

# Banff fest rallies TV faithful at new site in fancy Springs Hotel

BANFF—Pat Ferns, president of Toronto's Primedia Productions, is an avid supporter of the event which he describes as "world class." Australian producer Paul Barron calls it "the most important single event in my career." For Olivier Barrot, head of co-production at TF1, Paris, it is "a unique festival; an opportunity to meet people for serious discussion." Others, ranging from London's Richard Price to New York's Don Taffner are amongst the growing number who show their approval by returning each year. And the 1984 Banff Television Festival, to be held May 20-26, promises to maintain the sense of arrival that marked the '82 and '83 fests.

Under the capable leadership of present Director Carrie Hunter, a tighter format was developed for 1982, Jerry Ezekiel joined as full-time Programme Director, and the focus on "film for television" was dropped. Henceforth all entries were to be shown on video screens, for the most part in lounges which approximated home viewing circumstances.

Independents are immediately confronted at the Festival's doors by an embarrassment of riches. Three channels play

## Feminist retrospective

MONTREAL — Cinémama, a five-day showing of 37 pioneering films by women filmmakers from the silent era to the present, will be held Apr. 4-8 at the Cinémathèque Québécoise.

Presented by Powerhouse Gallery with the collaboration of the National Film Board and the Cinémathèque, the program includes rare archival footage and landmark works from Québec, Canada and abroad. Grouped in four historical periods, from 1900 to the present, Cinémama will begin with works by women filmmakers including the world's first woman filmmaker, Alice Guy, Nell Shipman (*Back To God's Country*), Lotte Reiniger and Germaine Dulac (*La souriante Mme Beudet*). The second program Home Fires 1940-1950 will include works by NFB filmmakers Jane Marsh (*Women Are Warriors*), Evelyn Lambart (*The Impossible Map*) and Margaret Perry (*Grand Manan*). Revolution to Recognition 1964-1975 will comprise films by Anne Claire Poirier, Susanne Gervais, Chantal Ackerman, Barbara Hammer and Mai Zetterling. The concluding program Present, Evolution will explore the experimental filmmaking of animator Caroline Leaf, Veronika Soul (*Interview*); Helen Doyle's *Les mots/maux du silence*; Lois Siegel's *Painting With Light*, as well as the Canadian premiere of Susan Lambert's *On Guard*.

programmes from 9 a.m. to midnight with only brief meal interludes. On-demand screening facilities provide access to hundreds of hours of additional material. Special speakers and seminars occupy a good thirty-five hours of the week-long agenda. Social events including receptions, mountain climbing challenges, the famous Barbecue, and the Awards Night Dinner account for at least a dozen more. Finally, the richest resource of all, a varied group of 400 participants, cries out to be engaged in discussion, tapped for its experience and knowledge, or approached with specific proposals for production or distribution.

Kevin Sullivan, producer-director head of Huntingwood Films, Toronto, recommends the Festival particularly to people who are just breaking into the industry. "It's a good place to share ideas and make both foreign and domestic contacts," he comments, adding "although it's a bit tame from a deal-making point of view compared with Cannes."

From the perspectives of a distributor, Jan Rofekamp of Films Transit in Montreal considers attendance at Banff essential. In 1983 he picked up several titles there which he has been selling successfully abroad through personal contacts in Europe and stands at markets such as Monte Carlo. Rofekamp advises independents to exercise self-discipline while in the mountain setting. "The place is beautiful. The Festival is well-organized. The social events are super. But I zero in and screen, screen, screen. The on-demand viewing set-up is excellent. Then I talk to the producers whose work I feel that I can sell and we try to come to an arrangement. I'm prepared to make follow-up trips too, say to Toronto, to finalize the contracts."

Back in 1979 Wendy Wacko of Jasper wanted to make a film, her first, about the Rockies. She treated the Banff Festival as a crash course in producing — talking to entertainment lawyers, producers, directors, securities commission people, and anyone who might contribute to the realization of her dream. The result, eighteen months later, was her international success, *Challenge: The Canadian Rockies*. Wacko has gone on to make other films and is now working on *Stryker's Mountain* in co-operation with CBC. She has continued to attend the Festival because "It gives the independents a chance to meet broadcasters and other key people. It's such a people game! And there's such a limited amount of air time available here." She suggests that eager producers concentrate on getting to know well a limited number of people

rather than taking a shotgun approach. Above all, she says, "Know what you want before you go!"

The competition with its ten categories remains central to the 1984 Festival. Productions must have received their first use on television, and that for the first time in the twelve months prior to the April 1st entry deadline. A \$5000 award awaits the Grand Prize winner. The jury, comprised of Claude Fournier, director of *The Tin Flute*; Neil Hickey of TV Guide; Carine Rueff of FR3, Paris; German director Lina Wurtmueller; and London Financial Times TV editor Chris Dunkley may also make two Special Awards accompanied by \$2,500 cash each as well as the "Rockie" which goes home with every winner.

Chief amongst the seminars is a two-day exploration of the new technologies and their implications both creatively and economically. An impressive guest list headed by Les Brown, editor-in-chief of *Channels of*

*Communications* will outline the programming characteristics and requirements of several systems.

Don Taffner, respected New York producer and "packager", will explain success criteria and report on case studies of imported programs adapted for the U.S. market, under the theme of *Transatlantic Transplants*. Other seminars will highlight the Canadian industry, the viability of regional and national small-scale production, television and film promotion, television news, and a critical examination of the financial considerations involved in international co-production.

Retrospectives of French Canadian programming, and the best from Australia will vie for attention with a review of Sid Caesar's triumphs from three decades ago. In addition to all the social events there will be various luncheon speakers and Norman Lear has been invited to give the first annual Marshal McLuhan Address.

Package arrangements purchased before May 1 offer the best prices for delegates who plan to stay at the Festival centre, the Banff Springs Hotel. For shoestring budgets, daily rates are available. Although accommodation in the heart of activities at the hotel is highly desirable, it is possible to economize by paying the week's registration fee of \$550, staying at a main street hotel or guest house, and living on downtown fast food obtainable a twenty-minute walk from the Banff Springs site. Visitors should bring warm clothing in anticipation of cool evenings, print material if they have a finished product or polished proposal to sell, prepared announcements to provide to the Festival Daily should they be seeking products or co-production partners, and a bathing suit. After all, at the Banff Television Festival one can close a deal while paddling in the Upper Hot Springs Pool.

Gordon Martin ●

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