

TEN HOT YEARS

Plus ça chauffe,
plus c'est la même chose

by Bruce Pittman

THEY TELL ME IT'S BEEN ten years since *Cinema Canada* became the magazine we know today. "Ten years!" I said to myself. "They've got to be kidding! How can it be ten years since Richard Leiterman's mug graced that first issue."

So I checked it out. It's all true!

Actually I managed one better. I re-read the entire first year of *Cinema Canada*.

Now you have to understand that this process is happening while I'm viewing the films that qualify for this year's Genie Awards. So all day I'm sitting through those movies and spending the intermissions in the lobby saying hello to old friends. At night I'm reading up on the events of 1972 in the pages of *Cinema Canada*.

I believe that's what's called juxtaposition. And that's what this article is intended to be - a juxtaposition of 1972 and 1982. A browsing through old copies of this magazine with the proverbial 20/20 hindsight¹ filtered through my own brand of bias.

It's been an interesting three months what with the industry stalled by high interest rates and pronouncements from Ottawa regarding capital cost allowances and pay-television applications. The resulting state of unemployment has afforded me the opportunity to renew acquaintances with many talented folks, who would otherwise be working. (Like they say - every cloud has a silver lining. And there's nothing better than to sit

Bruce Pittman recently directed The Olden Days Coat which won the Bijou Award for Best Drama Under 30 Minutes, and a gold plaque as Best Children's Film at the Chicago International Film Festival.

down and indulge in an old fashioned Canadian film industry gripe session.)

Given all the complaints and aggravations I've heard about on this assignment, I've come to one conclusion: nothing ever changes. It only seems different - a variation on the same theme.

For instance, take this item from 1972.

"Toronto's New Yorker Theatre has closed down for extensive alterations, and rumors abound that Bennett Fode is considering switching

from quality films to either action double bills or exploitation films for money reasons."

Same thing just happened in 1982.

In my case, ten years ago I opened the Revue Cinema in Toronto to run a retrospective of film classics. I lost my shirt doing it.² In 1982 United Artist Classics will be running a series of golden oldies at the very same theatre. I'm sure it will be successful only because I like to think that my ten-year-old idea was ahead of its time.

Here's another. Ten years ago Gilles Carle won the Canadian Film Award as best director for *La vraie nature de Bernadette*; but the film lost out as best picture to Bill Fruet's first feature, *Wedding in White*.

Insert the titles *Les Plouffe*, *Ticket to Heaven* and the name Ralph Thomas in the appropriate places and re-read the previous sentence.

Now that Fruet's name has come up, allow me to digress slightly. Here's a quote from him from these pages ten years ago.

"I want to do commercial films. I'd just love to do a thriller. *Wedding in White* was a pretty heavy film. I think it had its effect on everybody. There was a lot of sad feeling. The whole atmosphere was so down. I'm going to write my next picture - it will take place in Acapulco with lots of beautiful girls in it and all the ideal situations. (laughs) I now understand why Hollywood makes the kinds of films they do. It's a hell of a lot more fun to make those kinds of films than it is to do a serious one, like *Wedding in White*.

As hard as it may be, I wouldn't mind seeing Fruet given the opportunity to make another serious one, like *Wedding in White*. After all, it's been ten years.

Richard Leiterman was the director of photography on that nifty little film and in 1972 the pages of *Cinema Canada* were awash with articles about a dispute he was having with IATSE. Nothing really changes. I agreed with him then and I agree with him now concerning the present situation.

Richard had some other things to say that year:

"If somebody from Hollywood

RICHARD LEITERMAN

"1972 was pretty terrific workwise. I did four or five documentaries and two feature films: *Wedding in White* and *Between Friends*. It was easy then to do films for under a million dollars. The big discussion was what the unions were going to do about low-budget films. I.A. said they had all the work they could handle.

"1982 is going to be a very tough year. The budgets we've seen in the last three or four years are gone for reasons everyone knows. I've got a few things going but nothing really bankable. But we have a thriving alternative union, so even though there is a lot of doom and gloom I remain eternally optimistic. We certainly have world-class crews in all respects in Canada.

"The last ten years? Well I'm ten years older (maybe fifteen or twenty depending on the film). But I think the industry has come of age and so have the people working in it and I think there is plenty of room for people to start. The last ten years were a learning experience and I don't think any other country could have provided the experience that I got. The opportunities have been tremendous. All of us have had a good go here and some of us have learned to stand here."



IAN McDOUGAL

"In 1972 I was a production assistant on *Wedding in White*.

"I am presently deputy director and head of English language production for the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

"Summing up the last ten years I would say, 'too much too soon and too little too late.' What I see now is a return to sanity. The carpetbaggers are gone and the filmmakers as ever will prevail. I'm optimistic."



ANDRA SHEFFER

"Ten years ago I was finishing off my bachelor's degree at Carleton University. I started at the Film Festivals Bureau in 1974, and at the Certification Office in '75. Today, I'm the executive director of the Academy of Canadian Cinema.

"In the time I've been involved in the industry, I've really seen it go up and down. Now it's certainly moving in the right direction. When I started, I didn't know anything about Canadian films and, probably, had not seen many. Now, I think the average person has seen a few of them. And we're obviously moving in the right direction, getting out there to the public. We still have a way to go, but I'm optimistic about it."



phoned me and said, how would you like to come down and work on a two-million-dollar show, I'd say, you're absolutely right, because I know damned well that if I worked on that show, I could come back to Canada and say, 'Hey, I know how to do a hell of a lot more things than I did before. And I could help what we got going here.'

Well, luckily Richard didn't leave. Hollywood sort of came here and I think Leiterman would agree that he does know a hell of a lot more than he did before and that he is definitely helping what goes on here.

IT'S FUNNY TO LOOK

around and look back and take stock. Although, if you're not a hearty breed, all this nostalgia can be downright depressing. Item: dateline Montreal 1972:

"Bellevue Pathé president, Harold Greenberg announced the launching of a multi-million dollar fund for making private feature films. 'It'll only be for Canadian films and will augment the government's ten-million-dollar CFDC fund,' said Greenberg."

Meanwhile, back in Toronto:

"Terry Dene, president of Studio Centre and some of his associates have established a four-million-dollar Toronto feature film fund"

I turned to another page - rapidly - and came across the following item.

Reward: For the return of 2 - 750w Mole Baby Junior spot lights, Model 407 with barn doors. Contact: Ken Post, 2180 Parker Dr., Mississauga, (416) 277-2111.

I couldn't resist. I gave Ken a call. Now understand that Ken Post is a persistent filmmaker, a man who has paid all the dues. But have these ten years changed any of that tenacity? Is Ken Post going to give up in frustration? Cause, if a man like him loses faith, we're all in deep trouble. The conclusion?

The lights are still missing and if any of you have any information concerning this matter, please call Ken at the number listed above. The reward is still on.

Take another pair of good and talented cameraman friends of mine, Mark Irwin and Henry Fiks. They haven't really changed all these years. They're still as pleasantly obstinate and opinionated as ever. It's just that their hair has gone grey.

This observation was made in the lobby of that theatre where the 1981 Canadian films were being screened for Genie consideration. And it's time to sit down and assess those films. Where have we gotten to in ten years? The only place it counts is on the screen.

Now, I've developed all the hard bark and healthy cynicism that comes with 15 years in this business. So I set my jaw, clenched my teeth, sat down and saw them all, expecting the worst.

Guess what? I liked a lot of what I saw. Something good has developed in the last decade. In fact, I was damned proud of many of the films and the people who made them.

Les Plouffe knocked me out. I could have gone another hour with that film. Now mind you, this is a movie where there is no carnage and no "big names." Just three hours with people you really care about. Lovely stuff.

Scanners sits at the other end of the scale as films go: lots of carnage and some "names," but it works supremely well. Cronenberg is definitely under-

rated in this country. Anyone who thinks Cronenberg simply turns out profitable schlock is just plain stupid.

Now that film was photographed by a guy I know and have had many occasions to work with - Mark Irwin. I've said it many times to many people and I'm going to seize this opportunity to put it in print. Mark Irwin is well on his way to becoming a world-class cinematographer. And I do mean among the very few finest. His work on *Scanners* in first rate.

Ticket to Heaven was terrific. And you can put *Heartaches* in that category as well.

How about some great and unforgettable moments from other films; like Gordon Pinsent telling Ellen Burstyn that her husband is dead in *Silence of the North*, or Garry and Clay Borris in a beautifully emotional scene after Ronald Jones's suicide in *Alligator Shoes*. That was a film with enough integrity to almost overcome the poverty conditions it was made under.

I came away from a number of these films feeling a buzz. I was a convert. I liked what I saw. Maybe the last ten years where really worth it.

Now don't get me wrong. There were bad movies. Terrible films. Take *Finishing Touch* for example. Ghastly, yes. But it was so supremely trashy and inept that it was almost entertaining. I expect it to make several all-time lists; to join the pantheon of sincerely disastrous ventures. Right up there with *They Saved Hitler's Brain* and *Santa Claus vs. The Martians*. One magical element of film is its potential to stay in the mind - to be unforgettable. If there is any justice in this world, *Finishing Touch* is such a film.

But the real point I want to make is to take the good and forget the bad. On balance, the proportion of good films to bad was excellent. Better than 1972.

Marc Gervais, my favourite Jesuit, reviewed the 1972 Cannes Festival and the Canadian entrants that year by stating: "So the word for Canadian film, at least seen through foreign eyes, is very promising. Canadians are still on the verge... all in all, the experiment seems to be working." All in all, I agree and that's ten years after.

Lately, there has been a lot of talk about Australians when conversations get reduced to comparisons. How the Australians are doing it right. How the Australians can make films that honestly reflect their culture. "How about *My Brilliant Career* and *Breaker Morant* and *Gallipoli*," they say. I've said it too and I'm sick of it. Hang the Australians.⁴ Sit down and screen a given year's output by them and you'd see the proportions of good to bad. I've seen *The Car that Ate Paris*. What about *Illuminations*, *Pure Hit*, *The Trespasser*, *Fantasm* and the quickly to be forgotten *Fantasm Comes Again*.

Now let's look at our exportables over the last ten or so years. *Kamouraska*, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, *La vraie nature de Bernadette*, *Wedding in White*, *Why Shoot the Teacher*, *Les ordres*, *Outrageous*, *Who Has Seen the Wind*, *Mon Oncle Antoine*. A pretty fair showing, I'd say.

Michel Brault and Monique Mercure have won direction and acting awards respectively at the Cannes Film Festival. *Atlantic City* was named best picture by the National Society of Film Critics in the U.S. and was nominated for a best picture Oscar.

I could go on and on. Trust me, it really could be a long list.

HENRY FIKS

"In 1972 I was called a cameraman. I was working full-time on documentaries and was about to make films combining the creative young directors and camera persons.

"In 1982 I am called a director of photography. I work three or four months of the year. I have behind me 3 or 4 features of undistinguished direction, script and camera work. I do not get offered many interesting documentaries. (I am, after all, a D.O.P.)

"All that remains of the ten years in between has the merit of brevity: up, down and gone."



MARK IRWIN

"In 1972 I was in the third year of the film program at York University and had just joined the Canadian Society of Cinematographers as a student affiliate. I was planning to spend the summer in Prince Rupert, B.C., filming an archeological dig for the NFB, sponsored by the National Museum of Man.

"By 1982 I had managed to shoot 13 features (four for David Cronenberg, three for William Fruet plus two *Newcomers* for René Bonnière) and am planning to spend two weeks in China shooting an arts and science exchange.

"For me, the past ten years provided an opportunity to break all the rules, mainly by ignoring them. I found a place in a part of the industry that hatched a young union in the shadow of a large one; then hatched another union out of the neglect of that same shadow. Instead of splintering the film business, I look on these developments as ambitious phases leading to a more open and flexible style of filmmaking. And hopefully the products of the next ten years will reflect this ambition. Hopefully."



DENIS HÉROUX

"In 1972, I was directing *Quelques arpents de neige*. We had begun it as a co-production with France, using some French actors, but the French fell out of the deal, and it was finished without them. That was just after *J'ai mon voyage*, which was a co-production.

"When I think back over the last ten years, that was my battle: to create strong production ties with the French. Now, with co-productions like *Quest for Fire* and *Atlantic City*, I think we've been terrifically successful.

"In Canada; I'm really a solitary case. I have always said that what I wanted to do was to make films of quality, and films which provide popular entertainment. With the last three productions (add *Les Plouffe*) we have done just that. John Kemeny, Justine (Heroux) and I control the films we make, and even in the cases of the co-productions I mentioned, we were the controlling producers.

"Our objective is to make films which are absolutely original. That's the only way we can go, and it's a great challenge. We have to dare to make the films that no one else wants to make. I think that those who are trying to remake the American movies with the chase scenes are on the wrong track.

"The shake-up in the last years has been terrific. Those that were in the business to make money from the tax shelter are gone. We won't see them anymore. And they weren't just producers; they were brokers, lawyers and accountants. They were the people who were selecting the scripts, imposing their choices.

"We, on the other hand, decided to go ahead, to take the risks. We've been much freer over the last five years than ever before to make the films we wanted to make. And for that, the tax shelter has been great. Just now, people are waiting for pay-TV to drop into their laps. Pay-TV will simply be one more source of revenue, not a panacea. The important thing is to make different films, original ones. If you succeed, then there's no reason to worry."



DAVID CRONENBERG

"In 1972 I was trying to decide whether or not I wanted to be involved in the film business. My first trip to Cannes in 1971 had filled me with horror, tempered with fascination. It wasn't really the place to show two underground features, *Stereo* and *Crimes of the Future*, although with the help of the CFDC I did. Everybody walked out except the critic for *Le Monde*, Louis Marcorelles, who loved them. I was two years away from directing my first movie (as opposed to film) which was *Shivers* (also known as *The Parasite Murders* and *They Came from Within*).

