

Lawrence L. Kent's

Scoring

One look at the film *Scoring* and it's easy to understand why the Canadian feature film industry is in such a mess. This is one movie where everybody who was anybody demonstrated a considerable lack of judgement and foisted their blunders onto an unwitting public. The film was originally titled *Yesterday*, and the pre-release advertising campaign portrayed it as something of a winsome melodrama. "Falling in love was so much easier then," read the caption.

Obviously somewhere along the line, producers John Dunning and André Link had a change of heart. Heady with the awesome success of their *Meatballs* they must have decided to jump on board the bandwagon that they themselves had created. The title changed to *Scoring*. The sad-looking faces on the ads now beam at us. We see a hockey stick and a frothing mug of beer and are told that this "audience-winning experience should please *Animal House* fans." Just how this remarkable metamorphosis took place and why is more than an occurrence peculiar to *Scoring*.

SCORING d. Lawrence L. Kent p. John Dunning, André Link assoc. p. Lawrence Nesis sc. Bill LaMond, John Dunning based on treatment by Carol H. Leckner from an idea by John Dunning d.o.p. Richard Ciupka art d. Roy Forge Smith ed. Debra Karen mus. Paul Baillargeon title sequence design Ian Webster line p. Jean Lafleur, David Robertson asst. to p. Irene Litinsky p. acct. Trudi Link p. man. Marie-Josée Raymond p. sec. Micheline Cadieux cont. Ginette Senécal asst. to d. Rit Wallis 1st a.d. Don Buchsbaum 2nd a.d. Michael Williams 1st asst. cam. David Herrington 2nd asst. cam. Larry Lynn gen. op. Eddy Trempe stills Takashi Seida sd. mix. Patrick Rousseau boom Thierry Hoffman asst. art d. Susan Longmire set dresser Ronald Fauteux asst. set dresser Emmanuel Lepine prop. buyer Claude Decary, Jacques Godbout set props Jacques Chamberland asst. props. Daniel Huysmans scenic painter Elizabeth Leszczynski art dept. asst. Daniel Bradette wardrobe superv. Nicoletta Massone wardrobe mistress Nicole Pelletier make-up Jocelyne Bellemare, Suzanne Riou make-up asst. Normande Campeau sp. efx make-up Stephan Dupuis hair Thomas Booth asst. ed. Michael Karen, Milton Hubsher sd. ed. Peter Thillaye asst. sd. ed. Glen Gauthier, Tony Currie sd. re-rec. Gary Bourgeois mus. mix. Claude Demers gaffer John Berrie key grip Jacob Rolling grips Norman Guy, François Dupère, Serge Doré, Paul Morin elec. Michel Paul Bélisle, Walter Klimkiw, Jean-Paul Houle sp. efx. Joe Elsener, Eflex Specialists Inc. stunts Dwayne McLean, Terry Martin, Brad Bovee, Peter Horak hockey co-ord. Ned Dowd unit man. Tanya Tree loc. man. Mario Nadeau asst. loc. man. John Desormeaux unit pub. Elayne Kato casting U.S. Hilary Holden casting/Can. Claire Walker, Murielle Fournier titles additional graphics Gary Pover, Antoinette Morielli additional photog. Brian Boyer driver capt. Charles Toupin cast. driver Rick Disensi p.a. John Boland, Guy Cadieux, Robert Ditchburn, Paul Hotte, Bill Lee, Brian Campbell craft service Rick Barham, Steve Tabah post p. man. Stewart Harding second unit 1st a.d. Mirreille Goulet 2nd a.d. Yvon Arseneault cont. Cathy Toulmonde sd. mix. Normand Mercier art d. Reuben Freed set props Gilles Aird asst. props Pierre Charpentier cam. Frank Link, Daniel Fournier, Avon Brunet, Jean-Marie Buquet songs "Yesterday's Smile" & "Gabrielle" sung by Charles Linton; "Je me souviens" sung by Claire Pimparé. Charles Linton lyrics by Richard Berman French lyrics by Robert Gauthier mus. published by Coda Musique Inc. (CAPAC) "The U.S. Air Force" by Robert Crawford l.p. Vincent Van Patten, Claire Pimparé, Nicholas Campbell, Jack Wetherall, Jacques Godin, Marthe Mercure, Gerard Parkes, Daniel Gadonas, Cloris Leachman, Eddie Albert, Jonathan Barrett, Michel Blais, John Boylan, Jim Bradford, David Eisner, Neil Elliott, Ian Finlay, Marie-Helene Fontaine, Bertrand Gagnon, Cindy Girling, Harold Gustafson, Frederic Hall, Joan Heney, Robert King, Moira Knott, Richard Niquette, Earl Pennington, Scotty Sheridan, Sam Stone, Greg Swanson, John Wildman p.c. Filmline Productions Inc. (1979).

