



● The doll that steals the show in *Curtains*

'Jonathan Stryker's' **Curtains**

On some secondary level, *Curtains* seems to have been conceived as a showcase for rising Toronto actresses. The premise – six actresses are invited to the home of feared director Jonathan Stryker (the same name as on *Curtains*' director's credit – more of that anon) to audition for the plum role of mad Audra and are stalked by a mad killer – is full of opportunities for love scenes, death scenes, scenes of bitterness, bitchiness, rage, compassion, triumph, almost anything you can think of. What we get instead are stalk-and-slash scenes, scenes of Stryker 'auditioning' and 'directing' and material that looks like it came from a different movie.

Of course, stalk-and-slash is what *Curtains* is mainly about: the masked (solely to hide from the audience) killer and the isolated bitsy. It's at best a thin sub-genre, but here the murders are so trite in conception (hands emerge to clutch and cut from behind the tree where she's paused in her flight) and so blandly genteel in shooting and cutting that we're denied what pleasures of suspense and splashy axe-in-the-eyeball effects the genre does have to offer.

Dramatically, *Curtains* focusses on Stryker's ludicrous directing methods, which consist of pointlessly angry and condescending harangues, insults and humiliations (a believable character this is not) and the actress' responses which, under the circumstances are not surprisingly limited to becoming tense and defensive, tense and weepy, tense and angry, etc. On top of this, the whole thing is so badly written that it's astounding the performers managed to make anything at all of their roles.

But some did. Lynne Griffith did such a good job defining the compulsively funny, insecure stand-up comic that one suspects she wrote her own lines. Samantha Eggar and Linda Thorson both turned in decent jobs without straining their professional capabilities and, in the latter case, without the benefit of any big scenes to help her along. The rest – Anne Ditchburn, Lesleh Donaldson, Sandee Currie, Sandra Warren and Deborah Burgess – who knows? They weren't on screen long enough for

me to be certain they're all in the final print, let alone long enough to develop characters.

Which brings us to that material from another movie. There was an earlier version of *Curtains*; people who crewed on it say the movie went through a year of production, through major rewrites and reshooting. What's left, for certain, from that earlier version, is about a dozen shots involving a two-foot doll with a subtly horrifying face of sorrow and resentment. Whoever created that doll should be applauded, as should the crew, who managed to make the movie look consistent and fairly good (despite a couple of badly-lit exteriors and Stryker's woefully underfurnished house) under what must have been very trying circumstances.

As noted, Jonathan Stryker is the name on the director's credit, but a sheet in the press kit (possibly left in by mistake) claims this was cameraman Richard Ciupka's directorial debut, while word from the crew says that Peter Simpson directed at least some of the reshoot. The press kit says that Simpson, with writer Robert Guza, Jr., also originated the idea. They thought it up while jogging around Queen's Park.

Peter R. Simpson is the president of Simcom Ltd., a company more noted for making good deals than good movies (*Prom Night* is theirs). It's not likely Simcom will be making any good deals with *Curtains*, but hopefully it will feel that the loss of potential profit is more than offset by the valuable lessons learned by its president in the actual making of a film. On the nature of those lessons, we will not speculate.

Andrew Dowler ●

CURTAINS d. Jonathan Stryker **exec. p.** Richard Simpson **p.** Peter R. Simpson **ed.** Michael Maclaverty **cf.** p. **des.** Roy Forge Smith **mus.** Paul Zaza **d.o.p.** Robert Paynter **bsc.** **add. photog.** Fred Guthe **p. man.** Gerry Arbeid **sc.** Robert Guza, Jr. **(1st team) p. coord.** Gaille Ledrew **p. acct.** Robert Duckworth **asst. p. acct.** Roma Panczyszyn **asst. p. man.** Phillipa Polskin **p. asst.** Carlo Squassero **unit pub.** Linda Moyle **1st a.d.** Tony Thatcher **2nd a.d.** Karen Pike **3rd a.d.** John Pace **cam. op.** Fred Guthe **cam. tech.** Paul Neilsen **clapper loader** Yves Drapeau **cam. trainee** Curtis Brown **sd. mixers** Doug Ganton, Thomas Hilderley **boom** John Thomson **gaffer** John Berrie **best boy** Richard Allen **elect.** Steve Danyluk, Jerome McCann **key grip** Norm Smith **grips** Michael O'Connor, Brian Danniels, Sean Ryerson **gen. op.** Greg Daniels **ward. mist.** Mary Jane McCarty **asst. ward.** Mary Ann Wilson, Brittany Burr, Constance-Buck, Gaye Gardiner **make-up** Sonagh Jabour **asst. make-up** Christine Hart **hair** Jenny Arbour **asst. hair** Maureen Mestan **asst. art. d.** Barbara Matis **2nd asst.**

