Cinema Papers #59 September 1986

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The AFI Awards
A Special Preview

Nobody's fool:
Robert Altman on working with Sam Shepard

Man of films:
Paul Cox and his several obsessions

Lino Brocka
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Cox & Ballantyne on Hendon:

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‘You start from scratch in Australia’

That phrase — ‘You start from scratch in Australia’ — is a part of the history of Australian cinema. A very small part, it is true: Harry Watt used it in an article he wrote for the last issue of the Penguin Film Review in May 1949. But the Review’s editor, Roger Manvell, gave it a certain immortality by pulling it out and using it as the title.

It was a good piece of editing, because it summed up what Watt was on about. Sent to Australia at the end of World War II “to see if it was possible to make films there”, Watt discovered a vast continent, a wealth of themes, but studio facilities so poor that “indoor films” couldn’t be made. So he made The Overlanders.

As Australian films of the forties and fifties went, The Overlanders was pretty ‘Australian’: it had cattle and cabbage-tree hats and Chips Rafferty. But the context in which it was made was classic cringe. Watt, being a foreigner, was assumed to be able to do what Chauvel, Hall, Robinson and McCreddie couldn’t: get the message through to a world audience. The Australian government was worried that British propaganda was ignoring the Australian war effort. So it brought in a British filmmaker to set matters to right.

Nowadays, we tend to rely on foreigners, particularly foreign actors, and most particularly American stars, not for propaganda, but for profit. As the Australian film industry moves into its monetarist phase, its appetite for overseas actors is increasing dramatically. Ayers Rock and the Sydney Harbour Bridge are all very well for boosting tourism, but they don’t sell million-dollar movies.

Like all monetarist arguments, this one is impeccable in the short term. From small beginnings, a mighty industry has grown, with considerable ambitions and sizeable overheads. With a big workforce and large (tax-aided) investment, the industry’s supply side is trundling along nicely. Not so the demand: sad to tell, the world no longer wants our films just because they’re ours. For Australian and overseas audiences alike, a film is a film. And, in the market-dominated world of international cinema, the Australianliness of Australian movies supposedly needs a little levelling. In the rather ingenuous words of a recent open letter to the Minister for Immigration and Ethnic Affairs by 48 Australian filmmakers, we need foreigners in and on our films because they “enhance our ability to communicate our stories to the world”.

The letter uses phrases like “creative freedom of expression” and “artistic maturity”, but its arguments are, in reality, economic. The foreigners of “distinction and merit” it wants to see admitted to work without let or hindrance won’t really help Australian filmmakers “communicate”: they’ll make it possible for them to sell their films. Put rather more crudely, if American presales predicate Linda Evans (or Laura Branigan or Jason Robards), who are we to argue?

I’m sure no one — least of all the McElroys, who co-ordinated the open letter — wants to see Australia become a Hollywood backlot, attractive more for its emptiness and its cut-price dollar than for its stories, its culture, its filmmakers and its identity.

But the market is an unreliable master, particularly in the film world. Plus “the market” is, as currently defined, centred anywhere but in Australia. And, if we are not to go back to scratch in Australia, we have to recognize something which, from an Australian perspective, is inescapable. If overseas actors become the economic bedrock of our new-style film industry, then Australian stories, Australian concerns and even the sound of Australian voices in anything other than supporting roles will become the almost exclusive prerogative of A Country Practice and Sons and Daughters. And who knows? With escalating production costs, even Wandin Valley may turn out to need an emigre American vet.

This is not to argue a closed door and a cold shoulder to foreign talent, merely to point out that there is a renewed risk of something that will not be unfamiliar to any Australian movlegoer over the age of 40: that Australian films with Australian actors will begin to be perceived as cut-price and second-rate. And so they will be: if they weren’t, they’d have Americans in them.

Australian audiences won’t be the ones to insist on Australian content. If the urge for a national culture emanated strongly from that source, we wouldn’t have 90% foreign content on our TV screens. It is up to the government and the film industry itself to build such longer-term considerations into its legitimate economic concerns. Once you get back to scratch, it’s hard to get started again.

Nick Roddick
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The real ‘fx’ men

Blue-screen cinematography, model and miniature work, and a host of other special effects applications were the basis of a series of free seminars recently given in Australia by representatives of the Californian special effects company, Apogee.

John Dykstra, Robert Shepherd and Roger Dorney, who began their association about 1970, came together as a team in 1975 for George Lucas’s Star Wars, and formed Apogee in 1977. Dykstra is renowned for developing the Dykstraflex camera — a custom-built prototype made specially for Star Wars miniature photography. It enables the camera mount to (among other things) roll, pitch and yaw on its multiple axes.

The seminars were sponsored by the Australian Film Commission as part of a reciprocal study tour organized by Sydney-based producer/cinematographer Michael Jacobs, and were attended by Sydney-based producer, Tim Seguin, spent time in the States working under the auspices of Apogee’s special effects crews.

Speaking at two capacity-filled sessions at Melbourne’s Longford Cinema (seminars were also held in Sydney), the Americans provided a highly informative and entertaining breakdown of the US ‘fx’ business from a rational, utilitarian position. They seemed light years away from the technologically-oriented film industry with which they are not associated with the phantom side of ‘fx’ cinema, and appeared instead to be hard-nosed industry pragmatists with a portfolio of proven commercial products: Star Trek: The Motion Picture, Firebox, Never Say Never Again and Lifeforce.

Andy has a new appreciation of the film world — that you are only as good as your last picture — seemingly applies just as much to the ‘fx’ industry. However, Dykstra has no apologies for any shortcomings people might find in his effects work. “There is no pan­ acea,” he said, “no cigar box that you can wave in front of a camera and expect the magic to happen.” We explore every avenue available to us within the time and budget parameters that we have, and that is something that you are always going to face in special effects. Every ‘fx’ movie that comes out needs more money and more time, and you never get ‘em. The only measure of the worth of your work is whether you did it any better than the next guy, with the same amount of money and the same time.”

Tour-organizer Michael Jacobs stressed that the seminars represent an attempt to the development of our own neophyte ‘fx’ industry.

Mick Broderick

Briefly...

■ Photography is now complete on Ken Russell’s new horror film Gothic (see Sheila Johnston’s UK column on page 65). Russell will be in Mel­bourne for the Spoleto Festival, where he is directing Madame Butterfly, and he is set to visit Australia by a stray, including French Dressing, Billion Dollar Brain, Women In Love, The Music Lovers, Messiah, Maher, Tommy, Lis­ tonmania, Valentino, Altered States, Crimes Of Passion and the television series Butterfly, The Fugitive, Between the Lines: Atherden for the television comedy, _Between the Lines_: Atherden for the television comedy, and to David Holman for the children’s drama, No Worries.

■ In October, Melbourne people living in the inner suburbs of Carlton, Collingwood and Fitzroy should have the chance to view the transmission of a community-based television station, Television Unlimited (TVU). With the exception of the first science fiction feature from Aboriginal state of South Australia, there have only been a few “passing experiments” in com­ munity TV. We intend to change that all in the fall of 1986,” says Peter Davis, a member of the organizing group. The working group is currently developing policies and strategies in the areas of funding,Community TV. We intend to change that all in the fall of 1986,” says Peter Davis, a member of the organizing group. The working group is currently developing policies and strategies in the areas of funding, education, distribution and programming. Membership is open to all associa­ tions, groups, and individuals. For further details, write to Peter Davis, 204 MIlton St., Melbourne Brunswick East, 3057, or phone (03) 481 7125 or (03) 205 194.

■ Sandra Levy and Sam Chisholm have been appointed as part-time Commissioners to the Australian Film Commission for a period of three years. Levy is a script con­ sultant and producer, and currently produces a weekly television series, _Between the Lines_: Atherden for the television comedy, and to David Holman for the children’s drama, No Worries.

■ The National Film and Sound Archive has introduced fees for research and access to their collection. Fees will obviously affect the production of archival compilation films, so, if you’re budgeting, ring the Archive and check the costs and computer access.

■ Three documentaries and four features have received support from the AFC Special Production Fund. Distribution guarantees went to _Hail Mary_, directed by Norbert Noyaux as an interpreter for the French Commercial Office in Mel­bourne, focuses on the film world.

■ The Victorians for the French Commercial Office in Mel­bourne, focuses on the film world.

David Stratton — 5

Contributors

Naoke Abe and Georgina Pope head the Tokyo-based Gonna Films.

John Baxter is a film reviewer for The Australian and author of numerous books on the cinema.

Carol Bennett is a film writer and publi­ cist, currently working at Heneman Publishing.

Roth Bishop teaches film at the Philip Institute of Technology.

Annette Bionski is a freelance journalist based in Melbourne.

Mick Broderick works as a publications officer with the Australian Conservation Foundation and is a freelance writer on film.

Pat H. Broeske writes regularly about film for the Los Angeles Times, and is Hollywood correspondent for the Washing­ton Post and other publications.

Raffaele Caputo is a freelance writer on film.

Tony Cavanaugh is a freelance script editor.

Mary Colbert is a Sydney-based film researcher, writer and lecturer.

Sophie Cunningham is a film student and freelance writer. She contributes regularly to the Melbourne Times.

Mike Downey is a freelance writer and film critic. He is now a freelance critic and film critic and freelance writer. He reviews regularly for the Melbourne Times.

Tony Drouyn is a freelance writer on film who also plays and teaches classical guitar.

Helen Greenwood is a freelance book editor and writer on film.

Fred Hardren is a film and television producer.

Sheila Johnston is a London-based writer and translator. She is a film critic for the _LAM_ magazine.

Brian Jones is an independent pro­ ducer, director, scriptwriter and journalist.

Pat Kalina is a journalist at Video Week.

Amanda Lipman is a journalist at _City Limits_ in London.

Geoff Mayer is a lecturer in film studies at the Philip Institute of Technology.

Lyn McDonald is a freelance writer on film.

Brian McFarlane is a lecturer in English at the Chisholm Institute, and author of _Watch and Wane._

Mike Nicolaides is a freelance writer and contrib­ utor to Variety.

Norbert Noyaux works as an interpreter for the French Commercial Office in Mel­bourne, focuses on the film world.

Dieter Osswald is a journalist and contrib­ utor to Film Echo.

William D. Routh is a film historian and academic.

Tom Ryan lectures in media studies at Swinburne and reviews films for _The Weekly_.

Jim Schembri is a journalist at _The Age._

David Stratten is host of Movie of the Week on SBS-TV and reviews films for Variety.

Edouard Waintrop is film critic for the French national daily _Libération._
Placido Domingo in a Golan-Globus Production
Franco Zeffirelli

Vittorio Masterpiece

Othello

Hoyts Distribution

Commences October at Hoyts and a theatre near you
Don’t do too much: get bored!’ And I gave her some money to tell me stories about her own life on the road when she went. Eighteen-year-old Bonnaire, the ‘discovery’ of Maurice Pialat’s A nos amours (To Our Loves) jumped at the role. Comments Varda: ‘I made it very simple. I said: ‘Look, this is a part you’ll have only once in your life. She’s alone, she’s dirty and she’s a rebel. And she dies from the cold. She almost doesn’t speak. Are you ready for that?’ ”

Bonnaire had to put on weight, let herself be covered in dirt, get her teeth painted and have plastic cracked lips applied for every shot. It was extremely cold, shooting during the first few months of 1985. In the very first scene in which we see Mona alive, she comes out of the ocean — Varda warns audiences not to look for an allegory there: it was an idea she liked — and although they waited until the end of April to film that sequence, it was still so icy that Bonnaire had to have her teeth painted to keep them warm water thrown over her afterwards.

Vagabond didn’t have much of a script, since Varda preferred to work by writing the screenplay as she went along. ‘I write two pages, get the money, speak to people. Then, little by little, I build. If I have to write a workscript not knowing if we will make, made, there’s a kind of desperation in my work: I don’t feel high enough. When I get the money and I know I’ll make the film, I get excited. So all the ideas and the writing come very late.”

The same unorthodox attitude applied to the actual shooting. Although she wrote, directed and cut Vagabond, Varda’s descriptions of the shoot make it sound like anything but a one-woman show. ‘I know I work best with a small crew, and without the handicap of union problems,” she says, “because I want to be able to say suddenly: ‘This doesn’t look good’ or ‘We have to get rid of that’. Then ten people will do it with me, and they don’t feel they’re breaking union rules. It gets done, and we’re making the film together. I admire the crew for being like that, so that invention can remain vivid. And they all come to me with suggestions, which I love.”

In fact, the structure of the film was conceived in that way. ‘I had one young woman assistant who loves only thrillers, and she said: ‘Make it a thriller! Start with the girl dead, and make the story a police investigation.” I said: ‘I don’t want a police film!’ But the thing stayed in my mind, and I thought: What if I make a wrong police story? We find her dead, the police come, and we discover that discussing police issues has no meaning. Then, as soon as we get rid of that false thriller element, I can investigate my own understanding of the story with all those witnesses. And, because we know she’s dead, it will give the film a tough touch.’

Depressing might seem a better word, but Varda shrugs that off with: ‘I guess I’m raising a kind of uneasiness’. Nor does she have much time for suggestions that Mona might not need to die. “Well, I didn’t think she could meet a prince,” she says, scathingly. ‘What could happen to her? Go to a poor people’s shelter? Would that be a good ending? I made it so that nobody’s responsible.” Not even herself, apparently. Because, although Vagabond is her film, Varda constantly defuses questions about Mona’s actions with the retort: ‘I don’t know how she wrote it, but I don’t know her.”

What seems much more important to her are the positive feelings the film raises. ‘It’s all so full of life, and so full of understanding of people and their contradictions in a non-judgmental way. I like a film to have a lasting effect. I want you to be moved, I want you to be touched, I want you to be taken so that the film will be a reference for you on certain things, certain subjects. We only have one life, so we have to live also through others.”

And she goes on to enthuse about the set with Sandrine Bonnaire. Anlety’s performance in Les Entons du paradis, which happens to be one of the five films she admitted she’d seen when she made La Pointe courte. In those days, she claimed, she never watched movies because they didn’t talk about living or important things.

And now? ‘When I’m not working, I see movies all the time. When I’m finished with this, I’ll go back to silence — on the streets, in the city. To think, to dream, to see films. It’s like another life.”

"This is a part you’ll only have once in your life.” Varda on the Vagabond set with Sandrine Bonnaire.
WITH THAT KIND OF REPUTATION A RUSSELL RETROSPECTIVE IS A MUST

To coincide with Ken Russell's visit to Melbourne to restage his highly controversial production of Puccini's "Madam Butterfly", the Spoleto Melbourne Festival will be presenting a retrospective of this outstanding and much discussed and argued film director's films, including all the cinema features as well as many of the famous artists' biographies originally made for television. The Retrospective will comprise the following features: • French Dressing (1963) • Billion Dollar Brain (1965) • Women In Love (1969) • The Music Lovers (1970) • The Devils (1971) • The Boyfriend (1972) • Savage Messiah (1972) • Mahler (1974) • Tommy (1975) • Lisztomania (1975) • Valentino (1977) • Altered States (1980) • Crimes of Passion (1983) • plus a program of television films. Venue: State Film Theatre, 1 Macarthur Street, East Melbourne. Dates: September 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 26, 27, 29, 30 Screenings: Nightly at 7.30pm, with day-time screenings to be announced. Tickets: $7.00 and $5.00 Concession. NB: No bookings. Tickets on sale at the door. SPOLETO MELBOURNE Ph: 6144484

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The body in question

by Sophie Cunningham

Most mainstream films rely on women’s bodies as sexual objects, but must feminist cinema necessarily avoid depicting women’s bodies?

ANNETTE KUHN, theorist

Problems of representation began to raise themselves as soon as Annette Kuhn arrived in Melbourne. Were the sportsmen who were filmed leaving the plane she had been on soccer, Australian Rules or rugby players? Even an investigation of the signifiers of sporting difference — mainly buttocks and height — failed to determine which they were. Which just goes to show how unreliable assumptions of difference based on the body can be.

A staunch defender of the much-maligned Canberra, Kuhn arrived there from England in March, as Visiting Fellow in the Faculty of Arts at the A N U., and gave the opening paper in the four-day May conference on ‘Feminism and the Humanities’.

Kuhn was in Melbourne to do a few ‘gigs’ (her phrase): three seminars, all of which were about the representation of sexuality in the cinema, and the social and historical context in which such representations are constructed.

She is probably best known for her book, Women’s Pictures: Feminism and Cinema (1982), an important work which draws together strands of feminist theory and practice to explore the way in which, together, the two might contribute to the creation of an alternative cinema.

Kuhn is well placed to provide such an overview, having been in the forefront of the debates since they started in the seventies. A regular contributor to Screen, she was, until recently, a member of its editorial board. Her articles, published in a large range of magazines, cover a diversity of issues, including film studies, sociology and culture, and feminism.

Originally a lecturer in sociology, she has not always written about film. And it must have been the sociologist in her that fuelled her desire to drive through Moonee Ponds after being picked up at the airport: it was, after all, the only part of Melbourne she knew anything about, thanks to Dame Edna Everage. Residents will, however, be relieved to know she found it nothing like Dame Edna had led her to expect.

The trip to Moonee Ponds appeared to be the only unplanned stop on her itinerary, since the next two days were taken up with visits to Monash and Latrobe universities, with a stop at the AFC in South Melbourne to have a look at some local independent work being done by women.

The talk at Monash was based on an essay in her latest book, The Power of the Image: Essays on Representation and Sexuality, which explored the way in which censorship, both institutional and self-imposed, can actually be productive, helping to create specific genres like film noir.

At Latrobe, Kuhn tackled a subject similar to the one with which she had opened the Canberra conference. Entitled ‘Representation: some problems for feminism’, it was a fascinating look at the film, Pumping Iron II: The Women, a documentary about the World Women’s Bodybuilding Championship in Las Vegas.

Australian bodybuilder Bev Francis was a participant, but the judges considered her body — the most muscular in the competition — too well-built, and thus too unfeminine. On Francis, muscles became ‘drag’.

The slides of Bev Francis and other competitors that Kuhn showed certainly highlighted the challenge the bodybuilder poses to those pre-conceptions of what a woman’s body should look like, and the film as a whole also raised interesting questions associated with visual pleasure in feminist film, since much of the pleasure to be had in watching it came from a response to the camera’s investigation of the women’s bodies. Most mainstream films rely on women’s bodies as sexual objects, but must feminist cinema necessarily avoid depicting women’s bodies?

Gigs given, Kuhn left for Sydney after a mere three days in Melbourne — barely long enough, in fact, to work out the tram system. Kuhn’s interest in trams was less a sociological exercise, however, than a need to get places: many Melbourne institutions (in contrast to those in Canberra and Adelaide) had been reticent to fund her visit. A shame, because an academic perspective on films is of special value to the development of a feminist cinema. Women filmmakers will be more likely to provide a positive alternative if they have a fuller understanding of the many ways in which traditional cinema has represented and undermined women.

Pumping Iron II: The Women (Bev Francis in background, far right).
Movies, we are always being told — or someone is always telling Actors' Equity — are an integral part of our business, a game without frontiers. If that proposition is true, then Jonathan Chissick is its living proof. Having started as the "Latin American paper-shuffler" (his own description) at United Artists in New York in 1968, Chissick, now 40, was born in Israel, used to be British, and is now Australian.

His eighteen years in the film business have been spent in four countries: the USA (three years with United Artists in New York; six years, three of them as managing director of UA Israel), the UK (as managing director of United Artists there) and Australia. In the late seventies, he did a one-year stint here, taking the long way round between Israel and the UK, as managing director of (you've guessed it) United Artists. Now, since the departure of Terry Jackman six months ago, he has the same title at Hoyts.

Chissick is, let's face it, your average movie executive: that is to say, he doesn't smoke a big cigar, doesn't have models or oil wells on his desk and doesn't play nervously with his calculator while he talks. He is, in fact, much like you or I, only richer. And he believes in movies rather than deals, which is refreshing.

Since he took over, Hoyts has taken two steps of some significance: out of the arms of Michael Edgley and into those of (coincidentally, as it turns out) United Artists; and into a deal with CIC to develop a new subdivision of Hoyts multiplexes, designed to bring older audiences (back) to the cinema.

The production deal was, feels Chissick, only a matter of time for Hoyts. "We've never put our money where our mouth is, so to speak. We've done our tax-shelter deals. But to get up one morning and say: 'I'm going to take $10 million of our money and put it into a film' . . . you know, it's a lot of money."

The deal with UA, for a number of joint productions in the $US8-10 million range, came about during a courtesy visit to Hollywood shortly after Jerry Weintraub took over at UA (he has now left again, but these things tend to happen at the studio). The visit started predictably enough, but soon got down to the point. "We went in and said: 'We're Hoyts in Australia!' And he said: 'Oh, I know Hoyts and I've been to Ayers Rock and it's wonderful. Now what do you guys think about production?' So I told him my theory about 10BA and non-10BA and what we'd done so far with Crocodile Dundee: the budgets, the pictures, the problems . . . And he said: 'Listen, why don't we . . .?' By the next day, we had a piece of paper with pointers on it: a very simple deal. Of course, the lawyers and that will take months. But the deal's done."

Chissick is quietly eloquent about the thorny question of Australian content in the films that will be made under the deal. "As a person involved in the Australian film industry, I would hope that it will lead to Australian pictures being made, but we haven't set any parameter. The beauty of it is, you don't have to worry about pre-sales and 10BA regulations and prospecti and lawyers and corporate affairs. We don't want to make a deal, we want to make movies. And unfortunately, many movies that are made are not movies at all; they're deals."

Were Coolangatta Gold and Burke & Wills movies, then? And what did Chissick tell Weintraub about those experiences? "It was a very candid discussion. Jerry's made enough movies to know what it's all about. Coolangatta Gold I was very disappointed with, because I thought it was the best script to come out of Australia. So, we failed there somewhere. I don't want to point my finger, but there was obviously a failure."

With the new multiplexes, the aim is to have as much current Hoyts product on show in each location as possible. "There are a lot of people who will not drag themselves into town, look for a parking spot, pay for it and walk across town to the cinema, only to find that their first choice is sold out. We're going to give them accessibility to the theatres, free parking — and they can look up and see eight movies. There are probably going to be three that are their first choice. If they can't get into one, they'll get into the next. They're not going to a movie, they're going to the movies."

"It will take time, and of course there will be teething problems. We have twins at the Warringah Mall in Sydney and at Waverley in Melbourne that took twelve months to get the ground. But, if we get the audience to come once, I believe firmly they'll come back again, and they'll all be regular moviegoers."

And, that you have to admit, in the swimming-pool heaven of suburban Australia, couldn't be all bad.

"I don't want to point my finger, but there was obviously a failure." Joss McWilliam and Josephine Smulders in Coolangatta Gold.

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In the May 1985 issue of Cinema Papers, we printed an 'Open Letter' to the world’s filmmakers by Lino Brocka. Brocka, probably the best known Filipino director (and a constant opponent of President Marcos), was, at the time, out on bail from a sedition charge that carried the threat of the death penalty. Sixteen months later, after Cori Aquino’s revolution, Brocka is back at work. Among other things, he is now the head of the Task Force concerned with reorganizing cinema in the Philippines; and he is working on his usual flurry of films. Here, he talks about getting out of jail, about life under the last days of Marcos, about the changes that People Power has brought (and the changes it hasn’t), and about his own future as a filmmaker.

Immediately after I was released on bail, I made a movie, which is what I was preparing to do just before I was arrested. I’ve made about six films since Bayan Ko [Brocka’s political melodrama, in competition in Cannes in 1984, and shown at last year’s Sydney Film Festival], two years ago. That’s about average. In fact, my output is down a little, because we were very much involved with organizing and mobilizing members of the Concerned Artists of the Philippines as part of the protest movement.

Also, they’d banned Bayan Ko, and we decided to fight it out with them. Fortunately, the producer was willing to lose the money. I told him: “You know, the Board of Censors is very vindictive, especially the Chairman!” But he said: “I don’t care if the movie doesn’t get shown or doesn’t make any money in the Philippines. I just want to fight it out.” So we filed suit in the Supreme Court, and that went on for almost a year.
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In the middle of all this — filming and the suit and all — we had our weekly appearance at the court. It was just a big fuss: everybody knew that, I think. But we had to make an appearance every Wednesday, because there were two cases. The suits were 'Inciting to sedition' and 'Leading an illegal assembly', both of which were punishable by death at the time — death or life imprisonment, no in-between — if you were found guilty. But it was just harassment: that was very clear. I think the court was going to decide that there was no case, but they had orders from the top to hold it, so we had an ongoing case always hanging over our heads.

We — especially the theatre group I have — were very much involved in mobilizing for the protest movement, particularly in the provinces. The harassment and the arrests were getting quite blatant. There was no time to make films! Between December last year and the end of May, I didn't do a movie, which is quite a record for me. Usually, I make a movie every two months — five or six a year. There was also the fact that, because of the trouble with Bayan Ko, producers didn't want to touch me with a serious film. I wasn't wanting in assignments, but they were asking me to do films that the government would like — you know, the glossy 'Ross Hunter' look, that type of film.

We knew the end was near for Marcos by then, but we didn't know how it was going to happen. Even when we were asking the people to vote for Cori, everybody was aware that there was going to be massive fraud and cheating. We knew they handled the institutions and the agencies that were responsible for counting the ballots. The important thing was that the people knew one thing: that they had to go out and vote for Cori, even if they were going to be cheated. But, in spite of all the election vigils and all the people putting up a fight, we still needed something. And then, of course, came the sort of coup by the military, headed by Ramos and Ponce Enrile. I suppose that was the thing that did it.

Now that we have this freedom that we've been fighting for, though, it's not all straightforward, because there are still so many of the old structures left, and so many of the people who benefited from the Marcos government. People are scrambling for positions. It's a different kind of battle altogether — a little bit confused, right now, and a little bit messy, because we are in the process of reconstruction, the process of rebuilding. Plus, of course, as everybody knows, the Philippines is bankrupt, and the movie industry is having a hard time, just like all the other sectors.

Right after the revolution, the first thing the President did was to create commissions, like the Commission on Good Government. Let's face it: for the last 20 years, corruption was the system. It permeated almost every level of society, and the Commission is now running after these people. Since the movie industry used to be led by people who spoke for the government instead of speaking about the movie industry, there was definitely the need for a change there. For example, John Litton was still running the Film Centre, and we had to get rid of him!

We don't know what to do with the Film
Centre, as a matter of fact: it’s a big white elephant. Also, there was a lot of money earned because of the showing of those semi-pornographic films: where did it go? Like all government agencies, the Film Centre had to be audited, which necessitated the creation of a Task Force to oversee it. But, more important, I think, is the fact that the government realises that there is the need to formulate film policies that will govern the movie industry. And that, precisely, is the function of the responsibility — of the Task Force for Cinema.

A degree of independence is important, however. After the revolution, we organized a Union of Movie Workers, of which I’m President. We’d been trying to organize this for a number of years, ever since the First Lady instituted the Manila International Film Festival and organized us all into ‘guilds’. The ‘Academy’ the government created included the different guilds, plus the producers, so it was impossible to negotiate on economic problems. In fact, they made it very clear that they were not there to tackle economic problems. I mention that because the feeling was unanimous that we didn’t want any help — any subsidy or funding — from the government for the Union. It is important to retain our independence, so that we’re not beholden to any administration, even if it is Cori Aquino’s.

It is a concern of every sector now to educate the people. I think one thing Filipinos learned from all this is that we were very much to blame for what happened. In other words, we kept quiet. That is why Marcos became more and more emboldened and had the gall to do it all.

With 20 years of suppression, you can imagine the stories that are being planned right now! And they are still very relevant, because the revolution has not changed the system: corruption is still there. I don’t think you can change that overnight: that will go on. Let’s face it: a big segment of society still belongs to the same status quo, and those attitudes have not changed. As a matter of fact, even the educational system has got to change. We have to be weaned away from that, because the system that we’ve had for the past 20 years has been very much influenced by the lending institutions, e.g., the IMF and the World Bank.

Now, people are very, very conscious that, whatever aid they give, it is not in the name of democracy, or because we’re such a ‘peace-loving nation’: it is for their own security reasons, couldn’t make. That is why Marcos became more and more emboldened and had the gall to do it all.

For myself, now that the revolution is over, I’m going back to television. I was doing several shows there, before ‘The Crones’ took over. Now I’m going back. I’ve agreed to do a miniserie Catholic in the story of Nino Aquino, which I was supposed to have done two years ago but, for security reasons, couldn’t make. What I’m doing is the local version. There are, I think, three international versions, but I don’t want anything to do with them. If they want to do a Gandhi-type film, fine, as far as I’m concerned. But I don’t want anything to do with it. The story that we have is about a family that was harassed by the state — a domestic drama. It is the story of Nino when he was arrested at the declaration of martial law, and how the family went through the trial and then went to the United States and went back to normal. It’s a gun and Margot Fonteyn — the story based more or less on Imelda Marcos — the story of a woman who has an affection for the arts, who sings and who collects statues of the infant Jesus. That’s the one I look forward to, because the story we have come up with is exciting film: it has all the flairness in it, and the lust for power and the accumulation of all these things. She would have an afternoon tea-party, and there is a famous pianist playing; and probably there would be a famous American who comes in . . . I’m calling it Griselda R.

Griselda is married to the governor of a southern province, who has been in power for the last 20 years. Now, he is dying of an incurable illness and he is up for re-election. Since he is too sick, his wife takes over the re-election campaign. She goes to political rallies and sings a song and has the military behind her. There is also a human rights lawyer running against her — honest but poor. And, as the election campaign goes on, she realises there is the possibility this guy might win. So, she stages an ambush in which he is assassinated. Of course, there is no evidence, and people refuse to talk. But the wife of the slain opponent now runs against her, so we have a story about two women fighting it out.

I start the film with her singing at a party, then at a rally, then going to church and singing there. She has this fabulous wedding for her daughter, with all their foreign friends of hers. Then she quarrels with her husband, because he is having an affair with an American starlet who comes to the Philippines to make one of those Ninja films. He has an affair, so she has an affair . . . that type of thing.

You can’t exaggerate the life of Imelda: it’s already an exaggeration. It’s in a fantasy world. The woman bought a crown — an honest-to-goodness crown! Of course, we knew that she bought jewellery, millions of dollars worth: but a crown! Where would she wear it? In the evening, just to look at? Perhaps it was for a costume party. But, if you go to a costume party, you wear costume jewellery. This crown cost $184,000!

And who would ever believe the reason why she went to Russia? It was not publicized internationally, I think, but in the Philippines, we know about it: she went to Russia with a statue of Our Lady of Fatima. She had a whole entourage of nuns and priests — about 50 people — and she went to this small town in Russia and had a mass there. She had a black veil and she was all in costume, and pictures were taken. And do you know why she did that? Because her fortune-teller told her that a woman from Asia would go to Russia and convert it to Catholicism. It was in all the papers. Of course, they didn’t say that that was why she went. But her cronies — the ‘Blue Ladies’ — told us it was true. If you put that on the screen, people would say: ‘It’s true!’

