

TOP

The  
Best20 CANADIAN  
FILM

In *Take One's* ongoing effort to promote and celebrate Canadian cinema, I asked the contributing editors, Tom McSorley (director of programming at Cinematheque Canada in Ottawa), Maurie Alioff (screenwriter and lecturer at Vanier College, Montreal) and Marc Glassman (freelance critic and editor of several books on Canadian film from Toronto), to submit an even dozen of their favourite titles. I mixed and matched with my own choices and came up with this Top 20 list. While entirely unscientific, this alphabetical listing does point to several differences with the official Top 10 list issued by the Toronto International Film Festival in 1993. David Cronenberg is represented by three films, *Dead Ringers*, *Crash* and *Videodrome*, and he was completely shut out of the official Top 10.

Atom Egoyan is also represented by three films, *The Sweet Hereafter*, *Exotica* and *The Adjuster*, suggesting very strongly that there has been a significant shift away from the accepted wisdom that the best in Canadian cinema comes from Quebec. Denys Arcand, Claude Jutra and Don Shebib have two films each, and the rest of the list is rounded out with films by Ted Kotcheff, Phillip Borsos, Michel Brault, Jean Pierre Lefebvre, Guy Maddin, William D. MacGillivray, Francis Mankiewicz and Mireille Dansereau. While some might consider lists of anything represents something close to mind porridge, *Take One* fearlessly considers identifying and celebrating the best in Canadian cinema to be part of its mandate, and we modestly offer our selection for your consideration.

Wyndham Wise

## A tout prendre

1964 99m prod Les Films Cassiopée, Orion Films p/d/sc/ed Claude Jutra ph Michel Brault, Jean-Claude Labrecque, Bernard Gosselin m Maurice Blackburn, Jean Cousineau, Serge Garant with Johanne Harrelle, Claude Jutra, Victor Désy, Tania Fédor, Guy Hoffmann, Monique Mercure

In his debut feature, Claude Jutra takes the viewer on a virtually plotless excursion into his own psyche at a decisive moment in his life. As the film's restless young hero, Jutra chases around Montreal, searching for personal, political and sexual identity. He says yes to his homosexuality and ends a real-life affair with a Haitian woman (Johanne Harrelle). As director, Jutra discovers a relentlessly jittery, ad-libbing style that is the ideal correlative of the slaphappy turmoil the picture aims at evoking.

It's instructive to view *A tout prendre's* classic French New Wave moves just as they're being revived by directors ranging from Wong Kar-Wai to Oliver Stone, not to mention mainstream TV like *NYPD Blue*. *A tout prendre* can be translated as "Everything's Up for Grabs." MA

Canadian Film Award: Feature Film.



# IAN MIS

of  
all  
Time



Jacques Gagnon as Benoît in Claude Jutra's *Mon Oncle Antoine*



## The Adjuster

1991 102m prod Ego Film Arts, p Camelia Frieberg, Atom Egoyan d/sc Atom Egoyan ph Paul Sarossy ed Susan Shipton m Mychael Danna with Maury Chaykin, Jennifer Dale, Patricia Collins, David Hemblen, Arsinée Khanjian, Elias Koteas, Don McKellar, Gabrielle Rose

Insurance adjuster Noah Render (Elias Koteas) attempts to restore the damaged lives of his clients. His methods are unorthodox: he sleeps with most of them, puts them up in a designated hotel, and quotes his profession's code to them like a mantra: "You may not know it yet, but you're in shock." Living with his film censor wife (or is she?) in a barren, unfinished suburban development, Noah's various encounters are interwoven with the story of Bubba (Maury Chaykin) and Mimi (Gabrielle Rose), a couple desperate to live out their fantasies to achieve passion. Egoyan's amoral yet compassionate protagonist is one of the most strangely compelling creations in all his cinema, and his effective use of widescreen describes the terrifying abyss that separates Noah from everyone he encounters.

