

NFB giving you money's worth

Film review by Marni Stanley

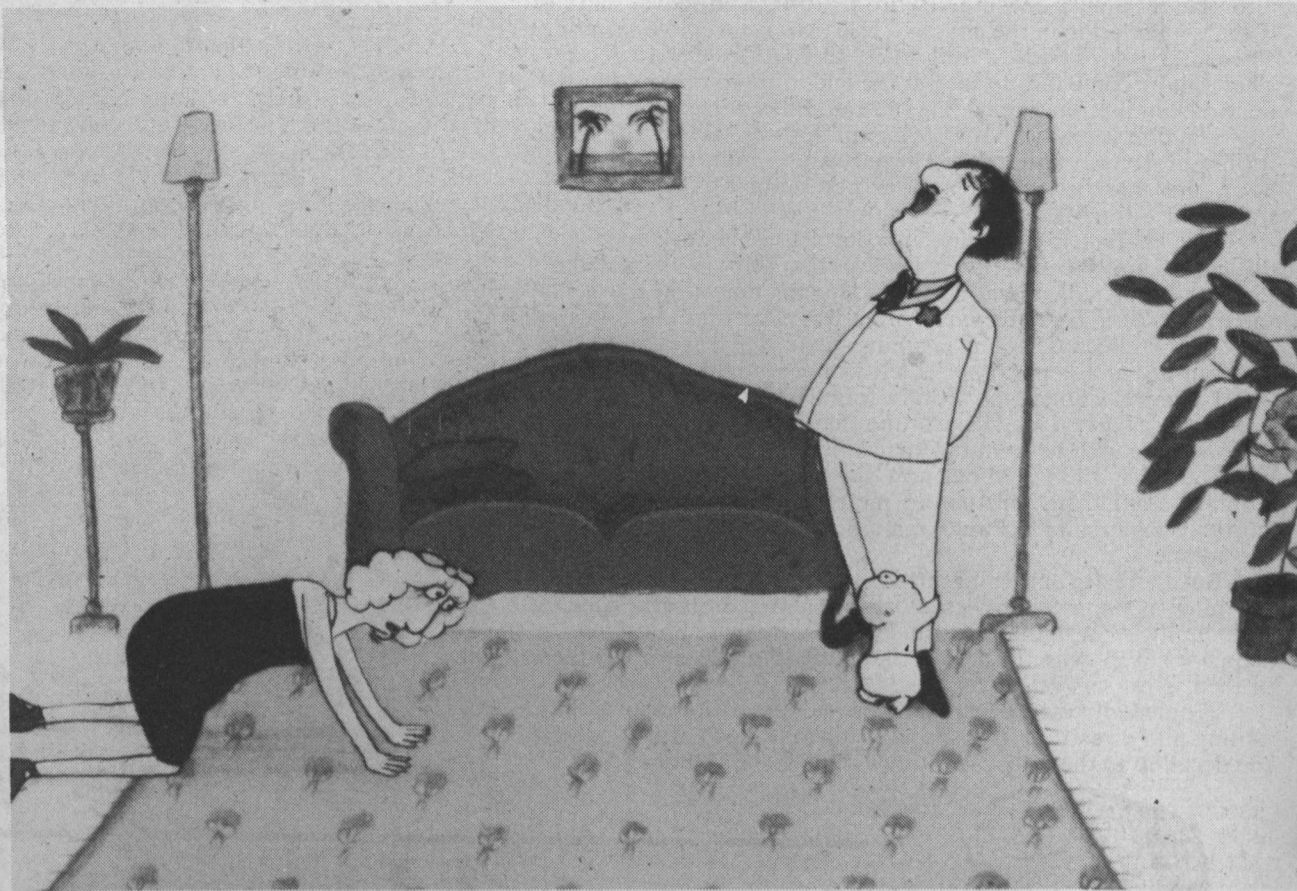
There is a special treat for film buffs at the Provincial Museum this week and you can't beat the admission — it's free. Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday nights the National Film Board is showing the four films nominated for this year's Academy Awards as well as the three shorts that have won Oscars in the last two years.

