

L'Arche - Home Versus Institution

After spending two very interesting and enjoyable years while living on PEI, I felt compelled to share with the PEI community an experience which I had the privilege to partake in a short time ago.

During the 75-76 school year at UPEI, I had the opportunity to be introduced via cassette tape, to a man who has initiated a new type of community that is rapidly spreading in different parts of the world and which in a quiet way, amidst the noise and haste, is calling to liberation people who have been victimized by the individualistic and competitive world we live in. The man's name is Jean Vanier and the community is called L'Arche with its main headquarters located in Trosly, France. L'Arche, founded in 1964, attempts to give a permanent home to some 150 mentally handicapped adults who in some way have been rejected or hurt by society, to psychiatric hospitals and the unwillingness of people to take a genuine interest in providing these people with a loving and caring atmosphere. Together with these handicapped or "assisted people" (we are all handicapped in some way), there is also

some 140 assistants, men and women alike who have come from all walks of life to dedicate their immediate lives to the service of the handicapped.

To understand the intention of L'Arche we must look at the very meaning of the word L'Arche. The word L'Arche means "The Ark" in French. In the bible story the ark was the boat that Noah had used to save the creatures of all varieties from the flood. Hence, L'Arche is symbolic of a place of refuge, of a community of great variety and the gift of hope.

The motivation behind Jean Vanier's establishing a community such as L'Arche is described in his inspirational book "Eruption to Hope". He states: "More and more of the world seems to be dividing itself into two. On the one hand there are those motivated by the accumulation of riches, by the need to possess, and by the need to dominate and be above others. On the other hand there are those who live in involuntary poverty and misery and who are in some way marginal to society. (the aged, the handicapped of all kinds, the alcoholics, the mentally

ill and so forth and those who live in misery in the developing countries). Is not the great challenge of the day to create communities (which in fact are quite ancient since they resemble the first Christian communities) a great means of bringing a solution to the suffering, the wars and revolutions so prevalent in our times? When the distance between the society seeking domination and possession, and the miserable masses living in poverty becomes too great we can be sure that one day a spark will ignite the explosion. Do we not need communities of those who choose poverty, happy to share their lives with the rejected in order to create a bridge between the two worlds?" Thus, the aim of L'Arche is clear, the intention simple. As Vanier sees it, "the aim is not efficiency and productivity but human and spiritual progress, which ought necessarily to be found on an openness and mutual respect, and the desire to see the other achieve the greatest possible liberty."

The life style led at L'Arche is one of work,

sharing at meal time and prayer. Work consists of assembling things for nearby factories, making all types of pottery and mosaics in the various workshops, the maintenance of the gardens and fields where food is grown, and the repairing of the old houses that the community owns, which require constant attention. The 8 hour work day at L'Arche is enjoyable and a kind of family affair whereby creativity and self-fulfillment is attained by each person according to their own capacity and talent. Although, L'Arche is to some degree subsidized by the French government, it could not function without the proceeds it receives for the work the community engages in. My knowledge of this area is limited but I do understand that most of the proceeds go directly to maintaining the upkeep of the community.

There are some two hundred people directly living at L'Arche houses some five to ten miles away. The L'Arche community itself is subdivided into about ten to twelve mini-communities consisting of between ten and twenty people. The reason for the creation (Con't page 5.)



Punk Rock - Good and Bad

tinctive voice and the band's very tight sound, Blondie is by far the best of the punk bands, including the Ramones. Before the end of 1977, everyone will have heard of Blondie and remember where you heard it first.

(*) JONATHON RICHMAN (BESERKLEY RECORDS)

In direct contrast to the craftily created songs of Blondie is the other emerging punk rock star, Jonathon Richman. The material on this album is so ridiculous I could hardly listen to the whole thing. I must say the second and third listens failed to reveal anything that could account for his current popularity. I can't understand how Richman made it out of the underground. This stuff is on the caveman's level. Primitive.

(* *) THE MODERN LOVERS (BESERKLEY RECORDS)

The Modern Lovers is Jonathon Richman's back-up group. They have their own album as well. Isn't that nice?

(* * * * *) SPANISH TRAINS - CHRIS de BURGH (A & M RECORDS)

It is very hard to describe a work such as this because it is so varied and so different from anything else I've heard that it defies categorization or description.

"Spanish Train", the title cut, is my favourite. It recounts the battle between the Lord and the Devil for the souls of men. The battle is symbolized by their playing a game of cards, and of course the Devil cheats, thereby winning more souls than the Lord. Eventually the Devil wins the hand and they switch to playing chess. Here again the Devil continues to cheat and win more souls. Chris de Burgh simply recounts this story via talking for the verses and bursting into tantalized song for the powerful, surging chorus. The effect is dazzling and is one he uses quite often on this record.

Other impressive songs are "A Spaceman Came Travelling", "Just A Poor Boy", and "The Tower".

It's difficult singling out particular songs as all the epics on the album are outstanding. If you're looking for a new listening experience try Chris de Burgh.

(* * * *) THE TIME MACHINE - RESONANCE (CELEBRATION RECORDS)

Considering they are only two guys from France, Resonance sure make their share of music. One plays numerous synthesizers, the other various guitars. The Time Machine is a two-record set which takes us on a musical voyage through the ages, touching on forms of music as varied as disco ("Al Capone's Blues") to Viennan waltzes ("Grand Siecle").

The best song on the album is entitled

"Magellans", an acoustic number that could easily be a hit single. The Time Machine is definitely one of the most interesting albums to come along in quite a while.

Next Week: "ANIMALS - PINK FLOYD"; "Tejas - Z Z TOP"; "JONNY THE FOX - THIN LIZZY", & others.

(* * * * *) BLONDIE (PRIVATE STOCK RECORDS)

Punk rock, which is rock 'n roll stripped to its very basics, is quickly becoming the emerging craze of 1977. Already groups such as 'Blondie' and 'Jonathon Richman & The Modern Lovers' have had considerable exposure in the rock trade papers and have expanding cult followings.

In the case of Blondie, featuring blonde-haired Deborah Harry as lead vocalist, the cult certainly has something to follow. Their material is, at first listen, lacking of any value whatsoever. But listen to the album three times and I guarantee you'll be hooked. With songs centered around violence ("X Offender", "Rip Her To Shreds") coupled with Deborah Harry's dis-