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MOUNTAIN LOVE
You come to me—
lady of beauty
with arms laden
full of winter whiteness,
the mist clings
about your golden face
and your gentle speech
comes over me
as the groanings and whisperings
of trees in the wind—
I come to you
the mortal to the immortal,
how many lovers
have you sought before me
in the first years
when you were young
and wild and untamed—
when lines and pains
did not sear your face
and you were virgin
in every facet of living—
what were those years like
before the advent of humanity
can you speak once again
and tell me
what it was to be whole?

—Bonnie Kuipers

YESTERDAY IS ETERNITY
I have seen the trees before,
Standing tall, immovable and silent.
But yesterday
I saw them stretch their arms to heaven,
And their leaves, rustling excitedly, whispered,
"God is alive."

I have heard the brook often,
Gurgling softly as it bubbled around the rocks.
But yesterday
I listened to its smooth, flowing rhythm,
And its quiet murmur told me,
"God is good."

I have felt the sun many times,
Radiating his light and glowing heat.
But yesterday
I experienced his true life-giving nature,
And his soft, gentle warmth calmed me with,
"God is love."

All of my life I have seen this creation,
Ever changing, yet constant and ordered.
But yesterday
I met its loving, sovereign Creator,
And today and tomorrow are His gifts to me.
This God is mine. Forever.

—Roy A. Hoogerhyde

Norman Rockwell, immortalized through his cover work for the Saturday Evening Post, is featured in one of this issue’s art profiles.
Disappointed in Review

I would briefly like to mention that I believe The Thaliens deserve much more credit for the excellent job that went into The Tempest than what was given them in the last issue of the Cannon.

The writer of the Cannon review (Jo Anne Feenstra) wrote a review which in my opinion, said nothing.

In commenting on her statements, I hope that those of you that did not see The Tempest will believe that you missed not only an excellent performance by the Thaliens, but an enjoyable evening as well.

To begin with, The Tempest was performed on the Thrust Stage because it was written to be performed on one. Performing on a Thrust State is totally different than performing on a Proscenium Stage. The Thrust Stage lets the actors mix with the audience. Performing on the Thrust Stage was a challenge I believe the Thaliens succeeded in meeting.

The Tempest review also mentioned that many lines were “muffled” and “lost.” As Kevin Kelley stated in a Diamond article (iss of Oct. 23), audiences react differently from night to night. The night I saw The Tempest performed I found many people mumbling to those around them of what was happening next, most of which wasn’t true, but which distracted me from watching parts of the performance.

There were also many parts of The Tempest that brought laughter to the audience. One cannot expect the actors to wait three or four minutes before continuing, hoping the audience will soon settle down.

In mentioning the acting itself, I found, for the most part, the acting excellent by most cast members. I agree with Les Top (who played the role of Caliban), that the actors had to give more than their 100% for this performance as a Christian. This was one obligation they each made that they had to live up to.

In mentioning Caliban I would like to say that Caliban was far from “lazy” and “stupid” as mentioned in the review. Caliban was actually intelligent, and what knowledge he had was taught to him by Prospero.

I would also like to mention that Caliban was not part of a “duo” as stated in the review. He was part of a trio which consisted of Stephano, Caliban and Trinculo; played by John Kanis, Les Top and Harvey Mulder.

The review of The Tempest also stated that “the play itself as a drama is really a poor play” and that the writer “wanted it to be funny, serious or outstanding in some area of plot or theme.” I find the need to stress that there was no real theme to The Tempest. Shakespeare’s purpose for writing this was to entertain, and in writing The Tempest, Shakespeare said his own farewell to the stage before retreating to Milan, where he was actually a Duke.

I could mention many other comments of importance about the production itself, but would only like to state that I wish some research went into the background of The Tempest before that review entitled Disappointing Choice was ever written.

—Sheri Cleaves

Piquant Pedogy

by Kevin Kelley

Where were you on the night of November the fourteenth? “How cliché,” you say. I stand convicted. But if you weren’t where I was, you missed it. School CAN be enjoyable. Of course, I speak of an ordinary ‘school,’ but of Molière’s The School for Wives. Without a doubt, it was the most delightful school this person has ever attended.

Richard Wilbur’s translation of this dramatic triumph is geared for the laughs, and it gets them. Wilbur’s efforts have made Molière a truly identifiable figure to the American audience, proving that the wit and finesse that struck home in the hearts of 17th century Frenchmen are as timely and piercing as ever. In the words of one patron, “I felt like I was laughing at myself!”

