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252-128 Danforth Avenue

Toronto, ON Canada M4K 1N1

PRINTER

Simpson Screen Print & Lithography

865 Sawmill Road

Bloomington, ON Canada N0B 1K0

Phone: 1-800-387-3214

DISTRIBUTOR

Disticor/Doormouse

14-695 Westney Road

Ajax, ON Canada L1S 6M9

Phone: 905-426-5552

SUBSCRIPTIONS

CANADA (incl. GST): Individual:

\$30 per year; Institutions: \$60 per year

U.S.A. (in U.S. funds): Individual:

\$25 per year; Institutions: \$50 per year

INTERNATIONAL \$60 per year

ISSN 1192-5507



In absentia is perhaps the best way to describe Canada's celluloid history according to Tom McSorley in his centerpiece article in this special issue of *Take One*, which focuses on the need to raise public awareness of the importance of Canada's film heritage. Prior to the birth of a recognizable film culture in the early 1960s, much of what was shot in this country has gone missing or is available only on worn out 16- or 35-mm prints with limited circulation. Preserving

Canadian audiovisual works has always been a constant struggle, due to a lack of public or private funding. A glorious exception, however, is Varick Frissell's *The Viking*. The film was one of the first talkies ever made, the first location shoot undertaken by Paramount Studios, and as far as it can be determined, the first sound film produced off the shores of Canada. After many years of painstaking research and restoration by the National Archives of Canada, with financial assistance from the AV Preservation Trust and Telefilm Canada, there will soon be a brand new DVD version of *The Viking* in wide release. McSorley, who is the executive director and director of programming at the Canadian Film Institute and *Take One's* associate editor, recounts in vivid detail the harrowing tale of the making of the film in 1931, its tragic conclusion, and the efforts by the National Archives to restore this unique and outstanding Canadian historical document.

Our special 16-page colour section also highlights the AV Preservation Trust's Masterwork Awards. Every year, the Trust bestows the title of Masterwork on culturally significant Canadian classics taken from film, radio, television and music. Funded by the Trust, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the CBC, Telefilm Canada, the NFB, the National Archives of Canada and other public/private sector sponsors, the Awards were launched in 2000. The selection of a film for a Masterwork is based on it's being "particularly representative of its genre," says Bruce Parker, executive director of the Trust. Genres include animation, documentary and fictional features, and all films must be at least 15 years old at the time of selection. Twelve films have been chosen to date, and these are featured in this issue with annotation by a select group of experts in Canadian film studies, explicating why they are so important and why they should be preserved, including: Peter Harcourt, founder of the Film Studies Association of Canada and one of the most distinguished figures in Canadian film scholarship; Peter Morris, the author of *Embattled Shadows: A History of Canadian Cinema 1885-1939*; Maurie Alioff, *Take One's* associate editor; Blaine Allan, who teaches film studies at Queen's University; Barry Keith Grant, a professor of film studies and popular culture at Brock University; André Loiselle, who teaches film studies at Carleton University; James Forrester has contributed research for books about Crawley Films; Christine Ramsay, who teaches media studies at the University of Regina; and Chris Robinson, who is the artistic director of the Ottawa International Animation Festival.

This special section will be posted on *Take One's* Web site in the coming months with a link to the AV Trust's site, www.avtrust.ca.

Wyndham Wise, Editor-in-Chief