

# Quebec

Robert Villefranche

**D**ISCOVERING WHICH people of colour are making films in Quebec can be tricky. There are no catalogues or statistics available. Jean-Daniel Lafond's new film *Tropique Nord* deals with many of the issues that make Quebec a difficult place for people of colour working in film and video. Ironically, Lafond is a French immigrant, married to Haitian-Canadian broadcaster Michaëlle Jean.

*Tropique Nord*'s tagline, "How to be Black and Quebecois in a society that is searching for its own identity," aptly reflects the situation. Quebec is busy trying to keep its historic culture alive; anything else seems distracting. But slowly, some filmmakers are emerging.

Alanis Obomsawin's celebrated *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance* continues her challenge to Canadian institutions. Historian Paul Brown is putting together a series on Black Canadian history, and Maureen Hill is working steadily on a feature film called *The Zam Zam Well*, dealing with female circumcision in Africa. There is a group of filmmakers at the National Film Board's Studio D being organized under the leadership of Toronto producer Claire Prieto, ready to follow Michelle Wong (*Return Home*) in finishing films through the Studio. NFB animator Michael Fukushima (*Minoru: Memories of Exile*) is working on a new project, and out in Greenfield Park, Nancy Tatebe is completing her half-hour film *Home Movie*.

Hunt Ho, with two low-budget features to his credit, is preparing a short film. Concordia students Kwan Ho and Ruey Wei How are both finishing films this year, suggesting that the same film department that produced Vrajesh Hanspal's *Trait D'Union* may be the new hotbed for cinema by people of colour.

In Quebec's Latin American community, German Gutierrez, who worked on a series presented by CBC called *Amerique 500*, continues to develop new projects, as does Carlos Ferrand, who made the feature film *Cuervo*, and Victor Regalado, a filmmaker from El Salvador.

Beyond the film scene, there are also people like Julian Samuel working in video, and myself on cable television. There's still much to do, but things seem to be improving.

## Atlantic Provinces

Errol Williams

**F**ILMMAKERS HERE are quite busy. Sylvia Hamilton of Halifax has just finished writing an hour-long documentary on the Jones family of Truro, Nova Scotia. Through them she traces the lives of many Blacks in Nova Scotian and Canadian society. The documentary is also a commemoration of the Number Two Battalion, a segregated unit of Black Canadian men who were gathered in Nova Scotia to fight in World War

One. The film is expected to be released in April, 1994, as part of a series on Black history produced by Almeta Speaks. Hamilton is also working on a documentary on employment equity for the CBC.

Hamilton's last film *Speak It!* is enjoying great success. It screened at the Margaret Mead Film Festival in New York, won an award at the Atlantic Film Festival, and also won the Canada Award at the 1994 Gemini, given to a film which best exemplifies Canada's multicultural identity.

Buseje Bailey, also a Halifax resident, has just returned from a trip to Jamaica, New York, Ghana and Nigeria, where she shot footage she intends to use in a series of shorts about race and culture. The first of the series is titled *Depoliticization of De Image*, about youth and art in Jamaica.

As for me, I'm completing two films as part of a project organized by the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission. *Masks* is a 60-second anti-racist public service announcement. *A Parable in Black and White* is a Chaplinesque tale of a two tramps, one black, one white, who experience different degrees of prejudice. Both films were shot and edited at the N.B. Filmmakers' Cooperative. I'm also finishing an hour-long documentary called *Echoes In The Rink: The Willie O'Ree Story*. It should be ready for the festival circuit in the fall •

MICHELLE WONG's *Return Home*

