Cinema Papers #91 January 1993

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75 PRODUCTION SURVEY

80 ELEATIC ELEVEN

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CLINT EASTWOOD AS RELUCTANT GUNFIGHTER MUNNY IN HIS OWN UNFORGIVEN

CLINT EASTWOOD AND ‘UNFORGIVEN’ THE DEFINITIVE INTERVIEW

PLUS

THE CINEMA OF RÂÚL RUIZ
GEORGE MILLER’S ‘GROSS MISCONDUCT’
DAVID ELFICK’S ‘LOVE IN LIMBO’
THE BIRTH OF AUSTRALIAN FILM
NOSTALGIA: ‘ON THE BEACH’

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Dear Sir

In your edition for October your freelance writer, Marcus Breen, reviewed the music video retrospective Totally Clips of which I was the producer/researcher. I appreciate his views but would like the opportunity to clarify certain points made by Breen.

I was commissioned by the AFI in June to put this retrospective together to be included in the public programme of the Australian Film Festival. My brief was to select clips:

a. that showed the marriage between film and music - i.e., videos that incorporate various cinematic techniques - be it narrative, animation, etc.; and

b. to include clips that were made early in the careers of directors who still work in the filmmaking field in some way. They may continue to make videos, they may make feature films, they may direct television commercials; whatever it is they have the common link of having made music videos.

These points were my outline and I had roughly 90 minutes of time to fill. That breaks down to only 23 videos out of the hundreds that have been made over the years.

With those guidelines in hand, I set about making a list of directors whose work I was aware of, and then spoke with them to ascertain their own personal bests, which of their own work they liked the most and was most representative of the aforementioned guidelines. Essentially I had the final choice but 99 per cent of the time I went with each director's decision. (There is a disclaimer at the head of the programme to make it apparent that due to the wealth of material available Totally Clips does not claim to be representative of all clip makers.)

The completed project was screened once in each of 7 capital cities during the 4-week period of the Australian Film Festival. I attended the Sydney and Melbourne screenings which both had good attendances: around 200 people came to an 11 pm mid-week screening in Sydney and 400 people came to The Lounge in Melbourne.

Those numbers, in fact, prove Breen incorrect in his assumption when he questions how "a string of any rock music videos stretching over 90 minutes would somehow interest an audience". Totally Clips was not strung together in a curatorial vacuum. I have worked on more than 50 music videos in a 6-year period, they are a personal love of mine. I have worked with a number of directors, some of whose work is represented in the retrospective. I have produced a couple, styled many, cast extras in a great deal, and personally cared about all my contributions to the genre. I have read about what people think of them, what they mean to people, what list of favourites people have, what they don't like. The fact is it is purely and simply a matter of taste. Clips are clips. Breen may like to analyze the content and 'text' of them but the fact is they are in essence a marketing tool. The important thing for me that comes from Totally Clips is that the consistently high standard of work should indicate just how important clips are in the marketing of a band/song/image whatever.

Since the retrospective was completed, the AFI has been successful in generating the distribution of it into the National Library in Canberra and State Film Centres, centralized libraries, including secondary and tertiary, government departments, community groups, and more. There has even been a sniff of interest for a possible screening in Paris early next year. These achievements are thrilling because, if nothing else, they further the cause of filmmakers in this country who, despite what Breen says, have taken risks and broken new ground in the genre over the years.

It disappoints me that someone would prefer to take a negative outlook rather than a positive one on a relatively harmless, be it politically or artistically, piece of film history. It gains nothing for anyone.

In conclusion, I'd just like to point out a couple of technical discrepancies - 1. Paul Goldman (not Goodman) was the partner of Evan English in the clip-making team called The Rich Kids. Their work is represented by Jo Camilleri's Walk On By. Paul Goldman was the director, Evan English the producer. 2. Gillian Armstrong made a music video in 1982 or 1983 for Pat Wilson, called Bop Girl. 3. I am Shelley Thomas, not Sally Thomas.

Sincerely, Shelley Thomas

Marcus Breen Replies

I am pleased to see some explanation for Totally Clips. It was this contextualizing detail that was absent from the programme. While Shelley Thomas was the research producer for the programme and appears keen to take responsibility, the real responsibility rests with the AFI (the programme's producer). This organization should be more remorseless in its commitment to detailing film history and, with respect to Thomas, perhaps the process of putting this retrospective programme together should have gone to a film historian, rather than a clip maker or fan.

This was the basis for my suggestion that the programme appeared in a curatorial vacuum. Unfortunately, it appears that Thomas does not understand what a curator should do to provide an audience with an opportunity to have an informed dialogue with works of art.

This is even more important with music film clips, which exist in an awkward space that straddles art and commerce. Then again, it is the dilemma for almost all film criticism.

FFC Reorganization Announced

The Australian Film Finance Corporation's Chief Executive, John Morris, today announced a reorganization of the FFC and the relocation of its Sydney office to new premises at 130 Elizabeth Street at the edge of the central business district. Morris said that the government has guaranteed four years of funding for the film industry through the FFC, we have the opportunity to make improvements to the organization's efficiency and develop a supportive working environment for the benefit of our industry clients.

To that end, the Board has decided on a staff restructure which stems from recommendations of the recent government Review of the FFC and the recent discussions we had with producers around Australia.

Late note: Morris announced 19 November 1992 that Garry Maddox has been appointed Policy Officer for the FFC. Maddox, a former editor of Encore, wrote the recent report, "Independent Film and Television Producers: Who's Making What and How They're Surviving", for the AFC.

FFC Film Fund

The Australian Film Finance Corporation's Chief Executive, John Morris, has announced the FFC's Fourth Film Fund.

Morris said that the FFC was able to continue with the Film Fund as a result of the high level of appropriation secured for the FFC in the 1992-93 financial year. Morris said that the Film Fund will comprise up to four projects with budgets up to $3.5 million. He added that the FFC was keen to ensure that two of the projects would be at the $2.5 million level and advised that producers with projects in this category would be advantaged in the selection process.

Morris said that the FFC had consulted widely throughout the industry in relation to the Film Fund and had sought to introduce a number of changes in response to industry comments. The most significant of these are:

* the budgets of the films will be financed independently by the FFC with the result that none of the revenues to the films will be cross-collateralized;
* the producer will have approval over the final cut of the film; and
* the producer will select the Australian theatrical distributor.

Morris also announced one further innovation with this Fund; namely that there would be a threshold requirement or pre-condition to application. He stated that projects would only be eligible for selection if the producer secured a commitment from an Australian theatrical distributor to release the film prior to submitting the project to the Fund. Morris stated that a print and advertising commitment or an advance or some other financial commitment to the project would be an advantage.
1992 AFI AWARDS

1992 FEATURE FILM AWARDS Best Feature Film Strictly Ballroom. Producer: Tristram Miall; NewVision Films Award for Best Achievement in Direction Baz Luhrmann for Strictly Ballroom; Cinesure Award for Best Screenplay Baz Luhrmann, Craig Pearce for Strictly Ballroom; Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Rôle Lisa Harrow in The Last Days of Chez Nous; Hoyts Group Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Rôle Russell Crowe in Romper Stomper; Best Performance by an Actress in a Supporting Rôle Pat Thomson in Strictly Ballroom; Telecom MobilNet Award for Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Rôle Barry Otto in Strictly Ballroom; Samuelson Award for Best Achievement in Cinematography Peter James for Black Robe; Spectrum Films Award for Best Editing Jill Bilcock for Strictly Ballroom; Best Original Music Score John Clifford White for Romper Stomper; Film Sets Australia Award for Best Achievement in Production Design Catherine Martin, Bill Marron for Strictly Ballroom; Best Achievement in Costume Design Angus Stratheie for Strictly Ballroom; Soundfilm Award for Best Achievement in Sound Steve Burgess, David Lee, Frank Lipson for Romper Stomper

KODAK NON-FEATURE FILM AWARDS Best Short Animation She/She (Andrew Horne); Best Documentary Black Harvest (Robin Anderson, Bob Connolly); Best Short Film Road to Alice (Stavros Efthymiou)

1992 AFI SPECIAL AWARDS Laurent-Perrier-AFIs Members Award for Best Foreign Film Truly Madly Deeply; Byron Kennedy Award Robin Anderson, Bob Connolly; Raymond Longford Award Lee Robinson

1992 AFI TELEVISION AWARDS Lemac Award for Best Television Documentary Cop It Sweet (Jenny Brockie); Atlab Australia Award for Best Television Mini-series or Tele-feature Brides of Christ (Ken Cameron). ABC, Roadshow Coote & Carroll. Producer: Sue Masters; Best Episode in a Television Drama Series or Serial Phonic; “Hard Ball”. ABC. Producer: Bill Hughes; Best Children’s Television Drama Lift Off; “A Load of Rubbish”. Australian Children’s Television Foundation. Producer: Patricia Edgar; Cameragroup Award for Best Achievement in Direction in a Television Drama Ken Cameron for Brides of Christ, Best Screenplay in a Television Drama John Alsop. Sue Smith for Brides of Christ; Best Performance by an Actor in a Leading Rôle in a Television Drama Gary Sweet in Police Rescue; Best Performance by an Actress in a Leading Rôle in a Television Drama Lisa Hensley for Brides of Christ.

FILM FINANCE CORPORATION FUNDING DECISIONS

1992 FEATURE FILMS

BUDDY (100 mins) Buddy. Executive producers: Domenico Procacci, Giorgio Drasikovic. Producers: Rolf de Heer, Fiona Paterson. Director-writer: Rolf de Heer. A man locked in the house by his mother for more than 30 years has to find his way in the world.

DOCUMENTARIES

DONA PALI (58 mins) Negara Film and Television Productions. Executive producers: Paul Cox; Tony Chapman (SBS). Producer-director-writer: Kerry Negara. Historical look at the manufacturing of the myth of Bali, the cultural paradise. SAILING THE NULLARBOR (1 hour) Sorena. Producers: John Mabey, Rhonda Mabey. Directors: John Mabey, Martyn Down. Writer: Dion Boeheim. An Australian and a French team will race for the world record as the fastest wind-powered rail craft. THE LAST HUSKY (TV hour) Aspire Films-Extreme Images. Producers: Chris Hilton, Jonathan Chester. Director: Chris Hilton. Writer: Jonathan Chester. Husky dogs have played a vital rôles assisting men in the exploration of Antarctica, but later this year these much-loved huskies will be repatriated to Minnesota. Since the July Board meeting the FFC also entered into contract negotiations with the producers on these projects. SNOWY (13 x 1 TV hour) Simpson Le Mesurier Films. Producers: Roger Simpson, Roger Le Mesurier. Director: tba. Writers: Roger Simpson, Tom Hegarty, David Boutland, Vince Gil, Katherine Thomson, David Allen, Mac Gudgeon, Peter Kinloch. A saga of people whose lives were caught up in Australia’s post-war development; people like Michael Logan, whose hometown of Cooma is turned upside down by the influx of immigrant workers from Europe.


SHOR TS

THE VALLEY IS OURS (John Heyer) Cut-mpire (John Heyer)

GOLD TOWN (Maslyn Williams)

THE SUNSHINE STATE (no director listed)

THE AUSTRALIAN LANDSCAPE PAINTERS (Richard Mason)

HIGH FIDELITY (Antoinette Starkiewicz)

LETTER TO A FRIEND (Sonia Hoffman)

PEARL (Jane Campion) – won Palme d’Or for shorts

PALISADE (Laurie McInnes) – won Palme d’Or for shorts

NIGHT CRIES: A RURAL TRAGEDY (Tracey Moffatt)

A PASSION PLAY (Tony Twigg)
GROSS MISCONDUCT
Psychologically-powered, sexually-strong, erotic: on paper it is explosive. But after 'Basic Instinct', how provocative can one get, asks writer Lance Peters. Director George Miller, the man who made 'The Man from Snowy River' and told 'The Neverending Story II', is expected to answer it. He has just finished directing the film of Peters' play.

ANDREW L. URBAN REPORTS
Gross Misconduct, which the producers are describing with references to Fatal Attraction, has undergone major script surgery since it was first penned in 1969, and has considerable new material from Gerard Maguire, the Australian actor who reinvented himself as a writer, based in Los Angeles.

The story was suggested to Peters by a 1955 scandal in Hobart, a place and an era thick with moral repression. Visiting Professor of Philosophy, Sidney Sparkes Orr, was ousted from his university post on charges of “gross misconduct”. It was a political push and shove. He had been agitating against the academic council at the University of Tasmania, and he had to go. But he challenged the sacking and, during the appeal hearing, it was alleged that he had sexual relations with a female student.

The student gave evidence against him, and his name was blackened, even though there was no suggestion of rape. Orr lost his appeal and it was only after his death that his name was cleared. He was officially pardoned and his widow paid some compensation.

Gross Misconduct, the film that is now in post-production and stars L.A. Law’s Jimmy Smits as the Professor and Naomi Watts as the girl, tells a very different story. It is not meant to replay history and, indeed, has been revised to a contemporary setting – but a Gothic one.

Carefully-chosen Melbourne locations – such as Melbourne University, Old Melbourne Gaol – play their part, together with a thoughtful and creative design concept from the brilliant Jon Dowding.

These things, George Miller feels, will provide the atmosphere of moral repression and monolithic institutionalism that will play a subconscious role. And this is where the film gets interesting.

After considerable massaging, the script finished up with more complexity and coherence than either Basic Instinct or Fatal Attraction, in that it eventually reveals the reason for the girl’s behaviour. And the reason is unexpected. Without giving away too much of the plot, it has to do with her own feelings of guilt and her psychological survival. In the words of Peters, she is attractive, sexy, troubled, a victim – and a predator.

Jennifer Carter is attracted to Professor Justin Thorne, the charismatic, intelligent American philosophy professor, whose happy marriage and blossoming career are shredded as the affair explodes and gets out of his control. He tries to battle the establishment to clarify things, but finds himself cornered. The story climaxes in murder.

Dowding takes great delight in explaining how even the murder weapon is part of the design concept: it was to have been a knife, but Dowding felt this was far too pedestrian for a film which has a ‘look’. Instead, he located a Gothic-looking, three-legged French lemon squeezer, which stands about 14 cms tall.

With the encouragement of the producers (of whom there are several; more on them later), Maguire has taken the script out of the courtroom to a large extent. He sees in it a classic drama:

The story is like a Greek tragedy. Thorne unleashes the wrath of the Gods. It is like the concept in Presumed Innocent, where he doesn’t kill her but he did do something wrong.

We re-wrote the story and character setting. We have taken the traditional rape defence – her past – and turned it upside down. His past is used against him.

It is Maguire’s first script that has made it into production; another drama, with strong thriller elements, is waiting to go. He has also been commissioned to adapt Sydney writer Jennifer Maiden’s Play With Knives by Lyn Barker’s Frame Productions.

But Maguire’s less visible work is as script assessor for the highly-regarded Sundance Institute, Robert Redford’s cinematic baby which hosts an annual festival for new talent and runs a year-long programme of writer and director development courses. The job is challenging, but rewarding. “I really enjoy this”, says
Maguire, “and it is good to have one’s opinions valued.”

For director George Miller, *Gross Misconduct* is a giant genre leap. Producer Richard MacClure knows it:

“It’s casting against type for George. He’s aware of that and he’s put his heart and soul into it. He’s had a lot of experience, and at first we thought it wasn’t his bag. But why not? He came through the Crawfords school way back and a lot of that still applies.

It is something of a welcome return to that ‘old’ style of filming in his earliest days as a director. Miller:

It’s adult and contemporary; I’ve done a lot of period lately. And I find myself working differently. I’m using Steadicam quite a lot, and there is a difference in the interpretive style. The film will look sumptuous and rich, but with a very different view of Australia.

Filming style in this day and age is influenced by rock clips and commercials. Anything cuts with anything. You can tell a life story in 20 or 30 seconds, so people are more visually literate as a result. More hip and open to accept an avant garde style of shooting and editing. The pace is moving, gliding and lots of tension as the camera hunts the actors, prowling, intense, terse.

Miller is waiting for a lighting set-up, and sits with his back to a roaring fire in the University dining room. He is as relaxed as if waiting for a haircut, and the crew seems delighted to be working with him; his experience gives them a sense of comfort.

Speaking of “adult and contemporary”, his own personal favourite is *Les Patterson Saves the World*, the critically-dismissed movie that Barry Humphries made with his ex-wife Diane Millstead as producer. The film was universally panned, but for Miller it was tremendous fun to make. “It is a film I can truly say offends everybody and breaks every racial vilification law. I hope it’ll be the first Australian film to be banned.”

 Appropriately enough, Miller now lives at Cape Patterson in South Gippsland, but commutes globally.

In the past five years, Miller has made four tele-features and a feature in the U.S., *Neverending Story II* in Germany, as well as two Australian movies. Family and children’s stories predominate, and *Gross Misconduct* is a radical departure in subject matter – not just in the techniques of filmmaking.

This is exactly right for me: I follow good stories, wherever. I’ve got a really good team, we are using great locations and we have a good cast. It’s not tough. The budget is okay, it’s not big but wisely spent and the film will look good. It’s the sort of budget we do well here.

As soon as he read the script, the pictures leapt off the page for Miller.

I immediately saw Melbourne in winter, which is spectacular. It’s the most sophisticated, cultured city in Australia. You see the effects of immigration, and it has the best examples of Victorian architecture. It’s a treasure house. And I know about the secret Melbourne.

We’ve blended all the locations together with a view to avoid the clichés, the stereotype Australian picture: sand, dust, flies and Sydney Harbour.

It meant finding original locations and took Miller three months to talk his producers into it: “I came down and photographed the places and showed them.” Apart from Melbourne University, locations include the Melbourne Magistrates Court, the Treasury, St Paul’s Cathedral and Queen Victoria Markets.

But Miller’s admiration for the locations is not matched by his esteem for The System:

The underlying sleeping giant of the justice system is straight out of Victorian England. Just look at the court buildings! I know from my own experience of defending myself in a magistrate’s court.

The pictures, he explains, came straight out of the mood of the script, with its Gothic look and sometimes Gothic dialogue. “The film will be startlingly original, with moments of darkness”, he says.

Miller’s preparations, apart from finding the perfect locations, involved carefully selecting his shooting team, two of the key members being cinematographer David Connell and designer Jon Dowding. “Jon brings a sense of the bizarre, something anachronistic, and Dave is just the best I’ve worked with, constantly challenging and moving forward.”
Jon Dowding, a tall, quietly-spoken character with a pensive air, received his first (but not last) AFI nomination for his work on *Mad Max*. Noted for his innovative sense of design, Dowding's work was quickly noted by Jimmy Smits, who was singing his praises as an international talent.

Dowding read the script and spoke to Miller, and instantly felt that the key to his work would be the use of light: "That's what film is, really: light and dark. I looked at Rembrandt and Caravaggio and how they used light. A lot of detail disappears into darkness. It's a dark story and a dark film."

Dowding placed a lot of light sources on the screen - such as the diningroom fire, one of many fire images in the film - and worked closely with costume designer Aphrodite Kondos, who is not only a regular team-mate but also his wife. Dowding:

One aspect of the story is the clash of Justin's new world and the old academia. We've reinforced 'the establishment' by the choice of locations and props, making it look an old, well-established institution. The architecture dwarfs the people inside it. For example, for a hospital scene we chose a Victorian-built banking chamber. The grandeur dwarfs us. That's the great thing about doing a location picture: the whole world becomes your palate and you can choose freely to realize what you want to express.

I'm not really interested in simply processing information, but in psychologically underscoring the story. Sometimes it's almost abstract.

But both Miller and Dowding say the film will display such an unusual view of Melbourne that it could have been anywhere in Europe. This is especially true of the jazz club, Apparatchik, a nihilistic environment resonant with Berlin, which is exactly where Miller got the idea, or feel, for it.

For Dowding, it was a question of finding a match for the rest of the film's dark mood and its carefully-designed look: "The real ones never make a statement in terms of lighting and decor, and we decided it would be grand, decaying, with parts of the Berlin Wall. The costuming reinforces this."

But Miller emphasizes that this is not some attempt at 'internationalism'. He has no intention of seeing the film fall between continents, somewhere in the mid-Pacific:

What it will reveal is that Australian society is not what it appears. Beneath our sunny *Crocodile Dundee* exterior, there is this whole other milieu, infinitely more complex and sophisticated – and to some degree more interesting.

I have characters in the film who dress as well as Paul Keating and his sepulchral quality provided a great inspiration for me – his demeanour. What lies under the sunny exterior of people like Keating? Cultured, lethally urbane and well-dressed.

But after all, it is a story which pivots on the sexual act; sex is very much the engine that drives the plot, the subject which creates such havoc for the characters and the weapon by which several of them are badly hurt. Miller is aiming for the erotic:

I'm shooting to make the sex look attractive. People do it to enjoy it, so that's what it should look like. But it, too, will look different, and there will be more of it than probably in any other Australian movie.

Gross Misconduct will also be different for other reasons. It is the first film to be produced by PRO Films in Australia, a subsidiary of R. A. Becker & Co. The Beckers, father Russell and son Richard, run a company that's been in television for 25 years, mostly distributing programmes.

In 1986, the company set up shop on Hollywood's doorstep in Los Angeles. Producer Representative Organisation Inc (PRO) was created to drive into the U.S. market as an overseas representative for Australian producers; a sales arm, in effect, working in the belly of the movie beast. It has handled sales for outside producers, including *Slaughterhouse, Shame* (the much-acclaimed drama made by Perth-based Barron Films) and *Windrider*. Says Russell Becker:

Australian films were seen as too risky, so we decided to be on the ground in Hollywood. We had an existing relationship with the industry there through sales, and we knew people. We had activity.

---

**Cast and Casting**

When we first spoke about this film in April 1992, George Miller, clearly looking forward to making it, said of the rôle of Jennifer Carter: "It'll be one of the most demanding female rôles in Australian film history. It's not nice; it's confronting."

Neither he nor any of the team had any idea at that time who would play the rôle. Indeed, Naomi Watts was only confirmed in the part four days before shooting began at the end of July.

Watts, whose biggest rôle to date was as the co-lead in *Brides of Christ*, was very much Miller's choice. Before the ABC mini-series, Watts had a supporting rôle in *Flirting*, and some guest appearances on *Home and Away*.

Miller had seen her in *Brides of Christ* and thought her a fine actress, but just not sexy enough for Jennifer. Watts sent him the tape of a screen test she had done for a rôle in a film that had fallen through. "It was the best screen test I'd done. They'd dodged me up and I was not wearing a school uniform. I was scrubbed up, basically." Evidently, she "scrubs up" well, for Miller showed the producers and they agreed she was the one.

At 7.00am on Thursday 23 July, Naomi Watts was woken by Miller's call. She was in Wales, visiting her granny. The following Monday she walked onto the set in Melbourne. Watts:

I read the script on the plane. It was exciting. This was a chance to stretch creatively and that doesn't come too often, especially in Australia.

As for the rôle, I think Jennifer has very good intentions, but people think she's a super bitch. She had a traumatic childhood - like most of us ... Well, she's never really had a childhood. Her mother died early and she was forced to grow up too quickly. She's very strong, independent and fascinated by powerful minds.
It was soon evident that it should be developing its own production slate. With offices on West Olympic Boulevard, it is run by the energetic Morrie Eisenman, an experienced and well-known marketing man in Hollywood. His track record includes consulting for the major studios Columbia, Universal and MGM, on films such as *Midnight Express*, *Being There*, *Love at First Bite* and *Animal House*.

PRO has been responsible for the feature films *Hawks*, *Bad Influence*, *Apartment Zero*, *Searchers* and *Only You*. Until now, PRO’s film production has been financed and made, independently of the big studios, in the U.S. At the end of July 1992, Becker’s Los Angeles-based PRO Films signed a significant deal with 20th Century Fox to co-produce a movie with Geena Davis’ company, Genial Productions. Davis will star. Richard Becker will be executive producer. It is a human drama written by U.S. writer Eric Tuchman, titled *Family Bloom*.

*Gross Misconduct* is the first time an Australian production company has made a feature film for a major U.S. studio, except for sequels that have been picked up, like “*Crocodile Dundee II*” and *Man From Snowy River 2*. Although *Gross Misconduct* is the first, Becker hopes several Australian features will follow.

The Film Finance Corporation has invested about 65 per cent of the $4 million-plus budget, but R. A. Becker is signalling its confidence in the film with almost a million dollars of its own. A further million was raised under the 10BA tax scheme from private investors. But it was producer David Hannay who brought *Gross Misconduct* to the Beckers’ PRO Film company, after nursing it with Lance Peters over several years.

Peters and Hannay took the script to MacClure at PRO Films more than three years ago, and MacClure immediately liked the premise.

Hannay acknowledges MacClure’s devotion: “MacClure has been the driving force at PRO in the development process.” It was Watts who brought in Gerard Maguire to work on the script with Peters:

Maguire’s version took the script forward tremendously. It moved it up from the 1950s [the time of the real incident] to a contemporary setting and turned it into a hot piece of property. It deals with sexual harassment, and all kinds of relationships at work between men and women.

For Miller, it is a chance to make a film with much darker tones than he has ever made before. As he says, “I want to show the very conservative establishment rising up like a lumbering beast to devour this man. I want to show his descent into hell.”

Watts could picture Jennifer as soon as she read the script. “I saw a vision of her on the plane. I knew where I was going with it. She’s drawn to Justin and respects him; he’s like a replacement for her father,” Watts understands that feeling very well. “I often crave to be around older men myself, as I haven’t had a father since I was 4.”

The rôle, as Miller had predicted, was a big challenge. Watts feels she is very lucky, though: “Everyone in Australia wanted the rôle, so there is a lot of responsibility, but which is awful. After the first rushes, I stopped thinking about it.” She became engrossed in the character, with its daily demands for vast emotional reserves.

It means exposing a lot of dimensions. Jennifer’s journey is so huge and she shows an extraordinary amount of emotions: vulnerability, strength, sexuality, sadness, disturbed, hysteria. She’s volatile and goes from one extreme to the other. I’ve formed her from instinct, as well as intellect and emotion.

Watts, grateful that her co-star Jimmy Smits was as concerned for the entire film as for his own rôle, said he was being generous and supportive.

For Smits, the rôle of Professor Justin Thorne, a respected, capable and forward-thinking man, was a certain resonance; he remembers how much influence certain teachers had on his own life and career. “The genesis of my becoming an actor was that I wasn’t really good at school. But I found I related to acting and I could spend six hours in the library researching for a rôle.”

A drama teacher in his junior high school turned him on to showbiz with her extravagant musicals; another teacher a few years later encouraged his drama studies; and, at university, a professor urged him to tackle the classics.

That was the key for me, because I got into a graduate programme. That was very intense and I did a lot of work, a lot of classics. I figured that I may not get a lot of opportunities to do Shaw, or Ibsen or Shakespeare in the professional arena, but I could do them. It gave me a boost, and, as it turned out, I did get to do all those things. I was doing a lot of regional work in New York when the television show [*L.A. Law*] happened.

To fans of the show, Smits was ideal as the idealistic Hispanic lawyer, Victor Sifuentes, but he wants to broaden his career. His films to date, like *Fires Within* and *Switch*, have not made him a superstar on the big screen; nothing to do with his performances, but the nature of the films themselves.

In *Gross Misconduct*, Smits plays a man on the other side of the law, happily married to Laura, an academic like himself, played by Sarah Chadwick.

For the Melbourne actress, it is a feature film debut and a welcome one. A 1988 NIDA graduate, Chadwick has been busy with television drama – everything from guest rôles on *E Street* and *A Country Practice* to regular characters on *The Flying Doctors* and *GP*.

I’m very excited to be doing a film; I thought it’d be hard to break out of television. In film, you can detail the performance and be very specific.

Laura is a lot smarter than me. She’s got a PhD and is working on her Masters. She’s emotionally a lot more stable. I’m fairly extreme and emotionally immature still.

Laura is very happy with life and marriage; she fell in love with her husband when she was a mature-age student. She has a dry sense of humour, she’s a good mother and friend – well-balanced.

Ironically, Chadwick plays such “all-together women” very well; but now she wants to play someone a bit mad and over the edge.

She sees the film as a suspense adult drama, with a strong ending: “The climax shows how the legal system can swamp an individual – the legal system gets it wrong.”
THE PERFECT SUBJECT FOR THE FINAL WESTERN
CLINT EASTWOOD'S "UNFORGIVEN"
In 1880, in Big Whiskey, Wyoming, a prostitute at the local whorehouse is badly cut up by Quick Mike (David Mucci). The sheriff, "Little Boy" Daggett (Gene Hackman), goes easy on Quick Mike and his partner, Davey Bunting (Rob Campbell), only making them pay the brothel owner for damage to his "property". The outraged prostitutes, led by Strawberry Alice (Frances Fisher), place a $1,000 bounty on the culprits' heads. For William Munny (Clint Eastwood), a struggling pig farmer in Kansas, the reward is enough to overcome his born-again resistance to gunplay and, with the "Schofield Kid" (Jaimz Woolvett) and Ned Logan (Morgan Freeman), he rides out in pursuit. Unforgiven, Clint Eastwood's fourth Western as director, has already been acclaimed in France and the U.S. as his masterwork. Many have already called it the best film of 1992; others the best Western in decades. Audiences have agreed and the film's box-office success has resoundly returned Eastwood to the list of major stars.

Eastwood's work as a director has been often under-praised, despite the cult interest in Play Misty for Me (1971) and The Outlaw Josey Wales (1976), and the Cannes Festival recognition of Pale Rider (1985), Bird (1988) and White Hunter Black Heart (1990). When the routinely "studio" The Rookie came out in 1991 to fairly damning response, Eastwood's importance as a director seemed all but forgotten. But, as is so often the cinematic case, one stunning film has changed all that. Unforgiven, a film of enormous complexity and moral depth, is easily the best American film of the year.
Clint Eastwood

How did you come across David Webb Peoples' script?
A reader at Warner Bros. called it to my attention when it was under option to Francis Coppola. I liked it so much that I decided to contact the writer and ask him to rewrite another project. When I called his agent, I found out that Coppola’s option had expired two days earlier. So I immediately took an option for a year.

That was around 1982-83. Other projects kept me busy, but I finally bought it outright and just kept this little gem on hold. The years went by and I simply aged into the role.

Was the script revised or touched up during those ten years?
It wasn’t necessary. The subject was timeless; it hadn’t aged; it remained just as powerful. I realized that I shouldn’t fool with it. Besides, the fable is probably even more pertinent today, even more timely in these times of recession, after the Rodney King beating, the riots in Los Angeles, the questioning of the justice system.

What was the main draw originally: the relevance of the fable, the complexity of the story, the realism of the approach or simply the remarkable character of William Munny?
All of those! The story, its morality, William Munny, of course, but all the other characters, too. It had more dramatic conflicts than most Western scripts I’d ever read. And I immediately liked the “revisionist” approach; I always wanted to do something in that vein. Some of my favourite Westerns, like The Ox-Bow Incident [William Wellman, 1943], paved the way. I don’t know if it will actually be my last one, but it seemed to be the perfect subject to do as a kind of final Western. It really sums up what I feel about the genre.

How do you envision the historical context of the film? Was this the transitional period between the anarchy of the Frontier and the advent of the Law? Your four main characters – William Munny, Ned Logan, “Little Bill” and English Bob (Richard Harris) – seem to belong to a vanishing species.
This is Wyoming in 1880, and probably one of the last enclaves where law and order were not yet firmly implanted. I have to make clear, however, that this picture is not based on historical events or characters. It is all fiction.

