

CAPRI FILMS' ROCK'N'ROLL VAMPIRE COMEDY

SUCK

STARS ROB STEFANIUK, JESSICA PARE, MALCOLM McDOWELL, and DAVE FOLEY with Rockers ALICE COOPER, IGGY POP, MOBY, HENRY ROLLINS, ALEX LIFESON, DIMITRI COATS, CALICO COOPER and CAROLE POPE

With the resurgence of vampire films, ***Suck*** kicks the ball out of the stadium in a sizzling blend of rock and roll and comedy. Add pop and shock rock pioneers Iggy Pop and Alice Cooper in his first film with his daughter Calico, musicians Henry Rollins, Moby, Dimitri Coats, Alex Lifeson and Carole Pope; the venerable actor Malcolm McDowell, and comedian Dave Foley. Juxtapose them to upcoming stars Rob Stefaniuk, Jessica Paré, Mike Lobel, Paul Anthony, Chris Ratz, Barbara Mamabolo and Nicole DeBoer, and you've got an unforgettable vampire rock'n'roll comedy which will blast any preconceived notions of vampire films into outer space. Capri Films' rock'n'roll vampire comedy ***Suck*** began principal photography on November 24, 2008 on location in Toronto.

Written and directed by musician/actor Rob Stefaniuk, ***Suck*** is about a group of musical wannabees in search of immortality and a record deal. The rock band The Winners have sunk so low, they will do anything to make it big. After a life-changing encounter with a vampire, they rocket to stardom only to discover that fame and fortune are not all they're cracked up to be.

Stefaniuk (*Phil the Alien*) stars as the lead singer of The Winners, Paré (*The Trotsky*, *Wicker Park*) plays bass and is the first bandmember to succumb to blood lust, McDowell (*Heroes*, *Clockwork Orange*) plays a vampire hunter who is afraid of the dark with Dave Foley (*Kids in the Hall*) as the band's sleazy manager. Coats plays the vampire who converts the band, Pope, a club manager, Rollins, an edgy radio show host, and Moby, the lead singer in the rock band—Secretaries of Steak. Iggy Pop plays a music producer and Calico Cooper, a cheeky waitress alongside Alice Cooper as a sinister bartender who haunts the lead singer. Lobel and Anthony are band members, Ratz is their Roadie, Mamabolo and DeBoer ex-girlfriends.

Suck's soundtrack features 11 original songs. Stefaniuk collaborated with John Kastner (The Doughboys, *Asexual*, *Phil the Alien*) on seven of the tracks, described as 70's Glam Rock with a gothic edge, recorded in Los Angeles and Montreal prior to filming. Additional songs came from Ivan Doroshuk (Men Without Hats) and Dimitri Coats (Burning Brides). Barb Mamabolo and Scott McCullough also contributed.

Suck is produced by Capri Vision Inc., a division of Capri Films, whose mandate is to produce commercially viable films aimed at a demographic of teens and young adults. It is part of a mentorship program where experienced professionals work side by side with talented, emerging filmmakers.

SUCK, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Suck is produced by Robin Crumley and Jeff Rogers and co-produced by Victoria Hirst with Gabriella Martinelli (Capri), Brad Peyton, Terry Markus, and Jeff Sackman serving as executive producers.

Suck is being distributed in Canada by Equinoxe Films. International sales are being handled by Insight Film Releasing.

Suck website: suckthemovie.com

SYNOPSIS

*Time is ticking, it's almost done
What we hated, we've become
By the pricking of my thumbs
Something wicked this way comes.*

The obscure rock'n'roll band, The Winners, are losers. Even their manager wants nothing more to do with them. But, during their last and fateful tour, their humdrum image finally begins to change when Jennifer, the bass player, disappears after a gig, with a seductive vampire. When she emerges with her own set of fangs, sexually charged energy and a new look, the band begins to attract crowds. As, one by one, the rest of the group succumb to blood lust and the promise of immortality, their new supernatural "gimmick" propels them into the limelight. Following an "incident" on a national radio show, they are launched into stardom quicker than they could have ever imagined. All the while, Joey, the lead singer of The Winners, is being haunted by a strange and ominous bartender and a legendary vampire hunter is tracking down the bloodthirsty band. When a close friend and veteran music producer points out to Joey that his band has become a vampire freak show, he begins to realize that the life of fame and fortune he had always craved is not all that it is cracked up to be.

GENESIS

Suck is loosely based on director/writer/musician/actor Rob Stefaniuk's personal experience. "I played in a bunch of bands that went nowhere and made a movie about it," says Stefaniuk, who, with his inimitable humour, adds that the vampire element is a true story. His plan was to make a music movie that didn't suck and then, just to up the stakes, call it *Suck*.

