

# CANADA

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IN THIS ISSUE:

WHO SPOILS  
THIS  
COVER GIRL?

"IF WE  
TRY TO COPY  
WE  
ARE FINISHED"

"I WANT TO  
USE IT TO  
SEDUCE  
MILLIONS!"

DEAD RAT REALISM VS.  
IBSENIAN REALITY

IS GILLES CARLE  
SECRETLY A FAMILY MAN?



## 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*.



## Fantastica: un film musical original

The hottest Canadian movie star right now is Carole Laure, whose *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* (made in France) won this year's Academy Award for best foreign film. The hottest Canadian director is Gilles Carle. Together they are finishing *Fantastica*, which will cost \$2.5 million and will be, loosely speaking, the first Canadian musical. The third major participant, Lewis Furey, wrote the musical score and plays the male lead.

*Fantastica* is precedent making by the past standards of both Carle and Quebec: it is costing a great deal of money and it will be distributed to a wide international market.

Its music, singing and dancing develop as naturally as its fighting and love making. A tycoon plans to build a factory on the edge of a wilderness lake, destroying an Eden created by a philosophic old man. Lorca, the star of a band of travelling musicians (played by Laure), is in love with both the old man and the band's young leader, Paul (Lewis Furey). She takes up arms against the industrial intruder with a guerilla group that includes a dynamiter who dreams of blowing up the world, the town fool, a homosexual auto mechanic and a youngster who sells meteorites.

### Dans la forêt

*Fantastica* was shot this summer in a forest at Grand'Mère, near Shawinigan, 150 miles north-east of Montreal.

The company is casual; the cameras, hand held; and only the chauffeur-driven Mercedes-Benz 300 SD limo that brings Laure to the set suggests Hollywood. The actors and technicians, eating lunch in a tent by the idyllic lake, are like a picnicking family, with a dynamic father, Gilles Carle, at

the head of the table. Carle has been directing provocative, small-budget films since 1965. He began with *La vie heureuse de Léopold Z.* and continued with *Le viol d'une jeune fille douce* (1968), *Les mâles* and *La vraie nature de Bernadette* (1972), *La mort d'un bûcheron* (1973), *La fête de Normande St-Onge* (1975) and *L'ange et la femme* (1977).

The notion that with a relatively large budget he is moving on to grander things is deceptive. *Fantastica* is still personal: the \$2.5 million budget is not really large, and much money is being spent on the perfection of detail — Eden has been created in the wilderness with a custom-made lake, log cabin, shrubbery and flowers — and on the salaries of Laure and Furey; Serge Reggiani and Claudine Auger, French actors of stature; and John Vernon, a Canadian with impressive credits.

After lunch the company moves through the forest to a grubby gas station set, on the edge of the pine-covered hills. A smiling mechanical man in front of the station waves elbowless arms up and down in a jerky, mechanical rhythm.

Carle dominates, talking softly, working swiftly and praising often. A stocky young man in mechanic's coveralls walks across the apron, confronts and imitates the mechanical man — stiff arms up and down — then strolls on and rolls in a somersault to the top of an ancient auto's hood, and Carle says "coupez."

"We are condemned to originality," says Carle, speaking of Quebec directors in general. "If we try to copy we are finished." He is optimistic about this film — "It is so good we will sell it after we make it, not before" — and about the industry. "The flame of filmmaking goes from one country to another — Sweden, France, Czechoslovakia, Italy — suddenly I feel it is coming to Canada. Quebec can have its place in the sun."

## La barrière n'est pas toujours impénétrable

Most Quebec films are in French, a few have English subtitles, very few are in English as well as in French; but one need not know a word of French to appreciate some that are neither dubbed nor subtitled. *L'eau chaude l'eau frette* can be enjoyed even by those who cannot translate the title into *Hot Water, Cold Water*. *Comme les six doigts de la main* (*Like the Six Fingers of the Hand*) will make you laugh and so will *Ti-Cul Tougas* (*Short-Ass Tougas*). They are films of action and visual humour.