Egoyan's best film to date, *The Adjuster* is a searching reinterpretation of Luis Buñuel's *Nazarin*, with distant echoes of Andrei Tarkovsky's *The Sacrifice*, and is a haunting drama of disconnection and desire. TM



## The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz

1974 121m *prod* International Cinemedia Centre *exp* Gerald Schneider *p* John Kemeny *d* Ted Kotcheff *sc* Mordecai Richler, Lionel Chetwynd *novel* Mordecai Richler *ph* Brian West *ed* Thom Noble *m* Stanley Myers *with* Richard Dreyfuss, Micheline Lanctôt, Jack Warden, Randy Quaid, Joseph Wiseman, Denholm Elliott, Joe Silver.

If Canadian cinema is in some way defined by Norman McLaren's pristine animation, Ted Kotcheff's adaptation of Mordecai Richler's novel comes across like a burp at a society ball. *Duddy* is an early Canadian feature that's not afraid to get its hands dirty in the material world. A young Jewish hustler grasps for success and breaks the hearts of everyone around him. Despite the fact that Duddy Kravitz is a louse, you can't stop yourself from responding to his naively hopeful, crackling energy. It may be in bad taste, but it jumps at you in Richard Dreyfuss's career-making performance. All Kotcheff had to do was keep up with the pace. MA

"Richler has been accused of anti-Semitism in this film, and at times he envisions Duddy and the Jewish subculture in Montreal as venal, crass and materialistic. But it is Duddy, played so dynamically by Dreyfuss, who complicates and transcends cheap stereotype by revealing compassion, family loyalty and a curious lonely vulnerability." *Jump Cut*

Canadian Film Award: Film of the Year; Oscar nomination for Best Adapted Screenplay; Golden Bear at the Berlin Film Festival.



## Archangel

1990 82m *prod* Ordinance Motion Pictures *exp* André Bennett *p* Greg Klymkiw *d/ph/ed* Guy Maddin *sc* Guy Maddin, George Toles *with* Margaret-Anne MacLeod, Ari Cohen, Victor Cowie, David Falkenberg, Kyle McCulloch, Kathy Marykuta

Set in the remote northern Russian town of Archangel at the end of the First World War, *Archangel* is the story of a one-legged amnesiac Canadian soldier, Lt. John Boles (Kyle McCulloch). As he courageously fights the Huns and the Bolsheviks in a strategically suspect set of battles, made more vague by the general amnesia afflicting most of those around him, Boles searches for his beloved, Iris. Trouble is, as we know and as John Boles has forgotten, Iris is dead.

Shot in sumptuous black and white worthy of Josef von Sternberg and filled with slices of the surreal and the cruel, Winnipeg visionary Guy Maddin's second feature is a masterpiece: a wistful, luminous conflation of absurdity, high romance, heroic delusion and the Canadian colonial. Buster Keaton would approve. Buñuel, too. TM

## Between Friends

1973 90m *prod* Clearwater Films *p* G. Chalmers Adams *d* Donald Shebib *sc* Claude Harz *ph* Richard Letterman *ed* Tony Lower, Donald Shebib *m* Matthew McCauley *with* Michael Parks, Bonnie Bedelia, Chuck Shamata, Henry Beckman, Hugh Webster

In spite of the mythic resonance and justified fame of *Goin' Down the Road*, *Between Friends* is really Shebib's finest effort. This tale of a botched robbery of a mine in Northern Ontario involves the troubled quartet of Chino (Chuck Shamata), his American surfing buddy Toby (Michael Parks), his girlfriend's father Will (Henry Beckman) and Coker (Hugh Webster). While the robbery is being planned, Chino's girlfriend Ellie (Bonnie Bedelia) becomes attracted to Toby.