What fascinated me was that the denial of justice triggers the whole story. With his lackadaisical ways, sheriff “Little Bill” fails to apply law and order. He may be very strict when it comes to gun control, but he’s totally permissive in lots of other areas. He fines the cowboys a minimal sentence, which only benefits the guy who owns the place. The women, who are the victims, are treated like second-class citizens.

Lawmen and outlaws behave the same way. One senses that they share the same past, that they are all former killers.
And in the end, they get taken out, even the innocent bystanders.
The young deputies are good guys, but they get caught up. When they see “Little Bill” kicking English Bob around, they see violence for the first time. They go, “Wow!” The sheriff represents a generation, a mentality, that they don’t understand.

Fate keeps weaving and intertwining these destinies. The innocent young Davey is hunted down on the same grounds as his companion, Quick Mike, who is guilty. Later, Ned is captured and tortured to death after he has renounced the bounty. This is a world where one becomes automatically guilty by association.

Yes, and it’s one of the elements that I liked in the story. The reward sets in motion a chain of events that no one will be able to stop. In the eyes of Munny and the rest of the people, young Davey is just as guilty as his buddy. Same thing for Ned, who’s presumed guilty because he holds the evidence: the rifle. Remember, Munny gives it back to Ned when Ned decides to ride back home.

There is an undercurrent of black humour, an absurdist logic, which contradicts the concept of poetic justice inherent to the classical Western.

To me, the humour is mostly in the opening. Then the story takes a turn—I think this happens when they kill the young Davey—and moves towards tragedy.

What I particularly like is that the humour doesn’t come from the superhuman traits of the protagonist, but on the contrary from his frailties. He hasn’t ridden in a while, he has trouble with his restive horse and even blames it on his past cruelty to animals! He is fragile, physically and mentally.

William Munny is haunted by his past turpitudes. As in Pale Rider, there is strong Biblical imagery that evokes the original sin.

He’s like a man coming out of rehabilitation. When they ask him about his past, he says he was drunk most of the time. He reformed himself, he kept going even after his wife Claudia died, but, when he wants to get the kids out of the pig farm, this is a man forced to do the only thing he’s really good at: shoot someone. As Ned reminds him, he wouldn’t be doing this if Claudia were still alive.

Does William Munny’s abominable past refer to the Man with No Name, the anti-hero of the Westerns that you made with Sergio Leone?

No, because Munny has more soul. He’s not as cynical, as detached. Obviously, he’s much more disturbed, and obsessed by his past, that of a renegade, who did a lot of robberies and raised a lot of hell. He has no self-worth. And he is constantly reminded that he is not worthy.
You undermine the baroque iconography lovingly cultivated by Sergio Leone, that of the bounty hunter devoid of all morality. Munny is not great with a gun, just okay. This is not one of those Westerns where the hero shoots the hats off people or shoots the eye of a bird in flight. It’s more like real life, where nothing is right on. These guys are killers only because they have done it before, not because they are a better shot than anyone else.

You show how difficult it must have been to kill someone in cold blood. You had to be in an inebriated state.

That’s what “Little Bill” tells the journalist; it isn’t so easy to shoot someone. And he gives a good example when he tells him how English Bob could shoot his opponent because the guy had shot his own foot by mistake! This was the crazy reality. All these killers that became legends were really just guys who shot people in the back, not standing face to face, in the middle of the street, as they used to do in the old Westerns!

Was the rôle of Ned written for a black man?

No. I thought of Morgan Freeman because I like his lived-in face and he was the right age. The fact that he is whipped to death evoked for me the era of slavery. Ned probably escaped from the South and, like many former slaves set adrift, moved west, where he ended up riding with Munny and a bunch of wild guys.

Gene Hackman is particularly adept at suggesting the matter-of-factness of sadism, its “ordinary” dimension. What inspired you to cast him?

He’s one of our best actors and I needed someone with a lot of strength for this complex rôle. In his own mind, the sheriff is a good guy. He’s building a house, hoping he will be able to retire there and take it easy. He believes he is right in dealing with renegades and setting up an atmosphere of terror. He also has a certain amount of charm and sophistication. That’s what makes the character so interesting!

Today, in most action films, death has no more reality than in a cartoon. In Unforgiven, on the contrary, there is a strong moral perspective. Each death is given a precise narrative and emotional context.

Each time someone is killed, it has an effect on somebody. Killing is nothing glamorous. That’s what made the project so appealing – especially at this time in my career. There is so much gratuitous killing in movies today; they almost seem to imitate what I was doing in the 1960s and ’70s. At the time, it was new, it was fun, but, ever since, people have been trying to outdo the last one. Violence has reached such extremes that it is time to take a step back and analyze its morality. I started thinking, “You can’t be doing the same old thing. You’ve got to move on.”

When I approached Gene Hackman, he immediately warned me that he turns down violent films systematically, as a matter of principle. So when I gave him the script, I told him, “Keep in mind that this is completely different. It will be a statement about violence, what it really is and its repercussions.”

You do not indulge either in the pastoral myths. The farm is anything but idyllic. One cannot help thinking of the Great Depression and the sadness of your Honkytonk Man (1982).

The Depression? I don’t know. But Munny is in desperate straits. He has tried to put together a new life; fate was unkind and took his wife; he tried to survive the best he could. But everything goes wrong. And when the “Schofield Kid” comes along, it’s like a temptation of adventure, and he thinks he may give it a try for a week or so. His going to see Ned is like an attempt to reinforce his resolution.

Does the title apply to your unredeem ed character solely or to the whole community?

It has a dual meaning. It is William, but it also refers to the feminist outrage, the relentlessness of the women’s efforts to get retribution for the crime.
When the young cowboy brings a pony to the victim, Delilah (Anna Thomson), you capture on her face the irony of the situation. One can tell that she could be satisfied with this gesture, but she is caught in the middle as her companions refuse any compromise.

Even though she was the victim, she would have wanted to avoid the bloodshed. Later, when the bounty hunters arrive at Big Whiskey, the women start questioning what they started and you read a look of foreboding on their faces: “Where is it going to end up?”

What is the prostitutes’ fate after Munny’s departure? Couldn’t the outcasts share a common destiny?

What they have in common is that they all sold their souls to survive. We don’t know what happens to the girls. It’s up to the audience’s imagination. I also cut a little scene where William Munny returned to the farm and the kids. You learned that the “Schofield Kid” has given the reward money to the children. The boy asked his father: “Did you kill anybody?” And Munny answered: “No son, I didn’t kill anybody.”

In your Westerns, you always contrast the beauty of nature and the infamy of human behaviour.

Well, mankind isn’t always so beautiful! We found the ideal location in Alberta, Canada. It was magnificent country. The town was entirely built there, under Henry Bumstead’s direction. He had worked with me on High Plains Drifter. Munny’s farm and Ned’s were filmed east of Calgary, where the open plains evoke Kansas and Nebraska.

With the exception of the train, which was filmed around Sonora, it was all shot within a hundred miles. And we were even blessed with snow. God, it was so beautiful up there after two days’ snow!

Again, as you did for Pale Rider, you composed the main musical theme yourself.

I was sitting at the piano in Sun Valley and trying to think about the beginning of the film. I wrote down some notes for the guitar; something super-simple: Claudia’s theme. Lennie Niehaus orchestrated it. Our guitarist, Laurindo Almeida, would have probably liked to embellish it, but I insisted on something as simple as possible.

Through the character of W. W. Beauchamp and the “dime novels”, you show how the reality of the West was distorted. The presence of the writer actually impacts people’s behaviour. “Little Bill”, for instance, tries to conform to the image he would like to pass on to posterity.

Beauchamp embellishes reality to make it more interesting. We all put our spin on things. See how the rumour starts and expands, how the details of the crime become more and more gruesome. Many of the stories in which mankind is putting its faith, starting with the Biblical stories, were written by chroniclers who had a very limited or highly personal point of view. The West is no exception. One of the best examples of this distortion is of course the legend of Billy the Kid.

For my part, I’ve always been interested in the real story of the West. Over the years, I’ve read tons of books on the mythology as well as on the reality of the period. My roots, as you know, go back pretty far in the history of the Western, all the way back to the 1950s. We were very far from reality, of course, in Rawhide. The context was real, with the cattle drives and all, but the stories were pure fabrication, without any element of realism. This is true also of the films that I made with Sergio Leone, where violence became a spectacle and was staged like opera.

Which were the Westerns that were important to you?

I remember mostly those that I grew up with: The Ox-Bow Incident, High Noon [Fred Zinnemann, 1952], Anthony Mann’s Westerns with James Stewart, starting with Winchester ’73 [1950]. I don’t really remember the messages, but I know they were important to me.

In Don Siegel’s The Shootist (1976), the old gunfighter died of cancer. Did that film influence you?

Not consciously. It was an interesting film at the time because John Wayne himself had a cancer. To him, it was an important film.

Do you view John Ford as a master?
Ironically, my favourite films of his are not his Westerns; they are his chronicles of the Depression era, like *The Grapes of Wrath* [1940]. I did like *My Darling Clementine* [1946] and *The Searchers* [1956] is still a beautiful film, even if some of the subplots and sub-characters don’t hold up today.

**What does Howard Hawks represent to you?**

He was the first film director I ever met! It was the summer of 1947. I was 16 or 17 years old. I was driving around in a beat-up ’39 Ford, drinking beer and playing the piano and chasing chicks. One day I was visiting a friend up in the hills around Sepulveda, above L.A., when we saw these horses running free down the street. We stopped them and corralled them. Out of a remote villa came a distinguished gentleman who thanked us profusely. Someone whispered, “That’s Howard Hawks, the film director!” We were very impressed. It must have been before *Red River*.

**Can the Western still reflect today’s America?**

The Western is always a mirror. Today, our society has become incredibly permissive of violent behaviour; our parents would have never tolerated what we tolerate. We accept violence, at least as long as it’s not happening to us. *Unforgiven* comments on that, and on the effect of violence on both the perpetrator and the victim. In most Westerns, including mine, the perpetrator never feels any remorse. He killed the bad guys and that was all. Here, my character thinks and has certain feelings.

**Does the Western bear some responsibility in our becoming desensitized to violence?**

I don’t think so. The Western hasn’t had that much effect. We all grew up with the Western; it didn’t make society more violent. The violence of the Western has to do with the historical context. If someone was guilty, they strung him up. They didn’t fool around. This was a society where people had to rely on their own judgment and were prone to taking justice in their own hands, a society where everything was more cut and dry, where moral values were clearer, where a lone individual might make a difference. Now, we’re mired down in a bureaucratic society where the slightest dispute requires lawyers and legal battles. The simplicity of those times fascinates us.

In an era when mainstream cinema, from *Batman* (Tim Burton, 1989) to *The Terminator* (James Cameron, 1984), is dominated by special effects, you are more than ever a maverick.

I appreciate the technological developments brought about by these films, but it’s not a genre I would want to tackle. I’m not interested in special effects. I want to do stories about people. That’s why I made this film. It is a genre picture, but it is different and unusual. I’ll move on and continue in that direction.

*Unforgiven* is dedicated to “Sergio and Don”.

I hadn’t seen Sergio Leone in ten years. After the presentation of *Bird* at the Cannes Festival, I made a quick trip to Italy. He called me out of the blue. We had lunch and it was the first time we had ever sat down together. We had such a good time that we decided to go out to dinner that night, with Lina Wertmuller. Sergio was completely relaxed, and we had a really great time, had a lot of laughs, a lot of wine. I’d never seen him that serene. A few months later, he was dead. I almost felt that it was his way of saying goodbye.

Shortly after, it was Don Siegel’s turn. He had been ill for a long time and I watched him deteriorate. Don was a friend. I loved his rebellious, cantankerous spirit. He was always supportive. I think he would have liked to make *Unforgiven*; he would have loved this story.

Most filmgoers won’t even notice or know the difference, but I wanted the dedication. I stuck it in there for myself.
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It is hard to imagine that charming Berwick, an hour outside of Melbourne, with the prerequisite column memorial to veterans, intimate arcades and small businesses, was ever the site for a film about the destruction of the world. Yet, in 1959, this sleepy farming community was...
one of the locations chosen for the filming of Stanley Kramer's production of *On the Beach* about the catastrophic consequences of nuclear war. That hot summer, over three decades ago, when Hollywood and its stars came to Berwick remains a vivid memory to many local people.
Stories and memorabilia starting pouring forth from Berwick residents, and from individuals from as far away as Bendigo, when a screening of the film and an exhibition were advertised, as part of an inaugural Berwick arts festival. On the Beach was not only filmed on location in Berwick and Melbourne, but in other areas: Canadian Bay, Williamstown, Point Lonsdale, Rockbank, Phillip Island and Frankston. Ironically, the scenes filmed in Berwick, over one sizzling week (with temperatures soaring over 37 degrees), were not in the final film.

Berwick locals lined the streets to catch glimpses of the stars as they drove to and from Melbourne in Rolls Royces: Ava Gardner, Gregory Peck, Fred Astaire and Anthony Perkins. A photographer and energetic businesswoman in Berwick today, Wendy Ward recalls her impressions as a teenager.

It was absolutely incredible. I, like so many other people, didn’t know anything about filmmaking. The crowds outside the Wilson House were quite incredible. They were several deep on our nature strip.

The original ‘Wilson House’, located in Berwick and mentioned in the best-selling Nevil Shute novel, upon which the film was based, was chosen as a location for filming. In Shute’s novel, the homestead is moved from Berwick to Harkaway, a neighbouring township. Curiously, the Wilson family had never met the reclusive author and they didn’t even know that their home was in the book, until its publication. Jane Bray, festival organizer and long-time resident of Berwick, recalls:

I never thought much of Nevil Shute as a writer. But I did admire him for his prophetic skill. In his novel, No Highway, he predicted the dire consequences of metal fatigue in airplanes. This was when the ‘Comet’ [airplane] crashed, and airplanes just seemed to be falling out of the sky for no reason. He always seemed ahead of his time. He had this mysterious quality as a writer and people at that time were becoming terrified about atomic war.

The Wilson family had lived in Berwick for more than three generations in the same house and were some of the earliest settlers in the area. That original family home used in the filming has been demolished. In its place is a sprawling suburb with street names paying homage to the film; today, you can can drive past rows of ranch-style brick homes on Kramer Drive or Shute Avenue. It’s even rumoured that the submarine used in the film, and called the “Sawfish”, is now beached at Caribbean Gardens.
The new 'Wilson House' built on the top of a hill has a majestic view of the countryside with its wide pastures and rolling hills. On the walls of the modern house are pictures and illustrations of the old Wilson homestead used in the film. Mr and Mrs George Wilson are eager to reminisce and show the On the Beach photographic album with stills and home snapshots of the filming, and their visitors book with all the signatures of the stars and film crew. George Wilson remembers:

There was one lad who wanted to get in. He got a sugar bag and put some horseshoes, a hammer and nails, and a leather apron in it. He came to the gate and said that he had come to shoe the horses and the guard bloke let him in.

But despite the locals apparent naiveté about film production, they were being exposed to a sophisticated and comprehensive marketing campaign for the film. Mobilgas dealers were handing out complimentary autographed photographs of Ava Gardner describing her rôle in the film, her home, height and weight. "This green-eyed, dark-haired beauty prefers to live in Europe, and her present home is in Rome. 5' 5 ½" tall. Weight 118 pounds."

Local country newspapers revelled in every aspect of the filming, one reporter describing the natural hazards encountered while filming on a working farm: "Early in the morning a 'foot-loose' horse, to be used in the background, held up proceedings for some time as it was chased all around a paddock." Another article recounted, "It was interesting to see that although there were over 100 behind-the-scenes men, they had to enlist the help of Mr George Wilson to yoke a pair of draught horses to put in a mower for one scene." The local insect world also featured: "The whole of the hedge and garden at 'Wilson House' was sprayed with D.D.T. so that no insects would worry the leading stars [...] during shooting in the garden." Apparently it wasn’t quite that easy, even with the lethal pesticide. George Wilson recalls this same episode, but with a different ending:

One of the funniest things, typically American, is that they brought a fly-killing machine. We had a big hawthorn hedge around the old house. They sprayed all this to kill the flies. You can imagine it at that time of the year – Australia is lousy with flies, as you would know. They had a great thing going to get rid of the flies. They thought this
On the Beach at Berwick

Below: poster for the film.
Facing page: ticket for the world premiere of On the Beach, Melbourne.

The Victoria Promotion Committee, which is now out of business [...] They were the ones that asked if they could do it. The main reason that I did it was that I thought it would give Victoria some publicity overseas. It was the days when they were trying to promote Victoria, when Henry Bolte was in full flight. We were sending delegations overseas at the time, and if we could get a big film company over here, it would make a bit of publicity in this part of the world as far as we were concerned.

Shrewd businessman, star-struck teenager, film extra or just an amateur filmmaker – hundreds of people in Melbourne remember that summer. An enthusiastic film fan recorded on 16mm film the stars’ and production crews’ activities working on a beach scene outside of the city. The film, in misty colour, shows the rigours of Kramer’s search for perfection, as Peck and Gardner film the same beach scene over and over. These scenes are intercut with some blurred close-ups of the stars signing autographs and mixing with the local crowds. The Hawaiian-style music in the background, and the narrator’s thick, Australian accent, inadvertently create a comic combination. Viewed today, the amateur film echoes some of On the Beach’s underlining cultural assumptions, and, at the same time, it also operates as a fascinating and humble counterbalance to the Hollywood mythology.

A catalogue that listed film props and equipment auctioned at the conclusion of the production still survives, and, like the amateur film, was loaned to the Festival exhibition from the Performing Arts Museums in Melbourne. Household goods from the stars’ residences came under the hammer. Peck had been accompanied by his family, and the items to be sold read like a checklist from a nursery (a son attended Melbourne Grammar). Among his goods to be auctioned were “2 Only Babies’ Cribs and 2 Mattresses, 1 Only Tea Set – 4 Cups & Saucers, 1 Sugar Bowl and 1 Milk Jug” and, in large print to emphasize the significance, “1 only king size bed base and mattress.” Gardner’s list makes much more intriguing reading: “5 Hi-Ball Glasses (coloured stems), 1 only Venetian Cigarette Box, 2 only Chinese Hangings and a Quantity of Throw Pillows.”

Two model ships used in the film were loaned by the staff of the White Hills Technical School Library in Bendigo, who responded promptly and excitedly to the Festival request for memories and memorabilia. It is not known who made the model submarine and destroyer, but the model maker did show great ingenuity in the construction, using “mustard tins and knitting needles” to construct the detailed replicas. These models appear in the background of a scene in a conference room set in the Department of Navy offices.

By another coincidence, writer Lee Harding, presently living in Berwick, was an aspiring photo-journalist in the late 1950s and ’60s; he loaned the exhibition the negatives that he had taken during the filming in Melbourne and Frankston. The widow of a man who had organized the stunt work on the film rang and another man called and said that he had worked at the printing house that had produced the calendars used in the production. (These were printed with the year 1964 on them, but as far as he knew none had survived.)

John Veitch lent the exhibition a set of photographs and a copy of an article he had written as a young journalist about his experiences as a film extra in On the Beach. Veitch and nine other extras dressed as American sailors were directed to turn and look appreciatively at Ava as she walked: “Besides the 10 of us who were being paid to stare, about 1500 others – all sailors from Australian warships in port at Williamstown – were staring as hard as they could, without monetary reward.” Veitch also appeared in scenes as a businessman and, again, as one of the Australians queueing for their “death pills”.

When discussing the film today, Veitch feels that the impact was far more important that is generally realized.

was going to last for ever and a day. They were back about five minutes later.

Perhaps, these persistent flies ruined the shoot, and the sequences were unable to be used.

Movie Life’s March 1959 colour magazine cover features a “debonair” Gregory Peck wearing a U.S. naval uniform. Today, he appears more like the hapless victim of artificial colourizing technology. The “behind the scenes” article hints that Miss Gardner was not as co-operative as the other stars. It recommends Peck, Astaire and Perkins to their readership as they were well-man­nered and did not display any temper tantrums: “They might almost have been good Aussies.” Astaire was thought to be the only one really enjoying himself: “He appears to be deeply interested in us, particularly our horse racing. Astaire owns racehorses himself and he was keen to learn all about the local racing conditions.”

It is difficult now to imagine anyone accepting Ava Gardner’s North American accent with its slightly breathy, British overtone, or Anthony Perkins’ “half-whispered New York accent” as Australian natives. Veteran Australian actor, Lou Vernon, played Ava Gardner’s father, and the star’s stand-ins and extras were Australian, though the film crew was from the U.S. “There were about 120 behind-the-scenes men and a great many trucks, cars, buses and other equipment. One truck was solely for providing the employ­ees with free Coca-Cola at any time they wanted it.”

But this is a contemporary interpretation. It was considered good business for a Hollywood film to be made in Victoria. George Wilson felt he should support the initiative:
When Stanley Kramer made *On the Beach* 33 years ago, an all-out nuclear war between East and West was generally regarded as inevitable. The people in power on both sides convinced themselves it would not last long. Each side figured that ‘the enemy’ would be knocked out and finished, and the world could then get on with becoming either capitalist or communist – depending on which side ‘won’. *On the Beach* helped to change those ideas.

A chilling anecdote is told by director Stanley Kramer in an interview in *Stanley Kramer – Film Maker*:

I needed an atomic submarine for the film, but the Pentagon told me, ‘No, your story says an atomic war would wipe out the world, and that isn’t so. Only about five hundred million people would be killed.’ I told them that’s the closest I’d like to get to a total wipeout. So since I wouldn’t change the script, we didn’t get the atomic sub.

This terrifying and misguided logic did not solely exist in the U.S. at this time. Atomic tests were carried in strict secrecy from 1952 to 1957 (with smaller scale sequels to 1963) on behalf of the British government in Western and South Australia and at the now notorious Maralinga where Aborigines were ousted from their land. The maximum in fallout level was exceeded in several tests and were not monitored properly. One frightening story claims that Sir Arthur Fadden cabled London when he was acting Prime Minister asking: ‘What the bloody hell is going on, the cloud is drifting over the mainland?’ This story, whether real or conjec­tured, supports *On the Beach’s* attempt to present to the public: the very real and present dangers of atomic proliferation.

*On the Beach* had 17 simultaneous premieres in cities all over the world including Melbourne, Moscow and New York. One of the most remarkable evenings must have been the screening in December 1959 in Russia, where a select group of foreign guests and Mr and Mrs Peck attended a private screening of the filming at the Soviet Film Workers Union. The film was never released to a general audience in Russia.

The reviews were mixed. “*On the Beach* is a mediocrity motion picture about the most terrible possibility now confronting mankind”, *Picturegoer* lamented. “This should have been the most controversial, vital and important film of the decade. Why isn’t it?” The review criticized the central characters: “none of those characters is vitally alive or representative, one cannot become deeply concerned”. The same review also found the ending lacked credibility, “And surely not everyone would prepare to meet the end quite so nobly or unprotestingly.”

*On the Beach* was classified as science fiction and premiered the same year as the Three Stooges starred in *Have Rocket Will Travel* and Jules Verne’s *Journey to the Centre of the Earth* was made into a film. Cinemagoers also thrilled to *Return of the Fly*, *Demons in the Swamp*, a tale about giant leeches. In this company, and with the film’s theme of total human annihilation, is it any wonder that the reviewer response to the film was particularly negative. Stanley Kramer defended the picture, “I’ll accept the blame for the box-office failure of *On the Beach* […] but I’d also like credit for aiming at quality.”

One of the most fascinating responses to the film came in a letter published in *Films in Review* quoting Earl Ubell, Science Editor of *The New York Herald Tribune*, describing the ways a projected nuclear war would differ from the events presented in *On the Beach*.

While it is possible to exterminate the human race, it couldn’t reasonably be done as it was in *On the Beach*. An all-out saturation nuclear war involving the major powers would be far more grisly than the silent affair shown on the screen. Furthermore, the human race’s gritty efforts to cling to civilization after such a big nuclear war would be much higher drama than the quiet sentimentality of this film.

Needless to say, a large ‘reasonable’ nuclear war of 4,000 megatons would spell death for at least 100,000,000 persons. The ensuing social disorganization may be far more disastrous than the radioactivity, leading to famine […] A city like Melbourne would turn into a human jungle, rather than remain the quiet, orderly place shown in Mr Kramer’s picture.

At the end of the letter, a grotesque expression of racism heightens its gloomy impact on a contemporary reader:

The long-term effects of the radioactivity – the cancers, the birth defects – these could exterminate the human race by attrition over the decades or throw men back to an aboriginal state. To paraphrase Dr J. Robert Oppenheimer, it would take a great act of faith to call the remaining creatures human.

That week that Hollywood came to Berwick is now a piece of local folklore. It is also interesting to note that *On the Beach* is absent from many texts on Australian film; though accurate factually, it is, in some sense, emotionally and psychologically, an omission.

That one week of filming in Berwick with the crowds jammed on the nature strip; Tony Perkins’ white naval costume hanging in a tree; Mr Wilson retrieving his missing ashtrays from Ava Gardner’s caravan or arguing with the film’s caterer about the mess in his front lawn – these have become the particular property of a small Australian city and its memories. With time, those memories have become more vivid than the film itself. Jane Bray feels now that the film indicated a shift in Australians’ perceptions of themselves: “*On the Beach* was one of the signals of Australians coming of age – their realization that they were part of the world.”

With increased immigration and expanding international trade markets, Australia began to redefine its cultural traditions and shed its colonial image. That summer, more than thirty years ago, seems very distant from our everyday concerns, and the Cold War, we are now told, is officially over, and yet, Chernobyl and Three Mile Island remind us that Kramer’s message is just not cinematic history.

**POSTSCRIPT:**

Jane Bray wrote to Gregory Peck seeking some memory or story to add to the exhibition. Three months after she wrote, she received a reply by surface mail containing a black and white photograph studio portrait of Peck with his autograph. It has been added to her mantelpiece.

BARRY (ADEN YOUNG) DANCES WITH MAISE (SAMANTHA MURRAY) AT THE DRIVE-IN. DAVID ELFICK'S LOVE IN LIMBO.
could be argued that the era known in the western world as the 1950s was the first stage of a modern renaissance, which fully manifested itself in the '60s. The West exploded out of its bottled-up emotional, moral, musical and social containers into a revolution with a signature tune: rock 'n' roll.

For many of us, this was a cataclysmic time, as it coincided with the private revolutions of adolescence, and no wonder that it was so vividly memorable. For David Elfick, himself a teenager at this time, when sex was a dirty word, the vivid memories have served to propel his latest film, which celebrates the '50s in its every sense.

Love in Limbo touches on every key reference of the era, from the generous, evocative rhythm-and-blues material in the soundtrack to the suppressed sexuality, the reshaping fashions and the celebration of war-free life in the bold use of primary colours and in the vigorous designs of consumer items.

What Elfick set out to capture was the look and sound of the era; not as some clinical exercise to show it can be done, but with the intent of using it as the framework for his story—and, let's face it, to satisfy an inner clamouring for the feel of those times, viewed from a mature vantage point.
To understand a bit better what was driving Elfick, it is useful to know that one of his first 'big' jobs was editing the rock 'n' roll magazine Go Set. This led to writing for Pop Scene Special on ABC Radio and, in 1971, the founding of the surfing magazine Tracks—which in turn led eventually to his filmmaking debut with Morning of the Earth (Albert Falzon, 1971), a surfing feature.

But it was his second surfing film, Crystal Voyager (George Grenough, 1971), that lifted Elfick's career internationally, and launched him as a filmmaker to be taken seriously. He had written and produced a film that combined rock 'n' roll with surfing, and many of his age group responded to the feelings and images it portrayed.

Elfick continued to produce features but switched to directing on the mini-series Fields of Fire II. He then directed the tele-feature Harbour Beat (1991).

This background provides a pretty solid basis for the style, texture and mood of Love in Limbo, which Elfick produced and directed, from a script by John Cundill.

To Elfick, the look and sound of the film were as important as the script itself: they were vital elements, and his personal touches are scattered throughout.

For example, Elfick is a great admirer of some of the 1950s designs, including the Zippo lighter, the famous Studebaker car (he owns a Silver Hawke model), and the Lucky Strike cigarette pack—the latter two both designed by French-born industrial designer Raymond Loewy. All these are prominent items in Love in Limbo.

The story is set around Ken Riddle (Craig Adams), 16, to whom sex is as much of a mystery as a riddle. He joins his two mates from work on a trip to Kalgoorlie's infamous red-light street in a fumbling attempt to collectively lose their virginity. Meanwhile, Ken's heart aches for a real romance right under his nose.

Coincidentally, his attractive, young, widowed mother, a talented dress designer, sets out on her own wobbly journey, to a new romance—and a new career—on stiletto heels. Romance and laughs and the vibrant images of a colour-saturated era fuse into a joyous whole.

Production designer David McKay, himself an accomplished artist, was directed by Elfick to Dutch painter Piet Mondrian as an example of the stylized use of colours Elfick had in mind. "The aim", says McKay, "was to capture the feel, not to religiously copy or recreate the period. Consciousness, we uncluttered things, keeping things graphic." Of course, sometimes keeping things simple takes the most work.

McKay worked closely with costume designer Clarissa Patterson, and, although they never consciously matched colours, the end result is as cohesive as if co-ordinated. In a sense, of course, it was. Says Patterson:

"The hair stylist, production designer, myself, the cinematographer and make-up artist pushed the intensity of colour to make an overtly colourful film work visually. Being set in the late 1950s gave the film an origin for artistic licence."

But Patterson avoided the trap of over-designing, which would have ended up "cartoonesque", as she puts it.

A healthy liaison with the production designer is important to me as I always work from drawings of sets, proposed colours and shapes of props, which provide me with an idea of where the script action will occur.

Patterson herself designed one of the special fabrics, but was able to find the rest in Sydney and Perth shops. "One thing that is difficult with a period film", she explains, "is the silhouette of the undergarments." She found herself ringing the women extras to see if they could bring along their suspender belts and pointy bras—that is, if they had them still.

But Patterson was happy to design new items which could not be bought, as it was far more satisfying and challenging.
DOP Windon’s briefing from Elfick was simple enough; he showed him The Girl Can’t Help It, pointed at the screen and said: “That.” They agreed to use the 1956 Frank Tashlin Cinemascope movie (“Colour by De Luxe”), with platinum blonde Jayne Mansfield, Tom Ewell and Edmond O’Brien, as a benchmark for the look of Love in Limbo.

For Australian cinematographer Steve Windon ACS, Love in Limbo is his first feature, but Elfick feels it may well lead to his joining that select but sizeable group of fellow Australian cinematographers who have been welcomed by Hollywood: John Seale, Dean Semler, Russell Boyd, Peter James, Geoff Simpson and Don McAlpine, to name several.

What’s more, the film business is literally in Windon’s blood, as a third-generation filmmaker. His father is a cinematographer and director, and his grandfather was a gaffer, both of them having started their careers with the famous newsreels of Australia’s Cinesound and Movietone. The year young Windon was born, 1959, his grandfather, Freddy, was an electrician on Fred Zinnemann’s Oscar-nominated picture, The Sundowners, with Robert Mitchum and Deborah Kerr.

(Coincidentally, Elfick has used footage shot by Windon’s father, Ron, in his acclaimed 1978 feature, Newsfront [directed by Phil Noyce], which was set in the heady days when newsreels were the hottest medium.)

Ancestry notwithstanding, Windon was on edge the whole time, he says, but he nevertheless felt he got control of the technical side of things. He wanted not only good colour saturation, but a crisp, ‘up’ image. It was a technical conflict.

