

E A S T E R N W A V E

by Chris Majka

This month I would like to engage in a bit of free-wheeling discussion on a variety of issues suggested to me during discussions with Yugoslav video artist and gallery manager Biljana Tomic who was in Halifax recently on the first leg of a cross-Canada tour. Called "International Festival of Video Art" and organized by the SAW Gallery in Ottawa, her visit here was hosted by the Centre for Art Tapes. She presented some provocative video tapes by Yugoslav video artists Sanja Ivekovic and Dalibor Martinis. The circulating programme also features tapes from Canada, U.S.A., Great Britain, Holland, Japan, West Germany, and Belgium and includes visits by Marie André from Belgium, Susan Reynard from Canada and Maggie Warwick from Great Britain. It will be seen in Ottawa, Toronto, London, Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Calgary, and Montreal as well as Halifax.

Although Yugoslavia and the Atlantic provinces might seem as remote from one another in concerns as they are in geography, there are some intriguing similarities and differences which suggested themselves in the public lecture she gave and in subsequent discussions. One such similarity relates to the difficulty which Yugoslav film and video producers, as well as visual artists in general, have in receiving recognition in the larger European forum. Yugoslavia is a small, primarily rural, country tucked away into a back corner of Europe and its artists have a difficult time of getting a reception in the cultural mainstreams of Europe such as Germany, France, England, Austria, Holland, etc. Any Atlantic area filmmaker (or for that matter any artist whatsoever!) will find that familiar, swamped as we are by the magnitude of Central Canada and the United States. We share the common difficulty of having our voices silenced by the ventriloquists of larger centers.

Like generations of Atlantic Canadians, Yugoslavs have adopted a similar measure as a countervail - they move to major centers to give themselves access to the resources in those locations and to gain the legitimacy that living in such places affords. In their case it is Berlin, Vienna, Paris or Amsterdam whereas in ours it is Montreal, Toronto, New York or Los Angeles. Ivekovic and Martinis, whose works were being presented by Tomic, are now both resident in Holland and are only now achieving in-

ternational renown from this new locale.

An exception to this state of affairs with respect to Yugoslavia pertains to politics. When Yugoslav artists are invited to participate internationally, audiences and festival organizers are often all too ready to see

political connotations (with a large P) in their work even if none are intended. Tomic described eloquently the difficulties artists in her country have in having their work seen for its artistic merits in a climate where Western opinion equates "eastern Europe" with politics. Some Yugoslavs, such as Marina Abramovitch, are compelled to emigrate to the west, partly in order to have their work viewed in a Euro-

pean context and outside of the political context.

The situation in Atlantic Canada, in this respect, is clearly different. Nevertheless, Atlantic media producers sometimes feel that the outside world is interested in their productions only if they present "Atlantic" kinds of motifs and stories - lighthouses, lobster traps, grizzled fishermen, schooners, sou'westers, highland flighs and all the other

"typical" Atlantic area features. In this spirit productions from this area are often relegated to "cultural" sphere rather than to the artistic".

Another feature of the production environment which is often important to Eastern European film and video producers, is the issue of censorship. Although the power and influence of film and television is now largely understood and



National Film Board of Canada

Office national du film du Canada

NEWS

NINE NOMINATIONS FOR GEMINI AWARDS

Canada's Sweetheart: The Saga of Hal C. Banks, an NFB/CBC co-production has received six major nominations in the dramatic program category of the first GEMINI Awards honoring English-language television: best direction, writing, photography, sound, and performance by lead and supporting actors. In the documentary category, Michael McKennirey and Boyce Richardson have been nominated for best direction for **The Great Buffalo Saga**, and Gwynne Dyer and Tina Viljoen are in the running for best writing in a documentary program for **The Space Between**, an episode from the Defence of Canada series. **Blue Line**, co-produced by the NFB and Les Productions de la Chovette Inc. has also been nominated for best Pay TV drama.



NEW DISTRIBUTION AGREEMENTS SIGNED IN QUEBEC AND SASKATCHEWAN

A joint agreement between the Saskatchewan Regional and Municipal Library System and the NFB has made it possible for Saskatchewan citizens in eight library districts throughout the province to borrow videocassettes of 150 of the NFB's most popular titles from their local library. The districts covered by the agreement are Chinook, Lakeland, Palliser, Parkland, Southeast, Wapiti, Wheatland and Northern Services.

In Quebec, agreements were recently signed with representatives of the University of Québec in Abitibi-Témiscamingue (UQAT) and the

Corporation de la Bibliothèque du souvenir in Rouyn-Noranda. The agreement with UQAT is a renewal of a 1982 agreement. It provides for NFB facilities on UWAT's campus and gives the university on-line access to FORMAT, the comprehensive AV database administered by the Board. The agreement with the Rouyn-Noranda library provides for an NFB office within the library. The Board, in turn, has given the library a collection of some 400 films and videos.

