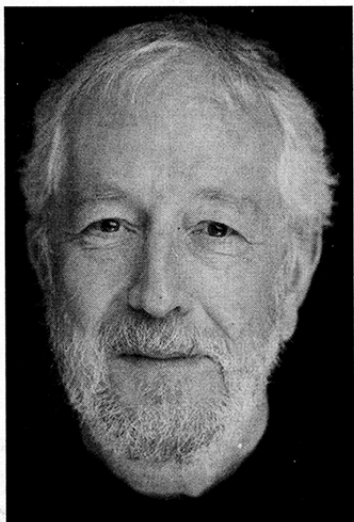


## THE PRESENT PAST

The only thing worse than losing someone you love, is losing them every day. In Allan King's new film, *Memory for Max, Claire, Ida and company*, we follow a number of residents in their eighties at Toronto's Baycrest Centre for Geriatric Care, as they forget their sons and daughters, husbands and friends.

Always wearing his finest suit, Max never talks, except to sing one-liners in Yiddish. He's doted on by the over-rouged Claire, the happiest of the residents, until her memory begins to go. Helen, a once successful business-woman, no longer recognizes her daughter. Fay is terribly lonely, and her family seldom visits. Thirty-seven years of marriage have vanished for Rachel, and Ruth refuses to eat or drink. Among the sadness, there is levity. In a moment of lucidity Claire recalls how she and her husband used to get up in the morning and, before she was even dressed, would dance together around the room. They were like two kids.



As heartbreaking as the film is, Allan King, in his trademark style, infuses it with much warmth and humour to remind us all of what it means to be human.

*Memory for Max, Claire, Ida and company* premieres on *The View From Here*, **Wednesday February 15 at a special start time of 9 pm.**

*"Dementia is an unfortunately misleading word with a muddle of meanings. It creates a disabling fear which often cripples care for people experiencing cognitive change. Aging does affect memory, as it does many other skills. But people do not lose their feelings, which are in fact often stronger, more expressive, and direct. They do not lose their identity or their need for respect," says director Allan King.*



Watching *Memory for Max*, we learn that growing old doesn't mean we lose our identity, our feelings, or our need for companionship.

## DOCUMENTARY 101

*The View From Here* complements celebrated filmmaker's approach to documentary studies.

Filmmaker Vladimir Kabelik knows Allan King's work well. "I admire Allan not only as one of the greatest filmmakers of all time, but also one of the last true renaissance men I personally know. He can discuss philosophy, music, visual arts, theatre and filmmaking all in one breath.

"What amazes me is that even though he is no longer a young man [he has been making documentaries since the mid 1950s], he still has his sharp wit, his special sense of humour and his stamina to tackle documentaries without compromise. Sometimes I wish we could inject some of his genes into the bloodstream of our young filmmakers."

That is exactly what Kabelik is attempting to do at the Sheridan College Institute of Technology and Advanced Learning, where he is professor of Film and Television Production in the Media Arts program. Included in the Kabelik curriculum is *The View From Here*, TVO's acclaimed documentary series.

"I realized that [none of the students] had any realistic ideas about the depth and complexity of the documentary field," he says. "Therefore I felt compelled to go back to the basics and create a documentary curriculum stretched through several levels."

*The View From Here's* course connection with Sheridan is one of over 40 such links TVO has with colleges and universities across Ontario. "Films like *The Corporation* and *Hardwood* (the latter of which was produced by Sheridan grad Erin Faith Young), are prime examples of how TVO features some of the best documentaries the world has to offer. Many of these films are analyzed in Sheridan's documentary program," Kabelik points out.

Kabelik's own story illustrates the power – and risk – of point-of-view documentaries like those airing on *The View From Here*.

"Documentaries can be dangerous," he observes. "Especially when you try to speak your mind in a non-democratic society," as Kabelik himself did in communist Czechoslovakia in the late 1970s. Some of his films were banned and he was the subject of an investigation by the secret police after establishing a link with the family of an imprisoned writer. "My wife and I started preparing a rather elaborate escape. The rest is now history."

Thankfully for students of documentary film, their "elaborate escape" involved Canada, where Kabelik has built a reputation as one of this country's most talented filmmakers, as well as a professor at Sheridan. The college certainly shares his commitment to the documentary form. The Media Arts program now includes a mandatory introductory course in documentary, and students can choose documentary production as their major in their second year.