Others judged worthy in Quebec are much more elusive. Talky feature films, such as *Éclair au chocolat*, ones with a particular Québécois context, such as *J. A. Martin photographe*, and documentaries, such as *Les servantes du bon Dieu*, lose much by non-translation.

The viewer, bilingual or not, who sees a good, intelligible, small Quebec film is likely to find it lodged in his memory. Quebec films are almost always intimate expressions of a single person — the director — and the best of them present a full-flavoured, accurate time, place and culture — Quebec today.

Since few people are tempted to go to a film in a foreign language, Quebec films have had a limited market. This may change soon. The new trend (as in the film *Fantastica*) is to use a double dubbing: English-speaking actors speak English, French speakers speak French, and then they are cross-dubbed for the French and English soundtracks. This technique, which originated in Italy, has become common in Europe where most films are co-produced by groups from different countries.



Carole Laure and Lewis Furey are the stars of *Fantastica*.

## Le retour de l'enfant prodige

Carole Laure works well with Carle. "Do you realize how spoiled I am, having Gilles Carle write films for me?" she asked Wayne Crigsby of *Maclean's*. "In each film we've made together, he's taken something in my character, my background and made it into film. If you took the films we've made together and put them end-to-end, you'd have my life."

She now identifies with Lorca in *Fantastica*: "I play a girl who is starting to be a star — she is full of contradictions, exterior very light, an extrovert, but full of deep emotions." On the set she sometimes seems like a child seeking Carle's frequent approval. They first met years ago, when she was very young; and in 1972, when she was about twenty-three, Carle cast her in *La mort d'un bûcheron*, not one of his best, though it was shown at the Cannes Film Festival. They lived and worked together in *Les corps célestes* and *La tête de Normande St-Onge* but split up domestically in 1977. Some six months later, Carle, Laure and Lewis Furey made *L'ange et la femme*.

She is hauntingly beautiful, small, fragile looking and intense, determined to be a super star. "I'm photogenic. I want to use it to seduce millions." She is also business-like, disciplined and self-confident. She grew up in a foster home in Shawinigan and is very much a Québécoise, not likely to be taken for an American, though most Americans who saw her in *Get Out Your Handkerchiefs* probably took her to be French.



Gilles Carle on the *Fantastica* location.

## La musique jouée avec Furey

Lewis Furey, born Greenblatt in Montreal, came to the screen after an eventful musical career. He appeared with the Montreal symphony at eleven, but as a teen-age student at the Juilliard school in New York, he abandoned the violin — "I did not like the prospect of being a monk, alone in a room" — and became instead a pop musician, a song writer and a cabaret performer. He has had two albums produced in Los Angeles, and he and Laure have appeared on stage, to great acclaim, in Montreal and Paris.

The editing and soundtracking of *Fantastica* will be completed this fall. The French actors will speak in French; Furey and Vernon will speak in English; Laure will sing in English, speak in French and do her own dubbing. Carle says the poor effects sometimes achieved by dubbers are the result of incompetence — "The problem in dubbing is the people who dub" — and that the French tracks for *Cabaret* and *Hamlet* are works of art.

*Fantastica* is being co-produced by Guy Fournier of Les Productions du Verseau, Montreal, and Charlyne Ascaso of E.I. Productions, Paris. The Canadian Film Development Corporation is also involved in the financing.

## Gilles Carle, le maître du k taine

Malcolm Reid defines the Quebec slang word *k taine* as "everything that is old-fashioned, naive, conformist, rural — and commercially promoted as the opposite, as sharp and stylish." In his book, *This Is Where We Came In*, Martin Knelman cites Gilles Carle as the master of *k taine*.

