



THE CAMERAMAN'S REVENGE & OTHER FANTASTIC TALES is a Fourth Quarter 2015 LVCA dvd donation to the Ligonier Valley Library of Ligonier, Pennsylvania. Below is Kino Ken's summary of its contents.

Six short fantasy animations by Ladislav Starewicz, born in 1882, an innovative filmmaker claimed as a native son by both Russia and Poland. Total running time: 81 minutes

Key: *indicates outstanding technical achievement

1. MOST'KINEMATOGRAFICH-ESKOGO OPERATORA (THE CAMERAMAN'S REVENGE) Russia
1912 black-and-white silent with color tints 13 minutes
Producer: Aleksandr Khanzhonkov & Company, Ltd., Moscow.

Points:

- 2 Direction: Ladislav Starewicz
 - 2 Animation: Ladislav Starewicz*
 - 2 Editing: Ladislav Starewicz
 - 2 Animation Camera: Ladislav Starewicz
 - 2 Intertitles / Story: Ladislav Starewicz*
 - 2 Production Design: Ladislav Starewicz*
 - 2 Sets: Ladislav Starewicz*
 - 1 Lighting
 - 2 Ambience
 - 2 Creativity
- 19 total points

Incorrectly identified by some authors as a “love triangle,” THE CAMERAMAN’S REVENGE is actually an “adulterous pentangle” involving three beetles, a dragonfly, and a grasshopper. The grasshopper is vocationally a cameraman.

In opening scenes, Husband Beetle is preparing to take a business trip, something he manages quite often, according to a title card. He and Wife Beetle live in a rustic accommodation. They have at least one servant, witness and facilitator to Wife Beetle’s not-so-secret affair. For when Husband Beetle is off at work, his spouse invites an artist friend of the opposite sex to keep her company. Like Emma Bovary, she wants some excitement at home during tedious hours her mate is busy elsewhere. Painter Beetle is willing to oblige her whenever he receives an invitation to visit.

Husband Beetle is dropped off in town by his driver at a favorite entertainment center called, in English, The Gay Dragonfly Nightclub, possibly after its star performer. There he watches a performance by a frog combining hop and dance movements. This is followed by the routine of a lady dragonfly which attracts the amorous interest of both Husband Beetle and a Grasshopper at the next table. Mr. Grasshopper and Miss Dragonfly exchange greetings. Then the duo move off to the table just vacated by Mr. G., passing a frustrated Mr. Beetle. Dragonfly and Grasshopper engage in private conversation. This is way too much for Husband Beetle to placidly accept. He pulls his rival away, creating a public spectacle.

Now it is the turn of Mr. Grasshopper to show irritation. He plots revenge and leaves to get camera and tripod. When Miss Dragonfly and her companion leave the building, Mr. G. captures their affectionate exit on film. After the other two have been picked up by Husband Beetle’s customary driver, Mr. Grasshopper dismantles his tripod and carries it away to a parked bicycle. Soon he is also off on a journey, somehow managing to beat the vehicle carrying an adulterous pair to a “Love Hotel.”

When Miss Dragonfly and her escort arrive there they quickly proceed to a second floor room. Grasshopper follows. He peeps through the keyhole of their door and quickly determines conditions are ripe for documentation. Soon he remounts the steps, awkwardly lugging unwieldy tripod and camera. After a brief delay to set up equipment, the voyeur is back at his post, this time with lens focused on activity inside a “love nest.” While cranking footage of this illicit affair, Mr. Grasshopper is interrupted by his competitor, who has tardily realized what is occurring and is taking steps to interdict it. He sends photographic paraphernalia and cameraman tumbling down to ground level. Miraculously, the film reel remains undamaged, as later events clearly show. Moving more slowly than Mr. Grasshopper, the beetle nonetheless catches him up as he tries to recover scattered possessions. A fight ensues. The adulterer is tumbled onto his back. As he attempts to right himself, the grasshopper finishes retrieving key evidence. Perhaps contemplating future blackmail, he beats a quick retreat with it.

