

TORONTO FILMMAKERS' CO-OP

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More News from the Homefront

On February 15th, 1973 the Toronto Filmmakers' Co-op passed a few daring resolutions that will undoubtedly influence the course of filmmaking in Canada, if not the entire world! The juiciest apple in the lot was the decision to PRODUCE A FEATURE FILM! Yes, we have been corrupted by the possibilities of world fame and millions at the Big Box-Office in the Sky. There is a SCRIPT COMPETITION underway right now! So get moving, blow the dust off that fantastic script you've been saving for 17 years, and send it in. But fast! The deadline for the competition is May 31st.

The blatant prejudices operating to get this contest rigged are:

1. The writer must be a Canadian citizen or a resident of three years' standing.

2. The script must be by a Co-op member. (Read as follows - for the magnanimous sum of \$10, you too can be a Co-op member. The question is, why aren't you yet?)

3. The feature should be filmed within a 100-mile radius of Toronto. This means NO - you cannot go on location to the Hanging Gardens of Babylon unless you are independently wealthy and can take the entire Co-op crew with you.

4. The script must be brilliant enough to completely dazzle the CFDC and/or every major producer of films. After all, their love for Co-ops knows no bounds, but there are strings attached. (You are expected to make a film.)

In return for your sweaty, bloody tears, the Co-op promises to have each script read by at least three filmmakers, all of whom will give a written evaluation. There are also plans to try to find alternate funding for some of the very fine scripts that we cannot produce ourselves. The final decision will be made by the Executive Committee of the Co-op. (People interested in taking a workshop in Feature-Film Scriptwriting, please get in touch immediately with the Co-op at the above address.) Kirwan Cox is officially in charge of this coup.

The other militant resolutions were passed to institute some necessary changes in our structure. We decided simply to have every person on the

Executive Committee take on a specific area of responsibility. (Very utilitarian philosophy). The winners are:

Frank Nissen	Workshops
Kirwan Cox	Feature production
George Csaba Koller	Non-feature production
Jim Murphy	Chairperson
Tom Urquhart	Scheduling
Dave Tompkins	Organization
Raphael Bendahan	Equipment
Sandra Gathercole	Politics
David Peebles	Space
Jerry McNabb	Fund-raising
Mike Hirsh	Editor of RUSHES

As you might have noticed, there are some changes. One of the changes was that RUSHES passed from the hands of Brenda Roman (now working on a Masters thesis) to those of Active Mike - artist, filmmaker, man-about-town. The old house organ is tinkling a bit more lightly over its familiar key this issue. In a manifesto of unleashed democratic zeal, M. Hirsh declares RUSHES "a community tool, an access catalogue and an open forum." Plans for expanding interest will include articles on a market survey of television and print sales for independent films, an evaluation of film courses offered at present in the Toronto region, portraits of local film artists, reviews of new independent films, theories of visual perception and a women's issue, plus any film production news. Active Mike plans to make it slicker and with much comic relief,

Raphael Bendahan



Photo: Audrey Gunn

while still maintaining its bird's eye view of the Co-op film scene.

Jerry McNabb steps on a crack

And RUSHES confirms it. A handwritten letter by the co-ordinator himself. Two years at the centre of the film universe has been enough and he is now off to the trees for a bit of holiday and a bit of writing and, he hopes, a glamorous new job somewhere. Are you listening, Mayor Crombie? (See next issue of *Cinema Canada* for an interview with the new co-ordinator, whoever she may be.)

Meanwhile, on March 13th, as if to contradict the ominous overtones of the number on the calendar, the Co-op had its best screening-night of the season. First Raphael Bendahan showed his latest work, **black and white/noir et blanc**, an eight-minute experimental film/poem, which he's sending to Oberhausen. The first half is the play of white light on a grey background, and coupled with the soundtrack built of amplified bursts of white noise, it is designed to put the spectator into a receptive mood for the second half - a naked black man dancing, captured sensitively by Raphael's variable-speed camera. The editing was done right in the Bolex and the rhythm works; it speeds up and slows down just at the right times to create a continuous flow of movement and energy.

The next film to be screened was Recha Jungmann's **Renata**, a half-hour cinematic study of a 13-year-old girl. Shot in Germany several years ago, the lovingly photographed look at adolescence was blown up from 8mm to 16, in both colour and black and white. The overall technical excellence of the 16mm print was surprising. So was the degree to which the subject opened up and revealed myriad glimpses into her psyche under Recha's extreme close-up style of cinematography. But it's not a heavy, intellectual piece, rather a light, sensuous, fun thing, accompanied by a well-chosen popular tune. **Renata**, is a very unusual and an extremely personal kind of film, betraying tons of talent on the

part of its maker. It's also illustrative of what can be done with an 8mm camera in your own backyard, and with perhaps a young babysitter who's not afraid to let herself go.

