

Cannes '85

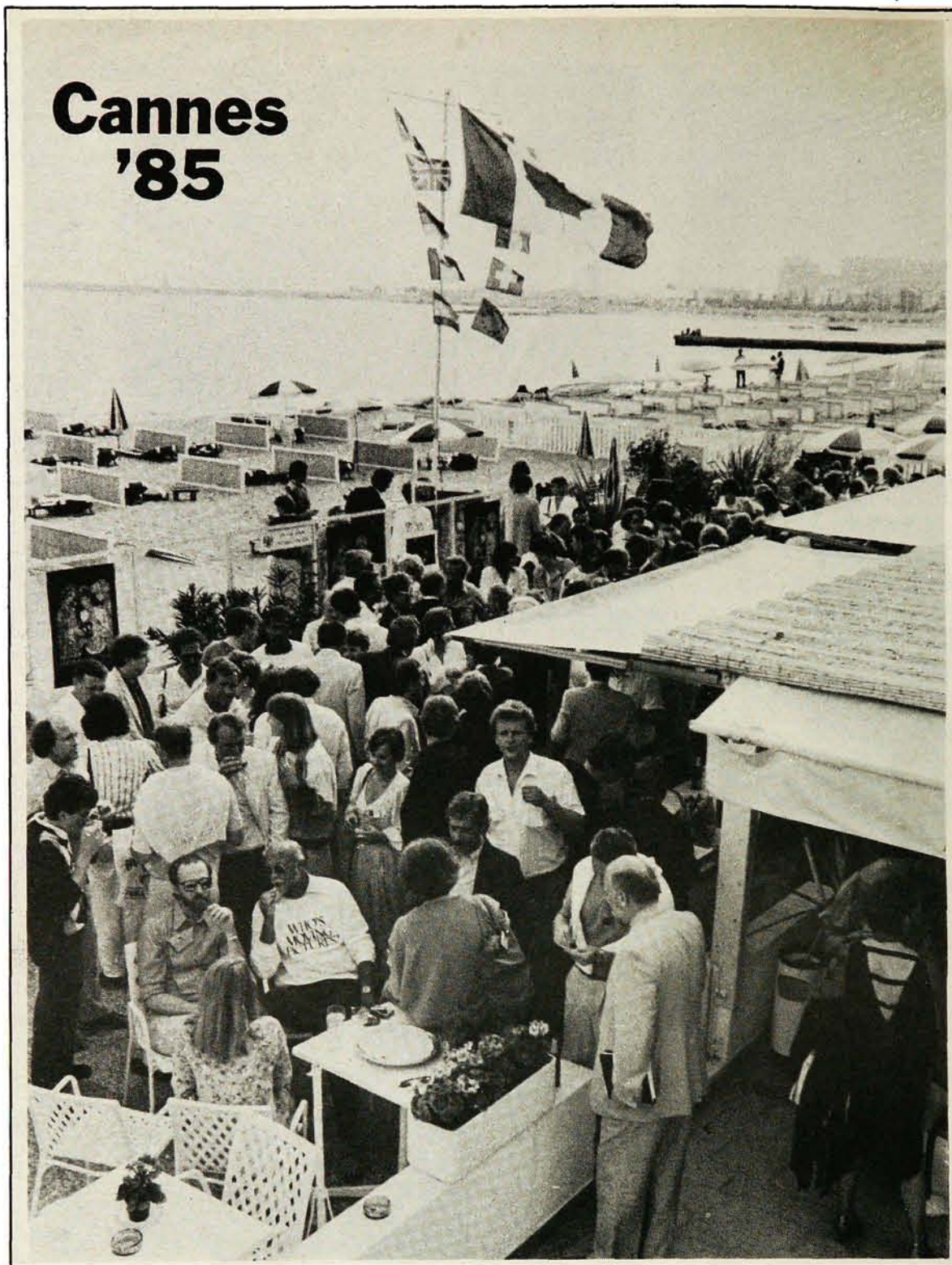


photo: Y. Coatsalio

• Ontario hoists the flag for Canada

The year of the lemmings

by Marc Gervais

Thirty-eight years is a long, long time for any festival to survive. Add to that the present *état de crise* of the European cinema (as it struggles rather desperately to adjust to a technological revolution that is radically changing distribution and exhibition patterns), an unparalleled American film domination at the box-office, and an apparent drying up of the wells of the creative imagination, and you have Cannes '85 – battered, threatened, surviving.

Marc Gervais is a professor of cinema in Concordia University's Communications department, and a commissioner with the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission.

Some things, however, do remain unchanged, ritualized into a shabby show biz immortality over the years. Exhibit one: the Festival is basking in one of its few sunny days, and the Croisette is paralyzed by miles upon miles of stalled vehicles. All in the name of art. What in the days of innocence we used to call a "starlet" has developed a new wrinkle on the old ritual. As photographers click away, she goes through the inane routines... but in an open car, smack in front of the Carlton Hotel in all its *kitsch* elegance and dowager dignity. There seem to be thousands of people, enjoying the scene, having fun at the circus. And there in the background, a familiar figure, James Bond (or at least a 20-foot cardboard statue of Roger Moore) towers over the scene in elegant, ironic detachment.

But the show is far from over. When I have finally battled my way to the relative safety of the beach, a new attack is mounting. Twenty-five single-engined propeller planes come roaring through the Mediterranean sky trailing banners proclaiming the Good News 1985-version: thanks to Alexander Salkind, *Santa Claus* will be ready for delivery *this August!!* Lots of time to get ready for the Christmas run, you bet. As the planes roar by, an Aussie mate mumbles 'Now I know what they felt like at Pearl Harbour'... But no one is jeering as we did for years when the same Mr. Salkind kept promising us *Superman* (though in those days with only one airplane) – and delivered in spades.

Cannes does indeed continue to out-Fellini Fellini. But it can conjure up even more surrealistic juxtapositions of a

more... uhh... intellectual nature. The Cannon boys, Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus, have not only bought up everything in sight in and out of Cannes in the movie world, but they are now going in for *talent, art, culture, thought* – and *that*, my friends, is something to grapple with, if you've ever seen a Cannon film. Anyway, in this, the year of Cannon, a meeting of historic significance took place: Jean-Luc Godard and Menahem Golan, we were informed, signed "the fastest deal in history" when they sat down in the bar of the Majestic and penned a contract together on a white linen napkin. Cannon will produce a Godard-directed version of Shakespeare's *King Lear* no less, with, it is hoped, Marlon Brando (no less) playing Lear, and, it is hoped, from a script by Norman Mailer (no less), with some help

from William Shakespeare (it is assumed).

The negotiations, let it be noted, lasted ten minutes. Only in Cannes...

That is only one of the many facets that makes of Cannes so unique a phenomenon. Depending on the moment or on one's mood, one is by turns fascinated, depressed, indignant, or one just laughs. One heck of a show, a circus side-show, the human comedy.

