

Citizen Z

A film now named *Citizen Z* was made about Dufferin Grove and its friends (us!) recently (February 2004). It was shown on **CBC Newsworld** on **March 21 8:00pm**.

How Citizen Z Was Made



Cavan drumming with park kids, 1996

From Cavan Young, the maker of the film:

I'm a friend of **Dufferin Grove Park**. I play hand drums in the park during the warm weather and enjoy walking through it all year round. I've been in the community for 12 years, back before the bake ovens were built, when Isabel was cooking her campfire tortillas next to the wading pool. I organized Music in the Park over four summers in Dufferin Grove Park, I also acted and played music in Clay and Paper's production of the Ballad of Garrison Creek.

I got the opportunity in January 2004 to submit a proposal to the **National Film Board** for their Momentum program. The proposal was for a 10 minute documentary on "**Democracy-Citizen's Engagement**". The issue of the inspectors coming to Dufferin Grove Park on the eve of Christmas and recommending the removal of the puppets and the kitchen was just taking place. All the activities that had been developed and supported over the years including the bread baking and Night of Dread

were being threatened. Having watched the community grow in Dufferin Grove Park over the last 10 years I knew it was a relevant story to tell. Active and engaged citizens meet the Rules ('yet again' could be the subtitle). David Anderson and Clay and Paper had created a performance of the puppet expulsion during Puppets on Ice 2, where the pretend inspector played by John Slavik removed the puppets from the children and fed the puppets to a chomping cardboard Zamboni. The premise being that the Zamboni was scared of puppets hanging overhead and was seeking revenge or at least solitude. All this I included in my proposal.

The **proposal was selected** with three others **out of 70 total submissions**. Then I had a week to make it all happen. We were being given 3 days of shooting, then straight into editing. David Anderson and I developed a vague outline of a renaming ceremony for the **Zamboni** on Valentine's Day to welcome the Zamboni into the community and show that the community has a heart that is big enough to include it. The machine would meet the god puppet from Lilith Unfair and learn it's true nature - to serve the community. Larry Lewis agreed to write an Ice Resurfacer Song and now the challenge was to get it all on tape. Including the unique spirit of Dufferin Grove Park, the bake ovens, farmers market and the friends of the park.



The filming of Citizen Z

We filmed on two Thursday's and Saturday February 14th. We got a great shot of the park from the roof of Dufferin Park Apartments thanks to superintendent Bruce Mckerracher. What a view! With the complete cooperation of Toronto Parks and Recreation's Brian Green and the Zamboni drivers we got some great shots of the machine in action. Don Boyle was very generous in giving us an interview right in the middle of dealing with the Withrow Park crisis. David Anderson was incredibly flexible with his time right in the middle of grant writing season as he is, and Jutta helped clarify elements of the story that were missing. Daniel Malloy did a great job chopping wood in multiple takes. The NFB crew fell in love with the park and enjoyed shopping at the market on both Thursdays. Gerry Flahive, the producer, said the place reminded him of Montreal, which I took as a compliment.....

Over all we did what any film crew is designed to do. We got in the way of the market. We held up the puppet show that Kate and Leah's Theatre company was putting on and generally pissed people off. The editing process has just finished. A lot of great visuals and contextual material was cut but it was all done with the best of intentions. One of the overall goals was that people in Nova Scotia, Nunavut or Nanaimo be able to follow the basic story, it is the National Film Board after all.

I've discovered that 10 minutes is too short to describe a complex story so don't expect it to go deep, but one of the first encouraging comments I heard was from the executive producer at the NFB, Silva Basmajian. 'It's good. It's good!' She said. 'It just needs a beginning, middle and end and then it's going to be really good.' After we had gotten on a little bit further she said: 'Oh, so you've got 3 endings!' and indeed I did. But it was useful to have people who didn't know the park critiquing the story: 'There's a kitchen where?' 'The puppets are how big?' 'They use the Zamboni room for What?' It's all done now, I hope you like it and it expands on the continuing history and mythology of our park.

The Lawyers wouldn't let us use the title Citizen Zamboni because Zamboni might get upset. Citizen Zed couldn't be used because ZED tv which is on CBC has a copyright on the letter ZED. So we're calling it Citizen Z. It makes it more friendly to the North American Market. Americans can call it Citizen ZEE and Canadians.... well you get the idea.

It will premiere along with the three other pieces at the Lafontaine-Baldwin lectures this coming Saturday March 13 at the Royal Ontario Museum. Then all four will screen on Sunday March 21 on CBC Newsworld. The time slots have yet to be confirmed.

Gerry Flahive is hoping that "The Ice Resurfacers Song" will be performed at the ACC with a full salsa band and Copa-cabana ice show, during this year's play offs when the Maple Leafs win the Stanley Cup. But I go too far.

By the way there are supposed to be two times for the broadcast Sunday March 21 on CBC Newsworld and neither one has been confirmed but that should happen this week.

cavan.