

The second annual Cinegrad Showcase and Forum '87, organized by the Ontario Centre for the Advancement of Cinema Graduates, announced the winners of its juried film, video and writing event at an Awards Gala in Toronto in June. Here's a rundown of the successful competitors.

THANATOS – *Grand Prize Winner and Best Drama/Direction/Sound/Lighting*
A drama of a falling out between two thieves, and the eerie haunting that follows. Already reviewed fairly favourably in this column (September 1986).

d. Stephen Roscoe (York University). 25 mins

CHAIN REACTION – *Best Music Video*
A toe-tapping, fast-moving piece that borrows from many sources, doesn't present anything particularly new, and features the director cutting a prince-like figure.

d. Ed Douglas (Ryerson Film & Cinematography) 4:10 mins.

CONCEIVING THROUGH A DEAD LANGUAGE and **MY MOTHER IS A DANGEROUS WOMAN** – *A tie for Best Experimental*

Conceiving Through A Dead Language is one of those irritating films that tries to suck you into thinking it has depth. However, interest evaporates rapidly as it reveals all too quickly that it has absolutely nothing to say.

d. Theresa Simons (Fanshawe College). 7:00 mins.

My Mother is a Dangerous Woman has the advantage of a great title! Billed as "a deconstruction of the Demeter and Persephone story", it has some wit, looks good, but goes on a bit too long.

d. B.H. Yael (Ontario College of Art) 16 mins

THADDEUS – *Best Documentary*

A sympathetic glimpse of a young paraplegic and his struggles to integrate into the system. His friends support him in his everyday living and his studies at college, and medical professionals pay tribute to his courage and tenacity. But they all say the same things, and more variety would have added depth to a film which has a professional sheen.

d. Timothy Garrett (Confederation College). 7:35 mins.

MINI REVIEWS

by Pat Thompson

TROUBLE WITH JOE – *Best Animation*

A delightfully original animation – the live hand draws and the character, Joe, wants to get into the act. A short, snappy and funny presentation of a good idea.

d. David Lee Andrews (Sheridan College Animation) 3:40 mins.

THE HUMAN DAY – *Medallion Award for Excellence in Cinematography/ tie for Best Sound*

A personal vision of the Creation distinguished by some beautiful cinematography, but badly marred by banal and predictable thought.

cam. Parth Jadon. sd. Sean Kelly (Humber College) 5:50 mins.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

An examination of the effects of unemployment on all members of a family

– from the father and breadwinner to his wife and two teenage children. All are affected, and display many different reactions, ranging from shocked disbelief to anger and pessimism, and on to bitterness and depression.

In this dramatization of an all-too-common problem, the husband, Pat, mopes around the house doing odd jobs. The wife takes in some sewing and attempts to interest Pat in a friend's offer of a business partnership. John, the son, hustles a job washing cars on a lot each Saturday, roping in friends to help for a small fee. Sandy, the tomboy daughter, whizzes around her paper route.

The problem with this well-intentioned docu-drama is its simplistic approach. The very real problems are presented in a weak script, with dialogue that is a load of *Clichés* – and everything is absolutely predictable. The angry confrontation at the dinner table; the really pushy and nagging wife shouting, "You

have to *something*"; the kids pitching in; the friendly loan officer ready with advice; the chance meeting of the husband with a former co-worker who has retrained to his advantage, and so it goes on. And, finally, the husband rushes from the house after an argument, and a family photograph falls from the wall and the glass shatters...

The film appears to try to serve all of its sponsors and suppliers of services. A pity, because the camerawork and choice and use of locations is good, the acting is passable, but the script is the stumbling block. Nevertheless, the film is still a useful jumping-off point for discussions on a number of current topics.

p./d./cam./ed. Barry Casson. sc. Michael F. Rogers, Barry Casson. **Financial sponsorship:** B.C. Council for the Family, Provincial Consortium on Family Learning, Royal Bank of Canada, B.C. Ministry of Industry and Small Business Development, Koerner Foundation, National Film Board, Camosun College. 24 mins. Col. 16mm/VHS/Beta/3/4". **Distributor:** Casson Films, 895 Walfred Rd., Victoria, B.C. V9C 2P1 (604) 478-7211.

Pat Thompson •



• A shot from *Making It Happen*

BOOKSHELF

In **The Camcorder Handbook**, Gerald V. Quinn describes the current, state-of-the-art equipment that fulfills every videophile's wish for for a compact, powerful and easy-to-operate video recording unit. His detailed and expert manual will help to select the appropriate camcorder, explain how it works, and spell out its professional and home uses (*TAB Books, Blue Ridge Summit, PA 17214; \$18.95*).

The booming audiocassette market has reached proportions requiring thorough resource inventory and cataloguing. **On Cassette** identifies 20,000 spoken word tapes and provides data on subject, author, reader/performer, and availability for rental and/or purchase (*Bowker, NYC; \$75*).

Bob Shanks's **The Primal Screen**,

now in paperback, carries experienced professional advice on writing, producing and selling movies for television. Rich in personal case histories, it offers clearly written detailed information, and includes Shanks's script and production schedule of "Drop-Out Father," a successful CBS film for television (*Ballantine/Fawcett, NYC; \$9.95*).

The publishers of the encyclopedic 12-vol. Motion Picture Guide have issued their first yearly supplement, *The Motion Picture Guide 1986 Annual*. It lists the previous year's U.S. feature film releases, providing full cast-&-credits, production data, genre, ratings, cassette availability, and extended plot summaries that include critical evaluations and related anecdotal information. Awards, obits, upcoming personalities

and an index round out this basic research tool (*CineBooks, Evanston, IL; Bowker, distrib., NYC; \$99.95*).

Polish films, so often acclaimed at film festivals but rarely enjoying wide public exposure, are given well-deserved praise in Oskar Sobanski's **Polish Feature Films**. This comprehensive study includes all movies produced between 1945 and 1985, with biographies of 233 directors and an annotated catalogue of their movies, a complete list of films with full production data, and useful cross-indexing (*Locust Hill Press, Box 260, West Cornwall, CT 06796; \$35*).

Spain's cinema after Franco is perceptively assessed by John Hopewell in **Out of the Past**. It charts the emergence of films with a marked political slant, and attributes the recurrent social concerns of

new directors to a reaction against the stifling censorship and intellectual stagnation of Franco's dictatorship (*U. of Illinois Press, Champaign, \$15.95*).

Watchers of the then-and-now syndrome will note a symbolic link between two recent biographies. **Gable's Women** inventories the countless femmes – actresses, extras, socialites – who shared the "King of Hollywood's" bed, with author Jane Ellen Wayne an obviously attentive witness; and **My Husband, Rock Hudson**, Phyllis Gates's melancholy saga, co-authored with Bob Thomas, narrating a three-year misalliance between an incredibly naive secretary and the late homosexual movie star (*Prentice Hall, NYC; Doubleday, NYC; \$16.95 ea.*).

George L. George •