

E A S T E R N W A V E

by Chris Majka

In keeping with our wintry surroundings, the past couple of months have seen a flurry of new productions settling onto the Atlantic landscape. Far from presaging a freeze of activity, however, they seem the first spring flowers of the coming bloom. **The Lanplighter**, the half-hour made-for-TV production mentioned previously in this column in February, received its sneak preview screening on

Feb. 27 in Halifax and is scheduled for broadcast on CBC March 30. It is a pilot for a series called **Curious Minds** for which co-producers **Ralph Holt** and **Les Gallagher** at Media Co-op Services hope to produce another five episodes. The series concerns the endeavours of famous (or sometimes not-so-famous, in the case of Abraham Gesner, the inventor of kerosene and the chief character of **The**

**Lanplighter**) Canadian scientists and inventors. Rough in places (particularly in the rather flat and nondimensional sound and rapid-fire pace of the editing), the film nevertheless looks very good (it was shot on location at historic Sherbrooke village) and shows promise for a production team which could go on and do good things. It certainly fills a needed gap.

Packed to the gills with an audience of school-children, the Rebecca Cohn Auditorium at Dalhousie University on Feb. 13 saw the premier of Red Snapper Films' newest production **Starting Right Now**. Sponsored by the Nova Scotia Heart Foundation and shot on 16mm, this half-hour film is an anti-smoking polemic with a distinctly non-dogmatic and non-evangelic flavour designed to appeal to today's generation of distinctly mature and savvy kids. Gone are the simplistic warnings and the dire threats of the 1950s generation of films which I was privileged to view once a year in my high-school auditorium. Instead we see hip kids in a production which, in some sections, looks like a rock video. Personal choice and independence is stressed in this drama about a girl (played artfully by actress **Mary-Colin Chisholm**) who chooses not to smoke in a gang of girls (called "The Freedom Four") all of whom do. Although not always successful (some of the rock-video style lip-synch doesn't work and seems contrived) the film has the strong character and individualistic flavour which director, **Lulu Keating**, has become known for. In particular a scene in a cigar store with a seedy and lascivious tobacco-shop vendor (played by **Jim MacSwain**) and a group of dancing girls in a picture-frame, is exquisite and teems with zany humour and antics certain to appeal to all audiences. Its premier co-occurred with the start of the 1986 Heart Fund Campaign and it is slated for CBC broadcast as well. Director Keating along with producer **Chris**

rated on the film **Rita McNeil in Japan**) are planning a research trip to Africa in the spring to continue work on a feature project entitled **African Chronicles**.

In January Carota Films in Shediac, New Brunswick premiered two new dramatic productions. The first, screened on Radio-Canada in March, is a half-hour drama called **Cap Lumière**. It is a tender love story of two women who have lived together for almost 40 years in a secret world which belongs to them alone. It was shot on location at Cap Pele on the east coast of New Brunswick. Produced by **Lawrence Carota** and directed by **Hermengilde Chiasson** it stars **Viola Leger** and **Kim Yaroshevskaya**. The second is a pilot for a sitcom series which Carota Films hopes to produce and is called **Getting to Work**. This first episode, produced by **Karen Carota** and directed by **Jack Nixon-Browne**, has been sold to CBC and negotiations are underway with CBC, Telefilm, and American syndicators to try and secure financing for a complete seasons series.

Another film to have recently premiered in Halifax was **Martin Duckworth's Return to Dresden** produced by the National Film Board in Montreal. Screened one year to the day after the shooting of the central scene, it is an ethical, and at times poetic, examination of the peace movement through the experience of **Giff Gifford**, a participant in the fire-bombing of Dresden during the Second World War.

Meanwhile, in Newfoundland, director **Sharon Smith** is continuing postproduction work on her half-hour drama called **Season on the Water**. Shot in 12 days last September in the small outport town of Petty Harbour, the film features **Rick Boland**, **Cathy Jones**, and **Adam McGraw**, telling a story which revolves around the relations between a brother and sister and explores the life of the people in outport towns. It is a co-production with the NFB's Atlantic Studio and is slated for completion later in the spring.

Also nearing completion is the prodigal Newfoundland chronicle **Faustus Bidegood** (sneak previewed at the Atlantic Film Festival). Director **Michael Jones** told me that the mix is set for the middle of June and final prints should be ready for release early in July. After shooting in 16mm, he is nevertheless shooting for a blow-up to 35mm and hoping for a theatrical release. Hold onto your hats, Canadians!

In Prince Edward Island organizational work on the Atlantic Film and Video Producers Conference continues and interest is growing for an animation co-op on the island in addition to the Island Media Arts Co-op presently there. Members of the latter are trying to increase their production capability in preparation for the coming shooting season.

Last month I wrote about the filmography project of the Nova Scotia provincial archives. At the beginning of March a workshop was held with **Sandy Wilson** followed by a special screening of **My American Cousin** as a benefit for the Motion Picture Heritage Fund. This is the fund which has been created to help acquire, preserve, and protect Nova Scotia's cinematic heritage. The session with **Sandy Wilson**, the film's director, drew a cross-section of the film community and, in addition to regaling the audience with stories of the painful and hilarious process of creating this feature, she brought a real sense of political dialogue between east and west-coast communities of filmmakers. The breadth of Canada separates us and as a consequence we too seldom realize that we share not only many interests and values but are also the victims of similar difficulties. The Toronto-Montreal axis of funding and control has the same effects on the indigenous film communities of Vancouver as in Halifax. Both communities of filmmakers are determined to clamour even louder in their attempts to let the regional voices of the country be heard across the country.

**JACK THOMPSON**

Dadoun Thompson Associates Ltd.

Insurance Specialists  
for the  
Entertainment Industry

- professional
- personal
- service

Your Complete Insurance  
Broker

Call:  
**Jack Thompson**  
100 Drumlin Circle, Suite 204  
(Steeles & Keele)  
Concord, Ont. L4K 2T9  
(416) 669-6400

**ONE STOP SHOPPING**

All film and videotape crafts *including camera.*  
Call us at 416/536-4827. We're negotiable.

**NABET 700** Association of Film Craftsmen  
National Association of Broadcast Employees & Technicians

1179A King Street West, Studio 102, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M6K 3C5