

New alliance to fight Free Trade

TORONTO - An ad hoc committee of actors, writers, directors, technicians, publishers, and others have formed a Cultural Industries Alliance to fight Free Trade.

In a statement issued at the end of July, the Alliance claims that the Free Trade Agreement with the United States undermines Canadian cultural policies. Members of the Alliance include ACTRA, the Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers, ACFC, the Association of Canadian Publishers, Canadian Film and Television Association, the Canadian Conference on the Arts, the Canadian Periodical Publishers' Association, the Directors Guild of Canada, NABET, the Periodical Writers Association of Canada and the Writers Union of Canada.

Doug Coupar, director of Communications and Research for ACTRA, and spokesperson for the Alliance, told *Cinema Canada* that the agreement "is very dangerous for the cultural industries. The so-called 'notwithstanding' clause allows the Americans to retaliate to something they don't like, such as strengthening our Canadian content regulations. Under the agreement, the Americans would be legally entitled to retaliate."

Coupar hopes to turn the ad hoc group into a formal organization and take the issue to the candidates during the next election. He says that the Alliance is unique, "the first time the publishing world and the film and production world have worked hand-in-glove."

In a recent speech to the House of Commons, the Minister of Communications called opposition to Free Trade "irresponsible." "Protection is there. And it is comprehensive. As article 2012 states clearly and without ambiguity the cultural industries exempted from the Agreement include: publishing, including electronic publishing; film and video; audio and video music recording; broadcasting and cable."

Ms. MacDonald went on to say that in "the past 50 years or so, when Canada and our neighbour to the South have consistently reduced the barriers to trade between our two countries, is precisely the time during which we have so greatly furthered and strengthened the cultural sovereignty that we so cherish in this country."

The Alliance, however, maintains that measures taken to ensure the growth of Canadian cultural industries appear compromised by the Agreement. They believe it is doubtful if measures introduced in the past would be acceptable were they to be proposed in post-Free Trade Canada. Therefore, they conclude that Canada's sovereignty is indeed jeopardized by the Agreement.

Coupar maintains that most of the members of the Alliance take a strong nationalist position, "not for some blind ideological reason, but for reasons of progressive development. We want to be politically independent, which means we must be culturally independent."

The Alliance cites the "watered-down" Film Importation Bill, the reduced capital cost allowance provisions for film investment, and provisions for Canadian cable TV companies to pay for 'distance' programming from the U.S. as proof of the negative effects of the Agreement.

However, the cable television industry supports the Free Trade Agreement, calling only for a clearer legal definition concerning which television signals will be liable for cable retransmissions fees. With few exceptions, the Canadian Association of Broadcasters also supports the Agreement. In its recently published newsletter CAB claims that "nothing in the agreement prevents either side from pursuing cultural policies."

Fund hits bottom in October at TFC

MONTREAL - Telefilm's feature film fund will be depleted by October according to Pierre DesRoches, executive director of Telefilm Canada.

DesRoches, who was among the guest speakers at the day-long general meeting of L'Association des producteurs de films et de vidéo du Québec, August 26, said although TFC is receiving applications, the \$23 million feature film fund will be depleted by Oct. 1, 1988.

Responding to questions from the assembled film and television producers, DesRoches added that the \$63 million broadcast fund for fiscal year 1988-1989 ending March 31, 1989, will also soon be dry.

François Floquet of Les Productions Via Le Monde, who raised the question of Telefilm funds publicly at the meeting, says he is not alone among producers who want greater accountability of TFC funds.

The federal government film and television funding agency should inform producers of the status of its feature film and broadcast funds every six months rather than once annually, he told *Cinema Canada*.

"The current situation is absolutely unacceptable," says Floquet. "What we are dealing with is a communication problem."

When negotiating projects, producers need to know what sort of assistance they can rely on in the long and short term, says the producer.

The general assumption, every year among producers, is that TFC and/or Société générale des industries culturelles (SOGIC) will be depleted of production funds for the last six months of the year, says Floquet.

SOGIC production funding, 1988-1989, is also close to depletion, according to André Théberge, director general of SOGIC-Films.

The announcement by DesRoches came as no surprise, says Floquet, particularly after TFC had to carry over a commitment of \$30.7 million from the 1987-1988 budget.

Floquet, who cancelled a project because of Telefilm's 1987-1988 budget problem, says DesRoches gave the impression of "making light" of the fact that TFC lost control of its finances last year.

"It was not a laughing matter for me and I certainly don't want to see it happen again," says Floquet.

Tax incentive gets good response

MONTREAL - Canadian film and television producers continue to push the federal government for new tax incentives.

A recent tax incentive proposal by the Association des producteurs de films et de vidéo du Québec (APFVQ) has been favorably received by Communications Minister Flora MacDonald and Finance Minister Michael Wilson, but no commitment has been given.

The APFVQ has proposed a reimbursable investment tax credit plan by which 50 per cent of the direct salaries disbursed in a qualifying production would be eligible for a full refundable tax credit.

This reimbursement would amount to 10-20 per cent of the production budget, according to Rock Demers, president of the APFVQ, who says Ottawa's response to the study has been positive.

Peter Mortimer, executive director of the Association of Canadian Film and Television Producers (ACFTP) says a similar study based on a refundable tax credit scheme is currently being sponsored by the ACFTP and the Canadian Film and Television Association.

This study will be delivered to the Minister of Finance by the end of September.

Although the federal government is not committed to renewing the type of support that was withdrawn in June 1987 when the Capital Cost Allowance for film and television was reduced from 100 to 30 per cent, indications are that the government would favor a system of tax credits over capital cost allowances.

"A definite message has been sent by Communications and Finance that the CCA will not be revived but that they would be supportive of something more consistent with other aspects of tax reform," says Mortimer.

Insolvency threatened DGC

TORONTO - Efforts are being made to bring the financial management of the Directors Guild of Canada under control to prevent insolvency, according to a report received by *Cinema Canada*.

The Report of the National Audit Committee was submitted to the National Executive Board (NEB) of the DGC at a special meeting of the Board, July 9-10 in Toronto.

The Report addresses the current financial situation of the Guild with three areas of detailed study: conclusions arising from the audit, conducted by Glen Ludlow, Chairman (Alberta District Council), Jason Paikowsky (Ontario District Council), and Jak King (British Columbia District Council); recommendations to remedy the financial emergency facing the DGC; and a case study of the "Computer Project."

First and foremost the Report states clearly that "the Guild must implement basic management controls." The Report notes that in the past the NEB has passed motions limiting unauthorized spending by both the National Office and the District Councils. It says that "these motions have been repeatedly ignored." It further states that "there (has been) very little accountability in the office or reporting" and that the Guild has spent "thousands of dollars" without operating or accounting procedures.

The Report recommends immediate steps to be taken to prevent "insolvency." When the Guild's current president, Alan Erlich, assumed office in March he discovered that the Guild had spent most of its accumulated surplus of close to \$1 million. This included \$561,000 in restricted money, money that apparently should only have been spent by specific resolution of the NEB. No such resolution was passed.

The Audit Committee reports that from February 1 to June 14, 1988 the National office spent \$909,101 and, "as of June 24th, the DGC has approximately \$180,000 in its general operating account." The Committee concludes that "without a large infusion of cash, the DGC National Office/NEB will cease to function within a month."

When contacted by *Cinema Canada* about this, Alan Erlich admitted that the apparent shortage of cash "is a crisis for the Guild" and that the "administrative arm of the Guild fell down", but he expressed confidence that "the accounting is now in very good shape."

The final section of the Committee's Report deals with the computerization of the Guild which it calls "a case study in micro-and macro-mismanagement." The three committee members make it clear that "we have found no

Continued next page

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evidence of deliberate wrongdoing. However, what we have found is a clear case of mismanagement at many levels and many lessons to be learnt."

In June of 1987 Ted Watkins, who was then the 1st vice-president of the Guild, was asked to coordinate "the search for a computer system that would allow the Guild to integrate its functions and procedures in a cost efficient manner." At a NEB meeting of January 23, 1988, an American system developed by MMI Inc. of Cleveland, Ohio, was introduced. The Report notes that Watkins claimed the system would cost approximately \$75,000 and carry anything the DGC required. By a nine to two vote, the NEB approved the purchase of the MMI system.

In a May meeting of the NEB, Watkins informed the Board that \$120,000 has been spent on the project at that time and he also indicated that a further \$130,000 would be required to complete the project. "Despite the near-universal shock that these revelations caused, the Board approved a further \$20,000 to keep the computer project on the road." The Committee Report claims that the computer project, as of June 14, has cost the DGC \$141,956. It projects a further cost of \$112,000, making the system worth over a quarter million dollars. It concludes "that these figures should be treated with great caution given the history of spiralling costs associated with this project."

In the summary to the 37-page Report, the committee members "accept that throughout this period, the financial and book keeping affairs of the DGC were a mess."

When the Report was presented to the Board at the July meeting a no-confidence motion was passed against Watkins, who was now the National Treasurer of the Guild. He eventually resigned, and according to Jak King, the BC member of the audit committee, "charges (against Watkins) have been filed by individual members of the Guild and it is up to the National Executive to set up hearings to investigate."

When reached by *Cinema Canada* Mr. Watkins had "no comment," refusing to talk about "internal" matters.