But there are other aspects, far more inspiring ones, that enrich human creativity and culture, with a sense of history. Cannes '85 rendered its usual *hommages* to deceased giants of the recent or not so recent film past: this time, Sacha Guitry, Joseph Losey, François Truffaut. One day before festival end – and one day before turning 78 – James Stewart showed up to garner yet one more life achievement tribute. Grace, intelligence, true elegance – Stewart rose to the occasion and the repeated ovations, a living throw-back to another kind of cinema. Cannes used the occasion to premiere the re-issue of *The Glenn Miller Story*, for the first time presented with its original stereophonic sound enhanced by today's Dolby. The entire audience was caught-up in a deeply nostalgic experience, for there, in person, were Jimmy and an amazingly radiant June Allyson sharing it with us. And there, too, was the romanticized story of that magical Miller sound, the enduring "standards", traditional Hollywood myth-making at its standard best.

Great fun, lots of emotion, music, Jimmy and June – *The Glenn Miller Story* should do well across the world. Not that Anthony Mann's film, however, is a masterpiece. It is *not* one of the "great" musicals of history, it does not avoid clichés cultural and artistic. Mann creates the myth, glorifying right-wing middle America in all its most noble facets, never probing, never questioning. James Stewart's politics incarnate, in other words, the true, *noble* conservative (as opposed to certain self-serving opportunists who appeal to the same ideals and win elections). But a lovely, entertaining move, rather irresistible.

One liberal American critic came out of the film asking "Did you see a better film in Cannes?" And there's the rub. One could justifiably say "no". The bottom line should be *movies*; but Cannes '85, sad to say, left me with no burning desire to write about any film: no exciting discovery, no heartening comeback, no electrifying moment in fresh film creativity. Instead, one deciphered the signs of cinema in crisis, of a contemporary art form in a state of *stasis* or *malaise*.

Two films in the *official selection* but not in competition actually did stand above the rest: the Australian Peter Weir's first American film, *Witness*, and Woody Allen's *The Purple Rose of Cairo*. This is hardly the place to discuss either of these excellent well-known pix. Krzysztof Zanussi's *The Year of the Quiet Sun*, last summer's winner at Venice, was probably the best film in Cannes, but on the market, as was Zanussi's recently completed French movie, *The Power of Evil*. Almost wholly ignored in North America, the Polish Zanussi is surely one of the ten or so most important active film directors in the world, joining other East European expatriates such as his fellow Pole

Andrzej Wajda, the Russian Andrei Tarkovsky, and the brilliant Czechoslovak Milos Forman (who happened to be president of the jury this year.)

The Americans clearly dominated this year's festival for, in addition to *Witness* and *Purple Rose*, Peter Bogdanovich's *Mask* (which won best actress for Cher) and Paul Schrader's *Mishima* were in competition. So were two other essentially American products, both directed by Britishers, and both among the festival's most intelligent and most provocative offerings. Allen Parker's *Birdy* won both public support and the festival's second highest award, *le grand prix spécial du Jury*. For me, Nicholas Roeg's *Insignificance* was a modest delight: who can resist a (literally) apocalyptic meeting between Albert Einstein, Marilyn Monroe, and Joe Dimaggio?

And Clint Eastwood, basking in French favour, came riding into town as well, with the festival's most eagerly awaited flick, *The Pale Rider*, directed by, produced by, and starring same. Eastwood's return to the western proved enthralling for a miraculous twenty/thirty minutes, a beautiful, witty, personal remake of *Shane*. Alas, the perfection of tone could not last, and the mythic masterpiece progressively falls apart, unable to be sustained by clever effort, which cedes to cynical put-on. Not, however that *The Pale Rider* is in any sense a loser.

Emir Kusturica's *Poppa's Gone on a Business Trip* (my translation) won the competition's major award, *La Palme d'or* – and probably deservedly so, given the lack of any contender of great quality. A remarkably wise, sharp, and courageous parable about Tito's Yugoslavia of 1949, the film has wit and humanity, covering its bitterness and touch of hopelessness with humour à la Milos Forman of the '60s in his Czechoslovakian period. *Poppa*, of course, is in jail, a political dissenter.

Luis Puenzo's *The Official Story* grows out of Argentina's years of agony (before the Falklands) and those images of mothers filing past government buildings, protesting their sons' disappearance. Probably the most inspiring film of the festival, *La Historia Oficial* won the ecumenical jury prize, as well as best actress for Norma Aleandro, herself a victim of that regime.

Another film worthy of the competition resulted from the collaboration of Hungarian director Istvan Szabo and actor Klaus-Maria Brandauer, the very successful team, two years ago, that created *Mephisto*. *Colonel Redl*, this year's offering, does not match its predecessor's baroque excessiveness – nor its brilliance; but it still is a fine historical re-creation of the Austro-Hungarian empire immediately preceding World War II.

And that just about does it for films that I found interesting in the official selection. There were others, of course, hundreds spread out over the market. My own area of concentration was (once again) Australia and the Nordic countries. Judging from Cannes, Australian cinema is still in fine shape. Not that its two representatives in the official competition, *The Coca Cola Kid* by the peripatetic Dusan Makavejev, and *Bliss*, by newcomer Ray Lawrence, came near to taking the festival by storm. *The Coca Cola Kid* is nonetheless intelligent and funny; for once Makavejev has his



• The real Glenn Miller gets ready to play



• June Allyson and Jimmy Stewart take Glenn Miller to the screen

obsessions under control. *Bliss*, on the other hand, left most of us confused and the majority of the European critics livid. Perhaps that is why the film may be invited to the big festivals in London and New York (and Toronto?). *The Coolangatta Gold*, a market offering, overwhelms with its sights and sounds, a sort of Aussie *Rocky*. *The Boy Who Had Everything* (a university drama) and *Emoh Ruo* (contemporary comedy) testify to a film industry that is solid, intelligent, quality-orientated. And *Robbery Under Arms*, co-directed by veterans Ken Hannam and Donald Crombie, shows the Aussies still eminently capable of churning out epic tales of the past, this one a western drama, with the usual visual expanse and joy in dynamic action and emotions.

