



LITERALLY SPEAKING

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The Spirit of Ariel

By A. PRIMROSE,
C. WHALEN & N. KUMAR

Ariel Dorfman's moving talk revealed how he represents the hope emerging from Chile's Pandora's box. Through his insights and examples he showed the terror of the disappearances, which he describes as "an outrage against life."

Trauma and the consequences of this turbulent period of history were present throughout the selection of works Dorfman read. His painful experiences were eloquently articulated using a wide range of literary media. He stated that his "silence was sacrifice" and showed the burning

motivation equally evident in the man and his work. His goal to instil a living conscience for the victims through the power of his work was clearly his driving force.

His firsthand experiences of repression are still vividly remembered and came through in his attempt to articulate the inexplicable grief over "the disappeared." His talk provided the "funeral of words denied to them by history." The shadow of General Pinochet, still looming over Chile, was also tangible in his discussion - "Pinochet is a sad farce of a Greek tragedy with a lot of dead people on stage." The ironic manner in which he was indicted under an internation-



law which he had ratified, clearly appealed to Dorfman's laconic sense of humour. For Dorfman to say that in Spain, Pinochet is considered more unpopular than Satan, reflects his enormous ability to temper his grief with wit.

Dorfman's play, *Death and the Maiden* shows his internal struggle to understand his outlook towards the future. "It comes from my refusal to forget. To forget is to deny identity and to remember is to keep reliving the past."

In his latest novel, *The Nanny And The Iceberg* Dorfman exorcises the ghost of Pinochet, significantly on the day of the rejection of his appeal. Yesterday he requested defiantly, "Do not reduce me to a human rights activist, I am a man of imagination."

TODAY'S HIGHLIGHTS

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Farewell to God
Town Hall,

10.30-11.30am

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William Gibson
Everyman, 2-3pm

•
Louis de Bernieres
Everyman, 6-7pm

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Champions of Slam
Peppers, 8.30pm-late

Roger McGough, Carol Shields

By JON ANDRIESEN

Liverpool poet Roger McGough reminisces over nearly forty years of earthy and oblique verse.

Reading from his new collection, *The Way Things Are*, we experienced the nostalgic trip of a young Liverpool wannabe into the charismatic frontman of the lyrical age.

Perhaps only McGough could so sensitively portray the loss felt by generations of Austin Metro owners.

A reflective afternoon of poetry and pause soon moved on to prose with the return to Cheltenham of Carol Shields, here to promote, well, no book in particular. However, we were treated to an insight into her early life, growing up in the same small town as Ernest Hemingway, and the knowledge that Winnipeg often records temperatures below that of the North Pole.

A reading from *Larry's Party*, her most recent novel, introduced us to



the many aspects of men which Carol has so carefully and methodically analysed. No part of Larry's life or anatomy is left untouched. His life, his work and his love is exposed to the point of destruction.

There is, perhaps, no natural or literary connection between these events - McGough a hard edged, jovial Order of the British Empire and Shields, a Canadian with a self confessed maze fixation - but what the hell. This is the fiftieth Cheltenham Literary Festival and all are welcome.

Ed Sez

Many times in the deep dark past, the dream of a literary magazine had been suggested. Sadly, this dream was so often forgotten in the cold, sobering light of day. They had a dream. This is the craven reality.

Welcome to the first edition of *Literally Speaking*: the daily 'newspaper' covering all aspects of this 50th anniversary of The Cheltenham Festival of Literature.

Thank you to Cheltenham College for their technology. We could not have achieved this without you.

Do not be afraid to send in your reviews and titbits to idiaverse@yahoo.com, or drop them into the Press Desk in the foyer.

Enjoy the Festival!

THE TEAM

SUB EDITORS:
Adam Horovitz, Alan Maddrell.

STAFF JOURNALISTS:
Nisha Kumar, Mary Fauset.

ROVING REPORTER:
Jon Andriessen.



Setting up

BY ALAN MADDRELL

In the main hall, look up. On the day before the Festival opens, inside the roofspace is a wonderful vantage point for spotting the principal figures that make this year's Festival a physical reality. Rob Wimperis sits on top of a lighting tower. He's directing a swarm of young volunteers whilst fixing a scaffold bar and dishing out sage advice to all who seek it.

Town Hall stalwart Jack works tirelessly behind the scenes with chairs and practically anything else available. Into this milieu flutters the inimicable Marcus Moore, the rugged voice of the Festival poetry.

Spare a thought for the young Oxbridge student who takes your ticket - they are the spine of the Festival's workforce corpus, and work only for a meagre scrap of bread a day. Their smiles belie a frightening wealth of hard labour which translates plans into action.

The last Millennium?

BY CHLOE PREEDY

The Millennium is fast approaching and melodramatic pronouncements are in. Will the world end? Will we see the start of a wonderful new era? Everyone has their own opinions, most of which have been aired on live television over the past year. One aspect has been almost forgotten in all the excitement. Way back before cars, hairdryers and even TV, people were celebrating (or dreading) the first millennium. So how much has really changed? Lacey and Danziger investigate...

