

Telefilm mobilizes industry response

MONTREAL – In an effort to produce a common front of support for the Film Industry Task Force report and the recent policies of Telefilm Canada, the Conference on the Future of the Canadian Film Industry was held in Montebello from Jan. 16-19. Over 70 industry representatives, provincial film bureaucrats and federal civil servants were invited to take part in the Conference, organized by Telefilm.

Producer Peter Simpson, one of only five non-aligned (i.e., representing no particular group) people invited to the conference, described the weekend as a "candid exploration" of issues in which a "sharing of views" led to broad discussions and informal chats, all of which contributed to a deeper understanding of the complexities of the issues confronting the government. He felt that a general consensus was reached by the group, backing both the Task Force recommendations and the Telefilm initiatives. "Whether these recommendations are do-able," he concluded, "is a matter for government."

The minister of Communications Marcel Masse was present at the Conference and had been scheduled to deliver a

prepared speech on Jan. 17, but decided not to do so because, in the words of one participant, "he felt everyone knew what he would say, and preferred using the time informally."

In the printed speech, Masse refers to Canada's film history, goes over recent government initiatives to shore up the industry and comments on current options before the government. It emphasizes strongly the industrial aspects of development in Canada. For instance, he quotes the 1950 Massey-Lévesque Commission report as saying "For general film entertainment, Canadians want commercial features, and in this field there is practically nothing produced in Canada." He makes no mention of the other comments of the report. He mentions that "in the 25 years since the founding of the CFDC...Canada has begun to tell its own film stories," and then relates the absence of commercial success to the larger context of the international marketplace.

"Film is considered a major part of what Americans call the 'leisure and entertainment' sector of the economy. It is highly profitable, with potential for expansion that is un-

known in other sectors. Canada is a major part of the film market." Citing undercapitalization and lack of access to our own market as the reasons for the difficulties of the Canadian industry, Masse goes on to cite the efforts made by government, mentioning recommendations for a quota system (made by the 1973 Ontario committee chaired by John Bassett) and the implementation of the capital cost allowance. Although no mention is made of pay-TV, Masse maintains that prior to the creation of the Broadcast Fund, "The best achievements in Canadian films were obtained when Canadian television networks commissioned the films, therefore providing an initial market. This was the point of creating the Broadcast Programme Development Fund. It was to let the only market we really did control – Canadian television – drive the product." Masse reassured the Conference that he would press for a "more solid foundation" for the Fund in the coming decade.

Moving to the question of distribution, Masse announced that he does "not believe in radical solutions, particularly

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MCA gets biggest piece of Cineplex action

TORONTO – In a move worth \$106 million in equity investment for Cineplex Odeon Corporation, MCA Inc. agreed Jan. 15 to purchase 10,883,042 shares (at \$9.80 Cdn.) of a new class of Cineplex Odeon subordinate restricted voting securities. That acquisition represents one third of Cineplex Odeon's equity and makes MCA the largest single shareholder in the Toronto-based company (ahead of the 23 and eight per cent of Cineplex stock held respectively by the Bronfman family and associates and Garth Drabinsky, Cineplex president and chief executive officer).

Furthermore, within 42 months, the deal also provides MCA with the right to exercise a purchase for MCA stock of up to an additional 10,883,042 Cineplex shares at a similar (and no smaller than) \$9.80 Cdn. price, an option that could avail Cineplex of a further \$106 million investment by MCA and thus make the total deal worth in excess of \$200 million. Exercising that right however is contin-

gent upon MCA's maintenance of its one-third interest in the Cineplex Odeon equity.

The move by MCA, parent of Universal Studios, is also in accordance with Investment Canada requirements limiting any and all voting rights MCA acquires from various sources to not equalling or exceeding one-third of the votes of all Cineplex-Odeon shares issued. The shares acquired by MCA, because they were issued on a fully-diluted basis, means MCA will not be able to exceed equity ownership of 50 per cent should it opt for the additional shares.

As well, MCA will acquire four out of the 15 positions on the Cineplex Odeon board of directors (an expansion shareholders will vote on over the next month – as well as on approval of the MCA purchase and creation of the new class of shares – at a special meeting), one of which will be taken by MCA president and chief operating officer Sid Sheinberg.

The deal, billed by Drabinsky as "a momentous

transaction" and "the largest foreign investment ever made in a Canadian-controlled cultural enterprise," resulted after a previous agreement last fall in which Cineplex Odeon and MCA agreed to spend \$10 million U.S. to build a 17-screen, 5,600-seat cinema complex (the world's largest) at the latter's Universal Studios in California. As well as offering Cineplex Odeon 1,450,000 MCA shares should the U.S. company purchase the additional Cineplex shares, it affords other advantages.

Not only does the MCA investment add to Cineplex's capital, but it will also enable it to retire some of the debt it acquired during its purchase last year of the Plitt Theatre circuit. Meanwhile, reaction to the Cineplex-MCA deal has been mixed.

Lynn McDonald, MP for Broadview-Greenwood and the federal New Democratic Party's culture critic, was "naturally concerned" about the deal. Viewing the In-

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"License trafficking" at CRTC

OTTAWA – In an unusually impassioned dissent, Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commissioner Jean-Pierre Mongeau (along with colleague Monique Coupal) broke the ranks of CRTC collegiality in dissenting from a majority decision which Mongeau termed "license trafficking" that on Nov. 14 approved transfer of control of Standard Broadcasting Corp. to Slight Broadcasting Inc. as a result of a hearing last September.

Standard, a public company,

has holdings in licensed broadcasters CFRB/CFRX and CKFM-FM, Toronto; CKTB and CJQR-FM, St-Catharines; CJSB, Ottawa; CJAD and CJFM-FM, Montreal; CJOH-TV Ottawa and rebroadcasters in Deseronto and Cornwall; Laurentien Telecable Inc. with undertakings in Hull and Buckingham, Quebec, and Rockland, Ontario; an 8.3% share of the Canadian Television Network; and a cable TV system in California, as well as other direct and indirect holdings in

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Fest of Fests top post to Schein

TORONTO – Leonard Schein, founder and past director of the Vancouver International Film Festival, has been appointed director of Toronto's Festival of Festivals. The announcement, effective Jan. 14, fills the vacancy created by Wayne Clarkson's resignation Nov. 1 to take up the position of chairman and CEO of the newly-created Ontario Film Development Corporation.

Schein, scheduled to take up his new post full-time by March 1, is a Los Angeles native with a law degree from Stanford University and a masters degree in psychology from the University of Saskatchewan, where he started up a film society of art films. Following a move to Vancouver in 1973, where for five years he taught psychology at the city's various colleges, Schein opened the Ridge Theatre in 1978 (British

Columbia's first independent repertory theatre and today, says Schein, Canada's top grossing independent art film house last year.) During his time in Vancouver, Schein was for four years also the programmer/manager of the Vancouver East Cinema, a venue for first-run art films.

During his five-year involvement with the Vancouver festival (last year on a full-time basis), Schein has seen its attendance grow from 17,000 at its inception in 1982 to 63,000 in 1985, with an attendance of 100,000 projected for this year. While that contrasts with the 225,000 filmgoers drawn to Toronto's 10th Festival of Festivals last year, Schein believes the respective sizes of the two cities make his Vancouver experience comparable to what he's undertaking in Toronto.

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Bill 109: No news is good news?

QUEBEC CITY – The fate of Bill 109's regulations concerning film distribution in Quebec is to be the subject of a public statement by the newly elected Liberal government's Cultural minister Lise Bacon before the end of January.

Under American pressure, the distribution regulations were put on hold by the previous Parti Québécois government cabinet at the height of the recent election campaign which saw the PQ go down in a landslide Liberal sweep on Dec. 2.

Bacon, who has stated that her government would take quick action so as not unduly prolong a situation she has termed "grave", spent the Christmas holiday period meeting with the heads of the various Quebec government agencies concerned with

cinema, the Société générale, the Institut Québécois and the Régie du cinéma, as well as familiarizing herself with the dossiers of her portfolio.

According to Bacon's press attaché Antoine Godbout, the entire Bill 109 question is "under study. The minister has met with the entire governmental machine." It was, Godbout told *Cinema Canada*, merely a matter of "technical verification" before Bacon made a public statement on the Bill 109 issue. (At presstime no statement had yet been made).

Godbout told *Cinema Canada* that, to the best of his knowledge, Bacon had not any meetings or discussions with representatives outside the Quebec government film agencies.

Cineplex

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vestment Canada arbitrary cut-off figure of 30 per cent as a "loophole," McDonald says it has given MCA *de facto* control of Cineplex Odeon as the now-largest shareholder. "Our main concern is the need for a Canadian distribution system, but the problem is much wider than ownership however," said McDonald.

Although she doubts little can be done about the deal given current regulations, McDonald raised the issue in the House of Commons Jan. 16, calling for "a vigorous policy on distribution and Canadians getting access to distribution." She suggested that, together with the provinces, the federal government will have to so proceed "by some carrot-and-stick measure." The starting place, she said, are the recommendations of the film industry task force, policy suggestions on which she noted the Mulroney Cabinet isn't yet prepared to move.

McDonald, who hopes the Cineplex-MCA deal will "embarrass" Ottawa, also took aim

at Communication minister Marcel Masse. "All Masse's task forces seem to be doing nothing. He's getting credit for setting up these task forces and all his rhetoric," scoffed McDonald.

Taking a more charitable, business-like view of the deal was George Destounis, president of Cineplex Odeon's rival Famous Players theatre chain. "I think it's great for them, I'd be silly if I said otherwise," said Destounis. Destounis, unable to see anything wrong with the deal, added "There's obviously certain benefits to it, that's a fact. He (Drabinsky) clears his debt, he gets in bed with MCA, and it allows for expansion." The Famous Players president, viewing it as "great" that Drabinsky will be able to retire the debt from the Plit Theatre circuit acquisition, sees little change in the Canadian market as a result of the Cineplex-MCA union.

Pointing out that Drabinsky and Cineplex Odeon's concentration will be on the American market, Destounis remarked "It really doesn't change anything for us because it's not as if he's stealing product from us." Although it would appear to give Universal as privileged

a position with Cineplex Odeon as Paramount has with Famous Players, Destounis said "Odeon has had Universal since 1940-41" and that, as far as the film task force is concerned, some of its major recommendations pertain to distribution and not exhibition.

Another favourable viewpoint was that of Hector Ross of Alberta-based Landmark Cinemas of Canada Ltds. "There's not really much I can say" said Ross. Doubtful that it would have any effect on his company or on the general public, Ross added "I think it's a hell of a good deal for both parties - it's good for Garth (Drabinsky) and it's probably an excellent deal for MCA." Attempts to reach film industry task force co-chairmen Stephen Roth and Marie-José Raymond for comment on the deal before press time were unsuccessful.

Their report, presented in November to Communications minister Masse, had specifically criticized the extent of foreign control of film and video distribution in Canada and the concentration of theatre ownership and vertical integration in domestic distribution and exhibition.

Majors' lobby needs to do 'homework' to answer report of feature film task force

TORONTO - The Canadian Motion Picture Distributors Association, after a volley of critical salvos following the November release of the Film Industry Task Force report, has no plans as yet on what action it will take and, instead, is concentrating on doing what executive director Millard Roth calls "a reasonable amount of homework."

The task force report which recommended that distribution of films and videos in Canada be handled by Canadian-owned-and-controlled companies, that the federal government take policy steps underlining the essential need for Canadian control of ownership/control of distribution, that tax incentives encouraging investment in Canadian production/Distribution/export companies be created (as well as a \$60-million Canadian Feature Film Fund), and

that measures be enacted to prevent the competition-reducing vertical integration of distribution and exhibition, was variously described by Roth last December as "unsubstantiated," self-serving and tantamount to government expropriation if accepted.

"We've sure been doing a lot of talking about it," Roth told *Cinema Canada*, explaining that any official response by the CMPDA would take in the report, because "what we feel is a high degree of misunderstanding and misinformation." Asked if he had any discussions with the Motion Picture Association of America on formulating a response while out of the country in mid-January, Roth's response was that his association's reflections which acts as Canadian representative for such majors as Columbia Pictures, MGM, Orion Pictures, Paramount Films, 20th Century-Fox, United Artists, Universal, and Warner Brothers would "refer to discussions internally."

Noting that "the responsibility of the association here is to review, discuss, consider, and determine the most appropriate course of action," Roth said the CMPDA's deliberations would be "a fairly exhaustive process" leading to a decision "over the next few months." As to when that moment would arrive or whether the association would set a deadline for its decision, Roth responded "I don't know. It's hard to say without total information. Our assumption is there's a task force and other issues out there...our statement will be broader than just a specific response to the task force."

Declining to speculate what fall-out and impact would result on the CMPDA's members should the federal government decide to accept and implement the film task force's recommendations, Roth did not rule out the possibility of lobbying Communications minister Marcel Masse.

"We already maintain fairly regular discussions with the department of Communications so I expect that when it would be beneficial, we will be in contact with the Minister," he told *Cinema Canada*. As to what outcome he expects, Roth remarked "We know the process will work itself to a completion over the next few months."

Telefilm lead player in industry conference

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to vastly complex problems," and suggested that Canadian distributors need "sufficient access to box office receipts. We need to connect the market in Canada to the financing of quality Canadian products." In what would seem a new departure, Masse continued, saying "One possibility is a phased approach which will enable Canadian distributors to co-venture with foreign-controlled distributors. There are several ways to go about this and the government is studying them actively."

