

Robyn Spry's

## Keeping Track

The '60s were the youth of Canadian cinema, and youth was its best subject. Dewy-eyed Michael Sarrazin played a sensitive juvenile delinquent in George Kaczender's *You're No Good* and dewy-eyed Margot Kidder played a restless daughter of the Ottawa Valley outback in Peter Pearson's *The Best Damn Fiddler from Calabogie to Kaladar*. Meanwhile, Robin Spry, the National Film Board's resident expert in Flower Power, celebrated rebellious young adulthood as the special condition of Canadian-ness, joining a whole generation of young filmmakers with the same vision: Owen, Shebib, King, Spring, Jutra, Groulx, Lefebvre, and Poirier, as well as Kaczender and Pearson. One of the finest films of the decade, Spry's *Prologue* set a couple of teenage innocents from Montreal against the backdrop of the international youth upheaval of 1968.

The rest is not quite history, with Kidder and Sarrazin going on to become second-stringers in Hollywood and occasional expatriate stars in Hollywood North, and with Spry going on to become the never-fully-appreciated Great Anglo Hope of Quebec cinema.

Now 20 years later, Sarrazin, Kidder, and Spry are *together for the first time!!* The film is *Keeping Track*, a tired but respectable middle-aged thriller that sums up many of the hopes and disappointments of a national cinema that never grew up.

*Keeping Track* is based on a serviceable intrigue involving the CIA, the KGB, and the Mounties chasing each other about Montreal in hot pursuit of the 'doomsday chip', an organic microchip that is going to Destabilize the Balance of Power and Change the Face of Western Civilization. Tangled in the web are a weary loser of a television news announcer (Sarrazin) who thinks he's Jane Fonda in *The China Syndrome*, a ditsy financier/computer-expert (Kidder) who thinks she's Lois Lane in *The China Syndrome*, and a slimy international banker (Alan Scarfe) who thinks he's the sneeringest high-camp heavy of Canadian cinema (he's right).

I found myself enjoying Jamie Brown's stylishly paranoid and funny script. But it's undeniably Spry's picture, a decent but *lite* remake of his fervent *One Man* (ten years old already), complete, once more, with crusading journalist standing in for the director (although haggard Sarrazin has credibility problems as a crusading anything). Kidder for her part seems to be a remake of the heroine of Spry's *Suzanne*, complete with working-class bi-cultural roots. She plays the part with brio, I suppose, but it occurred to me as I watched her frantically hobbling along in her too-tight high-heels with the



• Margot Kidder, Michael Sarrazin, - Keeping Track

KGB on her tail, or gamely trying to create Doris-Day-style sparks with Sarrazin, that Spry often had problems creating adult women.

The real star of the picture in any case is another old Spry stand-by: the most cinematic urban backdrop in the country, Montreal. The chase careens vividly from the Renaissance Palace headquarters of the Bank of Montreal, alongside the cranes of the Vieux Port to the green-spired rooftops and clotheslines of St-Henri. The location work is the kind of witty, tongue-in-cheek tourism Hitchcock indulged in everywhere from San Francisco to East Berlin - the *calèches* are everywhere, both literally and figuratively. But there's also a defiant depth of sentiment and belonging that Spry has acquired after years of fiction and documentary in this town that others have stripmined and recast as generic Americanopolis.

Spry's Canadian fingernails are thus as sharp as ever. I'm not referring only to the location work, nor to his habitual sensitive evocation of the French cultural backdrop (complete with blaspheming Montreal cops). If anything, the Canadian-ness of *Keeping Track* is as lovingly overstated as the civic boos-

terism. The biggest laugh at the screening I attended came when the KGB bad guy is revealed to be a Ukrainian RCMP counteragent from Moose Jaw. But on a more profound level the film plays resonantly with the heaviness of border crossings and exchange rates and making-it-in-New-York - and of course trains - in our collective imagination. A constant mock-reverential refrain is *American* money and Kidder symbolically incinerates a whole suitcase-full of the stuff at the climax. Take that you Free Traders!

Spry's moralism is also still visible, if somewhat diluted in tune with '80s yuppie fatigue. Though *Keeping Track*'s villains include our local arms manufacturers, one hardly expects to hear Spry's voice under the end credits intoning a list of the guilty corporations as in *One Man*. There's a slackness in conviction, as if the Telefilm Canada cynicism had permeated Spry's vision as well as his casting. All the same, any script full of broadsides at complicit media, corrupt Ottawa cabinet ministers and Mounties toadying up to the CIA means there's still life in the corpse of Spry's '60s idealism.

*Keeping Track* is conspicuously ab-

sent from the Genie nominations, despite Spry's graceful *mise-en-scène*, Diann Ilnicki's snappy editing (though she should have persuaded the boss to trim another 15 minutes), and Ron Stannett's lucid cinematography. (But of course this film's not the only victim of the Academy's stupid and irrelevant system of eligibility, nominations, and voting.) Without this plus, I'm afraid *Keeping Track* has little chance of surviving either the lackadaisical tax write-off distribution it will probably get or the absence of responsible film criticism in the English dailies across the country.

Therein lies the tragedy of the doubt-ridden adulthood of our cinema. A mature and thriving national cinema should have room for *Keeping Track*, whether as a decent genre work or as an in-between breathing-space effort by a major artist. After all, *Keeping Track* is in some ways an Anglo genre variant of Quebec's equally middle-aged *Déclin de l'empire américain*. Transferring *Déclin*'s climacteric cynicism from the comic genre to the thriller, why shouldn't *Keeping Track* connect with Canadian audiences (even if, as a thriller, it should have had more of the tautness, integrity and audience savvy of another Quebec hit, *Pouvoir intime*)?

