

TEN HOT YEARS

*Plus ça chauffe,
plus c'est la même chose*

by Bruce Pittman

THEY TELL ME IT'S BEEN ten years since *Cinema Canada* became the magazine we know today. "Ten years!" I said to myself. "They've got to be kidding! How can it be ten years since Richard Leiterman's mug graced that first issue."

So I checked it out. It's all true! Actually I managed one better. I re-read the entire first year of *Cinema Canada*.

Now you have to understand that this process is happening while I'm viewing the films that qualify for this year's Genie Awards. So all day I'm sitting through those movies and spending the intermissions in the lobby saying hello to old friends. At night I'm reading up on the events of 1972 in the pages of *Cinema Canada*.

I believe that's what's called juxtaposition. And that's what this article is intended to be - a juxtaposition of 1972 and 1982. A browsing through old copies of this magazine with the proverbial 20/20 hindsight¹ filtered through my own brand of bias.

It's been an interesting three months what with the industry stalled by high interest rates and pronouncements from Ottawa regarding capital cost allowances and pay-television applications. The resulting state of unemployment has afforded me the opportunity to renew acquaintances with many talented folks, who would otherwise be working. (Like they say - every cloud has a silver lining. And there's nothing better than to sit

Bruce Pittman recently directed The Olden Days Coat which won the Bijou Award for Best Drama Under 30 Minutes, and a gold plaque as Best Children's Film at the Chicago International Film Festival.

down and indulge in an old fashioned Canadian film industry gripe session.)

Given all the complaints and aggravations I've heard about on this assignment, I've come to one conclusion: nothing ever changes. It only seems different - a variation on the same theme.

For instance, take this item from 1972.

"Toronto's New Yorker Theatre has closed down for extensive alterations, and rumors abound that Bennett Fode is considering switching

from quality films to either action double bills or exploitation films for money reasons."

Same thing just happened in 1982.

In my case, ten years ago I opened the Revue Cinema in Toronto to run a retrospective of film classics. I lost my shirt doing it.² In 1982 United Artist Classics will be running a series of golden oldies at the very same theatre. I'm sure it will be successful only because I like to think that my ten-year-old idea was ahead of its time.

Here's another. Ten years ago Gilles Carle won the Canadian Film Award as best director for *La vraie nature de Bernadette*; but the film lost out as best picture to Bill Fruet's first feature, *Wedding in White*.

Insert the titles *Les Plouffe*, *Ticket to Heaven* and the name Ralph Thomas in the appropriate places and re-read the previous sentence.

Now that Fruet's name has come up, allow me to digress slightly. Here's a quote from him from these pages ten years ago.

"I want to do commercial films. I'd just love to do a thriller. *Wedding in White* was a pretty heavy film. I think it had its effect on everybody. There was a lot of sad feeling. The whole atmosphere was so down. I'm going to write my next picture - it will take place in Acapulco with lots of beautiful girls in it and all the ideal situations. (laughs) I now understand why Hollywood makes the kinds of films they do. It's a hell of a lot more fun to make those kinds of films than it is to do a serious one, like *Wedding in White*.

As hard as it may be, I wouldn't mind seeing Fruet given the opportunity to make another serious one, like *Wedding in White*. After all, it's been ten years.

Richard Leiterman was the director of photography on that nifty little film and in 1972 the pages of *Cinema Canada* were awash with articles about a dispute he was having with IATSE. Nothing really changes. I agreed with him then and I agree with him now concerning the present situation.

Richard had some other things to say that year:

"If somebody from Hollywood

RICHARD LEITERMAN

"1972 was pretty terrific workwise. I did four or five documentaries and two feature films: *Wedding in White* and *Between Friends*. It was easy then to do films for under a million dollars. The big discussion was what the unions were going to do about low-budget films. I.A. said they had all the work they could handle.

"1982 is going to be a very tough year. The budgets we've seen in the last three or four years are gone for reasons everyone knows. I've got a few things going but nothing really bankable. But we have a thriving alternative union, so even though there is a lot of doom and gloom I remain eternally optimistic. We certainly have world-class crews in all respects in Canada.

"The last ten years? Well I'm ten years older (maybe fifteen or twenty depending on the film). But I think the industry has come of age and so have the people working in it and I think there is plenty of room for people to start. The last ten years were a learning experience and I don't think any other country could have provided the experience that I got. The opportunities have been tremendous. All of us have had a good go here and some of us have learned to stand here."



IAN McDOUGAL

"In 1972 I was a production assistant on *Wedding in White*.

"I am presently deputy director and head of English language production for the Canadian Film Development Corporation.

"Summing up the last ten years I would say, 'too much too soon and too little too late.' What I see now is a return to sanity. The carpetbaggers are gone and the filmmakers as ever will prevail. I'm optimistic."



ANDRA SHEFFER

"Ten years ago I was finishing off my bachelor's degree at Carleton University. I started at the Film Festivals Bureau in 1974, and at the Certification Office in '75. Today, I'm the executive director of the Academy of Canadian Cinema.

"In the time I've been involved in the industry, I've really seen it go up and down. Now it's certainly moving in the right direction. When I started, I didn't know anything about Canadian films and, probably, had not seen many. Now, I think the average person has seen a few of them. And we're obviously moving in the right direction, getting out there to the public. We still have a way to go, but I'm optimistic about it."



phoned me and said, how would you like to come down and work on a two-million-dollar show, I'd say, you're absolutely right, because I know damned well that if I worked on that show, I could come back to Canada and say, 'Hey, I know how to do a hell of a lot more things than I did before. And I could help what we got going here.'

