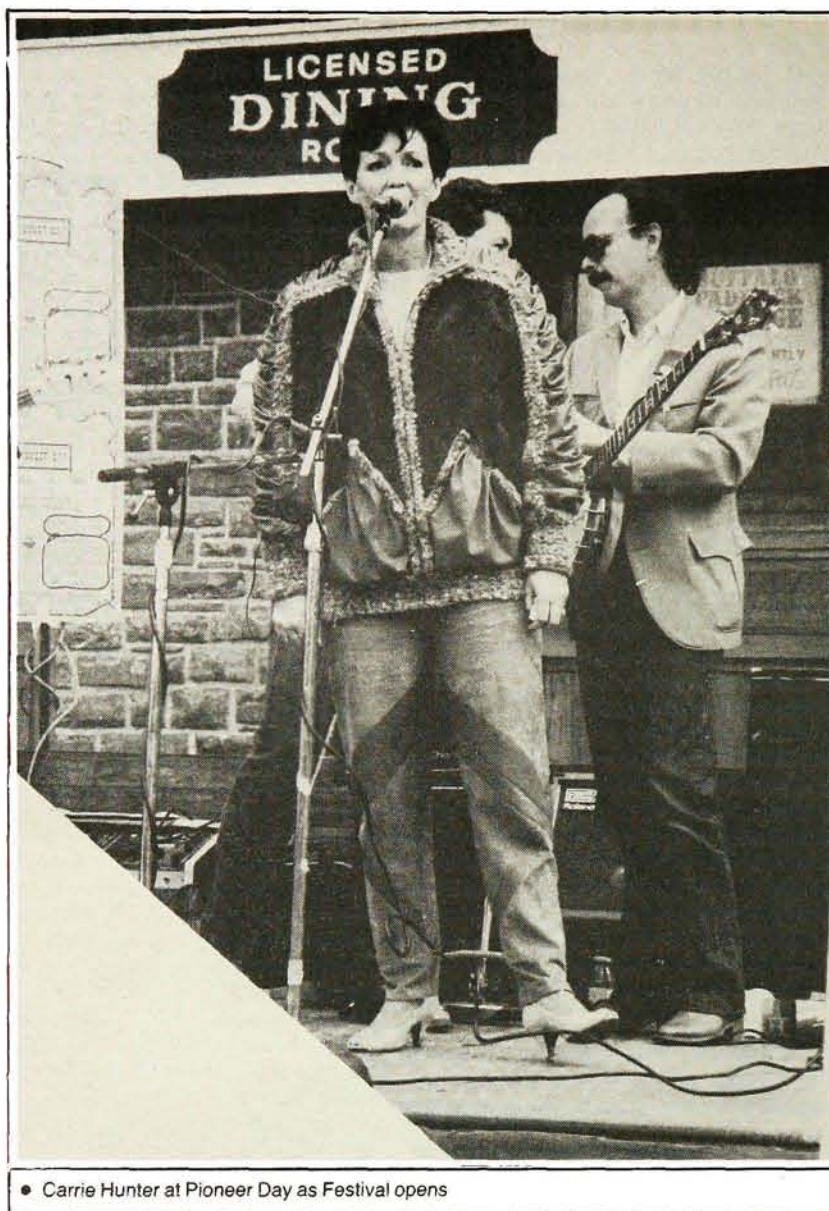


The Banff Television Festival is the choicest of Canadian festivals for many of the producers and filmmakers who spend a week there, making contacts and participating in seminars.

This year, around 350 people were at Banff from June 2-8, enjoying the scenery, each other, the television programs and seminars. Among them was the top brass from Granada Television (David Plowright, Managing Director; Barry Heads, Managing Director of foreign sales; Michael Cox and Leslie Woodhead, producers; and Gus MacDonald, executive producer). Also from the U.K. came Jemery Issacs of Channel Four Television, Graeme McDonald, controller of BBC-2; Peter Morley of Thorn EMI Videodisc, and Gunnar Rugheimer, acquisitions and programming head of the BBC-TV, London. At the risk of name dropping, these are the kinds of people attracted to Banff from abroad.