"The vampire element comes with having worked in music. You meet people that have been lost to the dark side, you watch the way drugs destroy their lives, and they look like vampires. It's a metaphor. The vampire is the drug. Instead of being addicted to heroin, they're addicted to blood," explains Stefaniuk who was also inspired in part by the feeling of passing his rock'n' roll youth.

***SUCK*, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

Stefaniuk began writing the screenplay in 2004, spending the next four years trying to make the movie, initially commissioned by Producer Jeff Rogers. But it wasn't until Executive Producer Brad Petyon, who worked with Stefaniuk on the stop motion animation show *What It's Like Being Alone* for CBC, presented the screenplay to Capri Films in 2007, that the film became a reality. The budget subsequently rose from very low to a respectable amount with support from Telefilm, OMDC, Superchannel, Equinoxe and Insight Productions with Jeff Sackman coming aboard as Executive Producer. .

"I laughed out loud when I read it," says Executive Producer Gabriella Martinelli who hearkens the film to "a Faustian tale of a rock'n'roll band who will do anything to achieve fame. I thought ***Suck*** had a lot of potential. It struck a chord. It's *Spinal Tap* meets *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*."

The script was the perfect vehicle to launch Capri Vision, a division of Capri Films whose mandate is to produce commercially viable films aimed at a demographic of teens and young adults, headed by Producer Robin Crumley. "It's part of a mentorship program where experienced professionals work side by side with talented emerging filmmakers."

"When I read the script, it fused all the different things that I am really into-- road movie, comedy, horror, rock'n'roll-- clearly written by somebody who had a gift for writing, so I liked it right away," says Crumley, who used to play the drums himself. After meeting with Stefaniuk, Crumley was hooked. "We had a lot in common and the film was exactly what we're trying to do with Capri Vision." Telefilm supported the project early on based on an interest in genre-based films to reach out to a younger demographic target.

The Cast

"We wanted to make a film that wouldn't just appeal to Canadian audiences, but to the international market as well," says Crumley. Consequently, Producer Jeff Rogers whose connections to the music industry were to prove invaluable, put out feelers to his musical contacts, with stupendous results. Iggy Pop was the first Rock legend to accept a part followed by Alice and Calico Cooper, Moby, and Henry Rollins as well as Carole Pope and Rush legend Alex Lifeson. Burning Brides' Dimitri Coats was Stefaniuk's first choice for the head vampire. Initially he was interested in two of Coats' songs for the film, but when they met three years before principal photography, Stefaniuk realized he'd found his Queeny – the vampire who initiates the supernatural changes in the band. However, there was a twist to the casting. In the main, the musicians played actors, and the actors played musicians.

***SUCK*, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

The Band

Stefaniuk describes the roles. “Joey,” whom he plays, “is the lead singer and the driving force behind the band. He writes the songs, he plans the tours, he’s the reason the band exists. Joey sees the world through pop culture lens but simultaneously feels there is an absence of a moral code within the band. He doesn’t want to be a failure anymore and is feeling the pressure of his age. He knows that he really doesn’t have a fall-back plan so he has to make this road trip work or he’s going to be working at a Wal-Mart. He’s a typical musician in that he’s got an actress girlfriend and his ex-girlfriend’s in the band, and he’s not really good at either relationship.

“Jennifer, played by Jessica Paré, is the cool indie girl everyone loves. She lost her way when the relationship with her and Joey didn’t work out. She’s seeking solace and escaping her problems just like everyone else in the band, though she does it with drugs. That’s what leads her down the path to the vampire which changes her, giving her power, attention and fame,” says Stefaniuk. “I wanted Jessica to be like a drug addict – a liar who uses all her charms to get what she wants. She played it exactly how I wanted.-- funny, endearing, sexy, and vicious. It think it’s a great part.”

“It’s a dream role,” says Paré, who read the entire script on her iphone when she was visiting her family in Montreal. “It’s really funny but not in a cheesy way. I really loved the parallels of the rock and vampire elements which Rob intertwined in a compelling way. I think both rock and vampires have a parallel sexy lifestyle. There is something about the surrender to vampires. Their victims come to them and willingly submit to being consumed. In the rock world you have all these groupies and fans who will do anything for their favorite musicians. Queeny represents this dark side which Jennifer slips into. He’s just waiting for her to come to him.

“The idea of immortality and vampires consuming humans in order to stay alive is so parasitic. Such a dark angle on humanity is obviously something that people have gravitated to,” says Paré, who took bass guitar lessons from co-song writer John Kastner before filming started.