Well, luckily Richard didn't leave. Hollywood sort of came here and I think Leiterman would agree that he does know a hell of a lot more than he did before and that he is definitely helping what goes on here.

IT'S FUNNY TO LOOK

around and look back and take stock. Although, if you're not a hearty breed, all this nostalgia can be downright depressing. Item: dateline Montreal 1972:

"Bellevue Pathé president, Harold Greenberg announced the launching of a multi-million dollar fund for making private feature films. 'It'll only be for Canadian films and will augment the government's ten-million-dollar CFDC fund,' said Greenberg."

Meanwhile, back in Toronto:

"Terry Dene, president of Studio Centre and some of his associates have established a four-million-dollar Toronto feature film fund"

I turned to another page - rapidly - and came across the following item.

Reward: For the return of 2 - 750w Mole Baby Junior spot lights, Model 407 with barn doors. Contact: Ken Post, 2180 Parker Dr., Mississauga, (416) 277-2111.

I couldn't resist. I gave Ken a call. Now understand that Ken Post is a persistent filmmaker, a man who has paid all the dues. But have these ten years changed any of that tenacity? Is Ken Post going to give up in frustration? Cause, if a man like him loses faith, we're all in deep trouble. The conclusion?

The lights are still missing and if any of you have any information concerning this matter, please call Ken at the number listed above. The reward is still on.

Take another pair of good and talented cameraman friends of mine, Mark Irwin and Henry Fiks. They haven't really changed all these years. They're still as pleasantly obstinate and opinionated as ever. It's just that their hair has gone grey.

This observation was made in the lobby of that theatre where the 1981 Canadian films were being screened for Genie consideration. And it's time to sit down and assess those films. Where have we gotten to in ten years? The only place it counts is on the screen.

Now, I've developed all the hard bark and healthy cynicism that comes with 15 years in this business. So I set my jaw, clenched my teeth, sat down and saw them all, expecting the worst.

Guess what? I liked a lot of what I saw. Something good has developed in the last decade. In fact, I was damned proud of many of the films and the people who made them.

Les Plouffe knocked me out. I could have gone another hour with that film. Now mind you, this is a movie where there is no carnage and no "big names." Just three hours with people you really care about. Lovely stuff.

Scanners sits at the other end of the scale as films go: lots of carnage and some "names," but it works supremely well. Cronenberg is definitely under-

rated in this country. Anyone who thinks Cronenberg simply turns out profitable schlock is just plain stupid.

Now that film was photographed by a guy I know and have had many occasions to work with - Mark Irwin. I've said it many times to many people and I'm going to seize this opportunity to put it in print. Mark Irwin is well on his way to becoming a world-class cinematographer. And I do mean among the very few finest. His work on *Scanners* in first rate.

Ticket to Heaven was terrific. And you can put *Heartaches* in that category as well.

How about some great and unforgettable moments from other films; like Gordon Pinsent telling Ellen Burstyn that her husband is dead in *Silence of the North*, or Garry and Clay Borris in a beautifully emotional scene after Ronald Jones's suicide in *Alligator Shoes*. That was a film with enough integrity to almost overcome the poverty conditions it was made under.

I came away from a number of these films feeling a buzz. I was a convert. I liked what I saw. Maybe the last ten years where really worth it.

Now don't get me wrong. There were bad movies. Terrible films. Take *Finishing Touch* for example. Ghastly, yes. But it was so supremely trashy and inept that it was almost entertaining. I expect it to make several all-time lists; to join the pantheon of sincerely disastrous ventures. Right up there with *They Saved Hitler's Brain* and *Santa Claus vs. The Martians*. One magical element of film is its potential to stay in the mind - to be unforgettable. If there is any justice in this world, *Finishing Touch* is such a film.

But the real point I want to make is to take the good and forget the bad. On balance, the proportion of good films to bad was excellent. Better than 1972.

Marc Gervais, my favourite Jesuit, reviewed the 1972 Cannes Festival and the Canadian entrants that year by stating: "So the word for Canadian film, at least seen through foreign eyes, is very promising. Canadians are still on the verge... all in all, the experiment seems to be working." All in all, I agree and that's ten years after.

Lately, there has been a lot of talk about Australians when conversations get reduced to comparisons. How the Australians are doing it right. How the Australians can make films that honestly reflect their culture. "How about *My Brilliant Career* and *Breaker Morant* and *Gallipoli*," they say. I've said it too and I'm sick of it. Hang the Australians.⁴ Sit down and screen a given year's output by them and you'd see the proportions of good to bad. I've seen *The Car that Ate Paris*. What about *Illuminations*, *Pure Hit*, *The Trespasser*, *Fantasm* and the quickly to be forgotten *Fantasm Comes Again*.

Now let's look at our exportables over the last ten or so years. *Kamouraska*, *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, *La vraie nature de Bernadette*, *Wedding in White*, *Why Shoot the Teacher*, *Les ordres*, *Outrageous*, *Who Has Seen the Wind*, *Mon Oncle Antoine*. A pretty fair showing. I'd say.

