

Joint Initiative Between British Columbia Film and CTV Results in a Unique Training Tool for Directors

Vancouver, BC (September 16, 2005) -- British Columbia Film and CTV announced today the release of their much-anticipated **First Shots Training Program DVD**, as a means of introducing directors to the world of episodic television. The **First Shots Training Program** was specifically designed to provide opportunities to emerging directors and writers, giving them their 'first shot' working on a network television prime-time series. The first season of *Robson Arms*, CTV's 13-episode half-hour comedy/drama, became that training ground.

Robson Arms was developed and produced by Omni Film Productions Limited and Creative Atlantic Communications Inc. in association with CTV. To support their key objective of providing opportunities for new talent, CTV and the producers looked towards the local provincial funding agency British Columbia Film. As a result, British Columbia Film partnered with CTV to create the **First Shots Training Program**. As part of this program, the producers of *Robson Arms* gave a boost to the careers of 9 BC-based directors by offering them the opportunity to direct an episode of a prime-time network television series.

When it was clear how many talented directors would be turned away due to the limited slots available, the **First Shots Training Program** created a legacy in the form of a leading edge interactive two-disc DVD training tool. This pioneering DVD gives aspiring directors a unique behind-the-scenes look into the creation of a Canadian series.

Disc One of the **First Shots Training Program DVD**, titled "One Director Goes Through the Process", follows 'first shot' director James Dunnison, as he helms the final episode of *Robson Arms*' first season. Also featured on this disc are the director's cut and the as-broadcast version of the completed episode, along with commentaries from Dunnison and series showrunners Susin Nielsen and Gary Harvey. The disc also includes a unique interactive feature titled "Anatomy of an Episode", which breaks the episode into small sections. For each section, viewers can choose to stop and review the director's shot list, read pages from the script, or review portions of the many prep meetings (special effects, props, cast read-through, etc.) that laid the groundwork for creating the corresponding scenes.

Disc Two, titled "The World of Series Television" includes in-depth interviews with mentor director Gary Harvey and several of the *Robson Arms* 'first shot' episodic directors including Dwayne Beaver, Luke Carroll, Jason Furukawa, James Genn, Asghar Massombagi, Monika Mitchell, and Benjamin Ratner. These up-and-comers provide thoughts on everything from working with producers, to directing those uncomfortable sex scenes.

Katherine Di Marino, Associate Producer of *Robson Arms*, directed, produced and designed the two-disc DVD set. "When I started this project, I quickly realized that nothing like it existed in the marketplace, where a director could get some perspective on what the realities were of working in series television." Di Marino adds, "The goal fast became to make the best possible product in order to fill that void, which I believe we have achieved."

Louise Clark, Head of Western Independent Production for CTV says "**The First Shots Training Program** has proved to be a tremendous success, not only in terms of this exceptional DVD, but also because a number of the *Robson Arms* directors have gone on to further their careers in series

television as a result of this experience.” **Liz Shorten**, Manager, Communications and Industry Development for British Columbia Film adds, “As a result of this groundbreaking DVD, we are thrilled that many more aspiring directors and industry professionals can be a fly on the wall by watching an up-and-coming director create an episode of prime-time television.”

The launch of the DVD will officially take place on Wednesday, September 21st at The Media Club, 695 Cambie Street, Vancouver, with a panel discussion from 5:30-7:00pm, followed by a reception. The panel features Di Marino, along with *Robson Arms* Producer, Brian Hamilton, and *Robson Arms* ‘first shot’ Directors James Dunnison and Monika Mitchell. Actor John Cassini, who played “Yuri” on *Robson Arms*, will moderate. Those wishing to attend are asked to RSVP by e-mailing bcf@bcfilm.ca.

The **First Shots Training Program DVD** will be available at Biz Books in Vancouver, will retail for \$24.95 (10% student/ 25% instructor discount), and is ideal for both individual and classroom use. The two disc set was directed, produced and designed by Katherine Di Marino; edited by Erin Falconer and Neil Thompson; with authoring services provided by Kirby Design; and DVD replication and packaging services by PowerSource Media.

Robson Arms recently enjoyed an encore performance on CTV, and is currently airing on The Comedy Network Thursdays at 10:30pm. The series has received widespread critical acclaim.

British Columbia Film is a privately administered non-profit society established in 1987 by the provincial government with a mandate to expand and diversify the cultural industries of film and video in British Columbia.

Omni Film Productions Limited is one of Western Canada’s most respected television and film production companies having recently celebrated its 25th Anniversary. Over the years, Omni has produced over 175 hours of television dramas, documentaries, factual and lifestyle series and children’s programming resulting in over 75 national and international awards.

CTV, Canada's largest private broadcaster, offers a wide range of quality news, sports, information, and entertainment programming. It boasts the number-one national newscast, "CTV News With Lloyd Robertson", and is the number-one choice for prime-time viewing. CTV owns 27 conventional television stations across Canada and has interests in 15 specialty channels, including the number-one Canadian specialty channel, TSN. CTV is owned by Bell Globemedia, Canada's premier multi-media company. More information about CTV may be found on the company Web site at www.ctv.ca.

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For more information, contact:

Liz Shorten, Manager Communications and Industry Development, British Columbia Film
604.736.7997 ext. 106 / lshorten@bcfilm.bc.ca