

GYPsy 83

a film by Todd Stephens
(USA, Color 35mm, 95 minutes)



Starring: **SARA RUE** (star of ABC's "Less Than Perfect")
KETT TURTON – KAREN BLACK
PAULO COSTANZO – ANSON SCOVILLE and JOHN DOE

"A heart-tugger... Stephens introduces us to a couple of irresistible outsiders!"

— Kevin Thomas, *The Los Angeles Times*

"A Follow-Your-Dream inspirational comedy."

— Dave Kehr, *The New York Times*

"Suprisingly fresh & thoroughly charming!"

— Maitland McDonagh, *Time Out New York*

"Sara Rue gives a bravura performance... come prepared to laugh, repress a few tears and wonder at the sight of a screenful of spinning Stevie clones!"

— Joel E. Siegel, *Washington City Paper*

www.gypsy83.com

GYPSY 83

CAST

Gypsy Vale	SARA RUE
Clive Webb	KETT TURTON
Bambi LeBleau	KAREN BLACK
Ray Vale	JOHN DOE
Zechariah Peachey	ANSON SCOVILLE
Troy	PAULO COSTANZO
Lois	CAROLYN BAEUMLER
Polly Pearl	STEPHANIE MCVAY
Connie	AMANDA TALBOT
Empress Chi Chi	VERA BEREN
Mrs. Larson	EILEEN LETCHWORTH
Banning	ANDERSEN GABRYCH
Hazleton	MICHAEL CAVADIAS
Christoph	JOSH VAN LEEUWEN
Bar Maid	CHRISTINA *BOB* GODINEZ
Kitty Boots	HEATHER LITTEER
Velvet Vale	MARLENE WALLACE
Ash	STANLEY WALL
Fraternity Pledges	BRYAN KEITH MILLER
	MATTHEW FAUST
	SHAUN P. FULLER
	CLINT JASTRZEBSKI
	TYLER MORGAN
Redneck Karaoke Guy	JEFFREY MATTIE
Acid Warsh Woman	DEBBIE
High School Jock	JARED OPFER
Gravedigger Carl	SCOTT WANAMAKER
Young Gypsy	TAMARIAH REBARCHAK
Luna Angel Band Members	RUSTY FOULKE
	ROBERT JUSTOFIN
Trailer Trash Mommie	NANCY ARONS
Trailer Trash Daddy	JIMMY ZENETSKI
Trailer Trash Kid	NATE MOYLAN
Rest Area Cruisers	JOE CAPECE
	JACK GOULSTONE
Little Feet in Men's Room	KELLY KLINE
Very Butch Doorman	JESSE ADAMS
Empress Chi Chi's Ravishing Boys	JAMES BAYLIS
	CASEY DICKERSON
	MICHAEL BUCKLEY
Twirling Stevies	
DARLENE CLAIR	BEAR SHEPPARD
BOBBIE JEAN DANIEL	TIM KALTENECKER
EDWARD ABRECHT	NICOLE NICKS
BARBARA GREENWOOD	CARRIE CARLISLE
VELMA J. BOWEN	MISTRESS KAOS





CREDITS

Written & Directed by..... Todd Stephens

Produced by..... Karen Jaroneski
Todd Stephens

Executive Producers..... Michael Wolfson
Edgar Lansbury

Co-Producer..... Judith Zarin

Story By..... Todd Stephens
Tim Kaltenecker

Director of Photography Gina DeGirolamo

Film Editor Annette Davey

Original Music Marty Beller

Casting Eve Battaglia, CSA

Line Producer Christine McAndrews

Production Designer Nancy Arons

Costume Designer..... Kitty Boots

Music Supervisor..... Gerry Gershman

Sound Designer..... Damian Volpe



GYPSY83

SYNOPSIS

Two misfits, dressed head-to-toe in black velvet...

Gypsy—25, stunning but chronically overweight. She wraps herself in shawls and sequins just like her lifelong idol, rock goddess Stevie Nicks. There's a brilliant song inside Gypsy, but years of fear and anger choke her voice.

Clive—18, a beautiful skinny Goth boy who powders his face and paints his lips death-black. Full of drive, talent and youthful dreams. He adores Gypsy but believes one day he'll find true, deep love in the arms of a guy.

Two outcasts who feel small-town Ohio closing in on them, Gypsy and Clive lose themselves in Gothic fantasies, soothed by the sounds of The Cure, Bauhaus and Claire Voyant. Their daydreams and friendship help them escape daily abuse from a town that takes great exception to those who don't fit in.

When Gypsy and Clive learn about the annual "Night of 1000 Stevies" in New York City, their deep-seeded dreams are unleashed. With Clive's encouragement, Gypsy crushes her fears and vows to be the best Stevie Nicks impersonator Gotham has ever seen.

They pile into a '79 Trans Am and begin a journey for acceptance. In five hundred miles they will reach New York, but not before colliding head-on with the judgments of both society and themselves.

Mile-marker 110. High-Ball Cocktail Lounge... featuring the vocal stylings of Miss Bambi LeBleau, a wearily fabulous lounge singer frozen in a time gone by. In Bambi, Gypsy finds both a kindred spirit and a dark vision of her possible fate.

Mile-marker 165. Hitchhiker Zechariah Peachey... a handsome Amish runaway. He longs for fast food and a different life. Feeling a deep connection to Gypsy, he seduces her, and for a moment she feels beautiful.

Mile-marker 368. Roadside rest area... rowdies Troy, Ash and their fraternity pledges. Clive finally faces his sexuality with studly frat boy Troy, who shatters his idealist dream of romance.

Destination — New York City. It's a full moon as Gypsy and Clive finally complete their pilgrimage to "Night of 1000 Stevies." Tonight, face to face with their deepest fears, their lives will be changed forever.



GYPSY 83

FROM THE WRITER/DIRECTOR

I started working on the story for **GYPSY 83** during a difficult rewrite of **EDGE OF SEVENTEEN**. I even thought of putting **EDGE** aside and diving into **GYPSY** instead, but my boyfriend, Tim Kaltenecker, talked me out of it. The initial seeds for the story, however, were planted in the summer of 1994 — the first time I saw Stevie Nicks in concert.

I had been a casual Stevie fan up until that point, but not enough to buy any of her records. Tim noticed she was performing at Jones Beach and we decided to go on a lark. This was during Stevie's "Street Angel" period, when she was at her heaviest. Several years later Stevie would spin back into fashion, but at this point many considered her a joke.

Stevie flowed out — in a riot of chiffon, at nearly 200 pounds — and completely rocked my world. After several songs, Tim and I turned to each other — both of us glassy-eyed and beaming — and realized a delicious spell had been cast upon us. After every song, the woman we later came to know as the High Priestess of Rock would twirl offstage and return in a new sequined shawl or velvet cape. I was in heaven. Stevie Nicks touched something deep inside me. On that summer night, I realized her songs were a primal part of my musical memory.

