

BANFF

## Banff awards Andermann & Campbell TV festival curtain falls

BANFF — The 10-day Banff International Festival of Films for Television closed September 29 with awards ceremonies at the Eric Harvie Theatre, followed by a cocktail party, dinner and dance at the Banff Springs Hotel.

Festival representatives estimated that approximately 300 delegates attended the screenings, seminars, luncheons, and social events.

A recurring theme of encouragement emerged at the Awards Ceremonies. Jury chairman Rock Demers gave what he claimed was the shortest speech on record, saying, "Long live the Banff Festival," a sentiment echoed by many of the winners.

Executive Director Carrie Hunter presented a large sculpture ("Inspiration") to Fred McNeil of the Bank of Montreal (which had contributed \$150,000 to the Festival) as well as three small "inspirations" to Mr. McNeil, David Leighton, and Fil Fraser.

In turn, Fred McNeil presented the Bank of Montreal's Award of Excellence to Norman Campbell, who thanked "my bank," wondering how he would be received in future at his Don Mills, Ontario branch. The showing of a clip of Campbell's work — *sans* sound — was saved by Campbell's grace and humour, as he strolled in the dark to the onstage piano and played the melody, to the immense delight and applause of the audience. Campbell also thanked the CBC, as did Sam Levene, who, in accepting Best Drama Special Award for *Final Edition*, thanked both CBC and Television Drama Head John Kennedy.

Ken Taylor, former Canadian Ambassador to Iran, presented the Best Film of the Festival Award to Italian director Andrea Andermann for *Castelporziano Ostia dei Poeti*. The prize consisted of a sculpture, airtime on the Preview channel in the U.S., and a \$5,000 cheque. Andermann commented that, in coming to Banff, he had arrived in Wonderland and found Alice in the person of Carrie Hunter, and that, consequently, he plans to leave his cheque in the Bank of Montreal in Banff, "so I can come back next year and make a film in southern Alberta."

The many positive comments from international guests were balanced by discontent from some Canadian delegates concerning organization and scheduling.

Hunter is not unaware of these criticisms, and she pinpoints the source of the trouble. "We had a tight budget and we were seriously understaffed."

At the last festival in 1979, people complained there was too much activity, and not enough free time, so Hunter changed that this year, only to discover the reverse was equally criticized, and that the event tended to lose momentum.

She anticipates the following changes for next year's festival:

1. a title change to The Banff Television Festival.
2. a change in timing to some other month than the industry's peak period (possibly June or late August).
3. a compression of seminars ("I will tighten it up. We'll inundate people with activities and information next year.")
4. a change in length to five days.
5. use of only one facility (Spreading the events into several facilities appeared to diffuse their impact and the opportunity for mixing.)
6. an emphasis on marketing and finance.

Yet, with only three months to plan this year's Festival, Hunter finds the participation "incredible".

Part of this can be attributed to the powerful support of the Bank of Montreal. Its impact was felt not only financially, but, also, in the highly successful p.r. campaign mounted by the bank. In particular, says Hunter, "the press conference in New York helped counteract the crippling effect of the mail strike."

Also, "the Bank's contribution helped our image, because suddenly people in business took us seriously."

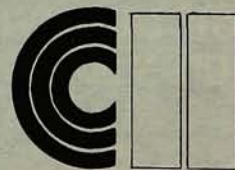
The Bank is not yet committed to financing next year's Festival, although it has requested first refusal. But one source has already committed itself. The Alberta government has pledged \$200,000 a year for eight years.

Linda Kupecek •



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# Directors debate merits of TV vs. theatrical film production

BANFF — While agreeing they personally see no difference between directing for TV and for theatrical film, panel members at the opening seminar pointed out that each form of film has its own set of circumstances and difficulties.

Daniel Petrie opened his remarks by saying there was a difference and no difference at all. Using the example of directing *Fort Apache: The Bronx* and his four-hour TV project *Eleanor and Franklin* he pointed out the major difference was in the mechanics, starting with a \$13 million budget for *Fort Apache* versus \$2 million for the TV film. "There was no difference in my approach to filming, except for the time factor of production," he said, "But

there's an inside change, you have a different time clock in your head for TV," he admitted, pointing out *Eleanor and Franklin* was allotted half the production time given *Fort Apache*.

