

OFDC Hosts Cineposium '88

TORONTO - Cineposium '88, the 13th annual meeting of the Association of Film Commissioners, took place this year in Toronto during the annual Festival of Festivals. Hosting the event were the Ontario Film Development Corporation and the City of Toronto.

Joe O'Kane, Film and Video Commissioner for the San José Convention and Visitors Bureau, and president of the AFC for the last three years, told *Cinema Canada*, that, "Toronto was the best place we could have selected this year for our Cineposium and to hold it alongside one of the best film festivals in the world was very nice. A number of film commissioners had films that were shot in their area shown in the festival. We found it very productive."

The AFC is a nonprofit association of over 200 film commissioners from all over the United States, Canada, West Germany, Chile, Australia and several other countries. The association provides a marketing data base, marketing surveys, and a list of names of people who do location work. Its primary goal is to educate first-time film commissioners on how to do an effective job. Cineposium '89 will take place at Park City, Utah, in association with Robert Redford's Sundance Institute.

Atlantis in the swim on 10th B-day

TORONTO - This fall marks the 10th anniversary of Atlantis Films Limited, the film and television company formed by partners Michael MacMillan, Janice Platt and Seaton McLean in 1978.

However, celebrations will be low-key, according to Atlantis' director of publicity and promotion, Jeremy Katz. Currently they are negotiating with author Kurt Vonnegut to produce a television series based on his short stories, similar to their popular *Ray Bradbury Theatre*.

Starting at the end of October they went into production with *Men*, a prime-time drama series produced in association with MCA/Universal for ABC Television in the United States. Katz believes this is the first time a Canadian company has produced directly for American prime-time network television and is "delighted to have cracked the American market." The series stars Canada's Saul Rubinek, along with Ted Wass, Ving Rhames and Tom O'Brian. In all, 13 one-hours will be produced to be shown starting in January. Kim Todd will be producing for Atlantis.

Dude is a made-for-TV movie being produced by Atlantis in Vancouver and Mission, B.C. Starring Winston Rekert of *Adderly* fame, the film is about a dude ranch for juvenile delinquents. Director Stuart Margolin wrote the script from an original idea by Rekert and co-producer Danny Virtue. Janice Platt is producing for Atlantis and Michael MacMillan is the executive producer. *Dude* will be seen on the CTV Network in 1989.

Alliance lines up projects

TORONTO - Alliance Entertainment has announced its production plans for 1988-89. Included in its schedule are two feature films, both sequels to successful early works.

California Dreaming is Sandy Wilson's follow-up to her award-winning *My American Cousin* and will be shot in British Columbia, Oregon and California beginning in the spring of '89. Wilson will be directing again from her own script. Margaret Langrick and John Wildman will reprise their starring roles as Sandy Wilcox and her American cousin, Butch. Robert Lantos is executive producer, with Wilson and Steve Denure acting as coproducers.

Gate II has already begun principal photography in Montreal. The film reunites the original creative team from *The Gate*, which received the Golden Reel Award for the Highest-Grossing Canadian Film in 1987. Tibor Takacs directs from a script by Michael Nankin (*The Gate*) and Bruce Wagner (*Nightmare on Elm Street III*). John Kemeny is executive producer for Alliance.

Alliance is also producing three television series: the first season of *Bordertown* (26 half-hours set in 1880 in B.C. for Global in Canada and CBN Cable in the United States); the fifth and final season of *Night Heat* (13 hours); and the second season of *Diamonds* (22 hours).

The company has two six-hour mini-series in the works for early 1989. *Smoke Bellew*, based on a collection of short stories by Jack London, will be shot on location in British Columbia. Set in the Klondike Goldrush of the 1890s, the miniseries is an official Canada-France co-production. CBC has the broadcast rights in Canada. *Gabrielle Chanel* tells the story of Coco Chanel and is again an official Canada-France co-production. Brian Moore has written the screenplay and the CTV Network has picked up the Canadian broadcast rights.

Finally, Alliance has purchased the film rights to *Stung: The Incredible Obsession of Brian Molony*. The book by Gary Ross tells the story of Molony, a Toronto bank officer who defrauded his employers of more than \$10 million to feed his gambling habit.

