

Peter d'Entremont's latest production honoured with World Peace Film Award.

By Jim Lavoie

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I truly cherish and am proud of any recognition that my peers have bestowed upon me," says Peter d'Entremont of his honours in film. And pride is what he should feel as the documentary Teaching Peace in a Time of War has won the 2006 World Peace Film Award, earning top honours at a prestigious ceremony held recently in India. The film was the third film in a series on peace. It was directed by Teresa McInnis and produced by d'Entremont. The film was co-produced with the National Film Board of Canada and was originally broadcast by CTV.

Teaching Peace introduced us to the students and teachers at Vasa Pelagic School in Belgrade, Serbia. More than 250,000 people lost their lives due to a decade of civil war in the former Yugoslavia. The children of this region have been irrevocably afflicted by this horrific violence, yet this film suggests how change is possible.

"This is a very gratifying award to receive since it recognizes the message of Teaching Peace as much as the craft of the film," d'Entremont says. "This award is particularly important for us since we were motivated by the events of 9/11 to look at how to break the cycle of violence. The answers clearly lie in education and youth, but also in equality of respect and dignity for all." Teaching Peace was completed under the banner of Triad Teaching Peace Productions, whose films have tackled a plethora of engaging and thought-provoking subjects regionally, country-wide and indeed throughout the world.

D'Entremont was born in Halifax, N.S. but summers and holidays were spent in Petit Rocher, New Brunswick.

"My parents moved to Halifax to seek employment," he says. "They raised our family in a strictly English environment which made a distinct separation between English and French a life-long reality. But my heart lies with my French heritage." To understand how d'Entremont values giving more than receiving is to grasp his persona. He feels it's the impact on others that truly matters.

"I hope my work has not only informed others, on whatever issue, but has also provided a means for others to become active participant in solutions." For d'Entremont and his wife Corinna, being active as community members is very important to them.

D'Entremont's immense respect and affection for Corinna and the impact she has had on his life is demonstrated when he speaks about her.

"I believe curiosity and caring are elixirs of youth. Curiosity has always been made possible because of my career, but it didn't make me happy. It wasn't enough. Now, because of our love, I believe I enjoy a richer, healthier way of life." Corinna is not only d'Entremont's life partner but also his business partner. She has a multi-cultured background, having resided in Germany, Switzerland, England, and France, which influenced her career as a journalist and multi-media creator. Her comprehension of the European marketplace proved to be invaluable to Triad Films. She became a partner in 2001 where her extensive background in public relations, promotions, marketing and advertising served her well.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves here. D'Entremont's journey to international acclaim as a filmmaker has had its shares of trials and tribulations.

"Film was and is a driving force in my life," he says. "It was natural for me to gravitate towards it as a career path."

While attending Memorial University (NFLD) a pattern or concept began to emerge for d'Entremont and he decided to follow the concept of making your own luck. This is the foundation of his beliefs and seems to be working. Case in point for him was while attending university he started a film society and later a revue cinema for \$50 (the cost for one newspaper ad) that not only paid off his university tuition, but also his attendance at the prestigious London Film School in England (LFIS).

Graduation from LFIS, with a wealth of training at the ready, didn't immediately open a secret door in the film industry, this would take some time.

"It took me a long time to gain acceptance and to be acknowledged within the industry," said d'Entremont. "It's a tough place to break into and once in, you eventually must decide if you want to work for someone or yourself." Peter worked on a number of feature films, including a few Disney pictures, but something was missing.

He felt restricted and unessential: a functioning but small part in a big system. He decided to find his own voice and wrote a half-hour drama for CBC called Marshwinds.

"It spoke to my heritage. The hardships, heartaches and the turbulent times of the Acadian deportation," says d'Entremont.

Marshwinds however, proved to be too restrictive as it kept d'Entremont, as the writer, away from the action of production. He was allowed on set, but wasn't able to interact with the actors or the director even though it was his script.

It was at this point that he made a career path change that would impact his life way beyond anything he could have imagined. Then and there, he decided to make documentaries.

