

## After the Fringe

With close on 1,000 productions shoehorned into three weeks, you can choose to view the Edinburgh fringe festival from practically any angle you want. The audience is predominantly Scottish, out for a good time and not frightened of political ideas.

The audience at least were well served by the comedy performers this year. Of the established names, Jenny Lecoat, Roy Hutchins and Simon Fanshawe all pushed against the limitations of the cabaret format and came up with exciting new material, while Glasgow not only fielded Arnold Brown, Ivor

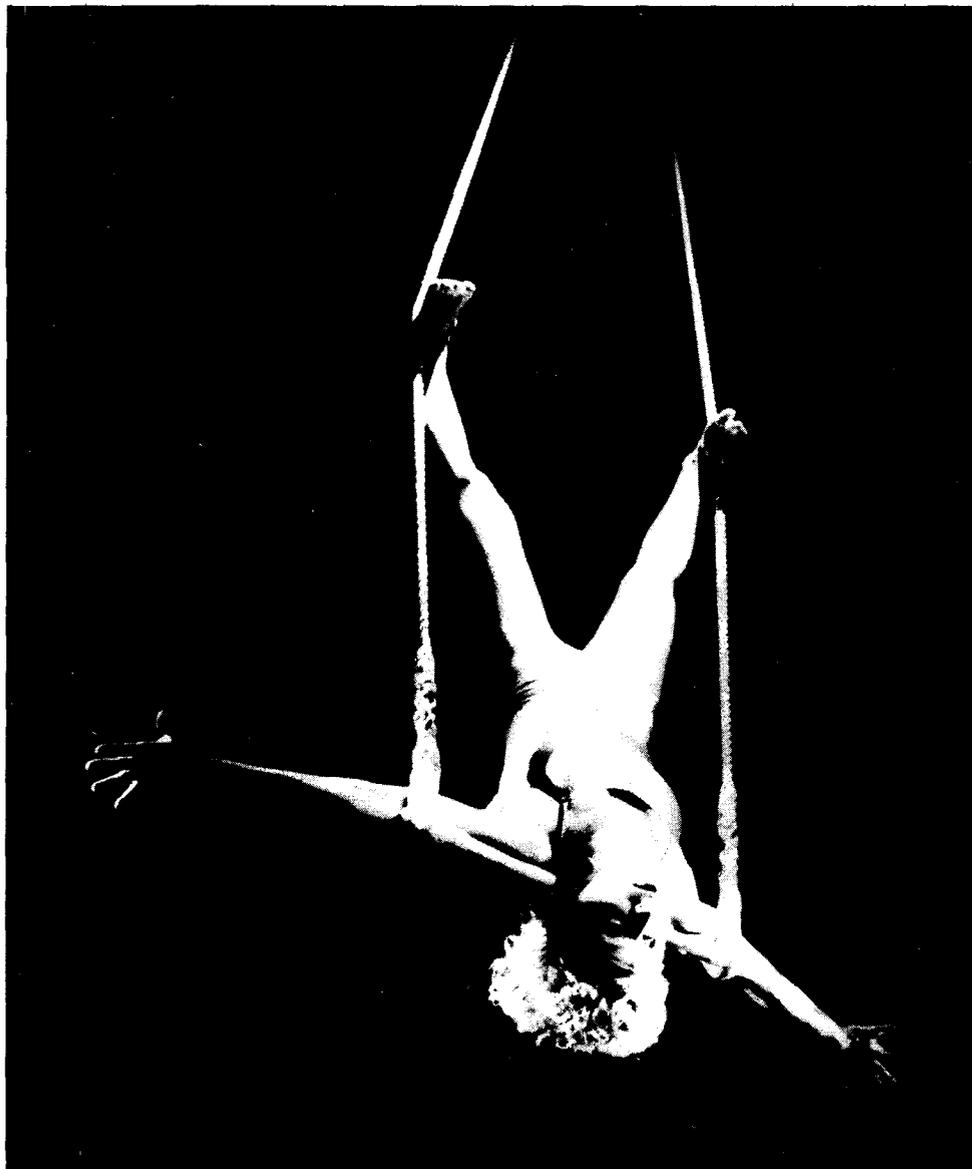


Hull Truck's *Cramp*

Cutler and Oscar McLennan, but also two new talents – Bing Hitler, a kind of mutated Jim Davidson, and delinquent magician Jerry Sadowitz.