"In 1982 I am working on a feature called *Videodrome*. I've become a moviemaker in the last ten years. That's very satisfying and very exciting."



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ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE

you can take a look at what's happening currently with production in this country. Let me take you through the 1972 production information that appeared in *Cinema Canada*.

Item: "The NFB announced that the half million dollar gross for *Mon Oncle Antoine* was the best in its history.

Claude Jutra was ready to start filming *Kamouraska* while, after many trials and tribulations, Czech director Jan Kadar was ready to start *Lies My Father Told Me*.

Warner Brothers was here to shoot *Class of '44*, the sequel to *Summer of '42* while Hal Ashby was here filming *The Last Detail*.

Otto Preminger announced plans to film the story of Norman Bethune from a script by Lionel Chetwyn.

A rumor has it that money might finally be in place for a noted Canadian producer to start a Bethune project this year.

Shebib was shooting *Between Friends* and the *Pyx* was a go in Montreal while Peter Pearson was out west filming *Paperback Hero*.

I would like to see that rather talented gentleman doing a feature or two in the not too distant future.

On the television scene:

Item: "Global Television reaffirmed its intent to direct six million dollars to independent producers for production."

That reminds me; where did I put those copies of pay-television applications for future reference?

Item: CITY-TV, in Toronto, was launched by Moses Znaimer. Among the staff producers was Ivan Reitman. He was doing a daily show hosted by Joanna Cotrell which featured "trans-sexuals, lesbians and prostitutes."

I'm sorry I missed it.

Anyway, I finally came to the end of my readings in those back issues. It seems to me that 1972 was a watershed year in which the industry started moving into multi-million-dollar funds for making "commercial" films. The 100% tax write-off was just around the corner, soon to be followed by lawyers,

accountants, stock brokers, and the whole "off the top" crowd.

In the midst of all those shifting times, one old timer slipped away. In an 86-word, four-sentence obituary, *Cinema Canada* announced the death of John Grierson. The passing of one type of filmmaking philosophy and the start of another? Who knows? Leave it to the historians.

Anyway, all that was ten years ago. The important thing is where do we stand now?

As it so happened, a compatriot in this industry of ours was bending my ear over some beer one night not too long ago. In a moment of anger and frustration, he espoused the view that, "Those greedy bastards have burned the industry to the ground."

I listened quietly to his views on this and other current trends in Canadian cinema. When he was finished, I leaned forward and presented a more charitable view, "Perhaps they were burned in the fire." Like they say, every cloud has a silver lining.

At this point the waitress arrived with another tray of refreshments and the evening degenerated into reminiscences about a certain burlesque house in New York City. But I think a valuable point had been made.

Most of us who were here ten years ago are still here. And there is still

enough piss and vinegar within the stalwarts to carry on. You don't work in this business without a generous supply of persistence and tenacity. Besides, in my case, I'm completely unqualified for any other line of work.

So, in 1982, there seem to be enough people around (the ones who always were) to roll up our sleeves and, like Sisyphus, roll the rock up that hill one more time. I know it's true. I've seen it in some of the films we've been making. I've heard it from the people who made those films.

It's like that line from the song: "If we're walking on thin ice, we may as well dance." ●

¹ The author stated that he indeed did have 20/20 vision and that he promised himself he would only keep doing what he does until he needs glasses.

² If pressed Pittman will acknowledge losing shoes, socks, underwear and pants as well and then he will wax poetic about how the doors of the Revue have stayed open to this very day under the skilled management of Mr. Bob Huber, and partners, some of the unsung heroes of Canadian exhibition.

³ A suggestion was made that a more commercial and at least a catchier title might be *Hard On*.

⁴ They'll probably do it themselves with a 150% tax write-off.

CLAUDE JUTRA

"1972. I'm still trailing in the wake of *Mon oncle Antoine*. Starting *Kamouraska*. Not a frame is exposed and the film is already panned: "Shouldn't be done. Quebec can't afford it!" By now it has been sold in many countries and has made good money. Nobody noticed. Two dogged years to get *For Better or Worse* off the ground. Release in one theatre still under construction. Many of my friends are still unaware it was ever made. After years of coaxing, I yield to Ralph Thomas's and John Hirsch's insistence that I make films in English for the CBC. Great guys, those two. Happy work. Four films. Good films. Awards: *Ada*, *Dreamspeaker*. The problem with TV is not how films are looked at but how they're not looked at. They're not real. I meet Saul Rubinek and direct him in three films. Most important event. Then *Surfacing*. I fear what I'm getting into. I should. The ground starts moving under my feet. I do not recognize the film I thought I made. I am ostracized for it. The CFDC has not invested in it, nor will it in the next one. Two dogged years to get *By Design* off the ground. One year after the shoot, still not released. Did a lot of theatre work in Toronto and Montreal. Just directed a new play in Montreal. It's a hit. I enjoy my home on Carre Saint-Louis. I don't have a film project. I'm fine, thank you. 1982."



ROBERT MÉNARD

"Ten years ago. I was an assistant cameraman, working for Les Productions Mutuelles on documentaries, commercials and the like. I hadn't yet done a feature. Today, having produced ten features and founded my own production company, Les Productions Vidéofilms, I've finally realized my goal, directing my first film (*Une journée en taxi*). That's what I've wanted to do for these last ten years.

Over that period, there has been a tremendous evolution in cinema, and things will change some more. I think we're travelling in the right direction. In Quebec, we're no longer making the films we made eight years ago, films which were only centered on Quebec. We've opened the door and are looking outside. It's more fun. And it's necessary.

"Features cost too much, and it's a healthy sign that we're ready to move into the international domain and look for new alliances. Being francophone, we look naturally to Europe. For ten years, we've lived the "boom" at home, with stars coming to Quebec to make films. We realized that cinema existed outside of Quebec as well, and that was good for everyone, the technicians and comedians as well as the producers. The young generation of filmmakers knows this now, and will move toward that larger world more frequently. If we can bring the financiers along, things will go well."

ARMAND COURNOYER

"I was in the private sector then, working in distribution at Les Films Mutuels. Presently, I am at the National Film Board in international distribution and sales.

"Over that period, the industry has made great progress. There have been delicate periods, like 1976, but we have got over them. I think that, within a year or two, we will find the ways to stabilize the situation in the industry, ways to provide the needed financing in both the public and private sectors. Above all, we must find new incentives to make the public come back again. It's always a question of cash."



ROBERT LANTOS

"Ten years ago I was finishing graduate school at McGill. That fall, I got into distribution with Derma Communications. Today, I'm making films at R.S.L.

"I've watched the industry plod along, and then I watched it take an enormous leap, stumble as it leaped, break its legs and fall. Now, I think that I'm watching a slow and rational recovery.

I think the guidelines for that recovery are beginning to be understood. Because it's more difficult to make a film, those who are not dedicated to that idea and are not prepared to suffer to make films have fallen by the wayside. The field is infinitely narrower today than it was three years ago. As a result, a number of films which do not have the commitment behind them to make good pictures will not be made, which is an overall improvement.

There have also been alliances shaped and formed between the Canadian industry and the worldwide industry which never existed before. Those alliances are making it possible now to make films on a rational, commercial basis. All the word "commercial" means is that films are pre-sold and pre-bought to distribution mechanisms around the world and, hence, guaranteed that they will be exposed to audiences. It is now possible for a number of entities in Canada to make films on that basis, *Paradise* being a case in point.

"Another interesting development is that Canadian films last year and this are getting a lot more exposure than they did at the beginning of the boom. There are now half a dozen major releases, world-wide, of Canadian films this year, from *Porky's*, *Paradise*, *Quest for Fire*, *Fright*, etc., plus the films which have gone on to earn all kinds of honors like *Atlantic City* and *Ticket to Heaven*. So, in every area of the marketplace, from awards and reviews to box-office dollars and pop-corn sales, we are there. Obviously, the films made at the latter half of the boom were more successful than those made at the beginning, but that was predictable. People need time to learn."

Begging to differ

What am I supposed to say? This guy, Pittman (whom I've known for quite sometime), hands me this article a mere 36 hours before deadline for some comments. I guess he expects a review of his review. Well, screw that! The man is trying to cover ten years - a very significant ten years. That decade involved a lot of my blood, sweat and tears. The best years of my life, as they say.

Sure, I like the idea behind the article he's written. He told me about it in his usual rambling monologue. So then I read the thing and quite frankly, I'm disturbed.

The guy is hedging his bets. It's light-weight stuff. What else is there to say?

Here's a guy with access to the media, our media. His task? Write about the last ten years. In other words, tell the story.

So what do we get? Pittman has delivered an article that will get not a single nose out of joint, save the poor misbegotten souls who devised *Finishing Touch*. Give me a break! That's like shooting fish in a barrel. What about the other crap he never even mentions? Pittman simply shrugs it away. Okay, fair enough. He's a kind person. Then he refers to those "greedy bastards" who have burned this industry to the ground and makes a joke of it.

Well, there are people, talented people who paid their dues in this business who are really hurting because of what's happened, because of that "off the top" crowd.

Yes, we'll roll up our sleeves and roll another rock up the hill, and, yes, good things have come out of the system that got started in our business a few years back. But (and it's a capital B-U-T) there is the bitter after-taste of anger.

Just to make a living, a lot of very talented people had to involve themselves in shit (and I'm sorry that I can't find another word for it).

A breed of people lacking any experience or love of film saw an opportunity

to make a fast buck at other people's expense. They chose to ignore or take advantage of the wealth of experienced people available to them. They merely griped at the rates they were charged and ignored the real value these talented people could have provided.

That's what Pittman fails to focus on. It's all that residual bitterness felt by people who have been here as long as he has (and, if I may be so bold to suggest, even longer).

I'm not one to mince words. So I'll put it simply. Our industry got invaded by a bunch of sleazy con artists. They wanted the glitter. They figured all that dazzle would be a way to make money. They packaged our industry to death and sold our financial backers down the river using that dazzle.

Some good films got made, but not by that bunch. The really good and commercial movies were made by producers and directors who believed, fought and died a little for their art and for their ideas. That's serious stuff. Let's face it. 1981 was lousy for people who work in this business.

Now, in 1982 (ten years after, as Pittman calls it), the great god pay-TV is upon us. And, lest we kid ourselves, the waters of our industry have the smell of new blood and the same sharks are circling, waiting for some money to be cast in these waters. Pigs at the trough.

I've seen it all before and frankly, I've lost faith. They'll find a way to screw it up.

It has to be said by someone - as unfortunate as it may be.

Perhaps I've been excessively unkind in my remarks regarding Pittman's article, but these are hard and angry times for us. I score him high on optimism and style. I even smiled at least once, but he's a man unwilling to burn bridges, even if the bridges are worth burning.

Maybe he's right. Perhaps I'm wrong. Who knows? I suppose the truth of it, as usual, lies somewhere in the middle ground. So I'll probably end up buying the guy a drink to smooth all this out. What the hell? I've been in worse company.

There's one last point to be made here. Pittman signed his piece. I haven't. Hell, I'm no fool! ●

DONALD BRITTAIN

"Ten years ago, I'd been out of documentaries for about five years. I had just come back from Japan where I had made a multi-image show called *Tiger Child* for the World's Fair, and I was sitting in a grubby hotel room near the Gloucester Road tube station in London, trying to talk Sterling Hadden into a feature film which was set in Northern Ontario. And he was trying to talk me into going back into documentary films which is where he thought it was all at. And he convinced me and I sacked in the feature and returned to the documentary. I didn't have too many regrets.

"Today, I'm mixing documentaries with TV drama and enjoying them both. At 53, I'd like to think I'm getting better at my job.

"The ten intervening years have produced the feature film boom, which I think was unfortunately dominated by a lot of imitation Hollywood producers and filled with a lot of lost opportunities. Let's hope there are enough investors left for the low-budget, high-quality features that I think we can make, which fit our situation better, and for which we have a great deal of talent which is still here."



ROBIN SPRY

"What I was doing ten years ago was dreadful, about as dreadful as things are now. I was shooting a television drama at the NFB for the CBC called *Down Hill*. I had had two features in a row, representing about two years work, refused by Sydney Newman. I was waiting to get permission to edit *Action/Reaction*, and, through all this, doing a short film called *Face*. I was trying to do my second feature after *Prologue*, and was getting nowhere.

"Now, I'm trying to get *Hit and Run* going, and some other films. Apart from that, I'm doing whatever I have to do to make a living.

"The distance the industry's gone? I guess you can use the word "industry" without it being ridiculous; there are labs and equipment houses, and a lot of people who are qualified and have experience. The infrastructure is now in place. Whether it will stay there is another matter.

Companies are going bankrupt right, left and center. A year ago, I would have said that we had a solid infrastructure and now what we need is more good films. Unfortunately, with the economic collapse and with the collapse of the 100% tax shelter system, the infrastructure which was in place is being dismembered, so I'm pretty pessimistic. The hope is that pay-television will help us. Personally, I'm not wildly happy with the decision which the CRTC has made.

"The outcome of the pay-TV decision is more of the same - of the failure of the bureaucratic, governmental machinery over the years, to really understand how the film world works and to properly use its resources. The government spends such huge amounts of money on overhead, and not in direct production. It has done nothing, literally nothing, to help the distribution end of the Canadian film industry.

"If this country had a strong, independent (of both the government and the Americans) distribution industry with ten strong distributors, and there were laws in place making it mandatory that all films and, above all, all Canadian films be distributed in Canada by Canadian companies, then we would have sources of production revenue in the hands of people who would know where to put the money. That, in turn, would guarantee that, when the film came out, the investors (who, in part, would be the distributors) would push the films in the theatres, and we would have a viable industry like anywhere else in the world. As it is, we don't have a Canadian distribution industry, and so we're looking at the collapse of a bureaucratic system, i.e. the tax shelter which was not what any of the film people asked for. It was some sort of financial invention which was misused and abused by a lot of people who didn't have anything to do with film. We have not had support in the distribution area. We have, with pay-TV, another example of a group being selected that seems to have no connection whatsoever with production or distribution. It is, again, a group which represents money and Toronto.

