

# FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS

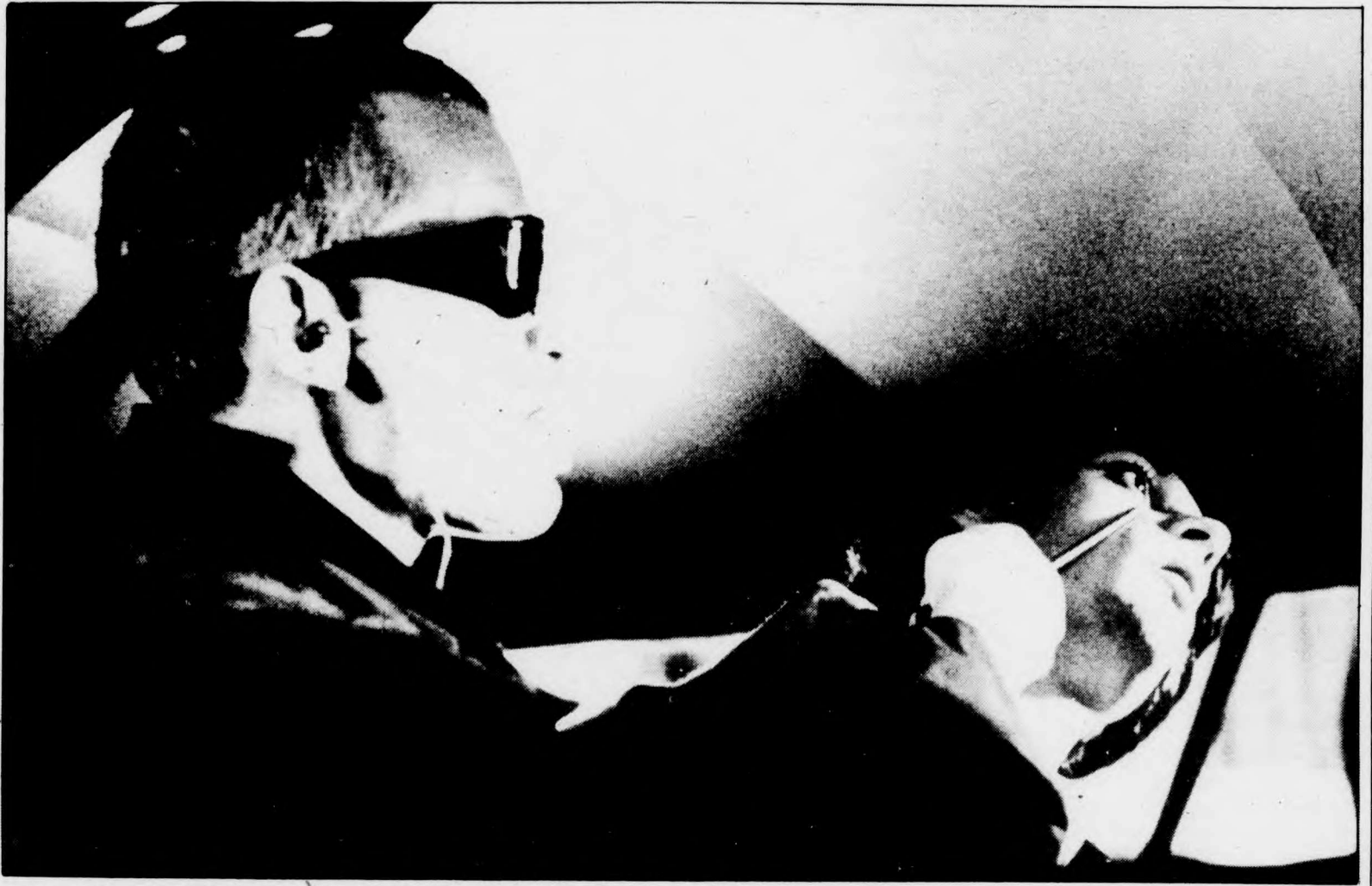
*Festival's fare ranges from the bizarre to the melodramatic in order to please film-goers palate*

**Robyn Butt**

The Festival of Festivals, says director Wayne Clarkson, really is a film festival of hits from other world film festivals — the picks of the picks (pix). This year it's better than ever. "When we call up to ask for a film," he says, "we don't have to explain who we are anymore." The festival divides films into series, which will include **Buried Treasures**, **Critics' Choice**, **Special Presentations**, and a Polish series.

The **Critics' Choice** series, according to the PR person with the instant breakfast vocabulary who writes the press releases, is a "showcase of films of an 'alternative' nature", many from first directors. ("Contrary to popular belief it's been a good year for first directors," said Clarkson, "which bodes well for the future of cinema.") There'll be 18 movies from all over the world and five directors will accompany their films to the Festival. **Diva** (Beineix), billed as France's best of the year; **Killer of Sheep** (Burnett), an honest look at life in Watts, L.A.'s black ghetto; **Short Circuit** (Grandperret), which claims to abandon the trendy Parisians of normal French City cinema for a paralyzed Tremblayesque character obsessed with motorcycles and **The Pretenders** (Stelling), a resurrection of Dutch Flower Children and a dissection of the 60's come with their directors.

Then there's a lot of marvellously disturbed West German films, such as **Desperado City**, the Cannes Camera d'Or Critics' Award, winner which focuses on desperate criminal lives; **Asphalt Night** about a decaying rocker named Angel who looks for a lost melody and finds it through the help of a punky named Johnny; **Angels of Iron** concerns survival in post-war Berlin. "An almost surrealist fantasy. More than subversive," says the director;



A scene from *Diva*, a French entry in the Festivals cavalcade of fine films.

