

# Astral saves First Choice by taking controlling interest: reactions

MONTREAL - On Oct. 25, First Choice Canadian Communications asked the CRTC to consider its request to transfer controlling interest in the pay-TV company to a group dominated by the Bronfman and Greenberg families, touching off a flurry of lawyers' letters, telegrams and position papers unlike anything seen since the introduction of pay-TV in Canada. By Nov. 16, the CRTC had approved the request.

In the formal request, First Choice asked permission to issue a \$8.4 million convertible debenture, which would entitle the holders to 58.5% of the voting shares of First Choice. The "holders" were to become Hees International Corporation, wholly owned by the families of Peter and Edward Bronfman, and Astral Bellevue Pathé Inc. owned via Bellevue Photo Labs by the Bronfmans (100% Class A common shares and 14,585 preferred Shares) and Abgreen Holdings Ltd. (100% Class B common shares and

14,585 preferred shares). Equal partners in Abgreen are the families of Harold Greenberg, and brothers Ian, Sidney and Harvey. At the end of the transaction, Hees would own 15% of First Choice stock and Astral Bellevue Pathé would own 43.7%.

On Oct. 28, the CRTC issued public notice of a hearing to be held Nov. 10, as the financial situation of First Choice was critical: rumors had been rife in the industry that the company would be bankrupt by Christmas. Efforts to raise monies by public offering and then by private means had failed, and lay-offs and programming freezes exacerbated the situation.

Almost every film organization and many individuals mobilized to make the CRTC aware of their various points of view. Most vociferous was Superchannel, First Choice's competitor in Ontario. On Nov. 1, lawyers writing on behalf of Allarcorn and Ontario Inde-

pendent Pay Television Ltd. (Superchannel) asked that the hearing be put off until Nov. 29 when the situation of the regionals - many in dire straits - is to be considered. They accused the CRTC of given preferential treatment to the First Choice situation. First Choice parried the next day, refuting Allarcorn's accusations. First Choice reiterated that it was not asking for any changes in the terms of its license, countering that the applications to be heard Nov. 29 all dealt with amendments of licenses.

Some 90 telegrams poured in, 70 in favor, 20 against. Of those included in the CRTC's public file, all emanating from Toronto asked that the hearing be postponed while all those from Montreal (with the exception of Sonolab, a competitor of Astral in post-production) urged the CRTC to proceed with all haste. A letter jointly signed by the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA), the Ca-

nadian Association of Motion Picture Producers (CAMPP), the Directors Guild of Canada, the Association of Canadian Film Craftspeople (ACFC) and the Canadian Film Editors Guild claimed that approval of the request would violate the

CRTC's "established policy on vertical integration" and would give an "unfair advantage to one competitor in the Canadian entertainment and communications marketplace, making all others vulnerable to it." The

(cont. on page 39)

## Search for genuine consensus about Canadian definition

OTTAWA - The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) is expected to give public notice shortly that the Jan. 3 deadline for the new Canadian content television programming certification proposals announced Aug. 15 will be postponed to April 1, 1984.

One reason for the postponement, according to CRTC sources, was the delay caused by the Commission's recent change of chairmen. Another reason, according to CRTC commissioner Jean-Pierre Mongeau who is chairing the Commission's Canadian content panel, reflects the CRTC's desire for "a genuine consensus" throughout the Canadian program production industry.

"Basically what we're looking at are the terms under which Canadian television programming will be produced for the next two to five years," Mongeau told Cinema Canada. "That's why we don't want to make any mistakes. Only through a third round of discussions will we be able to arrive at a genuine consensus."

The Aug. 15 proposals (see

Cinema Canada No. 100) suggested a point-system for Canadian content certification and attempted to come to grips with co-ventures (non-treaty co-productions). The 49 responses to the proposed guidelines from the production industry - "a lot of people have worked very hard and often at short notice to put their points of view across admirably", says Mongeau - pointed to the need for further discussion, particularly on the issue of co-ventures.

"We expect, pending the Commission's approval, to convene the parties concerned for another round of consultation that will focus on co-ventures or on other items where there are serious divergences of opinion," Mongeau told Cinema Canada.

Earlier this year a one-day intra-industry workshop on Canadian content with the CRTC "allowed us to obtain a range of view-points in one day that would have taken five days had we had to call a public hearing. It was the first time the Commission had used this method of consultation," commented Mongeau.

## Vertical integration curbed in CRTC decision

OTTAWA - Five pages of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's 12-page decision allowing Astral Bellevue Pathé of Toronto and Hees International Corp. to take effective control of First Choice Canadian Communications Corp. consist of conditions.

Among the conditions listed - and not yet available to the public at presstime - Cinema Canada has learned that:

- Only 6 of the 14-member First Choice board can be nominated by the Astral-Hees group; two of the six must come from outside Astral-Hees;

- The First Choice board must be expanded to include a representative from British Columbia and additional representation from the Atlantic provinces;

- No changes in First Choice senior management can be made without the approval of a 3-person subcommittee, two members of which shall be appointed by Astral-Hees;

- The management and program acquisition staff of First Choice must remain "entirely separate" from Astral and must report to the First Choice board;

- First Choice has contracted with a wide variety of independent Canadian producers and this variety must be maintained;

- First Choice must report every six months to the CRTC the list of its program acquisitions;

tions;

- Astral will not produce film-video production to be licensed to First Choice;

- Astral will continue to provide financial assistance to non-theatrical products and in particular Canadian pay-television programming proposed from Canadian producers on a non-discriminatory basis;

- Astral will not make its financial support conditional on the involvement of First Choice;

- At the time Astral informs the pay-licensees of the availability of a film, Astral will provide all pay-licensees with a high quality videotape copy on demand, to allow each licensee to program a pay-window without Astral being privy to the program schedule;

- All preview rights for 20th Century Fox product now held by Astral will revert back to Fox;

- Astral will treat all pay-TV licensees including First Choice on a non-exclusive and non-discriminatory basis;

- Semi-annual consultation must take place between First Choice and independent producers and distributors' associations, with copies of the minutes going to the CRTC.

In its decision, the CRTC's main concern was the problem of vertical integration which it addressed in theory by writing in controls to Astral production, distribution and post-production.

- In production, Astral's

role has been restricted to one analogous to the role played by any pay-TV licensee, namely financial arrangements. Furthermore that control is reinforced through consultation with independent producers and regular reporting of projects licensed.

- In distribution, similar written controls plus consultations with independent distributors' associations and reporting back to the CRTC. In addition, by making Astral preview copies of films available to all pay-licensees, the Commission hopes to add a further control against the possibility of exclusive windows for Astral product.

- In post-production, Astral's post-production facilities must deal on a tariffed rate-card basis.

In practice the CRTC cannot change the conditions of license once that license has been issued - and First Choice's license does not come up for renewal until 1987. However by permitting a change in ownership, the CRTC has created "a precedent subject to its own authorization." If in the Commission's opinion there are abuses in these precedential conditions of ownership, this would mean that the licensee is operating illegally and would as a result face serious sanctions. As one CRTC commissioner told Cinema Canada, "In my opinion these conditions are even more severe than the original conditions of license."

## Pre-sales no longer reduce investor risk

TORONTO - Communications minister Francis Fox has announced changes in the Income Tax Act which will allow investors in Canadian productions which have received pre-sales from Canadian broadcasters - as is required to be eligible for the Broadcast Program Development Fund - to still qualify for tax write-offs under the capital cost allowance.

Formerly, films and TV programs needed to be completely at risk to qualify, ruling out pre-sale agreements. But now, a pre-sale will not automatically render the investment ineligible, and will qualify if "a reasonable degree of risk or uncertainty" is inherent in the agreement between producer and distributor or broadcaster. Each program will be judged on its own merits.

This is a change for which the industry lobbied ardently during the period of the 100% capital cost allowance. Failure to allow pre-sales was often cited as one of the reasons the films made during that period fared so poorly in the marketplace.

The minister also announced the minimum amount to be paid in a given year in order to qualify for the capital cost allowance has been reduced from 20 percent to five percent.

Fox announced the changes at a recent meeting of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters and the Central Canada Broadcasters Association. He said this new policy thrust is another initiative developed by government policy for the Canadian program production industry.



# CBC to build distinctive programming

# Discretionary hearings in January: Universal pay on hold

OTTAWA - Communications minister Francis Fox tabled his long-awaited policy framework on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) in the House of Commons on Oct. 24.

Entitled "Building For the Future: Towards a Distinctive CBC", the glossy 22-page document sets three fundamental objectives: to encourage the development of a distinctive and predominantly Canadian CBC by raising Canadian content levels to 80% in primetime by '89; to help strengthen the Corp. as an essential vehicle of Canadian cultural expres-

sion by increasing to 50% by '89 the proportion of national network TV programming produced by independent producers; and thirdly, to promote greater efficiency and accountability within the CBC.