The theme, that there is no difference, was carried briefly through the talks of the rest of the panelists; the concessions made for television directing are concessions of scale because of money, not in personal approach. Canadian director Peter Rowe suggested the decline of theatres as exhibition venues in all but major urban centres, especially the U.S., is part of the trend that has TV growing while cinemas totter along on their last legs. He was also somewhat critical of filmmaking in Canada, pointing

out that TV in general, the CBC in particular, is the only game on the block when it comes to serious filmmaking. "And most theatrical filmmaking here is in the B-film category," he insisted.

A common theme running through the talks given by French director Liliane De Kermadec and Italy's Andrea Andermann, echoing Rowe's comments, was the difficulty of working television film with crews operating from a bureaucratic system, what Daniel Petrie described as civil-servant film crews plugged into projects.

De Kermadec was especially critical of the situation of French state TV, maintaining she would prefer to be given the money to make a film rather than work within a sys-

tem that makes the director a management person dealing with the film crews as labor. She illustrated some of the frustration by saying whether it was a simple story for adaptation, or a complex one with dozens of characters, she still has 23 days for script writing.

Andermann, however, insisted that while there is no difference in the way he constructs a film, or in the photographic techniques he uses, he does have to think in terms of the audience that will see the film, which is usually viewers who aren't necessarily prepared to receive the material as film so much as part of the regular stream of TV programming.

He offered hope, saying new film and video technology makes production more ac-

cessible to more people and everybody has some sort of story, but the possible handicap to that situation is the possibility of an overwhelming supply of dull, boring programs.

The one great difference between directing TV film and theatrical film Petrie said is the advantage TV has in its immediacy, with the end product being distributed that much more quickly.

The panel also agreed that the notion of TV as a farm team for theatrical directing is a myth of the past. Information volunteered by audience members, as well as panelists, was that the situation is actually reversed, with the theatrical film being the breeding ground for TV because theatrical films must now try to be more universal in appeal these days than TV film and filmmakers should look to the fragmenting television market as the medium for serious film directing.

Dave Greber ●

## "Write for yourself," is advice from Steve Cannell

BANFF — "You must write for yourself," Emmy-winning television screenwriter Stephen Cannell told the festival's writing for television seminar Thursday, Sept. 23.

"It's a mistake to create for an audience; you can't write for 50 million people or you'll write junk," said Cannell, whose track record in television stands at an enviable

10 series sold out of 14 pilots. "You must write for yourself as a writer and you have to be able to accept an audience's rejection."

Cannell said his successes have put him in the position of being able to write to his standards and not those of a programs advertiser.

If you're sought after you can quickly have a degree of

control. I've pretty much been able to do what I wanted to do what I wanted to do. You have to protect the quality of writing you do or you end up being just another person for sale.

"I don't even know who advertises on my programs," Cannell continued. "The network executives worry about that, not me."

He reiterated a theme those executives made at the first Banff Festival, saying, "A writer must go to the market. It's a help to live in the market you hope to sell to — you'll improve your chances markedly. Opportunities are created through friendships and if you're up here, you're in a position of putting something in an envelope and sending it

to someone who doesn't want to read it."

Cannell is one of television's most consistently successful writers. He has written for such shows as *The Rockford Files*, *Baretta*, *Tenspeed and Brownshoe* and, most recently, *The Greatest American Hero*, shows he also created.

Cannell broke into the business after two-and-a-half years of writing when he sold story ideas to *Mission Impossible* and *Ironsides* at the age of 24.

"I'm not by nature a very disciplined person," he recalls, "but I started writing for specific TV targets."

"It's very important to set a time and write every day," he responded when asked what advice he had to writers.

"If you write every day, the discipline will become part of your life. Your craft improves until you can hit smaller and smaller targets, and the more you write the better you get, until you get senile."

Cannell maintains a daily writing schedule and says that his creativity is fuelled by a sort of writer's schizophrenia.

"These characters live in your head and they really are people. I may feel sick or have other problems on a particular day, but when I start becoming those characters, all the rest falls away."

He warned beginning writers against regarding their creations as gold. Flexibility regarding rewriting is a valuable commodity for a writer in television, he said.

