

Pacific encounters

B.C.'s 'Marketplace' looks to Asia

BY MARK O'NEILL

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"It's pretty sexy to go have dinner with Katharine Hepburn, and we like to be able to travel in those circles, but we're going to have to make the basis of our industry the independents. The (U.S.) writers' strike shows up the fallacy we've been working under here. The major studios, which have been our bread and butter, are not going to be able to continue to be."

Crawford Hawkins is adamant. He's also right on top of B.C. - based initiatives to diversify film production beyond the American connections that have made Hollywood North a tired, and vulnerable, cliché. The president of Alpha-Cine and Tegra has begun a new company, Marketplace Communications, which is devoted to exploring the possibilities around the Pacific Rim. Hannah Fisher, the former director of the Vancouver International Film Festival, is, at this point, the entire staff of Marketplace. After a stint on the jury of the Venice Film Festival, she's off on an extended tour of Japan, Hong Kong, China, Malaysia, New Zealand and Australia.

"First of all I'm going to be speaking to our Asian colleagues about their views on the establishment of a market in Vancouver that will specialize in North American, Pacific Rim and Asian product. I think this is a pioneering idea because the (North American) population mix is changing radically and will continue to change radically. Large pockets of Asians are coming and we have to find ways of understanding one another and, you know, there's nothing that helps people understand one another better than their culture expressed through film and television. I think the demand for Asian product in North American and Europe is just beginning."

This is not a brand new idea. George Chapman of IATSE and Diane Neufeld of the B.C. Film Commission spent part of the summer pitching the province to producers in Japan and Hong Kong. Chapman says he became aware of the potential when he and Neufeld attended a symposium in San Jose five years before.

"At that time Japanese commercial producers stated that, because of tough immigration and union problems in the United States, they ventured to say that 24 of 30 million dollars worth of commercial production scheduled for that year would be unable to get into the U.S. Diane and I fell over each other getting to the podium and saying 'We'll take your \$24 million'."

Since then a handful of Japanese commercials



Former VIFF director Hannah Fisher

have been shot in B.C. but, apart from that, little has happened on this side of the world's largest ocean. As many other industries have discovered, Asians don't do business at quite the breakneck, quick handshake pace of North Americans. As Hannah Fisher puts it: "It's important to create a kind of quiet space of time whereby their suggestions and comments can come forward. We're all shaped by the American lifestyle, we move quickly, the dollar is the end result, it's push, push, push, get what you want and then move on. That's why many (of us) have difficulty dealing with Asians. North Americans find Asian cinema slow, they don't use violence in the same way, they don't use sexual activity in the same way. It's like the flowing of a river; you're not assaulted by fast cuts, fast action."

Perhaps the gearing-down necessary to do business in Asia explains why so few film

producing regions have made the effort to make deals. George Chapman reports that, prior to his summer trip: "The only other such initiative to attract production to any locale in the world was from Jamaica in January of this year. There are film commissions in every state of the union, most cities, most provinces, there's even one as close as Bangkok but no one had called on Asia until Jamaica." He says that the delegation came away with promises from producers to come and scout B.C.

The big plum hanging from the Pacific Rim tree is the People's Republic of China. It didn't wait for the Canadians to come a-calling. In June of this year a delegation of eight top officials of China's film system toured Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver. In an exclusive interview with *Cinema Canada*, the Deputy General Director of the China Film

Bureau, Bao Tongzhi, said his country is looking for three kinds of coproduction.

"The first type is having producers from both sides investing cash and the Chinese providing goods and services and then divide revenues according to the level of investment. The second type is that Chinese studios would put in goods and services. You put a money value on them and that counts as Chinese investment. The foreign producer will bring in the cash. The third type sees the foreign producer buying goods and services from the Chinese studio, very similar to Canadians providing for American productions.

Du Yuxiang of the Bureau's Foreign Affairs Department explained why the Chinese are beginning to court coproductions.

"In the past we've been isolated for 35 years. Now we want to open a door and understand the rest of the world and have other people understand us better."

