

been sold to television in England and Germany.

Ron Mann's latest project, which has taken over his kitchen table as well as the rest of his life, is a non-narrative, 90-minute documentary being shot under the working title *Poetry in Motion*. Mann explained, "In *Imagine the Sound*, Cecil Taylor talks about how music is everything you do. In a similar manner I'm trying in this film to show people that poetry is everywhere. It's not dead, boring, or static. It's very much alive, and it has come to encompass various other art forms from music and theatre to dance and visual arts."

In October Allen Ginsberg, backed by a local rock band called the CeeDees, was filmed at a benefit concert for Amnesty International at University of Toronto's Trinity College. The interview footage of a dark-suited Ginsberg shot in an empty locker room contrasts and complements his impassioned political punk performance. Filmed in his house, Canadian poet Irving Layton, ensconced in an easy chair, reflects on the role of the poet as social commentator and the "religious metaphysical quality" of Canadian poetry. A group known as the Toronto Street Poets are shot hustling their books to pedestrians in the Yonge and Bloor area, while wearing sandwich boards exclaiming "Not Irving Layton," "No Name Poet," and "Extremely Unpopular Poet." John Giorno, founder and head of the New York-based Dial-a-Poem Collective, was shot in performance at the Ritz in Manhattan, as was the grand old man himself, William S. Burroughs. Filmmaker Emile de Antonio conducted the interview footage with his long-time friend John Cage in Cage's Sixth Avenue loft while he (Cage) was busy baking bread.

There is a spontaneous element in the shooting of this film that could easily appear chaotic to conventional filmmakers. Mann explained his most recent shoot with Canadian poet and musician Ted Milton: "We went down to Innis College to shoot in the auditorium, thinking that it would be empty. After a few minutes of shooting there was a crowd of two hundred students waiting outside for a film class lecture to begin. So, with Professor Bart Testa's permission, they all filed in and got a great demonstration of spontaneous moviemaking."

On December 27, Ron Mann, Gary Topp, and Gary Cormier, presented a night of poetry performances in Toronto, with John Giorno, Anne Waldman, Michael McClure, Robert Creeley, Jim Carroll, Christopher Dewdney and Jayne Cortez. Footage was shot during the performances, and on the 28th and 29th shooting continued at Toronto's Jarvis Studios, where there was greater control over the lighting and camera work than there is possible during the live performances. Set designer Sandy Kybartas collaborated with the poets to create sets specifically suited to the style and content of the poetry. Anne Waldman interviewed the poets at various Toronto locations ranging from the lakeshore to the zoo.

Some of the *Poetry in Motion* crew, such as cameraman Robert Fresco, soundman David Joliat, and researcher and assistant - to - the - director David Segal, worked with Ron previously on *Imagine the Sound*. Emile de Antonio and John Giorno acted as creative consultants, and Peter Wintonic will be editing the film.

Although the film's original budget of \$200,000 has been reduced to \$160,000 there still remain a few unsold units.

"It's been a real struggle financially," Mann said, "the economy is lousy. The change in the tax law has made it even more difficult and a lot of potential investors can't recognize poetry as a commercially viable subject. I've taken out a bank loan to cover some of our immediate costs. I'm determined to make this film despite the obstacles because I believe in the artistic, historic, and political importance of documenting this art form."

The principal photography was finished by the end of the year, while pick up shooting in New York and San Francisco is expected to be over by the end of January. Editing, which may take four to six months to complete, will take place in Toronto at Film House.

There is no question that Ron Mann will have managed to get historically important footage of numerous major

poets. What remains to be seen is whether or not the incredibly varied personal and artistic statements of these artists can be edited into a cohesive, informative, and entertaining 90-minute film.

Post-script :

Ratch Wallace has joined the crew as production manager. The full ashtrays and half-full cups of cold coffee are still there, but the masses of paper have started to get sorted into neat piles and someone has even remembered to water the plants.

Camelia Frieberg ●

**POETRY IN MOTION** p. Ron Mann d. Mann d.o.p. Robert Fresco consult. Emile De Antonio ed. David Joliat ed. Peter Wintonic poets: John Cage, William Burroughs, Allan Ginsberg, Irving Layton, John Giorno, Michael McClure, Phillip Walen, Ann Waldman, John Cooper Clarke, Bob Woodward, Diane Prima.



● Doubling as director and DOP, Joe Sutherland makes film roll photo: Hugh McLean

## Freeloading Shooting on a shoestring

The MTV studio on Toronto's Lakeshore Boulevard is alive with activity. A lighting man repositions an unwieldy stand, the sound man rewinds tape, while other crew members and actors negotiate the particulars of the next scene to be shot. The details behind this scenario, however, are not quite so typical. It is late Sunday night, and the lines of exhaustion that trace the faces of those working do so on a crew who seem uncommonly young to be manning a professional shoot.

