Cinema Papers #50 February-March 1985

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Publisher
Cinema Papers Pty Ltd, Richmond, 100p

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Pacific International Media Market

Nick Roddick reports:

On the drawing board for what its organizers describe as "20 nerve-racking months" and extensively publicized in the world trade press, the Pacific International Media Market (PIMM) opened at Melbourne's Regent Hotel on Tuesday 22 January, running through the week. By the time of PIMM's opening, an estimated 300 participants, buyers and sellers were expected to be in attendance... By Friday, PIMM's first day, the doubled-up audience of over 400 buyers and sellers greet one another with regular market-goers. "This is a very quiet by major market standards: a couple of people, a hand speech of the AFC's chairman, Philip Adams — "We fully expect the Regent Hotel to challenge the Carlton Collins Street to rival the Croisette and the Yarra River to submerge the South of France..." Anyway, whatever business is done this year will be record business!" — seemed to carry an unintentional irony.

The AFC, of course, had contributed in mid-1984 an extra $50,000 to supplement Film Victoria's $10,000 feasibility grant, $30,000 of which was intended to subsidize buyers' accommodation. By the second day, business was fairly brisk in certain areas, notably television. By the second day, business was fairly brisk in certain areas, notably television. Mr. Sargent, whose review of Melvin, Son of Alvin appears in this issue of Cinema Papers and was written shortly before his death, was also a contributor to Filmnews and The Sydney Morning Herald.

Since March 1984, Sargent was an administrator at the Sydney Filmmakers Co-operative and has been an active worker for independent film production in Australia. He was one of the organizers of Independent Film and Video Action, a group established to promote the wider use of local independent films as part of the National Association of Independent Film and Video Workers. His death was the result of a cardiac arrest and was a shock to many people in the film community in Sydney and Melbourne.

St Kilda Film Festival

Nigel Bews reports:

While the contribution of most local councils to matters cultural amounts to keeping the local library open and weeding the floral clock, St Kilda has the St Kilda Film Festival as part of its annual St Kilda Festival. Inaugurated last year, principally by broadcaster, film buff and one-time councilor Mary-Lou Jeffar, the emphasis was on local short films: an opportunity to catch up on all those productions one had heard or read about but hadn't managed to see.

Last year's line-up included a strong sampling from recent Swinburne productions and several impressive films from resident St Kilda filmmakers. Attendances were so encouraging the council has decided to make it an annual event running four days, this year from Thursday 21 to Sunday 24 March. The venue is again the National Theatre in Barkly Street which used to screen part of the Melbourne Film Festival.

The importance to independent filmmakers of a well-organized presentation like this cannot be overstated. It helps provide that context without which the independent approach is hard pressed to survive. It gives meaning to their willful insularity, those long hours of toil and, of course, the costs involved.

The Australian Film and Television School's (AFTS) program suggests that the Class of '83 was probably their strongest year yet. It's A Living (Laurie Kirkwood) is a day in the life of a Sydney cabby, delightfully scripted and springed with rewarding moments. For moments of another kind, the whimsical Passionless Moments (Jane Campion and Gerard Lee) has the viewer observing fragments of people's lives which manage to be at once both meaningless yet charged with significance.

Fear of Life (Sally Bongers) expresses the way one's fear of life is and should be in a film that is slow and surreal but in which every frame speaks. Industrial City (Gary Kildea) is even stronger, with its bleak presentation of the Australian urban landscape. Two short narratives, Getting Wet (Paul Hogan) and A Girl's Own Story (Jane Campion), complete the AFTS program and are both excellent examples of low-budget films.

Gary Kildea's taxying Celso and Cora is a cinéma vérité film about a young family scratching a living in the back streets of Manila. It moves along at a quiet pace, not gathering any real momentum until the very end. With an unflinching camera and heartfelt compassion it makes most other documentary contemporaries trivial.

The support to Celso and Cora is one of the most interesting short films to come from New Zealand in recent years. The Little Queen (Peter Wells) is, at face value, a rather slight historical evocation of early young Queen Elizabeth was touring her Dominions. But, as the film progresses, one is drawn into a strange, dream-like world of memories and fantasy, laced with an almost subversive mockery of conservative provincial values.

From Swinburne comes another batch of films, all remarkable achievements given the traditionally meagre budgets. Outstanding productions in terms of their wit and style are the wildly up-front Father Keith Nink (Mark Hanlin) which relates the disasters which befall a certain boody priest, and Tarzan's South Yarra Adventure (Ray Boseley) wherein the Lord of the Jungle is catapulted through time and space to discover sex, drugs, rock and roll, and the beautiful people of South Yarra.

Space doesn't allow further descriptions of the film delights packed into this four days of festival. Suffice to say it provides an unrepeatable chance to catch up on current filmmaking developments. Negotiations are afoot to mount a program of Ben (The Dunera Boys) Lewin's earlier productions, particularly his popular contribution to Channel 9's Migrants Experience series and the bizarre Case of Cruelty to Prawns. Lewin, of course, is a St Kilda resident and should be...
Oblivity

Sam Peckinpah

"When I was a kid I grew up with those people (his family) living among my uncle. Sitting around a dining room table talking about law and order, truth and justice, on a very big in our family, I suppose I felt like an outsider, and I started to question them. I guess I'm still questioning." - Sam Peckinpah

Obituary

Sam Peckinpah's death last year, at the age of 58, caused little, if any, ripple through the cinema-going public's consciousness or, for that matter, much of the critical fraternity. For many, Peckinpah will be remembered as a filmmaker whose work was consistent in vision and idea. Peckinpah's career reveals a threefold progression from theatre to television and to film. Born in Madera, California, Peckinpah studied at the University of Southern California which led to work as an actor and director in the theatre. This early experience allowed Peckinpah to move into television work, for which he created the Riflemann and The Westerner series, as well as contributing as writer, director, and producer to innumerable other television series. His career began as a dialogue director and he was submerged as a sort of black hole. Notable is his significant contribution to the script rewrite of Don Siegel's Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1956), in which he also appeared as an actor. In 1961, he directed his first film, The Deadly Companions, a Western.

From this point, Peckinpah's unique artistic temperament found continual expression in the revisionist Western. His second feature, Ride the High Country, in some ways marks the beginnings of the revisionist Western, as the use of psychology overplotting is part of itself. Major Dundee might have been Peckinpah's most ambitious film, but it was not for cuts made by the studio which reduced it to a tattered epic about national identity in the civil war years in the U.S. The violent complications for violent individuals looking for something - the director, Peckinpah's most sustained statement on the dialectical nature of violence within his work. However, once again, it brought forth from critics accusations of excessive violence, misogyny and a reactionary politics. This film represents, in many ways, the peak of Peckinpah's artistic achievements, aesthetically and philosophically.

After this period, there was a noticeable decline in Peckinpah's output; films such as Convoy, Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia and Manhunter do not achieve the director's previous creative heights. This last film contains, apart from a review of Warren Oates' definitive performance for the director, Peckinpah's most sustained statement on the dialectical nature of violence within his work. However, once again, it brought forth from critics accusations of excessive violence, misogyny and a reactionary politics. This film represents, in many ways, the peak of Peckinpah's artistic achievements, aesthetically and philosophically.

It has been said that Peckinpah's spiritual home was the American-Mexican border; it is little wonder then that his films have been shown (he was due to appear in several countries in various guises). Peckinpah's vision of the modern Western was surely equal to John Ford's vision of the classic Western. His contribution to the genre will certify a place for Peckinpah within his history.

Peckinpah's collected works reveal a vision which is both in imagery and themes. His films are also minor masterpieces of shot-structure and editing. Peckinpah's career was fraught by factors powerful enough to disillusion the strongest of filmmakers, but he never renounced his vision and his love of film. If he were to have answered his critics, he would have surely repeated the "classic" words of the Bo Hopkins character in The Wild Bunch: "Why don't you kiss my sister's black cat's ass." It may offend some people, but he would have loved it.

Peter Lawrence Rolando Caputo

Filmmography

1951 The Deadly Companions
1956 Ride the High Country
1965 Major Dundee
1967 The Wild Bunch
1970 The Ballad of Cable Hogue
1971 Straw Dogs
1972 The Getaway
1974 Junior Bonner
1975 Pat Garrett and Billy the Kid
1979 Bring Me the Head of Alfredo Garcia
1979 The Killer
1977 Cross of Iron
1978 Convoy
1982 Jinxed
1983 The Osterman Weekend

"American directors have a gift for the kind of simplicity which brings depth — in a little Western like Ride The High Country — for instance. If one tries to do that in France one looks like an intellectual." — Jean-Luc Godard

"Don Siegel really got me started and taught me that if you were to have answered my critics, he would have surely repeated the "classic" words of the Bo Hopkins character in The Wild Bunch: "Why don't you kiss my sister's black cat's ass." It may offend some people, but he would have loved it."

Peter Lawrence Rolando Caputo
The Boy Who Had Everything is Stephen Wallace’s second feature. It is the story of John (Jason Connery), an 18-year-old boy whose glamorous looks and social affluence mask a desperate need for self-expression and assertion of his identity. Set against the tyrannical ‘fresher’ system of a conservative university college, a metaphor in itself of the Menzies Era, John’s conflict is placed on the threshold of the far-reaching social changes of the mid-to-late 1960s.

Before making his first feature, Stir, in 1980, Wallace was probably best known for The Love Letters from Teralba Road (1977), which he directed and scripted. He has also directed Conman Harry (1979), Captives of Care, which won the short fiction film category of the 1981 Australian Film Institute Awards, and an episode of Women of the Sun (1983). Most recently, he directed Mail-Order Bride (1984) for the ABC and the yet-to-be-screened Future Quest for the “Winners” series, produced by the Australian Children’s Television Foundation. His current project is as director on For Love Alone for producer Margaret Fink.

Though critically acclaimed, Wallace’s films have not enjoyed the wide-ranging acceptance they deserve, partly the result of the tough and confronting subject-matter his work has encompassed, and a raw, gritty filmic style. It is a situation which he hopes to change with The Boy Who Had Everything. At the same time, he maintains an uncompro- mising desire to work only on projects to which he is personally committed.

Unlike “Stir” and “Mail-Order Bride”, “The Boy Who Had Everything” has been scripted by yourself. How do you prefer to work?

I am quite happy to do both. I developed Stir very much with the writer [Bob Jewson], so I felt very close to that, and I liked the subject matter of Mail-Order Bride. I wrote The Love Letters From Teralba Road myself and that worked out well.

I have wanted to make The Boy for a long time; in fact, I had to make it. In general, in writing my own film scripts, I am exploring my own experiences; I would like to take that further, but I might need a writer to help me. But I do get excited about other people’s scripts when they seem right for me.

Is it coincidental that your films open with the audience’s being thrown head-first into a crisis: bashings in “Stir”, Len’s (Bryan Brown) violence in “Love Letters”, bastardization in “The Boy”...

That is something I am not conscious of. I am aware, however, that I seem to be drawn to situations in which people are trying to break free from something. In The Boy, John has to break free from himself; in Stir, they try to break up the prison; in Love Letters, Len tries to break free of the trap he is in. Perhaps there is a need to set up the main conflict early on.

In all your films the characters reach a breaking point...

When people are under stress they are pushed to breaking point. That seems to me to be the most interesting part of any drama, of anybody’s life: to be under stress and to see how one reacts.

How autobiographical are the situations in “The Boy”?

The feeling is autobiographical, which is why I wanted to make it, but most of the details aren’t. It conveys a feeling I had, and I know a lot of people had, about being at school and college. I found it difficult to cope, as did the guys around me, and I wanted to explore that. But, unlike John, I never quit college, had divorced parents or excelled as an athlete. The scenes with John’s parents have some autobiographical basis, but not in specific detail. The prostitute scenes are more autobiographical...

The script for The Boy started out being much different, much more austere. It wasn’t set in college and the boy was older — he was about 28 and was looking back...
Stephen Wallace

There is even mention in the film of the fresher system's producing national leaders . . .

Yes. The lines may sound a bit bald in the film, but they were actually said to me: "We are the top two-and-a-half percent; we are the leaders of the nation." I didn't think that was true, but the senior students at college seemed to think it was.

To what extent are the characters in "The Boy" the product of a specific social, economic and institutionalized situation?

At the Greater Public School I went to you were pushed around. There was a sense that you had to do things even if you didn't agree with them. You had to play sport, you had to be in the Cadet Corps, and you were persecuted if you didn't, or if you tried to challenge things. We were all well brought up boys, with parents with money, and we didn't question the system.

The hardest problem for me always has been to say what I feel, and a lot of boys growing up in those institutions later find it very hard to say what they feel because they have been trained not to believe that what they feel is authentic.

What I tried to show in the film is what these institutions do to people: for instance, the revering of institutions, as John's mother (Diane Cilento) does. I was trying to suggest, though I admit it is not very clear, that his mother is working-class, and she is pushing him on. While you can understand why she is doing it, in the end it has a price: he loses his spontaneity.

There is a constant sense of movement in John's plight, and he belongs to none of the various locales in which he is seen . . .

I intended him to be bewildered by the things going on inside himself. The only thing he can do to express himself is to pace restlessly, wandering, looking for a way out, looking to see if some experience can change him. To go somewhere totally against his background, to go to prostitutes, was the most rebellious thing he could do. But he never feels he belongs. It is that Artaud feeling of "I'm not quite myself" — a schizophrenic feeling, I guess. He can't say what he feels, be angry or upset. So he just feels alienated.

There is a way in which you frame close-ups which suggests a claustrophobic sense of insularity: the scenes in which John visits the prostitute, and in which he pushes the other boy through the window . . .

When you are 18 and have been brought up in a protected way, you don't know how to handle situations of confrontation, and it does become claustrophobic. I would say the same of going to prostitutes. It is a strange world of people who seem to know what they are doing and how the world runs. But you have no idea how to cope with them, especially when they get a bit aggressive.

Through the character of Cummerford (Nique Needles) one gets a sense of the things that are happening in college as being harmless fun, and of it being worthwhile in the long run . . .

Maybe, but Cummerford is an apparent rebel. There was a lot of those at college, who looked like rebels, but, to a certain degree, whose type of rebellion was accepted and tolerated. Some people need college — it can become a substitute for discipline, for fatherly discipline — and they get a lot out of it. Cummerford needs it, he admits it, and he does accept it as harmless fun but John can't.

John is the real rebel but his rebellion isn't overt. It isn't a game for him, it is part of his being. What is hard for John is that he has to leave; he has to make his
own choice; he has to realize that colleges are not all good or all bad, that he could be making a mistake.

Did you ever consider resolving John's predicament by having him stay at college and learning to accept the system?

That was a real possibility and is probably what happens in the majority of cases. In fact, that was the ending in some drafts of the script, but it just didn't work; it was too much of a defeat. I couldn't find a way of making that ending work; another writer or director might have been able to, but I couldn't.

John's sporting career, however, has a less-than-intrinsic value to the film's narrative . . .

The race sequences were always a problem. In a way, I wanted the final mile race to be unimportant, a minor event in the film, but that was impossible commercially. In any case, the race is important to the 'image' of John as a winner. I am not sure how intrinsic it is; it seemed necessary at the time.

Why did you choose Jason Connery and Diane Cilento, who are in real life mother and son, for the leading roles?

We chose Jason because, although there were a number of Australian actors, and one in particular, who could have acted the part, we couldn't find anyone who looked the glamorous boy. I always wanted someone who looked like the heroes I had known at school — the image of someone who appeared to have everything: good looks, physical fitness, etc. — and who could get beneath the surface of that. And Jason looked the part more than anyone I could find here.

Diane is the actress who most excited me in the role, although she wasn't exactly how I had pictured the character. She came in eventually because Jason was in it. But we would have used Jason without her and vice-versa.

The character of the mother is quite unsettling. There is something very sad but real about her predicament. What does she typify for you?

She represents a schizophrenic attitude and, in a way, society. On the one hand, she is very loving and nurturing; on the other, she is absolutely damming and destructive. And it is all instinctive; she can't help it. Like society, she is giving her son two messages all the time: "I love you, but at the same time I hate you because you are like your father." Our society often sends out the message: "Be legal and honest but cheat if you get the chance" — a similar conflict of messages.

The mother-son relationship is quite confronting. How difficult was it for the actors and yourself?

The mother sees her son not just as a husband substitute, but also as a protector. He wants to please her desperately, which is why he becomes a child; he doesn't want to confront her. In the end, he tries to confront her and be himself with her because he can no longer be a child if he wants to be himself. He has to break the kind of being the "good, successful son", of being seen only in those terms.

The actors understood this. Diane always felt it was a problem to make their relationship palatable, to make it work. The only thing we could do was to make it strong. To make it more soft, to weaken it, would have destroyed the reasons for making the film. I know it is tough, but that is the only way I could personally do it.

All of your films, until this one, have concentrated on characters who have come from poor, working-class backgrounds. It is a marked difference in "The Boy" that the characters and situations stem from the upper echelons of society. Nonetheless, there is a similar sense of constraint and frustration amongst the characters . . .

I suppose so. I hadn't noticed that. I am not at all working class. I was brought up middle class though my parents came from poor backgrounds. We were always well off, but we never identified with any "class". I never thought of that much until I started making films, and I started realizing that, whatever the class, there is an element with which a lot of people are trying to deal in Australia, a problem of being restrained and of not letting emotions out. That seemed to be a key to approaching Australian characters. I believe now that it is bad to be so restrained. People need to be more emotional, more honest and open, whatever their background.

There is a poignant reference to that trait in the film, when John's mother tells him that his father hated outward displays. Throughout "Mail-Order Bride", too, there is a sense of embarrassment when either Ampy (Charito Ortez) or Kevin (Ray Meagher) try to show affection publicly . . .

In Australia, there was a strong work ethic in the 1950s and '60s. It is a cliche now, but it really was true that men were brought up to be a strong symbol, an image. At the school I went to, and at St Andrew's College, University of
Sydney, there was also a strong image of the way you had to grow up, and I believed in that image. It was that of the strong, independent male, who knew the world for what it was; who knew about "women" somehow instantaneously; and who was a good fellow: got on with his mates, didn't make a fuss and didn't challenge authority.

But it didn't work because it ignored vast areas of men's personalities. Softness and gentle emotions in a man were taboo; respect for women was taboo; saying what you felt was taboo. No one supported the idea that you could be a "man", be "masculine", and yet be gentle.

Men in Australia seem to be changing this image now — witness Kim Hughes and Bob Hawke. Mind you, I think Australian men were always emotional, they are just letting it show more.

In "Mail-Order Bride", there is a division between the male group and Kevin when it comes to his defence of Ampy. Rather than a source of identity, male mateship is presented as a conflict which paradoxically denies its members a real identity . . .

In the pub, mateship is very conditional, almost threatening. It is a threat if you try to pull out of it, or if you try to be anything they don't accept. They have to prop each other up. When Kevin gets Ampy pregnant and asserts that he really wants Ampy and wants to build a home, Tommo (Paul Sonkila) has to break it. He has to do something because the group 'mateship' is being undermined.

A lot of people have criticized the character of Kevin; saying that he is unreal. I cannot believe people don't know that type; he is everywhere. I worked very closely with Ray Meagher on that; he was adamant about the reality of that character and so was I.

Would it have been possible to make "Mail-Order Bride" outside the ABC?

Absolutely not. The film is too raw for commercial cinema. I am glad the ABC is trying to do that sort of thing, because it is the only place it is ever going to be seen.

You are again working on something for television . . .

Yes, Quest Beyond Time, for the Australian Children's Television Foundation. It has a very good script by Tony Morphett and is set 400 years in the future. It is totally different to anything I have done, because it is an action-adventure story, about a boy who goes into the future, meets a young girl and goes on a quest with her. We had enormous problems with the weather and I am not sure how the film is going to turn out.

How important is it for you to work for television?

I have a feeling I am drifting more towards splitting my time 50-50 between television and cinema. But I like the idea of people going to cinemas. Somehow features seem to be more significant; they create a bigger impact in the end. But a filmmaker today can't ignore television. It is where a lot of the money is and it is where you get an audience. If one is wanting to explore the life that we are living, maybe television is a better way of doing it than the cinema. But cinema is my first love and where I would prefer to work.

In terms of your career, have there been many slumps between getting projects off the ground?

Yes. It was a difficult period before Stir because I was trying to get that going for two years. After Stir, the offers didn't exactly pour in, and what came in was mainly for television. In 1982-83, For Love Alone fell through, then The Boy fell through. I basically had nothing to do. I was offered some film scripts I didn't consider to be very good, and which I am sure would have destroyed me, and them, had I got involved.

You obviously enjoyed that era of filmmaking when it was possible to make short features entirely on AFC funds. How has the economic changes of the past few years affected your career?

Profoundly. I still made The Boy, but in some ways I made a compromise with it. I tried to make it in a commercial way, which in the old days I wouldn't have done. I am very conscious of making films which audiences are going to want to see, but still trying to keep honest. I have had to realize that unless people come and see my films I am not going to survive. But I am conscious also that if I just make any old sort of film, and not care what the content is, I will lose interest. I would rather work in a post office than do that. I want to make films that are relevant to my life, because if they are relevant to my life they may be relevant to other people's. But I know I have to make films that are more appealing to general audiences, and there is a dilemma there.

How conscious are you of the locations and design in your films?

More and more so. I am getting very concerned about locations and set design because they are such a powerful part of a film. Art
direction is the look, the feel, that comes across irrespective of the script: it is like an extra story being told, and it has to be accurate and reflective. I have always felt that art direction was my weak point. It has taken a while, but now I feel much more confident.

Nonetheless, it is an area that some would say is very strong in your films . . .

Maybe, but I have always felt I don’t concentrate on it enough.

The interiors in “The Boy” have a very British feel. How conscious were you of that?

Those colleges are very British. When we shot the film I felt it to be an accurate portrayal of college life in Australia. But it does come out as British. I am not going to apologize for our Anglo-Saxon background.

In terms of camera technique, “Love Letters” and “Mail-Order Bride” had some elaborately constructed shots, which allowed you to cover scenes in continuous takes, rather than the ‘classic’ manner of covering a scene and cutting it together in the editing room . . .

I tried to experiment in Mail-Order Bride. I don’t want to lapse into what I see a lot of other filmmakers doing, which is the classic way of covering a scene, and which, I admit, I have done a lot of myself. Now I would prefer to go with my instincts, rather than cover it safely. In the end, it makes for a more dynamic film. But one has to be careful; it can backfire and one can end up with an uncontrolled mess.

Were you as adventurous working on “The Boy” as you might have hoped?

I wanted to make sure it looked good — and neither the crew nor the producers in any way inhibited me — and I wanted to make sure I got the message across clearly. I didn’t worry about being technically smart. I was a bit like that on Love Letters. Watching The Boy now, I realize I could have made a stylistically bolder film. But I am happy enough.

I have this feeling now that I don’t want to get stale as a filmmaker. I would like to become more adventurous cinematically. I am now confident enough to do it, to take more risks, and in For Love Alone I would like to take bigger risks.

So, “For Love Alone” is finally happening?

Four years in the making! We start pre-production in January, shooting in April through to June.

Is it from your script?

Yes. I wrote the script from the novel [by Christina Stead]. It took a long, painful three-and-a-half years. Only Hugo Weaving has been cast so far.

I feel happy about doing the film. I identify with the girl in the novel, with the way she longs for love, to be able to give herself.
The opening montage of *The Plains of Heaven* is characteristic of Ian Pringle's filmmaking: a distant shot of blue mountain ridges, fading to shots of sunrise, clouds creeping like sheep over black ground, fading to a slow panning shot across the mountains. These are blue, jagged, formal; they appear as pieces in a jigsaw. This vista introduces a characteristic focus on landscape in Pringle's films, as remote, foreboding, a place of struggle. It suggests also his concentration on formal qualities of composition, light, color; the development of moods that are reflective, even disturbing, intense and claustrophobic.

His films return to locations in the Australian countryside that are remote and force adaptation in people's lives: the Bogong High Plains, the Mallie-Wimmera, the mountains of northeast Victoria and the Gippsland coast. The films look at ways people visit these landscapes, are drawn to them, live there. There is not much action in any of them; everything happens on a reduced scale. Small gestures become more important. The characters exist in these films less as people in drama than as figures in a landscape, often in exile. They search for meanings that persistently elude them, exist beyond them. The metaphor of a journey occurs in all the films, particularly the most recent, yet-to-be-released *Wrong World*.

Pringle emphasizes his interest in the difficulty people have communicating with each other:

> What my films are really about is something it is not possible to show: that is, the unspoken thing between people. We think we communicate but we fool ourselves. We really are just reduced to a confusion of words. There is so little communication between people and that is the greatest irony of all. I would hope that is at the heart of all the films I make.

Ian Pringle has made four films, each a quantum leap on its predecessor. His films illustrate in part what the Australian Film Institute describes as the "New Wave" of Australian cinema. Each of these films is distinctive in its look; in the care taken in the composition of images, framing, color, sound; and in the flow of images to suggest an interior process of memory and imagination. The stories are told in unconventional, thoughtful ways that demand and perhaps produce an attentive audience. As a director, Pringle is interesting for his images, his narrative construction, for the atmosphere and intensity of his stories, and for his way of seeing landscape and city.

This is a filmmaking practice rooted in specific Australian locations. These films are less affected by practices of television production, its grasp and representation of the real, but appear to see the world as if nobody had looked through the lens of a camera before. It is like being at the beginning of cinema: an experiment in establishing how things look, what rhythms can be set up by camera shots, especially panning and tracking shots, and by editing, particularly the juxtaposition of interiors and landscapes. This vision is a collaborative effort between Pringle and director of photography and editor Ray Argall.

Each of these films has a pulse of its own which makes them interesting to watch, even in the case of the first, *The Cartographer and the Waiter* (1977), which tends to be suffocated by atmosphere and deliberate poetic intent. All of them, too, promise more than they deliver. There is a weakness here in following through a story as a beginning, middle and end (in whatever order) rather than assembling a story as a collage of fragments.

Pringle's filmmaking began after he enrolled as a Media Studies student at the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology. Equipment was available to him as well as support from staff and students. Television production lecturer Joe Ford appeared in his early films, as did cinema lecturer Doug Ling who also collaborated with Pringle on the scripting. His videocassette *Flights* (1977) received "special recognition for innovative use of the medium" at the Penguin awards. In the same year he made *The Cartographer and the Waiter*, a 55-minute black and white drama (although the title sounds like a sophisticated European animated short), using amateur actors and set in the country around Mt Hotham in northeastern Victoria. It cost some $12,000 of which the Australian Film Commission (AFC) contributed $7000 through the Creative Development...
Branch. This was followed two years later by Wronsky, another short feature, this time in color, introducing actor Richard Moir, and the great cameow player, John Flaus. The budget rose to $20,000 of which the AFC contributed $12,000. Wronsky was screened around Australia by the National Film Theatre. Pringle’s third film, and the one that brought him to notice, was The Plains of Heaven, which runs 80 minutes and was made for $120,000. The AFC chipped in $55,000, and the film has since been sold in a number of countries to television. It had what Pringle describes as “a reasonable run” in Australia and continues to return money. It was shot on the Bogong High Plains, again with Richard Moir (and again with John Flaus). The Plains of Heaven won the Gold Ducat and Interfilm Jury Prize at the Mannheim film festival in 1982.

This success was followed by the latest film, Wrong World (which could well be the title for all of Pringle’s films), which, at the time of going to press, was not yet released. It is an ambitious $600,000 feature film, made with a grant of more than $100,000 from Film Victoria and an AFC distribution guarantee. Pringle says,

It is so difficult to get money. Anything that is slightly different stands no chance unless you have other avenues covered such as Film Victoria investment to cover the non-deductibles, and a distribution guarantee which provides a 25 per cent return to the investor.

In making low-budget films, he sees advantages beyond those of necessity:

You can do and say things that otherwise you couldn’t. It is patently clear that you can operate in a way that higher budgets won’t allow you to. And the restrictions, the archaic approach to filmmaking in this country, puts you even more at a handicap. You can tell stories that reflect the way people are. Low-budget stuff tends to be very auteurish. People have to go out with a particular vision and make their film, and that is always a reflection of the world around them. And you can have that phenomenon operating in low-budget situations. With a high budget, when you start to get up into millions of dollars, everything starts to be homogenized unless you have galvanized yourself into a position where you can still maintain your integrity and authority over the project. With the big deals, you have a producer coming in, you get a package together, and you end up with The Man from Snowy River, like frozen peas.

Wrong World is international in scope and treatment, shot in Super 16 mm that looks like 35 mm, glowing with color and extending Pringle’s already characteristic sense of drama, interaction of character and landscape, and pursuit of an interior, perhaps inexpressible goal.

It develops a more coherent plot line, though demanding considerable attentiveness to follow it, and continues the theme of the journey, the sense that meaning escapes its characters; it still depicts the characters as figures against a landscape rather than as fully motivated characters in a drama, and displays that formal patterning which gives structure to all his films in the composition of images, play of light, editing, recurrence of key sequences, the clear but narrow range of experience taken, and unusual interest in angles and perspectives from which images are seen and established. One might say the films adopt a perspective rather than a point of view. Reflecting on this aspect of his filmmaking Pringle says,

I am interested in reflecting our culture today. I am interested in individuals who exist on the periphery of society. I am interested in the way people communicate with each other; what goes into that communication. I suppose they are all things to do with what makes us human. Our culture is starting to change; I think it is becoming more American, and I am particularly interested in observing how that is happening. And we are hardly aware that we are quickly becoming a satellite of American culture. It is quite a shift from the 1950s. Our values are changing; things are becoming more expedient, more disposable; there is a loss of ceremony in our lives; and people are becoming more and more alienated and less able to fit into a group or survival unit. It is becoming more disparate and is falling apart. And that is why you get cases such as this character of Truman [Wrong World]. He has lost his centre of gravity and is culturally and emotionally out of step. He doesn’t come from anywhere any more. That is something I have explored before.