There’s another thing I have to show which, when people see it, they will probably say I am making fun. When Van Cliburn and Margot Fonteyn left after a visit to the Philippines, all the way from the VIP lounge to the airport, there was a red carpet and girls dressed in communion clothes, with flowers in their hair. It was straight out of Les Sylphides! The girls had baskets, and they threw petals, so Van Cliburn and Margot Fonteyn were walking on a red carpet, and girls on both sides are throwing petals at them. If you put that on the screen, can you imagine . . . ?
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For Paul Cox, film is the most powerful medium ever invented, but also the most abused. If the Australian film industry had more dedication and less greed, argues Cox, and if the money-lenders and executives restored it to the filmmakers, we would have better results.

A lot of Cox's frustration and anger comes to the surface in conversation. But his films are not nearly so blunt. They are emotional and tender; often, the meaning behind his recurring images remains obscure. They are films which appear affected by incidents in his life, and they bear the unmistakable stamp of the auteur. Indeed, David Stratton has described him as "the most interesting auteur of the contemporary Australian cinema".

Cox does not like large gatherings, and prefers his Australian anonymity to the autograph-grabbing frenzy of his fans in other countries. But he feels strongly that Australian filmmakers should get together more often. There is nowhere here, he complains, where you can go and have a drink, knowing that you will catch up with fellow filmmakers: nowhere where you can swap ideas over a coffee in some cafe or other. Where is the community spirit, he asks? That is one of the reasons why he thinks film festivals have an important role to play in the Australian film industry. For him, "they are the last vestiges of free dreams".

Do you still feel like a foreigner, after more than 20 years in Australia?

I used to feel Australian, but not any more. I think, as you get older, you go back to your roots. A lot of people, when they die, can only speak their mother tongue, even though they have spoken other languages. Maybe I'm getting old.

Do you feel Dutch?

No. What I feel has nothing to do with Holland. Even my parents had nothing to do with Holland. I was born there and was in a Dutch school for a while, but I was brought up in German, French and Dutch.

How would you describe yourself?

I think I'm a very determined person. But I don't call it ambition. I'm a very compulsive character, so they say.

Is this a characteristic you can apply to your filmmaking?

You have to. If you don't, you're not a filmmaker. It's impossible.

What do you think is the best attribute a filmmaker can have?

A lack of fear, because filmmaking is very much a medium of our times, and our times are very greedy and based on the wrong values. Filmmakers are easily seduced, so I think a lack of greed is essential. Also great determination and confidence. If in any way you start to doubt yourself...

Each time I go overseas, I am always amazed how filmmaking has devolved into some sort of totally idiotic situation, where ten people decide what is being done and how to put a film together. I don't work like that at all. I find it very boring and lacking in personality: we live in a society that doesn't breed individuals any more.

You are regarded now as a successful and bankable filmmaker. Is that what you wanted?

No, of course not. I did not even intend to be a filmmaker. I did it as a hobby and I've always said that, if you take something seriously, then you must do it as a hobby; because if you do it professionally, you have to make compromises all the time, and you have to make a living. I worked on the side, doing things I wanted to do — obscure little films that taught me a lot and which I always produced myself. I worked as a lecturer at Prahran College, and most of the money I made there went into films. From there, I became a filmmaker. But I never set out to become a 'film director'. I find that an embarrassing title.

Of all the films you've made, which one are you happiest about?

I don't think you should ever be happy about what you do. I think a film I made about ten years ago called Island is still about the best. It is only ten minutes long and it is totally abstract and hypnotic — and that is what I think a film should be.
Paul Cox has been making films in Australia for nearly twenty years, but people still tend to regard him more as an uprooted European. Carol Bennett talks to him about filmmaking and other obsessions.
Lonely Hearts is an extraordinary story. It is the most important medium of our times. It is the most abused, too. It is the most powerful thing we have invented. But I rarely go to the movies, because they make me angry. I think it is the most fantastic medium, but it is used in the most idiotic, patronizing and denigrating way. Let me tell you something. I was on the plane to Hawaii recently and I saw Prizzi’s Honor. Behind me, somebody started to clap. I was very angry with this film. I turned around and asked this man: “What is the matter with you? Why are you clapping? It is one of the most immoral pieces of shit I’ve ever seen!”

“We live in serious times. We are very close to the brink of extinction”

I can understand that, before Buñuel slipped out of this life, he might leave some funny, nasty little piece behind to teach people a lesson: he would have been capable of that. But here is a man at 79, John Huston, and his last ‘masterpiece’ is a totally immoral film that is being heralded as something quite brilliant. It is a piece of rubbish. We don’t live in times any more where we can indulge in that sort of thing: we live in serious times. We are very close to the brink of extinction. Film is such a powerful medium, and people are watching an average of two or three hours of television and film a day.

Do you think you are different from other filmmakers?

I don’t think I’m different. I am just more determined to do my own thing. There are very few people who get the chance to do that, because films are all controlled by the wrong people. Why should a producer, who has no idea about film, who may have been studying to become a chemist or a lawyer, suddenly become a film producer and have the final say? They have a say in the casting, in what is being made, what represents this country’s conscience; and then they have final cut.

Is that why you insist on such a high degree of artistic control?

Not high: total. The great irony of all this is that I am a much more commercial commodity at the moment than anybody else! All my films are about human beings and they are for human beings.

Was Lonely Hearts a breakthrough for you?

Lonely Hearts is an extraordinary story. It became very popular because people are basically starving for a bit of humanity on the screen. They don’t want to just have ‘shock’ and ‘fantasy’ all the time. I’ve always believed that. I believe much more in what an audience needs and wants, and they set the standards. That is why going to the movies makes me angry.

And why do we have American crap here all the time? That’s why I’m so pissed off with Australia: it’s like living in America. That second-rate culture, spitting its crazy message across the globe, and we all live for that! You can’t even turn on the television at night without hearing an American voice on every channel. And why should a foreigner like me scream against it all the time? Of course everyone agrees with me, but nobody does anything about it.

Are you happy making films, or would you prefer to be doing something else?

Yeah, I would rather be doing something else! If I had the courage, I would just live a very quiet life. I would like to do a bit of painting, a bit of writing and all that sort of stuff. It’s become too big, you know: too many things happen, too much pressure, too many demands. I don’t want to do that any more. I’ve always felt that the movies are something I would have rather left alone. I’ve always done them for myself; I’ve always had a lot of fun. I’ve always done them to please me. The audience is the last person I think about and make them remember. It means a lot, because, politically, it is a very important weapon — unbelievably powerful. Politically, it is the most abused, too. It is the second-rate culture, spitting its crazy message across the globe, and we all terribly upset and went to see her in hospital, but she wasn’t feeling bad at all. In fact, she was having a very peaceful time, lying in a quiet little room. I have made a few films about blind people, and I’ve always found that they are very peaceful. We live in a world that only scratches the surface of things. We judge people by their faces, and never allow any time to analyse the silences of a person or their feelings. Everything is judged by society on the surface level, and we all know a person is made up of an inner life and an outer life and how these two are balanced.

In Cactus, one person represents the inner and the other person the outer. One person has been everywhere, seen everything, and the other person has seen nothing and yet he has inner peace. The other person, although she has sight, has nothing. It is based upon saying that the world consists of two different types: the shallow ones and the real ones. The shallow ones have the world: they have the big cars and the new houses. The real ones have nothing. It’s a very ambitious and pretentious idea, I realise that fully.

I have read that you were influenced by Claude Goretta’s film, The Lacemaker, which also starred Isabelle Huppert.

No, but he encouraged me a great deal. Here was a film with no special commercial ingredients, and yet it was very successful. If Goretta had gone to a funding body here in 1976, he would have been kicked out of the building. When I saw it, I was quite amazed to find a full house with everybody sitting there stunned after the movie. They had been given something — something to take home, something to think about and make them remember. They wanted to talk. It is so important that a film can let that happen to you. It can be entertaining, it can even be light-hearted: it is not a matter of art.

So, The Lacemaker gave me great encouragement, and Isabelle’s performance was absolutely stunning. By sheer coincidence, I met her a year later; I talked in Canada and San Francisco, partly with an Australian crew, but I wanted to make it here. I live here, I work here. I’m glad we lived in serious times. We live in a world that only scratches the surface of things. We judge people by their faces, and never allow any time to analyse the silences of a person or their feelings. Everything is judged by society on the surface level, and we all know a person is made up of an inner life and an outer life and how these two are balanced.

Is it true that you created it for Isabelle Huppert?

This particular script, yes. The idea for the film was already there and I had written some sort of script that was very different, although it had somebody going blind in it. It was never completed and it wasn’t very good, so I re-wrote everything for her.

Did you have any problems with Actors’ Equity in allowing Isabelle to come to Australia?

It was either Isabelle coming here or my leaving Australia. If I hadn’t earned artistic freedom by now, then I’m living in the wrong country. I could have proceeded in Canada and San Francisco, partly with an Australian crew, but I wanted to make it here. I live here, I work here. I’m glad we managed to solve the problems.
Why Cox won't go Hollywood
by Tony Llewellyn-Jones

It is unlikely that Mr Cox will make a film in the United States unless a number of preconditions are met. For instance, he will always want final cut: he's always had it and he'll always want it. If a studio president or vice-president or independent producer were prepared to give him that right (and responsible), a hurdle would be overcome.

"Mr Cox does not believe in having to produce: he is a co-producer of all his films. It is not a matter of control for its own sake, but a genuine desire to share responsibility through shared control. Responsibility, that is, to the script (which he usually writes) and the moral (if one dares) which he is proposing, as well as financial responsibility in a Cox film, the budget of ideas may be unlimited, but the dollars are not. The total budget of Man of Flowers was $2,800,000; My First Wife was $4,700,000. Last year, Cactus was $1,1.5 million. We're getting into the big league.

"Last year, a pre-packaged project was offered to him. It was a good script, set in Chicago in the thirties, with a sexual plot concerning the black chauffeur of a white establishment family. The director was on the run for accidentally killing the eldest unmarried daughter. It had the basis of all creativity. I always have the music before the film begins.

Why do you choose not to work in Dolby?
Because Dolby is a lot of nonsense. It distorts. It blows the music up and makes it unrealistic. It is very rare that I see a film in which Dolby is properly used. Dolby is a con by the Americans, who even have a 'Dolby expert' for the mixing. Why should we imitate the Americans on that level? You know, I have never seen a film not succeed because it didn't have a Dolby track.

"I have a much better reputation outside Australia than I do here. I think, in Australia, there is still this thing about a migrant coming good".

So many of these little aspects in filmmaking are created by somebody. You can't even sing 'Happy Birthday' in a film because the Yanks somehow bought the rights to it, and it will cost you about 50 grand! It's incredible: you can't even pay homage to a nice song because you have to pay through the nose!

Are there other European filmmakers besides Goretta whom you admire?
I didn't say that I admired Claude Goretta. I think he is a fine, decent human being and that The Lacemaker is a great movie: it just touched the right nerve. But it is not a spectacularly interesting movie: the guts, the humanity behind it are good enough for me, thank you very much! I don't need more than that.
I think there are some fine filmmakers, I like everything Buñuel ever did: I think he was great. And Bergman, too. But how many filmmakers are there? Just before Cactus, I was invited to go to Canada. I enjoyed meeting Tavernier and Tarkovsky and it was really stimulating for me. But I hear exactly the same thing from all of these directors: none of them really makes any money out of films. They are all regarded as doing something original, they all do their own thing and they all have a hellish time. But I think it's extraordinary that 'they' say that these are the people who are supposed to be changing the shape of cinema [Cox's invitation was part of an event honouring ten directors who were supposed to be going to make the most significant contribution to world cinema in the next ten years]. It's all very nice, but who are 'they'?

You have received offers to work in the States. Would you consider going to America to make a movie?
Well, it's a long story. Everyone keeps on telling me I should do it once — experience it. But I get enough experience here. I am in a very fortunate position and I am able to make my own films here. It's not difficult to get the finance, so why the hell should I go to Hollywood? If I cannot have final cut, I don't want to make a film.
But I do have a much better reputation outside Australia than I do here! I think, in Australia, there is still this thing about a migrant coming good. If I go to a festival in the States, I can hardly move because people are asking me for my autograph.

And, although I say American movies are ratshit, at least they love you for what you do. That's the good thing about America: they are much more open about cinema, even though it's controlled by a few people whose thinking is based on the mighty dollar.

Do you have a solution to all this?
If I had the energy left, I would buy myself a television station and have all the control. You have to do your own thing as well as you can, and I am lucky to get away with doing my own thing — very lucky — and I have to be thankful for that. But it certainly hasn't been easy. You get so fucking angry, and it's not for...

It's very easy to go to Hollywood and make a million-dollar picture, but I have to live with my own conscience. I don't want to slip out of this life and look back and think: Yeah, well, I made a lot of money. I think that's nonsense. I think filmmakers have an extraordinary responsibility. People ask me: "How does it feel, working for television? What's the difference?" There is no difference, except that your responsibility is much bigger, because you reach more people. I think I've been lucky. I came to filmmaking through the back door. It became a hobby and then an obsession, and I have no way of turning back since I have become so obsessed with it that, now, there's no escape.
Above, Isabelle Huppert as Colo in Cox's latest film, Cactus. Below, Tony Llewellyn-Jones in the first two 16mm features: left, with Gabriella Trsek in Illuminations (1976); right, Inside Looking Out (1977).

**The films of Paul Cox**

1965: *Matuta*, 23 minutes, 16mm, colour.
1966: *Time Past*, 10 minutes, 16mm, black and white.
1968: *Skindeep*, 40 minutes, 16mm, colour.
1969: *Marcel*, 7 minutes, 16mm, black and white. *Symphony*, 12 minutes, 16mm, black and white.
1970: *Mirka*, 20 minutes, 16mm, colour. *Calcutta*, 30 minutes, 16mm, colour.
1971: *Phyllis*, 35 minutes, 16mm, colour.
1972: *The Journey*, 60 minutes, 16mm, colour. *All Set Back Stage*, 22 minutes, 16mm, colour.
1975: *Island*, 10 minutes, 16mm, colour. *We Are All Alone, My Dear*, 22 minutes, 16mm, colour.
1979: *For a Child Called Michael*, 30 minutes, 16mm, colour.
1980: *The Kingdom o f Nek Chand*, 22 minutes, 16mm, colour. *Underdog*, 53 minutes, 16mm, colour.

1985: *The Paper Boy*. Directed by Paul Cox. Produced by Jane Ballantyne. Written by Bob Ellis. Photography by Yuri Sokol. Edited by Tim Lewis. With Christopher Schlussel (Joe Riordan), Tony Llewellyn-Jones (Mr Riordan), Linden Wilkinson (Elise Riordan). 33 minutes, 16mm, colour (for the Winners series). *Handle with Care*. Directed by Paul Cox. Produced by Andrew Findlay and Anne Landa. Screenplay by Anne Brooksbank. Photography by Yuri Sokol. Edited by Tim Lewis. With Anna Maria Monticelli (Kate), Nina Landis (Julie), Monica Maughan (Margaret), Peter Adams (Geo). 75 minutes, 16mm, colour. *Cactus*. Directed and written by Paul Cox. Produced by Jane Ballantyne and Paul Cox. Photography by Yuri Sokol. Edited by Tim Lewis. With Isabelle Huppert (Colo), Robert Menzies (Robert), Norman Kaye (Tom). 96 minutes, 35mm, colour.
WE WISH THERE WERE PRIZES ENOUGH FOR ALL OUR MOVIES.

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We're proud to have been associated with these films. We wish their makers lots of luck with the Awards.

**Feature Category**

- Dead End Drive-In
- Departure
- The Right Hand Man
- Playing Beattie Bow
- Around The World
- In 80 Ways
- For Love Alone
- The Devil In The Flesh
- The Fringe Dwellers

**Non-Feature Category**

- Chile: Hasta Cuando
- Rocking
- The Foundations
- Down There
- Camera Natura
- My Life Without Steve
- The Mooncalf
- The Portrait of Wendy's Father
- The Rentman
- Half Life

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A couple of years ago come November, I went on the road in England with Robert Altman. The occasion was the British release of Secret Honor, Altman’s ‘Nixon film’, in which one actor alone in a room for just under two hours re-enacts the mania and the paranoia which is, it seems fair to assume, the scenario being played out inside the former President’s head.

I had seen the film a month or so before and I thought — I still think — Secret Honor, for all its self-imposed topographical limitations, among Altman’s greatest films. It is a work which uses two of the true resources of cinema — the control of point of view and the fine-tuning of pace — to astonishing effect, leaving most of the decade’s car chases and intergalactic battles looking turgid and immobile by comparison.

Going on the road involved chairing three question-and-answer sessions, one in London, one in York and one in Newcastle. In York, the lecture was introduced by Andrew Tudor, author of two excellent books on the cinema; and he paid Altman a rare tribute. In the mid-seventies, Tudor was film critic for New Society. Only once, he said, had he missed a deadline. It had been after seeing Nashville; and the sheer scope of the film, the number of issues it raised and the complexity of his own response made it totally impossible for him to write his column on time.

Most of us for whom filmgoing became a passion and a pastime somewhere between 1955 and 1965 have felt that way, if not about Nashville, at any rate about one or other of Robert Altman’s films. The sixties was a dreadful decade in American cinema, with very little that shone amid the machine-tooled efficiency of the product ground out by Hollywood. The first generation’ of talkie directors were mainly retired or dead, and the studios were still a long way off giving the kids a chance. And then, in 1970, along came M*A*S*H.

Altman was certainly not a kid in 1970: born in that epitome of the mid-West, Kansas City, in 1925, he was in his mid-forties by the time he made M*A*S*H, with a few unmemorable features and a ten-year career in television behind him. But the film was certainly youthful. And it was a landmark, not because it engendered a seemingly endless, cozy little TV series (which Altman hates), but because it came close to revolutionizing mainstream American cinema. It had stars and a story and it was made by 20th Century-Fox and it opened in major chain cinemas. It had about it, though, an anarchic freshness: more or less by mistake, Hollywood had produced a film which reflected its time, rather than making something that seemed born and bred in the fifties timewarp of the movie capital.

The soundtrack was noisy and muddled and fascinating, not antiseptic and post-synched; the handling of the narrative was loose and open, not seamless and unproblematic. Most amazingly of all, M*A*S*H was a film that millions of people went to see. It seemed to break the rule that any film made outside the mould would fail, and that any filmmaker who didn’t conform wouldn’t work.

After M*A*S*H, Altman certainly worked, making fourteen films in the next ten years. And it very soon became clear that not only would Altman break the Hollywood mould: there wouldn’t be an ‘Altman mould’ either. This was not a director whose career was going to be solid but predictable, like those of his contemporaries (and fellow TV graduates), John Frankenheimer and Sidney Lumet.

Immediately after M*A*S*H came Brewster McCloud (1970), a bizarre tale of sexual initiation and the desire to fly, set in the Houston Astrodome and introducing Shelley Duvall, an actress who would become an Altman regular. Next came McCabe and Mrs Miller (1971), a bleached-out anti-
western, set above the snowline in the Pacific northwest, in which the issues blend into one another like the outlines of the town of Presbyterian Church in the falling snow, and whose climactic six-gun face-down simply disappears into the whiteness.

The following year, there was Images (1972), a Freudian ghost story set (and filmed) in Ireland; then The Long Goodbye (1973), a film I would die for, which irreverently and quite justifiedly relocates Philip Marlowe's schematic moral values in the unprincipled urban wasteland of modern Los Angeles.

The sixth Altman film of the seventies was Thieves Like Us (1974), a remake of the 1949 Nick Ray film, They Live by Night, which looked at a doomed love affair against the background of the Depression, and did so far more honestly (if less commercially successfully) than Bonnie and Clyde. Next came California Split (1974), a gambling melodrama in which Altman did for 'buddy' movies what he had done to war films in M*A*S*H: deconstructed them, allowing the people — in this case, Elliott Gould and George Segal — to rise above the genre. It was a film that confirmed that Altman was, on top of everything else, a great director of actors: Segal has never been better.

And then came Nashville (1976), which was a critical and a commercial success in a way that none of the films since M*A*S*H really had been. Nashville was the film of the seventies — about sex and politics and music and the media, with dozens of different stories and 48 main characters. It took the temperature of the post-Nixon era with unerring accuracy, and with all the indelicate efficiency of a rectal thermometer.

With Nashville, Altman's career seemed established. Here was that dream-ticket of seventies Hollywood: a filmmaker of definite individuality, who reached audiences in such a way as to guarantee his future budgets. It turned out to be an illusion: no filmmaker that unprepared to spend too long on the same road, that unready to repeat himself, could survive for long. By the late seventies, Hollywood was turning back towards the safe options and the familiar formulae. The Reagan era was all but dawning on the horizon.

Altman's next film after Nashville, Buffalo Bill and the Indians, or Sitting Bull's History Lesson (1976), was a major flop (though it won a Golden Bear in Berlin). Since then, only one film out of eleven, Popeye (1980), has made an appreciable dent at the box office, and even that did nowhere near as well as Paramount anticipated. Three of the eleven — A Perfect Couple (1978), Quintet (1979) and Health (1980) — have hardly been seen, and one (O.C. and Stiggs, 1984) seems to have been shelved for good.

Of the remainder, 3 Women (1977), A Wedding (1978), Come Back to the 5 and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean (1982), Streamers (1983), Secret Honor (1984) and now Fool for Love (1985) have had critical responses ranging from the ecstatic to the politely deferential. But they have had very limited box-office success. None of which alters the fact that Altman remains one of the two or three most important American directors since World War II.

Fool for Love was in competition at Cannes this year, which is one of the places some of the following comments were recorded, in an interview in the Carlton Hotel. Others were in Paris in the autumn of 1984, also in a hotel; and, of course, on the road. Most of the comments were answers to questions, at any rate initially. But they soon became statements in their own right, which is why I have left them like that. Like his films, Altman embroiders on a subject. And, like Nashville, he rarely takes the narrow view.

By
Nick Roddick

Richard Nixon — and
SECRET HONOR

“I have a woman who works with me called Scotty Bushnell, who is in many ways the closest thing I have to a partner. Her husband is artistic director of the Los Angeles Actors’ Theatre, and they had put on Secret Honor as a workshop production in a little, 40-seater theatre. You had to cross the stage just to get into the room, and then you were trapped!

“But he kept saying: ‘You have to see it: the actor’s great!’ I know how people feel about something which is Richard Nixon alone in a room for two hours: I wouldn’t go see it, either! I just did everything to avoid it! Finally, he got me. He said: ‘Well, I just don’t see how you can talk the way you do about actors, and there’s an actor of this quality and you won’t see his work.’ So I said: ‘OK’. I went and just loved it. I spent all my own money: I took it to New York and then to Boston, and then we took it to Ann Arbor, and decided to do this film. Now, I really don’t have any money!

“Your first impression is that it’s going to be a comic performance — a lot of cheap shots. But just to take cheap shots at somebody like that — I mean, I couldn’t have stayed awake for ten seconds of the thing! It’s not about an individual: it’s through Richard Nixon — my feeling is — that we’re able to take a look at the quality of the Presidency and the media and the politics and how long this is going to continue. Of all the Presidents, Nixon was worst served by the media because of his personality and his own stupidity. When he said something, there it was. It’s starting to happen with this other joker we’ve got. The media were tough on Nixon, but they weren’t as tough as Nixon thought. They were tough on Nixon because he’s the one who did it.

“I think it’s coming to a quick end, because the quality of the people that would aspire to that office is now down there in the C-minus group. All of these people that get in there are horrendous. But they’re human, and they didn’t get there all at once. They didn’t just go from A to Z: they didn’t get there overnight. A lot of my reputation is such that they know, or they feel, that they’re not going to be made a fool of, that I’m not going to let bad performances go on the screen and I’m not going to lie to them. So they feel comfortable about stretching themselves as actors.

“I don’t like to travel around too much in a film. I find I like to have a perimeter: it’s just an idiosyncrasy of mine. Sometimes, it’s a pretty big arena, but I think it has to be an arena. I did Nashville in a kind of big arena. But Breezer McCloud was in the Astrodome, I feel comfortable in that kind of set-up. Jimmy Dean was like that, and the Nixon thing certainly was. Fool for Love was on a big surreal set with very few people on it.

“I know, when I get on the set, all those people will monitor their behaviour. Nobody wants to be the bad guy, nobody wants to be the hair in the butter. We get rid of all those stand-ins and runners to get their coffee, and they love it. Most of that special-privilege sort of attitude has nothing to do with work: it makes work more difficult for actors. It puts them on their guard.

“I went to San Francisco to cast M*A*S*H. And everybody said: ‘What are you going to San Francisco for? All the actors are here in Los Angeles.’ Because that’s where they throw the coins. But I wanted people who hadn’t been in a film before. René Auberjonois had done almost no films to that date. After about ten days of M*A*S*H, Donald Sutherland and Elliott Gould went to the head of the studio and tried to have me fired: they said I was ruining their careers!

“Warren Beatty didn’t really go along with that on McCabe and Mrs Miller, either. But, ultimately, he really had no choice. Of course, Julie [Christie] was a great help: she’s just the opposite. The sad thing is, I don’t think Warren has ever given a better performance. But when he mentions films, it doesn’t exist. He still doesn’t understand it. He looks at me and he doesn’t trust me: he doesn’t know how it was done.

“Shelley Duvall in Breezer McCloud — she was selling paintings for her boyfriend! She didn’t have the slightest idea: she’d never seen a camera before. I was looking for somebody from that area who had that Texas accent. I didn’t want an actor who was going to go out and perfect the accent: I cannot abide that. I smell it every time.”

“She’d never seen a camera before [Breezer McCloud].” Shelley Duvall in 3 Women (1975).

Audiences and COMPROMISE

“I never think that I’m shooting for any particular audience. An artist does what he does. It’s really his own vision of something and, if he’s going to stop — whether he’s a painter or a musician or whatever — and say: ‘What kind of picture can I paint or what kind of song can I write that’s going to make me a lot of money?’, he has at that moment abdicated his art, and he’s in the manufacturing business. Now, that doesn’t mean, of course, that you can’t go out and do what you want to do and it couldn’t turn into a billion dollars. So, I can’t really deal with what the audience is, or what it’s going to be made up of.

“But, if I have a piece I’m going to do, I realise I’m having a problem getting it done and I perceive that, if there was something a little more mainline in it, it would make it more acceptable to those guys who are writing the original cheque, I may bastardize myself and serve those little things up. But they’re never, in my mind, going to change the nature of what the piece is.

“With Fool for Love, we never had a screenplay, which was a problem with the other companies that were going to do it. I didn’t have a screenplay on Jimmy Dean or Streamers or Secret Honor. I said: ‘I’m not going to write anything and Sam’s not going to write anything. Here’s what I plan to do.’ All the other companies demanded a
Films and Plays

I did an interview with German television this morning and the woman said: 'I didn't like your picture. Don't you think it was a little old-fashioned? It reminds me of Tennessee Williams.' Well, Tennessee Williams's dialogue and presentation and repetitions are simply not very much to do with Sam Shepard's style of writing. But it's this pigeonholing thing that people have to do when they try to understand something. I'd rather they'd just accept it.

‘If you didn’t know Fool for Love was a play... that’s what harms it. All the people who write about it, like you, have seen the play. So they present it to the public as this film of this play. And the film public is really not interested in theatre. So these things all die because the knowledge is out that they’re based on theatre.

‘There’s always this thing of laying an overcoat, a box, a crate onto the material. I’m not going to argue with anybody, because that’s the way it is. And I’m certainly not going to change what I do to try to satisfy what you want. If I succeed and people come and say: ‘Oh, this is the best picture I’ve seen in my life: I’ve seen it seventeen times’, I think they’re as crazy as you and the German woman are. I can’t make the films you want me to make: I can just show you the films I’ve made.

Sam Shepard and Fool for Love

‘Two, maybe three years ago, Sam saw Come Back to the 5 and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean. I didn’t know him - I still don’t know him very well. But he wrote me a letter saying he had a new play. He liked what he had seen in Jimmy Dean and, if I liked this new play, maybe I could make a film out of it.

‘About two years later, I was in Paris, and it came back to my mind, mainly because Amy Madigan was there, and her husband, Ed Harris, had been in Fool for Love on stage. So I called Sam and said: ‘Maybe I can do this now’. And he said: ‘Who’re you using?’ And I said: ‘Well, who don’t you play the part?’ He said: ‘Oh, I can’t do that’. Then, two days later, he came round and said: Yes, he would. It took me two years to get to it: it took him two days!

‘The idea that stayed with me all the time was to have a writer like Shepard who’s also an actor and who can perform and interpret this autobiographical kind of thing. I don’t think he had an affair with his sister. But I think it’s about him and the kind of person he is. It’s certainly about his father, and the songs are written by his sister: it’s a Shepard package!

‘He’s very private; I think he’s a little self-oriented. It’s not that he’s difficult: he’s just not interesting. He wants to finish his work and go.

‘Somebody said – it’s clever and quick – that I made my film between the lines of his play. I was able to show a timewarp, when the little girl’s three years old, and then there she is an adult at 33, looking at herself. And when the man goes in to check into the motel, Harry Dean Stanton is just watching himself go in. That was what I wanted to do. I’m not much interested in stories. It’s sort of like a visual poem of some kind.”
Twenty years ago, a young producer named Jim Dale and I made a film appreciation series for TV. Our technique was simple: I'd write a rough script, then we'd choose some clips and snip them out of the 16mm prints in the station's film library, splicing them back in afterwards. We never cut a Lana Turner or a Liz Taylor vehicle, but Alexander Korda's Hollywood half-talkie, *The Squall* (1929), or Michael Curtiz's *The Mad Genius* (1931) were just gathering dust before being consigned (literally) to the scrap-heap, axed when the rights ran out.

Those golden days come painfully to mind this month, when a second series by Jim and myself, *Filmstruck*, makes its debut on ABC Television. The budget for that sixties series was $50 a programme. The ten half-hour 'film essays' of *Filmstruck* cost $150,000, and would have cost much more without the state-of-the-art Betacam video process, which sharply reduced production costs. They also took a little longer to produce; we signed the contract in April 1985, and delivered in June 1986.

What took the time? I had a clue from John Huntley of the British Film Institute when, years ago, I was researching a feature on the film dealer, Raymond Rohauer. "None of us wanted to grasp the nettle of copyright," said Huntley. "The films were on the shelf and we thought they would always be there. If anybody bought the rights, surely they wouldn't mind us showing them? But Rohauer saw that, since the advent of television, every piece of film had a price tag. Compilations and re-runs opened up a huge market, and he was the first to exploit it."

*Filmstruck* was commissioned by Paddy Conroy of the ABC as a 'personal view' of movies. We talked about *Civilization* and *The Living World*. Privately, I saw it as *The Body in Question*, with movies instead of corpses. There would be interviews and

"None of us wanted to grasp the nettle of copyright," said the BFI's John Huntley. "The films were on the shelf and we thought they would always be there."
live location segments, but perhaps a third of the series would be film extracts — some Australian, but just as many from films which had influenced us as filmgoers: *The Overlanders* and *The Purple Monster Strikes*, *The Magnificent Seven* and *The Right Stuff*.

Like the BFI, we didn’t anticipate copyright problems. Hadn’t heads of distribution for foreign majors shown us back rooms choked with film clips and implied: ‘All this can be yours?’

We should have been warned by an early straw in the wind. About the time we started researching Filmstruck, the production manager of the TV science show, *Beyond 2000*, asked where she could get a clip from *Frankenstein*. They needed a brief sequence for a segment on genetic engineering. I knew where there was a copy but, almost as an afterthought, I referred her to the Sydney office of Universal on the question of rights.

