

Two new volumes have been added to the massive **Variety Film Reviews** series, an 18-volume set reproducing in facsimile some 40,000 critiques published since 1907 in the authoritative entertainment industry weekly. Vol. 17 (1981-82) and Vol. 18 (1983-84) include American and foreign films with full production data, synopses and critical assessments, bringing up to date an exceptional reference work of unequalled scope (*Garland, NYC, \$173 ea.*).

Mass culture is discussed in two scholarly books. In **Studies in Entertainment**, editor Tania Modleski introduces cogent essays by well-known academics on significant facets of contemporary culture, from horror films to women's fashions, in an endeavor to bridge the gap between high art and mass culture. Ian Chambers' **Popular**

Another batch of recent National Film Board films, mostly animated, and available around the country, but seldom seen on screens of any sort — commercial, TV or pay-TV. Hey, they turn out good stuff which really deserves wide programming! (OK, OK, so this reviewer will this year continue beating her head against the brick wall...)

#### EVERY DOG'S GUIDE TO COMPLETE HOME SAFETY

A dog is ready for assignment! His voice announces that, like others before him, "...Rover, Spot — dogs who struggled to make the home a safer place to live in, I am a Safety Dog."

A dog-loving boss is coming to dinner with his employee's family for the first time. They rush out for a canine pet, inadvertently acquire a newly-minted Safety Dog, and christen him Wally. Their home proves to be an incredibly accident-prone environment — no emergency number sticker on the telephone; the vacuum cleaner and the iron are death-traps; the baby gets hold of a huge pair of scissors, and also loves to cavort in front of an unprotected fireplace with its roaring log fire; an electrical saw runs amok and slices and dices madly.

Poor Wally, worn-out with all his unnoticed life-saving duties, finally puts the baby to bed and, in passing, remarks unfavourably on the old-fashioned crib. Gasping for his first reviving cocktail, he sinks into a comfy chair — and disaster strikes...

A wonderfully inventive, funny and fast-moving string of calamities that can happen in the home, with a laconic, tongue-in-the-cheek forties style 'private eye' commentary by Wally, the Safety Dog.

This little gem (in 35mm) travels the country with every playdate of the re-release of Disney's **Lady and the Tramp**, and a tiny percentage of the box office receipts will go to the Canadian Picture Pioneers Trust Fund.

**exec.p.** Douglas MacDonald **p.** William Pettigrew **d./sc./anim.** Les Drew **cam.** Raymond Dumas, Jacques Avoine, Robin L.P. Bain, Pierre Landre **sd.ed.** Bill Graziadei **mus.** Eldon Rathburn **voices:** Paul Brown, Harvey Atkins, Luba Goy, Henry Beckman. 10 mins. Col. 35mm/16mm/ videotape.

#### CONCERTO GROSSO MODO

A delightful little film designed to teach the first basic, simple elements of music. A small, elegantly dressed orchestral group play rather strange music, and we move through the cello and into animation. The notes, resembling little stick

## BOOKSHELF

by George L. George

**Culture** probes the urban aspects of that phenomenon and its transformation under the impact of the sights and sounds of cities (*Indiana U. Press, Bloomington, \$27.50/8.95; Methuen, NYC, \$29.95/9.95*).

A timely re-issue, **Life Goes to the Movies** assembles a classic collection of vintage photographs that epitomize the glory of Hollywood's Golden Days. Stars swagger on screen and off, film moguls throw their weight around, studios flaunt their wealth and techniques, all for the benefit of a bedazzled citizenry (*Pocket Books, NYC, \$14.95*).

Woman as object of man's fantasy and cinema's role in this pervasive mythol-

ogy are searchingly traced in July Burchill's **Girls on Film**. Her provocative, articulate and often ferociously funny book assails the intentionally distorted image of women and dissects the ways movie stars were used to further this exploitive concept (*Pantheon, NYC, \$8.95*).

