

Local talent featured in Film Fest

Third World Film Festival
Feb. 28-Mar. 2
Tory

by Greg McHarg

The Third World Film Festival gives Canadian filmmakers the chance to display their prowess in the documentary film medium. Canadian documentaries are arguably our most important cultural export besides hockey. They are admired internationally, yet largely ignored here, due to the public's taste for the more seductive Hollywood fare.

Joe Vismeg is an Edmonton filmmaker who directed and edited two of the Festival's films: *This is Only a Test* (1984) and *With Our Own Two Hands* (1985). Vismeg is a graduate of Ryerson's filmmaking program and has lived in Edmonton for the last seven years. He offered his thoughts on his film projects, on the role of the NFB, and on the importance, to Canada, of its documentaries.

Vismeg's motivation for making *This is Only a Test* was his "disgust at discovering that the federal government had agreed to allow cruise missile testing in Canada." The film debates the issue through interviews with diverse interests. Canadian church leaders and the Canadian armed forces speak, as well as marchers protesting the tests and members of the Squamish Five who were convicted of bombing the Toronto Litton Factory.

In *With Our Own Two Hands*, Vismeg's film crew accompanies the Canadian "Farmers for Peace" to Nicaragua where, in 1984, they helped native farmers repair vital farm machinery. When asked whether the group was ever exposed to life-threatening danger, Vismeg quipped, "Yes, in Miami, before we flew to Managua." He added that, "seriously, we were never close to contraband and the natives treated us well."

Both of these films were funded by the National Film Board. *This is Only a Test* received unanimous (16-0) support from the NFB for funding (totalling \$126,000) in spite of its bias. Vismeg's presentation favours the public response against cruise missile testing in Canada.

The film board's enthusiastic support appears to indicate its autonomy from its

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source of funds. It also demonstrates a sincere interest in educating the public. Vismeg states that "government support of Canadian documentaries is crucial to satisfy Canada's social and cultural needs." He views our films as "records of Canadian history and tools for social change", adding that "to be effective as either, they have to be easy to watch."

When asked whether Canadian documentaries could or should be financially self-sufficient, Vismeg responded by comparing these films to museums. "Just because a

museum doesn't turn a profit, should it be shut down?" He also complains about the replacement of film by videotape. "Old or bad videos will be re-used. Old films usually sit around until someone finds them, views them, and discovers new historical value in them."

With regard to the documentary as a tool for social change, its effectiveness is determined by public exposure to it. Vismeg has found that the NFB's enthusiastic support for the making of *This is Only a Test* has not been followed up with support for its distribution.

Vismeg doesn't know whether the board's inaction is deliberate or whether the film has been lost somewhere in the bureaucratic process. At any rate, he and the film's producer, Dale Phillips, are doing what they can to give *This is Only a Test* more exposure, particularly to students. "Its use by teachers at this time would initiate a debate in the schools, not only on the issue of cruise testing, but on the broader subject of the validity of different types and degrees of civil protest."

Joe Vismeg will be present this weekend to introduce the showing of *This is Only a Test* (Sunday, 19:25). In addition to seeing his films, viewers will have a chance to discuss them with him. They will also have the opportunity to take in as many of the other features as they can sit through; if they're not careful, they might just learn something.

A look at life under Tito

When Father Was Away on Business
Princess Theatre
March 1-7

review by Gunnar Lindabury

Near the beginning of *When Father Was Away on Business*, Mesha (Miki Manojlovic) and his live-in father-in-law, Muzamer (Pavle Vujusic) smile, sit down, and cheerfully tear into each other. Mesha says he had hoped the "leech" would be gone when he returned and Muzamer snaps that he'd hoped his son would not return.

As the film closes, grandfather ruefully collects his bags and walks off to the hated nursing home, saying he can no longer stand the politics of his family.

In the meantime, the six year old sleepwalking narrator, Malik (Moreno D'E Bartolli), youngest son of Mesha, watches as his father is imprisoned by the Tito government and their family life is threatened.

Being "away on business" was a euphemism in post-war Yugoslavia for "political prisoner." In Mesha's case, his refusal to divorce his wife (Mijana Karanovic) and marry his mistress co-worker (Mira Furlan) results in a

few critical comments reaching the ears of the party faithful.

In a manner reminiscent of *The Tin Drum*, the family arguments, cat fights, and father's continued intrigues are seen through Malik's young-old eyes. In many ways, this is D'E Bartolli's movie. Although he seems to be tossed around more by the circumstances of his parents' life, Malik has his moments of influence. When his father moves in on a new woman at a dinner party, Malik slips under the table and sets the woman's skirt on fire. When his parents start fighting the next morning over his father's indiscretion, Malik hurls himself at his mother and holds her until his father stops beating her.

