



# Gate II has no creepies, crawlies or scary things

by Jim Russell

I hate horror movies. They scare the beejeebers out of me. All those creepy things that bump, creep or peep cause my chest muscles to cramp and my stomach to turn. I don't like roller coasters for the same reason.

I enjoyed *Gate II* because it did none of these things. In fact, *Gate II* is probably the first horror movie I've ever sat through without covering my eyes. Instead I spent the last 80 minutes of this 90 minute dog glancing at my watch and hoping this excursion into the nightmarish world of boredom would end.

*Gate II* takes up the first film's story several years later when Terry (Louis Tripp), now 15 years old, decides to invoke the demons from hell "just one more time" so that he can harness their power and use it to get his father off the bottle and into a job.

Alcoholics Anonymous and Canada Employment would have been a wiser choice; in summoning up the dark forces from below, Terry and his three teenaged accomplices get more than they had bargained for. Novice wizard summons forces he cannot control—it's a story that has carried everything from Disney's *Sorcerer's Apprentice* to Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Unfortunately, with this movie, old faithful crashes and burns. The main problem is the screenplay, which has more holes than the TD Tower has windows. Not little bitty holes, either. Didn't Michael Nankin, the writer, show the script to any one other than friends and rel-

**Gate II: Return to the Nightmare**  
 directed by Tibor Takacs  
 starring Louis Tripp and Simon Reynolds  
 produced by Alliance Communications

atives? It defies the laws of physics, chemistry and showbiz that self-respecting, competent story editors could have given their stamp of approval to a screenplay that never should have left the writer's word processor.

*Gate II* compounded this with a real problem maintaining credible production values—the sound, make up, lighting, props, animation and all the other factors that make up a film's 'look'. If footage from a scene is under or over-exposed, as were parts of the classroom scene from *Gate II*, you have to spend money to reshoot; you can't just fiddle with the film processing times.

If the dubbed dialogue sounds as if the microphone was taped to the actors' front teeth instead of a healthy distance from their mouths, you have to redub. And every film school freshman knows that low budget films should stay away from "latex suited" monsters. On film, a cheap rubber suit looks like a cheap rubber suit.

I wish I could have given *Gate II* a better review; after all, it is Canadian. But, I can't. The paying public doesn't care if the actors had nothing but a shoddy script to work with. Nor do they care that the production values and effects were nicked and dimed to death.

I give it a one, with apologies to those who tried to make it work.

# No graven Images at Fest

by Simon Chung

For those tired of formulaic summer releases from Hollywood, Images 91 is the event to look forward to. Now in its fourth year, this festival of independent film and video, which runs from June 6 to 11 at the Euclid Theatre, is a showcase for the latest works produced in Canada and around the world.

"In selecting works for the festival," says Images' coordinator b. h. Yael, "we look for works that challenge the status quo, that deal with issues of gender, race and politics as well as more personal issues such as sexuality."

The works are divided into various programmes. "Media Mirage" is a series of videos offering an alternative view of Middle East politics that tackles the mainstream media's misrepresentation of the region. *State of Danger* probes aspects of Palestinian society in the Occupied territories, offering us a chance to examine this much-reported but seldom understood people up close.

**Images**  
 Euclid Theatre  
 June 6-11

"The Great Canadian Escape" is a selection of new works by Canadian artists that explores the national landscape, taking us from the cottages of Muskoka in David Springbett and David Leach's *Medium Rare: Hold the Cottage!* to the West Edmonton Mall in Janice Williamson's *Pedestrian Notes on the West Edmonton Mall*.

This year's Images also features a retrospective of the works by renowned Quebec filmmaker Jean Pierre Lefebvre, one of the most distinctive and prolific independents in Canada. Since 1965, Lefebvre has made 21 feature films, including *Mon Amie Pierrette* (1967), a sensitive love story with a nonprofessional cast, and *Le Jour S...* (1984), which concerns a man's encounter with a series of women (all played by the same actress, Marie Tifo) while his wife is away.

At the press conference for Images 91, journalists were treated to a preview of some of the works that will be shown at the festival, including *Beach Story*, directed by Lori Spring of the Canadian Centre for Film Studies. Using a sun-drenched beach as a backdrop, it probes a mother and daughter relationship, past and present.

*Trio (Suspect No. 1)* is a technologically sophisticated murder mystery by Francois Girard. Using a single, ever-changing set the story unfolds with great economy and an elegance that approaches Noh theatre.

Finally, *Jollies* by Sadie Benning is the hilarious video diary of a 17 year-old lesbian who tells of her brief sexual experience with boys (which mostly involves touching their penises and running away in disgust), as well as her discovery of the joy of kissing girls.

If these works are any indication of the quality and diversity of the Festival itself, Images 91 will certainly be worth skipping *Robin Hood* for.

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## Oscar

directed by John Landis  
 produced by Touchstone Pictures

Sylvester Stallone's debut in an "intentional" comedy has stolen a lot from the farces of the 1930s and 40s, but never manages to duplicate their style or wit. In fact, this movie is so unfunny it should be used in arms limitation negotiations. —Ira Nayman