The challenge was to get the saturation on colours, but keep the skin tones natural and warm – suitable for a comedy with romance. I read all the technical information I could, including some material in American Cinematographer. At the time I was doing a lot of quite different work, grittier work, like the drama series Police Rescue.

Windon’s briefing from Elfick was simple enough; he showed him The Girl Can’t Help It, pointed at the screen and said: “That.” They agreed to use the 1956 Frank Tashlin Cinemascope movie (“Colour by De Luxe”), with platinum blonde Jayne Mansfield, Tom Ewell and Edmond O’Brien, as a benchmark for the look of Love in Limbo. This, the first big budget rock ‘n’ roll movie of the ’50s, triggered the whole visual concept “with all those colours that jump out at you”, says Elfick.

That led naturally to the decisions about stock, filters and lighting, says Windon.

I chose what I know well and feel comfortable with: Kodak 5248 and 5296, both standard tungsten stocks, and more suitable to a warmer look than the daylight stocks. The 5248 is slower, very standard, with low-grain structure, sharpness and colour saturation.

I used the 5296 high speed stock for night exteriors and big set interiors, but I found the filter worked best in daylight, so I didn’t use it for night shoots. There, we had to match the skin tones by using gels and filters on the lamps.

This was still not always enough, and the film gave grader Arthur Cambridge at Sydney’s Atlab plenty to do. “I had to fake some of it, as is usual, to bring it into line. But it was a pleasure to work on, to help the cinematographer, who put a lot there. I think it all works”, says Cambridge.

One sequence, for example, needed technical work of the most detailed kind at every stage. It is one of the key story points, when the three teenagers, Ken, Barry (Aden Young) and Arthur (Russell Crowe), drive out from Perth in Western Australia, to the infamous brothels of Kalgoorlie, a mining town nearly 600 kms away in the outback. Windon:

The brothel scene was complicated because the actors had to walk from the exterior to the lit interior set. I used the filter for the exterior shot, but not for the interior. So we had to somehow match the skin tones, the wardrobe colours, everything.

That same sequence was further complicated by what Elfick has come to call a “reality wipe”. The script called for a series of short scenes in...
Love in Limbo

adjacent rooms of the brothel, as two of the youths become clients of the establishment. As written, it would have required a series of cuts, but Elfick decided to invoke a certain tension for the audience by using the camera in an uninterrupted journey.

One room was painted blue, the other pink, to heighten the visual change, and a set was built so there was a common wall, or divider. The edge of this was painted black, and the camera tracked from one to the other, across the divider, giving the impression of a wipe. It required "extremely tricky choreography", which was cued by Elfick clicking his fingers.

It took many takes, but Elfick and Windon feel it gave the scene an instinctive tension which helped the comic elements.

The job was made a fraction easier by having Marc Spicer as camera operator, a man with vast amounts of documentary experience, and with whom Windon had shot more than 20 hours of television. For Elfick, this was a decided advantage, having "an integrated team".

However, no amount of team integration could help the hideous weather conditions encountered: of the 40-day shoot, it rained on 38. To make matters worse, Kalgoorlie is in the red sandy desert of Australia, which turns to a sticky mud when wet.

But this was also made to work for the film. Elfick:

The hot red earth had the colour enhancer working overtime ... there is a lot of colour. To me, it was symbolic of limbo, hades, hot sexuality, the film heating up to a conclusion. It is more stylized here than anywhere else.

The red earth shared the eye with the dramatic blue of the Australian sky at dawn, the pink of the brothel wall, the red mountains in the distance as the yellow sun rose in the east. Windon and Elfick threw caution to the wind and let the colours take over.

Yet it was a winter shoot, with the sun never more than 38 degrees above the horizon. Says Windon ruefully,

That was great for the look of the film, but it also meant shorter shooting days, not counting the rain. The sun would come out for five minutes in the hour, but luckily the cast were so focused that we managed.

Elfick says the weather became a common enemy which united the cast and crew, generating a terrific sense of camaraderie and team spirit.

One of the most successful sequences ("the best of its kind I've ever seen in an Australian feature in my 28 years as a grader," according to Arthur Cambridge) was shot in such difficult conditions that it is remarkable that it is in the film at all.

The sequence takes place in a drive-in, where, in notable tribute, The Girl Can't Help It is playing. Two of our teenager heroes with dates in the back seat watch the movie, have a dance and encounter a cut of macho bravado. The sequence was not only a complex night shoot, but rain kept splattering the collection of '50s cars, the wardrobes had to be kept dry, the actors and extras had to be kept focused, and a complicated picture delivered.

The complication came from Elfick's desire to integrate the dancing and the visuals on the drive-in screen.

Windon's imagination was in overdrive, and when it came to a front projection shot he improvised. With the aid of the projector used for rushes (dailies), he rigged up a half mirror adjusted at 45 degrees and shot through it. "The half-mirror loses one stop, but we built up the light level behind it to compensate."

Perhaps the most challenging lighting set-up of all was one in an old warehouse, which was dressed to play the part of the Bollinger clothing factory. It had treacherously low ceilings for the camera, with old beams stretching its length. Windon:

It was lit with a mixture of blue fluoros and warmer incandescent 60 watt globes. We lit the whole set with these practical lights. Fluoros were the future then; it was the '50s embracing new technology.

It meant the actors walking from one into the other, with dramatic differences in the way they were lit.

When Windon walked on the set there were just five of the fluoros set up by production designer David McKay. Windon ordered another 40.

Born as he was into a 'film' family, Windon's interest was encouraged and propelled by his father, who took him on set during the school holidays. "My father's work on camera seemed important to the whole process", the young Windon had concluded, "and it was exciting having to communicate with people. I think maybe that appealed to me."

He was second unit director of photography on Crocodile Dundee, shortly after moving away from ABC Television, where he spent two years as a news cameraman, "back in the days when it was shot on film".

He went on to work on some of the most demanding projects in television, including two tele-features for Film Australia, six Australian-shot episodes of Mission Impossible for Paramount, Children of the Dragon and The Leasing of Liverpool for the BBC/ABC, and two ACS Golden Tripod Award-winning projects for ABC TV, Police Rescue and Come in Spinner.

(Both of Elfick's previous cinematographers were winners of Australian Film Institute Awards: Ellery Ryan for Spotswood, and Geoff Simpson for The Navigator. Lack of their availability sent Elfick on a search for new talent and hence to Windon.)

Following Love in Limbo, Windon went on almost immediately to work as cinematographer on Elfick's next feature film, No Worries, due for completion this December.

Windo, also busy with television drama and commercials, says he feels more like an artist about his work than an engineer. "It's satisfying as a team effort, but I also recognize my specific role in it all."

Elfick says he was keen to work with Windon partly because of Windon's willingness to "give things a go". It is really a willingness to keep an open mind and experiment, to take calculated risks and to hell with the book: "I'd worked with some fine cinematographers, like Ellery Ryan, Geoff Simpson and Russell Boyd. When it came to Love in Limbo, I felt it was an enthusiast's film... and Steve was game."

With the film ready for release, Elfick was as enthusiastic about Windon's work as he was about his potential. "In commercials, Steve says when he sees a beer can he wants to shoot it so you can taste it. That's what he does in this film. He makes the reality work on the screen."
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RÁUL RUIZ

NEVER ONE SPACE

The Cinema of
T o an Australian cinéphile eagerly reading the literature from overseas, Raúl Ruiz (right) can easily seem a mythic figure. In the early 1980s, Jonathan Rosenbaum claimed in *Sight and Sound* that, like Jean-Luc Godard in the 1960s and Jacques Rivette in the ’70s, Ruiz “can simply do no wrong”. A typical rave in *Cahiers du Cinéma* by Iannis Katsahnias (reviewing *Mammanne* in 1986) began: “There are a thousand good reasons to love the cinema of Ruiz [...] his ability to tell stories, the magic of his special effects, his sense of rhythm”. Katsahnias admits that these are the very qualities that make the American cinema great, but in Ruiz there is something extra: his cinema is “personal, obsessed”.

Ruiz indeed shook up world cinema at the end of the 1970s, beginning particularly with his made-for-television *L’Hypothèse du tableau volé* (The Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting, 1978). His career in fact began much earlier, in Chile. His first completed feature, *Los tres triste tigres* (Three Sad Tigers), won festival awards in 1968 and was touted by such discerning surrealist critics as Ado Kyrou and Freddy Buache. But it is only after his relocation as an ‘exile’ in Europe that the Ruizian cocktail really comes together – a potent combination of art movie, magic realism, irreverent humour, esoteric knowledge and a wild, childlike feel for fantasy and fiction.

But Ruiz has not always been consecrated in the overseas film press. Four years after the special issues of *Cahiers du Cinéma* and *Positif* devoted to Ruiz in 1983 – the time of *Les Trois Couronnes du Malelot* (Three Crowns of a Sailor) and *La Ville des pirates* (City of Pirates) – the same French critics were passing over his prolific œuvre in silence; and even Rosenbaum noted the decline of Ruizian inspiration in films like *La Professor Taranne* and *La Chouette Aveugle* (both 1987). In the 1990s, however, the cycle seems to have restarted. Frédéric Richard writes favourably in *Positif* about *L’Oeil qui Ment* (Dark at Noon) – his first ‘above ground’ commercial film after a period of obscure (if prolific) low-budget activity – and refers to Ruiz’s “droll, dreamlike, disquieting” art.

Australian fans of Ruiz have perhaps received his work in exactly the right dosage. Only a small portion of his filmography has ever filtered through to here, via fleeting Film Festival screenings, 16mm film society prints and an unpublicised broadcast in 1991 of the three-part children’s series, *Manuel à Hie des marueilles* (Manuel on the Island of Marvels, 1985), on ABC TV. Finally, however, thanks to the joint effort of The Australian Film Institute and the Sydney Carnivale, we are being treated to approximately fifteen of his major films in January 1993 (the final selection unconfirmed at time of going to press). Since Ruiz is truly – as David Ehrenstein once suggested – the Edgar G. Ulmer of art cinema, making films quickly and always moving on to the next project, it is a miracle that certain films (such as *Le Territoire* [The Territory, 1981]) exist in any screenable form whatsoever. Ruiz is travelling to Australia with his wife and regular editor, Valeria Sarmiento, director of the brilliant *Notre Mariage* (1984) and *Amelia Lopes O’Neill* (1991), which will be screened during the season.

The following interview has been put together in a suitably Ruizian fashion. It is a montage of two separate interviews, one conducted by Christopher Tuckfield in France in November 1989, and the other by myself over the telephone in October 1992. As will be evident, Ruiz has no qualms about talking in great philosophical and intellectual depth about his films, a depth that co-exists in no contradiction whatsoever with their parodic, playful and outrightly silly aspects. Indeed, Ruiz may be one of the few filmmakers in the world today who can successfully ‘translate’ critical, theoretical concepts into the stuff of cinema – images, sounds, performances and stories. Perhaps this is because, for Ruiz, cinema is the space of a ceaseless translation, transformation and metamorphosis of all elements, material and immaterial. A. M.

**Part One: Career Path and Working Methods**

It was 1973, after the coup, you left Chile and went to France where you worked mainly in television and in films supported by television.

Yes, between television and cinema; not exactly more one or the other. I was also working in theatre and so the work was sometimes between theatre and cinema.

Then, of course, in 1984 I worked in this very funny monster called the Maison de la Culture in France. I had the idea of making a sort of cultural centre where you would not use a cultural centre for what it was made for, but to show films, put on plays, make concerts and help a lot of artists. At the same time, I tried to unify that and make mainly audio-visual work with both films and theatre.

At the Maison de la Culture in Le Havre, you managed to make a very large number of films.

No, not so many. I am more prolific when I work alone as a freelancer. The maximum amount of films I’ve made was between 1983 and 1984 when I made seven feature-length films and maybe four short films. I don’t remember the exact number.

Was there something special about France that enabled a different working style for you?

It was not so very different from the work I used to make in Chile; there was only more elements, more money, more people interested in making this kind of work. In Chile it was a real minority; no more than ten people interested in this kind of adventure.

You have described yourself as one of the last filmmakers not in captivity, meaning that you are not exclusively bound to a particular institution.

This is another problem. Fifteen or twenty years ago, maybe even five years ago, there were many institutions that helped artists to make very particular, very original work. Originality was a value; to make something different was a value; to make prototypes which were impossible to serialize or copy was a value.

Now in France, precisely when the socialists came to power, the rules changed rapidly. The rules became precisely those of the market and they were about becoming competitive like the U.S. But it was impossible. At that moment, most of the explosive filmmakers in France were stifled. Some of them stopped working, others

“My films are not fiction films but about fiction. Perhaps this is because I have always been interested in the way fiction connects with reality. It’s not very easy to capture, and I have been interested precisely in the problem of how more than one fiction can co-exist in the same moment.”
became crazy, and others tried to convert to this half-commercial, half-arty type of work.

I was never very experimental. My models were people like Igor Stravinsky, even people like Nicholas Ray. I was somewhere between original work and working within normal structures of production. I never moved, but everybody else moved to the other side, became more commercial or disappeared.

I had this curious feeling of being at the beginning: I was somebody who was on the right of experimental filmmaking and in something like three to four years I was on the extreme left and everyone else was on the other side.

You have managed for the past ten years to work continuously.

That’s the main idea. I try to work all the time in a very normal way; not very fast. My films are not very expensive. I have been mixing, combining and working more recently between cinema and theatre, and writing, of course. I have always written. I don’t publish, but I write. I make between three and seven films a year, and write between two and four plays.

My career is a collage of many careers really. I don’t feel comfortable within one particular system of cultural production. Instead, I feel very comfortable changing constantly from one context to another.

Have you worked in television recently?

In France it is very difficult for me. Just today I received my seventeenth refusal from cultural television. But I’ve also presented ten other presentations and so maybe one will pass. I hope I’ll be working in French television in a couple of months.

At the moment, I am making a film for British television for Channel 4. It is called Los Solidados, the name of a long poem by Don Luis Góngora y Argote. It has to be made in Chile, using many poetical elements of Chile.

Chile is seen through the eyes of a Chinese painter — any traditional Chinese painter — who uses the traditional shin taoi ideas of painting from the 18th Century. So again I’m making something where evidently two elements shouldn’t go together.

It is not immediately evident that something from Chile has anything to do with Chinese painting. But what happens in the landscape of my country, the south of Chile where I was born, the first thing it provokes in me is fear. It is a crazy landscape. But in crazy landscapes you can have very reasonable people talking, and that makes it more crazy.

You have written several hundred plays?

One hundred, on a bet. [Laughs] One hundred precisely, between the ages of 17 and 20 years. It was very easy; they were not really plays. Some of them were five pages long, others were one hundred pages, but most were very short plays. It was just a bet.

You once said that, after doing some theatre work in the 1980s, you were told it was in fact installation art.

At this time I am making both. When I started doing theatre, Jean-Paul Fargier told me there was something called installation which was very close to what I was trying to do in theatre. So I saw some installation work by Bill Viola and other people, and I became interested by this form of expression. I started doing installation work using elements of the cinema and theatre. But the work was always a lot more theatrical in the sense that they are like sets from mystery films during the night without actors and without lighting. Now I am making a church and next year I will be making a tower, a real tower, which is where Sigismond is imprisoned in Calderón’s play, La Vida es Sueno.
What happened after in theatre was that I started working with Italian actors. They are so keen to do improvisations that I began working in another kind of style, one very different from installation. This work was closer to the traditional form of Italian commedia dell'arte, even if the text and the style are completely different. I tried to make this commedia dell'arte with what was supposed to be old Spanish theatre of the 16th and 17th centuries.

My work in theatre has been mainly in Italy. There is a centre near Pisa where I worked with Grotowski, the Polish theatre director of the 1960s and '70s, at a permanent workshop with people coming from all over the world. A couple of months ago I finished Don Giovanni, which I wrote myself. It is a mixture of many Don Giovannis with elements of Latin America. Again, it is a sort of patchwork, but using all the elements of the commedia dell'arte, so it is not really installation. Don Giovanni does have the aspects of solemnity, coldness, the mystery of the installations. For me, installations are very dark. The theatre is exactly the opposite, trying to make something very happy, comical and with irony, even though installation has some irony.

What is the average length of the shoot for you on a feature-length film?

Sometimes it is very small; it just depends. I have my own records of 100 takes in a day, and 45 minutes. It is not so much on television.

The problem is what kind of takes and what is the complexity of what you do. But I am sure, whether a bad film or a good film, it needs the same amount of effort.

Sometimes a complex, very difficult film gives you more energy, so you are less tired than with a very stupid, flat film. To make a complex film is less difficult than making a simple one. Even the communication technicians would agree with that.

And is that true also of writing?

But you do not need to write to make a film. I make literary films but also other kinds. I could make silent films. It is not particularly different. I simply like to write, but you do not need to write. You shouldn’t!

In many centres, and in more traditional financing and production models, the script is the primary element.

It is a real danger. It becomes a contract very easily.

Do you closely supervise the soundtracks of your films?

Sure, I am always in this position. Except for the last one [Dark at Noon], where there was so much noise that I went away before the end of the mix. Normally, I make a score with music from my own record collection. I make a sort of maquette model and then tell the musicians to start with that and change anything they don’t like.

Sometimes there is some sort of strategy. In La Ville des pirates, it was particularly complicated, with music for almost the whole film. The film is an experiment in continuum, and varieties of continuum. Everything is connected somewhere. It is like the sea; it is liquid, the spirit of liquidity.

There was a series of five themes and the themes were not really like leitmotifs; we tried to use the opposite of a leitmotif. We put the horror musical theme in one horror situation, but then in another which was not horror. The connection we wanted to make between the scenes was made through music. It was an atmospheric reference to connect the scenes. It didn’t work completely, but the idea was good.

What are your feelings about 'nationalist' cultural identity?

Any kind of nationalism is a fiction in the worst sense of the word. I believe in some kind of cultural identity; that is, in the variety of identities. You do not need only one identity; you need many if you want to become yourself.

I can let drop my precautions about the problem of identity and culture because of my situation. I am now very distant from any kind of speculation about cultural identity. Of course, I cannot have one identity because I have been in so many countries and I have...
worked in so many languages. So identity for me, in the best of cases, can be a sort of enemy.

Do you consider yourself a European filmmaker, a South American filmmaker, or something else?

A bandalero! A bandit. Well, filmmakers are sometimes inspired by bandits.

**Part 2: Influences and Ideas**

There is a different sense of narrative construction in your work and it is quite unique to your style.

Yes. My films are not fiction films but about fiction. Perhaps this is because I love fiction and I have always been interested in the way fiction connects with reality. It's not very easy to capture, and I have been interested precisely in the problem of how more than one fiction can co-exist in the same instant.

**How do you feel about the description “philosophical filmmaker”**?

I do not know. You may remember [Jean Luis] Borges once said that philosophy was a branch of fantastic literature. Maybe that can be read the other way around: fantastic literature is part of philosophy. What is true now is that the new scientific and philosophical speculation needs a lot of images like the kind of images the cinema is producing.

I was always very close in a very sportive and funny way to some philosophers, or a kind of philosophy that is a bit different: people like the English philosopher Alfred Whitehead, [Arnold] Schopenhauer and, of course, other smaller philosophers of the baroque era, who are between philosophy, speculation, political activity – people that today could be called intellectuals and artists at the same time.

Anyway, for me the cinema is a way to connect many kinds of cultural elements that are usually separate.

**Frequently you have mentioned literary and other sources, usually from very particular areas of the 18th Century. It is interesting that you rarely mention cinematic sources.**

My references are not very popular: references to the worst of the ‘B’ movies because they were the movies I used to see when I was a child; to films by directors like Ford Beebe and Reginald Le Borg, and films written by DeWitt Bodeen. I have just written a chapter for a novel where the main character is DeWitt Bodeen. Other references are to the serials, and of course to some of the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer films, which are not exactly ‘B’ films but very popular.

I do not separate that from all my other various activities. When I started working with theatre, I mixed my films with references to Spanish theatre, the classics and so on. For me, the way to start making a film was a way of connecting two different worlds which were until that moment completely separate.

There was, you know, this aspect of Chilean culture called the “popular” where, for example, on Sundays you went to the cinema to see all these abject films, and in this moment you find yourself with two different cultures, two worlds. It was a world in which any middle-class person in Latin America lived at the same time between a very popular medium and another medium pretending to be less popular. The cinema for me was a way to mix these worlds without destroying any of the cultures.

**A touching point or a bridge between layers?**

Bridge – *il ponte* – was a very important word in baroque.

**Viewing those American popular films in Chile became the touching points between popular culture and a more academic, intellectual culture.**

We should say “pop culture”, like the Americans, because there was another popular culture which was the national Chilean popular culture, which is curiously very baroque because it started in the
Australia's First Films:

With Australia's cinema centenary approaching, the published accounts of our industry's birth are overdue for revision. Anniversary celebrations and commemorative films are planned. Considerable sums of money will be spent. Yet nobody seems to know the exact circumstances of the Australian genesis of film, and those who claim to know often quote apocryphal sources. Enduring film fables have been accepted as fact by a process of unchallenged repetition.

Historical objectivity is lost when attractive myths surround and obscure real events. Many people want to believe that Australia produced "the world's first feature film," or that we had a "film production industry" in the distant past which dominated the world's market. Under these circumstances, there can be a real resistance to the truth and very selective usage of evidence.

Fortunately, 1890s film production data does survive. Newspapers were incredibly numerous, reporting and preserving ephemeral events for future generations. Any public filming or exhibition of film got into print. All a modern researcher has to do is a thorough, patient literature survey. Modern research aids such as microfilm, Xerox and published listings of library holdings simplify the job.

In 1987, Ken Berryman and I initiated the National Film & Sound Archive's historical compilation video series. To assemble Living Melbourne (1988), Living Ballarat (1990) and Federation Films (1991), I first had to gather data on all of the early film components. Many surviving films and documents from the 1890s simply didn't accord with existing accounts of film history.

The NFSA supplied some money to assist research. Later, Pat Laughren at Griffith University (Brisbane) helped to extend the research into Queensland. A book emerging from this aggregate of data is to be called Australia's First Films, but many loose ends need to be tied before we publish. Meanwhile, the imminent centenary makes the publication of the earliest data imperative.

Robert Francis' film series, Celluloid Heroes, and these articles in Cinema Papers will be the first avenues of dissemination.

Let's look at some key facts, then I'll provide evidence for them:

- Australian film exhibition began on 30 November 1894, not 1896.
- Sound films were first shown here in September 1895, not 1928.
- Carl Hertz did not bring the first movie projector to Australia.
- Australia's first film was not of the 1896 Melbourne Cup.
- Australia's first film producer probably wasn't Marius Sestier.

I could continue, but the point is clear. Research through the contemporary sources of the 1890s has been inadequate and a lot of the accepted myths have been derived from inaccurate secondary sources.

Newspaper research is uncomplicated but expensive. Comprehensive investigation of Australia's newspaper holdings involves travelling the breadth of the continent. Inter-library loans of historical newspapers are usually not permitted. Even the microfilms of those newspapers are not generally allowed to travel from their source libraries. Finally, there is the problem of the over-zealous librarian who won't allow access to hardcopy newspapers, even if they're not transferred to microfilm.

Thorough research can only be justified where film production or publication offer the chance of defraying the considerable costs involved. Until that research is done and comprehensive filmographies are published, no history of Australian film will be really adequate in scope or usefulness. I hope that the myths uncovered by this series of articles will encourage a more sceptical appraisal of our film folklore.
FACTS AND FABLES

PART ONE

The Kinetoscope in Australia

Evolving Perspectives in Cinema History

Traditional accounts often claim that cinema began with the Lumière brothers’ first commercial show in Paris on 28 December 1895. That claim was contradicted by Louis Lumière himself, when he said that his movie work was inspired “when the Edison kinetoscope appeared in Paris in 1894”.

In the 1960s, Gordon Hendricks’ work gave further weight to the Edison kinetoscope’s priority claims. He worked meticulously through masses of laboratory records at the Edison factory site in New Jersey, subsequently publishing *The Edison Motion Picture Myth* (1961) and *The Kinetoscope* (1966). Hendricks’ books trace the day-to-day movements of Edison’s staff member in charge of motion picture development, William K. L. Dickson. Dickson is shown to be the inventor of sprocketed 35mm movie film in October 1892, and via the kinetoscope he introduced commercial motion pictures internationally in 1894.

The British film historian John Barnes further supports the claims for the Edison-Dickson kinetoscope:

> The cinema as we know it today, began with the kinetograph (camera) and kinetoscope (viewer). These two instruments represent the first practical method of cinematography [...] The whole procedure thus involved a strip of photographic film, a perforator, a motion picture camera, printer, and reproducer – all the essential requirements of the modern cinema. The only modern feature which had not been accomplished at this stage was the projection of pictures upon a screen. No previous attempts at cinematography had achieved all these requirements [...]"  

Barnes also maintains that “it was from the kinetoscope that all subsequent motion picture invention is derived”.

Some chroniclers reject the kinetoscope as the genesis of cinema because it was a direct film viewer, unable to throw images on a screen. That perspective was not shared by those who saw the first public motion picture projection demonstrations in Melbourne during 1896. Reviews universally refer to them as a development of the kinetoscope:

> “What the Kinetoscope does on a few inch scale the cinematographer does with life size figures.” Table Talk (Melbourne), 28 August 1896

> “In principle, it is the kinetoscope of Mr. Edison.” The Herald (Melbourne), 18 August 1896

> “It is a combination of the features of the kinetoscope with the magic lantern.” Argus (Melbourne), 19 August 1896

> “This is an amplification of Edison’s kinetoscope, or rather a combination of that photographic miracle with the optical lantern.” Melbourne Punch, 27 August 1896

One reviewer even considered projection a backward step:

> “Judging from a private trial given at the Melbourne Opera House the other night, the kinetoscopical views on a sheet are not as clear, or as natural in movement as the peep show pictures produced by Edison’s original apparatus [...]” The Bulletin (Sydney), 29 August 1896

All of these reviews clearly point to Australian cinematic beginnings well before 1896.

In fact, the first Australian kinetoscope film exhibition opened in Sydney on 30 November 1894. Patrons paid a shilling at the door of a specialized venue to view a programme of five films, one in each of the first five machines imported. Twenty-five thousand patrons rolled up in the first month. The film programmes were changed frequently and were advertised in the papers. After the Sydney season concluded, the machines toured all of the Australian capitals and many of the provincial cities, right through to the time of Australia’s first screen projection demonstrations.

This article outlines, for the first time, the events of the first two years of Australian film exhibition following the premiere in 1894.

The Phonograph Came First

The kinetoscope was devised “to do for the eye what the phonograph did for the ear”. The same theatrical entrepreneurs introduced both devices to the Australian public.

Edison’s Australian connection was forged on 28 May 1890, when the British showman Professor Douglas Archibald arrived in Sydney. He brought the latest wax cylinder phonograph direct from the inventor’s New Jersey laboratory.

A message recording from British Prime Minister Gladstone was played to the New South Wales Governor, Lord Carrington, on 8 June 1890. This attracted the attention of the Australian theatrical entrepreneur, James Macmahon (1858-1915), and his brother, Charles (1861-1917). They immediately arranged to manage Archibald’s Australasian theatrical exhibitions of the phonograph.

The Macmahons are the forgotten founders of our industry, both short of stature and both hard-bitten businessmen. They were the most successful of their Bendigo-born clan of four
brothers and two sisters. James in particular was well-suited to
wealthy man. Returning to Australia, he leased several theatres in
Scott Siddons on the first o f six outstandingly-successful American
management, at the age o f nineteen he piloted the actress Mrs
bourne’s Athenaeum Theatre on 27 June 1890.1 5  First came a
demonstration of the machine’s ability to make an on-the-spot
recording of a member of the audience. Then Archibald would
give his audience a tour of Edison’s laboratory with slide illustrations.
Finally, they were spellbound by the recorded voices o f
Wild West Show, including American Indians and the sharp­
shooter Annie Oakley.2 1

Dickson at Edison’s Laboratory
Making Movies Marketable
Meanwhile, motion-picture developments were reaching a prac­
tical stage. By February 1893, W. K. L. Dickson completed a movie
studio at Edison’s New Jersey base to provide film subjects for his
“kinetoscopes”.1 8  Popularly known as “The Black Maria”, it was a
wood-framed tarpaper construction on a rotating foundation to
catch the sunlight. Inside it was Dickson’s huge and immobile
camera, the world’s sole source of movie films until the early
months of 1895.1 9

Subjects were filmed in stark relief against the black tarpaper
studio walls, as sunlight streamed in through the studio’s flip-top
roof. Everything had to be brought to the immobile camera for
filming. Location work was out of the question.

Strongman Eugene Sandow, an act promoted by the youthful
Florenz Ziegfeld, travelled out to New Jersey for filming on 6
March 1894, the film being one of the first seen in Australia.2 0
Another early troupe filmed in September 1894 was Buffalo Bill’s
Wild West Show, including American Indians and the sharp­
shooter Annie Oakley.2 1

Kinetoscope viewers were stockpiled until a
marketable quantity were manufactured. The
first public “kinetoscope parlour” opened in
New York on 14 April 1894.2 2  The subsequent scramble for machines by American showmen
delayed exports for many months.

One of the first Australians to see the new novelty was J. C.
Williamson, who was on a brief tour of America in mid-1894. He
secured Australian rights to the invention, placing an order for the
dispatch of machines to Sydney on the earliest possible date.2 3

Edison’s London agent, Colonel George Edward Gouraud,
bought 100 machines for European distribution, and for a while
he may have controlled the British colonial exports to our re­
gion.2 4  As a local reference states that our kinetoscopes were “five
of the first hundred manufactured”,2 5  the number suggests that
Gouraud may have been their source. Another possibility is that
the Australian kinetoscopes were from Edison’s export agents,
Maguire and Baucus, which opened the first British kinetoscope
parlour in London on 17 October 1894.2 6

Whatever their source, we know that the Australian set of five
kinetoscopes were dispatched from London aboard the RMS
“Orizaba” on 5 October 1894, a remarkable two weeks before the
machine’s London premiere.2 7  They arrived in Sydney on 17
November,2 8  where the day-to-day exhibition work was assigned to
the Macmahon brothers by Williamson.2 9

The Australian Kinetoscope Tour, 1894–96

Australians were primed for the kinetoscope’s arrival by enthu­
siastic advance publicity, particularly in the photographic industry
press. First off the rank was Harrington’s Australian Photographic
Journal with a lengthy, illustrated account of the invention in May
1894.3 0  The rival photographic supply house, Baker & Rouse,
replied with articles in its Photographic Review of Reviews (Australian
dition) during July and August 1894.3 1

The big premiere for Sydney was organized by J. C. Williamson
and George Musgrove in association with the Macmahons, in a
converted shop at 148 Pitt Street.3 2  A century later, the building
still stands, operating as the Sussan clothing outlet in the Pitt
Street mall. The premiere was announced for 29 November
1894,3 3  but “some trouble was found at first in making the
electrical connections work smoothly”, so it was delayed until the
following day, Friday 30 November 1894. It was the birthday of our
industry.

