Kingsgate

It becomes evident, while watching Kingsgate, that one is observing the work of a Canadian "master." Jack Darcus is a director whose unique vision is fine-tuned, whose mode of expression is honest to a particular perfection for the conveyance of a powerful message.

In Kingsgate, Darcus makes creative use of a sensibility generally found in English Canadian film drama – deadened sound, overly dramatic musical effects, and theatrically "realistic" acting, all used here to alternatingly chilling and sadistic effect.

Kingsgate grapples with familiar fare: alcoholism and troubled couples. Darcus, with a tremendous script, takes these subjects (difficult ones to explore with new insight) and spins webs of emotional blackmail over a white wash of contemporary malaise and alienation. The effect is not only thought provoking and moving (no small feat) but filled with black humour and altogether unnerving.

Kingsgate has only two principal locations: a suburban home and a country estate, the only respite being the driveways, a veranda/yard, a suburban home and a country estate, the only respite being the driveways, a veranda/yard, a suburban home and a country estate, the only respite being the driveways, a veranda/yard, a suburban home and a country estate.

The Kingsgate atmosphere is quite bring herself to pull completely away from her mate. A little soft on strength, continually urged to leave but never acting upon that desire, she is mired in a mutually destructive relationship. Ellis (Roberta Maxwell) is the overblown patriarch of the Fournier family, whose career began in 1969 with their first feature, and directed by Gilles Caill. Siegel's film features a variety of action clips from the Fournier's films, which include Marc-Andre Forier's As Claire De La Lune, Harold Greenberg and Claude Haroux's disaster picture City On Fire, John Dunning and Nicole Boisvert's Blackout, as well as David Cronenberg's Requiem, just to mention a few. In all, they have worked on over 200 features and commercials.

Also included are interviews with members of the Fournier family talking about how they got started in the business and problems finding babysitters for their children who tended to perform stunts around the house. An interesting insight is offered by one of the Fournier daughters regarding the implication of a woman doing a stunt: "dubbing" for a male actor – perhaps resulting in a crushed male ego.

Stunt demonstrations are introduced via animation titles that read: "How to make a gun shoot sound," and soon. An interview with director Larry Kent explaining a stunt for his film Sinner is effectively cross-cut with one of the Fourniers explaining their preparation for the same stunt. Kent was worried that the explosion of a Volkswagen wouldn't be big enough. The scene is then shown; believe me, it was big enough.

Although the film tends to bog down near the end with an extended excerpt from Ron Lee's Country Roads, it flows nicely overall and is an entertaining look at a family that enjoys falling
Robert Bergman's

A Whisper To A Scream

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usually like thriller/suspense films, especially well done. Unfortunately this isn't the case with Robert Bergman's latest entry in the genre, A Whisper To A Scream.

This low-budget/low-tech formula piece, set against the backdrop of an artistic community, is nothing to write home about.

The basic plot revolves around Matt, a DJ/sound enginee/artist/manager who murders semi-clad female performing artists who also sideline as sex phone girls at the same club - Whispers. Enter Gabrielle (Nadia Capone), an out-of-work actress who must resort to working as a sex phone girl at the club in order to support herself and her unsuccessful artist boyfriend Frank. Matt develops an obsession with Gabrielle after inadvertently witnessing her performance in an independent video as, believe it or not, an angel.

Conveniently, Matt also works at the club and begins calling Gabrielle in his quest for the right character. Matt learns that Aaron is looking for young Aaron...and the Mozart string quartet is well selected too. A turning point in an adolescent life skillfully evoked by different rhythms, and by the use of overlapping sound to combine references to the past and the present. There's a ravishingly beautiful bit when the brother is crouching through and around white sheets drying on a clothesline, looking for young Aaron...and the Mozart string quartet is well selected too.

DEAD MEAT

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doyle Dale made this little drama when she was a Resident at the Canadian Centre for Advanced Film Studies, 1988-89. It sports a seedy gloss, a mean and gritty atmosphere, and is full of repetitive four-letter-word dialogue reflecting the pitiful inadquacy of its steel characters. The film also displays a certain grotesque wit.

A pathetic young druggie owes a loan shark, and the day of payment has arrived. Of course, he doesn't have the money, and tries to explain to his equally downwardly middle-aged girlfriend that he will own up to The Man and take the consequences. She reminds him of the last time someone tried this and ended up in a wheelchair...However, fortified with a shot of vodka, he says he will go, but will have to do "something" to the kid to preserve his dealer's bully-boy reputation.

On a tract of wasteland, the young wimp gets out of The Man's car, and agrees to the front tire being lowered on his hand to leave a mark! The gullible chap is pinned on the ground, and then The Man takes a hatchet out of the car trunk...