I am not the first to wonder why creditable genre work has such a hard time asserting itself among the regional, generational and women's voices that account for whatever youthful vigour now exists in English Canadian cinema. That Robin Spry's understated flair in *Keeping Track* will probably fall through the cracks with all the tax-shelter garbage of the last decade is a sign that English Canadian film fiction - and its audience - still has a lot of growing to do.

Thomas Waugh •

**KEEPING TRACK** exec. p. Neil Léger p./d. Robin Spry p/w/ Jamie Brown line p. Bob Presner casting d. Nadia Rona Elite prods. prod. man. Peter Bray prod. co-ord Janine Anderton asst. to prod. man. Françoise McNeil office prod. asst. Linda Nadler prod. act. Bernard Lamy bookkeeper Elisabeth Lamy 1st a.d. Lise Abastado 2nd a.d. Jacques Laberge unit man. Michel Chauvin loc. man. Ken Korral cont. Marie Théberge art d. Michel Proulx props Pierre Fournier asst. props. Louis Gascon props buyer André Chamberland props vehicles Fernand Boudrias d.o.p. Ron Stannett 1st asst. cam. Luc Lussier 2nd asst. cam. Andrew Nevard steadicam op. Christian Duguay video cam. op. Eric Sandmark 2nd unit op. Larry Lynn stills photog James Rae gaffer Michel Paul Belisle best boy Marc Hénault 2nd lighting asst. Marion Mailhot gen. op. Michel Canuel key grip Robert Lapierre Jr. grip Guy Bissonette 2nd grip Robert Baylis cost. design. Ginette Magny ward. mistress Denise Lemieux dresser Suzanne Canuel make-up Tom Booth hair André Morneau sd. engineer Don Cohen boom Eric Zimmer sd. trainee Françoise Gingras stunt co-ord Dave Rigby spfx Jacques Godbout driver capt. Jim Disensi driver David O'Donnell, Teddy Wilson, Neil Allan Bibby asst. unit. man. Michel Guay prod. asst. Richard Marsan, Marc Furtado, Hayg Fazlian honeywagon driver Gerardo Manzi craft service Patrice Houx prod. placement Isabelle Létourneau swing crew Don Riordan, Chris Gilmore ed. Diann Ilnicki asst. ed. Borek Sedivek l.p. Michael Sarrazin, Margot Kidder, Alan Scarfe, Ken Pogue, John Boylan, Donald Pilon, Vlasta Vrana, Jim Morris, Shawn Lawrence, Pierre Zimmer, Louis Negin, Terry Haig, Patricia Phillips, Renée Girard, Leo Ilial, Jon Granik, Bob Pot, Michel Pasquier, Joy Boushel, Danette McKay, Linda Smith, Marc Dnis, Phil Pretten, Brian Dooley, Roland Nincheri, James Rae, Catherine Colvey, Mark Burns, Pier Kohl, Thomas Donohue, Claudia Cardian, Danielle Lepage, Roger Clown, John Casuccio, Dave Rigby, Robert Parsons, John Walsh, Bill Haugland, Mark Walker, Rob Roy, Gary Plaxton, Raymond Belisle, Ken Ernhoffer, Jacques Des Baillets stunts Marco Bianco, Ted Hanlan, Alison Reid, T.J. Scott, John Walsh colour 35 mm running time 102.4 min.

Jean and Serge Gagné's  
**La Couleur Encerclée**

If one sees surrealism not only as a modern art form but also as a state of mind which seeks to overturn conventional structures, then surrealism has long been a tradition among the artists and writers of Quebec. It was only after the Second World War, however, that their continual denial of the established order crystallized in the form of the 1948 manifesto *Réfus Global* (total rejection). Initiated by the Quebec painter Paul-Émile Borduas, one of the first of Canada's abstract expressionists, the document called for a "new civilization... which refused to be founded exclusively on those tools of reason, logic and intention." Its emphasis lay in the realm of "magic and freedom."

Borduas was fired from his teaching job for his pains and became an exile from his homeland. But this challenge to Duplessis' repressive society became, by the '60s, a mythic event. Serge and Jean Gagné in *La Couleur encerclée* attempt to carry on this tradition.

The title of this film could be translated as the encircling of colour, if colour is seen as an expressive, emotive force being encircled, imprisoned or hemmed in by the forces of repression. The film, in essence, is a barrage of images (live and animated) and sounds with a repetitive theme and whose only coherence really comes from that repetition. The theme is an old one; the conflict between artistic, imaginative freedom and the restrictive forces of society.

Two main characters represent the forces of freedom (a painter), and oppression (a businessman who is involved in the art world as a publisher and art dealer). "The business of art is organized thieving," Van Gogh is quoted as saying, and throughout the film he is used as a symbol for the fate of the artist in a repressive society. Reproductions of his paintings constantly show up in *La Couleur*. Which seems odd enough for a film on contemporary painters, but what is stranger still is that these expressionist images are often metamorphosed into computer animated drawings.

Apparently the Gagné brothers are computer artists and their computer animated drawings are probably the most interesting parts of the film (although they go by too fast to hold our attention and are overwhelmed by the plurality of the live-action footage). It seems a strange idea to make a eulogy to Van Gogh, whose very brushstrokes emphasize the physical and emotional presence of the artist, with computer fabricated images, whose electronic origins confer on them a cold, mechanical aspect even when heated up by the use of bright, bold colours. The juxtaposition of these two artistic modes almost achieves the surreal effect (although unconsciously) that the rest of the film strives after so arduously.



• *La Couleur* – evoking great artists's work

There is no real plot, or, at best, only a tenuous one. The painter argues with the businessman about the fate of his artist son. A woman writer argues with her lover about having a child and tries to get her book, *Un Duo anormaliste*, published by the same businessman. Various people run around in front of the camera with painted faces. Two robots on a rooftop paint on a plastic canvas. Various voices on the soundtrack complain about the fate of the artist. Drawings of hell from a catechism book are changed through computer animation techniques. A young, nubile girl becomes a pupil of sorts, being ini-

tiated into the secrets of the creative process. And a man rolls around in horse shit and exclaims that "there where one smells shit one smells being" (*Là où ça sens la merde ça sens l'être*). At the end we keep seeing two white tombstones marked Vincent and Theo.