Michel Brault and Monique Mercure have won direction and acting awards respectively at the Cannes Film Festival. *Atlantic City* was named best picture by the National Society of Film Critics in the U.S. and was nominated for a best picture Oscar.

I could go on and on. Trust me, it really could be a long list.

HENRY FIKS

"In 1972 I was called a cameraman. I was working full-time on documentaries and was about to make films combining the creative young directors and camera persons.

"In 1982 I am called a director of photography. I work three or four months of the year. I have behind me 3 or 4 features of undistinguished direction, script and camera work. I do not get offered many interesting documentaries. (I am, after all, a D.O.P.)

"All that remains of the ten years in between has the merit of brevity: up, down and gone."



MARK IRWIN

"In 1972 I was in the third year of the film program at York University and had just joined the Canadian Society of Cinematographers as a student affiliate. I was planning to spend the summer in Prince Rupert, B.C., filming an archeological dig for the NFB, sponsored by the National Museum of Man.

"By 1982 I had managed to shoot 13 features (four for David Cronenberg, three for William Fruet plus two *Newcomers* for René Bonnière) and am planning to spend two weeks in China shooting an arts and science exchange.

"For me, the past ten years provided an opportunity to break all the rules, mainly by ignoring them. I found a place in a part of the industry that hatched a young union in the shadow of a large one; then hatched another union out of the neglect of that same shadow. Instead of splintering the film business, I look on these developments as ambitious phases leading to a more open and flexible style of filmmaking. And hopefully the products of the next ten years will reflect this ambition. Hopefully."



DENIS HÉROUX

"In 1972, I was directing *Quelques arpents de neige*. We had begun it as a co-production with France, using some French actors, but the French fell out of the deal, and it was finished without them. That was just after *J'ai mon voyage*, which was a co-production.

"When I think back over the last ten years, that was my battle: to create strong production ties with the French. Now, with co-productions like *Quest for Fire* and *Atlantic City*, I think we've been terrifically successful.

"In Canada; I'm really a solitary case. I have always said that what I wanted to do was to make films of quality, and films which provide popular entertainment. With the last three productions (add *Les Plouffe*) we have done just that. John Kemeny, Justine (Heroux) and I control the films we make, and even in the cases of the co-productions I mentioned, we were the controlling producers.

"Our objective is to make films which are absolutely original. That's the only way we can go, and it's a great challenge. We have to dare to make the films that no one else wants to make. I think that those who are trying to remake the American movies with the chase scenes are on the wrong track.

"The shake-up in the last years has been terrific. Those that were in the business to make money from the tax shelter are gone. We won't see them anymore. And they weren't just producers; they were brokers, lawyers and accountants. They were the people who were selecting the scripts, imposing their choices.

"We, on the other hand, decided to go ahead, to take the risks. We've been much freer over the last five years than ever before to make the films we wanted to make. And for that, the tax shelter has been great. Just now, people are waiting for pay-TV to drop into their laps. Pay-TV will simply be one more source of revenue, not a panacea. The important thing is to make different films, original ones. If you succeed, then there's no reason to worry."



DAVID CRONENBERG

"In 1972 I was trying to decide whether or not I wanted to be involved in the film business. My first trip to Cannes in 1971 had filled me with horror, tempered with fascination. It wasn't really the place to show two underground features, *Stereo* and *Crimes of the Future*, although with the help of the CFDC I did. Everybody walked out except the critic for *Le Monde*, Louis Marcorelles, who loved them. I was two years away from directing my first movie (as opposed to film) which was *Shivers* (also known as *The Parasite Murders* and *They Came from Within*).

"In 1982 I am working on a feature called *Videodrome*. I've become a moviemaker in the last ten years. That's very satisfying and very exciting."



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ELSEWHERE IN THIS ISSUE

you can take a look at what's happening currently with production in this country. Let me take you through the 1972 production information that appeared in *Cinema Canada*.

Item: "The NFB announced that the half million dollar gross for *Mon Oncle Antoine* was the best in its history.

Claude Jutra was ready to start filming *Kamouraska* while, after many trials and tribulations, Czech director Jan Kadar was ready to start *Lies My Father Told Me*.

Warner Brothers was here to shoot *Class of '44*, the sequel to *Summer of '42* while Hal Ashby was here filming *The Last Detail*.

Otto Preminger announced plans to film the story of Norman Bethune from a script by Lionel Chetwyn.

A rumor has it that money might finally be in place for a noted Canadian producer to start a Bethune project this year.

Shebib was shooting *Between Friends* and the *Pyx* was a go in Montreal while Peter Pearson was out west filming *Paperback Hero*.

I would like to see that rather talented gentleman doing a feature or two in the not too distant future.

On the television scene:

Item: "Global Television reaffirmed its intent to direct six million dollars to independent producers for production."

That reminds me; where did I put those copies of pay-television applications for future reference?

Item: CITY-TV, in Toronto, was launched by Moses Znaimer. Among the staff producers was Ivan Reitman. He was doing a daily show hosted by Joanna Cotrell which featured "trans-sexuals, lesbians and prostitutes."

I'm sorry I missed it.

Anyway, I finally came to the end of my readings in those back issues. It seems to me that 1972 was a watershed year in which the industry started moving into multi-million-dollar funds for making "commercial" films. The 100% tax write-off was just around the corner, soon to be followed by lawyers,

accountants, stock brokers, and the whole "off the top" crowd.