"Although Carle is the key figure in the [film] culture of the new Quebec — he's still drawn to the remnants of the folksy world he grew up in, and puts them on the screen with a dynamic balance of love and critical awareness. It's the combination of these elements, so peculiarly and distinctively Qu b cois, and the clash between them, expressed in surprisingly comic and melodramatic terms, that have made Gilles Carle the most popular as well as the most prolific filmmaker in Canada. At his most brilliant, Carle achieves a form of comedy that is part Rabelaisian and part Keystone Kops, but just under the surface of slapstick raucousness there is a sense of desolation, of despair on the brink of violence and defeat."

Carle is the only Canadian director to have had two films selected for the Cannes Film Festival. The best of his first bunch were *Les m les*, a bawdy farce, and *La vraie nature de Bernadette*, in Carle's own phrase, "a religious western." It is about a well-off Montreal woman who seeks the pure and simple life in the country. It combines satire and philosophy, comedy and melodrama. The more recent *L'ange et la femme*, which like *Fantastica* had Carole Laure and Lewis Furey as young lovers, is his most sensational effort. Peter Harcourt, in *Canadian Forum*, singled it out for particular praise.

"It was received in Quebec as a hardcore porn film because the reviewers were all blinded by the gossip that accompanied its production, gossip involving the personal lives of Gilles Carle, Lewis Furey and Carole Laure. But the film is more than gossip. It is a film that combines the violence of

*Bonnie & Clyde*, the yearning romanticism of a silent Rudolph Valentino movie, the poetic sensitivity of a film by Jean Cocteau and the sexual explicitness of *Deep Throat*."

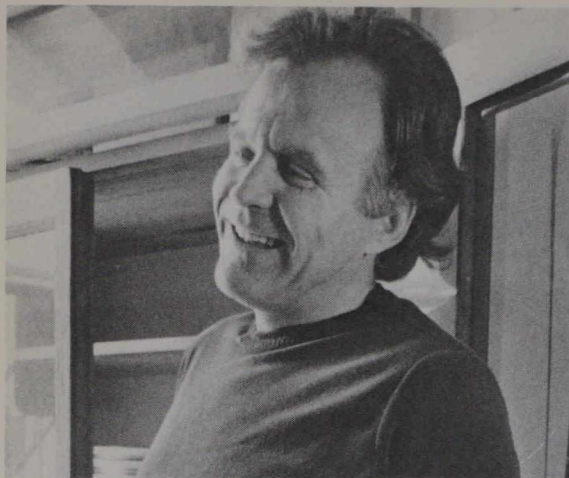
*L'ange* begins with the execution of Fabienne (Laure) for crimes against the ruling class (she has said, for example, that architects, lawyers and doctors are criminals) and continues with her return to life through the miraculous efforts of Gabriel (Furey) who wraps her in love, erotic and agapeic. The film, which grapples with the basic emotions and dilemmas of life, is an extraordinary achievement philosophically and cinematically, yet it cost less than \$60,000 to produce. Carle refers to it and his other inexpensive works as art and essay films, and his considerable reputation has been built on them. "If a film is good it travels. I'm amazed. Some go on the shelf, naturally, but some go a little more. I've been lucky."

## L'humour noir d'Andr  Forcier

There is fantasy in many Quebec films and much fantasy in those of Andr  Forcier. *L'eau chaude l'eau frette*, for example, blends dead-rat realism with a surrealist examination of the seven deadly sins. First it bathes the audience in warm and amusing nuances of daily life among the working class, then it pulls the plug and turns on the ice-cold shower. It concerns the childish delights of a boy and girl, each about twelve, bright and bubbling, and their older companion, a youth, perhaps seventeen, not so bright and pliable in their grip. The little drama of destruction is played out against the background of the girl's first menstrual period and a birthday party for Polo, the middle-aged neighbourhood loan shark, a man of simple tastes and vague amiability. The two younger children are amusing, but monsters,

*L'eau chaude l'eau frette* is black humour, funny, mordant and unexpected. *Guy L' cuyer* is the chef; *Albert Payette*, the man beneath the hat.