Tim and I immediately dove boots-first into a whole new world of Stevie. On the internet, we met a fabulous collection of fans who greatly inspired me. What struck me most was how diverse they were — men, women, old, young, gay, straight. All united by the common thread of Stevie's music. Inspired by the honesty in her words and the ups and downs of her life. Knowing that if she could survive drug addictions, weight problems and broken hearts — maybe they could, too.

One fan in particular was a woman named Susan Childs. A large and beautiful woman, Susan LIVES Stevie Nicks. She supplements her income by selling Stevie-inspired accessories online and dresses like her idol in her daily life. Susan's bold confidence reminded me of a long-lost Ohio friend, and the genesis of the Gypsy character was born. I considered it a challenge to write a big, sexy, damaged woman who was not always polite.

Around that same time, we discovered Chi Chi Valenti and Johnny Dynell's "Night of 1000 Stevies" at NYC's legendary nightclub, Mother. We spent weeks making shawls, finding the right boots (the heels had to be perfect!), wig shopping, etc. It was there I met Art L'Hommedieu, a beautiful Goth boy with a passionate love for Stevie. Art was one of the true eccentrics I've come across in life — an ever-changing chameleon in jet black hair, makeup and Victorian clothes. Stories of him as a child emulating Stevie's concert videos move-for-move in the driveway of his suburban New Jersey home melted my heart. It was through Art, and the club Mother, that I connected Stevie and Goth.

I had always loved bands like The Cure and Bauhaus. Music has been a constant inspiration in my writing, and when I dug out my old Goth records, they just sounded so RIGHT. I became fascinated with the dark beauty of the Goth aesthetic. Such true outsiders. Romantics. Dreamers. Tim and I began to co-write the story of two misfits who escaped the pain of their own existence by emulating their idols and losing themselves in their magical universe.

At this point I put my avalanche of inspiration aside in order to go off and shoot **EDGE OF SEVENTEEN**. I was originally set to direct **EDGE**, and after casting and rehearsing the film in NYC, returned to my hometown of Sandusky, Ohio to film it.

It was one thing to recall on paper the difficult memories of coming out in a smalltown environment, but actually going back home to make the film made me truly remember just how painful it was to be different. Many Ohioans did not take kindly to this colorful collection of New Yorkers, many of whom had originated from the Midwest themselves. Outward racism and homophobia shocked me back to my youth — I realized that, after fifteen years of

being away, many things had not changed. For fear of trouble, we decided to keep the film's gay subject matter a secret — which was a bizarre twist when I was making a film about affirming who I was.

EDGE could not have been more autobiographical. Old photographs influenced casting choices. We filmed at many of the actual locations from my past, including my own house. My own saved new wave clothes became costumes. A week into shooting, it all just got to be too much. In one of the most agonizing decisions of my life, I felt the film would benefit from a more objective pair of eyes, and asked producer David Moreton to take over the director's chair.

Later, as I began to write **GYPSY**, I slowly came to realize how much the story was a response to my **EDGE** experience. I was struggling with many of the same issues Gypsy was facing. In retrospect, I believe **GYPSY 83** was my way of telling myself — that despite all my fears, the past and the pain — I COULD DO IT. Working with many of the same collaborators, including producer Karen Jaronesi and DP Gina DeGirolamo, the production of the film turned out to be a joyous and healing experience.

Gypsy and Clive are — like I was — social outcasts in a small Ohio town where conformity is the way of life. Two lost souls trying to find their place in the world. My feeling is that most of us, whether we're gay or straight, black or white, male or female, jock or preppie, identify at one time or another with having felt like an outsider. And we all fight to prevent our fears from strangling our dreams.

This film is for all gypsies on the long and winding road to self-acceptance...

Todd Stephens

Writer / Director





ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Todd Stephens and producer Karen Jaroneski met while making **EDGE OF SEVENTEEN** in 1997. Todd had originally talked to Karen about producing that film, but when other obligations prevented it, she came on board as his Assistant Director. It was when **EDGE** was screening at the Castro Theater in San Francisco that Todd leaned over and asked Karen if she would produce **GYPSY 83**. She agreed, and a fruitful collaboration was born.

Together they set out on the difficult journey of cobbling together various private investors to finance the project. Screenplay readings staged in New York and LA helped generate interest, and through these events they first worked with actors Sara Rue and Karen Black (Todd's lifelong idol), both of whom ultimately agreed to appear in the film. Female investors responded strongly to the script's strong lead character — over 75% of all money raised ultimately came from women.

Finding an actor to play Clive became the biggest casting challenge. After endless searching, casting director Eve Battaglia discovered the fearless and talented eighteen year-old Kett Turton, who was cast just two weeks before production. Several of **EDGE's** cast members came on in cameo roles, including Andersen Gabrych, who plays the bitchy Goth boy Banning, and Stephanie McVay, as Fotohut district manager Polly Pearl.

A large obstacle the producers faced was clearing Stevie Nicks' music for use in the film. Despite promising talks with Stevie's management that began almost a year prior, principal photography neared without finalization of song clearances. The producers considered changing Nicks to another icon or creating a fictional one. But after much debate, they decided the script had been written as a love letter to Stevie and were confident everything would come together when she saw the film.

Meanwhile, many of the Goth songs written into the script began to clear. It was a major breakthrough when Gerry Gershman, the same music supervisor Karen and Todd had worked with on **EDGE**, informed them that Robert Smith and The Cure had granted permission for "Doing the Unstuck."

In June of 2000, cast and crew began arriving on location in Hazleton, PA, chosen because of its proximity to a highway rest area and for its smalltown feel. Lodgings were in the decidedly unglamorous and stuck-in-the-70's Mount Laurel Motel. Principal photography began on June 20, 2000. Since no films had been shot there in recent memory, many Hazleton residents were eager to help out by providing locations and serving as extras. A Goth character at Mother was ultimately renamed "Hazleton" in honor of the hospitable town.

Many other **EDGE** alumni also signed onto the crew, including Director of Photography, Gina DeGirolamo. Gina and Todd weighed all the different shooting formats, including DV, but ultimately decided that 35mm film would best capture the lush jewel-tone look they were going for. Clive's black and white footage was shot on Super 8 film and later blown up to 35mm. As the dailies came in, everyone was delighted that Gina was once again able to make beautiful images with limited time and resources.

Several new faces joined the crew, as well. Further increasing the Ohio-native crew quotient, Nancy Arons came on as Production Designer. Nancy's contrasting of Ohio-realness against Gothic fantasy greatly contributed to the film's look, but her crowning achievement is undoubtedly the fabulous living room she designed for Karen Black's character, Miss Bambi LeBleau.