"We are in a collaborative art form," he said. "Directors and actors add their own in-

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# Videodisc the next revolution

BANFF — "I'm excited by new technology but I'm worried what use we'll make of it," British filmmaker Peter Morley told a festival luncheon gathering Sept. 24.

Morley, who had earlier described himself as a former freelance producer has recently become a pioneer in video disc production and it was the disc, its possible uses and the problems disc technology raises, that made up the bulk of his informal talk.

Morley, after an illustrious filmmaking career that has won him numerous awards and world-wide acclaim, is now Contoller of Programming for England's EMI Thorn Corporation, which is actively involved in video disc research. The company is gearing up for video disc marketing in England in October 1981 and Morley is now involved in production of six discs.

There is an inherent difference between video discs and other visual media such as television and film, Morley said. This difference hinges on the fact that the discs will be purchased by consumers.

That act will make the discs more like books than films, Morley maintained. Because disc owners will keep the discs, rather than just view

them once, it will be possible to put more information on them than on a film or television program of comparable length.

"I've always been concerned about the superficiality of television," Morley said. "I'm not criticizing craftsmanship but you can't overload a television program with statistics, facts or ideas. If you do, you'll cause mental indigestion in your audience."

"You have to paint in broad brushstrokes. It doesn't matter whether you're doing a 13-part series, you're speaking the same language and I've found that I have to discard 50 per cent of my ideas on any topic.

"The video disc will improve this situation," he asserted. He said the video disc will not have television's built-in S-point, the point at which a viewer decides to either continue with a program or switch to another. Because the disc owner has already invested money in a purchase, he or she will be more inclined to stick with a disc.

This commitment, coupled with the fact that a disc will be replayed many times, makes the disc a denser medium, he said. In other words, the video disc can and should contain more facts than a film

of the same length.

This makes the video disc a natural medium for education, he said. "You don't have to hook people with a video disc," he claimed. "You have an opportunity to provide information of a higher density than with a linear show. But the disc has to be ever-green," he cautioned. "It has to stand the test of time."

Morley said the video disc lent itself to non-linear uses. For instance, one side of a disc could feature a normal narrative documentary while the flip side could be used as an index of related information or could include footnotes. "Very dense reference works will come out," he predicted. "We will use the disc like a book and we will get more sophisticated as we go. From a teaching point of view the possibilities are enormous.

"We have to develop an appropriate grammar for the video disc, that is our immediate task," Morely added. "We are used to wallowing in programming in a rather passive way. We must take the disc purchasers by the hand and lead them gently across the technological threshold so they can participate in a

(cont. on p. 16)

# Taking the medium seriously

BANFF — It's difficult to take TV programming seriously, though the medium itself should be taken seriously. That was the drift of arguments throughout Monday's seminar on taking TV seriously, the liveliest seminar of the festival.

Carlo Sartori, Italian communications professor, showed a 20 minute film of clips from his film about TV around the world, and in his later comments, summed up his message that as long as American-style programming is the world model, TV can't be taken seriously.

Although he divides the world of television into two areas — the economics of the industry, and contents and format — it is only analysis of the economics that gets serious consideration; contents and format are simply viewed as parts of a standardized concept.

James Roy MacBean pointed to the paradox that, in the midst of the festival which has focused on more markets, more money, and more of everything for the filmmaker, the only topic considered at the seminar was that of art.

"The critic sticks to this world and tries to make sense of the shambles," MacBean said, adding that he hopes then to be able to point out the gems that can be found in the video rubbish heap.

He quoted figures for 1975 that showed that 80 percent of the commercials on American TV in 1975 came from the 100 largest corporations in the world; those same 100 contributed to 40 percent of the sponsored programs on American public TV.

The end result of the figures is "When something good gets made, it doesn't get seen. There's a censorship that operates through the context of television that all too often trivializes programs," he said.

MacBean pointed out the difficulties of films like *The War Game*, *Emile*, and Marcel Ophuls's *The Sorrow and The Pity*, all of which were commissioned for TV, but weren't carried by the original commissioners because the end product frightened broadcasters and triggered banning or blocking of the programs.

"These are forms of censorship that militate against art or reality on TV," he concluded.

