

Canadian Documentary

will leave it to others to analyze or explain the paucity of Canadian documentaries included in this year's Festival of Festivals. Perhaps as melodrama becomes the new trend in Canadian filmmaking, we must remain content with a mere handful of documentary efforts in the genre that has long characterized this country's output.

Alanis Obomsawin's new work, **Richard Cardinal: Cry from a Diary of a Métis Child**, is a sombre half-hour reflection on teenage suicide within Native communities – a growing phenomenon that Obomsawin addresses by focussing on the life and death of one Métis child in Alberta shunted in and out of some 26 foster and group homes over the course of his brief life. This terrible saga of discontinuity and family break-up is painfully underscored by reflections and passages from Cardinal's notebooks that reveal a young soul grappling with conditions far beyond his strength and emotional stamina. Obomsawin is remarkably restrained in her handling of this agonizing subject, shaping the film carefully as a tribute and a probe, rather than the accusation it might have been. In understanding this Métis child and his reasons for choosing suicide, the film goes beyond the traditional realms of documentary to explore regions of the human heart. As in her 1984 film, **Incident at Restigouche**, Alanis Obomsawin is here fully attuned to the only important reason for making any film: to speak from, and to, the heart. Her handling of this film, in style, tone and intent, reminded me of a passage by writer Adrienne Rich on the responsibility of the poet: "...She is endowed to speak for those who do not have the gift of language, or to see for those who – for whatever reasons – are less conscious of what they are living through. It is as though the risks of the poet's existence can be put to some use beyond her own survival."

Less focussed in its results is **Passiflora**, directed by Fernand Bélanger and Dagmar Gueissaz-Teufel. Billed as "an innovative documentary critique of the near-simultaneous visits to Montreal in 1984 by Pope John Paul II and singer Michael Jackson," the film rarely rises to the rich promise contained in that extraordinary juxtaposition of mass spectacles coinciding in time. The filmmakers were undoubtedly hampered by the fact that no filming of the Jackson tour was allowed. Even so, the opportunities for really exploring the hype and larger meanings of both tours are unfortunately bypassed. **Passiflora** is less a critique of mass spectacle than it is a guerrilla attack on Catholicism, without mining the rich veins of irony, ritual, image, media hype, and mass hysteria surrounding the arrival of both "high priests" of the time.

While the anarchic tone of the piece is perhaps a necessary element to bring to this subject, it here works against the film itself through overindulgence:



exploding any sense of internal structure for the film and dissipating whatever energies might have been marshalled for an actual critique. Cleverness, or irreverence, or even clever irreverence cannot make up for the lack of a centre in the work: a lack which the film attempts to hide by superimposing staged fictional sequences onto the chaos – sequences which seem meant to say something about something, but which only add to the confusion.

Nevertheless, such a promising historical moment in Montreal could not fail to yield at least a few extraordinary images for a wandering camera: the shot of the ring of police surrounding the Pope's outdoor altar, the three Michael Jackson clones performing for the camera, the images of the papal spectacle replayed on the stadium videorecorder while in the foreground bulldozers are poised to begin their work. It is unfortunate, though, that such a brilliant concept for a film was somehow sabotaged in the making.

In an entirely different league is the latest feature-length work by Donald Brittain. **The Final Battle – The Champions** (part 3) is an extraordinary example of sustained control exercised over a volume of compelling footage that, in lesser hands, would have careened into chaos. Surely Brittain's style and intent have always been at the

other extreme from anarchic or clever irreverence: the search for the meaningful centre around which events and images coalesce. Here, in this masterful trilogy that sweeps across nearly 40 years of postwar Canadian political history, Brittain examines the unfolding of historical events as they centre around two great Québécois politicians, Pierre Elliot Trudeau and René Lévesque – two champions pitted against one another ideologically and personally in competing visions of nationhood. **The Final Battle** coalesces around two key events of recent times: the Quebec referendum on sovereignty-association, and the federal-provincial disagreements surrounding the constitutional charter – both dramatic showdowns between Trudeau and Lévesque in which "only one man's dream would come out alive."

The beauty of the work as a whole is that it so clearly reveals the distinct personalities and styles of these two central figures: Trudeau – "the enigma", Lévesque – "the open book." In the course of the film, we painfully watch the gradual destruction of Lévesque and his dream for Quebec. But, paradoxically, in his utter defeat at the skilled hands of Trudeau, it is Lévesque who emerges in the film as the real champion: a man of principle, vision, honesty, straightforwardness.

