

Faulkner's programmes have little effect

New magazine keeps track of political fooferah

By WARREN CLEMENTS

"Although it may seem foolhardy to some to become monthly just when the Canadian film industry is in such bad straits, the editorial and production teams of our magazine welcome the challenge."

So saying, the film magazine Cinema Canada streamlined its format, changed its editorial staff, and agreed to be bought out by Cinema Quebec, the French-language film monthly of Quebec.

Starting this month, Cinema Canada will be published 10 times a year rather than six, and the number of pages will be cut almost in half.

"We will try to free information,

to establish the facts and to advance the industry," write the new publishers Jean-Pierre and Connie Tadros. "Like moving from 35mm to 16mm for greater flexibility, speed and economy, Cinema Canada is combat-ready."

Assistant editor Natalie Edwards will control everything but the editing and the production from the Jarvis Street address downtown, and she is confident the increased production of the magazine will pose no problems.

"It's like having children," she said at a press conference to inaugurate the change. "The more you have, the more they start looking after each other."

But wait a minute — what is this talk about the Canadian film industry being in "such bad straits"? Secretary of state Hugh Faulkner just unveiled a programme promising, among other things, a minimum quota of Canadian films to be shown in the theatres annually; a 100 per cent tax write-off on investments in film production in Canada to encourage such production; and a guarantee by Odeon and Famous Players, the two main cinema chains in Canada, that they will invest \$1.7 million of their own money (\$1.5 and \$1.2 million respectively) in Canadian productions.

Most observers agree, however, that these dazzling changes offer far less than it might at first appear.

Faulkner's agreement on a quota with the chains — that Canadian films be shown for at least four weeks annually in each Canadian theatre — is strictly a voluntary one. And since a similar voluntary quota has been in effect for the past two years and has had less than a resounding success, the quota idea is not meeting with general approval.

"Faulkner's simply making the same mistake twice," commented Cinema Canada's Stephen Chesley. "He's admitted publicly that the voluntary agreement hasn't worked."

As for the \$1.7 million investment promise, critics complain that this sum is a mere drop in the bucket, especially since the Odeon and Famous Players chains gross \$200 million in Canada annually. They would much rather see a tax added onto the price of every cinema ticket sold, which would revert to Canadian filmmakers and finance new productions.

Investment is further complicated by the Treasury Board's refusal to fund the Canadian Film Development Corporation — which has helped immeasurably in bankrolling new films — until such time as the government drafted some sort of film policy.

"Now that Faulkner's given us a film policy," said Chesley, "maybe they'll reinstate the CFDC."

"Maybe they'll take away Faulkner's money," suggested someone else.

"Maybe they'll take away Faulkner."

The third proposal, concerning the tax write-off, is on the surface a good thing. Businessmen can deduct the full amount of their investment from their tax return in one year, so they have nothing to lose and everything to gain.

The problem, as Chesley pointed out, and as numerous contributors to Cinema Canada complain, is eligibility for the write-off is practically universal.

"Under (Faulkner's) definition," writes the Council of Canadian Filmmakers in Cinema Canada number 21, the first issue under the new publishers, "neither the production company, the director, the scriptwriter nor the lead actors are mandatory Canadians."

"Those positions which are required to be filled by Canadians can be filled by anyone who has applied for, and been accepted as, a landed immigrant. No residency requirement exists."

Which means that Paramount Pictures and other companies with branch plants in Canada can plow millions into pseudo-Canadian films and deduct the whole pile when tax time rolls around.

It's a sorry plight. Fewer Canadian films than ever are being produced this year, as a consequence of Ottawa's muddy film policy from past years. And consequently, the theatre chains can simply throw up their hands at the end of the year, complain that no good commercial Canadian features are available to show, and renege on the voluntary quota.

Who's keeping track of this political fooferah? Well, Cinema Canada, for one. You can't tell the players without a programme, and Cinema Canada is determined to be that programme. Fifty pages, \$1.25, wherever they manage to secure distribution.

Menagerie troupe's sense of Pinteresque too perfect

By BOB MCBRIDE

A theatre troupe should approach the work of Harold Pinter with the caution displayed by an explosives expert nearing a minefield; an overeager plunge into unfamiliar territory is dangerous, even suicidal.

The Menagerie Players, with an earnest, yet clumsy production of *The Caretaker*, quickly join the ranks of the walking wounded.

The major problem with their version of the play brings to the surface a fault which lies latent in the script. In much of his work, Pinter treads a thin line separating resonant matter from irritating manner; a production which stresses certain techniques deemed "Pinteresque" can become Pinter-parodic.

The Menagerie people unfortunately choose to seize upon the playwright's much vaunted ability to script pregnant pauses. At times stylized to the point of absurdity, the actors' efforts are stillborn stabs at evoking a nexus of feeling.

Properly done, the play can create an audience reaction which reveals the hysterical giggle as manifestation of extreme anxiety. We watch as Davies, an old tramp, ludicrously attempts to play off two brothers against one another. The brothers—Aston, a kindly man with a shaky psyche, and Mick, a cruel chameleon — in the end unite to expel the tramp from the room to which he has been invited.

It is the character of Davies, played here by John Gilbert, who is the focal point of Pinter's concern. Though cantankerous, bigoted and ingratiating, the procrastinating derelict never fully conceals his vulnerability to demonstrations of his nullity.

