

Tan – Take Two

The mature familiarity with the topic of sex evident in the *Québécois* feature is sadly lacking in its English-Canadian counterpart. Other than the obvious fumbling adolescent efforts, as evidenced by the NFB's recent attempts to produce 'adult' dramas (e.g. *The Last Straw*), or the odd Cronenberg perversity, sex is not common fare in English-Canadian film. Enter *A Winter Tan*, straddling sex in both its guises – as gender and activity.

Not only does this film break new ground as a Canadian film, but its gutsiness and audacity "dares to go where no film has gone before." The courage of the filmmakers to take on what the less adventurous, more profit-motivated would consider to be too risky a subject – the raunchy and often degrading sexual exploits of an 'older' woman on the edge of sanity in Mexico – is only surpassed by their blatant and sophisticated treatment of the material. Congratulations Canada, the sex-talk genre has sprung a new hybrid – "sex and the older girl."

A Winter Tan originates with Maryse Holder's published letters, *Give Sorrow Words*, but injects them with an additional meaning – "give sex words." What we see on the screen is a woman feverishly scribbling, talking and screwing madly – as if her life depended on it. And it is the presentation of this complex relation between sex, race and language that marks this film as exceptional.

A Winter Tan depicts a woman's – a somewhat disturbed, but very articulate woman's – painful attempt to speak as a desiring subject within the confines of a male language of desire. Adopting the lexicon of the pornographic, Holder's excessive outbursts attempt to push through and speak sex as language. Mixing the vernacular and the literary in a manner approaching Joyce or Stein, Holder breathlessly, giddily, exhausts the obscene in fragments of drunken poetry, in rants that attempt to go beyond 'talking dirty', to articulate her desire in a language of sex that exceeds the perverse. The unique speech of Maryse Holder, with its troping between vulgarity and aestheticism – "a cunt is a cunt is a cunt" – echoes the spirit of Molly Bloom's affirmative "Yes"

The camera remains riveted on Holder's body, a body verbally and visually stripped of eroticism – there is no evidence of airbrushing here. In an early scene Maryse critically takes stock of her body direct to mirror/camera. With an odd mix of unflinching scrutiny and overvaluing narcissism, Holder 'check-



• Tan uncommon fare in English-Canadian film.

lists' her body like it was an outdated car. We are doubly fascinated and repelled as she appraises various body parts for their desirability/longevity. These graphic depictions of an aging body, a body in ruins, are set against Holder's often sardonic commentary on aging – "too bad you can't vomit up age."

The phrase "you're not getting older, you're getting better" is fitting if you are fortunate enough to be Jane Fonda or Tina Turner. But most women are disenfranchised by the media's trendy interest in women over 40. The recent celebration of these women does not accommodate despair, only denial. *A Winter Tan* faces age – body on. By refusing to hide behind the soft-lens veneer of beauty and romance, *A Winter Tan* forces us to address the materiality of aging and sex. For Holder sex is libertarian – it offers identity, freedom and ultimately, transcendence.

The audience at the Festival of Festivals screening likely expected nothing less than 'another tour de force performance from Jackie Burroughs' and nothing more from the film itself. Ultimately the triumph of the film is that it offers more than just a context for a winning performance. At the same time, to ignore the triumph of Burroughs' performance (her first since her series of archetypal Canadian grannies) would be a mistake as well as an injustice. Bur-

roughs' complicitous direct address to the camera doubly infuses Maryse Holder's letters with desperation and humour. Burroughs sustains this balance; she carries the film through its zig-zag of euphoria and despair. It is those moments where Burroughs shifts from extreme narcissism to melancholic self-abrogation that achieve the brilliance and complexity of the film, its downright wonder. Maryse Holder was no simple gal and depending on her success at conquests, she either gushes or rails. Entire scenes can sustain these moods. When happy, Holder "loves this country, I love it with all of my heart, everybody is a fucking genius." When rejected, she reaches paranoia, "I think I hear them objectifying me, throwing pebbles of hostility and desire at me."

A female academic trying to bed the youth of Mexico and meeting rejection at nearly every turn, offers but one of the many contradictions *A Winter Tan* elicits – it is its *modus operandi*. Instead of analyzing sexual tourism, *A Winter Tan* unflinchingly presents it – its contradictions intact. The stakes and ultimate meaning here are indeed altered by the specific variables of the film – that is, gender. The fact that the protagonist is a pathetic woman does not necessarily cancel out the fact that she plunders and reduces a nation to a sexual laboratory. On the other hand, this film cannot be

simply explained as an exercise in racism. Power relations, after Foucault, cannot be reduced to simple equations of dominance; there is no such thing as a simple exchange. The specific interrelations that make up *A Winter Tan* – youth versus age, men versus women, white privilege versus Third World oppression – make it difficult to assess exactly who is on top at any given moment.

Through the grid of sex, (libidinal economy combined with economics) power relations in *A Winter Tan* are complex, variegated and downright ambivalent at times. What fascinates here is the constant power shifts between the Mexican men and this white woman. Holder's continual rejections and eventual murder, supposedly at the hand of one of these 'experiments' certainly disrupts that delicate balance the film negotiates. In Maryse Holder's words, "If you transgress, you get punished."

Differences are critically exaggerated here but the film in no way gives allegiance to these differences, especially Holder's values. It is a truism that a film whose character exhibits racist strains, is not in itself a racist film. To label *A Winter Tan* as racist is knee-jerk at best and at worst ignores the complex issues presented here.

In fact the charge of racism highlights what is bravest about the approach of the filmmakers – ignoring the common wisdom that an 'unsympathetic' character can only be presented within an analysis of the character's unsympathetic nature. Rather than distancing themselves from the film's 'subject' by means of the typical finger-pointing moralism, the filmmakers bravely let Holder have a forum. Holder's racism is presented in all its horror, for the viewer to analyse. Only in that she is the subject and therefore 'heroine' of the film can the filmmakers be said to be celebrating Holder's attitudes. Even then the film's very 'flatness' of presentation discourages any presumptions about the filmmakers' intents or attitudes.

By offering a complex portrait of a complex modern woman and presenting it without accompanying discussion, *A Winter Tan* encourages the kind of debate that has already begun in these pages. *A Winter Tan* proves that that big O for 'other' can mean different things to different people. It offers a site to begin to examine these differences. If nothing else, the film echoes the history of narrative film from its early days to its recent clarity in the slasher films that teach a woman, "If you fuck you die." In this regard it is not insignificant that the film is based on a true story and tries within the confines of a fiction to preserve that reality. It presents the old reality with a sophistication and complexity unmatched in Canadian filmmaking.

Kass Banning •

Credits for *A Winter Tan* were published in issue No. 146.

Claude Gagnon's
The Kid Brother

Few recent films offer so slippery a sense of their own context as Claude Gagnon's **Kid Brother**. A modest film which provides little sense of the places from or to which it speaks, its unexpected success at Montreal's World Film Festival has resulted in awkward attempts to account for it in terms of an (as-yet elusive) authorial career or a resurgent local cinema. Newspaper reviewers, in opting to read the film against the backdrop of other treatments of comparable themes or subjects, have been led to what is perhaps the only useful matrix within which **Kid Brother** may be judged. One watches with vigilant attention as the film winds its way around the traps endemic to films about

the disabled or unusual, then congratulates it on its success.