In the midst of all those shifting times, one old timer slipped away. In an 86-word, four-sentence obituary, *Cinema Canada* announced the death of John Grierson. The passing of one type of filmmaking philosophy and the start of another? Who knows? Leave it to the historians.

Anyway, all that was ten years ago. The important thing is where do we stand now?

As it so happened, a compatriot in this industry of ours was bending my ear over some beer one night not too long ago. In a moment of anger and frustration, he espoused the view that, "Those greedy bastards have burned the industry to the ground."

I listened quietly to his views on this and other current trends in Canadian cinema. When he was finished, I leaned forward and presented a more charitable view, "Perhaps they were burned in the fire." Like they say, every cloud has a silver lining.

At this point the waitress arrived with another tray of refreshments and the evening degenerated into reminiscences about a certain burlesque house in New York City. But I think a valuable point had been made.

Most of us who were here ten years ago are still here. And there is still

enough piss and vinegar within the stalwarts to carry on. You don't work in this business without a generous supply of persistence and tenacity. Besides, in my case, I'm completely unqualified for any other line of work.

So, in 1982, there seem to be enough people around (the ones who always were) to roll up our sleeves and, like Sisyphus, roll the rock up that hill one more time. I know it's true. I've seen it in some of the films we've been making. I've heard it from the people who made those films.

It's like that line from the song: "If we're walking on thin ice, we may as well dance." ●

¹ The author stated that he indeed did have 20/20 vision and that he promised himself he would only keep doing what he does until he needs glasses.

² If pressed Pittman will acknowledge losing shoes, socks, underwear and pants as well and then he will wax poetic about how the doors of the Revue have stayed open to this very day under the skilled management of Mr. Bob Huber, and partners, some of the unsung heroes of Canadian exhibition.

³ A suggestion was made that a more commercial and at least a catchier title might be *Hard On*.

⁴ They'll probably do it themselves with a 150% tax write-off.

CLAUDE JUTRA

"1972. I'm still trailing in the wake of *Mon oncle Antoine*. Starting *Kamouraska*. Not a frame is exposed and the film is already panned: "Shouldn't be done. Quebec can't afford it!" By now it has been sold in many countries and has made good money. Nobody noticed. Two dogged years to get *For Better or Worse* off the ground. Release in one theatre still under construction. Many of my friends are still unaware it was ever made. After years of coaxing, I yield to Ralph Thomas's and John Hirsch's insistence that I make films in English for the CBC. Great guys, those two. Happy work. Four films. Good films. Awards: *Ada*, *Dreamspeaker*. The problem with TV is not how films are looked at but how they're not looked at. They're not real. I meet Saul Rubinek and direct him in three films. Most important event. Then *Surfacing*. I fear what I'm getting into. I should. The ground starts moving under my feet. I do not recognize the film I thought I made. I am ostracized for it. The CFDC has not invested in it, nor will it in the next one. Two dogged years to get *By Design* off the ground. One year after the shoot, still not released. Did a lot of theatre work in Toronto and Montreal. Just directed a new play in Montreal. It's a hit. I enjoy my home on Carre Saint-Louis. I don't have a film project. I'm fine, thank you. 1982."



ROBERT MÉNARD

"Ten years ago. I was an assistant cameraman, working for Les Productions Mutuelles on documentaries, commercials and the like. I hadn't yet done a feature. Today, having produced ten features and founded my own production company, Les Productions Vidéofilms, I've finally realized my goal, directing my first film (*Une journée en taxi*). That's what I've wanted to do for these last ten years.

Over that period, there has been a tremendous evolution in cinema, and things will change some more. I think we're travelling in the right direction. In Quebec, we're no longer making the films we made eight years ago, films which were only centered on Quebec. We've opened the door and are looking outside. It's more fun. And it's necessary.

"Features cost too much, and it's a healthy sign that we're ready to move into the international domain and look for new alliances. Being francophone, we look naturally to Europe. For ten years, we've lived the "boom" at home, with stars coming to Quebec to make films. We realized that cinema existed outside of Quebec as well, and that was good for everyone, the technicians and comedians as well as the producers. The young generation of filmmakers knows this now, and will move toward that larger world more frequently. If we can bring the financiers along, things will go well."

ARMAND COURNOYER

"I was in the private sector then, working in distribution at Les Films Mutuels. Presently, I am at the National Film Board in international distribution and sales.

"Over that period, the industry has made great progress. There have been delicate periods, like 1976, but we have got over them. I think that, within a year or two, we will find the ways to stabilize the situation in the industry, ways to provide the needed financing in both the public and private sectors. Above all, we must find new incentives to make the public come back again. It's always a question of cash."



ROBERT LANTOS

"Ten years ago I was finishing graduate school at McGill. That fall, I got into distribution with Derma Communications. Today, I'm making films at R.S.L.

"I've watched the industry plod along, and then I watched it take an enormous leap, stumble as it leaped, break its legs and fall. Now, I think that I'm watching a slow and rational recovery.

I think the guidelines for that recovery are beginning to be understood. Because it's more difficult to make a film, those who are not dedicated to that idea and are not prepared to suffer to make films have fallen by the wayside. The field is infinitely narrower today than it was three years ago. As a result, a number of films which do not have the commitment behind them to make good pictures will not be made, which is an overall improvement.

