

# The Return of the Reforgotten

## Allen Ginsberg: Looking for All the World Like and Old Testament Prophet

"It was everything for me. It changed my life," sighs Lee Harris, remembering the heady June day in 1965 when 16 young poets took over the Royal Albert Hall, cheered on by 8,000 flower-waving idealists at the first "International Poetry Incarnation." "I fell in love with counter-culture that day and never moved on," he says. "Gave up my job the next day and became a footsoldier for the underground."

16 October 1995. Lee's back, and so are the poets. year-old musician Jesse looks like he might have been at home here in 1965. "My dad was here in his twenties. It was a big thing for him," he explains. "I go to poetry readings now and they are so tame — bald men with beards. I'm not expecting it to be, but I'd like this to be an event."

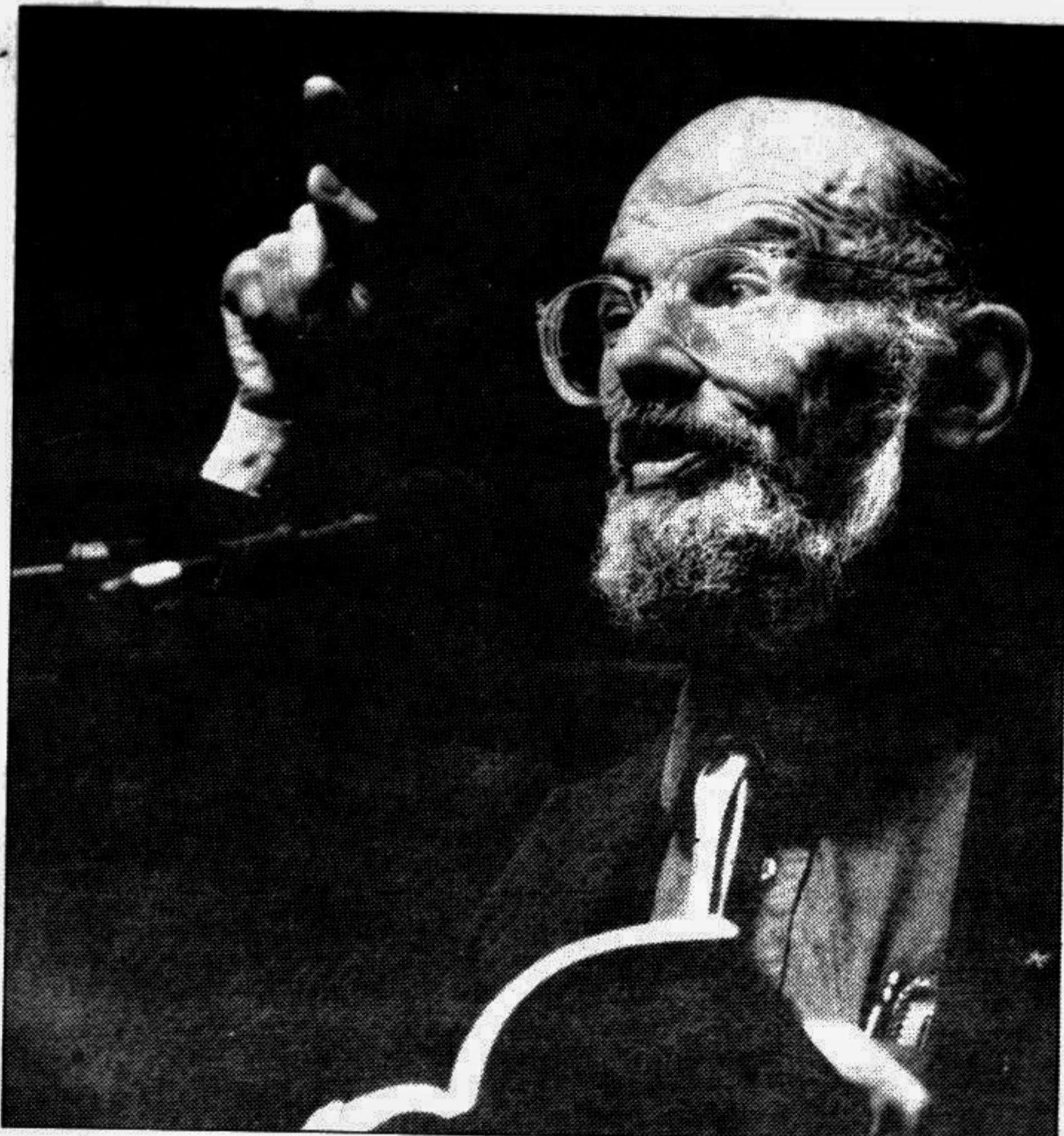
Allen Ginsberg, still looking like an Old Testament prophet, and Michael Horowitz, still wearing mint-striped loon pants and playing "Jerusalem" on the kazzo, are joint survivors from the

