ANGEL BABY Escaping the Cuckoo Nest By Andrew L. Urban In Michael Rymer's dramatic debut feature, Harry (John Lynch) and Kate (Jacqueline McKenzie) find love and flee from a mental institution. Their private world clashes with those around them. 10

EPSILON Love and an Alien By Andrew L. Urban Audaciously using time-motion photography to dramatic visual effect, Rolf de Heer crafts an unusual and poignant story of an alien woman and an Aussie male who meet and find love in the outback. 14

VACANT POSSESSION Sacred Land and Haunted Houses By Claire Corbett Tessa (Pamela Rabe) is coming home now that her mother has died. She returns to the empty family house, a house that, like the land, is alive, has a soul, is full of ghosts. 18

Max Cullen in Billy \i Holiday New Voice, Second Chance Mary Colbert investigates Billy's Holiday, a fully-fledged musical from the producer of Strictly Ballroom, Tristram Miall Miall, writer Denis Whitburn and director Richard Wherrett explain their passion for this story of a middle-aged man who inherits the golden voice of Billie Holiday. STAGE 4 OZ PICS AT CANNES A Round-up The Australian films most likely to be unspooling at Cannes this year. 22

RICHARD FRANKLIN Hotel Sorrento By Scott Murray An expatriate comes home to make a film about an expatriate's coming home. Family, culture and identity merge in Franklin's striking filmic adaptation of Hannie Ray's acclaimed play. 24

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**F U C C O S S**

**A N G E L B A B Y**

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Australians Win Oscar

Best Costume: Lezy Gardner and Tina Chappell for The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert.

CORRIGENDUM

My country, Plasto and Berry

In the December 1994 issue of Cinema Papers, Marcus Breen reviewed My Country (pp. 70-1). Bob Plasto and Ruth Berry’s documentary about Aboriginal land rights and the issue of reconciliation.

On publication, Plasto and Berry contacted Cinema Papers to say they believed there to be significant “errors of fact” in the piece and that Breen “accused us of lowering our editorial standards for the sake of a co-production.”

This view stems from the closing paragraphs of the review, where Breen speculates over whether what he regards as the film’s “simplistic version of events” might be the result of the BBC’s investment in the film. Plasto and Berry believe Breen’s ‘speculations’ to be statements of fact, which are inappropriate and incorrect, in that the documentary Breen viewed was made exclusively for an Australian audience. The version shown on the BBC is markedly different in length and structure, and has a different voice-over and narrator.

Cinema Papers and Breen accept that the BBC’s involvement had no influence on the version of My Country under review, and apologize to Plasto and Berry for any perceived slight on their professionalism and integrity.

ACTORS’ INCOME CUT BY 44%

A report released in March by the Australian Council reveals that actors’ incomes have dropped by 44% over the past five years. The mean annual income of actors is now $11,500.

Anne Britton, Joint Secretary of the actors’ union, Media Entertainment and Arts Alliance, says the results are alarming and point to a crisis in the industry. Unless the situation improves, a great number of our many talented and experienced performers will have no option but to look to alternative careers or move overseas.

This is not just a problem for performers but for the entertainment industry at large. A healthy Australian film, television and theatre industry cannot survive unless it has a reasonably-sized pool of skilled and professional performers.

An exodus of performers will also alarm the Australian acting community. Unless the situation improves, a great number of our many talented and experienced performers will have no option but to look to alternative careers or move overseas.

First, the deregulation of the television advertising industry in 1982 has been accompanied by a 20% decrease in the local industry. Major advertisers such as Coke, Pepsi and Colgate Palmolive are increasingly relying on imported commercials.

Second, the amount spent by the commercial networks on Australian drama has dropped by close to 30% since 1992, and as a result actors’ fees have been slashed. Many well-known performers are now working in television for award rates.

Fourth, and importantly, the absence of performers’ copyright means that performers are missing out on income opportunities available to many of their creative colleagues. This situation will worsen in the age of the information superhighway.

AUSTRALIAN FILM FINANCE CORPORATION

New members announced for industry panel

Director Rolf de Heer and script editor Barbara Masel will join the panel of film industry experts who will select projects for the Film Fund. They will replace Lynda House and Joce­lyn Moohooze, who have resigned because of production commitments.

The Film Fund panel also consists of producer Tristram Miall and writer Mac Gudgeon, as previously announced.

BRISBANE FESTIVAL FRINGE ‘95

There comes Polydactyl – three nights of film and video as part of the third biennial Brisbane Festival Fringe, which runs from 12-28 May.

This is a festival of innovative, experimental and contemporary work, encompassing and converging music, art, performance and dance, and, of course, film and video.

Polydactyl will present a varied programme of recent film and video which pushes the boundaries of conventional practice. The focus is on work which challenges current mainstream cinematic trends with regard to form, style, visual presentation, new technologies and content. Filmmakers will be involved to broaden the scope of the screenings, and encourage dialogue and discussion.

BRISBANE’S DENDY CINEMA

Lyn McCarthy and Graeme Tubben­hauer, co-owners of the Dendy exhibition-distribution chain, have expanded their operation in Brisbane.

Brisbane’s Dendy Cinema, formerly the Greater Unicorn George Cinema, is situated in the Casino precinct of George Street and will feature seating capacity of over 500 seats in a twin arrangement. The cinema opened its first screens on 19 January with Once Were Warriors. The second screen was due for completion in April.

The fully-refurbished cinemas are designed by Melbourne-based architect Peter Mills and Associates, who also designed the Dendy Cinemas in Sydney and the Kino 3 Cinema in Melbourne. While the emphasis of the design is on modern comfort, every effort has been made to preserve and complement the existing classical elegance and charm of the 85-year-old site, McCarthy.

It is very exciting to be moving into a larger venue, which will also bear the parent company’s name. We are dedicated to creating a cinema arrangement is a measure of the strength of the ABC’s commitment to Australian film and television.

Weiss added: “the stature of the Australian film and television industry and the increasing international prestige it enjoys makes the screening of the Awards essentially absolutely essential.”

The Awards presentation will showcase the best of Australian film and television of the year. It will be a great night of television for the viewing audience and a tremendous boost to the local industry.

AFI AND ABC ANNOUNCE DEAL

The Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards will be telecast by the ABC for the next three years, in a deal announced by AFI Chairman Bob Weis and ABC Chairman Professor Mark Armstrong.

More than 1400 members of the industry attend the Awards, which are scheduled this year for Friday 10 November in the Melbourne Town Hall. Professor Armstrong said: “I’m delighted the ABC will be telecasting the Awards. The three-year

australian film commission

CINEMA PAPERS IS PUBLISHED WITH FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE FROM THE AUSTRALIAN FILM COMMISSION, FILM VICTORIA AND FILM QUEENSLAND.
Dear Editor,

Re: Michael Meadows article "Searching for Success".

As a member of the Board of Directors of the 1991 and 1993 Brisbane International Film Festivals, I must take issue with two inaccuracies in Michael Meadows' otherwise excellent article in the March issue on the success of the Festival since its inception.

Both these errors stem from the same source, Jonathan Dawson's article, "BIFI: the making of a film festival", in the 1994 issue of Culture and Policy. The first error is the assertion that the opening film of the 1992 Festival was Lethal Weapon 3. As the notes accompanying the opening notes for the opening night, I can state categorically that the opening film was Strictly Ballroom, with the Balmain theme continued at the after film night was Strictly Ballroom, as Meadows' reliance on the Dawson article as source indicates the hazards of uncritical acceptance of secondary material.

Bruce Molloy
Professor of Film and Media
Bond University

which will lead the way in quality programming with the best interna­tional and Australian films available.

In addition, the two screens will give us the versatility needed to host film festivals and events, and to screen features previously denied to Bris­bane audiences.

WOMEN IN FILM
AND TELEVISION
(WIFT)
QUEENSLAND

On Monday 27 March, WIFT Queensland launched its Job Referral Service.

As a communications and support network, WIFT is recognized Australia­wide as being one of the largest film groups in the country, organizing work­shops and training courses covering all aspects of production. The estab­lishment of a Job Referral Service highlights the commitment WIFT Queensland has to the industry and to the members.

The Job Referral database consists of women with experience, as evi­
denced by substantial screen credits.

They are industry trained; they have received awards.

The service is open (at no extra cost) to all women who are financial mem­bers of WIFT Queensland.

As an added bonus, there is no cost incurred by the employer for the use of the Job Referral Service.

The process is as simple as a phone call to WIFT Queensland. Simply telephone the WIFT Queensland office during busi­ness hours on (07) 844 2043.

PUTTNAM AND GRADE TO SPAA

David Puttnam, "one of the nation picture industry's most highly­regarded filmmakers", and Michael Grade, the Chief Executive of Channel 4 Television, UK, will address the 1995 SPAA Conference as keynote speakers.

The tenth annual SPAA Conference will be held in Melbourne, 8-10 November 1995. Last year's conference attracted more than 500 delegates from film and television production, distrib­ution and broadcasting industries around the world.

Puttnam, whose remark­able career includes a period working inside Hollywood as the Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Colum­bia Pictures, will talk about "The role of the creative producer".

When Puttnam returned to Britain, he renewed his partnership with Warner Bros. and has since made four feature films. He has also produced four films for television.

Puttnam is currently Chair of Britain's National Film and Tele­vision School and is a Director of Australia's Village Roadshow Lim­ited. He was appointed Chairman of The British Council's Film, Television and Video Advisory Committee in 1993, and is a permanent member of the British Screen Advisory Council.

Channel 4 was established in 1982 and Michael Grade has been Chief Executive since 1988. He is regarded as a sort of "human version" of Channel 4.

His keynote address will be "What's happening to public broadcasting?".

Grade is Chairman of Channel 4 International Limited and a non­execu­tive director of The Open College Limited and First Leisure plc and a member of the British Screen Advi­sory Council.

The Hollywood Script Readers' Digest is an anthology of screenplay synopses and television series proposals which is regularly distributed free of charge to hundreds of established television and film production companies, independent producers, literary agents, major actors and directors, and other entertainment industry players in both Hollywood and New York.

Those looking for viable television or theatrical film scripts or series ideas are now able to easily assess that always large volume of available projects merely by reading descriptions of them, none of which is longer than 500 words.

Publisher Milford Stanhelm says: "Our purpose is to save busy execu­tives time and energy. Now, merely by spending a couple of hours with a cup of coffee and a copy of the Digest, it is possible to know what's out there and whom to contact. The days of producers and agents hav­ing to depend on chance or 'special contacts' to get a look at currently available script and ideas are over.

With the Hollywood Script Readers' Digest, everyone can simultaneously see everything. As well, copyrighted publication of ideas will discourage plagiarism and the frivolous lawsuits that too often clog our courts.

For more information call the Digest on (818) 848 6870 or fax (818) 842 3463.
Mary Colbert talks to producer Tristram Miall, scriptwriter Denis Whitburn and director Richard Wherrett about a magical second chance.
Tristram Miall, Producer

After the success of M&A’s first feature, Strictly Ballroom (Baz Luhrmann, 1992), doors opened wide for former documentary-filmmaker-turned-producer Tristram Miall. “Ballroom had been a wonderful, huge leap, but part of life is the desire to stretch yourself, to go one step further”, says Miall.

With his next feature, Billy’s Holiday, Miall and co-producer-writer Denis Whitburn are grand jettisoning into new territory – Australia’s first fully-fledged movie musical. Miall: “With Ballroom, we were breaking every rule in the book: first-time director, first-time production company, unknown leads, a subject that was considered rather naff, and a $3.5 million budget at a time when conventional wisdom dictated below $2m or over $5m with Kylie Minogue in the starring rôle. It was wonderful for us to be vindicated, because we were the first film that had done really major business for the Film Finance Corporation.

The Ugly Duckling/Cinderella/David vs Goliath story also turned out to have a fairytale ending for the key cast and crew. “I think that’s what everybody who comes to this industry hopes for in their heart of hearts”, says Miall. Apart from the tragic deaths of co-producer Ted Albert, and Pat Thompson, for the others it opened doors wide to the world, catapulting Luhrmann and Paul Mercurio, especially, to international stardom. For the production company, it reaped generous financial returns which have enabled Miall to go on more ‘risky business’.

“Scripts flooded through the door, but very, very few were any good”, he recalls. Then, through an unexpected source – completion guarantor Rob Fisher – Denis Whitburn’s script for Billy’s Holiday appeared, and Miall was hooked:

It had a wonderful mix of reality and fantasy, with a very strong musical component all the way through.

When Ted Albert and I first set up M&A productions, we always had the notion that we wanted to do projects with a very strong musical element. A love of music was one of the first favour; Hollywood’s ceased making musicals. That’s a pity, because when they work they are highly popular, with an evergreen quality to them."

In any case, Billy’s Holiday has a marketing trump card: the music. Logistically, the film is the largest musical exercise ever undertaken on film in Australia, with just over 10% of its $4 million budget allocated to music (the average is 1 to 3%), the involvement of the country’s leading international jazz musician, James Morrison, who composed one of the songs and big-band dance number (“Mr. Exhilaration”), and features throughout the film on most tracks, playing every instrument apart from drums and bass. The lively soundtrack has been produced and devised by musical director Peter Cobbin, the country’s top recording musical producer and five-time Australian Record Industry Awards nominee for his work with Morrison, Grace Knight, Vince Jones, Midnight Oil, Yotha Yindi and Margaret Urlich.

When word leaked out about the scale of the musical, Miall and Whitburn were advised by industry insiders that Cobbin was the only person in Australia who could marshal the logistics of a project this size. Three record companies expressed interest, but the producers opted to go with Roadshow Music, in conjunction with a Roadshow release. Miall:

If you look at the album performers at the moment, most are soundtrack albums. The ones that have done phenomenal business are The Bodyguard, Frank Sinatra, Harry Connick Junior – precisely the sort of music that’s in Billy’s Holiday.

The costs alone of clearances for Gershwin music required major negotiations and the producers hadn’t counted on the amount of voice training (from one of the top voice trainers, Bob Tasman Smith) required for Max Cullen (Billy) to prepare him for his three different voices: rough trad jazz, Billie Holiday and the rich romantic crooning voice of the last section. There was also instrument training for Billy’s band (Richard Roxburgh on piano, Drew Forsythe on trumpet and Cullen on trombone), with musical advisers required on set during the shoot to check on the fingering, Dylan Waters on drums was the only one who could actually play his instrument.

The producers were faced with similar options as in Ballroom: to cast musicians and hope the director could extract the acting performances out of them, or cast actors and give them voice/instrument training? The script was written as a vehicle for Cullen and, as with Ballroom, they opted for the latter approach (where the exceptions were Paul Mercurio, Anthony Vargas and Tina Sparkle). On both features, Miall chose to work with theatre directors making their feature film debuts: it’s not an article of faith; it just happened that way. But I do think they have a reverence for the text, and a very strong discipline of analyzing it and working it through with actors. The structure of the piece is where you live or die, and getting it right is terribly important. That’s not to say you don’t work hard to bolster the visual side.

Whereas Luhrmann was a relative beginner, just out of the National School of Dramatic Art, for Billy’s Holiday the choice was Richard Wherrett, one of Australia’s most-acclaimed theatre directors with a strong track-record across the board in a variety of productions, and outside commercial and critical success in highly-acclaimed musicals such as (the re-staged) Jesus Christ Superstar. Miall: It certainly gives an indication that Richard’s passionate about the genre and understands it. And it was enormously helpful when I was talking to investors – FFC, Village Roadshow, Beyond Films and the New South Wales Film & TV Office (which had just been allowed to put in production funding) – to give them a certain comfort zone.

Richard’s reputation also gave an authority and integrity to the cast, who were prepared to give more, to put themselves more at risk. The odd musical films were formative in his development and he remembers them affectionately. Yet, out of this tradition, he brings a passion for doing something contemporary. And while he has a healthy ego, he never lets it get in the way of what he’s trying to achieve: he’s a great listener.

With Wherrett came a team of his regular theatre collaborators: production designer Michael Scott-Mitchell on his first feature, veteran stage and film costume designer Terry Ryan (Muriel’s Wedding), and dancer-choreographer Kim Walker, who worked with Wherrett on Superstar. Miall: On Billy’s Holiday, the choreography grew as the film progressed. It started with, ‘Wouldn’t it be nice if people started bopping to the music and blew out into full dance numbers.’

Did the producers consider different crew choices in cinematography because of the musical genre? Miall: You start thinking that, but who in this country has...
shot a musical or choreographed numbers? We were working on a blank page. Steve Mason, DP on Ballroom, was unavailable [working in the U.S.], so we selected Roger Lanser, an Australian who had worked with Kenneth Branagh on some of his films [Peter's Friends, Much Ado About Nothing]. Miall, with a strong track-record in documentaries, tele-features and mini-series, has risen through the ranks to become one of Australia's most respected creative producers. What does he believe are his priorities?

My job is to create an environment within which everybody can contribute creatively, so everything can be taken on board and encouraged. You have to work with gut instinct.

Principally, it comes down to selection, and to nurturing the script and key creative people. Its important to listen, so that you know if there's some kernel of truth you've overlooked. But, at the end of the day, you're left with that gut instinct. It's so hard making a film that if you're not all pulling in the same direction, you have Buckley's chance.

Denis Whitburn, Writer-producer

It's rare in Australia for a script to be star-written, but Billy's Holiday was conceived as a vehicle for actor Max Cullen. Scriptwriter-co-producer Denis Whitburn (The Last Bastion, Body-surf, Blood Oath) explains:

Back in 1980, I wrote a play called The Siege of Frank Sinatra, for which Max returned from England to play the lead.

When The Siege was on, we used to go out drinking after the show and, every now and then in a bar somewhere at Darlinghurst at 2 a.m., Max would start singing 'Am I Blue?' in his Billy H. voice, and stop the place dead. I realized then that he had a particular talent that could be developed into a dramatic form.

Over the years, I tried different ideas but nothing came of them. It was very different from writing straight drama: in the tradition of classical musicals, the songs needed to drive the narrative.

About two-and-a-half years ago, Whitburn was re-inspired:

The penny dropped all of a sudden about how this story could be told. I wrote the script very quickly in three weeks and sent it to Max, at the time shooting Spider & Rose [Bill Bennett, 1994]. The immediate reply was, 'When do we start?' Richard Wherrett had known Cullen for more than 20 years, but, when he came to the project, he was stunned to discover Cullen's hidden talent. During discussions, Miall played some tracks that Whitburn and Cullen had laid down to the astonished director. "All the time he'd known Max and worked with him he had no idea Max could sing!," says Whitburn.

The idea for the music came to Whitburn - out of the blue - from a combination of factors. As a music and jazz buff, he was a fan of Sinatra, Billie Holiday, Nat King Cole and Ella Fitzgerald, and knew a number of musicians. The lyrics flowed naturally, and mates helped out with the music. Six songs were written into the screenplay and fully demo'd. When he presented the rough track to Miall, he found an immediate affinity with and affinity for the material. It also struck a chord with Wherrett, who brought immense enthusiasm and support to the project.

Whitburn:

I was very conscious of juggling the elements of fantasy, reality, comedy and music into the rhythm of the screenplay. From the time Richard came on board, we did nine more drafts over a ten-month period. What made it difficult was that there were no modern musicals to look at as role models. We were relying on going back to MGM musicals of directors like Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, who set the form in the '40s and '50s. But their stuff was so good you'd be a mug if you didn't learn the lessons.

So, it became a group of middle-aged guys ranging from late-forties to mid-fifties working on a film about second chances in life.

Whitburn was provoked into writing the screenplay as a reaction to Australian attitudes to ageism:

Over the past few years, an attitude was developed out of politics and business that anybody over the age of forty is finished - and I'm pretty pissed off about it. Effectively, it's created a society that believes we have only 20 years to make a contribution: anyone under 20 has no contribution to make and those over 40 are past it. As a result, a lot of people have given up on life, and what they are able to achieve. I wanted Billy, through a bit of magic, to turn the situation around.

Denis Whitburn, Writer-producer

It's rare in Australia for a script to be star-written, but Billy's Holiday was conceived as a vehicle for actor Max Cullen.
The Ensemble in Sydney opened in 1960 when I was 19, but I was watching movies from a much younger age. But since we didn’t then have a film industry, either, it seemed a remote career prospect.

When I returned from a five-year stint in England in 1970, I remember the thrill of seeing an Australian film called *The Demonstrator* [Warwick Armstrong], set in Canberra. It was fairly unimpressive, but what excited me was seeing Australian locations and hearing the Australian vernacular. At the time, I was working at the Nimrod Theatre, where we were committed to doing much the same on stage. But it meant that my film ambitions were put on hold for another ten years.

The real opportunity came when a special course was set up at the AFTRS in 1979 by Gil Brealey as a familiarization for theatre directors in film. About ten of us were part of that group – Rodney Fisher and George Whaley among them. As a result, I made two short films, and *The Girl from Minaloo* [55 mins] for ABC TV in 1980/81.

My appointment to the Sydney Theatre Company for a long term, and then as director of the Melbourne Festival, made film completely out of the question. It didn’t become a possibility till I got back to Sydney last year. Happily, the inquiry from Tristram and Denis came at that time.

**What was the special appeal of this project?**

The musical had always been a favourite, whatever the medium. I liked that extreme point of escapist entertainment. I had done lots on stage: *Jesus Christ Superstar, Chicago, Company.*

When the script came to me, I was taken with it. The opportunity of dealing with Australian characters within a musical was too good to miss. I liked the fact that it was contemporary, urban and romantic, and was very impressed with the music on Denis’ demo tape.

In a strange kind of way, I find the musical sequences easier to deal with than straightforward dialogue. With music driving the story, the freedom from the demands of naturalism means you don’t have to justify in naturalistic terms how you get from one shot to another.

The fantasy elements were especially appealing. It is pretty heady stuff when Billy imagines himself as the whole complement of a 16-piece big band – each member in turn – in two-shots and four-shots.

I immediately related to the screenplay, which sees a middle-aged man given a second chance at life and love. The amazing things we can sometimes discover about ourselves, if we just take time to look inside, struck an instant chord.

**What were you most apprehensive about in embarking on your first feature?**

The content remains the same, it’s the form that’s different. I knew very little about the formal aspects of film: the technicalities. So, the most basic questions were, “What is going to be the shot?”, “How is it going to be covered?” and “What’s its duration?” The very notion of having every frame in my head from start to finish was very daunting.

I don’t think the crew realized how little I knew. Because they’re so familiar with the medium, it’s easy to assume everyone else knows the jargon, though I was quite open about that.

I did storyboard most of the film, which is par for the course, and especially necessary with a musical. Almost half of the film is music; we’re not talking about action with musical accompaniment, as with *Priscilla*, but a musical genre where the music drives the film, where the conventions that are part of the genre apply.

A lot of the shots were pre-ordained by the musical elements, as when Billy needs to be making contact with his girlfriend, Kate [Kris McQuade], for 70 seconds during a song. That meant the shots had to be devised in sync accordingly, reversing the usual conventions. Even experienced crew are used to holding shots as long as required, so for them, too, it was a new ball game.

