

# INTRODUCING...

Stephen Zoller

## His Quiet Revolution

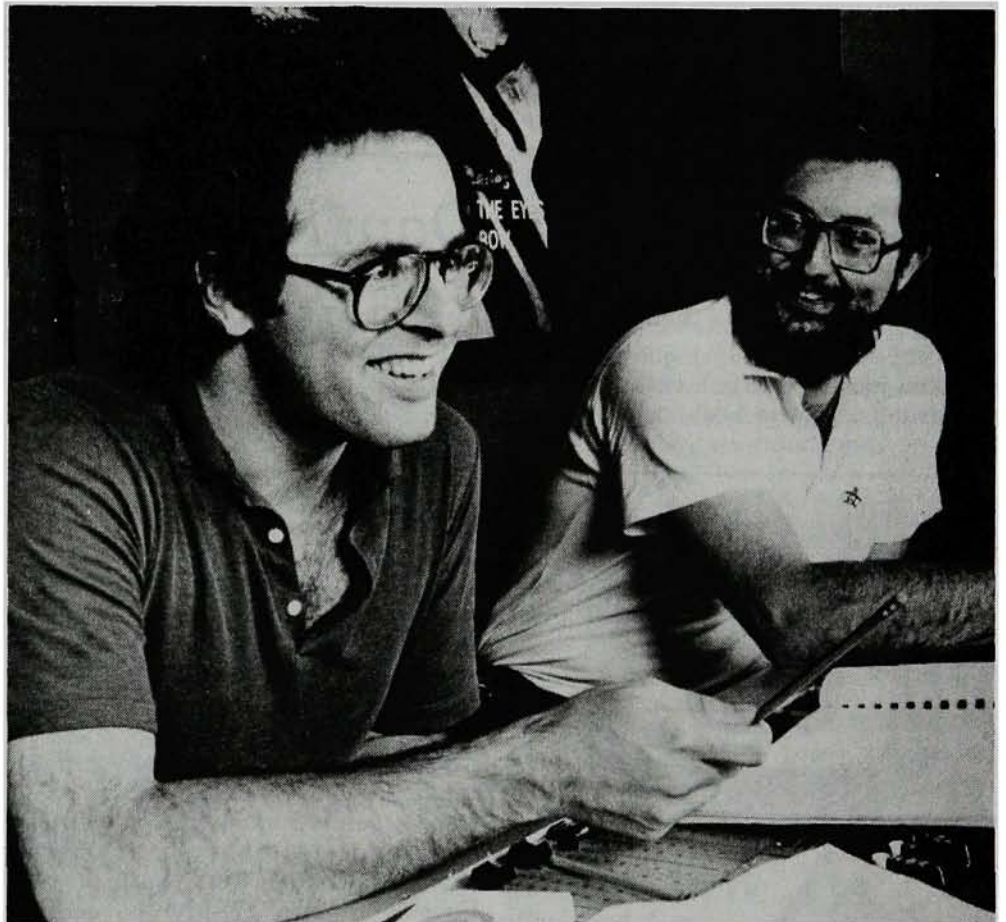
Science fiction writers, over the years, have developed many different styles. The science fiction hierarchy divides these writers into separate families, and they are assigned respective positions according to the plausibility of their visionary prowess. To the individual, unaware of the social strata, these differences would appear slight — if at all. But to hard-core sci-fi freaks, these divisions are as obvious as the differences between the sun and the moon. To them, science fiction almost has a caste structure.

Under the flag of 'speculative fiction', a handful of visionaries (Ray Bradbury, Isaac Asimov and Arthur C. Clarke, to name but a few), departed from the mainstream of science fiction and formed a small elite circle. Their aim was to postulate the psychological and emotional changes that might occur in man as he progressed side by side with the inevitable advancement of technology. To this day, they still battle to win wider acceptance and recognition; but more importantly, to disjoin public misconceptions that have linked them with space fantasy.



Stephen Zoller grew up with the writings of such notables as Asimov, Bradbury and Clarke. And the far-out worlds depicted in the comic-book-like *Astounding Stories* and *Analog* only reaffirmed his belief in the coming of an advanced technological age. But, unlike writers who chose to convey their cosmic thoughts purely through the printed page, Zoller adopted the instrument of film to create his own visionary world — for others.

"Now, since we can obtain rich special effects on film, we should take it one step further. Instead of extrapolating only where technology will be in the future, we should just accept its existence, and from there, look to where the people are; how they live and react in a changing social and political world."



Writer Stephen Zoller (right) consults with Tibor Takacs, director of *The Tomorrow Man*

**The Tomorrow Man**, Zoller's premier film in an anthology entitled **Through The Eyes Of Tomorrow**, marks his first major attempt to realize his own fantasies. Tibor Takacs directed the film, and together, they created an intriguing story of a crazed and eccentric warden (played by Don Franks), who goads an imprisoned and confused man, named Tom Weston (Stephen Markle), with a deadly cat-and-mouse game of survival. Many of the film's social and political statements are relevant today, but they are transposed into a changed and, perhaps, not-so-distant future.

