

Love

When a film has nine separate stories (each with a different cast), nine screenwriters, and four directors, things move quickly during production. If ever film-making deserved to be described as a 'collaborative art', it does in this instance.

The film in question is *Love*, the first feature to be produced by Renée Perlmutter, formerly a script developer at Quadrant Films (and incidentally, wife of its president, David Perlmutter). Shot in Toronto over nine weeks from October to December, *Love* is an anthology film consisting of nine segments, of eight to fourteen minutes each, all of which examine some aspect or form of love.

What makes this film most intriguing, however, is that it represents probably the most concentrated and most significant utilization of female writing and directing talent ever seen in a feature film production: each and every screenwriter and director is a well-known and accomplished woman.

Perlmutter read the script, written by Nancy Dowd (*Coming Home* and *Slapshot*), Lady Antonia Fraser, Germaine Greer, Gael Greene, Joni Mitchell, Edna O'Brien, Penelope Gilliat (*Sunday, Bloody Sunday*), Mai Zetterling, and Liv Ullmann, at Cannes in 1979. She snapped it up, and later convinced Ullmann, Dowd, and Zetterling to direct their own segments (Zetterling also handled those by Mitchell and O'Brien): Canadian Annette Cohen served as director on the other four, and as supervising director of the over-film.

A huge Toronto mansion, nearly the size of a small European hotel, served as the production's base of operations (some costumes and sets were made there), and as the site of several segments. Upon stepping through the baronial front door, one found a house furnished largely by cables, lights, folding tables and chairs, and, in one room, a full-size mock-up of an ocean liner stateroom, complete with fake portholes and low ceiling. It was filled with twenty or so technicians, assistants, and actors, leaving only a little more space than the Marx Brothers had onboard ship in *Monkey Business*. The room had 'forced perspective', achieved, as art director Claude Bonnière told me, simply by widening it at one end.

Scenes from Penelope Gilliat's screenplay - about an elderly couple's romance - directed by Annette Cohen, were being shot that day. Robin Ward and Candace O'Connor, looking terribly British in their upper-class clothes, were perched precariously on a bed in a corner of the stateroom, doing their Thespian best to be comfortably intimate while the crew was hunched up near them. The near mob of technicians, however, politely ignored Cohen's whispered conferences with the actors between takes.

The switch in this story is that, although the characters are elderly, they appear to each other, because of their intense love, as they were in their courtship days - hence, no 'age' make-up or plastic wrinkles on the actors.

The sensitive sound equipment, which could easily pick up whispered lines of dialogue, presented something of a problem, for this particular house had extremely communicative and forthright stairs, bannisters, floorboards, doors, and plumbing. A warning system,

using a signal bell and walkie-talkies, advised those on the premises to shut-up during shooting. At one point, while filming took place in the stateroom, a few dozen crew members in the room above had to eat their lunch and move around in total silence.

The setting two weeks later couldn't have been more of a contrast. Filming of Mai Zetterling's "Love From the Marketplace" (not all of the segments have yet been titled) was taking place in the ancient and notorious Wheat Sheaf Tavern. This was the fourth episode to be done. For the sake of convenience, and because the same crew worked on all of the segments (except for director of photography Norman Leigh, who was replaced part-way through production by Reg Morris), the nine stories were shot one at a time, in nine successive five-day weeks.

The scene being filmed was supposed to take place in a smoky poolroom/tavern populated by some slightly seedy regulars. You would expect, knowing the Wheat Sheaf, that this would be an exercise in *cinéma vérité*. But no. Smoke-generating devices, looking something like medieval watering cans, were used to create the right atmospheric 'look', necessitating the use of gas masks by some of the crew members. The extras looked 'correct', but when it came time to run through a billiards scene (doing something each of these guys had probably done every day after work for years), some of them were stilted - proving, it's hard to play yourself. Director Zetterling, seemingly a model of patience, finally said after about seven run-throughs "C'mon fellas, this isn't Shakespeare."

