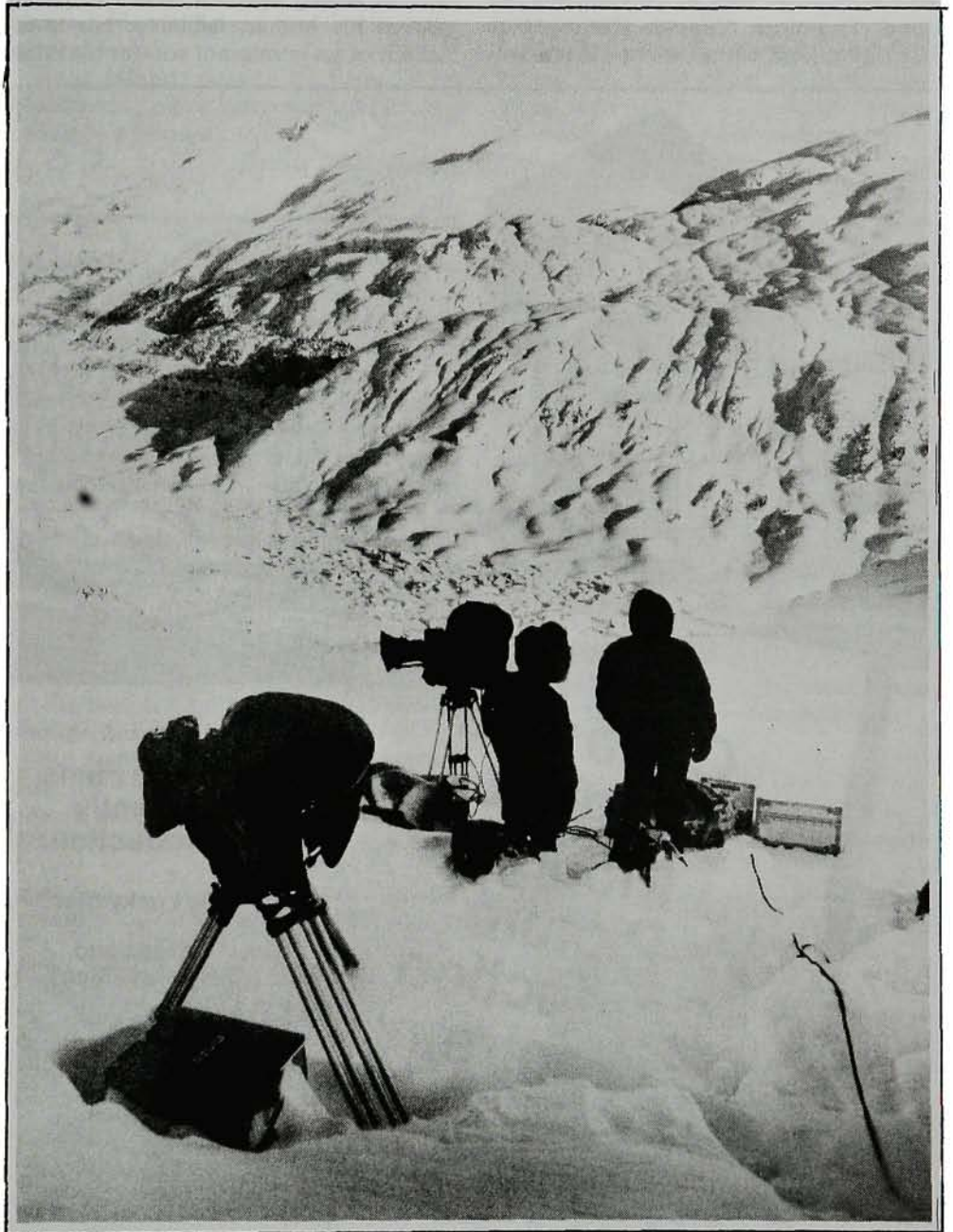


FILM REVIEWS

Don Sharp's Bear Island

d. Don Sharp. sc. David Butler, Murray Smith, from the novel "Bear Island" by Alistair MacLean. mus. Robert Farnon. assoc.p. Bill Hill. d.o.p. Alan Hume. p.superv. Brian D. Burgess. superv.ed. Eric Boyd Perkins. p.des. Harold Pottle. 1st a.d. Stuart Freeman. 2nd a.d. Don Brough.cont. Margaret Hanly. cam.ops. Derek Browne, Cyrus Block. foc.p. Sandy McCallum. clapper/loaders David Geddes, Dale Wilson. 2nd unit co-d. John Harris, Vic Armstrong. 2nd unit a.d. Alan Simmonds. 2nd unit cont. Penny Hynam. 2nd unit cam. Keith Woods. 2nd unit foc.p. Theo Egelseder. 2nd unit loader Bruce Ingram. art d. Kenneth Ryan. draughtsman David Moran. set dresser Denise Exshaw. constr.man. Bill Simpson. prop.m. Dug Purdy, Brian Ganby. props buyer Peter Young. ward.consult. Lynn MacKay. ward.m. Robert Watts. make-up Wally Schneiderman, Phyllis Newman. hair Leila Seppanen. ed. Tony Lower, Geoffrey Brown (assist.), Jack Harris (2nd assist.) sound mix Brian Simmonds. sound assist. Rob Young, spec-effects co-ord. Roy Whybrow, spec.effects John Thomas, David Harris. stunt co-ord. Vic Armstrong. hydrocopter spec. Leif Johanson. gaff. John Bartley. key grip Tim Hogan. best boy Ben Rusi. dolly grip John Brown. 2nd unit key grip Frank Parker. 2nd unit best boy Shelley Degen. snow control superv. Robin Mounsey. prod.acct. Arthur Tarry, Jak King Jr. (assist.). prod. sec. Marilyn Clarke (assist.). London contact Lesley Keane. stills Alan Zenuck. unit pub. Patricia Johnson. I.p. Donald Sutherland, Vanessa Redgrave, Richard Widmark, Christopher Lee, Barbara Parkins, Lloyd Bridges, Lawrence Dane, Patricia Collins, Michael Reynolds, Nicholas Cortland, August Schellenberg, Candace O'Connor, Joseph Golland, Bruce Greenwood, Hagen Beggs, Michael Collins, Terry Kelly, Terry Waterhouse, Richard Wren, Mark Jones. p.c. Selkirk Films, 1979. p. Peter Snell. co-p. a Canada-United Kingdom co-production. col. Panavision, 35mm. running time 103 min. dist. United Artists, a Transamerica Company.