Hull Truck have become Edinburgh's most popular theatre company thanks to *Up And Under* and a string of plays by John Godber about working-class culture. *Cramp*, which focused on a young weight-lifter, seemed set to continue in the same vein, but Tom Robinson's music, an excellent cast and a dramatic final twist made this the group's most interesting piece for some time.

One of the pleasures of the fringe is stumbling on the



Circus skills on display: Ra Ra Zoo at the fringe

unexpected. At 10.30 in the morning, in the most uncomfortable venue, Carole Pluckrose performed *Fallen*, a play by Polly Teale which brilliantly related the 'Kerry babies' murder trial to some of the wider issues of Ireland today. Lunchtime at the Mandela Theatre, one of the many new venues around Edinburgh, brought Eileen Nicholas in *Request Programme*, a disturbing and beautifully-performed vision of a life spent alone, written by Kroetz and directed by Nancy Diuguid.

There was so much more to enthuse about – Happy End, a 21-strong brass band playing joyous political music; Amampondo, a squad of

South African drummers who shook the fabric of the Assembly Rooms and are returning for a full tour next May; *Cafe Tabou*, a cabaret of Boris Vian's songs staged in a masonic lodge, and 'Coincidental Music', an enthusiastic season of avant-garde music in a Unitarian church.

But one group seemed to sum up all the energy, diversity and excitement that infects the fringe. Ra-Ra Zoo cut up highly-developed circus skills with strange, vivid music and a wonderful sense of comic self-deprecation – they are touring nationally at the moment, and are set to take on a West End season next year ● David Jones

### Future Performances

Jenny Lecoat, Roy Hutchins and *Request Programme* are all appearing in the Perrier season (to Oct 11) at the Donmar Warehouse, London.

Hull Truck finish a season at the Bloomsbury Theatre, London late in September, and run at the Spring St Theatre in Hull through October.

Fallen will be seen in London, but they haven't confirmed where yet.

Happy End are at the Donmar Warehouse (as above) and then the Hope Centre, Bristol Oct 25 and Marlow Playhouse Nov 6.

Ra-Ra Zoo are at Barnstable Oct 31 and Nov 1 and Hope Centre, Bristol Nov 7 and 8.

## Draught image

15 years ago lager accounted for less than 10% of the British beer market. Last year it represented 42% of beer sales and industry experts reckon that the trend will continue. It is expected that, within the next five years, more than 50% of beer sales will be lagers.

The growth of lager sales is the more remarkable in a market which is in overall decline, as drinkers switch out of beer to more sophisticated products.

The shift to lagers is part of a wider movement away from traditional drinks towards lighter, tasteless beverages – a trend paralleled by the growing popularity of vodka in the spirits market.

These lighter drinks enjoy an entirely baseless reputation for being healthier and less fattening. So they appeal to a category of weight-conscious people who enjoy the idea of drinking alcohol and dislike the flavour. 'All the trends in drinking are

towards a lower lead time before a customer gets to like a product,' says industry expert John Dunsmore of stockbrokers Wood Mackenzie. Lagers are the brewing industry's equivalent of the *Sun* newspaper, appealing to an ill-educated drinking public.

True, at the top end of the market, among so-called 'premium' brands, there really is a difference between Becks, Stella Artois and Hobec. But the important market is for standard lagers, such as Hofmeister, Fosters or Carling. These are hard to differentiate by quality. Image is the thing.

In the past, when lager represented a relatively small part of the market, most pubs only offered one draught brand. Customers were more likely to ask for 'a pint of lager' than a specific brand. With the explosion of lager drinking, more brands have become available and brewers have struggled to establish brand supremacy. When Fosters was launched people started to ask for it by name.