From Canada? The CBC had over 20 people there and as one producer from Toronto said enthusiastically, "Banff is terrific because it's the only time of the year when I can sit down with CTV, TVO, the CBC and Telefilm and strike a deal!" And this, despite the fact that all those players are in Toronto together all year 'round.

The seminars at Banff are rich. Speakers came from the U.S.A., the U.K. and Canada to talk about global (not international) opportunities for quality programs. A lively debate surrounded the fate of public television in light of the conservative wave sweeping the West. *Sesame Street* came with the chairman of the board, and representatives from Mexico, Spain, Holland and Canada to talk about making children's programming around the world. There was a hands-on session about



• Carrie Hunter at Pioneer Day as Festival opens

producing Canadian programs with international partners, and an actors seminar. Every afternoon was given over to the writers who discussed their work in both French and English. Dramalab made a stop at Banff; and specialized sessions cropped up on computerization of animation and the uses of videodisc. In all, there was more to do than anyone could, and more programs to screen than one had time for.

Banff is about chemistry and about meeting in a small place over a period of days, far from the distractions of the city. It's not a flawless festival... it might not be a "festival" at all but rather a live-in, on-going seminar which lasts for a week in the context of a television program competition.

What follows is a crazy-quilt of articles, each of which captures something of the goings-on at Banff and their ramifications. Michael Douglas, an Albertan producer, writes from his point-of-view about the contacts possible and the thoughts which the Festival provoked. Linda Kupecek offers a short overview, and a critique of the actors workshop, held toward the end of the festival. Excerpts from the Banff daily edition of *CineMag* round out the coverage, with president Pat Ferns introducing the fest, director Carrie Hunter commenting on its development, and some explanation of the competitive set-up and the judging procedure. Finally, a glimpse at one of the seminars which featured the provincial educational television networks.

Over the course of the next few months, Cinema Canada hopes to publish other accounts of interviews and panels held at Banff.

Banff: A pivotal policy platform

by Michael Douglas

At the First Banff Television Festival in 1979, former producer Fil Fraser kicked off the proceedings, and I asked him what I might do to help. He said simply, "Produce something good."

In the intervening years the industry has grown tremendously and the Banff Television Festival has evolved into a classy, compelling event, comfortably ensconced in the majestic castle on the hill - the Banff Springs Hotel. Banff is a stop on the way to producing something "good."

Meeting decision makers and creating trust and mutual respect have always been the essential first steps. You can't float a prospectus and do your thing anymore. The Quality project must be married to the Quality team, sprinkled with fortunate timing and good luck, produced gently, and served - hoping the opposition has something less than a playoff game opposite your baby.

Choices: what to make, who to make it with, where to sell it, when. Making those hard choices is dependent on

Michael Douglas in an Edmonton-based film producer.

personal judgements arrived at after some creative soul searching, testing some potential partners and listening to educated guesses. Then you view the best the market has to offer.

First lesson, if they've already got one, chances are they won't want to buy yours.

So, I wandered the Banff Springs looking to make meetings, exchange notes, venture opinions and listen, confident my day was coming - to produce something good, something successful, something to be seen. The great challenge ahead was to join my talented compatriots on centre stage accepting a *Rockie* or an *Oscar* or a renewal order.

But how to get there from here. Inevitably it meant finding the project and the presentation capable of generating excitement from Canadian players and others.

The Banff Television Festival provides a tremendous forum for launching production snowballs down the precarious international slope. To list the moguls, twists and jumps is tiresome. Needless to say there are some wipeouts; yet some of the people, the projects, that deserve to win - win. If there's only room for a handful of winners now, then the context will have to be changed.

Who knows, CTV might even join the rest of the industry. To see the great hearts and minds gathered in Banff working to find a way to make our theoretically spectacular new Canadian system work is inspiring at the least.

