

## Film Reviews



Gregory Osborne and Nadine Van Der Velde co-star as choreographer Philip Crest and aspiring dancer Jessica.

### Lewis Furey's **Shadow Dancing**

**S**hadow Dancing is a hybrid film that mixes contemporary dance with supernatural romance. It is an old-fashioned Gothic murder mystery spruced up with a heavy dance beat and an odd mixture of classical and jazz/MTV-style dancing. Director Lewis Furey, mostly known as a composer of film scores, holds the mix together for about two-thirds of the film, then he bogs down trying to make sense of it all.

Nadine van der Velde plays a pretty young dancer named Jessica who nervously auditions for an innovative new dance company at the rundown Beaumont Theatre. There she meets the demanding and skeptical choreographer Philip Crest (the National Ballet's Gregory Osborne), who is determined to reopen the theatre with his own work. Jessica is accepted into the company, but at first with only the grudging approval of Crest. Living above the stage is the theatre's original owner Edmund Beaumont (Christopher Plummer) who stalks about, reliving his past. His unfaithful wife Liliane, a temperamental prima donna, died on

the stage 50 years ago under mysterious circumstances. It turns out that her spirit still haunts the building and, with predictable inevitability, comes to possess Jessica.

Interwoven into this overwrought plot is some of Canada's best on screen talent playing an array of characters, including Charmion King as a wealthy patron and former lover of Edmund, Shirley Douglas as the dance company manager, Brent Carver as Liliane's lover Karnov, and John Colicos, as an arts reporter and lifelong fan of the dead dancer. Their performances hold the silly story together. Unfortunately, the two leads create few sparks. As an actor, Osborne is a great dancer with a commanding presence but little emotion; as a dancer van der Velde is a pleasing actor with limited range. Together they are good, but simply aren't strong enough, nor is their dancing dynamic enough, to forgive the creaky plot line.

While putting all the elements in place, director Furey builds the film with a series of sweeping camera movements through what is essentially one set. It was shot in one of the great buildings remaining in downtown Toronto, the old Polish Community Centre. The atmosphere is so claustrophobic that the Gothic suspense generated by tight angles and red gauze becomes real. The camera prowls through the building with haunting effectiveness. However,

Furey loses faith in the visual aspects of film and tries to explain the mysterious death.

A convoluted chase follows with Jessica's boyfriend Paul (James Kee) who suspects she is sleeping with Crest. Meanwhile, Jessica relives Liliane's past via flashbacks with Karnov, Liliane's ex-lover, who tries to save Jessica/Liliane from being murdered a second time. There is no real payoff as the dance goes off without a hitch and Edmund's sister is implicated in the original death, but the reason is never made very clear. The spirit is set free and Jessica is reunited with Paul.

Furey has allowed the Phantom of the Opera aspects of the story to get in the way of the dance, and consequently the film suffers from being neither a good murder mystery nor a great dance film. *Shadow Dancing* works best when Furey purposely creates an air of confusion and uncertainty, with Plummer, in a hammy but likeable performance, shuffling menacingly back and forth amongst the von Sternberg-style decor. Director of Photography Rene Ohashi has seldom done better work and he has already been given an award from the Canadian Society of Cinematographers for best cinematography in a feature. There's a lot of good filmmaking in *Shadow Dancing*. It's too bad Furey felt the need to explain things. He should have left it to the dancing and Ohashi's graceful camera work.

Paul Townend •

**SHADOW DANCING** exec p. Don Haig p. Kay Bachman d. Lewis Furey d.o.p. Rene Ohashi orig. mus. Jay Gruska p. mgr. Adam J. Shully 1st a.d. John Board, David Warry-Smith 2nd a.d. Frank Siracusa 3rd a.d. Jill Compton trainee a.d. Andrea Raffaghello p. coord. Justine Estee p. sec. Gaëlle Ledrew asst. to p. Harriet Levinson p. acct. Peter Muldoon asst. p. des. Douglas McLean draftperson Nancey Pankiw art dep. trainee Rob Ballantyne set dec. Kevin Breen, Bob Bartman lead dresser Lloyd Brown set dressers Kim Hoffman, Suzanne Hodson, Carolyn Loucks props master Juanita Holden lead props Kim Stitt props buyer David Edgar construction supervisor Edge S Bratton key scenic artist Jak Oliver dance inst. Beverly Aitchison 1st. asst. cam. Donna Mobbs 2nd. asst. cam. Andrew Potter cam trainee Mide Onodera loc mgr. Manny Danelon asst loc. mgr. Terry Hayes loc. p. asst. Lisa Jensen makeup Jane Meade asst. makeup Donald Mowatt hair Divyo Putney sc. sup. Susan Haller sd. mix. Clark McCarron dialogue cd. James Lahti sd. cd. Michael Dandy asst. sd. cd. Tim Griffin, David Drainie Taylor sd. fr. Mac Holyoke, Michael Dandy, Tim Griffin, Scott Purdy a.d.r. recording Al Ormerod a.d.r. ed. Anita St. Denis asst. a.d.r. ed. David Bennett Foley artist Andy Malcolm Foley rec. Marvin Berns re-rec. mix. Paul Coombe, Tony Van den Akker, Marvin Berns boom op. Peter Melnychuk gaffer Chris Porter best boy Andris Matiss elec. John Bakker, Gary Ledbetter gen. op. Kevin Murphy key grip Mark Silver dolly grip Greg Palermo grip M. Blake Ballentine, Neil Fraser cost. des. Maya Mani asst. cost. des. Martha Snetsinger ward. Lorraine Carson, Derek Baskerville seamstress Kristina Boon bird wrangler Jan Paleczny sfx mech. Frank Carere 2nd unit sp. fx Chris Worts, Dave Lee, Rob Hay trans. Mike Curran, Don Dykens, John Vannoord, Mark Van Alstyne, Nick Shelter honeymoon Star Status Inc. unit pub. Karen Pidgurski stunts Marni Grossman stunts Dwayne McLean, Alison Reid, Steve Lucescu asst. cd. Mary Bell, Victoria Rose story Christine Foster, Jeremy Hole, Heather MacDonald cons. Dina Lieberman l. p. Nadine Van Der Velde, Christopher Plummer, James Kee, Gregory Osborne, John Colicos, Charmion King, Shirley Douglas, Kay Tremblay, Brent Carver, Jennier Inch, Sandi McCarthy, Patric. A. Creelman, Craig Hempsted, Marcia Plummer.

### Jean-Claude Lord's **Eddie and the Cruisers II: Eddie Lives!**

**E**ddie and the Cruisers had only limited theatrical success in 1984, but did very well on pay TV, and the record album sold over three million copies. The music was more popular than the film and the remake, *Eddie and the Cruisers II: Eddie Lives!*, is more like an extended rock video for John Cafferty and the Beaver Brown Band, who once again provide the sound track album.

Eddie Wilson, now known as Joe West and working in Montreal, was thought to have died in a car accident in 1964. He was on the verge of rock superstardom, but decided he had had enough with the business, and the accident was a way of



*Eddie and the Cruisers*' Michael Pare and Marina Orsini.