The introduction of Fosters and Castlemaine did

Lager sales as percentage of the beer market



much to dispel any remaining 'continental mystique' that may have surrounded lager drinking. These two campaigns – unlike, say, Carlsberg – emphasised the simple, manly aspect of lager drinking.

Carlsberg's emphasis on the exclusivity of its product always carried with it the danger of alienating that important category of drinkers who liked drinking for drinking's sake. The Castlemaine campaign in particular reduced drinking to its bare essentials. Lager had come of age. It had become the drink of the masses ●

Peter Osborne

## Rosa



It took maybe 20 minutes to shake off any attempt to cope with the nuances of German left politics at the turn of the century. Having achieved that, *Rosa Luxemburg* becomes an eminently enjoy-

able and thought-provoking film which works without a detailed knowledge of the ins and outs of German social democracy (though it is advisable to read the lengthy programme notes which accompany the film to avoid confusion).

I have always had an image of Luxemburg as an austere, dedicated revolutionary, but Margarethe Von Trotta turns her into a human being – a skilled and exciting orator; a sometimes lonely, often impatient fighter, a passionate pacifist and a politician committed to trying to create the world she believes in.

Von Trotta's movie is not so much about Politics as about politics and the dilemmas of a dynamic woman who would rather lead a quiet, ordinary life but finds herself compelled to try and change the world she lives in. Her Rosa is a warm woman, forced to make cold political decisions; an idealist who (in company with many contem-

porary feminists) prefers the company of her cat to even her closest male lover. She is someone who is capable of internalising her emotions almost to the point of self-destruction.

But she is also a survivor who uses her four years in prison during the first world war to write, grow plants and live, even under those harsh conditions. Above all, it is a very personal film about hope and despair, optimism and depression in the changing political climate of the time.

While it is beautifully shot in full period setting, the film has a timeless quality about it and Von Trotta has taken care to add deliberate contemporary resonances both in its story and its style. It is so rare to see history portrayed through the eyes of a woman, that *Rosa Luxemburg* is a breath of fresh air for any feminist cinemagoer ●

Sally Hibbin

## Tours

Autumn turns the leaves to brown and the bands go on tour. Here's *MT's* idiosyncratic choice. See your local papers and the music press for details.

**Christy Moore.** Playing in a traditional Irish folk style but with a contemporary feel, his songs range from booze problems to El Salvador. The surprise hit of Glastonbury.

### The Housemartins.

The 4th best band in Hull and quite big in Belgium. Successful new pop band from the Go! Discs stable ('The label that leans to the Left'). £1 refund on the door to UB40 holders.

**The Fall.** 'If you're so anti fashion, then wear flares' – they do. Led by Mark E Smith, a Mancunian musical Lenny Bruce, they attack social hypocrisy and mediocrity in a rambling, chaotic manner that often hits the mark.

**Eurythmics.** Who could want to miss the magnificent presence of Annie Lennox on stage? A rare opportunity to see a live performance. New material from latest album and new backing band.

**B B King.** The legendary blues guitarist returns for a tour of the UK, his powers undiminished by the passing years. See him so you can tell the tale.

## Publications

Red Wedge is much more than just pop stars exhorting us to 'get involved'. Its activities branch out into all areas of popular culture and entertainment. This is just one of a set of 10 postcards from Red-A-Go Go, a collective of young illustrators.



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 (Thomas Coram Research Institute),  
 Chair - Joan Lester

#### Weds 19 Nov A Ministry for Women?

Jo Richardson MP, Terry Marsland (TASS)  
 Chair - Tessa Blackstone

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### UNION OF CONSTRUCTION, ALLIED TRADES AND TECHNICIANS (Scottish Region)

**Working for a Labour Future. Greetings to all delegates at the 1986 Labour Party Conference.**

J. McBride (Regional Secretary)  
 T. Tosh (Regional Chairman).

## Independent's Celebrations

This month sees the launch of the first new quality daily paper in Britain this century. With £18M of capital from a wide range of City institutions (and rules to stop any would-be proprietor buying control), more than 200 of some of Fleet Street's best journalists and a high-tech low cost base, *The Independent* aims to sell between 350,000 and 400,000 copies a day to middle class 20 to 45 year olds. Unlike Eddy Shah's *Today*, the paper will be launched after months of meticulous planning and dummy runs. Christopher Hird asked the paper's founder and editor, former *Daily Telegraph* City Editor, Andreas Whittam Smith, about the plans and prospects for the new paper.