Todd chose fashion designer and Mother nightclub co-founder Kitty Boots to help mastermind Gypsy and Clive's many-changing costume and make-up looks. A veteran of the Goth scene as well as many "Night of 1000 Stevies," Kitty's brilliant designs included costumes loaned by Stevie fans and Goths alike. Grassroots fan involvement continued as these same folks served as extras in the New York club scenes.

Principal photography wrapped, on schedule after 24 shooting days, on July 18th. Despite the limited budget, the film was shot in all four states which encompassed Gypsy and Clive's journey — Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Jersey and New York. Filming was completed once and for all in August 2000 after several days of second unit photography in Todd's hometown of Sandusky.

During the editing process, Todd and Karen learned that Stevie's management had decided against granting permission for any usages, citing the film's subject matter as too much of a risk. It is our belief that Stevie Nicks has not been shown the film and remains unaware of the project. Todd and editor Annette Davey began what they thought would be the heart-breaking task of replacing the Stevie music throughout the picture. That's when something wonderful happened. As each Nicks songs was replaced with tracks by such landmark groups as The Cure and Bauhaus, the film's Gothic theme came magically to life. Every scene was improved by the new choices.

Permission was granted to use Stevie's biggest solo hit, "Talk to Me," which Sara performs as a karaoke, as Stevie did not write the song and her management does not control it. The ultimate melding of Stevie and Goth was realized when the LA band Diva Destruction recorded a deliciously dark version of "Talk to Me" expressly for the film.

The most significant musical revelation was also the most complicated. When Gypsy finally conquers her fears and performs at "Night of 1000 Stevies," the script called for Stevie's "Gypsy," which was how it was originally shot. When clearing the song became impossible, Todd convinced Karen that he and composer Marty Beller could write a new song incorporating the score's main melody. That song, "Voice So Sweet," so beautifully sung by Sara at the end of the film, greatly helped strengthen Gypsy's catharsis. Instead of singing someone else's song, her own true voice was finally free to ring out.

Also recorded especially for the film were two songs from the fictional "It's Bambi Time" lounge LP — "I Want a Lip" and "Walking in the Jungle." Todd and Marty had such a fabulous time recording with Karen Black that the three of them plan to begin working on a full length Bambi-influenced album this year.

Although completed in the summer of 2001, music rights issues forced the delay of the film's release until now. Since **GYPSY 83** was shot in a pre-9/11 New York City, the producers were originally concerned that several shots of the city skyline contained the World Trade Center. After viewing it with audiences, however, they were pleased at the way **GYPSY** had inadvertently become an instant period piece — harkening back to a more innocent time when New York represented a dream, not a terrorist threat level.

Todd and Karen plan to continue their collaboration with the newly-formed Velvet Films.





ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

Todd Stephens (PRODUCER/WRITER/DIRECTOR) — Todd grew up on rollercoasters and ketchup and bologna sandwiches in the Lake Erie “Vacationland” of Sandusky, Ohio. A graduate of NYU Film School, Todd wrote and produced *EDGE OF SEVENTEEN*, a feature based on his coming-out experience and filmed in his Ohio hometown. *EDGE* was awarded numerous festival prizes including Best Picture at both The San Francisco International Gay and Lesbian Film Festival and at Outfest, where Todd also picked up the prize for Best Screenplay. *EDGE* screened at the 1999 Sundance Film Festival and was released theatrically to rave reviews and sell-out crowds. The film was nominated for both an Independent Spirit Award and a GLAAD Media Award.

GYPSY 83 is the second installment in Todd’s Ohio trilogy. He recently followed in Gypsy’s footsteps by finally getting up the nerve to perform at “Night of 1000 Stevies.” In 2002, Todd wrote *THE DANA RIVERS STORY* for Lifetime Television and Storyline Entertainment (Academy Award-winning Producers Neil Meron & Craig Zadan). He is currently in pre-production on *ANOTHER GAY MOVIE*, which he will direct from his original screenplay. Other projects in the works include *FLAMINGOS*, set in a gay retirement home, and *SMART MOB*, a quirky crime thriller based on a true story. Last year Todd was selected by *Filmmaker* magazine as one of their “25 New Directors to Watch.”

Karen Jaroneski (PRODUCER) — Karen was the associate producer and assistant director on *EDGE OF SEVENTEEN*. She co-produced *INTERN* (2000 Sundance Film Festival), which stars Dominique Swain, Peggy Lipton and Joan Rivers. Karen produced Isabel Hagner’s award-winning short *PEPPERMILLS* (Teddy Award, 1998 Berlin Film Festival) and production managed *ABOVE FREEZING* (directed by Frank Todaro, produced by Dolly Hall). In 1996, she co-produced Ramin Niami’s feature *SOMEWHERE IN THE CITY* (starring Sandra Bernhard and Bai Ling) and line produced James Rosenow’s feature *CROSSING FIELDS*.

Also a native Ohioan, Karen is a partner in Staccato Films, an Amsterdam-based production company. Recent Staccato Amsterdam projects: *THE EMPEROR’S WIFE* starring Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Paula van der Oest’s *MOONLIGHT*, the 2002 Cannes surprise hit *PAULINE AND PAULETTE* and Alejandro Agresti’s *BUENOS AIRES VICE VERSA*.

Michael Wolfson (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER) — Michael is a producer, writer and internet entrepreneur. After meeting Todd Stephens on the first day of NYU Film School, they went on to produce two award-winning shorts. After college, Michael and Todd co-wrote the first script of a horror trilogy, *COUNT YOUR CHILDREN*. In 1994, they founded Luna Pictures, an independent motion picture production company focusing on feature films and digital non-linear post production. In 1997, Michael co-founded The Knot, the internet’s leading wedding site. The company went public in 1999. Michael has since moved on to a top position at AOL.

Edgar Lansbury (EXECUTIVE PRODUCER) — Edgar is currently producing a new musical featuring the music of JOHN LENNON for Broadway (2005/2006). He has produced dozens of Broadway and off-Broadway plays and musicals, inaugurated by his Broadway production of Frank Gilroy’s Pulitzer and Tony Award-winner, *THE SUBJECT WAS ROSES*. Lansbury subsequently produced the film version for MGM starring Patricia Neal, Martin Sheen, and Jack Albertson (who won an Academy Award). Other films include *GODSPELL* (which Lansbury also produced on Broadway), *THE WILD PARTY*, *SQUIRM*, *BLUE SUNSHINE*, *HE KNOWS YOU’RE ALONE*, *THE CLAIRVOYANT* and *ADVICE FROM A CATERPILLAR* (adapted by Douglas Carter Beane from his play which Lansbury produced and directed).

