

Trade News

# Drabinsky and MCA battle for control of Cineplex

TORONTO - On the 10th anniversary of the opening of the first Cineplex multi-theatre in Toronto's Eaton Centre, Garth Drabinsky, the company's founder and chief executive officer, is engaged in a bitter fight with MCA Inc. of Los Angeles for control of North America's second largest theatre chain.

The battle, which has been fought in the Ontario Supreme Court, the Quebec Securities Commission, the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, and on the floors of the Toronto and New York Stock Exchanges, has yet to be resolved at press time. In the most recent developments, Drabinsky has dropped his third bid to purchase enough shares to give him control over the company he built, and MCA says that it no longer intends to commence action against Drabinsky, Myron Gottlieb, the company's vice-chairman, and five other directors, in the Ontario Supreme Court.

The bizarre and twisted story began when Charles Bronfman, the wealthy Montreal financier, announced his intention to sell "substantially all" of his holdings in the company to a group of Cineplex board members brought together by Drabinsky and Gottlieb. It was almost 51/2 years ago that Bronfman bailed out the cash-poor Cineplex, allowing it grow into an international theatre chain. Through a separately arranged voting trust, the purchase of the Bronfman shares would have given Drabinsky and Gottlieb effective control of company.

MCA owns 48 percent of the shares outstanding of Cineplex which it bought in 1986 for \$9.80 per share. However, due to federal regulations

governing foreign control over sensitive cultural industries, MCA has only slightly less than 33 percent of the votes. The Bronfman sale would have given Drabinsky and Gottlieb slightly over 33 percent of the votes. Currently Drabinsky controls only 8 percent. It is rumoured that MCA executives are unhappy with his style of management and felt that any deal offered to the Bronfman group should be offered to all the shareholders, including themselves. This would amount to an estimated \$800 million buy-out, a figure that industry analysts say Drabinsky and his group could not afford.

Here is a chronology of events from April 11 to May 1st - April 11: It is announced that Charles Bronfman and several associates have struck a deal to sell "substantially all" (7.3 million shares) of their holdings in Cineplex Odeon to a group of buyers organized by Drabinsky and Gottlieb; April 14: Cineplex issues a press release saying the original deal has been amended to "minimize securities problems." The second deal calls for the purchase of 5.8 million shares and slightly less voting control. The complexities of the deal revolve around the number of people in the selling group. Securities regulations require that any number of sellers over five must receive approval of the commission; April 18: MCA notifies the Quebec Securities Commission that it objects to the deal and the commission agrees to hold a public hearing on the 21st; April 20: The City of Toronto proclaims Cineplex Odeon Day in honour of the company's 10th anniversary and "as a tribute to the development, progress and support of the entertainment arts;" MCA obtains an interim injunction from the Su-

preme Court of Ontario blocking Drabinsky's group from buying the Bronfman shares "until further order." In a related move, MCA filed a statement with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission calling for an independent committee to examine the proposed purchase, claiming that "the Cineplex directors may have put their own interests ahead of those of the company;" April 21: Kellogg Associates, a Los Angeles accounting firm that specializes in providing institutional investors with early warnings on potential problem stocks, issues a highly critical report on Cineplex's accounting practices found in the recently released Annual Report; April 24: The Supreme Court of Ontario sets aside MCA's interim injunction. MCA says it will appeal the decision. A class-action suit is filed in the U.S. District Court in Los Angeles by Three Bridges Investment Group of Philadelphia alleging that Drabinsky and Gottlieb have breached U.S. securities law; April 26: The Quebec Securities Commission issued its finding, denying the Drabinsky group permission to proceed with either the first or second purchase offer. The QSC said the first version was not in the public interest and the second did not meet the conditions governing public offers. MCA drops its appeal to the Ontario court; April 28: MCA threatens to sue Drabinsky and his supporters on the board of directors in the name of Cineplex. Meanwhile, Drabinsky's group come up with a third plan to purchase the Bronfman shares. The QSC postpones public hearings until the following week; April 29: Following a Cineplex board meeting on the 28th in Toronto, Drabinsky announces that he will drop his at-

tempts to buy the Bronfman shares and MCA says that it is suspending all legal proceedings against him.

In some quarters this latest development has been interrupted as a victory for MCA. Ian Currie, a Toronto lawyer who has been acting for MCA, was quoted in the *Globe and Mail* as saying, "The end result is what MCA was really seeking in the first place; that if there is going to be a change in control to the Drabinsky and Gottlieb group, then all the shareholders should be given the opportunity to participate."

This would throw open the doors for others to launch takeover bids, which might lead Drabinsky into a bidding war for control of his own company. Cineplex Odeon stock fluctuated up and down during this hectic three week period and settled down at \$16.75, 75 cents less than the original \$17.50 a share Drabinsky was offering Bronfman.

There has been a great deal of speculation about what will happen next. There is a general meeting of Cineplex shareholders to be held in Toronto on May 9th, and some analysts think it is here that Drabinsky will launch his final takeover bid. There is also a takeover rumour that has MCA being bought out by Sony of Japan; a MCA take-over of Cineplex (which would run counter to current federal government policy); or Rank PCI, of Great Britain, buying Cineplex (Drabinsky has sold off Toronto's Film House and his share in a movie theme world in Florida to Rank in the past four months).

Wyndham Wise •

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## Claude Héroux to battle Radio-Canada in court

MONTREAL – Radio-Canada will not concede to the wishes of Claude Héroux to settle their differences out of court.

At a press conference on April 11, the television producer said the production of six made-for-television movies, each featuring a main character in the *Lance et Compté* television series, was temporarily suspended.

Shooting had been scheduled for June when Telefilm Canada announced it would not participate with \$2.1 million funding for the \$5.5 million project until Héroux and Radio-Canada had solved their differences and a broadcaster had been secured.

According to Telefilm policy, the funding agency can withhold funding where there is no letter of agreement from a broadcaster or where litigation may jeopardize the project.

Héroux expressed hope at his conference that Radio-Canada would agree to settle the dispute

out of court by means of an arbitrator but at press time Radio-Canada had scuttled that possibility.

The problem started when Héroux announced in March that TéléMétropole, Quebec's largest private broadcaster, would carry the six 90-minute movies-for-television (production cost estimated at \$995,000 each) to be broadcast in the fall.

