

A zed, two noughts, and an excuse me

By RUPERT PUFKIN

Toronto's 11 annual Festival of Festivals, an event which has grown quickly over the past few years into a major industry event, begins its 10-day run today at most downtown theatres. In recent years the Festival has brought a dizzying array of features, shorts, documentaries; domestic and foreign, experimental and commercial. With well over 200 films screened, the film enthusiast is usually spoiled for choice. For those willing to accept the inevitable eyestrain and plunge into the Festival in earnest, the best approach is probably to fork over the extra few dollars for a student pass (\$75 covers all films but the galas) and a program form with which to plan each day's viewing. Here's one person's view of some of some of this year's new features and best bets:

Galas

These high profile evening screenings (at the University, located at Bay and Bloor) are included only with the higher priced passes, though those willing to take a chance last year often were able to pick up tickets for the early show (extra tickets go on sale to the public 15 minutes before screenings). This year's galas include five world premieres; from Guy Guerra's *Malandro* (the first Brazilian musical for over 30 years) to Chris Cain's *Where the River Runs Black*, the screen adaptation of Toronto writer David Kendall's award-winning first novel, *Lazaro*.

Two films in French, Tavernier's jazz epic *'Round Midnight* and Denys Arcand's *The Decline of the American Empire* are likely to be excellent; both have great track records, and Arcand's *Decline* was a big winner at Cannes, walking away with the coveted International Critic's Award.

Of the American films, newcomer Jim Jarmusch's *Down by Law* looks most interesting. Those who haven't seen his *Stranger Than Paradise* (a brilliant low-budget debut which featured non-actors in most of the key roles) will be surprised by the freshness of Jarmusch's comedy and the distinct blend of American context and European sensibility. Tom Moore's *'Night Mother* has some proven stars (Sissy Spacek, Anne Bancroft) in the lead roles, but Moore (the original stage director) is a first-time filmmaker, and few have made the transition successfully. Notwithstanding the Pulitzer Prize she won for her play of the same name, Marsha Norman will have to do some major cutting, particularly in the monologues, if the film is to be a success. Randa Haine's *Children of a Lesser God* is also adapted from a play (Mark Medoff) and stars deaf actors playing the deaf characters. William Hurt (taking up the role he played on stage) and Piper Laurie are also on hand.

Perspective Canada

Thirty-eight shorts, features and documentaries are included in the 1986 Perspective Canada series. Lea Pool (*La Femme de l'Hotel*) and Donald Brittain (*Canada's Sweetheart . . .*) head the list of Canadian directors represented with new films, a list which also includes Yves Simoneau, David Rimmer, Rick Bairo, Anne Wheeler, and Leon Marr. Marr's *Dancing in the Dark* was invited to the Director's Fortnight at this year's Cannes Festival and will play at the New York Film Festival later in the month.

Return of the Documentaries

Though it is something of a disappointment that over half of the films represented are American (Canadian Documentaries are included in the

Perspective Canada programme), this year's return to screening documentaries is welcome exposure for a highly underrated art form. Barbara Margolis (*Are We Winning, Mommy?*) and famed documentary director Christian Blackwood (*My Life For Zara Leander*) will be accompanying their films to Toronto for the Festival.

20/20, and Contemporary World Cinema Programmes

This Festival feature is comprised of 20 new releases from many of the world's top filmmakers: Beinx, Clifford, Cassavetes, von Trotta, Saura. Beinx's *Betty Blue* will try to pick up on the popularity of his *Diva*, not to mention wipe away the memory of *The Moon in the Gutter*, its much-maligned successor.

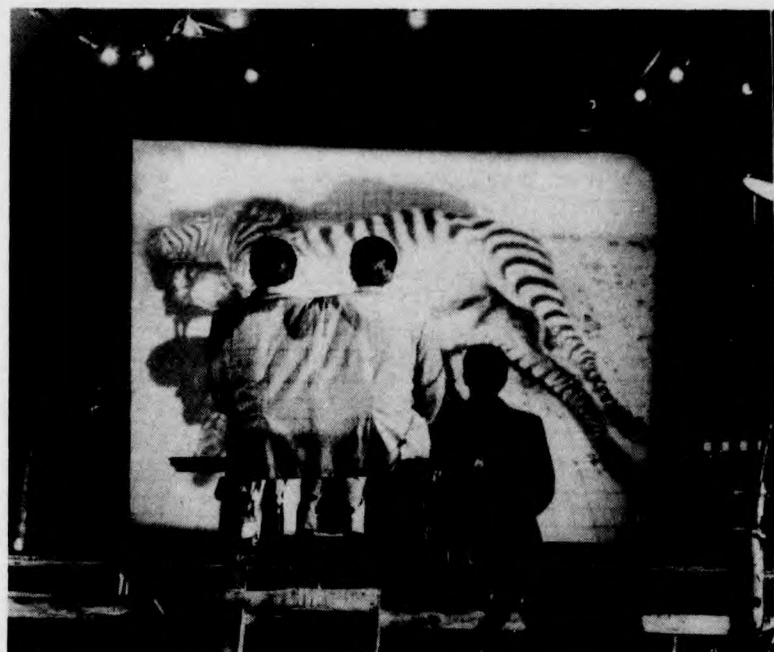
In the Contemporary World Cinema Programme, try not to ignore the British (*Caravaggio*, Derek Jarman; *Fatherland*, Ken Loach; *A Zed and Two Noughts*, Peter Greenaway; *Shoot for the Sun*, Ian Knox; *Sid and Nancy*, Alex Cox; *Shadey*, Phillip Saville; *Zina*, Ken McMullen).

The Winds Of Change

This programme is the largest retrospective of New Latin Cinema ever mounted, and features films from Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Nicaragua, El Salvador, Venezuela, Brazil, Cuba, Bolivia, Columbia, Puerto Rico, and Uruguay. Many of the 96 films in the programme are already considered classics, and many offer strong political statements from some of the world's most volatile and misunderstood countries.

The Open Vault

Last year's Open Vault series yielded some of the festival's most satisfying screenings and returns this year with



A scene from Peter Greenaway's *A zed and two.*

an excellent programme. Tyrone Guthrie's 1955 Canadian film version of *Oedipus Rex* (after a production at Stratford in 1954) provides some hometown interest. F.W. Murnau's *Sunrise* (1927), considered by many to be the nadir of silent cinema has been restored with the synchronized music Hugo Riesenfeld prepared for its original release.

Restored also are the 26 minutes of "pacifist" content which were censored out of Frank Capra's brilliant version of *Lost Horizon* (1937). Also, two of the last two-colour prints of *Doctor X* (1932), and *Mystery of the Wax Museum* (1933), give viewers the opportunity of seeing the versatility of cinematographers working with primitive colour techniques.

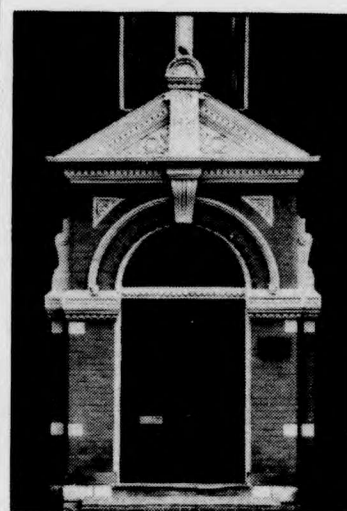


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