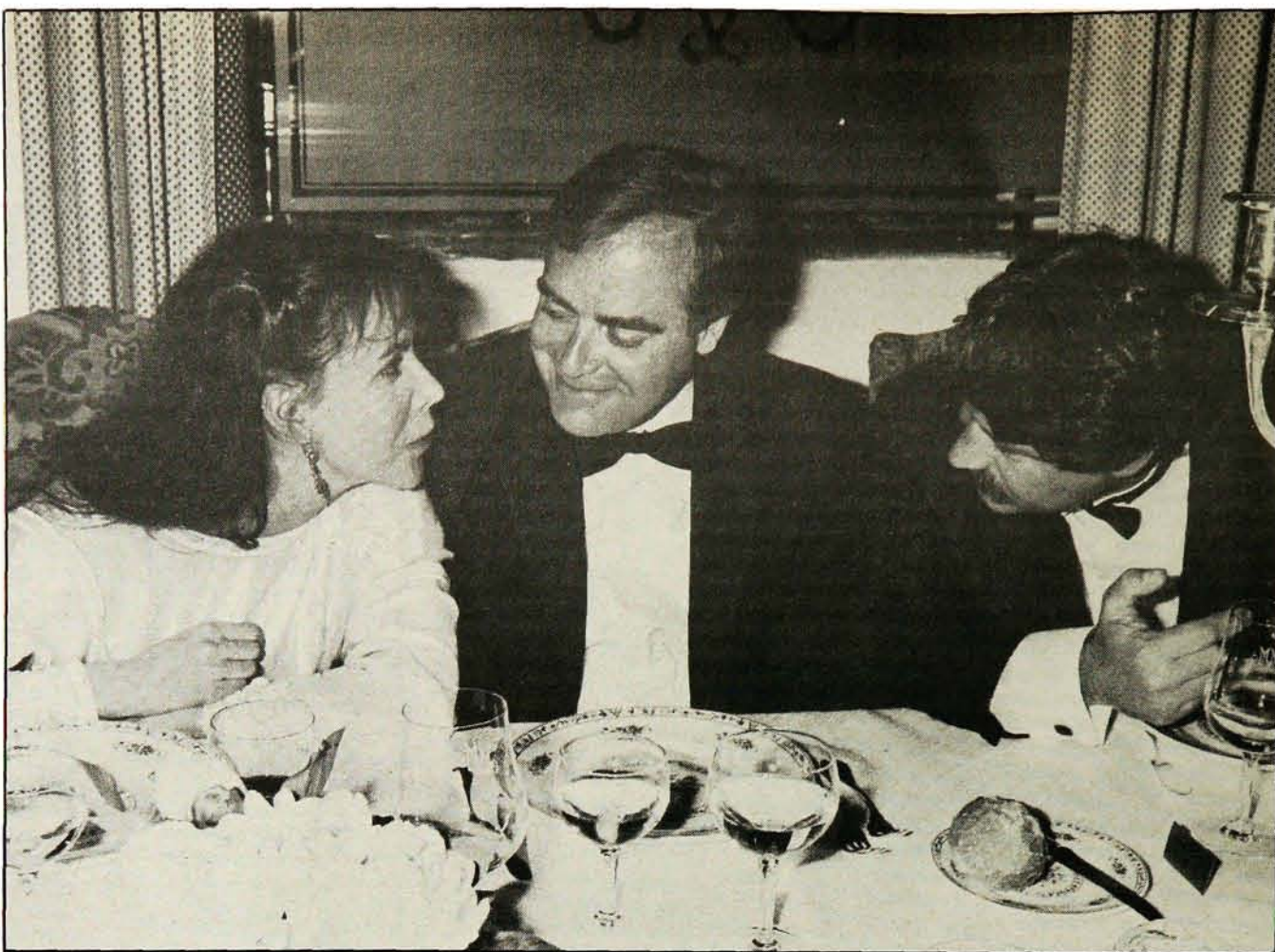
The Nordic countries these days are deprived of the Great One. Ingmar Bergman is officially back in Sweden, but has no film or television plans. Rather, Bergman has committed himself to an ambitious series of plays at Stockholm's Royal Dramatic Theatre. Some of his younger, rather well-known contemporaries, however, are still active. Jörn Donner will be bringing his *Dirty Story* to the Montreal Festival, and Bo Widerberg continues to explore the thriller-with-social overtones in *The Man From Majorca*.

I was lucky enough to unearth a few Scandinavian gems, all but hidden, all but condemned to remain unseen in North America (unless as part of a festival). Among these, a delightful Icelandic comedy, *Golden Sands*, by Agust Gudmundsson; the Danish *Tukuma* by Palle Kjaerulff-Schmidt, beautifully told and shot in Greenland; the fine Norwegian thriller, *Orion Belt*, by Ola Solum; and the rather astounding, terribly undisciplined, Finnish *Da Capo* by Pirjo Honkasalo and Pekka Fehto. Of the other films I could mention, most of them share a common fate: the impossibility of distribution in the U.S. and therefore Canada - markets of a cultural narrow-mindedness that continues to be appalling.

Which brings me to what I felt most deeply this year from the Cannes experience. *More than ever*, it seems, the ("free") world is one big wheel, with the U.S. at the centre and other countries on the circumference. Because of the size of the U.S. market and the desire for American product, everyone seems to have one-one-one major concern: dealing with the U.S. The problem however, is that in almost every instance the traffic only goes one way: the U.S. sells, the U.S. does not buy. American audiences (ans their Canadian counterparts) are simply not interested in films from anywhere but "Hollywood."

But the crisis strikes even deeper. One would think that with the proliferation of TV channels, pay-TV, video-cassettes and the like - the demand for varied software (read film programming) would be overwhelming. Amazingly, the opposite is true. So much money is spent on PR and advertising that audiences are being programmed into demanding the same thing. A dreadful uniformity has taken over. The consumers all over the world have become a gigantic flood of lemmings heading toward some kind of cultural suicide. Nothing else will do, unless it is a certain kind of American movie or American TV serial.

The reasons for all of this are horrendously complex, a mish-mash of consi-



• Carole Laure and Robert Lantos create their own night magic around Marcel Masse

derations technologic, economic, cultural, political, etc. But Cannes '85 attests to the lacklustre effects. So many countries now have truly sophisticated and capable film and TV industries, but all are caught in the same quest for common recipes, sameness, uniformity. Imagination, inventiveness, thoughtful affirmation, questions or contestation are inhibited almost to the vanishing point.

So what do I write home about? asks the critic at Cannes. Since everyone wants to create the product that will please *everybody*... and can find financing only by imitating one country (the U.S.A.) why bother seeing imitations? Might as well stay home and see the real thing (Hollywood) right on your screen.

All of this may sound caricatural, but it comes perilously close to representing adequately the "state of the art" right now. If 78-year-old Jimmy Stewart could express, here in Cannes, his disappointment in the drab sameness now squeezing the life out of movies, he also could state with confidence that movies would go on. One can hope that revitalization is not far away, and that the human spirit can renew its creative thrust as it has done time and again at moments of cultural crisis. But this time the name of the game, or the arena containing creative production, is called *media*.

So it is not only a Canadian problem. Italian cinema is in terrible shape, the French are in crisis, Germany's filmic re-birth shows signs of dying, Britain's re-emergence is still very timid. Russian cinema is drab. And the threat extends, as I have pointed out, even to the world's one filmic super-power.

There are, however, signs of consciousness and determination. Among its many activities, Cannes witnessed a significant number of meetings, seminars, etc., at the level of Europe's various ministries of culture in an attempt to combine efforts at breaking through

what has become a virtual creative *impasse*. All over the world, even tiny countries (such as the Nordic ones I have mentioned) stubbornly refuse to allow their film/TV activity to become extinct, and continue to allocate funds for production in the name of cultural survival. There are, indeed, grounds for reasonably hopeful expectations.

It is in this kind of text that one situates present Canadian film activity, and Canada's participation at Cannes '85. To put it simply: Canada fits the over-all picture perfectly. If anything, we have experienced the general malaise from day one, and with far greater intensity than anyone else, given all that binds us, for better and for worse, to Reaganland.

According to Telefilm Canada's way of reckoning, 37 features were made in Canada this last year, and six are still in production. TV dramas of feature-film length numbered another eleven. Of this total batch, probably 24 or so received screenings at Cannes. But some 60-80 Canadian pix of the last number of years were available for viewing in video-cassette form.