Though relatively young as a regional touring company, (this show marks their first effort!), the Milwaukee Rep was very impressive. A tour show is a little different ball game. The problems of production become seventy-fold when the whole show has to fit into one Ryder’s truck. Perhaps the single most important quality a touring company must possess is adaptability. The set must work in all situations from a gym floor to a standard proscenium to a thrust. Once the set is together, you must light it sufficiently. And as actor you must adapt to different acoustics and social climes to ensure that each audience you play to gets a Duke.

My hat is off to those responsible for this production coming our way. And for a buck-and-a-half, how can you beat it? I have but one suggestion, “Let’s do it again, soon!”

—Sandy Van Den Berg

(found poem)
Norman Rockwell is literally a household word, as well as a symbol for the good American way-of-life. Rockwell, himself, hasn't lost his awe for an American institution where a kid artist could just walk in and have his talent recognized.

Norman Rockwell is not a modernist. His style is devotion to detail, which allows him to depict even abstract themes in a vividly personal way. Details are so important to Rockwell that he never fakes them. If a painting calls for a particular rocking-chair, he'll search high and low until he finds that chair. Once, to illustrate a special edition of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn, he needed a pair of faded overalls. Finally, he found them—a farmer who was plowing a field. With the help of a bribe, the farmer was persuaded to trade trousers with Rockwell.

During one period of his life, which he now refers to as his James Joyce-Gertrude Stein period, Rockwell studied modernism in Paris and bought Picassos for inspiration. Some of his professional friends had convinced him that the only way to leave his mark on history was to paint in the modernist tradition. Upon returning to the States, he tried painting symmetrical covers for the Post. The Post editors patiently lectured him on the benefits of being yourself and pointed out that having his paintings on the cover of the Post for all the world to see was better than having them embalmed in some art gallery (a good point!). Rockwell says, "I guess I'm a storyteller and although it may not be the highest form of art, it is what I love to do."

Norman Rockwell is a rarity—an artist who identifies with the common people, who understands them, and is truly a spokesman for them. As a result, he likes his characters and paints them with sympathy and decent humor, not with the stark distortion of some of his more arty contemporaries. Rockwell works for the public and looks for their acknowledgment and appreciation.

What does Norman Rockwell paint? His paints the common down-to-earth American from Hometown U.S.A., his wife, his kids, his pastor, his dentist, his garage mechanic, and his dog. The men aren't Hollywood heroes, the girls aren't Powers models, but they are real people, faithfully rendered to the last wrinkle—people who have been thwarted and have had their small triumphs, good decent people, who still pray and who still believe that there is hope for the future. Rockwell's paintings celebrate simple America with joy, good sense, and a sentimental sense of humor.

Though he never paints extremists, Rockwell's covers have much social significance because his characters have the natural dignity of the ordinary man, who prefers to carry his own weight, if he's given a chance. His work also has political implications—Rockwell depicts the common man who only asks for his rights as an American and silently pledges faith in his country. An excellent example of Rockwell's political concern is his most famous work—"The Four Freedoms." One night, during World War II, he woke up at 3 a.m., tortured by the idea that Americans didn't realize what the four freedoms meant to them personally. He couldn't get back to sleep, so he got up and sketched his ideas for the "Four Freedoms."

An artist like Norman Rockwell is such a relief after one puzzles over the work of the modernists and struggles with the elitist attitude of many contemporary artists. Here, finally, is a man who understands ordinary people and can communicate with them; a man whose work is relevant to everyday life; a man whose work can be hung up on the wall and pointed to with pride because "he's one of us."

―Diana Vander Wal
Playfulness in Metal

“Rolf who?!” is a natural response, one I shared in a few weeks ago when reading the gallery signs on the second floor of the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. But the question will never be raised by me again: Rolf Nesch quickly became an unforgettable character whose unique metal prints are some of the most playful, joyful, simple, fun works of art I have ever encountered.