You can't talk about joint ventures with the Chinese without remembering the reported difficulties in shooting *Bethune*, a film that has yet to be released.

"I think they're a little upset with *Bethune*," says Crawford Hawkins, "and I think half the reason for the trip was to show we're really good guys and we're interested in doing business with you and talking about problems if there were any."

Huang Guang, manager of the North American Department of the China Film co-production Corporation, is nothing if not tactful on the subject.

"Even though they had some difficulties, generally speaking it was a very successful production in China. This film has strong support from the Canadian and Chinese government. This film will continue production smoothly. The part shot in China, the Chinese and Canadian crews worked together very smoothly. There were some problems after they came back to Canada but the problems have been resolved at this point."

"I found them incredibly polite and interested," says Hawkins, who was at a meeting to discuss a film based on the diary of a woman whose husband was a doctor in China between 1938 and 1953. But...

"The first reaction of the Chinese was that it was historically, or ideologically, inaccurate. I don't know where they're going to get together on that. If it's produced on mainland China it's going to have to be ideologically correct.

"It begs the question, 'If we can't come to an agreement can I still shoot by paying for the location?' I mused about it with Hannah and she seems to feel that they would not allow me to use it in the way we let U.S. companies take over Vancouver and nail up an American flag in the corner of a courtroom."

Political dogma aside, there seem to be some clear economic advantages to some Pacific Rim crews choosing to make films in Canada. George

Chapman has a telling story on the relative value of everyday items in Japan versus British Columbia.

"I think what really brought it home to them was that we, naively, took a cab from the airport to Tokyo and it cost something like 40,000 yen. They laughed and snickered but when they looked at our rates and converted to yen (they saw that) you can get a feature accredited key grip in Vancouver for only 150,000 yen. They were just ecstatic about the relatively low cost." He adds that the Japanese are already shooting in Australia and points out that Sydney and Vancouver are a similar distance from Tokyo.

The Chinese were excited about things technical, having visited studios across Canada. Bao Tongzhi was particularly impressed by the computerized video editing system at the B.C. Film Centre in Burnaby.

"And we've also seen demonstrations of computerized animation," he reported, "We were also impressed by Panavision in Montreal. They had a huge crane powered by battery so it's very light, huge but easy to operate. We would love to learn more about these kind of things.

"And there's a kind of lighting equipment called HMI which is convenient for shooting outdoors. Well, the Chinese have developed a light with a slightly higher colour temperature but which is inexpensive to produce. When we mentioned that to Canadian studios, they were interested in how it was made so it's possible for Canadians to learn more about that."

Hannah Fisher says the Chinese are also aware that they have a lot to learn when it comes to promoting their films given that their goal is better understanding of the People's Republic.

"It was interesting to me that the Chinese sent 22 people to Cannes, the largest group ever, in support of *King of the Children*, their film in competition. They also hired the most high-powered, driven publicity woman in North America. They recognized the mistake they made in Berlin when there was no publicity material for *Red Sorghum* and the interpreter barely spoke English. They won the Golden Bear and could see how they missed an opportunity. It's true they're now starting to think about what is commercial, you can't help that. It's an inevitable movement."

What all this traffic back and forth across the Pacific seems to demonstrate is a meeting of inevitabilities. Every nation would like to escape the dictatorial domination of American film styles and economics but few are strong enough to do it by themselves. British Columbians, and Canadians, are perhaps in an enviable position. We know how to make commercial films, after all we've been working for Hollywood for years. And we know we want to, and have to, create some things that are different. Even with the reservations and cautions mentioned, there seems to be a pervasive belief that many future triumphs lie west of the Setting Sun, not just south of the 85-cent dollar.

Copro slow go

by Ian F. Hunter

Despite all the recent hype and promise surrounding the signing of movie coproduction treaties between Canada and other countries, little of it has so far translated into increased Pacific Rim business for Western Canadian producers.

