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WE PUT TOS DEATH
Erwin Rado was director of the Melbourne Film Festival for 28 years (1954-80 and 1983). During that time he oversaw its rise to what many considered Australia's premier retrospective festival and one of the world's more important.

The Festival introduced thousands of Victorians to a world cinema poorly represented in commercial cinemas: that is, outside that of Hollywood and Britain. His stewardship overlapped the French New Wave, the Bergman-led Swedish revival, the flowering of the Czechoslovakian and Yugoslavian cinemas, and, of course, the triumphant Hungarian cinema of Jancso, Szabo and Gabor.

Erwin's selection of films, in conjunction with his committees, led many film buffs to rename the event the Middle-European Festival. For those audacious enough to challenge the director on this, Erwin would display all his passionate eloquence, arguing that he chose films only on the basis of their quality, not their country of origin. If it so happened that every year Hungary produced the best films . . . Erwin was equally forthright about his belief in short films and went so far as to proov the cinema's foyer to order back inside those who preferred to wait it out till the feature started. Quite rightly, he recognised the short film as an art form in itself and not just as a testing ground for would-be feature directors. (The government bodies trailed him badly on this.)

In judging Erwin's time at the Festival, it is not enough to survey the extraordinary number of excellent films exhibited, or to praise the efficient way the Festival was run, let alone explain the pleasure it gave so many thousands. Festivals have another cultural function, often ignored, and that is the learning environment they provide for filmmakers. Many writers have felt that Melbourne's filmmakers are more European in style and content than those from the rest of Australia. If this is so, Erwin's selection of films was an important factor.

But Erwin was often a more direct influence, encouraging and inspiring those local filmmakers who took the time to understand the man and allow him to be their tutor. He was stern about what he thought was second rate, but praised warmly and sincerely those efforts of which he was proud.

Erwin was also a force in his pioneering work at the Australian Film Institute. In that great Australian tradition, his work there is today little recorded or lauded, and, sadly, often ignored by subsequent administrations. A greater regret, however, is the one felt by many who had seen Erwin's attempts to launch his own film productions thwarted by his ill-health. What Erwin would have brought to such productions — his passionate, romantic nature, his Europeaness, his search for the first rank of films — could only have enriched the Australian industry.

He is already missed.

Scott Murray

Frames, the 1988 Festival of Australian Film and Video, takes place in Adelaide from 18 to 25 March. Haydn Keenan's Pandemonium and Dennis O'Rourke's Cannibal Tours will have their Australian premieres, and there will be a range of special events and discussion sessions. For more information, write to Frames, P.O. Box 33, Rundle Mall, Adelaide 5000. Cannibal Tours, soon to be released by Ronin Films, is described by Dennis O'Rourke as two journeys: "The first is that depicted — rich and bourgeois tourists, on a luxury cruise up the mysterious Sepik River, in the jungles of Papua New Guinea . . . the packaged version of a 'heart of darkness'. The second journey (the real text of the film) is a metaphysical one. It is an attempt to discover the place of the 'Other' in the popular imagination. It affords a glimpse at the real (mostly unconsidered or misunderstood) reasons why 'civilised' people wish to encounter the 'primitive'."
We have three copies of the video of The Big Easy to give away to readers, courtesy of Seven Keys. To win a copy of this "must see, must have" movie, just answer this simple question: What is the name of Dennis Quaid's brother who appears in The Big Easy? Mark your envelope 'This Is The Big Easy, Darlin', and send the answer to Cinema Papers, 43 Charles Street, Abbotsford 3067. First three correct entries will win.

Our New Zealand correspondent, Mike Nicolaidi, is unable to continue writing for Cinema Papers, because of increased commitments. Mike has kept readers in touch with the latest issues and developments in the New Zealand film industry for many years, and we are grateful for his contribution. We will continue to give New Zealand regular coverage in the magazine.

The British Film Institute's summer school, 'Hearts of the World — Melodrama and Politics in Cinema', will be held at the University of Stirling, Scotland, from 23 to 30 July. It will examine the cultural and ideological meanings of film melodrama by looking at its historical antecedents in a range of cultural practices; theatre, the novel and painting, the interdependent relationship of melodrama and realism and melodrama's capacity to transcend national and cultural differences. Further information is available from Alpa Patel, Summer School Secretary, BFI, 21 Stephen Street, London W1P 1PL.

The revitalised Australian Screen Studies Association in Victoria is organising a range of activities for the coming year. The first of these will be 'Zips, Whips and Clips', a weekend forum on the cinema and secret pleasures and themes of totem and taboo, to be held at the State Film Theatre in April. Seduction The Cruel Woman will screen on 9 April at 2 pm and Blue Velvet on 10 April at 2 pm, both followed by speakers and a debate.

Correspondence to ASSA can be directed to Anne Hutton at the State Film Centre of Victoria, 1 Macarthur Street, East Melbourne 3002.

The Australian Film Institute's extensive film and video distribution catalogue is available, free of charge, from the AFI, 47 Little La Trobe Street, Melbourne, or ring (03) 662 1944.

Women in Film and Television have compiled the first national register of women in film, TV and video. For more information contact WFT at P.O. Box 648, Broadway, New South Wales, 2007, or ring (02) 281 2058. The register costs $7 plus postage.

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How did you come to make this film? Well of course every time I make a film I say I’ll never do it again. But it’s actually very much like having a baby. It really hurts and you think, I’ll never go through this again; then the memory of it fades.

Anyway, People for Nuclear Disarmament (PND) were given the proceeds from the sale of a Victoria Cross to make a film. And because of my work in the peace movement I was very interested in the contradiction that exists between the fact that about 80 per cent of Australians, if you pay attention to the polls, don’t want to see any country having nuclear weapons, much less using them, and about 70 per cent, sometimes more, sometimes less, feel that Australia must have a nuclear alliance, that is, an alliance with the United States. So I was intrigued about the meaning of this contradiction.

And because I have a sort of psychoanalytic turn of mind anyway, it led me in all sorts of directions, thinking about dependence and independence, nations and personal relations and so on. Things I had perhaps been stirring around and stewing around inside me for quite a while had an outlet in this film. I had originally planned it as a documentary. I had some idea that I would pick up the camera, because that’s actually what I really like to do, and I would walk around with the camera and just talk to people all over Australia about related subjects. But anyway it’s very different from what the film turned out to be — a new and different kind of docudrama. And the interesting thing about the film as a docudrama is that most docudramas are acted films which have a flavour of documentary. In this film, some of the documentary has the flavour of drama, and I think that that’s unique.

Was that a conscious decision? No. Almost to the end of shooting I thought I was going to make the first kind of documentary. But there were so many different inputs to the film that were quite unpredictable — one of them was the camera style developed by Michael Edols — in fact it had a different flavour that I’m coming to be quite interested in.

You were looking for a more documentary style of shooting the film? Definitely. In fact I felt we would be doing many of the scenes in a sort of psychodrama manner, which was something I’d done in 1970, with Film For Discussion, and had been very interested in pursuing ever since. But we didn’t. In part, I think it was also because of the participation of Alex Glasgow, who has written a lot for television, and because he was able to write lines that were very interesting, the actors wanted to use them.

And why did you decide to set the film in Fremantle? Well there were several steps that led to that decision. First of all I sat down with
Kit Guyatt who worked with me, and later with Madelon Wilkins, and we tried to analyse what we wanted to communicate to whom. And we realised that the people we could probably reach with our kind of ideas, whatever they might be, would be people who were pretty immune to documentaries. People have seen it all. Jim Downes has made all the programs you could ever possibly want to make on the subject over the last 15 years in Four Corners. Excellently excellent films have been made. Also we tended to think what actually influences us. And it isn't always just the facts. Sometimes there has to be a way of presenting an idea that really catches on, and I think that what really stuck in my mind was that some years ago when Allies came out I did a review of it in Filmnews and while I was writing this review a metaphor occurred to me: what if the United States were a man and Australia a woman and they were lovers. And if this man dragged this woman all around the Pacific in all these wars and adventures, and was very domineering towards her, and she just said, “I want to go with you everywhere, I’ll do whatever you want, I just want to be with you.” You’d say, look, that’s a pretty terrible relationship.” But because it happens between nations and not between people, you tend to see it through a filter. It’s all respectable because it’s political, it’s economic. I couldn’t get that idea out of my mind. And that’s why we decided on making a film in which there was a parallel between the relationship between countries and the relationship between people. Of course when you come to actually make it, the parallel can’t be very precise. It drifts in and out of the metaphor.

Once we had decided that would be the structure of the film, we looked around for someone to make it in Sydney, and we could not find the conditions that would allow us to write the story and make the film with a sufficient amount of documentary in it. If we had written a drama — and almost to the end, I kept thinking we’d made a documentary — if we’d written a drama, well perhaps we could have set it anywhere. But for us we had to find a place where the relationship between Australia and the United States gave us enough of a contradiction in real life in which to put a personal relationship. I’d spent quite a lot of time in Fremantle and it seemed that the America’s Cup and the development of an excessive lust for money and wealth and power, in conjunction with the fact that the warships were coming in there every couple of months, made this really the only place to make the film. I had some ideas about character and so on, and I went to Fremantle and Madelon Wilkins and I did a lot of research there for quite some time and came up with some more ideas.

I was lucky that this coincided with a bit of a story. “There’s this bloke Alex Glasgow, he’s sort of along the same lines as you.” I’d seen When The Boat Comes In, which I thought was fabulous, and when I realised that not only was he the man that sang the song, he had actually written a couple of the episodes, I thought that I should meet him. Alex was very good. He helped me out of sticky places and was critical without pushing me about the ideas. We developed a structure for the film together. Then we spent a lot of time looking for people to be in the film. And then with these people and with Alex we had a two-week workshop, where we’d try things out and then Alex would go home and analyse them up to try to pull together things that didn’t work. Sometimes we wrote a sort of a script, sometimes he wrote some alternatives, and then the actors at the time on the spot would work from that script that we’d developed. But although that sounds spontaneous, an awful lot of thought and analysis had gone into it over months and months.

And how about the West Australian film community? How did they relate to you as a Sydney filmmaker?

In Perth they are very sensitive, and rightly so, because it is importation of people who are imported into Perth to make films and the local people don’t get the work they ought to get. But we did have a lot of people working on the film, especially young people without heaps of experience who were just fabulous. The cameraman and the sound recordist came from the East, but that’s about all. All the people in the film were local.

Did you specifically set out to cast non-actors in certain roles?

There’s hardly any actors in the film in fact. The main woman and man are actors, Alex Glasgow has done a little acting, and the American is someone who is actually a film director who has been an actor too — he’s very good — and other than that, there aren’t any actors in the film. For the father-in-law we wanted to get an actor and couldn’t find one, so we cast non-actors — they were all too English and theatrical and so we decided we would just have to have the real thing. We wrote to Equity about it and they said that for people who were not playing themselves we should have actors. They were very helpful; they understood the nature of the film, and the nature of the film is that no money goes to the production company until everyone is paid off. All the investors are people who are really not in it for the money but for the issues, and any profit goes to the peace movement. So it is a different kind of film. I wasn’t paid a wage and Dick Mason, the executive producer, actually had to put in money. He worked at Kennedy Miller so that he could provide this film with his resources.

Had you planned from the very beginning to use a lot of news footage?

Yes. If we had known we were doing a drama we would have had a tighter script. I guess, if we had had the time, but in fact all of those things were done after we had done the location shooting. We came back East and analysed what we had done, and tried to see what material we needed. Some of the news material we had gathered when we were in the West and made into programs already, but most of it we did afterwards. So we had to research all the archives, get all the stuff together and make video programs. I’d never worked in video before and I was a bit shocked at how expensive it was. But again, we got a lot of help.

What about the ratio between media footage and drama?

People have suggested that there’s too much media material, but in fact it’s a mere fragment of the programs we actually made. We didn’t understand how strong the dramatic side of it would be and how difficult it would then be to insert these television programs that Anna watches. In fact one of them is that 2½ minutes long was once in its entirety a wonderful program of nine minutes. There was no way to put it in. I think we’ll have to release it separately. We made a nine-minute program on the history of the military tie between Australia and the United States.

Always we were trying to work out how to balance these things out and it was very difficult because we didn’t always have the material in the drama we needed for intercutting with the documentary. Kit Guyatt is an absolutely wonderful editor and we just wrestled with it.

And after this film did you say you were never going to make another one?

No I’m never going to make another one again, for sure this time. The kids look at me and roll their eyes and say, “You said that before.” But making a film on a very low budget like this is absolutely gruelling. It’s exploitative to other people — sure they said they wanted to work for basic wages or they wanted to volunteer, but I just don’t know. People worked for nothing, then I’d do it. Or if everybody could get paid and there was enough time and money, then I’d do it.

Has winning the Byron Kennedy Award helped you at all?

Yes, it’s been fabulous. I have to think of Byron all the time which is bizarre, because I can’t say that he and I saw eye to eye when we were in the [Sydney Filmmakers’] Co-op together; not that we had big arguments, but he was in a different direction from me. I feel as if I’m the bride of Byron, he’s comes from heaven and I think of him all the time. That’s really changed my life, thinking of Byron all the time. But more than that, it has a very practical function. It says on all our propaganda, our leaflets and so on, “Awarded the prestigious Byron Kennedy Award”. And this seems to make a difference to people. At first I didn’t know what to do with it, but then people told me and now . . . I’m not very keen on those kinds of things and I feel very embarrassed about getting it. I tell people what it really is for is for being a good Communist.
IN GHOSTS . . . OF THE CIVIL DEAD, MUSIC VIDEOMAKERS EVAN ENGLISH AND JOHN HILLCOAT HAVE GONE DIRECTLY TO JAIL. JILLIAN BURT LOOKS AT THE STORY OF A FILM BEHIND BARS.

Ghosts . . . Of The Civil Dead concerns itself with the social and moral complexity of life inside a maximum security prison. It is a movie made by a team with almost no previous feature film experience — the key people have considerable recognition and notoriety in the field of music videos. Producer Evan English has been making acclaimed, stylistically diverse music videos for about 10 years (with Paul Goldman, in a company called The Rich Kids). Actor and co-screenwriter Nick Cave achieved fame with his band The Birthday Party. As a solo performer his songs have become the very literary narratives of a wild imagination and he has also been writing plays and a novel.

Director John Hillcoat made short films and music videos and has written two feature scripts. In 1984 he began a correspondence with Jack Henry Abbott, the convicted murderer who became a literary celebrity with his book In The Belly Of The Beast. This led to his collaboration on Ghosts.

The film is not a documentary in any sense, but it harbours no romantic illusions about the circumstances of prison life. It might seem an ugly and volatile subject for a group of people who are best known for putting the visual music to pop songs.

But society has always had difficulties in dealing with people who don’t conform to the rules, whether they are criminal outcasts who remove themselves from the norm by aggressive negative behaviour, or creative filmmakers who remove themselves from the fashionable artistic mainstream with an unorthodox vision and methods that can be construed as rebellious.

To research the movie Evan English and John Hillcoat talked to prison guards, psychologists and people who had been to prison. They also made a tour of 15 or 16 American “new generation” prisons that are decorated in subduing pastel colours and patrolled by the unceasing gaze of electronic eyes. The prison in Ghosts most closely resembles one in Marion, Illinois. “Marion is a Level 6, Federal Penitentiary and it’s the end of the line,” says English. “It has the so-called ‘most violent criminals in American history’. What you find when you actually go there is that there are a tremendous amount of very intelligent and articulate people who have violent tendencies who cannot adjust to institutional life. That’s why people go to Marion. And what you find there — in line with this level of intelligence and articulateness — is that they are spiritual and philosophical leaders of various sub-cultures. For instance there’s the Aryan brotherhood, the Black Moslems, Hindus, American Indians and Mexican mafia.

Through a process of what they call ‘selective incapacitation’ potential trouble makers are scooped up and isolated. What you’ve got in Marion is like either the bottom of the barrel or the top of something — extremely strong personalities.”
There are three units of prisoners in *Ghosts*, each separated by varying degrees of mobility and privileges. "The first is 'population'. They've got freedom of movement, they're walking around, they're dealing drugs, they're into the drug culture. They've got TV up there, porno, they just shoot up and smoke dope. It's like St Kilda really. Then in the maximum security you have a fair few intellectuals, a lot of charismatic, philosophically developed people and they have very, very restricted movement, one out of a cell, one at a time, handcuffed, escorted by three officers. Then we have what we call solitary confinement, the hole. It's one long corridor, it's more like conventional prisons and you don't need this psychological reasoning or anything, you just throw the man in there and lock him away for six months."

The characters were shaped by people that they had read of and met and finally by the people who portray them in the movie, fleshing out their roles. The story takes up thematic concerns that come out of the compromised reality that is the basis of prison operation. "It's got nothing to do with going back into the real world, let's face it, nothing at all, and that's what a lot of this film is about. Probably one of the strongest lines in this film — and in the ABC documentary *Out Of Sight, Out Of Mind* as well — is that patently, prison makes people worse," English says.

One of the contentions of *Ghosts* — and it's a very contentious issue — is that in fact that may be deliberate, that the perpetuation of the criminal class and the acceleration of criminal tendencies via prison is in fact a useful device for society. That's one of the film's thematic concerns. And the purpose of that is that you have, to use hackneyed old cliches, the land owning class and the workers, and the perpetuation of the criminal. The fear of the criminal justifies things like the police. The police are nothing but a social control mechanism to maintain the status quo."

While *Ghosts* was being filmed in October and November of last year in a disused factory in Port Melbourne, television viewers around Australia were stunned by the screening of the documentary, *Out Of Sight, Out Of Mind* in which madness, suicide, nervous disease, sexual licence, drug addiction and a brutal manipulative hierarchy in an enclosed society operating without self-control, discipline or shame, had broken the inmates down to cynical barbaric rabble. And most significantly, in Pentridge's Jika Jika division (a 'new age' section not unlike the fictional prison in *Ghosts*) five prisoners died in a fire after barricading themselves in to protest that their treatment was inhuman. There is a growing concern and awareness about prisons, but can a movie base itself on such potent reality?

"How do you turn reality into some sort of drama? You don't," English says. "All you can do is take the bones of reality and, in all fairness to the people who endure 10 years in a cell, what we are doing here doesn't relate in any shape or form. You can take the bones of a dramatic form and you hope, you do more than hope, you desire that the final form has significance for the viewer. You lose sight of the fact that this actually happens to a lot of people, rightly or wrongly, and without any morality attached to it. It's really important that if you're attempting to say anything, in some way you've got to have your springboard as reality otherwise it's impotent. The overall intention of the movie is to have an impact, not just in a sensational sense but in a fundamental sense, on those who view it."

Evan English and Paul Goldman began making music videos while studying film at Swinburne College, and used crews made up of fellow students, many of whom stayed with them and are working on *Ghosts*. Paul Goldman is director of photography on *Ghosts*. The Rich Kids began making music videos when it was still a new medium and they drew attention to themselves with youthful, brattish behaviour and developed a reputation for arrogance. English's interest in the subject matter of *Ghosts* developed over a long period, while he was engaged in making the video. It was not a sudden development of conscience. I think that a particular turning point was realising what a rat race the music industry was, and going to America. You're a colonial boy from the suburbs of Melbourne and you land yourself in Los Angeles. What an eye opener! We spent about 2½ years in LA as well as living in London. You develop as you get older but I guess it does look strange when you look at 'Walk On By' (Jo Jo Zep) and you look at this film. But they can be the same you that we made the film we made 'Something So Strong' (Crowded House) which is absolutely unabashed romantic cuteness. It's good; who wants to be tied thematically for your whole life?

"It's schizophrenic. When you look at all the work I've done with Paul it looks schizophrenic. We've made slick love stories and the rough-as-guts stuff that no one would play. We do like to play games and our videos were about teaching ourselves filmic tricks as much as anything else and doing it in the commercial medium. There were two things that we wanted to learn when we made videos: we wanted to learn how to move the camera and we also wanted to gain commercial credibility and this film is the result of doing that. Our videos are as slick as hell and we worked it like a charm. You go to Hollywood and they're amazed and they think that you can really do something.

It also keeps them guessing in the sense that only by having the commercial reel that we had can you make something that goes against the commercial sort of cliched grain. If we had a whole bunch of stuff like 'Nick The Stripper' (The Birthday Party) on that, or similar material, they'd just say 'You're a bunch of arty wankers' and 'Fuck off' and you'd never get an opportunity."

*Ghosts* features a couple of musicians who have been in some of the Rich Kids' most inventive music videos, Dave Mason (of the Reels) and Nick Cave. "Nick plays a guy called Maynard who is brought into the maximum security unit. He is an absolute psychotic lunatic, mad as hell, who upsets basically every side of the fence: the guards, the prisoners, everybody hates his guts. He's a bad piece of chemistry at a particularly bad time. He provokes everybody. Out of a 90-strong cast only 25 are actors and what we found is that the non-actors are really good." Some of the actors are ex-prisoners.

The marketing of the movie is also going to take advantage of the connection with the music world. Nick Cave, along with Bad Seeds group members Mick Harvey and Blixa Bargeld are doing the music for the movie. "Blixa makes noises, you couldn't call it music as such.
There will be some music but Nick and Mick and Blixa’s brief is to contribute sound effects, atmosphere and music. There’s going to be an album and all that sort of stuff. They’re tremendously excited, Nick in particular, about the opportunity to create something aurally around an idea that he’s taken by. He really loves prison, he loves the really bent quality.

*Ghosts* was made for the modest sum of $1.6 million. “What I’d found when we’d made music videos is that I cannot be answerable to anybody,” says English. “We work best creatively when there’s monetary control. That’s not just my personality, I think it’s a constant that artistic control is economic control, and so what I wanted to do was to be basically the executive producer.”

Though *Ghosts* is a brave and ambitious project, English is aware of the shortcomings and difficulties of a small budget production. “We are talking about a million dollar film. We are making a motion picture that we have less money per minute to spend on than we work with on music videos. We’re talking about working for $10,000 a minute — finished footage — and we are talking about up to $20,000 on music videos, without the addition of the overheads and post-production that we have here. We’re limited by money. We’re limited by our own inexperience. We’re limited by time.

“The whole thing has been less than a dream ride. That’s been accentuated by a lack of money and inexperience: we’re talking the director, the producer, the production manager, the directors of photography, the cameramen, the lighting designer — we’re all on our first feature and that’s a lot to overcome. It does show, but hopefully our raw intuition and talent makes up for it in some ways.

“We have made mistakes and we’ll continue to make mistakes but you find often enough that people with a lot of movie experience probably make worse ones, and spend a lot more money making worse mistakes and the net worth of what they’re doing is zilch. I think that one of the unique things is that we control our destiny right here, between John and me, and we make the film that we want to make and that’s unique. And the sort of family that’s grown up through the music videos and out of Swinburne, it’s a nice extended family and that’s the sort of passion that I like.”
How has the glasnost policy affected the way films are made in the Soviet Union?
MARY COLBERT who recently visited the USSR, takes a close look at the dramatic restructuring of its film industry.

When Mikhail Gorbachev outlined his 'glasnost' policy for liberalising the arts and press at the 27th Party Congress few realised how penetrating would be its impact on Soviet cinema.
Sceptics dismissed it as diplomatic, if not propagandistic, rhetoric, typical of a polished politician. The changes, if any, were expected to be little more than cosmetic.

Since the beginnings of the socialist state, politics and film had been inextricably linked in an uneasy relationship. Party lines dictated policy and vigilant bureaucrats protected the ideological safety of the state with stringent censorship. If party lines changed, art was expected to follow. Those who wished to make bold statements had to retreat behind the safety of history, allegory and the classics. Punishment for not toeing the line was silence. So, for many film makers the course of least resistance was easier. Now the new leader was encouraging a swing so far the other way it was difficult to know how to bridge the gap between word and action.

Yet Gorbachev’s speech became the catalyst and official seal of approval for the most dramatic upheaval of the film industry since Lenin’s nationalisation of ‘the most important art’ in the cause of the October revolution.

Both Lenin and Gorbachev had shown an acute awareness of the power of film, yet Gorbachev’s reform involved relaxation of controls of the bureaucratic film body Lenin had established 70 years ago, Goskino, which for so long maintained a stranglehold over creative decisions, ideological direction, production and distribution. Lenin had centralised the state film machinery, now Gorbachev wanted to decentralise it.

Film makers who had long been dissatisfied with what they considered the stagnant state of the art were sparked to action by Gorbachev’s words. After all, what did they have to lose? For a considerable number, their films were sitting ‘frozen’ on the shelves.

At the 5th Congress of the Soviet Filmmakers Union (SFU) — a body representing the 6500 film workers — they vented their accumulated grievances (“in what could have been 7 on the Richter scale” one of them recalls), ousted two-thirds of the previous leadership and replaced them with ‘new blood’. In an unprecedented secret ballot they elected controversial director Elem Klimov first secretary (head) of the union.

Klimov, whose works had caused clashes with authorities since the making of his first graduate diploma film
and had been banned for 20, 10 and five years respectively, was a particularly appropriate choice for the position — determined, critical, outspoken, charismatic, and highly respected for his talent by fellow filmmakers. He did not seek the job, and in that perverse way of fate, claims he probably got it for that reason. After the success of Come And See (which won the Gold Medal at the Moscow Film Festival in 1985) he wanted to continue directing again — after all, six films in 23 years is not a prolific total — but the pull of the cause was stronger. “What could I do? This was such an important time — and it might never come again,” he recalls.

One of the key resolutions adopted at the congress was the formation of a Conflicts Commission, headed by Pravda critic Andrei Plakhov, appointed to view previously banned and shelved films and, provided they met standards of quality, to seek their release. The basic premise was that everything of artistic value should become the property of the people. The Commission swiftly went about their task and within a few weeks presented a list of 50 films, the first of which soon began to make their way to the screens.

Meanwhile, practising a little public relations, the SFU Board invited 50 members of FIPRESCI (an international film critics' association) to a resort on the Baltic coast for a little viewing.

The newly released works quickly attracted attention. Abuladze's Repentance, an expose of the Stalinist cult (see Cinema Papers 67, p6) broke all box office records within the first month of release. The Soviet press, encouraged by Gorbachev, warmed to their task of publicising the 'thawing'.

Other previously banned works followed — Klimov's Agonia and Farewell, Panfilov's Theme, Kira Muratova's Long Goodbyes and Short Farewells, Sokurov's Mournful Symphathy, Alexei Gherman's My Friend Ivan Lapshin — and audiences flocked in droves to see them. They were works of quality, but then forbidden fruit is always juicier. People were intrigued to discover for themselves the motives for the shelving; some had been banned for obviously bold statements, others for much more obscure ideological travesties, such as the negative treatment of progress and technology in Farewell or the mention of a Jewish emigre's creative aspirations in Theme.

For some of the filmmakers, such as Sokurov and Gherman, the novelty of release for the first time was exhilarating. One of Gherman's earlier works had only been banned but Lenfilm Studios was asked to pay compensation to the state for 'mispending' money on its production.

Meanwhile, the films were scooping prestigious awards at international film festivals, such as Berlin, where Theme won best film and the international critics' prize. Other Soviet films were being acclaimed at Delhi, Venice, Mannheim and other film events. A tremendous upsurge of interest in Soviet cinema was taking place.

Tarkovsky once distinguished two types of films: those that imitate life and those that create their own world. Many of the banned belonged to the latter. The censors usually favoured the former. Now, films that once had no audience enjoy cult status for that very reason.

Yet the SFU refused to rest on its laurels, claiming that the quality films were proportionately few in number out of the 150 (or so) features produced each year in the Soviet Union. They expressed concern at a decline in cinema attendances, although these are still extremely high compared to the West. Any cinema that can sell 4 billion tickets per year (watching 70 per cent Soviet films), and draw 50 million to one of its blockbusters, is
in quite a healthy state, although the admission price is only about 45 cents.

The SFU stronghold was determined to proceed still further. It was claimed that more fundamental changes were needed so that real democratisation of the industry could occur. "We want to work on a chain of responsibility but it should exist at all levels. Instant restructuring is hardly possible but it must begin to gather momentum," urged Klimov.

As much of the criticism revolved around Goskino, Gorbachev obliged by replacing the previous head of 17 years, Fillipp Yermash, with much more dynamic Alexander Kamshalov (previously from the cinema section of the Central Committee), a man more likely to strike a rapport with the West. Alex Rudnev was appointed head of Sovexport film, and in no time the promotional materials began to reveal a slicker image. Editors of major film magazines — Film Art and Soviet Screen — were replaced by more dynamic colleagues.

Yet for any major reform the entire foundation of the industry needed rebuilding and replacement by a new model. At the press conference at the January 1987 plenum of the SFU, Klimov insisted ‘‘the situation will hardly change radically as long as we do not radically change the methods of making movies’’. The change proposed was a complete transformation from a centralised, state-subsidised model to what virtually was a system of free enterprise.

The aim was to do away with the bureaucratic pyramid and through decentralisation to allow studios greater autonomy, artistically, administratively and financially. For an art form that had so long been controlled by state mechanisms it was an unprecedented departure, but one that would ‘‘lead to greater democratisation, freedom and responsibility for the results’’ claimed Klimov.

The role of Goskino was to be considerably changed — no longer censor and script editor but overall coordinator in charge of distribution. Creative units within the 39 studios in the USSR would be responsible for their own decision-making. Goskino would merely require the subject (to avoid duplication) and a two- to three-year plan so it could work on distribution destiny. If they decided a film was an unprofitable proposition, the studio could take up the matter with a special commission at the SFU.

Each studio was encouraged to form its own model. Mosfilm, the largest and oldest, employing 5000 workers and responsible for one-third of the country’s features, M oscow, where a professional club (PROC) provided opportunities for foreign and Soviet filmmakers to exchange ideas and discuss issues of vital importance: the role of film in prevention of nuclear war, the future of the art form, women’s issues, the future of children’s cinema. Of particular interest were the open sessions to donate 50 per cent of the profits to state organisations such as day care centres or clinics, while they retained the other half to cover the cost of filmmaking. Since that was rarely an adequate amount, they were forced to apply for more money from the state, thus perpetuating the subsidy cycle. For the smaller studios, however, the prospects were much more daunting.

