

Book Reviews

Blythe writing award

The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics
ed. by Alan Aldridge
A Seymour Lawrence Book
Delacorte Press
155 pp., \$5.95

By JOHN BENDIX

The Beatles' lyrics can't be looked upon as being an independent type of poetry, their lyrics are a part of a whole with chaotic stops, starts and fits which only make sense when music, lyric, performer and time become one. Seeing Beatles lyrics on paper is fine for those people (a near-majority of the young) who can fill in the rest of the whole in their inner ear.

The songs fill our minds with images of life, events and the fantastic. Alan Aldridge, a young English graphic designer, transforms the thought-images occasioned by the Beatles' songs, into illustrations, with artists such as Tomi Ungerer, Brian Love, David Bailey and Robert Grossman, in his new book *The Beatles Illustrated Lyrics*. Most of the time these optic transfers succeed. For instance, photographer Enzo Ragazzini illustrates "When I'm Sixty-four" with a series of pictures of a man about that age which slowly refract into a multi-imaged series of reflections of eternity, or oblivion. Rich Griffen concretizes "Why don't we do it in the road" with an epic comic strip, and Robert Grossman condenses "Back in the USSR" with a plastic Playmate-like Russian majorette high-stepping while twirling a hammer and sickle. Most of the illustrations are adequate, a few are great and a couple are irrelevant. The pictures can help focus our thoughts on the songs, and at times add a new visual dimension to the Beatles' music a la *Yellow Submarine*.

Aldridge's book contains the lyrics of about 100 Beatles songs; songs from their early days through their "The Beatles" double album. It should be noted that this book does not contain the music to the songs, just the lyrics in small print, leaving plenty of room for the illustrations. Remember, this is an artbook and not a songbook. Apt extracts from Hunter Davies' biography *The Beatles* fill out the book. I can't tell you not to buy, or to buy this book—The Beatles, and everything about them, myth and fact, are many things to many people. They are like our times, a mixture of denseness and transparency. It's all in the eye and ear of the beholder. At your bookstore, pick-up a copy of this book, leaf through it and . . .

Survival in Space
by Dr. Vladimir Lebedev and Yuri Gagarin
Praeger \$5.95 Bantam PB 95 cents 166 PP.

By DAVID J. MILLER

Dr. Lebedev and the late Yuri Gagarin have put together a fascinating account of the human side of the space effort. Taken mostly from the training sessions of the cosmonauts, the problems and solutions in *Survival in Space* are shaped by the distinctly Russian view of the cosmos and man's place in it. Sources are miscellaneous: not only is Pavlov quoted copiously, but also Hippocrates and his (don't laugh) theory of the humors, Aristotle, Avicenna, Isaac Asimov, the inimitable Tsiolkovskii (forerunner of space thinkers), Joshua Slocum, and various Russian scientists and inventors

The Le Gette Blythe award is presented annually to a UNCC student for creative writing. Students eligible for the award will be those officially enrolled at UNCC at the time of entry and at the date of the awarding.

Mr. Blythe is rewarding a large silver cup on which the name of each year's winner will be engraved, and also a small silver replica of the larger cup for the winner, to keep in an effort to stimulate and reward creative writing at UNCC.

Mr. Blythe is widely known for his numerous books, such as, *BROTHERS OF VENGEANCE*, *SHOUT FREEDOM!*, and the *CHATHAM RABBIT*. He is also remembered as the author of last year's successful outdoor drama "The Hornet's Nest" held in connection with Charlotte's Bi-Centennial Celebration.

Entries may be submitted either by the

author or by sponsors (with the author's permission). All entries should be in a form easy to duplicate. Previous publication of the entry is not necessary for eligibility.

There is no specific limitation on the type of writing which may be entered. The judges for the award will not be restricted to faculty or administrative personnel. The judges will also include select persons off-campus.

Manuscripts should be mailed or delivered to Dr. Darryl McCall of the UNCC English Department for submission to the board of judges. Entries will be returned to authors if stamped, self-addressed envelopes are provided. Each author or sponsor is asked to keep copies of entries submitted. The deadline will be announced at a later date.

WHISPERS FROM A CONTINENT:
The Literature of Contemporary Black Africa
by Wilfred Cartey.
Vintage \$1.95

By DAVID J. MILLER

The field is new, relatively untouched by literary plows. The first really in-depth book about African literature should be really good. Dr. Cartey almost makes it with *Whispers from a Continent*. His criticism is quick, keen, perceptive; his writing is clear, often witty. However, he has not winnowed the smaller talents from his material. He limits himself severely to thematic and textual criticism.

For most people, every author touched upon in this book will be an unfamiliar name. After all, African literature is a relatively new subject. If you weren't paying attention, you might have missed Wole Soyinka, who has had two plays off-Broadway, or Chinua Achebe, whose trilogy of Ibo life limns the profound social changes of the last hundred years in Nigeria.

Dr. Cartey introduces each new author with the sure hand of a practiced host, yet it is not the authors that

we get to know. The real subject of Dr. Cartey's book is Mother Africa herself, the Black giantess who has awakened at last. But, like the Zen story of the mountain that was a mountain then it was not a mountain then it was, the Africa to which the European-educated "been-tos" return, is and isn't same. The only return possible is mythic, through literature, and particularly through poetry and drama.

Practically every author that Cartey includes in his survey has accepted the promise of a better world as seen by Europeans, has become alienated from his native land in order to save it from European colonialism by European means: law, science, politics, religion. While some have been captivated by the dream of Europe, others have gone to the cities, creating a new urban world to live in. In the end, it is a new Africa, tempered by the bad and the good of European experience, that now has found the voices for an African conversation. Dr. Cartey's accomplishment is commensurate with his labors; he has done his homework. *Whispers from a Continent* makes a good first book for African literary studies. Like a Whitman's Sampler, you get a lot of tastes to choose from.

whose names are not household words.

For the Russian view of things, here's how the first paragraph starts: "Around 100,000 years ago a glacier began to move across Europe bringing with it a sharp drop in temperature..." How's that for long-term perspective, technical bias, and utter opposition of man and nature? The whole book is shaped like a great arrow zinging its way past all obstacles to the Great Future of Mankind.

The first flights in space were flights of imagination. Among the dreamers, Tsiolkovskii deserves mention. He first suggested a number of things, among them, using the plant-animal ecology in space to solve the oxygen and water problem. It's not as simple as he thought, but a microscopic green algae called *Chlorella* will probably accompany man on long journeys. This algae may also

be the major source of food.

Gagarin and Lebedev reason thusly in their final sales pitch: "To be a cosmonaut one need not be a superman...nothing human is alien to them...The cosmonaut must learn mathematics, physics, astronomy, cybernetics, radio technology, electronics, metallurgy, chemistry, biology, psychology, physiology...Only a strong organism can sustain the training program...Space will submit only to the strong." End of pitch, end of book. So, do your homework, kids, space is waiting for you.

The Sports page will not appear this week week due to technical difficulties. It will resume regular publication after Christmas.

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