

Dufour manages film year

TORONTO - "I think the Canada Film Year is a wonderful initiative for the Canadian film industry," says Marie-Christine Dufour, recently appointed Managing Director of the program.

"There aren't many chances for an industry to get together with an effort for marketing and promoting its products."

The year-long celebrations to begin in the fall of 1989 are in honour of the 50th anniversary of the National Film Board, the 10th anniversary of the



Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television, and the 25th anniversary of the Cinéma-thèque Québécoise. The 25-member board of directors hopes to increase Canadians' awareness and appreciation of their country's films. What Dufour finds most interesting about the project is that events will be organized by the community, not necessarily by the Canadian Film Year body. Funds will be made available to industry and cultural associations who want to get involved.

Hamulak produces first Canadian-Soviet co-production

TORONTO - *A Night In May* is the first Canadian-Soviet coproduction financed entirely with private funds. The film was shot on location in Kiev and the surrounding Ukrainian countryside by



Canadian producer and screenwriter Stanislav Ostap Hamulak.

Born in England and educated in Italy, Hamulak came to Canada in 1972 to complete an M. A. in Slavic Studies. Fluent in Ukrainian and Russian, Hamulak went to work for CBC's radio international. There he met people who were interested in film production and he co-produced a documentary on the Vietnamese boat people. He also founded a semi-professional dance company, the Ukrainian Festival Dance Company, which became an important part of his artistic growth.

"I started to build this idea about a Canadian girl going to the Soviet Union and exploring the rhythms of classical and folk ballet. If you look at the Ukrainian community, some hardly speak the language, they know little about the culture, but they love to dance. I wanted to get deeper into that."

Stewart: frozen frame

REGINA - The temperature with windchill in Regina on Feb. 3 was minus 72 degrees. But this did not deter Barbara J. Stewart and the crew of *The Great Electrical Revolution* from plying their trade in the streets of this snow-blown city.

Feb. 3 was the first day of principal photography for this half-hour comedy drama which will be seen on the Global network late this year.

It was a bone-chilling sort of

day, comments Stewart, coproducer with the National Film Board.

"The city workcrews didn't even come out. The only other people outside were reporters because they couldn't believe we were out there."

Blankets, heaters and large lamps kept the machinery working during an elaborate sub-zero shoot and "*It's a wrap*" took on a whole different meaning.



"It was brutal," says Stewart.

The Great Electrical Revolution is the first of seven television dramas to be produced through the Saskatchewan Film Development Project. It is based on the popular short story by Ken Mitchell. Kevin DeWalt of Regina Motion Picture is also co-producer.

Armstrong: from docu to drama

MONTREAL - Mary Armstrong is best known for her award-winning documentaries and short fiction films of social and political concern. However, her most recent project is a half-hour family drama for the CBC called *The Light Brigade*.

Directed by François Labonté, this project is part of the *Family Pictures* series - 15 half-hours drama for family audiences. It was the first project to be approved in the series and one of the last to be shot due to a shortfall of funding at Telefilm in 1987.

"This project is a lot more ambitious than anything I've



done," says Armstrong. "It has a bigger budget (\$350,000) and it was shot during the winter (early February)."

The series was implemented by CBC to support production in the regions. Armstrong admits to some controversy about Cinéfort Inc. being a Montreal-based company but, she explains, English-language production in Montreal now reports to CBC-Halifax, the eastern regional headquarters for dramatic production.

Frantic Chato named head of CBC sitcom

TORONTO - Paul Chato, former member of the Frantics comedy troupe, has been appointed creative head for situation comedy at CBC. "I think I have the best job in the whole corporation", Chato told *Cinema Canada* about his new appointment.

Chato, was hired by Ivan Fecan, CBC's director of programming, last January as a script development officer. They agreed that although the CBC was doing great things with dramatic and variety specials, a network's identity is based on its series.



Chato spent a year overseeing the development of two series. "We're a boutique business", said Chato, when comparing the CBC to the American television networks. "We've got to come up with that narrow focused show that no one else has bothered to think of, and sell the living daylights out of it."

Mosquito Lake, currently in production, is one of them. The story has Bob McDonald, played by comedian Mike McDonald, dragging his family up to their ancestral cottage in the woods "to convince them to have a good time each summer." The series has been picked up for six episodes. Chato is proud to say that *Mosquito Lake* is "finally a CBC situation comedy with no socially redeeming values."

Keating goes out in *Midday Sun*

TORONTO - Although the story within *The Midday Sun* was inspired by Lulu Keating's experiences as a volunteer in Zaire in the early 70's, the scriptwriter/director insists that it's not autobiographical.



The Midday Sun, Keating's first feature film, is also the first Canadian feature-length to be filmed in Africa. After six weeks of shooting in Zimbabwe the film is now in post production in Toronto.

After several years with The Atlantic Film Co-op, the Nova Scotia native decided to establish her own company, Red Snapper Films, where she began an association with producer Christopher Zimmer. They worked on

several productions together, including two half-hour documentaries about singer Rita McNeil, before tackling *The Midday Sun*.

"We took several years to develop it," explains Keating, "because the script was evolving and also because the climate of making feature films in Canada kept changing." But the delays proved to be valuable, providing for the time to plan well ahead, so that there were very few problems when it came time to film in Africa.

Razutis' *Amerika* wins L. A. award

LOS ANGELES - *Amerika*, Al Razutis' monumental three-hour experimental feature (1972-83), was awarded the Los Angeles Film Critics Award for the best experimental film screened in Los Angeles in 1988. *The Los Angeles Times* called the film "the most provocative and challenging experimental



work... which alternatively dazzles and numbs but winds up making us think critically about how the media has shaped our very notion of reality."

Commenting on the award, nearly five years after the completion of the controversial film, Razutis was resigned. "It's taken a long time to get around the world. This is a film that had to leave Canada to get an award and ultimately the filmmaker, me, also had to leave Canada to get recognition. When the film was finished it was declared 'unCanadian' by Bruce Elder."