"When I look back over ten years, I look at ten years of being depressed at the wrong people making the wrong choices and putting the money and the power in the wrong places, and it's very disheartening. Ten years ago, I would certainly never have considered trying to include the United States or Europe in my work horizon, but now I don't see how I can avoid it. At least in some of those places, people are dealing with the real film world, and not with a sort of bureaucratic miasma."



PAT FERNS

"Ten years ago, I, and my colleague Richard Nielsen, were biting our fingernails waiting for confirmation of our first international co-production - with Time Life in New York - that would enable us to effect our escape from CBC into the exciting world of independent production. Little did we know..."

"Now, having recently effected another escape - from the loving embrace of Torstar - we are free agents, again owning our company, and looking at the exciting prospects in the world of independent production, biting our fingernails, waiting for a pay-television decision - almost any decision..."

"In the last ten years, we have grown up some, but not lost the inherent optimism that persuades us to keep banging our heads against a peculiarly Canadian brick-wall, and declaring that we enjoy it. Our fears about international acceptance for our products were misplaced, but a domestic marketplace that produces significant funding for Canadian projects is still more dream than reality."



BARBARA LAFFEY

"Ten years ago, I was a student at The Ontario College of Art.

"Today I run a company called Great Panes Studios which is involved in the design and fabrication of stained glass.

"In between I was the production manager on *Improper Channels* and *Threshold*. I'm sorry it didn't last because it was terrific."

TEN HOT YEARS

ROLAND LADOUCEUR

"I was head of the Paris office for the National Film Board in 1972, covering 16 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. We dealt mostly in distribution, marketing, promotion, and so forth. Today, I'm executive director of Film Canada Center in Beverly Hills, California, which is a new concept, an agency founded by the National Film Board to provide a service to all of the Canadian film community in Los Angeles.

"Over the last ten years, there has been a great awakening of the feature film industry in the private sector. I would assume that, ten years ago, the cultural agencies – the NFB, the CBC, the CFDC – played a very useful role, far more important perhaps than nowadays. I think the cultural agencies are still valid in Canada, but in theatrical feature films, in television and mini-series, there's been a terrific growth in the private sector. The principal factor has been the capital cost allowance, which certainly created a great influx on the financial side, making a lot of money available. There's a positive side to that and a negative side, as we know. But, at least, it was instrumental in creating the big surge in the production of feature films in Canada.

"The other factor is that more and more people have realized it's very difficult to create a viable film industry in Canada without regular access to the various foreign markets. Whereas, ten years ago, we were trying to develop the film industry within Canada, we have now become aware that we need, like most other national cinemas, some access to some foreign markets, in order to recoup some investment and to make a profit. The domestic market in Canada – whether in the theatre or on television, or pay-television – is simply not large enough to recoup your investment. We must keep in mind the need to sell our product outside of Canada, whether in the U.S., which is the largest market, and the most accessible one, or Japan or Latin America. You need to think of the foreign markets in developing projects – feature films projects or mini-series or specials for television – because you won't recoup all of your investment in Canada, and then you can't make the next film."



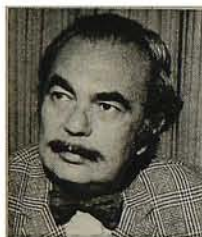
SYDNEY NEWMAN

"In 1972, I was Commissioner of the National Film Board. I'm presently president of my own consulting firm, Sydney Newman Enterprises, which provides consultation to producers and directors, but mostly to writers. My major client is the CFDC where I am the chief creative consultant.

"The last ten years, I think we've seen a new maturity at the NFB. They seem to have invested a greater contemporary urgency in their work, which means they're alive and well. I think the kind of controversies that their films create is healthy. In terms of the feature industry, it's been boom or bust, but, in general, people have learned that the highest degrees of professionalism are needed for success. Producers, I hope, have realized that you can't win on one picture. They've got to create a continuity to their work so that writers and directors can develop.

"On the whole, I think we've made some very good pictures but no great ones; but the overall quality of the work has improved. I think more and more films are meeting the needs of audiences, distributors and exhibitors alike.

"I think the advent of pay-TV will provide a much needed kick upward and some of the professionalism we've learned should bear fruit. Selling to a Canadian market should be easier with pay-TV, and this will necessarily increase chances for success. But I think the old dilemma of Canadian content and expressions of Canadian roots will still harass efforts in the international market."



ROBERT ROUVEROY

"In 1972 I was doing a documentary in Trinidad called *Black Steel*. It was the first production of my company Cinimage.

"In 1982, I'm doing some special effects shots using video for a short display film called *North of Canada*.

"I have never stopped working in the last ten years because I have been mostly involved in documentaries which are the backbone of the Canadian film industry. Everyone gauges the feature film business but few realize that it is only a small part of the industry. We have a tremendous tradition in this country of producing fine documentaries. And that business has been good, and never so good as now. With features, the producers killed the goose that laid the golden egg through their own greed and scams. I suppose on that side of things very few people can be cheerful."

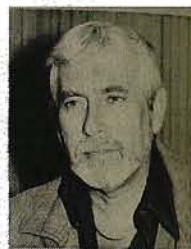


JOHN DUNNING

"We were doing *Keep It in the Family* in 1972, which was budgeted at \$360,000. We had just finished *Le diable est parmi nous* with Jean Beaudin, which had died. So, we had subsequently lost all the money we had made on *Valérie* and *L'initiation*. And we were starting over.

"Now, it's gone full circle. We've built up our budgets to the four million-odd mark, and last year we finished *Happy Birthday to Me* and *My Bloody Valentine*, and now we're starting right back again with low-budget films. So it's gone a full circle.

"I would say that we probably over-extended ourselves over the last three years. We're going to have to return to the basics of filmmaking, which was turning out a fairly good product for a price, a price that can survive in the international market and make a return to the investors. I think there will still be big-budget films made here, but they will be fewer and fewer, based on the availability of the financing. For us, it's come full circle. We're now budgeting films at a million."



BILL MARSDEN

"Ten years ago, I was in the private sector, producing documentary films. I was working in my own company. Today, I've celebrated one year with the Alberta government in the film development office, about to assist at the birth of the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corp. (AMPDC). It's been conceived, the fetus is growing. I think we're within 2 or 3 months of function.

"For me, these ten years have been very enjoyable. I haven't had a year in the business that I've regretted. They were all great. I just like to be involved in film and with film people.

"I think that the last ten years, businesswise, were a lot better than business is currently. Certainly, for documentary filmmakers, I see a real recession coming. The trouble in the film business is that the recession hits there first. I think that there's going to be a lean year or two ahead for a lot of our self-employed filmmakers in this country.

"I think that the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corp. will have a terrific impact on the Alberta industry, but one of the things we were counting on was the federal incentives staying in place. I don't know what will happen at the federal level after 1982, and what happens there will have an influence on our AMPDC. We're only providing seed money to help filmmakers develop projects, and we were counting on incentives being in place at the federal level to come up with the interim and permanent financing. So we'll have to wait and see. Pay television could have a tremendous impact on the industry. We're counting heavily on that. I think that feature films for television have more potential than feature films for theatrical release. We, as Canadians, have had trouble cracking the American distribution system for theatrical distribution. The television market promises to be a little bit more wide-open."



ALLAN KING



"In 1972 I was going down for the third time. I had been building a company through distribution only to discover that Europe could only be a dump market and that selling to Canadian television as an independent was an impossible task.

"In 1982 I'm writing my memoirs, developing four feature films and a mini-series.

"About the last ten years I would say that through our confusion and ambivalence and commitment to mediocrity that we have somehow emerged with a sense of identity. If we can read all the signs from the last ten years we should be able to develop a national cinema. If we don't, we will simply merge with the United States."

LINDA BEATH

"In 1972 I was working at the Canadian Film Institute and interviewing Claude Jutra for a monogram that was never published. I had the greatest house in the Gatineau Hills which was surrounded that winter by 22 feet of snow!

"I never thought I would be living in Toronto ten years later and certainly not doing what I am doing now (running United Artist Classics in Canada).

"Over the last ten years I learned that trying to be an independent in this country is impossible, but all in all I had a really great time. I think we made many people aware of some really good films so I have no regrets about New Cinema. It was good for the industry and a lot of films and filmmakers got recognition they might have never received in this country." ●



Academy of Canadian Cinema  Académie du cinéma canadien

1982 GENIE AWARDS

Best Motion Picture
Best Actor
Best Actress
Best Supporting Actor
Best Supporting Actress
Best Foreign Actor
Best Foreign Actress
Best Art Direction
Best Costume Design
Best Cinematography
Best Direction
Best Film Editing
Best Sound Editing

Best Music Score
Best Original Song
Best Original Screenplay
Best Adapted Screenplay
Best Overall Sound

Best Theatrical Short
Best Theatrical Documentary

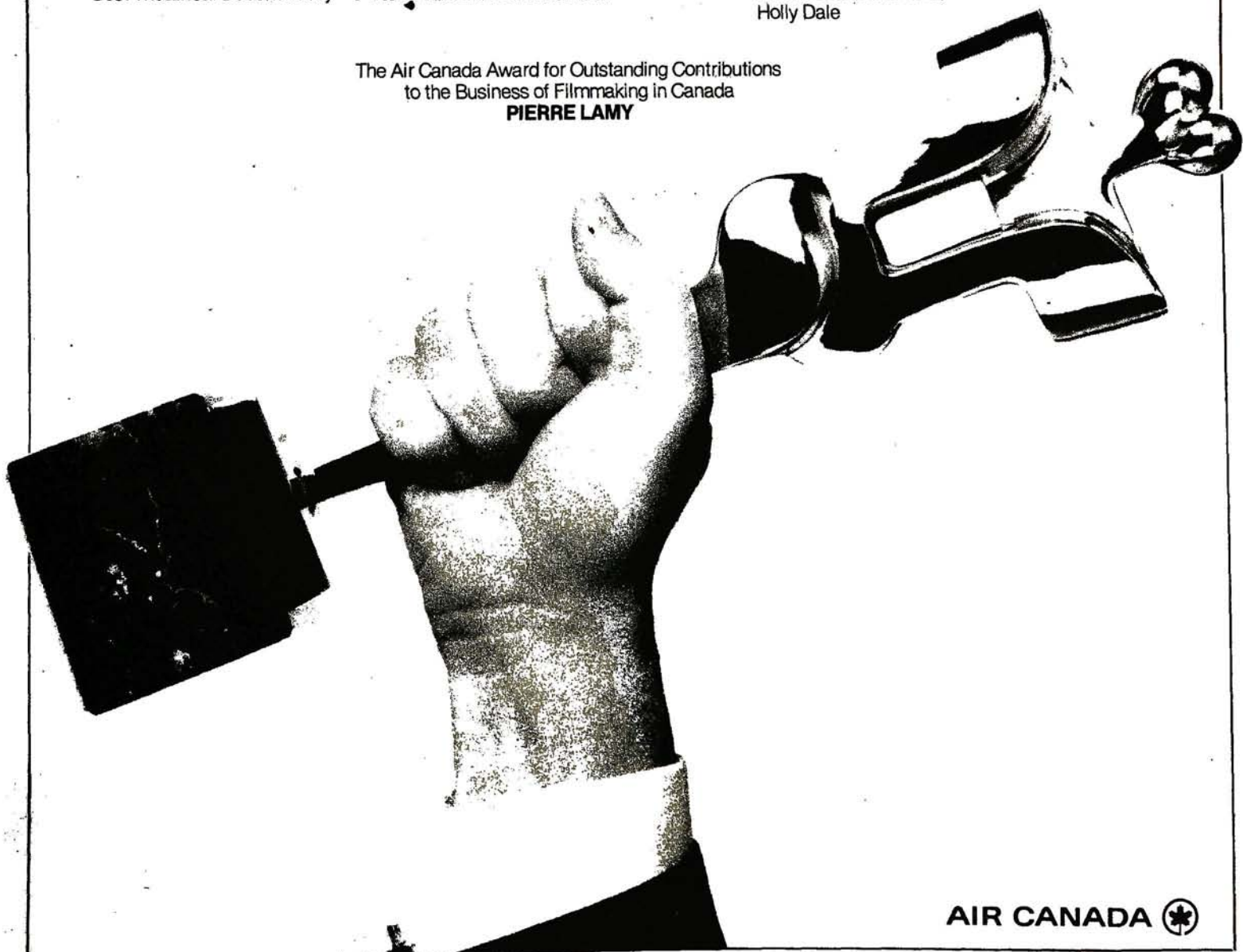
TICKET TO HEAVEN
NICK MANCUSO
MARGOT KIDDER
SAUL RUBINEK
DENISE FILIATRAULT
ALAN ARKIN
ANNIE POTTS
WILLIAM McCROW
NICOLE PELLETIER
RICHARD LEITERMAN
GILLES CARLE
RON WISMAN
PETER JERMYN, ANDY MALCOLM,
PETER THILLAYE
STEPHANE VENNE, CLAUDE DENJEAN
STEPHANE VENNE, CLAUDE DENJEAN
TERRY HEFFERNAN
GILLES CARLE, ROGER LEMELIN
AUSTIN GRIMALDI, JOE GRIMALDI,
DAN GOLDBERG, GORDON THOMPSON
ZEA
P4W: PRISON FOR WOMEN

Producers: Vivienne Leebosh, Ronald I. Cohen
Ticket To Heaven
Heartaches
Ticket To Heaven
Les Plouffe
Improper Channels
Heartaches
Les Plouffe
Les Plouffe
Silence Of The North
Les Plouffe
Ticket To Heaven
Heavy Metal

Les Plouffe
Les Plouffe
Heartaches
Les Plouffe
Heavy Metal

Producers: André Leduc, Jean-Jacques Leduc
Producers: Janis Cole,
Holly Dale

The Air Canada Award for Outstanding Contributions
to the Business of Filmmaking in Canada
PIERRE LAMY



AIR CANADA 

My dinner with Q.C.

by Douglas Bowie

For a writer each ring of the phone is a thrill of hope, the air instantly pregnant with possibility that this may be The Call, The Definite Offer, The Turning Point - an end to all this Mickey Mousing around. A tiny balloon of expectation pricked by the voice of an Electrolux salesman or a mother-in-law. Or Cinema Canada.