In this undelivered speech, Masse summed up his comments, saying "the most sensible approach to these problems is an industrial one."

In the evaluation of Telefilm, the Conference "went very well." Director of Communications Josée Miville-Dechéne reports that Telefilm believes it is important for the industry to regroup and unify and speak with the same voice" and, to this end, it was expected that 15 organizations would soon make public a press release, drafted during the Conference, requesting a more formal meeting with the minister of Feb. 22. Several days after the Conference, neither the Association des productions de films et vidéos du Québec nor the Association

of Canadian Film and Television Producers had plans for such a press release, spokesmen told *Cinema Canada*.

Meanwhile, Masse is expected to bring the Task Force recommendations to Cabinet at its next seating, at the end of January.

The participants invited to the Conference were as follows:

L'Honorable Marcel Masse, Ministre des Communications; Alain Gourd, Deputy Minister Department of Communications; Jeremy Kinsman, Assistant Deputy Minister, Department of Communications; Bernard Boucher, Institut québécois du cinéma; Marc S. Gélinas, Institut québécois du cinéma; Nicole Boisvert, Société générale du cinéma; Marc Boudreau, Société générale du cinéma; Wayne Clarkson, Ontario Film Development Corp.; Lorne MacPherson, Alberta Motion Picture Development Corp.; Jimmy Silden, Film Manitoba; Kim Johnson, Film Manitoba; Rob Armstrong, Director of Television Policy Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission; Jim Edwards, MP, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Communications; François Macerola, Commissaire du gouvernement à la cinématographie, Office National du Film du Canada, Conseil d'administration - Téléfilm Canada; Iain Paterson, Association

of Canadian Film and Television Producers; Peter Mortimer, Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers; Douglas Barrett, Canadian Film and Television Association; Samuel Jephcott, Canadian Film and Television Association; Pierre Valcour, Association des producteurs de films et vidéos du Québec; Louise Baillargeon, Association des producteurs de films et vidéos du Québec; Allan Stein, Alberta Motion Picture Industries Association; Raymond Hall, British Columbia Film & Video Industry Association; Michael Donovan, Atlantic Independent Film and Video Association; Stephen Ellis, Canadian Television Program Distributors Association; Derek Mazur, Manitoba Producers Association; Stephen Onda, Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association; Veronica Gamracy, Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association; Pascal Gélinas, Association des réalisateurs et réalisatrices de films du Québec; Alan Erlich, Directors Guild of Canada; Paul Siren, Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television & Radio Artists; Liliane Lemaître-Auger, Union des artistes; Louise Pelletier, Société des auteurs, chercheurs, documentalistes et compositeurs; Richard Goudreau, Association québécoise des distributeurs et exportateurs de films de TV et de vidéo; Danny Weinzwieg, Association of Independent and Canadian Owned Motion Picture Distributors; René Malo, Film

Industry Task Force; Stephen Roth, Film Industry Task Force; Peter Simpson, Simcom Limited; Victor Loewy, Vivafilm Ltée; Jan Rofekamp, Les Films Transit Inc.; Gordon Guiry, Film Industry Task Force; Robin Jackson, Film Policy Officer, Department of Communications; Michelle d'Auray, Canadian Conference of the Arts; Joan Gherson, Investment Canada; Paul Labbé, Investment Canada; Robin Spry, Telescene Productions Inc.; Claude Héroux, Communications Claude Héroux Inc.; Mireille Badour, External Affairs, Defense, Science, Environment & Culture Division - Treasury Board; Peter McQuire, Reisman Task Force on Free Trade; Carl McMullin, Canadian Film Certification Office Department of Communications; Reid Morden, Assistant Deputy Minister, Economic and Trade Policy External Affairs; Fil Fraser, Task Force on Broadcasting; Robert Pilon, Task Force on Broadcasting; Raynald Turgeon, International Cultural Liaison, Department of Communications; Chris Stone, Canadian Government Film and Video Centre, Department of Supply and Services; Ed Prévost, and Muriel Sherrin, Harvey Corn, Nancy Morrison, Claude Bruneau, Peter Pearson, Judith McCann, Ian McLaren, André Picard, Yves Beauchesne, Josée Miville-Dechéne, Francine Forest, Gwen Iveson, Donna Wong-Juliani, Micheline Rolland, Louise Brisebois, Lise Vaillancourt, Eric Guilbert, of Telefilm Canada.

L E G A L E Y E

by Michael Bergman

Taking Roth and Raymond to task

Task forces, commissions and like bodies are judged by the significance of their reports. Significance is a matter of physics. The gravity of the recommendations should overcome initial inertia, be propelled at an increasing speed to a velocity which is unaffected by resistance or drag, and strike the object of the problem in such a way as to suitably rearrange its molecules. The Film Task Force's report, *Canadian Cinema: A Solid Base*, can only be understood by evaluating its significance.

As government commissioned or sponsored reports go, the Task Force's is unusual. It had sixty days to submit what developed into three policy conclusions. These conclusions are neither the result of original research, study, survey, submission nor the other common paraphernalia usually proffered up to support the reasons for the results. The report may have a bibliography but is hardly the synthesis of any previous research in any scholarly sense of the word. Its pages are more the result of the personal experiences and observations of its authors.

The report's recommendations, although three in number, focus on a singular problem: financing Canadian feature films. Cultural considerations *per se*, although alluded to, are not the report's concern. By confining themselves to the problems of removing impediments to accessing funds for Canadian filmmaking, and creating sources of these funds, the authors have ignored larger cultural issues the detailed analysis of which would have helped to justify the funding difficulties complained of.

The solutions advanced are well-known and have already been advocated by many with varying degrees of intensity in other studies and commissions, in the lobbying of Canadian filmmakers, and even in the observations of the present writer in earlier articles in this very publication. The call for the total Canadianization of the film distribution system, the creation of a feature film fund, the re-orientation of tax incentives for film investment and the elimination of vertically integrated distribution and exhibition companies is hardly new. What should have been new or at least updated is the

attendant reasoning in support of the report's position, for which the thoughtful reader will find the arguments given not only inadequate but with a distressing tendency to negate the recommendations. It would do well to consider why this is so by examining each recommendation separately.

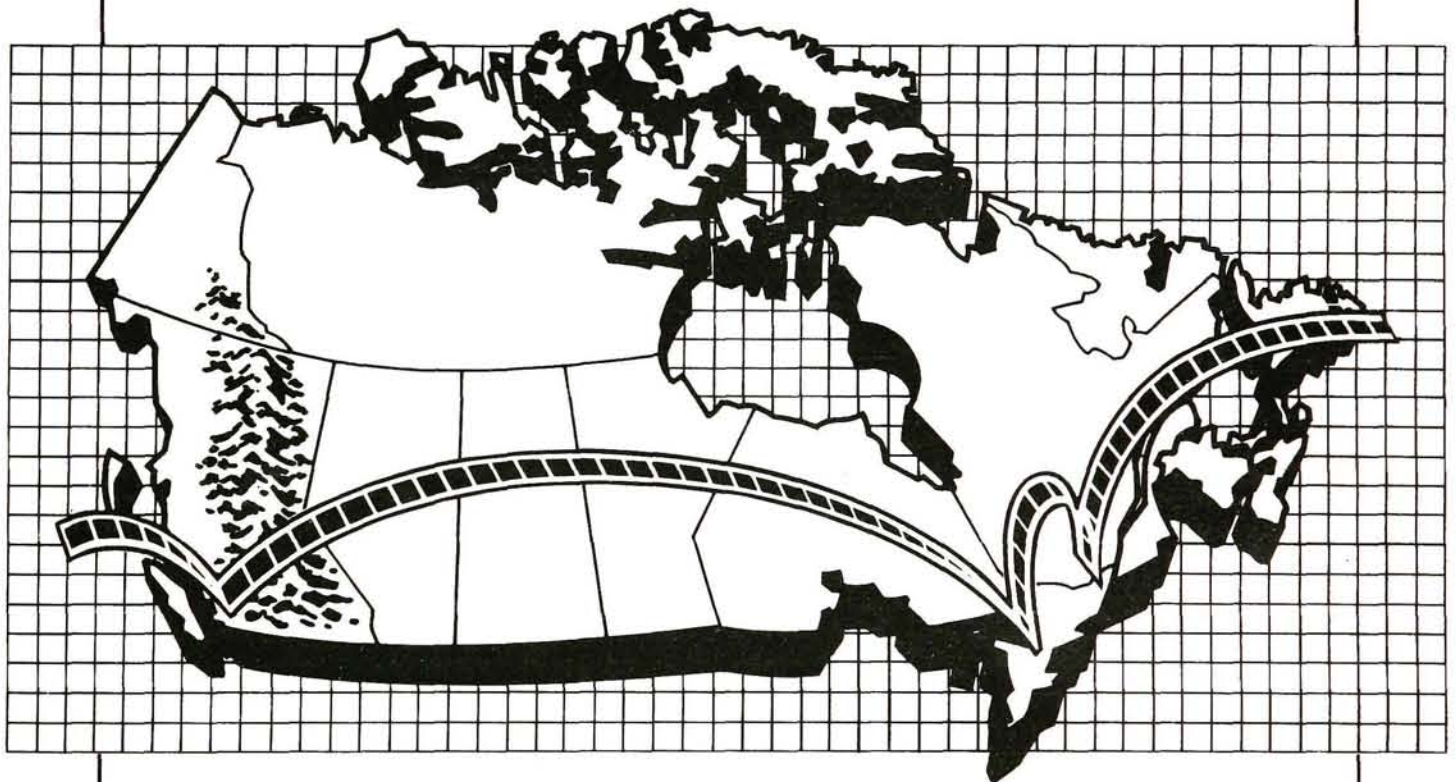
The authors of the report provide such a simple and superficial explanation of the interface between film production and film distribution, that the uninitiated will wonder what the problem is unless it is a simple fear or abhorrence of foreigners. Relying on pitifully few statistics, without any true market analysis, the text consists of simple bald assumptions that native distributors are sure to invest in indigenous films and provide fatherly guidance to boot. This rather weak demonstration of why Canadianization of the distribution system is necessary is unfortunate. There are many

detailed, logical and compelling arguments for immediate Canadianization. The influence of these better arguments might have helped to improve the political action or perhaps reduce the inaction that may follow. Nevertheless, it is hoped that the minister of Communications or at least his advisors are thoroughly versed in the ins-and-outs of film distribution and convinced of the desirability of Canadianization, even if they are not sure if they can do anything about it. The real weakness of the report's Canadianization recommendation is the absence of any suggestion as to how to

implement it. This is the hardest, most politicized, element of the problem; it gives meaning to the recommendation and some indication of what the Task Force thinks the film community wants. There are many routes to Canadianization, from outright expropriation at one end to financial assistance to independent Canadian distributors at the other. All the report can suggest is the intervention of Investment Canada (the agency which reviews acquisitions by foreigners) to review all future acquisitions of Canadian distribu-

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tion companies by foreigners. Clearly the problem is not future acquisitions but *existing* foreign domination.

Perhaps the authors hesitated to provide this detail for fear that any specified scheme would scare the government away. These anxieties are clear in two comments that appear periodically in the report. The authors are keenly aware that their recommendation flies in the face of the current free-trade talks with the U.S. In this they voice a legitimate concern that Canadianization by any degree of compulsion is doomed while free-trade theories are ascendant. Less warranted is their tendency to shy away from calling Canadianization what it could be: the direct or indirect expropriation of foreign interests. The authors argue disingenuously that since distributors do not have any physical assets or equipment as such, Canadianization would not constitute expropriation but simply the transfer of competition from foreigners to Canadians. This ignores the fact that intangible rights can be just as, if not more, valuable than physical assets. Certainly the termination of the right of foreigners to own or control the means of distribution of films in Canada has the same effect as a local municipality expropriating a piece of real estate. It would have been far preferable for the report to meet the issue head-on rather than let the politicians pursue a weak policy which tries not to offend.

If Canadianization is the toughest recommendation, the next — a \$60 million annual film fund and capital-cost allowance tax-advantages for investors who invest in production companies — should be the easiest, assuming the government wants to spend the money. Again, a conceivably sensible recommendation, it is not argued with the wealth of information or detail surely available. Again, there is no suggestion of mechanics of implementation. All this has the effect of making the two parts of the recommendation cancel each other out. Consider the situation. If tax incentives are necessary to promote the financing of production companies, the product of this incentive should be used to finance the object of the company, film production. By calling for a \$60 million annual film fund to supplement this (on a project-by-project basis), the authors are saying that film production companies can never finance themselves. The authors are really

asking for a permanent government subsidy. This leaves one with the circular problem of the government supporting companies which will not become self-financing and then

encouraging this deficiency further by providing additional funds on a per project basis which, the report claims, is the source of the original problem to begin with. And the scheme makes even less sense in the face of proposed Canadianization of distributors, which is to

have them invest in feature film.

The report's insistence on continuing, if not growing, government participation in the private-sector film-industry calls into question the private sector's reason for existence. It is precisely here that

reference to cultural and public-sector filmmaking and their relation to the private sector would have avoided this dead-end. These factors point to the development of a distinct Canadian film industry by dif-

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ferent means from those of the American experience. This has broad implications which the report ignores or does not foresee, perhaps because the report does not consider that the Canadian feature film industry can be viable without the U.S. market.