Producer Perlmutter raised the production money through the sale of thirty \$90,000 units, and is aiming at a spring finish of post-production work. Domestic and international sales of the film will not be attempted until it is completed - Perlmutter feels that *Love* (originally given the racier and perhaps mislead-

ing title *Acts of Love*) deserves to be seen in its entirety, and not just 'described' to potential distributors.

This is clearly a writer's film, and Perlmutter feels it is important to be true to the scripts: she is not worried about offending some movie-goers. "If someone doesn't like the story by, say, Gael Greene, that's okay," she says, elaborating that, with nine scripts, it would probably be impossible to ensure that the film is all things to all people. A rare and admirable attitude.

Gerry Flahive ●

Love

p.c. Coup Films (1980) p. Renée Perlmutter superv. d. Annette Cohen assoc. d. Martin Walters p. man. William Zborowsky asst. to p. Pamela Keary acc'ts sup. Edythe Hall prod. acc't. Penny Royce book-keeper Judy Roseberg coord. Alice Ferrier off. p.a. Steve Marshall art d. Claude Bonnière asst. art. d. Barbara Tranter, Dan Davis p.a.-art. Katherine Vansittart loc./unit man. Michael Muller d. Annette Cohen, Nancy Dowd, Liv Ullman, Mai Zetterling sc. Nancy Dowd, Antonia Fraser, Penelope Gilliat, Gael Greene, Germaine Greer, Joni Mitchell, Edna O'Brien, Liv Ullman, Mai Zetterling asst. d. Martin Walters (1st), Don Brough (2nd), Richard Flower (2nd), John Webb (3rd) script sup. Blanche McDermaid ward des. Linda Matheson assts. ward. Mary McCready (1st) make-up Valli Slutsky hairdresser David Beecroft set dec. Jacques Veilleux prop. master Cy Langevin props Denis Kirkham d.o.p. Norman Leigh cam. op. Matt Tundo 1st asst. cam. (focus) Gordon Langevin 2nd asst. cam. (loader) Wendy Walgate gaffer Chris Holmes best boy Tony Eldridge key grip Glen Goodchild grip Wayne Goodchild laborer Brad Blackwood sd. Owen Langevin boom Randy Milligan transp. capt. Jim Kennedy head driver Frank Tenaglio driver Gary Flanagan head carpenter Weits Jekel head painter Derek Stephenson ed. Don Ginsberg observer d. Larry Moore p. sup. Elizabeth Butterfield cast. Claire Walker, Deirdre Bowen extras Brent Meyer, Dwayne McLean (Computer Extra Casting pub. David McCaughna l.p. Tony Kalem, Nicholas Campbell, Scott Denton, Susan Fletcher, Sonja Smits, David Main, Cindy Girling, Robin Ward, Candace O'Connor, Patrick Brymer, Moses Znaimer, Marilyn Lightstone, Linda Renhoffer, Kathy Garra, Sally Higgins, Malcolm Smith, Daisy White, Louisa Martin, Barry Stevens, Joni Mitchell, Winston Rekert, Benjamin Gordon, Larry Dane, Elizabeth Sheppard, Janet-Laine Green, Charles Jolliffe, Rita Tuckett, Maureen Fitzgerald, Gordon Thomson.



● Keeping a hawk-like eye out for her prey, Georgie Collins as the Ghostkeeper

Ghostkeeper

Ghostkeeper, a low-budget thriller with a small cast and crew, was filmed in Lake Louise, Alberta, from November 30th to December 23rd. A visit to the set revealed that the company (primarily Albertan) was struggling to complete the project under arduous conditions - record low temperatures and record snowfalls, plus the limitations of a three-week shoot.

The \$650,000 package was assembled by three Calgary-based men: Harry Cole as producer, Doug MacLeod as line producer and production manager, and Jim Makichuk as director. MacLeod and Makichuk also collaborated on the script.