Patrons paid their shilling at the door to file past each of the five
electrically-operated machines. They looked down into a window in the top of each to view a clear but tiny image. The
machines contained a 50-foot loop of film running at the surpris­
ingly high speed of about 40 pictures a second and lasting about
thirty seconds. In spite of the brevity of the loops, one film at the
premiere explored the story-telling potential of the medium:

There is a shop, with the barber in attend­
ance. A man enters, takes off his coat, hangs it on a peg, and seats himself in a chair. The barber immediately adjusts
the towel, and commence shaving. While
this operation is taking place, a man
seated in a chair in the shop rises with a
paper in hand, and, walking over to an­
other one, points out a humorous pas­
sage in it, over which they both laugh
heartyly [...]3 4

Another item was the first of a very few
films shot by Dickson just outside the “Black Maria” studio, on 25 July 1894.3 5  The sub­
ject, wire walker Juan Caicedo, had appeared at the Princess
Theatre, Melbourne, in 1890, and was recognized by the reviewer in
The Sydney Morning Herald:

 [...] the personal idiosyncrasies of the individ­
ual are actually reproduced, and for this reason the management did well to exhibit this example of the power of the new invention. Most
theatre-goers have seen Caicedo, and they will now readily recog­

Exterior and interior vie of the “Black Maria” studio, where Edison’s
t was shot.
slow and certain method of his somersault, and the ease with which he swings on the rope.36

A couple of weeks into the Sydney season it became obvious that Australians would take fondly to this new medium:

The wonderful kinetoscope, now on exhibition in Pitt street, Sydney, under the pilotage of Mr. C. Macmahon, acts on the public after the fashion of treacle-paper on flies. During the recent holidays it has been a constant source of attraction, and every time the pictures were changed there was a fresh rush of visitors [...] To any outside observer, the show appears in the light of a veritable gold mine, and no matter in what form the opinions about it are expressed by those who have seen it, they are all centered in admiration.37

For the next ten months, the original set of five kinetoscopes toured Australia, introducing the first motion pictures shown in every place visited. Sixteen films were imported with the first shipment,38 supplemented by new items after the Melbourne premiere in March 1895. If any of these should ever be found, they will be recognized by their unique frosted nitrate film base.39 The frosting was to diffuse the light from the light bulb which momentarily illuminated each frame from behind through a rotating slotted disc shutter. The film moved continuously in the viewer. It had no intermittent film-advancing mechanism, so each frame was illuminated only very briefly to avoid blurring of the image.40 The brevity of illumination also demanded a high picture repetition rate, usually more than 40 pictures-per-second.

Anybody doubting the impact of these shows can refer to daily papers covering kinetoscope exhibition in any place on the itinerary below. “Who dares to say that the age of miracles is past?”, said Melbourne’s Table Talkon 21 March 1895. “Buffalo Bill moves a living personality before you, and will so move a hundred years hence when he has grown up into daisies and grass!”41

AUSTRALIAN KINETOSCOPE VENUES AND FILMS TO SEPTEMBER 1895

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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<th>Film Details</th>
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New films 8 Dec 1894
Dance scene: “A Highland Fling” (March 1894).
Eugene Sandow in Muscular Display.
The Blacksmith’s Forge.
Professor Weston’s Boxing Cats.
Armand Ary, French Soubrette.
New film 3 Jan 1895
J. K. Emmett and his Wrestling Dog.
5 Feb 1895 – 12 Mar 1895 – Hobart
(Main Hall, Tasmanian Exhibition, Domain.)
16 Mar 1895 – 8 June 1895 – Melbourne
(Haunted Swing Premises, Bourke Street East.)
Carmencita, Spanish Dancer (11/3/94).
Sioux Indian War Dance (24/9/94).
New film 19 March 1895
Buffalo Bill
New film 4 May 1895:
Lasso throwing by North American Indians (24/9/94).
New film 9 May 1895:
A Mexican Duel (knife fight) (6/10/94).
New film 18 May 1895:
French Ballet (6/10/94).
New film 24 May 1895:
The Arabian Pasha (“as recently viewed by Her Majesty Queen Victoria at Windsor”).
11 June 1895 – 17 June 1895 – Bendigo
(Aalborg Chambers, View Street):
New film 17 June 1895
Hadgi Hami, Egyptian Acrobat.
19 June 1895 – 26 June 1895 – Ballarat
(Academy of Music, Lydiard Street South).
28 June 1895 – 2 July 1895 – Geelong
(Exhibition Theatre).

Note: a phonograph was also exhibited at this venue. Bell-Tainter graphophones were exhibited at the Sydney kinetoscope venue from 22 December 1894.

6 July 1895 – 29 July 1895 – Sydney
(second run, in “shop premises opposite Lyceum Theatre and next to Tattersall’s in Pitt Street”).
30 July 1895 – 12 August 1895 – Unknown
(Newcastle and Maitland papers give no mention of kinetoscope. May have been Tamworth, or Parramatta.)
13 August 1895 – 26 Aug. 1895 – BRISBANE
(12 to 16 August at Organ Hall, Bowen Park Exhibition Grounds; 17 to 26 August at Telegraph Chambers, Queen Street.)

New film 15 Aug. 1895:
The Indian War Council (22/9/94)
New film 22 Aug. 1895:
The Arabian Juggler.

2 Sept. 1895 – c6 Sept. 1895 – TOWNSVILLE
(venue unknown - daily papers do not survive; weeklies do not state the venue.)

SEPTEMBER 1895
AUSTRALIA’S KINETOPHONES – MOVIES WITH SOUND

Charters Towers in Queensland is the last place you would expect the Australian debut of a cinematic innovation, but in 1895 it was briefly Queensland’s second largest city, at the peak of its gold-mining boom.42 Money poured into it from European stock exchanges, from mining magnates and miners. There was demand for entertainments.

The new development was a natural confluence of two Edison products, the phonograph and the kinetoscope. Edison and Dickson conceived motion pictures as an adjunct to recorded sound. Through the latter half of 1894, Dickson experimented with synchronous sound films, but disappointing trials revealed the problems of commercial exploitation. "Lip sync" efforts were abandoned at the end of 1894.43

Instead, Dickson produced kinetoscopes with cylinder phonograph mechanisms internally fitted. The kinetoscope motor rotated the phonograph mechanism through a belt drive. This ensured that the two mechanisms would start and stop simultaneously, but otherwise the sync was entirely "wild". Most exhibitions of this combination only provided rough musical backing for the films, heard through "ear tubes".44 A playlist published by Edison recommended particular standard records to accompany each film.45

From about April 1895, the new combination was marketed in America as the "kinetophone".46 Its Australian exhibition reviews strongly suggest that some of Dickson’s original lip-sync films with dialogue were shown here. The sync deficiencies ensured that the new kinetophone would never achieve the success of its silent predecessor. More than 1,000 silent kinetoscopes were manufactured before 1897, but only 45 sound-equipped kinetophones reached the open market.47 One of the world’s three surviving kinetophones is held in a Sydney collection – the oldest surviving item of film equipment in Australia.

After the Townsville kinetoscope season, the original five silent machines were freighted to Charters Towers for exhibition between 6 and 14 September 1895. The films and machines had all been seen elsewhere.

Then on 16 September 1895, quite unobtrusively, three sound-equipped kinetophones were displayed at the same venue, in their earliest known Australian exhibition.48 The kinetophone films included "songs and dances given true to life,"49 and "songs by Albert Chevalier, who has made a speciality of coster ditties".50

Further details of the kinetophone films were given when the machines were put on display in Rockhampton on 4 October 1895, following a week of exhibition of the silent kinetoscopes. The sound sync may have been defective, but it was all very wonderful to the reviewer in the Rockhampton Bulletin:

In the first (kinetophone) the great music-hall singer, Mr. A. Chevalier sang one of his inimitable coster songs, "Mrs. Enery 'Awkins". It was really a marvel. Mr. Chevalier is seen exactly as he
"ONE OF THE FINEST WESTERNS EVER MADE."
- Jim Svejda, KNX/CBS TV

"The most provocative and potently acted Western of Clint Eastwood's career. In decades of climbing into the saddle, he has never ridden so tall."
- Peter Travers, ROLLING STONE

"This is Clint Eastwood's 'High Noon'. An instant classic."
- Pat Collins, WWOR-TV

"One of the best films of the year. A two fisted, exciting intelligent Western. A profound work of art."
- Rex Reed, NEW YORK OBSERVER

"Triumphant! Don't miss it!"
- Neil Rosen, WNCN RADIO

"Clint Eastwood at his best. Gene Hackman, Morgan Freeman and Richard Harris are magnificent. An outstanding film."
- Gary Franklin, KCOP-TV

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appeared on stage. He starts singing, and while every note and indeed every word can be heard with utmost distinctness, the movements and gestures of the singer are seen as clearly as ever they were witnessed by those in the stalls at the music halls where he appears.

The next subject was Madame Patey singing a verse of "The Holy City". The impression was taken in Melbourne when Madame Patey was singing there. It was as perfect as the other. To watch the singer just as she appeared on the stage, to see her little gestures and movements, note her turning the sheets of her music, finally rolling it up as she reaches the concluding bars of her song, and all the time to hear her wonderful voice singing this fine song, fills one with amazement at this supreme triumph over time and distance.\footnote{31}

The comment about the "impression" being taken in Melbourne was either a falsification by Charles Macmahon in his telling the story of the making of the item, or the cylinder record (but not the film) could have been cut in Melbourne to accompany the film appropriately. But the reviewer's view of the last kinetophone subject was even more remarkable:

It was an American auctioneer selling a mob of cattle. He is seen in his rostrum calling the attention of buyers to the cattle he was about to offer, and he announces that he will put up one animal, but the purchaser will have the right to take as many of the mob as he chooses at the price at which the one is knocked down. The sale begins with a bid of twenty dollars, and soon runs up to thirty when there is a slight halt. The auctioneer throws out his hands, knocks on the box, asks if it is possible that is all they mean to bid for such remarkably fine animals, and at length sets his patrons started again, when they run the bid up to thirty-five dollars, at which figure the hammer falls. The scene closes with the auctioneer asking the purchaser how many he will take, and the reply that he will take the lot.\footnote{52}

During Adelaide and Broken Hill kinetophone exhibitions early in 1896, they were advertised as "phonoscopes".\footnote{53} Adelaide reviews from January 1896 confirm the use of spoken dialogue in the American Auctioneer film, listing further examples of films with attempted lip-sync. The "Comical Barbershop Scene" of 1894 (or a remake of it) was now presented with spoken dialogue. "The tonsorial artist", said the Adelaide Register, "is seen lathering the customer and during the whole of the seance is to be heard addressing the usual small talk to his victim."\footnote{34} Another dialogue film lampooned a Salvation Army Captain, "addressing a mixed audience and calling on sinners to repent etc."\footnote{55}

The addition of sound, however primitively it might have been synchronized to the film, improved the narrative potential of the new visual medium. The visuals were probably extremely rudimentary, consisting of about 30 seconds' worth of film looped repetitively against about $2^{1/2}$ minutes of wax cylinder audio. The records were probably not recorded simultaneously with the filming process, as the direct acoustical recording system of the 1890s would have immobilized the performers as they shouted down a recording funnel. Nevertheless, the dialogue obviously held the viewer's attention sufficiently to have him/her follow the development of a storyline in the presentation. When the movies developed into a screen-projection medium in 1896, the weak volume and tone provided by the early phonoaphers was inadequate to fill a theatre, and the promise of "talkies" faded away for the next 35 years.\footnote{36}

It should be noted that all of these narrative films with dialogue were produced almost a year prior to the Lumières' first silent narrative subject, L'Arroseur Arrosé (Watering the Gardener), which is usually given priority.\footnote{57}

**Decline of the Kinetoscope in Australia**

Screen projection naturally overtook the film viewers as a means of presentation late in 1896, but the decline of the novelty of the kinetoscope was already obvious at the start of that year. The introduction of the kinetophone by the Macmahons late in 1895 was probably intended to boost its failing fortunes. Kinetoscope tours ventured into the remoter corners of Australia and shifted their locale more frequently.

After the Rockhampton show in October 1895, Macmahon's kinetoscope and kinetophone showings are difficult to trace. The two sets of machines appear to have travelled separately, one under Charles Macmahon's pilotage, the other managed by Macmahon's employee, Frank St. Hill.\footnote{58}

Perth exhibitions probably occurred during an
unexplained gap in the author’s kinetoscope itinerary between 16 January and 28 February 1896. Perth newspapers covering June to December 1895 do not mention kinoscopes and later issues were unavailable to me.

In late February 1896, the Macmahons probably sold their kinoscopes to W. J. N. Oldershaw, who opened his Edison Electric Parlour at 162 Pitt Street, Sydney, on the 29th of that month.90 Kinetoscopes could be viewed there for the rest of 1896 as a sideline to Oldershaw’s Edison phonograph sales agency. Extra kinoscopes and film subjects were acquired for the venue, including at least two “prize fight kinoscopes”.91 These had triple the normal film capacity (150 ft) to accommodate a complete round of a fight.

**NEW AND BETTER FILMS SHOWN WITH PROJECTION**

The first film projectors reaching Australia in mid-1896 enlarged the size and spectacle of the movies. That was a mild technical improvement, but the improved film subjects accompanying the projectors were a more significant change.

Edison’s kinetoscope films were studio-bound and synthetic, limited by the immobility of Dickson’s massive camera. When Edison refused to supply films to competitors exploiting film projection, they devised their own movie cameras and shot films “on location”.

The barbershop and blacksmith’s forge in Edison’s films were studio mock-ups. Soon Edison’s competitors, such as R. W. Paul and the Lumières, were out shooting real forges and barbershops — and every conceivable outdoor view. These new films had geographical context, realism and greater information content than their synthetic Edison predecessors with their simplistic black studio background. If the occasion warranted, cameramen with the new portable cameras could bring important sporting and news events into the theatre. Australian audiences became conditioned to a film fare of actuality and news items. It was a remote British colony’s window on the world.

As the kinetoscope’s drawing power declined, Oldershaw sold several of his machines. Two were shown at photographer Mark Blow’s Polytechnic film venue in Sydney during 1897 and 1898.61 In Oldershaw’s June 1898 catalogue, kinetoscopes are offered for sale at £30 and kinetophones for £45.62 When the Polytechnic closed in 1899, the kinetoscopes remained in Baker & Rouse’s sales lists for many months, even at the throw-away price of £6.63 Finally, a kinetoscope was advertised in Baker & Rouse’s Brisbane sales lists in August 1901 for £10.64 After that, all is silence until the discovery of the kinetophone in Sydney.

**AUSTRALIAN KINETOSCOPE AND KINETOPHONE VENUES AND FILMS, 1895 – 1896**

6 New film 18 December 1895: Blow’s Polytechnic film venue in Sydney during 1897 and 1898.61 In Oldershaw’s June 1898 catalogue, kinetoscopes are offered for sale at £30 and kinetophones for £45.62 When the Polytechnic closed in 1899, the kinetoscopes remained in Baker & Rouse’s sales lists for many months, even at the throw-away price of £6.63 Finally, a kinetoscope was advertised in Baker & Rouse’s Brisbane sales lists in August 1901 for £10.64 After that, all is silence until the discovery of the kinetophone in Sydney.

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**AUSTRALIAN KINETOSCOPE AND KINETOPHONE VENUES AND FILMS, 1895 – 1896**

7 September 1895 – 21 September 1895 – CHARTERS TOWERS
(Mosman Street, opposite Collins’ Exchange Hotel and next to Messrs Alan B. Bright & Co.)

Kinetoscope shown throughout this period.

Kinetophone shown 16–21 September.

New kinetophone films 16 Sept 1895
Albert Chevalier singing a “Coster Ditty”.
A dance film (unspecified).
A song film (unspecified).

27 September 1895 – 12 October 1895 ROCKHAMPTON
(East Street, opposite “Argus” Office, in shop “lately occupied by E.S. Lucas”.)

Kinetoscope shown 27 September–3 October.

Kinetophone shown 4-12 October.

New kinetophone films 4 Oct 1895
Madame Patey singing “The Holy City”.
Harry Rickards singing “’E Dunno Where ’E Are”.
The American Auctioneer.

New kinetophone film 5 October 1895
Albert Chevalier singing “Mrs. Enery ’Awkins”.

New kinetophone film 11 October 1895
The Alabama Coon (song).

15 October 1895 – 7 November 1895 – UNKNOWN
(possibly en route Rockhampton to Adelaide; may have been a stopover in Melbourne).

8 November 1895 – 6 January 1896 – ADELAIDE
(8 November, at Jubilee Hall in connection with YMCA festival; 11 November moved to Hindley street “2 doors from William street”; 3 December moved to shop “opposite Marshall’s in Rundle street”; 28 December at Glenelg Town Hall one day; 29 December–6 January “opposite Marshall’s in Rundle Street”.)

Kinetoscope exclusively on show – kinetophones absent.

On 15 November, Macmahon announced that he now had a library “of 40 views (films)”.

New film 16 November 1895
Letty Lind, London Danseuse in “The Artist’s Model”.

New film 23 November 1895
Buffalo Bill – clay pigeon shoot.

New film 2 December 1895
Mademoiselle Rejane, Parisian actress, “rehearsing a scene with her managers”.

New film 18 December 1895:
French ladies performing a “pas de six” upon the stage of the Comédie Française.

(NOTE: This is probably the film, shot in the Black Maria, shown earlier as French Ballet.)

10–16 January 1896 – BALLARAT
(second run, in Alfred Hall, Grenville Street)

Kinetoscopes only were shown at this venue – kinetophones absent.

18 January 1896 – 15 February 1896 – ADELAIDE
(second run – first run with kinetophones, in Rundle Street opposite Marshall’s.)
Kinetophones only were shown in this venue under the advertised title of "phonooscopes".

New kinetophone films 18 January 1896
A Tyrolean Yodler singing.
A Skirt Dancer.

New kinetophone film 27 January 1896
Salvation Army Captain Heckled at a Meeting.

New kinetophone film 1 February 1896
George J. Gaskin, tenor, singing.

New kinetophone film 7 February 1896
George Williams, American Comedian.

New kinetophone film 15 February 1896
Sims Reeves, British concert artist, sings a popular ballad.

22 February 1896 – c7 March 1896 – BROKEN HILL
(Argent Street, next to Oriental Hotel)
Three kinetophones only were shown – kinetoscopes absent (probably in Sydney at Edison Electric Parlour by this time).

New kinetophone film 24 February 1896
The French Dancing Girl.

New kinetophone film 4 March 1896
The Coldstream Guards (with conductor).

29 February 1896 – onwards (permanent) - SYDNEY
(Edison Electric Parlour, 162 Pitt Street)
Kinetoscopes shown from 29 February 1896. Kinetophones shown from 28 March 1896.
New films 29 February 1896
A Row in a Bar-room.
Sword combat – Duncan Ross versus Captain Harding.
Burlesque Debate of American Presidents – Grover Cleveland versus Benjamin Harrison.
Annabelle’s Butterfly dance.
Boxing: Leonard vs. Cushing (possibly multiple machines).
Boxing: Corbett vs. Courtney (poss. more than one machine).

In the next instalment of this series, we will look at the first Australian examples of film projection, and we will trace the earliest local films, all shown in the landmark year of 1896. Were there projectors in this country prior to Carl Hertz’s? Which film producers were active before Marius Sestier? Stay tuned.

Acknowledgements

The project was supported by Pat Laughren’s actions at Griffith University, allowing the remaining gaps in the almost completed story to be filled in 1992.

Other help was generously given by: Clive Sowry - Sydney and New Zealand research; Richard Fotheringham - Rockhampton newspaper research; Ray Phillips - currently writing about kinetoscopes at his California home base; Frank Van Straten - phonograph reference material, Performing Arts Museum, Melbourne; State Library Newspaper Staff in Melbourne, Sydney, Adelaide and Brisbane; manuscript revisions by Bob Klepner, Graham Shirley.

Notes
6. ibid, p. 10.
8. ibid, 30 November 1894, p. 6.
9. ibid, 5 January 1895, p. 2.
12. The Perfected Phonograph, booklet, McMahon Bros., Melbourne, 1890, p. 16.
14. Table Talk, Melbourne, 15 August 1890, pps. 5-6.
19. ibid, p. 5. Earliest 35mm movie films shot by another camera, of which I have a record, were produced by R. W. Paul and Birt Acres in Britain. February 1895. Lumière’s filmmaking started in Lyon at about the same time.
21. ibid, pps. 80, 82.
22. ibid, p. 56.
27. The Sydney Morning Herald, 19 November 1894, p. 4: arrival of RMS "Orizaba."
28. ibid, 19 November 1894, p. 4.
29. Williamson arranged the preliminary dealings, but the Macmahons exclusively are mentioned as running the kinetoscope venues. See Australian Photographic Journal, December 1894, p. 136.
32. The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 November 1894, p. 2.
33. ibid, 28 November 1894, p. 2; 29 November 1894, p. 2; 30 November 1894, p. 6.
38. The Sydney Morning Herald, 24 November 1894, p. 12.
40. Table Talk, Melbourne, 21 March 1895, p. 177.
41. The table is assembled from daily papers in each of the places mentioned.
44. ibid, pps. 18-22.
45. Phillips, Ray: Personal letter to author, including an Italian translation of a kinetophone playlist, one of the few surviving.
48. Northern Miner, Charters Towers, 14 September 1895; 16 September 1895.
49. ibid, 16 September 1895.
50. ibid, 20 September 1895.
51. Rockhampton Morning Bulletin, 5 October 1895, p. 5.
52. ibid.
54. Adelaide Register, 27 January 1896.
55. ibid, 28 January 1896, p. 6.
56. Other unsustained attempts at exhibiting talkies in Australia include Gaumont Chronophone Process (c1908), Edison Kinetophone (1915-1914 version) and De Forest Phonofilm (1925-28).
58. St. Hill was in charge of Broken Hill kinetophone shows. Charles Macmahon was probably showing kinetoscopes in Perth simultaneously.
59. The Sydney Morning Herald, 29 February 1896, p. 2. After the opening of the Edison Electric Parlour, Macmahon is no longer mentioned in relation to kinetoscope exhibitions.
60. The Leonard-Cushing and Corbett-Courtney fights shown at the Oldershaw venue were shot on 150-foot capacity films: See Hendricks, The Kinetoscope, pps. 97-109.
61. The Sydney Morning Herald, 2 March 1897, p. 2. Blow puts two kinetoscopes on show. ibid, 9 March 1899, p. 2: two kinetoscopes for sale from Polytechnic.
63. Australasian Photographic Review, 24 August 1899. Sydney sales lists include "two kinetoscopes - cost £35, sell for £6 each". They were still listed for sale in May 1901's issue.
64. Australasian Photographic Review, 22 August 1901. On the Brisbane warehouse sales list, a kinetoscope was offered for £10.
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comes his new masterpiece
FATAL BOND

SCOTT MURRAY

Australia has any producer-cum-auteurs, then Phillip Avalon is certainly one. His latest production, Fatal Bond, owes much more thematically to his Summer City (Chris Fraser, 1977), Breaking Loose (Rod Hardy, 1988) and The Sheri Mountain Killing Mystery (Vincent Martin, 1990) than it does to the previous work of Fatal Bond's director, Vincent Monton (Winderider, 1986).

Avalon's films are preoccupied with violence bubbling to the surface in a lower-middle-class society repressed by Christian and materialist values. He has a decided affinity for the outsider, for those who refuse to play society's games and whose anti-social attitudes may, in fact, conceal a soul well attuned to life's pulses.

In that sense, and in its very darkness, Fatal Bond follows that strain of cinema made richest by Samuel Fuller, Robert Aldrich and others. This is not to argue a similar level of achievement, but to suggest that in Avalon's work there is more than just a grab for the B-audience and quick video sales.

When Fatal Bond was released recently in Sydney, it suffered very negative reviews. And in the previous issue of Cinema Papers, it had the dubious distinction of being the first film in the critics' poll to average a zero. (Only two critics had seen it, it should be noted.)

While Fatal Bond has many glaring flaws, not the least some poor performances (Jerome Ehlers notably excepted) and rather workman-like direction, it is nowhere near as unwatchable as many have claimed. It is certainly superior to many other Australian crime-thrillers (The Empty Beach and Grievous Bodily Harm, to name but two), and its script is playing with ideas of worth.

Joe Martinez (Ehlers) is a man without a home or a known past. His only friend seems to be the Valiant car that rockets him through time and across landscape. He is a loner with a violent temper that bristles whenever he feels society is grinding down on him. If anyone encroaches upon his sense of freedom (be he a bouncer or crim), Joe explodes — a quick head butt followed by a frantic attack of swirling fists.

On one such occasion, he is rescued from arrest by Leonie (Linda Blair), a hairdresser with an American accent and a poor love life. She is clearly attracted to Joe's sexual charisma and his anti-social nature.

In some ways, Leonie personifies those women who are drawn to unlovable men, who find reasons to stay when most others would have fled. Their ability to love the unlovable makes them objects of derision in the press (as when one marries a mass murderer in gaol) and a tribute to love's ability to conquer all. Monton and scriptwriter Avalon don't attempt to explain such attractions, but in the case of Leonie and Joe they make it totally believable. And this is even when Leonie chooses to live and have sex with a man whom she believes for some time to be a murderer of teenage girls.

This reticence by the filmmakers to explain — why Joe is on the run from the police, what happened between he and his brother, even why Leonie is an American adrift in urban Australia — is, in fact, one of the film's strengths. It is rare for an Australian film to take on the aspects of an American-style thriller, yet avoid all the banal explanation of the hows and whys.

Where many will part company with such an analysis is over the character of Anthony Boon (Stephen Leeder), the religious father of the first murdered girl. He is the sort who holds a cross and bible in his hands, and seeks to reek havoc on the ungodly.

Such characters in Australian cinema and television are often held up for ridicule, by critics and filmmakers: take, for instance, the pasting Harold Hopkins received for his characterization of the troubled priest in The Dirtwater Dynasty.

There is a feeling that such stereotype characters — in this case, genre characters — have no part in the local cinema, especially if they are American-inspired. But many of these same critics have praised the very same stereotyping
in *Strictly Ballroom*. Where lies the critical consistency?

The major problem with the portrayal of Boon in *Fatal Bond* is that at the start he lessens considerably the tension over whether Joe is the murderer. The filmmakers try so hard to make Joe look guilty that one is forced into looking for an alternative, given this is the sort of film that always has narrative twists. Boon is too obviously that alternative choice and the other red herrings the film offers along the way are unconvincing.

At the same time, there are moments during the film where one’s convictions about the resolution are undermined and the tension holds. A nice twist, for example, is to have the second girl appear to be murdered. Thus, Boon’s arrival the day after clears him of this death and, given our fascination for serial killers, of the first.

*Fatal Bond* is thus a more interesting film than, say, Wolfgang Petersen’s *Shattered* or Phil Joanou’s *Final Analysis*, where everything is obvious by the ten-minute mark and nothing alters one’s early judgement in the dreary hour-and-a-halfs that follow.

Not that the structure of *Fatal Bond* is not without problems. As scriptwriter, Avalon errs in not being strict enough about what perspective the film is taking. For much of the film, it reads like Joe’s first-person narrative: he is clearly the protagonist (even his keeping proof of his innocence from the audience is acceptable within this style).

But, in the middle of the film, Avalon abandons Joe (and Leonie) and cuts back to Anthony Boon and his son. Nothing justifies this abrupt jump and it certainly does little for the drama. Avalon also introduces a female Detective-Sergeant whom he never properly develops (Caz Lederman also seems greatly ill-at-ease with her character.)

What also undermines the film is some poor casting and very bad acting, particularly from the one- and two-liners. The exception, as mentioned earlier, is Jerome Ehlers. His performance is easily one of the finest of the Australian semi-crim, existential loner. There is not a trace of sentimentality and the dark grey edge he gives everything is commanding. Ehlers shapes as one of the country’s finest film actors.

*Fatal Bond*, finally, is not the embarrassment that some would have one believe, despite its many minor and major flaws. In its brave attempts at a story of ideas, in the excellent lead performance and its at times gripping plot, *Fatal Bond* deserves some respect.


**THE FAVOUR, THE WATCH AND THE VERY BIG FISH**

Ben Lewin’s zany *The Favour, the Watch and the Very Big Fish* is a film which doesn’t appeal to everybody. But if this is your cup of tea, you’ll laugh until you cry.

A man of many parts, Ben Lewin was a practising barrister in Melbourne for three years before a scholarship awarded in Australia in 1971 allowed him to study film at Britain’s National Film School. Lewin cut his teeth on British television before returning to Australia in 1985 when he entertained television audiences with his mini-series *The Dunera Boys*. This highly-idiiosyncratic dramatization of an infamous episode in Australia’s immigration history won him two Australian Film Institute Awards: Best Director and Best Screenplay.

It is hard to describe what makes something funny, but we recognize it when we laugh.

Bob Hoskins, Jeff Goldblum and Natasha Richardson are the stars of Lewin’s film, which was filmed in France and based on a ten-page story by Marcel Aymès called “Rue Saint-Sulpice”. Aymès’ tale is about a man making his living posing as Jesus for devotional pictures, who develops delusions that he himself is divine. From this tautalizing and somewhat familiar premise (any similarity to *Jesus of Montréal* is strictly coincidental, says Lewin, who has not seen Arcand’s film), this master of the tall tale has spun a whopper.

Bob Hoskins plays Louis Aubinard, a devotional photographer who lives a virginal, uneventful life working for Norbert Normat (Michel Blanc), the unscrupulous proprietor of a shop who sells religious artifacts. However, everything changes one day when Louis agrees to do a favour for his friend Zalman (Jean-Pierre Cassel), by standing in for the would-be-actor at a pornographic dubbing session in a film studio. There, Louis falls headlong in love with his fellow actor, a lovely young woman called Sybil (Natasha Richardson), who tells him about her strange romance with a tall, soulful pianist (Jeff Goldblum), which began with a wager over a watch.

And the very big fish? Notwithstanding the giant swordfish that Louis brings home for dinner one night, it is Goldblum’s pianist, of course, who on release from prison for violently attacking one of Sybil’s lovers finds employment posing as Jesus in Norbert’s shop.

*The Favour, the Watch and the Very Big Fish* is not without faults. It flags towards the end, and the scene in which the pianist goes over the top with jealousy and rage is labeoured. But the rest is sheer delight. Jeff Goldblum makes a wonderful Jesus, and Lewin shows that he has as much an eye for subtlety and detail as he has for the bizarre and surreal. The film’s lengthy opener – from where the nun comes to the door of Norbert’s shop, her stiff headgear gradually softening in the rain until it collapses around her ears, to where a goat rushes into Louis’ upstairs studio and tries to ravish a surprised ‘St Francis’ – is too hysterically funny for words.

**THE FAVOUR, THE WATCH AND THE VERY BIG FISH**


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1. This review is based on an earlier piece by Epstein published in *The Melbourne Report*. 

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Deep in the heart of the forest there is a place where humans exist only as characters in an almost forgotten fairy tale. In this secret world, steeped in magic and adventure, lives a pubescent fairy named Crysta and her over-developed friend Pip (and latent love interest), Magi the wise forest mother and a bat named Batty (sic) — as well as the rest of the wonderful and wacky crew. All is peaceful until the loggers move in, and then the fight for survival begins.

FernGully: The Last Rainforest is a feature-length animated musical fantasy that is the product of a collaboration between Australian and American filmmakers and animators from around the world. The film's topical nature (rainforest protection) and superb realization has generated an enthusiastic response, including the unique honour of being able to premiere worldwide at the U.N. headquarters in New York on Earth Day 1992.