The film could be amusing if, like some of the '20s surrealist films, it gave us one visual gag after another, but its pretentiousness burdens it. Like Buñuel's *L'Âge d'or*, it would like to be a protest against the hypocrisy of a bourgeois society, but the most shocking image it has is that of a young girl rolling naked in bed with an older man.

Child pornography I can do without but, really, this just ends up looking silly. Buñuel created shocking images which stay in the mind long after the film has ended. These filmmakers can only invoke the ghosts of Van Gogh and Artaud but they cannot live up to them.

In some ways the film is reminiscent of Gilles Groulx's *Vingt-quatre heures ou plus*; especially in its use of a collage technique made up of *cinéma-vérité* sections, video inserts and the use of voice-over commentary. As in Groulx's film, *La Couleur* also invokes the *Réfus Global*. But it lacks its rigorous Marxist analysis of a wide spectrum of Quebec society and politics. By focusing only on the plight of the artist within that society, *La Couleur* turns the cry of anger into a whine of protest. Improvisation and spontaneity were the credo of abstract expressionist painters who, in Quebec, were called the *automatistes* because their painting method was related to that of automatic writing in surrealism. In *La Couleur encerclée*, it's not only the surrealist vignettes which recall that art movement but also the expressionist frenzy of quick-paced editing and hand-held camera movements.

In some ways the film, rather than being a work of fiction, as it is labeled in the advertisements, is more like a documentary or a docu-drama. It does offer its audience a fascinating glimpse of a certain side of Quebec culture, that of the French-speaking artistic milieu, but perhaps only of the older generation of long-haired '60s rebels. I could recognize a few; Vaillancourt leading an artists' protest, Le Bison Ravi (Patrick Straram) going on about poetry and art. The film certainly tries to be a document of its time and, like the *Refus Global*, it would like to strike a blow against what it sees as a repressive social order. Unfortunately the artists' anger is not very convincing because we do not get clear image of the society which oppresses them. There is the absurd businessman, but he's too much a figure of fun to seem very oppressive. There's the recurrent image of the concrete spans of an autoroute blocking out the sky, but they have a certain abstract beauty. Paradoxically it is the images fabricated by computer animation which are closer to the cold technological side of modern society which these artists seem to be rebelling against.

If the *Refus Global* was the first blow dealt for the Quiet Revolution then this film might be its death knell. Borduas not only wrote the *Réfus Global*, he also created great paintings which broke the established rules of seeing and created a new language of art. This film does neither. It is derivative and self-conscious where it should be original and freely expressive. The evocation of great artists' names and works does not guarantee a film of the same quality.

Mary-Alemany Galway •

**LA COULEUR ENCERCLÉE** d./sc. Jean Gagné, Serge Gagné d.o.p. Martin Leclerc sd. Marcel Fraser ed. Jean Dumieuz music André Duchesne l.p. Jacques Rainville, Frédérique Collin, Jean-Pierre Cartier. Produced by Les Productions Quatre Vins Neufs. Distributed by Les Films du Crépuscule. colour 16 mm running time 90 min.

Robyn Wilson's  
**Moving Day**

Ever since she played the small town kid swallowed up by a heartless Chicago in 1971's *T.R. Baskin*, I can't help but feel responsible for Candice Bergen. A consistently underrated performer, she is so achingly vulnerable in *Baskin* that late-show screenings still find me shamelessly blurting: "Why don't you try someplace nice, like Vancouver?"

With her latest role in the locally shot *Moving Day* - a sweet and oddly touching story of a family's refusal to fall apart - it's almost as if that same girl took my telepathic advice only to find that, even in the best of places, life can offer more than a few curves.

As benefits a co-operative effort between the CBC, PBS and Vancouver's Zorah Productions, the setting is nebulously bi-coastal. For the puposes of PBS, where *Moving Day* is scheduled to air this fall, Bergen's Barbara Hartman could easily be the kind of wife and mother bred on the tennis courts of Beverly Hills - a gracefully aging blonde who can still afford to look hip in leather bomber jackets and cashmere sweaters tastefully edged with frolicking lambs.

Vancouver natives tuned in to the CBC's *Lies From Lotus Land* on March 14 would immediately have recognized the character as indigenous to the tranquil streets of Kerrisdale or Shaunessey. But, as the series title so aptly suggests, paradise has its own particular deceptions.

After living in the same house for over 20 years, the divorced Barbara is packing up to head for Albuquerque. It is a tribute to Bergen's skills that, even though Barbara is well-off and destined for a place that magazines like *Vanity Fair* consider rustically chic, she immediately garners our sympathy.

In fact, *Moving Day*, which Barbara dryly labels "two of the most chilling words in the English language," is graced with one of the most appealing casts I've ever seen in 30 minutes of television.

Bruno Gerussi's performance as Harry Picardo, a wheezy moving man who has trouble negotiating half a dozen stairs, is nothing less than a comic gem. After 15 years of watching Gerussi be supremely capable on the *Beachcombers*, it's sheer pleasure to hear those Stratford tones puffing: "I always get nervous we won't find the house."

Vancouver's Ted Stidder, blessed with a face that has all the folds of a

favourite pillow, turns in a moving performance as Barbara's live-in father. Facing an approaching senility, foreshadowed by the habit of watering a plastic plant, Stidder's Fred Sapstead somehow manages to be both dignified and undeniably charming. The scene where Fred explains to Barbara that his sanity doesn't stand a chance outside the familiar surroundings of home quietly cuts through the heart, a feat two-hour features don't often achieve.