A taut, serious dramatic study of loyalty, Canada-U.S. relations and the limitations of male bonding, *Between Friends* also distinguishes itself with its intelligent, suggestive use of desolate Northern Ontario landscapes and a failed heist sequence which rivals any *film noir* you can name. TM



## Les Bons débarras

1980 114m *prod* Les Productions Prisma *p* Marcia Couëlle, Claude Godbout *d* Francis Mankiewicz *sc* Réjean Ducharme *ph* Michel Brault *ed* André Corriveau *m* Bernard Buisson *with* Charlotte Laurier, Marie Tifo, Germain Houde, Louise Marleau, Roger Lebel, Gilbert Scotte

Made during a period when Québécois filmmakers were fascinated by dysfunctional losers—rather than today's snappily dressed, gloomy yuppies—the late Francis Mankiewicz's best picture is saturated with a deep and satisfying melancholy. Set during a cold, grey autumn in the Laurentian mountains, the movie presents its fallen world through the eyes of an obsessive young girl who won't let her mother (Marie Tifo) have a life. Imagined by the reclusive writer Réjean Ducharme, played by Charlotte Laurier, the kid is a dangerously compelling seductress who wreaks havoc out of a need to control those she loves. Mankiewicz was one of the most emotionally powerful, and yet subtle, of Canadian filmmakers. It's hard to understand why he's also one of the most overlooked. MA

Genie Awards: Film, Director, Screenplay, Actress (Marie Tifo), Supporting Actor (Germain Houde), Cinematography, Editing, Sound.



TAKE ONE'S

TOP  
20

CANADIAN FILMS





## Crash

1996 98m prod Alliance Communications exp Robert Lantos, Jeremy Thomas p/d/sc David Cronenberg ph Peter Suschitzky ed Ronald Sanders m Howard Shore with James Spader, Holly Hunter, Rosanna Arquette, Elias Koteas, Deborah Unger

Advertising executive James Ballard (James Spader) and his wife Catherine (Deborah Unger) lead complex, if hollow, sexual lives. Following a near-fatal car crash with Dr. Helen Remington (Holly Hunter), Ballard is drawn into an exploration of the connections between sex, danger and death. As their involvement with scientist/photographer Vaughan (Elias Koteas), who specializes in restaging famous car crashes, and accident victim Gabrielle (Rosanna Arquette) deepens, Ballard and Catherine discover new and disturbing ways of fucking and seeking the release of death.

An intentionally controversial film, *Crash* is neither pornographic nor dull, as its many critics have claimed, but rather a cold, detached look at sexual obsession. It's a brave, brilliant film that maintains with rigged assurity its non-narrative, anti-realist, cool-as-a-piece-of-highly-polished-steel conceptual idea—that some people can be sexually aroused by car wrecks. Intensely erotic and surprisingly witty, *Crash* is a cerebral ride, an end-of-the-millennium meditation on sex, death and alienation. WW

Genie Awards: Director, Adapted Screenplay, Cinematography, Editing, Sound Editing; Golden Reel Award; Special Jury Prize at Cannes.

of all time

## Dead Ringers

1988 113m prod The Mantle Clinic II exp Silvio Tabat, Carol Baum p David Cronenberg, Marc Boyman d David Cronenberg sc David Cronenberg, Norman Snider book Bari Wood, Jack Geasland ph Peter Suschitzky ed Ronald Sanders m Howard Shore with Jeremy Irons, Geneviève Bujold, Shirley Douglas, Stephen Lack, Heidi Von Palleske

The basic premise of *Dead Ringers* is derived from a novel based on a true incident. The twin gynecologists, Elliot and Beverly Mantle, played exquisitely and to perfection by Jeremy Irons, encounter a famous actress and carry on an affair with her. Elliot seduces her, pretending to be Beverly, and she ends up falling for Beverly. This leads to a rapid downhill spiral for the brothers into pills, eventual drug addiction and death.

Although fairly restrained for Cronenberg, the film contains several brilliant set pieces. In a particular lurid touch, inside the Mantle clinic's operating theatre, the doctors and nurses wear blood-red surgical masks and gowns. Beverly designs and commissions a range of special gynecological instruments for treating "mutant" women. Laid out on a trolley, they are truly the stuff of nightmares. WW

Genie Awards: Film, Director, Adapted Screenplay, Actor (Jeremy Irons), Art Direction, Cinematography, Editing, Original Score, Sound Editing.