This charting of recent history through the focus on two dynamic leaders not only dramatically makes sense of events and effectively structures a wealth of news footage, it also seems to signal the passing of an era. Through the very fact of their competing visions, their passionately held convictions, their popular charisma, Trudeau and Lévesque emerge in **The Final Battle** head and shoulders above any other contenders for political power. A sub-theme in the film is the inexorable rise of lesser men who stand for nothing in the political arena but polling results and image. In a searing moment, Claude Le Touche characterizes them as "a bunch of Kiwanis presidents that could be turned with two cocktails." This description for the provincial premiers in "The Gang of 8" who secretly turned on Lévesque in the final hour of the Charter debate somehow resonates in the mind long after the film has ended.

In this sense, it is tempting to see **The Final Battle** as the appropriate companion-piece to Denys Arcand's **The Decline of the American Empire**. The tone of both films is oddly similar: non-judgemental, yet tinged with sadness. Brittain seems to here chart the decline of a kind of heroism in Canadian politics, and with it the demise of any meaningful political vision. One is left with the sense of a country now in the hands of very unchampion-like mentalities, but mentalities perhaps suited to the microcosm delineated by Arcand.

Joyce Nelson •

RICHARD CARDINAL: CRY FROM A DIARY OF A METIS CHILD

d./sc. Alanis Obomsawin ed. Rita Roy cam. Roger Rochat music Dario Domingues diary read by David Mitchell p. Alanis Obomsawin. Marrin Canell. Robert Verrall loc.sd. Raymond Marcoux sd.ed. Bernard Bordeleau mus.rec. Christian Fortin mus.ed. Diane Le Floch re-rec. Hans Peter Strobl exec.p. Andy Thomson l.p. Cory Swan. Pauline Kerik. Betty Smith. Leslie Miller thanks to Kim Bager. Dr. Ray Thomlison. Betty Smith. Rachel Ann Crapeau. CBC Edmonton produced and distributed by the National Film Board of Canada. Colour, 16mm. running time 30 mins.

PASSIFLORA (For *Passiflora* credits please see *Cinema Canada*, No. 128.)

THE CHAMPIONS PARTS I & II

d./sc./narr. Donald Brittain p. Janet Leissner. Donald Brittain exec. p. Peter Katadotis. Paul Wright eds. Ted Remerowski. Steven Kellar d.o.p. Andreas Poulsson orig. music Art Philipps asst. ed./cam. Richard Bujold sd. eds. Bernard Bordeleau. Abbey Neidik asst. sd. ed. Michael B. Bordeleau sd. rec. Claude Hazanavicius sd. re-rec. Michel Descombes. Jean-Pierre Joutel music sup. Norman Bigras research Janet Leissner. Les Nirenberg film research W. Spahic. Jean-Guy Turbide anim. Pierre L'Amare p.c. The National Film Board of Canada and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Colour, 16mm. running time Part 1: 57 mins. Part 2: 55 mins.

THE FINAL BATTLE d./sc./narr. Donald Brittain p. Adam Symansky exec. p. Barrie Howells (NFB). Darce Fardy (CBC) ed. Richard Bujold story treatment Graham Fraser research Liza Vespremi d.o.p. Andreas Poulsson orig. music Eldon Rathburn assoc. ed. Roger Hart sd. Hans Oomes sd. ed. Abbey Jack Neidik re-rec. Jean-Pierre Joutel. Adrian Croll music ed. Julian Olson music/narr. rec. Louis Hone. Christian Fortin. Richard Lesage p.c. The National Film Board of Canada, and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Colour, 16mm running time 87 mins.

Bachar Chbib's
Evixion

Bachar Chbib's *Evixion* has the bad luck of being billed, erroneously, as a "non-narrative lyric poem." Such labels would be a curse to any film. But this doesn't explain why most reviewers, those that weren't merely dismissive, have thrashed it so violently. It's as if they were reacting to someone self-indulgently wasting half of Telefilm's budget instead of to a \$4,000 experiment by a talented young filmmaker.

Evixion is a narrative film. It may be nonlinear, the audience certainly has trouble following it, but it does tell a story - A motley group of tenants (a gay couple, a yuppie couple, a black family, punks) receive an eviction order from their landlord and we get to see how they react to the possibility of their being thrown out on the street.

Chbib has partly modelled the film after twenties' slapstick comedy. His characters use broad gestures to communicate with each other. There's a lot of people running around, entering rooms through windows, and smashing into each other. Though the film has an unusually varied and well-chosen soundtrack (everything from opera to industrial noise), there is no dialogue except for a crazy poetess who spouts



• Claire Nadon is Rose and Roland Smith is Blue in pale *Evixion*

radical doggerel.

One of the disappointments of the film is that *Evixion*'s non-linearity lacks purpose. It's not used to experiment with time and its pacing seems to have no pattern. The film's structure feels more like a last resort than a deliberate choice. Another disappointment is that after luring a cast many Canadian direc-

tors would kill for (it includes, Piotr Lysak, who starred in Andrej Wajda's *A Love in Germany*, and Pierre Curzi), Chbib wastes them. He does give each their little moments (which they make the most of) but for the most part, he might as well have used extras.