Normally, a film like this might be expected to find a life within the interstices of the youth festival circuit and international television markets, arousing a broad if restrained consensus in its favour. A film whose principal appeal is not to cinephiles, it has nevertheless been forced to seek its momentum from festival and journalistic response, with variable success. This is unfortunate; **Kid Brother's** virtues are those of a film with a long shelf-life and specialized constituency, not those of a seasonal triumph.

The intricacies of **Kid Brother's** history (it was filmed in the U.S., with a cast of mid-range mainstream American performers, and financed in part — like Gagnon's earlier films — with Japanese money) are by now well-known, as is the director's acknowledged estrangement from the main currents of Quebec filmmaking over the last several years. Similar circumstances have, in the case of other filmmakers, resulted in everything from a thematization of this *déracinement* to a productive clash of cultural traditions. With **Kid Brother**, it is

rather as if a strong investment in the apparent universality of the film's subject matter (the portrait of a boy born with no legs) has converged with the naturalism of Gagnon's earlier films (in particular, **Visage pâle**) to produce a kind of humanist esperanto. **Kid Brother** seems committed to eliciting universalist adjectives like "funny, moving and heartwarming" (the press release) and the Bulgarian or Chinese distribution deals which almost inevitably follow.

Kid Brother is, to its credit, successful at avoiding the twin traps of inspirational condescension and the voyeuristic revelation of sexual or hygienic detail. It accomplishes this, in large part, by making these part of the film's thematic and narrative material. The inability of characters in the film to just let Kenny live his life is set up against the film's own resolute determination to do just that. The unfolding of Kenny's difficulties takes shape within the style and narrative patterns of television melodrama (like so many of these, the story involves the disruption and reconciliation of the nuclear family). The point — that the magnitude of problems as perceived outside the family has little to do with the banality and familiarity of their effects within it — is a useful if uncontroversial one. It is, however, established quite early, and many viewers pass the point at which that ordinariness still has the force of revelation.

In this respect, I am reminded of Leslie Halliwell's brusque dismissal of Ida Lupino's film **The Bigamist**: that, having summoned all its force to make the point that bigamy exists, it finds few viewers surprised or shocked and retreats, deflated. **Kid Brother**, in its insistence on the quotidian ordinariness of Kenny's life, risks a similar reaction. The film, for many initially skeptical viewers, elicits a simple sigh of relief for having fulfilled its promise to be unobjectionable. Those most affected by **Kid Brother** seem to be those, precisely, for whom Kenny's story is one of courage and inspiration, an unfortunate but widespread response to a film which genuinely works to resist it.

Will Straw •



• Kenny Easterday in slippery Kid

THE KID BROTHER A Kinema Amerika Motion Picture A Towa Production Co., Ltd. Bandai Co., Ltd. and Kinema Tokyo Co., Ltd. presentation exec. p. Matsuo Takahashi, Makoto Yamashina co-p. Hirohiko Sueyoshi line p. Dennis Bishop d.o.p. Yudai Kato (J.S.C.) art d. Bill Bilowit lighting sup. Kenjiro Konaka casting by Judy Courtney, Donna Newton add. cast. by Sharon Ceccatti, Clayton Hill m. comp and conducted by François Dompiere song "Soaring Baby" m. by François Dompiere lyric Daniel Lavoie sung by Daniel Lavoie ed. André Corriveau p. Kiyoshi Fujimoto sc/ d. Claude Gagnon assist. p. Daisaku Yamada prod. sup. Mel Howard, Yuri Yoshimura-Gagnon prod. man. Kathleen Caton 1st a. d. Eduardo Rossof 2nd a. d. Annie Loeffler loc. man. Brett Botula sc. sup. Carmen Soriano, Paul Bowers cost. des. Maureen Hogan asst. art. d. David Hill prop master Ruth Lounsbury asst. prop. Martin Carrigan 1st. cam. op. Bert Guthrie 2nd. cam. op. John Rice cam assts Clive Sacke, Simon Manses, Tony Baggott, Tsotomu Takada cam. loader Evan Estern still photog. Alain Gagnon, Susan Golomb, Richard Golomb sd. mix Russell Fager boom op. Jim Bruwelheide sd. ed. Louis Dupire dialogue ed. Michel Bordeleau asst sd. ed. Louis Col-

lin m. ed. Noel Almey re-rec. mix Michel Descombes. André Gagnon Foley rec. Andy Malcolm color timing Pierre Campeau neg. cutter Negbec Film Inc. asst ed. Christine Denault apprentice editor Anne-Josée Boudreau head carp Gary Kosko scenic painters Carol Stavish, Leah Boogeman, Rick Sheridan carp. Bill Franko, Greg Deroy set dressers Frederika Gray, Alexis Samulski make-up Jeanne Josefczyk asst. make-up Karin Wagner ward sup. Mary Lee Anderson Forrester ward asst. Terry Eglar Bilsky lighting d. Bill Schwarz gaffer Barry Kessler best-boy elec. Hirokazu Murasawa elec. Robert Lubomski key grip Peter Bennett Beal dolly grips Nick Tallo, Richard Sieg craft services Craig Snidach, Susan Sayers catering service Metro Catering asst. to d. Luc Vandal int. Shisho Ito, Juncho Tsunashima tutors Diane Benec, Susan Handeshield stand in Mike Treylinek, Sal Palazzo dogs supplied by Captain Haggerty's School for Dogs handlers Susan Zaretsky, Mary Doran transportation co-ords Frank McGough, T. Michael Reid gripelec. driver Dennis Drogan honey wagon, driver Jackie L. Crane prod. co-ord Jessica Abrams prod. acc. Deann Balsler prod. sec. Barbara Homziuk, Debby Carter, Holly Bruwelheide acc asst. Media Rago key prod. asst. Thom Dowling prod. asst. John Stefancic, Bill Alberter, Jeff Barker, Andy Taylor, Arthur Sherin, Maria Polanick, Randall Newsome, Tony Mastrelembro post-production staff Montreal (Canada) prod. man. Alain Gagnon prod. co-ord Joanne Duguay prod. acc. Marie-Josée Théoret et prod. asst. Denys Lortie Production Staff Tokyo co-ord Akihiko Shimada acc. Rikiji Mori pub. Tadahiko Nobe sec. Kyoko Suzuki, Taeko Saito prod. counsel Janet C. Jacobson, Thomas E. Rothman film by Fuji Film, Hoei Sangyo cam. lenses Panavision loc. equip. Filmtrucks, Performance lighting lab Bellevue-Pathé Québec Inc., Michel Déglise, Serge Nadeau sd. lab. Sonolab Inc. titles Les productions ciné-titres opticals Film Docteur du Québec Inc. Special Thanks to Takaka Shigemori, The Easterday Family, Pennsylvania Governor Dick Thornburgh, Film Commission of Pennsylvania, Joyce Tomana, The City of Pittsburgh, Pittsburgh Mayor Richard Caliguri, People of West Aliquippa, Pennsylvania, Aliquippa Mayor Dan Britza, Greater Pittsburgh International Airport, Central Medical Pavilion of Pittsburgh, Union Electric Steel Corporation, Bob Mack, Ace Auto Glass (Harry), WPXI-TV (Pittsburgh), Ritz's, Jérôme Langlois. Song "Disposable Love", music Rudy Toussaint lyric Stéphane Fortier sung by B. B. Boom I. p. Kenny Easterday, Caitlin Clarke, Liane Curtis, Zach Grenier, Jesse Easterday, Jr., Tom Reddy, Alain St-Alix, Daniel Lambert, Lamy Derval, Eduardo Rossoff, John Carpenter, Gerry Klug, Bingo O'Mally, Bill Dalzell, Fretchen Greaser, Barbara Russell, Donale Stone, Karen Eisenhower, Laurence Woshner, Angelica Bellomo, Sharon Ceccatti, Frederika Gray, B. J. Rankin, Phyllis Stern, Sal Palazzo, Martin Carrigan, John King, Clayton D. Hill, Jim McCrum.