Toronto independent producers on the whole welcomed this official response to last year's drastic Applebaum-Hébert report recommendations which had urged that the CBC entirely turn its production facilities over to independents. In Edmonton, television producers expressed concern over what was termed Fox's "centralist document." However CBC producers in Toronto reacted unfavorably to the policy framework, viewing it as the government's way of implementing Applebert without actually saying so.

In a speech in Toronto two days after the tabling of the

CBC policy framework, Fox, quoting McLuhan ("We have moved from an era when business was our culture to one in which culture is our business"), explained that the framework rejected the Applebert recommendation that CBC end its affiliation agreements with private TV stations. The CBC, he added, would continue to rely on revenues from the sale of TV air-time for advertising. "The new CBC policy," he told the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, "provides a clear-cut definition of the complementary roles to be assumed by the private and public sectors in the new broadcasting environment," an environment he described as "much more competitive than that of the past."

Fox also announced the development of a new policy for radio in the coming year.

OTTAWA - The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) will hold a public hearing in Hull as of Jan. 24 to consider applications for licenses to operate networks for the distribution of discretionary Canadian specialty programming services.

In a 7-page public notice released Oct. 26, the Commission reviewed the 41 applications it had received following its call for applications May 4, 1983, for licenses to operate satellite-to-cable networks for the distribution of Canadian specialty programming services on a national discretionary basis.

The 41 applications, the Commission stated, fell into roughly three categories:

- applications proposing a tiered-group of services to be delivered to cable systems on a user-pay basis;
- applications proposing the distribution of a particular U.S. service to be received directly from a U.S. satellite;
- and applications proposing a programming service assembled and originating in Canada and distributed via Canadian satellites on a non-discretionary basis.

The applications received within the second and third categories, as they did not fall within the terms of the call, were rejected. Only applications falling within the terms of the first category will be considered at the Jan. 24 hearing. The CRTC public notice added that only once the Commission had rendered its decisions on Canadian discretionary specialty services, in the Spring of 1984, would it then entertain applications from cable operators for discretionary distribution of certain foreign specialty services received directly from non-Canadian satellites.

In a related 25-page public notice issued the same day, the CRTC issued a new statement on cable television service tiering and universal pay television service.

Referring back to its March '82 pay-TV decision, the Commission recalled "that one way of ensuring the evolution of a distinctively Canadian pay-television system might well be through the adoption of a universal service."

"However," the Oct. 26 public notice went on, the Commission "also determined that a universal service could not be introduced until a number of basic issues were resolved, including accountability of the ownership structure of the service and the means of delivery."

Reviewing comments received on the feasibility of introducing a universal pay-television service, the public notice stated that "the Commission has considered the written submissions... and is not yet satisfied that all the important issues raised by a universal service have been satisfactorily resolved."

The notice added that the CRTC remains committed to the ideals of a universally available and distinctively Canadian service and "intends to explore further the introduction of an omnibus channel which would be available to all subscribers at a reasonably low cost," a channel whose programming might include NFB productions, children's programming, quality private and public Canadian broadcasts and new Canadian dramatic or experimental productions.

The CRTC announced the formation of a consultative committee of representatives from the cable and TV broadcasting industries to examine such an omnibus channel.

## Edison Twins by Nelvana to CBC and Disney

TORONTO - *The Edison Twins*, produced by Nelvana Ltd., will premiere on CBC-TV Tues., Jan. 3, at 4:30 p.m. (EST), and run in that time slot for 13 episodes.

The series also will premiere in January in the U.S. on the Disney Channel.

Created by Michael Hirsh and Patrick Loubert, produced by Ian McDougall, and directed by René Bonnière, Zale Dalen, and Paul Shapiro, the shows star Andrew Sabiston, Marnie McPhail, and Sunny Besen-Thrasher. Series writers are J. Blum, David Carol, Dalen, Loubert, Sandra Kelly, Peter Sauder, Shapiro, and Elaine Waisglass.

Premiering Jan. 5 at 8 p.m. on CBC-TV is the series *Sons and Daughters*, six half-hour dramas produced by Atlantis Films of Toronto. Producers are Michael MacMillan, Seaton McLean, and Janice Platt.

## Regionals hearing in Vancouver

OTTAWA - The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) will hold a public hearing Nov. 29 at the Sheraton Plaza 500, Vancouver B.C. to consider Ontario Independent Pay Television Ltd.'s (Superchannel) application to amend its regional, general-interest, English-language pay-television network license to extend its service area to include the four Atlantic provinces until such time as the number of Star Channel subscribers justify the use of its origination center and transponder facilities.

At the hearing, the Commission will also consider an application by Aim Satellite Broadcasting to transfer not less than 96.4% of its shares to new owners, with 80% of the ownership of the company to be held by Allarcom Ltd., Edmonton; as

well as an application by Allarcom Ltd. Edmonton, to amend its regional pay-television license to include a pay-television service to British Columbia and the Yukon, until such time as Aim Satellite Broadcasting, B.C.'s regional licensee, implements its general-interest channel.

And the CRTC will also consider an application to review an amendment to Allarcom Ltd.'s license authorizing the extension of its service area to include Saskatchewan, Manitoba and a portion of the Northwest Territories, taking into account the roles and obligations of the national and regional pay-television licensees, in the light of the evolution of the structure of pay-television in Canada.

Intervenors had a Nov. 14 deadline to submit written interventions to the secretary-general of the CRTC in Ottawa.

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## 150% CCA QC definition soon Three wrap in Montreal, Alliance meets

QUEBEC CITY - The official definition of the Quebecois film, which will set the terms for made-in-Quebec films eligible for the province's 150% capital cost allowance, has reached the last phase of its long bureaucratic journey and is awaiting final approval by the Quebec cabinet. At presstime that approval had not yet been given but Jean-Pierre Bastien of the cultural industries branch of the Quebec ministry of cultural affairs assured Ci-

nema Canada that "the dossier is on the table."

The expected production boost likely to follow from Quebec's 150% CCA has raised eyebrows as far away as Hollywood where Screen Actors' Guild president Ed Asner warned against "irresistible seduction from other production areas", pointing specifically to Quebec. The high cost of film production in California is being blamed for billion-dollar losses to out-of-state production since 1979.

Principal photography on three features wrapped in the last month, including ICC's *The Blood of Others* in Paris Nov. 18; les Productions Pierre Lamy's *Le silence*, directed by Claude Jutra, in Montreal Nov. 14; and 12400 Canada Inc.'s prohibition-days adventure *St. Louis Square* on Oct. 28. Start-ups include ACPAV's *La femme de l'hôtel* (Nov. 17), Cinepix's *Blind Rage* Nov. 18 with an all-star cast: Carole Laure, Marilyn Lightstone, Art Hindle and Michael Ironside; and two erotic comedies from RSL, *Soho Blues* and *New Year's Eve*.

**Production notes:** Via Le Monde has all the pieces in place for the production of the

biggest documentary ever made by Canadians, *Le défi mondial* based on the best-selling book by Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber... Filmline has moved back the start of Rafal Zielinski's *Fun Park* to March, though casting gets underway early in the new Year. Filmline, instead, will forge ahead with *Dead Aim* for MCA-Universal and *First Risk*, an exclusive thriller about the Mafia and CIA's rescue of Nato general James Dozier.

Members of Canada's film co-ops in the Independent Film Alliance du film indépendant held their annual general assembly Nov. 1-6 at Montreal's Main Film. Highlights included the Montreal premiere of Halifax filmmaker Bill MacGillivray's first feature film *Stations*. Resolutions were resolved, positions debated, and films screened. Word has it there's determination afoot to form a Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre East to round out existing distribution centres in Toronto and Vancouver.

Cinema theory and discourse was the theme of the recently-formed Association québécoise des études cinématographiques' colloquium held Oct. 28-30 at the Cinéma-thèque québécoise. Papers, given by

Quebec film industry historian Pierre Véronneau, critic Patrick Straram le Bison Ravi, McGill University communications' professor John Roston and 12 others, are scheduled to be published in '84.

Over a dozen production companies, filmmakers like Michel Brault and Claude Jutra as well as the Association des Producteurs de Films du Québec (APFQ), will inaugurate Nov. 24 the completion of the first phase of the conversion of the old Famex factory into a 70,000 square-metre communications centre. Under the name Maison Premier Plan, the newly converted facility which will have a sound-studio completed by January '84, expects, by 1985, to also have a fully-equipped shooting stage for film and TV production. Some 350 guests from throughout the industry as well as Communications minister Francis Fox and Quebec cultural affairs minister Clément Richard have been invited to the official inauguration of the building.

**Rumor mill:** As part of his duties, the new government film commissioner who will be named to succeed outgoing NFB topper James de B. Domville, will have to reduce current Board staff levels by some 40 people.

## Holender and Ohashi shoot Kodo

TORONTO - Independent filmmaker Jacques Holender has completed filming on *Kodo*, a one-hour performance special featuring the group Kodo, the demon drummers of Sado Island, Japan.

