

Excerpts from Reviews for IMAX®/OMNIMAX® giant screen films created by Academy Award® winning Producer/Director/Writer/Designer Ben Shedd

Reviews for the IMAX film:

SEASONS

City Pages, St. Paul, July 17, 1987, by Phil Anderson -- Winter Into Spring

"Poetry meets technology on equal terms in SEASONS, the latest production of the Science Museum of Minnesota's Omnimax crew. ... This time the museum enlisted an Oscar-winning documentarist, director Ben Shedd. The effort paid off.

...What SEASONS adds to IMAX moviemaking is a stunning sense of intimacy. SEASONS may not be as flashy as other Omni films, but it's more polished and it gives NOVA fans a little something to chew on."

St. Paul Pioneer Press Dispatch, July 7, 1987, by James Tarbox -- SEASONS-ooh and aah

"Of the movies I've seen at the museum, (SEASONS) is the best. And not just for the effects which are special indeed. It's informative, easy to follow, and is especially pretty to look at.

...No mere travelogue, SEASONS is first and foremost a science/nature movie. But it is free of the dry and academic tone that afflicts many of those. This film will make you ooh and aah and laugh right out loud, just like the kids."

Minnesota STATEWATCH, Summer 1987, by Nancy Weber -- Science museum gives new angle on Seasons

"The viewer gets spectacular, vertigo-inducing heights and magnificent macrophotography within the first few seconds of (SEASONS). ...But producer/director Ben Shedd, winner of an Academy Award for his 1978 documentary short The Flight of the Gossamer Condor, had the aesthetic sense to aim for more than a display of technical virtuosity. Shedd uses the medium to express the film's content rather than the other way around."

Twin Cities Reader, June 17-23, 1987, by Brian Lambert -- Beyond the Thrill Ride-Omnimax SEASONS

"... The film was directed by Academy Award winner Ben Shedd on a budget of approximately \$800,000, plus another half million in free services and personnel.

... Thanks to some of the best editing the medium has enjoyed...your attention is held by a series of images of true, lyric splendor. ... SEASONS tells a cyclical story, carefully layering each term of the year with lingering images of what has come before and hints of what's ahead.

... What Ben Shedd and his collaborators have done with SEASONS is demonstrate that relatively commonplace environments can be made spectacular with attention to presentation and composition. ... Shedd has a gift for the process and you wonder what he could do, given a couple of million dollars and left more or less to his own devices.

... SEASONS supplies spectacle enough to satisfy the common thrill-seeker, enough art to sustain the aesthetes, and enough science to calm the fears of the museum zealots. It is a ripening of the biggest and youngest medium."

IRIS Universe Magazine-Summer 1988, by Richard Weinberg & Vibeke Sorensen

"SEASONS is a tour de force of special effects in the OMNIMAX format. Including time lapse, macro-photography, motion control and computer animation. The computer animation in SEASONS is an integral part of the film; a powerful tool in the filmmaker's toolkit."

Albuquerque Journal-August 4, 1990, by Robert A. Raines

"SEASONS is a film that sets out relentlessly to entertain its audiences-and it contains sequences that marry music and film in stunning fashion."

Albuquerque Journal-August 1990, by Frank Zoretich

"SEASONS is the extremely colorful, highly informative, thrillingly orchestrated and totally absorbing 30 minute film... And that close-up of the rose! Twenty seven feet of rose, filling the entire screen from top to bottom-the overwhelming blush of it taken in concert with ear-filling strains of visual and auditory aesthetic classicism."

Review for the IMAX film:

FORT WORTH FLYOVER II Signature Film

Fort Worth Star-Telegram-July 1992, by Michael Price -- A Sweeping New Look at Fort Worth

"The new film gives the viewer the illusion of soaring over the city in a helicopter, with breathtaking swoops and turns and the grandest view in town. ... Director Ben Shedd has lavished as much care on this short subject as he brought to the acclaimed superscreen feature SEASONS, an Omni theater favorite of a few years ago. ... FLYOVER II is a thrill that will bear repeating - about as close to wingless flight as anybody can expect to get."

Reviews for the IMAX film :

TROPICAL RAINFOREST

Pioneer Press-February 4, 1992, by Deborah J. Funk

"The Omnimax film TROPICAL RAINFOREST is one of the best yet from the Science Museum, an exceptionally pleasurable and articulate argument for leaving the planet's green treasure troves undisturbed."

The Hollywood Reporter-November 1992, by Duane Byrge

"TROPICAL RAINFOREST is a concise and colorful tapestry of the rain forests' wondrous regenerative energies. A number of stunning close-ups of the varied indigenous life that abounds in the forests, exotic looking insects and slithery reptiles, clues us to the dense life beneath the towering trees.

Director Ben Shedd has created a pulsating rhythmic presentation, cueing us to the tiny wonders deep inside the forest while giving us a sense of its immense grandeur and importance. Shedd also has a clear sense of fun in his image selection, which should prove especially engaging for children."

The Houston Post-February 1993, by Tim Carman

"TROPICAL RAINFOREST, please excuse the phrasing, is a rare beast...one of those documentaries that can stop gazing at its own navel and see exactly how everything fits together in a broader sense, both the good and the evil.

TROPICAL RAINFOREST has a sly way of magnifying the harmony and perfection of the forest's smallest creatures, thereby implying the alienation of mankind from its own natural surroundings. It can be quite humbling."