It is an analogy for an entire industry gone sour.

One wonders why English Canadians make such wretched films about the Québécois experience. The political and sociological issues in that province offer a hotbed of moral dilemmas that would intrigue any writer. A love story unfolding against the backdrop of political upheaval is a tried and true cinematic genre. What then went wrong with *Scoring*? Quite simply, the makers of this film got greedy. They wanted the whole audience pie and in their zeal to please everybody, they pleased nobody. Just precisely when and where they lost faith in their product is not clear. But the net result is, *Scoring* isn't much of a love story any more. As a political drama it is just not to be taken seriously and as far as those *Animal House* fans are concerned the movie is a joke - a bad one. *Scoring* is, instead, a mish-mash of genres that really succeeds in only one thing - further alienating the already beleaguered Canadian film audience.

When the screenplay was first developed it was, no doubt, intended as a serious dramatic exploration of two concurring protest issues - the burgeoning of the Québécois identity and the war in Vietnam. The narrative unfolds in 1967. An American pre-med student, Vincent Van Patten (God forbid you should ever see him coming at you with a scalpel) goes to McGill University and falls in love with a young Québécois woman, Claire Pimparé. She is a traditional homespun French Canadian girl with the hot blood of revolution coursing through her veins. One look at her charging about Montreal painting the town with separatist slogans and her would-be lover begins to realize that he has a national dilemma of his own to solve. The U.S. of A. is at war in Vietnam and, what with Montreal run amok with

draft-dodgers, it's time for this all-American boy to go home and take a stand. The idea for the film was a good one and it's not surprising that Dunning and Link went for it. Good ideas, however, have an uncanny way of undoing themselves when they're bludgeoned into pat formulas as this one was.