Banff is another valuable element in our national television production process. It's up to me and everybody else to find a way to get the most benefit from the Festival. It's really an open stage with set pieces for our own devising, if we can commit to making it the most valuable, creative, enlightening, provocative television convention of the year.

Banff is a thinker's coproduction fest, and coproductions are the way Non-Americans will compete with Hollywood for their own audiences. Coproductions are born of necessity and defined by national cultural and economic priorities spelled out in varying protective policies. Policies that hopefully facilitate production and opportunity.

Banff can become the pivotal policy platform for the Canadian industry and thus, a valuable event for all foreign producers interested in business with Canada. They can join us for a state of Canadian Communications presentation

straight from our minister of Communications.

Canadian television policy starts with the French-English fact and Banff has been particularly instrumental in presenting positive glimpses of the Québec scene, furthering my appreciation of the duality of Canada. Now, to learn French - *sacré bleu*.

I have a series project with a significant Quebec component and am looking forward to walking it through the potential contributions from Quebec players. I'll call Nicole Boisvert of *Société générale* and refer to the new Québec-Alberta accord and its ramifications for this project. Having met her at Banff, I understand some of their criteria and can proceed with confidence.

One of the side benefits of Banff has been to enjoy the good natured energy of active producer and unofficial social director; Louis-Georges Tétrault. L.G. has graduated from dancing on tables to nightlife management and if 10% of the coproductions he's developed at Banff came through he'll be swamped.

I'm operating with the spinal belief that if Banff works for Canadians it'll be worthwhile for everybody. And so Canadian participation has to be committed.

If the CBC execs rate Banff a 9 for social and a 2 for content, then great, let's see your sincere contribution towards a 10 for content.

What about CTV? The 'Canadian' Television Network? Shouldn't it be a leader of private sector action and initiative? Where were its people? Well, what can you say, It's currently just an easy carrier of American cultural domination.

If Independents wonder at the fascinating house of cards co-production machinations of Pat Ferns, then I have to take note of who put the most into Banff this year - the structures, the program - and it was Pat Ferns, so he gets the most out of it, and his snowballs roll on.

And what of the CRTC Alchemists? How do they make decisions on our industry without knowing its members, the trends and current realities? Look forward to meeting André Bureau in Banff. Perhaps he could describe the phantom constituency that's protesting against the current Canadian content guidelines. Have you met André Bureau? Who is he? What's he like then?

Some criticisms mentioned by several about Banff.

- Banff is expensive, and means will be found to facilitate the attendance of cash poor independents!

- Banff lacks focus. Maybe, so let's focus it.

- Banff lacks a marketing, cash-sales viability. That's MIP, Monte Carlo, MIFED, NATPE. Banff's a germinating idea place for coproductions and initial contacts.

- Screenings should be better organized - perhaps one special show a night selected by the jury.

- Staff should be better informed of various events, locales and times.

- Could an award be given by delegate vote?

- Counter-programming afternoon screenings might be counterproductive.

The Banff Television Festival is open and anxious to receive constructive feedback on how to maximize the value of this occasion. Just tell them what you think and what you want.

To Carrie Hunter and her gang that made it happen - Thanks. In the meantime, I have to get busy and produce something good, earn my place.

The quality of contacts makes it happen

In anticipation of the Commonwealth Games in Edmonton in 1978, broadcasters and film producer Fil Fraser decided to organize a showcase for films made for television. He knew with certainty that soon the TV would play a major role in the distribution of films, and his pilot Marie-Anne was ready for an audience. At the same time the Klondike ladies were filling up the downtown hotels and the Canadian Film and Television Association was holding its annual meeting in a motel outside Edmonton (and, incidentally, David Cronenberg was filming *Fast Company* at a local racetrack), the germ of the Banff Festival was planted.

