

**TELEFILM**  
C A N A D A

NOTES FOR A SPEECH BY

**MICHEL ROY**  
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

AT THE 2016 ANNUAL PUBLIC ASSEMBLY

NOVEMBER 30, 2016  
VANCOUVER

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

Thank you, Jacqueline.

Hello, Ladies and Gentlemen, dear industry colleagues, and hello to all the Telefilm employees across the country watching us on Facebook.

I would like to thank the Vancouver International Film Festival for hosting us today in this terrific theatre. It's a pleasure for us to meet you here in this city that has been aptly dubbed Hollywood North.

Our Annual Public Assembly is an opportunity to report on our work and to continue our dialogue with all our partners.

We'll talk to you this morning about vision, achievements, but also about memories, since 2017 will mark the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Telefilm. And Carolle Brabant will then comment on the results of fiscal 2015-2016 as indicated in the annual report that we are launching today under the title *Celebrating 50 years of talent*.

Although Telefilm's creation dates back to 1967, filmmakers organized the very first Canadian film gala, the Canadian Film Awards, in 1949.

The third edition of these awards was hosted by none other than "America's Sweetheart," Canadian Mary Pickford. All of this augured well, but we would have to wait another 10 years before the vision of a true Canadian film industry was born.

The great visionary John Grierson, founder of the National Film Board of Canada, and Michael Spencer, the NFB's Director of Planning, both of British origin, were very impressed by the creativity of our people.

They dreamed of offering Canadians more stories based on Canadian experiences. And they were supported by a group of very young directors determined to forge a career in film, including David Cronenberg and Denys Arcand.

Despite the initial enthusiasm, the creation of Telefilm Canada was a real saga. Some of its detractors viewed government intervention as a socialist measure to be repressed. After a tour of Europe and numerous presentations to the government, an original model for funding films in Canada was developed and approved.

The driving force behind this model was Michael Spencer, who would later become the first executive director of Telefilm. Mr. Spencer sadly died in 2016, and a great many of us gathered to pay tribute to his commitment and vision.

The films from the first decade have become our classics, among them:

- *The Apprenticeship of Duddy Kravitz* by Ted Kotcheff;
- *Goin' Down the Road* by Don Shebib;

- *Réjeanne Padovani* by Denys Arcand; and
- *La Vraie nature de Bernadette* by Gilles Carle.

And, since the 1980s, you, here out West, have chipped in with your share of the classics:

- *The Grey Fox* by Phillip Borsos;
- *My American Cousin* by Sandy Wilson;
- *Loyalties* by Anne Wheeler; and
- *Tales from the Gimli Hospital* by Guy Maddin.

We must also recognize the works of Gil Cardinal, which have all marked the history of Canadian filmmaking.

And, of course, *Madeleine Is...*, shot here on the West Coast, was the first Canadian fiction film directed by a woman, Sylvia Spring, in 1971. The very next year, in Montreal, Mireille Dansereau directed *La Vie rêvée*.

In 1983, proud of the results obtained in the film industry and wanting to breathe new life into the Canadian television industry that was producing its own programs, and in order to stimulate the development of a private industry, the government created the Canadian Broadcast Program Development Fund. This fund went through various versions, and then finally became the Canada Media Fund in 2006. I would like to take this opportunity to thank CMF president and CEO Valerie Creighton and her team, who share our passion for homegrown talent.

With productions such as *Motive* and *The Romeo Section*, or classics like *Da Vinci's Inquest* and *Cold Squad*, British Columbia has greatly contributed to the expansion of our television industry.

At that time, Canadian drama and animation series were already selling in more than 150 countries. Remember *Anne of Green Gables* and *Theodore Tugboat*?

There were more Canadian audiovisual companies—more diversified and more solid companies—that were calling for increased support from the Canadian government.

The creation of other funds would follow:

- The Feature Film Fund in 1986;
- The Feature Film Distribution Fund in 1988; and then, 10 years down the road,
- The experimental multimedia program was implemented to help Canadian talent take its place in an as-yet very mysterious digital world.

At the end of the last century, we had yet to know that our environment was going to require so much adaptability and openness. The Vancouver International Film Festival just held its 34<sup>th</sup> edition under the theme *Expand the Frame...* As we can see, change is still on the agenda.

I would like to congratulate the following VIFF winners:

- Ann Marie Fleming, director of *Window Horses*, recipient of the Best B.C. Film Award and Best Canadian Awards;
- Kevan Funk, director of *Hello Destroyer*, winner of the B.C. Emerging Filmmaker Award; and
- Sofia Bohdanowicz, who took home the Emerging Canadian Director Prize for *Never Eat Alone*.

Over the years, British Columbia has developed a unique expertise in foreign location shooting, with 261 projects totalling nearly \$2 billion last year alone. Among other productions, *Supernatural*, *Deadpool*, *Arrow*, *The Flash*, were all shot here. This is a great tribute to Canadian know-how.