## Le Déclin de l'empire américain

1986 101m prod Corporation Image M & M, National Film Board exp Pierre Gendron p René Malo, Roger Frappier d/sc Denys Arcand ph Guy Dufaux ed Monique Fortier m François Dompiere with Rémy Girard, Dorothee Berryman, Pierre Curzi, Louise Portal, Gabriel Arcand, Dominique Michel, Daniel Briere, Geneviève Rioux

A black comedy of manners built around a series of satiric and witty conversations about sex, love and life between several Montreal academics who are friends, lovers or both. The group includes a serial adulterer, an AIDS sufferer and a divorcee in a sadomasochistic relationship. It's as if these aging professors are the militants of Quebec's faded Quiet Revolution who are now locked into a sexual roundelay as their only outlet for action and iconoclasm. As *Le Chat dans le sac* in 1964 was the rallying cry for a militant generation, *Le Déclin de l'empire américain* is its epitaph.

This Oscar-nominated film put Arcand on the international map as one of Canada's greatest directors and was embraced by English-Canadian audiences like no other Québécois film since Claude Jutra's *Mon oncle Antoine*. In post (first)-referendum Quebec, Arcand perfectly captures a society in transition in its frantic desire for individual happiness, which may or may not be historically linked to the decline of the American empire that we are now witnessing. WW

Genie Awards: Film, Director, Screenplay, Supporting Actor (Gabriel Arcand), Supporting Actress (Louise Portal), Editing, Sound, Sound Editing; Golden Reel Award; Oscar nomination for Best Foreign-Language Film; International Film Critics' Prize at Cannes.

TOP  
20

TAKE ONE'S



## Entre la mer et l'eau douce / Drifting Upstream

1968 85m prod Coopératio Inc. p Pierre Patry d Michel Brault sc Denys Arcand, Michel Brault, Marcel Dubé, Gérard Godin, Claude Jutra ph Bernard Gosselein, Michel Brault, Jean-Claude Labrecque ed Michel Brault, Werner Nold m Claude Gauthier with Claude Gauthier, Geneviève Bujold, Paul Gauthier, Robert Charlebois, Louise Latraverse

Co-written by director Michel Brault and such luminaries as Denys Arcand, Claude Jutra, Marcel Dubé and Gérard Godin, this is a seminal film in Quebec cinema. Brault's most poetic and richly complex fiction feature concerns Claude Tremblay (Claude Gauthier), who leaves his small town for Montreal. There he falls in love with an actress, Geneviève (Geneviève Bujold) and enters a singing contest which launches his career. As he becomes more famous, Claude drifts apart from his lover and when he tries to go home, understands that things have changed forever.

Contrasting Claude's Quiet Revolution-inspired restlessness with the eternal flow of the St. Lawrence River, Brault's evocative, episodic, often improvised first fiction feature is a startling work. *Entre la mer et l'eau douce* is an engaging combination of Heraclitus and Thomas Wolfe: the river is never the same, and you really can't go home again. TM



# TAKE ONE'S TOP 20

22 SPRING 1998

## Exotica

1994 102m prod Ego Film Arts p Atom Egoyan, Camelia Frieberg d/sc Atom Egoyan ph Paul Sarossy ed Susan Shipton m Mychael Danna with Bruce Greenwood, Mia Kirshner, Don McKellar, Arsinée Khanjian, Elias Koteas, Sarah Polley

Of the many interconnected relationships, the film's most complex is between a 30-something tax auditor (Bruce Greenwood) who regularly patronizes Exotica, always requesting the same table dancer (Mia Kirshner) who invariably starts out her routine dressed as a schoolgirl, a very convincing Lolita, who, in fact, is not too many years past her own minority. Their relationship is typically ritualized, and it is only with the film's gradual unravelling that we fully understand its hidden meaning.

Egoyan's box-office breakthrough, *Exotica* is a film that displays a faith in cinema as a vehicle for provocation and intellectual complexity. Egoyan creates a dreamy atmosphere, one that reflects the partial, fragmented way the character's pasts are uncovered bit by eloquent bit. WW

Genie Awards: Film, Director, Screenplay, Supporting Actor (Don McKellar), Art Direction, Costume Design, Cinematography, Original Score; International Film Critics' Prize at Cannes.

