

Jacques Méthé's *La dernière y restera*

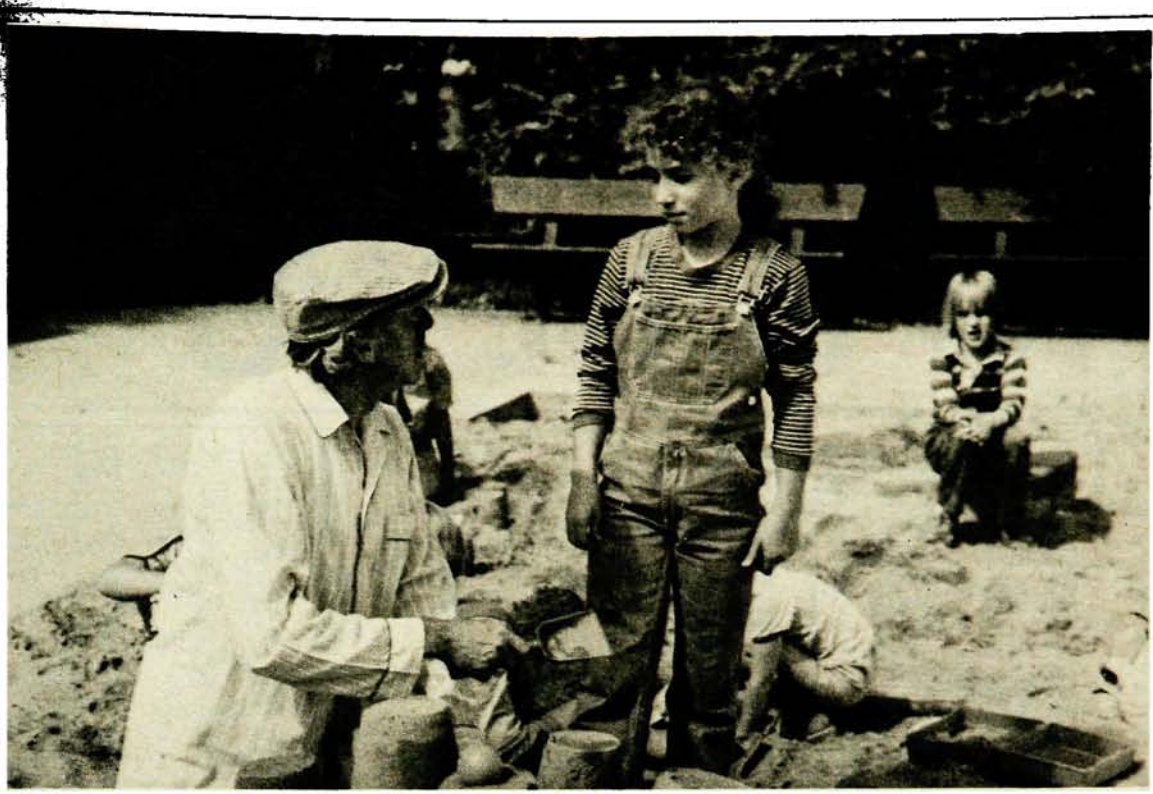
The film opens on the solitary figure of a young girl, bouncing a rubber ball in an alley. The ball bounces into a small yard. She stands at the gate, patiently waiting as an older man emerges with the ball in hand. She takes the ball back without answering any of his questions, and skips down the alley. Throughout this scene, the camera lingers on the child's face and movements. Her expression is ambiguous at best, and her gestures suggest a deliberation not associated with children. On the surface nothing is especially disturbing about this scene. But the atmosphere and the pacing are too benign. There is more here than meets the eye.

Director Jacques Méthé plays with tension continually. Joseph and Germaine Lavoie, a retired couple, seem to have lived out their lives relatively happily. Joseph complains about his toast and Germaine chides him as one would a child. Both have ironed out any problems they might have had long ago — until the little girl appears in Joseph's life.

The child seems to weave a fine web around the older man. Suddenly, Joseph tells Germaine he has an appointment; he is absent more and more often. But it is only when Germaine is told by a neighbour that Joseph refuses to leave the sand box he is playing in, that she realizes what has happened. Joseph has become terrifyingly senile. Caught in a struggle to fight for her husband against a force she does not understand, Germaine tries desperately to maintain some order. But the little girl is relentless, and continues, teasing Joseph. Finally, he sits, exhausted, in his kitchen attended by Germaine. Yet the game is still not over, and when the child throws the ball through the window, Joseph dies.

