

Camera Canada

On Dec. 2 the CBC-TV network began a 13-week anthology of half-hour dramas under the title *Sons and Daughters*, running in the 5:30-6 p.m. slot each Sunday. All were produced by Atlantis Films/Toronto (416) 960-1503.

This anthology is a mixture of previously televised pieces, plus six new dramas being presented for the first time. The opening film *Cornet At Night* was reviewed in *Cinema Canada* last month. The remaining five new offerings are now reviewed — all 24 mins/col. The complete 13-week schedule is also appended.

JO'S SONG

Jo admires her friend Lisa, who is in the school's Fall Follies, playing the piano and singing the song for which Jo wrote the lyrics. Performing is much more exciting than writing, says Jo: "How many people have posters of writers on their walls?" She wants to be up there too — in the spotlight — so, aspiring to be like her Mom who's a dancer, she takes up tap-dancing. Somehow Joe doesn't seem to get the expected fun out of it, and certainly nothing approaching her Dad's enthusiasm for his sports coaching. Practice does not make for perfect twinkling tap toes, and Jo is dropped from the Follies line-up. Fed up with her klutzy reputation, she accuses her parents of given up on her. After a little heart-to-heart talk with Mom and Dad, she feels better and decides to join the audience for the Fall Follies. Lisa gamely plays and sings, and then makes a graceful acknowledgement of Jo's lyrics, and they are together in the spotlight.

A sort of ordinary little story, quietly presented and easy-going, that makes its point abundantly clear. Some Ontario film folk may be slightly unnerved by the fact that Jo's Mom (Julie Wild) bears a remarkable resemblance to Mary Brown, the well-known provincial censor!

d. Seaton McLean, **p.** Janice Platt, Michael MacMillan, Seaton McLean, **sc.** Janice Platt, Seaton McLean, (based on novel "Miss P. and Me" by Florence McNeil) **cam.** Rene Ohashi, **mus.** Louis Natale, **lp.** Rebecca Fleming, Lisa Ann Turina, Allan Royal, Julie Wild. Produced in Association with TVOntario, and with the participation of Telefilm Canada.

WHITE LIES

The irritating Emma and the equable Marie-Anne are best friends, even though Marie-Anne always seems to beat Emma at most sporting things. Selections are about to be made for

the basketball team, and the pair make a pact: if *both* of them don't make it, neither will play.

The inevitable happens. Emma is selected for the team and Marie-Anne isn't. Emma agonizes; talks to another girl about it; discusses it with her older brother; and shies away from the hard decision. She lies to Marie-Anne about going skiing with her parents for the weekend, and her hapless friend sees her with another girlfriend. So Marie-Anne lies to Emma, "The family is moving — perhaps to Indonesia!" Emma wallows around and quits the basketball team, and then finds out Marie-Anne has lied, lied to her! Mutual recriminations ensue, everything is got off respective chests, and they finally reach an understanding — and play a little street hockey in a snowy back alley.

A sort of empty piece, with not enough bite in the script and soft direction. The teenagers' acting is on one note and, consequently, there's not too much tension. But Montreal in winter looks, well, if not inviting, definitely picturesque.

d. Don McBrearty, **p.** Michael MacMillan, Seaton McLean, Janice Platt, **sc.** John Frizzell, **cam.** Rene Ohashi, **mus.** (composed by) Bruce Ley, **lp.** Stephanie Morganstern, Virginia Thomas, Julie Desjardins, Tim Webber. In association with TVOntario and the participation of Telefilm Canada and co-operation of Assn. of Canadian Film Craftspeople.

CAROLINE

Caroline, part-Indian, part-white, returns to the Indian reserve that her mother left to marry a white man. Ben, the grandfather, cannot forgive or forget, and is unrelenting towards Caroline's friendly advances. "My grandfather and my mother didn't get along because my Dad wasn't Indian... He felt that anger every time he looked at me that summer."

At the general store operated by the grandparents, Silas, the young helper, befriends Caroline, takes her in the truck on deliveries and gives her a yo-yo from long-forgotten, unsold stock. Caroline gradually sells all the yo-yos to the local kids, spurring on sales with lessons. Ben won't admit that he's proud of her business sense, and he lashes out, "Don't ever feel that you have to do anything for me."

Urged on by Mary, his wife, old Ben admits to Caroline that she reminds him of his daughter. He talks about her leaving and how ashamed and hurt he felt. A few tears fall and they take a walk together — the first step in the healing process.

