

Gaburo, e. e. cummings Headline Arts Festival

Immaturity Big Fault Of New U. S. Poets

By **ROGER EBERT**
Managing Editor

THE NEW AMERICAN POETRY: 1945-1960, edited by Donald M. Allen (Grove-Evergreen, 454pp., \$1.95).

One might question whether the writing presented in this book is poetry, but there is no arguing the thesis that it is new. The stark, untempered newness of much of it is painfully obvious, making evident the lack of maturity in many of its forty-four "new generation" poets.

The poets, described by editor Allen in his preface as "our avant-garde, the true containers of the modern movement in American poetry," have been divided into five groups: the Black Mountain group, which first appeared largely in **Origin** and the **Black Mountain Review** or are identified with Black Mountain College; the San Francisco renaissance; the Beat Generation; the New York poets; and the younger poets who fail to fit into any geographical scheme but are defined in part by their association with members of the other four groups. Allen's divvying-up manages to contain most of the post-war "new generation," perhaps because they tend to grow into groups by themselves.

The Black Mountain group contains Charles Olson, Robert Duncan and Robert Creeley; San Francisco's movement was led by Creeley's 1947-49 influence and includes Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Brother Antoninus and Jack Spicer. Allen Ginsberg and Jack Kerouac lead the Beats, of course, with Gary Snyder and Philip Whalen also influential. Kenneth Koch and John Ashbery seem to be the leaders of the New York poets, and Moore places such dissimilar talents as LeRoi Jones, Gilbert Sorrentino and Edward Marshall in the fifth group.

The anthology includes several poems which must be regarded as significant post-war writing, as much because of their influence on the rest of the "new generation" as for their quality, which is sometimes uneven. Among these are Ginsberg's oft-anthologized "Howl," which makes ultimate uses of imagery; Ferlinghetti's best work, of which only parcels are included; Olson's

"The Kingfishers;" Duncan's "A Poem Beginning with a Line by Pindar," and several others.

The book should not include such essential nonsense as Kerouac's "Mexico City Blues" or much of the other verbal doodling by poets who might properly have been more mindful of posterity and destroyed some of their work upon completion.

If only a handful of the poems can be called important, most of them can be called entertaining, for one reason or another. Koch's "Mending Sump" is a diabolical reprimand of Robert Frost, and Creeley's "Ballad of the Despairing Husband" is a comic-serious portrait of the subject. The book is not a towering monument to the best of Moore's avant-garde, but it is a hopeful landmark on the way to more mature work by the "new generation."

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A spectrum of fresh new thinking in modern art, writing and music will be presented starting Feb. 26, in the tenth anniversary University of Illinois Contemporary Arts Festival.

Chief among prominent figures whose work will be featured are poet e. e. cummings and the University's own Kenneth Gaburo.

Cummings, who has been given credit along with Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot for introducing many of the stylistic innovations in modern poetry, will give readings including many of his most familiar works.

The poet is an accomplished performer, and often uncovers new levels of meaning by the devices of tone and inflection.

Cummings has experimented often in the past with the methods of "painting" with words. He points out that paintings exist in space: the eye registers the entire painting as a complete object at one time. Poetry, on the other hand, exists in time: one must read it from beginning to end and perceive it as a continuing, or unfolding, method of presenting art.

In attempting to "paint" his poems, cummings often uses the device of constructing an involved and inter-connected poem that comes suddenly into focus only with the reading of the last word or line. In this way, he hopes to place all the materials of his message in the reader's mind, and then shift them quickly into focus with the last catalyst word.

Kenneth Gaburo is a professor at the University. His new opera, "The Widow," will have its world premiere here as part of the opening presentations of the festival. Gaburo has already written several well-received works. Two of them have been performed by the New York Philharmonic, and conductors Leonard Bernstein and Dimitri Mitropolous have conducted his works.

Gaburo's first major attempt at popular music came ten days before the premiere of the opera, with the opening of the new musical, "The Tiger Rag."

Hundreds of new paintings, sculpture, photographs, and architecture drawings will be on display during the festival. Other areas covered will be home economics, communications, city planning and landscape architecture.

The Festival has gained a nationwide and worldwide reputation as an outstanding example of cooperation between an educational institution and the contemporary artists who are helping to shape modern thought. An anticipated 13,000 persons will view the various presentations.