**Did timing play a significant role in this career move?**

It came to me at a time when I didn’t care any more how I’m judged or criticized. I’m 54 and I have a body of work behind me. I care how I’m judged if it affects the
The AFC is proud to have been involved with the development and production of Australian films and to promote Australian filmmakers to international audiences over the last 20 years.
Angel Baby
It is an impossibly short 20 years since Milos Forman made *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and created a reference point for all future films set in mental institutions. It is inevitable, therefore, that comparisons will be made with the new Australian film, *Angel Baby*. After all, its two central characters, Harry and Kate, suffer from mental illness, and they do stage a mini-escape from a mental institution.

by Andrew L. Urban
Angel Baby doesn’t, however, follow in Forman’s footsteps. Whereas Cuckoo’s Nest deals with a primary 1960s motif about the individual’s struggle to survive in an institutional environment – and the atrocious lengths to which institutions can go to protect the status quo – Angel Baby is something quite different, more romantic, as writer-director Michael Rymer is anxious to point out:

This is a character-driven, intimate story about two people on the periphery of society, with little hope of getting normal love, companionship or family. Then they fall in love, and it gives them a reason to struggle and to go for more.

The characters came to me first, and I found them appealing and intriguing. Only at some later point did it occur to me that these two quirky characters might be described as mentally ill. They read signs in things, watch television game shows for messages from some other world ...

John Lynch (Cal, In the Name of the Father) and Jacqueline McKenzie (Romper Stomper, This Won’t Hurt a Bit, Traps) star as Harry and Kate, and the supporting cast includes some of Australia’s most well-known actors: Colin Friels, Deborra-Lee Furness, Robyn Nevin and David Argue.

Harry and Kate meet at their day-care clinic and fall in love, and soon set up house together, engaging each other in their living fantasies. Harry hears voices that torment him; Kate has a guardian angel that sends her messages through Wheel of Fortune, where she even finds the instruction to fall in love with Harry.

Their bland environment contrasts with their fantastic and vivid delusions, and things take a disturbing turn when Kate falls pregnant. They decide to have the baby without the protection of their medication – a grasp for some meaning and value in their disfigured lives. In the process, their courage is stretched to the full.

After spending four months attending an informal day-care centre for the mentally ill (a model for the early scenes), Rymer had a pretty good (and very compassionate) picture of their daily lives, which he describes as “atrocious”. He says the film, while accurate, does not, cannot, approximate the full extent of how awful are the lives of schizophrenics:

It’s a cleaned-up version. What they have to go through is messy and ugly, and half the challenge of making the film is to make it watchable. But the script is not about crazy people. It’s about people who have an illness.

If I’d set out to make a film about schizophrenics, it would have been more about the symptoms than about the people. I hope audiences will come out of the film with a changed attitude to the persons they see talking to themselves in the street.

Rymer has ambitions for this film; he wants to make audiences feel that something has happened to them: I want them to leave catharsized – emotionally charged and drained. I used to feel that as a kid when I went to the movies, but I haven’t felt like that very often since – except after Schindler’s List.

Films are the air I breathe. I see every film I can; they’re my great passion.

There are all sorts of film makers, and I’d like to make all sorts of films, from pure entertainment to something deeper. But I aspire to make films that touch people, and maybe even alter their lives – however idealistic that may sound.

The young, middle-class, Melbourne-born filmmaker studied at University of Southern California, and won the Warner Communications Scholarship for Directing. But it was a two-year acting course in 1986 that he feels was crucial: “That process taught me to write; you learn what drama is. I learnt more in those two years than in five years at film school.”

While the hardest thing Rymer had to do was raise the money (at $3.5 million, Angel Baby costs roughly the same to make as One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest did 20 years ago, at U.S.$3 million), he regards the important elements of filmmaking as writing and dealing with actors: “Neither are taught at film school.”

The original script had been enthusiastically handled by several producers when Rymer’s friend, young producer Jonathan Shteinman, took it to the more experienced Tim White (Malcolm, Spotswood, Celia, Death in Brunswick). White says:

The script had been highly spoken of, and had great appeal for top actors. It connected with me because it had big emotion, an intensity I was drawn to. It’s
began, Rymer and McKenzie flew to London to screen test seven actors.

Last on the list to be seen was a young actor just back from the Berlin Film Festival, where he had been promoting his latest film, *In the Name of the Father*: it was John Lynch. Just hours before Rymer and McKenzie were due to fly out, Lynch arrived at their hotel room for the screen test. He was perfect, everyone later agreed.

Although the support roles are quite small, they were cast with nerve-racking care: Colin Friels plays the major support role as Harry’s brother, and he was needed for just 25 per cent of the shoot.

Rymer’s strength is in his affinity with the actors, White believes, and the key to making a film with a first-time feature director is for the producer to relax enough to support him or her to enable them to realize their vision, in the face of natural contingencies like a modest budget and a complex script in terms of locations. We surrounded Michael with an experienced and committed crew.

When asked if he was happy with this debut feature-film experience, Rymer remarks:

How could I not be happy. I was able to make my pet script in a fashion almost entirely uncompromised. But it was also extremely difficult. It gradually got tougher as the intensity of the material caught up, built up on us all. It felt at times like we were making a tough documentary, sometimes reflected in people’s behaviour. Even the crew, whom I always imagined were detached, became very involved.

And after the shoot, things didn’t get any easier in post-production:

Post was harder than I imagined it would be; I expected it to be uneventful and it turned out pressured. But the whole thing was trying for really complex sound and music elements.

Indeed, it took the best part of a year in post-production, barely ready for this year’s Cannes Film Festival. One of the most time-consuming aspects was the music.

John Clifford White had composed a score drawing on ancient Celtic and other ethnic motifs, contrasting with the film’s rather ‘clean’ look: the modern architectural background to his characters. Rymer’s story is first and foremost an exploration of that singular human condition called love. Not a very original subject but this is not its purpose: Rymer’s story is first of all about schizophrenia.

Sufferers have hallucinations, delusions and thought disorders, and often have difficulty knowing where reality ends and fantasy begins.

Schizophrenia is not a split personality but a biological disease of the brain, perhaps best described as a breakdown of the machinery of the mind.

It may be instructive to go over some of the ground that writer-director Michael Rymer went over in his research. This is not merely to harangue the reader to become more familiar with mental illness, rather to illuminate the background to his characters.

*More young men die of schizophrenia than of car accidents: 18 per cent of them take their own lives.*

*Schizophrenia is not a split personality but a biological disease of the brain, perhaps best described as a breakdown of the machinery of the mind.*

*It is not a single illness, but a group of related conditions. Symptoms can range from mild deterioration of personality to total withdrawal from human contact.*

*There is no diagnostic test, nor is there a known cure, but medication can alleviate symptoms.*

*Schizophrenia affects about 1 per cent of Australians: between 12 and 15 per cent of all hospital beds are occupied by sufferers of schizophrenia.*

Harry (John Lynch) and Kate, Angel Baby.
IRONIC, ISN’T IT: Rolf de Heer effectively envisioned much of what is now the full-length feature, *Epsilon*, in a ten-minute gush of creativity one Sunday night in May 1993, while still editing *Bad Boy Bubby*. But when he finally came to make the film, de Heer, his cast of two and a tiny crew took ten gruelling, frustrating and mentally-demanding months, often in some of Australia’s most savage outback.

by Andrew L. Urban
What de Heer did not know that Sunday night was just how difficult a task he was setting himself; that he would spend 21 days over five separate trips to the Flinders Ranges for the extraordinary opening sequence alone, de Heer himself sitting for five solitary days on top of a small mountain like a hermit.

The thought did not occur to him either that the entire film would have to be post-synched, since the motors of the specially-prepared camera (and the generator) were too noisy. He knew nothing yet of the 46-degree heat they would all have to endure as cable joints literally melted in the middle of Australia’s harsh outback, with his tiny crew of six. He never expected to lose weight from running out of food on location, with no one to cook.

De Heer had no idea that the actor playing The Man would have to stretch one 60-second on-screen performance to 80 minutes in real time, for four camera passes that varied from real time to time lapse. (Syd Brisbane froze on the spot when, at the end of this 80-minute performance, the camera operator yelled out, "Hair in the gate!" — the sort of joke that was guaranteed a reaction.)

It was unthinkable that de Heer would get only two usable shots in a whole month of shooting, when lens-seating problems and bad weather interfered. As there was no way of getting rushes during a six-day period, it was not until later they discovered that all the stars were not in their ‘focus’ and the whole thing had to be done again.

De Heer could not anticipate that they would follow the Digital Arts team to New Mexico, only to find that the very large array of telescopes were not aligned closely enough for a shot he had imagined — and that Digital Arts was delayed somewhere across America, anyway.

Making the best of a bad situation, de Heer agreed to meet the three-man Digital Arts crew in Las Vegas. He created a new scene set in a casino; he got a casino’s permission to shoot it; at the last minute, the permission was withdrawn; he created yet another scene, set in the Nevada desert, with The Man simply wanting to go to a casino ... Creating the scenes as they went was never the problem, though, for, while de Heer had a clear enough vision of what he wanted to say, he knew it could not be scripted in advance in the conventional way.

For one thing, to keep costs to an absolute minimum, de Heer wanted to piggy-back on Digital Arts’ various shoots around Australia and the world. He would fit the story in with Digital Arts’ locations. By the end of the first month or so, this arrangement was proving impossible: Digital Arts simply had too much work coming up, so de Heer took over the cinematographer, Tony Clark, and one of Digital Arts’ three motion-control rigs, attached to a Mitchell Mark II camera. (Clark’s partner, Mike Carroll, carried on with Digital Arts’ schedule.) Now de Heer had the independent means by which to tell his story.

Motion control is a highly-precise camera-movement system using robotics, in which all the camera movements are controlled by computers and executed electronically. This enables the camera to replicate each move with scientific precision. In turn, this means that camera passes can be effected in both real time and time lapse, the latter being faithfully replicated, even when the camera is shooting 30 seconds per frame.

This technical facility, which has made Digital Arts a world leader in motion-control work, led to the realization that de Heer could make a profound cinematic statement that would be as visually dynamic as the intellectual content.

The outline was written in sporadic, fate-created situations: with Bad Boy Bubby invited to the Venice Film Festival, de Heer arrived in Italy a week early, and was sent off to a small Sardinian villa owned by the film’s producer, Domenico Procacci, to rest before the Festival. With nothing much to do, de Heer began doodling an outline for a film which had not even a working title.

Back in Rome, de Heer had a few more days to fill, and he sat on the terrace of Procacci’s office (to escape the chaos inside) and wrote the page-and-a­half narrative that forms the opening sequence of the film.

Then, in all the hoopla Bad Boy Bubby had caused at the Festival, de Heer missed his flight to Sydney and could not get another seat for five days. Yet again, he filled in the time by working on the treatment, including a half day spent reestimating a budget. The most critical moment, though, came when de Heer raised the question of making the film with Procacci. The producer did not hesitate to offer to put up half the budget, as he had done with Bad Boy Bubby.

When de Heer finally returned to Sydney, he had a piece of paper confirming this, which he took to the FFC; there he raised the other half. (Later, these arrangements were altered slightly, as the South Australian Film Corporation became a 10 per cent equity investor in return for use of post-production facilities, the two major investors now share the remaining 90 per cent equally.)

By October 1993, the project was financially ready, and de Heer set about casting his two roles:

There had been a tiny part for an actor in Bad Boy Bubby, a driver who screams out at Bubby on the street. I met him again on the set of The Battlers, and was surprised at how completely different he was. And what a very good actor he was. It was Syd Brisbane, and I rang him one day and we had breakfast in town. He was going to travel around the country in his 4WD, which fitted in pretty well with my plans.

For the rôle of The Woman, de Heer was looking for something he could not even define, someone who could have come from the stars. All he knew was he wanted a grass-roots, committed actress:

Syd came up with three suggestions, one of whom was Ulli Birvé, a girl who had also had a tiny rôle in Bubby. ‘Why hadn’t I thought of her?' I asked myself. She’s part of the Red Shed ensemble, a premier theatre collective that does very good work. What I didn’t know was that she and Syd had already worked together a great deal and knew each other incredibly well. Syd had hidden this from me so as not to influence my decision. The shoot was difficult, but it would have been worse if they hadn’t known each other so well.

With his actors and tiny crew in place, all de Heer needed by January 1994 was some money to start work, but delays to finalization of contracts frustrated him.

However, it is not the irony of its creation which is likely to be remembered, but the cinematically-novel way in which de Heer expresses what he wants to say — ideas he could hardly define even to himself at one point.

The seed was sown even earlier, though, while de Heer was in the pre-production stage of his much-acclaimed drama, Bad Boy Bubby. He had seen some footage shot by the Adelaide-based firm of Digital Arts Film and Television, which specializes in motion-control production, making natural-history documentaries (BBC, Discovery Channel are among their clients) and television commercials. De Heer:

I saw some time-lapse, motion-control footage they’d shot of stars in the night sky. I did not understand any of the technicalities involved, but I was awestruck. I’d never seen anything like it. It was profoundly moving in a way that’s hard to explain. It made me think of lots of things, including the nature of the universe, our place on earth, our place in the universe and a ... longing. A longing maybe for purity, simplicity, care, for a good part of the scheme of things, not a destructive one.

These feelings are essentially at the heart of Epilson, a love story between an outspokenn, idealistic woman from another planet, who questions whether Earth is really the best of all possible worlds, and a rather ordinary young Australian camping out in the bush on his own. De Heer:

I went on with Bad Boy Bubby and this became a little experience I’d had.

Some months later, I was working alone doing post-production [at Hendon Studios in Adelaide] one Sunday night, and was due to go and have dinner with Sharon [Jackson, production associate on Bad Boy Bubby]. I was thinking about what Bad Boy Bubby did and said and things in it ... and the fact that it was probably the only film I’d ever made where I could say absolutely anything at all. I regretted that I hadn’t said a lot of things that are important to me. Then I also realized that that was silly — it was not really possible.

I started to drive to Sharon’s house, a ten-minute drive, and about a kilometre down the road, BANG, I had it. I saw with complete clarity what I had to do.

In the next ten minutes, I’d worked out the characters, and that their relationship to space and time was an interdependent necessity to how we were going to shoot it. It felt it should be low-budget so we could try things, rather than do things.

In those ten minutes, de Heer knew that The Woman would come down out of the stars (she comes from Epilson, but the planet is never discussed on screen), meet The Man, and travel the world, seeing humanity and its mistakes on its own planet with a clear, critical eye. It was also to be a love story.
Finally, the Roman distribution firm, Intrafilm, provided some cash-flow so work could begin.

Intrafilm, which had handled Bad Boy Bubby, had been a keen supporter of the project from the start. It is a small independent company, in which de Heer has absolute trust, and had worked closely with producer Procacci.

In the weeks until mid-May when the shoot started, de Heer and his cast and crew talked about the meaning of life, love, death, the universe and domestic minutiae, building up a storehouse of ideas for the film. People came and went, joining in the conversations, dropping out, adding ideas. De Heer:

It was a very important time, in fact. It allowed me to get to know Syd and Ulli even before I wrote the script. I could see their idiosyncrasies and use their strengths to help form the characters.

In the stirring opening sequence, Graham Tardif’s musical score creates a mood of awe, expectation, emotion and contemplation, as the camera pans across the vast landscape; a myriad stars light up a mysteriously-moving sky. A naked woman, transparent at first, lands feet first on a rock, gradually solidifying.

One of Ulli Birve’s main concerns was how audience emotions would react to a woman so outspoken, so strong.

But if the alien had been a male character, of course, he would have just seemed a patriarchal figure, telling the woman what to do and what to think.

She is very committed and very strong mentally. When she decides to have a relationship with The Man, she sets the rules: always say what you mean, doesn’t always say what she means.

De Heer feels completely rewarded by what he has achieved, even though it is not exactly the sort of film he set out to make: “It’s shifted in style, and it’s a gentler, kinder film than I expected it to be. It was to have had its points more brutally put.”

Despite the extent and length of the shoot, de Heer used only 70,000 feet of film, to end up with a shooting ratio of 8.1; far lower than the average, which ranges between 12 and 20:1. De Heer:

That’s because when you do eight-hour time-lapse shots, you don’t have time to do ten takes. Many of the performance scenes were one take, or two or three. A lot of the shooting is very precise, from A to B; you don’t shoot coverage.

There was one particularly-tricky shot, however, that required 17 takes. In it, The Man walks across the frame and the shot dissolves halfway through. The effect is all done in the camera.

One other major aspect of motion-control camerawork is the alteration in the relationship of the actors to the camera, as de Heer explains:

Normally, the camera operator and the dolly grip react to the actors’ actions and movements. Here, we have to work out the timing of the actions second by second, so we can programme the computer. The actors have to learn the precise points of their actions to within a quarter of a second. They effectively become the camera operator and dolly grip: they’re responsible for keeping themselves in frame.

As de Heer found out, the motion-control camera moves unlike any human camera operator.

The movement has a sort of other-world feeling to it. It feels completely different, with its own precision. We used this to our advantage. Our grips never got tired; we can replicated each shot identically; and there was never an operator mistake.

Only a dozen shots were operated manually, says de Heer, but focus pulling was kept manual for the sake of ease.

It was quite usual to manage just one scene a day, and de Heer found it difficult to stick to conventional modes of reporting to producers and financiers. Instead, he kept a diary, discussing the mood on set and what was done.

The diary will read in part like a travelogue, with locations as varied as the Flinders Ranges (several times), Las Vegas, Los Angeles, Palm Springs, outside Broome, The Pinnacles (250 km north of Perth), Pumberton (250 km south of Perth), Cradle Mountain, Mt Barrow and Lifey Falls in Tasmania, Mt Buffalo in Victoria, the salty Lake Gairdner in South Australia, and star shots at Innamincka, Queensland, and Ceduna, South Australia.

Almost like an ironic pilgrimage, de Heer and his six to eight crew travelled to places where the absence of humanity makes a statement about the extreme nature of that absent humanity. As de Heer says:

The Man is outspoken, passionate ... so much so that The Man wants to terminate the relationship at one stage, saying she’s too extreme. But to her, he’s the extremist; human beings are the extremists. Everything we do is extreme. Our lifestyles are extreme, and what we’ve done to this planet is extreme.
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Botany Bay, the birthplace of white Australia; Botany Bay, strangely beautiful still, with its mangroves and wildlife and white sands surviving alongside the heavy industry and international airport; Botany Bay, which, for all its historic and symbolic significance, is not a part of a Sydney seen before in contemporary Australian film.

"I think one reason why no one's filmed there", says writer-director Margot Nash, "is because it's on the flight path! The aeroplanes are a recurring image in the film, so it didn't worry me. It worried the poor old sound recordist!"

Lead actress Pamela Rabe remarks: "Vacant Possession is like a love letter to the land. It is a love letter that acknowledges the difficulty and ambivalence of the relationship between white Australians and the land, and between indigenous people and colonizers. It also hints at a different connection that Aboriginal Australians have with the land, a bond not confined to the dream of owning a house.

Tessa, who ran away as a teenager, is coming home now that her mother has died. She returns to the empty family house, a house that, like the land, is alive, has a soul, is full of ghosts. Tessa's sister wants to sell the house and feels she is entitled to the money, as Tessa has been away so long. As Tessa wanders the house, sorting through her mother's belongings, looking for her mother's will, we gradually see why she ran away, what her connection is with the Aboriginal family living nearby, and why memories of her father and mother haunt her.

Asked about the origins of Vacant Possession, which has been fully funded by the Australian Film Commission, Margot Nash explains:

I was always very interested in the notion of the house, in the image of it as a metaphor or container, in the notions of 'house and home', a place that would or would not protect children.

I had done a documentary with teenage girls who were in care, and I'd come out of that thinking that questions about housing and a safe place were really critical. Most of the family breakdowns had happened within very enclosed and unsafe spaces. Interwoven with the idea of the house as an unsafe space is the story of Tessa's father (John Stanton), a man left damaged and grieving by his wartime experiences.

When we were making For Love or Money [a compilation documentary about the history of women's...
work in Australia], we coined this phrase: 'the amnesia of the '50s'.

Having grown up in a family that had been affected by World War II, I was very interested in the effect upon the family of devastating war experiences. I was interested in the repressed grief that I think a lot of our fathers had - I know my father definitely experienced it - and how that can cut a family into pieces. In this film, the father is a psychological casualty of WWII, but there is also the war between black and white in this country, which is still going on. We have colonized this country; we're living in a post-colonial society, trying to understand what that means, and trying to find our place and our sense of belonging. That is, I think, something that a lot of white people in this country have enormous confusion about.

For me, war is about land. Most wars are fought over land and property. That's how it fitted into the central ideas of the film: land, property, ownership. It's very easy to say, 'These are the bad guys, these are the good guys', but I think life is more complicated than that.

Weaving these strands of the story together proved a long journey during the scripting process. Nash:

I think there were seven official drafts in all.

One of the first things I did was find an Aboriginal person to talk to about the story. I met Kathy Kum-Sing, who'd been working at StreetWize Comics. She was a storyteller. That became a friendship but also a working relationship that went all the way through the project. Kathy was somebody who'd grown up around La Perouse and knew the community there.
while writing this film was that one of the things that happened was dropping chemicals in the Bay. Well, that all went.

The turning point came when I decided to write the film completely from the white character’s point of view, so we would never be privy to any conversations the Aboriginal mob might have if Tessa was not there in the room. We wouldn’t have any privileged information. It also helped to clarify the structure of the film – that it was a single point-of-view film.

I then moved the location of the film from La Perouse onto the other side of the Bay, and put it in a mythical place that was closer to where Captain Cook landed. We actually shot the film in Kurnell. When I started researching there, the mangrove swamps were so magical and mysterious and ancient that I wanted to incorporate them.

Kathy Kung-Sing became the Aboriginal script consultant. As there is an Aboriginal family as well as a white family in the film, Kung-Sing and Nash discussed what the Aboriginal characters may or may not say in certain situations.

When we were casting, Kathy stayed involved and came to see various cuts of the film. There are things in the film that are to do with the land, to do with a more – how to say it? – spiritual relationship to the land. So, she wanted to keep an eye on those things.

Another turning point in the scripting process came when Nash decided to allow more personal material into the story:

I had wanted to tell a big, universal story, but the more I tried to do that by drawing on the original research, the further I got away from it. The script went ahead when I allowed myself to use some of my own personal material.

I remember reading a poem after I’d finished the script where the writer said something like, ‘When I tried to dance with the gods there was nothing/When I stayed with the cry of the child the gods were there.’ I think that summed it up for me.

Vacant Possession has a haunting quality, an atmosphere of mystery and possible threat. The house is such an important character in the film, the search for the right one was crucial. Nash, producer John Winter and location manager Robin Clifton finally found owners who were prepared to rent out a property and allow the roof to be blown away in the story which is the film’s climax.

Production designer Michael Phillips, an architect by training, describes the house as “reminiscent of a carcase, with the weatherboards looking like sun-bleached bones”.

“We built the interior of the house in a studio in North Sydney,” says Nash, “so we had a lot of flexibility. We could move walls and move ceiling pieces and have a much more controlled environment. A lot of the film takes place inside.”

Phillips worked closely with Dion Beebe, the director of photography, on another very important aspect of the film: the seamless integration of the film’s fantasy, memory and dream sequences. The dreamlike, film noir feel is enhanced by design and lighting that allows the eye to slide over the frames and be drawn occasionally to a patch of high colour or detail to establish time and place.

