

CANADIAN by Rick Hancox FILM

In the beginning...

In yester-year, when I was a film student, I used to get awards at the Canadian Student Film Festival – until my luck changed the year the Festival went big-time, to the tune of \$10,000 total prize money. Now I can't enter anymore.

This year Famous Players Ltd., the Festival's chief benefactor, withdrew half their support and put part of it behind the new student festival of the Canadian National Exhibition in Toronto. But even at five grand, the Canadian Student Film Festival is still among the richest of its kind in the world, and every Canadian film student groping for funds for their next production – or next year's tuition – ought to take it pretty seriously. You can get on the mailing list for next year's entry form by writing the Conservatory of Cinematographic Art (H-109), 1455 de Maisonneuve Blvd. West, Montréal, Québec N3G 1M8.

The Festival was founded by Dr. Serge Losique, Director of the Conservatory, whose word is law for the annual event which has remained solidly fixed at Sir George Williams University (now the Sir George Williams campus of Concordia University) for the six years of its existence, and which – Dr. Losique proudly announced at the end of this year's Festival – is fixed for its seventh year.

The fact that the Festival is held each year during the last week of September is unfortunate, as it is sandwiched closely between three other Canadian film festivals: the Stratford International Film Festival, the Montreal International Festival in 16mm, and the new C.N.E. Student Festival. There are too few festivals to go around in Canada to bunch them all up between August and October. The entry deadlines conflict, and students usually just don't have that many extra prints, let alone enough closely consecutive time off to attend them all.

It's clear someone has got to change, and it looks like Dr. Losique must make the first move. The other festivals just seem to have better reasons prohibiting it. Unfortunately, date-switching for filmmakers entering the Canadian Student Film Festival won't make any difference until the organizers also change the exclusive entry rule, which this year read: "No film will be accepted as an entry if it has been entered in another festival in 1974."

In an interview Dr. Losique told me the rule is "normal – it's the same rule for the Cannes Film Festival". He went on to explain that the idea was to maintain the spirit for "building something really serious".

As well-intentioned as this reasoning may sound, there was a case this year where a film called *Hill Climb*, by Peter Starr, was dropped from the programme at the last minute when it was discovered that Starr had entered a print of it in the C.N.E. festival. This kind of situation tells me the prestige Dr. Losique is after may, after all, simply benefit the Conservatory at the expense of the student. The rule is not at all "normal": of the dozens of festivals open to students in the United States, there is not one I know of that subscribes to this philosophy. On the contrary, they seem to realize students should have every festival opportunity possible to gain exposure with audiences – and compete for all the money they can win.

The exclusive entry rule, in combination with this year's creation of the C.N.E. festival occurring just prior, was undoubtedly the reason the number of entries were down to a mere half of the 1973 total. And when a national film festival has only 73 entries, and 55 of those make it to the public screenings, odds are some inferior work will squeeze past the pre-selection committee. Also, when 17 of the 18 films rejected were Quebec entries, it is clear someone is after regional representation, no matter how few the films to choose from. (I've speculated on whatever connection existed between my never having a film rejected, and the fact that I was usually the only Maritime filmmaker who entered anything.) For the 17 rejected Quebec filmmakers it's another case of submitting to the continuing mis-directed quest for nation-wide prestige and recognition. I had previously seen a number of those Quebec films which were, in fact, far superior to some in the competition: *Untamed Hooves*, by Michael Merrill, July 16, by John R. Gaug, *Sweat Dream*, by Stephen Foxman, and *A Film by David Adams* (by David Adams), to name a few.

Whatever excuse the pre-selection committee can make up based on restricted choices, nothing will excuse their endorsement of the three films submitted from Confederation College – *Theatre Arts*, *Filmmakers*, and *Good Morning Man*. The festival audience became suspicious, and then resentful, after the third consistently flawed film – and little wonder: whatever the truth *may* have been, the three documentaries *looked* liked those confused and careless attempts at group-filmmaking funded by the college because they involve a lot of student participation, and/or carry an inherent recruiting pitch. If Confederation College does, in fact, underwrite certain films, its reputation would be much better served if it concentrated on those individuals free to make a personal statement. In a festival which does show, for the most part, such creative and original student work, the pre-selection committee has a responsibility to detect the appearance of ulterior advertising. It just doesn't go over – especially with more talented and deserving filmmakers rejected.