Husband Beetle, rather the worse for wear, returns home prematurely only to discover his own door locked and no one disposed to answer his greeting. Inside, Sympathetic Artist Beetle seeks undetected escape, deciding ultimately to leave via the chimney, never mind the crackling fire at its base.

Meanwhile, madder than ever, Husband Beetle bashes down the barrier keeping him away from his spouse. After the two share a hug, he discovers a guest has left behind hat and painting. The returned householder can see a depiction of Wife Beetle on the canvas, one he hadn't commissioned. Once again blowing a fuse, he first forces the telltale headgear on his wife's head, then picks up the artwork frame and smashes it down on her, completely destroying his bride's image. Next item of business: locating the rascal who created it.

This he soon does. A battle ensues, involving not just flips and grapplings, but also an abortive stab at uprooting a tree. The artist, being suppler of the two, evades his unwelcome host's crushing hugs and makes a successful getaway.

Later, in more magnanimous mood, Husband forgives Wife and suggests reconciliation through joint attendance at an outdoor movie screening. This is agreeable to his partner. So off they go to a show. Preoccupied with their new sensitivity to each other they fail to note Mr. Grasshopper will be the film's projectionist. He has a surprise in store for them. Why not watch the rest of the film and find out for yourselves what it is?

With alternating beige and pale blue tints, this motion picture is considerably lovelier than its tawdry storyline. Much craftsmanship was expended on making detailed miniature furniture and props. Insect cast members appear to drink, cavort, daub, pack, embrace, and generally imitate a wide range of human behaviors, so settings must reflect reality in a compressed form. Title cards tersely relate the plot, dispensing with dialogue. Replacing that is commentary setting each successive scene and providing narrative linkages. Masterful lighting preserves numerous tiny details evident in background sets. Starewicz made skillful use of small-scale models here, moving them millimeter by painstaking millimeter through a puppet theater world of his own design.

Though several illogical leaps are apparent in editing of scenes, there's sufficient clarity and cohesiveness to preserve overall continuity. While this earlier film lacks the emotional punch of 1915's *THE LILY OF BELGIUM*, Starewicz's anti-war short made three years later, it boasts greater wit and seems to be a better preserved print.

Music heard with it on this dvd release, compiled and edited by Robert Israel, is a collage of popular tunes of the period, fitting enough, if not necessarily what Starewicz himself would have selected. Camerawork displays optimal angles of vision throughout. Note the director's preference for iris shots.

THE CAMERAMAN'S REVENGE is an absolutely essential film for anyone interested in cinema or animation art. It is certainly one of the hundred most important films ever made.

Due to a prominent adultery theme, **THE CAMERAMAN'S REVENGE** is completely unsuitable viewing for juvenile audiences.

2. ROZHDESTVO OBITATELEI LESA (THE INSECTS' CHRISTMAS) Russia 1913

black-and-white silent with color tints 6 ½ minutes

Aleksandr Khanzhonkov & Company, Ltd., Moscow Producer: Aleksandr Khanzhonkov

Points:

- 2 Direction: Ladislav Starewicz
- 0 Editing: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Animation Camera: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Lighting: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Special Visual Effects: Ladislav Starewicz
- 0 Story: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Production Design: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Animation: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Props
- 2 Creativity

16 total points

An obscure Christmas treat with encore performances from Miss Dragonfly and the dancing Frog, **ROZHDESTVO OBITATELEI LESA** concerns an adventure by Father Christmas, here a tree ornament. He wishes to provide a genuine Christmas experience for “real” creatures of the forest. Climbing awkwardly down from a branch high on someone’s Christmas tree, Mr. Generosity manages to send a fragile ball down to the floor where it crashes and disintegrates. His clumsiness and its noisy consequences awaken a crabby, flaxen-haired doll. She looks about sleepily, then returns to winter slumber.