It could have been a great story. The B.C. government employees were on strike. You could buy only B.C. wine. Mary Lou McCausland, film classifier, was filling in for picketing clerks at the provincial Supreme Court.

Because the Vancouver International Film Festival (VIFF) is a society, only two films had to be classified, the family matinees: *Mio in the Land of Faraway* (a Swedish, Soviet, Norwegian co-production based on a short story by Astrid Lindgren) and *The Tadpole and the Whale* from Rock Demers.

I could hardly wait. Kids picketing Fantasy Gardens demanding an end to the strike. Vancouver's much-touted "world-class" status exposed as fraud. And then, dammit, they settled.

It could have been a great story.

Instead I can report that Garth Drabinsky fell in love with Shirley MacLaine when he was 17. And that when she enters a room otherwise sensible and sane Vancouverites do the same thing. Perhaps it was only a follow-spot, but her face seemed to light up the entire Cineplex-Odeon where the VIFF opened with *Madame Sousatzka*.

Less radiant perhaps, but no less talented, is her director in the film, John Schlesinger. He was spotted dining with producer Ron Sheldo (*The Dressmaker*). They hadn't spoken since clashing over *The Day of the Locust*. Sheldo must find Vancouver a bit hard on his nerves. When last here nine years back he passed up an opportunity to cast an up-and-coming local actor, Michael J. Fox. Before that, 29 years ago, he was here with Errol Flynn when the star dropped dead in a West End apartment.

Edward Dmytryk does not look 80 years old. He barely looks 60. Much to his own surprise he was one of the biggest draws at the VIFF, a B.C. - born director who made his name with Hollywood's B-movies in the '40s and '50s. I had an opportunity to talk with him and to see the 'B.C. Noir' retrospective series during the last week of the festival. He describes himself as an artisan and has little respect for those filmmakers who declare themselves artists. An interview with the director of *Crossfire*, *The Caine Mutiny*, *The Young Lions* and *Walk on the Wild Side* in the next issue.

As you'll read elsewhere, BC Film's astounding first year-end report was released during the Festival. One name appears more times than even BC Film boss Wayne Sterloff - Phil Savath, who's now focussing his attention on *Circus Gothic*, "the film I've always wanted to write." It's about a young girl who goes to clown school and then joins Canada's last travelling tent circus. It disappeared in the early 1970s. Savath expects to shoot next year.

BC Film's next major announcement may have been made by the time you read this: an extension of the Internship program to cover writers. Is Mr. Savath willing to take on an apprentice?

As last year's B.C. Motion Picture Association Trade Forum there was a session on pitching scripts. The Two Pegs (Campbell & Thompson) bounced their idea for a '40s-style mystery featuring a single mom detective. As I recall, reaction was mixed.

The Big Flirt is now at first draft stage and should be shot (for about \$750,000) next year. In the meantime *Bombs Away*, produced with the NFB, premieres November 21. It's a 17-minute look at children's fear of nuclear war complete with study guide. Also from Pegs Films (just a suggestion), *In Search of the Last Good Man*, a 7-minute short now in post-production.

And, about now, Peg Campbell will be arriving in the Orient along with five other Emily Carr College of Art and Design teachers and 13 students. They're there for the Shanghai Animation Festival and will be dropping by the Beijing Film Academy to talk about a possible exchange program.

My sincere thanks to Stephen Foster and Gloria Davies for inviting *Cinema Canada* to co-host the opening-night party for *Max Glick*. The Estia restaurant supplied a generous smorgasbord and we also received help from the Pacific Palisades Hotel and Beckett & Lowe sound.

Among many others I ran into a filmmaker I hadn't seen for six years, since her documentary about older women having children, *Baby Clock*. Elvira Lount's film gathered dust after the initial release but seems now to be coming of age. Broadcasters remain lukewarm but she says international educational TV programmers are suddenly calling up and she's also sold it for home video use. Right now her company, Utopia, is developing a \$5 million feature called *Weirdos*.