Philippe Meyer, critic for L'Express, catalogued the rules he set himself when he entered the world of TV criticism and pointed out the critic trying to act responsibly has to fight his editors, the industry, and the context of the industry itself.

"A TV channel has to be considered like a book, a film, Chinese food," he said, "And we should take it seriously, and it will have an impact."

At one point in the proceedings, moderator, Dave Billington, suggested the critic/reviewer must respect the medium, even though the content is pap. He argued the critic is a person that is born, not bred, describing his background as a cowboy who writes criticism as a career focus that started as a normal newsroom move.

Billington insisted the public takes its chances, that critics can't be bred, though he came up with the promising notion of mating Pauline Kael and Andrew Saris, planting the fertilized ova in host mothers to term, and producing a raft of brilliant critics.

"Unfortunately," he said, after the seminar, "that isn't and can't be the case. You can't breed 'em, you can't train 'em, they just happen and you hope for the best."

D.G.



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# Satellites provide shortest distance

BANFF — Communications satellites will soon be used to shorten the distance between film producers and prospective buyers.

An American-based company is about to inaugurate what it calls the Preview Channel, James Speck, Vice-President of marketing for the Preview Channel, announced at the Banff festival Pay TV seminar.

The company has leased time on Comsat One and plans to broadcast three-and-one-half hours of film previews each weekday to prospective buyers commencing October 19, said Speck. Time on the broadcast would cost \$5,500 per half hour but the broadcast would be available without charge for the approximately 6,000 owners of satellite earth stations, also known as downlinks. These owners include about 4,500 North American cable stations and 249 television stations, Speck added.

The program will be supported by a Preview Channel newsletter which would serve both as a program guide and an advertising medium. Each

preview will be broadcast twice in a month and, at the conclusion of each preview, buyers will be able to telephone the Preview Channel directly, thus forming an instantaneous communication link between the producer and buyer.

This reduction in time between presentation to buyers and buyer reaction is a major selling point of the scheme. The other, says Speck, is that a film producer will be able to reach many more prospective buyers than is possible by other means.

"The shortest distance between two points is now 46,000 miles," Speck told the seminar. "The Preview Channel is an electronic trade journal aimed at program directors and distributors. It's not for the public.

"Now you (producers) can reach programmers directly," he continued, "and they can pick up the phone and respond directly. Producers will have a bargaining chip and buyers will be able to make a more educated buy."

Speck, a former salesman for retail radio-advertising and for cable TV stations in the U.S., said the idea for the Pre-

view Channel came out of frustration at not being able to get to people. "Getting the product to market was the problem," said Speck.

Now, thousands of potential buyers can view a producer's proposal simultaneously, saving the producer an enormous amount of time and effort. Speck estimates the Preview Channel will be 40 times as cost effective a film marketing procedure as more conventional methods.

All the producer has to do is hand the Preview Channel a 20 or 30 minute video package, pay the fee and await the results of the broadcast.

Speck emphasized that users of the Preview Channel did not need to have a finished film, just a video package that would attractively present their product.

"I would recommend the project be at least at a storyboard stage, though," Speck said, "and preferably include a few selected scenes with the actors intended. It should include all the information an exhibitor would need to know."

If the producer needs help designing his package, the Preview Channel would help,

Speck said, and the company is preparing a guidebook for its customers.

The channel's first broadcast is on October 19 and Speck said his company has booked satellite time on a regular time-slot indefinitely.

Speck sees the project as a new use of existing technology, one that will produce an electronic marketplace to facilitate the flow between film producers and buyers. Although exact sales figures are lacking at this time, Speck says he is confident the channel will succeed.

"It's very hard to get anything done without people's cooperation," Speck concluded. "You have to figure out how to make an everybody wins situation."

And that is what he hopes the Preview Channel will bring about... for producers, buyers, and for the Channel itself.

**Paul Hepher** ●

TORONTO — The National Film Board reports that the complete works of internationally-acclaimed filmmaker Norman McLaren have been purchased by the new Fourth Channel in Great Britain.

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(cont. from p. 15)

new way. You can use video discs to learn at your own speed in your own way."

He said early indications in England point towards a huge market for video discs, despite their cost. "We have to use the discs in a positive and enriching way," he added. "Communicators must never lose sight of the power of their medium. We must take care we are not blunted to our responsibilities."