The film, directed by Bill Kroyer, is witty, fast paced and packed with enough morals to keep parents happy for days. Kroyer, nominated for a 1989 Academy Award for his short film Technological Threat, trained at Disney in classic hand-drawn animation and has pioneered combining computer technology with classic animation. Kroyer's credits include animation director on Animalympics and supervisor of storyboards and animation on Tron.

The Australian input for the film comes not only via our spectacular rainforests but also through Wayne Young and Peter Faiman who produced the film (associate producer and director, respectively, of Crocodile Dundee) and Diana Young who wrote the stories of FernGully in 1980; these form the basis for the film.

Animated films beg to be discussed statistically; figures like 150,000 cells, one million drawings, 44 kilometres of artwork, just make me sweat. The technical requirements for such a film are immense and the lead time enormous. In fact, FernGully: The Last Rainforest was seven years at concept stage and three years in preparation and production. It was the work of an international team assembled virtually from scratch and located in Los Angeles, Toronto, London, Copenhagen and Korea. The animators included experts in both hand-drawn and computer-enhanced animation. Computers were used in FernGully: The Last Rainforest for special effects, such as penetrating layers and layers of background, almost impossible using only hand-drawn techniques, and to generate the beginning stages of drawings which were then completed by hand.

The film really does pay extraordinary attention to detail. The colours and light infusing the forest is magnificent. Characters move through the forest with a natural flow and grace that is entrancing. The work has paid off.

The cast features Samantha Manthis (This Is My Life, Pump Up the Volume) as the voice of Crysta, and Jonathan Ward (Steel Magnolias, Mac and Me) as Zak, the young logger who stumbles upon Crysta in the rainforest. Christian Slater (Pump Up the Volume, Young Guns II, Heathers) plays Crysta's musclebound friend Pip, Grace Zabriskie (Twin Peaks, Drugstore Cowboy, Big Easy) is the voice of Magi Lune, the wise forest mother and Tim Curry (The Rocky Horror Picture Show) is the evil Hexxus.

Robin Williams manages to steal all the best laughs as the voice of the schizophrenic Batty Koda, a bat whose run-in with humans has left him just a little bewildered and maladjusted.

The upbeat nature of the whole enterprise is carried not only by the superb animation but also by the music. Songs feature prominently in the film and include performances by Sheena Easton, Tone Loc, Elton John and Johnny Clegg, with the musical score by Alan Silvestri.

The film follows Crysta (the lead fairy) as she undergoes the sometimes painful transition from childhood to womanhood. She goes from being forgetful to thought-filled, carefree to concerned, ignorant to magical. It is this transition, this process of 'ripening', of becoming fertile, that empowers her to save FernGully.

This transition is also reflected in Zak, the human teenager, who really gets brought down-to-size (literally and figuratively). Zak goes from being a beach bum from Byron Bay to finally accepting responsibility and confronting himself and his destiny. However, he will never blossom like Crysta, nor gain her powers. Zak can repent of his ways and do his bit to save the forest, but ultimately he is limited due to his human-ness.

FernGully: The Last Rainforest subscribes fully to notions of 'mother' earth, and the intimate/expressive relation between women and nature. Ultimately natural wisdom and natural (magical) power lie with the feminine.

The association of the feminine with all things organic is brought into sharp relief when its antithesis arrives. The forest is invaded by "The Leveler", a super-tech hybrid of chainsaw, monster tractor and factory, which is a powerful symbol of the crushing capabilities of a mass culture which literally wants to 'level' everything in its sight. Directing its furious appetite for trees are a couple of bumbling humans. Unwittingly, they release Hexxus, the destroyer, who has been imprisoned in a tree for aeons.

The scene is set for the showdown between the huge, dominating, pollution-drinking masculine spirit laying the forest to waste and our forest friends led by one small fairy Crysta, whose femininity gives her the key in order to unlock the energy of life itself. The battle and destruction scenes are awesome, the forest soon resembling the battlefields of the Somme, smouldering and lifeless.

The idea of the approaching 'horror' is vital in rallying all good souls to the fight, and is used as a central organizing element for the film's narrative. However, the promotional materials surrounding the film work very hard at denying the violence at its core. Take, for example, Samantha Manthis' comment: "The cartoons kids watch today are filled with violence. FernGully celebrates life while teaching us all that trees, like people, are givers of life." Such statements fail in terms of their own logic. For if trees are like people, then what is the difference between seeing a thousand trees laid waste and dismembered and seeing a thousand people suffer the same fate? Well, I suppose it could make it a little more difficult to market to the 'family' audience.

Even so, I don't like to see violence get a bad name. Undeniably, violence is a vital and productive element at work in this film. In order to see the triumph of life you have to vanquish evil, and in order to deal with evil you have to spill a little blood (or sap). Enjoy.


ZAK, CENTRE, ENTERS A MAGICAL SECRET WORLD.
BILL KROYER'S FERNGULLY: THE LAST RAINFOREST.
JOHN CONOMOS

GUMSHOE

Malcolm McDonald's Gumshoe is a humorous documentary look at the clandestine, hard-boiled world of the private eye, a breed of people who, since the turn of the century, has been stamped in our popular imagination by crime fiction, film noir and crime/detective movies. This is clearly shown in the case of someone like Peter Royle, a "two shots of bourbon for breakfast" private eye, who became seduced by the romance of the existential anti-hero Sam Spade (as performed by Humphrey Bogart) in The Maltese Falcon when he was a teenager at boarding school.

Let us stick with Royle for the moment: as the film unfolds, we see him tracking down a runaway teenager to a beach locale. This common enough narrative event, for this reviewer, had an eerie echo of art imitating life (and vice versa) as we are reminded of a similar narrative situation taking place in Albie Thoms' underrated Palm Beach.

Yet, as anyone who has a rudimentary knowledge of the above film and literary genres knows, the private eye can be seen to be operating in a murky shadowy world of moral conduct. This is a point that lawyer Christopher Murphy raises in the documentary. This is not to suggest (as McDonald skilfully manages to avoid) that all private eyes are objectionable people trapped in a noir ethos of greed and opportunism. It is that some of them (like in any other profession) can be rotten apples, mean "muthas". Murphy is mindful of the fact that some private eyes (excluding those who do have former police experience) act like mercenary hyenas, devoid of any professional skills, preying "on people who are depressed, lonely or mentally disturbed".

PETER ROYLE, A REAL-LIFE PRIVATE DETECTIVE IN MALCOLM MCDONALD'S DOCUMENTARY, GUMSHOE.
The historical drama is a genre fraught with difficulty. By focusing on the dramatic aspects of a story (particularly a fictional one) at the expense of the historical, the filmmaker risks being accused of "cheapening" the subject. By going in the other direction — paying scrupulous attention to the historical details — the possibility arises that audiences will fail to be engaged emotionally. At first glance, Régis Wargnier's French production Indochine seems to have found just the right balance between historical and emotional veracity.

If Wargnier's film is at all successful, it is because he has created a story peopled by characters who are representative of the history they are meant to inhabit. Unlike so many American attempts at the form, the characters do not seem to be modern ones imposed on an historical tableau (one need think only of Al Pacino's New York drawn in Revolution); they seem to rise out of their (diegetic) time, unconsciously but unmistakably imbued with the essence of that historical moment.

In Indochine, that moment is, in fact, quite a long one; the film opens in 1930, and closes in 1954, though the bulk of the action appears to occur sometime during the late 1930s. Set in the French colony of Indochina (Vietnam, Laos), it charts the growth of the country's first attempt at independence (Vietnam was granted independence in 1954, though the U.S. spent the next twenty years attempting to install a régime favourable to its foreign policy). Narrated in voice-over by Eliane Devries (Catherine Deneuve) on the brink of that 1954 declaration of independence, it appears from the outset that, as well as being history, this is her story.

Her narrative begins in 1930. A woman dressed in black is holding the hand of a small Vietnamese girl as they are rowed out to sea for what, we soon realize, is a funeral. The ceremony is in honour of the girl's aristocrat parents, killed when their plane crashed into the ocean. The woman in black is Eliane, owner of a large rubber plantation in Indochina, and she is about to become the guardian of the young girl, Camille (Linh Dan Pham).

Almost immediately, the story moves forward some years, so that Camille is now in her late teens, awaiting the return of her fiancé, Tanh (Eric Nguen), from Paris. She questions Eliane — whom she calls mother — about French girls; she fears that Tanh will no longer be interested in her, having seen the fair flesh and beautiful clothes of the Parisians. Eliane responds with a "you are what you eat" sort of parable: apples are the only fruit eaten by French girls, whereas she (Eliane and, by implication, also Camille) eats all manner of tropical delight, and is therefore much sweeter. Strange and convoluted reassurance it may be, but it offers a way into understanding Eliane, the narrator: she is no longer just French, though certainly not Vietnamese. She is, in a sense, the very essence of the colonial enterprise, changed by but always superior to that which is colonized.

That there is a definite structure of power in this relationship is unarguable, and clearly articulated in a scene in which Eliane whips one of her plantation workers as punishment for some misdemeanor. As she beats him, she tells him that she does not enjoy doing so, that it is like the sad but inescapable duty of a mother punishing her children. Power has its privileges, but it clearly also entails certain maternal responsibilities.

But Eliane is not merely a symbol of the colonial presence in Indochina. She is also very much a character in her own, personal right, and it is this successful melding of the symbolic and the emotive that makes Wargnier's film work. Eliane is clearly enmeshed by her position and her life, unable to transgress the limitations of her social status and her sex, unable to indulge in the pleasures of a congaie (a native concubine) as her father does. Despite her telling Camille that she is like a mango, she in fact seems a much harder fruit, spending much of the early part of the film with a set, emotionless expression. Only when handsome young naval officer Jean-Baptiste Le Guen (Vincent Perez) appears on the scene does she soften. And how: from rejecting the offer of protection from her would-be suitor and the Police Chief, Guy Asselin (Jean Yanne), to crying into Jean-Baptiste's arms, "Protect me, I need you." The transformation is difficult to understand, given the dastardly behaviour of Le Guen, except as the cry of a woman tortured by a sexual frustration which she dare not articulate; but Wargnier seems to want us to believe that this is true love, since that is what pumps the narrative along.

Shortly after Eliane's dalliance with her bit of seawing fluff, Camille sees him and falls likewise hopelessly in love. All thoughts of marrying Tanh are thrown out the window, which is fortunate because he has become more interested in the politics of revolution than in girls. When Eliane realizes what is going on, and sees the potential for three lives to be destroyed (such is the power of romantic love), she has her policeman friend Asselin pull a few bureaucratic strings to have the young man banished to an outer post of Empire.

Heartbroken, Camille dons peasant garb (symbolically shedding her privileged lifestyle in favour of the less obvious rewards of love) and sets off in search of her heart's desire. Jean-Baptiste is similarly heartbroken, though less on account of his separation from Camille than his distance from the ideals of imperial conquest that originally brought him to Asia. Far from bringing the virtues of French culture to a backward land, he now finds himself administering a slave market for the dirty mechanism of colonial capitalism.

Camille's arrival signals a shift in tempo from the languorous pace of the colonial palaces in Saigon to the frenetic and dangerous charge towards revolution. Significantly — at least in terms of the ideology of Wargnier's history — the act that propels Camille from silly schoolgirl to revolutionary leader is motivated equally by personal love and a sense of social injustice. Inversely, Jean-Baptiste's decision to flee with Camille after she has shot his commanding officer in the head seems as much a response to the betrayal of the ideals of colonialism as to his bewildered infatuation with her.

Whatever its plausibility (and the film is rid- dled with implausibilities), Camille's action is what finally galvanizes the film into action, and saves it from being just a sickly, bizarre love triangle kind of romance, albeit set against a pretty interesting period of Asian history. From this moment on, the story becomes more concerned with the emergence of a culture of resistance to French rule than with romance.
Unfortunately, however, Wargnier’s detailing of the growing mythical status of Camille, Jean-Baptiste, and their young baby tends to raise the trio to the status of deities, and denies the sense of a genuinely popular uprising stemming from a mass consciousness of injustice and the possibility of change. It is as if Wargnier is suggesting that these three individuals were significantly responsible for the overthrow of French colonialism, in the same way that John Avildsen’s *The Power of One* tries to convince audiences that a white boy called Peekay is almost the sole motivator for black South Africa’s demands for justice. Either way – the power of one or the power of three – the device smacks of an attempt to rationalize and reduce the history of popular politics to the cult of personality.

The major failing of Wargnier’s film is, in fact, to do with questions of history and its articulation: Whose history is spoken, and by whom? Eliane Devries is, of course, the narrator, and she speaks both for herself and for the colonial enterprise, a sort of a French Kurtz before the horror sets in. But the history she speaks is not just hers, it is also Camille’s. And Camille, like Eliane, is as much representative of a nation as she is an individual. She is Vietnam, or rather Indochina in the process of becoming Vietnam. She is a child of modernity (her parents die in a plane crash), raised between two cultures – the traditional Vietnamese and the French – neither of which she can ever truly be a part. She is a hybrid, neither one nor the other (to appropriate Homi Bhabha), at first compliant to the wishes of her colonizer (Jean-Baptiste/the French Empire), but gradually becoming aware that she must break away from the dual binds of Empire (cultural and military power) in search of a new and as yet unknown identity.

The very fact of Camille’s relative voicelessness robs the film of much of its possible power, rendering it as more a last-days-of-empire piece of nostalgia than a birth-of-a-nation fanfare. Large chunks of history are skated over, too, and that terrain which is traversed is done so in such a vague and sketchy manner that one is left with the impression that between 1930 and 1954 there were a few disturbances to the French administration which convinced it to gently and willingly hand over power to the Vietnamese. The defeat of the French in 1940, the Japanese occupation until 1945 and the internecine politics of the emergent nation are totally absent from this history.

Yet, *Indochine* somehow manages to make such elisions seem unimportant, while never quite succumbing to the temptation to leave its narrative concerns at the level of romance. Despite the nagging sensation that Wargnier’s history is vague, selective and anti-popular, *Indochine* still impresses with its poetic imagery, its rendering of the historical and the personal as inextricably entwined, and its attempts to explore the dual cultural alienation that is the post-colonial experience.


**ISABELLE EBERHARDT** RAYMOND YOUNIS

Of adventurers who journey to strange lands in search of diversion or forgetfulness, panaceas or that peace which is oblivion, there are many films – and of individuals, odysseans or lotus eaters, who seek their own image, eidolon or double.

Isabelle Eberhardt was such a seeker or adventurer, and much else besides. Born of a father who had been a member of the Russian Orthodox church and who died an unhappy and regretful man, and a mother who had been the wife of a tsarist general before taking up the Muslim faith in Algeria, Isabelle’s background is distinctive to say the least. She too travelled to Algeria in search of one or two things which have become no less elusive over the past ninety-two or so years.

The film is set at the turn of the century when France was in the process of extending its dominion in North Africa. Isabelle leaves Paris and Geneva in search of a mysterious marquis, though she soon convinces herself that he has perished in the desert (an ominous metaphor?). She forgets him rather quickly and finds herself involved in the turmoil of Algiers. She also tries to write short fiction. When she is not writing, she seems to be supporting – alternately, at times; simultaneously, at others – the Arabs and the French in their internecine conflict. She falls in love and she also finds time to search for the “peace” of her “soul”, though what that might mean while she is alive is not at all clear (what it might mean, one might add, after death is not a jot clearer!). Unfortunately, the search for the marquis is forgotten – not surprising, given the number of distractions here – and we do not learn whether that peace which she had valued so highly was ever attained or even attainable. Probably not, one infers.

The film, it must be said at the outset, is deeply disappointing, a pity since it is clear that there is neither a lack of ambition nor a lack of ability here. The director, it would seem, planned to make a film about everything, or just about everything, under the sun of Algiers (not to mention the shadows of Geneva and Paris).

The thematic concerns encompass the search for identity and the creative constitution of the self; the nature and the role of the writer in a tumultuous world where values are compromised or surrendered, where unscrupulous or sadistic officers are predominant; the issue of complicity in dishonourable political and military processes and in the brutality of colonisation; the paradox of tribal conflict among the indigenous people; the need for love and companionship; and the desire for oblivion (which is another name for the death-wish in a land where the desert is often obliging) under a sky which seems to be indifferent to the fate of such restless and tormented wanderers. No place for dreamers, indeed.

In this hodgepodge of a film, many strands are either abandoned (an over-burdened director?), obscured (ill-prepared script?) or forgotten (poor cutting?). Consequently, the film lurches from one city to another, one subplot to another, while the really interesting material is submergèd for significant periods. A pity, a great pity, there is some fascinating material here.

Not all fails, though. The cinematography and art direction are often striking. The transitions from the darkness and shadows of Geneva (and rain), where Isabelle’s father dies, and Paris to the brilliant, piercing light of Algiers, though familiar, do provide a dramatic analogy in relation to Isabelle’s own journey through this world. The desert, and the structures that men erect against its harshness, its alien aspects and inexorable winds, are highlighted in a number of memorable scenes. And a rather tired-looking Peter O'Toole, professional that he is, does what he can with dialogue that is too often stilted, banal and pretentious. Also, there are some visionary moments and
There are many artistic and narrative parallels between Stanley Kubrick’s futuristic allegory, *A Clockwork Orange*, and Geoffrey Wright’s *Romper Stomper*. Both films feature a gang of hoodlums who become social outcasts, spending most of their time vandalizing, drinking, rooting and “hanging out”.

In each film, there is a fine line dividing the behaviours of both the law and the gangs. Both are allowed to literally ‘get away with murder’. In *A Clockwork Orange* and *Romper Stomper*, the law has carte blanche to use violence against the gangs, in a gratuitous way, as witnessed during one sequence in *Romper Stomper* where the police pursue and attack the skinhead gang hiding out in a warehouse. Wright shoots the police chase and fight sequence in similar style to an earlier sequence where the skinheads embark on a death and destruction mission, maiming and killing several Vietnamese.

However, while Anthony Burgess’ novella charts the sardonic ‘reformation’ of Alex, leaving no doubt in the reader’s mind that its hero, despite his history of ‘ultraviolence’, will never be made to repent his ways, Wright’s *Romper Stomper* leaves the viewer thinking its key characters, Gabe (Jacqueline McKenzie) and Davey (the late Daniel Pollock), will pay heavily for their deeds.

Wright likens the skinhead gang to a surrogate family with Hando (Russell Crowe) as its leader and ‘father’ figure; Davey, his closest mate, alternates rôles of ‘brother’ and ‘son’; and a collection of motley blow-ins who hero worship Hando, like Peter Pan’s boys.

Hando commands respect and instills a sense of purpose into the group. The skinheads’ bonding ritual involves boozing, banging their women and affectionately brawling amongst themselves. Their comfort zone is fractured with the arrival of Gabe, who becomes Hando’s lover. Unlike other skinhead molls, who are portrayed in the film as dumb and submissive, Gabe bunks the order by undermining Hando’s power base. At first she adopts a child demeanour, wooing him with her girliness. As their relationship develops, she takes on a motherly rôle, for example in the scene where, after breaking into a warehouse, Gabe cooks for the gang, much to the disgust of Hando, who rejects her attempts at establishing a ‘homely’ environment by trashying her cooking.

Unlike the other molls who simply flee when things start to turn nasty, Gabe enacts revenge when Hando finally dumps her by attacking him on peer and personal levels: snitching on the gang’s whereabouts to the police and by seducing Davey, his ally.

In the dénouement of the film, Hando confronts Davey with a dilemma: loyalty to his male buddy, whom he has known through thick and thin, or loyalty to Gabe, whom he loves dearly. Hando cajoles; it is a case of better the devil you know than the devil you don’t, entrenching Davey, “We’re all we’ve got left, Davey.”

The scene is shot on a beach, which augments the incongruity of the skinheads against the natural beauty of the sea. It is as though Davey and Hando will never fit into the ‘real’ world; they are true misfits.

During the confrontation between the two men, Gabe scours rock pools for signs of life, fantasizing about happier childhood days. Like the skinheads, Gabe is also a social outcast, caught between lobbing off and being attracted to her father’s pedophile advances, desiring love and acceptance yet overcome by suspicion and hatred. Gabe is initially attracted to Hando’s strength, but becomes disillusioned as her ‘Lolita’ charms fail to woo him. When she overhears what fate Hando and Davey are planning, she spitefully sets the car on fire. The burning of the car signifies the end of the trio’s flight; they are forced to confront their emotions on the beach.

Through anecdote, Wright evokes sympathy for the skinheads’ plight: in most scenes, they appear like a bunch of aimless larrkins clinging to a cause, in this case neo-nazism. This neo-nazi thread, mostly visual, is never deeply explored. Wright uses it as a symbol of loyalty, supremacy and collectivism.

Rock video-style editing, featuring ‘wobble-cam’ and jump cuts, tends to distract the viewer from some of the film’s more intense scenes.
particularly during the film's set piece which involves a fight between the skinheads and the Vietnamese. Interestingly, the film's ugliest moments do not revolve around the skinheads but are set in Gabe's father's swanky house, a tribute to the excesses of success.

Rompers Stomper is like peering through an eyeglass at the some of the dress in society, ironically summed up by one skinhead comment, "We came to wreck everything and ruin your life. God sent us."


STRICKLY BALLROOM PAT GILLESPIE Baz Luhrmann's Strictly Ballroom was recently lauded at the AFI awards as the best Australian film of the year and has been enormously popular with the public. Critically, the film lacks pizzazz. While Strictly Ballroom loosely pays homage to 1940s dance musicals, the similarity stops with the ballgowns. It doesn't have the sheen of any Astaire and Rogers film, nor does it have the energy of Staying Alive or the romanticism and charm of Le Bal. Its call to fame is hype - a candid glimpse into the tacky, unnatural world of ballroom, but without insight. The characters are one-dimensional, the comedy is ham-fisted and irritatingly overdone, and the execution lacks subtlety.

Luhmann has gone on the record as saying the "film is not, strictly speaking, about ballroom dancing, it's about all of us" (Cinema Papers, No. 88). Luhrmann islands a wan 'lurve' story, which is the linchpin of the story, is decidedly glib and he fails to steam up the screen as Fran's lover.

The love story is a limp bridging device to hold together a number of clichéd vignettes. In one scene, Scott is taught the macho Spanish dance, the paso doble, by Fran's father. In one sense, the scene symbolizes the imparting of strength and wisdom from the older bull to the younger, yet the scene disintegrates into yet another cliché: ethnic family life and its down-to-earth values versus the tacky technicolour of the Australian ballroom life. Drama is an integral part of Spanish life, whereas the Australians introduce drama into their otherwise bland lives. It is the classic us-and-them scenario.

Scott crosses the boundaries and effectively is shunned by his colleagues. After Scott and Fran's father 'bond' on the dance floor, the scene cuts to a long-shot showing the group partying and a train leaving frame, suggesting one journey ending and another beginning. However, the rest of the film fails to explore the changes within Scott, preferring to wallow in the cosmetic build-up to the championships.

Choreography throughout the film is chopped into fragments and edited to fit the filmscore instead of being allowed to explore its own visual rhythm. The dénouement of the film, the Pan Pacific Grand Prix dance championships, is where Scott and his new partner, Fran, showcase their talents and get a second crack at winning. Ironically, the final dance sequence is so over-edited that one is left feeling frustrated, not elated, and wanting the 'money shot'. The flurry of cuts creates ambiance, not resolution. One gets the impression that Scott hasn't challenged the system sufficiently to make change. He's just made a chink in its lacquered armoury.

The film ends on the crowd dancing away to "Love Is in the Air" - like a 1970s Eurovision pop contest - yet fails to deliver the promise it has offered throughout: Did Fran and Scott actually win and what happens to them?


FRAN (TARA MORICE) EMBRACES YA YA (ARMONIA BENEDITO) IN BAZ LUHRMANN'S STRICTLY BALLROOM.
SAN SEBASTIAN 1992
A SHOWCASE FOR INDEPENDENTS
JONATHAN HOUSE

From 17-26 September, the San Sebastian International Film Festival celebrated its 40th edition and its second year under the direction of the Belgian general delegate, Rudi Barnet. The Festival is one of Spain's oldest and the only one belonging to the IFFPA class "A".

Set in a city known as one of the most beautiful of Spain (San Sebastian is a resort on the country's Basque coast), the Festival attracted some of the biggest stars and hosted some of the most important premières of world cinema. Its Concha (conch) Awards are the most coveted in Spanish Cinema.

But although the San Sebastian Festival is Spain's biggest, in recent years its relationship with the press and prominent industry figures has been marked by controversy.

In 1990, the Jury of the Official Selection walked out of the final deliberation process before choosing a winner, complaining of the low quality of the films. Last year, with the arrival of Barnet, critics generally agreed that the quality in Competition had improved but that the films in the parallel sections were worse than ever.

This year, the Festival got off to a better start. Barnet, after making the last selections of 100 films from an original list of more than 600, declared, "Last year we sowed the seeds. This year and the following we will reap the harvest."

The local press, traditionally among the Festival's most ardent critics, appeared optimistic as well. During the days leading up to the event, most critics refrained from passing judgement on the Official Selection, saying they didn't know enough about the films chosen. But they did venture to comment on the organization of the other sections.

"The programme of the second edition under Barnet is very complete. The organizers have taken into consideration last year's criticisms", stated Egin, one of the Basque country's leading newspapers, in an allusion to the bad reviews given to the Festival's parallel sections. The article goes on to applaud the Cassavetes retrospective, the Open and Opera Prima sections.

What Barnet tried to do
Barnet and Festival director Koldo Anasagasti want to create a niche for San Sebastian among the big European festivals. According to Barnet, "We are trying to create a meeting point for independent production. Other festivals, such as Cannes and Berlin, don't give enough space to unknown directors and low-budget productions."

For Barnet and his team, independent production means that the director has control over his own film. The projects are more original, but, of course, more difficult to finance.

Many directors make their films in their own houses to cut costs. They use their family and friends in the cast. John Cassavetes did. And so did Jeffrey Levy and Steve Antin, creators of Inside Monkey Zetterland and Ferenc Grunwald's Goldberg Variations, both which competed in this year's Official Section.

This year most of the films presented at San Sebastian, both within the Official Section and without, had budgets of under US$500,000. The American films, with a couple of notable exceptions, such as Barbet Schroeder's Columbia-produced Single White Female, didn't receive financing from major studios.

Festivals can help these productions by giving them free publicity and greater access to sales and distribution networks. "We want to promote art," says Barnet, "but also commerce."

This year, in a new innovation, the Festival's 100,000 ECU Concha de Oro (Golden Conch), awarded to the best film in Competition, must be spent on international distribution.

The selection called Opera Prima (the phrase means the work of a first-time director) presented 20 films by directors who had never made a feature-length movie. With its 150,000 ECU prize, directors can cover a good portion of the cost of their next movie.

The organizers created the section "Welcome Mr Cassavetes" to use the figure of the American director as a symbol for the Festival. They collected copies of 11 different movies from around the world and invited several of Cassavetes' collaborators to attend. "He was a producer-director-actor, a true independent, the kind of independent the Festival seeks to support", says Barnet.

Barnet was uncompromising in choosing the films for the Festival. The selection committee decided, for example, that only one Spanish film was worthy of inclusion in the Official Section. "The selection this year has avoided all outside pressure. For example, 16 Spanish films were presented and we only took one in Competition."

Similarly, with the French films, I saw more than 40 films and the ones we have ended up with are only nominally French. The real talent and roots of films like Tito and Me, Moscow Parade and The Oak are from Eastern Europe."

How it went
As expected, the Festival films this year came under some fierce attacks from the national press. This time they were mainly movies from the Official Section. About half received "0", "1", or "2" ratings from Spanish critics in the "Critics' Poll" kept by the Festival's daily publication. Some of the victimized directors couldn't believe that the marks were really out of ten.

Carlos Boyero of El Mundo, for example, in his review of La Tarea Prohibida (Forbidden Home­work), by Mexican director Jaime Humberto Hermosillo, implored the director not to do any more homework. Later in the week, the mordant critic described another film as "alarming idiocy" and another as "full of the worse clichés and a grotesque lyricism."

Foreign reviewers, on the whole, reacted differently. In the Critics' Poll, on average their marks were about twice as high as those of their domestic counterparts. Barnet pointed out the difference, arguing that Spanish critics have it in for the Festival.

Sandy Mandelberge, president of International Media Resources, a public relations company representing American independent producers, thinks that the Festival has done a good job representing non-commercial films from around the world. For American independents particularly, he says, "Success at a European festival will open doors back home. After Steven Soderbergh's Sex, Lies, and Videotape won at Cannes, people became interested in it back in the States. It became an international hit."

And Renzo Fegatelli, critic for La Repubblica, says, "The level of films in all the sections here have been really quite impressive. Opera Prima, with films like Abracadabra and Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me, is comparable in quality to Un Certain Regard at Cannes."

Some of the films
The most popular film in Competition and the winner of the Golden Conch was Un Lugar en el mundo (A Place in the World) by Argentinian

PEDRO OLEA'S EL MAESTRO DE EGRIMA (THE FENCING MASTER).

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director Adolfo Aristarain. Famous in Argentina, and in most of the Spanish-speaking world, for his movies of suspense and intrigue, the director has made a different type of movie.

**Un lugar en el mundo** explores the difficulties in living by ideals such as honor, dignity and justice. The content seems to have struck a chord in Argentina. With more than 300,000 tickets sold so far, it is one of the year's most popular movies.

And it won a lot of sympathy in San Sebastian. In the Crtic's Poll, the film got an average score of 7.46, putting it comfortably ahead of Grunwald's *Goldberg Variations*, a story about parents coping with the suicide of their teenage son, with 6.2.

Set in a small Argentinian village, San Luis, *Un Lugar* tells the story of Mario, a schoolteacher who fights to provide the local peasants with a better standard of living. He tangles repeatedly with Andrade, a tyrannical landowner.

Aristarain dramatically opposes the idealistic Mario with Hans, an ironic Spanish geologist hired by Andrade to look for oil on his lands. Hans, a former social agitator himself, regards Mario with a mixture of awe and disdain.

Mario's plans are, of course, doomed to failure. He himself senses it, but is undaunted. "If I cannot win the war," he says, "I can at least have the satisfaction of winning a battle."

To make the movie, Aristarain made a deal with the actors and technicians. He started filming with less than half of the $1,200,000 total cost of the movie and told the actors and technicians he'd only pay them if ticket sales passed the 300,000 mark.

The only Spanish film of the Official Section was *La Reina Anonima (The Anonymous Queen)* directed by Gonzalo Suarez. *Reina* is his third film, after *Remando al Viento (Rowing with the Wind)* and *Don Juan en los infiernos (Don Juan in Hell)*, and firmly establishes Suarez as one of the country's most important directors.

The movie's stars are Carmen Maura, famous for her roles in several Pedro Almodovar films, and Marisa Paredes, who appeared in Almodovar's *High Heels*, but who is most known in Spain as a stage actress.

When asked about his new movie, Suarez says, "Just after finishing a movie, I can't talk about it very easily. It takes on its own character and I need to let time pass before I can objectively evaluate it."

In the case of *Reina*, Suarez's confusion is easily understandable. A movie with "the structure of a vaudeville comedy", according to Suarez, it is filled with strange characters and even stranger occurrences. In the film, Ana Luz (Carmen Maura) is a housewife who lives quietly with her husband until "the stranger" (Marisa Paredes) mysteriously appears in her life. She introduces herself to Ana Luz as "the neighbour from downstairs" and sets off a bizarre chain of events which alter Ana Luz's life.

Suarez has made all three of his films in the last four years, a high rate of production in Spanish cinema. He says,

> The more I do, the more I see that I've to learn. To develop a good understanding of all the elements that go into filmmaking takes a long time. But I approach each new project with more enthusiasm than the last. I'm anxious to continue.