There are a few wonderful scenes in *Evixion* (The voyeurism between

apartments, Lysak's attempts at seduction) in which performance, direction and the audience's understanding come together. But often, Chbib's insistence on presenting the irrational irrationally, as illustrated by the depiction of the poetess, makes the film hard to sit through.

Evixion, however, shouldn't be dismissed. It is an unsuccessful experiment. But it is also the only Canadian film I've seen this year that tries to express a kind of rabid sense of alienation, exemplified by punks, skinheads and other marginals, shared by increasing numbers of young people. It is those who take the chance of affronting audiences with films like *Evixion*, and not those who grovel before it offering *Crazy Moon(s)*, who are making films worth watching.

José Arroyo •

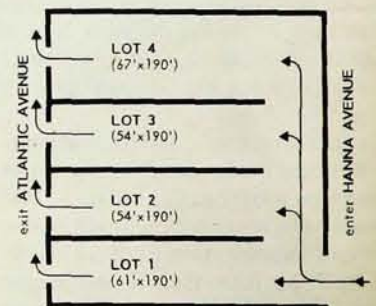
photo: Benny Chou

EVIXION d./p./ed. Bachar Chbib sc. Bachar Chbib, Claire Nadon, Dafna Kastner, Stephen Reizes d.o.p. David Wellington cam. Sylvain Gingras asst. cam. Sylvain Archambault sd. Doug Taylor, Marie Claude Gagné asst. ed. David Wellington orig. music François Giroux, Liver and Jean Leboeuf, (original) Jean-Noël Bodo, (original) addt. music Susan Eytton-Jones, Paul Stewart sd. ed. Marie Claude Gagné art d. Achraf Chbib, Paolo Giovannetti, Kathy Horner asst. d. Brigitte Huppen poetry Kennon B. Raines l.p. Claire Nadon, Roland Smith, Kennon Raines, Pierre Curzi, Piotr Lysak, Dafna Kastner, Jean Claude Gingras, Suzanne Stark, Mark Bérubé, Danusha Hart, Michelle DeVillie, Eric Gregor Pierce, Pierre Rancourt, Carole Jadeluca, Dalours Thornhill, Kathy Horner, François Giroux, Seamus Wheelan, Achraf Chbib, Brigitte Huppen, Armand Monroë p.c. Chbib Productions Inc. In collaboration with Main Film. And the Financial Participation of La Société générale du cinéma du Québec and Téléfilm Canada. Colour, 16mm running time: 78 mins.

DOWNTOWN TORONTO PRODUCTION PARKING COMPOUND

- MINUTES FROM TORONTO CITY HALL
- UNIT PARKING BY DAY / WEEK / MONTH
- ON-SITE SERVICES AVAILABLE:
- 120 VOLT A/C POWER
- FRESH CITY WATER

- EASILY ACCESSIBLE TO MAJOR HIGHWAYS AND ARTERIAL ROADS
- ON TWO STREET FRONTAGES:
- MAXIMUM PARKING CONVENIENCE
- MINIMUM JOCKEYING



FOR INFORMATION
CALL: (416) 960-1077

THREE BLOCKS EAST OF DUFFERIN STREET
SOUTH OF KING STREET WEST

1 ATLANTIC AVENUE
TORONTO, ONTARIO

Anne Wheeler's **Loyalties**

Alberta filmmaker Anne Wheeler's first dramatic feature, *Loyalties*, is, in many ways, a very laudable film. Telling the story of the friendship and loyalty between two very different women — one, a down-to-earth Métis, the other, a very proper and refined recent transplant from England — the film succeeds in being both entertaining and moving, and its honest and uncondescending portrayal of the Métis characters is one of its chief virtues. Unfortunately, the film's legitimate strengths are seriously undermined in the end by a rather contrived (albeit powerful) climax.

As the film opens, Lily and Dr. David Sutton (Susan Wooldridge and Kenneth Welsh) have just moved to the remote northern Alberta town of Lac La Biche from their native England with their three small children (an older child is still in school in England). Their reason for moving here is alluded to, but is not made clear; what *is* clear is that the Suttons have a very nasty skeleton in their family closet, and are hoping that here on "the tip of civilization" they'll be able to bury it for good.

