

Max, Cinema Plus split over rights to Jesus film

MONTREAL - Foreign sales and distribution rights to *Jésus de Montréal*, the \$2.2 million Canada/France co-production written and directed by Denys Arcand, is the subject of ongoing legal negotiations between Cinema Plus and the newly formed Max Films Inc.

Jésus de Montréal, Arcand's first feature film since his internationally acclaimed *The Decline of the American Empire*, is in production on a closed set in Montreal until Sept. 23. The film is produced by Roger Frappier (who with René Malo produced *The Decline*) and Pierre Gendron.

Both Frappier and Gendron were the principals of Les Productions Oz when they produced Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Night Zoo*, which made its debut at the Toronto Festival of Festivals in 1987.

In August 1987, Les Productions Oz merged with Cinema Plus (distributors of *The Tales For All* series produced by Rock Demers) to form a

production/distribution entity called Cinema Plus Productions Inc.

Gendron and Frappier became partners and majority shareholders in the new company (with revenues, at that time, of close to \$12 million) with Richard Goudreau, Yves Bohemier and Gordon Guiry, who, early this year, stepped down as head of Cinema Plus International, the foreign sales arm.

At that time, Frappier told *Cinema Canada* that linking production, distribution and foreign sales would place Cinema Plus Productions Inc. and its foreign sales arm in a stronger position to deal with the sorts of financial problems that characterize the Canadian film industry.

Night Zoo was subsequently marketed internationally by Cinema Plus International.

On Aug. 1, 1988, Gendron and Frappier announced the formation of Max Films Inc. with Pierre Latour, formerly of the Malofilm Group. Frappier explained that he and Gendron were unable to reach an agreement with Cinema Plus that would allow financial and creative stability. "We thought it better to move out on our own where we could control all aspects of the production and distribution process," said Frappier.

It was announced that Latour would head Max Film Distribution and acquisitions which would handle distribution of *Jésus de Montréal* in Canada. Max Films is developing *La Ruée vers l'art*, a theatrical film scripted for the Quebec comedy duo of Ding et Dong and *Moody Beach*, a feature being written by Marcel Beaulieu and Richard Roy.

Pascal Hébert of Cinema Plus told *Cinema Canada* that "there had been disagreement on certain points of international sales." She says that until a legal agreement is reached, Cinema Plus has control of distribution and foreign sales of *La Ruée vers l'art* and *Jésus de Montréal* which, she adds, is doing "extremely well" in international pre-sales.

Hébert assures that with readjustment, Cinema Plus will be able to withstand the severance of all business ties by Frappier and Gendron.

"When something like this happens, everyone gets hurt but Cinema Plus will continue," says Hébert.

Cineplex expansion continues in U.K.

TORONTO - Cineplex-Odeon announced in July the construction of a first theatre in a long-planned expansion push into the United Kingdom.

Cineplex will build a four-screen, 1,900-seat theatre in the Trocadero Centre in London's West End. In May 1988, the exhibition chain began its U.K. expansion with the purchase of the 10-screen, 2,120-seat Maybox Movie Centre in Slough, just outside of London.

Cineplex also plans theatres for Brighton, on the south coast of England, Harlow, north of London, and Glasgow, making for a total of 100 screens by late 1990.

Cineplex shareholders in Toronto expressed fears of too-rapid expansion at the latest general meeting in May, at a time when Cineplex stock prices had reached an all-time low.

A new specialized insurance service for the entertainment industry has opened in Cinevillage, Toronto

Thompson-James Entertainment Insurance Brokers

On September 1st, Jack Thompson and Roger James combine their impressive experience and expertise with the opening of their new entertainment insurance brokerage service, conveniently located in the Cinevillage complex on Eastern Avenue in Toronto.

Jack and Roger are Ontario's largest brokers representing Chubb Insurance Company of Canada to the entertainment industry.

Thompson-James is proud to offer Chubb's superb insurance coverage to film producers in Toronto. Jack or Roger would be happy to talk to you about your next production project or renewals and the insurance protection they can provide. Together, Thompson-James and Chubb offer a service you can depend on for fast and fair quotes and claims settlements.

Thompson-James Entertainment Insurance Brokers

65 Heward Avenue
Toronto, Ontario M4X 1K5
Phone: (416) 465-6757
Fax: (416) 292-9308