At first blush it seemed a simple enough request. Would I take a look at the industry from a writer's perspective? Reflect on what it's been like to be a screenwriter, a TV writer for (my god) ten years. Fifteen hundred words or so, replete with pithy comments.

Maybe it was the pith that did me in. A glance through back issues reveals an abundance of it - most of it pessimistic. It seemed pointless to write yet another piece with a title like "Lament for an Industry" or "Poor Hollywood Imitations" or "Cinema's Last Stand" or "Canada at the Crossroads (Again)" or "Sitting on the Foggy Edge Waiting for Godot" (or, for the past many months, "Waiting for Pay Dough.")

It's not that the Issues aren't Important - The State of the Industry, Where We All Went Wrong, How Come the Australians Can Do It and We Can't?, What Will Pay-TV Do To the Country Our Children Have to Live In? - but these have been hashed, re-hashed, and hashed again.

I had resigned myself to not adding to the hash when I ran into an old friend from law school, "Q.C." We hadn't seen each other in ten years, but we had been like twin brothers once. Now he was immaculately tailored, pink with prosperity. I was neither. He insisted on taking me to dinner at Kingston's finest restaurant where I picked at my dinner and pondered what might have been.

FADE IN.

INT: A PONDEROSA - EVENING

QC: (To waitress) A bottle of your best - loosely speaking.

ME: So, you look like chasing ambulances agrees with you.

QC: Think of it as jogging with a purpose. Actually you don't look as bad as I thought you might. For someone who presumably hasn't slept much in ten years.

ME: I sleep like a baby.

QC: You don't lie awake nights agonizing over that foolhardy decision you made?

ME: Decision - ?

QC: To quit law school and become a poet.

ME: A script writer.

QC: That makes a difference? Why would anyone who wasn't *non compos mentis* choose abject poverty and a never-ending struggle with writer's block when he had a sure-fire ticket to a lofty career, a loftier tax bracket and a

film, TV, a few for radio. About half of them have been produced.

QC: Only half?

ME: That's not such a bad percentage, believe me.

QC: So why don't I read about you in the paper?

ME: You do. As in the sentence "So and so (fill in one of a dozen names) says the problem with Canadian movies is that

doing. Someone said that there are two kinds of moviegoers - a large mass of dummies who think the actors make up their lines, and a small body of sophisticates who know the director does.

QC: And the reviewers -

ME: All terribly sophisticated. It amazes me how often I'll read a laudatory review of a film or TV drama without seeing the writer's name at all. Critics who are guilty of this would never dream of reviewing a stage play without mentioning the playwright. And it's not just in reviews. It's in general news coverage of films, everywhere.

QC: Your dinner's getting cold.

ME: The trouble is, even people who should know better think of the screenwriter as essentially a creator of dialogue and nothing else. I've had a director I worked with refer to me as "the dialogue man." In front of cast and crew.

QC: Presumably you set him straight on the spot.

ME: No. I needed the job. But the fact is that a good screenplay has everything a good film has - structure and pace, style and mood, visual elements, locations, emotion, and dialogue - not to mention telling the damn story. Don't yawn.

QC: No, no. It's fascinating.

ME: Often things that are right there in the screenplay are attributed to the director. Hollywood legend has it that Robert Riskin, who wrote *It Happened One Night*, got a little tired of this and finally handed Frank Capra a wad of blank pages. "Here," he said. "Give that the Capra touch."

QC: From all of this I conclude that it bothers you that you're not rich and famous.

ME: No, but it bothers me that the craft of script writing isn't given the respect it deserves. It bothers me that writing novels or plays is considered somehow more noble or serious than writing scripts.

QC: Presumably you were free to write plays or novels.

ME: It happens that I've always been more interested in film and TV. Why should I be penalized for preferring to work in what seemed to me the more dynamic, relevant, exciting medium? Why is writing a play which is staged in a church basement and seen by 27 people, 26 of whom are related to the author or someone in the cast (the 27th is the Globe and Mail reviewer) more inherently worthwhile than trying to write something that will touch or even just entertain millions of people?

QC: But do Canadian movies really touch or entertain millions of people?

ME: You're slipping in a Big Question while I've got my mouth full.

QC: You can't have forgotten Gorsky on Cross Examination.

ME: O.K. You're right. I can't honestly say the Canadian public has a strong



closet full of Saul Korman suits? Stop whimpering.

ME: Sorry.

QC: You have to admit it was an odd sort of ambition.

ME: O.K. I admit it. Someone said that wanting to be a screenwriter was like wanting to be a co-pilot. I guess wanting to be a Canadian screenwriter is like wanting to be a co-pilot in a country with one unscheduled airline which has managed only seven or eight successful manned flights - some of those with foreign pilots.

QC: I hate to ask how you've supported yourself. Driven cabs or - ?

ME: I've supported myself by writing. Period. Something like 50 scripts for

there are no good scripts." Editors keep variations of this on file and stick it in on slow news days.

QC: Do I detect a note of bitterness?

ME: Aren't you sensitive? For a lawyer yet. But no, I'm not bitter. Hell, at the moment I'm enjoying the sweet smell of semi-success. I think a screenwriter simply gets used to existing in an anonymous netherworld, out of which he's occasionally hoisted so some critic can beat him about the ears for the failure of a given film or, if he's feeling ambitious, for the failings of the industry as a whole.

QC: And if a film happens to be a success?

ME: That, of course, is the director's

He was immaculately tailored, pink with prosperity. I was neither. "Hell," I said, "I'm not bitter. At the moment I'm enjoying the sweet smell of semi-success."

positive feeling about Canadian films.
QC: But they do have a feeling about them – a feeling that they're boring, they're depressing, and the people in them don't have tans.

ME: Christopher Plummer has a wonderful tan.

QC: But you're on the horns of a dilemma, aren't you? You want to work in a popular, relevant, exciting medium when most Canadians – if they think about Canadian movies at all – consider them about as popular, relevant and exciting as the postal service.

ME: Mmm. It's a toss up.

QC: Maybe you should have gone to Hollywood.

ME: Maybe. Maybe not. I'm sure there are just as many unproduced scripts floating around down there.

QC: And complaining writers?

ME: Who's complaining?

QC: If you did get something produced then wouldn't the quality be better?

ME: In features, probably. But I think TV drama, with occasional exceptions, is actually more ambitious here, far less locked into tired old formulas. On *Empire, Inc.*, for example, I've had the freedom to do pretty much what I wanted for six hours. I certainly wouldn't have that writing for *Love Boat* or *Fantasy Island*. That's Holiday Inn writing – no surprises.

QC: So what would God do with the Canadian film industry if he had the money?

ME: Not to mention brains, guts, foresight, taste,chutzpah – and Harry Cohn's ass. Well, maybe he'd stop constantly harping on the "feature film industry" as if it's a self-contained entity. There is a snobbishness about feature films which is unjustified, just foolish, based on their track record in this country. We shouldn't be talking about developing just a feature film industry, but a whole creative pool flowing freely between features and television and perhaps theatre as well. This isn't a new idea with me. If you read old copies of *Cinema Canada*...

QC: Are you kidding?

ME: Anyway, Sidney Newman said in an interview back in 1974 that the obsession with feature films was naive. We were trying to run before we could walk. A thriving feature industry doesn't spring full-bodied from the head of Zeus or a section of the Income Tax Act. It grows naturally out of an amalgam of writers and directors and actors working in a viable TV drama and theatre.

Surely this still applies today. We've tossed away misguided millions trying to emulate *Jaws* or *Star Wars* and ended up getting drowned or lost in space. But *Flamingo Road*? We don't have to try to emulate that. We could make it hide its head in shame. That's where the void is. That's where the opportunity is. There's a whole middle ground between the Cheez Whiz of *Knots Landing* and the

ethereal reaches of *Masterpiece Theatre*, ground ripe for occupying. That's where our better filmmakers could find an audience. That's where they could be directing their talents, developing their talents, instead of palely loitering, lusting after every tarty little feature that smiles seductively and then vanishes in the mist.

QC: Taxing your metaphors a bit there.

ME: Pierre Berton comes to mind. I'm sure there are others. Make this an oasis of quality entertainment where the best Canadian writers, directors, actors could work without feeling they were slumming. The base is there. The CBC does all sorts of good shows. But they come on randomly. Different times, different nights. They're not habit-forming for an audience.



So how would all this happen?

ME: I'd like to see the CBC show the same kind of boldness and imagination it's showed with the ten o'clock news, and *The Journal*. Stop going head to head with *Masterpiece Theatre* every Sunday night. Pick a different night. Establish a beachhead. Package it. Promote it. Let people know this is the night for quality, entertaining drama – something worth staying home for, worth skipping *Quincy* for. Focus mainly on mini-series which have a better chance of hooking and holding an audience. Find a host, someone with credibility and a national following.

QC: That's a short list.

QC: We've got the resources to do this sort of thing week after week after week?

ME: I doubt it. Our films would have to alternate with a selection of some of the best series from elsewhere. But this might actually help, because what would be sold to the audience would not be Canadian stuff, but good stuff, period. And gradually this juxtaposition might impress on people that the Canadian series they were watching this month was every bit as good as the British or Australian one they watched last month. And this damn stigma on Canadian films might begin to fade.

QC: But if the audience thought the

Canadian shows weren't as good – ?

ME: I don't think that would happen, and for a reason you'll understand – the precedent exists. Thirty years ago all this doom and gloom about films could have applied to the publishing industry. Then the Canada Council was formed and now there are CanLit stars everywhere. Twenty years ago we could have been talking about the record industry. The Canadian content regulations came along and now April Wine is a household word.

People don't buy the books of Richler or Atwood or Davies or a dozen others out of a stiff upper-lipped sense of patriotism. They don't go to hear Bruce Cockburn or Rough Trade or Dan Hill or dozens of others out of a sense of duty. They *choose* to go. They *want* to go.

Given the chance and given time Canadians have proved themselves perfectly willing to tune in, turn on, buy Canadian, whether it's Pierre Berton's books, or a Rush album, or *SCTV*, or *As It Happens*, or a Stratford play, or *The Beachcombers*. All of these reached a point of acceptance where, if anything, their Canadianness became – not an albatross – but an added plus, an extra filip of recognition or identification or whatever.

Sidney Newman had a test in that article I mentioned. Although a film industry can be given an essential boost by a tax shelter, in the long run it stands or falls on whether its practitioners prove themselves capable of captivating a mass audience. Well, we can name dozens, probably hundreds of Canadian artists in other fields who have met that test.

QC: But no filmmakers.

ME: Yet. Maybe David Cronenberg is progressing in that direction. And doesn't it say something that our most consistently commercial filmmaker is also our most consistently, relentlessly personal. But my point is that I refuse to believe, it makes no sense to believe that our filmmakers as a group are somehow less intelligent, or less dedicated, or less talented than our novelists or musicians or comedians or dancers. So, given time, and given an outlet –

QC: They too will come to enjoy Honour, Riches, Fame and the Love of a Devoted Public.

ME: You said it. I didn't.

QC: Why is that fellow with the camera backing up like that?

ME: That's an end shot. Pull back. Credits rolling. Music playing.

QC: Upbeat?

ME: Bittersweet and ambiguous. A real Canadian ending... (Sotto voce) Listen, uh, now that we're off camera, tell me honestly – do you think I should go back to law school?

FADE OUT. ●

Film Board favorites down the years

by William Weintraub

Recently, during a sleepless night, I sat down with a National Film Board catalogue to choose my 15 favorite films of the last 35 years. With so many tempting titles, it was not an easy task; but by 4 a.m. I came up with the list that follows. How many of them have you seen recently?

1947

Où sont les chansons d'antan?

4 minutes, color, 35mm

To the haunting tune of an old Iroquois lullaby, sprightly puppets dance, thanks to the animator's wizardry. They are attired in the colorful costumes of British and French soldiers of the 18th Century. At the climax of the dance, they beat their swords into plowshares, over each others' heads, to illustrate the unity that Canada finds in its diversity.

1951

We're All a Bit Nuts

32 minutes, b & w, 16mm

It's no longer shameful to be mentally ill. John's parents are disturbed about his unnatural attachment to his pet turtle, feeling that a boy of 38 should not act that way. But they are cheered up when a kindly psychiatrist explains that John is merely "off his rocker" and will have to be locked up. It all started in childhood, Dr. Kalbfuss explains, and members of the community should not snigger so much. For professional audiences only.

Filmmaker and author William Weintraub wrote the screenplay for the NFB's comedy feature *Why Rock the Boat?* which won an Etrog. His novel *The Underdogs* (McClelland and Stewart, 1979) was on the Canadian best-seller lists.

1953

In Union There is Strength

18 minutes, b & w, 16mm

Something happened a couple of months ago at the company picnic and Local 861 of the Canadian Brotherhood of Steamplaters and Dieshafters (CIO) is up in arms. Stan Lubbock, a young shop steward, weighs the grievance made by Miss Grace Plunkett, of shipping. Could Management, as represented at the picnic by Mr. Jack Craddock, actually have done this to Gracie? The pros and cons are given and it is left for the audience to decide whether there should be a nationwide strike or whether Gracie should simply be a good sport and settle for a bit of sick leave come February.

