

Once a mild-mannered university office building, the Spire, now well into its construction, seems to provoke strife and conflict in all quarters. Is this the strange effect of the radical new building material used in the building? Biological Concrete, which is actually composed of bacteria which grow a keratinous shell, forms the outer shell of the tower. Could the computers, guided by two elegant mathematical functions, be causing these problems? What really is going on at Carleton University, the scenic, seemingly innocent university campus? Read on, in the second instalment of...

## The Spire

By James Foley

May 23, 1998

Mr. Mitchell Morien  
Construction Director,  
Carleton Spire Project

Dr. A. Trevor Hodge President,  
Carleton University  
Ottawa, Ontario

Re: Union Negotiations

Dear Dr. Hodge:

I am afraid that the possibility of a walkout is nearer than ever. Negotiations are still open, but little progress is being made. In the interests of preserving amiable relations between the staff of the university and the administration, I draw to your attention these demands of the union negotiators as of their meeting with me, May 20.

Their principle difficulty is with our hiring of non-union labour in the form of students from the Engineering faculty. The other specialized workers—electricians, contractors, truckers, etc., along with the chemists, biochemists, computer programmers, and mathematicians necessary for such an unusual project have protested to me ever since work began. They have even managed to gain some student membership, although I think their support from that quarter is slight.

Another point of contention concerns health and safety hazards. Many of our workers complain of having to be in close proximity to the bacteriological and chemical substances we have assembled in our project, contending that the health hazards have not been properly researched. I have cited to them several times the many lab hours—years—of work which have gone into the development of our system, but with little effect. Certain of them, being more troublesome than the rest, have left already, but of the remaining, we have several who must be dealt with. Perhaps if Professor Gradshal and Professor Herman could give a formal talk to the unions, explaining the biological basis for our system, it might have more effect than my persuasions.

Of course, we have also received many complaints about our extensive use of computer and biotechnology. Many say that we are taking jobs away from traditional workers. Of course, every new technology displaces people, even the transition from stone and brick buildings to steel girder high-rises. Despite all my efforts, I am sorry to say that the project has become somewhat of a magnet for popular environmental protest. I hope that our professors, equipped as they are with all the facts, will be able to dispel all unfounded fears.

Aside from these considerations, I am happy to say that construction is proceeding by schedule. The conventional concrete base of the tower is finished, the Bio-colony vats have been fired up, and the Electro\_growth of the structure may begin whenever these other difficulties are dealt with.

Please give my regards to your wife and family. With sincerest thanks for your continued patronage, I remain,  
Sincerely,

