

# REVIEWS

tiresome and sophomoric. Almost every second line in the film has to do with the pleasures and evils of rock 'n' roll. And that would be excusable if this were 1962 or if the music in the film was, indeed, anarchic or threatening. But it never is. Or, at least, the "directors three" failed to bring that aspect of it to the forefront.

Inexplicably, disturbingly, *Recorded Live* fails to make full capital of the very medium it has chosen to explore. Rock music has a history steeped in youthful anger (i.e. The Sex Pistols, The Who... even the Rolling Stones were angry as hell when they started out), but no one in this film seems to be angry about anything. For the most part, they stand around intellectualizing about something that is decidedly anti-intellectual. It's really too bad, because shot competently in black and white, *Recorded Live* could have been an important document of the youth of the early '80s. It simply is not. Once we remove the rock 'n' roll facade, the film is really quite cautious, if not conservative. One is hardpressed to find a single idea which challenges the status quo or challenges anything. And a film that fails to raise questions will find it hard to receive much of a reaction.

Now, it could be that the vapidness in *Recorded Live* is characteristic of the New Wave scene as a whole, but more likely it points to the inexperience of the filmmaking trio, and their failure to recognize the dangers of doing business by veto and compromise. They should have, instead, allowed one another to go with their instincts, and followed their passions. Then, maybe, they would have made a 'first' film to remember.

However, the three shouldn't lose a night's sleep over it because, unlike the sexual 'first', filmmakers generally get more than one crack at a 'first' film... although, you won't find many admitting it.

S. Paul Zola ●

**RECORDED LIVE** d. Andrew C. Rowsome p. Michael Korican, Rowsome, Almerinda Travassos sc. Rowsome, Travassos d.o.p. Korican, Travassos ed. Korican, Clinton Young **original songs** Rowsome art. d. Laura DiVilio, Margaret Moores p. man. Midi Onodera, Kathy Pahl p. asst. Chris Churchill, Kathleen Anderson sd. rec. Sebastian Salm stills Pat Chuprina p.c. Vidal Wave Productions Inc. lp. Natalia Kuzmyn, Sylvia Schmid, Allen Blumenthal, Liza Soroka, Robert Mills, Margaret Moores, Vivian Cayle, Paul Agnew, Walter Villa, Scott Thompson, David Jacklin, Richard Garbig, Jake Wallen, Marcia Cannon, Jane Mappin, Jean Daigle, Kathy Kinchen, Siobhan McCormick, Steven Hill, Lois Fine, Franco de Francesco, Jennifer Hagglass, Darlene Harrison, Andrew C. Rowsome, Toni Lorasco, Kathleen Kelly, Jennifer Wardell, Guy Babineau, Fiona Andrew, J. Logan Harris, Guy Lefebvre, Dennis Hall, Janet Sears, Cathy Werle, Kathleen Simmons, Robbin Hatt, James Kelly, Caroline B. dist. First Canadian Artists Films **running time**: 81:47 min., b. & w., 16mm.

## Terri Nash's *If You Love This Planet*

This first major film by director Terri Nash of Studio D at the NFB has become quite a focus of attention throughout North America. Not only has the film been awarded a special prize by the World Peace Council at the 1982 Leipzig Documentary and Short Film Festival,



● The way the world ends, according to Helen Caldicott

tival, a Certificate of Merit at the 1982 Yorkton Film Festival, and a nomination for an Academy Award this year, *If You Love This Planet* has become a media *cause celebre* by being one of three NFB documentaries recently cited by the U.S. Justice Department as "political propaganda" under the Foreign Agents Registration Act. As such, this film (and the two others: *Acid Rain - Requiem or Recovery*, and *Acid From Heaven*) would, when shown in the U.S., open with a disclaimer warning that it has not been approved by the U.S. government, and a list of viewers' names and addresses would have to be sent to the U.S. Justice Department.

So far, the result has been that thousands more people are seeing the three films than would have otherwise. *If You Love This Planet* certainly deserves such widespread viewing. It is a powerful evocation of what a nuclear war would be like.

The film is quite straightforward and simple, in the best sense of the word. It intercuts a 1981 lecture by Dr. Helen Caldicott, (U.S.) National President of Physicians for Social Responsibility, with archival footage from the Second World War atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. As well, it makes good use of a war-time newsreel featuring President Truman along with a 1943 U.S. War Department film entitled *Jap Zero*, in which a young Ronald Reagan enacts a gun-ho pilot eager to kill.

