

# REVERB

## The Audience Counts

Dear Sir:

As a freelance writer personally acquainted with both the director and the performers of David Leach's dance movie **Expansion**, I read Natalie Edwards' review with some interest (in the February, 1977, issue). Although her comments on the cinematic qualities of the film were well expressed, she missed the point of the film's inclusion of the audience, by failing to watch carefully. The audience members, as in Ms. Shaffer and Garfield's original choreography of **Green Piece**, were repeating the specific motions which, as modules, formed the second, more rapid segment of the dance. Thus, their inclusion in the dance (and by "expansion", the film) was not merely arbitrary or artificial but an intriguing suggestion of energy moving outward to the audience from the performers.

Ms. Edwards terms dance "the abstraction of an idea into its visual equivalent" and finds the film's use of the audience "more intellectual than satisfactory." Dance, however abstract its principles and intent, is only immediately appreciable as concrete gestures, mass, volume, rhythm; and the echoing of the dancer's specific movements by the audience at the film's end seemed to me clear enough to make the finale more than just a concept.

Sincerely,

**John Oughton**

## Happiness Is ENG

Mr. Robert Rouveroy  
CINEMA CANADA  
406 Jarvis Street  
Toronto M4Y 2G6  
Canada

Dear Mr. Rouveroy:

It was with considerable interest that I read your column in the February 1977 issue of **Cinema Canada**. I've been a film cameraman here in the States since 1968. But at the end of last year I got into ENG for the first time.

We do quite a bit of work for **CBS News**, as well as filming documentaries and educational films. With some trepidation we purchased an RCA TK-76 color camera and a JVC 4400 3/4" portable VCR. We've had 24 days of rental in the first 100 days we've

had the equipment in service. And I must say it's been a hell of an experience!

So far our gamble has paid off. But we're not getting anywhere near \$1000 a day for the equipment. Maybe Camera Mart can get that, but we get between \$400 and \$600 a day. The lower figure, in fact, is the one CBS has set as its freelance rental rate.

The equipment has held up quite well. The camera is just now being checked out for the first time since we bought it three months ago. It has performed like a charm. The recorder is coming back from the shop now after having had a power transistor (that I caused to blow when I inadvertently shorted a circuit) replaced. As you mentioned, the low-light capabilities of the camera are nothing short of remarkable.

It's taken a while to get used to shooting tape. The camera makes no noise, which at first I found very disconcerting (I felt as though I had no control over anything). Then there's the matter of the control track - without which the editor cannot edit, which means you have to be rolling at least five seconds before the shot becomes usable, or the edit will not take. And one mustn't forget to white-balance. It's taken a while to get used to these odd quirks of video.

When we bought our TK-76 we were one of the first freelance crews on the East Coast to go video. Now there are a few more with high-quality cameras, but the number is still a handful. I know lots of film cameramen who are waiting around for the Thomson-CSF Microcam to come out before they switch over. That means they'll not have a camera for at least a year - giving us that much more time to break into the market. With a year's head-start we can do wonders to the competition. We're the first on our block and we're doing our best to make the most of it.

At this point I have no regrets about moving into video. Our system cost us about \$45,000 complete (we let the network or the stations worry about the time-base-corrector). We're getting a lot of work we wouldn't have got without the video capability and we're having lots of fun. But then we haven't neglected film. Tomorrow we're doing a job for CBS and we're doing it on film (mostly because they asked us to). But that's fine with us because we like film a lot. We just did a little documentary on public television and did it on film because editing film is much easier (to us) than editing tape (which we tried once and gave up as hopelessly complicated and primitive).

Anyway, I don't know how much use these comments from ones in the midst of the revolution might be - but thanks for writing about the writing on the wall.

**Steve Smith**  
Williamsport, Pa.

## NFB: The Beat Goes On

Dear Friends:

Just a note to say that recent issues have been enjoyable and informative. The only small criticism I have concerns the number of times Stephen Chesley's name appears. His reporting is really fine, but there must be a way of gathering his material under a column system so that the same name doesn't appear at least a dozen times under short bits as is the case in Issue No. 34-35.