Bernard Lalonde

## La position solide de Yves Hébert

*Le trésor de la Nouvelle-France*, produced by Yves Hébert Inc., was shown this summer in the Television Masterpiece division of Montreal's Festival des films du monde. Shot originally in thirteen half-hour segments for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, it has been shown in Italy, Finland, Czechoslovakia and Spain and is now being prepared as a full-length feature and dubbed in English. Two French youngsters and three young Québécois find an old document and go hunting three thousand pieces of gold that were cached in New France. Hébert, who began as an architect, went to film school in Paris and then to work for the CBC. He and his associates — Vincent Davy, Claude Jobin, Jean-Pierre Ratelle and Marcel Lefebvre — have had striking commercial successes producing television series, political documentaries and industrial films. They are now working on thirteen one-hour programs for TV, each built around a traditional woman heroine.



Mireille Dansereau: Her *L'arrache-coeur* is being honoured by the American Film Institute in Washington, DC, this month.

and as it turns out, so is just about everyone else except the not-so-bright young man.

This summer Forcier and his producer, Bernard Lalonde, made *Albert en Albinie*, which translates as *Albert in the Land of the Albinos*. François, called Frank in the manner of Montreal, is an albino and the seventh son of a seventh son. He moves about at night because the sunlight hurts his eyes. He meets a young girl who spends the nights slashing tires in a parking lot in a futile effort to save her father's tire-repair business. They meet Albert, called Bert, a bowling champion, and together they scheme to make money. The pursuit of money is what it is all about. *L'eau*, which was a *succès d'estime*, was shown only in Quebec where it did relatively poor business, black humour not yet having built a reliable audience there. Lalonde has international hopes for *Albert*, which will be dubbed in English.



Yves Hébert

## Les réalisatrices

There are fifteen major film-production companies in Montreal, scores of male directors and several female ones. Two of the women have, however, achieved critical recognition. Mireille Dansereau, whose *L'arrache-coeur* was shown at Montreal's film festival, has won a variety of awards and so has Diane Létourneau, who made *Les servantes du bon Dieu*, which was shown at Cannes. *L'arrache-coeur* examines the relationship between mothers and daughters with Ibsenian reality, and *Les servantes*, a documentary, is a surprising, sympathetic and candid look at the daily lives of an order of serene nuns, who cook and sew and do other humble housekeeping tasks for priests.



Les servantes du bon Dieu is a remarkably evocative documentary on the lives of nuns.

## Le festival des films du monde

Montreal's Festival des films du monde ran from August 30 to September 9, showing 65 festival movies to the general public and many others to buyers and journalists.

Among the entries were the first two Chinese films ever shown at a Western festival — *The Great Flowing River* by She Teh-li and a documentary, *The Potola Palace*.

Among the countries represented were France, Hungary, Iran, Italy, Japan, the United States, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the USSR, Venezuela, West Germany, Spain, Brazil, Chile, Columbia, Switzerland and Canada.

The US entries included Stanley Kramer's *The Runner Stumbles*, Stewart Rosenberg's *Love and Bullets*, J. Schatzberg's *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*, Luis San Andres's *Night Flowers* and George Sluizer's *Twice a Woman*, co-produced by the Netherlands and the United States.

Winners were:

Jean-Charles Tacchella, *Il y a longtemps que je t'aime* (France), Grand prix du jury.

Heidi Genee, *1 + 1 = 3* (West Germany), Grand prix des Amériques.

Caroline Leaf and Véronica Soul, *Interview* (Canada), Prix du jury pour le meilleur court métrage (best short feature).

Gérard Marx, *Nuit féline* (France), Grand prix de Montréal, meilleur court métrage.

Louise Marleau, Prix d'interprétation féminine (best actress) for her performance in *L'arrache-coeur* (Canada).

Giuliano Gemma, Prix d'interprétation masculine (best actor) for his performance in *Corleone* (Italy).

Szabadits Meg A Gonosztol, Prix du jury pour la qualité des images (best cinematography) for *Deliver Us From Evil* (Hungary).

Harry Rasky, *Arthur Miller on Home Ground* (Canada), Prix de la Presse internationale pour le meilleur film canadien du Festival, en dehors de la compétition officielle.

