

lizards, darts, corny latin music, doctor's needles, and the future.

Dragon has moments of great beauty and memorable comedy, but its efforts to deal dramatically with very serious subjects (human guinea pigs as research fodder, the power of Big Business to do as it pleases, etc.) fall terribly flat, as do all efforts to create suspense. Perhaps one day Simoneau the filmmaker will retire Simoneau the screenwriter; then he can tackle even greater dragons and so become a great filmmaker, rather than merely a good one.

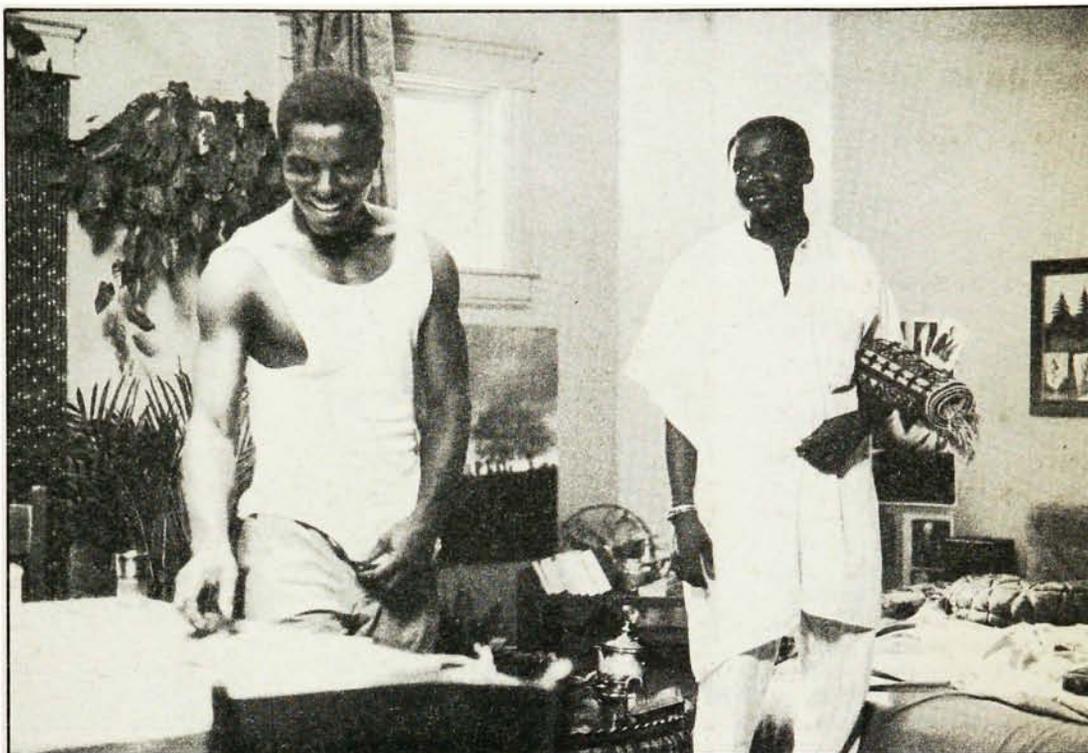
André Guy Arseneault •

DANS LE VENTRE DU DRAGON *exc. p.* Monique Messier, Lorraine Richard *p.* Michel Gauthier *assoc. p.* André Viau *d.* Yves Simoneau *sc.* Yves Simoneau, Pierre Revelin, Marcel Beaulieu *art d.* Normand Sarrazin *ed.* André Corriveau *sd.* Michel Charron, Paul Dion *cost.* Michèle Hamel *d.o.p.* Alain Dostie *orig. mus.* Richard Gregoire *p. mgr.* Muriel Lize *apprentice p. mgr.* Louise Richard *p. coord.* Suzanne Comtois *p. acct.* Helen Aubin *unit mgr.* Mario Nadeau *loc. mgr.* Roger Dufresne *p.a.* Robert Packwood, Richard Chateauvert, Catherine Faucher *app. d.* Pierre Dalpé *1st a. d.* Louis-Philippe Rochon *2nd a. d.* Marie-Christine Lavoie *cont.* Johanne Boisvert *1st. asst. cam.* Paul Gravel *2nd asst. cam.* Sylvie Rosenthal *still photog.* Claudel Huot *boom* Louis Marion *hd. elec.* Daniel Chretien *elec.* Manal Hassib, André Sheridan *key grip* Emmanuel Lepine *grip* Pierre Charpentier, Mario Roussy *asst. art d.* Réal Proulx *set dec.* Nick Jolicoeur, Michele Nolet *ext. props* Claude Poirier, Claude Rainville *set const.* Stéphane Connolly *set props* Pierre Fournier *asst. set props* Louis Gascon *sp. fx.* Jean-Marc Cyr *makeup* Pierre Saindon *hair* Réjean Goderre *dresser* Marianne Carter *sd. ed.* Paul Dion. Produced by Les Productions Québec-Amérique Inc. and Les Films Lenox Inc. with the participation of Telefilm Canada, SOGIC, and SRC. 102 min. 35mm, col. Dolby Stereo.

