

Saskatoon's man of mystery comes to town

By Danielle R. Gibbings

Anthony Bidulka is the author of the first time novel, *Amuse Bouche*. Russel Quant, the main character, is a private detective in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, who find himself in the midst of his most interesting and challenging case yet. When Quant is asked to track down the missing groom of a prominent businessman, he finds himself traipsing through France in search of the missing man. Suspense, humor, and ambiguity surround the colorful characters that meander throughout the pages of the book, taunting and teasing you to dare to guess "who did it?"

Swerve: First of all, this is your first book, but have you done any other writing before this? Any other publishing?

AB: No, nothing else published. I mean I've written all my life, in one form or another since I was five years old. But I've never had anything published. And then throughout my various careers I've written a lot.

Swerve: Can you tell me a little more about the experience of writing your first novel. What were the challenges and rewards?

AB: Well, I think from the challenging perspective it was mostly learning a whole new industry. My most recent career was as a chartered accountant. Certainly a lot of the things that I learned in that line of work helped me here as far as organization and work ethic and all that good stuff. But to become a writer is a business and it has its own ways of doing things and you have to know the right people. It has its own lingo. And starting from scratch, as with any-

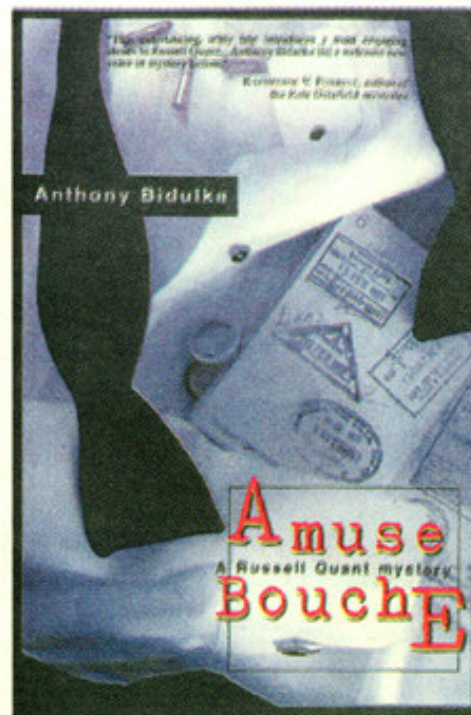
thing, was difficult. We have a Saskatchewan Writer's Guild and I joined that group. But it really took a lot of research just in the "how to" portions. The problem wasn't so much sitting down at a desk and being creative and writing the book, it was learning the business aspect of it. I left my job one day and was at my job writing the book the next day. The first time I spoke to Catherine Lake, my editor, was on January 2002. I had been at it for about three years when I first heard about publishing the book. As far as rewards, they have been so plentiful. Primarily for me it had been a dream of mine since I was a child. So when I finally had the courage to leave a successful career to do this, it was so exciting to me. To get this book published is, in some ways, just gravy because a writer has to really love the process and I do.

Swerve: I understand that you are doing some readings in Winnipeg for the Pride Festival?

AB: Actually I am doing two things in Winnipeg. On Thursday, June 5, I am at McNally Robinson and on Friday, June 6, as part of the Pride festival, I am doing Crossways.

Swerve: Now as a writer and a gay writer, how important do you think it is for gay writers and artists and so on to participate in events like the Pride festival?

AB: I think it is hugely important. I think it is important that gay writers and those with gay oriented material take part in non-gay events as well as things like Pride Festival and speak at bookstores that have gay lit. For a couple of reasons. The whole genre of gay literature is huge and people often don't realize that. Secondly, I think it is important to be at these



the "lesbian poet" and if it does, is this a help or a hindrance in establishing yourself and being taken seriously in your chosen field?

AB: That is exactly why I think it is important for us to be seen at events other than gay festivals and such. When they find out that the reader is gay, it may be somewhat controversial, but sometimes that is how you move forward in life. I wish labeling wouldn't happen. It is a tough question because you are certainly marketing to a certain genre but you also want to think that it is just a good book for anyone to read. It can be a double-edged sword.

From my perspective, this isn't just a mystery novel. It is based in Canada and it has a gay hero. Hopefully, the whole will help people see things from a different perspective. I want people to laugh and go to the beach with it and enjoy it.

events so that people can see that there are gay people out there whose job it is to be writers.

Swerve: Do you think that these events encourage labels like the "gay writer" and

Amuse Bouche hit the bestseller list for McNally Robinson in Saskatoon. Anthony Bidulka will be reading from Amuse Bouche on June 5 at McNally Robinson Grant Park, 8:00 pm, and at Crossways on June 6 for the Pride Coffee House, 7:00 pm.

Pride Festival Fair 2003
Community Arts, Crafts,
and Business Market

Sunday, June 8, 2003
Memorial Park, noon to 6:00 pm