We even understand the return of Barbara's ex-husband Charlie, played with admirable restraint by Jackson Davies. Like Bergen, Davies speaks with his eyes. One look at the two of them on the porch swing and we know Charlie realizes he's been a jerk.

Much of the credit must go to director Sandy Wilson who brings the same subtlety to *Moving Day* that made *My American Cousin* such an evocative experience. This, despite the fact that Bernard Slade's script is littered with the standard trappings of sitcom - crashing pianos, pregnant daughters and brawny sons who long to join the ballet.

While Slade has a wonderful way with dialogue, he still hasn't managed to forget he cut his teeth on shows like *Bewitched* and the *Flying Nun*. Play his work as broadly as it dictates, and you're asking for easy laughs and even easier solutions. Not even performers as skilled as Jack Lemmon and Dudley Moore have been able to avoid milking his lines.

In the hands of a lesser director, *Moving Day* could've been little more than an unusually loud game of musical chairs. Instead, Wilson opts for the gentle truth. In half an hour, we get what Slade has always wanted in previous work and never quite managed to achieve. People we care about going through enough sweet pain to make us all long for a happy ending.

As Harry Picardo says, "Don't tell me there's a season for everything... I happen to like spring." Spring is the season everyone who worked on *Moving Day* deserves.

John Lekich •

**MOVING DAY** sc. Bernard Slade d. Sandy Wilson lp. Candice Bergen, Bruno Gerussi, Jackson Davies, Ted Stidder, Kitty Lester, Laura White, K.C. Reaves, Janne Mortil, Alex Bruhanski d.o.p. David Geddes cast. d. Sid Kozak art d. Lawrence Collett cost. design Brigitte Schweickardt a.d. Peter Dashkewych cont. Sally Gardner cam. David Geddes sd. Hans Fousek graph. design Steve Osborne gaffer Amir Mohammed key grip Pat Paterson props. Bert Hilkman sp. fx. John Sleep make-up Imelda Bain-Parlin m. Brian Tate story ed. Karen Peterson ed. Ron Ireland sd. ed. Marc Benoit colourists George Vipond, Achim Kapitzka prod. sec. T.C. Trowsdale co-ord. Holly, Fitzhardinge-Aviles, Joyce Tinnion loc. man. Liz Dichmont prod. man. Garth Fowlie, Joe Battista assoc. p. Crawford Hawkins prod. acc. Norman Farrell post prod. Post Haste Video post. prod. p. David Dewar p. Ed Richardson line p. Derek Gardner exec. p. for CBC Philip Keatley produced by Zorah Productions Inc. in association with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (KCET), Los Angeles. Colour, 30 min.

• Candice Bergen, Jackson Davies



• Chloé Sainte Marie - Skybolt

Gilles Carle's  
**Skybolt**

*Skybolt*, the English version of *La Guêpe*, focusses on Chloé Richard (Chloé Sainte-Marie), a young career woman working as a pilot, who avenges the death of her two children following the acquittal of an unscrupulous billionaire charged with manslaughter and drunk driving. Despite its dramatic potential, it is one of the most banal, simple-minded and incoherent films ever produced in Québec.

Structurally, the film is a hodge-podge. Combining escapist, Hollywood-style fiction with social commentary on the contradictions of modern life, *Skybolt* falls short on all counts. In lines such as "Hm, is this Montreal or Quebec City?" and "Welcome to America, Mrs. Cook," it fails to clarify whether it is national or continental. There is nothing to indicate that it was shot in the Eastern Townships, let alone in Canada. In a desperate attempt to generalize, *Skybolt* succeeds in trivializing career women, drunk drivers, pedophiles and the plight of aboriginal people. (Although Carle's previous films address the contradictory nature of Québécois society, there is no evidence in this film that he has set up an ironic or critical distance from his characters.)

Whatever intrigue the film might have had, is destroyed by its maddening, shallow-minded obviousness: billionaire Steven Cook commenting on business ethics ("To get ahead, you gotta have a crooked lawyer"); Louis on Cook's acquittal ("You know what that means? In America, billionaires never go to prison"); and, finally, Cook on cheating the legal system ("That's what money is all about. But that doesn't mean that I did it all on purpose"). This is social commentary?

Perhaps the most dangerous example of this infantile reasoning is Chloé's acceptance of her own culpability in the death of her two children: "You know why they're not with us anymore? Because I was busy with exams when I should have been watching them... Such a fool, a mother who wants to become a pilot. You should have stopped me, tied me up, not let me out - put me in chains." (And this, from a director concerned with the right of individuals to free themselves from the dominant ideology!)

Melodrama notwithstanding, the implications behind such words must be addressed. It appears that the destruction of the Richard family is due more to the parents' separation, and specifically to Chloé's selfishness, than to the drunk driver. When Chloé decides to escape to the rural milieu of Louis' strawberry farm, there is no indication of whether or not she will find personal happiness. The plot shifts from loose ends to dead ends...

Unfortunately, Carle tries to be all things to all people. The result is confusion and contradiction. Had it not been for his track record, *Skybolt* might have been grounded before it got into the theatres.