There has been a long standing dispute between the BC District Council and the National Executive over the management of pension funds, the organization of the Executive, and the day-to-day operation of the Guild. Alan Erlich, three-time president of the Guild, does admit that "there was some mismanagement of funds, although no fraudulent mismanagement."

However, John Juliani, Chairperson of the BC District Council and former national president, feels there is more to it than that. He claims his members are on the verge of pulling out completely. "I'm more pessimistic than I've ever been. It's always been a question of whether we can keep this organization together nationally. I'm committed to that, but I'm finding it hard to find people in British Columbia who will go that route. Disenchanted is a mild word at this point. They're literally pissed-off."

A Touche Ross consulting report, commissioned earlier this year by the NEB, recommends a move towards decentralization and greater autonomy for the regions, especially in financial day to day matters.

Chbib heads south

MONTREAL - Bachar Chbib is leaving Montreal for Los Angeles. The independent filmmaker says he doesn't want to deal with government types any longer. He says he would rather deal with real people.

"I don't want to be forced to make a film for \$3 million when I could make it for half-a-million," says Chbib who, as of the first week in August, was L.A. bound.

Although Chbib Productions will maintain an address in Montreal, Chbib has entered into a deal with American partners to form Ambient Films in Los Angeles.

L'Entente, the first feature film by Ambient Films is in preproduction. Shooting scheduled for Sept. 15 to Jan. 7. in Haiti or the Dominican Republic. Chbib will direct Marie Tifo and Pierre Curzi.

"L.A. is where the money is," says Chbib. "An independent can make the type of film he wants without government interference."

After months of checkered negotiations, Chbib has received funding from Telefilm and the Société générale des industries culturelles Québec (SOGIC) for his latest completed feature film *Clair Obscur*, budgeted at \$1 million.

Disputes over the appropriation of funding and the extent of administrative control of his films have resulted in Chbib's decision to seek private sector assistance in L.A.

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Bethune back on track

MONTREAL - After months of delays and bickering, Canada's most expensive feature film resumes shooting in Montreal in October.

Several high-level meetings between the co-producers - the Chinese authorities and the producers at Filmline - and representatives of Telefilm Canada have gone a long way to iron out financial impediments. In question was a recent move on the part of the completion guarantor to take over the film, a move which has been forestalled. It is probable that changes in the completion guarantee area will be made.

In addition, both Telefilm Canada and the Chinese have committed new funds to the project, reports its producers.

Bethune: The Making Of A Hero has also been the object of bitter personal dispute between the star, Donald Sutherland, and the writer, Ted Allan. For a while it appeared that the film would close down for good after the completion of the very difficult China portion of the shoot.

However, according to Richard Racette of Uvesco, the major private investor group in the project, there are "no more ifs, ands, or buts... This (dispute) is finally put to bed." He sees the

Spanish portion being completed by late November and the film being ready for the 1989 Cannes festival.

The making of the film has already been the subject of a feature length documentary, *Strangers in a Strange Land*, which will be screened at this year's Festival of Festivals. Numerous press reports have detailed the principals' struggles to tailor the film.

The crux of the dispute has been the character of Norman Bethune as portrayed in the film. As China's most revered foreigner, he is regarded as a secular saint. However, as Racette points out, Bethune was also "a hard drinking, womanizing s.o.b." Allan, who wrote the original biography of Bethune, *The Sword and the Scalpel* and Sutherland, who has played Bethune before in a CBC docu-drama, differ strongly about the treatment of the character. Apparently the two men have now reached a compromise on the script.

Racette is pleased with the developments but acknowledges that "it has caused some people anxiety about an investment that they shouldn't have had anxiety about." Due to the rules governing co-ventures (the Chinese are partners in the deal with a substantial commitment of goods and services) Racette's investors have already received certification for tax purposes.

CBC, Frizzell and Pincher Creek

TORONTO - Filming has begun in Pincher Creek, Alberta, on *Getting Married in Buffalo Jump*, a CBC romantic comedy written by John Frizzell.

Frizzell describes the story as "an interesting reversal on the blondes who used to hold out for mink." Wendy Crewson plays a "sequens-top kind of girl, a bit bitter, a bit cynical" who goes back home to Alberta to inherit her father's farm. There she falls in love with a farmhand, played by Paul Gross, who wants the farm, and proposes marriage, but doesn't want to sleep with her.

Frizzell, who was part of the *Winter Tan* collective, has directed several documentaries for TVOntario and was head writer on the TV series *Airwaves*. He has just finished work on *Intimate Relations*, a feature scheduled to go into production this fall in Toronto for Norstar Communications.

Commenting on the surprising success of *Winter Tan*, Frizzell says, "It's one of those moments when you haven't a gripe against your country. We were given absolute freedom to make the weirdest damn film we could possibly

make. It was absolutely a no-holds-barred artistic effort and everybody came right out and supported us for it. It was wonderful."

Beaverbrook series to tell the tale

MONTREAL - *Beaverbrook*, the \$5 million mini-series, will be coproduced by Primedia Productions of Toronto and Cleo 24 Inc. of Montreal.

Ted Allen (*Bethune: The Making of a Hero*) will write the screenplay; production is scheduled for 1989 in Canada and Great Britain with a delivery date in the Spring of 1990.

The four-hour mini-series will be shown in Canada on the CBC and distributed internationally by Maple Leaf World Wide Distribution.

Arnie Gelbart of Cleo 24 Inc. and Pat Ferns of Primedia Productions announced, recently, that they have jointly acquired the rights to the definitive biography of Lord Beaverbrook by A. J. P. Taylor, a noted historian and a close friend of the legendary Canadian press baron.

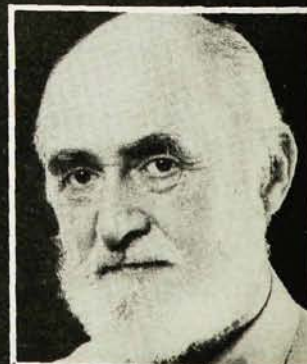
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Quebec law in force Oct. 1

MONTREAL - Most of the articles in Quebec's Cinema Law take effect on Oct. 1, the implementing regulations having been written, announced the minister of Cultural Affairs, Lise Bacon at a press conference, Aug. 18.

If the law has the desired effect, Quebec's distributors will gain control of one-quarter of the total film and video distribution sector.

One article which will not be in effect is the contentious Article 83 concerning the language of films in release in the province. Bacon said a moratorium on this article would end in October and public hearings will follow to determine whether its application is still required. The object of article 83 is to ensure the availability of French-dubbed versions of non-French language films simultaneously with the release of the original version of the film.

The application of the law will have important repercussions on the distribution sector. Only Quebec-based distributors, licensed by the Régie du cinéma, will be able to distribute films and videotapes in the province, an exception

being made for the nine members of the Motion Picture Association of America.

An agreement was signed between the government of Quebec and the MPAA in 1986 wherein the majors would relinquish their rights to distribute non-English language films (unless they invested 100 per cent of the negative cost of the film) in return for guaranteed access for the MPAA to distribute those English-language films they have either produced or for which they are the world-sales agents.

The definitions of "producer" and "world sales agent" are sufficiently weak to allow the American majors to retain distribution rights to all major films.

The "producer" of the film is defined as one who has committed 50 per cent of the total funds spent on a film, up to a ceiling of \$4.5 million Canadian. The "world-sales agent" is one who controls rights in the U.S.A., Canada, the European Common Market, Japan, Australia and New Zealand.

Bacon explained that studies show the distribution market in Quebec nets \$150 million per year, revenues coming equally from theatrical film, on the one hand, and video rentals on the other. To date, Quebec's distributors have controlled only three per cent

of this market. The new regulations, which affect both film and video, will deliver half of the theatrical market into the hands of Quebec's distributors, allowing them revenues of \$35 million, Bacon estimates.

Claude Fournier, president of the Institut québécois de cinéma, told *Cinema Canada* that he feels this forecast is extremely optimistic, and that the articles concerning distribution fall far short of his original expectations. (Fournier was involved in the original negotiations with the majors under the Parti Québécois government. Those negotiations were completed by Francis Fox for the Liberal government.)

Although the spirit of the accord is applicable to video distribution as well as theatrical distribution, Bacon commented that there has not yet been agreement with the MPAA on the regulations needed to administer the articles concerning video.

Ironically, one result of Quebec's Cinema Law will be to deny distributors from other provinces access to the Quebec market while guaranteeing access to the American majors. This aspect of the law will have serious repercussions. Coproduction treaties, like the one pending between Ontario and Quebec, will most likely not be concluded because of the failure of the law to

allow Canadian distributors based in other provinces to carry on business in Quebec directly.

Another aspect of the law which will come into force involves technical standards for theatres: the quality of the sound, the luminosity of the image, the height of the ceilings, the distance of the first row of seats from the screen, etc. These articles are intended to encourage the upgrading of many of the theatres in rural neighbourhoods.

The province is allocating funds to participate in the renovations of the theatres. There is a chance, say some observers, that certain regional theatres will close rather than undertake expensive renovations, given the current climate of theatrical exhibition.

Still other regulations will monitor video distribution, issuing a visa and affixing a seal to each videocassette, much as the liquor commission authorizes and seals each bottle. The intent of these regulations is to diminish video piracy, and to monitor the payment of residuals to Quebec's artists.