Mike Lobel plays Sam, the drummer. “Sam, the newest member of The Winners, like most drummers, is the butt of several jokes, and as in any good rock’n’roll movie, is killed,” smiles Stefaniuk. When Lobel, who has played the drums since he was 9, heard about the part, he went after it, sending Stefaniuk a tape of himself playing the drums. As he is also an actor, he landed the gig. Like everyone else, Lobel laughed out loud when he read the script. “*Suck* is a dark comedy. On the serious side, it’s an allegory for drug use,” says Lobel.

“What’s really funny is that the film relies on musician stereotypes, particularly drummers. We’re a dime a dozen, we’re kind of slow and all we do is bang on things all the time. Rob fires drummer jokes at me all day long. He’s very method and keeps me

SUCK, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

in my place as a drummer, even off camera,” laughs Lobel. “You can’t fake drums on camera,” says Stefaniuk.

Paul Anthony plays Tyler, the lead guitarist, the guy who’s the lack of moral compass in the band. He’s a rock’n’roll lifer. If he didn’t play for The Winners, he’d be playing for some other band. Like most lead guitarists, he plays his guitar too loud and likes to show off. “Paul took the part and ran with it. He loves it and you can tell he’s loving it. That’s exactly what I wanted and he does a great job,” says Stefaniuk.

Anthony was definitely in his element, particularly for the scene in which he hovers over a crowd of 200 extras while playing an electric guitar solo. It was the day he couldn’t wait for, despite the none-too-comfortable harness attached to the rig which hoisted him up. Keeping a promise he made to Stefaniuk, Anthony learned to play the guitar for his role. In addition, he reinserted his circular barbell nose ring, which he’d removed six years previously. “Paul’s got swagger down pat,” says Stefaniuk.

“When there’s a chance to become a vampire and get the attention that Jennifer’s getting and be immortal, Tyler willingly becomes a vampire. A lot of people enter rock ‘n’ roll to be immortal. They want to leave their mark somewhere. When you’re a vampire, you live forever and you’ve made your mark,” says Anthony. “If vampires exist, they’re musicians. There is no doubt about that. They sleep all day, they don’t look right and they are always wearing sunglasses.”

Chris Ratz plays Hugo, a French-Canadian guitar technician, road manager and Jennifer’s personal slave. Stefaniuk based Hugo on the Renfield character, Nosferatau’s assistant in the classic 1922 vampire movie and a real person whom he knows and loves, albeit somewhat exaggerated.

“I’m a kind of gofer and everybody in the band treats me like that,” says Ratz. “As a roadie, it’s my job to hack up the bodies into pieces and hide them. Then I have to pretend that everything is normal. As Jennifer’s personal slave, I have to cover up for her. Being a roadie/vampire/slave, all my roadie duties are pushed aside because what’s more important is hiding the band’s tracks. Anyone who gets eaten or bitten in this movie is handed off to Hugo. Jennifer promises to make me a vampire by the end of the tour, but she never does. I get progressively more upset about that because everyone else is becoming a vampire but me. But she needs me for her dirty work. That’s my job.”

Dave Foley plays Jeff, The Winner’s manager, loosely based on Producer and Music Manager Jeff Rogers. “I’ve made him a little more sinister person except for the part with the Blackberry. That’s dead on accurate and very obnoxious,” jokes Stefaniuk. Jeff’s the typical rock’n’roll agent guy, the older dude who still wants to be young, who’s into the next hot thing. He’s into Japanese hip hop. He’s really done with The Winners until he realizes actually they’re getting hot, potentially a chance to make his money

***SUCK*, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

back. He sleeps with the singer's girlfriend while they're down and out. He's a bad bad person."

"***Suck*** is a good dark turn on the rock'n'roll rise to power. Jeff is the literal thing that the vampires are allegorical for. He is an opportunistic feeder--a lot of people in the music business are like that," says Foley. "At the beginning of the movie, he is trying to dump the band when they need him most. When they have their vampire transformation, which turns things around for them, Jeff jumps back on the bandwagon and is quite happy to help them cover up dead bodies. He basically stands by and watches them kill people and thinks it's all fine because it's great press, as long as it's feeding the machine."

The Vampire Hunter

Venerable actor Malcolm McDowell plays Eddie Van Helsing, a vampire hunter who is afraid of the dark. The original Van Helsing was the first famous 'vam man' who dispatched Dracula with a stake through the chest. Stefaniuk tells the backstory. "Eddie was studying to be a doctor in the 70's and he was in love with a young jazz singer, but he was never home. One night he came home to find her dead in bed, or what he assumes is dead from two vampire bite marks in her arm. As all the power in the building was out, whenever he's in darkness, he has an anxiety attack. For a vampire hunter, this causes him some trouble. From that point on he basically doesn't change his clothes, doesn't change his car, still listens to an 8 track and dedicates his life to hunting and killing vampires, because she was the most wonderful thing in his life. The only problem is he has not really rationalized his anger, his rage and his sorrow. In the end, he realizes that she's not dead. She's a vampire. She had been a big singing star in Japan ever since her transformation.