"We want to create the magic and intelligence that Rod Sterling's *Twilight Zone* captured in the early sixties. We want to move away from the conventional science fiction films. We want to leave the audience with something more to think about than just bug-eyed monsters flying around in elaborate spaceships." Zoller's seven stories are all breakdowns and remedies of people caught in changing times.

In the first half of the seventies, Alvin Toffler's *Future Shock* claimed that, in these rapidly changing times, man must learn to cope with the rising age of

technology. Man must harness it to the best of his capability and use it to his advantage, instead of fearing it and seeing it only as a destructive force. Zoller's looming 6'2" frame carries the weight of a similar message: "One-hundred years ago time moved at a much slower pace. Today, time is racing — we must be constantly prepared. I think 'speculative fiction' will help people to cope, and perhaps, understand the future."

Zoller and Takacs also have their sights aimed at television. "Ideally, we'd like **The Tomorrow Man** to be seen by a television audience; people should be allowed, or at least have the option, to see something different from what they're accustomed to.

"We need more writers and filmmakers who are serious about experimenting with the art of making films — regardless of the contemporary trend or fad. They should create what they really want, and then, maybe, audiences around the world will begin to appreciate them for what they are trying to do."

Zoller glares out from behind his dark-rimmed glasses — he often lifts his eyes when speaking, as if seeking inspiration. He looks forward with inflexible devotion to creating a universal language with his films — understood and accepted not

only by western culture, but also by the global environment (including Iron Curtain countries).

"The message must be in every line of the film." Funnelling his imaginative and frenetic nature into a distilled diplomacy, Zoller's plea to communicate ideas stands at the forefront of his basic desire to make films. He feels that Canadian film in the past was too "parochial" — lacking in scope, designed for a limited audience. And its new facelift isn't without a few problems. "Many people think Canada has finally reached that highpoint of universality in filmmaking that other countries achieved long ago. In one sense they may be right; we do have the 'stars', money and acceptance — but is that all we really want? Are we actually making Canadian films, or are we merely making films in Canada? Are we truly creating a

strong, recognizable film industry, or just pale imitations of films made in other countries?

"Scripts are being built around stars and special effects," the continues. "More emphasis must be placed on the script."

Friend and colleague Peter Chapman will soon be collaborating with Zoller to establish Screenwriters Studio, a service incorporating many varied and talented writers from across the country. This service will offer producers and filmmakers "script surgery" and consultation.

And so, for the most part, Zoller's story has just begun; and no doubt he will continue to thwart any attacks attempted by those armed with fixed notions of science fiction.

Robert Paton

## Dani Hausmann

# Here's Looking At You

*Ambitious people have one thing in common — they daydream a lot. Dani Hausmann is not without dreams.*

*He recently opened his own casting service for films in Montreal — Casablanca Productions. He specializes in the Montreal scene, where he knows the actors and has a feeling for where they belong. Directors approach him looking for new, promising talents. The producers are involved with casting the stars, but Dani casts everyone else.*

*He has always been interested in film. While studying architecture at McGill, Dani organized student film showings, was a member of the film society, and ran a film workshop. After receiving his Bachelor of Architecture he began to design stores and build houses, then fell into film by accident.*

*Ashley Murray asked him for assistance one day when they were doing video auditions for the actors workshop at the National Film Board. And Dani was hooked. He became involved as an all-around gofer during the beginning of the Board's drama program. One of his first films was John Smith's **Bargain Basement**. Soon he became an assistant director and has been working in film ever since. In the following interview he explains what the work of a casting director involves.*

**Cinema Canada:** *What exactly does a casting director do?*

**Dani Hausmann:** First I read the script for a particular film, and then I make a list of the characters and the roles. I discuss the various parts with the director and select the actors I think might be right for the parts. Then I organize auditions.

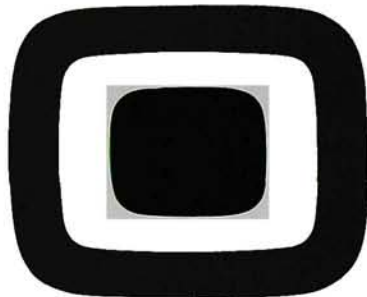
You give an actor the lines of a scene ten or fifteen minutes before the audition, then the actor says the lines and acts them out for me and the directors.

**Cinema Canada:** *What do you do during these auditions?*

**Dani Hausmann:** My job is to make sure that (A) a good actor is not overlooked. It's easy for that to happen because there are so many people. I will discuss the actor with the director before and after the audition; (B) I screen the actors, then narrow it down to three or four choices for any one part. The rest is variable. The director picks somebody. Then I call that person and say, "You have the part. It's such-and-such dates, are you available?"

Depending on the situation, either myself or the company will contract the actor, but usually the casting director contracts the actor. I arrange for him to sign, and I work out the fees. The contract is with the film company, and I'm the middleman working between the producers and the actors. I can negotiate, but I negotiate for the producer.

**Cinema Canada:** *How are you paid?*  
**Dani Hausmann:** I get paid on a fee basis. It varies according to the number of parts and the budget of the film. I make



**POST  
PRODUCTION  
SERVICES**

**EDITORS CUT LIMITED**  
44 WELLINGTON ST. E.  
SUITE 24  
TORONTO, ONT. M5E 1C8  
(416) 364-4038