Cinema Papers # 127 October 1998

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Publisher
MTV Publishing Ltd, Abbotsford, 96p

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INSIGHTS

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FOCUS

Ranking the Treasures
British cinema of the 1930s is far more varied than the textbooks would have us believe, as BARRIE PATTISON discovers when ABC television unreeled scores of little-seen Gaumont British films

Dangerous and Depraved
Henry Fool is the new film of acclaimed American director Hal Hartley, and quite a radical change. Hartley explains why to TEARLACH HUTCHESON

Louis Nowra: Images on a Wall
The acclaimed playwright and prolific scriptwriter Louis Nowra talks to MARGARET SMITH about his beginnings in film and his new work, Radiance

PETER WEIR AND THE TRUMAN SHOW
After the brilliant but largely ignored Fearless, Peter Weir has a huge commercial and critical hit with The Truman Show. In a revealing interview, Weir talks to PAUL KALINA.

KURT & COURTNEY
A FILM BY NICK BROOKMFIELD
"A dead rock star, a crazy heroine, a bunch of conspiracy theorists with hand-held cameras... might it be a Nick Broomfield film." - The Observer, London

Opens at Palace Cinemas on September 17 in Melbourne and Sydney with other states to follow.
COOKING IN THE CELLULOID
KOSHER KITCHEN

The Jewish Museum of Australia, as part of the Australian Family Project, is holding a Festival of short films, Celluloid Soup: Images of the Jewish Family.

The films must be under ten minutes and depict representations of the Jewish family. All films will be screened at Longford in Melbourne during September, and then travel to Sydney, and the best five films will be shown throughout a special exhibition at the Jewish Museum of Australia, Circles and Cycles.

FLICKERING ENTRIES

Flickerfest, the 8th International Short Film Festival, is now accepting entries for films, animations and documentaries under 30 minutes. Flickerfest is held at Bondi Beach in Sydney from 3-9 January 1999, before touring nationally.

For entry send info to: Email: flickerfest@bigpond.com; download from www.flickerfest.com.au; tel (61.2) 9211 7133 or fax (61.2) 9211 8278. Entries close 17 October 1998.

AND NOW IT’S TIME FOR PLAN B

Ian B, due to premiere on 2 November at the Globe in Newtown, Sydney, is looking for new short films under the ten-minute mark. The deadline for entries is 20 October, and enquiries can be made to Michele Santosa, tel (61.2) 9518 4589, fax (61.2) 9439 3985, email Michele@somicon.com.au, or Simon Fellow, tel/fax (61.2) 9484 0900 or email simon66@hotmail.com

GLOBAL SHORTAGE

The Globe Group is looking for local short films to screen with features at its cinema in Stanmore.

OUT AND ABOUT

The Australian Film Commission’s Industry night for August brought out a few familiar faces, including City director Alex Proyas, all-round Australian film icon Bryan Brown, and Rachel Griffiths, overseeing the screening of her short film début, Tulip.
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entry forms are available from: Richard Sowada, Festival Director, REVElation Independent Film Festival, PO Box 135, South Fremantle, WA 6162. Tel/fax: (61.8) 9336 2482. Email: dakota@omen.net.au

BEACHSIDE FILM BABIES
Panandus Film Festival in Noosa is calling for entries in two different categories: film or video productions no longer than five minutes and featuring the name or the place Noosa somewhere in the film; and film or video productions up to 15 minutes long with the theme 'character of landscape'. There will be three age groups: up to 17 years, 18-25 and over 25.

Deadline is 25 October for a 14 November screening, and entry forms are available from: Panandus Film Festival PO Box 211, Noosa Heads, QLD 4567. Tel: (61.7) 5474 8855. Email: panandus@coastnet.net.au

A SOUND IDEA

The Australian Screen Sound Guild has announced that, in October of this year, the first annual Screen Sound Awards will be held to recognize and celebrate excellence in the craft of creating a soundtrack. The aims of the Guild, based currently in Sydney and Queensland, are to maintain, recognize, promote and facilitate original and creative work, and achievements from those involved in the screen sound profession, to promote the pursuit of knowledge, and to liaise with associations and people involved in the profession. These awards are a step towards a broader recognition for the screen sound industry.

SCREEN SCORE COLLABORATION

Youth Music Australia, Fox Studios Australia, AFTRS and Caribiner Wavelength are putting together a new project, Camera Camerata. Composers and musicians between the ages of 18 and 30 will be called upon to write and perform original music for four films, under the guidance of experienced mentors and the project's Artistic Director, composer-conductor Edward Primorose. Films, composers and mentors are as follows:


A public screening and performance of the films and their scores will be held on 7 October at the new theatre complex at Sydney's Shore College.

GROWING SCREEN CULTURE

The AFC's survey on National Screen Culture Activity 1995-1996, which focused on organizations that received funding from the AFC's Industry and Cultural Development Branch (ICD), has shown a number of promising trends:

• Audience attendances for festivals, screenings and exhibitions are up, 1.2 million people in the two-year period;

• Screen culture attracted a lot of publicity: 4,400 press articles, radio and television items in that period;

• Almost 2,000 independently-produced films used facilities from ICD-funded organizations;

• The screen culture sector has become successful in generating its own income through services and activities, the private sector and government bodies. The proportion of self-generated income had increased from 75 percent to 80 percent in 1995 and 81 percent in 1996;

• While the number of full- or part-time employees fell, the number of volunteers, trainees or work experience people increased within the two-year period;

• Screen-culture organizations are instrumental in developing a local multimedia industry through conferences, seminars, touring

SUBVERSIVES IN BERLIN - DOWNUNDER STYLE

Timothy Grossmann, who runs the arthouse cinema Kino Balazs in East Berlin, is pretty chuffed. Along with two other cinema owners he has put together Germany's first Australian and New Zealand Film Festival outside two months. He stands proprietorially at the entrance of the Festival's opening venue - an old church in the middle of the former East Berlin - greeting the milling crowd with quiet pride. The place looks, smells and sounds spooky, and very Berlin. The high rough-hewn walls have a faintly bombed-out look, rather as if World War II stopped yesterday. Tonight we're seeing the sixteen short films from Sydney's Tropfest, and clearly Timothy sees this as something of a coup.

"These short films really substantiate my view of Australian films in general", he says in his melodic English. "They're not just well made and put together, but I'm also very taken with the whole idea of it all starting in a coffee shop (Sydney's Tropicana cafe). It was a miracle just how well the Tropfest finalists fitted the opening of our Festival".

The fascination with things Australian had already taken root with the minor furor around the 2000 Olympics campaign in Berlin, which saw the alternative scene here extremely anti-Berlin - and very pro-Sydney. Combine this with the fact that Timothy is an East Berliner and someone for whom Australia held a particularly exotic, miraculous quality, plus the sudden appearance a couple of months ago of clichéd Australiana on bill-boards everywhere (desert, Aborignes, kangaroo) advertising a certain cigarette - "Australia's Number One Smoke!" - and you have the genesis of a Brilliant Idea.

Timothy Grossmann and his colleagues, Frank Zilm (who runs Blow Up, also in East Berlin) and Franz Stadler (from Filmkunst 66 in the West), are showing over 30 movies in this Festival. For the selection process, Timothy is convinced that films like Dingo, Murf's Wedding, Shine, The Piano, Ghosts ... of the Civil Dead, Heavenly Creatures, and documentaries such as Cracks in the Mask are not only first class but share what he sees as a common Antipodean motif.

