

Buia completes I Am a Gypsy

Ex-York film major knocks department at own screening

By JULIAN BELTRAME

The basement of the Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre was the scene for the screening of ex-York film student Eugene Buia's recently completed 27-minute documentary on Canadian gypsies, *I Am a Gypsy*.

Sinking deeply into old, faded sofas, a select group of Cinema Canada—and CBC—affiliated would-be artists waited impatiently for the director-writer-producer to appear, passing the time talking shop and drinking beer.

When Buia entered the room, the lights went out and the testing of yet another new filmmaker began. Buia sat uneasily in a lone arm-

chair, his back turned to his associates whose faces betrayed their criticism.

I Am a Gypsy begins with the baptism of a gypsy child and ends with the deportation of 45 gypsies by the Canadian government, a casa which received prominent play in the Toronto press two years back.

In between, Buia's film explores the different types of gypsies found in the Canadian environment, their love for music, and explodes many of the myths commonly held about the group.

I Am a Gypsy is a successful documentary and Buia is given favourable but reserved comments by his insecure audience. Buia himself is somewhat paranoid about his position and blurts out, "I don't know if the film is any good."

It took two years for Buia to get his film from a completed course project to this small screening room, and now he is uncertain of what can be done with *Gypsy*. The cards are stacked against him; he is an outsider trying to break into one of the most closed industries in the world.

"The unemployment rate in the Canadian film industry is at least 85

per cent," he says.

Buia dismisses as a fraud the York film department, where he spent four years.

"They advertise in Cinema Canada about the York film department but they lie to students. You learn nothing about filmmaking at York, because most of the teachers are amateurs; they may be good film-makers, but they don't have a deep enough background in the industry to prepare students for what's going to happen to them on the outside.

"John Beveridge (no longer with York) was the only teacher I had who knew something. I didn't like his films, but he was a brilliant teacher.

"After hamburgers, I would rank the York film department as the worst Canadian disaster. From my class I know of only one person who is still working in the industry, and the rest are salesmen or something."

When *Gypsies* was handed in, Buia got one of the worst marks in his class, he says. He also received an 'F' grade for his videotape film on babies born in Rochdale College. He sold that film to CITY-TV for \$50. It was then submitted and

accepted as one of the three Canadian entries in the TV category of the Chicago Film Festival.

I Am a Gypsy is by far Buia's biggest endeavour, which he brought in at a cost of \$2,000. A typical budget for a film of similar length is closer to \$30,000, says Buia.

Although he has been rejected by the CBC, Buia has received an

invitation from Warner Brothers to show the film to their brass in California.

"But it's really a film about Canada and I want to distribute it here," he complains.

Nevertheless, the thought of selling a Canadian script to an American distributor intrigues Buia. It would be a personal statement on the state of the Canadian film industry.

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Documentary film director Eugene Buia.

New Redford-Dunaway vehicle to be screened on campus

American film director Sydney Pollack will come to York on Wednesday, Oct. 1 for a preview showing of his latest film, *Three Days of the Condor*, starring Robert Redford and Faye Dunaway. Pollack, whose past successes include *They Shoot Horses, Don't They?* and *The Way We Were*, will

answer questions from the audience after the showing.

The special October screening is sponsored by the York film department, and will be shown starting at 7:30 p.m. in Curtis lecture hall 'L'. There is no admission charge and everyone in the York community is welcome.

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