Holender produced and directed the film, shot last year and in September 1983 by d.o.p. Rene Ohashi. The footage includes performances from the group's 1983 North American tour and of a festival at Tokyo's National Theatre. Other crew credits include sound recorder Charles Bagnall, production

manager Barbara Sweete, and gaffer/grip Maris Jansons.

A 10-minute pilot film, shot while Kodo performed at Toronto's Ryerson Polytechnical Institute last year, helped Holender raise money to fund this project. Financing came from an Ontario Arts Council grant, a grant in services from the National Film Board, and private investment.

Holender holds all rights, and hopes to complete the film by spring so he can market it during Kodo's 1984 North American tour next fall.

## CBC gets brand new home in Toronto in '88

TORONTO - The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. announced plans for new headquarters housing all operations to be built by 1988 in Toronto at a Nov. 14 press conference.

On hand in Toronto for the announcement were three cabinet members - Communications minister Francis Fox, Employment and Immigration minister John Roberts, and Treasury Board president Herb Gray - as well as top CBC officials including president Pierre Juneau.

The development will be financed privately on a 9.3 acre site in downtown Toronto near Roy Thompson Hall. Included in the plans are apartments, offices, and stores, plus radio and television production facilities featuring state-of-the-art equipment, on land purchased by CBC for \$19.5 million in 1978.

The CBC will lease the land to a developer, who on completion of the project will lease the broadcasting buildings back to the CBC on a 30-year lease, after which the CBC will own it. The land is valued at around \$100 million.

The CBC's part of the development is valued at \$315 million, with the cost of broadcasting equipment for the new centre estimated at \$111 million. The entire development complex is valued at \$530 million.

CBC's Toronto production facilities presently are scattered around 22 buildings and cost an estimated \$17 million annually. Many of the buildings are in deteriorating condition.

With the new centre, CBC will consolidate all its radio and TV facilities in Toronto for English local, regional, and network and French regional programming.

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## The festival of change grows

MONTREAL - "It's the best film festival in the world," exclaimed American filmmaker, author and critic Susan Sontag whose fourth film *Unguided Tour* was one of the 130 films and over 100 videos from 25 countries screened at the 12th International Festival of New Cinema which came to a successful close Nov. 13 after a hectic nine days.

"The festival format is our

only defense against the producer system," said Franco-Vietnamese director Lam Le whose first feature *Poussière d'Empire* was in part made possible by the critical success of his short *Rencontre de dragon et de nuage* here two years ago.

While the films arrived often in copy zero form, a few straight from the lab, some not quite completed, and others turned

up that were not even expected, the Montreal filmgoing public faithfully turned out at this year's five locations (plus cabaret) to see and be seen, and this despite rain, sleet and snow.

"It was a very good turnout," festival director Claude Chamberlan told Cinema Canada, "some 30,000 spectators, which is 5000 more than last year. So I'm very pleased with the outcome."

Though some of the expected big names (Godard, Syberberg)

didn't make it in the end, their most recent films (*Prénom Carmen* and *Parsifal*) brought in the crowds - and the impact of the Festival spilled over to Quebec City where *Prénom Carmen* opened theatrically to a packed house.

According to Chamberlan, this year's Festival unveiled three significant new filmmakers: Chilean filmmaker Raoul Ruiz with his feature *Les trois couronnes du matelot*; British filmmaker Ken McMullen and his feature *Ghost*

*Dance*; and West Germany's Werner Nekes with *Ullisses*.

Chamberlan was equally pleased with the Festival's retrospectives of the works of two leading film technicians, Henri Alekan (France) and Thomas Mauch (W. Germany), though he was saddened by the recent news of the death in New York City of American filmmaker Mary Ellen Bute whose work was the subject of a Festival homage last year.

Despite a number of projection difficulties and a heartfelt dissatisfaction with one of the Festival locations - "If only we had three more Cinematheques" - Chamberlan at festival's end described his mood "as warrior-like as opposed to tired. There's real energy in the air. We're already full of ideas for next year. Just as the film medium is something that should be questioned, it's the same with our festival. There's no use having a formula-Festival. You can't live on the illusion of a big success."

So Chamberlan has already called the first meeting of his 25-person organizing committee to begin working on next year.

"This is a Festival of change - like the films themselves."

## Bertolino takes on Servan-Schreiber

MONTREAL - Documentary filmmaker Daniel Bertolino is going ahead with the adaptation of Jean-Jacques Servan-Schreiber's best seller "Le Defi Mondial" While the official announcement will not take place until February 1984, when Servan-Schreiber will be in Montreal, Via Le Monde's biggest project ever, budgeted at \$2.5 million, will consist of six one-hour segments to be targeted for prime-time television, simultaneously transmitted to Europe by satellite. Principal photography is scheduled for February in some twenty countries and will take close to two years to complete. *Le Defi Mondial* will be developed in association with Radio-Canada, Antenne-2 in France, CIDA and the Canadian Film Development Corporation. Peter Ustinov will host the series.

In a related development, an additional 13 segments of Via Le Monde's successful series *Les Legendes du Monde* will be shot in 1984. Four Via crews are presently on location in northern Spain, Poland, Ivory Coast and Madagascar. *Les Legendes du Monde* has been sold to the U.K. and French markets and five other deals have been completed in Europe and Africa. Bertolino, filmmaker François Floquet and producers Michelle Raymond and assistant Catherine Viau head-up Via Le Monde's innovative international projects.



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## Canada outperforms States for Brew

TORONTO - Ten weeks into release playing every major market, *Strange Brew: The Adventures of Bob and Doug McKenzie* has grossed over \$2,000,000 across Canada, according to its distributor, MGM/United Artists.

The picture was written, directed by, and stars Rick Moranis and Dave Thomas, and was shot in Toronto late last year financed by MGM. According to its distributor, *Strange Brew* has done "quite well" in Canada compared to its U.S. reception, which was described as "very disappointing."

## Creswin strong with Slaughter

TORONTO - *Slaughter in San Francisco*, the first release of revived Canadian independent distributor Creswin Films, earned \$78,000 its first week for 15 prints across Canada, according to Creswin president Larry Rittenberg.

Creswin's second release, *Strange Behavior*, which opened in Toronto Oct. 28 at four Famous Players houses

and a Twinnex drive-in, grossed \$25,000 its first week. Its second weekend, playing the Famous Players Imperial and Skyway theatres, the picture earned \$5,580.

Creswin's next release will be *A Taste of Sin*, starring Robert Walker Jr. and Suzanna Love, Nov. 25 in Toronto.

## Chapdelaine bows for les anglais

TORONTO - Astral Films releases *Maria Chapdelaine*, directed by Gilles Carle and starring Carole Laure, Nick Mancuso, Pierre Curzi, and Claude Rich, across English Canada Nov. 11.

Released in French with English sub-titles, the film opened in Toronto, Montreal, Hamilton, Ottawa, Halifax, St. John, Winnipeg, Calgary, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Victoria. Openings were scheduled Nov. 18 for London and Kitchener.

The film earned over \$815,000 in its Quebec release earlier this spring, playing in its original French version. It was also the official Canadian selection for the Venice Film Festival in September.

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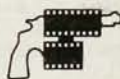
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Produced by Robert Cooper

### SAVAGE ISLANDS

### THE SETTLEMENT

Produced by Robert Bruning

### THE HAIRDRESSERS

Produced by Renée Perlmutter  
Line Producer Richard Baker

### MOTHER LODE

Directed by and starring Charlton Heston  
Also starring Nick Mancuso

### NEW WILDERNESS

### PHAR LAP

Produced by John Seaton and Richard Davis  
Directed by Simon Wright



### SONATINE

AN EVENING AT THE IMPROV

### THE PAMPEL-MOUSE SHOW

### THE NUTCRACKER - A FANTASY ON ICE

### BLACK MIRROR

### SURETING

### CHATWILL'S VERDICT

### MISS FUN SEEKER GIRLS

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# Cronenberg 4-walls Dead Zone, Cineplex performs

TORONTO - In the boldest move so far by any independent exhibitor since bidding on the U.S. Majors' releases was introduced July 1, Cineplex Corp. outbid Famous Players Ltd. in Toronto, Burlington, Kitchener, Peterborough, Thunder Bay, and Calgary for *The Dead Zone*, which opened Oct. 21 distri-

buted by Paramount.

It marked the first time a Paramount release was exhibited first-run by any Canadian chain except Famous Players. Both Paramount and Famous are owned by U.S. multi-national corporation Gulf & Western Ltd.

After its fourth weekend,

*The Dead Zone*, directed by Toronto's David Cronenberg and starring Christopher Walken, Brooke Adams, and Martin Sheen, had grossed nearly \$1.2 million in Canada and \$16.3 million across North America.

"The picture is performing exceptionally well, the bids were justified," said Daniel

Weinzweig, Cineplex chief booker and buyer. In its first week, the picture earned \$115,880 in Cineplex theatres, and earned \$87,254 the second week, for a \$203,134 total. The figures include \$31,703 the first week at the Eaton Centre in Toronto and \$24,638 the first week in Calgary.