I was interested in the transitions into those memories or imaginings or dreams. The dreams are more signposted as dreams, but the memories and the imaginings I wanted to be seamless. One just slipped into them the way one might just drop into a memory, I didn’t want to suddenly have different art direction or fades or ripples or colours changing too much. What I was trying to do was much more organic.

Interspersing these transitions from present to past, from dream to reality, at first seemed a great challenge to the film’s editor, Veronika Jenet, nominated in 1994 for an Academy Award for her work on The Piano. Jenet:

I’ve never worked on a picture before where everything was so interwoven. On the surface, you didn’t see it. But I’ve never seen those transitions done in any other film the way Margot’s approached it. I’m going to be really interested to see how the audience is going to deal with it. I think it’s clever and unique but not confusing.

Nash nominates the casting process as one of her favourite aspects of directing:

I found it really interesting because I’d written parts for women who were older [than usual]; the main character is in her late thirties or early forties, her sister a bit older. Then there is the mother, who appears mainly as a woman in her forties. There is an Aboriginal woman in her sixties, two old bag ladies and a couple of teenagers.

So, I wasn’t casting in the twenties, the beautiful young age group. I was casting older women and more mature actresses. There are very few parts for them, and I found it wonderful to meet these women who were so intelligent and so good at what they did, and so thoughtful.

Another turning point: casting and screen-testing people, trying to find out how they fitted into the part, how they worked, and what they need in order to shine. I’ve been an actor; I know how vulnerable one feels when one’s a performer.

As some of the cast did not have much experience, and as Nash herself wanted to brush up on working with actors, Nash applied for money from the Women’s Programme of the AFC to hold an intensive actors’ workshop before pre-production began. Kathy Mueller ran the workshop, in which the actors had a chance to bond together and talk through the psychological depths of the film and the relationships between the characters.

I’ve learnt just how important the pre-production period is in communicating one’s ideas. It’s very hard when you’re spending a lot of money to muck around with process, because people want to know and they want to be directed. They also want their creative space. So, it’s all of those things that one juggles in trying to get one’s vision onto the screen.

The first image in Vacant Possession, the golden dolphins in Botany Bay, was also the first scene shot in the film. The native creatures, so important in the script, seemed to follow the film crew.

On our first day, we were shooting at the heads of Botany Bay, in a boat. We were doing part of the opening dream sequence. We were out there at dawn and the safety boat rang up and asked, ‘Are you interested in the dolphins, because they’re heading straight for you?’

A school of bottle-nosed dolphins then came and played on both sides of the boats and swam with us in the golden morning light. We filmed them, of course, and they’re in the film. That was a thrilling way to start the shoot.

We were on a terribly tight schedule because of the light. We’d done our research and we had ten minutes here and fifteen minutes there, and we just threw that away and filmed them. That meant we didn’t have the light for the following shots. But we had the dolphins, which are beautiful.

While I’d written various bits of wildlife, I never would have written in dolphins. How would you get them out at Botany Bay at dawn? You write dolphins in a script and the art department has to go and get dolphins. You don’t do that on a low-budget film. So, what happens is they’re magically created.

Also, I had written a bird and a fish in the mangroves and they were all scheduled to be filmed later in second unit. We would have had to bring the fish and the bird in but, when we filmed in the mangroves later that day, we found fish and we found a bird. We stalked the bird for ages and there it is. Wildlife followed us wherever we went.

Margot Nash sums up the process of making her first feature by saying:

I was trying to do a lot and I had to cut a lot as a result, but how often do you get to make a film? You might as well try and do a bit. My favourite quote, which we had up in the editing room and which I had while writing, is by [Robert] Bresson: ‘One does not create by adding but by taking away. Empty the pond to get the fish...’
Nash: “I had wanted to tell a big, universal story, but the more I tried to do that by drawing on the original research, the further I got away from it. The script went ahead when I allowed myself to use some of my own material.”
At the time of going to press in March, the following Australian films were thought to be at the Marché. As some films may not in fact be completed in time, showreels and publishing deadline was before all producers had committed themselves to C

UNDER THE GUN

Cast: Richard Norton, Robert Bruce, Peter Lindley, Nicky Buckley, Kathy Long, Peter Cunningham, Stan Longinidis, Jane Badler, Tino Cererano.

Synopsis: A nightclub owner attempts to unload his debt-ridden club on a night where everything that can go wrong does. This is writer-director Matthew George’s first feature.

SEX IS A FOUR LETTER WORD

Cast: Joy Smithers (Sylvia), Rhett Walton (Morris), Mark Lee (John), Tessa Humphries (Tracy), Timothy Jones (Tom), Miranda Otto (Viv), Jonathan Sammy-lee (Dan).

Synopsis: A love columnist invites her friends to dinner to tell true love stories. A ‘90s drama about a group of friends coming to terms with their own feelings of love, lies and lust. Writer-director Murray Fahey’s previous feature was Get Away, Get Away in 1992.

BACK OF BEYOND

Cast: Paul Mercurio (Tom), Colin Friels (Connor), John Poison (Nick), Dee Smart (Charlie), Rebekah Elmaloglou (Susan), Bob Maza (Gilbert), Amy Miller-Porter (Rosie), Aaron Wilton (Ned), Terry Serio (Lucy), Glenda Linscott (Mary Margaret).

Synopsis: Outback Australia. An ancient land filled with infinite beauty and eternal mystery. The magical place where a young man’s search for spiritual fulfillment becomes an emotional awakening of the heart and soul. It is a journey to back of beyond. Michael Robertson’s two previous features are The Best of Friends (1982) and Going Sane (1987). He is a top commercials director. See article in Cinema Papers, No. 104, December 1994, pp. 12-8.

ALL MEN ARE LIARS

Cast: Toni Pearen, David Price, John Jarratt, Jamie Petersen, Carmen Tanti.

Synopsis: Mick, a 16-year-old country boy, cross-dresses and joins an all-girl band in town for the local festival. He falls hopelessly in love with band member Angela, who is flirting with lesbianism. She’s hot for Mick, not just because he’s cute and talented but being a woman he’s honest.

Writer-director Gerard Lee is a novelist, the co-scriptwriter of Sweetie (Jane Campion, 1989), and the writer and co-director of Passionless Moment. Recorded in Sydney Australia Sunday October 2nd (short, 1984). All Men are Liars is his first feature.

AUSTRALIAN FILMS
se thought most likely to be at Cannes, either in an Official Selection or represented els may be screened instead. Information is necessarily incomplete given that the annes representation. *Cinema Papers* apologizes in advance for any omissions.

## VACANT POSSESSION

**Cast:** Pamela Rabe, Linden Wilkinson.

**Synopsis:** When the past refuses to be buried it must be met in the present. Tessa had not gambled on that.

(See article in this issue on pp. 18-21.)

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## MUSHROOMS

**Cast:** Julia Blake, Lynette Curran, Simon Chivers.

**Synopsis:** A romantic black comedy about Minnie and Flo, widows in their mid-1960s, who become embroiled in a macabre plot when a corpse and a cop both decide to take refuge in the disused pawn shop that is their residence.

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## ANGEL BABY

**Cast:** John Lynch, Jacqueline McKennie.

**Synopsis:** A roller-coaster journey to the fringes of the human psyche.

(See article in this issue on pp. 10-3.)

## THE LIFE OF HARRY DARE

**Cast:** John Moore (Harry), Gordon Wente (Harry, 8 years old), Aaron Wilton (Jim).

**Synopsis:** John Moore (Harry) has just turned 8 and his father has vanished. He sets out on a search for his dad. A comedy about discovery.

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## EPSILON

**Cast:** Lilli Bivé (She), Syd Brisbane (The Man).

**Synopsis:** An intergalactic love story against a planet earth. (See article in this issue on pp. 14-16)

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## S AT CANNES 1995

### COUNTDOWN

**Cast:** Marcus Graham (Chris/Codie), Nikki Coghil (Katie), Doug Bowles (O'Rourke), Stephen Whittaker (Esposito), John Arnold (Frank), Bruce Alexander (Detective Sergeant). George Vidas (Keith), Andrew Curry (Jimmy), Jin Yi (Korean Diplomat), Roland Daniels (Large Asian Guy).

**Synopsis:** A comedy-thriller centred on a young girl who holds the key to the whereabouts of a missing research project as she journeys through a hostile and confusing environment questioning her beliefs and learning to trust and believe in herself.

This is Stephen Prodco's first feature.

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### GOODFRUIT

**Cast:** Claudia Black, Chrissie Yoheada, Aaron Jeffrey, Vic Rooney, Calvin de Grey, Joshua Rosenba, Peter Carmody.

**Synopsis:** A comedy-thriller centred on a young girl who holds the key to the whereabouts of a missing research project as she journeys through a hostile and confusing environment questioning her beliefs and learning to trust and believe in herself.

This is Stephen Prodco's first feature.

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### GIRL

**Cast:** Karoline Hohlweg (Vivi Martin), Kristy Pappas (Jeni Livieratos), Amelia Wong (Lin Hutchinson), Jamie Brindley (Suzan Carmo), Jack Thompson (Vctor Martin), Christine Karen (Maria Martel), Mary Slavonen (Despina Livieratos), Robert Forza (Janis Livieratos), Mavini Annes (Georgio Livieratos), Justin D'Orato (Michael Livieratos).

**Synopsis:** A story of four contemporary teenagers, three friends and one outsider, who enter a magazine photo competition. In consequence, one is propelled into an international modelling career.

Peter Thompson is the film critic for the Sunday programme on the Nine Network. This is his first feature.

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### ON OUR SELECTION

**Cast:** Leo McKinnon (Billy), Joan Sutherland (Mother), Geoffrey Rush (Davie).

**Synopsis:** A rural comedy. On Our Selection is the third film of this title to be made from the Steele Rudd stories, the others being made by Raymond Longford in 1919 and Ken G. Hall in 1932. Anthony Buckley is one of Australia's most respected and experienced producers; he is also a noted film historian.

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### BILLY'S HOLIDAY

**Cast:** Max Cullen, Kris McGauley, Tina Bursill, Drew Forsythe, Genevieve Lemon, Richard Reidburgh, Rachel Coops.

**Synopsis:** In the eyes of Billy's teenage daughter, he is a loser. And his girlfriend can't find the key to his heart. But when his pub jazz band takes off and Billy finds he has been magically blessed with the voice of his idol, the legendary Billie Holiday, life throws him some wild and wonderful curves. Fame, fortune - and Faust - tell Billy's world on its head until what emerges is the true romantic spirit of Billy Apples.

(See article in this issue on pp. 4-6)
Hannie Rayson’s popular and acclaimed play, *Hotel Sorrento*, is partially the story of an expatriate Australian’s return home – in all the contrasting senses that “home” can evoke. Debating the very essence of Australian culture, and its transformation from generation to generation, *Hotel Sorrento’s* adaptation to film needed a director minutely attuned to its myriad and contrary pulses. And it found it in Richard Franklin.

Although he hadn’t made an Australian film in the fifteen years since *Roadgames*, embracing instead the joys and tribulations of American genre filmmaking, Franklin returned to live here with his family in 1985. From then on, he has commuted to his many assignments overseas – that is, until the Hollywood committees he has so evocatively written about became simply too much.

Having decided to make a picture back in Australia, Franklin worked for a year and a half with Everett DeRoche on a project called “Breakwater”, a sci-fi action adventure set around Half Moon Bay’s hulk of the “Cerberus”, which, says Franklin, “finally, I’m afraid, went the way of the ship – it sank.”

FRANKLIN: When I discovered how difficult it was to put together a $15m picture in the independent market, I went back to another idea I’d had in the States, which was to translate theatre to film. I felt film was becoming more about the small screen, or “home screen” as I prefer to call it, as multiplex screens were getting smaller and home television screens were getting bigger.

I had lost my passion for modern cinema, at least modern American commercial cinema. Perhaps it was just that I was getting older (laughs), but I did perceive a real downturn in the quality of issues being dealt with in mainstream commercial cinema. At the same time, when I went to New York and saw plays, I would think, “God, this is speaking to me, not to some imagined perception of what the youth market wants.” I say “imagined perception” because the maxim that the youth market was all important may have been true in the 1950s and ’60s when it was first posited, but the bulge in the population has now moved on and we are middle-aged. Hollywood is still catering to the youth market!

The burgeoning “art-house” market (though you don’t hear about it in Hollywood) reflects a niche out there which is I suspect much bigger than anyone realizes. And Australian cinema has plugged into that niche very well.

I proposed to Universal that we adapt Tom Stoppard’s *The Real Thing*, and it turned out they had developed a script at considerable cost with Sydney Pollack and Stoppard. But they had shelved it because they couldn’t justify the advertising launch budget for making a picture that takes place in two rooms and a television studio. The absurdity of that struck me. They were complaining about escalating costs, yet here was Madison Ave calling the tune – the tail wagging the dog.

I talked to my brother-in-law, Peter Fitzpatrick, who is the head of the drama school at Monash and has written a number of books on Australian drama. I asked which recent Australian plays would be adaptable in the way I was talking about, and he gave me *Hotel Sorrento*. I didn’t have to read much further.

Have you seen any of the recent Australian films adapted from plays, such as *The Sum of Us* (Geoff Burton and Kevin Dowling, 1994) and *Strictly Ballroom* (Baz Luhrmann, 1992)?

Geoff Burton showed me *Sum of Us* while we were shooting *Hotel Sorrento* and, while I like it, it did not really change my approach. And while I knew it had begun as a play, *Strictly Ballroom’s* theatrical origins are not apparent to me in the finished film.
Most modern theatre is two-act in structure, yet film still struggles with an outmoded three-act model.

I read Hotel Sorrento as if it was a movie. I was looking for a movie subject, and, not having seen it on-stage, I visualized it taking place in real settings from the outset.

Geoff Burton, in his interview on The Sum of Us, argues the advantage of adapting plays is that they have already been worked through with audiences. And with actors.

The way actors perform dialogue is different from the way it reads. For example, Brian Denely rewrote his own dialogue, which was probably smart, on F/X2 [Franklin, 1991]. While it didn’t read so well to me, the minute he would start playing it, it sounded fantastic.

In the case of Hotel Sorrento, we were working from two versions of the published play which had been performed in every Australian capital city and undoubtedly been modified from the early drafts. It worked.

Hannie is a superb writer and this is probably the best dialogue I’ve ever had to direct. But to what extent the actors didn’t want to change it because it had been published, or because they knew other casts had made it work, I can’t say. But I had much less discussion about motivation and the like than on any other film.

It’s hard to think of an Australian film of the past half-decade or so which is so issues-orientated as Hotel Sorrento. Is that one of the things that appealed to you about the play?

I suppose I related to the notion of an expatriate coming home. But I also related to Sorrento.

I’d read a book called Miss Gymkhana, R. G. Menzies and Me by Cathy Skelton, which is about growing up in Sorrento. I personally never got much further than the camp ground at Rosebud, but I did visit Sorrento from my early childhood, and something about it just seemed never to have changed. Cathy’s book took me back to that era, before the renaissance of the film industry. I later discovered Hannie’s play is actually dedicated to Cathy and her sister Susie.

The irony is that the person The Sydney Morning Herald demanded leave Australia, because of an interest in making mid-Pacific films, has come back and made a film which discusses and values cultural integrity.

Yes, that’s an irony, isn’t it. I suppose I’ve moved philosophically, but so has the Australian film industry.

Back then, I genuinely believed that for the Australian cinema to work internationally we needed to get out there and capture the world’s attention. The ‘Breaker’ Morants did that, but so did films like Patrick [Franklin, 1978].

I tried the Aussie idiom — at least ocker comedy — but had my fingers burned with The True Story of Eskimo Nell [Franklin, 1975]. So, I moved to a model that served me well for a while. I was never opposed to the “cultural exactitude” argument, but believed we should also be allowed to do “international” genre pictures.

But my sense of genre filmmaking, at least as it once was, has been tempered. I thought it was valid for Fritz Lang, Max Ophüls, René Clair and Alfred Hitchcock to go to America and practise American genre filmmaking. But having seen America coming apart, I’m not sure that is so valid, because these films are now pushing a set of cultural values which I have discovered are not working.
The American approach to cinema is seen not only in genre, but in scriptwriting and theories about structure. When you set about writing the script with Peter Fitzpatrick, to what degree did you adopt the American rules of adapting plays to film?

I didn’t at all.

Most modern theatre is two-act in structure, yet film still struggles with an outmoded three-act model. I was eager to get rid of that second act which always sags, and Hotel Sorrento doesn’t have one.

Peter and I wanted to stay close to the play, and therefore, in the case of the lunch, broke all the rules of cinema. They say you can’t do a dialogue scene over eight pages in length, yet on shows like Roseanne, an entire act goes from commercial break to commercial break in one room, and it’s many more pages.

Television has subtly changed our notions of what can be done, without ever really defining itself. I don’t mean the tele-movie, which is just done in imitation of American formula cinema, with a few extra bumps for ad breaks. I mean things like soap opera, which has subtly pushed the envelope without meaning to.

To what degree were you concerned about such tired old notions as ‘opening’ out the play?

I don’t buy the opening-out argument and I’m borrowing directly from Hitchcock here. Although he was dismissive of what he called “films of people talking”, on Rope [1948] and Dial M for Murder [1954], among others, he said that very often theatre is strong because of its containment, and that you can damage it by opening it out.

I’ve always been fond of “containment”, even in original screenplays. Patrick takes place in a hospital room, Roadgames in a truck cabin and Psycho II [Franklin, 1983] in an old dark house.

But Hotel Sorrento is actually full of “air”. In fact, the first thing I did when I finished reading it was drive down to Sorrento and sit on the end of the jetty. I read Marge’s opening speech and tried to see how it felt in that setting. And it felt great.

In Australia, though, there is far more talk today about mid-points, second-act sag and third-act reversals than ever before?

Irony again: I was the one person who knew about that stuff from going to an American film school [USC] and now I don’t buy any of it. I believe the films that matter are the ones that break those rules – or don’t know them in the first place.

Why did you choose to co-write the screenplay and how much have you written of your films before?

I genuinely co-wrote Eskimo Nell, but, because it was such a debacle, I backed away from writing.

I took a story credit on Roadgames, because it was genuinely half my story. On Patrick, Everett had written a draft before we got together, but the structure ended up being at least half mine.

Everett and I worked very closely, as I did with Tom Holland in the States. We would sit down together, pin up scenes on boards and talk about structure, back story and so on.

In the latter days of “Breakwater”, when I was starting to worry about eating, I was approached by Grundys about a series of Daphne Du Maurier adaptations they were planning. I asked them about House on the Strand, which is one of my favourite unfilmed books of hers. They responded very positively, so I offered to write an adaptation, with which I was very happy. It was more difficult adapting a novel in some ways because there is so much more material.

With Hotel Sorrento, Hannie made it clear she didn’t want to write the screenplay. She was working on other things and I think had had bad experiences in the past. So, I figured the best way for me to learn the play was to do the adaptation myself with Peter, who’s not only a fine writer, but had taught the play at university.

The new scenes in the film were primarily written by Peter, but to my blueprint.

For example?

One new scene is on the pier with Pippa [Tara Morice] and Hilary [Caroline Gillmer] talking about the submarine sandwich shop at the aquarium. We expanded Pippa’s character to say more about the U.S. question. I knew a lot about the issue, but felt I might be a bit too close. Hannie also thought the play was too heavily weighted to Meg and British culture. So, I talked to Peter at length about it, and he went off and wrote it.

Pippa’s idiom throughout the piece, her turn of phrase, was something that I did.

I adjusted her dialogue so that she was talking in more modern American.

The film is extremely dense in its doublings. Meg says she “turned my back” on Hilary’s husband, while Troy [Ben Thomas] feels he “turned my
back" on Wal [Ray Barrett]. This doubling is also there on a visual level, such as the opening pan the painting with the roof.

Most of that is in the play. But visually I will take credit for it. I’m pleased you noticed the red roof.

That pan up the trees was very deliberate. Hannie began writing the play while she was living in London, and I’ve persuaded her that the pier she was writing about is actually the Portsea pier, where there is a very prominent red roof. On the Sorrento jetty, you can see no such thing.

Using this as a way to get into the issue of nostalgia and remembrance, false memory and constructing realities, I gave Dick [John Hargreaves] the extra line about there being no red roof there, or that you can’t see it above the trees. Then, as you pointed out, it is there in the painting. Marge [Joan Plowright] paints not the real Sorrento, but the mythic Sorrento — the Sorrento of the mind, in which the red roof is there.

Being an expatriate who has returned home links you clearly with Meg, but the film seems to side with Dick?

Umm ... I think that must have been your squint. Mid-way through the lunch, John said to me, "But this argument isn’t watertight." I said, "If it were watertight, we wouldn’t have a scene, let alone a debate about what is Australian culture."

But the view that Australian culture has progressed in the past two decades, and that many accepted wisdoms formulated by disgruntled expatriates are no longer relevant, is valid, isn’t it?

Well, if things have improved or changed, I suspect it’s been largely to do with our film industry — and our theatre.

As for the "old culture", I couldn’t help but feel that the Australia of my childhood, the Australia that Wal represents — Wal being both my father and my grandfather — lies unmarked and unourned because we had no film industry. I wanted to do my bit to chronicle that.

Perhaps a film industry and a sense of national identity come together. When you get a film industry, you are forced to ask, "What are we going to say?" I’ve been asked "Is it a period film or is it contemporary?", and I answer, "Yes." I wanted the film to be somehow timeless — like Sorrento. For me, it hasn’t changed, and I’d like it to stay that way. I think there is room for our backwaters as well as our Grand Prix tracks. There is no such house on the cliff, but there could be.

While Sorrento hasn’t changed much, are there many Wals still out there?

I think he is a pretty rare animal nowadays. I don’t want to give the impression, however, that I think the old culture was wonderful. Women were treated abominably. It was a xenophobic, tunnel-visioned, racist culture — but it was a culture none the less. And it’s remarkably resilient. In spite of the American onslaught, I was heartened the other night in Sydney to hear a taxi driver refer to McDonald’s as "Macka’s".

One of the main things I wanted to do was make a film which was unselfconsciously Australian, which puts me as much on Meg’s side as Dick’s, though they’re both self-conscious. I wanted to make something that audiences wouldn’t cringe at, which is directorially a matter of not being "apologetic" in the way you shoot and stage it, the accents and so on.

Does one need to leave Australia for a time to gain a fuller perspective?

Well, you might not, but I did. There are so few of us and we don’t see ourselves that often on film and television. I agree with David Williamson when he says in Emerald City that a culture has to be fictionalized before people can see it.

The film has an unusual number of dialogue scenes filmed in motion, with characters moving forward.

I could be very philosophical and point to one of the central metaphors of the play, which is the T. S. Eliot quote about how journeying outwards we come back to the place we started, and find ourselves. The play is about change; it is about people coming home; and, finally, the leaving of the house.

We shot more Steadicam than I have ever done before, but that was probably to keep the things moving. Perhaps I intuitively sensed that if I was doing an inherently static piece of theatre then movement seemed appropriate. It was all about people moving, changing their positions, coming from places and going to others, and, as I say, closing up and selling the house. It’s a house of three generations, and they put up an auction board and moved away.