The New Zealand coproduction agreement, signed in October '87, shows one reason why. While the Maori language was included in movies under the agreement, along with French and English, Canada's 43 native languages were not.

Barry Barclay, director of *Ngat*, the first New Zealand feature film produced and written by the Maori people, proposed a boycott of all Canadian films "until we get an indigenous Canadian (native peoples) drama... the possibility of producing films in native languages must be maintained".

While the threat rang hollow (or no Canadian movies made it to New Zealand to be boycotted), Barclay brought up one of the sticky points in coproduction treaties: language. Unless the movie is English or French, the market for it is limited. But governments of non-English - or French-speaking countries are reluctant to help if the language isn't indigenous.

That isn't stopping Lenord George of the Chief Dan George Society from pursuing projects with British and German coproducers interested in films of "first peoples." George says an English producer wants to put financing in place. A German producer "has the script and half the budget and we have to come up with the other half."

The advantage of a coproduction agreement is in the elimination of red tape in certifying the film for distribution, getting more of that country's market for the movie and in getting more money to do the production, and being recognized in both countries as an indigenous production eligible for the tax and funding benefits of both. The disadvantage is in the red tape, getting the movie going and the strings on the money or materials supplied by the coproducer.

Besides language, the problems of who pays and provides what, and finding a story that fits the requirements of the coproduction treaty, have kept all B.C.-based international coproductions in the talking stage.

Canada now has 15 international coproduction treaties in place. New Zealand and China are the only two Pacific Rim countries on that list. Telefilm Canada's Montreal-based international coproduction coordinator Louise St. Louis says the Canadian government is negotiating a

coproduction treaty with Australia and plans to "see the possibilities" of a coproduction agreement with Japan after sending an exploratory mission of Canadian producers there in the next few months. India is next on the list. The citizens of Hong Kong are already covered under Canada's coproduction agreement with the U.K., but the territory is not. That has posed problems for coproducers in both countries, but, St. Louis says, "there are some ways to get around them."

So far the only Western producer to do an international coproduction deal has been Edmonton producer Phil Fraser. There's been only talk of Pacific Rim coproductions.

St. Louis says there are more coproductions coming, but "it takes time for people to get their contacts in place. It's all a question of being in confidence with all the people you are working with."

So while there are mechanisms in place to ease the hassle in shooting in more than one country, it's still not easy.

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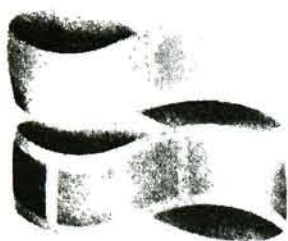
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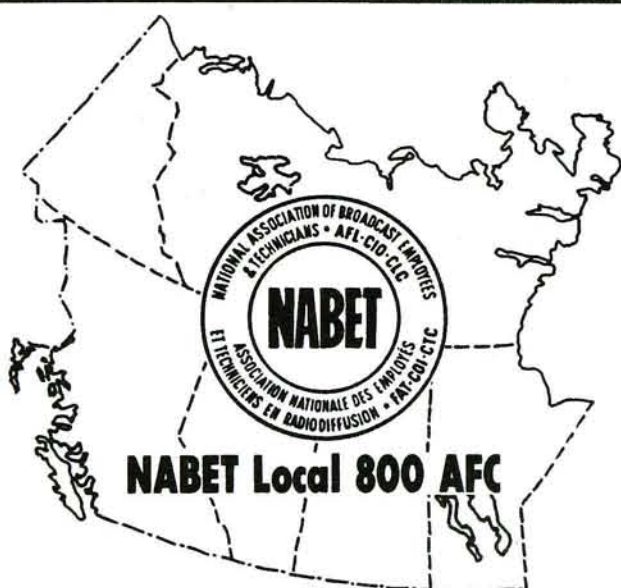
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Quarantine
**Warning:
enthusiasm for
indigenous
production is
contagious**

We can't use the front door I'm afraid. We'd disturb the Bingo." So, instead, we reach the set of Apple Pie Pictures' feature *Quarantine* via a back alley and a hydraulic 'scissor' lift. Then, north along the roof, over a rather high windowsill, across some rotting plywood, up the stairs and onto the top floor of the Trapp Building in New Westminster. The Bingo gang is left undisturbed in their quest for B-7 and the \$500 afternoon jackpot.