Beyond what the report doesn't mention, slightly mentions or half mentions, it is possible to see the outline of the need for an industrial strategy in film. Developing such a strategy means assessing long-term objectives, the means to obtain them, the role of gov-

ernment on an ongoing basis, if any, and what the producers will do with all this to help themselves. It is not enough to simply say that producers need more money to make more films.

If the report's first and second recommendations range from hardest to easiest, then the last recommendation is the most complex, breaking down the use and control of the dis-

tribution-exhibition ownership of principally two vertically integrated distribution-exhibition companies. Since theatrical distribution and exhibition is not subject to any regulatory body, dismantling arrangements offensive to competition becomes a matter of anti-combines legislation. In this field, the minister of Communications is, at best, an indirect influence; the more so with the recent introduction of long-awaited anti-competition legislation by the minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs. Vertical integration will have to be unraveled by anti-combines law operating in the film context and is sure to be cumbersome. This pot of problems can only be made even more murky by the fact that at least one of the vertically integrated distribution-exhibition companies is foreign-owned and presumably would be Canadianized if the Task Force's first recommendation is carried out.

Another ingredient should be added to the stew. If Canadianized distribution is a source of investment funds, it would seem only logical for Canadian film producers to ally themselves closely with Canadian distributors. It is only one step further to foresee the ultimate integration of film production and distribution companies creating another form of vertical integration. This, in turn, raises the argument that if it's sauce for the goose, why isn't it sauce for the gander?

By failing to provide detail the Task Force has not addressed the fundamental issue of this third recommendation: what is the extent of competition to be allowed either between foreigners and Canadians or Canadians and Canadians even if foreigners are excluded?

So, with all these limitations, what is the significance of a report produced in a scant 60 days during which for most of the time the minister who ordered it was in purgatory?

The Task Force report is only significant as a statement by the Canadian producer of

the plight of Canadian commercial feature film. Government policy in the 1980s has opted out of the direct development of Canadian feature film; instead it has gone in for the seemingly easier areas of TV programs, pay-television and the like. Despite undercapitalization, government inaction, foreign control and producer mistakes, the Canadian commercial feature film industry is a fact of life, a permanent and growing entertainment and cultural vehicle. If Canadian feature film is to reach its commercial, cultural and national potential, immediate reorganization of government policy is necessary.

Each of the Task Force's recommendations, however imperfectly advocated and described, represent real and legitimate concerns for the Canadian feature-film producer. The authors of the report insist that all the recommendations must be taken as one and implemented together. Whether or not this is realistic politically, the all or nothing approach is at least demanding that the government show the same political courage as the producers have shown commercial bravery.

Next month I'll look at some solutions the Task Force could have considered, but didn't.

Michael N. Bergman, barrister and solicitor, is a member of the Bars of Quebec, Ontario and Alberta with offices in Montreal and Toronto.

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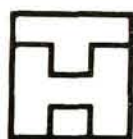
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CRTC debates future of native northern broadcasting in hearing

OTTAWA — The Canadian broadcasting system has often been described as unique. One reason for its uniqueness may be the little-known tip of the broadcasting system in the far north.

Served locally by over 250 radio stations, most of them operated by local native communications societies, along with 58 commercial AM and FM radio and seven television stations, the north has also been an important site for the development of satellite broadcasting, be it via the CBC's extension of its southern TV service to the north since the early '70s, TVO's pioneering initiatives with native broadcasting to northern Ontario, or Cancom's extension of southern (and U.S.) TV signals to some 200 northern communities, though less than 50 of these are native communities.

With radio available in the north only since 1958 (with the creation of the CBC's Northern Service) and TV only since the mid-70s, the development of northern media has been one of extremes — a sudden leap into modern communications together with deep-seated resistances to same. Today, native broadcasters produce over 92 hours a week of radio programming and 6.5 hours of TV, while commercial broadcasters by-and-large, as they do in the south, content themselves with importing southern or foreign programming. In anticipation of increasing levels both of native and imported programming, distribution bottlenecks and scheduling problems could cause the northern broadcasting system to "burst at the seams," as the CBC warned the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission during recent hearings on northern native broadcasting held last fall from Whitehorse to Fort Chimo to Ottawa. On Dec. 19, the CRTC issued a 32-page public notice which reviews the background of native

northern broadcasting and suggests a policy framework that, it is hoped, will preserve the northern system from the media pressures that have thrown the southern broadcasting system into its current state of confusion and Task Force review.

The media came to the north not to serve the interests

or needs of the northern peoples but those of the whites stationed in the north. In 1974, the federal cabinet approved a special \$50 million fund to extend CBC over-the-air English and French radio and TV coverage by satellite to all Canadian communities with a population of 500 or more. These funds have now been

exhausted.

Licensed in 1981 to extend southern radio and TV service to remote communities, Canadian Satellite Communications Inc. had, five years later, still not implemented pre-licensing commitments made to provide video uplinks and 10 hours of native programming. Cancom, like Canadian commercial

broadcasters generally, point to the shortage of native programming as the reason for not originating native programming.

In 1983, federally funded at over \$40 million spread over four years, the Northern Native Broadcast Access Program (NNBAP) was established to assist northern native com-
cont. on p. 35

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Illuminated Texts at New York's MOMA

NEW YORK — *Illuminated Texts*, a Bruce Elder Film billed by the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre as "a passionate three-hour odyssey through the modern mind," will be presented Feb. 10 at the Museum of Modern Art as part of the venue's CineProbe series. This latest international screening follows a retrospective of his works held last fall at Toronto's Ontario Art Gallery.

cont. from p. 34

munications societies produce radio and TV programming. For the NNBAP purposes, the north was divided into 13 regions, mainly on the basis of language, culture and traditional administrative boundaries. In each region, a native broadcasting corporation was established; for example, in Quebec, the Société de communications Atikamekw-Montagnais or, in northern Ontario, the Wawatay Native Communications society. Using a European model of cultural minimalism, a benchmark of five hours per week of TV and 20 hours of radio programming was set as the minimum requirement for the media maintenance of a language and culture. Access to NNBAP funding to enable northern communications societies to create radio and TV programming relevant to native needs was made conditional on a distribution agreement with an existing northern broadcaster. Difficulties in gaining access to northern distribution systems has since been the subject of repeated complaint, conferences and discussion. And at the most recent round of hearings late in '85, the Commission promised greater case-by-case flexibility on the issue of what constitutes 'fair' access. Some native groups have argued that commercial broadcasters should provide the 5 and 20 weekly benchmark free; provincial governments have questioned why tax payers should subsidize native cultural development by buying commercial media time; and commercial broadcasters have argued that their small profit margins does not allow them to provide free air-time.

The CBC's current financial constraints have forced it to abandon immediate plans for enhanced northern radio and TV services. However, the CBC does have distribution (transmission) arrangements with 10 of the 13 native communications societies (of the remaining three, the other two are with Cancom and one with TVO) though the societies themselves, according to the CRTC notice, are "dissatisfied with their allocated air-time, and have raised concerns regarding the capability of the CBC to accommodate increased amounts of production."

The Anik D satellite is the only appropriate satellite for the distribution of radio and TV signals to northern audiences. Of the nine Anik D transponders leased by CBC, such northern signals as exist have to compete for time on the "omnibus" channels that serve for news-gathering, inter-provincial feeds, pre-dis-

tribution, and back-up for other transponders. With mild understatement, the CRTC notice agrees with the CBC position that "ideally" the Northern Television Service would be more meaningful to northern residents if it had its own fully dedicated transponder.

In its December notice, the Commission called on private broadcasters, Cancom and the CBC to cooperate towards im-

proving "the quality and quantity of access by northern native broadcasters to the Canadian broadcasting system." For the immediate future, however, the 5 and 20 minimal benchmark prevails, though the Commission intends to establish an action committee made up of representatives from the native communications societies, private and educational broadcasters, the CBC, the Secretary of State Na-

tive Citizens Directorate, and the CRTC to deal with the problem of access to existing distribution systems. The Commission recommended that private northern broadcasters provide the 5 and 20 hours per week of airtime free, and that Cancom should not wait until 10 weekly hours of native TV programming are available before providing access to whatever is available currently. As the central player in

terms of broadcasting hardware (satellite transponders, cue-and-control terrestrial networks, receiving stations and transmitters), the CBC is encouraged by the CRTC to formulate long-range planning for increased integration of native programming. And, finally, the CRTC will set up a permanent liaison group to facilitate active participation of northern native broadcasters in policy development.



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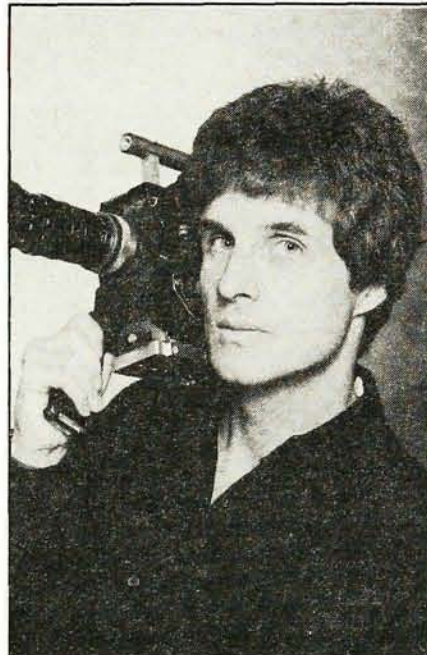
NEWS

NEW APPOINTMENT TO NFB BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Quebec City lawyer Jean Sirois has been named Vice President of the Board of Trustees of the National Film Board of Canada. The announcement was made by Minister of Communications Marcel Masse during a meeting of the NFB's Board of Trustees in Quebec City, December 18. Jean Sirois is a senior associate with the Rivard, Hickson law firm in Quebec City. Previously, he was director general of the Royal Commission into the administration of criminal justice in Quebec from 1967 to 1969; assistant chief of staff to Quebec Premier Bertrand; and vice-president of the Association of Young Lawyers of Canada. He has also served as director of the Quebec Carnival and the Quebec Summer Festival.

NFB FILM TO BE SCREENED AT INPUT '86

Two NFB films, *Democracy on Trial: The Morgentaler Affair*, and *Final Offer*, have been selected for screenings at INPUT 86 (International Public Television Screening Conference) to be held in Montreal April 6 to 12. The prestigious annual meetings of INPUT bring together professionals from around the world to view and discuss outstanding television productions. *Democracy on Trial: The Morgentaler Affair*, directed by Paul Cowan, chronicles the court battles of Dr. Henry Morgentaler and his personal crusade to legalize abortion in Canada. Sturla Gunnarsson's *Final Offer* takes us behind the scenes of negotiations be-



Paul Cowan, director of controversial docu-drama *The Kid Who Couldn't Miss*

tween the multinational company General Motors and its Canadian employees, represented by the United Automobile Workers union. Cowan and Gunnarsson will be on hand to present their works to their international colleagues.

DARK LULLABIES TO BE SCREENED IN BERLIN

Dark Lullabies, an award-winning documentary exploring the impact of the Holocaust on the generation of Jews and Germans born after the war, will be screened at the Film Forum in Berlin, February 14-25. Part of the Berlin Film Festival, the non-competitive Forum program pre-

sents outstanding works which increase public interest in social issues and improve understanding between nations. Director Irene Lilienheim Angelico will attend and participate in the discussion following the screening.

Angelico is also one of six Canadian filmmakers invited to visit West Germany, February 2-21. The tour is sponsored by Germany's Ministry of External Affairs and is part of an ongoing exchange program. The filmmakers will visit key West German cities and cultural institutions including the Berlin Film and Television Academy and the Bavarian Film Atelier, the country's largest film production house. The other Canadian filmmakers on the tour are Donald Brittain, Jean Beaudin, Phillip Borsos, Bruce Elder and Allan King.

PANEL DEBATES THE DILEMMAS OF THE DOCU-DRAMA

The future and validity of the docu-drama as an art form will be the subject of *Docu-drama: Fact and Fiction*, a round table discussion organized by McGill University's Department of English and the National Film Board at McGill University, Saturday February 1. Several filmmakers including Donald Brittain, Jacques Godbout, Giles Walker, Jacques Leduc and Paul Cowan, the director of the controversial *The Kid Who Couldn't Miss*, and invited journalists, will present their views to an audience of McGill and Concordia university students. The discussion is open to the public. To reserve a seat and for further information call, 392-5014, in Montreal.

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Record audiences for Anne

TORONTO - *Anne of Green Gables*, the two-part mini-series that aired Dec. 1-2 on CBC, drew successive record audiences for a Canadian-produced drama program on the network. Figures compiled by the A.C. Nielsen Company of Canada show that on its first evening, *Anne of Green Gables* attracted a record-setting average quarter-hour audience of 4.9 million viewers. That figure, easily besting the previous record of 3.1 million garnered in 1979 by part one of *Riel*, was itself surpassed by the second evening's average quarter-hour audience of over 5.8 million viewers.