I was nearly half way through shooting when I suddenly had a blinding flash and phoned Han-
The Australian Film Commission has $5.25 million to spend on multimedia over the next four years. Philip Dutchak asks: Will the money be well spent or should the government have left film to filmmakers and multimedia to multimedia developers?

The Australian Film Commission (AFC) staged its second “The Filmmaker and Multimedia: narrative and interactivity” conference in Melbourne on 9-11 March. If you attended the first AFC multimedia conference held in Sydney, in October 1993, you would have noticed that at this year’s event the AFC had purposely not invited computer hardware and software vendors to exhibit their products.

The reason is that the AFC wanted the conference solely to focus on the aspects of multimedia content. Michael Hill, Project Co-ordinator of Film Development at the AFC, put a humorous twist on the AFC’s single-mindedness by laying out to the close to 500 delegates who attended the event his particular “conference rules”. Speaking on the first day, Hill ribbed the audience that anyone talking about “technology”, “Bill Gates” or the “information superhighway” would be thrown out and banned from further attendance.

Having established the guidelines to much laughter from the audience (it was a rather fun event), the AFC held sessions on computer games writing, writing for interactivity, online interactivity, meaning in the interface, indigenous media, and myth and interactivity, along with a series of presentations by some of the artists whose multimedia installations were on display. There was an ancillary multimedia workshop held the next day after the conference’s official ending.

In setting the goals of the AFC meeting, Hill said, “It is to provide an opportunity for networking, to build up a common level of knowledge in this area [multimedia] and to inform the public.” Hill argued that, by drawing together multimedia developers with filmmakers, there was the possibility to improve multimedia content by adding the filmmakers’ skills of storytelling and emotional content to the new media - a point, it seemed, Jonathon Delacour, a writer-producer from Firmware Publishing, was trying to make by showing a number of sex and murder scenes taken from recently-made films, but presented to the audience by the aid of his laptop computer.

This notion of multimedia and filmmakers working together was indirectly challenged by Paul Brown, editor of FineArt Forum at Griffith University: “I don’t think the film industry is the right industry to lead us into new media.” He added later that “the alternatives are the design schools or design people”, whom he charged had been marginalized out of multimedia by the government’s “Creative Nation” statement’s not giving them the credit they are due.

Brown’s statements underline that in some circles it is perceived that the multimedia agenda is open for appropriation by the film industry, the IT industry, telecommunications carriers or creative types ... But this is getting a bit ahead of the article’s narrative.

Commercial highlights of the conference were

- A preview of Beam Software’s interactive video game, “The Dame was Loaded”.
- In computer animation, Jon McCormack’s installation, “Turbulence”, attracted popular attention. Jan Zwar, from New Media Enterprises at the ABC, told delegates that Auntie was “open to approaches from multimedia developers needing access to ABC...
archival material”. He offered that “the ABC could broker deals for multimedia developers and was looking to publish four to five CD-ROMS annually”.

A question from the floor on how to bring together writers and the people with the money to finance multimedia titles initially brought the response that there was “no such thing yet as a CD-ROM producer”. However, after a break, it was announced to delegates that the Australasian Interactive Multimedia Industry Association (AIMIA) were the right people to start talking with.

In the swing of multimedia conceits, let’s “hyperlink” highlight words from the preceding paragraphs.

“The Dame was Loaded” will, according to its principal writer Mark Morrison, begin shooting in Melbourne in May of this year. Based unashamedly on the narrative style of Raymond Chandler, the detective story lends itself well to an interactive format - in this particular case, a murder mystery in computer-game format. The difference is that, instead of the whole thing being rendered as animation, Beam is going to use video and actors. Using the point and click of a computer mouse attached to your computer, the viewer (participant?) will have the ability to change the narrative and solve the murder.

As for interactivity writing, Morrison warns that, if you let a player loose with a chainsaw in the foyer, you have to think what will happen when the player decides to take that chainsaw into the library. There are rumours that the “Dame” is only the first of Beam’s interactive video games based on a traditional narrative which - I just have to say this phrase - work as “nonlinear narrative”.

“Cosmology of Kyoto: Tales of the Heian Millennium” is an interactive computer game in CD-ROM format with the goal of reaching “enlightenment”. No points so far. But Kyoto indirectly teaches the user the origins of a culture - Japanese - and combines Monty Python-type graphics with a fair dose of spirituality. In short, the material is so novel that you forget that the storyline is based on point-and-clicking yourself to death to achieve the game’s goal. Its appeal is infectious. The AFC also released two commissioned research papers at the conference. “Multimedia Developments in Australia” is part of the AFC’s “Policy Series”. The study “provides a snapshot of the emerging infrastructure of the interactive multimedia business in Australia”. The report makes the qualification that its multimedia “focus is on disc rather than online or wireless technologies”. The other paper, in draft form only, was “Research into Current Markets for Interactive Multimedia Publishing on CD-ROM”.

According to other material supplied at the meeting by the Film Commission, the AFC since 1991 has provided more than $1 million to new media projects. Under the initiative of the “Creative Nation” statement, the AFC is to receive $5.25 million over four years for multimedia. The AFC plans to use these funds to provide...
"seed" and "completion" money for multimedia developers, as well as provide production money for the creation of multimedia titles.

**What it all means**

As a splash into multimedia, the AFC's conference was not bad. Michael Hill claimed it was "the first event of its kind in the world" (having an almost singular focus on aspects of multimedia content). The guest speaker at the AFC event, U.S. interactive cinema pioneer Grahame Weinbren, agreed with Hill's claim of an AFC first, but added "only just". Weinbren flew out of Melbourne before the end of the conference to attend a similar U.S. event on multimedia content. And the conference did start delivering when Weinbren argued that interactivity for him meant how people "accessed" his set film narratives, while other speakers talked of participants being able to change the actual storyline.

But the conference was a disappointment in terms of who didn't attend. With Brian Jones, former chairman of the government's Broadband Services Expert Group and now head of the ABC, talking about the imperative for content in multimedia, with the government's "Creative Nation" statement talking about the importance of multimedia and content, and with both Telecom and Optus publicly saying they want content for the new online and cable networks, where were the corporate players at the conference coming along to "look over the talent" - the creative people?

By contrast, the first of the joint DIST and DOCA Multimedia Forums held in Sydney the previous Wednesday, and due to hit all Australian capital cities in the coming months, had been loaded with "the players". I'm not trying to be hard here, but if the film industry wants to be in on new media, it is going to have to play "catch-up".

Multimedia at the moment lives primarily in the fields of training and presentations. Talking at the Australian Online and OnDisk 95 conference last February, keynote speaker Dr Lee Olson, strategic consultant for IBM Multimedia from Atlanta, told delegates that multimedia was the new way for education, in fighting illiteracy, for training and for the widespread dissemination of information. A study conducted by IBM with students using multimedia versus traditional educational methods found that "85 percent of those students using multimedia had better retention rates of the materials reviewed and took a third of the time of the other students to learn the material". Olson stated that multimedia is closer to the way we intuitively learn through sound and images as opposed to the written word.

The Australian film industry does have something to say and offer in multimedia. It also does have a play in multimedia training and education. The Australian Film Television & Radio School has recently announced its New Media Programme "to re-skill writers, directors and producers and assist them to apply new skills to interactivity multimedia". Other educational organizations, both public and private, either have started, or are to start, rolling out multimedia and online training courses.

There is the strength of filmmakers to work in multimedia titles, either on disk or online, and in interactive television, film and advertising. John Cleese's involvement in corporate videos is an example of "talent" going into a new area and doing well. But when the film industry's conference spends time, by necessity, to simply bring people up "to speed" on new media, rather than getting down to addressing specific details or emerging opportunities - doing the mighty deal - the gap between the potential of the film industry and its current new media product and services looks very, very large.
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The Digital Freight Train is coming.

Dale Duguid examines why Australian filmmakers are trailing the world in terms of digital visual effects and what it will take to catch up, while Dominic Case explores three-perf film, Flame, Avid and the Hewlett Packard Video Print Manager.

By Dale Duguid

FIlmmaking and its subset of visual-effects production is in the business, and the science, of the art of creating and manipulating images. Most audience experience with film and television is image-related, so ours is an important industry and the subset of visual-effects practitioners is critical to this important industry. This subset is diversifying, along with everyone else into multimedia applications (I think that means CD-ROM at present) and other high-resolution theme entertainments.

My sentiments are that the educators have failed the visual-effects industry. In both the training of sufficient numbers of digitally-skilled new graduates and the re-education and professional development of existing filmmakers, the educators have failed to acknowledge the arrival of the Digital Freight Train. I prefer the term "train" to "superhighway" or "infobahn" for reasons that will become apparent later. I should qualify my criticism of the educators. There is a global shortage of d’artists and imaging software code authors. “D’artist” is my abbreviated term for "digital artist", with the emphasis being on the word "artist".

This country, for its size, has been disproportionately-endowed with digital software stars. Imaging softwares like Flame, Eddie and Cineon (three of the film industry’s eight biggies) were spawned here. In the absence, however, of industry interest and entrepreneurial support, Flame and Eddie are now overseas-owned products, and Cineon, developed with Australia’s taxpayers’ support, has recently had its development team relocated from Melbourne to Rochester, New York, by its overseas owners, Kodak. Our local human resources dwindle as the brain drain draws them to where they are appreciated and utilized by more digitally-oriented film cultures.

"Why aren’t our filmmakers digitally savvy?" And what happens if they don’t re-educate?

The second answer is harsh as it is simple. We don’t re-educate, our industry will be laid waste and unrecognizable within two to five years. Ours isn’t an industry renowned for embracing technological change. It is said that all filmmakers want to be the second person to have the latest technology. For example, I remember utilizing one of the first Apple Macs in the film industry three years after they had become a mainstream graphics tool in other professions. In such an industry that copes because of its inherent forgiving nature with hiccups, it is easy to see how we can now be in the same situation:法兰克 called 10BA, which boosted then lowered tax incentives to film investors, caused the industry to reel for years after those goal posts were shifted. After those years in the wilderness, the industry is now climbing onto surer footing with hope that a second renaissance is upon us...

Unfortunately, the light we see is the thunderous approach of the Digital Freight Train, and I will go on to explain that it has the potential to scatter us like skittles and make the 10BA confusion pale by comparison. So much for "And what happens if we don’t re-educate?"

Let me provide my distillation as to why aren’t our filmmakers digitally savvy? And, things move quickly at the digital frontier. High-end PCs and supercomputers are a principal tool in visual effects. These experience a replacement product cycle every two-and-a-half to three years. (It’s rumoured that this is the time required for Japanese manufacturers to copy and usurp American technology, and the timing of the product cycle is driven by the U.S.’s constantly rising production cycles.)

New-product cycles result in an order-of-magnitude power increase for equivalent cost (this used to take six years only two decades ago, I recall). The capability-versus-cost graph spirals exponentially upward. Cost of entry to the quantum level of power needed to manipulate film resolution images spirals exponentially downwards. At the moment, the current product cycle permits visual effects achieve digital to compete with traditional analogue effects at only a slight cost penalty, but with the ultimate bias favouring digital because of its inherent forgiving nature and greater breadth of application. Analogue still has the edge in crafting certain types of illusionary images.

By "analogue", I mean non-digital, traditional and usually optically-based solutions. The next digital hardware product cycle in two or so years will sound the death knell, forever, of most analogue visual-effects solutions. The Train will have arrived.

George Lucas, famous filmmaker and owner of the Rolls Royce of visual-effects companies (Industrial Light & Magic), recently indicated that the average cost of each visual effect on Star Wars was U.S.$50,000, whereas the current cost is $10,000, and in a few years’ time it will be $2,000. By the way, I believe his maths are sound. If anybody knows where we’re heading, it’s George.

At $2,000 per effect, the very nature of conventional filmmaking will change. It is already changing — not here, but in Hollywood, where producers, directors, writers, technicians, actors and
technicalities

effects technicians are all becoming digitally savvy. Tragically, the sweeping
technicalities of Hollywood’s old analogue power base in Visual Optical Effects by the Digital Freight Train in late 1993
basically levelled the playing field for a short time. We were for the first time in 60 years in a position to keep pace with the digital prowess of Hollywood, but were unable to do so. We may soon pay the price.

That ever-growing digitally-savvy army of Hollywood filmmakers will seize the mind-boggling array of opportunities afforded during the imminent product cycle and exploit the cost-savings, risk-elimination, genre and narrative-diversification possibilities, while those who missed the Train consult the manuals and spend a decade playing catch-up.

Hollywood had always used technology to second-sense and offset high labour costs in filmmaking. Our industry rides on the back of relatively-low labour costs and a proud tradition of cost-saving and production-value-escalating innovation.

Wait for it: analogue innovation. Our range of production-genres have been copped by the absence of a significant optical industry, so we have few illusion-makers who can down the old analogue tools and seize up the new digital equivalents. But even more fundamentally, our filmmakers have tended to realize their screenplays in very literal manner, with linear interpretations to problem-solving rather than lateral solutions.

For example, if a hypothetical script read "and a thousand Romans advanced across the desert", you could be sure that the Hollywood filmmakers of old would have used a thousandwardrobed and armed extras, whereas the Aussie version would have used veils of dust and low camera angles to achieve a more humble, but nonetheless impressive, result with a couple of hundred extras. That was our trademark. We were clever. We still are. But our analogue cleverness counts for nought in our interfacing with, and exploration of, both arts and sciences. When a digital-hardware cycle has come and gone during the same time it takes to complete an Arts or Science degree.

I attended last year’s annual conference of the Screen Producers Association of Australia. My agenda was two-fold: to promote the existence of a visual-effects capability in Australia, to a broad cross-section of Australian producers; and to determine their collective knowledge of visual effects generally and the Digital Freight Train in particular. With only a couple of exceptions, none of them had seen the bombers fly overhead, and I came away knowing that few understood the implications had they bothered to look skyward in any case.

Oh, educators! In a world where the digital arms race processes production leaps by orders of magnitude every few years, the notion of educating for digital careers, then launching graduates into the fray, has passed. Constant professional development and post-graduate refurbishments are essential for tertiary-educated specialists, and a national enlightenment programme required for management, technicians and entrepreneurs. Whilst I speak for the film industry, one would reason that it must have parallel scenarios in many other fields that are borne aloft by silicon.

Surely, it is the rôle of educators to pre-empt such demand for new skills and the relentless need for re-skilling, and to service that pre-empted demand through their curricula, rather than react to it in retrospect. All aboard! That's getting aboard for the brave new 21st Century. This Train moves too fast for reactionary educators.

Only pro-active educators and institutions with the vision to pre-empt these events are relevant now. Only the pre-emptors are spending the taxpayers' money wisely. From this point onwards, each hardware cycle and its associated quantum leap in processing economy will create profound changes in our interfacing with, and exploration of, both arts and sciences. When a digital-hardware cycle has come and gone during the same time it takes to complete an Arts or Science degree, this implies that the education in digital-profession must be relentless... for life. Required curricula must pre-empt the needs and ramifications from what can only be a philosophical perspective, one which can extrapolate the exponential change propelled by the Freight Train, one which anticipates the ripping apart of our methodological fabrics and structures. It will only be situations endowed with brave and gutsy educators that will prevail and succeed.

On a positive note, I must relay that there are presently moves afoot among the bureaucrats, educators and power-brokers of our film industry to aggregate (at the AFC’s Multimedia Conference; see pp. 28-31) with a mind to look skyward and, having looked, hopefully shout, "Bombers on the way!" Who knows what will happen after that. One can only remain optimistic. If we can board the Digital Freight Train, rather than be run over by it, there will be afforded cultural and artistic gain on a grand scale. The 10BA loopholes were the genesis for some finely-crafted Australian films, as well as a space of sycophantic, unoriginal and unsuccessful attempts to ape the Hollywood model. The recent successes are attributed to a maturing local industry that speaks to its audiences in uniquely Australian ways and often about uniquely Australian situations.

Racing on the Freight Train has the promise of allowing us a profound and limitless diversification in genre, in narrative form, and subject matter, since we will be no longer constrained by linear and literal interpretations of screenplays and scripts. It will allow us to tell stories about all places and all times in boundless ways. Surely being able to telegraph the Australian perspective of circumstances broader than just our contemporary Australian circumstances defines maturation of our film culture. That spreading of our wings is one alternative. Being shackled to a subsidized and introspective quest for our Aussie raison d’être is the other. Our Train need not emulate Hollywood. It should leaftrop it to follow our own version.

Final call for all passengers. It runs express and it’s leaving soon.

"[A] digital-hardware cycle has come and gone during the same time it takes to complete an Arts or Science degree."

Thank you for indulging me in my talk of trains and bombs. These are items that appeal to my young son, who may read this one day. Come to think of it, I found planes and trains pretty fascinating at his age, too. It's comforting to know that some things are less prone to change than others... things like artistic endeavours which operate outside technology, but are disseminated and subsequently popularized by it. It follows that art and our culture, which embody our art, should not necessarily be burdened by any techno arms race. But, unfortunately, I feel that we must board the Freight Train with urgency and a set of expectations for our industry, so – not by the perverse need or will to have our art dominate elsewhere, but simply by the desire to ensure that our art is not swept aside and displaced by more energetic and capable disseminators.

Why can’t you see the risks? And if you can, why aren’t you doing something about it? Time to re-educate yourselves. Time to be digitally savvy. Where the educators have failed you, maybe it’s time to do it yourself.

THE THREE-PERFECT SOLUTION?

by Dominic Case

Some ideas seem so elegant that it's difficult to see why they aren't accepted. Usually, though, there's some minor flaw that prevents the idea being implemented effectively. Times change, though, and the idea usually comes around again.

So it is with the three-perf pull-down system for 35mm cameras. Look at a piece of 35mm negative. Although it may be covered with image, not all of the image is used. Normally, the soundtrack area is discarded (whether for a film or television finish), and to keep the image in the right aspect ratio, or screen shape, quite a lot is cropped off the top and bottom. For widescreen cinema applications, less than two-thirds of the frame height finishes up on the cinema screen. As we move towards 16:9 television, the same will be true for television material originating on film.

Several years ago, a SMPTE conference in Sydney presented three alternative film formats: three perf, 30 frames per second, and Super-35. None of these revolutionized the film industry, but they are all still around. And three perf may just have gained a new lease of life.

American television series are mostly shot on 35mm film. Lorimar produces Matlock, among many others, using the three-perf system. A Movicam camera used on the last series is now in Australia, and cinematographer Les Parrott recently shot a Valvoline commercial using the system.

The camera is modified in three ways: film transport is modified so that film advances three perf instead of four; the gate mask is altered to be about three-quarters of its full height; and the ground glass viewfinder is replaced with new rulings. Film stock is identical to conventional 35mm, except that a thousand feet load now runs for nearly fifteen minutes instead of eleven.

What cameras are available for three-perf shooting? Les Parrott is using the Movicam Super America II, John Bowling of Lemac reports that most cameras can be converted, but in every case it is a one- or two-day workshop operation. Currently, Lemac does not hold any 3-perf heads in stock. However, talk of camera conversions brings...
“Three-perf has the potential to revitalize creative thinking in the camera department.”

For 1.85:1 projection, the four-perf frame wastes 43 per cent of the negative area (not counting the soundtrack). Shooting three-perf reduces the waste area to 24 per cent; using the full width of the negative reduces waste further to 12 per cent and actually gives a larger frame for less stock.

Another surprise. According to Bowring, the Aaton 35 is a very elegant camera marred by its noise level: quieter than some, but, at 28 or 29 db, not really a surprise. According to Bowring, noise level to 24db – quite reasonable. But whereas a film work print of release prints, in three-perf format, conventional 35mm, and all that is changed is the waste area of the film. Maybe the times are right – this time around – for three-perf to flourish. Easy telecine transfer makes it an attractive format for television origination. For a film finish, nonlinear editing removes all the earlier problems associated with sprocket editing. But John Bowring adds a note of caution: “I wouldn’t advise anyone to embark on a three-perf shoot until they had a complete chain of post-production fully worked out and available.”

Sound advice for any of the plethora of systems available today.

NEW PRODUCTS, NEW APPLICATIONS

Hewlett Packard Video
Print Manager

The entire process of film or video production is aimed at getting a script – and possibly a storyboard – off the printed page and on to the screen. Not a simple matter. Now there’s a machine to get it all back again – to convert a filmed sequence back to a storyboard on paper – all at the touch of a button, as they say.

Seen at last year’s SMPTE show in Sydney, the Hewlett Packard Component Video Print Manager has already found a wide range of applications. At Omnicon in Sydney, it has been used in conjunction with the new Ursa Gold telecine. The unit grabs frames from each scene, and prints out a page for archiving. The sheet is then given to the client for reference when viewing the material.

Channel Seven (Sydney) has been using a Vidjet Print Manager in the Graphics Production Suite for several months. The unit can put up to 60 thumbnail size images onto a page – a useful reference for archiving Still Store and Paintbox graphics.

Qantas Airlines Video Production facility will use the unit for logging camera tapes. The unit grabs the first frame of each scene, and then prints a sheet of images out, with each frame’s camera
The day Frameworks introduced the first Avid to Australia we set about refining the way a long form project should be supported in the new ‘Non-Linear’ environment. Working with top editors and producers of drama, documentaries and features, Frameworks’ Stephen Smith has perfected a system that takes care of everything. From rushes to neg. matching. Daily budget and progress reporting. And, apart from always being accessible, Stephen still supervises complete or refresher Avid courses for the editor. Frameworks is the most experienced digital Non-Linear facility in Australia. Call Stephen for a quote. His accurate budgeting and proven post production back-up, can only be good for your next project.
These can then be printed out as a storyboard layout in the required sequence, with notes to assist in the editing session.

The engineering section of ABC TV use the Print Manager to grab images of satellite feeds. The system is controlled by a computer to grab frames at specific time intervals to be printed out as a log for later checking of image integrity and satellite time usage.

The unit takes a component video feed, and prints a variety of page layouts from one per page through to 60 images on an A4 sheet, on a standard parallel printer - typically a colour ink jet printer such as the Hewlett Packard DJ-1200C.

For further information, call Alan McLlwaine on (03) 558-9377 or Peter Adams on (02) 417-5166 at Quinto.

Fireworks Spread Across Australia

Following on the heels of Melbourne's Complete Post (see Cinema Papers, No. 102), several other facilities have now acquired the Flame software and Onyx supercomputer package. Omnicom in Sydney, Double G Post Production in Perth, and Digital Post in Auckland have each ordered a system, primarily for use in high-end television commercials.

The Flame system is yet another example of barriers falling down, as what might once have been regarded as a production tool is now to be used increasingly as an online edit suite. Peter Davies, Managing Director of Omnicom Digital, said "This means we have a lot more choice as to what we can do in the future. A traditional edit suite is not appropriate for our needs: they're a bit limited in their effects capabilities."

Similarly, Drew Gibson, of Double G in Perth, was looking for another digital editing suite, but decided to take the Onyx/Flame route:

Digital switchers don't really do much more than analogue switchers -- only better. Flame and Onyx give you a whole lot of effects that you just can't do in a real-time suite.