## Goin' Down the Road

1970 87m prod Evdon Films p/d/ed Donald Shebib sc William Fruet ph Richard Leiterman m Bruce Cockburn with Doug McGrath, Paul Bradley, Jayne Eastwood, Cayle Chermín, Nicole Morin

Pete (Doug McGrath) and his pal Joey (Paul Bradley) are two wistful roustabouts from the Maritimes with 30 bucks and an abused Chevrolet labelled "My Nova Scotia Home." They pick up and head for Toronto where they find temporary work in a soft-drink factory, drown their troubles in beer and make various and futile attempts to improve themselves. Joey marries a girl (Jayne Eastwood) he has made pregnant, then loses his job. After robbing a food store, Pete and Joey, still believing there is a better life somewhere, take to the road once more.

The most influential English-Canadian film of its generation with absolutely incredible performances by McGrath and Bradley, Shebib's first feature is still, today, an impressive piece of realist cinema. It's intelligent blend of fiction and documentary realism gives the film a clarity and insight into the lives of marginal people sharing a universal burden of existence, unable to cope even with their own aspirations, and there is never a loss of human dignity. WW

Canadian Film Awards: Feature Film, Actor (Doug McGrath, Paul Bradley).



## The Grey Fox

1983 91m prod Mercury Pictures exp David Brady p Peter O'Brian d Phillip Borsos sc John Hunter ph Frank Tidy ed Frank Irvine m Michael Conway Baker, The Chieftains with Richard Farnsworth, Jackie Burroughs, Kenneth Pogue, Wayne Robson, Timothy Webber, Gary Reineke

Bill Minor (Richard Farnsworth), infamous American stage robber, is released from San Quentin Prison after 33 years, "into the 20th century." Following a botched train heist, Minor flees northward to British Columbia. Under the name of Bill Edwards, Minor passes as a prospector, does some horse rustling, befriends the local RCMP officer and takes a lover, a fiery feminist photographer played by Jackie Burroughs. Eventually his past catches up with him and he returns to jail.

A revisionist western in the tradition of *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*, *The Grey Fox* is set in a mythic, nostalgic Canada where manners receive respect, where order is preferable to law and fair play is more important than self-promotion. Richard Farnsworth gives a terrific performance as the gentlemanly bandit and shines in the scenes with Burroughs who singlehandedly turns him into a romantic lead. *The Grey Fox* signaled the arrival of a major directorial talent in Phillip Borsos and is probably the single most successful feature-film debut in the history of Canadian cinema. WW

Genie Awards: Film, Director, Screenplay, Supporting Actress (Jackie Burroughs), Art Direction, Original Score.





## Jésus de Montréal

1989 118m prod Max Films, Gérard Mital Productions exp Monique Létourneau p Roger Frappier, Pierre Gendron d/sc Denys Arcand ph Guy Dufaux ed Isabelle Dedieu m Yves Laferrère with Lothaire Bluteau, Rémy Girard, Monique Miller, Johanne-Marie Tremblay, Catherine Wilkening, Robert Lepage

When a group of actors is asked by the Catholic church to revitalize the Passion Play on Montreal's Mount Royal, the results are electrifying. Led by unemployed actor Daniel Coulombe (Lothaire Bluteau), the troupe creates a breathtaking reinterpretation which incorporates ancient texts, historical and theological debates about Christ and even Hamlet's famous soliloquy. As the production becomes a hit, the lines between fiction and reality become blurred, particularly for Daniel. The play becomes a media sensation, too, much to the alarm of church authorities. When the church intervenes to stop the new production, the replication of the tale of Christ's persecution and death grows to eerie proportions.