After Executive Producer Gabriella Martinelli sent McDowell the screenplay, he admitted to laughing out loud when he read it, and accepted the role immediately. Having worked with Martinelli on a previous film, *Between Strangers*, McDowell trusted her taste. "Eddie can sniff a vampire from a thousand miles," says McDowell, who donned an eyepatch for his role. "To be a vampire hunter, you have to have a good nose, superb eyesight (although the eyepatch gave him 10/20 vision), and you have to be extremely brave. Eddie is brave although he may not be the smartest card in the deck. But we're not delving into that element too deeply," smiles McDowell.

"There's something about biting the neck that's so lovely and rather sensual-- sexy and sucking blood. Unfortunately, I'm not playing a bloody vampire, I've got to slay them all," he huffs.

***SUCK*, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

Rocker Icons

A galaxy of rock stars appear in ***Suck***. Landing Iggy Pop, Alice Cooper, Calico Cooper, Henry Rollins, Moby, Dimitri Coats, Alex Lifeson and Carole Pope for the same film was a major coup for Stefaniuk. “I’ve got some actors playing musicians and I’ve got musicians playing actors. It better not suck because we’ve got a bad title for that. We had to change the production company name to K.C.U.S. because of it.

“Iggy Pop is a legend to me,” says Stefaniuk. “I think he’s a genius. I’m trying to wrap my head around having him in the film. He’s perfect for the part and delivered such a sophisticated performance with subtle levels to it. He brought integrity to the lines. When he talks about fame and bullshit, he knows plenty about both and he brings a weight to the character that wouldn’t be there if it wasn’t him saying it.”

Pop plays Victor, an older wiser rock star who’s retired to the country. The band stops at his house because they need to do a recording to help sell themselves at the New York showcase. They don’t have any money but Victor helps them out anyway. Because he’s been around he knows immediately that Jennifer is a vampire, and advises Joey with the memorable line, “Always wear a condom, never trust a vampire.” Joey ignores Victor’s wisdom. The band is going down this path no matter what. Joey ends up with Victor’s blood on his hands by the end of it, which marks his final transformation to hell.

Pop received the script when he was in Russia. “It was lighthearted, witty and clear, a good part,” says Pop. “The role was low key, conversational and still close enough to who I am that I thought I could take that baby step and handle it. This is not my first vampire offer, but it’s the first one I took.

“Victor’s a local hero and therein lies his glory and his problem in life,” says Pop. “He is an artist of good character and a certain age who has achieved a certain amount. The arts, when it meets success, is a filthy business, and this has caused him some conflicts. But then, he has weaknesses of his own and at some point, he has begun to retire from the limelight, from performance and from intercourse with society. He’s retreated into this warehouse to become maybe half of what he could have been, but all his own man. He’s bemused on the one hand, by The Winners and younger people like them trying some of the same things that he did. But at the same time, I think he’s interested and a little obsessed with the question of whether they’re gonna make it or not, what that means and whether that’s cool or not. He’s a little depressed, hence that’s why he’s always home.”

“Any time I get to play somebody other than Alice, I seriously look at the script,” says Alice Cooper, who’s a horror film addict. “I’m in a band and there have been times when I’ve said if we were anything other than this to get ahead, the idea of becoming a vampire to make the band better would probably have done it. It’s very Faustian to sell your soul or change your life or do something that’s gonna make you more appealing.

SUCK, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

“I’m a songwriter and Rob’s a songwriter which is not that far away from writing scripts. Dialogue in a movie is just a big version of a song. I try to tell a story in four minutes. Rob gets to tell the story in an hour and a half. You can have rock’n’roll in a movie, but it needs to be part of the story. You need characters you love or hate,” says Cooper who, when he invented Alice Cooper, realized that, after looking around, there were a lot of Peter Pans out there, but no Captain Hooks. I was a natural villain. My theory was to put rock’n’roll, horror and comedy in bed together and I’d have something.”

Stefaniuk says, “We start off thinking that Alice Cooper is just a bartender. When he appears at the cross roads in Joey’s mind, we think he’s a devilish figment of Joey’s imagination. He goads Joey into making the choice to join the vampire rank. And it turns out that Alice is the oldest of the vampires. He just gives Joey that last little push he needs to make the decision to become immortal.”

When Calico Cooper, who appears in a movie for the first time with her father, heard he was playing an Uber Vampire in **Suck**, she thought it sounded cool and wanted to be part of it, even if she had to be an extra. Instead, she plays a cheeky waitress.

