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“Film suits the big event because film itself is a big event.”

“Shooting on film somehow shapes your thinking about the event. I’m as influenced as any member of the audience by the scope of film. And, somehow, deserve it or not, film has acquired the reputation that it is larger than life. It’s not considered as 35 mm, it’s how it ends up—fifty feet wide on a theatre screen.

If you’re shooting a commercial for T.V. you still have to think in that same big dimension because so many scripts call for that grand appearance on a T.V. screen.

When you’re really serious about a production you shoot on film, because there are some things you just cannot shoot electronically. Tradition has a lot to do with it, although I think it is more to do with the mental limitation of the director—not the mediums.

As for Eastman color film that has to be the big event of films.”

Peter Cellier
Freelance Commercial Director.
"The funny part about it" says Roger Cowland, the good opticals are the ones you don't see.

Where did you start, Roger, and how do you come to be supervising the feature optics department at Colorfilm?

It goes back 20 years to George Humphries, London. I started there in the neg cutting department, and doing all sorts of jobs, learning all the laboratory procedures. Then I went to Canada, Toronto, at Film House in charge of quality control. After a year in Canada, I came to Australia to work on the Tony Hancock series that was being made out here. Unfortunately, he died on the first week of the series. So we had to bring another one in.

The year in Canada must have been interesting. They have a very high standard there.

They have, extremely high. We did mostly commercials, they weren't doing a lot of features then. We used to do a lot of release prints of features for the States, it was cheaper for them.

Let's talk about opticals work. Could you briefly explain the process?

There are two areas in Colorfilm's opticals department, makeup and printing. Makeup is the actual translation of the effects required onto a print. To do that, the makeup operator must be able to visualise the effects the editor has in mind. When we get the cut work print, the edge numbers are recorded and sent to the neg department, and the negative is extracted from the original camera rolls. It's graded, and sent back to us. Each scene is matched to the cut work print, and cued according to the required optical. This is all laid out on a makeup turning sheet, which sets out in frames the desired effect and how long it should run for. That cue sheet then goes down to the printer. This is a slow process - you're printing a frame at a time, and when you've got multiple exposures, you've got to keep going back over the same piece of film. If you're a frame out, it's history, and the job's no good.

So all the opticals are printed in the optical department. Do you have special printers?

As a matter of fact, we've just installed another new one, an Osberry. It's an aerial image machine with two projector heads, one mounted behind the other so you can run negatives in one and your hit-con mattes or titles in the other. This makes it a lot easier for re-positioning, zooming of the other image, re-positioning a title, or just enlarging an image. It's got automatic zoom, skip framing, fades, dissolves, things like that.

If I bring a film into Colorfilm, what can I expect optically?

Given the right material to start with, there's nothing we can't do. If it's properly prepared. That's terribly important, preparation. One of the things I try to get clients to do is come in and talk the opticals over before they get into expensive shooting, and find out when they've shot it the effect they want isn't going to work.

You'd rather people came in and talked about opticals at script stage?

Yes. In few cases people have come in and talked about things, and of course they work, because we know what they want, and they know how to help us get it for them.

Can you give us an example?

Well, Harlequin was one, although it didn't go from pre-production stages, they asked me to go down to Melbourne when they were cutting to discuss the opticals.

There were a few opticals they wanted and they weren't quite sure if they'd work. So I saw the whole fine cut down there, which is a good thing, I got a feel for the film. Which is important for matching the opticals to the mood. Anyway, there's some places in Harlequin where they looked at the printed work print, and decided some scenes needed sunsets which didn't have sunsets. We had to superimpose them, and it worked very well. We added a streaky sunset sky, and storm clouds over the house.

I didn't notice it.

No. The good opticals are the ones you don't see. There are about 70 in Harlequin, and quite a lot in Newsfront, which most people wouldn't notice. Then there was the client who wanted a special optical for a commercial. They wanted two guys - one on each side of the frame - facing each other, swing in together and shatter. They talked about it before they shot it, we discussed how they should shoot it. They brought it in, great, the effect worked. If you can get people to shoot things with the opticals in mind, it works better. You know, if they have an effect, like a double exposure in mind, they work better if they're shot correctly, like a night shot superimposed over a day shot just won't work.

How else can an editor help get the opticals he wants?

By clearly marking work prints. One very common mistake made is that they don't check their trims. They want a dissolve, and we find there's not enough material to cover it. I think a lot of editors leave things out on the cut work print that they should put down. For example fades and dissolves, they just mark them up and assume you'll understand what it is. For titles, choosing a good legible lettering style. This is very important because depending on backgrounds they can break up and be lost. I can only say pick a bold style.

Avoid serifs?

Yes! Night shots tend to be the worst for titles to be over.

Can you see any radical changes in the business of opticals in the future?

Well, a lot of things have gone over to videotape, especially commercials, mainly because of the speed. But I think the advent of the CRI has made a difference - with opticals being turned around quicker. I still think you can't beat film for quality.

Do you like films?

Do I like films? You can say that again. I've always liked films, that's why I'm working here. That's another important thing. I feel if it's possible for anyone to work at something they really love doing, that's great. I think that's when you put your best into it.

Do you have a favourite film?

"2001." I'm a science fiction freak.

An optical man's dream or nightmare?

Dream. I'd love to do something like that.

What makes Colorfilm a special lab?

The people. They place a lot of importance on skilled technicians. And they look after their staff. It makes for a lot happier working area, people are more interested in and care more about what they're doing. I think it's terribly important for a producer to feel that he's in safe hands, that his film is going to be looked after as an individual thing, and he can be assured of the result.

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Front cover: Jack Thompson in Bruce Beresford's The Club.
1. Ginnane

The latest development in the Equity dispute over the use of foreign actors in Australian films has been producer Antony I. Ginnane's decision to move his film Ginnane's Angel to New Zealand. Principally, this means relocating his $35-40 million production, Race to the Yankee Zephyr.

In a press statement Ginnane said: "Equity's current policy means the total destruction of any possibility of an international film industry in Australia. After making nine films in Melbourne, it is a tragedy that our biggest production must shoot overseas. But not every company is in the position, like the South Australian Film Corporation's, that we will not film another production in the country until Equity's restrictive ruling has been removed."

Ginnane's Australia's most prolific producer, has been encountering difficulties with Equity for some time. On September 24, the Australian Film Commission published its statistical report, which showed the industry was unlikely to make any more films this year or next. The Commission is trying to finalize its finance is available for another production in the country. However, Equity's new policy made this impossible.

Ginnane has provided considerable work for a large number of Melbourne technicians over several years, and his departure is sure to be felt in the time of almost no production. Not surprisingly, the technicians union (the ATAEA) is challenging Equity's position.

2. SAFC

In a surprise announcement, John Fitzgerald, business and legal affairs head of the South Australian Film Corporation, said the SAFC was switching off television production and was unlikely to make any more films. As this came only two days after the SAFC's Breaker Morant won 10 prizes at the 1980 Australian Film Awards, Fitzpatrick's remarks were met with great disappointment.

One of the reasons for the decision was the problem caused by Equity's new policy. Overseas actors were no longer allowed (except in "exceptional circumstances"). The SAFC felt restricted when going about raising money overseas, as this money was usually drawn from overseas investors in the package.

Paradoxically, the need for foreign investment has become even more important following the announcements by the Treasurer, Mr Howard, that severe, dance schemes used by producers would be closed. The private investors on Breaker Morant, for example, recently had their claims disallowed by the Government. As Fitzpatrick said, "Where are we going to get any more private finance?"

PRODUCTION BLUES

With only Peter Weir's Gallipoli in production at the time of the 1980 Australian Film Awards, many observers are wondering what films will be eligible next year. One possibility is Fortress, the second venture of Murdoch and Ginnane backers of Gallipoli.

Based on a novel by Australian author Gabrielle Lord, the film is a "contemporary psychological thriller with elements of the kidnapping of a schoolteacher and her pupils from a small country school". The executive producers, Errol Solomon and Tom Howarth, have been preparing the film for some time, but the writer and director are expected to be named soon.

Another project that recently finalized its finance is Hoodwink. Producers Errol Solomon and Tom Howarth, however, abruptly announced that British director Clag and Campion have been released to film the Ken Quinlen screenplay. The film, about a prisoner who pretends to be blind to avoid going to prison, is due to start shooting in November.

Another film was the film is Tony Patterson's Centrepiece, the story of "an innocent girl's rise to fame in the world of nude modelling". The cost was $413,708 for Pulpblut Blues, which was adapted from the novel by Kathy loaf and Gabrielle Carey by producer Joan Long, the film is to be directed by Bruce Beresford.

CENSORSHIP

On September 19 the Attorney-General of South Australia, K. T. Griffin, banned a film already passed by the Commonwealth Censor, Lady Duckmanon. The film, Sweet Sweetback's Baadassss Son, had been banned 10 years ago but when re-submitted recently was classified "R".

This overruling of a commonwealth decision not only raises the possibility of a break-down in the state-federal agreement on censorship (Queensland and New South Wales have never had one), but places the film's importance to the Adelaide Film Festival in a highly awkward position. As George Anderson, president of the Festival, said, "it is clearly a return to censorship in its worst form."

Griffin acted after seeing the opening scenes of the film where the 12 year old hero makes love to a prostitute in a brothel. Griffin felt the scenes contra­vened the Prohibition of Child Pornography Act, 1978, and claimed his decision was designed to "protect children first and keep issues of artistic merit second".

Griffin, of course, merely making political capital as the Adelaide Festival is only open to those over 18, and the film's "R" certificate makes it impossible for children to see it. This is, therefore, no need for anyone to step in and "protect children". If Griffin is upset over use of the boy in the film, his concern is 10 years too late.

Other censorship news is the banning of Die biebesbrief einer Por­tugiesischen nonne because its soft-core sex scenes have been censored. The film was produced in West Germany by E. Dietrich, and the American porn film (presumably in its 'soft' version), Taxi Girls.

Only one film (Island) ventured the vagaries of the Films Board of Review, and came away with its "R" rating unchanged. Distributors were again busy chopping up films for classification. This time the cuts averaged 32.75m or 86 secs.

GUT REACTION IS NOT ENOUGH

Part of the 1980 Sydney Film Festival was an audience-and-panel discussion on film criticism. John Fox reports.

The Sydney Film Festival forum on film criticism turned out to be six critics in search of truth and criteria. The panel on stage comprised David Robinson (The Times), Kevin Thomas (The Los Angeles Times), Craig Pettit (Ex-Time Out), Bob Ellis (Ex-Nation Review), John Hain (ABC) and John Labeys (The Sun-Herald). When asked to explain the difference between film criticism and film reviewing, they were unwilling to make a distinction because they claimed the two were not easily separated. Under pressure, they suggested that film criticism is an academic and continuing body of work with a historical bias (the language of which is sometimes pretentious and needlessly dense), whereas film reviewing is an entertaining and important consumer guide in which the reviewer tries to get people to see the films he likes. Most of them felt themselves to be reviewers, yet wearing the same hat as Kenneth Tynan, Andrew Sarris and Alex Lamont, whom they admired as critics.

What are your criteria? asked voices from the audience. They were reluctant to answer because they felt that criteria change, and Easy Rider was cited as a film that, "looked terrific at the time but bloody awful when you see it now."

Rules, furthermore, are dangerous because a reviewer/critic tends to be hired because the person is, not because of his criteria for film criticism. What are your criteria? demanded the voices. The panel side-stepped into critical method: we respond to the film and then analyse and justify our response, we meet the film on its own terms; we develop a reflexive sense of genre. Eventually they were pinned down, perhaps unfairly, to specifics: instinct, involvement and gut reaction. Two were summarised as inadequate and "shoddy", as a journalistic spilling of guts which has neither a social function.

The forum ended with an unsatisfied audience and an uneasy panel. The idea that professional and committed critics should establish and promote role and status of their criteria in a more coherent and convincing way, or else convey more about what questions are over-simplistic.

FILM INDUSTRY UNIONISM

1. Australian Film Awards

The 1980 Australian Film Awards presentation was held on September 17 at the Regent Theatre, Sydney, and televised nationally by the ABC. This was the first telecast in a four-year deal arranged by John Foster, AFI executive director, and ABC's managing director of entertainment at the ABC.

Compered by Graham Kennedy, and using a number of local film industry identities as presenters, along with American actor Kirk Douglas, the broadcast was taped for the small screen after the Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association had effectively black-banned the telecast in 1979.

The AFI claimed its protest was against Channel 9's use of non-union technicians on outside broadcasts, but has never been explained why. The Telecast was halted, while numerous other outside broadcasts were not interrupted.

The AFI had planned to try again with the Nine Network this year, but Damien justified our response; we meet the film on its own terms, and that the questions are over-simplistic.

What are your criteria? asked voices from the audience. They were reluctant to answer because they felt that criteria change, and Easy Rider was cited as a film that, "looked terrific at the time but bloody awful when you see it now."

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set for the television presentation. A picket, organized by the ATAEA, blocked anyone from entering the building.

The demand placed by the ATAEA was that all Australian film and television actors who were members of the union should be paid at the standard rates for the Awards presentation, whether by the Regent, ABC or AFI. They should receive a 100% loading on all work over the standard rates. This was for work covering the set-up, rehearsal and presentation. The earliest film known to have been shown was a member of the union working on that Sunday (and there was only one) who would get an extra 20% tax rate (i.e., double double time).

The ramifications of this demand, as outlined by Stapleton, was that since the 1980 Awards was a live presentation as well as being recorded, the AFA were the only union members available for completion. Therefore, the Federal Union was overseas at time of press recording American film and television actors' strike is not related to local union's decision and feel the American union had asked its representatives. Unfortunately, this has caused some local union members to be regarded as strike-breaking, as the Federal Union was overseas at time of press recording American film and television actors' strike is not related to local union's decision and feel the American union had asked its representatives. Unfortunately, this has caused in the U.S., Australian film and television actors are not able to vote. Therefore, the situation seems to have been confused.

2. ATAEA

On September 1, the Melbourne Freewilliams, who had held a meeting over Equity's new regime in Australia. Dick Berres, musical director of the ACTU, said that he would take the matter to the Federal Equity committee. The ACTU, then, decided to take the matter to the Federal Equity committee. The ACTU, then, decided to take the matter to the Disputes Committee of the ACTU. There was further discussion.

The main concern among Melbourne technicians is that Tony Grimmett has announced his decision to move Race to the Yankee Zephyr to New Zealand. Grimmett has been Melbourne's largest freelance employer of technicians on features and his opting out of the local industry has been a matter of concern.

3. Musicians Union

The American Screen Actors' Guild strike is the American Musicians Union strike. In an attempt to control the situation, this has caused in the U.S., several American producers have confirmed recording scores in Australia. Dick Berres, musical director of the ACTU, has said he has visited Australia to see if he could record the scores for three films at Armstrong's Melbourne. (The scores have been composed by Larry Hamisch, Lalo Schifrin and Tom Scott.) Berres has said he was highly pleased with the recording here of Basil Poledouris's score for Blue Lagoon. Many local musicians were very keen to take the opportunity and further their overseas exposure, but many of them were not approached by Berres to act as musical co-director. Unfortunately, the American Musicians Union has let it get away differently and said such work would be regarded as inferior. However, the American union had asked its Australian counterpart to put a ban on recording American film scores. Berres's ban on recording American film scores will fall into further notice. This decision was apparently made without consultation with the American Musicians Union, was overseas at time of press and therefore, the Australian Musicians Union has been asked.

Some musicians are upset over their union's decision and feel the American actors' strike is not related to local union's decision. The Federal American union ever done for us?"

Sorrento

“The Encounter with the Australian Cinema”—to be held in Sorrento, Italy, on October 11–15—will be the biggest festival of Australian films staged overseas. A total of 30 films will be shown over seven days. Such films are mainly features, but short films and documentaries are included. The ratiocine director of an ongoing series of annual festivals entitled the Incontri internazionali del cinema. The Italian organizers honor the cinema of a nation or group of nations with an important contribution to world film criticism can never be overlooked. The Incontri internazionali del cinema. The Italian organizers honor the cinema of a nation or group of nations with an important contribution to world film criticism can never be overlooked.

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The AFI, represented by assistant executive director Sue Murray and board member David Rose, put this proposal to Stapleton at the meeting in the hope of resolving the issue.

When Bob Alexander of Equity replied, calling for union solidarity, the Disputes Committee of the ACTU, then, decided to take the matter to the Disputes Committee of the ACTU. There was further discussion.

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Jan Dawson

As the last issue was at press, I learnt the sad news that Jan Dawson had died in Melbourne.

I met Jan during the 1975 International Film Festival. She was a member of the national organizing committee, and was there to visit the Festival. One of her selection coupes was Louis Malle's Black Moon, although, surprisingly, it was to receive its world premiere there.

For years I had read, and admired, Jan's writings in Sight and Sound, and the Monthly Film Bulletin (on which she has been editorial consultant for several years). Her expert knowledge of directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, and Bruce Robinson has been tried for years to get more encores from Jan, and I considered her a person of be very fortunate. Her expertise in film history has been vast. She was a key to the establishment of a largely staid Peruvian. Jan became a contributor to Cinema Papers that year, with her article on Shuh Terayama. I was surprised then, and I am now, that Jan would write for what seemed to be at the time a fairly obscure journal, and for an appallingly obscure readership. Many journals had been trying for years to get more encores from Jan, and I considered her expertise on directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, and Bruce Robinson has been tried for years to get more encores from Jan, and I considered her a person of be very fortunate. Her expertise in film history has been vast. She was a key to the establishment of a largely staid Peruvian. Jan became a contributor to Cinema Papers that year, with her article on Shuh Terayama. I was surprised then, and I am now, that Jan would write for what seemed to be at the time a fairly obscure journal, and for an appallingly obscure readership. Many journals had been trying for years to get more encores from Jan, and I considered her expertise on directors such as Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Werner Herzog, and Bruce Robinson has been tried for years to get more encores from Jan, and I considered her a person of be very fortunate.

One example Howard gave was a scheme whereby an Australian film company was being used extensively as vehicles for diverting taxable income from individuals or companies. The exempt body gets little benefit from the income because it is required under tax law to use as much avoidance arrangement to give to the individual or company. The scheme includes a tax-free form, consideration that is more or less equal to the amount of the scheme, less a fee for its services.

The Italian organizers honor the cinema of a nation or group of nations with an important contribution to world film criticism can never be overlooked.

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Which scriptwriters do you admire and perhaps try to emulate?

Fred Raphael, who wrote *Two for the Road* and *The Glittering Prizes*, and Dennis Potter, who wrote *Pennies From Heaven*, which is the best thing I've seen on anybody ever. Also, Tom Stoppard, Francois Truffaut, Neil Simon, Paddy Chayevsky, Woody Allen and Paul Mazursky, whose works are known. Then there are David Mercer, who wrote *Morgan* and a number of television plays, and William Goldman, who wrote *Butch Cassidy and The Great Waldo Pepper*.

Most of all there is Ingmar Bergman, who has had the Shakespearean courage to do it all: comedy, tragedy, allegory, explorations of inner states, analyses of Marxism and bedroom farces. The best single screenplay in existence, in my humble view, is *Smiles of a Summer Night*. I think Bergman knows the way in which the screen is limited, and unlimited. And when I see *Wild Strawberries* for the 20th time it fills me up and makes my day, the way *Yanks* or Shakespeare's best play, *Henry IV Part One*, does. Here I think is a man's whole life or emotions, his whole way of behaving — or, the true, calm reflection of a whole historical era, the way *Newsfront* should have been and wasn't; the way *Yanks* and *Amarcord* were.

The film was big enough to be as abundant as this, and we have a duty to serve this abundance, even in the one house on the water, with 10 people and an atmosphere. You can't afford to do less. Women robbing banks in form-fitting leather is no longer enough. We must do more than this, as did *Cabaret*, *Midnight Express*, *Annie Hall*, *Breaker Morant* and *Apocalypse Now*. Not only is it good art to do more, it is good commerce.

The great unheeded law of the recent Australian cinema is that good films make money — like *Newsfront*, *My Brilliant Career*, *Mad Max* and *Breaker Morant* did. And the less-good films, that in theory should have made money, like *Tim*, *The Odd Angry Shot*, *Eliza Fraser* and *Ned Kelly*, all lost money because it isn't commercial theory that gets you into profit, and it's not budgetary limits, but quality.

The only apparent exception to this is *Cathy's Child*, but that could have done well had its publicity campaign not been bloody awful, and had it been put back on after it deservedly won its big awards. Quality tells now more than ever. Jack Nicholson and Marlon Brando together in a bad film will lose money, whereas *My Brilliant Career*, with unknowns, will make it.

What is the script development arrangement you have with the New South Wales Film Corporation?

I have to do 10 feature scripts over two years. In theory, and usually, in practice, I have to deliver first and second drafts on given dates. I get $7000 for each script, and if the NSWFC wants to buy one, they must pay an additional $12,000 within 28 days of receipt of the second draft. After that, they can do what they like.
I gave them 33 ideas and said, "You pick five and we'll pick five," which they did. The five they chose were picked because they could all be made for $400,000 each. I am pretty sure that's not the way they should go ahead.

How many of the scripts have you finished?

Two, and three more will be finished in two months. I wrote one with Donny Lawrence, one with John Hepworth and two with my wife, Annie. She is also writing one on her own.

How do you feel about collaboration?

It used to be the only way I could work, because only the guilt induced by somebody else would make me finish a script. I have now improved to the point where I can write on my own. But collaboration is very much like a love affair: you get an intense, emotional intimacy with the person you are working with, and, when you are no longer working, you are very stiff with them.

Against any mathematical logic, collaboration produces more than twice as many ideas — perhaps four times. It has advantages because biorhythms differ, and when you are having a bad day, your partner might be having a good one.

There seems to be a limit as to whom I can collaborate with, however. I used to think there was no limit, but I think it would be very hard to collaborate again with, say, Frank Brittain.

Given you have written some 20 feature scripts, it must be a problem finding enough directors and producers to make them . . .

It is a fundamental difficulty, and I think Annie and I are going to have to begin to pose as executive producers. I don't know with what credibility, but we must try. Unfortunately, most of the good on-line directors here have obsessions of their own, and they often waste two years trying to get something off the ground. I don't believe anything is worth that amount of time.

Yes, I think it's good to have locations and actors in mind, because you can generally write better. I don't think "limbo" films — like Harlequin — work.

What areas will you involve yourself in as executive producer?

I would like to impose my will on the casting, and watch-dog the script. I also wouldn't mind interfering in the publicity, which in Australia is usually dreadful: "Their sin was against nature. Nature found them guilty" — what more can I say?

I think the problem is that you can work with a director or a producer, but you can't work with two of them. You have three wills pulling in three different directions, and you always wind up with less. So, a writer has to take either one of those two roles to have any artistic satisfaction in the film business. And when they do — as in the case of Woody Allen, Billy Wilder or Sylvester Stallone — it usually works out pretty well.

In this country, producers don't realize that in a good script every full stop and comma contributes to the total effect. You can't rip out 100 pages of David Copperfield and believe people aren't going to notice.

There is also a point (like six weeks before shooting) when a script should not be interfered with. On Maybe This Time, we were instructed, three days before shooting the great Whitlam sequence, that all references to Whitlam had to be cut out of the first third of the film. Apparently, this was so that the NSWFC could pose as though it hadn't been appointed by a Labor government, and was not approving of Whitlam, who, as we approach 1984, is becoming a non-person: Michael Parkinson said he has never heard of him.

Losing Whitlam wasn't all that serious, but losing the references to him destroyed the structure of all the scenes in which those references occurred — and that may have been five or six. As a result, the first 10 minutes of the film was wrecked, and the film will lose money.

I don't see how these changes were worthwhile. My words aren't sacrosanct — I prove that every day of the week by collaborating — but I do know more about what I am doing, in terms of dialogue and structure, than somebody who is not skilled in the field.

There was another case on Maybe This Time which illustrates the present plight of the writer. There was a scene where Fran and Stephen are in a restaurant overlooking the harbor. It's a nervous scene: the old boyfriend wants to divorce his wife and marry Fran. In the original script, he says, "Luna Park down there." And she says, "I know, I've lived here for some time." He then says, "Settling in all right are you?", and so on.

What happened was Luna Park had been burnt down and they didn't want to include a cut-away of it, which they didn't have to, anyway. So they changed the line on the day to "Sydney Harbour." And she said, "I know, I've been in Sydney for some time." That made us, as scriptwriters, look like fools.

I don't mind what actors do, because they are fantastic beings. They are much more intelligent, have a wider experience, greater courage, stoicism, idealism and capacity for self-criticism than any of us civilians. It's the producers and directors to whom I object. They have very limited lives, dangerous tendencies and rigid minds.

Have you ever been in a position where a part has been written for a particular actor, but the actor wasn't available?

Yes, on Maybe This Time where we replaced the coquettish Jack Thompson with Mike Preston. It almost worked, but it was specifically Jack's part — as was the part played by Gerard Kennedy in Newsfront. I think Jack and Bill would have made pretty good brothers, but you scarcely knew they were, the way the film was ultimately cast.

I think correct casting is a hidden factor in the success of a lot of films: Satyajit Ray says it is 93 per cent. Just try and imagine Lex Marinos and Elizabeth Alexander in Kramer Vs Kramer — it wouldn't work. It has to be the two who played it.

How do you see the future of the local industry?

The thing I fear most is this multi-national obsession, which I call McDonaldization: fast films, to go. I fear it because it is inef-
It is very depressing in Australia because our history is not well documented and it is not that exciting. And our personalities are very few in number, partly because the publishing industry has always been very weak and biographies are not published often, and those histories that are published are not written by inspired men. But it’s all we have, and I only hope that I can deal with it. One should not imagine that one can somehow get away with perverting what we have into an imitation of what we don’t.

Now, of course, since My Brilliant Career and Breaker Morant have done well, critically and commercially, people believe they should spend a lot of money on projects that use lots of landscapes and things like that, rather than quietly shooting in rooms. I don’t think they are right. We should be making films like Manhattan, as well as films like The Electric Horseman.

There was a superstition, for a while, that budgets had to be under $400,000. Now I think there is a superstition that starts at $1 million.

Most people don’t want the lower-budget, indigenous films to disappear. But do you see that happening?

If the script is good enough I believe it will be made. If it isn’t good enough, then it is most likely to get through if, like Chain Reaction, it is salable to American television: i.e., it parallels American genres.

People are now fearful that only bad films will be made or attempted, but I think the good scripts will get through. I think there is enough shame left.

One possible mechanism for preserving low-budget filmmaking is Equity’s restriction on the use of overseas actors in films which receive government funding. What do you think of that scheme?

I  know it would have been economically sound for Jules and Jim to be made in English with Elliot Gould. Some people see the move towards internationalization as a reaction to the good scripts will get through. I think there is a superstition that starts at $1 million.

I  don’t think there is much in terms of book-keeping, but filmically disastrous. You also get film stars are powerful enemies for politicians to make. If Jack Thompson and Judy Davis go up on screen and say, “They’re killing us; vote them out”, people may well vote them out. I can’t see politicians risking that.

There is one other reason, too, which is that the film industry has no natural enemies: there is no Santamaria saying it must be stamped out, no Ralph Nader saying, “It’s unsafe at any speed”. It does, of course, have an organizational flaw: films tend to be funded to only 50 per cent by government bodies. So, it is nice to see that the NSWFC has bitten the bullet and gone to more or less 100 per cent funding on some projects. I hope that example will be followed, because it is one answer.

I think a number of multinational kinds of films will be made, though the overseas stars will be of
second rank. The films will fail, and the experiment will die as heartily as did the false nostalgia which preceded the true nostalgia films.

People get bees in their bonnets, and internationalization is one of them. It's a silly, silly one, too, because it hasn't worked in the past. There have been about 20 such films and they have all lost money except Picnic at Hanging Rock, and that didn't make money on the international charisma of Rachel Roberts.

The situation is terribly fluid at any time, and by some stroke of luck the U.S. Cavalry arrives each year. Last year it was My Brilliant Career and this year it's Breaker Morant. You feel good to be Australian for a while, and the crisis passes and the pain goes.

You can't understate the effect of things like the AFI screenings, where people do detest the Gimnane-type films, and do quite like the Australian films. And I think shame can be played upon people; rhetoric can be marshalled. Sure the danger is there, and it is threatened to go to court, and all that.

In the meantime, I got most of the actors I had written parts for, though only by the accident of their doing the best auditions. I remember narrowly nudging out of John Ewart's role one Reg Livermore, and so on. It was an energetic and chaotic experience, out of which I learned a hell of a lot.

How did “Newsfront” originate?

It was originally envisaged by Mike Molloy and David Elfick as a documentary on 1950s rock groups. They got together some old newsreels and then talked to Philippe Mora, who had made Brother Can You Spare a Dime? He suggested they insert into the footage enacted sequences about the lives of the cameramen. This was an excellent idea.

Now, it was quite obvious to Elfick that only one person could write it, and that was Richard Neville. So Elfick took Neville's name to the AFC, who said that Neville didn't have credits in film, and that Elfick should come back with a film writer. Eventually, it devolved on me.

We then had an afternoon's conversation and decided we would have a great Australian wedding, a great Australian funeral, a great Australian fuck, a great Australian bushfire, a great Australian flood and so on. This led to the first draft, which more or less became the final film, though it took 10 more drafts to get back to the original.

Elfick became nervous and said, "We want more details." So, I went away to the library for a day and looked up old advertisements, and wrote in things like the soundtrack on the radio. I also worked closely with Howard Rubie, who had been a young cameraman at the time of the Maitland floods. Howard at

"Then, the long attrition of cuts began. I finally wouldn't make any more, and they brought in the auteur of Skippy behind my back. I became irritable and threatened to go to court, and all that."

Andrew Sarris complained recently that it hadn't been nominated for the Academy Award...

Well, I complained too. But I am not sure what that proves except that arbitrary budget figures are stupid. Think of all the trouble that derived from Elfick's arbitrary budget of $507,000, or whatever it was. The film could have been made for $650,000 or $670,000 in its original form, and I don't think anybody alive prefers the film to the big fat script.

The unbelievably great, powerful and cuddly David Puttnam believes that you should decide on the film you are going to make and then make it, whatever it costs. I think that's fair. The old rule of "half a loaf is better than no bread" no longer applies.

I think the arrival in town of the twin Mephistopheles, Murdoch and Stigwood, has been wonderfully useful in this regard, because everybody's habitual way of making a film looks a little silly in the light of their prudence and reason. They too would like to make a film under $1 million, but the idea of setting a budgetary limit of, say, $350,000 seems insane to them, and they are right. You certainly can write a film for a budget, but you can't write it and then say the budget is going to be no more than this.

How do you feel about "Newsfront" four years after?

I think it is a very good film. It should be as good as Yanks — i.e., the moral history of a nation for 10 years — and it's not. Newsfront has excellent glimpses from that history, but it's not the thing itself.

I think the flood scene is terrific, and the acting is very good. There is also something about the shooting style which was very Australian, something about the honorable vulgarity of the time which was beautifully encompassed in the visual style. I don't think it was accidental, and I can't explain what it was, but it was what moved people the most. These were our fathers, and they weren't such bad blokes. They were truly seen and weren't romanticized in the
any way. Only a really good
director can get that double edge.
Peckinpah in Pat Garrett and
Billy the Kid gets the squalor and
the heroism of the story, as in
The Wild Bunch. Noyce gets the
ordinariness and the specialness of
the people in a similar way in
Newsfront.

How do you feel about the decision
to film "Newsfront" partly in color
and partly in black and white?

That was my idea, I knew we
wouldn't, as unknown filmmakers,
be able to make a black and white
film, which was the ideal. So I
worked out points where it could
change. Noyce ignored all these
and made different ones. I

think black and white is one of
the many ranges of cinema, and it
should be used. And anytime
somebody does intercut it with
color — however unthinkingly, like
Lindsay Anderson in If, and
whoever he was in A Man and a
Woman — it works sensationally
well. The classic use of this tech­
nique was in The Wizard of Oz
where the world is dull, and Oz is
colorful.

Black and white is wonderful for
tragedy, suspense and serious
content. Color trivializes and
distracts, and is never used well,
except when it is closest to
black and white.

The magic of the screen — the
silver screen which people came out
in the '30s — was due to the fact
that it was different from life in
a way people couldn't define. It was
like life, but it was distant enough
from it for people to look up to as a
God-like dimension. Color doesn't
do that, and you have to be a real
Genius to use it in that way. Occa­sionally, somebody like Federico
Fellini does, or Bob Fosse, but it's
very rare.

Maybe This Time

Did you have much trouble getting
"Maybe This Time" off the ground?

It took five years. We offered it
to everybody you can name, and
they all said no. There was Gill
Armstrong, Steve Wallace, Tony
Buckley, Donald Crombie and Ken
Hannam. Ken said yes, but we got
him into trouble with his chosen
producer, Tom Haydon, and it
didn't happen. I also showed it to
Chris McGill where I would ask
questions like, "What is the most
obvious children's film one could
make in Australia?" One day, after
30 seconds of thought, he came
back with the obvious answer,
which was Ginger Meggs. And
being too clever by half, I thought,
"Oh no, let's make it Fatty Finn,
because there already exists a silent
film on that subject — a classic
called Kid Stakes by Tal Oordell
which we can show to film investors
and say 'Our film is going to be like
that.'" Then McGill went away
and after a close study of the phone
book came up with something
called The Children's Film
Corporation. I was supposed to see
Yoram Gross and John Sexton.
Conversations subsequently
became confused.

I wrote the script and it was
funded on the first draft because it
was so good. But Yoram didn't
understand it, owing to his insecure
grasp of English. We had conversa­tions along the lines of: "Who is
the best Don Bradman?" Well, he's
so famous, in a classic children's
novel on King Arthur, A
Once and Future King, the quality
of the line there would be a silent
film of Sir Lancelot's sword fighting
is described by comparing him to Don
Bradman. "Who is this King
Arthur?" he asked.

There was another time when we
were having an argument about
plot. Yoram said, "All children's
films should be like Red Riding
Hood, with a clear simple plot." I
said, "How about Alice in
Wonderland?" and he replied, "I haven't
seen the film." This nonsense went
on for a long time.

Anyway, once the script had been
funded, Sexton demanded 118
major changes. I had put an
arbitration clause in my contract,
but I was then confronted by the
AFC's new lawyer who said my
contract meant I had to make the
changes. So I took a deep breath
and made them, word for word for
what they asked. The result was so
ludicrous that they didn't call me
for six months and I presumed
the

Concluded on P. 386
1980 Australian Film Institute Awards

On September 17 at the Regent Theatre, Sydney, the 1980 Australian Film Awards were announced. The presentation, produced by Ric Birch, directed by Jacqui Culliton and hosted by Graham Kennedy, was televised nationally by the ABC. The first in a four-year deal with the ABC, the 1980 Film Awards seemed at last to have reached the standard long sought by the organizers, the Australian Film Institute.