An eclectic New York publisher of movie books, St. Martin's Press presents a better than average selection of star biographies. An excellent example is Lawrence J. Quirk's **Margaret Sullivan: Child of Fate**, a sensitive portrait of a fiery and unpredictable actress, her acclaimed career, tempestuous mar-

riages and tragic end (*\$14.95*). Charles Higham's **Lucy** explores intimately the many roles, onstage and off, that Lucille Ball played in her life and the fierce determination that has kept her going (*\$17.95*). In **Linda Evans**, Michael Freedland narrates with candor the eventful rise to fame of *Dynasty's* reigning star (*\$12.95*).

Ninety years of British cinema are surveyed in **All Our Yesterdays**, a selection of essays tracing the specific traditions and illuminating the various aspects that collectively distinguish U.K. films. Knowledgeably edited by Charles Barr, it first explores the relation between British cinema and other media, followed by informative assessments of such topics as the film industry, cinema and state, documentaries, animation, and various personalities (*Museum of Modern Art, NYC, \$18.95*).

## MINI REVIEWS

by Pat Thompson

figures, take the five horizontal lines of the music staff and change them around — into scaffolding to ascend or descend, or to play vertically like the strings of a harp. Notes dance around with a treble clef to illustrate allegro, presto, and other musical expressions. A composition is played and starbursts twinkle over the actual sheet music as the notes flow along. Finally, we come back through cello to the orchestral ensemble and into the credits.

An entertaining little exercise in teaching the basic theory of music mainly aimed at children. However, a smooth blend of live-action and some charmingly spare animation, with good opticals thrown in, gives it general appeal.

**p.** Yves Leduc **d./sc./anim.** François Aubry **sd.track** André Angelini **anim.cam.** Pierre Landry **op.efx.** Susan Gourlay **cam.** Andreas Poulsson **ed.** Pierre Bernier **keyboards:** Robert Lauzon. Produced by the NFB French Animation Studio. 6½ mins. Col. 35mm/16mm/ videotape.

#### DEBTS

It's the Autumn of 1929 in Northern Alberta. A farm, fields of wheat, ploughing, cello music, and a boy's voice telling of the hard work. His young sister comes running into the field, "Something happened to Mrs. Sykes," she cries.

The Sykes, only married a few years, are expecting their first child. The boy's mother telephones to say she will stay over, and returns home with the news that Mrs. Sykes died, but her baby boy lives. The young sister asks, "Is that where people go when they die, into another person?" That night the brother and sister go to bed and listen to their mother talking about the Sykes baby, of losing one of her own and how she felt — adding that a man never knows what it is like.

The simple, stark drawings with colour wash, create and bring alive the arid, difficult life of the period. A small film made from the heart, with much feeling.

**exec.p.** John Taylor **d.** Stephen McCallum **p./cam.** Svend-Erik Erksen **sc.** James Reil **sd./ed.** Cal Shumatcher, Will Warins **mus.** John Forrest **voices** Sharon Bakker, Bobby Bruce, Dwight McFee, Massie Sunshine. A Pacific Region production. 9 mins. Col. 16mm/ videotape.

#### SUMMER LEGEND

An explanation of the cycle of the seasons according to Micmac legend. The great spirit Glooscap heard the cries of people perishing from hunger and,

seeking the cause, came face to face with the terrible giant, Winter. Glooscap listened to Winter talking on and on and, through the mists of sleep, heard the loons telling him of a beautiful princess in the south who could bring hope to his people. Held captive by the spell of Frost, Glooscap slept on, but after many months he broke free and called on the Spirits of the Deep to help him. A great whale rose from the water, and Glooscap rode on its back to the land of the princess, a most beautiful maiden called Summer. Glooscap faced Winter with Summer at his side. He talked and talked and Winter melted away, the snow disappeared, and the land reawakened. Glooscap keeps Summer for six moons and she then visits the south, and Winter returns to the North once again.

An extremely decorative rendering of this legend, retold for children of all ages, in delicate drawings and pretty pastel hues.