Bear Island cameras in position to film a specially-created avalanche

One-dimensional characters speaking banal dialogue in fake accents make **Bear Island** too easy to fault. But seeing it in a theatre with an audience of junior-high-aged males that hold their breath at the danger, gasp at the horror, groan at the love-interest, and applaud the villains' spectacular ends defines its appeal. **Bear Island** is old-fashioned and improbable Saturday matinee fare, and viewed in this spirit, is good fun.

Filmed in B.C. and Alaska under technically difficult winter conditions, the movie is set on an inhospitable island in

the north Atlantic. In the film, one half of the island is the site of a top-secret NATO base of strategic value: on the other side — which was formerly a WW II German submarine base — are the remains of the German barracks, faintly Bavarian in decor, where a United Nations scientific team of meteorological bent takes up residence, to conduct research that will save the world from famine.

The leader of this noble expedition is a German, Professor Otto Gerran, who, as disasters mount, seems inflexibly (and thus suspiciously) bound to the rules. Radio silence must not be broken. As played by Richard Widmark, his major characteristic is perplexity — and for good reason. Although a Stevenson screen is glimpsed briefly during a blizzard, never have so many people been

FILM REVIEWS

engaged in so little meteorological research. Moreover, even before they all arrive, a Norwegian member of their advance party, Larsen (Hagen Beggs) is murdered, and it is quite clear that all motives will not be scientific. The incident also establishes that all Norwegians are good. Therefore, Vanessa Redgrave as Hedi Lindquist, whose silence is remark-

ed upon by the hero, functions primarily as someone to listen to him. Considering her lines, this is just as well.

