

Love

When a film has nine separate stories (each with a different cast), nine screenwriters, and four directors, things move quickly during production. If ever film-making deserved to be described as a 'collaborative art', it does in this instance.

The film in question is *Love*, the first feature to be produced by Renée Perlmutter, formerly a script developer at Quadrant Films (and incidentally, wife of its president, David Perlmutter). Shot in Toronto over nine weeks from October to December, *Love* is an anthology film consisting of nine segments, of eight to fourteen minutes each, all of which examine some aspect or form of love.

What makes this film most intriguing, however, is that it represents probably the most concentrated and most significant utilization of female writing and directing talent ever seen in a feature film production: each and every screenwriter and director is a well-known and accomplished woman.

Perlmutter read the script, written by Nancy Dowd (*Coming Home* and *Slapshot*), Lady Antonia Fraser, Germaine Greer, Gael Greene, Joni Mitchell, Edna O'Brien, Penelope Gilliat (*Sunday, Bloody Sunday*), Mai Zetterling, and Liv Ullmann, at Cannes in 1979. She snapped it up, and later convinced Ullmann, Dowd, and Zetterling to direct their own segments (Zetterling also handled those by Mitchell and O'Brien): Canadian Annette Cohen served as director on the other four, and as supervising director of the over-film.

A huge Toronto mansion, nearly the size of a small European hotel, served as the production's base of operations (some costumes and sets were made there), and as the site of several segments. Upon stepping through the baronial front door, one found a house furnished largely by cables, lights, folding tables and chairs, and, in one room, a full-size mock-up of an ocean liner stateroom, complete with fake portholes and low ceiling. It was filled with twenty or so technicians, assistants, and actors, leaving only a little more space than the Marx Brothers had onboard ship in *Monkey Business*. The room had 'forced perspective', achieved, as art director Claude Bonnière told me, simply by widening it at one end.

Scenes from Penelope Gilliat's screenplay - about an elderly couple's romance - directed by Annette Cohen, were being shot that day. Robin Ward and Candace O'Connor, looking terribly British in their upper-class clothes, were perched precariously on a bed in a corner of the stateroom, doing their Thespian best to be comfortably intimate while the crew was hunched up near them. The near mob of technicians, however, politely ignored Cohen's whispered conferences with the actors between takes.

The switch in this story is that, although the characters are elderly, they appear to each other, because of their intense love, as they were in their courtship days - hence, no 'age' make-up or plastic wrinkles on the actors.

The sensitive sound equipment, which could easily pick up whispered lines of dialogue, presented something of a problem, for this particular house had extremely communicative and forthright stairs, bannisters, floorboards, doors, and plumbing. A warning system,

using a signal bell and walkie-talkies, advised those on the premises to shut-up during shooting. At one point, while filming took place in the stateroom, a few dozen crew members in the room above had to eat their lunch and move around in total silence.

The setting two weeks later couldn't have been more of a contrast. Filming of Mai Zetterling's "Love From the Marketplace" (not all of the segments have yet been titled) was taking place in the ancient and notorious Wheat Sheaf Tavern. This was the fourth episode to be done. For the sake of convenience, and because the same crew worked on all of the segments (except for director of photography Norman Leigh, who was replaced part-way through production by Reg Morris), the nine stories were shot one at a time, in nine successive five-day weeks.

The scene being filmed was supposed to take place in a smoky poolroom/tavern populated by some slightly seedy regulars. You would expect, knowing the Wheat Sheaf, that this would be an exercise in *cinéma vérité*. But no. Smoke-generating devices, looking something like medieval watering cans, were used to create the right atmospheric 'look', necessitating the use of gas masks by some of the crew members. The extras looked 'correct', but when it came time to run through a billiards scene (doing something each of these guys had probably done every day after work for years), some of them were stilted - proving, it's hard to play yourself. Director Zetterling, seemingly a model of patience, finally said after about seven run-throughs "C'mon fellas, this isn't Shakespeare."

Producer Perlmutter raised the production money through the sale of thirty \$90,000 units, and is aiming at a spring finish of post-production work. Domestic and international sales of the film will not be attempted until it is completed - Perlmutter feels that *Love* (originally given the racier and perhaps mislead-

ing title *Acts of Love*) deserves to be seen in its entirety, and not just 'described' to potential distributors.

This is clearly a writer's film, and Perlmutter feels it is important to be true to the scripts: she is not worried about offending some movie-goers. "If someone doesn't like the story by, say, Gael Greene, that's okay," she says, elaborating that, with nine scripts, it would probably be impossible to ensure that the film is all things to all people. A rare and admirable attitude.

