

# World of insects meets naked eye in 'Microcosmos'

By **PATRICK KELLY**  
Film Critic

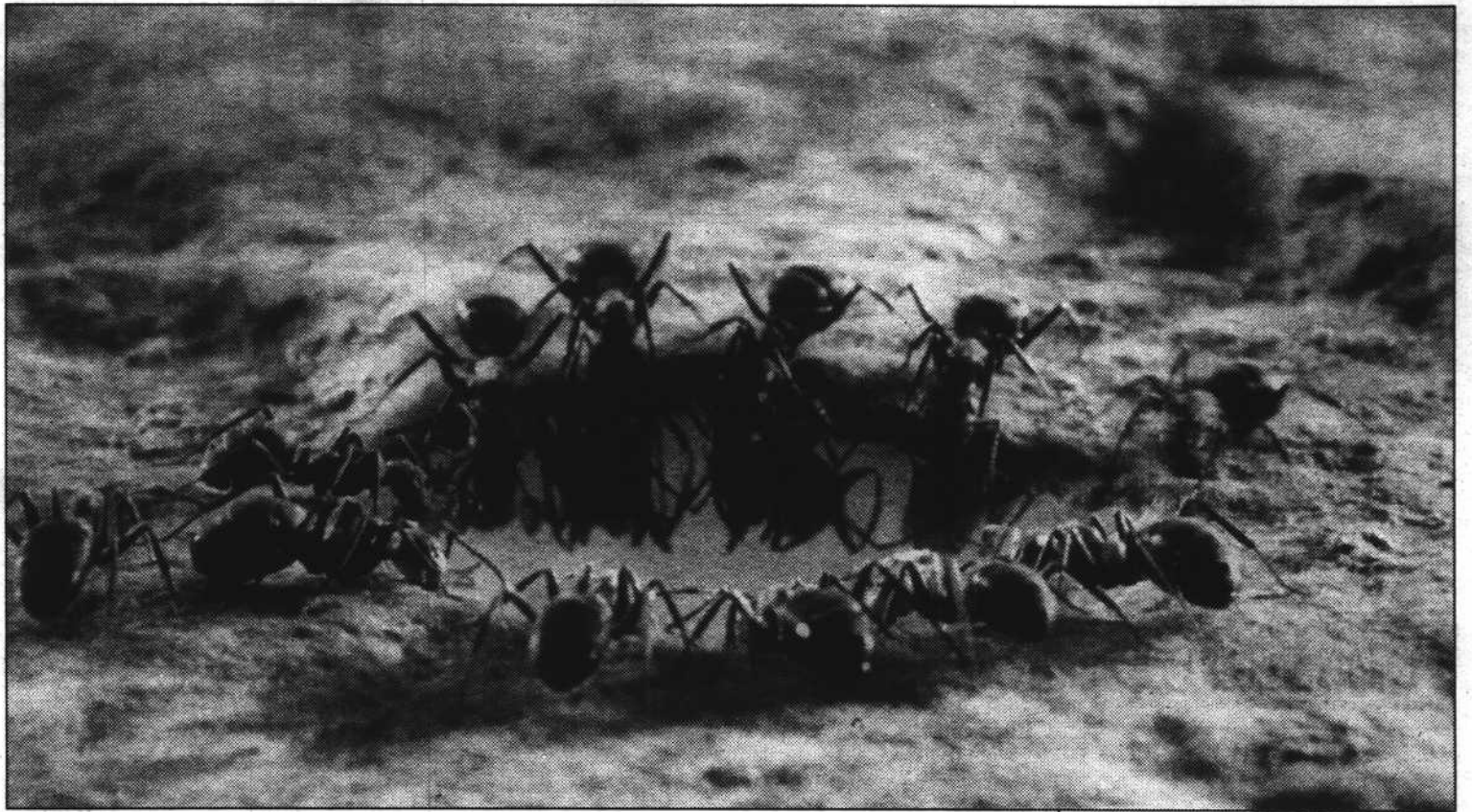
When one thinks of a documentary on the world of insects a sense of excitement rarely ensues.

In fact, insect documentaries often bring to mind several high school biology classes where the teacher would put on a National Geographic video and the students would subsequently take out their pillows. Fortunately the French film "Microcosmos" is a little different.

Through the use of ultra-sensitive audio/visual equipment, the film covers a 24-hour period, which is the life span of the on-screen characters. With the exception of brief narrations at the beginning and the end by Academy Award nominee Kristin Scott-Thomas, there is no speaking. Rather, the audience listens to the dialogue of chirping, croaking, buzzing and scratching.

The conflict of the film is an unchanging script based on nature: the struggle for survival and the inevitability of the food chain. High points include the entrapment of an insect in a spider web and a bird feasting on a colony of ants.

The film was expertly soundtracked with a very eerie and surreal operatic score by Bruno Coulais, reminiscent of the work of Danny Elfman ("Batman" and "Edward Scissorhands").



CLAUDE NURIDSAY and Marie Perrenou co-direct the insect documentary "Microcosmos."

COURTESY PHOTO

It is rather difficult to hold documentaries to the same guidelines as feature films. But all films must strive for one goal — constant attention from the audience. At times, this film seemed to drag.

But the technical achievement of the film was most impressive. Frame after frame is full of sights such as water being absorbed by a plant — which is practically invisible to the naked

eye. The flight of a bumblebee or the crash of a raindrop also proves to be epic.

This isn't the type of film that will garner huge box-office profits. It might not be the best flick to see on a date or go see in a huge group when there is nothing better to do.

But "Microcosmos" is an experience that provides a unique perspective to the world around us.

### The Facts

**Film:** "Microcosmos"  
**Directors:** Claude Nuridsany and Marie Perrenou  
**Rating:** G (gratuitous insect sex and violence)  
**Grade:** B  
**Five Words:** It's a small world indeed.

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