The script reminded Calico of going to Hollywood clubs and wishing the guys on stage had a shtick, so they’d be so much better. “When Rob went for the great idea of the band all being vampires, that’s what I was looking for,” says Calico. “Comedy, rock’n’roll and horror is like my Saturday night. The concept is really true to life. When I walked onto the set, I thought ‘this is the Sunset Strip’,” says the actress/dancer who has toured the world 10 times with her father.

Alice Cooper interjects, “When Calico’s in my show, she plays six or seven different parts from a James Bond Chinese assassin, a rag doll, a lyrical ballerina to an executioner. I see her more than I see my wife because we’re on tour six months of the year.”

“When I read the script, I envisioned it one way and when my dad read it, he saw it another way,” says Calico. “He surprises me every time they do a take, which is great for the director because he can have a cornucopia of craziness to pick from.”

Calico has a different take on vampires. “Vampires rock because they don’t need an excuse to wear anything other than black, which is very slimming. You never see fat vampires waddling around. And blood is very high in iron and low in fat!”

Moby plays Beef Bellows, the lead singer in the Secretaries of Steak, the worst (or most popular) heavy metal band in Buffalo. “I love the idea of one of the most famous vegans in the world being named Beef Bellows and playing in a hardcore band where the audience throws meat at him,” says Stefaniuk.

SUCK, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

In reality the meat was molded silicon rubber steaks with spongy blood bags inside which oozed blood when squeezed, created by Ron Stefaniuk, the director's innovative brother and special effects expert. Moby, an ardent vegan insisted no actual meat be used and that the blood had to be organic and washable. After the scene was shot, in which Moby outdid himself portraying a 'mean' rock'n'roller having been completely soaked in corn syrup based blood, he squeaked, "Ewwh, it smells like pancakes and it's really sticky." But, he adds, "I grew up playing in punk rock bands, so standing on the small stages, being dirty and disgusting is something I have had a lot of experience with. Though it's the first time I've ever been pelted with fake meat.

"The song was written for my character. I thought it was a really good solid heavy metal song. As I didn't write it, I'm objective in assessing its strengths. It fits the character, the setting and the mood, so I was thrilled and honored to be asked to lip synch."

Moby, who joined the cast when he learnt that Iggy Pop, Alice Cooper, Henry Rollins and Malcolm McDowell were all involved, laughs, "I think I have a total of about 45 important words and then I get eaten. Beef Bellows is a douche bag and a moderately big fish in a tiny tiny little pond, so he has a very inflated sense of self. So I get to play an asshole. I think I could spend the rest of my life perfecting and practicing being a douche bag, but it's the journey and not the destination.

"In the music business I've met a lot of soulless bloodsucking leeches, but the vampire has elegance to it that I wouldn't necessarily ascribe to most people in the music business. When you think of vampires, you think of those sort of poor tortured souls who are condemned to live a shadowy existence. When you think of people in the music business, you think of people who make a career out of it," says Moby.

"Rockin' Roger," the character Henry Rollins plays, "is such an ass that he totally exasperates the band during a radio interview," says Rollins. "I asked the director if the band would've spared me if I was not such a jerk. He said 'yah.' I asked if the fact I'm so awful gets me killed? Rob said, 'Yah.' OK, I'll just go with that," says Rollins, who sported a mullet hair style for the role. Echoing Moby, Rollins says, "It's fun being a douche bag with a mullet."

"When the production said I'd be kind of a loud mouth offensive DJ, as I do that two hours a week on Indie 103 in Los Angeles, I figured I could play Rockin' Roger," says Rollins.

Dimitri Coats, lead singer of Burning Brides band, met Stefaniuk three years before principal photography. Stefaniuk was interested in two of his songs for the film, but when he met Coats, he realized he'd met his Queeny, the statuesque vampire who starts the whole movie off by biting Jennifer. "He's part vampire and part rock'n'roll," says Coats. "What's really cool is Rob has me singing two Brides songs in the movie from

***SUCK*, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

our new album, ‘Anhedonia.’ Vampire movies have a tendency to take themselves too seriously, but ***Suck*** is full of laughs. I get a guitar (instead of a stake) through the heart,” grins Coats.

“When you play in a rock band and travel the world, and hang out with other rockers, you’re walking the tightrope between life and the dark side. It’s really about having one hand on the rope and one foot in the grave. The downside to immortality and fame is that it’s hard to make long-term friendships,” says Coats.

“Every two or three years, I like to act,” says Carole Pope, who visited her home town of Toronto to appear in ***Suck*** as a door-guard club manager who refuses to let Joey’s girlfriend in. “The script’s got everything a good rock’n’roll vampire movie should have as well as good sucking music.”