A Borgesian weaving of the real and the fictional, the perceived and the invisible, Arcand's most rewarding fiction feature to date is an analysis of power, institutional authority, rampant materialism and the spiritual vacuum in modern Quebec society. TM

Genie Awards: Film, Director, Screenplay, Actor (Lothaire Bluteau), Supporting Actor (Rémy Girard), Art Direction, Costume Design, Cinematography, Editing, Original Score, Sound, Sound Editing; Golden Reel Award; Oscar nomination for Best Foreign-Language Film; Jury Prize at Cannes.



## Mon oncle Antoine

1971 104m prod National Film Board p Marc Beaudet d Claude Jutra sc Clément Perron ph Michel Brault ed Claude Jutra, Claire Boyer m Jean Cousineau with Jean Duceppe, Jacques Gagnon, Lyne Champagne, Olivette Thibault, Claude Jutra, Monique Mercure

In a mining town in the late 1940s in Quebec, Benoît (Jacques Gagnon), a 15-year-old orphan goes to live with his uncle Antoine (Jean Duceppe), the town's undertaker. Young Benoît quietly observes the hypocrisy, joy, despair, carnality, class tension and strange melancholy of the adults who surround him. On Christmas night, he is taken by his uncle to a farm to collect the body of a young boy who has died.

Released in post-FLQ Quebec, the film has been accused of being a backward-looking postcard of an earlier Quebec society. It is also, more importantly, a perceptive, subtle and emotionally devastating portrait of pre-Quiet Revolution Quebec. Tracing the vast personal and political fissures about to tear open the rural Catholic Quebec heartland, Jutra's episodic narrative structure and inspired use of landscape render unforgettable this portrait of a sad, wintry town and the end of innocence. TM

Canadian Film Awards: Feature Film, Director, Actor (Jean Duceppe).

## Stations

1983 86m prod Picture Plant d William D. MacGillivray sc William D. MacGillivray, Michael Jones, Lionel Simmons ph Lionel Simmons ed William D. MacGillivray, Lionel Simmons with Michael Jones, Richard Boland, Libby Davies, Patricia Kipping

When successful Vancouver television journalist Tom Murphy (Mike Jones) learns of a friend's suicide back home in St. John's, Nfld, he travels back for the funeral by train. His station asks him to produce a documentary record of his pan-Canadian odyssey. As he travels, Murphy not only interviews his fellow passengers, he begins to take stock of his own life.

Acclaimed Atlantic Canadian director William D. MacGillivray's first feature film, co-scripted with cast and crew as they themselves travelled coast-to-coast, *Stations* is a quiet, meditative "rail movie" which penetrates that odd combination of displacement and roots that constitutes, for many Canadians, a kind of identity. Reminiscent of early Wim Wenders films, *Stations* is an absorbing examination of distinctly Canadian angst and the modes by which our culture expresses it. TM



## The Sweet Hereafter

1997 110m prod Ego Film Arts exp Robert Lantos, Andras Hamori p Atom Egoyan, Camella Frieberg d/sc Atom Egoyan novel Russell Banks ph Paul Sarossy ed Susan Shipton m Mychael Danna with Ian Holm, Tom McCamus, Sarah Polley, Bruce Greenwood, Gabrielle Rose, Alberta Watson, Arsinié Khanjian

Based on the novel by Russell Banks, *The Sweet Hereafter* recounts the events leading up to and following a school bus accident that kills 14 children and injures many others. The story follows the families, told from multiple viewpoints, whose lives irrevocably change and the big city lawyer (Ian Holm) who shows up in the community hoping to sign people up for a class-action lawsuit. In the ensuing atmosphere of suspicion, guilt and doubt, a surviving teenager (Sarah Polley) manages to regain her strength and dignity, and by telling a lie, reunites the community and drives the lawyer from the town.

The film takes place in layers, on sometimes subtly different temporal planes, both before and after the accident. Told in *Rashomon*-like fashion, Egoyan has made an almost perfect adaption of Banks's complex novel of guilt and redemption. The cast is seamlessly perfect, featuring a central performance by Holm as the deeply flawed lawyer with a smouldering intelligence which holds the screen with a magnetic core. Egoyan's most accessible film to date. WW

Genie Awards: Film, Director, Actor (Ian Holm), Cinematography, Editing, Original Score, Sound, Sound Editing; Oscar nominations for Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay; Jury Prize and International Film Critics' Prize at Cannes.