Wednesday night's fare of six short films includes the three recent winners and this year's nominees in the short documentary, animation, and live action short subject categories. The three films that have already cornered Oscars are: *Sand Castle* (1978, animation), a delightful piece about some unique little creatures using their individual talents to their best ends is a must for everyone interested in animation techniques; *I'll Find A Way* (1978, short documentary), a moving look at a brave young girl from Toronto suffering from a debilitating disease; and *Special Delivery* (1979, animation), an hilarious modern fable about the perils of not shovelling those icy steps.

Nails, this year's nominee for short documentary, is a beautifully photographed short by British Columbia director Phillip Borsos. The film moves from the old to the new and back again showing the changes in the relationships between man and his machines. It begins with a blacksmith in 1750 forging the nails by hand and then shifts suddenly to the endless flow of white-hot steel of a massive plant. Borsos has chosen to present this film without commentary and somehow he manages to give the evolution of nail-making real dramatic power.

This year's animation entry, *Every Child/Chaque Enfant*, was commissioned as Canada's contribution to a UNICEF film made to celebrate the declaration of the rights of the child. It is a universal film without any particular language but with very understandable and believable characterizations. The film illustrates that every child is entitled to a name and a nationality. As the baby is shuttled from one house to another we are introduced to a series of people who simply have neither the time nor the trouble for an infant. The sound track is delightfully performed by Les Mimes Electriques of Montreal and the film is worth seeing for the dog scenes alone.

The last of the Wednesday night films is *Bravery in the Field*, nominated for live action, short subject. It is the story of Tommy, an aging WW II veteran and his violent contact with Lenny, an unemployed "punk".



A scene from the National Film Board's production of *Every Child/Chaque enfant*. These and other films are showing at the Provincial Museum Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

The title is the inscription on one of Tommy's medals, worth only five dollars at the local pawn shop. Director Giles Walker presents a pessimistic picture of Canada's two problem generations, but the sentimental ending does nothing to warm or reassure the viewer. *Bravery in the Field* may be a graphic look at what can happen when the two generations confront each other, but the tension dissolves into yet another Remembrance Day promotion.

The Thursday and Friday night presentation is *Going the Distance*, the official commemorative film of the XI Commonwealth games which was nominated

in the feature length documentary category. *Going the Distance* is a surprisingly captivating film that follows eight of the athletes through the trials, triumphs, and upsets of training and competing. Director Paul Cowan has a great affection for the little guy and an eye for the eccentric in his subjects. This film has color, suspense, tension, tears, nostalgia, and yes, even a little *deja vu*, and the end result is one and a half hours of engrossing voyeurism.

All showings will be at the Provincial Museum Theatre, 12845 - 102 Avenue, starting at 8:00 pm.

Wolf mesmerizing as Detective Dupin

Theater review by John Hastings

"Voilà, mon enfant! I have returned."

"Uncle Auguste, I see you have just come from Edmonton in Canada"

"Mon cher Hercule — how on earth could you have known?"

The salt stains on your shoes, *Tonton* Auguste — only in Edmonton at this time of year is there still snow on the streets. But tell me, Uncle, how did you exercise your little grey cells this time?"

"I see I have taught you well, my child. No, Hercule, this trip was mere titillation of the little grey cells. I have come from seeing a formidable dramatization of one of my earlier cases — the one I call 'The Murder of Auguste Dupin.' And *magnifique* it was!"



The Murder of Auguste Dupin at Corbett Hall.

"But Uncle, I have heard you say many times that no one could hope to match your handsome demeanor and formidable mind. How could they find an actor to play you?"

Eh bien, mon cher, c'est vrai. But as much as humanly possible, this Northern Light Theatre Company has chosen a worthy representative in this man, Henry Woolf. A more charming, clever portrayal could only have been presented by your own uncle."

"What of the lovely Vivienne Smythe, or that silly starched American Trevanion who brought you there, *mon oncle*?"