‘Universal say it will cost $3,500 a minute,’ she reported back a few days later. Before I could choke out ‘You must be joking!’ she went on: ‘It’s high, but I said OK. But then they told me they wouldn’t approve it anyway, because the character of the monster was being overused. What can I do?’

The short answer, it turned out, was: Nothing. Closely questioned, our contacts in distribution admitted that, while they could give us physical possession of clips, they had no broadcasting rights. These belonged variously to: (a) the US parent company; (b) the US independent producers (e.g. Orion, TriStar, Touchstone/Disney) on whose behalf they distributed the films; (c) their own video divisions, which held the cassette rights; and/or (d) the TV network owning the broadcast video rights. On top of this, by agreement with Equity, no old film clips could be broadcast without agreement from the actors.

We gloomily began a detailed search of the copyright world — one which was to prove as illuminating and disorientating as anything ever experienced on the other side of Lewis Carroll’s looking glass. Bethwyn Serow, a 20-year-old film student hired for what looked like the simple task of clearing rights for Filmstruck, became our Alice as, over twelve months of struggle, she hunted down the owners of the films and, in the process, became an expert on film copyright.

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Approaching Hollywood for clips was, we quickly discovered, useless. The $3,500-a-minute rate was more or less standard. But, even if we could have paid it, nobody really wanted the money. It was just their way of shaking their heads. The major obstacle was the aggregation of researching and clearing copyright for film scholars.

We turned to local producers and found a different, but equally strangling, jungle. The company which produces the Fast Five, the newest film industry has its tape firmly round the throat of film scholarship. Under one interpretation of corporate law, we were told, any use of a film funded under 10BA legislation required the agreement of every investor. The most helpful producer can hardly make a hundred phone calls for a single clip. John Sexton, for instance, did his best; but one refusal was enough to make sure we didn’t get Phar Lap.

At least with Phar Lap we knew the nature of the problem. Elsewhere, we encountered only animosity. The New South Wales Film Corporation gave a blank refusal, without explanation. Even though producer Richard Morant was more than willing to release us, he was unable to get us using extracts from One Night Stand and Far East, the NSWFC was adamant. So were Kennedy Miller who, in what is now apparently a standard policy, declined permission to use any clip from their series: those participating make it so. David Sculthorpe was helpful in locating films and making them available for preview, but the South Australian Film Corporation agreed to the use of Freedom and Breaker Morant — but only if written permission was received from every actor appearing in the extract. (On the day a courteous telex of agreement arrived from Edward Woodward, my estimation of that actor rose substantially.)

Woodward, thank god, was the precursor of a growing stream of supporters to those early results. The screenwriter with Saul Zaentz during his Australian visit to promote Amadeus gave us access to clips from that film, and HandMade Films in London allowed us sections from Time Bandits. To name just a few of Australian producers who helped, David Elskie gave us Andy’s cover and Starstruck, Pat Lovell Picnic at Hanging Rock, Matt Carroll smoothed the way to our use of Freedom and Breaker Morant, and Tony Buckley allowed access to the I Am A Woman film. Film Australia negotiated a special rate for its productions.

Once the hurdle of theatrical rights was cleared, we faced the TV stations. Initially, their resistance seemed unreasonably hostile — until we discovered that producers of some earlier documentaries on Australian films (and one in particular) had simply omitted to get TV clearance for the clips they used. Legal skirmishes had left a residual immunity which we, if followed, would suffer. Considerable diplomacy was needed before the networks came round and gave us their guarded assent.

So, we had the new films. But what about the classics? The National Film and Sound Archive was helpful in locating films and making them available for preview, but with every print came the inevitable reminder that copyright was our problem.

To start with, just who owns the rights to a forties serial, an Eisenstein classic, a Betty Boop cartoon or a newsreel? Some questions were more easily answered than others. Eisenstein’s films are claimed by a Russian company. It asked for a script of the programme in which we proposed to use a clip of Battleship Potemkin, then refused clearance with a vituperative, six-page letter full of Stalinist rhetoric. We had committed the unpardonable sin of suggesting that the Soviet government had not been entirely happy with Eisenstein or his work.

Other problems were harder to crack. Who controlled Charles Chauvel’s films? And what had become of To Australia with Love, the film made by Swedish director Stig Bjorkman as a protest against the banning of his feature, I Love, You Love, from the 1969 Sydney Film Festival?

It turned out the literary agency, Curtis Brown, now administered the Chauvel rights. And Bethwyn Serow, long after the rest of us had given up hope, found that Mary Le海关 had been the only surviving copy of To Australia with Love, because his ex-wife appeared in it. It is now a major part of an episode on film censorship called ‘You Can’t Say That!’

As for the search for classic films, it led us into the shadowy world of the film collector. Film is usually copyrighted for 26 years, with an option to renew for a further 26. That means that anything more than 52 years old should be in the public domain. But films can be reissued with a soundtrack or a commentary, and re-copyrighted in the new version. Or, since film and literary copyright laws differ, the film may stay in the public domain, while the script remains protected.

David Williamson and Peter Sculthorpe describe their experiences at the Saturday matinee, and Chris Haywood confesses he learned to ride a horse before emigrating to Australia, assuming there were cars here but “probably not enough to go round”.

Until an Australian/US copyright agreement was signed in the seventies, little local protection existed for American films, though the British material was marginally safer. It is from the Empire days. There is no shortage of public-domain material freely available from reputable dealers. But why were Hitchcock’s The Birds, Vertigo, Psycho, North by Northwest, Rear Window all so difficult to find? You want ‘em or not?” All but gibbering refusal, without explanation. Even though we turned to local producers and found a different, but equally strangling, jungle.

Reluctantly, we didn’t accept. By then, we usually decided not, and the whole incident, without realising anything had gone wrong.

Not one person whom we asked to interview denied us time. Nobody asked for money. It was a delightful and unexpected affirmation of what we had always thought: that, among serious, professional filmmakers, goodwill outweighs vanity and spite.

What conclusions from all this sound and fury? Most obviously, as the rule stands, it is almost impossible to present in Australia, any serious programme on cinema, whether current or retrospective. The film production, distribution and exhibition industry, the Film Commissions and Corporations, the independent filmmakers and television in general are abysmally ill-prepared to deal with the demand for film study materials that will follow inevitably in the wake of a new popular and educational interest in cinema.

Advice to those who plan their own documentaries on film? I can only paraphrase James Thurber’s conclusion to Memoirs of a Drudge, about his years as a newspaper journalist. Noting that he left reporting to go into the magazine business, he concludes: “Now I have a little piece of advice to all my readers, both boys and girls. Stay out of the magazine business.”

Boys and girls, stay out of the film compilation business. But, if you must dive into it, take your copy of Alice in Wonderland along.
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No late winter, it seems, is complete without a crisis. In early September 1985, the Australian film community was in a state of panic about tax, and remained that way until the grim but scarcely fatal news was announced just over half-way through the month. Everyone, on the other hand, was looking forward to the annual get-together and media blitz of the AFI Awards, held on 14 September. This year, the emotions are the other way round: the 'future of film finance doesn't seem quite so bleak, but the AFI Awards are in all kinds of strife.

Not, of course, that some hint of conflict has ever been entirely absent from the Awards, at any rate recently. The fondly-remembered industry dinners of the seventies, which preceded the TV spectaculars of the eighties, have faded into memory. And, since the beginning of the decade, there have been growing rumblings of discontent from certain quarters, centring on claims that the Awards may perhaps, as the AFI's new Director, Vicki Molloy, candidly sums it up, be "too arty and not useful to the industry".

Put at its simplest, the problem is that films that do well with the punters have a tendency to do a great deal less well with AFI voters. And, recognizing this, the producers of the year's major box-office hits have, of late, not been entering their films. Last year, Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome was a notable non-contender. The film's production company, Kennedy Miller, claimed that a print would not be ready in time for the screenings. But the film hasn't shown up this year, either, suggesting that it was less a case of unable than unwilling.

In 1986, the OZfilm of the decade, Crocodile Dundee, has similarly not been entered (though it has not, as Truth's screaming headline declared, been "BANNED!"), and there are a string of other, smaller no-shows: the Burrowes-Dixon production, Cool Change ("not AFI style," says Burrowes-Dixon's Dennis Wright), a couple of independent exploitation flicks, Fair Game and Leonora (also, one presumes, not really up the AFI voters' street), and a couple from Crawfords — their 'lost film', I Live With Me Dad, and Fortress. "After a discussion with our theatrical marketing consultant, Terry Jackman," says Ian Crawford, "we decided not to enter them in the AFI Awards, because it wouldn't be worthwhile." Jackman, it is worth remembering, was also theatrical marketing consultant on Crocodile Dundee.

The absence of two possible further contenders — Burrowes-Dixon's Free Enterprise and PBL's Birdsville — can apparently be explained by the fact that they are not yet entirely ready. Free Enterprise will, says Dennis Wright, be another three months in the pipeline, and Birdsville is currently being looked at in a double-head version by a potential US distributor (reportedly Embassy). "We didn't," says producer Brian Rosen, "want to go to the trouble and expense of preparing a show print that might have to be recut afterwards."

Producers are, of course, perfectly entitled to withhold their films. The AFI Awards are not a statutory requirement and, in the case of films with good commercial prospects, they do not, as do the Oscars, give a major box-office boost (estimated at anything up to $16 million in the case of an Oscar for Best Picture). But the AFI Awards are also made up of craft awards which, since they are decided by peer-group voting, do mean a lot to Australia's film-makers.

One major victim over the last couple of years has been cinematographer Dean Semler, whose magnificent work on Thunderdome last year was not eligible, and whose work on Birdsville is now also out of contention ("There is no doubt in my mind," says the admittedly biased Rosen, "that Dean would have won"). But, leaving aside the technicians whose work is robbed of peer-group recognition (other possible losers this year include Russell Boyd for Crocodile Dundee and Andrew Lesnie for Fair Game), the crisis threatening the AFI Awards goes deeper than the no-shows (three, possibly four, films out of 25) suggests. For the non-contenders are, of course, a symptom...
rather than a cause.

In the first place, it is not certain, at time of going to press (early August), when this year's AFI Awards will take place, what form they will take and where they will be held — all of which puts something of a strain on their credibility as a high-profile showcase for Australia's films. If irregularity is added to excessive 'artiness', the chances are there will be even more no-shows next year — if, indeed, there is a next year.

The screenings were held, as usual, in July and August. But the actual Awards, originally scheduled for 6 September in a Sydney venue and with a telecast, as last year, on the Ten Network, now look like being in mid-to-late October. And, wherever they are held, they won't be home on Ten.

It all started to go wrong in the early part of this year, while the changeover in the AFI directorship was taking place. According to Network Ten's Business Manager, Guy Dunstan, it was the date which was the major stumbling block. When no suitable venue could be found for 6 September — and, says Dunstan, the Network's director of production, John Maras, had been working flat-out to find one, with the search going as far afield as Newcastle — the tyranny of the spring calendar began to exert itself. With such major events as the Melbourne Cup and the various sporting finals, the Network's outside broadcast facilities tend to be over-stretched from late October onwards.

A later date was necessary, says Vicki Molloy, because there were more films; because this year's awards will, for the first time, include miniseries and telefeatures; and because the whole schedule of judging has become more extensive. In the end, negotiations between the AFI and Ten reached an impasse. Dunstan is adamant that there was "absolutely no qualitative reason" for the Network pulling out. This may be true. But the failure of any other network to step in and fill the gap suggests, at the very least, the possibility of some reassessment of the entertainment value of the Awards.

One problem often cited is the fact that the prizes go to films which most tele-viewers will not and, in well over half the cases, could not have seen. Even if Crocodile Dundee had been included, only six of the 26 films would have had a public release by 6 September, and only two of those (Crocodile Dundee and Burke & Wills) would have been seen at all widely — a situation very different from other, awards overseas, such as the Oscars, Britain's BAFTA Awards, France's César's and even New Zealand's recently introduced GOFTA Awards.

It is, however, a kind of chicken-and-egg situation: without the Awards, certain films might not get a release. An AFI prize does boost certain films — Careful, He Might Hear You, Bliss and Fran are obvious recent examples — and can help others find a distributor. As it is, says Molloy, a number of producers are currently expressing concern that their chances of getting a release reduce as the Awards recede. Others, though, are less sure of the advantages of a big, flashy telecast, feeling that, over the past couple of years, the films have become almost secondary to the Awards spectacular — a state of affairs which doesn't do much for 'profile'. "I don't think," says one major producer, "that anyone is going to slash their wrists if the awards aren't telecast."

This is probably a minority view, however. And, if the AFI cannot deliver a channel by October, next year's Awards seem, if not doomed, at any rate destined to be on a much smaller scale. Some may feel, of course, that this would better serve their role of rewarding excellence in filmmaking, not promoting profits in the industry. But this is not a view shared by Vicki Molloy, "We will be taking a very close look at the structure and the judging criteria in the future," she says. And the objectives behind this reassessment will, she says, be three-fold: much closer involvement of the film industry in the management of the Awards (“We must be seen to be serving the industry's needs”); the continued recognition of achievement and excellence in Australian filmmaking; and maximum public awareness.
To get all or any of this, Molloy will first have to find a new sponsor. The AFI Awards are not cheap to produce — not counting administration expenses, it costs well over $300,000 to get the show on the road — and major sponsorship is an absolute necessity. But Westpac's three-year sponsorship is not being renewed and, with the America's Cup and the Bicentennial just round the corner, 1986 is proving to be one of the hardest years ever for attracting major commercial sponsorship of the arts. As Molloy puts it, "the big birthday party and the big boat race have soaked up all the available funds". Also, she says, there is a new style of management abroad which is less inclined to value the non-quantifiable benefits of arts sponsorship.

Industry criticism of the existing Awards, of which Molloy is very much aware, and which she has vowed to take into consideration, centres on the sorts of films which tend to win the prizes and, by extension, the judging procedures and criteria. There is also a recurring dissatisfaction with screening conditions, reaching a climax this year with multiple complaints about the sound and picture quality at the East Village in Melbourne. Dolby soundtracks could not be handled, and the overall sound system was so bad that Devil in the Flesh, producer John B. Murray apparently considered withdrawing his film altogether, feeling that it could not be properly assessed under the prevailing conditions.

These are, however, technical problems which could (and should) be rectified. The basic problem goes much deeper — so much deeper, in fact, that at a recent meeting of the Screen Production Association of Australia, a reported 60% of members apparently expressed opposition to having anything whatever to do with the Awards.

SPAA President John Weiley would not confirm this figure, and was reticent about discussing the matter. "What has emerged over a period of years," says Weiley, "is the feeling that there ought to be industry awards." But there are, he stressed, no immediate plans to introduce anything like this, and SPAA's position is, for the moment, a neutral one: it has advised its members to enter their films, but has declined to collaborate directly in the organization of the Awards.

There are, on the other hand, growing rumours that the AFI will be eased out of the prizegiving position in 1987. Plans for an Australian film 'Academy' — a cross-guild organization representing all film-production interests — have been around for some time, and have obviously been fuelled by recent AFI-Award problems. Weiley would not be drawn on how such plans might affect the future of the Awards — "if an Academy existed," he said, "it could decide literally anything" — but they will almost certainly be on the agenda at the industry get-together planned for late November at Threldbo, which would give ample time for alternative arrangements to be made for the 1987 Awards.

Molloy is, of course, aware of such moves, and has a few alternative options of her own, including a revised telecast, possibly by the ABC, which might be more in the nature of a review of the year's production, with the Awards included, rather than a TV spectacular with the Awards as its sole focus. Another way of deflecting industry criticism, says Molloy, might be to have all the voting done by peer panels — a prototype system which is being tried out with this year's judging of the miniseries and telefeatures — or to have some kind of pre-selection (which was also apparently mooted this year).

As both Molloy and the industry are aware, of course, the danger with industry-controlled awards is that they could — like the US record industry's Grammy Awards — become orgies of self-congratulation, in which the year's most successful films scoop the pool, while things such as innovation (or, for that matter, excellence) take a back seat. In some ways, it comes down to a simple question: should the AFI Awards be 'critical', or should they be 'promotional'? There is little doubt which the industry would prefer, and Molloy is going to have a hard time balancing the various interests.

It is ironical that all this should be going on in a year in which the AFI screenings, after last year's low point, have revealed an Australian film industry very much back on its feet, with, by general consensus, only two or three duds in a slate of 25 films. At time of writing, sixteen of the films already have distributors, and five have already opened.

Ironically, one of the year's better received films, Death of a Soldier (aka Leonski and War Story), is still very much on the shelf, as a result of yet another dispute, this time with the Australian Theatrical and Amusement Employees Association over crew payments. Until the ATAEA dispute is settled — and, at time of writing, it seems possible it won't be — the film remains blacked.

On a brighter note, Nadia Tass's comedy, Malcolm, seems, on the basis of informal inquiries, to be the hot favourite for Best Film, with a probable starting price of 6-4 on. Cactus, Death of a Soldier, The Fringe Dwellers, Kangaroo, The More Things Change and Short Changed all seem to be in there with a chance, too. So, in the pages that follow, we have, with all due reservations, made one or two tentative predictions for the four main categories.

The combined budget on this year's features is $58,594-400 — an average of $2.3 million (if the seven no-shows are included, the average goes up by $220,000). Just under half the films (twelve) were based in New South Wales, with eight in Victoria, two in Queensland, and one each in the other three states. Fifteen of the 25 have contemporary settings and, of the remainder, only six are true 'period' (i.e. pre-20th century) films.

The inaugural television section contains nine miniseries (Butterfly Island, Colour in the Creek, Dancing Daze, The Dunera Boys, A Fortunate Life, Land of Hope, Palace of Dreams, Robbery Under Arms and Shout: The Story of Johnny O'Keefe) and nine telefeatures (Archer, Breaking Up, Displaced Persons, Double Sculls, I Can't Get Started, The Long Way Home, Natural Causes, The Perfectionist and Stock Squad). Given the criterion for inclusion — a telecast between 31 May 1985 and 31 May 1986 — there are a number of no-shows here, too, including the year's highest rated miniseries, Anzacs (which, like Cool Change, comes from the Burrows-Dixon stable). A Thousand Skies and Body Business are also missing from the miniseries list as, in the telefeature area, are Handle with Care, The Last Warhorse and Robbery. The eighteen contenders will be voted on by two panels, one in Melbourne, one in Sydney, whose constitution — like so much else in this year's Awards — has still to be decided.
### Around the World in 80 Ways

*Directed by Stephen McLean.* Produced by David Effick and Steve Knapman for Palm Beach Entertainment Pty Ltd. Written by Stephen McLean and Paul Leaton. Cinematography by Louis Irving. Production design by Lisa Coote. Costume design by Clarissa Patterson. Music by Chris Neat. Edited by Marc Van Buirien. Sound by Paul Binical, Karen Whittington, Roger Savage. Bruce Emery, Steve Burgess, Nicki Roller and Andrew Stewart. With Philip Quast (Wally Davis), Allan Penney (Roly Davis), Diana Davidson (Davis Davis), Gossa Dobrowolska (Nurse Ophelia Cox), Kelly Dingwall (Eddie Davis), Rob Steele (Alec Moffat), Jane Markey (Miserable Midge) and Judith Fisher (Lotte Boyle). 90 minutes.

### Australian Dream

*Directed by Jacki McKimmie.* Produced by Jacki McKimmie and Susan Wild for Filmide Limited. Written by Jacki McKimmie. Cinematography by Andrew Lesnie. Production design by Chris McKimmie. Costume design by Robyn McDonald. Music by Colin Timms. Edited by Sara Bennett. Sound by Ian Grant, Sara Bennett and Peter Fenton. With Noni Hazlehurst (Dorothy), Graeme Blundell (Geoffrey), John Jarrett (Tod), Caine O’Connel (Jason) and Jenny Mansfield (Sharon). 88 minutes.

### Backlash

*Directed, produced and written by Bill Bennett for Mermaid Beach Productions Pty Ltd.* Cinematography by Tony Wilson. Music by Michael Atkinson and Michael Spicer. Edited by Denise Hunter. Sound by Leo Sullivan, Darcy Cooper, Denise Hunter and Brett Robinson. With David Argue (Trevor Darling), Gia Carides (Niko Iceton), Lydia Miller (Kath) and Brian Synn (Lyle). 90 minutes.

### Burke & Wills


### Dead-End Drive-In

*Directed by Brian Trenchard-Smith.* Produced by Andrew Williams for Springvale Productions Pty Ltd. Screenplay by Peter Smalley, from a story by Peter Carey. Cinematography by Paul Murphy. Production design by Larry Eastwood. Costume design by Antony Jones. Music by Bruce Strangio. Edited by Alan Lake and Lee Smith. Sound by Leo Sullivan, Lee Smith, Lee Fishers, Martin Ossin and John Herron. With Ned Manning (Crabo), Natalie McCurry (Carrine), Peter Whitford (Thompson), Dave Gibson (Dave) and Sandy Lillington (Beth). 90 minutes. Distributor: Greater Union.

### Death of a Soldier


### Departure

*Directed by Brian Kavanagh.* Produced by Christine Sul and Brian Kavanagh for Cine Australia Pty Ltd. Screenplay by Michael Gurr. From his play, *A Pair of Claws.* Cinematography by Bob Kohler. Production design by Jon Dowding. Costume design by Aghrodite Konodos. Music by Bruce Smaeaton. Edited by Ken Sallows. Sound by John Crowley, Craig Carter, Frank Lipson, Yvonne Van Gyn and Peter McIvan. With Michael Duffield (Plessey Swift), Serge Lionetti (Simon Swift), Patricia Kendall (Gillian Swift), June Jago (Frances) and Sean Scully (Bown). 94 minutes.
The AFI Awards

Devil in the Flesh

Going Sane

For Love Alone

I Own the Racecourse

The Fringe Dwellers

Kangaroo

Malcolm

The More Things Change
Playing Beatie Bow
Directed by Donald Crombie. Produced by Jock Blair for S.A.F.C. Productions Ltd. Screenplay by Peter Granter, from the novel by Rudyard Kipling. Cinematography by Geoffrey Simpson. Production and costume design by George Laddie. Music by Gary Macdonald and Laurie Stone. Edited by Andrew Prowse. Sound by Bob Cutcher, Frank Lipsch, Glenn Newman, James Currie, Peter Smith and David Harrison. With Peter Phillips (Jutlin Bow), Imogen Armisley (Abigail), Mouche Philips (Beatie Bow), Don Barker (Samuel), Damian Janko (Gibbe), Nicki Coghill (Dovy), Lynnel Rowe (Kathy), Moya O'Sullivan (Granny) and Barbara Stephens (Justice). 93 minutes. Distributor: CEL. Reviewed in this issue.

The Right Hand Man
Directed by Di Drew. Produced by Steven Grieve, Tom Oliver and Basil Appleby for Yarraman Film Productions Pty Ltd. Screenplay by Helen Hodgman, from the novel by Kathleen Peyton. Cinematography by Peter James. Production design by Neil Angwin. Costume design by Graham Purcell. Music by Allan Zawad. Edited by Ron Saunders. Sound by Sydney White, Don Saunders, Peter Fenton, Phil Haywood and Stephanie Fack. With Rupert Everett (Harry Irons), Hugo Weaving (Ned), Catherine McClements (Sarah Redbride), Arthur Dignam (Dr Redbride) and Jennifer Claire (Lady Ironsminister). 100 minutes. Distributor: Greater Union.

Short Changed

The Still Point
Directed by Barbara Boyd-Anderson. Produced by Rosa Colosimo for Colosimo Film Productions. Written by Rosa Colosimo and Barbara Boyd-Anderson. Cinematography by Kevin Anderson. Production design by Paddy Reardon. Music by Pierre Pierre. Edited by Zigfried Fric. Sound by Geoffrey White and Peter Frost. With Nadine Garner (Sarah), Lyn Semmler (Barbara), Steve Bastoni (David), Robin Curting (Grampa), Alex Mongrel (Paul), Gregory Fleet (Tony), Ben Mendelson (Peter), Kirsty Grant (Simone), Alisa Meadow (Chris) and Jodie Yerron (Blanco). 81 minutes. Reviewed in Cinema Papers 55, January 1986.

The Surfer
Directed by Frank Shields. Produced by James M. Vernon and Frank Shields for Frontier Films/The Producers’ Circle. Written by David Marsh. Cinematography by Michael Erbis. Music by David Tabish. Edited by Greg Bell. Sound by Max Bowring. Greg Bell and Phil Judd. With Gary Day (Sam Barlow), Gosia Dobrowolska (Gina), Rod Mulinar (Hagan), Tony Barry (Calhoun), Gerard MacLaire (Jack), Stephen Leeder (Stanley) and Kris McGuade (Tish). 96 minutes.

Twelfth Night
Directed by Neil Armfield. Produced by Don Catchlove for Twelfth Night Pty Ltd. Written by William Shakespeare. Cinematography by Michael Lamingfield. Production design by Stephen Cushley. Costume design by Alan John. Edited by Nicholas Bearman. Sound by Rob Saider, Karen Whittington, Philip Dickson and Julian Elingworth. With Ivar Kanti (Ornio), John Wood (Sir Toby Belch), Gillian Jones (Viola/Sebastian), Jacob Philips (Olivia), Geoffrey Rush (Sir Andrew Aguecheek), Peter Cummins (Malvolio), Igor Sz (Fabian), Kerry Walker (Feste) and Tracy Harvey (Maria). 120 minutes. Distributor: Greater Union.

Wills and Burke: The Untold Story
Directed by Bob Weis. Produced by Bob Weis and Maragot McDonnell for Story Desert Limited. Written by Philip Falkin. Cinematography by Gaetano Martini. Production design by Tracy Watt. Costume design by Rose Oring. Music by Paul Grabowsky and Red Symons. Edited by Edward McQueen-Mason. Sound by Ian Ryan, Glenn Martin and David Harrisson. With Garry McDonald (Burke), Kim Gyngeell (Wills), Roy Baldwin (Gray), Mark Little (King), Nicole Kidman (Juka Mathews), Peter Collingswood (Stewell), Jonathan Hardy (Macadamie), Henry Maas (Charles), Wynn Roberts (William Wright) and Paul Pryor (Michael). 104 minutes. Distributor: Greater Union. Reviewed in Cinema Papers 54, November 1985.

Windrider

Young Einstein
Directed by Yahoo Serious. Produced by Yahoo Serious and David Roach for Einstein Entertainment Pty Ltd. Written by Yahoo Serious and David Roach. Cinematography by Jeff Darling. Costume design by Mark Watts and Susan Bowden. Music by William Motzing and Martin Arminger. Sound by Roger Savage, Bruce Larnsled, Steve Burgess, Geoff Grist, Annie Breslin and Peter Fenton. With Yahoo Serious (Albert Einstein), Odlie Le Clacce (Marie Curie), John Howard (Freud/Prok), Peewee Wilson (Einstein’s Dad), Jonathan Coleman (Fangio Bavarian) and Su Cruckshank (Einstein’s mother). 94 minutes. Distributor: Roadshow.
Bruce Petty's history lesson

The Movers lives up to its name with a hectic two-week schedule

"On Monday, we did the industrial revolution," said producer Ron Saunders matter-of-factly, half-way through the second and last week of production on Film Australia's $400,000, 50-minute telefeature, The Movers.

With original idea, concept drawings and script by one of Australia's few Oscar-winners, the cartoonist and filmmaker, Bruce Petty, The Movers may be a small-scale production by current Australian standards, but its ambitions are high. And its production team is unusual, too, for what, by normal definitions, is a short: the director is Gil Brealey (his first helming job since Annie's Coming Out), the production designer is Larry Eastwood (straight off Dead-End Drive-In and the miniseries, The Challenge), and the leads are Drew Forsythe and Lorna Lesley.

Then, of course, there is Bruce Petty, who is most people's reasons for being on the project. The Movers is part cautionary tale, part comic journey of initiation through the history of technology, from the invention of the wheel to the era of nuclear power.

"I suppose in a way it's an extension of the political cartoons I was doing," says Petty, "it's an attempt to see whether you can develop an abstract sort of idea in a medium that is really best at storytelling and sport and instant news. Like all cartoonists, I'm continually asked to do drawings on these epic subjects, like the worst things people could do to one another. And one of the silly things we do to one another is let technology decide how we're going to live instead of, you know, deciding what we'd like and finding the technology to do it.'We've had a hundred years of it now, and I think people are entitled to ask: 'What's a fair period in which you could expect a system to start getting it right?'

The two central characters of The Movers, a young couple, are armchair travellers — literally: their armchair travels. A lovable, oversize-patterned, comfy, old-carpet-slipperish sort of chair, it acquires, as it travels through time, accoutrements like sails and rigging, Heath-Robinson steam paraphernalia, Formula One aerfoils and spoilers, and some sinister military hardware.

Petty is anxious to stress that The Movers is a film about who takes the decisions and why, rather than an anti-technology film. Which is just as well, given the stacks of half-million-dollar technology being used to bring the film in on time and budget. The Movers uses Ultimatte, a sophisticated blue-screen process, supervised by Danny Diklich of Omnicom, which enables backgrounds, background effects and even foregrounds to be dropped in around the 'live' actors.

But, rather than use the normal blue-screen technique of putting actors in front of real but unreachable locations, Brealey, Eastwood and Petty are after quite a different effect. "We're using it very abstractly," says Brealey, "and the whole idea is to get a sense of cartoon.

The unreality is also what appealed to Eastwood. "So much of the work today is becoming more and more realistic," he says. "Basically, you're doing this boring room or that boring room. We're trying not to be totally realistic here, which gives you a lot more freedom: it's more akin to a 50-minute rock clip than anything else."

The $400,000 budget, though tight, is high by Film Australia standards, and is "as much as you can spend on a 50-minute television programme", says Brealey, who also reckons the cost would have been three times higher without "a devoted band of Australian technicians".

Already, says Saunders, a lot of interest has been shown by a couple of Australian commercial channels, by PBS in the States, and by both the BBC and Channel 4 in the UK. And it's the controversial side of the project — the questioning of our current priorities on energy and technology — which is the real plus factor when promoting The Movers, thinks Saunders. "I certainly hope so," he says, "because that's why we're making it!"
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On the right track

There will always be a place for fantasy and always a time for laughter. Malcolm, the first feature from Nadia Tass and David Parker, gives us an abundance of both. The backdrop is a rather grey and gloomy Melbourne; the protagonists: a fellow who’s not the full quid, a criminal and his girlfriend; and the outcome: a work of absolute delight.

The apparently simple-minded character, Malcolm (played with pathos and peculiarity by Colin Friels), is a maintenance man on the tramways. Fired after he takes his ing for the milk bottle container sits on the roof of a toy car which runs by remote control and trundles down to the local milk bar.

It is a game that proprietor Mrs T (Beverley Phillips) has been playing along with for some time. And, when Malcolm can’t pay up, she insists that he take in a boarder. Handing him an elaborate questionnaire (“Are you neat and tidy?” ‘Do you have a job?”), she leaves him to contend with his first caller, Frank (John Hargreaves), a not so sharp crim who’s as rough as rough.