The winners of the 1980 Awards were:

**INDUSTRY AWARDS**

Best Film: Breaker Morant, producer Matt Carroll
Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Role: Jack Thompson, Breaker Morant
Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role: Tracy Mann, Hard Knocks
Best Achievement in Directing: Bruce Beresford, Breaker Morant
Best Screenplay: Jonathon Hardy, David Stevens, Bruce Beresford, Breaker Morant
Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role: Bryan Brown, Stir.
Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Role: Jill Perryman, Maybe This Time
Best Original Music Score: Peter Sculthorpe, Best Experimental Film: Andrew McPhee, Self-Portrait — Blood Money
Best Documentary Film: Gary's Story, producer Matt Parer
Best Short Fiction Film: Hard Knocks, directed by Ivan Durrant
Best Achievement in Cinematography: Don Stevens, 320 — Cinema Papers, October-November
Best Achievement in Costume Design: Anna Anderson, Breaker Morant
Best Achievement in Art Direction: David Copple, Breaker Morant
Best Achievement in Cinematography: Don McAlpine, Breaker Morant
Best Achievement in Film Editing: William Anderson, Breaker Morant
Best Achievement in Costume Design: Anna Senior, Breaker Morant
Best Sound: Gary Wilkins, William Anderson, Jeanne Chiavolo, Phil Judd, Breaker Morant

**JURY AWARDS**

Jury Prize: Don McLennan, Hard Knocks
Best Short Fiction Film: Gary's Story, directed by Richard Michalak
Best Documentary Film: Frontline, directed by David Bradbury
Best Animated Film: Pussy Pumps Up, Antonette Starkiewicz
Best Experimental Film: Self-Portrait — Blood Red, directed by Ivan Durrant
Cinematography Awards: Silver Medal: David Parer, Bird of the Thunder Woman, Bronze Medal: Tom Cowan, Peter Butt, No Such Place
Special Awards: "For its Original Concept": Blood Money, Chris Fitchett
"For Courageous Filmmaking": Give Trees a Chance, Jeni Kendell

**AFI DIRECTORS' AWARD**

Raymond Longford Award: Tim Burstall
To report on the 1980 judging processes and give an overview of the year's film output, Cinema Papers sent Brian Sheedy to the Awards screenings. Here is his report:

The Australian Film Awards have been run by the Australian Film Institute since 1958. The presentation night, usually in September, is preceded by months of work, part of which is the screening of entered feature films to AFI members in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Perth.

To be eligible for entry in the feature category a film must be narrative in form, and more than 65 minutes in length. It must have a capital city commercial release of a minimum one week at least one month before the presentation date. AFI members, who like myself, are not directly engaged in production can vote only for the Best Film Award. Only industry professionals are entitled to vote in specific categories: for example, only editors are eligible to vote for the editing award.

The competition is run according to strict attendance rules: a member must see every film to be eligible to vote and admission is refused to subsequent screenings if he misses any film. Most of us "lay folk" go along because it is a good way to test the new vintage in one burst, to compare tone, mood, style — "quality" generally — with previous years. This year no one seems very optimistic: the climate is politically frosty and financially dry. And where have all the big names gone? Bruce Beresford is there, but an alphabetical roll call through Tim Burstall, Tom Cowan, John Duigan, Fred Schepisi.

The front-line people, the actors, are easy to recognize; so too are the addicts who seem never to miss a screening of anything, anywhere. There are also the "back-room" people, the backbone of the industry, who seemingly exist only in the credits. Over the sandwiches and coffee, courtesy of the AFI, one might meet a freelance editor, an art director from a commercial house, or a designer from the ABC — or a teacher or critic. In this atmosphere of camaraderie everyone tries to be generous about the film just screened, praising its successes, excusing its failings. This year, the excuses seemed just a little strained.

My season got off to an uninspiring start with Gene W. Scott's Mystery Island, a children's story of the conventional, deserted-island-adventure type, complete with a suspicious, but finally friendly, beachcomber-recluse and hordes smuggling mysterious packages. All this is embelished by some pleasing but mostly irrelevant underwater photography. It is never possible to take the danger to the children seriously, and they are burdened by such leads and banal dialogue that the happy ending seems more than they deserve.

**Don McLennan's Hard Knocks is no seaside or sylvan idyll. Sam (Tracy Mann) is a hardcore punk kid who gets a stretch at a correctional institution. As her hair grows and her manner softens, she is groomed by a do-gooder social worker for a straight life as a model. All the odds are against her: blatant double standards, vengeful cops, old mates from Winlaton and the birds of prey of the fashion and modelling worlds. The film in part picks up a thread from Mouth to Mouth, and teases it out, but lacks warmth and simplicity, and is over-endowed with unnecessary scenes and superfluous dialogue.**

Tracy Mann in Hard Knocks
Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Role.
Film Awards

Some characters are drawn larger than life in their introduction, then disappear, never to be seen again and the construction seems unnecessarily complicated.

It could have been a small, simple and endearing film, but it isn’t; only Tracy Mann’s performance is remarkable.

Peter Maxwell’s Touch and Go is about women at the opposite end of the social scale from Sam who pull robberies on a scale never approached by the street kids. An unlikely trio of glamorous women — Fiona (Chantal Contour), the socialite wife; Eva (Wendy Hughes), a failed actress who does kookaburra calls on a children’s radio program; Millie (Carmen Duncan), a self-employed locksmith — pull meticulously-planned and cooly-executed heists.

Most of the money goes to a struggling progressive school, the balance to “expenses”.

Their lack of interest in education and children leaves one in no doubt that their real motive is the thrills.

Except for a few moments near the end, the pace never lets up and there isn’t a spare shot or a loose word in the entire 92 minutes of the film.

It’s exciting and very funny — the gang escapes from their big job along a jetty, with half the looted guests, bemused and in night attire, following them.

Fiona seems to do minor damage to her car every time she takes it out, but it’s only there on the soundtrack — she ignores it and so does the camera.

Chris McGill’s Maybe This Time is a serious and sensitive film that will strike many responsive emotional and political chords. In the wider context of Supply bills being blocked, a snap election and the consequent change in government, Fran (Judy Morris) finds herself at one of life’s crossroads. Thirty years old, a teacher-turnred-research assistant, her search for fulfillment through her relationships brings her to the end of a “wasted” four years with the arrogant, married, high-level public servant, Stephen (Bill Hunter).

The possible avenues open to her include returning to the boy-next-door, Alan (Ken Shorter), becoming sexually involved with her boss the academic, Paddy (Mike Preston), adopting an independent lifestyle by buying her own house, or going overseas to join a woman corporation apparently haven’t been told that the thrills.

The film becomes episodic, able to portray the thrills-and-laughter variety: Touch and Go. I hope it fills cinemas for months, helping us to forget for 92 minutes that life wasn’t meant to be easy.

And for poignancy, honesty and grace; Manganinnie, the one we’d all like to forget.★

Ian Barry’s Chain Reaction adopts the 50-minute television drama formula — a puzzling, high-speed beginning, a chase-race-smash ending and a soft centre — and stretches it to 92 minutes.

Malign authority is out to silence the dying man who can tell the world of danger from a nuclear waste treatment plant damaged in a small tremor. What else but divine providence lands him in Paradise Valley, to be cared for by an unsuspecting couple on a weekend away from it all. Luckily, she is a trained nurse and he can drive like hell and doesn’t mind biding his flashy, customized unit — the world is saved.

Ross Dimsey’s Final Cut is a silly film about a young journalist and her television cameraman boyfriend who seize the chance to make a film about a sinister impresario of popular culture who may have graduated from porn home movies to real death (“snuff”) films. The pair gets involved in this freaky scene, first on his luxury yacht and later at his apartment.

The best part of the film is the closing caption which assures the audience that any resemblance to any person living, etc., is purely coincidental — the film’s only laugh.

Three other films were screened: Bruce Beresford’s Breaker Morant, Rod Hardy’s Thirst and Simon Wincer’s Harlequin. All have been released commercially and reviewed in Cinema Papers and elsewhere.

And now for my vote for the Best Film. For polish and performance: Breaker Morant. Beresford and the South Australian Film Corporation apparently haven’t been told that the honeymoon is over and went ahead and made an excellent film from difficult material.

For sheer entertainment of the thrills-and-laughter variety: Touch and Go. I hope it fills cinemas for months, helping us to forget for 92 minutes that life wasn’t meant to be easy.

And for poignancy, honesty and grace; Manganinnie, the one we’d all like to forget.★
"The major reasons to make a film are to move people emotionally, to move them to laughter, tears or to fear . . . I'm not interested in an interesting movie. I am interested in gut level reaction . . . The American cinema is a kind of lean, hard, story-oriented cinema, just as American literature is. Scott Fitzgerald, who's probably one of the greatest writers that the country ever produced, had a piece of paper on his wall that said, 'Action is Character.' And that's what I think is best about the American cinema . . . There's a kind of muscular, visceral, story-telling sense to [it] that I feel is best embodied in the work of Raoul Walsh, D. W. Griffith, Ford, Hawks, Wellman . . . It's what the American people and people all over the world expect from the American cinema . . ."

(William Friedkin)

Few films in recent years have been accompanied by the level of anger that has attached itself to Cruising. Even before the completion of its location shoot in New York, the protest against the film in the American gay press was intense, admirably organized and effectively used to focus attention on the repression of homosexuality which seems embedded within our culture. Similarly in Australia, in the weeks preceding the film's release, the campaign against Cruising was underway, citing the activity abroad as sufficient indication that "this film could be a health hazard".

The view of the film as "calculatedly vile and threatening in all of its 'messages'" has been taken up by the film reviewers in the press, creating an unprecedented harmony with the gay commentaries. Words like "garbage", "contemptible" and "depraved" have abounded in accusation against the film. Yet little close consideration has been attempted to substantiate these exclamations and it is very difficult to locate precisely what it is about Cruising that has aroused such fury. Most attempts to talk about the film, even in the most basic descriptive terms, are characterized by a lack of attention to detail, passionate assertion taking the place of the terms of rational argument. One of many examples is Campaign's approving use of Vito Russo's comments from Gay News:

"All the gays in the film live in filthy rat-trap hotel rooms. When Pacino makes love to his girlfriend, the background music is a Bach cantata. When gays have sex, the music is violent, discorded [sic] hard rock." 1

Disappointingly, only the few reviews that have endeavored to defend the film have offered any detailed examination of it 5, and, interestingly, all of these seem to have come from the gay press. As yet no serious analysis has appeared elsewhere, and even the journals devoted solely to film have yet to produce their discussion of Cruising.

As far as I can gather, the terms of the hostility to Cruising are several. That its representation of homosexual life is inaccurate, or else that it is limited to the activities of a fringe group (the latter point is endorsed by a disclaimer at the beginning of the film). That it is a badly-made film which is clumsily shot and put together, its narrative confusions serving as ample evidence of the filmmakers' incompetence. That its 'messages' are likely to produce a general animosity towards gays and to the advancement of gay rights, perhaps even provoking a wave of violence against homosexuals.

The last objection cannot be countered, any more than it can be demonstrated. Crimes against homosexuals, such as those which provided a source for Cruising, are all too commonplace in our community and beyond, but those social and psychological factors which produce such crimes are notoriously difficult to pinpoint. Cruising is in no way an "innocent"

1. "Dialogue On Film", American Film Institute, 1974, pp. 27-29.
2. Campaign, No. 54, p. 5.
The crazies in our community scarcely need Cruising to stimulate their aggressions, and the representations of homosexuals in the film would seem to be of the kind more likely to discourage those acts of violence than induce them.

The other objections are best discussed through an analysis of Cruising in terms of its system of representations, its "realism" and its narrative construction. Without such a consideration of Cruising's formal strategies, any attempt to condemn or to define the film is doomed to the realm of surface impressions, which reflect more upon the speaker than anything else.

Cruising can initially be seen as belonging to that tradition of American cinema defined so succinctly above by its writer and director, William Friedkin. Its narrative adopts the structure of the investigation tale, as its central character, Steve Burns (Al Pacino), seeks out a killer in the fringe world of S & M in New York. Its style is "hard-boiled" in that Burns cannot remain detached from what he is doing. His investigations may be successful in bringing a killer to justice, but they also affect him in a way that challenges the security of his place in the world.

Cruising can also be identified as an intersection for several other generic modes: the 'film noir', the 'gothic horror film' (Friedkin's label) and the 'psycho'-drama. A dominant visual element of the film is darkness: in the emphasis on a world of night-time activity and in the recurrent fades to black which are used as punctuation between sequences but also to elide that period of time during which sexual activity occurs. This is most notable in the first murder sequence, but also at those times when Burns has been picked up. The use of darkness and the fades to black seem to be Friedkin's strategy for avoiding any literal representation of sex between males, with the effect that the specific details of homosexuality are rendered ambiguous and linked with the general sense of threat. Darkness in the 'films noirs' insistently serves the function of suggesting hidden aspects of the human psyche, dangerous sides to the human personality that are a threat to order, to the world.

The film does not reflect any order against which to set the chaos of the S & M world — in fact, they are linked with repression, which is shown to produce corruption (the patrol cops who terrorize homosexuals), impotence (Edelson, whose limp conventionally signifies a castration, is powerless to act except in accord with the bureaucratic strictures of his department) and brutality (again the patrol cops, but also the savage interrogation of the suspect who could have been exonerated by a simple print check).

The film insistently draws connections between the police and the S & M underworld — both function and are related through a system of signs which includes handkerchiefs, uniforms and slang expressions like "night stick" (which neatly links penis and baton); both have centres of activity marked off as precincts; both form an uneasy alliance in the attempt to find the killer — each becoming a distorting mirror of the other. This can be seen especially in the presence of the giant black, clad in jock strap, who assists the police with their interrogations. But a key motif of the film, that of the predator, binds the two worlds inextricably together. The ritual of the pick-up finds its distorted reflection in the police who cruise the S & M hangouts either as participants or as victimizers of the men there.

All of this provides the framework for the 'psycho'-drama whose centre is the character of Steve Burns. Having accepted the assignment to "disappear", he assumes an identity which allows him to mix with the crowd who inhabit the film's netherworld, a process which mirrors that of the killer, Richards (Richard Cox), whose daylight "innocence" conceals his night-time menace. The film here produces, and sustains, a conventional pattern of much 'investigation' fiction in which pursuer and pursued become reflections of each other.

Throughout the film, the medium long-shot is used to create an uncertainty about whether we are looking at an image of Burns or of Richards (or of someone else altogether), and their similarities in dress and physique further accentuate the point. The sequence where Richards first notices Burns' presence outside the apartment house where he lives employs the shot-reverse shot to encourage a sense of their inter-connectedness, and the final confrontation between the two men extends this. As their cigarettes lie smouldering side-by-side (a cutaway close-up), the two men move off to their ritual of battle, Burns now wearing Richards' cap. Dressed similarly and armed with identical knives, they face each other.

The ambiguity which results from this is usually linked with their common plights — both are seen as outsiders, or both act according to a common code, but on opposite sides of the law. Cruising is no exception to this, but it shifts that ambiguity into the realm of sexuality. Burns and Richards find their self-image threatened by homosexuality — each lives in the shadows of father figures to whom they have something to prove, and in each case that something involves a rejection of their own sexual instincts.

Burns is initially depicted in the customary fashion of the cop hero as a confirmed heterosexual. "There's a lot about me you don't know", he responds to his girlfriend Nancy's (Karen Allen) charge that he is being mysterious about his new assignment. Their initial lovemaking is accompanied by lyrical music, producing a sharp contrast with the hard rock that dominates the rest of the soundtrack.

However, as Burns penetrates further into the...
As a film about homosexuality, or a certain kind of homosexuality, *Cruising* is notable for bringing to the commercial cinema images never before seen there: the leather set, sadomasochism, pick-ups. This is not to say these images are any 'truer' than those of the charming effeminate of *La cage aux folies*; truth is never the issue. There is not a homosexuality, an essential homosexuality, anymore than there is an essential femininity or masculinity.

Homosexuality only exists in its different constructions, identifications, and cultural positions. It can never be separated from the meanings and connotations it carries. And it is in this light that I propose discussing *Cruising*.

There is probably a sustained argument against the film (certainly, it has yet to be made). It might claim that *Cruising* merely borrows and reinforces an existing identification of gay sexuality as something dark, monstrous, abnormal, even evil, given the aesthetic style Friedkin employs. And, being at least minimally a realist film, it presents this construction not as constructed but as natural, evident to the eye — 'That's what the gay world really is like.' People respond to familiar things in a familiar way, and thus *Cruising* becomes complicit with dominant ideology.

Although there is some validity to this position, it rests upon a presumption that I find impossible to work with: that we can know how 'average' audiences (whatever they are: middle class? heterosexual?) react to the film, what attitudes it evokes or bolsters in them. For the moment, the question of *Cruising*’s impact and its effects will be put to one side, and first we must understand the film itself.

*Cruising* is essentially about aggression. To claim, as Vito Russo did in *Gay News*, that the film "indicates that gay life makes one violent" is to ignore everything to do with who is being violent and the possible reasons why. *Cruising* is not a right-wing sermon warning against gay killers: it explores why gays are killed and why society has a need to kill them.

A few minutes into the film, two cops are shown travelling the streets in their patrol car. One of them, DiSimone (Joe Spinell), talks about his wife who has left him: 'She ain't gonna make a fool out of me. I'll get that b**ch.' They see two gays dressed as women, pull them up and harass them, the scene culminating in one of the cops ordering the most vocal gay to give him head. When this is about to happen, the shot racks focus to show the killer going into a bar to find a victim. What is going on here? DiSimone's aggression towards his wife is redirected towards the gays — because both homosexuals and 'liberated' women pose a threat to the social and sexual order. What the killer is about to do is only an extension of this first aggression: he is, paradoxically, on the side of the 'law'.

*Cruising* examines a patriarchal, or 'phallocratic,' society, in which the power invested in men by the law expresses itself through a valorization of male sexuality, the penis. The film consistently links power with virility: in the scene just mentioned, the gay is told to suck the cop's 'night stick'; the harassing cops are called 'hard-ons'; the killer's spermless ejaculation is referred to as 'shooting blanks'.

However, it is not only the police who are implicated in this association of virility with power. Certainly the most provocative aspect of the film is the way in which it refuses to romanticize its gays on any level; they are not presented as the poor victims of patriarchal tyranny. In fact, they help to perpetuate its ideology.

The whole 'leather set' scene is based on a glorification of phallic power — witness the Nazi regalia, the wrestling magazines, and most particularly the police uniforms. This is

6. In many ways the narrative order is also strained in a fashion most uncommon in the commercial narrative cinema to which *Cruising* expresses such a passionate commitment. For example, temporality is rendered asunder in the sequence where Richards meets his father. A few minutes later in the film that we learn that his father has been dead for 10 years. Another example, designed to produce disorder, is the 'open' epilogue to the film where Burns returns to Nancy's apartment.

No issue has been more heatedly debated in the Australian film industry than that of using overseas actors in local films. On the one hand, there are those who see internationalization as essential if our films are to be more commercially-acceptable overseas. Using foreign stars is one way of achieving this.

On the other, there are those who believe in maintaining a small, nationalistic industry which caters primarily for Australians. Its success depends on its difference from the "treadmill" of American-type product.

While these opposing views have been held for some time, it was primarily action by the Actors and Announcers Equity Association of Australia that made the issues public. Up until 1979, the producer of each film made in Australia negotiated separately with Equity. That changed in November 1979 with the incorporation of the Film Actors Award 1979, which resulted from negotiations between Equity and the Film and Television Production Association of Australia. One thing the Award did was establish penalties for the use of imported actors: e.g., if a foreign actor is used, each Australian actor in the film receives a 25 per cent loading.

At its incorporation, the Award was generally applauded, but enthusiasm waned quickly when producer Tony Ginnane ran into problems with The Survivor and then producer-director Richard Franklin with Roadgames. In Ginnane's case, he wished to bring in four overseas stars. Equity, which gives a ruling to the Immigration Department as to an actor's standing, refused on the grounds that two of the four actors were not of "international standing".

Ginnane took Equity to the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission, but Justice Robinson ruled that Equity had the right to determine "international standing" and Ginnane lost.

The Roadgames case was different, with Franklin claiming that the Melbourne branch of Equity gave him permission to bring in Stacy Keach and Jamie Lee Curtis, but the Sydney branch, after an objection was lodged by a Sydney actress, changed the decision.

But the real bone of contention was yet to come: Equity's "Defence of Employment Policy", also known as the "new policy". This bars the use of overseas actors in any Australian film with government money, except in "exceptional circumstances". Several producers saw the move as the death knell for a faltering industry; others felt it would ensure the continuation of a film industry of which Australia could be proud.

It is still too early to see what lasting effects the new policy will have, but already Ginnane, Australia's most prolific producer, has stopped working in Australia and the South Australian Film Corporation has threatened not to make any more films until the policy changes.

Given the importance of this and related issues, various people have been invited to contribute their views in this and future issues of Cinema Papers. Following are an interview with Uri Windt, assistant general secretary of Equity and its main spokesman; a statement by Errol Sullivan, chairman of the F&TPAA (features division); and an interview with Edward Woodward, acclaimed British actor. Their views form part of an ongoing debate which may well determine the future of the Australian film industry.
Uri Windt, assistant general secretary of the Actors and Announcers Equity Association of Australia, is the spokesman on Equity’s policies in the feature film and television areas. Here he discusses with Scott Murray the philosophy behind Equity’s recent actions.

What are Equity’s principal aims?

Our concern is twofold: cultural and economic. Culturally, what we would like to see is something that genuinely reflects, and is in touch with, an Australian way of life — a "cultural exactness", to use Bob Ellis’ phrase. Economically we are looking for an industry that, in one form or another, is financially viable and that has no constant threat to its survival. We want a mechanism that ensures the industry’s stability, and a continuity of production.

What concerned us, and we saw this coming two years ago, was that the economic crisis lurching up ahead would lead to economic compromises and, therefore, cultural compromises. We have seen this happen in a number of other industries, like in Britain and Canada.

In Canada, for example, there was $160 million worth of filmmaking — that is 55 films — being made in 1979. But only three of those scripts were written by Canadians, and only five or six of the leading roles were played by Canadian actors. In it is a transplanted American industry, and it is unstable because the decision of whether it goes ahead is not made within the Canadian industry, but in New York or Los Angeles. It is not economically viable because it is not based on anything indigenous: it is neither based on the Canadian economy, nor related to the Canadian cinemagoing public. It is related to the American cinemagoing public.

But Canada neighbours the U.S. and historically Canadian filmmaking tastes have been the same as American. It is not in the least of interest to Canadian audiences. Surely it is economically sounder to make the sort of films that Canadian audiences want to see, rather than the sort some people think they should see ...

There is a quote in Variety from the Canadian Minister of Interior Affairs, saying, "At the fact that films are using Canadian locations where the street names have changed, and where New York or Los Angeles has been imported into Toronto. The Government itself is saying, "This is outrageous." This kind of economics of scale is all about the Canadian government subsidizing American multinational and American production corporations. I suggest you see an element of this with a film like Patrick, which is supposed to be grossing millions of dollars in the U.S., yet it is alleged that the nett return to the Australian Film Commission is in the mere tens of thousands of dollars. It has ended up losing a leg and an arm for somebody else to be grossing millions.

That could be said of many films, such as "Picnic at Hanging Rock", which was sold outright to Italy for a small advance and grossed millions. Perhaps it just reflects inexperience in the film industry ... But Picnic at Hanging Rock came at one point in the history of the industry, and Patrick a long way afterwards. If, at that stage, they didn't know what a business deal looked like, there should have been very serious heartburn going on in the AFC boardroom.

The second point you made — that we ought to give people what they want — is very much akin to the argument that takes place about the race to compete with the razzmatazz. We are swamped in terms of product. Now to really get an understanding and a feel for how the exhibitors and distributors respond to Australian films, you have to look at different modes of history. It is not a uniform history. In 1967/68, for example, when there was a fairly strong dearth of production in the U.S., Australian films were virtually responsible for the cash flow among the exhibitors in Australia. They were desperate, and on that basis Australian films were

I, Luthered during a speech, titled "Is that an Australian film industry?", during the 1980 Sydney Film Festival.
while for people to go across the street to see a different film.

Now, if the economics of sustaining this second option exist, there is a reasonable security. You can control your destiny, because the sources of funds and the audiences you are cultivating — being Australian — are there. You get a return on the effort that has been spent within the Australian community.

Now, is there going to be a hybrid? I am not sure. What producers are complaining about is that the private funds which supplement the public funds are becoming progressively elusive. It is driving them to desperate means to try and get the balance of money to make up the budget. They would like us to believe that what they are doing is in good faith, which I don’t doubt, and therefore doesn’t involve any fundamental compromise of themselves or the Australian filmmaking industry. But this is where the crunch comes: “Is there a fundamental economic and cultural compromise being forced on those producers?”

When you look at some of the propositions that are put up to us, it seems to me that there are fundamental compromises. They are making a choice of which of these two options should take place, and they have done this without any widespread discussion within the industry, and certainly with no preliminary discussion with the group of people they are asking to make the most severe compromise, namely the actors. In that compromise for foreign money, lead roles are being sacrificed to foreign actors — some of them conspicuous by their inconsequentiality.

Producers could also argue that they have been forced into compromises by Equity’s new policy [see Box 1] . . .

That’s not true. What we have said is that there is a responsibility of filmmakers, operating within Australia, to the Australian community and to their fellow creative workers. That responsibility is there no matter how they finance their film. But there is a double responsibility when they are using government funds, because it is taxpayers’ money geared with a certain intent in mind.

In that sense, we have differentiated between government- and privately-funded films. As to government-funded films, we have said that we are willing to look at a situation which allows for “exceptional circumstances”, where an overseas actor may be required.

There are three areas that concern us in regard to the use of imported artists: producers want to use more and more imports in any particular film; they want to use less and less consequential people; and more and more films are doing it. Out of 10 productions planned this year, seven intend to use imports. Our response was that there needs to be an accountability for these decisions. They can’t be allowed to happen de facto.

We were then faced with the dilemma of what sort of circumstances were acceptable as a base on which imports can come in. We held two meetings of our members, one in Sydney and one in Melbourne, which were well attended. Two things stood out: one is the need for a certain amount of flexibility, and the other is that people resented being displaced by “crumb bums”.

So, in considering these feelings, we have looked at the prospect of saying that “exceptional circumstances” means (a) somebody can’t play the role satisfactorily in Australia, or (b) somebody who is of genuine international distinction and merit. Now, to that extent, certain requests for certain actors have been met. I don’t know if it is quotable at this stage, but the whole industry knows about Julie Christie. We have said “All right”, and that sets the peg. We will have a look at each test as it comes.

Has Christie been approved under (a) or (b)?

Under the international distinction and merit qualification. It was quite clear that it was a role that could have been played by an Australian — in fact, it had been offered to an Australian before being given to Julie Christie.

Is it not conceivable, though, that a director or producer has a burning desire to use a particular overseas actor? Yet, under your new policy, it would be difficult for him to use that actor. Therefore, there is a compromise . . .

That is not what has been put to us. It is not a real proposition. The real proposition is that producers aspire to using the big international star who will put bums on seats. The problem is that they can’t afford them. So there is a new game involved called “Catch a Rising Star”. Everybody says, “If only I could have got Richard Gere . . . .
Producers tell us that it is possible in some small markets to be offered a quarter of a million dollars if they use actors who are geared to the cable market in the U.S. They will be given two or three names, of whom the producers and directors have not heard much, but for whom they only have to pay $50,000. So the temptation of having that surplus $200,000 for their budget is what it is all about. And they are asking Australian actors to stand aside for a role which they could play as adequately, if not better.

Now, when you are dealing with government money, which is there for developing the capacity of the industry as a whole — and by that I mean our actors will get the chance to be more than a taxi driver in a film — then that is a big responsibility on the producer.

Your analysis would certainly hold in several cases, but what about a case where an impassioned filmmaker has a desire to use some little-known French or Italian actors because he feels she is the only person right for the role. Would that application be looked at under the term of "exceptional circumstances"?

Yes it would. We would look at it. But I am saying to you that this is not what has been put to us. The proposition of importing Jamie Lee Curtis for Roadgames had naught to do with the notion of a special creative surge ... through the producer's veins. Stacy Keach and Curtis in Roadgames.

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Producers tell us that it is possible in some small markets to be offered a quarter of a million dollars if they use actors who are geared to the cable market in the U.S. They will be given two or three names, of whom the producers and directors have not heard much, but for whom they only have to pay $50,000. So the temptation of having that surplus $200,000 for their budget is what it is all about. And they are asking Australian actors to stand aside for a role which they could play as adequately, if not better.

Now, when you are dealing with government money, which is there for developing the capacity of the industry as a whole — and by that I mean our actors will get the chance to be more than a taxi driver in a film — then that is a big responsibility on the producer.

Your analysis would certainly hold in several cases, but what about a case where an impassioned filmmaker has a desire to use some little-known French or Italian actors because he feels she is the only person right for the role. Would that application be looked at under the term of "exceptional circumstances"?

Yes it would. We would look at it. But I am saying to you that this is not what has been put to us. The proposition of importing Jamie Lee Curtis for Roadgames had naught to do with the notion of a special creative surge ... through the producer's veins. Stacy Keach and Curtis in Roadgames.
of Day.

British actress Sara Kestelman, and Australians John Bell and Andrew McFarlane in Break of Day.

funds and has to pay principal as well as interest. Obviously the pressures on it are intense. But what we found the SAFC saying to us was that unless it could get an import in every production, it didn't intend continuing with films.

That's not an open-minded approach. That's not, "We'll examine each film on its merits" and so on. That is giving us an overall proposition that cuts across whatever project they are doing. Hence their ludicrous idea about converting The Club into a film about soccer, with Michael Caine.

As mentioned earlier historical errors. One of these was the various funding bodies moving into only one aspect of the film industry, leaving the other two key areas—exhibition and distribution—to different interests. This has meant a fairly unholy marriage with the people who have been historically responsible for the death of the industry once already. That people couldn't see the inevitable crash of that situation coming seems to me extraordinary.

Yet when there has been a shortage of product from overseas, as in 1976/77, Australian films have been shown and done well. Surely that suggests that, to a degree at least, the exhibition and distribution network is interested in showing Australian films, if they think they can compete on the marketplace?

It is a question of choice. If they have a choice they won't. If they don't have a choice, then they will support the Australian film industry.

Again, you have to remember the historical context: 1976/77 was the aftermath of the Whitlam era. There was a great deal of nationalism and it was politically right to move in that direction. Also, they had been up before the Trade Practices Commission and got a fairly savage thrashing. To win their white wings again, they had to be seen to be actively supporting the film industry. Coupled with that was the dearth of material from the U.S. So why wouldn't they be involved in such a proposition?

Now that there is a choice, why wouldn't they get out of supporting the Australian film industry? Take these past two years. They released five, or was it six, films in the July-August period last year, in Sydney anyway. That is five or six films at the deadest part of the year. Well, you could say that was an accident, but they have released four or five films this year in exactly the same way. Now if that is not guaranteed to kill the Australian film in the marketplace, I don't know what is.

Could it not perhaps reflect on the quality of those Australian films?

It may. But it may also reflect pretty wful economic manipulation of the industry.

You mentioned government funding bodies moving into only one three areas. How would you like to see them move into distribution and exhibition?

That's a good question. I can't see the answers necessarily from where I sit. I don't have all the data in front of me. I really don't know how best you approach that situation.

It would seem to me, however, that without pretty strong government support, thereby providing additional infrastructure, it may not be possible. I don't know. But it certainly seems to me that it's reasonable to issue a call to have a look at the government's strategies in regard to this. Previous calls have taken place. There was the Tariff Board in 1973, which condemned the exhibition and distribution monopoly. So did the Trade Practices Commission, with the Venturini decision.

I am not optimistic with the present federal government, but if you have a sympathetic federal government you have lots of concepts you can play with. The Labor Government, for example, had a concept of decentralizing their bureaucracy. This involved spreading their various offices throughout regional areas, where new office blocks and community centres would be built. And in these regional centres would be theatres, cinemas, community facilities and so on. Had that idea gone ahead, it would have provided an exhibition chain for the various government funding bodies.

As new technology evolves, the government funding bodies and statutory bodies ought to be involved in controlling gain and access to them. One would be pay television, which looks like coming in. It is not a question of handing pay television over to the exhibitors/distributors on one hand, or to the commercial television proprietors on the other. We will be looking at the cable/pay set-up as a publicly-funded proposition, and one into which the film industry will have a direct conduit.

A lot of what you propose is dependent on a continuation of government involvement in the film industry. The policy of bringing in more and more overseas actors has been justified, by some people, as being a necessary step in preparing for the time when Australian government money stops. What's your reaction to that argument?

The new industry cliché is that subsidization per se is somehow bad, and doubly bad in the film industry. It seems important to pierce that balloon as a false proposition, and I'll do that in two senses. One, film is a cultural form that each country ought to sustain in the way enormous amounts of money are used to sustain other cultural forms, like ballet and opera. I understand that the Australian ballet company has recently received a grant of $2.75 million. On top of that, film is a mass cultural form in a way other cultural forms are not. It is a justifiable part of a social package, and has a very distinctive role. Consequently, governments have a responsibility to ensure its ongoing survival. So there is no reason to be apologetic. In fact, subsidization ought to be seen as a right of the industry.

The other thing to do, in this time of nervousness about government cut-backs, is look at what the industry costs the federal government. We feel there should be an increase in the levy that is imposed on the overseas remittances of exhibitors and distributors. They are part of the industry, and they ought to have to make a contribution towards it. Now, the last figures I saw quoted involved a $46 million turnover, of which exhibitors and distributors were taxed 10 per cent. That's roughly $5 million. That's roughly the government contribution towards the AFC.

If, as I believe ought to happen, the money from that levy ought to be pooled and re-funnelled into the industry, instead of going straight into consolidated revenue, then the AFC would cost the Government nothing. So where is the heavy price that the Government is paying for what is its greatest international prestige-winning showpiece?

Succumbing to the psychological terror of people saying that the Government won't subsidize forever, and that we must have economic viability, cuts your throat in two different ways. Firstly, you diminish the Government's sense of responsibility towards the industry as a whole; you make them feel free of their commitment.

Secondly, by making the kind of cultural compromises that we are talking about — indistinguishable locales, millions of imported artists — you also lose that international prestige-winning aspect of the Australian film industry.

Given that you feel there is a need for the industry to come together more — should to shoulder as you put it — how would you go about doing it?