Robert Frank and
Rudy Wurlitzer's

Candy Mountain

When Henry Fonda hit the road in **The Grapes of Wrath**, it was because the banks had turfed him off his land and the long road to California was the only option open to him. When son Peter, along with his buddy Dennis Hopper, trekked across the country some 25 years later in **Easy Rider**, the open road represented the means through which one could opt out of society. In Robert Frank and Rudy Wurlitzer's **Candy Mountain**, Julius (Kevin J. O'Connor) heads north to Nova Scotia in search of fame and fortune. **Candy Mountain** is in some ways just another road movie, but it is also a movie of our times; a movie of the '80s.

Given the histories of the two directors involved, one might have expected



• Kevin J. O'Connor watches dream candy get scorched

an updated version of a '60s road picture. Yet although many elements of the Beat vision of '50s and '60s America are firmly in place, there is a real attempt to reconcile the idealism of the past with the realities of the present.

Candy Mountain begins in New York City as Julius overhears a conversation about the 'legendary' Elmore Silk, one of the greatest acoustic guitar makers in the country who hasn't been seen or heard from in more than a decade. If Silk can be found, think the city schemers, his new guitars could be leaked onto the market and profits in the thousands could be made. For \$2,000 and a cut of profits, Julius volunteers to track down the longlost Elmore Silk.

And so the adventure begins. Changing cars in virtually every scene, Julius works his way up through New York State and across the border into Nova Scotia. Along the way, he comes face-to-face with the threads that make up the past of the elusive Elmore Silk. Silk's brother, played with tacky flair by Tom Waits, tells our young hero: "You're young, you should be playing lots of golf." Dr. John appears as Silk's less-than-fraternal, wheelchair-bound brother-in-law; Leon Redbone pops up in the most unlikely role of a Nova Scotian justice of the peace; and Tantoo Cardinal puts a great deal of spunk into her role as a local native who breaks into the cottages of summering Americans to keep warm while stalking deer.

This is a film that depends almost entirely on the strength of its cameo appearances. It is, after all, a road movie; a road movie with a beginning, an end, and a string of cameos in between. The cameo turns are often a bit too quirky to be entirely successful, but none of them are way off the mark. In the true spirit of the road movie, every performance

keeps things moving, and the forward momentum is never lost.

All of this, however, would have been for naught if the film's ending didn't deliver the goods. The true spirit of the film (and of the road as well) materializes at the end when Julius finally catches up with Elmore Silk, played with restraint, ease and humour by Harris Yulin. Silk is no Kurtz, but his presence envelops **Candy Mountain** in much the same way that the most vivid of Conrad characters hangs over the jungle in **Heart of Darkness**. If Julius' ambition in trekking to Nova Scotia is seeking fame and fortune, Silk's only ambition is to keep moving. Silk has no interest in Julius' schemes and is preparing to leave once again. As Elmore tells Julius, "I'll go somewhere I haven't been before. Maybe out West."

Candy Mountain is by no means a perfect film. It runs a bit too long at times, the segments which make up the film are not joined together as fluidly as they might have been, and there's not nearly enough local flavour in the Nova Scotian portion of the film — a rather serious criticism when one considers the insight and detail that Robert Frank was able to capture in his photographs of the American South and West.

It's been 30 years since Kerouac wrote *On the Road*, but that road has as much of an engrossing mystique as it did in 1955. And though it may be at odds with the 'make it' ethic of the '80s, there's something still strangely appealing about a voyage of discovery through the unknown roadways of North America. As Kerouac himself wrote: "What is that feeling when you're driving away from people and they recede on the plain till you see their specks dispersing? — it's the too-huge world vaulting us, and it's good-by. But we lean for-

ward to the next crazy venture beneath the skies." With **Candy Mountain**, Kerouac himself couldn't have asked for a better tribute, and the familiar material of the road movie couldn't have been better served.

Greg Clarke •

CANDY MOUNTAIN. A Xanadu Film, Rudy Waldburger presentation in association with Les Films Plain-Chant (Philippe Diaz) and Les Films Vision 4 Inc (Claude Bonin, Suzanne Héault). sc. Rudy Wurlitzer, d. Robert Frank, Rudy Wurlitzer d.o.p. Pio Corradi sd. David Joliat art d. (N.Y.) Brad Ricker art d. Canada Keith Currie ward/ styling Carol Wood casting USA Risa Braemon/ Billy Hopkins, Heidi Lewitt casting Canada Gail Carr asst. d. Richard Garber, Alain Klarer, Lydie Mahias sc. sup. Brigitte Germain asst. cam. Patrick Lindernmaier gaffer Andre Pinkus grip/ elec. Richard Ludwig key grip. N.Y. Chris Ingvordsen key grip Canada Michael Periard spfx Jacques Godbout prod. man. N.Y. Philippe D'Arbanville prod. man. Canada Marcelle Gibson loc. unit man. K.C. Schulberg asst. to the d. Jerry Poynton ed. Jennifer Auge asst. ed. Camille Côté sd. ed. François Gedigier asst. sd. ed. Karen Logan mix. Dominique Dalmasso m. sup. Hal Wilner p. Ruth Waldburger, Philippe Diaz, Claude Bonin, Suzanne Héault exec. p. Gerald Dearing assoc. p. Tom Rothman. A co-production of Canada, Switzerland, France, Canada, Xanadu Film, Films Plain Chant, Films Vision 4 Inc. Produced with the participation of Department of the Interior, Bern; Ministry of Culture (CNC), Paris; Telefilm Canada, First Choice (Canada) in co-production with George Reinhart, Zurich; T.S. Production, Milena Poylo, Paris, Television Suisse (SSR) and Films A2 Ip. Kevin J. O'Connor, Harris Yulin, Tom Waits, Bulle Ogier, Roberts Blossom, Leon Redbone, Dr. John, Rita MacNeil, Joe Strummer, Laurie Metcalf, Jayne Eastwood, Kazuko Oshima, Eric Mitchell, Mary Joy, Bob Joy, Arto Lindsay, Mary Margaret O'Hara, David Johansen, David Margulies, Tony "Machine" Krasinski, Susan H. Kirschner, Dee de Antonio, Jose Soto, Bob Maroff, Rockets Redglare, Nancy Fish, Liz Porrizzo, Harry Fox, Roy Maceachern, Wayne Robson, Eric House, Rosalee Larade, John Simon Beaton, Norman Rankin, Stanley MacNeil, Tantoo Cardinal, Jo-Ann Rolls, Ralph Dillon musicians Dr. John, David Johansen, Leon Redbone, Rita MacNeil, Tom Waits, Joey Barron, Mark Bingham, Michael Blair, Ralph Carney, Crispin Cioe, Greg Cohen, Joe de Lia, Ralph Dillon, Bob Funk, Tony Garnier, Arno Hecht, Brian Koonan, Arto Lindsay, Paul Litteral, Tony Machine, Magic Dick, Steve Morrell, Parc Ribot, Fernando Saunders, John Saunders, John Scofield, Chris Spedding, Peter Stammel, Kevin Tooley. colour 35 mm Running time 91 min.