Ed Matthews •

**SKYBOLT (English version: La Guêpe)** d./sc. Gilles Carle sc. Camille Coudari, Catherine Hermaty-Vieille d.o.p. Guy Dufaux sd. Patrick Rousseau art d. Jocelyn Joly asst. art. d. Raymond Dupuis costumes Nicole Pelletier ed. Michel Arcand sd. ed. Marie Hamelin, Alain Belhumeur or. m. Osvaldo Montes prod. man. Lorraine Richard 1st a.d. Carle Delaroché-Vernet 2nd a.d. Louis Philippe Rochon 1st asst. cam. Yves Drapeau 2nd asst. cam. Nicolas Marion trainee Louise Pepin cont. Marie La Haye dec. Diane Gauthier asst. Francois Gaston, Simon Fauteux props Ronald Fauteux ext. props Simon La Haye set props Patrice Bengle asst. props. Ian Lavoie make-up Nicole Lapierre asst. make-up Lucille Demers, Christiane Fattori, Viviane Marchand hair Alain Thiboutot asst. Robert Leblanc, Alain Moreau loc. man. Luc Martineau asst. Bernard Vincent prod. co-ord. Nicole Hilareguy or. mus. Osvaldo Montes mus. dir Jimmy Tanaka bandoneon Arturo Penon orchestration Richard Gregoire "Partons" composed and interpreted by Francois Guy gaffer Daniel Chretien c. Normand Viau, Andre Sheridan, Manal Hassib key grip Yvon Boudrias grip Jean-Pierre Lamarche, Sylvain Bergevin boom Veronique Gabillaud, Claude La Haye 1st asst. ed. Marie Hamelin 2nd asst. Florence Moureaux 1st asst. sd. ed. Patricia Tassinari art depts. co-ord Francois Paille construction co-ord Claude Gingras carpenters Adrien Lachance, Andre Ratelle, Bertrand Rousseau asst. ward. Sylvie Rochon dresser Sophie Beasse seamstress Enrica Ponzini prod. asst. Marc Beaulieu, Pierre Guillard, Claude Laflamme, Martine Carle, Bernard Rodrigue, Christiane Lacroix trainee Carole Demers double Manon Dessertine pilots Denis Bernier co-ord. car crash J.J. Makaro stunts. Gaston Perrault, David Rigby acc. Hélène Aubin, Louise Deslauriers, Louise Dupre vehicle man. Fernand Boudrias Challenger (Canadair) sup. shoot Gordon Tottle sp.fx. Bureau de la Magie enr. ext. spfx. David Hinks assts. Charles-Henri Duclos, Pierre Rivard front screen proj. National Film Board of Canada, Roger Martin, Eric Chamberlain SECOND UNIT d.o.p. Jean-Charles Tremblay 1st asst. Pierre Dupeppe video Francois Floquet add. shots Louis de Ernsted assts. Yvan Brunet, Philippe Martel neg. ed. Negbec sd. fx. Ken Page mix Michel Descombes, So-nolab Inc. asst. Andre Gagnon stills Lyne Charlebois pub. Pierre Brosseau cam. Panavision Canada lab Bellevue-Pathé Quebec Inc post. synch. Cinelume l.p. Chloé Sainte-Marie, Warren Peace, Donald Pilon, Ethne Grimes, Claude Gauthier, Gilbert Turp, Paul Buissonneau, Guy Godin, Louis Spritzer, Alain Villeneuve, Gabrielle Mathieu, Xavier Panaccio, Gabriel Panaccio, Len Watt, Jacques Tourangeau, Reynald Bouchard, Jean-Pierre Cartier, Coarlie Davidson, Yvon Sarrazin, Bruno Arseneault, Maxime Vanasse, Richard Lemire, Yves Dubreuil, Paule Ducharme colour 35mm running time 93 min. A Via Le Monde François Floquet Inc. production in association with Les Film Gilles Carle Inc. with participation from Telefilm Canada, La Société Générale du Cinéma du Québec, La Société Radio-Canada and Les Productions Karim Inc.

Don Allan's

# Jane Siberry, One More Colour

This half-hour music special aired in February, and was touted as Jane Siberry's 'CBC feature broadcast debut'. The main difficulty with this glimpse of Siberry (and that's all it is) is that it's a thing a snippets, bits and pieces, which don't add up to a rivetting whole. This talented woman deserves a better showcase.

Jane Siberry concert footage is heavily interspersed with her reminiscences, opinions, and answers to musical questions. It wasn't until she was about 18 that she started to "complete songs that I had always composed," and talks about the "possibility of it making sense." "I think there is a lot of humour in my work... ironic, more dry," but adds ruefully that perhaps people don't see it.

Her style - musically and visually - is word-wise, intelligent and off-centre. In many ways Siberry is a performance artist, with overtones of Laurie Anderson in the spoken passages, and hints of Philip Glass in music. But her abrupt, tight gestures during performances, and curiously repressed stance, convey an intensely guarded inner-life.

There are a couple of moments in the film that linger on: A 'talking' sequence with the two back-up singers flapping their hands to indicate typing with Siberry joining them in a short and funny burst of "Don't Sleep in the Subway, Darling" and, in the final number, some really beautiful voice harmonies superbly reinforced by the band.

But Jane Siberry is much more than a couple of memories. At times, the film seemed to resemble another choppy, tricky music video to add to the six she has already made. Perhaps the hour-long extended version of *Jane Siberry*,

• Jane Siberry



One More Colour on TVOntario in the fall will better serve her considerable talents.

Pat Thompson •

**JANE SIBERRY, ONE MORE COLOUR** Half-hour and one hour music special on singer-songwriter Jane Siberry. A TV pilot for series on international pop/rock artists. In production with the participation of CBC, TV-Ontario, Telefilm Canada and OFDC. Shot on location in San Francisco, Los Angeles, Toronto and Montreal until Dec. '86. p. Bruce Glawson, Arnie Zipursky assoc.p./asst.d. Charles Zamaria d. Don Allan doc. sequ. d. by Bruce Glawson concert and post-prod. d. Don Allan prod. man. Charles Zamaria film cam. Colin Allison, John Westhouser, Len Gilday film sd. John J. Thomson, Peter Sawade eds. Bruce Glawson, Arnie Zipursky concert ed. Anthony Corindia concert d.o.p. Allan MacPherson con. prod. man. Scott Mackenzie con. light. design. Alain Lortie 24-track Marcel Gouin, Karisma Recordin concert sd. engin. Doug McClement concert hall mix Bruce Drysdale mobile Spectel Video, concert sc. assist. Danielle Raymond conc. floor d. Jean Leduc con. switch Anthony Corindia con. make-up/hair Claudette Casavant con. prod. co-ord. Philippe Baylauc con. prod. assist. Mark Powers craft serv. Isobel Hardy con. cam François Gill, Ann Mackean, Allan MacPherson, Colin Allison, Pierre Theoret, Paul Hurteau steadicam Rob Crombie grip Richard Bonin, Martin Pilon, Daniel Billeneuve tape op. François Bonnelly ccu Adrien Reeves tech d. Michel St. Onger assist tech. d. Danny Belanger assist. cam. Marc Dupart light. Marc Dupart elec. Vincent Bric market/pub. Pamela Keary featuring Jane Siberry, Al Cross, Anne Bourne, Rebecca Jenkins, Ken Myhr, Gina Stepaniuk, John Switzer.