Two things. One relates to the sensitivity people have to the requirements of others. If nothing else, our policy has created a sensitivity about actors; for good or bad, people are at least saying that actors are involved in the film industry. As well, producers are
silly proposition if I go into asking themselves, "Am I going to go into Equity?" We are getting more meaningful negotiations as a result. The second possibility is one of people getting together more, so that there is some sense of belonging to the one industry. Consequently, we are proposing, if we can get state government permission, to create a celebration of the Australian-ness of the film industry at the next opening of an all-Australian film. We plan to close off George St and run the showbiz party of the year. At least it will provide people with an opportunity to celebrate what is good about the Australian film industry, rather than being at daggers with each other.

The Award [see Box 2]

Where did the initiative for the Award come from?

Continued on P. 389
Errol Sullivan, chairman of the Film and Television Production Association of Australia (features division), looks at the Equity debate from the point of view of the producer.

In some respects, Equity’s policies on imported artists are not far removed from those of independent producers. We are certainly committed to the concept that films which have secured public investment (other than development moneys) should restrict, but not exclude, the use of foreign creative talent, including writers and directors as well as cast. Restrictions could certainly protect Australian content and maintain Australian creative control.

In addition, if some formula for restricting the amount of foreign talent in productions could be agreed upon, then producers would be able to package and finance films with some public investment, in a planned and organized fashion, provided Equity could see its way clear to let directors and producers cast their films without effecting creative control themselves by way of veto on who can work in Australia.

However, Australian films which are totally privately financed (a handful over the past five years) should not suffer any more restrictions than Hollywood location films shot in Australia, even if that means taking the film outside the ambit of the arbitrated award for Australian films. Tony Ginnane should be able to make international films in Australia in the same way that The Earthling was made here and that Warner Brothers may make Thorn Birds here.

Production, distribution, exhibition and marketing costs have risen sharply. Below-the-line costs have roughly doubled. Examples of our successes from the past, which are totally Australian, take on a different hue with today’s cost structure when combined with diminishing box-office returns to all but the mega films. Yesterday’s successes are now formulas for today’s flops. Budgets have risen and films are, therefore, harder to finance from within Australia. Overseas finance or pre-sales can only be generated by projects with marketable elements in the key creative positions.

We have, in Australia, only a small number of directors and cast that can be used to help finance a project in this way. Production will continue to fall if we don’t bolster our investment packages with a restricted use of overseas talent and, at the same time, recognize that this talent may be virtually unknown in this territory. If producers are unable to use foreign talent, then only low budget features will be made so that they can be financed from within Australia. This will mean a different type of production.

If commerciality is to be a criterion for some production which involves public funds, then Equity’s policy will restrict this production to low-budget, exploitation films which will star hunks of flesh and spectacular car crashes rather than a mix of Australian and foreign performers in films which could have significance for a wide audience.

With an increasing tendency in lower budget, commercial films to generic exploitation films, then notions inherent in Equity’s position, that if the film is all-Australian it will better represent Australian values and culture (whatever that means), seem untenable. Is The Last Wave with Richard Chamberlain less Australian than Mad Max? Were the scores of spaghetti Westerns (with all Italian content) representative of Italian culture?

If Equity’s policy is designed to redirect public money from commercial investment in Australian films to a cultural subsidy, then Equity should say so. Producers support a mix of public investment, which promotes commercial mass audience film production as well as continued and increased investment in low-budget films with narrower audience aspirations, which would also provide opportunities for new talent. Such a mix of production will maintain jobs and keep the public money flowing.

Any contraction to the sole production of subsidized art films will quickly produce an elitist production industry, serving an elitist audience. As production continues to drop, Equity’s policies will move more and more from a defence of employment to an attack on employment, and not just for its membership.
Edward Woodward

Most of the debate over the use of foreign actors in Australian films has centred in Australia. But how do overseas actors feel about the issue?

In this frank interview, by Tom Ryan, leading British actor Edward Woodward discusses working in Australia and his concept of the international actor.

How did Bruce Beresford come to choose you for the part of Harry Morant?

Bruce had seen a lot of my television work and the film Wicker Man. He felt I was the one to play Breaker, and put the idea to Matt Carroll who agreed. They then found that I had this extraordinary resemblance to the man, which spurred them on even more. I was then sent the script.

Did you accept at that point?

No. The script wasn't finished and I think there is a great danger in accepting anything until you have seen the final form. Otherwise, you can make terrible personal mistakes. Soon afterwards, Bruce sent me a draft which was much closer to the final one. I thought it was great.

What sort of director is Beresford?

The keystone of his direction, as with all the good directors I think, is that he encourages you to contribute to the part, even to vary the way it is written. He is a very clever director and can achieve an almost unspoken rapport with his actors. He only has to move his finger before he says something, and you immediately know exactly what he is talking about. His communication with actors is unbelievably perceptive.

Your style of acting is that of a reactor, rather than of an initiator of dramatic action. That is especially true of "Breaker Morant", where one thinks of that image of you looking up at Jack Thompson as he speaks. Initially there is cynicism, but that changes to admiration and support in the course of the shot.

I am glad you got that, because it was very important in my mind.

I was trained in the school of reacting and, in fact, acting is about reacting. That is the most important thing actors should be taught.

The above interview was originally broadcast on 3RRR-FM.

You cannot answer a question intelligently if you don't listen to the question. Therefore, you cannot possibly act unless you give all your attention to the person with whom you are acting.

If you take the really top actors and watch their reactions, and watch them listening, it is all a question of not pretending to listen, but actually listening.

Obviously the techniques of an actor are developed over the years and vary for different roles. One wouldn't use that sort of technique, for instance, in a television comedy series. There, you have to bash it out all the time, with as near-perfect timing as you can get.

One thing that has struck me about Australian films is the absence of this "reactor actor". When the performers are the focus of attention they are mostly fine, but when they become part of the background they have nothing to offer, or else they are not directed to offer anything. Was Beresford consciously directing you as a reactor, or was that something you contributed to the part?

Firstly, I'll take you to task about that comment. I have seen a great number of Australian films, and I don't think it's generally true. Nevertheless, worldwide there is a great number of actors who find it very difficult to react, as opposed to act. But you cannot do any kind of performance if the script is not there. The first and basic requirement of any form of entertainment, and certainly film, is that the script has to be good in the first place.

In the courtroom scenes in "Breaker Morant" you say very little. In fact, it is Jack Thompson, Bud Tingwell and the others who do the talking. Yet it is your reaction that seems to control our emotional response to what's going on. Were the scenes directed around you consciously?

Morant is the catalyst: he is the reason the whole thing is going on in the first place. He is a very bitter man, so, of course, you show the bitterness through that man, through his reactions. Judicious reaction-shots provide the thread of tension throughout the scenes in the courtroom. This is the choice of the director.

There were, of course, other reaction shots, but they only came out of what an actor was doing. A director watches a rehearsal, sees the way a particular actor is reacting to somebody else, and thinks, "Oh great, that tells my bit of the story here, so I'll get that reaction shot." This builds up into a jigsaw puzzle, which is the film. All I do as a film actor is listen.

I spent 10 solid days of listening in that courtroom, but that was my job. You don't stop acting because the camera is not on you, especially in a scene, or a series of scenes, which is very tense and building inexcusably to a final, great five-minute take, which is Jack's appeal to the court.

The more you talk about acting and reacting, the more I know that what I was taught is true: that it is all a question of reacting or listening, focusing not just for yourself, but for all the other actors. What you do on set, or on a stage, is only a part of the whole. If you go out and say, "This is my show", or "I am the great I am", you already have destroyed whatever is going to happen. You have totally destroyed the writer, the director, all the other actors and yourself. That is not what I am about; that is not what actors are basically about.

Occasionally, you get the odd, twitty big-head, but it is very simple.
to deal with people like that. You do nothing, and the more they do, the less you do. Finally, they disappear up the vast anus of the world and you are left quietly on that stage, just being there. And that is basically what it’s all about just being there and allowing everybody to be there.

Was there any discussion on “Breaker Morant” about the dangers involved in opening out the play, in allowing the flashbacks to materialize out of the testimonies?

There was no discussion as such, because when Beresford came to the project he had already mapped out the overall plan. What do you do with a courtroom drama? You have to go outside the court. How do you go outside the court? Well you obviously do it in flashback or flashforward style.

In Breaker Morant, you have a situation whereby you go backwards and forwards in time. The director’s great problem there, of course, is to make sure that the audience is swept along by the action. And that is where, I think, the genius of a man like Bruce Beresford comes into play.

I kept thinking throughout the film that maybe it shouldn’t have moved outdoors till the end. Perhaps the end sequence would have been more overpowering had the film been claustrophobic to that point . . .

Yes, but the vast number of people who watch entertainment do not go to the theatre. Therefore, you have to deal with the kind of expectations they are going to bring to your film. Today’s audiences are not trained to feel that kind of claustrophobia.

You are a man who goes to the theatre a lot, therefore you know the genre. You have the feeling for this. But the audiences which go to cinema are not used to being taken outdoors. Today is the age of outdoors location filming.

The International Actor

You are probably aware that Actors Equity in Australia has a policy directed at excluding overseas actors, as far as possible, from Australian productions. What is your attitude to this?

To start with, all Equity groups are only the sum total of us, the actors. And whatever Australian actors decide, will be done.

I speak as this strange breed of thing called an actor, rather than as an Englishman or an Australian, and I don’t give a damn if I offend anybody. I have been trying for years and years, along with a number of actors in Australia, the U.S., and Britain, to have the true internationality of actors recognized, documented and docketed, and put into our rule books. Gradually, over the years, this has begun to happen. Occasionally, our Equity talks to American Equity, or American Equity will talk to Australian Equity. Of course you know. Don’t forget, there are few places in the world that English-speaking actors can work. And gradually, it seems to me, we have been moving nearer to this internationality, nearer to a true exchange. If there is a hard-and-fast ban, then there is no doubt in my mind that it will produce a total catastrophe.

Theoretically it’s not a total ban. An overseas actor can be brought in on a film with government finance, in “exceptional circumstances”. The onus is on filmmakers to show that nobody in Australia could play that part and that the overseas actor is really a star . . .

But there is no way you can prove these things. There is no way you can produce that an Australian can’t play a given part, or that any British or American actor could play a part. Actors are actors, and are therefore called upon to play all sorts of parts. We are not particularly good actors if we can’t play all sorts of parts.

I hope from what you say that there is no outright, stone-wall ban because that will produce a retaliation in Britain: no Australian actors will be allowed to work in Britain, and there are a great number of Australian actors working in Britain right now. Even more important, no Australian actors will be allowed to work in films in the U.S.

Over the past five or six years, there has arisen, at last long, a breed of Australian actors, second to none in the world. Now where do these people extend their craft? Obviously, top Australian actors will want to make films in the U.S. They will want new experiences, new types of scripts, new directors, etc. Yet, there is no way, if any Equity comes up with a hard-and-fast ban, without things being taken on the merit of a particular situation, that the Americans are going to say, “We don’t mind not being allowed in Australia. Of course we will make films in the U.S.”

So, we will find the situation where our countries are totally closed to the possibility of actors being able to move about. And actors are the most easily moved about.

A part of the history of film is the movement of actors from one country to another into films. Sometimes it’s going to be Australia’s turn to be the country that’s making films; sometimes, God willing, it will be Britain’s. It’s always America’s. All hard-and-fast bans on actors are imposed because of fear, and are totally understandable.

Equity is there to protect each of us, in our separate countries. It has to protect a very delicate situation at a time when unemployment is rife. Of course it has an obligation to protect. But I don’t see how an outright ban can protect Australian actors who want to spread their wings and learn more about their craft. It can’t possibly work for the good of Australian actors.

I think there is connected issue at stake. It is often declared by Australian filmmakers that they need an overseas star, firstly to get investment, and secondly because without a particular overseas star the film will not be marketable, or at least as marketable, in overseas countries . . .

Well I wouldn’t know very much about that side of the business, but my reaction to that is balderdash, pilfe and poppy-cock. That is not my reason for challenging any sort of outright ban. I am talking purely and simply about actors.

I have travelled all over the world and have worked and talked with many actors. Actors are my life; acting is my love. I know perfectly well that 90 per cent of the actors I have talked to, over the 33 years I have been an actor, have been crying out for a situation whereby we can work in each other’s countries, without undermining the indigenous actors concerned.

I am angry, in retrospect, for the Australian actor, because up to 10 years ago this country was, and still occasionally is, used by a few actors from Britain, and the odd one from the U.S., to make a killing.

They come here to make a packet and then get the hell out of the country. That has happened in our country too, in the days when American musicals came over to Britain, and British singers and dancers could not get work for years after year. I understand that syndrome only too well. But that does not exist now.

I come to Australia because I am asked to do a play or a concert tour, or, in this particular case, a film. I come to Australia because it extends me as an actor. I meet other actors and other people, and I see a marvellous and beautiful country.

It is great to be able to work in another place. I don’t come out here to make money, because I can make a hell of a lot more money in my own country. I am not asking you to weep about that. I am merely telling you why I, and a number of other British actors, come out, when invited and when permitted.
Opposite: scene from Eddie Romero's Aguila, the most expensive film made in The Philippines.

Manila lies about 6° north of the equator, so it is hot most of the year. But it was early spring when I arrived, the tourists were flooding through, and though the Luna, the large park in the centre of a rather level city, was packed with people enjoying the milder weather.

In his city office, Eddie Romero was putting the finishing touches to the promotion campaign for Aguila, his latest film. It is the most expensive film made in The Philippines, with a budget of almost U.S.$1 million. It is also the first effort in recent times at a national epic, a film which spans four generations and looks at the experiences of an important family through many different periods in Filipino history.

Romero has been making films in the Philippines for nearly 40 years — for local release and on contract for American producers. He said the technical aspect didn't worry him too much. His main concern, as for any producer, is whether it will take at the box-office and seeing he wrote, directed and produced the film, he has more at stake than most. But Romero is relatively unconcerned as he organizes the many previews which will precede the launch of his film.

Aguila is just one of the 200-odd local films that roll out of the Filipino labs each year, and which compete for the three or four playdates a week for films in the local language, Tagalog. Sometimes harsh, but beautiful, Tagalog is an amalgam of Malay root words and some Spanish, with a remarkable ability to incorporate English-American phrases and constructions.

Filipinos are avid filmgoers. There are more than 7000 cinemas in the three main island groups, and the total admissions a day throughout the islands is slightly less than two million. Of these, about 60 per cent are locally-produced films, and in certain areas 40 per cent never see a foreign film. So, it is a buoyant market, hardly dented by the impact of television and staunchly loyal to the local product.

The Government's interest in the film industry is social as well as financial, since it reserves the right to be shown all scripts before production (and other cuts and changes), and also collects a hefty 30 per cent tax on box-office receipts. Various incentives are fed back to producers, but the industry is very much self-supporting and exists without subsidy.

Recently, however, finance lines have become strained, and other sources of large-scale finance have had to be hunted out. Large finance companies have joined the fray, and one big company has made a long-term commitment to investment in production and distribution.

Aguila is one of its major investments, but was seen as a less risky leader, initially at least. These pessimistic approaches were already being proved wrong when I left Manila.

Other sources of finance are the stars themselves, usually by deferment of fees in return for a big part of the box-office take, and investment by theatre owners, who usually turn out to be Chinese entrepreneurs making high action quickies for their own release.

Although every effort is made to secure overseas release, either to a general audience or to Filipino minority groups in other countries, these efforts have not been successful. Filipino film has to compete with a vast world interest, although organized efforts are being made by Pierre Rissient, a French publicist-director, to get the films of Lino Brocka some European festival exposure. (See interview with Brocka on p. 399.) So, never said in openly, but I had the feeling that this resistance to Filipino films was seen as a form of racism by the Western countries.

Having now seen a fair collection of quality Filipino films, I feel they can establish an audience overseas, aided by a certain European quality to the style of relationships and spatial settings. But the market needs to be proved and this will take patience and persistence. Aguila may be the film to spearhead a Filipino entry into European and international markets.

In many ways, The Philippines can be seen as an enclave of European consciousness in Asia, while sharing the exotic conditions and lifestyles of the South-East Asian area. Providing that world interest in films continues at about the same level, it seems that Filipinos have the talent and the experience to supply international films. Cooperation with other Pacific nations would seem to be an obvious possibility.

So, if one were to define Filipino mass entertainment, it could be referred to as a mono-culture. There is no superimposition of other cultures and 'elite' cultural pursuits. Rather, the scene is of amalgam and adaptation, in which the total population shares. According to a recent report from The Philippines Motion Picture Association, filmgoing is more or less constant across the entire social scale (it averages about 90 per cent attending films regularly), although the A and B groups (the rich) show more preference for foreign films than the C, D, E and F groups (the rest), who prefer local language product. So, in a country of diverse and divergent people, film probably does more than any other cultural medium to weld the country into a social unity.

In the main, though, there seems little interest in it, but a financial experiment in the 1970s proved the utility of making films for which there was no substantial audience. And most of these directors have returned to commercial production, where they do quite well on a pay scale of 50,000 to 100,000 pesos a film (some $1500 to $3000). Sometimes, due to conflicting bookings of the major stars, production may stretch over many months, but to paraphrase Samuel Johnson's statement on marriage, commercial production may have many pains, but independence has few pleasures.

A few days after I arrived in Manila, the price of motor fuel was hiked 50 per cent, to 4.50 pesos a litre. This is slightly more than 50 cents in Australia, but in a society where wages are a fraction of ours it is a punishing blow. The foreseen stock film stock price increases had also arrived (50 per cent). So, it is no wonder that on most features the retake is a luxury, all rushes are essentially in black and white, and two film from East Germany, and sound transfers are done on to reused stock, averaging about a splice a foot.

Import restrictions on equipment have always been stringent, and the basic shooting kit is an Arri 11B or IIC, sometimes in a heavy blimp, with a fraction tripod and lights in home-made housings. Editing equipment is not less Spartan, with old Movielas predominating. Every editor lives in hope that a visiting American company will leave behind a flatbed for his company to buy. But the sound studios seem adequate and the mixing suites have the latest Magnetic equipment. Similarly, the LVN Studios processing equipment, designed and installed by Film Lab of Sydney, seems to be operating satisfactorily.

Post-production is always done in a rush, mainly to meet a playdate negotiated a few days before. Some houses offer a complete post-production package, with editors, editing rooms, sound transfers, mixing and everything but the splicing tape thrown in. This seems less of a bargain when you are told that the editor also does the non-matching, in less than optimum conditions. The old Australian myth of the footprint on the negative is an accepted fact in Manila. Sparkles, scratches and cement splice marks flash past the screen on all productions, even something as big as Aguila. Editors, to make money in an insecure and underpaid role, often take on up to seven post-production contracts, working all-night stints to get through.

However, these are expected problems in a high-volume, low-financial industry, and one should not sit back with a smug smile. Filipino films have helped to create and certainly service adequately a vast and loyal public. Most producers, in cover overheads, have to produce at least three films a year, so they do their best to utilize finance. What this means is that the average Filipino producer probably makes five to six films on the finance Australians would use to make one film of the scale of Cathy's Child. In addition, the Filipino producer probably supports a staff of four or five full-time, with additional work for literally hundreds of actors, extras and technicians, not to speak of lab and theatre staff.

The image of the Australian producer getting one or two films every two years, then sitting in an office waiting for receipts, or a nod from the
Rudolfo Velasco, executive secretary of the PMPPA, invited me to a shoot of a film starring one of The Philippines' biggest “bold” stars, Nora Aunor. The location, he warned me, was a squatter village near the centre of town. It was a night shoot, so we set out at around 5 p.m., through the incredible melee of Manila’s rush hour, as even in that hour 30-60 passenger vehicles that ply for hire seemed to be on the road, its dozen lights flashing, its stereo blasting out rock music. Chrome glittering in the setting sun.

In about 30 minutes we were at the location. A crowd of about 500 pressed against the fence around a small frame house, straining for a glimpse of their favorite female star. They groaned with excitement as they saw her at a window, and surged towards the fences.

Shooting hadn’t started, the director was not there and the camera crew were setting up lights. Velasco explained that shooting rarely starts in Manila before one o’clock in the afternoon.

The stars, who are essential for the success of most films, know their power and can refuse to get up in the morning. So shootings are tactfully scheduled to suit the stars, not the budget. And, as was the case of the film we were seeing, the star was also the producer, so little leverage could be exerted.

Nora Aunor gets a minimum of 300,000 pesos a film ($37,500), which is a small fortune by any standards, and since she may make three or more films simultaneously, with an average of four weeks shooting each, stars are very well rewarded for their work. These rewards are, of course, simple box-office insurance, pulling the film through the crucial first week when it must make money or be pulled.

A crowd of about 500 pressed against the fence. The majority of Filipino films, of course, do not possess such integrity. Many are straight exploitation films, on familiar themes of crime, prostitution and fantasy/escape.

A few nights later I attended a preview of Miss X, a creditable attempt to show the plight of Filipino women in Europe who are forced into prostitution. Shot entirely in Amsterdam on a low budget of 1,300,000 pesos (about $170,000), it starred the foremost “bold” star, Vilma Santos, noted for sexy dances and half-naked scenes. (See interview p. 340.) Vilma outdoes her boldest films here in dramatic rape scenes with a Dutch actor. But the production does neither her nor the basically accurate script justice: The low-budget restrictions, the technical inexpertise (once again in the area of lighting) and poor coverage by director Gil Portes let down a basically viable concept. Yet no doubt the loyal fans of Miss Santos will gather in droves to see this latest offering, which at least has the merit of dealing with a social problem.

Earlier, I had seen a shoot of another of Santos’ many yearly starring roles, in a sentimental drama called Mrs Jones, directed by veteran producer-director Cirio Santiago. In the...
scene I saw, Santos (playing a dancer who has made it) visits the ailing woman who started her on the road to stardom. Once again the shoot started at 3 p.m. (Santos suffers from insomnia) and after a fairly quick lighting set up — a couple of angles including a short dolly in — the hospital room scene was over. The director was happy, and Santos stayed calm and responsive through it all.

Watching the execution of this type of product, it is hard to escape the conclusion that such films merely feed the maw of an insatiable audience, which is quite content to see their favorite stars (supported with all the fervor of football heroes) in some sort of vehicle.

Well, Hollywood films in the 1940s and 1950s were certainly like that, and insofar as building a star system to support their local industry, the Filipinos have learnt the lesson well. This initiative is further supported by an endless stream of celebrity shows on television (by my account there were at least three a day); overkill advertising by newspaper, banner and billboard; and diversification into radio and music business tie-ups. If ever there can be an entertainment Golden Age, then Manila is in its throes.

So it was not surprising to encounter the many and varied references to film culture, in meetings, discussion and surveys, and the recognition of a need to develop a Filipino character through the medium of film. The artistic concerns, whatever their realization, are in the forefront of discussion. Filipino producers seem genuinely concerned in improving the cultural value of their product, and the many battles fought with the Board of Censors to extend the range of permitted expression seem in part aesthetically motivated.

Lino Brocka, a stage-oriented director, has fought a personal battle to make films about the great mass of Filipino life. If this means showing slum conditions, exploitation and inequality, then Brocka has the determination to push his views at the risk of censorship or outright bans. Other directors also see the need to propound social messages in their work and express frustration at the unspoken pressure to stay on the light side.

However, there are encouraging signs, largely as a result of representation to the First Lady, Imelda Marcos, by the PMPPA. There are also moves to re-constitute the Board of Censors with fewer retired military men (at last count there were seven generals and colonels) and more decision makers with a film background.

Other events in my week stay included another preview of Aguil a as it gathered momentum for its playdate, and a visit to the

well-equipped studios of LVN, owned by the de Leon family.

LVN used to be the biggest of the local language production companies; it was started in 1947 by a woman known affectionately as Dona Sisiang. At its height, it employed 2000 people, produced a steady total of 28 films a year for more than 20 years, and applied strict standards of behaviour to its stars.

LVN evolved into a large family of performers, stars, technicians and investors, who saw many tangible results for their efforts. In 1971 it ceased production, continuing in business by leasing film trucks and offering full laboratory and post-production services. In 1975, it re-entered production when the grandson of Dona Sisiang produced his first film, Hym, which won the Fajardo Film Festival award for Best Film in 1978. Since then it has produced another film by Mike de Leon, and is about to go into its third.

Like studios everywhere in the world, LVN suffers a continuing battle against rising costs, the increasing value of real estate, which must be in demand for shopping complexes or housing, and the increasing predilection for location shooting. However, a large part of de Leon's new film will be shot on a set to be built on the one sound stage, and a profitable commercials production agency, also run by the family, takes up the slack.

Other interests took me south for a few days, so I missed the opening of Aguil a. Eddie Romero was beaming modestly when I saw him next, and it seemed like the whole industry had heaved a sigh of relief. Aguil a had started well, and was set to become the biggest-ever Filipino box-office success. Already it was outgrossing Moonsraker, the season's best film.

The proponents of quality films for the Filipino masses have scored one important point: people will go to see a long film of high quality even if they have to pay more for it (prices were up around one peso a ticket — this is like expecting Australians to pay a dollar more to see a special film). Romero was already into pre-production for his next film ("a little one"); he assured me, and a wealthy financier had turned up at the last preview.

On my last night in Manila I was invited to a board meeting of the PMPPA. In the neocolonial luxury of the Club Filipino, a sort of 20th Century realization of Somerset Maugham's wildest fantasies, I sipped a local beer while the board welcomed their new lady president, Madame Maceda. In a speedy and decisive meeting, the outgoing president, Joseph Estrada, handed out cash incentives from the President of The Philippines — a noble institution which the Producers and Directors Guild of Australia could well adopt — and the evening business began.

High on the list was the business of theatre booking. Local producers are getting a bad deal. Once an exhibitor had booked a film, they often had as little as a week to prepare prints and publicity. Any delay in the release incurred a penalty, payable to the exhibitor. However, there was no reciprocal compensation if any exhibitor didn't open a film on an agreed date. To make things more equitable, it was suggested that the penalties to producers should be cut.

Also, it was decided to release films through the PMPPA Marketing Committee. That way, the producers could get the advantage of collective bargaining. All this was decided after 10 minutes' discussion, a decision that will probably take the Australian industry 10 years to arrive at, collectively.
Lino Brocka is a young Filipino director whose films have won a considerable following in Europe, with screenings at many international film festivals. This year, Jaguar, the story of a security guard who finds himself in trouble with his bosses, was shown in the Cannes Competition and his previous film, Manila — Claws of Darkness, at the Melbourne Film Festival.

Brocka’s latest film, Faith Healer, is the story of an addicted film fan who falls in love with a bit-part actor. Like several of his earlier films, it has run into trouble with the Board of Censors, which disapproves of his dealing with lower-class life and poverty.

In this interview with Ian Stocks, Brocka begins by talking about his views on drama, and in particular his training of actors.

An acting style, if it is to emerge, must be related to local culture and behaviour. Films in this country are being made in a realistic and naturalistic style, and to develop this style I manage a number of workshops in the theatre.

First, I get the actors to do a play as if for the stage, and then for the cinema. Finally, we videotape it. In this way, my actors learn to adjust or tone down their style for the benefit of films.

Through my activities in theatre, I also hope to develop an audience for a truly national theatre. So far the efforts have been successful, with all our seasons of short plays on local themes getting capacity audiences. Often, there are queues around the block before a performance.

Theatre is very exciting because it can study and attack contemporary issues through historical staging and tradition. Films can’t do this because they are under much more intense scrutiny [from the Board of Censors].

All your films are set in slums. Why is that?

I can’t make films about rich people in rich settings because the budgets won’t allow it. It is hard to find extras who can look rich; professional models have to be hired at 500 pesos a day. Consequently, you can’t afford many, and this means you can’t film a large party. Again, I am filming in the slums.

Why did you form your own production company with other producers and directors?

We wanted to make commercially successful films, so we attached ourselves to some businessmen who provided half the capital. In the end, we let the business...

The Cannes Film Festival...

Yes, I had trouble getting Jaguar to Cannes, so I went to the appeals committee and said, “What you are seeing is the physical city, and it embarrasses you. You are not trying to see the humanity that is in my films; that’s what I am trying to show. You are missing the soul of the film.”

What I wanted to show is how this man, because of his background, has so many problems in trying to get to the top. Really, I was trying to make a positive statement about life.

Why did you form your own production company with other producers and directors?

We wanted to make commercially successful films, so we attached ourselves to some businessmen who provided half the capital. In the end, we let the busi...
Manuel de Leon, father of the young director Mike de Leon, has been involved in film production for many years. Although his company stopped production 20 years ago, the de Leon family still owns laboratories, studio equipment and facilities, and one son runs Image Films, a commercials company.

Today, Manuel de Leon's main interests are construction and real estate, which form the basis of his company's income. He is also a founder member of the Asian Film Festival.

De Leon begins this interview, conducted by Ian Stocks, by discussing the change in judging patterns at the AFF in recent years.

Manuel de Leon, one of the influential figures in film production.

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VIIMA SANTOS

Vilma Santos is one of the highest-paid female stars in The Philippines. She specializes in "bold" roles, and at the time of interview one of her newest films, Miss X, was about to open in Manila. It is the story of a Filipino girl hired for domestic work overseas, who finds herself in the clutches of a pimp and drug dealer.

Santos' latest production is Mrs Jones, by the veteran producer-director Cirio Santiago. The story is that of a girl who comes from an obscure background and makes the big time as a dancer. It was while on location for this film that Santos spoke to Ian Stocks.

How did you get involved in films?

I was discovered by my uncle who was a cameraman at Sanpqua Pictures. I was nine and started in a film called Royal and Ready. After that, I was offered roles as a child actress, and when I was 13 I made two films for the First Family (President Marcos and Imelda Marcos) which was a dramatization of their story. I played the role of Amy, the eldest daughter of the First Family.

When I was 16 the fad came for musical hits. Finally, when I was 20, I started being a dramatic actress.

So you didn't start in the music business . . .

No, but I did make a record for the sake of the fans. I won't do any more though, because I prefer dancing to singing.

Apart from starring in many films, you also produce. Does that give you added worries?

Yes. First I read the script, then I ask for the director and leading man. I approve them all.

Like Greta Garbo, do you also have a special cameraman?

No, not a cameraman, but I have heard of that.

How many films do you do in a year?

Last year I made 10 — some of them simultaneously.

Apparently you don't like to start working early in the morning . . .

No, I am an insomniac and usually sleep late. So I ask them to schedule me for after lunch. Usually, we start at 1 or 2 p.m., and finish at 10 or 11 in the evening. Sometimes, however, we work through the night. If we do that, we don't have anything scheduled the next day.

Do you ever do research to help develop a role?

Of course. If you are working as an actress with people, as well as being the producer, people treat you as the producer and not as an actress. That bothers me.

Do you have script approval?

Yes. First I read the script, then I ask the director and leading man. I approve them all.

How about the future?

The only thing is I don't have any plans for production at the moment. ★

Have you worked in other Asian countries?

Yes, of course. I can't even go shopping in case I am recognized. I have to get all my dresses sent to the house and then I select them. My shoes, too.

I love my profession very much. The only thing is I don't have any privacy. I am public property; if the fans want me to do something, then I have to do it. But you can't please everybody, and it is really hard.

How about the future?

Right now, I am not producing any films, but I am making two. I have to finish this one and probably start another one immediately after that. Probably by the end of March I will leave to make another one in Los Angeles. So, I don't have any plans for production at the moment. ★

Billboard for one of Vilma Santos' many films.

Vilma Santos, the highest-paid "bold" star in The Philippines.
Ken Quinnell, a consultant on special project developments with the New South Wales Film Corporation, rang me and said the NSWFC was interested in financing the work of directors who had made reasonably successful short films. They were instituting a low-budget fund and had approached a number of people: John Duigan, Phil Noyce, Gill Armstrong, Ken Cameron and me. I was told that if I had a project in mind they would talk about investment.

I think the NSWFC had heard about the prison film and were interested in it, but that was on the assumption it was only going to cost $200,000. They thought it could be made as a low-budget, 16mm film, which turned out to be completely wrong. Had I put it in as a project under other conditions it would have been knocked back.

Before the release of "Stir", Stephen Wallace was best known as the writer and director of "Love Letters from Teralba Road", arguably the best one-hour drama made in Australia. The script was written at Film Australia, where Wallace had worked as a production assistant and then as a writer. Film Australia had intended to produce the film as part of a series, but ultimately shelved it. It was then independently produced by Richard Brennan, and starred Bryan Brown.

While "Love Letters" was being edited, Wallace attended the Australian Film and Television School as one of the first four participants in the one-year scriptwriting course. Since then, he has made another short film, "Conman Harry and the Others" (featuring Bryan Brown), and "Stir", his first feature. Written by Bob Jewson and produced by Richard Brennan, "Stir" examines the build-up of tension and ultimate confrontation between prisoners and warders in an Australian gaol.

In this interview, conducted by Barbara Alysen, Wallace begins by discussing how he became involved with the project.

The film began as a Prisoners Action Group project. How did you become involved?

The PAG came to me. I was told that Tony Green, producer of the PAG's first two films, Prisoners and Maximum Security, wanted to have a good look at me and my films, to see if I was the right person to direct the film. We then had a meeting at which we talked about the concept of the film, and whether it should be a documentary or told as a story. We agreed that it should be dramatic and follow one character through the riots.

When I asked who was going to write it, Tony said, "We have this guy who is a bit like you; he is a bit of a writer." I don't think Tony really knew how good Bob Jewson was as a writer. He gave me Bob's address and sent me over, telling me I had to look at his writing to see if he could write.

Did the PAG want to make the film collectively?

Some did. Certainly, it was going to be a group effort, but after another meeting it seemed impossible to make it that way. I didn't feel it was going to work. Finally, the NSWFC refused to deal with anyone other than myself and Bob.

But the PAG was involved with the film in the end?

Lee Whitmore was the production designer and there are a lot of PAG members in the film. There were advisers on set all the time.

Where does the PAG stand now in relation to the film?

It has a percentage and, although it hasn't any legal ownership, it has very strong links with the film.

The spirit of Stir is Tony Green. Bob wrote the script and I directed it, but Tony was the driving force.
— despite anything he may say.

Did you always have Bryan Brown in mind for the lead?

Yes. Actually, I was the first to use him in a film. He was appearing in a play, *Here Comes the Nigger*, at the Black Theatre. [Written by Gerry Bostock, and now trying to be turned into a film by Brown and Bostock.]

Sandy Richardson [director of several short films] took me to see the play while we were casting for the main role in *Love Letters*. I hadn't been able to find anybody suitable, and we were about to compromise with someone who wasn't quite right. Sandy was really keen for Bryan to get the part, but I felt he wasn't right.

After the performance Sandy introduced us, and I asked him to read the script and then do a test. He did and Richard Brennan, my producer, thought he was great.

Apparently you presented Brown going into other films?