The story may sound familiar: three young people are terrorized in a deserted ski lodge by an old woman and her monstrous entourage, with lots of blood, gore, and other such scenic effects.

A chance look at the call sheet confirmed this. Props required included a chain saw and axe. A three-foot-long T-bone in the kitchen of Deer Lodge (the hotel where the action was filmed) turned out to be another vital prop.

However, when asked if this project is the archetypical quick'n'gory horror flick, MacLeod (a thirtyish, golden-haired graduate of educational television, commercials and features) was quick to defend its positive elements.

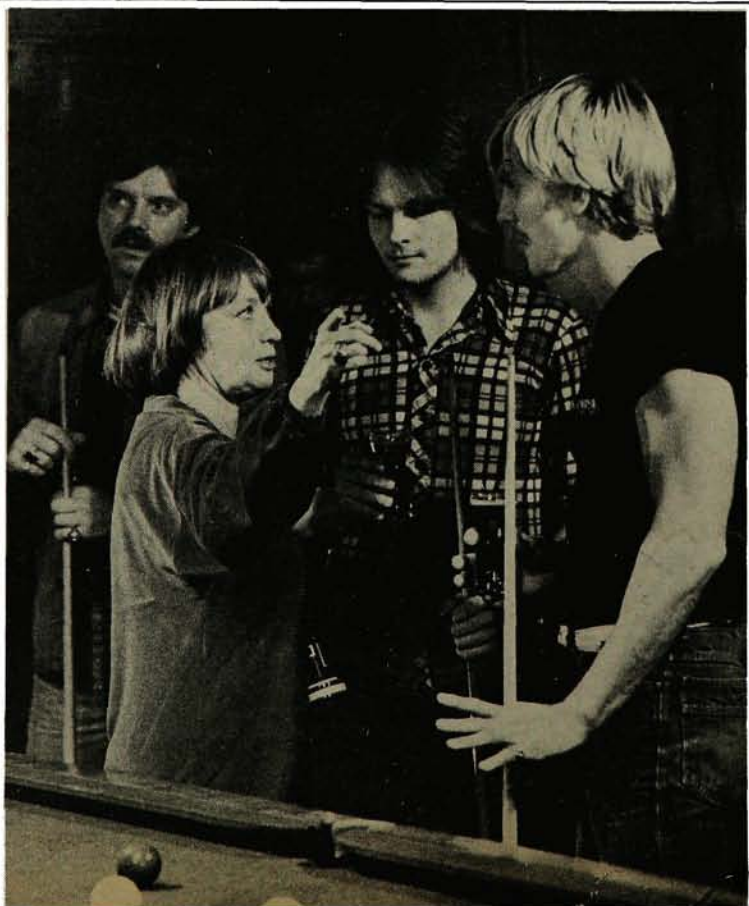
"This is not a shocker in the sense of being a blood-and-guts film," he said, "although there is a reasonable dash of that... But there is also very sensitive photography and an interesting story line."

MacLeod praised d.o.p. John Holbrook for experimenting with low lights and fast lenses in the use of natural light "to wonderful effect." He described the location as "an art director's dream," the script having been written around the availability of Deer Lodge.

MacLeod had remembered the rustic beauty of the Lodge from his student days as a cook in the kitchen. Now, he had returned as a film producer, with the cooperation of Rick Crosby, whose family has owned the hotel for three generations.

"You can get up in the morning and see the shoots!" enthused MacLeod, and, certainly, the icy grandeur of the snow-covered Rockies supported his comment. He added that they were exploiting the location to maximum advantage in terms of lighting - by using kerosene, candles and natural light.

● Mai Zetterling directs her snooker players in one segment of *Love*



Although this is MacLeod's and Cole's first time in the feature arena as producers, and the feature directorial debut for Makichuk, two of the leading actors have major feature credits. Murray Ord and Georgie Collins, both of Calgary, supplied their considerable skills to the picture, to director Makichuk's delight.