The Cartographer and the Waiter

This first film follows out an idea as much as it tells a story. One has the impression that the story arose, almost incidentally, from a certain way of seeing things. The film looks like a filmmaker’s first attempt, impressive enough, to record the landscape, to chart a journey. Its first sequence records movement, simply

![Image of Barker (Richard Moir) and Cunningham (Reg Evans) take a rest on the high plains. The Plains of Heaven.](image1)

![Image of Truman (Richard Moir) explains to Mary (Jo Kennedy) his reasons for going and experiences in La Paz, Bolivia. Wrong World.](image2)

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and limpidity, in shots of a young man running across paddocks, by fences, by three horses which turn and run like the wind with him. Each shot is beautifully set up and followed through with accompanying piano music, rather like a silent film.

A second character appears, and the two continue in intercut shots, one running, the other walking and watching. This is an essay in image construction; nothing much happens and what does clearly has meaning that is not for the moment apparent. The second character stops and draws a circle and, within it, a triangle. He is the cartographer, played in an amiable and engaging way by Joe Ford.

Sound, and some approach to naturalism, is introduced with a shot of an old Holden driving along a country road. The cartographer comes to a farm house, where he meets the waiter, casually and laconically, and prepares his maps for the attempt to reach a hidden valley. The waiter appears to know something that nobody else does, which is perhaps the reason for his given occupation. There is some discussion about where the real meaning of events lies, in imagination, perhaps in fantasy. An argument about the meaning of shapes is hardly resolved by the declaration that you can make them mean whatever you want. A three-way conversation with a girl, played languidly by Miranda Brown, explores relationships between language and meaning (“You can't express exact meanings in an inexact language”, she says).

The three of them go off into the bush to find the valley, and the country becomes increasingly rugged. The shots are limited and lighting flickers, this, too, recalling the beginning of film. These restrictions induce a curious sense that the characters, for all their toiling up the mountain, haven't really got very far. It is difficult, too, to sympathize with anxiety about being lost in the wilderness when a road is clearly visible in the background.

The film could be seen as a tortuous reflection on meaning delivered by amateur actors on a Sunday afternoon trek in the hills. But it is more an essay, somewhat overloaded by an obscure sense of significance, on recording movement, the play of light, and a tenuous human presence in a particular landscape.

Wronsky

This second film reflects a quiet, elegiac quality as though one can simply enjoy looking at the succession of shots of Melbourne and country-side. It appears as a collage of images, loosely connected, and mainly shot in Williamstown and on the Gippsland coast. The plot development is sketchy, the story always on the verge of disappearing completely into a dreamy, interior, unfinished state. Characters tend not to be identified by name until late in the piece, if at all. Dialogue is patchily broken, informal, incomplete. Action tends to be slight, with some key scenes taking place off-camera. Love-making is suggested by implication; the return of Wronsky’s stolen wallet is managed by the splendid and energetic Phil Dagg off the set.

Resolutions are not the focal point of the film. The final appearance of a herd of cows swimming in from the sea is an open, even ambiguous image, by no means a conclusion to the story. Wronsky dwells upon places, the appearance of things. It is as though everything is on a small scale, experimental, hopeful; a little naturalism, a bit of Damon Runyon here, folk comedy there, some romantic nostalgia whether for Carlton or the bush.

Nothing much comes of these incidents, except that the non-English-speaking peasant threatens, almost literally, to run away with the film. He leads the small company like the Pied Piper up a remote hillside, as the camera pans across windswept fields. Pringle:

These characters were after something that doesn’t exist, something you wouldn’t see until you believed it. And that was the aim of having cows come out of the sea. To set up something you wouldn’t believe unless you see it is quite difficult and that is why we chose the shots of the various vistas with nothing in them — the landscape, the grass — to create that sense of looking for something to come out of it. If you have characters looking for something and, more specifically, for something that doesn’t exist, if you keep going back to the landscape, you are enhancing the chance of seeing it. I would hope there was a sort of hallucinogenic quality to the landscape. It couples in with the cows.

Much of the film has this studied quality; shots of city streets, buildings, coffee houses, churches, factories and bill-boards; studies of trains and trams, and shots from moving vehicles, blurring landscape through windows. The film exists as a set of patterns, literal reflections, rather like the collection of postcards on Wronsky’s wall. Some of the technical effects are not quite right, particularly the interior lighting, and there are some awkward cuts and fades. But, generally, the editing sustains the rhythms of these patterns of reflection.

Formal patterning is a conscious way of telling the story. Cinematically, I am very interested in how people respond to images, what that emotive response is, and learning about it, learning how to create a certain emotion in people by dropping in a shot of a landscape or by putting in a bit of music. That has to be instinctive on my part, so that is what I am exploring; that emotional response from the audience, to build on what I have already set up. It is not as much breaking as building — that is the way I would see it. So, at the end of Wronsky, when we cut away to the hills, it is building on his emotional state; it is to amplify that.

The film is uneven, lifting at points such as the appearance of Phil Dagg or John Flaus, whose roles appear to have little to do with the story. Some of the shots are held too long. Several

The story is slight, even improbable. A young man whose connection to his absent, travelling father consists of a bedroom wall plastered with postcards is intrigued by a reference on one of them to a scene of cows emerging from the water (somewhere around Welshpool), and goes to see for himself.

Along the way he picks up a couple of friends played by Doug Ling and Miranda Brown. The unlikeliness of it all doesn’t matter so much, and is perhaps the point of the film. But it doesn’t give one a material grasp of these people, a sense that they are characters embedded in a life of their own. They haunt the city as vaguely recognizable figures during moments in a pool room, a Carlton coffee house, a Fitzroy terrace. There is something of the impression, intended or not, of Waiting for Godot, as though everything is a series of diversions whilst a small performing troupe kills time. Some of the diversions are notable, particularly John Flaus’ imitation of a Spanish peasant with hens, distractingly cheerful and reciting an incomprehensible argot of his own invention. His appearance is followed by a scene with a terse dairy farmer, bucketing his cow yard, also wonderfully played by John Flaus, minus beard, showing considerable versatility, particularly as the two roles almost overlap in the film.

Pringle:
The folly of humans, that is what it is about; that is what the landscape is used to display. As Pringle suggests, this film is about isolation, remoteness, stress and madness produced in at least one of two technicians who man a transmitting post for television signals. Their existence is threadbare, consisting mainly in monitoring the equipment, checking the transmissions, eating baked beans, drinking whisky and smoking endless cigarettes. One of them, Cunningham, keeps ferrets. He is played by Reg Evans, lean and ferretty himself. The other, Barker, is played by the unremarkable Richard Moir. He amused himself watching television, news of demonstrations and disasters (which must be counted as an oblique editorial on the part of the director) and American shows in which contestants identify pop songs and performers.

Much of the interest in the film lies in its slow rhythms, the careful cutting of shots of the landscape, the radio towers and huts, the work routine, the television images, and the domestic life, if it can be called that, between the two men. There are lyrical shots of the men’s setting off rabbiting into a valley that gives way to endless ridges shading off from indigo to blue-grey; sunset over rocks; buildings clustered on a peak. Some of the more philosophical speculation is less convincing. During the rabbiting expedition, Barker embarks on a lengthy discussion about the place of man in the world. He begins with the place of rabbits in the scheme of things:

Well it’s right that they should mess up the balance, because that’s part of the balance too. I mean everything on this earth is here naturally, and man is part of that along with everything else. And part of the way man is to make progress and change things. We are meant to mean to change. So if the rabbits are here because of man, well, that’s part of the balance too. See what I mean?

Cunningham doesn’t see what he means; he hasn’t even heard what Barker has said. Cunningham in the wild and rescues him, ease, although they can say little about it. Cunningham doesn’t see what he means; he hasn’t even heard what Barker has said. Cunningham in the wild and rescues him, ease, although they can say little about it. Cunningham finally locates Barker, and Barker is silent, blazing away instead with a rifle at the birds wheeling in the sky.

As with the two earlier films, The Plains of Heaven constructs a complete, remote world, representing characters as figures within a threatening landscape in which they are never at ease, although they can say little about it.

Wrong World

Wrong World glows, saturated in deep, intense colors. The film’s attractiveness lies in the patterning of light and sound, its sequences intercut between several locations as the story unfolds in layers, according to Pringle’s unconventional narrative style. This develops from his filmmaking practice:

I just go out and I tell the story the way I see it. I never do storyboards. People always ask,
The Films of Ian Pringle

Wrong World continues Pringle's disregard of conventions of establishing character, action and location. It follows a fine line, in consequence, between inventiveness and confusion. But Pringle intends it to be different from his earlier films:

I thought I would try and turn a corner here and tell a story with characters. So I wrote all this stuff between two people in a motel room. The personal history of the guy, Truman, was something I invented. But, once I had worked out his personal history, I went to Doug (Ling), my collaborator, and we worked together on it. We are both not writers. That is the point. We couldn't write to save ourselves. But we struggle, we keep at it. It took us almost a year to write that.

The story follows the failed career of a young doctor, David Truman, played by Richard Moir. He has been through medical school with a friend, Robert (Robbie McGregor), who has stayed in Melbourne, gone into practice and become rich. But David is an idealist, has gone to South America to a village to work in a hospital. He becomes a drug addict, travels through the U.S. keeping a diary, returns to Australia and meets in a drug rehabilitation hospital a young girl, Mary (Jo Kennedy), who is an addict and petty criminal. He journeys with her to Nilhil to her sister’s house, and tells her his story. These and other characters are not introduced by name until well into the film, and almost incidentally. Their communication is sparse, laconic and abrupt, certainly for the early part of their association, as though there is nothing left to be said, or are they not the ones to say it.

The film opens with a shot of an aircraft’s coming in to land at night although one cannot see the aircraft and has to decipher the shot of a dark screen with pin-pricks of light and a silver-blue, flashing light that resembles a blip on a radar screen. The image cuts to a tracking shot of touch-down, past more lights, then another tracking shot from a car past the reflected blue and red splashes of light gleaming along the roadway. This image cuts to a low-level tilt shot of David’s standing in front of a Howard Johnson sign, a vast pink and blue neon extravaganza. A voice-over begins: “New York. If you scratch away the artificial tinsel and glitter, you’ll find the real tinsel and glitter underneath...”

These shots, striking, almost dazzling, introduce the arrival: aircraft, taxi, motel. They suggest a disorientation, especially the handheld circling shot of David beneath the neon, a distance between appearance and what matters. His continuing voice-over injects a sense of fatalism, of indifference:

I didn’t say that. Someone else did. And they didn’t say it about New York. They said it about someplace else. It doesn’t matter. There or here. Me or them. It’s all the same. None of it matters a shit.

This collapsing together of things introduces one of the themes of the film: the smearing across of a bare existence from South America to New York, and then to Australia. It is as though all energies have been exhausted and the film is to trace an attempted recovery. The voice-over tells that David has been a doctor in Bolivia, in some squalor and distress. “I’d come to tend the sick, but I discovered that I was the one with the disease.” This reference to Bolivia is little more than a fleeting mention. Such momentary allusions are key clues to questions of identity and passage in the film. One needs to be alert to grasp their significance.

The opening montage gives way to the title: Wrong World, with its implications about contrasts between Western capitalism and Third World underdevelopment, idealism and cynicism, reality and glitter.

The film is then made up of intercut sequences between New York, rural U.S., Bolivia and Australia. After the title, the story takes up on a beautiful shot of American rolling fields and a road unwinding to the horizon, a landscape without people or significance. David has begun what he describes as a search for the U.S., although the U.S. remains in the film a kind of abstraction: a gloss of New York lights, towering buildings, endless roads and scattered fields; a visual collection of signs and vistas.

David is the film’s subject, narrator and another object in the American collage. He doesn’t seem to speak to anyone else in the U.S., has no life but to sustain this journey through the empty countryside. The tone is sombre, the movement is slow, the scale of things reduced. The sense is of a journey without definition, taken up with choices that are not real choices. The past overlays and oppresses the present, stifling capacity for decision and action. David exists in a haze of exhaustion: “The money’s finished. It had to run out sometime. Everything does: the blood, the passion, the fear.”

The telling of the story becomes an elaborate jigsaw, collecting and connecting pieces from three countries. These are slotted or wedged into place, developing the narrative by simple extension rather than by reflection and implication. Transitions are not clearly marked so there is often confusion about where David is.

Mary and Truman watch television in a motel room on the way to Mary’s sister’s place. Wrong World.
Whether the landscape is American or Australian. These connections, or disconnections, occur as his recollections are triggered, during journeys, whilst he is waiting at a railway station or lying awake at night. Pringle:

What I tried to do was to create this sense of not ever knowing where you were, like when he is in the cubicle with Mary and he cut to the bar with him in Denver. He could have got up, walked out of the cubicle and gone into a bar. So you just don’t know. Then you hear the knock and he is back in Melbourne. It is trying to bring together the threads of a person’s life. I would have liked to have been able to work more that way. To me memory works in that way; it works in unconnected ways. I can be walking up that hallway there and suddenly think of going through an airport lounge in Sydney. The most obscure things come at the strangest times, and what I tried to do with David was to have these weird things recur, for no accountable reason at times.

There is no particular reason why one recollection rather than another should come back to me. At the end, when he gets into the car in the second motel room, he sits in the car and we think he has driven off; it cuts to the shot of the city, driving into the city. It could have started off with another shot, just trying to create this emotion of fleeing, of flight reflex. When he talks to the doctor, that refers to the earlier conversation he had with the psychiatrist about the flight reflex: ‘Animals have a circle around themselves, and if you encroach upon it, …’ And that is what happened to him. He has this distance around himself. As soon as somebody gets close, he goes. And so, in that way, all the images which follow are there to create that sense of fleeing, of loneliness. But there could have been another series of shots to create that. I think audiences will accept a lot more than a lot of filmmakers think they will. People are receptive if you deal with it the right way.

Much of the characterization in the film becomes notational, sketching in appropriate signs for different life-styles. Robert, for instance, the successful doctor, is just that. He is shown to drive a white BMW, practises from an office with a gold sign saying Medox that has panoramic skyline views, and has everything, as he remarks, from computerized diagnostic facilities to itemized monthly accounts. He has the cool, suave manner conventionally associated with success and social position; his children are named Joanna, Caroline and Meredith. He is a common set of signs. Other minor characters exist in this way, not so much written in as designated. Therefore, Mary’s sister lives in her small house in Nhill, is married to a primary school teacher with children named Tracey and Derryn. She has no lines, and is not so much written in as written off.

Generally, the range of life-styles is depressingly narrow; the successful, middle-class professional, reduced to the acquisition and display of wealth; the drugged young, living a desperate, criminal existence; the grimly surviving lower middle class of Nhill, with its threadbare Danish couch and laminex table.

As the film develops and engages the story, which is perhaps surprisingly simple for the sophistication of its treatment, the momentum falters. The film tends to become too verbal, too explanatory, particularly on David and Mary’s long journey to Nhill, as he tells her about his life. The problem about the motivation and dramatizing of characters comes up, too, in the consistency of their performance. Both of them pass from drug-dependent junkies, shooting up on heroin and morphine, to reasonably sophisticated conversational partners. She softens, he becomes authoritative. The changes in mood and attention between them are too sharp, too unlikely.

Some intimacy develops in these conversations, and is expressed in the only scene of physical involvement as they make love on a motel bed. They have been watching a television movie, or pretending to watch as the picture has become distorted and Mary, who has seen it all before, tells him the story. He remarks that in the U.S. people become who they pretend to be, pretends to shoot her, she falls across him and they make love, themselves becoming whom they pretended to be. The initial embrace is cut rather awkwardly to what looks like a blue screen, a declaration of censorship, but is only the wall above the bed, and the camera pans slowly down to the dark, discreetly covered figures. One feels it would be inappropriate to show them making love, a kind of shock to them as much as the audience, as though a certain intensity of feeling cannot be managed within the film.

Several sequences shot in Bolivia tell the story of David’s stay at a village hospital as a resident doctor, but the messages are really carried in the voice-over and reduced to that. A verbal account of a bomb explosion or the death of a child, over shots of a crowded everyday street in La Paz, registers the facts of death and violence. It is more difficult to be moved by it. At another point, there is a panning shot across the lights of the city. David’s voice-over tells us, “At every light there was some connected mass, some spiderweb of pain and suffering and optimism.” Significance is attributed rather than realized. His conclusion, that “Hell defies comprehension”, is hardly supported by the images of village life. Ten days in South America may have been insufficient for the camera crew to shoot the footage that would have that impact. This problem underscores a lack of material grasp in the film, a preoccupation with vistas as metaphor. One is always at a distance from the grit and intractable circumstances of living. The distance is deliberate, imposed partly through the exhaustion and indifference of the narrator (the last shot is of his driving endlessly through the U.S.), partly through the exquisite composition of each shot, and partly through the way one’s eye is drawn to horizons and the persistent sense that the real meaning of it all exists beyond them all, even beyond the film. The real heart of the film is in the glow, the lights, the distances, the vistas and the music. If the writing can match this eye for movement and composition then Pringle’s filmmaking will be something to watch. It is already striking, although there is a nagging sense, with all four films, that the whole is less than the sum of the parts.

Pringle is a naive artist in film. His pictures reflect the world of the naive painter; self-contained and self-taught, a delight in the appearance of things, a sense that pure emotions exist like pure colors and can be expressed through color. Time hardly exists, or at least can be collapsed to the present moment. There are precious few cultural references; instead, there is the sense that everything can be discovered for the first time. Thus, the emphasis on “chemistry” and “atmosphere” and the pleasure of looking through the lens. The problem is to engage this original vision with the requirements of narrative.

Note: The quotes in this article are from an interview conducted by O’Hara with Pringle on 19 January 1985. At the time of writing, Wrong World had been accepted as an entry at the Berlin Film Festival. ◆
The exuberance with which Polish-born filmmaker Walerian Borowczyk pursues his muse has, at times, earned him the unhappy and inexact epithet of pornographer. And indeed the key words of many of his feature titles — Contes immoraux (Immoral Tales, 1974), Dzieje grzechu (Story of a Sin, 1975), Les héroïnes du mal (Heroines of Evil, 1979) — could almost form a lexicon of transgression. In his case, however, this is more of a flair than an obsession.

Borowczyk studied art in Cracow and began his film career designing posters for the major films showing there at the time. In 1953, he made his first experimental short. In 1957, he began to work in animation and the next year moved to Paris, where he has lived ever since. Even as a maker of experimental animated films he showed signs of being an incipient establishment feather-ruffler when one of his ‘cartoons’, Le dictionnaire du Joachim (Joachim’s Dictionary, 1965), was rejected by the directors of the Tours Festival in 1966 on the grounds that it was “detrimental to the prestige of art”.

Borowczyk is unique among European filmmakers. His films abound with the sort of content that would seem best suited to those brigades of gentlemen perennially dressed for inclement weather. Yet, the painterly care with which he fills each frame at once removes him from such associations. Functioning on each film as director, director of photography, editor, scriptwriter and set designer he would seem to embody a sort of post-Lumière version of the Renaissance ideal (the Renaissance being a period of which he is fond and has treated on more than one occasion in his films).

The following interview was conducted in Borowczyk’s Paris office by Susan Adler.
Have you done any formal study of filmmaking?

I didn't go to film school: I studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow. I started making films because I wanted to, playing around with a still camera. Then, when I was 14 years old, I saw a 16 mm movie camera in a shop window. It was open, revealing all the internal mechanisms. I was spellbound. As you can imagine, such goods were rare in Poland at that time. I bought one and started to experiment with it. But, as soon as I saw the first images that I had made, all notions of 'technique' flew out the window.

Technique is something you can learn very quickly; school isn't necessary for that. School can serve as a forum, a meeting place for young people — or people in general — who have the same passion. More often than not, the stairways and corridors of schools are the true classrooms and lecture halls, and it is often there that the future of the art-form is determined. I rejected the idea of film school but I don't deny that it has certain things to offer: technique, experience with certain structures . . . with the camera.

What was the atmosphere like in Poland at that time?

Artists had liberty, but it was liberty under surveillance. For painters, there was almost total liberty within the framework of socialism. In spite of everything, we were free. For the generation of painters after the war, the style was post-expressionist, abstract and sometimes surrealist.

And for the filmmakers?

At that time I wasn't involved in cinema. I had bought my camera because I was fascinated by its mechanism, not to use it for professional purposes. To this day, I am fascinated by moving pictures: sculptures which are mechanical.

They evoke a certain emotion in me, like when I saw the open camera in the shop window.

The first things I made were shorts, rather like paintings in a way. The fundamental thing for me is that miracle which allows 24 frames a second to give the illusion of movement. This is the truth of cinema.

You met Andrzej Wajda during this period . . .

Wajda was at the Academy of Fine Arts with me for two years. But he chose to follow a different path. He left the Academy and enrolled at the Lodz Film School. Wajda was a good painter but he preferred the cinema.

I still paint but I don't make a living from it. I study art and paint for personal satisfaction but I don't see making films as an extension of painting. And I don't subscribe to the idea that it is natural for a painter to go on to making films simply because they are both visual arts. Cinema is quite independent from the other visual arts.

My first films were shapes or forms in motion. Sometimes I used actors and sometimes I would relate a little story or make a documentary or simply show abstract forms moving in a universe of music. I did everything myself and I experimented a great deal; I taught myself how to edit. All you have to know is that there are 24 frames a second and how to work the camera. Then you start to make images that please you, to develop on your own. That is how I did it anyway. For me, it is a question of the film [stock] and the camera, it is the miracle of how you can recreate and improve or change and deform nature.

But the costs involved are somewhat higher . . .

Not necessarily. There are instances when one can draw directly onto the film.

You used that technique in some of your early experimental films . . .

Yes. Maybe it is not for everybody. For me, shooting isn't the most important part: it is the projection, the final effect, which is the most important, and projection doesn't necessarily require the prior use of a camera. You can draw in the movement by scratching onto the film or drawing by hand.

Even if one wants to make films
in the more conventional sense of feature films, and one wants to be a true filmmaker as well, it is still necessary to almost draw the movements, either by drawing onto the film stock or by the use of decor and actors. Whatever the method, the important thing is to envisage how the movements will come out during the projection of the film because that is the point at which the relationship with the spectator is established. Natural photography — that is, photographing things as they are — is too easy; the creative process is too difficult to avoid literary narration, even remember who made them. Sometimes the films I have liked the most are very short, only a few minutes long.

I detest all this naming and judging, even though I am inevitably a party to it. You have asked me a question that has limited my freedom. Do you realize how many filmmakers there may be who are true artists, and yet their films haven’t been made or seen? In this sense, I don’t have the right to answer that question; it wouldn’t be sincere. I would be like those panels of judges which select films for film festivals. What a moronic act! What about the films they haven’t seen — films that aren’t yet mixed or are still in script stage or that weren’t shown because of retrograde or political manoeuvres?

Of the films showing in Paris at the moment, I am almost certain that I will like Milos Forman’s Amadeus, just as I have liked his other films. I like Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin very much. I don’t share the enthusiasm that there seems to be for the American school, as they call it. I usually don’t like anything associated with a school because it implies that there is a lack of originality. Let us say, I like films in general.

When I started to make films, I went to the movies a lot. But now I don’t go as often because I find that I scatter myself. I am not a conformist like other people — I don’t feel impelled to keep abreast for social reasons — but one is inevitably bombarded by the media in any case.

Talking of media bombardment, you have often been singled out as a target by film critics ...

Ah, critics! In general, film critics are very limited people: they don’t seem greatly interested in ideas, or particularly equipped to deal with them. They look at films with an analytical slant that never seems to change. A film should be viewed without any preconceptions. Film criticism is like a circus: a cultural institution in which the same ideas inevitably appear. The garish is celebrated and everything is keyed to the intelligence of a five year-old.

Films are rarely spoken of as they should be by critics and usually only those films that are likely to draw large crowds are talked about. Artistic worth is rarely taken into consideration. A good number of different newspapers come out every day, each one with its own film critic. It never ceases to amaze me how critics who see perhaps two films a day, which makes 700 a year, can analyze and write about, say, 365 films all with the same emotion. It must mean they don’t believe what they write.

That is all part of the apparatus that generates more money for
more films. Surely, the pictures of naked women or the other suggestive images that are used to promote your films have not been chosen for purely aesthetic reasons . . .

Commercial exigencies and box-office potential are quite another subject, and one that doesn't interest me in the slightest. The most important factor for me is to impart my vision. If it turns out that people say, “He has made a commercial film”, so much the better.

The first priority should be to make good films and to try to be good filmmakers working with as much freedom as possible. Of course, I know things aren't like that at all. You spend a lot of time playing a complicated game whereby you are busy trying to deceive the people who have given you the money to make a film while, at the same time, convincing them that they are getting what they are paying for. For me, it is an endless struggle, sneaking my visions — and, maybe, obsessions — into my films. Obviously, with short films there is greater freedom. With features, it is very rare that one gets to express oneself freely, but it does happen.

Just the same, erotic-cultural films such as yours must enable you more freedom than other forms.

Erotico what? Who used that term? I have never made films of that type.

Why don't you go looking for eroticism and culture in Walt Disney's films, where both abound? Take any film of his you care to think of: for example, Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs. Why don't you look for eroticism there? There is always a boy and a girl in his films; there are even dogs that kiss each other and make vulgar suggestions — repressed desire that you can feel a mile away. Disgusting: desire that doesn't dare! I have never made films of that type.

If anything, I have been a victim of this semblance that there is in Italy about Docteur Jekyll et les femmes (The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Miss Osbourne). With a film, you can change the context of everything, except the titles, by dubbing or by re-cutting it — and that is what they did with my film in Italy. It is the same as someone who cuts up paintings and puts them back together in different configurations with different parts of bodies from other paintings.

The producers dubbed the film. In Italy, they dubbed all films; it is an incredible violation of the author's rights. I have dubbed things myself but only as a last resort and I have more right to do so since I am the author of the film. In any case, I was a victim of this abuse. I don't think that my films are any more erotic than most other films. Except for documentaries, perhaps: they are very rarely erotic.

The term pornography has been used, erroneously perhaps, in connection with certain of your films . . .

What is pornography? For me, it doesn't exist and yet it is everywhere. Pornography is a legal term, not a critical or artistic one. One can't talk about pornography as the curse of society because in every country it is expressed as being different in the penal code. As for the censorship boards, I have never heard of one of the judges' rushing from a screening to rape and kill because he saw it in a film, so why on earth should they suppose that someone else would behave like that?

What is the difference between a home-made porn flick and a film with erotic content by Borowczyk or Nagisa Oshima?

It all depends on the montage. For me it is exactly the same.

1. Borowczyk has used the word montage in its correct meaning of film editing and assembly but also in the sense of montaging as in sexual intercourse. —SA.

Are you aware of having been rather heavily condemned by feminists?

Feminists? I didn't think they exist any more: they have grown up and married and now they give luncheons.

Joking aside, women occupy key roles in my crews, a lot more, I imagine, than on many of the films that don't cause the sort of controversy mine seem to. But that is neither here nor there.

Your heroines — Erzsebet Bathory (Paloma Picasso) and Lucrezia Borgia (Florence Bellamy) in
Walerian Borowczyk

"Immoral Tales", and Margherita Luti (Marina Pierro), Marceline (Gaelle Legrand) and Marie (Pascale Christophe) in "The Heroines of Evil", to name a few — don't have to answer to the society whose rules they transgress. You place them beyond good and evil, in spite of the titles of these films . . .

Deep down, I am on the side of these women. I hope that those people who have seen these films recognize their heroism: that is, the heroic energy they devote to realizing their desires, whatever they may be.

Similar to the heroes in action films?

Yes, but, of course, not at all.

Have you ever considered making an action film?

Genre films disgust me. Nauseating repetitions of the same old thing — that, for me, is pornography. Naturally, I have had offers but I am not interested. There is always good and evil in those films and I am against that. I have my own way of seeing things.

Besides, I have a great aversion to being labelled. Once, John Ford stood up at a press conference at a film festival and said, "My name is John Ford; I make Westerns." They want me to stand up and say, "Hello, I make erotic films." He didn't distinguish between politically reactionary Westerns and noble Westerns because Westerns have been accepted by the censors and the hypocritical society at large. It would be the same as another director saying, "I've made a neo-Fascist film" — which of course he wouldn't; he would say "Western" or "detective story".

Do you spend a lot of time in pre-production?

No, usually the pre-production period is quite short. But I plan every detail and movement beforehand.

Andrei Tarkovski has said that he does the same thing, and that for him the shoot is almost an anticlimax . . .

I don't feel the same way but I can understand. An imaginary film is, in a way, just as important as one that has been made. It isn't necessary to film. There are a lot of exceptional artists who have only conceived an idea for a film, and writers of genius who have only written one book, or not even finished it. After all, what is the making of a piece of sculpture? It is merely the last phase, the least important. The most important phase is when you have the film inside you.

You do seem to manage to externalize your conception as you write the screenplays for all your films. Do you adhere strictly to the script during shooting?

I usually invent my films in moments of insomnia and then, after a certain maturation period, I very carefully plot a final shooting script. But, after that, there isn't a process. One shouldn't analyze everything so much; it is useless. If you ask me why I made a certain film, I can't answer you. I don't know.

Most of your films are based, to some degree, on works of literature, and often by authors with notorious reputations, such as Frank Wedekind, André Pieyre de Mandiargues, and others who are less notorious, such as Stendhal and Robert Louis Stevenson . . .

If I do a film based on literature, on an original story by someone else, what does it matter? Cinema isn't literature; cinema is appearances and, clearly, my way of telling a story isn't the same as the way a writer tells a story. For me, movement is creation. It is a pity I can't make films that are completely abstract: after all, people like to watch fireworks displays and sporting events. It is a pity that films haven't taken off in that direction as well.

"Ars amandi" ("The Art of Loving") is certainly literature, but Ovid's poem doesn't have a narrative thread . . .

Artistically, I am pleased with the film because it is fascinating to recreate periods of history. That is the magnificent thing about filmmaking for me: to relive things that may or may not have existed. If you want, you can have blue apples or strangely-colored trees. What is also fascinating is reconstructing the material culture, objects from an era that is close but at the same time very distant. This is the magic.

To this extent, then, you are free: for example, in the reconstruction of Rome under Augustus in "The Art of Loving" . . .

But, even though I have always done the things I have wanted to do, I have never been able to do
them in total freedom. As I said before, one can’t be free, because even if I were to do a film with total freedom it would not be released.