Clay Borris brought two films to show, **Parliament Street** and **Paper Boy**. Both are about growing up in the poor section of town, about adolescence and violence, about the mores of the street and the seething anger there that's ready to explode almost any time. **Parliament Street** is the rougher and shorter of the two, and it pre-dates **Paper Boy**, which is more polished, perhaps because of NFB participation. According to the Film Board, Borris "made it very much on his own although the Board provided advice, some technical assistance, and now distributes the film." Clay's younger brother plays the young rebel lead role admirably, and the camera captures all the mannerisms of the small tough kid, who hasn't quite yet lost his innocence.

The three thugs in the earlier film, on the other hand, have absolutely no redeeming characteristics — they beat the crap out of a kid who's a lot younger and weaker than they are. And they fight dirty, even kicking him when he's down. But the chase is the most exciting part of the film, and that moment when the hunters catch up with their victim and savor the victory — pausing for effect — before totally demolishing him. And afterwards the camera just slowly meanders upwards and casually shows you that you're not in some strange land but right here in Toronto, on Parliament Street. Borris' two films would lead one

to expect a hell of a lot from him in the future.

The rest of the program was rounded out by Peter Bryant's **The Deal**, and **Rocco Brothers** (see elsewhere in this issue for an interview with Peter), and Brian Small's **The Dancers**. These Vancouver films are dynamite! Small's film is op art in motion: horizontal and vertical stripes on two dancers' costumes moving in unison and in discord, pulsating with the heavy chemistry of polarized color images, switching back and forth from negative to positive, the bodies photographed close, with no heads. Day-glo stripes moving and swimming in diametrically opposed geometric patterns, synchronous with a mind bending soundtrack. A trippy experience to watch.

Bryant's **The Deal** was made as a student exercise at Simon Fraser University; it is a lesson in simplicity of presentation, utilizing a process which is almost still photos snapped at several-second intervals, or well-timed single framing with a motion picture camera. Capturing a dope deal with all its paranoia (this time justified), furtive glances, money, white envelope exchanging hands, dealer nervously puffing away on cigarette waiting for customer, etc. It's got a dramatic ending and is a really powerful work, perhaps because the soundtrack matches the image perfectly, staccato drumming like a clock ticking away. Suspense builds in all of four minutes, which is the running time of **The Deal**, filmed in stark, high contrast black and white, resembling Kodalith in

texture and feel. **Rocco Brothers** is covered in depth on some other page in this issue of Cinema Canada. It's enough to say that Peter Bryant has the potential to become one of Canada's leading young filmmakers.

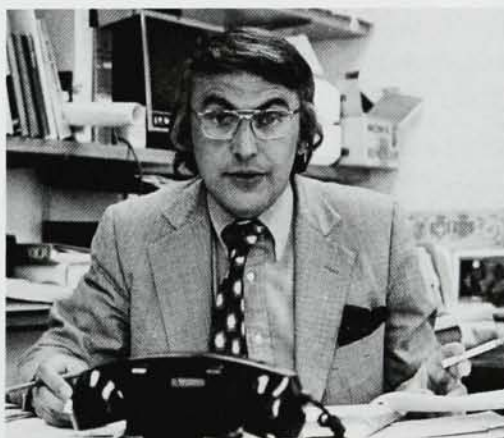
With films like these, plus the ones Richard Brook brought from Vancouver (the really exciting 30 second public service announcements made by a group called Uneeda Film on an Opportunities for Youth grant last summer) — hard to describe, but they're so beautifully imaginative that the CBC's refusal to show them should be protested by people wanting to see what some young people are doing with their tax money, if that's what it takes to have the Uneeda-films widely exhibited! — not to mention Emshwiller's **Choice Chance Woman Dance** and Scott Bartlett's **1970**, we're privileged to see first-class artistic output and it should inspire us all to greater creativity. And it is happening: Raphael is finishing the cutting of his next film **L'Ennuï**, and Recha has written a number of outstanding short scripts. The half-hour documentary on active old people shot with the Co-op's OFY grant last summer, is ready to go into a mix — all we need now is some advance money on a single sale to finance the completion of the film to release print stage. There is a lot of energy in springtime — let's put it to good use within the co-op. Not only are we soliciting scripts for \$100,000 features, but short scripts or ideas should be submitted as well. There's a better chance of getting financing if we apply together, than if we all do it separately.

— written cooperatively

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