Later that year, Fraser gathered together Carrie Hunter and Dr. David Leighton, head of The Banff Centre and, with the enthusiastic backing of Jean Lefebvre from the federal Film Festivals Bureau, put together the basic structure of the Festival. Fraser was executive director that first year, a job which Hunter would take on in subsequent years. Leighton became president of the Festival and held that mandate for the next five years. The Banff Centre provided the location and the first Banff International Festival of Films for Television was on. It was 1979.

That first year was a revelation. The mix of people who came, the quality of the seminars, the screenings on monitors and in the theatres of the Centre created a chemistry unique on the Canadian festival scene. It was clear to everyone involved that the Banff fest was here to stay once the initial problems - notably a substantial budget overrun - were dealt with.

Today, W. Paterson Ferns, elected last September as the second president of the Banff Television Founda-

tion which sponsors the Festival, acknowledges that a new day is dawning at Banff. "Our house is in order, we have been able to attract the movers and shakers of the industry and are moving to consolidate the success of the Festival by concentrating on a professional development program."

Just how did a small, isolated television festival work its way into a position of international prominence and expand its influence from a week-long event into a stable, year-long presence on the Canadian scene? Ferns would say that the key was the Festival's insistence on programming excellence.

Time and again, the winners at Banff have gone on to win other prestigious awards like the Prix Italia, establishing a reputation for the Festival of calling the winners. Relentless travelling around the world on the part of the Festival staff to other festivals and markets have created the contacts which, once again, feed into providing the Festival with a selection of outstanding programs. The ceaseless energy over a short period has built until Diana Filer, head of the CBC in London, England, says that "The best thing that Canada has going for it is the Banff Festival."

And then there's Banff itself. "It's an isolated place," comments Ferns. "The pace isn't frantic so one has a chance to reflect, to have significant discussions." And these discussions are also what the Banff Festival is all about.

Canada, with its enormous investment in program production, both through provincial agencies and through Telefilm Canada, is becoming market-conscious, and time and again, discussions center on what

kinds of markets Canada should provide its producers and sales agents. "Obviously, it would be a mistake for Banff to turn into a conventional market, especially just now when everyone is wondering whether the great expense of participating in markets like MIP-TV and NATPE are worth it," says Ferns. "This year, we've provided people with suites so that they can engage in business activities, but the nature of the contacts which are possible at Banff lead directly to its importance as a pre-sale market. This is the place where co-productions can be struck. While at other markets you might be able to say hello to someone and offer your card, at Banff there's the time and opportunity to have lunch together and to get to know each other. If a \$4 million production deal issues from one of these meetings, then clearly the activities at Banff have enormous market repercussions for Canadian business."

Now that the Festival has full-time year-round staff and an established reputation, the Foundation is anxious to expand the thrust of its activities. Professional development seminars, writer's workshops, working with the National Film Board's Drama Lab and with the Alberta Motion Picture Industry Association (AMPIA) Awards are all facets of the involvement of the Banff Television Foundation. Ferns feels strongly that, by "gathering together people who can help shape the future," the Banff Festival and the Foundation itself can help communicate to Canada's program production community the sense of excellence which is felt once a year at the Festival. This is the challenge of Banff.



• Louis-Georges Tétrault hits jack-pot on Casino Night



• Goro Koide of Japan, Peter Maris of Holland and Margaret Edgar of TVO

Banff TV Festival Acting Seminar

by Linda Kupecek

Finally, the Banff Television Festival has acknowledged the actor in its seminars, with the Friday morning session titled "Acting Up - the Profession of Living Dangerously."

