

ODYSSEY IN AUGUST

August Dunlop, a young man trying to find his place in the scheme of life, is having a hard time. Marooned in a slow-moving lineup for passports, his imagination takes flight all over the place. He's fascinated by the woman in front of him - her intricate hairdo seems to be expanding upwards - his mother comes for him to turn off the toaster; he thinks he will go to Africa; he finds himself unravelling the sweater of the woman in front of him (her with the weird hair...); somewhere he's being wound in wool; then there's the Wizard of Oz... Actually, this film sounds better in the telling! Which is a pity, because it has its funny moments, but there aren't enough of them to sustain and hold the interest. While competently organized with good camera work, there are script problems and the editing pace could be better. But it was a fairly ambitious undertaking, so let's see what the filmmaker comes up with next time. (Broadcast on Superchannel/First Choice Pay TV)

Exec. prod. Joan Schaefer/Don Haig. p. Leonard Farlinger/Stephen Roscoe. d. Stephen Roscoe. sc. Jukku Tuisku. cam. Paul Sarossy. ed. Laurie Lynd. mus. Lazarus Varla. l. p. Oliver Dennis (August Dunlop), Fran Gebhard (Lady with the Hairdo), Peter Blais (Prof. Dole), Miriam Newhouse (August's Mother). 24 mins. 16mm/1/2", 3/4", 1" tape. Point of View Productions/Toronto (416) 224-5751. Produced in association with The Global Television Network, and with the participation of Telefilm Canada and The Ontario Arts Council.

A WINTER TO REMEMBER

This look-back at the 1988 Winter Olympic Games in Calgary begins somewhat infelicitously with a voice-over droning on - "Together we are remembering, not just for ourselves but for Canada too... what brings people together, what makes people care..." - while a display of souvenirs passes before the eyes. The start of the Olympic torch relay unleashes a barrage of voices warbling a wimpy pop song, while at several points one is overwhelmed with singers, visuals and voice-over all at the same time.

The cross-country Olympic torch relay provides some lovely visuals, but they're accompanied by a truly awful song, "Share The Flame". However, there's a jolly interview with the parents of Robyn Perry, the final torch-bearer, who practiced by running up and down the stairs of her home, carrying a hammer provided by father. Another nice moment shows a Saskatchewan girl rehearsing the Olympic pledge, with a dissolve into her making it at the actual ceremonies.

The Olympic torch arrived in Calgary on February 13, 1988 with much ceremony and entertainment - and then the sports began. A kaleidoscope of images whizzes by - skiing, bobsledding, skating, hockey and on and on. Somewhere in there an impression is given of

the artistic and other events squeezed in - including ballet, orchestral performances, ballooning, parades and ooh-aah fireworks - all peaking with the closing ceremonies and the lowering of the Olympic flag.

This frankly old-fashioned approach to documentary would drive Grierson potty! Images jumble and fall together, the charmless narration (both voice and writing) sets one's teeth on edge, and the relentlessly ordinary music thumps on. And yet... it catches some delightful candid moments of the winners, and "real" people interviewed and using their own words come off very well. Would that the filmmakers had been more ruthless in selecting the footage and chopping the narration but, alas, they completely forgot that "more is less".

Sponsors: Petro-Canada/Govt. of Canada/Air Canada/General Motors/Kodak Canada. exec. p. William Johnston/Ronald Lillie. p. Christina Jannings/Douglas MacFarlane. d./ed. William Johnston. co. d. Douglas MacFarlane. cam. John Dyer/Attila Szalay/Henry Less/Paul Mitchnik/Rhett Morita/James Crowe. narr. sc. Siobhan Flanagan. narr. Barday Hope. 24 mins. Video format only. Distributor: Oasis Pictures Inc./Toronto (416) 967-6503.

FORGOTTEN MOTHER

Adrienne Amato left Zimbabwe (formerly Rhodesia), the land of her birth, 11 years ago, and emigrated to Canada. She's heard voicing a letter to Alice, the black domestic worker who took care of her as a child, telling her of a planned visit, "... the older I get, the more I miss you, Alice." And she relates a childhood memory of running to her room at the bottom of the garden because there were "no rules with Alice", and ends up by saying, "part of me is scared that you will not be there to welcome me..."

But Adrienne returns to Zimbabwe, and Alice is there to greet her, and the camera is rolling during a part of the visit. They talk a lot in Alice's little home, and Adrienne realizes that she knew hardly anything of her life - nothing about her family, and not even her last name. In a white Rhodesia, black women came from rural areas to find child-care work. They often stayed with a family for a long time and, although never a part of the family life, significant surrogate-like bonds developed between them and the children they cared for.

This moving little documentary captures well the feelings that still exist between Adrienne and Alice. Never cloying, it displays a rough-edged authenticity, and a lot of affection. Though Alice's speech may be a little difficult to follow, even with Adrienne helping out, it doesn't really matter - a genuine warmth flows from the screen. (Aired on CBC May 12/89)

d. Adrienne Amato. cam. Derek Rogers. sd. Louise Riber. ed. Adrienne Amato/John Meakin. mus. Stella Chweshe. With: Alice Muchakwa. 25 mins. 16mm/tape. Hand In Hand Films/Toronto (416) 979-9381. Assistance from: Liaison of Independent Filmmakers of Toronto (LIFT)/National Film Board (PAFF)/CBC.



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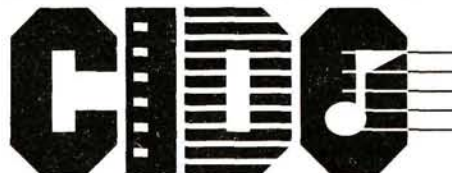
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