



be that Arcand's *Le déclin de l'empire américain* is not included. The most successful French-language film ever made in this country, it achieved the ultimate stamp of pop cultural success: Hollywood wanted to do an English-language remake. The list of the Canadians who have made it in Hollywood ("The 'Eh' List: Canada's Hollywood") pretty much correspond's to *Take One's* Distinctly Canadian list which was published in our Summer 1996 issue. I would quarrel only with the inclusion of Alan Thicke on this list. Granted Thicke has become a major Hollywood player, but his impact on the movies is negligible. Curiously, *Mondo Canuck's* list does not include James Cameron, who, along with Jewison and Reitman, is surely on Hollywood's 'A' list of directors.

The heart of Pevere's argument lies in the chapter on CBC's *Morningside* ("Canadian Shield: Who asked Peter Gzowski to save this country anyway?"). Here he outlines the myth of officially sanctioned Canadian culture, those writers, musicians, pundits, politicians, poets and farmers who make *Morningside* "the audio equivalent of Robert Bateman's wildlife paintings, W.O. Mitchell's prose or Kevin Sullivan's *Road to Avonlea* TV series: an appealing invocation of a mythical Canada (predominantly rural, simple, moral), whose absence in real life merely boosts its mythical currency. It is, in other words, a wilful act of denial—a comfort zone." Gzowski has become the official spokesperson for the enduring myth of Canada as an electronic village; however, his show is listened to by less than 15 per cent of the entire nation. Or, as Pevere concludes: "Whether or not one believes that whither goes Gzowski, so goeth the nation, this much is certain: when he finally does make his exit, an idea of Canada, if not the real thing, will probably go with him. The fact is, if the elder leaves, only 15 per cent of the country might feel that their village is on the brink of oblivion. The other 85 per cent won't even notice, and for a perfectly understandable reason: because they've never been invited inside."

Pevere and Dymond storm Canada's cultural ramparts with *Mondo Canuck*, arguing with confidence for a broader notion of Canada's contribution to North American, and therefore world, pop culture. Although they never ask the question, "Is Ivan Reitman's *Ghostbusters* a Canadian film?" the answer is obvious. *Ghostbusters* is as much Canadian as it is American and speaks volumes for what we can achieve outside the narrow confines of officially sanctioned Canadian culture.

Mondo Canuck: A Canadian Pop Culture Odyssey.
By Geoff Pevere and Greig Dymond.
Prentice Hall Canada, Toronto. 244 pages. \$27.95



Ron Mann's CD-ROMS

By Jennie Punter

While many of us are used to dimming the lights, popping the corn and putting our feet up before settling in to watch a film, switching off the screensaver is not normally part of the ritual. But a seat in front of the computer is a great venue to take in Canadian filmmaker Ron Mann's *Poetry In Motion*, a documentary featuring Beat legends, younger punk upstarts and other spoken word artists, or *Comic Book Confidential*, a comprehensive (albeit with a counterculture bent) look at comic books, their creators and even their detractors.

A few years ago, Mann turned both acclaimed documentaries into CD-ROMs for Voyager, the highly regarded publisher of arts-oriented interactive multimedia titles (*The Residents' Freak Show*, *The Complete Maus* etc.), who then got Mann to start producing original works for CD-ROM. *Poetry In Motion II* presents quality interview and performance footage—from old faces like Charles Bukowski, Jim Carroll, Allen Ginsberg and Canadian Michael Ondaatje, as well as a dozen new faces like Spalding Gray, Peter Orlovsky and Bob Holman—Mann couldn't work into its predecessor. I recommend starting with *Poetry In Motion* because it includes the entire film, as well as additional footage and lots of supporting text. Then, if you just can't get enough, check out the sequel, which doesn't contextualize the material nearly as well, for obvious reasons.

Mann's latest CD-ROM is *Painters Painting*, a fabulous multimedia extension of the revealing 1973 documentary on the post-war New York art scene by Emile de Antonio, featuring big names like Andy Warhol, Jackson Pollock, Willem de Kooning and Jasper Johns. Like the *Comic Book Confidential* CD-ROM, *Painters Painting* not only includes the entire documentary, but also contains an extensive text biography of each artist, full-colour examples of his or her work (that can be looked at close-up), and other quality text-based materials that put the film subjects in their appropriate historical and cultural contexts.

Painters Painting also includes an excellent live interview with de Antonio (from a public television broadcast) in which he discusses his earlier, controversial political documentaries, and never-before-published excerpts from the filmmaker's journals. Author and critic Douglas Kellner acted as editor on the *Painters Painting* CD-ROM, and also wrote most of the text.

Based on his previous work with Voyager, Mann was the obvious and perfect choice to transform this fascinating, visually stunning documentary (which Kellner jokes should have been titled *Painters Talking*) into a multimedia format. The interface is seamless, easy to navigate and wonderful to look at. After a while, you get used to watching the film in a small frame (by way of the Quicktime player, a version of which is included on each CD-ROM, along with a good Help file). And be warned, the picture quality will vary depending on your system (requirements for Macintosh and Windows systems are listed on the back cover). The beauty of watching a movie with a mouse at hand is that you can move anywhere in the narrative in one click, or stop at any point to dive into the background material. Unless you have a full day at your disposal, this CD-ROM is impossible to get through in one sitting.

Poetry in Motion. CD-ROM by Ron Mann.
Released by Voyager and CityROM (On the web: www.citytv.com).
Emile de Antonio's Painters Painting. CD-ROM
by Ron Mann, edited by Douglas Kellner.
Released by Voyageur (On the web: <http://www.yoyagerco.com>).