

"Quite often in Canada, the D.O.P. is hired before the director! And he's just an employee. There's no artistic consultation. Producers are too busy making deals and not making movies. So, it's really left up to the director, the first assistant, and the director of photography.

"When I meet a director I ask him 'What do you want to feel when you watch this after it's been shot?' That way I deal with him on an emotional level.

"Some directors will say 'Okay, a 28 here, a 55 here, and then over-the-shoulder with a 75. You got me?' Well, it's not that easy. It's not push-button filmmaking. I keep asking 'Is this shot necessary? What does it mean?'"

Though he shot three features in 1979, Irwin is now spending most of his time on documentaries and interviews. His only feature in 1980 was **Terror Eyes**, directed by Ken Hugues. It was shot in Boston for Lorimar.

Feature production in Canada has suffered a sharp decline this year. The features that have gone ahead have chosen to go with IATSE crews. Irwin refuses to join IATSE in Canada.

"I am a member of the Committee for an Independent Canada, and I have a visceral thing about not joining an American organization within this country. I don't want to belong to the branch-plant stepchild of an American parent union. That may be the Canadian way of life, but it has destroyed our labour situation. I just couldn't join.

"In Hollywood, it's a different thing. I'd join IATSE there." And Hollywood is Mark Irwin's ultimate destination, as it must be for anyone making movies.

"I don't think I want to live there, but I would like to work there. It has nothing to do with being a turncoat, turning my back on culture. But there is only one Hollywood.

"I study everything. I subscribe to every magazine — a magazine called **International Photographer** which does nothing but list who's shooting what, where, everywhere in the world. I read that and go to see films.

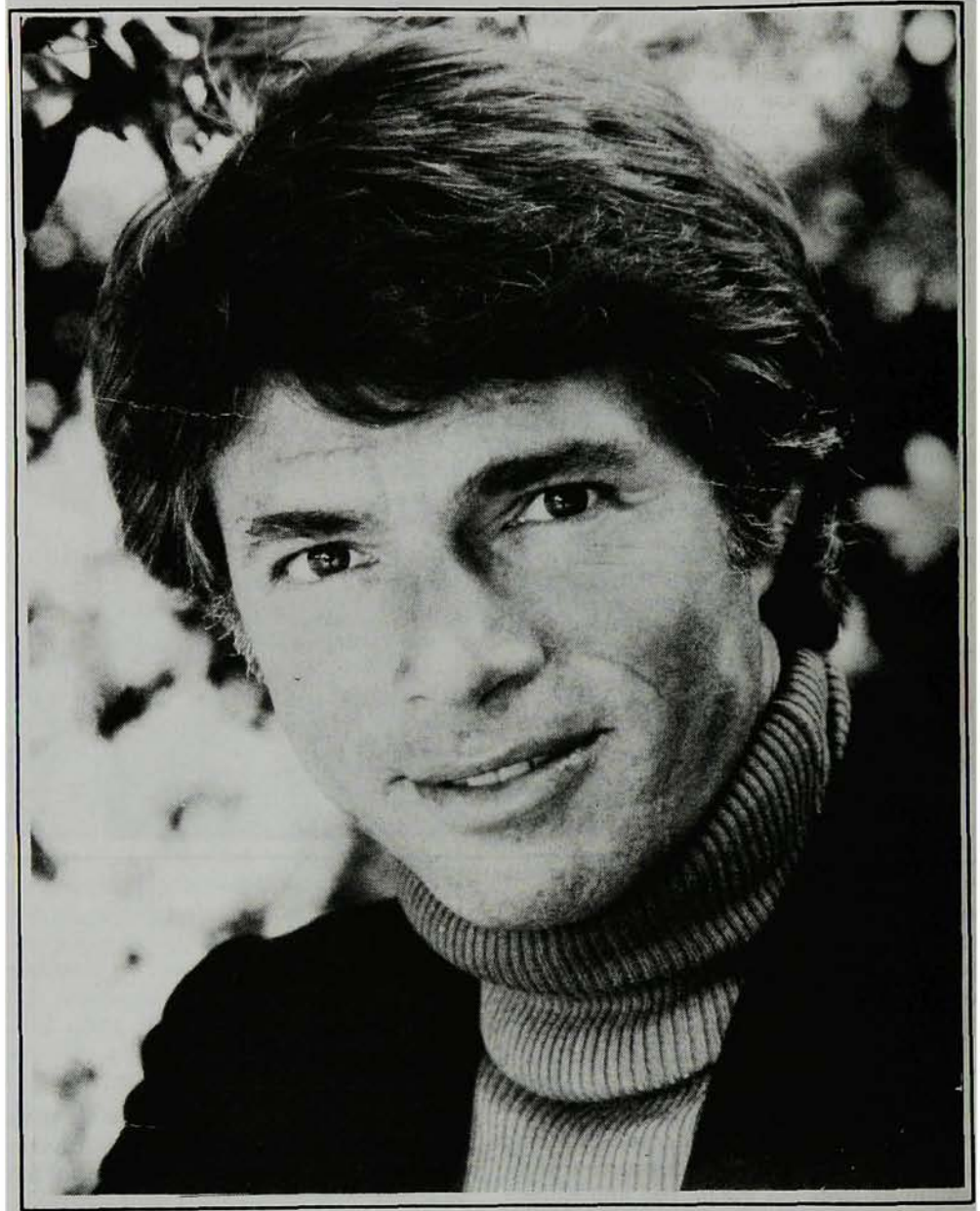
"How many people do you know that have seen **Gold** four times? I did, because Ousama Rawi (**The Black Windmill**) shot it!