"The central figure is often a little bit funny, outside the mainstream, but also driven - otherwise they will just drown, they simply won't find themselves. And as a result they are often quite subversive." He suggests this may have to do with Australia's penal colony origins, with being different. "I am an East German and also different. We have the same language as the other Germany but for the last 40 years we've had a completely different history, a different everyday culture - and this culture has no voice now". (In his opinion, German cinema as a whole seems to have lost its identity). Timothy also happens to be a very "different" East German. His father, an American GI with communist leanings, defected to East Germany in 1952 when the McCarthyist steamroller loomed in the form of military court proceedings. Now that is different. "I really feel for people who are coming from the side", he says. "You have this catharsis, something small that breaks through, it's a different perspective and a much more interesting one, I think".

Since that seemingly distant time when the Wall came down, Timothy and his cohorts have seen many, many Australian and New Zealand films. Sure, maybe some of the exoticism has dissipated, but as cinema buffs they remain impressed. "I like the humour", says Timothy. "I like the very professional way of shooting films, the good actors and the excellent editing. It's often very original and recent movies, maybe some directors and hopefully some bands. "I think what German cinematographers and directors could learn from Australia is to see what you have in your own country for things, for stories on the street, not always looking to Hollywood, but grounding yourself in the social fabric, so the audience can see it has something to do with them. It's about interesting stories, it's about communication ... and it's about subversion".
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CASTING A NEW NET

S ally Bristoe, formerly with Mullin­nars casting agency, has struck out on her own with The Casting House. Her aim is to provide the independent filmmakingsector with a range of budget casting options for features, short films, and corporate-training films, a new service for an otherwise-untapped market.

Maura Fay Casting has expanded and opened a Melbourne office.

YOUNG FILMMAKERS GET THE FUNDING AND THE TRAINING

The seven recipients of the latest round of the NSW Young Film­makers Fund were announced recently, and they are:

Anne Delaney and Brett Evans: No Mess, a documentary about two women who clean up after murders and accidents - $25,000;

Michael Henderson: Life after Birth, an animation about twins in a womb doubling life after birth - $10,000;

David Messer: Shooting Stars, an animation about two shooters aiming for the stars - $10,000;

Tim Slade: I Was Robert Mitchum, a true tale about a love affair with movies of a man who cannot see – $25,000;

Adam Blaiklock: The Piano Bomb Detective’s Last Case, a thriller with plenty of special effects – $9,500; and

Annie Beauchamp: Desire Lines, a film about a woman jumping off a building and falling in love – $9,500.

The NSW Premier and Minister for the production company Mullion Creek Productions has joined with Beyond International Limited to form the company Mullion Creek & Beyond. This new joint venture is set to develop and produce television for both domestic and international release, as well as having a "first look" deal on feature films and IMAX productions. Upcoming projects include: a feature film, Diving for Pearls, directed by Geoff Burton and based on Katherine Thomson's play; Equus – The Story of the Horse; a new IMAX film; and a television documentary, Guitar.

FURTHER BEYOND DISTRIBUTION

The announcement has engendered smiling faces all over New Zealand, as has word that Jackson and the NZFC have patched up their differences. When Jackson first spoke out, many suggested his career in New Zealand was as good as over. The Lord of the Rings is striking proof that it isn't, and that criticizing a hand that feeds is not the creative death sentence Australian directors tend to believe it to be.

EARLY AUSSIE TV FILM

The National Film & Sound Archive, in association with Melbourne Cinematheque, will be presenting two feature-film spin-offs of 1970s television shows: Country Town (Peter Maxwell, 1971), based on the melodrama Bellbird; and The Box (Paul Eddey, 1975), adapted, of course, from that sexy, saucy series. The screenings are on 21 October (7pm: Country Town; 9pm: The Box) at the State Film Theatre, East Melbourne.

APPOINTMENTS

The Australian Film Finance Corporation has appointed Chris Oliver as its new Investment Manager. Oliver has worked as an executive producer for the studio, whose article on the Australian Cinema Pioneers was important for young people to pay the staff, and during the war was seconded to the Dutch to make war films. In Australia a few years ago, she was interviewed on video for the film archives about her work as a neg matcher. The earnest young interviewer had done his homework about her very carefully, but still he had no luck getting her to talk about her past. Maggie looked very fetching in her outfit which included a little pink hat with a feather, but the poor interviewer had a dreadful job trying to keep her on the subject. She kept branching off onto what she thought was important for young people to know. That was Maggie.

She was very proud of being awarded membership of The Institute of the Australian Cinema Pioneers and was made an honorary member of the Australian Cinematographers' Society. She died early on the morning of 9 July and a number of film folk attended her funeral the next day.

Barrie Smith adds:

I saw Maggie at a preview of Fox Studios in Sydney in May this year. As she held court with all her old buddies, glass of champers in hand, it was amazing to see the likes of cameramen John Seale and Russell Boyd, as well as well-known editors, enjoy her sometimes-saudioscary tales of the industry. We will sadly miss The Duchess of Colorfilm.

The following is an abbreviated version of a eulogy written and spoken by John Mitchell: In 1950, Maggie Cardin arrived with all her belongings, first class, on an ocean liner to start the second half of her life in Australia. During her Australian career, she worked for the ABC, at Supreme Sound Studios at Paddington, and later went to Colorfilm at Camperdown. She took charge of the camera negatives from a film shoot and, having carefully catalogued them, stored them in ‘her’ vault.

After the editors had finished their work cutting the workprint on a production, she would painstakingly match the negative, ready for final release printing. Millions upon millions of dollars worth of film stock was entrusted to her. In the ‘50s, ‘60s and ‘70s, just about every Australian film went to her for neg matching.

One can see her name along with Colorfilm in the credits of every major Australian film, from Jedda (Charles Chauvel, 1955) to the Mad Max sequels. (She even appeared in Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome as a hag on the Thunderdome.)

Those who worked on films at that time knew that if The Duchess of Colorfilm was looking after your job it was in safe hands, although I am sure they would have been told, in no uncertain terms, what she thought when work was sent in to her with wrong edge numbers or something of the kind.

Maggie was always prone to disclose on her fascinating past. You could be excused if some of the tales appeared fantastic and possibly mythi­cal. She would often start an anecdote about her past and then, just as she reached an interesting bit, go vague about details.

Her journey started on 18 August 1906, in London. Maggie had a very event-filled life: the only child in a single-parent family, she suffered the tragic death of her mother, Julie, who perished on the Titanic when Maggie was six. She was placed in the care of a guardian who had Maggie educated as a lady of means, sent to a finishing school in Paris where she learnt to run a large household. She could have been a movie star and certainly knew how to act like one. But at some stage in her early years in London, she realized she would need a regular income and so trained to become a technician in the blossoming English film industry.

Listening to her tell it, it seemed that during the next 25 years she worked with just about everyone of any note in the English film and vaudeville scene – and she probably did. No matter who one mentioned to her, she could tell some little story about them. You could ask: Maggie, did you know Noel Coward? “Yes, dear, he and his mother lived in Edbury Street, near Victoria Station. I used to have tea with her, dear.” What about Pavlova? “She lived next door to me, dear. She was very tiny and quite ugly, but she knew how to dance.” Alfred Hitchcock? “I taught him all he knew, dear.”