So there was plenty of Canadian product around, and in both languages. But it was extremely difficult to discover just what and where were *Canadian* films, for the Anglophone films especially were sold strictly as commercial films, usually by American sellers. Results of all these transactions won't be known for a long time and, in any case, *accurate* results are always extremely hard to come by.

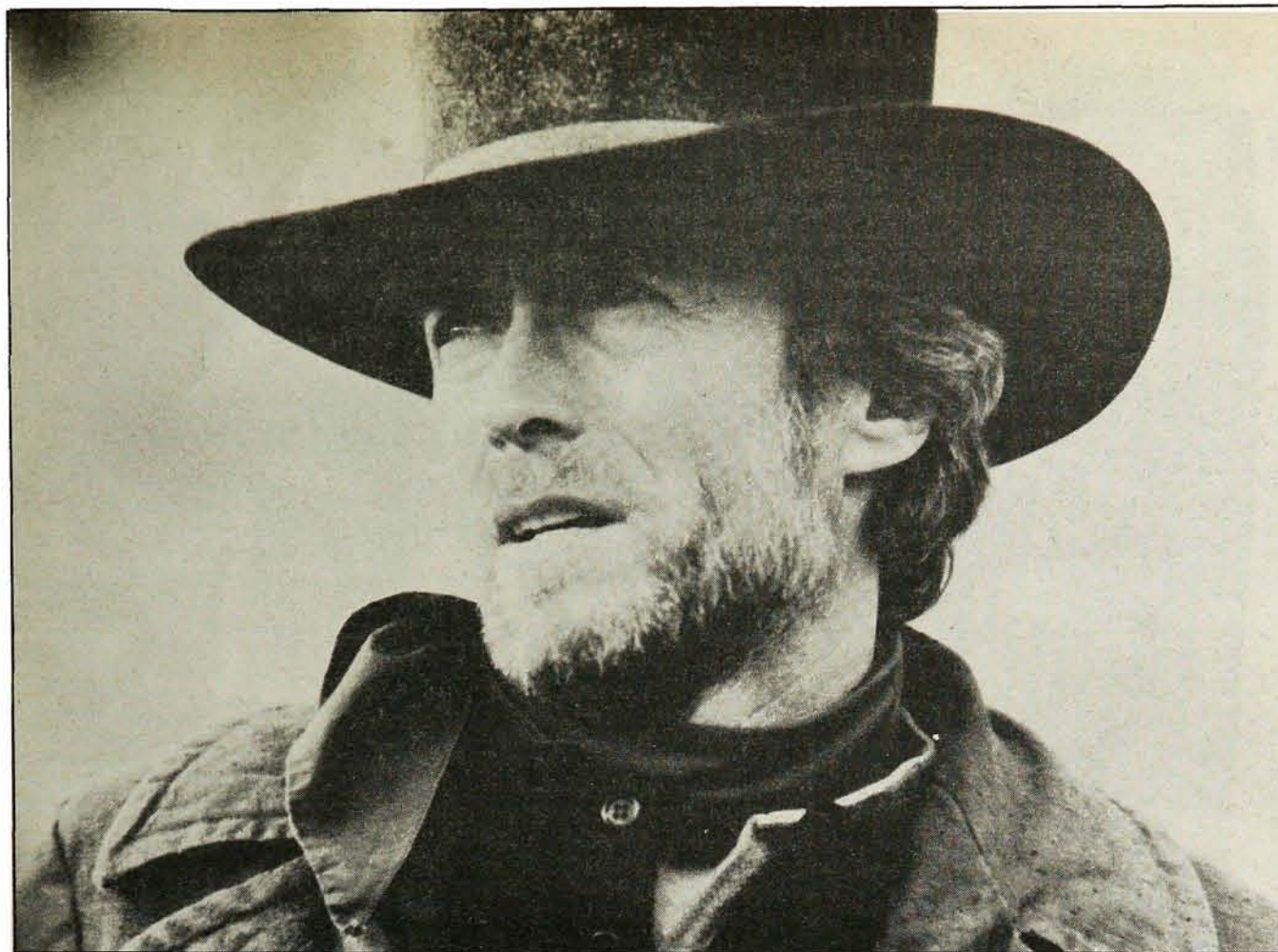
Jacqueline Brodie paints the Cannes Canada picture more completely in the companion piece of this issue of *Cinema Canada*, so I shall limit my remarks, to go along with other Canadian views she gathered. The Canadian turn-out was rather impressive, with Marcel Masse, minister of Communications, in atten-

dance for a few whirlwind days. His Quebec counterpart, Clément Richard, came as well. Telefilm Canada's guiding hands, André Lamy and Ed Prevost, led a strong Telefilm contingent which was responsible for the Canadian nerve-centre at the Carlton Hotel. In many ways the Canadian organization was back on track, one of the best in Cannes, as in the good old days.

Not that the old hoopla days of Michael McCabe were back. Indeed, the Lamy years have been marked by extreme discretion at the national or federal level at film festivals. Unlike the vast majority of countries in attendance at Cannes, there was no *Canadian* reception of any kind. That was left to Ontario and the Toronto Festival of Festivals, and to Quebec. Anything else that happens happened at a private level, usually organized by this or that producer.

So Canada fit into the picture quietly, more or less invisibly, perhaps effectively. Deals, sales, purchases, plans - Cannes still offers plenty of opportunity for producers, distributors, sales agents, exhibitors. But as for good old-fashioned *festival* activity, Cannes is merely a shadow of its former self. Dusty and Joan Cohl, the very essence of a bubbly Canadian presence, moved away from the Carlton after the first week, for nearby Cap d'Antibes where the folks that count now gather.

Yet thanks, however, to Robert Lantos and Stephen Roth (RSL), Canada was far from unnoticed at every level. They produced both Canadian films in the Official Selection, and *Joshua Then and Now* was actually part of the competition. The Mordecai Richler/Ted Kotcheff collaboration that gave us the fine *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* ten years ago has once again, I feel, proven successful. *Joshua* is a funny, rambunctious, thoroughly Canadian, thoroughly Montreal movie with lovely, bright undertones. It was not particularly well-received by the European press; I expect



• The gunslinger as a fictional stranger

the local brew of humour/caricature proved a bit much. Comedy, unless in the hands of a universalist like Chaplin or Woody Allen, often encounters that problem. The Cannes reception notwithstanding, one may hope the North American career of this solid film will turn out to be a success.

The other RSL film, Lewis Furey's *Night Magic*, experienced heavy going. Here is essentially an experimental musical, perilously close – for a feature – to an extended rock video. I tended to be more favourably impressed by the movie than the vast majority, but unquestionably *Night Magic* rises or falls

on the particular musical style/talent of Lewis Furey and Leonard Cohen. A tough act to get across with sub-titles (for a French audience, as was the case at the midnight showing). Whether a mass audience can respond to the rather hermetic universe created by Furey/Cohen, replete with elusive symbols, etc., remains questionable.

And yet the critic, I feel, should praise the authenticity of the enterprise, the risk taken to do something different. Many times in the past RSL has represented what some might see as the most tawdry in the Canadian film experience. This year RSL gave us what was best.