Quarantine is also a bit of a gamble. It's a science-fiction story written, directed and produced by Charles Wilkinson (*My Kind of Town*) with a budget of only \$690,000 (provided by Atlantis Releasing, B.C. Film and Telefilm). All of the cast and crew are British Columbians, many of them working for less than union scale to support an indigenous industry.

As we complete the hazardous climb to the set, cinematographer Tobias Schliessler (*The Top of His Head*) is rehearsing a key scene. Ivan Joad (Beatrice Boepple: *Stakeout, Christmas Comes to Willow Creek*) is the daughter of a doctor who has been helping the victims of a strange plague. She meets scientist Spencer Crown (Garwin Sanford: *The Experts, McGuerver*) who has invented a machine called Apollo that can find anyone, anywhere, anytime. Naturally she wants to find her Dad, but, so do the authorities.

Wilkinson's film is set in the relatively near future. For the past five years this plague has decimated the population. Early opinion was that it was contagious and so an elaborate system of quarantine had been established. However, the truth of the matter seems to be that everyone carries the disease but only some actually get ill. In short, quarantine is ineffective but, in some political circles, still very popular.

"I don't think this is a story about AIDS," says Wilkinson while acknowledging the obvious parallels, "I'm really fascinated by the mindset of the people in the story. At the beginning it was black and white, good guys and bad guys. For instance, Jerry Wasserman (*Beans Baxter*) plays the character of Senator Ford (who wants to use quarantine and the machine to further his own goals). In the screenplay he's almost a crazed psychopath but with the interpretation Jerry's given him, I'd vote for him.

"This guy is the kind of character that develops in a society that needs an answer, like



Jerry Cooperman as Senator Ford

Mussolini or Hitler. People will make the inevitable comparison between *Quarantine* and AIDS but I think the parallels to the Third Reich in the Second World War are just as appropriate."

Schliessler is ready to roll. A smoke machine fans just enough haze to highlight the griminess of the set, a down-on-your-luck warehouse with Apollo in the middle.

"How did it find me?" asks Ivan.

"It's a game," replies Crown.

"You built this thing?"

"Yes, I built it."

"I don't like it, it's sick" she mutters, aiming a nasty-looking pistol at the offending machine. Schliessler dollies forward as the characters stand still waiting for the shot that could destroy the invention.

"It's definitely a stylized look we're going for," explains Schliessler. "Dirty, gritty, high contrast with a lot of greys and blacks. We're using basically old places and I'm shooting with a lot of long lenses to make the backgrounds soft. There's a lot of movement to create a different look. We'll dolly before a person moves then have them walk into their own

POV. We're doing a lot of things for the camera rather than just having it observing what is playing out."

Special effects are minimal, as might be expected with a budget below \$700,000. Wilkinson bargained for, and received, major concessions from IATSE 667, ACTRA and the DGC to make the film. There are some deferrals (including most of his own fees) and, rather than posting bonds with the unions, he's paying everyone every three days. He even found a way to save money on locations.

"It was originally written for Vancouver but when we went to lockdown locations we found we couldn't afford it. They'd say 'how much will you pay?' and we'd say '\$2500 for a week' and they'd say 'we got \$25,000 from Cannell'. So we're shooting mostly in New Westminster."

Back down the stairs, across the suspect floor and to the scissor lift. The Bingo crowd continues to mark numbers, oblivious to the drama of disease being played out above them. Or to the possibility that *Quarantine*, if successful, could prove that British Columbians can make feature films on a shoestring budget.