As a working colleague of Tom Bindon and an admiring acquaintance of Ron Blumer, I feel the urge to comment on the dialogue appearing in the Reverb section. I find myself in basic agreement with both of them, but there are still a lot of things left unsaid.

Ron's needs as a professional filmmaker cum teacher are very specialized. Looking at the whole country over a time-frame of the past 15 years, I think the taxpayer has been pretty well served by the distribution function of the National Film Board. While I agree with Ron Blumer that serious film users need "particular films on particular dates" I'm wondering if that's really the "name of the game." If it is, then the local authorities offering film courses will have to budget for more than the teacher's salary.

I appreciate Tom's effort to deflect some of the criticism aimed at National Film Board Distribution Representatives and feel that perhaps we ourselves should stand up and be counted. There are approximately 40 of us across the country who have been on the receiving end of education's ultimate relationship to the National Film Board since the media consciousness explosion of the early '60s in all 10 provinces! Collectively, I think we have been paying our dues pretty well.

It's a little like criticizing a doctor in rural Guatemala for not attending properly to the needs of his patients. If this country wants to balance media literacy with commercial and technical development in the media then the Auditor General might suggest some criteria for focusing a little more energy in that direction.

Truly yours,

**Dan Driscoll**

**NFB**  
Distribution Representative  
Charlottetown,  
Prince Edward Island

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Directed by: Peter Carter  
Produced by: Lawrence Dane  
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Produced by: Peter O'Brian

**ANGELA**

Starring: Sophia Loren, John Vernon, Steve Railsback, John Huston  
Produced by: Claude Héroux  
Directed by: Boris Sagal  
Executive Producer: Zev Braun

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Executive Producers: Harold Greenberg, Robert A. Kantor  
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**Charles Champlin**  
L.A. Times CALENDAR  
November 28, 1976

"... Not only did that last reel include some of the most wildly exciting fight footage ever put on the screen, but it also provided an emotionally gratifying capstone to a picture that is truly an ode to the human spirit... And a final word must be said for James Crabe's incredible camera work—not only his stunning views of Philadelphia's historic monuments, but the squalor of the South Philadelphia slums, two breath-taking swoops up the broad steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum, a protracted run past swinging sides of beef in a meat-packing plant, and, of course, the virtuoso photography of the climactic bout... In many ways, ROCKY is a picture that should make movie history."

**Arthur Knight**  
The Hollywood Reporter  
November 5, 1976

Camera Operator Garrett Brown, inventor of the system, is seen using the STEADICAM stabilized camera system to film the dramatic fight sequence in ROCKY. James Crabe was Director of Photography.