**The state of Spanish cinema**

The Festival included two other Spanish films: *El Maestro de Esgrima (The Fencing Master)* by Pedro Olea, which inaugurated the Festival, and *Sublet*, the first film by Chus Guiarterez.

The three films presented at San Sebastian are representative of the varied panorama of contemporary Spanish cinema. Olea describes *Maestro* as full of passion and mystery with a historical background of a country in violent political crisis. It is a "costume thriller" full of romance, with a superb central figure - the fencing master Don Jaime Asturloa.

*Sublet*, on the other hand, describes the difficulties of a Spanish girl in adapting to life in New York. She doesn't speak English very well and she doesn't understand the people who never seem to say what they think. Her neighbourhood, Hell's Kitchen, is not very hospitable. The producer of the film, Fernando Trueba, said he was attracted to the story of *Sublet* because it was a "mixture of autobiography and fable where impressions are more important than action".

Surprisingly enough, Rudi Barret's pronouncement on Spanish cinema went unchallenged in the press. But several industry figures, although they didn't dispute Barret's opinion, did qualify it.

Pilar Miro, who directed *Beltenebros*, starring Terence Stamp, said, "Yes, it has been a bad year in terms of production. Fewer films were made. Less money was available for films. But the talent is there."

Television Espanola (TVE) is the principal financier of films in Spain. But this year's loss of advertising revenues caused the collapse of the state-run television station's pre-sale and co-production arrangements.

In addition, many industry figures find fault in the government film funding system which, through the Culture Ministry, provides subsidies on a project-by-project basis. The way forward is to direct government aid on a corporate basis into diversified television and film production companies.

During the Festival at San Sebastian, the representatives of 19 producers announced the formation of the foundation, PROCINE, to strengthen Spanish cinema. Each member of the group has given $33,750. According to one representative, Elias Querejeta, "For the first time an organization arises which has the means to be effective."

Although the needs of the 19 members of PROCINE are diverse, talks which ran through the summer established certain common objectives such as encouraging collaboration between television stations and film producers, establishing new means of financing and tax incentives for investment in the industry, and promotion of Spanish cinema in international markets.

Hopefully, Spanish cinema will fare better at the rest of the festivals this year.

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**TORONTO**

**17TH ANNUAL FESTIVAL OF FESTIVALS**

**RUSSELL EDWARDS**

It is not surprising that many Australians will remember the 17th Annual Toronto Film Festival mainly for *Strictly Ballroom*'s adding of the Toronto People's Choice Award to its seemingly endless list of successes. By being chosen as the most popular film out of 166 features from around the world, *Strictly Ballroom* certainly pulled a coup. But there is much, much more to this overwhelmingly huge Film Festival than the fortunes of one Australian film.

The Festival opened with Quebeçois director Jean-Claude Lauzon's second film, *Léolo* (to be distributed by Dendy Films in 1993). At the opening night party after the screening, audience reaction was divided about this polished, beautiful and at times shocking look at the madness of a Montréal family through the eyes of a boy who claims to be the only sane member. The most undeniably potently image had people talking all through the Festival: a group of teenage boys, wearing leather jackets and smoking cigarettes, bribe one of their gang to sodomize a cat. With *The Rolling Stones* "You Can't Always Get What You Want" on the soundtrack (as Lauzon observed, "money is just a pretext"), the moment is a magnificent blending of music, dialogue and image.

This controversial scene has already been excised from the version released in the UK and there is talk that the film may be truncated in Australia as well. *Léolo* also had, as director Lauzon was keen to emphasize at the press conference, many moments of humour and beauty as well.

Toronto always ensures that local product is given a showcase. In addition to opening the Festival with a Canadian film, the Festival of Festivals annually presents a programme called "Perspective Canada". The 22 Canadian features were led this year by Guy Maddin's third feature, *Careful*. Recently hailed by Martin Scorsese as a genius, this director, who emerged from the Winnipeg Co-op, was warmly received by the Toronto audience despite his unorthodox style.

In a question-and-answer session after the screening, Maddin described his work as "a positive view of incest".

*Careful* tells of the inhabitants of a Swiss mountain village who must eternally speak in whispers lest they inadvertently cause an avalanche. The strain produced by this atmosphere is a metaphor for the sexual tension later acted out between the mothers, sons, fathers and daughters of Tolzbad.

Though non-sequiturs, jokey title cards and just plain absurdity are used for comic effect, the film is kept on a nervous edge to puncture any audience security that the film is one big joke. With a deliberately scratchy print, the syntax of a Von Stroheim drama, strangely pensive performances (from Paul Cox and Gosia Dobrowolska as well as Maddin luminaries like Kyle McCulloch and Sarah Neville), an abundance of soft focus and an outrageous use of tinted colour (sometimes blue, sometimes yel-
low, sometimes lavender and occasionally all three), this film and its maker are in a category all their own.

Since Cannes, it has been open season on David Lynch and cultists have been looking for a new director to place on a pedestal. Maddin belongs there but his work is so idiosyncratic and he has strained so far from the path of knowing hipness that it is doubtful his world could sustain the idolatry.

Knowing hipness is something that many people brought to Remy Belvaux’s C’est arrivé près de chez vous (Man Bites Dog) and then were forced to choke on as they laughed. One of the most original films of the Festival, this Belgian film is funny, appalling and unforgettable.

Profiles a serial killer named Benoît who performs his trade for a film crew (“I always like to start the month off with a postman”), this mock-umentary is insidiously intelligent and well-made. At a question-and-answer session after the gala screening, an audience member commented that he thought Passion Fish would be Sayles’ first big commercial hit. Sayles dryly replied that every time he makes a film someone comes out with this prediction and no one’s been right yet.

Every night of the Festival had at least one Gala Screening. Among these were Kenneth Branagh’s Peter’s Friends, Neil Jordan’s The Crying Game, Robert Redford’s third directorial effort, A River Runs Through It, John Turturro’s directorial debut, Mac, which won the Caméra d’Or at Cannes this year, and Billy Crystal’s directorial debut, My Saturday Night (written with Crystal with the superb Ganz and Mandel writing team), all of which were well received. Other Galas, such as Jean-Jacques Annaud’s interpretation of Marguerite Duras’ L’Amant, were exquisitely dull, while the screening of Hal Hartley’s latest film, Simple Men, gave attendees yet another opportunity to mistake intelligence for genius.

Gary Sinise’s treatment of the Steinbeck novel, Of Mice and Men, gathered a lot of attention and, despite the softening of certain chauvinistic aspects of the original book, remained faithful in spirit. Sinise’s direction was efficient but his performance as George, the paternally sarcastic friend of Lennie (played by John Malkovich), proved that acting is his definite strength. Any interpretation of the simple-minded Lenny is a target for scrutinization, particularly in these politically-correct times, but Malkovich’s portrayal of a lumbering giant with the mind of an insecure eight-year old child proved fascinating in its authenticity.

One of the major benefits of attending film festivals is the chance to catch films that, though effective, will nevertheless find distribution a problem. Toronto provided at least two such films. One was a very personal documentary from, of all people, Frank Perry. The director of films like Diary of a Mad Housewife (1970) and Mommie Dearest (1981) was diagnosed as having stomach cancer, and consequently put himself in front of the camera to record his effort to fight, heal and co-exist with his disease. On the Bridge is a very confronting film which manages to present a man doing his utmost to be honest with himself, the world and ultimately death.

Even more powerful was Rain Without Thunder, directed and written by former lawyer Gary Bennett. A science-fiction film set in 2042, Rain Without Thunder is based very much in current American reality. In a series of documentary-style interviews, the film tells the story of a mother and daughter who have been jailed for the crime of “fetal murder”. With stars like Jeff Daniels, Linda Hunt, Frederic Forrest and Austin Pendleton lending a hand, this film may turn up somewhere but its subject matter—a woman’s right to abortion—will make it a hot potato. Regardless, it is a calm, intelligent film with a lot of savvy, addressing an issue that is usually soaked in emotionalism. Only a superfluous, MTV-inspired sixty-second dream epilogue mars the film.

Toronto’s annual emphasis on Latin American content also provided some cinematic treats. Como Agua Para Chocolate (Like Water for Chocolate) was splendid though a trifle overlong at 120 minutes. Basing his film on one of the best-selling Mexican novels of all time, director Alfonso Arau fondly relates the story of Tita, who is forbidden to marry because of an antiquated, even in 1910, custom which obligates the youngest daughter of a family to look after her mother. The film has some erotically-charged moments, in addition to some sequences of pleasingly natural surrealism. Coming in second in the People’s Choice Award, Como Agua Para Chocolate will do well on the arthouse circuit if picked up for Australian release next year.

Of two other Mexican entries, one seemed to be inevitable, while the other seemed most unlikely. Jaime Humberto Hermisillo’s follow-up to Homeland, called Forbidden Homework, is like the previous film a delight, though it explores darker territory. A reversal of the previous film’s premise, Forbidden Homework manages to exploit its predecessor without ripping the audience off.
One of the rules of film festivals is that you can't see everything, and with a festival as busy as Toronto's (there were up to eight participating cinemas showing films simultaneously), it is inevitable that I missed films of interest. The buzz on Stephen Gyllenhaal's Waterland, Jacob Young's Cageman, Clara Law's Autumn Moon, David Atwood's Wild West and Roberto Benigni's Johnny Stecchino was that all were well worth attending. Also very popular was a documentary on cinematographers called Visions of Light.

One other film deserves a mention not only for its excellent word of mouth but the miracle of its existence. El Mariachi was made by Robert Rodriguez during a summer break from his classes at the University of Texas. Rodriguez produced, wrote (with his friend Carlos Gallardo, who plays the title rôle), shot, sound recorded, directed and edited his film on a budget of $7,000. I regretfully missed this tale of mistaken identity between a hitman and a musician, but a film with that much guts can't stay away forever.

The choice of closing night film can often be as problematic as that of the opening choice. How to send people off with the feeling that the festival (any festival) was a total success rather than having audiences suspect that the whole thing ran out of steam halfway through. Toronto went against their tradition of exiting with a blockbuster and went out with a documentary from Canadian filmmaker, Ron Mann (whose Comic Book Confidential played the Valhalla circuit a couple of years ago). Everyone familiar with the work of this Toronto personality was pleased with the choice, expecting a good time. And, as anticipated, Twist was an informative and fun way to halt proceedings. With a myriad of old television clips (Mann called this "the film that took three weeks to write and three years to edit"), this documentary about that dance craze had people singing and virtually dancing out of the cinema, fondly remembering this year's Festival of Festivals and eagerly awaiting the arrival of the 18th of September, 1993.

SUZY AMIS AND KYLE MACLACHLAN IN BRUCE BERESFORD'S RICH IN LOVE.

VANCOUVER 11TH ANNUAL VANCOUVER FILM FESTIVAL

Compared to the Canadian Film Festivals held annually in Montréal and Toronto, the Vancouver Festival is a relaxed and relaxing affair. It is generally well-organized, both for guests and the paying customers. As with all festivals, some films are harder to get a seat at than others – advanced press coverage of the major films, published daily, ensures this – but provided you don't arrive at the last minute for anything about which there is a bit of a buzz (Baz Luhrmann's Strictly Ballroom, for example) there is never any real problem.

Vancouver's Festival is, like its counterparts in Montréal and Toronto, well supported by the city, local media, filmmakers and private sponsors. It hasn't the prestige of the others and suffers from a lack of suitably convenient venues. Nevertheless, public support is strong and the line-up of product, with its emphasis on the cinema of East Asia and Canada, impressive.

The Festival ran this year from 2-18 October, a long haul by any standard. Country by country, Canada headed the list as far as quantity was concerned, but Japan, Hong Kong, the U.S. and the UK were also strongly represented.

Australia did well with five films, including Strictly Ballroom, Geoffrey Wright's Romper Stomper and Paul Cox's The Nun and the Bandit, providing contrast as well as quality.

The work of an Australian director, Bruce Beresford, opened the Festival, but the film, Rich In Love, is American, the story of a girl's dream of reuniting her broken family.

This beautifully shot (by Peter James), well-acted ensemble piece was outclassed as a piece of filmmaking by a small-budgeted American movie on the same theme, Gas Food Lodging, a triumph of convincing observation by first-time director Allison Anders, who also wrote the screenplay.

Anders' film was the most successful of a group of movies programmed under the generic title "Young Americans". Others included such misfired attempts at black comedy as My New Gun and Hold Me, Thrill Me, Kiss Me.

The quirky Galaxies Are Colliding from writer-director John Ryman – about a man so upset by the state of the planet that he has lost all interest in normal pursuits – showed genuine originality, while Mistress, a film from Robert De Niro's newly-formed Tribeca Production company, about a writer seduced by the idea of having a script filmed, had some superb performance from Robert Wuhl, Martin Landau and De Niro himself, but suffers because Altman's The Player got to this territory first. Mistress was co-written and directed by actor Barry Primus, who reportedly spent seven years getting this script to the screen. One feels a lot of his experiences were relived in the often biting and amusing movie. (One could hardly call Primus a "young American", by the way.)

Easily the most confronting, however, of this group of films was Quentin Tarantino's first feature, Reservoir Dogs, a crime thriller of sometimes ferocious unpleasantness which should give our local censors a hard time when it comes before them. Undeniably a work of considerable talent, one wonders, nevertheless, what sort of audience could possibly enjoy the experience of watching it.

Kenneth Branagh's acting company, having successfully brought Shakespeare (Henry V) and a thriller (Dead Again) under his direction to the screen, had less success with Peter's Friends, a patchy mix of sophisticated farce and sentiment. Amusing at first, the characters were hard to take seriously as the mood darkened.

Benny's Video made its point about alienation in a cold-blooded fashion. Benny is a youth so disconnected from reality that even the view from his bedroom window is merely a picture on the video equipment around which his whole life is centred. His fascination with images of death leads to a killing, a scene which owes its staging to a similar sequence in Henry: Portrait Of A Serial Killer and which is equally hard to take.

Neil Jordan's The Crying Game is a mix of thriller and character study with one of the cheesiest and most breathtaking plot twists since Janet Leigh took that shower in Psycho.

The Mexican film, Like Water For Chocolate, based on a popular Mexican novel, proved often fascinating with its touches of magical realism as it tells the story of a powerful matriarch who holds her youngest daughter in thrall. Food plays an important part in this movie as the put-upon heroine uses it to help her obtain both revenge and erotic satisfaction.

The Argentinian A Place in the World looks in flashback at the youthful life of its central character with parents who are political refugees. Some fine acting and a genuine sense of place and time made up for some longeurs in the script, while Zanussi's The Silent Touch, a Polish-Danish-British co-production about an ageing composer (Max Von Sydow) coerced into a last burst of creative activity by a youthful musicologist (Lothaire Bluteau), proved disappointing.

Of many fine documentaries shown, the Canadian Father and Son from British Columbia stood out as a personal and revealing examination of some difficult relationships. Brother's Keeper and Manufacturing Consent, both shown recently on Australian television, were, in their very different ways, equally fascinating.

Australia's Black Harvest, directed by Robin Anderson and Bob Connolly, won $1000 as the Best Feature-length Documentary, while Strictly Ballroom tied with Zhang Yimou's Story of Oui Ju in the voting for the Air Canada Award for most popular film of the Festival.
NEW AUSTRALIAN CINEMA: SOURCES AND PARALLELS IN AMERICAN AND BRITISH FILM

STUART CUNNINGHAM

Although the subtitle of this book refers to “sources and parallels” in British and American cinema of films from the New Australian Cinema, it is not a reference book. Authored by two well-known writers on Australian cinema, it is structured at the most general level as an argument about the influence, or more pertinently the lack of it, exerted by the American cinema on high moments of national cinema, in Britain in the post-war period (1940s-'50s) and in Australia in the contemporary period (1970s-'90s). The simultaneous inevitability of the stylistic influence of the American cinema on these small and derivative national cinemas, and the sad failure of that influence to be fully embraced, used and allowed to flourish to full efflorescence, is the authors’ basic argument throughout the book.

There is a great deal to applaud about this book and the approach it takes. Internationalizing studies of national cinemas such that the ‘sources and parallels’, or the various strands of influence, effect and derivation, are foregrounded is a forward step in the literature. Historicizing the study of the ‘new Australian cinema’, such that the classical Hollywood cinema, dating back to the 1910s, is taken as its primary stylistic source, or that this would be a surefire recipe for many commentators, the full amplitude of the 166). And surprisingly and disappointingly, there is not much in the way of explanation for this central failure: “For what may well be similar reasons, [melodrama] has never had in British or Australian film the valued place it has had in American film”. (p. 230).

A more substantial discussion of cause and effect, of influence and resistance, of interconnections between industry and style, is needed here – the expository clarity of the textbook gets in the way of the argument. Hollywood classicism is not coterminous with melodrama – the latter is a mode seen in a variety of aesthetic media, while the former is a formal ensemble of techniques for optimum storytelling in a commercial, technology-intensive medium. Indeed, for many commentators, the full amplitude of the melodramatic mode will conflict with the normalizing tendencies of the classical style. There is as much ‘failure’ to fully exploit the melodramatic mode in Hollywood as there is in any national cinema. This would suggest that the central critical prescription of this book needs considerably more examination in order to elucidate the preconditions for successful exploitation of melodrama, first in Hollywood, then in cinemas widely separate in size, time, and geography from it.

Charles Chauvel exploited the melodramatic mode most fully of any filmmaker in the early Australian cinema, but this didn’t guarantee his filmmaking greater success or greater industrial centrality – indeed, it often had quite the opposite effect.1 And the Australian films that most fully exploit the potential of melodramatic fullness in the contemporary period (such as Roadgames, Patrick, etc.) don’t necessarily work either (and it’s not for stylistic reasons that this is the case).

Most interestingly, the melodramatic mode has changed significantly in the post-classical period (during and since the 1960s) in Hollywood, and elsewhere. Those Australian filmmakers who currently seem most aware of the melodramatic tradition in the sense advanced by McFarlane and Mayer are as often as not makers of small innovative material, not higher-budget mainstream films. Films like Camera Natura quote the melodramatic greats or, like Ghosts... of the Civil Dead, render the melodramatic ‘text of muteness’ in new and arresting ways. Little of this material, however, suggests that you can or should simply reproduce classicism and melodrama in geographical and historical circumstances far removed from their sources, or that this would be a surefire recipe for success if you did.

The melodramatic tradition has not only changed in the cinema, it has migrated from the cinema – into television in the 1980s in Australia. The most achieved renditions of the mode in Australian audiovisual work during that period, and the most industrially successful at that, were the mini-series, among them: The Dirtwater Dynasty, Shout!, Brides of Christ, Come in Spinner, Vietnam.2 And these do not display the failure to fully exploit the mode that McFarlane and Mayer identify as the defining mark of the Australian cinema during the same period and earlier. I don’t see why we need to continue the artificial separation of television from film when the industries were to most intents and purposes (that is, higher-budget audiovisual production) during the 1980s two sides of the same coin, with most of the more interesting innovations and achievements pertinent to the authors’ argument occurring in television.

As for the thesis that Australian and British cinema fail to fully exploit the richesses of the American tradition, there is no discussion of the “positive unoriginality” thesis put forward by Meaghan Morris in discussing Crocodile Dundee, or the idea of “synthetic remodelling” (Australianizing Hollywood genres) advanced by this writer as a way of interpreting some of the most interesting cinema in Australia in the 1980s.3 The notion that national cinemas have not gone down the path marked out by Hollywood, to their own detriment, has a venerable history – it was used throughout this century in Australia by
industry apologists to justify why local production was not supported within the industry. Critics, when they use it, often forget that the reasons why national cinemas must mark out different forms of production have to do as much with the industrial dominance of Hollywood style and the resources that support such dominance (thus, a decision to complement through niche production rather than attempt quixotically to compete head on) as it is to do with an inability or unwillingness to learn from, appreciate or indeed actively imitate that style. The more one knows about the full richness of the melodramatic tradition, the more one might decide to mark out a difference from it that might make a difference in recognition and acceptance in other places and times.

The Australian films that ‘broke out’ in the 1980s were those which exploited melodrama, but overlaid it with confident Australianisms (the Mad Max trilogy, Crocodile Dundee, The Man from Snowy River), but the recipe would not necessarily cook up a storm in the 1990s. Most of the successful contemporary films (Proof, Sweetie, Strictly Ballroom) are classic niche market, arthouse, or retro material. Because of the dominance of Hollywood in the cinematic exploitation of melodrama, national cinemas often must exploit other angles, and should be appraised on this basis. While McFarlane and Mayer at times dip into the policy and industrial issues surrounding the contemporary Australian cinema, they do not seem to want to join the debate with any great conviction – a debate that has been intimately informed by the issues germane to their book. Because of a virtually exclusive attention to textual and aesthetic form in their discussion, questions of how filmmaking, policy direction and financial support in the Australian cinema might respond to their arguments are never addressed.


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BRUCE BERESFORD: INSTINCTS OF THE HEART Peter Coleman, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1992, 158 pp., pb, rrp $16.95
The first study in book form of not only Bruce Beresford’s highly successful film career but also his life.

It’s open season on film scripts, and this is one of the better publications. This year Casablanca celebrates its 50th anniversary and Howard Koch takes a look back to the development of his and Julius and Philip Epstein’s original screenplay. Following the screenplay are analyses of the film’s status as one of the most enduring cult classics – writers include Richard Corliss, J. Hoberman and Umberto Eco. Original reviews by Howard Barnes and Bosley Crowther are also reprinted for comparison against this new legend of screen history.

This compendium of articles by Australian writers on film arrived too late for review in this issue; one will appear in the next.

HOLLYWOOD BABYLON II Kenneth Anger, Arrow Books, London, 1990, 323 pp., pb, rrp $29.95
This re-issue of Hollywood Babylon II coincided with Kenneth Anger’s visit to Melbourne and Sydney last June. Anger really surpasses all others in the field of ‘rumourdom’. At times the accuracy of his anecdotes may be questionable, but this is a secondary concern as what delights is Anger’s remarkable flair for detail as he uncovers the delicious and dark “realities” beneath the glamour of Hollywood.

Both Hollywood Babylon and Hollywood Babylon II are as legendary as the lives of the stars they peek at.

THE FILMS OF NICOLAS ROEG: MYTH AND MIND John Izod, Macmillan, Basingstoke, 1992, 294 pp., illus., hb
John Izod, a senior lecturer in Film and Media Studies at the University of Sterling, has written an intriguing book of the work of Nicholas Roeg from a Jungian perspective. In particular, Izod highlights the use of puzzles and even reproduces a Tibetan mandala as his first illustration.

Izod is of particular interest on Walkabout, Roeg’s brilliant Australian film. His analysis of the Aboriginee’s relationship with the girl is particularly astute and his comments on the ending pick up what has been missed by many: namely, that the ‘memory’ the girl has in her high-rise apartment (of the three swimming and playing naked) is imagined:

Where in actuality she had swum alone, in her vision there exists between her and the black boy an ease in their shining bodies, and a grace in their shared joy […]

The girl’s loss is not of a perfect past – that never happened – but of a possible future.[p. 65]

Some will find Izod’s readings of the films rather unusual, especially if one is not a devotee of Jung or his black-umbrella’d predecessor, but this is a stimulating work that one imagines Roeg would take great interest in.

THE INESSENTIAL ELLIS Bob Ellis, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1992, 160 pp., pb, rrp $14.95
A collection of new and old essays by one of Australia’s most acerbic critics and filmmakers.

IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE: A PERSPECTIVE ON FILM EDITING Walter Murch, AFTRS, Sydney, 1992, 108 pp., pb, $17.95 (direct sales)
Walter Murch is one of America’s leading film editors and sound mixers. He is a regular for Francis Ford Coppola, having worked on The Conversation, Apocalypse Now and all three Godfather films. Murch’s other credits include American Graffiti, The Unbearable Lightness of Being and the recent Zoetrope production, Wind. This slim publication is a revised version of a lecture Murch delivered at the AFTRS in Sydney in 1988. It is a concise and well-presented overview of Murch’s work and insights in the art of editing. In addition to the original lecture is an afterword on computer-based technologies. It is essential reading for student and professional practitioners, and a worthwhile read for film critics and scholars as well.

John Parker’s search beneath the “overcoat of gloss and glitz that hides the real Jack Nicholson” is rather lame and un inventive. Parker is not game enough to explore the world between the screen, the persona and the life, in the fashion of David Thomson’s book on Warren Beatty, or Nick Tosches’ on Dean Martin. The success of the latter two books relies partly on constructing something of an imaginary world which seeps into the “real story”. It is a world where actual events meet with attitudes and world views to shape a personality. The Joker’s Wild, however, sticks strictly to actualities and plods along with event after event in Nicholson’s life. In the end, there is no mystique to Nicholson’s leery smile or the devilish glint in his eyes. Indeed, Nicholson comes across more as a man of moderation than the “wild card” this biography wants to reveal.
IVAN HUTCHINSON’S MOVIES
ON TV & VIDEO
Ivan Hutchinson, edited by Maggie Pinkney,
The Five Mile Press, Melbourne, 1992, 350 pp., pb, rrp $14.95

This guide draws on Ivan Hutchinson’s vast knowledge of movies garnered from his years as a film presenter on Melbourne’s Channel Seven and a film reviewer for radio and the national print media. (Ivan is also a contributor to Cinema Papers.) The emphasis of the guide is on recent features, so it is not a comprehensive listing, but rather seeks to provide a shortcut to Ivan’s selection of the best movies on TV and the best movies to hire. His capsule reviews are enjoyable to read and highly informative, more so than in most other guides with their annoyingly short comments.

THE LAST DAYS OF CHEZ NOUS & TWO FRIENDS
Helen Garner, McPhee Gribble, Melbourne, 1992, 226 pp., pb

The original scripts of two films by Helen Garner (though the latter is actually titled 2 Friends). Included is an interesting introduction by Garner regarding her experience of writing for film, as opposed to the experience of writing a novel. But, as usual with published film scripts, the introduction is all too brief.

MONTGOMERY CLIFT: BEAUTIFUL LOSER

A very elegant-looking book that includes previously unpublished photographs. Montgomery Clift is an icon of the 1950s in the same league as James Dean and Marlon Brando, but still remains something of a shadowy figure. The text by Hoskyns tends to eulogize Clift a little too much instead of addressing why Clift is still an enigma today. Also, much of the material has already been covered in greater detail elsewhere, particularly in the 1978 biography by Patricia Bosworth.

RODGERS & HAMMERSTEIN
Ethan Mordden, Abrams, New York, 1992, 224 pp., illus., hb, rrp $79.95

For one who rates The Sound of Music (Robert Wise, 1965) as one of the direst of all film experiences, a book on the show’s creators, Richard Rodgers and Oscar Hammerstein II, is not a high priority. But this work by Ethan Mordden is a gem. Gloriously illustrated and with a witty, erudite text, it is a worthy celebration of one of America’s greatest Broadway teams.

The book is divided into discrete chapters on each of their 11 stage shows, with brief comments on any film versions. There is no biographical material about either man’s life, or their separate careers, except for a brief encapsulation in the Oklahoma! chapter. The book presumes, quite reasonably, either prior knowledge of a desire to continue one’s reading on its subject’s lives. There is a succinct bibliography at the end, with some trenchant comments from Mordden.

Apart from the aforementioned stills, in glorious colour and crisp black and white, it is the pithy text that delights. Here is a typical extract:

South Pacific’s curtain rises on two Polynesian children singing a song (in French) so short that it’s over in literally thirty seconds. The kids leave just before a navy nurse and a French planter enter, apparently on a date but also apparently utter strangers. Small talk ensues. Songs: what she believes in; what he needs. It’s mystifying and fascinating – the Polynesians and the whites, the navy and the civilian, the young woman and the older man, her nièvete and his passion, a dense mix [...] The South Pacific movie isn’t that rich, from the drab opening sequence inside Cable’s plane to the perfunctorily erotic look of the location shots on Bali Ha’i. One reason why we never see the place in the show, except for the inside of a hut, is that Bali Ha’i is more a concept than a locale. It’s dreamland, a place few of us ever get to go. But [film director Joshua] Logan takes us there, and it looks like your high school with coconuts. [p. 124]

As well, there is always interesting analysis of a show’s lyrics, score (with extracts) and plot. Mordden’s knowledgeable comments on the casts are also rewarding.

This is a joyous book written by an expert about a subject he loves. It is highly recommended. S. M.

RESOURCE TOOL HANDBOOK

A resource tool for production houses and anyone working in the special-effects business. It is a directory of where to go for equipment and materials needed for special effects construction. The major portion of the directory consists of organizations and personnel in the U.S.; there are, however, listings for most major cities around the globe.

STRICTLY BALLROOM

Publishing the script of Strictly Ballroom on the heels of the film’s enormous success is called merchandizing. There is no significant appraisal of the script or the film: just a few very brief and “fluffy” comments by producer Tristram Miall, and equally brief and “fluffy” reviews reprinted from The Financial Review and The Australian.
that rhetoric has so many functions; sometimes it takes the form of modesty or the sense of shame. If you are talking about something very personal, you use a rhetorical form; it is a sort of veil. Rhetoric was a bad thing more than a century ago, but then you also have to say it was the most rhetorical century in Italy. And there is the fact that rhetoric was so refused by romantic poets, by modern poets, by the majority of artists, until recent years, like in the ’70s. So I was simply fascinated by that, in a very chaotic way because my ideas are not clear about that yet.

In 1987 you remarked – using a philosophical concept from Whitehead – “the cinema seems to me the most perfect expression of the ‘perfect location fallacy’”. It is the idea that one point for the camera is better than another. It is not exactly a philosophy; it is sort of an ideal, or a superstition. Of course, I think it is the wrong way of thinking. What is funny with such fallacies is that first they are an accident, and at the same time they are a complete necessity. Jean-Marie Straub believes there is a point for the camera which is the only one possible and he spends days and days looking for this point.

My objection is not against the idea that, in photographic, three-dimensional, imaginary space there is a point that is evidently the best; my objection is that I don’t believe this space exists, because of the mixtures of different kinds of space. If you have a room without any furniture, without any windows, there is still a shadowy part and a sunny part, and that means there are at least two spaces co-existing. I don’t believe in speaking about only one space or point. There is never one space.

In what sense are your films personal? Do they relate to you and your experiences?

I am trying to change my mind all the time, and I am fascinated by those artists who were able to escape themselves through rhetorical forms in order to appreciate themselves. Of course, you can say that you are going to escape from yourself because it can be your own obsession. But what is interesting is that the way to escape from yourself is to form your obsessions, which are birds. The way to escape from yourself is to follow your own obsession.

You have spoken of the body separated and made into parcels which are distributed around space, as part of a larger classification system of the body in cinema. It has often been noted that you are very interested in situations where different actors portray the same character, or in which the body literally belongs to different actors but is doing the same work in films like Petit Manuel d’histoire de France (1979) and La Vocation suspendue (1977).

And in my films Le Professeur Taranne and Allegory (1989), where everybody plays every other rôle. I am trying to disconnect or destroy the connection between the character, the history and the appearances of the bodies: that a particular face cannot necessarily be related to a particular event.

One of the first things that interested me in cinema is something you cannot show, so of course that can be the space “out” or “off”. But it can be something inside. The “I” that is inside, this sort of ghost or spy or soul that is there. I find it quite practical to have many characters playing the same rôle, and after a moment the rôle is separated from the character. “He” is there; this invisibility or ghost is more real than the character.