Frank takes the room, yet, when he moves in with his adoring and provocative moll, Judith (Lindy Davies), Malcolm is completely bamboozled, and is immediately dismissed by his new tenant as a moron. But, when Frank pulls off a warehouse robbery with his mate, Willy (Chris Haywood), it becomes apparent that he has the same knack for tricks, or rather need for them, as Malcolm. This initial discord marks the opening of a classic comedy: what will follow is union and the resolution of conflict. There are few openings in the script that allow Malcolm’s character, at least, to be laughed at. After his first jaunt on the tram he has us on side — and

when Malcolm builds his friend a bright yellow getaway car — a trick vehicle that leaves the James Bond escape cars for dead.

The way in which Malcolm takes to crime is orchestrated beautifully, especially the staging of his own remote-control robbery (take one video screen, a model car and a gun loaded with blanks…). Frank is impressed, and the three join forces in planning an operation involving the Angels’ Bank.

This event is the climax of the film. Malcolm’s whacky ideas come to the fore, revealing a genius hitherto unrecognized. Even morality is taken care of, because Frank (who only cares for money anyway) it leads them to another city of trams, where the trio continue scheming in the same crazy manner...

Malcolm is not a complex story and its message is an old-fashioned one: there are positive qualities, even genius, to be tapped in everyone — in outsiders like Frank, or those labelled as backward, like Malcolm. It is a story that John Steinbeck told in Of Mice and Men, and it has been played out in One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, and it could probably be told again and again.

Even so, stories can be lost in the way they are told. And the fact that, in Malcolm, we find both a comic and a cinematic flair sets it apart and makes it work. There are only a few moments where Tass and Parker (who wrote the script) rely on obvious comic devices (like cockatoos that answer back). Otherwise, the direction is assured, the material confidently handled.

Similarly with the camera, for which Parker is responsible. Known for his still photography for Australian features like The Man from Snowy River, Malcolm is completely different: that there are positive qualities, even genius, to be tapped in everyone — in outsiders like Frank, or those labelled as backward, like Malcolm. It is a story that John Steinbeck told in Of Mice and Men, and it could probably be told again and again.

And, if forgetting is the other side of laughter, Malcolm should be taken as an affirmation: it should not be forgotten.

Kathy Bail

Although the core members of the Baader-Meinhof gang died in the Stammheim-Stuttgart prison less than a decade ago, Reinhard Hauft's film of their trial makes it all seem much more distant.

The well-founded suspicions that the men by whom the roots of the gang were much older and much deeper. The postwar generational conflict was particularly evident in West Germany, where the horrors of the Third Reich created a disaffected generation only too ready to join the worldwide student protests of the sixties.

But when, at the end of the sixties, the student movement began to disintegrate, some of its more hardened members were not prepared to return to the institutions or conventions of everyday life. Unable to accept bourgeois society, a number of them engaged in violent terrorism against the state.

The Baader-Meinhof gang — more properly, the RAF, or Red Army Faction — were not the only terrorists to emerge with the turn of the decade, but they certainly became the focus for political paranoia over all such renegade groups. Baader and Ensslin were first jailed in 1968, after a botched attempt to burn down a Frankfurt store. In 1970, Baader was assisted in his escape from jail by Meinhof and, during the next two years, the gang went underground. They raided banks, blew up US military installations in Frankfurt and Heidelberg, and bombed the Hamburg offices of the newspaper mogul, Axel Springer. The final death toll on both sides was 28.

The core of the gang — Baader, Meinhof, Ensslin and Raspe — were held in 'investigatory detention' for the next three years. Their trial, which began in 1975, lasted an astonishing 192 days. When it concluded in 1977, Baader, Ensslin and Raspe were all sentenced to life imprisonment. Ulrike Meinhof, however, had been 'found' hanged in her cell, mid-way through the trial.

When the sentences were handed down, members of the gang who were still at large hijacked a jet. The resulting loss of control by the legal system only too ready to join the world-wide student protests of the sixties. Crumpled into the courtroom (specially built for the trial) is a bare, air-tight, windowless, fluorescent-lit room.

The claustrophobic atmosphere of the setting allows little escape from the events, either visually, or in terms of the seriousness of their implications. The Stammheim jail is a multi-storey, hi-tech cement fortress, and the courtroom (specially built for the trial) is a bare, air-tight, windowless, fluorescent-lit room.

The audience has little choice but to take up the drama of this confrontation, and to deal with the questions: Who are these people? What purpose is served by their acts of terrorism? And why is the judiciary unable to contain them?

Both sides speak a language incomprehensible to the other, and the trial, conducted more along the lines of a debate, clearly shows how the prosecution and the judges, unable to match the verbal intensity of the accused, adopted the tactic of resorting to all political discussion with purely legal procedure.

Concentrating instead on what is factually beyond dispute, Hauft's film is left with a single focus: the knee-jerk reaction which has become the common response to all such terrorist acts.

By not tackling this particular issue, Stammheim strengthens its case against the judicial system, and helps to highlight the knee-jerk reaction which has become the common response to all such terrorist acts.

The resulting loss of control by the trial presiding judge, Theodor Prinzog (Ulrich Pleitgen), together with legal improprieties on his part, led to the eventual removal from the trial. And any residual respect for the legal system evaporates when it is revealed that the state has bugged conversations between the lawyers and the defendants in their cells.

At this point, the trial simply self-destructs. Stripped of its legitimacy, the legal system winds up the proceedings by convicting and sentencing the defendants in absentia. Unlike Meinhof's judgement, made shortly after her death, remains the most resonant: "After Stammheim, West Germany can never be the same'.

Hauft's film may not 'perform' at the box office like a mainstream movie during its initial theatrical release, but it will certainly be remembered, referred to and revived for years to come. And its unsurprising dedication to factual accuracy results in a work distinguished not only by its logic and credibility, but also by its value as historical endeavour.

Rod Bishop

Children of Marx and Coca-Cola

Although the core members of the Baader-Meinhof gang died in the Stammheim-Stuttgart prison less than a decade ago, Reinhard Hauft's film of their trial makes it all seem much more distant.

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Rod Bishop

Every once in a while, a film will generate so much electricity, so much intense feeling, that something almost magical happens: you can feel the hairs on the back of your neck stand up, and your entire body shivers with a mixture of awe and pleasure.

There's a moment like that in John Ford's The Grapes of Wrath, when Henry Fonda talks to Jane Darwell about being an unseen presence "whenever a man cries out for justice". There's another at the end of Max Ophuls's Letter from an Unknown Woman, when you feel that (maybe) Louis Jourdan has remembered the woman whose long letter he has been reading. And Peter Weir has managed it more than once: when Miranda is found in Picnic at Hanging Rock, and again when Harrison Ford and Kelly McGillis dance in the barn in Witness.

There's a moment like that, too, in Paul Cox's superlative new film, Cactus. Robert (Robert Menzies), the solitary young collector of cacti, tells Colo (Isabelle Huppert), the French woman who has been partially blinded as a result of a car accident, that he was blind from birth. Except, he adds, for one moment when he was a child and fell over, bumping his head. Then, he says, just for a moment, he could see.

A little later in the film, Cox shows us that moment in which the little blind boy falls and, as his father picks him up, sees a fleeting image of sunlight through the trees. Pure magic, with the sad little footnote that, as Robert says, "Nobody believed me".

With Cactus, Cox has finally managed to merge the opposing elements in his career to date: his love of the documentary, and his fascination with the surreal. The film is (mercifully, perhaps) unclassifiable: a love story, but a love story that's surrounded by pain, like the spikes of a cactus plant. Though it's much more optimistic than My First Wife, it's almost more unsettling, more challenging — and much, much more adventurous.

Colo is visiting her friends, Tom and Bea (Norman Kaye and Monica Maughan), in the lush hilly countryside outside Melbourne, back home, in France, her marriage to Jean-François (Jean-Pierre Mignon) is on the rocks, and she's running away.

The opening scenes of the film, including the extraordinary opening shot, establish the setting of the story — an area that reminds Colo of Germany's Black Forest but which, Tom reminds her, is much older. These images that are Colo will soon barely see. A sliver of glass penetrates an eye, blinding it; an eye specialist warns her that the blinded eye will have to be removed to prevent the good eye being affected as well. Quite naturally, Colo objects, delays, vacillates.

Her distraught friends try to help as best they can, and introduce her to Robert, whose first advice to her is: "There's nothing much to be afraid of". But Colo is afraid, and after a while only Robert can bring her any real comfort. Inevitably, they become lovers; and, just as inevitably, Jean-François arrives to bring her home.

Aided by the exceptional photography of Yuri Sokol and the production design of Asher Blu, Cox has produced his most tactile film: the symbol of the cacti, which give the scenes at Robert's home an almost primeval atmosphere, is beautifully used. The director's fondness for cinematic doodling may not be to the taste of every viewer. But, when Cox inserts home-movie material of Colo (i.e. Isabelle Huppert) as a child, dressed up for some festivity or diving into a lake, it is somehow very touching.

Nor does Cox ignore the off-beat humour with which his films since Lonely Hearts have been infused: Tom energetically playing tennis with an unseen opponent (which turns out to be a machine), or Ray Marshall doing an impersonation of a camel at a birthday party, while Elsa Davis pounds away at the piano and sings a song for Colo.

Complementing the images is the richest soundtrack Cox and his team have yet composed — "composed" seems the appropriate word here — with bursts of magnificent music sharing the film with the sounds of the bush, including the extraordinary cry of the whipbird.

The principal actors are faultless. Norman Kaye and Monica Maughan play Colo's sad, embarrassed hosts with just the right degrees of awkwardness; while Isabelle Huppert makes Colo a truly memorable character. Best of all, though, is Robert Menzies; after a walk-on role in Man of Flowers and a bit part in Bliss (as Honey Barbara's lover), this young actor emerges as a major new talent, playing Robert with absolute conviction: it's the best screen portrayal of blindness since Lonely Hearts have been infused.

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There are some, however, a small minority — who find Cox pretentious and self-conscious. But any viewer who remains unmoved by the last dialogue exchange between Huppert and Menzies at the end of the film must surely have a heart of stone. Or, perhaps, of cactus.

David Stratton

In 1932, 80-year-old Mrs Alice Hargreaves (Coral Browne), the Alice to whom Lewis Carroll first recounted a little girl's adventures in Wonderland, sails to New York to receive an honorary doctorate from Columbia University.

Imperiously Victorian in manner, and travelling with a timid young companion, Lucy (Nicola Cowper), Mrs Hargreaves finds herself at the centre of an immense amount of fuss to which, for a variety of reasons, she gradually succumbs. More importantly, she finally comes to terms with her younger self and with the love shown her by Carroll (the Reverend Charles Dodgson), love which she has long repressed because she had been made to feel there was something wrong, something she "couldn't bear to think about".

On this slender plot, writer Dennis Potter and director Gavin Millar have fashioned Dreamchild, an irresistible entertainment, densely textured on the level of ideas and filmed with a sure sense of the cinema's capacity for moving fluidly in time and space.

As Mrs Hargreaves grapples with the brashness of New York (a brilliantly stylized realization of neon-lit streets and diners, radio stations and art deco hotel suites), she also finds herself grappling with her own past and her own imaginative life.

Her Oxford childhood of walled campus, Pennies from Heaven, in association with Thorn EMI Screen Entertainment. Distributor: Greater Union. 35mm. 94 minutes. Great Britain.


The bottom line in exploitation: Jessica (Cassandra Delaney) about to strike back against the macho marauders in Fair Game.
to brand her horse with a welding torch are among the film's few inventively nasty moments.

Cut off from help — if, indeed, the stereotypically redneck policeman in the nearby town could be described as such — Jess is forced further and further onto the defensive until, strapped on a Rambo-style headband, she hits back. Ringo is fried on a live wire, Sunny meets a fiery death and Sparks is impaled on the sharp end of an anvil.

Fair Game is an unabashed exploitation movie, a horse for a well-rutted coulter, and it succeeds on the world video market (see the News section of Cinema Papers 58, July 1986) has proved — as if anyone still needed to know — that punters around the world lust after beautiful young women in loose-fitting shirts and invisible shorts, who are much given to taking showers (it gets very hot in the desert/jungle/outback, you see), and who are put in jeopardy by a bunch of wisecracking yobs.

As exploitation, Fair Game is, I suppose, par for the course, though its first half, after a stuntwork involving Jess's ute, The Beast and a refrigerator truck full of kangaroo carcasses, is a little slow. Similarly, a number of fabulously built-up bits of suspense lead nowhere, barring a sudden fright when a bird gets loose in a closed room (who may — who knows? — be a hommage to The Birds, from which the scene is taken). Round about the mid-point, though, Fair Game ceases to be a generic exploitation piece, out-right, indigenous nastiness. This happens in a scene in which Jess is strapped to the front of The Beast, her legs lashed to the ute bars, her jeans and teeshirt suggestively sit with a large knife. She is then driven about, struggling and screaming, while the men guffaw and the camera glows. It is a loathsome scene, its voyeuristic intent far outweighing any dramatic justification. A lot of the atrocities in this writer, at least — all sympathy for the calculated commercialism of the film, leaving one with, at best, a grudging acceptance of Andrea Delaney's cinematography and a muted admiration for Cassandra Delaney's brave battle against stereotype. Fair Game is a thoroughly nasty piece of work, pandering to a set of attitudes it pretends (perfunctorily) to condemn.

If the only way we can make an impact on the world video market is by proving that Australia can churn out exploitation flicks like any scumbag, tax-shelter sleaze pit, then the last ten years, TOBA or no TOBA, have been pretty much in vain.

Nick Roddick

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**Salvador**

**Midday express**

The credits are in red over a black-and-white rendition of the famous video news-clip of the slaughter of the demonstrators on the steps of the cathedral in San Salvador, juiced with intermittent flashes and convulsive bursts of motion. The title music sounds like it was written for a forties-'50s movie (no synthesizers, no guitars).

Fervour and action are clearly promised by such titles. Instead, Salvador sorties away from commitment and begins to develop its central characters: the scavenging journalist, Richard Boyle, and his failed-hippie sidekick, Dr Rock.

But the scenes in which this is supposed to happen are flat and pointless. The dialogue between James Woods as Boyle and Jim Belushi as Rock is crudely arch, and they play it like they had never met before.

We are supposed to see them as comrades in Hunter S. Thompson's and Oscar Zeta Acosta, yet gonzo hysteria is exactly what is missing, and we have all too much time to mourn its loss while the couple motivate their way towards El Salvador and the movie we have come to see.

Then things get better for a while. Brutality doesn't require finesse, and brutality is what the Salvadoran material is all about. It takes only a short time for us to recognize that, in spite of all their self-centred nastiness, Boyle and Rock are amateur uglies in comparison with Major Max's bully boys and the US Embassy's plastic spooks.

Oliver Stone, who directed, co-wrote, co-produced and cast his intant son in a supporting role, treats the demons of a war's aftermath from an old spoy movie: the Salvadoran nasties plot fanatically in dark rooms, while the Americans are soulless corporate robots who only come alive at noon. Subtlety is not Stone's strong suit, and a lot of smoke billows over the screen in this picture.

Time by time to time, we are taken on side-trips to hell. If you didn't already know that Stone's big writing credit was Midnight Express, you could read from the pious way these sequences of festering gore are presented.

Small-time jerks against big-time thugs, though, normally makes for a good movie, but Salvador keeps coming back to Woods being an actor being Richard Boyle, and Woods has to be one of the most mechanical slime specialists in the business: all his tics are pre-programmed, making me regret he was not Christopher Walken or some other real zombie.

But that is because I kept wanting Salvador to be a movie it was not — a movie which drew me in and made me 'live' the horror it depicted. Actually, Woods's performance is of a piece with the rest of the film: calculating and exploitative, dishonest and mean. Strangely enough, these are the qualities which make the film good.

By most conventional standards, Salvador is a 'bad' movie, and I don't want readers of this review to expect anything else of it. Yet, when it was over, I found I agreed with it far more completely than I usually do with movies with political views like my own. It had done what it set out to do. Now, why is that?

I think it is because, in the end, it is good — very good’, like Brigid O'Shaughnessy in The Maltese Falcon. It is good because it is honest propaganda, like she was an honest liar — both of them honest because they are so blatantly dishonest. Only a fool would believe in the political engagement of what is essentially a Killing Fields rip-off, a film so coldly sensational in its expressionist villainy and violence, so manipulative in its sentiment and 'human feeling'.

Most propaganda is 'positive' and inward-turning, concerned to tell the world the virtue of the cause it espouses. But it is hard to be convincing about virtue in these cynical times. Salvador is almost wholly

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**Experiencing the contra culture:**

**By William D. Routt**

**LAND OF HOPE**

Docked worker: Patrick Dickson as young Paddy Quinn, about to be sentenced in Land of Hope.

The opening minutes of Land of Hope establish the dual themes of the need for solidarity within the labour movement and the possessive power of Catholicism. For the next ten weeks, these themes are examined against the background of selected historical events from the past 50 years.

It is a concept — developed by producer Suzanne Baker and scripted by Tony Marrott, Anne Brookbank and John Patterson, with alternating direction by Gary Conway and Chris Adshead — that generates a considerable degree of interest, but which also causes a number of formidable problems.

Occasionally, the pain and the passion of the burgeoning labour movement develop out of their interaction with the individual concerns of the Quinn family. Too often, however, the viewer is left in a sort of dramatic crevice, where the mechanics of the drama and the predictability of the characters' development fail to connect in anything more than a superficial way with the rather stilted layer of historical information. The latter are largely enmeshed in declaratory speeches, and a written epilogue accompanied by Mike Perjanik's superbly plaintive music.

Each episode is organized around a key political or industrial event, beginning with the shearers' strike in the eighteen-nineties, and proceeds to establish a correlation between the fate of the Catholic church in the labour movement's fortunes, developments within the Catholic church, and the activities and ideals of the Quinn family.

In the first episode, Paddy Quinn (Patrick Dickson) is transformed from scab to union organizer. In the following episode, Frank, transforms from a member of the radical International Workers of the World to a voluntary participant in the armed forces during WW1. Similarly, in the next episode, Paddy's daughter, Kathleen (Melita Jurisic), discours the Catholic church and the traditionalism of the Catholic church. The cyclical movement that started with Paddy, the voice of union moderation and pragmatism, peaks in the mid-nineteen-twenties, and early twenty-twenties, concludes with Andrew's final transformation from anarchist to endorsed Labor candidate under Whitlam in the seventies.

While the basic concept may have been useful to sell the series, the decision to devote less than an hour to some of the most complex issues in Australian history results in a reductionism that rarely exceeds more than a cursory outline of the event, and leaves the prevailing perception of history as a series of neat, unproblematic packages.

The rejection of a radical alternative to the exploitation of the capitalistic system is highlighted in the opening episode. Paddy, the voice of reason and moderation, is forced to serve a gaol sentence after the more radical members of his union attempt to burn down a shearing shed. The price he pays is not just imprisonment, but also the death of his wife, Nesta Darling.

In subsequent episodes, the communist alternative is explored and rejected, and the activities of the individual who eventually commits suicide in a fit of despair after Stalin's regime is exposed and the Russians invade Hungary. The Liberal Party under Menzies also receives its share of symbolic criticism, via the adulterous and unprincipled behaviour of Dominic, the Quinn family's last heir, who effectively disowns his true love, Nesta Darling.

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The major weakness of the mini-series is its unfailing predictability, which means that the prejudiced Catholics are eventually replaced by tolerant, less dogmatic Catholics, in the form of Andrew Quinn and his wife Mary Teresa. Thus it is not the institution of the church which is at fault, merely the execution of its tenets by a few misguided individuals. This simplicity attempt to infuse significance into every gesture and action. Thus, each of the major characters virtually dies on cue. Paddy when he learns of the installation of the Communist Party in Russia, Nesta trying to lift a box of anti-Menzies literature in the early fifties. Finally, Maureen 'permits' her own death when she is the victim of a bomb attack in the Whiteman government in 1972: the heritage of Paddy's dream has been safely passed on to Andrew and Sarah.


**Bull and bush**

There are two almost memorable scenes in Alice to Nowhere which, in entirely unconnected ways, capture an insight into this two-part Crabwood miniseries.

One is towards the end, where the deranged Johnny, a killer from the big smoke (played with some sincerity by John Waters), confronts an old bushwoman played by Ruth Cracknell. With a loaded shotgun prodded into her chin, she tells Johnny: "This country isn't kind to creatures like you: you don't last out here." This is a moving, shocking, meaningful: he simply pulls the trigger.

The other is the extended opening titles sequence on the Birdsville Track, where we meet the protagonists whom this 'creature' will soon face in mortal combat. The overpowering protagonist here is the face of the land itself, shown in sweeping effective aerial photography. The human protagonists are in a battered old mail truck that forms a long line of white dust against the dimness of the dawn light. In it are Dave (Steve Jacobs), the Bachelor of the people, decent man who doesn't understand women but does understand the land, and his biblically bearded sidekick, Ivan (Ronald Wabic), a 'relo from Russia who loves life, vodka and Dave, his first and only mate. Their mate ship is quickly and effectively unravelled.

But this introduction is a yardstick which only serves to point up the uninspired nature of what follows. The plot is a jumble of incomprehensible, the baddies steal something (in this case, the Queen's opals) that they somehow lose and must get back. The opals end up in the suitcase of a passing innocent called Barbara Dean (Rosey Jones), who is en route to a job in Birdsville, via the Alice, Maree and, of course, the mail truck.

Although mostly concise, the words, phrases and scenes of the screenplay seem to sit after one another. The bucolic, the dead, the unseen — all are presented in a careless logic and cheap cheats.

As we follow the trail of murder and mayhem across the great, barren heartland of Australia, we begin to ask a few questions. Why does Johnny so rapidly degenerate into a vicious, pathological killer when he is so sympathetic? What strange sexual weirdness moves in his head? To young Betty (Joy Smithers), who, along with Barbara, loves of Johnny, to whom Johnny tries to rape — he yells: "You could have loved me!" What, inside Johnny, is cracking up?

We could also ask a few questions...
Sufferin' souls

The fictional territory of playwright Sam Shepard is vast. His chronicles tell of a mythical landscape of lonely motels, prairies, Plymouths and cowboy dreams. He delves into the junkyard of American kitsch. "We stopped on the prairie at a place with huge white plaster dinosaurs standing around in a circle. There was no town. Just these dinosaurs with lights shining up at them from the ground," he writes.

It is a vision of America often found in the films of Robert Altman. Think of 3 Women (1977), and the depiction of the 'Dodge City' bar in a nightmarish Southern Californian landscape: there is a captivation with the surface of things — with banality, madness and wry humour.

When these two artists are placed together, as they have been in the production of the film Fool for Love, the clash is bound to be fascinating one. Shepard’s award-winning play was first staged by the Magic Theatre in San Francisco in 1983. It had a successful run in America and elsewhere, before becoming a film (see the Altman interview in this issue).

Altman’s direction here is intimate and also plays the lead, Eddie, a brash, whip-cracking cowboy, who arrives at the El Royale to make things up with May (Kim Basinger).

The setting is brilliantly realised — a run-down, neon-lit motel on the edge of the New Mexico desert. Glowing pinks and the moody, evocative colours of the desert heighten the intensity of Eddie and May’s blazing and incestuous relationship. "You know we’re connected, that we’ve had a long time ago," he tells her.

The beginning is very slow and contemplative a series of long, long takes. It allows Altman to give a drawn-out explication of the two characters’ connections: they are two fighters in a no-win situation. It also invites careful exploration of the visual space — the trailers in the junkyard, an empty bar, a child on a swing. Finally it locks us in, just as Eddie and May are forced to play out their love/hate games in this claustrophobic arena.

Prancing around on his horse, Eddie is brazen — an indelible performer. But his act is often comic: he kicks in the door of May’s room with his steel studded boots, he sends glasses on the bar skittling with his steel studded boots, he sends glasses on the bar skittling with his whip. It is a pathetic violence, that May won’t succumb to. She performs too. In a clinging silk slip, she sensually washes herself, playing up to Eddie’s dominant air. Then she kicks back, silencing him.

The knowing watcher on the balcony is the drunken Old Man (Harry Dean Stanton). His harmonica-playing lends a melancholy air, and it is his stories that are the more philosophical. "It was the same love, it just got split in two," he says, looking back over his life.

Altman chooses to reveal the links between the main characters in recreations of the past. It is, I think, the major fault of the film: the camera should have remained focused on the El Royale. In the original, the poetry in the characters’ stories is a rich source for our own imaginative play. As Eddie says: "There’s not a movie within a hundred miles that can match the story I’m going to tell." So why give us the images so literally?

There is however some clever cinematography in these scenes, most notably in the way the past and present are diffused. For example, a scene where Eddie first sees May as a teenager blends into an image of the present, reminding us of the impossibility of escaping the past. It is typical of Altman: he plays with reflections, fragmenting the images, dislocating the visual and the narrative space.

Basinger acts May’s magazine dreams with a raw sensuality and strength. Her other recent film, 9½ Weeks, may also have dealt with obsession, but in Fool for Love, she is given a script loaded with poetry rather than meaningless silences. Randy Quaid as the outside ‘man’ brings to his part the right sort of awkwardness and vulnerability. Though he makes Eddie’s whole-some dream of owning chickens and a plot in Wyoming look even more shallow, May can only use him. Her entanglement with Eddie goes too deep to allow any way out.

The whining country tunes of Fool for Love reinforce the action. Written and performed in (addition to George Burt’s score) by Shepard’s sister, Sandy Rogers, they are about yearning, dislocation and the impossibility of romance. And, like Ry Cooder’s music in Paris, Texas, they strike a strong emotional chord.

It is on the structural level that Fool for Love is flawed — strange, because Altman is one of the few directors capable of recreating (not simply filming) stage plays on the screen. One of the few, also, whose view of American history and American culture is as simultaneously mythic and hyperrealist as that of Shepard.

In the final analysis, the emotional and intellectual engagement of Shepard’s Fool for Love lies in leaving Eddie, May and the Old Man’s stories to tell themselves, not in attempting to realise the poetry of their lives. Maybe Altman was tempted to show too much, precisely because his and Shepard’s visions are so close.

Kathy Ball


Out of the saddle again: Sam Shepard as Eddie in Robert Altman’s Fool for Love, based on the stage play by Shepard.
Scot of the Pacific

It was an excellent idea to combine the story of Robert Louis Stevenson's relatively unknown life in Samoa with a look at the under-explored subject of European settlement in the Pacific. Ultimately, however, the ABC's Tuisitala doesn't seem to have made it work. The miniseries suffers from an inconsistent script and a thematic confusion that strangely reflects the split personality of its heroine — or, perhaps, the more tortured confrontations of Stevenson's own Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

Episode One of the series tries to do too much, too quickly. Describing Stevenson's rise from being "unknown, penniless and a poseur" to being a popular Victorian novelist, it sketches in his Edinburgh milieu, his family background and his bouts of TB. It also deals with his infatuation with and marriage to Fanny, an older woman from the American mid-West with a family of her own. Episode One ends with Louis and Fanny arriving in Samoa, where both Fanny and the tropical climate will nurture his genius and cure his lingering illness.

The European locations in that first episode, shot around Sydney, and the cliched recreations of Victorian society, are as disappointing as the lack of character development. Angela Punch McGregor's accent waxes and wanes, becoming as treacly as John McEnery's Scottish one. But there is no doubt that Episode One, after all that frantic sketching, leaves the viewer curious, wondering what the hero and heroine are going to do for the next five.

The answer becomes obvious in Episode Two: slow down. The locations definitely improve (Samoa and its sets are lovely), but the action sequences are pretty similar to all final climactic swordfights. There is not enough background to the power struggle that takes place between the Europeans over this far-flung island in the Pacific to give more than a superficial context for the anti-colonial themes of the succeeding episodes.

The most interesting sections of Tuisitala are those which portray native Samoan life, but their full potential is never realised. Traditional Polynesian society is shown to be under threat from Europeans, but that threat doesn't seem to warrant making it more than just an extension of the background.

And, while the miniseries does succeed in building up some of the tensions between and within these societies, and adequately portrays the rapaciousness of the colonial administrators, it doesn't manage to account for the depth of the relationship that must have existed between Stevenson and the Samoans.

Instead, we get snapshots of Stevenson and the Samoans having a feast; Stevenson against the Consuls; the Samoans being pushed towards civil war; and Stevenson writing letters to the press in Europe. With such a superficial rendering of this relationship, the 'road of gratitude' built for Stevenson by the Samoans appears more than it was accounted for in the miniseries.

Their island story: left to right, Peter McEnery, Julie Nihill, Dorothy Alison, Angela Punch McGregor and Todd Boyce in the miniseries, Tuisitala.

TUSITALA

Star of the ilk: Christophe Lambert in Highlander.

He doesn't want to be immortal, and its effect upon him — for instance, the relationship with his wife, who does age and finally dies, while he stays the same age is an interesting (though lightly explored) area.

Unlike other recent fantasy/adventure films, however, Highlander is well written (by Gregory Widen, Phil Wilmot and Larry Ferguson). And, except perhaps for the final climactic battle, which is pretty similar to all final climactic battles, the action sequences are fresh and exciting. Mulcahy's direction helps — the Scottish clan battle is particularly well staged and shot — and there's enough humour and balance the sombre struggle between the immortals.

In a flashback sequence, we see a duel in which an increasingly confused version of New York in 1986, is then re-established in Scotland in 1536, where he is fatally wounded during a battle.

Falling to die and being tossed out of his horse by superstitious villagers, he eventually discovers that he has become a member of a unique group of immortal warriors.

Trained by the mysterious Ramirez (Sean Connery), he has to pass on through time until The Gathering, where he and other immortals will meet to fight Kurgan (Clancy Brown), the evil immortal, and (hopefully) win The Prize. The Gathering is, of course, set for New York in 1986.

If the story sounds ridiculous, then it is to the filmmakers' credit that it's sold so well. Partly, that is because of the naturalistic approach to immortality and, more generally, age: MacLeod's mystical character grows slowly out of the normal man.
release from prison, their wake for him, and their lacking of a path through the jungle to his mountain grave, appear inexplicable and undeserving.

If this relationship remains hardly credible, the one between Fanny and Louis finally comes into its own towards the end of the series. Fanny herself slowly evolves from wily appendage and fierce protectress into an interesting character in her own right, albeit a schizophrenic one.

Angela Punch McGregor eventually gets enough script to act with, and she is very good in this difficult role, albeit a schizophrenic and an adolescent audience, and that her own family, like the Bow's, might grow to be close-knit again.

Based on a novel by Ruth Park, it is a variation on H.G. Wells's The Time Machine, in this case, seventeen-year-old Abigail (Imogen Annesley) is transported back just over a century to 1873. Fittingly, the film worries nothing about technological or mystical explanations, but simply gets on with the dramatic realisations that the premise provides.

Troubleshooting with her mother for forgiving her father (who left them for another woman, and who is never seen), Abigail follows "the little furry girl", Beatie Bow, played by (Mouche Phillips), who sets her on her way to the land of old Oz.

In the best tradition of the genre (and this is a mark of the film's achievement), its ellipses of time and place are fluid and overlapping. George Liddle's functional designs provide the bridge between the Dickensian industrial city of the eighteen-seventies, and the modern-day cubist Sydney housing blocks, with their graffiti-covered playgrounds.