Alejandro Doria, *La Isla* (Argentina), Gagnant du prix oecuménique.

Luis San Andres, *Night Flowers* (United States), Mention spéciale du jury oecuménique.

## Les patrons des arts

Film producers in Quebec get considerable support from l'Institut québécois du cinéma, which is a provincial concern, and the federal Canadian Film Development Corporation. L'Institut has helped finance twenty-six films including *Albert en Albinie*, *L'arrache-coeur*, *Fantastica* and *Le trésor de la Nouvelle-France*.

The CFDC was established by the federal government a decade ago to invest in Canadian films and to encourage others to do so. Producers seeking aid have to have investors already committed, and their films have to involve substantial numbers of Canadians.

Most of the films that originally attracted investors were designed for English-speaking Canada and the United States. The first, *Explosion*, was produced by Meridian Films of Toronto and shot in Vancouver with a Canadian cast and crew. It, like many of the over one hundred other films the CFDC invested \$20 million in during its first six years, was not a box-office smash.

Recently there have been significant changes. Last year the CFDC invested \$7.8 million in films budgeted for over \$50 million, and some 1970s English-language films — *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz*, *Murder by Decree* and *Meatballs* — have done very well.

Special efforts are being made to expand markets for and to encourage investment in French-language films. Co-production with foreign associates — for example in the making of *Fantastica* — has helped both financing and distribution; and this spring the CFDC announced a special policy allowing investors in French-language films to take repayment from the first revenues. (Ordinarily the CFDC recoups the full public investment before the private investors receive anything.)

CFDC President Michel Vennat says this recognizes the fact of commercial life in North America. "French-language producers don't have the revenues from pay television in the United States or the option of selling to the US networks. If an individual puts \$3,000 into a francophone film, he will be allowed the first \$3,000 the film makes."

## Présent à la création

The National Film Board, which began as a wartime propaganda agency in 1939, is the nest in which most of Canada's filmmakers have been hatched. This has been particularly true of French Canada's directors, script writers and editors, and it may be said that one NFB protégé created the Quebec film industry and another has set new limits for social and political satire.

### Claude Jutra, fondateur

In 1948 Claude Jutra, then 18, won a Canadian Film Award for *Perpetual Motion*, an experimental short, and went to work for the board. In 1963, working privately, he made *À tout prendre*, the first feature-length French-language Canadian film of note. In 1971 his NFB film, *Mon Oncle Antoine*, won eight Canadian Film Awards, and for the first time English-speaking North American audiences became rather vaguely aware that films were being made in Quebec. *Mon Oncle*, the story of a boy coming of age in back country Quebec, is delicate, compelling and, in its understatement, rather old fashioned. It is a critical commentary on life in the old, repressed Quebec, but it is low-key, with no suggestion of agitprop.

In 1973 Jutra finished *Kamouraska* from the period novel by Anne Hébert. Geneviève Bujold performed brilliantly as Elizabeth, the narrator, a misused wife who takes a lover (who kills the tyrannical husband) and who herself becomes a household monster. At the time, *Kamouraska* was the most expensive film ever made in Canada, and though it is both a costume piece and a morality play, its substance of life, love, hate and death

In Claude Jutra's *Kamouraska*, Geneviève Bujold, below, gave perhaps her best performance. Philippe Léotard and Richard Jordan, right, played the husband and the doctor.

among the Quebec haute bourgeoisie in the 1830s is more important than the spectacle.

The full sweep of Jutra's imagination is suggested by his latest French-language film, *Pour le meilleur et pour le pire*. A remarkable study of marriage, it slips with subtle ease from the real to the surreal (as do many marriages) confounding time and exaggerating the ephemera of domesticity while maintaining an air of earthy reality. It is very funny. Jutra is its star as well as its creator and is an actor of gentle nuances who would delight any director.

Recently Jutra has made several English-language films for the CBC, and he is now directing a film based on Margaret Atwood's *Surfacing*.