My one-man's subjective-opinion tells me that sometimes the juries have given awards irresponsibly. There is a tendency to condescendingly dish out certain awards with what must be a sort of pretty-good-considering-it's-a-student-film approach – an attitude so basically negative it is little wonder *Montreal Star* critic Martin Malina didn't do much more than partially list the winning films, and add the fact that his personal choices differed from those made by the jury. Unfor-

STUDENT FESTIVAL

unately his attitude is the same, for when I asked him why he didn't give the festival more attention (as he has done in the past), he replied bluntly, "We don't review amateur films". Mr. Malina should read Stan Brakhage's best piece of writing, "In Defense of the 'Amateur' Filmmaker" (*Filmmakers Newsletter*, Vol. 4, No. 9 & 10), and re-vitalize his adventitious terminology.

In defense of Mr. Malina on the other hand, it is easy to understand his attitude when juries seem to insist on a fallacious trap in which they find themselves giving out awards for what appears to be no more than evidence of hard work and effort, special effects, fancy sets or costumes, and general displays of 'almost-professional-looking' touches. In past years certain documentaries have seemed to win for simply having some comfortable subject: mostly films about 'rustic' country folk, or documentations of vanished, esoteric aspects of Canadian culture. Last, but not least, there is usually a token, 'youth' award to the most industrious high school kid. And all this, but for a number of worthy exceptions, without regard to how lacking in a definitive, personal style some of them are. In addition, some of the documentary prize-winners have been either plainly flippant in treating their subject, or been poorly organized, long and boring; experimental winners are often aimless.

A filmmaker who enters a competitive festival - student or otherwise - which offers \$5,000 in prize money, public screenings before a large audience, a distinguished jury (headed this year by Maurice Bessy, Director of the Cannes Film Festival), and a tour of winning films in Famous Players Theatres across the country, ought to be prepared for keen, unconditional critical judgement based on nothing but the success of the final product - certainly all the intent in the world is meaningless to those watching the film if it ultimately doesn't work. Yet despite all that grandiose padding around the Canadian Student Film Festival, the irony is the pre-selection and final judging remain, with various exceptions, far from grandiose.



Let there
be films!

NORMAN McLAREN AWARD (Grand Prize) of \$1,000: Trapper Dan
by Chris Windsor, Simon Fraser University.

ANIMATION CATEGORY:

1ST PRIZE (\$500) - *Revisited*, by Joyce Borenstein, Cal. Arts.
2ND PRIZE (\$300) - *L'Immigrant*, Gilles Pelletier, UQAM.
3RD PRIZE (\$200) - *Tempting of Eve* Neill Warren, Conestoga.

DOCUMENTARY CATEGORY:

1ST PRIZE (\$500) - no film awarded.
2ND PRIZE (\$300) - *Vice Versa*, Peter Bonilla, School of Modern
Photography.
3RD PRIZE (\$200) - *Jean Pierre Lefebvre*, Paul Crépeau, Loyola.

SCENARIO CATEGORY:

1ST PRIZE (\$500) - *Fragments*, Frank G. Bushe, Ryerson.
2ND PRIZE (\$300) - *L'Autobus*, Danyèle Patenaude, UQAM.
3RD PRIZE (\$200) - *Hello Friend*, Robin Lee, North York Alt. Stdy.
Prgm.

EXPERIMENTAL CATEGORY:

1ST PRIZE (\$500) - *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, Veronika Soul,
McGill.
2ND PRIZE (\$300) - *Quebec 5299*, Daniel Louis, Ryerson.
3RD PRIZE (\$200) - *Almost Nothing in this Film is Real*, George
Hargrave, Loyola.

