

Allan Eastman's  
**Crazy Moon**

**T**he French do it. The Americans flaunt it. The Russians have been caught at it and the British certainly aren't above it. So why is it such an unbearably tawdry spectacle when Canadians make a lousy film?

Maybe it's because film-lovers in those other countries can point to the likes of Renoir, Ford, Eisenstein and Hitchcock and contrast their works of genius with the tripe of lesser lights; but Canadians are afforded no such luxury. So few feature films have been made in this country that, should one ever make it to theatrical distribution (does Canada lead the world in undistributed tax-shelter-write-off movies?), it has to bear up to greater critical scrutiny than would a forgettable effort from another country.

'Forgettable effort' would be a charitable — no, make that a generous — description of *Crazy Moon*. The film is so awkward and amateurish that it could have been offered up during the good old days of *Monster*, *Horror*, *Chiller Theatre*. Oooh, that's scary kids. Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the movies.

Kiefer Sutherland plays a... well, what does he play anyway? He's supposed to be a bright, sensitive, but marginal youth, out of synch with the '80s. He photographs excrement, pines for his absent mother and fears water. You can just sense that screenwriters Tom Berry and Stefan Wodoslawsky thumbed a pop psychology primer, looking for interesting defects that could give Sutherland's character substance. They came up a closetful of neuroses short.

One major problem is that Sutherland has nothing to do. He spends most of his time courting a deaf girl (Vanessa Vaughan) and enduring the rigors of sibling rivalry. That's it. And, though Sutherland looks like a good actor, it's only because he resembles his father.

Both Sutherland, film, and Vaughan are hurt by the leaden directing of Allan Eastman. Vaughan is continually obliged to 'react' with a demure smile every time Sutherland does something goofy, which is often. His character is so out-of-date that even to call him a nerd



•Kiefer Sutherland gets wild and crazy in wet Moon

would make him seem too modern. He's either a goof or a goon, take your pick.

The filmmakers are constantly undercutting their own good intentions. Sutherland is locked into an apparently marginal mind, and he falls for an ostensibly handicapped woman. The parallels of psychic & physical pain are obvious, and not without potential. Unfortunately, every time that Sutherland opens his mouth, he utters such banalities that it is impossible to care for Miss Vaughan's efforts to draw him out.

Vaughan's character wants to travel alone to Europe. Presumably, this could be somewhat difficult for a deaf person, but the writers do nothing with this. No obstacles on her way there, no sense of what she might face. Who can identify with her achievement?

If Sutherland's and Vaughan's characters are lacking development, then the other players must have gone to the Consolidated-Bathhurst school of acting. As flat and inanimate as cardboard: a dime-store imitation of Karl Malden as the father and a Sigmund Freud cum Inspector Clousseau aberration as the psychiatrist. Performances not for the squeamish.

The soundtrack is so awful that you can't even joke about it. In a film about an uncommunicative boy who meets a deaf girl, the music clearly takes on greater meaning. Or should. Woody Allen can make New York more vibrant than ever with the dated sounds of Gershwin and Dorsey, but the makers of *Crazy Moon* dug up some dreary tinkling that might have been Muzak except that it was written before the invention of the elevator.

The cinematography is also staggeringly bad. This crew wouldn't know an original camera angle if they were invited to go dancing on Lionel Richie's ceiling.

Finally, the only thing that does get a sympathetic laugh in this movie is the use of a mannequin in a motorcycle sidecar. Very fitting that a dummy can steal a scene from the 'live' actors in the film.

The fact remains that, contrary to the situation of French-Canadians, or Australians, there is no daunting barrier (save the attainability of a green card) to keep English-Canadians from going to Hollywood. Therefore, an otherwise healthy talent pool gets drained, and the only bodies left to mount a purely domestic show are the second-raters. Hence, we get the likes of *Crazy Moon*. In the year of *Le Déclin de l'empire américain*, it's a truly pathetic offering from the country's other principal linguistic and cultural group.

**Stan Shatenstein •**

**CRAZYMOON** p. Tom Berry and Stefan Wodoslawsky d. Allan Eastman sc. Tom Berry and Stefan Wodoslawsky line p. Franco Battista art d. Guy Lalande d.o.p. Savas Kalogeras ed. Franco Battista orig. mus comp and arr. Lou Forestieri casting Diane Polley and Elite Productions asst. d. John Rainey prod. man. Michel Martin prod. co-ord Elisabeth-Ann Gimber studio admin Marie Tonto-Donati cam op. Susan Trow loc. sd. rec. Yves Gendron sd. ed. André Galbrand dialogue ed. Wajtek Klis cont. Joanne Harwood make-up Tom Booth props Claude Charbonneau ward Sylvie Kraker underwater and 2nd unit cam Georges Archambault titles Val Teodori Additional Story Conc and research. Jeff Rosen sign lang. coach Barry Cooney unit pub. Sally Bochner loc. man. Donald Brown gaffer François Warot best boy Claude Pothier bs elec. Mike Slobodzin key grip Robert Lapierre grip Michel Caron asst. cam René Daigle loader clapper Naomi Wise boom Thierry Morlaas and Hubert Mace de Gastines 2nd asst. d. Pierre Houle 3rd asst. d. Pacal Bonnière prod. sec. José Lachance asst art d. Richard Tassé asst. props Réal Baril asst. ward. Tamara Deverell asst. make-up Coleen Quinton 1st pict. assem Glenn Berman asst. pict. and sd. ed. Jean-Pierre Viau extra grip elec. Guy Bissonnette and Christopher Reusing craft service. Janet Cavanaugh prod. asst. Raynald Lavoie, Marie Ghislaine Crétier, André St-Arnauld, Jennifer Robertson, Pierre Archambault, Karl Archambault, Jacky McClintock, Sylvie Fortin and Mark Collette stills Piroška Mihalka extra mae-up Martin Ménard photog. Paul Cowan (Rock concert) steadicam op Christian Duguay asst cam Simon Leblanc and Stefan Nitoslowski post prod co-ord Grace Avrih Foley Artist Andy Malcolm Foley rec. Louis Hone sd. re- rec Hans Peter Strobl and Adrian Croll neg. cut. Arlene Sawyer color timing Gordon Wallbank neg. and rush insp. Barbara Hutchison sync rushes Stephen Reizes and Kevin Smith film processing by the National Film Board of Canada video mast. Philippe Vandette orig. mus. rec. at Studio St-Charles mus. Engineer Roger Rhodes l.p. Kiefer Sutherland, Vanessa Vaughan, Peter Spence, Ken Pogue, Eve Napier, Sean McCann, Bronwen Mantel, Terri Hawkes, Harry Hill, Barbara Jones, Eddie Roy, Sheena Larkin, Chantal Condor, Carla Napier, Tara O'Donnell, Andrea Robinson, Joanne Meath, Michael Duguay, Rodney Gorchinsky, Rational Youth, Tracy Howe, Kevin Breit, Jim MacDonald, Owen Tennyson, Rick Joudrey. Produced with the financial participation of private investors, Telefilm Canada and CFCF Television. colour 35mm running time 89 min. 17

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