I did, and I tried to stop him. I felt a lot of directors were just using and exploiting his obviously magnetic face without really making his role a character. But I suppose that's being a bit critical.

I wonder how many films an actor can appear in in Australia without people becoming awfully tired of him?

Well, if people are sick of Bryan, the public doesn't know. I was a bit worried about casting him in *Stir*, but who else is there? We started work on the film two years before shooting it, and in those two years Bryan appeared in many films.

You made the main actors take part in a clown workshop, which most of them disliked. What was behind that?

The ambitions I had for the clown workshop didn't come out. I was hoping for a really relaxed style and great spontaneity.

Many of the actors resisted the purpose of the workshop and I realize now that you can't thrust actors into a workshop of that kind. They are professionals and have their own standards and training. It would have needed a year's training program to put them through that kind of workshop and expect anything to come out of it.

It was my mistake and I almost alienated some of them. I think the idea was right, but the way I went about it was wrong.

What about the rest of the workshop?

The clown workshop ran for four days and the rest of the workshop for three weeks. Looking back, I think the whole workshop was too long. It ended up being mainly rehearsals and not every actor got a lot out of it.

It was important, however, in that PAG members Tony Green, Kevin Storey and Bob came along and talked to the actors, and took them through the experience of being in prison: what it was like to be in a boys' home, how they were ordered about, the humiliation, the searches, how prisoners react to each other. They looked at films, talked to Les Newcombe [a former prisoner, who appears in *Stir*, and who is author of *Inside Out*] and read books.

Apparently you had problems finding enough extras in South Australia, despite the unemployment problem?

We had a lot of trouble because we were shooting in a town well away from anywhere else, and most of the extras had to come from Port Pirie. We couldn't find enough locally and we couldn't afford to fly them from Adelaide.

I was told later that some potential extras wouldn't have their hair cut, so we had to lose them.

Haven't a lot of the extras been in prison?

Yes. There is one sequence where five guys front before the governor, and three of them have each done more than 11 years in prison; one of them was an actor.

"Stir" is your first film in 35mm. Did you find many problems in making the transition from 16mm?

The difference between the gauges is that the 35mm camera is not as fluid as 16mm. We also had to be more careful with stock.

I remember Phil Noyce saying he worried about taking responsibility for all that money, but the cost never occurred to me. I hadn't originally wanted to make such a big-budget film and I felt at first that I had been pushed into it. But then I realized we couldn't possibly have made it for less. And when it came to the crunch, I was too involved in making the film to worry about the money.

Did you overshoot?

I think the ratio was about 11 to 1, and it was supposed to be 10 to 1. So we only overshot a little.

The camerawork in "Love Letters" makes a lot of use of the zoom lens. Was "Stir" a big change of style?

Yes. Geoff Burton [cinematographer] and I thought it would be more suitable to shoot *Stir* with fixed lenses, as a zoom lens gives a documentary feel; it's a bit loose. Looking at it now, though, it might have been a bit formal.

Did shooting an entire film within a confined space, and with only a small variation in color, worry you?

It did, although the prison had very beautiful brickwork. You are always inside the prison and it is claustrophobic, so I wonder if that will interest people enough to hold their attention. I was also a bit worried that there were no women in it. [There is one, a television reporter.]

The other problem I faced was trying to make a film about an area of which I had no direct experience. I was reliant on advisers and I kept making mistakes, like leaving the locks off the doors. There was one scene where I originally had the warder (Max Phipps) having a cup of tea while he was talking to one of the prisoners. Bob went off his head and said, "Prison officers don't have tea while they are working. They are as bored as the prisoners and they are not allowed to do that sort of thing." I was quite shocked. I thought just having a cup of tea would give him something to do.

Not knowing what a prison is really like was always a problem. How do warders walk down corridors? How do they salute their superiors? How do they open doors? What do they say to each other?

One of the actors who played a warder told me that he knew much more about how to behave once he put on his uniform ...
Yes, I remember he used to go out and polish his boots, and when he'd done that he'd start ordering people about. I used to have a great respect for him.

I treated the warders exactly like their characters because they walked in with their uniforms, polished boots and caps. It's an intimidating process.

Did you consider having any women in the film, as girlfriends for example?

Yes. At first there was a woman social worker and another woman character in the film, but they weren't good characters and were dropped. Even up until the second last draft there was a sequence where China Jackson (Bryan Brown) has a visit from his girlfriend. But I was always worried about her as a character.

When we had to cut the budget I cut her scene out as to have kept it would have meant building some visiting boxes and bringing an actress from Adelaide. We replaced it with a scene where the prisoners receive letters.

Did the strong language in the script bother you?

No, but it did worry the sound recordist. After about the third week he said, "Look Steve, I am just an ordinary middle-class guy and I can't see this film ever being released. And even if it is released, I don't think anybody is going to come and see it." He told me he wouldn't see it because of the swear words.

It's obvious the language is going to be a bone of contention, but that's a decision we made.

Was the NSWFC worried about the language?

Yes. They thought it wouldn't sell to television, here or overseas. In fact, that was their biggest worry about the film. But, once we made the decision, the NSWFC backed us all the way.

Prisoners use a certain kind of language because they are bored: it's just bravado. The point of the film isn't the language — it's much more political than that — and if you appreciate what the film is about, you forget the language. But even the ex-prisoners objected to it when they read the script. They felt we were showing prisoners in a bad light. In the end, it was up to Bob to decide whether to leave it in, and he is the authentic ex-prisoner.

One other worry would be that people might object to the use of four-letter words, and then query the wisdom of government investment...

Well if people start to compare *Stir* with the riot at Bathurst gaol — which occurred under a Liberal state government — it might be construed that we were given government funds to attack the Liberal party.

With films that have a social message, like "Stir", there is a level at which people say, "Oh no, it's not really as bad as that". Have you guarded against that possibility?

We tried to show authentically what it was like to be in gaol. It isn't like a Nazi concentration camp; it's not that bad. They have beds, they walk around and it looks quite casual, but the underlying violence is obvious.

Prison is an extremely lonely and isolated place. Men are constantly moved and shoved around, and they are locked up in cells for 14 or 18 hours. It's the sheer boredom, the frustration, that's destructive. It's like a really bad boarding school, but you can't get out.

You are not allowed contact with women. You have only brief contact with other prisoners. You have your meals in your cell. Warders are constantly niggling you.

You can look at *Stir* and think everything looks all right — the prisoners are walking around; they are not being bashed every day — but if a prisoner dares stand up to the system he gets bashed and thrown into the really bad places which Raymond Dening (NSW prison escapee) has spoken about.

We didn't show the observation section at Grafton or Katingal at Long Bay. But we have prisoners being taken off all the time — shanghaied in the middle of the night — and you don't see where they go, but it is obviously too much-worse places.

Were any of your prisoners black?

Only one. We wanted to have lots of black prisoners, but the film isn't about Aboriginal prisoners. At Bathurst — the gaol that Bob was in — the people who rioted were mostly white. Apparently the Aboriginals didn't want any part of the riot. They said it was a white man's riot and, according to Bob, went off to another part of the gaol.

We should have had more black prisoners, because there are lots of black people in gaol. We tried to get Aboriginals on the set, but there were no blacks in the district. We did get one guy for a day, but he didn't want anything to do with it and left. So the film isn't representative in that sense.

Are you suggesting an alternative to prison?

No, the film doesn't suggest one and I don't know of any. But there are certainly alternatives to that sort of prison which just makes people worse.

Someone remarked to me that *Stir* wasn't presenting anything new. At first I was quite offended and thought, "Of course it's new." Then I realized it wasn't new because it had all happened before, in every gaol. But in a way that's the point of it: if the content of *Stir* was new, people would say it was a unique prison, but it's not.

Basically, it is a lack of understanding that causes riots and the film is meant to increase understanding. Bob says that unless something is done, people are going to be killed. Eventually there will be bigger riots, with hostages taken and the moment hostages are taken there will be bloodshed and warders will be killed.

The reasons for making *Stir* were social. It wasn't a personal film for me. It was like a contract job in a way. Although I identify thoroughly with everything the prisoners wanted.

It's not a heavily-political film because you don't see what happens to the rioters later. You only see what happens at the gaol and have to draw your own conclusions.

On the other hand, we hope it's entertaining enough for people to see just as a film. That's why the NSWFC backed it; I don't think they were particularly interested in the prison issue.
This may well have been the last of the Sydney Film Festival to preserve the idea that a single kind of audience sits watching in the stalls, mezzanine and dress circle. To keep the audience in the State to which it has become accustomed will mean either cutting its size to the reduced number of seats that planned renovations will make available, repeating all films, or ceasing to think of it as a single audience at all, and developing a series of different programs, having some degree of overlap, but with different subsets of the audience in mind.

If the last possibility is developed, then the cut in seating could well provide the long overdue moment for a review of the notion of a single, homogeneous film festival audience, and of the corresponding assumption that it is possible to program a single series of films that will stimulate and satisfy most of its members.

It seems to me that the Festival has remained a little too long with a notion of audience formed in the days of the much smaller Rose Bay Wintergarden, and that programming still tends to court that loyai, but no longer majority, audience. This year, possibly because of a noticeable paucity in the quality of available 'middle-ground' films from which the Festival mainy draws, more people seemed to be articulating their irritation more loudly than ever before. Why buy a whole sample bag when you know you'll want to throw out half the candy?

There are some good films, to be sure, within the Festival-safe area that has emerged — the European film of sentiment and sensibility, with Home Beautiful settings and 'operatic' resolutions. In fact, it is the sort of film equivalent of opera in the music or theatre world, with many of the same attendant assumptions about class, education and taste. But there are many objections to setting up a Festival program around a concentration on such films.

For a start, they are not necessarily representative of the most interesting films of 1978–80, the films that most test, enrich or expand assumptions about film. If they can be said to be marginal films, they are the most thoroughly institutionalized of marginal films. They can easily be argued to constitute a genre, sharing many of the conventions, motifs, plot situations and thematic concerns of soap opera, though with a rather different intended audience.

Secondly, by all reports of Cannes in the past two years, it is a peculiarly banal and enervated area of filmmaking at present, and getting worse. Perhaps the French, who specialize in it, are too preoccupied with the phase of striking germanism and neo-colonialism in other sectors of their economy (such as armaments, and nuclear technology). The strongest feeling getting through in films like Ma cherie, Death Watch, Le voyage en douce (Sentimental Journey), and even L'amour en fuite (Love on the Run) is one that is very dissociated from present realities, a kind of faint anxiety that the neuroses of greed and consumption may have an adverse effect upon personal style — in a purely aesthetic sense.

Thirdly, the nausea that they begin to produce is an effect that is greater than the sum of its parts. It is easy to exaggerate about how far the Festival is numerically dominated by these films (in fact, they are the largest sub-category of films on the program, rather than the outright majority). But it is difficult not to feel that the Festival sets them up as a staple and yardstick of taste.

Fourthly, the more films that are included (from any area), the less outstanding the sample will tend to be, and the less representative or exploratory the Festival will be in terms of world film. Third World cinema is pitifully under-represented, and so is 'experimental', or 'avant-garde' or 'other cinema'; documentary has been minimally present in the past; and although the special documentary feature of this Festival began to redress the neglect, it didn't risk very much, sticking mainly to films with documentary forms familiarized by television — with the exception of Jean-Pierre Gorin's Poto and Cabengo.

Could it not be possible for the Festival to remain responsive to its past and still-loyal patronage, as well as keeping faith with its implicit dictum (as the Sydney Film Festival) to celebrate the diversity of good and interesting tolerance-testing and-margin-finding films of a given year? This could be done with, say, three ticket series, each permitting subscription to a part, rather than the whole, of the series, as the present Red/Blue/Gold system does, so that it would be possible to subscribe to part or all of the main series. Evening sessions could concentrate on what I have described as the Festival-safe area of films, while intermediate sessions could be opened up to every kind of risk and specialized interest. Weekday matinee or afternoon sessions could be used to repeat the best-received films from the other two series, at a greatly reduced price, for students, unemployed people, pensioners and house-bound (that is, child-) bound parents.

And yet, I have to admit that when you start to give each of the films individual attention, more than just a few arouse interest. Third World cinema is pitifully under-represented. If the last possibility is developed, then the Festival could be made more diverse than ever before. The most interesting thing about Helma Sander's Germany, Pale Mother was its extraordinary ease of movement between past and present, eroticism and violence, feeling and appalling dislocation of meanings (they literally travel to 'the end of Japan') with the expiry of their traditional contexts.

The Boy's father is close kin to Imamura's Enokizu, the grotesque logical end of an absolute patriarchy whose original (feudal) context has been shown of almost all its traditional meaning, in the world of private submission to corporate profit. Only, Imamura's chronicle is disarranged into a series of kaleidoscopic patterns of relationships between past and present, of violence and atrocity, feeling and appalling dislocation of meanings. The schizophrenia of the experience is finally the film's most pervasive subject-matter.

The most interesting thing about Helma Sander's Germany, Pale Mother was its extraordinary ease of movement between a kind of 'autobiography' of her mother, in the decade of war and after, the war in Germany, and allegory — allegory not of the heavily-announced Die Electrommel (Tin Drum) variety, but of the picturesque patterns of relationships finding the marks of a human life that correspond with frightening exactitude to the historical stigmata on the German nation.

The film looks at women, mothers and daughters during the war, and sets up in its very title, a rasping contradiction between 'fatherland' and 'mother', 'nursemaid' and bodily stress. Helma's mother, Helene (Eva Mattes) grows strong and separate in the sheer adversity of giving birth and surviving blitz, famine, rural winters and liberation forces. What she can't survive is the psychic stress of a return to married life in the taboos and rituals of the post-war period.

At the heart of the film is the Grimm fairytale she recounts to her daughter (Helma) as she passes through a forest crossed with relics of war. It is the story of the maiden betrothed to a stranger who complains that she never visits him.
When at last she does, carefully marking her trail through the bewildering forest, she finds the house empty, except for an old woman who warns her that she is in a den of murderers whose victims are young girls.

Before she can leave, they return. She is hidden by the old woman, and witnesses the truth of her warning. When the murderers cannot remove a ring from one of the victims’ fingers, they chop it off and it lands in the lap of the betrothed maiden. The old woman quickly distracts them with wine and, when they collapse, the girl escapes. Her husband-to-be visits again, and everyone at the table is asked to tell a story. When it comes to her turn, she tells a dream — the story of her unknown visit — and then produces the chopped-off finger with its (wedding?) ring.

The telling of the story was neither excerpted or hurried. Its gradual elaboration as they travelled back towards Berlin and the return to peaceful marriage marked it out as a set-piece of even deeper allegory than the rest of the film, so that the effect of (male) war was to the body of German women as the symbolic order of patriarchy is to the body and life of women, generally, in this darkest of times.

In the final, almost unendurable move of the film, Helene enters the bathroom to gas herself, as Helma whines hopelessly at the locked door. After an aeon of time, long after the melodramatic moment has passed, Helene does walk out to touch Helma, but as the voice of the filmmaker explains, her mother never really came back from her locked room, again.

Much as I admire the technical mastery and visual riches of Volker Schlondorff’s far more abstract Tin Drum, I would argue that Germany, Pale Mother cuts more deeply into the heart of the matter of Germany and especially the unlivable aftermath of the war. (The only other film I have seen that reaches the same subject-matter, of the unlivability of the specific contradictions of postwar Germany, is Jean-Marie Straub’s Not Reconciled.)

Tin Drum concentrates far more on its own cleverness in creating cathartic imagery of the pre-war and wartime period, and its obscene contradictions. It is brilliant, but somehow unnecessarily inventive, at least when set against the ground of Sander’s film. It is inventive in its allegorical grotesqueries to the point of detachment, unlike Brecht’s analysis of history through grotesque epic. Tin Drum does not finally resound in any of the crucial interfaces of history, except tinnily in one of its own, energetic creations.

I remain amazed at the vitality of the film, but I grew increasingly bemused with its allegorical trajectory away from history and into the separate space of its brilliant solutions to pro-filmic problems.

The two films from the approximate and exact Middle East, Suru (The Herd, Turkey) and Salehale boland e (Tall Shadows of the Wind, Iran) deserve discussion together, not just because they both emanate from that queerly-oversized region of present consciousness, but because they have different ways of dealing with partly similar kinds of historic contradictions.

Tall Shadows scrutinizes and appeals to mystery and fear of mystery, while The Herd takes a consciously Marxist model of analysis of some of the same kinds of mystery — especially the “two countries” notion that Francesco Rosi’s Cristo si e ferma a Ebboli (Christ Stopped at Ebboli) also explores, that the peasantry (or nomadic tribes) constitute a different nation, with a different history and time-scale to that of metropolitan Italy, Turkey, or Iran. The points of contact and collision between these two worlds are catastrophic for the rural one, and barely acknowledged by the metropolis.

So, in Zeki Okten’s The Herd, the nomadic family bringing their sheep to Ankara are engulfed and dispersed, their tenuous economy is destroyed by the difference between subsistence and profit economies. Even before they reach Ankara, their epic train journey is a gradual catastrophe, the first point of contact with the predatory city economy: the sheep are poisoned by travelling in freight cars polluted by DDT, stolen by brigands who throw them from the moving train and arrive in less-than-marketable condition.

The melodramatic sub-plot of the mute woman, Berivan (Melike Demirag), hated by her father—law who blames her for every ill and dying of kidney disease, is sometimes at odds with the rest of the film. While she is an extra-ordinarily powerful presence on screen, the scenes of rage that she excites seem distressingly gratuitous. Are we meant to see her mute suffering as symbolic of the plight of women (a very easy symbolic slip to make in a Moslem country) or the nomadic people in an industrializing Turkey? The sub-plot remains essentially detachable and, given that it is wearing to move endlessly through the monologue of male hatred and contempt for silent, suffering women, it is worth detaching.

Tall Shadows seems to be about recent Iranian history by carefully making no reference to it. Its shots of holes in the ground full of voices and senseless giggling, and its final inscription — “The sea is jealous of the drink from which you drink” — heap enigma on an already portentously unexplained story. In a remote walled town, the town’s bus driver (and link with the cities) draws some of his own facial characteristics onto the blank face of a scarecrow when his bus was stalled: the scarecrow inexplicably begins to exert a potent influence over the townspeople. It even stumps through the town, and finally kills its non-believing creator.

The finest thing in the film is the sense it creates of remoteness, estrangement and vacant space open to seizure by any widely-shared belief, in the landscape and lives of these people. Even time, in the film, is filled with a sense of vacancy and indeterminacy, such that anything may fill it or be permitted, by unspoken collective agreement, to have happened.

I wonder if Iranian audiences would be so impressed by the sense that such spaces and time intervals are habitable, and that the price of inhabiting them seems to be the sacrifice of reason, and submission to what is said to be the case. Is this the real political allegory of the film, rather than trying to turn the scarecrow into the Shah or Khomeini, seeing the frightening tractability of the people’s consciousness and its over- rapid cultivation of monsters of suggestion? Rosi’s Christ Stopped at Ebboli was finally a bit soft, and its true centre was its nostalgic end: the tearful, rainy, soft-focus farewell of the peasants to the good doctor. The romantic impressionism of umbrellas halting the peasants’ faces and rain on the car windows blurs the issues that the film had inspected in its course.

Finally, it seems that the film has been always directed towards the path of its end, rather than to the ironies of Levi’s opening remembrance, in which he acknowledges that he has “let down” the
peasants of Lucania. Is this by his departure, or by his romanticization of his sense of them over time, from the clear delineation of their political plight in his conversation with the Fascist mayor of the town, to the sentimental impression of his departure?

Levi (Gian Maria Volonte) is a leftist doctor/painter who is sentenced to political exile in Lucania in the remote south (beyond even the reach of Christ's long shadow in Italy, he imagines, which stopped short at Eboli). In Lucania, his eyes open as if to an alien world, the 'other country', of the peasantry, in which women are a feared species, pigs are treated annually with holy anointing, the priest is perennially drunk since his entire cathedral slipped away in a mudslide, and the young boys go off at random, as if taken by a rare erotic disease, to fight in Abyssinia or to live on the other side of the world in the U.S.

Rosi asserted that Levi, in Lucania, "will feel more strongly the weight of age-old injustices and will go all the way back to the heart of these injustices", but while the film may see to some of these roots, it seems that Levi finally withdraws to a safer, more contemplative distance, filtering everything through beautifully overblown color and large colours than life.

Radio On, by contrast, was a welcome 'Festival-safe' film.

Yet it must be noted that the overlay of Wenders' Germany on Pettit's Britain (through the photography of Martin Schalifer, Wenders' assistant cameraman on many films) is extraordinarily rich and defamiliarizing, in terms of both British city and landscape. I don't mean to imply that Pettit copied the look of Wenders' films (the compositions he achieved are far more decentred, and dangerously close to the edge of the frame). It is more that the overlay of the 'soccer' inside to the heavy Urgos on Pettit's Britain of astonishment, assurance, a sign of the manner in which Wenders' film provides complex conceptual and emotional work for its audience, as well as the perversity black and white pleasures of the cities and their road connections. Pettit's first film seems peculiarly passive and frozen, tuning in disengaged states like boredom and fascination, and noting their close relatedness.

I planned also to write about Joi baba telunath (Elephant God) and Junoon (A Flight of Pigeons), The Mirror, Kung san ling yo (Rambhing in the Mountain) and Mourir a tue-tue (Scream from Silence), but find that most have been adequately discussed in the review of the Melbourne Film Festival (Cinema Papers, No. 28, pp. 232-36, 286-89, 302).

The biggest single disappointment with Radio On is that it remains at the level of a (visually and aurally fascinating) tinkering with the aesthetics of the form. Where Wenders' film provides complex conceptual and emotional work for its audience, as well as the perversity black and white pleasures of the cities and their road connections, Pettit's first film seems peculiarly passive and frozen, tuning in disengaged states like boredom and fascination, and noting their close relatedness.

I was disappointed at the thinness of the material in this ghost thriller about the revenge raid of a crew of sailors, massacred 100 years ago, upon the inhabitants of the town established with their bodies. I can't carry the effectiveness of John Carpenter's seemingly intuitive knowledge of cutting and soundtrack, and the enjoyable terrors of the glowing fossil of steel axes and indeterminate ghosts, but The Fog begins to seem fairly quickly like the same fright, over and over, a prolonged exercise for keeping Carpenter's superb skills flexible.

Tony Luraschi's The Outsider was another film with political subject matter that swerved or retreated away from its own consequences — particularly in the wholly gratuitous American grandfather sequences, overplayed by Sterling Hayden. It attempts to deal with IRA resistance in Northern Ireland, and the murderous logic with which it pursues itself, as it is understandable and emotive, to recreate the image of British presence in Ireland.

Richard Aronovich's extraordinary photography of Belfast transforms gutted streets and wired-off districts into almost dangerously-stylish icons of the politics of Belfast.

Bernardo Bertolucci's La Luna and Chris Pettit's Radio On may well be discussed together because of the interesting parallels they establish in terms of what I have described as the 'Festival-safe' film. La Luna is like an adult-cartoon version of the 'operatic' saga of sentiment in overblown color and outrageously affluent settings.

The operatic element is made literal, in that Jill Clayburgh plays a trans-Atlantic prima donna, and the operatic concerns that usually lie buried in this kind of film (perhaps the master-work for the art film and the soap opera is Hamlet) are pushed to the foreground. Its resolution by means of a choric or concordance of feelings (against opera rehearsals under a full moon) really works, just as opera does, despite the fact that the plot has gross exaggerations, unnatural coincidences, and larger colors than life.

Radio On, by contrast, was a welcome 'Festival-safe' film.
Set in Hungary in 1948, the brilliant career of Vera, a young nurse, begins when she suspects publicly the way the hospital is run. Considered to be promising material for ‘training’, she is involved in a three-month Stalinist in-service course at the end of which, during a general session of self-criticism ‘without bourgeois self-pity’, she denounces herself and her lover. He loses his job as a tutor, but she is rewarded with a high-ranking position as a Party official. ‘I am a communist’, she says, ‘because I feel humanity.’

The irony is fierce: Vera has rejected conscience, doubt, need, friendship, trust and love. She has power, without pity, communism without compassion. Is she a naive innocent, easily indoctrinated, or, as some see her, a calculating opportunist? Either way, it’s a subtle and compelling performance by Veronica Papp. (If this Festival established nothing else, this one shows historical events forcing people together.

The events are the round-ups of suspects by the fascists during the last few days of the war in Budapest. The people are a man and a woman, both fugitives, who are obliged to pose as husband and wife. Lonely, frightened and confused, each reaches out for the security and comfort the other could provide. Their relationship develops into love, but the wound in the bud is inescapable: even at the height of passion the man wonders if the woman is really a Gestapo agent. He knows this is sickness and he might not be able to control it.

Lack of trust in personal relationships and in society is a matter of deep concern to Szabo. At that time, he said, the Left underground had to capitalize on this lack of trust in order to exist. Should they get into power, what would happen then? The answer to his question is in Angi Vera, and he is clearly pointing to the undercutting of security in the Stalinist era. But more than that, he is making a universal statement about the dangers of a moral disease, and he disagreed with a member of the audience who suggested that only a Hungarian could properly appreciate the film. He wanted to make his message strong because “the world is more and more made up of people who didn’t have to queue for water.”

All this is a heavy load for the film to bear, and it shows in the second half where the infinite riches in a little room are withheld from the fearful, haunted lovers. It is rather too schematized to allow a fully credible, growing relationship, or the subtlety or irony of his latest film, Der grune vogel (The Green Bird); it is thin in characterization (although the beautifully judged and sensitive performance by Lidio Bagassi makes the wife totally convincing) and there is a disproportionate amount of time spent in and on the bed. The first half of the film is more sure-footed as it establishes its climate of fear: an informer in every queue for bread or water; the fascist sympathies of the ostensibly harmless old couple at the house; the danger in a stray word, a photograph, a letter.

Andrzej Wajda’s Bez zniczenin (Rough Treatment) is a triumphant tour de force about the fall of a contemporary Icarus. A scene in a dentist’s surgery, which seems at first like a comic interlude, is crucial to an appreciation of Wajda’s intentions. The dentist ashes her cigarette, adjusts her spectacles and throws her instruments about with a casual indifference to her patient in the chair. He can do nothing but sit there and submit while she hovers above him and extracts a rotten tooth, without anaesthetic and with unconcern.

The patient is a celebrated television journalist whose star quality and cunning ability, according to Wajda’s authority, there is something rotten in the state and he is extracted. He finds that he is no longer a man coveted by a university job, friends or a marriage. He never knows how or why it happened. It is a process of bewilderment and despair. Reversing the method of his equally powerful Czlowick-marmur (Man of Marble), Wajda takes a man’s life apart, piece by piece, using a series of scenes designed to show more than one time tnee simultaneously. The man whose self-confident and successful image appears on the television screen in a kind of ‘This is Your Life’ show is not the same man who watches his recorded image: he is already changed; the image of ‘now’ is already ‘then’. There’s no mirror image, rather a dual reality or shifting screens of past and present. Similarly, where is the life of the man whose biography he has written and is defending against his ambitious and politically opposed younger rival? That life is fixed on paper, but it is being re-interpreted at the very moment when it is being presented.

In a scene of marvellous fragility and strength, he talks to his estranged wife at the kitchen table; the marriage is here, now, alive in their remembered ‘mutual compromises, growing old together and shedding of physical shame’ and in their nervous desire to keep it going, but at the same time they know it is gone; they are present only in a past tense. Nothing is stable, or certain — not even truth.

In a superbly conceived divorce court hearing (almost entirely reaction shots and foreground close-ups of the hands of witnesses), lies are effortless and casual: ‘How are you going to prove what isn’t true? ’ ‘Proof is never a problem.’ In a world which has no certitude, peace or help for pain, he can fight no longer, say no more — only shrug. The film ends with a charred body in a burnt-out room, and men, as in Breughel’s painting on this subject, go about their business with indifference. A victim, yes, but not merely of a conspiracy, or of war, of personality. He is a flawed hero and the centre cannot hold. A deeply felt and disturbing film which shows Wajda in magnificent form.

The younger generation of Polish filmmakers, including Krzysztof Kieslowski. His Camera Buff is concerned with the act of filmmaking. His central character is a hastily hired factory worker who buys an 8 mm camera to record her new baby. Enthusiasm grows and he shoots everything in sight, becoming increasingly fascinated by image-making and intrigued by techniques of cheating or shaping reality. Encouraged by winning a prize at an amateur competition, he begins filming make greater demands upon his time and energy. His wife becomes a camera widow and leaves him. He falls foul of authorities who cannot appreciate his distinction between creativity and conformity: a film image isn’t necessarily an approved public image, and his factory film is censored and a superior fired.

Briefly disillusioned, he is about to throw away his new 16 mm camera, but he can’t bring himself to do it; he’s hooked. Enthusiasm has become obsession and it will devour him as it sustains him, an irony anticipated in the deceptively simple and telling image which opens the film: a bird of prey tearing at a chicken. The point of Tantalus is serious, but the tone of the film is light. The playing is relaxed and good-humored, the vision is deft and unforced. It is a film with something to say about life and art and says it with wit and wry, clarity and perception.

The Poles were apart from the French, who appeared to consider it not only to be cinema and as little more than inconsequential games. L’amour en fuite (Love on the Run) directed by Piotr Szulkin, looks a bit like Doinel through the earlier films and who wish to place the extracts from them. For instance, the plot of the film 400 Blows was tempered by disappointment that Truffaut’s autobiographical connections to his work are not as strong now as they were then.

One critic finds the ‘rather rare sort of film which is perhaps analogous to literature, which takes pause, which turns pages back, which knows its debt to what has gone before’. Maybe — at least, it draws attention to the printed word: the hero has written a novel and long passages are read to us (it sounds as shallow as its author); he is a proof reader for a publisher; he reads aloud from a newspaper; someone runs a bookshop; there are references to Balzac, Proust and Dumas. Very little respect for literature and fascination with language have become word play.

Charlotte Dubreuil’s Ma cherie (My Darling) begins with the birth of a baby girl 16 years after death of the mother, and now adolescent daughter, discussing the pros and cons of pills and coils. The film (a very long hour and a half indeed) is about these two women living alone together and supposed to terms with their similarities and differences. A good subject and a good opportunity for sexual liberation, but the potential is not realized. Very little happens to distress or vex these two:

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WHEN IT COMES TO AUSTRALIAN DRAMA, CHANNEL SEVEN ISN’T AFRAID TO ACT.

At Channel Seven, we’re pleased to have played a supporting role in some of Australia’s greatest television dramas.


We are proud to have given Australian talent opportunities they might not have found elsewhere.

We’re also proud to have given Australian audiences exactly the same thing.
New Series for Grundy

Production is under way on the first 13 episodes of the Grundy Organisation's new prison drama series Punishment. The series is expected to go to air on the 10 Network later this year.

No doubt inspired by the success of Prisoner, locally as well as in the U.S., the new series is set in an all-male prison called Longridge. The U.S. in particular is U-Matic in a major version of the Prisoner series.

Included in the cast are entertainers Brian Crocker, Brian Wenzel and Anne Haddy, along with Mike Preston, Penne Hackforth-Jones, Julie McGregor and Michael Smith.

Crocker plays the prison superintendent, with Preston and Smith as inmates. Punishment will also feature one of the rare television appearances by Mad Max star Mel Gibson, who is in the first two episodes.

Production designer Darrell Lass has based the prison set on a cell block at Parramatta Gaol, the maximum security prison on the outskirts of Sydney. The executive producer for the series is Bruce Best.

With established international connections, Grundys will certainly be offering Punishment for sale overseas. The international sales of Prisoner placed the Grundy Organisation in the unique position to know where it could afford to continue producing the series even without local financial support.

Production schedules — 13 one-hour episodes of the new police drama series Bellamy, starring John Stanton in the title role — a tough cynical police sergeant investigating major crimes. Written by Ron McLean, the series is being produced by Don Battey. It is expected to air on the 10 Network, early next year.

China Buying

"The Chinese want specials and series with an element of crisis," says former general manager of Melbourne's Channel 10, Max Stuart, who has been made an official buyer of television programs for China.

According to Stuart, who was the most popular television show in Peking is the American fantasy series Man From Atlantis. They also like documentaries, and recently bought a Sherlock Holmes series.

Stuart was invited to China earlier this year and hoped to sell programs to the Chinese. But on arrival he was handed a list of television and film programs that the Government wanted to buy.

At this stage, China's buying program is limited because in Peking, for example, the city's two channels are on air only three hours a day — and one hour is taken up with news. Finance is also limited.

Stuart hopes to sell the Chinese Australian-made programs, but says he'll have to wait until transmission times increase. With a population of 1,000 million, China promises to be one of the world's biggest television markets if it develops in line with the communist country's westernization program.

Number 96 Returns

Sydney television producer Bill Harmon, of Cash-Harmon Productions, is working on a new version of Number 96 for U.S. television.

Number 96, which ran for five years from 1971 and won several television awards, was one of the first series to tackle down-to-earth and intimate issues in a frank and, at times, sensational manner.

After 12 months of negotiations, Harmon has sold the series idea to the NBC Network in the U.S. Production has already started on a pilot scheduled for screening in the U.S. later this year.

The Americans, according to Harmon, are taking the basic format and changing the characters. Meanwhile, Harmon is working on a science-fiction love story film, to be titled Tomorrow Today.

New Prank Show

The Nine Network has commissioned a 60-minute pilot of a new comedy show, from Sydney's Lyce McCabe Productions. Titled Catch Us If You Can, the show is loosely based on Candid Camera.

A team of regulars will play practical jokes and pull stunts on celebrities and the public.

There will be prizes for participants — probably as compensation for public embarrassment.

Appearing as pranksters in the pilot are actor Robin Stewart — Timeless Land and Punishment, actress Deborah Gray and Channel 9 musical director Geoff Harvey. The host of the show is Geoff Stone, of Nine's inventors program What'll They Think of Next.

ABC News Deal

The ABC has signed a deal with an American public broadcasting network for the exchange of news and current affairs material. The deal was negotiated by Ed Baumeister of WGBH-TV in Boston, which produces the nationally-telegcast News at Ten for subscription television.

(Unlike cable television, subscriber television is telecast by satellite via a scrambled signal which is unscrambled by a device fitted to television sets.)

The deal was motivated by the Americans' desire for better coverage of the South-East Asian region.

New Markets

Brisbane's Channel 9 is making inroads into the South-East Asian market with sales of locally-produced programs to Malaysia and Hong Kong. It has sold 45 episodes of a children's program, titled It's Now, to Malaysia, and 50 60-minute specials have found buyers in Singapore, Hong Kong and New Zealand. A major factor in the sales is the low cost of the programs.

Naturally, the more markets that become available to locally-produced programs, the cheaper they can be sold, which then opens up even more markets.