Tony Currie's

# Pink Chiquitas

Humming rock from outer space turns typical small-town bimboes into rock video slut-style bimboes while Sylvester Stallone's lookalike brother Frank thuds along as a white-suited private eye and familiar faces from commercials perform 33 rpm shtick at 78 in a spirited attempt to generate big laughs, which are in fact present, but not in such profusion as to dampen the viewer's awareness of the film's underlying glorification and expansion of certain proud Canadian cinematic traditions, exemplified, in the traditional manner, by the proliferation of American money, flags, license plates, etc. and, in the expansion, by the profound statement of Ontario sexuality that derives from dressing what are intended to be sexually threatening women in what has been scientifically determined to be the most soothing of hues - pink - thereby rupturing the gestalt and, as diegesis and pro-filmic event fly in opposite directions, eroding the viewer's pre-determined cultural stance until nothing remains but the conflicting impulses toward laughter or silence and the comfort, or threat, perceived in the tautological knowledge that those who like this sort of thing will like this.

Andrew Dowler •

**THE PINK CHIQUITAS** exec. p. Syd Cappe p. Nick Stiliadis assoc. p. attorney George Flak assoc. p. comp. Carl Zitter w/d. Tony Currie prod. man. 1st a.d. Michael Kennedy ed. Steve Withrow asst. ed. Mike McMahon 2nd a.d. Alan MacMinn 3rd a.d. Ani Baravyan asst. prod. man. Paco Alvarez script cont. Bronwen Hughes exec. asst. Dorcas Craig prod. sec. office Lyse Vivian prod. sec. - Dagmar Alice O'Neil driver/p.a. George Vodojovic, Nick Campbell, John Sanders driver p.a. gaffer Rob Emery d.o.p. Nick Stiliadis 1st asst. cam. Doug Lawrence 2nd asst. cam. David Benn Equip co-ord

2nd unit cam. Rhett Morita gaffer Keith Hlady best boy John Paxton elec. Will Van Halteren spfx lighting Bob Connolly key grip Edgar Egger grip Mark Hoffman p.a./gaffer Bob Davidson sd. mix. Gord Thompson boom Mike Farrell art d. Danny Adario set construct Tony Dasilva asst. set construct John Biggar, Dan Kangas scenic art. Mike Close graphics John Pearson props 2nd asst. ed. Julian Grant props Bora Bulajic special props Mark Arnold ward sets Giulio Murator ward. Jessica Daniel, Linda Grimbaum seamstress Debbie Williams make-up Nicole Demers hair Elvareez Ryan spfx co-ord Brock Jolliffe ass5. spfx. Dave Granger, Mike Gerace photog Robert Stamenov pub. Prudence Emory travel agent Phylis Brown cast. d. Karen Hazzard caterer Tony Gillina loc. man Brian Dennis driver/p.a. Mark Singer l.p. Frank Stallone, Bruce Pirrie, Liz Edwards, Cindy Valentine, Diana Platts, Gerald Issac, John Hemphill, Claudia Udy, Don Lake, Laura Robinson, Heather Smith, David Rigby, Angelo Christo, Bob Bredin, T.J. Scott, Kevin Frankoff, Peter McBurnie, Sharon Dyer, Anne Sketchley, Harold Bachan, Derango Coy, Sean Taylor, Bob Aaron, Marcia Bennet, Andrew Paul Bernard, Linda Bradbuckle, Jan Anderson, Alan Fox, Marlow Vella, Don Legros, Jean Currie, Bora Bulajic, Steve Withrow, Mike Gerace, Ted Hanlan, Tony Gillandro, Carl Zitter, Julian Grant, Michael Charrell, Jason Shout, Chris Shout, Paul Hembuff, Michael Kennedy, Eric Mackey, Jack Macintyre, Gene Mack, Mike Ferguson, Mike Simone, Sharolyn Sparro, Jo Penny, Carrie Gleason-Kennedy, Colin Gleason, Karen Mair, Nick Campbell, Karen Kennedy, Don Richardson, Eleveez Ryan. colour 35 mm running time 86 min.

Rafal Zielinski

# Recruits

Making movies is a kind of madness. But an egalitarian madness. It strikes many. Some talented, sensitive. Others, with more serious handicaps.

Imagine if you will, a group of your average greedy, greasy, but o.k. no-talent guys getting together over a few brew and indulging in a let's-make-a-movie-and-lots-of-money fantasy. (Sound familiar?) They reminisce about all the good bits and pieces from all their favourite Z pix - you know, the juicy stuff, and the yuk-yuk parts - and scramble them together, maybe talk a little distribution. But instead of having a good laugh and going home, they (and here is where the first symptoms appear) actually write it down, hire some supine director to give them what they want, and why not, maybe more, and high-tail it to the nearest 70¢ backlot.



• A Total T&A disaster - Recruits

One can only imagine the script conferences, a riot, the casting, wow, and the shoot itself, what a gas.

Unfortunately, the watching is hell. Those of us who, duped by our own patriotic zeal, sat through it, could only agree, that *Recruits* can be most charitably described as a total T&A disaster.