A pleasant, sincere, slow-moving, rather stodgy little film, but with general all-round family appeal. Competently acted, especially by Joanna Schellenberg, who makes her debut opposite her real-life father, August, playing old Ben, her grandfather.

d. Peter Shatalow, **p.** Seaton McLean, Michael MacMillan, Janice Platt, **sc.** Janice Platt, Seaton McLean (from a dramatization by Alexander Bremner, based on short story "The Sense She Was Born With" by W.P. Kinsella), **cam.** Mark Irwin, **csc.** orig. **mus.** Richard Bronskill. In assn. with TV Ontario and with participation of C.F.D.C.

AN OUNCE OF CURE

It's the faraway '50s and the wonderful moment has arrived for Elizabeth — Martin, heart-throb of Grade 13, is about to kiss her, in the moonlight, on the verandah. "I was a mess of emotions." But her dilemma is that she can't decide whether she wants Martin to kiss her again, or to leave so that she can rush to the telephone and tell her best friend Joyce all about it.

The first experience with love is tersely chronicled with humour, understanding, wit, and a large dollop of irony. The torture, the agony, the time spent with the beloved — "37 days and 65 hours" — and the sixty-five pages of diary entries, is all there.

Alas, the handsome Martin ditches Elizabeth for the hateful Mary Bishop with whom he stars in a school play. The painful let-down leads Elizabeth from crying jags, to the wry contemplation of a bottle of pills, and the downing of a tumbler of booze while babysitting. This final folly leaves her somewhat wiser, and with a new understanding of life's inanities.

This little goodie is given life and charm by a superior screenplay (from Alice Munro's short story) by John Frizzell, who does his *auteur* bit by using his own name for a character. And Martha Cronyn is so heartwarming as the hapless Elizabeth, hope and eagerness flickering across her face, dying to find out about love and going through a small hell in the process. A nice period recreation of the '50s, replete with saddle shoes, crinolines, and Connie Francis.

d. Don McBrearty, **p.** Janice Platt, Michael MacMillan, Seaton McLean, **sc.** John Frizzell (based on short story by Alice Munro), **cam.** Mark Irwin, **csc.** **mus.** Bruce Ley **lp.** Martha Cronyn, Cathy Burns, Greg Spottishwood, Winner of Best Overall Production, 1984 Canadian Film & Television Assn. Awards.

HOME FROM FAR

In an opening tragedy, Jennie's twin brother Michael dies in a car accident.

The grieving parents finally decide to take in Hildie, a younger girl, from the Children's Aid. As she has a brother, they decide to keep the two children together. The boy's name is Michael and he's about the same age as Jennie.

The pressure builds as Jennie tries to cope with feelings of hostility towards Michael, who uses some of her brother's possessions and gets on well with her father. The mother explains the background to Michael who, after his friendly overtures have been repulsed by Jennie, retires to his personal hideaway in an old wooden garage. When Jennie discovers it, she has to see what he's doing and, after lighting a candle, prowls around. Startled by the returning Michael, she overturns the candle and starts a fire. Together they manage to douse the flames.

In a coda, the parents talk over the matter and Jennie tries to accept all the blame. The kids discuss their feelings of guilt, and about hurting, and then join amicably on a project — a playhouse for Hildie. At the gala opening they put on a magic show, using the late Michael's costumes and box of tricks.

A rather icky script is given some life by the children, who are well handled, but the parents come across as a bit *too* good to be true.

d. Bruce Pittman, **p.** Seaton McLean, Michael MacMillan, Janice Platt, **sc.** Joe Wiesenfeld, **cam.** Mark Irwin **csc.** **mus.** Bruce Ley, **lp.** Fiona McGillibray, Simon Craig, Nadiene Gibney, Diana Barrington, David Main. In assn. with TVOntario, with participation of C.F.D.C. and co-operation of Assn. of Canadian Film Craftspeople.

Non-commercial availability/16mm & video: Magic Lantern Film Distributors, Toronto. (416) 844-7216, and Vancouver (604) 271-3311.

SONS AND DAUGHTERS CBC TELECAST SCHEDULE

Dec. 2/84 *Cornet At Night*
Dec. 9/84 *Jo's Song*
Dec. 16/84 *I Know A Secret*
Dec. 23/84 *Olden Days Coat*
Dec. 30/84 *White Lies*
Jan. 6/85 *RW*
Jan. 13/85 *Caroline*
Jan. 20/85 *Pick Me Up At Peggy's Cove*
Jan. 27/84 *An Ounce of Cure*
Feb. 3/84 *Bamboo Brush*
Feb. 10/85 *Home From Far*
Feb. 17/84 *David*
Feb. 24/84 *Boys and Girls*

Pat Thompson ●

Next month in Cinema Canada :

● An interview with the CBC's Pierre Juneau ● Technology and culture, part two ● News and reviews