She worked for the BBC at the time of Logie Baird and at Alexander Palace or Ally Pally as she called it. She had a film business in Curzon Street, would occasionally have to pawn her furs to pay the staff, and during the war was seconded to the Dutch to make war films.

OBITUARY

MARIE CARDIN

The NSW Premier and Minister for the Arts, Bob Carr, has also announced six people selected for the Digital Visual FX Traineeships, a partnership between the NSWFTO, Animal Logic, DFilm Digital Film Services and Brilliant Interactive Ideas. The six people are: Angela Pelizziara, Craig Welsh, Jane Maguire, Shamus Baker, David Gross and Kelly Wallwork. They will spend six months working with one of the companies with their salaries jointly funded by that company and the NSW Government. The Traineeship is part of the $560,000 New Media package announced by Carr earlier this year.

JACKSON DEFIES CRITICS

Peter Jackson, the brilliant director whose article on the New Zealand Film Commission caused so many ruffled feathers when first published in New Zealand, and then in Cinema Papers (no. 125, pp. 15, 42), has just announced the financing on his The Lord of the Rings. New Line Cinema will commit more than US$130 million to the live-action, special effects-packed trilogy, based on J. R. R. Tolkien's novel. All three films will be shot in New Zealand, with production beginning mid-1999.

The announcement has engendered smiling faces all over New Zealand, as has word that Jackson and the NZFC have patched up their differences. When Jackson first spoke out, many suggested his career in New Zealand was as good as over. The Lord of the Rings is striking proof that it isn't, and that criticizing a hand that feeds is not the creative death sentence Australian directors tend to believe it to be.
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Bank of Melbourne cuts the cost of banking
Film Australia has announced the appointment of three new executive producers, Stefan Moore and Mark Hamlyn, both based in Sydney, and Franco di Chiera in a new Melbourne-based position.

Following the Becker Group's acquisition of Dendy Film Distribution, Jane Alsobrook has been appointed Distribution Head. She will be replacing Lyn McCarthy and Graeme Tubbenhauer, who had owned and operated Dendy for over thirteen years. Alsobrook was previously the president of REP Film Distribution, also a division of the Becker Group, and head of Twentieth Century Fox Classics Division.

Village Cinemas International recently announced the appointment of David Glass as General Manager, Exhibition Development and Moveline. Glass has been serving as the General Manager of Village Cinema's Singapore cinemas for the past five years. In his new position, he will be responsible for Village's part in the tele-ticking joint venture with Hoyts and Greater Union. He will also be overseeing exhibition developments and investments in Asia.

The Australian Film Commission has appointed four new commissioners, including a new Deputy Chair, Des Clark, Chairman of the Melbourne International Film Festival. Filmmaker Rolf de Heer, actor-director John Polson and producer Helen Leake are the other three commissioners.

Letters

PO BOX 2221 FITZROY MDC VIC 3065

COMMERCIAL COWBOYS

Dear Sir

I have just seen the Director's Cut of Walkabout, and want to commend you for the publicity you gave it in your June issue.

It probably amounts to stating the obvious by now, but the crucial segment which has always been omitted on television involved that of the plaster cast production line, staffed by Aboriginal child labour, producing reproductions of both themselves and other "native fauna" for the tourist trade. No wonder this was cut - what a wonderfully subversive little inclusion! And, of course, it explains where the Aboriginal boy had come from - and why he left. The challenge he receives from the supposed partner of the "commercial cowboy" running the little operation echoed for me the complaints voiced by the white exploiters in Jedda, who similarly complained about no good young bucks going on their walkabouts.

What is really intriguing, too, is that I don't believe that the actors from this segment are even included in the credits.

Was that a young Cul Cullen playing the "cowboy"? Has anyone ever asked director Roeg about the segment's omission?

Thanks again for giving a brilliant, beautiful, but deeply disturbing, film the attention it deserves.

Stephen Grace

email: cp@parkhouse.com.au

ADDENDUM

As Cinema Papers went to press, we were saddened to hear of the appointment of three new executors, including a new Deputy Chair, Des Clark, Chairman of the Melbourne International Film Festival. Filmmaker Rolf de Heer, actor-director John Polson and producer Helen Leake are the other three commissioners.
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Brisbane Film Festival
by Scott Murray

Brisbane continues its ascent as Australia's most user-friendly festival. Ticket sales were up 60 percent on an already-successful 1997, and the annual event seems to have gripped Brisbane Film Festival and a real desire to please its patrons.

20:00 Thursday 30 July
The Festival began with John Ruane's Dead Letter Office, which has been extensively covered in a past issue and is reviewed in this. Suffice it to say, this gentle film, which has had rather underwhelming reviews in the Australian press, contains a truly remarkable performance by Miranda Otto. Its quality has been too little remarked on; it should be shouted about from the streets as one of the best in Australian cinema.

The bit players, too, are good, though George DelHoyo in the male lead is sadly exposed when called to recount the horrors of his character's homeland, reverting to television-style acting. That is particularly unfortunate as it adds to the already unsettling impression of Deborah Cox's screenplay being based and dependent on the clichés and constructs of television serial drama.

Director John Ruane strives hard to imbue the film with atmosphere – it reminds one strongly of his earlier Feathers - but he needs stronger source material on which to exercise his special talents.

Preceding Dead Letter Office was Lynn-Marie Danzey's Fetch, which was shown in Compétition (Court Métrage) at Cannes this year. On one level, it is the horror of all horrors: a gag film. On another, it delivers.

Starring the too-little-seen Rebecca Frith and the much-seen Matt Day, who gets better with each performance, it is a near flawless piece of short filmmaking, with an ending that literally no one expects.

12:00 Friday 31 July
The first full day began with José Luis Guerín's Tren de Ombres (Train of Shadows: The Spectre of Le Thuit), a Spanish film made in France. It was a great pity only ten people and a dog attended, as this is a truly fascinating film.

One deduces from the opening (there were no subtitles, but very little dialogue) that Guerin recently unearthed some footage shot by a Gérard Fleury in 1930. The film is, naturally, in black and white, and shows a well-to-do bourgeois family at play at their minor château near the Normandy town and lake of Le Thuit. It is all sunny and happy, a perfect image of a perfect past.

Within a minute or so, though, one suspects something is odd. The people don't seem fully at ease in their clothes. Perhaps they are in their "Sunday bests", which might also explain why their garments are so neat.

Then there is the face of the eldest, and very beautiful, daughter. Her face seems too modern ... or are one's generalizations?

Anja Breien (famous for Wives). One is greatly helped on the journey switch to colour being a truly transcendent moment.

This bravely experimental film lingers on the mind in a way few films today do. It is 38-year-old Guerin's second feature and his career should be followed.

With the programming astuteness one now expects of Brisbane, Tren de Ombres followed a nine-minute shot by the acclaimed Norwegian director, Anja Breien (famous for Wives).

Solvorn is a recreation of a brief period in the life of Breien's grand-mother (1908-13) when she took a series of photographs in her home town. The images are extraordinary – not only for capturing clearly a vanished life but for their aesthetic brilliance. Few photographs from that era have as much clarity (in all its senses) as these do.