You have to flatter the taste of the public but it is not the public that is at fault. People have faith in things, and they want to see new things, but they aren’t allowed to. By the time the censors have finished snipping away a bit here and a bit there, one’s film is inevitably disfigured.

The version of The Art of Loving that will be released in Italy will be disfigured. The Italian producer and distributors have added scenes that are pornographic because the producer decided to make an erotic film. There is a scene in which a swan makes love to a tree and the producer thought it was a pity there wasn’t a woman involved. They faked letters that were supposed to be from me giving my permission to add certain scenes.

Nonetheless, I am happy with what I did because I feel that I have done things I hadn’t been able to do in other films. Now I have other projects but I will never again work with a producer whom I don’t know well. What other projects are you doing?

I am doing a film in France and then a co-production in Germany for German television. I am preparing a film I have dreamt of doing for a long time: an authentic reconstruction of Nefertiti’s story. There is a plan to make it in five episodes for television but the form doesn’t interest me as much as the idea of reconstructing ancient Egypt.

The private life of another woman: although I don’t share the opinion that you are a pornographer, you certainly seem to be something of a voyeur ...

No more than you or anyone else. Films and television are all enticements to voyeurism. I make the films, but other people watch them.

Filmography

Features
1967 Théâtre de Monsieur et Madame Kabal (The Theatre of Mr and Mrs Kabal)
1968 Goto, L’île d’amour (Goto, Island of Love)
1971 Blanche
1974 Contes immoraux (Immoral Tales)
1975 Dzieje grzechu (Story of a Sin)
1976 La marge (The Margin)
1977 Intérieur d’un couvent (Behind Convent Walls)
1979 Les héroïnes du mal (The Heroines of Evil)
1980 Lulu
1984 Ars amandii (The Art of Loving)

Shorts
1953 Glowa (The Head)
1954 Photographies vivantes (Living Photographs)
1957 Byl sobie raz (Once Upon a Time)
1958 Dom (The House)
1959 Les astronautes (The Astronauts)
1960 Le magicien (The Magician)
1961 La tête (The Head)
1962 Théâtre de Monsieur et Madame Kabal (The Theatre of Mr and Mrs Kabal, one episode: The Concert)
1963 Encyclopédie de grand’maman en 13 volumes (Grandmother’s 13-volume Encyclopaedia)
1964 Holy Smoke
1965 Le dictionnaire du Joachim (Joachim’s Dictionary)
1966 Rosalie
1967 Brief von Paris (Letter from Paris)
1973 Une collection particulière (A Special Collection)
1975 L’armoire (The Cupboard)
Throughout history many great artists have depicted the tortures of hell. But never before has anyone dared to suggest that hell is a place where an elephant sits on your motor car.

Bliss is directed by Ray Lawrence, for producer Anthony Buckley from a screenplay by Lawrence and Peter Carey, based on the novel by Carey. The director of photography is Paul Murphy, the sound recordist Gary Wilkins and the editor Wayne Le Clos. It stars Barry Otto, Lynette Curran, Helen Jones, Tim Robertson, Miles Buchanan, Gia Carides, Paul Chubb and Jeff Truman.
Top: Honey Barbara (Helen Jones) takes a bath before heading off for the city. Above: Bettina and Joel (Jeff Truman) 'make it' in the middle of Milano's restaurant. Below: what does one do when an elephant sits on one's car?

Top: Harry's reaction to his operation: "Oh shit, I've died again!" Above: Honey Barbara explains the meaning of karma to Harry. Below: The Vision Splendid (Sarah de Teliga).
In November and December 1984, a selection of French films was screened in seasons at the Brighton Bay Twin in Melbourne, the Boulevard Twin Canberra and the Academy Twin in Sydney. Entitled "Film Nouveau: A Festival of Contemporary French Cinema, 1982-1984", the season brought a range of films by well-known and unknown (to audiences here) filmmakers to the attention of Australian film-goers and distributors. The festival was organized by DCF Film Distribution.

Kieran Finnane

"Film nouveau" is somewhat of a misnomer for the recent festival grouping together heterogeneous French productions or international co-productions involving French money and stars from the past three years. The term "film nouveau" suggests, no doubt unintentionally, the emergence of a new, dominant direction in current French cinema, but the festival itself did not provide evidence of this; nor could it, of course, when no such dominant direction exists.

Nouveaux films are what the audiences saw, the products of a relatively healthy industry, representative of it only in their diversity. The French film year continues to be marked by the outstanding latest films of New Wave auteurs such as Alain Resnais' L'amour à mort (Love Unto Death, 1984), Eric Rohmer's Les nuits de la pleine lune (Nights of the Full Moon, 1984), Jean-Luc Godard's Prénom: Carmen (First Name Carmen, 1983) and Jacques Demy's Une chambre en ville (A Room in Town, 1982); in the commercial sector by outstanding box-office hits rivalling American productions, such as the latest Belmonto; followed by a cluster of so-called NQF ("nouvelle qualité française") films which bear heavily the mark of American productions but do not rival them and of which Bob Swaim's La balance (1983) is a much lauded example. On the edges of these categories, productions take a variety of directions, some venturing into relatively unexplored territories in their aesthetic or subject matters, others taking well-worn trails, a dispersion quite accurately indicated by the festival.

Of the five festival films that I will review here, Jacques Bral's Polar (1984) would be closest to the NQF group while, to its merit, playing against it.

NQF favors screenplays adapted from or styled after American hard-boiled literature of the 1940s and '50s. (Patricia Highsmith is a great favorite) Polar (the title is a slang word referring to this literary genre, and the screenplay is adapted from Jean Patrick Manchette's novel, Morgue pleine) has some of the stylistic and narrative elements of such a script but stands on their head, in a clever, amusing deconstruction of the genre. There is no patently clear resolution of the narrative. One listens to the voice-over of an ex-cop, Eugène Tarpon (Jean-François Balmer), forced to resign after killing a demon-tracker, and now his own, has also discovered the secrets of reproduction. However, unbeknownst to them all, the humanoids have not only served to increase one's dissatisfaction with Mitchell and just about everything else.

Special effects are embarrassingly primitive and sex scenes, ranging from titillating to grotesque, plummet the film to new low depths. The worst of the latter deserves a mention and the audience loudly shuddered when it was sprung upon it: Frank (Eddy Mitchell), hankering for a mate, brings home to Victor Frankenstein (Jean Rochefort) three freshly-strangled, bruised and blood-splattered disco dancers suspended from meat-hooks in the freezing unit of a butcher's van. It is hardly an interesting "twist" that the resultant, ideal feminine play-thing fails to interest Frank who has from the beginning fixed his sights on his creator's girlfriend Elizabeth (Fiona Gélin). (He rapes her on the occasion of their first encounter.)

A potentially more interesting twist is the futuristic end of the film: Frank, thanks to a facelift from the skilled hands of Elizabeth, now his lover, and to an expansion of his computer program, has become head of a corporation marketing humanoids programmed to perform specific tasks. He tops this by getting Elizabeth pregnant. Frankenstein can lay claim to total success as Frank's ex-playmate, now his own, has also conceived. However, unbeknownst to him, the humanoids have discovered the secrets of reproduction. Is it all going to get out of hand? Jessua does not manage to exploit the potential of his innovation, and one's only response is a yawn.

For Claude Sautet's Garçon! (1984), one would have to knock the "N" off the rubric. There is nothing nouvelle...

Eugène Tarpon (Jean-François Balmer) takes care of a young punk who has been trailing him. Jacques Bral's Polar.
about Sautet’s film but it is very qualité française. It is a nostalgia film (nostalgia for between-wars French society and cinema) set in the 1980s and make it look like the '70s, a group portrait in a happy, a-historical world.

Good acting — Yves Montand as Alex, the 60-year-old head-waiter and charmer; Nicole Garcia as Claire, the most alluring of the women who enter and leave his life; and the excellent Jacques Villeret as Gilbert, Alex’s flat-mate and fellow waiter, lovable and loving, unable to definitively leave his first wife to definitively live with his second, plus all the well-filled minor roles — a well-handled script (within its limits) and expert directing, as evidenced particularly in the brasserie scenes, save Garçon! from being boring. These qualities make it, in fact, gently pleasurable but do not save it from its fundamental irrelevance. The only question it left is how Philippe Sarde continues to have such success in composing music for films. His work is stamped with a family entertainment, middle-of-the-road style which bathes accompanying scenes in banality.

Two other films, Caroline Roboh’s Clementine Tango (1982) and Jean Marboeuf’s T’es heureuse? . . . moi, toujours (Are you happy? . . . me, always, 1982), have nothing to do with NQF. Roboh’s is a first film. While it is always fitting to be generous with a first film, in this case one does not have to try very hard. Roboh was clever enough to bring to the screen the extraordinary talents of Arturo Brachetti, cabaret artist and co-production designer, Josephine Larsen and half-a-dozen fellow cabaret artists and weave around their stunning performances a narrative, not without interest, which leads one through the film and gives it a beginning, a middle and a sort of end (a similar achievement to that of Purple Rain). In the same scene, Labourier’s front-of-house character is seen for the first time, travestied in a blond wig, piled-on make-up and a red satin

danger is that it becomes a charged ambience with all the interest of stale air in a back room. Some of the psychological and sexual catastrophe could have been explored or dealt with in a more dynamic and sustained, even humorous, way, particularly in the relationship between the bourgeois Charles (Francois Helvey) and the angel-faced, tango-dancing Clementine (Claire Pascal). More links could have been drawn between Clementine (who Charles discovers, after his initial attraction, to be his half-sister, their father having had a long-standing affair with her mother, an American cabaret singer) and Charles’ full sister (played by Caroline Roboh).

Roboh as a writer and director obviously wanted to avoid sensationalism while exploiting the extra-cinematographic — i.e., theatrical and musical — appeal of her cabaret setting and artists. Unfortunately, the solutions she comes up with are rather tame and leave one wanting more: not more added on, but more from within.

This is much more than can be said of the tedious T’es heureuse? . . . moi, toujours which gives marvellous Dominique Labourier, the Julie of Jacques Rivette’s Celine et Julie va en bateau (Celine and Julie Go Boating, 1977), the thankless role of a suicided filmmaker’s widow. She devotes her life to the exhibition of the defunct’s films, roaming the countryside in a live-in, mobile cine-museum taking the cinema back to its original context, that of the travelling fair. The audience joins her in her travels and experiences somewhere south of Lyon, in the provinces along the Rhône. (The chance to see some of the beautiful landscapes and villages of this part of France is one consolation offered by the film.)

One never actually sees extracts of the films that have inspired this devotion but, on the occasion of the first projection, the audience hears them and learns that it is Marboeuf’s work and presumably himself at the heart of it all. Such guileless naïveté about one’s own adolescent fantasies is a very antipathetic starting-point for a film. In the same scene, Labourier’s front-of-house character is seen for the first time, travestied in a blond wig, piled-on make-up and a red satin
The suicided filmmaker's widow (Dominique Labourier) and the pederast clown (Claude Brassieux) cross paths in Jean Marboeuf's "T’es heureuse... moi, toujours.

Helen Greenwood

The biggest drawbacks of the Film Nouveau festival were, without doubt, Carlos Saura's "Antonieta" (1982), Andrzej Wajda's "Un amour en Allemagne" (Love in Germany, 1984) and Maurice Pialat's "A nos amours" (To Our Loves, 1983). The films were not, however, necessarily amongst the best of the selection. "A nos amours" fulfilled expectations with its lingering, hard look at family disintegration and other themes typical of French cinema, while "Un amour en Allemagne" disappointed in its failure to be a convincing drama, or politically or historically credible.

Un amour en Allemagne goes back to Germany in 1943 through the clumsy device of an unidentified narrator and his son in search of the circumstances surrounding a long-buried scandalous affair between a German shopkeeper, Paulina Kropp (Hanna Schygulla), and a Polish prisoner-of-war, Stanislaw Zasada (Piotyr Lysak). Sometimes staring directly into the camera in the style of direct documentary, an incongruous style compared with the historical sections of the film, and sometimes not, the narrator leads the audience into the flashback scenes. These modern scenes, however, are so disjointed and so infrequent that they fall as a narrative thread. Instead, the historical scenes become the dominant mode and one is not sure if it is not for a reason other than to serve as flash forwards which are really operating after all (cf. Antonioni, reviewed below, another historical offering at the season, in which the camerawork and the narrative structure ease the time transitions and give them immediate relevance).

Apart from the narrative confusion in "Un amour en Allemagne", there are also thematic and moral ambiguities with which the viewer of this film has to cope. Wajda injects familiar themes into the film: individuals struggling against the inevitability of history, moral purity in the face of ideological rigidity, and the anger of people who see their nationality and culture exploited and denigrated. All these reflect much of the current-day dilemma and circumstances of Poland.

In "Un amour en Allemagne", these themes are represented by a woman whose purity of love refuses to allow her to deny that the Polish prisoner is her lover and thereby condemns him to death, and a Pole who refuses to become Germanized and thereby seal that fate. The latter is plausible because Paulina, in her casting aside of what she is doing and not as a woman distraught and obsessed by love, Schygulla's wooden-faced portrayal is to blame for this in large part. One is left wondering how to relate individuals, who not only tempt fate but who also do their best to ensure it is an ill one, to Wajda's attempt to illustrate modern events.

Furthermore, because Wajda tries to be fair and balanced, one is also left wondering what is the moral position of the filmmaker in a film with such strong moral overtones. Elisabeth (Elizabeth Trissenaar), whose fiancé dies in action, has every reason to betray Paulina but does not; Maria (played wonderfully by Marie-Christine Barrault), whose husband returns to satisfy her desires, still covers more and so eventually betrays Paulina. The SS Untersturmführer Mayer (Armin Mueller-Stahl) tries to bend regulations to save Paulina and Piotyr but in the end has to hang Piotyr. The Polish prisoner, Wiktorkczyk (Daniel Olbrychski), protests and refuses to hang his fellow Pole but escapes a decision by fainting and leaving Mayer to complete the task (an unconvincing scene).

No blame is directed towards individuals; it is history which overpowers. But by refusing a moral stance and by making it difficult to see the characters as more than one-dimensional, one is left wondering whether Wajda himself is as yet capable of coming to terms with the complexity of those times. The only scene in which the characters become credible, people riddled with human weaknesses and strengths, takes place between the two Poles in the truck on their way to the hanging. Perhaps Wajda, like most people, is best at portraying what he is closest to.

This generalization is equally applicable to Maurice Pialat who also explores unknown territory but does so successfully. Although he penetrates the psyche of 15-year-old Suzanne (Sandrine Bonnaire), he maintains his own, determinedly-detached perspective as a filmmaker, which contrasts ironically with his participation in the film as Suzanne's father.

Suzanne is afraid that her heart is drying up and that she is no longer able to love. This is not hard to understand as she drifts into the fading innocence of adolescence and witnesses the unheralded departure of her beloved father and the breakdown of her...
A brother (Dominique) and a hysteria-prone mother (Evelyne Kerr). His mother and sister manifests in his aspirations and perverse attachment to Besnehard (Cor Boland) whose frustrated career playing one off against the other. The father has, unfortunately, misread the situation. Suzanne finally marries, after a certain emotional maturity without satisfaction. She is as unsettled by her presence as she was by his absence and decides to move on again, this time with an old friend and further afield: San Diego in the U.S. (ironically the site of a major American naval base and a reminder of Suzanne’s first sexual encounter). Still fleeing from his shadow yet searching for a substitute, Suzanne’s departure with her father’s blessing leaves one unsure of what has been resolved. One can only be certain that Suzanne will keep searching.

Pialat exposes the undercurrents of incestual tension and frustrated sexuality that run through this family, almost verging on the distasteful but always pulling back beneath a veneer of ingenuousness. He has an extraordinary perceptiveness of the fears and fantasies of a young girl. This is obviously due in part to the screenplay having been co-written by Pialat’s longtime collaborator Arlette Langmann and it being semi-autobiographical.

Pialat makes use of summer light and sounds in A nos amours to convey a deceptive mood of ease and simplicity which is sharply broken by the harshness of the interiors as Suzanne retreats into herself and away from human comfort. The film also has a spontaneity and rawness that stems from Pialat’s style of directing: “planned improvisation” as Bonnaire refers to it. Bonnaire has an innocent voluptuousness that marries perfectly with the tone of the film; her most banal actions, such as stuffing ham into her mouth and chewing vigorously, are at once basic and sensual, dt episodic film — are considerably better at conveying what she finds — and to indicate what is unlearnable in rational terms.

The film supplies this background, first through interviews between Schygulla and the Mexicans who had known Antonieta, then with unexplained flashbacks and, typically of Saura, a rationality-defying leap by Schygulla back to the fateful day of the suicide.

What comes out of it is a teasing, wispy portrait of a gifted woman in a macho society trying to make some sense of her life (as in Elisa vida mia) and, more telling, a rare picture of Mexico in the uncertain years after the revolution and civil war of 1910-20.

Some of the film’s shortcomings may well stem from the fact that it is one of the few in which Saura was not in sole command of the screenplay. His collaborator is French screenwriter Jean-Claude Carrière, who seems to have sobered Saura, an effect he certainly didn’t have on Luis Bunuel in Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie, Le fantome de la liberte or Cet obscur objet du desir. (Saura showed in Mama cumple cien anos that he can be every bit as impish as Bunuel.)

Presumably, Antonieta is intended to reveal the sexist flaws in a Latin American society that is so macho that everything within it becomes an extension of the male ego — from conservative to revolutionary politics, from the arts to religion.

The only time Antonieta really establishes herself as a personality on equal terms with men, able to play a major role in the processes of her own country, is as the secretary-mistress of a would-be leader, the real-life writer and educator Jose Vasconcelos (played by Ignacio Lopez Tarso). When Vasconcelos dumps her, after the failure of his 1929 bid to win the presidency, she has little to live for. (Saura showed in In the name of Mexico’s shorts camp with Vasconcelos in his hopeless election bid are the most effective in the film, matched by the earlier assassination of strong-man president Alvaro Obregón and the suppression of the peasant followers of the Cristero, or pro-church, rebellion of 1927. Sandra doesn’t seem terribly interested, however, in either establishing or dissociating the links between these catalytic events and Antonieta’s personal crises. He goes some of the way in explaining the paternalism of the society in which she grew, married, and parted from her domineering husband (who burns her library in response to his wife’s growing independence of thought and action). But there are other elements, what might be called a ghost story (in the manner of Cria cuervos) as well as an interesting investigative study, and a mysterious and chilling erotic relationship with an artist, that are parts of an unresolved jigsaw.

As usual, Saura’s technical command and sense of place are superb (typified in her next film — the on-going excavations of the Indian capital, Tenochtitlan, upon which Mexico City is built). As always, Teo Escamillo’s cinematography is bold and incisive, and many of the Mexican locations are equally exciting and evocative.

Saura is less well-served by the principal cast. Isabelle Adjani pours ill-naturedly like Adele H. with a stomach-ache and Hanna Schygulla at times seems so disoriented (or is disinterested?) that one expects to hear her mutter, “Rainer Werner, come back!”


dorre Koester

Alain Jessua seems to have a fondness for creating monsters. Before this year’s Frankenstein 90, he had already told the story of a man transformed into a monster in his 1982 film Paradis pour tous (Paradise For All). A horrific being far more threatening than the gentle Frank (Eddy Mitchell) of the more recent film, the character of Alain (Patrick Dewaere) is a sad, neurotic, ordinary man turned into an irresistible force that terrorizes his family and friends with patience and emotional control: a man who is happy all the time. Paradise For All is a black comedy about a man who lives in the throes of being alone, to the point at which the result is a prescription for making its viewers fond of their anxieties. The consequences of being happy in the film are a snowballing outburst of misery and death.

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Keith Connolly

Antonieta is a typical Carlos Saura mixture of real and surreal, fact and fantasy, plausible and incredible. It should be among his best works, but isn’t. The parts — and it is a very episodic film — are considerably better than the whole.

The first film Saura has made outside his native Spain, Antonieta is an internationally-cast, French-Mexican-Spanish co-production, and educator Jose Vasconcelos (played by Ignacio Lopez Tarso). When Vasconcelos dumps her, after the failure of his 1929 bid to win the presidency, she has little to live for. (Saura showed in In the name of Mexico’s shorts camp with Vasconcelos in his hopeless election bid are the most effective in the film, matched by the earlier assassination of strong-man president Alvaro Obregón and the suppression of the peasant followers of the Cristero, or pro-church, rebellion of 1927. Sandra doesn’t seem terribly interested, however, in either establishing or dissociating the links between these catalytic events and Antonieta’s personal crises. He goes some of the way in explaining the paternalism of the society in which she grew, married, and parted from her domineering husband (who burns her library in response to his wife’s growing independence of thought and action). But there are other elements, what might be called a ghost story (in the manner of Cria cuervos) as well as an interesting investigative study, and a mysterious and chilling erotic relationship with an artist, that are parts of an unresolved jigsaw.

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Top: Antonieta (Isabelle Adjani) on her way to console the man who is her obsession but will never be her lover. Carlos Saura’s Antonieta. Above: “...a teasing, wispy portrait of a gifted woman in a macho society...”, Hanna Schygulla as Anna in Antonieta.
Peter Schreck hitch-hiked to Sydney at the age of 17 “to become a writer”. He started writing advertising copy “as a way of putting words through a typewriter”. In his mid-twenties he changed to television drama, writing for Spyforce, Homicide, Solo One, Bluey and the ABC’s Dynasty. He then moved to Melbourne and worked for Crawfords, writing and script editing Ryan, writing early episodes of The Sullivans and becoming an associate director of the company.


How has the relationship between you and director Igor Auzins developed?

Both Igor and I have a commitment to the belief that the writer-director relationship is important in the life of a film, and, indeed, in the life of the Australian film industry.

He approached me to do We of the Never Never and we discovered that our relationship worked. Having put a lot of effort into it, we decided it would be crazy to throw it away, so we decided to do another film.

How did the idea for “The Coolangatta Gold” come about?

During the making of We of the Never Never, Igor and I decided that our next picture ought to be a contemporary love story in the sporting genre. The film was first proposed as a low-budget one shot in Bondi for $1.5 million. Within days of thinking about the story and working on it, it became obvious that it was becoming a very big movie. When it became more involved and a lot bigger, Auzins and I formed a production company, Angoloro Productions, with John Weiley [producer] as a third partner; that production company bought my script back in December 1982. We knew from the outset that we were looking at a budget of about $5 million and to raise that we would need a joint venture. So I then took the screenplay to Hoyts-Edgley. The next day Hoyts-Edgley got back to us: it wanted to form the joint venture and do the picture that year [1983], and committed itself to raising the budget. So it was literally within 24 hours.

It is a project that works on two levels. On the one level, it is immensely marketable and promotable: a very commercial

 Does your relationship help you understand how Auzins is going to film the screenplay?

Absolutely. There are not too many unpleasant surprises. By the time we start shooting the film, we are both talking the same film and seeing the same images, and have been through the screenplay hundreds of times in casual discussion.

Igor and I work very closely together; however, I do like to get to first draft stage on my own. Collaborating too early on a project can muddy my motivations, drives and thinking. I try to get the first draft down as quickly as I can so it is an object, something separate from myself, and something about which we can talk and develop together.

After the first draft, we define what the picture is about, how we can move more economically from A to B, and where it is working and where it isn’t. Then Igor disappears again and leaves me to it. I don’t think writing is a process you can do with someone else in the room. At least I can’t.

The prevailing wisdom is that the director interprets the screenwriter’s work and then projects his own vision on to it. Is that accurate?

Writers can be far too precious, as can directors and producers. A successful film should be the sum of many creative inputs; the moment one person attempts to impose his view on the total he is depriving the project of other creative efforts. The director is a major contributor and the writer should not resent that.

So you don’t have a problem of trying to direct the film from the pen or the typewriter?

I don’t have a problem about it because I just go ahead and do it. If the screenplay writer can’t direct his view of the film on the page, then he ought to be a novelist or a radio writer. Every screenplay writer directs a film on the page and any director who is threatened by that ought to be directing radio, too.

The Coolangatta Gold

During the making of We of the Never Never, Igor and I decided that our next picture ought to be a contemporary love story in the sporting genre. The film was first proposed as a low-budget one shot in Bondi for $1.5 million. Within days of thinking about the story and working on it, it became obvious that it was becoming a very big movie. When it became more involved and a lot bigger, Auzins and I formed a production company, Angoloro Productions, with John Weiley [producer] as a third partner; that production company bought my script back in December 1982. We knew from the outset that we were looking at a budget of about $5 million and to raise that we would need a joint venture. So I then took the screenplay to Hoyts-Edgley. The next day Hoyts-Edgley got back to us: it wanted to form the joint venture and do the picture that year [1983], and committed itself to raising the budget. So it was literally within 24 hours.

It is a project that works on two levels. On the one level, it is immensely marketable and promotable: a very commercial
screenplay clearly targeted to the large youth audience. At the same time, it has layers of family conflict and the like operating.

Did it impose any conditions on or make any changes to the script?

No. The only changes I made to the screenplay as a result of the Hoyts-Edgley input were to remove the word "blue", as in fight, because the Americans would not understand it, and some other Australian expression; I can't remember what it was.

That is remarkable; one would expect that if Hoyts-Edgley were going to market a big film here and overseas it would have very strong ideas on what it wanted . . .

Hoyts-Edgley did have, and the screenplay was it. One of the reasons we were able to go through the joint venture process over two years without a single major disagreement was that we had the picture that we wanted to do and it had the picture it wanted to do. That pre-empted any likelihood of conflict. That is not to say it didn't have more input during production and post-production — it just didn't ask for any script changes.

"The Coolangatta Gold" is an obviously commercial film. How do you define the commercial elements in the film that are going to draw the large audiences?

The obvious answer is that the commercial elements are the dancing, the motorbikes, the music, the glossy sets, the Ironmen, the beach and surf, and the spectacle.

But all of that is secondary. The primary commercial aspect of the film is the character story, the universal story of adolescence and conflict between brothers and with parents, the loneliness of adolescence, and the desire for approval, for friendship and for a girl. The rest is icing that makes it more commercial.

Did you pick those commercial elements — the girl, the macho Aussie beach culture — and build the characters and situations around them or was it the reverse?

The reverse. There have been a lot of films which have failed because the writer attempted to do the icing first and the cake second. If you can get the characters right and touch some universal chord in the audience, then, and only then, can you dress it up. If you try to do it the other way around, you will come up with Summer Lovers; that for me would be a classic example of how not to go about it — icing and no cake.

Igor and I wanted to do a story about sport and love, but when you look at the ones that have worked, sporting love stories are also straight dramas, conflict stories. Having decided the film was to be directed at a youth audience rather than a middle-class adult one, the need for parental approval and sibling rivalry, best summed up by the story of Cain and Abel, became the heart of the film. The decisions to make them Ironmen, to make the girl a ballet dancer rather than a librarian, and to have them live on a banana plantation rather than work in a factory are very important ones, but they are not make or break decisions.

What constraints did you have to place on yourself in terms of character development to make a commercial film?

One makes judgments as to what is "commercial". In this case, I wanted to follow the story of the boy. It was an identification lead film and I wanted the audience to be with him. I wanted his emotional graph to be pretty much its emotional graph. I sensed that to spend too much time away from him would let the audience off the hook and it would be hard to get them back on again for the style of film I was doing.

I would have loved to have spent a lot of time exploring why that family is the way it is. A lot of the problems in that family stem from the relationship between the mother and the father. The father's sense of failure, which is the dramatic impetus of the film, derives largely from how he believes his wife perceives him. Yet the mother, who is therefore one of the main forces of the film, has almost no dialogue and only one big scene and one small scene. That is all I have given her to work with; that is all I have given myself to work with because I would have been off the tracks had I spent more screen time conveying that information to the audience.

But isn't it possible to come up with a film that is just as commercially orientated yet which explores those themes?

Certainly one could have chosen to do Ordinary People but I had just done We of the Never Never, which was a very talky piece, all about unstated conflicts and misunderstandings. I had had enough of that and I wanted to do something more punchy.

The film opens with close profile shots of Steve in the karate studio, and cuts to Kerri (Josephineismail). The cutting between them seems to establish the stereotypes of macho male and beautiful young sex object, a dramatic code the film seems to play on . . .

Perhaps that is the way it comes across, or the way it comes across to you. I saw that particular sequence as a talking about as the reverse. What I was trying to say was that karate can be every bit as poetic and sensual as is ballet, and that ballet can be every bit as physical as karate.

But those characters, for the most part, stay within stereotypes. Steve's character is explored and perhaps goes a little outside the male macho stereotype, but Kerri does very little in the film other than show her body off . . .

Kerri is a very unexplored character, I would not deny that. Whether or not we like it, and I am sure there will be a great many
Cinema Papers readers who won’t like it, that is the way it is with a lot of these films. The girl is there for the love and romance interest. It is not very satisfying for me, but you just don’t have the screen time to develop them.

I had a very complicated family and a very complicated young man to develop, and that was more than I could handle. I didn’t have the time or the pages to spend developing Kerri Dean. It is part of the writer’s, the director’s and the actor’s craft to convey as much as one can on the run.

The impression one gets from the film is that Joe’s failure stems from his failing to win the Ironman contest in 1960, and that Robyn is not that interested in the rivalry or in seeing him as a victorious Ironman.

That is exactly the point; Joe’s race is a macho one, and Steve finds he doesn’t want to run Joe’s race and be untrue to himself. This ‘macho’ phrase is a vast oversimplification: the Australian male ethos dominates Joe’s life, and Steve finds himself sucked into it; his triumph is that he is able to step aside from it and walk away.

Joe is quite wrong about the expectations of Robyn. Because he never won the damn thing, he began seeing himself as a failure, and assumes that she sees him as a failure, too. Maybe she does — but it is not because he came second in some race 20 years ago.

However, Robyn is not a saint. She expects certain things of him, so his sense of being a failure is not totally unfounded. But the tragedy for him is that he sees

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The promotion of, and reaction towards, The Last Bastion has inevitably concentrated on the "truth", or historical accuracy, of the series. Interviews with David Williamson, one of the co-producers and co-writers, in newspapers and on television included a warning that The Last Bastion was "not a history lesson, it is a drama about extremely interesting people under great stress". These interviews, perhaps through no fault of Williamson, concentrated on the "new" information unearthed by the writers and the ability of the series to, at last, provide the "truth" about the early war years.