How Nesch devises his colorful almost three-dimensional embossed prints automatically prods the curiosity of viewers. “How does he do that?”, a technique too detailed to describe here. Essentially, his works derive from accident and experiment. Zinc plates mistakenly dunked too long in acid made freakish designs any other artist might cuss about. Nesch saw beauty in the “ruined” plates and continued to experiment with acids, among other methods: Soldering wires onto the plate, heating metals and melted glasses to shape the plate into a montage, employing tin cut-outs to emboss the print to the point of tearing the paper, fusing chunks of firewood directly onto the plate—all constructed with wire cutters whom Duchamp is king. Others, like “the enemy of abstract art” Xaver Fuhr (b. 1898) and Nesch, felt art could be “brutal” without being destructive. Ernst Kirchner, one of the founders of Die Brucke, influenced the simple forms of Nesch, as did Edvard Munch, the Norwegian giant admired by Nesch. If there is any artist he resembles, it is the abstract tinkerer Kurt Schwitters and his Merzbau (cathedral of misery). Schwitters belonged to “the other guys” of the Dada movement whose progeny include the friends of Kandinsky and Duchamp, brought out the best and worst in the Dadaists. Many were out to destroy art, to “create” anti-art, of horizon.

and soldering irons instead of the usual etching tools. Added to this, the prominent Hungarian printmaker, Gabor Peterdi, said Nesch often worked for whole sections in his prints in which the plate isn’t inked at all and where the design appears only in his interplay of shadow and light. This method, because of its awkwardness, imposes a brutal simplicity on his style, strong and expressive.” And abstract? Far from it!

Die Brucke, that revolutionary clique whose progeny include the friends of Kandinsky and Duchamp, brought out the best and worst in the Dadaists. Many were out to destroy art, to “create” anti-art, of which Duchamp is king. Others, like “the enemy of abstract art” Xaver Fuhr (b. 1898) and Nesch, felt art could be “brutal” without being destructive. Ernst Kirchner, one of the founders of Die Brucke, influenced the simple forms of Nesch, as did Edvard Munch, the Norwegian giant admired by Nesch. If there is any artist he resembles, it is the abstract tinkerer Kurt Schwitters and his Merzbau (cathedral of misery). Schwitters belonged to “the other guys” of the Dada movement whose progeny include the friends of Kandinsky and Duchamp, brought out the best and worst in the Dadaists. Many were out to destroy art, to “create” anti-art, of horizon.

Growth-forms 1941

“absolutely, unreservedly, 24-hours-a-day PRO art.” It is this same Schwitters who, if alive today, would have relished Nesch’s works, but not because Schwitters would recognize himself. Nesch may have picked up any number of influences, from the sweep of a line by Matisse to the flavor of ancient Oriental manuscripts. But Nesch is Nesch, one quickly discovers, and cannot be mistaken for anyone else. His self-perpetuating art is a great tribute to his ability to conceive and create imaginatively and effectively.

A chronological scan of Nesch’s works is a history of an ever-flowering creativity. His early works, like “Sun,” 1933 (from the 20-etching series, Snow), and “Trumpeter,” 1934, show Nesch beginning to toy with the metal plate itself, only in a minor fashion. The subject matter is still most important, but the trumpeter’s arm design in his 1934 work foreshadows the day when Nesch would flood the entire background of his works with no less beauty than his simple, humorous subjects. In the late thirties and forties, intricate patterns explode into a fantasy of experimentation as seen in his “Two On a Horse,” 1941 (from In the Mountains series) to his caricature, “Bishop,” 1948, and the playful “Come In!” of 1949. From the early fifties to the present, the prints gradually become more three-dimension-like, fusing even more precise designs with simpler forms, and an ever increasing panorama of colors as seen in “Three Musicians” (1952), “Snake Tamer,” 1957, right up to the contemporary Bird and Fish series (1969, 1971 respectively). Currently, Nesch is sculpting his imagination in stone. Remarkable, they are, conjuring up Polynesian idols or caricatures of Eastern Island megaliths—forms not having the slightest resemblance to those on the prints. Nesch has, like his art, an almost naive manner of looking at his stone cutting: “One can look at nature—one can see everything or nothing.” And that is about all the philosophy of art one can extract from Nesch. He seems to say, “What is the sense of all this debate and pictorial challenge? Why not bring a beautiful thing into this world and have fun doing it?” Fun is a certainty in Nesch. He is not a Duchamp, a Magritte, or a Dahl whose works challenge the spirit. Nesch is like, if I might be so bold to say, a Brughel whose day-to-day work blinks the eye with the beauty of life.

“Rolf Nesch was a pioneer of the sculptural metal collage print. Today artists all over the world are making prints using all types of materials, tools, and printing methods, but their basic idea of building surfaces relates to Nesch.” —Gabor Peterdi

Composition, 1945

Trumeter, 1934/35
Take a Bite


It's Friday night and you don't have a date. You're bored of staring at the wall, sick of studying, and wishing you were any other place in the world. Than where you are. God's waiting, too. As Gini Andrews says, its both your privilege and responsibility to live a full, rich, exciting life. And you can do it, by the grace of God, with His help. The challenge is clear: What are you going to do with Your Half of the Apple?