P.H.

## Cannell says

(cont. from p. 14)

terpretations to the script. That's what makes film exciting. And, as shows can become wonderful upon execution, they can be terrible too."

The rise of cable and Pay TV is creating a vast new marketplace for film writers and Cannell told writers, "We have to get into that marketplace and create and be innovative or cable too will be imitative."

And that, to paraphrase one of Cannell's more famous characters, you can take to the bank.

P.H.

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## Sartori's outlook gloomy as U.S. dominates world-wide TV

BANFF - Programming developed by the three major U.S. television networks has spread around the world and this process of imitation will continue in new media says Italian media expert, Carlo Sartori.

Sartori, a mass communications professor at the Public Relations School of the Modern Languages University in Milan, drew that conclusion after studying television in 60 countries over a period of three years.

"TV is the same all over the world from a structural point of view," Sartori said. "The United States is the major exporter of television."

Television, more so than other media, is dependent for its form and its content on the local context, he added.

"Much more than other media television depends on its own context," he said. "It exists in a form that is typical to its political, economic context. Television is the most controlled medium."

"I'm not making a moral judgement here, I'm just pointing out facts. The American economic system could not exist as it does without television as it is."

"The three networks are in business to produce viewers, not programs," he continued.

In some countries, programming depends in a very strict way on the economic context," he stated.

"It's a very direct relationship and you have no chance of changing it unless you change the whole system. The fact that PBS is going down in the U.S. is not by chance."

Sartori held out little hope for significant changes in commercial television programming formats.

"In other countries where you have strong public institutions independent from the government, you can have more flexible programming geared to different ethnic and cultural groups."

These groups are not represented by commercial television as it exists, he said. Responding to the assertion that television as presented by the three U.S. major networks does give people what they want, he said, "Audiences may want certain kinds of programs because they got those kinds of programs from the beginning."

In other words, they may

not be aware of alternatives because they have not been given them, creating a sort of limiting vicious circle.

Earlier in the festival Pay and Cable TV had been hailed as mediums with the potential for bringing television out of the commercial general consumption mode.

Asked if he thought the Pay and Cable TV explosion in North America would democratize television, Sartori replied, "No, the programs will still come from the same sources and only the big corporations will be able to afford to jump on the new wave."

"Maybe in the U.S. something will change because cable stations will buy more foreign programs. There will be a Europeanization of the U.S.A. while, unfortunately, Europe and Italy in particular, are becoming more and more influenced by the old (commercial network) model of American TV."

"The U.S. had Laverne and Shirley and now they want La Scala and Shakespeare. Italy has La Scala and Shakespeare and now they want Laverne and Shirley, and that's very sad."

Paul Hopher

## Mander gives advice 'Turn it off now!'

BANFF - The coming of Pay TV and the proliferation of cable TV will not necessarily herald a golden age of television, media observer, Jerry Mander, told a festival seminar Friday.

Mander, a former successful advertising man, and author of the controversial book *Four arguments for the Elimination of Television*, said, "There will be a lot more outlets doing the same kind of programming."

He rejected the theory that Pay and Cable TV would foster specialized programming which would suit special interest groups, saying "the potential is tremendously over-rated."

"The net result will be more centralism," he predicted. "Cable will bring a few doubtful local benefits but the democratic potential has been over-rated."

Mander, who has turned to media advocacy for such groups as the Friends of the Earth since leaving the advertising world, said the television medium would not be essentially changed by the coming availability of many more television channels.

He said many of the interest

groups who seek to take advantage of television's powerful hold on the North American public, would fall short of their goals because they would not have the capital or the expertise to properly make use of the medium.


As well, he said that subtle and complicated issues, such as environmental ones, do not lend themselves to exposure on television, which, by its nature, demands simple and visually attractive subjects.


"They are up against the biases of the medium," he said, adding that commercial considerations will still dominate the medium.

Mander, dubbed the Ralph Nader of advertising, said he was not so much concerned about the effect of reporters' biases on news reporting as he was on the effect the medium itself had on the way news is seen.

"It is difficult to think of a story that necessarily can be presented better by television," he asserted, although, he acknowledged television's impact, saying "television is the most powerful medium of all."

Paul Hopher

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