The production team for the series has gone to some lengths to ensure that this process takes place. Newsreel and archival footage is carefully inserted at significant points in the narrative and a voice-over is used in an attempt, not very successful, to capture the intense polarization reflected by, and the stridency of, wartime newsreels. There has also been an attempt to satisfy the "popular memory" of the leading figures in the drama by careful casting and costuming.

Perhaps even more important, however, is the significant changes in the narrative voice. For example, to identify characters as "non-fictional", a printed title appears below the introduction of the major characters denoting their name and position. This device, as well as the printed titles accompanying the archival footage, constantly reminds the audience that the characters were "real" and that the events actually took place.

What I would like to follow through in this article is the concept of the "historical truth" of the series, not necessarily to question its historical accuracy, if there is such a thing, but to attempt to foreground the dominant discourse and, consequently, underline Williamson's point that the series is, above all else, a drama based on a traditional dramatic construction devised to persuade its audience of a particular point of view.

The point of view expressed by Williamson is that international politics can be very ruthless, particularly for a country such as Australia. This theme forms the basis of the series but one should remember that The Last Bastion is constructed according to the narrative conventions of popular drama, and the specific requirements of the television mini-series. This is evident in the use of repetition, the development of parallel characters (e.g., Eddie Ward (Max Cullen) on the Left, Billy Hughes (Jon Ewing) on the Right) and the significance of the final confrontation between General Thomas Blarney (Ray Barrett) and General Douglas MacArthur (Robert Vaughn).

The difficulty with a series such as The Last Bastion is that it compounds the traditional pattern of popular film and television drama to deny all marks of enunciation. All popular film and television programs attempt to deny the source of their story. The drama is presented as a series of events which unfolds before the viewer's eyes. This problem is accentuated in The Last Bastion because of the reference to historical characters and events. As a consequence, it is presented as a series of "historical facts", which must be accepted for the sake of coherence and understanding. This aspect derives from the original motivation for the program, which, according to Williamson, was the stories he heard as a child in Bairnsdale, when his father explained the plans to head for the hills with the children if the Japanese came any closer.

The unfolding of "historical facts" is accentuated by the reference to contemporary documents by Williamson and co-producer and co-writer Denis Whitburn, together with the claim by Williamson that, "I see the series as providing a realistic view of international politics at the time." The newspaper promotion included headlines such as "Bastion Set To Shock Viewers" (Truth, 3 November 1984). Peter McGregor in the Australian Teachers' Curriculum Package cites the producers' claim that "they have unearthed new information about the war leaders which is 'dynamite'", which complements Williamson's belief that, "One of the exciting things about the series is that we will be substantially rewriting Australian history."

The emphasis on the "historical facts" is something which the audience understands, and which provides it with a seemingly easy entry into what appears to be the true nature or discourse of the series. The emphasis on the historical veracity operates on the viewer in much
the same way as a controversial topical drama or even an election speech does: it destroys what the English aestetician Edward Bullough called the "psychical distance" between the object, in this case the series and its audience. In other words, the constant reminder of the actuality of the events, and the "authenticity" of the characters and their actions, prohibits the maintaining of the normal sense of "distance" which is premised ultimately on the knowledge that the characters are "unreal" or "imaginary".

Reaction towards the series is almost centred on a consideration of the series' "accuracy", This appears to possess a number of built-in advantages, such as an automatically acquired position of aesthetic and artistic superiority to other forms of drama, particularly romantic drama. No longer is it viewed in the same light as fictional melodrama, but rather as a legitimate drama directing its attention to serious issues. For example, Michael Shmith in a lengthy review in The Age's "Green Guide" (1 November 1984) applauds the "skillful, admirable and dramatic recounting of a pivotal point in our history". The series represents, according to Shmith, an example of how Australian television has matured, in this case into something of true worth: how it is able to present a behind-closed-doors version of Australia at war without having to lard it out with irrelevant love, interspersed with the occasional battle, showing hefty actors in combat fatigues shooting at less hefty Oriental actors.

This sense of aesthetic purity is also shared by Williamson who demonstrates his unwillingness to prostitute his craft by resisting an initial plan to sell the series direct to an American network. This, Williamson points out, would have meant a total rewrite. Shmith, grateful that Williamson rejected the lure of money and fame, consequently argues that as "a piece of television The Last Bastion offers the sort of viewing that is all too rare. It is history without frills."

There is a host of unwarranted assumptions in the positions put forward by Shmith and Williamson, but the one relevant to this article is the implication that a position of "truth" is retained by not pandering to the base interests of the "mass audience" and not allowing cheap dramatic contrivances (e.g., strengthening the love interest and turning Elsie Curtin (Nancye Hayes) into a glamorous blonde or "irrelevant love scenes" or "hefty actors in combat fatigues") to contaminate the historical "facts". Consequently, historians of either the armchair or the academic variety can concentrate on the "important" issues, such as the part played by British Prime Minister Winston Churchill in opposing the return of the Australian Sixth and Seventh Divisions from the Middle East early in 1942. John Robertson, in a letter to The Age (16 November 1984), insists that Williamson and Whitburn were incorrect in depicting Churchill as resisting Australian Prime Minister John Curtin's request for the return of the two divisions. Robertson, author of Australia Goes to War, argues that Churchill first suggested the move on the 15 December 1941 whilst en route to the "Arcadia" conference with American President Franklin D. Roosevelt. This suggestion, according to Robertson, was discussed in London and, on the 3 January 1942, the Dominions Office cabled Canberra asking if the Australian Government would despatch the Australian

Consideration of issues such as this, interesting though they might be, only deflect attention away from the dominant narrative voice, the narrative discourse, of the series, in preference for an arbitrary selection of isolated incidents within the series. This is similar to falling into a bottomless barrel. Where does one draw the line in verifying the historical authenticity? General Douglas MacArthur's biographer, William Manchester, points out that MacArthur expressly rejected the idea of a band greeting him on his arrival at the Spencer Street Station, yet the corresponding sequence in the series begins with a shot of a band. Obviously, director Chris Thomson, and perhaps even the scriptwriters, wanted to heighten the visual and aural pleasure of this quite crucial sequence as MacArthur delivers his "I shall return" speech. Is the authenticity of the series threatened if there really wasn't a band on the station in 1942? Similarly, MacArthur's "I want each of you to kill me a Jap" was part of a motivational address to the newly arrived untried American soldiers in New Guinea. In the series, it is included in an aside to Eichelberger (Brian McDermott) and one of his aides. Does the change really matter? It may, depending on a consideration of the discourse. A clue in this regard is contained in the television statements promoting the series:

January 1942 — we were under siege. Thanks for the deceit England! Thanks for nothing America! Now we can tell you the true story.

The narrative voice is contained particularly in the "we" and the "you" in this statement and perpetuates the sense of the directness and the omniscient authority of this address. "You" in the audience, in other words, are about to receive the "truth". In a similar vein, other promotions maintained that "Now the secret story can be told" and "This is how Australia learned to stand on her own two feet". The latter statement was complemented by scriptwriters Williamson and Whitburn's producing contemporary documents in their attempt to demonstrate the relevance of Australia's position in 1941-42 to Australia in the mid-1980s.

Whitburn cites a Joint Strategic Communique of February 1942 which refers to American plans to fall back to the defence lines of Alaska, Hawaii and Panama on the assumption that the Japanese would conquer all of Australia. Similarly, Williamson offers an American document from 7 March 1942 which reveals that the British had lost all interest in the Pacific area, including Australia and New Zealand, except in the way it affected the Middle East. According to Admiral Turner, the British believed that although Australia and New Zealand were lost the war could still be won by the Allies.

The point to these documents, and to the series in general according to Williamson, was that Australia suddenly found itself alone and friendless in a big bad world. We're still alone and friendless in a big bad world and we have got to come to terms with that fact.

Don't expect, argues Williamson, your big and powerful friends to come to your aid in a crisis unless it is in their interest. Through selection and interpretation of characters and events The Last Bastion expresses this. There are three main "figures of
knowledge”: that is, characters who articulate the "truth" or "reality" of a situation within the series. They are Frederick Shedden (Neil Fitzpatrick), Secretary of the Department of Defence, General Thomas Blamey, Commander-in-Chief of the Australian Military Forces, and, of course, John Curtin (Michael Blakemore), although Ben Chifley (Bill Hunter) could have been included in this category.

Curtin is the most significant figure in this regard and there appears little point to the prologue set in Washington in 1944 except to establish the importance of Curtin as the dominant authority in the text. The prologue fades from Curtin's comment to Roosevelt “that it was a bloody close shave” to the newsreel footage of the German invasion of Poland in September 1939. Within the conventions and heroic parameters of popular drama, Curtin proved to be ideal material, as William son readily admits:

It is one of those cases where a man who was not thought to have the qualities of the job, because he was thought to be ... too vacillating, too weak, anti-conscriptionist, suddenly gets the job and blossoms. That’s good drama, too. It is a situation of character growth in a situation of extreme duress.1

Also, it was Curtin who provided the title for the series in his 1942 appeal to President Roosevelt:

We are the last bastion between you and the West Coast of America. If you let us fall, America itself is in danger.

But above all else, it is Curtin who realizes that, the whole world is in flames. In the larger scheme of things Australia doesn’t matter a damn ... Let’s get off our backsides and do something about it!

He articulates the “truth”, accusing Australians of failing to realize the gravity of the situation, attending football matches, race meetings and night clubs. He represents the situation, attending football matches, race meetings, etc., in order to deliver speeches which tend to destroy the carefully worked out contemporary ambience and to foreground the discursive basis of the whole series. Walking along the colonnades of the Australian War Memorial he reminds Blamey that: “No one ever wins a war. When are we ever going to learn, Tom?”

A less conspicuous figure of knowledge is the Secretary of the Defence Department, Frederick Shedden, who, according to the series, anticipated Great Britain’s inability to assist Australia and, hence, the need to turn to the United States as far back as 1929. His criticisms of Churchill—emanate from this position of authority and assist the audience’s reading of the conflict between Churchill and successive Australian leaders. Churchill’s position regarding the use of the Australian troops, and the struggle for authority with a recalcitrant colony, is never established as legitimate within the dominant discourse.

Consequently, the series only selects certain activities and attitudes involving the British leader. Churchill’s reference to Gallipoli could only be included to provide the audience with a position to read his comments and behaviour in the confrontation over the deployment of the Australian troops:

If they [Australians] got on with the job at Gallipoli in the last war we would have swept the Dardanelles. You can’t breed a decent race out of convicts and Irishmen.

At a time when Britain was battling for her very survival, the only impression one gets of Churchill is of a man totally preoccupied with making disparaging remarks about the background of Menzies (“grocer’s son with a flea in his ear”) and Curtin, or plotting to undermine

Concluded on p. 87

1. ibid.
Leading film critics and industry personnel were asked to list their Top 10 films for 1984. Any film seen last year qualified for inclusion.

Compiled by Patricia Amad

Rod Bishop
Phillip Institute of Technology, Melbourne

1. Camminaccomina
Neglected, under-rated and missing more than two hours, Ermanno Olmi's bitter sweet critique of the Nativity fable is still good enough to recall the greatness of Carl Dreyer.

2. Paris, Texas
A seamless collaboration of talent, with most of Wim Wenders' previous films resonating through this atmospheric saga of American family life.

3. In This Life's Body
Although screenings are rare, this powerfully honest two-and-a-half-hour autobiography made by veteran experimentalist Corinne Cantrill was the Australian film of the year; at least a hundred times better than Razorback.

4. Yol
Tormented view of power and authority in modern Turkey from Yilmaz Guneys who directed the film from gaol before dying in exile in France.

5. Meantime
Mike Leigh's bleak portrayal of a chronically unemployed working-class family was made for television, but ranks with the finest of British realist cinema.

6. Once Upon a Time in America
Two American gangster sagas released during 1984 were encased in a view of a drug-soaked America slowly anaesthetizing itself against civilized behaviour. Sergio Leone aimed a little high, but his intelligent, seductive direction more than made up for his 10-year absence from the screen.

7. Scarface
Undermined by some indulgent crane shots and the 'star' quality surrounding Al Pacino, Brian de Palma is surprisingly restrained with this allegoric vision of the U.S.'s cocaine mafia.

8. Videodrome
David Cronenberg's gently ironic satire of the horror genre used an intelligent, if fanciful, script based on a conspiracy of Right Wing terrorists manipulating video technology to create brain tumors in America's scum population.

9. Burroughs
Affectionate, humorous, and sober view of the father of the 'beat generation' by Howard Brookner; the cantankerous, dusty septuagenarian writer is still making cracks about his methadone treatment.

10. Out of the Blue
American film saved in production by the ubiquitous Dennis Hopper who also turns in a harrowing performance as a suicidally neurotic, working-class father struggling with his street-wise daughter to make sense of a low-life, 'white trash' society.

Sandra Hall
The Bulletin

In no particular order:
Silkwood (Mike Nichols)
The Ploughman's Lunch (Richard Eyre)
Fanny och Alexander (Fanny and Alexander, Ingmar Bergman)
Greystoke: the Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes (Hugh Hudson)
Il gattopardo (The Leopard, Luchino Visconti, full-length version)
Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom (Steven Spielberg)

Paul Harris
"Film Buffs' Forecast", 3RRR, Melbourne

These are the 10 films that I enjoyed seeing this year. It was quite an effort to compile this list; filmmaking is either at a low ebb or I am ageing faster than I thought.

Narayama bushi-ko (The Ballad of Narayama, Shohei Imamura)
Broadway Danny Rose (Woody Allen)
Entre nous (Diane Kurys)
Fast Talking (Ken Cameron)
Gremlins (Joe Dante)
Heller wahn (Labour of Love, Margaretha Von Trotta)
Meantime
Pauline a la plage (Pauline at the Beach, Eric Rohmer)
Splash (Ron Howard)
Swing Shift (Jonathan Demme)
Ivan Hutchinson
The Seven Network and The Video Age, Melbourne

In no particular order:
Once Upon a Time in America
El norte (Gregory Nava)
Trading Places (John Landis)
Underfire (Roger Spottiswood)
The Right Stuff (Phillip Kaufman)
Le retour de Martin Guerre
(The Return of Martin Guerre, Daniel Vigne)
Un dimanche à la campagne
(A Sunday in the Country, Bertrand Tavernier)
Racing with the Moon (Richard Benjamin)
The Big Chill (Lawrence Kasdan)
The Ploughman's Lunch

Michael Koller
Secretary, Melbourne Cinematheque

1. Carmen (Carlos Saura)
2. Splash
3. The Terminator (James Cameron)
4. Underfire
5. Den enfaldage moedaran (The Simple-Minded Murderer, Hans Alfredson)
6. Fast Talking
7. The Right Stuff
8. Entre nous
9. La balance (Bob Swaim)
10. Pauline at the Beach

Richard Lowenstein
Director

A list of the five best and five worst films of 1984, I would be hard-pressed to find more than five to put in my top ten for this year.

Best Five of 1984
Stranger Than Paradise (Jim Jarmusch)
The Brother From Another Planet (John Sayles)
Le bal (Ettore Scola)
Paris, Texas
Metropolis (Fritz Lang, original version)

Worst Five of 1984
Conan, The Destroyer (Richard Fleischer)
Silver City (Sophia Turkiewicz)
My First Wife
Where the Green Ants Dream (Werner Herzog)
Dune (David Lynch)
I have left out Strikebound because, after sitting through 40 viewings of it around the world, I don't know whether it should be in the best five or the worst five.

Scott Murray
Cinema Papers, Melbourne

The Leopard
Then, in alphabetical order:
The Big Chill
An Englishman Abroad
La femme d'à côté
The Hypothesis of a Stolen Painting
Nicaragua: no pasaran
Reckless

Ian Pringle
Director

1. Pauline at the Beach
2. Paris, Texas
3. Light Years Away
4. The Big Chill
5. Silkwood
6. King Blank
7. I'll Be Home For Christmas
8. Tender Mercies
9. The Muppets Take Manhattan
10. The Night at Varennes

Tom Ryan
"The Sunday Show", 3LO, Melbourne

In alphabetical order:
Daniel (Sidney Lumet)

Neil Jillett
The Age, Melbourne

I find it impossible to list a 10-best in any sane order this year, so this list is a bit eccentric.
Best Film (by several kms): La nuit de Varennes (The Night at Varennes, Ettore Scola)
Best Australian film: My First Wife (Paul Cox), with Razorback (Russell Mulcahy) close behind.
Best American Film: Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom

Other admired films in no particular order:
Sally och friheten (Sally and Freedom, Gunnell Lindblom)
El norte
Trading Places
Eating Raoul
La dame aux camélias (The Lady of Flames, Robert van Ackeren)

Gremmins

Natalie Miller
Director, Sharmill Films and the Langford Cinema

Ascendancy (Edward Bennett)
Le bal
Stranger than Paradise
Betrayal
Mean Time
Paris, Texas
Kenira — Diary of a Strike (Tom Zubrycky)

Peter Thompson
Sunday, Sydney

In no particular order:
Nineteen Eighty-Four (Michael Radford)
Un amour de Swann (Swann in Love, Volker Schlondorff)
Gremmins
Splash
Danton (Andrzej Wajda)
Never Cry Wolf
Silkwood
Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes

Kim Williams
Chief executive, Australian Film Commission

1. Yol
2. Nicaragua: no pasaran
3. Nineteen Eighty-Four
4. Carmen
5. Strikebound
6. My First Wife
7. Scherzo del destino in agguato (Scherzo, Lina Wertmüller)
8. Annie's Coming Out
9. Silver City
10. The Big Chill
Although Bill Conti's name is most immediately associated with his music for the first of the Rocky trilogy (John G. Avildsen, 1976), he has written the music scores for a range of critically successful films: Paul Mazursky's Blume in Love (1973), Harry and Tonto (1974) and An Unmarried Woman (1977); John G. Avildsen's Slow Dancing in the Big City (1978) and The Karate Kid (1984); and Phillip Kaufman's The Right Stuff (1983). Conti spent two weeks in Sydney recording the music for The Coolangatta Gold where Dorre Koeser interviewed him.

Your music is very sensitive to moods, often very dramatic . . .

I have always liked music which evokes something in you, which is why I admire the dramatic composers, the real ones from the past from whom we all steal.

Whether it is supposed to make you happy or cry or be afraid, music has to communicate something, but not just intellectually: it has to have an emotional message. That is the kind of music I like to hear, therefore it is the kind of music I like to write.

Is there any style of music which you prefer?

I prefer changing. I have just finished Mass Appeal, with Jack Lemmon and Charles Durning, which has a baroque score. I am not saying it is better than Bach, but it is totally baroque music. It was fun. The Karate Kid is a movie that has pan pipes, a big orchestra and rock 'n' roll, all when it is needed. The Right Stuff is purely symphonic, but also has some synthesized music.

All my colleagues are trained in classical music, but our ears are open to today's music; we are just like musical sponges in a sense. If a director says to me he wants Mozart, I'll give him Mozart; it doesn't matter to me. I understand and can write in the styles of Mozart, Beethoven and Mahler, but if you want rock 'n' roll, I can write it. You have to be prepared to master all styles of music — that is, unless you have your trademark, which means you only write a certain kind of music and people only call you if they have a picture that works in those terms.

What is your approach when you are given a film to look at?
Two composers — Bill Conti

Kerri Dean (Josephine Smulders) and Steve Lucas (Joss McWilliam), young lovers in Igor Auzins' The Coolangatta Gold.

Once you have seen the movie and found that it excites you in some way, you then meet with the director and perhaps the producer. You discuss where the music would go and why, the size of the orchestra, how big the music is, if there is a restriction on the number of musicians because of the budget and so on.

As well as the many administrative problems there are creative problems: for instance, when the director says he would like the music to begin at a certain point and you don't agree. I would then ask for a motivation, just as an actor would. Why does the music start here? What point of view does the music take? Am I supposed to be telling the audience something? Whose point of view is it?

Most of the time there is agreement about where the music starts and ends, and what its nature should be. Those initial, conceptual things are critical. On some movies you don't agree about the concept, and you may decide not to do the movie together.

If, however, I choose to go ahead with it, I am given a video cassette of the film, from which I take the specific timings.

Do you ever feel restricted by the timings, by having to compose five seconds here and 50 seconds there?

Not at all. When a composer is writing music for music's sake, he decides that the music is to go in a particular direction. He takes the turn and the music follows until it wants to go in another direction. In a film, when the film turns left you turn left.

The form presents its restrictions, but it is not a problem. The goal of a film composer is not to have complete, crazy freedom; the goal is to follow the film. Sometimes you can do it right to the frame — every time something happens on the screen the music goes plank — or you can be generic. Sometimes long sweeping lines make the cuts go away or the cutting in a movie can be highlighted by hitting those cuts with music changes. If I do something that is long and linear, and the cuts are going by, and I am not pointing them out, you are following the music. It works hand in hand. You can be very precise or very loose, depending on the quality of the movie — the quality that it has, not the value quality.

I don't ever feel restricted because there is a 25-second or four-minute cue. The last two reels of The Coolangatta Gold, for instance, are 20 minutes of music without stopping. That is a lot of music. So, in a case like that, one has to ask if it is too much. I don't know. It just has to fit the movie.

Do you rely heavily on a music editor?

For the specific timings; I don't go around with a stopwatch. The music editor takes the particular scenes, and breaks them down, on typewritten sheets, to the hundredths of a second.

The music editor system has always existed in the U.S.; it is not that way in Australia and it wasn't that way in Europe for quite a while, too. There, they would just use a stopwatch.

Do you prefer the American system?

Yes. I began in Europe, so it is not as if I don't know how it works the other way; but the American way is more precise. My end of the business is double-headed: I have to be very good technically, and I also have to make music. The technical end I don't even want to think about. It must be perfect and there are people who do that.

On The Coolangatta Gold, we had a music editor. The film was sent to the U.S., and he took off all the timings that we needed for the movie. After that, the music is composed to those timings and recorded, which means contracts.
Two composers — Bill Conti

Two composers — Bill Conti

A ballet sequence from The Coolangatta Gold. Conti also composed for a ballet sequence in Slow Dancing in the Big City.

The recording session for The Coolangatta Gold at the Sydney Town Hall on 10 September 1984. Composer Bill Conti is conducting.

The Coolangatta Gold is a strong picture which needs a lot of music and a big orchestra, which is always good for a composer. In terms of the music and the experience of coming here, it worked out just fine. In terms of timing, it was tight. Everything in Australia was synchronized at the same time for the kind of recording that we did, symphonic recording and locations such as the Opera House and Town Hall, which are pretty cumbersome things to get together.

The Opera House has not been used for recording film music before . . .

I don't take any credit for that; the crew should. They did a great job.

How long did you actually spend writing for “The Coolangatta Gold”?

Three weeks writing in the U.S. and two weeks working here. The writing is part of it, but there is also the looking, the note-taking and the concept talks with the director. It was five weeks of actually writing, conducting and putting it all together.

What were your first impressions of “The Coolangatta Gold” that inspired the great range of musical styles in the film?

The film has a few things going for it, rather than just one thing. The spectacular photography and amazing locations, for instance, can be approached in a certain way musically, symphonically. It is an intense, well-written story about young people today — that gives another approach. Someone wants to be in a rock ’n’ roll band, and so on. All these aspects set the parameters of an eclectic score in which you have different kinds of music and which, hopefully, weave together to make a whole experience.

Of your earlier scores, the one for “Slow Dancing in the Big City” is possibly the most dramatic. What was your experience on that film?

Oh, wonderful because I got to write a ballet. In fact, I got to write two ballets because [director] John Avildsen didn’t think the first one was right. John is very forward; he has an idea and goes after it. There is about 10 minutes of music in the film when no one talked: I liked that. The movie didn’t do any business and I don’t know why. I think it is a neat little movie.

Why didn’t Avildsen like the first ballet?

There was a mis-something between choreographer, director and myself. My idea of contemporary dance and what they are listening to does not always work.

The film has a few things going for it, rather than just one thing. The spectacular photography and amazing locations, for instance, can be approached in a certain way musically, symphonically. It is an intense, well-written story about young people today — that gives another approach. Someone wants to be in a rock ’n’ roll band, and so on. All these aspects set the parameters of an eclectic score in which you have different kinds of music and which, hopefully, weave together to make a whole experience.
Edited by Peter Beilby and Ross Lansell

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Interviewed by Ivan Hutchinson

Brian May is one of Australia's best-known composers for films. Since the last interview with him for Cinema Papers¹, he has had the experience of working on a major film in Hollywood, as well as recording in Melbourne the soundtrack for another film, currently among the top box-office films in the U.S. To bring the career of this highly successful Adelaide-born musician up to date, Hutchinson interviewed him at his Melbourne home. He began by asking May how the commission for writing the score to Richard Franklin's Cloak and Dagger came about.

I suppose it almost predates the time of Psycho II. I went to the U.S. in the middle of June 1983 because my stocks were rather high with the level of acceptance of The Road Warrior (Mad Max 2). I tended to get a very good spin-off from the score, particularly within the industry. So I was quite keen at that stage to try and make my break.

I had an interview lined up for Psycho II principally because Richard Franklin was the director and he has always liked my work, but I also had an interview with the producer of the film (Allan Carr). Both were pretty keen and it seemed as if I had a good chance of getting that score because it was not going to be a big-budget film.

There were all sorts of views as to what the music for Psycho II was to be — whether it should regurgitate Bernard Herrmann² or be a completely different score — but I was considered in the running for it. On my return to Australia, I heard that the shooting had turned out much better than expected and that the studio [Universal] had decided to pour a lot of the budget into the music. The result was that Jerry Goldsmith was chosen as composer and he did a wonderful score.

I was not at all disappointed that they chose Jerry because he has been good for me in America, speaking highly of me to his top people. He gave me a personal credibility, in print and verbally, above that which I had gained from The Road Warrior, Mad Max and a few other things.

The connection has continued in a way because when Richard went on to do Cloak and Dagger it was generally considered that Jerry

¹. No. 17, August-September 1978, pp.32-33.
². Herrmann wrote the score for Psycho.
Two composers — Brian May

Two composers — Brian May

would do the music. But when it was near completion Jerry found himself heavily committed with Gremlins and Supergirl. He became unavailable and then, because of the good impact I had made with The Road Warrior, particularly in Los Angeles when I had been there before, my name again came up. Richard, of course, was very keen to use me; but there were other people as well as Richard who were to make the decision.

Who did make that decision? Were there any difficulties with the Musicians' Union, for example?

The decision was made by the studio [Universal] where they have a head of music. Producer Allan Carr was happy about it; in fact, Jerry himself had put in a kind word for me, and of course Richard, being the director, had certainly a strong say but obviously not the say.

Once they were committed to my doing the score, dealing with the Musicians' Union was actually quite different from what I thought it would be. At that time I had an excellent agent called Robert Light — there are only a handful of agents who handle composers — and he saw the Musicians' Union. To my joy the union was very much aware of my internationally proven track record and, of course, my name seemed to be so easy. The union was very much aware of my having an excellent agent called Robert Light — there are only a handful of agents who handle composers — and he saw the Musicians' Union. To my joy the union was very much aware of my being a member of the Musicians' Union. It is quite different to Australia.

With regard to the orchestration, is it still usual for composers to do their own orchestrating?

On most major features, a composer is hired to compose the score and there is a budget allocation for somebody to orchestrate it. On some occasions, the composer has the time to orchestrate it himself but it is not usual. I was very lucky because once again Jerry was good to me and suggested that Herb Spencer, who had worked for him and was John Williams' orchestrator, should be the person to have. But I was unlucky because Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom was running late and Herb couldn't leave it to be ready for me. So Jerry very kindly spoke with a well-respected musician, Dr Fred Steiner, who has been a famous composer in his own right and who has orchestrated occasionally for Jerry when Arthur Morton has been unavailable. In fact, Fred orchestrated quite a bit of Poltergeist, which was interesting. Because of Jerry's friendship with him, Fred agreed to orchestrate for me, which was unusual because he doesn't normally do that. It was really a joy for me, because it was a chance to work with one of the people who has been through the thick of Hollywood, and one of the most well-versed musicians I have met.

What sort of score did you present to him and in what sort of condition?

I thought you might ask that. [Laughs.] This is what I actually wrote. [May produces some sections of his short score for Cloak and Dagger.] It is a nine-stave sketch with the woodwind, trumpet, trombones, tuba, horn, keyboard, harps, strings and percussion track.

Fred worked with me for about six weeks and he would come in each day when I had a cue ready. We would look at the piece of film for which I had written the music, then I would play it in a rough way. It was somewhat embarrassing because he is such a fine pianist. Anyway, somehow we staggered through that; he understood my ideas and, occasionally, he suggested something, such as adding a harp at a particular moment. But essentially it is just put down as a short score with all the timings and dialogue. Fred was wonderful because he double-checked everything in case I had made a mistake in my timing cues. He was inspirational to work with.

What are the differences in working conditions on a film in this country and the U.S.?

It is much easier over there. At Universal, where I was on the lot for about three months, they gave me a lovely bungalow and duplicated the set-up in my hotel so I could write in either place. I had the same sort of equipment as I have here, but there the emphasis was on what you needed to get the job done. Really, the only thing that was on my mind was composing the score of the film.

How long did you have to do that?
I had something like 10 weeks before working with the music editor, which is a lot longer than I have ever experienced. A music editor is, once again, rarely used in Australia. Even on television in the U.S. every production has a music editor. Basically, the music editor is the composer's right arm; he supplies the timing breakdown of each cue and his first job is to sit down at the spotting session (where you work out with the producer, director, etc., where the music will be) and write copious notes on everything that is to happen. He then starts delivering the timings with the notes. He communicates constantly to the editor, the director and the effects people any of your wishes. So he is, say, an extension of the composer.

After I had finished the composition, Fred would do the orchestration, come back to me and I would check that everything was O.K. Then it would be photographed and each day the music editor would get his copy; he would check it out on the film to see that everything was synchronized.

Was he a professional musician?