Canadian box office totals for the first two weeks were \$858,561.

Cineplex's bid, which was accepted by Paramount's New York office, include "a sizeable guarantee", according to Weinzweig. Since neither *Dead Zone* author Stephen King's last few pictures, nor any of Cronenberg's films except *Scanners* have been big box office hits, one insider commented that Paramount executives would have had a hard time justifying to Combines Investigation Act officials (who introduced the bidding system) why they turned down the bid.

Canadian Odeon Ltd., the country's other major chain, did not bid the picture.

In another development, director Cronenberg rented the 750-seat independent Crest Theatre in Toronto, installing a Dolby sound system at his own expense, to exhibit the film on a big screen after it was announced Cineplex had won its bid.

"I believe in big theatre, big screen, big sound," said Cronenberg. He admitted there were advantages for filmmakers to screen their films at Cineplex, but said *Dead Zone* on the chain's characteristic small screens "is not the way I would see the movie or the way I intended it to be seen."

However, Cronenberg added that politically he was all for Cineplex and bidding: "It's good Cineplex is rocking the boat."

Cronenberg said it cost him \$3375 to install the Dolby system, \$1,200 to rent it each week for the first three weeks (\$1,000 per week after that), plus \$4,500 theatre rental the first week, \$4,000 the second week, and \$3,500 the third and subsequent weeks, putting nearly \$20,000 at risk for the first three weeks, with returns to come after the distributor had taken its cut.

The film earned \$12,500 its first week and \$10,500 its second week at the Crest, and Cronenberg said he expected to break even on the deal.

After Cronenberg had rented the Crest, Cineplex negotiated to free its only 70mm/Dolby-sound screen, at the new Market Square complex in Toronto, from a previous bid and booked *The Dead Zone*, where it earned \$6,100 its first week.

## Wars fares well in Toronto launch

TORONTO - *The Wars*, released Nov. 11 in Toronto and Vancouver by Spectrafilm, grossed approximately \$28,000 at the box office its first weekend.

The film earned \$16,000 in Toronto - \$10,000 at the Odeon Hyland and \$6,000 at three suburban locations - and took in another \$4,000 in Vancouver.

A sellout Nov. 11 at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa earned about \$8,000.



National Film Board of Canada

Office national du film du Canada

# NEWS

## NEW YORK PREMIERE

On December 2, Norman McLaren's new film *Narcissus* will premiere at two of New York's most prestigious institutions, The Film Department, Museum of Modern Art, and the Film Society of Lincoln Center. The official launch will be held at MoMA at 6 p.m. followed by a reception and second screening at Lincoln Center. McLaren will attend both events.

## THE WARS PREMIERES

*The Wars*, a Nielsen-Ferns International/National Film Board of Canada co-production, had its world premiere in Toronto on November 10th at a benefit screening for the Parkinson Foundation. The film played to a packed house at the Hyland Theatre with key members of the cast - Brent Carver, Jackie Burroughs, William Hutt, and Ann-Marie MacDonald - there to take the bows. The following evening the film opened in Vancouver, and a special screening was held at the National Arts Centre in Ottawa with the Governor General attending. *The Wars* has received wide critical acclaim and according to Spectrafilm, the distributor, "the box office is excellent." The film has just opened (November 18) in London (Ontario), Winnipeg and Ottawa.

## THE NFB AT AGO

The Art Gallery of Ontario is paying tribute to the Film Board's 45 years of filmmaking with the month-long retrospective, "Has Anyone Here Seen Canada?" The film program has been arranged by categories covering music, issues, dance, por-



Photo: Shin Sugino

A scene from the critically acclaimed *The Wars*, a Nielsen-Ferns International / National Film Board of Canada co-production

traits, the French Unit, NFB features, art, treasures from the archives and Oscar winners. Highlights include *If You Love This Planet*, early films on Glenn Gould, A.Y. Jackson, and McLaren's new film *Narcissus*. Several filmmakers will be on hand to introduce their films. The retrospective began November 20 and will run till December 14. Film screenings are free with admission to the Gallery.

## UPCOMING TELECASTS...

### Something to Celebrate

Hot from the cutting room of Canada's best-known documentary filmmaker, Donald Brittain, is *Something to Celebrate*, which will premiere on the full CBC network on Sunday, December 18 at 10 p.m. The hour-long NFB/CBC coproduction is an exhilarating portrait of

fourteen energetic old people whose zest for life keeps them perpetually young. As for 55-year old Brittain, he is already well on the road with his next project as supervising director of a series of films on highway safety.

### Special Dance Program

A celebration of a different kind takes place on CBC the following Thursday, December 22 at 9 p.m., when prima ballerina Veronica Tennant introduces two unusual new dance films from the NFB. Cynthia Scott's *Flamenco at 5:15* features students of the National Ballet School in a dance class given by the charismatic flamenco teacher and choreographer Susana. Then, *Narcissus* will make its television premiere, preceded by a short homage to filmmaker Norman McLaren.

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# Artists netted by Revenue in search for shadow businesses

OTTAWA - A moratorium on Revenue Canada's reclassification of the employment status of artists for tax purposes is expected before the House of Commons' Standing Commit-

tee on Communications and Culture tables its January report on the tax problems of Canadian artists, according to Communications minister Francis Fox's office and cul-

tural lobby organizations.

A recent Revenue Canada reassessment of artists' tax returns has left that one source said were "hundreds of Canadian artists", including paint-

ers, filmmakers and writers, suddenly facing tens of thousands of dollars in back-taxes.

Among visual artists, the tax plight of West coast painter Tony Onley received widespread publicity when Onley threatened to burn his paintings until a telegram from Communications minister Francis Fox urged him "to reconsider further action."

Similarly, the cases of Montreal filmmaker Lois Siegel, whose eight years of filmmaking were classified as "home movies" by Revenue Canada, and Toronto writer and academic Phyllis Grosskurth, were raised by Conservative MP Joe Clark in the House early in November. Clark proposed that a special committee of the House be established to examine the tax problems of Canadian artists, an issue which has been under study by the federal government since before 1977.

Clark's intervention led to the House referring the question to the Standing Committee on Communications and Culture, chaired by Liberal MP Robert Gourd. The Standing Committee was directed to suspend its deliberations of the Applebaum-Hebert report and make a study of the tax plight of Canadian artists its first priority, reporting back to the House in January.

As well, discussions between Fox and National Revenue minister Pierre Bussières both at the ministerial level and between officials from both departments, in addition to representations from cultural organizations, are expected to result in a moratorium on Revenue Canada's tax sweep before the House Standing Committee gets down to business.

"We're hoping for a morator-

ium," Francis Fox cultural advisor Sandra McDonald told Cinema Canada.

"What I'm hoping for is a moratorium before the Committee goes into business," said Brian Anthony, acting director of the Canadian Conference of the Arts. "People here in Ottawa are finally seized with the gravity of the situation."

The board of directors of the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA), following a meeting in Toronto, called on Oct. 25 for an immediate moratorium that "should remain in place until the government reviews and implements new taxation regulations which are appropriate to performers, writers and visual and other artists."

"In the treatment of artists," said ACTRA president Bruce McLeod, "our government is decades behind much of the Western world."

In the House of Commons, MPs from Vancouver to Toronto also echoed the call for a moratorium.

One interpretation making the rounds in Ottawa is that Revenue Canada was going after shadow business activity and only netted the artists, writers and filmmakers by accident.

"They've had the tax problems of artists brought to their attention for so long now," commented the CCA's Brian Anthony, "any persecution of the arts community is willful. If they continue I can only conclude it's deliberate."

A 1977 report commissioned by the Secretary of State, then responsible for film affairs, had recommended that artists be given a special taxation status which would allow them to deduct professional expenses from gross earnings. The recommendation has yet to be implemented.



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## 11th ANNUAL CFTA AWARDS

CATEGORY	TITLE	PRODUCTION COMPANY
Animation	Herself the Elf	Nelvana Ltd.
A / V Portable	Homefires	Multiple Images Inc. / McGill Productions
A / V Non-Portable	Gonna Build a City	Lawrence Marshall Productions
Commercial	Alien	The Partners
Documentary - under 30 mins.	Tom Magee - Man of Iron	Mobius Productions
Documentary - over 30 mins.	Magic in the Sky	Investigative Productions
Instructional / Educational	Your Benefits	Tahl Commercial Film Productions
Sales Promotion / Public Relations	A New Voyageur	Chetwynd Films
Television Drama - under 30 mins.	Boys and Girls	Atlantis Films
Television Drama - over 30 mins.	The Wild Pony	Pony Film Productions
Television Variety - under 30 mins.	Best of Bizarre	Shiral Productions / CTV Television
Television Variety - over 30 mins.	Jefferson Starship	Nelvana Ltd.
Music Video	Don't Walk Past	Champagne Pictures
First Production (VTR Productions Award)	Wild Goose Jack	Clear Horizon Films
Chetwynd Award	Special People	Diane Dupuy (Famous People Players)
Merit Award	Your Benefits	Tahl Commercial Film Productions
<b>Outstanding over-all Award</b>	<b>Boys and Girls</b>	<b>Atlantis Films</b>

## A bill to curb sexism on television

TORONTO - A House of Commons sub-committee will study New Democratic Party MP Lynn McDonald's private member's bill to amend the Broadcasting Act as a step toward eliminating pornography and sexism on television. The bill proposes to add the words "... or sex" to the clause in the Broadcasting Act which reads: "No station, network operator, or pay-television

licensee shall broadcast an abusive pictorial representation on any race, religion, or creed."