"I saw **The Godfather** thirteen times! Just to look at Gordon Willis' work! If you look at Diane Keaton, she looks pretty bad. This is because the mood in that room had lit itself. I feel the same. I don't want pin-spots for ladies everywhere. The source of light has to be in this room. The room is what you're acting in. Leave it at that." Straight, clean and simple.

Charles Lazer

# Stephen Young

## All Things Considered



No place quite like home for actor Stephen Young.

Stephen Young doesn't actively seek press interviews, but when he's offered one, he doesn't refuse. "It's publicity," he says with a shy smile.

The fact that we don't have a "star" system in the Canadian film industry has long been the lament of many Canadian actors, including Stephen Young. In the twenty years that he's been acting, the CBC has employed him only once, three years ago, when he made a guest appearance on an episode of *Sidestreet*.

Young is visibly mystified by the CBC's attitude towards him. Although it's their prerogative not to hire him he comments,

"They bring back a lot of other Canadian actors to work, but I come back and still nothing." So why does Young keep returning to Canada from California where he now lives? "It's simple; I like Toronto a lot. I was born and raised here. My family still lives in town."

After graduating from Forest Hills Collegiate where he was school president, Young went across Canada as a travelling salesman before taking an interest in the advertising trade. He joined a Toronto based agency as an office boy and it was there that Young was introduced to doing commercials. Next, he went to Robert

Lawrence Productions where he became an assistant producer/director on the television show *Far Away Places* with John Trent and Allan Cullenmore. "I was all of twenty at the time and I said, this is it; I want to go into the big time now," he recalls.

So, off he went with an aspiring actor friend of his and bought a one-way ticket to Rome where all the big productions were being made at that time. They landed in Naples aboard the Leonardo da Vinci and immediately got jobs as extras in Joseph L. Mankiewicz's *Cleopatra*, starring Elizabeth Taylor. On to Sicily next and Visconti's *The Leopard*, followed by more work in Spain in Nicholas Ray's *55 Days at Peking*.

At the end of a year's work in Portugal on a Walt Disney movie, Young found himself with \$10,000 worth of travellers' cheques and a new wardrobe. At that moment he decided to be an actor — and packed his bags for Hollywood. A pit stop in Las Vegas cost him \$9,000 which meant he had to make some money — fast. Six months in Hollywood yielded one job, a spot on the last episode of *The Untouchables*. Out of money, Young returned home to Toronto "C.O.D." Calls came through for work in Spain and England before he returned to Toronto again where he played in the soap opera *Moment of Truth*.