The increased interest in the drama also meant a hefty rise in the program's audience share of all viewers tuned into English-language TV across the country, from 47 per cent to 56 per cent (in effect meaning that every second English-speaking Canadian was tuned into the CBC those nights). In comparison, CBC coverage of the 1985 Grey Cup managed to attract an audience of 2.6 million. Interestingly, the only other programs to attain higher figures than producer/director/co-author Kevin Sullivan's *Anne of Green Gables* were the fifth and final game of the 1984 Stanley Cup final between the Edmonton Oilers and New York Islanders (which, with six million-plus viewers, became the CBC's highest rated sports program) and the final *M.A.S.H.* episode, which drew over eight million viewers to the CBC, according

to English network senior press relations officer Glenn Luff.

Anne of Green Gables, which starred Megan Follows in the Lucy Maud Montgomery tale, was co-produced by the CBC, Sullivan Films, and PBS Wonderworks, with participation from Telefilm Canada, CITY-TV, and West Germany's ZDF Television.

Against reason, McClelland to tube

TORONTO - Jack McClelland, the ever-newsworthy publisher of the Canadian publishing firm McClelland and Stewart, is the focus of the 50-minute documentary *Against Reason*, by Close Up Film Productions of Toronto, that airs Feb. 6 on the CBC.

McClelland and Stewart, a leading publisher of Canadian titles which turns 80 years old in 1986, was sold Dec. 30 to private investor Avram Bennett. *Against Reason*, researched in the fall of 1984 and produced for \$220,000 with Telefilm participation last spring takes a behind-the-scenes look at the final, chaotic year 1985 was for Jack McClelland (one jolt included the resignation of his president, Linda McKnight) and features such M & S literary luminaries as Margaret Atwood, Margaret Laurence, Farley Mowat, and Mordecai Richler.

The film, a second production for producer-director

brothers James and Peter Weyman, also features narration by R.H. Thomson and original music by jazz pianist Aaron Davis. It also follows on Academy Award win in 1985 by Close Up for best foreign student film with *The Leabys: Music Most of All*.

Peter Weyman, who describes *Against Reason* as being "as much a personal portrait as a business portrait," says the title is derived from discussion between Mowat and McClelland. Mowat, who started out with an American publisher, apparently had been convinced by McClelland "against reason" that he could be successful in Canada. "I thought that was applicable to Jack," says Peter, "because he continued to do it (run M & S) from then until now."

Toronto Fest director

cont. from p. 29

Of this new challenge, Schein says he feels "very confident" taking over, in no small part because of the collective acumen of Festival staffers Anne Mackenzie (managing director and, until Schein's appointment, acting Festival director), Helga Stephenson (director of communications), and Piers Handling (Festival programmer). Although he has no plans to tamper with the Festival's "excellent reputation" by making any drastic changes, Schein expects to be able to add his own touch to the Festival.

At the moment, that imprint will consist of "opening up" the Festival to the filmmakers by

providing more access to film starts and directors (such as by holding half-hour or hour-long question-and-answer sessions after screenings). As well, he envisions an expansion of the information in the Festival

program booklets and a nominal fee to make it more available. He added that after he arrives in Toronto, he'll be meeting with local industry people to hear what revisions to the Festival may be in order.



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TVO beefs up French side

TORONTO — TVOntario, whose French-language programming has consisted largely of Sunday afternoons and evenings and one-hour educational programs daily during the week, is moving to become increasingly bilingual — with a new French-language network. Scheduled to begin broadcasting in January 1987, the new, separate channel will appear on cable only and will increase the network's programming for Franco-Ontarians from a current 1,000 hours of programming annually (from a TVO annual total of 5,600 hours) to around 4,000 hours of French-language programming.

The result of over a decade of lobbying by the province's Franco-Ontarians (which in 1981 numbered 476,000, with a further half million Ontarians speaking French as a second language), the new network will receive \$30 million over a five-year period to cover programming, capital, and operating costs. Funding, which was kicked off last Dec. 18 with a \$233,000 cheque from Ontario minister of Citizenship and Culture Lily Munro, will be provided in equal portions by Citizenship and Culture and the federal department of Communications.

TVO's general manager of French programming, Donald Duprey, will be responsible for creating the new network's overall program schedule. The application for the French network has been submitted to the CRTC along with TVO's licence application, currently up for renewal. Designed as a bid to provide TVO with more programming in both languages, Duprey said the new network will likely share the

TVO name, although other aspects are less certain.

It isn't definite, for example, whether the new network will program exclusively in the French language, with one proposal suggesting that English-language programming take up a similar Sunday 12 noon - 12 midnight position on the new network (which would recognize the argument that TVO is indeed a bilingual operation). Another proposal considers the construction of a few new transmitters for beaming the new French network to the province's heavily francophone communities. Currently, through the use of approximately 150 low, medium, and high-powered transmitters and cable, TVO's one signal reaches 94 per cent of the province.

More definite, however, is the sort of programming the French network will carry. Not only will it include the likes of TVO's existing "Le temps de se connaître" programming package, but there will be co-productions with Radio-Québec's, Radio-Canada (part of the new network's *raison d'être* is to give Ontario's francophones more 'Ontario'), and the NFB.

Duprey, who underlines the new French network is "a modest service" and who (if he had his way) would like to see it program "100 per cent Canada and Ontario-based production," points out that a certain amount of the programming will have to be found in foreign acquisitions and joint-ventures. While the accent will be placed on Ontario-based, French-language production to provide a focus on the province, Quebec based production companies will be encour-

aged to work with local ones on French-language co-productions. Private sector initiatives, something Duprey has a strong sense of and commitment to (based on 11 years as a producer and as associate producer on *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*), will also play a prominent part.

To that end, Duprey says TVO is encouraging Atlantis Films Limited to develop a French-language component (something which the NFB has joined in on), while moves have been made in Switzerland and Belgium with regard to children's programming.

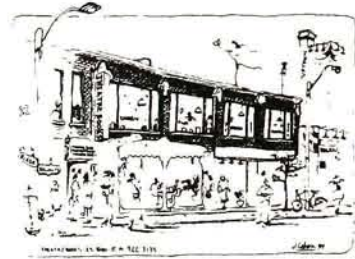
Explaining that the focus of the French network will be the 5-10 p.m. daily slot supplemented by programs like *Question Period* and those that meet the province's French school educational needs (in order to meet the 10 hours daily/seven days a week target), Duprey said the network may also begin Sunday programming earlier in order to catch the significant children's time block.

Certain the new French net-

work is "going to get some- place," Duprey expects that \$18-\$20 million out of the total funding will be available for productions over the five-year period starting next January after capital costs are deducted. And though he believes TVO's modest service

faces an enormous challenge, Duprey remarked "I believe we can meet those expectations in a meaningful way." Added Duprey "It's something Franco-Ontarians lobbied for and I think the community deserves to be recognized for this."

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Reynolds and Bruce move up at CBC

TORONTO — Two CBC Television departments received new faces with appointments announced last December by the network's Director of TV Programming, Jack Craine. Filling a post vacated by Ivan Fecan, Carol Reynolds became the first woman to be named head of TV Variety, a department she joined in 1981 as Manager of Administration and Finance. For Reynolds, a University of Toronto Fine Arts graduate who first joined the CBC in 1976, the promotion is the culmination of her having become the department's deputy head in October, 1984 and acting head since June, 1985. Among the objectives set out by Reynolds are continued development of a Cana-

dian star system, a repatriation of SCTV alumni back to the CBC, and magazine-type pop music shows.

In the other appointment announced by Craine, Angela Bruce was named Dodi Robb's successor (the latter retired last November) as head of TV Children's. As with Reynolds, Bruce's promotion recognizes her having been the department's deputy area head since 1981 and, most recently, acting head since last November. Bruce, who had also served as TV Children's manager of Program Production, has served in such capacities as production assistant, producer, director, and assistant program director since joining the network in 1964.

CBC aims for year 2000 as it unwraps new, hi-tech mobile unit

TORONTO – It may not have been gift-wrapped, but Christmas arrived one week early Dec. 18 with the presentation to the CBC English television network of Mobile 80. Measuring 48-feet in length and weighing in at 35 tons, the state-of-the-art mobile TV production trailer is a bid by the network to both rationalize existing mobile equipment and provide enhanced on-the-spot production.

The Mobile 80, which had its baptism in the world junior hockey championships Dec. 29 at Hamilton's new Copps Coliseum, was a project first proposed in February 1983 and ordered in November 1984. When it was finally delivered to CBC Toronto, the Mobile 80 brought with it a \$5.1 million price tag (spread over three CBC fiscal years) and the realisation of the combined recommendations of the network's Toronto department heads on what would constitute the best mobile unit. It was also, in the hearts and minds of CBC officials present at the unveiling, a much-needed replacement (effectively supplanting on its own three mobile units) for technology dating from Expo '67.

While the Mobile 80's shell (which includes an expandable side) was built over five months by London, Ontario-based Conran, internal installations were produced in Montreal and these contents prompted CBC Toronto outside broadcast supervisor Morris Hastie to beam that "We're now in the ranks of the pros, not the orphans." Hastie, noting the Mobile 80 was primarily designed for sports productions, cited news, drama, and variety specials as other areas where the new unit would achieve equal effectiveness.

The technological jazz inside the Mobile 80 (it can also serve as a post-production vehicle, a first for the network) amounts to a veritable shopping list for technicians and programmers: eight Hitachi cameras (six studio-type SK970 Computa-cam with push-button automatic set up and two hand-held SK97s) complete with zoom lenses and over a mile of Triax camera cable; a two-man camera control section; a complete audio section lacking only the ability to perform digital recording; 70 black & white and 18 colour monitors; four 1-inch video-tape recording

machines capable of editing in pairs (effectively providing a complete editing suite), each with slow-motion control an Abekas A42 still picture store unit for frame storage with computer-controlled call-up; a two-channel Encore video manipulation digital effects unit capable of technologically 'perking up' the likes of variety show openings; and a character generator function with computer and land-line tie-in, among other bits of electronic wizardry.

Besides giving the CBC a mobile production ability on a par with the equipment used by the CTV network and Hamilton's independent station CHCH, the Mobile 80 was designed for ease of operation. One estimate is that only 1 to 1 1/2 hours would be required to set up for a production requiring six cameras. With an eye on economy, Hastie said the Mobile 80's Hitachi

cameras have "effectively consolidated into one complex. picked up two f-stops," an improvement permitting lighting down and a resulting use of less lights and power. In terms of power, it's been estimated that 200 amperes would be sufficient power to run the Mobile 80 with all systems operating. Given its weight, even its 5 mile-per-gallon fuel consumption (estimated by its driver on the Montreal-Toronto journey) smacks of some economy of operation.

The end result of this latest acquisition will be, according to CBC Network Director of Television Production and Operations Dave Martin, "more production in less time at less expense" and a considerable easing of equipment failures. Because the Mobile 80 is essentially capable of acting as a veritable studio, Martin said it would provide a welcome complement to the CBC's Toronto facilities until they are

consolidated into one complex.

Expectations too are such that the Mobile 80 is intended to last, said Martin, "at least into the 2000s." In recognizing a need to pre-empt any regional envy, another Mobile 80 was simultaneously under construction for deployment in Edmonton, Alberta to cover western Canada (delivery of which is anticipated in April or May). The ambit of the Toronto-based unit, meanwhile, will include both the local CBLT station's requirements but also serving the CBC's English and French-television networks in central Canada. Perhaps not surprisingly, given the Mobile 80's projected longevity, a special contest is underway to rename the unit with an appellation more fitting than its assigned cipher number.



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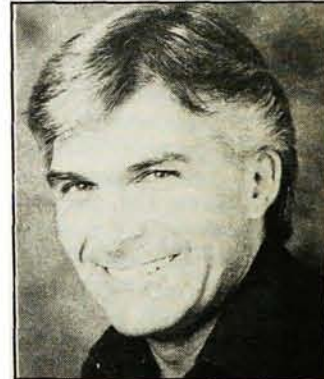
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Great year for distributors

TORONTO — By all accounts, 1985 was a very good year for Toronto-based distribution companies, at least according to Norstar Releasing Inc., Spectrafilm, Astral Films Ltd., and Pan-Canadian Film Distributors.

At Norstar, president Daniel Weinzweig likened 1985 to "a vintage year." As its first year in business, last year was also considered by Weinzweig as "probably the most auspicious beginning," marked by the success of such titles as *Teen Wolf*, *Choose Me*, and *A Private Function*. Not only did Norstar "corporately make our mark" but Weinzweig also pointed to the company's second consecutive International Critics Award success at the Toronto Festival of Festivals with the film *No Surrender* (and, in 1984, for *Choose Me*).

Well underway since its kick-off last September is Norstar's home video division, which is now releasing such products as *The Coca-Cola Kid*. Several TV deals, in particular what Weinzweig billed a "substantial" pay-TV deal with First Choice-Superchannel, were also signed last year. The company's production

arm, Simcom Productions, also wrapped up production last year on three projects (*Bullies*, *High Stakes*, *Mania*) for theatrical and TV release this year. Weinzweig credits Norstar vice-president Tom Lightburn too with making "a lot of good deals with theatre owners."

Accounting for a year in which Norstar had more than its share of hits, Weinzweig puts it down to "just clever management." That included the exclusive, three-year distribution deal Norstar signed last fall with Peter O'Brian's Independent Pictures Inc., an arrangement "going very well" and which by the end of 1986 will see Norstar receive the first group of three productions annually. As to 1986, Weinzweig anticipates "another auspicious year" with more and better productions, an increase in support staff, and a prospective doubling of revenue (figures which all respondents declined to reveal or didn't yet have). "It certainly was a profitable year for Norstar, I can tell you that," Weinzweig said.

