

# IN PROGRESS...

## Tribute

p.c. Kudos Film Productions exec.p. The Turman-Foster Company and Richard Bright p. Joel B. Michaels, Garth H. Drabinsky assoc.p. Hannah Hempstead d. Bob Clark sc. Bernard Slade d.o.p. Reggie Morris, csc a.d. Kenny Goch p.man. Gerry Arbeid ed. Richard Halsey p. design Trevor Williams art.d. Reuben Freed sd. David Lee cost. design Suzanne Grace lp. Jack Lemmon, Robby Benson, Lee Remick, Colleen Dewhurst, John Marley, Gale Garnett, Kim Cattrall casting BCI Casting, Barbara Clayman (NY); Canadian Casting, Claire Walker & Stuart Aitken (Toronto) pub. Lynda Friendly, First Performance Public Relations

"Tribute is first and foremost a comedy" declared director Bob Clark who recently won a Genie award for Best Direction in *Murder by Decree*. "It is," he added, "a very affirmative picture, and one that lends itself well to an expressive range of emotion between all the principal characters."

On March 7, 1980, producers Joel B. Michaels and Garth H. Drabinsky (*The Silent Partner*, *The Changeling*), began principal photography on the eight-million-dollar film adaptation of Bernard Slade's award-winning Broadway play, *Tribute*. As in the stage version, Jack Lemmon plays Scottie Templeton, a wise-cracking Broadway press agent, whose flawed character mars his relationship with his estranged son — who is neither like him, nor approving of his vacuous lifestyle.

Slade's carefully-crafted screenplay came to life when a full compliment of cast and crew converged on the Palais Royale — a somewhat nondescript dancehall, owned and operated by the Polish community, and normally reserved for the more traditional fare of borscht and polka evenings. John, the hall's resident caretaker, stumbled about the set muttering to himself in an interesting combination of Polish and English — something about being confused, and that movie people were all crazy. He was absolutely right!

Trevor Williams, the production de-



Jack Lemmon gives Lee Remick the soft-sell in a scene from *Tribute*

credit: Curt Kaufman

signer (also a recent winner of a Genie award for Best Art Direction on *The Changeling*), and Reuben Freed, the art director, (the pair of them charging around the set like maniacs!), were responsible for revamping the entire interior into a richly imaginative New York Roller Disco. Complete with flashing lights, strobes and smoke, the visual scenario was complemented by the audio strains of Donna Summer's sizzling album "Hot Stuff," played at concert volume while a steamy "disco daddy" manned a console that would have made Star Trek weep with envy. Poised on the sidelines were dozens of attractive roller-disco-ites, decked out in outrageous 'nouveau' disco threads — just rarin' to go!

In the midst of all this activity was director Bob Clark, rehearsing principals Robby Benson (*Die Laughing*, *Ice Palaces*), and Kim Cattrall (*Scruples*, *Crossbar*), in a scene that obliged them

to collide into one another, stumble, and fall. After several attempts, they finally gave him some choreographed spills that looked painfully authentic.

Standing by was D.O.P. Reg Morris, the man responsible for back-lighting the set, with bank upon bank of 100-watt color bulbs, which semi-illuminated the set and the skaters, and heightened the rink's sense of realism.

Satisfied that all departments were ready, Clark finally yelled, "Action!" and the whole place took on a frenetic quality: the skaters became a swirl of vibrant colors, and the two principals "accidentally" fell down, over and over again — in wide shots, close shots and every other kind of shot.

So ended *Tribute*'s 'first day' — a day traditionally fraught with irritating problems, it proved the exception to the rule. (As was later discovered, the rest of the shoot was equally trouble-free.)



Having wrapped at one "New York" location the unit moved to their next "New York" location; namely the Elgin Theatre on Yonge Street — which was to double as a Broadway theatre. "They're still arriving, I need help!" radioed Don Brough, the second a.d., as hundreds of extras streamed into the auditorium dressed in styles that ranged from Park Avenue elite to Times Square bum. Before a packed house, they were there to participate with principals Colleen Dewhurst, John Marley, Kim Cattrall and Gale Garnett in a scene that culminated with an emotional performance — Lemmon and Benson resolving their father/son differences — that had everyone in the theatre, including the crew, in tears.