Recovering a dropped fur hat, the adventurous decoration sets off to frozen woods. There he magically employs his walking stick to create a small fir tree. This he soon festoons with wrapped presents, all of which appear to come from the end of his cane / wand. After a short inspection assures him all is well, Father Christmas traipses through blowing snow to rouse hibernating insects, inviting them to attend a holiday celebration. All accept, surrendering temporarily cozy cavities inside tree stumps and fallen logs or underneath rocks. Hiding from their benefactor is impossible — he excavates them with little effort. En route back to his enchanted fir, the magician stops on a frozen pond. There he bangs on the ice with his stick until a large hole appears. Out climbs showman frog, who welcomes company by performing the same dance steps observed in **THE CAMERAMAN'S REVENGE** a year earlier, following these with a hearty hug for the spectator.

Soon everyone is gathered round the tree, where their host presents each with a present. Then the animals journey downhill to a pond, slipping, sliding, and sledding as they go. After a few skating turns on the ice, one of them falls, precipitating a pileup of the rest.

Back at the charity tree, Lone Beetle and Mr. Frog battle over ownership of a large oblong present. Frog ultimately loses their tug of war. He's sent tumbling backwards all the way through an ice hole down into his underwater home.

A title card in German wishes viewers a Merry Christmas. Then the short concludes with Father Christmas's return ascent to his lofty evergreen post.

An abundance of humor, delicately calibrated animation, lucid lighting and individualized characterizations make this film a delight for all ages. Its gorgeous blue wintry tints are highly evocative of a Russian Christmas and shouldn't be overlooked.

3. LES GRENOUILLIES QUI DEMANDENT UN ROI (THE FROGS WHO DEMANDED A KING a.k.a FROGLAND) France 1922 black-and-white silent with color tints 9 minutes

Russian Art Society of Paris

Points:

- 2 Direction: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Editing: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Animation Camera: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Lighting: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Screenplay: Ladislav Starewicz, adapted from the fable by Jean de la Fontaine
- 2 Production Design: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Costume Design
- 2 Props
- 2 Characterization
- 2 Creativity

20 total points

Boasting one of the wittiest screenplays ever to grace an animation, LES GRENOUILLES QUI DEMANDENT UN ROI (THE FROGS WHO DEMANDED A KING) is based on Jean de la Fontaine's reworking of an Aesop fable, turning it into an admonition supporting political passivity.

In a world of yellow and green tints, a group of frogs grow bored by affluent routine. They resolve to entreat Jupiter, chief of their gods, to send them a King. Local counselors and authorities are intoxicated layabouts.

So Jupiter heeds their pleas, sending a lightning bolt down to earth where it separates the base of a tree from its upper trunk and branches, uprooting the remaining stump. This personified fragment is then plopped into a pond by the force of the jolt it receives. Neighborhood frogs, assuming the chunk of wood newly resident in their home is incoming

monarch, sail out in a discarded shoe to greet it. However, orating, petting, and brushing have no effect on their ruler, whose eyes uplift to Jupiter, begging silently for release from a preposterous situation.

Growing weary of pampering unresponsive “Presidential” timber, frog reception committee returns to lily pad domesticity, its boldest member greedily first taking a bite out of a pie prepared for the new regent. He then sticks out his tongue in scornful farewell.

Sadder, though not yet any wiser, supplicating frog again clamors for an overlord, interfering with Jupiter’s sleep schedule. A crotchety benefactor consults with messenger Mercury about what to do next. Behaving more like a Loki than his customary mediative self, Mercury advises making a stork sovereign over Frogland. Jupiter agrees, yet gets bitten by the ungrateful bird before it leaves Olympus. He happily sends it down to Earth as good riddance. Its voracious appetite is soon being appeased by frog dinners.

That predator is not exactly what requesters hoped would lead their community. Some panic and flee. One is gulped down visibly after delivering a speech of welcome and an offering of pastry. Another empties a bottle of alcohol intended for their new regent, then itself becomes a meal after it blunders along with its head in a bucket.

As a ferocious reminder not to bother him again with foolishness, Jupiter hurls a volley of lightning streaks at cowering amphibians, closing the story with bangs and crackles, visual rage substituting for sonic fireworks. Remember, this was supposed to be a silent film. Only Roger White’s appended music score communicates noisy chaos intended as climax.

Notable for elaborate costuming and highly individuated characters, FROGLAND is droll entertainment for teens and adults. Its sophisticated plot will dishearten younger viewers.

