

PRELUDES

2000 75m prod Rhombus Media exp Niv Fichman CAMERA p Jody Shapiro d/sc David Cronenberg ph André Pienaar ed Ronald Sanders pd Carol Spier s Bruce Carwardine, David Evans, John Laing, Lou Solakofski m Howard Shore with Les Carlson; **THE LINE** p Jody Shapiro d/sc Atom Egoyan ph Paul Sarossy ed David Wharnsby pd Phillip Barker s Ross Redfern, Steve Munro, Daniel Pellerin m Mychael Danna; **CONGRATULATIONS** p Paul Pope, Jody Shapiro d/sc Mike Jones ph Robert J. Petrie ed Derek Norman pd Pam Hall s David McCallum, Lou Solakofski m Paul Steffler with Mike, Andy and Cathy Jones; **SEE YOU IN TORONTO** p Edouard Faribault, Jody Shapiro d/sc Jean Pierre Lefebvre ph Robert Vanherveghen with Marcel Sabourin; **THE HEART OF THE WORLD** p Jody Shapiro d/sc/ph Guy Maddin ed Guy Maddin, Deco Dawson pd Rejean Labrie s David McCallum, Lou Solakofski with Leslie Bais, Caelum Vatnsdal, Shaun Balbar, Greg Klymkiw; **A WORD FROM THE MANAGEMENT** p Jody Shapiro d/sc Don McKellar ph Douglas Koch ed Christopher Donaldson s John Thomson, Steve Munro, Daniel Pellerin with Don McKellar; **24FPS** p Jody Shapiro d/sc Jeremy Podeswa ph Greg Middleton ed David Wharnsby s Alan Geldart, David McCallum, Lou Solakofski m Alex Pauk, Alexina Louie; **THIS MIGHT BE GOOD** p Jody Shapiro d/sc Patricia Rozema ph André Pienaar ed Michelle Czukar pd Kathleen Climie s Bissa, David McCallum, Lou Solakofski m Lesley Barber with Sarah Polley, Don McKellar, Mark McKinney, Fides Krucker; **Prelude** p Jody Shapiro d/sc Michael Snow ph Luc Montpellier ed David Wharnsby pd Phillip Barker s John Thompson, David McCallum, Lou Solakofski m CCMC, Michael Snow with Esther Jun, Diane Sidik, Bill Chan, Tuan Tran, Leanne Poon, Robert Lee; **LEGS APART** p Peter Lhotka, Jody Shapiro d/sc Anne Wheeler ph David Frazee ed Lara Mazur s Shane Connelly, James Genn, Paul Sharpe, Iain Pattison m Tim McCauley with Patricia Harras, Hrothgar Mathews, Alec Willows, Tom Butler, Gabrielle Rose.

Let us now praise Guy Maddin. Unlike his compatriots across the country, the wonderfully eccentric filmmaker from Winnipeg rose to the challenge offered by Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) director Piers Handling to make a short piece on any subject as a prelude for TIFF's 25th anniversary. While directors ranging from Anne Wheeler to Jean Pierre Lefebvre created safe, predictable appetizers for the cinematic main courses offered by the festival's featured galas, Maddin decided to go where artists should always roam, on the outside, and into the wilderness of his own fevered imagination. *The Heart of the World*, Maddin's celebration of the abused genre of melodrama stirred audiences at the festival and it will surely do so again during its extended run on the nationwide TMN – The Movie Network cable channels.

To be fair to the other directors, the *Preludes* were not set up in a way that would inspire anyone to think big. Conceived by Piers Handling to honour the festival, the whole project was put into place, like so many Toronto events, over a glass of wine with cronies in a downtown bistro. Bill House, then of Telefilm Canada and now of Alliance Atlantis, festival insider Debra Henderson, Rhombus producer Niv Fichman and Sun Life Financial's Robert Pattillo were there with Handling that evening, ready to lend monetary and technical assistance to his notion that Canadian filmmakers be asked to create short pieces as their tributes to the festival.

Just like a westerner's concept of a Canada Council jury, the selection of the 10 filmmakers for *Preludes* was ostensibly countrywide while being heavily skewed toward Toronto. The Atlantic provinces are represented by Newfoundland's Mike Jones, Quebec by old-timer Jean Pierre Lefebvre, the west coast by Anne Wheeler and the Prairies – thank the cinematic gods! – by Guy Maddin. The other six filmmakers – Jeremy Podeswa, Patricia Rozema, Michael Snow, Atom Egoyan, Don McKellar and David Cronenberg – just happen to live within two miles of TIFF's headquarters at Carlton and Yonge.



