

# VANCOUVER VISTAS

by Rona Gilbertson

Vancouver's Centenary has given lifeblood to at least two commemorative production that will make their appearance in 1986.

This year, in a \$63,000 project, the National Film Board, together with the Vancouver Centennial Commission and Cineasthetics Productions, are documenting the history of ol' 374.

The locomotive pulled the first train from Montreal to Vancouver in 1886 on the track that brought eastern and western Canada together in Confederation. After retirement, 374 sat on Vancouver's Kitsilano Beach from 1947 to 1983. It is being completely restored for the city's centenary.

*Stanley Park - A Living Celebration* is a half-hour production to be narrated by Barry Broadfoot, best-known for his books such as *Ten Lost Years*. The project will follow the changes of the seasons along the Pacific Rim attempting to present the wilderness as a metaphor for the attitudes and sentiments of Westcoast peoples. Producer Nathan Enns and D.O.P. Tobias Schliessler plan a release on

CBC network by March, 1986. At that time Stanley Park will pass from federal jurisdiction into the hands of the city.

Erin Films Ltd. of Vancouver, has just finished the September shooting of *Abducted*, a privately-financed, Canadian venture, produced by Harry Cole.

The feature was co-written by Lyndsay Bourne and Boon Collins who will also direct. Starring is American actor Dan Haggerty, known for his creation of *Grizzly Adams* in feature and series. As principals with Adams are Torontonians Roberta Wise, from last year's *Hitchhiker* pilots and Lawrence King-Phillips of *Bedroom Eyes* and *Loose Ends*.

This somewhat surreptitiously-made wilderness adventure production makes good use of the feral terrain of British Columbia. Theatrical release is slated for early '86.

The Northern Light Media Group, together with Vancouver's National Film Board, have moved into production

on *Asian Video Letters*. With the number of episodes undetermined at this point, shooting has begun in Korea, with expectations to average two productions per selected countries in Asia. The project, directed toward school and television release, is being shot for the Asian Society in New York. David Yeager is executive producer, with Nick Kendall directing.

Writer/Director Rex Bromfield has begun production on *Hartbreak Motel*, after much time spent seeking the position of least compromise in budget, location and other matters linked with project development. At \$1.8 million, this feature will have the largest budget in B.C. filmmaking since *The Grey Fox*. *Hartbreak Motel* will be completely Canadian-made, with \$825,000 coming from Telefilm and \$975,000 from private sources.

So far, the production, running from Oct. 5 through Nov. 15, will star sister of the writer, Valeri Bromfield, and is synopsized as "a satire on American life."

Adding to the budgetary base is a deal already in place with Atlantic Releasing one of the 'mini-major' studios in the U.S., responsible for promotions of such recent works as *Teen Wolf*, *Valley Girl* and *1984* for world-wide and U.S. distribution.

Ivan Ackery, theatre manager extraordinaire, was recognized in a fiftieth anniversary tribute Oct. 30, held in Vancouver's famed Orpheum Theatre.

Ackery, born in England, came to Canada after fighting through the trenches of the First World War. His career as a theatre manager began after he had worked up through the ranks from usher. He was known for his support and salvation of many theatres, bringing them out of the red, and above all for his own Orpheum, which he maintained in full style long after the fashion of the vaudeville cinema had died away. His long career spanned from 1935 to 1970. While ushering, he delighted audiences with singing and dancing routines, and later promotional schemes included employing persons in gorilla costumes to run outside and enlist the attention of passersby. His public notices of coming events were pasted on the backs of horse-drawn carriages pulled through the streets.

Among some of Ackery's most notable achievements were his contributions to the careers of once-unknowns. He brought such names as Susan Hayward and Burt Lancaster to public attention. George Burns, Bob Hope and Frank

Sinatra performed in the Orpheum long before they were household names. Vancouver locals like Juliette, Lance Harrison, Mini Hines and Red Robinson made their debuts on Ackery's stage as did the Dal Richard's band.

The Oct. 30 tribute coincided with Halloween, and patrons are encouraged to respond in costume to the evening's film, *Son Of The Sheik*, Ackery's favorite and Rudolph Valentino's last. And patrons dressed like sheiks, or at least chic. The 1926, 70-minute-long, silent celluloid was accompanied by the theatre's old Wurlitzer organ, one of the last surviving theatre organs on the continent.

Vancouver businesses and cinematic supporters provided various prizes and gifts for participants, as part of the evenings entertainment.

The apogee of the evening saw Vancouver Mayor Michael Harcourt commemorate the day to the 85-year old Ackery, and award him with the Pacific Cine Centre Award for Excellence. This first award of its kind is given, according to merit, to those who demonstrate a commitment to excellence in public entertainment and the development of cultural life in Vancouver, especially in film.



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## T F shakeup due soon

MONTREAL — Three resignations in September signal major personnel changes at Telefilm Canada's Montreal office.

Claude Daigneault left his job as director of Communications to return to daily journalism as assistant director, French news, at Canadian Press. Josée Miville-Deschênes is the interim replacement.

Montreal legal counsel, Jacques Blain, also left Telefilm to become assistant to the director, independent production, at Société Radio-Canada. No permanent replacement has yet been named.

Bill Litwack stepped down as director of Corporate Affairs to open his own consultancy firm, William Litwack Communications Inc., on Oct. 15. Meanwhile, he was kept busy at Telefilm, preparing a business plan for the corporation.

News of a major shakeup of personnel at Telefilm is expected by the end of October.

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