art. d. Birgit Siber, Suzanne Smith, Debra Gjendem, Brendan Smith **key set dec.** Carol Lavoie **1st asst. set dec.** Linda McClelland **2nd asst. set dec.** Paul Dreskin **set dec. trainee** Marlene Puritt **props buyer** Barry Kemp **propmaster** Anthony Greco **asst. props** Gordon Sim **const. man.** Bill Harman **hd painter** Nick Kosonic **prosthetics** Greg Cannom **asst. prosthetics** Jeffrey Kinney **prosth. trainee** Linda Preston **sp. efx.** Colin Chilvers **loc. man.** Ray Elias/Brian Ross **cont.** Pauline Harlow **set. photog.** John Williamson **stills** Pat Harbron **asst. stills** Dave Hill **trans. capt.** Michael Curran **asst. trans. capt.** Gof Martin **drivers** Al Kosonic, John Ciccone, Simon Clery, Rick Moyle, Gordon Thorne, **crafts.** James Tamblyn **(2nd team) p. man.** Ilana Frank **unit man.** Helga Stephenson **loc. man.** Fran Solomon **p. coord.** Susan Mander **p. assts.** Carl Marks-George, Diane Mitchell **1st a.d.** Stephen Wright **2nd a.d.** Donato Baldassarra **3rd a.d.** Jerome McCann **gen. asst. to d.** Brock Simpson **cam. op.** Fred Guthe, Robert New **scs.** Marvin Midwicki **clapper loader** Christopher Bonniere **focus puller** Greg Farrow **cam. trainee** Ray Bronstein **sd. rec.** Bryan Day **boom** John Thomson **sd. mixers** Joe Grimaldi, David Appleby **1st asst. ed.** Jeremy Maclaverty **2nd asst. ed.** Haydn Streeter **ed. trainee** Laurie Russwurm **sd. ed.** Peter Burgess, Charlie Bowers, Jeremy Maclaverty, Terry Burke **asst. sd. ed.** Michele Cook, Gary DaPrato **mus. con.** Carl Zittler **gaffer** Roger Bate **best boy** Adam Swica **elect.** Ira Cohen, Sandy Carroll, Al Lalonde **key grip** Carlo Campana **2nd grip** Christopher Dean **3rd grip** Greg Palermo **grip** Dennis Thompson **gen. op.** Jock Brandis **ward. mist.** Mary Jane McCarty **asst. ward.** Maureen Gurney **make-up** Sonagh Jabour **asst. make-up** Suzanne Benoit **hair** Jenny Arbour **set dec.** Linda McClelland **1st asst. set dec.** Greg Pelchat **2nd asst. set dec.** Brendan Smith **props** Ed Hanna **stunt coord.** Bob Hannah **const. man.** Bill Harman **cont.** Pauline Harlow **trans. capt.** Michael Curran **drivers** David Chud, Allen Kosonic, Dave Brown, Jerome McCann **crafts.** Laurie Manoim **asst. crafts.** Daria Stermac **cast.** Karnick Armstrong, Liz Ramos **lp.** John Vernon, Samantha Eggar, Linda Thorson, Anne Ditchburn, Lynne Griffin, Sandra Warren, Lesleh Donaldson, Deborah Burgess, Michael Wincott, Maury Chaykin, Joann McIntyre, Calvin Butler, Kate Lynch, Booth Savage, William Marshall, James Kidnie, Jeremy Jenson, Donald Adams, Diane Godwin, Janelle Hutchison, Virginia Laight, Kay Griffin, Bunty Webb, Daisy White, Vivian Reis, Sheila Currie, Frances Gunn, Katya Ladan, Suzanne Russell, Jenna Louise, Anna Migliarese, Elaine Crosley, Mary Durkin, Angela Carrol, Julie Massie, Pat Carroll Brown, Teresa Tova, Janice Nicholson, Alison Lawrence, JoAnne Hannah **p.c.** Simcom Ltd. **dist.** (Cdn.) Norstar. (U.S.) Jensen Farley **running time:** 90 mins.

Edward Mowbray & Ruth Taylor's **Not Dead Yet**

This honest piece of anthropological and cultural research had its world premiere at the recent New Media Festival in Toronto. *Not Dead Yet* reveals, for the first time, a portrait of an important sub-cultural movement – punk. Traditionally left to marginalization by the rest of the mass-media, considered freakish, camp or anti-social by the middle class/class, victimized by moralistic portrayals of punklife on television soma-shows, directors Edward Mowbray and Ruth Taylor have here fashioned a very sympathetic and energetic document. The work features the music and thought of twelve Toronto area punk bands, their members, friends and supporters of the movement that they represent. *Not Dead Yet* breathes authenticity because it is born out of, and respects the community that it portrays. In fact the producers and creators were very conscious of consulting all the people in the tape and made sure that they would approve of its conception and evolution throughout the year-and-a-half that it took to put it together. It is a model for all documentarians, aided by the fact that Ruth Taylor is herself, a member of United State, one of the groups featured in the tape.

Co-director Edward Mowbray, had a brief career in television before turning to independent video production. His video art has toured North America and Europe.

Executive producer Tom Taylor, has had a long career as an illustrator, editor

● *Not Dead Yet* holds up a mirror to our own ugliness