That's the good news. The bad news is that the seminar, presented in the Festival brochure as "more a workshop than a panel discussion" with Sian Phillips "confirmed" as a participant, was, instead, a charming but unexciting four way *tête à tête* between Marilyn Lightstone, Tom Peacocke, Louise Marleau and British actor Edward Duke. These four distinguished talents, guided by moderator Eric Till, were prevented from really satisfying the needs of the actors present (who had shelled out \$100 for the session) by administrative mismanagement which allowed gate-crashers, onlookers, and producer delegates to dominate the session. While it is true that any delegate, having paid their dollars, should be welcome at a session, in this case, it might have been more fair and beneficial to divide the session into the craft workshop promised in the pamphlet, and a question and answer period for beginning producers. (Simple question from audience: "Why do I have to deal with agents? Couldn't we just get rid of all your agents and be one big happy family on the set?" a question which was greeted with unanimous disdain from the panel. "We have agents to protect us from people like you", was the response.

"I didn't learn anything new," reflected one actor. "I resented those simplistic questions asked at what was presented

Linda Kupecek is an Albertan actress and a regular contributor to Cinema Canada.

as an advanced seminar about my craft," snapped another.

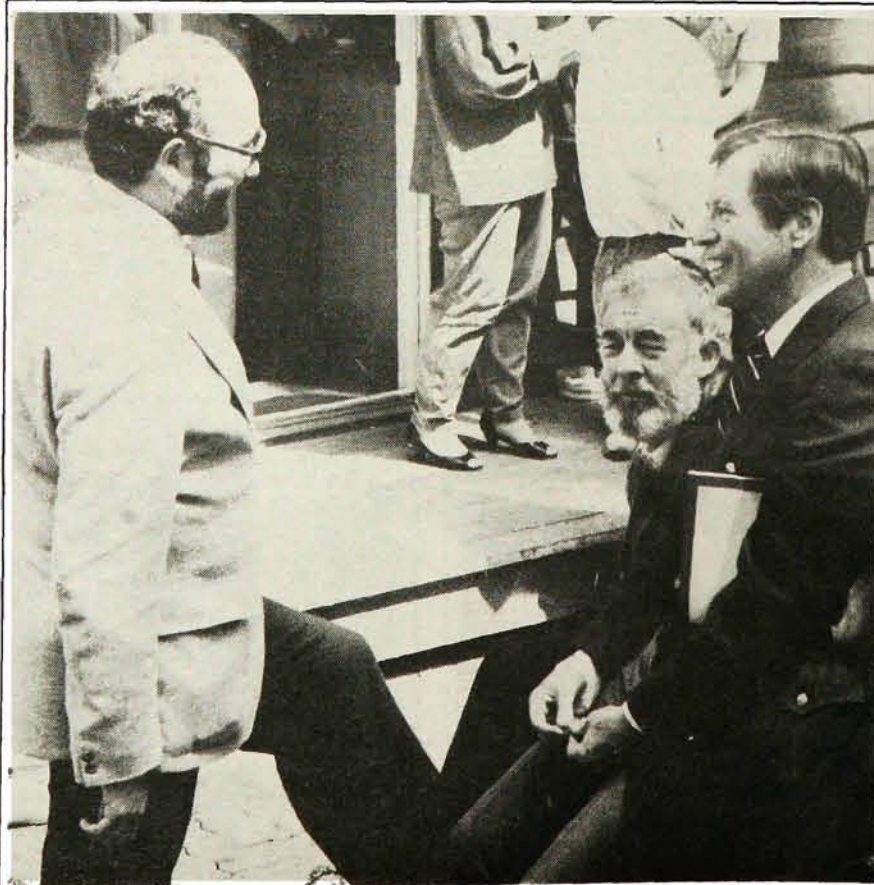
The admirable Lightstone, as close to royalty as we can claim in our acting community, graciously but firmly spelled it out to one producer complaining about fees. "You don't ask the technicians or the soundman to take a cut, so don't ask the actors."

If the above is a metaphor for the state of the actor in the film and television industry in Canada, it is a sad figure of speech indeed. Lightstone said, at one point, "Actors have no power in this country."

How can they, when highly trained, experienced, respected, award-winning artists agree to speak at a workshop about their craft, and instead are forced to field dopey questions from novices who should know better?

