

## **Panarticon**

#23, August 2003. *Discorder Magazine*.

tobias c. van Veen

### **olympic orgasms, on tap**

Down high from the Mount, Olympus has crowned Vancouver for 2010... And like EXPO '86, the Olympics will bring irreversible change, both pleasurable & perverted, to the West Coast Paradise. But there's little point in *fighting* this impending behemoth of greed, televised stupor-sport and corporate ad-guzzling. Indeed, let's all join hands in a giant group orgy and Breed the Olympic Spirit by offering a few suggestions to the Olympic Committee, as we get down on our knees and beg, like the dirty hypocrites we are, for that tasty piece of the funding pie... & thus I offer the first suggestion in what will become a new series in Panarticon—readers are encouraged to write in their own brain-bubbles...

### **New.national.Anthem**

Suggestion Uno: *A new national anthem*. Our anthem sucks. Burn the old dirge not only because it's a diatribe of religious ideology, but because it has a hook/limerick combination as arousing as a funeral march. Which it practically is—the nation's sing-song was composed as a *hymn* by Calixa Lavallée in 1880 for a spirited poem by Judge Adolphe-Basile Routhier. We should have listened to history: nobody paid much attention to the damn dirge until...well, really until 1980, when it was all settled as Canada's national anthem. For awhile there were several sets of lyrics via competing scribes, including such memorable passages as: "At Britain's side, whate'er betide," "Guide then one Empire wide" [as in YAY! Britain is world-imperialist! We be Britain's bitch, yo!], and my personal favourite [and closest to the French]: "Beneath the shade of the Holy Cross/Thy children own their birth." [I'm not too sure whether I should feel comforted or frightened that "I own my birth"].

Today's lyrics just compact these imperialist, good ol' Brit/French colonial & God-fearin' themes into slightly more metaphoric language: "The True North, strong and free [note the *true*, here]; "True, patriot love [more *true*, of patriotism for the *truth*]" — "In all Thy [that's God, kids] Son's [no women] command [obey, fuckers!—obey *the truth*, ie, of Thy God]" — "God keep our land, glorious and free" [Well, here it is—a plea to God to get into the action, in case this obeying stuff falls through]. In French, Canada's national chant reveals its "*true*" origins, apparently jotted down in some frozen, Catholic schoolhouse during a particularly rotten Québec winter. Here's the official English translation, and I print it here in full—my comments interpolated.

Canada! Land of our forefathers [*Well, not really: we're immigrants, and this is certainly not "our land." The "forefathers" and "foremothers" are First "Nations".*] / Thy brow is wreathed with a glorious garland of flowers [*Note the Christian imagery: the poetic, historical & patriarchal "head" of Canada is wreathed*] / As in thy arm ready to wield the sword [*Canada is thy North American saviour: and He carries Vengeance and Might via Death—the Sword*] / So also is it ready to carry the cross [*I.e., salvation— wrought first by the sword; the cross is "also...ready" but not a necessity. In fact the other "arm"*

*remains empty while the sword must be put down to "carry the cross." Note these are arms, as in "bear arms," not hands, which usually do other things, like caress, touch, and love, as well as create. A "handy"—or, better, "army"—doctrine in dealing with "Natives." / Thy history is an epic of the most brilliant exploits [Indeed, it is: exploit/ations]. Thy valour steeped in faith [No Comment] / Will protect our homes and our rights [Take note: rights and property—capitalism—are entwined via a Christian humanism].*

Well! What would be better then, instead of "O! Canada!"...? Easy—*electronic music*. That's right, bring on a completely non-lyric "national anthem" and I am down—be it stoned & laughing or grooving out to our new Olympic microfunk (Montréal glitch-massive, get down to the *new national anthem froooooommmmm.. AKUFEN!*). For one, there would be no more bickering about lyrics. Arguments over representation & interpretation would be obsolete. All that would matter would be bodily affect. For nothing glues the world today like the cross-cultural thudding of beats. Or, for that matter, the beauty bong-hits of chill-out music...hell, drum 'n' bass, whatever: we could have an uptempo version wrought by techno producer Daniel Lui, a dark & evil minimalist version from Richie Hawtin, a cascading, granular-ambient epic from Tim Hecker, and a cheesy prog remix from Chris Sheppard. Why not? We're a cheesy nation. Embrace the cheese! In fact, why not just commission an *entire symphony* of electronic refrains? Every time we had to play the "anthem," there would be such a selection to choose from that our "national identity" would completely dissolve, our competitiveness as a "people" would disintegrate, and a feeling of cosmopolitanism would flood the "glowing hearts." It would no longer even be "international" or "transnational," but something exterior to the "nation" altogether, something *global*, something of the *multitudes*... There would be dangers in this tactic—any attempts to attach our "nation" to a fragment that could not be sung at all could result in bitter infighting. We'd have to watch that. Québec would not be happy, but they weren't happy that Vancouver got the Olympics anyway—apparently "it hurt their future chances." [Québec's petty "nationalism" is not distinct. It's ignorant. *Viva autonomia*, but not when it means *exclusive politics of "home"*]. Imagine: the new "national anthem" could not even be accurately hummed. The concept here being to create a "national anthem" that goes one step further to dissolving the nation-state. [But don't tell the Feds or the Olympic Committee that...].

### **Yes, Vancouver Does Cool Now**

Artist & Freakster olo j. milkman wrote to tell me that Good Things are erupting in the summer of street madness (yay, Critical Mass!). Apparently the beat collective Tribal Harmonix has broached the threshold of organisation & energy, throwing some solid events, including a few powered by bicycle-generators (silent & nonpolluting: wicked). Fire-twirling, which I witnessed under a certain Bridge a few months ago, has illuminated a number of flagrations, including the Drive—see <[www.firespinners.com](http://www.firespinners.com)>. Also Socialconstruct.com has gathered together artists in a friendly & hopefully profitable fashion; and freak-energy seems to be flowing toward the Coast—Toronto's infamous minimalist Tomas Jirku has flown the coop with Robin Judge to VanCity, while Daniel Gardner (aka Frivolous) has joined us Montréalers. (And for those of you following G.I.

JOE KILLAZ, now known simply as THE KILLAZ, this is why, Joes, that the Commander is Dead). Then there's this year's NFF, which hopefully will present itself as a professional entity after last year's spectacularly deconstructive performance <[newformsfestival.com](http://newformsfestival.com)>.

*Eeeeeoooooeoe BOOM eeieieeeee BOOM BOOM...!*