Seizing upon Davies' weakness, Mick coldly toys with him, finally forcing the old man to reveal his grasping opportunism. Davies' inevitable expulsion, though coming as the just desserts of treachery, is nonetheless extremely pathetic.

Gilbert's portrayal of Davies, when seen apart from the stylized silence which intrude upon the play's overriding naturalism, is characterized by both vitality and an expression of the character's nuance. The actor is able to capture the rhythms and patterns of the individual's speech; patterns which make concrete his mansided character.

Neither Matthew Gray as Aston, nor Clair Culliford as Mick are able to match the high level of Gilbert's performance. Gray's Aston is sufficiently confused and thick witted, but the actor falters at key dramatic moments. As Mick, Culliford remains throughout a matador playing with the bull-like Davies. His presentation of the character, contained by a couple of gestures and a high pitched rant, denies Mick's complexity.

The set at the Central Library Theatre is properly a muddle of objects which acts as a correlative for Aston's mental state and which seems to deny Mick's sporadic attempts to create order.

Director Joan Calderera leads her actors to use this stage effectively. However, her sense of the Pinteresque is imperfect, or too perfect. Under her direction, *The Caretaker* too often explodes self-destructively.

The Caretaker is playing until Sept. 20 at the Central Library Theatre.

The School of the Toronto Dance Theatre CLASSES AT ALL LEVELS

The School offers instruction in dance techniques based on the forms and movement principles of Martha Graham and other contemporary dance techniques.

Write or telephone for further information:

957 Broadview Avenue,
Toronto, Ontario M4K 2R5
423-0562

Excalibur
needs reporters
and photographers

Come to
staff meeting

Thursday 2 p.m.
Room 111
Central Square

YORK UNIVERSITY HOMOPHILE ASSOCIATION

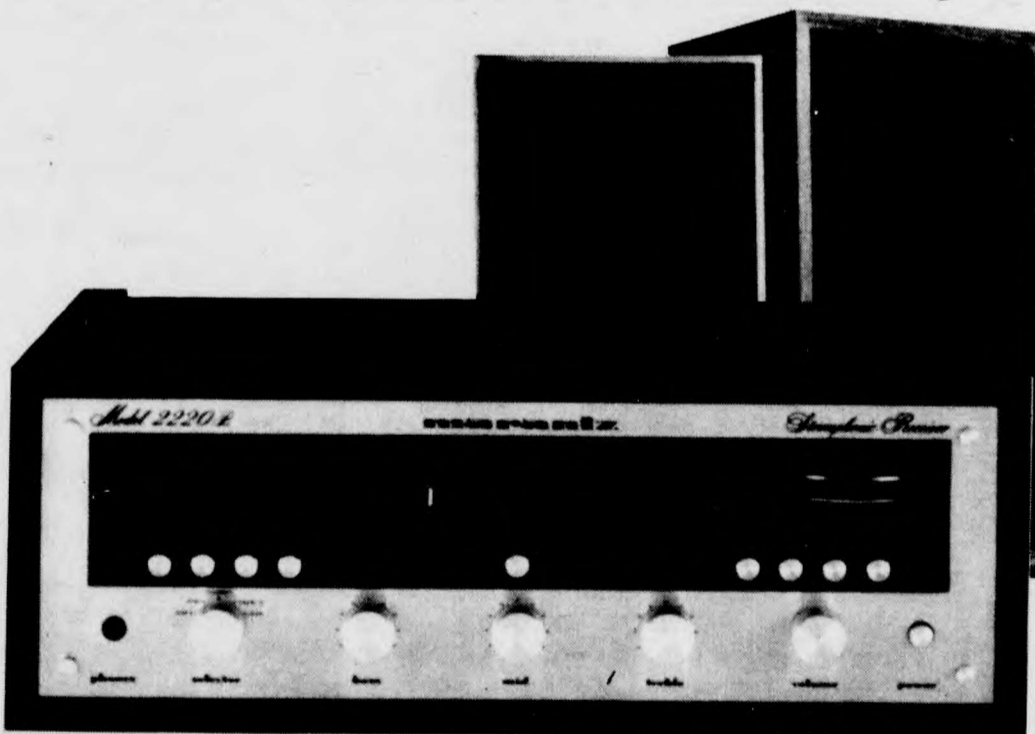
No gay woman or man at York need ever feel lone. There are 2000 homosexual people on campus - 1 in every 3 or 4 homes in Toronto.

We're having a term-opening dance and social evening, at the CHAT Center, 201 Church St., WEDNESDAY, Sept 24, at 8 pm. Refreshments.

COME OUT - YOU'RE AMONG FRIENDS - FEEL FREE

Meets TUESDAYS, 8p.m. 215 Bethune
the Gay Alliance at York (G.A.Y.)

BACK TO SCHOOL SPECIAL



Marantz Model 2220B

Marantz 2220B including Dual 1225 Full Base and Cover. Plus Shure M75 Cartridge and Ava 3, 3-way Speakers with 12" Bass. Driver 4 1/2" Mid Range 1" Ceramic Dome tweeter. All wood enclosure.

Manufacturer's suggested price \$800.00

AM/FM
STEREO RECEIVER

BACK TO SCHOOL
SPECIAL
LIMITED QUANTITY

\$610 COMPLETE



2762 KEELE ST.
DOWNSVIEW
636-7112

AVA ELECTRONICS

SHOPPERS WORLD
BRAMPTON 459-1400