Jean-Yves Laforce's **Le Coeur découvert**

Playwright and novelist Michel Tremblay, Quebec's literary superstar, is no stranger to the Quebec cinema. During the '70s he scripted **Il Était une fois dans l'est** and **Le Soleil se lève en retard** for director André Brassard, his longstanding collaborator, as well as **Parlez-nous d'amour** for Jean-Claude Lord. All three films are among the underrated treasures of that decade. But the neglect of the brilliant, ferocious **Il Était une fois**, which assembled Tremblay's menagerie from the momentous **Les Belles-soeurs** play cycle plus a breathtaking ensemble of the leading acting talent of the day, is especially unfair (today it is recycled only in gay film festivals around the world). More recently, the movies have profited less from Tremblay's gifts, perhaps because his plays are so self-consciously theatrical with their direct-address monologues, and perhaps because the novels would be very expensive to adapt with their period urban sets.

All the same, I don't understand why Tremblay got the cold shoulder everywhere when he approached producers with a script called **Le Coeur découvert**. It was a low-budget, present-day project with clear commercial potential, a kind of gay comic instalment in the series of family melodramas that have done rather well commercially over the last decade in Quebec, from **Les Bons débarras** to **Mario** to **Bach et bottine**, with the focus shifted somewhat towards the grownups. Not one to be easily discouraged, Tremblay brought out a novel version of the property last year and at the same time succeeded in hooking Radio-Canada into a commitment for a TV-movie version.

Hearing this background made everything come into place since my first impression had been that the film adaptation was a refreshing improvement on the novel. In fact **Le Coeur**, which premiered at the Montreal World Film Festival (where some of it was actually photographed as well, since one of the principals belongs to that particular Montreal breed, the festival glutton), is a delightful *tour de force*. Directed by Jean-Yves Laforce and masterfully shot in 16mm by none other than Jean Pierre Lefebvre, the film will hopefully make the shortsighted private producers a little bit more openminded in the future.

Since Tremblay moved to Outremont at the peak of his success, some of his work, I think, had lacked the punch of the earlier plays situated in the Plateau Mont-Royal, the *quartier populaire* of



his childhood. Although his memoir-inspired novels appearing between 1978 and 1984 returned to the Plateau and to his earlier pizzazz, I found that his 1981 play, *Les anciennes odeurs*, a melancholy portrait of a gay Cegep professor, felt stiff and contrived. With **Le Coeur découvert**, the professor has reappeared, reincarnated this time as Jean-Marc, a 39-year-old Outremont French teacher, and it is clear that Tremblay has now found a much surer footing in the new neighbourhood. The narrative is an upbeat and sympathetic account of Jean-Marc's encounter, courtship and nestling with Mathieu, a 25-year-old would-be actor. The only hitch in this ideal May-August romance is that our hero must now welcome Mathieu's five-year-old son Sébastien into his life and co-op for the same price.

Director Laforce and a likeable cast have created life-and-blood characterizations to add colour and warmth to Tremblay's scintillating dialogue. The players, composed both of old Tremblay hands, Gilles Renaud and Amulette Garneau, and of newcomers, Michel Poirier and Louise Dussault, recruited from the world of children's television, are uniformly first-rate. Renaud, the butch leather biker Cuirette of *Il Était une fois* and later the gloomy hero of *Anciennes odeurs*, has now considerably filled in the character of Jean-Marc, showing every nuance of a too-settled life being stirred up. It's not easy to steal the show from such a veteran, but the diminutive and charismatic Poirier almost gets away with it as the new lover Mathieu, defensive, tender and charming.

Their primary relationship, the core of the film, is skilfully textured as it evolves, from the currently fashionable courtship through all the ups and downs and insec-

urities to its final domestication. My only reservation was that Laforce apparently let the constraints of television (self-) censorship hold back the physical dimension of their interaction: the two go to bed, not like passionate newlyweds, but like the chaste Hollywood couples of the '50s, complete with dry peck on the cheek on parting. On other counts, however, Laforce doesn't falter: straight critics were terribly nervous about the novel's fine exploration of adult-child relationships and focused on a bathtub scene between Jean-Marc and the little boy. Life imitates art: in *Coeur*, the child has a macho uncle who harasses the new couple with his homophobic terror of touching. Laforce goes one better, giving two adult-child bathtub scenes, not one, and confronting the issue of gay parenting with humour, subtlety and defiance.

The women characters, too often assigned to supportive and decorative roles in the genre of the gay male melodrama, come across in *Coeur* as strong, interesting individuals in their own right: Jean-Marc's hesitant new mother-in-law, played by Garneau with spellbinding technique; his worldly-wise lesbian *co-propriétaire* played by Dussault with just the right twinkle in her eye; his new ex-wife-in-law, played by Louise Rinfret. Not only do we get a sensitive picture of the network of new bonds created by alternative families (Sébastien brags to his classmates about how many fathers he has), but Tremblay is pursuing what has always been his favorite theme, the natural alliance of all the others squeezed out by the patriarchy. This was what brought together within the frame of *Il Était une fois* the waitress dying of her botched illegal abortion and the drag queen suffering her daily humiliation, the sisterhood of oppression. Now, even if Tremblay's co-

alition of the suffering of the balconies and the streets has migrated upscale, the complicity of his gay men with his women is still operative. Even in the co-ops of Outremont, they are still the salt of the earth, and there is only a single minor representative of the law of the Father, Sébastien's macho and uptight new "Monday-to-Friday co-step-father"

Perhaps the reason this migration, Tremblay's gentrification, is artistically so successful, is that the old world of the streets left behind is still present, hovering around the edges of the frame. In one of the film's funniest scenes, Jean-Marc's solicitous lesbian neighbours ask with a note of snobbish prurience whether his St-Denis Street rendezvous with his new flame will be above Sherbrooke Street (chic) or below (sleaze). The audience I saw the film with couldn't contain themselves as the scene cut to a long shot of the lovers slowly descending the slope below Sherbrooke, pausing indecisively to look back towards Chic, and then continuing their downward direction.

The cast is well rounded out, it must be mentioned, by child actor Olivier Chasse, with whom Laforce has shaped a strong understated performance, only occasionally marred by the cuteness that seems endemic in Quebec film these days. The minor characters are also superb miniatures without exception: Tremblay's works always seem to bring out the best in ensemble performances.

The only other criticism I have is of the design which has a little too much of that boutique-y Radio-Canada flavour for my liking, the Outremont setting notwithstanding. Although it may be a bit excessive to go on and on as some of my friends did about how no self-respecting lesbian would go walking in Parc Outremont in a little yellow straw hat, the general look of the cultural milieu in question is slightly off. On the other hand, the location shooting provides an authentic, even romantic backdrop in the milieu: my archivist friend is ecstatic that the oldest gay bar in Montreal, the Café Lincoln, dating from the '30s, has now been documented on film, coloured glass globes and all.