What weakens the film is an overly-poetic and -mannered narration (by Breien) that seeks to question aspects of memory and authorship. Her closing suggestion that her grandmother took photographs because "she wanted to fly" is less than helpful.

14:10 Friday 31 July
Again clever programming was at work here. The short, Anna Perotti Sings (Stephan Caspar), is about two unemployed working-class lads waiting at the world's most desolate bus station. They talk of finding a better life. Behind them is a poster advertising the imminent return of local-singer-made-good Anna Perotti.

Suddenly, Perotti appears at the same stop. She hails a taxi out of nowhere and asks one of the lads, who dreams of being a famous drummer, to come with her and join the band. He hesitates under pressure from his mate (of the "Don't leave me alone" kind), and declines. The taxi drives off.

This stark black-and-white film in subtitles Welsh is a pithy look at a moment of decision not taken that will affect characters' lives for years to come.

This parallels neatly Lee Chang-dong's Chorok Mulgoki (Green Fish), the story of a young man's difficult choices on leaving the army. Jobs are almost impossible to find and, like many of his age and background, Madeo (Han Suk-Kyu) must decide whether to become part of the gangster underworld that increasingly grips South Korea.

Chance plays its part when a girl he has seen on a train, and whose scarf he has kept, is found working as a singer in a nightclub; she is the girl-friend of a local gangster. Madeo slips almost effortlessly into the corrupt world, even though he is at first not asked to do anything untoward. But descent is inevitable and the end is a truly pathetic moment of tragedy one knows has been coming since the start.

Along with many other modern Korean films, Green Fish suggests that South Korea is the world's greatest living hell, a capitalist state gone mad with consumer desire, dissipated ideals and a lack of will to fight back.

It is a challenging, disturbing and extremely impressive first film.

16:50 Friday 31 July
What can one say about the recent career of Claude Chabrol, other than quickly remind oneself of the greatness of his earlier work? While not as awful or misogynistic as L'Enfer and Le Cérémonie, Rien Ne Va Plus is a complete nothingness, a caper movie even more trivial than Dirty Rotten Scoundrels (Frank Oz, 1988). This is the type of
soulless, witless, hack cinema that Chabrol and his comrades rightly denounced in Cahiers du Cinéma. Most dispiriting is the appalling visual quality of the film. It looks like it was shot on Super 16 (the creeping black death of modern, particularly Australian, cinema), an ineptly-shot mess of grainy, uninspired compositions. At least L’Enfer looked like a Chabrol; this looks like a cheap videoshop-only flick, despite the quality cast (Isabelle Huppert, Michel Serrault, François Cluzet). Perhaps the next Chabrol will herald the long-awaited return.

19:00 Friday 31 July
Masato Harada, a charming and informed guest of the Festival, presented his Bounce Ko-gals, a dazzling look at what are termed “high-girls”, schoolgirls who earn extra money by selling themselves and/or their intimate possessions. Harada spent several months doing research and his film is a remarkable document of a bizarre sub-culture of Japanese life that has only recently waned (perhaps to be replaced by something even more bizarre). These middle-class teenage girls, dressed in school uniforms with the trademark above-ankle-to-below-knee white socks, want the extra money to buy famous-label clothes and accessories. A good money-earner is selling underwear to sex shops; “fresh”, as in just-taken-off, brings the highest price. The girls also pretend to be prostitutes, luring men into hotel rooms or dark alleys, before robbing them. One ko-gal uses a stun gun to zap the customer post-payment and pre-sex.

In the film, the Yakuza understandably get somewhat annoyed with the ko-gals moving into their legitimate and professional turf, muttering waters by leaving angry, disappointed clients out in the marketplace. Harada speculated in the question-and-answer session after the screening that many middle-aged Japanese men have found it impossible post-feminism to communicate with women of their own age. Instead, they have retreated into a fantasy world of sex with girls the age of their daughters. Harada finds their behaviour disturbing, and both he and the film urge a major rethink.

Harada also questions, as does his film, why the girls sell themselves in the first place. Most are well-to-do and have more than enough money from their parents to live well. Why would they demean themselves so basely just to be able to afford a label product, especially since the girls (as revealed in a hilarious and depressing scene at a restaurant) often find label goods to be inferior to cheaper ones? This is consumer desire gone mad.

Bounce Ko-gals is a rich film, staggeringly well-acted and with a joyousness in cinematic language rarely seen since the Nouvelle Vague. Most striking is the positive tone. After all the Korean and Taiwanese films of recent times, it is a shock to see a film where there is hope, where people can make courageous decisions, where evil does not have to triumph.

12:15 Saturday 1 August
John W. Hood has already written favourably and knowledgeably about Jayaraj’s Kaliyattam (The Play of God). All this author can add is that this film, why the girls sell themselves in the first place. Most are well-to-do and have more than enough money from their parents to live well. Why would they demean themselves so basely just to be able to afford a label product, especially since the girls (as revealed in a hilarious and depressing scene at a restaurant) often find label goods to be inferior to cheaper ones? This is consumer desire gone mad.

For the first ten minutes or so, Olivier Péray’s Petits Désordres Amoureux (Love Tangles) is an insufferable example of the French cinema at its most trivial: cutesy, plastic, over-clever, avoidable. Even the acting, surprisingly, is sub-par, as if the filmmaker had no choice but to use his mates. Slowly, however, the film’s many qualities assert themselves. It doesn’t end up being in the class of the best Rochant or Truffaut, but it is an advance on Rohmer’s more recent moral tales. Certainly female sexual desire has rarely been so openly portrayed, or the fear some men have of it. The success of the film hinges to a large extent on the ending, which it would be cruel to reveal here, as hopefully the film will be more widely seen than just at Brisbane. In the tradition of Lelouch, the resolution challenges viewers to reassess all that has come before and their reactions to it.

18:40 Saturday 1 August
Park Ki-Yong’s Motel Seoninjang (Motel Cactus) was shot by the great Australian DOP, Christopher Doyle. The lighting, the controlled colour and the nuances of time passing are all brilliantly done, which is fortunate given the film has limited narrative interest. Set in one room of a motel hired out for sexual assignations, Motel Cactus tells four discrete stories. The first two are both melancholic and hypnotic, but the oppressiveness of the setting, the dourness of the telling, the lack of variation and the seemingly-endless shot of the motel sign in rain quickly pall.

The film does nothing, either, to weaken one’s concerns about the materialistic hell of South Korea.

21:30 Saturday 1 August
There is a growing wisdom that some of the best cinema is now being made in Spain; many of its directors have not

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PARK KI-YONG’S 'MOTEL SEONINJANG' (MOTEL CACTUS).
the 1998 Sydney Film Festival (Director Paul Byrnes' 10th and last) was a veritable feast. As always, the documentary section was particularly strong; and, predictably, strong films from Asia featured prominently. Notable documentaries on Bergman (The Voice of Bergman), Paradjanov (The Last Collage), Buñuel (A Mexican Bunuel), Capra (Frank Capra's American Dream) and Hou Hsiao-Hsien (HHH: Portrait of Hou Hsiao-Hsien), and a tribute to Pennebaker and Hege- dus stood out. A short retrospective on Frank Capra was both timely and thought-provoking, especially in the light of the recent diminution of his reputation. Indeed, a number of films screened at the Festival would suggest that this phenomenon is quite unjusti fied. Films such as Meet John Doe (1941) and The Bitter Tea of General Yen (1933) still have much of interest to say to a new generation of cinema-goers. It would seem that a revaluation of Capra's œuvre as a whole is long overdue.