Judith Zarin (CO-PRODUCER) — Judith has produced and executive produced an impressive list of independent features including Nicole Holofcener's *LOVELY & AMAZING*, Miguel Arteta's award-winning *CHUCK AND BUCK*, Dan Minahan's *SERIES 7: THE CONTENDERS*, Linda Yellen's *THE SIMIAN LINE* and *THE PORNOGRAPHER: A LOVE STORY*. She has a number of projects in development with directors including Robert Allan Ackerman and Amir Naderi.

Tim Kaltenecker (CO-STORY) — Tim leads a double life. By day, he is an award-winning teacher and Chairman of the Math Department at Byram Hills High School in Armonk, New York. By night, he collaborates with his boyfriend, Todd, on various film projects. Tim co-wrote the story for *GYPSY*, as well as serving as its Music Consultant. In 1997, he cast *EDGE OF SEVENTEEN*, from which Chris Stafford was nominated for an Independent Spirit Award for Best Newcomer. Tim taught at New York City's Little Red School House/Elisabeth Irwin High School for ten years.

Gina DeGirolamo (DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY) — Gina, another relocated Ohioan, shot *EDGE OF SEVENTEEN* achieving the "John Hughesian *Pretty In Pink*" style Todd had envisioned. Gina's other features include *EQUINOX ROCKS*, directed by Fran Rzeznik and *JEROME*, a desert road movie written, produced and directed by three partners — Tom Johnston, Dave Elton and Eric Tignini. The film received visual critical acclaim at festivals and *Daily Variety* called Gina's work "unshowy yet often beautiful... the photography makes the wasteland a character in itself." In 1996, Gina lensed the short *THE LAST TAP DANCE*, directed by Michelle Truffaut. She then collaborated with director Paula Goldberg on *THE TRAVELLING COMPANION* — a 35MM short which inspired Gina to create beautiful images of women against a deeply saturated color palette. Gina's television credits include DP'ing and camera operating on such series as *DREAM ON*, *BAKERSFIELD P.D.*, *VR5*, *THE CLIENT*, *MALONEY*, *MURDER ONE*, *ARLI\$S* and *PROVIDENCE*.

Annette Davey (FILM EDITOR) — Annette has an impressive list of film editor credits that includes features, shorts and network television. A sampling of her recent feature work includes *HARRY AND MAX* (Sundance 2004) and *THE SLEEPY TIME GAL* (Sundance 2001), both directed by Christopher Munch; Vincent Gallo's *BROWN BUNNY* (Cannes 2003); Christopher Goode's *DEAD DOG*; *DROWNING ON DRY LAND* with Barbara Hershey; Hart/Sharpe and Killer Films' *DARK HARBOR* with Alan Rickman; Garrett Williams' *SPARK* (Sundance and Berlin); and Gabriella Cristiani's *LADIES' ROOM* with John Malkovich, Greta Scacchi and Lorraine Bracco.

Marty Beller (ORIGINAL MUSIC) — Composing credits include music for the Emmy award-winning documentary *THE CRUISE*; Theatreworks USA's production of *ROMEO AND JULIET* (Lucille Lortel Theater, U.S. Tour); *BIOGRAPHY OF GROUCHO MARX* (A&E); The documentary *7TH STREET* (2003 release in Theaters); The New York Times' *MILLENNIUM MINUTE*; Award winning short *THE POOL* and short *LOVE GETS YOU TWISTED* (IFC). Marty has recorded and toured with Restless recording artist They Might Be Giants, Nettwerk recording artist Ivy, Image recording artist Stew, Unfiltered recording artist Brookville, Warner Bros. recording artist Michelle Lewis, Polygram recording artist Daniel Cartier, Bolivian singer Hilario Soto, the 14 piece rock orchestra All Gods Children, and Enemy recording artist Meow. He has composed for and performed with international dance companies Jennifer Muller/The Works, Julio Bocca/Ballet Argentino, Sean Curran Company, Heidi Latsky, Chet Walker/8 and ah 1 and RhythMEK.

Eve Battaglia, CSA (CASTING DIRECTOR) — Eve has been a casting director in NYC for over ten years, working on film, TV and theater projects. She has cast many independent features selected for major film festivals, including Sundance, Toronto, Berlin and Cannes. Recent film projects include *MAX & GRACE* which stars Natasha Lyonne, Tim Blake Nelson, David Paymer and Lorraine Bracco, and *HAPPY HOUR* starring Anthony LaPaglia and Eric Stoltz. *SEARCHING FOR BOBBY D.* with Sandra Bernhard wrapped in November 2003. She has cast numerous theater productions on and off-Broadway for the Manhattan Theater Club, Primary Stages, Actors Theater of Louisville and The Circle Repertory Company. She has cast projects for the Showtime, Oxygen and Lifetime networks in addition to work for NBC and CBS. Eve is a member of the Casting Society of America.

Christine McAndrews (LINE PRODUCER) — Christine is currently the General Manager of KSA Publicity, whose clients include Sting, Aerosmith and Bette Midler. She production managed *NAQOYQATSI*, the third in Godfrey Reggio's non-narrative documentary series scored by Philip Glass. Christine also line produced *INTERSTATE 84*, (2000 Toronto Film Festival), *TRUST DANCE* and *ANKLE BRACELET*. In 1997, she production managed her first feature, *NO DEPOSIT, NO RETURN*. Prior to her work in features, Christine production managed and coordinated both live-event television (U.S. Open, Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, Tony Awards) and numerous commercials. While at New York University, Christine interned for *The Howard Stern Radio Show*, where she became notorious as "Christine, the sexy intern."

Nancy Arons (PRODUCTION DESIGNER) — Nancy is, yet another, Ohio-born *GYPSY* participant. Her first production design credit was in 1986 on the PBS/American Playhouse movie *A MISTAKEN CHARITY*. *The New York Times* singled out her work on the period drama as "remarkably authentic." Nancy designed the 1994 Sundance entrant *AMERICAN STANDOFF*, directed by Gavin O'Connor (*Tumbleweeds*); the 1998 independent *TIRE MOUNTAIN*, directed by Lisa Udelson; and the Milos Forman/Channel 4 production *OF WHICH NOTHING IS LEFT*, directed by Elizabeth Benfey, among other films. Nancy has both art directed and production designed a slew of high-end music videos (for Tony Bennett, Reba McEntire, Willie Nelson and Sinéad O'Connor, Meatloaf, Anita Baker, etc.) and a broad spectrum of commercials (for AT&T, Neo-Synephrine, ESPN, Sony, ShopRite, MTV, Pete's Wicked Ale, IBM, etc.). She received the International Broadcast Designers Association Silver Award for her work on MTV's 1989 Video Music Awards, a Clio award for her Nick@Nite's Fall Parade '89 campaign (12 spots), an Addy and a Telly.

