

FROM SEA

EAST COAST

As the 20th Atlantic Film Festival looms, the region is still basking in the critical and box-office success of Allan Moyle's *New Waterford Girl*. This year, however, there are only two small-scale, low-budget indigenous dramatic features lined up. Newfoundlander Rosemary House's *Violet* and Halifax filmmaker Andrea Dorfman's *Parsley Days* are both intimate gender comedy/dramas that hope to follow the trail that brought Tricia Fish's fresh and funny script for *New Waterford Girl* to national and international prominence. Prince Edward Islander Gretha Rose developed a script called *Wild Mustard* for Thom Fitzgerald (*The Hanging Garden*, *Beefcake*) to direct this past summer, but at the last-minute financing fell through, delaying the project until fall or next spring. Meanwhile, some more established filmmakers are tantalizingly close to production or in the final stages of development, including Bill MacGillivray's *The Dreams of Jinky Drover* and Stephen Reynolds's adaptation of Wayne Johnston's *Human Amusements* as a follow-up to *The Divine Ryans*.... Documentaries, on the other hand, are particularly strong this year with Sylvia Hamilton's *Think On Me: The Portia White Story*, Peter d'Entremont and John Martin's *Hank and Jimmy* (about Hank Snow and his son Jimmy Rodgers Snow) and Matthew Welsh's *Breakaway* (about two brain-injured men and their quest for total recovery) leading a strong pack of non-fiction films from the region.... Despite the lack of indigenous features (many local features are stalled as they wait for the promised but long-delayed feature-film funding from the feds), there's still a large amount of service production going on, including American actor Billy Morrisette's 1970s take on *Macbeth*, starring James Legros and Christopher Walken, entitled *Scotland, P.A.*.... Disturbing news from New Brunswick reveals that the big sci-fi TV series *Space Hunter* has been mired in personnel and financial difficulties highlighted by a dispute with ACTRA because the project is a non-union shoot, a dangerous precedent for a province just getting into the business. But Film New Brunswick, the provincial film-funding agency, doesn't seem phased. *Space Hunter* rolls along regardless, with a 13-episode commitment from the Space Channel.

Ron Foley Macdonald

Fanny Mallette, Céline Bonnier, Marina Orsini in Robert Favreau's *Les Muses Orphelines*

MONTREAL

Newcomer Jessica Paré, the young star of Denys Arcand's *Stardom*, is hard at work again on two major productions from Cité-Amérique. She has a lead role in *Lost and Delirious*, Léa Pool's follow-up to her critically acclaimed *Emporte-moi* and the director's first English-language film. Adapted for the screen by Judith Thompson from Susan Swan's novel, *The Wives of Bath*, it tells the story of three young women's sexual awakening set against the backdrop of a conservative all-girls private school. The film also stars Piper Perabo (*Coyote Ugly*), Mischa Barton (*The Sixth Sense*), and Canadian veterans Graham Greene and Jackie Burroughs. Paré's second project with Cité-Amérique is the eight-hour miniseries *Random Passage*, based on the award-winning novels by Bernice Morgan, and starring the Irish-born actress Aoife McMahon as Mary Keane, the series' fierce heroine. Co-produced by Newfoundland's Passage Films and Ireland's Subotica Entertainment and Full Work Media, *Random Passage* combines the talents of award-winning screenwriter Des Walsh and director John N. Smith (*The Boys of St. Vincent*) to bring to life the story of a community of settlers trying to build a better life for themselves on Cape Random, a harsh and remote fishing outpost in early 1800s Newfoundland. It is scheduled to air in fall 2001 on CBC-TV.... The fall 2000 theatrical season will be rather busy for Montreal-based distributor Film Tonic. In addition to having secured Quebec rights to this year's Cannes Palme d'Or winner, Lars Von Trier's *Dancer in the Dark*, the company's schedule boasts three much-awaited Québécois independent films: Robert Favreau's *Les Muses orphelines*, an adaptation of Michel Marc Bouchard's acclaimed play; Philippe Falardeau's *La Moitié gauche du frigo*, the quirky story of a 20-something out-of-work actor who decides to make a documentary of his roommate's search for a job; and Mario Chabot's first feature, *Méchant Party*, a grating comedy set on Halloween night, starring David La Haye as a hapless junkie who kidnaps timid do-gooder Roc Lafortune.... Coming up in the next few months: Amérique Film's Sergei Eisenstein bio-fiction *Eisenstein*, a Quebec/Germany co-production, directed by Renny Bartlett; Catherine Martin's historical *Comme pour un mariage*, La Co-op Vidéo de Montréal's first feature-film production since last year's multi-award-winning *Post Mortem*; and Denis Chouinard's *L'Ange de goudron*, produced by Max Films.

Claire Valade

