

People

Beverly Shaffer: To a safer place

TORONTO - Beverly Shaffer established her career as a filmmaker in 1975 at Studio D of the National Film Board after spending four years with WGBH-TV, Boston's PBS station. She is a graduate of McGill University and acquired a Master's degree in film at Boston University. In 1978 she won an Oscar for the best short documentary, *I'll Find a Way*, about a courageous little girl with spina bifida.

In 1987 she co-produced and directed *To A Safer Place* for the NFB, a powerful hour-long documentary about an incest survivor, which will receive its first Canadian television broadcast on the CBC this month. Since its release last year, the film has been shown



nationally on PBS and picked up for broadcast in Europe, Australia, New Zealand and Japan. Shaffer, who is presently in Israel producing a film about Jewish feminists entitled *Half the Kingdom*, told *Cinema Canada* that she made the film because, "there has not been much done from the point of view of the victim or survivor. The CBC now realizes that it is an important film and they are giving it a lot of attention. I am glad about that. I think it will help people."

Shaffer has been involved with the distribution of *To A Safer Place* and her next project will be a fictional piece, but she

hasn't yet determined what that will be. *Half the Kingdom* is a NFB co-production about Jewish feminists in Israel, Canada and the U.S. scheduled for release in the fall. She said it will focus on orthodox as well as reform Jewish women and she got some very good footage of the orthodox rabbis objecting to women praying in front of the Western wall in the old city of Jerusalem.

Shaffer was one of the mainstays with the now defunct Studio D at the Board. "The staff directors, six of them, have been moved to another studio to make room for freelance woman filmmakers," she said. "But there still will be a woman's studio. It was a management decision to have Studio D absorbed by the other studios."

Daudelin heads world organization

MONTREAL - Robert Daudelin, curator of the Cinémathèque québécoise since 1972, is a busy man. His recent election as president of the Paris-based Fédération internationale des archives du film (FIAF) comes as an honor but does not bring any relief.

Daudelin, who is in the midst of celebrating the 25th anniversary of the cinémathèque and who is building new archival vaults to be completed in October, was



elected president at an FIAF meeting in Lisbon, Portugal, in April.

"I was on the FIAF board since 1975 and served as general secretary between 1979 and 1985, so this new position is sort of a natural outgrowth," says Daudelin.

Among the issues the FIAF will grapple with during Daudelin's two-year term will be the balance of preserving and showing material and developing new archives in the Third World.

"Building and maintaining cold-storage vaults for film in Vietnam is not the easiest thing to do," says Daudelin.

The FIAF has been in existence since 1938 and consists of 81 cinémathèques, 61 of which are full members, in 45 countries around the world.

Cheung still having fun

MONTREAL - When Tammy Cheung and friends started the Chinese International Film Festival in 1987, they had no idea what sort of work they were getting into.

Cheung, a film student at Concordia University, has been trying ever since to finish her degree.

"I don't remember what we originally expected of this festival except that it would be fun to run a festival."

What was anticipated as "fun" has turned into an annual cultural event with over 52 films, May 27 to June 2, by Chinese filmmakers from around the world. Most of these films including the latest from Taiwan, Hong Kong and China are subtitled in English.

There are also films about the Chinese including the making of *The First Emperor of China*, a Canada/China co-production produced by the National Film Board of Canada and China's Xi'an Film Studio. A photo and painting exhibition was held this year

by InterCiné Art, formed by Cheung and friends after the first festival to promote Chinese culture.

A special conference on China in Crisis was convened on May 27 to discuss recent events in China with four Chinese journalists.

"It was very interesting but slow," says Cheung, who did her part to translate French, English as well as Mandarin and Cantonese Chinese.



Cheung came to Montreal from Hong Kong several years ago. She says that "Montreal is a festival city."

"There is not a big Chinese population here but there is a good festive atmosphere in this city."

Attendance is expected to surpass the 60 per cent mark this year.

Richard Gabourie: One man show

TORONTO - Richard Gabourie has been an actor, writer and producer in television and feature films for more than 20 years. His most recent production is *Buying Time*, which he co-wrote with his son Mitchell, who also directed. In the tax shelter years of the seventies he wrote, produced and starred in *Three Card Monte*, a low-budget gem of a movie which won him a Canadian Film Award for his performance, and *Title Shot*, starring Tony Curtis. Both were directed by Les Rose.

He has remained active in the industry since then, but



resolutely independent. "I've always done things in a one-man way," he told *Cinema Canada*, "I don't know how other people do it. If you don't get any government money, or other help, then you have to be prepared to go out and do all the selling, all the preparing and everything yourself." For *Buying Time* this resulted in what most Canadian independents would sell their grandmothers for, a distribution deal with an American major, in this case MGM/UA.

"As far as I know this is the first Canadian film to be picked up by a major for saturation North American distribution after the film was in the can. There was *The Grey Fox*, but that was a limited release. If it has occurred before, it is a very rare occurrence." He explained how the deal came about. "My foreign distributor, Lou George of Arista Films in LA, was at Cannes festival in '88. It was also my first time at Cannes after all these years. They (MGM/UA) came to look at it, but it took almost a year for the deal to fall into place."