Radio-Canada quickly reminded Héroux that it had paid \$1.6 million for the exclusive broadcast rights to *Lance et Compté* through 1993.

However, Héroux, argued that the public broadcaster had been too slow to commit itself to the new project. He told Radio-Canada that the proposed television-movie format was distinct from that of a series and, therefore, going to TM did not constitute a breach of contract with Radio-Canada which had bought the rights to the series.

public investment offering through Midland Doherty Ltd. Corporate participation came from O'Keefe, Ultramar Canada Ltd. and Canada Trust. Agreements for co-production were made with TF1 (France) and SFP (France). French participation was \$2,790,000.

Average audience size shot up to 2,487,000 viewers and five more Prix Gémeaux were added.

The CBC (English side) withdrew its support from the third series after the second series failed to draw high ratings in English-speaking Canada. TF1, dissatisfied with European ratings, did the same, forcing Héroux to restructure his finances, cut his budget by \$4 million and rely on increased funding from O'Keefe, Le Permanent, Ultramar and the Métro-Richelieu grocery chain.

Several weeks into the production of *Lance et Compté III*, with a budget of \$8,209,900, Radio-Canada announced it could not afford to carry the series and that it had not approached Telefilm for funding. Negotiations proved fruitful for Héroux and Radio-Canada returned.

A record audience size for the third series which ended in March was over 3,000,000 but, according to Héroux, Radio-Canada was slow to commit itself to the fourth series of movies-for-television.

Therefore, after eight months of what Héroux calls "bureaucratic sluggishness" the television producer took his hockey series to Télé-Métropole, a move that Radio-Canada called a breach of contract.

Radio-Canada has completely dismissed Héroux's argument insisting that Héroux remains contractually obligated until Dec. 31, 1993.

Héroux has asked Radio-Canada not to bring this case to court where Quebec's most popular television program could be tied up for years.

Radio-Canada has responded by pointing out that Héroux (not Radio-Canada) wants to break the contract and that the court, not arbitration, would provide the most conclusive decision.

An inside source at Radio-Canada who is working closely with the Radio-Canada/Héroux dossier told *Cinema Canada* that although Radio-Canada might have been responsible for certain extended delays where legal matters were concerned, there has always been a sound working relationship between both parties.

The source explained that Héroux was slow to submit documents for a legal name change of the *Lance et Compté* production company and that confirmation by Radio-Canada took some time.

However, it took only three days in early December 1988 for Radio-Canada to read and respond to the first two television-movie scripts – a process that was interrupted by the holidays.

According to the source, Héroux's stated frustration with Radio-Canada is compounded by the fact that other Héroux projects have been rejected and by the fact that Radio-Canada is being prudent in its investment dealings since the costly failure of the *Mount Royal* (Alliance) series in 1988.

John Timmins •

### Overview: Héroux in a hurry

Claude Héroux, producer of the *Lance et Compté* television series, does not like the way Radio-Canada does business.

The direct production cost of all three *Lance et Compté* 13-half hour series was \$26,615,675 with additional indirect costs. Of this, Radio-Canada paid a total of \$5 million or 18 per cent, according to Héroux.

He says that while Radio-Canada was paying low licence fees, the public broadcaster was charging \$8,500, \$11,000 and \$14,000 for 30 seconds of commercial air time during the three series, respectively.

In July 1985, Radio-Canada bought the broadcast rights to all three *Lance et Compté* series. A pilot was made to attract further investment for an overall cost of \$547,167 to which Radio Canada contributed \$50,000.

Additional participation for the first series came from TF1, the largest broadcaster in France with a 20 per cent investment, Swiss Television, O'Keefe Brewery and the CBC.

This series was produced in both English and French for \$8,670,775 with a 15 per cent licence fee paid by Radio-Canada.

Average audience size was 1,993,000 viewers. That year, *Lance et Compté* won six Prix Gémeaux with nominations in eight categories.

The second series was produced at a cost of \$9,735,000 with a large fully subscribed

## More cuts to the CBC proposed

OTTAWA – CBC president Pierre Juneau said the CBC will have to make major reductions in service and lay off staff to meet the Tory government's proposed cut of \$140 million in the corporation's budget over the next four years. The cuts backs were announced in the federal spending estimates issued a day after the federal budget was tabled in the Commons.

The budget cut, is in the president's words, "is absolutely devastating. The impact is not only painful, but dire." CBC spokesman Richard Chambers told *Cinema Canada* that the cut backs (the second to be imposed by the current Conservative government; in 1984 it imposed a \$84 million cut that led to extensive lay offs), "are unfortunate, bordering on the tragic given what we are trying to do within Canadian broadcasting."

Juneau suggested on a Toronto CBC Radio morning program that the corporation's goal of achieving 95% Canadian content in prime time over the next five years, "has gone out the window." Chambers explained, "What the president is saying, is that with the budget cut im-

posed on the CBC now, on top of the history of cuts we have experienced in the last four years, it is going to make it very difficult. He doesn't know yet exactly how Canadization will be effected. The target may go out the window, but the goal is very dear to us."

ACTRA General Secretary Garry Neil said in a press release, "These cuts will have disastrous consequences for all Canadians. The CBC will have no option but to amputate whole services, to close stations or otherwise decimate programming." When reached for comment, ACFTIP spokesperson Peter Mortimer thought that the cut backs would "obviously slow down Canadization, possibly putting it on hold." Sam Jeppcott of CFTA called the cut backs, "a political move. Not 'I'll get you', but political in the sense that nobody is fighting for what amounts to ministerial petty cash for this broadcaster. Nobody has a clear policy about what they want to do with public broadcasting in this country, and that's a terrible shame."

Although the Canadian Broadcasting Corp. will face the cuts starting next spring, the spending estimates show that this year the CBC will receive an extra \$57.8 million in revenues previously committed by former Communications Minister Flora MacDonald for Canadization and the building of the broadcast centre in Toronto. Also the Corp. will receive \$26.7 million for higher salary costs and an extra \$6.5 million for operating costs. However, next year CBC's federal subsidy will be cut by \$20 million and accumulate to \$140 over the following three years. Presently the public broadcaster receives a parliamentary allotment of \$965 million.