Oh yes. The guy I had was Jim Wideman and he has a Bachelor of Music, and is a fine pianist, a good singer and a very clever guy who loved his job, who loved being an extension of the composer. He would also mark the film with "streamers" and "punches" and all sorts of aids. If I had to "hit" something, he would put a red streamer into it. This was prepared by him beforehand, checked by him against the score and, when we came to record everything, there wasn't anything which wasn't right. I also used the system that Jerry used called "The Newman System", which not a lot of the composers use.

Whose system is it: Alfred's or Lionel's?

Lionel Newman's. You take the bars of music and the music editor punches a hole in the film at the start of each bar or the start of every two bars. As you can imagine, because film music is not in the same metre all the time, only a qualified musician could punch the thing so it would come out right. I would mark them in where I wanted the punches and instead of having an audio click-track, which can give somewhat mechanical results, there is a visual click-track. When you conduct, you see a great white light coming towards you through the "punch" when the film is being projected. Quite a lot of the cues I did this way are actually conducted to the "punches". You might be a fraction of a second out but you could collect it on the next "punch". It gives you a little bit more in the way of performance quality and a little more flexibility in the conducting.

With the booking of the musicians, there was a music contractor and she obtained a stunning orchestra for me. I had some of my idols in that orchestra.

Were you as much in awe of them as they were of you?

Well, there are some interesting stories about that because once again everyone was very kind. I was on the studio lot one day when the music editor came in and said, "Hey, Maurice Jarre is recording in the studio and he wants to meet you. Can you come down?" So I dropped what I was doing and went down there. I thought he was probably in his lunch-hour, but when I walked in he was rehearsing a cue. He stopped the cue in the middle of the recording and ran over to me. He hugged me, kissed me on both cheeks, pushed me up on the podium and said, "Gentlemen, this is the composer of Mad Max and The Road Warrior. It was really the red-carpet treatment.

What about the musicians themselves and their quality? Was it as you hoped?

The biggest difference between here and the U.S. is the attitude of the musicians. Everybody who plays music there really seems to love music. On my sessions, their ages ranged from 25 to 65 and they had played for just about everybody, yet they were excited and interested, and kept running back with their coffees at breaks to look at and listen to the playbacks.

That is not always the case here . . .

No, and there is a variety of reasons for that. Mainly, the difference is that to be a Hollywood musician is considered over there a top job, whereas here some musicians don't have the same interest in film music. They would rather be playing jazz or doing symphony work. In the Cloak and Dagger orchestra, I had principal players from the front desks of the Los Angeles Philharmonic playing seconds and thirds.

We had a lot of fun incidentally with my accent; some of them couldn't understand it, so I put on an American accent and they loved that.

How many days did you have to record the score of "Cloak and Dagger"?

There were 72 minutes of music in a 100 minute or so film so it was a huge score. I had two days with a big orchestra — there were 80 people in the big orchestra — half a day with a small orchestra of about 40, and another half a day doing the "source music". There was some Mexican music, and even two Russian themes with a balalaika orchestra, which I wrote.

I was highly impressed with the musicians' attitude on the job. They took 10 minutes on the first day to come to grips with my style of writing and after that, from the first performance of a music cue.
Bill Gooley's name has been mentioned in the credits of more Australian films than any other. While in charge of feature liaison for Colorfilm, he has viewed more rushes on Australian features and documentaries than probably any other Australian. This gives him a unique view of Australian film and contact with the best talents in the industry. His contribution was recognized at the 1983 AFI Awards when he was presented with the Raymond Longford Award.

During the course of the following interview, Gooley referred to his report books, which contain daily notes on all the films he has been responsible for at Colorfilm. Because of space restrictions, the conversation has been substantially edited, including many of the sections in which he has attributed his knowledge and success in the industry to a number of other people, and his comments on the recognition of the influence and support of the management over the years at Colorfilm. He would mention Phil Budden OBE, Doug Dove and Murray Forrest, as well as many other people who are part of the team at Colorfilm.

Gooley has a marvellous talent for saying nice things about people, and had to be prompted to talk about any of the negative aspects of his work. What was going to be a discussion of the way laboratories have changed with the industry became a discussion about the people involved, something which would hardly surprise anyone who knows him.

Tell me your story back as far as you can remember. Where did you grow up?

In Redfern in Sydney. I was born during the Depression in 1932 and grew up during World War 2. Childhood was never the wonderful thing that it should have been; it was just a difficult time. So I used to go into the dream factory every Saturday afternoon and lose myself for three hours, which was just wonderful.

As I got older, I tended to go not only to the Saturday afternoon sessions but also to the morning ones. I lived fairly close to the city and used to walk in. I would meet different people who would want to see different movies, so I would go four and five times on a Saturday; it became a way of life. I loved every second of it.

I left school at 15 and decided I had to get a job. There was a place just down the road in Chippendale known as Percival Film Laboratories. I worked there, expecting to see all the actors and actresses coming through but found that I was stuck in the dark room and didn't see anyone. I persevered with that for a few years, then went to the Smiling Snap where I did little photos of weddings and christenings. I soon got bored with that and worked for a retail store, but the management didn't like me talking to anybody. I found that terribly strange. So I went back to a laboratory and I haven't left for 30 years.

The place was Filmcraft, which is where Colorfilm is now. Clients never went into the laboratory, and you didn't communicate with anybody. You lived in this closed circle of people who made all of these wonderful black and white features and newsreels for release in Australia, but you never became involved. You just worked your eight or nine hours and then went home.

At first, I worked on the black and white processor that put through positive film at 120 feet a minute. I would cut the ends off it between reels, put it in a can and send it back. I never saw anything.

Then you graduated to the wet end . . .

That was the big time. You actually put film on, topped up the tanks and were responsible for the machine while it was running.

Was the bulk of your work 35 mm?

Yes. The Commonwealth Film Unit [now Film Australia] was one of our biggest clients. There weren't many independent people around.

Did you do any of the newsreels?

For a while, Movietone was above us in the building, but it folded. I loved newsreels. The Melbourne Cup coming and going; caravans out at the airport; processing film up in aeroplanes: it was all exciting.

So when did it change from being just a job?

Filmlab and Automatic Film Laboratories merged at one stage because business was not good and became Colorfilm, which eventually moved to Camperdown.
guess that was when it changed for me. There was the excitement about the coming of color. Black and white business was fading and all the prints coming from America were in color. But because processing color meant a lot of money, many questions came up: Is there enough in this country to make it work? What is going to happen?

Rosemary and I had just got engaged and we had to ask ourselves if I should stay in the business. Was it something that would keep me healthy and happy enough in my life? I decided there was no way I could get out of it and I should stay, whether it worked or not.

We had color machines but there wasn't much being shot. The 35 mm color print was processed at nine feet a minute. You sat there and watched all the sprockets explode, and some of them would be evil.

Was the machine imported?

No, it was home-made, as was the positive machine. The latter sounded just like the African Queen.2 You worry that if it squeaked one way it was going to break down, which it did every couple of hours.

We were never certain how long color might last, so we didn't employ a lot of staff because we couldn't have them sitting on their behinds. What staff we had learnt to do everything, working between 12 and 14 hours a day. If someone was filming and they wanted the work print the next day, you had to learn to change your shift in mid-stream and work all night so you could process the negative and get the work print ready. All that was exciting and once it gets into your blood it never leaves you.

What features were being produced in those early days of color?

There were very few features. There were a few documentaries, but very little apart from commercials, such as the Peter Stuyvesant ads. Then we did The Weird Mob (Arthur Grant, 1966), but we never completed it because it went back to England as a long cut.

Adam's Woman (William C. Butler, 1970) also went back overseas to be cut, but we processed the negative and did the work print. We were lucky to get that because they could have taken it back to the U.S. We had no recognition of how much or how little we were in color. But because process­

The other film that was a landmark for me was Hands of Corkman Joyce (tele-feature, 1973), which Johnny McLean shot [with Vincent Monton]. It was, to my knowledge, the first film ever finished here. They were trying to get a feature that day's shooting would come up on a plane at night. I would collect it from the airport and bring it back to the lab. We would process the negative, cut it, then print and process it. It was a valuable experience before the lab. It was complete involvement. I would go home for a couple of hours' sleep and make sure I was ready to work during the day to catch up on what I hadn't done. Because it was a once-off, we couldn't employ another 10 people because there would have been nothing for them to do when it was finished.

It was a valuable experience because I hadn't cut negative before. It was Maggie Cardin, the old tyrant that she is, who taught me the importance of negative. She would sit there and say, "This is how you do it. No, you are doing it wrong. Don't put your hand there. Where are your gloves? Why are you doing this?" Everybody had to have gloves and white coats on because she wouldn't work with anybody who didn't. And a lot of the negative cutters whom she has trained don't know how to do anything differently because she wouldn't allow them to.

It was also valuable because of the wonderful communication between John McLean and myself. It opened my eyes because all of a sudden I was in a situation in which I had to know what people wanted. My attitudes changed completely. I made stipulations on points; to read the script before the rushes arrived; to see who I would then take it to the airport at six o'clock in the morning to catch the first flight back. It was complete involvement. I would go home for a couple of hours' sleep and make sure I was ready to work during the day to catch up on what I hadn't done.

There was no point in playing silly buggers: a mistake was made and that was all there was to it. But unless you experience it you don't really know the effect of a mistake like that. It is very difficult because somebody in the lab on the end of a machine doesn't necessarily realize that a director, actors and a crew have labored for hours to get to that point.

Obviously your attitude influences Colorfilm's standing in the industry because people expect that kind of liaison. Were you aware of that at the time?

You are always conscious of competition between laboratories. I was conscious that I was doing something different to the others, and that it was taking an enormous amount of my life and my time. But I never backed off because Rosemary and I had made that commitment a long time before.

I am not a half-way person; I have to be in there all the way.

Rushes can get boring and the only way to make them alive is if you have read the script and become involved. I know where every foot of film is going to fit into the script, and what the director and cinematographer are trying to put on the screen. It becomes very real to me.

At Colorfilm, we don't stand on the end of a machine and process film; we sit on the end of a 'phone and talk to people. The company has allowed me to expand and draw people into the lab. You don't tell a director of photography what to do; you ask him what he is going to do and he tells you. The man is talented or he wouldn't be where he is.

On The Devil's Playground (Ian Baker, 1976), for instance, it was all dark and blue. But I knew that was the feeling Ian was after. So I didn't send reports to those on location saying, "What are you trying to do? The whole thing has gone blue." That would upset any director of photography.

Producers and directors shouldn't be involved with the day-to-day concern of what their picture looks like at that stage. So I have to know the production secretary or production manager well enough to be able to tell them what I think of the DOP's work and clear any queries with them: "Did he mean to under-expose that half a stop or is it a mistake?", and they will come back and say, "Yes, he meant to do it", or "No, he didn't."

Have there been any features on which you have liaised that were particularly interesting?

They have all had their joys and I have grown with them. Caddie (Peter James, 1976) brought back memories to me because it was set

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2. Throughout this interview, the style is director of photography, not director-
Top: Jack Thompson and Helen Morse in *Caddie* (1976) "brought back memories to me". Above: Tim Burns and Noni Hazlehurst in *Monkey Grip* (1982); "wonderful, a beautifully-lit film with a wonderful actress". Below: director of photography Don McAlpine during the filming of *Breaker Morant* (1980).

in the era in which I grew up. I remember saying to producer Tony Buckley, “If the rabbit is not right, the film won't work.” When they shot that sequence, I rang Tony and said, “You've made the film; it doesn't need anything else. The man is just as I remember: his cart, his horse...”

You also did Buckley's next production, “The Irishman” (Peter James, 1979)...

That was shot on Agfa Gevaert, which was something we hadn't processed before. There were problems because we didn't know what the stock would do over time. There are no duping stages in Gevaert so the final negative had to go on to Eastman and all the opticals had to be made on Eastman and cut into Gevaert. Eventually the film ended up with this yellow, burnt-out look, which is what Peter wanted. It worked fine.

How about some of those other early-1970s films?

Let me look up my report books. These are the reports I did every day on films. They were never seen by other people and record the things that used to worry me. Shall we start with Picnic at Hanging Rock (Russell Boyd, 1975)?

The first day's shooting was 1 April 1975. It was an example of the joys of working with a great director of photography.

Had you worked with Russell Boyd before?

Only on odd things; not on a feature. Break of Day, which Russell shot in 1976, was also cinematically beautiful. It was a joy to see that happening in front of you.

Then there was The Devil's Playground, which was joyous to work on. The people were absolutely lovely. It is a fine film, adventurous and different. But I felt a lot of the stuff was under-exposed. It was all very low-key and, while it looked wonderful on film, I wonder what it would have looked like in a cinema where the projectionist didn't turn the lights up because there weren't enough people?

It was a problem but it worked because the grader, Arthur Cambridge, was able to get more out of the film than I ever thought anybody would be able to. He kept a continuity all the way through. If you remember the sequence when they find the boy drowned, well, there was nothing in the negative; you could hardly see a damn thing. I thought they ought to have reshot it but they said, “No, this is the way it is going to look”, and it works very well. So you learn all the time.

Mad Dog Morgan (Mike Molloy, 1976) is where I met Jeremy Thomas [producer]; I knew Jenny Woods [the production co-ordinator] from The Devil's Playground [on which she was production secretary]. A lot of people who have worked in the industry at the low end of the spectrum have worked their way up. Young people come out of an institute or a film school and say, “I am a director.” They may know their craft but they have to work at it before they get that title. All these small budget films are great; they learn by working. In this business, you may learn the basics by reading a book, but you have to go out and do the thing yourself.

An example is For Love or Money (1984). When I quoted for that film years ago we didn't know it was going to be as mammoth as it was. Those three girls [Margot Nash, Jeni Thornley, Megan Murchy] deserve a gold medal for the three years of work they put into it. They have learnt an enormous amount. Those years of going through the archival footages taught them that some stocks had to go from black and white on to a Fuji stock or on to an Eastman stock or a CRI, and so on. And we learnt, might I add!

It is exciting when you see people do something, then go on to something else. I have seen an enormous amount of people go from being production co-ordinators, production people or clapper loaders to being, say, producers or directors of photography. I am not just referring to men: many of the producers are women who do a damn fine job. They are amongst the best and are quite remarkable. They have never been scared of saying, “I don't know. Let me come in and find out.” Pat Lovell keeps saying, “Can I come and see what you're going to do?” So, she will come in and watch the optical department mark out, and understand that it takes hours to do.

We now open our gates to the...
people outside. We want them to come in, to know everybody in the building, to associate with some­one so that if there is a problem it can be discussed. We have guided tours through the lab for the ABC, from the Australian Film and Television School, from the New South Wales Institute of Technology. We are trying to make people understand why things can’t happen in five minutes.

One of the rewarding things about building relationships is that people stay loyal to the lab... They always stay loyal but I don’t blame anybody who says, “I only have so much money, I have to go somewhere else.”

I went to Cannes when they screened Breaker Morant (Don McAlpine, 1980). I don’t care who processed it or who made it, it was a fine Australian film. I felt that if I could help in some way to make the rest of the world know about it then I would. So when they asked me to help out, I handed out leaflets.

The only other time I went to Cannes was when My Brilliant Career (Don McAlpine, 1979) was screened. That was an experience because it was Rosemary’s first time overseas. My Brilliant Career went wonderfully well. I can remember an American saying to me, “How much did it cost?”, and I said, “I think it was $850,000”, and he said, “Yes, but how much did it cost to make?”. I said, “Maggie Fink [the producer] is over there. Go and ask her, but I think it cost $850,000.” “But the whole production?” This man was standing there open-eyed thinking, “I don’t believe this. He is telling me lies. You don’t make films at that cost.”

Were the Americans you have known difficult to work with?

No, they were very good. We made Ride a Wild Pony (1975) for Disney. Don Chaffey directed it, Geoff Burton shot it and Pom Oliver was the production secretary.

I enjoyed working with Chaffey, although I found him an emotional man. He screamed and yelled and hollered and did all sorts of strange things. Usually, we never allowed people to come into the grading because they would want to stop on every frame and change its color, and that just doesn’t work. Chaffey wanted to look at the negative he had shot for the ABC, which was being graded on the Hazeltine. As he was “the great director” from overseas, the ABC felt they should oblige him. They had been up there for a while when I walked in and there he was with a can of beer, having a cigarette. I just looked at him and said, “Put that out!” “What are you talking about?”, he replied. I said, “Put it out. Go downstairs, get rid of the beer and don’t ever smoke in this area again.” “It’s all safety film...”, he said. “It doesn’t matter. Get out!”. He couldn’t believe that he was being spoken to like that.

Here is another film on the list that got lost on the way, Summer of Secrets (Russell Boyd, 1976). Jim Sharman’s film. Then we did Both Ends Against the Middle which ended up as Raw Deal (Vincent Monton, 1977). That was a good shoot. Then we go through to The FJ Holden (David Gribble, 1977) and High Rolling (Don Burstall, 1977), Judy Davis’ first film.

We had trouble on The Getting of Wisdom (Don McAlpine, 1977). The film went splendidly. It was a great piece of work and it was good to be with the people. But when we were cleaning the negative for the second trial print off the original, which I hated doing, we scratched one reel of the final cut negative. We made a wet gate negative but there were some scenes that really didn’t work on it. Bruce Beresford [director] went to the opening night with the print off the original. What they did was to sit Rosemary and me in the first four rows of the theatre. Rosemary loved the film; I sat there and said, “That reel is coming up, I can’t look. Why did they sit me so close?” I could see was this mammoth scratch that was five foot wide. The whole film was ruined for me. But nobody else noticed it.

Summerfield (1977) was beautifully shot by Mike Molloy; he has an enormous talent. Long Weekend (Vincent Monton, 1977) was the first film to use Steadicam. They ran through the forest and the trees with it strapped on, which was interesting; I had never seen it before. The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith (Ian Baker, 1978) was a long shoot, but again it was interesting. I think it was a film made long before its time.

Mouth to Mouth (Tom Cowan, 1978), John Duigan’s second feature, was shot on 16 mm and blown up. That was an experience because we had never blown up a feature from 16 mm.

Until this stage you had only been blowing up shorter things?

Very little in fact. They either shot on 16 mm or they shot on 35 mm for features. Mouth to Mouth lent itself very well to be blown up; others don’t. The Night the Prowler (David Sanderson, 1978) is a 16 mm blow-up. It had a few problems because there was a lot of night shooting and the 16 mm wasn’t coping very well. If the 16 mm negative is great, then the blow-up will be great. They were happy with it, but there was some material which I thought was under-exposed; they couldn’t have got any lights into Centennial Park so they had to live with it.

Newsfront (Vincent Monton, 1978) was, in its time, a most exciting, intricate and worrying bit of film, and the biggest headache we ever had. We were processing black and white negative and it had to blend with the newsreel footage. Vince spent ages testing material and then we buggered some of it up: we scratched it and got spots on it. But, when we compared it with the old footage, it matched.

When the first print came off, someone commented that it was a “Technicolor nightmare”, with every shot a different stock and color...

Everything that was black and white had to go on to a color

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Fred Harden

In the first issue of Cinema Papers, Vince Monton interviewed Peter Watson of Victorian Film Laboratories. As with many of the articles in those early years, it was a technical discussion about film stocks and processes. At the time of the interview, the labs were preparing for the introduction of color television, something even they did not realize would have such an impact. Ten years later, Peter Watson and his son, Peter Watson jnr, talked about how they have maintained their independence in the market, the problems of managing in such a variable industry, and the effect that video has had on the laboratory.

You have been involved in film laboratories for a long time. How did you start?

Peter snr: During World War 2, I was doing metallurgy and Stan Adams was the photographer at the government laboratories at Maribyrnong. He made some films for the chemical warfare section and I became interested. So, when at the end of the war he said he wanted to go back to processing amateur movie films, I went with him.

We started in one room in a place in Box Hill processing mostly 9.5 mm black and white reversal film on a hand drum. We also had an ambition to do sound mixing and recording, which we did with home-made equipment. We did that from 1946 to about 1956 when it came to the stage when we had to get rid of the home-made stuff and get some better equipment. By this time, we were doing 16 mm color prints on Kodachrome, which was processed at Kodak.

What other labs were operating in Melbourne at that time?

Peter snr: There was Vern Wagstaff, who was operating earlier than us for the Department of Agriculture, and George Gamon, who was formerly from the government film labs and had opened up at Parkdale. Of course, there was also Herschells.

When I needed extra money to buy the new equipment Peter Lord came in, and we bought an Arri printer and a Maurer galvanometer for the sound. Until then, the film processing had been mostly 16 mm, then television arrived and there was a lot of messing around as various people experimented trying to make commercials. The format finally settled on was shooting 35 mm negative and reduction printing to 16 mm, with the soundtracks made on 16 mm and printed onto the reduction. It grew into quite a big industry because there were no videotape cartridges and everything went to air on 16 mm, so we used to get 50 or 100 print orders.

Then color television started looming so we had to get into color. We started slowly with one Eastmancolor machine doing internegs and prints off 16 mm Ektachrome originals. Kodak was processing the reversal, as were a few other labs such as one of the Gibson's and Cinevex, after they were bought out by Colorfilm. They had put in reversal processing to do television news which was something we didn't chase because we didn't want to work all night.

By this time, in the 1970s, we had scraped up enough money to buy two processing machines and two Bell & Howell printers, which in those days cost a fair whack. We did reasonably well but at that time the commercial print market had disappeared with the coming of videotape. We were also doing a lot of post-production on commercials and documentaries. We had started with Crawfords, which kept us entirely for about 20 years, then it started spreading work around. We did all of Homicide and Division 4.

We did a few features, including 2000 Weeks in 1967. Kevin Williams assembled the entire feature on the Oxberry with all the effects. The first print was off the dupe negative from the master positive; I forget how many prints it went into, maybe three or four at the most, but the film was not a success.

At the time of the introduction of color television everyone was quite sure that fast reversal films for news-gathering were going to be around for a long time. There was no real hint about ENG video taking over . . .
New Products and Processes

The Carver daylight operation wenge gate printer open for business.

Peter snr: There was a big explosion in reversal in the U.S. in the mid-1960s. At that stage, Kodak was making the best sound magnetic tape and film on the market but, in order to concentrate on Ektachrome, it dropped the lot. It made more profit with Ektachrome anyway. We felt the drop-off in the commercials print work from about 1974 but, as we were doing a lot of documentaries, we were doing quite well. In 1978-79 things started to get tough and in 1981-2 they got tougher. Peter Lord left, but since then we have made a bit of a recovery. The situation now is that we have plenty of work most of the time but the prices aren't very good.

Being independent now means that you don't have the guaranteed work such as a television station's series or mini-series that the other affiliated labs might have . . .

Peter snr: And you don't have the resources. If we owned a television station, as does Aitlab, we wouldn't be worried about losing money. Colorfilm is now owned by Greater Union and it is probably expected to make a profit.

You also face the problem of having no capital to invest in new buildings, and there always has to be room for another piece of equipment. So you end up in a maze of buildings. Nigel Buesst sums it up well in his facilities guide when he says that the Sydney labs are a bit classier than the Melbourne labs.

Peter jnr: Most of the people who make the decision where to send the film never go to the lab anyway, but the appearance is sometimes important.

When did you start being involved in the lab?

Peter jnr: I had always been interested in film and had been shooting film for as long as I can remember. I did some holiday work at VFL in between school and going to Swinburne to do the course in film and television. I left there after a year due to mutual dissatisfaction. After six months of being a vagrant I came here and mixed chemicals, went overseas, then came back and started running a processing machine. I did my apprenticeship in sound with Wally Shore and some Open Program courses. Now I am a company director, on paper, and taking over most of the manual work my father used to do, freeing him to look after the total operation.

Peter snr: He gets to do the interesting things while I sit here sorting out the arguments with the staff and customers. No technical person, if he is born into it, really wants to disappear into a mist of administration. I ought to be thinking about retiring of course, but it is heartening when you see the age of the people still working productively in Hollywood. It has caused the split into two Hollywoods, the old mob and the new young mob.

Our staff has been remarkably constant over the past 17 or 18 years and, as we have been around now for a while, the staff has aged with the firm. To a certain degree we are overstaffed, but that has always been a problem with labs: you might see people sitting around doing nothing today but tomorrow they will be flat out. That is another thing that has reduced the profit: the increase in wages with each award.

What other financial pressures are different today?

Peter snr: In the past we were able to buy new equipment from profits but we had to finance the two most recent machine purchases.

Have any of the changes in processing helped make it cheaper?

Peter snr: Kodak's philosophy is to make the processing simpler and more foolproof. This hasn't made it any cheaper but it is not as hard to keep everything right, which reflects in improved quality in the final print.

What processes are you running now?

Peter snr: Eastmancolor negative and positive, Ektachrome and black and white. The intermediate films go through negative process. The CRIs we still send to Australia. CRIs are probably going to disappear. Film Australia, which used to send us CRIs to do prints for them, are now sending intermediates. Kodak tried to simplify intermediate processing of CRIs but didn't really succeed. It is a very delicate stock and, because it is a reversal stock, you have to be very accurate with the thickness of the emulsions. A reversal image is formed on the emulsion that is in the film after the pictures have developed and bleached out. If there were any slight unevenness, which doesn't matter with negative, you will get streaks on the image and it is accentuated in gamma by a factor of about two and a half. It looks much worse on the final print.

The processing of interneg is much more difficult: you can make one master positive and strike off intermediates for distribution for big scale stuff. It is definitely better for the optical people for effects work. We think about colour, but the differences are a slight drop in colour saturation and in sharpness. It is perfectly adequate for 35 mm but, if you had to go through an interpositive to an interpositive and print from that, it is not in 16 mm, it does look a bit soft in the long shots.

What about the low contrast stocks for telecine transfer?

Peter snr: They have improved. But that brings up another grouch for the laboratories because sometimes the negative comes in for processing only and goes straight to tape, without even a workprint being struck. We haven't added a surcharge for processing only but we are going to have to do it. Our problem is that you can't do a change on the negative because you don't screen it, while every bit of workprint done is screened and checked. PBL's Glass Babies is developing only; Crawfords still get a surcharge for processing only but we are, for the time being, watching and keeping on our toes.

Peter jnr: The thing we have talked about most is building a viewing theatre.

Peter snr: It is very hard to say what the future is going to be. It is more a case of fighting for existence than looking to the future. The immediate threat is how we can condense our activities and make them more efficient, but you can't do that without curtailting your services. The night shift is a burden but I can't see people putting up with not getting their rushes overnight: with these high-cost series showing it is almost vital to see the footage before you strike sets or leave locations. We are, for the time being, watching and keeping on our toes.

Note: Stocks mentioned in this article are Eastmancolor Intermediate 2 (used as a positive or negative) Type 5243 and 7243. CRI is Eastmancolor Reversal Intermediate Type 5249. Print stocks mentioned are Eastmancolor Positive Type 5384 and Low Contrast Positive 5380.

58 — February-March CINEMA PAPERS
### Box-office Grosses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TITLE</th>
<th>Distributor</th>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>SYD.</th>
<th>MLB.</th>
<th>PTH</th>
<th>ADL.</th>
<th>BRI.</th>
<th>Total $</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>PERIOD</th>
<th>SYD.</th>
<th>MLB.</th>
<th>PTH</th>
<th>ADL.</th>
<th>BRI.</th>
<th>Total $</th>
<th>Rank</th>
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<tr>
<td>Silver City</td>
<td>FW</td>
<td>14.10.84 to 8.12.84</td>
<td>(5)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>130,930</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12.8.84 to 13.10.84</td>
<td>(2*)</td>
<td>(2*)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>64,448</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>My First Wife</td>
<td>RS</td>
<td>(2.2/2)</td>
<td>16,878</td>
<td>(8*/8)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>123,832</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td>(4.<em>/5</em>)</td>
<td>(4.<em>/5</em>)</td>
<td>(3*)</td>
<td>10,729</td>
<td>173,914</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Coolangatta Gold</td>
<td>HTS</td>
<td>(2*)</td>
<td>54,659</td>
<td>(2*)</td>
<td>34,170</td>
<td>31,345</td>
<td>120,174</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>36,910</td>
<td>21,735</td>
<td>(3*)</td>
<td>58,645</td>
<td>5</td>
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<td>Annie's Coming Out</td>
<td>HTS</td>
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<td>41,996</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>12,003</td>
<td>9,690</td>
<td>19,799</td>
<td>97,449</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>(3*)</td>
<td>(3*)</td>
<td>(1*)</td>
<td>16,288</td>
<td>20,209</td>
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<tr>
<td>The Slim Dusty Movie</td>
<td>GUO</td>
<td>(2)</td>
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<td>9,399</td>
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<td>Strikebound</td>
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<td></td>
<td>21,059</td>
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<td>Street Hero</td>
<td>RS</td>
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<td>3,983</td>
<td>(1)</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>17,841</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(3)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>886</td>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>6,338</td>
<td>8,801</td>
<td>3,610</td>
<td>24,923</td>
<td>43,672</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

#### Australian Total
- SYD: 178,154
- MLB: 174,081
- PTH: 61,684
- ADL: 29,434
- BRI: 81,681
- Total: 525,034

#### Foreign Total
- SYD: 174,081
- MLB: 61,684
- PTH: 29,434
- ADL: 81,681
- BRI: 525,034

#### Grand Total
- SYD: 352,235
- MLB: 235,765
- PTH: 91,168
- ADL: 173,115
- BRI: 1040,048
- Total: 1785,29

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1. Figures exclude N/A figures.
2. Box-office grosses of individual films have been supplied to Cinema Papers by the Australian Film Commission.
3. This figure represents the total box-office gross of all foreign films shown during the period in the area specified.
4. Continuing into next period.
5. Figures in parentheses 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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Prod. company... Flying Tiger Films
Prod. company... Panorama Television
Prod. company... Philippe Lepley Productions
Prod. company... Bill Nagle
Prod. company... Bill Nagle

SYNOPSIS: A School children and their teacher are kidnapped by a group of villains, who take them to a secret underground facility for questioning purposes. However, the children manage to escape and make their way back home, where they are reunited with their parents and the authorities.