Other regulations deal with the financial reports which distributors will have to furnish to

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Importation Bill: mantra for foreign sellers?

MONTREAL - Some industry insiders say that part of the \$200 million promised by the federal government for Canadian film production and distribution is a political gift that may be squandered by Canadian distributors on foreign films.

However, André Link, president of the Association québécoise des distributeurs et exportateurs de films et de vidéo, has a different opinion about the efficacy of the Film Products Importation Bill and the \$200 million, tabled and announced on June 8.

Link calls criteria for receiving funds, currently being written into the federal bill for a second reading, "fair and equitable." Combined with these criteria, which include a re-definition of "film distributor," are tough penalties for contravention of the law.

Foreign film agents who don't acquire an import license could face imprisonment and/or a fine of \$200,000 per day.

These penalties put teeth in the bill which will, in effect, force recognition of Canada as a distinct distribution market. Such recognition, says Link, will result in up-front negotiations with Canadian distributors. It may also promote a bidding war among Canadian distributors for foreign films.

"This is obviously a very strong impetus for foreign parties to deal in good faith with Canadians," says Link, who adds that policy-driven law can be amended after several years, if necessary.

Critics of the bill say that the criteria for government funding combined with severe penalties is one thing and that the problem of rising prices for foreign films triggered by the bidding process for imported film outlined in the bill is quite another thing.

"Do you really think Canadian distributors are going to invest in Canadian films?" asks Jan Rofekamp of Films Transit Inc., who says that the Canadian government is, in effect, subsidizing the importation of successful foreign films while Canadian independent filmmakers are "crying for funds."

"We are going to pay higher prices for foreign product. I know French (France) sales agents who are looking at Quebec, the second-largest francophone market in the world, wringing their hands with glee and waiting for the prices of their big pictures to soar."

"Look," says Link, "what we have here is movement towards a separate Canadian market; something we have never had before. It (the bill) might not resemble what was first promised (Feb. 1986) but at least it is a first step forward."

Whatever the benefits of the distribution policy, Link, who has gone on record as a strong proponent of an industry not fully dependent on



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NEWS

FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS

See No Evil, a new docudrama from acclaimed director Paul Cowan (**Democracy on Trial: The Morgentaler Affair; The Kid Who Couldn't Miss**) heads the list of NFB films selected for this year's Festival of Festivals. **See No Evil** recreates the dramatic events surrounding the 1979 blinding of blue collar worker Terry Ryan at a Westinghouse transformer plant in Hamilton, Ontario. His case, championed by fellow worker Stan Gray, led to a legal battle entangling labour, management and government.

The NFB also participated in the production of three features screening at this year's festival. **The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick**, directed by Allan Goldstein and based on a novel by Morley Torgov, is a comedy about a young boy growing up in the Prairies in the early 60's. **The Outside Chance of Maximilian Glick**, was produced by Outside Chance Productions Inc. in association with the NFB and the CBC. Set in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia, **Something About Love**, a co-production of Allegro Films and the NFB tells the story of an emotional reunion between a father and son. Directed by Tom Berry, the film features Jan Rubes, Stefan Wodolawsky and Jennifer Dale. Francis Mankiewicz's **Les portes tournantes (Revolving Doors)**, a hit at the



Terry Ryan, who was blinded in an industrial accident, plays himself in *See No Evil*

recent Cannes Film Fest, stars Monique Spaziani and Gabriel Arcand and is a co-production of Malo Film Production and UGC, with the collaboration of the NFB and ACPAV.

VISION TV

Canada's new national faith network, Vision TV, will showcase NFB documentaries in a provocative, fifteen-week series called **The Cutting Edge**. Many of the documentaries featured in this first season have never before been seen on network television. Among them are a number of award-winning films from Studio D, NFB's acclaimed women's studio, including: **Dark Lullabies**, Irene Angelico's compassionate look at the impact of the

Holocaust on post-war Germans and Jews; Laurette Deschamps' **No Longer Silent**, a revealing examination of discrimination against women in India, and Patricia Watson's inspiring **The Best Time of My Life: A Portrait of Women in Mid-Life**.

FAMILY CHANNEL

Some of the finest NFB productions on nature and wildlife subjects have been selected for the premiere season of Family Channel, a new discretionary television service which began broadcasting on September 1. The series Nature Probe will present award-winning documentaries from the NFB, including **Beluga Baby**, **Life on Ice** and Bill Mason's **Wolf Pack**.

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government funding, says there is no indication in this policy that government policymakers are thinking in terms of creating a market-driven industry.

He says the outlook for Canadian film production this year and next is a rather gloomy picture. The optimistic view is that 35 films will be produced this year (down by half of last year's production, according to *Cinema Canada's* year-end figures) and will be halved again in 1989 when grandfather clauses in the Capital Cost Allowance (CCA) federal tax plan for film expire.

"This year is not as drastic as it will be next year. At least in Quebec we have a generous (provincial)

tax shelter but in English Canada they will be worse off," says Link.

"There is no reason for anyone to take advantage of the 30 per cent (federal CCA) and go into film."

Famous signs Cinepix

MONTREAL - Cinepix, the Montreal-based producer-distributor, and Famous Players have entered an agreement whereby the giant theatre

chain has the exhibition rights to English and French-language films carried by Cinepix.

"Our company has a commitment to providing the Quebec moviegoer with good films in both languages and Cinepix will help us meet that commitment," said Walter Senior, chairman and CEO of Famous.

Both Senoir and André Link, president of Cinepix, announced the agreement on August 25.



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OFDC takes stock

TORONTO - In its first two years of existence, the Ontario Film Development Corporation has helped make Ontario the third largest movie and TV production centre in North America.

"This has been a very exciting year for us," said Jonathan Barker, acting Chief Executive Officer, at a recent press conference, "one marked by critical acclaim and commercial acceptance." Indeed, the success of *I've Heard The Mermaids Singing* (Prix de la jeunesse at the 1987 Cannes Festival), *Family Viewing* (Berlin Festival and Prize for Excellence at the 1987 Festival of Festivals), and *A Winter Tan* (invited to the New York Film Festival) bears out this claim.

"The OFDC is committed to supporting low to medium budget films which are original and culturally relevant," continued Barker. "We encourage young filmmakers who offer a new perspective and fresh insight."

Don Haig, president of Film Arts and "godfather" of so many independent filmmakers coming out of Toronto, is also very pleased with the performance of the new agency. "I find them straight-forward, and because it's a tighter group than Telefilm, you can get a decision quicker. I think it's good that they have taken a chance on a few of the off-the-cuff things that may not appeal to the commercial interests of Telefilm."

Haig was the executive producer on Patricia Rozema's *Mermaids*, Ron Mann's recently completed *Comic Book Confidential* and Morley Markson's documentary *Growing Up In America*.

Paul Saltzman, president of Sunrise Films and executive producer on *Martha, Ruth and Edie*, an OFDC-backed film, says, "What they are doing is incredible. By nurturing the low-budget community I think they are nurturing the correct area to bring along a mature feature film industry in this country. I applaud the work they are doing."

Barker, in an interview with *Cinema Canada*, outlined the direction he would like to see the agency go. "What we want to do is develop a body of work for those filmmakers whom we have been trying to support. But the question arises, where is our obligation? At a certain point those ones who have had success like Atom Egoyan, Patricia Rozema, John Frizzell and the others on *Winter Tan*, will become established filmmakers. Do we keep our sights focused on filmmakers who are new talents or develop further the filmmakers with already proven successes? We can't drop anybody at either end and that's why we're asking the government for more money. It's that simple."

The OFDC committed \$5.4 million in production and development financing over the '87-'88 fiscal year. The corporation is now asking the provincial government for an additional \$7.5 million over and above its original budget

allotment of \$21 million. Barker is reasonably optimistic that this will be forthcoming, but the actual decision will not be made until the end of this month.

The renewed strength of the Canadian dollar, coupled with the federal withholding tax and changes in the CCA have created "very serious problems" for the growth of the industry in Ontario, Barker said. With film investment less attractive for private investors, the corporation is faced with filmmakers requiring more support from government agencies. This means more money to fewer projects. Barker said that "we'd rather invest in two films at \$250,000 than one film at \$500,000 (the agency's maximum production limit), but the problem becomes: can we only contribute \$250,000 and the film still get made?"

In the area of promotion and services, the corporation in the past year assisted 62 projects representing \$231 million spent in the province. However, Barker predicts that there will be a drop of 10 to 20 per cent this year. He said, "We're going to have to work harder to attract the same production level."

On the positive side, he feels that this will bring together "those elements of the industry who control price and quality" (guilds, unions, technicians etc.) and plan better for the long term, avoiding the usual boom-bust scenario all too familiar in the Canadian industry as a whole.

Louise Clark, recently appointed head of production and development for the corporation, sees hope in the fact that unions in Vancouver are continuing to discount the dollar to keep attracting U.S. productions. She feels that this will compensate for the rising strength of the dollar.

Commenting on Clark's appointment, Barker couldn't be happier. "We set out to bring in somebody from the community on which we are most focused, the low-budget community. I think her appointment is very good for us and very good for the community."