One can only applaud what one hopes is an evolution – *Joshua Then and Now* may not be a "festival film", but it is what is perhaps lacking most in our industry: an intelligent, well-made, "commercially pleasing" movie that is "genuinely Canadian."

A final word about the host country and the dominant presence at Cannes '85. This was supposed to be the year of the return of the *nouvelle vague*. It was and

it wasn't. Two of the founding fathers, Claude Chabrol and Jean-Luc Godard, actually had films in competition – and both, I feel, fell short – far short.

Chabrol's wry thriller, *Poulet au vinaigre* ("Vinegar Chicken"?) is hardly a movie for a festival but more the sort of thing one has grown to expect from Chabrol: rather personal, rather commercial, rather well-made, nothing to rave about.

Godard? Well, here was another film that started out brilliantly. *Detective*, for twenty minutes, brought us back to the exciting, deeply-felt experience of *Pierrot le Fou*, with touches of *Made in USA*. Gradually, however, *Detective* succumbs to deadly *ennui*: no poetry, no heart. Godard with nothing to say but empty parroting of his early, creative days. It was to Godard's inestimable merit that he subjected the whole film-making experience to a merciless probing. In his hands, the cinematographic sign was turned inside out. That done, it died, as did any possibility of affirmation, of finding a way out. As a result, anything that Godard's cinema touches or attempts to communicate is now still-born or dies before our eyes, the victim of total cynicism about cinema's ability to communicate anything, and perhaps about existence itself. Even the strong cinema presences of Johnny Hallyday, Nathalie Baye, Claude Brasseur, Jean-Pierre Léaud, Alain Cuny, and Laurent Terzieff gradually succumb to the emptiness.

Detective is numbered Godard's 48th film. And now *King Lear* for the Cannon boys? On his way to the press conference after the showing, Godard received a pie in the face from an irate cinephile (one assumes). Bull's-eye.

And yet Cannes '85 was filled with a *nouvelle vague* presence, and that presence gave this event its heart. I speak of course about François Truffaut, who died only half-a-year ago. The *Cahiers du Cinéma* organized a book-and-photo display, Truffaut's picture was everywhere. And there was the *event*, the most memorable of this festival and perhaps the most beautiful moment yet experienced in any film festival. A retrospective documentary on Truffaut was presented in the *grand palais*. Jeanne Moreau (*Jules et Jim*, etc.) was master of ceremonies in a beautiful tribute, as, one by one, Truffaut's actors and actresses in so many films stepped out of darkened stage into a shining circle of light.

A shared, immensely genuine and emotional experience between audience and actors; a moment of loving, sorrowful tribute to a man who was probably the most beloved film director of our time (at least in film circles), and one whose love for the cinema and for film people became legendary.

It was especially moving for those of us who were of that *nouvelle vague* generation of the '60s. Truffaut was generous in immortalizing others, and now – when he should have been still at his peak – he himself was the object of tribute. Perhaps saddest of all was the realization that that glorious period of film history was indeed dead, and Cannes 1985 was a sad confirmation of that fact.

However, perhaps Truffaut would not quite see it that way; instead he would be thinking of new wonderful films that create. And maybe that is the best way to end this article, on a note of hope that, in the very near future, Cannes will once again be able to present films that are a tribute to humanity's creative genius.



• The real-life gunslingers we know too well: the boys from Cannon

Canadian presence by Canadians present

"Being in the Official Selection is not only extremely important but absolutely indispensable for Canada. It means being at the core of the event. We, journalists, are proud when we have films representing our country. This said, I will not make an assessment of the quality of these films.

"I also think that having two ministers added weight to our official participation. Culture, in Canada, has always been considered as a poor relative. And this time at Cannes, the very presence of two of the country's official representatives could be interpreted as a public recognition and a gesture of support. It is indeed the first time that Canada's Minister of Communications ever came to Cannes. ... Good! I believe that the ones holding the power of decision should be where things are happening."

Minou Petrowski

Radio-Canada, Montreal



• Marcel Masse

It was great to have RSL with such a high profile at the festival this year. The Ontario Party, which has really become one of the most important events of Cannes over the years, was also great - the event that everyone looks forward to.

But, generally speaking, my impression was that Canadians came to Cannes hoping that it was going to be a springboard back into film production. I think the Canadian presence wasn't as people hoped it would be. I didn't get the impression that people got what they came for.

We Canadians come to Cannes with lots of good intentions and good parties but... not enough films. What is lacking is the 20-odd films that the Australians have. Australians come to Cannes with the same expectations and the same good parties as the Canadians. What they bring as well are the films! We've got to make more films.

Ron Base

The Toronto Star, Toronto

Implacable and fatal

by Jacqueline Brodie

Cannes, the symbol of success in cinema, the peak, the dream...

Cannes, implacable and fatal, aristocratic and venal, wreathing some with golden palms, ruining others...

Cannes, monstrous buffet, where one is offered each year *La grande bouffe* of the planet earth's cinema production.

Cannes means cinema for film people and business for everybody; for the ones who make the movies, for the ones who make their living from them. Everyone wants to be part of the great spring

Jacqueline Brodie, longtime assistant director of the Film Festivals Bureau, now heads her own public relations company.

rendezvous: individuals, governments, humbugs, pickpockets, prostitutes of all sorts. Everything there is for sale. Everyone is busy buying, selling, exhibiting, wheeling and dealing - even stealing. Films, favors, relations, ideas and talents of all kinds overflow.

This year, approximately 20,000 festival-goers invaded the city of Cannes in order to be part of the biggest celluloid fair in the world. Among them, many Canadians: 34 press representatives according to Telefilm Canada's list, 47 according to the official press list published by the Cannes Film Festival.

The Telefilm Canada "Canadians at Cannes" list includes over 65 producers, distributors, exhibitors and professionals from various sectors of the film industry who came to Cannes on business. Some 25 others were listed in the Official Directory of the Marché Inter-

national du Film. Obviously, many Canadian participants never registered at the Telefilm Canada office located as usual, in the Carlton Hotel. The distance between the Carlton and the new Palais, a pleasant walk on a sunny day, became a very dampening experience in this year of ever-pouring rain.

Telefilm Canada occupied three offices at the Carlton: one for the Film Festivals Bureau, one for marketing and promotion, and one for meetings and interviews. The Film Festivals Bureau, operating mostly as a reception and information center, was managed efficiently and courteously by Montreal-based veteran Jean Lefebvre. Marketing specialist Anne Brown was next door, in charge of all commercial aspects. Telefilm was officially represented by chairman Ed Prévost and executive director André Lamy.

photo: Y. Coatsalou

• Lynn Kinney, Ron Base and Adrienne Clarkson



• Happy as clams, past and present ministers of Cultural Affairs of Quebec, Denis Vaugeois and Clément Richard flank Serge Losique

Ontario Film and Video Office, from the Ministry of Industry and Trade, headed by commissioner and film market expert Sandra Johnson, had its office next to Telefilm. Ontario, which shared its office with Alberta Motion Picture Development Corporation, was promoting its film industry, location and facilities.

