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CALENDAR

THE THIRD ANIMATION CELEBRATION

I wonder which member of the Simpson family would enjoy watching this collection most. Bart would probably think *Ren Hoek and Stimpy in "Big House Blues"* was cool because it mixes Tex Avery's drop-jaw style with lots of cruelty and vomit in a story of two homeless pets facing the Big Sleep in the pound. But Bart would have ducked out of the theater during one of the longer East European opuses like Czechoslovakia's *Darkness, Light, Darkness* (plot too esoteric to describe), which molds threadbare existentialism into claymation. Lisa would have felt sympathetic toward Bruno Bozzetto's *Mr. Tao*, a little man's short stroll up a hill and then beyond, past heaven, because she's at the age (10) that tends to migrate toward the windy, lonely philosophies. Lisa's political chops are sharp enough, however, to see right through *Poumsee*, a water-color fable of imperialism from Russia, in which a group of shivering, pink-skinned jungle animals reclaim their skins after a white trader cons the natives into buying clothes. I can hear Lisa's reaction: "Don't they know that the cogs of Third World domination are oiled by the blood of exotic animal species?" Marge would have sat politely through all 21 shorts, simply because the pro-

gram is a cultural event, and she's the only Simpson who appreciates culture for appreciation's sake. The amazing technique most of these shorts demonstrate would have held Marge's attention, though if she's an animation festival regular, it might have lagged upon the jillionth showing of inanimate objects acting cutely human — a ravenous fork and knife, for example, as they corner a quivering peach in France's *Still Life*. In the end, Homer



The Third Animation Celebration

is the ideal Simpson for this show because, although he would have dozed through most of it, there are enough nose-picking jokes (about a dozen) to keep him laughing or looking forward to the next one. (Nuart, Dec. 26-Jan. 8) (Dave Gardetta)