At Spectrafilm, 1985 was a "terrific year" says president

Linda Beath, the most obvious testament being the success enjoyed by the film *My American Cousin* (for which Spectrafilm put up some production financing). The distributor also achieved the release of nine films in the U.S. and 12 in Canada during last year, hitting three six-figure sales last October-November. Developing nicely is Spectrafilm's rapport with producers Murray Shostak, Peter O'Brian, and Nicolas Clermont (for whom investment financing was committed late 1983, respectively for *Love Songs*, *My American Cousin*, and *Toby McTeague*), producers whom Beath reports being "really impressed with" and with whom Spectrafilm is currently at work on scripts.

Last year was "much more relaxed" than the previous two, during which the company went through some start-up problems. Now past, Beath looks ahead to a "pretty dynamic" 1986, given the U.S. release in February of *My American Cousin*, a line-up that will see three times as much English-language as foreign-language production, and Spectrafilm's start in January as executive producer on Robertson Davies' *A Mixture of Fraillies*.

Astral Films experienced "a

very good year theatrically," noted vice-president of sales, Gordon Guiry. With Canadian earnings in excess of \$2 million, *The Care Bears Movie* led the way, followed by strong performances from such titles as *Dance With A Stranger* (\$400,000 in Canada), *Savage Streets* (\$115,000), *Stranger Than Paradise* (\$86,000), and with \$50-60,000 showings turned in by the remainder of its 10 releases in 1985.

Equally fortunate for Astral, given 1985's being the year of *Rambo*, was its role as the Canadian representative for Fox, Columbia, and Tri-Star (with whom it has a service distribution agreement). "Our year is tied to that but even with that, we had a very good turnout" in 1985, Guiry said. With 40 years as an independent theatrical distributor (and Canada's oldest and most successful, Guiry maintained. Astral is also reporting a strong performance in the video business. Although beating the company's *Porky's*-induced glory of 1983 is unlikely, Guiry noted that by Astral's year-end in February "the way things are turning out, it (1985) is going to be a very solid year."

"Particularly successful," meanwhile, is how Pan-Canadian general sales manager

Andy Emilio summed up 1985. Not only did the distribution arm of the Cineplex Odeon Corporation release approximately 58 titles last year (with "much more" expected in 1986), but Pan-Canadian also experienced what Emilio called "tremendous growth, it was considerably more profitable."

Despite the fact the eight Canadian films released last year by Pan-Canadian didn't figure in a big way, Emilio said, "with all rights and considerations, we did well with them, we're happy with them (releases that included *The Killer Instinct* and, last March, the release of *The Dog Who Stopped The War*). Pan-Canadian, most of whose deals are independent ones, is currently distributing the Dog's executive producer Rock Demers' second feature, *The Peanut Butter Solution*."

Other titles that added to 1985's "excellence", Emilio said, included the good showing of *The Emerald Forest* last summer and *King Solomon's Mines*. And as to how 1986 looks for the five-year-old distribution company, Emilio says "We're really not going to change anything — we're just progressing as we were in 1985."

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VANCOUVER VISTAS

by Eric Green

Late in 1985, B.C.'s provincial government took a giant step toward the creation of a major movie studio, announcing that the B.C. Development Corporation would begin conducting detailed design work and negotiating with film industry representatives and potential tenants. An estimated \$300,000 has been committed to the consulting work involved.

In making the announcement, the government said it intends a joint, venture development in collaboration with the industry. Local 891 of IATSE responded by sending a letter to BCDC indicating it has set aside \$250,000 "with a view to investing in a structured partnership of the kind proposed." The union recognizes that a major studio is a vital component of its long-term plan to strengthen B.C.'s position within the international film industry.

The proposed complex would include a large, low-cost, effects stage. At least one smaller sound stage is included, with the potential for adding several more, should the demand call for it. The complex would also include rental accommodation for the wide variety of types of companies involved — offices, meetings rooms and, subject to design and demand, of course, rehearsal rooms and other amenities. Leasable space is expected to take up about 100,000 square feet. The goal is to provide space at \$5 per square foot.

One potential site is the well-reported Dominion Bridge facility in Burnaby. Most industry spokespeople feel this location is ideal. A variety of other facilities are also being looked at, including the former Park and Tilford brewery buildings in North Vancouver.

Pre-development is expected to be complete by the end of February. If the BCDC's analysis says "go", a government spokesman said, then work could begin in the Spring.

In its giddy news release, the provincial government (which is expected to call an election some time in 1986) via Industry and Small Business Development minister Bob McClelland said, "Movie-making has become a major industry in British Columbia. The development of a modern, state-of-the-art studio is now needed if this industry is to reach its full economic potential."

The Fourth Annual Vancouver

International Film Festival will be held May 21-June 26 this year, but without festival director and founder Leonard Sc-

hein who's off to take over directing the Toronto Fest..

Over 30 directors, producers and performers will be brought in for the event from Pacific Rim countries (Australia, Japan and other nations), as well as from Europe and North America.

For cinema people

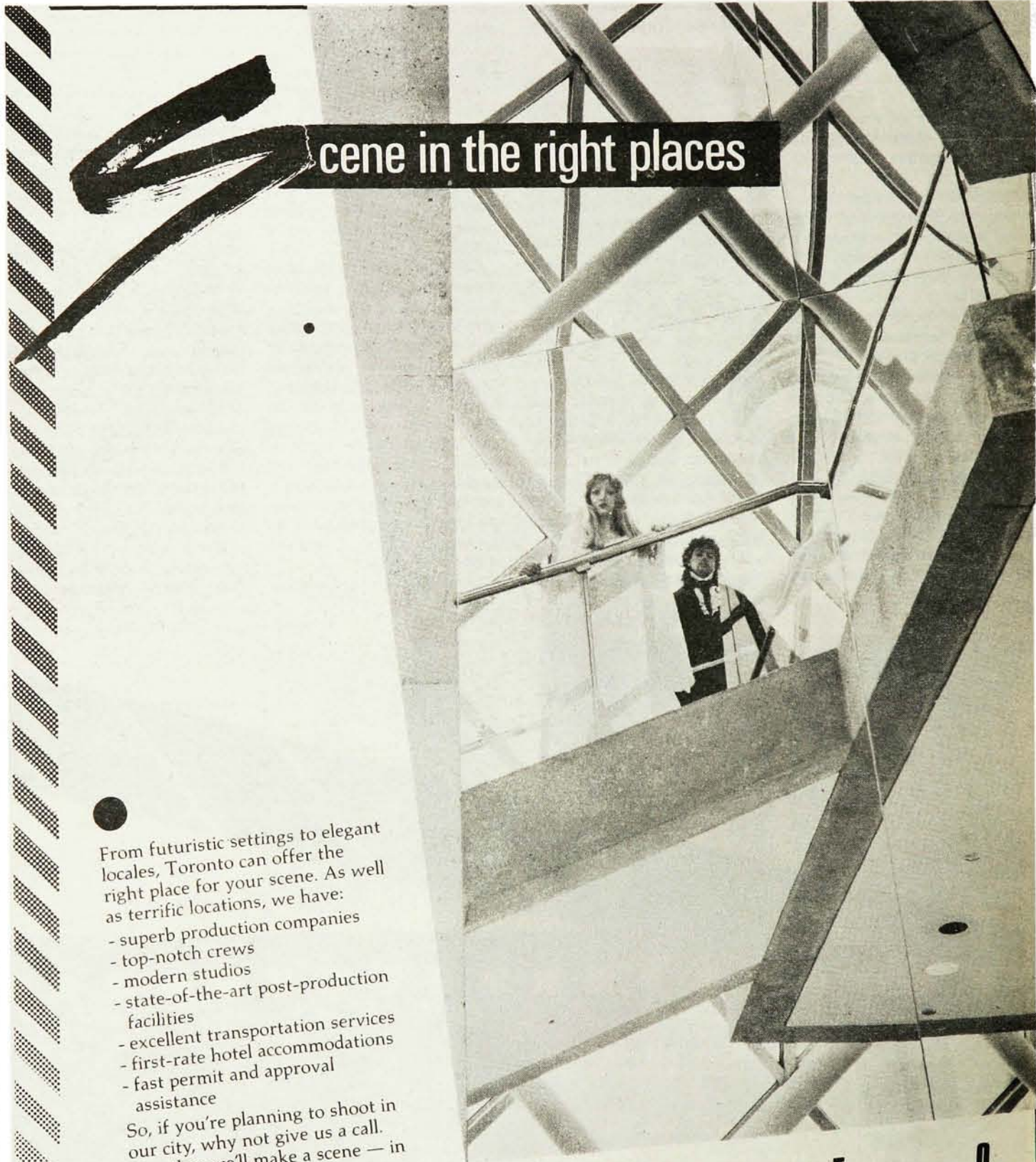
everywhere, the event is a good excuse to come and visit Vancouver during Expo in one of the nicer times of the year in Lotus land.

Japanese producers began filming in Alberta recently on a television series called *The Rice*.

Producer Akio Kitazawa works for the Fuji Television Network Inc. of Tokyo. Vancouver coordinator and contact is Kojiro Mukai of TCS Tours Canada Inc.

Other segments, other series will be shot in eastern Canada.

cont. on p. 41



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Vancouver *cont. from p. 40*

Mike Rachmil has taken control over the Dominion Bridge facility from Jan. 6 to Oct. 1 to film three features.

Tripwire Productions Ltd. of Los Angeles will shoot *Tripwire*, *Roxanne* and *The Limit*, with principal photography on *Tripwire* beginning March 17. Director of this film is

Jonathon Betuel. *Roxanne* will be shot in the Whistler Ski Resort area in the summer. Rachmill was producer on the feature *Runaway*, shot in Vancouver, starring Tom Selleck.

B.C. unions have 14 signed pre-production agreements to start 1986 off right. All of these will get underway on or before the end of June 1986.

Disney's Lorin Salob will

take over Panorama Studios from Jan. 27 right up until the wrecker's ball levels it early in the summer. Disney will produce two feature films, and there is the possibility of a third.

There were more than 800 people gathered to say bye-bye to the soon-to-disappear Panorama Studios Jan. 25.

The entire film industry in

B.C., and from elsewhere, gathered at the studios for the party. There were a few sniffles and teary eyes as industry people recalled experiences associated with the facility.

Could it be that they were crying out of frustration because Panorama, when it was built, was touted as the foundation of a great new "Hollywood North"? The fact that it never lived up to its billing causes

some alarm in the industry here when people talk about the commitments being made for a new professional studio complex.

The powers-that-be can expect enormous pressure from western interests in the industry to continue the move to more indigenous production. The good news about CBC's commitment to independent production (50% by Sept. 1987) could be the jump-start that helps this process happen.

Western film industry people are ecstatic about the pressures being brought politically on the great 'Canadian broadcasting castration' to stop creating expensive sinecures for producers who more frequently than not can't be bothered to answer letters from 'proposers.'

Now, if we can get a national commission to investigate why the most lucrative national network, CTV, has hired almost no talent in the west (and precious little elsewhere) in 25 years, and made fewer deals with independent Canadian producers, then perhaps we can start to see some of the cash trickling, but preferably pouring, out to the people who buy the products of the people who advertise on that network.

Samuel Lount, *My American Cousin* and *Overnight* all appeared as part of the Genie Awards screenings in Vancouver as of Jan. 2.

Elvira Lount's film opened for a limited engagement at the Ridge Theatre after a barrage of publicity in the province. Critics have been very positive.

Sandy Wilson's *My American Cousin* continued its run in Vancouver while its creators rested up after a similar barrage of publicity in the middle of the fall. Jack Darcus' new feature *Overnight* was seen for the first time at the Genie presentations.

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OTTAWA — A re-examination of the 100% capital cost allowance is underway and the department of Communications is looking for "alternative incentives for stimulating investment in the Canadian film industry."

The Request for Proposal which has been issued to researchers states that an "entire new universe" has been created since the CCA first was applied and that it is now only one factor among many. Hoping that new tax incentives may also be applicable to the recording industry, the study should "determine what role tax incentives should continue to play and what types of incentives are most appropriate."

Mako/CTV go for it

TORONTO — Listening to John Stoneman of Mako Films, a few points become quite clear: that Mako is one of the top underwater film producers and cinematographers in the world, with an unabashed confidence in being Canadian, and gratitude for what Stoneman considers a unique relationship between his company and the CTV Network, co-producer and broadcaster of his award-winning *The Last Frontier* series.

Winners at November's Canadian Film and Television Association Awards for best documentary under 30 minutes and best TV series (respectively, *The Silent Killers* and *The Last Frontier*), Mako is probably the world's largest underwater film producer. Stoneman believes Mako is among the world's top three marine cinematographers, among them the world-famous Cousteau Society.

If that smacks of patriotic chest-thumping, it's not something Stoneman (who views himself as "a good old boy from a fishing village in south Devon in England") apologizes for. "I'm not afraid to push the fact we're Canadians and that we're just as good as our American colleagues, if not better, though we are prone as Canadians to take a lower profile to everyone else," he told *Cinema Canada*.