When you get older, say after forty years, you can have this sort of impression when you meet new people that are so similar to people who are dead, and in some way they are the same people. I think this is what [Pierre] Klossowski is talking about when he talks about the eternal retour. These moments, these intensities, are repeated, and so in some way the same person is there, suggested with the movement of a hand, for example.

Such a ghost can be split amongst a number of people?

Yes, being the same one. Remember Tobi in La Ville des pirates: he is somebody who believes he is many people. Only it is a joke because “he” believes “he” is from a very formal family.

And, of course, there is this curious play by Jean Cocteau called Les Chevaliers de la table ronde [The Knights of the Round Table], where there is a demon who goes ‘inside’ every character, so the demon is always somewhere and you sometimes recognize him by his acts, by his deeds.

A central theme in your work is the body. Is it the sacred body?

I would say theoretical, not sacred. The bodies are figures, and they provide a way of connecting elements that are not evidently connected inside the image or frame.

There are comic elements in films such as Les Trois Couronnes du Matelotand L’Hypothèse du tableau volé which some viewers seem not to get.

There are always moments when I make a film, pretending to work with extraordinary philosophical things, then I suddenly feel that they are so ridiculous. All the films are potentially very funny.

When you start making the rough cut there are always accidents at the end of a take and sometimes inside a take. That can be very funny, so I try to insist on leaving it. Sometimes I even provoke the accident and play with the audience – mainly with a television audience, because they are convinced that you are making something quite serious. Then in a moment it changes, putting people in a position of tension. It sort of becomes a rock concert, a tennis match, a football match.

When you learn the game, it is a good time to change the game. That always has an effect than can be comic or simply gives you the joy of trying to destroy something. It is like the joy of children trying to destroy, or of Chinese bombs.

Have you ever wanted to do a film of purely visual gags in the style of Maurizio Nichetti, Jerry Lewis or Jacques Tati?

Not really. When gags happen all the time in a film, they are just ‘extras’. But I like to work with the moment just before the gag; or make it a very, very long joke, so long that it becomes tragic.

Part 3: Five Films

Both The Suspended Vocation and Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting are based on the works of writer-artist Pierre Klossowski.

Klossowski is not very French, if you know what I mean. Of course, he’s French because of his family ancestry; it’s an old Polish family which came to France in the century of the Napoleonic wars.

Klossowski is deeply connected with French culture but he never felt comfortable in this culture. He was always very interested in Spanish and Italian culture mainly and, of course, classical culture. But these aspects were more-or-less ignored in France.

Klossowski I discovered really by chance, reading his novel La Vocation suspendue while waiting for a friend in a library, and then I bought the book and thought it was very strange. It has the form of the proverbs, the proverbs of a future book that never comes.

This book talks about all the quarrels inside the church, of different factions in the Catholic church, and this was not very different from the discussion and quarrels inside the Left movements in Latin America, which is not so strange if you think that this movement was composed by ex-Catholics. They made a transcription of old Catholic quarrels inside the Left, which is one of the ways you can read the political movements in Latin America.

I was of course fascinated by this and, when I started working on this novel, Klossowski was so surprised that I wanted to do it. We talked about how we could do it and we became friends. I wanted
to make something with the whole body of his work, so I wanted to make a documentary of sorts. But he was quite shy and timid about it and did not want to work on that.

I was interested in the novel because part of the work is a combination of perversion and theology, mostly to work inside the form of perversion as a philosophical work. I am much too Catholic to accept that. I prefer to work with the other kind of perversion, with the Catholic perversions, in the theological nightmares and the institutional nightmares. I was most interested in how institutions work, how an institution is ideology plus bad faith.

What does Klossowski think of the films you've made based on his work?

He likes La Vocation suspendue a lot. He didn't like L'Hypothèse du Tableau volé too much.

You often refer to Klossowski's idea that the unconscious is something that happens between people.

One of the reasons I became interested in Klossowski is because he created one of the most powerful critiques of identity, of personal identity.

The idea you mention seems to me to be very evident and at the same time very strange. It's that you are never you; you are always somebody else with another person. You are not the same person with your wife; your unconscious changes when you are with a friend or when you are buying your newspaper. You are all the time changing identity.

It was crazy, but it was a central element for me to think about working with characters, with the non-existent characters of the cinema.

Later, Klossowski told me he never said that, that maybe it was a misunderstanding. But I am sure he told me that.

De Grands Evénements et des gens ordinaires (Of Great Events and Ordinary People, 1979) is a collision between documentary and fiction.

A collision and also a mixture. It shows how I like to work on the border, not to go to one side or the other.

What I wanted to do in Chile was to make a film without a theme, without a central subject. I didn't know how to do that at the time, I didn't know if it was possible. What happened was really an accident.

The film was part of a series of films about the Left movement at the time of the elections and which were to be shown in conjunction with the Left's success. But the Left lost the elections, so there was no reason to go ahead with the film. I decided to play around with other ideas like difference, and the difficulty of concentrating centralized images around a central theme or subject. So what I did was to pass from one to another, to play with a sort of vagueness, an impression of in-existence.

At the time I was working with a close friend, Jean Baudrillard. The text was not written by Baudrillard, but he speaks it. The film is a kind of anti-documentary, which is still a documentary because there are documentary elements that become strange because they are not centralized. I have kept making this kind of film from time to time. The first was when I went back to Chile after ten years of exile; and also Inferno, which I finished there.

In La Mémoire des Apparrences (1987), you combine a play by Calderón and a story involving someone remembering a list of resistance workers in Chile, using the play and its link to movies from popular culture.

It is a film about the art of memory, classical memory. I was very fascinated by a book of Frances Yates [The Art of Memory], and I started reading a lot around the idea of the art of memory in the 17th Century. Now I have the book by Quintilianus [Marcus Fabius Quintiliano], De Institutione Oratoria. I was fascinated because although I have a good memory, memory is still a mystery for me.

I wanted to make a film about the attribute of memory and the use of memory in films, which was going to be called Imago and the Art of Classical Memory. This became La Mémoire des Apparrences where you see this building which is an element of La Vida es Sueño [Life is a Dream] by Calderón, this sort of ballade sentimentale about a place of imprisonment. I then used this text which is the names of resistance workers.

In the art of memory, you need a place that you know perfectly; it can be your body, your house, your town with your church. Then you need to put a sign there; they need to be signposted, like "we are called images", particular and unforgettable images. The concept entails putting weird images or objects that are very easy to remember, and then connected with the place or the image of the place you have the order of the text. The images give you the more technical element, and then you put your text.

Perception and memory are some of the key points in a critique of identity.

Sure, you have to remember that you are you if you want to be you.

Can La Mémoire des Apparrences be considered an allegory?

I wanted to make a film about what happened in Chile without using Chilean elements. It was a case where allegories infected other systems and made everything else allegorical.

The film is making a connection between at least two allegorical systems: one is the system of memory and the other is the system allowing La Vida es Sueño to stand for Latin America. By mixing both, the result is that Chile itself becomes an allegory of something else.

This connecting aspect of allegory is one of the things that fascinated me the most in this moment. You make an allegory and this allegory touches an element of real life and makes this element become an allegory of something else, of some distant object, and when this object is touched it becomes another allegory and so on.

I use allegory as an element. And yes, it seems to me that in this moment, especially, most of the arts have refused this form of the allegory which was such an important element in the history of culture. This is why there were so many enormous works, not only the [Divina] Commedia by Dante [Alighieri], but by so many others in England, for example.

I was interested in how it works and discovered it is not so easy to do. And when I started asking how the allegorical Spanish hero could work so well, I started writing allegorical plays.

This is very recent, just over ten years ago, but of course the interest has come from a very distant past. When I went to Chile six months ago I discovered an autó sacramental, an allegorical play called The Feeling of the World, written by me at the age of 15. I started a long time ago.

How did John Hurt and David Warner relate to your way of working during the shoot of Dark at Noon?

The first thing which helped me is the fact that because my English is not very good, especially early in the morning, they instinctively tried to help me. The other thing is that, even though the film is not really a conventional film, the elements inside the film are, in a way, conventional – i.e., the commonplace elements of horror and fantastic movies – and they are actors who can deal with those types of images.

The only problem for the actors was to act as though they were playing in many films at the same time. Then I was trying to systematically re-write scenes, put new scenes when we were going good; as was the case for David Warner. I wrote several scenes which
were not in the script at the beginning.

What was more difficult was to mix languages. English and French require two very different kinds of rhythmic acting. The only way to deal with that was to make the difference more evident. Also, the French actors come from comedy. They are comedians who eventually got to make ‘serious’ films, but normally they make comedies. And so that’s another element of difference evident in the film. There is a lot of patchwork.

Did you start with a complete script?

It’s difficult to explain. I started with an old script I wanted to make in the ‘70s, a normal horror movie with elements from H. P. Lovecraft and the like. Then, at the beginning of the production, I realized maybe it was easier to make another kind of film, using the capacity of the actors. So I started re-writing the script completely. It was finally ready one week before shooting, so it was not really different from my other films.

Was this a relatively high-budget film for you?

For me, yes, definitely. Something like between three and six times more money than what I usually have. But I had a bigger crew, which meant I had to work slower. So, in one way I won; in another way I lost. I lost flexibility and speed.

You’ve said often that you don’t keep proper track of your career. Agnès Varda was recently in Australia and she said she worked in the same way for most of her life, but when her husband Jacques Demy died, and she was in her sixties, she suddenly decided she needed to put all of her films together as well as those of Demy. She is now going mad trying to get hold of the old prints and get control of the films. Do you think this will ever happen to you?

I don’t really know. I hope it is too early for me. [Laughs].

FILMOGRAPHY

1960 La maleta (The Suitcase) – not completed. 1967 El Tango del exilio (Widower’s Tango) – not completed. 1968 Los tres tigres (Three Sad Tigers). 1969 Militarismo y tortura – documentary short; La cate naria – not completed. 1970 Que hacer? – co-directed. 1971 La colonia penal (The Penal Colony); Nadie dijo nada (Nobody Said Nothing); Ahor te vamos a llamar hermano (Now We Will Call You Brother) – short; Mapuches – documentary short. 1972 Los minutores (The Minute Hands, a.k.a. The Street Photographer) – short. 1973 La expropiación (The Expropriation) – completed in Germany; Nueva canción Chilena (New Chilean Song) – short; El realismo socialista (Socialist Realism); Palomita brava (Bad Girl) – short; Palomita blanca (Little White Dove) – co-directed; not completed due to coup; Abastecimiento (Supply) – short. 1974 Diálogo de exiliados (Dialogue of Exiles). 1975 El cuerpo repartido y el mundo al revés (The Scattered Body and the World Turned Upside Down). 1976 Sólote – documentary short. 1977 La Vocation suspendue (The Suspended Vocation); Colloque de chiens (Dog’s Dialogue) – short. 1978 L’Hypothèse du tableau volé (The Hypothesis of the Stolen Painting); Les Divisions de la nature – short. 1979 De Grands Evénements et des gens ordinaires (Of Great Events and Ordinary People); Petit Manuel d’histoire de France (Short History of France); Images du débat (Images of Debate); Jeux (Games); Rue des archives 79. 1980 L’Or gris (Grey Gold); La Ville nouvelle (The New Town) – short; Le Jen de l’ave (Snakes and Ladders) – short; Teletests – short; Pages d’un catalogue (Pages from a Catalogue) – short; Fahistrom – short; Musée Dalí. 1981 Le Territoire (The Territory); Het dak van de wolven (On Top of the Whale, a.k.a. The Whale’s Roof); 4 épisodes de Le Borgne (The One-Eyed Man) – television serial; Images of sable. 1982 Les Trois Couronnes du Matelot (Three Crowns of a Sailor); Classification des plantes – short; Les Ombre Chinoise (Chinese Shadows) – short; Querelle des jardins (The War of the Gardens) – short. 1983 Bérenice, Point de fiesta, La Ville des pirates (City of Pirates); La présence réelle (The Real Presence); Volage autour d’une main – short; Lettre d’un cinéaste ou le retour d’un amateur de bibliothèque – television short. 1984 Manuel à l’île des marveilles (Manuel on the Island of Marvels) – three-part television series. 1985 L’Exilé du pont de l’Alma; Les Destins de Manoel (Manuel’s Destinies); Dans un Miroir (In a Mirror); Richard III. 1986 Mammane; Régime sans pain; L’Ile au trésor (Treasure Island). 1987 La Mémoire des apparences/ Vie est un songe (Life is a Dream); Le Professeur Taranne, La chouette aveugle. 1988 Brisse-Grace (Icebreaker) – co-directed; Tous les nuages sont des horloges – short; Palla y Talla. 1989 Behind the Wall; Allegory, The Altar of Friendship; Il Pozzo di Pazzi. 1990 The Golden Boat; La Telemoxela Errante; L’Exode. 1991 Inferno. 1992 L’Oeil qui Ment (Dark at Noon); La Fille de la Sortie (Exit Girl) – in production; Los Soldados – in production.

NOTES

1. Don Luis Góngora y Argote (1561-1627): Spanish poet who introduced a highly affected style into Spanish drama of the 16th Century; hence Gongorism.

2. Ford Beebe: American writer-director of low-budget Westerns, second features and serials. His filmography includes Flash Gordon Goes to Mars (1957), Riders of Death Valley (1941), The Invisible Man’s Revenge (1944), Enter Arsène Lupin (1945) and Bomba the Jungle Boy (1949).

3. Reginald Le Borg: Austrian-born director, in Hollywood from 1937. At first he worked as a shorts director then moved onto low-budget, routine features. His filmography includes The Mummy’s Ghost (1944), Calling Dr Death (1944), Joe Palooka, Champ (1946), Wyoming Mail (1949), The Black Sheep (1956) and The Diary of a Madman (1962).

4. DeWitt Bodeen: American screenwriter best known for his work with producer Val Lewton, The Seventh Victim (1943) and The Curse of the Cat People (1944). Other notable low-budget films include The Enchanted Cottage (1944), I Remember Mama (1944) and Billy Budd (1962).

5. Pedro Calderó de la Barca (1600-81): Spanish dramatist considered to be the successor of Lope de Vega. La Vida es Sueño is his best known work. He has written some 120 plays and more than 70 autos, dramatic presentations of the mystery of the Holy Eucharist.

6. Lope de Vega (1562-1635): regarded as the founder of the Spanish drama, author of a great number of plays, poems and romances, which had an influence upon European literature in general, particularly in France.

7. Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra (1547-1616): Spanish novelist. Don Quijote is of course his most famous novel, completed in two parts, in 1604 and 1615. He also wrote a number of plays, sixteen of which survive; and also a collection of short stories, Novelas Ejemplares.

8. Giambattista Marino (1569-1625): Neapolitan poet. Adone (1623) is his best-known work, a long poem on the love between Venus and Adonis. Marinnis describes an affected poetic style practiced by Marino and his followers.

9. Pierre Klossowski: novelist, essayist and artist. He is known as an astute commentator on the Marquis de Sade, and his pictures are mostly erotic and executed in pencil. He began exhibiting in public as late as 1967; and is brother to the painter Balthus. He appeared in Robert Bresson’s Au hasard, Balthazar (1966). Art & Text (July 1985) is devoted to Klossowski.

10. Marcus Fabius Quintilianus (c. AD35-C.100): Roman rhetorician. His greatest work is De Institutione Oratoria, the tenth book of which contains a history of Greek and Roman literature.
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- Spotswood – The Year My Voice Broke – Flirting – Young Einstein
- The Last Days of Chez Nous – No Worries

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**INTRODUCTION**

SMPTE 92-NEW HORIZONS has long passed by the time you read this and it was considered a successful sales event, at least by most of the bigger video companies. Its position as a source of up-to-the-minute information via the presentation of technical papers may not have been so vital this year, but it serves to bring us a greater depth of information, and to share local experiences, that we would undeniably be poorer without.

The Australian SMPTE shows are an event, made more important by the absence of rival trade shows available to the U.S. industry, such as Showbiz Expo. Because of this, there is responsibility to get it right. I heard a few rumblings about how the electronic media seems to have hijacked the event and how expensive the venue has become, forcing out many people who would like to have taken part.

There also seemed to be petty but obvious problems such as supplying the sort of power that would have enabled demonstrations of some of the bigger lighting gear, while generating plants stood by unable to be run due to regulations and space restrictions. It made people appreciate the flexibility of the Showground venue of past years (while I for one appreciated the access to the hotels and to the Darling Harbour amenities).

Taking the show as an event on the 1992 calendar, we have used the personal contact with most of the industry suppliers to catch up and now pass on some recent equipment releases. We also feel that SMPTE was useful to review the state of production on film in Australia at this time.

We have been talking up film as the ultimate quality image medium for some time. Much as I would like to think that we have had an impact on its swing back to fashion, the best we can claim is that with our ear to the ground we have heard the rumblings. No one is calling it a stampede as yet, but there have been positive reports from all the manufacturers that, with the economy in its current state, there are reasons to be optimistic. The film manufacturers have done a lot to revitalize the market with their continuing commitment to Research and Development. We have asked the three major players in the local market for a statement in their own words of how they see the prospect for their film product worldwide and at home.

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**KODAK**

Richard Krohn, National Sales Manager, Motion Picture and Television Imaging, Kodak (Australia), states:

I confess that I am not a fortune teller, nor do I own a crystal ball. It is also entirely possible that I am biased towards film. However, what follows is a brief outline of our best judgement about the future of the motion-picture business.

It is a business we know well and one in which we are pleased to play an important part. For all our technical expertise and wizardry, let me acknowledge that the key essential for success in this business is a good story. With a good story, filmmakers can make good movies.

Kodak states that today it is on the threshold of an exciting new era where art and technology are converging. This is certainly the decade when we will see a blending of film, video and computer technologies.

Boris Mitchell, Technical Sales Representative, Motion Picture and Television Imaging, says:

It is already happening in the creation of television programming and commercials. Film is routinely being converted into digital format for the blending of real and synthetic images.

Karen Eastmure, Technical Sales Representative, Motion Picture and Television Imaging in Melbourne, reminds us that music videos and commercials are on the cutting edge of new imaging technology: “They are frequently a marriage of film origination and digital technology that captures and maintains the aura of fantasy.”


Richard Krohn adds:

However, features are more of a challenge because of the vast amount of visual information captured on every frame of film. It takes 40 megabytes of binary data to represent the visual information on just one frame of 35mm colour film.

Kodak has just opened a test site for the Cineon Digital Film System, called Cinesite Inc.
This Electronic Intermediate System is situated in Burbank, California. The system incorporates CCD film scanner, image computing work station and software developed at Kodak (Australia), high-speed data recorders, and a gas laser recorder designed for optimized digital picture-to-film image transfer.

Bill Miller, of Kennedy Miller, Andrew Mason of Meaningful Eye Contact, and John Donovan and Bruce Williamson from Atlab have recently visited Cinesite Inc. All had good things to say about this leading-edge technology.

Cinema Papers asks, "What's on the horizon for television, especially HDTV?" Richard Krohn answers:

In a way HDTV has already done for film what the paperback did for publishing. It offers vast new markets for film programming. Producers have become sensitized to the fact that film origination on 35mm, Super 16 or 16mm is the surest way for them to future proof their libraries.

Steve Taysom, Technical Sales Representative, Motion Picture and Television Imaging in Melbourne, states:

There are few secrets about the current status of HDTV. NHK is programming eight hours a day in HDTV, popular film libraries are being transferred to layer disk HDTV format. That's all good news for filmmakers.

Tim Waygood, Product Specialist for Motion Picture and Television Imaging, says: "Recently a number of television programmes have been filmed in Super 16. This medium is ideal for wide screen 16:9 TV or HDTV." Waygood cannot add much more other than to say that he truly believes HDTV will be great news for television programme producers.

Krohn is so confident about the future of film origination for new television systems that he states:

Kodak continues to invest in a high-performance HDTV telecine. This telecine utilizes an array of advanced CCD sensors. We also developed unique optics and signal software, processing software for this HDTV telecine.

Helping to link film and video are Keycode™ numbers. Gary O'Brien, Technical Sales Representative, Motion Picture and Television Imaging, is working closely with film labs, neg matchers and telecine houses to help better understand this enabling technology. Importers of bar code scanners, and data management systems such as OSC/R have all worked towards making this technology work for local producers of features, documentaries and television programmes. Richard Krohn summed it up:

On the horizon, we look for vigorous international growth opportunities. Even though the current world recession has impacted independent productions both in Australia and in the rest of the world.

While in Hollywood productions dominate many world markets, we should not lose sight of the fact that low budget independent productions are the very backbone of this business. It is where filmmakers earn their stripes and represents opportunity for many in all parts of the world.

As we went to press, news was received that Australia's highest recognition for quality management, the inaugural Australian Quality Prize, was presented to Kodak (Australia) Pty Ltd.

The Australian Quality Prize is the peak achievement for Australian companies wishing to be internationally competitive. It represents a standard that is comparable with the best the world has to offer. Full details next issue.

— Graeme Wiskin
Manager Motion Picture Division
Agfa-Gevaert Limited

Competition is obviously a good thing and the winner is the industry, the gains being things like improved product, more research and development, and competitive rates for stock.

We are still turning out good pictures but Australian budgets are getting a lot tighter.

In the case of an average ratio picture shot on Agfa, the stock cost saving can be at least $12,000. It's like doing a deal with the labs or the hire cars, it is money that can be used to make it a better picture.

All our stocks, XT 100, XT320 and XTS 400, are $523 per 1,000ft, regardless of the speed. Kodak's dearest stock is 5293 at $658 per 1,000ft and you would think that a product which is dominant in the market place must be manufactured a lot cheaper than either Fuji or Agfa because of the volume. But obviously it's not.

No one is going to suggest that we have a lower quality product. We should be more expensive by rights because we have more silver in our stock than the other manufacturers.

We have compared high-speed Kodak 5296, our XTS 400 and Fuji's F500 and the grain of our stock is definitely finer grain and equal in over and under exposure latitude. (I believe the skin tones and blacks are better, but this gets into
Roger McAlpine: I was never good at knot-tying. Shoe laces were okay, but bow ties, windsor knots and rope tricks were out for me. I have survived nevertheless, although there were those occasions when I was carrying timber on the roof rack of the car. Then I always seemed to tie at least six silly knots on top of each other in an attempt to gain peace of mind on the way home from the timber yard. I had a secret admiration for those farmers and truck drivers who tied their loads down in a manner approaching art.

Well now I've joined those enlightened ones, become one of the knot-tying brethren. And it's all thanks to the Cinesaddle. I bought one three years ago, prior to shooting Embassy at the ABC. Our first two weeks were spent in Fiji shooting scenes with the tropical look. The schedule was very tight and it was necessary to keep the equipment list to the bare bones. It seemed like a job for Cinesaddle! The day I bought it, I took it home and practised knot-tying. It was like studying for an exam as I learnt to tie the Bowline and the Truckie's hitch. I passed Part A of the exam using a camera-sized road case mounted on the bonnet and then on the car's door sill. Part B was done with the real thing and I was relieved and impressed with the way the Cinesaddle held the camera securely to the car.

In Suva, the Cinesaddle was a godsend! In addition to car exterior-mounted shots, it was used for all the car interiors. Upon our arrival, we bought a piece of dressed timber, 19 x 300mm, and cut its length to fit across the sills of the rear side doors. This became a platform for the camera sitting in the Cinesaddle, and I was able to get shots in every direction. The only snag was with one car in which the window didn't wind down into the door as you would expect. However, I solved the problem by cutting a piece of timber to fit exactly between the windows but still resting on the sills. The sound recordist thought this was an excellent solution, so did I when it started to rain.

Suva is a city where the main roads are all one way. Therefore getting from A to B might be simple but getting from B to A might involve travelling right around the city centre. It took the first assistant director and the production manager a little time to adjust to this enlightened (?) traffic management system. We decided that the simplest way to get to many locations was to walk. The Cinesaddle became a protective basket for the camera, etc., as we tramped the hot and crowded Suva pavements. It also doubled as a welcome seat while we waited for the actors to drive from B to A or a Take 2.

(In fact, the insulating properties of the Cinesaddle are excellent. The DOP was seen on more than one occasion wearing the Cinesaddle on his head in the hot tropical sun. He also keeps wine and is very discreet in such circumstances.)

I had to resort to underhand measures when mounting the camera on the bonnet of a new model Falcon. The slope is so severe that even with a well-tied truckie's hitch, the camera had a tendency to slip down the bonnet. Room 147 at the Suva Travelodge came to the rescue by donating its nonslip rubber bath mat to the unit. I must also add that the stone tray on the Falcon is not as rigid as you would expect on a car. It did bend a bit as I pulled up my hitch.

For those two hectic weeks, the Cinesaddle was my constant companion, since then we have bought another and now both ABC grip trucks in Melbourne carry one.

It was just as well I learned to become proficient with those knots before going to Suva; the first assistant director used to be a farmer and the sound recordist owned a truck! ■

Roger McAlpine has been a camera operator since 1966, most of it with the ABC, and has worked on every major drama production from the Melbourne studios. He went to The Netherlands in 1987 as part of the design team working on the BTS LDK 900 video camera. His camera credits include I Can Jump Puddles, Lucinda Brayford, Come Midnight Monday, Descant for Gossips, One Summer Again, The Fast Lane, This Man Thia Woman, Street Angels and Embassy.

Cinekinetic gear is sold and rented by a number of distributors. Call or fax Michael Young for details.

Technicalities: Back to Film

more subjective judgments! It is up to the individual director of photography to do tests on those things).

There are too many people out there who stick to one stock and don't even know what the others look like. They all have different qualities and it is up to the director of photography to choose the qualities that suit his palette. And don't be frightened of mixing stocks. Steve Mason is shooting The Custodian on a mixture of Kodak 5293 for interiors and Agfa XT5400 for the exterior night scenes, and the colour balance matches perfectly. The labs aren't frightened of it anymore and it opens up possibilities to people like John Seale who shot his last picture on a mix of Agfa and Kodak stock, choosing what's right for the job (and remember he shot The Mosquito Coast on Fuji).

I'm just one person as against, who knows, maybe seven or eight Kodak sales people around Australia, but being from the production area makes my job a lot easier. I've been involved with the industry for almost thirty years now and having been behind the camera myself makes it easier to talk with DOPs.

Looking to the future, there is a lot of Agfa black-and-white stock being used in the archives and Agfa print stocks are being used more by the labs. We have also seen an increase in the use of 16mm stocks and in Super 16mm production, so I am quite confident and aggressive about the future place of Agfa in the Australian industry.

Contact: Graeme Wiskon  
Manager Motion Picture Division  
Agfa-Gevaert Limited, 2 Byfield Street, North Ryde  
2113. Phone: (02) 888 1444. Fax: (02) 887 1981  
Mobile: 018 447 949

Marc Van Agten  
Sales Manager, Pro Video and Motion Picture Film, Hanimex

The past year has been an interesting one for the Australian film industry with the introduction of many technical innovations, particularly in the area of post-production.

The industry has taken the first steps in adopting the use of the bar coding on 35mm neg. stock. One instance was on the recent production of Crime Brokers, which was edited on the "Touchvision" video system.

A concern for quality

The trend towards neg.-to-tape transfers, without making workprint, is becoming increasingly popular given the financial pressures placed on film budgets. Many Australian cinematographers consider this to be an area of major concern, as they can no longer view the one-light print from film budgets. Many Australian cinematographers consider this to be an area of major concern, as they can no longer view the one-light print from film budgets. Many Australian cinematographers consider this to be an area of major concern, as they can no longer view the one-light print from film budgets. Many Australian cinematographers consider this to be an area of major concern, as they can no longer view the one-light print from film budgets.
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facto distribution standard. It makes sense and

was assemble several different versions, compare each with the Director and

Producer so we could all reach the

right decision*.

Kodak has opted for a system that gives it a lot

more headroom and a file of at least 30 MBytes per frame. We covered the Cineon system in our

last issue, but this was the first demonstration I

captured with. The software interface of the

Cineon was presented in a showbiz style video

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Theatre in Melbourne at AAV. The 35mm pro-

jected film examples clearly showed the advan-

ces of the digital negative over the conven-

tional internegative and that's the exciting part.

THE INPUT, THE OUTPUT I believe it is going to be the quality of the I/O process that will decide which of the many systems we use. There is a growing body of software running on computers getting cheaper and faster that will give anyone film resolution retouching and graphics capability. The Paradox Matador system caught my attention. Running on a Silicon Graphics, its

function as a paint and keying system looked as good as the Harry/Paintbox combination but at film resolution. Industrial Light and Magic obviously like it; it had something like ten systems working on the sequence that twisted Meryl Streep's head around for Death Becomes Her.

The near future will see us do our retouching and optics on our own machines and go off to one of the big guys as a bureau for their fast scanners digitizing from our negatives, and for the final high-resolution output back to film, or something like the Solitaire.

SMPTÉ: The Papers

Super 16 and the benefits of AATON-Time Code received a good working over from John Bowring of Lemac whose AATON and Super 16 experience now reigns supreme. The conference Super 16 paper was an update of the Lemac Super 16 manual and, if you are contemplating the format, you must get a copy: it names names. Good useful stuff, and thanks John for keeping it up-to-date.

Kodak weighed in with some pieces about Super 16 suitability for HDTV that pointed out that Super 35mm would be better, but Super 16 can hack it with a bit of telecine help. There was more talk about film being "future proof" and, with the possibility that conceivably there may not be agreement on one world HDTV standard, that would leave widescreen film formats as a de facto distribution standard. It makes sense and in some throw-away snippets of industry news it appears that others agree. Apparently Swedish television has dropped video for all their drama programming because of future quality concerns. And it was pointed out that when they were shooting Get Smart and I Love Lucy on film, they didn't have any idea that the programmes would be making money thirty years later. It doesn't have to be art to make it worthwhile. Everything suggests that we can all expect to be shooting more 16mm.

There were some interesting archival papers. Apparently the ANSI group is going to train us to use the term LE (Life Expectancy) as this can be a rating that relates to certain film under specified storage conditions. There was also a paper that reassured you that your videotape programme recorded on any of the major players' D-2 tape should last at least 14 years, but there was some doubt about the earlier formulations to go the distance (gap!). The information points to the cassette shell as the best thing to have happened to videotape life.

In other papers, Kodak presented information about Eastman 5293/7293, its recently-released 200 ASA stock and a lengthy rundown on its new intermediate print film, 5244. Dominic Case ran through the strengths of Excalibur 2, whose screen display makes OSC/R look dead dreary. The video guys took up the rest of the time.

ures are indicative of production trends, placing the value of corporate production during 1991-92 at $170 million compared to $114 million for feature films. The figures showed a drop last year in feature film production but this was not reflected in the number of features. It is related more to the lower costs of production, not only through electronic post coding but also the increasing popularity of Super 16 against 35mm. The difference in 16mm stock costs alone is very significant in making this format attractive.

At this stage we are optimistic for production in 1993 based on the number of recent inquiries for Fuji film stock, both 35 and 16mm.

Contact: Hanimeax Pty Ltd, 108 Old Pittwater Road, Brookvale NSW 2100 Telephone: (02) 938 0400.

The Digital Optical

With that video bias to the show, this year the digital manipulation of film was a hot enough topic to get good coverage.

There were papers from Quantel and some examples projected, mostly still frames and barely-moving paint-animated ones that came via their Domino film scanner and system. It proved that 2880 horizontal samples X 2048 vertical samples looked pretty good on screen. Quantel is opting for storage on D-1 at the rate of 16 video frames for one high-definition frame, but to preview a moving sequence you need heaps of hard drives. An 8 Gigabyte disc pack would give you 30 seconds at that quality, and it takes about 30 seconds to scan in and output each frame of about 12 MBytes.

