

Two first-class offerings from Ismé Bennie, whose company is now known as Paragon International, but still at the same address: 260 Richmond St. W., Ste. 405, Toronto M5V 1W5. Tel.: (416) 595-6300.

HEART OF THE FOREST

Lisa is alone in the schoolyard while others skip and play around her. She retreats into an imaginary forest – dancing with the trees in her secret world – while the real world lurks around the corner. Lisa also notices Ian, another ‘outsider’. Along with other schoolmates, he comes to her for answers before tests. As Ian struggles in the classroom, Lisa quickly finishes the test and begins to imagine playing her favourite computer game, Choose Your Journey. With a surge of electronic music and a rush of wind, Lisa is into a forest fantasy – strange sounds, scary masks, gnarled tree roots. Her daydreams are definitely more amazing than her life and, musing on her lack of friends says, “Who needs them anyway.”

Ian too, is a different person in the computer room at school. On his own in front of the screen he tries to write, to rhyme, but it’s not easy. His hands on the keyboard slam out gobbledegook and, suddenly, he has access to something special!

Back in the schoolyard, Lisa’s contemporaries discuss her and whether she really wants friends – she’s off in another dream, trying to “find the magic vine” in a forest which now resembles a jungle and, while paddling along, discovers the strange rope-like vine.

Ian drinks in information from the ‘talking’ computer about the “World of Free Form Poetry” – and Lisa’s dream in the heart of the forest starts to encroach upon that of Ian...

An engaging film that uncovers and elaborates upon, the dream worlds of bright but introverted children, who want acceptance and friendship from the mainstream kids at school. Their escapes today come through computer games and challenges (not from the books and more books of this reviewer’s far-off youth!), and lead to even more isolation as they ‘walk into the screen’. However, the filmmakers have made an upbeat, sensible statement with

natural, non-actor children uttering believable and (for the most part) improvised dialogue.

The production values are excellent – sound, photography, acting – and enhance a story that could perhaps be a little tighter in the editing.

d./sc. Adrienne Mitchell, Linda Outcalt. p. Adrienne Mitchell. assoc. p. Linda Outcalt. cam. Adrienne Mitchell, Chip Yarwood. ed. Michael Werth. running time 24 mins. Col. 16mm/tape. Assistance from: L.I.F.T.; National Film Board; CBC; Ismé Bennie.

SPORTS CARTOONS

The publicity sheet proclaims, “Thirty-seven Amusing Encounters from the Animated World of Sport”. Actually, it’s 50 mins. of hilarity, crisp and colourful animation, and delightfully wry comedy, crammed into tiny little ‘fillers’ designed mainly for TV.

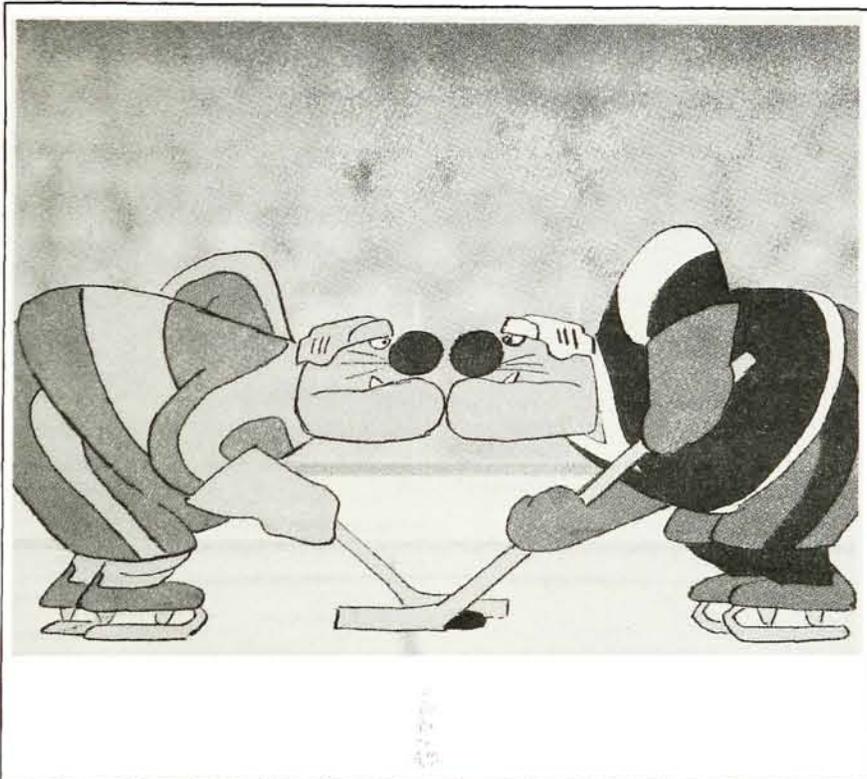
The lead characters in these spots are a hippo – who is not as stupid as one may think – pitted against a small, smart-ass, loud-mouth cat. And this cat plays dirty! He lies, cheats, sabotages his