The bored border guard

“It’s very lonely being a border guard. Nobody loves you,” joshes guitarist Alex Lifeson, a 40 year Rush veteran. What does a border guard do while he’s sitting in his booth wonders Lifeson. “He sits there thinking about what he could be doing and then he takes it out on whoever comes to the booth. Another occupation of a bored border guard is to make “To Do” lists. Lifeson’s list included: 1. Arrest more people, 2. seize drugs, sees drugs, see drugs, 3. keep drugs, 4. arrest some more people, 5. wait for wife to come home from her mother-in laws, 6. shoot mother-in-law, 7. Get grade 10 diploma, 8: take literary course, 9. get more drugs , 10. pick up quart of milk, 11. get more nuclear waste, 12 . get more newer waist, 13. yoga classes.

“I grill the band when they cross the border, then I recognize them as being musicians. I went from rock music to border guard and so I connect with them at the end.”

Ironically Alice and Calico Cooper had a similar encounter with a Canadian border guard on their way to Toronto to shoot ***Suck***. Calico relates, “We were tired looking, and when we gave our papers to the Canadian border guard, the guy puts on his glasses, looks at the paper and says, ‘Suck, huh?’ ‘Yes,’ Alice says, ‘my daughter and I are in a movie called ***Suck***.’ And just to clarify, he added, ‘it’s a vampire movie’.” Meanwhile Calico was explaining that there was no porn in vampire.

The Music

Rob Stefaniuk and John Kastner established a songwriting partnership on Stefaniuk’s *Phil the Alien*. ***Suck*** features 11 original songs ranging from heavy metal to pop to rock, most of which were written by the talented duo and recorded in Los Angeles and Montreal. “The kind of vibe we’re going for is a combination of Jesus and Mary Chain, the alternative rock band from Scotland, and the UK rock band, T.Rex,” says Kastner (Asexual Dough Boys). “When we were brainstorming what would be a cool sound for our fictional band, we came up with T.Rex because that was a band with a very cool

***SUCK*, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

sound from the '70's," says Stefaniuk. "It sort of reminded me of vampires." Of course we had modern influences so it changed and evolved as we went along. You could call it 70's Glam Rock influenced by T.Rex, David Bowie and The Beatles. Kastner adds, "It's shoegazer rock going for a lot of wah wah!"

The soundtrack

1. "I'm Coming to Get You" by Rob Stefaniuk and John Kastner
2. "Flesh and Bone" by Dimitri Coats
3. "Take It" by Rob Stefaniuk and John Kastner
4. "Going Nowhere" by Rob Stefaniuk and John Kastner – The Winner's theme song.
5. "Goes Further" by Dimitri Coats
6. "Still I Bleed" by Scott Mc Cullough and John Kastner—Lip synced by Moby
7. "Night After Night" by Rob Stefaniuk, Barb Mamabolo and John Kastner
8. "So Close It Hurts" by Rob Stefaniuk and John Kastner
9. "The Fool" by Ivan Doroshuk
10. "Brain On Drugs" by Rob Stefaniuk and John Kastner
11. "Suck" by Rob Stefaniuk and John Borra

The songs follow the emotional arc of the film foreshadowing what's to come, what's happening at that moment, and what has passed. "The soundtrack is cool because it tells a story if you listen to the lyrics. Rob uses poetic license to describe what's happening. He rehearsed 'the band' five hours a day a week before shooting began," says Lobel. Even Alice Cooper was heard to say that Jessica "looked cool" on the bass guitar.

The Look

"The movie definitely takes place in a rock'n'roll world. It's surreal and distorted, and not cinema verité about what it's like to be a rock band. I'm not treating the film that way. It's what if *feels* like to be a rock band," muses Stefaniuk. Everything in the movie is seen through a rock'n'roll lens. The red purple sky, the slightly exaggerated extras, not necessarily people you see in a rock club, but misfits such as bikers and older dudes to help to create a surreal look. To achieve this goal, stop motion models and green screen projections were utilized in all the driving sequences so that the background and the environment changes with the emotional story of the film as the band goes down the highway to hell. "They just get weirder and darker as they go," says Stefaniuk who brought Production Designer Jim Goodall aboard.

"Jim's team incorporated rock'n'roll elements into the vampire lair which was based on Andy Warhol's factory, where the red motif is introduced which is seen to bleed its way through the film. The vampire elements which emanate from Queeny's lair slowly start to make their way into the rest of the film until the very end, when it returns full circle to Queeny's lair when the band finally decides to go back to being human again. To do that, they have to kill the queen vampire. Queeny's lair is trippy and surreal," says Stefaniuk.

SUCK, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

“We wanted to make sure we caught the rock’n’roll vibe, the vampire vibe and the road movie vibe,” says Goodall. “There’s a lot of movement throughout the film and major changes with all the characters, not just physically but the whole aura around them. We’re trying to capture a sense that the band is growing from a no name band at the beginning to a more polished professional fan-based rock’n’roll band at the end. It was important to map out their journey so we started them in a boring drab environment. The momentum builds with each show, delivering more colour, more vampire elements, more fans, more extras, more spectacular costumes,” says Goodall.