Further reforms were still to come. In this more competitive system employment by tenure would be replaced by hiring on a picture-by-picture basis. In a country where job security has been accepted as one of the basic tenets of socialism, this was a radical departure intended to raise artistic standards. Less talented workers whom the studio was previously obliged to employ would be relocated to other work, eg teaching film. A Review Commission would reassess the situation every five years.

By mid-87 with most of the reconstruction well under way, the Moscow Film Festival (held every two years) was to provide a platform to highlight progress and act as a barometer of glasnost. A record number of delegates and press were attracted to the event, wanting to discover for themselves the extent of the changes.

Though some of these were only cosmetic, such as the reduction of the number of prizes and film entries to ensure quality, others presented marked departures from the past.

The Tarkovsky retrospective indicated the extent to which attitudes had relaxed. The filmmaker whose works were once withdrawn from circulation and whose name was even deleted from film history books, was honoured with a retrospective of all his works in their unabridged versions. For the first time the festival organisers had selected a foreign head of the jury, Robert De Niro. A record number of Americans attended the event, and international distributors expressed considerable interest in Soviet films.

Appropriately, the spiritual nerve centre of the festival became Dom Kino, the headquarters of the SFU in Moscow, where a professional club (PROC) provided opportunities for foreign and Soviet filmmakers to exchange ideas and discuss issues of vital importance: the role of film in prevention of nuclear war, the future of the art form, women’s issues, the future of children’s cinema. Of particular interest were the open sessions
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about the state of Soviet cinema, the impact of 'pere-
stroika' (reconstruction) or the role of the press in the
reforms — in an open informal atmosphere which the
foreign press found particularly impressive.

There was even an instant release of a previously
banned film, The Commissar, when its director, Askol-
dov, demanded its screening at the forum. The film had
been recommended for release by the Conflicts Commissi-
ion but had remained on the shelf — the festival forum
provided a perfect opportunity to challenge the situa-
tion. At the following press conference, more personal
aspects of 'shelving' emerged — the trials for the
director who was prevented from making films again
and declared professionally unfit by the Supreme Court.
Little can make up for those wasted years. The revela-
tions provided particularly interesting insights and
concrete evidence of glasnost.

Unsurprisingly, Soviet films enjoyed an unpre-
ceded popularity at the film market with record sales
of 414 films to 31 countries. Professional marketing
indicated that the Soviets were eager to capitalise on the
surge of interest for their products, though still display-
ing financial caution in purchasing expensive foreign
films. (The vice-president of Sovexport, Viktor Khukar-
sky, explained that hidden costs of dubbing, transport,
combined with the low price of cinema tickets, make
highly priced blockbusters an unfeasible prospect.)

Sovin, the agency branch of Goskino in charge of
handling co-productions and provision of services for
visiting foreign crews, reported record interest in
working with the Soviets and USSR as a location and
subject for documentaries.

The importance of art in political diplomacy was
revealed with the unveiling of the American-Soviet Film
Initiative, a non-profit organisation formed between the
filmmakers of the two superpowers to encourage co-pro-
ductions, professional exchanges, research and better
information services. First proposed at an earlier summit
when a Soviet delegation visited the US in March last
year, the initiative reported a number of projects already
underway: a television documentary, Superpower
Mirror, aimed at dispelling stereotypes between the
two countries, a feature about Chernobyl to be produced by
Stanley Kramer, and a biography of the poet Alexander
Pushkin. It appears that art was making more substi-
tional headway in diplomacy than political summits.

But despite this progress, there are still areas where
reforms have met with less success — particularly in film
education and at VGIK, the All Union Higher Institute
of Cinematography. VGIK is the first film school in the
world, established by Lenin's decree in 1919, where some
of the Soviet Union's leading filmmakers had taught
their specialties. Though courses in the various com-
ponents — direction, acting, art, screenwriting and film
criticism, and camera — are long and intensive, for some
years there has been an undercurrent of dissatisfaction
with the standard of equipment, course content (some of
which has remained unchanged since 1962), and the
quality of the teaching. (Ironically, in the 1930s Eisen-
stein complained about the intellectual and cultural
calibre of the students.)

Gorbachev's policies gave the students impetus to act.
They organised a conference demanding changes,
suggesting that a system of inviting guest teachers,
approved by student vote, be adopted. The SFU, deter-
mined that a reform of the system had to start at grass
roots, took the students' complaints seriously. VGIK
came under considerable attack (even though many of
the SFU members were graduates of its system) accused
of producing an assembly line which discouraged talent
and, at best, resulted in mediocrity.

In a subsequent reshuffle of appointments, Goskino's
selection of Alexander Novikov (the previous assistant
dean) over the SFU candidate was considered conserva-
tive. Novikov admits that new staff and equipment are
badly needed and that plans to revamp the curriculum
are under consideration, but few believe he is capable of
injecting the institute with the kind of vision and
initiative required.

If proposals to introduce a film syllabus (in cinema
history and cinematography) into secondary schools —
currently prepared by film critics and educators — are
implemented, the student intake of future years may be
even more demanding and knowledgeable, especially as
many Soviet children are already provided with oppor-
tunities to work with film (even 35mm) at amateur clubs
and Young Pioneer hobby courses.

Looking down the line there is still much to be done.
Encouraged by the achievements over the last 18 months
the SFU is proposing a number of further improve-
ments. It is particularly concerned that the reforms be
codified by law so that regression to the previous situa-
tion is unlikely.

Certainly the release of shelved films has injected new
vigour into a previously allying industry. Victor Dyomin
(head of Soviet film critics) stressed that, though rela-
tively small in number, these films counterbalanced the
situation at a time when mediocrity was representative of
the majority. The shelved filmmaker at least had the
courage to prove that it was still possible to make great
films and it's only now that the Soviet film industry is
being recompensed for that.

But when the novelty wears off, it will be interesting to
see the quality of new films created as products of the
reconstruction. Judging by those recently released, a
number reflect more personal themes and social
problems, such as Lonely Woman Looking For Com-
panion or Messenger Boy, one of many films concerned
with the dilemmas and disorientation of youth in a
changing society. Will these be able to compete on the
international film scene?

A number of other questions still need to be asked.
How will the free enterprise system of the studios walk
the tightrope with a centralised socialist ideology? It
must be remembered that a democratisation of the arts
does not mean a deviation from socialist ideals. Can the
momentum of the reforms be sustained? Even now
acceptance of the reforms has not been pervasive in
Soviet society and though resistance at this stage is not
clear, the time the opposition may intensify.

When will the changes be truly reflected on the screen
and how will young filmmakers graduating from film
institutions cope with the adjustment? The talent
abounds and new mechanisms have been set up but how
will these interact? Could it even turn out that repression
was conducive to creativity . . .?

Soviet theoreticians were amongst the first to treat
film as an art form. Eisenstein, Vertov, Pudovkin and
Dovshenko set very high standards for their successors,
at the same time setting up the tug-of-war between artist
and state which continued for more than 70 years. Ceni
tly the Soviets have produced some masterpieces
since then — one only needs to think of The Cranes Are
Flying or Moscow Doesn't Believe In Tears — but gen-
gerally, horizons for filmmakers have been limited by
repressive state mechanisms. The new policies have
opened the doors. Over the last two years Soviet cinema
has earned a much higher profile internationally; at a
time when Western film has offered limited inspiration,
the lifting of the curtain has released an intense wave of
energy after so many years of stagnation. Commerci-
ally and artistically, it's provided a sample offering to arouse
world interest. Whether this can be sustained remains to
be seen.
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"a move in the right direction"
What is this thing called glamour? ADRIAN MARTIN considers the question.

CONFESSIONS OF A MASK

LET'S think of the human face as a *mask*. Not in the sense, primarily, of a disguise that can be taken on and off; although there are of course many wholly contrived 'painted faces'.

I mean, rather, the face as a special, heightened, almost imaginary sign or metaphor of the human person who 'possesses' it. The luminous face — the face of glamour. Edgar Morin in his pathbreaking book *The Stars* (1959) once grumbled over the historical tendency that has led us to invest so much in the faces of others — 'the eyes are the windows of the soul' and all that — a tendency given absolute aesthetic form in our rapture before the screen close-up of a movie star. Morin's worry is valid: something of the full, earthy body — and that body in motion — is surely lost in these ethereally frozen twilight moments of the supremely beautiful human face, images wrought from movies into that even more impossibly perfect art of the Hollywood still photographer's glamour portrait.

Other commentators, however — Robert Benayoun (*The Look Of Buster Keaton*), Lo Duca (*L'érotisme au Cinema*), Ado Kyrou (*Love And Eroticism In The Cinema*), Gerard Legrand (*Cinemania*) — take a different line of reverie in relation to images of screen glamour. Touched one and all by successive waves of surrealism, these authors contributed prolifically over many years to that overshadowed rival of *Cahiers du Cinema*, the wonderful magazine *Positif*. Inspired by a great visionary and erotic philosopher of the human face, Malcolm de Chazal, such writers probed deeply and fancifully into glamour, grasping the vision as a fantasy of love which must endlessly be produced through words and emotions, dreamed out aloud.

A veritable religion of the face emerged, far surpassing even the traditional gush of glamour publicity that troubled Morin: a soliloquy addressed in minute detail to watery eyes, open pores, follicles of hair, cheek lines, nostrils . . . Amongst filmmakers, Alain Resnais (*Je t'aime, je t'aime*), Luis Bunuel (*L'Age d'or*) and Chris Marker (*Sans Soleil*) paid their homages to this vision. And even as they knew that what they worshipped was a madly unreal and magnified glamour possible only via camera lens and cinema screen, these dreamers still had the surrealist good sense to know that such beauty could be found outside the movies — that it could and indeed had to be explosively ignited within the ordinariness of everyday life. Here as never before cinema came to be the source not of escape but of inspiration, a potent metaphor of glamour in the service of the world's *amour fou*.

Of course, the fact can't be escaped that most of the talkers in this love game were men, with women (privileged cases: Louise Brooks, Lana Turner, Cyd Charisse, Brigitte Bardot, Marilyn Monroe) fixed as the epitome of . . .
of glamour-as-object. And it is for this very reason that the game goes largely unplayed today, at least in these terms; history has ultimately embarrassed or accused those men who would forever eulogise women in an ‘enlightened’ film analysis context. Today, the fact that Positif published a ‘Dictionary of Eroticism’ during the May 1968 riots is taken retrospectively as a cardinal symptom of political incoherence; today, the Raymond Durgnat who once dreamed so eloquently of Greta Garbo is hauled over the coals for trying the same with Grace Jones; today, even Gerard Legrand despairs of being no longer able to bear witness to the heterosexual eroticism which led him in the first place to his life of ‘cinemania’. When the American magazine Film Comment tried in 1985 to celebrate its ‘favourite screen women’, the results were indeed largely misogynistic and prurient. A sad end to the ethos of glamour.

If glamour talk still persists, it is in fact mostly under the ‘progressive’ (ie historically sanctioned) cover of man-as-object reverie. Anyone, man or woman, can swoon in print these days over Gérard Depardieu, Mel Gibson, Clint Eastwood or Richard Gere as figures of glamour. Nelly Kaplan (also a surrealist) led the way (for straight women at least) in 1964 with her marvellous cry: ‘Is there anything so exciting as a beautiful young man captured by a heterosexual camera’. The reversal of terms and the novelty of choice is itself exciting, playful. Furthermore, a strongly homoerotic, sometimes subtly ‘crypto-gay’ undercurrent informs much of the older writing on glamour, not to mention much of the work of the great Hollywood portrait photographers: see Benayoun on Keaton (“his masculine energy”) and the ‘feminine’ Gary Cooper; or the great stills anthropologist John Kobal on classic ‘androgyne’ camp heroes like Marlene Dietrich or Greta Garbo, his eulogy confusing at every step the desperate tremors of love with a melancholic longing for death — and all in the name of a glamorous ‘transcendence’. Besides these various shades of homoeroticism, perhaps the ‘art house’ is the last fleetingly safe place where a straight man can, with care, confess publicly his ‘voluptuous’ estimation of, say, Isabelle Huppert; but woe to that same man if he speaks out of turn about Kim Basinger, Marilu Henner or Madonna. (Brave exception: Raffaele Caputo’s “Bleach of Promise” in Cinema Papers 67.)

Beyond the historical limits of what can and can’t be said in the name of glamour at any given time, other deeper and more perennial problems stir — and they are hardly resolved by the modish replacement of Marilyn Monroe by Marcello Mastroianni as resident cultural sex object. Glamour images both moving and still have always displayed the tendency to slide from the positive end of a spectrum to an opposite, negative end: but that’s not something you can always see, since it has as much to do with the use or reception of those images as with their inherent visual or associative properties. My sense of what is positive and negative in glamour photography is personal — hence not universal — but it is based on an intuition of an intense, almost mystical or metaphysical, deep structure in much writing on the subject: a fierce dualism of living and dead, moving and frozen, subject and object, personality and fetish.

Let me explain. Think once more of the face as a mask, and of glamour as the idealisation of the face, the imbuing of a face with soul. Nightmare: the mask becomes a prison, it hardens and cracks, but can never be removed — that’s beauty’s curse. Here, the ‘ideal’ of glamour is imposed on the star from without, a social stereotype administered by somewhat sinister Pygmalion-like directors, photographers, lighting and make-up artists. Billy Wilder’s cinema, from Sunset Boulevard to Fedora, has provided the classically jaded and incisive portrait of a film world where glamour is all ‘image’, illusion and nothing more — the dream of eternal youth and poise giving way to a nightmare of age, decay and insecurity as lived by the hapless victims of the glamour system, its so-called ‘stars’. But even on those who, in real life, don’t rise as high or fall as hard as Norma Desmond, the code of glamour must surely wreak its havoc: living an eternally alienated relation to one’s self (presence, appearance, personality, sexuality) through the omnipresent cliche of one’s ‘looks’. (How strange, as Raymond Bellour once noted, that the question ‘how do I look?’ refers, nervously and eternally, not to one’s own act of looking but to the acts of others seeing and evaluating an already prescribed appearance.)

‘Soul’ doubtless resides somewhere else. But where? Glamour’s fragile utopian dream is the two-way exchange between a star’s ‘inside’ (personality, heart) and his or her outward bodily appearance — a dream that the soul might ‘fashion’ the face and body in its secret, inner image. The moment a face becomes all appearance.)
experience this profound intimation of the invisible soul, the soul made flesh. But who can determine, finally, whether this is anything more than pure hallucination? Can I really claim to know Cary Grant’s ‘soul’ through looking at his immaculate portrait? Is it all just another movieland con-job, the ultimate emotional sweet cheat?

Yet still the search for true glamour continues — a truth which would not be brutally visible, but more fleeting, hidden, ephemeral, poigniant. Once cliché notions of beauty are cast out from the lover’s gaze, what does he or she see in the most precious glamour photos? Alfred Appel Jr speaks of those fragile ‘signs of life’ (in his book of the same name) that undo the glossy perfection of glamour portraiture and introduce a moment of true human feeling — signs of age, worry, strain, distant reflectiveness (as in a celebrated 1932 shot of Buster Keaton by Clarence Sinclair Bull). Appel privileges and values those elements in glamour photography which resist or even subvert the genre’s wholesale tendency towards living death — subjects who find themselves inexorably frozen, embalmed and objectified by the art of prettification. Veronica Lake in a Richee portrait is, for Appel, “checking her pulse at the carotid artery, to be certain that her imitation of the submissive doll in the male supremacy fantasy has not gotten out of hand . . . has she been posed to death?”

Like Roland Barthes who, in his book on photography Camera Lucida, privileged what he called the punctum (the strange, intractable, individual effect) over the studium (everything which is cliché or conventional), Appel seeks out in his chosen images what is whimsical, imperfect, parodie — and also again homoerotic, since he (like others) regards a subterranean gay sensibility as having totally mocked the Hollywood facade of heterosexual glamour from within. He is fond of ‘limpid’, obscure, nutty, failing images (like a Philippe Halsman snap of Myra Marilyn against a very ordinary door) — those that betray tell-tale signs of life, and which, in retrospect, indicate the coming historical moment when the ‘great days of glamour’ would end, and other more ‘banal’ photographic practices (like the domestic snapshot or the journalistic news photo) would come to be revered as, in their own ways, magical. For ‘everyday life’ is that arena in which people and things happily move, change and perish — and photography should not want to freeze them for evermore.

But is glamour really dead? For a stern aficionado like Kobal, it died way back in the 1930s: “something that had been intensely powerful became something that was too bright, too cheery, and ultimately empty” (The Art Of The Great Hollywood Portrait Photographers). A gradual loss both of total aesthetic mastery (of artist over model) and a proper tone of solemnity meant the end of the spell of glamour, in his account. But perhaps what Kobal values is precisely that tendency to ‘make over’ living, moving, individual subjects into comatose objects, pure fetishes. And perhaps the ‘soul’ he sees, the magic he projects, is the least truly soulful or magical.

Let’s return one last time — with all due historical allowances for heterosexist bias — to that heady team of Kyrou, Benayoun, Legrand, and their friends on Positif. It seems to me these guys really knew something about soul. Their position was not some sophisticated pro-life/anti-glamour argument like Appel’s; on the contrary, they embraced the codes, clichés and rituals of the glamour ethos. Through investing that ethos with more love and intensity than it ever strictly required, they turned the ‘fan’s’ position right around from passivity to total delirium. Not for them the purism of Kobal: everyone, from Theda Bara to Jerry Lewis, could be found truly, stunningly beautiful. Yet these fans always exercised a certain affecionate discipline, a vigilance of the seeing heart: their reveries didn’t totally project a fantasy onto a loved object, rather they tried to draw out and magnify every physical and behavoural particularity of the ever elusive, ever mysterious subject of their mad desire. Both tortured and humble, they watched the screen or pored over stills in total awe — and in the explosive point of contact between what the star actually projected and what the fan longingly invested, a soul was born.

The Positif crew knew something that too many of us forget too quickly: that the cinema is bigger than we are, that we are taken up in it, moved and transformed by it just as we move and transform it. Glamour, at its highest point, can be part of this dizzy scenario of two-way exchange. At the cinema, we are privileged to receive the confessions of masks, those souls made flesh which ultimately disappear back into shadow; and we might see in the screen-mirror that we too are masks, souls, shadows, free to reinvent ourselves. At the end of such an initiation, we might also realise (as did the surrealists) that the cinema of glamour is thus the perfect metaphor for what is possibly the only thing greater than it: love — sweet, mad love, another terrain where masks confess to and transform each other ceaselessly.
DEGREES OF

RADIA

PETER KEMP examines

You’ve made my life so glamorous
You can’t blame me for feeling amorous
Oh! ‘S wonderful ‘s marvellous!
That you should care for me!

George and Ira Gershwin’s
 ‘S’Wonderful’ sung by Audrey
Hepburn to Fred Astaire in
Funny Face (1957)

I hate showbusiness and I love it. I love
working with actors and dancers and writers
and designers. I think they’re the most
beautiful, talented and witty people in the
world. But I hate the bullshit, the Beverly
Hills homes with swimming pools. I hate
Mercedes, I hate Gucci bags, I hate all of
that shit.

Bob Fosse interviewed by Bernard
Drew in “Life As A Long
Rehearsal” for American Film,
November 1979.

THE OXFORD English Dictionary tells us
that glamour is “A magical or fictitious
beauty attaching to any person or object; a
delusive or alluring charm.” Introduced into
the language during the early 18th century, the
word was originally coined to conjure, in the
act of enchantment, those qualities pertaining
to spells, trickery, deceit.

However, with the introduction and
development of photography (particularly
fashion photography) and the cinema, it
would appear that the meaning of glamour has
been modified and extended to evoke not the
catalysing process but rather one of the
ultimate effects of what cameras can produce
in the frozen or moving image.

Through the tricks and ruses of technology
and the ways light and shade may be
artificially adjusted and re-adjusted, the
magical instant became a perpetual moment,
manifestly *there* for all time, for all to behold.

ALL THAT JAZZ: Roy Scheider
Fictitious beauty was presented in magazines and moviehouses as beguiling fact. Cheating delusion was transformed into forever charming illusion. And the all-embracing term to signify a certain heightened, highlighted attractiveness, peculiar to manipulative photogenics, was Glamour. Glamour — no longer a special effect but the everlasting, splendid result, the shining net outcome of many special effects.

Glamour and, more specifically, Hollywood Glamour, was, and enduringly still is, Gloria Swanson, Rudolph Valentino, Greta Garbo, Cary Grant, Marlene Dietrich, Tyrone Power, Kay Francis, Joan Crawford, Charles Boyer, Constance Bennett, George Raft and a galaxy of other male and female bodies, whose faces and figures 'took' in a uniquely felicitous manner to the Dream Factory's klieg lights.

The fortuitous response of any being to the play of bulb shine and filter shadow across his or her bodily contours not only determines the shape and form of that entity's glamour potential but also further emphasises a scientific/poetic relationship between glamour and various properties of light. Attributes often associated with the special impact of glamour are lustre, dazzle, sparkle, glitter, glow. And it is precisely through the phenomenon of the camera's technical and chemical reactions that some Hollywood stars shine with glamour and others don't.

Glamour should not be confused with energy, talent, style, charisma, sex appeal or even beauty, though in many screen performers glamour co-exists with all or some of these qualities. Glamour neither promises nor precludes greatness or popularity. It simply is and you've either got or you haven't got glamour.

If stars can look or be glamorous (as made evident by movie stills, photo pin-ups, video pause buttons or the interpretative freeze frames of memory), then surely a number of them can behave and move gloriously as well. The Katharine Hepburn canter, the Cary Grant saunter, the Mae West sashay, the Errol Flynn bound, the Bette Davis stride, the Ava Gardner slink provide distinguishing kinetic signatures that complement the distilled glamour of posed portraits. Furthermore, if glamour on screen is characterised as a kind of glimmering surface veneer or textual polish emanating from people, things or places, then maybe this definitive dependence on lighting variables can be inflected to help create different types, diverging schools of glamour that could range from Bright and Debonair through to Dark and Dramatic.

Probably the most gesturally pitched, energetically stylised, ritually concentrated and expressively exuberant of film genres is the
musical, which might be alternatively regarded as Glamour In Motion.

The deaths last year of actor-dancer Fred Astaire (born 1899) and actor-dancer-choreographer-director Bob Fosse (born 1927) robbed the film world of two singular innovators of the movie musical, each a visionary practitioner who shaped, sharpened and shifted the elements of song and dance to yield forth much more than just a distinctive style or attitude.

Fred’s flair and Bob’s brilliance fashioned unique universes, individual realms of colour, line, mood and movement which we could separately label Astaire Glamour and Fosse Glamour. Both artists perform as neatly apposite mascots for an Astaire-Bright/Fosse-Dark Glamour dichotomy yet Astaire is not without his melancholy nor is Fosse entirely bereft of optimism or transcendence.

Nobody proves the you-don’t-have-to-be-beautiful-to-be-glamorous maxim quite so cogently as Fred Astaire. Not until Barbra Streisand is there a plainer-faced contender who triumphs as the leading film musical performer of a generation.

Though a seasoned success on Broadway and in the West End (partnered by his sister Adele), Fred auditioned solo for Hollywood in 1933, exhibiting that deceptive nondescriptness that is said to have prompted one myopic movie mogul to note: “Can’t act. Can’t sing. Balding. Can dance a little.” Producer David O. Selznick’s astute reply to this initial snub reads: “I am a little uncertain about the man but I feel, in spite of his enormous ears and bad chin line that his charm is so tremendous that it comes through even in this wretched test.”

And come through it did, gloriously and glamorously. Fred went on to star in a series of nine black and white RKO dance musicals with Ginger Rogers which Pauline Kael describes as “the most exquisite courtship rites the screen has ever known.” These are films distinguished by what David Thomson succinctly terms as “those intimate, but accelerating conversational dances, where hard heels and glossy floors speak of bliss”.

The sleek Astaire-Rogers vehicles of the 1930s with their justly celebrated Van Nest Polglase Big White Sets constitute a peerless pinnacle of Hollywood glamour. The films positively fluoresce with that all important light, sculpting Art Deco-rated fantasies which Thomson tells us “glisten with glass, polished floors, satin dresses, celluloid costume flowers and Astaire’s hairstyle.”

Fred’s immaculate grooming and sartorial sense enhance his rake-like frame which etches out such a parody of male slenderness as to seem almost inhumanly neuter. But that big irresistible grin twinkles with boyishness and the pliant silver tenor voice tosses off lyrics by Gershwin, Berlin and Porter with an occasional catch of ardour and dash of deep yearning. And when Astaire guides a female partner in dance, it’s clear this is a man who enjoys and savours the principles and conventions of heterosexual romance where He Loves and She Loves, Fated to be Mated, Cheek to Cheek, Night and Day.

The ‘Night and Day’ number is featured in the very first Fred Astaire movie I remember ever seeing, The Gay Divorcee (1934) and my 10-year-old eyes were, even then, astonished by the haunting, heart-breaking glamour of it all.

Ginger in frothy snow evening gown backing off from, and eventually succumbing to, a persistently advancing Fred in white tie and tails, set to the rhythmic, relentless throb of Cole Porter’s classic love song. Contact. Release. Contact. Release. Contact. Contact. Contact. Contact. Wow. One of those moments when you know that you love movies if this is what movies can do.

Another equally arresting kind of glamour concocted from components of the Hollywood musical left me gasping in mid-adolescence when those busty dance-hall floozies hung over the rails and clicked their fingers in the ‘Hey Big Spender’ routine from Bob Fosse’s Sweet Charity (1969).

No swank ballroom dress here. No tidily
nevertheless possesses a showy metallic glint, a promotional slogan for brand of glamour aptly conveyed by the carnal reality, this dancing in-the Fosse dark, Astaire, this key-hole view of seedy, steamy, of Fred's glamour, Fosse reconstructs his own glamour. In deconstructing the luminous grace decadent experience".

laughs, good times" , as well as languidly triggering diamond-hard flash. In short, exudes its own stifling enchantment and appeal. The sharply exaggerated stances, the accent on angular rather than rounded movement, the roving camerawork and bravura use of constant, cutting-in editing contribute towards a crackling ensemble effect. The sharply exaggerated stances, the accent on angular rather than rounded movement, the roving camerawork and bravura use of constant, cutting-in editing contribute towards a crackling ensemble effect that reactivates strident cheap into stylish chic.

With the two other musicals choreographed and directed by Fosse, Cabaret (1972) and All That Jazz (1979), this reverse side to the fine romancing and rizy put-on of Astaire, this key-hole view of seedy, steamy, carnal reality, this dancing in the Fosse dark, nevertheless possesses a showy metallic glint, a piercing diamond-hard flash. In short, glamour. In deconstructing the luminous grace of Fred's glamour, Fosse reconstructs his own brand of glamour aptly conveyed by the promotional slogan for Cabaret as “a divinely decadent experience”.

We can see early gleams of Fosse-Dark Glamour in some of those 1950s MGM musicals which showcase Fosse’s work both as a regular-looking, keen-faced young dancer and as a resourceful, idiosyncratic, promising choreographer.

In the ‘From This Moment On’ number from Kiss Me Kate (1953), after the first two couples have done their bright bits, Fosse gives himself and Broadway colleague Carol Haney an absolutely sizzling duet, introduced by a skidding scream and further punctuated by curled up knee bends, unexpected body slides and a sort of dazed, head-holding stagger. Conceptually and stylistically it’s a far jazzy cry from Ann Miller’s sunny exhibition tap, Howard Keel’s robust leer and Kathryn Grayson’s operatic trill in the same film.

Similarly the hearty trade union shenanigans of John Raitt and Doris Day in The Pajama Game (1957) are counterpointed by Fosse’s dance direction of the sweaty, underground tango in ‘Hernando’s Hideaway’ (ole) and the prototypical Fossean ‘amoeba’ grouping of compressed human pistons in ‘Steam Heat’. And bursting forth from the Faustian baseball farce of Damn Yankees (1958) is Gwen Verdon’s knockout instance of screen immortality when then-husband Fosse choreographs her smouldering, high-heeled legginess through ‘Whatever Lola Wants, Lola Gets’.

But the most honoured (eight Oscars including best direction) and best remembered Fosse film is possibly Cabaret. This musical revamping of Christopher Isherwood’s Berlin stories by way of John Van Druten’s I Am A Camera boldly reflects the social currents of Weimar Germany within the tatty milieu of the Kit Kat Klub, a Berlin nightclub where can girls turn into strutting Nazi soldiers and a giant female gorilla acts as a metaphor for persecuted Jewry.

Among Cabaret’s superb routines, Joel Grey’s devil doll M.C. and Liza Minnelli’s “international zinging zenzation” Sally Bowles singing and dancing ‘The Money Song’ are a cynical high point. The number also furnishes a revealing indicator of aspects of Astaire and Fosse Glamour when placed alongside Fred and Judy Garland’s renowned team effort ‘A Couple of Swells’ from Easter Parade (1948).

Both numbers are novelty songs about wealth and the relative conditions of having and having not.

In the Irving Berlin standard, Judy and Fred play at being a pair of New York city bums who elaborate upon the aristocratic joys of slumming (“We could sail up the avenue/But we haven’t got a yacht/We could ride up the avenue/But the horse we had was shot.”) For the Ebb and Kander composition, specially devised for Cabaret the film, Liza and Joel play at being a couple of over-dressed toffs who perform a paean to how it’s cold cash and nothing else, certainly not love (“But when hunger comes a-rap-ta-ta-ta, tat-a-tat at the window/See how love flies out the door!”) that makes the world go round.

Fosse uses Minnelli’s top heavy eagerness to please and Grey’s mischievous midgety prurience to fuel the song’s message that coins cure all, to the extent that “a mark, a yen, a buck or a pound” offer some kind of sex surrogate; her bosom and his crotch become
erogenous banks of trickling gold as the spangled vamp and monocled dwarf shower themselves in riches, turning each other on to the lust for lucre.