1955

Muscles of Molybdenum

46 minutes, b & w, 35mm

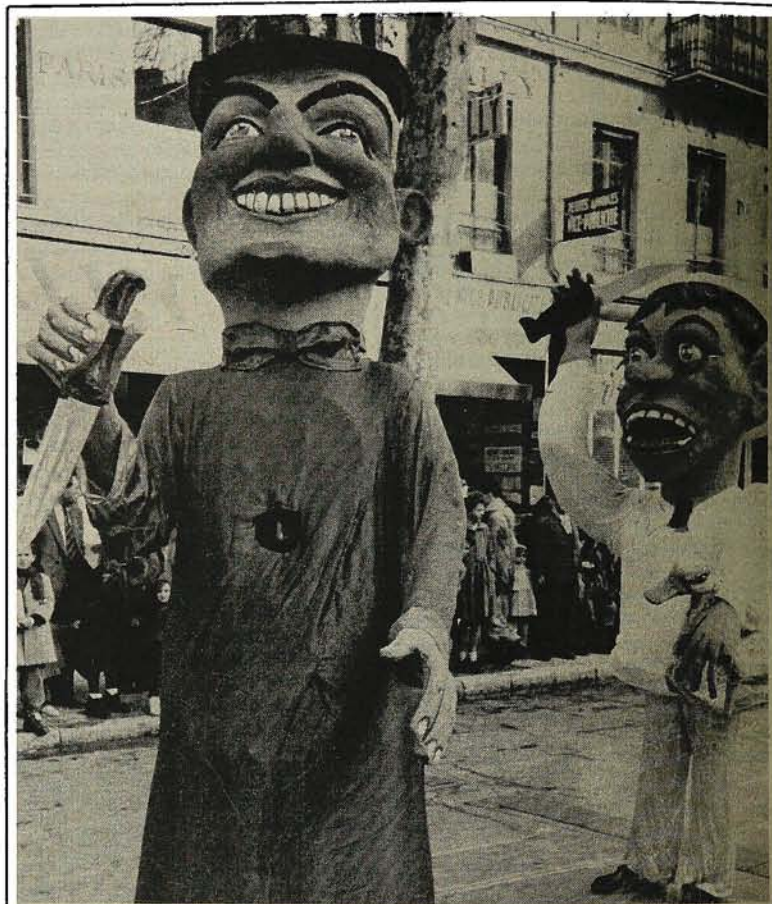
Giant earthmovers bite into the tundra, mountains are shifted, and the camp cook cries "Soup's on!" as Canadian mining experts prepare to wrest rare molybdenum from the soil of Belcher Island. Here is the story of molybdenum - from assay to di-oxyfraction, from crusher to smelter, from sulphiding to alloying, from re-carbonization to petrodeactivation - as seen through the eyes of an Eskimo boy and his dog.

1956

Crafters of the Valley

9 minutes, color, 35mm

Ever since they came to Canada, Bjorn Bjornsterjen and his wife Ulgga have potted in their own kiln. At first, their purple-glazed ceramics were known only locally, but now they are famous throughout the Pasquoidiac Valley.



● Male chauvinist behaviour is denounced in *Home Porno*. Like many NFB productions, this documentary shines a fearless searchlight of truth into the darkness of contemporary social evils.

● Grace Plunkett and Jack Craddock relax during a lighthearted moment at the company picnic in the searing NFB documentary *In Union There Is Strength*. Grace's union later filed a grievance because of her surprise pregnancy.



1959

The Noble Compromise

29 minutes, b & w, 16mm

It is 1866. Sir Henry Shadbolt, least famous of the Fathers of Confederation, has had a tumultuous night in the Legislature. With bitter dispute still ringing in his ears, he trudges wearily home through the snow. In his bedroom, he looks down tenderly at his sleeping wife, the lovely and helpful Agatha. If only she knew the trouble he was having with the Grits... he tiptoes across the room, unbuttoning his wing collar. Imagine his surprise, as he opens the cupboard door, to find Sir Charles Tupper standing there. As he ejects Lady Agatha and Tupper into the snow, Sir Henry Shadbolt realizes that the moment for decision has come. Should Prince Edward Island really join this dubious federation?

1962

Candid Car

29 minutes, b & w, 16mm

The automobile pollutes, congests, kills. To find out what men in the automobile industry plan to do about it, cameras were concealed in the Salesmen's Washroom of Honest Al's Used Cars. The film consists of a lively and only slightly-censored cross-section of Canadian conversation, covering such topics as hockey, women, money, horse-racing and beer. The fact that automobile safety is never once mentioned proves the filmmakers' contention that Canadians need more films on this urgent subject.

1964

It's A Small World

59 minutes, b & w, 16mm

Robbie is a young Scottish salmon gillie; Frank is an autoworker in Oshawa; M'hwana is a youthful giraffe herder in Uganda; Philippe is an apprentice croupier in Monte Carlo. You might think they have nothing in common, but one thing unites them - they are all in this film.

1969

Plinth

16 minutes, color, 83mm

Filed in 83-millimeter Jumbo-scope, this epochal production was made to celebrate the 64th birthday of the Province of Saskatchewan. It had its premiere there, projected from the ceiling to the floor of the largest grain elevator in Estevan, with members of the audience lying suspended in hammocks all the way down. It's a fast-cut, multi-screen rhapsody, with sequences filmed in New Zealand, Lapland, Swaziland, Newfoundland, Somaliland, Cleveland and St. Hyacinthe, Quebec. "Essentially the film relates the myth of Medusa and the Seven Sacred Cucumbers," explains its director, Cordovan Rubric. "It is our hope that audiences will leave the theater feeling that they finally understand the Meaning of Life."

1972

Hanging Around in Boobapur

58 minutes, color, 16mm

Filmmaker Rolf Bunkle goes to Boobapur, in northern India, to study the ethos of a group of colorful street urchins. Bunkle is noted for appearing in his own movies, and in this film we see him learning various age-old skills from the Boobapur urchins, including the elements of shoplifting in the bazaar. The arrest of Bunkle by the authorities makes for an exciting sequence, and the film ends with a sad comment on the corruptibility of local officialdom when the Canadian Consul finds that the only way he can secure the filmmaker's release from jail is by paying the warden a bribe of 6,000 rupees.



● Honoria Fingerbaum, the renowned feminist activist, is the narrator of *Home Porno*.

1986

The Helping Hand

39 minutes, color, 16mm

In the lonely outpost of Often-Begone, the squid jiggers face economic ruin. The more they jib, the less squid they seem to have. The provincial government sends them an ice-crushing plant, but it doesn't help much. An economist from the university comes to show them how to set up a co-operative, but there is still hunger, scrofula and illiteracy. Salvation comes only when the squid jiggers send for Mr. Semyon Zagorin, of the Fisheries Development Board, Leningrad. Mr. Zagorin shows them how to set up a Soviet, and how to dynamite the headquarters of the United Fish Wholesale Corporation, Ltd. The squid jiggers are now prosperous and literate, and to show their appreciation they have recently sent a delegation to Colombo, Ceylon, to instruct underdeveloped fishermen there in the manufacture of plastic bombs.

1988

The Be-In

175 minutes, color, in 73 interlocking triple-concept loops

As an experiment in generational gap-assessment, the Film Board hired 47 young drop-outs to stage a Be-In. Seventy-eight media-deprived elementary-school pupils were brought to the Be-In, to observe and react. A cross-section of 32 kindergarten teachers was given 8mm cameras to film the reaction of the elementary-school pupils in their confrontation with the Be-In environment. When developed, the 8mm footage was screened for the drop-outs, whose post-adolescent reactions to the pre-pubescent assessments of the pupils were fed into a computer. The resultant grid will eventually be incorporated into a multimedia filmstrip kit which will include a sample of Precambrian schist, three pruning hooks and a fresh orange.



● Director Ron Englund relaxes during a lighthearted moment in the shooting of *Never a Shrimp Boat*, in the swamps of Louisiana.

1975

Never A Shrimp Boat

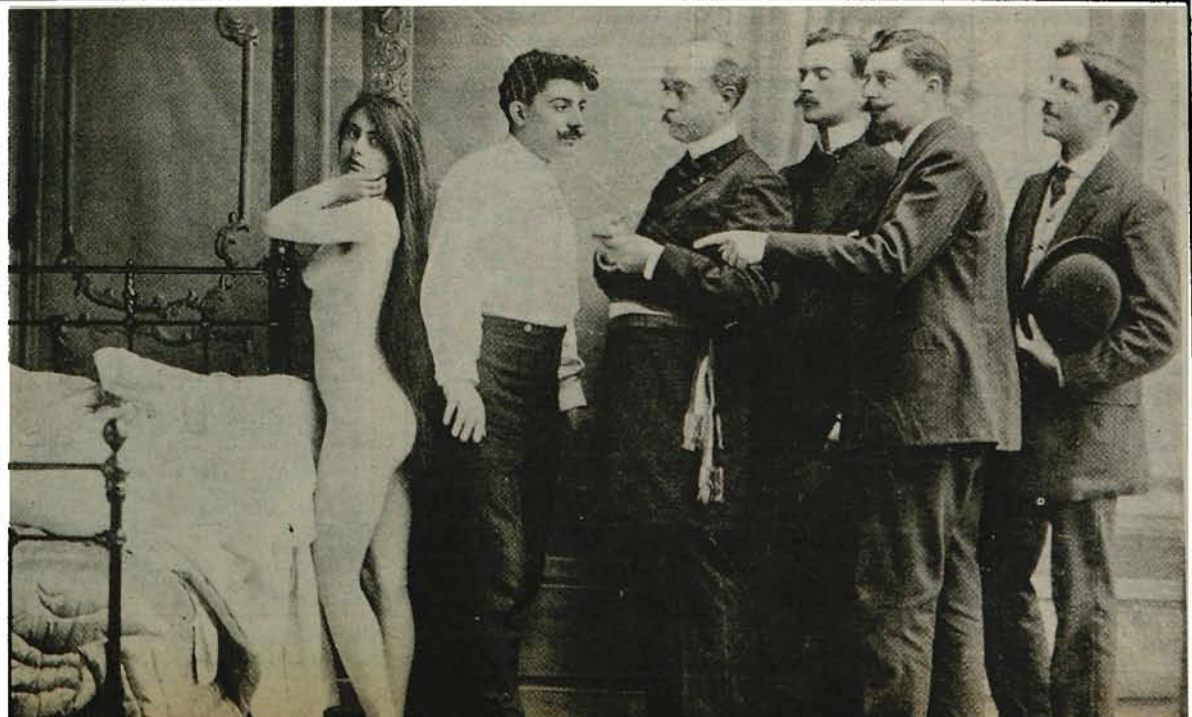
58 minutes, color, 16mm

"But in the end, Jack Snodgrass flew far too close to the sun, and the wax of his hopes melted, betrayed by dreams of glory - and a five-cent cigar." This striking line of narration comes over haunting, crepuscular shots of skaters on the frozen Rideau Canal in Ronald Englund's award-winning documentary about expatriate Canadian shrimp fishermen eking out a precarious living in the swamps of Louisiana. Film buffs will notice that the narration of this film, written in Englund's inimitable rhythmic style, is identical - word for word - with the narration of another film Englund was working on at the same time, about the Montreal Expos baseball team. "Through a clerical error, we gave the narrator the wrong script to read during the recording session," Ron Englund explains, "and nobody noticed anything wrong until we looked at the answer print. My co-workers thought it incongruous, hearing all this baseball talk over shots of shrimp boats at dawn, but I personally found its lack of relevance to be strangely poetic. So we let it go." Englund was right, as usual, as the film went on to win the Golden Sardine Award at the Lisbon Festival of Piscatorial Productions.



● Bjorn Bjornsterjen, renowned pottery maker, relaxes during a lighthearted moment in the NFB's lyrical *Crafters of the Valley*.

● NFB filmmaker Rolf Bunkle (white shirt) is arrested by the authorities in Boobapur, India, where he went to film the habits of colorful street urchins. One of the urchins may be seen at extreme left.



1978

Getting High on Ecology

28 minutes, color, 16mm

The Throgmorton Brothers, Cliff and Griff, live at Squelch Bay, on Vancouver Island. Determined to do something about the ecology, through appropriate technology, they build a mulch pile out of their daily potato peelings and apple cores. They pour a bit of Pepsi-Cola onto the mulch and within a few days it is fermenting nicely and giving off methane gas. They collect this gas and store it in their Pepsi bottles (family size). Then they build a small, two-man Zeppelin out of old coat hangers and green plastic garbage bags. Filling the wee airship with the methane gas, they soar high above Squelch Bay and set their course northward for Nanaimo, where they will attend a conference on Solar Refrigeration. Their personal, fuel-efficient Zeppelin will have cost them only \$12.78, after they get their refund on the Pepsi-Cola bottles.

1982

Home Porno

2 hours, color, 35mm

The Women's Movement is deeply disturbed by the chauvinism of cynical young husbands who persuade their wives that it's O.K. to set up their home videotape cameras in the bedroom, to record moments of conjugal activity. Our film shows Hubert and Melissa Upjohn, a typical young couple, sinking ever deeper into this contemporary mire. To underscore the squalor of their so-called "hobby," the bedroom sequences in our film are very brightly lit, with no details lost in the shadows. And there are scenes (not for the squeamish) in which Hubert and Melissa exchange videotapes with other young couples in the neighborhood. Our film (presented strictly as a public service) is narrated by the renowned feminist activist Honoria Fingerbaum, who finds the visuals so deplorable that she can barely look at them. Occasionally bursting into tears because of the profundity of her emotions, Ms. Fingerbaum draws attention to Hubert Upjohn's brutally macho propensities, as demonstrated on one particular evening when he appears to be in such a hurry to get on with the videotaping that he forgets to take his socks off. ●

A magic show!

With sleight of hand and TV wizardry, the 1982 Genie Awards bewitched even the sceptics.

by Merv Walker

Take five people. Pour on a little wine. Toss lightly with quiche and salad. Arrange casually in front of the largest colour TV you can find, and you're ready for the Genie Awards.

So we thought. But we were not really ready for the Genies at all. Novices all, we'd heard of these affairs and expected some good yuks. We were prepared to see yokels shuffle up to a tacky stage, talk like the Mackenzie brothers and hustle off, awards in hand, to the nearest pawnbroker. The last thing we expected was to be deliberately entertained.