WILLS AND BURKE - THE OLD WORLD STORY

Prod. company... Story Desert Ltd
Prod. company... Ken McDonald
Prod. company... Philip Galkin
Prod. company... Lance O'Neil
Prod. company... Synapsis

SYNOPSIS: The story of Burke and Wills.

A STREET TO DIE

Prod. company... Mermaid Beach Productions
Prod. company... Bill Bennett

SYNOPSIS: The violent crimes of Private Stephen Leacock and the exploits of the American League of the Americas during their time in Victoria, Australia. The Melbourne Police Force is called in to investigate the matter, leading to a series of events that will change the course of history.
Monticelli (Ann Winter), Belinda Giblin
Length...............................................100 mins
Sound editor ..........;........................Greg Bell
Art dept runner .................Mark Schulenberg
Synopsis: Cliff Hardy meets organized
Sound editor............................................Mark Atkin
Boom operator......................................Louise Hubbard
Camera operator ..................................Jaems Grant
Standby props ..............................John Stabb
Gauge....................................................35 mm
Catering assistant ..................Robbie Emery
Composer .......................................Brian May
Runner.....................................................Vic Mavridis
Composer ..................................Dave Skinner
Sound recordist ....................Ken Hammond
Producer........................................Ian Bradley
Casting .........................................Maura Fay
Prod, accountant ........................Matt Sawyer
Unit manager...............................Tim Higgins
Focus pullers..................................Ian Jones,
Composer ....................................Chris Neal
Focus puller ........................Peter Van Santen
Director .......................................David Baker
Key grip ........................................Rob Morgan
Prod, managers..................................Patricia Blunt,
Lab. liaison.............................................Peter Willard
Prod, company ..................Yarra Bank Films
Unit publicist ..............................................Lyn Quayle
Producer..................................................Ross Dimsey
Prod, co-ordinator ..............Francis Durham
Prod, designer ...........................................Jan Louthean
Prod, accountant..............................Graeme Wright
Lab...........................................................Colorfilm
Production..............................................Progress
Production..............................................All
Casting manager......................John Roddam
Cast: Sigrid Thornton (Fennimore), Paul
THE BOY WHO HAD EVERYTHING
1965.

THE NAKED COUNTRY
Focus puller...............................Pat Fiske
Director .......................................David Baker
Key grip ..................................................Peter Mardell
Prod, design company ..............Yarra Bank Films
Prod, managers ....................................Deuel Droogan
Prod, co-ordinator ......................Deuel Droogan
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Prod, co-ordinator ......................Deuel Droogan
Lab..........................................................Colorfilm
Production..............................................Progress
Production..............................................All
Casting manager......................John Roddam
Cast: Sigrid Thornton (Fennimore), Paul
Governing Film Production

GOVERNMENT FILM PRODUCTION

FILM VICTORIA

BEYOND 2000

Prod company...VTC Prod director...Jim Connolly Prod director...Mal Bryning Prod director...Alex Shaw Prod sound editor...Ian Ryan Editor...Robert Montgomerynbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;nbsp;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The Coolangatta Gold

Brian McFarlane

Twenty years ago Kenneth Tynan, in reviewing The Sound of Music for The Observer, made wittily some predictable points about the banality of the film's central plot but confessed to being utterly bowled over by the widescreen beauties of Salzburg and its surroundings as captured by Ted McCord's camera. Igor Auzins' The Coolangatta Gold offers a similarly overwhelming physical experience that leads one to reflect on the screen's potential for sheer visual seductiveness.

The eye is constantly excited by immense vistas of Queensland's Gold Coast, of surf and sand, and lush coastal vegetation, but there is a purposive exhilaration about the camera work that removes the film from the scenic mindlessness of The Man from Snowy River (1982). On this occasion, cameraman Keith Waggstaff makes superlative use of tracking shots and helicopter shots in ways that catch the exuberance of the activities portrayed and which create an exuberance of their own through control over speed, angle, color and editing. The scenery is often undoubtedly breathtaking but the excitement is in the way the camera presents it.

In the film's second sequence, there is a wonderful tracking shot of a motor bike's speeding along a coastal road which cuts to a close-up of the bike's wheels, thence to a medium shot of surfers, before pulling back to a wide shot of the beach with huge waves, before lifting and dropping. The juxtaposition of these shots establishes not merely a sense of place but also a sense of the kinetic activity which will pervade the film. The symmetry of the shots and the excellence of the cutting, allied to the beauty of the place, creates its own excitement, of a kind allied to the beauty of the place, pervades the film. The symmetry of the shots establishes not merely a sense of place but also a sense of the kinetic activity which will pervade the film. The symmetry of the shots and the excellence of the cutting, allied to the beauty of the place, creates its own excitement, of a kind allied to the beauty of the place, pervades the film.

In its best moments, the film contrives, not to be despised or to be dismissed. It is the motif which binds together the personal and public dramas. The eponymous race, a grueling triathlon of swimming, running and surfboard-riding, is used to bring the family drama of Joe Lucas (Nick Tate) and his sons Adam (Colin Friels) and Steve (Joss McWilliam) to a head.

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In 1960, Joe Lucas lost the Gold Coast iron-man contest and is obsessed with retrieving the family honor by pushing Adam to victory in the Coolangatta Gold. In a sequence that recalls his Uncle Jack's (Bill Kerr) training sessions with Archie Hamilton (Mark Lee) at the start of Gallipoli, Joe urges Adam to go out there and beat Grant Kenny (played by himself) and has no patience with the idea of being a good loser. When Adam doesn't win, Joe enjoin him to, "Go through the race in your mind and find out where you lost it. Go to sleeping knowing you are a winner." He has to instill in Adam his own overdeveloped sense of competitiveness; he also sees himself as still in competition with his sons. "I can still run you fellows into the ground", he boasts.

His obsession with winning, with having Adam achieve what he has missed out on, has led him to undervalue his younger son. The relationship between the two sons, one of slightly wary camaraderie, is constantly tested by their father's competitiveness. He is utterly unimpressed with Steve's rock group (itself the site of urgings to excel) or his martial arts prowess (in which Steve competes with the "grading" above his present standing). Joe's view of Steve's usefulness is limited to how far Steve can help Adam to train; his strongest abuse of Adam is that "Steve can nearly match you now."

Hovering at the edges of the father's manic preoccupation with Adam's winning and Steve's growing resentment is the mother's (Robyn Nevin) concern with the consequent family tension. When Joe finally gets articulate enough (not easy for a man whose whole life is taken up with physical exertion and testing) to speak to Steve as his mother has wanted him to, it is to ask Steve not to move away from the family's mountain-top plantation because this will endanger the marriage.

Where the film misses its opportunities is in relation to this network of family relationships. It is never clear or detailed enough about motives or the fine shades of affections and resentments. How, for instance, and why has Joe come to be so single-mindedly fixed on Adam and so dismissive of Steve? The film merely presents this as a donnee with no attempt to fill in the contours. What is the nature of the feeling between husband and wife? The wife's role is so thinly written (Peter Schreck's screenplay is the film's weakest element) that the usually excellent Robyn Nevin can give little of it.

As to the relationship between the two sons, potentially the most interesting in the film, it comes to life sporadically through contrasts in the actors' physical presences and in the superbly shot Roof Garden disco scene in which Adam makes off with Steve's girl. The situation of two brothers, bound by genuine affection and subjected to damaging pressure by their father's obsessive concern with one of them, promises more interest than it delivers. It is not the fault of the actors, especially not of Colin Friels who suggests perceptively a good-natured character under daunting pressures, but of a screenplay that fails to give them enough revealing things to say.

Despite these (serious) shortcomings and despite banalities such as Steve's saying to his father, "Don't you ever touch me again or I'll kill you", there is still something compelling in the training for the race and in the event itself. The latter, brilliantly photographed and edited, with long tracking shots of competitors running along the beaches and figures silhouetted on a cliff's edge, invites comparison with the race sequences in Chariots of Fire (1982). In both, slow motion and soaring musical score romanticize and thus, to some extent, vitiate the
grinding rigor of the performance. Both films, nevertheless, provide moments of power and beauty that both generate the kind of excitement that physical contest at a high level of competitive sports should, and both manage to ally these public performances to the personal drama. The Coolangatta Gold, to its credit, resists the temptation to graze the surface expectation at the end of the event, and in doing so makes its points about the limits of competitiveness.

As well as the triathlon itself, and the family conflict it gives rise to and, perhaps, resolves, the film presents glimpses of three other intensely competitive worlds: that of popular music, of ballet and of martial arts. As one with practically no ear for the first, I must admit to finding the musical sequences so well filmed as to overcome my innate resistance. The business of Steve's group is well-integrated into the film: he has succeeded in this field which means nothing to his father, but he is under pressure here too. It is not enough to be a Gold Coast hit; the group which is going to be 'big' tends to be a hard one to make. Perhaps the 'truer' film is one which lays about the totality of the cinema: an ideal firmly opposed to the 'sincerity' that aligns the focus of traditional critical perspectives.

Writing of Francis Coppola's The Cotton Club as a 'single' film, one would posit it as a banal yet entertaining cinematic experience. Writing about it as a work within the auteur oeuvre of the Coppola persona-myth-subject would allow it to be a complex interlude in Coppola's score for a contemporary cinema through a Hollywood renaissance. But, writing about The Cotton Club as an exercise (and quite a dialectically subsumed one at that) in looking at the cinema, rather than an exercise in talking about The Cotton Club's story, is an approach which can retrieve the film from the post-camp aesthetic of 'filmic artificialism' and restate it as a discourse on how to make a film 'now' while, at the same time, acknowledging how films were made 'before'. Although this simplistic distinction between 'now' and 'before' may be inadequate theoretically, it is a primary distinction upon which concepts of Hollywood (and the American film industry in general) rest. The Cotton Club, in part theatrically, in part symbolically, works through this distinction in its handling of a textualuality: that of the musical narrative and the non-musical narrative in the film. Coppola constructs The Cotton Club as a series of oscillations centrally located by its being and not being a musical, and being and not being a gangster movie.

The film is set in the late 1920s and the early 1930s, the time of the Roaring Twenties, the interlude in Coppola's oeuvre of the Coppola persona-myth-subject. These two, major story strands form a progressive alternation throughout the film so that scenes between one set of characters (the Dwyers) are echoed in scenes with the other set of brothers (the Williams). A forced reunion of the Dwyer brothers is brought about as a consequence of Vincent Dwyer's (Nicolas Cage) kidnapping of his younger brother, his lover and the negro dancer Sandman Williams (Gregory Hines), a black dancer who must, in turn, relate to his brother, his lover and the negro underworld.

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of Dutch Schultz’s (James Remar) gang.

Such alternations and divisions find articulation on all kinds of textual levels: race (white and black), profession (gangsters and dancers), spatial relations (the stage and the non-stage) and so on. The Cotton Club itself is a space divided into territories along the lines of power, desire, expression and oppression, literally taking the gangsters’ idea of territories to be protected and giving it a metaphorical resonance. The blacks are the performers but not the patrons of the stage, the gangsters give expression to their art, skill, grace and energy; backstage, they are harassed by a huge, white bodyguard. Any attempt by the blacks to contravene the designated spatial boundaries results in violence.

Spatial relations are all important in The Cotton Club, for they signify a character’s freedom or lack of freedom, power or lack of power and, finally, a character’s desire and ability to find a space (not only physical, but also moral) within this range of bounded territories. It is best summed up by a black gangster when he asks, “I dance in the underworld. Where do you dance, Sandman?”

What is also rendered by these words is an idea of “dance” as an extended series of metaphors, one of which is the association between dance and aggression evident in the dance routine which is the gangster’s being kicked out of Dutch’s hand and, more importantly, in the sequence of Dutch’s death which brings together and clearly links the physical space of gangsterism and dance. The sequence more or less commences with Dutch’s exit from the Cotton Club and the return to his hangout while, concurrently, Sandman commences his solo tango-dance routine. In the same moment, gangster boss Luciano (Salome Balasidonia) orders his henchmen to kill Dutch. The various actions are alternated through the use of accelerated, paralinguistic, montage editing which is then editing Sandman’s dance steps. As Lucky’s men close in on Dutch, Sandman’s dance steps become more frenzied and, at the moment that Dutch’s gang is being machine-gunned to death, Sandman has almost reached the height of speed and energy in his tapping, so much so that on the soundtrack, the sound of tapping and machine-gun fire are almost indistinguishable. Then Dutch stumbles to a table, Sandman slows the rhythm of his dance so that the last, dying breath of the last of his ancestors in Sandman’s dance are perfectly and beautifully synchronized. It is a symbolic use of montage which clearly links dancing feet and machine gunning and thus icons of energy and aggression.

Coppola has made use of parallel-symbolic montage before, most notably in The Godfather (1972) during the sequence of the alternation of the baptism of a newly-born child by Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) and the slaughter of the mob bosses. However, in The Godfather, the two terms forming the pattern of alternation are fully contained within the domain of the gangster film. In The Cotton Club, Coppola is bringing together the iconography of two different narrative forms: the gangster film and the musical. Coppola has allowed for the elements of both genres to co-exist within the one film, finding points of contact, where possible, without integrating one form within the other. For example, the classic dramatic form of the gangster film finds articulation through the “rise and fall” of Vincent — that is, on a microcosmic level — thus allowing for other dramatic forms to also take effect in the film, not only the musical form. The themes of brotherhood and the loss of innocence — Vera Ciccio (Diane Lane) and Dixie refer to themselves as “the little girl and the choir boy” — in The Cotton Club are also to be found in other Coppola films such as The Outsiders (1982), Rumble Fish (1984) and The Godfather.

The Cotton Club plays with the gangster genre in all sorts of ways: the classic comedy routine between gangsters Frenchie and Owney Madden about a gold watch; having Dixie go to Hollywood to make a gangster film called “Mob Boss”; which results in a number of gags about gangsters and good looks, brings out their narcissistic natures, something which has always been present in gangster figures (real and fictional). The 1929 montage of the Wall Street crash and the gangland newspaper headlines, along with the rapid montage of gangland violence, seems a loving homage to the Warners Brothers’ montage sequences in numerous 1930s’ gangster films.

Before going on to discuss The Cotton Club’s relation to the musical genre and the experimental use of the soundtrack, some comments should be made about the final scene of the film in relation to the points made earlier about its narrative tangents and spatial dynamics. The final scene of the film inverts completely the spatial boundaries that have been existing through the story. Unlike the other musical sequences, the production number at the end is not contained within the “theatrical” stage: the characters, dancers, sets and music spill into a supposedly other space, that of Grand Central Station. This creates a blurring between stage and non-stage, not unlike the musical numbers produced by Busby Berkeley which begin from a theatrical premise but subvert that space through a kaleidoscope of cinematic effects. Then, the subversion of the racial boundaries of the Cotton Club are furthered by having Dixie “on stage” performing with the all-black orchestra and allowing blacks “off stage” as patrons of the club. None of the characters are restricted any longer by territorial boundaries, and the space of the Cotton Club finally has no meaning insofar as it cannot be distinguished from other spaces (Grand Central Station) which have merged with it. In its final, narrative dislocations, The Cotton Club is no doubt declaring itself a work of fiction, a diegetic world in which the actors are seen to be exiting from screen space.

The scenes leading to this, with their theatricalized acceleration of plot tangents interrupting one another to the dizzy syncope of Sandman’s tap solo, recapitulate the set of abrupt shifts from credits to dance number at the beginning. The credit sequence is quite remarkable in the way that the “external” data of the film’s production creates the tempo and fictional space of the opening dance routine, a metaphor, surely, for the film’s fairly self-conscious manipulations. The Cotton Club thus opens with a meta-oversure and closes with a diegetic finale. As a musical, it is in opposition to the mode of realism in Cabaret (1972) which disavows the musical of the past to create a contemporary reality wherein the musical numbers are, in effect, ‘overseen’ by a contrasted realism. The Cotton Club is superbly guilty of this kind of modernism (after all, Berlin during the initial rise of Nazism and black dance clubs in Harlem in the late 1920s are both predictable subjects for a liberal-progressive text but such tendencies are subordinated by the film’s being a musical structure with dramatic inserts rather than a drama with music.

The central star of The Cotton Club is the Cotton Club itself. It is the stage within a stage upon which and across which the multiplicity of dramatic and musical rhythms are played out. Never in the film does a musical sequence remain in isolation: there are always developments that intercut, seep into and move below the domain of the number (be they visual, aural or combined). This approach, as foregrounded in the credit sequence — is used not only in the Cotton Club musical scenes, but also in the frenzied footwork of the Williams brothers in the kitchen, on the street and in the pool-hall, and the endless series of sequences which never allow one to hear a complete song by Lil Rose Oliver (Loretta McKee). Even musical careers are interrupted: by egotism and unrequited love in the case of the Williams brothers, and by gangsters and Hollywood for Dixie. As much as the embodiment of the Cotton Club is one of murder, money and mayhem, the environment of the film’s fiction is music, song and dance.

The musical in The Cotton Club is of interest in the various ways that the film outlines historical relationships. The marvellous scene portraying Cab Calloway’s (Don Bushnell) doing his renowned “Minnie the Moocher” is an intricate recreation of Cab Calloway in one of the early ‘soundies’ (the 1930s’ ancestors of today’s video-clips). The ‘hoofers’ scene features some of the cream of Harlem’s original hoofers. But, aside from the methods of recreation and cameo featuring used in the film, the reconstitution of the music in the soundtrack deserves mention.

Modernist formal re-recordings of music which previously had existed only on scratch recordings, rich in historical value but lacking in aural clarity, often have an air of sterility in their re-presentation. For example, a wash of lush Max Steiner strings is full as a monument becomes flatly and bloated when recreated with superior production as in John Williams’ score for Star Wars (1977), Superman (1978) and Jaws (1975). The musical re-recordings (sic) in The Cotton Club never quite capture the film’s surface as they always sit comfortably (in the aural sense) within the fictional domain of the film’s physical spaces. Without a doubt, the sounds of The Cotton Club are just as ‘experimental’ as the visuals of One from the Heart, but the experiment in The Cotton Club is largely unnoted because it succeeds. This is one of The Cotton Club’s strengths: Coppola’s acknowledgment of the critical space of the cinematic structure and of the cinematic experimentation, with particular reference to the soundtrack.

The Cotton Club doesn’t really appear to music at all. But, along with the films such as Cabaret, Pennies From Heaven (1981) and Flashdance (1983), it historically punctuates the contemporary development of the musical as not as a genre, at least as a developing cinematic structure and form. Its essential experimentation (disguised by its not appearing ‘experimental’) lies in
I'll Be Home For Christmas

Mark Spratt

Without intending to belittle the content of the finished film, it might be said that Brian McKenzie's major achievement in making I'll Be Home For Christmas occurred before his camera began rolling, in gaining the trust, confidence and friendship of a large group of derelict citizens — winos, tramps, deros, call them what you will. These drop-outs on the lowest social rung are known to most people only by brief and casual observation, in the act of turning away and often in their sorriest states. The achievement of the film lies in revealing the humanity and bonds existing amongst this group, which may shame many viewers who regard deros' with fear and disgust as being hopeless and violent. Their general lack of aggression towards society that shuns them, denies at least part of this stereotype.

The film, shot between July 1981 and September 1983, begins with black-and-white stills of two homeless men, Dave and Steve (who subsequently does not appear), talking to McKenzie in voice-over about their consent to be filmed. It immediately establishes what will later be confirmed by the other men in the film: their curiosity about what other people think of them and a desire to tell their stories and needs. They have a mistrust of television, knowing instinctively that it edits for sensationalism, and McKenzie undertakes to assure them that his film will not be televised.

More still sequences punctuate the film but it changes to color for the first live-action sequence, a series of uncomposed shots in Royal Park beside the tram-line as a number of men assemble in the morning to chat and react to the same patterns. McKenzie, and philosophize about being out of the rat race and having freedom to enjoy life on its basic level. The Irishman, John, complains angrily about the Poms' making out the Irish to be stupid. Someone cannily asks him why Dave Allen, the Irish comic, seems to concur with this opinion. Through their statements to the camera, the men define their perception of themselves as harmless, their being on the outside of society because of having "gone wrong" somewhere. They resist being hated.

The film reveals its strategies as it unfolds, showing the men in the parks and streets, sharing drinks and sleeping rough in the park equipment boxes. Their street philosophy is articulated with a little prodding, the nature of life and death being a repeated concern: e.g., "Life is a dream, death is real!"; "Life is just another thing that happens!"; and "In life you can be burned at the stake by a quick fire or a slow fire. This is the slow fire."

Occasionally, the men will address the filmmaker or be asked a question, although the main outside intervention comes in filming Paul Makin doing interviews with several subjects for Melbourne radio station 3UZ. Makin asks questions John, Trevor and others about what Christmas means to them. Unsurprisingly, they find his insistent questions on value of religion irrelevant. The reason for filming these interviews is that the interviewees are later filmed on Christmas Day, listening to themselves on air while a table in the park enjoying their 100 per cent liquid Christmas dinner.

In the group scenes, the loyalty and camaraderie ('Friendship is life') is strongly confirmed. Apart from the abrasive John, these men have little criticism of each other and, as the film closes in to focus more on individuals, one finds a surprising amount of optimism. David, despite having been hospitalized for a serious heart condition and alcoholism, talks of his desire to work and change his life-style. Trevor, in a more incapable moment, refers to himself as an 'ex-chef' while beinghardtly reassured that he still is a chef.

The film's value in getting the men to talk freely about their lives allows the audience to stop thinking of them as being radically different, especially as many of them give details of their jobs, families and children, in whom they feel evident pride.

In a recent interview, Brian McKenzie discusses his non-interventionist, non-exploitative approach to the film. However, while nothing in the film can be called exploitative, certain contradictions and confusions do arise. The two years' shooting span apparently takes in several changes in circumstances in some of the men's lives, which to some extent undermines understanding what their day-to-day life is like. The opening sequences give the impression that most of those filmed live rough in the park but a change of scene to the Society of St Vincent de Paul's Ozanam House, where most of the men dwell during the film, alters this perception; this institution appears relatively modern and habitable compared to one's own. McKenzie says this film is a milder film than what might have been expected, with the violence, helpless drunkenness and illness barely present.

The film's emphasis on the rational, socially acceptable side to and feelings of the 'deros' amount to a manipulation, unless the Melbourne 'deros' simply do have less unpleasant lives than one has observed of their counterparts in other cities. The type of confrontations that affects these men in their daily lives exists only in the imaginative, as periodically one of them describes a visit to a hospital casualty ward, a run-in with hooligans or arrest. There is an element of black humor in some of these misfortunes, perhaps appreciated by the victims themselves. Dave was watching his heartbeat registered on a hospital cardiograph which failed, leading him to believe he had died and that reincarnation was exactly the same life as before. Patrick tells of finding himself locked in a park box to be inadvertedly rescued a day later by a startled jogger. He was also called across the road, when drunk, by a police patrol and knocked down by a motorbike half-way across, resulting in four-and-a-half months in hospital — another tale told without animosity which could be read (or misread?) as an acceptance by some individuals of being society's victims.

For a major documentary, I'll Be Home For Christmas diverges somewhat from the 'standard' established for cinema verité during the 1970s and 80s in presenting unprejudiced views of institutions and social groups by filmmakers such as Frederick Wiseman, Roger Graef, Nick Broomfield and Joan Churchill. It is not necessarily heretical to have made some methodological divergences, given that much empathy had to be established between filmmaker and subjects, and it probably was essential that more interaction took place than one would see in a Wiseman or Graef film.

I'll Be Home For Christmas is closest, certainly in subject matter, to Kim Longinotto's and Claire Poliak's Theatre Girls (1978), about a group of resilient, female hostel dwellers in London. In avoiding or just not finding the harsher edges of 'dero' life (which may well have reconfirmed the...
middle-class viewer's repugnance), it achieves little of the emotional impact of Wiseman's Welfare (1975), for instance, or Bridge's and Churchill's Tattooed Tears (1978) or Soldier Girls (1980), all of which manage to record extremes of emotional, and physical stress and violence without exploitation.

Further reasons for this are the decisions to step aside from a rigorous formalism and not establish clearly some of the locations and circumstances. For example, after being introduced to 75-year-old Frank, a cut takes the audience to an interior location where he is being outfitted in 'new' used clothing; a scene simply dropped into a film like this looks staged. It is not, however, until some time later that one understands that this outfitting took place at Ozanam House where Frank lives and that the man helping him is the house administrator. The Christmas-day sequence is interrupted and returned to twice, the first rupture implying that some occurrence has not happened either. In the second instance or Broomfield's and Michael Chimino's Heaven's Gate all suffered the kind of critical savagery which has greeted the release of Jean-Jacques Beineix's second feature. Unlike his debut, Diva, which elicited rapturous responses—except amongst French critics—The Moon in the Gutter has been almost universally denounced.

The Moon in the Gutter is a modern-day film noir, an adaptation of a novel by David Goodis, the darling of the French New Wave directors. Francois Truffaut's Tirez sur le pianiste (Shoot The Pianist) derives from a Goodis story, and Jean-Luc Godard's Made In U.S.A. includes a character named David Goodis. A descendant of the hard-boiled school of crime writers such as Dashiell Hammett, Raymond Chandler and James M. Cain, Goodis wrote novels brutal in their evocation of characters trapped in a world of disparate lives. In worlds, whose doomed, passionate existences have a paradoxically surreal quality, making full use of allusion and metaphor as narrative devices.

The Moon in the Gutter is the story of an impossible love affair between Gerard Delmas (Gerard Depardieu), a dock-worker who lives in poverty, and Loretta Channing (Nastassja Kinski), the beautiful rich girl from uptown. Delmas, who cannot escape the memory of the tragic rape and subsequent suicide of his sister Catherine (Suzanne Delbarre), is still searching for her assassins seven months later. Her blood still lies in the gutter where she died, in the dead-end street overlooking the port. The family lives "in the crummiest house around": the father (Gabriel Monnet) is a no-hoper, an ambulance driver whose vehicle sits broken-down in the front yard; Frank (Dominique Pinon), the brother, is a simple-minded drunk who fears that Gerard suspects he is the rapist. The other members of the household are the landlady Lola (Beatrice Reading), an overweight dark woman with a violent temper, and her daughter Bella (Victoria Abril). Gerard's lover, who is so passionately in love with him ("I got this guy in my blood") that she suffers fits of insane jealousy.

The initial meeting between Gerard and Loretta occurs at the waterfront drive where much of the action of the film is to take place. Gerard walks in on a man attempting to bite through a block of ice, watched anxiously by a group of low-lifers who have gambled on his chances. After this man fails, Gerard takes up the challenge and succeeds. Later, curious about the man, Gerard finds him again at the dive where much of the action of the film takes place. The man fails to return, and Gerard feels an immediate attraction to the atmosphere of the dive: effect replaces narrative, here.

The symbolism of the film is obvious, almost completely replacing narrative exigencies as the driving force; indeed, the plot is almost an afterthought. The symbols, composed of verbal, visual and aural imagery, make up a self-enclosed world with no contact with an existing 'reality' outside the film. The catalogue includes: shoes, blood, women's bare breasts, shaving, switchblade knives, heat and cold, cleanliness and dirt, cities, styles of music, thunder, smoking glass, animals of all kinds, violence, food, a suit, a camera, a statue of the Virgin Mary, a violin, rings, bottles, showroom dummies.

Andrew Preston
La lune dans le caniveau (The Moon in the Gutter) has gained a notoriety usually reserved for the maligned works of major American directors. Martin Scorsese's New York, New York, Francis Coppola's One from the Heart, Steven Spielberg's 1941 and Michael Chimino's Heaven's Gate all suffered the kind of critical savagery which has greeted the release of Jean-Jacques Beineix's second feature. Unlike his debut, Diva, which elicited rapturous responses—except amongst French critics—The Moon in the Gutter has been almost universally denounced.

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The initial meeting between Gerard and Loretta occurs at the waterfront drive where much of the action of the film is to take place. Gerard walks in on a man attempting to bite through a block of ice, watched anxiously by a group of low-lifers who have gambled on his chances. After this man fails, Gerard takes up the challenge and succeeds. Later, curious about the man, Gerard finds him again at the dive where much of the action of the film takes place. The man fails to return, and Gerard feels an immediate attraction to the atmosphere of the dive: effect replaces narrative, here.

The symbolism of the film is obvious, almost completely replacing narrative exigencies as the driving force; indeed, the plot is almost an afterthought. The symbols, composed of verbal, visual and aural imagery, make up a self-enclosed world with no contact with an existing 'reality' outside the film. The catalogue includes: shoes, blood, women's bare breasts, shaving, switchblade knives, heat and cold, cleanliness and dirt, cities, styles of music, thunder, smoking glass, animals of all kinds, violence, food, a suit, a camera, a statue of the Virgin Mary, a violin, rings, bottles, showroom dummies.

Andrew Preston
La lune dans le caniveau (The Moon in the Gutter) has gained a notoriety usually reserved for the maligned works of major American directors. Martin Scorsese's New York, New York, Francis Coppola's One from the Heart, Steven Spielberg's 1941 and Michael Chimino's Heaven's Gate all suffered the kind of critical savagery which has greeted the release of Jean-Jacques Beineix's second feature. Unlike his debut, Diva, which elicited rapturous responses—except amongst French critics—The Moon in the Gutter has been almost universally denounced.

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The Moon in the Gutter

Identifies as quintessentially post-modern are Diva and Brian De Palma’s Blow Out. One could also include The Moon in the Gutter, One from the Heart (an obvious influence on the former) and Coppola’s Rumble Fish, and, as an inferior example, Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s Querelle, films which have all appeared since Jameson wrote his article.

Finally, as in Diva, the space of The Moon in the Gutter is constructed around the difference between flat, still photographic images and moving images which contain depth. As with most other oppositions in the films, however, the distinctions don’t hold. Still images want to move; action wants to stand still. The symbolic billboard, for example, is a surface which contains images that are three-dimensional elsewhere in the film, yet this difference is itself in turn destroyed when the camera actually enters the still image, converting it into a ‘real’ space.