Across the Tasman at Auckland's Digital Post, operations director Garry Little followed the same thinking:

We needed a second edit suite, as last year we were booked up choc-a-bloc. But we didn't want a dedicated hardware system. That's a dead-end for us, because there's no upgrade path for the machine.

The Flame and Onyx package also introduces lots of interesting new possibilities for Digital Post, such as editing in S25-line format. Furthermore, in contrast with dedicated hardware systems, the Onyx's ability to run other software is seen as a major bonus.

The rapid industry acceptance of Discreet Logic software running on the Silicon Graphics (SGI) Onyx platform has placed David Edgar's company Future Reality as the major seller of SGI equipment in Australia. The company is just 18 months' old. David Edgar said the rapid growth of Future Reality confirmed his belief in the future of open-ended computer-based special-effects systems.

World-wide, the industry has seen a powerful new alliance formed with the merger of hardware manufacturer Silicon Graphics Inc with leading software vendors Alias Research and Wavefront. As a result of integration, the new organization will speed up development of FireWalker, a set of tools that will allow filmmakers and other entertainment authors to use the same digital source material in a number of related applications. Starting with the initial project such as a film, images and clips can be re-used in other interactive media such as CD-ROM, location-based entertainment, and interactive television programmes.

For more information about Discreet Logic or SGI products, contact David Edgar on (03) 876 5598 or (03) 876 5398.

Avid Goes Online

But it's Still a Cinema Finish

Starting out as a straightforward offline editing tool with the benefit of random access (arguably a better description of the process than "non-linear"), Avid is being increasingly integrated into the complex world of electronic post-production.

Melbourne's Digiline Non-Linear Pty Ltd has produced what it claims to be the world's first cinema commercial using Avid's online system. The commercial, for Melbourne's 1995 World Police and Fire Games, was co-ordinated through David Campbell Productions for agency Bond Miles and Coulter. It features working professionals who are morphed into athletes.

"What made it all possible was image quality", claims Chris Weir, Digiline's managing director. "It was very exciting to see a television image rendered so clearly on the big screen."

After shooting, telecine rushes were edited on an offline Avid 4000, and selected takes regraded on a Rank Ursa telecine. These takes were then recompiled on a broadcast standard Avid 8000 Media Composer. Selected scenes were exported and morphed using separate software, before being edited back into sequence, still at broadcast standard.

The finished commercial was then released on Betacam SP for television release, and via kine transfer onto film for the cinema release.

Traditionally (are we ready yet to use that term for nonlinear editing?), Avid systems have been used offline for film editing, followed by a matchback to a cut negative. The downside of the whole process has been the reduced image resolution of the digitized compressed image -- which is why it has remained an offline system. Now the increased image standards used by the online version bring Avid output up to broadcast quality, allowing digital effects to be edited back in, and short-circuiting the offline online process -- one more small link in the chain that will allow the seamless integration of digital effects into a film finish. Already this is possible at broadcast quality, and before long the same service will be possible by the same providers, at fully-intercuttable film quality. *Dominic Case*

AS WELL...

Cinestore Imports K-3

Making quality movies is usually an expensive proposition. Often would-be filmmakers lose the urge after they read the rate card at the camera company. Bunt thanks to Zenit, a camera company from Russia, and the Cinestore, a filmmakers' bookshop, quality, reliable 16mm cameras are now available for less than the price of a VHS camcorder.

The Kraanogorak-3, or K-3 for short, is a professional 16mm motion picture camera that meets all world standards for excellence in design and optics. Besides offering a full range of features, the K-3 comes with a complete line of accessories, including pistol grip, dipters, filters and carrying case. There is also a single-frame release that makes it perfect for animators.

Some of the features include a variable speed spring-driven motor, allowing film speeds from 8fps to 48fps, a built-in light meter and a rotating-mirror reflex viewing system normally found only on much higher-priced cameras.

Additional accessories such as video taps, crystal-speed motors and ARRI C-mounts are also available. Zenit also makes a range of lenses at very affordable prices.

The K-3 was called "the best buy in filmmaking today" by *American Cinematographer* and comes with everything necessary to start filming immediately.

The K-3 is available exclusively from the Cinestore. To order, call Brett Garten or Bill Eisenman on (02) 283 3049, or drop into the store at 37 Liverpool St Sydney for a demonstration.

Hewlett Packard Video Print Manager

Picture log produced by Hewlett Packard "Vidjet" Video Print Manager
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Open Channel acknowledges assistance from
Film Victoria and the Australian Film Commission
Australia's first films: Foreign producers in Australia, 1901

In part 13 of this series, Chris Long and Clive Sorwy continue their examination of the film bonanza that accompanied the Royal Visit in Australia's federal year.

Current literature makes no mention of the first really lengthy Australian films to achieve international distribution, which we examine in this article. They were made in 1901, when the Royal Tour in connection with the first opening of our Federal Parliament became newsworthy worldwide. Local and visiting foreign film producers fully exploited the event.

Our last instalment examined the local producers' 1901 Royal Tour coverage. At least three British cameramen also came out for the occasion. Their films were distributed extensively by London's Warwick Trading Company and by G. West and Sons of Southsea, near Portsmouth. Further coverage was attempted here by the British Mutoscope and Biograph Company. These cameramen made the first Australian films shot by foreigners since the Lumière Company's Marius Sestier departed in 1897.

The foreign producers' Australian Royal Tour coverage of 1901 was mostly sold in the customary short reels ranging from 50 feet (50 seconds) to 325 feet (5 mins 25 secs). However, they were also available to order in assembled forms, providing up to an hour of chronologically-sequenced Royal Tour views. The showman had the option of individually examining below. Our photographic examination of 1901 documents which described each item in detail.

Warwick Trading Company

In Australia: 1901

The Warwick Trading Company had its origins in the work of Charles Urban (1867-1942), a kinetoscopie parlour manager from Detroit. In 1897, he moved to England to manage the London office of Maguire and Baucus Limited, the company marketing Edison films in Britain and its colonies. In June 1898, he reorganized the firm, naming it The Warwick Trading Company after London's Warwick Court, the street where its office was based.

With the anglicized name, Urban then gave the firm improved local appeal by having it produce British films. He also took over the British distribution of French Lumière and Star (Méliès) films, and marketed the output of the Brighton (England) producers James Williamson and G. A. Smith.

Through Urban's business acumen he became the first major British film magnate, boosting The Warwick Trading Company to the forefront of the British and colonial film trade by 1900. Its Australian agents, Baker & Rouse Limited, ensured that Warwick had the lion's share of local film and equipment sales at that time.

Like the Lumière Company in the 1890s, Urban had a team of travelling cameramen touring the world and returning their films to London. His policy favoured news and actuality film rather than fictional narrative, in line with the then British and European cinematic tastes.

The Warwick Trading Company's principal travelling cameraman was the genial Jewish cockney Joseph Rosenthal (1864-1946). Originating in the United States, he probably also shot film in Japan and India, before setting his sights on recording Australia's Royal Visit in mid-1901.

Rosenthal arrived in Melbourne no later than 20 April 1901, and early in May he shot a few films of the Royal Visit there. Further good action films were taken of the Melbourne Fire Brigade (Eastern Hill), but overall the Melbourne visit seems to have been fairly unproductive. Our photographic press released Rosenthal as the foremost man of his time as a cinematographer, but a Melbourne newspaper extract published in Warwick's August 1901 catalogue suggested that the city's officialdom had been obstructive to his efforts.

Greater support was forthcoming when Rosenthal moved to Sydney late in May. Possibly assisted by the cameraman J. G. Avery, he effectively became Sydney's official Royal Visit cinematographer. He persuaded the New South Wales Government Printer to order the erection of camera platforms specifically for his use.

One was at the Domain to record the Royal Couple's Sydney arrival on 27 May. Another was at Centennial Park to give an unobstructed view of the Duke's Military Review on the following day.

Rosenthal also obtained the support of the New South Wales Railway and Tramway Commissioners, who allowed him to shoot a continuous tracking view of Sydney's George Street from a tram running between the Quay and the railway station without stopping.

A similar film was taken from a train running "through the mountains" (probably the Blue Mountains) before Rosenthal returned to Britain.

The pioneering New Zealand-based exhibitor and cameraman Walter Franklin Brown (1873-1964), known professionally as Franklin Barrett, often claimed in latter years to have shot Royal Visit coverage in association with Rosenthal.

Rigorous examination of 1901 documents has failed to locate any supporting evidence for this claim.

Rosenthal's Australian visit was brief, probably not exceeding six weeks. By the end of 1901, he was back on filming assignments in The Netherlands and Denmark. His Australian films were processed and printed in London, then offered for sale in Warwick Trading Company catalogues which described each item in detail.

"British biograph" film, 16mm wide. This fragment, supplied by Bob Kerprer of Melbourne, shows the unusual upside-down configuration of this film. The only films produced in Australia on this gauge appear to have been coverage of the Duke of York's Melbourne arrival, 8 May 1901.

Joe Rosenthal
Australian Filmography

The following descriptions are condensed from entries in the Warwick Trading Company Limited Catalogue Supplement.
No. 1, August 1901. Only Cat. 6230a is presently known to survive, in a private collection. More will probably be identified from these descriptions, as the films were sold widely by Warwick and are likely to survive, although they would have no identifying titles.

Cat. 6173a *The Duke and Duchess of York Passing “Menzies Hotel”, Bourke Street, during their triumphal progress through Melbourne [6 May 1901]*


Cat. 6189a *The Governor General (Lord Hopetoun) and the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and Staff going to open Parliament at Melbourne, May 9, 1901*

Troop of Australian Horse, followed by outriders in front of the Governor-General’s carriage. Then more cavalry, a carriage with the Duke’s staff, and finally the fourth carriage with the Royal couple. Immense crowds line the decorated streets. Length: 150 feet (2 mins 30 secs).

Cat. 6190a *Parade of Trades and Friendly Societies before the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, at Melbourne, May 11th 1901*

Trade union banners, triumphal cars and friendly societies’ members marching in their thousands. Spectators line the streets. Probably shot in Spring Street. Length: 150 feet (2 mins 30 secs).

Cat. 6202a *Arrival of Duke and Duchess of Cornwall at Sydney, May 27th 1901 – Leaving the Domain and passing into College Street*

Australian Lancers lead the Royal Couple’s State Landau drawn by four horses ridden by postillions. Large body of mounted guards at rear. Taken from an elevated platform. Length: 150 feet (2 mins 30 secs).

Cat. 6203a *The Great Review of Australian Field Forces before T.R.H. The Duke and Duchess of*
The Historic Cruise of the "Ophir" (1901)

**Above:** Their Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York, aboard the "Ophir" en route to Australia with their Suite, April 1901. A photo taken by Chief Petty Officer McGregor on behalf of filmmaker J. W. B. Murphy, later used in West's Royal Command entertainments which toured Australia, 1900-2. He was commissioned to produce the complete film record of the 1901 Royal Tour to Australia, and sent out Chief Petty Officer McGregor of the "Ophir" to shoot the film. Based in Southsea near Portsmouth, he was a marine photographer as well as a cinematographer. Photo by courtesy of John Barnes, St. Ives, Cornwall.

Top right: Alfred J. West (1858-1937) of the photography firm of G. West and Sons, founder of the "Our Navy" film entertainments which toured Australia, 1900-2. He was commissioned to produce the complete film record of the 1901 Royal Tour to Australia, and sent out Chief Petty Officer McGregor of the "Ophir" to shoot the film. Based in Southsea near Portsmouth, he was a marine photographer as well as a cinematographer. Photo by courtesy of John Barnes, St. Ives, Cornwall.

Right: Alfred J. West's "Our Navy" film entertainments travelled Australia between 1900 and 1901. West's shows were highly popular in Australia. This one is for a Hobart showing on 31 October 1901. Courtesy of J. W. B. Murphy Theatre Collection, State Library of Tasmania, Tasmaniana Collection, Hobart.

Below right: Filming the Duke's Review in Centennial Park, Sydney, 28 May 1901. Two cine cameras (extreme right and left of picture, foreground) and one still camera are seen here filming the Duke, right, on horseback in the busby. Joe Rosenthal, Chief Petty Officer McGregor and probably Mark Snow (see previous issue) covered this event. Rosenthal is the "Warwick "stringer" after Rosenthal's and the 75 foot length of this item concords exactly with the lengths of the project 6231a Panorama of the "Ophir" before leaving Sydney Harbour, 6th June 1901

The Royal Yacht, the "Ophir", at anchor just before her departure. Shores covered in bush at rear, while steam excursion boats circle around the liner. Length: 75 feet (1 min 15 secs).

Cat. 6230b Panorama View of Sydney Harbour, with crowds watching departure of the "Ophir", 6th June 1901

This begins with clifffy, bush-covered shore of Sydney Harbour, with spectators occupying every vantage point. Distant view of docks follows, then the "Ophir" seen "bows on" slowly leaving her anchorage. Ironclads of the Australian Squadron decked in flags also present, while the escort cruisers steam into position. Length: 100 feet (1 min 40 secs).

Cat. 6231a Good-bye Australia. The "Ophir", with escort of Tugs, Pleasure Boats and Warships leaving Sydney Harbour, 6th June 1901

The "Ophir" steaming out to sea pursued by numerous craft blowing good-bye on their steam whistles. Escort cruisers follow. Length: 125 feet (2 min 5 secs).

Man rushes to ring fire station bell. Doors fly open. Hose cart, two steamers and an American fire escape come out. Shot change to Melbourne city street, with engines rushing to fire at full gallop. Canvas reservoir tank placed in street, filled from a street hydrant. Engines rush up, insert suction tubes and train their hoses on the burning building. Length: 150 feet (2 min 30 secs).

Cat. 6233a The Melbourne Fire Department at Work

Continuation of previous film with fire engines working. Length: 50 feet (50 secs).

Cat. 6243a A Russian Battleship in Australian Waters

Tracking shot taken from a tug steaming past the "Gromoboi", probably in Sydney Harbour. Length: 50 feet (50 secs).

Cat. 6244a Panorama of the Russian Battleship "Gromoboi" [sic; "Gromoboi"], in Sydney Harbour

The largest battleship then afloat, passes the camera, "from the great guns in the barbette to the enormous Russian Naval Ensign trailing from her stern". Length: 100 feet (1 min 40 secs).

Cat. 6245a Panorama of George Street, Sydney, taken from the front of a Special Electric Tram Car [May-June 1901]

Tracking shot of George Street from the Quay to Central Railway Station taken from an electric tram running specially, without a stop, showing decorations and stands put up for the Royal Visit. Length: 150 feet (2 mins 30 secs).

Cat. 6250a Panorama of Thursday Island, the Headquarters of the Pearl Fishing Industry [shooting date unknown]

Note: This may not be shot by Joe Rosenthal, and the 75 foot length of this item concords exactly with the lengths shot by A. C. Haddon in Torres Strait. Panning shot of the jetty with the island beyond, with pearl luggers at anchor in the estuary. Length: 75 feet (1 min 15 secs).

The following item is listed in Blue Book of "Warwick" and "Star" Selected Film Subjects for standard American Gauge Animated Picture Apparatus, April (?) 1902:

Cat. 6679 Return of New South Wales Lancers [from Boer War]; Passing Through Sydney

May have been taken by a Warwick "stringer" after Rosenthal's Australian departure. Length: 75 feet (1 min 15 secs).
The following item is listed in the Warwick Trading Company's Film Blue Book Supplement No. 3, October 1902, Latest "WARWICK" and "STAR" film subjects:

Cat. 6978 Sailing Scene at Foy

[actualy "Syd" or Sydney],

Australia

May not be a Joe Rosenthal film.
Length: 75 feet (1 min 15 secs).

(2) C.P.O McGregor's Royal Tour Films, 1901

In 1901, Alfred J. West (1858-1937), co-founder of G. West and Sons' "Our Navy" film entertainments based at Southsea near Portsmouth, was commissioned to produce a film of the Royal Tour to Australia.27 Chief Petty Officer McGregor (sometimes spelt MacGregor), a photographer attached to the torpedo depot H.M.S. "Vernon", was instructed by A. J. West in film-making and accompanied the Royal Yacht, the "Ophir", on its tour.28

Very little is known of the content of McGregor's film. It was exhibited by A. J. West in a Royal Command Performance at Sandringham (England) a few days after the "Ophir" returned to Portsmouth in November 1901.29 West's later film catalogues gave the production's title as The Historic Cruise of the "Ophir" ("series 28"). They also state that the Command Performance was given on the day that the Duke of Cornwall and York was made Prince of Wales, and that on the same day Edward VII celebrated his first anniversary as King of England. As these two events did not coincide, at least one of those claims must be wrong.

In his unpublished reminiscences, A. J. West recalls that the various films showed the reception given to the Royal Couple at different outposts of Empire - the ceremony of crossing the line - arriving in Australia - the Review of troops in Sydney - log-chopping competitions - Maori war dances in New Zealand - Arrival in British Columbia - a panorama from the train going through the Rockies - Niagara Falls. The films were interspersed with lantern slides [...] After pictures of the arrival home at Portsmouth, the entertainment concluded with a portrait of the King [...] the show had taken nearly an hour and a half.30

McGregor's was the only complete film record taken of the 1901 Royal Tour, and it was shown by West's operators for about ten years after its production.31 However, no record of its exhibition in Australia can be found, and the most likely place for its survival is Britain, possibly at the Naval Archives in Portsmouth.32

A. J. West was not related to the later Australian film magnate T. J. West, neither were their businesses connected in any way.33

(3) British Biography Company Coverage

H. G. L. Wyld and C. H. Freedman toured Australasia as the sole local concessionaires for the British Mutoscope and Biograph Company's 70mm film projection equipment between 1900 and 1902.34 When the Royal visitors arrived in Mel...
New films from India

John Hood examines the best of indigenous filmmaking at The 1995 Indian International Film Festival

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The 26th International Film Festival of India, held in Bombay earlier this year, attracted over 3,000 official delegates, including 120 from foreign countries. More than 200 films from some 45 countries were screened, and these were presented in the usual sections of the Festival: Cinema of the World (which included Lee Tamahori's Once Were Warriors, Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List, Paul Cox's Exile and Krzysztof Kieslowski's Three Colours trilogy); a genuine variety of retrospectives (Fellini, Elvis Presley) and a nostalgic screening of a number of important Marathi films (of particular interest to the locals of Bombay); and the Indian Panorama, this year showing some 16 of the best films made in India during the past year.

The Indian Panorama is for many the most important part of the Festival, offering the foreign cinema enthusiast, at least, a convenient package of the previous year's best in India. As might be expected with the number of films, the package was somewhat uneven, with several of the movies being quite mediocre for this standard of festival, some very good and one quite outstanding. Much might have been expected of directors such as A. K. Bir, Ketan Mehta and Jabbar Patel, but their films were disappointing.

Bir's Aranyaka (A Trip into the Jungle) offers a potentially-interesting story about a hunting party that goes horribly wrong, but the potential is aborted by a convenient package of the previous year's best in India. As might be expected with the number of films, the package was somewhat uneven, with several of the movies being quite mediocre for this standard of festival, some very good and one quite outstanding. Much might have been expected of directors such as A. K. Bir, Ketan Mehta and Jabbar Patel, but their films were disappointing.

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Another film from Kerala was T. V. Chandran’s Pontyam Mada, a film about an unouchable peasant by the same name. It is a bulky and somewhat confused film, but contains some fine photography and some interesting insights into Keralan history and social customs.

From Orissa came Biplab Ray Chaudhuri’s Anranya Rodana (A Cry in the Wilderness), about injustices suffered by the tribal people of that state. It is well made, and offers a credible human interest story as well as providing a colourful look at regional tribal customs.

Clearly, the outstanding film of the Panorama and one of the best of the Festival was Buddhadeb Dasgupta’s already widely-acclaimed film, Charachar (Shelter of the Wings). The winner of the Indian national award for the best film of 1994, it has been shown already at fifteen international festivals, including Berlin, Montréal, La Rochelle, London and Brisbane, and it won the Grand Prix at the recent international festival at Fukuoka in Japan. The film is about a man, Lakhinder, sadly dissatisfied with his hereditary profession as a bird-catcher and involved, just as sadly, in a marriage that is failing, some years after the death of his only son. As his wife becomes more and more alienated from him as a result of his failure to provide for her and her growing affection for another, the memory of his little boy becomes ever closer, bringing with it an intense fondness for the birds he catches and then, almost always, releases. As he becomes gradually estranged from domestic and social responsibility, he starts to become overwhelmed by his dream of being like the birds. Through the breakdown of Lakhinder’s marriage and his increasing failure to make a living, Shelter of the Wings follows the pursuit of that dream. The film proceeds at a very gentle pace, as its progress is in the evolving of emotion and dream rather than in the development of plot or character. Typical of Buddhadeb Dasgupta’s later work is the minimal importance given to narrative, and in this film, too, the imagist style enhances the emotional evolution and helps unfold the dream. Soumendra Roy’s camerawork is exceptional, as is the director’s keen attention to framing and composition, and his obvious care for logic and balance of continuity. Shelter of the Wings is certainly the best film to come out of India since Dasgupta’s previous film, Tuhader Kotha (Their Ward), was released.

The International Film Festival of India may not be the biggest or the most prestigious film festival in the world, but it is particularly important in showing to the world the best films made by the serious artists of a country that is better known, regrettably, for the multitudinous trivia of its popular film industry.
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Six Degrees of Separation sees Fred Schepisi at his finest

Six Degrees, a wildly-clever film, is perhaps too clever for easy popularity. John Guare has adapted his own play to the screen and the idea contained in the not immediately catchy title remains central: “Everyone on this planet is separated by only six other people”, says one character, adding, “But you have to find the first six people to make the combination.”