Ord, in particular, with extensive theatrical and improvisational experience, and a stream of feature credits including *High Country* (nee *The First Hello*) *Ambler Waves*, *Ski-lift to Death*, and *Buffalo Bill and the Indians*, was a positive force on the set, according to MacLeod: "There are people in this province who are capable of assuming major roles in a movie and doing it well," he commented.

The general view, reiterated by MacLeod, Makichuk, and art direction consultant Barry Anderson, was that the crew, and cast (IATSE, DGC and ACTRA) were pulling together to make the project successful, despite discouraging odds.

For example, Lake Louise suffered record snowfalls, and record cold lows of minus forty degrees Celsius during the shoot. Not only were the highways closed on several occasions, but Louise Inn, where the company was lodged, ran out of propane, and the pipes burst, spilling icy water into the halls. Despite this, the cast and crew managed the two mile ride up the hill to Deer Lodge. Blizzard conditions sent a car carrying actress Shari McFadden into the ditch... But after a two-hour wait, she was en route to the set once more. The set itself was so cold that the performers' breath was visible in the rushes! And, as there was no running water on location, cook John LaCroix had "terminal dishpan hands," as he put it, from washing dishes manually. Still, LaCroix, a gentle, bespectacled man with one of the more generous and kindhearted personalities on the set, was much praised for his culinary efforts under difficult conditions. "Best grub in the mountains," was the crew's claim.

The rushes were expressed to the Calgary airport on hazardous roads, then flown to Film House in Toronto, and expressed back to the set, where editor Stan Cole assembled them with the assistance of Rick Benwick of Cine-Edit. This was about the fifteenth film for award-winning Cole, who said, "I've never done a film with this small a budget before, but I'm pleased to be doing it." Brother to producer Harry Cole, editor Stan asserted, "I love editing. I wouldn't want to do anything else."

As for the environmental problems, MacLeod said cheerily, "There's nothing we haven't been able to resolve. Other people call them problems. We call them challenges. Our job is to overcome them. And we're doing quite well."

Shooting ended on time and on budget to the vast relief of all concerned. According to Makichuk, "It was nothing short of a miracle that we got as much done as we did."

Ghostkeeper is slated to open in May, and MacLeod promises, "It's going to be harrowing right up to the last moment."

Linda Kupecek ●

Gregor 2nd elec. Larry Johnson grip Ivan Hawkes, Lawrence Gregor (2nd) props Barry Merrills, Les Kimber (2nd) sd. Rick Patten boom Andy Wilson make-up Kirstie McLellan ward. Jackie Merrills cont. Marianne Mendzet p. sec. Nives Lever p. a. acct. Linda Jeffery loc. contract Rick Crosby p. a. David Campbell (1st), Larry Dickie (2nd) Calgary-Lake Louise Express Gord Thompson chef John LaCroix ed. Stan Cole, Rick Benwick (asst.) guard dog Lobo L.p. Riva Spier, Murray Ord, Sheri McFadden, Billie Grove, John McMillan, Georgie Collins.

Curtains

Prom Night producer, Peter Simpson (of Canada's Simcom Ltd., and Simcom International in the U.S.), is now into his second psycho-thriller called *Curtains*. While Simpson is undoubtedly aiming to capitalize on the terror trend (*Prom Night*'s domestic gross was \$14 million plus), his new feature will not have teenagers or disco music in it. *Curtains* is aimed at a more sophisticated audience because bloodlust, it seems, knows no age or class boundaries.