PRIX SPECIAUX DU JURY (Honourable Mentions - \$100 each):

Dreams, Jean Pol Passet, UQAM.
Pedestrians, Andrew D. Ruhl, Conestoga.
Living Water, James McIntosh, U. of Manitoba.
These Days, Michael F. Adams, Sir George Williams.
Ordinary People, Bruce Allen, Conestoga.

Trapper Dan, by Chris Windsor, a spoof on silent movie serials, was well-executed by the filmmaker and had wonderful acting. I would have given it a 2nd or 3rd Prize rather than Grand

James Cameron, Veronika Soul, Serge Losique and Maurice Bessy

Prize of the festival. Of all approaches to film creativity I think satirizing other films is the easiest. Consequently, while *Trapper Dan* was entertaining on first viewing, when it was re-screened on award night there was nothing left to look at – and certainly no indication of a personal style or vision for Windsor to further develop and invest his \$1,000 in. *Trapper Dan* is about as memorable as a good episode on the Carol Burnett show. I am not saying art has no room for knee-slapping humour – just look at Robert Nelson's films (*Oh Dem Watermelons*, *Blue Shut*, etc.), for one example. And it's a fallacy to pretend entertainment is not a necessary function of art. There are just different levels of it: TV situation comedies (can you remember one you saw last week?), and the kind lasting as long as the silent movie greats – who had no early film period to satirize. I feel the same way about last year's Grand Prize winner *Ivory Founts*, which was, predictably enough, yet another film scenario satirizing film.

The animation category, which has often been the festival's best overall group, was very weak this year. There was not one traditional drawn animation film among the prize winners. Both *Tempting of Eve* and *L'Immigrant* were object pixillation, the latter being an altered copy of stuff McLaren was doing decades ago – *A Chairy Tale*, to be precise. *Tempting of Eve*, a clay animation so detailed that clay notes come out of the flute Eve plays, was nevertheless unmoving – especially if one has been spoiled with the likes of John Straiton's *Eurynome*, where the effect is a lot more than simply having watched the clay move. I think *Tempting of Eve* is one of those cases where so much time and effort went into it, the jury felt obliged to award the film. This kind of esthetic irresponsibility is doubly unfortunate when you consider some of these pre-selected films meant ousting John Gaug's *July 16*, an innovative and beautiful celebration of the fantastic potential animation holds. The audience wasn't even permitted to see it.

Happily, the First Prize winner in animation, Joyce Borenstein's *Revisited*, was in fact one of the best overall films in the festival. Borenstein studied under Pat O'Neill (7362, *Runs Good*) who along with Jordan Belson, Scott Bartlett, Bruce Baillie, and others, pioneered the Gene Youngblood 'expanded cinema' school of the sixties. The style is one of extreme abstraction, producing primarily sensual responses. I can't buy the intellectual interpretation in Youngblood's book *Expanded Cinema* – which is a pile of rhetorical balderdash – nor am I affected by Belson's own interpretation of his totally abstract images as precise religious symbols. The influence in Joyce Borenstein's work is there, but where she departs from this school is that her symbols have precision, her abstraction is less accidental, and her structure has clarity.

Revisited can be compared to the National Film Board's *Cosmic Zoom* and to the final sequence of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, insofar as the film explores multiple layers of perception. In one sequence, where the camera continually trucks in like the 'corridor' section of *2001* a large egg seemingly suspended in starry space comes closer to reveal inside an hourglass, inside which lies a skeleton – whereupon the camera approaches and goes through an eye-socket in the skull, revealing inside a group of terrifying masks with hollow eyes and mouths. The camera selects an eye-socket and trucks right through it, only to discover another group of masks, whereupon it zooms through a *mouth* this time, inside of which are more masks, and so on. Eventually the camera arrives in a long tunnel, the sides of which separate and begin flapping like the wings of a huge bat. The sensation of flying on the thing remains until it dissolves into a beautifully animated white dove, which flies off into a sky – moonlit – with racing clouds. Borenstein told me she shot the sky live-action, via time-lapse photography, then matted the diminishing animated dove over it. This scene is the most beautiful

marriage of animation and live-action I have ever witnessed. In fact the film, as a whole – if one continues the earlier comparison – is more beautiful than *2001* and possesses a structure more rich and complex than *Cosmic Zoom*, with none of the crude artwork and simplistic scientific purpose.