Jacques W. Benoit's Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer

Seductive title aside, this controversial Canada-France coproduction is not a visual manual for love-making. Nor is it primarily about sex. It is a buddy film, presenting the friendship – soul love – between two immigrants in photogenic Montreal. Unconventional in content and style, the film is unique in Canadian cinema: the first to portray a tight, complementary relationship between two Black (heterosexual) males.

In this semi-autobiographical comedy, the central character, Man (Isaac de Bankolé), succeeds with humour and with an airy, free sense of himself in fulfilling his obsession. He completes a novel, a chronicle of his validating sexual encounters (of which we are treated to two). Man, the epitome of cool, even when confronted by



Isaac de Bankolé as "Man," with Maka Kotto (Bouba)

racist threats and accusations, shows deep emotion – fear – only once, when it appears that his contemplative, philosophical Muslim roommate, Bouba (Maka Kotto), has perished in a fire set by a trio of racist drug pushers led by Julien Poulin (Elvis Gratton).

The two friends are saintly, even while cruising, and so are their various acquaintances. No one tries to do the other in, and each has needs that are mutually met through camaraderie. Love and respect permeate the film, at least as far as the male characters are concerned.

In *Comment faire l'amour*... Black women are invisible, and white women play various (stereo)types in the sub-plots. Miz Literature (Roberta Bizeau) is a McGill postgraduate student rebelling against the values of her wealthy Westmount parents. (After her affair with Man, we learn that she moves on to the anti-Apartheid cause). Miz Suicide (Miriam Cyr), a drug addict, is mesmerized by the profound utterances of Bouba. The acting of both the principals and the secondary characters is, by and large, believable and commendable.

Comment faire l'amour... succeeds precisely for the reasons that John Smith's *Sitting in Limbo* (the first fictionalized portrayal of Black life in Montreal) failed. Black music is successfully integrated by the editing; script and shoot had significant and informed Black input (author Dany Laferrière). The film features human and humanist images of Black males; experienced actors (why has the Canadian film industry not yet allowed Black actors and actresses to become

experienced?); and, finally, a comic story whose central characters persevere to triumph amidst all the human frailties in a pre-AIDS, lovable Montreal.

Comment faire l'amour's sound track contributes strongly to making the film enjoyable and authentic. The background rhythms of Cameroun-born, Paris-based Manu Dibango (*Soul Makossa*), are the key to the editing, serving effectively as a transitional device linking shots and sequences even when visual elements are weak or missing. The track can only enhance the reputation of this talented musician (composer, lyricist and instrumentalist), who over the years has mastered funk, reggae, soul, gospel, jazz, salsa, blues, et al. Charlie Parker's innovative jazz, Bouba's passion, supplements Dibango's as foreground music from an on-camera record player.

Complementing the superb music, at least in the original French-language version, are the human voices: dialogue and on-camera narration. The distinctive Francophone-West African speech of the two principal male actors – with their dignified, philosophical, and occasionally humorous textures, physiognomies, stances and gestures – adds authenticity to their alienation. The occasional straining of French-speaking Quebecers to understand clearly their enunciation reinforces their foreign origins and also serves as a reminder of the linguistic diversity within the international Francophone community.

The film's real *auteur* is Dany Laferrière. Haitian-born, humorous, provocative and

irreverent, this journalist-turned novelist and co-scripter (dialogue), worked closely with rookie director Jacques W. Benoit and producer/co-scripter (structure) Richard Sadler, to make a pleasing, although imperfect film. Laferrière has demonstrated a capability to be a future force in the film industry, if given the opportunity.

Filmgoers desiring an evening of entertainment, solid music, good acting, pleasing shots of Montreal, and a story revolving around obsession and friendship, could do worse than see *Comment faire l'amour*... Parental warning: some sex, no violence, and little profanity. This is a clean production, almost to the point of being sanitized. Hal Weaver •

COMMENT FAIRE L'AMOUR AVEC UN NEGRE SANS SE FATIGUER *p.* Richard Sadler, Ann Burke, Henry Lange *d.* Jacques W. Benoit *sc.* Dany Laferrière, Richard Sadler, based on the novel by Dany Laferrière *cam.* John Berrie *sd.* Serge Beauchemin *art d.* Gaudeline Sauriol *of.* Dominique Roy (France) *sd. des.* Claude Langlois *mix.* Jean-Paul Loublier *orig. mus.* Manu Dibango *theme song* "On vit de femmes" by Claude Dubois, Manu Dibango (music); Claude Dubois, Dany Laferrière (words), performed by Claude Dubois. *cast.* Lise Abastado, Anne Singer *l.p.* Isaac de Bankolé, Maka Kotto, Antoine Durand, Roberta Bizeau, Miriam Cyr, Marie-Josée Gauthier, Julien Poulin, Roy Dupuis, Denys Trudel, Susan Almgren, Alexandra Innes, Nathalie Coupal, Jacques Legras, Mark Bromilow, Isabelle L'Ecuyer, Patricia Tulasne, Tracy Ray, Dominique James, Nathalie Talbot. Produced by Stock International (Montreal) and Dédalus in association with Molécule (Paris). With the financial participation of Telefilm, SOGIC, TQS, and the Ministry of Culture (Paris). Canadian distribution and foreign sales: Aska Film International.