

News of the arts

Canadian films on world markets

Canadian films should soon reach wider international audiences as the result of the boom in production of movies aimed at world markets.

The Canadian Film Development Corporation (CFDC), which last year made commitments to invest in 30 films with aggregate budgets totalling more than \$53.5 million, is encouraging the growth of such films.

Twenty-four of the films, with budgets totalling more than \$42.6 million, are in various stages of production, while the six other features were slated to go before the cameras early this year, CFDC executive director, Michael McCabe, said recently in reviewing the corporation's activities during 1978.

The current production figure compares with CFDC investments in films with total budgets of only \$5.5 million in 1977, and \$60 million in the corporation's first ten years.

Many reasons for boom

"Tremendous growth of the industry

stems from many factors," Mr. McCabe stated, "not the least of which are the CFDC's new investment, script development and promotion activities.

"Other factors include the emergence of a group of strong, creative producers, the development of new sources of financing through public offerings by recognized brokerage firms, tax incentives and the co-production treaties Canada has with Britain, France, Italy, West Germany and Israel.

"In addition to the commitments we made to films in production or going into production, the CFDC has invested almost \$500,000 in 37 script development projects. Another \$180,000 has been loaned to three production companies to take their films to the pre-production stage."

International actors

Canadian productions have attracted international stars, David Niven, Michael Douglas, Valerie Perrine, Ava Gardner, Shelley Winters, Robert Mitchum, Henry Fonda, Vanessa Redgrave, Richard Widmark, Michael York, Angie Dickinson, Lino Ventura, Linda Blair and Tony Curtis.

They have also brought home such internationally-known Canadians as Susan Clark, Donald Sutherland, Geneviève Bujold and Christopher Plummer, while helping to promote Canadians such as Helen Shaver, Jonathan Welsh, Al Waxman, Paul Harding, Lawrence Dane, Chuck Shamata, Hollis McLaren, Art Hindle, Nicholas Campbell, and Ken James to international attention.

"In addition, hundreds of technicians and people behind-the-scenes, from set carpenters, script assistants and costume designers to cameramen and directors, have been busy this past year as a result of all the film activity," said Mr. McCabe.

Ustinov at Stratford

Peter Ustinov, internationally-acclaimed actor, playwright, director, author and designer, will join the Stratford Festival company for the 1979 season.

Mr. Ustinov, who was born in London of Russian, French and Ethiopian origins, studied under Michel St. Denis and made his first stage appearance — aged 17 — as Waffles in Chekhov's *The Wood Demon*.

As early as 1941, he was writing sketches for his own revues, and a year later, he made his *début* as a playwright with *House of Regrets*. Since then, his many works for the stage — most of which he also directed and in which he has often played leading roles — include *The Love of Four Colonels* (1952) and *Romanoff and Juliet*. The latter opened in London in 1956, with Ustinov playing The General, and ran a year, a success which was subsequently repeated on Broadway, on a North American tour, in a film adaptation and a later musical adaptation. *Photo Finish* (1962), *Halfway Up the Tree* (1968), *The Unknown Soldier and His Wife* (1973) and *Who's Who in Hell* (1974), followed. Mr. Ustinov has also published novels, short stories and a collection of his cartoons.

His many films include *Quo Vadis*, *Ben Hur*, *We're No Angels*, *The Sundowners*, *Hot Millions*, *Hammersmith is Out* and *Death on the Nile*.

In addition to numerous television appearances Mr. Ustinov has also directed operas by Puccini, Ravel, Schoenberg and Mozart in London and Hamburg.

In the 1979 Stratford Festival season, Peter Ustinov will play King Lear in a production directed by Robin Phillips.

Anne Murray and Oscar Peterson win Grammy Awards



Bill Langstroth



Two Canadian entertainers, Anne Murray of Springhill, Nova Scotia, and Oscar Peterson of Montreal, were among the winners of Grammy Awards given in the United States by the 4,700-member National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences in Hollywood, California, last month.

Miss Murray was judged the best female vocalist for *You Needed Me*; Mr. Peterson won the jazz instrumental soloist category for *Oscar Peterson Jam and Montreux 77*. The Bee Gees won the Grammy for album of the year, with *Saturday Night Fever*; Barry Manilow won best male vocal award for *Copacabana*; and Billy Joel's rendition of *Just the Way You Are* won best record and song of the year.