PBS screens Canada series

DETROIT - *Canada: True North*, a four-part series of one-hour documentaries produced by WTVS/Detroit and the National Film Board of Canada, airs on the PBS network, Sept. 12, 19, 26 and Oct. 3, at 10 p.m.

The series explores the history of U.S./Canadian political relationships; the connection between Canada's vast geography and its peoples; the turbulent contemporary history of the French Canadians; the influence of immigration on Canadian society.

The series will also be shown on Global Television and WTVS/Detroit.

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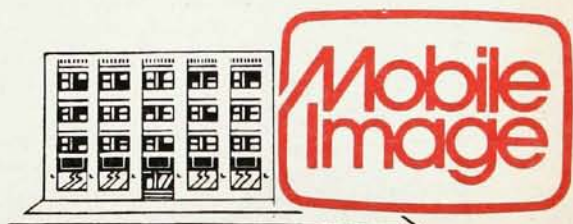
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STUDIO HEAVEN?

Quebec launches specialty shows

MONTREAL - Sept. 1 was the launch date for new specialty channel services sanctioned, last November, by the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

While the larger cable operators (over 6,000 subscribers) are required to carry "all or none" of the five specialty services, many of Quebec's 140 cable distributors can select a combination of these services.

Hubert Stephenne, president of the Association des cable distributeurs du québec, expects that most of the smaller operators will take the full package to improve program selection. He says TV5 will be among the more popular of the new services in outlying regions of the province.

The new French-language specialty services are: TV5, a service providing current news, public affairs and cultural programming from France, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada and certain French-language African countries.

MeteoMedia, featuring 24-hour weather reports, national and international.

- *Canal Famille*, 12 hours per day of programs geared to children and young adolescents.

Musique Plus, a 24-hour French-language music video service.

The fifth service, prescribed by the CRTC in the "all or none" package is *Le Réseau des sports*, a 24-hour coverage of professional and amateur sports. The launch date for this service has been delayed until September 1989.

Stephenne says only time will tell whether Quebec audiences are receptive to the new services. Subscriber surveys by various cable companies indicate a general willingness to pay an average increase of \$1.50 for the full range of new services on basic cable, but, adds Stephenne, the true test is in the viewing.

The four largest cable companies in Quebec say they are ready for the launch date. Videotron, with over 780,000 subscribers, will be asking \$19.95 for basic cable with the new services.

In May, Videotron informed the CRTC that it could not afford to pass on the cost of carrying a mandatory-five channel package prescribed by the CRTC.

At that time, Videotron argued that subscribers would not support a fee increase of over \$2. This influenced the decision by *Le Réseau des sports*, owned by John Labatt Ltd. and Télémedia Communications Inc., to withdraw the service, the most costly one, for a year.

CF Cable-TV, the second-largest French-language cable company in Quebec (195,000 subscribers), will ask for an increase of 97 cents for a monthly basic cable fee of \$15.81.

At press time, CF Cable was negotiating a discounted rate for an additional three English

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specialty services - YTV, *Much Music* and *Vision TV*.

In effect, subscribers to CF Cable (of which 50 per cent are English-speaking) will receive the English and French-language specialty services in a two-for-one deal on the basic cable and for a fee approved by the CRTC.

Diane Legris, vice-president of programming of CF Cable, told *Cinema Canada* at press time that the agreement was binding on all mandatory services and that last-minute negotiations with *Le Réseau des sports* were "going well."

"At this time we are confident that all services

will be launched on Sept. 1, but if this fails, we will inform our subscribers immediately," says Legris.

There are no new discretionary (pay-TV) services in Quebec. It is expected that the CRTC will determine whether *Much Music*, currently a discretionary service, will be made available on basic cable.

Restructured CRTC

OTTAWA - The Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission has completely restructured and streamlined its

Broadcasting Directorate.

The Directorate is now composed of three separate units: Television; Radio; and Cable, Pay and Specialty Services. This has been a major reorganization within the CRTC in an attempt to improve services. The CRTC has been frequently criticized in the past for being too central and too slow in handing down decisions.

Peter Fleming is now the director general of Radio; Robert Armstrong is the director of Television; and Lisa de Wilde, director of Cable, Pay and Specialty Services. All will report directly to CRTC chief, André Bureau.

Specialties cover English Canada

TORONTO - This month saw the introduction of four new national specialty networks on cable TV and a move to basic cable for MuchMusic and TSN.

The four new ones include Vision TV, the world's first multifaith network; YTV, an 18-hour per day children's network; Family Channel, which will include 60 per cent of the existing Disney Channel; and WeatherNow, a 24-hour-a-day weather station. Three of the four are available on basic cable (converter required), while the Family Channel is a pay TV service.

Vision TV carries two distinct types of programming: dramas, documentaries and public affairs programs designed to appeal to persons of all faiths; and denominational programs designed to reflect the views and interests of a particular faith community. Participating groups included Protestant, Roman Catholic, Islamic, Jewish, Sikh and Hindu.

Broadcasting six hours a day (a three-hour package repeated once), seven days a week, Vision TV is run by Ron Keast, a veteran of more than 30 years in broadcasting. Most recently he headed the Radio and Television program at Ryerson Polytechnical Institute in Toronto. The new network intends to be more in line with CBC's *Man Alive* than the bible-thumping PTL-style of religious broadcasting.

YTV is commercial free for seven hours a day, with eight minutes of commercials per hour during the rest of its 18-hour broadcast schedule. As pledged in their application to the CRTC last spring, the network will initiate a minimum of 40 hours per year of original first-run Canadian programming.

Kid's fare ranges from *She-Ra* and *He-Man* to *Paul Hann and Friends*. The schedule also includes reruns of *Bonanza*, *Carol Burnett*, *The Muppets* and *Black Beauty*.

YTV president Kevin Shea has been working to get children's network on the air for over 10 years. In 1975 he was with Scarborough Cable when they introduced, under a special license granted by CRTC, the experimental Canadian Children's Channel. He has also worked with TVOntario and Rogers Cable and was the Director of the Children's Broadcast Institute for four years. To date, YTV has been picked up by 105 of Canada's cable companies.

The only specialty pay TV service to sign on this month is Susan Douglas Rubes' *The Family Channel*. Rubes, the founder of the very successful Young People's Theatre in Toronto, is the wife of actor and opera star, Jan Rubes.

"We're not programming just for children", says Rubes, "but for older adults and grandparents who want a certain kind of entertainment. We hope we'll draw the family together for some viewing."

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The Family Channel is owned equally by Allarcom Pay TV Ltd. from Alberta (they own and operate Superchannel) and Astral Bellevue Communications Inc. of Montreal (who own and operate First Choice). Apart from the 60 per cent repeats from Disney, there will be some original Canadian programming and plenty of vintage films and TV such as colorized versions of Shirley Temple movies and the *Burns and Allen Show*.

WeatherNow is produced in Montreal and around the clock it has local weather reports every five minutes. Owned 80 per cent by Lavalin Ltd, the engineering firm, WeatherNow hopes to repeat the success of a similar channel in the U.S. The Weather Channel has 32 million subscribers out of a potential 48 million American households.

TSN, the Sports Network, now a specialty pay service, will be carried on some Rogers and

Macleon Hunter basic cable systems this month. It is scheduled to be on all Rogers and Maclean Hunter basic systems by September 1989. According to the Bureau of Broadcast Management, TSN, own by John Labatt Ltd., is the most-watched pay TV service in the country, with a subscription base of more than 1.2 million.

MuchMusic, Moses Znaimer's 24-hour rock video station will also move to basic cable in some areas this month. However, the format is a tough sell to the cable companies. Cable companies are realizing they have a big marketing job ahead of them to prevent a consumer backlash to the increased cable rates.

According to Scott Colbran, senior vice president of operations at Maclean Hunter, the company does not want to add TSN and MuchMusic immediately because its subscribers would be hit with an increase of about a \$1 per

month for both services. As it stands now, with the introduction of three new services on basic cable, subscription rates can be expected to increase from \$.60 to \$.70 per month.

Just over 65 per cent of Canadian homes receive cable television, generating business worth over \$140 million for the cable companies.

Continued from page 65

the Régie, and the issuing of the various permits now required for distribution and exhibition.

Bacon has stated repeatedly that the tradition of distributors' investing in Quebec productions is so strong that she is expecting the regulations dealing with distribution to funnel investment back into production, and that support to Quebec's film producers is one of the main objectives of the current law.

Festival of Festivals Gala attracts stars

The world premiere of David Cronenberg's *Dead Ringers* (formerly *Twins*) will launch the 13th annual Festival of Festivals in Toronto. The film, starring Jeremy Irons in the dual role of the Mantle twins, is a complex psychological thriller that explores the unique world of twins. Toronto filmmaker Cronenberg has achieved international acclaim with his work in the horror genre. His most recent film was *The Fly*.

Closing the fest is John Schlesinger's *Madame Sousatzka*, another world premiere. Starring Shirley Maclaine, who will be present at the gala night closing, the film is based on a screenplay by award-winning Indian novelist and scriptwriter Ruth Praver Jhabvala.

Other gala features at the fest include Pedro Almodovar's *Women on the Verge of A Nervous Breakdown* and Claude Sautet's *Quelques jours avec moi*. Almodovar was widely acclaimed in Toronto when his work was spotlighted at last year's Festival.

