

SEA

TORONTO

Toronto experienced yet another unprecedented boom year in film and TV production this past summer, on track to surpass the record \$1.2 billion that poured into the city's coffers in 1999. Over the first six months of 2000, 129 major productions (features, MOWs, TV specials and series) were recorded by the Toronto Film and Television Office. It's become a cliché to say that you can't get around the city without running into a long line of production vehicles. Hollywood stars are all over the place, to the delight of the gossip-column types who are having a field day keeping track of their wining and dining habits. Such luminaries as Jennifer Lopez, Christian Slater, Laura Dern, William H. Macy, Natasha Richardson, Denzel Washington, Leslie Nielsen and Sly Stallone kept the paparazzi hopping. And of course, the local branch of ACTRA was very pleased to announce that earnings by its members were up 30 per cent over last year. Stallone's *Champs*, a car-racing movie partially shot during the Toronto Molson Indy, had the biggest budget, worth more than \$70 million (U.S.).... Many more Hollywood stars showed up for the 25th anniversary edition of the Toronto International Film Festival, a yearly event that has become one big corporate bore. The festival snatched Denys Arcand's *Stardom* from the Montreal World Film Festival for its opening night gala, and in an unusual move, the prestigious opening night of Perspective Canada had the world premiere of Denis Villeneuve's *Maelström*, the director's follow-up to his much-heralded *Un 32 août sur terre*, making it the first time both nights honoured Quebec-produced films. Local heroes John Greyson (*The Law of Enclosures*) and Clement Virgo (*Love Come Down*) were also featured in Perspective Canada.... In the spring issue of *Take One*, in this space, it was reported that wannabe filmmaker Paris Roger was set to take on the Cannes Film Festival with filmonline.com, a Web site supposedly devoted to promoting independent Canadian films. Unfortunately, what Roger lacked in expertise, he matched with incompetence and bad luck. In a classic case of Murphy's Law, whatever could go wrong did and Roger arrived at Cannes late, with no chance of getting his Web site launched in time for the festival. His sponsors, sensing a con job, pulled out and even though the Web site is now up and running, law suits are flying thick and fast. Yet another case of an inexperienced overachiever who wanted to play with the big boys and got burnt.

Paul Townend



Jeff Solylo's *East of Euclid*

WINNIPEG

The Winnipeg Film Group is helping satisfy a demand for experimental and independent film in South America. This October a selection of member's films entitled "Fantastic Tragedies" will tour South America with screenings at the National Museum of Fine Arts in Buenos Aires and possibly The Cinemateca in Montevideo, Uruguay. The program, which includes a cross section of Guy Maddin's work and an experimental program, was organized by Ruben Guzman of the University of Buenos Aires, Vancouver independent producer Judy Robertson and Winnipeg Film Group's distributor Marlene James. "We're trying to open new doors for Canadian film in South America," said James. "There's a huge appetite for independent and experimental work down there." Meanwhile, Video Pool in Winnipeg, in conjunction with the Walker Art Centre in Minneapolis, is launching "Magnetic North", an incredibly ambitious tour of the work of 40 to 55 video artists from across Canada. The tour, beginning in October, will travel to major institutions in the United States, Europe and Canada. According to curator Jenny Lion, the program will showcase "the recent explosion of compelling and sophisticated Canadian independent video...occasionally shocking, often funny, and above all genuinely experimental".... Photographer Jeff Solylo (*Latent Greatness*) is shooting a new black-and-white feature, *East of Euclid*. Loaded with Winnipeg references (garlic sausage, hockey and the old *Tribune* newspaper), the film is set in an illegal gambling den run out of a perogie warehouse in the city's north end. Set in 1972 (the year of the glorious Russia/Canada hockey series), the film is the story of recent Russian immigrants—press photographer Valeri (Brent Neale) and Villosch the gambler (Michael O'Sullivan)—who become involved in a love triangle involving gambling and kidnapping.... Guy Maddin used a huge, abandoned bridge factory to shoot a short entitled *The Heart of the World*. The film was commissioned to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the Toronto International Film Festival. Working with some of the same art crew from *Archangel* and *Twilight of the Ice Nymphs*, the fantastic set resembled a cross between Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* and Georges Méliès' *A Trip to The Moon*. A member of the art department said they were aiming for a Russian Constructivist look. Maddin hopes to convey a "visual machine-gun blast" of imagery with additional footage from a Super 8 diary that was shot on set by filmmaker deco dawson. With dawson as co-editor, they faced a mammoth task of cutting 600 to 800 individual shots into a five-minute film.

Dave Barber

FROM SEA TO SEA