Of course the lyrics do tender some momentary sub-Brechtian moral compensation ("That clinking, clanking, clunking sound/Is all that makes the world go round"). However a lot of our recollective residue from the song remains anchored in shots of the shaking Minnelli mammaries and the jiggling Grey groin.

This doesn’t necessarily mean we get out our ideological whips and relegate Fosse to some theoretical concentration camp for Suspected Sexual Objectifiers or Convicted Body Imagists. It simply appears that this is how Fosse’s immense choreographic and directorial skills have chosen to employ the particular talents of particular individuals to interpret a particular song. Or that is to say parts (including body parts) of Minnelli and Grey serve an overall theme in ‘The Money Song’. Their considerable energies are moulded and managed by Fosse to make performative means reach an informative end.

EASTER PARADE: Astaire and Judy Garland

It’s the showing as much as the show that for Fosse must go on . . .

What choreographer Robert Alton, Fred Astaire and Judy Garland achieve in the ‘Swells’ routine comes across as significantly different. To begin with, the whole affair is filmed using what had become recognised as Astaire’s trademark, namely the performing figures in top-to-toe medium long shot producing a unity, which is further reinforced by the impression (and often the actual occurrence) of seamless flow, of being staged in one continuous take.

There’s a notable absence here of Fosse’s virtuoso inter- and intra-cutting technique, where the frame cuts up into an ever-changing frieze of other shots, either related or unrelated to the main dance action, allowing for the effects of fragmentation. In its place, what we see is what we get: Fred and Judy going through a vaudevillian turn against a conventional painted backcloth.

Most of any virtuosity involved is up to them to perform for us without lightning edits or multiple camera angles. Aside from the song’s quite arbitrary theme that you can be happy being poor by pretending you’re not, the number’s uninterrupted show-it-like-it-goes wholeness of execution permits the undeniable pleasure of witnessing two great stars sock it to us.

In torn rags and faded patches they mug about and camp it up, displaying the full riches that the glamour of their talent together affords. This isn’t “bits” of Astaire and Garland primitively piecing out a map of a larger thematic mosaic, grand scheme or Big Idea.

This is the entire lovely thing that happens when he prances erect in battered top hat and dusty polka dot bow tie and she ducks down and around, grabbing attention with low down shimmies and hammy, winking toothless smiles. It’s the real thing and not necessarily the “reality” thing that Fosse claims he was trying to inject into the cinemusical genre, where he has, in his own words, “generally tried to make the musical more believable”.6

And watch how Fred watches Judy, how generously he ‘gives’ the scene to her. Not standing back, mind you, but participating, responding, using the carriage and bearing of their bodies within the number to stress, inflect, change, in fact, edit, the routine. If Fosse evidently revels in the flinty crosscutting glories of montage, then the Astaire mode utilises self-propelling mise en scene to express the special glamour of his musical whirl.

The transition in film history from Astaire to Fosse glamour can be seen to reflect a parallel shift in art history which moves from classical Renaissance perspective (man as the measure of all things) to dislocating, distorting expressionism, abstraction and surrealism (man as un-measurable part of many, many things). Fred Astaire, as has been often noted, functions as a kind of twirling, animated version of Leonardo da Vinci’s perfectly
dimensioned ideal man, the figure placed within a geometrically divided circle which is itself framed by a square, or if we so choose, a cinema screen. Bob Fosse’s choreographic canvas covers an ambitious palette spanning the darkened eyes, pallid countenances and violent emotionalism associated with, say, Edvard Munch, to the twisted hips, poking buttocks, splayed fingers and generally dismembered carnality paraded in the spotlit buttocks, splayed fingers and generally dismissed doom of Salvador Dali. The Astaire mode is a definite style (a way of aesthetically meeting and matching the world, as is). The Fosse strands trace out a certain stylisation (a way of turning around and making a different world, which may or may not be).

This question of scale and proportion might suggest how Astaire glamour shifts so easily across to dimensions of unquestionable radiance while Fosse glamour seems “merely” fixated at the level of razzle dazzle.

Speaking scientifically/poetically, forces are said to radiate and disperse energies in equal distribution when the dynamic source is centrifugal, when rays emit from a crucial core. In other words, Astaire glamour could appear to radiate, to be a radiant glamour due to the phenomenon of an ever-present, governing principle which sustains ratio and guides the differentials of frequency and speed. And that quintessential dynamic principle must, of course, be Fred Astaire — his is the music that makes him (and others) dance. Within this contextual sphere, Fosse functions as a high-flying piece of flotsam or jetsam, a mass of startling details that don’t quite make a whole.

Why else do Fred and Ginger in the ‘Bouncin’ the Blues’ rehearsal tap from The Barkleys Of Broadway (1949) project a luminescence and zest that the ‘On Broadway’ audition sequence in Fosse’s All That Jazz can only meet with the perspiration of anxious hopefuls straining to match the demands of A Chorus Line-Up? (Or do they and the segment just get wasted from the exhausting cleverness and pressure of Alan Heim’s editing tour-de-force?)

Why do we remember, can never forget, the brow-to-brow bonding of ‘The Carioca’ from Flying Down To Rio (1933) and the crossing arcs of stretched arms in ‘The Picollono’ from Top Hat (1935) when the ephemeral spark of the Pompeii Club’s ‘Rich Man’s Frug’ in Sweet Charity (1969) has long since dimmed?

How come the utter simplicity of ‘By Myself’ in The Band Wagon (1953) seems to say (and do) so much more (and so much less) about solitude, ego and mortality than the whole phantasmagorical Kamikaze fireworks finale of ‘Bye Bye Life’ in All That Jazz?

In looking at Fosse versus Astaire glamour are we finding a vital link between glamour that goes and glamour that grows? Do Fosse and Astaire respectively affirm and negate the 19th century Romantic novelist Ouida’s dictum: “I know how quickly the glamour fades in the test of constant intercourse”? Given his superlative natural radiance, can fabulous Fred ever really die? And was bright Bob, even alive, in perpetual peril of out-dazzling himself, of being Fosse-lised in his own mesmerising, fetishising modernity?

Perhaps the formidable dance (and former film) critic Arlene Croce (author of the acclaimed Fred Astaire And Ginger Rogers Book) might assist with a few observations to help clear up at least some of the enigmas surrounding Astaire, Fosse and Hollywood Glamour:

**On Fosse**

[His] method of closing down and hugging the figure so that the only way it can move is by isolating and precisely featuring anatomical parts makes it a good vehicle for narcissistic display and slithering innuendo.

**On Astaire**

Passion — the missing element in just about every ‘sexy’ duet that has been attempted since — is usually confused with emoting and going primitive. With Astaire and Rogers it’s a matter of total professional dedication; they do not give us emotions, they give us dances and the more beautifully they dance, the more powerful the spell that seems to bind them together.

When the curtain went up on an Astaire dance . . . the experience was so dazzling the only sane response was gratitude to film for having brought it into existence.

5. ibid. p524
7. Ouida, Held In Bondage, 1863, p97
9. ibid. p436
10. ibid. p435

For Terry Owen.

(With thanks to Felicity Collins, Anna and Peter Denezis, Jill Niquet, Lorraine Mortimer, Bill Routt, Rick Thompson and Michael Wilkie.)
"The great show is as furtive, and as bound by loneliness, as every voyer's pleasure must be" — David Thomson

I think there are two kinds of cinephiles (film buffs), or perhaps two conflicting tendencies within every true, serious buff. On the one hand, a deep attraction to states of solitude; and on the other, a celebration of community. The movies allow, and encourage both tendencies. I can go home and have sad dreams about Once Upon A Time In America as if the film had been made only for me; and I can also whoop it up with the gore hounds at a matinee of Evil Dead II. I have a suspicion that as critics become more dedicated and 'professional' — as they alienate themselves from the Hoyts theatre complex and end up dividing their time between secluded preview rooms, the VCR and their writing desk — melancholy inexorably sets in, and the whole experience of film becomes intensely 'privatised'.

Of all the great writers on film, David Thomson seems to me also the most melancholy. He cultivates his sense of solitude, and pursues it relentlessly through each film, motif or star that comes into his view. Whether writing about telephones or moustaches, Cary Grant or Warren Beatty, Wetherby or Mike's Murder, Thomson sees in each the signs of a sad shadow play: lack of fulfilment, loss, separation, desperation. No matter what fleeting joy or whimsy flickers across the screen, for Thomson it is all ghosted by a recognition of an unavoidable, solitary end. Although one could fairly object that Thomson ends up 'rigging' most of his subjects in order to produce such a reading (and what film criticism doesn't ultimately do just that?), there's no doubt that he is the most eloquent spokesperson for the melancholic aspect of the filmgoing experience.

Prospective readers of Warren Beatty: A Life And A Story should be forewarned of that which Thomson lays on the table in the first few pages of the book: this is a 'biography' by someone who has never met, spoken to or corresponded with his subject. Thomson's trick, in fact, is to write about Beatty as if he is already dead. This corresponds to the book's ideas about stardom and glamour alike: the screen actor as ghost, myth, blank screen upon which the viewer projects his or her own tortured desire. We cannot ever know the 'real' Beatty; he exists only as a fiction of the imagination. This lengthy exploration by
Thomson of the key tenets of what could justly be termed his theory of popular film — a theory of desire and imagination — will delight cinephiles in tune with this not-so-hidden agenda; but it may well disappoint readers in search of a more conventional, and conventionally informative, biography.

There are in fact two books in one — the ‘life’ and a ‘story’, a novel which runs in alternate chapters with the biography. Thomson offers his story as a reflective counterpoint to Beatty’s life, ‘a part fit for him to play’ (p5). It concerns a naive outsider to the movie world, a writer named D, being brought into the mysterious, duplicitous kingdom of a reclusive superstar, Eyes. This literary gambit (or conceit) does not work as well as it should for Thomson, and it weighs the book down mightily. The ‘story’ is somewhat monotonous and lifeless — coming to it straight after reading Rudolph Wurlitzer’s not dissimilar novel about New Hollywood, Slow Fade, I found myself wondering whether it is a rule of the genre for the innocent narrator to have his cock sucked by the producer/star’s secretary by page 25. In the context of the parallel parts, this story fails particularly insofar as, while trying to expand and delve more deeply into the themes thrown up by Beatty’s stardom (particularly the sinister Howard Hughes-style secrecy), it ends up merely ‘illustrating’ and reiterating them, over and over.

Another reason the ‘story’ doesn’t work is that, finally, I don’t think Thomson is too good at stories. He understands them and their magic — he even provides his own version of Fitzgerald’s famous ‘I’m just making pictures’ lesson from The Last Tycoon — but his deepest sensibility lies elsewhere. For Thomson, rattling good yarns are only important for the moments of reflection they create, the pauses, the echoes. Movies always provide a sad revelation for him; he cherishes the dark, frozen moments of silent watching, waiting and listening. The cinema — and particularly the cinema based on a system of glamorous stars — is a spectacle of interiority, of private thoughts and hovering, luminous faces (here Thomson meets the very different theorist Jean-Louis Schefer, for whom films reveal “the unknown centre of ourselves”).

The subject of the book is Beatty (rather than Jack Nicholson or Al Pacino) because he is an actor who “prefers to be invaded by the perplexity of a moment”, who arouses doubt and speculation whilst performing/being, rather than one who ‘projects’. Thomson is fond of the notion of ‘worrying’ — and Beatty is someone who ‘worries at’ his roles, rendering them strangely opaque and ghostlike.

It has to be said that, because of Thomson’s affinity for the ‘pregnant’, frozen moment, the most successful counterpoint he provides to the ‘life’ is not the ‘story’ but the immaculately selected, and often tantalisingly mysterious still photographs — everything from Beatty’s face at its most inscrutable to haunted highway vistas. The book comes equally alive when both the ‘biography’ — and the numerous reflections on what it is to write biography — give way to what Thomson does best and what few biographers can do at all: the analysis of films. In a few brief pages, Thomson brings Lilith, The Parallax View, Mickey One and McCabe And Mrs Miller alive in ways and from angles that one has never read or imagined before. Thomson can grasp in a truly exciting way the interplay of an actor’s contribution, the part he or she has been called upon to play, the persona that has accrued to the star, and the total semantic field of the film as a film — where all this holds together and where it flies apart.

When it comes to the question of glamour in the cinema, I think there are two traditions. The first would be signified for me by the chapter in Robert Benayoun’s book on Buster Keaton called The Mask Of Glamour, a letter of love truly without limits. For Benayoun, Keaton’s face is a mask, a perfect work of flesh, an imperishable image. Age cannot wither him, nor custom stale his infinite variety . . . In Alfred Appel’s Signs Of Life, a rather darker variation on the theme of the mask works itself out: the mask as facade, as the picture of Dorian Gray, the real decay and the real complexity lying beneath the surface.

Thomson falls somewhere between the two traditions, playing them against each other. His ‘story’ gives full vent to the grim ironies, the fatal contradictions of the condition of stardom. But his interest in the ‘life’ is the emotion of someone fully seduced, who sees in the face of the actor, and the fancy it inspires, “the ultimate transcending of history”. For Thomson, transcendence too undoubtedly leads, in the end, to pure melancholy. But for me, for you? We are not through yet with the cultural complexities of desire and imagination.

Adrian Martin

A few years ago the American short story writer Raymond Carver briefly visited this country and his fiction, which is admired by such Australian writers as Helen Garner and Elizabeth Jolley, has enjoyed quite a vogue in Australia since that time. Carver is a meticulous craftsman who celebrates succinctly and with compassion the travails of lower middle America and not just in any narrow economic sense. Carver’s America is an America without glamour and without prestige, a world of little people getting by as best they can. The authority of his writing comes from the dignity with which he invests common life at its shabbiest. His style is crystalline: it traces the ups and downs of the tough life with a delicacy of understated cadence. I suspect he appeals to Australians so much because of his understatement, his ability to touch on the experience of the nearly inarticulate and his complete lack of social pretension.

It makes sense that someone should have had the idea of turning Carver’s story Feathers into a short Australian movie. The world of Carver’s fiction has a real resemblance to that all too rarely seen suburban world as it was represented in Stephen Wallace’s Love Letters From Teralba Road and it’s not hard to imagine the early Stephen Wallace, or perhaps the Jane Campion/Helen Garner and Elizabeth Jolley, has ruffles some Feathers and John Conomos gets deep about Ocean, Ocean. (Either of them could benefit from watching Jack Thompson on a good day.) In the part of the wife in the country, Julie Forsyth seems to me quite simply wrong. She plays the role in that Carltonised rustic whine which she has used on Melbourne stage audiences as everything from Lady Macbeth to Madame Ranevskaya. Oddly enough it doesn’t work in ‘realistic’ cinema either; even though she’s playing a country woman the effect is both wooden and mannered.

Feathers has the advantage of its ambition. The countryside around Ballarat is used to splendid effect in all its frosty blues and sunlit golds. A smattering of moments work with a real freshness and panache and the all important peacock is quite a performer. But when it all comes down to it Feathers is a very interesting piece of film which does not quite come alive.

It was shown with Megan Simpson’s An Australian Summer, a short film with less exalted pretensions. A piece of journeymaking by a director recently out of film school, this was little more than a memoir with images. It showed, however, almost inadvertently (because the attempt to fictionalise was so slender), some kind of refraction of the low key Australia that Feathers needed to come to terms with.

FEATHERS: Neil Melville as Bert
Occasionally we encounter a new film which reaffirms the waning belief that it is still possible to create a cinema of fresh images and sounds that connect to the heart—a cinema of precision and intensity. The film I’m referring to is Keiran Finnane’s Ocean, Ocean—an Australian-French 16mm co-production—whose importance for our local filmmaking scene will, I believe, increase with the passage of time. Ocean, Ocean is a highly accomplished work of ambiguity and silence that exhibits a rare filmic sensibility at home with the main narrative and stylistic conventions of the European art film as a distinct mode of cinematic discourse.

Ocean, Ocean’s authorial expressivity centres on an impressive ability to manipulate the visual language of the art cinema, so that in effect, we have a work that approximates Bresson’s definition of his own sublime cinema as ‘cinematography’. That is to say, a cinema which rejects the banal lies of most of our mainstream cinema which is, according to the French filmmaker, no more than photographed theatre. Ocean, Ocean is a splendid instance of his description of cinematography as “a writing with images in movement and with sounds”.

There may be some who will see Ocean, Ocean as simply a faithful reproduction of the key formal and thematic configurations of the art cinema. And there may be others who may object to its ‘ideologically unsond’ story of a young woman having a relationship with an elderly man. Both positions, I contend, are misleading in the light of the evidence on the screen.

Ocean, Ocean is a brave and imaginative work whose sombre colours indicate an emotional world where its lonely characters seek understanding in a universe of indifference. It is not to say that the film is without humour. On the contrary, witness the sequence staged around a serene lake where we see the heroine pursued by an amorous young man who is limping because his shoes are too small. I say ‘brave’ because the film is genuinely experimental in concept and execution. It is a work that dares to take risks, the biggest risk being the writer-director’s willingness to create a work of great refinement that belongs and contributes to an unmistakably original cinematic topography enunciated by Resnais, Duras and Bresson.

Finnane gives us haunting scenes of characters and their ambiguous relationships in a world that is at the same time alluring and impenetrably mysterious. She seeks out new refreshing options in the relation of image to sound. But sound in this case, excluding Felicity Fox’s apposite mournful music, is silence, a silence which speaks of our solitude and pain in a world of fleeting happiness. The film’s characters seem to be happier ensconced in the warmth of their dwellings. The world outside is both beautiful and sad, a place only fit for passing through, as we are reminded in one of the work’s pivotal scenes, where the heroine visits her other lover at his office.

Ocean, Ocean possesses several fine and understated performances. Helen Manning is engagingly credible as the pensive heroine; Pierre Vial as her aged companion is equally sensitive in his role and his finely sculptured face is, on several occasions, embraced by a slow moving camera. This is a tender work of faces, gestures and sound. Bernard Ballet as the heroine’s other companion is particularly memorable. His expressive face reflects a quiet wisdom of someone at peace with the world.

Ocean, Ocean is a mature work of abundant conceptual and technical accomplishment. It knows what it wants to say and how best to say it. It is a film of beauty and sadness, of stillness and compassion. Australian cinema is richer for it.
What can Australia learn from Britain's Channel 4? Plenty, argues HUW EVANS.

Most people in the film and television industry will be familiar with the origins of Channel 4 in the UK and with the various attempts over the past decade to achieve something similar in Australia.

In fact genesis of the concept occurred in the two countries at very much the same time. In the case of Channel 4 it was the Annan Committee on the Future of Broadcasting between 1974 and 1977 which laid out the general philosophy and structure of the Fourth Channel largely on the basis suggested to the Committee by broadcaster and writer Anthony Smith. Smith argued that the new channel should be placed outside the existing competitive strategy, outside the BBC/IBA duopoly... wedded to a different doctrine from existing broadcasting authorities, to a doctrine of openness rather than to balance, to expression rather than to neutralisation.

Considerable argument and compromise nevertheless had to be worked through in the five years between Annan’s report and the start of transmission by Channel 4 late in 1982.

I don’t think I need to detail Channel 4’s subsequent performance other than to point out that in the last British financial year to March 1987, Channel 4 not only met its audience targets with a range of programs and films which have received international critical acclaim, but also billed close to £160 million worth of advertising and returned a profit of around £20 million to the mainstream commercial operators who fund it.

Almost everyone had, of course, declared in 1982 that the concept couldn’t and wouldn’t work. So well is it working now that the discussion turns on cutting it loose or even privatising it.

In the same year in which Annan returned his findings (1977), the Australian Labor Party adopted, as part of its policy on arts and communication, a plan to establish what one of its creators, Phillip Adams, had dubbed “The Electric Gallery”. This was to be a television service which concerned itself with programs which were educational and fostered a national cultural identity. It would support the Australian film and television industry and, like Channel 4, would act in the market only as a publisher of programs — that is, it would make none of its own.

Labor, however, was not then in office and the concept was overtaken by the Fraser Government’s decision to broaden the scope of multilingual programming then being undertaken on radio stations 2EA Sydney and 3EA Melbourne by creating a multicultural television service, now SBS TV, which began regular transmission on October 24, 1980.

We should in no way seek to minimise or dismiss the political and social exigencies which prompted the establishment of SBS.

The point is, of course, that the Channel 4 option with which I and the AFC have been associated turns on the enhancement of the charter, structure and resources of SBS TV, with greatly increased program supply from the independent production sector and non-‘in-house’ sources.

I think it is important to be aware of the quite desultory treatment SBS has had to
put up with at the hands of successive Governments.

Here is a brief chronicle.

1975 Radio stations 2EA and 3EA begin experimental transmission.
1976 ABC requested to provide a permanent ethnic broadcasting service.
1977 Request to ABC withdrawn by a Fraser Government exasperated by the ABC's indifferent response and the SBS established.
1980 Government proposes "Independent and Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation (IMBC)". Senate refers the matter to Standing Committee on Education and the Arts which recommends against proceeding. SBS TV proceeds in the absence of the statutory provisions of the Broadcasting and Television Act.
1983 Connor Committee of Review of the SBS established.
1984 Connor report received.
1986 Government announces establishment of Special Broadcasting Corporation, an independent statutory authority to replace the SBS as recommended by Connor and the SBS itself to undertake its submission to Connor's inquiry.
1986 Corporation proposal abandoned. (July) Merger of ABC and SBS announced to achieve cost savings — all done very suddenly.
1987 Legislation to merge ABC and SBS defeated in the Senate. Issue referred again to the Standing Committee on Education and the Arts.
1987 (Just prior to the July election) Government announces replacement of SBS with Establishment of Eduction and the Arts when it considered (and recommended against) the legislation to create the new TV service and turn the SBS into the Independent Multicultural Broadcasting Corporation, as proposed by the Fraser Government and the then Minister, Tony Staley.

The report was presented to the Senate more than seven years ago in August 1980 shortly before SBS TV began.

At page 15:

The SBS in its evidence expressed great confidence in the IMBC's ability to provide a highly professional service that matches or even surpasses that of the commercial broadcasters or the ABC...

At page 26 the Committee says:

...we are concerned that the movement towards its permanent introduction (ie the IMBC) is being made without the necessary preliminary preparation that would ensure its success. ( . . .)

The evidence has not shown that the proposed programming policies will necessarily be successful in achieving a worthwhile intercultural exchange between those people of the various ethnic communities and with Australian society at large.

Multiculturalism as envisaged by the IMBC would seem to depend upon the popularity of foreign language programs with English subtitles — a policy that on the basis of evidence received is open to question and hence a policy which will need considerable experimentation.

That experimentation is still going on. The fact is, however, that since the inception of ethnic and multicultural broadcasting in Australia, a defined long-term role, organisational structure and funding mechanism for the SBS have proved elusive to successive Governments and Ministers. To me it is plain enough: the program focus is somewhat too narrow; the UHF transmission system alienates it further from its potential audience; and not nearly enough money is being spent on Australian-made product.

So it is encouraging that the new Minister should now be prepared to look to the UK Channel 4 television model for possible solutions to some of the SBS's problems. One cannot argue with his expressed view that things simply cannot be allowed to continue as they are.

Most recent surveys suggest that, on a raw ratings basis, SBS TV is achieving an average share of little more than 1 per cent of the viewing audience. Taken together the metropolitan commercial services generally achieve close to 90 per cent.

Thus the effectiveness of using "multicultural" television as presently provided by SBS TV to achieve a significant degree of "intercultural exchange" has to be seriously questioned. Put simply: no audience, no intercultural exchange.

I realise that some of these judgements may seem strident in the face of the high degree of commitment and creativity evidenced by SBS TV since its inception. Within its budgetary and technical limitations SBS TV has shown itself willing to be experimental and innovative. It has attracted considerable interest abroad.

Yet it is this very dependence for reasons of cost upon overseas sources for so many of its programs which has caused SBS TV's multicultural function to be perceived by much of the wider community as essentially foreign, fragmented, and unrelated to even a partialistic view of the Australian cultural identity. The danger in allowing such a perception to become entrenched is that the policy of multiculturalism will itself be marginalised, ghettoised and ultimately subverted.

The clue to broadening the "multicultural" program philosophy lies in the approach to the wider question of cultural identity. A paper by Dr Peter Sheldrake, formerly Director of the Australian Institute of Multicultural Affairs (now the Office of Multicultural Affairs) contains the following observation:

... a key issue is that multiculturalism is often spoken about as if it dealt only with 'ethnic' cultural issues. Academic examination of culture suggests that identity, and the cultural basis for this, is an intrinsic expression of a person's simultaneous membership of several overlapping but different groups.

Each person in our society belongs to groups characterised on the basis of ethnicity, gender, class, occupation, geography, etc. An approach to multiculturalism which ignores these groups, and their contribution to identity, will be both inadequate and ineffective.

I would want to add a further dimension to the charter of a broadcaster committed to such a view of "cultural identity" — and that is the dimension of assertion. For it seems to me pointless to create such a television service unless it undertakes a dynamic cultural and social role. Bland passivity in the face of racism, sexism, social injustice, power elites, intellectual reductionism and homogeneity for homogeneity's sake is not much of an agenda.

After all, the Australian contemporary culture in all its diversity is emerging at precisely the same time as technology and commerce impel us towards globalism. Unless we provide ourselves with structures within which to achieve a confident expression of our culture at the non-mainstream as well as the mainstream levels, our contributions to global culture are more likely to be technoprofessional and accommodating.

Although the work I undertook for the AFC developed a notional budget, program expenditure profile and some cost-equivalent advertising estimates for an SBS/Channel 4 hybrid, much will depend upon the parameters identified by the Department of Communications working party established last year by the minister...
to develop policy options in this area. There will need to be more discussion, consultation and structural development before a concept of this kind can be translated into reality.

A number of threshold questions will have to be addressed.

Firstly, what should we mean when we talk of multiculturalism in television? How do we deal, in that context, with such program objectives as innovation, experiment, sophistication, style, editorial independence, the targeting of general or specific-interest audiences as well as general and specific-interest advertisers?

Secondly, should we approach the question of multilingual television separately? Are there desirable quotas we should seek to meet and, if so, how should they be accommodated within either the SBS or the wider television system?

Thirdly, in what ways will the creation of this service impact upon our other television services and can we now take other special steps to ensure that other desirable broadcasting policy objectives are achieved?

(For example, can we, in the overall management of our television services, accommodate a measure of public or community access television? Should we try to counter the centralisation of production in Sydney? Is there a case for the special provision of educational television material? Should not the charter of the ABC be made more role-specific and its structure refined accordingly? Should there be more or less regulation of commercial programming and station ownership?)

Fourthly, what other future options lie ahead consequent upon technological advance or other factors. If PAY TV is just around the corner, for example, what sort of life expectancy would a channel of the kind we have been discussing actually have?

I realise that there is a danger here of posing so many questions (and there are a great many more) that one loses sight of the original objective. The reality is, of course, that in the matter of television policy, this and other Australian Governments have shown themselves to be markedly manipulative. In television and politics, everything is now perceived to be connected to everything else.

This proposal will generate both enthusiasm and resistance. It will require goodwill, patience, candour, an enthusiasm for cultural and creative diversity and a sense of realism to negotiate its many merits and resolve its difficulties. But ultimately it has to be the best option at this time.

It is best because it will provide us with a qualitative diversity of television program choice in what is overwhelmingly a homogeneous, mainstream market.

It is best because it will harness and use efficiently resources which at present are underutilised and bring the production of non-mainstream programs into a more market-related environment.

But most importantly it is best because it could give us an opportunity to embark on the confident celebration in television of Australia's contemporary cultural identity in more than just its popular dimension. And that will change us all for the better.

*This paper was given at the second annual SPAA conference, held at Surfers Paradise in December last year.

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**Cisco Entertainment**

**A Rosy View**

David Rose puts writers first. As commissioning editor at Channel 4, he has been responsible for more than 100 films, from The Draughtsmen's Contract to Wetherby and Playing Away, which have helped revitalise the UK film industry.

He became a founder member of Channel 4 after 25 years at the BBC, as drama editor at Birmingham and before that as producer of drama series, including Z Cars.

In this interview with HUNTER CORDAIY, he talks about the impact of Channel 4, script funding, and a trusting partnership between finance and independent filmmakers.

The names Channel 4, and Film Four International bring with them a stamp of quality on the screen and also a sense that English film production is now divided into two convenient periods... before and after Channel 4.

Yes, I'm aware of this and it's enormously heartening the way Channel 4 has invigorated the British cinema. It certainly was at a low ebb; employment was very low in 1980-81 when we started and then soared so quickly it became hard to get the cameraman or editor you wanted. We were filling a gap, of course, and it wasn't just a question of jobs, there was a huge gulf between the film industry and television, and we've closed that gap.

Now I think it's a real partnership, particularly in the way the talent flows across the two industries — writers and directors are making films and not thinking too much if it's for cinema or television, they're making films, and certainly 95 per cent of the films we're making now have theatrical potential.

As you've said, Channel 4 has dramatically altered the relationship between television and cinema. Films are now automatically linked to television, from the beginning, whereas in the past that connection came much later... Channel 4 has changed the sequence hasn't it?

In quality and content they're absolutely linked. There's hardly a film being made in Britain today that has not got television money, upfront, assisting it to be made. Television money has held together an enormous number of films that otherwise would not have been made.

And this has changed the 'look' of television in the process?

Yes, it has. The Play For Today, and the Video Play are having a huge struggle to survive on television. I'm supporting six one-hour video plays and we'll be screening them shortly. I'm particularly happy about this because each one is from a writer new to television. Perhaps one or two of them will go on and write screenplays and give something to cinema later. There are still some television plays, but the
opportunities for film are so much greater and the audience perceives a film as something a great deal richer than television studio drama.

Channel 4 produces very distinctive films... Channel 4 film', do you have a signature?