Mark O'Neill ●

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VIFF '88

Spotlight on glasnost, Max Glick and local contributions to "film noir"

BY MARK O'NEILL

It hasn't been an easy year for the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF). Nearly six months into the annual preparations, director Hannah Fisher resigned following an unexpected takeover of the Board of Directors at the annual general meeting. This left Interim Director Alan Franey and an almost completely new staff with very little time to put the pieces back together, particularly since the new Board was intent on changing many of the directions set by Fisher for the Commonwealth Conference edition of the Festival in 1987. Since taking over in June, the new staff have been successful in overcoming sponsors' reluctance and have now signed up about 40 corporations as sponsors.

Still, the program offers a wide variety of films representing emerging new trends in world cinema, an intriguing homegrown series title "B. C. Noir", an up-to-the-minute overview of Canadian filmmaking and an overview of Soviet films, many of which hadn't been seen until the advent of glasnost.

Gerald Peary, programmer of "B. C. Noir" writes:

Is the affinity the black clothes, the urban street lifestyle, the cynicism and paranoia? Whatever, the punk 1980s brought a widespread revival of 1940s and '50s "film noirs", those hysterical, nasty, ultraviolet and yet somehow truthful tales of America's underbelly. Forget heroic *Gone With the Wind* and feel-good *Wizard of Oz*. Bring on *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Big Sleep* and a dozen other forlorn, moody, bare-knuckled entertainments of the lowlife, back-alley U. S. A. The cheaper the better: lethal, blood-simple "B" and "C" pictures like *Detour* and *Gun Crazy*, what critic Manny Farber labelled "termite art". They're the celluloid equivalent of three-chord garage rock 'n' roll. With the door shut and the motor going.

A revelation for film historians is to learn just how much "polite" Canadians - Hollywood imports - contributed to this rough, crude, extraordinary genre. More specifically, a number of key "noir" players hail from British Columbia! B. C. -born actors Raymond Burr, Yvonne DeCarlo and John Ireland populated the films as gunmen, gangsters and *femmes fatales*. B. C. native Edward Dmytryk, who will be on hand to introduce the series, directed several "noir" classics including *Crossfire* (1947) and *Murder My Sweet* (1944) both of which are among the seven films to be revived at the VIFF this year.



Play that funky Klezmer music: Noam Zylberman (Max), Saul Rubinek (the Rabbi) and Fairuza Balk in *The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick*

"Canadian Panorama" programmer Martin Delisle (of the Canadian Film Institute in Ottawa) says that although "many people within the industry have expressed the view that it's not a particularly banner year for the Canadian feature film, there is still much to admire among the current crop." His series includes the "sublime *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*. What is it about Winnipeg filmmakers that makes for such fascinating and wry treatment of offbeat subject matter?" he wonders, citing further evidence in Lorne Bailey's *The Milkman Cometh*.

In a totally different mode, Léa Pool captures one's attention with *Straight to the Heart*, an intense, emotion-filled story which deals with the themes of alienation and redemption. Other Canadian offerings include Ron Mann's documentary *Comic Book Confidential*, a survey of an ever-growing and popular artform and Richard Boutet's *The Forgotten War*, a docu-drama which uses both images and songs to denounce the stupidity and horror of war. The series will open with *The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick*, which was produced with a fair amount of B. C. investment and talent.

One of the first and most prominent areas of Soviet life to be changed by the new policies of "glasnost" and "perestroika" was the cinema. The most visible change, writes "Cinema of the Soviet Union" programmer Forrest S. Ciesol, is that it is now increasingly possible to make films on subjects that were previously prohibited. He continues:

In this atmosphere of enlarged freedom, filmmakers have advanced to the cutting edge of cultural reform. Contemporary issues ranging from Stalin to the housing shortage are now being confronted in film, fueling widespread debate and public analysis. A provocative new contemporary Soviet cinema is fitfully emerging, one that courageously examines the status quo and the past without becoming didactic or forgetting to entertain.

The spirit of glasnost has not only been manifested in feature filmmaking. The VIFF will feature the celebrated Latvian documentary *The Last Judgment* and three outstanding short films from the Central Asian republics of Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan.