old Scots-Gael Sorley MacLean, making an all-too-rare trip down from the Isle of Skye. There were few obvious commonalities between the poets who lined up to deliver an ultra-economical eight minutes each.

"I'm going to introduce... bloody hell... whoever comes on first," stammers the bemused compere, the London, sci-fi writer Michael Moorcock. "London: writers... mumble... so much good stuff... mumble... almost collapsing in on itself... mumble, mumble," he, er, mumbles, with much hand-wringing, beard-tweaking and nose-rubbing. "Oh, get on with it," the audience mutters politely. "The... mumble... poetry speaks for itself... (wild cheers)." We'll cheer anything. Just spare us any more of this. Any poet. Please. Quickly.

Brian Catling stands sideways on to the audience, holding a large mirror to his face while he reads. I don't notice the words. I'm too mesmerised by the sight of his bisected and reflected features, projected overhead on to a 30ft screen, his lips pursing and unpursing like a pauri tropical fish.

Back in 1965, the Austrian sound poet Ernst Jandl chose to fill his slot with 10 minutes of sneezing in homage to Kurt Schwitters. For 1995,



Allen Ginsberg

Aaron Williamson, poet and performance artist, lets out a strangled primal scream. Profoundly deaf, Williamson articulates his text through an extraordinary series of physical and vocal exercises. "Cascading... cantilevered... cornerack... tortured scraps of words squeeze out from twisted balletic contortions, rhythmic stamps and guttural agonies. Beautiful."

"Four-letter words associated with Lady Chatterley" so shocked the manager of the Royal Albert Hall in 1965 that the reputedly tried to ban poets from the hall for ever. His ghost will no doubt return to haunt Tom Pickard, the Geordie poet delivering his sexual manifesto as if to a party conference, before departing with a confident Portilloesque wave.

One-time footballer and bus conductor Brendan Kennelly, now professor of modern literature at Trinity College, Dublin, had the crowd chortling merrily to his subversive fantasy. "James Joyce had dinner with the Holy Family."

"How're things in Ireland?" asked Joseph. "Ugh!" said Joyce. Joyce's short answers were bugging the dinner up. The rosy-cheeked bard in the crumpled tweeds grins with perfect comic timing. A slightly fragile Ginsberg

(just short of his 70th birthday) conducts the rousing finale from his seat, accompanied on the guitar by Paul McCartney. No "Howl", no "Kaddish". It's new poem, "Ballad of the American Skeletons," performed to an "I fought the law"-like riff.

"Said the macho skeleton: Women in their place/Said the fundamentalist skeleton: increase the human race/Said the TV skeleton: give me soundbites/Said the newscaster skeleton: that's all. Goodnight."

And gently into that good night slipped the 2,000. The bright-eyed twenty something, the 65 veterans the school parties, and the culturally curious all.

Could this unashamedly nostalgic venture ever really hope to capture the spirit of the times? "There are all different ways of doing it," says Ginsberg diplomatically at the backstage party, sipping quietly on a Diet Coke. "You can give a poetry reading at the Albert Hall, or Megatropolis, in a small room, or to your boyfriend, naked in bed."

The Return of the Reforgotten is unlikely to have recruited many new counter-cultural footsoldiers, but, yes, it was an event. And good fun, too. "This time you are there and will remember it," Mike Goldmark proclaims.

**Judith Palmer**  
The Royal Albert Hall may not be packed to capacity, but with 2,000 tickets sold. The Return of the Reforgotten is still one of the largest poetry gatherings ever seen in this country. "Well, you've got to support the guy," shrug the punters — all surprisingly young — who are queuing up outside. "He was good enough to put it on."