I think it's very difficult to say. Firstly, our budgets are on the low side — when we first went to air our target was 20 feature films a year. It's dropped to 16 this year because the production costs have completely outstripped the budget. In Year One I had £6 million to support 20 features. That gave me an average of £300,000. Today the average cost is £1.2 million and my budget is £92 million. The reasons for the early low costs were that we were new, we were engaging independent producers for the first time, and it was a honeymoon period. We are trying to support low budget films — that doesn't mean cheap films — and we look very closely at the budgets so we know it’s practical and the money is on the screen, not in lush limousines.

What, for you, is an independent filmmaker?

An independent is a production company, a producer, linked possibly with a director, who has his or her own company and is entirely independent of the commercial companies and the BBC. You might call the writers and directors ‘freelance’, but they are independent. When we came into the field we were very anxious that the independent sector would grow and thrive because before 1980 independents had hardly any opportunity for their work to be seen on BBC or ITV.

Why was that?

I worked for the BBC. It made economic sense, you have staff, staff agreements, and you believe that by employing your staff on all the programs in the best possible way you are being economical. Of course you have a much greater degree of editorial control over the program-makers if you have them in-house.

We set out from the beginning at Channel 4 to commission independents while keeping at arm's length. I know Jeremy Isaacs has always been very keen that we should commission people with a very clear understanding as to what they were going to make for us, then they’d go away and do it. In my experience it hasn’t quite worked like that.

How does editorial control work at Channel 4?

In feature films we will only move when we're satisfied with the script, that it is within the 'last touch' of being satisfactory. We have 2000 scripts to choose from each year, in one form or another, and when you're selecting 15 from 2000 you simply go with the project you can see most clearly and you believe in, the one that excites you.

In contractual terms we have script approval, approval of the director, key crew, and central casting; we have access to the shoot, access to the rushes, access to the rough cut, and we have fine cut approval. They’d never actually had any arguments about the fine cut approval because we have respect for the people who make our films.

We will argue, and persuade as hard as we like but finally it’s the work of the filmmaker and that must be respected.

Comrades is an interesting example. It was one of the first scripts on my desk in 1981 that I read. Comrades runs for three hours and some say it needs to be that length, others say shorter. Bill Douglas took a long time editing the film and there was a lot of discussion. In the end it was his film and we stood by him. We’ve never insisted that a director keep one scene and drop another, because it’s their individuality we’re looking for.

And filmmakers will trust you because of that attitude.

Yes, that’s the key. We seem to have built up a strong bond of trust.

Can we talk about this trust in partnership between finance and filmmaker... how does it work for writers?

At its purist we commission a script from a writer and I think it is important that the trust of Channel 4, the authority, is placed in one commissioning editor. There have been experiences in the past, say at the BFI Production Board, where a group reads a script together, it's a commission, and then there must be a question as to whether a degree of risk and adventure goes out the window if a project is passed over so that an agreement can be reached more easily on another. The same applied to the then Film Finance Corporation.

I welcome the fact that British Screen has now been formed and Simon Relph is running that and as far as I know it really is his decision that fast films have the green light. The same applies to Channel 4. I have to make the decisions. There are a number of new writers and we can’t always give a contract for a screenplay, so we might advise to have a treatment first.

What sort of finance would you give?

We’d pay £2000 for a treatment.

And a screenplay?

The minimum is £12,500... up to the acceptance of the final draft, plus another 50 per cent on principal photography, so for most scripts we earmark about £25,000.

How many starts and finishes in one year?

I ask this because often there is a problem when a culture is based on a level of failure is often very conspicuous. If a script gets investment and it doesn’t work then that is seen as a ‘bad’ decision...

When the script of My Beautiful Laundrette or Playing Away is ready we budget it, and put 100 per cent of the money in. I think you’ve got to decide to go with a script or not, if it’s your year back it and ensure it goes into production. I know that sounds easy but there are some films where we’ve had to look around for other money too, but we’ve found it quickly and we haven’t spent more money.

We consider about 2000 projects a year, and of course a number of scripts are considered complete, but when we’ve gone ahead with a project bought in that way we usually have to cash it out. If we are interested in an unsolicited script then we buy it. I think it is only right that we should show a positive interest in the script by buying it, and that means paying a producer to make the arrangements with the writer to acquire the script, so there’d be some money for the legal side of the contract and perhaps £1000 for the producer.

We keep the development down as low as we can as I don’t see the point of splashing your money until you’re absolutely sure you’ve got the script you want. This year we might commission 12 or 16 screenplays and I’ll be very satisfied if three of those went into production. You’ve simply got to write the script. The script cost is such a small item in the overall budget, and it’s sensible to keep it low because you hear of such vast sums being spent in America on screenplays, which seems to me unnecessarily generous.

Can you talk about Channel 4’s experience with co-productions?

We do some, not many. We did one a few years ago called A Song For Europe based on the novel by Stanley Adams, who worked for the Swiss chemical conglomerate Hoffmann La Roche.

It was a story that moved from Switzerland to Italy, France and England. Most of the time on our films were Australians who spoke English, as they did in the real story, and there were only two scenes that were subtitled. So, happily it was English language but beyond that we didn’t do any dubbing, we hate it, and with very few exceptions we have nothing but subtitles.

There aren’t many true co-productions, but we have a reciprocal arrangement with the French, where we pay them money into each other’s films and screen them. A lot of our funding is with British Screen, though we did give Agnes Varda money to complete Vagabond from rough cut by pre-purchasing the UK theatrical rights.

Do you think you’re creating a national image with Channel 4 films?

I think many of the writers and directors are dealing with subjects which they’re familiar with, with particular sense of time and place, so they will be perceived as ‘British’ from the outside, and the successful ones are perhaps the Australians who have brought to British cinema a kind of film that was not around before 1980. Maybe it’s more serious, and they certainly leave the audience with something to carry away with them other than the slushy adventurous tales we are so often invited to view which live for the moment but do not give us anything to think about.

I asked the question because it is perceived that Channel 4 is producing a significant number of films which have to represent the current image of England. Australian film financing is to a large degree supported by government agencies charged with the task of creating an Australian cinema, an Australian image. Perhaps this is instinctive and not conscious.

It’s not conscious. I think you’ve got to go for the very best talent and I think some of the best expression is on contemporary subjects. Writers writing about what they know, directors conveying to us vividly and accurately...
CRY FREEDOM

Perhaps the most fascinating aspect of Richard Attenborough's Cry Freedom is the effect that it will have on South African audiences, if they are ever allowed to see it.

Technically, this extraordinarily moving and mostly factual account of a young black radical leader, Steve Biko, and the blinkered white newspaper editor whom he re-educates, Donald Woods, has been cleared by Pretoria’s censors for screening from April.

But it is not up to the censors to judge a film’s political impact. That is for the Botha Government to decide. Whatever the artistic merits and demerits of this long and sometimes lavish production, it is certain that for South Africans of all colours this is emotional, social and, above all, political dynamite.

If ever a country lent itself as a subject for close cinemactical examination, South Africa, with all its wonders and horrors, is it. Oddly, after all this time, Cry Freedom is almost alone in striving to make a definitive moral statement on apartheid in a form with international mass appeal.

Attenborough, closely advised by Woods, on whose book Biko the script is largely based, starts Cry Freedom by demolishing a replica of the Crossroads squatter camp near Cape Town and, along with it, any doubt that this film will treat the white authorities kindly.

Indeed, the actors who portray the security police enjoy a cliched ugliness that seems excessive to anyone who has not seen the real thing. Yet even John Thaw’s Police Minister Kruger, who is accurately portrayed as telling a ruling National Party rally that Biko’s death “leaves me cold,” gets a chance to rattle off a few historical justifications for the Afrikaner’s fiercely defensive attitude.

Thaw, who seems never to have recovered from being a television detective, is made up to resemble a short, fat Cary Grant with big, black-rimmed spectacles and an accent that must make Jimmy Kruger turn in his grave.

Two things filmmakers never seem to get right are South African accents and dummy newspaper front pages. Attenborough is no exception in Cry Freedom, on either count. But the two main characters, Kevin Kline’s Woods and Denzel Washington’s Biko, are superbly cast and for the most part convincing, accents and all. Woods, by all accounts, is much more ebullient than Kline’s portrayal and Washington’s evocation of Biko is a little too saintly for comfort.

These are details, however, and they fail to detract from Woods’ transformation from what Biko calls “a white liberal who clings to all the advantages of the white world” to one who in the end is prepared to sacrifice the white South African way of life — and more — to let the truth about Biko’s ghastly death come out.

What is particularly notable is that the Woods character never loses his almost naive anti-heroism (“I was shaking like a leaf,” he says after ordering police off his property at gunpoint) while managing to dominate the film — some would say at Biko’s expense.

Biko, apart from the occasional reappearance in flashback form, is whisked off to his death in a police Land Rover halfway through the film, leaving Woods to record his death as a martyr.
only to suffer the same banning order that sought to silence his black friend.

The remainder of the story concerns Woods's decision to flee South Africa and his attempt to do so while disguised as a Catholic priest, a segment which falls back on just a little too much contrived emotion, humour and drama to make the break from Biko's dark sufferings an altogether comfortable one.

This is the stuff of a hearty controversy: is the film about Biko or Woods? What is Attenborough playing at? There will be some who find the sudden concentration on a white South African family agonising over its future an indulgence.

But Attenborough's intention seems essentially positive. Not all white South Africans support apartheid; those who do can be convinced to change their minds. Some may even actively assist in its downfall.

Is this the effect that Attenborough is trying to achieve? Cry Freedom, like any big-budget film, is a compromise between an artist's conscience and an accountant's bottom line. This production has to play in Peoria as well as in Pretoria, and the white Woods family's lengthy escape is probably a commercial necessity.

Attenborough could counter this criticism by saying that there is no use in producing a moral masterpiece if no one goes to see it, and he would have a point. The result is a film which is partly a political testimony, partly a 'Boys' Own' adventure, partly an educational documentary. As a blend it is difficult to control, making the monumental Soweto massacre re-enactment near the end almost an "oh, and by the way . . ." intrusion.

But see the attention to detail: brought to life is the famous press photograph of a schoolgirl, face contorted in grief, running with a dead sibling; there in its callousness is the security policemen leaning out of a car window to shoot a fleeing child in the back, which is precisely what was happening then — and, for all we know since the introduction of blanket censorship, what is still happening right now.

Cry Freedom is an unapologetic indictment of the world's only institutionalised system of racial discrimination. In its final moments, however, it has the ability to reach out even into the heart of Australia's cosy conscience with a list of many of those South Africans — white, coloured, Asian as well as black — who have died in police custody, with each name followed by an official explanation: "fell against chair"; "fell down stairs"; or, perhaps most sinister of all, "no official explanation".

Could this be a list of Aborigines who have suffered a similar fate in one of the world's proudest democracies?

In this film, Attenborough has given everyone something to think about.

Graham Barrett


Made In Heaven

Tears, which seem to appear so spontaneously, are, we think, most often conventional responses to conventional situations. One of us remembers listening to a sentimental song while shaving some years ago, glancing into the mirror and seeing his face streaked with tears he had not known he was shedding. The response was Pavlovian, to all intents and purposes involuntary. This is one reason why the commonplace distinction between 'sentiment' and 'sentimentality', or good and bad tears, seems so misguided. It is only another distinction between Us and Them, good taste and bad, one style and another.

Made In Heaven is a sentimental film. This means that some people will think
it is all too much like a commercial for toilet paper and that some of those who cry will be ashamed. It is a film in the line of *Seventh Heaven*, or *Zoo In Budapest*, or *Peter Ibbetson*, a film of patent falsity, of manipulation, of lies better than truth. There are no ‘real’ characters or situations in this film. Everything in it is impossible.

In *Made In Heaven* the camera glides constantly, forward, then backward, to and fro — a slow waltz of camera, a swaying and returning, sailing, hesitating, until it is finally the movement itself which is important, not what is revealed by the moving. Style then, and not substance, surfaces and not what we pretend lies beneath them.

And the surfaces themselves are carefully, too carefully, decorated in today’s colours, toned to designer taste (even the opening, in black and white, points to trendy fashion). This too, in time, will add its charm to the whole, when those colours which are so normal and what one tries to escape, but rather what we try to remember — what was it like then, how did it feel, what did people dream of?

The film is one of resemblances, feelings, dreams. The story is a trap. A young man (Timothy Hutton) dies and finds his true love (Kelly McGillis) in heaven. They are returned to life on earth, with less than a lifetime to find each other again or lose their love forever. The story is a trap because it seems to be, ‘classically’, about desire and loss and searching. Moreover, it is a man’s desire, loss and search which preoccupies us. But to read it this way is to fall into the trap of ignoring this film’s manifest artifice and its obsessive stylisation. This is no story. It is a dance, a configuration. There is no loss here, for only one ending — reconciliation — will complete the figure. No desire, then, for desire is dependent upon loss. No search, for the finding is foreordained.

Instead, the film teases. Like the camera, which is its substitute, the film advances and withdraws, plays with the possible and discards it, leaving for its ending only what cannot be. Nothing in this story between the arbitrary (deliberately unmotivated) separation of the lovers and their arbitrary (wholly coincidental) reunion qualifies as a narrative ‘event’. Where there is no story here — merely a set of ‘incidents’, happenings without narrative significance, actions which have no bearing on how the story turns out.

So this is why we call it a dance rather than a story and why we say the story is a trap. And this is why this sentimental film, this film of conventional emotion, is more in line with an unconventional and disquieting way. Transitions are abrupt, elisions of time and space are unexplained, which has the dual effect of emphasising that indeed there is nothing of consequence separating the lovers (or that the time-space of heaven is not what we are used to) and that what we are watching is only a way of filling in the time until they are brought together again.

In the process we become acutely aware of place. Place is our only means of understanding what is going on, and we learn to flick our eyes across the screen, picking up clues, constructing where and when and are looking into and beyond what is pushed up front, to see surprises, *lagniappe* in the margin. That is, we too begin to pay intense attention to whatever is incidental, insignificant; to enjoy the billed (and unbidden) guest appearances, the bizarre and banal circumstances in which the lovers find themselves, the twists of action which do not eventuate (strings of inarticulate might-have-beens complementing the capricious here-and-now that we do see). In short, perhaps, to see the movie rather than read the story.

And, obligingly, *Made In Heaven* responds by making its places sharp and clear, creating with wonderful economy a sense of inhabited spaces. More than that, its unnecessary incidents are, by very nature, by and large, interesting and entertaining, sentimental and outrageous. When the film is — abruptly and predictably — over, certain kinds of looking and showing have played themselves through, sentimentality has been invoked in what might once have been called unsemitical ways, feeling has prevailed over logic as expression over content.

We don’t want to be too extreme about this (even the length of this review is extreme for us: do we have something to explain?). *Made In Heaven* is awfully slick, awfully yuppie now. Not your thing, very likely. It almost was not ours. Yet, finally there is the sentimentality of it, the evocation of meaningless tears.

— They order, we think, this matter better in the movies —

**Bill and Diane Routt**


*This is a word you might have missed in Down By Law when that fast nasty cop says it to Tom Waits just before he looks into the boot of his car. It’s a New Orleans term which means ‘a piece of candy the shopkeeper throws in as a bonus. It’s a useful word and deserves wider circulation.*

**TAMPOPO**

Japanese audiences love to laugh at their own foibles. Shochiku in the 1920s — and later Toho in the 1930s — built up their company assets by churning out a steady supply of slapstick comedies. When Ozu started work at Shochiku, he served his directorial apprenticeship working on studio comedies largely composed of a string of gags. They were called ‘nonsense films’. During the thirties producer Kido Shiro added a social realist component to the comedy. Perhaps influenced by Chaplin’s successful formula, he developed the Shochiku studio genre — a mixture of comic gags with sentimental stories about the common people. The comedy was diluted or deepened, depending on your point of view.

Mansaku Itami, the father of *Tampopo’s* writer-director, was a popular writer-director of comic samurai films in the thirties. Long before Woody Allen started making movies, his characters bungled their way to success in love and war. His son, Juzo Itami, has come late to directing, after a career as an actor and film critic. His directorial debut film, *The Funeral*, was an runaway commercial success in Japan — and well received at overseas film festivals. It leaned on its source material, a sprinkling of comic gags. *Tampopo*, on the other hand, marks a return to an earlier type of comedy — little social comment, less narrative continuity and more gags. Alternatively, its pastiche of movie conventions, structural fragmentation, multiplicity of mini-stories, indiscriminate satire and anarchic humour could be seen as the mark of the post-humanist if not postmodern sensibility...
perfect omelette on the run from the police. Then there are the bad-taste gags — ones worthy of Mel Brooks. A dying mother on orders from her husband rises from her bed and cooks her family a last meal; an elderly sick man who overindulges in taboo food is saved from choking to death by having his stomach evacuated by a vacuum cleaner; the child of health-food freaks is force-fed ice-cream by a stranger.

A series of gags running through the film involves a high-class gangster and his moll who combine gourmanderie with their love play, producing sex with egg yolks, oysters and other delicacies. In the film’s prologue, before introducing the film, this same gangster character addresses us directly, warning us that he cannot bear members of the audience who crunch noisily during the screening of films and disturb his concentration.

As gourmet dining is as much a cult in Melbourne as it is in Tokyo, one might have expected this film to find an appreciative audience here. However, the lack of laughter from the audience at the film’s preview — reportedly also at later commercial screenings — suggests a certain resistance to it on the part of Melbourne audiences. Perhaps an art house cinema is not the right location for this fragmented farce — the audience comes with the wrong expectations.

More’s the pity, because this film tickles the palate at a fraction of the cost of a meal at a gourmet restaurant.

Itami is making a career in films by concentrating on bread-and-butter issues. After disposing of death and dining, his latest film satirises the Japanese passion for tax evasion. I wonder how that will go down here. I fear it will sink to the bottom like a lead balloon.

Freda Freiberg

MANON DES SOURCES

“Le dest in ca n’existe pas!” Destiny does not exist. This is the answer given by Cesar Soubeyran-Le Papet (Yves Montand) to Ugolin (Daniel Auteuil), as the past catches up with them. This defiance of the gods is not uttered dramatically by a Greek hero, but by a common man who has built his fortune and who wants his name passed on to future generations. To achieve his last goal, he tries to convince his only surviving relative, Ugolin, to marry.

This is the starting point to the second part of the drama, which begins 10 years after the events of Jean de Florette.

Director Claude Berri wanted to call the second part of his cinematographic diptych, La Force Du Destin, the force of destiny, inspired by Verdi’s opera, whose musical theme is that of the film.

With Manon Des Sources, he recreates a Greek tragedy which follows all the rules of classical drama. In a classical tragedy, a number of elements are crucial: the gods, a crime, a perpetrator of the act, a chorus which represents the collective conscience, knowledge, an instrument of revenge, and a messenger of the gods for the final revelation.

The scene is set. All the elements are in place: the action will follow its inevitable course, and if we are familiar with the pattern of classical tragedy, we can anticipate the various stages of its development.

Ugolin experiences an all-consuming passion for Manon, the daughter of Jean de Florette, the man he helped destroy. He will hope for her love, he will plead for his, and will be destroyed by her hatred, taking Cesar’s hopes and dreams in his trail of destruction.

Fate catches up with the culprits. Even if Manon’s discovery of the source of the spring and her revenge stretches credibility, it is part of a pre-ordained sequence of events.

A crime has been committed, in which everyone in the village had a part. Atonement must be made, and punishment handed out. The perpetrators of the crime are exposed publicly, and so is the collective guilt. Ugolin commits suicide, and with him dies the last hope for the name Soubeyran to be carried on. Worse is to come for Cesar, when he talks to an old friend, Delphine (Yvonne Gamy), and the name of Florette comes up once again. This time, it is confirmed that she and Cesar were once lovers. During the conversation, it is gradually revealed to Cesar that her child Jean de Florette, the man whose ruin and death he caused, was his son.

He not only realises what could have been, but the full monotony of his crime is revealed to him and to us, as he realises that he is the cause of his own son’s death. It is the Oedipal formula in reverse. Cesar, who had proclaimed that destiny did not exist, recognises the hand of fate.

Claude Berri has retained in his treatment of the characters the balance he achieved in the first film. We, the spectators, identify with Manon’s hopeless passion, and the destruction of Cesar.

The words of the French playwright Jean Anouilh, who used a great number of classical themes in his work, come to mind. He explained the mechanism of classical tragedy, saying that unlike melodrama, where you have villains and heroes, “... in a classical tragedy, everyone is innocent. The characters are acting out a part dictated by forces beyond their control.”

The last scenes of the film, where Cesar watches from afar the wedding of his grand-daughter, never daring to approach her, are heartbreaking. It is on him that the final episode of the tragedy will focus: his confession, his surrendering to death, and the moving last letter he writes for his grand-daughter.

The last shot of the film shows his hand half-open, clasping the emblems of his love: a comb, a letter, and a necklace, symbolising the happiness fate took from him. This last image confirms Claude Berri’s first choice of title: “La Force Du Destin”.

Berri’s films have renewed a French cinematic tradition from the pre-war cinema. The South of France, contrasted with Paris, represented what the bush symbolised in the Australian>
• THE BLACK CANNON INCIDENT

Red normally may be the colour of passion, but in this stylish black comedy from China, it is the colour of alarm.

First alarm: A distracted-looking man enters a telegraph office and pushes a form across the counter at the clerk: “Black Cannon missing. 301. Find.”

The clerk, sniffing espionage, alerts the Public Security Bureau — discreetly, of course.

Second alarm: The PSB tracks down the sender of the mysterious cable to his workplace and informs the Party Committee in control there of the problem. The suspect is a single, middle-aged, German-speaking engineer named Zhao Shuxin. A quiet, dedicated worker, Zhao has never caused any trouble nor done anything suspicious, but that, the committee members conclude, is no reason to presume innocence. Without telling him why, they remove Zhao from the job of interpreting for a German technical adviser who is overseeing the installation of imported equipment. The German, who is also in the dark as to the committee’s motives, protests that Zhao’s replacement, a tour guide, is incompetent as a technical translator. The fact the foreigner is so bent on having Zhao back with him makes Zhao even more suspicious in the committee’s eyes.

When the factory manager actually has the audacity to suggest to the Party Committee that it approach Zhao directly to ask the meaning of his strange telegram, the committee’s refusal insinuates an Orwellian logic into the tale: that couldn’t be done, it’s explained, for it would imply distrust, and investigation is concern; secret investigation means never having to explain, for it would imply distrust, and investigation is concern; secret investigation means never having to say you’re sorry.

Third alarm: The truth is revealed in a small parcel. Zhao is exonerated.

Reds and oranges dominate the urban-industrial landscape of The Black Cannon Incident. Director Huang Jianxin explained his colour scheme to London’s The Times this way: “Whenever we could, we highlighted the colour red. Red signifies anxiety. It is also used for warning signals.” In The Black Cannon Incident, the warning signals are clearly flashing for Chinese society itself.

The environment in which this unusual story unfolds is recognisably Chinese, but also abstract, surrealistic — an idealised vision, one might say, of a modernising and modernised People’s Republic. The Party Committee meets to discuss the troublesome case of their prize engineer and his mysterious cable in a sterile white room dominated by a giant black wall clock, whose hands silently glide through the passing hours. Unnaturally long indoor corridors swallow and distort the people who pass through them; gigantic machines with no obvious function hegemonise the screen.

The clean, modern look of New China in The Black Cannon Incident excludes any hint of poverty or material backwardness which the regime ritually dragged out and flogged in China whenever the ruling Communist Party needs a scapegoat for its own mistakes. (Witness the current tendency in China to shift the blame for the Cultural Revolution from power struggles to ‘feudal tendencies’.) So when things go wrong, and they go very tragically wrong here, it looks like the blame must rest with the system itself — the system of all-mighty Party Committees, with their sticky-beaked meddling in personal affairs, pathological concern for secrecy, security hysteria, and barely-suppressible xenophobia.

If you’re wondering how such pointed political satire could have been made in China in the first place, part of the answer lies in the studio which produced The Black Cannon Incident: the Xi’an Film Studio. Since 1983, the studio has been run by Wu Tianming. A middle-aged filmmaker, Wu plays the role of patron saint and protector to younger, innovative filmmakers like Huang Jianxin. “The young directors want freedom,” Wu has said, “and that’s what I give them.”

The Black Cannon Incident was awarded best film of 1985 by the Ministry of Broadcasting, Film and Television. Director Huang Jianxin, who made the film, his first, at the age of 32, was nominated for Best Director in the Golden Rooster Awards (China’s Oscars) that year, and the film’s lead actor, Liu Zifeng, who portrays the character of Zhao with an almost Woody Allen-esque quality, won a Golden Rooster for Best Actor.

It’s a seamless film, however, and several scenes seem mystifyingly out of place, like one in which Zhao goes to see a nightclub act. On the stage, a singer gyrates wildly through the disco song ‘Ali Baba’ while a team of blankly smiling young women in red miniskirts thrust and bump to the music. When a pair of youths several rows behind Zhao stand up to boogie along, however, they are promptly arrested. There is a connection, but it’s difficult to discover without knowing that, shortly before the film was made, Wham gave a concert in Peking at which police hauled in people who danced in the aisles. This was much discussed by young urbanites who wrily observed that there was a message in this: those on stage (a Chinese pun for those in power) can act as wildly as they wish, those in the aisles (a Chinese pun for those in power) can act as wildly as they wish, but the audience should never assume the same privilege for itself.

Linda Jaijin


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THE FAMILY

Ettore Scola's gentle and humorous inspection of a bourgeois family from the turn of the century to the eighties is a finely orchestrated work rich in subtle rhythms and detailed textured images that speak of almost Chekhovian sensitivity about its subject matter. But despite its noteworthy performances and directorial assurance, this movie is all dressed up with nowhere to go. Not that it suffers from the elephantine pictorial excesses of the worst form of the European art movie of the seventies and early eighties — Scola is too intelligent a filmmaker to indulge in such banality. But the movie is limited in the sense that it does not preempt any image in any appreciative sense of the term.

One can't say that The Family lacks conceptual and visual clarity or that it is crippled by tiresome clichés. Ultimately, The Family disappoints because it does not take any large creative risks with its potentially interesting material. Scola's sentimental humanitarianism, augmented by an atmospheric romantic score and a constantly inquisitive camera eager to explore the faces of his characters and their cluttered rooms in the hope of revealing their souls, is a problem. And there is a continuous metaphorical urge to formulate a picture of a family's history over three generations as representative of the human condition. This, too, spoils the movie in so many unfortunate ways.

Scola's propensity to sentimentalise his sharply nuanced story line tends to take over the movie. It tends to overshadow some of The Family's better qualities: its impressive compositional unity and sensitive performances. Vittorio Gassman is particularly good as Carlo, a melancholic self-centred professor of literature. What we see throughout this tenderly observed movie is Carlo's destiny being forged by the traditions and internal logic of the European extended family.

Two other exceptional performances need mentioning. Fanny Ardant as Adriana, the independent concert pianist who is Carlo's sister-in-law, is quite remarkable. Their long-term desire for each other is finally consummated after some 30 years in a scene of extreme anguish and hesitation, characterised by effective Wagnerian storm effects. Then there is Philippe Noiret, a performer of masterly refinement, in a small cameo role. Carlo, an argumentative soul, gets involved in a ridiculous small cameo role. Carlo, a melancholic self-centred professor of literature. What we see throughout this tenderly observed movie is Carlo's destiny being forged by the traditions and internal logic of the European extended family.

The Family does not belong to the experimental avant-garde end of the European art movie as characterised by the highly individualistic works of Antonioni, Resnais or Godard — works noted for their narrative ambiguities and subjective realities of characterisation. Instead, what we see is a far more traditional art movie, embodying some of the more main thematic and stylistic conventions of the classical narrative cinema that are based on its cause and effect logic of narrative representation. The Family does not entirely eschew some of the definitive critical ideas of the European art movie, such as psychologically complex characters concerned with their own emotions and loosely defined narratives that go against the classical conceptions of time and space located in mainstream narrative cinema. The movie does display these features, but in a much more subdued form.

What we do experience is Scola's use of certain narrative and visual devices which are central to his filmic sensibility and have been identified by Rolando Caputo and Gerard Hayes in their helpful review of one of the director's more recent popular and critical successes, Le Bal (Cinema Papers 50, February-March 1985). Like Le Bal, the action of The Family occurs within the confines of one locale — in this case, it's Gassman's large family apartment. In this hermetically sealed universe we follow the countless personal events that constitute the complex history of his family — a history of domestic calm and turbulence which parallels the more public socio-political history of 20th century Italy happening outside the apartment. This larger history of fascism, war, the cold war, the student unrest of the sixties and the subsequent two decades of recession has been virtually displaced. It is barely glimpsed except for the occasional shot from one of the apartment windows, where we see workers going to work, children playing or an organ grinder entertaining a few people. Radio, television and newspapers are also occasionally shown disseminating information on this almost absent history of a nation undergoing the turmoil of modern life. Thus Scola foregrounds a more intimate popular history as represented by the ongoing intricate activities of his characters bound by their common familial ties.

The movie deploys several neat situations (arguably too neat in terms of its own closure) essential to its underlying theme which can be summed up as 'family life just keeps going on', thanks to the inherent regenerative powers of the extended family. At the start of the movie, we meet a large family preparing for a group portrait. (Gassman's character is a baby at this point.) The portrait comes back to us in the movie's concluding scenes, only this time Carlo is 80 years old and sits where his grandfather sat in the original portrait that opens up Scola's work, after the first of several elaborate travelling shots down the apartment's long corridor. The notion of the extended family as a site for repetition and growth is emblematised by a series of short scenes that occur before the concluding portrait sequence. Carlo's grandson is seen opening the apartment's front door to many old and new members of the family.

Whatever its faults, The Family is well structured and performed. Its greatest sin is that it hesitates to engage in a more probing examination of its subject matter.