It was on a jogging spree around Queen's Park in Toronto that Simpson first came up with the idea for *Curtains*. As fate would have it, his running partner just happened to be screenwriter Robert Guza (*Prom Night*), so the two immediately began mulling over an idea. What if six beautiful actresses, all competing for the ultimate role that will make one of them very rich and very famous, are called together for a week-end audition at the director's remote New England mansion? And what if the director is a manipulating Svengali, an obsessive man who will push an actor over the psychic brink to get a total performance? What too, if the director's vengeful ex-lover shows up to compete for a part she's obviously too old for? And what if, as the audition progresses, the competitors are eliminated one by one — not by the director, but by an unknown murderer who vies for the role of a lifetime with a deadly performance?

In classic whodunnit style, the plot is riddled with motives and alibis so that all six of the actresses are suspected of doing the dastardly deeds. If *Curtains* publicists play their cards right, the secret identity of the killer may become an international media event (consider a certain Texas 'oil opera'), and book-makers may even calculate odds. Long shots and heavy favorites include Linda Thorson, who made her name on *The Avengers* series solving murders; Samantha Eggar, who excelled as the schizophrenic victim in the film *The*

Collector; Anne Ditchburn, a dancer-choreographer, formerly of the National Ballet of Canada; and Lynne Griffin, a Canadian stage actress who appeared in *Black Christmas* and *Mr. Patman*. Starring as the unorthodox director, who finds that he's not the only one playing games at the audition, is John Vernon, known for his countless roles as a steely-eyed villain.

There are seven principals in the film — a fact that has director Richard Ciupka just a little worried. As one of Canada's foremost cinematographers, Ciupka has reaped praise and prizes — including this year's Film Craft Award for Louis Malle's *Atlantic City, U.S.A.* — but this is the first time he's ever directed a movie. "It's been difficult making a film with so many principals," he confesses after wrapping a shot in Toronto's Magder Studios. "Because there are seven major characters, it's impossible to do psychological studies of all of them. But to have the suspense build, there has to be some psychological exploration."

Ciupka may be grappling inwardly with the dilemmas facing him, but he is relaxed and congenial on the set. And though he appears younger than his 34 years, he has shot many miles of film for leading international directors, and has closely observed their methods. "Of the two French directors I have worked closely with," he says, "I guess my approach is closer to that of Claude Chabrol. He knows what he wants before he shoots, and goes about fitting the actors into the camera frame. Malle, on the other hand, fits the camera around the actors." Rather than playing it by ear, like Malle Ciupka's approach is precise and deliberate, and aside from a bit of improvisation, all his direction is pre-planned.

With a background in cinematography, Ciupka is obviously sensitive to the visual aspects of the film, but he says he has been careful not to overdo the clever camera shots. The temptation must be hard to resist, because all but one week of shooting is being done in Toronto's Magder Studios, and the sets designed by Roy Forge Smith is a cinematic nirvana. The six-bedroom, art nouveau mansion is filled with twisting corridors and movable partitions so the camera can pull back through the walls. As well as creating a flexible environment for the thriller, Smith has paid special attention to the creation of atmosphere through lighting. In the opening scene, which takes place in a dining room, lights are placed behind opaque art glass panels so that an unusual glow falls across the faces of the dinner guests. This creates

an air of expectancy most appropriate to the scene; for the characters soon discover that they are seated for a dinner that will never be served.

Nearly ten percent of *Curtains*' \$3.7 million budget has gone into the construction and dressing of the set, and every penny has been exquisitely well spent. The mansion is lavish with ornate woodwork, wrought iron staircases and silk-screened wallpaper. Each bedroom is designed with a specific art nouveau motif which is reproduced on the walls and in the furniture. Local artists were commissioned to produce carved art glass panels and classical sculptures. Much of the art work is of female nudes to reflect the notorious director's obsession with women.

What is ironic about this stunning mansion is that it is the setting for a glut of horrendous murders. One of the most spectacular bloodlettings takes place around a massive carved fireplace adorned with tragic and comic theatrical masks. Though it looks like sculptured stone, the mantle is in fact reinforced fiberglass, and the hearth is filled with cement logs to accommodate the impact of an accelerating ski-doo which comes crashing through a set of windows into the front of the fireplace. The stunt is not being faked either. A ramp is being built in the studio so the machine can build up full speed before the crash, and set construction manager Bill Harman has taken special care to ensure that the fireplace will not disintegrate under the impact of the speeding vehicle.