And then there were the other eagerly-anticipated films: Rachel Perkins' Radiance, Robert Duvall's The Apostle, Gillian Leahy's Our Park, Maurice Elvey's astonishing The Life Story of David Lloyd George (1938), the three Cannes prize winners — Abbas Kiarostami's Ta'm E Guilass (Taste of Cherry) (Palme d'Or), Wong Kar-Wai's Happy Together (Best Director, 1997) and Atom Egoyan's The Sweet Hereafter (Grand Jury Prize, Ecumenical Prize) — as well as Michael Winterbottom's Welcome to Sarajevo, among many others.

The Apostle and The Sweet Hereafter

Atom Egoyan's new film is a deeply-satisfying meditation on the extent to which the unexorcized demons of one's past irrevocably shape one's future. The film deals with a lawyer who travels to a small town near the Rockies to bring justice to the grieving parents after a bus crash kills many children. But his own life is haunted by the devastation caused in his daughter's life by drug dependency and by the piper's failure on so many levels; and this failure is due, perhaps, to the innate flaws that the piper, so to speak, cannot transcend.

The Apostle lacks the structural sophistication of Egoyan's film but is no less incisive. It is relatively straightforward in style and structure, but gathers strength from an uncommon depth of characterization, especially on the part of Duvall in the central rôle. It, too, is concerned with the troubled negotiation of some sort of redemptive capacity: Sonny Dewey, a man who "hollers" at God and hears the voice of Jesus Christ, commits a murder and tries to rebuild his career as a preacher in another land. He displays violent tendencies and rebellious behaviour, but Duvall does not turn away from the complexities; he does not patronize or belittle such characters — indeed, one of the remarkable things about the film is the extent to which Duvall imbues this man with dignity. The intensity of Duvall's performance keeps the viewers' interest from flagging.

The Long, Happy Life of David Lloyd George

Maurice Elvey's silent masterpiece, The Life Story of David Lloyd George, was a revelation. This film had been presumed lost since 1918. The Wales Film and Television Archive and the National Film Archive in London have masterfully restored it. It was shown at 18 frames per second.

The film looks at the life of the British Prime Minister, beginning with his early career as a Nonconformist and ordent nationalist with socialist leanings and ending with his "heroic leadership in the Great War. It was suppressed because of its subject's socialist sympathies.

One has to sit through a great deal of mindless nationalism and the film is predominantly a hagiography, but it is an astonishing film for its time in other respects: it employs eleven different tints to emphasize certain themes (for example, yellow for heroism), as well as various framing devices such as keyholes and heart-shaped frames to highlight the thematic concerns. The photography — probably the work of a number of cinematographers judging by the stylistic variations within the film — seems remarkably pristine in many cases. The film makes no mention of George's anti-Semitism; the film itself was never finished. But it was one of the great treats of the Festival and another reminder of the expressive power of the silent film.

The Unbearable Burden of Being

Two of the Cannes prize winners explored existential angst. Kiarostami's Taste of Cherry is concerned with a man (Badii) who wishes to end his life and seeks someone to pour earth upon his open grave. Kiarostami favors a minimalist style in order not to distract the viewer from the existential drama of this man's unavailing life. Colour is controlled tightly; brown tinges dominate until the end when greens and blues proliferate, perhaps to evoke a renewed sense of hope and growth. It is engaging for the most part but there is a serious flaw: because Badii withholds his reasons (on the rather dubious, not to say patronizing and insulting, premise that his listeners will not understand), it is difficult for the viewer to connect in any profound way with his predicament. The effect is somewhat akin to watching a self-destructive cipher. Perhaps the distancing effect is deliberate. If it is, then the result is an emotionally-cold exercise: it gains from its intellectual grappling with the troubled question of suicide and complicity but loses too much because the ideas are not arrest­ ing enough consistently to sustain the interest of the viewer. It is not surprising that some viewers chose not to stay until the end.

Wong Kar-Wai's Happy Together is about two men's attempts to 'start over'. They travel from Hong Kong to Argentina ostensibly to see Iguazu Falls and to rebuild their lives. It is another rites-of-passage/road film in which angst and an impossible relationship figure prominently. One man works as a doorman; the other as a prostitute. But the film is remarkable for its style: Kar-Wai employs colour and black and white in order to evoke two levels of existence — a fundamental duality — which cannot be reconciled (and, on a further symbolic level, two lovers whose alterity is ineradicable). He also employs rapid cutting to evoke the angst-ridden instability of these lives. The dominant register is anguish and the stylistic innovation (strident contrasts, heightened areas of light and shadow, dynamic intercutting) is used to intensify the sense of separation and dissonance that permeates the lives of these two postcolonial hybrids. This is a form of hybridity that is full of unresolved, and the film suggests, ultimately unresolvable, tensions.

Sydney Film Festival

by Raymond Younis

"The Pied Piper": the lawyer's tormented past as a seemingly-helpless father; and the grieving parents in the small town. All three strands highlight the same concerns: the tentative structures that bind a seemingly strong community; the deceit, the terrible compromises and the façades which are erected to conceal these from view; and a redemptive task which is fuelled by something other than the noblest or purest of motives and which is thwarted by an expanding fabric of deception.

The attempt to find some meaning in such tragic circumstances is constant in the film. This is a sort of postmodern rites-of-passage narrative for the 1990s, with its fragmented structure and fractured lives, with many ironic twists and without the playful subtext of many similar films. The sweet hereafter is a consequence of the piper's failure on so many levels; and this failure is due, perhaps, to the innate flaws that the piper, so to speak, cannot transcend.

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Melbourne Film Festival

by Tim Hunter

The trouble with festival overviews is that they can never be truly objective or definitive. There is no way you can see everything offered in a large-scale international film festival, so the films you see, the choices you make, are determined by your own tastes and desires. Therefore, the following is not even going to pretend to fully cover the 47th Melbourne International Film Festival; it is just going to be my impressions about the Festival and the films I saw.

Perhaps the first impression formed about this year’s Festival was one of sheer volume of choice available. Sitting down with the screening schedule, a pen and a diary, and trying to work out exactly what to see, when, and how to see everything I wanted to was a major undertaking. There was so much on: a hefty swag of films in the International Panorama; some promising Australian content; the retrospective showcases, “Kiss Me Deadly” and “Funky! Freaky! Foxy!”; “Regional Features”; the “Exotic Erotic”, “East of Broadway”, “Pump Up the Volume” and “Sushi and a Switchblade” showcases; and the documentaries and short films. It seemed impossible to squeeze it all in. Already anticipation and excitement were being generated, and the Festival hadn’t even begun.

Certainly that buzz was to become more evident as the Festival continued, and perhaps it was more noticeable because there really wasn’t one last year. Much has been said about last year’s Festival: about its over-commercial content, the corporate presence and the need for it to make money. First-time Festival Director Sandra Sdraulig bore the brunt of most of that. Whatever else last year’s Festival was or wasn’t, it was a financial success and, because of that, the Festival was able to return for 1998. This year, there were queues, there was much excited film-chat at the Festival Club, and people were generally keen and eager to see and talk about the films being screened.

