

March - April 2000

PFA

FILM NOTES



The *Uns*ilent Film

PFA presents a new performance series, "The Unsilent Film," in which music artists are commissioned to create and perform scores for silent films. The first in our series is *Un Chien Andalou*, with a score by Owen O'Toole, presented on February 22, Buñuel's birthday. Tonight's is the second program in this series which continues into 2001.

The Unsilent Film is supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Friday April 7

Beth Custer Ensemble Performs

My Grandmother 7:30, 9:00

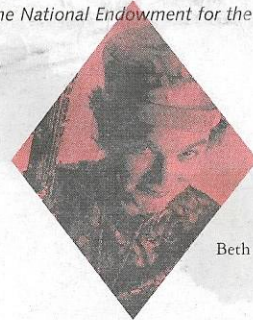
Kote Mikaberidze (USSR, 1929)

Special Admission: \$10.

This exciting event premieres a score commissioned by PFA for the thoroughly peculiar Georgian film *My Grandmother*. Noted for its anarchic stylistics such as stop-motion, puppetry, exaggerated camera angles, and animation, this Soviet silent has met its match in the bold but playful musicianship of Bay Area multi-instrumentalist Beth Custer. A founding member of Club Foot Orchestra, Custer has also worked with Trance Mission, Eighty Mile Beach, and most recently, the Vinculum Symphony. For this score, she will compose for a range of woodwinds, percussion, and bass.

Mikaberidze's scathing satire of Soviet bureaucracy is a genuine piece of grotesquerie from the Eccentric Cinema of the twenties. *My Grandmother's* most memorable character is a wide-eyed, wild-haired bureaucrat's wife who is caught up in a frenzy of bourgeois living. Her equally comic husband, modeled after Harold Lloyd, personifies the indolence and irrelevance of a State system that resembles nothing so much as a roundtable defended by benighted stooges. When he loses his job, he learns the value of a "grandmother"—a slang term for the boodles that moves the table round. Forgotten for half a century, this irreverent blast, complete with constructivist sets and deconstructivist slapstick, has lost none of its bite.—Steve Seid

• Written by Mikaberidze, G. Mgvani, S. Dolidze. Photographed by A. Polikevich, B. Poznan. With A. Takaishvili, B. Chernova, E. Obanov. (65 mins, Silent, Russian intertitles translated live, B&W, 35mm, PFA Collection)



Beth Custer