Under the leadership of Elem Klimov (new First Secretary of the Union of Filmmakers) one

of the first major accomplishments was the establishment of the Conflict Commission to review films "shelved" or "banned" for political, cultural or bureaucratic reasons and to make recommendations for their release. The VIFF series will feature three excellent films that have been unseen for 20 years: *Commissar*, *Aaya's Happiness* and *Beginnings of an Unknown Century*.

Another major focus of the Festival is the "Celebration of British Cinema". Despite financial difficulties, the British film industry produces some of the strongest films in the world and their variety and quality make them the envy of many other European countries. Films confirmed as of our deadline include Jim O'Brien's *The Dressmaker*, Ken Russell's *Lair of the White Worm*, Colin Gregg's *We Think the World of You* and *An American Dream* by John Smallcomb.

"Contemporary World cinema" includes major new works by a host of leading international filmmakers: Bruno Barreto, Claude Chabrol, Agnes Varda, Nagisa Oshima, Clint Eastwood, Paul Morrissey and Nestor Almendros. As well there will be examples of films emerging from rarely seen (at least in

Vancouver) nations like Turkey, Yugoslavia, Poland and Brazil.

Given the Commonwealth flavor of last year's VIFF and the growing awareness of Pacific Rim possibilities, festivalgoers will be especially interested in "Cinema of the Pacific Rim" which is expected to include about 25 titles. The highlight is likely to be a retrospective of Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-Hsien including his latest, *Daughter of the Nile* as well as the Berlin "Golden Bear" winner *Red Sorghum* from mainland China.

Alongside the actual films, the B. C. Motion Picture Association is presenting a Trade Forum, an event so successful last year it's been moved to a bigger venue, the Enterprise Centre on the old Expo 86 site. Also, the Praxis Film Development Workshop will once again be sponsoring seminars, probably focussing on the national cinemas of visiting countries.

Festival sites and sounds

This year's Vancouver International Film Festival takes place in four of the city's movie houses, one a venerable old establishment, two mainstays of the alternate movie scene, and one *avant-garde* newcomer.

Built in 1935 by Reginald F. Fairleigh and operated since then by four generations of the Fairleigh family, The Hollywood Theatre is Canada's longest-running independent cinema. A reinforced concrete slab of a building, it looks much like the hundreds of other movie houses erected across North America in that golden age of Hollywood, and still boasts a heavy velvet curtain that rises on every feature.

The Hollywood has always been a second-run house, offering the mostly neighbourhood clientele ticket prices of \$2 on Mondays and \$3 other nights, in keeping with a tradition set when downtown movies were 50 cents and a ticket to The Hollywood could set you back as much as two thin dimes. It should be noted that this generous pricing policy does not apply to Festival features!

As venerable an institution as it may be, The Hollywood utilizes the latest in sound and projection technology, as befits a house run by the same family that operates Dominion Theatre Equipment.

With 651 seats, this is the second largest venue in this year's festival. Though the amenities are more standard issue than those of the other three houses (no espresso machine here), a visit to The Hollywood will be a real hit of nostalgia for anyone who grew up in the area or the era.

The Ridge Theatre's towering plate glass front dominates the surrounding residential cityscape, suspending a giant stained-glass movie projector high above passing traffic and queued filmgoers.

Built in 1950 in the sort of cardboard cutout imitation Art Deco style that was so popular for artsy endeavors at the time, The Ridge was for many years the "reserve house" for Famous Players; *The Sound of Music* played there for three tear-filled years. In the late seventies The Ridge was the local alternate cinema trend-setter, featuring first-run "scraps" and double bills with second runs and old classics.

The birthplace of The Vancouver International Film Festival, The Ridge has established itself as the City's premiere venue for first-run art films, with occasional special events such as the recent live reading by William Burroughs.

Aside from good movies, much of what is now



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standard fare in better theatre houses in town, was pioneered at The Ridge; fresh baked goods as an alternative to the sticky old candy counter, real butter on real popcorn and a cappuccino machine, for example.