**Let's start almost at the beginning. You've said that Eddie Shah was a catalyst for this idea. What is it that you admire in him?**

I didn't think it was possible to start a new newspaper until he got up and said he was going to do it. I just admire him for that really. The point about a catalyst is that what they do is evident if you look again with fresh eyes: the technology was there, and had been there for some time; the change in labour relations had been unwinding for some time; colour, which he thought to be very important, had been around for some time; he just saw that you could put it all together.

I thought that one should do it differently so from the beginning, I said that we would use normal printing plants, wholly unionised, and that would have the advantage that we could go into the normal distribution system. That's what we're doing.

**Was that just a practical decision on your part?**

Yes. It was practical. It was also a feeling that I wanted to go with the grain of the way the business works. It's all very well to take a risk but the first thing you should do after you've decided to take a big risk is to find at least a thousand ways of reducing it. **But as far as setting the paper was concerned you were committed from the beginning to new technology.**

Yes. I couldn't get into the market unless I did that. It's as simple as that. You can't get into the market unless you raise a lot of money. And you can't raise a lot of money

unless you can show a very high return to compensate for the evident risk. And you can't show that very high return unless you do direct input. It all links together.

**Why did you call your paper *The Independent*?**

We thought that it best described what we were. Independent means a number of things in our minds. First of all our editorial stance is that we hold ourselves out as querying the establishment of the day – the government of the day, Left or Right, – trade union executives, public company boards and test and county cricket boards. Secondly, to campaign on issues that arise out of good reporting.

**Give me an example of something that you might be campaigning on this week.**

There's been a report very recently on the whole appalling bed and breakfast situation, homeless families and the state of children and children's health in those places. There were more, worse, statistics last week. That's the sort of thing that might turn into some steady reporting and then into a campaign.

**Bed and breakfast seems a good issue to campaign around but is it a question of saying 'Stop this evil' or, 'this is how we can stop this evil now. That's what we'll campaign for, a solution to it.'**

It would be considerably better if we could put forward a solution. That really would be worthwhile. I mean we haven't done the reporting and we haven't thought it through so I can't really give you an answer. I'm not quite sure what it would lead to.

The other thing is that

we're independent of the whole Fleet Street tradition. We're not an empire ruled by fear. We want to get away from all those bad management practices of Fleet Street. We want everybody to be shareholders if possible. That's the whole point of the stock option scheme. We want everybody to be treated equally across the company. We have maximum information after every board meeting. I take the whole of the editorial staff – and the others do it in their departments – through every figure; we will discuss the editorial budget in the greatest detail. I was never myself taken through any of the finances at the *Telegraph*.

**What I haven't got any feel for is what sort of politics the paper is likely to represent.**

It's hard to answer that at the moment. I don't believe in prejudging issues. We'll obviously develop our politics. I see ourselves in the tradition of *The Economist*, the *Financial Times* and the old *Sunday Times*, which were not predictable along party lines but which were – still are in the case of the *FT* and *The Economist* – perfectly capable of consistent and coherent opinions which if you were to put them in a bundle no doubt would turn out to be some position in the political spectrum.

I frankly don't know what our bundle will look like yet. I've just taken on 200 very talented journalists. I'm not sitting here to force a line upon them. I think the only thing you can reliably assume is that as we are the purest product of the market system – you know, we raised our cash on the open market, we live or die by it, they can close us down – we're so much a product of the market system that I'm sure we will, generally, be looking to market solutions to problems.

