

Mr. & Mrs. Paul Newman's search for a Canadian director

During the recent British telecast, earlier this summer, of the three-part Canadian mini-series, *Chabot Solo*, a whimsical history of aviation, one of the London viewers was Hollywood actress Joanne Woodward. She was so enchanted with the series - which features an aging aviator flying everything from Sopwith Camels to Concordes and who once shared a hospital room with Canadian air-ace Billy Bishop back in WWI - that she had people combing New York, L.A. and London for more information on *Chabot Solo's* producer/director.

Meanwhile in an office on Soho Street in Toronto, 37-year-old Les Harris of Canamedia Productions was completing post-production on *444 Days To Freedom*, the two-hour sequel to his award-winning 1981 TV-movie, *Escape From Iran: The Canadian*

Caper. *444 Days* will air on North American TV this fall on the fifth anniversary of the Iran hostage-taking.

A Canadian citizen since 1976, British-born Harris had gone from television directing for the BBC to the CBC's *Country Canada* and for 4 years with CTV's *W5*. As Woodward's people hunted for his whereabouts, Harris was preparing to produce and co-direct the television version (for CBC) of John Gray's musical *King of Friday Night*, which begins principal photography in Nova Scotia this September.

When Woodward was finally able to catch up with Harris, it was to ask him for a personal copy of *Chabot Solo* for her husband, Paul Newman.

Chabot Solo has been sold to U.K., Australian, New Zealand, and Italian television. So far the only Canadian network to have picked up the film is Radio-Quebec.



Prisma looking good with Ranger arrival

The arrival of Louise Ranger as General Director of Les Productions Prisma is a sure sign that the Montreal production house bears watching in the coming year. Ranger, fresh from a six-month rest after stepping down from a 4-year stint as director-general of the Institut Québécois de Cinéma, is one of Quebec's most accomplished production administrators. Her credits start off with over 250 commercials during the late '60s, move through the features of Gilles Carle and Jean-Claude Labrecque while she was at Les Productions Carle-Lamy and include other features

signed by Denys Arcand, Brigitte Sauriol and Jean-Claude Lord. She was sent in to rescue Joyce Weiland's *Far Shore* and André Forcier's *L'eau chaude, l'eau froide*, and orchestrated the Olympic film for the NFB. She then began producing in her own right, making the animated series *Les voyages de Tortillard* with Peter Sanders.

With Genie awards for *Les bons débarras* which is just now being opened in over 100 theatres in France, Prisma also made Michel Brault's *Les ordres*, and co-produced several of Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's films. Prisma took a shine to children's films



before it was popular to do so, and made André Melançon's marvelous *The Backstreet Six* (*Comme les six doigts de la main*), finished his recent *Zigzags*, and is now launched into a series called *Open Book* which should grow to 75 films in all.

For many years, producer-director Claude Godbout and producer Marcia Couëlle have held down the fort at Prisma, putting in time on the side as president of the Association des producteurs de films du Québec and the Institut Québécois de Cinéma (for Godbout), and as president of the Cinéma Québécois (for Couëlle). The quality of their films has been matched only by the quality of their service to the milieu, and with the addition of Ranger, the 'small company that can' is

ready for a new departure.

Concretely, the company is moving from its drafty downtown offices to a new building on Park Ave. near Outremont. In the works are plans for the next feature film by Micheline Lanctôt (*Teloc et Cila*), a 6-hour mini-series about a lady detective who prowls around Montreal's Main entitled *Charlotte Lalumière*, and continued production on *Open Book*, not to mention its on-going sponsored film program. Godbout and Couëlle will worry about making the films and making the deals (respectively) while Ranger takes on the job of keeping all the separate projects and people on track. Nevertheless, Prisma is committed to remaining a small company, dealing in quality products. So far, it has kept the faith.

Doomsday comes to Ottawa

Ottawa's struggling film community has gained a new, if slightly reluctant, member with the arrival of Halifax producer/distributor/director Ramona Macdonald to the national capital region.

Macdonald, president and founder six years ago of Halifax production company Doomsday Studios, has as of July opened an Ottawa office in a move which has less to do with new film-making opportunities in the federal capital than with loyalty to her recently transferred civil servant husband and two teenage children.

"Who in their right mind would move to



Ottawa for film?" the Lithuanian-born Macdonald recently mused to Cinema Canada. "I understand there are 4000 people working in the industry here, but I don't know what they're doing. I feel like a cactus in the desert."

But while frankly admitting that her Ottawa move "means that the existence of my family is making their presence felt," Macdonald is making the best of adapting to changing circumstances - as attest the sounds of saws and hammers of workmen building an editing studio to her new James St. home.

"I've operated for six years. First with no money, then with no staff. I've been hit by everything, and now the worst has happened. What it means is that I'm a commuter between Ottawa and Halifax. I'll be moving distribution to Ottawa as well as the

editing studio and office, but production will remain on the east coast."

With renovations underway, "our distribution activity is at a bit of a standstill until September," Macdonald says. But as of August she intends to continue co-direction with Charles Lapp in Halifax on a hour-long documentary on the late novelist Ernest Buckler, then back in Ottawa she'll edit *Windows*, a 30-minute drama shot last year.

"This move is a liberation for me. I'm first of all a director, and this will allow me to hand over other things and spend more time directing and editing."

Critic Pratley named to Order of Canada



Gerald Pratley was named a Member of the Order of Canada in the July Honours List. The investiture will take place Oct. 3. It would appear to be the first time a film critic has been so bemedalled.

Pratley, born in London, England, attended the Fishguard & Goodwick Grammar School in Wales, and returned to London to study writing at the Regent Street Polytechnic. He emigrated to Canada in 1946 and joined CBC/Toronto as a continuity writer until 1950. His regular programs on CBC Radio (1948-1975) - *Pratley At The Movies*; *The Movie Scene*; *Music From The Films* - are well remembered.

Pratley's long career includes the sometimes controversial chairmanship of the International Jury of the Canadian Film Awards (1968-76); revival of the Stratford International Film Festival (1970-76); and responsibility for the film program of the Centennial Commission (1966-67) culminating in the *Festival of Laughter*

in Ottawa and Calgary (1967).

Author of several books on directors and numerous articles for newspapers and film publications, including *Cinema Canada*, Pratley has been Canadian correspondent for the *International Film Guide* since 1968, where this staunch supporter of indigenous production persists in listing "Canada's American Films"

He has taught cinema courses at universities and colleges, as well as lecturing at film conferences and seminars in Canada and the U.S. Pratley has been to every world film festival, including Cannes, for 25 consecutive years.

Gerald Pratley has been director of the Ontario Film Institute and Theatre since 1969. He lobbied long and hard with the provincial government to establish this archive, and his vast personal accumulation of movieana formed the nucleus of its collection.

Congratulations to A Man For All Cinematic Seasons!



PANAVISION
CANADA

MONTREAL

TORONTO

VANCOUVER

*Bonne chance à tous les participants du
huitième Festival des Films du Monde
à Montréal, 1984.*

*Good luck to all the participants in the
Eighth World Film Festival
Montreal 1984.*

WE'VE GOT IT ALL and the people

Montreal :

Administration and equipment (514) 487-5010
2120, Boul. Décarie, H4A 3J3
Studio and Lighting
2020 Northcliffe Avenue, H4A 3K5

Toronto :

793 Pharmacy Avenue, M1L 3K3 (416) 752-7670

Vancouver :

43 West, 6th Avenue, V5Y 1K2 (604) 873-3901