

TELEVISION

Ten-week 'Academy Leaders' series highlights noted short films of past years

Since short films rarely receive the recognition they deserve, PBS is airing a 10-week series of hour-long programs showcasing some of the top short works of all time. The series, entitled *Academy Leaders*, is devoted to showing short films that have either won Academy Awards or have been nominated. It was written and hosted by Norman Corwin, who is a writer, producer and director. Two shows that will be airing in the weeks ahead are:

Episode 8

8 p.m. Monday, March 26

—**"Adolescence"** This show begins the program by exploring the human relationship between a 14-year-old Parisian schoolgirl and her ballet teacher, an 84-year-old celebrated former dancer. The retired ballerina, Madame Egorova, conveys to her pupil not only the strict discipline of ballet, but also a deep love for the art form. This touching study received a 1966 Oscar nomination for its director, documentarian Vladimir Forgency.

—**"Neighbors"** This is the second oldest film in the series. From the National Film Board of Canada, it won the 1952 Academy Award for best animated short, and is considered a classic both for its theme and technique. The film maker, animator and innovator Norman McLaren, deplored the physical violence he witnessed in China during the Korean War, and shared his feelings in the eight-minute black and white parable. The movie was filmed without a script, and was one of the first examples of single frame shooting, in which all visual illusions are produced in the camera, not through post-filming technical trickery.

—**"City of Gold"** This short film is a portrait of Dawson City in the Klondike during the gold rush of the 1890's, contrasted with the city as it was in the 1950's, when this Oscar nominee was made. In order to fully utilize a collection of richly detailed photographs of the mining town in its heyday, directors Colin Low and Wolf Koenig developed a cinematic technique known as filmographic which evokes a sense of movement in the still pictures by means of optical effects, zooms and pans. The short caused a tremendous stir not only with the Academy, but also in Dawson City, where the Canadian government staged a festival honoring the town's history, and restored many of the old structures depicted in the film. "City of Gold" was made by the National Film Board of Canada.

Episode 9

8 p.m. Monday, April 9

—**"The Numbers Start With the River"** A nostalgic look at rural life in America's heartland. When writer-producer-director Donald Wrye received an Oscar nomination for this unpretentious profile of the Midwest in 1971, it was his second consecutive Academy nomination. The 14 1/2 minute short was produced for the United States Information Agency for distribution abroad as a means of sharing American culture with other nations. Its inclusion in the series marks a rare domestic showing of a USIA film.

—**"Time Piece"** A jazzy stream-of-consciousness look at the urban "rat race." It was created in 1965 by Jim Henson, who was then an experimental film maker and puppeteer. Henson rose to public television prominence four years later as the creator of the madcap Muppets of "Sesame Street." Henson wrote, directed,



produced and starred in this surrealistic film, which got him an Oscar nomination.

—**"Robert Kennedy Remembered"** A lasting tribute to the late statesman. It is the work of film maker Charles Guggenheim, who had worked with Kennedy during his 1964 campaign, and was commissioned by the Kennedy family shortly after the senator's death. It was first screened as a memorial during the tumultuous Democratic National Convention in Chicago in 1968, and was subsequently honored with an Academy Award.



SONIA PETROVNA POR-TRAYS an aspiring young dancer, above, whose relationship with her 84-year-old dance teacher is explored in "Adolescence," which opens the eighth episode of the series. Below, muppet creator Jim Henson is shown as he starred in his own satirical commentary on the urban rat race in "Time Piece," which is included in the ninth series episode. The series is produced by KCET in Los Angeles.