**I suppose I find it hard to believe that a company with Marcus Sieff as the chairman and a pretty heavy proportion of its staff from the *Daily Telegraph* will come out anywhere other than somewhere in the Conservative Party.**

I don't know. Two leader writers come from *The Guardian* for a start. And I'm sure you know lots of the people here – some of them have notably leftwing views. I think we're probably going to have a weekly meeting when we can basically discuss what are the big things coming up in the week. We will ask the specialists to those meetings – because we do want specialists to write leaders – and we'll have to hammer out a line between us.



Andreas Whittam Smith

**How would you describe your own politics then?**

I've worked for *The Times*, *The Guardian*, the *Telegraph* twice – so you draw your conclusion.

**How many political parties have you voted for?**

In 62 or 63 I stood as a Liberal local councillor in Chelsea. I voted for Labour in 64 – white heat, new technology. I voted for them again in 66. And I think I've voted Conservative since then.

**How do you think your paper will differ from the three titles that you are clearly aiming to get readers from – *The Guardian*, *The Telegraph* and *The Times*?**

It's hard to answer that. First of all we're focused – we do think of 20-45 year olds and what they need. Starting at the back with sports. These people are much more in-

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terested in motor racing than they are in horse racing. In our qualitative research—using dummies where small groups were interviewed at length—we haven't found anyone who's interested in horse racing. So I'm not going to say we get rid of horse racing, far from it. All I say is that if you think carefully about the exact sporting interest of 20-45 years olds you will come to a slightly different answer from present newspapers.

Then we are going to do two pages of listings based on the *Time Out* method, which is designed for the 20-45s, because I can assume that they go out. I can also make the safe assumption that the arts page readers are more experimental, go-outish, liberal, than the entire age range would be.

**How would your city pages differ from the city pages of the Telegraph?**

The first thing we've done is divide the city and business pages so that business is adjacent to city but not muddled up in it. Rightly or wrongly, we shall not devote very much time to British Steel or shipbuilding or British Rail workshops because our readers neither work for them nor do business with them even.

**So what would you devote time to?**

All those businesses which seem to be producing opportunities, of which there are a very large number. You may have noticed the other day a company called Bywater that already employs 2000 people. It's been in business for seven years and it's just landed this very big irrigation equipment contract—amazing—I find that very interesting—standing start to 2000 people. I have not heard of it, personally, before. I really want to know about that company. And I'm sure a lot of readers do too. It's a story. It suggests that there's a good market internationally in this area. And I'm quite interested to know how they put it together, how they financed themselves.

**About £160M of government money for this particular contract.**

## THE INDEPENDENT

That's part of the story isn't it? That's the way to do business.

**You have said that this is a newspaper for the television age. What do you mean by this?**

We're going to try to do what the American newspapers do rather well, the *New York Times* in particular and the *Herald Tribune* carry a lot of that stuff. We want to do analysis pieces so well that they look like news stories—analysis with quotes. Very specific background and analysis type pieces. Three or four on the home pages every day, a couple on the foreign pages—600 word pieces, marked as such so the reader knows where they are. They're such a high art that the *New York Times* will actually lead its front page with such a piece.

**It doesn't sound to me as though your proposal is greatly breaking the mould of what you might expect to find in a daily newspaper.**

Look, we're not going to be fantastically, dramatically different, because it's not possible to be so. Newspapers have been doing their job for a very long time and they have learned a few lessons as they've gone along. We're not capable of tearing up the basic idea of newspapers and saying 'this is it'. We'll just push that much further than it's been pushed by *The Times* or the *Guardian* or the *Telegraph*. But the *FT* certainly does that.

**Why will people buy your newspaper rather than, say, the FT?**

The *FT* doesn't have lots of things that general papers have. It doesn't have any sport—it has a very good arts page—it doesn't have the same volume of home news. It doesn't have the same sort of foreign news. You're unlikely to get James Fenton reporting from Manila. Instead you will get an analysis of the Philippine debt.

**But you get Patrick Cockburn in Moscow—pretty formidable competition there.**

Yes.