Helping Lily with the settling-in is Rosanne (Tantoo Cardinal), a Métis woman with three kids of her own who has just left her common-law husband Eddy (Tom Jackson), and moved back in with her mother. Initially unable to see past their class and cultural differences, Lily and Rosanne eventually do find common ground and become friends. In the film's climax, however, they return home from a night out (celebrating Lily's birthday) to find that Dr. Sutton has attacked and raped Rosanne's 12-year-old daughter. (We learn here that the Suttons' 'skeleton' is

a previous rape in England.) Rosanne turns on both of the Suttons in a horrified rage. Lily, however, is almost catatonic; with her life turned inside-out (again), she finds her fortitude and her loyalties put to a cruel test.

Even in this brief synopsis, the film's two narrative threads are evident. The first, Lily and Rosanne's growing friendship, is portrayed in the film in subtle, well-acted scenes full of warmth and gentle humour; we can almost see the rapport building. The second narrative thread, the mystery surrounding the Suttons' abrupt departure from England, is presented much more one-dimensionally. The emotional wall between Lily and David — there at the start of the film — never changes, and each scene between them merely echoes the previous one. Also, because these characters are saddled with the task of maintaining the 'intrigue' element of the film, their own characterizations are forced to take a back seat, and thus they engender much less audience sympathy than Rosanne and her family do.

The problem, then, is this: when these two narrative threads — each with distinctly different dramatic tones and levels of audience involvement — are brought into collision in the climax, the realism and subtlety of the 'relationship story' are completely quashed by the mechanics of the 'mystery' (and again later by the manipulative denouement), and as a result the film plummets into the unambiguous, monochrome world of melodrama.

A good example of what direction the film might have followed, had it forgone 'family intrigue' and focused more directly on Lily and Rosanne's friendship and the contrast of their lives, is indicated in the dinner sequence. Here the film intercuts a scene of Lily and David having dinner, with a scene of Rosanne, Eddy and their kids also gathered around the meal table. The differences are very revealing. In the Sutton house, Lily and David are seen eating after their children are in bed; they are sitting at opposite ends of the dining room table; they are well dressed, mannered... and

they have very little to say to one another. The way this scene is shot — emphasizing as it does the physical space between them — also reinforces the sense that they are emotionally isolated from one another.

The scene with Rosanne's family, by contrast, is full of warmth and good feeling. Here, as Eddy talks about getting the family back together, we see the kids and Rosanne smiling, and we note that they are all gathered close together around their kitchen table; comprised mostly of medium close-ups, the scene visually makes the characters seem close to each other, thereby reflecting the mood of the dialogue.

By intercutting these two scenes the film clearly establishes, in a totally cinematic way, what the real differences are between Lily and Rosanne, differences that have nothing to do with culture or class, and everything to do with the emotional richness (or emptiness) of a person's life. With the great dramatic potential of these themes to explore, and with their unique setting and characters, why then did Wheeler and screenwriter Sharon Riis feel it necessary to make the Suttons' secret — something so monstrous? By raising the stakes so high, Wheeler and Riis have undermined their story, for at the end of *Loyalties*, loyalty and friendship are no longer the main issues, but rather it is moral integrity (Lily's). Moreover, because of the nature of the crime/climax, the audience's sympathy in the last few scenes rests almost completely with Rosanne and her daughter, leaving very little for Lily and her own trauma.

All the problems with the film's ending, in fact, center around Lily. First of all, throughout the film she is presented as a sensitive and moral character (we see this particularly in her concern for her son, Robert). However, when her husband commits the rape and we learn he has raped before, we realize that Lily has already been through this situation. How did she react the first time? Did she threaten to leave David, to expose his action? Did she try to deny the

whole thing? We don't know what her reaction was, but we do know that she stayed with him and has tried to bury the event. But while we can accept her hiding the crime once, twice is too much. Also, because the crime — and its depiction in the film — is so vicious and horrifying, the matter of Lily's 'personal loyalties' really becomes a perverse issue. In this context, we would demand that she do what is morally right whether Rosanne were her friend or not.

At this point one might argue — with considerable merit — that ultimately it is Lily's friendship with Rosanne that gives her the strength to make a moral decision, and this is no doubt the contention of Wheeler and Riis. However, making a claim and proving it are two different things, and it is here that the film most conspicuously fails to deliver. For at the moment when Lily's integrity is put to its severest test, the filmmakers — unbelievably — *abandon* her, and shift the narrative to a scene at Rosanne's house the following morning. But what happens to Lily? How does she react when left alone with her husband? Seeing what she goes through that long night and how she decides on what action to take is imperative if we are to appreciate the strength she draws from her friendship with Rosanne. By denying us the opportunity to see Lily prove to herself — and us — that she is indeed a 'woman of substance' after all (and is therefore worthy of Rosanne's friendship), the filmmakers weaken the premise of their story immeasurably. (They also deny Lily her one true moment of glory by relaying her decision to Rosanne — and us — through a minor character.)

