

# entertainment

## Film festival rolls; censors chop

by Stephen Burr

*In Praise of Older Women* opens the third Annual Festival of Festivals. The premiere provides a good mixture of Hollywood hoppla—censorship problems, prominent politicians rumored to be present (P.E.T.) the film's stars, Karen Black, Susan Strasberg, Helen Shaver, Marilyn Lightstone and Alberta Watson.

If the excitement of a world premiere were not enough, *In Praise...* was on the verge of becoming a political bombshell. The Ontario censors had indicated they were not willing to pass the film without a major cut about 2 minutes.) The producers had refused to cut, and indicated they would run it, defying the government agency.

The problem is that the censors continuously over-step their authority. Its role is to classify films, but it takes upon itself the duty to moralize and ban films — the most recent being Louis Malle's

With prominent government people scheduled to be present, and the partial funding of this film by the CFDC, there could have been a confrontation between the federal and provincial officers.



Tom Berenger of "In Praise of Older Women." Based on a 12 year-old book, the film has created a controversy over Ontario's censorship practices, at the beginning of the third Festival of Festivals.

However, the producers and the board reached a compromise and 30 seconds of the film was taken out.

The confrontation should have taken place. The agreement reached allows the board to continue on knowing that its decision would be fought if extreme political pressure occurred, the board backed down. They still retain their power, losing one skirmish but controlling the battlegrounds.

*In Praise of Older Women* is possibly the most explicit big-budget Canadian film made, but it is not the first. The prolific Quebec cinema of the 60's was characterized by 'hard and soft come' porno films. These films did little to undermine their largely Catholic sensibilities.

However, there is much more going on this one film.

Wayne Clarkson, the new festival director indicated that Martin Scorsese will be in town to introduce his new film, *American Boy*, but at this moment no screening time has been scheduled.

Other cinema lights are rumored to appear at the Galas or the various Craft Conferences taking place at the Festival Cinema (formerly *The New Yorker*) Sept. 15, 16, 17 but no one is willing to confirm the names. The Craft conferences are roughly titled Financing, Publications and Acting/Directing. Two York faculty members, are rumored to be taking part (Robin Wood and Peter Harcourt), but in the movie business there are no certainties, only rumours.

There have been some major changes with the Festival this year. The majority of the screenings are being held in the Yonge-Bloor area at the Towne, Backstage and the Festival.

The programme is much smaller and tighter. The chaos of year one has given way to structures and themes. The hundred-odd films show in year one, have dwindled down to around 60 this year.

There are now real openings taking place - *In Praise...*; *Diabolo Menthe*; *Blood Brothers*, directed by Robert Mulligan; *Viollette Noziere* by Chabrol starring Isabelle Huppert; and Ted Kotcheff's *Who is Killing the Great Chefs of Europe*

The various series' that began last year continue. The Australian cinema is being spot-lighted with 10 films, all released within the last 2 years. This should provide a good perspective on their current social and cinematic issues. *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* is one of the Galas, Tuesday 9.30 P.M. at the Towne.

The other series include a tribute to Italy's CBC, the R.I.A. The rise of television co-production has brought many prominent directors to that medium. The films scheduled include Bertolucci's *The Spider's Stratagem* and Fellini's *The Clowns*.

The cult series and *Buried Treasures* provide the opportunity to see films rarely, if ever seen, in this city. This is possibly where the Festival could really shine. Toronto is a starving film community.

(Cont'd next page)

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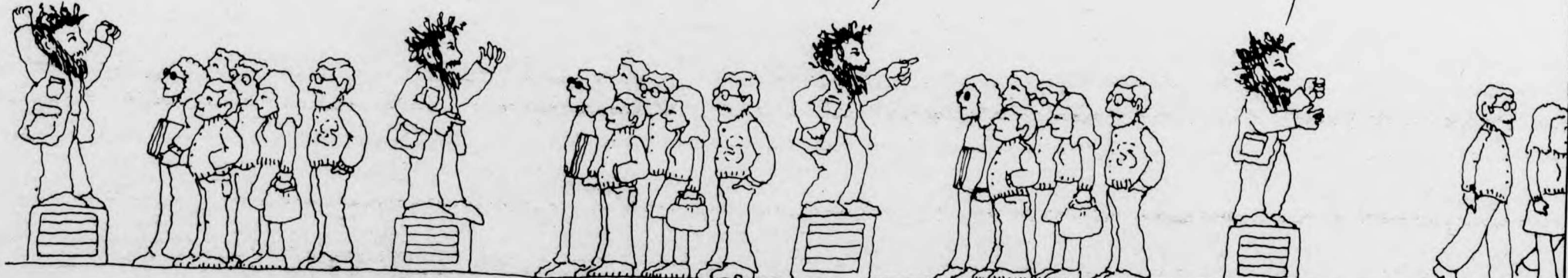
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