John Conomos

CINEMA PAPERS MARCH — 41

Fatal Attraction starts out as a romantic comedy, suddenly becomes a suspense thriller and, in its final scenes, changes course again to opt for horror. As in Play Misty For Me, a classic of the female-revenge cycle of thriller films, the revenge of the spurned woman becomes more horrifying as the narrative progresses. Fatal Attraction is a very successful thriller, a story of psychological disturbance which has the power to grip and chill its audience even in scenes which use hackneyed conventions of the horror genre and one over-the-top scene which is pure schlock. A fan of both Hitchcock and Chabrol, the director, Adrian Lyne (Flashdance, 9½ Weeks) has learnt his lessons well although without the brilliance and originality of his mentors. However, compared with Psycho, a major problem does arise from the fact that it uses the device of generic rupture in order to seduce and terrify its audience.

If Fatal Attraction had made it clear from the beginning that it was a horror film, then the audience could have settled back for a night of thrills and chills. Woman as monstrous-feminine is a conventional figure of the horror film (Repulsion, The Exorcist, Sisters, Rabid, Shivers) and of literature (the madwoman of Gothic novels), and myth (Medusa, the Sirens). But Fatal Attraction is duplicitous, wearing the garb of an adult, social issue film, then that of a suspense thriller in order to blur its true nature – and as a result, the issues at stake – until the last half hour when its horrific skeleton is fully revealed. Consequently, much of the horror (particularly the rabbit scene) that is generated towards the end seems misplaced; it does not develop logically from the character of Alex, as initially established, but rather from the conventions of the horror film which are imposed on the narrative towards the end. Most important, the film’s multiple generic format means that as the Alex (Glenn Close) figure is transformed into a man-eating monster audience sympathy for her point of view is lost; this would be fine if the film had not initially given the erroneous impression that it was about to deal seriously with her position as the ‘wronged woman’.

Feminists are justified in arguing that Alex’s position as the ‘wronged woman’ is unfairly presented. On one level, the narrative is a female revenge fantasy – the expression of every woman’s anger when she finds that she really is just a one-night stand. The problem is that the events are portrayed from the man’s point of view, not the woman’s. Contrary to Lyne’s denials, the Alex persona does represent a negative portrayal of the independent woman. She is made to mouth feminist slogans about ‘sex for its own sake’ and independent “adult relationships” and...
Judging from audience response, however, family (beautiful wife, adorable daughter Dan (Michael Douglas) and his yuppie husband and family. When she begins her prolonged attack on Dan, the audience are audibly hissing her. “I think people have found the film very scary,” says Lyne. “The last 25 minutes of the film, if you see it with 500 or 600 people in America, is very extraordinary. They scream and they yell and they shout at the screen to Michael Douglas to get the Hell up there and kill her. It’s almost like a lynching mob!” (Age, “Entertainment Guide”, 22.1.1988, p1) If it is a lynching mob then one is tempted to take the analogy further and argue that as in all lynchings the wife has not had a fair trial — she may even be innocent.

Adrian Lyne claims that the film is also presented from her point of view but his comments indicate that he has a very superficial understanding of notions of identification. Lyne stresses that he empathised with his heroine: “When she comes to his office and offers him tickets to a show, I find it heartbreaking. And when she’s alone in her loft, clicking the light on and off while he’s having fun at the bowling alley with his friends . . . She’s totally desolate. Whatever she does, I think she really loves the man.” (Datebook, 20.9.1987, p22) In the interview from which these comments are taken, Lyne appears to think that because the film elicits these responses it is also shot, in part, from her point of view. Lyne is confusing filmic point of view, which clearly belongs to Dan Gallagher (he is present in nearly all scenes, the subjective shots are largely his, or his family’s) with emotional identification. Lyne’s pity really amounts to surface sympathy.

Certainly, there are moments when one’s sympathies are with her but these are only fleeting. The strongest argument for identifying with Alex is that the alternative is pretty distasteful. If we don’t side with her, then we are left with Dan who is basically dishonest, weak and uninteresting. Judging from audience response, however, he is far more sympathetic than Alex. Or perhaps he only becomes truly sympathetic when his family comes under threat. The decision to make Dan Gallagher married and the father of an adorable little girl (the Clint Eastwood persona in Play Misty For Me does not have a family) works brilliantly to push audience sympathies completely onto Gallagher’s side. Alex is not even going to look.” Such a figure cannot be seen from a male viewpoint. Her image is constructed to represent at least five male fantasies, fantasies which overlap but nevertheless are clearly recognisable. Firstly, she is Woman-as-witch, sent from Hell to weav[e] a spell over her victim while offering him the pleasures of Paradise. Then, she becomes the ‘tragic woman’; like Madame Butterfly, she would prefer to commit suicide rather than stand in his way or lose him to another. Thirdly, she is the Liberated Woman, the woman who, according to the myth, appears to be independent and happy on the surface but underneath is desperate for a man. Fourthly, she is the notorious femme fatale, the cold, cruel woman who uses her sex to trap men in order to destroy them. Finally, she is the monstrous-feminine, woman as ‘other’, unclean, abject, a creature who lives outside the boundaries of civilisation and who must be destroyed.

In short, Alex comes direct from Hell. Hence, the setting of her apartment in the wholesale meat district where the butcher’s fires burn through the night. Hence, her Medusa-like appearance. Hence, her fatal powers. She is larger than life. Witch, Medusa, Monster, the Black Widow Spider who devours her mate after copulation. The difference is that Alex Forrest, although a version of the femme fatale, is actually in love with her man. Unlike her sisters of the night, she is not totally cold and calculating. She is in part femme fatale and in part, like Madame Butterfly, a passionate, obsessed woman. Her representation is drawn from the passionate lover of the woman’s melodrama and the femme fatale of film noir. Thus, the Alex Forrest persona represents a weird hybrid figure; a conglomerate of different aspects of woman concentrated in one — a total fantasy figure. It is this side to her character, this difference in relation to the femme fatale which holds the key to a fuller interpretation of the film and the exact nature of its ‘fatal attraction’.

Because Alex is a creation of male fantasy, she comes to represent all things to Dan; most significantly, she signifies the figure of Dan Gallagher displaces his underlying fears and anxieties about life, women and marriage in general. She is the ‘other side’ of his wife, Beth (Anne Archer) — that part of his wife which drew him into marriage and happy families in the first place. Initially, Dan only wanted a one-night stand. Alex represents the possibility of an escape, an opportunity for Dan to flex his genitals. The problem is that Alex falls in love — he doesn’t. She wants a commitment. She wants to know where she stands, particularly after she learns she is pregnant. She begins to sound like a prospective wife. Dan’s decision to have a sexual relationship with Alex clearly suggests that he is a little fed up with the dull routine of marriage. The last thing he wants is another ‘wife’.

The words which tumble from Alex’s lips, her initial desperate actions to keep Dan with her, are clichéd in the extreme. She pleads with him, attempts suicide, tells him she is pregnant. He even replies with the stock comment: “How do you know it’s mine?” It is as if Dan, nine years after his marriage, is invoking a nightmare about the forces which trapped him in the first place. Alex signifies woman at her most desperate, most clinging, most threatening. She is not simply every married man’s nightmare. She is every man’s nightmare.

She is also rejected by most female members of the audience probably because she comes to represent that aspect of woman which is held up to extreme ridicule in our society, a woman who can’t get a man and a figure with whom no self-respecting female would wish to identify. For the special preview sessions of Fatal Attraction, the Russell Street cinemas segregated the audiences. Apparently the female audience was far more vocal in its abuse of Alex than the male audience. Perhaps the women spectators felt more threatened when Alex began to attack the family. Cries of “You bitch!” reverberated through the cinema. Alex becomes a social pariah, the clinging, demanding, dangerous woman, the woman who has spoilt the game because she refuses to abide by what Dan refers to as the ‘rules’. She signifies what men often describe as the ‘suffocating’ side of woman — the side which threatens their notions of ‘manhood’, that is, the free, independent, footloose male. But Dan is already married, his independence already undermined.

It is no accident that these events occur just as Dan is about to make a momentous change and move to the country where life appears to be even more dreary. Even though the film represents Dan’s married life as perfect, there is (regardless of whether or not the director intended this).
Both women are beautiful, both are in love with Dan, both fight desperately to keep Dan. In the final scene, when Beth is in the bathroom preparing to take a hot bath, she rubs the steam from the mirror. Instead of seeing her own reflection she sees the face of Alex; Alex is her alter ego, her Doppelganger revealed for an instant in the mirror. In the end, she carries out the murder of 'the other woman' which Alex had planned to enact. Ironically, Dan attempts to drown Alex in the bath which was intended for his wife, Beth. Part of the reason for the pitch of emotional intensity which is generated at the end of Fatal Attraction is that the parallels between the two women are most clearly drawn here. Both are strong, unstoppable, fatal. Both are capable of killing to get what they want. And they both want Dan. Thus, the final shot of the happy family portrait becomes ironic not because it suggests that 'nothing will be the same again' but rather because it states that 'everything will be the same again — forever and ever'.

The final bathroom scene is also powerful because it draws on images and motifs which are central to the horror genre, particularly those of water, knives and blood — classic images associated with birth. The motif of a woman drowning or of women associated with water runs through myth (the lorelei), art (The Birth of Venus), and literature (Hamlet) as well as film (Psycho, Vertigo, The Shining, Carrie, The Singing Detective). These instances signify either moments of birth or death, but in both the association of woman and water always signifies, at a deeper level, the processes of birth. In the horror film, woman sometimes rises from the waters in a new and frightening form. The climax of Fatal Attraction, its images of water, blood and knife, draws much of its power from these mythic associations. The shot of blood running down a woman's leg is also a central motif of the horror film, suggesting death, birth, menstruation, castration. The bathroom scene also refers back to the scene with the rabbit — another death which occurs in association with a knife, blood and water. The death which Dan hoped for early on, of course, was that of their unborn 'child' which — if it existed — would also have died in the bath. When Dan attempts to drown Alex, he is trying to murder not simply a woman who is threatening his life but also 'a woman and her child' (Alex/his wife/all women?) — the origin of his daily nightmare. A more appropriate — and honest — title for the film may well have been Fatal Women, subtitled — 'Fantasy Of A Trapped Husband'.

Barbara Creed


BARFLY: Mickey Rourke succumbs to the Muse and the...
On another level, Rourke and fellow Barfly Faye Dunaway are giving us a parallel account of the relationship between art and suffering: the actor who’s prepared to be pugilistic, the actress who will endure greasy hair. Sometimes they seem to have come from another time and place, an era when Hollywood could slum it with charm and style; they are in the gutter, and we are looking at the (movie) stars.

This impression is probably helped by the fact that in its odd way, Barfly is a fairy story, filled with temptations, quests, trials, princesses and rituals, with true love at the end of the rainbow, or the bar of the Golden Horn. Henry catches sight of Wanda (Faye Dunaway) across a not very crowded barroom and says wonderfully, “She looks like a distressed goddess.” Fortunately, she drinks like a suffering artist. They are drawn together, then pulled apart by infidelity: she betrays him for a bottle of whiskey, he is lured into the bed of Tully, a WASP princess magazine editor with a taste for low life prose and low life prose writers. Her presence demonstrates another axiom of the Barfly world: true artists simultaneously confront and attract the bourgeois, who want to acquire (and therefore corrupt) them and their work. The elegant Tully wants to give Henry money, security and a place to live so that he can create in peace, not understanding that peace is the most disruptive thing she could offer him.

In the end, the lightness of Barfly is both its saving grace and its stumbling block. Charm only takes us so far; the downtown bar where most of the action is set becomes as coy and familiar as Cheers, punctuated by bouts of Tom and Jerry violence, graced by distressed goddesses and drunks who just happen to be geniuses.

**Philippa Hawker**


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**PLANES, TRAINS AND AUTOMOBILES**

There is only one question you should ask of any comic work, and only one condition it should satisfy: did it make you laugh? Application of this criterion makes evaluation very easy and the difference between good and bad, successful and failed, very clear. I can, therefore, report with complete certainty that Planes, Trains And Automobiles is a good film, yes, and I would even go further: it is a great film. Here, however, my judgment becomes more speculative as the criterion has not yet been tried, nonetheless I am quite sure that it *would* make my mother laugh and possibly even my father. (Isn’t there something smelly and repellent about a comedy that excludes, that is elite?)

But what room does this leave for the critic whose realm is precisely the questionable, doubtful and grey? None: and there is its triumph and ultimate sophistication — the attainment of the magical zero degree. John Hughes directs John Candy farting in bed next to Steve Martin and I piss myself. There is nothing left over, the moment fulfills and exhausts itself in its unfolding.

This account for most of the film and would have done as a review if it were not for the familiar Hughes’ sentimental streak, one that centres on bonding, the bonds of family and companionship.

In Planes, Trains And Automobiles it surfaces a number of times, particularly at the end. These moments might be dismissed as breathing spaces in the chain of gags if it were not for the feeling that though it might not always be present, that sentimentality is never far away, or it will be there in some inverted form.

Those inversions are the rights of outrageous cruelty and nastiness Hughes allows himself — always to comic effect. He will violate the very values the film will finally affirm and in so doing make them the more convincingly felt. To give you an example of this, but without giving away any of Planes, Trains And Automobiles, let’s look at a scene from Vacation which Hughes wrote and which has many similarities to Planes.

Chevy Chase and family are driving across America on holiday. For a part of the journey they have an aunt with them who they are returning home. The old woman is completely obnoxious. Along the way she dies. So as not to upset the children, she is tied, sitting upright with rigor mortis, onto the roof rack. When they arrive at her destination there is no one home to receive the corpse so it is left at the back door with a note attached. Film has hardly ever been so scurrilous, yet at the end of Vacation it is the sanctity of family that Chevy Chase invokes and which, however farcically, prevails.

In Planes, Trains And Automobiles the relationship between Steve Martin and John Candy is, for the most part, abusive and always in the one direction: the one resisting the other’s need, strangely insistent, for company and desire to be friendly. Slowly, very slowly, an understanding develops and where there is understanding, acceptance follows.

**Raffaele Traveatu**

Yet what lurks in and around this love is the question of breaking through social barriers. Cindy (Amanda Peterson) is the popular cheerleader of the cool clique, and, importantly, she dresses to be popular. Ronnie (Patrick Dempsey), on the other hand, is a nerd, and as his close friend, Kenneth (Courtney Gains), reminds him, “this is senior high where jocks are jocks, cheerleaders are cheerleaders and us . . . we’re us”. According to Kenneth, this is the order of things, but it’s an order which Ronnie cannot accept or understand. His desire to be popular, and therefore his desire for Cindy, harps back to a time at elementary and junior high when divisions like this never existed.

*Can’t Buy Me Love* is a film which juggles a number of things at once, and one of them is economics — the law of supply and demand. As the title suggests, the only means Ronnie has of breaking through the barrier into popularity is to buy into it. His chance arrives in a shopping mall scene: Ronnie has $1000 to buy a telescope, and while peering through his prospective purchase he spots Cindy, in distress, attempting to bargain for a new dress priced at $1000. Ronnie offers Cindy the money which she needs to replace secretly her mother’s prized dress, which she has damaged. In exchange, she must pretend to be his girlfriend for a month, thus ensuring his popularity. So far it’s fairly simple: Ronnie has something Cindy wants, Cindy has something Ronnie wants.

Moreover, what’s involved here with the telescope reinforces a series of motifs about Cindy and the stars. Ronnie can be called a kid astronomer, a stargazer more precisely, or someone looking beyond his lot. Thus, as he peers through the telescope, Cindy is his star. In another scene, for example, after his fall from grace and while attempting to get Cindy on the phone, a sign over his bed reads, “Let the stars get in your eyes.” Another has both Cindy and Ronnie on the last leg of their (supposedly) fake romance gazing at the moon: Ronnie recites in a curiously poetic and scientific fashion his description of the moon, on which Cindy comments, “The moon . . . it isn’t mysterious or romantic anymore. You haven’t spoiled it, you’ve just changed a little.” This scene and Cindy’s words are pertinent enough, for if Ronnie is succeeding in changing his status and his milieu, Cindy is significantly changing her values. This is made clear when at the film’s second party sequence — in contrast to the first where she surreptitiously borrows her mother’s dress, pretends it’s hers, and ruins it — Cindy admits to her friends that she is wearing her mother’s clothes.

What the title also suggests, however, is that buying into popularity is indeed at loggerheads with love. For as Cindy’s values change, from following the pretensions of the cool clique to respect for a certain type of individuality, so do Ronnie’s values change as his popularity increases — his loyalty to his former friends begins to flag, and he neglects his love for Cindy. The film could not make this change any more pointed than in the scene of the darkened science classroom where an educational film is being screened. As the film rolls, Ronnie is seated behind Kenneth, and at first, given the conditions of the classroom, it seems strange to find Ronnie still wearing his sunglasses. Kenneth, in a whisper, reprimands Ronnie for neglecting their traditional Saturday night card game; when an expected response doesn’t come, Kenneth reaches over and lifts Ronnie’s shades to discover to his chagrin that Ronnie is far away in dreamland. The classroom screening, moreover, is a film about the moon. Thus, although the scene is apparently about loyalty to
one’s friends, it equally concerns Ronnie’s love for Cindy because, once again, she is emphatically figured in the scene through a celestial motif.

What initially began as a common goal — gaining popularity and gaining Cindy’s love — is now broken into two conflicting notions. Perhaps this is what is meant by Ronnie and Cindy’s penchant for finding “cracks” in the moon. The film plays one off against the other; in the scene mentioned, Cindy becomes identified, not necessarily in the same class as nerds, but, like the nerds, on the other side of popularity. Can’t Buy Me Love will evidently pull Ronnie in two different directions when there can only be room for one. For instance, in the school hallway when Cindy approaches Ronnie to appraise her new poem, “Broken Moon”, he is split between Cindy and the sexual interest expressed by another female colleague only a few paces away. A little later the film repeats a similar incident in the school hallway, this time with Kenneth. Ronnie is chasing Kenneth in a desperate attempt to make up for throwing a shit-bomb at Kenneth’s house in a Halloween prank with his jock friends. At the precise second that Kenneth exits the frame Ronnie’s jock friends enter it, and Ronnie switches mode and mood, yelling after Kenneth with a quick change of subject. Up to this point in the film Ronnie has been trying to play out a cute balancing act, at times confusing the contradictory notions. Perhaps here lies the significance of the sign on his father’s fifties station wagon, a sign Ronnie has on occasion covered over when on a date. It reads, “‘Tic, Tac, Tile’. It’s the trademark of his father’s occupation, but by recalling the game it could stand as metaphor of Ronnie’s moral predicament — ‘‘Tic, Tac, Toe, here I go, where I stop I do not know.’’

Like many a teen movie there is a moral lesson to be learnt here. But the film does not seem overtly concerned by the moral in and of itself. In fact, it’s fairly straightforward, simple and rather naive — the title, after all, does indeed say it all. Instead, Can’t Buy Me Love is more deeply fascinated with how one arrives at it through a series of ironic character misunderstandings, or mismatches of confrontations and exchanges which are the source of so much humiliation.

In a sense, Can’t Buy Me Love is so fascinated by humiliation that one could and should call it a comedy of humiliation, with every character, or representational character, humiliated to one degree or another. One of the most telling instances is when Cindy is humiliated in a scene where Ronnie terminates their (supposedly) fake romance through a (supposedly) fake argument in front of the whole school: Ronnie plays out a role while Cindy takes his cutting remonstrations to heart. What is even more interesting, however, is how this scene is in ways similar to their romantic encounter the night before. When

Ronnie says to Cindy, as they gaze up at the moon, “We need to talk. How are we going to do it. I’m new at this, so we need to rely on your experience.” Cindy interprets it as the next step to furthering their romance when in fact Ronnie is asking about how they will terminate the romance before their friends. The next day at school when Cindy says to Ronnie, “We need to talk”, Ronnie immediately and mistakenly launches into acting out his role, when Cindy was actually about to redress their situation.

Taken from this angle — a series of refracted angles — Can’t Buy Me Love instinctively owes a great deal to the teen movie genre at the same time as its drama of situations tends to pull away from the genre. If, like a personal civil war, the film pulls Ronnie in two directions, then in formal terms, Can’t Buy Me Love seems to be similarly under two influences (possibly lunar). If its characters are easily typed, if its premise is not significantly imaginative, and if its concluding lesson is fairly standard, then what is most to be appreciated is the way Can’t Buy Me Love charts out its symbolic elements; the way it schematises its metaphors is of an order that cannot be easily let go of, or underestimated. In short, what’s fascinating is how simple and yet complicated a film Can’t Buy Me Love is.

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**RITA, SUE AND BOB TOO**

Harking back to the British Carry On (after sex) movie of the late sixties, replete with big breasts and views of naked bums raised through car windows, Rita, Sue And Bob Too lives up to its blurb as a bawdy comedy.

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**RITA, SUE AND BOB TOO:** George Costigan, Michelle Holmes and Siobhan Finneran get down
Not as serious as My Beautiful Laundrette nor as actively romantic as Letter To Brezhnev, Rita, Sue And Bob Too at times barely escapes Benny Hill country, but it is funny, and there's a kind of interesting tension between the solid exuberance of the girls and their funny, small-town material objects of a male desire. In this comedy the women are as openly randy as the boys, and you can tell the story from their point of view, so this female forthrightness isn't ever quite contained by a limiting expression around men.

It all begins when Bob follows his wife's orders to drive the two babysitters home. Rita and Sue are two teenagers from the adjacent housing estate. They're well-developed girls who wear short skirts and enjoy cream cakes and dancing. They're two weeks short of finishing school. Not much goes on for them. They accept Bob-bulging-eyes' offer of a drive on the moors, and allow him to abuse a bit of 'rubber johnnies' and the reclining seat. After this, Rita and Sue can't wait for their regular 'jump' with Bob, and entertain us and the Yorkshire neighbourhood in their quibbles about the practice of this sport.

Of course, Bob's wife has to go, taking the children with her, but not before we learn that three of her siblings are divorced and we see as fine a performance of 'the conceited, frigid bitch' as the script demands. The poor woman was under the misapprehension that once a week was expecting too much of Bob's (Dick's or Harry's) expense.

The film begins with Sue's drunkard father staggering comically home from the pub, and ends with Sue and Rita on either side of Bob's bed. You get the feeling that maybe the girls will stay a team and bring up their kids together in a house like Dunbar. A new kind of family.

For Rita and Sue, love isn't like it is in the cinema for girls, and that's all to the good.

Dena Gleeson


SHERMAN'S MARCH

There are cable lines connecting Sherman's March and 28 Up from either side of the Atlantic: conjecture and the ideal. When Jackie, the anti-nuclear activist in Sherman's March, shows us a monument which commemorates the war dead and carries the directive for its survivors ('"Prize truth, beauty, love, harmony with the infinite"') she reveals the concern of each film — signs of the times. The message is that if one is to say anything at all, there are many obstacles and impossibilities which must also be stated.

As parallel instances of the documentary reflecting national character, the two films are endlessly interesting for their circumnavigation of lives rather than lifestyles; yet as films produced in a context of 'New British' or old guard cinema verite gurus from the sixties, they stand out as perversities.

28 Up began as a TV documentary in 1963, examining the lives and aspirations of 14 seven-year-old children; since then, Michael Apted has revisited his subjects every seven years. While his use of the television device is a vast storage vault of cultural history to be rearranged and re-edited every seven years makes 28 Up seem rather anachronistic, his clients are not. They have fictional counterparts in films where class relations are discussed on finer levels — Rita, Sue And Bob Too, My Beautiful Laundrette. Where there has not been enough to ask whether Miss Biggs from Manchester came to land in this or that socio-economic trap, but rather how she exploits it daily to get her pleasure out of life. This omission is a frequent stumbling block for Apted, particularly when he is talking to women. He is reluctant to pull back and try some free association questioning, or pick up some tips from Ross McElwee's bedside manner.

McElwee plays the wild card in this game of human statistics and case studies. Sherman's March, which calls itself a film about an improbable search for love, is full of the confessions that Apted would love to have, but then again the 'heroine' of the film is the filmmaker and not his hotly pursued subjects.

Our man behind the camera is living the long-term dream of the cinema verite movement in America, adhering to an orthodoxy concerning spectator-screen relations set down by purists such as Jean Rouch. It is a devoutly religious methodology which takes as a condition of viewing the expectation that the viewer will tune in to the subject with mystical affinity and total credulity — a kind of cult of the cine-eye. The cult has grown, diverting its small-time focus for a while with last-gasp attempts to stimulate the idea of a new cinema verite guru in the form of the man 's March — American man before and after Reagan/Springsteen attitude issues a new directive, which calls for the average man to realize his own potential as a doer.

Michael Apted would love to have this, but then again the 'heroine' of the film is the filmmaker and not his hotly pursued subjects.

For too long the life and dreams of the 'average American' have lain under the shroud of Reagan/Springsteen platitudes which seek to elevate 'ordinary people'. The effect is very much the same at the other end of the movie spectrum, in films like Beth B's Salvation — ordinary folks live in Hicksville with their nasty, money-driven hobbies, New Right religion and undying patriotism. Sherman's March issues a new directive, not only for his fellow filmmaking fanatics, but for Hollywood films too.

It's a return to many camps: provincialism, ambition of the 'I'm gonna give to Broadway' variety, a reunion with the star system.

Full of 'impossibilities', Sherman's March seems to be telling us what it is that cannot be filmed, cannot be represented, in any more than a passing reference. At the beginning of the film, we are told that it is about the impossibility of love in an era of nuclear proliferation. Yet every woman McElwee
meets is treated as a prospective partner, not a lover, all part of the film’s obvious jokes about matchmaking and pre-arranged childhood fantasies of character development and compatibility. (Is this the man, I wonder, that Germaine Greer holds promise for — the male who speaks girls’ talk.) Romantic instinct is what is supposed to keep the film in full swing, but its excesses prevent it being the great opus on love and the male-feminist perspective that would mark it as single-minded.

Sexual digression is cleverly covered up — he “can’t seem to stop filming Pat”, and when she leaves, McElwee laments that there is no more film to film, she’s chosen the chance of a Burt Reynolds movie over a starring role in his future. In order to clear up that relationship (like all his female encounters, it’s always unfinished, there’s always more to pore over) the Reynolds look-alike is inserted, in what could only be described as miraculous coincidence or divine will. Later, the real Reynolds is tracked down, and the fake is “corrected”, for this is not a film about illusions.

The second impossibility: the inadequacy of a film about war, the danger of being exposed as a perpetrator of penile fantasy and, finally, the impossibility of retracing Sherman’s trek of destruction through the south as a kind of barometer of social opinion about global warfare. There is also the notion that history may repeat itself or that the ‘southern woman’ was what really led to Sherman’s tragic non-recognition by both North and South, a kind of avowal of the feminine which Sherman’s superiors took a dim view of and for which Southerners branded him a rapist. McElwee teeters on shaky ground on this issue, with amusing results.

There are very few men in Sherman’s March. Their lives, naturally enough for someone whose tape recorder is not activated at moments of extreme male sexual neurosis (when Pat’s exercising, minus her underwear, or when Karen is leaving to be with her ex after McElwee has just told us that she was the untouched golden girl) are of little interest to our ‘heroine’. But when they show up, they are exposed as willing collaborators in a much larger fake scenario: the first time in a Scottish Highland demonstration of “strength and virility” which McElwee cunningly pursues in his constant comments on entertainment; the endless historical re-enactments; the fashion show. There’s also something desperate, in the need to get his women into certain locations: ponds, forests, lakes, mountain tops. As for the several boyfriends, his rivals in love, it is not necessarily significant that they are silenced in the film, because Sherman’s March is a film about one-to-one relations namely, McElwee and his chosen subjects. The potential emptiness of the Commissars, who must take their survival into their own hands and prepare for the arrival of the holocaust — this is McElwee the ethnographic filmmaker, the anthropologist who might be commissioned by Granada television, or even Peter Watkins, to follow up these mortal enemies of the state and the disarmament lobby. But the beauty of all the political statements in Sherman’s March is that they are cushioned by a profundity of equally obsessive loyalty to personal commitment. Didi, the Mormon girl with the voice like an angel, says “We are in the latter days, the signs of the times are all around us.” It is a lovely epigraph for Sherman’s March. McElwee repeats the Marker motto by calling the shots and putting in a few of his favourite personal things, vestiges of the life he filmed in order to have a life: Burt Reynolds, a plastic rhinoceros and his picture. In order to clear up that problem for cynics or unbelievers, and people like Neil who are coerced into explaining their social dysfunction with a medical diagnosis.

Another presumably ‘good’ life turned up when we journeyed to Australia, following and, it seems, the little enterprise. Finally 28 Up, for all its meanderings into the behavioural patterns of ‘normal’ folk, is both a fake and a disturbing peephole.

Vikki Riley


FEBRUARY:

• Nuts (Village Roadshow)
• Wall Street (Fox Columbia)
• Three Men And A Baby (Village Roadshow)
• The Everlasting Secret Family (Filmpac)
• Family Business (Hoyts)
• The Good Father (Newvision)
• The Great American Novel (Filmpac)
• The Latina (Filmpac)
• A Local Hero (Filmpac)

• STROKE OF MIDNIGHT (Filmpac)
• The Exorcist (Fox)

• THE MUNCH MULLERS (Filmpac)
• Amazon Women On The Moon (UIP)
• The Running Man (Village Roadshow)
• The Principal (Fox Columbia)
• 1986: The Year of the Woman (Filmpac)
• CINEMA PAPERS MARCH — 49
NATIONAL FICTIONS

"Australia offers a new beginning not because it is a kind of paradise, but, on the contrary because it is purgatorial, the place of the ordeal which reveals the possibilities which may emerge from the pain and the mastery which may emerge from submission." — Veronica Brady, quoted in Turner, p52

National Fictions is both a textbook and a sustained argument. As a textbook it carefully outlines its theoretical assumptions and their sources. As an argument it draws out points of connection between traditions in Australian literary criticism and recent film criticism. And as a reassessment of the stand-off between the radical nationalist and the metaphysical ascendency approaches to culture in Australia, it proposes some new connections between some old dichotomies.