The hero, an American called Frank Lansing (Donald Sutherland), arrives heroically, dangling from a helicopter; but, in falling into the sea, he quickly proves his human fallibility. His is the search of an immigrant son for his father

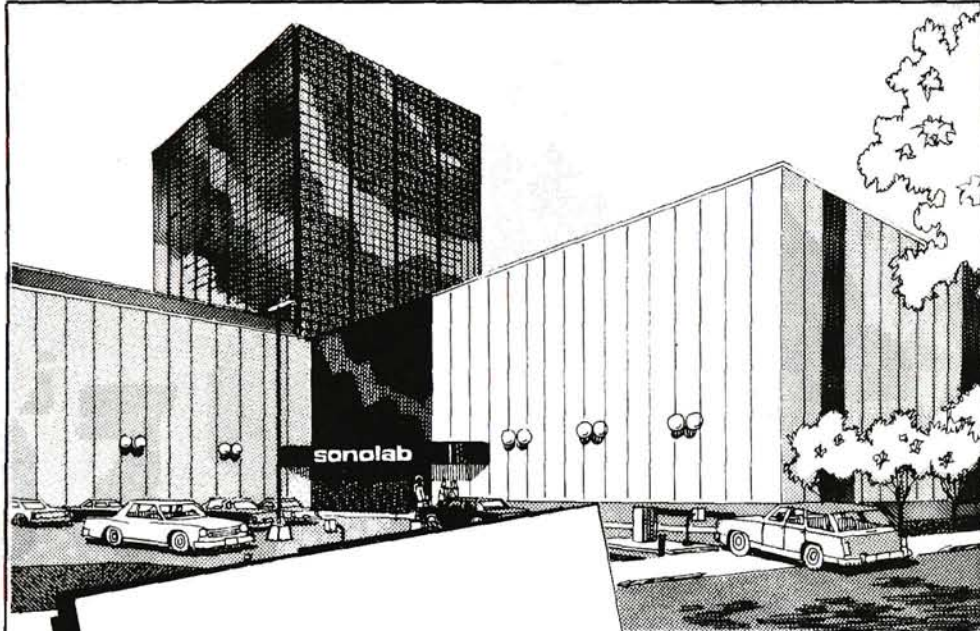
— and thus for himself — who had been a German submarine commander based on the island. Although the development of this, the only potentially serious theme, is beyond the capabilities of the screenplay, Lansing's pursuit of the truth leads to the centre of the plot. Not surprisingly, as events test his mettle, he discovers that the metal both he and his father are made of is stainless steel (recall **Dick Tracy** to account for his dialogue and demeanor).

Gold, however, is the metal that most of the others pursue, and the story traces the complications involved in sorting out the good men from the evil — the women being above suspicion. Those with potentially venal motives include the Pole, Lechinski (Christopher Lee is the only performance that touches the heart-strings), the American ex-navy diver, Smithy (Lloyd Bridges), and all those Germans: Garran, Paul Hartman (Lawrence Dane), Heyter (Michael Reynolds), and Jungbeck (Nicholas Cortland).

What is interesting is that **Bear Island**, despite its story and its Arctic setting, draws heavily on the traditions of the movie westerns, and therein lies its appeal. For the abandoned mine, in which the lost gold lies waiting to be discovered, it substitutes an underground submarine pen. For the dash to the NATO base to get help, think army fort. For the trusty horses, marvel at the agility of the hydrocopters and snow scooters. Pursued by villains, mounted on the stronger vehicles, Lansing and Lindquist plan to head them off (quite literally) at the gulch. During this chase, the good guys are doubly simple to spot. They wear the white balaclavas while the bad wear the dark!

Rooted in such a tradition, the silent hero, who rescues his woman and restores the fortune to its rightful owners, is easy to forgive no matter how stolid. His story is not designed to explore his character or human relationships, but rather to exploit the possibilities for excitement and action. Don Sharp's direction takes full advantage of the situations presented by the screenplay. **Bear Island's** set-pieces, even the bare-fisted fight that would do credit to any western bar, are visually exciting.

Much of **Bear Island's** appeal comes from the adaptation of the potentials of northern technology to the old adventure format. While more could have been made of the underwater sequence and the marvels of the dry suit, those involving the Swedish scooters and brilliant yellow snowcopters zipping through the snow — and in the case of the latter, taking off into



Canada's
largest
Motion
Picture
Production
Centre

sonolab
INC.