With frog socialites in shawls and top hats, Mercury appropriately sporting winged shoes and hat, and grumpy, fleecy-bearded Jupiter garbed in simple unadorned loincloth, the puppet cast received diligent attention from production designer Starewicz. Painting their outfits no doubt led to considerable eyestrain.

An admirably satirical script contains numerous quotable highlights. Politicians of this batrachian commonwealth are referred to by their leading orator as “wise quackers” and “toad stool pigeons.” When a frog welcomer becomes disillusioned with his tree stump “king,” he asserts “he is nothing but a blockhead.” At another point, the instigator frog declares “our democratic form of government is all wet.” Indeed, any form of government in their territory was likely to suffer that fate.

What is the moral of this fable? “Heaven dislikes disturbances” would do nicely, though the originator used an alternative.

FROGLAND is another alluring Starewicz masterwork animation enthusiasts shouldn’t miss.

4. LA VOIX DE NIGHTINGALE (VOICE OF THE NIGHTINGALE) France 1923 stencil color, Prizma color, and black-and-white with color tints 13 minutes Pathé Consortium Cinema

Points:

- 2 Direction: Ladislav Starewicz**
 - 2 Editing: Ladislav Starewicz**
 - 2 Animation Camera: Ladislav Starewicz**
 - 0 Lighting (There are much clearer prints available. See YouTube's, for example.)**
 - 1 Screenplay: Ladislav Starewicz**
 - 2 Production Design: Ladislav Starewicz**
 - 2 Sets: Ladislav Starewicz**
 - 2 Props: Ladislav Starewicz**
 - 0 Cast: "Nina Star" otherwise known as Irene Starewicz**
 - 2 Creativity**
- 15 total points**

An especially beautiful and ambitious project, Starewicz's *LA VOIX DU ROSSIGNOL* was a short pixilation co-starring the director's daughter and a bird puppet. With a range of color techniques not previously available to him, Starewicz crafted a vibrantly affecting tale promoting kindness to animals. Its plot is rather convoluted.

A girl in a pinafore is playing outside with her doll, listening to the song of a bird. The singer is a nightingale warbling away in broad daylight. Attracted by a worm wriggling along the wooden floor of a wire-sided box trap, the hungry musician flies down to capture it. At this point, the child's doll has been set down atop the box. In its hurry to overtake the worm, Mr. Nightingale brushes past the toy, knocking it to the ground where it cracks apart. The flyer hops inside the girl's snare, stretches its beak out to grasp a snack and — down comes an imprisoning door behind him. Suits him right, according to the child's way of thinking, for he broke a favorite plaything and must make amends by serving as captive pet.

She brings the caged creature inside for the night and listens drowsily to its singing as she nestles under sheets in bed.

As melody continues, it unfolds a tale in her dreams about happenings in the Kingdom of Flowers. There, a pixie travels unwarily into a spider's web and is bound tightly there by its spinner. Her boyfriend enlists the assistance of a grasshopper who bounds to the scene of captivity with elf rider on his back. Elf and spider battle briefly, the former emerging victorious. Working together, Elf and Grasshopper liberate a grateful fairy, foreshadowing the film's conclusion.

Then the nightingale sings about his own misfortunes. After revealing in song a happy courtship, mating, and birth of a fledgling, he continues the tale with a tragic account of how an insensitive young boy attempted with toy bow and arrow to strike down his wife. Frightened and wounded, the bird left its baby unattended and vanished. The grasshopper

who reported this incident to the singer was itself pinned down momentarily under the shaft of the arrow.

Heartbroken searchings failed to locate the missing mother. It was during one of those that the nightingale ended up in its current entrapped predicament.

A cutaway shot reveals the baby bird calling woefully for its lost parent.

As the story of family fracture is gradually unfolded, the girl dreamer becomes progressively more distraught. Sympathy for the bird prisoner develops and strengthens. At last she decides when morning comes her unhappy pet must be freed.

When liberated, the nightingale resumes hunting its derelict companion. The two are reunited where they first met each other. In joyful gratitude, Mr. Nightingale donates his voice to his former captor for daytime use. This supposedly explains why nightingales only sing at night. Right.