But I digress. It is a fine pleasure to see this warmhearted little gem, not only because of positive representation of gays in this year when everyone's gushing about *Night Zoo*, a violent misogynist derivative film that exults in queer-baiting and queer-smashing, but because one of our finest writers has made another all-too-rare visit to the screen.

Thomas Waugh •

LE COEUR DECOUVERT (THE HEART EXPOSED) d. Jean-Yves Laforce sc. Michel Tremblay a.d. Marie-Josée Boudrias sets Francine Denault orig. m. Michel-Charles Therrien d.o.p. Jean Pierre Lefebvre ed. André Daigneault l.p. Gilles Renaud, Michel Poirier, Olivier Chasse, Louise Dussault, Amulette Garneau, Louise Rinfret, Pierre Houle, Robert Lalonde, Diane Miljours, Mona Cyr, Han Masson. Produced by La Société Radio-Canada. Special Thanks to City of Montreal, City of Outremont, Montreal Harbor Cruises Inc. World Film Festival, MUCTC. colour 16mm running time 107 min.

Jean-Claude Labrecque's

Le Frère André

Le Frère André continues the good news of the last few years: the Canadian cinema is alive and well, showing more signs of maturity and vigour. The fragile, iconoclastic, new-wave days of the '60s are, in so many ways, a thing of the past; the succeeding booms and busts are also long gone, to be replaced by a more professional industry that is fully capable of producing, with modest regularity, what are artistically solid films of popular appeal.

There is something especially gratifying in the fact that one who has experienced it all, first a cameraman in the '60s, and then as his own director, is still very much part of the creative scene. Jean-Claude Labrecque will very soon be 50 years old. For a film director, that is generally not old; and indeed, his very best work may still lie ahead. Interesting projects are in the works. If the Quebec film scene continues in its benign cycle, Labrecque may continue to be a major force for years to come.

Le Frère André continues Labrecque's chronicling of Quebec's cultural history. In all of his features (*Les Smattes* - 1971; *Les Vautours* - 1975; *L'Affaire Coffin* - 1980; *Les Années de rêve* - 1984), Labrecque has chosen particular moments, particular stories, purely fictional or based in actual fact, to communicate his understanding of our recent past. What emerges is sometimes a critique, sometimes poetry, but always seen through one man's experience of the past, his feelings and his visions of his own human condition.

With **Le Frère André**, Jean-Claude Labrecque chose a subject fraught with difficulty. How do you bring to the screen the life of 'a humble little man', a Holy Cross Brother who died in 1938 at the age of 91 - and who was the occasion for a multitude of alleged miraculous cures, for an enormous outpouring of religious devotion reaching out well beyond the regions of Quebec, and for the building of St. Joseph's Oratory, whose towering dome has become Montreal's dominant landmark?

Bringing **Le Frère André** to the screen was indeed walking into areas that angels might prefer to avoid; and the very manner in which Labrecque treats his subject matter might be seen as revelatory of Quebec's culture today and the film director's own evolution. Brother André was a sign of contradiction in his own dominant Roman Catholic culture, and even in his own religious order. The appeal of the man, difficult to explain, and the thaumaturgic powers ascribed to him by so many people - but

which he resolutely credited to his beloved St. Joseph – made many of his fellow Holy Cross priests and brothers decidedly uneasy.

He presents a Montreal version, really, of a dialectic ever running through religious experience, pitting prudence/rationalism vs faith/superstition (to set up overly facile polarities). As for today, post-Vatican II and all, major areas, of the North American Church, dedicated to social action, seem far removed from this kind of popular devotion; farther removed than, say, Pope John Paul II himself, or certain Latino or Slavic cultures more given not only to this sort of exuberant public display, but also to a theological understanding that many educated, western, middle-class Christians consider outmoded. There is always a current of distrust of experiences that invite charlatanism of the crudest kind. Faith healers, TV evangelists and the like may have millions of devotees; but they receive scant attention from millions of other types of Christians, alienated by the style and content.

One need but imagine for a moment what treatment this kind of subject would have received in the '60s from a Gilles Carle or a Jean Pierre Lefebvre! But the times, they have changed; and far from resorting to sardonic critique of facile humour, *Le Frère André* emerges as a very intelligent, sympathetic, touching, humorous, well-crafted movie, a tribute to its eponymous hero.

At the same time, however, the film is in no way a ringing affirmation of faith, a polemic taking of positions. While Labrecque treats Brother André with affection and respect, he avoids the time-honored clichés that religious movies of the past have created to signify heroism and holiness. What emerges is something more modern, more representative of the contemporary sensibility.

Feature films, it seems, must tell stories; and that means drama, which in turn demands conflict and 'action'. So *Le Frère André* chooses a moment (1910, the Eucharistic Congress in Montreal): the crowds are flocking to the chapel on the side of Mount Royal, Brother André is at the height of his thaumaturgic activity, there is talk of erecting a huge Oratory in honour of St. Joseph – and many of Brother André's own religious confrères are appalled at what they consider a circus atmosphere that threatens to make a shambles of their main apostolic activity (teaching at Notre-Dame College). There is even talk of exiling Brother André to the New Brunswick boondocks of Memramcook.

Enter, this particular evening, Marie Esther, Brother André's 17-year-old niece from Rhode Island. They talk, there are flashbacks – and that is the film. Except for a double epilogue, as it were, that shows us, first, multitudes of pilgrims winding their way up the mountain to the chapel, symbolizing Brother André's triumph and the eventual build-



• Marc Legault – he's not heavy, he's my brother

ing of St. Joseph's Oratory; and, second, a closing panoramic aerial shot of the Oratory today, in its contemporary setting of urban Montreal.

As a spectator – reassured, no doubt, by historical hindsight – I found myself caring nary a whit as to whether or not the Oratory would be built or whether or not Memramcook would become our hero's fate. What I really cared about was the interplay between the two characters of Brother André and Marie Esther, beautifully rendered by actors Marc Legault and Sylvie Ferlatte (and by director Jean-Claude Labrecque). Here are two glowing, simple, true human beings, of the people, Marie Esther more a vibrant *essence*, really, of youthful health and vitality. Legault's down-to-earth Quebec lower-class speech patterns are pitted against the refined Radio-Canada-of-old diction of his more educated confrères in a series of debates setting up the issues, giving us the necessary historical background, and manufacturing the necessary dramatic conflict. There is no question in the viewers' minds (nor in Labrecque's, obviously) where all the sympathies lie: spontaneity, freshness, simplicity versus the more rigid, organized, established power culture. And that is where the drama lies, really. By the same token, we are squarely situated in Labrecque's usual world, where central characters are always the lowly, the victims, the outsiders of a society beyond their control. And of other forces, I think.

For, far removed from the fate of Brother André and of a St. Joseph's Oratory-to-be-built, is another kind of reality that situates us in Labrecque's territory. *Le Frère André* is really a series of abstracted scenes and dialogues, a collage of moments strung together according to the dictates of a plot, but in themselves far more powerful, evocative, than that plot.