"Both ably played, my child, by two charming Edmonton actors, Marilyn Gann and Wally McSween. *Vraiment*, Hercule, all the actors played as

if they themselves had been in the drawing room of Trevanion Manor in Philadelphia when I so cleverly unravelled *cet petit mystere*."

Mais Tonton Auguste, did the intrigue not tax even your resourceful mind to its limits? How did the company convey both what appeared to be happening and what your clever mind deduced?"

"With an ingenious set by a Canadian designer called Allen Stichbury, Hercule, which, through the clever device of revolving, allowed the director to expose what was happening at all times, just as your dear uncle's mind was doing *la meme chose*."

"*Enbien*, Uncle, it must have been a truly clever script to have pleased you. Surely in such a complex case, it would be *tres difficile* to convey all the workings

of your little grey cells."

"*Mais certainement*, Hercule. The writing was indeed *hypnotique*. Of course, my exploits cannot help but be entertaining, but *l'auteur dramatique*. Ben Tarver managed to portray the case masterfully and novelly. Indeed, it was as clever a piece of writing as I have seen in many years: so concise, so subtle, so suspenseful. All in all, a triumph! A man of great imagination, *cet homme* — I have approached him to work with me on my next case."

"But Uncle Auguste, did he really reveal that the crime was perpetrated by . . ."

"Shhhh, Hercule. Perhaps some day you too, Hercule Poirot, will understand the need for *la psychologie*."

Music steals show from dancers

Dance review by Megan Collins

The performance last Thursday evening by the Brian Webb Dance Company was remarkable for its good intentions. Unfortunately for the dancers, the phalanx of musicians accompanying them stole the show. Webb came up with some ingenious choreography but the combination of music and dance overbalanced in favor of two particularly inventive musicians, Bob Myers and Wendy Albrecht.

In "The Path", Michael Massey and Thomas Cameron performed a piano-clarinet duet by Poulenc accompanied by a dance that appeared to be based on improvisation. The musical score in three movements, as interpreted by the dancers, appeared to combine gymkhana, pas de deux and *dejeuner sur l'herbe* of which only the second even began to reflect the grace of the music.

"Ennuï", performed by Webb and Ken Gould, starred the droll sound effects produced by Wendy Albrecht and Michael Fijal using mallets on piano strings and a trumpet gurgling in a tub of water. Two gormless figures dragged their underwear clad bodies across the stage in a parody of the exertions of everyday existence. Their losing battle against inertia was accompanied by awful facial grimaces that inspired peals of hilarity from the female members of the audience.

With age, "The Garden" has grown in expanse rather than depth. Its sprawl was held together only by the taut rhythm of flute, gongs and drum provided by Bob Myers and Rick Garn. Here an exhausted

athlete found renewed energy by conjuring up visions of three earth spirits whose grace is marred by their all too evident dependence on gravity and the broken lines of what are evidently intended to be sinuous gestures.

The houri of "Odalisque" was torn between seductress and victim of torture. The sound of a lash accompanying her initial haughty scorn became the instrument of her own punishment. Andrea Rabinovitch showed graceful control but little conviction. The grimace she presented to the audience wavered between sneer and appeal. Were we to be compelled to pity or seduced? She didn't decide and neither could we.

"Runjumptwistfall land in 4th" began with an ingenious idea; screens were suspended over Myers on drums and Webb on foot. On the cue of Myers' drumbeat, slides of musician & dancer were projected on the screens, suspending momentarily the real-life gestures of each. As the images changed Webb hurtled about the stage superimposing an element of fluidity on the static "cuts" of the slides. This "sleight of hand" dance was theoretically inventive in its attempt to alter the audience's expectations of visual continuity.

At one point Webb fled the stage, leaving his celluloid self suspended by arms and legs. The duo of dancer and musician became a quartet of action and image, now vibrant now static. Unfortunately the dance was marred by Webb's self-effacement although the experiment of mixed media was in itself a spell-binding combination.