There have also been alliances shaped and formed between the Canadian industry and the worldwide industry which never existed before. Those alliances are making it possible now to make films on a rational, commercial basis. All the word "commercial" means is that films are pre-sold and pre-bought to distribution mechanisms around the world and, hence, guaranteed that they will be exposed to audiences. It is now possible for a number of entities in Canada to make films on that basis, *Paradise* being a case in point.

"Another interesting development is that Canadian films last year and this are getting a lot more exposure than they did at the beginning of the boom. There are now half a dozen major releases, world-wide, of Canadian films this year, from *Porky's*, *Paradise*, *Quest for Fire*, *Fright*, etc., plus the films which have gone on to earn all kinds of honors like *Atlantic City* and *Ticket to Heaven*. So, in every area of the marketplace, from awards and reviews to box-office dollars and pop-corn sales, we are there. Obviously, the films made at the latter half of the boom were more successful than those made at the beginning, but that was predictable. People need time to learn."

Begging to differ

What am I supposed to say? This guy, Pittman (whom I've known for quite sometime), hands me this article a mere 36 hours before deadline for some comments. I guess he expects a review of his review. Well, screw that! The man is trying to cover ten years - a very significant ten years. That decade involved a lot of my blood, sweat and tears. The best years of my life, as they say.

Sure, I like the idea behind the article he's written. He told me about it in his usual rambling monologue. So then I read the thing and quite frankly, I'm disturbed.

The guy is hedging his bets. It's light-weight stuff. What else is there to say?

Here's a guy with access to the media, our media. His task? Write about the last ten years. In other words, tell the story.

So what do we get? Pittman has delivered an article that will get not a single nose out of joint, save the poor misbegotten souls who devised *Finishing Touch*. Give me a break! That's like shooting fish in a barrel. What about the other crap he never even mentions? Pittman simply shrugs it away. Okay, fair enough. He's a kind person. Then he refers to those "greedy bastards" who have burned this industry to the ground and makes a joke of it.

Well, there are people, talented people who paid their dues in this business who are really hurting because of what's happened, because of that "off the top" crowd.

Yes, we'll roll up our sleeves and roll another rock up the hill, and, yes, good things have come out of the system that got started in our business a few years back. But (and it's a capital B-U-T) there is the bitter after-taste of anger.

Just to make a living, a lot of very talented people had to involve themselves in shit (and I'm sorry that I can't find another word for it).

A breed of people lacking any experience or love of film saw an opportunity

to make a fast buck at other people's expense. They chose to ignore or take advantage of the wealth of experienced people available to them. They merely griped at the rates they were charged and ignored the real value these talented people could have provided.

That's what Pittman fails to focus on. It's all that residual bitterness felt by people who have been here as long as he has (and, if I may be so bold to suggest, even longer).

I'm not one to mince words. So I'll put it simply. Our industry got invaded by a bunch of sleazy con artists. They wanted the glitter. They figured all that dazzle would be a way to make money. They packaged our industry to death and sold our financial backers down the river using that dazzle.

Some good films got made, but not by that bunch. The really good and commercial movies were made by producers and directors who believed, fought and died a little for their art and for their ideas. That's serious stuff. Let's face it. 1981 was lousy for people who work in this business.

Now, in 1982 (ten years after, as Pittman calls it), the great god pay-TV is upon us. And, lest we kid ourselves, the waters of our industry have the smell of new blood and the same sharks are circling, waiting for some money to be cast in these waters. Pigs at the trough.

I've seen it all before and frankly, I've lost faith. They'll find a way to screw it up.

It has to be said by someone - as unfortunate as it may be.

Perhaps I've been excessively unkind in my remarks regarding Pittman's article, but these are hard and angry times for us. I score him high on optimism and style. I even smiled at least once, but he's a man unwilling to burn bridges, even if the bridges are worth burning.

Maybe he's right. Perhaps I'm wrong. Who knows? I suppose the truth of it, as usual, lies somewhere in the middle ground. So I'll probably end up buying the guy a drink to smooth all this out. What the hell? I've been in worse company.

There's one last point to be made here. Pittman signed his piece. I haven't. Hell, I'm no fool! ●

DONALD BRITTAIN

"Ten years ago, I'd been out of documentaries for about five years. I had just come back from Japan where I had made a multi-image show called *Tiger Child* for the World's Fair, and I was sitting in a grubby hotel room near the Gloucester Road tube station in London, trying to talk Sterling Hadden into a feature film which was set in Northern Ontario. And he was trying to talk me into going back into documentary films which is where he thought it was all at. And he convinced me and I sacked in the feature and returned to the documentary. I didn't have too many regrets.

"Today, I'm mixing documentaries with TV drama and enjoying them both. At 53, I'd like to think I'm getting better at my job.

"The ten intervening years have produced the feature film boom, which I think was unfortunately dominated by a lot of imitation Hollywood producers and filled with a lot of lost opportunities. Let's hope there are enough investors left for the low-budget, high-quality features that I think we can make, which fit our situation better, and for which we have a great deal of talent which is still here."



ROBIN SPRY

"What I was doing ten years ago was dreadful, about as dreadful as things are now. I was shooting a television drama at the NFB for the CBC called *Down Hill*. I had had two features in a row, representing about two years work, refused by Sydney Newman. I was waiting to get permission to edit *Action/Reaction*, and, through all this, doing a short film called *Face*. I was trying to do my second feature after *Prologue*, and was getting nowhere.