One might say that Labrecque has made a virtue out of having to shoot cheap. Rather than attempt any elaborate historical reconstruction, he concentrates on somewhat abstract – one might say symbolic – mini-sets. We have a sense of floating nowhere/anywhere, in a world of essences, where the essentials are given in careful, precise dialogue, and where another kind of reality, impossible to designate – perhaps "surreality" comes closest – is communicated. The lighting tends to be obviously 'artificial', often in sharply defined areas, such as a stained glass window. The colors are dark and strong, blacks, purples, deep garish primaries. Labrecque's well-known penchant for wide-angle lenses is in evidence, though in relatively mitigated form; enough, however, slightly to distort space, to give us a slightly off-kilter framing of image.

The rather abstract composition of the scenes has elicited some comparisons with another recent, religious film, *Thérèse*. Last year's French 'César' (Oscar) winner, however, has none of

the off-kilter, off-centre quality that is more or less a constant in Labrecque's fiction films, and that imbues his creations with a strong sense of uneasiness, of not quite being able to come to grips with, or, say, intellectually appropriate, whatever reality is there before us.

And so, *Le Frère André* is filled with vitality, warmth, life, a simple truth shining through Brother André and his niece. But the film universe they inhabit, with its abstract, theatrical sets, peopled with artificially 'dictioned' characters, and breathing an overall mitigated off-kilter 'innocent surrealism', is far from reassuring. Labrecque's poetry of the little man adrift in a universe he doesn't really cope with is well-served once again.

It is difficult to call the film religious, strictly speaking, in spite of its overtly religious subject matter. Labrecque, rather, has given us a strongly *distanced* experience: he is distanced from total adherence to whatever Brother André represents; and we, the audience, are distanced from his film's subject matter. Certainly, there is no explanation of any religious dimension. And one understands why the socio-religious exploration is simply taken for granted, being merely stated. The plot itself doesn't really matter that much.

The experience is similar, in a way, to that of looking at a book of Labrecque ciné-paintings, a bit abstract, a bit surrealistic, a bit realistic. We are distanced, we wonder...even as we are deeply touched by this 'little man' who is total, who is living his truth. Take it or leave it, accept the miraculous cures or explain them away – Brother André is there. And in his humble way, he is remarkable, even significant.

This, it would seem, is the truth of Labrecque's vision – and in that sense his approach is indeed modern, if by that term we mean open, self-conscious proclaiming that it is 'only' one man's art by being obvious in its use of its 'artistic' means. Quebec's cinematic chronicler poet has indeed been true to himself, to his culture, and to his history.

That is no small achievement, the mark, surely, of a mature artist and of a film industry that is quite capable of producing works of cultural validity.

Marc Gervais •

LE FRÈRE ANDRÉ p. Pierre Valcour assoc. p. Daniel Louis sc. Guy Dufresne, d. Jean-Claude Labrecque 1st a.d. Jacques W. Benoit cont. Thérèse Bérubé, extras casting Bernard Tourville art d. Ronald Fauteux cost. Denis Sperdouklis make-up Kathryn Casault d.o.p. Michel Caron stills Bertrand Morin gaffer Jacques Fortier sd. Michel Charron, ed. André Coriveau asst. ed. Christine Denault sup. sd. ed. Marcel Pothier sec. Madeleine Lavallée l.p. Marc Legault, Sylvie Ferlatte, Jean Coutu, André Cailloux, Jacques Zouvi, Roland Lepage, Gilles Renaud, Guy Thauvette, Michel TrouilletCollet, Guy Provost, René Caron, Roger Garceau, Raymond Cloutier, Jean Lajeunesse, Michel Cailloux, Roger Larue, Linda Sorgini, Jean Doyon with the gracious participation of Guillaume LemayThivierge, Mireille Thibault, Leo Rivet, Danielle Lepage, Kathleen McAuliffe. A Les Productions de la Montagne and Les Films J.-A. Lapointe production with financial assistance from Telefilm Canada, Société générale du cinéma, Super Ecran (Premier Choix: TVE Inc) Shudec Ltee, Auvidex Inc. and St. Joseph's Oratory. colour 35 mm running time 88 min.

Niv Fichman's

World Drums

"Through his life, percussionist John Wyre dreamed of gathering drummers from around the world to play together on one stage. At Vancouver's Expo 86, John's dream came true."

— from **World Drums**

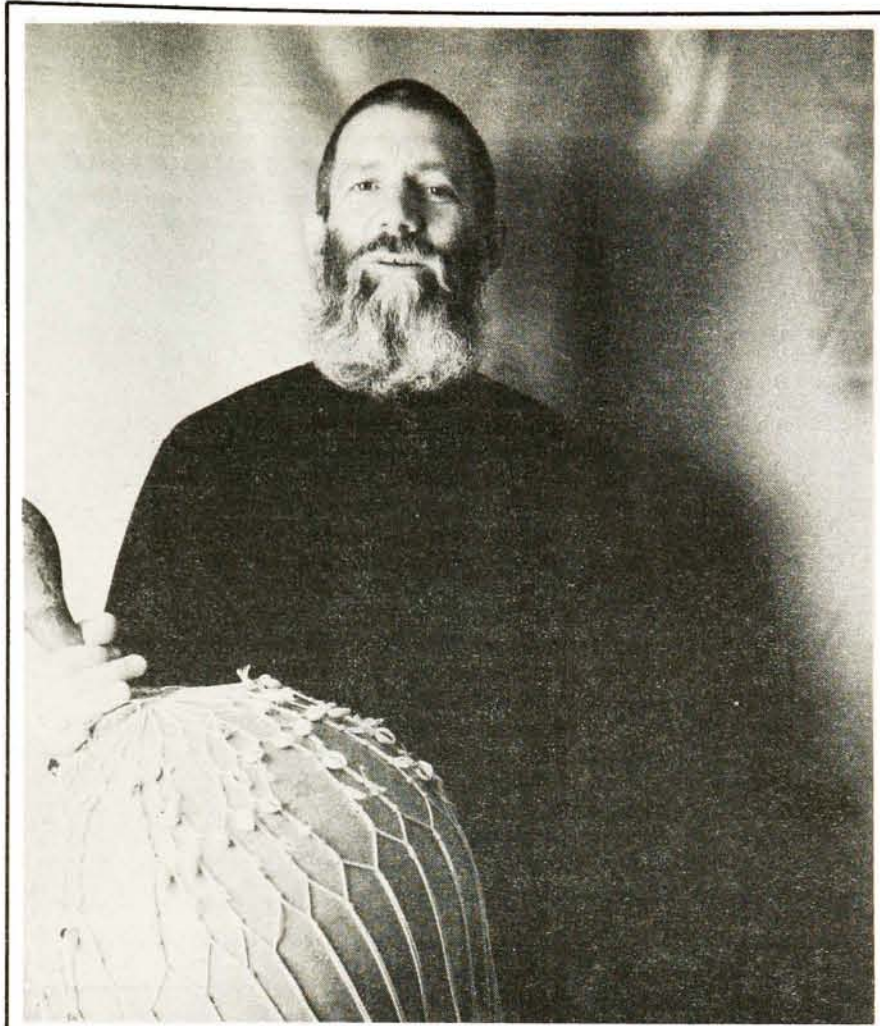
This stunning film catalogues the truly marvellous over-realization of one man's dream. Word-of-mouth has been building since **World Drums** premiered at this year's Festival of Festivals in Toronto, and the hum should soon become a roar of approval.