TOP  
20  
TAKE ONE'S





## La Vie rêvée

1972 85m prod ACPAV d Mireille Dansereau sc Mireille Dansereau, Patrick Auzépy ph François Gill, Richard Rodriguez, Louis de Ernsted ed Danielle Gagné m Emmanuel Charpentier with Liliane Lemaître-Auger, Véronique Le Flaguais, Jean-François Guité, Guy Foucault

The first fiction feature ever directed by a woman in Quebec, *La Vie rêvée* offers a refreshing perspective on the politics of liberation. As Isabelle (Liliane Lemaître-Auger) and Virginie (Véronique Le Flaguais) work in an advertising firm, they dream, sexually and otherwise, of finding their ideal man. Becoming ever more aware of their oppression and marginalization within popular media, within Quebec history and society and in personal relationships, both recognize that battles must be fought for respect and recognition.

Consistently intelligent, Dansereau's first film is by turns lyrical, polemical, playful, sensual, amusing and ferocious. While its Godardian influences are numerous, this kinetic film is an original detonation of Quebec machismo and a convincing call to arms for a generation of women left out of the cinematic articulation of their own experience of Quebec's emergent cultural nationalism. TM

## Le Vieux pays où Rimbaud est mort

1977 113m prod Cinak Compaigne Cinématographique (Canada), Filmoblic (France), Institut National de l'Audiovisuel (France) p Marguerite Duparc, Hubert Niogret d Jean Pierre Lefebvre sc Jean Pierre Lefebvre, Mireille Amiel ph Guy Dufaux ed Marguerite Duparc m Claude Fondrède with Marcel Sabourin, Anouk Ferjac, Myriam Boyer, Roger Blin

The second of Lefebvre's "Abel" trilogy (the third is now in postproduction), *Le Vieux pays où Rimbaud est mort* follows Abel (Marcel Sabourin) on a journey to France to visit the land of his ancestors. What he discovers is his distance from the "old country" is considerably more than geographical. Constructed upon Abel's three separate voyages within France, *Le Vieux pays où Rimbaud est mort* is a visually stunning exploration of identity, melancholy and solitude.

Through the searching and personal encounters of his protagonist, Lefebvre reveals the paradoxes of living in a former colony; indeed, the contours of colonial consciousness have never been drawn more clearly or astutely. Made as the Parti Québécois came to power, the film is unfashionably critical of Quebec's colonial relationship with France, and remains a poetic commentary on how we in Canada are perhaps still fighting the old colonial battles of European powers who could care less about former distant holdings of empire. TM

## Videodrome

1983 87m prod Filmplan International II (Canada), Universal Pictures (U.S.) exp Pierre David, Victor Solnicki p Claude Héroux d/sc David Cronenberg ph Mark Irwin ed Ronald Sanders m Howard Shore with James Woods, Sonja Smits, Deborah Harry, Peter Dvorsky, Les Carlson

David Cronenberg is one of the few Canadian directors who figured out how to deal with the country's lack of mythical urban centres like New York or Paris. The visionary *shlockmeister* created a parallel universe which might be the nightmarish flip side of The Canadian Dream, but is accessible to international audiences. *Videodrome's* hero (an especially feral James Woods) suggests Duddy Kravitz for the 21st century. A hustling cable-TV operator, Woods's character seeks out the ultimate pornography to boost the ratings on his failing channel. Naturally, he gets more than he bargained for. Some claim that Cronenberg's debut feature, *Shivers*, anticipated AIDS. *Videodrome* certainly points toward today's quest for psychosexual fulfilment on the Web. Near the end of the movie, Woods gets fucked by a monitor. MA

"A Boschian brew of lurid S&M, hallucinogenic TV Transmissions and biomorphism run amok." J. Hoberman, *Village Voice*

Genie Award: Director.



TAKE ONE'S

TOP  
20

CANADIAN  
FILMS of all time