

Count us in!

In her interesting article on the Canadian Film Institute, Penelope Hynam makes one observation which is decidedly odd - that "we have the ridiculous situation of Toronto being the only city in Canada which has neither a National Film Theatre affiliation, nor even occasional programme exchanges with the NFT."

I cannot imagine what prompted her to write this. Ever since the Ontario Film Theatre was formed in 1968 we have maintained a very close relationship with the NFT in Ottawa, through such programme directors as Frank Taylor, Ted Riley, John Webber, and now Stephen Bingham and John Sharkey. Nearly all national series from other countries, together with most Canadian series, which originate at the NFT are shown at the OFT, with many of them also being shown by the Pacific Cinematheque in Vancouver and either the Cinémathèque or Conservatory of Cinema Art in Montreal. Our 'affiliation' is no less than theirs.

Gerald Pratley
Director
Ontario Film Institute

Misery likes company (?)

Your last issue, No 78, had a question mark too few. There should have been one more after "This Man is a Star?"

While it is Fil Fraser's prerogative to put whom he wants in his pictures - after all, Fellini casts from the streets of Rome - for Tom Peacock to even be nominated by the actors of this country is a farce, let alone being awarded a Genie, no matter how good his performance was. The man is a school teacher and always will be. Actors who have striven in the business for years, like August Schellenberg, were also nominated. For somebody like that to be passed over in favour of someone who does it between classes is ludicrous.

No wonder we don't have a star system in this country. The actors themselves haven't the sense to award one of their own.

It's hard enough making a living as an actor and if you can't share the heartache then you sure as hell shouldn't share the glory!

Zale Daniel

Multi-media under exposed

An open letter to festival directors

Recently I was hired as a consultant to help the NFB's multi-media studio straighten out some problems related to distributing their product (paperwork problems). As an incidental aspect of this project, I became interested in the "profile" of multi-media as a filmic art. Actually, I had the chance to see several classy filmstrip productions and several "moving" diaporamas which changed all the preconceived notions I had about the artistic development of this medium.

Looking at the screen, my mind became readily aware of how multi-media conceptors were dealing with the medium's major limitation (the fixed image) through developing the artistic composition of the frame and working the narrative and the sonore "ambiance" (la troisième ambiance). Without going into

a detailed theoretical analysis à la Noël Burch, the technical/artistic developments that are occurring in the NFB's Studio G and the Canadian Government Photo Centre are something to see. For the student of cinema, it is obvious that multi-media is on the move and that the technical advances of the seventies have resulted in an original and growing use of filmic grammar (which probably also reflects the development/requirements of the image-trained audience). With the new equipment, using one image at a time (or more if you like) to provide "key moment images," multi-media creators are providing a programmed visual guideline through a mass of audible information.

Thus the creator has several interesting narrative advantages:

- 1) the capacity to force the spectator to imagine the next image, much as the storyteller does (teasing);
- 2) the dramatic suspense/impact caused by the differing linkages or articulations between the images;
- 3) the opportunity to exploit the conflict of the fixed image and the "liberated" sound - off screen space, etc. and,
- 4) the capacity to "color" the narrative, much as stockshot film does, by exploiting the impact of "real" photography or, for handdrawn frames, by exploiting the geography and composition of the frame, often leading to surrealism.

To my utter amazement, I discovered that the only Canadian Film Festival with a competition category for multi-media is A.M.T.E.C. which is oriented to pedagogic and technical concerns with an emphasis on hardware, and not to "film art" or "communications techniques." I have been informed that the

reason that multi-media, as an art form, is ignored has to do with "16mm/35mm chauvinism" and to the fact that festivals tend to reflect the tastes of the audiences and are not intended to develop new frontiers. On the other hand, the Chicago Film Festival includes multi-media as a competition category, but this exception, I am told, is because the festival is oriented to experimental efforts.

I am now addressing you, since you are in the festival business. How would you suggest that I approach the problem of getting recognition in a Canadian festival for the multi-media techniques?

Lots of people make it, and for the third world it is one of the only practical audio-visual solutions, since the production cost is easily controlled and the projection systems require the minimum of investment without limiting the image to the TV screen. Apparently, multi-media is also ideally suited for "message passing," so its utilization in a message-interested world is growing. Thus the creator often works towards filling real needs while using an artistic approach.

Now that the motivation for all this has been explained, could you please spare a few minutes to answer one of these two questions for me?

- 1) would your festival be interested in opening a competition category for multi-media and if so, under what conditions?
- 2) if it is impossible to do this in the context of your festival, where would you recommend that I go and what approach should I take?

Thanks for your attention. To quote one of my own memos: "Does multi-media have to wait 50 years to be recognized as an art form, as cinema

did?" Maybe...

Michael Hendricks
Montréal, Québec

"Out of the Blue" no floperoo

I am writing with reference to Les Wedman's ("More From Les") column in your last issue in which he refers to "Nicolas Claremont the man associated with Linda Manz' *Out of the Blue* floperoo"...

Mr. Claremont was never associated with *Out of the Blue*. He was, in fact, a producer on *Reckless* which was also shot in Vancouver, but almost a year later.

Furthermore, the 'floperoo'... is currently playing with 30 prints in France and 30 prints in Germany, doing very respectable business and garnering excellent reviews, is opening in London, Sweden and Holland in October and was recently hailed at the Edinburgh Film Best by eminent Times critic David Robinson as "a wholly believable picture of the atmosphere and human pressures of the North American lower depths."

Julia Frittaion
Director Public Relations
and Advertising
FilmAccord Inc.

Editors note: The error was made in Wedman's article by a copy editor, and not by him. His comments concerned the film *Reckless*. Mention of Linda Manz who stars in *Out of the Blue* caused the confusion which led to the error. Our apologies to all.

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