Germaine is left alone — and then the doorbell rings and the same girl appears in the doorway. This time she is almost angelic, her hair glowing in the sunlight. Germaine asks her in.

Writer Francine Ruel has constructed an intricate work where the idea of innocence and knowledge meet and are played out against each other. The cycle of life is neatly defined in the film. Joseph follows the young girl, seen as willful seductress, to his death. In other



● Weaving a sand-castle web (Paul Hébert and Véronique Démassey).

films, the idea of the child as 'angel of death' has also been successfully used. *Toby Dammit* and *Don't Look Now* depicted 'child like' figures as signals of imminent death. It is the fragility of man versus the indomitable course of events that is so well played out in *La dernière y restera*.

Paul Hébert as Joseph Lavoie is superb. His evolution from perfect normality into senility is extremely convincing. Monique Aubry's Germaine is a woman

that we instantly recognize — the older lady next door. Especially worth mentioning is Véronique Démassey whose portrayal of the nameless girl is at times more than frightening — she really is a diabolical being.

La dernière y restera is a haunting work that meshes superior performances with clean, precise technique and a lean script that uses less to show us much more.

Pia Marie ●

LA DERNIÈRE Y RESTERA d. Jacques Méthé p. Pierre Roi exec. p. Pierre Roy, Jean-Claude Tremblay p. man. Angele Bourgault d.o.p. Michel Caron p. sec. Jocelyne Prenoveau asst. d. Michel Gauthier ed. François Labonté asst. ed. Louise Blais ad. ed. Roger Boire art d. Louise Jobin props Charles Bernier make-up Brigitte McCaughy sd. rec. Serge Beauchemin boom Esther Auger mix. André-Gilles Gagne cont. Johanne Prgent asst. cam. Daniel Vincelet elec. Daniel Chretien grip Marc DeErnsted, Jean Prenoveau apprentices Paul Laflamme Lp. Paul Hébert, Monique Aubry, Veronique DeMassey, Julien Poulin, Diane Miljouis, Fanny Cyr, François Méthé, Guillaume Poulin, Françoise Maheux, Etienne Allard, Annick McKintire, Mélina McKintire, Maxime Grondin, Benjamin Vadenais, Catherine Chouinard p.c. Momentum Film Video Inc. for Radio-Québec (1981) running time 26 min.

Nick Holeris/Jim Theodorlis's *Anything for a million*

Anything for a Million is a 14-minute comedy directed by Nick Holeris of Toronto. This interesting piece of work deals with a winning lottery ticket and the fate of the lucky/unlucky klutz, played with manic enthusiasm by Wayne Veti, who possesses it. But although it is an interesting piece of work, it is not really a very interesting movie.

Explain. For this reviewer the most fascinating thing about *Anything for a Million* is that it got made. For many filmmakers, fledgling and veteran alike, the thing that determines what they may or may not attempt to do is the market. And the market for 14-minute comedies is not exactly huge these days. There are many who think that anyone who tries to raise money for a film which has no market is a freak. And it definitely feels strange to sign cheques from your own account for such a project. So it was inspiring to learn that there is someone out there who has both enough faith in themselves and love for the genre to go ahead anyway and put a film like *Anything for a Million* together. Such a person would appear to be Nick Holeris. More power to him.

But on seeing the film the first thought was that perhaps he hasn't really gone off on such an adventure after all. What has he given us? A movie that is well made, but which reads like a catalogue of every tried and true cliché in the comedy handbook. I gather that was his intention, because we've seen everything in it before — many times: a winning ticket slipping out of the winner's hands and blowing away with the wind; the mad chase past the traffic cop, through the nudist camp with hands bashfully in place, sneaking from tree to skinny tree with the appropriate background music in an attempt to retrieve the errant fortune which has landed on a muscleman's sleeping girlfriend; and finally, so close to satisfaction on the railway tracks, only to have a shoelace get snagged as he reaches for it with you-know-what chugging around the bend...

The ending? You've seen that too. Nevertheless, Holeris knows how to put these scenes together. Wayne Veti's relentlessly high energy level, like that of a little kid who is about to wet his pants, gets on your nerves. But with the help of Holeris's framing he gets the job done: his gestures and movements pay apt homage to Dagwood comic strips and are quite funny.