The only observable deficiencies of LA VOIX DU ROSSIGNOL are inept, muggy acting on the part of its human performer and variability of color brightness, partly a factor of diverse illumination processes. Milestone's print copy is not one of the best. Try Internet offerings for superior clarity.

Editing is handled mainly through iris shots, which give a pleasantly antiquated tone to the film.

The story itself, teaching sensitivity to animals, is agreeable as both moral preceptor and diversion. While younger children may be momentarily grieved by the wounding of Mrs. Nightingale, her subsequent recovery is shown to be complete and should remove their concerns. Since the level of complexity inherent in both format and structure is fairly high, this pixilation mixing live action and animation is better suited to older children and adults than preschoolers.

5. FETICHE (THE MASCOT) France 1933 black-and-white pixilation 26 minutes

Gelma Films, Paris Producer: Ladislav Starewicz

Points:

0 Direction: Ladislav Starewicz

0 Editing: Ladislav Starewicz

1 Animation Camera / Cinematography: Ladislav Starewicz*

2 Animation: Ladislav Starewicz*

0 Lighting: Ladislav Starewicz

2 Production Design: Ladislav Starewicz

2 Character Design: Ladislav Starewicz*

1 Sound

2 Cast: ? (Mother), ? (Child), ? (Policeman), ? (Orange Vendor)

2 Creativity

12 total points

Here is one of the weirdest, wildest films ever made. Combining two live actors, playing mother and child, with puppets and papercuts, Starewicz invented a pixilation that alternately terrifies and amuses. What there is of plot concerns a scurvy-suffering, bedridden child badly in need of Vitamin C, present only in expensive imports such as oranges. Mother, a seamstress, stitches together stuffed toys which she sells for income. Business is not what it once was. For the Depression has come to Europe. It seems unlikely enough of her handiwork will be purchased to provide adequate cash for either fruit or medicine.

One of the stitched toys she prepares is a plump dog, first observed in a half-sewn condition. As she is just about to finish it, her sickly child cries out for an orange. Mother cannot fulfill the request, causing tears to drop from her eye onto the puppy's exposed stuffing. They dribble down to the canine's heart, bringing it magically to life. Thus is set in motion what at first looks like a typical dog-to-the-rescue tale. For Fétiche, known better in English-speaking countries as Duffy, decides to track down and bring back the desired exotic food. He gets that opportunity when Mother packs him and a number of other recent creations or repairs into a box for transport.

Soon Fétiche is travelling in the back of a delivery van, views blocked by solid pasteboard on all sides of his container. They pose no barrier to a thug doll, who pummels his way free of encircling tissue, then draws out a huge knife and rips a path through the canvas cover at the back of their vehicle. He proposes a ballerina doll join him in jumping to the street beneath. When she fearfully refuses, he grabs her arm and yanks her out the newly cut opening, immediately following his victim. Most other toys in transit follow their lead. One peasant woman doll, however, is pushed into duplicating it by a troublemaking stuffed monkey. Another passenger is even less lucky. When Clown tumbles out, it barely lands on pavement before a passing vehicle's wheels sever its head from spasmodically quivering body. Witnessing this, Fétiche restrains a friendly toy cat from taking the same risk. It breaks free a moment later though and plunges down to dangerous, potentially suicidal liberty.

Leaving Fétiche alone to reach the shop intended as a common destination. There he becomes a prominent window hanging. Purchased by an unidentified buyer, he is again hung up on display, this time as a kind of talisman in someone's car. In its new home, the pup twists and swings, sometimes facing front and pretending to make change like a trolley conductor, at other moments looking backwards, pressing paw to belly indicating motion sickness or extending it as if to signal a turn. After waving to a curious pedestrian just passed, the pup twirls round again and tugs one flappy ear imitating the pulling of a signal cord to let the driver know to open his door. This action overloads tension on its ribbon hanger, causing Fetiche to drop, hit solid surface, then bounce all the way back to the top of a rear license plate. From there, relaxing his grip enables the adventurer to plop down to street level.