In fact, the film in progress is a professional student film, aptly entitled *Freeloading*, and many of the people on set are students from the Ontario College of Art (OAC). The mechanics of this unusual shoot have been orchestrated by director and DOP Joe Sutherland, who has had the idea for the film in mind for a number of years. Touting the project as a feature film (the first student venture ever to be shot on 35 mm), a preliminary press release gives only scanty details about the plot: it is based on the history of the NBS newsroom. Sutherland elaborates that the inspiration came from his experience as a

cinematographer for the CBC years ago, although he hastens to explain that his script is totally fictional, a not inappropriate addendum as the story deals with "news as creative news."

The budget is almost non-existent on this film, with production manager Bob Wertheimer and other crew members scrounging about town for individuals willing to donate locations to the impecunious venture. The latter have included Varsity Stadium, restaurants, the Toronto Fire Academy, and the King City Airport, whose owner obligingly provided a pilot and wreckage for one of the scenes.

The 150 members of the crew and cast are all working for deferred wages to be paid before producer fees in the event that the film is distributed.

Professional reaction to the shoot has not been positive. Bobby Wertheimer, a veteran A.D., has borne a fair degree of criticism for his participation in *Freeloading*, and judges that his financial position will not be terrific by shoot's end (mid-November). But he takes considerable pride in the proficiency of work done by the student crew, pointing to production reports, a rigorously enforced promptness, and a professionalism that might match a film set anywhere. Ian Dobson at City Hall, who handled the location permits, countered, saying that he had received only compliments on the condition work-sites had been left in. (Those with professional experience working on the

film include Chris Terry, director, Fraser McAninch, producer and Derret Lee, publicist.)

To get the project to the shooting stage took either a miracle of sheer inventiveness, unmitigated gall or a combination of both. What little money there was, went into striking an extraordinary deal with Panavision for equipment and buying up short ends of raw stock and 1/4 inch tape. There was no room for error with one-take-only allotted to most scenes. But Wertheimer points to the record of waste and extravagance that have recently marked the Canadian film industry's flirtation with investor support.

"How many thousands of dollars have been wasted in discussion?" he demands. "And how many are shooting now? How many cameras are rolling?"

If the amount of thrift exercised on the film is noteworthy, so is the loyalty director Sutherland has inspired among his student crew. All who were interviewed about his/her role on set were enthusiastic about the knowledge garnered from their experience. And as shooting progressed, more professionals were showing up on-set, some to watch, others such as cinematographer Joe Seckeresh to donate something of their own valuable expertise.

Although he has worked professionally for a number of years, Sutherland is making this film as a fourth year student of OCA. He freely admits that he does not think the head of the college has a clear grasp of the scope of the project that he (Sutherland) has undertaken, but neither is there any financial support from the college. The students are all participating to help realize a dream, or as some put it, "... to help Joe out..." Transportation manager Richard Quinland was mock-grateful for the difficulties that had come up on the shoot, for he gained experience from dealing with the real world, rather than the insular academic environment.

Incredibly difficult as the shooting schedule was, all of the students agreed with Quinland about the value of this practical experience. There are, those critics who would argue that Sutherland has scavenged the services of a group of young people, who because of their lack of experience do not know better, but the loyalty he has inspired from them does not appear to be the type that is easily shaken. And if the film makes it through post-production to distribution, their until now naïve faith will have been amply justified.

*Freeloading* is currently undergoing processing at Medallion Labs.

Patricia Michael ●

**FREELoading** p.c. Freeloading Productions p. Fraser McAninch d. Joseph Sutherland, Chris Terry cam. sc. Joseph Sutherland 1st a.d. Dave Pamplin man. Bob Wertheimer wardrobe sup. Connie Buck wardrobe Shea Keohane, Michele Lyle art dept. Kim Brandes, Sheila Anderson sc. sup. Tannis Baker gaffer Hugh McLean sd. mix. Reynald Trudel transport Richard Quinland boom Brad Ruelles make-up Gary A. Boisver, Pat Barnett p.a. Andy Chown grip Ian Bresolin 1st asst. cam. Ron Hewitt clapper Roger Stafeckis stills Hugh McLean l.p. Richard Comar. Bill (Duke) Edwards, Arnie Hardt, Shelby Gregory, Peter Kaye, Tom Macdonald, Susan Hart, Glen Wilkins, Dave Lyle, Bill Durst, Lionel Rumm, Ellie Taylor, John Ladell, Jean (Hawk) Hurtubise, Tony Mason, Ann Barber, Natalie Kusmyrn, Howard Rock, Cameron Brown, Susan Seshadri, Simon Craig, Frank Scott, Steve Cyncora, Joe Crozier, Jeff Flock, Shirley Gillette, Gary Robbins, Sam Johnny, Patricia Sam, Tiger, Joe Grosso, Norm Mackay, Derek Patalia, Steve Evans, Bill Dawe, Blaine Berdan, Evelyn De Laurentis and Marc Dassas.