It may seem perfunctory at this point to discuss the acting in the film, but no review of *Loyalties* should go by without a special mention of Tantoo Cardinal's performance. Her Rosanne is bright, hot-tempered and totally ingenuous, and she all but steals the film. If Susan Wooldridge had been handed a character as subtly well developed, her Lily might have been Rosanne's screen equal. And *Loyalties* might have been a more honestly affecting drama.

Linda Gorman •

• Hot-tempered, ingenious — Tantoo Cardinal (Here with Tom Jackson) all but steals the show in *Loyalties*



LOYALTIES d. Anne Wheeler p. William Johnston, Anne Wheeler, Ronald Lillie sc. Sharon Riis sc. dev. Sharon Riis & Anne Wheeler d.o.p. Vic Sarin CSC art d. Richard Hudolin line p. Rob Iveson prod. man. Grace Gilroy 1st asst. d. Brad Turner loc. man. Mike Gazley liaison-Edmonton Pati Olson sc. sup. Penny Hynam cast-Toronto Gail Carr cast-Alberta Bette Chadwick 1st asst. cam. Harvey Larocque stills Doug Curran cost. des. Wendy Partridge make-up Jan Newman hair Donna Bis sd. mix Garrell Clark boom Daryl Powell gaffer Duncan MacGregor key grip Brian Kuchera sp. efx. Dave Gauthier const. Bryan Cockroft carp. Martin Shostak ed. Judy Krupansky pub. Prudence Emery dialogue Jeremy Hart lp. Kenneth Welsh, Tantoo Cardinal, Susan Wooldridge, Vera Martin, Diane Debassige, Tom Jackson, Jeffrey Smith, Meredith Rimmer, Alexander & Jonathan Tribiger, Christopher Barrington-Leigh, Yolanda Cardinal, Dale Willier, Wesley Semenovich, Janet Wright, Done Mackay, Paul Whitney, Tom Heaton, Sam Mottrich, Eric Kramer, Wendell Smith, Joan Hinz, Jill Dyck, Colin Vint, Veena Sood, Doris Chilcot, Terri Daniels, Susan MacNeill, Ben Cardinal, Bryan Fustukian, Larry Yachimec, Larry Musser, Eddy Washington, Joyce Vold, Eiko Waida, Emilie Chervigny, Alexandra Leigh, Joan Cole, Alison Bossy, Douglas Law, Patrick Bull, Mary Skare p.c. Ronald and Lillie/Lauron International/Dumbarton Films dist. Norstar Releasing Inc. Colour, 35mm running time: 96 mins

Jack Darcus' Overnight

The friend with whom I went to see Jack Darcus' *Overnight* said half-way through the film, "It may be little. It may be Canadian. I don't care." She walked out. I only stayed to the end to watch a tremulous Gail Garnett, whose hoarse raspy whisper completely enchanted me, and Alan Scarfe, whose performance wittily sends up imported European 'artistes'. Most everything else about the film is a mess.

Overnight tells the story of an unemployed actor (played by Victor Ertmanis, badly miscast) who, through various circumstances, finally ends up working in a porno flick. Darcus' film is described in the World Film Festival catalogue as, "an adult comedy about one man's modesty and his frustrated hopes for the big career break that has never come." I think the film has intelligent things to say about sexuality and about the Canadian film industry but Darcus doesn't seem to know how to explain them filmically.

I can conceive of a movie that would depict the making of a porno film, not show nudity and still be very interesting. In *Overnight*, however, modesty becomes very disconcerting. The characters speak at length about the



• The making of a porno star: Barbara Gordon, Victor Ertmanis and Alan Scarfe

naturalness of the naked body and the beauty of sex, but at the same time, they either discreetly drape towels over their private parts or the director has the camera rush in for close-ups. The characters', and the director's sincerity becomes very questionable.

Darcus tries to satirize filmmakers who want to make a movie at any cost. He also, I think, wants to pay tribute to all those people who, year after year, continue making their films with very little money, equipment, and no chance at an audience. Both would have worked better if their expression wasn't couched in clichés.

The role of the ruthless film director, who does not compromise his art until he's told to do so or gets a chance to sell out, had been old hat before it became a staple of the dime-store novel. Playing

the role for laughs became clichéd only slightly afterwards. It is only the relish with which Alan Scarfe plays his role that makes it fun to watch.

The scenes in which the porn stars teach the 'real' actor lessons in loyalty, humility and dedication lack consistency of tone. When Gail Garnett tells Ertmanis off for jeopardizing the film, you know she's being serious (Like Mickey and Judy were about their shows). When the porn star ejaculates before a cross, you know it's meant for laughs (Like a broader Dusan Makavejev). Most of the time, however, Darcus tries to express both humour and truth and fails to communicate either.