Video Slow to Go

The home video boom is a slow one. Predicted for Australia could be a long time coming.

Growth in the market has been so slow that several major U.S. companies involved in the marketing of pre-recorded programs, such as top box-office films, have deferred involvement in the local market at least 12 months.

Home video units have been available in Australia for almost three years. In 1978, 14,000 units were sold; in 1979, sales increased by 85 per cent to 26,000, but in 1980, projected sales figures allow for only a 42 per cent sales increase. This means a sales of about 0.5 per cent of Australians own a VTR unit — of these, 25 per cent are of the Philips 13-inch format, widely used in commerce.

So, in terms of other world markets, Australia is not the most attractive sales prospect for home video manufacturers. And this is one of the reasons for slow growth.

Supply of machines is limited because production is geared for the major markets — the U.S., Britain, Europe and Japan. Rapid technological change also means that just as the latest models are reaching Australia, new and improved models are rolling off the production lines overseas.

According to Melbourne publisher Gerry Gold, next month, launches a national video magazine called Video Action: "A lot of people have jumped on the video bandwagon to find it has no wheels."

The fact is, home video is a technological advance that Australia hasn't quite worked out what to do with. The ANZ Awards have been voted "video strictly a luxury item for four households, and the available software — pre-recorded tapes (is) not any different to that already readily available in cinemas or on television.

Coup for Gyngell

Former Broadcasting Tribunal chairman Bruce Gyngell has engineered a television sports coup that has left commercial stations and the ABC red-faced and flat-footed.

Gyngell has secured rights to a number of major world soccer events for the Independent and Multicultural Broadcasting Service, of which he is chairman designate. The telecast will begin in October on Australia's fifth station Channel 0, which opens in Sydney and Melbourne on United Nation's Day, October 24.

Included in the deal is coverage of the World Cup Series, the national Philips Soccer League matches, the British F.A. Cup Final, European South American and American league games and possible joint coverage with the ABC of the World Cup in Spain, in 1982.

This extensive coverage of soccer is expected to gain the IMBC a large audience, and not only among ethnic groups.

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Ron Casey, general manager of HSV-7 Melbourne, talks to Scott Murray about the Seven Network's coverage of the 1980 Moscow Olympics.

When did the Seven Network get the telecast rights to the 1980 Olympic Games?

We signed the contract in the last week of April, 1977, but negotiations had been going on for about two months. Originally it was going to be a pool arrangement, with a combination of the commercial stations and the ABC. This was the way the Olympics had been covered in the past, even at Munich when there were only two stations in the pool (the ABC and the Seven Network).

There was, in fact, a meeting where the networks agreed that, with the ABC, there would be a pool coverage of Moscow. Shortly afterwards, I learned there was a network already negotiating in Moscow. So, we approached the Russians and asked them to discuss any negotiations with us — which they did.

Was it a bid situation, or was there a price to be met?

We made them a proposition, which they considered for some time. I don't know whether it was a bid situation, or what the other networks did. The Russians never referred any of those negotiations to us.

Did Seven's affiliated stations throughout Australia automatically become part of the deal?

Yes. When you have a major program, like the Olympics, it is usual to offer it to them.

Also on the same telecast were the five members of the Arab Broadcasting Union . . .

That was because of convenience in using the Indian Ocean satellite, which they can pick up from their ground stations. They took all the Australian material from us, and also a little football material of their own. They used our commentary in most situations, and their own in others.

Before the Olympics, what was Seven's position regarding the political opposition to Australia's participation?

In a word, difficult.
Were you confident that the situation would be resolved in the athletes' favor?

No, because you never know how these sorts of things will go. It would be impossible to estimate the amount of pressure on the members of the Olympic Federation. As it turned out, there was only a one-vote difference.

Was there also pressure on the station?

There was some persuasion, yes.

How did the affiliated stations react to the situation?

Each station made an individual decision. There was no contractual situation with any of them.

Had the athletes not been allowed to go, would the telecast have gone ahead?

Probably, but not with the same scope. What was overlooked in most of the stuff said about us was that we had a contract, not only with the organizing committee in Moscow, but with the International Olympic Committee. And quite apart from the financial stipulations of that contract, there was a requirement for us to televise the Games. As it was, we televised considerably fewer hours than we had originally planned because of a lack of commercial support.

Had there been no problems, how many hours would have been telecast?

About twice as many. We would have extended the evening telecast, and probably doubled the early morning ones.

Was there a minimum commitment, in terms of hours, in the contract?

No. So, I don't know how much we would have shown if Australia had not gone. Fortunately, we didn't have to make that decision.

It is interesting that the Japanese, who had no athletes at Moscow, actually televised five more hours than we did. We took 47 people and they took 72.

Given the division of feeling within the Australian community, was there also dissension among your crew?

No. Most of them were broadcasters who were just interested in broadcasting the event. From a policy point of view, all we wanted was to present the Olympics as the Olympics, with no overtone comment. By letting the public see them as they were, people could make up their minds.

The only exception to that would be the opening night's commentary, when you expressed some hopes for fairness in the judging by Soviet officials. That is not a comment that would be made at all Olympic Games . . .

I can't recall saying that specifically towards the Soviet judges, but there have always been problems with judging in the Olympics. This is particularly true with sports like diving, gymnastics and boxing where you have international panels.

One can go back to 1960 and Rocky Gatellari, the Australian boxer, who got a terrible decision in the quarter final. And the guy who got the decision went on to win the gold medal.

How do you rate Moscow in terms of controversial decisions?

If anything, there were probably less than at Montreal. Still, some of the decisions, especially in the boxing, were unbelievable. There was also the dust-up at the finish of the gymnastics and the diving, and there were the situations where there were only Soviet referees, like on the triple jump. But there is nothing special or unusual about that, it happens at every Olympics.

So, if I said something along those lines during the opening night, it probably reflected the tenseness in the period leading up to the Games. It would have only taken some serious malfunction, or a serious error by a judging panel, to set the whole thing in a very, very bad atmosphere. As it turned out, it didn't happen.

Were you surprised by the amount of coverage given to the dubious decisions in the Australian Press?

Yes.

What is your personal feeling about intermingling politics with sport?

I think it is a tragedy that political influences have become involved in sport. But it would be foolish to say that it is possible to keep them apart — you just can't. Some countries stayed away from the Melbourne Olympics in 1956 because of the Suez Canal problems and others because of the Soviet presence in Hungary. It happened in Montreal because New Zealand had played football with South Africa — all the African nations stayed away. There is even a possibility that the Africans may stay away from the Commonwealth Games in Brisbane, which would be a tragedy. But if countries want to take that attitude, you can't stop them.

I think Lord Killanin's attitude was the right one. He led the Olympic movement through its most serious crisis, on a very simple philosophy: the Olympic Games are awarded to a city and athletes are invited to be there. There is no compulsion on anyone to attend.

How do you think the public's comprehension of politics and sport has changed since the Games?

I don't know. I have only been back a short time, and haven't had an opportunity to gauge public reaction. But by reading the thousands of letters we have received, I think the public accept the fact that it might have been a lot of political talking for no real purpose. People were half expecting to see a huge propaganda exercise and were pleasantly surprised to see there wasn't.

Such a propaganda exercise, incidentally, would have been very difficult to achieve because the charter of the Olympic movement is very strict. You can't, for instance, do much with a 100 metres race. You are inside a stadium, you have a running track, a crowd and eight finalists. It's a bit hard to make a political exercise out of that.

How successful was Seven's coverage of the Games?

In terms of public acceptance and the pleasure it gave a lot of people, I think we can feel more than satisfied.

Given the disappointing amount of revenue, how expensive an exercise was it for Seven?

Expensive.

One writer in 'TV Week' suggested that Channel Seven's buying program would be cut back because of the cost. Is that true?

No, there is no evidence to support that.

Does Channel Seven view making a loss as ultimately worthwhile in promoting the image of a sports-oriented station?

With hindsight yes, because people did watch, accept and enjoy the Games. But we weren't too certain of that when we went into it. We were stepping into an unknown area, where the results, and the public reception, were completely unknown.

What is the position regarding broadcast rights for the next Olympic Games?

We haven't thought about that yet. It's four years away. We will wait and see.

Turning to more technical aspects, what were you given in the way of facilities at Moscow?

We had a three-camera studio and a control room to operate that studio. Then there was a technical area, with videotape machines and three offices adjacent to our production area. We took our own EG equipment; two crews and two units.

Continued on P. 386
In the vocabulary of film, epic is a dangerous and often misused word. But, filming the life of Ned Kelly, you confront a story which has, literally, epic qualities.

The huge, logistical problems posed by an accurate reconstruction of the 1870s become a secondary consideration. You are dealing with a subject that has gripped the Australian imagination in a unique way for exactly a century. The challenge is to bring Ned Kelly to life as a normally complex human being without losing all objectivity; to achieve an intimate portrait without trivializing the conflicts which shaped the fate of this remarkable man.

Apart from the manifold traps in portraying Kelly's character, the pure scale of the story has always presented a problem. Dramatic treatments have tended to fall between the stools of incident and character, simply because 90-odd minutes isn't enough time to cover the essential events, and adequately handle the huge gallery of people who played significant roles. It's hardly coincidental that the Kelly story prompted the world's first full-length feature film.

In the past, the solutions have been to combine characters, places, scenes, and events, to reduce the complexities of character and plot, or to concentrate on only a part of the story.

Left: John Jarratt as Ned Kelly.
Douglas Stewart made a good fist of it in his verse play *Ned Kelly* — covering only the Jerilderie Robbery, the death of Aaron Sherritt, and the Glenrowan finale.

Twenty-odd years ago, Tim Burstall's projected *Man in Iron* feature was based solely on the events of Glenrowan.

Bronwyn Binns and I, had worked on Tony Richardson's *Ned Kelly* (without ever getting to meet each other) and were acutely aware of the scale problem — one of the rocks on which Tony's project scraped its bottom.

To us, the television mini-series offered the perfect medium for the Kelly saga, effectively breaking the initial time barrier and providing the chance to tell the story without compromise on historical and dramatic levels.

We had just completed *Against the Wind* and used this budgeting and logistical yardstick to estimate that a Kelly series would cost roughly twice as much an hour. This estimate was based on a much bigger cast, substantially more set and location construction, many more horses and other livestock, and a wide range of locations. And, of course, inflation.

Without doing any detailed sums, we fastened on an eight-hour format — a realistic length in terms of dramatic content and possible budget.

That was February, 1979. As we cleared the decks after *Against the Wind* and began our run-up for *The Last Outlaw*, Pegasus Productions comprised two people — Bronwyn and myself. Ideally, the series would be on air in 1980 — the Kelly centenary year. Allowing 10 days shooting an hour, plus realistic post-production turnaround, this meant that production would have to start no later than February, 1980, with some pre-production in September or October — only seven months away.

Obviously, scripts wouldn't be finished by this date, so we had to face the discipline of detailed pre-planning, making precise scene breakdowns of every episode, which would include all sets, characters, extras, livestock and major props.

Early in the year we recruited our producer, Roger le Messurier (then completing production of a spectacular New Zealand series, *Children of Fire Mountain* and associate producer, Tom Binns, who had been production manager on *Against the Wind*.

Tom and Roger worked from our breakdowns while we progressed the scripts.

Art director Leslie Binns and wardrobe designer Jane Hyland joined us in September-October, starting on an exhaustive research and discussion program based on our break-
The concept entailed some compromises in terms of authenticity and creative integrity. But, economically, there seemed no alternative.

The location surveys were discouraging. We all knew the look we wanted. And we weren't finding it. After an unsuccessful trip around the Macedon-Woodend area, Brownyn, Les Binns and I decided that we'd have to push out further — to the Broadford-Seymour district 100 km from Melbourne — and cope with the travel problem as best we could.

That same week, Tom Binns began talks with the Shire. As budgeting advanced, we took time off filming to set up a home base studio where interior sets would be erected, with most exteriors being shot in a house base where interior sets would be erected, with most exteriors being shot in "Against the Wind." Perhaps a week on distant locations, then into a home base where interior sets would be erected, with most exteriors being shot in kilometres from our barracks base.

We leased a two-storey barracks complex from the Commonwealth for accommodation and catering, rented a factory for office space, wet-weather-cover, studio, wardrobe, and post-production, and set up complete post-production facilities on location. But apart from free access to superb exterior locations, it would give us the chance to shoot virtually all our interiors in the actual buildings — a huge creative bonus.

We leased a two-storey barracks complex from the Commonwealth for accommodation and catering, rented a factory for office space, wet-weather-cover, studio, wardrobe, and post-production, leased a huge Army ware house as a props store, and found perfect key locations on the handsome, 800 ha property of local grazier, Bernie O'Sullivan, only six kilometres from our barracks base.

Here, we planned to build our town complex (a dazzling composite of the seven towns we needed as backgrounds for the series), the 'old' and 'new' Kelly homesteads, the Byrne and Sherritt huts, and the Glenrowan Inn.

The valley of the Goulburn, the Tallarook Ranges, and the Mount Disappointment State Forest would provide our other major locations.

While all these plans were being laid, we were advancing crewing with Tom and casting with Roger. And, of course, writing. Our two directors, George Miller and Kevin Dobson, were joining the fold. George had been a very early appointment, initially to direct all eight hours. But, as he realized the scale of the project, he suggested that a second director should take two hours off his plate. The choice of Kevin Dobson was unanimous.

Eventually, in the course of production, Kevin directed another two hours, so that he and Miller ended up sharing the load equally.

The contract for the series was negotiated with the Seven Network in the positive and enthusiastic atmosphere that had characterized our dealings on "Against the Wind." When we had to set a sale price of more than $1 million, they didn't quibble. We realized we were on the limit that an Australian network could afford, yet we also knew we could bring in our new concept series at this price only with incredibly tight control and a degree of luck.

A production office was rented from Channel Seven while pre-production was advanced, beginning with the re-statement of the barracks building and amenities, then moving on to the cutting of the Kelly Gang and gathering saddlery. Props, firearms, and set dressings were hunted down and bought, borrowed, or hired.

By January 1980, props were starting to fill our Seymour warehouse, wardrobe was packing up along racks in a temporary home at the Viaduct Theatre, construction had begun on the old Kelly homestead, and the cross streets of our town were laid out and graded. As bricklayers were starting on the nucleus of the town, the last script was completed.

At the beginning of February, we flew the Kelly Gang to Forbes in central New South Wales, for two days' shooting at the Lachlan Vintage Village. This gave us the plains terrain we needed for our Jerilderie scenes — to be integrated with the main street of 1879 Jerilderie, which was being built at Seymour.

The following week, the Gang worked with dialogue coach Frank Gallagher and got to know their horses. Then, on February 8, we packed up in Melbourne and moved to Seymour.

On February 11, we started filming and began an intensely exhilarating, although at times depressing, four months. It seemed to drag on for years, yet passed too quickly.

A few people were totally dedicated to the project, most worked well, the apparently inevitable handful of ego-trippers and malcontents played their usual roles.

A hot, almost cloudless, and rainless summer gave way to a long and magnificent autumn which dissolved into an increasingly rainy, moody winter. We almost made to-order range of weather conditions for the phases of our story, superbly handled by lighting cameraman Ernest Clark.

We finished shooting 10 days over schedule and substantially over selling price. We then settled down for a month's post-production at Seymour as editor Phil Reid finished the film. At this stage we wrapped up in Seymour and moved back to Melbourne for sound editors Terry Redman and Glenn Martin to complete their work.

As I write this, we are waiting for the last answer print from Atlab; the last sound mix has just been completed by David Harrison, working at the Crawford mixing suite. Brian May has composed, arranged, and conducted a stunning score, recorded by Roger Savage at AAV.

The Kelly town has been demolished, the Army has moved into the barracks, the factory has been sold, the props are scattered, the wardrobe is literally in mothballs.

Pegasus Productions is back to square one — two people.

It's been one hell of a 20 months. But if we have told the Kelly story as it deserves to be told, then it's been worth it.
TELEVISION PRODUCTION SURVEY

THE SULLIVANS

The series spans the period leading up to the Second World War, focusing on the lives of the Sullivan family living in Sydney and their experiences during the war. The series was produced by Grahame Moor for the Nine Network and filmed at Forest Studios (ABC). The cast includes Paul Cronin (Dave Sullivan), Steven Buchanan (Miles), and Susan Hannaford (Kitty Sullivan).

THE TIMELESS LAND

Set in the 1920s, the series follows the lives of the Fanelli family. The cast includes Robyn Nevin (Sasta), David Hamilton, and John Howard. The series was produced by David Stevens for ATN-7 and filmed at Forest Studios (ABC). The music is composed by Ailson Pickup and the art director is Logan Brewer.

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

The series deals with the impact of the Second World War on a group of people who lived through the conflict. The cast includes Tony Bart and Robyn Nolin. The series was produced by Grahame Moor for the ABC and filmed at Forest Studios. The production designer is George Liddie and the art director is Tony Bart.

THE TIMELINE LAND

Based on the novel, the story follows the lives of the Fandango family during the Second World War. The cast includes Paul Cronin (Dave Sullivan), Susan Hannaford (Kitty Sullivan), and John Howard. The series was produced by David Stevens for ATN-7 and filmed at Forest Studios (ABC). The music is composed by Peter Leggett and the art director is Logan Brewer.
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INTERNATIONAL PRODUCTION ROUND-UP

Compiled by Terry Bourke

United States

The prolonged strike by the American Screen Actors Guild, designed to force finalization of long-requested agreements for payment of cable television and cassette residuals by producers and studios, has seriously disrupted the film industry worldwide.

Many sister unions internationally especially the musicians (including Australia) have joined the strike in seven countries.

This longest-ever shutdown by actors means several planned Christmas and New Year releases won't meet deadlines and major distributors say their worldwide exhibition plans have been thrown into chaos.

The 10-week strike has also closed down the production of television series, and the networks are frantically trying to prop their programming with repeats and a diminishing backlog of library material.

Almost every feature film and television show has been stopped shooting because of the strike but, there are some exceptions overseas production involving American stars has been exempt. This included Richard Franklin's Roadgames (Australia), with Stacy Keach and Jamie Lee Curtis, and Milos Forman's Ragtime (England), with James Cagney making a comeback at 81.

Exemption has also been given to films in post-production (where revolting is required), but pick-up shots have not been allowed.

About seven features were allowed to continue shooting in the U.S. when producers agreed to comply with any gains acquired by the ASAG during the shut-down and subsequent negotiations with producers.

New York is as hard-hit as Hollywood by the strike. Almost all current productions estimated at around $60 million, picked-up fees worth $40 million are under review because of the union struggle.

Among New York shutdowns are Peter Yates' Eye Witness (formerly The Janitor Doesn't Dance); Peter Bogdanovich's They All Laughed; Steve Gordon's Arthur; David Sheinberg's Alligator; John Binder, Uforia (previously Escape); Byron Quisenberry, Butcher, Baker, Candlestick Maker; Lewis Teague, Alligator, and John Barron, The Girls Aren't Here.

Australiand filmmaker Fred Schepisi (The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith) is among directors affected by the strike. Schepisi will have to wait to start Barbarosa (with Willie Nelson, Gary Busey), a futuristic western for Lord Lew Grade, in Hollywood and Texas.

Shooting has been held back on Franco Zeffirelli's Endless Love; Anthony Page's Ruby Red; Jack Fisk's Raggedy Man (Slassy Spaces); Ron Howard's Skyward; Brian de Palma's The Gold Mine; Ivan Reitman's Animal House II; Edmond Stevens' The Fools in Town Are On Our Side; and Richard Jefires' Out of the Blue.

Independent productions hit by the strike include Worth Keeter's Dare to be Great; Eric Westminster's EvilSpeak; Herman Gershon's Island Claws; Robert Collins' Savage Harvest; Mike Levanos' Uncle Scam; Mark Rydell's On Golden Pond; John Carpenter's Escape from New York; Gus Trikonis' Take This Job and Shove It; and Caleb Deschanel's The Escape Artist, with Francis Coppola as executive producer.

Director and films which finished ahead of the strike (some with only days to spare) were Ed Bianchi, The Fan (for Robert Stigwood); Gene Wilder, Sunday Lovers; Hal Needham, Cannonball Run; Carroll Ballard, Never Cry Wolf; Steven Sterns, The Devil and Max; Michael Schultz, Carbon Copy; Paul Williams Miss Right; William Packer, The Legend of the Lone Ranger; Dan Petrie, Port Apache; The Bronx; Blake Edwards, S.O.B.; Michael Mann, Thief; Kevin Connor, Motel Hell; Jay Sandrich, Seems Like Old Times; Robert Collins, Savage Harvest; and Charles B. Griffith, Dr Heckle and Mr Hype.

Already into post-production were John Huston's Escape to Victory (Sylvestor Stallone, Michael Caine), shot in Hungary; Armand Weston's Dawn of the Mummy (Egypt), and Carl Gottlieb's Cavemen (Ringo Starr, Barbara Bach) shot in Mexico.

Among overseas films exempted were Roger Vadim's Act of Deceit (Wayne Rogers) in Canada; Richard Marquand's Eye of the Needle (Donald Sutherland) in Scotland; Karel Reisz' The French Lieutenant's Woman (Meryl Streep) in London; John Guest's Loophole (Albert Finney, Martin Sheen) in London; and Charles Jarrott's Condoman (Barbara Carrera) in Monte Carlo, Paris and London.

The animated feature The Last Unicorn continues voicing (Alan Arkin, Jeff Bridges, Christopher Lee) in New York, with Arthur Rankin jun. and Jules Bass directing.

One director who shot through the strike was Australian Brian Trenchard Smith, called in as a replacement director on the $3 million action-thriller Circle of Assassins in Mexico. Producer like

Scene from John Carpenter's Escape from New York.
American-financed productions continue to keep the British film industry at work, but there are signs of major union problems even as local companies press doubts over the future of domestic production.

British Actors Equity is threatening strike action against British productions which employ American talent in roles suitable for British players.

Three films in particular have been responsible for this latest salvo from British Equity. George Lucas’ production of Raiders of the Lost Ark (directed by Steven Spielberg); the Lord Lew Grade/Paramount-Disney high adventure yarn for a new 16-35mm processing line and Associated British Picture Corporation (directed by Tom Goddard); and Outland, directed by Peter Hyams and starring Sean Connery.

Chris Sarandon (Lipstick) stars in A Tale of Two Cities (television for the U.S.); theatrical release for British actors Karen Allen co-stars in Lost Ark, and Frances Sternhagen co-stars in Outland.

British Equity has named actors who are not particularly well-known to British audiences, and special mention is made of Sarandon, who has the lead role of Sydney Carter in A Tale of Two Cities.

The British unions have demanded that James Clavell, the Secretary of State for Employment, intervene to stop any further work permits for American actors performing roles in British films and TV series. The actors or actresses could be considered.

Usually British Equity has not made official demands for American actors in the U.S. are members of the American Screen Actors Guild, and would not be affected by American Equity rules.

With space and science-fiction product all the rage, Terry Gilliam and John Cleese have given up work on Monty Python temporarily, and Gilliam is directing Cleese, Sean Connery and David Warner in the Canadian city of Halifax. Gay Hamilton is into post-production on The Mirror Crack’d, and John Quested is directing Leopohole (Albert Finney, Martin Sheen).

John Boorman is close to wrapping Knights in Ireland, with a major cast which includes Nicol Williamson, Corin Redgrave and Helen Mirren.

Norman J. Warren is directing Inseminoid for Run Run Shaw at Lee International Studios (London). The Hong Kong film mogul is making two international features a year, and is said to be negotiating a U.S.-Australian co-production agreement.

Ernest Day, too, second unit director in Britain for many years, has replaced Anthony Simmons as director on the big-budget Green Ice due to "creative differences" with producer Jack Weiner in Mexico. First assistant director on this action-drama, starring Ryan O’Neal and Omar Sharif, is Patrick Clayton, who spent five years in Australia as a production supervisor and assistant director (of the Damned, Plugged, Blue Fin, The Man from the Other Side, Creepin’ Boiset, Banner Maker). Clayton is now based in London.

Weaving Beatty says there are still "a few more scenes" to be shot for Reds (the stars and directs), which has been before the cameras in London and Europe for 32 weeks. Beatty says he may retitle the film The John Reed and Louise Bryant Story.

Matthew Robbins is directing the Paramount-Disney high adventure yarn Dragon's Lair in Scotland and Northern Ireland. Relax Richardson stars. Lindsay Shonteff’s (Spy Story) is directing Combat Zone.

Unaffected by the ASAG strike while shooting in Britain are Milos Forman’s One Flew Over The Eagle’s Nest; Kari Reisz’s The French Lieutenant’s Woman; Richard Marquand’s Eye of the Needle; and Charles Jarrott’s Condomnor.

Canadian production has slumped in the third quarter. Although only nine features are before the cameras and one in post-production, it is a slack situation compared to the features filmed at this time last year (13 in 1978).

The drop in production is obviously linked to the cutback in American co-productions after union pressure earlier this year for less Americans and more Canadians in the casting of films. (Lee Remick’s long-term fight to co-star with Glenn Ford in Tribute started it all.)

Accordingly, Canadian Actors Equity is taking legal action against American producers. The actors and actresses back. Most interest is centred on Roger Vadim’s A Stroke of Luck (formerly Act of Deceil), starring Wayne Rogers, Marie France, Samantha Eggar and Lloyd Bochner. After location work in Canada, the film will go to New York and become another casualty in the actors’ strike.

Just Jancik (Emmanuelle) is directing of The Paradise Club; Donald Shebib, Heartaches; Ralph Thomas Ticket to Heaven, Michael Anderson Bells (starring Richard Chamberlain, John Hurt, and Barry Morse); and J. C. Lord The Freight.

J. Lee Thompson (Gun of Navarone) is directing Glenn Ford and Melissa Sue Anderson in Happy Birthday to Me, and John Trent Misedale.

Susan Anspach, Sterling Hayden and Donald Sutherland star in Gas, shooting in Montreal, with Les Rose directing. Rex Boyd is involved in the post-production of Melanie (Glynis O’Connor and Paul Sarino).

France

Only seven films were before the cameras and two in post-production at the beginning of October, with four features set to start before Christmas. This is slightly down on last year’s figures and, although better than 1978, there is some concern over the likely slowdown in production next year.

Claude Berri is directing Gerard Depardieu in Je vous aime, Jose Givan and Mathieu Carrière for American company New Line, as Against the Dark, starring Bruno Ganz; Dennis Amor, Asphalte (Carol Laure); and Luc Bernard, La debandade (Patrick Dewaere). Michel Blanc stars in Claude Chabrol’s new film, Le cheval d’orgueil, directed by Jacquot. Day is into its third production on Trois hommes a abattoir (Three Men to Kill).

Yo-Yo production keeping Gerard Oury busy on Le coup de parapluie; Yves Boisset (Yellow Taxi) is preparing Barracuda; and Andrew Zulawski is location hunting for Wake, Spy.

French producers are at a loss to understand why the Government has not signed the Australia-France production treaty. First mooted by Tom Stacey in the days of the Australian Development Corporation, and strongly promoted by AFC chairman Ken Watts, the treaty was ratified by Australia late last year.

A survey of exhibition outlets in France by the British Film Industries has revealed that American films dominate the film industry, as against 35 per cent in 1974.

The French film industry Observers claim the Government is now studying the feasibility of a law to protect local films in France, and cut back on the number of import licences issued for American films.

Italy

Italian producers worry about their decline in fortune and ponder over the future — production for 1980 will be down 30 per cent on 1979, and an even slower 1981 is forecast — all eyes turn to Edoard Molinaro as he completed La cagia assegna (The Box Office Success in Success) to the box-office success Turn the Other Cheek, which is having a long run in Italian capital cinemas. (The sequel again stars Ugo Tognazzi, Michel Gerras and Michel Galabru.)

Peter Zinner is directing Anthony Quinn, Franco Nero and Claudia Cardinale in The Salamander, based on a novel by Allen Moris West’s major novel. Robert Kazinks directed the screenplay. Twelve weeks of the 14-week shoot are in Italy, with special interiors scheduled for the final two weeks in London.

Massive changes in all areas of film production, export and distribution are likely in the wake of the 1979 National Film Policy investigation and recommendations to the Indian Government. Full details of the policy findings are yet to be revealed publicly, but it is known film-makers and exhibitors will benefit immensly from the proposed plans.

The Government’s Motion Picture Committee has already announced plans for a new 16-35mm processing laboratory to be set up in Delhi by the National-funded Films Division.

Some relief from import charges is expected for rawstock film, and a lowering of cinema tickets is also expected to be implemented in early 1981.

Sathyajit Ray is in post-production with Hirak rajesh, and is planning six short features for Calcutta television, all based on Bengali short stories.

The Government’s Ministry of Culture is preparing Love Marriage (Sunhinej sheed), the first Sindh film in color, and the first Sindh cinema in eighty years.

The Government of Bihar and Unicef have sponsored A Tale of Bhutan, a Brunei-English bilingual film by American Robert Taylor. The 37-minute film is said to have cost $170,000.
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AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION

FILM AUSTRALIA
## BOX-OFFICE GROSSES

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<td>15,893</td>
<td>(2(^*))</td>
<td>5971</td>
<td>15,893</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harlequin</td>
<td>GUO</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>19,445</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>19,445</td>
<td>3994</td>
<td>3994</td>
<td>19,445</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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* Figures exclude N/A figures.
* Box-office grosses of individual films have been supplied to Cinema Papers by the Australian Film Commission.
* This figure represents the total box-office gross of all foreign films shown during the period in the area specified.
* Continuing into next period
* Figures in parenthesis above the grosses represent weeks in release. If more than one figure appears, the film has been released in more than one cinema during the period.

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(1) Australian theatrical distributor only. RS — Roadshow; GUO — Greater Union Organization Film Distributors; HTS — Hoyts Theatres; FOX — 20th Century Fox; UA — United Artists; CIC — Cinema International Corporation; FW — Filmways Australasian Distributors; TK — 7 Kays Film Distributors; CCL — Columbia Pictures; REG — Regent Film Distributors; COG — Cinema Centre Group; AFG — Australian Film Commission; SAI — South Australian Film Corporation; MCA — MCA Corporation of America; S — Shermill Films; OTH — Other. (2) Figures are drawn from capital city and inner suburban first release hardtops only. (3) Split figures indicate a multiple cinema release.
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**THE SURVIVOR**

**Synopsis: A film based on the true-life story of a young girl, who escapes from a period of a famous Sydney bank robber.**

**MURDER MOST FOULED UP**

**Producers** Jer McElory, Mike McEwan

**Director** John Hays

**Based on the novel by** Brian Sharpe

**Cast** Mel Gibson (Frank), Mark Lee

**Synopsis** A film which follows the ex-cop, who feels a sense of guilt with the spirit of Gallipoli.

**POST-PRODUCTION**

**Roadgames**

**Producers** Quest Films

**Distributor** GUD and Asia Embassy

**Production manager** Brian Taylor

**Based on the short story** "The Boomerang Man" by Richard Francis, Everett de Roos

**Synopsis** A film with nine episodes.

**Heatwave**

**Producers** M & L Enterprises

**Distributor** Cityline Films

**Production manager** Phil Neave

**Based on the original idea** "Heatwave" by Tony Masters

**Synopsis** A short film with nine episodes.

**Blowing Out a Black**

**Producers** Don Ewart

**Distributor** Bill Owen

**Synopsis** A film that explores the impact of technology on the film industry and audiences.

**Shorts**

**The Actress and the Feminist**

**Producer** Kay Seil

**Distributor** Artfest

**Synopsis** A film that examines the impact of feminism on the film industry.

**Action**

**Producers** Agfilm

**Distributor** Reg Brawler

**Synopsis** A film that explores the impact of action movies on society.

**Blacking Out a Blonde**

**Producers** Don Ewart

**Distributor** Artfest

**Synopsis** A film that explores the impact of technology on film production.
SYMPHONI'S HERD

**Dist. company:** Department of Agriculture, Vic.

**Director:** Donald Ewart

**Sound recordist:** Donald Ewart

**Editor:** Jack Green

**Length:** 16 mins

**Shooting stock:** Eastmancolor

**Synopsis:** A documentary feature about the use of ram mating harnesses and crayfish traps to assist in the business side of running a successful dairy farm.

**THE USE OF RAM HARNESSES**

**Dist. company:** Department of Agriculture, Vic.

**Director:** Donald Ewart

**Sound recordist:** Donald Ewart

**Editor:** Jack Green

**Length:** 16 mins

**Shooting stock:** Eastmancolor

**Synopsis:** An historical documentary about the New South Wales Builders Laborers Federation, from the late 1980s through to 1993.

**MIRENA JELI**

**Producer/director:** John Hayer

**Sound recordist:** John Hayer

**Synopsis:** A documentary feature about the New Farbory at Dubai.

**STATE OF CHANGE**

**Producer:** Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

**Dist. company:** Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

**Synopsis:** A documentary feature about the New Farbory at Dubai.

**TAKEOVER**

**Producer:** Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

**Dir.:** Donald Ewart

**Sound recordist:** Donald Ewart

**Synopsis:** A documentary feature about the New Farbory at Dubai.

**FAMILIAR PLACES**

**Producer:** Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

**Synopsis:** A documentary feature about the New Farbory at Dubai.

**SHORTS**

**FAMILIAR PLACES**

**Producer:** Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies

**Synopsis:** A documentary feature about the New Farbory at Dubai.

**UNCLASSIFIED**

**Synopsis:** A documentary feature about the New Farbory at Dubai.

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT BRANCH**

**Projects approved at the AFC meeting on August 29th, 1980:**

**Script and Post-production Development Investment**

**Short Film Projects**

**Synopsis:** A documentary feature about the New Farbory at Dubai.

**PROJECT DEVELOPMENT BRANCH**

**Projects approved at the AFC meeting on August 29th, 1980:**

**Script and Post-production Development Investment**

**Short Film Projects**

**Synopsis:** A documentary feature about the New Farbory at Dubai.
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HARRY BUTLER'S TASMANIA  
Prod. company: Tasmanian Film Corporation  
Dist. company: Tasmanian Film Corporation  
Producer: Harry Butler  
Scriptwriter: John Patterson  
Director: Harry Butler  
Sound recordist: Bob Hayes  
Gauge: 16 mm  
Progress: In release  
Synopsis: A light-hearted journey through Tasmania's unique parks and open areas highlighting the ease of getting away from it all. Produced for the Department of Tourism.

LETTING GO  
Dist. company: Tasmanian Film Corporation  
Producer: Anne Whitbread  
Scriptwriter: John Patterson  
Director: Harry Butler  
Sound recordist: Bob Hayes  
Gauge: 16 mm  
Progress: In release  
Synopsis: A dramatized documentary exploring the situation of mentally handicapped people in their home—either as the developer of major multi-national organizations or as important institutions. The film examines the impact of the dangerous species can be saved.