And so, an emerging industry has transformed itself over the years into an impressive economic and cultural force, with an annual contribution of nearly \$9 billion to Canada's GDP and work for more than 148,000 full-time employees.

Today, we enjoy coproduction agreements with 55 countries—some of which date back 40 years—and we have just signed a new agreement with Jordan. From 2005 to 2014, total Canadian coproduction volume rose to \$4.8 billion.

And, this year, Canada's pick for the Best Foreign Language Film Oscar is a coproduction with France called *Juste la fin du monde (It's Only the End of the World)* by Xavier Dolan.

Thanks to the determination and perseverance of Carolle Brabant, our executive director, Canada is now part of Eurimages, the 37-country European co-production and promotion fund. This is a significant recognition for Canada as we are the first country outside the European economic area to participate in Eurimages.

I have just begun my 10<sup>th</sup> and last year as chair of Telefilm Canada. This decade has been marked by enormous change and by the evolution of a remarkable industry comprising film, television and digital media. I am finishing this last year with a great deal of pride.

And I'm proud of the support we have given to the next generation of filmmakers.

The Micro-Budget Production Program has already financed 55 projects from promising filmmakers. Many of these micro-budget projects were successful both nationally and internationally, including:

- *The Editor*;
- *Un film de chasse de filles*;
- *Le Dep*; and
- *The Space Between*.

And most recently, Ashley McKenzie's *Werewolf* has also embarked upon a brilliant career.

And what especially impresses me is that the filmmakers in the Program are enthusiastically welcomed in their own regions.

Their first feature films are touching the hearts of their fellow citizens. *The Devout*, by Victoria filmmaker Connor Gaston, walked away with seven prizes at the 2016 Leo Awards, and *Cast No Shadow*, by Halifax filmmaker Christian Sparkes, took home six awards at the 2014 Atlantic Film Festival.

Thank you to our partners, Capilano University's Bosa Centre for Film and Animation, On Screen Manitoba, the Calgary Society of Independent Filmmakers, the Adam Beach Institute, the Film and Video Arts Society of Alberta, the National Screen Institute and the 40 or so other training and co-op schools that, each year, suggest projects from promising filmmakers, including several Indigenous and official minority-language filmmakers. Thank you also to our partner Technicolor, which provides free digital encoding services for the projects.

The Talent Fund, a private donation fund set up by Telefilm for the next generation of creators, finances more than 75% of the Micro-Budget Production Program. I would like to take this opportunity to recognize some of the members of the Talent Fund Advisory Committee that are from Western Canada:

- Its chair, Hartley T. Richardson, from Manitoba;
- David Aisenstat and Sandi Treiving, from British Columbia; and
- Carol R. Hill, from Saskatchewan.

I do not want to forget another prolific partnership: the one between Telefilm and the Rogers Group of Funds.

Over the past 10 years, we've financed 61 theatrical documentary projects, 38 with Rogers, including:

- *China Heavyweight*;
- *La nuit, elles dansent*; and, more recently,
- *Koneline: Our Land Beautiful*, by Vancouver filmmaker Nettie Wild, about the Tahltan First Nation. We're already indebted to Wild for her unforgettable *A Place Called Chiapas*.

Lastly, I'm also proud of Telefilm's administrative performance. Governance and strategic planning have been at the heart of both of my terms as chair of the Board.

We have consulted the industry extensively. We have simplified and modernized the way we do things and now invest a greater percentage of our funds directly in programs that support our

works. We have improved our services to become a more flexible and more efficient administrator that encourages mentorship and rewards success.

In the last federal budget, the government confirmed an increase in Telefilm's parliamentary appropriation of \$22 million over the next five years, \$2 million of which is for this year, and \$5 million for each of the following four years. Telefilm will devote this year's increase primarily to international marketing and coproduction.

We will take advantage of the coming months to lay the foundations for Telefilm's next strategic vision, starting in 2018.

This vision will include the commitment we made last September to deliver a representative and diversified portfolio of films that more accurately reflects gender parity, cultural diversity and Indigenous communities by 2020. Telefilm will keep its word.

In closing, I want there to be even more young dynamic entrepreneurs in film, television and digital media who are able to achieve the careers of their dreams. That is our future.

I would like more partners from all sectors to unite in order to promote Canadian stories, so as to increase their visibility and appeal both at home and abroad.

Creation is an act of freedom, openness and discovery; it is as vital as the air we breathe.

Dear artists and artisans of the audiovisual industry, we need you: we need your images, we need your stories to entertain us, to educate us, to make us think, so that we may better understand the world we live in, and so that we may better understand ourselves.

A year from now, when I have left Telefilm, rest assured that I will continue to be curious about everything you're producing.

I will do so from my small village on the banks of the St. Lawrence River, in a house where I now live and where scenes from the 1973 NFB film, *Tendresse ordinaire*, directed by Jacques Leduc, were shot. And I will always have an incredible soft spot in my heart, an out-of-the-ordinary tenderness for our homegrown cinema.

Thank you for joining us today.