

## TRAVEL

## 'Cannes in Canada' beckons adventurous filmgoers

BY MARTIN BANDYKE, KIM SILARSKI  
SPECIAL WRITERS

It's almost too much for a film fan to resist. Three hundred of the latest, greatest films a mere four hour drive away from metro

Detroit. The U.S. dollar is worth about a buck-fifty Canadian. The natives are friendly, public transportation is convenient and cheap and the food is fabulous. If your idea of a good time is

spending an hour in a queue having an animated conversation with total strangers about an obscure Russian film that moved you to tears, then the 23rd Toronto International Film Festival, Sept. 10-19, is just your ticket.

It was Time magazine that recently dubbed Toronto "Cannes in Canada," for good reason. It's one of the top four festivals on the globe, right up there with Cannes, Berlin and Venice. It's considered the gateway to the North American film market. It's got all the stars and the parties, but it's far more accessible than its sparkling peers. This year, it's even got a Cannes Grand Prize winner, Roberto Benigni's "Life Is Beautiful," a tragic yet somehow humorous tale of the concentration camps.

Also confirmed for this year are a number of stellar features including "Without Limits," the life of American runner Steve Prefontaine, directed by Robert Towne, who took home an Oscar for writing "Chinatown."

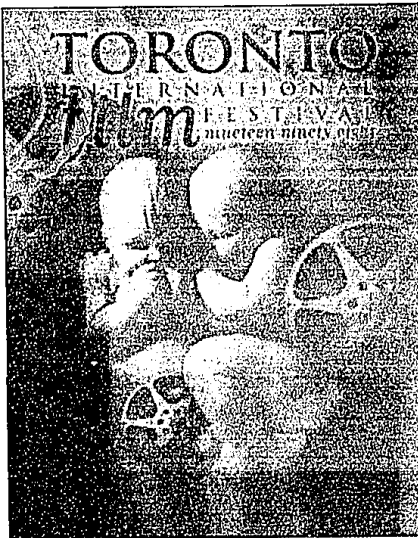
Toronto will host the world

premiere of "Down in the Delta," the much anticipated first film by post-author Maya Angelou. Another world premiere is "Antz," a computer-animated comedy featuring the voices of Woody Allen and Sharon Stone. There are numerous categories from which to choose, including Midnight Madness, Contemporary World Cinema and the glitzy Roy Thompson Hall Galas, where big name stars and directors are typically in attendance and often take questions from the audience. Also of note is this year's National Cinema program, entitled New Beat Of Japan, featuring work from some of the most provocative and innovative directors in the world.

The complete list of films will be available on the Festival's web site ([www.bell.ca/filmfest](http://www.bell.ca/filmfest)) at noon Tuesday, Aug. 25. Ticket info is also on the site, or call 416-968-FILM. With the Festival a mere 2-1/2 weeks away, the best bet to guarantee yourself tickets would be to check out the web site and then order Gala tickets by phone at the 968-FILM number beginning Saturday, Aug. 29 (only VISA accepted).

Heading to the Toronto Film Festival unticketed (advance individual duca for non-Galas are consumed instantly by piranha-like T.O. filmgoers) is a risky but potentially rewarding venture. If you're willing to be flexible and wait in lines you can usually see something worthwhile. Start by going to the Festival Box Office (444 Yonge St.). Don't be too shocked to find most screenings sold out. Don't be afraid to experiment, and don't despair if you can't buy an advance ticket to something! If a screening is sold out, a line of non-ticket holders forms outside the theater, and if any seats do pop up, people in this rush line get in. Queue up at least one hour ahead of time.

Air Canada (800-361-7686) is offering festival-goers special airfares, but the drive, mostly on the 401, is easy, and cheap and the ViaRail (800-561-9161) train



Film Festival: Michael Graph created this poster for the 23rd Annual Toronto Film Festival.

is a pleasant five-hour hitch. Pick both up in Windsor, and do use the excellent, safe subway and bus system once you get into town. Hotels are plentiful. If you crave luxury, try the Four Seasons Hotel (416-964-0411), which is also prime territory to spot celebrities.