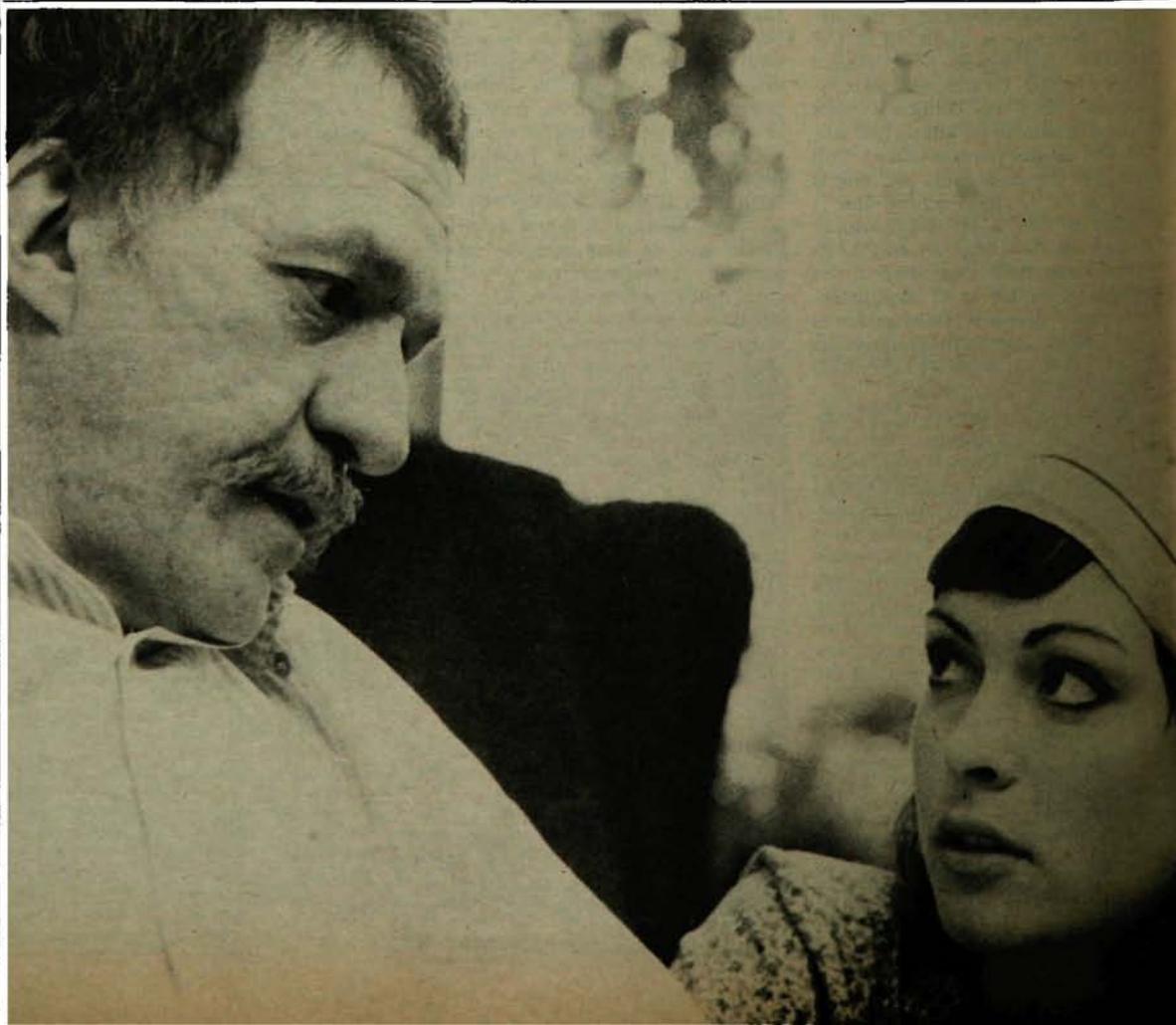
Jane Fonda realized that it would take the upmost in tack and tenderness to make an American audience swallow a hard-hitting film like *Coming Home*. The writers of *Scoring*, Bill LaMond and John Dunning, have thrown caution to the winds and charged at their subject matter in the most confrontational, emotionally manipulative manner possible. These guys have taken on the sorest points of both Canadian and American culture and jabbed at them with ice picks. Facts may be facts but these writers need to be informed that fiction is quite another matter. LaMond and Dunning are so determined to give us the goods that they forgot to give it to us good. The narrative frequently grinds to a halt so that we can profit from a much needed Canadian history lesson. Any sense of drama has been lost because of the persistent need of these writers to tell us what we already know about Quebec society. Cliché-ridden characterizations abound. We get momma in the kitchen doing her ironing, her grim-faced husband coming out with lines like, "stay with your own kind" and "you can't eat your principles," their downtrodden son plotting insurrection, and a daughter who knows plenty about politics but nothing, apparently, about birth control. As Van Patten tries to ply open her legs he says with a straight face, "I'll be careful." The sage Miss Pimparé replies, "I wonder how many children were conceived after those words."