Claude Jutra

## Denys Arcand, le rebelle avec une cause

In the late sixties and early seventies the National Film Board was shaken by the determination of its French filmmakers to break with what they regarded as the NFB's stodgy impersonal style.

The most conspicuous rebel was Denys Arcand, who left in 1966 and returned in 1969 to make *On est au coton* (*We Are in the Cotton Business*), an idiomatic pun meaning "we are fed up." It was a study of workers in the textile industry, and it was meant to be political.

The Quebec textile industry took vigorous exception, and *Coton* was shelved by the board, though bootlegged copies were shown on college campuses. Arcand's next film, *Québec: Duplessis et après*, which strongly implied that the level of political behaviour in Quebec had not changed much despite the Quiet Revolution, was rejected by the CBC (though it was released by the NFB), and Arcand, the radical film hero of Quebec politics, left the board.

His privately produced *Réjeanne Padovani* created a sensation at the 1973 Cannes Film Festival (although Gilles Carle's *La mort d'un bûcheron* was the official entry).

*Padovani* is a harsh satire of the ruling class. The opening of a new highway is celebrated with a dinner party at the home of the construction tycoon, and the guests include the officeholders with whom he is in alliance. It is a comedy of corrupt manners, in the vein of Bunuel's *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*.

Martin Knelman, in *This Is Where We Came In — The Career and Character of Canadian Film*, says *Padovani* is much more than political satire. "Arcand's movie is a kind of parlor game that teaches the audience how to crack the code — [it] is an inside view of corruption. There have been movies before that tried to capture the stench of political depravity, but this may be the first one that portrays the *odourlessness* of an operation so efficiently antiseptic that no meal was ruined by talk of nasty deeds: the machine runs so smoothly that the bosses are protected from hearing the screams of their victims or seeing their blood stains."

## L'office national du film n'est pas sans honneurs

The NFB has been doing quite well in recent years. Last year two of its animated shorts, *The Sand Castle* and *I'll Find A Way*, won Academy Awards. This year *Special Delivery*, directed by John Weldon and Eunice Macaulay, won another in the best animated short category.

*The National Film Board's The Sand Castle won last year's Academy Award.*



## Avant Jutra

**1934-37:** Monsieur l'Abbé Maurice Proulx made *En pays neuf* in 16mm. It was a devotional film.

**1942:** Monsieur l'Abbé Jean-Marie Poitevin made *À la croisée des chemins* in 16mm. It was church produced and devotional.

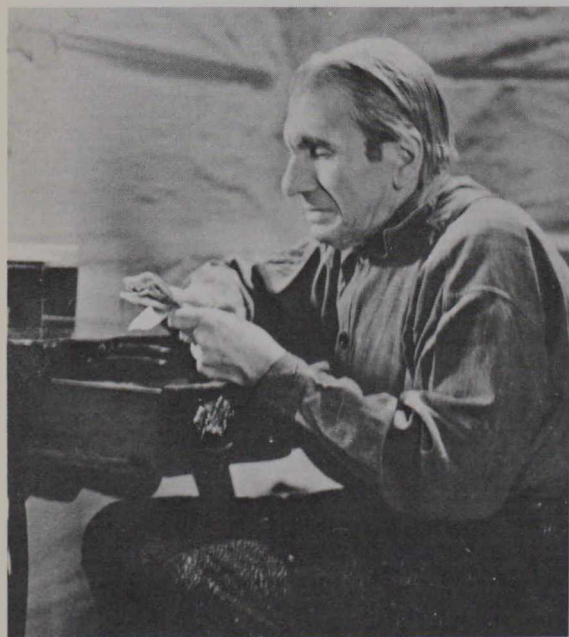
**1944:** J. A. DeSève made *Le Père Chopin* with a French executive producer, an international director and American technicians. DeSève had imported films made in France since 1930. When World War II cut off his supplies he made *Le Père*, the story of two Quebec brothers, one rich and lonely, one poor and happy. It was an enormous box-office success.