Yet Malik is still only a six year old and in many ways is still powerless. He falls in love with a young classmate of his, a girl with a fatal blood disease. He arrives just before an ambulance is preparing to take her away and she asks him if he loves her.

"More than anything else in the world," he replies, "more than I love myself."

Malik is unlike his father who, when his mistress accuses him of not loving her any-

more, replies "Who loves anybody anymore in this madhouse?"

Yet, despite his love, the ambulance wails and drives away: Malik cannot help the girl live. What he really wants, he cannot bring about. It is perhaps this feeling of powerlessness that causes him to sleepwalk when his father is first taken away for "volunteer duty" in the mines.

So the boy disappears from his bed and is found walking along the top struts of a bridge or on the edge of a cliff, oblivious to the risk he is in. In this regard, perhaps he does resemble his father who walks a line between Stalinism and independence in somnolent disregard for himself or his family.

When Father Was Away on Business is a complex film, working on many levels through many dynamic characters. It describes many storylines through the cynical eyes of its young hero; perhaps the most compelling plot is the love story of Malik and his young friend. Of all the plots and intrigues of the film, at least this story is not overwhelmed in the politics and familiar content that mark the rest.



EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

Clubs Commissioner

- Represents the interests of Students' Union registered clubs on Students' Council
- Assists the Vice-President Internal Affairs in maintaining an ongoing relationship with Students' Union registered clubs.
- Promotes cooperation and coordination among student clubs and organizations, and assists them in the preparation of budgets for requests of financial assistance to the Students' Union.
- Approves the chartering and registration of clubs with the Students' Union in accordance with Bylaw 1100.
- Serves as a member of the Administration Board, the Building Services Board, Students' Council.
- Acts as co-chairperson of the Clubs Council.

External Commissioner

- Assists the Vice-President External Affairs in the investigation of problems relating to the funding of the University and its effects on students; and accessibility of post-secondary education, and specifically the effects on tuition fees, student aid, and differential fees on accessibility.
- Assists the Vice-President External Affairs in the organization and implementation of programmes designed to combat these problems, as well as promotes a high level of student awareness of these problems and programmes.
- Serves as a member of the External Affairs Board, and Students' Council.

Housing and Transport Commissioner

- Assists the Vice-President External Affairs with programmes relating to housing and transportation concerns of students.
- Serves as chairperson of the Housing and Transport Commission
- Investigates Government and University programmes of housing and transportation of concern to students.
- Serves as a member of the External Affairs Board and Students' Council.

Academic Commissioner

- Assists the Vice-President Academic in the investigation of current academic issues and development.
- Promotes cooperation and coordination among faculty associations and departmental clubs
- Serves as a member of the Academic Affairs Board, the Council of Faculty Association, Students' Council, and the General Faculties Council Student Caucus.

Commissioner's Remuneration
\$0-300 May 1 1986 - Aug 31 1986
\$300 - 1 Sept 1986 - 30 April 1987

Chief Returning Officer

- RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- Performs the duties normally required by a Chief Returning Officer (staff recruitment and hiring, organization of polls, oversees counting procedures, etc).
 - Conducts elections in accordance with Bylaw 300 and 350 for such elec-

- tion or referenda as designated by Students' Council.
 - Act as arbitrator in any dispute arising during the course of an election/referendum.
- QUALIFICATIONS:**
- Must possess excellent organizational and administrative skills.
 - Familiarity with previous Students' Union elections a definite asset.
- SALARY:** \$500 plus according to scheduling established October 1984

Housing Registry Director

- RESPONSIBILITIES:**
- Recruits and hires the support staff for the Housing Registry
 - Oversees the proper functioning of the Housing Registry and the fulfillment of its purpose
 - Coordinates and publicizes the Housing Registry

- In conjunction with the Vice-President Finance and Administration, prepares the preliminary and final budgets for the Housing Registry.
 - Ensures the Housing Registry operates within those budgetary limits
- Remuneration:**
\$900 per month, 1 May 1986 to 31 August 1986
\$350/month 1 September 1986 to April 1987

TERM OF OFFICE: 1 May 1986 to 30 April 1987 (unless otherwise stated)

DEADLINE FOR APPLICATION: Friday, 28 February 1986 at 4:00 p.m.

Please sign up for an interview at the time of application.

FOR APPLICATIONS AND INFORMATION, CONTACT THE SU EXECUTIVE OFFICES, Room 259 SUB, Phone 432-4236