"Now, I'm trying to get *Hit and Run* going, and some other films. Apart from that, I'm doing whatever I have to do to make a living.

"The distance the industry's gone? I guess you can use the word "industry" without it being ridiculous; there are labs and equipment houses, and a lot of people who are qualified and have experience. The infrastructure is now in place. Whether it will stay there is another matter.

Companies are going bankrupt right, left and center. A year ago, I would have said that we had a solid infrastructure and now what we need is more good films. Unfortunately, with the economic collapse and with the collapse of the 100% tax shelter system, the infrastructure which was in place is being dismembered, so I'm pretty pessimistic. The hope is that pay-television will help us. Personally, I'm not wildly happy with the decision which the CRTC has made.

"The outcome of the pay-TV decision is more of the same - of the failure of the bureaucratic, governmental machinery over the years, to really understand how the film world works and to properly use its resources. The government spends such huge amounts of money on overhead, and not in direct production. It has done nothing, literally nothing, to help the distribution end of the Canadian film industry.

"If this country had a strong, independent (of both the government and the Americans) distribution industry with ten strong distributors, and there were laws in place making it mandatory that all films and, above all, all Canadian films be distributed in Canada by Canadian companies, then we would have sources of production revenue in the hands of people who would know where to put the money. That, in turn, would guarantee that, when the film came out, the investors (who, in part, would be the distributors) would push the films in the theatres, and we would have a viable industry like anywhere else in the world. As it is, we don't have a Canadian distribution industry, and so we're looking at the collapse of a bureaucratic system, i.e. the tax shelter which was not what any of the film people asked for. It was some sort of financial invention which was misused and abused by a lot of people who didn't have anything to do with film. We have not had support in the distribution area. We have, with pay-TV, another example of a group being selected that seems to have no connection whatsoever with production or distribution. It is, again, a group which represents money and Toronto.

"When I look back over ten years, I look at ten years of being depressed at the wrong people making the wrong choices and putting the money and the power in the wrong places, and it's very disheartening. Ten years ago, I would certainly never have considered trying to include the United States or Europe in my work horizon, but now I don't see how I can avoid it. At least in some of those places, people are dealing with the real film world, and not with a sort of bureaucratic miasma."



PAT FERNS

"Ten years ago, I, and my colleague Richard Nielsen, were biting our fingernails waiting for confirmation of our first international co-production - with Time Life in New York - that would enable us to effect our escape from CBC into the exciting world of independent production. Little did we know...

"Now, having recently effected another escape - from the loving embrace of Torstar - we are free agents, again owning our company, and looking at the exciting prospects in the world of independent production, biting our fingernails, waiting for a pay-television decision - almost any decision...

"In the last ten years, we have grown up some, but not lost the inherent optimism that persuades us to keep banging our heads against a peculiarly Canadian brick-wall, and declaring that we enjoy it. Our fears about international acceptance for our products were misplaced, but a domestic marketplace that produces significant funding for Canadian projects is still more dream than reality."



BARBARA LAFFEY

"Ten years ago, I was a student at The Ontario College of Art.

"Today I run a company called Great Panes Studios which is involved in the design and fabrication of stained glass.

"In between I was the production manager on *Improper Channels* and *Threshold*. I'm sorry it didn't last because it was terrific."

TEN HOT YEARS

ROLAND LADOUCEUR

"I was head of the Paris office for the National Film Board in 1972, covering 16 countries in Europe, the Middle East and Africa. We dealt mostly in distribution, marketing, promotion, and so forth. Today, I'm executive director of Film Canada Center in Beverly Hills, California, which is a new concept, an agency founded by the National Film Board to provide a service to all of the Canadian film community in Los Angeles.

"Over the last ten years, there has been a great awakening of the feature film industry in the private sector. I would assume that, ten years ago, the cultural agencies – the NFB, the CBC, the CFDC – played a very useful role, far more important perhaps than nowadays. I think the cultural agencies are still valid in Canada, but in theatrical feature films, in television and mini-series, there's been a terrific growth in the private sector. The principal factor has been the capital cost allowance, which certainly created a great influx on the financial side, making a lot of money available. There's a positive side to that and a negative side, as we know. But, at least, it was instrumental in creating the big surge in the production of feature films in Canada.

"The other factor is that more and more people have realized it's very difficult to create a viable film industry in Canada without regular access to the various foreign markets. Whereas, ten years ago, we were trying to develop the film industry within Canada, we have now become aware that we need, like most other national cinemas, some access to some foreign markets, in order to recoup some investment and to make a profit. The domestic market in Canada – whether in the theatre or on television, or pay-television – is simply not large enough to recoup your investment. We must keep in mind the need to sell our product outside of Canada, whether in the U.S., which is the largest market, and the most accessible one, or Japan or Latin America. You need to think of the foreign markets in developing projects – feature films projects or mini-series or specials for television – because you won't recoup all of your investment in Canada, and then you can't make the next film."



SYDNEY NEWMAN

"In 1972, I was Commissioner of the National Film Board. I'm presently president of my own consulting firm, Sydney Newman Enterprises, which provides consultation to producers and directors, but mostly to writers. My major client is the CFDC where I am the chief creative consultant.