Lorne W. MacPherson, president of the Alberta Corporation, was involved in other activities and could only make a brief appearance in Cannes. Replacing him was chairman of the AMPDC and well-known producer Eda Lishman, expertly presenting Alberta's co-production program.

The year of the ministers

Was it the rain? It seems that, this year at Cannes, ministers were springing up like mushrooms. West Germany sent

her Minister of Culture. France, naturally had hers, Jack Lang, omnipresent and generous, presenting the Legion d'Honneur to our close neighbour Jack Valenti. Well, we beat them all... Indeed we were spoiled. Two ministers came: Marcel Masse, Minister of Communications of Canada and Clément Richard, Minister of Cultural Affairs of Québec. A real *première* for Canada! We also had many other distinguished personalities attending the screenings of the two Canadian feature films officially selected by the Cannes Film Festival, *Night Magic* and *Joshua Then and Now*: heading the list were Michel Dupuis, Canadian Ambassador to France; Adrienne Clarkson, Agent General of Ontario to France, Spain and Italy; David F. Silcox, assistant deputy minister for Cultural Affairs of the Department of Communications; Marcel Cloutier, Director-Cultural

Advisor of the Quebec Delegation in Paris.

Cannes, the labyrinth

Whether one loves it or hates it, Cannes is unique. It is truly the international window where everything, every name and everyone trying to make it in the film business should be seen. Gigantic and complex in its structures, Cannes is highly confusing for a neophyte.

The Festival is composed of many sections. Number one and most prestigious of all is the Official Selection. The films shown in this section (25 this year) must be invited by the selection committee of the Cannes Film Festival. Though competitive, this category generally includes films out of competition (often the opening and closing night offerings as well as others which are considered exceptions for various reasons).

Canadian presence by Canadians present

"The old days when Quebec and Ottawa waged their "flag wars" seems to be over. They now have separate quarters and there is no more fighting.

"This year, Quebec had a higher profile than Telefilm Canada which wants the private film sector to take more responsibilities; an initiative with which I agree. But one can deplore the abandonment of the promotional work which, until last year, had been provided by the Film Festivals Bureau in support of the officially invited films.

"It is also regrettable that Telefilm Canada put an end to the press luncheon tradition. These press luncheons were given to honor the Canadian films invited to Cannes. They provided the Canadian journalists with a unique opportunity of meeting the foreign press and exchanging ideas in the presence of our filmmakers. These encounters resulted in an interesting press coverage which was good for our films and their authors.

"Our films are our flags. They are the ones which represent Canada at Cannes. Therefore, it is our films that the government should support."

Luc Perreault

La Presse, Montreal

"Canadian presence?... Outside of the officially invited films, almost invisible! ... That may be a good thing."

Jay Scott

Globe and Mail, Toronto

"The Société Générale du cinéma du Québec is very pleased with the way **Night Magic** was received.

"Quebec's growing cinematographic presence at Cannes has been matched by the size of its stand.

"The presence of our Minister of Cultural Affairs, Monsieur Clément Richard, certainly had an impact but it is difficult to say to what extent. We were so involved with our own responsibilities that we only saw him at the Quebec reception.

"Undoubtedly, our two ministers brought an element of prestige to our participation. Their presence demonstrated the support given to our cinema by the two levels of government which they represent. This can only increase, in the eyes of our foreign interlocutors, the seriousness of our projects."

Denise Robert

Société Générale
du Cinéma et du Québec

Canadian presence by Canadians present

"It was embarrassing. What was shown at the Market and at other screenings is not very representative of what is being done in Canada. Maybe the lack of money is to blame for the fact that our cinema produces so little... Canadian films at the Market were awful!

"In the Official Selection, *Joshua*... is excellent. As for Lewis Furey's film *Night Magic*, it is outdated and really belongs to the '50s. Its music is very beautiful, but it is Lewis Furey's usual music and he, by no means, outdoes himself. The choreography by Eddy Toussaint is pitiful, not to say absent.

"Fortunately, our ministers attended together, a harmonious duet, and we hope that it symbolizes a new beginning in Canadian film politics."

Francine Grimaldi

Radio-Canada, Montreal

"It was a wonderful feeling for Canadians to have the minister responsible for the film industry in our country with us at the Cannes International Film Festival. It gave Canadians working at Cannes the special prestige that is so important on the international scene. I think we were all especially proud of his attendance in Cannes. When he and Ambassador Michel Dupuis attended the Ontario reception along with representatives of the world film community, it showed the official support so needed and much appreciated by our industry."

Sandra Johnson

Commissioner, Film/Video Office, Ministry of Industry and Trade, Ontario

• Sandra Johnson



• Talking distribution, René Malo chats with Ed Prévost and Mr. and Mrs. Masse



photo: Y. Coatsaliou



• Cinema Canada contributor Jacqueline Brodie greets Nicole Boisvert of the SGC and Cultural Affairs Minister Richard

The competition is fierce. Every producer, every country wants to be in the race. Winning Cannes' top prize, La Palme d'Or, guarantees its recipient commercial distribution.

Canada was in the selection with two feature films: *Night Magic*, directed by Lewis Furey, one of the five films shown out of competition; and *Joshua Then and Now*, directed by Ted Kotcheff, among the 20 in competition. The two films were produced by RSL Entertainment Corporation. Canada had not had a feature film in competition at Cannes since 1980, when Gilles Carle's *Fantastica* opened the Festival. That same year, the Canadian tax shelter film *Out of the Blue* by American director Dennis Hopper was also in competition.

Within the Official Selection, there is a second section titled Un Certain Regard. *Auteur* films which are considered

representative of the actual tendencies of international cinema are invited. This section is non-competitive and presents between 12 and 14 feature-length films. Jean-Pierre Lefebvre's *Le Jour "S..."* was shown in this section last year.

Aside from the Official Selection and Un Certain Regard, two other extremely prestigious programs take place. The Critics' Week, organized by the Association of the French Film Critics, is non-competitive and very exclusive. It is devoted to first or second films, documentary or fiction, by unknown directors.

Each year its selection committee, comprised of six film critics, chooses seven innovative films from around the world. Canada submitted eight films to the selection committee this year. None was accepted. The last Canadian film invited by the Critics' Week was *Les*

Servantes du Bon Dieu by Diane Létourneau, produced by Prisma. That was in 1979.

The second major parallel program is the Directors' Fortnight. Non-competitive and totally independent from all the other ones, this program was created and is organized by the Société des réalisateurs de films français (the filmmakers association). The Directors' Fortnight has a one-member selection committee: its general delegate, Pierre-Henri Deleau. Deleau, who travels tirelessly, searching the world and indeed discovering treasures, comes to Canada every year in order to select one or more Canadian gems among the 12, 15 or 20 films which he screens without interruption. Unfortunately, he did not find any gem this year. *Gazl el Banat*, A Lebanon/France/Canada Co. Production gave us a mention in this section. Jean-



• Ted Kotcheff, Gabrielle Lazure and James Woods of *Joshua*



• Carole Laure and Lewis Furey accompany Jennifer Dale and Robert Lantos for *Night Magic*

Claude Labrecque's *Les années de rêves* had been invited in 1984.