**Looping** reels the life of an old couple down and out on the carnival circuit — stars Shelly "Who Is Ingrid Caven" Winters and Ingrid Caven; **Malou**, Jeanine Meerapfel's autobiographical debut. Hannah ("awe-inspiring performance") travels to the past, pain, and her mother. And miscellaneous, of which you might try: **Mark of the Beast**, Holland ("Extraordinary cast includes many who electrified Festival audiences last year"); **Charlotte**, Holland (a woman escapes the Nazis and then has to escape herself); **L'Altra Donna**, Italy, (an unlikely friendship between two women); **Celeste**, France (memories of the girl who looked after

Proust: a rustic's dedication to an alling intellectual); **Squeeze**, New Zealand (tribulations of a gay couple); **Jaguar**, Philippines (their best film-maker; the one they cancelled last year. "Ganster melodrama with a difference").

The Buried Treasures theme is "The 'Bad' Movie"; films "dismissed from the canons of art because of particular transgressions against traditional expectations". This year the series programmed by Johnathon Rosenbaum, hope for subversity as *raison-d'etre*. Watch for **Bird of Paradise**, U.S. '51, with Louis Jourdan and reportedly bizarre; **Mikey and**

**Nicky**, U.S.'76, with Falk, Cassavetes, and Beatty, directed by Elaine May, one of Hollywood's few women directors. A rebel. Special Presentations, Clarkson says, reach beyond the conventions of their genre. "Like **Imagine the Sound**. Yes it's a documentary but no, it isn't in Katz's definition. It's somehow special." Or **Not A Love Story**, the NFB film? The nature of the subject transcends the straight 'documentary'. **Not A Love Story** is one of those uncompromising Canadian exposes, first time film-maker and Montreal stripper exploring the sex supermarket. They go through peepshows, strip joints,

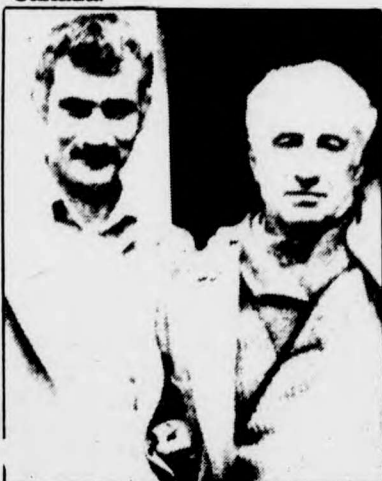
and candid with various vampires of the porno trade. A Canadian premiere. **The Gardener**, a comedy that uses images, character and movement more than dialogue; **The Heiress** (by the fabulous Hungarian Marta Nine Months, **A Man and a Woman** Meszaros), a WWII tragedy with French cinema street-queen Isabelle Huppert, pre-**Gates of Heaven**; and **How Do I Make It In The Movies?**, "a ribald comedy about film extras and their hunger to become stars", for everyone who hates groupies. For the hyperactive, catch Dutch and French shorts chosen by Critics' Choice organizer David Overbey. All under half an hour.

## The Festival: where movies grow on trees

**Elliott Lefko**

What's a September without the sound of falling leaves, back to school shock, and of course The Festival of Festivals.

Back again for its sixth season, The Festival again lives up to its self-proclamation of being the class of film fests in Canada.



Guney and Elia Kazan

Some new categories this time around are World Of Animation; featuring more than 100 animated shorts from around the globe (at the Backstage Theatre on Balmuto St.).

Another first for The Festival is a series called Cultures Under Pressure — 17 films showing cultural dislocation in various countries including two from Canada, **Magic In The Sky** and **Les Voleurs de Job** (Where Dollars Grow On Trees).

Five features, will be shown by Turkish director Yilmaz Guney who is behind bars in Turkey, convicted for murdering a judge; Guney manages to get his films off the ground even in jail.

The Less Is More series is in its second year. Katz sees these films as 'nuggets' in the dark sea of celluloid. Some of his favourites in the series are Ken

Loach's **Looks and Smiles**, which focuses on the problems of Britain's unemployed youth;

Jan Egleson's **The Dark End Of The Street**, a followup to his Billy **Billy Of The Lowlands** — which also showed last year in the Less Is More Series, and an adaptation of Doris Lessing's first novel (1950), **The Grass Is Singing**, starring Karen Black, and produced by the unusual threesome of Zambia/U.K./Sweden.

"It's really a rewarding job," says Katz. "I see approximately 250 film for both series. I've developed extensive connections and either I seek out a film or a filmmaker will get in touch with me. The best part of the job is following the careers of certain filmmakers and watching their progression."

Katz's Documentary series, Real to Reel, is in its third season. The first year was best remembered for Ira Wohl's **Best Boy**. This year Katz has a programme of nine features and three short subject documentaries from around the world.

Of interest to Drama students is a Spanish film which shows a group of dancers rehearsing the flamenco-ballet version of Garcia Lorca's play **Blood Wedding**.

Finally again from Canada, comes Harry Rasky's **Being Different**, which is a portrait of humans with abnormalities, which asks us just who is normal and who is the freak?

interest to all sections of the film-going public.

The big night this year is Tuesday, September 15, when a special gala double bill will feature two of the best films from the world class Polish Cinema. The first is Krzysztof Zanussi's **A Man From A Far Country**, based on the life of Pope John. The second is Andrzej Wajda's **Man Of Iron**, a semi-fictional look at the solidarity struggle. The latter film won the top prize at the Cannes Film Festival this year.

Czechoslovakia's Ivan Passer's American film, **Cutter's Way**, is based on the Newton Thornberg

Jeff Bridges, John Heard, and Lisa Eichorn.

And Hugh Hudson's **Chariots Of Fire** is an artistic film examining the lives of two great Marathon runners, and the reasons why they run.

This year's Festival's Galas, all at the Elgin Theatre, should be of