Not only do we have great scenery and a passable winter here in B.C., we also eat well. At least if we're munching at one of Tara Tocher's *Reel Appetites* catering tables.

When she began back in '84 I doubt that even Tara envisioned serving 75,000 meals a year to film workers. Never mind winning a Certificate of Merit from the Canada Awards for Business Excellence. Bon appetit!

It's just like in the movies - George Grieve is walking tall in his hometown. He's the production manager for the 26-episode TV series *Bordertown* being shot in the Fraser Valley community of Maple Ridge, about 60 kilometres east of Vancouver.

"It's 13 years of fantasy come true for me," says Grieve, who was the local Parks and Recreation director and an Alderman before getting into the film business. He's long been encouraging producers to shoot in the area.

A western town set has been constructed on ranch land north of Maple Ridge. It includes a saloon and general store; most of the 14 buildings will be practical with complete interiors rigged for indoor scenes.

Bordertown will shoot for 22 weeks under an agreement with a French producer; one of the series' regular performers will be from France and about 20 per cent of the budget will be spent there. The show will be shot in English and then dubbed. Grieve says the total budget is between \$12 and \$13 million. "We'll probably spend a million in Maple Ridge," he says, "buying supplies, lumber and services."

Grieve is keen on local hiring and already has some Maple Ridge residents at work on set construction. The crew will peak at about 75, most of them British Columbians.

"Most of them will be coming from the Vancouver area to us, which is the reverse of what we locals have been doing for years."

Bordertown is being distributed by Alliance but, as of our deadline, no Canadian broadcast had been confirmed.

On the tube, CKVU has introduced its alleged flagship public affairs program *WestCoast*. Although late getting on-the-air (the set wasn't ready), the first week showed promise for what's essentially a low-rent version of *The Journal*. Pieces are well shot but aimlessly written and it is, I think, pretentious to have a host interviewing, via screen, someone who is clearly in the same studio. Still, VU chief of news and current affairs George Froelich comes to the job after several years with Barbara Frum, so the show should soon find its feet.

Just one thing that doesn't make sense: Why is *WestCoast* scheduled opposite both CBC and BCTV supper-hour newscasts? And why isn't there at least one host with some level of competence as an interviewer? Douglas Miller is a perfectly affable TV weatherman but quite unconvincing asking any question more complicated than the current windspeed.

Canwest has also promised Vancouver segments on *For Arts' Sake* and *Eyes West*, co-produced with its other western stations. So far, no specifics on dramatic production.

A couple of issues back we went on-location to *The Wish*, a half-hour CBC program about a paraplegic girl learning to scuba-dive. A number of the actors were members of Theatre Terrific, a company that specializes in training the physically handicapped. You may recall their plea for more opportunities.

Apparently it was heard. Company director Sue Lister says she's had at least four calls from film companies looking for performers but, unfortunately, in ages and heights she couldn't supply. One request was for a male midget or 'little person', another for a 16-year-old girl in a wheelchair. Eventually an able-bodied actress was cast.

Aspiring actors with handicaps should contact Theatre Terrific at 604-222-4020.

By now most of our Vancouver clients will have met Sherri-Lee Guilbert, our new sales representative. She's an actor with Headlines Theatre, the company that creates plays hand-in-hand with those affected by issues in the news. This summer she toured the country in *No-Xya*, an examination of native land claims. During the Vancouver Fringe Festival Headlines also staged their first interactive TV 'power play' with members of the refugee community. During the previous week refugees constructed a short play, about 10 minutes, about their experiences in a new country. After the community cablevision performance, viewers were invited to phone in with suggestions of how the characters might otherwise handle situations. The program is being submitted for Innovative Use of Television awards.

Also please take note: A few months back I was elected to the B.C. Writers Council of ACTRA, largely as a representative of freelance CBC Radio journalists. It quickly became clear that a great deal of our time was to be spent on issues pertaining to film, often from a union point of view. So, in the hope of avoiding conflict of interest, I have assigned coverage of the B.C. labour beat to Ian Hunter.