It should be said that the films shown in this section are often the most interesting ones of the Festival.

The other, commercial sector of the festival is the Marché International du Film. A world marketplace for the selling and buying of films, the market is expanding so much that many people this year were predicting that it will soon eliminate the more prestigious and culturally oriented sections of the festival.

Located in the basement of the new Palais des Festivals, the market occupies a full level. On its immense floor it had 183 stands, representing companies or government organizations. Quebec was one of the market tenants with a large and always very active stand. The Société Générale du Cinéma du Québec with its présidente directrice générale,

Nicole Mathieu-Boisvert and top aides Denise Robert and Robert Meunier, were busy meeting with foreign producers interested in coproducing with Québec, showing films to foreign festival directors for future Québécois Film Weeks abroad, and providing as many services as possible to Quebec film exporters and to Quebec film festival directors. The stand was equipped with a screening booth and had a dozen feature films on video-cassettes.

The market has many screening rooms; seven in the Palais des Festivals and seven in theatres outside of the Palais. Every film which complies with the rules and regulations of the market can be registered and is eligible for one free screening.

The market was packed with 500 films this year and competition is always without mercy in this very special-

ized territory where old pros succeed and beginners can lose their shirt. Five Canadian films were shown at the Market: *Hot Water*, directed by Jim Hanly and produced by Don Carmody; *Killing 'em Softly*, directed by Max Fischer, produced by Leila Basen and Max Fischer; *O rage électrique*, directed by Carl Brubacker, produced by Plume Latraverse and Carl Brubacker; *Storm*, directed and produced by David Winning; and *That's my Baby*, directed and produced by Edie Yolles and John Bradshaw.

At last...

Two feature films invited in the Official Selection, *Night Magic* and *Joshua Then and Now* was enough to heal the wounds inflicted on the pride of the Canadian film industry through the repeated rejection, by the various Can-

Canadian presence by Canadians present

"I am very pleased with our participation in the Cannes Festival this year. After having been absent from the Competition for a long period of time, we are now back to the Official Selection. I feel it is important. It reflects the growth of our cinema. We are more integrated to this international event.

"The Canadian film industry is now a sector in full expansion. With 77 million dollars advanced from Telefilm, the private sector produced for 250 million dollars worth of films and TV programs in the past year.

"...Yes, representations had been made before the French authorities on the general basis of Canada's official participation.

"I believe that the fact that we are involved in many co-productions projects with France certainly plays a positive role. It means that our relations with French producers, distributors and French authorities have intensified, therefore giving us a better chance of expressing our views and showing our products."

André Lamy

Executive Director, Telefilm Canada

"Filmwise, the Canadian presence was a rather sad one. Even at the Market we had nothing to offer... I find regrettable the fact that so many official personalities came for such poor products. Is it absolutely necessary to spend the taxpayers' money?"

"... I was appalled by the lack of professionalism at the federal level: the way promotion and invitations were handled was surprising. For example, the Canadian journalists learned at 10:00 p.m. on the 16th that they were invited to a luncheon offered by the Minister of Communications at 2:00 p.m. on the next day. Furthermore it seems that Mr. Masse had nothing really special to announce. So, what was the point?..."

"The Quebec stand was organized efficiently and very professionally. But I found absurd the manner in which our half-a-dozen Québécois distributors operate at Cannes. Each one is competing against the others, offering a few thousand dollars more than his colleagues for the same film. Needless to say, this childish behavior is delighting foreign exporters who are laughing all the way to the bank.

"... It looks like Canada is into television products only. Then why participate in film festivals?"

Martin Delisle

Radio-Canada and Le Droit, Ottawa

Canadian presence by Canadians present

"I will start with the films. One should not be surprised by the lack of ink in the newspapers regarding **Night Magic**. The only presentation of the film took place at half past midnight and, with the press screenings starting at 8:30 a.m. every morning, very few journalists could see Lewis Furey's film.

Joshua Then and Now is a good little film for family entertainment. But I don't think that Ted Kotcheff's film was of competition calibre.

Absent from Cannes was the other Canadian cinema. The Québécois cinema could have been at the Market. It wasn't, with the exception of one film: **O rage électrique**.

The Germans, the Hungarians, the Scandinavians, the Italians and many others, through their government organizations, rent a theatre in Cannes and use it every day to advertise and to show their national production. Wouldn't it be advisable for Canada to do the same?

"A very important aspect of my participation at the Cannes Film Festival is meeting with the cinema people and journalist colleagues from all over the world. This was made possible every year at Cannes through the press gatherings organized by the now defunct Ottawa Film Festivals Bureau. These encounters - which took place around a table, in the course of an informal luncheon - were priceless working tools. I did not find the equivalent in any of the mundane receptions held by our various official organizations or by our producers."

Franco Laurendeau
Le Devoir, Montreal

"We were represented in the Official Selection: that's positive. What is not is the fact that Quebec was absent from the Cannes Market. Out of the 700 Market screenings for 400 films, we showed only one film from Quebec: **O rage électrique**... Quebec and Canada's names were nowhere on the programs, which I find deplorable for our film industry.

"It was a poor year for Quebec and Canada at the Market because of our distributors' attitudes. According to them, screenings at the Market are not cost productive. Nevertheless, I feel that we should show our films in theatres.

"I was pleased that we had two ministers attending the festival. I think it is excellent that they meet with the film milieu, that they see by themselves what the greatest cinematographic event of the world is like. It officially demonstrated Canada's interest for cinema and for the arts."

Franco Nuovo
Journal de Montréal, Montreal

Selection Committees, of our English-Canadian films over the last decade. Aside from Dennis Hopper's film in 1980, the last English-Canadian film invited to compete in the Official Selection was Eric Till's *A Fan's Note* in 1972.

So... 13 years later, at the end of the 16th and the beginning of the 17th of May 1985, there we were, climbing the steps of the Palais for the unique half-past-midnight screening of Lewis Furey's film *Night Magic*, a Canada/France co-production. Night it was... But the magic somehow could not reach the audience. Reminiscent of both Gilles Carle's *L'ange et la femme* and *Fantastica*, *Night Magic* lacks Carle's imaginative madness and generosity.

The story: a music hall artist finds an angel that epitomizes the woman of his dreams in the town where he is about to perform his last show. It is, says Lewis Furey, "a musical fantasy that celebrates

the victory of love over destiny."

Night Magic, although honestly crafted, is monotonous and repetitive. After the first 30 minutes, the charm of its lyrics, music and visual quality fades out. What is left is a long succession of pretty images illustrating an expensive narcissistic exercise. Actors Nick Mancuso and Carole Laure did their best to convince us. So did choreographer Eddy Toussaint. But the spark wasn't there. The audience reacted politely. No magic that night!

Friday, May 17, 1985 was the day of *Joshua Then and Now*, Ted Kotcheff's Canadian feature in competition. Unlike *Night Magic* which (at the request of its producers) had only one screening, *Joshua Then and Now* was shown three times, in the regular schedule of the Official Selection.