From Script to Screen

A DIVISION OF TELE-METROPOLE INC.

Feature Films presently in production:

"The Lucky Star"

•
"Kings and
Desperate Men"

•
"Babe"

•
"Suzanne"

•
"Your Ticket is
no longer valid"

•
"Yesterday"

TELEX · 05 267329

1500 PAPINEAU ST., MONTREAL, QUE. CANADA H2K 4L9 · 514-527-8671

the air to land in the ocean — delighted the viewers. They are the stars of the show, their manoeuvres alone worth the price of admission.

And so is the landscape. Characterized from the opening as icy grey and threatening, it is the perfect isolated setting for mysterious and violent actions. The jagged peaks and snowy vastness function like the mountains and dry plains of the western, and the phenomena natural to such a location have been incorporated into the plot exceedingly effectively. The

avalanche sequence is superb; the night blizzard is suitably ferocious. Yet, for all the threats intimated, the landscape is benign and as pure as its driven snow. The avalanche may kill, but it was set off by explosives. The radio mast comes down in the storm, but its cable had been severed. Man is the evil that dwells in the natural world.

Bear Island, despite its flaws, is an entertaining piece; not a serious film, but certainly a good movie.

Anna Carlsdottir

Les Rose's Hog Wild

d. Les Rose sc. Andrew Peter Marin **orig. concept** Victor Solnicki, Stephen Miller **p.man.** Don Buchsbaum **d.o.p.** René Verzier **art d.** Carol Spier, Ninkey Dalton (assist.) **ed.** Dominique Boisvert **mus.** Paul James Zaza, Dwayne Ford **a.d.** John Fretz (1st), Mike Williams (2nd), Robbie Ditchburn (3rd) **loc.man.** Christine Burt **unit man.** Josette Perrota **set dress.** Kathy Wadas **cont.** France Boudreau **sd.** Don Cohen **props** Jean Bourret **cost.** Delphine White **dresser** Corinne Verzier **make-up** Joan Isaacson **hair** Tom Booth **cam.** Denis Gingras (1st assist.), Jean-Jacques Gervais (2nd assist.) **elec.** Marc Charlebois **boom** Lewis Wolfe **stills** Takashi Seida **cast.** Dani Hausmann, Lorna Brown (assist.) **stunts coord.** Gaetan Lafrance **p.assist.** Tony de Santis, Steve Tabah, Glen Light **gaf.** Don Caulfield **grip** François Dupéré **p.sec.** Danielle Rohrbach **l.p.** Michael Biehn, Patti D'Arbanville, Tony Rosato, Angelo Rizacos, Martin Doyle, Matt Craven, Matt Birman-Feldman, Claude Philippe, Thomas C. Kovacs, Jacoba Knaapan, Michael Zelniker, Karen Stephen, Jack Blum, Stephanie Miller, Keith Knight, Mitch Martin, Robin McCulloch, Susan Harrop, Sean McCann, Marilyn Rosell, John Rutter, Bronwen Mantel, Norman Tavis, Richard Rebriere, Bena Singer, Len Watt, Alexander Godfrey, Rolly Nemcheri, Steve Bloomer, Thom Haverstock, Andrew Semple, Stephen Mayoff, Helen Udy, Grace Morai **p.c.** Filmplan International in association with Reindeer Productions (1979) **exec.p.** Pierre David, Victor Solnicki, Stephen Miller **p.** Claude Héroux **col.** 35mm **running time** 97 min. **dist.** New World-Mutual

Hog Wild is amazing! It opens up your eyes, brings forth a thousand questions, makes you think about the world.

You start right inside the film as you ask yourself... if Tony Rosato, in the lead role of Bull the motorcycle hood, can't even put together a respectable imitation of John Belushi's "pig-out" scene from **Animal House**, how will he ever succeed in parodying Marlon Brando's Johnny from **The Wild One**? Who is Patti D'Arbanville? Is the funniest part when Tim,

the hero, has cement poured in his car by the hoods, or when his father cracks a pool cue over his back and smilingly advises him "Never turn your back on anybody"? Is it fair to kill a tarantula so that a movie star can pretend to eat it so that millions of fun lovers across the continent can gag and laugh their brains out — or was it done with trick photography?

