

Les films du Québec

There are two kinds of good films — big ones, like *Gone with the Wind* and *The Godfather*, and small ones, like *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* and *L'eau chaude l'eau frette*.

Big films are almost always Hollywood films, which does not necessarily mean that they are made there, but that they are made by the big international organizations that grew out of MGM, Warner Brothers, Paramount and the other titans of the 1940s.

To make a good big film, one needs an almost inexhaustible supply of money, a director of genius, script writers of high competency, actors with flair, and luck. To make a good small film, one needs all of the above except riches.

Many big expensive films are market researched, the ingredients as carefully planned as a fast-food burger — a chase in which autos are destroyed marvelously, gunfire, acrobatics, a colourful romantic setting, beautiful stars and a dash of winsome charm supplied by a reliable and familiar character actor. Good small films are frequently eccentric, the plots unpredictable and the humour original. (Consider, as an example of all three, *L'eau chaude* in which the young girl starts a dead motorcyle with the batteries of her pacemaker.)

Canada's reputation for good films began with very small films indeed, the animated cartoons of Norman McLaren and other shorts and documentaries produced by the National Film Board, most of them in English. More recently low-budget English-language movies such as *Outrageous!* and



Anne-Claire Poirier's *Mourir à tue-tête*, a study of rape was shown in Cannes this year. Monique Miller, left, played Director Poirier who appears now and then on the screen to comment on the film. Micheline Lanctôt, right, played the film editor.

medium-budget ones such as *Meatballs* have done well at box offices in the United States. Few Americans realize that other Canadians have been making excellent, low-budget films in French for years. In this issue of *CANADA TODAY/D'AUJOURD'HUI* we talk about some Quebec films and some Quebec filmmakers and about the bright possibility that the good small films of Quebec will soon have a broader international audience.

Left are scenes from *Éclair au chocolat* with Jean-Belzil-Gascon, the boy, and Jean-Louis Roux, the man. Julie Vincent, right, played Suzanne, the rape victim, in *Mourir à tue-tête*.