Having sufficiently undermined the

political and romantic themes of this script the writers then go for the *Animal House* stuff. Someone throws up (off camera, thankfully) into an aquarium, we get a belch or two, lots of beer, some lame looking hockey games and a few schoolboy highjinks. It all looks rather half-hearted. The film just isn't paced quickly enough to sustain these gags and consequently they feel like an afterthought. Like it or not, *Meatballs* was a well-constructed film script. The setups were so shamelessly obvious that you half respected them. Furthermore, they belonged in a kiddie summer camp so you didn't even bother resisting them. Somehow in the context of the War Measures Act and the war in Vietnam those gags don't just seem out of place, they're downright obscene. All else having failed, *Scoring* ends by going full tilt into melodrama, aiming with uncanny precision for the jugular. We come out of this movie feeling battered and bruised, screaming, "Enough already!"

What is singularly lacking in *Scoring* is a genuine sense of passion. What we're dealing with here, goddammit, is our national dilemma! We should be screaming out for the likes of a Costa-Gavras to do it justice on the screen. Instead we get Larry Kent who thinks he's still at the Film Board. He just plunks his camera down any old place and tells his actors to go to it. Scene after scene is so cinematically naive (one remembers the Christmas party and cringes) that it's hard to believe that the film wasn't made by a group of Ryerson film students. And those actors! It is highly doubtful that even a Costa-Gavras could have wrenched anything closely resembling thought from a Vincent Van Patten. Claire Pimparé is pretty and works hard but she just doesn't have the charisma required to take hold of the

● Papa, played by Jacques Godin, doesn't like the idea of Gabrielle's (Claire Pimparé) little love affair



Kalli Paakspuu's Maypole Carving

During baseball season in the summer of 1980, down in the Harbourfront park at the foot of Bathurst St., a strange obstruction appeared in right-field sometime during the month of June. It was the huge trunk of a 700-year-old cedar tree. It had been felled in the forest near Squamish, B.C., stripped and transported by truck to Toronto. With it came a small mobile office, and a group of people with a purpose as grand, it turned out, as the piece of wood itself.

They were going to carve something: a Cosmic Maypole. Great! We re-aligned our baseball diamond and continued on with our season.

Two years later, one Kalli Paakspuu, filmmaker, arrives at the Canadian Film Makers Distribution Centre with a 23-minute documentary describing the evolution of this Cosmic Maypole, from the felling of the chosen tree in the lush B.C. forest to the raising of the finished icon, oiled and swirling with carved images, on a chilly October morning in an empty park in Toronto.

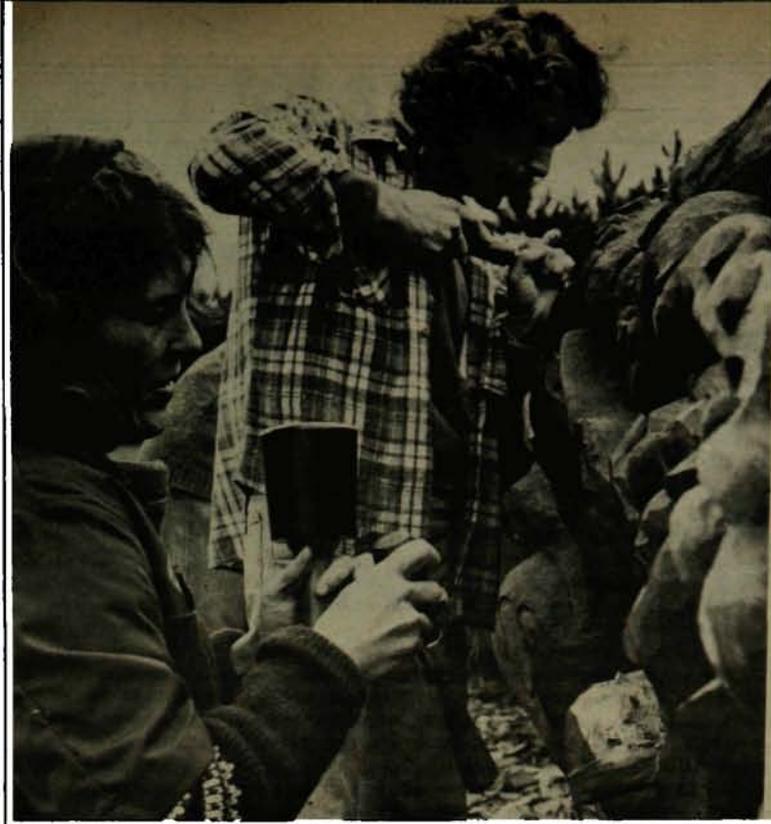
The film begins with a series of long-held close-ups showing a carver's hands, wielding mallet and chisel, slowly fashioning the details of a face in the wood. Timothy Sullivan's music compliments perfectly to immerse the viewer in what is to be the essential idea of the film: slow, patient, painstaking work, performed not as drudgery, but as a way of contemplation and learning - and therefore, creating.