In fact, at the CFTA Awards, Stoneman proclaimed the credo of Mako Films (which he founded 17 years ago in England to realize a marine love af-

fair begun in the Indian Ocean) as "Go for it, but it's go for it with a Canadian flag" (which appears at the end of each *Last Frontier* episode).

What has helped Stoneman and Mako to 'go for it' is the rapport established with CTV and, in particular, with CTV president and managing director, Murray Chercover. Chercover, after CTV helped Mako develop several half-hour films, alerted Stoneman to their TV potential and so, starting in September, 1983, production began of *The Last Frontier* series. By March, 1985 that had led to 24 half-hour episodes, (each averaging \$135,000 in cost), a first season's worth shot in a *cinéma vérité* style (no efforts are made to hide the salt sores after the five or six dives made daily) and, more important, in the documentary-TV series tradition Stoneman believes affords the chance to provide viewers with more meaningful content than feature films and still succeeds at being entertaining.

The series, due to air this fall on CTV (a prime-time, commercial slot which Stoneman gratefully acknowledges Chercover's "tremendous amount of support") took so long to realize in large part because of the lack of any stock footage in the first 24 episodes.

In brief, each episode deals with a different aspect of research projects engaged in by the Foundation for Ocean Re-

cont. on p. 54

Super year in Toronto

TORONTO — The poster adorning the office of Naish McHugh, industrial liaison manager for the City of Toronto's planning and development department and the head of the Film Liaison Office, says "Making films is your job, cutting red tape is ours." Given the success Toronto enjoys as North America's third largest overall production centre (after Los Angeles and New York), both claims seem to apply.

In 1984, billed by McHugh as "a banner year," the Toronto community (the Film Liaison office concerns itself primarily with the city of Toronto but has contacts in the boroughs and cities that make up Metro Toronto) played host to 20 made-for-TV movies, 20 features, six TV series, a half-dozen music videos, and \$124 million in commercials. Those figures, which saw the liaison office issue 1,500 location permits (a 50 per cent increase over the average 1,000 issued annually since the office's 1979 opening), were topped last year.

In 1985's "banner, banner year" the Film Liaison Office issued 1,700 location permits, with a further 500 issued by the combined efforts of the Metro Roads & Traffic and Parks & Property departments (the latter's permits govern such Metro Toronto locations as Yonge Street and University Avenue). What 1985 offered in the way of vital stats included 29 made-for-TV movies totalling \$78 million; 21 features totalling \$55 million (which combine for a record \$133 million); 12 independently-produced Canadian TV series (among them *Night Heat*, *The*

Campbells, and *The Edison Twins*) totalling \$47 million; 26 music videos; and, says McHugh, an even better year for commercials.

From the \$180 million figure representing TV features/features/series, McHugh estimates Toronto benefitted "by at least \$100 million" in wages, equipment supplies and leases, and location fees. That figure, McHugh pointed out, was arrived at without the use of a multiplier effect and is calculated on the shooting days from the permits issued by the Film Liaison Office. To demonstrate just how busy 1985 was, McHugh noted that on one day last year, October 22, different productions were underway at 40 different locations (with some crews at as many as three different locations that day).

While McHugh credits the increased activity in 1985 to Telefilm's Broadcast Fund "really coming into play" and that 1986 is expected to see a maintenance of that record level of production, he says making such a projection is "irrelevant." For example, though the only such body in Toronto, the Film Liaison Office only knows of those productions (largely an even mix of American and Canadian, as per the 1985 year-end Production guide) for which it issued permits or provided information. As a result, the figures do not reflect the amount of in-house production particularly for TV underway. Often too, notes McHugh, there's a problem defining whether a production is American or Canadian. Budgets too are also general estimates and then in differing currencies, ranging among the

TV features/features from \$80,000 for *Passion* to \$11-million for *Eleni*.

A definitive growth pattern is also difficult to determine because of the up-and-down character of the entire industry, explains McHugh. The Film Liaison Office, for example, opened in 1979 due to the quantum leap in production (totalling \$80 million) from the capital cost allowance and tax-shelter boom, that featured some big-budget items (such as *Circle of Two*) that never saw theatrical distribution.

After what McHugh calls the "skitters" of 1981 and 1982 when relatively little was made in TV features/features (although a lot was done with the CBC, TVO, City-TV, and student films), the Film Liaison Office witnessed a resurgence with the 1983 arrival of the Broadcast Fund. By then, much of the infrastructure had been laid and American companies were arriving to take advantage of the increasingly favourable exchange rate.

Since then, McHugh has observed Canadians "creeping up" (especially as regards TV productions, now on an upswing). Invariably those are low-budget affairs, notes McHugh, whereas two of seven productions underway and carried over from '85 to '86 include the \$4 million U.S. *The Return of Billy Jack* and David Cronenberg's \$10 million U.S. re-make of *The Fly* (both designated American productions).

Intent on attracting new production and keeping repeat clients (and there are several, he observes), McHugh sees continued avenues of civic promotion lies in the new Ontario Film Development Corporation, of which the Film and Video Office is now a part.

Pool in Berlin competition

MONTREAL — The Berlin International Film Festival, Feb. 14-25, has traditionally been welcoming to Canadian cinema, and this year, with 11 features and one animated short, is no exception.

As per Telefilm Festivals bureau chief Jean Lefebvre, in competition are two films, Léa Pool's second feature *Anne Trister* starring French actress Albane Guilhe in the title role, and *Elephantrio*, an NFB-CBC coproduced animated short by three of Canada's leading animators, Paul Driessen, Graham Ross and John Weldon.

At the Festival Forum, Greg Hanec's stark feature-length *Downtime*, a grim portrayal of urban youth, marks the third production to be accepted at an international festival this year for the Winnipeg Film Group. As well, there will be a special screening of *Dark Lullabies*, Irene Angelico and Abbey Jack Neidik's documen-

tary on the children of Holocaust survivors.

As part of the fest's In-foshow, Claude Gagnon's third feature *Visage pâle*, starring Luc Matte and Allison Odjig, has been selected for a special screening.

And at the festival market, Gilles Carle's documentary *Ô Picasso*, Brigitte Berman's documentary *Artie Shaw: Time Is All You Got*, and features *The Peanut Butter Solution*, directed by Michael Rubbo, *90 Days*, directed by Giles Walker, *La Dame en couleurs*, directed by Claude Jutra, as well as Pool's *Anne Trister* and Gagnon's *Visage pâle* will be competing for sales under the banner of Montreal-based international sales agent Films Transit.

There are two Canadian stands at Berlin this year; the Société générale du cinéma du Québec's stand and Film Transit's.

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SHOOT ALBERTA

by Linda Kupecek

Alberta is entering 1986 with high hopes, after a year with increased location shooting, regional production, and a boost to the economy. From a modest drama such as Dreamland Picture's *Rat Tales* to the glitz of Hollywood imports like Hal Needham's *Rad*, the scene was much more active than in the past.

"It's been an excellent year," says Dave Crowe, film commissioner for the City of Calgary, who estimates that two location shoots, *Rad* and *Hyper Sapien*, pumped \$17 million in

the economy in southern Alberta. As well, about 80 local people were picked up for crew positions on both shoots, which by Crowe's guess, totalled 2500 manpower days on *Rad* (30 shooting days x 78 people) and 3476 on *Hyper Sapien* (48 shooting days x 79 local people).

Crowe is typically modest about his involvement in attracting the productions. "They looked at Vancouver, but saw they were going to have a problem getting crews. The Vancouver people suggested they take a look at

Alberta. Bill Marsden's department arranged some location work. They liked what they saw, and decided to do both pictures here." Crowe admits to "cautious optimism" regarding 1986, expecting some overflow from Vancouver, which may have trouble hosting shoots due to Expo.

Bill Marsden, director of the Film Industry Development Office for Alberta Economic Development, estimates, in addition to the \$17 million from the two big shoots, an extra \$6.7 million from the "bread and butter" industry. About twenty million a year is spent in the province on goods and services (hotels, restaurants, equipment rentals) related to the film industry. Add to that the jobs created, both for crew and for talent, and the benefits are obvious.

"We have an edge in Alberta," says Marsden, "with no hotel taxes, restaurant or sales taxes. But what dictates where the film will be shot is the script. We have lost projects like *Kane and Abel* because although the producer wanted to come here, they needed an east-coast look, so went to Toronto... B.C. and Ontario have larger labour crews than we have. But, in English-speaking production, we are the number three location, and gaining."

Part of the boost to the production scene has been *Mania*, a four-episode anthology series about urban crime, which filmed at ITV in Edmonton in November and December. The Simcom of Toronto production was part of a three-package deal, the other two components being *Bullies* and *High Stakes*, two feature films shot in B.C.

Funding for *Mania* was pulled together from Telefilm, outside investors, BCTV and Allarcom (hence the ITV location). As well, the half-hour stories, each with a twist ending, were actually set in Edmonton.

Ray Sager, head of Canadian production for Simcom, was production supervisor (for all three productions) and line producer, while Paul Lynch (*The Hard Part Begins*) who is head of production of Simcom in Los Angeles, directed two episodes. David Robertson and John Shepherd (who also wrote all four segments), directed the remaining episodes.

The budget for *Mania* was \$1 million, part of the total package budget of \$5 million.

The cast was totally Canadian, drawing actors from Toronto, Edmonton, Vancouver, and Calgary, including Lenore Zann, Richard Monette, and Elan Ross Gibson. Production

manager was Bob Wertheimer, camera was handled by John Spooner, and the crew was a mix of ITV crew and Toronto and Edmonton freelancers.

Mania is slated for broadcast on Superchannel and BCTV, with possible future sales to free television.

Edmonton producer Allan Stein won the award for best music video at the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival for his turn-on effort, *Turn It Off*. He is also working on completion of his documentary feature, *Shooting Stars*, with doc material in the can, and dramatic scenes about to be lensed. As well, he and co-writer Harvey Spak are working on an AMPDC-assisted project, *Dream Horses*, with a second draft now completed for producer Ron Cohen.

But his most ambitious project is a major symposium to preface the AMPIA Awards March 8, a western regional caucus of all the major players (AMPIA, BCFA, regional directors of television, ACTRA, IATSE). He is planning a massive plenary session and work session for exchange of views, intended to stimulate and provoke positive action. Stein, energetic in all his endeavours, serves on the board of AMPIA.

This long-overdue symposium has already attracted interest from a number of areas, since it offers filmmakers in the western region an opportunity to meet and network, as well as develop policy and position papers.

Tentative dates are March 6 and 7.

The Southern Alberta Branch of ACTRA, headed by branch president Douglas Riske, hosted a party for membership and engagers in December. Talent and members of the film and television community celebrated the work of the past year at the historic Wainwright Hotel in Heritage Park... Canadian Cinegraph of Vancouver visited Alberta to shoot a series of Seven-Eleven commercials, titled *Warming Up*... M.P. Harvie Andre was in the hot seat on the free trade issue on CBC radio in Calgary, quizzed by host Liz Palmer and Douglas Riske, as part of the "Adopt an MP" program initiated by ACTRA. Andre's final quote, certain to be remembered, was "There is no question that the government would not willingly express anything but great concern about anything that might reduce our sense of Canadianism, our sense of culture, our sense of nationalism of which culture is such an important part."

Best of the Fest highlights pickings from Toronto's fest

TORONTO - Local filmgoers who missed seeing the independent documentary and experimental films offered in the Perspective Canada series at last September's Festival of Festivals got the chance to catch up Jan. 19 when the "Best of The Fest" screened at the Bloor Cinema.

Offered by the Canadian Filmmakers Distribution Centre and Toronto Film Now as the fourth program in the latter's series showcasing independent/art film productions on a commercial screen-time basis, the nine-film screening resulted after the CFMDC's Nora Currie received several interested inquiries about the titles featured.

The "Best of The Fest" films, which appeared in mid-day slots or as pre-feature film 'shorts' during the Festival, were: Richard Kerr's six-stories *On Land Over Water*; Laurie Lynd's *Together And Apart*; Peter Dudar's *Transylvania 1917* (an exploration of the ambiguities of transylvania's myth and history); Ron Mann and Elliott Lefko's *Marcia Resnick's Bad Boys* (inside looks at John Belushi and Mick Jagger, among other celebrities); Joyce Wieland and Hollis Frampton's *A and B in Ontario*; Colin Strayer's *Red Rocket* (a look back at Toronto's enduring streetcars); Midi Onodera's *Ten Cents A Dance (Parallax)*; Bruce Worrall's *Conditions*; and Barbara Sternberg's *A Trilogy*.

While several of the above directors' works have already received both domestic and international exposure, one, Laurie Lynd's *Together And Apart*, will soon be added to the acclaim. A Toronto native currently finishing a Fine Arts masters' program at New York University, Lynd's film has been selected for this April's 1986 New Directors Series at New York's Museum of Modern Art. The 26-minute tale of a young poet's dinner party reunion with his ex-lover was also screened last year at Minneapolis' Walker Arts Centre.

Michael Korican, co-organizer of the Toronto Film Now series, expressed hopes the "Best of The Fest" would provide the best turnout to date. The series, which Korican said has attracted a "very supportive" community reaction, has drawn Sunday-afternoon audiences ranging from approximately 200 to approximately 400 viewers in the 946-seat theatre (sufficient figures, he said, to continue the monthly offerings).