A combination of matted background with the Fétiche puppet on a foregrounded stage yields a scene of terror as chaotic Paris traffic in cars and on foot hurry past. Wisely deciding to stay on curb and sidewalk, Fetiche follows his nose. That lead him to a fruit vendor's stall selling just what he seeks.

Problem: he has no money to buy even a single orange.

Solution: bite the saleswoman's leg, causing her to drop what she is holding.

Once the orange is rolling about on brick walkway, the pup picks it up and carries it by mouth to a protected location amid excelsior shavings heaped into an extra layer or two of camouflage by a street sweeper.

Now something curious happens. At about eight minutes and fifty-five seconds into the narrative, a huge editing leap occurs. Suddenly, the time jumps from bright afternoon sun to the stroke of midnight.

Why?

One possible explanation is that the original cut of FÉTICHE ran about twenty minutes longer than the release version. It's likely transitional material was shot initially, then removed when producers balked at the overall length.

When the narrative resumes in the theatrical release edition, the characters constituting a cast for the Devil's Ball section are introduced. These macabre creatures include skeletal birds, flying fish devoid of scales and fins, vegetables with faces, balloon instrumentalists who inflate and deflate according to volume and pitch of notes they play, walking papercut figures, dancing glasses, and assorted weirdos from discarded trash, many of those being blown into a café devoted to lowlife entertainment. The host for the night's bizarre revelries is a sinuous, elongated Satan emerging from liquid dregs of a drunkard's discarded bottle.

Visitors include familiar figures. Friendly kitten, trembling ballerina, knife-toting ruffian, malevolent monkey, and headless clown all show up for encores. A considerable amount of liquor is imbibed, resulting in Monkey's aggressive pawing of Ballerina as he attempts to make her tipsy and accepting of leering advances. Looking on with little concern is the underworld doll that previously instigated the toys' escape from their delivery van. Satan conveniently supplies him with a butcher knife to forestall Monkey's planned seduction. Without even a glance in his accomplice's direction, remorseless attacker instead pokes it back through the Devil's own body.

Feast your eyes on the assortment of freakish customers at this watering-hole. They include cookie-headed drummer, pumpkin-headed sentinel scarecrow, and mobile carcass of either a flamingo or ostrich.

When Fétiche arrives with his precious orange, it tantalizes Satan. He tosses both attractive addition and pup through the doorway into an indescribably revolting sham of a bistro. Various regulars inside try to gain control of Fétiche's treasure for themselves, the mangy-looking stuffed cat employing outright courtship while kicking a smaller rival out of

the way. Rat and dwarf engage in a tug of war over the orange, unintentionally squeezing off its skin. Out pops the pulp. Fétiche, treating it as a soccer ball, rushes off with a small army of devilish misfits in hot pursuit.

Will they catch him? Or does his escapade have a happy conclusion? Watch the climax involving police patrols to find out.

Longer in its clipped form than the bulk of Starewicz's productions, FÉTICHE, also known as THE DEVIL'S BALL, was the first of a series of pixilations starring the same well-intentioned pup.

Later episodes:

FÉTICHE PRESTIDIGITATEUR (THE RINGMASTER), a twelve-minute short from 1934

FÉTICHE SE MARIE (THE MASCOT'S WEDDING), a fifteen-minute short from 1935

FÉTICHE EN VOYAGE DE NOCES (FETICHE IN A HONEYMOON VOYAGE), a thirteen-minute short from 1936, also known as THE NAVIGATOR

FÉTICHE CHEZ LES SIRÈNES (THE MASCOT AND THE MERMAIDS), a sixteen-minute silent short from 1937

A projected fifth episode was never completed.

Why watch this old black-and-white meld of animation and live action?

For starters, it has exerted demonstrable influence on Henry Selick (both CORALINE and THE NIGHTMARE BEFORE CHRISTMAS), Terry Gilliam (his short animations), the Fleischers (BIMBO'S INITIATION and POPEYE THE SAILOR MEETS SINDBAD THE SAILOR), Jiri Barta (TOYS IN THE ATTIC), the Quay Brothers (STREET OF CROCODILES) and Jan Svankmajer (ALICE and JABBERWOCKY, among others). Animators today are still being fascinated by its quirky design and abundant black humor.

