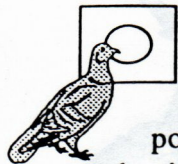


November '96

PIGEON HOLE

MOVIE MONDAY SALUTES CANADIAN MOVIES



I'm not a film critic, I don't have time, or take the time, to keep on top of all the wonderful (let alone the mediocre and downright awful) stuff pouring out of the industry each year. I haven't seen the length and breadth of the classics and worthy films produced over the years, so this is dangerous ground for me. I DO, HOWEVER, KNOW WHAT I LIKE . . . and a good number of those I like best are Canadian.

Not, I hope, entirely blinded by national pride, I see a freshness, inventiveness, an ingenuity - probably partly born of necessity - in many of our best films. Our industry hasn't the same financial power behind it that the Hollywood engine provides. An example is **Atom Egoyan's** first short feature. *Next Of Kin*, (not to be confused with the Patrick Swayze flick of the other type) is a gem of a great small story, artfully and thriftily told. It was produced on a legendary small budget, profit sharing promises, volunteer participation, and minimal borrowed equipment. But it still stands as a fine little move that Atom, even though he's in the big leagues now, must feel proud to have made.

Another thing that's really cool about our industry is that the people are still pretty accessible and genuinely nice folks. Anne Wheeler was very generous with me when I approached her by phone. Besides making the November 11 show available she suggested other works of hers that might be of interest to Movie Monday's audience. She talks in the documentary **Teru Teru Bozu** about the integrity of the truthfulness of the story and authenticity of the characters' experience and setting being so important.

The same factors shine through in Mort Ransen's **Margaret's Museum**. Even though he learned by bitter experience that to make a film work at the box office you need a big star, and Bonham Carter was a great catch, the location and experience are all true Canadian. (The actual mine site local did have to be shot in Scotland as our old mine buildings had been dismantled.) Wexler's and Ransen's script was based on short stories by Sheldon Currie who *"had only narrowly escaped the coal face. His father had secretly taken steps to prevent him being hired ... Currie's father had good reason to discourage his son. He had himself been crippled in a cave-in when he was in his 40's. [Currie] also had uncles and cousins, an aunt whose husband was mangled, almost everybody had somebody who was hurt or killed."* That experience is powerfully relayed through Ransen's deft direction. Check out the *Globe & Mail* article in our lobby. Mort is also a genuinely nice guy, I am sorry I was stuck behind my own camera when I met him at Salt Spring Cinema's Gala.

What needs to be said about Mordecai Richler's works? **The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz** and **Joshua Then And Now** are both huge favourites of mine and for precisely the same reasons. Richler wrote the screenplays for both from his own rich experience and conspired with director Ted Kitchoff to share that with us. Aren't we lucky! I'm proud to present these great Canadian movies at Movie Monday - ENJOY! More on Canadian picks next time ...

Bruce Saunders  
Movie Monday Presenter



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