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C I N E M A G

Quebec critics pick finalists for Ouimet-Molson prize

MONTREAL – The Quebec Association québécoise des critiques de cinéma (AQCC), after one round of voting, has selected five finalists out of 21 feature films entered in competition for the L.E. Ouimet-Molson prize for the best Quebec feature released in 1985.

The five finalists, as announced by association president André Roy at a press conference Jan. 15, are Claude Jutra's *La Dame en couleurs*; Sophie Bissonnette's documentary on technological change, *Quel numéro?/What Number?*; Claude Gagnon's *Visage pâle*; Paul Tana's documentary about the Montreal Italian community, *Caffe Italia*; and Pierre Goupil's *Celui qui voit les heures*.

The prize-winner will be chosen at a special meeting of the association's 42 members whose decision will be announced Jan. 28 to coincide with the opening of the Rendez-vous du cinéma québécois, the Quebec industry's annual retrospectives of the previous year's film output.

Academy's Who's Who offers bios, stats on directors, editors

TORONTO – An effort to enable the members of Canada's film and television industry to become more familiar with each other and their accomplishments has resulted in the Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television's launching last December of the 1986 "Who's Who/Qui est Qui in Canadian Film and Television."

The 153-page directory, inspired in part by such reference sources as Variety's "Who's Who In Show Business" (which in 372 pages lists more than 6,500 American and Canadian biographies), provides everything from filmographies, biographies, and contact lists for over 400 Canadian directors and editors. Attempting to satisfy an industry need for such a comprehensive source, the directory details biographies by the entrant's disciplines (extensive questionnaires were collected from the individuals, listed in the language of their choice) and major festival awards won.

"There's an enormous amount of information per per-

son", says Who's Who editor Chappelle Jaffe. Describing its publication as the realization of a useful guide she always wanted to see exist, Jaffe, with an eye to expanded directories, says listings are open to "anyone with real credits" and has already started work on next year's Who's Who. That 1987 edition will be expanded to include producers, cinematographers, writers, composers, and art directors and is expected to number up to 2,500 listings (and be anywhere from 800-1,000 pages in length).

The total cost of the five-month project, including a first run of 1,000 copies and four computer programs, amounted to \$29,000 (funded by the Academy with Telefilm Canada assistance). Jaffe, noting that over 30 per cent of the handbooks have already been sold, explained that all information contained in the publication is stored in the Academy's "Who's Who" data bank, a database capable of a variety of cross-indexing for several kinds of lists and soon to become available on-line.

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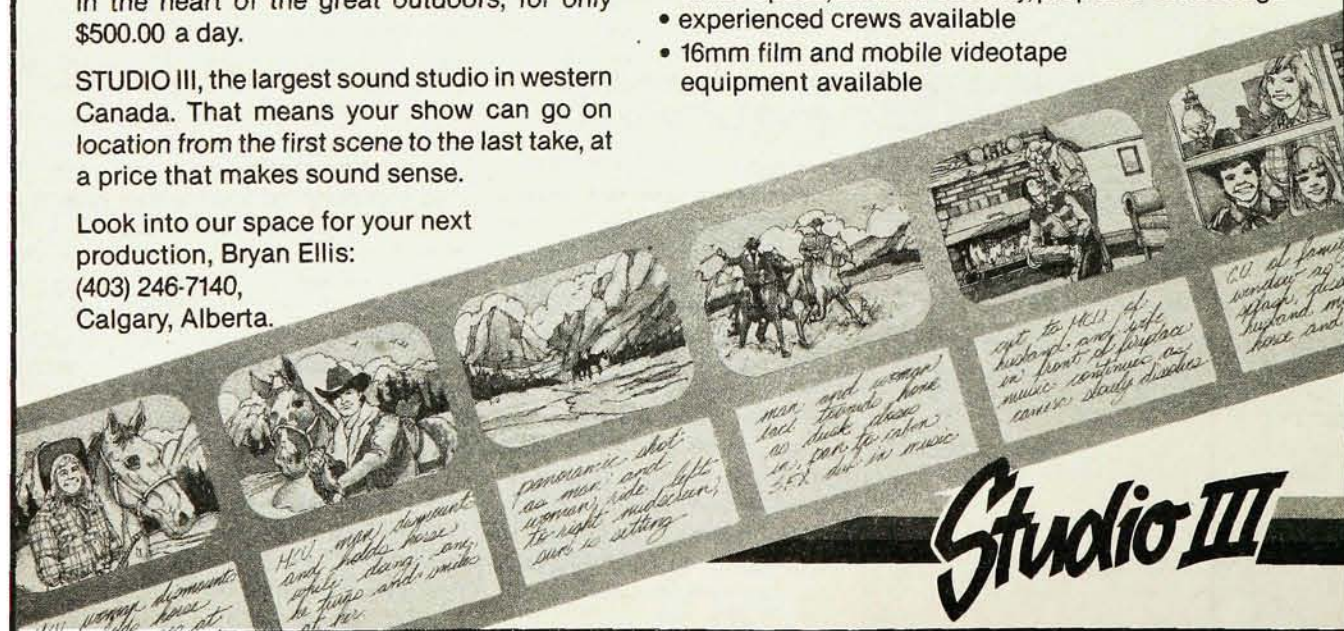
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Studio III

The Eastern Wave

by Chris Majka

Another year has dawned on Canada's eastern seaboard. The lakes are frozen and pensive skaters glide on their surface pondering their New Year's resolutions. Although the film industry here is still on rather thin ice, it seems at least to have stopped treading water, to mix seasonal metaphors. The last year saw a degree of activity unparalleled in the past in this region and there is a genuine sense of optimism on the street as a generation of filmmakers, who have cut their teeth on low-budget or no-budget productions, have begun to find opportunities closer to the main funding channels of the country.

Talking with the Island Media Arts Coop in Charlottetown, I learned that planning has again started for the Atlantic Film and Video Producers Conference, the yearly fête which they host on Prince Edward Island. This conference has already become an important opportunity for producers from around the region to workshop on a variety of issues. The organizers tell me that this year they hope to attract more participants from outside of the region as well. The winter months have tightened their grip upon the island and the Northumberland Strait is once again thick with ice. This has not kept Islander Brian Pollard from work on a sunny documentary shot partly in Kenya on co-operation between farmers of Prince Edward Island and that African state. More on this in the future.

In Newfoundland preparations in earnest are continuing on *Finding Mary March* (misspelled *Funding Mary March* in a *Cinema Canada* article on Telefilm; much to director, Ken Pittman's delight), a feature-length drama planned for seven weeks of production in July and August of this year. Those cinephiles who have seen the NFB's production *Shanaditti - Last of the Beothucks* will be familiar with one of Ken Pittman's obsessions, namely the genocidal fate of the indigenous tribe of Newfoundland Indians who vanished almost without trace in the early years of white settlement on the island. Like the previous film, *Finding Mary March* will focus on an attempt to discover and unravel some of these long-lost threads. This time the story will be set in dramatic form

starring "made-good" Newfoundlanders **Bob Joy** as well as others yet uncast. Expressing faith in the new format, Red Ochre Productions is planning to shoot in Super 16mm for blow-up to 35mm. A partnership has been formed with the Ontario-based Film Arts group to share the responsibilities for the production of this venture.

The usually quiet season of December in Nova Scotia saw the making of a made-for-TV historical drama called *The Lamplighter* in the east-shore coastal town of Sherbrooke. Produced by the Halifax-based Media Co-op Services, and di-

rected by William MacGillivray, it is the story of Abraham Gesner who in 1842 was the discoverer of kerosene, a substance first made from the famous "Albertite" coal, found only in New Brunswick's Albert County. In this era of electricity we often forget what a significant boom it was to have a medium of lighting superior to candles and that it was a Maritimer who was responsible for this discovery. This is the pilot of what producer **Ralph Holt** hopes will be a five-part series to be shot in the summer and fall of 1986 about inventors and discovers of this region. Produced through a CBC-Telefilm broadcast fund agreement with further funding from the province through the Departments of Education and Development, it is slated for broadcast in February or March of this year.

Rita MacNeil is a folk-musician who is part of a long legacy of Maritime bards who include **Stan Rogers**, **John Allen Cameron**, **Don Messer**, and "Stompin'" **Tom Connors**. These are singers of the people who sing directly to the people of the east of broken dreams, vanished prosperity, and good times "down home." This past year Rita MacNeil went to Japan and Red Snapper Films, a.k.a. "Lovely" **Lulu Keating** followed her to shoot a half-hour documentary called, —prosaically enough, *Rita MacNeil in Japan*, shown early in January on CBC. The images were exotic and beautiful with peculiar juxtapositions such as Rita telling of her childhood in Cape Breton while sitting in a Japanese house of rice-paper screens.

Productions, scripts, cutting copies and story-boards seem to be swirling so thick in Halifax these days you might almost think you were on Wardour Street (well... at least the buildings here are better heated). **John Brett** is in the final stages of post-production on his half-hour documentary on cormorants for CBC's *The Nature of Things* which will follow in the path he blazed last year with the NFB's *Where the Bay Becomes the Sea*, a documentary on the Bay of Fundy ecosystem which was shown on the same venue. The film on cormorants is slated for broadcast on CBC sometime this spring. *The Puracon Factor*, a feature-thriller drama, has finished production in Chester on Nova Scotia's south shore.

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ON (EXPERIMENTAL) FILM

• by B. Sternberg •

We've been speaking of distribution/exhibition and so I asked Patricia Gruben how things were going in this respect with her feature *Low Visibility* which premiered at the '84 Festival of Festivals.

Patricia had just returned from a tour of cinemathèques and campuses in 12 U.S. cities including San Francisco, Houston and L.A. The film had received good critical reviews. Patricia is somewhat disappointed with its distribution, however; not that the film isn't being seen, but that it's being seen only in the same places, in the same context as her previous works. She had thought, she now suggests naively, that this film could make the crossover to broader distribution (it has sync sound and actors!); that there might be an audience somewhere between those interested in strictly experimental films and the *Anne-of-Green-Gables*-Sunday-night-TV-drama watchers.

There is an audience, but so far there seem to be no avenues to it. The type of features that get distribution, Patricia notes, such as *Grey Fox* and *My American Cousin* do so not only because they are good movies, but also (and more?) because they create a "national identity." They are promoted as "Canadian" films. Films are considered in terms of themes and subject matter as opposed to their formal concerns. And when this is the case, it seems that we become attached to the most conservative forms – and to past history as subject matter as opposed to current issues (like the media war we are engaged in, the battle of the airwaves, the constant bombardment of our minds). *Low Visibility* is a film dealing with these issues not only in subject/content but through its formal devices. It is more a film about drama Patricia explains, than a dramatic film. Mind you, it IS about Survival... Or, perhaps, as Patricia contends, "Canadian" is not the issue. Intellectual curiosity is international – and so can be the scope and appeal of our films.

Patricia is now at work on two films, one dramatic and one non-narrative. The latter, *Ley Lines* is to be shot in film and video. Interior, distantiated, it centres around the family name and what it means. It is about the fiction of personality – how we as individuals are constructed out of the intersection of concepts about biological, psychological, evolutionary and societal states. The film starts at the point of

personality and traces back, along ley lines, to cultural and biological roots. Ley lines are imaginary straight lines, pre-historical, along which there are concentrated points of energy – a sacred well, a sacred yew tree... One such line runs through London and St. Paul's Cathedral.

The other, dramatic feature (two Houston oilmen want to invest!), will be more overtly political than her previous work and less self-consciously analytical. It is about being colonized as a child within a family, as a woman in a family, as a Canadian within the American culture. Also, like all her films, it's about how we can know what we know, how we arrive at knowledge. The film will unfold as a mystery story solved

by someone's dreams. It too will have sync sound/actors, music (distributors, get ready!), and be more emotionally involving than anything she's done. Patricia is not making the film just to bridge gaps – it does follow a continuum of her concerns and involvements: "It would have to be a script I loved or I wouldn't do it."

Patricia teaches filmmaking at Simon Fraser University, B.C. She told me of an exciting project being established there: Praxis, a professional group with a director, a studio and a bit of equipment where people might go to develop their script and perhaps shoot the film there as well.

Critical support would come from the group and visiting filmmakers, screening relevant films, discussion and workshops. The group will help the filmmaker structure his/her idea in an arts-oriented envi-

ronment beyond the tyranny of the made-for-TV formula.

I guess everyone's read or heard of the Film Industry Task Force report: *Canadian Cinema, A Solid Base*, and we'll all wait to see if, perhaps this time, the government will act on the recommendations. But did you all take note of what areas were totally ignored by this report (and who was on the Task Force)? This Task Force was not looking at, not even casting a quick glance in the direction of, experimental film. Of course, a task force needs a focus and "the industry" needs Canadian control of Canadian distribution/exhibition and access to our own markets, but, can you imagine what we could do in the production, distribution and exhibition of experimental films given even \$2 million of

that \$60 million recommended for the Industry? So, Marcel, how about it??? It can't be that Marcel Masse is unaware of experimental films and the international stature of its filmmakers, or of the value the Canadian public gets for their relatively small expenditure in the Canada Council?