Finally, a reminder that this year's B.C. Motion Picture Association 'Wrap Party' happens on December 1st at the Hotel Vancouver. BCMPA members pay \$75, non-members \$100. Tickets can be reserved at 604-684-4712.

CRTC approves CAB's Broadcast Council

OTTAWA - The CRTC has approved a proposal by the Canadian Association of Broadcasters to establish a Canadian Broadcast Standards Council. Michael McCabe, president of CAB, claims that the council is unique. "If we get this off the ground, it will be the first in the world," he told *Cinema Canada*.

"I don't think any broadcasting system has this sort of voluntary process of self-discipline. We have been under pressure for some time on a whole range of issues, such as children's advertising, violence in broadcasting, sex-role stereotyping and, increasingly, the portrayal of the disabled and multicultural groups. We thought that it would be better if these matters were not regulated and instead we developed our own codes."

According to CRTC chairman André Bureau, the commission is pleased with CAB's proposal and believes that it constitutes a new approach to the improvement of industry standards.

The Council will be responsible for administering CAB's Code of Ethics, a voluntary code regarding violence in television programming, and the codes regarding sex-role portrayal in radio and television programming. The council will consist of a National Executive, consisting of 12 members, five regional councils (Atlantic, Quebec, Ontario, West and British Columbia) and the radio or television stations that adhere to the Councils.

Link heads Institute

MONTREAL - André Link, president of Cinepix Inc. has been elected president of the Institut Québécois du Cinéma. He replaces Claude Fournier for a three year term.

Link is also the president of the Association Québécoise des Distributeurs et Exportateurs de Films et de Vidéo.

The election on Oct. 12 resulted in a full slate of new board members.

They are: Paule Baillargeon (Union des Artistes), Pierre Blondin (Syndicat des Techniciennes et Techniciens du cinéma du Québec), Roger Frappier (Associations des Producteurs de Films et de Vidéo du Québec), Jean Daniel Lafond (Association des Réalisateurs et Réalisatrices de Films du Québec), Héléne Lauzon (Association Québécoise des Industries Techniques du Cinéma et de la Télévision Inc.), Jacques Patry (Association des Propriétaires de Cinéma du Québec Inc.), Louise Pelletier (Société des Auteurs Recherchistes Documentalistes et Compositeurs).

Sylvie Sauriol represents the video production industry and André Paquet represents a Francophone exchange program.

André Picard, who was also elected to the board as the television broadcast industry representative, has abstained after resigning (Oct. 20) at Television Quatre Saisons. Currently the vice-president of programming at TQS, Picard will move to Toronto in March where he will join the Imax Corp. (SEE PEOPLE).

The Institut Québécois du Cinéma is an advisory agency to the Quebec government on film and television policy.

Script Breakdown starts up in Vancouver

VANCOUVER - Since mid-August, the Los Angeles-based Breakdown Services Ltd. has had a branch office offering script breakdown in Vancouver.

Nathalie McGowan, who is also co-ordinator of the British Columbia Motion Picture Association, runs the Vancouver operation. "As it is now, we're working on about four projects a week that are locally-based," she said.

McGowan explained that casting directors bring in a script, which is then broken down into various elements, such as who the characters are, their age, mental state, number of lines, etc., along with who is producing, directing, and the shooting dates.

This information is then distributed to local agents (who must have two letters of recommendation from casting directors to be eligible, and who pay a fee for the service). The agents can then make submissions to the casting director.

"In the past, casting directors would get on the phone to all the agents when they were looking for actors," McGowan said. "Our service speeds up the process."

Gary Marsh, company president, realized the need in Vancouver for a breakdown service, and wanted someone here who knew the industry and would be able to work with both Canadian and U.S. productions, McGowan explained.

"So far we're doing features, television series, movies of the week; we're hoping to tap commercials, theatre, even student films - anything that involves talent," she said.

The company here presently has 17 clients, as opposed to about 650 in Los Angeles, according to McGowan.

Any casting director can use the service, although one stipulation is that a project must be funded: "We don't do breakdowns for projects that aren't ready to go," she said.

"My real goal is to work with indigenous productions to get the cream of the crop in terms of talent."