Based on Mordecai Richler's best-selling novel of the same title, *Joshua* is

warm, funny and superbly photographed by François Protat. James Woods is totally convincing as Joshua Shapiro, the working-class Jewish kid who becomes a successful author in London and marries into Montreal's Protestant establishment. Gabrielle Lazure is a little stiff but quite acceptable as Pauline Hornby, daughter of a wealthy senator and Joshua's wife. As for Alan Arkin, his comic presence and talent make him irresistible as Joshua's delinquent father.

The film is not all perfect. The editing could have been tightened to give the film a sharper rhythm and the director occasionally indulges in clichés, exemplified by the corny freeze-frame which ends the movie. But *Joshua Then and Now* has, among others, one great quality. Its characters exist and the audience believes in them. It was obvious, at the evening screening, in the big, packed

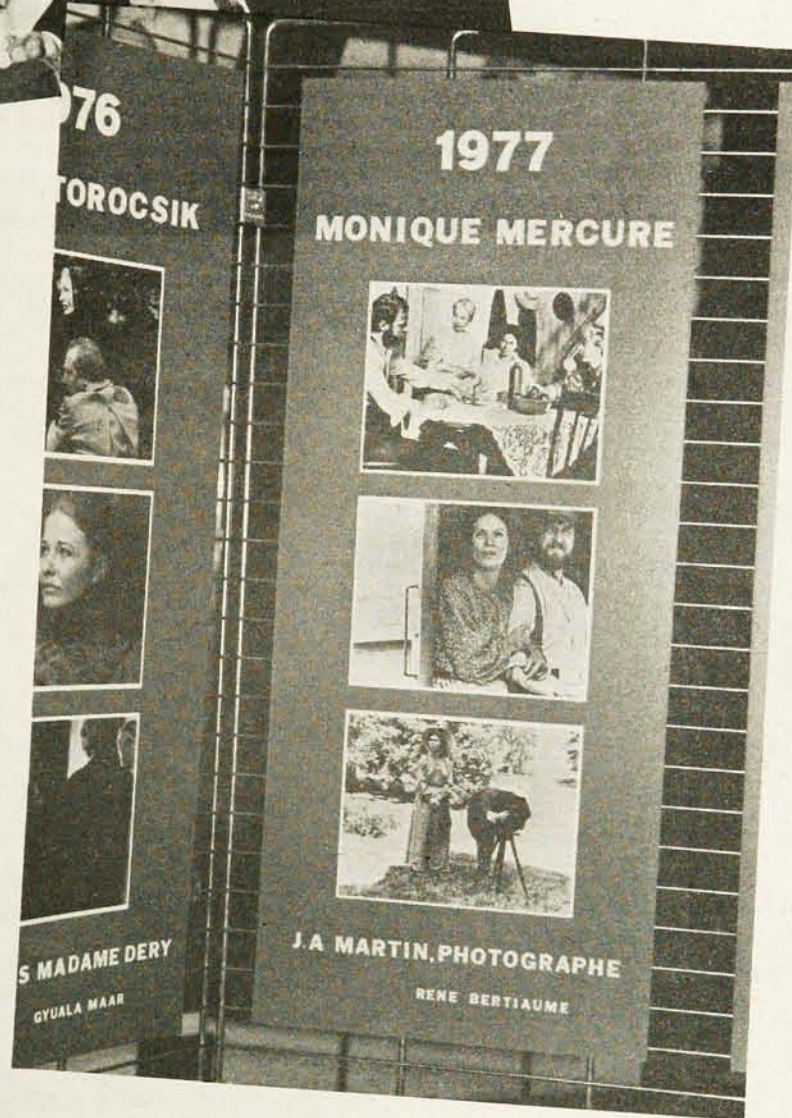


• Who said love isn't forever? Serge Losique and Wayne Clarkson



• Cinema Canada contributor Marc Gervais and Telefilm president Ed Prévost

• The Alberta delegation, Eda Lishman, greets the Quebec contingent



Canadian presence by Canadians present

"The Cannes Festival bounced back this year for Canada as it did for many others. It will probably continue to be a crucial event for Canadian film interests, even if its commercial side begins to give way to the American Film Market.

"I would like to see our offices and facilities in Cannes upgraded and expanded. We do enough business, the private sector, the provinces and the federal agencies, to justify a larger and better suite of offices.

"...Canadian film production should be at a point where we have one or two films in competition every year. For the past several years the quality has been too variable and our presence on the world scene inconsistent. **Joshua Then and Now** is the sort of film we should be doing every year. Surely if the Australians can produce successful films regularly, so can we."

David Silcox

Assistant Deputy Minister
for Culture,
Department of Communications,
Ottawa



• David Silcox

theatre of the Palais, that Ted Kotcheff had conquered his public. The extended and heartfelt ovation he got said it eloquently.

A surprise from Marseille

The Festival-goers were blessed with an overabundance of exhibitions. One of them, *The Best Performances by Actresses*, was organized by the Musée Provençal du Cinéma de Marseille. An interesting initiative indeed, the exhibition presented a visual anthology of the actresses awarded the prize for best performances over the years by the International Cannes Film Festival.

Composed of two rows of huge posters on every film for which an award had been won, the exhibition was on the Press floor of the Palais des Festivals. And there, a surprise was waiting for us as we, Canadians, search-

ed for our own memorable winner (1977) superb actress Monique Mercure. The poster was there with Monique Mercure's picture. But, thanks to the Musée Provençal du Cinéma de Marseille, we learned something we never knew: that the film *J.A. Martin photographie* had been directed by... René Bertiaume! And we were convinced for so long that *J.A. Martin photographie*'s director was named Jean Beaudin... *Très drôle!*

Shooting with the world

Co-production seems to be the latest panacea of the film industry. Therefore a Panel on Film Co-production was part of the feverish Festival activities. Telefilm Canada executive director Andre Lamy participated as one of the speakers along with U.S.A. producer Roger Corman; M. Charret, director of C.N.C. Pro-

duction Service, France; Gerard Ducaux-Rupp, producer and president of the French Association of Film Producers and Exporters; Dieter Geissler, a German producer; Felix Laudadio, director of the Rimini Film Festival; Italian producer Luigi de Laurentis and Jeremy Thomas, a producer from Great Britain. The event enjoyed a very moderate success.

Better attended and more lively were the two big Canadian parties. Ontario led the way on May 15. Superbly organized, its party took place on the beach of the Gray d'Albion on the only sunny day of the Festival. Then on the 17th Quebec held its own party, an equally superb production, in the Palais des Festivals' vast Salon des Ambassadeurs. Both receptions met their goals: bringing together various representatives of the film industry from Ontario, Quebec and all over the world. That's Showbiz!

"As always Telefilm Canada had hardworking people in its office. But as usual Telefilm did nothing to advertise its presence in Cannes. It sent buyers a list of where they were going to be before the Festival; but in Cannes nobody knew where the Telefilm people were. Telefilm advertisements in the trade papers were terrible, badly done and it was money wasted.

"The Marketplace pictures, except for one, did not have Telefilm investment and they were all either teenage exploitation films or violent films. There was nothing of quality from Canada; it's no wonder we have a bad reputation.

"Having two films in the Official Selection is very good; I wish they had both been **much much better.**"

Sid Adilman

Toronto Star, Toronto,
Variety, USA