Of all the films I saw, the most surprising and inspiring were those from countries not well known for their filmmaking. Ayneh (The Mirror) from Iranian director Jafar Panahi (The White Balloon, 1996) was a beautifully-realized film about a small girl finding her own way home from school that turned itself on its head halfway, challenging and subverting traditional film narrative structure. Likewise, Festen (The Celebration), a Danish film by Thomas Vinterberg, allowed you into a very personal and painful family birthday celebration, via hand-held video cameras. There really was a sense that we as the audience were intruding, voyeuristically, in a forbidden place.

Fable-like stories were also obvious among filmmakers. The Austrian film Die Siebteilbauern (The Inheritors, Stefan Ruzowitzky), France’s Gadjo Dilo (The Crazy Stronger, Tony Gatlif) and the Burkina Faso Faso Buud Yom (Gaston Jean-Marie Kaboré) told elegant, simple tales that were disarming and compelling. Japanese films were prominent, with Hana-bi (Fireworks) from Takeshi Kitano and Unagi (The Eel, Shohei Imamura) as highlights that divided Festival audiences, but which beguiled me nevertheless.

Established directors and their new films also featured, some to great acclaim (Neil Jordan’s The Butcher Boy, Hal Hartley’s Henry Fool, Pedro Almodóvar’s Carne Tremula [Live Flesh]), and some to lukewarm disappointment (Tom Di Cillo’s The Real Blonde and Claude Chabrol’s Rien Ne Va Plus), and, as usual, there was a host of first-timers, again with mixed results. Canadian Thom Fitzgerald’s The Hanging Garden was a strong début, as was Lisa Cholodenko’s High Art and Vincent Gallo’s Buffalo ’66. Less easily defined was n (P) from American Darren Aronofsky, which was so bewildering in its level of information and understanding that it left audiences completely overloaded or just plain cold.

As always, the Festival was the launching place for a good many new Australian films, again with varied results. Without doubt, the strongest Australian film this year was Ana Kokkinos’ Head On (see review this issue), with Rolf de Heer’s Dance Me to My Song not far behind. Less impressive were new films from John Ruane (Dead Letter Office), James Bogle (In the Winter Dark) and Nadia Tass (Amy), which all started with good ideas or concepts, but soon lost their way in pedestrian storytelling, unfulfilled suspense and sentimentalization, respectively. Jon Hewitt’s new low-budget feature Red Ball provoked some strong responses from the Victoria Police and audiences alike, but...
whether it was a bad hardboiled cop thriller done well or a film suffering from a lack of time and money is not an easy call to make. It will, assuredly, become a cult film.

Even without the "Exotic Erotic" showcase, which promised to explore human sexuality in all its forms, the films in this year's Festival seemed preternaturally occupied with sex, sexuality and relationships, and the gay theme was particularly obvious. The Hanging Garden, Love is the Devil (John Maybury), High Art, Head On, Relax ... It's Just Sex (P. J. Castellaneta) and The Opposite of Sex (Don Roos) all dealt with homosexuality in one way or another, and displayed a growing acceptance in our culture for such a lifestyle and such films.

The more explicit exploration in the showcase "Exotic Erotic" was pretty much a mixed bag. Sex Life in L.A. (Jochen Hick) was remarkable for its explicit and frank material, but that was about all; Uncut (John Greyson), the only fictional film in the showcase, was something of a disappointment, especially after Greyson's moody Lilies last year. Finished (William E. Jones), upon all reports, was a bad, bad, bad self-indulgent look at the death of a porn star, and the best of the lot was Unmade Beds (Nicholas Barker), a very real, very sad journey with four single people trying to find love in a lonely world.

The "Kiss Me Deadly" retrospective provided some welcome nostalgic escapism into the simpler, darker world of 1950s film noir. The title film, Robert Aldrich's 1955 classic, with a recently discovered different ending, had some great lines ("You're never around when I need you","You never need me when I'm around") and a broody atmosphere; Pushover (Richard Quine, 1954) provided us with Kim Novak's début; and, after a mix-up with prints, the only 35mm print of Scandal Sheet (Phil Karlson, 1952) in the world made it to screen on the last night of the Festival — a real treat.

The documentaries, as always, created a great deal of interest, especially Waco: The Rules of Engagement (William Gazecki) and Mob Law (Paul Wilmshurst), but, for me, a couple of offbeat docs like Kid Nero (Shereen Jerrett) and Fast, Cheap and Out of Control (Enrol Morris) provided great entertainment, as did two films focusing on Hollywood's glory days: Hollywood: Jews, Movies and the American Dream (Simcha Jacobovici) and Frank Capra's American Dream (Kenneth Bowser). Interestingly, both looked at how the archetypal American Dream of the 1930s and '40s was manufactured by Europeans. A fascinating double bill.

Not quite so fascinating was The Silver Screen: Color Me Lavender (Mark Rappaport), a great disappointment for a number of reasons. First, it was not nearly as interesting as Rappaport's The Journals of Jean Seberg (1997). Ostensibly, it was about the representation of gay male characters in early Hollywood films, but it spent far too long focusing on the Crosby-Hope road movies, and then on Walter Brennan as grizzled but loyal unrequited love of the leading man. The other problem was the way the film was pitched in the Festival programme. Using quotes from overseas film reviews and the filmmaker himself, it set itself up to be "The Celluloid Closet's evil twin brother". The thing is, it just wasn't.

If I have one major gripe about this year's Festival, it is about the programme. Just about every film was represented by a series of quotes pulled from press kits and some uncredited connecting hyperbole and endless praise that read more like an advertising pitch. That is its purpose, I suppose, but some more critical appraisal would have been appreciated. It seemed that every film was a sure-fire festival favourite, a must-see, this year's most controversial film, etc. Consequently, there was some disappointment experienced. And I don't like being told what to think of a film before I see it. That is, after all, why I'm seeing it. Both Gommo (Harmony Kone) and Funny Games (Michael Haneke) were beat-up as controversial and divisive, especially in the newspaper ads, but the films themselves were not nearly as shocking as all the hype had led me to believe.

Anyway, that's a small quibble really, considering that I saw over 70 films, and only suffered a handful of two of disappointments. After last year's rather bland selection of films, it certainly was a joy to go along and see so many, and such varied, films. And, of course, I haven't even mentioned Animagic, or the Mousetrap multimedia installation. A much more equitable balance was reached in this year's Festival between commercial and more obscure material; and, as far as numbers-crunching goes, ticket sales were up by 35 per cent, and attendances reached something like 90,000 — not bad going for Sdraugil's second year. Well, that's my impression, anyway.