In a quietly deceptive opening, the camera roams over a variety of drums, soft percussion pervades the soundtrack accompanied by close-ups of hands thrumming. Then John Wyre, founding member of Nexus (Canada) and artistic director of the World Drum Festival at Expo 86, welcomes all participants — 150 musicians and 23 ensembles from around the world.

World Drums is artfully constructed to climb to a terrific climax. The fascinating groups that have come together for this singular event are sampled, and enticing chunks of the various performances are interspersed with candid backstage stuff and glimpses of John Wyre rehearsing and working towards the Grand Finale.

The Harmonites Steel Band (Antigua) kicks off with a lively mellow sound and a fast beat. An invigorating singer gets everyone (literally) jumping — the band leaps and plays and the audience bobs up and down.

From here on, it's just one delicious treat following another, and the film takes on a 'don't — let it — stop' magic about it. Many images still linger: Companions d'Akati (Côte d'Ivoire), with drums and shaken gourds fronted by an intensely acrobatic dancer, who gives way to a masked dancer who, in turn, is displaced by an incredibly whirling stilt-



• John Wyre with drum

walker. John Wyre says that the peak of percussion is exemplified by Indonesia, and who would disagree after experiencing the group Gamelan? Its expressive performers each have a large and a small red drum and, accompanied by flute, cymbals and gongs, they joyfully chant and shout and generally have a lot of fun.

The Dou Dou Rose Ensemble (Senegal), a drum group, is led by a wonderfully agile and theatrical conductor. In wild contrast is the Queen's Lancashire Regiment Drum Corps (England) in scarlet military uniforms and sporting black helmets with silver chin straps. In shiny boots they march out, and rat-a-tat-tat up a storm. A particularly eye-catching movement constantly brings the drumsticks up smartly to rest horizontally on upper lips — without a slip.

John Wyre remarks that rehearsals sometimes seem like a war zone, as ideas are put forward, exchanged, and then

translated into a number of languages. However, he appears remarkably cool while into the "third rewrite", trying not to be overwhelmed by the Grand Finale as he organizes the chaos, giving individual instructions and cues. As the great culmination approaches, there's lots of steam-ironing and general preparation in the dressing rooms, and backstage tingles with excitement and anticipation.

At the opening of the Grand Finale everyone lines up on stage, drumming rhythmically in unison as Wyre, an ascetic figure in black, conducts. Then, a lone Inuit elder progresses across the stage. [Backstage: everyone gyrates to the beat, including the boys in scarlet uniforms]. The Bomas (Kenya) now drum centre stage, seed-covered gourds shaking, and what looks like an elongated bicycle pump giving out some quivering notes as an incredibly athletic dancer bounds about. [Backstage: a member of

the U.S.S.R. group practices spinning; a statuesque woman in white looks on; the military boys take it all in, while a black girl imitates their "drumsticks to upper lip" routine; others mime movements of the performers onstage].

Everything shifts into high gear. Steve Gadd (U.S.A.) smashes through a complicated jazz routine, Oreno (U.S.S.R.) follows and four black-clad Cossacks glide through a routine with the woman in white, majestic and stately, hands concealed by the costume sleeves, all accompanied by drum and accordion. Nexus (Canada), with Wyre performing, delivers a whimsical syncopated xylophone number. The exotically costumed Samul Nori (Korea), is now front and centre. This four-man ensemble performs on drums and cymbals, constantly circling their heads so that the long streamers attached to their hats whirl continuously about them.

[The black-clad Cossacks laugh and dance backstage].

Then the vast troupe assembles on stage. Wyre leads the disparate elements — steel band, dancers, drummers, percussionists, singers — in a superbly orchestrated frenzied finale. After sustained drumming from the Dou Dou Rose Ensemble (Senegal), three strong drum beats...it's over. And the audience erupts with roars and cheers. No encores, nothing — just knock their socks off and end.

Talk about shake, quake and quiver — what a toe-tapping, body-writhing, downright movie that really moves! A fast, snappy performance film that more than captures the spirit of the dream John Wyre had of gathering drummers from around the world to "play together" It has all the earmarks of an award-winner and also of becoming a worldwide financial success. Bravos to Niv Fichman and the Rhombus crowd, and to the National Film Board.

Produced for National Film Board by Rhombus Media Inc. assoc.p. Larry Weinstein exec.p. Peter Katadotis. Barbara Willis Sweete p. Niv Fichman, Louise Clark. d. Niv Fichman. dop. David Geddes. ed. Margaret van Eerdewijk stereo sd. John Martin. sd.ed. Michael Werth running time: 60 mins. 16mm. 1 7/8" 4:3" videotape. Availability: National Film Board. Made with the assistance of Expo 86 Corporation and the Dept. of Communications. Govt. of Canada.

Pat Thompson •

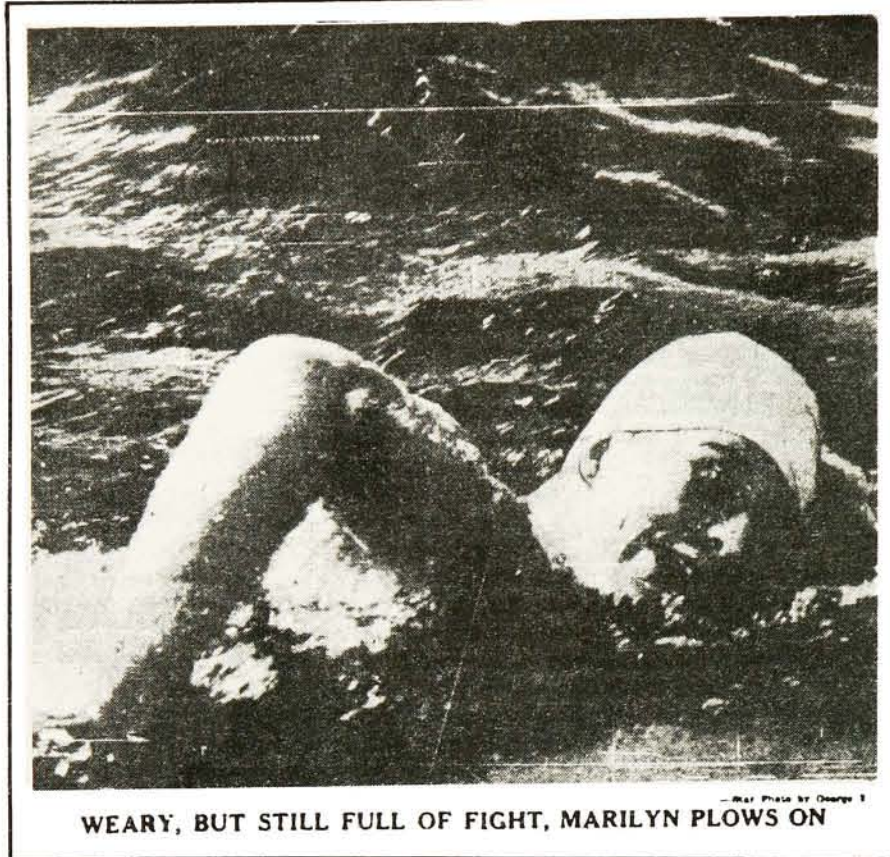
THE ALTERNATIVE

Call us at 416/536-4827

NABET 700 Association of Film Craftsmen
National Association of Broadcast Employees & Technicians

1179A King Street West, Studio 102, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6K 3C5

Brenda Longfellow's
Our Marilyn



WEARY, BUT STILL FULL OF FIGHT, MARILYN PLOWS ON

A woman swims across Lake Ontario in the dark in 1952. All we can see of her are her arms and head moving in and out of white splashes of water. The image has been treated, drained of all colour and detail, a Rorschach pattern of black becoming white becoming black. The swim continues in a monotonous rhythm – struggle, setback, struggle – endurance. The image never seems to change much either – a continuous disturbance of ragged white on a dark field – but it holds a strange fascination. Somehow it is weirdly beautiful, seductive to watch.