Oh, and one more thing. For parents of squalling tots who can't find a sitter, The Ridge is the only theatre in town with a "crying room" from which you can watch and not be heard.

Built in the early 1970s as a showcase for ethnic films, which primarily meant East Indian, The Vancouver East Cinema has become Vancouver's leading venue for the best of the classics, the more interesting second-run films and occasional first-run foreign film.

The newest and most austere of the 1988 festival venues, the 210 seat Pacific Cinematheque, is operated by a nonprofit film society with a special mandate to promote film as an art form. The cinematheque brings to its 3,500 members a wide variety of films as the programming explores the non-commercial aspects of world cinema.

Designed to what those in the know refer to as "European specifications," the screen size and seating arrangements both afford maximum viewing comfort.

Tucked away in a very business and commercial corner of downtown Vancouver, Pacific Cinematheque is perhaps a harbinger of things to come for arts facilities in the inner city, as limited available space reduces theatres, cinemas and galleries to the minimal bare necessities.

Four very different movie houses, representative of the diversity of film viewing interests and, in a sense, of the history and the future of the industry.

Kevin Dale McKeown •

Beacon lights way to Asian coproduction

The Beacon Group, a Canadian investment business which provides venture capital for film and television projects, is what Grant Allen, director of their Vancouver operation, calls "a private version of Telefilm with broader parameters."

Working on a mutual fund concept, the company has in three years raised venture capital of \$5 million with investments spread over 15 different film and television projects, including Anne Wheeler's *Cowboys Don't Cry*, and *Danger Bay*.

And they have been active in Asia, raising funds and distribution financing.

"About one-third of our investments

come from the Asian market," Allen says, "which for us is concentrated in Hong Kong and Taiwan. We're now also venturing into Japan."

That 33 per cent adds up to a substantial dollar figure, especially since the Beacon Group has already begun to raise a \$30 million investment fund which they anticipate will go into 30 to 40 pictures. "It's difficult to come up with an exact number of projects at this point since the fund is essentially distribution-driven as opposed to production-driven," Allen says.

The company looks at distribution in Asia, Europe, the U.S. and elsewhere, but

the primary emphasis is to support distribution in Canada.

The Beacon Group has discovered that working in Asia has its own particular problems. Allen says for the past year-and-a-half his company has been involved in a Hong Kong coproduction deal which still hasn't been completed. The difficulty lies in getting agreements with Telefilm and the British government.

Allen also describes the Asian distribution market as badly fragmented. "There's no single dominant Asian distributor. And it's a little tougher to get good contracts which will be fulfilled while avoiding the potential

problems, such as illegal duplication."

But he adds that it is also a maturing market, gradually becoming more sophisticated. "Distribution can only grow for Canadian productions," Allen says, "and in a few countries Canadian product is actually liked more than U.S. product. It's considered more wholesome."

And the Beacon Group has found a fair amount of interest among Asian clients to place money in North America. "They're conservative and take time to make decisions," Allen says, "but we've been able to find ways to encourage their investment."



(604) 684-5443

CBC tapes pilot for teen show

An ambulance and first aid attendants were parked in front of CBC Vancouver when I arrived for the taping of *Pilot One* one sunny Saturday in August. A small group of teenagers lounged against the giant air-conditioning pipes that give the building the appearance of an urban recycling plant. Apparently the excitement was over so I made my way to Studio Five, deep in the bowels of the Corporation's west coast bunker.

Along the way, harried *Pilot One* staff explained that Jacques LaLonde, one of the program's six teenage stars, had burnt his lower face during rehearsal of the opening segment. As a result his fire-swallowing act would have to be dropped from the actual taping.

Pilot One is the latest stage in the CBC's plan to introduce an hour-long late-afternoon TV show for teenagers. You may remember it as *Young Street*, a name that, as it turned out, belonged to someone else. Executive Producer David Marsden is hoping to deliver the program to the public airwaves in the New Year. Today is the first day of two tapings, the best of which will be mixed into a one-hour pilot for the inspection of the powers-back-East.