City of Melbourne Short Film Awards

Winners in this year's Short Film Awards as awarded by the jury (Fiona Cochrane, Zakir Hossain Raju, Akinos Tsilimidos and Christina Heristandidis) are as follows:

GRAND PRIX THE CITY OF MELBOURNE AWARD FOR BEST FILM, $5,000

The Storekeeper (South Africa, Gavin Hood)

THE CITY OF MELBOURNE AWARD FOR BEST SHORT FICTION, $2,000

Joint winners: The Sugarbowl (Belgium, Hilde Van Mieghem), The Sheep Thief (Australia, Ian McFarland) and Beirut Nights (Australia, Kristin Scott Thomas) TURKEY

THE CITY OF MELBOURNE AWARD FOR BEST DOCUMENTARY, $500

Flatworld (UK, Daniel Greaves)

THE CITY OF MELBOURNE AWARD FOR BEST EXPERIMENTAL FILM, $2,000

The Persistence of Memory (UK, Anthony Atanasio)

THE BEYOND AWARD FOR BEST AUSTRALIAN SHORT COMEDY, $5,000

Fetch (Lynn-Marie Danzey)

The Erwin Rado Award for Best Australian Short Film, $2,000

Two/Out (Kriv Stenders)

The King Cinema's Award for Excellence in an Australian Short Film, $2,500

Relative Strangers (Rosemary Hesp)

Best Student Production

The Man From the Deep (Denmark, Martin Hagbjerg)

Best Achievement in a Video Production

Come Dancing (UK, Richard Knew)

International Catholic Film Organisation Award for an Outstanding Australian Short Film Promoting Human Values

Tulip (Rachel Griffiths)

Audience Polls

The top ten most popular feature films at the 4th Melbourne International Film Festival are as follows:

1. Radiance (Australia, Rachel Perkins)
2. Dance Me To My Song (Australia, Rolf de Heer)
3. Gadjo Dilo (The Crazy Stranger, France, Tony Gatlif)
4. The Interview (Australia, Craig Monahan)
5. Amy (Australia, Nadia Tass)
6. Festen (The Celebration, Denmark, Thomas Vinterberg)
7. Head On (Australia, Ana Kokkinos)
8. Carre Tremula (Live Flesh, Spain, Pedro Almodóvar)
9. The Spanish Prisoner (USA, David Mamet)
10. High Art (USA, Lisa Cholodenko)

The top ten most popular documentaries are as follows:

1. Waco: The Rules of Engagement (USA, William Gazecki)
2. Hephzibah (Australia, Curtis Levy)
3. Jobiluka (Australia, David Bradbury)
4. Blue Note: A Story of Modern Jazz (Germany, Julian Benedikt)
5. Charles Mingus: Triumph of the Underdog (Netherlands, Don Gilmour)
6. The Saltmen of Tibet (Australia, Kriv Stenders)
7. Lou Reed: Rock and Roll Heart (USA, Timothy Greenfield-Sanders)
8. Year of the Horse (USA, Jim Jarmusch)
9. Hollywoodism: Jews, Movies and the American Dream (Canada, Simcha Jacobovici)
10. Modulations (USA, Iara Lee)

* Some of the ads were just plain wrong as well: Motel Cactus was confusingly described as 24 hours in the life of a motel room, when it is clearly set over a far longer period.
Contestability of the Image: Postmodernist Appropriation and Intellectual Property Rights

by James Cooper

The common law tradition in intellectual property has focused on the protection of the economic interests of the creators of original works of art. The common law has developed a range of rules governing the ownership and use of images including the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth), The Trade Marks Act 1995 (Cth), and the tort of Passing-Off. The development of these rules rests on fundamental modernist concepts of authorship and originality.

Postmodernism contests the appropriation of images into conventional property relations. Postmodernist discourse rejects the privileging of the 'creative author-artist' as the legal subject on whom rights are bestowed. Rather, postmodernism analyzes meaning and value from context—the work's interplay of social, cultural and political representations and references. The painting or artwork is a mere sign taking meaning from the interpretations of the viewers, who are the 'originators' of meaning. For the postmodernist artist, creativity is the re-articulation of images through recontextualizing the image. Commonly, parody and satire are used to undercut the authority of prior discourses embedded in the image.

The purpose of this article is to consider the law of copyright in the light of postmodernist discourses on culture and, in particular, the extent that the law of copyright limits and restricts the use of parody in postmodernist art.

Defining Postmodernism

The term “postmodern” has become a label for a wide range of contemporary intellectual and artistic movements, and it would be a mistake to seek a single essential meaning.

Postmodernism reflects a noticeable shift in sensibility, practices and discourse formations which distinguishes a post-modern set of assumptions, experiences and propositions from that of a preceding period. Postmodernism is marked by an increasing denunciation of abstract reason and a rejection of any projects for human emancipation based on science, technology and reason (“grand narratives”). The concept of objective knowledge of the real world, “univocal” meanings of words and texts, any certitude in a unified “self”, is denied. Postmodernists embrace ephemerality, fragmentation, discontinuity, and the chaotic. Condemning meta-narratives as ‘totalizing’, they insist upon a plurality of power-discourse formations (Foucault), or of ‘language games’ (Lyotard).

The postmodernist challenge to the stability of meaning, if taken seriously, has profound implications for art and the legal protection afforded the “artist”. The Deconstructionist movement (initiated by Derrida in the late '60s) argued that the relationship between “the signified”, or message, and the “signifier”, or medium, is continually breaking apart and re-attaching in new combinations. That is, the production of meaning is through the structure of language and its protocols, which are always in a state of flux. For Derrida: Writers who create texts or use words do so on the basis of all other texts and words they have encountered, while readers deal with them the same way. Cultural life is then viewed as a series of texts intersecting with other texts […] this intertextual weaving has a life of its own […] Recognizing that, the deconstructionist impulse is to look inside one text for another, dissolve one text into another, or build one text on another.

On this basis, representation in any form cannot pro-claim any objective, universal truth. Any truth claim can only be constructed within the system of representation itself and only obtains meaning through its context.

Postmodernism queries not only the appropriation of images under copyright and the privileging of the author-artist-composer, but the whole question of the validity of law as a modernist “master narrative” on justice.

What is required is nothing less than the decen-tering of the disciplinary subject and hence the ‘deconstruction’ of precisely the form of disciplinary thinking that repeatedly situates the conscious individual legal thinker as the privileged adjudicator of the truth of propositional content and as the independent wielder of instrumental power.
Postmodern Art

For postmodernist artists, the form of representation becomes the benchmark of reality; there is an acceptance of the loss of 'reality' and an emphasis on decoding the protocols of the medium. The effect of the cultural construction (enculturation) of meaning is that the icons and images of popular culture become the most proximate referents of reality—and therefore a major place of dispute between postmodern artists and those claiming 'ownership of the image' (with apologies to Edelman). Postmodernist artists emphasize the heteroglossia and fragmentation of cultural forms through techniques such as parody, irony and pastiche, and the use of collage and montage, and a preoccupation with participation, performance and happening (the signifier), rather than the finished object (the sign).  

Postmodernism also calls into question the postmodernist cult of the 'creative individual' as the originator of artwork who is the privileged legal subject in copyright law. Postmodernism argues that meaning is intertextual and both producers and consumers of cultural texts participate in the production of meaning. Postmodernism displaces both the concept of the 'artist' and the very understanding of the 'self'. If the 'self' is a construction of social discourse, then the 'rational man' of modernism and the 'alienated worker' of Marxist theory is replaced by the schizophrenic (Lacan's description is one of linguistic disorders resulting from a rubble of distinct and unrelated signifiers) of postmodernist thought. This 'centred' subject is free to locate and change its identity and recognize the intertextuality of the 'self'. For an artist, he/she is free to adopt multiple representations of genres, styles and even the self.

