

OMDC: "Culture is our Business." Promoting growth and investment in Ontario's book and magazine publishing, film and television, music and interactive digital media industries

Hardwood Goes to the Oscars®

Even before its Oscar® nomination for best documentary short, *Hardwood* was already a rare thing: an intimate, quiet study of both a family's dysfunction and its function. That the family happens to be the director's own makes it rarer still, by telling a personal and still-raw narrative with neither indulgence nor self-pity.

Although under 30 minutes in length, *Hardwood's* cinematic and emotional journey makes it one of the year's most honest and moving films.

Its confident and understated storytelling would have made *Hardwood* an achievement of high order for the most seasoned professionals, but this is the work of young filmmakers. *Hardwood*, in fact, signals the auspicious debuts of both director Hubert Davis and producer Erin Faith Young. The National Film Board's Peter Starr is co-producer.

A McGill University graduate with a Bachelor of Arts in Film and Communication, Davis, of Toronto, continued his education in film at the University of British Columbia, studying creative writing under screenwriter Peggy Thompson (*The Lotus Eaters*, *Better than Chocolate*). He has worked as an assistant editor on Deepa Mehta's features *Bollywood/Hollywood* and *The Republic of Love*, and in just two years has edited more than 30 commercials and music videos. Not content to wear a single hat for his directoral debut, Davis is also *Hardwood's* writer and editor.

When he initially conceived the project, Davis intended simply to document his father's former career as a Harlem Globetrotter. Instead, he says, "I couldn't tell my father's story without telling my own. And I couldn't tell my story without telling my family's." So the film became a record, and a reckoning, of Mel Davis's life choices, told principally by those he loved, and hurt, and left in turn. Choices such as his falling in love at first sight with Hubert's mother, a white woman in Canada; his stormy first marriage to a black woman in Chicago, the mother of Hubert's half-brother; and his father's eventual choice to follow his heart and leave his Chicago wife and child for Vancouver, where he at last wed his first love.

Mel's betrayal of one family and then the other, and how each have coped with the sometimes fractious and often absent partner and father, is the film that *Hardwood* became, and the reason it resonates with so many viewers.

Reflecting on all that has happened, Davis says, "A nomination for my first film—amazing! It is very gratifying to turn the camera onto my family, tell our Canadian story and then have it received so well."

Guelph native Erin Faith Young is a graduate of Sheridan College's Post-Graduate Diploma in Film and Television, and has been involved in many productions, including assistant to director Mehta on *Bollywood/Hollywood*. She works with producer Debbie Nightingale, of The Nightingale Company; her projects include the teen series *Get Outta Town!*

In 2003, Young's own company, Faith Films, was the recipient of OMDC's Al Waxman Calling Card \$45,000 grant to produce *Hardwood*, in co-production with the National Film Board of Canada (Peter Starr) in partnership with TVOntario.

That the finished work has gone on to move audiences and wow critics is a testament to the talents of Erin Faith Young and Hubert Davis, as well as to the value and virtue of the funding program. *Hardwood* was a hit at last year's Hot Docs festival, and has received awards at the Yorkton Short Film and Video Festival in Saskatoon and the Canadian Film Centre's Worldwide Short Film Festival in Toronto.

As wonderful as all that has been, it's only the beginning for the *Hardwood* team. Since December, Faith Young has known *Hardwood* was a contender, having made the short-list of 10 films from which the documentary short nominees were to be drawn. Then, on the morning of Jan. 25, after nervously reloading the official Academy website for the news, Young learned *Hardwood* had indeed made it to the Big Show. "I've been in shock ever since," Young told *The Guelph Mercury*. "I just screamed."

With fingers crossed, we hope to hear even louder screams Feb. 27, coming from the direction of Hollywood's Kodak Theatre.

E-mail your news and events by the third Thursday of each month to newsletter@omdc.on.ca

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OMDC Connects Our Music to the World at Canadian Music Week

"Let's get down to business" at Canadian Music Week (CMW), March 2 to 5. OMDC is taking the lead in ensuring that the business side of the industry will be able to connect to more international delegates than ever before at CMW's conference, trade show and festival.