Liberal MP Robert Gourde and Maud Barlow, the Prime Minister's special advisor on women's rights, announced in Ottawa Nov. 4 that the sub-committee will report by Feb. 23, 1984.

## Petrie goes home for co-production

MONTREAL - Shooting began Nov. 3 in Glace Bay, N.S. on The Bay Boy Productions' *The Bay Boy*, written and directed by Glace Bay native Daniel Petrie who directed *The Neptune Factor*, *The Betsy*, *Fort Apache: The Bronx* and *Six Pack*. The theatrical feature film, starring Liv Ullmann, Kiefer Sutherland, Leah Pinsent, Ste-

phane Audran and Alan Scarfe, is expected to wrap in Glace Bay by mid-December after an eight-week shoot on an estimated \$4 million budget. The production has applied for official coproduction status (80% Canadian, 20% France through Hachette-Fox). Producers are John Kemeny and Denis Héroux.



## Sunrise wraps When First We Meet

TORONTO - Independent production company Sunrise Films has completed principal photography on *When We First Met*, a one-hour teen drama licensed to Home Box Office and completely financed by U.S. educational film distributor Learning Corporation of America.

Sunrise president Paul Saltzman produced, wrote, and directed the \$150,000 production, which wrapped a nine-day shooting schedule Oct. 30 in Toronto. Post-production will be done in Toronto and the program's delivery date to LCA is Dec. 15 for a scheduled March, 1984, playdate on HBO.

Based on the novel by Norma Fox Mazer, the film is a modern day Romeo and Juliet story. It stars Amy Linker, who appeared in the U.S. sitcom *Square Pegs*, and Andrew Sabiston, a Toronto native whose credits include the Nelvana Ltd. series *The Edison Twins*. Veteran Jayne Eastwood also stars with Patricia Hamilton and Sean McCann.

The project is Sunrise Films' first drama after producing 90 documentaries over the past ten years, of which 60 have won awards. Its 26-part series on creativity in young people, *Spread Your Wings*, has earned

22 awards and been sold to 30 countries.

U.S. television distributor for *Spread Your Wings* is LCA, whose vice-president of production and acquisition, Bob McDonald, approached Saltzman about shooting the film in August. "He told me, 'If you can do it in Canada for the same money as it costs us in New York, do it,'" said Saltzman. He proceeded to put together a first-rate crew including line producer-production manager Ray Sager, associate producer-1st a.d. John Board, d.o.p. Mark Irwin, and sound recordist Dan Laour.

McDonald acted as the film's executive producer, and LCA retains all rights. The film does qualify for Canadian content, however, so LCA probably will sell it back to Canadian TV.

According to Saltzman, Sunrise has several feature projects in development, including *Chappie and Me*, John Craig's true story of a white Canadian who wore blackface to barnstorm with a Negro baseball team in the 1930's; *Picture Story*, a feature documentary and TV mini-series on combat photo journalism; and *Dar*, a 90-min. drama written by Steve Lucas, who wrote and co-produced the NFB documentary *After The Axe*.

## MGM dominates Toronto productions

TORONTO - With the MGM feature *Martin's Day* wrapped on Nov. 12, after an eight-week shoot, only low budget features and made to order TV fare can be found on the sluggish Toronto production scene.

Robert Cooper Productions started *The Guardian*, a made for pay-TV feature licensed to Home Box Office, in New York Nov. 14. After shooting for one week in New York, the production will move to Toronto for four weeks. David Greene will direct a cast including Martin Sheen, Lou Gossett Jr., and Arthur Hill. Producing are screenwriters William Link and Richard Levinson, Robert Cooper, and associate producer Joyce Kozy King.

Producer Tony Kramreither will start shooting Nov. 21 on the low budget picture *Thrill Kill*. Kramreither will co-direct with screenwriter Anthony D'Andrea. Other key personnel include associate producer/editor Nick Rotundo, production supervisor Ray Sager, and

production manager Robert Wertheimer.

RSL Films will shoot two features for the Playboy Channel in November, *Heavenly Bodies* and *Bedroom Eyes*. *Bodies*, directed by William Fruet and starring Dayle Haddon, began shooting Nov. 13. *Eyes*, directed by Lawrence Dane, and written by Dane and Ron Base, is scheduled to begin Nov. 20. Producers are Robert Lantos and Stephen Roth.

Atlantis Films will finish its six-part series of half-hour TV dramas with *Liar Liar*, an original screenplay by John Frizzell. Production will begin in Montreal on Nov. 28, directed by Don McBrearty and starring Stephanie Morganstern.

Toronto production company Renaissance taped a TV adaptation of the Stratford Festival production *The Country Wife* in early November, directed by John Thomson. The program has been licensed to Global TV for the 1984 season. Sunrise Films wrapped *When*

*We First Met*, a one-hour teen drama financed by Learning Corporation of America and licensed to Home Box Office, in Toronto Oct. 30.

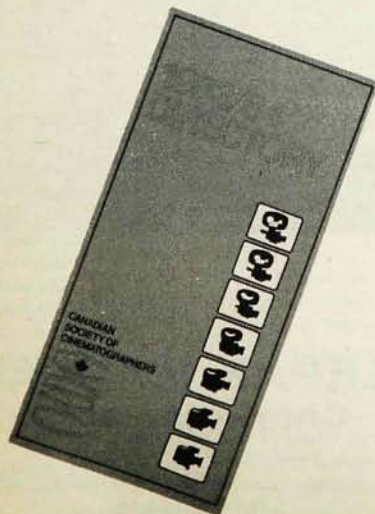
CBC will shoot a two-hour movie *Charlie Grant's War* on location in Toronto until Nov. 23. Produced by Bill Gough, written by Anna Sandor, and directed by Martin Lavut, it stars R.H. Thomson, Joan Orenstein, and Jan Rubes. Also filming around town during November was *SCTV Network*, airing this season on pay-TV services Cinemax (U.S.) and Superchannel.

Scheduled to shoot in Ontario this January is the MGM-financed feature *Mrs. Soffel*, produced by Edgar Scherick and Associates. A nine-week shoot is planned, directed by Australia's Gillian Armstrong (*My Brilliant Career*, *Star Struck*) and starring Diane Keaton and Mel Gibson.

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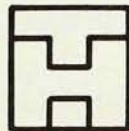
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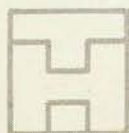
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# Fox exercises Cineplex option, sells off

TORONTO - A complicated financial deal involving Cineplex Corp., Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp. of Los Angeles, and an unnamed European financial institution has enabled the Canadian company to reduce its corporate debt by \$1.6 million.

In mid-November, Twentieth Century-Fox exercised its op-

tion to acquire 1,490,000 Cineplex shares, part of an August 1982 deal in which Fox gave Cineplex an interest-free loan of \$3.7 million. Fox obtained the shares for a token fee of one cent per share.

Fox then shifted the shares to the European financial institution, along with a promissory note of \$1.6 million which

Cineplex still owed on the loan. The institution then cancelled the note at no cost to Cineplex.

On Nov. 11, most of the shares were sold in two blocks of 700,000 shares each on the Toronto Stock Exchange at \$2.45 and \$2.50 per share. The deal was handled by Merit Investment Corp., and Merit president and Cineplex vice-chair-

man Myron Gottlieb said the shares were bought by institutional investors.

The deal in effect gave Cineplex \$1.6 million as well as use of \$3.7 million interest-free for 15 months in exchange for issuing shares with a market value of \$3.7 million.

A week earlier, on Nov. 4, the Ontario Securities Commission announced it had suspended the trading privileges of Cineplex president Garth Drabinsky for 10 business days beginning Dec. 15, 1983, for filing a deficient press release. The OSC also reprimanded vice-chairman Gottlieb.

The OSC withdrew its notice of hearing dated Oct. 11 in which it made certain allegations against Drabinsky and Gottlieb, in particular that they approved a press release and material change report designed to conceal the true financial condition of Cineplex. In its withdrawal of the hearing, which had been scheduled for Nov. 7, the OSC also withdrew its previous allegations.

The problem arose as the result of a press release Feb. 4 by Cineplex. At the same time, the company filed a material change report with the OSC and the Toronto Stock Exchange. Disclosed in the material change report, but not in the press release, was a serious deterioration of working capital which occurred in late 1982.