Everyone that is, save Craig DiBona, the Panaglide operator, whose job it was to track with Benson, while walking backwards down a long theatre aisle, up some stairs and onto the stage — all in one fell swoop! "It's never easy," laughed DiBona, who took time out between set-ups to briefly explain the sophisticated Panaglide. "Firstly, there must be a synthesis between the operator and the apparatus — a fluid and choreographed motion that enables the operator to compose the shot 'on the walk.' It also helps if the operator uses his peripheral vision (beyond the frame-line of the camera's TV monitor) to see what is happening either side of him; for example, lights, grip stands, crew members, a brick wall. . . ! etc."

When later asked how the Panaglide sequence had worked out, Reg Morris smiled affably, "You know, we've got terrific coverage; coverage that would have taken us much longer to shoot had we used a conventional dolly and laid tracks. Of course, Bob (Clark) had a very concise idea of what he wanted out of each scene and, having worked with him on **Black Christmas** and **Murder by Decree**, I was better able to anticipate his needs — in essence, to be one step ahead of the game."

In the auditorium it was business as usual: set-up and shoot, set-up and shoot, set-up and shoot. "It's hard to believe," expressed a seasoned grip, "but this picture is running so bloody smoothly that it's amazing!" Kenny Goch, the first a.d. qualified this statement by adding that for him it was a real treat to be working with principals who were so prepared and who could intelligently relate to the multiples involved in the blocking of each scene.

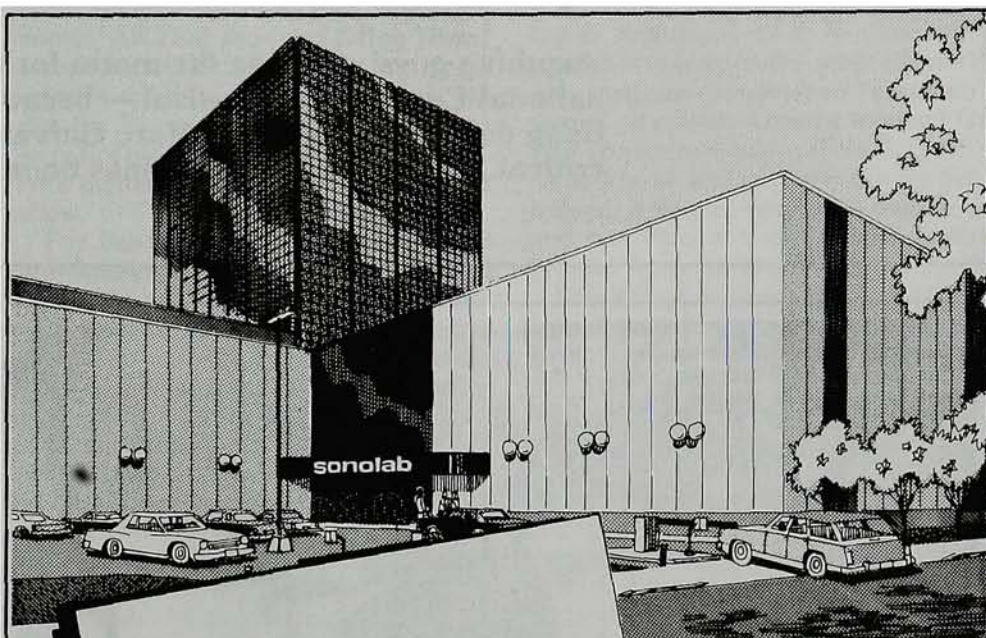
The unit finally rolled into Magdar Studio's sound stage B where an elegant New York brownstone had been built, complete with long deep rooms, inter-connecting archways, and other embellishments. Reuben Freed remarked that

the set's design was aimed at creating a "look" that reflected the central character's style and personality. Subsequently, the set was of a richly eclectic nature: crystal chandeliers, cement American eagles, antique furniture, an art nouveau aquarium, paintings by famous artists, chinese temple carvings, and an endless assortment of curios. Associate producer Hannah Hempstead quipped something about re-christening the set "Sotheby's

North," which suited the on-set security guard; his beady eyes were everywhere, lest someone succumb to the temptation of a "souvenir."

**Tribute** wrapped its Toronto shoot on April 14, then proceeded to New York City to shoot the film's exteriors. Distribution will be handled by 20th Century-Fox which projects a Christmas 1980 release.

Peter Cresswell



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