Kitty Boots (COSTUME DESIGNER) — Kitty currently designs for *QUEER EYE FOR THE STRAIGHT GUY*. *GYPSY 83* marked Kitty's debut as a designer in film, which she followed with *SI' LARABY* and *SECOND BEST* (Sundance 2004). Her early career was spent working for BOY LONDON during its rise from London punk/goth street wear to global sportswear for the worldwide market. Kitty left BOY to set up her own design business, outfitting such celebrities as Alice Cooper, Adam Ant and Sique Sique Sputnik. In 1990, Kitty arrived in New York where she hosted a series of runway shows, receiving rave reviews from the worldwide press, including *Women's Wear Daily*. The Kitty Boots Collection has been sold at stores including Bloomingdale's and London and Tokyo's Sign of the Times. In 1996, Kitty showed in Vienna at Diesel's "International Modernage Wien." Kitty has designed costumes for the May Music Festival's Opera Ballet of Florence, performers Acrobats of God, and costumes for Debbie Harry/Blondie. Kitty was born in England where she acquired a degree in theatrical design from Birmingham Polytechnic. She is co-founder of the legendary New York City nightclub Jackie 60 / Mother.





ABOUT THE CAST

Sara Rue (GYPSY VALE) — Sara is the star of the hit ABC series *LESS THAN PERFECT* with Andy Dick and Eric Roberts. She spent three years on the WB's *POPULAR*, and appeared in *PEARL HARBOR* and *THE RING*. Sara played Sigourney Weaver's cellmate in *A MAP OF THE WORLD* and is in the upcoming film *A SLIPPING DOWN LIFE* starring Lily Taylor and Guy Pierce. She has been a cast member on five other television series and has been a guest on numerous series including *ER*, *ROSEANNE* and *WILL AND GRACE*. Sara also writes and performs her own music in clubs around Los Angeles.

Kett Turton (CLIVE WEBB) — Kett currently stars in Stephen King's mega mini-series *KINGDOM HOSPITAL* on ABC. He received a Best Actor Award at Outfest for his work in *GYPSY 83* as well as a Canadian Leo best actor nomination for his performance in the feature *ROLLERCOASTER*. Kett starred in the WB series *DEAD LAST*, about a ghost-chasing rock band. Other recent film credits include *SAVED* (with Jena Malone, Mandy Moore & Macaulay Culkin), *FALLING ANGELS* (Toronto 2003), *HEART OF AMERICA*, *COMING DOWN THE MOUNTAIN* and *RICKY 6*.

Karen Black (BAMBI LE BLEAU) — Academy-Award nominated for *FIVE EASY PIECES*, Karen has done over 100 films including Robert Altman's *NASHVILLE*, *COME BACK TO THE FIVE AND DIME*, *JIMMY DEAN* as well as *EASY RIDER*, *THE GREAT GATSBY*, *AIRPORT 1975*, *TRILOGY OF TERROR*, *DAY OF THE LOCUST*, and Hitchcock's *FAMILY PLOT*. Karen recently appeared in Rob Zombie's hit *HOUSE OF 1000 CORPSES*. Two of Karen's musical performances appear on the *GYPSY 83* Soundtrack Album and she and Todd plan to begin recording a Bambi-inspired lounge album this year.

John Doe (RAY VALE) — The punk rock star from the 80s band X, John started acting a few years back and can be seen in *THE GOOD GIRL*, *SUGARTOWN*, *FORCES OF NATURE*, *BOOGIE NIGHTS*, *GEORGIA*, *ROADSIDE PROPHETS*, *BROKEDOWN PALACE* and TV's *ROSWELL* among many others.

Paulo Costanzo (TROY) — A native of Ontario, Canada, Paulo appeared in *ROAD TRIP*, *JOSIE AND THE PUSSYCATS* and *40 DAYS AND 40 NIGHTS* (co-starring Josh Hartnett). He recently starred in *A PROBLEM WITH FEAR* (Toronto 2003) and *SCORCHED* (with Alicia Silverstone and Rachel Leigh Cook).

Anson Scoville (ZECHARIAH) — Anson played one of the love interests opposite Dominique Swain in *INTERN*. Last year Anson played the lead in two independent features *DRAFT DODGING* and *CHECKOUT* (opposite Burt Young). He recently produced and starred in the feature *BLACK WINE*.





FESTIVAL AWARDS

Grand Jury Award for Best Actor — Kett Turton	Outfest
Best New Director — Todd Stephens	Seattle Gay & Lesbian Film Festival
Jury Award — Todd Stephens	Reel Affirmations XI, Washington, D.C.
Audience Award — Best Feature	Torino International Gay & Lesbian Film Festival (Italy)
Audience Award — Best Feature	Out on Screen — Toronto Gay Festival
Audience Award — Best Feature	Portland Lesbian and Gay Film Festival





music

“Pieces”

Written and Published by
Victoria Lloyd, Chris Ross and Benjamin Fargen (BMI)
Courtesy of Metropolis Records
Performed by CLAIRE VOYANT

“Surround You With Love”

Written by Jess Adams
Published by Yes Sir That's My Music (ASCAP)
Courtesy of Motif Records
Performed by PJ LEQUERICA

“Severance”

Written by Dead Can Dance
Published by EMI Virgin Music, Inc.
Courtesy of Metropolis Records
Performed by BAUHAUS

“Crystal Sea”

Written by Che Zuro
Published by Che Che Che (BMI)
Performed by SARA RUE and JOHN DOE

“Nothing Special”

Written by Roi
Courtesy of Soiled Records
Performed by MECHANICAL CABARET

“Talk To Me”

Written by Chas Sanford
Published by © WB Music Corp. (ASCAP)
Courtesy of Sound Choice
Performed by SARA RUE

“Crystal Sea”

Published by Che Che Che (BMI)
Courtesy of Youghiogheny River Records
Written and Performed by CHE ZURO

“Turn Up The Radio”

Written by Steve Plunkett, Steve Lynch, Keni Richards, Randy Rand and Steve Isham
Published by Songs of Universal, Inc. (BMI) o/b/o itself & Plunkrock Music (BMI)
Ish Music (BMI), Richitti Music (BMI)
Lynch Mob Music (BMI) and Black Casper Music (BMI)
Courtesy of The RCA Music Group, a unit of BMG Entertainment
Under license from BMG Special Products
Performed by AUTOGRAPH

“When Sunny Gets Blue”

Written by Fisher & Segal
Published by Sony / ATV Tunes LLC (ASCAP)
Courtesy of Music Maestro
Performed by KAREN BLACK

“I’m Too Sexy”

Written by Fred Fairbrass, Richard Fairbrass and Robert Manzoli
Published by EMI Blackwood Music Inc. (BMI)
Courtesy of Sound Choice

“Country Road Show”

Published by Revision West (BMI)
Courtesy of Marc Ferrari / MasterSource
Written and Performed by JOHN REED KEKAR

