



## Reel World

**The Plow That Broke the Plains** Some years ago, Gunnar Madsen — Berkeley composer, record producer, and co-founder of the a cappella group the Bobs — shot a series of training videos for his father's garbage company. Madsen had no illusions that his work for the Palo Alto Sanitation Co. made him a filmmaker. But it sure came in handy when his brother asked him to come to Russia and make a documentary about the remarkable farming commune he'd helped found, where developmentally disabled people work and live alongside volunteers and their families.

"It's important in music and film, more so than in a novel, to have an arc," Madsen says. "I can do an eight-minute industrial video, sure. But a 45-minute film is akin to writing a symphony. The biggest challenge was the writing: 'How do I make the voice sound right?'" Madsen opted to narrate the film in the first person, rather than use the detached voice-over endemic to educational films. Then, while he was editing the film, Madsen happened to hear director Norman Jewison's DVD commentary about scenes he left out of *The Hurricane*. Something

clicked, and Madsen realized he had to cut some powerful sequences that didn't quite fit. *Svetlana Village: The Camphill Experience in Russia*, a genuinely inspiring and unsentimental portrait, has its world premiere at Berkeley's Fine Arts Cinema at 4 p.m. on Saturday, May 26. The screening is a benefit for Svetlana Village, with both Madsen brothers in attendance.