Turner takes the category of narrative as the point of mediation between Australian film and literary traditions. He proposes that narratives are in the business of resolving culturally specific contradictions, and that the patterns of meaning which recur in film and literature are articulations of the ideological beliefs and values which constitute Australian culture.

One of Turner's objectives is to identify the dominant consolations offered by Australian narratives to the problems of Australian experience. He surveys a wide range of writings and films to suggest that: "the commonsense notions of Australian experience (as being harsh but worthwhile, eliciting realistic expectations of a modest level of survival rather than romantic or naïve notions of transcending one's physical conditions) and the commonsense notions of the 'Australian type' (as resourceful, tough, possessing an independence and individualism that does not preclude a sense of community and 'mateship') are consoling inventions." (p143)

Turner reaches this conclusion and draws out its implications in four stages. His first step is to challenge the Romantic opposition between Society and Nature which proposes that the search for harmony with nature in Australia is doomed because of the harshness and hostility of the land. In terms of this opposition, the radical nationalist tradition sees the land as offering the threat of isolation but also the promise of freedom. The metaphysical ascendency tradition sees the threat in terms of banality and spiritual starvation, and the promise in terms of spiritual transcendence. Turner argues that the dichotomy itself is the problem because the elision of culture into nature pre-empts calls for change. If the Australian landscape is one of entrapment by its very nature, then the only option is the pragmatic one of survival.

Turner uses the metaphor of imprisonment to develop the next stage of his argument that: "the rigours and difficulties of the natural landscape together with the social system of convictism... provide us with the alibi that we need to accept the status quo in a society where there are strong physical, social and hegemonic reasons for doing so." (p52) The identification of imprisonment or convictism as the central paradigm for the depiction of the self in Australian narrative, substitutes the American protagonist's quest with the Australian protagonist's ordeal of exile. If survival becomes the central goal, then meaning becomes pragmatic, based on a scepticism about social change.

Turner argues that the loosely structured, open-ended narratives of the 1970s feature film depend on the invocation of history to give meaning to otherwise intractable situations like the shearsers' strike in Sunday Too Far Away: "Our narratives halt just before the feeling of absurdity, without fully accepting it; they are arrested at a 'pre-existential moment' admitting the withdrawal of meaning and value but without inventing a replacement for which they may accept responsibility." (p80) The dominant view of power relations between the self and Australian society proposes the futility of action against the status quo.

The third step in Turner's thesis maintains that the choice of the mode of characterisation in Australian narratives relates to a particular view of the self. The documentary realism of much film represents characters as types. They act as metonyms for some aspect of Australian life, revealing a scepticism about individualism and the uniqueness of the self. The literary convention of mateship depends upon a representation of character which is ideologically opposed to the individual and which undermines the radical potential of the nationalist myth of independence. A commitment to certain kinds of independence masks a basic suspicion of difference and individuality.

The final stage of Turner's argument takes up the conflation of mateship, nationalism and the myth of individualism. For
Soundtrack Albums

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"The Big Easy" has to be one of the best and sexiest romantic cop thrillers to hit a movie screen in years.

Sydney Sun

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KINGS ROAD ENTERTAINMENT PRESENTS DENNIS QUAD: ELLEN BARKIN "THE BIG EASY" MUSIC SCORE BY BRAD FIEDEL FILM EDITOR MIA GOLDMAN WRITTEN BY DANIEL PETRIE, JR. PRODUCED BY STEPHEN FRIEDMAN DIRECTED BY JIM McBRIE


Felicity Collins
Jim McBride Tells It Like It Is

IF YOU DIDN'T get hooked on The Big Easy during its theatrical release last year, you'd be crazy not to catch it on video. Harking back to the most passionate screen romances, this latest film from the director of Breathless, Jim McBride, would give anyone palpitations. You'll see it once and want to be seduced by Ellen Barkin, Dennis Quaid and the ambience of New Orleans over and over. The dialogue is delicious and the extraordinary repartee between Barkin and Quaid is heightened by sensual Cajun tunes that sweep you through moods of longing and lament, carnival and celebration.

If it all sounds too good, there are more than a few dedicated McBride followers to back it up: those who know the work of this once "underground" American director from the days of David Holzman's Diary when he first collaborated with L.M. Kit Carson. Made for $2500 in 1967, David Holzman's Diary takes as its premise Godard's line "Cinema is truth 24 frames a second" and records the mixed-up daily life of its central character in all its banality. The initial image for the film was of "a guy with a camera on his shoulder filming himself in a mirror" and it continues to mark a significant moment in the debate about the line between documentary and fiction.

Eleven years later, McBride and Carson conceived the opening shot for Breathless: "a rockabilly punk juking around in front of a Vegas casino at sunset." Set in contemporary LA, it was inspired by A Bout De Souffle (1960) and was their "reckless payback" to Godard. Starring Richard Gere (who gives a nervously energetic, mesmerising performance as huster Jesse Lujack) and Valerie Kaprisky (an 18-year-old unknown, spotted in a group photo torn from a French magazine), Breathless was a stylish entry into Hollywood, recognised by the critics but not the box office.

Before this feature, McBride worked sporadically, editing, writing screenplays, revising screenplays (Sam Fuller's The Big Red One), driving cabs, travelling. And there were other films: My Girlfriend's Wedding (1968), Glen And Randa (1971), Pictures For Life's Other Sides (1974), a porno movie which was picked up by distributors with more eagerness than the previous three films. "All my friends in Italy and France and Germany have seen it," said McBride, "whereas my other films are almost impossible to see."

But then there is The Big Easy. New Orleans, where we learn that folks have a certain way of doing things, is the backdrop for this romance/thriller. Dennis Quaid plays the charmingly brash police lieutenant, Remy McSwain. He's from a long line of cops and breezes through his job. McSwain's on the inside. When assistant district attorney Anne Osborne (Ellen Barkin) arrives to investigate alleged police corruption, the tables are slowly turned. She's from the outside. And there's the magic: the process of these two negotiating for love draws you in, spins you around, and leaves you sighing for more. More of Quaid's etiquetting and teasing, his beguiling yet innocent play; more of Barkin's contradictory signs — her prim responses, her vulnerability, her courage to show desire, un sane, embarrassment.

The Big Easy is about the difficulties, the craziness, and the fears engendered by love. But there is the other side, other moods: it gives you grins, glances, giggling, and toy "gators" that are meant to make up for the heartache. Amidst films that make love look so easy, McBride is not afraid to "tell it like it is."

On top of this, the supporting actors add the spunk and vitality that helps to shift the murder plot into the background. Each is given the chance to develop a quirky attribute, a way of injecting interest beyond their immediate function in the narrative: Lisa Jane Persky, the smart and sassy Detective McCabe, delivers some of the best 'wise guy' lines; the late Charles Ludlam as the eccentric defence attorney, Lamar, amuses with every roll of the eye; and Ned Beatty is perfect as the classic Southern cop looking for a winner. In their own way, they have the tables turned on them too.

McBride considers himself a collaborator; for him, it's all about pointing people in the right direction. "I'm not the kind who imposes this absolute vision," he has said, "I give them a general kind of thesis, tone — an attitude." In The Big Easy, he certainly got it right. In this interview, he explains how...

Raffaele Caputo and Kathy Ball

It's been three years since Breathless and as a reviewer* put it, it's always a long time between drinks for you. What's happened in that period? Are there any new projects we don't know about and can you tell us about any?

Sure, there are zillions... That's kind of the way life is here. You try to have four or five different things going and hope that one of them will happen. But if you're talking specifically about the period between Breathless and The Big Easy — I'm trying to remember, it was so long ago — I did a screenplay called The Challenger with Kit Carson, who wrote Breathless with me, and it was based on a screenplay by another guy, an English guy whose name I don't recall at the moment... How much do you want to know about any of these things?

Whatever you can tell us. You have something of a following here, a critical following.

I do! You're kidding. How funny. That's very nice. It seems the state of affairs in Hollywood is very difficult for you. I guess that's for commercial reasons. Although your films are released commercially — Breathless and The Big Easy — just the same, they seem to be at odds with, or unacceptable to, the mainstream. For instance, Breathless and I, suspect, The Big Easy, took some time before receiving a commercial release. Why is that?

Breathless wasn't a movie that was well-loved in Hollywood. In fact, it was about three years before I got a chance to make another movie. The Big Easy was the first project that anyone ever offered me, to be a director-for-hire, so to speak. I was very anxious to work and very grateful for the chance even though the original screenplay wasn't something that I felt really strongly about. It was very different from the way the movie ended up. It took a year between the time The Big Easy was finished and the time it actually got released commercially here. I can't really explain it. The producer showed it to all the major distributors and they all kind of responded the same way and said, "It's a nice little movie but I don't know how to sell it."

The producer was very unhappy and thought we had a disaster. He kept wanting us to shoot a new ending and try to

*Adrian Martin, Filmnews, October 1987.
find ways of making it more “appealing” but we couldn’t figure out what the problem with it was. But it wasn’t like “We hate this movie . . . If you just change this scene” then suddenly it would be all right. It was just met with this kind of indifference. We didn’t have any big stars, a big commercial hook or anything and in fact the producer was going to try and distribute it himself. It was terribly depressing because it was going to open in a couple of cities in the South and we were sure it was just going to disappear.

Then, that January, about a year ago, there’s a film festival in Park City, Utah, that’s run by Robert Redford’s Sundance Institute, and we took the movie up there and David Puttnam saw it (this is when he was head of Columbia) and he liked it and bought it and released it — it turned out to be quite successful! Before that, it was a disaster, after, it was a success, who can explain it?

In the interview you did with Joseph Gelmis (The Film Director As Superstar, Penguin, 1974) you mention reading Cahiers du Cinema and through it becoming reacquainted with American movies. People like Howard Hawks, Nicholas Ray or Anthony Mann were discovered by a foreign culture, the French in this case, and because of it they were “returned home”. Do you feel this has been the way with your own films? At least it seems to be the case with David Holzman’s Diary.

I think that’s very much because I was coming from a generation of young American filmmakers who discovered American movies through the French. It’s like the French discovering Shakespeare through Orson Welles!

But that whole idea of being discovered by a foreign culture and then returning home, for me that seems to be built in to your films. Breathless, in particular, because it is a remake of a French film which remakes the American gangster movie. I’m not so sure about The Big Easy. Maybe in a more general sense the film appears to be foreign to its own culture.

The Big Easy certainly looks to be exotic here. I think that is a lot of its appeal ultimately . . . Having discovered movies through a kind of intellectual prism — the nouvelle vague and the American underground — my first interest was in ‘art’ movies, let’s say, and it wasn’t until after I’d learnt about the
French New Wave and Antonioni, Fellini, Bergman, Eisenstein, not to mention a whole background in documentary films, cinema verite, and the American underground, it wasn’t until I absorbed all of that stuff that I got to classic American movie-making. So I learnt backwards, I guess. By the same token, my career has followed that peculiar track, in the sense that I started out making very specialised art movies and in recent years have tried to find a more mainstream voice to speak with.

Let’s move on to a particular element in your films — the music. In both Breathless and The Big Easy the selection of music is singularly appropriate to the narrative development. For instance, in Breathless the selection of songs reflects the character’s psychological state. It also fits in with a notion of popular culture which pervades Breathless — cars, comics, clothes, certain movies and, of course, the music — and in a sense they are all throwaway elements.

Did you say throwaway elements? I don’t throw them away!

No, I mean they’re popular.

But they’re classic too. I think the music is classic, the books, the cars. I’m trying to find a way now to make distinctions between high and low art, so to speak. I think that ultimately when you step back from all that stuff certain things remain, certain classical values pervade popular culture and high culture and they’re not so far apart.

But the way the music functions in The Big Easy is different from Breathless in that it is pertinent to the region, New Orleans, culturally and historically.

Maybe the difference is this: in Breathless we created an imaginary, semi-fantasy kind of cultural context that the characters lived in — the fantasy of Los Angeles, the fantasy of a life of rock’n’roll. But it was still basically trying to put the story in a rich world. In the case of The Big Easy, that was southern Louisiana and in Breathless it was an imaginary LA. However, in a sense, The Big Easy is just as much an imaginary New Orleans. For example, there aren’t any Cajuns in New Orleans, Cajuns are generally country people. So we created an imaginary world where two different kinds of music co-existed but it’s not really true.

That’s why you don’t really represent New Orleans, or you represent it differently. We don’t see a great deal of New Orleans. There are a couple of landmarks — “Tipitina’s” and “Antoine’s” — but New Orleans is invoked as a state of mind or a mood.

Exactly. It really is like that to a certain extent. We took all of our cues from the reality but it was a heightened and selective reality that we ultimately showed.

What kind of input do you, personally, have in the music of the films? You seem to give it a great deal of thought.

Yeah. Music is one of my great preoccupations in life. I think there is a great deal that movies and music have in common, abstract qualities. When you can find a way to fuse them or marry them, you can create something very rich.

You also seem to avoid the popular approach which sees soundtracks constructed from pop songs for the sole purpose of what appears to be commercial gain.

That’s true. We had a really hard time trying to find someone to put out the soundtrack of The Big Easy. I think they expected to sell about 20,000 in the first order and they sold 100,000 in two weeks. Amazingly, it’s been selling very well. It didn’t come out until several weeks after the film in the States. We felt bad about that but it’s doing well. People seem to like it a lot. But the idea of constructing a soundtrack that has surefire commercial appeal . . . that doesn’t interest me that much. I think the music that I like generally has some kind of commercial appeal! I try to do things that people will like. I don’t deliberately try to be obscure. There’s a whole range of music beyond the Top 40 that I think people love to hear but they don’t get a chance very often. I never felt any conflict about the music we were using or any pressure from somebody else to use more commercial music.

That scene where Remy turns around to Annie and sings that song really surprised me. It felt odd that this character should sing — it seems to be an aside to the film. But at the same time, it is very appropriate because he is attempting to endear himself once again. It gives the scene a double-edge. It doesn’t seem as though it was scripted.

It wasn’t in the original screenplay. The original screenplay was set in Chicago and I worked with a writer-collaborator Jack Baran. We reset it in New Orleans and introduced the musical context of it very deliberately.

I remember reading that for Breathless there was initially a problem with Richard Gere coming to terms with his character but finally it happens. It seems to indicate that you work intensively with your actors. Was that the case with The Big Easy?

That story about Richard is true but it happened way before we actually started making the movie. That was the process I had to go through with him in order to convince him to work with me on the movie. He had been working with another director who had a very different idea of what the character should be like. (McBride and Carson wrote the script for Breathless although two directors began working on it before Orion appointed McBride director.) At the beginning, Richard found it difficult to see it in a new and different way. It was mainly through showing him pictures of Jerry Lee Lewis that I got him around to the idea of what this character meant to me. More than anything, it’s an attitude and it took a while for us to connect about that. Once we did, then he was totally with it and extremely inventive within that approach.

My experience working with the actors on The Big Easy was the best experience I’ve ever had with actors in my life, and I don’t have a whole lot of experience with actors. I find the idea of working with actors very challenging. I used to find it very scary. But in this movie we had an ensemble of wonderful actors. We also had this odd situation where we had a script which was in a constant process of change. The whole time we were re-writing the script to make it set in New Orleans, and making all the other kinds of changes, we were in pre-production for the movie. We had to start on a certain date. In fact, the re-writing kept going all through the making of the movie. I took the position that we had to bring the actors into the creative process and so I invited them to participate and make suggestions and we would try in rehearsals to improvise.

In The Big Easy there seems to be something similar to the incident with Gere where you showed him pictures of Jerry Lee Lewis. I read that you showed the cast His Girl Friday in order to cut corners on the script.

That’s right but not so much to cut corners. On a pragmatic level, we had a very long script and I didn’t want it to be a long, slow movie so by showing them His Girl Friday I wanted to infuse them with that kind of spirit. We had a game where we were always competing to make it faster and funnier. It worked out great because all the actors really got into it. Very much beyond that, Dennis, I think, stood out more than anybody else, throwing himself into the role and the whole atmosphere of the city. He was tremendously inventive
and came up with some wonderful stuff. I have to credit him as a collaborator on the screenplay in a way.

There’s been the implication that because the Dennis Quaid character, Remy, is so smooth and charming, and is so good at what he does, and Annie is so vulnerable, that the sexual politics of the film are suspect or questionable. I tend to read it the other way round because I find Remy an incredibly innocent and naive figure. For instance, when his brother reveals to him that he knew his father was on the take, Remy is blind to all that. Would you agree with that?

I much prefer your interpretation!

It also relates to all that stuff about family and to his job because he sees the police department as family as well. More important, he doesn’t have the knowledge Annie has; she is less innocent than he is because of what she knows.

That’s an interesting thought! On one level, I could say to you very pragmatically, we were stuck with this story about this basically arrogant and obnoxious guy who did a lot of bad things and somehow realised they were bad at the end and became a good guy. That was a very awkward position to be in and one of the big struggles in making the film was to find the proper tone for him and the proper way to be able to love him and still be able to judge him. It was a delicate process, feeling our way through that. Dennis was a tremendous help in that way.

But you’re right, we wanted to give that sense, and it’s quite true, it’s very much the way it is down there in New Orleans. . . . I lived in Brazil for a year where everything is done under the table and sideways, never through official channels. It’s kind of the same in New Orleans. There’s a way of doing things which is not necessarily right or wrong and if you grow up with that it’s possible to ignore the moral implications of what you do. That’s the way we tried to see Remy. It takes somebody from outside and a series of events for him to see his life in a moral context. That’s the idea and if we follow your interpretation it works.

It’s very similar to the Italian cultural experience.

That’s funny because the character originally was Italian.

Are there any new projects in the works and can we expect to see them soon?

Yes. This is the most amazing thing about my life because I’ve basically been someone who’s a long time between movies — or drinks — and suddenly I’m having pictures offered to me. I got a lot of attention after The Big Easy. I’m actually involved in three different projects all of which I think are really exciting and all of which I think will eventually get made. One of them is called Elektra Assassin and it’s based on a comic book by Frank Miller. It’s quite brilliant and wonderful. I collaborated on the screenplay with Kit Carson. The next one is based on the autobiography of Chuck Barris who was a very famous game show host (The Gong Show). This is a very bizarre autobiography, a mixture of reality and fantasy that’s quite extraordinary. Jack Baran and I have just finished that screenplay. I work sometimes with Kit and sometimes with Jack. They’re both long-standing collaborators. I enjoy working with both of them.

The most current thing is a project about Jerry Lee Lewis which Dennis Quaid is going to star in. We’re doing it for Orion and we’re just about to start writing the screenplay. We’re supposed to shoot it this summer. They’re the three things I’m involved in now. I’m excited about all of this — I’d be happy to do any one tomorrow.

The Big Easy is a Seven Keys release.
which would probably sell out of brown paper bags. Says Marina Andrian, "Usually, however, if a film has experienced strong theatrical success, one does not suggest major changes to video cover artwork that mirrors the artwork used in its theatrical campaign.

Contractual and corporate obligations largely determine how distributors market videos in Australia. As an international corporation, RCA-Columbia-Hoys, which derives product from companies like Columbia Pictures, Orion, Cannon and Hoyts, has predetermined contractual obligations. These obligations include a 'blueprint' on what is possible or not in the marketing field and are determined by the film studios who own the copyright of the film. Changes involve tampering with a copyrighted product and this is where difficulties arise.

Until as recently as December 1986, the local distribution arm of Walt Disney Studios had its hands tied by the parent company in Burbank, and were not allowed to make changes to the marketing material it was supplied. At present, the local distributor of Touchstone and Disney product has a fair amount of input in making changes to slick designs, although approval must always be sought. When Lucy Huncan felt that the slick of Tin Men failed to mention comedy, her only recourse was to include cover lines taken from reviews that highlighted that aspect of Barry Levinson's film. On the other hand, she was permitted to alter Tough Guys to suit the local market. Approval was also granted on Ernest Goes To Camp, to play down the presence of Jim Varney, whose popularity in America is not matched locally.

In what must be one of the most fastidious contracts in movie history, the slick of Outrageous Fortune had to position Bette Midler to one side of Shelley Long. When CEL released Labyrinth it was bound to use Bill Henson's design of a girl jumping through the labyrinth, even though it was felt that its orientation toward children detracted from the more adult appeal of its star actor David Bowie. According to Maria Benedetti at CEL, a more "mature" slick emphasising David Bowie, who was touring Australia at the time, would have been preferable. Woody Allen's water-tight contracts include controls over artwork used in marketing campaigns and extend to international video releases. Marina Andrian, who has overseen the release of Hannah And Her Sisters and Radio Days, believes that "this inflexibility on not being able to change 'key' artwork does not render success stories for Allen's pictures when they become videos because the 'look' that works for territories such as America and Europe may be totally unsuitable for Australia."

Proof of the power of a slick, and the need to shape campaigns for the local market, occurred when the first three films of Karl Lorimar Telepictures were released in Australia. Following consultations with the parent over the unsuitable designs, the slick of Blood And Orchids was reworked, resulting in sales that exceeded expectations by several hundred.

With the large number of video releases where distributors are not bound to producers, the slick (and subsequent sell) will depend primarily on the distributor's marketing 'flair' and the materials available. Invariably there will be an 'overseas sell' to fall back on, but says Scerri, "if it doesn't look like it will work, it will be redesigned."

Premiere certainly covered all the bases when it produced a double-sided slick for Geoff Murphy's Utu. The "smart marketing concept", as Scerri puts it, pitched the film to two different types of viewer. One side depicts a "very action adventure sell", the other an "arty type sell". (The latter utilised three superimposed transparencies to depict a tattooed Maori whose hair blended into the branches of a tree and sky in the background.) And, says Scerri, "Let's face it, Double Bay is a different area to Parramatta." He says that dealers were recommended to turn the cover around as soon as demand dropped.

Mike Patterson suggests that the ingredients of a good slick are that it "look like a movie, not a magazine or book"; that it contain a single point of reference; that it be bright and contain key elements of the film. Colour, says Marina Andrian, plays an enormous part in the visual appeal of a video cover.

Ideally, the image used on a slick will be strong enough to attract attention — the hook, one might say — while also capturing the essence of the film. For instance, the slick of Alan Rudolph's Trouble In Mind combines superimposed images of its star Kris Kristofferson and a city skyline (culled from a photo library) with a cover line drawn from the film's dialogue. The challenge, says Maria Benedetti, was to elicit the film's distinctive mood without making it look too much like an 'art film', which in the video trade is the seal of death.

In the rare instance of when material is designed before seeing the film, Benedetti maintains that "a feel" for the film can usually be extracted from Variety reviews, sometimes these studio clippings, festival and market reports. Where no suitable material has been supplied, illustrations, studio shots and the resources of photographic libraries are used. According to video industry veteran Alan T dibbits, in the past many 'R'-rated sex films came from the US in cardboard packaging which could not be used locally. Covers were subsequently made from photographs of models who had no association whatsoever with the film itself. Sometimes these studio shots can be comically inappropriate. The 1982 David Puttnam-produced Secrets (part of the First Love series), featured on its cover a shot of a girl on a bed in stockings and suspenders. For a 'PG' rated film described as a "delightful comedy of innocent adolescence", the image is hardly an accurate representation, T dibbits explains that he "thought it
would depict the most provocative aspect" of the film.

But by their very nature, advertising hooks depend on exaggeration. The snappy cover line on Dogs In Space — "The film they tried to ban" — is hardly accurate. The controversy raged over whether it should be given an 'R' or an 'M' certificate.

Cover lines, says Scerri, ought to be "short, sharp advertising copy that gets straight to the point. The front cover catch should have the least number of words to describe the film in the best possible light." The cover of I Spit On Your Grave reads "This woman has just cut, chopped, broken and burned five men beyond recognition — but no jury in America would ever convict her."

Patterson admits that the cover line of Hanna D. — 'She makes money between her legs . . . and spends it up her arm's — trod a fine line. In order to highlight the film's extreme elements (teenage drug abuse and prostitution), it was a matter of neither "underachieving the sell", nor offending the public. Scerri defends criticism of the cover of Girl School Screamers — heads chopped by meat axes — claiming that it's an accurate representation of the film, and that it can't possibly mislead potential viewers.

The notion of not misleading the customer was recently turned into a particularly calculating and shrewd marketing ploy. Like Mondo Cane and the two Shocking Asia films, Sweet And Savage is a brutally realistic, no-holds-barred shockumentary. The cover carries a letter 'warning' the viewer of the gruelling footage contained in the film. It's a ploy that can be seen as socially responsible, but it is also a challenge and a lure.

Recently, it has been suggested that video covers carry a warning, especially where the film contains scenes considered to be violent. By drawing attention to the fact, such a warning could become a marketing ploy to sensationalise such material. And besides, what impact could official wording have, compared to the blinding force of those slicks?

IT IS NOT CLEAR what to make of Alex Cox's claim that Straight To Hell (Palace) was intended as "a light-hearted rehearsal for Walker". At best, it might suggest that his most recent film will right the wrongs of the earlier one. On the other hand, despite the tongue-in-cheek final credit promising a sequel called Back To Hell, the possibilities seem stiflingly limited.

Straight To Hell is not so much a spaghetti Western as a parody of one. Here the down-and-out bandidos and winos are played by cool rock stars, including Joe Strummer, Dick Rude, Cait O'Riordan and Elvis Costello, as well as Jim Jarmusch and the ubiquitous Dennis Hopper. (Many of them were also cast in Walker.) Throughout, they project the image that is de rigueur for rock stars — cool, detached, nonchalant.

At the same time, Cox clearly intends Straight To Hell to be more than a spaghetti Western, treating the genre with a fair dose of spoopy irreverence. The loosely knit narrative, concerning a pack of irreverent robbers who stumble into a ramshackle town, is punctuated with interludes, skits and anachronisms, like a woman who wears an aerobics outfit beneath her dusty trenchcoat.

DIRECTED by Karen Arthur (The Rape Of Richard Beck, Mafu Cage, Return To Eden), Lady Beware (Roadshow) has had a brief theatrical run before its video debut. But it seems we are not going to see the film that Arthur originally intended to make about the "psychological rape" of a woman who is so victimised that she leaves the town where she lives. Arthur has distanced herself from the film, which took eight years and many studios to get made. Arthur reportedly told the producers, who wanted to see violence in the film, "I'm trying to make a film about psychological violence, not physical violence. "They thought it was too tough," she told American Film recently. "So they tore every shred of it apart, reconstituted it back into dailies, and made their movie."

DEBUTING on video, and also accompanied by a drawn-out production history is Street Smart (RCA-Columbia Pictures-Hoys Video). David Freeman based his screenplay on his time as a journalist at New York magazine, when, he confesses, he made up stories. "I cooked up a lot of colourful feature stories about odd people in New York: muggers, bag ladies (now called 'the homeless'), and various showbiz hangers-on," he admitted.

One of those Hollywood 'properties' that has been around since 1979, it was finally taken on and filmed last year by Cannon. For the Cannon boys, Street Smart was the only way to get Christopher Reeve to make Superman IV; if they let him do it, he would agree to play the man of steel one more time. Jerry Schatzberg (Panic In Needle Park, The Seduction Of Joe Tymon) was signed on as director.

Freeman's screenplay is a fanciful but still credible exploration of what happens when a journalist fabricates a story. By chance, the concocted story about a pimp closely resembles the facts about a real-life pimp who is on trial for a murder for which there is no conclusive evidence. The pimp's lawyer decides to subpoena the journalist's notes, knowing that they cannot be produced, and predicting that the ensuing confusion will benefit his client.
This tactic could even force a constitutional crisis if the journos stand by the First Amendment and refuses to confess he made the story up. In this sort of issue that Geoffrey Robertson would put to the panel of a Hypothetical. Or, according to Freeman, "It's a hard tough movie about a rascal who tries to take the low road and gets in over his head." But Street Smart does not always follow its premises to their logical ends. Instead, it focuses on the wiles of a thoroughly despicable journalist who finds himself turned on by the seedy life of the underworld. Though his motivation is never clear, it's evident from the very start that ambition has made a monster of him when he puts his lover in jeopardy by using her as bait.

The Believers is reminiscent of the work of Larry Cohen, where lurking evil is never glimpsed, but constantly suggested. Here, there are brutal, gory murders, a "virus" that eats away the mind and body, and a social order pervaded by depravity. Then the film starts to link the supernatural to archaic tribal practices, and treads a familiar path of hokey pokey voodoo rituals.

THE CBS-FOX Marilyn Monroe collection will be available for rental and purchase. There are eight films in the package: How To Marry A Millionaire, Bus Stop, The Seven Year Itch, Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, Niagara, Monkey Business, Let's Make Love and River Of No Return. The last four titles were previously unavailable on video. At much the same time, Warners will release her last film, The Misfits.

There are a couple of impressive names attached to Demons 2 (Palace) — Dario Argento as producer and Lamberto Bava (son of Mario Bava) as director. These names have been at the vanguard of some of the most legendary nightmare visions in the Italian horror trade: Argento, since the late sixties with films like Deep Red, Suspiria and Inferno; Bava with his debut film, Macabre. Unfortunately, Demons 2, like its predecessor, fails to impress. The film's starting point is a familiar voiceover prologue which tells of the centuries-old prediction that came true in the theatre of Demons, providing an excuse to repeat sets of situations from the first movie.

Like Demons, a film-within-a-film device gets the ball rolling. But unlike the original, the device is so confused that it cannot effectively match events in one with events in the other. Demons 2 is highly derivative in its effects, borrowing the effect of a demon pushing himself through a TV set from A Nightmare On Elm Street and a creature from Gremlins. It is unfortunate that Argento and Bava, who have in the past spearheaded some original effects, have settled for borrowing all too quickly from other sources.

DOLLS (Vestron) owes no visible debt to H.P. Lovecraft, but it nonetheless retains the tongue-in-cheek spirit of the earlier Re-Animator and From Beyond, both inspired by Lovecraft. In this case, the successful blend of humour and horror in the exploitation mould should be credited to the stable and craft combination that works under the auspices of Charles Band's Empire Pictures — producer Brian Yuzna and director Stuart Gordon. DOLLS takes further inspiration from Grimm's fairy tales, in particular Hansel And Gretel.

