



Allan Moyle's *New Waterford Girl*

East Coast

As the late summer turns into early fall, the Atlantic Film Festival (AFF) rolls out the region's major film offerings. Stephen Reynold's long-awaited *The Divine Ryans* is set to lead the East Coast pack. Starring 22 Minutes' Mary Walsh along with British star Pete Postlethwaite, *The Divine Ryans* is the screen version of Wayne Johnson's acclaimed novel about an eccentric early-1960s Newfoundland Catholic family. It's a wonky costume drama punctuated with earthy humour complete with some wild surrealistic touches. Producer Chris Zimmer has been gently positioning the film for almost a full year while he considers the best way to launch the quirky, general-audience film and it's presenting some of the challenges that his earlier feature, *Margaret's Museum*, faced. How do you sell a film that is so rooted in a specific region? As a Nova Scotia/Newfoundland coproduction that bears all the baggage of a prestige picture, much is riding on *The Divine Ryans*.... Allan Moyle's *New Waterford Girl*, from Cape Breton native Tricia Fish, will also hit the screens this fall. With a cast of (mostly) unknowns led by former brat-packer Andrew McCarthy, *New Waterford Girl* tells the story of a free-spirited young woman who yearns to transcend her small town Cape Breton origins.... A much-anticipated feature to be unspooled at the AFF will be Clement Virgo's *One Heart Broken Into Song*. The first Nova Scotia dramatic feature to be written and directed by African Canadians and sporting an almost exclusively black cast, *One Heart Broken Into Song* is a rich poetic and very sensual story of two young lovers who escape from rural Nova Scotia during the deepest recesses of the Depression only to find a dead end in the legendary village of Africaville. Producer William D. MacGillivray and screenwriter George Elliot Clark struggled for seven years to get the project realized. The CBC can take some of the credit. *One Heart Broken* will eventually be broadcast as one of the Mother Corp.'s *Sunday Night Movies* sometime in the fall.... A steady stream of Cancon guest stars have trooped through Halifax making cameo appearances in Rick Mercer's next 13 installments of his corrosive film-biz burlesque, *Made in Canada*. So far Sarah Polley and Margot Kidder have been spotted. There's no word yet whether William Shatner, Jim Carrey or Anne Murray have been booked, but with only a few more episodes to go before the end of this round of production, there aren't many guest spots left. **Ron Foley Macdonald**

Montreal

Quebec has been experiencing a tremendous boom in its film industry over the past two years. All trades in the industry are touched by this rejuvenation, from the independents to the mainstream. This summer, John Travolta brought his *Battlefield: Earth* to Montreal and the Saguenay region for 11 weeks. In the fall, two other major blockbusters, one starring Bruce Willis and the other Eddie Murphy, will take over our studios for six to eight weeks. But Americans are not the only ones hitting the streets. Two major Montreal-born Anglo independents also shot their own latest opuses here. Arto Paragamian (*Because Why* and one of the directors on *Cosmos*) shot his second feature, *Two Thousand and None*, a dark and ironic tale of life, death and memory about a dying paleontologist. In a bold coup, Paragamian and his producer, Galafilm's Arnie Gelbart, cast American John Turturro, one of today's most intense and brilliant actors, as the lead. Also starring Katherine Borowitz and Oleg Kisselev, the film is distributed internationally by Paris-based Pandora Cinema. Fresh off the success of acclaimed TV series *Da Vinci's Inquest*, Montreal-born John L'Ecuyer returned to his filmmaking roots with *Saint-Jude*. Shot over a six-week period in Montreal, *Saint-Jude* tells the story of Jude, played by fresh-faced newcomer Liane Balaban, a thick-skinned, wise-beyond-her-years teenager thrown out on the streets by her father, who contemplates life through her eclectic vision of her neighbourhood's quirky inhabitants. Alongside Balaban, L'Ecuyer cast veterans Nick Campbell and Louise Portal, to bring to life this original and edgy script by Montrealer Heather O'Neill. On the francophone side, films currently in postproduction include indie Claude Demers' *L'Invention de l'amour*, Charles Binamé's untitled latest and, of course, Denys Arcand's *15 Moments*.... On a sadder note, this summer marked the passing of one of Quebec's truly great directors. When Pierre Perrault, the poet and ethnological historian of Quebec cinema, died in June, we were left with the indelible black-and-white images of the Ile-aux-Coudres fishermen from *Pour la suite du monde* (1963) and his remarkable vision of Northern Quebec culture, from the hunters in *La Bête lumineuse* (1982) to the mystical beast sought in *L'Oumigmag* (1993) and *Cornouailles* (1994). But beyond that, were left with the memory of an artist and humanist who preferred to always go his own simple way rather than buy into any system, who loved the land that he defended so well through his films and his extensive essays and literary works.

Claire Valade