

Dave Barber, from the Winnipeg Film Group, presented a small selection of its films at the annual meeting of the Canadian Federation of Film Societies in Toronto on the Victoria Day weekend, thus providing an opportunity to review a tiny part of regional filmmaking.

### THE WALTZ

Based on a short story by Dorothy Parker, this neat little piece focuses on the plight of a 1920s young lady who, rather than be a wallflower, agrees to dance with a *gauche* young man. An inner monologue catalogues her agonies as, in the noxious embrace of a perspiring partner, she bumps and lurches around the ballroom floor, to the strains of *The Swan* from *The Carnival of the Animals* by Camille Saint Saens!

With a limited set, good costuming, and a few actors, the '20s atmosphere is evoked and aided by the pouty-lipped and kiss-curl'd Donna Lewis as the unfortunate girl. Her delicious boop-a-doop voice-over – "The music is never going to stop playing" – completes the delightful overall effect.

A film by Shereen Jerrett. 6 mins. 16mm.

### THE WASHING MACHINE

A philosophy professor assures his sceptical wife that he can fix their aging washing machine. But eventually he admits defeat, and hands over the monster to Elwood, a large oafish appliance repairman. Then it's all downhill – running to the laundrette, running out of washing powder, and quarters too. The prof. tries to contact Elwood; his wife becomes increasingly caustic; and Elwood, when located, demands a lot of cash and gets rough and nasty when criticized.

A small idea which never develops, and just meanders around and about. The dialogue is not pithy or funny enough – it raises a soft smile and not a loud chuckle – and the handling of the actors is just passable. In all, really a learning exercise for the director.

A film by Gene Walz. 24 mins. 16mm.

### THE CARETAKER

A black-and-white essay with no dialogue, which succinctly recounts the empty, sad life of a young caretaker in a slum apartment building. He lives in the dirty, dank basement, and emerges from drinking and sleeping in his sloppy room to mop the dingy stairs and hallways. Going about his tasks he hears arguments, shouting and raging from behind the closed doors. One day a small boy comes out to the landing and is shyly friendly. This overture appears to give a little hope and comfort to the youthful caretaker.

A taut, well-thought-out piece that is never maudlin, and which makes its point in an economical and gripping fashion.

A film by Allen Schinkel. 12 mins. B&W



Czech guitarist Vladimír Mikulka and Canadian mime Charles Gundy collaborate

### TALES FROM THE GIMLI HOSPITAL

Trailer (3 mins. in sort of septatone – film reviewed in *Cinema Canada* #152) is a little tease to whet appetites for Guy Maddin's 72-minute feature. It certainly made a weird impression – like, "What the hell was that all about?" So let's try and see the film which, according to rumour, bids fair to become one of the cult ones... (Availability: Winnipeg Film Group, 404 – 100 Arthur St., Winnipeg, Man. R3B 1H3. (204) 942-6795).

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*The Canadian Independent Film Caucus held its Annual Party and Film Night in Toronto during June and, in between greeting old friends, movie chat, and eating and drinking, a few short films were taken in.*

### EXTENDED CRUISING

One of the series, *Set Your Sails*, made in collaboration with TVOntario, this episode features the first boat to sail across Hudson's Bay. Video interviews with the two men and two women who completed this hazardous trip point up the difficulties and terrifying experiences that even hardened and experienced sailors have to cope with. All this is interspersed with the regular format of the series – giving tips and notes on various aspects of sailing. As far as one can judge from a single episode, this series is fairly free-wheeling in its approach and advice, and is more than competently handled in the shooting and editing areas.

Soma Film Producers, Toronto (416) 466-0822. d. Dorothy Engelman/Graeme Campbell. cam. Jim Borecki/Christopher Terry. sd. Robert Sim. ed. Robert Doughty/David Leach. 27 mins.

### GUITAR

A sampling of the 1987 Toronto International Guitar Festival, with mostly informal glimpses of the participants from around the world – John Williams (England) working on *The Toronto Concerto* composed by Leo Brouwer (Cuba), the University of Toronto Guitar Ensemble rehearsing a relentlessly modern work, and Eli Kassner instructing visiting artistes (and managing to paint a portrait of one of them too). In rehearsal, at parties and receptions, the guitar is spotlighted by individuals and groups from Japan, Brazil, Spain, the United States and Canada, among the many countries participating. A flamenco dancer is divinely inspired by a Spanish group, while a mime artist works on a piece with a Czech guitarist, encouraging him to toss over his instrument at the end – "Please don't drop it", the musician mutters.

Rhombus is expert at these events – never producing a dry, this-is-how-it-was film, but always spicing the action with backstage, off-the-record stuff, all impeccably shot and edited. And *Guitar* is no exception as it moves along smartly, without one's interest flagging for a minute.

Rhombus Media/Toronto (416) 962-9131. p. Niv Fichman/Barbara Sweete. d. Barbara Sweete. cam. Andreas Poulsson. sd. Brian Avery. ed. Steve Weslak. 54 mins. 16mm/tape.

### LEAVE ONLY FOOTPRINTS

A comment on man and his environment. No words, just a flow of images connected by the filmmaker, but not necessarily making the same connection for the viewer, who

may think "why?" on a number of occasions. Gardens and garbage, rows of houses from the road and the air, logging above and tree seedlings underground, city and country, summer and winter – it's all a bit too familiar and goes on a bit too long, but it's undeniably good-looking. The electronic and percussive music is great to start with, but loses its charm when the singing starts.

d./cam. Chris Terry. mus. Perfect World. ed. Steev Morgan. 25 mins. 16mm. (Availability: The Imaginators (416) 922-1600).

### SPACEWATCH

Shown on video, this is a pilot project for a children's series on space exploration. Young Bennie hangs out in his "clubhouse" where he works on a computer concoction called W. A. L. T. E. R. (Wired Analog Laser Technology Experimental Recorder!) When he tries to demonstrate WALTER to his doubting sister, somehow they are "teleported" into the space program, and get to ask questions of a bunch of astronauts. These actual working astronauts are a good-natured lot, and answer and comment on the various demonstrations including weightlessness, how to eat, sleep in space, and the most asked question of all, how to go to the bathroom (very carefully!)

This pilot is crammed with incident, as they say, and indicates its "selling" aspect. However, the stock footage is well chosen, the astronauts are low-key informative, the learning material is delivered in a lively fashion, and the kid actors come across with unself-conscious charm.

Co-prod. Rudy Inc./Toronto (416) 489-7115 & Spacewatch/Houston Public Television. p. Rudy Buttignol. d. Gail Frank. cam. Richard Stringer. sc. John Frizzell/Rudy Buttignol. 27 mins.