

Best of the Fest: Saskatchewan Film & Video Showcase

Best Animation and Best First Production
THE FOOLISH OGRES
Brian Duchscherer, Regina, 3 min

Duchscherer spent countless not-so-innocent hours reading children's books before attempting this ambitiously self-scripted animated tale. At times it appears to parody the genre but that is also its strength for there is appeal for both toddlers and the mature.

Utilizing foam-rubber characters, a light-hearted soundtrack and a compact, colourful set, the blend of humour, action and morality is infectious. A small boy, lost in the forest is bagged by an ogre. The ogre takes his prize home to a greedy wife wallowing in slovenly domestic bliss. Their argument over who gets to eat the boy provides him with a chance to escape.

Details like the fearsome ogre's slapstick collision with a tree, the wildly staged ballet of a greed fight, and the wife reading an upside-down *Cover Girl* magazine work like fine seasoning. Duchscherer's irreverent wit and convincing characterization in this first-time effort prove he's ready for more challenging projects in animation.



Best Drama Production, Best Overall Production, Best Direction, Best Achievement in Editing and Best Achievement in Sound

HEART AND SOUL
d. Larry Bauman p.c. Camera West, Regina, 27:50 min.

In the opening scene a razor knife is slowly removing a face from the photograph. The closeness of this gesture is never far from the heart of this film.

Laurie (Veronica Voss) has mysteriously lost her husband and son. Her obsession to replace her son results in her abduction in a supermarket of a look-alike boy, Danny (Danny Balkwill). **Heart and Soul** spends the rest of that day and night wrapped in Laurie's obsession and Danny's increasing skepticism.

Bauman's fearless close-ups and nail-biting silences force the viewer to make emotional contact with Laurie and Danny. Unfortunately, Voss's flat-voiced, expressionless portrayal doesn't return the compliment. But part of her problem could be her repetitive, monosyllabic lines. On the other hand, Danny's passage from excited complicity to bewildered doubt, fear and determination is plausible considering what Bauman wants us to believe. The innocence of a child trapped by a manipulative adult could create a wealth of unpredictable responses. But while Danny is asking all the right questions, Voss is loaded with a pile of bland answers.

In the scene where Voss is putting Danny to bed, Bauman's camera traces Danny's glance around the roomful of stuffed toys. Slowly these unusually warm-hearted creatures staring back at him become wide-eyed guards. The friendship he (and we) had anticipated vanishes. If the depiction of terror can be exquisite, Bauman achieved it.

Bauman's lingering camera and the sparse script find an accommodating partner in Rob Bryanton's music. It becomes a narrative device heightening tension, tranquillizing, and probing the introspective focus of the characters.

Heart and Soul is a patient, expertly plotted drama.

Best Educational Production
THE BOTTOM LINE
d. Stephen Onda p.c. Frameworks Productions Ltd., Regina, 12 min.

The film begins around a newspaper editor's desk. It's a black and white '50s scene and he wants a story. Between cigar puffs he details the job to his yet-unconvinced reporters. They've got to investigate the economic impact of the arts and culture on Saskatchewan. One makes a quip about "ballerinas in Moose Jaw" and they're off.

What they find is inspirational colour, not heartless black and white. **The Bottom Line** is a hardsell of Saskatchewan arts. No



dance slipper or smudged palette is left unturned, no stage is left curtained, no guitar string is unplucked. Onda's decision to keep reporter's rushing back to their black and white business office with ecstatic full-colour facts is not subtle. But just as the editor gets his story, so is Onda's message driven home.

The most successful segment involves the informal 'man on the street' interviews that are so down to earth, you can't help but believe every word.

If the editor had known, he'd have probably only had to send Onda out to get the story.



Best Promotional Production
SASKEXPO 86 - WELCOME
d. Larry Bauman p.c. Camera West, Regina, 11:30 min.

If anyone ever asks you to explain in 10 minutes what you did on your summer holidays in Saskatchewan, hand them a copy of this film. It was made to be shown on the video screens above the line-ups at the Saskatchewan Pavilion at Expo 86.

Bauman has covered it all. Exuberant dance scenes, splashes of industry and a look at the drafting and construction of Saskatchewan's infamous Expo 86 glass grain-elevator tower are mixed with sweeping horizons. Although the theme changes are abrupt, Bauman has composer Rob Bryanton's score to smooth the transitions.

The wide-angled aerial vistas are captivating and more than adequately define the diversity and essence of space. But two more intimate moments and their own perfectly choreographed interludes. One captures a moose loping through a northern swamp - in a graceful combination of high-stepping lilt and ponderous dignity. The other follows a majestic, silvery elevator being moved down a mystical winter morning highway.

A tourist-oriented film, it made me want to visit a province I've lived in all my life.

Dale Winnotowy •

Terry Ramsaye's classical work, **A Million and One Nights**, now in paperback, is a first-hand history of the movies through 1926. Its lively anecdotal style surveys the technical, business and personal development of the industry, with an eye for authentic detail and a firm grasp of the facts (*Simon & Schuster/Touchstone, NYC, \$15.95*).

Italian films from 1942 on are discussed by Mira Liehm in her well-researched book, **Passion and Defiance**, now in paperback. Emphasizing the Fascist period and its aftermath, she defines each film's multiple aspects in a thoughtful assessment of its contribution to cinematic art (*U. of California Press, Berkeley, \$12.95*).

John A. Michalczuk, in **The Italian Political Filmmakers**, examines the concern of Italy's national cinema with social issues. This insightful study of such directors as Pasolini, Bertolucci and Wertmüller explores the effect of their political commitment on their creativity (*Fairleigh Dickinson U. Press, Cranbury, NJ, \$49.50*).

A collection of stimulating essays edited by Eric Rentschler, **German Film and Literature** probes the creative interaction between these distinct media, and the process whereby directors from Pabst to Fassbinder translated important novels and plays into significant films (*Methuen, NYC, \$40/17.50*).

British filmmaker Leo Dickinson narrates, in **Filming the Impossible**, his spectacular feats of cinematography. Climbing sheer cliffs, dangling from balloons, crossing precipitous gorges are some of the daring exploits he describes and illustrates with his own superb stills (*Merrimack, Topsfield, MA, \$15.95*).

Wes D. Gehring's basic study, **W.C. Fields**, explores the life and times of a comedian equally acclaimed on stage and in films. It includes critical assessments of his impact on American popular culture, a condensed biographical sketch, and lengthy biblio/filmographic listings (*Greenwood, Westport, CT, \$29.95*).

Hugo Vicker's compelling biography, **Cecil Beaton**, explores the clash between Beaton's flawed personality and his natural gifts. A talented photographer, he blossomed into a brilliant costume and set designer for stage and screen, and a prolific diarist. But his artistic achievements were marred by arrogance and ambition, and fear of exposure as a homosexual (*Little Brown, NYC, \$25*).

In **Famous in America**, a collection of personality studies, Peter N. Carroll diagnoses the "passion to succeed" syndrome that drives Jane Fonda and other celebrities in their purposeful determination to achieve uncontested pre-eminence (*Dutton, NYC, \$17.95*).

Mark Bego's **The Best of "Modern Screen"** reprints articles published between 1930 and 1940 in the popular fan magazine. They tellingly evoke the balmy old days when studio p.r. men had a monopoly on news and columnist Louella Parsons as the enforcer among stars of Hearst's dubious moral standards (*St. Martin's, NYC, \$12.95*).