And, as in director Donald Crombie's previous films, Caddie, Cathy's Child and, to a lesser extent, The Thirteenth colourful Angel Street, it is mainly through the eyes of the female protagonist that the story is told.

In the overly romantic, sentimental and fairytale world of the past, Abigail discovers an equally romantic partner in Judah Bow (Peter Phelps). Resembling a cross between Crusoe and Robin Hood, Judah is portrayed as the perfect gentleman, his close-knit family providing a staunch contrast to the disintegrated modern-day situation of Abigail. Though he is committed to one of his 'contemporaries', Judah and Abigail fall hopelessly in love.

The lone heroine, a recurring theme in Crombie's films, is, through her quest, dependent upon and defined by the search for a partner and she remains, at the least, distrustful and resentful of men. In the film's last scene, Abigail, having returned to her humdrum modern life, befriends Robert (also played by Peter Phelps). Yet there is an ambivalent sense of loss, and a hope that one day her ideal will be (re)found, and that her own family, like the Bows, might grow to be close-knit and loving. In Playing Beatie Bow, as elsewhere in Crombie's work, the purpose seems unashamedly sentimental and melodramatic.

But, above all, the film is a solid and traditional piece of storytelling, with enough cinematic verve, humour and energy to make up for occasional lapses into stereotyped characters and banal nostalgia (there is at least one unfortunate scene in a bordello).

At its best, the film unfolds easily, allowing its striking and unique design and atmospheric photography to tell the story. Indeed, DOP Geoffrey Simpson won both the Cinematographer of the Year and the Golden Tripod at the 1986 Australian Cinematographers' Society Awards.

There are sequences in Playing Beatie Bow, such as the opening, which are exemplary. The film immediately locates itself, and uses various shots to show Abigail effectively pursuing the spectre-like Beatie until, finally, through dissolves, the camera becomes Abigail's point of view atop a cliff.

Nearly all the young characters are played by people of roughly the same age, whose characters have been written and directed to appear authentic, not as some adult's idea of what 'a kid' ought to be (in which respect, Playing Beatie Bow, like the Wonder Years TV series, is one of the few locally-made products that is respectfully geared to a specific audience).

Playing Beatie Bow is as naive, unpretentious and provincial as, in its own way, Back to the Future was cockeyed, filmboyant and exploitable. It won't be a film to cross the Pacific — but, then again, it doesn't try to. At least, to its credit, it wears its intentions clearly on its sleeve.

Paul Kalina

Childhood’s end

Set in a small town in the ‘anywhere of Australia, Frog Dreaming revolves around a fourteen-year-old, orphaned American boy — and something of a child genius — called Cody Walpole (Henry Thomas). Cody’s irreplaceable, adventurous spirit leads him to discover the terror of ‘Donkegin’, a mythical monster which, according to Aboriginal legend, resides in a taboo area called ‘Frog Dreaming’.

Because it is steeped in an Aboriginal myth of passage, Frog Dreaming can, at one level, be read as a film about coming into manhood. Cody, in his determination to discover the secret of Donkegin, seeks out an Aboriginal sage by the name of Charlie Pride (Dempsey Knight). And, in a scene completely divorced from the known, familiar world, Pride puts Cody to what he calls a test of the kind of carefully modulated reverence of matters relating to boys and girls.

This test is not at all incidental: it occurs at precise moments, as when, at the Donkegin waterhole, Wendy and Jane are drifting on a raft into the centre of the waterhole. Jane asks Wendy whether she has ever kissed Cody. And it is at this very moment that the Donkegin monster begins to raise its head from its murky hideaway. Cody and Jane are drifting on a raft into the centre of the waterhole. Jane asks Wendy whether she has ever kissed Cody. And it is at this very moment that the Donkegin monster begins to raise its head from its murky hideaway. And what of Charlie Pride? He belongs to a world both supernatural and very real, where the little white community has no stake — a place where the community attempts to prevent its children from exploring. He represents, at one and the same time, the demand for innocence, the innocent, profound level of (sexual) awareness, still not fully realized but, like the monster, just bubbling at the surface.

Like Huck, Cody, with the help of Charlie Pride, takes flight from the community, and, like Huck, he is a true young Australian boy. He and his young Australian companion, Chubby Miller (Kerry Mack), go off on an adventure only to be integrated thereafter into the community, now that he is a man. The myth of passage, as I have suggested, is the presumption of many a young Australian boy. Yet I have never witnessed so many affronts to the adult world as in Frog Dreaming. If there is a truly monstrous being in the film, then it is the adult community — what it probably always knew but never spoke. Peter Yeldham’s script and Henri Safran’s direction provide a view of the events that is neither naively romantic nor glamorous, but often intense and interesting.

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Chubby raises the money for the flight, on condition that Lancaster takes her along. Her role as passenger — a selling-point to sponsors — is soon transformed into that of co-pilot. A pivotal sequence, beginning with a shot of the plane's joystick moving temporarily between her legs (in, I can only assume, a deliberate phallic joke), ends with her taking over the controls and thereafter becoming a pilot in her own right. Out of a sense of honour and rectitude, as well as a fear of scandal, they set out on their epic voyage, with the reluctant consent of Bill's wife and parents. And, as one inevitably expects, Chubby and Bill become lovers.

The narrative follows the various events of their life together — their failure to beat the record due to accident, the refusal of Anne to grant divorce, he tries to redeem his reputation by a record-breaking solo flight from London to Cape Town. But he crashes in the desert — a heroic death, brought about by a combination of social pressure (the need to 'redeem' his reputation at a time of economic depression and of the period) and of a love affair. The movie ends with Chubby and Bill turning the whole affair into a cause célèbre. The producers are depicted as an extreme instance of self-serving opportunism: the (Barry Hill) pathetically reduced Lancaster may well have been a poor man, but he was a brother to the poor and was therefore worthy of public sympathy and support.


**Mutton dressed as Rambo**

For the benefit of those with short memories: a recap. A couple of years ago, Fortress was a notable cause célèbre. The producers wanted an American actress, Bess Armstrong, for the lead role of a tough, capable, short-haired, blue-eyed woman who would take on an entire clan of villains and emerge victorious. Armstrong was deemed insufficiently glamorous and Equity vetoed her. With a highly theatrical flourish, Crawfords then ostensibly abandoned the project, but only for long enough to reach a compromise with Equity.

Whether or not Fortress would have gained any real advantage by using Bess Armstrong is largely irrelevant: the film's problems lie more fundamental than that. But, in the important central role of the plucky schoolteacher, Sally Jones, Rachel Ward is totally out of her depth, possessing neither the vulnerability nor the dramatic range to give the character substance.

Yet it's doubtful that even Meryl Streep would have saved Fortress. There are too many holes, credibility gaps and overall strains on audience credibility. To state that the film is based on the notonous Faraday, inspired by the Bogus aura of reality that can't, in any way, be justified by what takes place under the guise of dramatic, imaginative fiction, is to concede the tendency to run off in too many directions.

The abduction itself is well-staged, if unsympathetic to the small class of pre-teens that are taken. Once peeled off Fortress is its tendency towards the grotesque. As Sally: "You always spit on a dead animal for luck." The whole film is shown as capable of killing, yet are not given sufficient cause for it, and the film's finale is a tour de force of shameless exploitation. The kids whip up an arsenal of lethal jungle devices that would bring tears to the eye of a seasoned Green Beret.

By this time, Fortress has undergone yet another metamorphosis. Having begun as a straightforward children's adventure, it now becomes a close cousin to Lord of the Flies, albeit shorn of that work's coherence and efficiency. But, in the postscript, with an otherwise fine final shot, is pure Stephen King. Or is it a bush allegory?

For all its faults, Fortress is not unsympathetic in its own confused fashion. However, crazy as the plot may be, it hardly cancels out the whole film. Directors like De Palma, Spielberg, or Telly Savalas can create villains in a few hours. Fortress is a testament to the fact that even Meryl Streep could not save it. The postscript, with an otherwise fine final shot, is pure Stephen King. Or is it a bush allegory?

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Stepping again on the tiger's tail

Over 40 years ago, in the closing months of another world, Akira Kurosawa made a film called *Tora no O* or *Fumu Otokotachi*, his fourth. The title has been translated in various ways, but most often it comes out as *They Who Step on the Tiger's Tail*.

The summer of 1945 was not a happy time for Japan, and it is scarcely surprising that the military authorities should only have been prepared to authorize an apparently traditional treatment of a legend already enshrined in the Noh and the Kabuki. The result, though, was *Kurosawa's first masterpiece*.

The crux of *Tora no O* comes when the soldier, Benkei, attempts to smuggle his fleeing master, Yoshitsune, past an enemy checkpoint. Yoshitsune, past as an enemy, is disguised as a porter and, at the last moment, the enemy commander, Togashi, recognizes him. But Benkei averts disaster by taking his stick and beating the 'porter'.

That a soldier should beat his lord is unthinkable. Thus Benkei's act denies and dishonours the latter's identity in order to save his life. But what he does also dishonours him, and is thus an act of both extreme bravery and potential self-destruction. The noble opponent, Togashi, however, recognizes this and, out of admiration, lets Benkei and Yoshitsune pass — an act of honour, bravery and, perhaps, self-destruction on his own part.

There are clear visual echoes of the 1945 film in *Ran*'s first post-credits scene, as Lord Ichiemonji Hidetora sits in conference with his three sons, Taro, Jiro and Saburo. As at *Tora no O*'s checkpoint, the roughness of the terrain is tamed by a formal assemblage of flags and screens laid out on a hillside, while the participants sit in the same formal configuration.

But in *Ran*, the echoes of that exquisite early film eventually fade beneath the reworking of *King Lear*, which is the new film's raison d'être: three sons replace Lear's three daughters (Saburo is the plain-speaking, guileless Cordelia); Goneril and Regan merge and are transposed into Taro's wife, Lady Kaede; and there is a Fool who indulges in both wordplay and cryptic political comments. *Ran* means 'chaos', and it is chaos that Hidetora ushers in when, like Lear, he divides up his kingdom, yields his authority and expects respect to be paid where there is no power to command it. Like Shakespeare's foolish, fond old man, he undermines the edifice of state by misusing his statesman's power. Chaos is the dark heart of both *Ran* and *King Lear*, brought on by a wilful, temporary tipping of the balance of the world.

By the time we reach the film's mid-point of the first battle — the sacking of Hidetora's castle by the treacherous Taro — that sense of pure dramatic excitement that comes when ideas and emotions meld perfectly is coursing through the film, culminating in one of the greatest sequences Kurosawa has ever filmed. Music and stylized images replace the clamour of the battle, as Hidetora sits motionless and wide-eyed in a slatted tower, while the arrows fly past him in flocks and his men are slaughtered around him in their hundreds.

The attack on the castle is the heart of *Ran*, as the storm — Act III — was the heart of *King Lear*. And the fact that it is a human cataclysm, not (as in *Lear*) a natural one, perfectly accords with the modern work's theme, as voiced over an hour of screen-time later through the question: "Are there no gods, no buddha?" and the reply, "They cannot save us from ourselves."

For that hour after the attack on the castle, though, *Ran* seems to falter, as though Kurosawa had exhausted the theme but not the details of Shakespeare's tragedy. Thus we have another 'storm scene', a lacklustre affair amid the whipping grasses of the plains; we have a hovel, where the blinded son of Hidetora's vanquished rival becomes "poor mad Tom"; and we have Hidetora "fantastically dressed with flowers".

And, of course, we have a second battle, like the set-piece finale in *Kagemusha* (1980), it is visually stunning — a magnificent piece of orchestrated movement, of glowing camerawork (by Takao Saito, who took over the Kurosawa cinematography mantle from Asakazu Nakai in the mid-sixties). But it is a fake climax, a piece of spectacle without dramatic weight, adding nothing to the tragedy of Hidetora — a magnificent folly, verging on the self-indulgent.

That that first hour of genius should gradually evaporate into sound and fury and single, superb images makes *Ran* one of the true disappointments of the year. For Kurosawa's greatness as a director is not that he can move people and horses across the screen like John Ford (whom he greatly admired) but that, like Jean Renoir (from whose films horses were largely absent), he can also dislodge character and camera into a single, perfect mechanism. And that mechanism runs unmistakably down in the second half of *Ran*.

For all the disappointment the film engenders, though, it has to be said that Kurosawa at his most disappointing (and *Ran* is far from that) is as great a filmmaker as any still working, and ten times better than most. I doubt the year will see many better films. How sad, though, that it could not have been the best, nor have captured the perfect poise of *Tora no O*.

Nick Roddick

The heyday of the martial arts movie was a decade ago; nowadays, it appears, grace in combat cannot compete with wholesaler, mechanized slaughter. Cannon, though, soldier on with their Ninja films, of which American Ninja (Hoyts) is the forerunner.

While it would be an exaggeration to say they have got steadily better — they were never, frankly, much good in the first place — the last two have had their moments of Shaw-Woo ninjitsu. Ninja III: The Domination had a sword-tooth heroine. And No. IV — American Ninja — has the tactfully executed Daniel (Dudikoff), innocent with awesome skills, whose origins are lost in the mists of annals.

Set in a non-descript South-East Asian country (it was made in Marcos's Philippines), the film has a preposterous plot involving corrupt army officers, international arms dealers, and the colonel's daughter (Jodie Aronson). Joe (Dudikoff), a GI raised by a Japanese army officer hiding out in the jungle, does battle with the 'Black Ninja' ("He has taken the black path and betrayed the code: he must die!") helped by his former army commander who turns up in the chief crook's lily pond.

A lot of the film looks like a faded episode from The Man from U.N.C.L.E. (Hanaia Bael's camera work). The music (Michael (Daniel Auteuil) Lin) belongs in an airport lift. But work is awful). The music (Michael

Of late, the French appear to be making a tradition out of thrillers with a hint of Ninjitsu. The addition to this cycle, ironically entitled L'Addition (Filmways), does not gain much from its ultra-modern visuals.

Lorca, a prison guard played by Subway's Richard Boyringer, has a prison picture with a prison guard played byDOWNLOAD FULL TEXT
Biggles: Alex Hyde-Smith in the title role.

Success follows success in modern Hollywood, especially where violence is concerned. The Stallone, Chuck Norris and Charles Bronson sequels have shown that mindless heroes have very smart minds, making megabucks out of macho Americans. In the Death Wish films, Bronson has hardly been macho. Rather, he has been a vigilante, cleaning up the streets and towns of America — an ageing reactionary out to protect the values of middle America. In Death Wish 3 (Hoyts), Bronson joins the New York Police Department and becomes an official vigilante, blessed with the task of cleaning up the East Side of the city.

His quarries are ‘the creeps’ — the leftovers of the city, whom the police are fearful of confronting. As in the two previous Death Wish films, Bronson not only acts as a vigilante, but as a keeper of the faith for those who still believe that violence is the only solution to anti-social behaviour by groups of the dispossessed. In the only intellectually stimulating words in the film, the NYPD recruiting officer says to Bronson: ‘You’re in it for the payment, for the correctness of it.’ But, with the sort of retribution that is delivered in Old Testament fashion to the people who have wronged him in this film, there is ultimately neither enjoyment nor correctness to be found.

When Rose Chismoore (Annabeth Gish) gets her new glasses, the world suddenly focuses. Rose, who lives and Las Vegas is about to experience one of the best shows in town. Teachers are giving lessons in how to ‘duck and cover’, disc jockeys are singing ‘I save and shine, it’s A-Bomb time’ and women are dressing up for the ‘Miss A-Bomb Contest’.

Beyond establishing this setting, however, writer/director James Bronson (Columbia), doesn’t come together — while there is a fascinating period to investigate, the story is very thin. Throughout the film, Rose is unable to cope with the awkwardness and pain of adolescence. Ignored by her parents, not to worry about socialism (or any -ism: it’s not going to help you buy a car), and reinforced the importance of individuality.

Written, directed and co-produced by John Hughes, Ferris’ script is witty in parts, but the story-line is corny and the ending is schmatzy. There are a few experimental touches which help create the film’s comic-strip style. But, as an ideological preparation for adolescence, it is like a Reagan reader: all the ingredients are there, even a polished performance.

At the beginning of Fire and Ice (7 Keys), there is a moment when John, an Austrian living in New York, tells the audience that his life changed totally when he set eyes on the woman he is now following across the country.

When we actually see that moment in flashback, however, the camera is zooming in on a wide, snow covered ski slope. It is the new nuclear age. It marks the beginning of the broader sweeps of the canvas, and the film itself suffers.

For Austrian painter Egon Schiele and others of the Viennese avant garde (Klimt, Kokoschka, Weininger), art was libidinous. Indeed, Freud, working in the same city, was building the language that would define the fragile, neurotic temperament and expressionistic work of an artist like Schiele.

Schiele’s portraits — strained and sexually defiant — suggest a morbidity and dissatisfaction that would, one assumes, overwhelm any biography of the artist. But it is this excess that Herbert von Vidler’s partially biographical film, Egon Schiele: Excesses (Filmsways) lacks.

It traces Schiele’s affairs and sexual exploits (he was imprisoned for the alleged abduction of a minor), the attacks on his work (regarded by the establishment as shocking and affected), his marriage and his early death at the end of World War I. However, the film gives no real sense of his pain or his desires, merely as a result of Matthi Kehr’s (among others) script is witty in parts, but the story-case. The Ecstasy of Woodcarver Steiner (among others) proved that a sports documentary has the potential to be far more than a showcase for well-photographed action sequences. Fire and Ice (the warmth of passion, the chill of the snow) has some good photography of some good skiing. But that’s all.

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Tony Cavanagh

Cobra: Sylvester Stallone as Marion ‘Cobra’ Cobretti.

Every night, she turns to her flamboyant Aunt Starr (Ellen Barkin) for comfort.

Desert Bloom is about the girl’s innocence, and the innocence of the new nuclear age. It marks writer/director Eugene Corin’s debut and, though he succeeds in painting the broader sweeps of the canvas, the film lacks specificity, the essential element of personal drama. The pairing of Grodin and Keaton is heavily handled, allowing no entry into the narrative: too much is resolved, closed in, overstated. In fact, Desert Bloom discourages you from constructing your own vision because of the tunnel-vision from which the film itself suffers.

Kathy Bail

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Tony Cavanagh

FX: Murder by Illusion (Roadshow) is a moderately entertaining little thriller — free of pretension, but lacking the style which might have made it memorable.
In Blockade (1938), Henry Fonda made an impassioned speech about the Spanish Civil War. Hollywood, it seemed, was not all "bad": here was some recognition that the defence of the Popular Front government was a just fight.

The excerpt appears in the splendid documentary, The Good Fight (Cineaction), which, through interviews, newsreels, songs and radio broadcasts, tells the story of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade, part of the international army of volunteer fighters who went to Spain to fight the fascist forces of Generalissimo Franco.

The film captures the camaraderie and idealism of the men and women who fought for their native country, and the way in which their world was turned upside down by the war. The film is a powerful reminder of the sacrifices made by those who went to Spain.


The plot hinges around Rollie Tyler (Bryan Brown), a movie special effects wizard who is hired by a Justice Department agency to stage a fake hit on an importantmafioso. The hit proves too effective, however, and Rollie finds himself a marked man.

A few small bubbles aside, the basic premise of FX is acceptably bizarre, the action well staged, and the quality of the performances especially Brian Dennehy as a hard-boiled cop whose life-path eventually crosses Rollie's — competent. The pace is fast but uneven: the film's high points are energetic ally crosses Rollie's — competent. just fight.

The Popular Front government was a marked man.

The Good Fight's high points are energetic

The end result is likeable, exciting and occasionally original. Yet it is marked by a lumpy structure. Perhaps its tone is too uncertain, hovering uneasily between tongue-in-cheek caper and hard, poker-faced realism.

Tony Drouyn

If the last fifteen years have produced a successor to the film noir, it is the disaster movie, with its landscapes of the south-western sun belt replacing the mean streets of America's cities as the arena for larger-than-life confrontation between good and evil, man and people and myths.

The Hitcher (Greater Union) has all the appearances of a run-of-the-mill escape flick, with a runaway car (C. Thomas Howell) battling a psycho (Rutger Hauer) known only as John Ryder (nider — get it?) But the film — a debut feature for director Robert Harmon and writer Eric Red — is anything but run-of-the-mill. In fact, The Hitcher is a very fine movie indeed, with Mark Isham's religious score, via John Seale's moody camerawork (the opening night-for-night, with a thunderstorm lurking on the horizon, is superb), to its intelligent, resonant direction.

Howell goes through an impressive transformation, from pinny kid to the hitcher's nemesis. But it is Rutger Hauer who gives the film its core.

Not since Robert Mitchum, 40 years ago, has the screen leaves the ship and the film is acceptably magnetic stillness, wonderfully and unforgettably different from the snarling action heroes or the grand-scale melodramas of contemporary male stardom.

Sequels, these days, are often better than the originals, perhaps because with the money-making formula established there's space for something creative.

The Karate Kid Part II (Fox Columbia) is not especially creative, but it is certainly a lot more interesting than its teen-pic forerunner.

In Part II, Miyagi (Noriyuki 'Pat' Morita) and Daniel (Ralph Macchio) head off to Okinawa, where they encounter Miyagi's brother's beautiful niece, Sato (Danny Kamekona). Miyagi also encounters his childhood sweetheart, Yuki (Nobu McCarthy), and Ralph Macchio's alter-ego, Gene (William Forsythe).

But characterization takes a strange turn, as the villain are stylized to the point of parody (a mix of fifties thuggery and high melodrama). Their mentor, Caspy (Robert Duval), is a bland Southerner prone to effusive excesses of philosophizing, the Captain (in complete reversal) high-minded and humane to the point of blandness.

In this curious casting against type, Skolimowski must have had some masterplan. But, like much of the metaphors and symbolism, it is dissipated amidst the incongruities. Skolimowski's previous films delved into areas where the director was on firm ground. But he seems here to be trying too hard to impress, overloaded The Lightship with an uneasy cargo: the attempt to Americanize Lenz's novel for the screen leaves the ship and the film a voyage to nowhere.

Mary Colbert

Salvador, and the struggle of the thrives immediately becomes that of the eighties. The idealism and hope are also going. So, five years after the beginning of the war in Spain, the 'good fight' continues.

Kathy Ball

The film's humour is heavily reliant on a voyage to nowhere.

The film's humour is heavily reliant on an eerie soundtrack and, at times, eerie visuals. My Chauffeur cannot hope to sustain a comic pace. The result is downright confusing, which may have to do with the suggestion that hero and heroine are actually brother and sister. But even this is left to die with a convoluted ending, rather than being extended as a comic possibility.

Raffaele Caputo

My Chauffeur: Deborah Foreman as Casey Meadows.

My Chauffeur (Hoyts) opens with a promise that you somehow know it isn't going to be able to keep: a sequence of close-ups of a young woman's accoutrements — her white net gloves, her white socks, her oversized handbag, her cheap glitter accessories and, of course, her sunglasses. My Chauffeur is desperately seeking Madonna. Yet, with a mildly wacky female lead, Deborah Foreman, as Casey Meadows, the film is far from that star's free spirit, and only just reminiscent of a forties romantic comedy.

Due to an obsessive passion to drive limousines, Casey sets her sights on entering the world of 'chauffeurism'. But, set against her is the concomitant world of male chauvinism. The staunchest chauvinist is the young heir to the limousine company, whom she ropes without the slightest inkling of who he is and without the slightest determination of doing so.

The film's humour is heavily reliant on an episodic structure, which seems Casey's assignments turned into frivolous escapades, frowned upon by her upright colleagues. Yet those escapades do not extend from her wackiness, but from the eccentricity of her assignments (drug dealers, mob barons, etc.), leaving her fundamentally ineffective as a character meant to put a few wrinkles into the stuffed shirts of this gentleman's trade.

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Deborah Foreman

CINEMA PAPERS September — 55
Poltergeist remains one of the best horror films of the decade, functioning both as a ghost story with a sense of ordinariness (essential) and as an intriguing glimpse of what E.T. could have been like if its alien hadn't been so overwhelmingly cute. With Poltergeist II: The Other Side (UIP), one's heart sinks at the title alone: what made Poltergeist so good was that the other side remained just that: a terrifying 'beyond' that began at the closed door. Nor does the opening of the new film help, with its mumbo-jumbo atop a desert mesa.

After a while, though, we rejoin the haunted Freeling, snazz-gussing dog and all, now quartered with Gramma (Geraldine Fitzgerald), and with TV sensibly banned from the house. To no avail: connecting up via Carol Anne's toy telephone, 'they' are back, shaking the house, ruining plumbing, and almost strangling her. Not her size, has to be emphasized.

The cinema throws us so few genuine oddities these days that one wants Sugarbaby (Zuckerbaby, McLernon Films) to be better. The past of the father (ex-CIA agent) affects the present (a family situation even more a drag than that of Hackman's recent Twice in a Lifetime), and jeopardizes the future (when the superficial and marginal mother is kidnapped). Father and son join forces and ideologies by going back to the past so that a new family can come back to the future. If the potential of this ultra-conventional film lies in its all too rare comfortability, because of its central development of an intimate father/son conflict, his mise en scène never allows for the necessary psychological elements.

Penn seems slightly more comfortable in the action scenes, even if the often banal camera movements, the clumsiness of the plot and the air of indifference surrounding his treatment of the subject do not convince us of any great interest in the main characters.

But the Target and its all too rare consolations do not do justice to Penn's previous films, let us hope, nevertheless, that it won't be four or five more years before his next. He is credible character development rather than implausible nonsense. Jim Schembri

The cinema throws us so few genuine oddities these days that one wants Sugarbaby (Zuckerbaby, McLernon Films) to be better. The simple tale of a very fat woman in her mid-thirties (Marianne Sägebrecht) who becomes obsessed with, wool and wins a handsome young subway driver (Eisi Gulp), it creates a small world and makes us believe totally in its inhabitants. Marianne's life in a shabby apartment, furnished only with a table, chair, single bed, black-and-white TV and Dansette recordplayer. On the latter, she plays her only record: the sixties hit by Peter Kraus which gives the film its title. Her pursuit of Eisi is a matter of purloined subway schedules and preferred candy bars. He hasn't a chance.

Sugarbaby looks wonderful, with its sea of pinks and mauves (DOP Johanna Heer has already been featured in American Cinematographer). But director Percy Adlon is so determined to control the tone of his story that, once Marianne has found Eisi, there is nowhere for the film to go. The problem is built into the style: Marianne's ordinariness, not her size, has to be emphasized. Thus, by the time the couple come together, they are so ordinary as to be almost uninteresting.

One had, in these days of slash-and-stab, rather despised of the return of schlock movies like Re-Animator (Filways), owing, quite vaguely, a soundtrack ripped off from Psycho and heavy with homages to H.P. Lovecraft, the film is, in fact, neither a thriller, nor any more accurate a version of Lovecraft's hyperbolic world than sixties horror flicks like The Haunted Palace and The Duplex. But Re-Animator has a definite style of its own, akin to that of The Evil Dead, though with a stronger sense of both identity and humour. Together with its pseudo-academic extremely Neo-classical style, it makes this one of the most erotic duels of seduction on film, Friend becomes angel and devil, dream and nightmare, embodying all Connie's sexual desires and fears. Faithful to Joyce Carol Oates, Choppra chooses to leave Connie's resolution of her dilemma in an aura of mystery. At a time when Hollywood seems preoccupied with the male role of passage, Smooth Talk is a refreshing and intelligent change, boosting one's confidence in small-budget films and women directors.

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The library of the week isn't the most exciting one, with the exception of Side Show where three robots are reprogrammed by No. 5 to perform a Third, there's nothing to write home about. Indeed, one of the most enjoyable aspects of Short Circuit is watching the skilful humanization of No. 5. The robot's appeal is as something — or someone — that is traditionally fallible, vulnerable and slightly paranoid. And it is so deftly handled that the declaration that "No. 5 is alive" comes across as
If there is a dangerous message in *Top Gun* (UPI), it’s not in the right-wing leanings of the film’s politics, nor in its glorification of US military air power, but in the fact that a film as wimpy, pretable and silly as this can make $100,000,000.

The setting is the ‘Top Gun’ school where the cream of America’s fighter pilots are trained to be even creamier. That this school really exists, however, does little to inspire about the character of these pilots, the rigours of their training, the nature of their patriotism and the readiness to answer the call of war.

What we get instead is a plodding romantic adventure yarn about a hot-shot young stud, Peter ‘Maverick’ Mitchell (Tom Cruise), his best buddy, Goose (Anthony Edwards), and sex interest Charlie (Kelly McGillis). The dramatic ‘com­plications’ that ensue can be seen coming a light year away. For instance, once Goose’s wife and kid appear, guess how long before he dies in a plane crash?

All this would have been a little more palatable if the much-lauded aerial sequences were as ‘breath­taking’ as many critics have made out. It’s only in the final battle sequence with some anonymous MiG jets (gutsy move, what?) that the point of view switches, the wide shots and, most importantly, the editing, come together to deliver some exciting action.

Jim Schembri

The Trip to Bountiful: Geraldine Page.

Horton Foote’s gentle little piece, *The Trip to Bountiful* (Hoys), first appeared as a television play in 1953. Made over for the stage, it is now brilliantly adapted by Capra for a vehicle for Geraldine Page. Page won (and deserved) the Oscar for her performance as Carrie Watts, determined to make her southern­girl journey, to reassure herself of her own ‘identity’ and roots, and for­tile her memories.

These are under daily threat in the cramped life she leads with her ineffectual son, Ludie (John Heard), and his shrewish wife, Jessie Mae (Carlin Glynn), in their two-room Houston flat, in which Carrie has a servant’s status and a living­room sofa for a bed.

Choosing her moment, Carrie escapes, and the film begins its journey into the past. The ironical­ly-named Bountiful is, however, now a clapboard wreck. But the vividness of the natural scene, with its capacity for renewal, gives point to Carrie’s journey and, on several levels, tightens the story’s coherence.

There is a modesty in the film’s claims that keeps sentimentality at bay.

And there is superb ensemble playing by the whole cast — not just Geraldine Page, who is indeed remarkable, but Heard, Rebecca De Morain (as a young woman Carrie meets on the bus), Richard Bradford (as the sheriff who finally drives her to Bountiful) and especially Carlin Glynn, who pitches Jessie Mae somewhere between Susan Hayward and Gloria Grahame, adds something of her own, and wins through sympathy for this vain and silly woman to give Carrie something tough to react against.

As the title indicates, *Violets Are Blue* (Fox­Columbia) is about romance and reality; about choices and their repercussions. And, while the subject — marriage and infidelity, career and family — hardly earns marks for originality, the film’s drama comes from a perceptive and restrained direction by Jack Fisk, and superb performances by Kevin Kline (as the ‘wronged woman’. Sissy Spacek as the former love returned, and Bonnie Bedelia as wife Ruth, whose honest decency provides a refreshing dimension for the wronged woman.

The setting is Ocean City, Maryland, in two time­frames. In 1969, sweethearts Gussie (Spacek) and Henry (Kline) swear eternal love, and make plans for future careers in the wide­world. But things don’t work out as prescribed: fifteen years later, a rekindling of passion is set off by an exploration of the exuberance of love found, and the consequent dilemma.

The exhilaration of working together gives Gussie and Henry a taste of what could have been . . . and still can, if he takes up her offer of an exciting assignment overseas. If there is a danger of mistaking the professional challenge he’d always wanted . . .

