

CANADIAN COMPANIES IN MEXICO

RIP ROAR MUSIC

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Rip Roar knew it would need a Mexican production company to assist with the project. Through contacts in Canada, the company got in touch with *Producciones Kitch*. This turned out to be a very successful relationship. As Ms. Pilon puts it: "The Mexican crew was great, we couldn't have asked for anything better. They were so on the ball and worked so hard that, even with a bit of a language barrier, there was never a problem." In fact, the only technical problem that the crew reported was with telecommunications. The Mexican phone system was unreliable and very expensive.

The Canadians say that they were extremely well received by the Mexicans they met, both colleagues in the industry and the general public. There was a lot of curiosity expressed about Canada and Canadians. Many of the crew felt a strong affinity with the Mexican people. The Mexican and Canadian technical crews also worked well together. Director of Photography Louis Durocher says, "Mexicans are very similar to Québécois ... they know how to work hard when there's work to be done, but they also know how to have fun. It was a very pleasant experience."

Cathy Boutwell, who handled administration and liaison, agrees that there were few problems with cultural barriers. "It was no different than working with people from any other culture," she said. "We work with a lot of Native artists and the same principles apply. Be polite and patient, and everything will happen as it should."

The most important lesson learned, according to Mr. J.C. Caprara, director of the shoot, is to take advantage of advice and contacts within the industry in Canada: "Local contacts are essential. Talk to Canadians who know Mexico, and take their advice." He also stresses the need for adequate pre-production time and technical readiness. As he summed it up: "Go there ahead of time and get acclimatized. Hire a good local driver. Bring a satellite phone."

TELEVISION BROADCASTERS

Televisa is the largest communications company in Latin America, and is a major television broadcaster and cable television operator. It is the parent company of *Videovisa*, which has exclusive rights to a large number of Mexican and foreign movies. This company also runs a chain of more than 1,500 video rental outlets throughout Mexico. *Televisa* obtained a concession for 62 television channels in 1993, which include the four major national channels. Its market share in Mexico City is estimated at 75 percent. Flagship *Canal 2* features "tele-novelas", soap operas, during prime time. *Televisa* is also a part-owner of *PanAm Sat*, the first privately-owned satellite system in Latin America, and operates a direct-to-home television service in partnership with several foreign companies. *Televisa's* programming includes several Canadian productions, including *Robot*, *Tiempos Inolvidables* (Ready or Not) and *El Caballero de las Tinieblas* (Forever Knight).

Televisión Azteca is Mexico's other major television broadcaster. It is owned by *Elektra*, which is also a major vendor of television sets. *Elektra* purchased *Televisión Azteca* from the government in 1993. The company broadcasts two network channels over 180 television stations, some of which have additional repeaters. *Azteca* operates *Canal 11* and *Canal 22*, both of which feature high-quality cultural and educational programs, with some of them being purchased in Canada.

Mutivisión is a large cable television provider. It carries 22 channels to about 1.5 million subscribers. It has exclusive rights to several American cable television channels. The company was granted concessions for new cable services in Guadalajara and Monterrey in 1994. It also operates a direct-to-home satellite television service.