



O Vertigo dance modern

O'Vertigo Danse's choreographer, Ginette Laurin, rehearses an athletic couple, wearing running shoes, in a work in progress. "Full House," says Laurin, is about the '50s when everything was flashy and people were very naive. One of her dancers remarks that, "She is seeking a line between kitsch and art." "Full House" is staged in a swimming pool set (rather like a David Hockney California painting). Three beauties in red bathing suits frolic in about six inches of water. Couples 'dive' into the water and skim the length of the pool. The bright primary colours are reminders of old 20th Century-Fox musicals.

Finally David Earle, of the Toronto Dance Theatre, talks about the company and the "necessity for linking ourselves up with the most urgent impulses to dance... dancing from one's emotional centre." Earle rehearses his piece set to Mozart's Requiem, "Sacra Conversazione." A grieving crowd views three hanging figures and the emotion, intricate patterns and beautiful movement fuse together, aided considerably by the noble choral work. Here again, there is an overlap as the film crew, choreographer and company discuss their involvement during a rest period.

As in most dance films, the glimpses of repertoire are fleeting, but enough to whet the appetite (or not, depending upon a liking and

appreciation of modern dance). But Moze Mossanen has been very cunning in showing, not only the wheels going round from the point of view of choreography, but has also involved the viewer in the "choreography" of filming. This intriguing device appeals to two audiences - dance and film - and in addition involves the "general public" by giving them an interesting and painless introduction to both media.

*Dance for Modern Times* serves its subject well, with good camerawork, ravishing colour, and editing that flows from one dance company to the next. The only complaint of this reviewer is that director Moze Mossanen's voice-over contribution - giving the shooting date and introducing each company segment - seems a bit stilted and stiff in contrast to the visual ebb and flow of the dancers. But no doubt budget considerations dictated this economy? It does not detract from the film as a whole, which is an excellent contribution to knowledge of the current modern dance scene.

Pat Thompson •

p./d. /sc. Moze Mossanen. asst. d. Rick Thompson. cam. Norman Allin csc. sd. Bobby Jones. orig. mus. Glenn Morley, Lawrence Shragge. With the participation of Telefilm Canada/Ontario Film Development Corporation/TVOntario/Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. running time: 76 mins. col. 16mm/VHS/3/4" dist.: Creative Exposure, 2236 Queen St. E., Toronto M4E 1G2 (416) 690-0775.

## Oliver Hockenull's Determinations

Oliver Hockenull is a young filmmaker connected with Cineworks (British Columbia's independent film co-op). He has just finished his first feature-length film, in which he deals with the problem of conveying a somewhat apocalyptic political message.

*Determinations* is described in its publicity material as a "radical filmwork on the Vancouver Direct-Action anarchist group and on the question of justice in Canada." While it's not necessary to know this to get the film's message, it probably helps organize the almost 80 minutes of image, statement and nihilist sentiment that comes at the viewer as rapid-fire as promised.

Hockenull proposes his film is an essay, but as such it is deficient. Rather than developing an argument, the emphasis is on suggestion and a litany of statistics; *Determinations* is perhaps more of a rant than an essay. The film centres on the concerns, actions, arrests and sentencing of the "Squamish 5" in 1982-83, and on the resulting coverage of these events in the popular media. But it also condemns the world-wide build-up of, and massive expenditure on, military armaments (particularly in the U.S. and the Soviet Union).

Hockenull produces a sense of uneasiness and bleakness by the use of assorted visual, textural and textual strategies. He often uses traditional methods of documentary presentation (for example, voice-over and overlaying film) but seems conscious of this, and resists

fulfilling expectations created by the standard notion of the documentary film. He also employs animation, shadow dance performance, broadcast news footage and other television imagery, along with dramatic sequences, to establish an impression of the human condition in crisis.