“I Want A Lip”

Written by Nino Tempo
Published by Larry Shayne Enterprises c/o Largo Music, Inc. (BMI)
Performed by KAREN BLACK and THE SMARTMEN

“Walking In The Jungle”

Written by Irene Farrera
Published by Same Sea Music (BMI)
Performed by KAREN BLACK and THE SMARTMEN

“Just Like Heaven”

Written by Smith, Tolhurst, Gallup, Thompson and Williams
Published by BMG Songs, Inc. (ASCAP) o/b/o Fiction Songs Ltd. (PRS)
Courtesy of Elektra Entertainment Group
By arrangement with Warner Special Products
And courtesy of Fiction Records Limited / Polydor UK Limited
Under license from Universal Music Enterprises
Performed by THE CURE

“Twenty-Four Years”

Written and Published by
Victoria Lloyd, Chris Ross and Benjamin Fargen (BMI)
Courtesy of Metropolis Records
Performed by CLAIRE VOYANT

“Doing The Unstuck”

Written by Smith, Gallup, Thompson, Williams and Bamonte
Published by BMG Songs, Inc. (ASCAP) o/b/o Fiction Songs Ltd. (PRS)
Courtesy of Elektra Entertainment Group
By arrangement with Warner Special Products
And courtesy of Fiction Records Limited / Universal International Music, B.V.
Under license from Universal Music Enterprises
Performed by THE CURE

“Suffer In Silence”

Written by Stephan L. Groth
Published by Dead Man Moving
Courtesy of Metropolis Records
Performed by APOPTYGMA BERZERK

“Talk To Me”

Written by Chas Sanford
Published by © WB Music Corp. (ASCAP)
Performed by DIVA DESTRUCTION

“Dilaudid (Postponed)”

Written by Bryan Erickson and Paul Lipman
Published by Futurepop Music (BMI)
Courtesy of Metropolis Records
Performed by VELVET ACID CHRIST

“Iolite (Francis A. Preve Remix)”

Written and Published by
Victoria Lloyd, Chris Ross and Benjamin Fargen (BMI)
Courtesy of Metropolis Records
Performed by CLAIRE VOYANT

“Voice So Sweet”

Written by Marty Beller and Todd Stephens
Published by Skee-ball (ASCAP) and Stephens (BMI)
Performed by SARA RUE and STEW

“Eccentricity”

Written by Anders Odden
Published by Hacate Entertainment Group (TONO)
Performed by MAGENTA

Soundtrack Available on Metropolis Records



IN MEMORY OF

Art L’Hommedieu (1969-1998)
Byron Williamson (1974-2000)

'Gypsy 83' Brings Middle America to Outfest 2001

By KEVIN THOMAS
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Outfest 2001, the 19th annual Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Film Festival, continues through Monday at various venues, including the John Anson Ford Theater, where "Gypsy 83" screens tonight at 8:30.

Todd Stephens, the writer-producer of the poignant, autobiographical "Edge of Seventeen," again returns to his hometown, Sandusky, Ohio, to introduce us to a couple of irresistible outsiders, a pair of Goths in the midst of Middle America. The beautiful, zaftig Gypsy (Sara Rue), a struggling singer in her early 20s, and Clive (Kett Turton), a gay high school student, take off for New York, where Clive has encouraged Gypsy to enter the "Night of 1,000 Stevies" competition—Stevie Nicks being Gypsy's idol.

This time Stephens directs and writes, and the result is a heart-tugger in which this vulnerable yet resilient duo have some life-changing experiences along the way to Manhattan. Karen Black is memorable as a small-town lounge singer sustained by delusions of past glory.

Los Angeles Times

THURSDAY

JULY 19, 2001

PhiladelphiaWEEKLY

GYPSY 83. "I don't give a flying fuck or a rolling rim-job what you or anyone else thinks of me," spits Sara Rue to an old lady in church. Best-known as Carmen, the zaftig cheerleader of the WB series *Popular*, Rue turns pottymouth as the title character in *Gypsy 83*, an outspoken Stevie Nicks-wannabe whose velvet corsets and dramatic eye makeup cause nuclear families to gawk and churchgoing old ladies to tremble in rage. In their hometown of Sandusky, Ohio, Gypsy and her barely-out-of-the-closet best friend Clive are "freaks" who dream of stardom and a world outside of Sandusky. When a Stevie Nicks' fan website announces their annual "Night of 1000 Stevies" look-alike contest at a New York club, Gypsy drops her job at the Foto Hut and they grab their

chance at a new life. Predictable yet pleasant road-movie hijinks ensue, set to a soundtrack of gothy favorites like Siouxsie and the Banshees and the Cure. (Rumor has it Nicks declined to provide the rights to any of her music.) Gypsy and Clive hook up with an Amish boy and a frat boy, respectively, and Karen Black makes a cameo appearance as washed-up karaoke hostess Bambi LeBleau. Because it's primarily about friendship and not sexuality, *Gypsy 83* is funny and touching for both gay and straight audiences.

(Jessica Pressler)



Stevie wannabe: Sara Rue goes from *Popular* to nomad in *Gypsy 83*.

Outfest 2001

Gypsy 83, Julie Johnson stand out as top distribution picks at L.A.'s burgeoning gay and lesbian film festival

by R. Hunter Garcia

A t a festival disappointingly slim with distribution pickings, two strong films about friendship—Todd Stephens' *Gypsy 83* and Bob Gosse's *Julie Johnson*—emerged as the best new films seeking distribution at Outfest 2001, Los Angeles' Gay and Lesbian Film Festival.

In *Gypsy 83*, Sara Rue, best known as zafig cheerleader-wannabe Carmen on the axed WB TV series *Popular*, gives an endearing, knock-out performance as Gypsy Vale, a 25-year-old Ohio native and would-be rock star with a Stevie Nicks fixation who embarks on a road trip to New York's "Night of a Thousand Stevies" along with her best friend Clive (Outfest Best Actor winner Kett Turton), a teenaged, gay Goth virgin who has his own fixation on Robert Smith of The Cure. The pair of misfit friends meet a memorable mix of characters along with the way, from a truck stop

karaoke hostess (Karen Black) to a hitch-hiking, runaway Amish hunk (Anson Scoville) who may or may not be gay.

Although this hard-to-define film poses a tough marketing challenge

mouth appeal that signals giant sleeper hit potential. And while director Stephens doesn't yet have name recognition, his role as screenwriter of 1998's cult gay hit *Edge of Seventeen* will draw the large fan base of that film.

In addition, the film's Stevie Nicks theme will draw upon Nicks' own sizable following.

