



Entertainment

The Third World Talks in Film Fest

Third World Film Festival Feb. 27-29
review by Elaine Ostry

The Third World Film Festival allows people to see films which they otherwise would not have a chance to see — films from impoverished, oppressed peoples around the world. Many of these films are documentaries, but the "fiction" films are also a close reflection of the lives of the people of the Third World.

If *Broken Rainbow* and *No Longer Silent* are representative of the films of the festival, this year's Third World Film Festival promises to be as interesting and thought-provoking as last year's. Both are documentaries of interest and emotional impact.

Both films deal with the aspect of culture: how it affects the people of the culture, and how much culture means to people. *Broken Rainbow* depicts the struggle of the Navajo and Hopi Indians of Arizona to keep their culture; *No Longer Silent* shows the struggle of women of India for the social and economic equalities prohibited them in their culture.

Broken Rainbow gives the viewer a mini-history of the relations between the American settlers and the Indians. The film proves that these relations (bloody from the start) have not improved at all. Only now there are words like "relocation" and various legislations which act as a veneer for the genocide and cultural genocide of the Navajo and Hopi Indians.

The problem is that the U.S. government, after having encouraged Navajo and Hopi settlement in the "Four Corners" area of Arizona, wants to relocate the Indians to towns hundreds of miles away. The reason for this change is pure greed of the American government: there are tons of coal and uranium and plenty of oil and natural gas under the Indian grounds. They have been cheated out of the leases for resources by the companies, receiving next to nothing in profits (a yearly income of \$1900).

Thus the film shows the conflicts that arise when economics and big business confront a

group of people to whom money means nothing. The clash includes increases in air and land pollution. During the forties, the Indians worked in the new uranium mines. They were not warned of the dangers of radiation (they even built houses out of the loose rocks of the mine).

The film adds more and more of these facts, gradually increasing the power of this piece. Most of the film is narration by Martin Sheen, interspersed with Indians talking about their sorrow at being forced to leave their land. There is also commentary from journalists and experts, one of whom says, "The land has defined themselves to themselves." To force them out, the companies and government are killing their livestock and plants: starving them out of their simple lifestyle. As one Indian says, "It seems as if our future has been beaten out of us with a stick." Another claims that he cannot live anywhere else: "My roots are way down deep."

Meanwhile, Sen. Morris Udall of Arizona says, "People get relocated in America every day."

The only complaint I have about this film is the song which kept on repeating. It adds irritating sentimentality to a film that is powerful enough without it.

No Longer Silent, a film on the women of India, is co-produced by The National Film Board. This, too, is a powerful documentary. It follows the progress of a woman fighting for justice and equality which her culture does not allow to her sex, and her fellow-workers.

The film concentrates on the unfair dowry system of Indian culture. This means that the daughter is an economic drain on the family, and therefore undesirable. Several hundred brides die each year in New Delhi in dowry-related murders; most of them are burned to death by their husbands if their family refused to acquiesce to the increasing demands of the in-laws.

The women of India are at last countering



Women of India are *No Longer Silent*

the image of "The Good Woman": eyes lowered, head bowed, mouth shut. "Among the poor," says the women's group leader, "women are the poorest. Among the exploited, women are the most exploited." She

complains of the media perpetrating the "Good Woman" image of the Indian culture.

Both of these films are successful in demonstrating the powerful bonds of culture; neither should be missed.

The Wedding Script is flawed but enjoyable

The Wedding Script
til March 8
at the Kaasa Theatre

review by Michael Maitland

Begin with a replica of Cindy Lauper dressed as K.D. Lang. Add an inspiring punk rocker, a banker who has a repressed craving to be a gardener, a neurotic, whining refugee from Prince Edward Island and a transsexual landlady and you have the ingredients for the "Wedding Script", presented by the Phoenix Theatre.

Chantelle is madly in love with Rupert but

refuses to marry him because marriage is patriarchal oppression. Loud, impulsive, and rebellious, she has rejected the comforts of Rosedale and aspires to become a photographer.

Rupert, played by Joe-Norman Shaw, is a beer-swilling punk rocker, who boards at Alex's house. He has but a few days to find a marriage partner in order to stay in the country.

Marianne Copithorne plays a whiny and wonderful Louise, secretary by day, an aspiring writer — "Amazons of Stellanova" — at night. Neurotic and excitable, Louise has moved into Alex's boarding house after

moving out of Bob's apartment. She has endured a twelve year relationship with him and now craves suburbia and babies; she is tired of Bob's procrastinating ways.

Bob is "not quiet, he's mute". Shy, insecure and clumsy, Bob is into his tenth reading of *War and Peace*. He would rather walk five miles to the cinema and miss the movie than pay for a cab fare. Bob and Louise have an exciting relationship. While Bob dreams of Porsches, Louise suffers from insomnia and watches slugs copulate in the moonlight.

The owner of the house is Alex. She is landlady, surrogate mother, friend, mediator, and a transsexual. Alex contemplates the past and constantly reiterates her wish to re-establish ties with her former wife. Conservative in style and in dress, Alex is the cornerstone of stability in the play. Serious in tone and character, the subtle statement of the play is hidden somewhere in her lines, but where?

Indeed, the major flaw in the play lies within the script. As a result, the play drags on at times, leaving the audience bored, confused and waiting for the next joke. To compensate, the characters are often overplayed, almost to the point of being unbelievable. It is almost as if the characters — especially Chantelle and Rupert — are vying for the audience's attention. The subtlety of the playwright's message is lost in a cloud of comedy. There is no one to blame but the playwright.

The play is set in trendy Toronto (Yorkville?), in the backyard of Alex's house. Complete with trees, a deck, patio lights and

a wooden weather vane, Stencil Campbell must be complimented for his efficient use of stage space while maintaining a sense of intimacy with the audience. At times you feel as if you are hanging over the fence like a nosy neighbour.

Characterization is heightened with the excellent costume selection. Bob, played by Edmonton's Larry Yachimec, wears a variety of costumes which range from plastic sandals fresh off the K-Mart shelf — baggy socks and all — to the standard blue pinstriped uniform of the banking industry. Chantelle is played by Leona Brausen, who is dressed in a wardrobe that ranges from that of an avant garde, punk Marxist groupie — complete with cowboy boots and a shirt patterned with chuckwagons — to Alfred Sung silk and satin, appropriate for the wild child she is.

Louise marries Rupert, and together they fly to England to await a decision by immigration officials. Meanwhile, back in Toronto, Bob faces the trials and tribulations of loneliness, and with the help of an analysis and Alex, he undergoes a radical change. Rupert and Louise return. Everyone gathers in the backyard to celebrate. And in the end, does it really matter whose baby it is anyway?

The play is successful in its lightheartedness and ability to stimulate laughter. It is not, however, without flaws. Most three act productions test the durability of even the most dedicated theatregoer. The *Wedding Script* is no exception.

Taken as a comedy, the production represents an opportunity for a few laughs to escape the winter blahs.



Wild Cast of *Wedding Script*