"Oh my God! Jacky, hurry up! Come and look at these sets." That's Tom Jacky's in the kitchen being an exceptionally gracious hostess (considering we've commandeered her TV). They are both well-known Montreal decorators. (The names are real, only the people have been changed.)

"They're fabulous. And they all move too."

Brian Linehan appears to a chorus of "Who is he?" (And "Who is she?"). He is impeccable. It is a rare pleasure to hear good writing well read.

"Who's this one with the long hair? He doesn't fit in at all."

"He's one of the hottest magicians around."

"Well, that's different."

Everything in the show appears to have been carefully thought out. People presenting awards have obviously prepared their routines. Recipients have written acceptance speeches to a uniform length. And, if they are a little less spontaneous than the average Oscar

Merv Walker is an art director and free-lance writer in Montreal.



● Toast of the Town, Ralph Thomas and Vivienne Leebosh of the best picture, *Ticket to Heaven*

winner, at least no one is tongue-tied or long-winded and fatuous.

"They must have been told what to wear. Have you noticed, everyone is in black and white or red."

"And glitter. They were allowed glitter." (In fact, we discovered later, these people were victims of fashion not of a set designer gone wild.)

Denise Filiatrault is pronounced best supporting actress (for *Les Plouffe*) early on in the show. She appears live, via

satellite, from Brussels. It's a nice clean piece of TV tech and the trouble and expense involved have their own subtle message: it's not so long ago that the Québécois scorned these awards by boycotting them or mocking them outright.

The commentary from the couch is non-stop. "I hate it when they break up the screen like that, or get carried away with the star filters..."

"He's cute, the one on the left, like a

young James Dean."

"The sets are fabulous."

The pacing of the show, when you compare it to other industry awards like the Oscars or the American Music Awards, is really very good. You don't have to watch people walk miles across a stage. The film clips with the director's comments are well chosen and gracefully edited. There is never the slightest whir or pause or technical bloop. The names of the winners are always correct



● With a little magic and a masterful touch, Doug Henning and Brian Linehan set the pace



● The closer she gets... Actress Jennifer Dale snuggles up to hubby producer Robert Lantow

AWARDS

and on time when they are flashed on the screen. These are small matters, but they keep the Genies moving as a show.

Not everything is flawless, of course: "What did they do, grease his head?" "No, that's what skin is like if you don't powder it."

"What a sleazoid shirt!" That's Fran. She's suing a film company.

Silence descends when Glen Ford climbs to the podium. By comparison with the well-coached Canucks he seems ill-prepared. His material is old. He stays too long.

We all wonder what Peter Ustinov is doing here. We all agree it doesn't matter: he's a class act. Very international. In fact, most of those accepting awards are deemed a class act too. They express their pleasure with humility. They thank their moms. The savoury exception is the editor who declares that "This was a film made in the editing room."

"That's so bitchy when you think about it. Don't you find?"

Les Plouffe wins for art direction, costume design, musical score and original song. It looks like it will sweep up all the awards. But then Saul Rubinek takes best supporting actor for *Ticket to Heaven* and Annie Potts and Margo Kidder carry off best foreign actress and best actress for *Heartaches*.

"I thought Potts was Canadian..." "I thought Kidder was American."

We are surprised and suddenly hushed by the appearance of Frank Augustine and Veronica Tennant. Their *pas de deux* is beautiful and only slightly marred by creative camera work.

The theme for our review is "The Genies as Theatre" and the ballet piece gets high marks for excellence and surprise value.

Doug Henning gets mixed reviews until he saws his wife and assistant in half and mixes the halves before rejoining them.

"How did he do that?" "He's very good this magician." "He should get his hair cut."

The major flaw in the show is the simultaneous translation. Both languages seem to come through at the same volume and we can't understand either. There is constant indecision about what to translate. André Brassard takes the stage. "Bonjour" he says but then continues to speak in English. The translator translates "Good evening..."

Nick Mancuso (best actor, *Ticket to Heaven*) is greeted with delight by the women. "Oh he's gorgeous!" "He's a real sweetie pie."

He thanks his Mom.

Les Plouffe has swept up most of the awards and we are expecting it to be named best picture. To our surprise *Ticket to Heaven* wins out.

We haven't seen all the pictures so it's hard to agree or disagree with the Academy, but there does seem to be some justice in spreading the awards around. By my count, of the three major winners, *Les Plouffe* took seven awards, *Heartaches* three and *Ticket to Heaven* four. No one pays any attention: they are reading the credits.

"There it is. The set designer is James Jones."

"Never heard of him."

We didn't recognize too many of the people either in or behind the awards, it's true, but as theatre, we decided, the Genies were a hit. Between them and us we were entertained, and in the process of being entertained we met a whole group of Canadian pros whom we hadn't known existed before. ●



● A festive night for Pierre Lamy (winner of the Air Canada award) and friend Toni Silverman



● Sitting pretty with his mom, best actor Nick Mancuso chats with Alan Arkin



● "Class act" Peter Ustinov presents best director Gilles Carle (*Les Plouffe*) with his genie

And the envelope please...

While International Cinema Corporation's *Les Plouffe* led with seven awards, *Ticket To Heaven*, produced by Vivienne Leebosh and Ron Cohen, was selected best film at the 1982 Genie Awards March 3 at Toronto's Royal Alexandra Theatre.

The split among the Academy of Canadian Cinema voters saw *Ticket To Heaven*'s Nick Mancuso and Saul Rubinek honoured as best actor and best supporting actor respectively for their performances as a young schoolteacher brainwashed by a San Francisco religious cult, and his friend who later rescues him. *Les Plouffe*'s Gilles Carle won twice, for best director and with Roger Lemelin for best script adapted from another medium, leaving some observers curious as to how a film with the best direction and best script (beating out *Ticket*) was not selected best film. Conversely, *Ticket To Heaven* supporters were wondering how voters who selected the film best picture did not award its director, Ralph Thomas.

Other awards to *Les Plouffe* went to Denise Filiatrault for best supporting actress, William McCrow for best art direction, Nicole Pelletier for best cos-

tume design, and two awards for Stephane Venne and Claude Denjean, best song and best musical score.

Ron Wisman won *Ticket To Heaven*'s fourth Genie Award for best film editing. *Heartaches* earned three Genies, including Margot Kidder as best actress and co-star Annie Potts as best foreign actress, and Terry Heffernan for best original screenplay.

Heavy Metal, an animated rock fantasy produced by Ivan Reitman and the top-grossing film at Canadian box offices last year, won Genies in both categories in which they had been nominated. Dan Goldberg, Austin Grimaldi, Joe Grimaldi, and Gordon Thompson were honoured for best sound, while Peter Jermy, Andy Malcolm, and Peter Thillay were won for best sound editing.

Richard Leiterman won best cinematography for *Silence Of The North*, while Alan Arkin was chosen best foreign actor for *Improper Channels*.

Toronto filmmakers Janice Cole and Holly Dale beat out Harry Rasky to win best theatrical documentary for *P4W: Prison For Women*. Robert Forget's *Zea* was honoured as best theatrical short.

The Air Canada Award for outstanding

contributions to the business of filmmaking in Canada was presented to Quebec producer Pierre Lamy, who has participated in 27 feature films and numerous television series, short films, and documentaries during his career (see article on page 42).

The Genie Awards were sponsored by the Academy of Canadian Cinema and produced by the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. The telecast, live from the Royal Alexandra Theatre in Toronto, reached about two million Canadians at first count, and lasted just a few minutes longer than two hours.

Bob Gibbons, CBC producer, shared responsibility for the broadcast with Wayne Fenske, chairman of the ACC's Awards Committee. Ron Meraska directed, and Jimmy Jones designed the sets. The master of ceremonies was Brian Linehan, assisted by guest magician-par-excellence Doug Henning.

Paul Hoffert is the current chairman of the ACC and Andra Sheffer, its executive director. The ACC reportedly has about 600 active members.

Bruce Malloch ●

Marathon man : Pierre Lamy

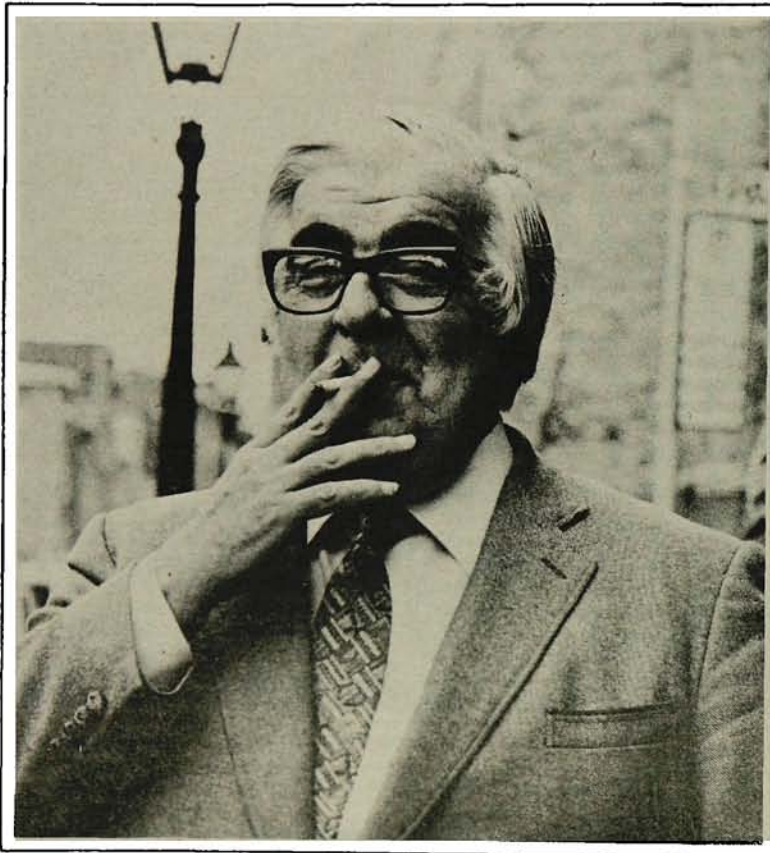
by Barbara Samuels

Whatever else is said of this year's Genie Awards presentation, one fact remains indisputable. The network broadcast gave most of the country its first – albeit brief – glimpse of a one-man national institution. The gravel-voiced recipient of the Air Canada citation for Outstanding Contribution to the Business of Film-making in Canada delivered a thank-you speech more concise than the title of his award. But that was to be expected. Louise Ranger, independent producer, head of L'Institut québécois du cinéma and a close associate since 1967 has called Pierre Lamy "the quintessential behind-the-scenes man." And after some twenty-four 'low-profile' years as one of this country's premier film producers, Lamy has finally been nudged into the spotlight.

The recognition from Air Canada came on the heels of another major award. At the end of 1981, Lamy was named recipient of the Albert Tessier Prize, bestowed annually upon a distinguished Quebec filmmaker as part of the Prix du Quebec. There is justice in all this overdue admiration, and more than a touch of irony. From the sudden explosion of Quebec film talent in the late '60s, through the oversized glitz and expenditure of the tax shelter boom and into the current, uneasy calm before the advent of pay-TV, the circle completes itself and deposits us back on Pierre Lamy's doorstep. The man's filmography reads like a history book for students of Quebec film culture; it also provides a thumbnail sketch of someone who adopted a credo of integrity at the outset, and stuck by it. Now embellished by this new wave of esteem, Lamy's career is a singular defiance of the axiom that good guys always finish last.

For a starting point, he goes back to his days at the Université de Montréal, where he was enrolled in the highly-regarded Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales. As president of the university's Artistic Society, he was heavily involved in the administration of plays and cine-club events. Director Claude Jutra, a medical student at the time, recalls appearing in a stage review mounted by the fledgling producer.

In 1948, Lamy moved to Vermont, where he handled administrative business for the Trapp Family Singers. By 1956 he was back in Montreal, and experienced his first taste of film production as administrator of the Youth Section at La Societe Radio-Canada. Television production was a brand-new field, and by taking on the first TV series ever produced by the Societe, Lamy became one of its pioneers. "The head of tele-



From the sudden explosion of Quebec film talent in the late '60s, through the oversized glitz and expenditure of the tax shelter boom, into the current, uneasy calm before the advent of pay-TV, the circle completes itself – and deposits us back on Pierre Lamy's doorstep.

vision production asked me to become a producer on *Radisson*," he recalls. "No one else knew anything about TV production, so we were all in the same boat. Half of the series had been shot by then, and it was very expensive for those days: \$1.2 million for twenty-six episodes. That's the point where I really became a film producer."

He left Radio-Canada in 1958 to work with Fernand Seguin, who had established Niagra Films Inc. in Montreal. A blend of TV series and commercials added to Lamy's portfolio, and he joined with his brother Andre (current executive director of the Canadian Film Development Corp.) in 1962 to found Onyx Films Inc. In many ways the birthplace of the Quebec cinema boom that was to follow, Onyx boasted a roster of names almost top-heavy with talent; in addition to the Lamys, Denis and Claude Heroux, Gilles Carle, Michel Belaieff, Roger Moride, and Guy and Claude

Fournier were among original staffers. The company began on familiar ground, concentrating on TV series and commercials to establish itself. But the incentives for feature production were clearly in place with the establishment of the CFDC in 1968. Lamy dates the Quebec film explosion from that moment. "We were all basically frightened of getting involved in feature films," he remembers. "There were so many risk factors. But Michael Spencer came to see us. He said, 'Look, if you're not going to do the films, who is? You're the company with all the potential. You're obligated to get into feature production.'"

