

scope and understanding.

The majestic curve of the earth sweeps across the screen; Italy is laid out below and Christopher Columbus's name is invoked. Later, another procession passes by – the Hawaiian island, the Andes mountains, Cape Canaveral and the Galapagos islands.

Earthbound, ordinary mortals are treated to fascinating details of training, and then the actual work and experiments being performed in space by the crews of three different shuttles. Two astronauts, James (Ox) van Hoften and George (Pinky) Nelson, train in an underwater tank that simulates weightlessness. For a whole year they rehearse the capture and repair of the ailing "Solar Max" satellite. Then there's the real rescue of Max in orbit using the Canadian arm and, when all does not go according to plan, Ox and Pinky improvise and dramatically bring off the operation successfully.

Visuals and tactile memories abound: the Cinesphere vibrating as an overwhelming night launch and liftoff take place; the stomach-churning "rescue basket" drill pushing all the air out of collective audience lungs; the astronauts, tackling meals and floating shrimp, and an eerie glimpse of them fast asleep, zipped into bags, but with hands and hair gently floating. Then there's Kathy Sullivan, the first woman walking in space and, with David Leestma, looking in through the spacecraft windows.

These missions also carry commercial ventures and experiments – among them the launch of a communications satellite and "bees in space" provided by students in the hope of producing zero-gravity honey!

The jumbo screen, filled with wonderful images, has to be a real filmic 'high', with wide popular appeal. However, the narration is heavyhanded and Walter Cronkite recites it in a ponderous, stuffy manner, so it's best to blank him out. But the music is a real problem. In attempting to suck up to the 'masses' who see the film, Mickey Erbe and Maribeth Solomon have composed trite middle-of-the-road treacle, including a choir of "heavenly voices" trilling around out there in space. An opportunity missed for some spare, evocative chords and themes, backed up by intellect – Harry Freedman, where are you? Luckily the fabulous images triumph every time over this wallpaper stuff.

*The Dream Is Alive* is at Cinesphere/Toronto until September 2, returning there later in 1985, and in 1986, and will be at the Edmonton Space Sciences Centre in September. By the end of the year the film will have played extensively in the USA, and The Netherlands, England, Australia, Hong Kong and France.

**THE DREAM IS ALIVE**

p./d. Graeme Ferguson, assoc.p. Phyllis Wilson, sc./ed. Toni Myers, training man. David Douglas, tech.sup. William Shaw, sd.designer Ben Burt, mus. Micky Erbe/Maribeth Solomon. running time: 37 mins., Col. Co-operating Institutions: National Aeronautics and Space Administration/Smithsonian Institution's National Air and Space Museum/Lockheed Corporation/IMAX Systems Corporation.

Pat Thompson •

MINI - REVIEWS

by Pat Thompson

**OFRA HARNOY: THE MUSIC INSIDE**

Ofra Harnoy, the Canadian cellist, started playing at six years old and now, at nineteen, has most successfully shaken off the "child prodigy" label. This film quickly establishes the talent inherited from her mother who plays the piano, and from her violinist father. He was her first teacher, and soon realized that "she was going over my head."

Harnoy gave a public performance two weeks after her first music lesson, and we see snatches of home movies of a recital with her parents when she was eight. She then went on to win many competitions, grants and awards.

"Playing the cello is my love... it releases emotions and feelings," says Harnoy, "... it can do anything...it's just an extension of me." She rehearses three hours a day when at home – just enough to keep her performance spontaneous. "It has been something that has come naturally to me...I almost feel guilty that it has come so easily to me."

However, Harnoy's touring is arduous. Ninety-hour concerts in a season; a schedule booked two years in advance; extensive travel; plus a recording career which began when she was fifteen. In the last five years 10 albums have been released internationally and, since the repertoire for cello is limited, her adaptations of popular music (including a very successful Beatles album) have shown her capable of living in both the classical and pop music worlds.