Henry Winkler and Alan King will attend the world premiere gala of Winkler's directorial debut, *Memories of Me*. The film stars Billy Crystal as a cardiac specialist determined to reconcile with his eccentric father.

Also making his directorial debut and a gala appearance at the fest is Pulitzer-prize winning playwright Sam Shepard sheparding his film *Far North*.

Richard Gere and Kevin Anderson will join director Gary Sinise in attending the gala performance of *Miles From Home*.

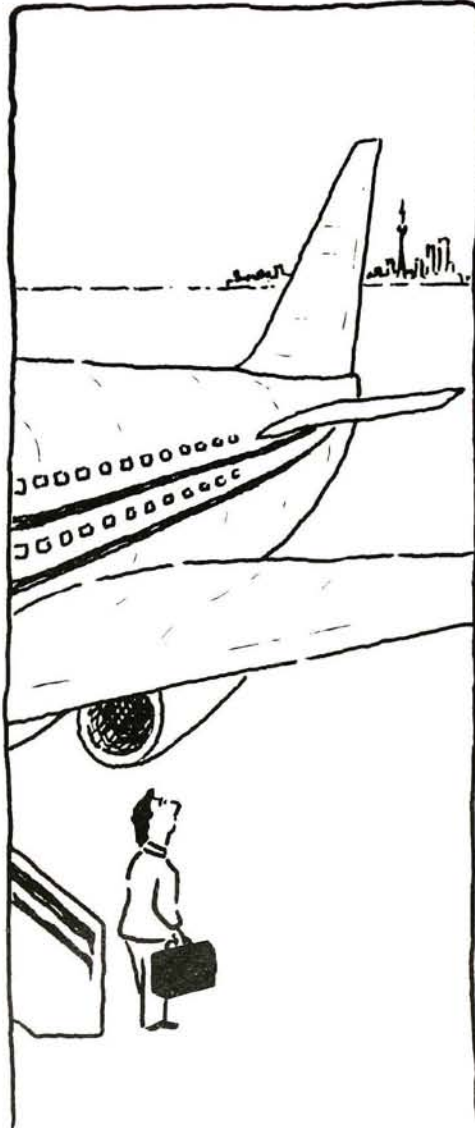
Other celebrities attending the fest include director Julien Temple and the stars of his film *Earth Girls Are Easy*, Geena Davis, Jeff Goldblum and Julie Brown. Gary Oldman will be attending the gala presentation of Martin Campbell's *Criminal Law*. And Theresa Russell will attend a special presentation of husband's Nicholas Roeg's new film, *Track 29*.

Trade Forum talks business

TORONTO - Minister of Communications, Flora MacDonald, will launch the Festival of Festivals' Trade Forum in Toronto September 9. It is expected that she will be announcing new government initiatives for the Canadian film industry. Also using the Trade Forum as a platform for policy announcements will be Monte Kwinter, Ontario's minister of industry, trade and communications.

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In its 10th year the Trade Forum brings together panellists from Canada and abroad to debate pressing industry issues. The first day of the three-day affair will be devoted entirely to Canadian affairs. The New Deal will examine current and proposed government policies with representatives of key government agencies. The Industry Responds will bring together leading figures from the independent sector to comment on government initiatives in film funding. The final session of the day will be an update on the current Canadian broadcasting scene. Presiding panellists for the "Oh Canada"

day will be: Stephen J. Roth, chairman of Cinexus; Roger Frappier, president of Max Films; and Robert Lantos, president of Alliance Entertainment.

The second day of the Trade Forum reexamines the question of international co-production: how to do it and with whom to the mutual satisfaction of the parties concerned. Panellists include: Pierre David, chairman of Image Organization; Stephane Sperry, head of programming for Ellipse; Wolfgang Fischer from Tele 5; and Robert Nador, producer at Dune Productions.

The Trade Forum winds up on September 11 with an analysis of distribution led by distribution executives Michael Skewes (Cineplex-Odeon), Richard Lorber (Fox/Lorber), and Neil Cort (Nelvana).

In addition to the main sessions, the Trade Forum will host a number of smaller workshops on topics as diverse as comedy writing, small independent production, children's programming and the future of women producers in Canada.

Continued next page

Continued from previous page

Sales office for feature sales

TORONTO - For the first time in its 13-year history the Festival of Festivals, in conjunction with the Ontario Film Development Corp., will open an official sales office for feature films. While buyers and sellers have always met at the Festival, there has never been an organized infrastructure to accommodate them.

Helga Stephenson, executive director of the fest, noted that "the sales office is being established to fulfill industry requests for a more structured environment." Jonathan Barker, acting head of the OFDC, added that the growth in the Canadian industry and the increased interest in Canadian films has made a sales office viable.

The sales office, headed by Christine Yankou of the festival and Shane Kinnear of the OFDC, will compile a directory of all buyers and sellers attending the Festival of Festivals and will act as a message and introduction centre. The sales office will also arrange screenings for buyers.

Soviet retro at Fest of Fests

TORONTO - Toronto's Festival of Festivals will be launching a major retrospective of Soviet cinema from 1957 to the present day. Kino Eye was programmed by Soviet expert Ian Christie, head of distribution at the British Film Institute.

The festival will be screening 50 films covering every aspect of Soviet life. Piers Handling, program director for the festival, noted that a number of films have been taken off the shelf after years of censorship. Handling added that "Soviet cinema of the pre-glasnost era was not stagnant. The grandeur and beauty of many of these films is striking. The intimate, personal tone of many others reflects universal concerns."

Christie noted that "the paradox of the Soviet cinema is that it has often been at its boldest and least shackled during periods of political repression or stagnation."

A delegation of Soviet filmmakers will be attending the Fest including Valeriy Rubinchik, director of *King Stakh's Wild Hunt* and Artavazd Peleshyan, director of *Our Century*.

Film commissions at Fest of Fests

TORONTO - Cineposium '88, the 13th annual meeting of the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFC), takes place in Toronto from September 12-16 to coincide with the annual Festival of Festivals.

The AFC is a nonprofit association of over 200 film commissioners from all over the United States and Canada, as well as Australia, the Bahamas, Belize, Jamaica and New Zealand.



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Members serve in municipal, state, provincial or national film offices as the liaison between the film and television industry and local governments. This is the first time the event is held in Canada.

Keynote speakers include the popular talk-show host Oprah Winfrey, the producing team of Jerry Bruckheimer and Don Simpson (*Top Gun*, *Beverly Hills Cop I and II*) and British director Michael Apted.

A variety of panels and workshops, including "Where It All Begins: A Writer's Diary", "The Job Of A Location Manager" and "Producer and Production Executives" are featured.

Canadian features show in Halifax fest

HALIFAX - Films and videos from across Canada will be showcased with the best from the Atlantic provinces at the 8th annual Atlantic Film and Video Festival Atlantique, October 11 to 16, in Halifax.

Among the films produced in the Atlantic provinces are *Finding Mary March* by Ken Pittman, *I Will Not Make Any More Boring Art* by

Bill MacGillivray, *The Squamish Five* by Paul Donovan, *Something About Love* by Tom Berry, *Madame LaTour* by Herménégilde Chiasson.

Quebec filmmaker Francis Mankiewicz will attend the festival with his film *The Revolving Doors*.

In addition, *Comic Book Confidential* by Ron Mann, *Calling The Shots* by Janice Cole and Holly Dale, and *Milk and Honey* by Rebecca Yates and Glen Salzmen will be imported from Toronto.

Tales from Gimli Hospital by Guy Maddin is the Winnipeg entry.

The MoonSnail Awards will be presented on Sunday, Oct. 16.

Showing our shorts

Toon Cat Meets Fish Called Wanda Dept. : With three major awards from Zagreb, Winnipeg animator Cordell Barker's seven-minute *The Cat Came Back* is warming-up the crowds nationally for the new MGM release of *A Fish Called Wanda*. Over three years in the making, Barker's film was produced through The National Film Board and boasts a coproducing credit from Oscar-nominated Richard Condie. Audience-reaction at Winnipeg's Polo Park Cinema has been extremely positive. Theatre management reports that guffaws and applause are common occurrences during the seven minutes preceding the John Cleese comedy that *Cat* has been paired with. Kudos are certainly in order for Famous Players for bringing back a little showmanship into their presentation by programming a short that not only provides a little something extra for the moviegoers' six-and-a-half bucks, but more-than-adequately warms-up the audience for the lunacy that follows in *A Fish Called Wanda*. Meanwhile, Cineplex-Odeon continues to draw razberries as opposed to applause for screening annoying Dentyne commercials, etc. Get the hint, Garth? Quality Canadian shorts are the answer.

Sask-Touring Dept. : Saskatchewan Film Pool's Nora Gardner reports that moolah is now in place for a Western Canadian mega-tour of Sask indie-product. Approximately \$10,000 will be shelled-out to flog *Wheat Soup* and some selected shorts in 10 cities. Locales include Manitoba, Alberta, British Columbia and Whitehorse. Yet to be confirmed is whether the same package will actually tour Saskatchewan.