Francis Schaeffer says in his introduction to the book: "If there is to be an answer to The Sensuous Woman and other books like it, we must have the courage to speak as the prophets spoke." Gini Andrews speaks out with such courage and isn't afraid to comment on some of the touchier areas such as masturbation: "that skeleton in your closet." (p.93)

I guarantee that you won't come away from this book saying, "I don't know what the author's trying to say," because she says it loud and clear (so even the guys can hear, too): "He that touches you, touches the apple of My eye." That's you—the apple of God's eye.

You're waiting. God's waiting, too. As Gini Andrews says, its both your privilege and responsibility to live a full, rich, exciting life. And you can do it, by the grace of God, with His help. The challenge is clear: What are you going to do with Your Half of the Apple?

The Night Porter

THE NIGHT PORTER—Joseph E. Levine, producer

You need a solid stomach and a cheerful heart to make it through this possible essay about love's inadequacy in the 20th century. It is also better not to know the details of what went on behind the barbed-wire fences of Germany's concentration camps in the Second World War so the psychological pressure is minimized when viewing The Night Porter. The Night Porter contains more "juicy parts." The Night Porter contains more "juicy parts." Forthright as it may seem, The Night Porter is "romantic pornography" a somewhat accurate summary, though deceptive with the word "pornography." It is a film that begs the "moral-aesthetic-social" questions. As far as "grossness" is concerned, that is, The Exorcist, contains more "juicy parts." Forthright as it may seem, The Night Porter's supposed "pornographic" sequences are not as explicit to the eye as they are psychologically subtle and wrapped in the most heinous circumstances imaginable. Dirk Bogard and Charlotte Rampling add to this mind-bender with great force.

A fatalistic film? Perhaps. Rarely will I place myself in the authoritative position of telling people not to go to a particular film. But this one I certainly would not take a child—and don't see it yourself if you have even a mild touch of the blues. But I still wonder how much of the film is purely excessiveness—is The Night Porter nothing but "romantic pornography," an Elvira Madigan in its ultimate extreme? Or is it a film that has finally come out, crying desperately, "Love, the embracing god of mankind, is not enough under any circumstances to live and never shall be!"? I really wonder.

Though graphics, music, direction, and the utterly indiscernible make-up on Mr. Finney (Is that really Albert Finney? No!) figure favorably in the film, the lavish sets and overabundance of renown players selected mostly for posing downgraded my liking for the film, giving me the feeling that Murder on the Orient Express was produced to out-do all films of the 1930's instead of telling a great classic murder story.

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Film Reviews

by Wayne Farr

Murder on the Orient Express

Agatha Christie's memorable "who-dunnit" is on screen displayed by a showpiece of Hollywood splendor. Famous actors and actresses appear in roles less renown (and less costly) people could have filled, and probably with better acting as a result. But not all is chaff: Vanessa Redgrave has a few seconds of glory as does Ingrid Bergman. Albert Finney, however, does more than pose fashionably in his role as Hercule Poirot, the Belgian Sherlock Holmes, unlike the bulk of those expensive figures.

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NIGHT WIND
The rising wind begins
filling
the footprints
in the sand fringes
of his mind
The dredging machines
the swimmers
those who trod the beaches
one hurrying
another loitering
the dune buggies
creating deep ruts
burying potato chip bags
they're gone now
the umbilical cord of day
has been severed
and the wind
sweeps clean the beaches.

—by Ken Koopmans
Incoherent Ramblings

Although I dislike living in Sioux Center, an Iowa spring causes sensations more exhilarating than any I have ever felt. Every year winter's long seige appears victorious, but each April, temperatures rise abruptly into the seventies and the great plains are reborn. Good, dark earth replaces snow, green shoots push quivering heads into the open sunlight, rabbits race through new prairie grasses, and warm rains cleanse the bright, young landscape. As the rain soaks into a man's skin, he may feel its medicine seep into his veins. Seized with an unexplainable spirit, he may dash wildly through the meadows. He may jump up and down, pull faces at centipedes, or hug trees with sensuous abandon.

Several years ago, Jim Wolff and I, both raw Chicagoans, bumped into our first Iowa spring. The spring spirit immediately ripped its fangs into Jim, an incurable romantic who presented a hopelessly easy target.

As we crossed the Iowa border, dawn's soft glimmer brightened the plains and Jim shook like a Pennsylvania Quaker, near a gently sloping valley. Jim leaped finally. He announced his intentions: "Dude, I want to pet a cow."

