

First three markets favorable to Canadians

MONTREAL – Despite an obvious drop in the quality of international films available, Telefilm has reported favorably on the American Film Market (AFM), held in Los Angeles, Feb. 23 to March 3.

At the Berlin Film Festival (Feb. 10 to 21), were more Canadians than ever, and the Monte Carlo Television Market, Feb. 13 to 18, continues to be a technologically driven market.

Telefilm reports that although sales figures look good, a final tally for all three markets will not be available until Canadian exporters submit a biannual report.

"In the past we found that most negotiations don't conclude until sometime later and that early figures can be misleading," says Deborah Drisdell, Telefilm manager of marketing and distribution.

One keen observer and longtime veteran of the Berlin Film Festival is Jan Rofekamp, president of Films Transit Inc. who characterizes this year's festival as "workable and practical".

Transit's *Comic Book Confidential*, directed by Ron Mann, was a hit at Berlin and subsequently sold to England, Germany, Spain and Finland.

"In fact the territories that we did not sell we should conclude at Cannes," says Rofekamp.

A Corps Perdu, also carried by Films Transit, sold to Spain and Germany for all media rights. *The Rustling of Leaves* received numerous invitations to other festivals after a screening in the Forum Section of the festival and John Greyson's *Urinal* was shown several times after its initial screening in the Panorama Section.

Monte Carlo remains a dynamic market, says Rofekamp, where a lot of attention was paid to *Onward Christian Soldiers*, a television documentary about the American evangelical movement in Central America by Gaston Angelovici and Jaime Barrios.

Robert Blair of Sullivan Films says Monte Carlo was especially lucrative. *Anne of Green Gables*, the miniseries, continued to sell. Two new features, *Looking for Miracles* and *Lantern Hill* sold to Ireland, Malta, the United Kingdom, Dubai, Iceland and Poland. Preliminary co-production discussions were held with major broadcasters in Australia, France, Germany and the U.K. for a new 26-part series, *Avonlea*, that will go into production in May.

The AFM was not as productive as in previous years, says Blair.

"There seems to be a proliferation of slasher and gasher films at the AFM," says Blair.

Andy Emilio of Simcom International agrees with this assessment of the AFM.

"There were few pictures of quality available at the AFM and as always films are sold to the Americans for the Canadian market. The problem with the AFM is that it has always been difficult to negotiate Canada out of the U.S. deal," says Emilio.

Simcom International did a brisk business at the Monte Carlo television market entering into negotiations with Scandinavia, Holland, South Africa and Spain for special package deals.

"The television market is growing by leaps and bounds and we have an extensive library in television," says Emilio.

André Matteau of Cinema Film Corp., a two-year-old Montreal-based company, says that there is always a gem to be found among the rough fare at the AFM.

Matteau and his French partners bought *Falling In Love Again* starring Elliot Gould for all the French-language territories of the world.

"It's true that 90 per cent of what is available at the AFM is commercial, but these films can work very well. Contacts are what makes investments in these markets count," says Matteau.

Lapointe Films International Inc. of Montreal was in Berlin and Los Angeles. Jacqueline Dinsmore says that Berlin remains a strong market for U.S. and European independent films. The AFM, however, was a letdown.

"Last year I underlined close to 30 interesting titles on the product list of the AFM. This year there were none," says Dinsmore.

Ontario Premier David Peterson visited the AFM for two days to encourage co-venture productions between Ontario and U.S. producers.

On March 1, the premier hosted a dinner in recognition of the Walt Disney Company.

On March 2, a luncheon was held for the premier by Lew Wasserman, chairman and C.E.O. of MCA/Universal; Sid Sheinberg, president and chief operating officer MCA/Universal and Garth Drabinsky, chairman, president and C.E.O. of the Cineplex Odeon Corporation.

That evening, the premier hosted a reception in celebration of Hollywood's support of the Ontario film industry.

At presstime, Peterson was scheduled for a visit to Paris, April 4, to encourage co-productions between Ontario and French film and television producers.

WFF to honor NFB

The festival will celebrate the 50th anniversary of the National Film Board of Canada with an NFB Day during which 10 NFB filmmakers will be honored.

A new feature film produced by the NFB will premiere on this occasion.

ACTRA's performers ratify Canadian Production Agreement

TORONTO – The Association of Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) Performers Guild has ratified the Canadian Production Agreement (CPA). The agreement, which has been in place since July of last year, has the stated objective of "supporting and encouraging the production of fully Canadian feature films in a climate where insufficient private funding is available to make them properly." Other signatures to the agreement are ACTRA Writers Guild, DGC (Ontario District Council), ACFC and CAMERA.

"It was a very contentious issue," said Ray Stringer, executive director of the Performers Guild. "There have been deferrals in the past, but this is a deferral to investment and we needed approval from the entire guild. The writers already had provisions in place for this sort of thing and didn't need prior approval to sign the agreement."

Under the CPA, the members of the participating guilds are allowed to defer a portion of their fees until such time as the film starts generating revenue. In return, these people are entitled to a share of the profits earned once (and if) the film recoups its costs. For example, performers engaged at above minimum fees shall defer all fees in excess of minimums, plus 20 percent of all minimum fees earned during the course of production. For this each performer will share in that portion of revenues allocated to deferrals. This allocation will administered by an agency agreed to by the producer and a committee of all the signatories. A producer must adhere in writing to the agreement and the committee has the right to approve the terms of any distribution agreement between the producer and a distributor.

Douglas Kiefer, president of CAMERA, told *Cinema Canada*, that the agreement originated with Atlantis Films, "as a way to produce indigenous Canadian features at a reasonable budget which are entirely financed in Canada. It is a combination of a lowbudget type contract plus an approved deferred payment scheme."

The agreement is quite restrictive and applies only to those films that achieve 10 out of 10 points in accordance the Certification Office and are budgeted at under \$3 million. They must be entirely Canadian controlled in all creative and financial respects and have no direct or indirect foreign investment.

Rob Iveson, outgoing chairman of the Ontario

District Council of the DGC, notes that the unions and guilds are protected as if they were investors and the rights of directors are clearly spelled out. However, he says, "I am disappointed that it hasn't been taken up by producers more often." To date the agreement has only been used by Atlantis for its first theatrical feature, *Destiny To Order*. Although ACTRA's performers were not party to that particular agreement, Stringer says that the experience was "positive" and that the rank and file of his membership want to see something done about getting truly Canadian films made.

Egoyan to go to Cannes

TORONTO – It has been confirmed that Atom Egoyan's latest film, *Speaking Parts*, will be going to Cannes in the prestigious Directors Fortnight category. Egoyan's previous film *Family Viewing* won the Best Canadian Film Award at Toronto's 1987 Festival of Festivals and German filmmaker Wim Wenders gave his first prize at Montreal's 1987 Festival of New Cinema and Video to Egoyan in recognition of the young filmmaker's talent and vision.

The official announcement for the Cannes festival will not take place until April 20 and Robert Davidson at Telefilm's Festival Office would not confirm that Denis Arcand's latest, *Jesus of Montreal*, has been selected as the official Canadian entry this year. However, the film is heavily favoured to represent Canada at the 42nd annual film festival and media circus. It was previously announced that Philip Borsos' *Bethune: The Making of a Hero* would be launched at Cannes, but the producers recently had a change of heart, and the film will now premiere later in the year at the Montreal World Film Festival.

Alliance establishes an international arm

TORONTO – Alliance Entertainment, Canada's largest production company, has recently established an international sales division. Alliance International will handle both theatrical and television sales and will sell its own product plus productions from other companies. The new operation is to be completely separate from Alliance Releasing, which distributes film and video in Canada.