Acquisitions Dept. : The newly-formed Alberta Releasing has picked-up four indie Manitoba titles for worldwide television distribution. Pics are West End Productions' *Niagara Falls*, Winnipeg Film Group Productions' *The Washing Machine*, John Kozak's *The Celestial Matter* and Jeff McKay's *A Game of Death*. In other acquisitions, Ottawa's National Archives will be securing the following Manitoba titles; McKay's *A Game of Death*, Guy Maddin's *The Dead Father* and *Tales From the Gimli Hospital* and Lorne Bailey's *The Milkman Cometh*. The happiest news comes from Video Pool's Alex Poruchnyk, whose feature-length video production *To Whom It May Concern* was purchased by the New York Museum of Modern Art.

Festival Fever Dept. : In addition to the successful screening at Yorkton, Lorne Bailey's black comedy *The Milkman Cometh* will also be seen during the Toronto Festival of Festivals and the Vancouver International Film Festival. John Kozak's 16-minute experimental drama *Running Time* will also unspool at Toronto. Guy Maddin's *Tales From the Gimli Hospital* will continue its cross-country gross-out during Montreal's World Film Festival and has been invited to the Vancouver International Film Festival. Also, Telefilm's Festival Office just announced that Maddin's 72-minute feature has been selected for competition in Mannheim. French and German versioning is currently underway.

Plenty Premieres Dept. : Greg Hanec's 102-minute feature *Tunes A Plenty*, received a gala world premiere in Winnipeg on August 18. Three-and-a-half years in the making, *Tunes* is the second feature for Hanec, whose first film, *Downtime*, was screened at the Berlin Film Festival in 1985. Hanec is currently developing a new feature; the Capra-styled comedy-drama is entitled *Until It Happens Twice*.

Paizs Update Dept. : John Paizs' 80-minute comedy *Crimewave*, has finally been released theatrically by Norstar in spite of the fact that it's already been screened by Superchannel/First Choice and was released last fall on homevideo. Theatrical engagements so far include Winnipeg's Cinema 3, Victoria's Cinecenta Films and Kingston's Princess-Court. Paizs will also be the subject of two tribute/symposiums. The first will be in Boston during October and then at Regina's Dunlop Gallery in January. Paizs is currently developing a new feature, a psychological thriller - perhaps, we suspect - in the Hitchcock vein.

Sub-Zero Manitoba Subs For Sub-Zero Siberia Dept. : Alana Langelotz, Locations officer for the Canada-Manitoba Cultural Industries Development Office (CIDO) reports that she's just returned from a recent location scout for Salt Lake City-based Christenson Creative Films. CCF's upcoming *MIG-Pilot* is price-tagged at \$15 million. The true-life action pic, to be released by TriStar, deals with the life story of Soviet defector, Lt. Victor Belenko and requires locales that can sub for the Soviet Union. Langelotz zeroed-in on Gimli's airforce base and Manitoba's Whiteshell area. Belenko himself is apparently pleased with the videotapes and photographs that CIDO has provided. In particular, he's reported to Langelotz that the Whiteshell bears a striking resemblance to Southern Siberia. Belenko will visit Manitoba to see for himself whether or not the pic can be shot here. Langelotz reports that location-scouting is no longer just building in Manitoba, but "blooming", "We're getting at least one script a week," she said.

Rock Video's As Film Art Dept. : Tom Sparling, president of Winnipeg's Rotifer Records, has signed an agreement with the Winnipeg Film Group to distribute a Manitoba-produced rock video. The video, entitled "Shot With Our Own Guns" received a major chunk of its funding through CIDO's

music industry support program and represents the efforts of a Winnipeg band called The Cheer. The video has already been screened on Much Music and will be touring non-theatrically as a warm-up short to Greg Hanec's music-oriented feature *Tunes A Plenty*.

Schizophrenic Cinema Dept. : M. B. Duggan's 23-minute drama *Mike The Movie*, is currently in post-production. The \$60,000,00 pic takes a realistic look at the surrealistic life of a young schizophrenic. Duggan, a social-worker-turned-filmmaker, spent a few pre-production weeks acquainting the cast with the ins and outs of schizophrenia and the social programmes presiding over them. The film will be released in January.

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CFTO strike over

TORONTO - Negotiators for NABET agreed to end their 12-week lockout dispute with CFTO, the largest affiliate in the CTV Network.

The dispute has ended with union leaders admitting they lost the battle over barring non-union staff from all station productions. They essentially accepted the terms of a May 5 offer by the company which the union rejected June 7 after last minute negotiations failed.

Of the 292 technicians and other employees who were locked-out, over 100 have returned to work during the course of the dispute. Only 80 of the remaining 192 will be recalled. The 112 who are not being recalled will be placed on a layoff recall list for one year, or they can resign and accept an enhanced severance pay package.

The three-year contract announced August 31 includes wage increases of 6 per cent this year and 5 per cent in each of the following two years.

Ekering resigns from ACFC

VANCOUVER - The latest president of the Association of Canadian Film Craftspeople in Vancouver has resigned. Joris Ekering left the fledgling organization on September 1st to resume his career in the production management end of the industry. A replacement was expected to be selected by ACFC-Vancouver at a Board meeting on September 7th.

The west coast chapter of ACFC was set up earlier this year but so far has been unsuccessful in landing a major product contract (although the branch in Victoria is getting work for set decorators at trade shows and other such exhibitions). Ekering told *Cinema Canada* that he believes other industry unions have been exerting pressure on his membership to jump ship.

"Members are being requested to tear up their (ACFC) cards in order to get work," he says, "We have 11 such resignations on file and I think there could be more that we don't know about."

"I'm resigning because at this moment my career is stagnating. I'm not getting work either."

While Ekering might have good reason to be discouraged he thinks ACFC "has made a difference in how IATSE (667) looks the industry."

"We've already achieved a situation where producers can win concessions for local productions," he says citing productions like Charles Wilkinson's *Quarantine* where IATSE and other unions agreed to provide service at bargain rates.

ACFC's attempts to break into production in Vancouver have also been hampered by the emergence of an aggressive new NABET local 800.

ACFC has also been troubled by ongoing internal squabbles: Ekering was the third president in no more than six months.

Studio expansion in Montreal

MONTREAL - Announcements about the construction of two major film production centres in Montreal are expected in the fall.

On June 30, CBC announced that Prodecco Lavalin Inc., the engineering firm, was given the contract to develop the western portion of the parking lot at Maison Radio Canada on René Lévesque Blvd. The construction of an audiovisual complex of about 105,000 sq. ft. and an office building of 142,000 sq. ft. is to be completed by the summer of 1990.

The project is based on the financial objectives laid down by the CBC when it called for proposals in November 1986.

Astral Bellevue Pathé won that contract but certain aspects of the deal were never settled and the deal fell through in the fall of 1987, according to Paul-Emile Lamy, information officer for CBC.

Lavalin, says Lamy, was the second choice.

Plans are moving ahead for another film production centre to be built by the private sector with government assistance under the Canada-Quebec Subsidiary Agreement on Cultural Facilities.

Gilles Lalonde, director of federal provincial relations for Communications Canada, says all proposals were submitted by June 30 and that the results will be published before the end of September after a management committee makes its recommendations to the respective ministers of both governments.

Rogers takes on video rentals

TORONTO - The cable-TV company Rogers Communications Inc. of Toronto has announced the sale of its American cable TV interests to KBL Inc., a subsidiary of the Texas-based Houston Industries, for \$1.265 billion (U.S.).

Rogers has been wanting to sell its U.S. system to pay down its billion-dollar bank debt and finance acquisitions in the Canadian market.

Houston Industries, through its majority ownership of Paragon Communications, operates cable services in California and Texas. The purchase of Rogers adds 525,000 subscribers to its present base of 670,000.

In the meantime, Rogers Communications has entered the highly competitive video rental business with the purchase of a 90 per cent interest in Video Movie Ventures of Alberta. The operation consists of 32 Video Show Place Superstores located in Alberta and Ontario and 60 videocassette kiosks.

Rogers plans to develop a further 60 stores across the country over the next three years.