"The guy" is the Uppingham book-dealer Mike Goldmark, who has dug deep into his own pockets to assemble the random cocktail of disparate poetic voices which he hopes will rekindle the mythic flame of 1965.

With his orange flowery tie, violet nylon shirt and a daisy in his buttonhole, 26-

Golden Age. They are joined neither by old compadres Adrian Mitchell and Lawrence Ferlinghetti, nor by the familiar constellation of glittering young stars. Not a whiff of Faber. No sign of the New Gen. Not even a whisper of a Nuyorican. Goldmark's band of 1995 troubadours are true mavericks.

There's the mannered mystic Aidan Dun, every inch the Rimbaud-inspired poet with his brooding eyes and high cheekbones, his white shirt secured by a single button, draped, like Saint-Exupery's petit prince, in sky-blue scarf; the bounding dub poet Benjamin Zephaniah; the sprightly 84-year-

## A K M Jahangir Khan : The Movie Mughal

A K M Jahangir Khan is one of the most successful film producers in the country. Apart from involving himself with making movies, he is also a successful industrialist. In a recent interview, taken by Kaiser Parvez Ali, he talks about his success story in his well-decorated film production office at Kakrail. The following is the excerpt of the interview.

**Q. How did you join the film industry as a producer?**  
A. I was interested in films from my childhood and dreamed to become a film actor. I used to watch a lot of films. My father was against my joining the film industry. I wanted to produce and distribute successful films like *Sutarang* and *Guani*, but could not because of my father's opposition. After my father's death in 1973, I became active in the film industry, producing and directing films. I wanted to invest in films pro-

duction so I asked some producers to make good quality films, but I was not satisfied with their production. So in 1976 I hired director Amjad Hossain to direct *Noyan Mont* which was a very successful film. Then I produced *Toofan* and *Kudrat* in 1977. So far I have produced and distributed about forty films in twenty years.  
**Q. Have you given breaks to newcomers?**  
A. Yes, I introduced Anju Gosh in *Saudagar* in 1979.

When I saw that senior actresses were dominating the film world and were often moody and too demanding, I wanted to show that any newcomer could be a successful actress, if the story was strong. I proved it with my film *Saudagar*. I have also introduced Jayasree Kabir in *Surja Kannya*. Doel in *Chandranath*, Sattar in *Rangin Rupban*, Zeenat in *Rakhal Bandu* and Rajeeb in *Samrat*.  
**Q. Have you produced any joint venture films?**  
A. Yes, I have jointly pro-

duced two films *Badla* and *Saath Bhandabi* with Pakistani producers. These two films were released in Pakistan but unfortunately not in Bangladesh. The Pakistani producers have cheated me and I would have lost huge amount of money to bring and release the two films in Bangladesh. Joint venture films are not successful in our country as movie goers no longer want to see foreign locations; they want to see films with good stories.  
**Q. Please tell our readers about your films.**  
A. Out of forty films that I have produced, art films such as *Surja Kannya*, *Sheemana Paryta*, *Chandranath*, *Subhadra* are my favourites. They brought recognition and fame but box office collections were not as I had expected. On the other hand, among the successful commercial films at the box office, I would highly rate *Noyan Mont*, *Saudagar*, *Teen Bahadur*, *Rangin Rupban* and *Prem Qaidi*.  
Some vital scenes of *Saudagar* and *Prem Qaidi* have been subject to censorship but even then they were very successful at the box office.  
**Q. What is the future of our film industry?**  
A. It is very bleak. Television and videos have reached all even the remote areas, so now it is time for the television dramas to become popular. Fewer and fewer people will be going to watch the movies in the cinema halls. So now on I have decided to switch over to the production of "package" dramas where less risk is involved and BTV is always willing to purchase them. Less time is also required to produce them, artists are easier to handle, but I fear that very soon we will be facing attitudinal problems with artists as their will be more demand for them. I plan to continue producing "package" dramas for BTV.  
**Q. What made you a successful producer and an industrialist?**  
A. Discipline, honesty, hard work and rational thinking. My early life has been influenced by Bengali films which I used to watch. I extracted all the good things from films and especially two films *Babla* and *Matz Didi* have molded my life and helped me become successful in my life.



## Change Sweeps Sherpaland

FIFTEEN years ago, it looked like there was no hope for the receding forests around this monastery below Mt Everest. Mountaineers, trekkers and porters had hacked away the trees and bushes, leaving the slopes bare and lifeless. Expedition trash and toilet paper littered the trail.