Mitchell Morien

cc/wjv

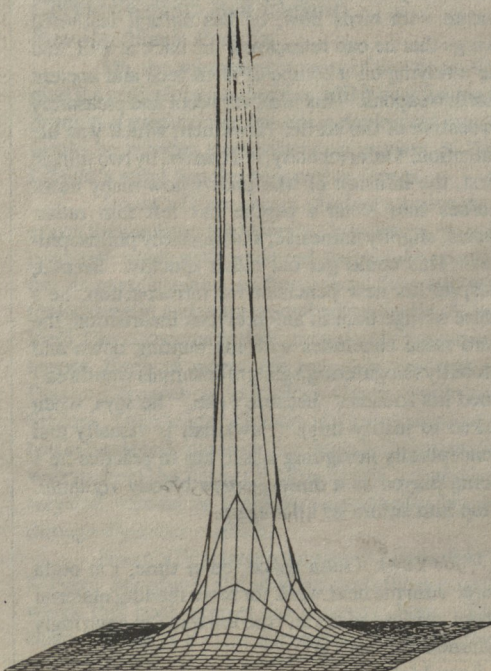
October 25, 1994

## Ottawa Citizen Aug. 1, 1998 Section D3 Monster Needle Won't Stop Growing

In the most unusual development yet in the short history of the Carleton Spire, scientists report that the material used to build the Spire, dubbed Biological Concrete TM, won't stop growing. The concrete is actually composed of millions of microscopic bacteria which are genetically manipulated to grow along magnetic and electrical fields. The workers at the Carleton project have found that, despite all projections, the concrete exterior of the building continues to grow at an exponential rate. The building was slated to stop at 2,400 feet, but as of this writing the structure has reached a height of 2,600 feet and shows no signs of stopping. In fact, the entire building is continuing to grow at the rate of 10 feet per day, and scientists say that this rate will only increase as the building becomes taller. The Director of the project, Dr. M. Morian, was unavailable for comment, but sources report that the director of biochemistry on site is planning to try various measures to cease the wild growth. Meanwhile, computer scientists at the Carleton research department are attempting to rewire the computer program which directs the reproduction of the bacteria.

Independent mathematical sources report that the two equations used to guide the computer in its program have a fundamental flaw. Apparently, both equations, (one shown to the left in a computerised reconstruction) are infinite in their extent. That means that following its program precisely, the computer would never be able to end the construction of the building. In fact, according to this mathematician, the very pinnacle of the building is "undefined" by either equation. "Even if that Carleton Spire were to grow to the very edges of the known galaxy, it would still be unable to stop," our expert reports.

Official reports from Carleton University say that the situation is not serious, and that they hope to have all parameters of the project under control by the weekend. In the meantime, the public is advised that there is no danger, and that the building is very stable.



# FOR YOUR AURAL STIMULATION...

## 22 Brides

s/t

(Zero Hour/Attic)

This debut album is an unspectacular though not uninteresting listening experience. Sisters Carrie and Libby Johnson create moody, disturbing songs through their use of murky chords and intense lyrics. Emotional, harmonized vocals also help to set the album's dark tone. The songs are well written, with unnerving, poetic lyrics about subjects ranging from poor families selling their children in India, to a horrifying journey through the mind of a serial killer. My only complaints concern the overall sameness of the tunes, and the weakness of the instrumentation.

(3.5)

--Mike Beagan



## Sarah Craig

Sweet Exhaust  
(Attic)

Sarah Craig does tend to be a tad imitative of Kate Bush, but she pulls it off with incredible ability. She bounces all over the musical spectrum, showing her immense diversity while remaining true to her influences. "Wakerife Waltz", for example, has a distinct sound similar to that of German cabaret music from the '60s. She has a clear tone and her enunciation is immaculate. The album is well worth a listen. Buy it.

(4)

--Cate Hanus



## Peter Gabriel

Secret World Live  
(MCA)

I am normally a big Peter Gabriel fan, but I must say how terribly disappointed I am with his most recent release. For one thing, Paula Cole leaves a lot to be desired in the vocal department. She has a very airy voice that doesn't mesh with his style at all. The instrumental sections were poorly done, and even Peter Gabriel himself was far below his usual standard. That's the trouble with live cassettes. He must have had an off day.

(2.5)

--Cate Hanus

## Robbie Robertson and the Red Road Ensemble

Music For The Native Americans  
(Capitol/EMI)

*The Native Americans* is a six-hour TBS documentary which chronicles the history of North America's indigenous people. The stories are told from the Native American perspective, and the project utilizes native people in all levels of production.

The soundtrack, featuring Robbie Robertson and a group of native musicians collectively known as The Red Road Ensemble, presents an evolved version of traditional music. *Music for The Native Americans* contains two powerful instrumentals and a few ancestral tunes, but the album's true strength arises from the modern-traditional sounds of original vocal songs such as Ulali's "Mahk Jcha (Heartbeat Drum Song)", Kashtin's outstanding rocker "Akua Tuta", and the Robertson-penned "Words of Fire, Deeds of Blood". Rock-like tunes "Golden Feather" and "Skinwalker" are slightly weak, but still quite listenable.

Each of this album's twelve tracks is performed with skill, love, and respect for the past. It is strongly recommended for all true music lovers.

(4)

--Mike Beagan

### Rating System:

- 5-- Orgasmic
- 4-- Oh-me-oh-my
- 3-- Not too bad
- 2-- Getting worse
- 1-- Oh god, throw this out!