The budget hit the CBC in other ways as well. There is an increased tax on telecommunications (satellite time and telephone lines), higher general sales taxes on all goods, higher employer share to unemployment insurance and a new tax on corporations. "Our finance people are costing it out right now," said Chambers. "It will probably mean three or four million for the present year and six next year."

During the Toronto radio interview, Pierre Juneau speculated that the CBC would consider selling advertising time the National and the Journal, or even radio, to make up for the government's short fall in subsidies. He has call for an emergency meeting with Communications minister Marcel Masse to discuss the cuts, which he says came as a complete surprise. "If we're talking about taking the CBC apart," said Chambers, "which Juneau would say these cuts mean, we have to discuss with the minister about how this can be done."

The released spending proposals also indicate that the government has followed through on an earlier promise to increase funds available to the Telefilm to fulfil its commitment to the Broadcast Fund and the film and video distribution policy. The increase in the current year will be \$44.1 million. The NFB will also receive a \$6 million increase.

## Canada Film Year cancelled

TORONTO - Canada Film Year, the celebration of the Canadian film industry due to begin in September, has been cancelled. The Academy of Canadian Cinema and Television made the announcement April 28 in a brief press release. Maria Topalovich, Director of Communications for the Academy, told *Cinema Canada* that, "it was the responsible thing to do. It was very difficult for us to the kind of fund raising we needed to do in the current economic climate."

The decision to scrap the events came immediately after the budget was released in Ottawa. "It just seemed like the wrong time," said Topalovich. "It was felt that the fundraising targets are unlikely to be met and this would severely limit Canada Film Year's programming and promotional objectives." Government funding for Canada Film Year was intended to be supported by private sector financing. Projects funded by CFY were expected to raise matching funding other sources.

Stephen Roth, chairman of the board for CFY, expressed hope that an alternative means of "highlighting and promoting our film achievements will developed in the future." Applications have already been received for events plan in the fall and Topalovich anticipates negative feedback from those who saw the whole notion of celebrating Canadian film as being ill-conceived.

"This was a great opportunity when this was conceived off two years ago," said Topalovich. "We work in a difficult industry and things change. We really regret it."

## OFDC issues OFIP guidelines

TORONTO - The Ontario Film Development Corporation has issued guidelines for its two-year Ontario Film Investment Program. The program was announced back in February as a means "to counter the federal government's decision to significantly reduce the tax incentive to

invest in Canadian films," said Ontario's Minister of Culture and Communications Lillie Munro at the time.

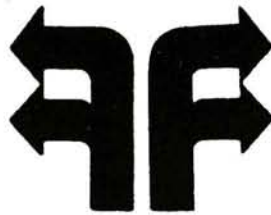
The Ministry hopes that the scheme will generate a minimum of \$75 million in private sector investments in the first year and roughly \$120 million in total film production. The program will be limited to independent productions that are Ontario-controlled and provides a cash rebate of up to 20 percent of the investment up to a limit of \$2.25 million.

Eligible investors will get a 15 percent rebate if the film gets eight, nine or 10 points and 75% of the post is done in Ontario and 20 percent rebate if the film achieves 10 points and 90 percent of the post is done in the province. The point system is the same for certification under the regulations of the Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office and the points are allocated to key creative and technical positions on the film.

According to the guidelines, an "Ontario resident" is someone who has been present in Ontario for at least 200 days of the year prior to the date of application. The production must be actually owned and controlled by one or more Ontario production entities and not previously be-

nefitted from OFIP. Principal photography must normally take place in Ontario and the budget approved by the OFIP. When a production qualifies, based on a review by the OFDC, and the OFDC is satisfied that all the financing is in place but for OFIP approval, the OFDC will provide a guarantee of rebate to close the deal.

The OFIP is funded by a commitment of \$30.8 million from the province. Munro said at the February press conference, "Individuals within the film industry and industry associations tell us that film production in this province could well fall by half if nothing is done. Our government will not let this happen." She pointed her finger at the feds for doing nothing about the damage done to the industry by the virtual elimination of a coordinated federal policy. "We hope the federal government will develop a meaningful national approach that will make provincial programs unnecessary," she said.



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## Paramount pulls English videos in Quebec without explanation

MONTREAL - There is all sorts of speculation as to why Paramount Home Video did it. Some call it an ideological stand against the Quebec Cinema Act in general, others says Paramount misread the act. Whatever the reason, Paramount refuses to spell it out.

Paramount Home Video, a division of Paramount Pictures, has decided not to comply with the Quebec Cinema Act and to withhold its English-language videocassettes from the Quebec market.

As of April 1 this year, the Régie du cinéma has enforced sections of the act which require that all Quebec distributors deposit a letter of agreement authorized by the foreign exporter.

According to sections 104 (condition for general licence) and 118, the régie provides a sticker

for each videocassette in circulation which effectively guards against piracy or illegal duplication. The law also stipulates that it is the Quebec distributor and not the majors (exporter) who assume the cost of the permits at \$400 for an annual permit, \$50 per title in circulation and 25 cents for each sticker.

There are 118 authorized distributors in Quebec with either exclusive or non-exclusive rights in either French or English.

Marc Brissette, a lawyer for the régie, says Paramount's motives remain a mystery.

"The régie was not consulted and Paramount is still not talking," he says.

The Paramount decision, according to Brissette, was made independent of the Motion Picture Exporters Association of America.

Paramount has hinted at its reasoning in one tersely worded press release saying that the Quebec Cinema Act "hampers competition." But no one seems to know what this means and as of Sept 30 next, the other U.S. major studios have agreed to comply with the law.

Brissette says it is uncertain how the Paramount decision will affect the Quebec industry.

Paramount has the most to lose, he says, ad-

ding that the majors have never been known to give up even fractional revenues.

"Maybe when Paramount realizes that it is losing money it will change its mind," says Brissette.

The Paramount decision came on the eve of its delivery of *Tucker: The Man and His Dream*, *The Accused* starring Jodie Foster and *Coming to America* starring Eddie Murphy.

Opposition to the Paramount decision has been raised by Lise Bacon, Quebec cultural affairs minister, who says the decision took her by surprise.

The Video Dealers Association of Canada has condemned the decision as "deplorable". The VDAC supports the spirit of the act but has asked the government to consider the difficulty for national retailers who are used to shipping inventory across provincial borders.

