

# FILM REVIEWS

## Angels

p./d. Edie Yolles **assist. d.** John Bradshaw **cam.** Bill Reeve, Alex Vizmeg (assist.) **ed.** Edie Yolles **assoc. ed.** John Bradshaw, Chris Lee (assist.) **sd.** Steve Withrow, Wade Cornell (assist.) **light.** Christopher Wilson, Marvin Midwicki (assist.), Don Egoroff (assist.) **p.a.** Tim Belliveau, Michael Kennedy, Wang Chow, Chris Lee, Doug Pruss, Joe Vizmeg, Daniel Chalifour, Geoffrey Lee **add. cam.** Michael Kennedy, Tony Currie, Kent Lindsay, Rick Price **elec.** Alan Goloboff **pre-mix assist.** Tom Brennand, Kirk Hawks, Peter Buhl, Paul Fitzgerald, Mick Griffin, Les Holdway **mix** George Novotny, John Bradshaw (assist.) **neg. cut.** Catherine Rankin **opticals** Film Optical **lab.** Medallion Film Laboratories Limited "Sun-

shine Song", written and sung by Michal Hasek **running time** 28.5 min. **col.** 16mm **dist.** Canadian Filmmakers' Distribution Centre

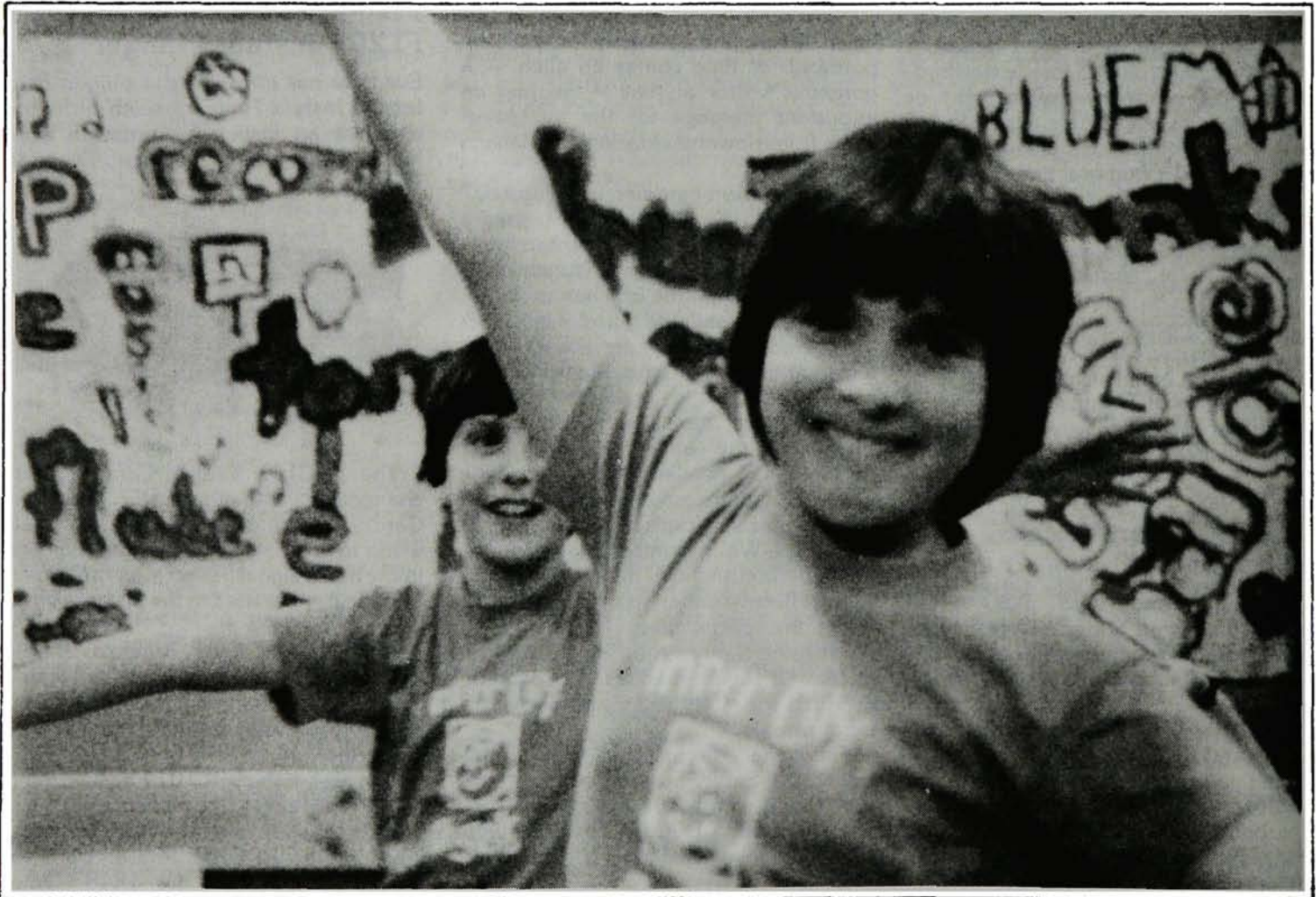
Edie Yolles' **Angels** is 26 minutes of bright images and lots of love. It is also a finely crafted film. The Red Ribbon it won at the American Film Festival is well deserved.

