been sold to television in England and Germany. Ron Mann’s latest project, which has taken over his kitchen table as well as the reality of the province’s most expensive, 30-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 in the air, 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 Cecilis, 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 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 out for a film class lecture to begin. So, with Professor Bart Testa’s permission, they all filed in and they all got off their feet and a demonstration of spontaneous moviemaking.”

On December 27, Ron Mann, Gary Topp, and Camilia Frieberg attended a non-public screening of poetry performances in Toronto, with John Giorno, Anne Waldman, Michael McClure, Robert Creeley, Jim Carroll, Christopher Dewdney and Janeane Curet. Footage was shot during the performances, and on the 28th and 29th continued at Toronto’s Jarvis Studios, where there was more crew control over the lighting and camera work than there is possible during the live performances. Set designer Sandy Kybartas and his crew 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 Dan Jollad, and researcher and assistant - to the - director David Segal, worked with Ron previously on Imagine the Sound. Segal had done extensive research as creative consultant, and Peter Wintonic will be editing the film.

Although the film’s original budget of $280,000 has been reduced to $160,000 there still remain a few unsold units.

“It’s been a real struggle financially,” Mann said, “the economy isousy. 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.

Mann explained 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 30-minute film.

Post-script:
Ratch Wallace has joined the crew as production manager. The full atsharys 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


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 reads 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 managing 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 time around, he decided suddenly to act on the historical interest of the NBS newsroom. Sutherland elaborates that the inspiration came from his experience as a cinemographer for the CBC yes, a ago, although he listens to explain that his script is totally fictional, a not inappropriate addendum to 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 working out 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 cast and crew 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 show’s end (mid-November). But he takes comfort in the profitability 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 McAlinich, producer and Derret Lee, publicist.)

To get the project to the shooting stage was with a miracle of sheer inventiveness, unmitigated gall or a combination of both. What little money there was, went immediately into the extra Paavation for equipment and buying up short ends of raw and 1/4 inch tape. There was no room for error with one take only all.

But Wertheimer points to the record of waste and extra that have recently marked the Canadian film industry’s flirtation with investment.

“How many thousands of dollars have been wasted in discussion?” he demanded, “Where is the money now? How many cameras are rolling?”

If the amount of thrill 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 a shooting progressed, more professionals were showing up on-set, some to watch, others such as cinematographer Joe Seckoreas to donate something of their own valuable expertise.

Although he has worked professionally for years, Sutherland feels that 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, all participants are all participating to help realise a dream, or as some put it, “...to help Joe out...” Transportation manager Richard Quinland was mock-gratified at 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. “It’s working with the people who would argue that Sutherland has scavenged the services of a group of young people, who because of their lack of experience 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