Since 1986, strong video distribution legislation in Quebec was anticipated as compensation for weak film distribution legislation.

When the Quebec government signed a film distribution law with the Motion Picture Export Association of America on Oct. 22, 1986, there was widespread criticism that the deal distorted the original intent of Bill 109 as drafted in 1985 by

the Parti Québécois. The legislation failed to curb the majors who control 80 per cent of the Quebec box office. It was expected at the time that the government would compensate with tough legislation for video distribution.

## Standard buys Medallion labs

TORONTO - After over a year of trying, Standard Broadcasting Ltd. has acquired a 100 per cent interest in Medallion Film and Video Laboratories of Toronto. Medallion is one of the biggest and oldest labs in the city. Standard, which owns CFRB radio, VTR Productions and Eastern Sound, announced its intention to buy the lab in February of last year.

Allan Slaight, president and CEO of Standard said, "We have worked for quite some time to bring Medallion into our family. Now, between Medallion and VTR Productions/Eastern Sound, we intend to become North America's leading supplier of production services."

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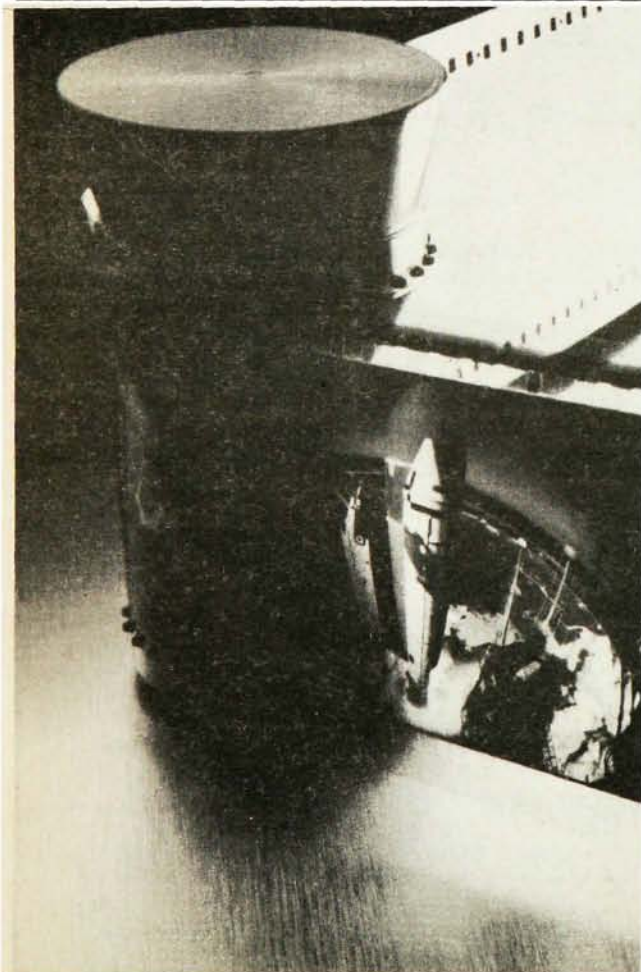
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**Telescene drops commercials and regroups**

MONTREAL - The Telescene Film Group has relocated its offices in the Town of Mount Royal and is in the process of dropping its commercial division.

Niel Leger, founder of Telescene in 1977 and executive in charge of the commercial division, has pulled out of Telescene.

After reincorporating in 1986, Telescene jumped into feature production in a big way -

*Obsession, A Corps Perdu and Malarek* - at the expense of the commercial-making arm of Telescene, according to Leger.

"The money we were making on commercials was being used to buoy up film production. This was fine when we were billing \$3 million but that wasn't always the case," says Leger, who plans to reestablish himself on a freelance basis or join another commercial house.

Leger says the 1986 reincorporation of Telescene into three divisions worked a lot better on paper. This exercise was intended to protect private investments should one division fall into financial difficulty.

During that same year, Telescene moved into office/production facilities at 444 St. Paul Street

which it subsequently sold and occupied as a tenant.

Jamie Brown, executive vice-president of the Telescene Film Group, agrees that the commercial division suffered during the last three years of intensive feature film production.

"There is a perception that if you're busy producing films, commercials will not get full attention. In some ways this is true," says Brown.

Brown says Leger has parted company with Telescene "in an amicable way."

Telescene has renovated its own facilities at 5510 Ferrier in T.M.R. where Brown says they can make more efficient use of the building space and where "taxes are lower."

"The only reason we were in Old Montreal

was for the commercial side," says Brown. "We don't feel removed from the centre as most of our business is done on the phone with Los Angeles."

The Telescene Film Group has recently hired Jean Desormeaux, director of business affairs and Barbara Pecs, comptroller.

At press time, the company was considering no fewer than five different offers for the *The Brylcreem Boys*, a \$7 to \$10 million Canada/Ireland co-production with Opix Films.

**Crawleys reorganizes**

OTTAWA - Financial difficulties have forced the Crawleys Group Inc. of Ottawa to drastically cut staff and restructure the entire organization, in this, the 50th anniversary of the company that the late "Budge" Crawley built. When a multi million dollar international co-production deal fell through late last year, Crawleys was left owing a million dollars to Telefilm and had to lay off most of its staff. (see *Cinema Canada* no. 160)

Bill Stevens, CEO and co-owner of the Crawleys Group, said at the time that, "We are not bankrupt or insolvent, we just have one huge, huge cash-flow problem." When contacted recently by *Cinema Canada*, he was cautiously optimistic about the future of one of Canada's most famous production houses. "I think we can see the light at the end of the tunnel. If we can sort things out quickly enough we will be fine. There is now someone at Telefilm who is working closely with us and our loans will be paid in a civilized fashion."

The company is finishing work on *The Ugly Duckling*, one of its animated classics, which has been extremely successful for them on CTV and the home video market and Stevens is waiting to hear from the CBC on *Mouse Sports*, four animated half-hours. "We can build on that," he said. So far Stevens has sold off most of Crawleys' assets, like the lab, equipment and sound studio, and the building has been sold. They will be moving into smaller quarters this month. The staff has been reduced to five. "We are confident we can rebuild," said Stevens.