Strictly for the record now, it is the small-town story, similar to the *Police Academy* series, of a bunch of regular o.k. no-talent guys (and gals) that get hired by an unscrupulous police chief in order to wreak havoc on the mayor's plans for the governor's visit and the new freeway that will boost the local economy. Our gang, already in various troubles of their own, are pressed into a rigorous police training program

**RECRUITS** A Concorde Maurice Smith Production. p. Maurice Smith d. Rafal Zielinski assoc. p. Mike Dolgy, Terrea Smith sc. Charles Wiener, B.K. Roderick orig. story Maurice Smith ed. Stephan Fanfara m. Steve Parsons art d. Craig Richards d.o.p. Peter Czerski prod. man. Ken Gord prod co-ord Carl Alkerton prod. acc. Joanne McIntosh loc. man. Tony Morrone unit man. Paul Kahnert prod. sec. Sue Gilbert 1st a.d. Rob Malenfant 2nd a.d. George Collins 3rd a.d. Chris Geggie 1st asst. cam. Steve Deme 2nd a.d. Martin McNally cam. trainee Kevin Wright gaffer Jens Sturup best boy Ted Fanyeck elec. Steven Reddick key grip David Zimmerman best boy Ruth Lyons grip Jack Hilkenwich sd. rec. Urmas John Rosin boom Chris Leech cost design Eva Gord asst. ward. Michael Fernandez, Jody Bielaska, Joe Barzo make-up Deni Delory asst. make-up Odelya cont. Dug Rotschein stills photog John Phillips props Ray Lorenz set dresser Nick White art asst. Ian McAfee Bike Wrangler Dave Hutton carp Curtis Herbert comp. serv. Sean Wenzel storyboard artist Rob Ballantyne 2nd unit d. Randy Bradshaw 2nd unit cam Steve Deme, Barry Stone 2nd unit cam asst David Perkins stunts performed by Stunt Team casting Media Casting Lucinda Still C.D.C. add. cast. Christian Liedtke, Candadian Film (CFCS) unit pub. Linda Mote Ltd. 1st asst. ed. Christy Wilson 2nd asst. ed. Craig Nisker dialogue eds Wayne Griffin, David Giammarco sd. fx eds David Evans, Steven Munro sd. rec. Jack Heeren, Chris Cooke ADR rec Peter Shewcuhk sd. transfers Dave Cooke transport capt Gabe Fallus prod. assts. Michaela Morris, Franco Spada, Allen Kocman, Robert Howard, Dave Strapko, Mike Strapko, Goran Kalezic, Luciano Nobili, Danny Derry, Blanca Brynda, Robert Toppin craft serv. Roza Sadowski mixing house Soundmix titles and opt. Film Effects film processing Film House l.p. Doug Annear, John Canada Terrel, Stephen Osmond, Alain Deveau, Mike MacDonald, Tony Travis, Annie McAuley, Lolita David, Colleen Karney, Tracey Tanner, John Mikl Thor, Herb Field, Mark Blutman, Jason Logan, David Sisak, Carolyn Tweedle, Dianne Turgeon, Tom Melissis, Judi Emededn, Frank Savage, Lisa Shoosmith, Adrien Dorval, Linda Nantel, Terrence Howson, Dave Strapko, Al Therrian, Mike Strapko, Bob Segarini, Goran Kalezic, Bruce Bell, Mike Dolgy, Kimberly McCoy, Christian Liedtke, John Wing Jr., Charles Winener, Frank G. Thompson, Doug Zebeljan, Dominique St. Croix, Norbert Kausen, Paul Webster, Bo Staude, Karen Wood, Sasha Alexander, Elizabeth Harden. colour 35mm running time 90 min.

which they predictably and hilariously (as in ha-ha) fail. But at the last minute they bounce back, save the town and become the new police force.

All the basic elements are in place. Lots of naked flesh, motorcycle gangs, one nerd, our libidinous gang, one incompetent bully training-sarge and his partner – she of the bad German accent and the big bazooms – one ineffectual mayor and natch, the mayor's daughter. Well, it's been done before, right?

Maybe, but never this badly. If it wasn't for the T&A you would think it's the work of amateurs, and come to think of it, perhaps it is. Crammed with gags that are neither set up nor pay off, riddled with T&A squeezed into a cockamamie plot – you know, connect the dots – reject casting, serious hamming. The whole presented straight – almost like a children's play, – blessedly unaware of glaring loopholes, character, believability, you name it. However, I would have to believe this is one badly drawn cartoon cynically and execrably staged by Rafal Zielinski – formerly of these parts – and give it a merit rating of O.

But I think I'm making it sound too good. This picture really shouldn't be reviewed. Up-chuck time boys. Go back home to Pasadena and the day job.

Ah, film madness. Glorious and blind.

Daniel Hausmann •

Nancy Nicol's

## The Struggle for Choice

Prior to 1969, according to Statistics Canada, abortion was the leading cause of death for pregnant women. Between 1958 and 1969 over 12 women died each year from illegal abortions, and as many as 2000 women annually suffered complications, infections, perforated uteruses and sterility. Due to the illegal and covert status of abortions, these statistics grossly underestimate the situation. One Vancouver doctor in 1970, for example, numbered abortion-related deaths to be as high as 2000.

A major turning point in Canadian legislative history occurred in 1969. The Criminal Code of Canada was amended. Abortion was legally permitted if a 'therapeutic abortion' committee of three doctors decided that continuation of the pregnancy would endanger the woman's health or life. Despite this 'liberalization', women still lacked the access they wanted, and a campaign against the new law began.

Nancy Nicol's video series, *The Struggle for Choice*, begun in 1984, chronicles the movement and strategies of abortion rights groups since 1969. The video is divided into 5 parts, each 30-minute segment focussing on a different aspect of the Canadian experience: (i) **Abortion Caravan: The Early Movement**; (ii) **Access**; (iii) **Quebec 1971-1980**; (iv) **Restraint/Repression**; (v) **Morgantaler**.

