

ARTS

Daughter of Jerusalem wraps up production at York York students destined for stardom as extras

By ROSLYN ANGEL

Five days of feature film mania turned York University into a second Hollywood. The location shooting for the Candian feature *Daughter of Jerusalem* wrapped up production at York on February 12, with a grand finale at Burton Auditorium.

A York graduate, director and co-writer Izidore K. Musallam chose the location because of his familiarity with the campus.

The film, which took three years to get off the ground, started pre-production in November and filming began in January. Producer Justine Estee said that "the actual cost of production is one million dollars."

Daughter of Jerusalem deals with the struggle between a young woman, Leila, and her Palestinian immigrant father, Yousef — over old and new world values.

"How do I reconcile the traditional upbringing, the values, and the cultural heritage that my parents have instilled in me with the new things that I'm learning in university?" actress Terri Hawkes explains of Leila's struggle with her father.

Leila grew up in Canada but was restrained and sheltered by her father for most of her life. The new ideas and situations which she confronts in university — new friends, a boyfriend, parties, and the desire to dance — are extremely different from the ones she was brought up with.

"(She) loves (her) parents, but (she) also wants to explore. There is a fire within Leila to explore, and it comes out the more (she) is exposed to different circumstances," said Hawkes of Leila.

Leila has a communications breakdown with her father when he suggests that she marry a man he's chosen for her in Israel. Her father's solution to her new-found freedom is

to pack her up and marry her off.

"(Leila's) solution is to leave home and explore the world," said Hawkes.

In the end, however, as Leila matures, she realizes that "(she) can combine the best of both worlds."

Hawkes added, "(Leila) feels like (she's) resolved the fact in (her) mind that there are two things important to (her): (her) family and their cultural heritage, and (her) own independence."

"What is interesting about this film," said producer Justine Estee, "is that (Leila is) really learning to become her own person so she can pick and choose what she wants to take from her background and what she wants to take from the cosmopolitan world she lives in."

Estee said that the film also addressed underlying themes. The double standard between Leila and her brother is shown by the different way Yousef treats his children.

"The boy can go out. He gets drunk and he can do whatever he pleases," said Bushra Karaman, who plays Leila's mother. "There is a double standard because the girl carries the family honour with her purity and her virginity."

Another subplot is the fact that her parents have to come to grips with their daughter's new-found freedom. They feel that their traditions are being threatened as the outside world starts to weed its way into their home.

The reason Leila is experiencing this conflict at 20 years of age instead of earlier, lies in the fact that "She is not a typical North American kid," said Estee. "The stuff that she's doing at 20, we all did at 16. She's tremendously naive and she's been kept that way by all the socialization she's had from her parents."

Estee added: "Here we have a country which is a melting pot as opposed to a mosaic . . . and



ONE BIG HAPPY FAMILY: Clockwise from top left, *Jerusalem's* Paul Morasutti (Karim), Terri Hawkes (Leila), Yousef Abdul-Nour (Yousef), Bushra Karaman (Besma).

Toronto is a perfect example because it could have been Chinese or Italian."

Estee said that Leila's problem is not specific to Palestinians.

"This is going on in households all over Canada and has for a lot of years," said Estee, "but I think it's becoming a lot more obvious to the general public just how much of a cross-cultural country we live in."

The film, she added, is targeting three kinds of people. Firstly, those

aged 16-20 who are experiencing a situation similar to Leila's. Secondly, parents with this type of conflict will want to see "what they can learn from the film," said Estee. And finally, "North Americans like Jaime, Leila's best friend, will appreciate what someone else's experience of North American life is like."

Estee also hopes to target a European market.

"Everybody in Europe thinks the streets are paved with gold here and they see North America as an escape

from tradition, but it's not," she said. So Europeans may want to get a glimpse of what life is "really" like here, she added.

Estee is a freelance producer and has been in the film industry for six years. She said that the hardest part of her job is dealing with people, egos, and creative types.

Estee finds the creative side of the film industry exciting also.

"Seeing the characters come alive and the whole creative element is just

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Caution melts the Ice Cube

By LISA MESCHINO

As part of the Fine Arts Festival which ran February 6-10, Visual Arts students had an open invitation to exhibit their talents in the Ice Cube Show, held in the IDA Gallery. Although it was not juried, the exhibit still lacked impact. Indeed, it reflected the tone of the entire festival — conservative.

While a little caution and conservatism works well in the organization of any event, too much will defeat the purpose, particularly of a festival.

According to Robin Penty, a second-year dance major and co-president of the Dance Students' Association, the festival is primarily a celebration. "Its intention is to give Fine Arts students a chance to display their works to the York community," she said, "and, in this way,

integrate the Fine Arts faculty with the rest of York."

Despite the subdued display that ran the risk of being just another in a series of art exhibits, the Ice Cube Show offered interesting works from almost every field of visual arts. The bulk came from first and second year students, and it was exciting and inspiring to see the potential that lay beneath the struggling and often awkward efforts.

The students took a definite interest and care in the skill and draftsmanship that art requires, yet no poetic aspect was lost. Highlights of the show included the subtle expressiveness of simple lines in the many life drawings, the strong composition of shapes and colours in the paintings, and the simple, metaphorical images in the sculpture and graphic displays.

However, areas to avoid were the

trendy, overused ideas that take precedence over the actual construction of the art work. Interdisciplinary art, which deals with the communication of ideas through multimedia, was in danger of this kind of self-consciousness. Sloppiness in the construction of some interdisciplinary works only hindered rather than enhanced the "idea."

Overall, if the Ice Cube Show is any indication, there was much for Fine Arts students to be proud of and to celebrate. However, conservatism in students' attitudes, participation, and promotion only undermined the spirit of the Festival. Isolated exhibitions can only perpetuate the isolation of the Fine Arts faculty from the rest of the York community. Ultimately, this approach was counterproductive for the Fine Arts Festival and for the artists as well.

Feminism, religion explored in *Cakes*

By NORI SYRIOPOULOS

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven
Directed by Jacelyn Hopkins
Moot Court Room

Those of us who saw *Cakes for the Queen of Heaven* on February 9 at Osgoode Hall's Moot Court had a chance to feast our eyes on a clever and controversial play.

Written by Carolyn Dade, the play was put together with readings from the Old Testament, Mary Daly, Simone de Beauvoir, Holly Near, Marg Piercy, Adrienne Rich, Charlene Spretnak, and Starhawk.

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven centres around the themes of power,

religion, and domination. It takes a quick but thorough look at how the change from the rule of God affected and still affects women today.

The women of the South Peel Unitarian Church group of Mississauga took the audience through a tour of the centuries. Even though no props or costumes were used, the actors managed to inspire thought in the minds of their audience.

Cakes for the Queen of Heaven proves to be a refreshing learning experience, as well as a unique play. For those who missed it, the ninth performance will be held at the First Unitarian Church, 175 St. Clair Ave. West, at Avenue Rd., on March 31 at 8 p.m.

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