"The last ten years, I think we've seen a new maturity at the NFB. They seem to have invested a greater contemporary urgency in their work, which means they're alive and well. I think the kind of controversies that their films create is healthy. In terms of the feature industry, it's been boom or bust, but, in general, people have learned that the highest degrees of professionalism are needed for success. Producers, I hope, have realized that you can't win on one picture. They've got to create a continuity to their work so that writers and directors can develop.

"On the whole, I think we've made some very good pictures but no great ones; but the overall quality of the work has improved. I think more and more films are meeting the needs of audiences, distributors and exhibitors alike.

"I think the advent of pay-TV will provide a much needed kick upward and some of the professionalism we've learned should bear fruit. Selling to a Canadian market should be easier with pay-TV, and this will necessarily increase chances for success. But I think the old dilemma of Canadian content and expressions of Canadian roots will still harass efforts in the international market."



ROBERT ROUVEROY

"In 1972 I was doing a documentary in Trinidad called *Black Steel*. It was the first production of my company Cinimage.

"In 1982, I'm doing some special effects shots using video for a short display film called *North of Canada*.

"I have never stopped working in the last ten years because I have been mostly involved in documentaries which are the backbone of the Canadian film industry. Everyone gauges the feature film business but few realize that it is only a small part of the industry. We have a tremendous tradition in this country of producing fine documentaries. And that business has been good, and never so good as now. With features, the producers killed the goose that laid the golden egg through their own greed and scams. I suppose on that side of things very few people can be cheerful."

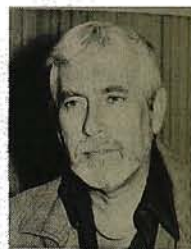


JOHN DUNNING

"We were doing *Keep It in the Family* in 1972, which was budgeted at \$360,000. We had just finished *Le diable est parmi nous* with Jean Beaudin, which had died. So, we had subsequently lost all the money we had made on *Valérie* and *L'initiation*. And we were starting over.

"Now, it's gone full circle. We've built up our budgets to the four million-odd mark, and last year we finished *Happy Birthday to Me* and *My Bloody Valentine*, and now we're starting right back again with low-budget films. So it's gone a full circle.

"I would say that we probably over-extended ourselves over the last three years. We're going to have to return to the basics of filmmaking, which was turning out a fairly good product for a price, a price that can survive in the international market and make a return to the investors. I think there will still be big-budget films made here, but they will be fewer and fewer, based on the availability of the financing. For us, it's come full circle. We're now budgeting films at a million."



BILL MARSDEN

"Ten years ago, I was in the private sector, producing documentary films. I was working in my own company. Today, I've celebrated one year with the Alberta government in the film development office, about to assist at the birth of the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corp. (AMPDC). It's been conceived, the fetus is growing. I think we're within 2 or 3 months of function.

"For me, these ten years have been very enjoyable. I haven't had a year in the business that I've regretted. They were all great. I just like to be involved in film and with film people.

"I think that the last ten years, businesswise, were a lot better than business is currently. Certainly, for documentary filmmakers, I see a real recession coming. The trouble in the film business is that the recession hits there first. I think that there's going to be a lean year or two ahead for a lot of our self-employed filmmakers in this country.

"I think that the Alberta Motion Picture Development Corp. will have a terrific impact on the Alberta industry, but one of the things we were counting on was the federal incentives staying in place. I don't know what will happen at the federal level after 1982, and what happens there will have an influence on our AMPDC. We're only providing seed money to help filmmakers develop projects, and we were counting on incentives being in place at the federal level to come up with the interim and permanent financing. So we'll have to wait and see. Pay television could have a tremendous impact on the industry. We're counting heavily on that. I think that feature films for television have more potential than feature films for theatrical release. We, as Canadians, have had trouble cracking the American distribution system for theatrical distribution. The television market promises to be a little bit more wide-open."



ALLAN KING



"In 1972 I was going down for the third time. I had been building a company through distribution only to discover that Europe could only be a dump market and that selling to Canadian television as an independent was an impossible task.

"In 1982 I'm writing my memoirs, developing four feature films and a mini-series.

"About the last ten years I would say that through our confusion and ambivalence and commitment to mediocrity that we have somehow emerged with a sense of identity. If we can read all the signs from the last ten years we should be able to develop a national cinema. If we don't, we will simply merge with the United States."

LINDA BEATH

"In 1972 I was working at the Canadian Film Institute and interviewing Claude Jutra for a monogram that was never published. I had the greatest house in the Gatineau Hills which was surrounded that winter by 22 feet of snow!

"I never thought I would be living in Toronto ten years later and certainly not doing what I am doing now (running United Artist Classics in Canada).