**1946:** A rival group led by Paul L'Anglais, a radio producer, organized Quebec Productions and made *La forteresse/Whispering City* in French and English versions using a Hollywood script and American technicians. The French version was a box-office success in Quebec.

**1948:** Paul L'Anglais made *Un homme et son péché*, the first of a planned series of three films about a Quebec village miser and his beautiful wife. It was a success.

**1949:** Quebec Productions made *Le curé de village* featuring the village priest as the problem solver who arbitrates conflicts, rights wrongs, advises lovers and represents justice. It was a success. The sequel to *Un homme et son péché*, *Séraphin*, was also a success, but the planned third film was never produced. DeSève organized a new production company and built a studio after the success of *Le Père Chopin*. Les Productions Renaissance made *Le gros Bill*, directed by the French filmmaker, René

Hector Charland in *Séraphin*.



Lucie Mitchell and Yvonne Laflamme in *La petite Aurore l'enfant martyre*.

Delacroix. It was set in Quebec but was only moderately successful. In the same year, in France, Delacroix and Les Productions Renaissance made a France/Canada Co-production, *Docteur Louise*, which dealt with abortion from a Catholic point of view.

**1950:** Les Productions Renaissance made its last film, *Les lumières de ma ville*, and then went bankrupt. Quebec Productions co-produced *Son copain/The Unknown from Montreal* in both French and English. It was directed by Jean Davaire, a Frenchman.

**1951:** Quebec Productions made *Le rossignol et les cloches*, another Catholic village film. Despite its string of successes, the company now disbanded, plagued by a lack of markets outside the province and the new competition of television. A small independent company made *La Petite Aurore l'enfant martyre*, a very sad story about a step-mother who tortures and eventually kills her ten-year-old stepdaughter. It was enormously successful.

**1952:** *Tit-coq* was made by Gratien Gélinas. Based on his successful play, it was the story of a draftee who loses his girl to another man. It was the only film in two decades that had neither a village Catholic nor a family cruelty theme. René Lévesque, now Quebec Premier, who was then a journalist, said, "With *Tit-coq* the Canadian cinema emerges from the caverns."

1953: Two morbid films, *Coeur de maman* (the story of a mother mistreated by her oldest son and his wife) and *L'esprit du mal* (about a woman who tries to marry her stepdaughter to a retarded son of a millionaire) were made by small companies.

In the late 1950s and the 1960s new filmmakers with new themes appeared. They broke all of the old rules, mocking what previously could not be mocked and, in such films as *Deux femmes en or* and *L'initiation*, treating sex with less than the traditional restraint.

## Canada à Cannes

Quebec film did well at Cannes in 1977, when Monique Mercure received the best actress, ecumenical prize for her role in *J. A. Martin photographe*. This spring three films were shown under official auspices — *Avoir seize ans*, *Mourir à tue-tête* and *Les servantes du bon Dieu*.

The first, directed by Jean Pierre Lefebvre concerns the prison of adolescence — a sixteen-year-old boy commits a senseless act of vandalism in defiance of his high school and his teachers. Jay Scott of the *Toronto Globe and Mail* called it a "passionate plea for the rights of the young" done in "an elegantly simple style."

*Mourir à tue-tête*, directed by Anne-Claire Poirier, is a movie about rape, which in Mr. Scott's words "uses the coercion and dehumanization it condemns to make its point."

*Les servantes*, by Diane Létourneau, concerns an order of nuns, "aged, happy women, so well preserved by their insulated existence that she [Miss Létourneau] found herself asking each one her age; the answers are astonishing."

Carole Laure's career began with Gilles Carle's *La mort d'un bûcheron*, which was shown at Cannes in 1973.



Gratien Gélinas and Nicole Germain.

Scott reports that *Les servantes* drew packed houses, *Mourir à tue-tête* "engendered a good deal of discussion" and *Avoir seize ans* was hailed as a great work by some and as a bore by others.

The festival wound up its two-week schedule with a Franco-Canadian co-production, *À nous deux*, by Claude Lelouch, which was well received.