To give more of an edge to Moby’s metallic rock scene, while highlighting the Secretaries of Steak being pelted with steaks, Goodall created a set resembling a meat locker. Because blood was being flung around, Goodall had to be practical. To protect the band’s instruments, he wrapped them with plastic and set the grungy scene against a backdrop of shredded plastic and hung chains for the meat to hang on.

To jar the viewers into asking themselves where they are, Goodall broke the shadowy red and black colour palette completely for a sci-fi set where Joey meets his actress girlfriend (Nicole DeBoer). “We used purple and florescent greens and shot through a giant fish tank into which coloured globules sank. The scene where Jennifer and Joey become yuppies is a complete deviation from the colour palette.

“But it’s a rock’n’roll movie at its heart, so it’s got to feel like a music video. The stakes have to be higher for every scene and every song. The songs get better as they progress and the way they’re shot feels like it’s a fancier more expensive music video,” explains Goodall.

Costume Designer Mario Davignon worked closely with Goodall on the wardrobe design. “To establish the band’s look at the outset, we started them off in blue jeans and regular lothes.” The designer used a blue and gray colour palette which gradually disappeared and was replaced with red and black. By the end of the movie, The Winners, in full vampire mode, wore marching band uniforms in red and black, inspired by the Beatles Sgt. Pepper Lonely Hearts Club Band.

Davignon built coats in black leather lined in flashy red. “Each time they moved, you suddenly realize that the black silhouette is burning from underneath. Queeny’s flowing silk coat is lined in red which suddenly cuts with the black.” For Queeny’s necklace, Davignon collected pieces from different countries to show he had victims everywhere.

“What we didn’t want was a lot of frilly things and we didn’t want Queeny to be in gothic clothes, but more in rock’n’roll inspired outfits,” says Goodall. The idea was to avoid any of the typical gothic or cliché elements that are normally associated with vampires.

Suck shot mainly on locations, utilizing Toronto’s Queen Street clubs to shoot different rock shows as the band starts in Montreal and ends up New York via Toronto, Buffalo

SUCK, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

and Philadelphia. Each club had a different theme, different colour schemes and moods. The tone is dark with lots of humour and pops of colour.

The cinematography

In determining the look of the picture, Stefaniuk told Director of Photography D.Gregor Hagey he didn't want to shoot just conventional coverage on everything. "I wanted to do rock'n'roll framing." That's how the reference to album covers emerged. In a tribute to rock'n'roll, some scenes in **Suck** merge into iconic album covers including The Beatle's "Abbey Road," T.Rex' "Electric Warrior, The Rolling Stones' "Beggars Banquet," The Who's "Kids Are Alright" and Bruce Springsteen's "Born in the U.S.A."

Suck was filmed on the Red One Digital Camera, the most cutting edge digital camera extant. "It's a very interesting hybrid of video and film technologies, but it's neither a film or a video camera. It has 4 times the resolution of HD video, which allows you to capture beautiful images with delicate textures that rival even 35 mm film. Red also has all the advantages of digital video which lets you shoot very affordably, and because it records directly to a hard drive, it lets you quickly review or if necessary, even edit shots together right on set," says Hagey, who pioneered the Red Camera in Canada. **Suck** marks his third feature on Red Cam.

Hearing "checking the chip," instead of "checking the gate" at the end of a take, is a new experience for many crew members. As the chip size is the same as 35 mm, it lets you use the same lenses as film cameras. "It's a fantastic tool for independent movies because it is similar to HD video but the picture is 35 mm. in quality. It's a big saving," says Hagey, an enthusiastic proponent of the system.

"The lights in this movie change with the emotions of a vampire. We also play with speed changes. Every time a vampire is on screen, the camera shoots at 48 frames per second instead of the usual 24 fps. Things slow down to show a vampire presence so I can heighten the drama and make it feel more surreal," says Stefaniuk.

Special Effects

The work of Special Effects expert Ron Stefaniuk, Rob Stefaniuk's brother, who built and played the beaver in *Phil the Alien*, has been seen in such films as *Harold and Kumar*, *Love Guru*, and *Max Payne*. For **Suck** his company STEFANIUK FX STUDIO made nine sets of acrylic vampire teeth, 45 silicon steaks with sponge blood bags inside to release blood when squeezed, retractable wooden stakes to hammer in chests, floated and spun beer bottles through the air, plunged straws into a clerk's neck for a vampire to suck blood, operated a mechanical flying rig to hang an actor over a crowd while playing an electric guitar solo, shot blood cannons into Malcolm McDowell's face, finishing up with a flying a V-Guitar jammed through Dimitri Coats' chest, and a 14-foot wide pair of cable operated, black vampire wings for Alice Cooper's denouement.