In the documentary category the jury declared no film was worthy of First Prize, and instead divided the money into five \$100 Honourable Mentions. Three of these went to films deserving of higher awards: *Ordinary People*, by Bruce Allen, *Pedestrians*, by Andrew Ruhl, and *Dreams*, by Jean Pol Passet. It's alarming to consider additional money could not be attained from another sponsor for things like honourable mentions. Because the jury had to destroy one of the First Prizes instead, in accomodating their own indecision, it becomes misleading and plainly false to pretend documentaries weren't good enough this year to warrant a First Prize. Bruce Allen's *Ordinary People* deserved the award hands-down.

Ordinary People a fine cinema-verité study of evangelistic 'Jesus-freaks', had prize statements in it like: "Jesus pulls you into the center of reality", "Dr. Jesus gives heart transplants", and "We consider Canada a Christian country". The film was impeccably constructed with an unforgettable baptism scene at the end, where the cameraman went waist-deep into a lake to film the converts being ducked entirely under water, in slow-motion. In the seemingly endless edited stream of one baptism after the other, the slow-motion and the background music combine to effectively communicate the true joy of the occasion. I can only conclude the reason the jury was indecisive about *Ordinary People* was that perhaps they felt uneasy with the subject matter.

The First Prize winner in the scenario category, *Fragments* by Frank G. Bushe, was about a man who accidentally meets a little girl reminding him of his own daughter who, we learn later, is dead. The conflict surrounds how the man deals with his wife, who still pretends the daughter is alive. This hybrid *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolfe?* was flawed by clichéd dialogue, obtrusively predictable background music and arbitrary intercutting of meaningless and unnecessary symbolism (recurring clocks). Technically, there were moments of obvious dubbing, and also a generally flat and murky black and white print quality – surprising for Ryerson Film Lab, unfortunately given a credit in the film. Despite the odds, the actors did well – especially Leigha Lee Browne, in the role of the mother. Whatever possessed the jury to award the film so highly, it is probably the same reason this kind of stuff is continually awarded television airing. I hope the filmmaker will cultivate a responsibility to improve, not copy, standard television fare – if such a career be his intent.

If I am being harsh, then it is because the jury overlooked some very fine scenario works. One of these films, *Les Poissons Morts* directed by Yves Tessier and edited by Mary Minty, of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts School of Art & Design, showed a truly unique and exciting personal style and vision. The film applies subtle and exquisite surrealist touches as it takes its protagonist on a symbolic journey in search of fish, only to find a picture of a fish on a postage stamp floating in a rain-barrel. After an endlessly long climb up a winding fire escape, he disappears into the top floor of a warehouse with his 'catch', turns it in to a faceless, terrifying authority behind a cage, who then takes the stamp and angrily pastes it on the protagonist's forehead. The humiliation this creates triggers a gradual and complete loss of identity, until – in madness – he crushes between his hands the very thing he has been shown handling so gently and lovingly – his last and only possession – a pet hamster. It is a very moving emotional scene, and although this act was allegedly not performed in reality, it sure looked convincing enough.

The style in *Les Poissons Morts* makes use of a great deal of hand-held camera work, with beautiful, long travelling shots

that eventually wind up on (or in some cases go past) the protagonist in some stationary position. The editing structures the film in a dream-like and haunting fashion. Yet here was a film, deserving of at least Best Scenario and \$500, not even given an honourable mention. I hope the filmmakers are nevertheless self-inspired enough to overcome their defeat and seek funding for another film production on their own.

I also saw the 2nd and 3rd Prize scenario films as ousting better films like *Les Poissons Morts*. *L'Autobus*, by Danyèle Patenaude, was an unsuccessful treatment of an interesting idea – a man actually eaten-to-death by three vampire witches on a lonely bus trip. The poorly-structured film was at best a 2nd rough-cut in which the filmmakers loved their own, boring photography so much (most of it passing countryside out the bus window), they simply refused to part with any of it. *L'Autobus* remained a film with its entire dramatic structure out of whack – but it had good make up, costumes, and gory special effects. I hope Patenaude will take the \$300 and finish the film; it's a good idea and at least the material is there.