A follow-up comment on the accessibility/availability argument raised in a previous column. A reader argues:

In stating the problem (small audiences for experimental film) to be more one of availability (lack of exhibition venues, minimal advertising, etc.) than the accessibility or nature of the films themselves, you seemed to be equating accessible with 'good' and inaccessible with 'bad'. But this is not the case. The very thing that makes James Joyce, for

cont. on p. 47

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cont. from p. 46

example, worth reading is the profundity of the work, a register of which is the demands it makes upon the reader and its very radicalness. So with experimental films, the more a film is like what one ordinarily sees, the more it conforms to a perceptual pattern, the less it questions and challenges perception, the less it intensifies by being different from the norm. And a film is art, is valuable as art, to the extent that it

renews our perception by difference.

I agree — and, Vive la différence!

But how 'Vive' without making the films less rigorous, challenging, radical, unsettling? As I have already indicated: more exhibition and promotion, and more and better education at all levels to effect a change in attitude; one in which art is valued; the new, unknown or challenging work is engaged, and demanding thinking is responded to in kind.

Americans check out Canadian company

TORONTO — When it comes to checking into foreign markets, the CTV sitcom *Check It Out* has an inside track, thanks to a New York-based company that's spawned such sitcoms as *Three's Company* and *Too Close For Comfort*, Taffner and Associates, producers of *Check It Out* in association with CTV, is the Toronto end of that bilateral link. Equally owned by

D.L. Taffner Ltd. of New York and Sarsden Communications, Taffner and Associates is a Canadian company, though as 50% American-owned, received Investment Canada approval in 1984.

Its raison d'être, in the words of president Charles Falzon, is "to produce highly successful TV programs that are Canadian (lead actor Don

Adams is the only American content in *Check It Out*, says Falzon) but with Taffner marketing in New York to sell them internationally." So far 17 of the first 22 *Check It Out* episodes have been completed (airing on CTV) and with D.L. Taffner Ltd. as the exclusive distributor, *Check It Out* has also found a time slot on the U.S.A. Network where it's pulled in average audience ratings of 1.2 to 1.3 million viewers. The series has as well been sold by its New York connection for syndication starting in April and, notes Falzon, the hope is for *Check It Out* to run long enough to be sold in strips (over 65 episodes) and in syndication.

With an eye to producing commercially saleable product, Falzon says the accent for his company is on export sales. Hence the tie-in to a worldwide distributor he credits with "making it happen" for *Check It Out* and which he views as a unique strength for the Toronto production company (itself unique considers Falzon, since "all we're here to do is produce shows that are commercially successful"). That *Check It Out* is a Canadian show is immaterial to its U.S. buyers, says Falzon, because it is produced and tailored for an international market. As a previous international sales manager for CBC TV programs, Falzon says that contrasts with previous Canadian sitcoms that were produced and sustained domestically.

One change in mind for Taffner and Associates is that although sitcoms have been the D.L. Taffner Ltd.'s bread-and-butter and was the TV genre chosen to start Taffner and Associates off (since they're easiest to sell, says Falzon), it will also be looking at domestic production of dramas and developing shows in concert with the Global TV, CBC-TV, and CTV networks. One ironic note and testament to Canadian content is that while Taffner and Associates' New York link is benefitting the *Check It Out* series Falzon, a Toronto native, is grateful for his departure from the Big Apple, commenting "New York's nice, but I wanted to live in a sane city."

OTTAWA — *The Bestest Present* and *The Raccoons and the Lost Star*, two animated TV specials produced by Atkinson Film-Arts drew over four million viewers when they aired on the CTV and CBC networks respectively last Dec. 9.

A third Atkinson production, the half-hour *Rumpelstiltskin*, netted a further two million viewers on CTV Dec. 12.

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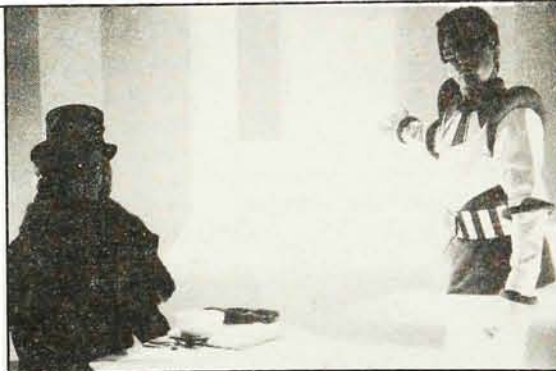
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Frantic music invades television with new show 4 on the Floor

TORONTO - When it comes to mating music and comedy, it doesn't have to consist of mixing bad sounds, or novelty tunes, with Weird Al Yankovich-inspired parodies. It can instead simply be played straight.

That's the attitude of husband-and-wife duo Marvin and Carmen Dolgay of Tambre Productions, the couple behind the music heard on The Fran-

tics 13-part *4 On The Floor* television series that premiered Jan. 16 on CBC. Chosen after a six-month selection process, Tambre Productions was assigned the task of providing a musical energy that would be central to The Frantics' comedy, be it for the 'ditties' (little musical gags) or the videos that feature in each episode.

While getting the opportunity to do so was very much a

matter of gaining the comedy troupe's trust (no mean feat, said Marvin, given The Frantics' protectiveness of each other and their material), working with them proved both easy and entertaining. It also amounted to a considerably different experience than their most previous production, which involved the creation of a hi-tech, state-of-the-art soundtrack for Toller Cranston's *True Gift of Christmas Special*, which aired Dec. 8 on CBC, a sound 95 per cent generated via a computer-controlled midi-synthesizer orchestra.

The Cranston special was an intensive effort, amounting to nearly a year's worth of work, with the Dolgays sitting through every shooting day; massive pre-production and careful planning (a big belief of theirs); compiling a 'skate-tape' from 600 albums in the CBC's music library; choreographing from that tape to produce 'click tracks'; and then producing demo ideas for Toller Cranston and special director David Acoma to choose from. Post-scoring provided flexibility and made for a positive experience for Tambre, since the special was not shot or cut to the music (the skating was not done to musical time).

For the Dolgays, the Frantics' experience, was no less direction and production of the music in summer 1984 for a pilot episode. This time around, however, because it was comedy they were dealing with, Marvin and Carmen opted for an extremely low-tech music and warm-bodied musicians that would afford the "humanness" they and The Frantics were after.

Another difference in their work with The Frantics (the series was shot last August and September by Painless Productions, in association with the CBC and Telefilm) was the "ass-backwards" approach Marvin and Carmen had to take. Since The Frantics needed music to shoot to, it all had to be recorded without reference to visuals (precisely the reverse of the Cranston special). So, after spending time last August producing the bedtracks for the videos and demo tracks, Marvin and Carmen then had to have The Frantics sing the final vocals to their "tinkle tracks" and then, because the foursome of comedians (consisting of Paul Chato, Rick Green, Dan Redican, and Peter Wildman) would be performing their lip-synching, the Dolgays had to be on-set to ensure the sounds were right.

While that meant they were to some extent working in a vacuum, Marvin and Car-

men appreciated the hands-on approach granted them by David Acoma and Morgan Earl, respectively the executive producer and producer of The Frantics' series. They also relished the craziness they were treated to.

"It's fun walking into work knowing you're going to laugh," says Marvin, a former lead guitarist with the rock band The Stampeders. Marvin was also impressed with The Frantics being "incredibly musical for a comedy group...in the end they knew a lot more about music than we did about comedy."

As to the future for a perfection-seeking duo who claim to have "never finished a production where we couldn't have done any better," they're hopeful The Frantics' *4 On The Floor* series finds future sales and becomes a long-term affair. That way, not only could Tambre realize a relationship in which they develop more music with The Frantics and acquire a reputation permitting them to take on greater challenges, but they could also make use of the excess of musical material left over from their first Frantics series. And as to their current work, it's a return, once more, to hi-tech synthetic music for the psychological thriller *Blue Man* starring Karen Black.

Friday Night's King wins again in Chicago

TORONTO - *The King of Friday Night*, selected the best overall production and best television variety over 30 minutes at last November's CFTA Awards, added another award to Canamedia Productions' collection with a Silver Hugo Award picked up at the recent 21st Chicago International Film Festival. Coming out on top in that festival's variety/entertainment category, the win brought to six the awards won by the tale of a 1960s Maritime rock band's rise, fall, and reunion (which itself was based on the John Gray musical "Rock And Roll").

Also on the list of awards for the Les Harris-produced/Andrew Gosling-directed variety program were selections as best performance special at the Banff TV Festival, best music video (long form) at the New York International Film & TV Festival, and best video narrative at the Athens, Ohio Video Festival. Canamedia's most recent production, *444 Days To Freedom: What Really Happened in Iran*, aired January 20 on Global TV and Britain's BBC, with a shorter version *Hostage In Iran* airing the following day on the American PBS network.

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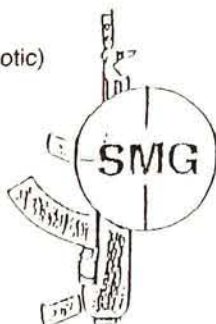
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Saltzman's Valentine

TORONTO — *Valentine's Revenge*, Paul Saltzman's dramatic production of the O. Henry short story, is slated for broadcast Feb. 3 over the PBS network as part of the American public television web's weekly drama anthology series, "American Playhouse."

Saltzman is president of Toronto-based Sunrise Films Ltd., and executive producer/co-creator of the CBC-Disney action series *Danger Bay*.

Valentine's Revenge came to Saltzman in 1984 when executive producer Fred Rogers company Family Communications Inc., contacted the Learning Corporation of America to produce the drama. The Learning Corporation asked Sunrise Films — then producing *Danger Bay's* first season — to produce and direct *Valentine's Revenge* (previously called "Jimmy Valentine") in association with itself and Family Communications Inc.

Saltzman brought in former *The Littlest Hobo* series supervising producer Simon Christopher Dew to act as co-producer and writer Paul Lally for minor revisions, and shot the story in 10 days around Toronto in October 1984. By

March 1985, *Valentine's Revenge* was completed at the cost of \$260,000 and its sale finalised by early last summer.

Mindful of the number of independent production companies competing to produce shows for "American Playhouse" (RSL Entertainment Corp. is apparently the only other Canadian contributor), Saltzman reports being "thrilled" when PBS picked up *Valentine's Revenge*.

cont. from p. 29

Canadian enterprises. Slight Broadcasting is a private company controlled by Toronto broadcaster Allan Slight.

In its 22-page decision, the Commission, after taking into account Slight's commitments that Standard would enhance its contribution to the production of new Canadian TV production and musical talent, as well as Slight's commitment to sell Standard's California cable holdings, felt that approval of the transfer would not produce an increase in concentration of ownership nor decrease the number of broadcast voices available in the Toronto market or else-

where, and meant "significant" benefits to the Canadian broadcasting system as a whole.

With CJOH-TV Ottawa currently investing \$4.8 million for the production of local TV programs, Slight committed an additional \$775,000 for three new local programs: an annual, one-hour special entitled *Homegrown* that CJOH-TV and CHAN-TV Vancouver will produce in alternate years; a 13 half-hour interview series called *Instapoll*, and a 13 half-hour comedy series called *The System*, with the latter conservatively budgetted at \$300,000 to develop and produce. In its majority decision, the Commission upped the commitment from \$775,000 to \$900,000 as a minimum in the first year, for an overall annual investment of \$5.7 million, an increase in overall expenditure that would "increase in each subsequent year in proportion to the percentage increase in gross revenues achieved by CJOH-TV."

Among other "strong expectations" put forth by the majority decision, Montreal radio stations CJAD and CJFM-FM would be expected to invest a minimum of \$100,000 as seed money in the first year of operation of Musicaction, a Quebec fund for production of new re-

cordings and music videos by French and English artists. As well, the Commission expected that CJAD and CJFM-FM's annual contributions of \$27,000-\$30,000 to the development of the Canadian recording industry be doubled in the second year to \$54-60,000 and increased proportionately to gross earnings in subsequent years.

Slight's contributions to the Ontario production fund, FACTOR/CTL, was increased by the decision from just over \$105,000 to \$211,400, with further proportional increases in subsequent years.

For CFRB Toronto, Slight committed an expenditure of \$150,000 to computerize news facilities, and an allocation for CKFM-FM of an annual \$150,000 to sponsor and expose Canadian musicians on the station. For these and other reasons outlined in the decision, the Commission "is satisfied that approval of this transaction is in the public interest."

It was just this question of the public interest that formed the center of Commissioner Mongeau's dissent which, he noted, was "the first time I have felt it essential to express my dissent in writing."

The transfer between two private parties of broadcastings

undertaking holding licenses in the public domain, Mongeau wrote, "must demonstrate substantial and unequivocal advantages...for the...undertakings...as well as for the entire Canadian broadcasting system." In Mongeau's view, the present application by Slight was "seriously deficient" in this regard.

Mongeau felt that the Commission should have required increased capitalization, a reduction of the debt/equity ratio or divestiture of certain holdings to ensure that the undertakings would have sufficient operating margins and financial resources.

"Mr. Allan Slight," Mongeau wrote, "will realize substantial personal benefits through this transaction. He must now prove that the majority decision is right by demonstrating that the transaction will result in significant and unequivocal benefits...for the Canadian broadcasting system as a whole."

"I hope that he does," Mongeau added in italics.

For her part, Commissioner Coupal dissented "because the applicant has not provided evidence that the public interest will be served, nor that there is any important benefit which will accrue to the Canadian broadcasting system."



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