Secondly, the smooth flow of live action into animation and back again, interspersed with matte work and studio staging, is as wondrous to behold today as ever. Sections of the film have a documentary urgency to them, not a common quality in animations of any sort.

Thirdly, all major characters have distinctive personality eccentricities making them easy to remember. This is far easier to report than achieve, suggesting prolonged study of storyboards before actual filming began.

Fourthly, sound is employed in thrilling, dramatic fashion, not simply inserted for realistic background accompaniment. The traffic policeman's shrilling whistle is every bit as arresting as the solitary swallowed one in CITY LIGHTS.

Fifthly, the range of humor employed is astonishing, often coming from slapstick, as when the fresh orange for sale konks Fetiche on the head rather than landing in outstretched paws. Consider, too, the pup's responses to the policeman's feet as he presses uncertainly away from crowds of pedestrians. Or the manner in which paws are clapped to ears, blocking out piercing overtones of the man's whistle.

Too outlandishly demi-monde and hellish for preteens, FÉTICHE is especially rewarding for teens and adults, particularly jaded ones who think they've seen everything already. Oh, yeah?

6. CARROUSEL BORÉAL (WINTER CAROUSEL) France 1958 color 12 minutes

Les Films Alkam Producer: Ladislav Starewicz

Points:

- 1 Direction: Ladislav Starewicz
- 0 Editing: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Animation Camera: Ladislav Starewicz*
- 2 Lighting: Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Special Visual Effects
- 0 Screenplay: Irina Starewicz, Ladislav Starewicz
- 2 Art Direction: Alexandre Kamenka*
- 2 Animation: Irina Starewicz*, Ladislav Starewicz*
- 2 Sound Engineer: René Louge
- 2 Creativity

15 total points

The final short in Milestone's Starewicz Collection is arguably the most playful and beautiful. Patapouf the Bear is accompanied by the familiar figure of Grasshopper and more obscure Rabbit. Here they are engaged in winter sports, with predictable pratfalls. Rabbit, showoff and imp, alternates between total inability to skate at all and flashy speed skating. One of the games on display is Blind Man's Buff, with Rabbit taking advantage of Bear's blindfolded condition to splatter him in the face with a snowball launched from a sprung tree branch. There's a bit of sledding before the animals find their way to a frozen carousel of sculptured ice. While frolicking on and in it, they enjoy frigid drinks and icy popsicles. Rabbit laps off the top of a snow cone before inattentive companions realize what's happening.

The provider of that treat is a snowman who gradually changes outfits as seasons change and Spring arrives. At that point he transforms into a flashy patchwork scarecrow wearing an amazing spectrum of colors. Around his head a small band of bees buzz. Ice pond changes to boating paradise. A frog stretches out luxuriously in the stern of a rowboat, while his partner enjoys shade from an overhead parasol.

Meanwhile, Scarecrow has begun to play the flute and travel up hill and down dale. Wherever he goes, plants shoot out of the ground, attracting animal dancers of various kinds, including butterflies.

On a rise, an anonymous boy labors to haul up timbers to complete a log house. An ant is occupied on its roof, sawing away in unconventional cooperation with human builder.

The entire film consists of a succession of lightweight vignettes, humorous anecdotes occasionally enlivened by dazzling displays of fractal overlaps similar to those Disney used in the introduction to his weekly World of Color television show. Intricately detailed sets are marvelous to see and get secondary use as props for the athletically inclined cast. Daniel White's music score is playful, childlike, repetitiously staccato, with just enough trill insertions to reinforce the humorous insect and bluebird supporting cast.

Don't overlook the mishap of a bicycling frog.

WINTER CAROUSEL is an excellent introduction for children to Starewicz's puppet animation, a wordless color feast with agreeably low-key characters engaged in common outdoor activities, thoroughly enjoying themselves in both summer and winter. There is no character development or story arc. It's pure entertainment, a pleasant experience adults and their offspring can enjoy screening together.