Kodak has opted for a system that gives it a lot more headroom and a file of at least 30 MBytes per frame. We covered the Cineon system in our last issue, but this was the first demonstration I caught up with. The software interface of the Cineon was presented in a showbiz style video produced by Tom Olson of Australian Business Theatre in Melbourne at AAV. The 35mm projected film examples clearly showed the advantages of the digital negative over the conventional internegative and that's the exciting part.

THE INPUT, THE OUTPUT I believe it is going to be the quality of the I/O process that will decide which of the many systems we use. There is a growing body of software running on computers getting cheaper and faster that will give anyone film resolution retouching and graphics capability. The Paradox Matador system caught my attention. Running on a Silicon Graphics, its

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The near future will see us do our retouching and optics on our own machines and go off to one of the big guys as a bureau for their fast scanners digitizing from our negatives, and for the final high-resolution output back to film, or something like the Solitaire.

NEW STOCKS AND FORMATS

For Fuji, this year has seen the introduction of a new high-speed 500 ASA stock which has received positive feedback, giving the Australian cinematographer a wider choice of stocks, from a low-speed 64 ASA to the new F500.

Fuji is also benefiting from the increase in electronic post-production, being one of the world's largest tape manufacturers. We often end up supplying not only the film stock for a shoot, but also their videotape requirements, DAT audio tape and Fuji photographic still film, all as a package deal.

The Australian Film Commission's recent
Technicalities

Jonathan Erland (right) is Director of Research & Development with Apogee Productions of Van Nuys, California, and has a credit list running back through more than a few of the special-effects films of the past 15 years. He has been in Australia recently, and stopped over in Sydney to present a seminar at the Australian Film Television & Radio School.

Jon was part of the original team at George Lucas’ Industrial Light & Magic, brought together for Star Wars. When Lucas moved ILM up to San Francisco, Jonathan Erland, together with many others, stayed in Southern California and formed Apogee Productions, an integrated facility that includes modeling, motion control, pyrotechnics and optical compositing.

In a four-hour presentation, the audience saw his massive personal collection of slides, demo reels, tapes, sections of technical papers and reels of features. One of Erland’s specialities is the various methods of travelling mattes, and he received the SMPTE journal award for his paper on the reverse blue-screen matting method used for Clint Eastwood’s Firefox.

Technology Council

Jonathan Erland has been pursuing a mission for several years which is now coming to reality as the Technology Council of the Motion Picture/Television Industry. Perhaps the first blessing is that TCMP is a name that defies all attempts at cute acronyms.

The Technology Council, based in the U.S., is a co-operative council formed to provide a centralized forum for the effective development of new technology and the exchange of technological resources. It has undertaken a number of projects that are beyond the scope of any one company, or will have more effect through co-operative action. In some cases, it acts in an advisory capacity; in others it takes on consultants through sponsor funding, to pursue specific projects.

The list of founding members is an impressive who’s whom, ranging from Warner Bros. through Panavision, Agfa Corporation and DeLuxe Labs to the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and including such individuals as special-effects guru Linwood Dunn, lens expert Glen Berggren and Kodak colour specialist and historian Rod Ryan.

Erland described some of the Council’s projects already underway in the U.S. Perhaps one that illustrates the effectiveness of the body best is the development of an aqueous film cleaner. Currently film is normally cleaned using an organic solvent, trichloroethane, which has been revealed as an ozone depleter. Legislation to limit the use of this chemical is obviously not far off, and the motivation to a more environmentally-friendly cleaner is obvious, particularly in Australia. Through the Technology Council, all three film manufacturers (Eastman Kodak, Fuji and Agfa Gevaert) are co-operating in developing a water-based cleaning system – both environmentally sound and more efficient.

Among other projects, the Council also has a film product advisory group, assessing the demand and need for new stock types with particular characteristics: for example, for improved telecine transfer, or for film special effects. It is active in the field of film preservation and restoration, and is developing an on-line computer database of technical information for the film industry.

Discussions currently under way may well lead to an Australian Film Technology Council, with similar goals. Many technical matters are specific to the local scene, and could well be tackled here, given the right forum. In particular, a well-managed local database, linked to an international one, could give access to everything from relevant technical standards to a local resource directory.

If you are interested in joining the U.S. Film Technology Council, or in the foundation of an Australian one, give Dominic Case a call on (02) 858-3840.

YOU CAN BEND REALITY, BUT DON'T BEND THE FILM

Erland aroused considerable interest, and some alarm, with a preview of his paper for the SMPTE conference in Toronto in November. A range of tests showed that stocks using the modern “T-grain” technology all suffered from a significant flicker in the blue-sensitive layer, which did not appear in the older conventional stocks. Fuji, Agfa and Eastman stock were all affected. Some cameras seem to be immune to the problem, others not.

Thorough testing revealed that if a small roller in Mitchell camera movements was replaced with a larger diameter roller, the problem was significantly reduced and sometimes eliminated. It seems likely that the flat (tablet-shaped) crystals in modern emulsions suffer a temporary desensitizing effect if the emulsion is stressed too much – such as by wrapping round a small roller.

Erland’s results have led Eastman Kodak to modify the emulsion in its 5296 stock, and camera suppliers have been able to replace the offending roller in most cases. Was this, as Erland’s paper proposed, an undiscovered problem with the stock or, as a Kodak representative commented, simply that camera design hadn’t kept up with modern emulsions? Or (my favourite trouble-shooter’s fence-sitting phrase) simply a product-process interaction?

Dominic Case
**Nagra Digital**

Somewhere between SMPTE and press time there should have been a story on the Nagra D, Nagra’s digital reel-to-reel recorder (pictured below). Yep, when everyone else has rushed of to cram their DAT cassettes into little plastic boxes that don’t have time code, Nagra has made a move that has really stirred up the coffee-time conversation with the sound guys.

This is a beautiful machine, incredibly solid like all Nagras and the result of lots of industry input. But is it too late? Too expensive?

We promise to ask the only person we know who has bought one, Philippe Decrausaz, Melbourne freelance sound recordist (and who has recorded sound on Flying Doctors for Crawfords for the last three years), how his Nagra D is going.

If you can’t wait and you’d like some further information in the meantime contact Ewen or Janet Coldrey, at dB Audio Junction Terrace, 16 Princess Street, Kew 3101 Phone: (03) 853 1070. Fax: (03) 853 5929.

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**Giving Edit Advise to ‘Lex & Rory’**

Barry Minster and John Leonard, who run their Lightworks-based non-linear editing company EDIT ADVISE out of Melbourne’s POST!, are now in post-production on what promises to be our first all-digital post-produced feature.

Described as a post-adolescence comedy-romance, Lex & Rory is being produced by Scott Andrews and Dean Murphy of Sounds Write Productions and is principally funded by the citizens of Albury-Wodonga, where the six-week shoot was recently wrapped.

During production, editor John Leonard said his cut was only a few days behind the actual shoot:

I am able to sync the DAT audio to the telecined negative in better than real time. This plus the faster cut that the Lightworks makes possible enables me to get into the fine-cut phase a lot earlier than I would normally.

With the Lightworks laying up the 100% audio track, it maintains the sound as digital right through to Post! Film and Video’s AMS Audio File for all the other lay-up and Foley work. Michael Slater, Post!’s audio supervisor, is reported to be excited by the project due to be completed late this year.

(Post! has also been involved in Sydney with the Beyond International series Submarines that is being cut on the Avid and there is now a lot more experience available with non-linear feature-length film-originated projects. It is clear that producers must look at the non-linear editing path for future projects or they are going to be wasting time and money.)

EDIT ADVISE is at 18 Kavanagh Street, South Melbourne 3205.
Phone: (03) 686 8888. Fax: (03) 682 6736.

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**ON FILM**

The Business Edge

Q. Is there a cost saving using Avid?
A. Yes. How much depends on the requirements of the project. The savings on work print alone is a major plus for Avid.

Q. Avid resolution is that good?
A. Frameworks offers 5 resolution levels. Lowest is VHS quality.

Q. Savings apart from work print?
A. Editing time is faster, certainly more efficient. 1 editor, 1 assistant and myself as full time Avid supervisor - a Frameworks exclusive!

Q. How much does training cost?
A. Absolutely nothing when it's part of any longform project.

Q. Are Frameworks competitive?
A. Call me.

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NORTH SYDNEY 2060
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FAX (02) 954 9017

Stephen Smith is Managing Director of Frameworks, Australia’s first and most experienced Avid facility. Now with 2 Avids, Frameworks understands the Business Edge.
Close to the Edge

KeyCode has made it easier for the neg. cutter. (Or has it? Check out our post-production special in the next issue.) But the edges of film are getting kind of crowded. From Ben Vanderlinde at John Barry’s came a swag of ARRI press releases that we just had to fit in somewhere. Included are details of ARRI’s time-code and the first pictures of the physical format. We still have to see the 535, but the information about its use in the U.S. makes it appear more like a solid item, less mythical. There has been time for ARRI to come up with the 535B, described as a smaller and lighter and modular expandable. (See caption details with 535B photo.) We are holding back a bit until we can get a “hands-on” story, so first the Super 16.

ARRI 16 SR3

The ARRIFLEX 16 SR3 is the camera ARRI told us to wait for rather than rushing off to convert the earlier SRs (or, more likely, buy an AATON). What the company has lost in momentum in the Super 16 production push will probably be balanced by all those staunch ARRI fans, but it will be interesting to watch the AATON vs. ARRI use in what promises to be a revival of film production for HDTV and feature blow-up. We will have to wait until early 1993 here in Australia for the first cameras, but the specifications look impressive now.

Briefly the reports go as follows. Weighing in at 7kg with loaded 400 ft mag. and on-board battery, it is capable of fast conversion from normal 16 to the Super 16 format. Integrated time-code. Takes PL (or pl as Arri writes it) mount lenses which makes the complete range of 35mm lenses available. A new viewing system with ARRIGLOW format markings and an especially bright and flicker-free video assist. There is an electronic control system for all functions that is shown on a large CCD display. An adjustable mirror shutter and a low noise level of 20 dB(A).

CHANGE TO SUPER 16

The decision to make the offset lens mount a pl-mount gives access to a lot of quality optics. There is even a special 41 mm steel bayonet lens mount adapter which can remain in the camera when changing lenses.

The film gate is universal, which makes the change of formats fast and leaves the original adjustments intact. The ground glasses and fibre-optic screens can be rapidly changed and then all that is required is adjustment of viewfinder centre.

TIME CODE

ARRI’s decision not to adopt the AATON time-code system (unlike Moviemax and Panavision, which may be the reason why) sent them back to the drawing board. The time-code generator is incorporated in the camera body, but the recording module is in a new 400 ft coaxial magazine. This means that existing magazines can be used when you are not using T/C. Apparently, the time code can be set on the magazine away from the camera body and the Nagra or timecode DAT or Slate is jam-synced to run together at the beginning of the shoot. The positioning of the ARRI code is radically different to the AATON. The ARRI uses a continuous narrow track on the image side of the sprockets. Apparently, even on Super 16 format the time-code information is clear of the image and it obviously doesn’t go anywhere near the Kodak Keykode numbers.

NEW VIDEO ASSIST

Two 1/2-inch CCDs are available: a colour and black-and-white with an anti-flicker module called the AFP-2. The beam splitter is interchangeable without requiring re-adjustment, and ranges from 0% to 20/80% for black and white, 50/50% for the colour and 100% for Steadicam. The split works equally for 16 as for Super 16, showing the whole frame, and even with the assist attached the viewfinder can pivot up to 120 deg. across the camera body for viewing. (Without the split, the viewfinder swivels 190 degrees. It is rotatable by 360 deg. parallel to the camera and can be swung away by 25 deg.)

DISPLAY AND CONTROL PANEL

On the left side of the camera, the LCD displays the frame rates from 5 to 75fps in the standard version (the high-speed version is 10 to 150fps) and the film counter is switchable from metres to feet. There is a display of the opening on the mechanically-adjusted mirror shutter, time code and time-code user bits and time-code sensitivity. There is film-end, battery-voltage and low-warning indicators, and a display of the asynchronous camera speed. The display is also used in service to show analysis and testing information.

ADJUSTABLE MIRROR SHUTTER

There is an automatic mirror stop to keep the viewfinder clear and a quick gate check PHASE key to re-position the mirror. The mirror shutter is mechanically adjustable with the camera switched off. 90°, 135°, 144°, 172.8° and 180° positions are locked and shown on the display.

ACCESSORIES

Along with a lot of new toys, like the heatable eyecup, all of the 535’s accessory range is available for the new SR3. This makes the electronic capabilities of the camera more like those we expect from video and then some. See the following 535 story for more details.

1. THE ARRIFLEX 16SR3
3. THE NEW ARRI VIDEO ASSIST WORKS ON THE ARR 2, THE NEW 16SR3 AND THE 535, CALLED THE AFP-2, IT HAS AN OPTIONAL ANTI-FLICKER OPTION, VOM-2 OR AFP-2. CONTACT JOHN BARRY GROUP FOR FURTHER DETAILS.
4. A COMPLETE REMOTE-CONTROL LENS SYSTEM THAT MOUNTS ON THE 19MM MATTE-BOX RODS, THE ARRI LCS ADDS FOCUS, ZOOM AND IRIS CONTROL TO MOST LENSES. PERFECT FOR COMPUTER CONTROL VIA RS 525 OR INTER-FACING WITH THE INBUILT MICROPROCESSOR IN THE 535 CAMERA, THE LCS ADDS MOTION-CONTROL FEATURES TO ANY SHOOT. THE IN-BUILT MEMORY CAN STORE AND REPEAT REHEarsed SEQUENCES. CONTACT JOHN BARRY GROUP FOR FURTHER DETAILS.
The German Camera, the Video Split, and the Non-linear Edit

While we are waiting to see the Arri 535 here (the latest schedule says early 1993; and the 16 SR3 is almost certain to be around by then), there is a technology application story that I felt was timely. It revolves around the quality of the 535's flicker-free video split.

The Press Release for the new video assist gives the following information. The CCD 2-FR is a high-speed 1/2-inch video camera and, when combined with the video optic module VOM-2 (for the 535) or the AFP-2 (yep, that's Anti Flicker) for the 16 SR3, apparently gives a high-quality (460 lines Horizontal Resolution in PAL) video image with up to 1200 ASA light sensitivity. It boasts a wide contrast range and automatic as well as manual overrides of gain, exposure and colour balance. The anti-flicker function uses a video field store and works above 15fps in PAL, for 24 as well as 25 fps (and 30fps or 60 fields NTSC). Having a built-in store in the anti-flicker module means that an accurate freeze-frame can be held for comparison, a great bonus for effect shoots. The brightness differences when the camera is ON or OFF is compensated and there is a genlock on the camera with a standard BNC so that the camera split can be synced to other cameras (for multi-camera shooting).

In the June 22 Hollywood Reporter, there is a story about cutting costs with film-originated series by using the video split recorded off the Arri 535 as video workprint. The multi-camera film shoot is still attractive for lots of reasons other than film quality; international video standards conversions from NTSC are lousy for a start. But costs quoted in the article are savings of up to U.S. $7,000 per half-hour episode.

The example given in the article used the time-code output from the camera (that is being recorded on the film) being recorded along with the colour signal of the video split. This gives an absolute reference that lasts through the video split. It was just an extension of this to hire an AVID 2000 and to record the split onto SP Betacam. Set up adjacent to the set, the editor was taking each of the SP tapes and cutting the spots with input from the director during breaks between shots. The savings were the traditional ones with a video split - being able to check performances and camera moves - but with the added creative input of watching how the material cuts while there is still time to do a retake if there is a better way to do it. Clients can be consulted about alternatives and shown the results immediately. Shooting just what was needed also resulted in a cost saving.

DOP Jon Fauer was quick to stress the need for screening rushes and choosing takes for their visual values, colour, contrast, lighting and focus. Watching a good video split will help make judgements on content, but will not look like the quality of a telecine transfer. Fauer also warned that without a clear vision of the production, having the Avid nearby could mean agonizing over creative decisions while the production meter was running.

The film was processed overnight at Foto-Kem in Hollywood and returned next day for film-to-tape transfer on a Bosch FDL60 fitted with the ARRI FIS (Film Ident System) Reader. The gains were greater speed and accuracy in finding selected takes and syncing sound. Then in the on-line, the CMX used the Avid's EDL to quickly assemble the commercials.

Avid Technology Inc. kept a close eye on the project and is investigating how best to reconfigure the system for location use. The news that Avid and ARRI are having backstage discussions doesn't surprise me. The latest ARRI releases about its FIS system uses the Avid name as a generic term for non-linear editing.

Cinemania

VideoFile Marketing in Sydney has taken on the task of promoting in Australia a Microsoft CD ROM called CINEMANIA. It combines standard film text references with the sound, animation and graphics that show the promise of CD ROM as the next publishing medium. The trick of course is that you need a Multimedia PC to run it (386SX or higher processor, 2Mb of RAM, Hard drive, CD-ROM drive, audio board and VGA or better display, all with Windows 3.1). If all that doesn't daunt you, then you will love this package that includes the 1992 Leonard Maltin Movie and Video Guide, slabs out of The Motion Picture Guide and The Encyclopedia of Film. Fast access to any of the titles, reviews and biographies is one reason for the use of a database such as this, but imagine clicking on the actor's name in a film review for a photo, filmography and hearing famous lines of his/her dialogue. There is a gallery of more than 1000 stills, biographies of actors, directors and producers and 19,000 film reviews dating from 1914 to 1991. You can even print out a selected title list to take to your local video store.

Jock O'Keefe at VideoFile Marketing is offering information, hardware and expertise in CD-ROM use and other film-related titles. Contact him on (02) 975 2917 or at PO Box 345 Manly NSW 2095.
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Sound and Vision Stockshop

Where d’ya get it? You have decided on your stock, now you need a service that can deliver 24 hours a day and not just where the company delivery van goes. Sound and Vision Stock Shop Manager Alison Peck explained that they have been doing just that since July 1990, selling film, sound and video stock at the same price as their suppliers and are also able to offer discounts. The service they offer was to me the interesting part of the story so I asked Alison for some examples.

ALISON PECK: One job happened in November last year. An Italian production company was shooting a chocolate commercial in New Zealand. They decided to do an extra day’s shoot on the Sunday, the decision being made late Saturday morning. I travelled with the stock as hand luggage, leaving Sydney at 6.00pm arriving 11.00pm in NZ. I stayed over at the Christchurch airport hotel, getting up at 6.00am to be on a plane to Queenstown at 8.00am. I arrived at Queenstown at 9.00am and called the production manager. She arrived, handed me the money and I gave her the film. I then got on the return flight to Christchurch and back to Sydney.

Another case was when a production company based in Sydney paged me late one Sunday and wanted film stock in Fiji the next day. The only flight I found out left at 8.00am. The airport opened at 6.00am, but cargo needed to be lodged four hours beforehand. So I took a risk and travelled with the stock out to Qantas Jet Base at 10.30pm. As there had been a bomb scare, all the chaps were out of the building, so when I arrived I was the only one with cigarettes to share during the 15 minute wait. When we were allowed inside, they very kindly processed the parcel and got it there on time.

One more!! RSA production manager Vickie Byers called from a boat off Hamilton Island at 4.00pm requesting stock at the earliest time the next day. We got it to her at 5.30am; crew call was at 6.00am!

Besides those rare emergencies, we do provide stock locally and as far away as Perth for commercials, rock clips, etc. I think the main basis for our success is the service we provide and the people who run the company. I have been in the industry 12 years and realize the importance of those things, large and small, and the meaning of a NIGHTMARE OF A JOB! Also, we are all trained to sound incredibly happy when we are pagged at 2.00am. (It’s amazing what bonuses will do nowadays!)
Edit Advise congratulates Sounds Write Productions on the completion of principal photography for their new 35mm feature, the teen comedy/romance

Lex and Rory.

We are proud to have been selected as post production supervisors on this - Australia's and possibly the world's first - all digitally post produced feature film.

Let Edit Advise get you off the cutting room floor. Call Barry or John about your post production needs today.

Phone 03 686 8888 Fax 03 682 6736

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Daniel Scharf, Producer

CINEVEX
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Telephone 03 528 6188 Facsimile 03 528 5098

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beautiful enigmatic woman strike a macabre pact to avenge the deaths of their love partners in this psycho-sexual thriller set against a stylish Italian backdrop.

**FEATURES**

**POST-PRODUCTION**

**ALEX**

[See previous issue for details]

**BROKEN HIGHWAY**

[See previous issue for details]

**LE DENTISTE**

Prod. company
Oillage Productions
Dist. company
Road & Pukar
Pre-production
March 1992...
Production
June 1992
Post-production
Sept. 1992
Principal Credits
Director
Patrick Fitzgerald
Producer
Peter Butt
Scriptwriter
Patrick Fitzgerald
DOP
Marc Spencer
Sound recordist
David Glasser
Editor
Pam Kreuger
Costume designer
Ruth Bracegirdle
Catering
Margaret Rolfe & Assoc.
Travel co-ords
Annalies De Moli
Ball Tours

**Camera Crew**

Camera operator
Marc Spencer
Focus puller
Susie Stitt
Clapper-loader
Frank Flick
Camera type
16 mm

**Sound Crew**

Sound recordist
Peter Butt
Mixing assistant
Nichole Lazaroff
Make-up artist
Nadia Mallige

**Production Crew**

Prod. supervisor
Glenda Gardner
Prod. secretary
Debbie Womack
Financial controller
Patricia Fitzgerald
Prod. accountant
Wyatt Fiscus & Assoc.

**Film Crew**

FILM MAKERS

Producers
Brian Kavanagh
Production buffer
Zev Eleftheriou

**Post-production**

Production runner
Antony Tulloch
Post-production supervisor
Chris Kennedy
Post-production manager
Julie Goldrick

**THE HEARTBREAK KID**

Prod. company
View Films
Dist. company
Roadshow Film Dist.
Pre-production
27/7/92 - 4/9/92
Production
7/9/92 - 19/10/92
Post-production
20/10/92...
Principal Credits
Director
Michael Jenkins
Producer
Ben Gannon
Co-producer
Barbara Gibbs
Screenwriter
Richard Barrett

**GROSS MISCONDUCT**

[See previous issue for details]

**NO WORRIES**

Prod. company
Oilrag Productions
Dist. company
SOS Distribution
Pre-production
Sept - Dec 1992
Post-production
March 1992...
Principal Credits
Prod. professor
Dennis Miller
Prod. manager
Jacquie McKensie

**THE SILVER BRUMBY**

Prod. company
Two Can Do
Dist. company
Roadshow Film Dist.
Pre-production
20/1/92 - 8/3/92
Production
9/3/92 - 13/5/92
Post-production
13/5/92 - 17/11/92
Principal Credits
Director
John Tatoulis
Producer
Colin South
Line producer
Phil Chambers
Associate producer
Jane Hyland

**LEON**

[See previous issue for details]

**RECKLESS KELLY**

[See previous issue for details]

**SAY A LITTLE PRAYER**

[See previous issue for details]

**CINEMA PAPERS 9 1 • 77**
**BATHURST NATIONAL TRANSLANT GAMES 1992**

Production company: Petersen & Dingli
Dist. company: Petersen & Dingli
Community Cable Television
Redfern, Sydney
Budget
Pre-production
Production
Post-production
Nov - Dec 1992
Principal Credits
Director: Shane Petersen
Producers: P. Nunez, Peter Dingli
Sound recordist: Peter Dingli
Other Credits
Researchers: C. Fitzell, P. Nunez
Budgeted by: Petersen & Dingli
Camera operators: Peter Dingli
Camera type: Hiladix JVC
Post-pro. supervisor: Shane Petersen
Asst editors: Peter Dingli
Narrator: P. Nunez
Titles Lab supervision: Peter Giles
Gauge: U-Matic SP
Shooting stock: 3M
Video transfers by: Duplication Centre
Online facilities: Community Cable Television
Video master by: Metro Television
Production: AFC

**SYNOPSIS:**
A documentary recording the gradual demise of the first Russian-Australian co-production City of Dreams, an espionage thriller based on the exposure of Australian public figures...

**CAST:**
Andrew Booth (Rocket Rod), Andrew Windsor (Ivan Ivanyvich), Graham Pitt (Frank Comet), Linda Gibson (Natascha Vodka), Carol Oysten (Ivan Ivanyvich), Peter Giles (Ivan Ivanovich), Eddie McShortall (Asst. to SAP), Peter Burgess (Inti), Brian More (Mimmi Pulka).
**ROLLING CLOQUES**
Director: Laura Elkington Producers: Laura Elkington, Louise Kors Scriptwriter: Laura Elkington DOP: Bryan Mawkin Sound recordists: Louise Kors, Nyree Smith Editor: Laura Elkington **Other Credits**
2nd camera: Tony McGrath Asst. director: Natasha Garra
Gaffer: Rowena Sherriff Unit runner: Peter Shrimpton Still photographer: Karen Johnston Asst editor: Tony De Pasquale Sound editors: Louise Kors, Nyree Smith **Titles**
Tony McGrath **Graphics**
Tony McGrath **Marketing**
Kim Gourley **Gauge**
SP BVU **Finances**
QFDO **Cast:** [No details supplied]

**Synopsis:** A homage to rock’s musical heroes, or second-rate rockers cashing in a easy money? Who are these fabulous nobodies? What drives them to this pretence? And what effect does this have on the already stressed with a parcel left behind by a strange Australian music industry? **For details of the following see previous issue:** **ONE WAY STREET** **THE TENTH DANCER**

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**SHORTS**

**Produce company:** VCA School of Film & Television **Budget:** $14,000 **Principal Credits**
Director: Emma-Kate Croghan Producer: Luigio Acquisto Exec. producer: Jennifer Sabine Scriptwriter: Emma-Kate Croghan DOP: Liz Hughes Sound recordists: Nag Vlavidemsky, Melissa Johnson **Costume designer:** Rebekah Farr **Composers:** Ian Eccles-Smith **Other Credits**
**Storyboard artist:** Mickey Maselli **Prod. manager:** Kath Sheper **Camera operator:** Liz Hughes **Camera assistant:** Joanne Donahoe **Gaffer:** Andrew Max Davis **Best boy:** Steven Gartner 1st asst director: Chloe Kimberley **Continuity:** Celine Tabrizi **Boom operator:** Christine Young **Make-up:** Clare Peers **Hairdresser:** Gerad Farmer **Still photography:** Jaki Gammell **Catering:** Ursula Staines (Katoomba) **Art director:** Rebekah Farr **Laboratory:** Cinevex **Gauge:** Kodak 7356 **Synopsis:** A girl In an ice cream shop panics when she begins to receive strange phone calls from someone who is watching her every move. **Synopsis:** Tribute bands. A homage to rock’s musical heroes, or second-rate rockers cashing in a easy money? Who are these fabulous nobodies? What drives them to this pretence? And what effect does this have on the already stressed with a parcel left behind by a strange Australian music industry? **For details of the following see previous issue:** **ONE WAY STREET** **THE TENTH DANCER**

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**TELEVISION PRODUCTION**
**CLOWNING AROUND ENCORE!**
Prod. company: Barron Films (Television) **Dist. company:** ABC International **Production:** 21/9/92 - 15/11/92 **Principal Credits**
Director: George Whaley Producers: Paul B. Barron Exec. producer: Mark Hembrow **Synopsis:** Based on the story written by David Martin and Martin McGonigal **By:** Tony Cavanaugh **Based on the story written by:** David Martin **Synopsis:** ***Clowning Sim*** **Based on the story written by:** David Martin and Martin McGonigal **Synopsis:** Based on the story written by David Martin and Martin McGonigal **Synopsis:** ***Clowning Sim*** **Synopsis:** Sim is now well established as a camel clown in the Winter Circus Paris. He still has his demons. Being the world’s greatest clown is not even enough for Sim. He wants to own the world’s greatest circus! **STARR (series)** [See previous issue for details] **THE WEB**
Director: Lucinda Clutterbuck **Producer:** Fiona Egger **Scriptwriter:** Charlotte Clutterbuck **Synopsis:** Based on original idea by Lucinda Clutterbuck **Animators/directors:** Lucinda Clutterbuck **Sound recordist:** Stephen Vaugh **Editors:** Harriet Clutterbuck **Composers:** Paul Shustke, Rosemary Pearce, David Chesworth **Other Credits**
**Animation assist:** Anna Kannava **Production assist:** Michael Agar **Accountant:** Hamish Brown **Mixed at:** Crawfords **Laboratory:** Cinevex **Finance:** APC **Cast:** [No details supplied] **Synopsis:** The Web is a series of six by five minute animations on rare and vulnerable animals. Included in the series are: Parapene Falcon, Eastern Barred Bandicoot, Great White Shark, Cheeta, Panda and Rattlesnake. **TELEVISION POST-PRODUCTION**
See previous issues for details on: **HALFWAY ACROSS THE GALAXY AND TURN LEFT (series)** **KELLY 2 (mini-series)** **MASTERPIECE PROPILES (series)** **THE SACRED MELLOPS - SEQUEL** **SEE JACK RUN (tele-feature)**
# ELEATIC ELEVEN

A panel of eleven film reviewers has rated a selection of the latest releases on a scale of 0 to 10, the latter being the optimum rating (a dash means not seen). The critics are: Bill Collins (Channel 10; The Daily Mirror, Sydney); Sandra Hall (The Bulletin, Sydney); Paul Harris (“EG” The Age, 3RRR); Ivan Hutchinson (Seven Network; Herald-Sun, Melbourne); Stan James (The Adelaide Advertiser); Neil Jillett (The Age); Adrian Martin (Business Review Weekly, Melbourne; “Screen”, 3RN); Scott Murray; Tom Ryan (3LO; The Sunday Age, Melbourne); David Stratton (Variety; SBS, Sydney); and Evan Williams (The Australian, Sydney).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FILM TITLE</th>
<th>Director</th>
<th>BILL COLLINS</th>
<th>SANDRA HALL</th>
<th>PAUL HARRIS</th>
<th>IVAN HUTCHINSON</th>
<th>STAN JAMES</th>
<th>ADRIAN MARTIN</th>
<th>SCOTT MURRAY</th>
<th>TOM RYAN</th>
<th>DAVID STRATTON</th>
<th>EVAN WILLIAMS</th>
<th>AVERAGE</th>
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<td>AUX YEUX DU MONDE</td>
<td>[Autobus] Eric Rochant</td>
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<td>Syd McCartney</td>
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<td>Fran Rubel Kazui</td>
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<td>Michael Curtiz</td>
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<td>Bill Kroyer</td>
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<td>Woody Allen</td>
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<td>A LEAGUE OF THEIR OWN</td>
<td>Penny Marshall</td>
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<td>John G. Avidsen</td>
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<td>Zhang Yimou</td>
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<td>A STRANGER AMONG US [Close to Eden]</td>
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<td>TAXI BLUES</td>
<td>Pavel Longuine</td>
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<td>UNLAWFUL ENTRY</td>
<td>Jonathan Kaplan</td>
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<td>UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD</td>
<td>Wim Wenders</td>
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<td>WAGES OF FEAR (Re-issue)</td>
<td>Henri-Georges Clouzot</td>
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*David Stratton has declined to rate this film.
Bank of Melbourne

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Bret Harte

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The impact on home television will be stunning.

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