VICTORIAN FILM CORPORATION  
Dist. company: Tasmanian Film Corporation  
Producer: Barry Pierce  
Scriptwriter: Damien Brown  
Director: Phil Noyce  
Sound recordist: Howard Spry  
Gauge: 16 mm  
Progress: Pre-production  
Synopsis: A film that will provide a new understanding of the process of construction workers picking on the film.

FOREGOTTEN WATERS  
Prod. company: The Film House Corporation  
Director: Gordon Glenn  
Scriptwriter: Russel Portman  
Camera assistant: John Wilson  
Editor: Graeme Preston  
Length: 20 mins  
Gauge: 16 mm  
Progress: Pre-production  
Synopsis: A film that offers new insights into the water crisis in Australia, focusing on the conservation of fresh water resources.

 citations: Cinema Papers, October—November — 367
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- Clio
- Best Category

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- Best Design
- Best Editing (Nomination)
- Best Music (Nomination)

**TAUBMANS**
- Clio Awards
- Best Category
- Best Humour (Nomination)

**TIP TOP**
- Clio Awards
- Best Campaign (Nomination)

**LOVE HERTZ**
- Clio Awards
- Best Travel (Nomination)

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NZFC Annual Report

The New Zealand Film Commission's report for the year ended March 31, 1980, has been released. Seventy-seven applications for funding were received by the Commission during the year, of which 24 were from projects initiated in the previous year. Of the 53 new applications, 24 received financial assistance. Nineteen of these were feature films, two of which were released theatrically during the year.

The report also gives details of the Commission's marketing and distribution activities. Copies of the report are available from the Government Printer.

Best Actor Award

Director Paul Mauder had a successful visit to the Karlovy Vary Film Festival in Czechoslovakia, where his feature film Sons for the Return Home was awarded the Best Actor prize for the performance of Samoan star Uelese Petala. Petala is now living in Melbourne, where he hopes to continue his acting career. Among widespread praise for the film, was this comment from Eric Shorter of the British Film Institute: "It was a relief to see such a gentle, humane and serious-minded film."

New Crime Film

New Zealander Andrew Brown, fresh from collecting an Emmy for his acclaimed British television series Edward and Mrs Simpson, will be back in his homeland to produce his first feature, The Shooting. The film is about a police siege on the west coast of the South Island in the 1940s. It will be backed by the recently-formed Southern Pictures of London. A British director and an Australian star are expected to be named soon — most of the rest cast and crew will be New Zealanders.

Protests at Tax

New Zealand filmmakers have been inundating the Government with letters of protest since a 40 per cent sales tax on film stock was introduced. The move is part of a government policy to switch to indirect taxation. So far, the only relief in sight for the film industry is the fact that when a film is exported — either during the production process or after completion — all the sales tax is refunded.

One of the strongest criticisms of the new sales tax came from David Fowler, recently retired manager of the National Film Unit. He said higher production costs resulting from the tax would make it more difficult to raise investment finance, and increased laboratory charges would force more producers to send the processing work to Sydney, at a time when New Zealand's two laboratories (one of them at the Film Unit) were improving the quality of their work.

Parliamentary Inquiry

A select committee of members of parliament was appointed to inquire into the National Government's plans to de-license film distribution and exhibition. Several submissions were received for the parliamentarians to consider. Distributors were largely silent, but many cinema-owners came out against the plans to de-license their industry — fearing the loss of a system which has protected them against competition for many years.

One immediate result of de-licensing should be the opening of several new independent cinemas in Auckland and Wellington, offering a wider choice to local filmgoers.

First Feature

Auckland director Sam Píllisburyn will be shooting his first feature soon. Working with lawyer-producer Rob Whitehouse, he has chosen Scarecrow, a novel by a Taranaki writer about an adolescent boy and his sister growing up in a small town, where a crazed killer arrives in the guise of a travelling magician. The killer selects the girl as his next victim, and her brother is the only person who can save her. The screenplay has been written by Michael Heath.

Pillisburyn is now looking for two teenagers to play the key roles. He is also considering several international stars for the role of the killer.

Festival Choice

Geoff Murphy's new comedy adventure Goodbye Pork Pie will be New Zealand's entry in the London Film Festival this year. The feature, which was well received at the Cannes Film Festival, is also being given a special screening in Tokyo at a New Zealand evening sponsored by Asahi Shimbun, a major Japanese daily newspaper.

Since Cannes, Murphy has been re-editing some scenes and strengthening the soundtrack. The film opens in New Zealand next February.

Concluded on P.391
In an interview in “Cinema Papers” in 1978, you said that the only hope for the survival of the New Zealand industry was co-production. Do you still feel the same way?

I said that at a time when there wasn’t a New Zealand Film Commission. But I still think that whether it is co-production, or some other sort of financial involvement from outside New Zealand, it’s still true.

Co-production gives the New Zealand industry access to a bigger market and helps inject a little bit more professionalism into areas where we need it. We are too small an industry to cut ourselves off from experts.

Do you see Australia as a natural co-production partner for New Zealand?

Yes, because there is a history of Australians and New Zealanders working together. So we can co-produce without the feeling that there is a certain amount of cultural imperialism going on.

In my business, I have been working successfully with Australians since 1955. And of course the Australian film industry is full of New Zealanders anyway.

I think there is an advantage in having an indigenous film industry but, on a commercial basis, New Zealand needs to be able to have involvement with other countries, to provide more money, more technicians and more actors.

The recent wrangle between Australian producers and Actors Equity over the use of foreign actors threatens to restrict a free exchange of talent between Australia and New Zealand. What are your feelings about this?

I would like to see the reverse happen. I would rather the doors opened further, and see free trade flourish. I would like to see the two countries getting closer together all the time.

Do you think the NZFC should be playing a more upfront role in trying to bring overseas producers and overseas government agencies together with New Zealand filmmakers? Or do you think this is an initiative which should be taken by producers?

Tony Williams is one of New Zealand’s best-known filmmakers. He started his career at Pacific Films as an assistant cameraman at the age of 16, and then travelled to the U.S. to study at the University of Southern California’s film department.

Returning to New Zealand, he acted as director of photography on John O’Shea’s two features, “Runaway” and “Don’t Let It Get You”. Williams then went to London, where he worked as a freelance editor before making his debut as a director on two documentaries for the BBC’s “Release” program.

Back in New Zealand, he spent five years making independent television documentaries, three of which won The Feltex “Best Television Program of the Year” award in consecutive years.

In 1978, Williams co-wrote and directed his first feature film, “Solo”, an Australian-New Zealand co-production starring Vincent Gil and Lisa Peers. Last year, he was invited to direct “A Special Kenny Rogers”, a 50-minute CBS television special shot in Texas.

Williams has his own film production company in Wellington, and is New Zealand’s — and one of the world’s — top commercials directors.

At this year’s Clios, he won the awards for best overall direction, and best commercial.

Williams was in Australia recently, working for The Film House, where he talked to Peter Beilby about the New Zealand film industry.
I think the NZFC has a very tricky role, because whatever they do they are going to be criticized, and they have my sympathy for that. But independent filmmakers are characterized by the people who, once upon a time, wore caps on the backs of their heads, put a hand-cranked camera in the back of a truck with a few actors, and went off and made comedies in Hollywood. Then they took the reel under their arm and went around the cinemas and tried to flog it. And that, essentially, is the spirit of independent filmmakers in New Zealand — even though there has been a lack of opportunity in the past.

I believe the NZFC is there to work for these filmmakers and to help support them, rather than to take the initiative and lead. The danger is that the NZFC will become yet another state bureaucracy — a bureaucratic body which takes the initiative instead of the industry. There are times when the industry is naive. There are also times when the industry is inexperienced, but, so is the NZFC.

Do you think the Commission should become involved in areas other than finance — distribution for example?

Yes, I think there is expertise it can offer, as long as it doesn’t supplant the producer. I think New Zealand is weighed down with state bureaucracy, which has been responsible for the dearth of filmmaking in the country. What the NZFC should be offering is advice and support.

The NZFC

As someone who was very closely involved with the establishment of the NZFC, what are your comments on its development?

When I was involved, trying to get the NZFC set up, and doing a lot of lobbying, I thought it was important that we learnt from the mistakes of others, and that we tried to avoid the bureaucracy we had had to face as New Zealand filmmakers for years. It was my hope that the NZFC would form along this line, offering assistance to, and backing New Zealand producers. But I think there have been times when they have wanted to go off on a tangent and become New Zealand’s official producers. I can see this tendency within personalities, and within the Commission as a whole. I suppose, in a way, it’s inevitable. They sit there all day and hear about the problems in the industry, and want to take an initiative or make a move.

But, by and large, I think we have tried to slap them down heavily each time... sometimes unfairly. I think it is important that we do keep them in check, even when they are trying to do a good job. What we have to keep reminding them of, all the time, is that they are there to serve us, not the other way around. We don’t want to be treated like candidates for an Arts Council grant, and we are not sitting exams, we are filmmakers.

Do you think the level of finance allocated to the NZFC allows it to fund a sufficient number of films?

That leads into another argument and another problem: how many films the industry should be making and whether we could sustain a film industry with just one feature a year, or, maybe, two? Which brings us to the next problem: the huge gap between features and commercials which should be filled by television drama — which is non-existent in New Zealand because we have the most ridiculous two-channel television system in the world.

But, returning to your question. I think the financial constraints on the NZFC are most apparent in their lack of support for young filmmakers. I think the most urgent thing we need is an experimental film fund. That is what worries me most — where the next generation of filmmakers will come from. And I think one of the mistakes that the NZFC has made is to encourage the making of 35mm big-screen productions in preference to a wider range of films.

But given their budget, once the NZFC has committed finance to five or six features, their funds are used up... What I am suggesting is that one of those films may better have been made on a lower-budget, on 16mm, an experimental film, or even as a television film, rather than on a bigger budget, on 35mm, just so it can be released theatrically. In other words, we need to have different scales of production.

How many feature films should the NZFC be backing?

Three films a year would be a good number at this point. But I think those three films need to be backed by more activity below the feature film level, so that actors, technicians, writers and directors are breaking their teeth on something a little less ambitious, and learning their craft.

Do you think the NZFC should adopt strictly commercial criteria in selecting the feature films they support, or do you think they should function as more than a merchant bank and encourage productions which may be worthwhile for artistic or other reasons?

I think that discussion can go on forever. The NZFC has to dance lightly on that one, because the Mad Maxes and, hopefully, Sticky Ends, and other strong commercial films are the ones that will get the industry on its feet. You can’t really afford to go completely into art films, or completely into the commercial market. I think you have to create an equal balance.

Television

Australian television is really the backbone of the feature film industry, because it provides actors, technicians and key creative personnel with a continuous source of employment. How much work does New Zealand television generate for the local industry?

Practically none. And it never will, under its present charter. Our television system is top-heavy. It has no vision, no concept even of what it is.

I used to work in British television at BBC2, and I know that state-owned television can be marvellous. But we don’t have that. We have two state-controlled commercial channels that, at best, churn out light entertainment. I am fighting for independent television as an alternative.

Why doesn’t New Zealand television commission more independently-produced drama?

Because of the sort of person working for state television. They tend to be empire builders. They are not in it for any commercial gain; they are not really interested. I was once told by the head of programs of Television New Zealand that they are not in it to subsidize New Zealand feature films. When I argued that a feature film was only 90 minutes of New Zealand drama originating on celluloid, he couldn’t understand what I was talking about.

He also went on to say that if a film has been shown in the cinema, he felt television was getting it second rate. Whereas, in any other country in the world, they pay more for a film if it has been released in a cinema. So, they are very naive, and they don’t really understand what we are talking about. We need to sweep the floors and start again; it is the only way.

Is there any move in that direction?

Yes, there is a body of people who haven’t disclosed themselves yet, who are going to attack in a very big way, with a lot of money behind them. I think that is the only hope of changing the system.
Government Attitudes

It seems strange that the New Zealand Government is trying to foster a local industry by subsidizing production through the NZFC, while its own television instrumentality won't commission or buy New Zealand programs except at unrealistically low rates — ...

I recently had dinner with the Minister for Broadcasting, the Minister of the Arts, and the Caucus Committee on Broadcasting. They had no hope for the future.

On the one hand they have invested $500,000 in the New Zealand film industry, but on the other, they have imposed a 40 per cent tax on filmstock, which is going to pull about $1 million back into their pockets.

Television will still only pay about $10,000 for a feature film, which doesn't even pay off the tax that the Government has imposed!

So, they really have no policy at all on the film industry. They set up the NZFC, perhaps to win a few votes and keep a few people quiet, but obviously not as part of a policy to foster local filmmaking. I think there is still the feeling that what they are doing is giving assistance to the arts, not a part of a policy to establish a viable film industry.

But I think you could argue that the $500,000 they have put into the industry in the first year of the NZFC has churned out more drama than the multi-million dollar television establishment. And it is drama that has reached millions more people overseas than any of the television or Film Unit programs have.

Therefore, even on the basis of cost-effectiveness, there has to be value in what we are doing. But the politicians don't understand that yet. Obviously from talking to them they have no idea at all of what the NZFC should be doing.

There doesn't seem to be an active producers' organization in New Zealand. Do you think producers are, therefore, responsible for the ignorance and the misguided actions of the politicians?

Up to a point. I certainly think a more organized body may help the situation. But what you also have to understand is there are not that many producers. The most qualified ones are working flat out trying to get a project together. I have spent years battering away at the bureaucracies that run our lives — the television system and the Government — and I have got to a point now where I feel I have done my bit and I am going to get about my career before it is too late.

You waste so much energy and time lobbying, talking and blasting away, when you could put the same amount of effort into writing, producing or directing a film.

In which case, do you think this is an area where the NZFC is being less active than it should be?

They have had their problems getting established but I think now they do need to start fighting for an industry, which as yet isn't there. It appears to be there, but it isn't.

There are still too many opportunities overseas tempting people to leave the country. Certainly, on questions like the purchase prices paid by television for feature films, the NZFC should start moving very strongly. They should be representing film producers in this instance, because film producers aren't getting anywhere at all.

They have a laboratory which is better than any in Australia, in terms of equipment, but we are all terrified to put our rushes through it because they might get destroyed. I think a smart, commercially-minded operator, who could move in and take over the Film Unit, could attract productions from other parts of the world. And then if the Government offered tax incentives — rather like the Irish Studios do — you could have all sorts of feature films from all over the world there.

But the Unit can't afford to market these facilities, and they don't have the right people in there.

The Film Unit

Another organization under government control is the New Zealand Film Unit. There has been quite a bit of criticism of its role and its activities. It appears that the Government has made a major investment in a world standard production and post-production facility which is largely unused. What role do you think the Unit should perform?

Again, it has to be re-structured. As a facility, the Film Unit could be one of the finest in the world — if not the finest — in terms of post-production. They have dubbing theatres, post-sync theatres, foot-steps theatres, mixing theatres, sound theatres, the likes of which don't exist anywhere near Australia — even Hollywood doesn't have some of the facilities!

But the Unit can't afford to market these facilities, and they don't have the right people in there.

Do you think the ownership and control of the Unit should be moved into private hands, or is it just a matter of shaking it up a bit?

I don't think that just shaking it up is going to work. What I am talking about is a cultural revolution! There was a suggestion once that the Commission could be involved in the running of the laboratory, but it finally comes back to the people that are there. And while the people who work there have to be civil servants, the Unit will never be able to pay enough money to attract the kind of world-class technicians you need in such a facility.

When it comes to building anything with bricks and mortar, then the New Zealand Government will pour millions of dollars into any facility you want, but the moment it comes to staffing them, they refuse to pay realistic, competitive salaries.
awards than anyone else at the moment.

It seems extraordinary that such a small industry is producing some of the best work in that field . . .

I don’t know why, but we do have a lot of intelligent, talented creative people here. And in the world of advertising, they are given free reign. They are given their head to do whatever they like to do. And maybe if the film industry and the television industry operated in the same way, you would see much more creative work coming out of the country.

But I also think that another reason the commercials sector in New Zealand is so strong, is in fact the lack of a feature film industry. In Australia, the flow of talent — particularly directors — from the commercials sector into the feature film area has definitely affected the standard of the commercials.

Commercials directors have been making quite an impact in the feature film area recently. Alan Parker and Ridley Scott are two examples that come to mind. Why do you think commercials directors move so easily, and effectively, into feature films?

I think it is the intensity of the commercials work. Every day you are working to feature film standards, and when you are shooting three days of the week, every week of the year, you are in fact, over a period of years, doing more actual filming of a very high quality than you would be even doing one feature a year.

I also think that some of the tricks of the trade, and some of the things that you are called upon to do, give you a very good technical background.

As I understand it, local advertising agencies are free to import foreign commercials. Do you object to that?

I have never been in favor of protectionism of any kind. I guess you could say that because most countries have protection that New Zealand should too, but I am not prepared to fight for it. I don’t want to see any halt in the free exchange of personnel, services and facilities.

Interestingly enough, most New Zealand agencies want to make New Zealand commercials. Most of the commercials that appear on our screen are made here, and when the odd American one pops up, people generally don’t like it.

Distribution and Exhibition

Distribution and Exhibition

Another area of the industry which has come in for some criticism recently is the distribution and exhibition sector. In fact several producers have undertaken the distribution of their own films rather than let them go through the chains . . .

Yet another monopoly raises its head. This time controlled from outside New Zealand. There is a big move at the moment to delicense exhibitors, and I think there is a good chance it will come about. What effect will that have?

There will be more alternative outlets and, therefore, more competition. And that’s what the New Zealand industry needs — some good old competitive free enterprise and a reduction in the number of monopolies — Government and private.

Writers

A number of recent New Zealand feature films have been written and directed — and in several instances produced — by the one person. In Australia, attempts — particularly by government funding bodies — have been made to separate these functions and encourage greater contributions from writers. Do you think the doubling up of functions is dangerous in a young industry?

Yes, I think the auteur theory is a big problem in our part of the world. Too often films are made under the guise of being an auteur film, when in fact they shouldn’t. It’s not necessarily the writers problem either, it is an industry problem. Our writers, particularly novelists — and we have some tremendously good novelists in New Zealand — have no experience in films. In fact there is a lot of confusion about film writers: some think they are writers of radio plays; others think they write theatre drama, and some even believe they are novelists. They are a combination of all those things.

Most importantly, a film writer is really part director.

The wonderful thing about reading an American script is that as you read it the film unfolds, and every little detail in the frame is described. I once talked to Alan Parker about Midnight Express, and he told me the wonderful thing about hiring an American scriptwriter to work on Midnight Express was that when he read the first draft, he read his film.

He said the first 10 pages didn’t have a line of dialogue. It was a visual description, because the writer understood the medium completely. He understood directing, photography, lighting, editing — everything. And all the director had to do was go out and improve on what had been written and give it a bit of pacing.

I believe, very strongly, in the writer’s role, but I think one of the problems is that a scriptwriter is someone who is so often asked to just put words to a novel and have people talk. I find that the first job I do when working with a writer is to go through and cross out all the dialogue, and put it back into pictures and narrative.

So often writers want to describe what is happening with dialogue, instead of in filmic terms. And it is not the inexperienced writers’ fault, but where do they learn? How do they become a writer first, and a filmmaker second?

In that respect, the production of drama for television would provide New Zealand writers with the opportunity to gain this sort of experience . . .

Possibly, but I am not sure, because television writing doesn’t always solve the problem either. Television writers often get very bad habits, because television is a dialogue medium.

I tend to look to novelists for tomorrow’s film writers — provided they are prepared to put the time into learning the art. I think there is more connection between a novel and a film, than between a play and a film. In fact I think there is more connection between an opera and a film than a play, or a television series, and a film.

One initiative the Australian Film Commission has taken to help local writers gain experience is to bring established scriptwriters and producers to Australia. Do you think this is the sort of thing the NZFC should be doing, or do you believe in a natural evolution?

I think you have to put a stick of dynamite under evolution occasionally. I don’t think there is any harm in that.

One of our problems in New Zealand is that writers and producers are grossly underpaid. The sort of money that is being offered for a feature film script is not really enough to attract a person to spend at least a year on it, which is what a film really needs.

Is that why it has taken so long to get your next film project off the ground?

It probably is. Solo was a desperate undertaking, in the sense that I had to do something and get it on the screen. I wrote the script with Martin Sanderson in four weeks. And the problems of the film are reflected by that.

Trying to originate a script since then, I have been less willing to take a pen out to write myself, or go on a project I can help me. I have abandoned a lot of projects. What I am now looking for is projects that are originated by someone else. And in that sense, I am not in such a desperate rush, I turned down an American film, and I have turned down an Australian film, both of which were ready to go. The Australian film, starts shooting in two months on a budget of more than $1 million, but I didn’t like the script.

Are you in a position to talk about your latest project at this stage?

Only to say that it is a horror film called Sticky Ends and will go into production some time next year.
FEATURES

THE LAST LOST HORSE

Producers.................................................Pat Cole
Scriptwriters.............................................Kim Wilson, Paul Cole
Synopsis: One man who leads a wolf to the edge of the cliff.

SCARECROW

Producers...............................................Joan Cole
Scriptwriters...........................................Barry Thomas, Michael Cole
Synopsis: A man who has a look at the edge and a wolf who leads him to the cliff.

THE SHOOTING

Producers...............................................Phil Cole
Scriptwriters...........................................Paul Cole, Michael Cole
Synopsis: A man who leads a wolf to the edge of the cliff.

SMASH PALACE

Producers.................................................Phil Cole
Scriptwriters...........................................Barry Thomas, Michael Cole
Synopsis: A man who has a look at the edge and a wolf who leads him to the cliff.

IN PRODUCTION

RACE FOR THE YANKEE ZEPHYR

Co-producers............................................Antony Guinan (Aust), John Barnett (NZ)
Director..................................................John Barnett
Editor.....................................................Bruce Morrison
Synopsis: A film about a man who leads a wolf to the edge of the cliff.

POST-PRODUCTION

PICTURES

PROD: Pacific Films
Distributor.............................................John Jolly
Scriptwriters..........................................Michael Black, John Jolly, John Jolly
Synopsis: A film about a man who leads a wolf to the edge of the cliff.

SHOTS

BEYOND REASONABLE DOUBT

Producers...............................................BRD Productions
Scriptwriters..........................................Robert Lord, John Barnett
Synopsis: A man who leads a wolf to the edge of the cliff.

BLACK HEARTED BARNEY

Producers...............................................Gibson Film Productions
Scriptwriters..........................................Jack Layton, John Barnett
Synopsis: A man who leads a wolf to the edge of the cliff.

NEW ZEALAND AND PRODUCTION SURVEY

Key words: Graeme Cowley, John Barnett, Barry Thomas, Michael Black, Paul Cole, John Jolly

374 — Cinema Papers, October-November
ANIMATION

COTTON ON
Producers/directors: David Waters, Lynne Dunn
Editors: David Waters, Lynne Dunn
Sound: John Stennett
Gaffer: Mike Trebere
Key grip: Mike Trebere
Gaffer: Andy House
Key grip: John Kirkham
Synopsis: A story in the life of a young man from the cotton plant to the mill.

DOCUMENTARIES

THE BRIDGE
Producers/directors: Mary Anderton
Photography: John Graces
Editing: John Graces
Synopsis: A study of the bridge: its importance in the life of the community.

FEATURES

KESAKI-AROA
Producers/directors: Maryl Sanderson
Photography: Marilyn Sanderson
Editing: Maryl Sanderson
Sound recordist: Rod Prosser
Synopsis: A study of the people of the area.

Shorts

CHILDREN OF SAMOA
Producer: Gibson Films
Prod. manager: Graham Mclean
Editor: Simon Ryan
Sound recordist: Don Raynolds
Synopsis: A documentary about the lives of the children in Samoa.

THE GREATEST RUN ON EARTH
Producer: Sam Pillsbury
Prod. manager: Richard Thomas
Editor: John Anderson
Director: John Anderson
Synopsis: A documentary about the rodeo circuit in New Zealand.

DOUGLI
Producer: Sam Pillsbury
Prod. manager: Richard Thomas
Director: John Anderson
Synopsis: A documentary about the life of a young man.

PAINTINGS OF JANE EVANS
Producer: Sam Pillsbury
Prod. manager: Richard Thomas
Director: John Anderson
Synopsis: A documentary about the paintings of Jane Evans.

SEAMEN

THAILAND

JAKE THE PLACE AND PAINTINGS OF JANE EVANS
Producer: Phoenix Communications
Dist. company: National Film Unit
Synopsis: A documentary about the place and the paintings of Jane Evans.

The Valley of the Sacred Fire
Producer: Nimrod Films
Dist. company: National Film Unit
Synopsis: A documentary about the sacred fire.

Psychotherapy
Producer: Phoenix Communications
Producers/directors: Jan John
Synopsis: A documentary about psychotherapy.

SADDLEBACK
Producer: Nimrod Films
Producers/directors: Jan John
Synopsis: A documentary about saddleback.

WOMAN OVERBOARD
Producer: Beth Productions
Producers/directors: Leon Nairn
Synopsis: A documentary about the lives of women.

IN SPRING ONE PLANTS ALONE
Producer: Vincent Ward
Prod. manager: Vincent Ward
Director: Vincent Ward
Synopsis: A documentary about the planting of crops.

PHOTOGRAH
Producer: Sam Pillsbury
Prod. manager: Richard Thomas
Director: John Anderson
Synopsis: A documentary about photography.

PHOTOGRAH
Producer: Sam Pillsbury
Prod. manager: Richard Thomas
Director: John Anderson
Synopsis: A documentary about photography.

PHOTOGRAH
Producer: Sam Pillsbury
Prod. manager: Richard Thomas
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Director: John Anderson
Synopsis: A documentary about photography.

PHOTOGRAH
Producer: Sam Pillsbury
Prod. manager: Richard Thomas
Director: John Anderson
Synopsis: A documentary about photography.
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The Club

Keith Connolly

Bruce Beresford's screen version of the David Williamson play is disappointing. What might have been its chief asset, the dramatic thrust of a double-edged plot about power struggles within a Victorian Football League, is dissipated amidst colorful, bustling backgrounds - the minaret of Victoria Park (home of the August Collingwood team), street scenes, a player's home, an official's tatty business premises.

This isn't the first play Beresford has adapted to the screen, but it presents problems that either weren't present in the original play. This is, of course, the filmmaker's problem, as he must resist the temptation to overdo it, rendering the plot in the action.

Williamson's screenplay reshapes his comedy-drama in more linear form, retaining the dramatic high points but spreading them through a whole season, instead of theatically-compressed mid-winter's night of long knives. The anonymous club of his play becomes Collingwood (which the cognoscenti identified it as, anyway) and its well-appointed clubrooms serve admirably as the film's central location. But authentic backdrops don't necessarily ensure that the scenes they're shot to or against will be any more convincing.

One of the troubles with Beresford's The Club is that too many of its dramatic confrontations occur in places that are simply too public. Such hardened organization men aren't given to conducting verbal brawls in the club foyer, bar, gamesroom, locker-room, showers, the training field or out in the street. Moreover, these al fresco altercations are conducted at the top of the lungs, the very Australian participants bellowing like Lina Wertmuller characters, minus gesticulations.

There is a further contradiction, most noticeable to those (and there are millions in the southern states) familiar with Victorian league football. The setting may be wholly recognizable, the people even identifiable, but the tone is close to parody - and that devalues the painstaking verisimilitude. Of course, had the club in question remained unidentified, or been a fictitious one, the film would have been denied most of its real-life match sequences. That wouldn't have been such a loss - far too many intersperse the narrative, like slabs of Saturday night replay in slow-motion. One wonders just what audience these repetitive sequences are aimed at; the home crowd sees better on the box every weekend, the wider world will be, at best, mystified, at worst, bored. Or is the intention apostolic, even though a good slice of the film's finance is from heavens New South Wales?

All this is quite some distance from Williamson's original, which, for all its localized references, has a relevance broader than the mad-hattery of Melbourne football. The power struggle at the core of the plot could apply to many organizations, political, business, religious, as well as sporting. Such universality, if it exists at all in the film, is submerged beneath a plethora of authenticating material and in-jokes.

However, one important element of Williamson's original is preserved, even enhanced. The very day The Club opened in Melbourne, the Victorian Football League made a quite startling announcement: henceforth, the VFL final series, which have the status of a secular Holy Week for a good many people, were to be sponsored by a French (mon Dieu, Cazaly!) manufacturer of kitchenware. This is a most striking exculpation of the film's suggestion that economic factors are increasingly eroding even the most hallowed traditions of the league clubs.

This is most explicit in the machinations of the Machiavellian club manager, Gerry Cooper (Alan Cassell). He constantly stresses the "economic reality" of his more dubious proposals, from dumping devoted team coach Laurie Holden (Jack Thompson) to bending previously ironclad club rules so big money can be milked from affluent supporters.

The crafty old survivor Jock Riley (Frank Wilson), former player, coach and now a long-serving committee man, talks glibly about the "good economics" of a player-buying spree to halt the club's membership decline. He makes this remark in a scene where Beresford nicely illuminates Williamson's well-placed barb at those football officials who bask in the reflected glories of the sport's relatively recent ascension to the realms of "big business". When Jock, seated in his tinpot businessm an ownself, Laurie cuts him down by pointing to a pile of unsold goods:

"I was one of the mugs who invested in this . . . a hundred dozen pop-up Taiwanese toastisers that burned the bread and fired it out like mortar shells . . . forty gross of Russian alarm clocks that ticked so loudly you didn't need the alarm!"

"This is m ost explicit in the machine of getting of Wisdom and Breaker Morant," that he can be discreet), presents the club power-struggle in goodies' n baddies terms. The black-hats are Jock and Gerry, the nice guys Laurie and the team captain Danny Rowe (Harold Hopkins), huge player just topping..."
the hill. In between is the club president lifelong, non-playing supporter, swept through Collingwood streets and across the Yarra. One shot of silhouetted figures — all, with the exception of Thompson and Hopkins, real-life Collingwood players — on a freeway pedestrian crossing with the traffic streams past below is evocatively contrasted later by shots of supporters streaming down railway-station ramps to the opening match of the season.

The early restraint evaporates, however. As the players puff their way back to the ground, we see the club’s divided ruling triumvirate, Ted, Jock and Gerry, ushering star recruit Geoff Hayward (John Howard) and officials of the Tasmanian Football Association into the boardroom. Within seconds, the business of completing Geoff’s transfer has degenerated into the film’s first show-battle, the off-field bickering at each other like crooks of Barry McKenzie. The fury, aroused by Geoff’s demand for an extra $10,000, abates as Ted quixotically writes a personal cheque, one, it turns out, that he can’t afford (the gesture contributes to his pie-manufacturing business going bankrupt).

Shout-in No 1 soon follows when Laurie upbraids Ted who promptly takes him off, provoking a clash with Ted. Here, Beresford makes excellent use of the Vuitton Park location, as the president strides angrily from the official box, through the crowd and up to the eyrie where the coach is directing his team. It’s a good deal more convincing than the subsequent scene in which Laurie and Geoff come to blows in the dressing room.

These incidents lead to Laurie telling the press that Ted is “sticking his nose into where he shouldn’t”, which produces a highly uncalled-for splash in The Age. (Another example of the eye failing to deceive the mind — the paper that reads it knows that such a report couldn’t be treated like the second coming.)


Beresford blunts the storyline, not so much by dispersing it over a longer time-frame as interspersing it with a superficiality of what is, after all, largely established football. The action scenes, television replays and slow-motion bump-and-grunt are a good deal less than fascinating, while the behind-the-scenes drama is, at best, mildly interesting for all but footy fanatics. The play’s still the thing — regardless of the medium for which it is conceived.

At the 1980 Australian Film Awards, it may have been easy to overlook the two prizes presented to Don McNennan’s Hard Knocks. Amidst the almost continuous vignettes in “I'll Sleep When I’m Queen” and Graham Kennedy’s repeated pleas for a tight close-up, their significance could have been ignored. The Special Jury Prize needs to be recognized as a very high recommendation, while the award for Best Actress, which went on the day to Tracy Mann for her role as Sam (anthona) in this film, should give some indication of her performance, since the competition for this award is so low, it’s the result hardly a forgon conclusion.

Tracy Mann sustains her role in the film with an assurance that guarantees the authenticity of her mannerisms and intonations. Her acting performance is not gratuitous; her gaucheries do not indicate a facile, unconvincing conception of the character. Rather, she manages to communicate the sense of that which is marked with her body and obstinacy that naturally belongs to the character she is portraying.

Sam develops through a series of confrontations, and although it could be argued that the paradox she has to face in the end results from a realization that no significant change has come about, it can also be asserted that real development has taken place because now at least she is able to choose.

At the beginning of the film, Sam is festering in the raw open wound of the punk generation. She is never entirely sure of her place in this world: the acrid smell of its spit, the tenseness of its defiance. Rough though these qualities may be, she does act as a touchstone. The more she becomes involved in the world of fashion modelling, the more she comes to realize that there is a great moral ambiguity beneath the attractive facade. She is caught at a moment of transition between these worlds, moving through a shadowy no-man’s-land where the police practice their bloodhound instincts by hunting those who are already marked by society as victims.

I don’t think the film says anything essentially new about this situation. However, it is legitimate to ask whether...
one could dismiss it simply for this reason alone. If the film does no more than present a true picture of the lives and social ethos of this group of people, so easily identified because they advertise their existence through their appearance, it nevertheless reminds us of the trap they are caught in — a trap that is not always of their own making, but one that society fashions for them. As Sam says in the film: “We mix with the wrong kids because nobody else will associate with us, and nobody else will associate with us because we mix with the wrong kids.”

The film, however, is more than just the developmental progression of a single character. Don McLennan has succeeded with the casting, and has managed to get good performances from all his actors. Indeed, the film would have been difficult to sustain on a single performance alone.

To a large extent, the fact that the film manages to sustain interest must also be attributed to the skill with which the narrative structure is handled. To evaluate this aspect of the film would lead to rather complex discussion. The overall diegesis of the film is broken up; the sequences themselves are fragmented, and the component scenes are scattered as if at random through the film.

There are also a couple of skilfully-handled examples of the autonomous shot. The film sometimes appears to be a mini casebook of ‘Metz’ ‘grande syntagmatique du cinema’.

The scrambling of the narrative at first produces some surprises. The filmmakers play with this technique to trick us a number of times. The audience quickly comes to locate a core group of characters, but at first it takes some effort to recognize them from scene to scene, because cumulative changes of appearance and qualitative changes in relationships are not presented in a linear and progressive development.

This is an attractive quality in the film because it allows moments of discovery and recognition to be built into the structure. Taken together, these devices all work to distance the viewer from the characters and action. The audience is constantly forced to reconstruct the diegetic sequence of the film as it goes along.