**Lifesize: women's film series**

HALIFAX - *Lifesize: Women and Film* will host a film series and two six-day scriptwriting and directing workshops for women in the Atlantic region.

Screenings will be held at Wormwood's Cinema in Halifax, May 19 to 25.

Workshops will be held May 27 to June 1 in the rural setting of Tatamagouche. The *Lifesize* office is located at the National Film Board office in Halifax.

## Canada/France co-production treaty under close examination

MONTREAL - The question of whether Canada/France co-productions will be accepted by the European economic council as an inclusive part of the French quota system remains an open question.

In its efforts towards harmonization of a pan-European market by 1992 the European council of ministers has issued a directive that 60 per cent of television programming must be of European origin.

The bilateral co-production agreement between Canada and France provides that Canada/France co-productions are counted as part of a current 50 per cent French-language quota even if Canada has taken a minority position in the co-production project.

The new directive stipulates that France must have a majority position in the project in order for it to be counted within the 60 per cent quota and not be relegated to the 40 per cent wasteland of largely U.S. programs.

A tripartite commission of Canada/Quebec/France has been discussing the issue which will be tabled before the European parliament this month and sent back to the council of ministers if amendments are necessary.

A spokesperson for Communications Canada told *Cinema Canada* that she is optimistic that a final agreement will favor all parties.

"It is not difficult for Canadians to understand why Europeans are attempting to protect their own market. It was only recently when they realized that this audio-visual legislation might have an negative impact on the co-production treaty."

## OFDC in Paris to boost co-productions

TORONTO - Ontario premier David Peterson and the OFDC held a reception in Paris in April to give a boost to the many co-productions between film producers in Ontario and their international partners. Wayne Clarkson, chairman and CEO of the OFDC, expects there to be "120 to 150,000" worth of co-production dollars in the coming year, which he called a "pleasant surprise".

The trip was a trade mission sponsored by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Technology, and representatives of Toronto-based Alliance Entertainment, Atlantis Films, Nelvana and Sunrise

Productions were invited to come along. In Paris they met with senior executives from major French film production and television companies. Clarkson told *Cinema Canada* that "it was valuable to have the Premier there to represent the importance of co-productions to Ontario."

## Imax goes to Russia

TORONTO - Imax Systems Corp. of Toronto has signed a joint enterprise agreement in Moscow with Znanije, the "All Union Knowledge

Society" which operates museums and planetariums throughout the Soviet Union. The agreement calls for the creation of SOVIMAX and the building of a least one IMAX/OMNIMAX theatre in the Soviet Union. There are currently 58 IMAX/OMNIMAX theatres operating in 14 countries around the world.

Following 10 months of negotiations, the agreement was signed in February by Imax president Graeme Ferguson and executives from Znanije. A committee has been struck to determine a site for the theatre and to begin developing ideas for the first Soviet IMAX production.

## Canada and Ireland sign film treaty

OTTAWA - The Irish/Canada Film and Video Co-production Treaty was signed in Dublin on April 4.

Present were Dennis McDermott, Canadian ambassador for Ireland and Brian Lenihan, Irish deputy prime minister and minister of foreign affairs.

The first official co-production, *Brylcreem Boys* has been scheduled to start shooting at the end of May. It will be co-produced by Opix Films (Ireland) and the Telescene Film Group.

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## CSC announces awards

TORONTO - The Canadian Society of Cine-  
matographers held their 33rd annual awards din-  
ner last month at the Convention Centre in To-  
ronto. The winners were: Jim Scott for the Best  
Cinematography in Music Videos (*Comfort  
Zone*); Greg Middleton of the University of  
British Columbia for Best Cinematography in  
Student Films; Reginald Morris, Best Cine-  
matography in TV Dramas for NBC's *The Fortu-  
nate Pilgrim*; Joan Hutton, Best Cinematography  
in Documentaries for the NFB's *For Richer For  
Poorer*; and Rene Ohashi, Best Cinematography  
in Theatrical Features for *Shadow Dancing*. This  
year's winner of the Stan Clinton Award (Clin-  
ton was the first cameraman to join the CBC in  
1952 and died in 1986) went to Peter Warren for  
*Summer in the City*, Global TV.

The International show comes hard on the  
heels of Images 89 Festival of Independent film  
and video, which was primarily Canadian in  
focus. Shedden said the Congress will have  
more of an "academic agenda." Invited film-  
makers include Stan Brakhage, Michael Snow,  
David Rimmer, Wilhelm and Birgit Hein and  
many others. The opening evening will be a tri-  
bute to Canadian artist and filmmaker Jack  
Chambers.

There will be screenings of films from Canada,  
Eastern Europe, West Germany, Latin America,  
Britain and the Phillippines in addition to cu-  
rated thematic screenings, special presentations,  
panel discussions and open screenings. Some of  
the special presentations include abstract films  
of the 20's, women filmmakers and the avant-  
garde, and a retrospective of the films of Hollis  
Frampton.

## First wave of CTV Fellows go the Banff

BANFF - Forty persons will attend the Banff  
Television Festival, June 4 to 10, as CTV Fellows.

The fellowship was initiated to assist prom-  
ising television producers, directors, writers who  
could otherwise not afford to attend the festival.

Over 40 winners were chosen from a group of  
93 applicants from across the country.

The jury consisted of Jerry Ezekiel (festival di-  
rector), Derrick Harvey (board member), Bill  
Stewart (Alberta Culture, Film and Literary Arts  
officer) and Larry Shorter, (past chairman of the  
Banff Television Foundation's professional de-  
velopment committee).

This is the first year of the three-year \$180,000  
fellowship program sponsored exclusively by  
the CTV Television Network.

## International Experimental Film Congress to be held in Toronto

TORONTO - The International Experimental  
Film Congress to be held in Toronto from May 28  
to June 4th will be largest exhibition of avant-  
garde films mounted anywhere in the world  
since a 1979 exposition held in London, England.  
Coordinator Jim Shedden of the Innis Film Soci-  
ety told *Cinema Canada* that the Toronto Congress  
will be "more focused and more reflective" than  
the London show. "So much has happened in  
the 10 years, which is indicative of the relative  
health of the avant-garde," he said.