OMDC International Marketplace at CMW, in the Fairmont Royal York's Territories Room, will connect Canadian businesses to conference delegates from around the world. Building on the successes of the past two years, OMDC teamed up with CMW, CIRPA (the Canadian Independent Record Production Association), the Department of Canadian Heritage—Trade Routes Program, International Trade Canada and Team Canada Inc. to put resources and know-how behind this initiative.

In the months leading up to CMW, OMDC and partners worked with international governments and trade organizations to recruit international delegations including official delegations from the UK, Australia, France, Germany and Japan. Record companies, distributors, agents, promoters and media are all planning to attend. OMDC expects CMW to be an excellent place to do business for those selling and looking to import and export. OMDC International Marketplace will facilitate these business deals.

International delegates are listed on the CMW website and will be included in a directory on OMDC's website and at the International Marketplace. Conference attendees can review the list and leave word at OMDC International Marketplace regarding the delegates they'd like to meet. OMDC will help coordinate these meetings, which can be held within the Marketplace itself.

"Ontario's music industry is looking to explore new markets," says Marcelle Lean, OMDC Chair. "OMDC is working with all our partners to ensure that we expand the reach of our music industry to both domestic and foreign markets."

OMDC International Marketplace is open to all Executive Conference delegates and will be open from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on March 3 to 5 in the Territories Room. There is also a place for orientation sessions and market overviews on various international territories. Schedules of these events will be available at the conference and will be posted on OMDC's website, www.omdc.on.ca by Feb. 23, 2005. Stop in and get connected!

To get involved in Canadian Music Week, see www.cmw.net to register for the Executive Conference or buy a Festival-only wristband through www.ticketmaster.ca.

OMDC Updates and News

On Feb. 8 and 9, OMDC hosted 200 of Ontario's cultural industry leaders at the annual Six Degrees of Integration Conference on leadership with keynote speakers Allan Gregg, The Strategic Counsel, Graham Henderson, President of Canadian Recording Industry Association, Hon. Minister of Culture Madeleine Meilleur, and Jim Hayhurst, founder of the Right Mountain. There was a lively panel discussion moderated by OMDC's CEO, Michel Frappier, who posed the question: **"Is leadership in cultural businesses different than in other businesses?"** Panelists Andy Burgess, Somerset Entertainment Ltd.; Ron Estey, C.O.R.E. Digital Pictures; Marina Glogovac, Cue Ball Media; Lillyann Goldstein, @Wallace Avenue Studios and Doug Pepper, McClelland & Stewart Ltd. provided their insights on this question.

At the recent **Ontario Library Association (OLA) Super Conference** held at Toronto's Metro Convention Centre, the Organization of Book Publishers of Ontario (OBPO), Canadian Independent Record Production Association (CIRPA) and the Canadian Magazine Publishers' Association (CMPA) created an exciting exhibition of Canadian books, sound recordings and magazines. OLA is Canada's largest library association and the trade show is one of the focal points of the Super Conference for its 4,000 delegates. Working in partnership with OLA, the Ontario Cultural Pavilion showcased products from 17 Ontario book publishers, nine independent record labels and 50 magazines. Supported with funding from OMDC and the Ministry of Culture, a unique and interesting display of Ontario cultural products provided librarians with a great one-stop exhibition. Authors and musicians read, performed and signed their works during the conference.

Culture Minister, Madeleine Meilleur, opened the Pavilion. In her remarks Minister Meilleur stressed the importance of Ontario's public libraries as "hubs of community life" and "important in encouraging literacy and supporting our children's education." The Minister commented on the collaborations of the associations, the Ministry, OMDC and the Ontario Library Association, noting that, "As a cultural marketplace, the Ontario Cultural Pavilion can pave the way for Ontario's cultural products to have a greater presence within our library system, serving to enrich the lives of all Ontarians."

OMDC co-sponsored the Canadian Music Publishers Association's extremely successful inaugural **Digital Music Summit** with the common goal to open up channels of dialogue and explore creative business opportunities between the music and digital industries.

Earlier this month, OMDC also sponsored an award to honour Frank Davies at the Canadian Songwriters Hall of Fame Gala. For a list of honourees, go to www.cansong.ca.