In the second week of December, Ontario was hit with snow flurries and plunging temperatures, but the cast and crew considered the frigid weather a godsend. The search for rolling banks of snow for a week of location shooting had centred around Vermont, until a couple of days of rain wiped out that site. With the Muskoka region blanketed in the white stuff, *Curtains* could look forward to completing the shoot on schedule in Port Carling. After that, those who flew home for a Hollywood Christmas would have to console themselves with a few bars from Bing Crosby.

Thérèse Beaupré ●

Curtains

p.c. Curtains Productions Inc. (1980) p. Peter Simpson exec. p. Richard Simpson assoc. p. Gerry Arbeid sc. Robert Guza Jr. d. Richard Ciupka, C.S.C. p. design. Roy Forge Smith superv. ed. Henry Richardson d.o.p. Robert Paynter loc. man. Ray Elias/Brian Ross pub. d. Helga Stephenson p. coord. Gaille LeDrew p. acct. Robert Duckworth p. man. asst. Philippa Suskin unit pub. Linda Moyle asst. ed. Michael MacLavery (1st), Tim Eaton (2nd) p. acct. asst. Roma Pancyzszyn a.d. Tony Thatcher (1st), Karen Pike (2nd), John Pace (3rd) cam. op. Fred Guthe clapper/loader Bill Reeve focus puller Yves Drapeau cam. trainee Curtis Brown sd. mix. Doug Ganton boom John Thompson gaf. John Berrie best boy Richard Allen elec. Steve Danyluk, Jerome McCann key grip Norm Smith grip Michael O'Connor, Sean Ryerson genny op. Greg Daniels ward. Mary Jane McCarty, Mary Ann Wilson (asst.), Britanny Burr (asst.) make-up Shonagh Jabour, Christine Hart (asst.) hair Jenny Arbour, Maureen Mestan (asst.) asst. art. d. Barbra Matis 2nd asst. art. d. Birgit Siber, Suzanna Smith, Debra Gjendem set dec. Carol Lavoie, Linda McClelland (1st asst.), Paul Dreskin (2nd asst.), Marleen Puritt (trainee) props buyer Barry Kemp props master Anthony Greco, Gordon Sym (asst.) constr. man. Bill Harman head painter Nick Kosonic prosthetics Greg Cannom, Jeffrey Kinney (asst.), Linda Preston (trainee) d. sp. ex. Colin Chivers sc. superv. Pauline Harlow stills John Williamson, Pat Harbron, Dave Hill (asst.) transp. capt. Michael Curran, Gof Martin (asst.) drivers Nick Kosonick, John Ciccone, Simon Clery, Rick Moyle p.a. Carlo Squassero craftperson James Tarnby l.p. John Vernon, Samantha Eggar, Linda Thorson, Anne Ditchburn, Lynne Griffin, Sandee Currie, Lesleh Donaldson, Deborah Burgess, Michael Wincott, Richie Peirce, Paul Hubbard.

● Putting on their best table manners are (left to right) Anne Ditchburn, Lynne Griffin, Lesleh Donaldson, Linda Thorsen and Sandee Currie in *Curtains*



Ghostkeeper

p.c. Badland Pictures Ltd. (1980) p. Harry Cole line p. p. man. Doug MacLeod d. James Makichuk a.d. Rick Thompson (1st), Lisa Barry (2nd) d.o.p. John Holbrook o.p. Harvey Larocque, Dan Heather (1st asst.) genny op./sp. ex. Mel Merrills gaf. Jim Gregor nd elec. Larry Johnson grip Ivan Hawkes, Lawrence Gregor (2nd) props Barry