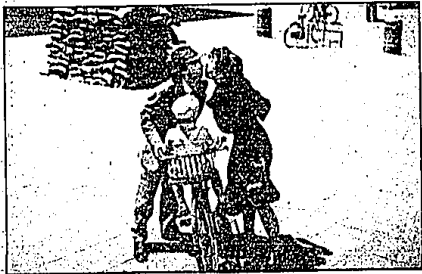
If your budget is tight, consider the Global Village (888-844-7876), a hostelry-style "backpackers' hotel." In between is the centrally located Comfort Hotel-Downtown at 15 Charles Street East (416-924-1222).

Let your meals be as random as the films you see. There's lots of inexpensive ethnic offerings

(Green Mango, at 707 Yonge St., is great), the ubiquitous coffee/muffin purveyors, and The Senator, 249 Victoria St., (416) 364-7517, an upscale diner that looks like it dropped right out of an Edward Hopper painting. Or, drop in at Rabba Market on Charles Street West, a 24-hour mini-market near the festival cinemas, for fresh fruit and other portable, healthful eats.

And oh yes, don't forget the Vaine.

Martin Bandyke is music director and weekend afternoon program host at WDET-FM. He and his wife, Kim Silarski, are veteran Festival-goers.



BENIGNI STRAZZ

Award winner: Roberto Benigni, Giorgio Cantarini and Nicoletta Brashi appear in Benigni's Cannes award-winning film "Life Is Beautiful."



BEN MARK HOLZBERG

Delta: Al Freeman Jr., Wesley Snipes and Alfie Woodward, left to right, appear in poet Maya Angelou's "Down in the Delta."

## GREAT ESCAPES

Great Escapes features various travel news items. Send news leads to Hugh Gallagher, assistant managing editor, Observer & Eccentric Newspapers Inc., 36251 Schoolcraft, Livonia, MI 48150, or fax them to (313) 691-7279.

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**K'NEX @ COSI**  
COSI Toledo will host a new exhibit, K'NEX@COSI: Where Science Clicks, Oct. 2 through

Jan. 7.

From huge models of structures such as the Brooklyn Bridge, which demonstrates the concepts of tension and compression, to massive replicas of architectural wonders like the Capitol Building, illustrating the principles of physics and geometry in building, the exhibit will present an array of structures. Thousands of K'NEX pieces are used to construct each of these colorful, fascinating structures. And visitors to COSI Toledo can design and build their own creations as well.

Unique models built especially for COSI include a 7-foot high model of One SeaGate, a distinctive edifice on the downtown riverfront. The exhibit is presented by SSOE Inc. Engineers-Architects.

## LABOR DAY EVENTS GALORE

■ In Manistiquio, a parade (Friday), a car show and street dance (Saturday) and a boardwalk shuffle (Monday) are planned; (800) 341-6010.

■ "Arts Deckade" featuring more than 100 exhibitors is back again in St. Ignace, Sept. 6 and 7, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; (906) 643-

6950.

■ Tawas and East Tawas hosts the annual Labor Day Arts and Craft Show, Sept. 5-6. Free shuttle service is offered between the two locations with 325 or more booths; (617) 362-8643.

■ Lansing's 19th annual Riverfest is Sept. 4-7 and is held downtown along the Grand River on Louis Adame Riverfront Park. The family event is free and features activities, events and shows for all ages. An electric float parade featuring lighted pontoons is a highlight.

■ In Jackson, the 1998 fireworks concludes in Cascade Falls Park Sept. 5. Bands provide entertainment until the show at about 9:30 p.m. On Monday, Sept. 7 the final Cascades Light Show Dance is staged, with waterfalls illuminated and synchronized to music at 10 p.m.

■ "Germanfest 1998" is on tap in Grand Rapids Sept. 4, 5 and 6. Entertainment includes the Windschlag Men's Choir from the Black Forest area of Germany, the Paloma Band from Chicago and the Grand Rapids Accordion Ensemble.

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