This is the core of Brenda Longfellow's *Our Marilyn*: a woman, a lake and an optical printer. From these three elements you can make magic, something the film does effortlessly. This is a film whose images and sounds have a hypnotic sensuality, working with the emotional force of a chant, insinuating itself into the regions you can't reach by sense alone.

This all may seem somewhat strange for a film that is on one level so cerebral. The context for the film's sensuality is rigorously theoretical, but the body of the film exceeds theory, if by theory we mean the sort of discourse that walks around a thing countless times before deciding it must first interrogate what it means to walk.

Our Marilyn intends to explore the differences between the female bodies two countries appropriated as icons at a particular moment in history: America consumed Marilyn Monroe, a child in a woman's body, a body bred for the pedestal or the rumour mill, while we Canadians consumed our own Marilyn, Marilyn Bell, a marathoner, an emblem of endurance, an icon of denial.

Longfellow takes on a lot here; the film is ambitious. It analyses the way we construct the bodies we will worship and attempt to emulate, the way we want them

to be resistant to change, to pain, to decay. Marilyn Bell was an adolescent who undertook an enormous challenge, partly to test her own body, to determine its limit, but mostly to beat an American who was also vying to be the first to cross the lake. The comparison to Marilyn Monroe is a bit of a reach, but it's never dwelt upon; the tragedy of that body remains largely as a reference point. On this level the film is thoughtful and sometimes provocative. But it's the story, the narrative of Bell's triumph, that seizes you.

The effect of this narrative is direct, complicit. It isn't careful like theory is; it grabs you by our critical distance and makes you need to follow it to the end. There can never be a simple opposition between theory and practice, but the practice in *Our Marilyn*, the actual retelling of the story stands out disturbingly from its context; too often this narrative seems to be the real film trying to get out, the film *Our Marilyn* wants to be. It might be a lesser film, but it might also be more intense.

The power of the story is strange because you know how it ends, you know Bell makes it – the film even shows you the front-page celebrations first. But the drama still draws you in. There are those wonderful, abstracted images, a powerful soundtrack – the water, the narrator's rhythmic voice – and a text that follows the chronology of the swim.

Our Marilyn is a personal documentary, a blend of theory, formal experimentation, and historical reconstruction. But it's more than that; it's a confessional written from one body to another.

Cameron Bailey •

OUR MARILYN d. Brenda Longfellow l.p. Marilyn (contemporary) – Linda Griffiths; Marilyn Bell (voice) – Brigitte Cauchery; Gus Ryder (voice) – David Fraser orig. score Gayle-Marilyn Young add. arrangements Jamie Bonk Archival Music: "How Far is She Now" performed by Jack Kingston and the Mainstreeters. c. Procan 1954; "Marilyn" written by Doctor Leslie Bell and performed by the Leslie Bell singers. c. 1954. optical printing Cindy Gawel. Brenda Longfellow super8 shoot Glen Richards sd. ed. Petra Valier sd. mix Sound House neg. cut May Bischoff Made possible through the financial assistance of Ontario Arts Council; Studio D. National Film Board; National Film Board, Toronto Regional Office, Queen's Film Department. running time 27 min. b & w and colour 16mm.

Existing happily in the chasm between Fine Art and television, video artists of the past few years have accomplished what would have been impossible within either institution: they have championed the de-commodification of art; explored social issues which had little popular support; reconstructed narrative formats and redefined, 'the story' in its relation to entertainment.

Operating in the chasm, however, has meant foregoing the economic validation associated with sundry production industries. In 1977 a well-established video artist, completing a tape which took 12 months to make and cost \$5,000, could reasonably expect \$50 to exhibit it in a gallery or festival. In 1987 the fee is exactly the same but the tape probably cost \$20,000-30,000 to make. A much-sought-after museum sale might net the artist \$500 or \$600. Not surprisingly, worth and economic value are seldom discussed in the same breath by video artists.

However, it is clear that, in their effort to garner support for their art form, video artists must speak, at least partially, in the *lingua franca* of our soci-

VIDEO TALES
by Geoffrey Shea

ety: dollar-value. Realizing this, artists have gallantly rebuffed the broadcasters' offers over the years to show video art for grossly less than standard television fees, realizing that they would be forfeiting any claims to a reasonable rate of pay later on.

At the same time however, the artists have spent precious little effort concerning themselves with other venues of validation. Hence the 10-year price-freeze on the absurdly low rental fees.

A survey of several price-setters reveals a variety of attempts to improve this condition:

Vtape's existing rental fee structure is: Single Screening: 0-30 minutes – \$50; 30-90 minutes – \$75. Library Screening: 0-30 minutes – \$100; 30-90 minutes – \$150. ('Library' usually means one public showing followed by screenings-on-request, for a period of one or two weeks.) These basic rates were established 10 years ago and have been com-

monly adopted by many distributors, exhibitors and artists.

Now, in consensus with the film and video caucus of the ANNPAC (Association of National Non-Profit Artists' Centres) V/Tape is planning to institute a new fee schedule: Single: 1-15 min. – \$50; 15-30 min. – \$75; 30-90 min. – \$100. Library: 1-15 min. – \$100; 15-30 min. – \$150; 30-90 min. – \$200.

V/Tape recommends that institutions pay at least \$400 for a purchase, but leaves the actual price-setting to the artist.

CARFAC (Canadian Artists Representation) has established a Recommended Minimum Exhibition Fee Schedule for visual artists exhibiting in public and artist-run galleries. This schedule does not presently include film and video, but CARFAC intends to develop a film and video policy as soon as it can.

The Centre for Art Tapes in Halifax has hit upon an uncommon but obvious fee

structure for its audio and video exhibitions: for a three-week show, whether it is an installation of a Library Screening, they pay \$1,000, a rate slightly in excess of CARFAC's recommended fee for visual artists. The healthy respect this implies for the work of video artists may be spreading: YYZ, one of Toronto's most conscientious artist outlets, has recently included film and video in its ongoing exhibition program and has also adopted a fee structure close to CARFAC's recommended rate for visual artists.

Given these last two recent developments, it seems ironic that Vtape is increasing its fee schedule as little as it is; and that CARFAC does not actually have a recommended rate for film and video. Perhaps if video-makers wish to be considered seriously as artists, they should initiate exhibition and fee structures which are on a par with artists working in other media. For it is clear that if artists, their representatives, and artist-run centres do not start to accord their own work more value, our cultural institutions (museums, broadcasters, funders) certainly never will.

Geoffrey Shea •