

Spike and Mike's Classic Animation Festival trips the mind



PHOTO COURTESY OF Pixar Studios

Geri smiles, literally to himself, as he plays an interesting solo version of chess in the park. This animated short, "Geri's Game," also precedes the feature presentation in home video copies of *A Bug's Life*.

JEREMY STALLWOOD
Feature Editor

From Sweden, Germany, Belgium, France, England and even here in the United States they came.

They came to boggle our minds, to make us try to piece together an impossible puzzle.

Spike and Mike's 1999 Classic Festival of Animation came to Portland last week, with its entourage of tripped out cartoons made to twist the mind into pretzel knots until you don't know what to think anymore! It was wonderful!

First, we saw "Shock," by Zlatin Radev of Germany. There wasn't too much shock involved, but it was strange to see a cartoonist's drawing come to life and chase the new one he was a working on. The odd situation escalates until the cartoonist is devoured many times by a big piece of paper. Such a dramatic confrontation!

We also saw a very adorable cartoon called "Lily and Jim," by Don Hertzfeldt of the United States. This short, about the complexities and tensions involved in a blind date, won Best of Festival Grand Prize 1998 by the USA Film Festival. The blind date went so badly that Jim, unable to say no to anything suggested, goes ahead and drinks coffee with Lily. Jim is allergic to coffee, and soon his face puffs out like a balloon and his eyes are red, about to pop out, as he's drooling on himself. Lily asks if he's okay and Jim says he's fine. Lily asks if he wants

some more coffee and Jim, after a long pause, says sure. Completely insane.

Oh—then we get to the really tripped-out stuff! "Fruhling," by Silke Parzich of Germany, was a look at still life that should have remained still. As it started, there were all these chairs dancing in a circle. Then a table appeared. The table danced around a bit, then from its surface grew what looked like sea shells. These danced around a bit until they grew and turned into forks! The forks then danced around and sang to the forks that were hanging out in a drawer under one of the chairs. After that one, we were like, dude, what the hell was that? It was cool!

Then, we were exposed to the truth in Ben Gluck's "Man's Best Friend." Basically, it was about Adam and his dog, his best friend. Everything's great until Eve comes about. Then Adam is paying all his attention to her, not the dog. So then, the dog takes an apple from the Tree of Knowledge and gives it to Eve, but then there's a twist, and in the end, the poor serpent loses out on the spotlight.

Then we met the nicest moose in "Welcome," by Alexei Karaev of Russia. First the moose lets a bug ride in his antlers for a short ride. Then another critter pops along, then a rabbit, a few birds, a spider, a woodpecker, and finally, a great big huge grizzly bear. When the moose wants to cross a stream, all the "residents" protest. It is then

that the moose realizes how extreme the situation has become, especially when the "residents" all vote that the moose stay right where he is. All seems hopeless until all of a sudden everyone comes crashing to the ground. He had forgotten that moose shed their antlers.

One familiar cartoon, toward the end, made us chuckle. In "Geri's Game" from PIXAR Animation Studios of the United States, an old man plays chess against himself, yet in order to win, even against only himself, he feels he has to cheat. It was a view of how people are competitive, and how the game should be measured against one's own limitations.

Finally, as a rare treat, we got to see an encore presentation of "Ah L'Amour," the stick figure story of an unlucky man looking for love, or at least the time. From asking girls out to the movies to just saying hello, each girl would just explode with anger and rip his heart out, literally. Or they would rip all his skin off, or chop his head off and chainsaw his body in half, or stab his eyes out. Such a grotesque experience! But very necessary to anyone who likes to laugh.

HURRY, RUN, NOW NOW NOW!!! There is still time to go to the show! Tonight and tomorrow, April 28 and 29, at 7 and 9:15 p.m. at Cinema 21, 616 NW 21st Ave. Call 223-4515 for more information.

Authors touch readers' hearts and funny bones

SHELBI WESCOTT
Associate Copy Editor

Alison Baker and Ehud Havazelet reclined, sipping water and chatting, as students, teachers and community members filed in to participate in Authors' Night, held last Wednesday in Gregory Forum.

The audience quieted as Baker strolled to the podium, apologizing for her sore throat and cold.

After reading a few sentences, audience members leaned forward with interest and chuckled with amusement. When Baker looked up from reading, she noticed the smiles and looked pleased. Mission accomplished: her job was to be a fisherman—her words bait, the audience fish—and with each sentence she reeled them in.

Havazelet followed Baker's humorous and delightful tale of life in a small town. The mood quickly changed as he read about two Jewish brothers smuggling money from Switzerland to bring Jewish families out of the clutches of Nazi Germany. When he had finished, the

room sat in a pensive silence. Mission accomplished: his job was to touch the hearts of those listening to the story—his words an outstretched hand—and with each sentence the hand moved forward.

Both readers captivated the audience with their attention to detail and engaging dialogue.

Baker's rich imagery never left me without a detailed picture in my mind's eye. And Havazelet's descriptions allowed me to feel as if I, too, was living in 1943.

"I always knew I wanted to be a writer," said Havazelet during the question and answer session. "A lot of people want to be writers, but they don't want to write."

He admitted that writing is hard work; it takes sweat and tears, and a writer can't always wait for inspiration. However, he "find[s] the work rewarding and enjoyable."

Baker also discussed the toils of starting a writing career. "It takes persistence to get published," she remarked, "you just keep sending a story out over and over again."

"A lot of people want to be writers, but they don't want to write."

"

Ehud Havazelet
Author

Baker began writing at age ten by pounding out poems on her father's old typewriter. Several years later, she graduated to short stories. Someday she would like to write a novel, but blames her short attention span for her inability to finish one on.

Baker also views reading her work as a treasured experience.

"It's a chance to break out of my writer's corner and share my quirky ideas with an appreciative audience. That's very rewarding."

The evening was immensely enjoyable. It had been a long time since I had been read to, and I had forgotten what an experience it could be.

Take Our Daughters to Work



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Jennifer Pendley and daughter Cory Jo, 4 1/2, enjoy lunch during "Take Our Daughters to Work Day" last Thursday. The event was sponsored by the "Connections: Women Creating Community" program. "Take Our Daughters" was created by the Ms. Foundation several years ago to give girls a chance to explore career options.

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