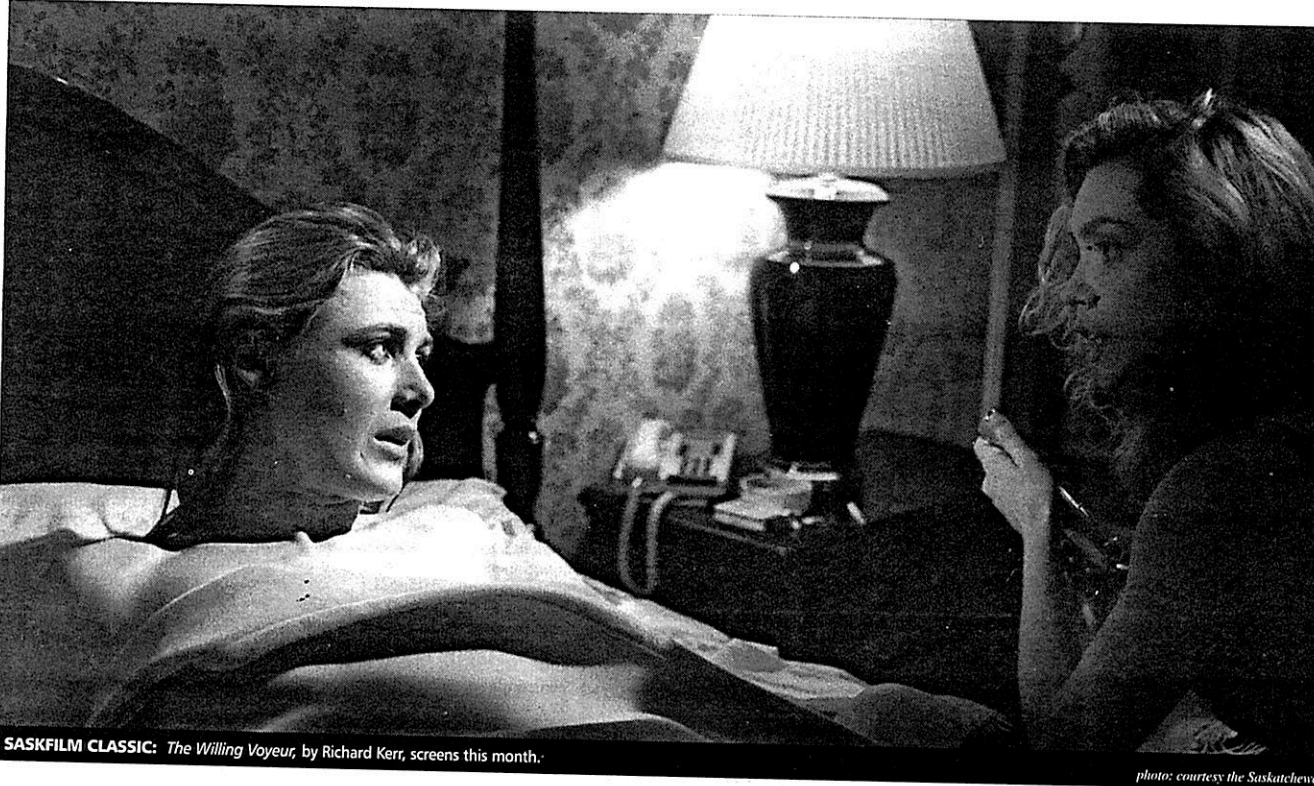


AFTER HOUR

FILM | MUSIC |



SASKFILM CLASSIC: *The Willing Voyeur*, by Richard Kerr, screens this month.

photo: courtesy the Saskatchewan

Lights! Camera! Party!

Saskatchewan Filmpool Celebrates 25 Years

by Greg Beatty

At a time when film has supplanted literature as the most popular medium for storytelling, it's perhaps ironic that the Saskatchewan Filmpool owes its existence to a writer. But according to noted Regina filmmaker, and current Filmpool president Gerald Saul, that's the case.

"In 1976 an eastern Canadian film company used Saskatchewan as the backdrop for its feature film adaptation of W.O. Mitchell's *Who Has Seen the Wind*," says Saul. "From the ranks of the locally hired crew emerged a group of enthusiastic and idealistic people who wanted to change the [existing] attitude toward filmmaking in the province."

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couple of filmmakers," says Saul. "One to document the harvest, and another to make TV commercials for the combine and fertilizer companies."

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While the U of R did offer a few film courses, there was no SaskFilm back then, no Saskatchewan Motion Picture Industry Association, no Hollywood co-productions. Even the Saskatchewan Arts Board did not yet award grants for film projects. Where the aspiring filmmakers, which included Don List (now owner of Birdsong Communications) and Stephen Surjik (who directed *Wayne's World 2*), did find support was the Canada Council, which provided money for the purchase of a camera and tape recorder.

Originally intended as a centre for members to share equipment, the Filmpool, which is celebrating its 25th anniversary with a host of events March 12-16, has grown over the years. "We now publish a newsletter, hold screenings of non-mainstream films, host workshops on different aspects of filmmaking

and produce *Splice TV*," Saul says.

When Saul was studying filmmaking in the early '80s, he recalls, "the majority of my classmates moved elsewhere upon graduating. That's where the work was, that's where the interest was. Now, things aren't quite so Toronto- or Vancouver-centric."

Certainly, Saskatchewan has enjoyed a boom in commercial film and TV production in the past decade. While some emerging filmmakers, most of whom are graduates of the University of Regina's Media Studies program, do find the prospect of working on a big-budget Hollywood production alluring, the Filmpool continues to attract new members interested in creating uniquely Saskatchewan films. Saul is grateful for this. "After 25 years, the Filmpool's become an institution. One individual can't

change an org gained the momentum. But every c strong group u university and m; And I think that's

This vitality w during the 25 festivities, says celebrations h retrospectives. B make it bigger t bringing forme Richard Kerr and artist talks."

Screenings of f new are planned f at downtown the evening capped by Filmpool (1822 S 16, the co-op w discussion *The Independent Fil* 2-4 pm.

THE COLLEGE FILM SPECIAL SUPER SUNDAY BRUNCH