This documentary explores the activities of the Inner City Angels, a group of 50 Toronto artists based at Scadding House, that tiny historic house hidden behind the Eaton Centre. The Angels work with kids. They go out to the schools and community centres of Toronto's core areas, or they invite the kids to come to them at Scadding House. Each artist presides over a workshop in which the young participants

begin to get in touch with their own creativity while they are learning and having fun.

The film brings the viewer into the midst of several of these workshops. It also goes along on Angel field trips, to the Toronto Island and to an Argo game. It illustrates how this group is managing to spread its energies in all directions — that there is an angel for everything from dance therapy to kite-making.

These Angels are special people. The film is strong because it succeeds in showing the creative spark in each of them and how it is transmitted to the kids they work with. Poet Sean O'Huigin conducts a session in sound poetry, having fun doing variations on the word "turnip."



Thanks to the Angels, inner city children learn how to joyfully release their creative energies



The kids are not exactly sure what he's up to, but John Reeves' camera catches them totally absorbed. When O'Huigin sets them to work on their own names they jump right in. And filmmaker Aido Suzuki uses two cut-out photos to plan a script for a film with another group. When one small boy complains that the pictures are not all the same size she challenges him: "Why does everything have to be so symmetrical?"... Good lessons to open the minds of kids of all ages, but especially those growing up in the heart of the city.

Intimacy, fun, concentration and dignity are what the Angels teach. Live sound and the editing of Yolles and John Bradshaw bring these elements together. John Reeves' cinematography creates a bright collage that naturally lifts the spirits. Edie Yolles began the project as a film student at Ryerson. It is to her credit that she could bring together fellow students, professional film people, government officials, public and private money, and of course the Inner City Angels to produce a film that ought to be seen by urban folk everywhere.

John Brooke

## The View From Vinegar Hill

p./d. Barbara Boyden cam. Mark Irwin ed. Paul Caulfield music consult. Heather Conkie exec. p. Don Haig p.c. Film Arts running time 12 minutes col. 16mm dist. Canadian Filmmaker's Distribution Centre and Kinetic Film Enterprises

*"When we moved here to Vinegar Hill, I thought it was a very magic spot. It's very close to nature and there's a sort of pioneer feeling about it. And I think too many people ignore their history. This felt like my place in the world and so I decided to do a lifetime series... it's my view of life as seen from Vinegar Hill."*

- Barbara Elizabeth Mercer, in **The View From Vinegar Hill**

Barbara Boyden's film asks little more of us than that for a few minutes, we share painter Barbara Elizabeth Mercer's view of life, a view that is, as she puts it, "child-like and wonderlike."