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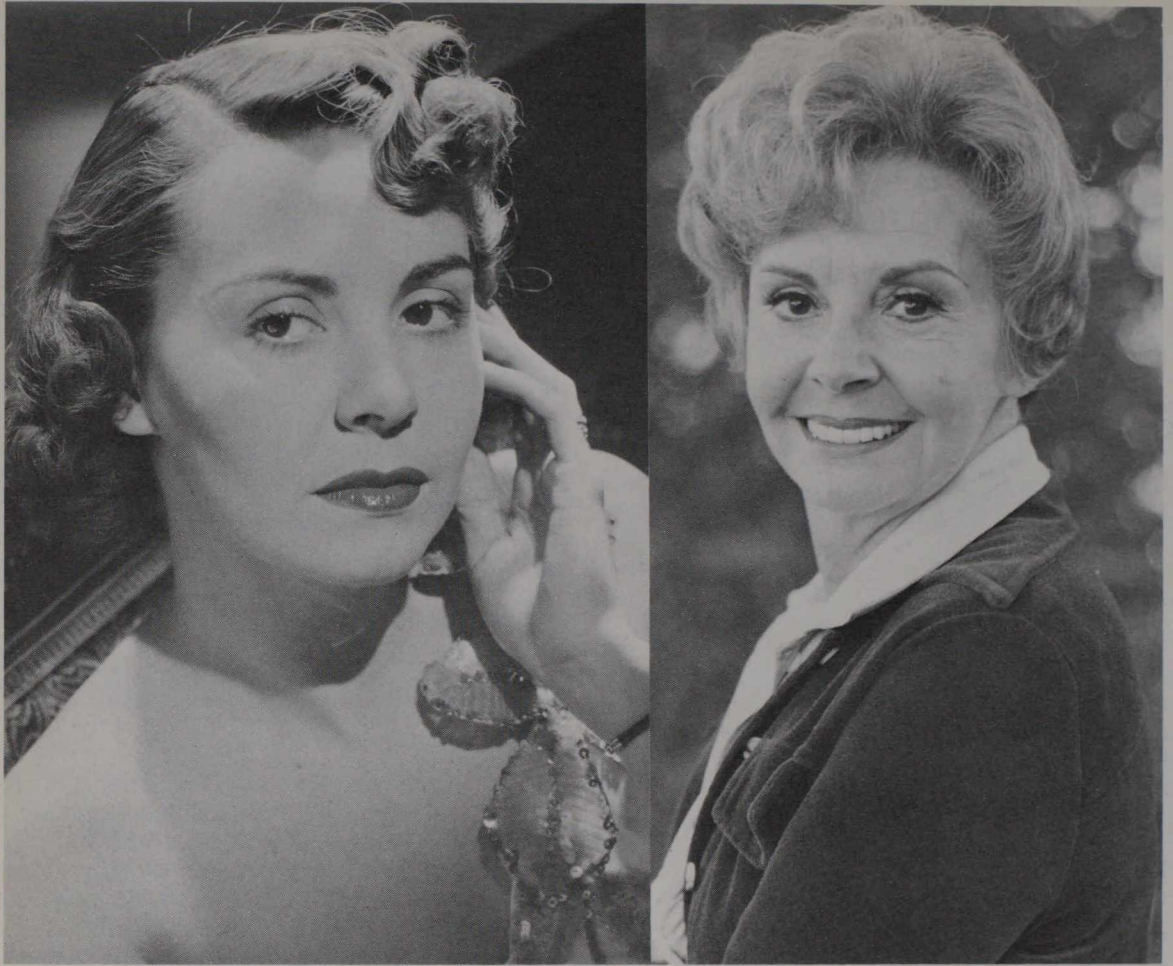
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*Then and now: Nicole Germain starred in many early Quebec films — La forteresse/Whispering City, Un homme et son péché, Séraphin and Le rossignol et les cloches. She is now frequently seen on Canadian television.*

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