"Documentaries seemed more relevant to me and were better suited to my expressive nature and need for self-actualization," says d'Entremont. After a period of research and immersing himself into a topic that interested him, he committed himself to making a documentary.

"I directed, produced, and wrote a one-half hour special for CBC, called Ebbtide. Ebbtide tells the story of the people of Ironbound, a small island off the coast of N.S. For over 200 years the island was inhabited by two families - the Youngs and the Finks.

"It's a very compelling situation because in order to survive a couple of important factors were in play," says an enthusiastic d'Entremont. "They had to work in a co-operative manner and bring in new blood to the island. It was usually teachers of the one room school house that fit that bill."

He recommends reading Ironbound by Parker Day which is still regarded as a classic even by today's standards.

When the CBC series Land and Sea did a 10-year retrospective they featured Ebbtide and an update on the people of his film. Although Ebbtide gave him exposure, it most certainly held no guarantee for his future. But his next project called Iceberg Alley would change all that.

Iceberg Alley: On collision Course with Destruction, a CBC network special (1984) told the story of the offshore corridor from Greenland to southern Newfoundland. It's a place where icebergs meet their demise in the warmer environment. Their journey impacted upon many communities and their way of life most notably the Innu. He researched the subject for two unpaid months before presenting it to CBC for funding. It would take another six months to convince them to invest in his story and in him.

Laboratory tests had concluded the ice makeup of an iceberg, due to compressed air bubbles locked within, was equivalent in strength to concrete. Therefore technology that was in play for moving the icebergs from the path of huge stationary drilling platforms was deemed to be ineffective. The biggest

impact was felt in the surrounding areas whose confrontation with the oil and gas industry afforded the opportunity to document the theme of man against nature.

D'Entremont's Iceberg Alley was a great success that drew 1.8 million viewers and an 88 per cent viewer satisfaction rating. It had taken d'Entremont an entire year to make the 52 minute documentary film.

"It's a time I remember very well," he says. "I wrote, directed, produced and did just about everything but star in the film." Given the success of Iceberg Alley, d'Entremont fully expected to have a well-worn path to his door or the phone to be ringing off the hook.

"That didn't happen and the reality of that was very painful," he says. Because of this, he learnt a very valuable lesson that would steer him well into the future. (Please note: Iceberg Alley would go on to win the 1984 Canadian Science Writers Association Award for Science Communication and a new project for d'Entremont.)

"I know knew first-hand just how the television industry worked," he said. "I learned to work hard and when it was time to enjoy the fruits of my labor, I worked harder."

His latest documentary is a feature-length documentary, The Strangest Dream, a co-production with the National Film Board of Canada. It's an examination of the turbulent life and times of Nobel Peace Prize winner, Sir Joseph Rotblat. He was the only scientist to walk away from the 'Manhattan Project', which was the famed atomic bomb project. He was also a founder of the Pugwash Movement which perpetuates the dream of a world without nuclear weapons.

D'Entremont and wife Corinna are very active in environmental issues and recommend readers view <http://truthandconsequences.org> for information on how we can change the world in three easy steps.

"We need to learn how to co-exist in harmony and not dictate or negatively influence the fate of other species or other people. In fact we need to stop being such as such a destructive force in nature," said d'Entremont.

While he's not filming documentaries, d'Entremont and Corinna like to relax and enjoy our environment. In their latest adventure, the pair went on a seven month RV vacation stateside. One of the highlights was camping in Death Valley where they found the isolation that had beckoned them.

"It was as close to being one with nature as could be in the States," d'Entremont says. "The desert there, like Sable Island offshore N.S. and the Tundra of Nunavut in Canada have a special appeal to me because they are largely untouched and unblemished by man. We spent two months in the desert - an

inhospitable land that nurtures respect and self-reflection." Another milestone was in Santa Monica, California where every Sunday on the beach an Iraq War Protest is held. Protesters erect crosses representing American Soldiers killed to date. On their visit there, they was a total of 2,554 crosses.

"It made the suffering very personal," he says. "The news sanitizes death and this allows us to accept the fact that war is necessary. It hijacks our capacity to evolve beyond fear."