Review by Brian McFarlane

BEFORE SUNRISE


The idea of a chance meeting on a train, a plane, a street or in a room which alters one’s perception of life, or the direction of one’s life, has attracted many filmmakers from Bergman, Resnais, Ozu and Kurosawa to Tarkovsky, John Ford, Bresson and Kieslowski. Certainly, the notion of the fateful encounter which is remembered and recorded, even as it is heightened and intensified through the passage of time, has provided some of the richest films in recent memory, from Alain Resnais’ Hiroshima, mon Amour (1959) and L’Amante Dernière à Marienbad (Last Year at Marienbad, 1961) to Akira Kurosawa’s Dersu Uzala (1975), Andrei Tarkovsky’s Zerkalo (Mirror, 1974) and, most recent, Krzysztof Kieslowski’s Trzy Couleurs trilogy. In such films, which are profoundly concerned with time, memory and the shaping force of the imagination as it attempts to grasp the transitory in the very process of flight, the past seems poignant and replete with value and meaning not so much because of the fleetingness of its elements, but because of the heightened or intensified quality which the process of recollection, reconstruction and reflection subsequently bring. Much of the poignancy, in other words, is due to the strong sense of
Six Degrees of Separation


It is a truism that a film ought to be concerned with images rather than words, but a film as good as Six Degrees of Separation challenges the idea that a lot of talk is bad for a film – or that it necessarily precludes the cinematic fluency. It is, in fact, a dazzling mix of incessant talk, intricate narrative procedures and cinematic fluency. It is, in fact, a series of conversation pieces, with changing audiences, the encounter of its opening sequence providing material for endless anecdotal chatter, enthralling to the increasing circle of listeners. Schepisi has directed films derived from plays before, notably Plenty (1985), from David Hare's allegory of postwar Britain's decline, and shown himself sensitive to the rigour of the original dramatic material while insistently reshaping to the demands of the new medium. This is brilliantly achieved in Six Degrees, a wildly-clever film, perhaps too clever for easy popularity. John Guare has adapted his own play to the screen and the idea contained in the not immediately catchy title remains central: "Everyone on this planet is separated by only six other people," says one character, adding, "But you have to find the right six people to make the combination." As ideas go, it is clever rather than profound, but, by the standards of most movies, "clever" is not to be despised. As the film talks its way through a swirl of interlocking episodes, deftly switching contexts, times and characters, the idea develops an emotional shading that is, by the end, unexpectedly affecting. A handsome, articulate young black man, bleeding from a wound to the side, interrupts Ouisa and Fan Kittredge (Stockard Channing and Donald Sutherland) in their Fifth Avenue apartment when they are entertaining a South African gold magnate (Ian Mckellen), whose financial backing they need to effect the sale of a Cézanne to Japanese investors. The young man, Paul (Will Smith), claims to be a friend of the Kittredges' children – and to be the son of Sidney Poitier. Next morning, after cooking the Kittredges and their guest a fabulous meal, Paul proves to be in bed with a male hustler, and the outraged Kittredges throw them out. They have forgotten how he fascinated them the night before, and now, having checked that their objects d'art are all intact, he has become fodder for anecdote at the fashionable wedding they attend. They scarcely know the bridal couple from whom they distract attention by telling the story of the night before to an ever-increasing circle of onlookers. The Kittredges have not been alone in having their lives invaded by the charismatic Paul, who, it is discovered, has tracked down his willing and gullible hosts through a number of things that Celine holds dear. Yet each is attracted to the other and it is the attraction that overcomes the fundamental points of divergence between them; indeed, the film's sense of an overarching unity that binds these characters is quite dominant notwithstanding the differences between them. Their time in Vienna is clearly meant to convey to the viewer the sense of a distinctive and special relationship forming between the brash young American and the outspoken though much more optimistic Frenchwoman.

It is tempting to read the relationship between the two in symbolic as well as personal terms. For example, a number of stereotypes of "the American" and "the French" are raised in retrospectiveness that pervades such films – the sense that something is being appreciated more fully and more meaningfully in its absence and as a consequence of an acute, even overwhelming, awareness of human transitoriness, temporality and loss. Before Sunrise is a film which explores such ideas. It is also a film by a literate filmmaker who is aware of and alludes to celebrated forebears. The storyline is quite simple. A young man, Jesse (Ethan Hawke), meets a young woman, Celine (Julie Delpy), on a train, though, interestingly, the film suggests that the meeting is not altogether a matter of chance. They talk and become attracted to each other. Jesse is travelling to Vienna where he will board a flight which will take him back to the U.S.; Celine is travelling home to Paris. They talk until the train arrives at Vienna and, before parting, Jesse asks Celine to spend time with him in Vienna. (He has about 14 hours before flying out.) She agrees and both leave the train. The rest of the film records their walks through Vienna, their conversations on numerous topics including marriage and relationships, death, the past, wars, family, love and sex, poetry, feminism, philosophy and so on, and their encounters with a host of Viennese folk. (Indeed, there is not much that they do not talk about.) In the process, they become very close. Of course, the moment of parting, which the film has always constructed as imminant and unavoidable, becomes very problematic for both. The film then explores not so much the lives of the two travellers but rather the idea of transitoriness and the ways in which people attribute value and meaning through memory, recollection and reflection in response to their consciousness of change and mutability. It is clear that both characters respond in fundamentally different ways: Celine sees herself as a strong, independent icon of "modern womanhood" who is torn by her conviction that loving another person and being loved in return are the most crucial things in a life; Jesse sees himself as a hard-nosed, experienced young man who is street-wise and affirms a measure of cynicism about a schoolfriend of the children of the Kittredges, of their best friends, Kitty and Larkin (Mary Beth Hurt and Bruce Davidson), and of a Jewish doctor, Fine (Richard Masur). The schoolfriend, Trent Conway (Anthony Michael Hall), sexually infatuated by Paul, has found him on the streets and put him through the Pygmalion course which has enabled Paul to present himself so plausibly. What emerges as the narrative twists and turns is a stripping away of layers of complacency and self-absorption, as the catalytic figure of Paul cuts a swathe through one group after another. Not that it is a honed-down morality play in which the catalyst has no function except to effect changes and/or self-examination in those with whom he comes in contact. In fact, it is really only in Ouisa's case that such an outcome occurs. Paul himself may draw attention to the ever-widening gap between the haves and the have-nots in his society, but he remains an individual with an individual's needs. What happens to him in the end may be representative of an unconnecting, irresponsible society that makes anecdote out of other people's experience; it is also humanly complex in a way that resists such reductiveness. In the chain connecting any six people, the links have proved dangerously fragile in Paul's case. Not many films conduct their narratives through so much talk as Six Degrees does, and it needs to be stressed that it is often witty and always acutely observed and -rendered talk. As well, not many films make such spatial and temporal demands on their audiences. With an impressive sense of narrative rhythm, Schepisi urges us on from apartment to wedding, from gallery to street, from Harvard to Central Park – and not in any simple linear way either to wherever the protagonist Paul is acting out his imposture or wherever others are talking about him. It is immensely filmic, for all the talk. The contrasts in mise-en-scène, as, for example, the film cuts between the gainful luxury of the Kittredge apartment and the phone-booth on a squall, rough-strung street as Paul tries to make Ouisa believe he has really cared.
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importance of their encounter with Paul: He did more for us in an hour than our children did. And we turn him into an anecdote to dine out on? He was an experience. How do we keep the experience? To the embarrassment of Flan, who has long since given up any creative aspirations in favour of milking the lucrative art market, she storms out of the influential luncheon asking, "How much of your life can you account for?", and walks off into the street alone, determined to treasure the "experience". The film is spelling its meanings out more explicitly than it needs and the ending is more upbeat than expected, but Channing makes it triumphant.

Why, one wonders, is she not a major film star? Sutherland is comparably subtle in the little bits of Flan that he allows to be seen before shutting down in the face of an important luncheon, and indeed the entire cast (including cameos by Kitty Carlisle Hart and Madhur Jaffrey at the luncheon) makes the film a feast of screen acting. When so many films are dominated by special effects, this is by no means the everyday treat it once was: Six Degrees of Separation may well be Scheperis's most accomplished film. An Australian director working in America, he achieves that sharp cultural specificity about aspects of American life that used to be noted about European directors such as Wilder or Peter Yates or John Schlesinger at large in the U.S. He also makes the locally exact surfaces resonate with intimacy of wider significance—and without being solemn about it.

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HOTEL SORRENTO

Directed by Richard Franklin. Producer: Richard Franklin. Co-producer: Helen Watts. Scriptwriters: Richard Franklin, Peter Fitzgerald. Based on the play by Moynihan family and Sorrento summer from the 1950s through to the '70s. The fact that these are actual home movies, drawn from various families named in the closing credits, foregrounds the contemporary realism which pervades the film: the forceful reality of family dynamics, the natural beauty of a sleepy coastal town. Franklin's Moynihan family and Sorrento are a farewell from P.J. Hogan's Muriel's Wedding and family at Porpoise Spit.

As the camera glides along the foreshore, our point of focus is guided by the dulcet tones of Joan Plowright's voice. Her character, Marge, is reading a passage from a novel called Melancholy, written by Meg Moynihan (Caroline Goodall), an expatriate who has lived in London for ten years. The novel's setting is clearly based on Sorrento, as Marge is convinced, despite the scepticism of her companion, Dick Bennett (John Hargreaves), a magazine editor.

On one of the coastal headlands, overlooking the ocean, sits the Moynihan family home, a tired weatherboard with verandah, where Hilary (Caroline Gillmer) lives with her ageing father, Wal (Ray Barrett), and teenage son, Troy (Ben Thomas). Hil's husband died when Troy was six, in circumstances veiled in family secrecy. Her mother, a hard worker who cared for three daughters and a difficult husband, also died tragically some years ago, but this too remains unspoken in the family. The bonds between these three generations are strong, but particularly between Hil and Troy, a mother and her only child. The interloper in this trio is Pippa (Tara Morice), Hil's younger sister who has been living in New York and is somewhat caught up in the quasi-intellectual psycho-babble for which Americans are infamous. Both Hil and Pippa are trying to ignore the obvious autobiographical nature of Meg's novel, which is shortlisted for the Booker Prize and the focus of publicity hype in London. Melancholy is particularly scathing in its depiction of Australian middle-class, masculinist culture, and suggests that the only way for a woman to survive is by betraying her sisters. Throughout the film, Meg's novel raises fundamental concerns about the nature of writing 'fiction' and writing as an expatriate, and questions about loyalty to one's family and country.

Marge and Dick manage to infuriate the Moynihan family as new-found acquaintances. Her curiosity aroused by the novel, Marge is drawn instinctively to Hil, whose fictional characterization as 'Helen' touches a chord with her own distant, painful past. Dick, meanwhile, succumbs to his journalistic urgings for snooping, when he hears of Meg's return to Sorrento with her English husband, Edwin (Nicholas Bell), and her wish that this be kept from the press. However, rather than write the 'big scoop', Dick is more interested in engaging Meg on an intellectual level, challenging her narrow, nostalgic view of Australia with a voice of maturity and reason. One respectful, the other critical, Marge and Dick are the catalysts for the dramatic dénouement between the sisters as secrets are finally spoken and the family suffers another tragic death. Curiously, it is the final scene in which the sisters confront each other that the film's impeccable realism lapses, the front living room bathed in a burnt-orange glow, perhaps to suggest sunset, but more evocative of an apocalyptic moment (which, one could argue, it is). It feels eerie, surreal and consequently out of place with the tone of the film.

Within twenty-four hours of seeing Franklin's adaptation, I was once again witness to the Chekhovian intricacies of the Moynihan family, this time in the words of Rayson's original work (the full play was published as the programme for the Playbox premiere). Rayson's ear for dialogue and sense of dramatic pull are masterful and Franklin has accorded her script all due respect, with most scenes a word-for-word transposition from stage to screen. I recalled Rayson's own astonishment, described in a speech she gave at a seminar on adapting literary works to film at last year's Melbourne Writers' Festival, when she saw 'the dining room scene' — which brings the entire cast together at lunch — filmed with hardly a cut to the original script. This is one of the dramatic high-points of both the play and film; intended for the stage, rather than the pacy scene changes typical of conventional film, this scene runs close to ten minutes. Thus, a great deal of the film's impact is due to the power of Rayson's writing, on the small scale of one-liners to the grand picture of a damn good story which blends tragedy with comedy and social comment. However, this is exactly where credit must go to Franklin and his partner-in-adaptation, Peter Fitzgerald. The adaptor's rôle calls for great self-discipline and fine judgement in resisting the urge to alter, to tamper with someone else's work you are now claiming for your own purpose. Instead, Franklin and Fitzgerald restrict themselves to placing the scenes in sequence, occasionally condensing two into one, and setting them around the very localities in Sorrento the play describes but cannot realize on stage. Franklin exploits one of the fundamental differences between stage and film — the camera — as a medium for controlling audience response. The camera provides Franklin with a means of intensifying emotions and exchanges, through close-ups of faces and significant objects, and creating an alternative frame of reference: although the film is grounded in realism, Franklin is not constrained by the earth-bound camera, choosing on a couple of instances to shoot from above, looking down upon the characters, whether on the jetty or in the living room.

With a canvas so deftly painted by Rayson and framed by Franklin, the cast forms the crucial third element in producing a work of cinematic art. Tara Morice showcases her chameleon-like quality as the smart, sassy Pippa; Caroline Goodall deftly juggles the painful and sympathetic sides of the expatriate Meg, who is still as much a victim of family emotions as her two sisters; and Ray Barrett relishes the rôle of the ageing patriarchal philosopher: "If you're a woman and you got any brains, you don't work!" Nicholas Bell,
ever the English gentleman, is the perfect foil for Meg's unrestrained ranting and raving. The rapport between Flwright and Hargreaves — as good friends with differing personal and political philosophies — is the product of two sensitive actors in full command of their craft.

But the truly moving performances belong to Caroline Gillmer, as Hilary 'the survivor', and Ben Thomas as Troy. Her son is often the go-between for the three sisters, for Hilary and her father, even for Dick and Hil, and Thomas handles the role with mature understatement. Troy has always been there for his mum, until he suffers his own personal tragedy and she is there for him: "We've got a lot to feel sorry for — you and me. God knows. But I'm buggered if I'm gonna go under. And I'm not gonna let you either." 2

Gillmer is the one original cast member from the Playbox production; she actually played Meg. In her role as Hilary, Gillmer uses an economy of voice and facial expression to convey her character's inner torment. This subtlety produces a stirring performance, made all the more powerful by her final, passionate outpourings with Troy, then with her sisters, as the film closes.

With its wry examination of the background of history, Hotel Sorrento is primarily concerned with questions of place, within one's country, one's work, one's family and one's heart. Hopefully, the film will find a place in many hearts. It deserves to. © Fincina Higood

LA REINE MARGOT

Directed by Patrice Chéreau. Producer: Claude Berri. Executive producer: Pierre Grunstein. Screenplay: Danielle Thompson, Patrice Chéreau. Dialogue: Danielle Thompson. Based on the novel by Alexandre Dumas. Director of photography: Philippe Rousselot. Costume designer: Moïdèle Bickel. Composer: Goran Bregovic. Art Director: Guillaume Sciama, Richard Peduzzi, Olivier Radot. Sound designer: Guillaume Sciama, Olivier Radot. Editor: François Philippe Rousselot. Production designer: Richard Peduzzi, Olivier Radot. Costume designer: Moïdèle Bickel. Composer: Goran Bregovic. Art Director: Guillaume Sciama, Richard Peduzzi, Olivier Radot. Sound designer: Guillaume Sciama, Olivier Radot. Editor: François Touchet. The sweeping history of France is brought to life on the screen with absorbing detail in this epic film directed by Patrice Chéreau. The story of Margot's life is told through the eyes of her lover, Henri, who witnesses to the wedding which is about to take place. Visually, the film often recalls the crowded canvases which Bosch imbued with such malign effect, offset by the sudden lovely shock of a Dutch landscape that invokes Vermeer. In the foreground of the film is the marriage of Margot (Isabelle Adjani), daughter of the Queen of France, Catherine de Médici (Vivien Leigh), and Henri (Daniel Auteuil), King of Navarre. This union, promoted by the unloved Italian exile, Catherine, to bring about accord between the warring religious factions, is sealed with violence even in the church, and continues as it began. On the night of the wedding, Margot refuses to sleep with Henri, and wanders the streets in search of a lover, whom she finds in the handsomest Protestant, La Môle (Vincent Perez). La Môle is both pure at heart and a passionate lover, and the film makes the most of the latter element with some predictably steamy sex scenes.

However, without going into further detail about the ramifications of its plot, it is fair to say that Chéreau maintains a serious narrative interest in the growing rapprochement between Henri and Margot, and in the growth of Margot's sense of justice as a by-product of her passionate liaison with La Môle. There is a skilful balance between the historical and the personal, between the panoramic and the intimate, and interest in the corrupting potential of great power and the dangers of religious zealotry give the film enough intellectual bite to ensure that it is more than just a dazzling surface. The physical texture of wood and stone and brocaded cloth is not a mere carapace: there is as well the satisfaction of watching relationships develop and Margot's priorities change, and the sense of a society glutting itself on intrigue and destruction.

In all, the enormous busy-ness of its violent narrative, hurting along to the accompaniment of Goran Bregovic's sometimes overbearing score, it is the acting which firmly anchors one's attention to both the personal and the religious/political matters. Isabelle Adjani's passionate sensuality as Margot is complemented by both Daniel Auteuil's equivocal Henri, part opportunist, part peasant clown, and Vincent Perez as the idealistic La Môle, whose life Margot saves and who comes to love her wildly.

Considering that La Reine Margot lasts for two and three-quarter hours, it is pretty compulsive viewing. It lingers too much over bearing bosoms and thighs, and it is often atrociously sub-titled ("What's with him?", "Is that what turns you on?", talk of "screeving" and "knocking up", along with "You know nothing of love" and other high-flown sentiments). But in its headlong rush of events, it sometimes surprises with a sense of the weariness of trying to adjust human need to the onslaught of history. © Brian McFarlane

2. La Reine Margot, but for some obscure reason re-titled Marguerite de Valois in English editions.
**Books**

**KABOOM! EXPLOSIVE ANIMATION FROM AMERICA AND JAPAN**


Although the book Kaboom! Explosive Animation from America and Japan is clearly associated with the Sydney Museum of Contemporary Art’s animation exhibition of the same name, it is not a catalogue of that show. Rather than explaining or documenting the exhibition, the Kaboom! book stands successfully on its own as an informative compilation of essays, animator profiles and interviews with figures from the animation industry.

For instance, Mark Shilling’s “A look inside Doraemon’s pouch” is the most comprehensive introduction I have read to one of Asia’s most successful comic, animation and merchandise characters. Masaharu Osa delivers an interesting sketch of connections between the music, manga and anime scenes in the 1960s and early 1970s. And Rosemary Iwamura’s anecdotal piece on Japanese animation heroines contains some entertaining observations on the cult following enjoyed by animation characters in Japan, where they are frequently more loved and admired than flesh-and-blood movie and television stars. Iwamura also reports on the creative marketing of voice actors, who are frequently hired as much for their physical resemblance to the cartoon characters they “play” as for their vocal acting skills. Philip Brophy’s extended answer to the question “Why do Japanese cartoon characters have Western eyes?” strays into a diverting history of cuteness in dolls and art as well as cartoons. And, following in the footsteps of earlier work by Brophy, Daniel Szyk contributes a historical argument for the importance of sound to the Japanese cartoon characters. A sixth essayist named Emmanuelle Toulet, Thames & Hudson, 1994, 177pp., illus., ph, rrp $14.95

**MAKING PRISCILLA**

Al Clark, Penguin Books, Australia, 1994, 177pp., illus., ph, rrp $14.95

Al Clark is the producer of The Adventures of Priscilla, Queen of the Desert (with Michael Hamlyn), so that makes him close to the source when it comes to writing about the hilarious true story behind the hit movie.

Clark is not afraid of the bold statement: “Even in its still incomplete state, Priscilla strikes me as the most confident first film I have seen”. While Franks may lay claim to being one of the most under-appreciated Australian films of recent memory, one has to ask: What about that other first film, Citizen Kane?! That is page seven, and Clark has only just begun to warm up. Soon he is in full swing: Roadshow’s Alan Finney is “the distribution counterpart of the fire-and-brimstone preacher” (p. 136).

Clark isn’t reluctant either to settle some old scores: The NSWFTO’s initial response [to the script of Priscilla] is not as crucifying as one made by the Australian Film Commission when it was rejected by them after Cannes 1991 [citing stereotyped characters, political incorrectness and the view that Stephan’s short films were ‘deeply shallow’] (p. 19).

Yes, the AFC and NSWFTO got it wrong, and Clark won’t let us forget it: he even contrives comments favourable by ICM against negative ones by the NSWFTO. (The film was ultimately “produced with the assistance and financial participation of New South Wales Film and Television Office”, as an end credit reads. The NSWFTO also holds joint copyright.)

Clark has written this book in the glow of triumph and one would be churlish to want anything less spirited or first-person in perspective. What also can’t be denied is that Clark is a natural writer, knows and loves movies (not that common amongst producers), and has helped make one of the finest Australian films of recent times. Stories like this need to be told, and Clark is savvy enough to make sure it is spiced.

Stephan has been unsettled by an incident following a party at which his glib, hyperactive frivolity had got the better of him. Someone began to introduce him to an Australian film director he already knew well, and Stephan cut it short: ‘Of course I know him’, he snapped, ‘I used to book his wife.’ This fatally careless remark – its absence of truth subordinated to its potential amusement value – has opened a Pandora’s box of secrecy and suspicion, culminating in Stephan on his hands and knees the following morning on the Crouzette begging forgiveness of both director and wife.

[p. 148] © SCOTT MURRAY

**CINEMA IS 100 YEARS OLD**

Emmanuelle Toulet, Thames & Hudson, London, 1996, 175pp., illus., ph, rrp £13.95

Originally written in French (Gallimard/Réunion des Musées Nationaux, 1988) and only recently out in English, this tiny book, like a Fabergé snuff box, is a visual gem. Covering the very beginnings of cinema – up to 1906 – it is a mix of historical information and quirky facts. The best aspect of this book, though, is the amazing illustrations, colour and black-and-white reproductions of early footage, paintings (animation), advertisements, photographs and diagrams. One just wishes the book was three times the size – and made an acknowledgment of the existence of filmmaking in Australia!
back issues

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defamation can be one of the most over-looked aspects of production. There are two main pat­ terns. The first is where the script is obviously defamatory and advice is sought from a very early stage. The second is where the question, “Could this be defamatory?” is asked very late (sometimes too late).

Defamation, if it is an issue in a script, usually gnaws at the back of the producer’s mind. He/she has so many other things to do that defamation is never at the top of the list. It is usually an issue which has a certain amount of fear and uncertainty surrounding it. Because it is unknown territory, producers mostly hope that no one will notice, or that it’s probably not defam­atory anyway.

If the defamatory material is not obvious, then the producer is reliant to some extent on the writer’s being aware of the potential for defamation. Writing, as a creative process, is evolutionary in nature. Scripts often undergo many changes and characters sometimes evolve from nowhere, making it hard for a writer to know whether there could be a potential risk. A few weeks ago, a script arrived at 4:30pm by urgent courier. It was urgent because principal photography was to start the next day, and the worry that had been gnawing at the back of the producer’s mind had turned to blind panic.

Ten minutes into the story, I realized it was without a doubt the most defamatory script I had ever read. After eleven years of reading them, that is quite an achievement. It made politicians’ slanging matches in parliament sound like idle chatter at the local retirement-village bingo night.

By 5.00pm, I was staring out the window wondering if there was any way the original story could survive the seemingly necessary changes to the script.

For the next few hours, I went through the laborious task of distilling all the defamatory state-ments, imputations and innuendo. After doing that, I concluded that the script was probably doomed!

What happened? The shoot started the next day on schedule and only two words were changed.

More on that later. The situation made me realize that some timely advice may help to alleviate filmmak­ers’ fears regarding defamation in the future and make them aware of when advice may be needed.

What does defamation really mean? It is very simply about the protection of a person’s reputation. The law aims to provide a means by which reputations can be protected. In an industry where credits are so important, that is not a difficult concept.

There are many ways in which defamation can arise. Some of the more obvious are:

- Direct written statements (such as in a script);
- Actors performing a rôle, facial expressions, voice intonations; and
- The use of irony, caricature, ridicule, innuendo, parody and pictures.