Lili Taylor plays the title character of Bob Gosse's *Julie Johnson*, but the film belongs to co-star Courtney Love. Taylor plays a Hoboken housewife who leaves her domineering husband and goes back to school only to discover, in the tradition of *Good Will Hunting*, that she is a brilliant physics genius — and that she's in love with her best friend Claire. Love gives the best performance of her career as Claire, a dim-witted but well-meaning friend who, for instance, agrees



Popular's Rue stars in Todd Stephens' *Gypsy 83*

(Possible tagline: "Night of a Thousand Stevies or Bust?"), the youth-oriented movie's chief recommendation is that it has the kind of word-of-

to accompany, the frightened Julie to her first night-time computer classes despite her own absolute lack of interest in them. Love won Outfest's Best Actress Award, and it is not an exaggeration to suggest that *Julie Johnson* could garner Love her first Oscar nod (Love was a 1997 Golden Globe nominee for *The People vs. Larry Flynt*). Originally scheduled for distribution by The Shooting Gallery, *Julie Johnson* became available again last month when The Shooting Gallery suddenly went out of business. Director Gosse and the film are reppped by ICM.

Although Outfest showcased 43 narrative features, the strongest films arrived with distribution already lined up, while a shockingly high number of the remaining films barely warranted exhibition beyond the immediate circle of friends and family involved in the each of the respective productions. Among the highlights: Michael Cuesta's *L.I.E.* (*Long Island Expressway*), a provocative account of a 15-year-old boy's conflicted feelings for a predatory middle-aged pedophile, which won the Outfest Grand Jury Award for



Taylor and Love anchor *Julie Johnson*

heated competition—including Dirk Schafer's *Circuit*, Jeffrey Maccubbin's *Flush*, Helen Lesnick's *A Family Affair*, Michael Selditch's *Fixing Frank* and Harriet Dodge and Silas Flipper's *By Hook Or By Crook*. The inclusion of such films might have been understandable in the past, but it's inexplicable in light of Outfest's exclusion of such high quality new films as Derek Simonds's *Seven and a Match* and John Greyson's *The Law of Enclosures*. **E**

Orthodox winner at Outfest

By EILEEN KOWALSKI

The community turned out for Outfest's raucous seventh annual Outies awards at the John Anson Ford Theater on Sunday night, as Sandhi Simcha Dubowski's docu on gay Orthodox Jews, "Trembling Before G-d," received the grand jury award for docu feature and Michael Cuesta's coming-of-age drama "L.I.E." took the prize for American narrative feature.

Honoring a wide spectrum of gay cinema, the ceremony capped the 19th Los Angeles Gay & Lesbian Film Festival. A total of seven jury prizes and five audience awards were presented.

"While the Emmys will give an award to 'Queer as Folk,' at Outfest the queer *are* the folk," host Bruce Vilanch said. "It's important to celebrate the gay community and the gay culture. It's more than just what you may see on a few television shows."

"L.I.E.'s" Paul Franklin Dano tied for acting honors with Kett Turton from "Gypsy 83."

Turn to page 16

Continued from page 4

Two other films won multiple Outies: Harriet Dodge and Silas Flipper's butch noir buddy film, "By Hook or by Crook," garnered the grand jury award for outstanding screenwriting and the audience award for outstanding narrative feature (tied with Cheryl Dunye's "Stranger Inside"); and Lisa Udelson's Tupperware lady doc, "Lifetime Guarantee: Phranc's Adventures in Plastic," won audience awards for outstanding documentary feature and soundtrack.

Other winners included "Princesa," by Henrique Goldman, grand jury award for international narrative feature; Courtney Love, grand jury award for actress in a feature film for "Julie Johnson"; African doc shorts "Dark and Lovely, Soft and Free" and "A Normal Daughter: The Life and Times of Kewpie of District Six," special mentions.

"Meeting (Entrevue)" took the audience award for narrative short film; "De Colores," audience award for docu short; "Treading Water" helmer Lauren Himmel, emerging talent award; "Our Lady of the Assassins" d.p. Rodrigo Lalinde, special programming committee award for outstanding artistic

achievement; and Rich Burns and David Mixner, winners of the screening competish for WWII drama "The Dunes of Overveen."

The awards ceremony was followed by the Los Angeles premiere of Susan Seidelman's "Gaudi Afternoon."

Outfest 2001 featured 231 films from 23 countries.

TUESDAY
JULY 24, 2001

WASHINGTON CityPaper

GYPSY 83 Two Goth misfits trapped in the tedium of Sandusky, Ohio—20-something photo-mart clerk and would-be singer Gypsy (chunky Sara Rue) and androgynous teenage virgin Clive (puppyish Kett Turton)—hit the road in a '79 Trans Am heading for Manhattan, where Gypsy hopes to participate in a "Night of a Thousand Stevies" honoring her idol, Stevie Nicks. En route, the pair encounter a washed-up, alcoholic jazz chanteuse (Karen Black, who sings a breathy version of "When Sunny Gets Blue"), a handsome Amish runaway (Anson Scoville), and a van filled with randy fraternity pledges. Gypsy succumbs to a passionate but disillusioning roadside romance, and Clive experiences a gay sexual awakening that excites but subsequently unnerves him. Arriving in New York at a club overflowing with faux Stevies, Gypsy learns the fate of her runaway mother and Clive realizes that he's not yet ready to deal with the challenges of a larger, more threatening world than Sandusky. Written and directed by Todd Stephens, *Gypsy 83*, a comedy-drama filled with unexpected moods and eccentric characters, offers a fresh spin on the road movie. A regular on the television series *Popular*, Rue gives a bravura performance, complemented by Turton's vulnerability and startling changes in physical appearance as he shifts from one outrageous outfit to another. Come prepared to laugh, repress a few tears, and wonder at the sight of a screenful of spinning Stevie clones. In conjunction with the Reel Affirmations XI Film Festival. (JES) (Lincoln Theatre, Saturday)

ON THE GAYDAR: TODD STEPHENS

Depicting subcultures on film can be a tricky business. Either you miss the mark completely and offend every member of the group or hit the nail right on the head, and gain an eternal cult following.

Helmer and scribe Todd Stephens — whose film “Gypsy 83” was completed two days before its June 6 debut at the New York Gay and Lesbian Festival and will make its West Coast debut under the stars at Outfest on July 19 — takes on two quirky societies with great success: Stevie Nicks fans and the Goth crowd.

Stephens’ film focuses on how an obsessed and talented Nickite named Gypsy (“Popular’s” Sara Rue) attempts to escape her mundane existence of Sandusky, Ohio, to take a wild ride of her own to the Night of 1,000 Stevies in Gotham. Her dark-cloaked best friend, Clive (Kett Turton), goes with her, taking a journey toward his own coming out.

The reason Stephens’ pic bears the stamp of authenticity is because the Ohio-born filmmaker has first-hand knowledge, he explains. “I’ve been a fan for a number of years, have lots of memorabilia and have myself gone to Night of Stevies for about five years. This last May I got the guts up to perform myself. I’m more like a 6-foot-tall Stevie.”