At the time, the producer, John Trent, was also casting the lead for *Seaway*, a Canadian adventure series. Young got the part. *Seaway* gave him national exposure and after the series ended, the offers started to roll in. Young decided on *Judd for the Defence*, an American courtroom drama series in which he co-starred with the late Carl Betz.

"And that's the way it all came about," Young offers with wide-eyed wonder, which nevertheless seems clouded by a sense of disappointment; for the business has changed since he first started out. "It's very much down to the dollars and cents now, which it was in the past too, but there

was more showbusiness then." And, to make a living as an actor, he's had to compromise. He finds episodic television "too mundane and structured...it caters to the lowest common denominator."

Young's attitude about it all has been less torturous to him since he went through what he calls "male menopause" when he turned thirty. After both good and bad years there was a point when he wanted to give it all up. He found himself doing things that didn't interest him anymore and the whole film business seemed "very silly" to him.

"In a lot of ways it still does but it doesn't effect me anymore. I understand the business now and it doesn't bother me. The animosity is gone; everything is in perspective."

As for the future of the Canadian film industry, he believes it is in the hands of people like producers Garth Drabinsky and Henry Less. "They are exciting, fresh blood in an industry that has never had any. They're the ones who are going to make this country go, who *have* made it go in the film business, and that's what we need. These people are winners; they're aggressive. They are tuned into the fact that to create an industry here, we have to make a product that is going to be viewed by the rest of the world and not just by people in a certain area of town. We're starting to do this now. This year we had several films picked up by distributors in the United States, for example — *Meatballs*, *The Changeling* and *The Silent Partner*.

"In terms of the percentage of what we're getting, we are still a small entity out there in the world market. Although we've done very well in the last year, it's going to be a big problem maintaining our successful movie-making; we don't have the necessary studios and we have to keep tax shelters to protect the qualified producers and projects by keeping them funded.

"But everything goes through growing pains. We have finally broken through and we are going to have an industry here

even when film production isn't running as heavily as it has been this past year. We've learned a hell of a lot — what it is to package a film properly, the elements needed for distribution and how far our crafts people and talent can stretch. Now I think our television industry is going to improve next."

Young's optimistic comments are genuine, but he warns against the ill-effects that too many smug complaints by ACTRA and other unions, against the use of foreign talent in Canada, may have on the film business here.

"We are still growing, a point I hope we don't lose sight of. We still need expertise from other areas of the world such as Hollywood and Europe to develop our potential. We can't cut that off, or we'd be cutting off our nose to spite our face. It always comes down to the fact that a million-dollar-plus budget depending on pre-sales needs justifying with big names. Investors ask, who is the exposed talent? Canadian names alone won't make it fly for the rest of the world."

What lies in the future for Stephen Young? He has just completed a pilot for a children's game show at the CFTO studios in Agincourt, and movie audiences will see him star in the low-budget, Canadian, "anti-horror" horror film *Deadline* (working title: *Anatomy of a Horror*) still to be released.

After successfully co-producing (with Joel B. Michaels and Garth Drabinsky) *The Silent Partner*, which won an Etrog for best picture in 1979, Young is currently developing two new projects which he hopes to produce in Canada. One is a remake of an old Hollywood comedy; the other is an original idea dealing with business, particularly, the sales-oriented pitch man.

Another of Young's main interests these days lies in broadcasting, either in news or sports reporting, or in hosting a talk show. He's had a taste of the latter, when occasionally guest-hosting the Alan Hamel Show. He wouldn't even mind doing another television series if it allowed him to travel across the country like *Seaway* did.

Despite his statement that "the kind of work available for 95% of the actors out there is crap," Young is quick to emphasize that there are also big pluses to being an actor: he mentions only one — no mandatory retirement age — before going on to say that, to have any longevity as an actor, one must try to make the acting secondary in life and get on with the process of living. In part, it is this philosophy that has enabled Young to come to terms with the business he has been devoted to for twenty years.

Connie Filletti

## Erratum

In the last issue of *Cinema Canada* two errors were made in the In Progress report on *Threshold*: Jon Slan should have shared the producer's credit with Michael Burns; and, the director's name is correctly spelled Richard Pearce as it appeared in the credits, not "Pierce" as it ran in the article. Our apologies.