During the establishing sequences, as we see the felling of the tree and its eventual placement at Toronto's Harbourfront, there is a voice-over in which designer Georganna Malloff explains the motifs and the story which the carving will depict. She has mapped the whole thing out for the carvers in red and black paint: it is to be a creation myth entitled "The Dreamwork of the Whales." The maypole's various sections will provide a telling of creation's beginnings... through to a vision of a higher consciousness which man will eventually attain.

Scoring (continued)

big screen. The odiously miscast Jack Weatherall looks as if he had more fun doing *The Elephant Man*. That leaves us with those cinematic luminaries Cloris Leachman and Eddie Albert who are, supposedly, our bargain-basement rite of passage to the American distribution deal. Appearing quietly in a thankless supporting role is the one actor in this film who's got the face, talent and brains to be a great actor, Nicholas Campbell. When he looks at the camera you know what he's thinking and when the words don't suffice his body takes over. He's such a good actor that he can even make a lousy part look interesting. The producers of *Scoring* obviously never thought of Campbell for the leading role. Apparently, going for a second rate T.V. star/tennis player like Van Patten was their idea of inspired casting.

Taken all in all, *Scoring* isn't really much better or worse than any number of Canadian films we have seen recently. Its budget, \$1.5 million, is a fair price for any film these days if it is to recoup its



● The maypole slowly takes form

All the scenes and elements are autonomous, yet, by design, they overlap and connect with each other: a Cosmic Maypole.

Then comes the main body of the film which concentrates on the carvers. Chainsaws and axes are used to make the initial cuts. Then, as the maypole takes on a form, the tools become smaller and the work more delicate. But is difficult for the carvers, as they work at close-range on details of the still horizontal slab, to visualize the completed work. So designer Malloff is brought back during several scenes to make sure the rhythms and textures fit with the overall plan. It's interesting to see a "director" at work, striving to make the concept and the physical materials merge. The film could use much more of the presence of Georganna Malloff.

Chip by chip, the Cosmic Maypole nears completion. Two other sequences are inter-cut with the actual work on the wood. One hints at the engineering dynamics involved in raising the mammoth pole; and the other shows one of the members of the maypole group

costs. *Scoring* is a little film and, by definition, should have come from the hearts and minds of its makers. Had there been some emotional commitment to this project we might have had something here that feels more like a movie and less like a deal. John Dunning and André Link should be called upon to redress their wrongs and raise the budget for this film all over again. Rewrite the script but this time without any spurious Hollywood notions of manufacturing a winner and find a director who's willing to divest a little of his/her soul in putting it on the screen. Of course, real actors will have to be found for the parts but there are plenty of those around if you look hard enough for them. All of this may sound a touch preposterous but crazier things have happened in this business. Who knows, if producers start caring about the movies they make we may just have an industry after all.

