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 filled in the field next to Squamish B.C., stripped of its bark, 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 swirled 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, the music complement perfectly to immerse the viewer in what is to be the essential idea of the film: slow, patient, painstaking work, performed as a meditation, 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 Mallof 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 called "The Dreamworks of the Whales." The maypole's various sections will provide a telling of creation's beginnings.

Scoring

big screen. The odiously miscast Jack Wetherall 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. The director who's willing to divest a little of his budget for this film all over again redress their wrongs and raise the thing here that feels more like a movie than a movie. John Dunning and Hugh Brady. 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 the去anthropological approach. The silence and distance of the film is frequently punctuated by the hunters' discussion of their actions and of the nature of the process.

While skimming and putting 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 guarantees under Treaty 8. The most important, we move from the hunt to a meeting on the reserve. The legal issues surrounding the hunt are explained by a lawyer and a band council and the hunters. And, as these issues are unfolded in a lengthy, anecdotal fashion, the camera pans away from the speaker to a scene of people seemingly endless process of processing 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 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 Mallof 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 a little more, as she did with those beautiful opening close-ups? Rolf Cot's camera has the basic matter, but, I suppose this falls back into director 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 alleviated 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 •


David Eames •
that is never very far from the genesis of the conflict and the consciousness of those who struggle with it at their own pace in their own way.

At its best, Harvey Crossland's *Somewhere Between* begins to evoke this kind of synthesis. Sponsored by the Professional Native Women's Association with additional support from The Legal Services Society, The Secretary of State and the National Film Board, the film is an attack on the injustice of robbing native women of their Indian status for having married non-Indians. The argument is made largely through a series of interviews with native women who have been victimized by the legislation.

Like *Treaty & Country, Somewhere Between* is a lesson in watching and listening. The women's stories of arbitrary loss and separation are superb oral history. None of the women interviewed asks for our sympathy. Yet all of them earn it through their forthright renditions of the sexist bureaucratic nightmare that has plagued their lives.

The women's stories demolish the credibility of the few voices who speak for the status quo. But they also make pale the stock parliamentary footage of sympathetic M.P.'s raising the issue in the abstract. Indeed, the film's major shortcoming is its inability to clarify the current struggle in the context of the testimony presented. What is missing here are the smart lawyers and eloquent lobbyists who might be able to bridge the oral testimony and the ideal, if sympathetic, parliamentary addresses.

The film needs someone like the native lawyer in *Treaty & Country*, someone who can speak both languages.

It is just this question of speaking two languages that is examined in *Magic in the Sky*, an ambitious film by Peter Raymont. *Magic in the Sky* takes us from a eulogized image of Marshall McLuhan to the world's most isolated television station in its attempt to describe the genesis of native run northern television.

Unlike the other two films, there is little in Raymont's production that forces us to observe or listen with a native sensitivity. Instead, the complex considerations presented here are brought to us with the fury of a mid-60's media happening. At one point, Raymont's crew is filming an Innuit crew filming the filming of a network soap opera. At other moments, we are being given television-speed capsule descriptions of the nature of the medium, the white/Innuit interface and the workings of communications satellites.

Undoubtedly, the horror of information Raymont wishes to place before us represents 100 years work for a native storyteller or a non-native filmmaker working to emulate his pace. Nevertheless, the many charming moments found in this film disappear far too quickly. This polar village debating the issues surrounding cultural interface, the relationships between Innuit student broadcasters and their white "trainers" and the interactions between CBC Headquarters and its most distant affiliate render a tiny bit of broadcast time to the interactions between CBC Headquarters and its most distant affiliate.

MAGIC IN THE SKY d. Peter Raymont  
Initial research Martin Lewis, Beverly Straight camera ass. Frank Ravin, Catherine Doney ad. ed. Bernie Bordeleau, Anne Whiteside  
re-rec. Jean-Pierre Locard v.f. ad. Louise Clark  
name. Michael Kao research consultant Kenneth G. O'Riordan Ph. p. Arthur Raymond, Peter Raymont  
assoc. P. Ted Riley p.c. Investigation Production The National Film Board of Canada running time: 27 min., colour, 16mm, d.s. N.F.B.

SOMETIME BETWEEN d. Harvey J. Crossland  


Peter Carter

(cont. from p. 8)

who put these series into shape, and loved working on it with him.

Peter and I stayed close friends and when, in the late '60s, I got my first feature film together, *Isabel*, it was of course Peter with Joyce Cuzey that helped me. And he was always there from line producer down to third AD, as well as props; but most of all, he was like a brother, and we shared that special adventure into my world and the Gaspe with a closeness I've found hard to match in film since.

When it came time to do Act of the Heart there was Peter again, helping as associate producer. But once we got the thing rolling and were shooting he went back to Toronto to, at last, direct his first television film. That was in 1989. I believe.

A year or two later we found us each starting our own film projects for a feature to the CFDC, which at that time was even more powerful than it is today. Once his own film was ready, with both Harvey Crossland and Larry Day came to me preparing Journey. We set together with the rest of the Journey crew, through that long afternoon in one of the CFDC offices in Toronto on our fate. The meeting broke up, but no one had the courtesy to pass on their decisions. So P.C. and I got on the phone, but as usual, the CFDC members were just plain-crawled across town. We got the answer. P.C.'s The Rowdymen was off! But Journey was off! We were both broken down for our new project and des pairing... But this story does have a happy ending. Within a week I got the CFDC to reverse their decision! Now our only problem was to get a telegram to each other on the first day of shooting between the wilds of Newfoundland and Tadoussac on the rocky North Shore of Quebec.

In the late '70s, I lost a very happy refuge in Toronto where, on visits there, I spent a lot of time sharing Peter and Louis J. and later in California, where I decided to move to Los Angeles. My wife Joan and I met them at the L.A. airport in a truck, and they stayed with us on the beach until they moved into their own art-deco house. Peter loved the birds which sang around his garden and he grew great roses and flowers, and continued to spread his influence on film down here. Fun enough, we always used to say that in our old age we'd stick it out together in some old-age home with no teeth, reminiscing over our lengthy past. We shared so many experiences, it would take a book to write them all. And now, I've lost a very dear friend.

Peter's story is the story of the beginnings of our new industry, from R.C.M.P. through Forest Rangers, Sea- way, the early days of CBC-television films, to our first features, and then to the first great wave of films. They were extraordinary years, and the whole industry is depleted by his unexpected death. I was going to say that they don't make them like that anymore - but there's his son Jason: if he decides on film, I expect every door in the industry will open to him.

Paul Almond

*Director of many television films and series Peter Carter's feature films include The Rowdymen (1972), Rituals (1976), High Ball (1977), Ravik the Wolf Dog (1978) and A Man Called Intrepid (1979).*

Erratum: Inadvertently, John Harkness's name was omitted from the film review of "Paradise" in issue No. 85. Our apologies to the author. Ed.