As often happens when one tries to make 'The Great Drink' by mixing different kinds of good spirits, the various elements of *Overnight* simply explode

in different directions. The humour is never quite funny and the satire is itself worthy of being satirized. Jack Darcus seems to be an intelligent and articulate artist in print but if I were Telefilm, I too would consider taking my name off *Overnight*.

José Arroyo •

OVERNIGHT d. Jack Darcus sc. Jack Darcus p. Jack Darcus. John Board exec. p. Don Haig, Hank Leis assoc. p. Bob Akester p. man. Bob Wertheimer p. coord. Alice Dwornik p. acct. Dennis Jacobson 1st asst. d. John Board 2nd asst. d. Ty Haller 3rd asst. d. Frank Siracusa d.o.p. Brian Hebb C.S.C. 1st asst. cam. James Crowe 2nd asst. cam. Trevor Haws sd. Bryan Day. Mike Lacroix re-rec. sd. Mike Hoogenboom asst. mix. Edigio Coccimiglio, Brent MacLeod cont. Dug Rotstein a.d. Andrew Deskin asst. a.d. Ted Paget carp. Bill White const. Gord Calvert, Hugh Walker set paint Monty Douglas set dec. Alexandra Anthony art dept. Peter Cameron, Andrea Raffaghello ward. Tina Livingston asst. ward. Maggie Thomas make-up Lisa Posen hair Jocelyn MacDonald gaffer Adam Swica best boy John Gundy grip David Hynes 2nd grip Ron Paulauskas 3rd grip Tim Sauder ed. Sally Paterson asst. ed. Alison Grace 2nd asst. ed. Ed Balevicius, Alexandra Gill negs. Erika Wolff music comp./orch. Michael Conway Baker, Glenn Morley stills Doane Gregory, Rob McEwan loc. scout. Lillian Sarafinchan, Debbie Beers cast coord. Melissa Bell cast. cons. Deirdre Bowan extra cast. Peter Lavender prod. asst. Monika Wolff sec. Jeff Krebs, Ed Balevicius titles Film Effects equip. P.S. Production Services lab. The Film House Group thanks to Donna Wong-Juliani, Don Haig, Doug MacDonald, Stan Ford, Wayne Arron, George Chapman, Keith Cutler, Tom Braidwood, Doug Dales, George Furniotti, Madrienne McKeown, Rachel Jacobson, Smith's Seeds Ltd., Greenspoon Wreckers, Chutney and Various, Thunder Thighs, Reinhart Selsar, Ontario Film and Video Office, Chapman and Gough, Futures I.p., Gale Garnett, Victor Ertmanis, Alan Scarfe, Duncan Fraser, Ian White, Barbara Gordon, Melissa Bell, Tedde Moore, Patrick Brymer, Eric Keenleyside, Alfie Scopp, Ty Haller, Brenda Kamino, Cynthia Kereluk, Randy Morton, Luce Di Paulo. Produced with the assistance of: Image International Productions Inc. p.c. Exile Productions Film Colour, 35mm running time:

CASTING CALL

AGENCY

Talent Showcase

9 BLOOR STREET EAST
TORONTO M4W 1A9
TELEPHONE (416) 960-6088

DYAN BOWIE



ARLENE BANNEN



ARLENE DASRATH



ROULA LAMBERIS



GLADYS GEORGE



MARGARET LANDON



SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

We are now capable of booking up to 1000 extras in a two-hour notice through Computer Casting. Available to members only.

SANDRA LARGEY



KWAI-KAM LAU



CLARE MEADE



CORINA PASQUALI



NANCY KOVACS



ROULA FRANGOS



Audition space available with Video Equipment. Videos available on our Principal people.