The film involves an elderly couple, the Hartwickes, who appear to be dollmakers, but are actually witches. Their peculiar profession can offer comfort and, for the young or young at heart, the prospect of living out their imaginary world — it's Hansel And Gretel in reverse.

But if you have the wrong attitude towards childhood, your fate is not as pleasant. Judy, the Gretel of the piece, imagines her discarded Teddy transformed into a vengeful, ferocious grizzly that tears away at her father and stepmother.

Dolls is not as gory as Re-Animator or From Beyond, but it's still as chilling. For this, it probably owes a good deal to the fanged dolls who rip Jane Fonda's flesh in Barbarella. R.C.
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IMAGING THE WORLD

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You should have been here

How long does it take to film the world's largest flower opening? What do you do when you miss an all-important rainforest copulation sequence? FRED HARDEN investigates the trials and technical solutions of Australia's foremost nature cinematographer.

It's a sign (I'm sure you've noticed) of the growing visual/cinematic sophistication of the television audience that in natural history documentaries we no longer accept the human observer's eye-view of things. We expect a certain standard of camera placement, movements and technical quality. Similarly there is no tolerance for the difficulty in showing the mating habits of the Lesser Noddy by covering with a few words of commentary. Show us and surprise us, we cry.

Among the many examples of film technique that I enjoy showing to advertising creative people is the work of Oxford Scientific Films, famous for documentary natural history techniques that could be applied to TV commercial and feature production. It's an interest that is shared by a lot of special effects companies. They hold innovators like Oxford Scientific up as the best example of technical application used to expand the boundaries of what is possible to show on screen.

Film can compress or expand time, discover things our eyes could never see alone, make patterns of behaviour meaningful (or discover things we cannot understand). It finds application nowhere greater than in programs such as David Attenborough's BBC series, Life On Earth and the forthcoming Trials Of Life, which set incredible standards for the filmmakers to show things never seen on screen before.

Like the previous series, the new program will have an Australian name on the credits, that of Mantis Wildlife Films, behind which are the talents of photographer and journalist Densey Clyne and photographer and cinematographer Jim Frazier. I have known of the work of Frazier for some time; he is a friend of Peter Purvis from Oxford Scientific who has visited and lectured here, and Andrew Mason from Mirage Effects speaks highly of him.

I have been trying to catch him between travels for some time and the following is only a frustratingly brief look at his ideas and work. The conversation was as packed with examples from each of his productions as his workshop studio was with unique equipment.

Frazier has been associated with biology all his life. His father had large collections of butterflies and beetles and Frazier's earliest memories are of being out in the bush with him. He was also aware that his father's interests had labelled him at the time as 'eccentric'. Yet he is grateful that his father's interests had awakened by his now partner, Densey Clyne. He looked towards cinematography with the advantage of the technical background but, practically, was approaching it blind, learning from magazines and books, not realising that he had chosen to start with the most difficult area — micro and macro. He remembers the bewilderment, wondering 'why I couldn't do as simple a thing as a pan, and why your heartbeat would invariably shake a steady zoom at high magnification.'

BEGINNER'S LUCK

Having lived in the country all his life, he found the move to the city was hard. Clyne had helped him settle in and while visiting her one day, he was introduced to Vincent Serventy and Bob Raymond, who were doing Shell's Australia, a pioneering Australian TV documentary series which influenced the work of a lot of people at the time.

Vincent Serventy had been trying to talk Clyne into shooting, on movie, some of the beautiful macro stills she had taken. There was an opportunity in the series for some insect and spider footage and Serventy and Raymond didn't want to tackle it. They asked Clyne but she wasn't keen because the equipment was too heavy and she wanted to stick to stills. "I was cheeky and said why don't we have a go together," Frazier said.
Jim Frazier

"Vincent lent us his old windup Bolex, and the first thing we shot was a spider called Pinopis, the net-casting spider. The first footage was terrific and I thought, 'Hey this is easy.' But it was beginner's luck. Every bit of footage after that was over- or underexposed, had tramlines down them, or spots or blotches. Nothing went right for a long time; each time the workprint came back we would literally break out in tears. "

Building equipment, and a reputation

This has involved using standard equipment but altering it in some fashion. One example of this is his technique in gluing diopeters straight on the surface of the lens. He did this when he explained, "I was looking for magnifications of a butterfly egg that were greater than people had said were possible, and would still give a good image. I was told that I should use bellows instead of diopeters and I tried and tried. I remember engraving the exposure step adjustments on the bellows. But you really need to just start shooting with our kind of subjects and those calculations took too much time. You haven't got time to take your eye off the eye-piece to make those adjustments.

"The main thing that I've concentrated on with my gear is that if I see something, the camera is always loaded, and I can be filming in 10 seconds flat. That's correct exposure and focused, and with wildlife you have to be that speedy."

The evolution of Frazier's equipment has culminated in a sophisticated motorised optical bench for doing very precise movements at high magnifications. Built on a small lathe bed, it is controlled by heavily geared motors and micrometer adjustments. Frazier says "It was built first for Life On Earth, and it has paid for itself many times over." With a laugh, he says it is portable, "in that it breaks down into six suitcases! After carting it around for a few years I've built a single-cased version that looks like a large microscope, which I now use for field work." When he is filming on the run it can be set up on the bonnet of the car and all the motors work from the camera batteries.

New subjects, new techniques

Each new subject seems to call for new techniques. For Attenborough they produced a lot of sequences that at the time were very innovative and are today remarkable, only because they were the first. Such is the speed with which we move from being wide-eyed, to a critical audience. "We shot things like the water-holding frogs," Frazier explained, "where we had to devise for the first time ways of getting underground to show how these frogs outlived nine-year droughts. It also involved David Attenborough squeezing one of the frogs and getting water out and drinking it. At that time I was also experimenting with improving tracking shots with the subjects. For the frill-necked lizard on Life On Earth I only managed to run behind the animal chasing it and it was pretty good film. I've since learnt enough about the animal that I can film it from any angle. I did a big sequence for National Geographic and when it was shown in Japan I think it must have been the thing that sparked the craze. They used that sequence as advertising in their promotion across the States."

While it's obviously impossible to take a Louma crane onto their locations, it is just that flexibility that is required. Frazier has built a very portable lightweight...
he says "that fits together in five minutes. It sits on the tripod but it's a boom arm with a difference. It performs like a miniature Louma and it has extraordinary movement that the Louma doesn't. There are extra movements that are possible at the camera head and built-in automatic corrections to overcome the natural arc you'd get when doing forward swings with it, by panning the camera head.

"I use the crane a lot to go from one subject to another when doing linking or bridging shots. You can track small endoscope lenses along the ground following small animals through foliage, you can go from above ground to underground. There's a shot of a green iguana in Life On Earth where I thought it would be good to do a move from the sunny to the shaded side of the branch. So I pointed the camera inwards, put the fulcrum point under the branch and floated the camera under the branch around to the opposite side of the animal. It was a terrific movement and the BBC loved it.

"My first experience was tying the camera to a stick and I did tracking shots of blue tongue lizards like that, tracking by angling the camera downwards to a preset position and walking beside them. The crane now does all that. Devices like Steadicam I've found are not only too expensive but almost useless for my kind of work. It would be hard for a one or two man band to pull off a Steadicam shot quickly in the bush. I've found that your elbow is as good as a Steadicam. Hold your arm out at 90 degrees to your body, and you can run all day and the camera weight in your hand and the elbow is enough to smooth out the up and down motion of your body. I find I do most of my tracking shots that way."

THE BEAUTY OF FILM AND THE COMING OF VIDEO

He uses H16 EL Bolex cameras almost exclusively, a choice he spends much time justifying to camera operators "who seem horrified that I'm not using something more expensive. In the field the Bolexes are extraordinary; apart from the noise, they offer far more than the other 'sophisticated' cameras like Aaton and Arri. I can put any lens I like on a Bolex. In seconds it can switch speeds even to time lapse, and I find that I vary the speed a lot depending on the degree of magnification and size of the animal. I have instant exposure readings with the through-the-lens metering of rod lenses, endoscopes etc. that don't have diaphragms in many cases.

"For most of our work the noise doesn't matter, and for a lot of it we need more than one camera and I can afford that with Bolexes. I have four electronic Bolex ELs and three others that I use for different situations. Imagine having seven Arri SRs! Despite the talk about registration pins, I've done comparisons with other cameras when intercutting the images, and the Bolex has never given me image steadiness problems and a lot of our material has been blown up to 35mm."

"Today we are talking about most of the audience seeing the results on video, but there are still a lot of theatrical releases around. The Film Australia work I've just done on cane toads is having a cinema release. I did about 99 per cent of the camera work on that and for the sync sound talking heads we used an Aaton. To fit some of my strange lenses to the Aaton we had to remove the metering system, but it's impossible to tell where the cameras change over."

This prompted me to ask if he was considering using video cameras when so much of the market was for broadcast. Frazier is enthusiastic about the quality of the smaller cameras he had seen, but said, "Unfortunately, the BBC people are not interested unless you use one-inch which is hardly a field format (they won't accept Betacam) and prefer film. The advantages for us of video would be instant viewing of rushes in the field, while you've got the chance to redo something. The others are silence and low light capability. The low light is a huge problem, for instance, shooting in rainforests. Against this you don't have high speed or time lapse capability, which is probably only a matter of time. I think it's remiss of places like the BBC not to consider work on video because all their work goes out on the television.
spiders called two films. One was about Us they had ultimately come up boldly approached the then New South Wales Film Commission for funding for two films. One was about spiders called Aliens Among Us which won a lot of awards around the world. It was picked up by the BBC and has had a lot of TV showings.

Because of its success the BBC told Frazier and Clyne about their early plans for Life On Earth and asked if they could do some work on it. "No one realised the success that program would be," Frazier said. "After those early films we cut our teeth in a serious way on Life On Earth as professionals. We had a lot of fun with the two earlier films (the second film is called The Garden Jungle). I was still working at the museum at the time so I spent weekends and nights on it. I was glad when daylight saving came in because it let me leave the museum, head up to Densey's place and have more hours of daylight behind the camera! A lot of the spiders and insects were more active at night anyway so it suited the film better to work into the night."

For the Life On Earth project they had a visit from David Attenborough and the production crew who briefed them on what they wanted and were then given very much a free hand. They spent two months in Borneo and then went to California to film the symbiotic relationship of the yucca moth and plant. From there they came back and covered a wide area of Australia.

Mantis Films contributed more than an hour of on-screen material. Frazier remembers it as "a lot of work and great fun. They paid us well and we have probably done more work now for the BBC than anyone else." Although they didn't contribute much to the second series, the Living Planet, they went to Sumatra and photographed the world's largest flower, which the BBC wanted to show opening in time lapse. That presented Frazier with technical problems because it happens high in the trees in dense jungle, away from any electrical power. Frazier worked out beforehand a way of filming the huge three-foot wide flower which took three days to open. "I decided," he said, '"to use two cameras in case something went wrong, and I've got a very good electronics technician who helped make a battery-operated device that ran the lights and the camera. We built a huge black plastic tent over the flowers which eliminated the problems of fluctuating daylight. And we literally filmed it in the dark."
CLOSELY WATCHED CRANES: The home-made ("better than a Louma") crane in use for a sequence on water-holding frogs could handle: it was camping in the jungle which was the terrifying experience for them, as there were tigers and rogue elephants around.

TREE SICKNESS AND DISCOMFORT While not trying to stress the physical difficulties in his work, Frazier mentions such moments offhandedly. The stories are almost told against work, Frazier mentions such tree in North Queensland, very sea sick 75 feet up in a sway in the wind. It was motion sickness. He continues, "We probably do a lot more crazy things than most filmmakers, otherwise you don't get the sequences on those animals. Most filmmaking is in controlled situations until you get to natural history. I guess that my early experience gives me insight into, and some empathy with the animal. Being able to read what a subject is going to do, knowing the animal when you switch the camera on is our greatest asset. Without that you produce superficial films. And the time for that has gone. The BBC people won't accept that kind of program, they want things in depth, with lots of behaviour. And they want it all! They don't want the camera switched on after the action is started.

"I've been told that we are also the models of a lot of wildlife cameramen out there, there's us and Oxford Scientific Films, and we set the early trends and in many ways we have made a rod for our own backs. There are now many people out there doing natural history who are in many ways doing it better. There are some brilliant guys out there and at the risk of sounding repetitive, without exception they have this early training in natural history."

ENDOSCOPES AND ETHICS Among the projects that Frazier has contributed was one for Doug Stanley of Nomad Films about in vitro fertilisation. On this film he spent time at the Queen Victoria Hospital and at Monash University working with the medical team. It was an experience that had a profound effect on him. He describes how he was "in operating theatres putting endoscopes into women's stomachs, filming live human stuff under the microscope. It imparted some strong feelings on me that had remained. I still end up in tears when I see the film and hear the music. That film also taught me a lot about what you can or can't do ethically.

"The BBC has a policy of being very tough about how you treat the subjects in front of your camera, and how much stress you place on the animals and things you are filming. That's one of the reasons we love the BBC, it has ethics and integrity. One of the greatest joys is to be able to film something and to let it go free, and you know you haven't damaged it. It's little heart might have been pumping a bit, but that's all. "It's not easy; I've had to develop a lot of special cool light sources. I remember that my lights cooked a butterfly once. I sat there waiting for hour after hour for this caterpillar and it was roasted. It was one of the very first lessons over seventeen years ago and I can remember was devastated. I took a look at what lights we had; turning them on only when needed which was inconvenient so I started to look at infra red reflectors and so on. Now I have a whole lot of things for different situations that keep the heat right off. It also helps keep the subject from crawling off because it's uncomfortable, especially when you are looking for natural behaviour. Every subject is different and has different things it will react to."

He concludes with a story about how he stopped a shoot on a Japanese production that he was working on as an adviser because they were just getting too rough on the animal. He said to them, "That's it as far as I'm concerned, we either stop filming you let the animal go or we take a break and have lunch, and please, let the animal calm down! And they did just that. It's very hard to tell that to a crew that are all geared up to shoot; commercials are the worst, often there is very little thought for the animal."

DEEP FOCUS Basic mechanical construction is one thing, but most people would stop short of building their own lenses; Frazier again approached it with the need for specialisation that ruled out existing gear. To get down spider holes or into hollow trees he is faced with problems that most cameramen never encounter. Without any training in optics he has made up his lenses from trial and error.

"It's not just a matter of perspective," he insists, "it's where the animals are. And you have to get down to their level. So I've built up a whole range of lenses that all do different things; they are very much periscope-type lenses but my own system — I've concentrated on getting extra deep focus into my images. The difficulty in using the commercial endoscope lenses outside in standard lighting conditions is that they are all about f/22 with high speed film and useless in low light. My lenses are achieving that at comfortable light level. There is a shot in a moth film that is 12.8 at 60th. This is a shot in the firewood where there is a drop of water in the foreground and the flooded stream in the background. Those are the situations I encounter so the equipment has to be adapted to that."

Walking around his workshop studio, Frazier had a story to tell about each item he picked up, a great shot that it enabled him to make. It is a very close shot of a part of the equipment, and although some are made specifically for an application most are modified again to serve another.

A small handwritten label stuck to the barrel of one field scarred tube says "green frog", named, Frazier says, "for a honey of a shot in Sounds Like Australia with a green frog on a stick with all this water and dead trees in the background — everyone comments on it. It's a deep focus wide angle but without gross distortion."

His pride in the deep focus ability has an element of awe in the face of a magic that he is not sure how he has conjured up. He doesn't talk about how difficult it is to use the lenses' deep focus ability without the extra sharpness adding messy background clutter and detail. When it is used it is for a reason, like the dramatic shot in the funnel with a film where the spider is big in foreground, close to the lens and children are playing away in the background, the focus holding the link between them. Almost never removing from the optical shooting bench is a Tescos field lens system adapted from a monocular microscope. It has a diaphragm in it, a 5:1 zoom and a range of magnifications. It is a range of lenses from a butterfly's wing to a 1:1 ratio. This is so much a standard piece of equipment that Frazier can't envisage filming without it. "I use a lot of strange optics," he said, picking up another right-angled tube. "This happens to be an eyepiece from a microscope, or I can take it off and use my favourite lens, a 10mm Switar, or I can go 55mm on there. I've got one that is even lower for some things." Picking up another, he goes on, "This one gets a whole lot lower, and I can bury it in the ground. There is a shot in Sounds Like Australia using this, a shot in a tunnel where I literally running up and looking at you at their eye level, and Densey is walking past the ants' nest in focus in the background."

"There is another shot in the toad film where someone advocated a monument to the cane toad, like the dog on the Tuckerbox, so we decided to shoot one. We got a stuffed toad and had someone make a decorative base for it. We went and sat it in Cairns in a park and with this lens it looks enormous as if someone
could walk up to it and it would tower over them, yet the cars and the buildings in the background are in focus. Because you have all that depth it allows you to pull off all those trick shots with miniatures. "The BBC invited us to do the first work and set the standards on David Attenborough’s new series and we have preceded all the other shooting by six months. We thought about what we could do to get the standard high and we took a trip through a green ants’ nest. We have uncovered a whole lot of new behaviour including a butterfly that is impervious to the ants and actually eats them, living in the nest. The green ant is quite a vicious ant — I must have got thousands of stings doing that sequence. We were using this sort of endoscope with a sheath of fibre optics around it that pours a whole lot of light out beside the lens. We also used a lot of fibre optics lights pushed into the nest itself. I built barriers around the lens coated with an anti-ant goo to try to stop them crawling up into the eye-piece. Those are the sorts of problems we face, like shooting in water and coming out with legs all bloody from leeches, mosquitoes and sand flies . . . it’s all part of the down side of our business.”

After talking about the economics of long shoots waiting for events, I asked Jim whether he continued to work because it was still a pleasant way to make a living. He paused before he replied, “It’s actually not a good way to make a living at all. People are always offering to carry our bags. We work twice the hours that normal filmmakers would. If something happens at 3am then you have to be there. Like a lot of filmmakers we get sick of living out of suitcases; aeroplanes and motel rooms are all the same after a while.

“I’ve just spent 30 days sitting 100 feet up a tree peering out a hole in a hide in rainforest to get a sequence for David Attenborough and I don’t get everything except the very important copulation at the end of the sequence. You actually get pretty dejected after a while. You think, why am I here, am I reading the subject wrong? You try and figure out shortcuts to ease the boredom. This particular bird has several stumps that he used to display himself on. So we went about eliminating most of them so that he would use the one in front of the camera. He became very tame — we could poke our heads out of the hide and say ‘Look here buster, do your thing’ and he’d stay put. Unfortunately the females he’d coax in, won’t. We’ll get the footage, because the name of the game is perseverance, but we have to go back. I had to come home and it happened on the day I left. This so often happens that I’ve always wanted to write a book titled, ‘You should have been here last week’. I can cite dozens of stories where we should have been there last week and it’s a difficult thing to organise, commitments, travel, long distances and when you have seasonal and weather barriers. “We rely on a network of field information, of friends in the field that keep their eyes on things and give us the important clues as to when to arrive at a place to get what we want. Their local knowledge of weather is better than just watching a weather map as they have the local seasonal knowledge. The difference for us can be several points of rain that may make or break when we go somewhere. A lot of the things we have to get for David Attenborough’s Trials Of Life are crammed into the November period, while we sit here over winter. The criteria of providing new and interesting material also means that you are limited.”

Footnotes
1. Can you remember the shot in Alan Parker’s film The Wall where Bob Geldof’s disintegrating sanity is shown with a macro photographic dolly from his Mickey Mouse Watch along his arm? Or the maggots devouring his head? This and other slow motion sequences were shot by Oxford Scientific Films. They also shot the crystal tunnel background for Dorothy’s fall in The Return To Oz and more.
2. Frazier has been helping Mirage partner and special effects cinematographer Paul Nichols, with his Kodak sponsored 3-D film project. They are using two endoscope lenses adapted to give a 3-D macrophotography view in stereo!
3. Endoscope lens. A long rod like periscope principle lens designed for scientific, medical and architectural use. Often fitted as a supplementary lens it allows the lens to be inserted into holes and still gives a wide angle view from the end. Architects can move it around a model of their building and obtain a human point of view. For medical use it usually has a sheath of fibre optics that allow light to illuminate the subject from its tip.
HELP US MAKE THIS PRODUCTION surveys as complete as possible. If you have any thing which is about to go we shall be happy to have your comments and we will make sure it is included. Call Kathy Ball on (03) 5511 or write to her at Cinema Papers, 43 Charles Street, Abbotsford, Victoria 3057.

LINDA SAFARI

Composer.................................................C. S. Bogda'n, I. Bartzik, E. K. Peryo
Script writer.............................................G. Sanzhynil'ny
Exec. producers......................................David Bowdin, Mark O'Connor
Prod. manager.........................................Bob Sharp
Prod. accountant.....................................S. Z. Bonta
Script editor...........................................John Fisk
Sound designer.......................................Mark Bayliss
Stills photographer.................................I. Bartk
Dialogue director.....................................Toni Evans
English dialogue......................T. Ros Simms
T. Ros Simms
Prod. manager...........................................Bill Sharp
Prod. accountant.....................................Ian Blackman
Script editor...........................................John Fisk
Production ...............................................G. B. Snejew, Hemisphere
Publicity..................................................Nigel Broad
Catering..................................................Colin Jacobs
Sound post-production.............................Melody
Labouratory.............................................T. V. Tolm
Length...................................................90 minutes
Shooting stock........................................T. Y. V. Tolm

BRIEF FEATURES

CINDELLA'S SECRET

Prod. company........................................Yoram Gross Film Studio
Producer..............................................Yoram Gross
Director................................................Yoram Gross
Associate producer................................Sandra Gross
Music.....................................................Guy Gross
Publicity................................................Uma Harris
Length...................................................90 minutes
Gauge.....................................................35mm
Synopsis.................................................The story of a woman's struggle with life and nature.

HEAVEN TONIGHT

Producer..............................................Frank Howson
Screenwriter........................................Frank Howson
Editor.....................................................Peter Boyle
Publicity................................................Uma Harris
Length...................................................100 minutes
Gauge.....................................................35mm
Synopsis.................................................The story of a journey to find love in the afterlife.

MANIFEST DESTINY

Prod. company........................................Virgo Productions & TVM
Dist. company..........................................Virgo USA
Distributor............................................Judith West
Scriptwriter...........................................Peter West
Executive producer...................................Tom Stunt
Co-producer...........................................Peter West
Fight co-producer.....................................Jim Richards
Publicity..................................................Uma Harris
Length...................................................95 minutes
Gauge.....................................................35mm
Synopsis.................................................The story of a new world order.

SOMETHING GREAT

(The Les Darcy Story)

Prod. company........................................Boulevard Films
Producer..............................................Frank Howson
Director................................................Richard Franklin
Screenwriter........................................Frank Howson
Exec. producers......................................Antony I. Gnanou, Peter Boyle
Prod. manager........................................Maxime Shoen
Length...................................................120 minutes
Gauge.....................................................35mm
Synopsis.................................................The true story of a boxer who rises from poverty to become a national hero.

WIZARD OF AUSSIE

(Working title)

Prod. company........................................Yoram Gross Film Studio
Producer..............................................Yoram Gross
Director................................................Yoram Gross
Associate producer................................Sandra Gross
Music.....................................................Guy Gross
Publicity................................................Uma Harris
Length...................................................90 minutes
Gauge.....................................................35mm
Synopsis.................................................In this adaptation of Frank Baum's Wizard Of Oz Dorothy lands in Australia and meets strange and delightful inhabitants such as Kangaroo, Koala, Cockatoo, etc.—with whom she sets off to find "Opal City."
In the January 1988 edition of "Cinema Papers" a production list for the film "The 13th Floor" was published. The credit for Casting Consultant Shauna Crowley was omitted.
OUTBACK
Prod. company ........................................... The Burrows Film Group
Dist. company ........................................... The World (excl. Australia), Hennah-Ginnane Australia Limited
Prod. country ........................................... Australia
Prod. info. .................................................. Color, 35mm, 90 mins
Prod. co-ordinator: Lesley Parker
Prod. manager ........................................... Linda Whitely
Prod. manager (production) ....................... Janine Demeris
Prod. manager (post-production) ............... John Wisbild
Prod. accountant ....................................... Allen D'Aguila
Costs ....................................................... $3,000,000
Spend ...................................................... 94 minutes
Sound ...................................................... 4 tracks
Still photographer ..................................... Peter Figetakis
CondensedNegative film ......................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Neg. matching .......................................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Prod. exec ............................................... Kim Lascelles
Prod. assistant .......................................... Jayne Anderson
Lab. supervisor ......................................... Frank Ziller
Lab. manager ............................................ Peter Figetakis
Gaffer ...................................................... Tom Brodie
Line producer ......................................... Lynn Barker

SYNOPSIS: A witty and compassionate story of a teenage girl coming to terms with tragedy and herself when she learns that her mother is critically ill.

OUT OF THE BODY
Prod. company ........................................... Dave Hankey Productions
Dist. company ........................................... Premiere Film Maxis
Prod. country ........................................... Australia
Prod. info. .................................................. Color, 90 mins
Prod. co-ordinator: Jodie Spence
Prod. manager ........................................... Lisa Ritchie
Prod. manager (production) ....................... Barry Taylor
Prod. manager (post-production) ............... John Danesi
Prod. accountant ....................................... Elaine Crowther
Costs ....................................................... $2,500,000
Spend ...................................................... 90 minutes
Sound ...................................................... 4 tracks
Still photographer ..................................... Peter Figetakis
CondensedNegative film ......................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Neg. matching .......................................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Prod. exec ............................................... Kim Lascelles
Prod. assistant .......................................... Jayne Anderson

SYNOPSIS: The nightmarish adventures of artist Walter Hay who wakes up one morning without his head. A bizarre journey into comic madness.

MULLAWAY
Prod. company ........................................... Ukiyo Films (International)
Dist. company ........................................... Cleopatra Films Corporation
Prod. country ........................................... Australia
Prod. info. .................................................. Color, 96 mins
Prod. co-ordinator: Christine Gallagher
Prod. accountant ....................................... Fran D'Agostino
Costs ....................................................... $1,500,000
Spend ...................................................... 96 minutes
Sound ...................................................... 5 tracks
Still photographer ..................................... Lisa Young
CondensedNegative film ......................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Neg. matching .......................................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Prod. exec ............................................... Ross Porteous
Prod. assistant .......................................... Andrew Carty

SYNOPSIS: Linda Newton, John Clayton, John Ley, Marco Galvani, Michael Hudson, Shane Barry Griffiths.

OUTBACK
Prod. company ........................................... The Burrows Film Group
Dist. company ........................................... The World (excl. Australia), Hennah-Ginnane Australia Limited
Prod. country ........................................... Australia
Prod. info. .................................................. Color, 35mm, 90 mins
Prod. co-ordinator: Lesley Parker
Prod. manager ........................................... Linda Whitely
Prod. manager (production) ....................... Janine Demeris
Prod. manager (post-production) ............... John Wisbild
Prod. accountant ....................................... Allen D’Aguila
Costs ....................................................... $3,000,000
Spend ...................................................... 94 minutes
Sound ...................................................... 4 tracks
Still photographer ..................................... Peter Figetakis
CondensedNegative film ......................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Neg. matching .......................................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Prod. exec ............................................... Kim Lascelles
Prod. assistant .......................................... Jayne Anderson

SYNOPSIS: A witty and compassionate story of a teenage girl coming to terms with tragedy and herself when she learns that her mother is critically ill.

OUT OF THE BODY
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Dist. company ........................................... Premiere Film Maxis
Prod. country ........................................... Australia
Prod. info. .................................................. Color, 90 mins
Prod. co-ordinator: Jodie Spence
Prod. manager ........................................... Lisa Ritchie
Prod. manager (production) ....................... Barry Taylor
Prod. manager (post-production) ............... John Danesi
Prod. accountant ....................................... Elaine Crowther
Costs ....................................................... $2,500,000
Spend ...................................................... 90 minutes
Sound ...................................................... 4 tracks
Still photographer ..................................... Peter Figetakis
CondensedNegative film ......................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Neg. matching .......................................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Prod. exec ............................................... Kim Lascelles
Prod. assistant .......................................... Jayne Anderson

SYNOPSIS: The nightmarish adventures of artist Walter Hay who wakes up one morning without his head. A bizarre journey into comic madness.

MULLAWAY
Prod. company ........................................... Ukiyo Films (International)
Dist. company ........................................... Cleopatra Films Corporation
Prod. country ........................................... Australia
Prod. info. .................................................. Color, 96 mins
Prod. co-ordinator: Christine Gallagher
Prod. accountant ....................................... Fran D’Agostino
Costs ....................................................... $1,500,000
Spend ...................................................... 96 minutes
Sound ...................................................... 5 tracks
Still photographer ..................................... Lisa Young
CondensedNegative film ......................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Neg. matching .......................................... Wayne Dunsdon (Colorfilm)
Prod. exec ............................................... Ross Porteous
Prod. assistant .......................................... Andrew Carty

SYNOPSIS: Linda Newton, John Clayton, John Ley, Marco Galvani, Michael Hudson, Shane Barry Griffiths.
SYNOPSIS: A futuristic adventure set to powerful music, combining fantasy and science fiction are bound together by a band of like-minded, orlicked-fashion heroes.