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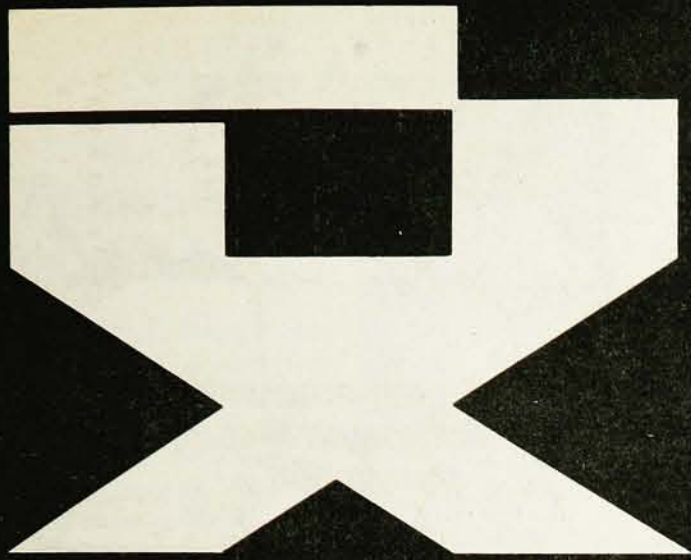
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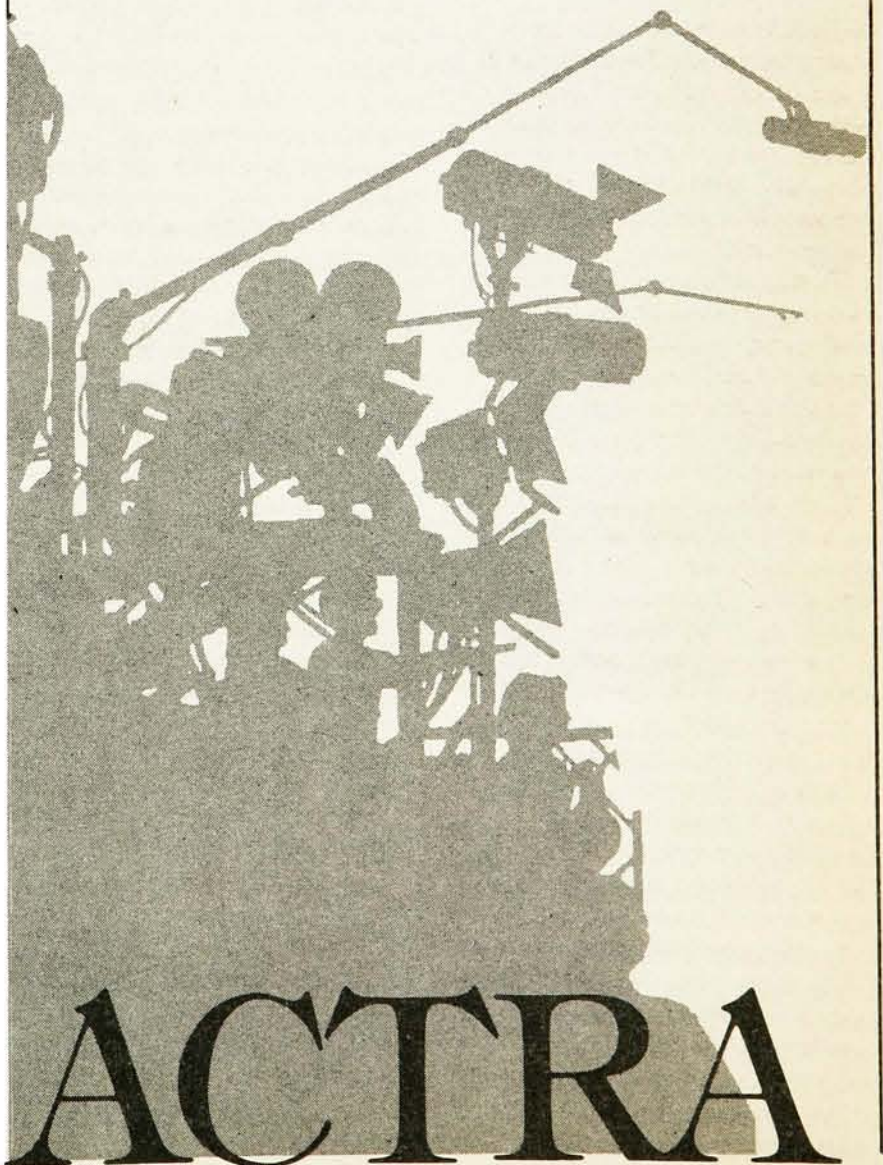
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Famous takes record revenues

TORONTO - Famous Players Inc. has announced box office revenues for the first nine months of fiscal 1988 totaling \$122.2 million, a new company record. This total was boosted by a record five week period in July of \$21.9 million, surpassing the previous company record of \$19.6 million set in January 1988.

Hot summer hits include Paramount's "Crocodile" Dundee II and Coming to America and Touchstone's Who Framed Roger Rabbit?

In addition, Famous has announced a significant renovation program for its theatres in Vancouver, Calgary, Edmonton, Winnipeg, Toronto and Montreal. Famous now operates 429 screens in 151 locations and approximately half of the existing locations are scheduled for improvements.

New rep sale to open in Montreal

MONTREAL - The closing of five repertory cinemas in Montreal within the last year has not discouraged three Montrealers from re-opening the Rialto Theatre on the corner of Park Ave. and Bernard.

Steve Pantos of Pantos Film Inc. has announced that the 65-year-old theatre will re-open Sept. 30 as a first-run English and French-language repertory cinema.

"There is room for everyone to operate," says Pantos, who insists that there is an audience for English-language repertory cinema in Montreal.

Pantos and partners Don Lobel and Chandra Prakash have leased the 1,000 seat theatre with plans to subdivide it into two screens in 1989.

Former repertory cinema operators say that low audience participation and fierce competition from pay-TV, video rentals combined with the frequency of new film programming on regular television have closed The Outremont, Cinema V, Papineau, Elysee and other cinemas in Montreal.

However, Pantos who has worked with Astral Bellevue Pathe and an independent distributor, does not anticipate programming difficulties. Although he doesn't expect to fill 500 seats (the balcony will be closed) seven-days-a-week, he says, "the seats will be there when we need them."

Chandra Prakash, a film professor at Vanier College, says he would prefer to use the full theatre to accommodate what he calls a "substantial" audience for English and French-language repertory cinema in Montreal.

"Three hundred seats would be too small. I could live with 1,000 seats," says Prakash.

Prakash argues that the disappearance of

repertory cinema in this city can be attributed to injudicious programming and ventures seeking greater profit.

The Rialto, formerly a Greek-language cinema, will open with the theatrical premier of Guy Maddin's *Tales from the Gimli Hospital*, Sept. 30 to Oct. 6.

Vancouver City backs down on location fees

VANCOUVER - City Council is going to rethink the idea of charging film companies for use of locations. The Council's Finance Committee backed down after industry representatives said fees would be detrimental. The issue was to be settled at a meeting of the whole Council in mid-September.

The notion of charging location fees came to City Hall officials after an increase in citizen complaints (likely in direct proportion to the amount of filming on city streets). One man has now endured four separate invasions in front of his house. Merchants say walk-in traffic drops when the sidewalks are blocked by dressing room, catering trucks, lighting equipment and stars. Drivers say the last thing Vancouver's crowded roads need is more obstacles.

So, the city engineer suggested limits on the number of days any one location could be used, a \$30 fee for each location and a ban on activity after 11 p. m. and before 7 a. m. weeknights and midnight to 1 a. m. on weekends. Basically the fees are meant to pay for the addition of a staff person to look after film-related business.

The industry showed up, en masse, at Council's August meeting of the Finance and Priorities Committee. Paramount (which makes *MacGyver* here) warned that the bosses back in Los Angeles would consider the new cost when looking at competitive locations.

"It's the bureaucracy that would get to us," he said, B. C. Film Commission director Diane Neufeld called the whole idea "restrictive and inhibitive", prompting committee chairman Alderman George Puil to refer the whole matter to Council (and the Engineering Department staff back to their storyboards).

Thomas moves to Malofilm

MONTREAL - Deborah Thomas, formerly of Astral Bellevue Pathé, has been appointed vice-president of business and legal affairs at the Malofilm Group.

René Malo also announced recently that Yves Dion will become president of Malofilm Distribution.

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The Funnel down the tube

TORONTO - The Funnel, Toronto's alternative theatre space devoted exclusively to experimental and independent films, has apparently come to a confused and bitter end.

Judy Gouin, Film, Photography and Video Officer at the Ontario Arts Council said, in an interview with *Cinema Canada*, that "it is hard to know whether the Funnel is a functioning organization or not. We've been told to expect an application from them, but it's overdue and I've heard nothing from them. I don't know what condition they are in right now."

Rob Berry, media spokesperson from the Ontario Ministry of Culture and Communications, said that "by June or July the operational end started to disintegrate so it (the Funnel's application) was withdrawn because of administrative problems."

The Funnel's problems go back a number of years and were apparently exacerbated by the recent move to the much more expensive location on Soho Street, in the heart of Toronto's fashionable Queen Street West area. Although filmmakers and past board members are reluctant to talk on the record about the events, it would appear that conflicts over membership and censorship where at the heart of the troubles.

In a meeting called prior to the move, it was decided to maintain the "closed shop" style of membership, whereby new members had to be invited to join by existing members. This irritated those who were pushing for a more open style of membership. Significantly, the core membership had dropped to an all time low of 20 at the time of the move, from a previous high of over 100.

Censorship had always been a sensitive issue with the membership, but how best to tackle the issue became the focus of many internal disputes. At least one director in the past year had resigned over the issue of how best to fight the Ontario Film and Video Classification Board. Ironically, just as the Funnel was folding as an exhibition facility the Classification Board dropped its restrictions on art gallery screenings.

The crunch came with the move to Soho Street. The old location on King Street was for some time felt to be outside the mainstream of artistic activity. Despite extensive renovations, the old building was really unsuitable for film screenings. In the Spring of '87 the Funnel left the King Street East building, which it had occupied since 1978.

However, it soon became apparent that the Board had seriously miscalculated the cost of the move. Renovations were taking longer than planned and someone had failed to take into account the taxes the Funnel would have to pay. The Funnel was now stuck with a lease that was costing them in the neighbourhood of \$60,000 a

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year.

