



MICHELLE THRUSH with young *Kootenai Brown* co-star.



LOUIS B. HOBSON

Movies

**Native issues
inspire Thrush**

IT TOOK Michelle Thrush considerably longer than most struggling actresses to get star struck. In 1984, when she was a student at Calgary's Plains Indian Cultural Survival School, Thrush was cast in the Canadian film *Isaac Little Feathers*.

Though her co-stars included Scott (*Night Heat*) Hylands and Lou (*The Diary Of Anne Frank*) Jacobi, Thrush returned to the classroom rather than seeking out a film career.

"Acting has always been and will always be my second love," insists the 20-year-old Native actress. "My first love will always be working towards social changes for my people."

After graduating, Thrush joined a Native dance troupe called Red Thunder with whom she travelled to New Zealand.

"Shortly after we returned to Canada, I was cast in the National Film Board mini-series *Daughters Of The Country*," she recalls.

"It paid great but working in film still didn't fulfill my political desires."

Eventually Thrush realized that "as a young Native woman, no one really took what I was saying seriously."

"I saw acting as a way of gaining a voice which could make a difference for my people."

Thrush moved to Vancouver and, within a year, won the female lead in *Kootenai Brown*, a historical adventure film.

The movie also stars Tom Berntsen, Raymond Barr (*Ferry Mason, Ironside*) and Donnelly Rhodes (*Danger Bay*).

Kootenai Brown will have its Calgary premiere tomorrow at the Palliser Square cinemas to benefit the Canadian Film Celebration.

For information and tickets, call 268-1370. The movie will have a regular run at the Plaza Theatre beginning Feb. 24.

SINCE COMPLETING *Kootenai Brown*, Thrush starred opposite Lou Diamond Phillips (*La Bamba*) and Fred Ward (*Rambo Williams*) in Robert Redford's thriller, *Dark Wind*, and with Gary Farmer (*Pow Wow Highway*) in *Day-Glo Warrior*.

Today the actress will be at her former school performing her one-woman show *Reclaim*.

On Thursday, she will attend the local premiere of *Kootenai Brown*.

Later this month, Thrush begins rehearsals for a Vancouver stage version of *The Ecstasy Of Rita Joe*.