At **The Sunny Side of the Doc Toronto Encounters**, a co-production forum organized by OMDC, Marcelle Lean, OMDC's Chair, personally welcomed a French delegation of Documentary filmmakers and broadcasters to the event. The successful forum fostered new relationships that will benefit and strengthen the ties between Canada and France. Ontario has great talent, award-winning documentary filmmakers and broadcasters who know a good story when they hear it. This event ensured that they heard Ontario's stories too. Lean delivered the message that "Ontario is open for business and Ontario companies are eager to work with them on co-production partnerships."

Congratulations!

OMDC's Director of Tax Credits, **Len Pendergast** has been appointed Vice President at Independent Film Financing Inc., effective at the end of February. OMDC would like to thank Len for his years of commitment and dedication to the agency and OMDC's cultural businesses. We wish Len all the best in this new and exciting endeavour. Gina Vanni will be Acting Director of Tax Credits.

Congratulations to the **OMDC's Al Waxman Calling Card Program for Documentary** producers Samantha Hodder and director Geoffrey Siskind for *The Mantelpiece* and Erin Faith Young and director Hubert Davies for *Hardwood*. Both films were selected for a short documentary competition program at the prestigious Big Sky Documentary Festival in Missoula, Montana. The Big Sky festival focuses on the highest quality documentary films without any restriction on theme. Nearly 600 films were submitted for consideration!

Congratulations to the eight successful applicants to **OMDC's Market Access Program**, who will attend KidScreen Summit in New York from Feb. 16 to 18 with consultant Loredana Cunti of Fresh Folklore. The participants are: Jeff Bastedo of Big Fat Toe, Liz Haines of Tapas Productions Inc., Michelle Henderson of The Children's Group Inc., Matt Hornburg of Marblemedia, Barbara Jones of SailorJones Media, Andrea Nemtin of PTV Productions, Rick Wilks of Annick Press Ltd., and Margie Wolfe of Second Story Press.

Kudos also go to Kim Kuhteubl, producer, and Amy McConnell, director, of the Al Waxman Calling Card documentary *Nigel's Fingerprint*. The film won the Diploma of Honour for short films at Roshd International Film Festival in Iran. The Roshd International Film Festival is in its 34th year, and it is the oldest film festival in the Middle East. The event featured 134 films from 19 countries. Its focus was on children and education.

On Feb. 1, **The Writers' Trust of Canada** announced the finalists for literary awards in Canadian fiction, non-fiction and biography. The nominees for the

Rogers Writers' Trust Fiction Prize (\$15,000) are Alice Munro for *Runaway*; Michael Helm for *In the Place of Last Things*; Colin McAdam for *Some Great Thing*; Jeffrey Moore for *The Memory Artists* and Russell Smith for *Muriella Pent*. Nominated for the Pearson Writers' Trust Non-Fiction Prize (\$15,000) are Shaughnessy Bishop-Stall for *Down to This: Squalor and Splendour in a Big-City Shantytown*; Elaine Dewar for *The Second Tree: Of Clones, Chimeras and Quests for Immortality*; Trevor Herriot for *Jacob's Wound: A Search for the Spirit of Wildness*; Patrick Lane for *There Is a Season: A Memoir in a Garden*; and Charles Montgomery for *The Last Heathen: Encounters with Ghosts and Ancestors in Melanesia*. The Journey Prize, the Biography prize, the award for Children's Literature, the Marian Engel Award and other awards will be presented at the Jane Mallett Theatre, March 9 in Toronto at the fourth annual Great Literary Awards. Total prize money to be awarded to Canadian writers totals \$133,000. www.writerstrust.com.

Congratulations to Toronto authors Christopher Dewdney and Paul William Roberts, whose respective books *Acquainted With the Night: Excursions Through the World After Dark* and *A War Against Truth: An Intimate Account of the Invasion of Iraq* have been shortlisted for the **Charles Taylor Prize for Literary Non-fiction**. The \$25,000 prize is the highest award since its inception in 2000. This year's recipient will be announced Feb. 28. The finalists will discuss their books on Feb. 27 at the Books & Brunch series at the Meridien King Edward Hotel. For tickets call 416-777-2665. www.thecharlestaylorprize.ca

The nominations for the **25th Annual Genie Awards** in 21 categories were announced on Feb. 8. For a full list of nominated films, go to www.academy.ca. The Genies will be broadcast on CityTV and Bravo on March 21 at 8 p.m.