**exec.p.** Douglas MacDonald **p./adapt.** Eunice Macaulay **ass.p.** Les Drew **d./anim.** Françoise Hartmann **mus.** Keith Tedman **mus./sd.ed.** Julian Olson, Diane Le Floch **narr.** Tex König **voice** Margo Mackinnon Baculis 8 mins. Col. 35mm/16mm/ videotape.

#### ELEPHANTRIO

A surreal, weird collaboration of three animators, but bearing the indelible stamp of Paul Driessen. No point in delineating the tale, replete with a variety of sounds from plops, to gulps, to ruder ones, which is about an elephant sitting in a sort of laboratory, reading a storybook, that has something to do with a golden egg. The pachyderm cries at some of the adventures, but eventually is all smiles by the happy ending.

Not a fan of the Driessen style (it's always more of the same to this reviewer) and never able to force even a tiny smile or chuckle, let's say that his admirers will probably find it well up to standard. But what's Academy Award winner John Weldon doing in this company when he should be out there brandishing his own inimitably witty fist across the screen?

**exec.p.** Douglas MacDonald **p.** Hubert Tison, David Verrall **d.** Paul Driessen, Graeme Ross, John Weldon **cam.** Claude Lapiere, Claude Lebrun, Jean Robillard **sd./mus.** Normand Roger **voices** Christine Lamer, Denis Chartrand, Jacques Lareau, Serge Benoit. coprod. with Société Radio-Canada. 9 mins. Col. 35mm/16mm/ videotape.

#### LUCRETIA

A wryly humorous poem by Peter Desbarats recounts the story of Lucretia, a redheaded inhabitant of Hell. Born to be a freckled holy terror, her mother had to admit that "...there's a pleasant streak in her!" On Christmas Eve, Hell is locked up tight, but Lucretia said she left her pitchfork on the lawn, and was off. At Heaven's gate, she outwits Gabriel (who is making himself a slice of toast), takes off for earth, and falls into a Montreal snowdrift. An old man comes out of his basement room and finds her. Lucretia asks him all about Christmas and what is needed for its celebration. The old man tells her his Yuletide dreams — a tree, a comfortable chair, a log fire, a rug on the floor, a cat purring, and an old-fashioned turkey dinner. Lucretia provides all this, they share the feast — and she promises to come again next year.

The visuals are well-matched to the poem, and Lucretia is a deliciously endearing character. Altogether a charmingly astringent tale for Christmas — or any other season — which whips along at a good pace. And if memory serves, didn't the animator, Heidi Blomkvist, produce the prize-winning *Ob, Sean*, in her student days at Sheridan College's animation course? (Noticed long-time super animator Grant Munro is credited with "rendering" on this film — and when do we get a new epic from him?)

**exec.p.** Douglas MacDonald **p.** Eunice Macaulay **d./design/anim.** Heidi Blomkvist **cam.** Pierre Landry, Robin L.P. Blain, Ray Dumas **mus./sd.ed.** Normand Roger. Poem by Peter Desbarats and read by Damir Andrei. 9½ mins. Col. 35mm/16mm/ videotape.