"It was an oak tree that provided the ink..." Thus begins a new and original investigation into life in the infamous 'Dark Ages', based around an ancient calendar called *The Julius Work*. And no, we're not talking 'veni, vidi, vici' here. This deals with the work of kings, saints and slave labourers at a time before the arrival of Parisian fashion (which doesn't turn

up until 1066). Sounds fascinating, right?

Well, OK, maybe not. But you haven't read the book yet. Because this is not your standard history text. It is a witty, amusing account that brings life to a time that already had brain surgeons, property developers and the dreaded gossip columnist... Not to mention hallucinogenic 'crazy bread' (a form of LSD) and a medieval recipe for Viagra - remember, there were all those blonde Viking girls around!

And yes, they've even got the facts! Humour and historical accuracy - what a combination! So if you want to get in touch with the Millennium without splashing out £16 to visit the Dome, then read this book. In fact, read it anyway! You'll be pleasantly surprised by how enjoyable history can be... I promise!

Robert Lacey will be bringing his book *The Year 1000* to life today at 5.30pm in the Town Hall.

This is SLAM!

BY ADAM HOROVITZ

Once again, the Cheltenham Festival of Literature started with a bang and a Slam. The now traditional afternoon and evening of poetic performance chaos has all the quality expected of this vibrant event. Co-host Marcus Moore said, "It's probably the best line-up we've had so far. It's just a shame that more people can't go through."

The afternoon saw a highly charged collection of sensitive invective, dirty surrealism and John Cooper Clarkeisms. This is not poetry for the faint-hearted, as it shouts, swears and conducts verbal intercourse with the audience, who are expected to respond in kind.

In the Playhouse, fifteen heats comprising five eager troubadours, rappers and lyrical hit men and women ended at 5pm with twenty five nervous hopefuls ready to take on a capacity crowd in the evening. No-

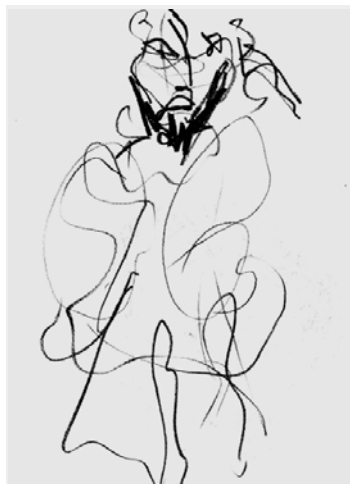
one was disappointed. The intensity of the afternoon was nerve-shatteringly increased in the booming ambience of Cheltenham Town Hall. It is a strange hall, but all the poets rose to the occasion. Of the twenty five poets drawn, only six could go through to the semi-final. They were stunning in their diversity. From the bleak North Eastern slices of life by Carl Staebler

through the dry, morbid wit of Lloyd Evans to the shattered glass calm of Karen Walker there was not a dull moment in the tense last half hour. The audience clamoured for more and they kept on getting it.

The final was an exciting one. There were two tried and tested Slammers in the form of Lloyd Evans and Rob Gee and one virtual Slam virgin by the name of Jem Rolls. In the end, morbid wit won out over Leicestershire lunacy and London shout-scapes with Lloyd Evans taking the grand prize.

He said "This is the biggest and best poetry audience in the country! I'm devastated. Yeah, I'm overwhelmed. Especially by the £20." The event was sealed with a tender poetic kiss from hosts Marcus Moore and Sara-Jane Arbury and the awesome Stroud School of Samba.

"We wouldn't come to the Festival if it wasn't for the Slam" said a busload of people from Bury St. Edmunds.



Lloyd Evans - sketched by Robert Palmer

The Stoat

Sir Robin Day forgot to put in his hearing aid until two minutes before going onstage. On hearing that there were going to be questions from the audience he was heard to reply, "I don't listen to people. I talk." Rumour has it he has been known to do this before... several times.

Encountered Roger McGough on the train down yesterday afternoon. He claims to have never been to a Slam. Now seems a good time to issue this challenge: can we have a Sixties Slam? It would be fascinating to see the founding fathers of Performance Poetry doing the Opportunity Knocks of the New Millennium.

Vol(e)s

BY CATHERINE MARTIN

Dotted about the Festival looking useful are the volunteers. This twenty-strong squad of near-graduates is united by a number of factors - a love of literature and a proclivity for toting a badge with panache rate highly.

Their day starts at eight with a queue for the one hot shower at the youth squat where they reside. Jobs vary from the finding of the bolt Marcus dropped from the light on his bike to teetering atop tall, wobbly ladders.

At the end of the first day, battered and torn, they're treated to a meal in Pizza Express. A wise manoeuvre, engineered by a sweetly Machiavellian Sarah Smyth. A well-fed volunteer is a happy one.

What more can be said about being a volunteer? They should have acquired some tasty celebrity stories by the end of the Festival. Just don't ask how much they get paid.