But there is a conflict between romantic and pragmatic aims — and the realisation that choices are cumulative and often irrevocable. The film’s real triumph lies in the balanced handling of the dilemma, and an ambivalence and restraint which make the emotional impact so powerful.

Mary Coibert

Trouble in Mind: Kris Kristofferson and Lori Singer.

At Cannes this year, quite a few of my colleagues — even quite serious colleagues — were to be observed sipping away from the main competition to take in a market screening of Alan Rudolph’s new film, and coming out saying it was the festival’s most enjoyable.

They weren’t wrong. *Trouble in Mind* (CEL) is two hours of pure magic — a debt and wonderful blend of fairytale, film noir and romantic populist ideal of individuals triumphing over personal and social obstacles.

Looking back over *Wise Guys* (UPI), it is hard to see why the film is so disappointing. The serious comic ideas (Harry [Danny De Vito] and his kid both practising Robert DeNiro’s “Are you talking to me?” in front of mirrors in adjacent rooms); some wonderful setpieces (Harry and Moe [Joe Piscopo] live side­side­by­side in little frame houses on a Dead End street); some nice marginal characterizations ("Did you know, enquires a hoof, that "organized crime is the fourth largest employer in the State of New Jersey"); and some great action sequences (clocking one pider in which Frank the Fixer’s beloved Cadillac is junked on the New Jersey Turnpike).

But it all resolutely refuses to come together. The story — about a couple of small­time crooks (De Vito and Piscopo), who try to cheat the boss and finally, almost by chance, win out — is laboured. De Vito and Piscopo (presumably the film’s commercial draw cards, given their profile on US TV) have even less chemistry as a couple than James Caan and Elliott Gould in *Harry and Walter go to New York*. The comic timing is off, leaving one with the unnerving feeling that, no matter how it meant to be rather than how it actually is. And the editing, framing and colour­grading are all TV standard, giving the whole thing the air of one of those Keeping Off the Boulders in which Richie and The Fonz are transported back to some previous period in US history. Comedy, one is forced to conclude, is not Brian De Palma’s forte.

*Wise Guys: former wrestler Captain Lou Albano as Frank the Fixer.*

Somewhat in the tradition of Frank Capra, director Ron Howard’s films have refreshingly reworked the populist ideal of individuals triumphing over personal and social obstacles.

In *Working Class Man* (UPI) — known as *Gung Ho* in the US but retitled here to tie in with Jimmy Barnes’s hit record — Howard takes on more than he can deal with and, like the main character of his story, Hunt Stevenson (Michael Keaton), burns the candle at both ends. Stevenson, the brigand-hero, masterminds a plan to get a Japanese auto manufacturer to regenerate the now-defunct plant in small­town Hadleyville, and to re­employ the hundreds of laid­off workers. However, it is only through blatant trickery and deceit that he can bridge the gap between labour and the new boss.

Howard’s trademarks of innocence and simplicity — which, until now, have masked the inherent ambiguity of his material — are notably missing, forcing him to run for the cover of Michael Keaton’s excellent knockout comedy routines and a nicely­drawn friendship between Stevenson and his Japanese boss, Kazahiro (Gebbke Watanabe).

In the end, the moral of *Working Class Man* is hard to decipher. There is no fairytale redemption, but an ex­ceedingly glum resumption of the worker’s plight which, one supposes, is tacitly approved by Jimmy Barnes’s line about the working class man’s “heart of gold”.

Paul Kalina

*The Trip to Bountiful: Geraldine Page.*
Amidst a lot of junk, one can find several admirable contributions to the growing collection of books about the 'Australian cinema'. The initiative of a number of authors and editors (any list must include John Tulloch, Brian McFarlane, Sylvia Lawson, Ross Cooper, Andrew Pike, Graham Shirley and Scott Murray) has resulted in a body of work that is always informative and consistently illuminating. 

To this one can now add An Australian Film Reader, a compilation of short essays and articles, some old and borrowed, some new, which are mostly useful, often provocative, and, alas, occasionally turgid. As the editors would have it, their selection "assembles a series of voices about Australian film, without seeming (so far as we can tell) to have a definite authoritative voice of its own".

However, the organization of the book into four major sections — 'Early Cinema and Documentary Hopes', 'Renais­sance of the Feature', and 'Alternative Cinema' — immediately poses a specific challenge for the reader, for film history, which ends up marginalizing alternative cinema, albeit unintentionally, by locking it into a section tagged on at the end.

Further, the preponderance of particular kinds of voices — those concerned to identify film-making as an art in its own right, as a matter of national interest, of politics and of economics — demands that films should not be separated from the cultural context in which they are made and in which they occupy within Australian conditions of colonial existence, and con­ditions of colonial existence, — demands that films should not be segregated in the meantime, the arrangement of the book’s readers, for it demands an energetic and extensive commitment to the idea that they have outlasted most of the essays and filmmakers. This can be deemed traditional commentaries or auterist pieces. And they are all coerced into placing side-by-side with discussions of the business behind the scenes, and with considerations of the place the films were made, especially to the industry’. The most recent addition to the Reader is the book’s conclusion. And they are all coerced into placing side-by-side with discussions of the business behind the scenes, and with considerations of the place the films were made, especially to the industry’. The most recent addition to the Reader is the book’s conclusion.

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Tom O’Regan’s essays about the inadvertent racism of The Last Tasmanian and about the links between The Man from Snowy River and contemporary Australian popular culture pose timely challenges to the pre­conceptions and beliefs surrounding the poverty of current Australian film criticism and reviewing.

Meaghan Morris’s splendid contrib­ution astutely identifies this dilemma: that the two are inextricably entwined: that one should not be segregated in the business section whilst the other is left to the capricious opinions of the arts and/or entertainment pages. The book that is able fully to argue the need to see Australian films in their historical and cultural context remains to be written. However, in the meantime, the arrangement of the material in this Reader implicitly indicates the commitment of its editors (in a lot of junk, one can find several admirable contributions to the growing collection of books about the ‘Australian cinema’). The initiative of a number of authors and editors (any list must include John Tulloch, Brian McFarlane, Sylvia Lawson, Ross Cooper, Andrew Pike, Graham Shirley and Scott Murray) has resulted in a body of work that is always informative and consistently illuminating. To this one can now add An Australian Film Reader, a compilation of short essays and articles, some old and borrowed, some new, which are mostly useful, often provocative, and, alas, occasionally turgid. As the editors would have it, their selection “assembles a series of voices about Australian film, without seeming (so far as we can tell) to have a definite authoritative voice of its own”.

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turing oppositions are explored, and Telotte's reading of the films reveals their working with clarity and authority.

He is also alert to the different narrative approaches adopted by the films. For instance, in relation to The Leopard Man (often one of Lewton's least-regarded films), he makes a convincing case for how the various "separate interpolated narratives add to the larger labrynithine pattern". The multiplicity of narrative voices in I Walked with a Zombie is seen as an "attempt to furnish Betsy with an overview of this world or to explicate its mysteries to her". Telotte's uncovering of the narrative strategies and the ways in which these dramatize Lewton's preoccupations reveal a sophisticated awareness at work in the films — and in their commentator.

He draws attention, as others have, to Lewton's "bus" effect (originating in the heroine's night-time walks through New York in Cat People), and his preference for the frightening powers of suggestion over more obvious effects of horror and violence. This latter technique is traced through the films' use of threatening absences, of patches of darkness, which unsettle because of time's walk through New York in and violence. This latter technique is probably agreed. Astute, well-argued and powerfully written, Sculpting in Time will be crucial to any evaluation of his place in cinema history. It also demonstrates, however, that modesty is not one of the director's more endearing qualities.

At Cannes in 1983, Tarkovsky bated, harangued, caped, insulted and ridiculed those attending his press conference. The sting of his remarks was only slightly tempered by the lengthy procedure of translating everything into French, Italian, Russian and English. Tarkovsky's aggression, and his instinctive defensiveness about any question (whether critical or complimentary), seemed to indicate the particular sense of public relations endemic to most Soviet artists.

Tarkovsky ended the press conference by thumbing the table and informing the press that, should he not receive the highest accolade for his film, Nostalghia, he would refuse all minor awards. Justifying this position, he recalled Robert Bresson's somewhat more muted demand, made a few days earlier, for L'Argent. Finally, Tarkovsky stormed out, leaving a bemused but mostly cowering press corps, wondering what on earth they had done to deserve such disdain.

Sculpting in Time is often reminis­cent of these press conferences. By far the best, the book is as rewardingly uplifting as Tarkovsky's films. At its worst, it is a tiresome harangue by an over-zealous lecturer. Using words with scalpel-like precision, Tarkovsky cannot resist turning language into a weapon, particularly when belittling the reader for under­estimating his work. Often of concern­able participant in his own mis­anthropic view of the spiritual bank­ruptcy of contemporary western civilisation. Writing as if from some high moral dimension, Tarkovsky even, at one point, obliquely compares himself to Hamlet, observing: "It is as if a man of the face were forced to live in the past".

The director does, of course, have some reason for raising the spectre of his Dostoevskian suffering. Every time, it seems, he strayed from the 'party line', the wrath of the Soviet intelligentsia was upon him. Ivan's Childhood, his first film, was criticized for trying to replace 'narra­tive realism with poetic and abstract­ions'. Similar attacks were made upon his philosophical meditations in Solaris, and upon the licence he took, with history in Andrey Rublev. His autobiographical film, Mirror, was dismissed as "immodest" and shelved for several years. Stalker, a harrowing science fiction parable about the psychological and spiritual degeneracy of contemporary life, was evidence that the director had "cut himself off from reality". Stalker was the last straw for the Soviets, and Tarkovsky was permitted to go to the West, where his films had always received more critical attention anyway.

The director, however, seriously disturbed Tarkovsky. Russians claim a fatal attachment to their national roots, a 'nostalgia' they carry with them whenever they are separated from home. "The element of Russian emigration," writes Tarkovsky, " bears out the western view that Russians are bad emigrants. Everyone knows that the incapacity to be assimilated, the clumsy ineptitude of their efforts to adopt an alien lifestyle. How could I have imagined as I was making Nostalghia that the stifling sense of longing that fills the screen space of that film was to become my lot for the rest of my life? That from now until the three or four days I have left to suffer the painful malady within myself?"

Self-examination apart, Tar­kovsky's book is clearly written in the likeness of God?"

Bell, book and camera


For Ingmar Bergman, Andrey Tarkovsky is the most important director of our time. And, on the evidence of the Russian director's first book, Tarkovsky himself would probably agree. Astute, well-argued and powerfully written, Sculpting in Time will be crucial to any evaluation of his place in cinema history. It also demonstrates, however, that modesty is not one of the director's more endearing qualities.

One of the functions of fantasy is to provide such images, and Lewton has provided more than his share. Telotte's scholarly book does justice to its subject; sometimes he makes the films sound more complex than they are, and he is oblivious to certain B-grade thinnesses in them. But, if his readings do not recreate one's sense of viewing the films, they do — temporarily — go some distance towards reconstructing a composite world.

Brian McFarlane

CINEMA PAPERS September — 59
The incredible hunk


Mel Gibson turned 30 in January this year. He has eleven feature films to his credit, nine of them as star. And he is, to judge by the almost simultaneous appearance of these two, large-format paperbacks, fair gris for the biography mill.

Neither, to be frank, is a must-buy for the film buff’s bookshelf, though the Australian one (by John Hanrahan) is the more accurate and the American one (by Keith McKay) is — well, the more inventive.

Neither writer seems to have had direct access to the star for the purposes of his biography — something about which Hanrahan is fairly open, citing other sources of information (including a Cinema Papers interview) and specifying to the day (and almost to the map reference) where such conversations he did have with Mel took place.

McKay, I suspect, had no access to Gibson at all, though since he doesn’t give sources, it’s difficult to be sure. At least, however, he doesn’t do what he did in his previous bi-text, De Niro: The Hero Behind the Masks, where he tried to turn failure into myth, waxing lyrical about the unmeetability of the man himself.

To be fair, both writers are dealing, not with a private individual — committed to privacy has, against a lot of odds (including his own personal career for a good time), managed to remain just that — but with a public persona, which is a winning combination of sensitivity and sexiness.

Indeed, sexiness is a kind of leitmotif in McKay’s book. Almost every portrait of the hero is suffused by it, and the author, whose own biography mentions Rutgers and Oxford Universities, does sterling work steering his analyses of the films back to what, presumably, his publishers wanted: a few lines on the “ripe, intrinsic youthfulness, sensuality and helpfulness” of Mrs Gibson’s little boy.

Hanrahan and McKay come out about even. Hanrahan, at $14.95, has 88 pages, including sixteen pages of colour, with 22 different shots (one of which turns up a couple of pages later as a black and white). McKay, at $16.95, has 96 pages, with eight pages of colour, made up of ten different shots.

McKay has around 15% more text, but Hanrahan’s pictures are more comprehensive. Both books have filmographies, though only Hanrahan’s is complete, and both are sloppily edited with Hanrahan, who offers $150,000 as the budget for “Strategic Defence Initiative”, adducing from his early film, the worst offender. McKay has around 15% more text, but both writers are more accurate and the American one (by Keith McKay) is the more accurate and the American one (by Keith McKay) is the more accurate.

Denied primary source material, both writers resort to ingenious devices to get some background. Hanrahan comes up with a school photo, leaving the reader to guess which one is Mel (clue: he isn’t wearing glasses), while McKay manages to go into the house in Verplank, New York, where Mel spent his early years.

Hanrahan’s tracks down Brother Michael from St Leo’s, Wanneroo, who has a few sharp things to say.

McKay has to make do with a brakeman who knew Mel’s dad when he worked on the New York Central, but who doesn’t appear to remember the future star.

McKay’s focus is resolutely North American. Gibson’s Summer City (1976) is dismissed as “long forgotten”, and its fourth, Attack Force Z (1978), is not mentioned at all. Both are part of McKay’s filmography, which gives the North American rather than the original (Australian) release date.

For McKay, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation becomes a Commission, AFI Awards become ‘Sammys’, Britain’s National Theatre becomes the ‘National Academic Theatre’. And, in a book with a 1986 imprint, Robert Stigwood and Rupert Murdoch are still credited with wanting “to establish Australia as a major international production center and to produce at least three features there each year”.

In terms of critical comment, Hanrahan has rather too little to say about the films, McKay too much. But neither really tries to tackle the essence of Gibson’s star image, which evidently has to do with a great deal more than being good-looking and in the right place at the right time (Hanrahan rightly scoffs at the myth of Gibson being cast as Mad Max just because he turned up for the audition with a bristle from a fight in the pub, though McKay solemnly endorses it).

Buried at the end of Hanrahan’s book, though, is a comment from the film’s publicist, Paul Linden-schmid, which gives a hint of what it is all about. Gibson, says Linden-schmid, reminds him of a movie star “His looks, not the ordinary, modern good looks of a Richard Gere or a John Travolta. A creation of a trend or a theory on which to build a book. But, if either of these books had been built on a theory, as opposed to the more straightforward premise that Mel sells, it might have been a better starting point than some vague notion of antipodean sexiness (McKay) or larmir charm (Hanrahan)."

Books received

NB. Inclusion of a title in this list does not preclude a future review.

BARBRA STREISAND: THE WOMAN, THE MYTH, THE MUSIC by Shaun Considine (Century Hutchinson, 1986, ISBN 0 7126 1082 0). Exhaustively researched (the range of sources is exemplary) and well, if a little heavily, written, this is a career biography, not a rags-to-riches story about a kid from Brooklyn. There is little or no family background (though the star’s mum makes an occasional appearance); but the albums, the concerts, the TV specials, the movies, and the corporate career-steering are lovingly documented — and at length.

CHARLIE HESTON: A BIOGRAPHY by Michael Munn (Century Hutchinson, 1986, $35.95, ISBN 0 86051 362 9). A banal, ill-written, scissors-and-paste biography that falls so far short of the labour of love it sets out to be that, perversely, it leaves one feeling almost sorry for the unlikable actor over whom Munn fawns so persistently. The lack of a critical perspective means that the extravagant claims about Heston’s acting genius are nowhere near substantiated.

And the man’s evident contrariness — his “The politician is the most outrageous, but occasionally Eva and now and then Magda. There’s very little here that isn’t in their own (and their mother’s) autobiography, and the pre-war Hungarian experiences are very thinly researched. But it all makes for a good read for those who believe that Hollywood is really just scandal, gossip and gold-digging.

SUCH DEVOTED SISTERS: THOSE FABULOUS GABORS by Peter H. Brown (Century Hutchinson, 1986, $40.95, ISBN 0 86051 361 0). An above-average stroll through the careers of the Gabor sisters — mainly Zsa Zsa, of course, because she was the most outrageous, but occasionally Eva and now and then Magda. There’s very little here that isn’t in their own (and their mother’s) autobiography, and the pre-war Hungarian experiences are very thinly researched. But it all makes for a good read for those who believe that Hollywood is really just scandal, gossip and gold-digging.

*Details on the availability of these two titles can be obtained from the Editor.
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WATER BOTH CIVIL AND EX MILITARY TYPES
New Zealand
by Mike Nicolaidi

Long black clouds gather over the Kiwi film industry

Ward's Navigator, the story of a medieval quest by a visionary child that crosses over into 20th-century New Zealand, has been long planned and is his first project since the widely-acclaimed Vigil, the only New Zealand film to have been selected for the main competition at Cannes (in 1984). Maynard says the new work is "more accessible" than Vigil with a potential appeal, in Australian terms, of "Breaker Morant bottom line, and Gallipoli should it break through." Even given Vigil's primarily art-house appeal, the film scored well at GQOTA (best screenplay, cinematography and production design), against Parr's runaway mainstream success, Come a Hot Friday, which captured most categories.

Cannes' influential Gilles Jacob has added his weight to efforts to get Ward's second feature off the ground, by nudging the Film Commission and placing on record his opinion that Ward is "one of the most promising and original directors of his generation."

But it will take more than rhetoric to transform dreams into celluloid in the cool, free-market-oriented economy that is rapidly emerging under David Lange's Labour government. Special taxation incentives are a no-no, and there are no signs that Finance Minister Roger Douglas is likely to ease the legislative clamp in respect to private investment, imposed exclusively on the film industry two years ago by his long-time political foe and predecessor in the finance portfolio, former Prime Minister Sir Robert Muldoon.

While Muldoon substituted a meagre 100%, one-year write-off on investment in certified New Zealand films for the previous situation of no-recourse loan funding (which lifted feature production to unprecedented levels in 1983-84), it can hardly compete for investors' interest in the market, when gearing is still prevalent in such other "industries" as goat farming, bloodstock, ginger growing and the staging of musicals.

However, the major factor in turning investors away from film, according to most film industry sources, is currently the negative climate created by the Inland Revenue Department. Even though the Muldoon government allowed a two-year breathing space (between 1982 and 1984) before closing the tax-break loopholes, the Department continues to hold up the returns of many pre-October 1984 investors.

Some sources estimate upwards of 1,000 investors are being "done over" by a trio in the Department delegated to work full-time on the matter, and that negative assessments of film investment claims, dating back to the early eighties, are now being handed back.

When Maynard first went noisy public on the Navigator abandonment, he hammered what he termed the "disciplinary tax system" of the government. "Because the industry had been singled out in legislation, it could not compete with other tax-driven opportunities for investors' high-risk money, he said. The necessary intervention could not be raised in New Zealand, even though the Film Commission had made its largest-ever single investment in a feature ($NZ2.1 million), and upwards of $NZ1.8 million had been obtained in presales around the world.

Maynard asserts that the minimise New Zealand regimen for film should at least measure up to Australia's. "The television and film industries of all countries in the world are the business of government," he said. "One way or another, they have found ways to fund these industries and reduce the risks of investors."

Film Commission Chairman David Gascoigne described abandonment of Navigator as "tragical," but said the industry had many "very robust filmmakers who, in spite of the climate, will continue to battle the odds and strive to provide films by and about our people."

Commission funds for the current year total $5.7 million and, while Executive Director Jim Booth diplomatically talks of providing finance for New Zealand's "second generation of filmmakers," his current emphasis is clearly on setting up co-production treaties (enabled through government legislation late last year).

A planned co-production deal with Australia would designate approved products as both New Zealand and Australian, with the consequent advantages that this would have in raising investment in both countries. Booth is also involved in negotiating treaties with the Canadians and the French.

The treaty with Canada is intended to secure the co-production already under way between Auckland Productions and Filmline International of Montreal, to make a film based on the bombing of the "Rainbow Warrior". Robert Lloyd Phillips says the production is ready to go in October, with a four-week shoot in Fiji, followed by six weeks in New Zealand locations. Post-production will probably be in Canada.

Another Auckland producer, Don Reynolds, is involved in what he describes as "co-production with the Peoples Republic of China," scheduled to shoot on location here later in the year. The project's title is illustrated by two stories in the Auckland Star about two Chinese goldminers working New Zealand goldfields last century.

Phillips is also involved in another project, touted for shooting during the upcoming summer months. He will be executive producer on Testament, directed by American David Morrell, screenwriter of Blood Simple. Wellingtonian John Barratt will produce, with Gascoigne described as "a nifty production." The project, which concerns the murder of a young man, is another of the many projects that may be lured away.

Geoff Murphy flew to Hollywood early in July to give serious consideration to a project for Kings Road Entertainment. David Blyth (Death Warmed Up) is shooting an action picture in Miami. And John Landis leaves soon for Vancouver to direct several segments of The Hitchhiker for Home Box Office.

Jane Campion and Jonathan Hardy, meanwhile, have already been approached by the Australian film industry. And, with this year's Wellington and Auckland Film Festivals being the most successful ever, it is ominous to note that, for the first time in several years, no New Zealand features are being screened.
**France**

by Edouard Waintrop

Wrong turns on the ‘right’ track

The numbers for France’s second annual ‘fête du cinéma’ were certainly good this year, with 1,800,000 entries compared to 1,600,000 in 1979’s entry, and the opening figures of the ‘fête’ — moviegoers bought only one ticket to gain admission to a number of different cinemas which could scarcely mask the grimy reality.

In fact, the idea (which originated with Jack Lang, when he was still the socialist Minister for Culture) was little more than a brief ray of sunshine in an otherwise overcast sky. The week preceding the ‘fête’ — 18-24 June — was a major low for the French box office, registering a 40% drop on last year’s figures.

This one-week disaster, caused by the soccer World Cup and the good showing in it by the French national team, even managed to reverse the slight improvement during the first quarter of 1986. Taking Paris as an example, the first six months’ figures now show a 4% drop in overall admissions by comparison with 1985.

Nor is this the only cloud on the horizon: the new audiovisual bill is expected to bring a 40% drop on last year’s figures. Following its 16 March triumph, the new right-wing government made known its intention of privatizing two of the public channels. After a while, this was reduced to TF1, but the draft was so ill-prepared that the right-wing majority itself called for modifications. François Léotard, the popular new Minister for Culture and Communications, an extremely ambitious politician, put in an uncharacteristically incompetent performance.

The whole affair might, of course, have ended just another comic moment in the ongoing saga of the whole massive PR exercise of the horizon: the new audiovisual bill is going through some traumatic birth pangs. Uncertain as to exactly how they are going to be carried up, France’s television channels, particularly the three public ones, have been spending the past year in a state of lethargy. Around them, the audiovisual environment has been changing rapidly. But the upheavals which accompany swings in electoral fortunes and changes in the political majority have made it hard for them to assess a delicate situation, and even harder for them to take the right decisions at the right moment.

Following its 16 March triumph, the new right-wing government made known its intention of privatizing two of the public channels. After a while, this was reduced to one. The government’s own right wing was in favour of Antenne 2, but TF1 ended up being the chosen one. A bill was placed before the Assembly, but the draft was so ill-prepared that the right-wing majority itself called for modifications. François Léotard, the popular new Minister for Culture and Communications, put in an uncharacteristically incompetent performance.

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Another disappointment, considering its heavy-weight cast, is Legal Eagles. At time of writing, the Rolin-Rolland-Debra Winger-Daryl Hannah romantic comedy has taken only $4 million to date. In comparison, the French TV series of the same name has taken $32 million. Not bad, until you weigh that against a reported cost of more than $45 million.

Prizzi’s Under the Cherry Moon also looks to be a washout. Grosses were only $7.9 million after two weeks, although a handful of critics predict it will ultimately emerge as a camp classic with a perpetual niche on the ‘midnight circuit’.

And, despite lots of press about Arnold Schwarzenegger and his Kennedy bride, Maria Shriver, Raw Deal brought in only $15.9 million. The consensus on this one, released after Cobra, is that moviegoers may finally have had enough of gun-crazy tough guys.

As for the hits, they’re led by Tom Cruise and Top Gun. The Navy is recruiting the movie’s patrons.

**USA**

by Pat H. Broeske

An airborne summer at the American box office

With the summer already half gone, Hollywood is still hanging on for its hot-weather hit. Aliens may turn out to be it: early reviews are more than anticipated, and the opening figures of the ‘fête’ — moviegoers bought only one ticket to gain admission to a number of different cinemas which could scarcely mask the grimy reality.

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Another disappointment, considering its heavy-weight cast, is Legal Eagles. At time of writing, the Rolin-Rolland-Debra Winger-Daryl Hannah romantic comedy has taken only $4 million to date. In comparison, the French TV series of the same name has taken $32 million. Not bad, until you weigh that against a reported cost of more than $45 million.

Prizzi’s Under the Cherry Moon also looks to be a washout. Grosses were only $7.9 million after two weeks, although a handful of critics predict it will ultimately emerge as a camp classic with a perpetual niche on the ‘midnight circuit’.

And, despite lots of press about Arnold Schwarzenegger and his Kennedy bride, Maria Shriver, Raw Deal brought in only $15.9 million. The consensus on this one, released after Cobra, is that moviegoers may finally have had enough of gun-crazy tough guys.

As for the hits, they’re led by Tom Cruise and Top Gun. The Navy is recruiting the movie’s patrons.
Is there no stopping Men? Doris Dörrie's comedy, *Männer, about stereotypical males, is still at the top of the box-office charts. And, with the three-million-ticket mark now passed, the *Ktnoverband has given it a "Goldene Lernwand" (Gold Screen) award. Along with Alexander Kluge's far more serious *Der Angriff der Gegenwart auf die jüngste Zeit, Dörrie's film, a "Silbernes Flimmband" (Silver Filmstrip) in the Federal film awards. The golden one went to Margarethe von Trotta's *Rote Luxus.

Meanwhile, Dörrie, whose film has already opened in the States, has announced two new projects: *Labyrinth, which she will be co-producing with Chris Sievernich, and *Love Hotel, a love story set in Japan.

The big film headlines recently, however, have been about the spectacular break in the shooting of *Gelächter in der Nacht, a film version of Vladimir Nabokov's novel, *Laughter in the Dark. Among the cast were Maxime Schell and rock star Mick Jagger. The reason given for work being stopped was financial difficulties at production-company level.

By contrast, the German-Soviet co-production, *Es ist nicht leicht ein Gott zu sein, is still almost certain to go on shooting. After nearly six months of planning, the director is Peter Fleischmann, the budget 30 million Deutschmarks ($22.2 million), the screenplay by Jean-Claude Carrière, the story a Blutsgeschwister, and the cast headed by Peter Ustinov, Hanna Schygulla, Kurt Russell and Carole Bouquet. Most of the shooting was carried out in the Crimea and on the soundstages of Munich's Bavaria Studios.

On the home front, following the American model, German hit movies are now spawning sequels. In the wake of Otto 2 and *Schimmelwisch 2 (see previous columns), there is now to be *Drum 2. Volker Schlöndorff is already at work on the screenplay, and David Bennent will again be playing the lead. For the time being, however, Schlöndorff is still tied up in America, where he is filming *The Most Powerful Man in the World, with Steve Martin.

Last but not least, Germany's favourite TV actor, Klaus-Jürgen Wussow, star of the hospital series, *Die Schwarzwaldklinik, is getting into films. Called *Bitte laßt die Blumen leben, it will cost six million Deutschmarks ($4.5 million), and be a version of a novel by bestselling author Mario Sollner. A particular favourite in cinemas with a student audience has been the *Cannes Reel, a compilation of prize-winning entries from this year's festival of commercials in Cannes. And, on the subject of advertising, the *Chernobyl disaster has prompted a series of anti-nuclear energy commercials, the first of which was shown at the Munich Filmfest. The ads will be either 30- or 60-second slots, and are being financed by subscription.

On a similar theme, Dennis O'Rourke's *Half Life was recently voted 'Film of the Month' by the Evangelical Jury. Sadly, however, by the month in question (July), it

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**Germany** by Dieter Osswald

*Of Mick and Men*

Momo (Radost Bokel and John Huston). Novelist Ende likes it a lot better than *The Neverending Story*. The film, shot at Rome's Cinecittà, stars the eleven-year-old discovery, Radost Bokel, as Momo. John Huston makes a guest appearance as Master Hora.

Finally, some statistics. According to the latest poll, 14% of all Germans over the age of fourteen — some 6,700,000 people — go to the cinema once a month. Of these, 37% go as often as twice or three times a month, and 10% at least once a week. Further revelations: a third of the population (around sixteen million people) has been to the movies at least once in the past year. But 4% of the over-fourteens — around two million people — don't go at all.

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**Japan** by Naoko Abe and Georgina Pope

*Unseasonal ghosts and animal magic*

A second Tokyo Film Festival is to be held in late September 1987, on a smaller scale than last year's inaugural event: there will be a competitive main section, but the 'Young Cinema Section', which last year carried prize money of $1 million, has been abolished.

There has, however, been at least one spin-off. CineMagoing in Japan is traditionally seasonal, with New Year, the May national holidays and summer the prime release periods. Until the Tokyo Film Festival, horror and ghost stories were strictly for summer release only, since it is believed that ghosts only make their appearance in the hot, steamy weather. The success of the Fantasy Film Festival section changed all that, and it alone will be repeated this autumn.

Local product for summer release includes Schochiku's *Otuna Studios. It is directed by Yoji Yamada and stars Kiyoshi Atsumi, both of *Tora-San* fame. Tora-San is the central character in a dozen titles of the same name, possibly, if they follow the adventures of a wandering sales­man. Over a dozen *Tora-San* features have been made, and all have been enormous box-office hits domestically.

On the independent front, Kuzui Enterprises, who began distributing only last year, with the successful *Stop Making Sense*, have just opened *Pumping Iron 2: The Women*, featuring Australia's own Bev Francis (see the 'Profile' on page 13). Future releases from Kuzui include the punk story, *D.O.A.*, and Spike Lee's *She's Gotta Have It*.

Meanwhile, on a recent trip to Tokyo, well-known actor Ken Takakura announced plans to produce a film about Japanese war orphans left in China. Thousands of Japanese children were left behind when Japanese troops pulled out during World War II, and have been brought up by Chinese families. The two governments are currently cooperating on a programme to reunite families, and several hundred of the now 40- to 50-year-old children were visiting Japan in the past year in search of long-lost relatives. Less than half find their kin. Other upcoming productions include Schochiku's *Hachiko (Shibuya Dog*, set in the Taisho Era (the nineteen-twenties), with a budget of $US12 million. It is the story of a dog which, after the death of its master, hangs round the centrally-located Shibuya station doing wonderful deeds, including rescuing children from drowning in a nearby river and generally keeping the peace. Schochiku plan to rebuild the old station for an autumn shoot.