Third Prize winner *Hello Friend* got what I call the token Professional-Looking-for-a-'Youth' award. The condescension is not my idea. I've taught high school students filmmaking for five summers in a row and seen so many precocious films by 12-17 year-olds they would put many of this year's prize winners to shame. However young Robin Lee was when he made *Hello Friend*, the point is the film has not much more going for it than hard work and an understanding of film story-telling. It's a well-made, innocuous little film about the trials and tribulations of a boy who invests in a muscle-building course – lots of cute laughs, but the really bitter guffaw goes out to the filmmakers whose work showed some accomplishment and depth in the development of style and technique, some profundity of personal statement, and whose merits did not receive due reward. At least Robin Lee – unlike Danyèle Patenaude – knows how to edit the subject he's dealing with, but since he has learned the 'rules' so well (the necessity of which is debatable), it may be difficult for him to embark on the important task of breaking them.

The experimental category – or sometimes the lack of one – has always been a controversy with the Canadian Student Film Festival. Last year there was no experimental category because, according to Dr. Losique, "... the previous jury had discovered that all experimental films are based on scenarios". This buffoonery meant a lot of good films were rejected from competition, and the few that did make it were aimlessly labelled as scenario, documentary, or animation – and then unrewarded because they weren't good examples of that category. Happily, Dr. Losique assures me the experimental category is "here to stay". Now the issue for juries is just what an experimental film is.

Besides being not scenario, not animation, and not documentary, the experimental film displays a certain attitude – it's more in the way filmmakers approach their work. Too often the meaning of the word *experiment* is totally ignored, and in its place some juries will simply compare the work to whatever surface trappings they remember from the few experimental films they have seen. The mode is seen by some to be just so many variations of the split-screen extravaganzas of Expo '67 in Montreal, for example. Views similar to this at once assign preconceived standards for judging new works, when in fact the nature of the experimental is in the constant re-definition of the medium. The false assumption that experimental means filmic acid trips, a notion perpetuated by the worst of television and feature films, is undoubtedly the reason this year's jury awarded Daniel Louis' *Quebec 5299* three hundred dollars. A better candidate would have been *Breakdown* by Joel Singer, of Sir George Williams.

Breakdown was a successful and fascinating experiment in film structure, wherein a 360-degree pan inside a room is

gradually 'broken down' by removing frames from parts of the shot in increasing geometric progression each time the pan comes full turn. The experiment reveals, among other things, how radically the unmanipulated soundtrack – a poetic monologue of memories concerning the room – is affected by the structurally changing visual relationship. Despite the film's mathematical evolution, *Breakdown* is nevertheless a curiously emotional piece of cinema. Unfortunately, it is clear the jury was totally at a loss in confronting this film, as they couldn't even give it an honourable mention.

I agreed with the choice for 3rd Prize in the experimental category, a film entitled *Almost Nothing in this Film is Real* by George Hargrave. Although it was one of those displays of technical wizardry, it left a greater impression than merely having been a part of some mechanical high. Hargrave is a filmmaker with considerable control over his technical prowess. The images he creates are visually precise, original, and often humorous – which is a refreshing combination for this kind of film. In one sequence he inter-cuts W.C. Fields in *The Bank Dick* with footage from a bank's video camera showing a hold-up, which looks disturbingly real – until one reflects back on the title of the film. Even then I found myself wondering if this were the 'real' scene in the film – which gradually gave way to actually worrying about things like: How real is film anyway? ... What's more real, the image on the screen or the film in the projector? When a film forces you to ask such questions, it's working to make a statement on the whole concept of reality – just what, I haven't decided yet.

In another sequence Hargrave shows a wrestling match in which the image suddenly turns to video every time one of the wrestlers hits the canvas. The most memorable film image he creates utilizes a country & western song – "God is Freedom" – over a scene in a misty room one is convinced is shot black and white until the camera pans to reveal a tiny red rose in the center of the room. The camera zooms in to a full shot of the rose – withering via time-lapse photography – while the conclusion of "God is Freedom" turns into a repeating, broken record.