The Moon in the Gutter seeks to recreate a world which has disappeared from contemporary experience. Its images are overblown as if to accentuate that its subject-matter cannot any longer be represented except as pure image. This nostalgia for lost forms is mixed with an almost surrealistic investigation of the world beyond cognition, involving a radical disrespect for the conventions of illusionism. Everything is equally real and illusory for this film, though love is the ultimate reality and the ultimate illusion. When Loretta says, in a half-dream state, to Gerard, “I love you for life and into death”, she may indeed be speaking of the cinema. Many will say that this film does nothing to keep the cinema alive, having more in common with the video world of commercials and rock clips. However, the mere fact that it contains these kinds of conflicts and exists in this strange, contradictory position makes The Moon in the Gutter deserving of more critical engagement than it has received.


Melvin, Son of Alvin

Dave Sargent

Melvin, Son of Alvin is the type of film that makes this reviewer want to dismiss it quickly in one word and expend no further time and energy thinking or writing about it. However, part of the reason for reviewing films is trying to make sense of what is being produced in a culture at a certain time; to look at the many meanings which are generated by films and surround them; and to make an attempt to think and write about them in ways which open up, rather than close down, one’s understanding of them.

After all it was a natural progression. The story could be written with much more humor than the original series. The sex angle would...
be used as an integral part of the story and not for shock value, as was in the case of the original. It was critical that the film be funny, a little sexy but above all it had to be a 'class act'.

“Class act” is the vernacular of show-business promoters and falls extremely short in describing this “contemporary sex comedy” which, curiously, seems to have as much to do with 1984 as it has to do with 1954. The film attempts to derive its “humor” by appealing to the “sex is smutty” school of thought and it has clearly been made for the gaze of the ideal male spectator who, in this case, appears to be 15-year-old boys who know at much about sex as they know how to spell it. It has been quite some time since this reviewer has seen a film so narrowly focused by restrictive, male point-of-view shots.

The simple and tightly conservative narrative of Melvin, Son of Alvin, built on the common and misguided male social belief that “every woman wants it”. In the case of this film, it’s, of course, is Melvin (Gerry Sont), son of Alvin (Graeme Blundell). From the time of his birth, Melvin has women throwing themselves — especially their breasts — at him, causing him to grow up deathly afraid of women. Just when life becomes too miserable (“Women find me irresistible, can’t help off from me”), along to his rescue comes Gloria (Lenita Pisilakis). She is “different from all the rest” because of Greek cultural beliefs, though she is just as keen to get Melvin, and is prepared to help him overcome his problem by being more understanding, more calming and more seductive. It is not just into any bed that she wants to get him but the matrimonial bed.

Adapted to this is an investigative television journalist, Dee Tanner (Tina Bursill), and her bumbler camera-man (David Argue) who set out to reveal that Alvin, now 40 years old, is a rough and profitable pimp, using exploited by his seedy manager Burnbaum (Jon Finlayson), to defend the male social belief that “every woman wants it”. It was in the case of the original. It was quite some time since this reviewer has seen a film so narrowly focused by restrictive, male point-of-view shots.

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1. Melvin, Son of Alvin, production notes, p. 2.
long, overhead shot. (The film's visual style is notable also for its discerning use of other representative stylistics, such as fore-grounded objects, acute angles, tight close-ups, low-key lighting and framing devices such as the rehearsal scene in which the two "fictional" lovers kiss behind window bars.) However, it is Silva who is a winner and not Steve because Silva "writes" his part: he takes Carol to New York, leaving Steve to ask Stanley and Farris about her sudden absence. Stanley replies, referring to the film's visual style which evocatively suggests "Strangers Kiss" can be interpreted as a critical reading of Hollywood's classic narrative cinema in terms of the connection between capitalism and crime, which has shaped the essential development of mass culture-show business since the beginning of the 20th Century. Soviet emíre director of photography Mikhail Suslov has created a visual style which evocatively suggests the definitive formal attributes of the 1950s film noir. The fluid visual style of "Strangers Kiss" is constructed with a critical intelligence about the form's basic visual configurations and is used for comic effect, as in the handheld camera-work of the boxing scenes, which parodies the expressive hand-held photography of the fight sequences of classic examples such as Body and Soul (1947) and The Set-Up (1949), and for remarkable dramatic impact, as in the outstanding sequence depicting Silva's point-of-view shots of Carol, whose fractured mirror images articulate Silva's acute sense of betrayal.

"Strangers Kiss" is an achievement considering that as entertainment its enjoyment is not dependent on a cinephile's knowledge of film noir and its filmic and literary antecedents. Perhaps, more significant, it was made by a British film-maker in today's Hollywood where the mega-cinema of Francis Ford Coppola, Steven Spielberg and George Lucas is a stark contrast to the film's production details: it was made for only $150,000 and in less than three weeks. In this context, Chapman has provided a new, contemporary definition of independent narrative filmmaking. And, it should be noted, "Strangers Kiss" is not a typical, pretentious effort to resurrect film noir's major theoretical and visual interests (including its distinctive stimmung) as an academic exercise; rather, it displays an impressive awareness of these preoccupations combined with the aim of giving the viewer a satisfactory and entertaining film. Essentially, Chapman's film provides a reasonable appreciation of the significant elements that were at play in the production of the 1950s' B-grade crime melodrama, and which formed a part of Hollywood's extensive generic spectrum of narrative cinema.

The Slim Dusty Movie

One of the film's greatest liabilities is the way most of the songs are treated. The film has a few truly charming musical sequences, but never deliver. Another sequence that shows how the death of Slim's father inspired a song (which is first sung by a young Slim, played by Blake, before cutting to the real Slim continuing it in concert) promises a look at how some of these songs were conceived but also fails to follow through. This is in part due to the limit to which the film is prepared to be inspired by the music. The films say practically nothing about Slim's life, how he started in country music, or how he became so popular. One sees him strumming a guitar as a boy in a rural radio station, getting married, riding a roller coaster and touring, but these segments are disconnected, follow no particular narrative pattern and often contain almost no dramatic interest. Jon Blake also has trouble miming songs and has practically no dialogue.

The thin line has a few technically interesting pieces, including some excellent production tracking shots through the rock 'n' roll café and the side-show carnival, and sharp, crisp horizon shots complete with sunsets and clouds. Particular mention should also be made of the steady camera shots, the helicopter shots, the train sequence and the superb aerial work in the opening part of the film around the Sydney Harbor Bridge. The photographers, have done a commendable job, but for what?

Jim Schembri

1. Unfortunately, the film was viewed in a cinema not equipped for stereo, so I am unable to comment on the sound.


The Slim Dusty Movie

One could easily run up a list — a long list — of what is wrong with Rob Stewart's The Slim Dusty Movie. But the one fault, above and beyond anything else, that accounts for the film's extremely rapid transition from the commercial film circuit to oblivion is that The Slim Dusty Movie is not, in any meaningful, entertaining or informative sense, about Slim Dusty. Making a feature film about an Australian country music legend is a valid and workable concept, but what this incomprehensibly aimless and overproduced $2.3 million misfire offers is not an insight into the music, life or times of Slim Dusty, but a patchy series of filmed segments of the Slim Dusty Show on tour throughout Australia, with a few flashbacks of Slim as a youth thrown in.

This "approach" vitiates the money spent on the film, the high standard of technical production and the attempt to release it to the general public as entertainment. It also demonstrates the startling and disheartening extent to which a film can be produced without any apparent cinematic intention or market in mind.

The "tour" sequences are not informative enough for the film to be a documentary; the music segments are too loose and bland to make it an entertaining musical profile; the flashbacks are too brief and do not have the dramatic interest for the film to be a biography. The modern day segments have the uncomfortable feel of an anamorphic home movie, and the blatant phoning-in of some of the scenes does not help. There are numerous scenes, for example, in which Slim pulls out his guitar for a little "spur of the moment" strumming. Slim, who, to his credit, never once looks into the camera, often looks as if he wished he were somewhere else.

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An oft-used cliché by reviewers

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when writing about bad films is, “There is a good film in here somewhere.” That is certainly the case with *The Slim Dusty Movie*: some extensive re-editing could salvage a moderately interesting 20-minute short suitable for screening before *We of the Never Never* or *The Man from Snowy River*. But Slim deserves a lot better than this.


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**Le bal**

Rolando Caputo and Gerard Hayes

With the burn-out of the avant-garde attrative fringe of the European art cinema in the late 1970s (Jean-Luc Godard's move to autobiography, Alain Resnais's historical romanticism, the continued failure of international distribution of the films of Jacques Rivette, Alexander Kluge, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet and others), one has for the moment returned to a consolidation of the "tradition of quality". It is a less formalistic, less politically engaged cinema, with a stress on 'art' and visual aesthetic. Perhaps, it is not accurate to call this movement a tradition, but rather a series of currents which have found a renewed pre-eminence: the historical — Danton, *La nuit de Varennes* (The Night at Varennes); the operatic — *La travista*, *Carmen*; the melodrama — *La dame aux camélias* (*The Lady of the Camellias*); the literary — *Passione d'amore*, *Un amour de Swann* (*Swann in Love*); and the pastoral — *Une dimanche à la campagne* (*A Sunday in the Country*). This period or costume film has returned in all its forms. No doubt the "tradition of quality" has returned as an effect of the new pictorialism which invaded the cinema in the late 1970s and continues into the 1980s. It is marked by a return to traditional art values, along with an atmospherically poetic, richly textured image. From a 'local' perspective, *Passione d'amore* (1981), *La nuit de Varennes* (1982) and *Le bal* (1983) seem evidence enough for Ettore Scola's being regarded as the European art film director par excellence. Certainly, the Australian 'art house' circuit has served Scola's films well and, in turn, it has fared better with his works than with the recent films of more prestigious names such as Federico Fellini, Ingmar Bergman or Andrej Wajda.

Scola's is only a recent entrance into the canons of the European art cinema. In a recent and rather poor study of the Italian art cinema, *The New Italian Cinema*, by R. T. Wiccombe, of the 14 directors discussed who comprise this so-called art tradition fraternity, Scola is not amongst them. This is not surprising given that his career reveals a trajectory which is anything but that of the art film director, his current identity.

In the late-1940s and early-50s, Scola wrote numerous scripts for the famous Italian comedian Toto. As a scriptwriter in the '50s, Scola was at the centre of the genre which was known as *La Commedia all'italiana*, contributing to films such as *Accadde all'assistito* (That Happened at the Police Station, 1954), *Lo scapolo* (The Bachelor, 1953), *Il conte Max* (Count Max, 1956). Comicly Italian-style grew directly out of neo-realism, but overturning neo-realism's bleak pessimism in favor of a satirical view of the manners and morals of a culture's regained social mobility. It was a genre that achieved what neo-realism had always aspired to: a truly populist national cinema. In the 1960s, Scola turned to direction, and as well as some commercial films, mainly comedies (*Do Our Heroes Find Their Friend?* 1968, *Dramma della gelosia* (*The Pizza Triangle* 1969), he made a number of more militant shorts, often sponsored by the Italian Communist Party (Schelto Torino: Viaggio nel Fiat Nam, 1972, *Le bal* 1976).

There are two works which stand as the culmination of Scola's work before the move to the French co-productions and the art cinema, in which he is the leading actor, plays the francophile villain in each episode, whether he be bourgeois, collaborator, profiteer or adventurer. It is easy for the foreign audience of this film to retrospectively put themselves on the side of the angels. But, in fact, any film which devotes itself to such trite devices runs the risk of completely emptying itself of any meaning, whether cultural or political. When *Le bal* uses a Coke bottle to symbolize American cultural imperialism, one might think one is watching a Bruno Bozetto cartoon.

What *Le bal* trades for 'official history' is 'popular memory', which is evident from Scola's comments on the unusual photography of the 1936 episode:

The emotion of this historic moment is bound up with our memory of a certain realist and populist French cinema from the 'thirties. This photo by Claude Matras of Georges Perinal's *Le bal* (1936), made from contrasting grey and black tones and when filtered in a hazy grain, already makes these images a memory. We would like to remind the public of these memories.

*Here 'popular memory' is filtered through the cinema and still-photography. Appropriately, therefore, each episode will conclude with a photographic snapshot of the dancers in suspended time. Each snapshot will be evidence enough for the ballroom dancers to place themselves in this episode to episode to episode. The passage of time is marked by changing styles of music, dance and wardrobe; the crises of the external archetypal priest, makes it easy for the French audience of this film to retrospectively put themselves on the side of the angels. But, in fact, any film which devotes itself to such trite devices runs the risk of completely emptying itself of any meaning, whether cultural or political. When *Le bal* uses a Coke bottle to symbolize American cultural imperialism, one might think one is watching a Bruno Bozetto cartoon.*

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My Last Breath: The Autobiography of Luis Buñuel

Translated by Abigail Israel
Jonathan Cape, London. 1984
Hardback, 256 pp., $16.95
ISBN 0 224 02073 O

Dennis Bowers

Perhaps the outstanding feature of Luis Buñuel's autobiography is the contradictory picture one gets of the man who has reviled in the oft-repeated paradox, "Thank God I'm an atheist." Buñuel consistently maintained that we do not live in the best of all possible worlds, and regarded many of his films as calls to rebellion. The attack on bourgeois morality and on those pillars of bourgeois society, family, religion and fatherland has been consistently pursued in his films, as also in this book, in which he avers that "God and Country are an unbeatable team; they break all records for oppression and bloodshed." (p. 170)

Yet, near the end of his life, Buñuel confesses to fond memories of the family, religion and fatherland that "God and Country are an unbeatable team; they break all records for oppression and bloodshed." He repeats his denunciation of publicity and the media ("the source of all our anxieties"), but confesses that, after his death, he would have loved to rise from the grave every ten years or so and buy a few newspapers. Ghostly pale, sliding silently along the walls, my papers under my arm, I'd return to the cemetery and read about all the disasters in the world before falling back to sleep, safe and sound in my tomb. (p. 256)

From Un chien Andalou (1928) and L'Age d'Or (1930), Buñuel set out to scandalize the respectable bourgeois, particularly with regard to sex, which his strict Catholic upbringing led him to associate with a "sweet secret sense of sin". Yet he appears to have had less trouble with the English writer who wrote to him from the cemetery and asked him to return the papers. Buñuel writes that he was able to return the papers. Buñuel writes that he was able to return the papers and read about all the disasters in the world before falling back to sleep, safe and sound in his tomb.

The paradoxes multiply when the reader scrutinizes this autobiography. Buñuel is quiet about the zijn of his death, and he prefers to leave intact a certain ambiguity concerning sex and women, and recounts with gusto the orgies and seductions he planned to have with the actress originally cast for the part. Strangely enough, how much he was put off by the actress's description of him as an atheist and a product of Salvador Dalí, whose works he was familiar, especially on the films which he produced in Spain in 1934 (Don Quixote el Amargo), where nothing changes, though perhaps there is a "small boy once in a while." One is left to decide whether Buñuel became an unrepentant sensualist in his later years, or whether the views he expresses in this book represent a refreshing honesty. Buñuel certainly recognizes the contradictions:

'I've managed to live my life among multiple contradictions without ever trying to rationalize or resolve them; they're part of me, and part of the fundamental ambiguity of all things, which I cherish.' (p. 231)

Buñuel's autobiography provides a fascinating progress through this century, from the feudal world of rural Spain and the iron discipline of the Saragossa Jesuits, through the bohemian escapades of the Surrealists in Paris and the dangers which attended his involvement in the Civil War, to work in the film industries in Hollywood, Mexico and Europe. Along the way, one gets a vivid portrait of Salvador Dalí, whose works Buñuel regarded as a liar, opportunist and egomaniac with fascist tendencies. (Dalí's description of him as an atheist effectively lost Buñuel his job at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.)

The genesis of many of Buñuel's films is filled in; some of the details are familiar, especially on the films which created the desired scandal, but some puzzles are also solved. For example, the two actresses playing the role of Crusoe's father appear to him in the cave. There are relatively few reflections on the business of filmmaking. Buñuel says, "I'm not a philosopher, and I don't do very well with abstractions" (p. 176), yet his interest in ideas and the way his particular cases always suggest general rules are apparent in his films. He detests psychoanalysis and the compulsion to understand, preferring to leave intact a certain mystery or ambiguity in life and in his films. His mischievous desire to scandalize surfaces even in his comments on the best actors. ("The best actors I've worked with have been children and dwarves"), and in his highly un-fanatical view that "nothing about movie making is more important than the scenario.

Buñuel is quietly ironic about Hollywood. MGM invited him there in 1930 to "learn some good American technical skills", but he apparently drew a regular pay cheque for doing next to nothing. It is clear that he could have made a place for himself there had he wanted to, but was put off by the straitjacket of formulas and big budgets. Indeed, he says that "the size of my budgets was a measure of my freedom" (though perhaps there is a deliberate ambiguity here too).

Three aborted projects he mentions are "Lord of the Flies", "Johnny Got His Gun" and "Under the Volcano." One imagines that he might have done interesting things with an adaptation of William Golding's novel. Buñuelian anecdotes abound, such as the promulgation of free love in Calanda during the Civil War, which produced almost no effect because "no one seemed to know what free love meant!" Buñuel and a friend once produced a symphonic table of the American cinema, charting the likely narrative progression of every Hollywood film, and confounding a Hollywood producer by predicting every narrative move in his latest film. On another occasion, Buñuel had to threaten to smash the typewriter of producer Pierre Braunberger's secretary to get money that Braunberger owed him.

Although some gaps in Buñuel's history remain (he doesn't say much about his period as film producer in pre-Civil War Spain), other aspects are
filled out, notably Bunuel’s activity for the Republican cause, his period of filmmaking in Mexico which began with the lucky accident of his meeting Oscar Danegiers, and his association with the Surrealist group, short but of profound significance. Bunuel was one of a small handful of the Surrealists for whom the movement provided the key to a personal identity.

More than the artistic innovations or the refinement of my tastes and ideas, the aspect of surrealism that has remained a part of me all these years is a clear and invariable moral exigency. (p. 124)

Bunuel admits the failure of the Surrealists to change the world. They were “just a small group of insolent intellectuals” who argued and fought. But this judgment is a sobering one, he nevertheless acknowledges the ultimate value the movement had for him:

I treasure that access to the depths of the self which I so yearned for, that call to the irrational, to the impulses that spring from the dark side of the soul. It was the surrealists who first launched this appeal with a sustained force and courage, with insolence and playfulness and an obstinate dedication to fight everything represented on the conventional wisdom. (p. 123)

Bunuel’s autobiography is both good fun to read and useful as a more or less consecutive account of his whole career. In addition, he is defending obsessions “because they make it easier to deal with life”, or nominating the four new horsemens of the apocalypse as overpopulation, science, technology and the media, such a man’s views are worth attending to.

An Encyclopaedia of Australian Film

Paul Harris

John Stewart, a Sydney-based film enthusiast, describes himself on the dust jacket as a former champion pole vaulter (in 1965 he set the world record for a 13-year-old). Perhaps he feels that with the publication of this pioneering reference work he will leap into the major leagues of Halliwell and the Apocalypse, (p. 124)

There are occasional lapses in the choice of inclusions, and some obvious omissions and inconsistencies. Graeme Bond is not listed, Elizabeth Alexander, the actress, is erroneously credited as being “a Commissioner in the Australian Film Commission”. (The AFC’s Elizabeth Alexander is a chartered accountant.) Terry Hayes, of Kennedy Miller fame and responsible for co-writing Mad Max 2, The Dismissal and Bodyline, is not listed. And why is it that Melbourne-based Russian emigre Yuri Sokol, director of photography on My Man Godfrey and My First Wife misses out? And, while on the subject of the Paul Cox Repertory Company, it is puzzling to note the absence of producer Jane Ballantyne, but not sister Elisabeth.

Films are often listed with the wrong year of production and there seems to be a similar lack of consistency with titling; e.g., A Salute to the Great MacArthy is referred to as The Great MacArthy, The Chain Reaction is, yet again, Chain Reaction and Mel Gibson is mistakenly listed as the star of Mutiny on the Bounty (actually The Bounty). And although produced by INP Productions, traditionally a supplier of television programs, Warming Up was shot on 35 mm specifically for cinema release and does not qualify as a tele-feature.

Director Ian Pringle’s 1979 project, Jack and the Soldier, is a script that never received funding so it is hardly surprising to see it listed here as “unreleased”. Supplementary information includes separate tables (no page intended) for American and British talent who have worked in Australia. These charts are arranged in chronological blocks decade by decade from 1910 onwards.

Further listings include features made locally since the industry’s early days, including cast lists and names of characters played; a list of major novels translated into film, arranged alphabetically by author; and a “fairly comprehensive” list of films subjected to title changes, either during production or in release.

The author does seem unnecessarily reticent about making any critical judgments, going so far as to insert the following disclaimer in his introduction: “There are very few opinions expressed, and they are the generally expressed ones, rather than those of the authors.”

This ‘encyclopaedia’, despite the aforementioned shortcomings, is certainly to be commended as an admirably adjacent to the currently available standard references (which can be counted on the proverbial hand) and will hopefully expand its information activities in future editions. More’s the pity that it seems to have been pushed into the market without any fanfare or media attention.

Omni’s Screen Flights/Screen Fantasies: The Future According to Science Fiction Cinema

Edited by Danny Peary

Silverberg is quite happy to waive the scientific implausibilities of both THX 1138 (1971) and Blade Runner (1982) since, for him, these two films provide what traditional cinema literature must do: project a totally believable futuristic milieu onto the screen, which he calls “written prose that transfers the imaginary realm from mind’s eye to celluloid. This is a view Phillip Strick complements in his excellent analysis of the future metropolis in science fiction film and its recurrent iconography of architecture.

The mainstream cinema commentator, he argues, has helpfully accelerated us to the accelerated new technology via its benevolent and utilitarian employment as movie special effects.

David Thompson’s perceptive essay about sex in science fiction films illustrates well the operation of a subtext vital to the genre. So much of science fiction crystalizes our fears that life could end, and sexuality is so ambivalently bound up with death and life. It is one of the peaks in existence, it lets the human race perpetuate itself, but it is also the function of the urge for violence and power, and the pre-occupied end of death. (p. 62)

Similarly, Martin Sutton explores sexual themes in his “Supercinema on the Abandoned Planet”, producing an interesting Freudian perspective, especially in his observation of Robbie the robot.

There are, however, a number of weaker articles such as the shallow reading of Robert Heinlein’s Destination Moon (1950) which, whilst praising the novel’s “libertarian” sensibility, conveniently ignores the overt function of a technocratic authoritarianism that smacks of McCarthyism.

Silverberg, like Michael Crichton, appears to be one of the few contributors comfortable and cognizant with the notion of formulaic convention manipulation and the limitations of the literary and cinematic media.

Not all of the science fiction authors, however, follow the ‘hard science’ line of Asimov and Ellison.
Recent Releases

Mervyn Binn

This column lists a selection of books on sale in Australia up to December 1984, of which deals with the cinema and related topics.

The publishers and the local distributors are listed next to the author in each entry. If no distributor is indicated, the book is imported (Imp.). The recommended prices listed are for paperbacks, unless otherwise indicated, and are subject to variations between bookshops and libraries.

The list was compiled by Mervyn R. Binn of the Space Age Bookstore, Melbourne.

Popular and General Interest

The Bible According to Hollywood

Robert Cross

Warlock/Australasian Publishing Co., $7.95 (PB)


Donald Duck — 10 Years of Happy Anniversary

Flora O’Brien and others

Three Duck Editions/Dent Australia, $14.95 (HC)

A celebration of Donald Duck’s 50th Birthday, tracing the history and development of this popular cartoon character.

History of Movie Musicals

Thomas G. Ayersworth

Orbis/Trident Books, $12.95 (PB)

An illustrated survey of more than 250 hit songs and their films.

The History of World War 2

Donald Cross

Ward Lock/Australasian Publishing Co., $7.95 (PB)

A new-to-be-taken seriously, using suitably captioned stills from film.

The Movies of the Thirties

Edited by Ell Alone

Orbis/Trident Books, $19.95 (HC)

A collection of articles on the silent movies and the directors and producers profiles.

The Movies of the Forties

Edited by Ell Alone

Orbis/Trident Books, $12.95 (PB)


Fantasy and Science Fiction Fiction

The Complete Film Source

Syd Field

Hodder & Stoughton/Hodder & Stoughton Aust., $14.95 (PB)

A complete history of television from its earliest beginnings.

The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Australian Show Business

S. Heath and P. Mellencamp

A complete history of television from its earliest beginnings.

Television

The Complete Film Source

Syd Field

Hodder & Stoughton/Hodder & Stoughton Aust., $14.95 (PB)

A complete history of television from its earliest beginnings.

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Hodder & Stoughton/Hodder & Stoughton Aust., $14.95 (PB)

A complete history of television from its earliest beginnings.
September 1984

Films Examined in Terms of the Customs (Cinematograph Films) Regulations as States' Film Censorship Legislation are Listed Below.
An Explanatory Key to Reasons for Classifying Non-"G" Films Appears Hereunder:

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M (For Mature Audiences)

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November 1984

Films Registered Without Deletions

| G (For General Exhibition) | | | | | |
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October 1984

Films Registered Without Deletions

| G (For General Exhibition) | | | | | |
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Films Refused Registration

| G (For General Exhibition) | | | | | |
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November 1984

Films Registered Without Deletions

| G (For General Exhibition) | | | | | |
|---------------------------|-------------------|------------------|-----------|-------------------|

Hal Osborne (Dabney Coleman) lowers his son Davey (Henry Thomas) from the cockpit in their escape from the spire of the plane. Richard Franklin's Clash and Dagger.
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**Mr. B Says No**

Philadelphia: Pine's, 3181.88 m, Raffy Rios, Film Victoria, War of the Planets

Winds of Jarrah

Of adult concepts, L(i-l-j)

(b) Previously shown on July 1983 list.

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**M (For Mature Audiences)**

- Against the Ice, Sony Pictures
- Chelea's Order, by Innocence: Cannon Group, Britain, 2386.41 m, Hoyts Dist., Filmways

And Now What's Your Name?; W. Chung, Hong Kong, 987 m, Joe So Film Co., Ltd.

- Crime: Raffy Rios, Film Victoria
- War of the Planets

Winds of Jarrah (reissue)

- (b) Previously shown on July 1983 list.

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**(a) Is issued at the discretion of the Films Board of Review. See also under "Films Board of Review."**

**(b) Previously shown on July 1983 list.

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**R (For Restricted Exhibition)**

- Black Rose: Young Venus: Playboys Enterprises, Britain, 959 m, Valley View Video Library
- Quo Vadis?: Confusion from a Holiday Camp: G. Smith, Britain, 959 m, Valley View Video Library
- Dead of Night: R. Clark, U.S., 90 m, VCL Communications
- Death Wish: L. Laubor-R. Roberts, Britain, 91 m, Valley View Video Library
- Death Wish II: R. Golden-Y. Glubsch, Britain, 87 m, Valley View Video Library

- D. Lohan, U.S., 93 m, Valley View Video Library

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**Films Registered With Deletions**

- Nil.

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**Films Board of Review**

- (a) Universal, U.S., 2154 m, United Int'l Pictures
- (b) Previously shown on July 1983 list.