The seminar was well attended. But Lightstone, Marleau, Peacocke and Duke were so far beyond the experience of many of the more vocal delegates, that the results were disappointing. There were genuine intelligent comments as well. One director delegate asked a poignant and realistic question about directing drama: "Many of us come from a documentary background. We're used to talking to oil rigs, cattle, and dogs. But we need guidance in how to talk to actors."

Obviously, there is a tremendous interest in this topic, judging from the attendance. The Festival was astute in realizing that interest, and in slotting a morning session for that pursuit. Having forged ahead this year, they would do well to develop this area next year. If they could find a way to organize the session in a format which would satisfy both the specific needs of professional performers, and the genuine interest of beginning producer/directors, the Fest would have a winning seminar.



• Pat Ferns chats with CBC-Alberta boss Eric Moncur and Banff board member Vic Rogers

Integrity attracts the best television programming

If making contacts is the key to the success of the Banff Television Festival, then Carrie Hunter is the person to thank. As one senior executive from the CBC commented to CineMag, "Even if you set the festival aside, Carrie Hunter is the best ambassador Canada has abroad."

As the Festival's executive director for the last five years, Hunter has seen the festival grow and respond to the changing television environment, and is pleased with what she sees. "There is no comparison in the quality of the programs we are receiving now and those we got in the first year. The programs are just superior this year, and the TV feature category has made great strides," she sums up.

Although the quality of the programming may have something to do with a general rise, world-wide of television production, it most probably also has to do with the reputation the Festival has made for itself and the fact that quality breeds quality.

"Winning a Rockie really means something to competitors. In some cases, producers have made sales world-wide based on the Rockie Award. In other cases, the broadcasters have come to understand the Banff is only for top-quality programs and have stopped sending programs which they don't think can compete. I was surprised the year that the RAI (Italian Television) didn't send any entries but was told that they didn't think any of their productions would win that year and that winning a Rockie was what they were interested in."

Banff is unashamed to talk about "excellence" and "integrity", and this is refreshing in a Canadian atmosphere where more and more people are talking about numbers and the compromises which television production too often provokes.

"We believe that small is beautiful, but this doesn't mean that the festival is elitist. What is important to us is that the right people come to Banff to share their ideas and that Canadian producers learn to 'work' our festival." Hunter reports that already many Alberta producers have learned that coming to Banff can be truly productive and that, in many ways, the activity indicates a "coming of age" in the Alberta community. On the other hand, "If we are to become parochial, we'll lose that international edge which allows our producers to measure themselves with the best programs made in the rest of the world," she comments. Staying small and thinking big is what it's all about.

Opening night

With the usual ceremony and in the presence of the federal Minister of Communications Marcel Masse, the Sixth Banff Television Festival was opened last evening in the Ballroom.

Banff Television Foundation president W. Paterson Ferns welcomed delegates and other participants, emphasizing the progress the festival has made over the years, the contribution of fest director Carrie Hunter, and the recent initiatives being taken. A record number of participants will be on hand this year.

Before introducing the Minister, who formally opened the Festival, Ferns remarked that Gerry Caplan, head of the Minister's Task Force on Broadcasting would be present this year and suggested that Banff was just the place for the Task Force to begin its job...

How to make it to the top

For a program to end up among the finalists at the Banff competition, it has travelled far, competed with many and been seen by several discerning if weary watchers.

Dr. Jerry Ezekiel, program director, spends a good part of the year roaming the world in search of the best programs. At the suggestion of TF 1 in France, a mini-screening is organized each year in London to which European broadcasters send their programs for Ezekiel to sort through. The best (this year, 35 hours of programming) are brought back to Banff, as are others gleaned from the markets and festivals attended during the year.

In addition, 260 programs were entered directly in the Banff Television Festival this year. As has been the case in all previous years, Ezekiel rounds up his sturdy pre-selection committee and they go through the programs, eliminating those which are too weak to go to jury deliberation. Françoise Picard of the Canada Council, journalist David Billington who does a column with the Edmonton Sun, and University of Alberta professor Bill Beard are the candidates for Ezekiel's unusual punishment.