Gerry Flahive ●

Love

p.c. Coup Films (1980) p. Renée Perlmutter superv. d. Annette Cohen assoc. d. Martin Walters p. man. William Zborowsky asst. to p. Pamela Keary acc'ts sup. Edythe Hall prod. acc't. Penny Royce book-keeper Judy Roseberg coord. Alice Ferrier off. p.a. Steve Marshall art d. Claude Bonnière asst. art. d. Barbara Tranter, Dan Davis p.a.-art. Katherine Vansittart loc./unit man. Michael Muller d. Annette Cohen, Nancy Dowd, Liv Ullman, Mai Zetterling sc. Nancy Dowd, Antonia Fraser, Penelope Gilliat, Gael Greene, Germaine Greer, Joni Mitchell, Edna O'Brien, Liv Ullman, Mai Zetterling asst. d. Martin Walters (1st), Don Brough (2nd), Richard Flower (2nd), John Webb (3rd) script sup. Blanche McDermaid ward des. Linda Matheson assts. ward. Mary McCready (1st) make-up Valli Slutsky hairdresser David Beecroft set dec. Jacques Veilleux prop. master Cy Langevin props Denis Kirkham d.o.p. Norman Leigh cam. op. Matt Tundo 1st asst. cam. (focus) Gordon Langevin 2nd asst. cam. (loader) Wendy Walgate gaffer Chris Holmes best boy Tony Eldridge key grip Glen Goodchild grip Wayne Goodchild laborer Brad Blackwood sd. Owen Langevin boom Randy Milligan transp. capt. Jim Kennedy head driver Frank Tenaglio driver Gary Flanagan head carpenter Weits Jekel head painter Derek Stephenson ed. Don Ginsberg observer d. Larry Moore p. sup. Elizabeth Butterfield cast. Claire Walker, Deirdre Bowen extras Brent Meyer, Dwayne McLean (Computer Extra Casting pub. David McCaughna l.p. Tony Kalem, Nicholas Campbell, Scott Denton, Susan Fletcher, Sonja Smits, David Main, Cindy Girling, Robin Ward, Candace O'Connor, Patrick Brymer, Moses Znaimer, Marilyn Lightstone, Linda Renhoffer, Kathy Garra, Sally Higgins, Malcolm Smith, Daisy White, Louisa Martin, Barry Stevens, Joni Mitchell, Winston Rekert, Benjamin Gordon, Larry Dane, Elizabeth Sheppard, Janet-Laine Green, Charles Jolliffe, Rita Tuckett, Maureen Fitzgerald, Gordon Thomson.



● Keeping a hawk-like eye out for her prey, Georgie Collins as the Ghostkeeper

Ghostkeeper

Ghostkeeper, a low-budget thriller with a small cast and crew, was filmed in Lake Louise, Alberta, from November 30th to December 23rd. A visit to the set revealed that the company (primarily Albertan) was struggling to complete the project under arduous conditions - record low temperatures and record snowfalls, plus the limitations of a three-week shoot.

The \$650,000 package was assembled by three Calgary-based men: Harry Cole as producer, Doug MacLeod as line producer and production manager, and Jim Makichuk as director. MacLeod and Makichuk also collaborated on the script.

The story may sound familiar: three young people are terrorized in a deserted ski lodge by an old woman and her monstrous entourage, with lots of blood, gore, and other such scenic effects.

A chance look at the call sheet confirmed this. Props required included a chain saw and axe. A three-foot-long T-bone in the kitchen of Deer Lodge (the hotel where the action was filmed) turned out to be another vital prop.

However, when asked if this project is the archetypical quick'n'gory horror flick, MacLeod (a thirtyish, golden-haired graduate of educational television, commercials and features) was quick to defend its positive elements.

"This is not a shocker in the sense of being a blood-and-guts film," he said, "although there is a reasonable dash of that... But there is also very sensitive photography and an interesting story line."

MacLeod praised d.o.p. John Holbrook for experimenting with low lights and fast lenses in the use of natural light "to wonderful effect." He described the location as "an art director's dream," the script having been written around the availability of Deer Lodge.

MacLeod had remembered the rustic beauty of the Lodge from his student days as a cook in the kitchen. Now, he had returned as a film producer, with the cooperation of Rick Crosby, whose family has owned the hotel for three generations.

"You can get up in the morning and see the shoots!" enthused MacLeod, and, certainly, the icy grandeur of the snow-covered Rockies supported his comment. He added that they were exploiting the location to maximum advantage in terms of lighting - by using kerosene, candles and natural light.

● Mai Zetterling directs her snooker players in one segment of *Love*