Elsewhere, other dogs, along with robots, goblins and cats, dominate Japan's screens this summer as well, in the form of *Hambone and Hillie* (with Lillian Gish), *Labyrinth* and the Fuji Network's *Chatran (The Adventures of a Kitten)*, mentioned in July's column. *Toho Distribution have just reopened Disney's 101 Dalmatians*, on a double bill with *The Black Cauldron*. Definitely not a dog in box-office terms, however, is *Rocky IV*, which has established 24 house records, and taken $US12.5 million at 208 cinemas nationwide.
As British Film Year draws to a close, David Puttnam (who, you may remember, gave the world Charlie of Fire, Local Hero and The Mission), is making tracks for Hollywood to become Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of the Coca-Cola-owned Columbia Pictures.

Puttnam has already dallied awhile on the shores of the Pacific, producing Foxes and Midnight Express in Hollywood in the late seventies. And, though he was reportedly chastened by the experience, he seems to have swallowed his distaste for the studio system (a pill sweetened, no doubt, by a rumoured three-year, $7.5-million contract).

As his opening gambit, Puttnam has signed TV comic Bill Cosby to produce and star in his own feature film. British producers apparently welcome the idea of a friendly face in L.A., though one wonders how long Puttnam himself will make out as the Coca-Cola Kid.

Back in Britain, the Bondwagon is slowly cranking back into action for the next 007 epic, called The Living Daylights, after one of Ian Fleming’s short stories, and due for release in summer 1987. The villain has been cast as Popeye Broccoli could find himself taking Roger Moore out of mothballs for yet another outing.

Meanwhile, the Peacock Committee has laid a curate’s egg of a report on the future of British broadcasting. The main thrust is towards deregulation: an unlimited number of channels, the introduction of pay-TV by subscription and, eventually, a metering device. There is also a proposal to abandon internal programmes, and, curiously, the Royal Family.

What is ruffling Mrs Thatcher’s feathers, however, is the fact that Peacock has, against widespread expectation, not endorsed her pet plan to introduce advertising on the BBC (which is currently financed by a licence fee). As a result, the Committee’s findings could be placed on hold until after the next general election.

After a sluggish spring, several interesting new productions have gone on the road over the last weeks. Chief among them is Pick Up Your Eyes, the story of the ill-starred homosexual relationship between playwright Joe Orton and Kenneth Halliwell. Scripted by Alan Bennett and directed by Stephen Frears, it stars Gary Oldman, fresh from his impressive debut as Sid Vicious in Sid and Nancy, as Orton, and Alfred Molina (Peter Finch’s lugubrious sidekick in Letter to Brezhnev) as Halliwell.

Meanwhile, Chloe Webb, the other half of Sid and Nancy, co-stars with Brian Dennehy in The Belly of an Architect, which, with a title like that, could only be directed by Peter Greenaway. A plot synopsis is probably neither possible nor desirable.

On location in Zimbabwe, Richard Attenborough has started shooting Asking for Trouble, based on the two books by Donald Woods about black South African activist Steve Biko. Denzel Washington (from A Soldier’s Story) has been cast as Biko, while Woods, who is acting as consultant on the production, is played by Kevin Kline. While there is always the risk of a bland hagiography along the lines of Gandhi, Asking for Trouble could and should, in the light of the sanctions row dominating UK headlines at the time of writing, be a controversial film.

One production that certainly will be provocative is Ken Russell’s latest opus, Gothic, which encompasses narcotics, romantic poetry, unorthodox sexual practices and things which go bump in the night — in short, most of the staple ingredients of a Russell film. The story concerns the strange experiences of Shelley (Julian Sands), Byron (Gabriel Byrne) and Mary Shelley (Natasha Richardson) during one night in a lonely villa on the shores of Lake Geneva.

At the box office, admissions continue to rise, with the first four months of 1986 up by 18% on last year (even if, more recently, receipts have been dented by the World Cup, Wimbledon and a minor heatwave). Current hits include Jewel of the Nile, 9½ Weeks, Down and Out in Beverly Hills and After Hours, Scorsese’s first British bull’s-eye for a very long time. A Room with a View is still sitting pretty in the London charts, and, in the subtitled market, Ran continues to run and run.

Frankenstein meets Childe Harold meets the Masque of Anarchy: Ken Russell’s Gothic, about a harrowing night out with the poets on the shores of a Swiss lake.
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This year’s Sydney Film Festival, held from 6-20 June, came to the public (though I might have preferred it if it were the public that came to the festival), and was rewarded with an 11% increase in ticket sales and universal praise from film reviewers, who dubbed it the best in years.

The range of films was so diverse that it had the breadth to please some of its audience most of the time, but perhaps lacked the depth to please most of its audience most of the time. The special night of Spanish cinema went down well, the Chinese and horror film nights less so. All in all, then, a festival with some dubious choices, but nothing too outrageous either way.

One of the highlights were the ‘restoration pieces’. Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger’s The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp (1943), with its fabulous production, wit and masterful camerawork intact, possessed a narrative which whisked you through time like a Wellsian war game.

Equally enjoyable was Rouen Mamoulian’s Becky Sharp (1935), a delightful comedy of manners with a cut-crystal performance from Miriam Hopkins. Both films had a clarity of theme and technique that reminded you of why film is also history — and that you need to see now and again that everything that you take for innovative today has already been done before.

While everyone seemed to agree that it was more exciting to be outside in the street watching passions run hot over Jean-Luc Godard’s Je vous salue, Marie (Hail Mary) than to be inside watching this chilly reflection of misogyny and religious turmoil, the same was not true of the same director’s Detective. This clever pastiche of Shakespearian structures and allusions, American crime films and self-parody was an intellectual endgame and a delight.

Added to the beautiful photography of Bruno Nuytten was a fabulous soundtrack that constantly cut across the images and mocked the dialogue. The result was a visual mind-tease by Godard that few filmmakers have the sardonic mind or capability to match.

American Rebel was an interesting documentary by Will Roberts about an interesting phenomenon, singer Dean Reed, who, without actually defecting to the East, made his career and home there for nearly 20 years. Reed, who was killed in a boating accident three days before the film’s screening in Sydney, is revealed as a complex idealist with much of the Yankee naivety and ‘gosh-gee’ attitudes that are often a part of the American stereotype.

The documentary, though tentative and at first skirting the issues, gradually hardens its gaze until it quite firmly places its sympathy on the line with its hero. And it is a nice companion piece to the other ‘difficult’ American film in the festival, Ufores.

Ufores’ delayed release (it was made in 1980) speaks volumes for the way American distributors see their audiences and their own purpose. Naive, idealistic and un-realistic people — an evangelical preacher, a drifter who plays on his resemblance to Waylon Jennings and a romantic dreamer obsessed with UFOs — are confronted with some awful truths and, fortunately, an uncloyingly happy ending.

Although Brother Bud (played by the marvellous Harry Dean Stanton), Sheldon and Arlene are small-town people with small-town hopes, director and writer John Binder has nothing but admiration for the strength of their beliefs and their courage, and portrays them with wit. Very much Dean Reed country.

By contrast, the ‘unhappy souls’ of Agnieszka Holland’s Kokieta samarzina (A Woman Alone), endure smashed hope after smashed hope. This tragic tale of a middle-aged woman, alone with a small boy and grasping at straws of happiness, proved too much for some of the Sydney audience (who burst out laughing — be it from tension or disbelief — when the woman and her crippled lover crash their car during their escape to the border). But it is an intense film about the misery and meanness that people inflict on each other when they have no personal or political choices. Small wonder, then, that the film, made in 1981, has not been released in Poland.

Unlike Nadzor (Custody), the other Polish offering, which won its audience down in its attempt to communicate, A Woman Alone left you replenished with determination rather than depleted. Custody was one of several films that surprised by being worthy but disappointing.

Among others I would count Cool Runnings: The Reggae Movie, whose bad editing and shooting could not be countered by its enthusiasm; the straight and un-imaginative coverage of the talented Laurie Anderson in Home of the Brave; Lea Pool’s The Painter, which was a simplistic cross-cutting of meaningful events and people that never added up; and Ken Mc-Mullen’s Zina, a highly operatic and rhetoric-laden melange of symbols, landscapes and psychology which did no justice to its theme of Antigone or to the tragic life of Zina Bronstein, the daughter of Lev Davidovich Bronstein, otherwise known as Trotsky.

Of the Australian contingent at the festival, 2 Friends, the Jane Campion/Helen Garner/Jan Chapman collaboration, was marred by faulty sound, but still managed to shine as a delicate, finely-tuned film. Tracing the breakdown of the seemingly indestructible bond between two schoolgirls, the film moves back in time to reveal the turning points. It does so without the arrogance of hindsight or the intrusive camera of television technique (the film was made for the ABC). A little film, it appeared to go beyond its small story and limited action because it closed in on the intimate and minute details of character and narrative.

The festival for me, though, was epitomized by the screening of Tenue de soirée (Evening Dress), directed by Bertrand Blier. Bawdy, irreverent and quick-witted, it turned sexual stereotypes and expectations severely on their head and ferociously ran them down. Gérard Depardieu’s performance as the bravvy ex-con with homosexual preferences is startling. While the film fizzes excessively in a few scenes, the transformation of the characters leaves the audience blinking.

Meanwhile, Greater Union’s Terence McMahon, who has bought the film, hovered in the State Theatre’s foyer, keen to know if Evening Dress had overstepped the bounds of ribaldry. He must have been surprised to see it nominated ninth in the festival’s ten most popular films.

What would have been unacceptable to public taste but highly suitable for a festival audience in past years has now become acceptable for both — something which confirms the identity crisis facing the Sydney Film Festival, to which I referred in my report last year (Cinema Papers 53, September 1985). Instead of being a cornucopia of obscure delights, it is now a bing of filmgoing that requires stamina and catholic — if not Catholic — tastes, rather than strength of mind and aesthetic perception.
FESTIVALS AND MARKETS

Swings and roundabouts

Box office up, but problems still beset the Melbourne Film Festival

It is becoming customary, in writing about the Melbourne Film Festival, to express a mixture of surprise and gratitude that it has happened at all. After 1984’s debacle, the 1985 festival was a small miracle. And, given the festival board’s decision not to reappoint director Paul Couler (who has now gone west to head the Film and Television Institute in Perth), Melbourne cinemagoers should presumably breathe a sigh of relief that there was a festival this year, too.

It is, however, hardly surprising that a certain amount of confusion and tension should have surrounded the 18th event. To start with, laudable attempts to develop a "film festival" pleasure — that is to say, a movie festival — remained locked in stand-off. And, even if, in the end, everyone calmed down, relations with local distributors — a recurring problem for the festival — have certainly not been improved.

But what of the films? Receipts were apparently up an impressive 29% at the box office. And an unofficial survey — no one seems to have bothered with a 'top ten' this year — suggested that Ossoshiki (The Funeral), Desert Bloom, Petina Chryonia (Stone Years), Visages de femmes (Faces of Women), Mixed Blood, Working Girls and the two Michael Apted documentaries, Up and 28 Up were among the preferred films. Plus, of course, Tenue de soirée (Evening Dress), discussed by Helen Greenwood on the previous page, and Stammheim reviewed on page 42.

Visages de femmes tells two stories: one about love (a young woman who refuses to be "slave, possession, thing") to her husband, and establishes another relationship — the other about work (a middle-aged businesswoman demands and wins financial independence). These two women’s stories are framed by another event: a festival. The women of the village sing, dance and gossip: they are the chorus, commenting on the actions of the protagonists.

Another impressive non-American, non-European film was Trikal, Past, Present and Future, directed by Shyam Benegal. A man returns to Goa and, in the tradition of a novelist Gabriel Garcia Marquez, a rich, romantic and quite bizarre family history unfolds (which is, of course, a matriarchy).

Trikal is high melodrama, though perhaps more so than the political history (Goa was a Portuguese colony until 1961; the year in which the action takes place) and commentary on the traditional life of the Garo (a tribal group of Catholics) family at the centre of the film.

Programmed on the first and last days of the festival, Trikal did not get the critical attention it deserved, nor the festival seem to know what to do with the film’s star, Sushma Prakash, a brief visitor to Melbourne. Another visitor was Ken McMullen, director of Zina. Speaking after a screening, McMullen said his interest was in "rescuing characters from the shadow of history." In the film, he evokes the life of Trotsky’s daughter, Zina, a courageous (though disturbed) woman, who is likened to Antigone, daughter of Oedipus. McMullen in fact uses the framework of classical tragedy: Zina is portrayed as a seer, while her father is blind to instinct — a rational man who believes interpretation of the natural world should be left to the poets. Domiziano Giordano is excellent as Zina, though the character of Trotsky (Philip Madoc) is not always so convincing.

From the US independent sector, Lizzie Borden’s Working Girls was a slight disappointment after the energy and inventiveness of Born in Flames (1982). The great thing about Borden's first film was that it was radical in content, experimental, in style and accessible. With Working Girls, about a day in the life of a Manhattan brothel, Borden chooses to focus on the individual women, and on the relationships between them and the owner, Susan. The wider issues that made Born in Flames so fascinating are somewhat marginalized, and the undoubted reality of day-to-day life on the streets for the john is a John — may enhance our sense of the film’s accuracy, but also leaves a kind of ‘so what?’ feeling.

Appropriately, one of the year’s least popular films, L’Amour par terre (Love on the Ground) is the latest from that fringe dweller of the French new wave, Jacques Rivette. But, along with Godard’s Détective (discussed by Helen Greenwood, Kluge’s Die Angriff der Gegenwart (The Wider War, The wider Zeitgeist) and Tenue de soirée and Stammheim, it definitely yielded that specifically film festival pleasure: the ability to watch a magnum opus at the peak of his powers manipulating the medium of cinema.

In L’Amour par terre, Rivette may have been influenced by the novel Julie vont en bâton (Céline and Julie Go Boating, 1974) with that examination of the borderline between theatrical role-play and life, but his main concern is the sense of sexual and social identity that made L’Amour fou (1968) arguably his greatest film.

A group of down-on-their-luck actors is hired by an eccentric millionaire to re-enact the traumas of his own relationship for an invited audience (on-screen as well as in front of it). But the relationships between the actors and their employer, his friends, his idiosyncratic valet, and a hound refuse to be contained, resulting in a film that is as multi-faceted as L’Amour fou and as funny as Céline and Julie — a major achievement that soon overcome one’s sense that one had seen it all before. Which was, sadly, a feeling that kept creeping up on one elsewhere in the festival.

A John is a John: Louise Smith as Molly in Lizzie Borden’s new film, Working Girls.

With inflation running at a crippling 85%, production costs escalating at an equally alarming rate and a gross lack of the hard currency necessary to purchase film stock, Yugoslavia is still managing to maintain its annual average of between 30 and 35 features a year. But the prognosis is not good: mid-summer shoots have always been popular, but less films are in production right now than at any time in the past five years. It is hard to see how the current high international profile of Yugoslavian film can be maintained.

Serbia heads the production stakes (odd, when you consider that the republic has a minimal subsidy for cinema), producing nearly half the films. Croatia comes a close second with six, followed by Slovenia with five. Macedonia, Montenegro, Kosovo, Vojvodina and Bosnia and Herzegovina had only a piece at the annual Pula showcase this year.

Stole Popov’s Srečna Nova ’49 (Happy ’49) swept the board, with the ‘Golden Aress’, as with the last year’s winner, Otac Na Službenom Putu (When Father Was Away on Business), Happy ’49 is set at the time of Tito’s ‘divorce’ from Stalin. A family drama, a powerful love story and an authentic period piece rolled into one, it was scripted by veteran writer Gordan Mihić, and takes a look at the internal crises, doubts and dilemmas posed by ideological dogmatism. Its main concern is the right to an alternative choice in life — a ‘third way’.

Za Srečno Je Potrebno Troje (Three’s Happiness), the latest offering from Ljubljana-educated FAMU director, Rajo Grilč, is surprisingly speedy follow-up to U Rajalma Života (In the Jaws of Life), consider­ ing that Grilč usually spends between three and five years between projects. Three’s Happiness tells the story of Drago (played

Kathy Ball and Nick Roddick

THE PROGNOSIS FROM PULA

33rd Festival of Yugoslav Film may mark the end of an era
Sampling the blooms in Bavaria

Large crowds but slim German pickings at the fourth Munich Filmfest

“A huge bunch of flowers for everyone to pick from” is how Munich Filmfest chief Eberhard Hauff likes to describe his festival. Nor does he ever miss a chance to add that this is an event for the general public. 1986 was the fourth outing for the Bavarian festival and, as the soccer World Cup notwithstanding, the general public turned out in force for the nine-day, ten-cinema, 150-film extravaganza.

There were directors there from 30 countries and the “Festival of European Films” was, for the second year running, a part of the Filmfest. Munich’s tried and tested categories were used again this year: as well as the “deutsche Reihe” (German selection), there were programmes of foreign independent productions, children’s films and an international programme.

The latter gave Munich movie-goers a chance to see highlights from major foreign festivals: Tarkovsky’s Offret (Sacrifice), Altman’s A Zed and Two Noughts and Australian director Niko List’s Muller’s Büro from Berlin. As in Venice, Chris Bernard’s Letter to Brezhnev was rapturously received. And new offerings from the international sector included the British comedy, Clockwise, Arthur Penn’s spicy thriller, Target, John Badham’s teen movie, Short Circuit, and Blake Edwards’ A Fine Mess.

By contrast with the international programme, the German offerings weren’t especially sparkling. It would seem that tedious trips through the inner psyche are back in vogue in the Bundesrepublik, to judge by Rudolf Thomas’ Tarot, a lurid adaptation of Goethe’s novel, Die Wahlverwandtschaften (Effective Affinities).

Then, as threatened in my July column (Cinema Papers 58), there was former critic Hans Blumen­berg’s tiresomely constructed thriller, Der Sommer des Samurai, starring fifteen pop stars Peter Kraus (who sung the featured song, ‘Zuckerbaby’, in the film of the same name) and Conny Froboess.

The ‘foreign independents’ section was a real must-see this year, hinting (as it usually does) at the shape of trends to come. New Zealand was represented by Dangerous Orphans, Australia by Dennis O’Rourke’s Half Life and Glenda Hamby’s Fra. From the US came Robert Young’s much-dis­cussed Barbarians, and the Ber­wood’s well conceived gay movie, Paring Galaxies.

Two years ago, Munich gave Heimats world premiere. This year, it was the turn of another mammoth work, the eight-hour Väter und Söhne, directed by Bernhard Sinkel. The story of the German company, IG Farben, and its entanglement in two World Wars, it starred Burt Lancaster, Julie Christie and Bruno Ganz.

Business was also done: Edward Rome and Norbert Auerbach (late of United Artists, UIP, CBS Films and a good few other major companies) launched their new, Luxembourg­based company, IFP, which, like many before it, is a European production company aiming for a share of the US market.

And the protracted debate about whether Munich’s Eberhard Hauff was going to take over the Berlin Film Festival came to an end, at any rate for the time being, with the announcement that the beleaguered Berlin Film Festival chief, Mortiz de Hadelin, had his contract extended for a further five years.

Mike Downey

by the excellent and ubiquitous Walter Matthau-lookalike, Predrag-Miki Manojlovic), who is driven by love triangles, but also about commitment, cowardice and the criminalization of innocent victims.

Zoran Tadic, master of the psychological thriller in this part of the Balkans, was back in the Arena to stay honest in a patently dishonest success of his 1981 film, Ritam Zicoci (The Rhythm of Crime), San O Ruiz (The Dream of a Rose) is a contemporary story of a man who tries to stay honest in a patently dishonest world. A factory worker (Rade Serbedzija) inadvertently witnesses a double murder and becomes both suspect and investigator. He finds a large sum of money at the scene of the crime, as well as a gun, and he takes both home. Then comes the moral dilemma: to tell or not to tell; to spend or not to spend.

The Dream of a Rose is not just an ordinary thriller, but a tense morality play about right and wrong, corruption and honesty. In the context of Yugoslavia’s present financial situation, it is a bitter analysis of the situation in which those who are least guilty usually have to suffer the worst punishment. A much-deserved suspect and investigator. He finds a large sum of money at the scene of a double murder and becomes both suspect and investigator. He finds a large sum of money at the scene of a double murder and becomes both suspect and investigator. He finds a large sum of money at the scene of a double murder and becomes both suspect and investigator. He finds a large sum of money at the scene of a double murder and becomes both suspect and investigator. He finds a large sum of money at the scene of a double murder and becomes both suspect and investigator. He finds a large sum of money at the scene of a double murder and becomes both suspect and investigator. 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SAMPLES THE WARES
AT THE SECOND
INTERNATIONAL
SMPTE CONFERENCE
AND EXHIBITION IN
SYDNEY

In an industry that relies as much on technology as film and television, trade shows assume a special importance. After all, magazine reports — even the ones in Cinema Papers — are only a tease compared to actually seeing a new product demonstrated. Australia's isolation and the relatively small size of the market make trade shows crucial. We have all waited patiently for the releases of new film stocks that have been on the market overseas for some time, before the local distributor gets round to clearing existing stocks, or somehow feels the 'time is right'.

In video, there is the added problem of the incompatibility of our European-based system and the US and Japanese NTSC television systems — all of which makes local shows such as those mounted by the IREE (Institute of Radio and Electronics Engineers) and the SMPTE (Society of Motion Picture and Television Engineers) especially important.

The SMPTE, through its engineering standards committee and study groups, and its encouragement of technical developments in the SMPTE Journal, is also helping provide some conformity within the image-making industries. Working with an alphabet soup of committees such as the ANSI (American National Standards Institute) and the EBU (European Broadcasting Union), the SMPTE assists in setting standards in a world that often sees standardization as a block to creativity and innovation, and even as a restraint on trade. Sometimes though, mass marketing can bring about standardization, as with the VHS home video system, which has now become a de facto worldwide standard.

The SMPTE has all these elements to juggle with, and is supported by a list of Sustaining Member companies that reads like a complete A-Z of film and video brand names. The Australian section of the SMPTE gains prominence with each staging of its 'Sound & Vision' conferences (this year's was held in Sydney from 24-27 June), and actively takes part in the social aspect of playing host to the international delegates.

With the financial support of the Australian Film Commission and the Federation of Australian Commercial Television Stations, there is also the presentation, over the four days of the conference, of a series of papers. What this means is that a technically interested audience is provided with what, on the whole, are individuals promoting some product or development that is (not entirely coincidentally) also on sale in the exhibition hall. The social aspects of a meeting of this kind would go almost unnoticed by visitors to the exhibition, but gives the fair the feel of an exclusive club, where the Australian members greet their US counterparts on first-name terms, and where it is traditional for Kodak to throw a cocktail party to welcome delegates.

The conference

This year, the SMPTE conference opened with the presentation, on a temporarily-erected wide screen, of a collection of sequences from The Man from Snowy River, Phar Lap and the now proud-to-be-Australian, Crocodile Dundee. The Prime Minister officially opened the Conference, rather overshadowing the opening address by the Minister for Arts, Heritage and the Environment, Barry Cohen. For his part, Mr Cohen began with an unsolicited advertisement for Sony, saying he now felt he understood the industry better after purchasing and using a Sony 8mm video camera. He admitted, though, that he couldn't understand the manual.

The presentation of papers then began in earnest, leading off with the now familiar face of Henti Stappaerts from Agfa in Belgium, talking about Agfa's new XT stocks. While some of the papers seemed to be about sharing information, most were about specific new products that were on sale in the exhibition or else, more interestingly, presented a case study of a particular application. Over the four days, some of the more significant topics included Filmlab Engineering's report on its computer-controlled processor for tight control of film soundtrack negatives; the plea by Dominic Case of Colorfilm that 'You can still do so much with film optics'; and a report on the coverage of the Indianapolis 500 by the Racecam developed by ATE. The selected set of papers presented and details of available audio cassettes, see the box on page 73.

Buy Australian

Since I assume that most readers of this column are more interested in the latest film and video production toys, I will do little more than mention the broadcast equipment which is always a significant part of each SMPTE show. Satellite dishes, Assaut, stereo sound and HDTV (high-definition television) provided conversation for a lot of the delegates and visitors on the floor, most of them wearing name tags saying they were from the engineering department of a television broadcasting station. In the production front, there were, as was to be expected, few significant new products on show, most of them being improvements on existing design and hardware. Still, it was heartening to find that some manufacturers had brought costs down, at a time when the Australian dollar stands so low against most major currencies. In almost every case, this was because of the use of microprocessors and the availability of cheaper personal computers.

By the same token, the high cost of importing new equipment has moved some of the Australian production market overseas. If the scale of our production and our design skills can take advantage of this, then we will all benefit by the local expertise.

An example of this is the small Melbourne company run by Joe Talia, which is producing vision switches and mixers that, in the small-studio area, come head on with corporations such as the US Grass Valley Group, but at a more affordable price. Farliegh continues to sell its unchallenged CMI audio synthesizer around the world, and has now developed its video effects synthesizer to the point where so much overseas demand that the Miller's Portomount: it isolates vertical and horizontal shock.

The rise of the Betacam-format edit suite and the acceptance of Betacam cassettes by some stations for release material has allowed a lot of producers to remain cost effective with a low-budget, retail area of the commercial's market. But it has also given birth to a number of interesting drama and documentary projects being shot on tape. The format records the output from the camera as individual components (not just RGB), and only recently has seen its success spread from the small-studio area, coming head on with corporations such as the US Grass Valley Group, but at a more affordable price. Farliegh continues to sell its unchallenged CMI audio synthesizer around the world, and has now developed its video effects synthesizer to the point where so much overseas demand that the Miller's Portomount: it isolates vertical and horizontal shock.

Betacam rules

When RCA introduced the ¾" M format in America, it was destined to become the field production videotape recording format. But, within months, Sony had introduced its Betacam system, also on ¾" but carrying the domestic VCR-format war into broadcast (Sony uses a Betamax cassette, RCA's M format is on VHS). Despite major network purchases of M equipment and a lot of users finding it superior to Betacam, Sony managed to reverse its defeat in the domestic market and become the de facto ENG format. Because of the ease of use of the Betacam equipment, the slight reduction in quality from 1" tape was considered a worthwhile trade-off, and now looks like most TV stations will eventually be replacing their 'cart' players (which stack up the commercials and the promo material for programme replay).

The tiny WV-CD110 surveillance camera: the same CCD chip as the National F2.

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The user-interface allows the designer/artist on the Painbox to treat the material as a graphic representation of ‘reels’ of images, cutting and splicing them as on a flatbed. Harry allows you to make a complete, 60-second commercial or a longer effects sequence that is first-generation digital quality until it goes to 1” master for release. The prospect of the completely digital editing suite is just round the corner. Meanwhile, sharing space on a modest stand at SMPTE were Peter Sjoquist, demonstrating his Scorpio Entertainment Network electronic cut suite, and Showcast, with Showcast’s information retrieval system. This hopes eventually to have all Showcast’s current list of performers, full contacts and facilities listings, and additional services such as props, locations and production personnel, all listed for instant access via a telephone call and a personal computer. More on these services in a later issue.

Using microprocessors for an advanced system of colour edge detection was the da Vinci colour grader. Costing approximately $50,000, this is a colour-correction controller that works with all the current telecines or for tape-to-tape grading, and it has some remarkable features. The most impressive of these is that it allows you to select an area on the screen and change just that colour individually. By moving cross-hairs onto the screen, the machine detects the edges to the colour, and allows it to be controlled without affecting an identical object nearby. The process can be repeated any number of times. Since the launch of the product at NAB, the company claims they have sold 50 grader — an amazing number considering that the da Vinci would be mostly replacing existing equipment.

**Invisible barriers**

The one product that was truly unique at the show couldn’t actually be seen. But it was certainly there, it was the Photogard process, developed by 3M, which puts a protective coating on film and photographic prints that stops abrasion, moisture, static electricity, colour degreding from UV, bacteria, and fills in base and emulsion scratches. The process has been available for some time, but recently (it won the Academy Award in 1984), and uses a thin polymer coating that is cured by UV, forming a clear (97%-transmission), tough coating. It is claimed to extend the life of cinema prints by up to ten times, and, at a cost of about 5.5 cents a foot for 16mm, and 7 cents a foot for 35mm, it could be a worthwhile investment.

The coating is being used by MGM to extend the life of its printing negatives, and allows a range of colour correction solvents to be used to clean off fingerprints, grease pencils and dirt. The extra cost it adds to cinema prints tends to restrict its use to those smaller-quantity release prints that are expected to have a long life, rather than the multi-print blockbusters. Woody Allen has had all his prints coated with the process for his latest project. The telecine laboratories have begun using Photogard. The company is represented here by Photo Advertising (Australia) Ltd in Sydney, and all the coating is done in this country.

**Around the stands**

Apart from these major features and trends, there were any number of interesting individual products on show at the SMPTE. What follows is a few of them.

*Not available at the time of the show but installed that same week was the gin-regisrtred telecine gate jointly developed by the Sydney companies, Mirage and Videolab. I have yet to see a demonstration, but the device is claimed to be as good as the American-developed Steadygate (subject of a paper at the conference), but at a fraction of the cost.*

*Kodak announced the availability of the high-speed 16mm negative, 7292 (mentioned in our fast stock, 5295, with superior blue separation, for special effects work. Similar qualities are claimed for an intermediate printing stock, 7243/5243). *They* all use the new T-grain developments for fine grain and faster speed.*

*On display at the John Barry Group stand was a remote control gyrosco-pially that has a larger platform on the head, allowing the assistant to sit opposite the operator. The Panther still has one of the swisstec electronically-controlled hydraulic lift systems around.*

*Also on the Barry stand was the update to the Ann BL 3, the new Ann BL 4. The most obvious external feature is the extra-large extension viewfinder, with illuminated ground-glass markings. Ann has recently re-modelled the Lightflex into a smaller and lighter device that now looks like a more workable tool, which comes complete with an inbuilt, battery-powered dimmable eye-light.*

*Also attracting attention on the John Barry stand was the Gryoscope-stabilized lens. This battery-powered gyroscope lens was demonstrated with the aid of a hand-held camera whose operator was sitting in a co-infrared-controlled rocking motorbike. The video feed was impressive in smoothing out movement that would otherwise have made the results from the zoom quite unusable.*

*On the Samueleons stand, they were showing an improved video-assist system with reduced flicker. After much effort, Sammies have hit on the combination of the new CEI Technologies camera tube, and attached it to a Jurgens mount.*

*Sammies were also promoting the new ‘E’ series Panavision ana-morphic lenses. The ‘E’ series were apparently meant to be an interim set, until the lenses that Panavision has been designing for some time could be released. As it turned out, this set of lenses (25, 35, 40, 50, 85 and 100mm) are producing such stunning results that David Cornell of DOP on Slate, Wynn and Blanche McBride, has gone with Panavision after test-shooting in Super-35.*

*Another lens, although familiar, has been significantly improved, was on show on the Filmtronics stand. It was the new 25-250mm Angenieux zoom, extensively re-designed. From the outside, though, the only obvious change was that the front element doesn’t turn as the lens is zoomed, which solves a problem when using polarizers and other filters.*

*From a new (to me) Melbourne company, Getlit/Wired for Sound, was a range of display and theatrical lighting and items such as a video console for video-disc cueing and image-mixing in discos. The new group also sells the 6-light Maitre line of smoke machines, ranging from the $900 Mini Mist to a $2,500 model.*

*Le Maitre’s middle-of-the-range smoke machines: $900 and $1,800.*

*Other items from Getlit were a video projector and a range of cute electrical plug-in Lamps. Pan Can servo range. Primarily designed for theatre and discos, they could also be used for special effects.*

*Miller Tripods has just opened its offices in Australia.*

*Miller’s Porta-remote mount has attracted a lot of attention, but the company also has a new, $3000 head that looks like its answer to the Sachtcher Video 25, with a 40kg capacity and a lightweight but heavy-duty tripod to...*
match. Miller also has a range of moulded tripod cases, similarly light but tough, and giving full-size protection. Cost is $295.