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## Cinexus produces first feature

TORONTO—Stephen Roth, formerly of Alliance Entertainment, and now president of Cinexus Capital Corporation, has announced the first of "three or four" projects Cinexus plans to produce this year. *Beautiful Dreamers* tells the little-known story about a short visit by American poet and visionary Walt Whitman to London, Ontario, in the 1880s. Whitman will be played by Rip Torn. Others in the cast include Colm Feore and Wendel Meldrum.

The script is by John Kent Harrison, who will also be directing. The story centres around Whitman's visit to London to investigate a local institution where his retarded brother was being kept. Roth says the film's budget is "medium size" and will be shot in and around Toronto starting at the end of May. Cinexus' next film will be *Heart of the Storm*, which begins production by the end of July.

## Primedia's plans to produce Robertson Davies put on hold

TORONTO—A television adaption of Robinson Davies' novel, *What's Bred in the Bone*, has been delayed because of the budgetary uncertainties at the CBC. "We're a victim of CBC cutbacks," producer Pat Ferns told *Cinema Canada*. "The script is in good shape and we're having meetings with the BBC at MIP to finalize the deal but we've been delayed by the CBC." The adaptation of the novel, which has sold well in both Canada and England, is by Bill Humble and John McGreevey (producer of *Peter Ustinov's Russia*).

Fern's company, Primedia, is also involved with the development of *Grey Owl*, a drama based on Lovat Dickson's *Wilderness Man*, a biography of Canada's first conservationist. This \$7 million project, to be produced in association with Palace TV of Great Britain, is scheduled to go before the cameras in August under the direction of Eric Till. CTV has picked up the broadcasting rights in Canada.

## Gagnon to adapt Ireland novel

MONTREAL—Claude Gagnon, director of *The Kid Brother*, is in preproduction with his latest film, *The Pianist*.

The film is an adaptation of the award-winning novel *A certain Mr. Takahashi* by Toronto novelist Ann Ireland.

# BANFF, JUNE 4-10: THE INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION REVOLUTION

In 1989, Banff — Canada's International Television Festival — celebrates its tenth anniversary. A time to look back? No, a time to look forward, to the 90's and beyond. In our anniversary year, we're planning our most ambitious festival ever: a week-long, in-depth look at the television revolution.

### OPENING SALUTE TO CTF

The festival opens on Sunday, June 4, with a gala salute to **La Communauté des télévisions francophones** honoring a quarter of a century of achievement in the promotion of quality international French-language television.

### THE TELEVISION REVOLUTION

The conference sessions begin with the CBC Keynote Address, presented this year by **Andrew Nell**, Executive Chairman of Rupert Murdoch's controversial new British satellite service, Sky Television, and Editor of *The Sunday Times* of London.

That launches fifty hours of seminars and workshops about our industry and where it's going. "The Television Revolution: More Choices, Fewer Voices?" — "Television and the Democratic Process: An Electoral Revolution?" — "The Sponsorship Revolution: Who Pays? Who Controls? Who Cares?" — "The Banff International Market Simulation" (a perennial favorite, revolutionary in concept!) — "The Distribution Revolution," a presentation by **Norman Horowitz**, President and CEO, MGM/UA Telecom-

munications Inc., and members of his specialist sales force — and a wind-up session titled "Visions of the Future," looking at where the television revolution is going in America, the likely impact of the 1992 integrated European market on the television industry, and the impact that television will have on cinema in the next decade.

(All this and more. Contact us for further details on our seminar and workshop program.)

### LA RÉVOLUTION TÉLÉVISUELLE

*En l'honneur de son 10<sup>e</sup> anniversaire, le Festival de télévision de Banff, sera probablement le plus intéressant de tous. Le soir de l'inauguration le 4 juin, un hommage sera rendu à la Communauté des télévisions francophones. Le festival soulignera aussi le 50<sup>e</sup> anniversaire de l'Office national du film du Canada et présentera à la chaîne Globo TV du Brésil, le Grand Prix de Distinction. Notre festival est le point de ralliement international des dirigeants de l'industrie et l'endroit idéal pour parler de coproduction.*

*"La révolution télévisuelle" est le thème de 1989. Pendant les 50 heures de séminaires et de séances plénières seront analysés tous les aspects de ce thème "subversif." Toutes les séances offriront un service de traduction simultanée française et anglaise. Un événement spécial aura lieu chaque soir de la semaine (y compris la danse et le barbecue western), pour être couronné par la soirée de gala du 9 juin au cours de laquelle les Prix Rockie seront décernés aux meilleures émissions de télévision. En plus de tout ceci, la magnificence des montagnes Rocheuses.*

### OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

Each year at Banff we honor a network, production unit, or production company with our Outstanding Achievement Award. Past winners include Granada Television of England; WDR, Cologne; MTM Enterprises, U.S.; and NHK, Japan. This year the award goes to Brazil's **Globo TV Network**, whose President and owner, **Dr. Roberto Marinho**, will be in Banff to accept the honor. On Tribute Night we celebrate Globo TV's unprecedented domestic and international successes.

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As a registered Banff delegate, you'll enjoy a full, relaxing week of easy access to other professionals in our industry — opportunities to make friends, renew contacts, and do business. (Banff has been called the co-production marketplace.) **Accessibility** is what the Banff business connection is all about: access to your peers, and access to the movers and shakers of the television world.

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## Agfa and SC sign four pic deal

TORONTO—A minimum four-feature film deal has been signed by SC Entertainment Corp. and Agfa-Gevaert Canada Ltd. The producers are Paco Alvarez and Edgar Egger. Shooting is scheduled to begin in June.

Agfa will supply raw XT 320 and XT 125 stock. Western Imperial Ltd. (Vancouver) and SonoTechnique (Montreal) handles sales of Agfa XT color negative 16mm and 35mm film.

Agfa has recently transferred specialist Frank Dejonghe from the company headquarters in Belgium. Bruce Wienberg has been appointed motion picture products division manager.

OTTAWA—The CRTC will begin its hearing into the biggest and most complex takeover in Canadian broadcasting history May 29th in Ottawa. The federal regulator will determine if Maclean Hunter's \$600 million takeover of Selkirk Communications Ltd. and MH's subsequent sell-off, for \$310 million, of Selkirk's holdings, conforms to government guidelines.