Recent defamation cases have involved such things as lobsters, nudity (with or without genitals), allegations of promiscuity and criminality. In Etting­hausen v ACP Ltd (1991) Aust. Torts Reports 81-125, an article contained a black-and-white photograph of the plaintiff in the shower:

The plaintiff was facing the camera, the photograph was grainy in quality and the lighting appeared only to have come from behind. There was a shape between the plaintiff’s legs which was capable of being interpreted as his penis.

The plaintiff sued successfully, alleging imputations that, among other things, he deliberately allowed the photograph to be published.

In order for there to be a defama­tion, the defamatory material must be published. Publication does not mean to the person defamed.

Obviously, if Michael Douglas writes to Kevin Costner and says he is an ill-tempered asshole, that is not defamatory. If Douglas sends the letter to Spielberg, and Spielberg thinks less of Costner, then that is defamatory and a “cause of action” at law exists.

So, publication does not have to be to the public at large. It can simply be a conversation between two people.

Fortunately, in an industry which thrives on gossip, there are few defama­tion actions between its members. However, because publication can be on such a grand scale (millions of peo­ple), the damages which can flow may be large, especially when you take into account all of the new technology and methods of disseminating material.

One of the difficulties with scripts generally is that, if the words used are not clearly or blatantly defamatory, then the normal ambiguity of words can make them in a certain context defamatory. Couple this with the sub­jective interpretation of words, and the way in which a character can be portrayed, and you start to enter a minefield without a map. To top that off, something may be instantly defam­atory to some and not to others, such as Irish jokes.

It then comes down to interpreta­tion: the test the courts use is the “natural and ordinary” meaning of the words as they would affect a member of the public of average intelligence. It begs the question: What is average intelligence?

I find the most common plea by scriptwriters is “but it’s all true!” Unfortunately, there is a common mis­conception that truth or justification is an absolute defence to a defamation action.

The difficulties with truth as a defence are that, between the different state jurisdictions in Australia, there are different statutory rules. For truth to be of assistance to a defendant, it really must relate to a substantial truth or a matter very commonly known – such as John Morris is the Managing Direc­tor of the FFC – or it must relate to a matter of public interest, or a matter published under qualified privilege.

The public policy behind the legis­lation is to provide some form of freedom of expression. The material must serve some public benefit with no ulterior motive (such as profit or malice). The English Appeal Court in Adam v Ward (1917) A.C. 309 at 334 set down the formula which is still used, namely that the publication must be one:

Where the person who makes the communication has an interest or a duty, legal, social or moral, to make it to the per­son to whom it is made, and the person to whom it is so made has a corresponding interest or duty to receive it.

Obviously not all matters of public interest can be said to be in the public interest. This area, however, is under review by the various state and federal governments.
Unfortunately, in Australia at present there is no defense of “Fair Comment”. However, recently, there have been amendments which have gone part of the way to establishing this as a defense. The new defense of “privileged material for comment” may in the future come to the aid of filmmakers if they venture into the minefield.

How do critics manage to escape defamation proceedings? Their luck to some extent arises due to the decision in *Lyson v Daily Telegraph* (1943) K.B. 746 where it was held:

In the case of criticism in matters of art, whether music, painting, literature, or drama, where the private character of a person criticised is not involved, the freer the criticism is, the better it will be for the aesthetic welfare of the public.

Returning to the script in question, it contained a number of highly-defamatory depictions of characters, some of whom were identifiable people. Luckily, the character most defamed was dead, and you cannot be held liable for defaming someone who is dead.

There were two characters who, even though the material relating to them was highly-defamatory, after discussion were persuaded to consent to it, and that it be reviewed before the shoot.

Note: The Biograph Company's "proper material for comment" may in 746 where it was held:

The Biograph Company's negatives, up to about 1902, were shot on the 70mm gauge to permit flip-cards for the "mutoscope" peepshow to be printed from them by contact. The mutoscope viewing device made its Australian debut much later here than abroad – viz. Brisbane 10 October 1902; Sydney 12 December 1902. It would appear that they were introduced to Australia just after Wyld and Freedman's tour with the Biograph Company's projection gear ceased.

**Filmography: British Biograph Royal Visit Films**

The films were shot at about 30 pictures per second on 70mm unspotted film, which was perforated as it ran through an electrically-driven camera. The huge 30mm by 70mm images ran right to the edges of the film, with superb definition and high screen illumination. These are the only Australian films known to have been shot on that gauge:

1. The Duke and Duchess Landing at St Kilda Pier

2. The Royal Procession Passing Over Princes Bridge

**Next Installment**

The New Zealand Royal Visit of June 1901 was the subject of the first major film made abroad by Australians. Running for 36 minutes, it was directed by Joe Perry of Melbourne's Salvation Army Limelight Department with his Australian personnel, cameras and processing equipment. The New Zealand Government financed the commission, and the fascinating correspondence surrounding it survives to paint a vivid picture of Australia's pioneering production industry, *The film's surviving 15 minutes is the oldest New Zealand footage known to exist today. Read the story in our next issue.*

**Acknowledgements**

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Others directly assisting with this article were:

- *Melbourne*: NFSA Melbourne Office; Ken Berryman, Helen Telly, Zsuzsa Szczs; Ross Cooper, La Trobe Library Newspaper Section; Bob Klepner.
- *Sydney*: Judy Adamson; Alan Davies, New South Wales State Library.
- *Britain*: John Barnes of St. Ives, Cornwall; Stephen Bottomore.

As always, we extend thanks to our two other characters who, even though the material relating to them was highly-defamatory, after discussion were persuaded to consent to their depiction. Once their consent was obtained, they were asked to each sign a "deed of release", which released the producers in relation to any and all claims against them for defamation, invasion of privacy and right of publicity.

Two other characters very simply needed a minor name change. In any event, they were compilations of a few real people and were not so clearly identifiable. We decided to take the risk, realizing that it would be difficult for the people depicted to clearly identify themselves.

This is an example of extreme luck in the circumstances. I subsequently became aware that one of the main characters who had died would not have under any circumstances given a deed of release.

1. "Cause of action" means the fact or facts which give a right to sue.
Billy’s Holiday

success of the work, but for my own personal purposes I don’t have a fear of failure. Perhaps five or 10 years ago I would have been disadvantaged by either fear or worry. But this came to me at a stage where I was beyond that, and enabled me to be perfectly open with the crew about what I didn’t understand.

I’m as capable of blowing a project as anybody else. You don’t always get it right and to take on a movie as a novice was a very daunting task. I’m hugely appreciative of Denis and Tristram for taking a punt with me.

But I did have a team of actors with whom I had worked before, and my production team [designer Michael Scott-Mitchell and costume designer Terry Ryan] were terrifically helpful and understanding of my position. As well, my DP, Roger Lanser, had worked with Branagh when he crossed over from theatre to film.

What strengths as a theatre director were you bringing to the project?

There were two crucial parts of the business I felt confident about. I think that if I hadn’t, I wouldn’t have had the arrogance to take on directing a feature, when I knew so little about the rest of the process.

One was dramaturgical; more simply, script editing. Effectively, I’ve been working as a script editor all my life, because there are very few plays where the script remains absolutely intact. Even Shakespearean classics such as Hamlet, a four-and-a-half-hour-long play, is rarely uncut. Romeo and Juliet’s a mess and new Australian plays – 50% of my work – go through a process of evolution up till opening night. I know that I’m not a writer myself, but I enjoy helping writers, and I believe I’m quite good at it.

The other was my skill with actors. I’ve so often heard actors that I like and respect say they had a terrific time doing a movie, but the director was of little help to them and they were left on their own. Most actors want help. They don’t want you to tell them what to do, and they won’t necessarily take any notice, but they want a sounding board. Because a lot of Australian directors have come from the technical side, they assume actors know it all; they think acting is some mysterious alien process. It’s a skill, a technique, just like camera operating.

Because I had a sound knowledge of the pool of available acting talent, I had a pretty good idea of whom I wanted to cast, and we went after them. When we started the eight-week pre-production, the film was already cast, which is apparently pretty unusual.

The actors have all said that working with you is incredibly liberating. Can you explain?

I see directing of actors, to put it simply, as a process by which you remove the impediments and inhibitions that prevent the actor focusing on his/her task – psychological, intellectual, physiological barriers. In film, where you are trying to capture just one moment, it seems even more important than in theatre, because the camera brings actors much closer to audiences and, like a microscope, makes acting more transparent. In film, obstacles can break down the smallest unit of action. And the best acting is the most true, where there are no defences or impediments it doesn’t reach.

Communication is terribly important. So many directors give instructions like, “I want you to be more angry”, but I think it’s much more relevant to ask, “What are you doing?” Pin them down to basic behaviour motivations.

What did you see as the dramatic core of the film?

I felt very strongly that the movie is about the need in all of us to find the true voice with which to speak to the world. It’s about a man who wakes up one day with the voice of Billie Holiday and utilizes this gift to become world famous and successful. The dramatic thrust of the story for me was that Billy has to find his way back – in the movie’s terms, singing with his own true rich voice. The holiday that he goes on in the middle of the film, when he goes off the rails, is ego-tripping fantasy, and it takes off and, from the time he sings the trumpet. When we were threatened with the loss of that song, it seemed that the structural and thematic thrust of the movie was going to collapse.

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Returning Home

The flywire was particularly important to me – like a scrim onstage. It actually comes from *The Scarlet Empress* [Josef von Sternberg, 1934], where focus is held on a veil instead of the face behind it. I wanted to suggest there is “profundity and passion” in something as mundane and Australian as flywire.

Once we had the golden light hitting that flywire, it looked quite beautiful – “painterly” is probably the better word. What we were trying to get was that sense that it’s all going back into the past, into the painting.

The first shot you see of the three sisters together is of them on the jetty. They are in their own separate zones and spatial planes. It links directly with that last shot at the window.

Yes. I shot the jetty much earlier, but I had that sense of their being together, yet separated.

In the last scene, I walked the three of them to the door and it looked really good with them in silhouette against the sunset. But when I went around and looked at it from outside, it was terrific. I knew I wanted to get to the flywire somehow.

Of the actors, only one, Caroline Gillmer, had been in the play? Yes. Caroline played Meg on stage, but Hilary in the film. I felt she would bring a warmth, a homeliness, to the house that I thought was essential. She needed to be a kind of a mother figure, and Caroline, with whom I’d never worked but admired for a long time, seemed to me to possess that quality. I was also keen to have someone on set who could say to me, “No, no, this always gets a great laugh; you’re missing it”, but that seldom happened. She just gave a fantastic performance, and, if the piece has warmth, it comes from her in particular. She’s amazing on the back beach listening to Margie’s story.

There is also the great Ray Barrett. Yes, of course. Ray I had seen on stage in *Brilliant Lies*, which is my next project. The way he played the father in that was so astonishing I thought of him immediately for Wal. Wal is that archetypal old Australian male who never tells anyone what he is doing, and just keeps heading off to do Lorna Watson’s guffering. He’ll never tell anyone, especially the women, what he feels or is thinking. He’ll then slip silently away when the time comes, not quite the Scott-of-the-Antarctic male, who slips out of the tent, but a more likeable character, I think. Wal is based on a real person, I’m told.

When Pippa stands on the chair, Barrett’s rendering of Wal’s “you silly bugger, Pip” is gloriously resonant with sweetness and put down, and a million other nuances.

Yes. She is trying so hard to be taken seriously by him that she doesn’t have a hope – none of them do.

You had a change of editor on *Hotel Sorrento* with David Pulbrook.

Since going to Hollywood, I’ve worked almost exclusively with Andrew London. But, as it didn’t seem reasonable to talk about an American editor on an Australian film, I asked David to cut it.

David used to edit for me at Crawfords on *Homicide*, and I’d done the odd thing with him since on commercials. The last feature he’d edited was *Ground Zero* [Michael Pattinson and Bruce Myles, 1987], for which he won the AFI award. He’s a superb editor, particularly of dialogue.

The lunch was his first cut. It took him more days to do than it had taken us to shoot. Normally, it figure it takes at least as long to cut something as it does to shoot it. I started to restructure it, but when we got half way through, I said, “Your first instinct was the right one.” So, we just went back to his cut, and that is the way it is in the finished picture.

Did you edit on film or do it nonlinear?

We edited it on Lightworks and had no work print – not even the so-called “check print” the neg cutters like to have. I think it’s obscene with the new technology to waste that much money – and silver – on something that barely gets looked at.

You didn’t have Jerry Goldsmith score the music this time.

No, but I had one of his students, Nerida Tyson Chiew, who is a real find. She came up to me after I gave a talk at the ASDA conference in Sydney and said she’d gone to USC and studied with Jerry. I said, “So, where’s your tape”, and she pulled one out of her handbag. I listened to it and wanted her to do “Breakwater”. But when that didn’t happen, I asked her to do this, which was not at all like the stuff on her demo tape, but which I think she did wonderfully.

We’ll be hearing a lot more from her in future – indeed, we’re currently working on a film musical together.

So, how did you feel being a male director on this film?

I kept sort of apologizing to the female members of the cast, but none of them seemed to mind. I can’t say I did anything to change the males. And in the case of the females, I stayed well back and they didn’t tell me why they wanted to do this line of dialogue from the play as opposed to the one in the script.

Had I shot the play exactly as written, it would have run at least two-and-a-quarter hours, so I made quite a lot of cuts. But as we moved on through the shooting, the actors turned up more and more with copies of the play and we ended up shooting most of it. Then, of course, in the editing most of the stuff I had previously cut in the script came out again.

In the case of that scene on the back beach, there were two things that the women discussed: one was men, and the other was babies. I cut the stuff about babies and that is what is now in there. Caroline and Joan said, “No, no. You’re a man. You just don’t understand. We discuss babies at this point, not men.” So I said, “Okay, whatever.” [Laughs.] So they did. I just tried to give them plenty of space, which is smart for a male dealing with women, I think.

1 See Franklin’s *Pistols at Dawn*: The ‘Art of Film vs the ‘Science’ of Pre-viewing (*Cinema Papers*, No. 95, October 1993, pp. 12-20) and “Working in America” (*Cinema Papers*, No. 97-8, April 1994, pp. 24-6).

2 Burton was DOP on *Hotel Sorrento*.


4 In 1980, *The Sydney Morning Herald* published a lead editorial attacking Richard Franklin for making what it considered mid-Pacific films, and demanding, in effect, he leave Australia for the U.S. It is the only known editorial of a major newspaper since the local film renaissance to attack an Australian filmmaker for exercising his creative rights. It is, in this author’s opinion, one of the true low points in Australian journalism.

5 Scriptwriter on *Psycho II* (1983) and *Clash & Dagg* (1983), and now a director.

6 Particularly s. E. Elliot’s *Little Gidding*: “We shall not cease from exploration/And the end of all our exploring/Will be to arrive where we started/And know the place for the first time.”

7 Nicholas Urfe comes out of the ocean after a swim, and finds a book lying on the sand. On the opened page is that quote. (John Fowles, *The Magus*, Jonathan Cape, 1966, p. 59; and *The Magus: A Revised Version*, Jonathan Cape, 1977, p. 69.)

8 Miller’s interest in Campbell’s work, and particularly the heroic journey as described by Campbell in *Hero with a Thousand Faces* (The Bollingen Series XVII, Pantheon Books, New York, 1949), has been a topic of discussion and inspiration between Miller and many a filmmaker, including this author. Miller has also extensively discussed Campbell in his *Cinema Papers* interview on *Lorenzo’s Oil* (No. 92, April 1993, pp. 4-13, 60, 62).


10 Franklin’s interest in Campbell is extensively discussed in his *Cinema Papers* interview on *Lorenzo’s Oil* (No. 92, December 1993, p. 56) that in his travels he has encountered only three true geniuses: Orson Welles, Stephen Sondheim and Jerry Goldsmith.
Production Survey

**Features Pre-production**

Lust and Revenge 58
Race the Sun 58
River Street 58
The Small Man 58

**Features Production**

Lilac's Story 59
Teens of the Sun 59
 Turning April 59
What I Have Written 59

**Features Post-production**

All Men Are Liars 59
Angely Baby 59

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**ffC Funding Decisions**

Following the Board meeting on 28 February 1995, the ffC entered into contract negotiations with the producers of the following projects:

**Feature**

**RIVER STREET (100 MINS)**

House & Moorhouse Films
P: Lynda House D: Tony Mahood, SW: Phillip Riall

An ambitious young real-estate agent misses an important land auction when his temper lands him in trouble. Sentenced to community service, he is sent to a drop-in centre terrorized by street kids. Here he is forced to make his course of courage and to make a choice between property and people.

**Documentaries**

**VIDEO DIARIES (8 x 52 MINS)**

Excalibur Nominees-Open Channel Productions
E/P: Alan Carter, Jack White, P: Alan Carter.

The day-to-day lives of ordinary Australians from an unusual and illuminating perspective - their own. The approach involves handing the camera over to the subject and getting them to tell their story in their own way. Based on the successful UK model, Video Diaries, which has been running for five years.

**THE CLUB**

(55-MIN ACCORD DOCUMENTARY)

December Films
P: Tom Windsor, D: Steve Thomas, SW: Steve Thomas.

A documentary about 15-year-olds growing up. It will follow the adventures of an inner-Melbourne junior soccer team, Clifton Hill United, over an entire season. The story takes one inside the lives of adolescent kids who turn each week out to struggle for their small team, dreaming of heroism and fearing failure.

**Production Survey**

Information is as supplied and adjusted as of 29/3/96.

**Features Pre-production**

**LUST AND REVENGE**

Production company: Illuminations Films Production date: 8 May 1995 ...

**PRINCIPLE CREDITS**

Director: Paul Cez

Executive producer: William T. Marshall Screenwriters: Paul Cez, John Clarke

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**Lilian's Story**

**WHAT I HAVE WRITTEN**

**SHINE**

Production company: Elements Films Distribution companies: The Debbie Reynolds Company, Fremantle Films, Horizon Films, BBC Entertainment

**PRINCIPLE CREDITS**

Director: John Calley

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**Productions for the Commonwealth**

**THE YOUNG ONE - A PORTRAIT OF THE CONDUCTOR SIMONE YOUNG**

(52-MIN ACCORD DOCUMENTARY)

Serendipity Productions
P: Marjorie Bryant, Emma Calver. D: Marjorie Bryant, SW: Marjorie Bryant, Emma Calver. C: Simone Young.

A documentary profiling a young Australian woman conductor who, at the age of 33, has achieved extraordinary success in a complex and male-dominated art form. The documentary will start in Berlin, Simone’s current home, in the bleak German winter, and take the viewer inside some of Europe’s most formidable institutions with Simone centre-stage.

**COOLBAROOL CLUB**

(55 MINS)

Annamas Media/Stefan Kinnane/Lauren Marsh

The story of Australia’s most successful Aboriginal dance club that spanned the 1940s-1960s in Perth. It was a time when government policies of assimilation were threatening to divide Aboriginal communities. Kinnane and Marsh totally on funding themselves, the Coolbaroool League and other groups like sprang from the desire of community elders to ensure a continuance of unity and pride in Aboriginal identity.

**THE GENIE FROM DOWN UNDER**

Production company: Merchant Ivory Productions

Production manager: Elizabeth Simms

Completion guarantor: Film Finances

Legal services: Marshalls & Dent

Executive producer: Sally Campbell

**Planning and Development**

Casting consultation: Liz Mullinar

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**Cinema Papers • June 1995**

**58**
Catering: stage an opera by Mozart, despite the depressive who dems that they eaver

Wardrobe assistant: Make-up:

Diane Cusunato & M. W. W. (Tony Gibbs)

Continuity:

Mila Wilson

Film gauge: 1:1.85

Principal credits:

Director: George Whaley
Producer: Anthony Buckley, Bruce Davey
Co-producer: Carol Hughes
Executive producers: Jonathan Sittenheim, George Whaley
Based on graphic novel: STEVE RUD
DOP: Michael Richardson
Sound recordist: Lloyd Carrick
Editor: Wayne title
Production designer: Herbert Peter
Costume designer: Robert Kirk
Sound assistant: Pete Ender

Planning and Development Casting: Suzie Magdel, Casting consultants: Majsie and Associates Extra catering: Pete Ender


Correction guarantee: FilmFinance Legal sec: Paul Fazey Travel coordinator: TravelTO

Camera operator: David Williams Focus: David Whay Clapperboard: Ben Haines Key grip: Brett McDowell Assistant grips: Ben Tait, Gary Edwards Production manager: Mike Niedereiter Production manager: Mike Niedereiter Production manager: Mike Niedereiter Account Manager: Delia Asman Casting: Helen Valentine Unit publicist: One Globe Promotional Casting: Kerry Ferrier

Art Department Art director: Dan Fearl
Assistant art director: Michael Massarelli Production designer: Robert Fairbank Unit publicist: One Global Promotional Casting: Kerry Ferrier

Camino

Art Department Art director: Dan Fearl
Assistant art director: Michael Massarelli Production designer: Robert Fairbank Unit publicist: One Global Promotional Casting: Kerry Ferrier

Cast Karline Houwing (Val Martini), krysti Pappas (Jan Livermore), Amanda Wong (lucie du Plessis), jean bradyn (Susan Camden), Jack Thompson (Victor Martin), Christine Kamin (Manu Marti), Mary Starks (Desma Livet), Asher Roberts (janns Livermore), Marnie Annese (George Livet), Justin O’Dazio (Michael Livet).

The story of four contemporary teenagers, three friends and one outsider, who enter a magazine photo competition. In competition, one is propelled into an international modelling career.

On our Selection Production company: Anthony Buckley & Michelle Ryan Distribution company: Roadshow/Dirretron Pre-production: 19/9/94 Production: 31/10/94 Post-production: 19/12/94...

Sylvie Brinse (The Man).

An intergalactic love story about a planet earth.

Gala Production company: Phillip emmanuel, Philp Hals bays Production Price: $400,000

Principal credits:

Director: pete Thompson
Producer: Phillip emmanuel Co-producer: John Hilliw Executive producer: David Hannay
Scriptwriter: pete Thompson
DOP: Tim sham
Sound recordist: Steven best
Editor: Anthony Nardozzi
Production designer: alan carmack

Planning and Development Casting: Lizz Mullinard
Birded by John Hilliw

Production manager: Anastasia Siemons Production assistant: Brad Rassler Production secretary: Georgia Murray Location manager: David Shakespear Production assistant: simone Jamesons, Daniella Carelli

Film gauge: 1:1.85

Principal credits: Mark w. Wood (Tony Gibbs)

Continuation guarantee: FilmFinance Legal sec: Paul Fazey Travel coordinator: TravelTO

Camera operator: David Williams Focus: David Whay Clapperboard: Ben Haines Key grip: Brett McDowell Assistant grips: Ben Tait, Gary Edwards Production manager: Mike Niedereiter Production manager: Mike Niedereiter Production manager: Mike Niedereiter Account Manager: Delia Asman Casting: Helen Valentine Unit publicist: One Global Promotional Casting: Kerry Ferrier

Art Department Art director: Dan Fearl
Assistant art director: Michael Massarelli Production designer: Robert Fairbank Unit publicist: One Global Promotional Casting: Kerry Ferrier

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The story of four contemporary teenagers, three friends and one outsider, who enter a magazine photo competition. In competition, one is propelled into an international modelling career.