Nicol concentrates on the women who have participated in the movement since its early days. From NDP MP Grace MacInnis to Veronique O'Leary, founder of the Women's Health Centre in Montreal, to Betsy Wood and Marcy Cohen, co-founders of the Vancouver abortion referral service in 1969 who, in 1970, marched with a group of women to the Parliament in Ottawa and declared war on the government of Canada.

The first segment, **Abortion Caravan**, sets the stage. Women remember their experiences in the '50s and '60s. Pioneer activists are interviewed. Marie-Angé Fournier of the Canadian Abortion Rights Action League in Moncton recalls her experience as a seventeen-year-old student nurse, when women for whom abortion was not an option were forced to breast-feed their babies before giving them up for adoption, to pay for the 'sin' of their pregnancy.

It is in this atmosphere that, in 1970, NDP MP Grace MacInnis – the only woman MP at the time – challenged her fellow MP's to further amend legislation to allow for the establishment of abortion clinics. But, she says, "They would become just like little boys in a washroom. You know, they'd get kind of nervous and raucous in every way they knew."

Outside the House, women gathered around, invaded Question Period, draped banners over the railing and, on May 11, 1970, declared war. Recounts Marcy Cohen: "We charged the government of Canada with being responsible for the murder, by abortion, of thousands of women who die from illegal abortions, and with being responsible for the oppression and degradation of thousands of women who are forced into unwanted motherhoods and who depend on inadequate birth control methods."

**Access** expands on the problems of availability of abortion, to include the whole support network of birth control, daycare, special services for working women, battered wives etc. The structure of the family, and the state, is designed to deny women power and autonomy.

Quebec, a province where conservative catholicism and the repressive measures of Duplessis' Union Nationale

managed to ensure that the status and freedom of its women were the lowest in Canada, nonetheless became the first province to defy the federal abortion law by 1976.

Nicol explores this process in **Quebec 1971-80**, expanding her focus to include a concrete analysis of class struggle. It is in this part, especially, that Nicol makes her point. Says Veronique O'Leary, "You cannot separate what happened in Quebec socially from the issue of abortion; it is about women, labour, politics; it is about nationalism, about working-class struggle. It's all linked, really."

In Quebec, abortion rights activists found a sympathetic environment in unions such as the Quebec Federation of Labour. Feminists considered themselves part of the Quebec battle for autonomy. It was a time for rising and embracing – politically, economically and socially, Quebec flourished.

In the early '80s an economic recession settled across the country. Its impact was felt in the social services, even in Quebec. **Restraint/Repression** examines the provincial governments' increasing use, under economic duress, of legislative measures to erode social and health services and drive down the working class and unions. The BC government under Bill Bennet, and Quebec's disheartening transition from the Parti Québécois to Robert Bourassa's Liberal policies, are viewed in this dim light.

Twenty-five bills have been targeted against Quebec's Common Front in the last 15 years, the majority of them since 1978. Bill 111 legislated teachers back to work, with a 20% wage cutback. Bill Bennet fired elected officials and appointed his own. "Operation Solidarity" lost in BC in 1983, defeated by a major sellout of the trade union bureaucracy.

Seen from the viewpoint of abortion rights activists – for whom availability and choice is a working-class issue (for wealthier women, it, like any other commodity or privilege, can be bought) – this backlash against social services, jobs for women and union independence is a rude awakening to the tenuousness of their achievements and the intent of governments to deny services to the powerless in times of economic hardship. In Ontario and Manitoba, since the opening of Morgantaler's

clinics, time and energy has been directed towards legislative reform which increasingly favours anti-abortion pro-lifers.

In **Morgantaler**, Nicol asserts that the abortion-rights campaign – because it concentrates on legal strategy – is defensive in character and therefore ineffective. The pro-life movement is getting stronger and richer – two major reasons for any government not to resist it. The NDP in Manitoba, for example, while espousing a pro-choice stance, actively engages in prosecuting Morgantaler.

Today, there is a major attack on abortion rights and, by extension, most minority/working-class gains. The question is, should activists spend their time and energy in the courts, or turn to each other to create a pool of resources, services and support?

As exemplified in previous videotapes such as **Let Poland be Poland**, **Our Choice: A Tape About Teenage Mothers**, **Mini Skools Pay Mini Wages** (about the 1983, 8-month daycare worker strike in Mississauga), and **Selling Out** (about the 1980 strike by 50,000 federal government workers), Nancy Nicol combines a radical analysis with a straight-forward documentary style. She simply relies on interviews with activists, whose recollections are underlined with archival footage, rallies, marches, news reports and performances. There is no 'expert' in *The Struggle for Choice*. What Nicol searches for, and finds, are the articulate desires of women for whom choice is the basic tenet of freedom.

Leila Marshy •

**STRUGGLE FOR CHOICE** p/d. Nancy Nicol assoc. p. Janis Lundman prod. co-ord. Julia McMahon. Michelle Robidoux res. and sc. Nancy Nicol sc. consult. Janis Lundman, Michelle Robidoux, Phyllis Waugh narr. Alain Bruouard, Michelle Robidoux narr. Linda Chartrand, Danielle Depeyre, Arlene Mantle, Dominique Provost, Michelle Robidoux cam. Phyllis Waugh audio and lighting Marian Collins, Karen Feinmen, Mai Mills, Elizabeth Schroder post prod. Charles Street Video, Toronto ed. Nancy Nicol, Nancy Reid, Geoffrey Shea Special Thanks to The Ontario Women's Caucus of the NDP, Canadian Abortion Rights Action League, Regroupement des centres de santé des femmes, La Vie en Rose, Groupe intervention video, video femmes, and the many individuals across the country who have donated generously toward this project Co-produced by The National Film Board of Canada and Trinity Square Video, Toronto running time 150 min Video

• Women struggling for Choice

