

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*) *Amer 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 Tamblyn 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