Arthur Lamothe's
Equinoxe

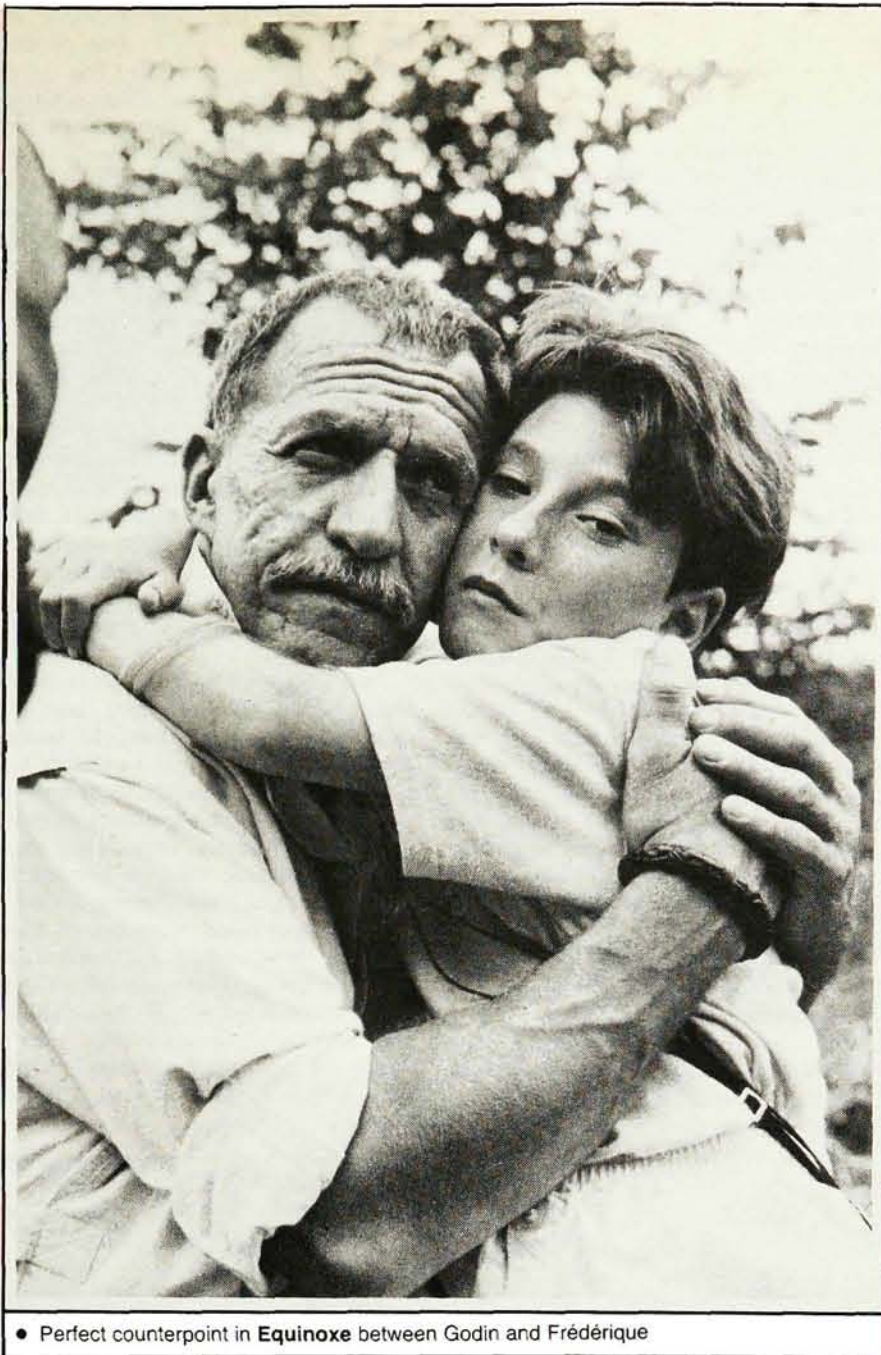
Four weeks after its release, Arthur Lamothe's **Equinoxe**, his first fiction film in 20 years, can no longer be seen first run in Montreal. It's too bad that we haven't discovered how to market films that aren't immediate critical hits or that don't capitalize on recent scandals. A bit slow and structurally weak, **Equinoxe** will nevertheless return a large reward to the patient viewer.

Lamothe has cast Jacques Godin as Guillaume, an innocent man who, because of his best friend's lies, was arrested by the police and sentenced to a jail term. After many years in prison, and many more years of self-imposed exile in Venezuela, Guillaume, accompanied by his granddaughter (Ariane Frédérique) returns to his old village to find out why he was betrayed and to come to terms with himself and his life.

The film is structured as a mystery/suspense film. We are told that Guillaume is an ex-convict but we are made to wait before we're told what crime he committed. We think he wants revenge but the form it will take, the person who will be the victim of it, and the reason for its existence are revealed to the audience little by little. On his way to his village Guillaume also enraged a few local troublemakers by passing them on the highway. Mistaking him for one of those tourists who think they own the places they visit, the rednecks (they really are depicted as drunk, ignorant, brutal slob) go on a rampage to make Guillaume pay for his cheek. When they will find him (we know they will) and what they're going to do to him are elements of a subplot intended to add to the suspense.

As a mystery/suspense film, however, **Equinoxe** does not quite work. Lamothe's universe allows for the unexpected but leaves no room for the absurd. We're never really afraid for Guillaume because Lamothe doesn't give the goons a motivation for doing anything other than scaring him. The long scenes and leisurely editing, which enhance the psychological dimensions of the characters, dilute the tension created by the plot. Lamothe's half-hearted attempts to create suspense through the possibility of violence is at odds with the main theme.