On our Selection Production company: Anthony Buckley & Michelle Ryan Distribution company: Roadshow/Dirretron Pre-production: 19/9/94 Production: 31/10/94 Post-production: 19/12/94...
The Club follows the adventures of a Greek junior soccer team in Melbourne which has opened its doors to kids of all ages and cultures, among them Vietnamese. In accompanying Clifton Hill Untied through its winter campaign, we meet the adolescents who dream of heroism but must often cope with failure.

CURTAINS FOR MY CABIN
Production company: VOIX FILMS
Director: Judith Rosenthal
Scriptwriter: Judith Rosenthal
[IN POST-PRODUCTION.]

THE LOOKER
Production company: DEAN KYAKI AN
Pre-production: 16/1/95–20/2/95
Post-production: 20/2/95–10/3/95

PRINCIPAL PRODUCERS
Liam Goldney

THE SEARCH FOR THE SHIELD- ENCRUSTED TOILET SEAT
Director: Thomas Demick
Producer: Angela Bourne
[IN PRE-PRODUCTION.]

See previous issue for details on:

BOYSTOWN
THE BUSINESS OF MAKING SAINTS
THE CENTURY OF CINEMA – 40,000 YEARS OF DREAMING DOESN’T EVERYONE WANT A GOLDEN GUITAR
Shots
THE BIRDS DO A MAGNIFICENT TUNE
Director: Curtis Woodbridge
Producer: Simon Johnson
[IN PRE-PRODUCTION.]

Television
Pre-production
BLUE MURDER
Production company: SOUTH EAST SHEPPARTON PROD.
Producer: Michael Jenkins
Scriptwriter: Rod Allen
Executive producers: Enrol Sullman, Penny Chapman
Scriptwriter: Ian Davis

Series of corruption in the NSW Police force in the 1980s, the connections between police and criminal culture.

CODY 2 (MINI-SERIES)
Production company: SOUTH EAST SHEPPARTON PROD.
Director: Ian Barry
Producer: John Edwards
Executive producer: Enrol Sullman
Scriptwriter: Christopher Lee, Peter Schack

Further series of three tele-facts about a Sydney "wild cop" called Cody. Irrevelent, unpredictable and unbending. Cody isn’t afraid to break the rules to get justice.

THE TATTOO SHORE (MINI-SERIES)
Production company: VILLAGE ROADSHOW

FIRE 2 (MINI-SERIES)
Production company: EXTRA DIMENSIONS IN ASSOCIATION WITH LIME TREE FILMS
Distribution company: BEYOND DISTRIBUTION Pty Ltd

GAI-JIN (MINI-SERIES)
Production company: NBC
Based on: NOVEL BY JANIS CLEWELL
[TO BE SHOT IN QUEENSLAND.]

THE GENIE FROM DOWN UNDER (MINI-SERIES)
Production company: ACTF
Producers: Patricia Egan, Phil Jones
Directed by: Erven Storm
Written by: Michael Saunders
Scriptwriter: Erven Storm
Written by: Steven J. Speaks, others
Distribution: CORDOVA, CHAIRMAN
Production designer: Peter Lawson
Editor: Ralph Thompson
Length: 3 x 30 mins
ABC: ABC
Finance: FFC

CAST
Rhys Muldoon, Alessandra Milian, Michael Mitchell, Janine Jansen, Monica Mauclain, Jody. 13-year-old English blue-blood inherits an Australian genie called Brucie. Wishing wish is his command – sort of!

THE LAST BLITZ (TELE-MULTI)
Production company: TWIN MEDIA ENTERTAINMENT, TWENTY- FIRST CITY INC.

PRINCIPAL PRODUCERS
Michael, Pattinson
Producer: Dick Wherries, Gramee Isaac
Executive producer: Mark Banoff, Renji Itozuma
Scriptwriter: Brian Tradichio-Smith
Finance: FFC (CONTINENT Network
CAST
Jason Donovan.
An Australian soldier is stranded in the jungle during the closing days of World War II. Sharing the same fate is a Japanese soldier. Sworn enemies at the start, the man gradually come to an understanding and respect with each other.

OCEAN GIRL 3 (SERIES)
Production company: THE LITTLE DOG IN YOUR LIFE

PRODUCERS
Jonathan M. Shiff, production
Matt Fisher, production
Distribution company: BEYOND DISTRIBUTION, TELEVISION (ITV2)
Length: 26 x 25 mins
Pre-production: 10/4/95–30/6/95
Post-production: 3/7/95–27/7/95

PRINCIPAL PRODUCERS
David, Keefe, Judith-John, Storm
Producer: Jonathan M. Shiff
Live producer: Erven Burnett
Executive producer: Jonathan M. Shiff
Production company: SOUTH EAST SHEPPARTON PROD.
Director: Ian Barry
Producer: John Edwards
Executive producer: Enrol Sullman
Scriptwriter: Christopher Lee, Peter Schack

Related to the original of a Sydney "wild cop" called Cody. Irrevelent, unpredictable and unbending. Cody isn’t afraid to break the rules to get justice.

CINEMA PAPERS • JUNE 1995

A further series of three tele-facts about a Sydney “wild cop” called Cody. Irrevelent, unpredictable and unbending. Cody isn’t afraid to break the rules to get justice.

THE TATTOO SHORE (MINI-SERIES)
Production company: VILLAGE ROADSHOW

FIRE 2 (MINI-SERIES)
Production company: EXTRA DIMENSIONS IN ASSOCIATION WITH LIME TREE FILMS
Distribution company: BEYOND DISTRIBUTION Pty Ltd

GAI-JIN (MINI-SERIES)
Production company: NBC
Based on: NOVEL BY JANIS CLEWELL
[TO BE SHOT IN QUEENSLAND.]

THE GENIE FROM DOWN UNDER (MINI-SERIES)
Production company: ACTF
Producers: Patricia Egan, Phil Jones
Directed by: Erven Storm
Written by: Michael Saunders
Scriptwriter: Erven Storm
Written by: Steven J. Speaks, others
Distribution: CORDOVA, CHAIRMAN
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Production company: THE LITTLE DOG IN YOUR LIFE

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Matt Fisher, production
Distribution company: BEYOND DISTRIBUTION, TELEVISION (ITV2)
Length: 26 x 25 mins
Pre-production: 10/4/95–30/6/95
Post-production: 3/7/95–27/7/5

PRINCIPAL PRODUCERS
David, Keefe, Judith-John, Storm
Producer: Jonathan M. Shiff
Live producer: Erven Burnett
Executive producer: Jonathan M. Shiff
Production company: SOUTH EAST SHEPPARTON PROD.
Director: Ian Barry
Producer: John Edwards
Executive producer: Enrol Sullman
Scriptwriter: Christopher Lee, Peter Schack

Related to the original of a Sydney “wild cop” called Cody. Irrevelent, unpredictable and unbending. Cody isn’t afraid to break the rules to get justice.
Production Survey continued

Director of photography: Ron Hadnock Sound recordist: Glen Williams Editors: Philip Watts, Andrew Scott, Ray Daley Production designer: George Greenhill Costume designer: Alban Farnamell Composer: the Music Department (Garry McDonald, Laurene Stone) Production manager: John Elston Story editor: Peter Hewsworth Script co-ordinator: Naomi Powell Lambs: Marie Gray Turn P: Catherine Mason Casting: Prototype Casting

Batedis, Alex Poon (Winston Seth), Willy Mehta (Milton) Neil and the children from the underground city of Ora set out in search of an alien device capable, when assembled, of controlling the new movement of the dark force. But the dark forces of UBRI have also stumbled upon its existence and the race is on. At stake is the Earth’s salvation or its destruction.

SUN ON THE STUBBLE (SERIES) Production companies: Film Australia, ZDF (Germany) Film Australia, ZDF (Germany) Production: April-June 1995

PRINCIPAL CAST

Director: Fred Schepisi Executive producer: Terry Jenkins Executive producers: Ron Saunders, Damion Unsworth Screenwriter: Noel Robinson Based on the novel by: Colin Thiele Production manager: Cathy Flannery The adventures of the 14-year-old son of a German wheat farmer, growing up in a small Australian farming community. Based on the novels by Colin Thiele.

VIOLENT EARTH (MINI-SERIES) Production companies: GAUNTAIN, CRAWFORDS Director: Michael Jenkins Producers: Philip Viney (GAUNTAIN), John Kreany (CRAWFORDS) Screenwriter: Graeme Farmer Based on novel by: JACQUELINE SINES Writing: FVC.

Set in New Calabria, where the French settlers and indigenous Kanakas “work out their destiny” together, the story follows the Suttons, pioneering Australian-French-Irish family, and the Kanakas, who are caught between the conflicting legacies of the South Sea Islands and French colonialism.


PRINCIPAL CAST

Studio director: John Smith Series producer: Ivor Burmin Field director: Martin Heikkinen Executive producer: Graham Snodgrass Director: John Stone Sound recordists: Paul Sant, Brant Cooper Editor: Tim Wellburn Production designer: GEORGINA GREENHILL Costume designer: Philip Eagles PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Casting director: Margie Fay & Associates Extras casting: MAURIA Fay & Associates PRODUCTION


Vehicle hire: AUSTRALIAN RENT-A-CAR


CAST


ART DEPARTMENT


POST-PRODUCTION

Assistant editor: Bill Lowndes Sound: Chris Lowe Sound Design Laboratory: ABAT Telecine: APACHE Post-production facilities: SPECTRUM

GOVERNMENT AGENCY INVESTMENT Production: FFC Finance: FFC, FILM QUEENSLAND, PORTMAHON PRODUCTIONS

CAST

JUDE NELSON (Matt Curren), DIE SMART (Cathy), LARRY MILES (Cris), Peter Phillips (Frank), JOAN WALLACE (Bette), GABRIELLE FISCHER (Sandra), Daniel Roberts (Dax), BRETT CONNOLLY (Father Michael).

When Matt Curren returns to the small town in Queensland where they have left behind, Correlli wants to change the system. Begins on air in early June 1995.

Television Production and Post-production

After the Deep (SERIES) Production: Geoff Portman Executive producer: John G. Sculley, Alistair Harris

CAST

GENEVE MOWY, GENEVIEVNE MOY, is a single white female who is living with her father and who struggles to make sense of the world around her.

Beyond the Closet (SERIES) Production company: Beyond the Closet Productions Production: February 1995

PRINCIPAL CAST

Director: Brett Harston Executive producer: Brett Harston Director of photography: Dion Winton Story: Brett Harston Screenwriter: Brett Harston Production manager: Nick Verme Length: 4 x 60 mins Format: Digital HD

AN anthology of contemporary gay cinema from Australia’s leading gay writers.

Blackwater Trail (TELE-FEATURE) Production company: RYTHM MILLION Productions Budget: $2.6 million Production: 16/1/95 – 18/2/95 Post-production: 28/2/95

PRINCIPAL CAST

Director: Ian Barry Producers: John Sexton, Julie Forrester Executive producers: Martin Warren, Chris Brown

Screenwriters: ANTHONY RUSSELL John Jones Sound recordists: Paul Sant, Brant Cooper Editor: Tim Wellburn Production designer: GEORGINA GREENHILL Costume designer: Philip Eagles

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Casting director: MAURIA Fay & Associates Extras casting: MAURIA Fay & Associates


Production accountant: Gene Hallam 1st assistant directors: David Clarke, Stephen Henry Length: 47 mins per week Genre: Drama

CAST


Blue Murder (MINI-SERIES) Production company: Southern Star Films, ABC TV Pre-production: February-May 1995

PRINCIPAL CAST

Director: Michael Jenkins Executive producer: Penny Chapman Associate producer: Wayne Barry Scriptwriter: Iain DAVIES, Martin DELL

Production designer: Murray Picknett Editor: Bill Russell Finances: ANC Length: 2 x 60 mins Genre: Crime

Cops and crimes in the 1980s.

Bordertown (SERIES) Production company: ABC TV Production: 9/2/95 – 13/5/95; 1/5/95 – 30/9/95

PRINCIPLES CAST

Director: Ken Cameron, Ian Dilmou Production producer: Martin McShane Executive producer: Penny Chapman Associate producer: Jo Rodney

Directors of photography: Russell Brown, Louis Irving Screenwriters: Sue Smith, John Alsop Production designer: Marcus North, Edouard Edmon, Chris Spinney OTHER CAST

Production manager: Lisa Scott Art director: Col. Rudder Finances: ABC Length: 10 x 50 mins Genre: Crime

CAST

HUG WESKING, LINDA CROPP, PETRA TOPPANO, ROBERT MAINMAD, CAT BLANCHETT, JOE PETRUZZI, CHRISTINE TREMEMAC, MITCHELL BUTTL.

Bordertown chronicles one year (1985) in the life of a rural police camp in Australia, where people strive to shake off the ghosts of the countries they have left behind.

Correlli (SERIES) Production company: ABC TV Production: 27/2/95 – 26/5/95

PRINCIPLES CAST

Directors: Kate Woods, Tony Tiber, Amanda Cribb, Mark Salmon, Julian McSwiney Producer: Ross Matthews Executive producer: Peter Sculley Scriptwriters: Kristen Dunphy, Chris McDermott, Peter Kingdon, Michael Miller, Daniel King, Charles Trapani (DDA), Colin Scul, Graham Brumley Production designer: Julie Belle Editors: Chris Bransgore, Gary Watson, Ken Turner Length: 8 x 50 mins Genre: Crime

CAST

DEBORAH LEE FORNELL, Hugh Jackman, NEIL MCINTOSH, KERRY KLEINER, PAUL O’BRIEN, RUSSELL HALL

Casting: FAITH MARTIN & ASSOCIATES Casting assistants: ELY BAGUDRY Production manager: LINDA KLEZES Production co-ordinator: Helen Bodenheit

A woman psychologist takes a job in an all-male prison. From the start, Carroll wants to change the system. However, most of the mates occur within herself.
THE FERALS (2ND SERIES)
Production company: ABC Children's Department
Principal Credits
Directors: Di Drew, David Evans
Executive producer: Claire Henderson
Series producer: Gaye West
Scriptwriters: Peter Neale, David Evans, Andrew Kelly, Chris Rodgell, Mary Bell, Graham Fraser, Mona Saxon-Jones, Ross Nobel
Production designer: Robin Williams
Wardrobe: Colleen Wopple
Lighting: Jeff Brown
Other Credits
Script editor: Al Webb
Production manager: Eric White
Assistant producer: Karen Barnes, Colin Dent
Puppets: Tina Williams
Technical director: Ernie Quick
Group: 1-inch video
Length: 15 x 15 mins
Cast
David Collins, Emma De Vries, Max Kelly, Terry Ryan, Danielle Baker, Brian Rooney, Kyli Hosart, Miguel Ayala.

A fake city of feral animals awakens issues for problems their human neighbours. A children's slapstick comedy combining live action and puppetry.

FULL FRONTAL (SERIES)
Production company: Home Box Office
Budget: $8.4 million
Principal Credits
Directors: Ken Olson
Producer: Malcolm Rice
Executive producer: Jeff Hayes, Marjan Rees
Line producer: Darrin Sheen
Script editor: Dennis Lynton Clark
Cast
Don Johnson, Craig Sheffer, Gabrielle Anwar, Rio Stevens.

The true story of a group of career Canberra officers who, in 1935, defined General Douglas MacArthur's 'order to destroy 500 men in an effort to modernize the army.'

HEARTBREAK HIGH (HIGH SERIES)
Production company: Crown Television
Production: 16/1955-12/1945
Principal Credits
Directors: Andrew Promise, Catherine Millar
Producers: Ben Gannon
Executive producer: Michael Jenkins
Line producer: Stephen Jones
Assistant producer: Jean Kiss
Director of photography: Joseph Pickering
Production designer: Owen Paterson
Editors: Richard Hendley, Bill Murphy
Music: David Dennis
Other Credits
Story editors: Chris Roache, Graham Kostelecky
Script editor: Susan Loosli, Paul Macalloon
Art director: Diana Robertson

Pre-sale: Network Ten Length: 65 x 50 mins
Group: 16mm
Cast
Kim Wilson, Stephanie Cooke, Inar Kants, Scott McLean, Coree Paige, Emma Roché

Pin-off series from The Heartbreak Kid.[See previous issues for details.]

HOME AND AWAY (SERIES)
[See previous issues for details.]

THE LAW OF THE LAND (4TH SERIES)
Production company: Roshawood Cost & Carroll
Directors: Various
Executive producer: Terri Carroll
Group: 13 x 50 mins

LIZZIE'S LIBRARY
Production company: Henderson Bowman Productions
Production: July 1995
Principal Credits
Producer: Philip Birnbaum
Executive producer: Philip Birnbaum, Peter Jackman
Animation director: Tim Adure
Scriptwriter: Karyn Henderson
DOP: PPS Apps
Costumes: Min Asklin-Smith
Gail Benet-Gonzalez-O'Dea
Composer: Craig Harkness, Brian White
Other Credits
Character design: Tim Adure
Model construction: Tim Adure, Tony Leiton
Assistant director: Tim Adure
Art: Liz Norman
Group: S P Betamac
Length: 5 mins
Pre-sale: ABC
Distribution: Beyond
Finance: ABC, AFC, FQ
Cast
Nigel Hazlehurst.

The adventures of Lizzie the Librarian, her travelling bookmobile and the townfolk of Long Flat.

MIRROR MIRROR (SERIES)
Production company: Millennium Pictures, The Gibson Group
Production: 16/1995
Principal Credits
Director: John Banks, Sophia Turkiewicz
Producer: Andrew Blackland
Executive producer: David Evans
Co-producer: Dave Gibson
Length: 20 x 24 mins
Pre-sale: Network Ten, TVNZ
Finance: FFC, NZ on Air
Cast
Terry Yare, Jeffrey Walker, Michelle Banks, Judy Montgath, David Bentley

14-year-old girls, living in different times, travel to other time zones through the magic of an old mirror.

MISSION TOP SECRET TWO (AM-SP SERIES)
Production company: Grundy Television
Production: 5/69/95
Principal Credits
Director: Howard Rubie
Producer: John Banks
Line producer: Emmanuel Maltz
Scriptwriter: David Phillips
Other Credits
Directed: Tony Reid
Script editor: Susan Lazarkoff
Art director: Laurie Fadn
Gauge: 16mm
Length: 24 x 24 mins
Pre-sale: Network Ten
Finance: FFC
Cast
Shane Brinkin, Red Parliwul, Emma Funker, Ross Kiwfie.

Centaurs, a 'club ofutherlanders from various countries, solves the problem of communication between people and the environment.

MINI (SERIES)
Production company: John Chapman Productions
Production: 24/6/95-16/8/95
Principal Credits
Producer: John Chapman
Executive producer: Penny Chapman
Co-producer: Helen Bovington
Scriptwriters: Tony Avis, Roger McDonald, Nick Enright, Ian David, Andrew Bovell, Paul Brown

Sitcom television plays reveal what men really feel about their lives today. Written by men, the anthology aims to present male emotions with piercing honesty and uncover the passions beneath the façade of maleness.

NEIGHBOURS (SERIES)
[See previous issues for details.]

SAM THE TARD (PILOT)
[See previous issues for details.]

THE SILVER BRUMBY (ANIMATED SERIES)
Production company: Media World Features
Principal Credits
Supervising director: John Tatoulis
Animation director: Neil Robison, Maggie Dodds
Producers: Colin J. South, John Tatoulis
Scriptwriters: John Stephenson, Judy Montgomery
Character designer: Tassos Soniavas
Other Credits
Script writer: John Tatoulis
Pre-sale: Network Ten, BBC
Distribution: Dingo Film Distribution
Finance: FFC, Film Victoria
Length: 13 x 30 mins
Voices

The adventures of the legendary Silver Brumby, one of Australia's silver brumby and his youthful gang of High Country friends.

SINGAPORE SLING
[See previous issues for details.]

THREE TELE-FEATURES about John Stanfield, a world-weary private eye based in Singapore, who unravels a series of cases involving politics, war, and the Asian underworld.

SOLIDER, SOLIDER (SERIES)
Production company: Palm Beach Pictures
Production: 6/2/95 - 10/3/95
Principal Credits
Director: Ken Ramm
Producer: Anthony Fishbank
David Ellef
Line producer: Dusty Simmons
Scriptwriters: Peter Bamford, Richard Smith
Executive producer: Doff Jeffrey Malouf
Production designer: Michael Bridge
Editor: Joseph Dann
Other Credits
Production manager: Anne Brunings
Art director: Jenny Careggone
Camera: Foote-Tennant
Pre-sale: Network Seven
Finance: Central Films (UK)

A welcome series of 15 1/2-year-old boys who find himself accidentally marooned in a world parallel to his own.

WILDSCREEN (SERIES)
Production companies: ABC National History Unit
Directors: Various
Executive producer: Diane Gilmore

YACKITY YACK (SERIES PILOT)
Production company: David Productions
Budget: $140,000 (All deferred subject to network sale)
Principal Credits
Director: Chris Ashdown
Producer: Stephen Rowen
Executive producer: Chris Ashdown
Scriptwriters: Sids Wemisz, Ray Matson, Marnie Rets, Kate Landohr
Planning and Divisions: David consultant: Ray Matson
Shooting consultant: Charles Ashdown

A late night talk show hosted by Chris Ashdown.

PRODUCTION CRED
Production manager: Rees""

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### nihil obstat nine

The little-heralded American Clerks charges home ahead of some French heavies (Le Colonel Chabert and La Reine Margot).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie</th>
<th>Bandit Queen</th>
<th>Before the Rain</th>
<th>Blue Sky</th>
<th>The Brady Bunch Movie</th>
<th>A Bronx Tale</th>
<th>Bullets Over Broadway</th>
<th>Clerks</th>
<th>Le Colonel Chabert</th>
<th>Color of Night</th>
<th>Dumb and Dumber</th>
<th>Eternity</th>
<th>Farinelli: Il Castrato</th>
<th>Hotel Sorrento</th>
<th>John Carpenter's In the Mouth of Madness</th>
<th>Legends of the Fall</th>
<th>Little Women</th>
<th>Nobody's Fool</th>
<th>Only the Brave</th>
<th>Peeping Tom</th>
<th>Peřt-á-Porter</th>
<th>La Reine Margot</th>
<th>The Shawshank Redemption</th>
<th>Tales from the Crypt presents Tales from the Crypt</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rating</td>
<td>8</td>
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</tbody>
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**Table Notes:***
- Each film is rated on a scale of 0 to 10, with 10 being the optimum rating.
- A dash (-) signifies that the film was not reviewed by the critic.
- The average rating for each critic is indicated in the last column.

**Critics:**
- The critic data includes ratings from:
  - Bill Collins (Daily Mirror, Sydney)
  - Barbara Creed (The Age)
  - Sandra Hall (The Bulletin)
  - Stan James (The Adelaide Advertiser)
  - Adrian Martin (The Age)
  - "The Week in Film", Radio National
  - Scott Murray (SBS, The Sunday Age)
  - David Stratton (Variety, SBS)
  - Evan Williams (The Australian)

Note: "nihil obstat" (Lat. "nothing stands in the way") words appearing on the title page or elsewhere in the preliminary pages, indicating that it has been approved as free of doctrinal or moral error.

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A panel of nine 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).

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