THE 13TH FLOOR
Prod. company ..................................David Hayman Productions
Dist. company ................................Prement Film Distributors
Exec. producers ................................David Hayman,
                                        Charles Hannay
Director ............................................Chris Roache
Screenwriter ....................................Peter Edgeworth
Photography ......................................Paul Bevan
Sound recordist .................................Paul Bolger
Editor ..................................................Peter McQuillan
Supervising editor ..................................David McConville
Prod. designer .......................................Lara Lasz
Exec. producer ....................................Tom Broadbridge
Line producer ......................................Lynne Barker
Prod. co-ordinator ...............................Leslie Palmer
Prod. manager ......................................Julie Riche
Prod. secretary .....................................Debbie Simmons
Accts assistant .....................................Linda Whiteley
Lab. liaison .........................................Jennie Jenkins
1st asst director .....................................Ian Asttridge
2nd asst director ....................................Clive Reeves
Continuity ..........................................Jo Monte
Focus puller .........................................David Wood
Boom operator .....................................Tom Keesing
Art director .........................................Peter Davis
Art dept ..................................................Greg Clarke
Production office .................................Peta Lawson

A tale of superheroes and villains, set in a world where humanity has advanced beyond the bounds of the imagination.

BLACK JACK’S LAST MISSION
Prod. company ..................................Lighthouse Productions
Prod. ..................................................Steve Bindiull
Directors .............................................Russell Galloway
Screenwriter ......................................Steve Bindiull
Sound recordist .................................John Schleifer
Prod. manager ......................................Sandra Bindiull
Camera assistant .................................Wayne Cowen
Camera assistant ..................................Steve Bindiull
Lab. .......................................................Gig Watson
Camera assistant .................................Tony Keesing
Continuity ..........................................Jo Monte
Focus puller .........................................David Wood
Boom operator .....................................Tom Keesing
Art director .........................................Peter Davis
Art dept ..................................................Greg Clarke
Production office .................................Peta Lawson

A drama telling the story of a man who has to make a difficult decision about secrecy and collusion within families and communities. Personal testimonials from five stories are reinterpreted. A caution for adoption reveal the price some women must pay for transcending the sexual codes.

FIRST BORN — The Life and Times of Jack Davis
Prod. company ..................................Zest Films
Producing/ loosely directed ......................................................Peter Davis
Screenwriters ......................................Rene Rojolos
Photography .............................................Alex McPherson
Sound recordists ..................................Hugo de Vries,
                                          Peter Davis
Editors ....................................................Rene Rojolos,
                                           Dick Fickler
Prod. manager ......................................Carrie Rizzoli
Art director ............................................Ellen Verhaar
Sound ......................................................John Black
Additional sound .....................................Mike Kelly

A series of overland expeditions to develop a World War II club in deep water off the coast of Papua New Guinea. The island is identified as ‘Black Jack’, one of the most famous Flying Fortresses in the Pacific War. The film is located in California and, after 44 years, returns to New Guinea to be reunited with the crew.

THE LABI SISTERS
Producer .............................................John Tamsbaas
Sound recordist .....................................Hans Heidrich
Sound ......................................................Ralph Steel
Art director ............................................Penny LeBard
Lab. .......................................................Guita Velz
Length ..................................................35 minutes

Synopsis: When Margaret moves out of home with her new husband, it sets a pattern for her younger sisters to do the same and creates a problem for the Jewish abrimmo partners.

LIAISON
Prod. company ..................................Brilliant Films
Producer .............................................Brian Douglas
Director ...............................................Paul Bevan
Screenwriter .......................................Patrick Edgeworth
Photography .............................................John Tamsbaas
Sound recordist .....................................Geoff Spurrell

An exploration of the liaison between two families from different cultures, set against the backdrop of a historic event.

SPECIALIST REFERRAL
Prod. company ....................................Scopo Films
Producer .............................................Jane Scragg
Screenwriter .........................................Edward Crichton
Photography .............................................Roger Scrigmure
Sound recordists .....................................Robert Cotherwill,
                                           Sue Ker
Editors ....................................................Paul Scragg
Lab. ...........Stop Press Equipment

A group of children, bored at the low standards of film shown in their schools, set about directing one to compete in the national entry standards. The story, for the 13 to 15 year old group, covers the operation of a sugar industry, with more on going content than on refining and developing.

SPECIALIST REFERRAL
Prod. company ....................................Scopo Films
Producer .............................................Jane Scragg
Screenwriter .........................................Edward Crichton
Photography .............................................Roger Scrigmure
Sound recordists .....................................Robert Cotherwill,
                                           Sue Ker
Editors ....................................................Paul Scragg
Lab. ...........Stop Press Equipment

A group of children, bored at the low standards of film shown in their schools, set about directing one to compete in the national entry standards. The story, for the 13 to 15 year old group, covers the operation of a sugar industry, with more on going content than on refining and developing.

SPECIALIST REFERRAL
Prod. company ....................................Scopo Films
Producer .............................................Jane Scragg
Screenwriter .........................................Edward Crichton
Photography .............................................Roger Scrigmure
Sound recordists .....................................Robert Cotherwill,
                                           Sue Ker
Editors ....................................................Paul Scragg
Lab. ...........Stop Press Equipment

A group of children, bored at the low standards of film shown in their schools, set about directing one to compete in the national entry standards. The story, for the 13 to 15 year old group, covers the operation of a sugar industry, with more on going content than on refining and developing.
ANABELLA  
(Winter title) 
Prod. company........Image Sync Productions 
Producers........Darrell Stokes, Michael Andre 
Directors........Darrell Stokes, Michael Andre 
Scriptwriter........Kathryn Bird 
Based on the original idea by Michael Andre 
Photography........Darrell Stokes 
Actor........Stephen Amsi 
Make-up........Leanne Prince 
Visual effects design........Darrell Stokes 
Lab. liaison........Michael Andre 
Camera operator........PFL 
Length........15 minutes 
Gauge........16mm 
Shooting stock........7291, 7292 
Synopsis: The year is 1888. At the moment of dying, young Isabella wills her split into her sister’s doll, “Anabella.” 1889, Jamie, 19, confined to a wheelchair, lives through her sister’s experiences – telepathically shared. In learning to walk again he comes closer to his sister and the two are inseparable... until she discovers “Anabella”.

DEATH OF GOD 
Prod. company........Geoff Clifton Films 
Dist. company........CFD 
Producer........Geoff Clifton 
Director........Geoff Clifton 
Scriptwriter........Geoff Clifton 
Photography........Sarah Borsellino 
Actor........Michael Andre 
Make-up........Kathryn Bird 
Lab. liaison........Ian Anderson 
Camera operator........Palmer Lane Studio 
Length........35mm 
Gauge........16mm 
Shooting stock........7291, 7292 
Synopsis: In pre-programmed worlds, how would you change your destiny.

GLORIOUS DAY 
Prod. company........Innersense Productions 
Producer........Bill Mousoulis 
Scriptwriter........Bill Mousoulis 
Photography........Peter Watson 
Actor........Stephen Wears 
Sound recordist........Peter Watson 
Lab. liaison........Warren Keever 
Camera operator........Jorge Kinella 
Camera assistant........Kieran Knox 
Gaffer........Rory Timony 
Boom operator........Craig Walmsley 
Art director........Greg Harvey 
Make-up........Nicky Cooper, Jorgina Vanden Berg 
Hairdressers........Greg Harvey, Jorgina Vanden Berg 
Prod. designer........Afsheen Akbari 
Costume designer........Jordana Vanden Berg 
SFX........Peter Watson 
Lab. liaison........Ian Anderson 
Gauge........16mm 
Shooting stock........7291 
Synopsis: A man, recently released from a sanatorium, befriends a lonely pregnant girl.

LOVER BOY 
Prod. company........Lover Boy Productions 
Director........David Caesar 
Scriptwriter........David Caesar 
Photography........Michael Andre 
Editor........David Caesar 
Lab. liaison........Warrin Keever 
Camera operator........Jorge Williams 
Camera assistant........Kieran Kinella 
Gaffer........Rory Timony 
Boom operator........Craig Walmsley 
Art director........Greg Harvey 
Make-up........Nicky Cooper, Jorgina Vanden Berg 
Hairdressers........Greg Harvey, Jorgina Vanden Berg 
Prod. designer........Afsheen Akbari 
Costume designer........Jordana Vanden Berg 
SFX........Peter Watson 
Lab. liaison........Ian Anderson 
Gauge........16mm 
Shooting stock........7291 
Synopsis: A stylized look at the notion of housing.

THE LONELY ONES 
Prod. company........Tulla Films 
Director........Mark D. Chapman 
Scriptwriter........David Glazier 
Photography........Michael Andre 
Editor........Mark D. Chapman 
Lab. liaison........Ian Anderson 
Camera operator........Warren Keever 
Camera assistant........Kieran Knox 
Gaffer........Rory Timony 
Boom operator........Craig Walmsley 
Art director........Greg Harvey 
Make-up........Nicky Cooper, Jorgina Vanden Berg 
Hairdressers........Greg Harvey, Jorgina Vanden Berg 
Prod. designer........Afsheen Akbari 
Costume designer........Jordana Vanden Berg 
SFX........Peter Watson 
Lab. liaison........Ian Anderson 
Gauge........16mm 
Shooting stock........7291, 7292 
Synopsis: A man, recently released from a sanatorium, befriends a lonely pregnant girl.

Personal service in skilful public relations, publicity and promotion.
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CINEMA PAPERS MARCH — 71
Please help us keep this survey accurate. Phone Kathy Sall on (03) 429 5511 with any errors or omissions.
HEY DAD

SYNOPSIS: A Royal Flying Doctor service is located in the outback town of Cooper Crossing. The two brothers, Geoff Stanis and Chris Randall, not only contend with the medical challenges, but also with the small community in which they live.

HOME AND AWAY

SYNOPSIS: The mother and father trying to raise their three children with the help of the family's crazy cousin.

INVADES

SYNOPSIS: They thought they had everything. They then they found themselves in a nightmare of treasure hidden in the wilderness out ...
Costume designer .........................................Jennie Tate
Make-up ..................................................Annie Heathcoat
Hairdresser ..................................................Renee Har Pullen
Wardrobe ....................................................Mary Webster
Wardrobe ass't ............................................Tony Assness
Props buyer ..................................................Claire Wright
Standby props .............................................Juanita Ryan
Special effects ..............................................Steve McNaught
Set dresser ...................................................Glen Johnson
Set dresser ...................................................Sue Pettigrew
Construction manager ..............Geoff Howe
Ass't construction manager ............Stevie Flack
Sound editor ...............................................Ashley Greenville
Shingle estimator ........................................Brenda Ledger
Stunts .......................................................Bemie Ledger
Still photography ..........................................Trenzley
Wranglers .....................................................Brian McKenzie
Best boy ......................................................Craig Fry
Set decorator ..............................................Thomas Thaw
Art dept runner .............................................David Joyce
Art dept attachment manager.............Angus Tait
Set dresser ...................................................Peter Bartlett
Mural artist ....................................................Karen Leong
Greens .......................................................Gregg Thomas
Painters ......................................................Peter Australia
Andrea Overall .............................................Martin Pyevets
Construction runner .............Ches Halley
Carpenters ..................................................Colin Stirling
Producers .....................................................Roger Biggs
Make-up .....................................................Doreen Robson
Hair ..........................................................Graeme Basen
Tim Higgins ................................................Paul Miller
Danny Rollston ............................................Leanne McKee
Security ......................................................Vadim Kazarov
Safety officers ............................................Clare Walker
Rig ..............................................................Rick Skees
Publicity .......................................................Wendy Low
Unit publicist .............................................Sherry Stumm
Catering ........................................................Vern's Catering
Laboratory .....................................................Sansa Chyr
Lab assistant ...............................................Denise Wolfson
Budget .....................................................6 x 30 minutes
Gauge..........................................................16 mm
Sound..........................................................Super 8
Shooting stock ............................................Kodak
Cost .............................................................$17,000
Based on the book by ......Sir Bernard Callinan
Photography ..................................................Bobby Letts
Sound recordist ..........................................Seeh Metzer
Editor ............................................................Ruder
Composer ....................................................Tassos Ioannides
Sound recordist ..........................................Keir Wilkins
Prod. manager ..............................................Yvonne Collins
Prod. secretary ..............................................Tanja Paternoster
Director's assistant ....................................Gus Rice
2nd unit photography .........................Flora Foulds
Boom operator .............................................Chris Roberts
Make-up ......................................................Keryn Carter
Wardrobe .....................................................Debrah Pugh
Props ..........................................................David Vassiliou
Special effects ..........................................Peter Van Horn
Dialogue coach ...........................................Joe Coserolas
Reseau ................................................................
Translations ................................................Sadda Seno,
Runner ............................................................Michael Nasser
Length .....................................................60 minutes
Studio ..........................................................16 mm

MICHAEL WILSEES'S AUSTRALIANS

Prod. company ...........................................Roadshow
Cinematography ............................................Ann Granger
Casting ..........................................................Joan Wall
Screenplay .....................................................Dick Dale
Production design .............................................Merv Hopper
Editor .............................................................Patricia Morris
Sound recordist .............................................Mary Collingham
Art director ....................................................Brian Johnstone
Original music ..............................................David Bayliss
Set construction ............................................Robyn Neale
Sound ..........................................................Paul McLean
Stunts ..........................................................Len Sheehan
Lawyers ..........................................................Graham Cherry
Best boy ......................................................Ivan Bond
Runner ..........................................................Ross Bell
Food .............................................................Peter Luck
Catering ..........................................................Feast Catering
Stunt coordinator .........................................Mark O'Leary
Mixed at .....................................................Film Australia
Laboratory .....................................................CINEMA PAPERS

Please help us keep this survey accurate. Phone Kathy Bullock at (03) 4925511 with any errors or omissions.

CINEMA PAPERS MAR 77
SUGAR AND SPICE


To watch the sister of young George交通, Baddie's son, comes to stay with his cousin Baddie's family on their farm in central-west South. Baddie's farm is the small-town family in Tasmania's rugged south-west. Baddie's farm is a pastoral paradise for baddie, the green-throated calf. The cattle graze, Baddie's family lives their lives in the wilderness. When the two boys have a layabout, though, it's time for a rest. The boys, Baddie's family, become separated from the others and must work together to retrieve the heifer and get back to the farm safely.

TOUCH THE SUN — DEVIIL'S HILL: FILM PRODUCTIONS

Series prod. company: ACTF Productions Prod. company: Simons Entertainment Intr. Prod. company: ABC TV PtY Ltd Producer: Jill Robb Director: Bill Chamberlain Scriptwriter: David Phillips Producer: Lynne Milburn, John Milburn, Palmira Phillips Executive producer: Peter Shepherd Synopsis: Sam comes from the city, but when his mother is ill and his father has left home, he is sent to stay with his cousin Baddie's family on their farm in central-west South. Baddie's farm is a pastoral paradise for baddie, the green-throated calf. The cattle graze, Baddie's family lives their lives in the wilderness. When the two boys have a layabout, though, it's time for a rest. The boys, Baddie's family, become separated from the others and must work together to retrieve the heifer and get back to the farm safely.

TOUCH THE SUN — THE GIFT: FILM PRODUCTIONS

Series prod. company: ACTF Productions Dist. company: Australian Children's Television Foundation Prod. company: ABC TV PtY Ltd Producer: Peter Shepherd,(detail)

SUGAR AND SPICE


To watch the sister of young George traffic, Baddie's son, comes to stay with his cousin Baddie's family on their farm in central-west South. Baddie's farm is the small-town family in Tasmania's rugged south-west. Baddie's farm is a pastoral paradise for baddie, the green-throated calf. The cattle graze, Baddie's family lives their lives in the wilderness. When the two boys have a layabout, though, it's time for a rest. The boys, Baddie's family, become separated from the others and must work together to retrieve the heifer and get back to the farm safely.

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TOUCH THE SUN — THE GIFT: FILM PRODUCTIONS

Series prod. company: ACTF Productions Dist. company: Australian Children's Television Foundation Prod. company: ABC TV PtY Ltd Producer: Peter Shepherd,(detail)

WESTWARD HO


Out West

SUGAR AND SPICE


To watch the sister of young George traffic, Baddie's son, comes to stay with his cousin Baddie's family on their farm in central-west South. Baddie's farm is the small-town family in Tasmania's rugged south-west. Baddie's farm is a pastoral paradise for baddie, the green-throated calf. The cattle graze, Baddie's family lives their lives in the wilderness. When the two boys have a layabout, though, it's time for a rest. The boys, Baddie's family, become separated from the others and must work together to retrieve the heifer and get back to the farm safely.

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TOUCH THE SUN — THE GIFT: FILM PRODUCTIONS

Series prod. company: ACTF Productions Dist. company: Australian Children's Television Foundation Prod. company: ABC TV PtY Ltd Producer: Peter Shepherd,(detail)

WESTWARD HO

### Censorship Listings

Films examined in terms of the Customs (Cinematograph Films) Regulations as States’ film censorship legislation are listed below. An explanatory key to reasons for classifying non-”G” films appears hereunder:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Explicitness/Intensity</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In frequent</td>
<td>Frequent</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Hearts On Fire
- R. Marquand/J. Alward
- Miller, USA, 2605.85m, Village Roadshow Corporation, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Hellraiser (edited version) C. Figg, USA, 2413.84m, Village Roadshow Corporation, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Hotel Colonial: I. Barmak, India, 2979.58m, Film pac Holdings, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g (Drug sat. adult concepts)
- Last Emperor: T. J. Thomas/China/China, 4306.51m, Fox Columbia Film Distributors, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Mauricio: J. Merchant, UK, 3789.00m, Village Roadshow Corporation, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Princess Fragrance: T. Zhang, China, 2496.13m, Kwang T. Mok, (Drug sat. adult concepts)
- Road Warriors: P. Tong, Hong Kong, 2560.98m, Chinatown Cinema, V-fi-m-g
- Spiritual Love: J. Max, Hong Kong, 2413.84m, Chima Medical Centre, V-fi-m-g
- Suspect: D. Sherwood, USA, 3139.03m, Fox Columbia Film Distributors, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Terroriser: Tzu Wu Wei, Malaysia, 1140.88m, Chinese Cultural Centre, V-fi-m-g
- Tough Guys Don’t Dance: M. Golan/Y. Yoffe, USA, 2979.58m, Hoyts Distribution, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- He’s My Girl: L. Taylor-Morton/A. Schapio, USA, 104m, Village Roadshow Corporation, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Leonard: Part 6: Not shown, USA, 89m, Fox Columbia Film Distributors, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Women Wonder: T. Zhang, China, 93m, Kwang T. Mok, (Drug sat. adult concepts)
- Hellraiser: C. Figg, USA, 2496.13m, Village Roadshow Corporation, (V-m-g) V-fi-m-g

#### DECEMBER 1987

Films Registered Without Deletions

### G (For General Exhibition)
- Asterix Vs. Caesar: Y. Piel, France, 75m, Film pac Holdings
- Big Joys Small Sorrows (main title not shown in English) M. Watan, Japan, 126m, Japan Information and Culture Centre
- Lost In The Wilderness: Not shown, Japan, 136m, Japan Information and Culture Centre
- Song Of The Spring Pony: K. Kuwahayama, Japan, 106m, Japan Information and Culture Centre
- Torasan’s Island Encounter: Shochoh Prods., Japan, 100m, Japan Information and Culture Centre

#### Special Conditions

- Bellissima: D. S. Angelo, Italy, 130m, Italian Art Film Society
- Bread: B. Israel, Israel, 85m, Festival of Perh
- Catherine: (e) Thames Television International, UK, International Festival of Britain
- Chronicle Of A Death Foretold: D. Cassirer, Von Bouren, Italy/France, 109m, Italian Art Film Society
- Dark Eyes: T. Sandhoo/C. Cutchi, India, 117m, Italian Art Film Society
- Desert Of The Tartars. The: Not shown, France/Italy, 140m, Italian Art Film Festival Society
- Family, The: The (G), C. Magnelli, Italy, 137m, Italian Art Film Society
- Gold-Rimmed Glasses, The: D. L. Pascaud, Italy, 82m, Italian Art Film Society
- Green Light For Us Now, A: (p) Korean Broadcasting System, Seoul, Korea, 59m, Festival of Film
- II Generale Di Roma: D. Rovere: M. E. Arc, Italy/Britain, 137m, Italian Art Film Society
- M. Rothberg, USA, 99m, Hoyts Distribution, (Drug sat. adult concepts)

### Films Board of Review

- China Girl: M. Nozik, USA, 87m, Filmpac Holdings, (V-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Deletions For Restricted Exhibition — R —
- Blood Diner: J. Maslon, USA, 2304.00m, Film pac Holdings, V-fi-m-g
- China Girl: M. Nozik, USA, 2386.00m, Filmpac Holdings, V-fi-m-g
- Fatal Beauty: K. Kroll, USA, 2825.29m, United International Pictures, V-fi-m-g
- Ghost’s Lover: T. Zhang, China, 2496.13m, Kwang T. Mok, (Drug sat. adult concepts)
- He’s My Girl: L. Taylor-Morton/A. Schapio, USA, 104m, Village Roadshow Corporation, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Leonard: Part 6: Not shown, USA, 89m, Fox Columbia Film Distributors, (L-m-g) V-fi-m-g
- Women Wonder: T. Zhang, China, 93m, Kwang T. Mok, (Drug sat. adult concepts)

#### Dec 1987

Films Registered Without Deletions

### G (For General Exhibition)
- Asterix Vs. Caesar: Y. Piel, France, 75m, Film pac Holdings
- Big Joys Small Sorrows (main title not shown in English) M. Watan, Japan, 126m, Japan Information and Culture Centre
- Lost In The Wilderness: Not shown, Japan, 136m, Japan Information and Culture Centre
- Song Of The Spring Pony: K. Kuwahayama, Japan, 106m, Japan Information and Culture Centre
- Torasan’s Island Encounter: Shochoh Prods., Japan, 100m, Japan Information and Culture Centre

#### Special Conditions

- Bellissima: D. S. Angelo, Italy, 130m, Italian Art Film Society
- Bread: B. Israel, Israel, 85m, Festival of Perh
- Catherine: (e) Thames Television International, UK, International Festival of Britain
- Chronicle Of A Death Foretold: D. Cassirer, Von Bouren, Italy/France, 109m, Italian Art Film Society
- Dark Eyes: T. Sandhoo/C. Cutchi, India, 117m, Italian Art Film Society
- Desert Of The Tartars. The: Not shown, France/Italy, 140m, Italian Art Film Festival Society
- Family, The: The (G), C. Magnelli, Italy, 137m, Italian Art Film Society
- Gold-Rimmed Glasses, The: D. L. Pascaud, Italy, 82m, Italian Art Film Society
- Green Light For Us Now, A: (p) Korean Broadcasting System, Seoul, Korea, 59m, Festival of Film
- II Generale Di Roma: D. Rovere: M. E. Arc, Italy/Britain, 137m, Italian Art Film Society
- M. Rothberg, USA, 99m, Hoyts Distribution, (Drug sat. adult concepts)
### MARCH

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>Jackie Coogan dies, from heart failure and kidney ailments, Santa Monica, California. A popular child performer from the age of 16 months, he played the urchin in Chaplin's <em>The Kid</em> (1921). His parents misappropriated his childhood earnings of more than $4 million, leading to the introduction of the so-called Coogan Act, which set up court-administered trust funds to safeguard the interests of juvenile performers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1932: Paramount's <em>Dr Jekyll And Mr Hyde</em>, starring Fredric March and Miriam Hopkins, opens at Sydney's Prince Edward Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1911: Jean Harlow (Harlean Carpenter) born, Kansas City, Missouri</td>
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<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1975: Charles Chaplin knighted, Buckingham Palace, London</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>1982: John Belushi found dead from a drug overdose, Chateau-Marmont Hotel, Hollywood</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>1906: Comedian Lou Costello (Louis Francis Cristillo) born, Paterson, New Jersey</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1928: Sydney's Regent Theatre opens with <em>The Flesh And The Devil</em>, starring Greta Garbo and John Gilbert</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>1982: Arthur Honeyegger, composer (Gance's <em>Napoleon</em>, 1926), born, Le Havre, France</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1931: Warner Brothers Studio releases 42nd Street, starring Warner Baxter and Bebe Daniels</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1975: Susan Hayward (Edythe Marrener) dies of a brain tumour, Los Angeles</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>1933: Charles Chauvel's first sound film, <em>In The Wake Of The Bounty</em>, premieres at Sydney's Prince Edward Theatre</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>1940: Bernardo Bertolucci, director, born, Parma, Italy</td>
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<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>1906: Brigitte Helm (Giselle Eve Schittenhelm), actress memorable for her debut in Fritz Lang's <em>Metropolis</em> (1926), born, Berlin</td>
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<td>18</td>
<td>1905: Robert Donat born, Wittington, Manchester, England</td>
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<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>1980: Australian-born Hollywood actress Louise Lovely (Louise Lehman, aka Louise Carabasse) dies, Tasmania</td>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>1982: World premiere of The Man From Snowy River, Star Cinema, Mansfield, Victoria</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>1985: Media magnate Rupert Murdoch acquires half-interest in Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation in US$260 million deal</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>1941: Almost a year before the United States will officially enter the Second World War, James Stewart becomes the first major screen star to sign up with the armed forces</td>
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<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>1910: Akira Kurosawa, director, born, Tokyo, Japan</td>
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<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>1901: Ub Ivers, animator who designed Mickey Mouse for the Disney studios, born, Kansas City, Missouri</td>
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<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>1921: Simone Signoret (Simone Kaminkber) born, Wiesbaden, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>1989: Chips Rafferty (John William Piblean Goffage), born, Broken Hill, NSW</td>
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<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>1897: Gloria Swanson (Gloria Josephine Mae Swan) born, Chicago, Illinois</td>
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<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>1989: Maria von Trapp, former nun whose family were inspiration for the Ritz Brothers, nightclub comedians who appeared in many musicals of the 1920s (<em>On The Avenue</em>, 1937; <em>The Goldwyn Follies</em>, 1938), dies, of pneumonia, San Diego, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>1986: Harry Ritz, leader and last surviving member of the Ritz Brothers, nightclub comedians who appeared in many musicals of the 1920s (<em>On The Avenue</em>, 1937; <em>The Goldwyn Follies</em>, 1938), dies, of pneumonia, San Diego, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>1937: Warren Beatty (Warren Beatty), born, Richmond, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>1939: Volker Schlondorf, director, born, Wiesbaden, Germany</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### APRIL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Nita Naldi (Anita Donna Dooley), actress memorable as the temptress opposite Valentino in <em>Blood And Sand</em> (1922), born, New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1959</td>
<td>Raymond Longford, director, dies, Sydney, having spent his final years as a night watchman on the waterfront</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>Marlon Brando born, Omaha, Nebraska</td>
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<tr>
<td>1958</td>
<td>Lana Turner's boyfriend, Johnny Stompanato, is stabbed to death in her Beverly Hills home. Her daughter, Cheryl, is later acquitted on the grounds of 'justifiable homicide'</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>Roger (William) Corman, producer-director who became 'King of the B Pictures' in the 1950s, born, Los Angeles</td>
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<tr>
<td>1936</td>
<td>Universal Studios release Flash Gordon, starring Larry (Buster) Crabbe and Jean Rogers</td>
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<tr>
<td>1896</td>
<td>E.Y. 'Yip' Harburg, lyricist, often in partnership with composer Harold Arlen (The Wizard Of Oz, 1939; Cabin In The Sky, 1943), born, New York City</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1986</td>
<td>Linda Darnell receives fatal burns in a house fire while trying to rescue her host's daughter, Glenview, Chicago</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1983</td>
<td>Omar Sharif (Michel Shahhoub) born, Alexandria, Egypt</td>
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<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Chaplin's <em>Monseur Verdoux</em> premieres, Broadway Theatre, New York</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>Comedian Roscoe 'Fatty' Arbuckle acquitted of the rape and murder of actress Virginia Rappe in September 1921</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1947</td>
<td>Barragan Toscano, Mexican director/cinematographer whose pioneering efforts led to a legacy of foot­age showing everyday life in Mexico between 1897 and 1920, dies, Mexico City. His daughter, Carmen, used much of the footage in <em>Memorias De Un Mexicano</em> (1950)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1932</td>
<td>Anthony Perkins born, New York City</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Curtis (Kurt) Bernhardt, director (<em>The Blue Veil</em>, 1951; <em>Miss Sadie Thompson</em>, 1953), born, Worms, Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>1940</td>
<td>Paul Cox, director, born, Venlo, Netherlands</td>
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<tr>
<td>1914</td>
<td>George W. Davis, art director (All About Eve, 1950; <em>The Robe</em>, 1953; <em>How The West Was Won</em>, 1963), born, Kokomo, Indiana</td>
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<tr>
<td>1899</td>
<td>Cineplex, largest cinema complex in the world, with 18 separate theatres, opens at Toronto Eaton Centre, Canada</td>
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<tr>
<td>1909</td>
<td>A walk-on part in Her First Biscuits marks Mary Pickford's entry to motion pictures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>Billy Bitzer (Johann Gottlob Wilhelm Bitzer), leading cameraman closely associated with D.W. Griffith (Birth Of A Nation, 1915; <em>Intolerance</em>, 1916), born, Roxbury, Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1949</td>
<td>Meryl Streep (Mary Louise Streep) born, Basking Ridge, New Jersey</td>
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<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>Crocodile Dundee premieres at Hoyts Centre, Sydney, then opens at 72 cinemas across Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1934</td>
<td>Shirley MacLaine (Shirley Maclean Beatty) born, Richmond, Virginia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1972</td>
<td>George Sanders suicides with an overdose of sleeping tablets, Barcelona</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1984</td>
<td>May McAvoy, actress who starred with Al Jolson in <em>The Jazz Singer</em> (1927), dies, Sherman Oaks, California</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1900</td>
<td>Walter Lantz, animator cartoon producer and creator and voice of Woody Woodpecker, born, Rochelle, Nebraska</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1894</td>
<td>Rondo Hatton, character actor who suffered from a disease which distorted his face, skull, hands and feet, was thus typecast in horrific roles, memorable as The Creeper in <em>Sherlock Holmes And The Pearl Of Death</em> (1944), born, Hagers­town, Maryland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1912</td>
<td>Eve Arden (Eunice Quedens), born, Mill Valley, California</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
PROUD TO BE ASSOCIATED WITH

THE MAN FROM SNOWY RIVER II

Keith Wagstaff: Director of Photography

Geoff Burrows: Director and Producer
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