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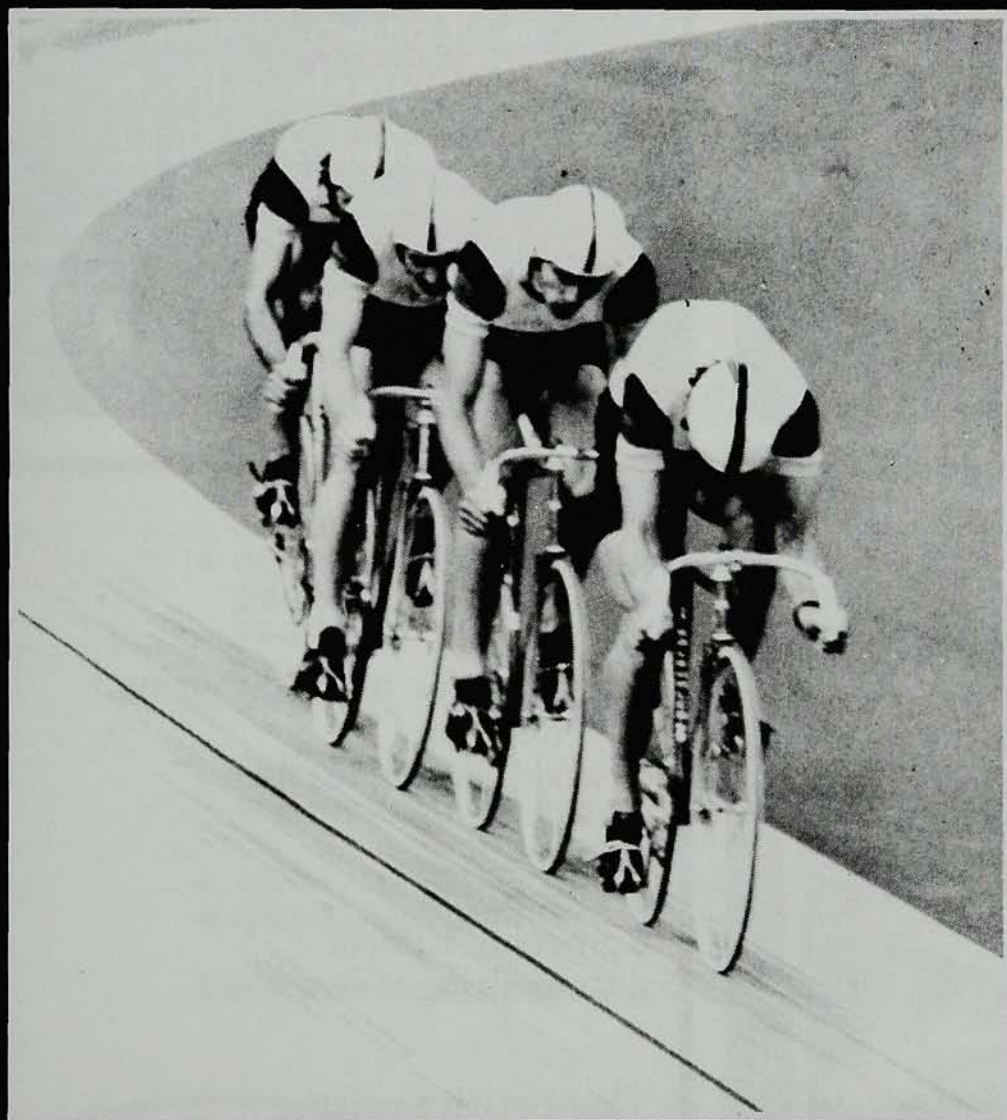
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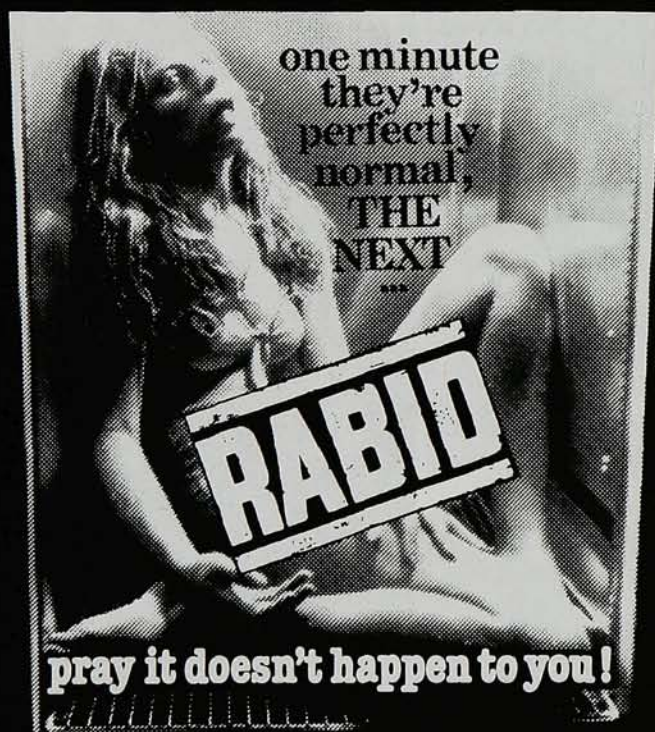
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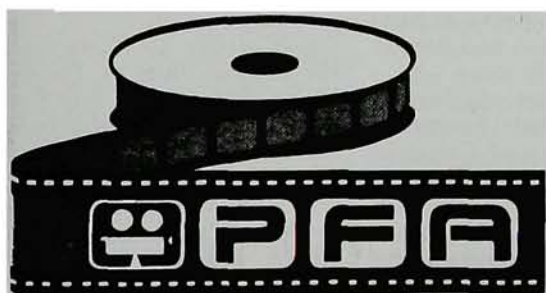
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