Today, the mountain flanks below Tengboche are once more draped in young rhododendron and juniper. Pheasants and musk deer roam the undergrowth, and there isn't any plastic wrapper or garbage to be seen.

The battle to preserve the ecology of the fragile Himalayan foothills below Mt Everest from the effects of mass tourism has been won. A lot of the credit goes to His Holiness Reincarnate Lama Ngawang Tenzing Zangbo, the Abbot of Tengboche.

But for the head lama, an even greater battle looms ahead: to preserve the cultural heritage of the Sherpa people. "We have saved the trees, now we need to save our culture," the Abbot tells a visiting journalist in his small meditation room inside the monastery.

The Tengboche Monastery, perched at 4,100 metres above sea level, is the spiritual heart of the Sherpa people who migrated to what is now Nepal from eastern Tibet in the 16th century. The monastery has itself literally risen from the ashes after it burnt down in 1990. Priceless scrolls and Tibetan Buddhist thanka paintings were lost. But with donations from the local people and supporters abroad, the monastery has been rebuilt.

The head lama now wants to turn it into a centre for the spiritual rebirth of his people. His plans include a school for novice monks, courses in Tibetan herbal medicine and training students in Tibetan sculpture and thanka painting. The abbot has reason to be worried. There is a shortage of lamas in the monastery as Sherpa families are no longer sending their children in to become novices. "Ours is a living cultural

heritage, but we are facing a serious threat from external influences," says the abbot, who has set up the Himalayan Heritage Foundation to help rescue Sherpa culture. In many ways, the Sherpas are the victims of their own economic success. Tradition-

They don't carry loads anymore, but Sherpas still have a near-monopoly as high-altitude guides on mountaineering expeditions where they can earn anywhere up to US\$ 2,000 per ascent. Since Tenzing Norgay, 80 Sherpas have climbed Mt

Everest. Some like the legendary Ang Rita Sherpa have reached the summit of the world's highest mountain eight times and have become blasé about it. Tired of climbing for others, Sherpas organised their own all-Sherpa expedition on Mt Everest three years ago. But it is a dangerous profession, as trekkers are re-

### Kunda Dixit

Luckily, the mountaineering industry took off in 1953 with the first ascent of Mt Everest by New Zealander Edmund Hillary and his Sherpa guide, Tenzing Norgay. Sherpas earned international acclaim for their tolerance of high altitudes and they became a vital part of expeditions on Nepal's virgin Himalayan peaks.

Along with mountaineering came trekking tourism as thousands of back-packers and hikers came to walk to the base of Mt Everest — bringing employment and affluence to the region. Sherpas now have an annual per capita income of nearly US\$ 1,000, almost eight times Nepal's national average.

Tengboche, Namche Bazar and other towns have electricity and phone links to the outside world. There is a hospital, a high school and even a dentist's clinic. Well-to-do Sherpas are building houses that look like chalets in the Swiss Alps — complete with geranium boxes on the window sills. Their shingle roofs bristle with satellite dishes.

Although many of the 3,500 Sherpas in the Khumbu District below Mt Everest are still traders and livestock farmers, half of all households directly depend on tourism for their livelihood. Sherpas own about one-fourth of the 100 or so trekking firms in Kathmandu, and now employ people from other ethnic groups to do the portering.

## Eliot in Bengal

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is different, for in it the labouring classes are working to produce crops; and there was in him, as there was in his other compeers, a desire to break away, to build up a juster society through collective effort.