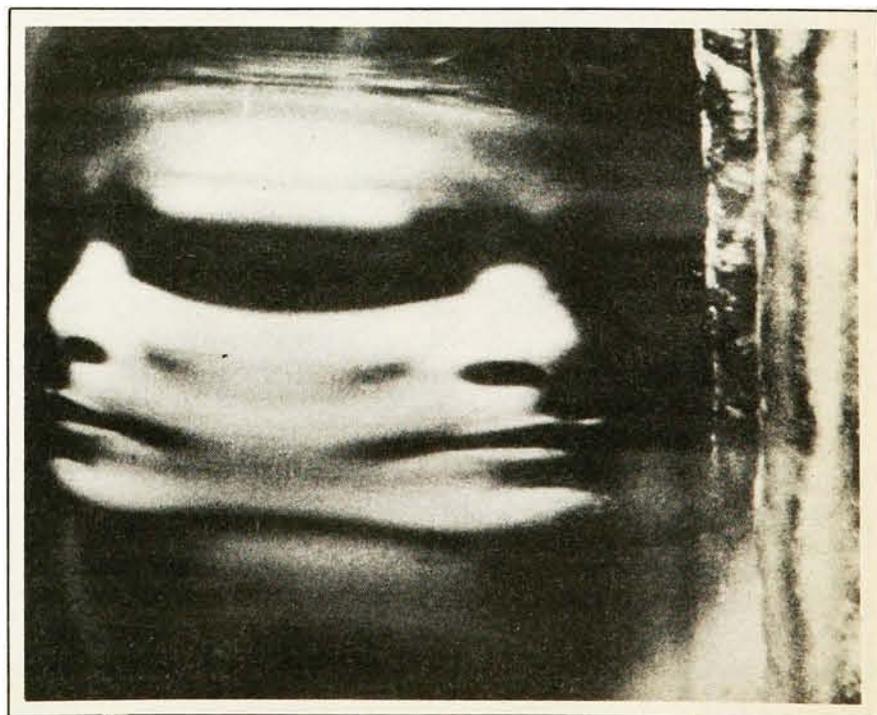
Although the film repeatedly insists its essential doctrine: "all violence is abhorrent," the message is actually undercut at times by several presumably ironic anecdotes in which the solution to various problems always comes down to more violence. An insomniac kills himself; a young prostitute, sexually molested as a child, avenges herself by stabbing her abuser "in his privates"; if an armoured-car guard causes trouble, kick him in the head or shoot him. Irony is a fine device, so long as it is apparent or has an obvious intentionality.

One of the film's strongest moments is a television rap poem, read by Vancouver performance poet, Judy Radul, over a series of quick-cut, accelerated TV images. This is one of a few instances in which the visual, verbal and contextual elements mesh remarkably well (which brings to mind the poet Louis Zukofsky's test or poetry - "the range of pleasure it affords as sight, sound and intellection").

In another memorable scene, a young man delivers an anti-military monologue while a car drives wildly and pointlessly around him. This sequence is the pinnacle of humour in the film, and a rare moment.

Overall, *Determinations* would benefit from a more developed sense of humour. The tone seldom strays from its single-minded bleakness. Possibly, the filmmaker feels his aim is too serious (or takes himself too seriously), but the balance is off.

The gloomy emotional atmosphere is further compounded by what Hockenull calls



Doug Chomyn in *Determinations*

"Brechtian dramatic sequences." In these, actors perform highly-stylized scenes in which the dialogue – discussions of morality, possible actions and their consequences – provides most of the drama.

The film is certainly not about production values (as Hockenhuil admits), although it is not completely devoid of effective film technique. Unfortunately, there is too much of the raw, hand-held camera approach, and the sound is often poor – hard to hear (or hear clearly) what's being said.

But many of the production problems can be forgiven as this is a very low-budget film (made for less than \$25,000 Hockenhuil says). He also says the film is aimed more toward an intellectual audience than to those just interested in entertainment. "I'm not glorifying the actions of these individuals (the Squamish 5) so much as trying to point out some basic blind spots in the Canadian psyche, for example, about arms manufacture," he says. "I tend to believe there is no real political movement since the death of history on August 9, 1945."

*Determinations* strives for an articulate confusion in its effect. Hockenhuil achieves this state at times throughout the film, but can't sustain it. Perhaps his mere presentation of images and ideas is not enough; he never really connects all of the film's various constituents. Still, I admire his boldness and his concerns.

