

VANCOUVER VISTAS

by Rona Gilbertson

The Simcom group of Toronto have come west this year with three all-Canadian projects: two feature films and a four-part series. Finding investment capital in B.C. and Alberta was somewhat ironic, with so much of the work done in those quarters from over the border.

Funding has come, in part, for two of the projects, from Telefilm Canada. BCTV in Burnaby and ITV of Edmonton are each in financially for a work in their respective provinces.

Bullies, on the home stretch in Cranbrook, B.C. was slated for a wrap Nov. 3. This action/adventure feature will come in

for under \$2 million.

The second Simcom feature is in production in Vancouver and will run until Dec. 17. *High Stakes*, a comedy, will just exceed the \$2 million mark, with Telefilm and BCTV sharing partnership on funding.

On Nov. 18 the four-part series, *Mania*, began shooting in Edmonton with Allarcom people. Says line producer Ray Sager, with only slightly concealed concern, "There will be a lot of interiors." In partner-

ship with ITV, Simcom will do the half-hour episodes total for about \$1 million. The theme in each is urban crime and all that foments it.

Toronto writer John Shepard is the pen behind all three works. In Vancouver, Bob Fredrick, formerly a line-producer for CBC's *Beachcombers*, is the production manager whose experience will be leaned on heavily, as Simcom producers orchestrate simultaneous production from three different locales. In directorial

positions are Larry Kent, who takes *High Stakes* through its making, and Paul Lynch, a Canadian who heads production from Simcom's L.A. office. Lynch is helming both *Bullies* and *Mania*.

Producing for the Simcom is Peter Simpson, who produced both *Curtains* and *Prom Night*. The company is currently planning three more projects for 1986, one of which is *Prom Night Two*. Though budgets are restrictive, Simcom is enthusiastic about the Canadian projects, especially in a market dominated with foreign film work.

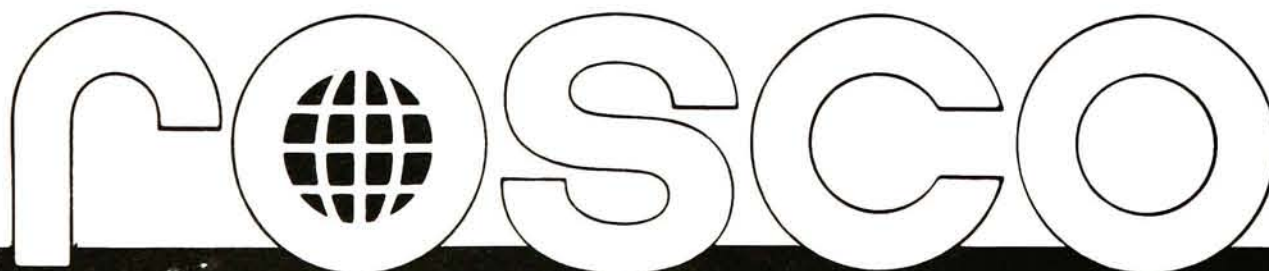
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Zorah Productions of Vancouver will co-produce four made-for-TV movies, to be shot back-to-back in Vancouver next spring. In partnership on the venture is Robert Stabler's Broadwood Productions from L.A. Stabler, now a landed immigrant, produced such TV series as *Gunsmoke* and *Have Gun Will Travel*.

With financing and scripts in place for the initial four, hopes are to see the series lengthened to 12 by the time principal photography begins in early '86.

International distribution rights and responsibilities will be split between the two partners, while U.S. syndication will be handled by Harold Goldman, formerly of the Gold Key company. Budgetary responsibility will be shared equally between both Broadwood and Zorah.

Tegra Industries of Vancouver, parent company to Alpha Cine Lab and Poste Haste Production, will supply facilities for post-production, packaging the 16mm onto tape for home video distribution. Tegra will also be the distributor for the home video market.

The Northern Light Media Corporation, in collaboration with the Asia Society of New York and the National Film Board of Canada is currently shooting a new series in Seoul and Chungju, called *Focus On Korea*.

Under the direction of award-winning Nicholas Kendall, the production highlights Korean life as seen through the eyes of children. The video/print packages will be narrated also by children and are targeted at an audience of eight-12 years of age, throughout the North American school system and will be broadcast on national television.

Major financial support comes also from the Korean Trade Association, which in-

clude corporations like Hyundai and Goldstar Electronics. Further mergings of North American and Asian audiences are likely as plans are underway to create similar series focusing on life in other Asian countries.

Three years in the making, *Close To Home* has just been released by Hy Perspective Media Corporation. This feature-length drama focuses on the plight of teenagers on the street, and traces the continuum from early childhood

abuse to a life that keeps its young victims entrapped. With Telefilm assistance, director Ric Beairsto and cinematographer Tobias Schliessler engaged both composite and real-life players, to illustrate the moral and legal issues affecting this neglected sub-population.

Close To Home was produced and edited by Harvey Crossland and associate-produced by Jon Stoddart. Hy Perspectives is also in production on a half-hour documentary for television broadcast. *A Life Of Independence* portrays the lifestyle of six men, victims of spinal cord injury that confines

them to wheelchairs and respirators. The story, which follows their move to independent apartment living, includes wheelchair athlete Rick Hansen and distribution will occur with the completion of his *Man In Motion* World Tour.

Rounding out their socially-focused productions, Hy Perspectives is in post-production on *Weakness To Strength*, which was filmed in a treatment centre in the B.C. interior. Also a television documentary, *Weakness To Strength* probes the arduous tasks of counsellors in a native Indian drug and alcohol abuse program.

Despited for shooting in 1986 will be *Come With me*, currently nearing script-completion. With the backing of Telefilm development funding, this feature-length work focuses on capital punishment.

Nick, of *Big Valley* fame, has moved to Vancouver. The western, which ran throughout the '60s, featured the deep-voiced, tall, dark and handsome Peter Brook, who brought strength, impulse and often trouble, to a fatherless family.

Brook recently opened The Academy Of Dramatic Art to nurture talent for the ubiquitous productions working in the city and province. After 25 years of visiting Canada with his Canadian wife, Brook feels there are great inequalities in the ratio of Canadian to imported talent used in B.C. productions. The academy aims to establish a stronger stable of cinematic skills to draw upon.

As an actor with 140 film and 36 stage credits behind him, Brook's experience brings a needed injection to the west coast industry. In recent years, Brook has starred in several L.A. episodic productions and has principalled in such features as *Benji* and *The Sword and the Sorcerer*. He also won Best Actor at Cannes for *Shock Corridor*.

Though the academy is of immediate priority, Brook is as well seeking funding for film projects of his own.

VANCOUVER - Due to insufficient financial support and a delayed response from the federal department of Communications, Vision '85 was forced to Sept. 26 announce the cancellation of a symposium to examine and provide answers to the future of film and television in Canada.

It was the intention of Vision '85 to lay the first steps towards creation of a National Film and Television School which would nurture and train talent and help create job opportunities for the future.

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