These questions may not have immediate answers, but they do put you in contact with your fellow man. You look around the theatre and wonder... if the "pig-out" bit is so obviously second-rate, then are all thirteen-year-olds idiots? Are all the people who go to drive-in movies stupid? And, am I a melancholy fool?

But getting too cosmic can be dangerous. It's more relaxing to think about people laughing, people making money. Are there any people in this **Hog Wild**

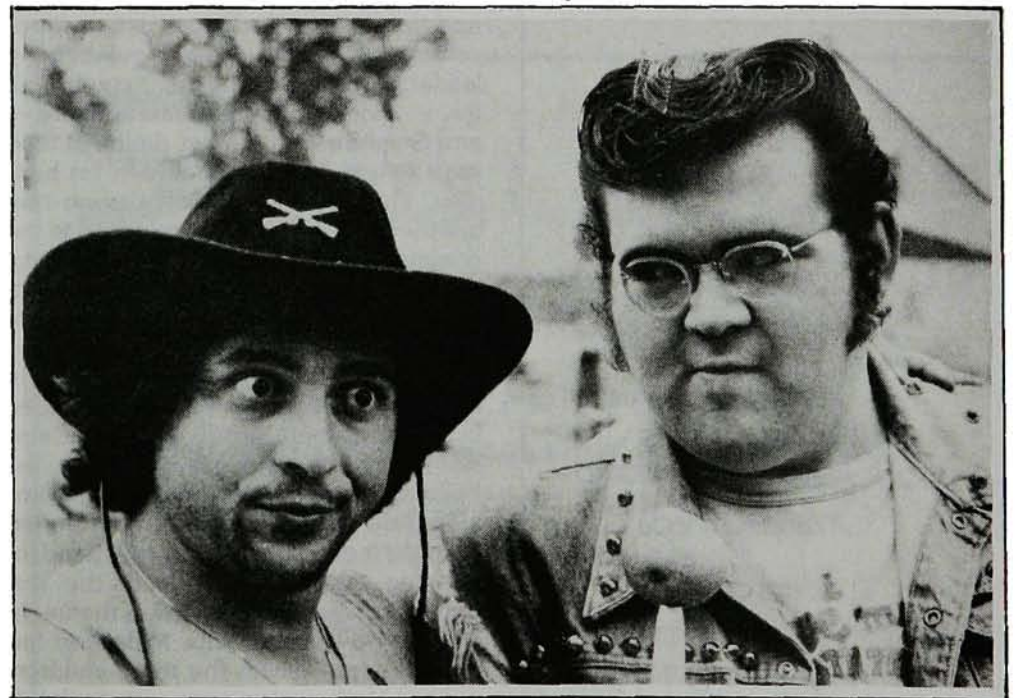
community who can fit those criteria? Did Pierre David and Victor Solnicki laugh when they conceived this idea? Did they laugh when the CFDC gave them money? Do they laugh when they go to the bank? Will they get to go to the bank with money from **Hog Wild**? That's perhaps the biggest question of all.

Money, money, money! **Hog Wild** brings you back down to earth again, away from all the dirty-faced thirteen-year-olds and mindless morons parked at drive-ins across the hinterland. It forces you to face reality; it gives you ideas...

Dear Filmplan International: I have a great idea. I once knew a guy who went into a greasy spoon and ordered twelve hamburgers. He ate them all at one sitting, and I think this could be the basis for a very funny film. Do you remember how Lee Marvin threw scalding coffee in Gloria Graeme's face in **The Big Heat**? We could give the man who makes the hamburgers an ego problem like the Lee Marvin character had, and have him smash his wife around with a greasy spatula. We'll get money from the government to do it, but we'll ensure an international distribution by dressing the whole cast in red speedos and those white T-shirts with *I Love New York* stenciled on the front. It'll be great. It'll make money. I'm excited. What do you think?

... whew! **Hog Wild**.

John Brooke



Take your pick! Tony Rasato and Keith Knight co-star in **Hog Wild**