"Over the last ten years I learned that trying to be an independent in this country is impossible, but all in all I had a really great time. I think we made many people aware of some really good films so I have no regrets about New Cinema. It was good for the industry and a lot of films and filmmakers got recognition they might have never received in this country." ●



Academy of Canadian Cinema  Académie du cinéma canadien

1982 GENIE AWARDS

Best Motion Picture
Best Actor
Best Actress
Best Supporting Actor
Best Supporting Actress
Best Foreign Actor
Best Foreign Actress
Best Art Direction
Best Costume Design
Best Cinematography
Best Direction
Best Film Editing
Best Sound Editing

Best Music Score
Best Original Song
Best Original Screenplay
Best Adapted Screenplay
Best Overall Sound

Best Theatrical Short
Best Theatrical Documentary

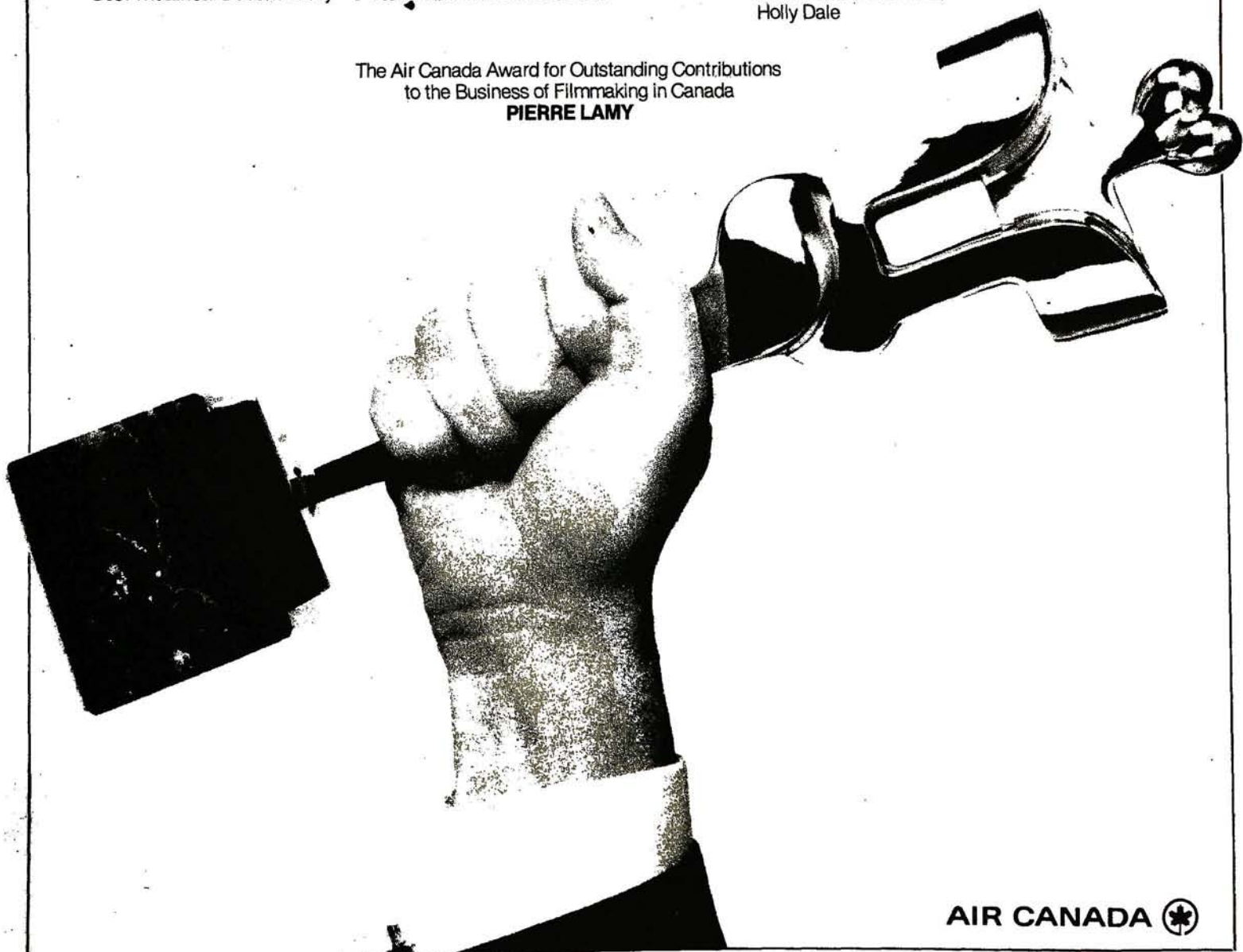
TICKET TO HEAVEN
NICK MANCUSO
MARGOT KIDDER
SAUL RUBINEK
DENISE FILIATRAULT
ALAN ARKIN
ANNIE POTTS
WILLIAM McCROW
NICOLE PELLETIER
RICHARD LEITERMAN
GILLES CARLE
RON WISMAN
PETER JERMYN, ANDY MALCOLM,
PETER THILLAYE
STEPHANE VENNE, CLAUDE DENJEAN
STEPHANE VENNE, CLAUDE DENJEAN
TERRY HEFFERNAN
GILLES CARLE, ROGER LEMELIN
AUSTIN GRIMALDI, JOE GRIMALDI,
DAN GOLDBERG, GORDON THOMPSON
ZEA
P4W: PRISON FOR WOMEN

Producers: Vivienne Leebosh, Ronald I. Cohen
Ticket To Heaven
Heartaches
Ticket To Heaven
Les Plouffe
Improper Channels
Heartaches
Les Plouffe
Les Plouffe
Silence Of The North
Les Plouffe
Ticket To Heaven
Heavy Metal

Les Plouffe
Les Plouffe
Heartaches
Les Plouffe
Heavy Metal

Producers: André Leduc, Jean-Jacques Leduc
Producers: Janis Cole,
Holly Dale

The Air Canada Award for Outstanding Contributions
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PIERRE LAMY



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