A temporary cease-trading order was issued Feb. 17 by the OSC on Cineplex shares pending clarification of the company's financial position. It was lifted Feb. 28 after Cineplex issued a press release Feb. 24 clarifying its financial situation.

Cineplex said that the Feb. 4 press release and material change report were prepared for the company by independent counsel, but approved by Drabinsky and Gottlieb.

## Class of '84 works for Citadel in release

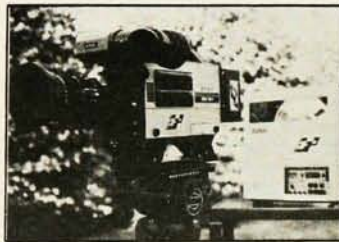
TORONTO - *Class of 1984*, a Canadian film produced by Arthur Kent, directed by Mark Lester, and shot in Toronto in 1981, has grossed over \$400,000 in wide release across English Canada, according to its distributor, Citadel Films.

## Straight goes to Vestron for internat'l

TORONTO - Five-year Canadian Broadcasting Corp. veteran Rob Straight, former head of American affairs at CBC Enterprises, has been appointed vice-president of Vestron Video International, and will be responsible for overseeing the full scope of Vestron's international activities.

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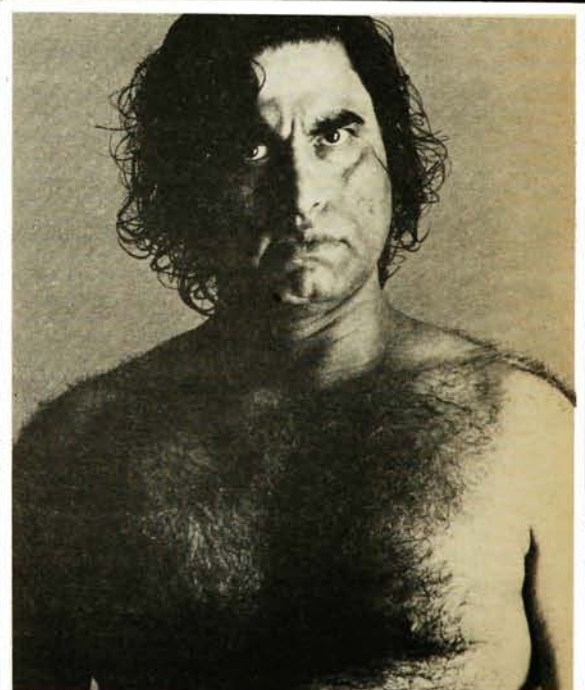
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(cont. from page 30)

letter urged rejection of the request.

Increasingly, there was a feeling in the milieu that the CRTC would have little choice but to accept the request. Refusal would probably provoke the bankruptcy of First Choice, and would be followed by other bankruptcies throughout the industry as First Choice defaulted on its many contracts.

As for Harold Greenberg, president of Astral Bellevue Pathe, he was confident that the CRTC would approve the request, and felt that would be an exceedingly good thing for all involved. As he told Cinema Canada on Nov. 15: "The best thing that could happen for the production industry would be for me to get the license. As Andre Link said, I'm nobody's competitor in Canada. The Americans are the people we have to compete against. Everyone I've been talking to has been saying to the CRTC, 'Get someone in First Choice who understands filmmaking so that we can get back to work'. If this system is allowed to fail now, my friends in the States tell me it would be two years before a Canadian pay system could be put back in place again."

Astral has undertaken to remove itself from active production, but not from the financing of films, as a condition of its license.

As the industry learned of the CRTC's approval of the Astral-Hees takeover of First Choice, there were sighs of relief from some and groans from others, while many of those reached by Cinema Canada had simply not yet read the Commission's Nov. 16 12-page decision.

"We were in favor and so we're satisfied," Andre Link, president of Cinepix Inc. told Cinema Canada. "Now there's an important entity that will in the long-term make a lot of money for all of us. The problem was the short-term and now I think we've all got a better understanding of the situation. Pay-television in this country is a long-term proposition; the main thing is that we have the means to keep on going."

"As for vertical integration, that doesn't scare me. Astral is not the only large concentration nor the first one to come along, nor even the most important one."

"We expected it," commented Superchannel's Jon Slan. "We feel that Ottawa has acted with unusual speed to save the Playboy channel. I hope they act as expeditiously on the regionals."

"We opposed the thing since the department of Communications had asked the CRTC to look at the whole pay pie but now they've gone ahead with a half-baked one."

"The CRTC has done what the CFTA asked to be done," commented Canadian Film & Television Association presi-

dent Jack McAndrew. "There was a real and present danger of vertical integration and the CRTC went to great lengths to question the applicants on their plans for vertical integration. If new financing was not put in place, there would be nefarious consequences for us all. So we reasoned that there was little choice but to approve (the Astral takeover) with conditions. All we want is to ensure that there's a market for independent producers and distributors. I would assume that as a result of this decision there will be renewed production activity. If they do that, great."

Dov Zimmer, president of Sonolab in Montreal, was waiting to read the exact regulations as defined by the CRTC.

"What the don'ts are is very important. We have asked for the document and only then would we be able to comment."

"It took the CRTC 10 years to decide whether or not to have pay-TV in this country and it's taken them just two weeks to restructure the industry," commented filmmaker Allan King of the Canadian Association of Motion Picture Producers (CAMPP).

"The CRTC," King continued, "has a 30-year record of saying

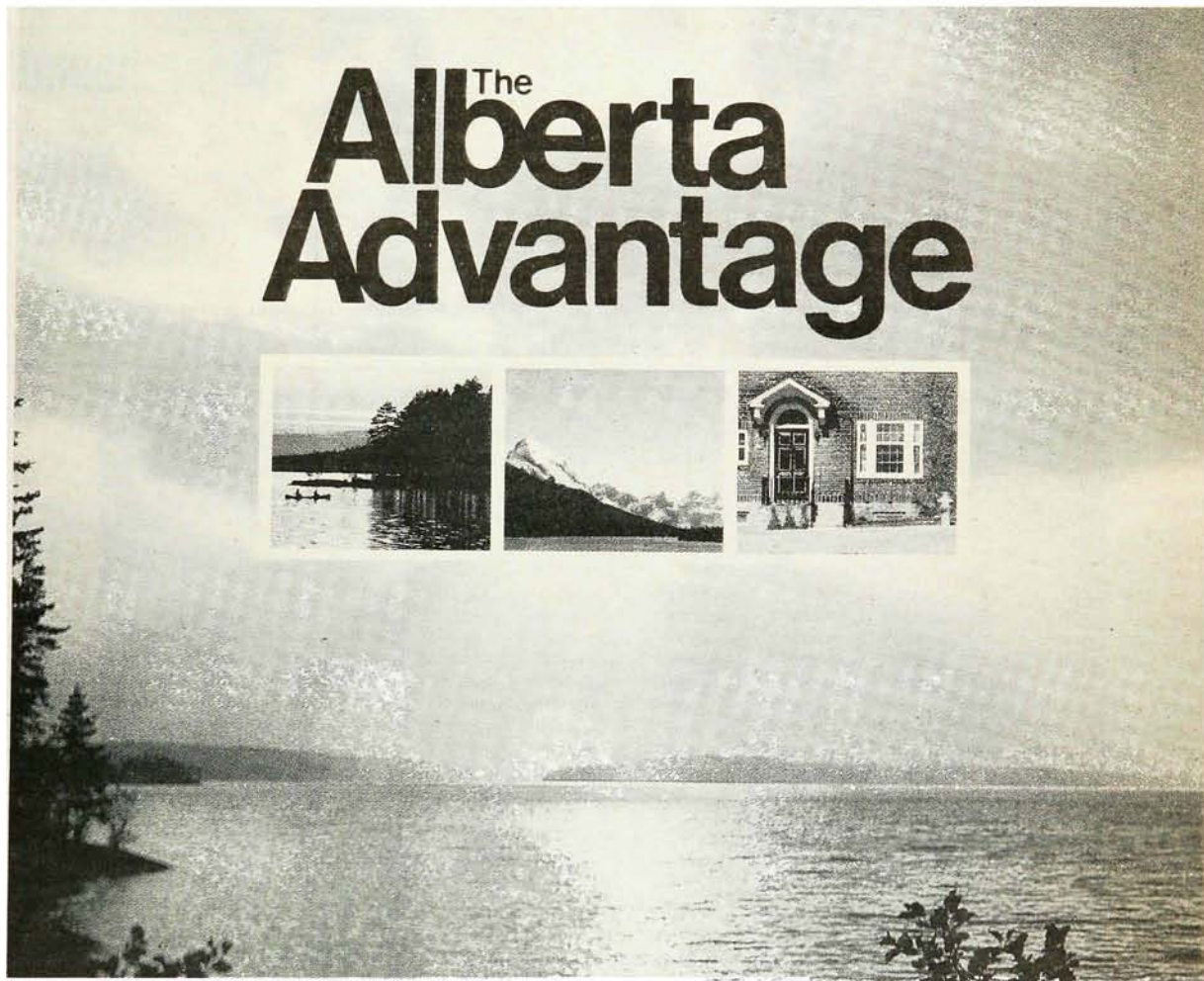
one thing and doing the opposite. This is just one more bad CRTC decision. They have built an immense highway of American product into Canada. On the other hand, there's virtue in having a strong, capable organization like Harold (Greenberg's)."