opponent and, when found out or bested, has frequent tantrums and emits a miaoow that sounds suspiciously like a fretful baby.

The sports range over diving, soccer, hockey, baseball, wrestling, tennis, golf, with some of the more out-of-the-way, such as chess, fencing, ballooning, thrown in with many other muscle-and-pant activities. Supporting characters include some pinkish porkers and a wiry dog, who join in team sports along with a bunch of clone-cats who are just as obnoxious as their lead feline.

A set of very funny vignettes, covering easily recognizable and comic aspects of many sports, all with great popular appeal. Would be nice to see them in cinemas, as well as on TV.

Lamb Perlman Productions Inc. p./d./sc./ed. Derek Lamb. assoc. p. Janet Perlman. anim. d. Zlatko Grgic, Kaj Pindal, Janet Perlman, Wayne Morris, Bob Browning, Anne Chevalier, Jeffrey Hale, Chris Hinton. mus. leff./sd. ed. Normand Roger. voice eff. Bernard Carez, Patrice Arbour. running time 50 mins. Col. No dialogue. 1” VTR. Made with the participation of Telefilm Canada.



Sports Cartoons – The antidote to cartoonish sports

STRANGERS IN TOWN

A straightforward look at albinos, from both the medical and social side, which exposes the fears, misconceptions and downright ignorance of a great many people. The documentary is crammed with information imparted by a narrator, ‘the general public’ interviewed on the street, and by albinos, their families, and medical personnel.

The two albinos on screen who provide the most interesting insights have made their way in two divergent fields – medicine and showbiz. Dr. Bernard Robaire, one of a family of three albino children, teaches in the Faculty of Medicine at McGill University, while Johnny Winter is a guitar-playing singer-songwriter. They make a wonderful contrast, both visually and mentally! Robaire is bearded, informative, and possessed of a dry wit, who was always supported and encouraged by his family. But Winter, exotically tattooed, cowboy hat firmly in place all the time, talks of being thought very odd in his home state of Texas but, on coming to New York, found himself going unnoticed – “they’ve seen everything there...”

An extremely interesting film on a subject rarely discussed, but... would that it was better organized and more crisply edited. Having found knowledgeable people willing to talk, and then researching into other countries, and branching out into plant and animal life, it is understandable that the filmmaker wanted to use just about everything at hand. But at times the sound is dreadful; the people on the street are extraneous; and one cries out (inwardly, of course), “reduce it to about 27 mins, please!” so that it can be seen and appreciated by a larger audience on TV.

p./d./ed. Lois Siegel. co-p./asst. d. Bryan Oldford. cam. Ron Hallis. mus. Johnny Winter, André Vincelli. narr. Don Winkler. col. 16mm running time 47 mins. Availability: Lois Siegel (514) 481-0611. Foreign Sales: Film Transit, (514) 844-3358.

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