

Arts



Paul Harris on the arts

Rock'n'roll makes it's way behind the 'iron curtain'

Throughout the past half of this century, our society has seen music evolve from the most traditional of standards to the most bizzare of harmonized frequencies. Music critics have seen the spotlight go from Duke Ellington and his orchestra to heavy metal acts like Ratt and Motley Crue. The only limitation to this art is electrically amplified expression that can be magnetically recorded.

Bruce Springsteen knows. Modern music was born in the USA.

Last summer while I was travelling in Western Europe and Asia with Dr. David Crowe and his Soviet Studies Group, I was able to observe the results of this musical revolution from a different stance—*rock'n'roll behind the iron curtain.*

When I began to prepare for my trip, I borrowed a compact cassette player from a friend. I didn't know what to expect music wise. Upon arriving at the Greensboro Airport, I found that others had done the same. Comparison of cassette tapes began

before the plane even left the runway.

I felt that I was bringing a part of my culture with me in my personal selections. But much to my surprise, there were people in Russia who told me some things about rock'n'roll that I didn't know. I didn't realize that Jim Morrison's father was highly ranked in the U.S. Air Force until an English-speaking Russian quizzed me on the fact. He was delighted to see that I had a copy of "The Doors Greatest Hits" tape, and insisted that it be played while we ate dinner.

It was not only in Leningrad that music that has been created and popularized during the past twenty years here in America has gained a truly world-wide recognition. No matter what city it was, from Baku on the Caspian Sea to Irkutsk, Siberia, there always seemed to be someone wondering if you had any western music with you.

The Soviet Union does not subscribe to such distribution

standards as major record lables do. Mass distribution of western produced recordings is not accepted. Therefore, rock music must make it's way in an alternative route. One way that such music arrives in remote regions is through the country's one million plus annual tourists.

Helsinki, Finland is located less than one hundred miles from the Russian shore, just across the Gulf of Finland. In this capitol city, I was surprised to find a Nantucket album in a downtown record store. Posters on the shop door announced a Deep Purple concert in nearby Stockholm.

With western culture living so close to the Soviet Union, it's popularity can't be stopped. Music that is looked down upon by a great deal of Americans over the age of 50 is being accepted in communist territory.

The reason for such leakage of our society need not be justified. Some of the people *behind the iron curtain* know what rock'n'roll is, and they like it.

A 26-year-old native of Leningrad described it best to me. "This music and these headphones serve as escape from this dark, grey world we live in." I was about to board the bus for the airport when he said that to me. I had just given him my friends Walkman and the Doors tape.

In the United States, we are reserved the freedom of expression. Whether that be freedom of speech, political opinion, or freedom to play an electric guitar, as long as we do so without offending someone directly, we are free to.

The Soviets see things a little differently. They don't include the *freedom to rock* in a bill of rights. That's one of the aspects of living under communist rule. While we may assume our musical freedom of expression, much of this world lives without it.

If you listen closely, though, you can still hear electric guitars echoing in the foreground.

Durham-based author inspires young writers

By Maurine Justad
Staff Writer

"Fiction gives us a way of telling the truth that's more powerful than other ways of telling the truth." That's what author Elizabeth Cox said last Wednesday evening when she addressed a crowd at Elon's Whitley Auditorium.

"Stories offer to us a kind of peripheral vision

that's different from the regular way of looking at the world of human nature."

Cox is the author of *Familiar Ground*, a novel that was published last year. A resident of Durham, her short stories have appeared in several journals and anthologies. She began writing poetry nearly ten years ago, but her fiction writing style has earned the author greatest credit.

In Cox's presentation, she talked about story and our basic need for this writing concept. "A story," she said, "shows us something about ourselves by telling us to look someplace else."

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Cox showed a way to talk about love, hope, and hate by reading a portion of *Familiar Ground*. In her recital, she described a favorite character of hers, a 53-year-old retarded man that she introduced about midway through the novel.

She went on to explain what makes this particular character so meaningful, describing him as one who teaches.

Also in her presentation, Cox parrelled some of her views as a Southern writer with those of literary great, Robert Penn Warren. In discussing some of Warren's works, Cox showed similarities in ideas, and went on to recite a short passage of his. After the lecture, she was a guest at an informal reception in West Parlor.

Her advice to aspiring writers is to always have something submitted for publication. No one is going to come to your door asking for something you've written, she says.



Elizabeth Cox

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