

Madcap Caped Crusader Comes to L.A.

BY LEO BUCK

Despite many major studios having talked about it for years, whenever the time to actually make a movie involving a gay superhero was at hand, getting it off the ground seemed tougher than leaping tall buildings in a single bound. Then again, these guys didn't reckon with independent filmmaker Vincent J.

what you do," Gavin tells the professor.

"As it should be," the professor replies. Little do they know that the professor's former lover and research partner, Hector Harris, has sabotaged the project, which results in both Hector and the unsuspecting Gavin being shot full of energy rays. Naturally, this gives each man strength and abilities far beyond those of ordinary mortals.

Gavin soon learns that he has tele-mag-



Roth. In *Surge of Power*, classic characters like Batman, Green Lantern and the ol' Man of Steel himself finally get a super sending up—this time with a refreshingly flamboyant twist.

Written and produced by Roth and directed by Michael Donohue, our story opens at "Comic-con," San Diego's famous memorabilia convention. There, a young collector happens upon a vendor promoting comics about a masked defender of a different kind. Although cynical at first, he looks at a copy of *Surge of Power* and in a flash we're transported to Big City—home of Gavin Lucas, a mild-mannered legal clerk and comic book enthusiast.

Sent to check over some figures with professor Ronald Richards, he sees the result of the professor's latest "groundbreaking research," which is never fully explained.

"No one's really quite sure



netic powers that enable him to move metal objects with the power of his thoughts. Shortly afterward, in a clever variation of the traditional “damsel in distress,” he meets studly but shy Joey Bourgeois, whom he will come to rescue on numerous occasions. The first occurs when he encounters his new friend being accosted by a group of gay-bashing thugs. As expected, he runs to the rescue—for the first time demonstrating his incredible powers.

Realizing he has been chosen to fight for truth, justice and the “American gay,” he creates his official secret identity, calling himself “Surge of Power,” in light of the energetic force he now commands.

The professor also helps the fledgling

pered with numerous winks and nods to many unforgettable shows and movies we all grew up with.

Roth himself does a fine job starring in the title role of a decent-hearted dreamer turned dynamic do-gooder once greatness is thrust upon him. As Hector, aka “The Metal Master,” John Turini nicely overacts and keeps with the entire “out there” style of the production. Perhaps most impressive, though, is *Star Trek*’s Nichelle Nichols, who has never looked more glamorous as “Omen”—Big City’s previous protector. Harkening back to Marlon Brando’s brief but important appearance in the big screen version of Superman, she turns up to offer Gavin just the right advice when he needs

it most.

“Powers aren’t the important thing; character is!” she advises. Additional cameos include strongman Lou Ferrigno from *The Incredible Hulk* and Noel Neil, who played Lois Lane on TV’s *The Adventures of Superman*. However, it’s during the closing credits that Roth really trots out his star power, featuring comments from such memorable pop icons as Rose Marie, Butch (Eddie Munster) Patrick and Little House on the Prairie’s nasty Nellie Olson (Alison Arngrim). Even H.R. Puffinstuff and Witchiepoo get in on the act!

Will the evil “Metal Master” succeed in his plan to – er – “inconvenience” the innocent people of Big City? And what of that cute guy our hero finds himself always protecting? More importantly, does a cape really go with sculpted, vinyl body armor? Find out for yourself when *Surge of Power* hits theaters in Los Angeles on March 24.

For more information, visit www.surgeofpower.org.



crime fighter by inventing several handy tools of his new trade, as well as pulling together an appropriately flashy costume—in electric blue, no less. Before you can say “Holy Rainbow Flag,” this disguise allows Gavin to battle hate crimes, bank robberies and lots of general everyday meanies.

Meanwhile, Hector is using his newfound talents to rob and steal, likewise creating a new alter-ego for his ruthless villainy: “The Metal Master.”

“Is that the best you could come up with?” Surge asks during their climactic rooftop confrontation. “Who writes your material?!”

Sporting a helmet complete with a gaudy oversized horseshoe-shaped magnet attached to it, this diabolical fiend’s plan is to use his energy-draining capability to disable all the electronic devices in Big City—save for those manufactured in his own factories.

One thing’s for sure, Roth and company really know the genre they’re lampooning, and the incredibly low-budget production values play like one of those campy spoofs of the ’60s or early ’70s. Looking past a few awkwardly placed religious references, the script is deliciously campy, pep-



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