



Giles Walker's *Dooley Gardens*

## Montreal

It's a great time of the year for Quebec film premieres. As we heard that François Girard's much anticipated *The Red Violin* was going to play both the Venice and Toronto film festivals, it was also confirmed that Robert Lepage's latest, *Nô*, was chosen to open the Montreal World Film Festival. Based on one of the many stories from his acclaimed epic play *The Seven Streams of the River Ota*, *Nô* is a low-budget comedy set in Japan and Quebec during the 1970 October Crisis. Who said we couldn't have fun with some of our biggest historical traumas? The film, starring Anne-Marie Cadieux, will be released in late September.... Set to be released this fall is Manon Briand's *2 secondes*, produced by Roger Frappier and selected in competition at the World Film Festival. The story of a professional cyclist, played by Charlotte Laurier, forced to abandon the game, the film was shot in Quebec and California, and also features Dino Tavarone, who became an overnight sensation three years ago with his star turn in the acclaimed Mafia TV series *Omertà*.... Set for an October release, Cinémaginaire's *C'tà ton tour*, Laura Cadieux marks Denise Filiatrault's film debut. A star of Quebec television, cinema (*Les Plouffe*) and theatre (*Les Belles soeurs*) for over four decades, Filiatrault is also one of Quebec's most prolific and respected theatre directors. She finally makes the jump into film with this comedy of manners based on Michel Tremblay's famous novel of the same name, which she adapted herself. *C'tà ton tour*, Laura Cadieux stars singer/actress Ginette Reno, whose last appearance on the big screen was as the memorable mother figure in Jean-Claude Lauzon's *Léolo*.... On another front, while the release date for Michel Brault's film about the 1837 Rebellion, *Le Prisonnier*, has been pushed back to winter 1999, Quebec's other patriot-in-waiting, Pierre Falardeau, is back behind the cameras. Joining him for the first time in almost a decade, Falardeau's longtime friend and collaborator Julien Poulin straps his sequins on once again to star in *Miracle à Memphis*, a brand new Elvis Gratton adventure. Elvis impersonator extraordinaire, Gratton is Falardeau and Poulin's most beloved creation and quite possibly Quebec cinema's greatest and most biting satirical character. Distributed by Lions Gate Films and produced by ACPAV's Bernadette Payeur, *Miracle à Memphis* is being shot in and around Montreal until the end of October.

**Claire Valade**

## The East Coast

Festival season seems to have fallen out of sync with much of East Coast production this year, leaving several major projects such as Thom Fitzgerald's docudrama, *Beefcake*, and Clement Virgo's Picture Plant-produced *One Heart Broken into Song* set to premiere in deep winter. Meanwhile, newer projects like Rick Mercer's acerbic series, *The Industry* (a.k.a. *Castling Couch*), a six-part *Newsroom*-like satire of the film industry, won't touch down until next March or April.... Younger filmmakers based in or around Halifax have considerable leverage this year, with Mike Clattenburg, Stephen J.P. Comeau and Scott Simpson all weighing in with new short dramas—*One Last Shot*, *Mercy* and *December 1917*, respectively.... Outside the region's biggest city, however, activity continues to build in New Brunswick and Newfoundland. Bathurst-based writer/director Tony Larder has just wrapped a coming-of-age half-hour drama entitled *The Dance*, filmed just outside of Fredericton. It's only one in a six-part series destined for broadcast on the CBC that highlights New Brunswick writers, directors and producers.... Meanwhile, in Newfoundland, John Doyle's *Extraordinary Visitor* is clearly the strongest indigenous dramatic feature since Mike Jones's legendary *The Adventure of Faustus Bidgood*, which was released in 1986 after many years of delay. Mike's brother and sister, Andy (formerly of *CODCO*) and Cathy (of *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* fame), star in another Newfoundland feature, Sharon Cavanaugh's Samuel Beckett-meets-Ingmar Bergman two-hander *The Pasta King of the Caribbean*, which is shot almost entirely in one room. Full of oblique exchanges that disguise a murder/mystery structure, *The Pasta King of the Caribbean* is the region's most intriguing feature of 1998.... Series work continues to provide most of the region's television activity. Giles Walker directed Mary Walsh and Andy Jones in episodes of the kitchen-sink/hockey-rink St. John's comedy *Dooley Gardens*, while Halifax's Salter Street is steaming ahead with 20 additional hours of its quirky sci-fi German coproduction, *Lexx: The Dark Zone Stories*, and launching a new comedic gardening show, *Mrs. Greenthumbs*. Salter Street recently swallowed Nova Scotia's fifth biggest production company, Charles Bishop Productions, and adds CBP's series *FoodEssence* to its growing library.

**Ron Foley Macdonald**