"This decision will work on two conditions" commented CRTC commissioner Jean-Pierre Mongeau. "One, it settles First Choice's short- and medium-term problem which was that First Choice had over-extended itself with Canadian producers. So we've permitted that operation to continue and

to be in a position to live up to its obligations to producers."

"Two, the sequel to all this will take place in Vancouver on Nov. 29 where we're to consider the rationalization of French-language pay-television services and the Superchannel national grid of regionals. Everyone concerned has every interest in having the situation adjusted so that pay-TV in Canada can work and meet the original objectives of the March '82 decision."

"So I'd say we've concluded the First Choice phase - and the real issue will be settled on the 29th."



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## Canadian locales shine in recent releases

TORONTO - Moviegoers will be able to see a lot of Canada at local theatres this fall - without necessarily seeing Canadian produced films.

In October and November, 15 features were released across Canada which either are Canadian-made or else shot in Canada with differing degrees of Canadian participation.

It began Oct. 4 in Toronto with Disney's *Never Cry Wolf*, American director Carroll Ballard's adaptation of Canadian author Farley Mowat's adventure story, shot in the Canadian arctic starring American actor Charles Martin Smith.

On Oct. 13 in Quebec, René Malo Films released *Au nom de tous les miens* (English title: *For Those I Loved*), a Canada-France co-production directed by Robert Enrico and starring Michael York. The film grossed \$350,000 in five cities during its first two weeks.

Paramount opened *The Dead Zone* across Canada Oct. 21, based on Stephen King's novel, produced by Dino De

Laurentiis, starring Christopher Walken, Brooke Adams, and Martin Sheen, but directed by a Canadian, David Cronenberg, and shot in Ontario by an Association of Canadian Film Craftspersons (ACFC) crew. By its second weekend, the film had grossed \$9,000,000 in North America and ranked number two on Variety's Top 50 for the week ending Oct. 26.

Independent distributor Spectrafilm released *The Tin Flute* in Toronto Oct. 28, after the French version, *Bonheur d'occasion*, had played since September in Quebec. The film has fared poorly at the Toronto box office.

*Running Brave*, shot in Alberta last summer by Canadian director Don Shebib (who later asked his name be removed from the credits), financed by the Ermineskin Indian Band, produced by American documentary filmmaker Ira Englander, and starring Robby Benson, opened Nov. 4, distributed by Paramount. The story of American Indian Olympic hero

Billy Mills features Edmonton substituted for South Dakota and Commonwealth Stadium for Tokyo's Olympic Stadium, where Mills won his gold medal in 1964.

On the same day, Orion released *Strange Invaders* in Toronto, directed by Michael Laughlin and starring Paul Le Mat, Nancy Allen, and Louise Fletcher, a film which last year shot some scenes and did special effects work in Ontario.

A rarity for the industry, three Canadian-produced features opened in Toronto Nov. 11. Spectrafilm released *The Wars*, shot in 1981, directed by Robin Phillips and starring Brent Carver, Martha Henry, and Jackie Burroughs; Astral opened the English version of Gilles Carle's *Maria Chapdelaine*, starring Carole Laure and Nick Mancuso; and Universal released *Going Berserk*, a comedy featuring SCTV stars John Candy, Joe Flaherty, and Eugene Levy, produced by Pierre David and Claude Héroux, and directed by David

Steinberg.

The day before, Warner Brothers released *Star 80*, the story of Vancouver-born Playboy centerfold and actress Dorothy Stratten, who was murdered by her estranged husband in 1980. The production filmed in Vancouver last year, directed by Bob Fosse and starring Mariel Hemingway.

Independent distributor Citadel Films will release *Big Meat Eater*, a cult film by Vancouver filmmakers Lawrence Keane and Chris Windsor, Nov. 18 at Toronto's independent theatre The Ritz. Also on Nov. 18, MGM/United Artists will release *A Christmas Story*, the

studio's own film shot in Toronto, to earlier this year directed by Canadian Bob Clark, which tells the story of an American boy who really wants an air rifle for Christmas.

Warner Bros. will release *Of Unknown Origin*, produced by Pierre David and Claude Héroux and directed by Georges Cosmatos, on Nov. 25, the same day director Paul Almond's new feature *Ups & Downs* will premiere in Vancouver, distributed by Astral. Also Nov. 25, Astral will open *The Golden Seal* in Toronto, a film shot by Sam Goldwyn Jr. Productions in British Columbia last year.

## Superchannel preems SCTV

TORONTO - A new season of 18 45-minute SCTV shows will premiere Dec. 16 on both Alberta and Ontario Superchannel regional pay-TV services.

The award-winning comedy series will star Joe Flaherty, Eugene Levy, Andrea Martin, and Martin Short, with former regulars John Candy, Catherine

O'Hara, and Dave Thomas appearing as guests throughout the season. U.S. pay service Cinemax is also carrying the show, which will premiere a new episode each month.

For the past two seasons, the show has been broadcast in a 90-minute format on NBC and CBC, each year earned eight Emmy nominations, and winning awards each year for outstanding comedy series writing.

Producer is Andrew Alexander, who has produced the show since it began in a 30-minute syndicated format in 1976.

Superchannel also has acquired the TV adaptation of David Fennario's play *Balconville*, produced last year by Tapestry Productions and Standard Broadcasting. Directed by Mark Blandford (executive producer of CBC-TV's *Empire Inc.*), the show stars Peter MacNeill, Jayne Eastwood, Marc Gélinas, Yolande Circe, and Jean Archambault.

Produced in association with CBC, *Balconville* was originally licensed to C Channel. Premiered in the VIDEO/video program of the 1983 Festival of Festivals, the play will be aired on Superchannel in January 1984.

Also telecast in January will be *The Terry Fox Story*, directed by Ralph Thomas and starring Eric Fryer, Robert Duvall, and Michael Zelnicker. In May, the film was released theatrically across Canada by Twentieth Century-Fox and Astral Films, and aired on U.S. pay-TV giant Home Box Office.

In November, Superchannel premiered the four-hour version of Claude Jutra's *Kamouraska*, starring Geneviève Bujold, which had been released in a shorter, feature length version in 1972.

TORONTO - Director Bob Clark (*Murder by Decree*, *Tribute*, *Porky's*, *Porky's II*, *A Christmas Story*) has been signed to replace Don Zimmerman on Twentieth Century-Fox's *Rhinestone*, currently shooting in Nashville starring Dolly Parton and Sylvester Stallone. Clark took over Nov. 4.

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## SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupeczek

*Change of Heart*, a one-hour drama shooting in Vermilion, Alberta, is aptly named, for the title could apply not only to the emotional evolution portrayed in its story, but also to the CBC's most recent attempt to fulfill its mandate in the regions.

Slated for the For the Record series in March '84, *Change of Heart* is a co-production between CBC and the NFB North West Studio. The result of two years of continuing conversations between CBC producer Anne Frank and the NFB's Tom Radford, the production (budgeted roughly at \$300,000 to \$350,000) shot Oct. 24 to Nov. 9.

Anne Frank, an ex-Albertan, was interested in utilizing Alberta talent, particularly Anne Wheeler (*War Story*) as director. The script was written by Sharon Riis (*Latitude 55*) who lives in Lac La Biche. The cast includes Joy Coghill, Ken James, Joy Thompson, Susan Stackhouse and Edmonton actors Paul Wood, David Sivertsen and Warren Graves. Casting was handled by CBC's Gail Carr and The Other Agency Casting Limited in Alberta. "They did a splendid job. We're very, very happy," says Frank of Bette Chadwick in Edmonton and Diane Rogers in Calgary.

Production manager is Doug Smith, and DOP is Richard Leiterman. Script supervisor is Penny Hynam. Designer David Moe found the location at a farm in Vermilion, two hours from Edmonton.

"We've put together a fantastic crew out here," says Frank. "I look forward to doing it again."

Ron Brown has been appointed General Manager of Operations for ACCESS. Brown, formerly president/producer Century II Motion Pictures Ltd., has been actively involved in the Alberta industry for a number of years, including stints with AMPIA and CFTA. The appointment of Brown is a result of the restructuring of ACCESS initiated by new president Peter Senchuk.