They did so with commitment. Denis Heroux produced the company's first feature, *Pas de vacances pour les idoles*. Gilles Carle's screen debut came with *Le viol d'une jeune fille douce*; producer this time out was Pierre Lamy. Louise Ranger, who joined the company

as a kind of 'femme à tout faire', recalls the volunteer spirit that ruled those days and accounted in good part for the enormous output of product: "You did everything then. Unit, script assistant, makeup, whatever. *Le viol* was shot on weekends with volunteer labour. I think it took about six months to complete." Ranger was directly involved in Carle's second feature *Red*, shot in 1968. "We worked with a crew of 19 people. Two weeks of pre-production. And on top of that, we produced two TV ads during that two-week period. It was a rough shoot, but the desire to do that film was very strong. It was always a question of desire."

Producer Harry Gulkin encountered Lamy for the first time after the completion of *Red*. "He invited me to a screening of the film one day, because he wanted to know if it would work as an English-language dub." Gulkin describes Onyx as a "structure which has not yet been replaced in all of Canada, a set-up within which a group of directors and producers worked as a team, discussed projects, gave each other support." More than just the moral variety, as it often happened. When a financially strapped Claude Jutra turned to Lamy for help on his first film, *À tout prendre*, he was offered equipment and facilities, all free of charge. Lamy dismisses the period with characteristic modesty: "It was just a time when everyone helped everyone else."

Louise Ranger counts herself among the recipients of that help. After the exhaustive process of *Red* came to a close, she found herself confused by the whole event. "I asked myself whether people worked like this on films all over the world. I was convinced we'd burn out in five years if we kept this up." As a means of clarification, Lamy obtained a CFDC grant in 1969 that sent Ranger to France on an apprenticeship program. "I spent two months in Paris," she recounts. "I found out we were on the right track here; all we really needed were bigger crews, more people to do the same kind of work a few of us were trying to handle. It was really a question of confidence. Going to Paris enabled me to say 'Yes, I'm capable of doing it, and the methods we used on *Red* are more or less the right ones. All this experience came through Pierre. He was the one who really brought me into feature filmmaking."

Before leaving Onyx in 1971, Lamy also produced Carle's *Les mâles* and Claude Fournier's record-breaking *Deux femmes en or*. And the major activity on the Quebec scene still lay ahead. When Lamy decided to regroup his resources, he chose his associate carefully. Gulkin comments: "I think it's a measure of Pierre's taste and vision that he selected a man I feel is this

country's outstanding director. He was able to see - long before there was general recognition of the fact - that Gilles Carle was the guy to go with."

Les Productions Carle/Lamy Ltée was formed in 1971, with Louise Ranger and Jacques Gagné rounding out the quartet of key players. Another woman who spiralled her way up through Canadian film ranks after starting at ground level with Lamy is former film and video officer at the Canada Council, Penni Jacques. She joined the company near its inception, and stayed for two years. During that time, she learned all she could about film production by working the administrative gamut. "He has a flair for teaching," she remarks now. "He enjoys seeing young people learning from him; he takes great pride in that. There are so many people who went through his offices in one capacity or another, and are today an important part of the Quebec film scene." She credits her time at Carle/Lamy with providing the resource material for her Council position. "Using Quebec and that two years of experience as a microcosm for films, I drew from it the essential elements for a program that was Canada-wide." And echoing others, she adds: "My experience with Pierre was crucial in terms of where my life led."

Lamy's eye for talent is reflected in the names that hold the director's credits in the long string of films the company produced between 1971-75. Lorraine Duhamel, Lamy's executive assistant and de facto right hand since 1972 sums up his criteria for involvement in a film quite neatly: "Quality. He's always done quality pictures. He's stuck fast beside certain people, like Denys Arcand and André Brassard. The guys who make films of a certain calibre." Nowhere was that more evident than in the case of *Kamouraska*, a project which, at \$875,000, loomed in 1972 like a Hollywood megamovie over the otherwise modestly budgeted Quebec film industry. It was another undertaking Lamy brought in on his own terms, wrangling what was essentially a 'hot property' away from the competition despite overwhelming odds. "Both Anne Hébert (the author) and the book's French publishers wanted a French director," Claude Jutra recalls. "And Pierre called me one day. He said 'I can do the picture on the condition that you direct and Michel Brault shoots it.'" Lamy swung the deal, thereby launching one of Canada's first co-productions with France.

But the pressures were extraordinary. High costs, bitter winter weather and a

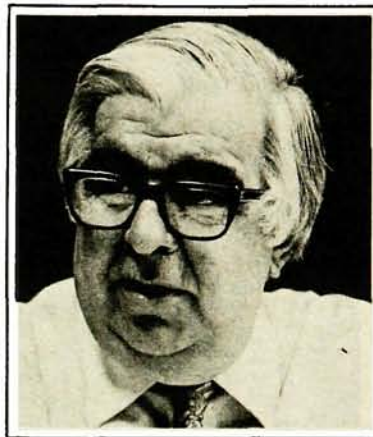
host of production problems turned the shoot into an endurance test. The troubles, however, brought no mad display of temper from the producer. "If Pierre gets into a rage," Jutra explains, "it's icy cold. The best description of his anger is this: absolute motionlessness. Silence. And he looks at you with cold, dark eyes. At the end of *Kamouraska*, when there was no more money, I refused to cut the shooting schedule, refused to eliminate scenes. So our confrontation took place at his house in Beloeil. It consisted mostly of long silences."

The ordeal of *Kamouraska* finally over, Lamy went on to produce a succession of features, among them *La mort d'un bûcheron*, *Il était une fois dans l'est*, *Gina*, and *La tête de Normandie St-Onge*. Examined as a body, the films produced during the five-year life of Carle/Lamy probably represent the highwater mark of that filmmaking era. It ended in 1975. Carle and Lamy parted ways, with Lamy going on to form his own company. That year, he was called in on *The Far Shore* by the CFDC, which asked that he oversee the troubled production. "The people at the CFDC began to look to Pierre as perhaps the senior producer in the country, in terms of getting them out of difficulty," Harry Gulkin explains. "He was able to create not just an effective administration, but he also avoided the kind of resentments that always seem to happen in those takeover situations." Lamy was called upon for similar reasons on *Who Has Seen the Wind* in 1977.

In 1976, he handled the production of the opening and closing ceremonies at the Montreal Olympics. It was a change of pace, one he enjoyed tremendously. And he opted for another. Later that year, he took time off to plan and construct two cinemas in Beloeil, Quebec, moving away from film production for quite a few months. Lorraine Duhamel notes that this break was taken not too long after the split with Carle, and speculates that Lamy "needed time to rethink the way he was going to function. I think he needed the breather. Maybe he was tired of the constant pressure."

Lamy filled the years between '76 and '78 with a string of TV series, and his stint on *Who Has Seen the Wind*, but returned to feature production in 1979 with *Contrecoeur*. He also teamed up with Michael Spencer to form Lamy, Spencer & Company Ltd., and it was through this new association that he made his first foray into film production with partial tax shelter funding. But the

terms were strictly his. "*Les beaux souvenirs* had a budget of \$1,250,000," he explains. "Of that, \$300,000 was tax shelter money, privately invested cash. It obligated us to no one; it didn't impose conditions on the film." His reticence to endorse the CCA is something he can only explain instinctively: "When the tax shelter came along, I wasn't eager to get involved. There was something in there that didn't jibe for me. I don't know; maybe a moral question. I had always worked on a small-scale, low-budget basis. I guess the whole overblown, expensive scene just turned me off." He refutes all suggestions that his reluctance had a touch of the visionary about it. "I was approached to pro-



duce an awful lot of things. I refused, but I only make the films I want to make. When you look back at my record, all the pictures I made weren't award winners. But I produced them at the time because I liked the subject, because I got along with the director. The pictures never started out as money makers; I never produced anything with the sole intention of 'cleaning up'."

Nor does he envision a glowing future for film production dependent upon the writeoff. "As far as I can see, the tax shelter principle is finished. It will always exist in one form or another. But the boom that busted isn't going to happen again. The way budgets broke down in the middle of that boom showed that the greatest percentage of the monies invested were going to cover costs incurred because of the size of the film; lawyer costs, accountant costs, star costs. Then all the other costs were inflated accordingly. So a picture that should have cost around \$1 or \$1.5 million comes in at three or four or five."

The Canadian option? "We can make movies. Within our own structure and on our own terms. But I feel that pictures costing more than \$2 million are out of the question."

He is also rather critical of prevailing attitudes in the two governmental agencies established to promote indigenous film. "It's worked out so that L'Institut and the CFDC have created a whole framework for the financing of films that forces pictures into categories. No two films are ever alike. So the realities of independent production are ignored. These institutions were originally created to help private industry; they used to have consultative committees at the CFDC. That doesn't exist anymore. It's coming very close to the same situation we've had for years in terms of the CBC and the NFB; if you fitted into *their* mold, you could co-produce with them. I think it's a basic mistake."

The future direction of Canadian film is of central concern to Lamy, and he sees it as being very much entwined with the pay-TV market. There is a personal note involved here; as one of the partners in Premiere Television, he awaits the CRTC decision with great interest. Should Premiere win the license, Lamy will become Vice-President of Programming, working with associates Moses Znaimer and Jean Fortier. "This will mean," he says, "leaving film production as a first-person film producer, but I'll be close to the production of films nevertheless." And if Premiere doesn't get the nod? "I'll continue to produce pictures privately, as I always have. Either way, TV will be involved. That market holds out the most money and the biggest audience. If that tax shelter survives, the amounts sought will be much less; pay-TV will be able to co-finance films as well. But we're looking at reasonable budgets. Not more than \$2 million. This is a viable structure. Everyone gets involved: L'Institut, the CFDC, the National Film Board and the CBC. We'll be working on films scaled down to our means. It has to be the start of a new credo."

That credo will not be new to Pierre Lamy. His *modus operandi* for years, it has seen him through cycles of boom and bust with his principles and his reputation intact. No small feat. And they're giving awards for it this year. "It's kind of nice that after sitting there for years with no kudos, he's finally been fully recognized," says an admiring Harry Gulkin. "He's a marathon runner; no good at all for short bursts. Pierre lasts the course."

Filmography

(The following films are feature films unless marked (tv) for television series or (docu) for documentary films. Throughout his career, Lamy has also produced a great number of commercials and educational films. His credit on these films is as producer unless marked executive producer.)

1958-1962:

Niagara Films Inc.
(executive producer)

Le roman de la science (tv)

Par le trou de la serrure (tv)

Les insolences d'une camera (tv)

L'homme devant la science (tv)

1962-1971:

Onyx Films Inc.

Les insolences d'une camera (tv)

Jeunesse oblige (tv)

Place aux Jérolas (tv)

Place à Olivier Guimond (tv)

Le viol d'une jeune fille douce

by Gilles Carle

Red by Gilles Carle

Les mâles by Gilles Carle

L'Expo 67 (docu)

Deux femmes en or

by Claude Fournier

Situation du théâtre

by Jacques Gagne (docu)

Education (tv)

1971-1975:

Les productions Carle-Lamy Ltée

La maudite galette by Denys Arcand

Les smattes

by Jean-Claude Labrecque

La conquête by Jacques Gagne

La vraie nature de Bernadette

by Gilles Carle

Kamouraska by Claude Jutra

Aux frontières du possible (tv)

La mort d'un bûcheron

by Gilles Carle

Les corps célestes

by Gilles Carle

Il était une fois dans l'est

by André Brassard

Gina by Denys Arcand

Pour le meilleur et pour le pire

by Claude Jutra

Tout feu, tout femme

by Gilles Richer

Les chevaux ont-ils des ailes

by Gilles Carle (docu)

La tête de Normandie St-Onge

by Gilles Carle

1975-1979:

Les productions Pierre Lamy Ltée

Far Shore by Joyce Wieland

Chanson pour Julie

by Jacques Vallée

Le soleil se leve en retard

by André Brassard

Who Has Seen the Wind

by Allan King (executive producer)

Innu Asi by Arthur Lamothe

(executive producer)

Frederic (tv)

Contre-coeur by Jean-Guy Noël

1980-1981:

Lamy, Spencer et compagnie Ltée

Les beaux souvenirs

by Francis Mankiewicz

Hockey (tv)

Alberta awards its own

by Linda Kupecek

The 8th Annual Alberta Film and Television Awards were held February 12-14 in Edmonton. The annual event, sponsored by the Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association (AMPIA) attracted 95 entries and a crowd of over 200 from Edmonton and Calgary.

The weekend's activities opened with a retrospective of early silent films shot in Alberta, with Charles Hofmann at the piano. (Mr. Hofmann, an anthropologist and film lecturer, played for silent films as a boy, and has served as Music Director for Film at the Museum of Modern Art in New York for five years.) The fare at the retrospective paralleled the offerings at the Film Awards: short promotional films outnumbering commercial features. The silent shorts shown included *Home of the Buffalo*, a 1920 travelogue, and *An Unselfish Love*, a ten-minute C.P.R. settlement film, shot in 1910 near Strathmore. The feature, *Back to God's Country* (1919) starred Nell Shipman, as Dolores, "the swimming girl of the Canadian wilds."