Los Angeles Times---November 13, 1992, by Michael Wilmington

"...the latest IMAX film, TROPICAL RAINFOREST, is an invaluable document. ...the forest is revealed to us layer by layer, as it developed biologically over the years. The perspective shifts. What we see begins to resemble not a forest, but an immense work of art: intensely complex and beautiful, alive in all its parts."

LA Weekly November 1992

"TROPICAL RAINFOREST is spectacular-a hypnotic blast of near-reality from one of the least-seen corners of the earth. 'Imagine a day 400 hundred million years ago,' intones the narrator, and so we do. We confront, for long pleasurable minutes, an infinite vastness of pre human green. Director Ben Shedd, who filmed this in forests throughout the Americas, moves in close on microscopic insects, monumentally huge snakes and a toucan with (from this angle) a beak the size of a Studebaker.

Never has the murder of a rain forest been so effectively dramatized...surely this is how the Lumiere Brother's footage of a charging train locomotive felt to viewers of a century ago."

The Wall Street Journal-February 21, 1992, by Joe Morgenstern

"Given the size of [the] screen and the camera's 85-pound weight, Mr. Shedd's film proves remarkably light on its feet. It roams the treetops of the tropical forests in Costa Rica, Queensland and Malaysia, finding a scarlet macaw at one moment, and, at another, a biologist on her way up a nylon rope to study plant growth on the top of the forest's canopy. ... The most important point is the rain forests are being destroyed, and Mr. Shedd makes it powerfully by letting the subject speak for itself."

The New Voice-February 12-18, 1993, by Tad Nelson

"In a mere thirty-eight minutes, thanks to the wonders of cinema and the insight of director Ben Shedd, you will journey through hundreds of millions of years of evolution in the Earth's tropical rainforest... I highly recommend this exciting audio/visual experience to everyone. It will fascinate young and old alike. ... My only complaint was that I didn't want it to end as soon as it did."

Las Vegas Review-Journal-May 15, 1992, by Carol Cling

"Writer Simon Campbell-Jones and director Ben Shedd know better than to pummel audiences with heavy-handed anguish over the dangers of clear-cut logging. Besides, they don't have to. Not when the pictures make the argument far more forcefully."

Boston Phoenix, February 12, 1993

"The rain forests' drastic variations in light, their delicate ecology, and an abundance of ticks and vampire bats were among the other challenges Shedd & Co. Faced. Ultimately, it took \$2.1 million, 10 weeks on location, and six months of post-production to produce the 38 minutes of TROPICAL RAINFOREST. All this work to create the illusion that there was no work done at all - that the rain forest just blossomed on its own, right there in the theater."

New York Newsday, 1992, by Joseph Gelmis

"The film is a primer of evolution, a brief history of the survival and astonishing diversity of plants and creatures."

New York Newsday, 1992, by Christina Avvento and Brian Schweibert

"It is rare that we find a film that is tremendously enjoyable, as well as filled with non-stop intriguing information."

City Pages-February 5, 1992, by Phil Anderson

"It's a relief to note that veteran Omnimax director Ben Shedd, working for the Science Museum of Minnesota as producer, hasn't let his subject down. This movie isn't just pretending to be a classically reasoned documentary, it is one.

In short, the film lets the audience discover the subject and its importance, which is what all the best little-screen documentaries have always done. TROPICAL RAINFOREST does this mainly through the real-time long take (and) following the seductively musical narration of Geoffrey Holder. ...It shows how the evolution proceeded on this planet, and how the rainforests encompass this history all at once."

Houston Chronicle--1992, by Louis B. Parks

"Seldom has an IMAX film offered audiences such a feeling of intimacy with the subject, in this case the rain forests of the world as represented by Costa Rica's lush dense jungles."

Enterprise Correspondent--1993, by Gil Bliss

"The sensation of standing next to a 150-foot tree as it's felled by a single snarling chainsaw is impressive. ... There are as many night animals as day creatures and Shedd's brilliant camerawork [by Director of Photography Tim House] brings them to view, often in startling close-up."

The Seattle Times-November 11, 1992, by John Hartl

"Shedd takes time to show a butterfly emerging from its cocoon or a thunderstorm develops over the course of a day. In one particularly devastating sequence that could be subtitled "The Tropical Chainsaw Massacre," he shows us in real time, without cuts, just how quickly and effortlessly a magnificent, landscape-dominating tree can be reduced to a pile of wood."

The Daily Breeze-November 15, 1992

"Traveling shots just above the forest canopy suddenly open down into canyon streams to give the viewer the effect he might be swinging in a parachute somewhere above the Eastern Columbia. Shots of shockingly hued macaws and toucans--25 feet high in the IMAX format- provide a contrast to the predominating greenery ... It's a beautiful movie, and director Ben Shedd and his crew can be proud to have presented the world of equatorial forests so spectacularly."

Louisville Courier-Journal-January 1993, by John Roberts

"A tropical rainforest bustles with extraordinary images and the setting has been magnificently captured by IMAX cameras through the graceful interpretation of Academy Award winning director Ben Shedd. Only the equally lyrical THE DREAM IS ALIVE ...and BLUE PLANET...compares to the majesty and exulting excitement offered by the more down to earth escapades. ... Shedd masterfully conveys the intricate ecosystem of which scientists know very little."