

A Paige from reality

Da Vinci star pleased by authenticity of new film

FLMEXCHANGE: TURNING PAIGE

Original 7:30 p.m. Garrick

Nicholas Campbell has a raging talent for keeping it real. And he shows it to full advantage as an emotionally bruised car salesman in director Robert Cuffey's compelling feature *Turning Paige*, screening at the Garrick tonight at 7:30 p.m. as part of *FilmExchange*.

Campbell isn't just a key player he's also an ardent fan of the film co-starring Katherine Isabelle, Brendan Fletcher and newcomer-to-watch Philip Dewilde.

"I'm going to be at the screening. I can't wait to sit there with the full audience and see if they like it or not," Campbell says.

Isabelle and Cuffey will also be in attendance to support the film shot in New Brunswick a year ago. It's a suspenseful, sometimes comic drama in which budding teenage writer Paige (Isabelle) and her functioning-alcoholic dad (Campbell) are forced to deal with a past tragedy when wayward son Trevor (DeWilde) returns to the dysfunctional family fold.

"It strikes you right away how sincere it seems. It's a nice take on a common problem," Campbell says. "For kids that age, it's assumed that they go home and it's nice and there's a meal on the table, and the actual reality of it is what the film is about. It smacks of authenticity."

Campbell has more than 60 films and TV projects under his belt, including the 1983 Manitoba-made *Bordertown Coyé*. But he's really been on a roll since his gripping turn as an undercover cop in 1997 CBC drama *Major Crime* bled into his Gemini Award-winning run as Vancouver



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Nicholas Campbell type, never for a second envisioning that we would get him," he says.

Cuffey auditioned Isabelle a few years ago when he workshopped the script in Vancouver. He wanted her but hired another actor by mistake. This time, he made sure he got it right.

Campbell also remembered Isabelle, who played a teen hooker on *Da Vinci's Inquest's* debut season in 1998.

"It's hard to forget that face," he says. "She was in the very first triple-header we had. She didn't have much dialogue but she was in a lot of scenes."

Isabelle, 20, has since worked with Al Pacino in the upcoming drama *Insonmnia*, but counts *Turning Paige* as her favourite film experience to date.

"I really liked Paige because she wasn't your typical teenager in depression, she kinda had a bit more to deal with," she says. "And the script was so funny in parts and it was so totally depressing in

other parts that it was just the variety of different emotions."

After playing a teenage werewolf in the most successful Canadian film of 2000, *Ginger Snaps*, Isabelle is getting lots of offers, but some kinda bite.

"Like I've been asked if I want to do auditions for *Halloween VIII* and things like that," she says. "The only reason I did *Ginger Snaps* was because it was so good and not your typical horror movie."

The daughter of Emmy Award-winning production designer Graham Murray (*The X-Files*) and writer-producer Gail Murray, Isabelle and her brother Josh Murray had roles in *The Last Writer* shot in Virden, Man., in the late '80s. She's since appeared in *Crossed*, *Disturbing Behaviour* and in several Vancouver-made TV series and movies.

Other features on tonight's FilmExchange bill:

■ Critically acclaimed Inuit language film *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* at the Garrick at 7 p.m. It gets a theatrical release later this month. Actress Lucy Thiburgayuk is a guest.

■ *The Secret Hereafter*: A tribute to director Atom Egoyan, who takes part in an onstage interview tomorrow at noon at the Hot Fort Garry, the movie screens at Cinematheque at 7 p.m. Actress Gabrielle Rose is a guest.

■ *Jesus Christ: Vampire Hunter* director Lee Demarbre introduces his odyssey Mexican wrestlers, kung-fu vampires and the son of God do battle, at Cinematheque at 11:30 p.m.



CROUCHING TIGER: Nicholas Campbell and Katherine Isabelle in *Paige*