Taking Control: A Positive Approach to Television for Educators and Parents, a symposium sponsored by the Calgary Board of Education, featured speakers Gary Toth of Toth and Associates, and Patricia Mahon of Superchannel... Super organizer and actress Jan Miller is putting together Symposium '84, "Local Heroes", for Edmonton in February. Invited guests include Bill Forsythe, David Puttman, Bruce

Beresford, Joan Micklin Silver, Phil Borsos and John Sayles... *Storm*, a low-budget drama by producers Michael Kevis and David Winning of Groundstar Productions, has wrapped in Calgary... Randy Bradshaw has returned from a stint in Toronto on the CBC series, *Judge*; William Marsden of the Provincial Film Office has returned from a jaunt to England in the name of promotion; and Maxine Samuels has returned to John Ware country from the east.

## Toronto news in brief

**TORONTO - The Terry Fox Story** earned four nominations for the U.S. Cable Television Association Awards, to be presented Dec. 12 in Los Angeles. Nominations include best picture, best feature director (Ralph Thomas), best actor (Robert Duvall), best script (Ed Hume) ... Pan Canadian has acquired Canadian film and TV rights to director Phillip Jackson's feature *Music of the Spheres* ... *Snow*, a 13-minute short directed by Tibor Takacs and written by Stephen Zoller, has been picked up by Columbia Pictures and will be distributed with their Christmas releases.

CBC-TV's co-production with Jim Henson Associates, *Fraggle Rock*, seen in over 60 countries, has been nominated in the children's category for a 1983 International Emmy Award... Director Donald Brittain's NFB documentary on the elderly, *Something to Celebrate*, will be telecast on CBC Dec. 18... 20 episodes of the CBC series *Seeing Things*, starring Louis Del Grande, have been sold to WNET New York and will be seen beginning Nov. 5 on over 25 U.S. stations... The premiere of the second season of Alcliff Prod.'s *Fighting Words* on CHCH-TV has been rescheduled to Dec. 1... Among Vestron Video's December U.S. releases is *The Terry Fox Story*.

*The Incubus*, 1981 Canadian feature starring John Cassavetes, played two weeks at Cineplex in Toronto after opening Oct. 14, distributed by Pan Canadian... Nelvana Ltd.'s series *Inspector Gadget* will premiere on First Choice in January. Also scheduled on the national pay service early in the new year is Tapestry Production's *Maggie & Pierre*, starring Linda Griffiths... *The Bamboo Brush*, a half-hour drama directed by Sturla Gunnarson for Atlantis Films, has won top prizes in its categories at the Columbus International Film Festival and the Vancouver International Children's Film Festival... *Iceman*, shot in B.C. earlier this year produced by Norman Jewison and Patrick Palmer and directed by Fred Schepisi, is tentatively scheduled for a spring release by Universal.

## Culture agencies' revolving door

**TORONTO** - The revolving door atop Canada's cultural agencies continues to turn, as key appointments to the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. (CBC) followed confirmation that government film commissioner and National Film Board chairman James Domville will not serve a second term after his present five-year mandate expires Jan. 2.

While a new government film commissioner has not yet been named, Francis Fox advisor Sandra McDonald told Cinema Canada, "There will have to be a government film commissioner who will have to implement the film policy." But according to informed sources, the long-awaited Film Policy, promised for the end of the year, will now not be out until March.

André Bureau, president of Canadian Satellite Communications Inc. (CanCom) has been appointed to replace John Meisel as chairman of the CRTC, and will assume the post Nov. 16. Meisel resigned last month in the middle of his seven-year term and will return to teaching at Queen's University in Kingston, Ont.

Bureau, president of CanCom since Aug. 31, is a lawyer from Trois Rivières, Qué., and has been vice-president of the Montreal French-language daily *La Presse* and president of the Quebec broadcasting firm Télémedia Inc. He comes to the job recommended by Communications minister Francis Fox for his understanding of the rapidly changing communications industry.

Denis Harvey, current head of CBC-TV network sports programming, has been named to replace Peter Herrndorf as vice-president of the English language television network. Harvey will take office Nov. 14, but Herrndorf will remain with the CBC as a consultant until the new year, when he is scheduled to become publisher of *Toronto Life* magazine, a position he is not expected to hold for too long. According to reliable sources in the CBC, Herrndorf, after a recent meeting with Opposition leader Brian Mulroney, has been promised the Communications portfolio in the next Conservative government.

Another CBC executive retiring at year's end is veteran English network programmer Norm Garriock.

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# Patterns change as bidding plays part in Christmas releases

TORONTO - When Santa comes to town this year bearing his usual goodies - a stockingful of money - for the box office winners among Hollywood's Christmas pictures, he may have to make a few unfamiliar visits to the independent exhibitors who now can bid the Majors' December releases.

Already, Universal reports that *Scarface*, director Brian De Palma's crime drama starring Al Pacino, has been successfully bid by Cineplex for their Eaton Centre and Scarborough Town Centre locations in Toronto and their St. Albert's theatre in Edmonton. Also, Premiere Operating has obtained the picture for Brampton. Canadian Odeon will handle the picture's wide release Dec. 9. Bids on Universal's other Christmas release, *D.C. Cab*, opening Dec. 16, are still up in the air.

Columbia releases successfully bid by independents include John Carpenter's *Christine*, opening nationally Dec. 9, and *The Man Who Loved Women*, starring Burt Reynolds and Julie Andrews, opening Dec. 16. Columbia general manager Ted Hulse, reluctant to

discuss specifics, said bids on these pictures have been accepted "right across the country" with openings by independents scheduled for Toronto, Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Calgary, and Edmonton. Cineplex confirms it has acquired both pictures.

Columbia's other Christmas release, *The Dresser*, starring Tom Courtney and Albert Finney, opens Dec. 16 in Toronto exclusively at Odeon's York Theatre.

Odeon director of film buying Ron Emilio confirmed his chain will play *Sudden Impact*, from Warner Bros. (a traditional Famous Players supplier), in some situations across Canada. But he stressed Odeon was taking "a common sense point of view" toward bidding. "Someone once said you can't go out of business by trying to buy every picture ever made," he said. "Everything has its price."

Bids on Paramount and MGM/United Artists releases are still in negotiation, according to their general managers. Twentieth Century-Fox pre-sold

their Christmas releases to certain key markets before the bidding system began July 1.

Warner Brothers plans only one Christmas release, *Sudden Impact*, with Clint Eastwood as Dirty Harry, on Dec. 16, after opening two films in November: director Bob Fosse's *Star 80* (Nov. 10) and *Of Unknown Origin*, from Canadian producer Pierre David (Nov. 25).

Paramount will release five films, beginning with *Nate and Hayes*, starring Tommy Lee Jones, Nov. 18, followed by *Terms of Endearment*, starring Shirley MacLaine and Debra Winger, Nov. 23 in Toronto and Vancouver, Dec. 16 across Canada. Also scheduled for Dec. 16 are national releases of *Uncommon Valor*, directed by Ted Kotcheff and starring Gene Hackman, and *The Keep*, with Scott Glenn. Another planned release is the animated film *The Rescuers*, along with a re-release of the short, *Mickey's Christmas Carol*.

MGM/UA will open director Bob Clark's *A Christmas Story* Nov. 18, and on the same day in Toronto only will open *Yentl*, produced, written and directed

by, and starring Barbra Streisand, which will open nationally Dec. 9. *Sahara*, starring Brooke Shields, will be released Dec. 23.

Fox's Christmas pictures will follow the Nov. 18 release of *A Night in Heaven*, with Christopher Atkins and Lesley Ann Warren. *Silkwood*, directed by Mike Nichols and starring Meryl Streep, opens Dec. 14, while Mel Brooks' *To Be or Not To Be* and *Two of a Kind*, starring John Travolta and Olivia Newton-John, open Dec. 16.

Orion plans to release *Amityville 3-D* Nov. 18, and *Gorky*

*Park*, with William Hurt, on Dec. 16.

Among Canadian independents, Spectrafilm will release French director François Truffaut's *Vivement dimanche* in Toronto Dec. 23 under the English title *Confidentially Yours*. Astral will open *Triumphs of a Man Called Horse*, starring Richard Harris, in Toronto Dec. 2. New World Mutual will release *Wavelength*, with Robert Carradine and Cherry Currie, in Toronto and Vancouver Nov. 25. Citadel opens *Big Meat Eater* in Toronto Nov. 18.

## Cinephile enters tough market as indy distributor of art films

TORONTO - Independent distributor Cinephile has acquired English Canadian rights to five features, according to company president Andre Bennett.

The films include *Marianne and Juliane*, by West German director Margarethe von Trotta; *Larose, Pierrot et la Luce*, by Quebec's Claude Gagnon; *In Between Places*, a Yugoslavian

film directed by Srdjana Caranovica; *Man on the Wall*, by Reinhard Hauff; and *The Deception Around Benjamin Steiner*, by Izhak Hanooka.

Cinephile's 1983 Toronto releases include two Quebec films, Claude Gagnon's *Keiko* and Andre Forcier's *Au clair de la lune*.

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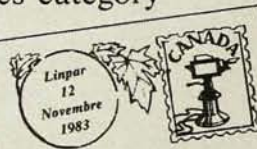
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