David Eames ●

appearing before Toronto city council, giving a progress report and appealing for aid in the matter of paying for the pole to be raised. As with the scenes involving Georganna Malloff more development of these elements of the project would have given the film a greater breadth. (It's always fun to see such worldly people as city politicians arguing and expressing themselves on the topic of such things as Cosmic Maypoles.)

The film ends with the raising of the maypole on an autumn morning in the nearly deserted park. Those involved dance with pride and joy at their accomplishment, but one is left with the feeling that the whole project was carried out in near anonymity.

Technically, the film's strongest point is the music track. This element is the strongest in helping to establish the feeling which must have surrounded the small group as they worked through the summer and fall. Paakspuu, who appears to have done her own editing, chops a few scenes off with a haste that is noticeable. Why didn't she linger more, as she did with those beautiful opening close-ups? Rolf Cutt's camera has provided the basic materials, but, (and I suppose this falls back into director/editor Paakspuu's lap), a little more thought beforehand to the *rhythm* of a story about such a huge sedentary object as a maypole could, perhaps, have illicit a little more in the way of variety in the cinematography. I don't know what her budget was, but, as stated, the thing was lying there from June right through to the World Series; plenty of time to study and story-board.

But the film is enjoyable and valuable. It explains the maypole, and, partially, the perspective of those who caused it to happen. It's good that we have filmmakers such as Kalli Paakspuu whose curiosity and dedication would attract her to produce and complete a project such as *Maypole Carving*.

John Brooke ●

MAYPOLE CARVING p.c. Kalli Paakspuu
Films p./d. Kalli Paakspuu d.o.p. Rolf Cutt's ed.
Kalli Paakspuu ed. Kalli Paakspuu. Scott Prebby
music Timothy Sullivan dist. International Tele-
Film Ent. running time 28 min. 16mm colour

Peter Raymont's Magic in the Sky

Harvey J. Crossland's Somewhere Between

Anne Cubitt's Treaty 8 Country

Photo: Kalli Paakspuu

Canadian cinema has presented us with two images of native peoples. The first was of smiling and silent performers of exotic crafts and practices. Whether we were asked to despise or romanticize this anthropological subject, the implication of these films was that the native person was essentially alien to our European culture, a sideshow to our daily lives.

The second image of the native person has been that of the political activist, the hero of films like *You Are on Indian Land*. Admirable as these films were in bringing native problems into public view, they carried within them a rather demeaning assumption. The first was that their native protagonists had gotten smart; they would succeed because they could be taught the mechanics of Western style radical struggle. No longer would the native person be essentially alien to the film audience. Instead, he fit quite well into the rhetoric of those productions that brought us Oppressed Minority, Type A.

Three recent films concerning native problems have come up against these fundamentally divergent views of native peoples in contemporary Canada. Most successful is *Treaty 8 Country*, a film by Vancouver documentarians Anne Cubitt and Hugh Brody. The first half of the film is a synch sound sequence of a caribou hunt on a western reserve. As the hunt slowly unfolds, the temptation is to see the film as yet another "Indians trap and skin something" ethnographic epic. Yet we are soon made aware of breaks with the anthropological approach. The silence and distance of the hunt is frequently punctured by the hunters' discussion of their actions and of the nature of the process.

While skinning and gutting their prey, the hunters project a social awareness that goes beyond the traditional practices of the hunt. This awareness is made more tangible with a radio announcement of a meeting to discuss infringements of the hunting rights guaranteed under Treaty 8. Almost imperceptibly, we move from the hunt to a meeting on the reserve. The legal issues surrounding the hunt are explained by a native lawyer to the band council and the hunters. And, as these issues are unfolded in a lengthy anecdotal fashion, the camera pans away from the speaker to the continued, now seemingly endless, process of preparing skins and meat.

The genius of *Treaty 8 Country* is the genius of any great documentary: the ability to tell a story on its own terms. The hunt, in its own good time, becomes a political rally. But it is a political rally