

These days downtown Halifax and Dartmouth streets bear more of a resemblance to Rio during Carnival than they do to the capital city of the frugal, hardworking land of 'New Scotland'. Buskers '88 has taken us by storm and jugglers, mimes, magicians and scrivers entertain thousands every night upon the lawns and pavements. Sounds like good material there for a film, fictional or documentary. Any takers?

An obvious choice would be Halifax's Salter Street films which has emerged from the summer with a veritable flurry of productions to keep them busy during the fall. Following on the success of the last two series of *Codco* shows which Salter Street has co-produced with the Atlantic Region CBC (the most recent 13 episodes of which will air nationally on CBC on Thursday evenings beginning on October 6) and which star Newfoundland's zany theatre group Codco. Salter Street will begin taping a third series of programs this fall. Production is slated for October 17 for a further seven programs. No avenues of humour are closed to Codco (a.k.a. Andy Jones, Kathy Jones, Mary Walsh, Greg Malone and Tommy Sexton) so stay tuned for more outlandish antics this year and next. For an early glimpse of the productions, come to this year's Atlantic Festival Atlantique where the series will be showcased.

However even before the cameras begin to roll on this series, Salter Street will be in production on a children's feature film called *George's Island*. The script was written by Paul Donovan with his longtime creative partner Maura O'Connell and is based on Nova Scotia supernatural folklore. The focus of the story will revolve around the madcap events which take place in Halifax during the Halloween 'Mardi Gras' Festival when thousands of Haligonians spill into the streets in costumes varied and sundry. The fortress on uninhabited George's Island in the centre of Halifax Harbour will also figure as a locale. There is involvement by both Telefilm and the NFB in the project and the film will be distributed theatrically by Montreal's Astral Films. Production is slated to begin on October 3.

In a press release Astral also announced a second feature of Salter Street's called *Tom* but producer Michael Donovan would only say that the announcement had been somewhat premature and that plans for the project were still only in negotiation. Definitely making an appearance this fall is *The Squamish Five*, a television film made last year by CBC and directed by Paul Donovan. It is a docu-drama of the five people convicted of the Litton and Red Hot Video bombings.

The NFB seems also to be having a busy year here. Just recently it announced that Cape Breton native Stefan Wodoslawsky, co-producer of *Crazy Moon*, *Blueline* and *Something About Love* (shot last year in Cape Breton) and co-star of *90 Days* would be coming back to work with the Atlantic Region NFB. His special responsibilities will be to develop co-ventures with the private sector. Wodoslawsky is a former student of theatre at Dalhousie University and worked previously with the NFB here when the studio was first established in the early 1970s.

In New Brunswick two NFB films are in production. Fredericton's Kevin Matthews is working on a documentary about groundwater pollution, one of the central environmental issues that the Conservation Council of New Brunswick has been concerned about. Filming for the production is being done in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Meanwhile Acadian filmmaker Herménégilde Chaisson is directing a film about former N.B. premier Louis Robichaud. The film will be a co-production of the Atlantic studio and the Production française/Acadie in Moncton.

On Prince Edward Island intrepid filmmaker Brian Pollard started production in late August on a film about community economic development in the Evangeline region of the island. The film will be shot in both French and English and an as-yet-unnamed francophone associate director will be working with Brian on the project.

In Newfoundland the NFB is shooting a theatrical short which will be distributed to commercial cinemas to mark the NFB's 50th anniversary in 1989. If for one am a great enthusiast of theatrical shorts and it seems that I am not alone. I recently saw Cordell Barker's *The Cat Came Back* (produced by the NFB) at a local cinema and the audience reaction was excellent - even applause at the end! Let's hope we see more of them!

Back in Halifax, Atlantic Filmmakers Co-op (AFSCOOP) coordinator Gary Swim is leaving to pursue other projects and is being replaced by Heather Levecque, lately of the Great Canadian International Theatre Festival. AFSCOOP is now settled into its new quarters on Gottingen Street and is very busily engaged in its 1988 Workshop program. Five of the workshops (Assistant Director led by Cordell Wynne; Production Manager with Terry Greenlaw; Script Development led by Bill MacGillivray; Lighting led by Lionel Simmons and Eric Emery, and Sound Recording led by Jim Rillie) have been successfully completed. The remaining two are: Director of Photography by John Walker in early September and Acting for the Camera which Glenn Walton will lead late in the month. Speaking of Glenn, he recently received a script development grant from Nova Scotia's Department of Tourism and Culture for his half-hour drama *The Room at the Back* which is scheduled for completion at the end of the summer.

I recently spoke with David Hopper, the director of the Linda Joy Busby Media Arts Foundation. The foundation has recently announced that this year's award will be a \$2,000 grant for a proposed or work-in-progress film presented, as is usual, at the Atlantic Festival Atlantique. David told me that work is underway to secure a stable source of funding for the Foundation and that very promising negotiations in this respect are currently underway with the corporate sector. Further news on this should be forthcoming soon.

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