Calvin Wharton •

**DETERMINATIONS** *d.* Oliver Hockenhuil *ass. d.* Doug Chomyn *m.* Dennis Burke *other m.* D.O.A., The Subhumans *musical perf.* Carmen Reittich, Scott McLeod, Pat Chird, Gerry Hannah *with the asst. of* Al Razutis, Hadwijich, Erik Sven-Erikson, Rim Wilson, Patricia Gruben, *crew* Juergen Beerwald, Jeff Carter, Scott Haynes, Bill Evans, Craig Condy-Berggold, Cynthia Wong, Glenn Anderson, Mary Daniels, Ileana Pietrobruno, Keith Groat, *l. p.* Louise Ross, Doug Chomyn, Judy Radul, Fumiko Kiyooka, Karen Zawasky, Derek Neen, Jackie Dionne, Zoltan Lipics, Andrew McEllroy, Jamie Parker, Lisa Adams, Carolyn McLuskie. Assisted by The Canada Council, The National Film Board of Canada (Pacific Region), and Cineworks.

Two animated films from the National Film Board, which are nominated in the Best Short Film category of the Academy of the Academy of Canadian Film and Television (Genie) Awards. In addition, George and Rosemary gives the NFB its 53rd Academy Award (Oscar) nomination.

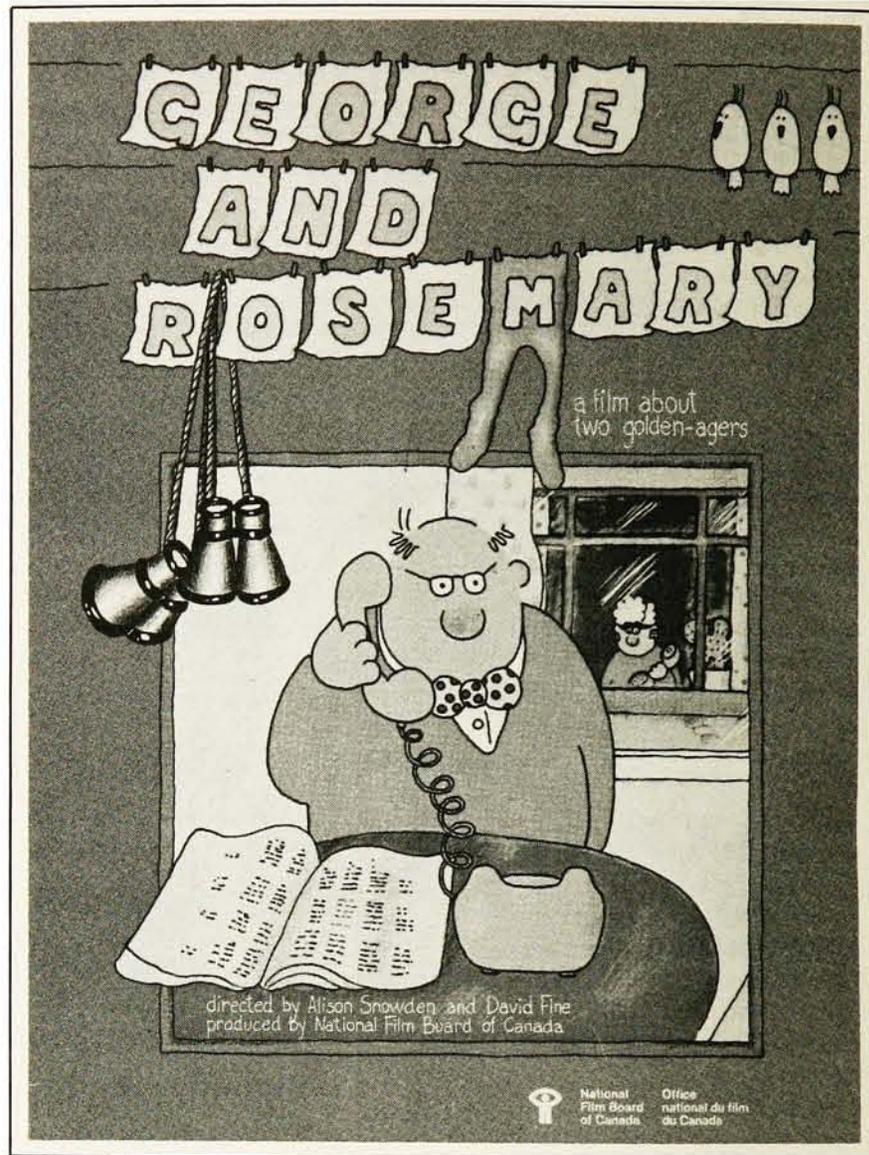
GEORGE AND ROSEMARY

**Y**ellow birds twitter on the clothesline, and it is slowly pulled across the screen to announce the film's title inscribed on the pegged-out laundry. The soft-voiced narrator tells us that George plays checkers with his cat, puts ships into jars and, when the weather is nice, sits on his front porch. The last mentioned hobby allows him to watch the house opposite – "He had a passion for the lady across the street..."

As the widow Rosemary comes out, puts her goldfish in their bowl on the porch, and waves to George, he indulges in a little bit of fantasy... a fast passionate tango, followed by sips of champagne. That night, gazing from his bedroom window, in his mind's eye, George is in the operatic mode, singing his heart out and climbing up to the widow's window for a stolen embrace.

Finally one morning, the would-be suitor decides that this is *the* day. Clad in his best suit and bow tie, with garden flowers in hand, George gathers his courage – but then sees a carload of Rosemary's family descend upon her. When George finally does knock on Rosemary's door, he is in for a wonderful surprise – to the tune of "Yellow Bird"...!

This delightfully whimsical "film about two golder-agers," is the first in a series of animated films called *65 Plus*, initiated by producer Eunice Macaulay. Hitting just the right note, it shows in a wry, subtle, and charming manner that, even though the facade may crumble, underneath the ruin many of us remain young at heart, sexy, and fascinatingly delectable. The animation is softly persuasive, the atmosphere cosy and inviting, and there are some hilarious touches.