Jacques is one of six young co-stars Marsden has picked from about 1,500 applicants. He's gone for the fashionable and fashion-conscious *21 Jump Street* look.

Jacques and Martin Cummins could have walked right off Granville, Ste. Catherine or Yonge Streets (not much wardrobe expense) while Steve Coulson is an insouciant Englishman who does a mean imitation of Jackie Stewart, the racecar driver and crash-by-crash announcer.

Karen Campbell is a statuesque blonde who describes herself "iconoclastic" but, with modelling and commercial experience already under her handcuffed belt, might end up an icon. Paula Remple is a walking example of how kids can spend a lot of money in order to look as if they hadn't a cent to their name while Lossen Chambers is one of God's natural cheerleaders.

The six don't seem nervous but could be forgiven for hiding it. They still don't have the job. Marsden is firmly in the pilot stage and, judging by the amount of money spent for this taping, has been given instructions to get it right. (A live carp rented for one short sketch cost \$150.)

What kind of material do the *Pilot One* writers and producers think is right for an afterschool audience of media-blitzed teenagers? How about a remote control car race between Barbie-sized cutouts of *Video Hits*' Samantha Taylor and *Good Rockin' Tonight*'s Stu Jeffries? Or a man-in-the-seat film review using people actually watching Tom Cruise in *Cocktail*? A vintage video of Nancy Sinatra singing "These Boots Were Made for Walking"? Or a violent, borderline racist take-off on cablevision's Home Shopping Network?

We've come a long way from *Razzle Dazzle* and *The Forest Rangers*.

Some *Cinema Canada* business: Nancy Kennedy is leaving us to concentrate on some other of her many innovative enterprises. By the time you read this she will likely have introduced most Vancouver advertisers to her replacement.

Calvin Wharton who, up until last month, shared this space will continue to contribute but will be spending a great deal of time working on his first screenplay. He's the deserving recipient of a 10-month Canada Council "Explorations" grant.

Which brings me to Ian Hunter, who you might remember as a Vancouver reporter for *Mediascene*. Since that publication folded he's become better known as an advocate for the right of children to vote. An excellent CBC Radio *Ideas* documentary on the subject led to rave reviews from *The Globe & Mail* and interviews with media outlets from sea to shining sea. As if that wasn't enough, he's also been talking to CBC about using radio drama as a development stage for screenplays. Ian begins his contributions with this month's story on why international coproduction agreements don't seem to be working yet.

Finally, we've engaged Midi Data Music Limited as British Columbia distributors. Over the next two issues, newsstand circulation will be extended outside of Vancouver to the Island, the Valley and the Interior.

The Praxis Film Development Workshop is accepting applications for spring 1989 sessions. The setup is much as before; a five-day Writing Workshop in February, rewriting and more rewriting and then back in May to work with actors and distinguished directors. The sessions are free but you have to cover most costs. Inquiries to (604) 682-3100. Deadline is November 7th.

Patricia Gruben is taking leave from Praxis for the next few months to work on her film project, a mystery about a 16-year-old Mormon girl whose father was killed some years previously. Colin Browne, who's been working on a feature-length documentary called *White Lake*, returns to Praxis.

Jack Darcus should have wrapped *Kingsgate* with Christopher Plummer and Roberta Maxwell by

now. It's one of at least a dozen indigenous B.C. projects (see On-location report on *Quarantine*) that have been steaming away while U.S. productions were waiting for an end to the writers' strike. Another is TV movie *Dude*, which wrapped at Danny Virtue's Fraser Valley film ranch in late September. And, this month, Cal Schumatcher begins shooting *Matinee*. Sandy Wilson's *California Dreamin'* is also underway and we hope to be on-location next month.

Under the headline "Sign up Janet!" in *The Province*: "Come on, you Canadian hockey fans. Press those producers making movies in Vancouver to give Janet (Gretzky) a contract here! How asleep can you be?"



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