The ideological implications of this technique would be fascinating to investigate, given the subject matter of the film. Questions of point-of-view would also be interesting to consider. Apart from the clever cinematic tricks that can result (we need only remember Alain Resnais’ Providence), it seems that there is also a qualitative difference involved: compare a film with a straight narrative structure in which the actress is finally led down the same blind alley from which she emerged, and the technique of cutting a film so that past and present are apparently made to look at each other face to face, as in this film.

The surface scrambling of the narrative suggests an interesting consideration: perhaps there is a deep level where the structure remains essentially linear. One can, for instance, trace a sequential development in Sam from the short-hair stage, through a phase during which her protest moves to the glaring iridescence of the color rinse in her hair, and finally to the softer look of the girl who has a choice between a number of different lifestyles, though perhaps unable to make up her mind.

There is also a progression in her relationship with men, from Munch (John Arnold), who is little more than an uncomprehending cipher caught in a vicious power situation, moving to Frank (Hilton Bonnet), a smart operator though still on the wrong side of society, and finally to the saxophone player who represents a much more complex response to the world (significantly, it is in his company that Sam expresses some of her most considered opinions).

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, there is a real progression in the events which lead Sam, step by step, to the dilemma she has to face at the end. The structuration of the film works in a complex way and depends on more than the simple recognition by the viewer that the fragmented scenes belong to a linear narrative, which can be reconstructed by resorting to an agile ingenuity.

The editing of the film will obviously be a function of the way the narrative is handled. The fragments, in fact, are strung together with great skill. Sometimes one is given classical cues to flash back and then abandoned to return...
as best one can. Sometimes, in a series of skilled cuts around a character, one suddenly realizes that a great leap in time has taken place; yet the shots have not displayed any filmic discontinuity.

Generally, the cutting of the film is adept. Insofar that it preserves a balance between perception of change of shot and requirements of continuity in the visual and auditory quality of the scene. I particularly liked the scene with the fat man and piano.

Successful cutting depends on the camera angles and general shot configurations that the cameraman gives the editor. In this film, there is a positive gain in having the same person, Zbigniew Friedrich, controlling the camera as well as the editing. Visuals are well conceived, lighting well controlled. I also liked Friedrich's use of a fast stock (rather than excessive lighting) in the night scenes.

If I have any reservation about this film, it is mainly regarding the constant use of music in the background. Yet, I liked the music, and some of Australia's best bands appear in the credits: there may even be a justification for using music in this manner — Sam's type of people usually walk around with a transistor stuck to their ears.

Generally, I thought the film showed great form. Perhaps the makers have not fully extended themselves yet. Perhaps something even better is still to come.

Manganinnie
Virginia Duigan

Manganinnie. John Honey's first feature and the Tasmanian Film Corporation's début, almost willfully takes all kinds of risks. There is little plot in the conventional sense. One of the two main characters is a full-blood Aboriginal who doesn't speak a word of English throughout; the other is a little girl who hardly talks at all. Neither has ever acted before. The budget was a bargain-basement $480,000 and for Gilda Baracchi it was her first feature as producer.

On the second last night of Manganinnie's school holiday run in Sydney, there were 40 people in the cinema. One could blame minimal publicity, but not bad notices. The reviews were mixed. The good balance might also conclude that people don't particularly want to see "G"-rated films with an Aboriginal name and unknown actors. In the adjoining theatre the 'M' rated Urban Cowboy, starring John Travolta, was packing them in.

Manganinnie is aimed specifically at children, but it is the kind of gentle film that influences attitudes and combats prejudice. It would be en-couraging to see it made repeated view-ing for schools throughout Australia.

The year is 1830 and the place is Tasmania in the throes of genocide. The extinction of the Tasmanian Aboriginal has been tellingly recorded in Tom Haden's documentary The Last Tasmanian. In Manganinnie, John Honey chooses a deliberately low-key, reticent approach which is so un-fashionable as to appear almost evasive. There is nothing of the hounding to death of the other members of Manganinnie's tribe. The horsemen gallop into the native camp, but there are no shots, no screams, no blood. And, apart from the man who assumes was Manganinnie's husband, no bodies.

The film operates with intercut shots of the Aboriginal settlement and the white colony. Uninhibited dancing and chanting on the one hand, studied formality on the other, the implication being warmth and spontaneity versus repressed emotions and rigidity.

Because neither impression is more than fleeting and superficial, it takes a while before the film starts to grip. One watches Manganinnie's bewilderment and distress with a certain detachment — rather as the European settlers might have reacted. The grief of the family of the little girl, Joanna, who becomes the second lead character, is similarly remote.

The Europeans are swathed in the symbolic garments of their era: hats, britches, waistcoats, voluminous skirts, and Joanna in bonnet and frilly leggings under her dress. The discarding of these garments and eventual adoption of Aboriginal dress parallels Joanna's identification with the alien culture.

Anna Ralph, who plays Joanna, is a child who already has unusual strength of character in her face, plus gravity, intelligence and attractiveness of the most interesting kind. Mawuyul Yanthalawuy from northern Australia is equally remarkable as Manganinnie, with a rare capacity to generate emotional response. She speaks her own language in a way that makes Joanna's instinctive comprehension entirely credible.

Both actresses, with styles that are complementary, display dignity, poise and complete naturalness. Unfortunately, they act the others off the film. It seems likely that John Honey gave all his attention to their performances, which are the body of the action, and had little left for the peripherals. The supporting actors are often disappointingely wooden.

Manganinnie is based on a novel by Beth Roberts — not a true story, incidentally, which probably explains the central suspension of disbelief the film requires.

Joanna, on an outing with her family, lags behind her father and follows the exotic Manganinnie as if hypnotized by her strangeness. It is a capricious action and the early scenes of the little girl at home haven't laid the groundwork for it. A suggestion of independence, curiosity, daring or even plain boredom might have made her behaviour more credible.

On the other hand, it is pedantic to demand complete psychological plausibility from a film like Manganinnie. It conveys some of the quality of a fairy tale, and is entitled to the same poetic non sequiturs and dramatic licence. One can say that Joanna just goes off, and that's that.

There are other occasions where credibility is strained. The little girl shows no inclination to return home, doesn't betray her whereabouts to searchers early on, and shows minimal childish fears. It is a measure of the film's originality and the spell it manages to cast that these objections cease to matter a great deal. One accepts that here is a unique child in a unique situation.

There is an affinity between the two outlaws, who are opposites in so many visible ways, which springs from a more fundamental kinship. They are spiritually in tune, non-conformists — Joanna by nature and Manganinnie by force of circumstance. Yet the implication is that by reason of Manganinnie's special knowledge they are outsiders who are also privileged members of an inner, charmed circle.

It is Joanna's initiation into the world of the dreamland that is the real business of the film, and its imaginative accomplishment. This might suggest that it is a very exotic piece of work; in fact, it is sturdy practical, making its points in plain and accessible language, with only occasional forays into symbolism and visionary hallucinations.

The relationship of Joanna and Manganinnie unfolds during their wanderings through the bush in search of Manganinnie's lost tribe, their efforts to communicate with different words and tools, the unfamiliar food, the Aboriginal's symbiotic relationship with the land.

The exchange of knowledge is not all one-sided. Joanna is able to teach Manganinnie a bit of white man's lore when she makes fire by rubbing flints together.

There is the occasional brush with danger, an encounter with escaped convicts when Manganinnie is wounded, the loss of the fire stick that wards off evil spirits. Tension is built by the realization, subconscious at first, of the inevitability of Joanna's return home. When it does happen, and Joanna sees her family again, she is like a wild child and seems not to recognize them. Manganinnie has died, and Joanna's last action is to light her funeral pyre in the night and sing her spirit away.

Scenes like this very difficult one work because they are handled with
delicacy and tact, and because Honey has established an atmosphere in which they are believable, the sequences of Joanna and Manganinini in the bush could have been dramatically flat; instead, they are charged with individuality.

It is a very quiet film and also an unobtrusively confident one. The director, John Honey, has a keen awareness of the various moods of the play — it is set in a rain of petals in a room bathed in melancholic lighting. A great stage Prospero, an expressive comment on Elizabethan theatre, is drenched in light and flowers, with a ravishment of the eye if not the mind.


Slippery Slide and Do Not Pass Go
Keith Connolly

The convenient conviction that, like the poor, the juvenile delinquent will always be with us, has been reinforced in these short features, one intended for television, the other made as a social welfare training film (but also to be televised). Each in its way implies that society itself is delinquent in its attitudes to young people, particularly those who, writingly or otherwise, stray outside norms of behaviour and background.

Donald Crombie's Slippery Slide, a 51-minute feature made for the Tasmanian Film Corporation, is more ambitious in scope, if not in purpose, than Phil de Bruijn's Do Not Pass Go, produced by the Victorian Film Corporation for the State's Department of Community Welfare Services.

In the Tasmanian film, writer-director Crombie takes much the same episodic approach as in his 1976 one-hour television drama, Do I Have to Kill My Child?, but here the didactic intent is much less clear. There is also a touch of the gloss of Chris Morgan's photography about this tracing of a teenage boy's inexorable path from state ward to state's prison. Crombie's narrative is unrelentingly deterministic, in that each crisis in the boy's life arises from the seltiltly and insensitive actions of others, while the motivations of such actions are left for us to ponder.

The relative modesty of the film's intentions are revealed in production notes which declare, with rather disarming frankness, that the aim is "to raise the consciousness of the whole community and in particular the professions which make children deeply involved in Welfare".

Slippery Slide opens with an establishing prologue, set in 1968, which shows a young, deserted wife bursting into a court hearing where her small children are, in the incongruous terms of the Act, charged with being neglected. Crombie establishes a degree of sympathy for the woman before she hysterically assaults the female Welfare officer who has, somewhat improbably, taken the three children from their home while the mother is out shopping. The mother reappears later as a less sympathetic, if grievously exploited, figure.

She and her daughter are reminiscent of some finely-realized effects. In the film's last quarter-hour, a charge that might equally be levelled against melodrama...
Charmed Lives
Allen Lane, 1980
Michael Korda
Brian McFarlane

Alexander Korda married Merle Oberon. Not content with this single achievement, he went on to establish the British film industry. Well, the marriage lasted only long enough for Merle to be briefly Lady Korda, and the British film industry, it may be argued, has never been securely established.

While its virtual disappearance in the 1970s as a subject for serious consideration can scarcely be laid at his door, Korda seems to have been prophetically wrong-headed about British films as long ago as the 1930s, with his "belief in the 'international film' — a big historical drama about famous personalities or events".

Such films, in my view at least, have been the death of the British cinema, give or take box-office successes like Lawrence of Arabia, pushing out the smaller, truly indigenous products (like early Carol Reed, or Ealing comedies) which gave the industry whatever reputation it once had.

Korda had no interest or faith in films of this kind, even in the face of successes like The Winslow Boy or The Fallen Idol, produced for London Films, his own company. His commitment, no doubt deriving in part from temperament, in part from the early success of The Private Life of Henry VIII, was towards such internationally-slanted clinkers as Bonnie Prince Charlie and Anna Karenina. (Mind you, his projected War and Peace with Merle as Natasha might have been a different story, though some would no doubt add "different from Tolstoy's."

His nephew, Michael Korda, has written nearly 500 pages about "the fabulous world of the Korda brothers" and, though the account is literate and generous in a way that few such works have been, many may feel that he tells them both more and less than they ever wanted to know about the Kordas. More, that is, about where Alex has his clothes made for instance, less, about the films themselves, him than that he was the most Bohemian of the brothers and perhaps the most reliably good-natured. His career as a set designer for his brothers' films is sketched but not dwelt upon, nor is his somewhat unlikely marriage to the author's mother, the actress Gertrude Musgrove.

His relationship with his second wife, Leila, by whom he had several children in late middle age, is perhaps the most warmly realized in the book, and the author's affection for his father, notwithstanding a lonely childhood and limiting hero worship for his uncle Alex, is recorded with touching understatement.

Zoltan, the middle brother, seems to have suffered from a sense of competition with Alex. Despite the closeness of the brothers, and it is a closeness that exceeds that of any other relationship in the book, Zoltan skims his career which deserves more than the fleeting references that Michael Korda makes to The Thief of Baghdad, Sahara, and Cry the Beloved Country. Macomber and A Woman's Vengeance (based on Aldous Huxley's Giaconda Smile) are certainly films of more than passing interest.

On a personal level, for a book which makes a good deal of marriage and mistresses, Zoltan's wife Joan is the least substantial figure in the book, given not so much as a surname. His films — and his marriage — appear to have been more consistently successful than Alex's and it is frustrating to be told so little about them. There was much less contact and rapport between Michael Korda and his uncle Zoltan, and this perhaps accounts for the former's comparative reticence.

It is Alex, undoubtedly, who was the chief formative influence in Michael's life and one sees why. It's not just a matter of reveling in the luxury of being Sir Alexander Korda's nephew (and he is honest about this — and about the clout he gets from his connection with Auntie Merle). Alex had "presence to an extraordinary degree", was "by far the most tolerant and civilized of the brothers", and had an enduring "passion for size" which was his strength and his undoing as a filmmaker.

Only when Michael, in 1956, drives across Europe bearing medical supplies...
to beleaguered Hungary (there is a kind of symmetry here in his returning to the Kordas' birthplace) does he begin to feel he may emerge from the shadow of Alex's influence: "Up till now, I had found it difficult to equal Alex in any way, perhaps because it was an impossible task. Nor did it seem likely that I would ever equal Alex's phenomenal ability to make money or his easy, graceful charm. His successes and his aura — financial, sexual, professional — all seemed to crush and reduce me, and I felt suffocated, haunted by the possibility of being a failure all my life, of having to compete with Alex (long after his death).

The book is clearly an attempt to come to terms with this dominant influence in his life and it registers some of the pain as well as the fringe benefits of being Alexander Korda's nephew.

It is perhaps Michael's fascination with the whole life, and the importance of its influence on his own, that accounts for the fact that the Korda films seem to receive such scant treatment. In a filmmaking career that embraced Hungary, Vienna, Berlin, London and Hollywood, it would have been instructive to trace his involvement as an artist/entrepreneur in more detail. As it is, his films have to jostle for place along with his marriages and his political friendships (Carruthers, Beaverbrook and co.), his yacht, his eating and drinking habits, his servants and his clothes. He is the centre of the Korda clan's universe and his biographer feels impelled to give us as much of the man as possible.

Curiously, though, for all the claims about his dynamism, his charm, and his paternal sympathy and generosity towards a wide range of people, the portrait that emerges is something less than charismatic. It is as though the predominant greys of his dress have obliterated some of the fire that one feels must have been there, and the book's failure to give us more about the films and his working methods reinforce this strangely muted note.

The man who produced and/or directed Henry VIII, Things To Come, Lady Hamilton, The Thief of Bagdad, An Ideal Husband (Paulette Goddard, that most American star, as a Mayfair schemer), or the quieter but more interesting critical successes like The Sound Barrier and An Outcast of the Islands is worth looking at more closely as an artist.

There are gross miscalculations, too (Bonnie Prince Charlie has become a by-word for cinematic ineptitude); but a man who wrestled with H. G. Wells, Oscar Wilde and Leo Tolstoy and who worked closely and, one gathers, sympathetically with Graham Greene and David Lean, as well as actors like Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh and Charles Laughton, had more going for him professionally than this book reveals.

Michael Korda tells, writing about Lady Hamilton (That Hamilton Woman in the U.S.), that: "Now, quite suddenly, his real gifts as a director, his sympathy for actors and actresses, his understanding of human emotions, his sense of drama, returned to him ..." (p.153.)

Arguably, Lady Hamilton reveals these qualities best and, of the films he directed, stands up best today, showing as well the strongly patriotic qualities that characterized his emigre's attitude to England. But it is not, in the end, as a director that he is chiefly remembered: it is as a producer (any claims to authorship derive from this role) and as financial juggler, responsible for keeping London Films afloat for so long. From this point of view, the book does justice to his achievement.

In his personal life, he seems always to have had so much responsibility to bear, for people or films or companies, that any real lightness to relieve for long the surprisingly sombre cast of mind that emerges in this biography. There is evidence of extravagance, of high living, of friends in high places, but there is little sense of his delight in any of this.

In his three marriages — to the tempestuous and illigible Hungarian actress, Maria, to the ravishing Merle, and to the opportunistic Alexa — he seems not to have found equality of relationship. Maria, seeking to prove that she was the one true Lady Korda and to maintain hefty allimony payments, kept up her harassment of him for all his life, and indeed his death provided only a spur to her activities. Merle, while always speaking of him as the fire that one with generosity, in the end found her career more absorbing than life as Lady Korda, while Alexa, vulgar, on-the-make and 40 years his junior was no more than an old man’s folly. In all of these relationships, though, Alex’s role is persistently more paternal than passionate; that is, as perceived by the ladies themselves.

Whatever one’s critical judgment of the films for which Korda was responsible, in one role or another, there is no gainsaying his centrality in the development of British films over a crucial quarter-century. His nephew’s book is an honorable account of the life that produced that achievement — and of some of the other lives involved. For a proper appraisal of the films themselves, we shall have to wait.
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Films examined in the terms of the Customs (Cinematograph Films) Regulations and States’ film censorship legislation are listed below. An explanatory key to reasons for classifying non-“G” films appears hereunder.

#### Frequency
- Infrequent
- Frequent
- Low
- Medium
- High
- Justified
- Gratuitous

#### Explicitness/Intensity
- S (Sex)
- V (Violence)
- L (Language)
- O (Other)

#### Purpose

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<td>Secret Spy</td>
<td>B. D. Productions</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>1745:94</td>
<td>14th Manitoba P/L</td>
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<tr>
<td>Secretary Spies</td>
<td>Kti Productions</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>1358:55</td>
<td>14th Manitoba P/L</td>
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<tr>
<td>Turned On Girl</td>
<td>B. D. Productions</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>1563:51</td>
<td>14th Manitoba P/L</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Two in Black Belt</td>
<td>A. Shaw</td>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>2396:41</td>
<td>J &amp; S W International Film Co.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Use the Back Door</td>
<td>B. D. Productions</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>1589:00</td>
<td>14th Manitoba P/L</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wisdom</td>
<td>M. Lobell</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>2456:00</td>
<td>United Artists (Austral P/L)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Zero in and Scream</td>
<td>Phoenix International Films</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>871:45</td>
<td>Mutual Film Distributors</td>
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#### FOR RESTRICTED AUDIENCES “P”

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<tr>
<th>Title</th>
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<th>Applicant</th>
<th>Reason for Decision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Amorous Adventures of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza</td>
<td>December 1978</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Special condition: That the film will be exhibited only at the 1980 Sydney/Melbourne/Brisbane/Pont and/or Adelaide Film Festivals and then exported.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bastien Bastienne</td>
<td>R. Stephane</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>2907:00</td>
<td>Sydney Film Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>Company</td>
<td>Towner Films</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>2475:00</td>
<td>Melbourne Film Festival</td>
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<td>The Great Rock ’n Roll Swindle</td>
<td>Hungarian Film/Malini</td>
<td>Hungary</td>
<td>3630:00</td>
<td>Melbourne Film Festival</td>
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<tr>
<td>In the Name of the Fuhrer</td>
<td>D. Boye J. Thomas</td>
<td>Britain</td>
<td>2639:00</td>
<td>Sydney Film Festival</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Load the Weight</td>
<td>Lydia Films</td>
<td>Belgium</td>
<td>2500:00</td>
<td>Melbourne Film Festival</td>
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<td>Hungary</td>
<td>3930:00</td>
<td>Melbourne Film Festival</td>
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<td>The Most Loved Women</td>
<td>Les Films Du Carrosse</td>
<td>France</td>
<td>2973:00</td>
<td>Melbourne Film Festival</td>
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<td>Raffle Service (16mm)</td>
<td>B. Rouge</td>
<td>U.S.</td>
<td>504:62</td>
<td>14th Manitoba P/L</td>
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#### FOR RESTRICTED EXHIBITION “R”

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<tr>
<td>Die Lautsprecherin Eines</td>
<td>E. Delrich</td>
<td>W. Germany</td>
<td>2430:50</td>
<td>Brave Films P/L</td>
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**Note:** Title of film shown as Defiance (September 1979 and March 1980 Lists) has been altered to Brute Force.
What scripts are you working on now?

I recently completed a screenplay for Bert Newton and Graham Kennedy called The Road to Gundagai, in which they are on a latrine duty when Darwin is bombed. They then take a message, hidden in a yo-yo, back to the Prime Minister of Australia. They hitch-hike south in disguise towards their home-town of Gundagai.

Kennedy and Newton read the script and found it filthy, and out of keeping with their present, holy suburban image. So that is not happening.

I have finished a script about radio actors in the 1940s, which is like Newsfront, but funny, and not as serious and intense. Then there is a mystery set in Surfers Paradise, which is a kind of Australian version of Raymond Chandler. There is a film about a boy and the horse Archer, which won the first Melbourne Cup after being walked back to the Stables Theatre at the end of the year. It is called The Road to Gundagai. It was set in Surfers Paradise.

All the performances are dreadful, the conspicuous exception being Bert Newton's. It's also over-enthusiastic, but what can I say? Terry Jackman's kid loves it.

Future Plans

How many images did the Russians generate simultaneously?

For the main stadium they had three separate productions: one on the running track, one on one of the throwing events and one on jumping events. They had three productions down at gymnastics, where there were three apparatuses in use at the one time. So there were six in two very different areas.

Probably, they had up to 25 different areas to which you could have access.

Did all these images automatically come through your set-up, or did you have to book in advance?

We gave indications of what we might want before we left, but the specific bookings we did 24 hours in advance. It was possible, however, to get pictures at very short notice. To get a commentary package took a little more time.

One interesting aspect was your use of different anchors in the studio. Why was that?

There were certain days when guys were not specifically required for the events they were best suited for, so we used them in the studio and swapped around.

When we made the decision to go to Moscow, we had to revise our budget. This meant we didn't have as many commentators as we wanted, and the guys had to double up on various activities.

What was your feeling about the standard of commentary?

I think everybody did very well. We had very few complaints from the public about the standard of commentary. We had one or two from opposition media, however.

You seemed to be at your happiest when you were at the boxing ring ...

Oh, I wouldn't say that. I was at my happiest at the closing ceremony, for obvious reasons.

Apart from selecting an event, did you have control over the way it was covered?

No, but that is standard practice at the Olympic Games. The host nation is required to create, by the IOC, what is called an "international picture". At the start of the 100 metres, for example, it is required to put the camera for a certain number of seconds on each competitor.

The reason there are now three simultaneous productions out of the main stadium, instead of one, is the criticism in the past. The director would go to the high jump just as the shot putter from another
### Film Censorship Listings

#### Continued from P.385

#### FOR GENERAL EXHIBITION "O" FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Producer</th>
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#### FOR MATURE AUDIENCES "M" FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

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#### FOR RESTRICTED EXHIBITION "R" FILMS REGISTERED WITHOUT ELIMINATIONS

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### Film Censorship Listings

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### Country was due to perform. One country's television viewers would be very upset.

What they did this time was to give everybody a total coverage of what was happening and then leave it to the various producers to choose. That was the theory and, while it didn't work 100 per cent on some occasions, it was a lot better than with the previous Olympics.

In the second week of broadcast, there were a couple of stories about not having control over the images, particularly by Bill Collins. Was there a frustration over some of the coverage?

Yes. We were disappointed, in that they didn't cover the sports events as we wanted to, with a lot of cut-aways to crowds, and things like that, which we found pretty frustrating.

The only political influence on the technique side was the fact that they didn't show the Olympic flags during the opening ceremony or at the victory ceremonies. Otherwise, the coverage was very straightforward.

Occasionally the replays looked edited. One example was in the heats of the women's 800 metres, when there was a bit of jostling before the turn. When it was replayed that incident wasn't shown and Ron Clarke commented on its absence. . . .

I am not sure whether it was edited, or whether they simply started it from the point afterwards. But they were very consistent, and if the pattern said the replay would start from the 175-metre mark it wouldn't matter what happened at the 180-metre mark because the replay would start as planned.

There was one relay, for instance, when a member of the Cuban team dropped the baton at the last change-over. The best picture at that point was of the Cuban lying on the track, slamming his hand and throwing the baton away. But the pattern was that the last change-over was a close-up of the winning runner. Now, if they had cut away from the winner and gone back to the guy at the track, which we is a far better news story, there had been an immediate complaint from the people taking the coverage who wanted to see the winner. So, a rigid pattern is a safeguard in itself.

We complained about a couple of things, however, like the swimming, where they used a lot of cutaways of the crowd. But they used them less often after that, and did seem to take notice of other broadcasters. There were other things which upset us, but it was probably due to the inexperience of some of their technicians. The Olympics is so vast an operation that I think they finished up running out of top people. *
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To understand the Award and what it means, you have to understand the way things used to operate before, which was on the basis of each individual film having a separate industrial agreement with the union. There were two components: work conditions — when meal breaks should happen, ratios of pay, etc. — and the rights associated with the film. Each producer, before starting production, would tell us his problems and we would tailor an agreement around a specific situation.

To some extent, producers were a bit resentful about that — not that we took advantage of them, but they felt vulnerable in terms of being leap-frogged over. Producers also felt vulnerable in that they couldn't plan 12 or 18 months in advance. They wanted to know what our requirements would be at that time, so that they wouldn't be caught short-footed. Not unreasonable propositions, either of them.

We then started discussions and reached substantial agreement. But the producers wanted to hurry things along, and whacked in a log of claims. We had more negotiations — most of these took place around the questions of rights, as distinct from conditions — and finally the Award was incorpo rated in November 1979.

I am sure you would have heard accusations of bad faith — that we wouldn't play by the rules, and that within six months of the Award being passed we were already playing silly buggers with it. I don't think that's quite fair. The Award really resolved the conflicts and dilemmas of the past; by the time of its incorporation, the rules had changed. We are accused of bad faith because we had to respond to what we saw as a crisis. All I can say is, that for a crisis to have arisen within the first six months of the Award, the preparatory planning must have been made well before the Award was completed. And it was never raised with us.

It has been suggested that during the formulation of the Award, some producers felt they were being a carte blanche to import whomever they liked, provided they paid the penalties. Was that possibility ever discussed?

Yes, but not in an overt way. It was discussed as the question of an easing of that criterion. But what was made very clear throughout the discussion was the question of international distinction and merit was never a negotiable item.

The Award came in November 1979 for 18 months. Will it then be renegotiated?

No, that is not the way awards work. What happens is that one side serves a log of claims, and you negotiate a conclusion. What you are saying to each other is, "Let's have a truce for a certain period of time". The normal time is 12 months, but we agreed to make it 18 months. At the end of those 18 months, the truce is over, and if one side wants to change something, that's well and good. But if both parties are happy, you can let it go.

It has been alleged that your new policy contravenes the Award ...

I don't think so. I can't see where it does. We are merely looking towards a realistic interpretation of the provision in the Award, which says that artists have to be of international distinction and merit. We are looking for the genuine article.

The Award is between Equity and the Film and Television Production Association of Australia. What happens if a producer is not a member of the FTPAA?

He either becomes a member or gives us an undertaking that he will be bound by the Award. If there are some peculiarities on a particular film, a separate industrial agreement can be negotiated. I can't think of any, but one possibility is an animated film which involves only voice-over people.

What is the position of overseas producers wishing to make a film in Australia?

They would be looked at on a case-by-case basis. If you are looking at an American production coming into Australia, we are bound by the statutes of the International Federation of Actors. Whatever the terms are between the two countries involved, the higher terms should operate. Certainly, if an American producer should come to this country and want to produce something, we would ask that Screen Actors Guild rates and residuals apply.

As for the rest of it, we would have to know what kind of production we were looking at. There is not much experience of that in this country, and the nearest thing is a couple of television-type productions, like the McCloud episode shot here. We are not vastly experienced in dealing with American producers.

If an overseas producer arranges a co-production, with only minimal Australian government involvement, would he come under the new policy?

If the producer is not Australian, there would be the question of whether he is the holder of the copyright and so on. But we wouldn't think the Australian funding bodies would go into partnership with overseas corporations in terms of film production. Their role is to develop an Australian film industry, using the resources of Australians in that situation. So, I don't know what kind of examples you are thinking of.

It is conceivable that a film such as "The Blue Lagoon" could be made here, with some government involvement ... Is it?

Isn't it?

Well, let's look at The Survivor, which is an example par excellence of muddled thinking on behalf of a government corporation. Here you have SAFC money in a film that has a foreign writer, a foreign director and foreign actors. You have substantial foreign creative control in that film.

But the producer, an Australian, legally retains all the creative control, in Australia ... Words fail me when talking about that producer. I know the contracts you are talking about. That was one of the first bones of contention as a whole. The need to ask whether it should be encouraged, or should it go back to the scheme where the government corporations look after that end of things. Concluded on P. 390
At the time of “Roadgames”, each state office of Equity could give decisions as to classification or importation of an overseas actor. Apparently this situation has changed...

No. What used to happen was that negotiations were local, then there would be some international discussion and a decision conferred back. What happened on Roadgames was that the consultation between Richard Franklin and the Melbourne office was assumed to be a final answer. Franklin went away and contracted himself, and then tried to face us with a problem, saying, “I am $800,000 in debt, and if you don’t give me what I want, you are going to send me bankrupt”. That put us in an invidious position.

So, in looking at that kind of problem, we decided it would be better to issue some clear guidelines on what we are doing. Then, if somebody tries that again, they do so at their own risk.

So Melbourne could not have given Franklin the go-ahead...

Well, the consultations had not been completed internally within our organization. I think Franklin went off on his own and then faced us with a problem — the same as Tony Ginnane did on The Survivor. That’s an awesome power for the union to have, and we are very reluctant to use it.

What is the procedure now?

Much as before, in that initial consultations can take place at any one of our offices throughout Australia. We have also instigated a mechanism whereby, for a fee, we can work like that. It is quite clear that it would be totally unsatisfactory if producers thought they could play one office against another. No organization can work like that.

The Future

How do you view the future of the industry?

It seems to me that the time has come for a more intelligent debate than the one that has taken place to date. There has been a great deal of inventive thrown around, and it has tended to focus on the imports question, for very real reasons. We are now to get a broader view of where we are going in the industry. We would like to play a part in that, and there are a number of other points that need to be stated.

1. Private funds are so difficult to come by, as the producers keep saying, then we have to look at government bodies providing 100 per cent finance, both individually and collectively. So, rather than by definition, financing an economic crisis on producers — that is, by saying one can’t expect 60 per cent government finance — they can provide a solution.

2. It seems to me that government bodies should clearly establish their priorities, and that their first priority should be to fund all Australian films.

3. The relationship of the exhibitors and distributors to the industry must be examined. A limit should be set to the number of imported prints and beyond a certain number, say five, those prints should be struck in Australia. The consequent benefits to the labs would flow back into the production of the Australian films.

4. Similarly the levy that is stuck on overseas remittances should be increased and directly funnelled into the industry. This would remove the false notion of subsidization.

5. As new technology is produced, the ownership and control of segments of it should go to the public sector. The film industry should be incorporated in that part, so that the various government funding bodies get their own cable television outlets, and so on.

6. It seems to me that there ought to be a reasonable look at the relationship between the film industry and television stations, and that producers ought not be forced to sell stupendously high-rating programs for peanuts. Some private mechanism should be devised to work out what an acceptable figure is.

Would you have a prices commission examine it, or set up some sort of formula?

I am not talking about a quasi-judicial sort of organization, but rather an internal industry-based mechanism that sets a certain fee as a minimum for any sale to Australian television. The figure can then be reviewed periodically.

7. Given the substantial funds bodies like the AFC and the New South Wales Film Corporation put into shorts and experimental films, they ought to have the courage of their convictions and see it through. They should provide for the packaging of short films with Australian features for exhibition in the theatres.

8. The last point I’ll make, which will create a wonderful talking point, is that all foreign films, American included, ought to be dubbed by Australians. That involves a whole lot of concepts, including our own cultural autonomy. Let them chew that idea!

How seriously are you suggesting that?

We are suggesting it. *
New Zealand News
Continued from P.369

Ginnane, however, attributed the shift to the stand recently adopted by Actors Equity over the use of foreign actors. In a recent press statement, Ginnane said:

“Yankee Zephyr’s large budget has significant U.S. and British investment, and my intention was to import restrictions do not apply.”

Ginnane’s decision means that some 20 Australian actors and 35 imported performers in a totally privately-financed production has made this impossible.

“Accordingly, scriptwriter Evret de Roche relocated the action adventure epic in New Zealand where

Television News
Continued from P. 349

When Gygell’s term as head of the Broadcasting Tribunal ended, Kerry Packer is believed to have approached him to work for the Nine Network, but Gygell opted for the IMBC appointment. Packer, if not already, could soon be wishing he had tried harder.

Bruce Gygell

Radio Station Calls for Private Ownership of Television

Leading private radio operator and former pirate station, Hauraki Enterprises, has called for one of New Zealand’s two national radio services to be handed to private enterprise. Hauraki, which operates Radio Hauraki, holds 30 per cent of Auckland’s Radio 1, and 25 per cent of Auckland’s Radio 1.

The free enterprise bid to lease television time and provide joint AN Channel 7-Hauraki coverage, has two parts. At the two television stations.

New Series for Luck

Peter Luck has teamed with the local arm of the American Hanna-Barbera company to produce a new series of 20 documentaries titled The Australians, a follow-up to his successful This Fabulous Century programs.

The series of contemporary documentary films on Australian themes will be screened by the Seven Network, starting early next year. The network will give the 20 programs half-hour and hour episodes.

Luck explained: “We wanted to retain the ability to cover almost any positive, and not every subject has to be a full hour. So, the network has taken the plunge and agreed to buy programs of both the half-hour and hour lengths.

Each episode of The Australians is being produced on a 14-week turn-around. Each producer-director has been given the freedom to determine the scope of the subject, then is paid a salary dependent on the size of the project.

Top Ratings for Quiz Show

Since 1957, when Bob Dyer greeted viewers with a “Howdy, customers” on television’s first quiz show, Pick-a-Box, game shows have been a part of Australian television tradition.

Mike Willessee recently celebrated his fourth year at Channel Seven in the 7 p.m. timeslot with a rating figure — probably his worst in 1000 shows — but he should mean the axe for any other show.

To date, none of the other commercial networks has mounted a challenge to Sale of the Century, perhaps hoping that it will have a fall from the meteoric as its rise. But while Willessee’s initial format remains, along with the repeats of M*A*S*H on Channel 10, that’s the Catchphrase. It’s the danger.

Judy Green, Vincent Smith, Tony Barber and Simone Gardiner. Sale of the Century.

Produced and directed by David Sailer, who was also producer and

director of This Fabulous Century, the series budget is in excess of $1 million.