And Cec Linder is just right in his reading of the first-rate narration. Keep the fingers crossed. This is surely an all-round winner.

*d./sc./sd./design/animation* Allison Snowden, David Fine. *orig. mus.* Patrick Godfrey *p.* Eunice Macaulay *exec. p.* Douglas MacDonald. *assoc. p.* David Fine. *narr.* Cec Linder *running time:* 8½ mins. *col.* 35mm/16mm/VHS/Beta/3/4" *awards* 1987: Prix du jury, Festival des films du monde, Montreal; Gold Plaque, 23rd International Film Festival, Chicago.

mechanical contrives to trip him up; it is all too much. Staggering into a bar for a Harvey Wallbanger, Nelson confides in the barman, and Edna is also there drowning her frustrations with the "new" system – but the nightmare is not finished and technology has even invaded their leisure moments...

An amusing idea, and well-conveyed by combining cel animation with computer-animated images. According to the NFB, "The computer images were animated separately on the screen of a standard office computer and were integrated using an animation camera equipped with an aerial image projector." But, however interesting the technique may be, it cannot overcome a shrill and overloaded cascade of words, which should have been heavily edited. The bright, very jazzy images, combined with the flow of language, which includes a lot of boring, one-note "robot" voices, becomes soporific in a very short space of time. If a 10-minute film *can* sag in the middle, this one does, but perks up to a good ending with a twist in its tail. But definitely full marks for technique.

*d.* Kevin McCracken. *computer prog.* John Weldon. *aerial image camera* Raymond Dumas. *mus./elec. efx* Normand Roger. *p.* David Verrall. *exec. p.* Douglas MacDonald *running time:* 10 mins. *col.* 35mm/16mm/VHS/Beta/3/4"

FUTURE BLOCK

**N**elson is an ordinary sort of a guy, nothing special. He keeps a modest account at the Harmony Bank, and looks forward to joshing his favourite teller, Edna Beasley. He suspects all is not well when the bank entrance is blocked by a huge video-arcade-game-type money machine. Nelson negotiates several electronic hazards before reaching the counter and, horrors – no Edna! A video-face screen confronts him with impossible requests for his card number and his code word (he enters "hunk", as that's what Edna teasingly calls him!). He thinks Miss Beasley comes to explain the new system to him; he panics; everything

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