A PEOPLE UNITED

A teenage boy is walking through a winter's lane. He sings along and his voice-over is heard: "It's like a dream you have and you can't remember the details." The boy, Claudio, tries to recall the Chile he left with his family when he was seven years old, and he looks forward to going back in the summer to visit his relatives. His father Victor, his mother, and his two younger brothers form a united family and, together with Chilean friends, are dedicated to the land of their birth. Above all, the music of the country serves to unite the expatriates who long to return to their land, who discuss the reproductive military rule, and who hope for the democratization of Chile. Claudio plays the guitar, the flute and the pan pipes. Together, he and his father fashion their own reed instruments from bamboo. The men gather to talk about their childhoods and the plight of their country, but modestly they make wonderfully evocative and lively music. "Just because there is repression, it doesn't mean our songs have to be sad."

As the Grupo Taller they give concerts in small halls and meeting places, striving to keep alive the spirit of Chile in the hearts of Chileans, and also entertaining many others who love South American music.

At the close of the film, Claudio leaves the airport for his visit to the reality of everyday life in Chile. He takes along his little brother, remarking that he's a bit mouthy, so he'll have to keep an eye on him. A charming, heartfelt film from Peter Blow, who knows the Chilean family well and presents them unsentimentally, but in a manner which is full of warmth and understanding. With a minimum of voice-over narration from Claudio, and tiny interviews with his father and mother and some of their friends, a great many nuances of feeling are neatly caught.

A SYMPHONY OF TOYS

The conductor is the "Gumby" character, all rubbery and animated, and the audience is a motley crew of toys — cuddly, wind-up, battery operated — fashioned from old and new materials. At the downbeat, the soundtrack burst forth with a spirited selection from Rossini's "Thshima of Seville." Carried away by the lively music, the audience gets a bit frolicsome. The toys start to chase each other, run into each other, and a woodpecker does some damage to a baby's head. General mayhem ensues. At the crashing finale, the camera surveys a disaster scene, and the Gumby conductor gets knocked off its feet by a big gorilla.

This engaging little film is the work of a fourth-year student in Film Studies at Queen's University. Later in his career he will probably be reclassified as "the other Gumby", but many months of preparation went into its production. The Gumby figure is animated, while the set movements of the battery and wind-up toys are carefully choreographed, integrated and edited to the music track. All this effort pays off in a fast-paced kaleidoscope of movement and humour. The "cast of thousands" of toys is well-chosen, and a nice touch is the opening and closing title pulled along by a mechanical tricycle and truck respectively.

Selected for showing at the 1985 Canadian Student Film Festival in Montreal. A film by James Stuart, with Gorl McGlynn and Michael MacLaren. Running time: 4 min. Col. 16mm. Availability: James Stuart (+1) 927-8104

MINI-REVIEWS

by Pat Thompson

SCAN LINES

by Joyce Nelson