I pulled over to the highway's shoulder and Jim, gripped by the spring spirit, even snickered at himself. Jim, turned and sprinted like an Olympian over the fence and, mooing like a cow, steamed toward a herd of cattle at the bottom of the slope. His eyes glittered with the joy of freedom and his legs propelled him skyward in spinning, twisting jumps: he was a man possessed. He shouted, "Hey, babies, watch out. I'm a'comin' to hug ya."

He thoroughly frightened the herd, which scattered, bellowing. As Jim careened down the slope, my eyes changed on a very large, enraged bull. "Hey, Jim, there's a bull over there." "What bull?" asked Jim.

At last he saw the bull, still two hundred yards distant, but charging him madly. Jim turned and sprinted like an Olympian all the way back to the barbed wire fence. Unfortunately, just seconds before he would have escaped scot-free, he slipped on a muddy pile of dung and lurched headlong through the air, landing face flat in a juicy cowpie. Luckily for Jim, the bull halted in wide-eyed wonder, staring at this curious, dung-eating creature. As my snuffling friend crawled under the fence and stood up, a heroic figure silhouetted against the Iowa sunrise, I laughed at him. Jim, gripped by the spring spirit, even snickered at himself.

I haven't tried petting a cow, but for me, the Iowa spring provides a temporary release from academia. I climb oak trees along the Rock River and watch the sun curl past the western horizon. I watch the icebergs rip against the riverside, spin off snags, and play tag with twists.

Last spring, a friend joined me on the Sioux River banks. As we sat there, he discussed neo-Platonism and Hegel's Reason in History. The spring animal bit me and I finally blurted, "Hegel, blah! Leibniz, blah! Sartre, Kierkegaard, Plotinus, Dooye-. They're all just big flufly bags of bleep."

My friend started at me; he was undoubtedly shocked. But after we massaged our toes in the short grass for a while, he grinned at me and grabbed my arms. We tumbled, wrestling, over the cliff and flopped into the murky water.

Dragging our sopping bodies from the muck, we hauled Gan Belt beers from our grocery bag. We watched the sky sliding by the cottonwoods on the Dakota side and the wind sparring with the leaves on the trees and the river flowing always to the south.

Today, winter's soft blanket shrouds the plains and Immanuel Kant's Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics stands open on my desk. Ah, to find that eternal spring.

Good talent, but performance sloppy

by Mimi Ernest

Commenting on this week's performance of the MESSIAH may, at first, seem strange as reviewing THE NEW CHRISTIAN HYMNAL but, as in the case of the hymnal, this review is just as important.

The announcement on KDCR proclaimed that "the glory of the Lord shall be revealed in Te Paske Theatre on Sunday, December 7." Not even the Mormon Tabernacle Choir could live up to a promo like that! But even if the announcement had been more humble the performance still would have disappointed many in the audience.

The 3:30 performance, which I went to, was riddled with rushed tempos, clumsy cadences, missed notes and insensitive phrasing. There was an almost continual sense of unease and instability between instrumentalists and chorus—one group trying to rush ahead while the other stumbled over notes. I was left with the feeling that the pieces were very difficult. The ease and flow that comes from a real mastery of the music was lacking.

Chorale, which is capable of very fine work, sang almost completely without any true musical sensitivity, except for the excellent phrasing in "Laud We Thy Name" from the Bach work. The Saint-Saens selection is, no doubt, very beautiful but the thin texture and high range seemed to be more than the soloists and chorus could handle at this point.

The members of the massive MESSIAH chorus looked like they were enjoying themselves (even when a whole section smiled sheepishly after missing an entrance) but if they had been a little more conscious of their singing for the audience instead of only themselves perhaps more musical sensitivity (not to mention the glory of the Lord) would have been revealed.

There were some very pleasing moments. It was good to hear "Thou Shalt Dash Them," an air rarely included in the usual line-up of MESSIAH highlights. The MESSIAH soloists, one or two of the Chorale soloists, and a couple of the first chair instrumentalists proved that, despite unfortunately quick tempos, an amateur orchestra and boorishly clicking tape recorders, Northwest Iowa is capable of providing talent equal to Handel's creativity.

THE INQUIRING OF EXISTENCE

Man of solitary dreams,
walks the earth
with body footsteps
falling softly
empty shadow
of the man is left,
alone the flesh
wanders—
leading an existence
whispered to the stars
as a life of crazed
emotions flying,
inert body crying,
if only he knew
where the stars were—
it will never coincide
for the mind
has also taken flight
and searches
in the darker shades
of painful life
for its existence.

-Bonnie Kuipers