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**Video**

**Week Ending 11 May, 1984**

- The Amazing Spider-Man: Marvel Comics, U.S., 60 m
- The Art of Daddy: RKO-Prod, The Philippines, 3181.88 m, Raffy Rios, Film Victoria

- The Arabic Adventure: J. Dark, Britain, 96 m, Valley View Video Library

- The Archer and the Sorceress: A. Gore, U.S., 90 m, Valley View Video Library

- Banana Splits and Friends: Hanna Barbera, U.S., 96 m, CBS-Fox Video

- Beauty and the Beat: H. Moonjan, U.S., 91 m, Valley View Video Library

- Black Beauty: Hanna Barbera, U.S., 46 m, CBS-Craft Video

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**CINEMA PAPERS February-March — 81**
Refused Classification

Week Ending 18 May 1984

G

David Bowie — Serious Moonlight: A. Eaton, U.S., 89 mins, Video Classics, R (adult theme)

Flying the Phoenix: The Quest for the Holy Grail (60 mm): Caribbean Films, Netherlands, 90 mins, Video Classics, R (adult themes)

The Unknown Soldiers of the Holy Land: 4th Volunteers: Germany, 25 mins, W.B. and J.E. Wathen, R (adult concept, violence)

X

All About Gloria Leonard: M. Howard, U.S., 72 mins, Venus Video, V (adult theme)

Dancing for Dollars: Not shown, U.S., 60 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

The Gates of Heaven: A. Croft, U.S., 100 mins, Video Classics, R (adult themes)

Celluloid: Penthouse Films Int., Canada, 95 mins, Pakenham Video, R (adult concepts)


Hearts Touched by Love: F. N. Fyson, U.S., 74 mins, Video Home Video, V (adult concepts)

The Prisoner: M. Hunter, W. Germany, 76 mins, Palace Home Video, V (adult concepts)

The Priestess: U.S., 90 mins, Palace Home Video, V (adult concepts)

Refused Classification

Week Ending 25 May 1984

G

American Christmas Carol: J. Slan-S. Chase, U.S., 96 mins, Syne Home Video, V

Cactus Jack: R. C. Parrish, U.S., 91 mins, Syne Home Video, V

Anchors Aweigh: J. C. Chauve, Australia, 85 mins, Syne Home Video

Hollywood Video ke ta kultivatuon: S. Panzani, Greece, 98 mins, DPK Video Entertainment, V (adult concepts)

Savage Connection: J. Bochis, U.S., 90 mins, DPK Video Entertainment, V (adult concepts)


The Right Stuff: U.S., 89 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

Refused Classification

Week Ending 1 June 1984

G


Hecks and Jackie (Vol. 1): T. Verroux, U.K., 50 mins, Video Classics


The Hox: R. Anderson, U.S., 144 mins, Video Classics

Mouse: R. Mithen, U.S., 50 mins, Video Classics

Penny by Penny: E. L. Lehman, U.S., 84 mins, Video Classics

PGG

An Audience with Mel Brooks: London Weekend Tele, U.K., 87 mins, Video Classics

Caribbean Films: N.V., U.S., 95 mins, Z Indoor S.W.E. Ltd., V (adult concept)

Beat Street: D. W. Hamill, U.S., 88 mins, DPK Video Entertainment, V (adult concept)

Budo — Art of Killing: H. Masuda, Japan, 85 mins, Kaboom Video, V (adult concepts)

Come Die With Me: D. Curtis, U.S., 66 mins, Video Classics

Faust: C. W. Grundy, U.S., 100 mins, Video Classics

The Demon of London: W. Rebane, U.S., 89 mins, Video Classics

The Grey Fox: T. B. Hines, Australia, 99 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

The Hound of the Baskervilles: D. P. Schischa, Britain, 85 mins, Roadshow Home Video, V

Love Story: H. Wonk, U.S., 95 mins, Rigby-Clive Video, V (adult theme)

Nightmare at 43 Crescent: D. Curtis, U.S., 86 mins, Syne Home Video, V (adult concepts)

A Night Out in London with Cannon and Ball: J. P. Layng, U.K., 88 mins, Video Classics

The Right Stuff: L. Strode, U.S., 93 mins, CIC-Video, V (adult concepts)

M

Another Time, Another Place: S. Perry, Britain, 100 mins, Palace Home Video, V (adult concepts)

The Cones: P. Hunter, U.S., 86 mins, 14th Mandolin, V (adult concepts)

The Draughtsmen’s Contract: D. Payne, Britain, 92 mins, Palace Home Video, V (adult concepts)

Miss Macaroon’s Run: L. Strode, U.S., 93 mins, CIC-Video, V (adult concepts)

Experience Preferred But Not Essential: C. Griffin, Britain, 74 mins, Palace Home Video, V (adult concepts)

Muder For Sale: M. Denon, Italy, 114 mins, 14th Mandolin, V

R

Angel Of Vengeance: Navaron Films, U.S., 80 mins, Video Classics, V (adult theme)

Boiling Point: Cowboy Priors, U.S., 71 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

Bondage Pleasures Vol. 1: T. Play Video, U.S., 80 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

Bondage Pleasures Vol. 4: T. Play Video, U.S., 80 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

Box Car Bertha: American International, U.S., 86 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

Caligula: The Untold Story: M. Corpaz, U.S., 144 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

The Devil In Miss Jones Part II: J. Boche, U.S., 78 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

Friday 13th Part III: F. Manuso, U.S., 94 mins, CIC-Video, V (adult theme)

Language Of Love: I. Ivanov, Sweden, 103 mins, Video Classics, V (adult theme)

Legacy Of Satan: L. Parish, U.S., 71 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concept)

Maraoshimo Cherry: M. Berman, U.S., 77 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concept)


Three On A Match: J. L. Eyres, U.S., 97 mins, 14th Mandolin, V (adult concept)

X

All American Girls: B. M. Hunter, U.S., 60 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concepts)

Baby Blue: M. Hunter, Germany, 73 mins, J.E. Wathen, V (adult concepts)

The Baby-Sitter: G. Carey, U.S., 60 mins, Anglo America, V (adult concepts)

Bad Dreams: M. Hunter, U.S., 87 mins, 14th Mandolin, V (adult concept)

Bathing Sickness: Superchop Prods, U.S., 59 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concept)

Deadly Play: F. S. Wide, U.S., 59 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concept)

Three On A Match: J. L. Eyres, U.S., 97 mins, 14th Mandolin, V (adult concept)

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All American Girls: O. Beautiful: M. Hunter, U.S., 60 mins, Video Classics, V (adult concept)

American Girl: B. M. Hunter, Germany, 73 mins, J.E. Wathen, V (adult concept)

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Three On A Match: J. L. Eyres, U.S., 97 mins, 14th Mandolin, V (adult concept)
the solution as winning Ironman races. Perhaps growing more bananas might have been the solution, or being a better father or more affectionate husband.

Is Adam (Colin Friels) another example of a character you would have liked to have developed more? It would have been interesting to see what his wants were and where his conflict with Joe lay. He basically seems to be a physical and psychological extension of his father.

I had to be very economical, and Colin and Igor had to create and deliver a rounded, complex and satisfying character with not a great deal to work with.

Colin's contribution to the film is enormous. The first time I met Colin he told me more about the character of Adam than I knew myself. And then, without adding any more dialogue or any more scenes, he delivered, I feel, an Adam you can understand. It is a major achievement, and I am grateful to Colin for it.

Despite all the good questions you have asked, which have pushed me towards spending more time developing the primary characters, after one viewing of the film you have picked up most of the subtleties: that Adam is striving to be something he doesn't really want to be, that he has grown up. The trophy is such a small thing to him and such a big thing to Joe, that Steve is able to make a present of it.

By coming second, Steve is responding to his father's impending disapproval of his winning. So, he is reacting to the way his father is going to feel about the outcome of the race.

Certainly, but he is not seeking his father's approval — which is the point. Steve has just run 24 km, paddled 24 km and swam for 5 km so he has learned a bit about pain in the last 110 minutes. One of the marks of the maturing process is when we come to realize that our parents aren't perfect and shouldn't be, and we accept them as human. Steve sees the pain on his father's face and not only sympathizes but empathizes with it. He has sensed failure himself, and felt pain, and he can now understand Joe.

The point of the race, and one of the reasons it is a marathon race, is that Steve burns all that garbage out of himself, and comes to the realization that winning his father's race, or even having his father know that he could have won the race, is irrelevant because his father's approval or disapproval is irrelevant. He doesn't even need to hurt him. The only thing that means anything to him is his own independence, that he can come second and walk away from the race feeling that he is a winner, that he has grown up. The trophy is such a small thing to him and such a big thing to Joe, that Steve is able to make a present of it.

There is one scene in which Joe is telling Steve off for injuring Adam that seems to be taken almost exactly from "East of Eden". Did those other fraternal rivalry films have any influence?

Quite a bit I suppose; you can't help it. East of Eden did influence me because it also has that theme of rivalry between the brothers. It is funny the number of people who have asked me if Flashdance influenced the film. It had nothing to do with it; East of Eden had much more bearing.

Have you been influenced by any Australian films on adolescence?

No. There has been a degree of social realism in Australian films that is not directly relevant to what I was trying to do. I was more concerned with the underlying human traits, not the realistic reflection of them in a social setting, which is what most Australian youth pictures have done. I wanted to deal with it on a much simpler, larger-than-life level than that — emotional rather than directly realistic.

Geoff Burrowes and George Miller who made "The Man from Snowy River" said in an interview for ‘Cinema Papers' that they were not going to worry about the critics because they had decided right from the beginning that they were going to market the film properly. Would it be fair to say the same for "The Coolangatta Gold"?

That is right. If the critics don't appreciate it, that doesn't worry me; if the people who pay their $7.50 don't like it, that worries me. Critics can have a very important role but they can also be destructive. So I don't ignore them but I don't lose any sleep over them. In this case, as with *The Man From Snowy River*, it is a film intended for the market, not for the critics. So you don't think the critics affect the audience attendance?

I doubt that writers, producers or directors would be basing their marketing strategies on the critical response. Once you go over a certain budget, it is very important to have some sort of marketing strategy in mind, even while you are writing the screenplay, and certainly while you are making the film.

David Puttnam once said while he was writing you ought to be able to identify the poster, the trailer and the television commercial in your script because more people will see them than will ever see the picture. Basically, what he was saying was that you ought to know how the picture is going to be marketed while you are writing it. It might be a pretty cold-blooded way to approach it, and I wouldn't recommend it to everyone, or for every picture, but certainly for a big-budget film it is important to know that.

So you were visualizing the advertisements while you were writing the script... Yes, but that is not to say they turned out how I visualized them. But I knew how I would want the picture to be marketed and I needed to know that there were marketing, promotion and publicity hooks in the picture. It was nowhere near as cold-blooded as writing a scene thinking it was going to appear in the commercial. But, for example, there were three reasons why I created the race: first and foremost, I needed a dramatic climax; but then I needed $1 million of free production values, and, very importantly, I needed a publicity hook for the launch of the picture — and it has provided enormous publicity.

Are you glad that the race has become an event?

To have bought the production values that it provides would have been impossible, so we had to have it as a real event during the shoot. And we needed it as a real event for the launch of the film. As it turned out, they ran the race six weeks after the launch of the film. It has provided a higher level of recognition for the film but, after this year, it will have done its job for the film. Whether it continues as an event, I don't know, and it doesn't matter. It would be a nice ego trip, to have created an ongoing race, but it has already done the job I care about.

What is your current project, "Kimberly", about?

It is a contemporary romantic film. One of the things writers should never do, if for no other reason than it diffuses their need to write, is to talk through their stories before they are written. Writing is such a painful process: if you leave writing as the only way to get the story out, then eventually you are going to do it, but if you tell the story orally, then you have already had the satisfaction and you may never get around to writing it. So I don't want to talk too much about it.

What do you mean by writing being a painful process? Are you talking about the research of characters, etc.?

No, that part is great. I would do that forever, just to avoid the writing: it is probably one of the reasons I research so much. I find writing is physically painful; it hurts. To keep it taut and keep it tense I just seem to have to generate so much tension in myself physically. But there is no other way I would ever want to make a living. I love being a writer, but I hate writing.

Do you eventually want to direct films?

If you gave me a choice between being locked in a room with a typewriter, shoving the script through a slot on the door and getting the cheque back through it, or being a writer-director then I would be a writer-director because I enjoy the filmmaking process so much. But happily it is not as clear cut a choice as that.

While I can go on being a writer and still be part of the filmmaking process, then I will stick to writing. I would have to be driven to direct — and I don't know that that would be a very good thing to happen.

"For and I wanted to do a story about sport and love." Top: the finale to the triathlon race is fought out between Steve, Grant Kenny (played by himself) and Adam. Above: Steve and Kerri reunited after the race. The Coolangatta Gold.
release print, and it took a long while to get it looking like a true black and white. Some stock footage refused to look like black and white and the stuff they shot had to have a little of the color cast put back in so it matched.

When they shot The Blue Lagoon (U.S., 1980) in Fiji, Nestor Almendros wanted to send the material back to Los Angeles, because that is where all of his negatives had gone. But Richard Franklin [co-producer] wanted it processed in Sydney as he could get a report back much quicker. We had even talked about Nestor's coming to Australia to have a look on to color and come back as black and white, then I don't need to know anything else. It can all go wrong. I hadn't seen all the work prints, done the edge numbers and presumed they were right. We didn't go back and check because we didn't think there was any reason to. We didn't realize that sometimes the loop which goes through the edge numbering machine, instead of being, say, three inches wide was six inches wide, which made a lot of difference. So Maggie had to eye-match the whole film and she nearly had a nervous breakdown.

What about the more recent films, for example “The Man From Snowy River” (Keith Wagstaff, 1982).

It had its problems, too: for example, the interiors with the candlelight. I had never worked with Keith Wagstaff before and there was an enormous amount of work within the rooms and the cabins which was under-exposed to my way of thinking. But it was the look he wanted. I would have liked to have seen more exposure on it, but it became one of Australia's most commercial films and made a fortune for them.

It was a good shoot, though there were odd things that went wrong with it. If you watch the film carefully you will see a blue reflector while Vince Monton lines up an angle.

Might I add that there are some films about which I have never said that because nothing has been funny. I get very offended when films go through the lab which are so static because the camera never moves and you could be watching television. I don't think that is what it is all about.

How many films have you worked on at a time?

Seven. It can be done; I just go to work earlier.

You have to be involved and genuinely interested in every film you do. It is a personal relationship. But you make a rod for your back because you become terribly jealous of what you do. You start on something and it becomes “Mine, mine, mine!”. You go to work with the flu for 12 hours because it is “mine”.

I go to see one of my films in a theatre and part of me is up there; I haven't physically done anything to it but it is part of me. It is like the director of photography going in and saying, “I shot that”, I walk in and say, “That's mine.” There is a certain possessiveness in it. I get offended when Australian people don't go and see Australian movies; they are letting me down.

But you don't do this by yourself. I could never have spent the hours unless Rosemary and the girls had been wanting or allowing me. When I got the Longford Award last year I just couldn't believe that was happening to me. It was the most unreal thing, standing up there in this wonderful place of honor. That was my greatest achievement: that a technician who had come through the ranks was recognized as a Longford Award winner. And it was an achievement that I never thought I would have. As I have said before, I have never considered myself anything but part of the crew. And I wouldn't want to be anything else. ★
Curtin’s efforts to defend Australia against the legitimate threat of the Japanese. Churchill’s credibility is shattered by his constant claim that Singapore will hold, thereby further legitimizing Curtin’s opposition to the attempt to divert the Australian troops to Rangoon.

Blamey, Australia’s military leader, is the other major figure of knowledge representing a position extending through Shedden and Curtin. Blamey’s position is foregrounded in the latter part of the series in his conflict with MacArthur. As with Churchill, MacArthur’s position must be undermined to further reinforce the dominant discourse; certainly his saviour-like image of the period would damage this position. Consequently, as with Churchill, the series is highly selective in its interpretation of the American general. The strutting, petulant, vainglorious image offered probably captures correctly one side of the man, but only one side. Compare this to William Manchester’s description when he writes that MacArthur was a thundering paradox of a man, noble and ignoble, inspiring and outrageous, arrogant and shy, the best of men and the worst of men, the most protean, the most ridiculous and the most sublime. No more baffling, exasperating soldier ever wore a uniform. Flamboyant, imperious, and apocalyptic, he carried the plumage of a flamingo, could not acknowledge errors, and tried to cover up his mistakes with sly, childish tricks. Yet he was endowed with great personal charm, a will of iron, and a soaring intellect. Unquestionably he was the most gifted man-at-arms this nation has produced.5

Robert Vaughn’s MacArthur looks the part, if a trifle short: the trousers with the pleats to hide MacArthur’s slight paunch, the infamous corn cob pipe, dark glasses and welter of gold braid. But his presentation in the series remains at the level of what the Australian troops dubbed him as they were slogging their way over the Owen-Stanley ranges in New Guinea: “Choco Doug”, which was slang for “chocolate soldier”. Never does the series capture the immense pain he felt at leaving his troops in The Philippines, nor the obsession behind his “I shall return” speech. Instead, the series presents these sentiments as, at best, forced and superficial, and characteristic of yet another foreigner who fails to appreciate the intrinsic nature of the Australian people, in general, and the Australian soldier, in particular. To MacArthur, in the series, Australians are “colonial hicks” and Curtin and Blamey are merely props to perpetuate his enormous self-glorification.

Given the dominant discourse, MacArthur is reduced to a strutting cardboard figure which totally fails to capture what Australian journalist George Johnston described as the spellbinding power of his briefings, or to acknowledge MacArthur’s affection for Australians and his friendship with Curtin: MacArthur: When I stand at the gates of Manila, I want the President of the Commonwealth [of The Philippines] at my right hand and the Prime Minister of Australia at my left.6

Also, it would have only weakened Curtin’s position if the series had acknowledged MacArthur’s vigorous protestation over the Churchill-Roosevelt plan to divert the Australian battalions to Burma. It would have no longer presented a simple dichotomy of the confrontation (“us” versus “them”).

The Last Bastion, like all melodramas, requires a vigorous third act in which the innocent can humiliate and reject the villain. This occurs when the Curtin-Shedden-Blamey position (i.e., the legitimate Australian position compared to the illegitimate position espoused by the royalist Menzies) is able to put those foreigners (Churchill-MacArthur) in their rightful place. The build-up to this final sequence takes place from Menzies’ abortive trip back to Buna: “I’d rather put Australians in at least I know they’ll fight!”

The second meeting begins with Blamey watching MacArthur strutting before the photographers and taking the credit for the success at Buna and Gona.

Blamey: There’s... four thousand Japs up there... This is all that’s left. When we started back up the trail, there were at least fifteen thousand, not the two thousand you keep telling me... We lost over three thousand men, and a lot of them died because you kept bombarding them with your hysterical orders ‘Attack! Attack! Attack!’

MacArthur: When I get back to Brisbane I’m going to stress the magnificent valor of you and your Australians.

Blamey: I’m not interested in the press. I just don’t want to hear you tell any more bare-faced lies. This has been a bloody and costly campaign and it’s not over yet. Enjoy your trip back to Brisbane. (Blamey gets up and walks away from MacArthur. MacArthur goes after him and apologizes.)

MacArthur: I called your men cowards and I was wrong. I just didn’t realize the conditions were difficult.

Blamey: Why didn’t you go up and have a look for yourself? I did.

MacArthur: Your men didn’t die in vain, Tom. The Japanese aren’t invincible any longer...

(Blamey turns away from MacArthur.)

MacArthur: I'm not interested in the press. I just don’t want to hear you tell any more bare-faced lies. This has been a bloody and costly campaign and it’s not over yet. Enjoy your trip back to Brisbane. (Blamey gets up and walks away from MacArthur. MacArthur goes after him and apologizes.)

MacArthur: I called your men cowards and I was wrong. I just didn’t realize the conditions were difficult.

Blamey: That’s an order?

(He turns toward MacArthur.)

MacArthur: If you were an American I’d have you court-martialled.

Blamey: If I was an American I’d shoot myself.

MacArthur: (takes off his dark glasses). Whatever you think of me, I think you’re one hell of a soldier...

Finally, the true Australian character is appreciated.

The closure of the series, which has been criticized for its seeming arbitrariness, is totally coherent in its message. It completes the concerns of the drama. Whilst the plethora of “historical” material appears to unfold before the viewer’s eyes throughout the six-hour mini-series, a careful selection and interpretation process has also taken place. There is no mention, for example, of the Pensacola convoy which was diverted from The Philippines to Brisbane in late December 1941, nor the part that Churchill played in securing Washington’s approval for MacArthur’s escape from The Philippines and his appointment to Australia. This is not to argue that the series should necessarily have included such material but merely to point out that the game of presenting the ‘historical truth’ is just that, a game: a game of selection and interpretation. The Last Bastion is a coherent and dramatic drama with the key word being “drama”.★
The film was shot over three years, then edited for a year. They had hired a composer1, then they changed their minds. When they hired me they were a year late to do it, and didn’t feel they had the money to begin recording about two weeks after I got the job. I was on my way out the door with my family to go on a vacation. There was no vacation.

I wrote for a week, then scored for a week, then wrote for a week and so on. It seemed like forever, even though it happened fast. It was a big movie with a lot of music and it was an intense period. I wasn’t on the movie more than two months. I finished it and it was out in the theatres.

You obviously work well under that kind of pressure.

Everyone in my business works under that kind of pressure. I don’t think I can do it, because there was no money in it and then I was approached. I said, “Sure I’ll do it.” That kind of changed my career.

Another of your best-known scores is the one for “The Right Stuff”. Apparently there were last minute changes with the music.

1. John Williams.

Brian May
Continued from p. 49

which they had never seen before, it was virtually spot on.

“Cloak and Dagger” is not the only film you have worked on recently...

I went into a picture called Missing in Action (a Chuck Norris feature for Cannon Films) which had a chequered career as to what was going to happen with the recording of the music. I was hired to compose it and then there was a lot of dithering over where it was going to be recorded. At one stage it was London and then it was Budapest.

Why the odd venues?

It wasn’t a high-budget film. The director of the film liked my work and when the movie was finished he “tracked” the movie with all of my music from different films. It was scary hearing it because they had used parts of The Road Warrior, Mad Max, Roadgames and others — about five of my pictures. It was not, of course, going to be exhibited like that, it was just something to give an idea of the sort of music they wanted. The heads of the company heard the (tracking job, liked it and said, “That’s it. You’ve got the score.”

When I met the producers, they asked me where the music had been recorded. I said Australia, so eventually we did the music in Melbourne. I must say that everybody who has heard it has been very impressed. It was a big plus for our musicians here.

So, not every American film has to have its music recorded in the U.S....

No. If it is shot outside America, and Missing in Action was shot in South America, that reduces the necessity to record the score in America.

What are the current trends in film music in Hollywood?

The song score seems to be, unfortunately, coming back into its own. I went to buy a copy of Jerry Goldsmith’s Under Fire score and, under the heading of Film Scores, I found that about 70 per cent of all the new film score albums were just collections of songs. It was like a return to the 1950s. The reason in those days was that record sales of hit tunes helped a film considerably at the box-office; the reason today is that the 24-hour cable television music has a strong viewing pattern from younger audiences, which are the same audiences that are going to the movies. They have found that if they can get a couple of music clips a day on cable television from a film it is worth gold in advertising. Some producers don’t even think about what the music is about as long as they can get those television clips going.

What is your reaction to the decision to bring in an American composer, Bill Conti, to do the score for “The Coolangatta Gold”?

There was a strong reaction amongst a lot of people in this country about that decision. The reaction I have is that in a free market-place it should be possible for people with international standing to come here to Australia to work just as I, Bruce Smeaton and others have been able to work in the U.S. The strongest point in this case about the use of Bill Conti is that The Coolangatta Gold and other Australian films are not really free market-place films, but are supported by taxpayers’ money. In fact, there is still very little protection for the Australian musician in Australian films, although practically every other aspect of filmmaking has some protection.

But it is unlikely that highly successful film composers overseas are going to be prepared to work for the money available to most filmmakers in this country...

True, although it was obviously available on The Coolangatta Gold.

What are your plans for the future?

I hope to be going back to America next year to work with the director of Missing in Action on a Western. The one thing I believe is that I, Bruce Smeaton and others have been able to work in the U.S. and so on. It seems like forever, too much. I would like to add one point about my experiences in Hollywood. I had the opportunity to meet John Williams, Quincy Jones and others, but I had a very touching evening in which I spent about half an hour with Miklos Rozsa...
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G

The Black Stallion Returns: Zoetrope Studios, U.S., 86 mins, United Int'l Pictures
Cassino Carnival Vol. 2 — Caesar and His Friends: Sid (of Adam and Eve), Italy, 65 mins, United Int'l Pictures
The Battle of the Sexes: Warner Bros., U.S., 96 mins, United Int'l Pictures
Pink Panther: Tashen-G. Kurtz, U.S., 96 mins, United Int'l Pictures
Tarkovskiy's Andrey: Arthur, U.S., 110 mins, Sun­downer Film and Video Prods
The Last Command: Republic, U.S., 110 mins, Sun­downer Film and Video Prods
The Man Who Would Be King: U.S., 89 mins, Sun­downer Film and Video Prods
Let's Break: IMA Inc., U.S., 58 mins, Warner Home Video
The Year of Living Dangerously: Carolco Pictures, U.S., 123 mins, United Int'l Pictures

P

The American: R. Stillman, U.S., 82 mins, Sun­downer Film and Video Prods
Adventures of a Bartender: Japan, 62 mins, Yamamoto Pictures Ltd., Sfi-m-j
Joe: Universal, U.S., 95 mins, United Int'l Pictures
Falcon — Pacific Underground: S. Farkas, U.S., 89 mins, United Int'l Pictures
Curse of the Living Dead: S. Millaney, U.S., 60 mins, Vestron Video
The Perfect Killer: J. Seeley, U.S., 65 mins, United Int'l Pictures

G

A Streetcar Named Desire: E. Fields, U.S., 123 mins, Sun­downer Film and Video Prods
Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: U.S., 88 mins, Sun­downer Film and Video Prods
True Colors: S. Beatty, U.S., 107 mins, United Int'l Pictures
Kong, 90 mins, CBS-Fox Video
The Big Bus: E. M. Katz, U.S., 88 mins, Sun­downer Film and Video Prods
The Lords of Discipline: S. Millaney, U.S., 90 mins, United Int'l Pictures

R

Carrie P. Monash, U.S., 98 mins, Warner Home Video
The Morning After: U.S., 98 mins, Sun­downer Film and Video Prods

S

Carrie sale: a. Koyroyniotis, Greece, 80 mins, Stavros Importers

F

The One Armed Executioner: R. Suarez, U.S., 80 mins, Sun­downer Film and Video Prods
Exorcist 3: Reasonable Solutions: D. J. McDonald, U.S., 90 mins, United Int'l Pictures

X

The Best Little Warehouse in L.A.: Log Cabin Pictures
Mr. Holland's Opus: U.S., 106 mins, United Int'l Pictures

A

Amarcord: M. Pasolini, Italy, 122 mins, Columbia Pictures
Adamo ed Eva: M. Pasolini, Italy, 112 mins, Columbia Pictures

D

Dormitory Daze: Nova Prods, U.S., 60 mins, United Int'l Pictures

H

How I Got the Story: Nova Prods, U.S., 60 mins, United Int'l Pictures

I

Ioni ti esoterika: A. Koyroyniotis, Greece, 65 mins, Stavros Importers
Kayo kankai: D. Vitsos, Greece, 72 mins, Stavros Importers

K

Kicking It: The Movie: L. Gruber, U.S., 89 mins, United Int'l Pictures
Keeping Hell: S. Nivens, U.S., 90 mins, United Int'l Pictures

M

Made to Order: Nova Prods, U.S., 90 mins, United Int'l Pictures
Magnus Glen — Male Erotica Volume I: Magnus Glen — Male Erotica Volume II

M

McBain's Last Case: J. Nash, U.S., 90 mins, United Int'l Pictures

N

Nightline: J. Lewis, The Netherlands, 75 mins, J. Nash

O

On the Good Side: D. L. Clark, U.S., 90 mins, United Int'l Pictures

P

Paper Bullets: S. Pahk, U.S., 90 mins, United Int'l Pictures

R

Rangoon: W. Stevens, U.S., 90 mins, J. Nash

S

Seduce and Destroy: J. Nash, U.S., 90 mins, United Int'l Pictures

T

Texas Lightning: J. Sotos, U.S., 88 mins, Video Classics

V

Violecent Video: Violecent Video

W

Wayne's World: U.S., 105 mins, United Int'l Pictures

X


Y

Year That Will Be Remembered: Sun —downer Film and Video Prods, U.S., 112 mins, United Int'l Pictures

Z

Zagor: U.S., 88 mins, United Int'l Pictures

Refused Classification

Nil
nightmare of monotony and tedious phobias. Alain has found an easy answer. The troubled characters such as Edith bring some color in contrast to his growing lifelessness, which is welcome as he becomes increasingly robot-like and rigidly happy through the two-hour film.

There are a few side-effects that are not so encouraging, however, and one watches through Barbara's eyes as she begins to distrust the new Alain. His interests are only in the superficial. He becomes obsessed with television commercials, and fashions his appearance after the man in his favorite magazine advertisement. When his wife asks why he loves her, he tells her because she is beautiful and her skin is soft. He has no conscience in causing the death of his mother-in-law because it ends the strife between her and Barbara, and is generally more domestically convenient. None of these actions trouble Alain; they only torment those around him.

"We feel good don't we?" is the mantra of the flash patient, and Alain's method for rising above the ordinary human problems is to ignore what he doesn't have and be happy with what he does have. Perhaps we all would like to live without jealousy and pain, and be satisfied with what we have. Perhaps we all envy those who have the rest of the world doesn't understand their problems. Their overwhelming, all-consuming desire to be happy, to live without jealousy and pain, and be satisfied with what they have.

Alain's method for rising above the world in his favorite magazine advertisement, instructing his co-workers to tolerate the abuse of potential customers, to sell by smiling through it all, and to be happy with what he does have. Perhaps we all would like to live without jealousy and pain, and be satisfied with what we have. Perhaps we all envy those who have the rest of the world doesn't understand their problems. Their overwhelming, all-consuming desire to be happy, to live without jealousy and pain, and be satisfied with what they have.

As more and more people get flashed it is easy to identify with the depressed Barbara and the world weary Marc (Philippe Léotard), Alain's pessimistic colleague at the insurance company. Their dullness, sadness and the circles under their eyes remind one that despair is quite normal. Alain becomes totally dehumanized, and his presence grows steadily more difficult for the normal human being to tolerate.

Although the film is very funny, and at times very light, Jessua's sense of humor throughout is a sort of modern macabre, sinister thread of sadistic control that exaggerates the spirit behind the popular cure-alls and panaceas of the 20th Century. The truth he underscores is that everyone wants to be happy — and as easily as possible. People crave a formula for happiness that requires no pain, discomfort or even effort. When Valois' flashing technique is publicized, he is deluged with potential patients of every age and ailment, coming to him with the ordinary problems that make life hell: "My husband left", "I'm tired all the time", "I'm bored with life", "I can't stop thinking about the girl who dumped me", etc. People begin trekking to the flashing machine the way people in the 1960s trekked to southern California to find themselves. A new race is created, whose danger is evident not only in the domestic situation of Alain and Barbara, but also in the delayed reaction of Charles and his simian relatives in the zoo. An outrageous scene of monkey bedlam, domestic animal war and crazed chimpanzees is a subtle symbol for the future of the quality of life for the human flash victims. It is a painfully blatant comparison. And yet the story, as written by Jessua and André Ruellan, is not as predictable as it might seem to be. Jessua has such a unique, albeit distorted, view of life that a fairly simple, modern-day myth becomes in his hands a complicated, meandering moral that may make one squirm, but won't leave one bored.

**Film Reviews**

Continued from p. 76

CINEMA PAPERS February-March — 91
José (Garry Cadena) escapes the poverty of the sugar cane fields. Euzhan Palcy's 
Rue Cases Négres (Sugar Cane Alley).

Sugar Cane Alley

Dorrie Koeser

Dedicated to the world's "black shack alley", Rue cases negres (Sugar Cane Alley) tells the stories of Martinique 
cane-cutters and their families. And with a budget far less than the 
basics required by most modern film-makers, Euzhan Palcy is 
in her first feature a masterpiece.

Palcy discovered the book La rue cases negres, by Joseph Zobel, when 
she was 14 years-old. "The truth, the 
beauty, the violence and the grandeur 
of this work astounded me", she says. 
Palcy does it justice with her film 
which describes, with pain and humor, 
the harsh realities of the cutters' 
lives. It deals with their oppression, "this 
deep-rooted misery in our guts", 
without becoming an oppressive moral 
lesson, and is an educational account 
of another culture without being a 
documentary, a depiction of ordinary 
living without lurking drama. 

As well as warfare, there is a 
peaceful rhythm to the days in the 
black shack alley. The film provides a 
feeling for those days with its changing 
quality of light, local noises and music, 
and depiction of the ritual habits and 
movements of the people. The young 
hero, José (Garry Cadenat), connects 
many of the stories with narration and 
works upon the original producers. In the event that the award is shared, the prize will be divided equally among the winners.

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