**One of the things that you lay**

**great emphasis on is that you will provide balanced reporting. What do you mean by that?**

Well—in our dummy issue the other day we wrote a rather slashing attack on one of these purveyors of slimming diets, which had been subjected to some very thorough scientific testing. However much we may think they're quacks and however damning the evidence is, we still have to go back to the purveyors and say 'What do you say?' Of course there's no such thing as a neutral piece of reporting because by deciding to do it in the first place you've made a value judgement, by giving it a large position on the front page or a small position on page 9 you've made another value judgement. But within that context I wish to attain balanced reporting.

**What do you think the function of journalism is?**

It's a number of functions. It's all clichés isn't it—as well as to inform, to articulate, to entertain—it's all of those things really—to help. By *articulate* I mean that opinions or feelings which have no outlet should be given voice in newspapers. And to *help*: you have a constituency who have no big battalions on their side—that's what I mean by help.

**On the paper's independence: I understand that it's independent of all sorts of old traditions, old cultural values and also proprietors and parties, but it is going to rely for half its revenue on advertisers. How confident are you that you can be independent of the pressures that they can apply?**

I'm terribly confident really because national newspapers are in a very lucky position *vis-a-vis* advertisers. The important fact is that no single advertiser's account is important enough to worry about its loss. I can't think of a single account that would upset us if it went. And in none of my experience in newspapers have I ever known an account whose loss I couldn't shrug off.

**You're going for just under 400,000 as your average circulation in the first year. Where are these readers going to come from?**

Well the first rule of business is that if you put a new product into any market, including dog food and newspapers, and it has some merit and you promote it properly, it will enlarge the market. That's an iron rule of business. There are not many examples in newspapers because there have been very few launches. But the *Star* and the *Mail on Sunday* both did it in very different ways.

We're forecasting a loss in the first trading year of just over £3M, so we've financed that already. Also, if we do 20% worse than expected, which is a circulation falling to 265,000 next February, and then just going above 300,000, our worst overdraft position will be about £½M against a £3M overdraft facility. Moreover, our shareholders, who are highly professional, being, as you know, the Prus, and Legal and Generals and nationalised industry pension funds of this world, understand the risks and they have very deep pockets.

**So you're saying that if you need more finance in the first few months you think it would be forthcoming from them.**

It would depend on the circumstances. If we'd made a complete and colossal cock-up of the whole exercise—a disgraceful product, ill-managed—and we'd lost money through carelessness... no! If, on the other hand, it just seems that time is needed I should think yes.

**Do you think what you're doing is a gamble or a well informed hunch?**

I'd rather not use the word gamble. It's just a straightforward old-fashioned risk. That's what it is. There's no way that you can avoid the problem that you don't know whether you're right, or you've got it together properly. You simply don't know until you hit the marketplace. I've tried to narrow the risk as much as possible but there's no way of avoiding it. There it is. You have a sudden jump. ●

## A Talent to Inspire

### The Heart of a Woman

Maya Angelou  
Virago, £3.95 pbk



The unprecedented explosion of writings by African-American women in recent years tends to obscure the fact that black women were writing well before the advent of the women's movement in the 1970s. There exists a rich and myriad body of literature which begins with the slave narratives of outstanding women such as Phyllis Wheatly and Sojourner Truth and extends through the years to 20th century writers like Zora Neal Hurston, Nella Larsen, Ida B Wells and Gwendolyn Brooks.

While much of their work still remains hidden, they are the indisputable foremothers to the present genre of autobiographical writings amongst black women. Their books provide invaluable insights into black women's search for selfhood and signal the historical contexts of their lives.

Fortunately contemporary black women writers such as Audre Lorde, Alice Walker and Maya Angelou have not had to wait too long to see their writings published. Indeed they are rapidly becoming household names in Britain where the indigenous black community is eager for literary and cultural works which reflect their struggles imaginatively. Coupled with

the growing vogue amongst publishers to add black women writers to their lists, it is fast proving to be a good commercial venture to market such books. Whatever the motive, such mass access to black women's writings is welcome.

Maya Angelou is one writer whose books have become rapid bestsellers in Britain. It would be somewhat of an understatement to call it a rare and unique achievement to have written four volumes of one's autobiography while still only in your fifties. But when that individual is a black woman who has lived the life that Maya Angelou has, then such an achievement can only be described as an extraordinary feat.