***SUCK*, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

“Working in this business, you get asked to build many weird things and you can have a lot of fun doing that. If you can do that and help your brother at the same time, well I guess that makes me feel pretty lucky,” says Ron.

Make-up

Rock ‘n’roll and vampires have more in common than just being cool and dead. There is also a long history of white face, black eyes and black lips. It was Alice Cooper who first combined rock’n’roll and horror accompanied by the white faced black-eyed look. David Bowie was not far behind. That was the feeling which Stefaniuk wanted to create. “I also wanted the eyes to look like people messed up on drugs. They look like vampires. I wanted to make sure the eyes captured that even though ***Suck*** is a comedy. It’s rooted in reality even though it’s surreal. It made more sense to me to keep it real and in the end it plays more funny. We worked with hair and make-up to create a believable skin and not the full Hollywood vampire look.”

“I only have a few scenes where I’m human. I spend most of this movie in vampire make-up,” says Paré. “I don’t wear fangs for every scene. They only come out when I’m hungry, feel threatened or threatening. I love my fangs. I talk with a little bit of a lisp.”

INSERT: COMMENTS FROM KEY MAKE-UP ARTIST JORDAN SAMUELS NOT AVAILABLE UNTIL FEBRUARY.

Rollins comments on the vampire look. “When people are addicted to heroin, quite often it gives them a power as well as giving their skin a glowing translucent look. You can see the guy has a drug problem. It’s almost like morticians makeup on someone and it makes women sometimes look scary or mysterious. There is something about the nighttime druggie world that people find alluring because the girl on stage does not look like the gal you brought to the gig. I think there is an allure to that on a lot of levels. Death is a scary thing that none of us want to run towards tomorrow.”

What ***Suck*** has that other vampire films don’t

How hard is it to come up with a new twist on the vampire genre? Stefaniuk pull it off, pointing out, “I’ve never seen a vampire movie of a vampire getting sick and needing food where their addiction forces them to thrust a straw into a variety store clerk’s neck ‘to drink the guy.’ I’ve never seen a vampire movie where they are conscious of getting their clothes dirty. I’ve never seen a vampire movie where they dispose of the body. I’ve never seen a vampire movie where they say ‘vampires are cool.’ I had Alice Cooper say ‘vampires are cool.’ Everybody knows it, but no one ever says it.”

***SUCK*, ABOUT THE PRODUCTION**

The end

Cast and filmmakers summarize their perspectives on ***Suck***.

Paré reviews the story. “***Suck*** is about a band called The Winners that aren’t doing very well until the bass player (Jessica) gets turned into a vampire and then they start gaining some traction and more people show up at their shows. By the time they figure out it’s because she’s a vampire, they’re doing so well that they all hop on the bandwagon and decide to become vampires as well.”

Chris Ratz says, “The story says a lot about selling your soul for fame and notoriety. It’s also about drug addiction, a metaphor for vampirism.”

Says Stefaniuk, “The vampire world is a metaphor for drugs. The movie is about people who do drugs and turn into monsters, destroying everyone around. This is a slightly darker comedy than my last one, but the intention is to be funny. Mostly I just wanted to make something about real people and take real people from real bands in a real situation. Obviously the environment is exaggerated and crazy in that they’re actual vampires and hopefully get the comedy from playing it totally straight while maintaining some level of credibility within these exceptional circumstances.”

Notes Foley, “I’ve always been a fan of vampire movies. They get to be conscious for centuries which I think is something we all want to do. The whole vampire ethos is very sexy. It’s about having an animalistic sexuality, that appeals to people. A rock’n’roller looks like a vampire. They live very similar lifestyles, sleeping all day and spreading despair and destruction all night.”

“Vampires are very sexy, rock’n’roll is very sexy. Vampires have addictions and rock bands have addictions. The parallels are kind of scary. “The whole mixture of vampires, rock’n’roll and comedy has got cult classic written all over it,” says Lobel.

“I like the old legends and the idea of somebody that hangs out in the night and sucks blood out of other people. Vampires don’t have day jobs, they always know how to act and they dress well, at least that’s the portrayal. I suppose there must be some nerd vampires,” quips Iggy Pop.

“With the incredible excitement and box office generated by recent vampire films, we are thrilled to be pushing the genre in a slightly more intense direction. With an amazing cast representing not just great actors but also legends of performance such as Alice Cooper and Iggy Pop amongst the many recognized rockers, we are looking at a combustible film that will inspire curiosity and be discussed for years to come,” says Executive Producer Jeff Sackman.