By the time the jury arrives, it sits down to 120 hours of programming and goes at it in 12 hour sessions seven days a week until the job is done. What results is the presentation of a Rockie Award to the best television program in each of the following categories: television features, limited series, continuing series, drama specials, television comedies, social and political documentaries, outdoors and wildlife documentaries, arts documentaries, performance specials and children's programs.

Educational networks join together for indys

Some of the most influential Canadian broadcasters are the provincial educational networks, and this year they are making a major contribution to the Banff Festival with the afternoon gatherings entitled Canadian Television Workshop (2:00 p.m. in the Ballroom).

The Workshops are sponsored by the Agency for Tele-Education in Canada (ATEC) which regroups four networks: Radio-Quebec, TVOntario, Access Network from Alberta and Knowledge Network from British Columbia. Running things for ATEC here are Jean Campbell, Director of Informal Education at Access, and Gene Lawrence, General Manager of Educational Services (Programming) from TVO.

"We feel we have a responsibility to the writers, filmmakers and producers who might not be able to come to Banff," explains Campbell as she describes ATEC's involvement. "Professional development is really the key," continues Lawrence, "and the workshops provide a new dimension which was absent at previous festivals here."

To fill this need and bring program makers to Banff, ATEC has foot the bill to fly 10 participants in, and the

Festival is helping out with accommodations. What it means for the participants is the chance to have their work screened and to get immediate feedback from their peers.

Conceived as interactive seminars, the Canadian Workshop screens a single work and then invites reaction, comment and criticism of the work in the presence of the program maker. In some cases, this is the writer; in others a director or producer. "We've been surprised and pleasantly so at the numbers of people who are foregoing the weather outside and the other activities to attend the workshops," say both Campbell and Lawrence...

"...The emphasis is on programming, on content and genre," remarks Campbell. "The private sector needs the support of the educational networks and, though we are not able to acquire all the programs which may be produced and might be screened by us, we do have a responsibility to help these program makers gather strength and exposure."

Agreeing with her, Lawrence continues, stating that the healthier the private sector, the stronger and more pertinent the work at the educational networks will be.



• Local color from Pioneer Day celebration

1985 Banff Television Festival Winners

Best of the Festival

Blue Money

London Weekend Television, U.K.

Special Jury Awards

\$2,500 Cash Prize

Jean Sibelius 1865-1957

Allegro Films, U.K.

Squaring the Circle

Metromedia Producers Corp. in association with TVS Ltd. and Britannia Films, U.K.

Best Arts Documentary

David Lean - A Life in Film

London Weekend Television in association with RM ARTS, U.K.

Best Outdoors & Wildlife Documentary

National Geographic Special: Land of the Tiger

WQED/Pittsburgh & National Geographic Society, U.S.A.

Best Limited Series

Concealed Enemies

(American Playhouse)

WGBH/Boston in association with Goldcrest Films and Television Ltd. and Comworld, U.S.A.

Best Television Comedy

The Very Beast of Spitting Image

Central Production, in association with Spitting Image Productions, U.K.

Best Social & Political Documentary

To Save Our Schools, To Save Our Children

(ABC News Closeup)

ABC News, U.S.A.

Best Drama Special

Lovers of the Lake

RTE 1983/84 in association with Channel 4, The Republic of Ireland

Best Performance Special

The King of Friday Night

Canamedia Productions Ltd., Canada

Best Children's Program

Wonderworks: Booker

New Images Productions, U.S.A.

Special Jury Award

The Other Kingdom

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, Canada

Best Continuing Series

Hill Street Blues: The Rise & Fall of Paul the Wall

MTM Enterprises, U.S.A.

Special Jury Award

Natural World: On the 8th Day

British Broadcasting Corporation, U.K.



• Telefilm's Myrienne Pavlovic... playing with money on Casino Night