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## Cambium produces a generic special

TORONTO — Cambium Productions of Toronto hopes to repeat the success it has had with *Sharon, Lois and Bram's Elephant Show* with its latest offering, *The Eric Nagler Generic Holiday Family Music Special*. The special was aired May 4th on CHCH-TV. Children's musician Nagler has been a regular on the *Elephant Show* from the beginning, and now that Cambium have completed five years with the very popular group, they are looking to repeat the winning formula. Producers Arnie Zipursky and Bruce Clawson are currently developing a series with Nagler and the CBC.

Zipursky told *Cinema Canada* that Cambium will soon be breaking out of the children's market with more music specials and perhaps even a feature film. He is looking to stage concerts in Moscow and Leningrad with Canadian recording artists (tentatively), k. d. lang, Brian Adams, Rush and Colin James. There is a mini-series in the works with a British television company about 19th-century whiskey barons Tom Dewar and James Buchanan, and Cambium is developing its first feature, an offbeat musical with the Clichettes called *Rebel Girls*. The lip-synching Clichettes are a cult favourite in the Toronto Queen Street clubs and the story, which is to be set during the sixties in Niagara Falls, is "about what happens to bad girls when they grow up."

## Baton launches history series

TORONTO — Baton Broadcasting in association with History Productions Ltd. has embarked on an ambitious project to produce a series of television movies on pre-Confederation Canadian history. History Productions is owned by Tom Gould, a former journalist and vice-president of news programming for CTV. Baton owns the Glen-Warren studios in Toronto and CFTO, the largest CTV affiliate.

The first to go into production this summer at the International Studios in Kleinberg is *Divided Loyalties*. It tells the story of Joseph Brant, who lead his Iroquois people into Canada after the American Revolution. Producer Barrie Diehl told *Cinema Canada* that the company hopes to produce several films (perhaps as many as "10 to 15") about the different regions of Canada and the next one is already in development.

*Divided Loyalties* will be directed by Mario Azzopardi (*Night Heat, Diamonds*) and shot by veteran Vic Sarin, who is currently behind the cameras on CBC's *Love and Hate*. A cast and Canadian broadcaster have yet to be announced.

## Alliance wraps E.N.G.

TORONTO — *E.N.G.*, a two-hour made-for-TV movie recently wrapped in Toronto, is an abbreviation for Electronic News Gathering. Alliance Entertainment (*Mount Royal* and *Border-town*) of Toronto, which is producing the pilot for the CTV Network, has announced its intention to go into series with this story about a television news team and their daily work in a big city.

Arthur Weinthal, CTV vice-president of Entertainment Programming, claims the series will be "the costliest ever undertaken and every element of the production is in the hands of Canadians." Heading the cast of *E.N.G.* are Sarah Botsford (seen in *Street Legal*), Mark Humphrey (*Night Heat* and *Adderly*) and veteran Art Hindle.

Mario Azzopardi directed the pilot, which was produced by Jeff King (*Diamonds*) and Robert Carney. Robert Lantos is executive producer. North American rights are owned by Baton Broadcasting and worldwide rights will be sold through Alliance International, the company's

newly formed international sales arm.

Alliance is also involved in an international two-part feature film/eight-hour TV mini-series, simply called *The French Revolution*. Denis Heroux is serving as a co-producer with an international assortment of companies. Robert Enrico and Richard Heffron are directing a screenplay by David Ambrose. Leading players include Klaus Maria Brandauer, Jane Seymour, Peter Ustinov, Michel Piccoli and Claudia Cardinale. This year marks the 200th anniversary of the revolution that changed the course of European history.

## CRTC renews 75 TV licences

OTTAWA - Following extensive public hearings held across Canada in the fall of 1988, the CRTC renewed the licences of 75 privately-owned English-language stations and CBC-owned-and-operated English and French-language stations. A similar review of private-sector French-language stations is planned for the coming fall.

"Overall, we are happy with the performance of these television stations. The commission believes that Canadians are the best-served television consumers in the world," said Louis "Bud" Sherman, interim chairman of the CRTC.

In its decision, handed down at the beginning of April, the CRTC adopted a new approach to Canadian-content regulations, linking requirements concerning Canadian program spending to total advertising revenues. Sixteen of the largest licensees, whose total advertising revenues exceeded \$10 million in the year ending August 31, 1988, will be required as condition of licence to achieve a minimum level of Canadian program expenditures. The smaller stations will be expected to meet the same content requirements, but this will not be a condition of licence. Sherman estimates that a minimum of \$2 billion will be spent on the production of Canadian programs over the next five years.

Michael McCabe, president and CEO of the Canadian Association of Broadcasters, said that the recent decision, "is a strong endorsement of Canada's private television industry and a recognition of their impressive performance over the past several years." In all, 20 CTV affiliates, nine independents, 20 CBC affiliates and 26 CBC owned-and-operated stations were issued licence renewals.

## CKVR-TV faces stiff opposition at CRTC hearing

TORONTO - CKVR-TV's application to the CRTC to disaffiliate from the CBC and become a "twin-stick" operation has run into stiff opposition from local Toronto broadcasters, in particular Global TV and Multilingual TV (MTV). CKVR of Barrie, Ont., is owned by CHUM Ltd., a Toronto-based media company that owns CITY-TV (Toronto), MuchMusic, plus TV and radio stations across six provinces.

Under a proposal presently before the regulatory body, CKVR would set up a "twin-stick" operation in central Ontario. It would rebroadcast CBLT-TV (CBC's owned-and-operated Toronto station) in the region, while the new CKVR

would be classified as an independent and given "priority carriage" in Toronto. Under the present arrangement with the CBC, CKVR carries about 50 hours a week of CBC programming and is given low priority by Toronto cable companies. CKVR would carry the full CBC programming on newly built transmitters.

However, during the CRTC hearing in March, Global president David Mintz implied that CHUM Ltd. is trying to get a new independent television station "through the back door" into the lucrative Toronto market and that other companies should have been given the chance to compete with CHUM for the licence. In their intervention, Global claimed that, "if approved, (CKVR's application) will effectively result in the addition of yet another independent television station in the Toronto market, which will adversely affect the ability of the existing broadcasters to fulfill the special responsibilities they bear."