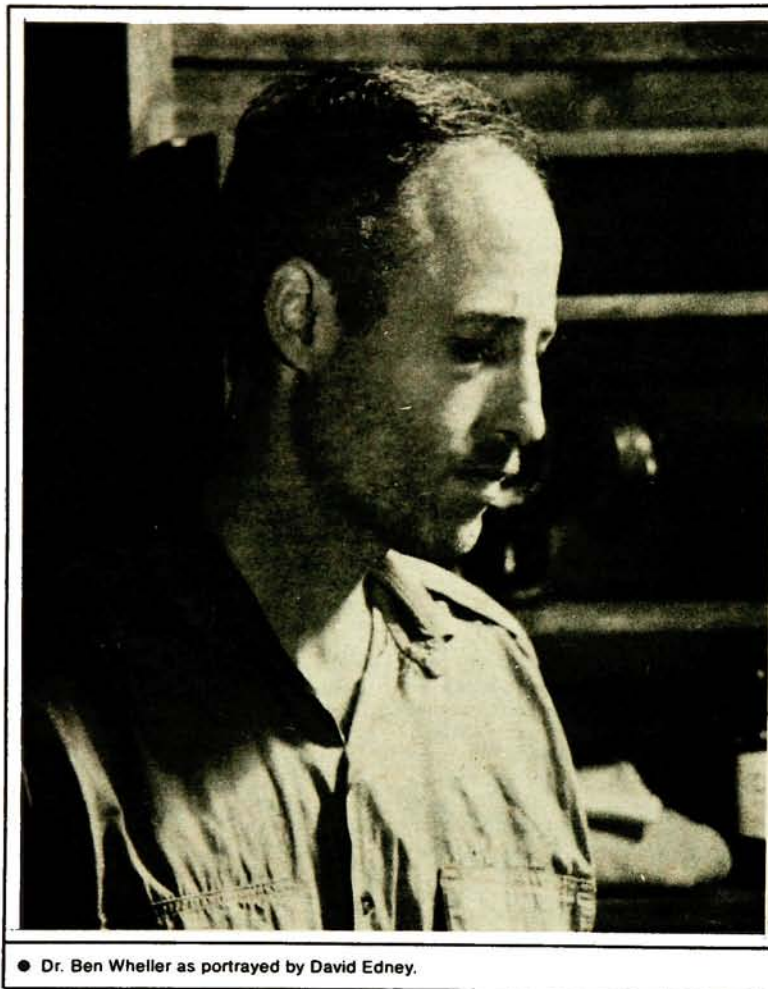
The Awards were presented Saturday, February 13, at a dinner/dance at the Four Seasons Hotel, organized by Awards Chairman Marke Slipp. Jury Chairman was Dr. Jerry Ezekiel, and the judges (who endured with grace a rigorous week of almost continuous screenings) were John Kennedy, Head of Television Drama, CBC, Toronto; cinematographer Richard Leiterman (*Motherlode*) and producer-director Philip Borsos (*The Grey Fox*).

A War Story, a feature-length documentary produced by the National Film Board, Northwest Production Studio, won several awards: Best Overall Production; Best Entertainment, Feature; Best Direction (Anne Wheeler); and Best Music (Maurice Marshall).

Genie Award winner Tom Peacocke (Best Actor, *Hounds of Notre Dame*, 1981) presented the Best Actor award with the comment, "My Genie was an award that came to Alberta, not to me." Another presenter, William Marsden, Director of the Film Development Office in Edmonton, and one of the founding members of AMPIA, commented, "There is no place in the world I would rather be tonight than with the AMPIA people."

The Jury Luncheon on Sunday allowed the entrants to discuss their work with the judges, which many felt was a rewarding exchange. Chairman Ezekiel claimed the positive overview and constructive criticism were a highlight of the weekend.

The mood of the evening was one of



● Dr. Ben Wheller as portrayed by David Edney.

The mood of the evening was one of celebration, with audible sighs of relief that the dry spell of 1981 appears to have ended.

"The big thing is that we survived 1981." (Michael Douglas)

"This year looks totally different. We have a very strong year coming up." (Ron McCallum)

celebration, with audible sighs of relief that the dry spell of 1981 appears to have ended. Last year, a gloomy investment climate, grim economy, and industry strikes combined to limit film activity in Alberta, as elsewhere.

"The pressure of the economy is starting to be felt in the film (and tape) industry," commented Ron Brown of Century II. "But I think everybody's optimistic. We have things in the works

for the year." Century II completed several projects in 1981: a Klondike Days film; a film on international trade, *The Alberta Connection*; and *Generations*, a one-hour television drama to be released with pay-television. The company continues work on *The Edmonton Chronicles*, a five-part television series (or two-hour showcase). Other projects include a film on the handicapped; a one-and-one-half hour television drama;

and a television program on agriculture to star Fil Fraser.

Ron McCallum, of Thunder Road Studios in Calgary, comments, "We were frugal and kept our staff and overhead down." In 1981, Thunder Road's sound studio, film studio and motion picture lab were engaged in recordings, commercials, and film scores. "This year looks totally different. We have a very strong year coming up."

Cranston Gobbo, the general manager of William F. White which opened in Calgary in May 1981, says "Although the year was slow, we were very, very busy." The company is constructing a studio, offices and camera room in its facility.

"To me, the big thing is that we survived 1981," says Michael Douglas of Douglas Film Group. Douglas is now producing and directing a five-part docu-drama series on safety and the young worker.

Meanwhile, Albert Karvonen of Karvonen Films Ltd., known for its extensive wildlife productions, has been busy with an Audubon lecture tour.

Doug Paulson of Videopack (and also the star of the CTV series *Thrill of a Lifetime*) comments, "We survived on sponsored industrials. It hasn't been easy, but repeat business and updating has helped." Paulson predicts a busy summer for Videopack, but laments the border restrictions regarding shooting in the U.S. "We are disappointed that the opportunity to use American sunshine is not afforded us, despite our long winter."

Of *Thrill of a Lifetime*, with ratings of nearly two million, star Paulson exudes "It's so great to be involved with a show on national television that isn't sponsored by the hinterland's who's who."

Hans Dys, of ITV, reports on two major series, *Stony Plain* and the popular SCTV. *Stony Plain* is set on a dude ranch, with 13 segments completed, and 11 more planned for next year. The series is distributed by Viacom. "We are anticipating very good foreign sales because of the big open skies of Alberta." Dys comments, "We were happy with the final results, but there were areas that we needed to improve, mainly, the stories." Dys anticipates syndication by the fall of 1982 with an ultimate goal of 24 segments a year.

SCTV will be moved to Toronto. "We own 50 per cent of SCTV," says Dys. "SCTV tied up two studios, so we couldn't do other projects." The series, now in its fifth year of production, is now seen all over North America on NBC and CBC.

"We are always looking for ideas," says Dys. "Co-productions are the big things as far as we are concerned."

Despite the rigours of 1981, Alberta filmmakers appear optimistic regarding 1982. The continuing ritual of the Film and Television Awards is a reminder of the constant growth of the industry, and an inspiration for the future. ●

Linda Kupecek, an Albertan actress who writes and broadcasts on film, is a member of the National Council of the ACTRA Performers' Guild.

REVIEWS

by Tom Crighton

This year's AMPIA Awards proved to be a three-horse race. *A War Story*, *Never Say Die* and *Inupiatun: In The Manner Of The Eskimo*, swept the majority of honours. Here are a few thoughts on these winning films.

A War Story

Produced by the National Film Board of Canada, North West Studio. Directed by Anne Wheeler. Running time: 81 minutes 50 seconds.

A War Story is an intensely emotional docu-drama. It's also a true story. In 1942, when Singapore fell to the Japanese, over 120,000 men were taken prisoner. One of them was Dr. Ben Wheeler. The good doctor was shipped to a mining camp on Formosa (Taiwan) where, for the next four years, he cared for his fellow P.O.W.'s under hellish conditions. The camp grew to hold 1,000 men, many of whom are alive today, thanks only to Dr. Wheeler's medical genius and devotion.

During those years, when death was a daily visitor, Dr. Wheeler kept a diary. This film is based on that diary. It tells of human endurance beyond belief, of starvation, torture and pain. But there is also hope, and an astonishing amount of love. *A War Story* is a powerful film because of the story it tells and the remarkable recollections of some of the survivors.

Dr. Wheeler died when his daughter Anne was 17. Anne Wheeler grew up to become an accomplished documentary filmmaker, (*Augusta, Teach Me To Dance*). This film is her tribute to her father.

A War Story was shot on three continents and is by any criteria a major production. The P.O.W. camp was meticulously reconstructed for the dramatic sequences and no resources were spared in finding archival stills and footage to compliment Dr. Wheeler's story.

All of this, of course, means money.

Tom Crighton is an Edmonton writer, film critic and broadcaster.



● Jurors Kennedy, Leiterman and Borsos, backed by Ezekiel and Slipp.

Being a National Film Board production, it's impossible to calculate exactly what the film cost, as so many of the expenditures are classed as 'inside costs'. I have been informed that the 'real cost' of the film was in the neighbourhood of \$650,000. If this is the case, that budget is not on the screen.

A War Story is a fairly straightforward documentary in terms of direction and cinematography. In many ways the story actually carries the film. In a case like this, every filmmaker on the block will tell you, 'For that kind of money, I could have done a lot more.' I believe for that kind of money, Anne Wheeler could have done a lot more.

Never Say Die

Produced by Filmwest Associates Ltd., Edmonton. Directed by Harvey Spak. Running time 30 minutes.

Never Say Die is a safety film aimed at roughnecks who work on onshore oil rigs. Doesn't sound too glamorous does it? This is not the type of property most producers would give a second thought. Little do they know. This film is a gold mine!

In 1973, the same producers made a similar film warning against the dangers of sour gas. Again, it sounds too industrial to be show biz. The film was called *Three Minutes To Live*. It cost less than \$40,000 to make. To date, *Three Minutes To Live* has grossed over \$500,000! *Never Say Die* is the son of *Three Minutes To Live*.

Filmwest's business manager George Christoff, (ex-Crawley Films) is confident that *Never Say Die* will do at least as well as *Three Minutes To Live*. This will mean a gross of around \$700,000 for a

film with a negative cost of \$96,000.

Films like this, made specifically for a target market, are difficult to evaluate unless one is part of the intended audience. *Never Say Die* transcends this problem, being an entertaining and often funny look at the roughneck's work habits.

The number one cause of accidents on oil rigs is lack of alertness... sleep-walking on the job. The film uses this as its basic premise and weaves around it an inspired yarn of supernatural proportions. This is the story of one roughneck who has been turned into a zombie by the deafening environment he works in and his own means of escape... drugs and booze. It enables us, and every oilworker, to see how a man can become a time bomb, a danger not only to himself but also to his fellow workers. It is a powerful indictment of complacency.

Part of the magical formula at work here is the fact that for a half-hour safety film, *Never Say Die* has the production value of a feature film. Vancouver-based John Thomas was hired as effects co-ordinator and no corners were cut in assembling the cast of eight to re-enact every roughneck's nightmare... death on the rig.

Never Say Die was a capital cost allowance project with the budget coming from a small private issue of units. Filmwest will sell prints around the world to oil and gas companies and petroleum associations.

The reason this short film is such a hot property is simply that every drilling rig in the world is virtually identical, and so are the dangers inherent in working on them. This in turn translates into guaranteed international distribution.

Never Say Die is a fine film which deserves all the financial success it will no doubt achieve. It is also a refreshing reminder that the film business is as much business as it is film.

Inupiatun: In The Manner Of The Eskimo

Produced by Cinetel Film Productions Ltd., Edmonton. Directed by Peter Haynes and Harold Tichenor. Running time 55 minutes.

This film is described by its makers as, 'The first film on McKenzie Delta Eskimos living on the land... and perhaps the last.' This is a sensationalistic statement, but it's probably true. *Inupiatun* is an endearing piece of work which avoids the banalities which are generally incumbent on this type of film.

At its best, it's reminiscent of Flaherty's opus of 1920, *Nanook of the North*; at its worst, it's as good as the pseudo-anthropological specials we see on American television. It is worth remembering though, that in 1982, Flaherty will get you nowhere.

The documentary was shot over the period of a year by a crew who lived with the Eskimos in nine different hunting and fishing camps. It successfully captures the spirit and soul of these unknown people in a fashion which is admirable in its objectivity... this film doesn't preach. The fact that the Eskimos have snowmobiles and rifles is never questioned. Nor should it be. In trying to depict the Eskimo way of life as accurately as possible, the film does lack what one might call 'Cheap hooks.'

In this respect, *Inupiatun* is perhaps a little too honest for its own good. The 'Year in the Life of...' format is difficult to pace. It often leads to sequences which some would call lyrical but most would call boring. Again, this is a result of the film's authenticity.

This is a valuable document, a film which informs without drawing conclusions. It is a rare opportunity to gain an insight of a lifestyle which is no doubt doomed.

It's no surprise that *Inupiatun* won the awards for best cinematography and best non-dramatic script. It's also no surprise it didn't win for best editing or best sound recording. These are two craft fields where this film is sadly lacking. If the producers had gone 'out-of-house' for these skills, they would have a better film on their hands.

Cinetel Productions raised the capital for *Inupiatun* under a capital cost allowance private issue of units. The budget was \$250,000. The film will hopefully recoup its cost through international television sales. ●

WINNERS

8th Annual Alberta Film and Television Awards

Best Overall Production
A War Story
National Film Board, Northwest Production Studio.

Best Documentary
Inupiatun - In the Manner of the Eskimo
Cinetel Film Productions

Best Educational
Speakeasy - Did I Say That?
ACCESS Alberta

Best Motivational
Never Say Die
Filmwest Associates

Best Promotional
I'm Just an Ordinary Me
ACCESS Alberta

Best Commercial
CITV-FM Rock Metropolis
Advision

Best Wildlife
High Country
Karvonen Films

Best Entertainment (short)
Person's Case
ACCESS Alberta

Best Entertainment (feature)
A War Story
National Film Board, Northwest Production Studio

Best News and Public Affairs
The Gay Straightjacket
CBC Edmonton

Best Musical Variety
Ray Charles in Concert
CITY

CRAFT CATEGORIES

Best Direction
Anne Wheeler
A War Story

Best Script - Dramatic
Donaleen Saul, Gerri Cook
Garage Gazette

Best Script - Non-Dramatic
Peter Haynes, Harold Tichenor
Inupiatun - In the Manner of the Eskimo

Best Cinematography
Swami Veet Parajayo, Trig Singer
Inupiatun - In the Manner of the Eskimo

Best Sound
Garrell Clark
Garage Gazette

Best Music
Maurice Marshall
A War Story

Best Editing
Michel Lalonde, Allan Stein, Swami Veet Parajayo
Never Say Die

Best Performance by an Actor
Frank Pelligrino
Never Say Die

Best Performance by an Actress
Carol Curties
Pieces of Anger

Best Performance by a Narrator
Jim Nunn
Alberta 2005-When the Well Runs Dry

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