RECENT AWARDS

At the 25th International Film Week in Mannheim, Germany, **Sitting in Limbo** won a **Gold Ducat**, a citation for "the vivid and surprising way of exploring the hopes and disappoint-

ments of young blacks living in Montreal"; as well as a strong recommendation from the Adult Education Association for using humor in revealing uncomfortable truths.

At the 3rd Annual Chicago International Festival of Children's Films, **A Good Tree** took First Prize for live action under 30 minutes, 2nd Prize went to **Jack of Hearts**, and **Red Shoes** received an honorable mention. Atlantis Films and the NFB which co-produced the films also received special recognition as one of three international film producers (Australia Children's Television Foundation and Wonderworks WQED, Pittsburgh, being the other two) for "outstanding achievement in developing good quality films for children's television".

At the 18th International Film Festival in Nyon, Switzerland, the NFB received a special prize "for its exemplary work in developing documentary film".

NFB filmmakers honored recently include Norman McLaren, appointed to a select group of 100 individuals who are members of the Faculty of Royal Designers for Industry of the U.K.'s Royal Society for the Encouragement of Arts Manufactures and Commerce.

In addition to being appointed a member of the Order of Canada, former Studio D executive producer Kathleen Shannon has received two awards for her outstanding contribution to the advancement of women - one from the Honorable Flora MacDonald, Minister of Communications and a second, the Muriel Duckworth Award, bestowed by Canadian Research Institute for the Advancement of Women.

NFB Offices in Canada:

Headquarters - Montreal (514) 283-9253  
 Pacific region - Vancouver (604) 666-3411  
 Prairie region - Winnipeg (204) 949-2812  
 Ontario region - Toronto (416) 973-0895  
 National Capital - Ottawa (613) 996-4259  
 Quebec region - Montreal (514) 283-4823  
 Atlantic region - Halifax (902) 426-7350  
 plus offices in most major cities

→ acknowledged throughout the world, this realization came much earlier in the eastern bloc than it did elsewhere. This understanding dates all the way back to Lenin and his famous statement to the effect the most important art form." The unfortunate consequence of the importance placed on cinema is that for many producers in the eastern bloc, life is a constant skirmish with the censors. Although in some situations, as for example in Poland, this has led to the development of a complex Aesopian film language full of double meanings in order to evade the censor's scissors, in general censorship works greatly to the detriment of film and video artistry.

Again in the Atlantic provinces we do not have a parallel situation. Censorship as an issue, in fact, seldom crosses the minds of local producers

### Field narrows for CBC Toronto Broadcast Centre

TORONTO — The field has narrowed to three major developers competing for the contract to build CBC's broadcast centre in Toronto.

Cadillac Fairview Corporation of Toronto, Campeau Corporation, also of Toronto, and Trizec Equities Limited of Calgary are the three final competitors for the project. The three were chosen from a field of 13.

Responses from the three companies are expected early in 1987. Depending on cabinet approval the project could be under construction by 1988, a Canadian Broadcasting Corporation publication says.

The CBC wants to build facilities on a 9.3 acre site on Front Street across from the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, near the CN Tower.

The broadcast centre proposal is to build broadcasting facilities along with 1.8 million square feet of office, retail and entertainment space as well as a hotel and parking at the site.

The CBC says the broadcast centre is badly needed to replace technically inadequate and outdated facilities that are spread out between nearly two dozen sites in Toronto.

although recently this issue has been discussed in the media here. In Nova Scotia the censors bureau hides under the name of the "Amusements Board". Under the stewardship of director Donald Trivett this board has aroused little attention (at least in comparison with Mary Brown, former chief censor of Ontario) because of the general perception that it is an "enlightened" institution. The list of rejected film and video titles number less than

sixty out of the many thousands which have been screened and includes only the most overtly pornographic and violent films. Trivett eschews the use of scissors in his work and prefers to pass or reject films *in toto*. Nevertheless this ought not to obscure the fact that there *is* a censors board in the province. This is also the case in New Brunswick where a censors board exists whereas Prince Edward Island and Newfoundland rely on the film

classification of New Brunswick.

The issue has been perhaps more pointed in the case of the printed word where the Writers Federation of Nova Scotia has proved to be an active force in opposing, for example, the 1978 campaign in the Annapolis Valley to have Ernest Buckler's book, *The Mountain and the Valley*, removed from school reading lists.

The eastern bloc may seem to many of us in the Atlantic

provinces to be remote from our area and interests, yet as visiting producers such as Biljana Tomic make clear, there are points of similarity and difference which are stimulating for both sides. Building such bridges of understanding is a valuable vehicle not only for learning about other societies but also for seeing your own society and situation in a different light.

Christopher Majka •

# ROSCO products

FOR THEATRE,  
FILM AND  
VIDEO PRODUCTION

## Here are the products that make it happen!

- Lighting Filters
- Projections
- Screens
- Designer Materials
- Fog and Smoke
- Painting
- Dance Floors
- Stage Platforms
- Special Effects
- Computer Software

For further details contact Rosco or your local authorized Rosco dealer

# ROSCO

1271 DENISON STREET #66 MARKHAM, ONTARIO L3R 4B5 TEL. 416/475-1400

serving the performing arts