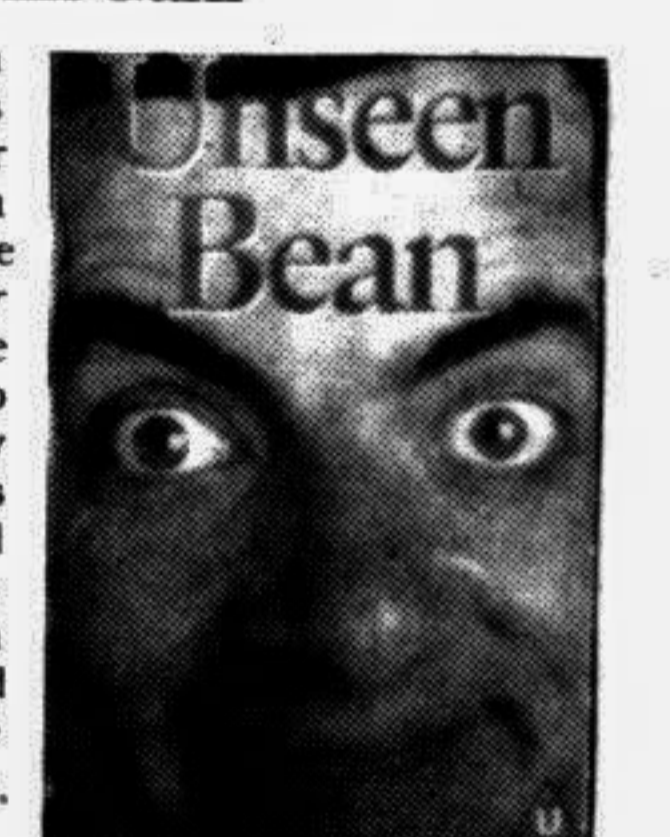
In the nineteenth century we used to have our Miltons, Pops, Scotts and Byrons; that was because the Bengalee middle class was nurtured culturally by English education and had learnt to over-emphasize the importance of literature to the detriment of other studies. While other parts of India took from Great Britain her law, mathematics, and commerce, we took literature —

It has been pointed out,<sup>13</sup> in this literature-minded Bengal Eliot was received with excitement in spite of Rabindranath; perhaps, to an extent, because of him. We do not call any of our poets the Eliot of Bengal; but Eliot's influence has been wide-ranging, and sometimes, as on the question of tradition, of an unexpected nature. Significantly, Eliot's later writings seem to have been more or less ignored, and it was his early work which produced its effect on the Bengalee mind. Eliot came just when he was needed, and what he did in Bengal tells us more about those who received him than about Eliot's own self.

## Viewing Video

by Lenin Gani

**M R Bean** alias Rowan Atkinson is back as **Unseen Bean**. Our walking misfit is involved in two hilarious episodes. The first is titled *Hair by Mr Bean of London* in which he goes to the hair dresser to have a hair cut unfortunately for the customers he forgets he is only a customer and tries his hand at the business with dire effect. In the second sketch called *Back to school Mr Bean* the visits his old school where, he as usual is upto no good.



	ENGLISH		
	NAME	TYPE	CAST
1.	Golden Eye	(Action/Thriller)	Pierce Brosnan
2.	Ace Ventura-2 (When Nature Calls)	(Com/Adv)	Jim Carrey
3.	River Wild	(Act/Adv)	Meryl Streep/Kevin Bacon
4.	Get Shorty	(Comedy)	John Travolta/Gene Hackman/Rene Russo
5.	Unusual Suspects	(Com/Thriller)	Stephen Baldwin/Kevin Pollack/Gabriel Byrne
6.	Canadian Bacon	(Comedy)	John Candy/Alan Alda/Kevin Pollack
7.	Mr Bean Vol-7	(Comedy)	Rowan Atkinson
8.	Born Wild	(True Story)	Brooke Shields/Martin Sheen
9.	Scarlet Letter	(Rom)	Demi Moore
10.	Magnificent Hero	(Act)	Jackie Chan
11.	I.Q.	Rom/Com	Meg Ryan/Tim Robbins/Walter Matthau
12.	Parasite	(Horror)	Demi Moore
13.	The Englishman	(Comedy)	Hugh Grant
14.	An Awfully Big Adventure	"	Hugh Grant
15.	Chains	(Action)	"
16.	Harrison Bergeron	(SciFi)	Christopher Plumber

	HINDI		
	NAME	TYPE	CAST
1.	Rock Dancer Music : Bappi Lahri	(Musical)	Kamal Sadnah/Ronit Roy/Govinda/Javed Jaffry/Samantha Fox
2.	Ghar Ka Kanon	(Drama)	Saraj Chadha/Anamika
3.	Ram Shashtra	(Action)	Jackie Shroff/Monisha Koirala
4.	Angrakshak	(Action)	Sunny Deol/Pooja Bhat/Sayed Jaffry
5.	A.A hits-29	(Musical)	"
6.	Madhuri Dixit Vol-9	"	"

Source : Film Fair Video and other clubs.