Other experimental films I enjoyed were *Labyrinthe*, by Mary Stephen of Loyola, and *Soluble Fish*, by Collette Malo of the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts School of Art & Design.

The 1st Prize winner in the experimental category, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, by Veronika Soul, was truly remarkable. She won Grand Prize two years ago with *How the Hell Are You?* a film which may yet become a Canadian classic. That Soul has fully developed as an artist is evidenced in the two films, and established even more in the transition between them. There is a continuity of style which she has expanded upon and perfected, and a rich and more complex personal statement, all of which appear to crystallize in the new film. Martin Malina had sufficient insight to recognize Soul's importance when he wrote in the *Montreal Star* after the festival, "... (she) has an extraordinary cinematic imagination, one which ought soon to be directed into a professional career". Although this implied prospect of commercialism is no doubt the highest honor Malina can bestow, I would hesitate to relegate this artist to such a fate, especially when she already considers herself – and rightly so – 'professional' by her own definition. This is not to say I don't wish her many happy commercial returns; I do for every poet, painter, sculptor, and other artist whose work I admire.

Tales from the Vienna Woods is a highly-stylized impression of late nineteenth-century romanticism, and the tangled emotional webs woven around marriages and affairs of the time. Soul based her film on the letters of Sigmund Freud to his wife, and the diaries of some of the Habsburg monarchs. The film communicates a fascinating tension as it reveals the curious Victorian paradox of polite restraint mixed with romantic impulse. One gets the idea this was exemplified often

by intense in-breeding at a sort of moment's notice, and although Freud did not marry his cousin, he and his wife did become engaged on second meeting. Freud then left her for four years to study in Vienna and in France, seeing her only occasionally, but he tried to make up for it by writing her almost a letter a day. Consequently some of the letters, exquisitely narrated in the film, are hilariously petty and self-conscious. But the greatest impression they leave is the way he felt compelled to alter his language, as if to a child. At one point the narration goes, "Becoming an analyst is so complicated, so many questions..."

In an interview with the filmmaker she told me, "I was incensed by Freud's letters to the 'dull' woman he felt he had to entertain with little jokes". But she went on to say this was customary for the time, and had Freud acted differently he would not have been considered a gentleman.

At one point in the film the narration relates how pleased Freud was with his "little Trojan" when she 'proved herself' not only by giving birth, but by apologizing in the right order of protocol for having screamed when forceps were used to force the birth Freud wanted for a Sunday. The brilliance of Soul's image-sound contrapuntal style is typified by this scene, for mixed with the narration is a Bavarian brass band and a delightfully animated still photograph of them giving a concert — because, says Soul, Freud "likened the birth to a performance: applauded if it works, scolded by the critics if it doesn't".

Tales from the Vienna Woods has such an abundance of rich and complex imagery and beautiful visual effects, that even after three viewings it still promises further discoveries. All the effects were done in the camera via multiple slide projections, and then "edited frantically" according to Soul, which probably accounts for the particular creative spontaneity that is becoming a trademark of her work. She says she wants to break away from traditional animation; certainly it is a break-through when you consider her approach is really a documentary one. Curiously, the names of Freud, King Ludwig, the Emperor Franz Joseph and his wife Elizabeth, are not mentioned in the film, nor are there any pictures of them. Instead there are pictures of Veronika Soul's relatives. Her grandmother, as it turns out, lived in that part of Europe central to the film, and the filmmaker confessed to me that her motivation lay partially in discovering her own origins.

The fact that *Tales from the Vienna Woods* successfully marries techniques of documentary, scenario, experimental, and animation, suggests one reason it may have been an interesting candidate for Grand Prize. For all the arguing the Festival causes with regard to how 'documentary' is a documentary entry, or how 'experimental', etc., Veronika Soul's films prove just how silly and irrelevant all this categorizing is.



And
next year..