Filmwest had some unique items on its stand, along with two new Aaton XTR, with direct time-recording, and the stripped-down, lightweight (and cheaper) XC. Both will be familiar to Aaton fans, and the XC provides a sensible alternative as a beginner’s or backup model.

Also from Filmwest and deserving a full examination (though not cheap) was a small, electronically-controlled product turntable called the Revpod, which can be exactly controlled and stopped (saves reverse-printing the label shot).

There were two further products from US electronics engineer Mike Denecke, who left KEM to start his own company: first, the Decode TS-1 electronic slate, with extra bright and large LEDs giving time-code read-out — the best electronic slate I’ve seen so far, and designed to work with the time-code Nagra; and, for $US800, there was also a small time-code reader that was attracting attention.

The SMP kit: five charts in a handy plastic cover.

- SMP Products specialize in supplying editing equipment and consumables, and had a great range of beches, trim bins, synchs, and window dressers. The company makes a cleverly designed adjustable film horse to hold spacer and leader, and distributes the Masbeth colour charts (recently recommended for testing by Kodak), MPC sprocketed recording tape, and a range of coloured paper tapes that accept markers.

- New from Sony are some high-band U-matic models that breathe fresh life into the BVU format. The BVU SP and the portable 150P had some fine-tuning done to the electronics; and, by extending the colour sub-carrier and shifting the luminance signal, improved detail has been added. Also attractive was the small Indextron monitor, designed to give a very bright picture for outdoor or high ambient light levels; what is notable is that it does not have a shadowmask or a Trinitron tube.

- On the tape front, it looks like we are finally going to have to concede to metrification for the familiar 1/4” U-matic tape used in the new digital systems: the tape is designated 19mm even in the US. Sony showed its digital videotape machine at the recent NAB show. In Sydney, only the new digital video cassettes were on display.

- The duplication labs and AV hire companies will also have to concede that rear-screen projectors, such as the Fairchild, with its Super 8 endless-cartridge, are on the way out. On the GEC stand was the Panasonic portable AG-500 VHS player/TV combination unit. A few companies have been making similar combination sets using the small NV180A player for some time, but National has now produced its own compact unit.

- A long-awaited improvement in sound quality for VHS ports is the Panasonic VHS Hi-Fi portable AG-1000, with the hi-fi sound version of the NV180A, and allows location recording at compact-disc quality, with access to the linear tracks as well. This VCR has come in as a professional machine with the Panasonic name on it, probably because, if it was offered as a consumer item, it would surely kill sales of the NV180.

- Among the new broadcast equipment, Ampex showed the AD0 1000, an entry-level digital effects unit that can be upgraded. The company was also showing the Zeus TBC, together with modifications for its VPRs (to speed up the animation capability) and a forthcoming software kit for set-up called Multi-Gen. This significantly eliminates the tiny set-up errors that are compounded with each generation of copying. By recording bars from input sources and then replaying, switching automatically back and forth, the velocity errors (which cause more degradation than the obvious signal-to-noise problems) can be finely adjusted.

- The Philips Scientific and Industrial stand had the Adams Smith 265 AV video editors/synchronizers. They accept an 8” CMX-format disk, which could speed up transfer of edit points from audio post-production on a videotape job. Philips also showed its new professional high-bit impact audio discs for sound post-production, with a sound-effects library of 28 discs from the Canadian company, GEC. The discs contain a time-code controller allowing cueing of two or more LHV 2000 Professional CD players, so that they can be accessed rapidly and cueled accurately.

- SMPTE provided me with my first sight of the Rycote Windjammer windshield for shotgun mikes, which is claimed to cut wind noise by 6dB over a normal windshield. It is distributed here by Syntec International.

- Finally, Filmtronics had a Marusho audio-tape splicer, which is a specialist machine for digital tape editing, and which is claimed to give a dead accurate vertical cut.

Product suppliers and distributors

- Agfa-Gevaert Ltd, 372-394 Whitehorset Road, Nunawading, Vic 3131. (03) 875 0222.
- Ampex Australia P/L, Unit A, 51 Fairview Road, North Ryde, NSW 2113. (02) 887 3333.
- Artstar III is distributed by Minicomp P/L, 104 Mount Street, Camperdown, NSW 2060. (02) 675 6599.
- Fairlight Instruments P/L, 15 Boundary Street, Rushcutters Bay, NSW 2011. (02) 331 6333.
- Filmtronics (Australia) P/L, 33 Higginbotham Road, Gladesville, NSW 2111. (02) 807 1444.
- Filmtronics (Australia) P/L, 201-203 Port Hacking Road, Miranda, NSW 2228. (02) 522 4144.
- Quantel is distributed by Quantum Communications P/L, Grass Valley Group listing for address).
- Quantum is distributed by Quantum Communications P/L, 8/18 Forests Road, Frenchs Forest, NSW 2086. (02) 452 4111.
- Samurai Film Service Australia, 1 Giffin, North Ryde, NSW 2113. (02) 888 2766.
- scorpio entertainment network, 88 Darling Street, Glebe, NSW 2037. (02) 660 6444.
- Sontron Instruments P/L, 36 Lever Street, Oakleigh, Vic 3166. (03) 588 4022.
- SMP Products, 30 Gibben Street, Camperdown, NSW 2050. (02) 517 2745.
- Steadycam is distributed by Andrew Gibson Equipment Services P/L, 113 Willoughby Road, Crows Nest, NSW 2065. (02) 438 3833.
- syntec international, 90 Gibbs Street, Chatswood, NSW 2067. (02) 406 4700.
- talent sound & video, 3 Wadsworth Drive, Knoxfield, Vic 3180. (03) 222 1844.
- Tektronix Australia P/L, 80 Wattletoc Road, North Ryde, NSW 2113. (02) 888 7066.

Mitsubishi Electric Australia. 73-75 Epping Road, North Ryde, NSW 2113. (02) 888 5777.
- National Panasonic is distributed by GEC Video Systems, 2 Giffnock, North Ryde, NSW 2113. (02) 887 6222.
- Philips Scientific and Industrial Broadcast Systems, 25-27 Paul Street, North Ryde, NSW 2113. (02) 888 6222.
- Philco Advertising (Australia) Ltd, 53-55 Herbert Street, Artarmon, NSW 2064. (02) 438 1755.
- Quanta Corporation products are distributed by Pacific Consumer Sales P/L, (Grass Valley Group listing for address).
- Sound Industries.
- Tecno (see)
- Telecine', Wayne Smith, Steadygate.
- Television', Ray Derek, Raydek Services P/L.
- 'Motion control: an update and overview', Andrew Gibson, Ages 36.
- 'Cut List system using Datakode negative 5295'; 'Noise in film to* audio-tape splicer, 'Low-cost non-computer offline editing', Oliver Morgan, Acquis Ltd.
- 'Motion control: a update and overview', Andrew Gibson, Ages P/L.
- 'Digital sound', 'Improved 16mm East­mancolor high-speed negative film 7229'; 'New Eastmancolor negative 5295'; 'Noise in film-to­video editing'.
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The scramble and madness that characterizes the end of the financial year for the film industry has long passed and, with prospecti in the bottom drawer, now is the time to come up with the goods. And it looks like there should be a reasonably high level of production activity.

Under the 10BA tax incentive scheme, a total of $159 million was secured for film and television production in 1985-6. Though this marked a $26.7-million downturn from the previous year, the fall was not as dramatic as some analysts predicted.

The figures, released by the Australian Film Commission, also indicate a reduction in projects financed at 133/33 concessional rates. The commission, with prospectus in the scheme, a total of $159 million was secured for film and television production in 1986-7, together with non-deductible expenses, amounted to $12.4 million for the 120/20 projects, and $27.1 million for the 133/33 projects.

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The Cinema Papers

Production Survey

A full listing of the features, televisions, documentaries and shorts now in pre-production, production or post-production in Australia.

FEATURES

PRE-PRODUCTION

THE ATTACK OF THE GARBAGE PEOPLE

Prod. company: Immediate Films Dist. company: Cinema 10 Prod. manager: Gary Keedy Director: Gary Keedy Screenwriter: Gary Keedy Based on the original idea by: Gary Keedy Based on the original screenplay by: Gary Keedy Sound recordist: Blast Bass Synopsys: A comedy about a small-time actor.

DO AND THE TREE

Prod. company: Yoram Gross Film Studio Pty Ltd Prod. manager: Yoram Gross Director: Yoram Gross Screenwriter: Greg Flynn Production designer: Allen Hey Animation director: Allen Hey Production manager: Stuart Winter Length: 75 minutes Synopsys: Dot and Old Tom, the violin-maker, find a new way to spread the joy of music in their town.

8341: THE PYJAMA GIRL MURDER

Prod. company: Ulladulla Picture Company in association with Casablanca Films Works Prod. manager: Keith Stewart Prod. accountant: Rosion Whalley Prod. designers: Denis Clifton Prod. co-ordinator: Philip Howe Musical director... Gary Leary Budget: $1.5 million

SYNOPSIS: A comedy about a small-time actor.

BLIND FAITH

Prod. company: Chadwick/Douglas Prod. manager: John Gauk Prod. accountant: Peter Herbert Prod. secretary: Brenda Mahan Screenwriter: Ian MacFadyen Prod. exec. producer: Stephen Vizard Prod. analyst: Chris Paterson Synopsys: Rivalry between two parish councils escalates into a media event of astronomical proportion — leaving Father Bramigan attempting to undo what the miracle he needed has given him!

BUSINESS AS USUAL


VISIONS


THE ROBOT STORY


HIGHSIDE


SYNOPSIS: A child playing video games on his computer.

Casablanca Films Works

KISSY AND THE CHALLENGER


CANDY REGENTAG


SYNOPSIS: The real story of the true exploits and triumphs of Australia's golden boy of boxing, who fell from grace to a notorious drug dealer and was resurrected as a hero, when he died in Miami, lonely, beheaded and laid at the age of 21.

THE TIME GUARDIAN

Prod. company: Jen-Dixi Film Productions Prod. manager: Jennifer Dixo Prod. accountant: Jennifer Dixo

SYNOPSIS: The true story of the true exploits and triumphs of Australia's golden boy of boxing, who fell from grace to a notorious drug dealer and was resurrected as a hero, when he died in Miami, lonely, beheaded and laid at the age of 21.

WARM NIGHTS ON A SLOW MOVING TRAIN

Prod. company: Western Pacific Film Limited Prod. manager: Ross Dimsey Prod. accountant: Ross Dimsey

SYNOPSIS: The true story of the true exploits and triumphs of Australia's golden boy of boxing, who fell from grace to a notorious drug dealer and was resurrected as a hero, when he died in Miami, lonely, beheaded and laid at the age of 21.
PRODUCTION

Production Survey continued

Prod. designer
Richard Rooker

Composer
Bruce Warren

Exec. producers
Ken Markham, Bruce Warren

Prod. accountant
Horwath & Horwath

1st assistant director
David Munro

2nd assistant director
Jan Havelijn & Sheffield

Continuity
Carolyn Hagstrom

Elaine Lamont

Lighting cameraperson
John Stokes

Focus puller
Brad Sheldon

Costume designer
Christine Reeder

Key grip
David Wham

Boom operator
Bruce Walace

Make-up
Helen Harvey

Warobe
Jo Sheppard

Script supervisor
David Frasier

Neg. matching
Atlab

Cameraman
Richard Allen

DOP
Daniel Diamante

Length
90 minutes (approx.)

DOP

Shooting location

Casting
Colin Bowman (Tom), Penny Jones (Jenny), Cae Rees (Cathy), Greg Powells (David), Cagull (Sally), Andrew Cottrill (Owen), Paul Dibbins (Pete), David Clandening (Reggie)

Synopsis: A two-hour pilot for a family television series featuring a wildlife photographer, his assistant and the adventures in Australia as a natural history film crew.

MARAUDERS

Prod. company
The Magic Men

Producer
Mark Savage

Costume designer
Mark Savage

Scriptwriter
Mark Savage

Photography
Mark Savage

Special effects
Simone Smith

Synopsis: The film tells the story of a man who breaks with the conventions and taboos of an era in the pursuit of self-knowledge and sexual fulfillment.

PROGRESS TO KEEP

Title designer
Dale Duguid

Length
80 minutes

DOP

Synopsis:

Marauders

A film directed by Phillip Noyce, who breaks with convention and defies the taboos of an era in the pursuit of self-knowledge and sexual fulfillment.

THE STEAM DRIVEN RIVERBOAT BILL

Prod. company

Producer
Paul Williams

Story
Jeanette Overtone

Scriptwriter
Mark Savage

Synopsis: A film directed by Phillip Noyce, who breaks with convention and defies the taboos of an era in the pursuit of self-knowledge and sexual fulfillment.

THE TALE OF RUBY ROSE

Prod. company

Producer
BryanSchwartz

Story
Mark Savage

Scriptwriter
Mark Savage

Synopsis: A film directed by Phillip Noyce, who breaks with convention and defies the taboos of an era in the pursuit of self-knowledge and sexual fulfillment.

DOCTORS

AUSTRALIAN WILDERNESS SERIES

Prod. company
Kestral Films

Dist. company
Kestral Films

Prod. exec.
Bryan Schwartz

Director
John Lacey

Scriptwriter
Catherine Crampton

Synopsis: A film directed by Phillip Noyce, who breaks with convention and defies the taboos of an era in the pursuit of self-knowledge and sexual fulfillment.

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION
phone Kerry Hohenhaus

Starsound
Sir Samuel Griffith Drive, Mt. Coot-tha, QUEENSLAND
Phone: (07) 369 9999
Producers........................................................................................................................................Jim Dale

Gauge................................................................................................................................................16mm

accurate. Phone Kathy Bail on

Based on the original idea

Director.............................................................Bethwyn Serow

Dist. company............................Documents of

comment, culture and politics. It is the story

Editor.....................................................Jeffrey Brue

Photography........................................MARCUS CORN

Lab, liaison..................................................................................Ian Anderson

Length..................................................................................50 minutes

Shooting stock..................................................................................16mm

Cast: George Donikian.

Synopsis: Witch Hunt is a story of trial and error, innocence and guilt. It was an attempt to find a crime — the so-called ‘Greek spycyry’ — but it turned into a massive error in judgment that was revealed as a conspiracy far larger than anyone imagined. Elements of this conspiracy are still unfolding.

A WORLD OF FESTIVALS

Prod. company.................................................................Bardoor Pictures Pty Ltd

Producer..................................................Joey Barrow

Scriptwriter........................................Barry Soane

Editor............................................................Barry Soane

Synopsis: A documentary series featuring twelve European festivals. Each episode of the present-day people engaged in celebration to reflect on the events and changes have modified and shaped their society through time.

SHORTS

THE ANNIVERSARY

Prod. company.................................................................Proline Films Pty Ltd

Director..................................................Rod Wayman

Scriptwriter........................................Terry Carlyon

Sound recordist........................................Seán Molloy

Editor............................................................Edward McQueen-Mason

Synopsis: Continuity — Ronchi Bara-Skannon

Camera operator..............................................Terry Carlyon

Camera assistant............................................Keith Platt

Boom operator........................................................................Jimi Laking (McPhayden, Flon Keans (Arthur)

Synopsis: Nigel and Cynthia Hamilton hold a dinner-party celebrate 25 years marriage, with disastrous result. A madcap comedy.

FEATHERS

Prod. company.................................................................Proline Films Pty Ltd

Director..................................................Rod Wayman

Based on the short story by ....................................John Ruane

Photography........................................MARCUS CORN

Sound recordist........................................Seán Molloy

Editor............................................................Edward McQueen-Mason

Synopsis: More Australian farmers were killed flying bombs over Europe than in any other theatre of World War Two. Through archival footage and interviews with survivors and rel

WINGS OF THE STORM

Prod. company.................................................................Bardoor Pictures Pty Ltd

Director..................................................Zelda Rosenbaum

Scriptwriter........................................Howard Griffiths

Editor............................................................Graeme Roos

Synopsis: More Australian farmers were killed flying stones over Europe than in any other theatre of World War Two. Through archival footage and interviews with survivors and rel

VICTORIA’S CHILDREN

Prod. company.................................................................SBS TV

Director.................................................................John Baxter

Scriptwriter........................................Barbara A. Choppock

Synopsis: A group of young people look at life in the northern suburbs of Melbourne and the

WINCH HUNT

Prod. company.................................................................Channel Communications

Director..................................................Hazel Joiner

Synopsis: WINCH HUNT is a film about the life and work of Vincent van Gogh (1853-1890).

WAR BRIDES (working title)

Prod. company.................................................................Warrandyte Films Pty Ltd

Producer....................................................Tony Wilson

Production manager...........................................Kevin Moore

Synopsis: WAR BRIDES is the story of some of the thousands of Australian women that

CAST: Deborah Baeker, Elaine Bay (Interview)

SYNOPSIS: A group of young people look at life in the northern suburbs of Melbourne and the

Photography........................................MARCUS CORN

Lighting design............................................David Atkinson

Sound recordist........................................Seán Molloy

Editor............................................................Edward McQueen-Mason

Synopsis: MIDDRIFFINI

Camera operator............................................Terry Carlyon

Camera assistant............................................Keith Platt

Boom operator........................................................................Jimi Laking (McPhayden, Flon Keans (Arthur)

Synopsis: Nigel and Cynthia Hamilton hold a dinner-party celebrate 25 years marriage, with disastrous result. A madcap comedy.

FEATHERS

Prod. company.................................................................Proline Films Pty Ltd

Director..................................................Rod Wayman

Based on the short story by ....................................John Ruane

Photography........................................MARCUS CORN

Sound recordist........................................Seán Molloy

Editor............................................................Edward McQueen-Mason

Synopsis: More Australian farmers were killed flying stones over Europe than in any other theatre of World War Two. Through archival footage and interviews with survivors and rel

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Synopsis: WAR BRIDES is the story of some of the thousands of Australian women that

CAST: Deborah Baeker, Elaine Bay (Interview)

SYNOPSIS: A group of young people look at life in the northern suburbs of Melbourne and the
Synopsis: A thrill-seeker who has come to Sydney to experience the city's nightlife realises he is being followed by a mysterious figure who seems to know everything about him. Events unfold in a most unusual way, illustrating the ways in which people can sometimes intrigue, and sometimes frighten, each other.

The Sydney Morning Herald.
The Movers

Synopsis: A dramatized documentary from Robin Klein’s well known children’s book.

Raining Forest

Synopsis: Raining Forest is about the tropical rainforest of northern Queensland. The precious nature of the place will be conveyed using animation and Jeannie Bailey’s specialist art.

Rock Art

Synopsis: A documentation of Aboriginal rock painting in the Northern Territory.

Sounds Like Australia... Naturally

Synopsis:

New South Wales Film Corporation

CORRECTIVE SERVICE INSTITUTIONS

Producer:...PLH Films

Director:...Peter Livingstone-Horton

Photography:...Jenny O’Donnell

Synopsis: Provides a general view of the "Tasmanian" prison system.

Wood Machining

Synopsis: The video demonstrates the training of 7000 Tasmanian State prison workers in a variety of woodworking skills. Skills acquired through this training are part of a rehabilitation program.

Tasmanian Film Corporation

ROAD SAFETY

Synopsis: This film draws attention to the scientific laws of an herbarium, to reveal the rich history of scholarship, and common sights unity found there.

Tasmanian Film Corporation

Synopsis: A film to delve behind the scenes of Tasmanian Film Corporation.

Tasmania Film Corporation

Synopsis: Directed for eight to twelve-year-old schoolchildren, this dramatic documentary appears at accidents that occur on buses, in cars, riding bikes or just walking to and from school. Four particular stories are combined to show just what can happen in one minute, thus emphasizing the fundamental rules of road safety are forgotten.

Promotion Australia

Promotion Australia is part of the Department of Sport, Recreation and Tourism.

Paddy’s Market

Synopsis: A look at one of Australia’s open ‘air’ city markets.

Hand Made Musical Instruments

Synopsis: A video about the flora and wildlife that are protected in Australia’s unique national parks.

Kelpie Exports

Synopsis: One of Australia’s unique exports is charring herbs world-wide.

Work Resource Centre

Synopsis: A profile of Eamon Burke, campaigner for peace, who, at the age of eleven, has gained notoriety around the world.

Conservation Volunteers

Synopsis: A group of committed young and older people rebuild bush paths, fences and national parks, all as volunteers.

Sheltered Wool Workshop

Synopsis: Ultra fine fleece developed within a sheltered workshop proves a success.

Questacon

Synopsis: A new science centre travelling show.

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CINEMA PAPERS September — 83
PRE-PRODUCTION

AT ARMS LENGTH
Prod. company: Kurayra Pictures Pty Limited
Producer: Bill Hughes
Director: Susan Haworth
Associated producer: Susan Haworth
Budget: $1,010,000
Length: 90 minutes
Gauge: 16mm

The story of a group of friends who become involved in something of the top of the world. They find themselves drawn into a vicious circle.

FIELDS OF FIRE
Prod. company: Palm Beach Entertainment Pty Ltd
Producer: David Effick, Steve Kampman
Director: Rob Marchant
Screenwriters: Miranda Downes, Rob Marchant

PREDPERS:
Prod. company: Kurayra Pictures Pty Limited
Producer: Bill Hughes
Mary Gage
Assoc. producer: Susan Haworth
Budget: $1,510,000
Length: 95 minutes

SYNOPSIS: Based on the tragic story of the pioneering engineer, C.Y.O'Connor, the man who brought water to the Kalgoorlie goldfields.

PRINCE AT THE COURT OF IZRAAULUM
Prod. company: Somerset Films
Supervising producer: James M. Vernon
Director: Colin Eggleston
Screenwriter: Colin Eggleston

SYNOPSIS: An international thriller.

THE RED CREST
Prod. company: Kurayra Pictures Pty Limited
Producer: James M. Vernon
Supervising producer: James M. Vernon
Director: T. H. S. Ryan
Screenwriter: Andrew Knight

SYNOPSIS: A re-telling of the classic story of a woman's relationship with the delinquent girl in her care.

THE AUSTRALIAN CAMELEERS
Prod. company: Media World Pty Ltd
Producers: John Tatoulis, T. H. S. Ryan
Director: John Tatoulis
Screenwriter: Daniel Aveling
Photography: Gasteino N. Martini
Editor: Mark Grace
Assoc. producer: Yvonne Collins
Assoc. producer: George Heslop
Assoc. producer: T. H. S. Ryan
Researcher: Karen Bonycz
Budget: $1,000,000
Length: 60 minutes
Gauge: 16mm

Synopsis: A dramatized documentary on the plight of the Afghan camels brought to Australia to open the outback.

BLACK BEAUTY
Prod. company: Burbank Films
Producer: Roz Phillips
Screenwriter: J. L. Kane
Based on the novel by: Anna Sewell
Editors: Peter Jennings, Caroline Neave
Exec. producer: Carole Stacey
Assoc. producer: Rodney Lee
Assoc. producer: Andrew Young
Casting: Joy Crease
Costume: Gary Page
Storyboards: Tanya Viskich
Timing: Jean Tych
Assistant director: Warren Cave
Director: Studio 2, Geoff Collins
Painting supervisor: Jenny Schowe
Costume: Andi Bodin
Animation checkers: Liz Lane, Gary Craste
Assoc. producer: Kathryn deKnock, Shara Dally
Pre-production: Alex Nicholas
Length: 90 minutes
Gauge: 16mm

Synopsis: A raunchy but tasteful comedy about an up-and-coming barrister who becomes mesmerised by the sight of beautiful women.

NANCY WAKE
Prod. company: Auckland Feature Films Dist. company: Pre-sale Seven Network Prod. co.: New Line Cinema
Screenwriter: Roger Le Messurier
Based on the novel by: Russell Bradson
Script editor: Barbara Bishop
Producer: John Sturzaker
Director: Alan Bateham
Gauge: 16mm
Length: 89 minutes


PALS
Prod. company: Communicom/Australian International Pictures
Dist. company: (worldwide except Australia) George Burrell, George Stephenon
Title designer: Neil Graham
Laboratory: Atlab
Lab. cost: $75,000
Budget: $776,000
Length: 50 minutes
Gauge: 16mm

Synopsis: The autobiography of a horse, following the life of Black Beauty through a series of stories, events, songs and costumes, and the changing circumstances of his life.

THE BREEZE
Prod. company: Mobi Productions
Producers: Enzo Vecchio, Danny Della
Directors: Enzo Vecchio, Danny Della
Screenwriters: Enzo Vecchio, Danny Della
Photography: Enzo Vecchio, Danny Della
Prod. designer: Carl Rizzo
Art director: Rosario Della
Costume designer: Anna Maria Della
Length: 75 minutes
Gauge: 16mm

Synopsis: A story of a group of friends who become involved in something of the top of the world. They find themselves drawn into a vicious circle.

PILGRIMS
Prod. company: Kurayra Pictures Pty Limited
Producer: Bill Hughes
Mary Gage
Assoc. producer: Susan Haworth
Budget: $1,510,000
Length: 95 minutes

SYNOPSIS: Based on the tragic story of the
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Dist. company ................................................. Grundy Television Pty Ltd

Director .......................................................... Ray Watson

Screenwriter .................................................. Ray Watson

Based on the original idea by.............................. Ray Watson

Sound recordist ................................................... Grant Voiger

Make-up ............................................................ Louis Jorgensen

HAIR

Prod. company ................................................. Four Winds

Dist. company ..................................................... Four Winds

Director ............................................................ Sean Nash

Screenwriters .................................................... Lizzy Dean, Peter Morgan

Based on the original by................................. Peter Morgan

Make-up ............................................................ Jody Paody

BEHIND THE SCENES

Prod. company ..................................................... Catt Motion Pictures

Director ............................................................ Grant Vosler

Screenwriter ..................................................... Grant Vosler

Based on the original idea by............................. Grant Vosler

Make-up ............................................................ Philip West

THE LIVING BORDER

Prod. company ..................................................... ABC Television

Dist. company ..................................................... ABC Television

Producer ............................................................ John Reeves

Screenwriter ..................................................... John Reeves

Based on the original idea by............................. John Reeves

Make-up ............................................................ Gail Stringer

THE MELBA

Prod. company ..................................................... ABC Television

Dist. company ..................................................... ABC Television

Director ............................................................ John Reeves

Screenwriter ..................................................... John Reeves

Based on the original idea by............................. John Reeves

Make-up ............................................................ Gail Stringer

THE OH Z SERIES

Prod. company ..................................................... ABC Television

Director ............................................................ John Reeves

Screenwriter ..................................................... John Reeves

Based on the original idea by............................. John Reeves

Make-up ............................................................ Gail Stringer

THE ROB

Prod. company ..................................................... ABC Television

Director ............................................................ John Reeves

Screenwriter ..................................................... John Reeves

Based on the original idea by............................. John Reeves

Make-up ............................................................ Gail Stringer

THE VISITOR

Prod. company ..................................................... ABC Television

Director ............................................................ John Reeves

Screenwriter ..................................................... John Reeves

Based on the original idea by............................. John Reeves

Make-up ............................................................ Gail Stringer

THE WIG

Prod. company ..................................................... ABC Television

Director ............................................................ John Reeves

Screenwriter ..................................................... John Reeves

Based on the original idea by............................. John Reeves

Make-up ............................................................ Gail Stringer

This concludes the document.
CINEMA PAPERS — 87

Number 2 (April 1974): Censorship, Frank Moorhouse, Nicolas Roeg, Sandy Harbutt, Film under Akande, Between the Wars, Alvin Purpie.


Number 10 (September-October 1976): Nagisa Oshima, Philippe Mora, Krzysztof Zanussi, Marco Ferreri, Marco Bellochio, gay cinema.


Number 17 (August-September 1978): Bill Bain, Isabelle Huppert, Brian May, Polish cinema, Newsfront, The Night the Prodigy Was Born.

Number 18 (October-November 1978): John Lamond, Sonia Borg, Alan Tanner, Indian cinema, Dimboola, Cathy's Child.

Number 19 (January-February 1979): Antony Ginnane, Stanley Harris, Jeremy Thomas, Andrew Sarris, sponsored documentaries, Blue Fin.

Number 20 (March-April 1979): Ken Cameron, Claude Lelouch, Jim Sharman, French cinema, My Brilliant Career.

Number 22 (July-August 1979): Bruce Petty, Luciana Arrighi, Albe Thoms, Stax, Alvin's Birthday.


Number 25 (February-March 1980): David Puttnam, Janet Strickland, Everett de Roche, Peter Farman, Chain Reaction, Str.


Number 27 (June-July 1980): Randal Kleiser, Peter Yeardham, Donald Richie, Richard Franklin's obituary of Alfred Hitchcock, the New Zealand film industry, Grendel Grendel Grendel.

Number 28 (August-September 1980): Joan Fontaine, Tony Williams, law and insurance, Far East.


Number 37 (April 1982): Stephen Mac­Lear, Jackie Weaver, Caia, Pa­ruca, Peter Ustinov, women in drama, Monkey Grip.

Number 38 (June 1982): Geoffrey Burrows, George Miller, James Ivory, Phoebe, Fontaine, Tony Williams, law and insurance, Far East.

Number 39 (August 1982): Helen Morse, Brian Trenchard-Smith, Ian Holm, Arthur Hiller, Jerzy Toeplitz, Brazilian cinema, Heartbreak.


Number 43 (May-June 1983): Sydney Pollack, Denby Lawrence, Graeme Clifford, The Dismissal, Careful He Might Hear You.


Number 52 (July 1985): John Schlesinger, Gillian Armstrong, Alan Parker, soap operas, TV news, film advertising, Don't Call Me Girlie, For Love Alone, Double Souls.


Number 55 (January 1986): James Stewart, Debbie Byrne, Brian Trenchard-Smith, John Hargreaves, stunts, smoke machines, Dead-End Drive-In, The More Things Change, Kangaroo, Tracy.

Number 58 (July 1986): Woody Allen, Reinhardt Haupt, Orrin Welles, the Cinematheque Française, The Fugue, Dwellers, Great Expectations: The Untold Story and The Last Frontier.

Other Publications

- The Australian Motion Picture Yearbook 1980. $15 (Overseas: $30 surface, $40 air mail).
- The Australian Motion Picture Yearbook 1981/82. $15 (Overseas: $30 surface, $40 air mail).
- The Australian Motion Picture Yearbook 1983. $25 (Overseas: $35 surface, $45 air mail).
- The Documentary Film in Australia edited by Ross Lansell and Peter Beilby. $12.95 (Overseas: $18 surface, $24 air mail).
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