Cinema Papers, October-November — 391

WINNING

Prod. company | Kestrel Films
Prod. director | David Morgan
Photography | Alex McPhee
Sound | John Webster
Editor | David Morgan
Exec. producer | Kent Chadwick
Length | 24 mins

Shooting stock | Eastmancolor

First released | September 1960

SYNOPSIS: Set against a background of new core values available for the mentally handicapped people — their history and aspirations. Produced for the Health Commission.

A series of three documentaries on the effects of industrialisation on a new community. Co-produced by the Victorian Film Corporation and the Australian Broadcasting Commission for the Department of the Red Cross.

Telephone News

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Top Ratings for Quiz Show

Since 1957, when Bob Dyer greeted viewers with a “Howdy, customers” on television’s first quiz show, Pick-a-Box, game shows have been a part of Australian television tradition.

Mike Willessee recently celebrated his fourth year at Channel Seven in the 7 p.m. timeslot with a rating figure — probably his worst in 1000 shows — but he should mean the axe for any other show.

To date, none of the other commercial networks has mounted a challenge to Sale of the Century, perhaps hoping that it will have a fall from the meteoric as its rise. But while Willessee’s initial format remains, along with the repeats of M*A*S*H on Channel 10, that’s the catchphrase. It’s the danger.

Judy Green, Vincent Smith, Tony Barber and Simone Gardiner. Sale of the Century.

Produced and directed by David Sailer, who was also producer and

director of This Fabulous Century, the series budget is in excess of $1 million.

Cinema Papers, October-November — 391

WINNING

Prod. company | Kestrel Films
Prod. director | David Morgan
Photography | Alex McPhee
Sound | John Webster
Editor | David Morgan
Exec. producer | Kent Chadwick
Length | 24 mins

Shooting stock | Eastmancolor

First released | September 1960

SYNOPSIS: Set against a background of new core values available for the mentally handicapped people — their history and aspirations. Produced for the Health Commission.

A series of three documentaries on the effects of industrialisation on a new community. Co-produced by the Victorian Film Corporation and the Australian Broadcasting Commission for the Department of the Red Cross.

Telephone News

Leading private radio operator and former pirate station, Hauraki Enterprises, has called for one of New Zealand’s two national radio services to be handed to private enterprise. Hauraki, which operates Radio Hauraki, holds 30 per cent of Auckland’s Radio 1, and 25 per cent of Auckland’s Radio 1.

The free enterprise bid to lease television time and provide joint AN Channel 7-Hauraki coverage, has two parts. The free enterprise bid to lease television time and provide joint AN Channel 7-Hauraki coverage, has two parts. At the two television stations.
Cruising

Continued from P. 324

Cruising's greatest insight and its finest irony. These gays, logically, should perceive that they are a challenge to the social/sexual norm and become accordingly radicalized. Instead, they shut themselves up in a ghetto to which society is happy to relegate them and mimic the brutal and brutalizing values of that society. This seems to me a provocation that the gay community should seriously debate rather than merely deride.3

The web of associations and links which draw police and homosexuals together around the theme of power are condensed in the scene where the police, during their investigation of a suspected killer, arrange for a huge Negro strongman to suddenly burst into the room and slap the suspect (and Burns) around.

Friedkin presents the scene with no narrative explanation before or after, with the result that some have claimed it to be particularly absurd and sensationalist part of the film. But I would argue that its symbolic connotations are very rich.

The Negro, on the one hand, embodies the energies repressed by white society, shut away in ghettos like the gays. This points to a more general social repression, not just a sexual one. Equally, the Negro stands for the super-phallic, the hyper-virile male. And finally, wearing a cowboy hat, he signifies homosexuality itself, or the kind of homosexuality which identifies with the icons of phallocentric power.

But all this energy is used by the police for their own ends, transformed into a tool of social control which evokes fear and prompts submission. To dismantle this system of domination would mean dismantling all the cultural meanings and transformations upon which it depends.

Within the patriarchal structures depicted in the film, law proceeds from the Father, and the film is full of actual or symbolic fathers: Burns has Edelson as well as his own father to live up to; Richards' psychosis stems from his repressed feelings about his father. When the fabric of the social order begins to crumble, the Father's command is to eliminate whatever threatens it: Richards imagines (remembers?) his father telling him, "You know what you have to do...

In fact, the film makes it clear that Richards is literally 'not himself' when he kills - he speaks with his father's voice and is devoured by the father's aggressive drive.4

Within this context the role of Edelson is particularly complex. One might imagine him to be the principal virile father of the film, sending out his 'son' to clean up the sordid gay world. This is hardly the case. Not only can one sense a certain sympathy or even empathy on his part towards gays (evident, for example, in the way one of the harassed characters from the opening scene comes to him for appeal); more importantly, Edelson possesses none of the attributes of phallic power. Quite the contrary; he limps (classic Hollywood sign of a castrated male), and while Burns and Richards play strenuous, 'masculine' sports (body-building, football), he can only play chess and pool, and plays them on his own.

Edelson is indeed another victim of the system - the State system and the patriarchal system. He himself is subject to a 'father', his superior, who orders that the investigation be speeded up and the case closed for the sake of political gain. This demand prompts the brutal treatment of the suspect, which is essentially an attempt to elicit a confession of guilt, even if it is not true. Throughout the film, Edelson is the one who knows about the victimization of gays by policemen, but can do nothing - how could a Negro, or a Negro police officer, overcome the social barrier of being socially abnormal? Symbolically, Edelson has been castrated because he is a prisoner in a system which drains him of any genuine humanity or sexuality. He is merely a position, a role, a position he plays: 'It's only a job', and detective work is referred to as a 'body count'.

Aggression does not only run from 'normal' society to homosexuals. The film suggests a second reason for its causes: killing homosexuals is a way of killing the homosexual part of oneself. The true threat in the film is bisexuality, and all the dissolution of fixed identities that entails. The police are fascination by homosexuality as much as they actively hate it. Edelson knows everything about the gay scene as if he were an insider: the patrol cop gets sucked; and DiSimone is seen frequently in the bars - whether pretending to be gay or actually so is not made clear. But a homosexual impulse inadequately repressed leads to murder, Richards' words to each of his victims as he knifes them - "You made me do that" - seem to mean: you must die for arousing and satisfying the desire I must repress.

Burns is also, and especially, implicated in this knot of repression and aggression. A scene abruptly begins with him vigorously thrusting into Nancy, in an attempt to affirm his masculinity (his phallic) as well as his heterosexuality. But even as he does this, he wears the studded leather wristband which is part of his gay outfit; his repression is incomplete. Later he is followed out of a gay bar and propositioned - "That bulge in your pants ain't a knife" - a proof of his desire that clearly troubles him.

The backlash of aggression occurs later when he bashes in a door to get to Ted's flatmate Gregory, an act whose violence far exceeds immediate provocation. Burns resolves his identity problem only when he knifes the killer with almost as much vehemence as the killer's own victims are disposed of.

But all resolutions are thrown into doubt by the final scenes of the film. Richards is arrested, but another homosexual is found dead, and it is Ted, Burns' neighbor in the apartment block. If Gregory is the killer, a reason suggested for the murder - "a lovers' quarrel" - refers not to any inherent quality of gay relationships, but far more a defining characteristic of the dominant heterosexual pattern: mutual possessiveness between two people, with all its attendant jealousies and tensions.

If Burns, in a further unseen act of aggression against his own gay impulse, is the killer, then this throws into question everything we have assumed about the relationship between him and Ted.

Earlier in the film, Ted is presented as a 'good', normal homosexual, someone who can be tolerated by society, and who in turn respects it. Visually, he is never connected with the leather nightlife, and his physical contact with Burns extends no further than a good-buddy jab on the shoulder. But, reading back from this scene, Ted's remarks that he is "seething", and understands why people get into the leather-set, or Gregory's allusion to a time when Ted associated with 'trash', take on a new significance, casting doubts over the apparent innocence or sexuality of his involvement with Burns - and thus over Burns' reaction to his own desires.

DiSimone is present as the police search the murder scene, again suggesting that aggression can come not from individual 'madmen' but from the social order itself. Edelson also appears, again impotent in the face of the events and their significance, which he fully realizes.

Friedkin dissolves from Edelson looking at the corpse to a shot of a man, seen from the back, entering a gay bar, an almost exact duplication of the first shot of the killer mentioned above. This character is not meant to be identified. He stands for any or all of the film's possible killers.

The final scene between Burns and Nancy is remarkable: a couple, inviting two equally contradictory readings. Burns turns his gaze to the camera as, off-screen, his girlfriend approaches wearing the killer's gear. What is Burns' silent address to the camera meant to tell us: that he is about to kill her (i.e., a further aggression against both gays and women, as at the film's start)? Is the boat in the final shot about to find her body in the river? Or is it that at last fixed sexual identities have been stripped away, and that the scene celebrates the emergence of a playful, bisexual desire?

This ambiguity is not a problem. In fact, Cruising's greatest strength is that it can only be read if one is ready to question one's own assumptions - as a film viewer, and as a subject within this society. ★

3. See, for example, the dismissive comments made on the film and its possible interpretations in recent issues of the gay newspaper Campaign.

4. This offers a fascinating parallel to Psycho. At the end of Hitchcock's film, Norman Bates, 'consumed' by his mother, can do nothing; all the murders he has committed; Richards, having become his father, can make the same denial.

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little spats are patched up with shining eyes and sympathetic smiles; loneliness is relieved by a quick, clean pick-up; household chores occasion a pet and a pout, but they are soon gigging about their sex lives.

There is hardly a moment of genuine observation and it is one of those irritating films in which a woman goes to bed, wakes up and takes a bath in full and unblimmed make-up. All is chic: clothes, music, decor. And Marie-Christine Barrault, who created a Woman in a Twilight Garden with intelligence, seems to be doing a commercial for Gallic Charm. The end result is a perpetuation of women's magazines stereotypes.

More rewarding studies of two women were elsewhere. Di Drew's Tread Softly... deservedly won the Greater Union Award for Australian short films (fiction category). In warm, glowing images, it considers the situation of one woman offering love to another who can't accept it. Much of its effectiveness is due to a moving and persuasive performance by Robyn Nevin.

The gifted Dominique Sanda is one of the two women friends in Michel Deville's Le voyage en douce (Sentimental Journey). In her understated comic mode she is a pleasure to behold: teaching Lucie (Geraldine Chaplin) how to arouse a hotel waiter; stabbing a high strength weapon as if they are prized entry disposal of bodies, the film's wider and pervasive concern is with death. The hero has a nightmarish obsession with death Watch. The two strongest sequences are those which open and close the film. It begins in a deserted railway station (under-ground, of course): neon signs indicate SORTIE; one escalator moves relentlessly up and another down; a man dies with a knife in his back — "Bon voyage". It ends in a silent lake — cold, grey water; it is struck by timely lightning, cooked as if the food shortage is severe, sister-in-law plants and the insertion of mechanical ashes of poor, dead mother; and when the food shortage is severe, sister-in-law is struck by timely lightning, cooked as if by micro-wave, and ready to serve. Guess who's coming to dinner...

Bertrand Tavernier established himself in the 1970s as an important director and his films at recent festivals were striking and stimulating works by an original talent. No doubt that is why his La mort en direct (Death Watch) was selected for showing this year, and why it was anticipated with interest. It didn't live up to expectations. Indeed, it is curious how one can tell from the first few frames, as from a couple of sniffs, something is slightly 'off'.

The central idea is intriguing and disturbing and, in these days of transplants and the insertion of mechanical bits and pieces into the body, not so much a leap into science fiction as a step beyond science fact. A man has a miniature videotape camera implanted in his brain. He thus becomes a super-mobile Gatra unit and wherever he goes on tape for a television program called Death Watch which shows the last days in the lives of people who know they are going to die. Audiences get their kicks from watching people dying 'live' on the screen. It is chilling how popular such a program might be — there was one on Australian screens which fed upon the reactions of the families of car-accident victims: "How do you feel," the interviewer asks a distraught mother, "how your son is dead?"

The film takes a moral stand about the tastelessness of this invasion of privacy, and attacks the promoters who cynically exploit base instincts and the public which gratifies them. I am not so sure, though, that Death Watch isn't doing much the same kind of thing that it purports to be condemning, rather like the two so-called documentaries about porn filmmaking which disguise themselves as responsible expose in order to do what they intended all along: i.e., make a porn film. With them it is easy to spot the real motive, because it is apparent from the position of the camera. It is not so easy with Tavernier, but there is a whiff in the air.

Maybe it's the smell of money. It is a
smooth, glossy commercial product, packaged with expertise and aimed at an international market, like Peter Stuyvesant cigarettes. It has no personal conviction or individual stamp. Computerised and calculated, it smacks of a novel written by a committee. The ingredients are patronizing music, pretty scenery (Scotland), a French/German co-production, and an international cast of actors: American, Austrian, British, Swedish, French — with an inevitable assortment of accents and styles and, although the film is not dubbed, that odd sound of voices not quite belonging to the speakers. The film seems to belong nowhere and I don’t think this can be justified by saying that it is set in the near future — or that the international elements are inherent in the original story. Perhaps the real death watch is the spectre of internationalism that hovers over filmmaking.

This problem is close to home. It was discussed at a forum session which asked, “What direction for Australian cinema?” Make it international, or make it Australian? This was hotly debated and a film is more likely to have integrity if it uses largely local resources and expresses what Bob Ellis calls “a cultural exactness”.

At least Ian Barry’s The Chain Reaction is firmly rooted in an Australian context. For all that, it, too, is set in the near future and is concerned with a leakage from a nuclear plant — which could happen anywhere — but there is no mistaking where we are, geographically or socially. As well, there is some dialogue with fine ironic humor and sequences with flair and impact the search for the break in the long, underground tunnels below the plant (lit eerily by Russell Boyd); the throttling of the onlookers; and two exciting car chases staged by George Miller with mad-maximum effect.

Last year, Derek Malcolm of The Guardian suggested that the two weaknesses of Australian films are scriptwriting and directing actors, and there is some evidence of both in The Chain Reaction. Still, there is much to commend in its energy and ambition.

One of the joys of any festival is finding new subjects treated in a fresh new way. The Heartland took the audience by surprise. It was voted No. 3 in the Gold subscribers’ Best Ten. (No. 2 was Germany, Pale Mother and No. 1 was The Tin Drum.) Based upon letters written by a woman pioneer in Wyoming, it describes her life in 1910 when she worked as a housekeeper for the doziest of Scots, a farmer whom she marries for practical reasons — money is short and the winter is long. It is a harsh existence: cattle freezes, food is scarce, their baby dies. The director, Richard Pearce, says that he wanted to make, “a different kind of Western, a truer kind of Western, one that would be about struggle and isolation and real economic work, where the simplest things — things that films too often take for granted or make seem easy — would sometimes be the most difficult and hard won.”

It is a spare film that proceeds at its own careful and unhurried pace, stripping away narrative and mythical imputus, and allowing the incidents time to take their shape through the accumulation of detail. The film refuses to give easy emotional coloring through music, apart from the occasional use of a plaintive version of “What a friend we have in Jesus”, and it plays its big scene, the wedding celebration, quietly, not building it up into a Fordian set piece. There are no self-consciously beautiful compositions, yet the film is undeniably beautiful, and it is illuminated by an outstanding central performance by Conchata Ferrell as the housewife, who goes West and finds no promise of a new life except, perhaps, in the magic moment when a healer is born.

John Reid’s Middle Age Spread is not a new territory. The old ground of suburban mores has been ploughed countless times before, often enough by David Williamson. But this has a gentleness not found in Williamson (or not, anyway, until Travelling North). When the characters are knocked down, they are set on their feet again with a tender care for their dignity. That alone makes it fresh.

As well, it manages to take a stage play, highly successful in New Zealand, and make it feel more or less like a film. It helped that the play was structured like a film to start with: 19 scenes which flashed back from an ongoing dinner party. These have become 54 scenes, some of the extra ones to show the High School Deputy Principal attending to his middle-age spread and his middle-age itch by jogging through the night. But they don’t seem like mere openings-out: they intensify the humor and the pathos. Much credit for this is due to Grant Tilly, who performs for film, not stage. But whether it’s film or play, the lines are funny, and why can’t a film have got lines?

Shakespeare’s richly suggestive Titus Andronicus, The Tempest, was given, by Deon Jarman, a highly original setting in the decaying splendor of Stonleigh Abbey in Warwickshire. It was an inspired choice, the house so huge and isolated that it was admirably suited for the “other world” of The Tempest, its shabby magnificence adding to the sense of displaced royalty of Prospero and Miranda. However, the hazards of such a choice were soon clear, the temptation of shots of faces glimpsed through baroque candleabra or framed against mysterious and shadowy family portraits proving too great to resist. Consequently, though the film is a total visual delight, the coherence of the play is lost, a situation not helped by cutting the dialogue to shreds.

Prospero is for once not an ageing guru, but young-middle-aged, so that the possibility of having made the mistakes which led to his exile is completely believable, as is the mixture of benevolence and vindictiveness in his behaviour. Caliban has an interesting suggestion of former playfellow turned greedy ravishe in his dealings with the plausibly country-gauche Miranda. How, though, did Caliban, who had been taught to speak by Prospero, develop a Birmingham accent?

Replacing the masking of the original is a high camp rendering of “Stormy Weather”, danced by Busby Berkeley. The lines of sailors, which the audience seemed to find a show-stopper (perhaps because one didn’t have to tussle with coherence?) though it left me fairly lukewarm. In spite of its limitations, the film stays in the mind in a series of images: the grossly fleshy Sycorax giving suck to the adult Caliban; Ferdinand emerging bewildered from a soft-focus, dusky sea; Prospero and Ariel whispering in a Palladian doorway.

Skal vi danse forst (Shall We Dance First?) is a first feature by Danish director, Annette Olsen. She looks at adolescence in the spirit of Milos Forman and Jiri Menzel, but with a freshness of vision all her own. Susanne (Lene Gurlter), an average 16 year-old with childhood behind her and adulthood beckoning, explores the possibilities in-between. Sexually aware and testing her powers, she gets Heathcote Williams and Toyah Willcox in Derek Jarman’s The Tempest.

Bridget Armstrong, Grant Tilly and Dorothy McKegg in John Reid’s Middle Age Spread.
pregnant and has an accidental abortion. Susanne’s getting of wisdom is observed with sympathy and with comic detachment: the skinny legs and white shorts of the older man who is teased into rape keep the emotional temperature well down. The scenes between the girl and her parents (faultlessly played) are wry comments upon the generation gap and, when the gap is bridged in a boldly-held sequence in which the girl dances with her mother, the mood is touching and thoughtful.

Throughout, there is a cinematic sensuousness. Within a budding grove, young girls and flowers, gardens and grass drenched in sunlight, all is green and youth is green, it evokes a place and a time. There is nothing self-consciously Proustian about this remembrance of things past, though the details of a particular summer have the sharpness of recall induced by a madeleine. It is a matter of connection and perspective.

Coming as it did near the end of the Festival, when we were red-eyed and weary, this small, quiet comedy, bright with talent, was a timely reminder that film can replenish and delight.

John Fox

This year, the Festival highlighted a series of new documentary features, as well as a retrospective of the work of Mike Rubbo and the screening of a new print of Frank Hurley’s Pearls and Savages. Most of the documentary features were from the U.S., and most had a more-or-less overtly political theme.

Ira Wohl’s Best Boy was the most popular documentary shown. A very emotional and moving film portrait of Wohl’s retarded cousin Phillip and his family. It is difficult to be critical of Best Boy without seeming to be cold and cynical. Certainly does it not make you think about the problems of handicapped people, but not in a very constructive way.

The problem is, I feel, that Wohl is not being entirely honest when he says that he only wanted to help his cousin. In actuality he may have done the best that could have been done for Phillip. However, the film never gets past a kind of Reader’s Digest most unforgettable character-in-every-moment feel.

It is not Phillip and his family who are exploited by the camera, but some of the audience worried in the discussion after the film, but the audience itself. Wohl is so skilful at being an emotional level that one is made to forget about the need for information and analysis.

In contrast, Barbara Chobocky’s Pins and Needles is a more useful film for disabused people because it deals with the social and political aspects of their plight, as well as the private and emotional. It shows that the two are inexplicably linked.

Poto and Cabengo, by Jean-Luc Godard’s former collaborator, Jean-Pierre Gorin, was the most formidably intriguing documentary and probably one of the two or three best films shown at the Festival.

Poto and Cabengo are identical twins, living in San Diego, who became the centre of media attention when it was discovered that they may have invented their own language. The mystery of this “secret” language is explained by the bizarre nature of the family and the society in which the twins live.

The film is much more than a narrative of this discovery and, like the best of Godard, is a meditation upon the discontents of cinema and society. Gorin questions his own role as narrator and film maker, and asks us to question the conventions of documentary form and cinematic language. Poto and Cabengo’s uncertainties and tentative conclusions undermined the assumptions of Best Boy and served to highlight for me the problematic nature of that film.

Four of the documentaries dealt with overtly political subjects. The Wobblies looked at the history of the International Workers of the World in the U.S., through the recollections of those “wobblies” still alive and a lot of historical footage. Yet what was a potentially very exciting story is told in a rather pedestrian way. But, no doubt, it is an important film for Americans to see since it reminds them of a history of struggle that has been suppressed.

Nearer the experiences of a contemporary audience was The War at Home, which chronicled the anti-Vietnam war movement in the mid-Western city of Madison. The filmmakers mean Madison to stand as a microcosm of American society by starting the film with a wire story announcing that Madison had been voted by Life as the best place in the U.S. in which to live.

Like The Wobblies, The War at Home mixes the recollections of participants with extensive historical footage, it certainly succeeds in conveying the sense of why vast numbers of people grew in political awareness as a result of their opposition to the war. But its linear approach to history is its biggest weakness, since it fails to show how the lessons of the anti-war movement were used in other struggles. For example, we are never told how one of the student leaders who figures prominently in the film came to be Mayor of Madison.

Although not very well made, Joan Harvey’s film about Three Mile Island, We are the Guineau Pigs, is one of the most effective anti-nuclear films I have seen. It is a perfect example of how the strength of the content can override deficiencies of construction. Mainly composed of interviews with anti-nuclear scientists, government officials and local residents, it effectively shows the awesome ramifications of an accident that still continues. Anyone who sees the film will find it difficult to take seriously aspects of alienation under advanced capitalism, though neither took a politically-partisan stance.

Stefan Jarl’s Ett anständigt liv (A Respectable Life) took the subjects of his earlier film Dom kallar oss mods (They Call Us Mods) and showed them 12 years later. The naive rebelliousness of the working-class youth has now been replaced by pain and despair of heroin addiction.

The film is very graphic in its presentation of the realities of addiction, but it is not simply about this addiction. Parallels are drawn between heroin and the more socially-acceptable alcoholism of the previous generation. Jarl is obviously very angry about what he sees as a deeply-seated malaise in Swedish society and wants to shock his audience into thinking about the lives of the people in the film.

A Respectable Life is also unwatchable, because so much of it has obviously been re-created for the camera. But there are few moments when one does not think the film is an honest representation of the lives of these people.

Monarch, from West Germany, begins as a seemingly light-hearted portrait of a man who makes his living by winning jackpots of poker machines. He appears to have found the ideal way to make a living and is the envy of those who still have to work.

As the film progresses it becomes bleaker, and we realize that he still remains firmly tied to the consumer ethic and that he has to work harder and harder to keep ahead, since the machines that he knows how to crack are slowly going off the market.

Worth mentioning is D. A. Pennebaker’s Town Bloody Hall. Coming so long after the event which it records, it now assumes the role of a curious historical document. It is, in fact, a kind of ethnographic film about an exotic and preposterous ritual that could only be performed by the New York Jewish intelligentsia.

Finally, there is Brian McKenzie’s excellent Winters Harvest, winner of the Rouben Mamoulian Award. This film reminded me of Frederick Wiseman at his best in the subtlety of its construction. It is one of the more original documentaries to have come out of Australia for some time. It was unfortunate that the bulk of the Festival audience was denied the opportunity of seeing all except the most sensational scene on the closing night of the Festival, when the award was presented.

Ira Wohl’s portrait of his retarded cousin Phillip, Best Boy.

There were only two documentaries from Europe, but both of these examined the eviscerating rationalizations of those who talk of the “safety” of nuclear power.

Allan Frankovich’s mammoth three-hour film on the CIA, On Company Business, at times seemed about to collapse under the sheer weight of information it contained. What mattered in the end was not the detail but the examination of the methodology of the CIA, and the perverted priorities of American foreign policy. The early history of the CIA in Europe is shown, but the main focus is upon Latin America and Africa. The already well-traversed history of the coup in Chile is complemented by an examination of the 1964 coup in Brazil, the Bay of Pigs, Angola and CIA-sponsored torture squads in Uruguay.

Exhaustively researched, the interviews with “stars”, such as Philip Agee and Victor Marchetti, are supported by the evidence of other company men: directors, agents and ambassadors. Seen in isolation, each case could appear an aberration. When taken together they amount to a convincing condemnation of the U.S. as the prime offender against human rights in the Third World.

D. A. Pennebaker’s Town Bloody Hall, an “ethnographic film about an exotic and preposterous ritual.
The Treasurer also said (so far as "it is of note that a number of these amount of the loan, of nominal value. any, income will be received or the recourse' loan. This is a loan in respect of which the lender has no recourse beyond particular income or particular assets of the borrower. "Needless to say, the schemes are structured on the basis that little, if any, income will be received or the assets will be, in comparison with the amount of the loan, of nominal value. "To the extent that the loan is for these reasons not repaid, the taxpayer effectively recovers his or her claimed outlay. "The following are simplified examples of the latest recoupment-type schemes against which the Government is acting: Film Investment Schemes "A tax-exempt body claims funds — funds that it would otherwise have invested directly — into a film through a non-recourse loan made to a partnership of taxable investors. The partners contribute a relatively small amount from their own resources and that amount, as 'geared up' by the loan, is, expanded by them and sought as a deduction. "Gearing of 3 or 4 to 1 is common with the result that each investor seeks tax deductions of up to $5 for each $1 funded from his or her own resources. "Any income from the film is shared among the various participants. The taxable partners are not entitled to income from overseas exhibition of the film and their effective profit share arising from local exhibition is based simply on their personal contributions. "Correspondingly, [a] tax-exempt body's effective profit share is calculated as if the amount lent to the partners had been risk capital contributed by it, as in reality it is. "Should the partners receive income totalling more than their personal contribution the excess would be earmarked for repayment of the loan. The terms of the loan are such that, otherwise, it does not have to be repaid. "A producer enters into an agreement with a promoter to pay the promoter, by way of a procurement fee, 64 per cent of all amounts received from investors introduced by the promoter. The promoter then introduces a partnership of investors who engage the producer to produce and market films on their behalf for a fee of $1 million. "Of that amount, only $150,000 is contributed personally by the partners, the remaining $850,000 being provided by way of a non-recourse loan from a company associated with the promoter. "The $840,000 procurement fee is attributed by the production company as a tax-deductible cost of producing the film and is paid to the promoter. "Any income derived from the film in the first year is minimal so that when interest on the loan falls due the partnership, as arranged defaults and this causes the rights in the film to be transferred to the lender, thereby extinguishing the debt. "An associate of a promoter acquires a copyright in a film and disposes of it to an investor for an inflated price. The investor personally contributes 15 per cent only of the purchase price and the balance is left to be paid at a later date. The full purchase price is claimed to be deductible. "The investor then assigns rights to 85 per cent of the income to a finance company associated with the promoter which, in consideration of the assignment, agree to pay the investor's outstanding debt. "The Treasurer indicated that there would be no deduction at all in such cases. Clearly, the Government has taken a very broad axe to what it regards as tax avoidance, and there are complaints from within the industry that "legitimate" investment has been penalized along with the artificial schemes. The point is made that the type of non-recourse loans involved in such legitimate investment involved tax deferral rather than tax avoidance. The most serious problem for producers is that the Government has not yet tabled any legislation to implement the proposed amendments, and it is not known when it will be tabled. People with venture capital are staying away from investment in films until they see what the legislation says. Consequently, the climate is very bleak for raising production money. Stop press: On September 26, after a meeting with an eight-member delegation, Howard told the press he would re-examine tax laws as relevant to film. More next issue. YUGOSLAV FILMS The Ambassador for Yugoslavia, Mr Aleksandar Sokorac, has deposited a collection of about 20 Yugoslavian films in the National Library of Australia's film lending section. Of these, one deals with the life of the former President of Yugoslavia, Marshal Tito; it was completed shortly before Tito's death in May. Another presents a view of the summit conference of non-aligned countries, held in Cuba in September, 1979. The remaining films, mostly documentaries on themes ranging from architecture to travel, include two or three cartoons from the famous animated film studies in Zagreb. Most of the films are in color and have commentaries in English. AFI STAFF Les Rabinowicz has been appointed the manager of the National Film Theatre, replacing Verina Glassner who is returning to Britain. Keith Lumley, formerly company secretary for J. C. Williamson's Pty Ltd, is the AFI's new business manager. ADDENDA AND CORRIGENDA In the credits for Dirt Cheap on p. 283 of the last issue, the film was referred to as "an Equitable Survival", an inaccuracy appears in the paragraph dealing with house expense figures. The example given is, in fact, only one of a number of possible exhibition-distribution deals. A film can, under some arrangements, earn film hire even if the weekly box-office gross is less than the house expense figure. Breaker Morant is one film on such a deal, though it is in the fortunate position of having a weekly gross that will exceed the house expense figure. The introduction to the interview with Bob Gosford (No. 28, p. 230) refers to Godfrey's presence at the Melbourne Film Festival, but not at the Sydney Film Festival. The SFF director, David Stratton, points out that Godfrey's visit was a SFF initiative and that the lack of mention of the SFF's involvement.
of those characters in other Crombie films who are victims of socially-sanctioned male manipulation (unlike the heroinics of Caddie and Child, however, they remain relatively passive).

From this clumsy courtroom scene, Slippery Slide moves into the present. Two of the children (the third has died) are now teenagers living near each other in one of Welfare-appointed foster-parents. The film’s protagonist, Steve Cameron (Simon Burke), is an outgoing, bright high-school student living with a middle-aged, middle-class couple he affectionately calls “Mum” and “Dad”. He soon has reason to distance himself from this relationship when the foster-mother puts her elderly father in the boy’s room.

From that point, Steve’s relationship with his foster-parents rapidly dissolves — so completely, in fact, that a lecture the new Welfare officer, David Wilding (John Waters) reads to the foster-mother about the damage done to the boy’s psyche is already being overtaken by events: the foster-parents no longer want Steve in their home.

The howler here is in Crombie’s attempt to establish the officer’s humanitarian bona fides, significant in his subsequent struggles to temper the bureaucracy’s less-than-flexible attitude towards its wards.

Steve is steered to a Welfare home, but deencapsulated in a search of his natural father. More disappointment follows: the father turns out to be not the successful professional fisherman he purports, but a pipe-dreaming barfly.

Steve next harbors hopes of living with his real mother, and is encouraged in this by Alana (Arkie Whiteley) and Wilding. But although his mother welcomes him, she has started a new family — and her de-facto husband won’t have Steve at any price. The downward spiral continues when Alana enlist’s Steve’s help in a shop-breaking bid: the burglary is bungled ludicrously and Steve lands in a detention centre.

This sequence is stiffly unconvincing, comprising unfavourably with a final confrontation between Steve and the foster-parents. In the latter scene, Crombie unexpectedly abandons deadpan realism for a minute of comic hyperbole which, though out of kilter with the film’s general tone, works far better than it has any right to.

Crombie again shifts gears emotionally at the end, when Steve delivers a dejection monologue directly into the camera. By this time, Steve is in jail — where he has been heading from the beginning. He is in a situation by way of a violent assault on Alana’s boyfriend for violating the only piece of didactic fiction by any Australian filmmaker.

Slippery Slide is in some way behind this, less in technique than in certainty of purpose (the subject matter, it should be said, is broader and less readily defined), but there are times when one is frankly unsure of what Crombie is driving at.

What are we to make, for instance, of the foster-parents, who may be accused of starting Steve down his Slippery Slide? They are shallow, petit-bourgeois folk who give Steve a home because they feel a responsibility to the community, but drop him when he most needs sympathy and understanding. (One never meets Alana’s foster-parents, dismissed as being unapproachable and “religious”.)

is Crombie suggesting that the most resolute, stable families should undertake to foster wards of the state (a not unreasonable proposition), or is he condemning the whole concept of fostering as doing more harm than good? (Few people in the film show any sympathy for Steve’s plight, and the briefly-glimpsed Welfare ‘home’ is almost as impersonal as the detention centre itself?)

If this pricks the mass television audience, it may be because it is the aura of sweet reason that permeates the film. Steve (Simon Burke) nurses the baby as Alana (Arkie Whiteley) talks to Welfare officer David Wilding (John Waters). Don Crombie’s Slippery Slide.

Truffaut is inescapable, though this modest little tele-feature scarcely aspires to such lofty comparison. It is perhaps best measured against Crombie’s Do I Have to Kill My Child, which would rate as the most effective piece of didactic fiction by any Australian filmmaker.

Slippery Slide is on firmer ground in contrasting the concerned practicality of the field worker with the divided concerns of the desk-bound bureaucracy, pointing up an unfortunate dichotomy that rebounds on the department’s charges.

Crombie elicits good results from Simon Burke in conveying Steve’s eroding confidence and from Waters in suggesting the frustration of the well-intentioned Welfare officer. Arkie Whiteley’s Alana is less persuasive, but the role is tritely drawn (some of her lines border on soap).

The Victorian Do Not Pass Go began as a training film for Welfare officers. It deals with a young man appearing in it acts out his or her real-life role (naturally enough, they are usually seen in the wrong). For all its self-imposed limitations, Slippy Slide works far better than its American counterpart.

The film’s most illuminating passages are those in which the two young people are admitted to their respective youth training centres. In the first instance, Margie has been convicted, but she might as well have been. One feels here that the system reveals a little more of itself than it intends to, or perhaps understands.

Margie is sent to live in a departmental hostel for 12 months and the film does not allow the reader to be present when her parole terms have elapsed.

Here the narrative becomes economically terse, though not at the expense of intelligibility. We next see a pregnant Margie arguing with Steve about the money he needs to supply his heroin addiction (acquired in the training centre)

Caught breaking into a chemist shop, he is gaoled (“You have failed to learn your lesson”, says the Bench this time). The Bench this time) is an accusing, quietly angry film and so is Slippery Slide.

Neither is at all explicit in its accusations, nor do they propose remedies. Both end on a defeatist note, albeit a challenging one, confronting society with a failure of its institutions and, more importantly, of its humanity.

If this pricks the mass television audience, it must be said that both films are rated qualified successes.

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