

FILM REVIEWS

Slipstream

Directed by David Acoma; Screenplay by Bill Fruet, from a story by David Acoma; Cinematography by Marc Champion; Edited by Tony Lower; Music by Brian Aherne. Cast: Luke Askew, Patti Oatman, Scott Hylands, Eli Rill, Debbie Peck, Debbie Rotenberg, Danny Friedman. Distributed by Cinepix. Running Time: 94 minutes.

Ostensibly intended as a paean to youth, or at least as a patronising celebration of the 'hippie' way of life, David Acoma's "Slipstream" actually presents young people in a very unfavourable light, as either stupid or sexist, or both; with some justification, perhaps, but doubtless unintentionally. The minimally involving plot revolves around a popular disk jockey and his failure to come to grips with a materialist society; we also witness his relationship with a young woman, an affair that wavers unsteadily between mutual acquiescence and complete domination on his part. We realise that they are supposed to be in love because there is a coyly lyrical interlude when they go horseback riding in the buff. (Hats off to Acoma, though, for showing Luke Askew in a prolonged frontal nude shot, thereby negating any cries of exploitation which might have otherwise heralded the scenes involving Patti Oatman's naked body.) The communal house Cathy (Ms. Oatman) leaves to take up with Mike (Mr. Askew), the deejay, is seen as a veritable bastion of male chauvinism: the women are told to clean up the place whilst the men sit around stoned or drinking beer, watching television. Were the film more perceptively written (and it is a disappointment to discover that Bill Fruet is responsible for the witless scenario), one might conceivably accept these communards as examples of the folly of youth-worshipping; that there really is no such simplistic thing as a generation gap, merely intelligent people and stupid people, some old, some young, some with long hair, some with short. But, unfortunately, they fit in all too easily with the other sketchily developed parts to be taken as anything

other than they appear.

The producers of "Slipstream" obviously have their eyes set on the American market, for the film, although unconscionably sloppy in places, has a superficial gloss alien to the usually realistic and grainy look of most Canadian films attempting to be serious, and two of the leading actors (Askew and Scott Hylands) are from south of the border. If one hasn't been there, or cannot read out of focus license plates on moving cars, it comes as an unfortunate surprise to realise that "Slipstream" was filmed in Alberta, with financial assistance from the C.F.D.C. To be fair to Acoma, though, the film is occasionally striking visually, but even then, only in as far as his artful compositional sense is concerned. All the pretty pictures might mean something if their appeal weren't vitiated by sluggish and predictable camera motion (usually a pan from A to B) and, more damagingly, atrocious editing. Time and again, the audience is left to ponder the mystery of the prairies as Acoma leaves his camera pointing at a set or location long since deserted by the players. Worse still are the many fade-ins and -outs, usually accompanied by meaninglessly portentous music. Nothing much happens in "Slipstream" (beyond the plentiful and obligatory lens-flaring, and even some gratuitous use of yellow filters), and when it does, one couldn't care less. Ultimately, it IS a film suitable for youths, but only those very much younger than the eighteen years required by the Ontario censors.

A harsh judgement, perhaps, but certainly not unreasonable. To praise a film simply because it is Canadian IS unreasonable, for that is carrying nationalism to a level of jingoistic absurdity. "Slipstream" is a bad film with pitifully little to offer an intelligent audience, and to sanction a work such as this merely because it was made in one's own country is to condone the making of mediocre movies, a state of affairs which would finally be extremely unhealthy for the Canadian film industry.

Montague Smith

Taureau

— written and directed by Clément Perron; photography by Georges Dufaux; editing by Pierre Lemelin; Joseph Champagne did the sound, Jean Cosineau did the music for this National Film Board production, Marc Beaudet, producer. Starring André Melançon, Monique Lepage, Michèle Magny, Louise Portal, Marcel Sabourin. Canadian distributor: France Film.

Clément Perron wrote the screenplay for **Mon Oncle Antoine**; as directed by Claude Jutra, that nostalgic, tender, story of a boy's greening in the Québec countryside was certainly the hit of 1971 in Canadian films.

Now Clément Perron has written and directed **Taureau**. This seems to English Canada to be his directorial debut and just his second feature film script. But he is hardly an inexperienced newcomer. He has directed, written, or produced scripts for almost forty films since he joined the National Film Board in 1957. His background includes studying at the Sorbonne and the Institute of Filmography after graduating from Laval, and in 1968 he was an executive producer for French Production at the NFB, responsible for works like Jean Pierre Lefebvre's **Jusqu'au Coeur**. Unfortunately, since French Unit Productions are not frequently seen in English-speaking Canada, Perron's name is still new to many.

However, the people of Perron's Québec are becoming familiar to Canadians from Victoria to Saskatoon to Sackville, through his scripts. In **Mon Oncle Antoine** they are seen half-tolerantly through the eyes of a boy, as slightly mysterious, mad, lovable monsters. In **Taureau** the viewpoint darkens to that of an alienated adolescent, and the people appear more malicious, hypocritical, cruel and foolish. Considering the stereotypes born in English-Canadian minds with every movie, I shudder to think of the results when Perron interprets the townspeople of his past in his next screenplay, in which he's promised to describe the local resistance to World War II conscription, undoubtedly centering the conflict on Taureau's dead father, seen memorialized in a photograph in his World War II uniform in **Taureau**.

Taureau, "the bull," is a great, big-chested, heavy, hairy fellow whose formidable sexuality is both held in check by his simpleness, and yet made