Many well-known festivals have no categories at all, and instead allot monetary prizes in pre-determined amounts to what the judges simply consider good films. On the other hand — categories or no — any pre-determined prize still requires the jury to come to a consensus, when often their personal choices differ considerably. I don't know

what happened with this year's jury at the Canadian Student Film Festival, but I will compare the resolution of this problem to the Ohio University International Film Festival jury recently. They came to a consensus by tallying votes, which this year happened to have the unfortunate result that the lowest common denominators won (they had all thought of the same films personally for honourable mentions), and the personal choices for the larger prizes went out the window. I don't see why jury members should have to negotiate; surely the reason someone is appointed to a jury is that their personal opinion is respected.

If Dr. Losique is interested in attracting more support, especially from filmmakers who boycott festivals because they feel they are unfair, he should learn a few tips from the Ann Arbor Film Festival, which has entries approaching 400. The only answer to the problem is, in fact, a variation of Ann Arbor: firstly, do away with all categories and pre-determined prizes of any kind, and secondly, give each jury member an equal amount of money — say \$1,000 — to do with as they see fit. This might mean, for example, one juror could award ten films \$100 each, while another could award one the entire \$1,000.

All this renovating is fruitless, however, unless the pre-selection methods are radically improved, or else the whole idea of pre-selection abandoned. For all its flaws in final judging, the Ohio festival managed to publicly screen every one of the over 100 films entered. I see no reason why the mere 73 films entered in this year's Canadian Student Film Festival couldn't all have found a time slot in the Sir George auditorium — and if not there, then somewhere else. It may be a little more trouble for the Conservatory in some ways, but in the long run it would mean a lot less trouble than the time it must take to organize pre-selection.

I would also suggest the Conservatory widely publicize the possibility of arrangements for groups of students from other colleges to attend the Festival. For the last two years I have brought 40-50 Sheridan College students with me and can recommend to other film teachers the immense educational value the week in Montreal holds in store.

Other ways of improving the Festival were suggested by James W. Cameron, Public Relations director for Famous Players, the same organization which this year withdrew \$5,000 of their support. Mr. Cameron told me his company's concern is to "put the money where it will do the most good", but he is not sure festival awards are it. While Famous Players does intend to maintain most of the awards as they stand now, Mr. Cameron said he was taking a hard look at the four \$200 prizes to see if it wouldn't be better to bring in the winning filmmakers for award night, or expand it with more publicity. "I think it is a great pity a winner in Vancouver does not have the opportunity to be present at Sir George and receive his just and well-earned accolades in front of his peers", Mr. Cameron declared. "We're discussing plans for re-arranging our budget to include air fare".

It's too bad the Famous Players publicity budget is so restricted that these plans necessitate another cut in prize money. I fail to see how the company would be putting the money where it would do the most good — at least for the filmmakers. The silly show-biz flare of parachuting the winners in on award night is most certainly a shallow and suspect way to improve a film festival — especially at the expense of some of the cash awards.

Still, Famous Players is to be applauded for its support thus far — which includes screening the winning films for free in Vancouver, Edmonton, Calgary, Winnipeg, Ottawa, and Halifax. The company donates the theatre and pays for the advertising. I hope a good many people get a chance to see some of the fine winning films that are in the tour, if and when the programme is 'playing at a theatre near you'. The tour will start in Vancouver before the end of the year.

With Famous Players support becoming more tenuous however, Dr. Losique is well advised to continue his pursuit for funding from the Canadian Film Development Corporation. I think the Canadian Student Film Festival is a perfect vehicle for C.F.D.C. investment — and an investment it is. What's at stake in this festival (which is why I harp about its organization) is a good chunk of this country's next generation of filmmakers. It's a generation which may find themselves in the position to make or break the nationalism of an industry and art form finally on the brink of autonomy. This is the connection Martin Malina fails to grasp in his flippant lumping of the Canadian student filmmaker into the same implicit category as the week-end film buff and hobbyist. It is fortunate this national event is directed by a man whose insight is at least positive. In Dr. Losique's own words: "I've discovered now that more students are professional than many so-called professionals, and I will never call it an amateur festival — that's foolish". □