Anne Wheeler's *Legs Apart*

Although Handling offered all filmmakers carte blanche, most must have assumed that they were being called upon to produce little cinematic bonbons. Mike Jones's *Congratulations* is a sly piece in which a helicopter plucks the Jones family – Cathy, Andy and Mike – from obscurity on an outport farm into the limelight, temporarily, so they can send a congratulatory message to the bigwigs down in Toronto. Anne Wheeler's *Legs Apart* equates filmmaking with delivering a baby; it's a lame comedy that no hospital official or script doctor could fix. Even worse is Lefebvre's *See You in Toronto* in which a bewigged Québécois (Marcel Sabourin) gives us a history lesson on imperialism in politics and the cinema. Somehow, the Toronto festival escapes radical analysis as an Anglo institution; however, and rather shockingly, the pretentious narrator gets the date of the festival's inaugural year wrong – it was 1976, not 1975, Jean Pierre.

Festival insiders Egoyan and McKellar produced similarly minor works. Using a tracking shot and a script culled from Egoyan's own memories of lineups during the festival's early years, *The Line 1976–2000* has the air of a nice knock-off about it. So does McKellar's *A Word From the Management*, which, again, is built around the filmmaker's memories of being a theatre manager at the festival, 15 years ago.

Patricia Rozema's *This Might Be Good* is so well-edited and shot that it arrives at a higher level of achievement than do her two friends in the Toronto film scene. McKellar pops up here, again, as a film projectionist who charms star Sarah Polley when she realizes that her lover has shown up with his wife at a film festival gala. Jeremy Podeswa's *24fps* is a heartfelt tribute to cinema and memory. Using a wonderful score by Alex Pauk and Alexina Louie, based on Colin McPhee's Balinese compositions, the film recounts his father's love of Marcel Carne's *Les Enfants du Paradis*, an epic romantic film of the 1940s.

Rather more arty are the entries by two of Toronto's most feted filmmakers, David Cronenberg and Michael Snow. *Camera* by

REVIEWS

Guy Maddin's
The Heart of the World



Cronenberg takes a disturbing premise, the relationship between photography and death, but does little to dramatize it. *Prelude by Snow*, is a typically arbitrary film in which the sound for a narrative piece is presented backwards to the visuals we are seeing on the screen. A nice experiment, but...

...and then there's Maddin. As he has ironically noted, "I thought I'd just lie low in the bushes and ambush some of those other feature filmmakers." He most certainly did, creating a cinematic masterpiece that recalls elements of Lang's *Metropolis*, Eisenstein's *Potemkin* and Murnau's *The Last Laugh*. Shot in a warehouse in Winnipeg, Maddin evokes the magical art direction of the 1920s, combines it with a melodrama worthy of Dickens while gripping audiences with his propulsive editing style. It's a deranged silent classic resurrected like a Frankenstein beast that isn't afraid to strut itself in front of a stage lit with a single word, Kino.

Kino or cinema is what the festival is all about. Maddin has provided Handling with the sweetest of tributes, a work that reminds us all why we give a damn about the movies. ●

MARC GLASSMAN

Mike Jones's *Congratulations*



NEW WATERFORD GIRL

2000 97m prod Sienna Films, Imagex Production exp Christopher Zimmer, Ted East, Victor Lowery p Jennifer Kawaja, Julia Sereny d Allan Moyle sc/ap Tricia Fish ph Derk Rogers ed Susan Maggi pd Emanuel Jannasch sr Christian T. Cooke s ed Paul Virostek m Geoff Bennett, Longo Hai, Ben Johannesen with Liane Balaban, Tara Spencer-Nairn, Nicholas Campbell, Mary Walsh, Andrew McCarthy, Mark McKinney.

Fifteen-year-old Mooney Pottie is lying on her back watching the clouds go by, daydreaming about exotic places. With voice-over, she tells the story of her life in a small Nova Scotia town during the 1970s. Mooney is the town misfit, always reading a book, doing her best to ignore what's going on around her. Presently, new neighbours move in next door: the 16-year-old, Lou, and her mother, Midge, a Latin-dance instructor. Lou and Mooney become friends

While putting up flyers around town to attract people to her mother's dance lessons, Lou gets harassed by three local toughs. Meanwhile, Mooney watches a pregnant girl get on a train to go to her aunt in California and envies her for getting out of town. Lou picks Mooney up and they go cruising. She tells Mooney that her father is in jail because he killed someone in the boxing ring. She takes her to a bootlegger and then to a party where they meet another friend who has to go to Antigonish to have her child. A boy at the party who is pestering her becomes Lou's first knockout. The three tough girls seek Lou out, and ask her to find and take care of a two-timing boyfriend; Which she does, decking him with the expression, "if they fall, they're guilty."

Mooney devises a plan to pretend to have sex and get a reputation of being the town "slut," while Lou becomes the instrument of every girl's revenge. Mooney let's her parents know that she's pregnant, and her sisters concur that she's a