The stresses of success are always present. Ofra Harnoy talks particularly about the unpleasant "meat market" aspects of selling her talents

in the record business – the ugly competition, and the hatred of other musicians which is "sometimes not very nice." She tries to counteract all this by striving for a normal family life – when she has the chance. She rehearses at home in her small bedroom, and enjoys cooking a meal for her parents. Narrator Hana Gartner lets us know that the cellist likes old movies, romantic novels, reading poetry – and going out for junk food.

Ofra Harnoy is a charming, outgoing, and extremely talented performer, and Bruce Griffin gives us a nice clean impeccable documentary, which serves its subject admirably. Hana Gartner, as writer/narrator, adds just enough information to the visuals without going overboard.

d./ed. Bruce Griffin, writer/narr. Hana Gartner, cam. Henri Fiks, Jim Aquila, Colin Allison, sd. Ross Redfern, Ingrid Cusiel. Running time: 26 mins., Col. 16mm/vid-eotape. Assistance from Ontario Arts Council/The National Film Board. Special thanks to Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra/St.Lawrence Centre staff (Toronto). Availability: Kinetic Film Enterprises, 781 Gerrard St.East, Toronto M4M 1Y5 (416) 469-4155

**NOTE: Ofra Harnoy: The Music Inside** had the dubious honour of being shown on the first program of CBC's *Canadian Reflection* on Monday, July 8 at 4 o'clock in the afternoon. The telecine transfer was atrocious, with focus and light change problems, and it was buried (as will be all other films) in this series. How can CBC allege to "showcase" short films at 4 p.m. on Monday afternoons in summer? Who's glued to the TV set when the sun is burning brightly, the lake sparkles, and outside diversions definitely have priority? It appears these shorts are only

OK enough to fill the "Canadian content" in an abysmal off-peak slot. These little films, often a spawning ground for the feature film talents of tomorrow, would be infinitely better served if an appreciative audience could snuggle up to them, say, on a wintry *Sunday* afternoon at 4 p.m.

**D.P. BROWN: BEYOND REALISM**

Dan Brown lives and paints in Colingwood, Ontario, and combines a studio and home in the country in order to portray the daily life around him. The film starts by focussing on Brown out in the fields and, on returning home, he throws his jacket and other items on a chair. We then see that this artful arrangement is the inspiration for a painting now on screen. (This reviewer's heart sinks.)

The artist talks a great deal too much during this film – about his "Old Master" technique; of the social, 'bitter' and 'sarcastic' comments embodied in his canvases; and his partiality for egg tempera, "the finish of the work has a quality all its own – the whole textural concept..." His blandly banal and excessively conservative canvases belie what he is telling us. There is a smidgen of unconscious humour, though.

Brown's full-length self-portrait is painted nude, from the rear, and his children call it "Daddy's Bum." Shortly after this piece of information, the artist declares, "I like the idea that what I have to say can be understood by the viewer."

The 'hook' for this film was a retrospective at the Hamilton (Ontario) Gallery of Art, covering 20 years of Brown's work, which subsequently travelled across Canada. The camera zooms in and out on many of the paintings, including "The Auction", "The Wedding tray", and "The Twirler", and Brown is also seen preparing serigraphs – accompanied by narration, or the artist (again) giving explanations of his intent.

Even if one admired Brown's commonplace work, the artist himself is enough to put off self-respecting art lovers at any level. He natters on and on about his paintings in a simplistic and unctuous manner – a sort of mundane schoolmaster trying to stir up feelings for his work that are just not there.

The filmmaker had to love Brown and his paintings, for what other reason is there to inflict upon an unsuspecting audience such an overdone, technically ordinary, tribute to this artist?

d./sc. Athos Katsos, exec.p. Don Haig/Film Arts, cam. Dennis Rindsem, sd. Ross Redfern, Dan Latour, ed. Barry Backus, M.C. Manne, video seq. Bill Goddard/Alndon Group, opticals: Film Effects, narr. Chris Skene, running time: 27 mins. Col., 16mm. Availability: Kinetic Films, 781 Gerrard St.E., Toronto M4M 1Y5 (416) 469-4155.

• Ofra Harnoy: "Playing cello is my love"