The **34th Annual Juno Award** nominations are in! This year the Junos will be held in Winnipeg, hosted by Brent Butt. Watch the action on CTV, April 3 at 8 p.m. and check out Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (CARAS) Web site at www.junoawards.ca.

Upcoming Events and Industry Deadlines

Feb. 26 | **Doc Saturdays 2005** is a series of day-long workshops taught by leading industry professionals and guest lecturers. For information on registration fees and how to apply, email alessandra@docorg.ca.

Feb. 28 | Nominations due for the **Canadian New Media Awards**. Three finalists per category will be selected. The awards will be handed out on May 30. www.cnma.ca

Feb. 28 | Submissions due for **Canadian Film Centre's Worldwide Short Film Festival (WWSFF)**, which runs from June 14 to 19. WWSFF presents over 200 short films and videos from Canada and around the world in competition screenings and special programs. The Short Film BIG IDEAS Symposium offers seminars, panels and workshops on the art and commerce of short filmmaking. Participating films are eligible for a Festival prize package worth over \$40,000 and possible consideration for the Academy Awards. www.worldwideshortfilmfest.com

March 11-20 | **CMPA Professional Publishing Program**. This popular training program develops leaders in the Canadian magazine industry by providing the essentials of a successful publishing strategy. Queen's Landing Inn and

Conference Centre, Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont. www.cmpa.ca or cmpamtn@cmpa.ca.

March 15 | Deadlines for **COGECO and Independent Production Fund programs** are as follows: IPF, March 15, May 1 and Oct. 15; COGECO Development and Production, March 1 and July 1; The Theatrical Feature, Oct 1. www.ipf.ca

March 17 | **The Canadian High Commission** is considering organizing a videoconference on March 17 that would allow Canadian developers and programmers to interact with UK industry professionals. Because of the logistics involved, they are only considering four locations: Vancouver, Calgary, Toronto and Montreal. If you'd like to participate in this videoconference, please email peter.aterman@international.gc.ca with your contact info. Once they have confirmation of enough interest, they will communicate the details to interested individuals.

April 27-28 | The 6th-annual edition of Hot Docs' flagship market event, the **Toronto Documentary Forum (TDF)**, will be held April 27 to 28, 2005, during the 12th annual festival, April 22 to May 1. www.hotdocs.ca

Upcoming Markets and Festivals

March 2-5	Canadian Music Week 2005, Toronto. www.cmw.net
March 2-5	NSI Film Exchange, Winnipeg. www.nsi-canada.ca/filmexchange
March 4	Genie Awards, Toronto. www.academy.ca
March 7-11	Game Developers Conference, San Francisco, Calif. www.gdconf.com
March 11-20	CMPA Professional Publishing program; Niagara-on-the Lake. www.cmpa.ca
March 13-15	London Book Fair, UK. www.libf.co.uk
March 16-20	South By Southwest (SXSW) Festival & Conferences, Austin, Texas. http://2005.sxsw.com
March 29-30	Entrepreneurial Publishing Summit, Chicago. www.folioshow.com
April 1-10	Cinefranco 8th Annual Celebration of International Francophone Cinema. www.cinefranco.com
April 11-15	MIP-TV International Television Market, Cannes, France. www.miptv.com
April 11-15	MILIA World Interactive Content Forum, Cannes, France. www.milia.com
April 13-16	Bologna Children's Book Fair. www.bookfair.bolognafiere.it
April 13-17	5th Annual Reelworld Film Festival, Toronto. www.reelworld.ca
April 22-May 1	Hot Docs, Toronto. www.hotdocs.ca
May 7-15	Toronto Jewish Film Festival, Toronto. www.tjff.com
May 11-22	International Film Festival of Cannes, France. www.festival-cannes.com
May 30	Canadian New Media Awards, Toronto. www.cnma.ca