During the eighties Gabourie has been producing for television, in particular a 13-part series for Global and Superchannel called *The Achievers*, but his inclination has always been to produce for the larger screen. "I had always planned to get back into the feature film business, it was just a question of when and what capacity. I wasn't sure I had given up acting altogether." Now that he has returned, he is ambivalent

about the future of the industry in Canada.

"It's going to be tough because the government dropped the tax write-off down to 30 percent. But I feel very positive how the rest of the world is looking at Canadian film. Now I get the feeling, in Cannes, New York or LA, that it's no longer 'Oh no, that's so bad it's got to be a Canadian film.' In the seventies we were making films for a million or a million-and-a-half and going into theatres where the Americans were making films for \$30 million and we were being compared to them. People paying the ticket don't really care how much money is spent on the film, they just want to be entertained."

As for working with son Mitchell, a MFA film grad from York University, again, he thinks they will go their separate ways. "It was a good experience working together, but I don't think I want to make a career out of it." Currently he is working on another feature, hopefully for production this year, called *False Witness*.

Ignatieff plays the Palace

TORONTO - One's first impression of Michael Ignatieff, former Cambridge academic, British media star, writer, thinker, son of a Canadian diplomat, grandson of Russian aristocracy, expatriate Canadian, is of the "superfluous" man so entrenched in 19th-century Russian literature; the *déraciné* intellectual searching for a role in a society where all roles are questioned. That's more an association with *The Russian Album*, Ignatieff's award-winning excursion into collective memory framed by the technology of the photograph. Even after a full-day's taping of intros to TV Ontario's forthcoming 26-part documen-

tary series, *The Human Edge*, Ignatieff is sharp, full of conviction. He only fronts what he believes in. With producer Heather Martin, he came up with a programme to reinstate documentary as filmic art. Ignatieff: "In the 70s the politics of the left and feminism made documentary stupid. People forgot it is a piece of filmic art... the subtlety of the cut, the beauty of the pan." He believes in what he calls "the aesthetics of respect" which means lighting and photographing people so that they remain people rather than obscure objects of political desire. The programme opens with *This Year in Estonia*, a portrait of a Jewish family in glasnost Soviet Union. Other films include an inside look at Palestinian refugee camps, *Voices From Gaza*, and Errol Morris's further explorations of the American gothic in *Vernon, Florida*. For Ignatieff it's a treat to be back in Toronto where "every physical detail is home". Why London where he is now based? He says that when he was young his mother sang him a song which concluded "unless you play the Palace you might as well be dead". He says, "He was going to find the Palace" and the Palace was not here. While he doesn't believe that any more, "the Palace is everywhere", perhaps for Canadian intellectuals the affinity with the "superfluous" man of Russian literature is not so farfetched.

Bill Gough goes south

LOS ANGELES - Bill Gough and Anna Sandor, one of Canada's most successful producer/writer teams, have taken up residence in Los Angeles after 10 months in Vancouver. Gough recently produced *Two Men and Mama's Going to Buy You a Mockingbird* for CBC-TV and both written by Sandor. They have been married for eight years. Previous joint credits include *The Marriage Bed*, *Charlie Grant's War* and nine episodes of *Seeing Things*. Sandor was the head writer on *King of Kensington* for five years.



Gough told *Cinema Canada* that they plan to stay in LA for one year "to see how things go." They sold their house in Vancouver because it was becoming inconvenient flying back and forth every few weeks. "It made more sense to be here," he said. "Most of the work we were accepting was coming from here." Their first

joint U.S. project was a movie-of-the-week for CBS, *Tarzan In Manhattan*, which may become a series in the initial fall lineup or as a mid-season replacement.

"I do feel at the moment the bureaucratic structure of CBC and Telefilm's involvement makes it increasingly more difficult to work as a kind of producer I am. I am the kind who is concerned with the script. I don't need 50 readers to analyze the script for me. That hinders the process and lengthens the time it takes to do your show.

"We've had fun doing what we're doing in LA, the difference being that the executives we are dealing with here are involved with a money making enterprise, which is slightly different from when you are involved with essentially a communications industry that is to a large extent stated-supported. I felt personally a need to expand.

"There are projects ongoing in Canada, like *Maude's House*, which I wrote and now is in development with Cambium Productions. That's been done as a dance with Veronica Tennant. The nature of writing is such that I don't have to be in the country. In Canada there is simply not the volume of work that would allow me to do what I want to do. I've moved to a centre where the volume of work is much higher. There is a great openness to your work here, and right now there is a number of people who want to work with us down here."

Hart heads DGC

TORONTO - Harvey Hart is the new president of the Directors Guild of Canada. Hart is best known for his mini-series *Passion and Paradise*, *Master of the Game*, *East of Eden* and for his feature films *Fortune and Mens' Eyes*, *Goldenrod*, *The High Country*, *Utilities*. He will serve a one year term as president. Neill Fearnley is the first vice-president and Don McBrearty is the second vice-president.

Peter Downie named as host of *Man Alive*

TORONTO - Peter Downie will be the new host of CBC's *Man Alive*. He will be just the second person to front the show since it went on-air 22 years ago. Downie takes over from Roy Bonisteel, who left the show two months ago, complaining that he had been unduly restricted by CBC's journalistic policy, which prevents employees from talking publicly about issues of public concern. Formerly, Downie was the co-host of CBC's *Midday* with Valerie Pringle.

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