Both Global and MTV expressed their concerns forcefully at the hearing, bringing a strong rebuke from CHUM president Allan Waters. Calling Mintz's implication "appalling and a disgrace" he went on to say that "CHUM Ltd. deals in the truth and the commission knows that."

Ron Waters, son of the CHUM boss and president of CKVR, told *Cinema Canada* that, "We were on basic cable in Toronto many years ago, then were pushed aside. Both Global and MTV are on basic cable in Barrie because of the regulations, and now the regulations will work in our favour in Toronto. They're just concerned about their revenue, and that's understandable. I think they're overreacting to us coming into the Toronto market." Waters is hoping the commission will okay the deal and allow CKVR to start up its new operations by September.

## CBC wants to broadcast into the U.S. via satellite

OTTAWA - The CBC has announced its intention to beam Canadian television shows produced by itself and other Canadian broadcasters via satellite to U.S. cable subscribers. Assuming that the federal cabinet approves this scheme by the CBC's board of directors, the CBC projects that the Canadian channel could attract as many as 44 million viewers. Chairman Pierre Juneau is reported to have submitted a preliminary draft of the plan to the Department of Communications.

The plan would seem to be a variation of an earlier CBC plan submitted to the 1986 Caplan-Sauvageau Task Force that envisioned a superstation in Windsor, Ont., that would beam the CBC in the U.S. via satellite.

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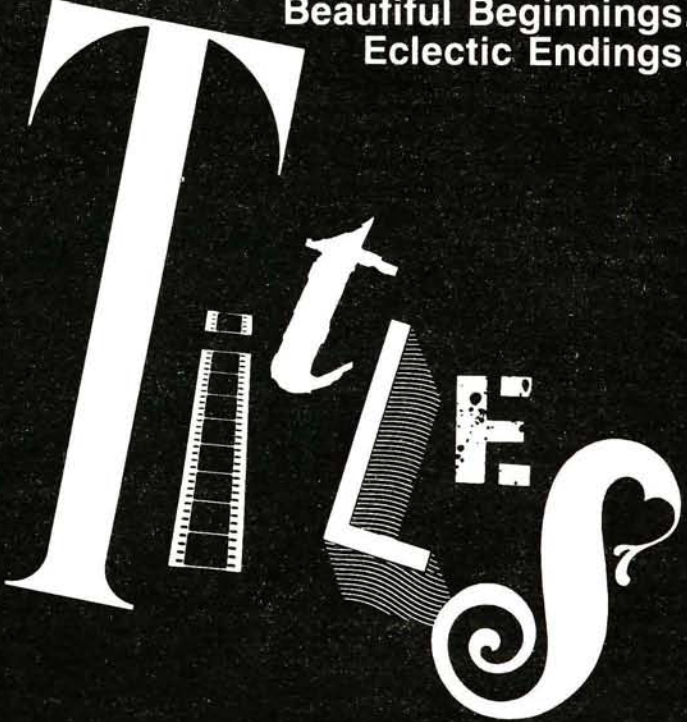
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## Distribution update

MONTREAL - *Comment faire l'amour avec un nègre sans se fatiguer* (How to make love to a Negro without getting tired) has made \$350,000 at the box office in Quebec since opening in early March.

The comedy adapted from the novel by Dany Laferrière opened on 17 screens across the province and was playing on three screens by May 4.

The film is directed by Jacques W. Benoit. It is a Canada/France co-production between Stock

International of Montreal and la société Dédalus de Paris. The Canadian distributor is Aska Film Distribution. An English-Canadian releases in the fall is currently being negotiated.

MONTREAL - *Le Palanquin des larmes*, a Canada/France/China co-production has made \$45,000 at the Quebec box office since opening in five French-language and one English-language venue on March 31.

The film is directed by Jacques Dorfmann and co-produced by Filmline International, Eiffel Productions and Shanghai Film Studios. It is distributed by Key Largo Film.

## Demers' Fierro opens

MONTREAL - *Fierro*, the eighth film in the *Tales for All* series of family oriented films produced by Rock Demers, will open in Quebec, June 16.

*Fierro* is directed by André Melancon from a script co-written with Geneviève Lefebvre. Alexandra London-Thompson, a young Montreal actress, stars in this story about an unusual summer vacation at grandfather's house.

The film will be distributed by Cinéma Plus.

## First Emperor to premiere in Hull

MONTREAL - A June 27th premiere in Hull at the Museum of Civilization has been planned for *The First Emperor of China*, a Canada/China - IMAX/OMNIMAX film, co-directed by Tony Ianzolo of the National Film Board of Canada and Liu Hao Xue of the Xi'an Film Studio.

This epic about the creation of the Qin dynasty in the second century B. C. has been authentically detailed, from battle scenes to a seven-storey palace built for the film, by Chinese scholars.

The film also contains documentary footage of Qin's underground army of 7,000 life-size terracotta soldiers, chariots and horses discovered in 1974 by well-diggers.

Picture editing was completed in April at the NFB in Montreal by Roger Hart. The co-producers are the NFB, the Canadian Museum of Civilization and China's Xi'an Film Studio. The NFB will distribute the film.

## Jutra honored

MONTREAL - Three film-related expositions are being held at the Palais de la Civilisation in Montreal, May 25 to Oct. 15.

*Cites-Cines* will feature 16 walk-in sets representing the sights and sounds of different major cities of the world.

*Hollywood et l'histoire* will feature authentic Hollywood movie costumes, props and an audio-visual presentation.

*Hommage à Claude Jutra* will honor the late Claude Jutra with screenings of his most successful films, *Kamouraska* and *Mon Oncle Antoine*, as well as a display of personal memorabilia.

The exposition is sponsored by Société du Palais de la Civilisation and the City of Montreal.

## Tower birthday

TORONTO - La chaîne française de TVOntario has produced the Toronto segment of *Le Tour du monde en 80 jours*, a two-hour variety show featuring world-famous landmarks and performing artists from 13 countries including Canada, U. S. A., China and the U. S. S. R.

The Canadian segment will star Robert Paquette, songwriter and composer, and will feature a Toronto cityscape.

The program will celebrate the 100th birthday of the Eiffel Tower and will be aired on France's Antenna 2 television network and on la chaîne française de TVOntario, May 20 at 8 p. m.