According to Berry at the Ministry of Culture and Communications, "The Funnel had been approved for a CFIP application they had made (this is money set aside by the Ministry for various arts groups to either build or renovate), but the application was never processed because other matching funding did not come through." Instead, according to past members, money was spent from existing Canada Council and Ontario Arts Council grants. This caused a serious problem with cash flow and there was little left for salaries and programming. In turn, there was a further erosion of membership.

At the time of its official opening in February of this year the Funnel was incomplete and, despite the expressed optimism, the theatre never opened. The landlord kept the doors closed at night, and in the resulting confusion, he finally refused the space to be used as a screening facility.

The equipment was moved into storage and the remaining board members announced to the community that the Funnel could no longer function as an exhibition entity. It would instead become a production co-operative. As one disgruntled filmmaker told *Cinema Canada*, "it has become very difficult for any filmmaker to

access equipment. The rumour has it that they've gone "underground".

Technically the Funnel is still responsible for the rent at Soho Street until another tenant can be found, and within the arts community there are still a lot of unanswered questions. The equipment in storage represents some of the best Super8 equipment in the country. The current director, Gary McLaren, brother of the original Funnel founder, Ross McLaren, could not be reached by phone for comment. As far as Judy Gouin of the OAC is concerned, "the Funnel is not a closed book. It is an on-going story."

These days downtown Halifax and Dartmouth streets bear more of a resemblance to Rio during Carnival than they do to the capital city of the frugal, hardworking land of 'New Scotland'. Buskers '88 has taken us by storm and jugglers, mimes, magicians and scrivers entertain thousands every night upon the lawns and pavements. Sounds like good material there for a film, fictional or documentary. Any takers?

An obvious choice would be Halifax's Salter Street films which has emerged from the summer with a veritable flurry of productions to keep them busy during the fall. Following on the success of the last two series of *Codco* shows which Salter Street has co-produced with the Atlantic Region CBC (the most recent 13 episodes of which will air nationally on CBC on Thursday evenings beginning on October 6) and which star Newfoundland's zany theatre group *Codco*. Salter Street will begin taping a third series of programs this fall. Production is slated for October 17 for a further seven programs. No avenues of humour are closed to *Codco* (a. k. a. Andy Jones, Kathy Jones, Mary Walsh, Greg Malone and Tommy Sexton) so stay tuned for more outlandish antics this year and next. For an early glimpse of the productions, come to this year's Atlantic Festival Atlantique where the series will be showcased.

However even before the cameras begin to roll on this series, Salter Street will be in production on a children's feature film called *George's Island*. The script was written by Paul Donovan with his longtime creative partner Maura O'Connell and is based on Nova Scotia supernatural folklore. The focus of the story will revolve around the madcap events which take place in Halifax during the Halloween 'Mardi Gras' Festival when thousands of Haligonians spill into the streets in costumes varied and sundry. The fortress on uninhabited *George's Island* in the centre of Halifax Harbour will also figure as a locale. There is involvement by both Telefilm and the NFB in the project and the film will be distributed theatrically by Montreal's Astral Films. Production is slated to begin on October 3.

In a press release Astral also announced a second feature of Salter Street's called *Tom* but producer Michael Donovan would only say that the announcement had been somewhat premature and that plans for the project were still only in negotiation. Definitely making an appearance this fall is *The Squamish Five*, a television film made last year by CBC and directed by Paul Donovan. It is a docu-drama of the five people convicted of the Litton and Red Hot Video bombings.

The NFB seems also to be having a busy year here. Just recently it announced that Cape Breton native Stefan Wodoslawsky, co-producer of *Crazy Moon*, *Blueline* and *Something About Love* (shot last year in Cape Breton) and co-star of *90 Days* would be coming back to work with the Atlantic Region NFB. His special responsibilities will be to develop co-ventures with the private sector. Wodoslawsky is a former student of theatre at Dalhousie University and worked previously with the NFB here when the studio was first established in the early 1970s.

In New Brunswick two NFB films are in production. Fredericton's Kevin Matthews is working on a documentary about groundwater pollution, one of the central environmental issues that the Conservation Council of New Brunswick has been concerned about. Filming for the production is being done in both New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. Meanwhile Acadian filmmaker Herménégilde Chaisson is directing a film about former N. B. premier Louis Robichaud. The film will be a co-production of the Atlantic studio and the Production française/Acadie in Moncton.

On Prince Edward Island intrepid filmmaker Brian Pollard started production in late August on a film about community economic development in the Evangeline region of the island. The film will be shot in both French and English and an as-yet-unnamed francophone associate director will be working with Brian on the project.

In Newfoundland the NFB is shooting a theatrical short which will be distributed to commercial cinemas to mark the NFB's 50th anniversary in 1989. I for one am a great enthusiast of theatrical shorts and it seems that I am not alone. I recently saw Cordell Barker's *The Cat Came Back* (produced by the NFB) at a local cinema and the audience reaction was excellent - even applause at the end! Let's hope we see more of them!

Back in Halifax, Atlantic Filmmakers Co-op (AFCOOP) coordinator Gary Swim is leaving to pursue other projects and is being replaced by Heather Levecque, lately of the Great Canadian International Theatre Festival. AFCOOP is now settled into its new quarters on Gottingen Street and is very busily engaged in its 1988 Workshop program. Five of the workshops (Assistant Director led by Cordell Wynne; Production Manager with Terry Greenlaw; Script Development led by Bill MacGillivray; Lighting led by Lionel Simmons and Eric Emery, and Sound Recording led by Jim Rillie) have been successfully completed. The remaining two are: Director of Photography by John Walker in early September and Acting for the Camera which Glenn Walton will lead late in the month. Speaking of Glenn, he recently received a script development grant from Nova Scotia's Department of Tourism and Culture for his half-hour drama *The Room at the Back* which is scheduled for completion at the end of the summer.

I recently spoke with David Hopper, the director of the Linda Joy Busby Media Arts Foundation. The foundation has recently announced that this year's award will be a \$2,000 grant for a proposed or work-in-progress film presented, as is usual, at the Atlantic Festival Atlantique. David told me that work is underway to secure a stable source of funding for the Foundation and that very promising negotiations in this respect are currently underway with the corporate sector. Further news on this should be forthcoming soon.

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B.C. ACTRA deal with Paramount

VANCOUVER - "It's not the greatest deal in the world but it got us in the door," is Vancouver ACTRA branch representative Peter Dent's summing up of the new ACTRA agreement with Paramount Pictures over writers for the high budget action/adventure TV show *Macgyver*, shot in Vancouver. Dent believes the agreement will lead to more Canadian writers on American series and features.

Under the contract ACTRA members get paid under Writers Guild of America rates, and give up the right to approve script revisions. The contract leaves the question of copyright ownership between the writer and producer. Paramount meanwhile agrees to hire a minimum two to four Canadian writers per season depending on how many episodes they shoot.

But this has the national board of ACTRA upset to the point of contacting Paramount directly and asking that the negotiations be reopened.

"In the opinion of the national guild there is no deal because they didn't ratify it," says Dent. "In the opinion of the branch we didn't ask they ratify it because they had no business ratifying it. They have no authority to ratify it.

"The national guild just doesn't like some of the realistic changes to get the agreement, but that was the price of the deal." Dent says Paramount responded to the national board that "as far as we are concerned we have an agreement and any disagreement you have within your organization you have to settle on your own.

"I predict it will provoke a constitutional crisis within the Writers' Guild of ACTRA the likes we haven't seen before," Dent told this reporter on the Thursday before the branch's executive meeting Wednesday. During the meeting he toned down and said "It's not our wish to get in a mudslinging match... there is a constitutional disagreement here. Our position is that there is an agreement in place and we will honor it."

Paramount had been reluctant to deal with ACTRA before because of the linkage between the budget and the pay. According to Dent this meant Canadian writers working for Americans under the ACTRA agreement would initially get paid twice as much as American writers under the WGA contract.


"When the ACTRA agreement was written up no one guessed a \$1.7 million per episode series would come to town... that's as much as a Canadian feature."

While Canadian writers are paid by Canadian producers for "advance royalties", American writers get paid under a different system based on residuals coming in when the shows go into rerun or syndication. In the long-term this may mean more money for the Canadian writer of

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"The fear is that, while we're in dispute internally about this, Paramount will get cold feet and *Macgyver* will go yet another season without a Canadian writer on the show."

Archives hold news symposium

OTTAWA - "Beyond the Printed Word: Newsreel and Broadcast Reporting in Canada 1897 to 1987" is the title of a symposium to be held Oct. 19-22 at the National Archives of

Canada in Ottawa.

Over a period of four days, 50 panelists including scholars and broadcasters will discuss the evolution of Canadian news reporting from newsreels to television.

Keith Spicer will moderate two special media forums: "Canadian Media Response to the 1970 October Crisis" and "The News Anchor: Announcer, Reporter and Entertainer."

The symposium is sponsored by the National Archives of Canada, the Association of the Study of Canadian Radio and Television in collaboration with CBC, Heritage Canada, CRTC and NFB.

TV rights to Cineplex

OTTAWA - Cineplex Odeon has bought the Canadian theatrical television rights for *The McGregor Queen*, produced by Talisman Films and currently in pre-production. This drama about a young romance and father/daughter conflict in an already split family is written and produced by Norman Allard and Pierre Paul Mongeon.

Shooting is scheduled to begin in January with an anticipated release in September 1989.

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