#### A DOG'S TALE

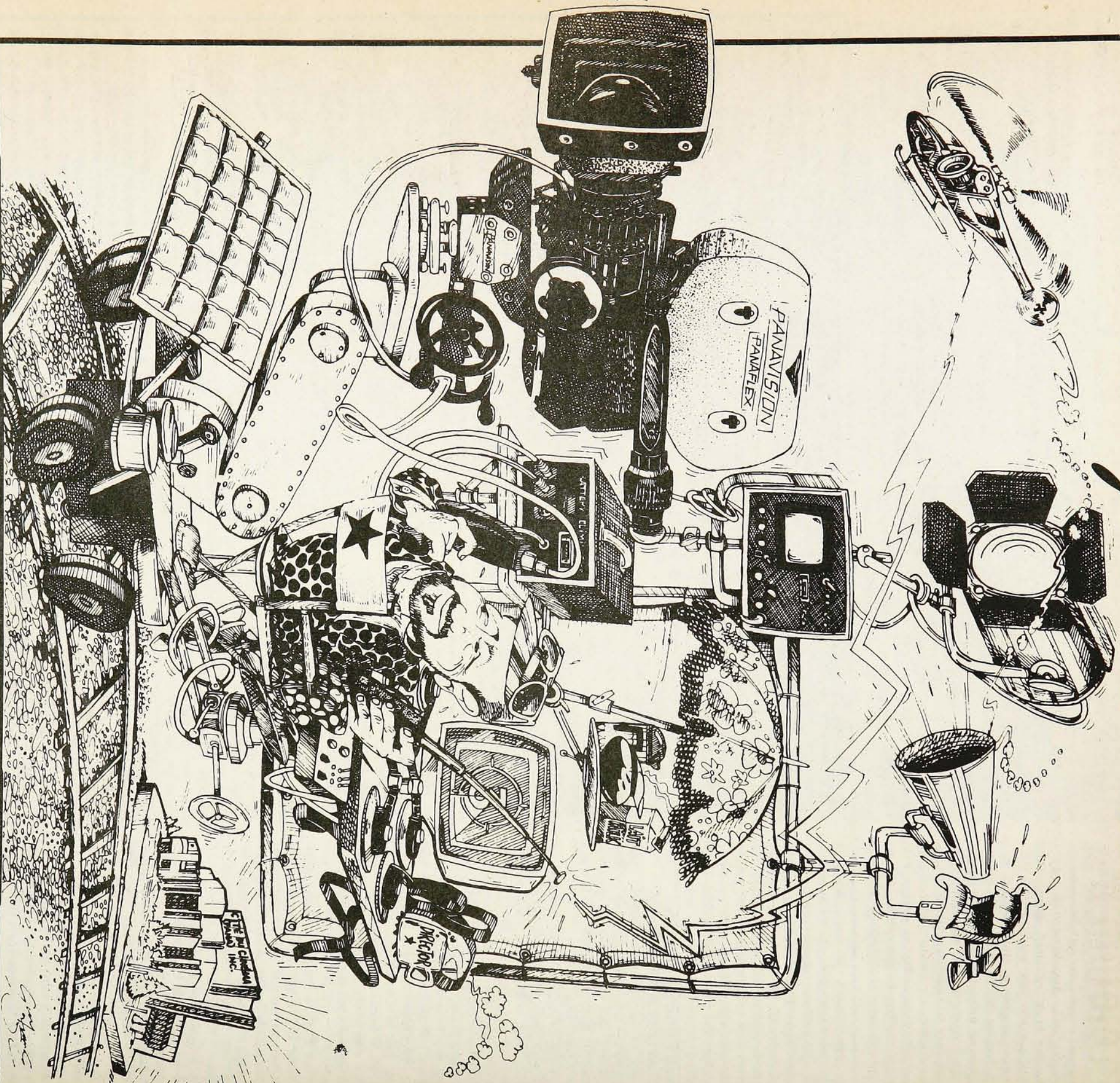
A little Mexican parable, voiced by an actor dressed as a dog and gnawing a bone... for some reason or other.

This is the story of a man who couldn't read or write, and who was rejected as a street sweeper. So he sold tomatoes; then his own tomato sauce; bought a cart, and then a stall from which to sell his wares. He made lots of money and went to open a bank account — and the punchline is saved for a viewing of the film!

A simple, straightforward, brightly coloured melange of actors, cut-outs, painted backdrops and puppets that evoke the naive feeling of Mexican folk art.

**exec.p.** Andy Thompson **p.** Marrin Cannell **d./design** Caroline Leaf **concept collab.** Grant Heisler, Bob Pot **cam.** David de Volpi **sd.composer** Daniel Feist. **Actor:** Grant Heisler 4 mins. Col. 16mm/ videotape.

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