

ARTS

Bureaucracy manacles DiMarco

Thick thievery

by Garth Hagey

Thick as Thieves directed, written and produced by Steve Di Marco

Canadians have an incessant inferiority complex regarding their own artists and their art. Canadian artists themselves, have relentless frustrations trying to expose their art to the public. Steve Di Marco is one such film artist who feels like "a fuck-

ing yo-yo" trying to screen his films for the public.

Di Marco, although anything but new to the film industry, recently finished his first feature length film, *Thick as Thieves* but has not been able to screen it to the general public of Canada. The recent Toronto Festival of Festivals is the case in point.

Deemed by the Festival officials as offensive and homophobic, they rejected *Thick as Thieves* without even watching the whole film.

This isn't the first time Di Marco has been refused by the festival, the two previous years he entered half hour shorts. The first time it was one short and the Festival

Turn up the accordian music!

by Howard Kaman

Zachary Richard
Women In The Room
A & M Records

On his 1986 album, *Graceland*, Paul Simon sang of "standing on the corner of Lafayette/State of Louisiana" and dancing to the music of "Clifton Chenier/King of the Bayou." On "That Was Your Mother," a track recorded with Good Rockin' Dopsie and the Twisters, he introduced the vast majority of the public to Cajun Zydeco, a style of music previously known solely for its connection to the southern shores of the Mississippi river.

While Simon can be partially credited with the recent influx of more traditional styles in American music, along with the increasingly popular use of the accordian, the native artists of the region must be recognized.

Zachary Richard's *Women In The Room* is a formidable step towards this goal. Combining the sound of his accordian with New Orleans



rhythm and blues, Richard has created a new musical synthesis while lyrically addressing the issues that have faced Louisiana Cajuns

throughout their history.

As francophones exiled from Acadia over 200 years ago, Cajuns have had to fight to keep their culture alive in the anglophone American south. "My Papa couldn't tell us and it didn't make no sense/When the teacher told us we couldn't talk no French," he sings, in a sentiment that is eerily familiar to French-Canadians in the wake of Meech Lake.

While the casual listener could accuse Richard of messing with his native musical heritage, in the same way some criticized Paul Simon for his dilution of Soweto's Mbaqanga (or "township jive"), both artists should be given their due credit. By blending musical styles, these artists have opened up possibilities that would have otherwise remained closed, and invited listeners to look deeper into the roots music that they've borrowed.

Richard's *Women In The Room* makes an ideal follow up to Simon's Zydeco experiment and an even more appropriate introduction to the Louisiana Cajuns.



said they couldn't run 30 minute shorts (which they were) and the second time he re-entered three shorts as a trilogy but again refused because one was entered last year (Even though they asked him to try again with the trilogy).

Distraught, Di Marco decided to take things into his own hands, renting out Kingsway theatre for a screening and inviting anyone to come for free. What about the film itself? Interesting and very hep, a slick comedy about a hack pickpocket (Al Hacker) trying to raise fine money because he's scared of the 'mos (Hacker's term for homosexuals) in jail.

The best scenes are the fantasy/dream sequences: one dream by Hacker's sister features a french lounge lizard et lizardess singing a strange "l'amour" song; the other, Hacker's nightmare

features the 'mos in jail wearing bondage masks and crying out his name "Al-fred . . . Al-fred." Not your typical Canadian film, which seems to be another reason for the Festival rejecting it. But homophobic? On the contrary, we laugh at Hacker's perspective of jail as well as at his own sexuality.

Interestingly enough *Thick as Thieves* has made runs at Festivals in Italy, Brazil and New York with quite a good response. It seems another case of Canadian "moronic fucking bureaucrats" restricting our view.

And as bureaucrats seep into our lives each day, it seems we have to try and find escape or move on. So if you get a chance to see *Thick as Thieves*, see it to support independant artists, to fight the stone-walling bureaucrats, but most of all see it because it's a damn good film.

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