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Sapporo Winter Olympics

(JAPANESE—DOCU—COLOR)

Venice, Sept. 12.

Toho release of Newsreel Producers' Assoc. production. Directed by Masahiro Shinoda. Screenplay, Nobuo Yamada, Aromu Mushiake, Motoo Ogasawara, Kyoko Kishida; camera (color) over 52 photogs; editor, T. Najizaki; music, Masaru Sato. Reviewed at Venice Film Fest Aug. 31, '72. Running Time: 100 MINS.

(English Narration)

The 11th Sapporo Winter Olympics, which took place in Japan last February, is given an extremely perceptive, insightful and informative envelope with extraordinary skill in editing, lensing and an overall one-man perception by director Masahiro Shinoda.

It appears the better Olympic films have usually had one guiding hand despite the number of cameras used (here it was 52), be it the more Aryan-slanted 1936 pic of Leni Riefenstahl or the brilliant "Tokyo Olympiad" of Kon Ichikawa. Shinoda first gives a look at the entrance of the torch brought by relays from Greece, the fine ritual and colorful panoply and then segues into many of the top events ending in the exciting ski jumps and bob-sled races.

Shinoda has not forced any overt lyrical conceptions, mainly

let the color, pageantry, and sheer physical prowess speak for these competitions that are more a hymn to physical beauty and training than knockabout or elbowing competitiveness.

But sometimes, as in the Czech-Russo hockey game, it takes on a greater significance as it becomes a sort of look at the '68 Warsaw Pact invasion somehow making itself felt in the fervor of the Czech playing.

During the figure skating of a pretty Yank practitioner a flight of wild ducks is superimposed for an effective visual notation that is not overdone. The skating races, the competent use of slow motion and, at times, a ski jumper followed down to the end and held to mark a subtle but transcending point about the exciting human endeavor and capacities raises this over the usual level of Olympic pix.

With the recent Summer Olympics still a hot topic, this fresh and snowy Winter Olympic look-see should have an extra peg but has the knowhow in all departments to still keep it fresh. Print shown here had a fine English comentary and its supple editing was also an asset as well as the fine lyrical but right musical score.

Mosk.