But the primary focus of the film is Dr. Caldicott's speech to American students in which she describes the immediate and long-range medical and environmental effects of detonating a single 20-megaton bomb. As her audience sits mesmerized, Dr. Caldicott paints a frightening picture, based on medical fact, of the progression of events that would follow such an explosion: instantaneous and irreparable destruction, uncontrollable firestorms, third degree burns from the sun caused by

the weakening of the earth's protective ozone layer, destruction by radiation of survivors' immune system. She describes the planet, in the aftermath of a nuclear war, contaminated by radiation and rampant with disease.

The urgency of this message is heightened by being intercut with archival footage from the bombing of Hiroshima and colour footage of its survivors seven months after the attack. Their horrible burns and deformities pay witness, as words cannot, to the devastation. Yet, as Dr. Caldicott tells us, the bomb dropped on Hiroshima was a small bomb, equivalent to only 13,000 tons of T.N.T. Today's 20-megaton bomb is equivalent to 20 million tons of T.N.T.

By tracing the development of atomic weapons, showing us the horrific damage caused by the 1945 bombing of Japan, and graphically alerting us to the personal fate that awaits each of us in the event of nuclear war, *If You Love This Planet* reaches right to the bodily core of every viewer. In other words, it makes the nuclear arms race an inescapably personal issue. This is the film's fundamental power and strength.

Absurdly, the CBC has rejected broadcasting this film, claiming that it is biased... as though the possible destruction of the planet is something to be unbiased about! But *If You Love This Planet* and the two acid rain films have opened in selected theatres across the country. They are not to be missed!

Joyce Nelson ●

**IF YOU LOVE THIS PLANET** d. Terri Nash exec. p. Kathleen Shannon p. Edward Le Lorrain ed. Terri Nash cam. André Luc Dupont, Susan Trow, Don Virgo asst. cam. Bonnie Andrukaitis, Simon Leblanc sd. Jacques Drouin asst. sd. Maurice de Ernst ed. elec. Gerald Proulx asst. elec. Jacqueline Newell sd. rec. Jean-Pierre Joutel music comp. Karl L. du Plessis singer Margot MacKinnon archival film research Terri Nash unit admin. Signe Johansson p.c. National Film Board of Canada, 16mm, colour, 25 minutes 50 seconds, 1982.

## Jonny Silver's *Kubota*

Nobuo Kubota, a Vancouver-born musician, sculptor and architect, teaches contemporary sculpture at the Ontario College of Art and plays saxophone with the Canadian Creative Music Collective (CCMC). Kubota's work in sound sculpture/performance is the subject of a curious NFB documentary by Toronto-born, Jonny Silver.

The film provides a unique journey through Kubota's 'sound cage', a strange structure filled with percussive toys. The aural/visual landscape that unfolds presents the viewer with an intimate look at the extraordinary qualities of the simple objects Kubota uses to create his sound sculpture.

Using black-outs and odd sound/picture combinations Silver builds the performance on film to its climax as Kubota plays this complex instrument constructed of wind-up toys, gongs, bicycle horns, synthesizers, laughing boxes, clocks and many, many other things.

It is this peculiar marriage between artist and filmmaker that makes *Kubota* work. Silver has not so much made a documentary as he has captured a moment, created an atmospheric portrait of a constantly evolving performance and performer.

To this effect, Silver has added extra rhythm tracks to heighten the impact of the visual performance. *Kubota* winds through childish cacophony to elegant rhythmic pulses to Nobuo simply playing his saxophone, finding a quirky harmony within the chaos of images and sounds.

Throughout its 20-minute duration, *Kubota* maintains a sensuous wonderland of sight and sound that is much more than child's play.

Tina Clarke ●

**KUBOTA** d./ed. Jonny Silver d.o.p. Joe Sutherland add. cam. Dennis Pike lighting Peter Grundy, Michael May loc. sd. David Millar, Reynald Trudel sd. consultant David Millar assoc. p. Kimmo Eklund, Michael May studio admin. Louise Clark tech. co-ord. Frank Ciavaglia p. exec. p. Arthur Hammond p.c. National Film Board/Ontario Regional Production **running time**: 20 min. 16 mm. colour.

● Nobuo Kubota at play



photo: The National Film Board of Canada