

York grads educate public on mental illness

by **BOB SHAIRULLA**
What is it like to be mentally ill?

You might have a better idea after you watch the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) video *On Mental Illness*. The 15-minute video, by York graduates Peter Corlett and David Brown, is being shown to prospective volunteers in the CMHA's Rehabilitation Action Program. It serves as an introduction to the problems of the mentally ill.

"We decided to do the video," said Corlett, "because it was something useful and interesting. It helps the volunteers to realize what mental illness is like and to identify with their clients' view of the world."

"When they come out of the hospital, most mentally ill people just go home and shut their doors on the world. They need someone to help them come out of their shell."

"But this is not easy to do," Corlett continued. "We hope the video will motivate more volunteers to reach out to these people

and help them to reintegrate with society."

Corlett and Brown prepared for the video by interviewing volunteers and their clients who had been successfully rehabilitated. They also joined a 10-week program for volunteers in order to gain an inside understanding of the subject matter.

The video begins with a poem acted out by York theatre students and then goes on to show how Toronto might appear to a mentally ill person. The poem — recited by harsh, pained voices — expresses the fear, loneliness and paranoia the mentally ill experience.

"Apparently we hit the nail on the head," said Corlett, "because many of the clients were saying that that's exactly how they felt."

The video placed second in last year's CBC Telefest and was later shown at a Harbourfront festival. Corlett, who now runs Videopulse Productions, hopes that it will attract more volunteers to the Rehabilitation Action Program.



by **JACOB KATSMAN**
 and **OLEG SEREBRYANY**

Can 50 million Russians be wrong?

Little Vera is a controversial, highly publicized Soviet film that has received a tremendous audience response in the Soviet Union. May's *Playboy* magazine has labelled it as a Soviet porn film.

Although the sex scenes in the film have offended the morals of Soviet citizens who haven't seen anything like it on their cinema screen before, Western audiences may consider them mild.

What is really controversial about the film is the manner in which it deals with the everyday realities of Soviet life. Portrayed

through the eyes of a small, industrial city family, *Little Vera* represents the hardships of the Soviet youth who turn to sex, alcohol and violence as means of escape from their empty existence.

Vera is a rebellious teenager, played by the recently acclaimed Soviet star Natalia Negoda, who indulges in sex and loud music and is not willing to make a commitment to post-secondary education.

The scenes follow Vera from her lovemaking to her family dinners where her father, Andrei Sokolov, gets drunk and spills out his dissatisfactions with Vera and her

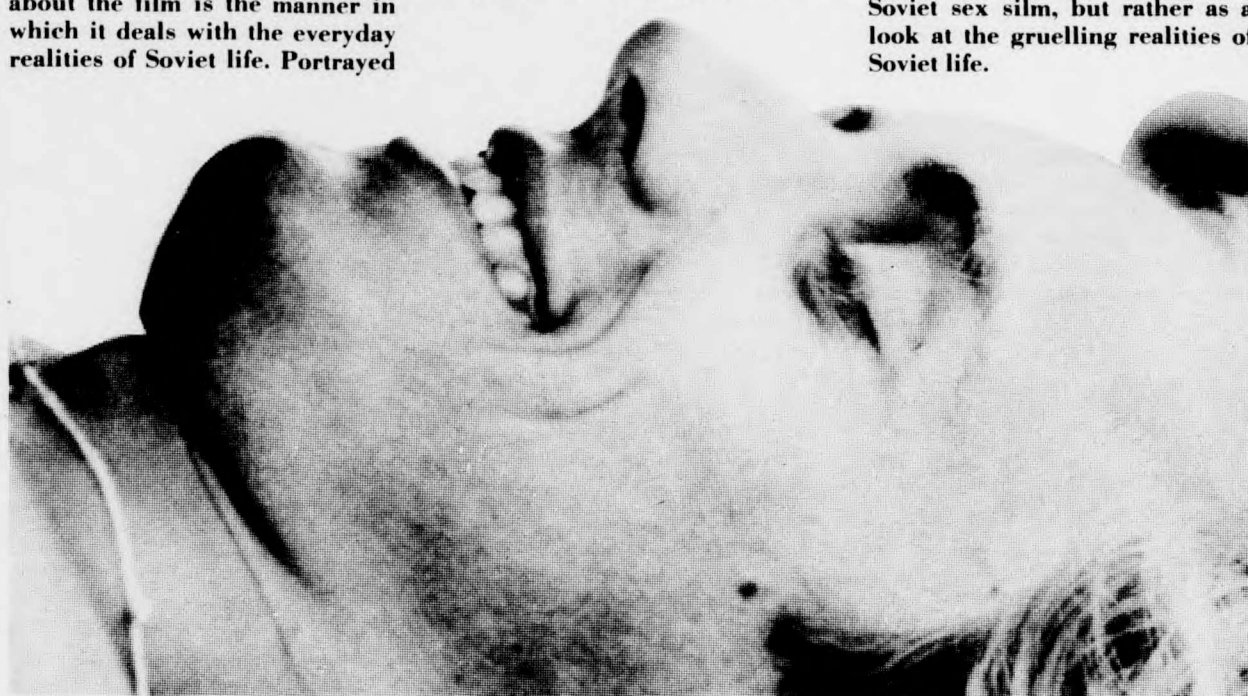
lifestyle. Little of the family time is passed without constant screaming and arguing. Not even Vodka is intoxicating enough to quell the emotional rage in the film.

The film's sensitive content caused *Little Vera* to be held for nine months in the USSR before being released to the West.

The film's script was written by Maria Khmelik in pre-Gorbachev 1983 when such explicit material could not even be published.

The director, Vasily Pichul, read the script and inspired by the Soviet Union's growing artistic freedom, took *glasnost* into the bedrooms, catching some old bureaucrats with their pants down.

There is no doubt that *Little Vera* titillated the Soviet audiences. However, Western viewers should see the movie not as a Soviet sex film, but rather as a look at the gruelling realities of Soviet life.



arts calendar

GALLERIES

IDA Gallery presents the *Convocation Show* of works by graduating visual arts students. The show runs from May 29 to June 14.

AGYU presents *Drawn From/Drawn Upon* until May 14.

AGYU will exhibit selections from the **Ann and Marshall Webb Collection** of recent Canadian and international art from May 24 to June 28.

Glendon Gallery presents "Celebratory," an exhibition of the works of **Liliana Berezowsky** from May 25 to June 25, Mon.-Fri., 10 am to 4 pm.

Glendon's "Maison de la Culture" presents **Joso Spralja's** Recent Works until May 30. Call 487-6730 for more information.

FILM

Premiere '89 "The Best Kept Secret" screening of 16 mm films by graduating students of the Dept. of Film and Video on May 27 at 1 pm at Bloor Cinema, 506 Bloor St. W. It's free but you need a ticket. Call 736-5149.



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