Maya Angelou began her literary career as a poet. When she was asked by Robert Loomis at Random House to write her autobiography, she refused. It was only when he said that he thought writing an autobiography as literature was the most difficult thing anyone could do, that she rose to the challenge. Since then, she has gone on to write four enthralling and awe-inspiring volumes of her autobiography.

Born in 1928 in St Louis, Missouri, Maya Angelou has had many careers and lived through exciting and revolutionary times, many of which are brilliantly recorded in these books. In *I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings* (1969), she recalls her bruised childhood, when at the age of three she goes to live with her grandmother in a small southern town. It is the story of girlhood maimed by the experience of rape at the age of eight. At 16 she gets pregnant and gives birth to her son Guy.

The second book, *Gather Together In My Name* (1974), vividly traces her courageous struggle as an unemployed and isolated single parent, briefly forced through circumstances to turn to prostitution and drugs. *Singin' and Swingin' and Gettin' Merry Like Christmas* (1976), her third book, describes Maya's stage

debut, concluding with her return from the international tour of *Porgy and Bess* in which she was a featured dancer.

Maya Angelou lives her life with the energy of a tornado, resiliently struggling for self-affirmation and self-definition. In the face of appalling discrimination she retains her humour and optimism. These books chronicle and interpret Angelou's engagement with racist America as much as her struggle as a woman, a writer, an actress and a mother.

She continues to weave the emotionally rich and moving tapestry of her life in her fourth book, *The Heart of a Woman*, which Virago launched in September. This book sees Maya maturing into a writer and a full-time political activist who feels at ease with her success and creativity. The time is the 1950s and 60s and the book begins with Maya in Los Angeles going to live in Laurel Canyon (the official residential area of Hollywood), despite the efforts of a racist landlord who refuses to rent her the house. It is here that the legendary Billie Holiday visits and gets to know Maya and her son.

Mother and son are soon on the move again, this time to a neighbourhood 'where black skin was not regarded as one of nature's more unsightly mistakes'. She begins writing but feels restless and decides to move to New York where she survives her baptism into the Harlem Writers Group.

In the awakening summer of 1960, Angelou is fired with enthusiasm after hearing Martin Luther King speak. She organises a fund-raising 'Cabaret For Freedom' for the Southern Christian Leadership Conference who invite her to become their coordinator. The fervour of those times is vividly recalled as she gets caught up in the civil rights movement. It is in writing about these events that Maya Angelou shows her skill as a literary crafts-woman by highlighting the intrinsic relationship between her individual life and

the social and political movements of the 1960s. In doing so she does not subordinate literature to political rhetoric yet reveals herself to be a very adept social and political commentator.

One envies her as she witnesses many crucial historical moments. She meets Martin Luther King and reveals a humorous side to this legendary man; she is present when Cuba and Russia meet on the streets of Harlem. . . Castro and Khrushchev embracing each other on 125th Street.

Amidst such momentous and significant events Maya is beset with loneliness. She meets a South African freedom fighter who promises 'a life of beckoning adventure and Africa.' Married life creates many tensions and frustrations for a woman not content to play the perfect wife, cooking, cleaning and scrubbing to her husband's satisfaction. Refusing such insularity she agrees to act in Genet's *The Blacks*, an experience she describes with brutal honesty.

A life full of partings and beginnings takes her to Cairo where her panache for adventure and survival come to her rescue as she is forced to take a job as an editor of the *Arab Observer*. Slowly the marriage disintegrates and she decides to go to Ghana to place her son in the university there.

The book ends with a moving account of Maya's separation from her son. This final parting does not leave her as devastated as she imagined she would be, but eager to begin a new chapter in her life.

Through charting her personal journey, Maya Angelou has succeeded in mapping out the contours of the collective history of her people. In the true tradition of her ancestral sisters, she has captured the political and cultural realities of her time. Maya Angelou writes with vivacity, force and emotion. It is not difficult to be stunned by her radiance and inspired by her capacity for creative survival. I eagerly await future volumes ●  
Pratibha Parmar