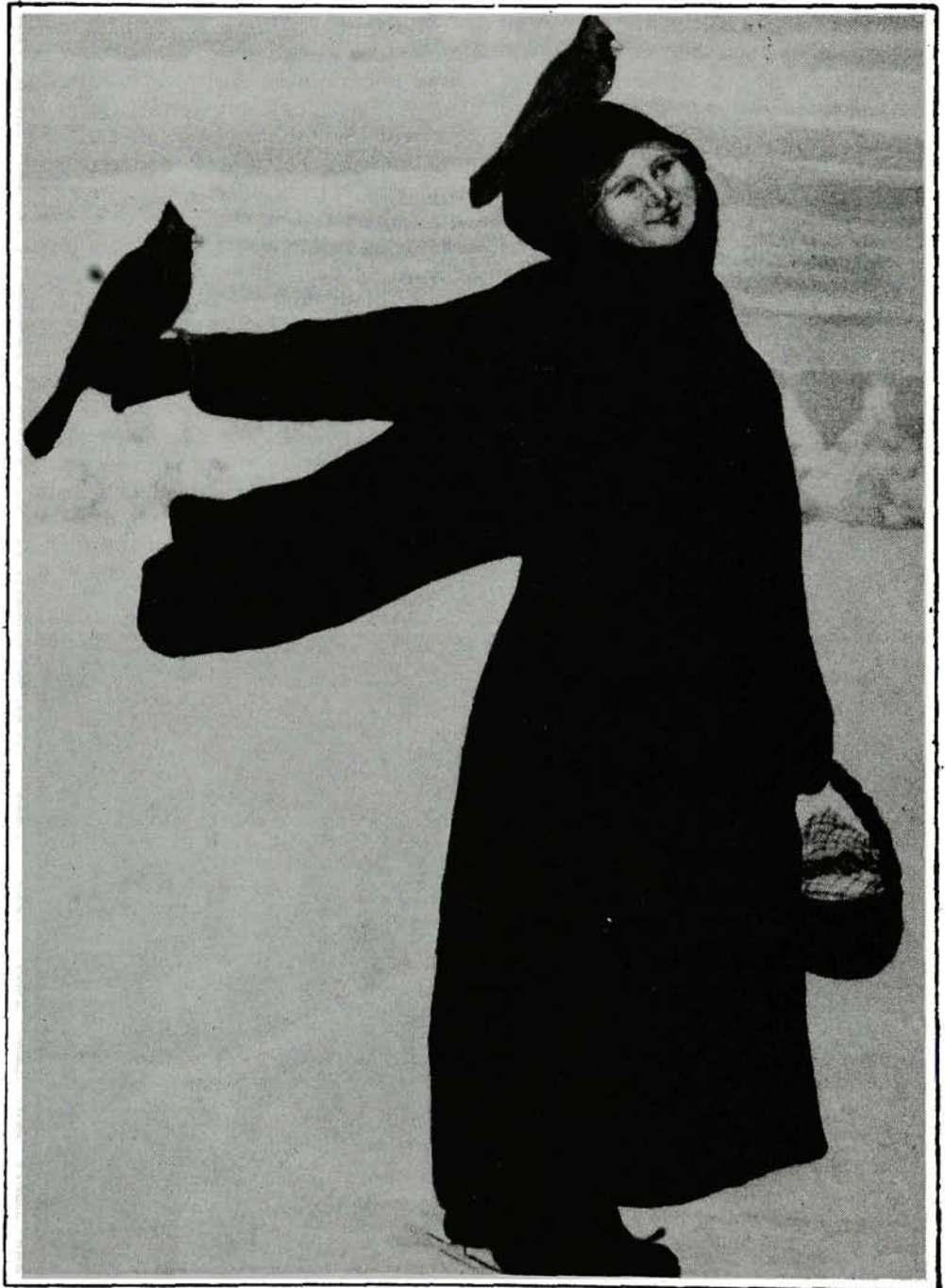
That the film seems longer than its 12 minutes is a testimony to the combined

skills of producer/director Barbara Boyden, cameraman Mark Irwin, editor Paul Caulfield, and music consultant Heather Conkie. Ultimately, they draw us into Mercer's world so completely that at the end, we feel we understand both her work and what led her to live at Vinegar Hill, to create there a series of naive paintings that have an undeniable force and charm.

Barbara Elizabeth Mercer is a beautiful, serene woman, with a face and a voice that the film affectionately uses. Her house, its setting, and her obvious love

and appreciation of both, are carefully and succinctly set down for us before we go on to look at her work.

It is through the exploration of her work that the film widens from what might have been only a finely-drawn vignette. The convention of slow panning shots over the paintings does more for the artist's work, and our viewing of it, than most of us could do unaided. Perhaps a trained eye can see a painting the way the camera sees it here; but I, for one, feel more at ease with film than with static forms of art, and therefore Irwin's camera leads me to



The wonder of life as seen through artist, Barbara Mercer's eyes