It was through this fan network that he met a woman online called Gypsy 23 that was an inspiration for the character in the film.

Never really a black-lipstick guy, Stephens was more of a new wave kid, like the one in his autobiographical screenplay for the 1998 release “Edge of Seventeen.”

The filmmaker says he can “definitely identify with being a freak growing up in a small town and trying to find the place in the world where you belong.” Like the characters in “Gypsy,” he left the Lake Erie “Vacationland” of Sandusky; he left to attend NYU film school years ago.

He currently is penning what will be the final chapter of his so-called “estrangement in Sandusky” trilogy, “Drama Club.”



— Greg Reifsteck

DAILY VARIETY

ONCE MORE, WITH FEELING

Todd Stephens makes his directorial debut — again.

BY SAM ADAMS

Toward the end of *Gypsy 83*, the first film written and directed by Todd Stephens, Gypsy (Sara Rue) steps onto the stage of a New York nightclub looking a lot like Stevie Nicks. In fact, she's come all the way from Sandusky, OH, to take part in the club's annual "Night of a Thousand Stevies," where Nicks-alikes from all over the country gather to show off their best simulations. Gypsy's obsession, though, isn't a one-night stand; she dresses like this all the time. 25 years old and working in a

York apartment. "I actually directed about a quarter of the movie. It was so personal: We were back in my hometown, shooting in my real house with all these clothes that I had saved, these characters that were completely based on real-life people, including my mother and myself. And it just got to where I felt I wasn't able to be objective; I felt like I wasn't doing the film justice because I stopped being able to separate the reality of the way it happened from re-creating it in a film — which I learned I can never fully do."

In fact, he says, casting decisions were partly made based on old photographs of the people the characters were based on. In one case, that of the main character's lesbian boss (played by Lea Delaria), he didn't even bother to change the name. (The model for the character, he says, lives in Philadelphia.) As a result, Stephens says, he found himself overwhelmed with attention to niggling details; "Sometimes, I would walk onto the set, and it just wouldn't look right to me, because it wasn't the way it was."

What followed was, he says, "the most agonizing decision of my entire life."

He volunteered to step aside, and asked the film's producer to take over as director. "It was really tough," he recalls. "It was really horrible."

Needless to say, Stephens wasn't going to make the same mistake twice. *Gypsy 83* splits its interest between Gypsy and Clive (Kett Turton), an 18-year-old gay Robert Smith clone who's come to terms with his sexuality but still hasn't managed to lose his virginity. The similarities between *Gypsy* and *Edge* aren't hard to trace; Stephens says he thinks of the films as "companion pieces," both featuring gay teenagers in Sandusky, would-be artists stuck in menial jobs but dreaming of big-city life. But *Gypsy* backs off enough to allow Stephens to get a handle on the material without losing his grip. "One thing I learned: You just can never re-create the past, and why bother? A film has a life of its own. You can come at it with all this inspiration from reality and real people, but once you cast actors, they're going to have their own interpretation of the character. I think I really learned to let that breathe."

(sam@citypaper.net)

Gypsy 83 screens Fri., July 6 at 9:30 p.m. at the Prince Music Theater, 1412 Chestnut St. Todd Stephens will attend the screening. See Sam Adams' review on p. 18.



JUMPIN' IN THE BONEYARD:
Turton and Rue look enthused.

photo booth in a mall parking lot, she's clung to her dreams of Nicksian acclaim, and the trip from Sandusky has both uncovered old wounds and left a few fresh ones. But, as often happens in movies where people drive from one place to another place, she's learned something about herself along the way. After muscling her way up to the mic, she sings not one of Stevie's songs, but one of her own. She hasn't come this far just to copy someone else.

In a strange way, *Gypsy's* story is Stephens' as well. Not only is he a self-confessed Nicks addict who's been attending the real Night of a Thousand Stevies with his boyfriend for the last five years, but he, too, has learned something about the perils of making art by Xerox. See, *Gypsy 83* is Stephens' directorial debut, but it isn't — not exactly. It might strike you while watching *Gypsy 83* that it bears a striking similarity to 1999's *Edge of Seventeen*, for which Stephens received writing and producing credits — far more than films with only a writer in common usually share. And as it turns out, Stephens did much more than write *Edge of Seventeen*. In fact, he directed it — or at least, he started to.

"I did all the casting, and rehearsals, all the costumes and location [scouts] and that kind of stuff," Stephens recalls from his New

FILMMAKER™

THE MAGAZINE OF INDEPENDENT FILM

25 NEW FACES OF INDEPENDENT FILM

Every year *Filmmaker* attempts to predict the future by highlighting 25 people we believe will shape it. This year's group spans a wide diversity of talents and directions, including animators, directors, writers, d.p.s, composers and actors. But they all share a dedication to their craft and provide us with a promise of things to come.

SUMMER 2001

NEW FACES

TODD STEPHENS – writer/director

Fresh out of N.Y.U. film school and with only two shorts to his name, Todd Stephens wrote and produced the gay indie hit *Edge of Seventeen*, a semi-autobiographical feature based on his teen years. "I actually started out as director of *Edge of Seventeen*," Stephens says, "but after a week of shooting this very personal story, I found it was very hard to maintain my objectivity, and I felt it was better for me not to continue. I asked David Moreton to step in and finish it. It was hard, but it was the best thing at the time, for me and for the film. Ultimately I was very happy with the way things turned out."

With that success under his belt, Stephens was soon ready for what would be his debut as a director, *Gypsy 83*. "I wanted to pick up where *Edge* left off," he explains. "[The films] are tied together by my real-life experiences. *Edge* is about one part, and *Gypsy* is the part about leaving Ohio."

An unusual road movie of sorts, *Gypsy 83* is the story of a young woman, Gypsy, obsessed with her idol, Stevie Nicks, and dreaming of a way to escape her small-town life. She finds refuge in fantasy and in hanging out with her gay, goth best friend. Gypsy has a few strikes against her: she is overweight, her mom abandoned her, and she has a chip on her shoulder. The road trip is her journey to self-acceptance.

Vociferously upbeat, and featuring a killer soundtrack with Bauhaus, the Cure and Siouxsie and the Banshees, *Gypsy 83* is backed up by talent

that includes Karen Black and Sara Rue, who were both drawn to the project by a strong script. Says Stephens, "It's about accepting yourself for who you are and living your dreams, something we can all relate to." Next up for him? *Flamingos*, a script about a gay retirement home in Florida, and *The Dana Rivers Story*, an original movie for Lifetime Television. — Arnold Salas

[contact: www.gypsy83.com or gypsy083@aol.com]



Photo: Miguel M. Alabos