The story of a lottery ticket has universal appeal. Especially in Ontario. Could that be why the Ontario Arts Council gave some of its precious purposeful money in aid of the film? It's difficult to explain some things. Perhaps they were investing in Holeris's future, if he can continue to produce movies as competent but as unoriginal as this one, maybe he'll soon be doing anything for a million in the film business.

And if that comes to pass, again we'll have to say, more power to him.

John Brooke ●

ANYTHING FOR A MILLION p/d./d.o.p. Nick Holeris, Jim Theodorlis Lp. Wayne Veti, Sherril Lynn, Peter Wall, Ulrich Hahn, Steve Nemeth, David Daub, Doby Waldron, Ligit Grigalis, Gary Hyslop and David Thair p.c. James Nicolas Productions cat. 16mm running time 14 min.

HEARTACHES d. Don Shebib p. David J. Patterson, Jerry Raibourn exec. p. Joseph Beaubien, Nicole Boisvert exec. In charge of p. Pieter Kroonenburg co-p. Bruce Mallen ac. Terence Heffernan d.o.p. Vic Sarin, csc ed. Gerry Hambling, acs. Peter Bolta, gfile co-ed. Barbara Broun-McKay, cf. mus. Michael Martin assoc. p. André Dion p. man. Don Buchsbaum unit man. Ted Rouse 1st ad. Mac Braden dialog. consult. PEGGY Feury creative consult. Dorothea Moore p. account. Irene Phelps cost. des. Julie Ganton cont. Diane Parsons loc. man. Marc Dasso set dec. Patricia Gruben p. co-ord. Debbie Zwicker make-up Kathleen Mifsud hair Barbara Alexander lead casting Michael McLean & Assocs. Toronto casting Walker-Bowen Inc. unif pub. Glenda Roy stills Robert McEwan focus puller Robin Miller clapper loader Marvin Midwick transp. co-ord. Donato Baldassara loc. ad. Don Cohen boom op. Gabor Vadnay key grips Jim Craig, Mark Manchest grip John Trainor gaffer Roger Bate best boy William Brown 3rd elec. Thomas Fennessy gen. op. Alexander Daves 2nd ad. d. Robbie Ditchburn asst. p. account. Doreen Krost-Davis, Terri Mueller-Armitage asst. art d. Carmi Gallo set dec. Robert E. Bartman 1st asst. l. Martin Weinryb 2nd asst. l. props Andrew Deskin master l. Kenneth Clark 1st asst. l. Haim Akum 2nd asst. l. ward. Kat

Moyer mistress. John A. Roberts (asst.) seamstress Alison Till Mr. Carradine's wig by Clayton Shields asst. ed. Roberta Kipp 1st. Les Holdway 2nd) superv. ad. ed. Marcel Pothier sd. ed. Paul Dion, Serge Viau (asst.) dialog. ed. Claude Langlois, Gilles St-Onge (asst.) Robn Leigh (post-synch) Foley artist Andy Malcolm dialog. coach Lorin Biagini asst. loc. man. Izidore K. Musallam art. dept. trainee Latzezar Avramov drivers John Vanderpas, Randy Jones, Richard Spiegelman, David Chudnosky craft service Wendy Shaver, Debbie Zielinski p.a. Donna Noonan, Ron Hewitt office asst. Michael Parr 2nd unit: d. James Annett cam. Bob New, Ron A. Crapse, Jack Cosgrove asst. cam. Robert Libby, Nik Petrik, Paul Mitchnick cont. James Young gaffer Keith Sherer grip Tony Kuper Smith gen. op. Allen Rollins mus. p. co-ord. Alain Leroux Lp. Margot Kidder, Anne Potts, Robert Carradine, Winston Rebert, George Touliatos, Guy Sanvido, Arnie Wehtman, Michael Zelniker, Jefferson Mappin, Maureen Fitzgerald, Albert Bernardo, Rena Tenen, Alberto de Rosa, Gino Martocco, Susan Conway Mitchell, Patrick Bryner, Rocco Natarelli, Robert Vasil, Toby Cuglin, Don Buchsbaum, Paul Newmark, Peggy Feury p.c. Rising Star Films Inc. (1980) running time 90 min. dist. Les Films René Malo