The film works best as a psychologi-



• Perfect counterpoint in **Equinoxe** between Godin and Frédérique

cal drama with Guillaume's journey of self-discovery as a focus. The Sorel islands are the setting. Lamothe's experience as a documentary filmmaker here serves him very well. As Guillaume canoes through the marshes and rivers around the islands, Lamothe's camera lingers over the flora, the water and the sky. The beauty of the setting is communicated sensually. You can almost feel and smell those islands. You can certainly understand how they helped form Guillaume's character, why he would be so tranquil there.

As Godin plays him, Guillaume is a lonely man, marginalized by society and cut off from his roots by his past. As such, his character is almost a fic-

tionalized exploration of subjects Lamothe treated in his documentaries of native people like **Carcajou et le péril blanc** and **Terre de l'homme** from a different perspective. (Except in this case, it's a white man. The only depiction of a native person is that of an old friend of Guillaume played by Marthe Mercure.) In a quiet, almost motionless way, Godin communicates his character's tumultuous dramatic past and his present serenity simultaneously.

As Guillaume mingles with the ghosts of his past, old memories (the building of a pond, once-forgotten canoe trails, a favourite dish, old relationships) are not only unearthed, but in sharing them with his granddaughter, transformed into

vital and life-forming events.

His relationship with his granddaughter gives Guillaume an extra dimension. As an element of the plot she exists as a reason for the explanation of past events and as the source of Guillaume's vulnerability. As a character she is outgoing, talkative and rambunctious – the perfect counterpoint to Guillaume. His honesty with her, and her love for him, convinces us that whatever he did in the past, and whatever he'll do during the course of the film, were and will be the actions of a basically decent man.

People have complained that the climax is a letdown. When the goons find him and his granddaughter and harass them, the situation is quickly brought under control by the native woman. When he finds the ex-friend whose lies sent him to jail, all he does is punch him. Nevertheless, I think that within the context of the film these resolutions make sense. It would have been irrational for Guillaume, after unjustly spending a great deal of his life in jail and in exile, to come to his old town only to do something that would either make him flee again or justly land him in prison.

Equinoxe could have used a tighter structure. But it is very well acted and beautifully shot. I find the image of a leonine Godin, paddling a canoe through marshes to come to a rendezvous with his past, unforgettable. A film that has this much going for it deserves to be seen by more people.

José Arroyo •

EQUINOXE d. Arthur Lamothe p. Nicole Lamothe sc. Arthur Lamothe, Gilles Carle, Pierre-Yves Pépin orig. idea Pierre-Yves Pépin d.o.p. Guy Dufaux ed. François Gill music Jean Sauvageau, Jean-Claude Tremblay p. man. Carole Mondello coord. Nicole Fréchette coord. (Sorel) Nicole Hilaréguy unit man. François Sylvestre 1st a.d. Alain Chartrand dit Lino 2nd a. d. Norbert Dufour 3rd a.d. Jean-Roch Marcotte cont. Marie Théberge 1st asst. cam. Nathalie Moliavko-Visotsky 2nd asst. cam. Sylvaine Dufaux addt. cam. Jérôme Dal Santo asst. unit man. Pierre Houle art d. François Lamontagne props. Denis Hamel ward. Ginette Magny, Suzanne Canuel make-up Micheline Trépanier stills Claude Rodriguez sd. Yvon Benoit boom Claude Lahaye gaffer Claude Fortier grip Jean Trudeau asst. grip. Sylvain Bergevin prod. asst. Sylvain Arsenault, Paul Bujold, André Desrochers music d. Jean Sauvageau sd. ed. Claude Beaugrand asst. sd. ed. Lucie Marion sp. efx. Ken Page post-syn. d. Marc Bellier mix Michel Descombes, André Gagnon lab. Sonolab Inc. optics Film Docteur titles Ciné-titres sd. efx. Michel Brohez pub. David Novek et Associés, Bernard Voyer, Danièle Gauthier l.p. Jacques Godin, Ariane Frédérique, Marthe Mercure, André Mélançon, Luc Proulx, Jerry Snell, Marcel Sabourin, Gaston Lepage, Diane Lamothe, Johanne Fontaine, Rejeanne St-Laurent, Félix Richard, Camille Hébert, Claude Gauthier, Paul Savoie, Jean-Roch Marcotte, Richard Laforest, Paul Berval, Philippe Michaud, Paul Guévremont, Patrick Allard, Philippe Roger p.c. Les Ateliers audio-visuels du Québec. With the participation of Telefilm Canada, La Société générale du cinéma du Québec, La Société Radio-Canada Colour, 35mm running time: 83 mins.

NABET AT YOUR SERVICE

Call us at 416/536-4827

NABET 700 Association of Film Craftsmen
National Association of Broadcast Employees & Technicians

1179A King Street West, Studio 102, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6K 3C5