Copyright and Parody

Parody presents unique problems to the law of copyright, but, despite this, there is no special status accorded parody or any definition within the Copyright Act 1968 (Cth) ("The Act"). The question of infringement of copyright is treated in the same way as any other infringement.

Edelman defines parody as:

A creation based on a creation: it creates from what is already created. Hence, its ambiguity. On the one hand it has to be distinct and distinguishable from the work being parodied, while borrowing its characters. On the other hand, so as not to run foul of the legal obligations of 'respect', it cannot falsify the work being parodied.

Parody is defined in the Oxford English Dictionary as a composition, prose or verse in which an author's characteristic turns of thought and phrase are imitated and made to appear ridiculous, especially by applying them to ludicrously inappropriate subjects. Arguing from a moral rights perspective, Hemingway, Voltaire, Cervantes and Swift were all applying them to ludicrously inappropriate subjects. Their characteristic turns of thought and phrase are imitating and making to appear ridiculous, especially by parodists. The substantiality test is problematic for postmodernist art forms. Edelman's ironic definition (supra) reflects the problem that parody is by nature derivative and must borrow closely from the original as to suggest the original to the mind of every person seeing it. In this case, a rough copy of the plaintiff's painting of 'Psyche' appearing in an advertisement was held to be an infringement. The copy of a part of a photo or painting may also be an infringement. Thus, where a man used the plaintiff's photograph of the Prince of Wales by cutting out the head and replacing his wife's head on a drawing, the court held there was a breach of copyright. In Bauman v Fussell the defendant painted a picture based on a photograph taken by the plaintiff of two cocks fighting. As the relative positions of the cocks was not arranged by the plaintiff, it was held not to infringe because the positioning was of less significance in determining whether the defendant had taken a substantial part of the work.

The substantiality test is problematic for postmodernist art forms. Edelman's ironic definition (supra) reflects the problem that parody is by nature derivative and must borrow closely from the original to be effective. The question of infringement resting solely on the issue of whether the work contains a substantial reproduction of the plaintiff's work must usually be answered in the affirmative.

Whilst the court has focused on the issue of substantiality, the issue of the originality of the parody may still determine the issue of infringement. Originality is central to the copyright law for the grant of protection under the Act. If an artistic work reflects the skill and effort of the artist, such that the parody is a sufficient reworking of the original, then it may have its own copyright. In Kristarts SA v Briarfine Ltd (1977) FSR 557, the court examined the painting to determine the features in which copyright subsisted, the choice of viewpoint, the exact balance of foreground and background features, the figures introduced [...] it is the choice of this character that the person producing the work makes his original contribution.

Parody and Moral Rights

Besides the threat to postmodernist parody from the protection of the economic interests under the Act, the introduction of 'moral rights' may further erode the use of parody. In Schott Musik International GMBH v Colossal Records of Australia Pty Ltd (supra), the opening shots were fired in the use of moral rights to prevent the debasement of a work. In this case, the court had to decide whether a techno dance music adaptation of Carl Orff's chorus from the "Carmina Burana" debased the work. (S 55(2) removes the statutory licensing scheme for recordings if the adaptation debases the work). Whilst Australia is yet to enact the "moral rights" provisions of the Berne Convention, the case highlights their possible use to limit parody.

The proposed scheme would involve an amendment to the Act to accord relevant copyright holders the right of attribution and, more controversially, the right of integrity. According to the discussion paper (supra) the right of integrity would include the right to object to any material alteration, distortion or other derogatory treatment of a work. The right would be limited by requiring action taken pre judgmentally to affect the author's honour and reputation. However, according to the discussion paper (supra), the possible use of moral rights must be limited by requiring action taken pre-judgmentally to affect the author's honour and reputation. However, according to the discussion paper (supra), the possible use of moral rights must be limited by requiring action taken pre-judgmentally to affect the author's honour and reputation.

By comparison with Anglo-Australian copyright, the USA has recognized the role of parody within the 'fair use' exceptions in the U.S. Copyright Act. The American courts consider the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyright work in determining fair use. Unless the parody usurps demand for the original, or there is an "unreasonable" taking from the original, there is no infringement. The function of fair use is to prevent the stifling of creativity.

In the recent case Campbell v Acuff-Rose Music Inc. (U.S. Supreme Court, 7 March 1994, internet copy annexed), the Supreme Court found in favour of the rapper group 2 Live Crew in relation to its...
Critics and viewers have been far kinder to Peter Weir's latest film than they were to his unjustly
maligned Show. It is likely be one of 1998's best-remembered films, and is already promising to be an Oscar-
worthy release. The Truman Show is a media-savvy fantasy about Truman Burbank (Jim Carrey),
that he is trapped inside a soap opera in which he was, literally, born and raised. "The Truman Show"
producer Christof (Ed Harris), who has created a massive environment in which actors and conceals
the truth from Truman. From beneath a dome, Christof and his crew control every aspect of Truman's
world. The film has been applauded for its wry critique of how television has deformed modern society's perspective.
rites-of-passage stories is no less central to The Truman Show than it is in his other works. Peter Weir
dismissed Fearless (1993). The Truman contender. Heralded by an innovative a 29-year-old who comes to realize is the money-raking creation of ed cameras conspire to keep the life. The film understandably e of reality. Weir’s interest in eir speaks to Paul Kalina.

WHAT IS YOUR RESPONSE TO THE FILM’S RECEPTION IN THE USA?
Delighted and relieved, Jim Carrey is so well-known for his broad comedy, there was a feeling we might be like the drunk and fall between the two bar stools.

GIVEN THAT THE RÔLE IS VASTLY DIFFERENT TO WHAT JIM CARREY HAS DONE IN THE PAST, WHAT DID YOU SEE HIM BRINGING TO IT?
There’s something alien about him, something strange, and that was a quality the character had to have. It wasn’t just a case of taking a good actor and putting him in the rôle. There had never been a character like Truman Burbank.

GIVEN CARREY’S ASSOCIATION WITH MADCAP ROLES, DID YOU AT ANY STAGE SEE THE POSSIBILITY OF A PROBLEM, OR HAD HE AGREED EARLY ON TO YOUR VISION OF THE RÔLE?
Of course, we had to have an accord, and that first meeting was critical. I wouldn’t have accepted the film without that having gone well; and I’m sure that was true on his side. I had a very open mind about how he should be, because I was still thinking and coming up with ideas about what it would have been like to be born and live under these circumstances for 29 years.

One of the first things I thought was that those around him are all actors. They would have leaned in close to him, beaming away, because they would know they are on camera when they are close to him. Plus, if he liked you, you would maybe get a long-running part. Then I began to think about other aspects of what that life might be like.

At the end of the movie when he is told the full truth about his circumstances, there needed to be a reaction from the character which was, “Oh, so that’s what it was.” Unconsciously, all his life, it would have seemed that there was something, and he never knew what it was. That something caused him to be a performer. It’s as if there was a will from those around him to be entertaining, to be funny, to be “on”, which is not dissimilar to Jim’s own story in a way. He was the entertainer of the family. That’s true of many theatrical people.

TRUMAN NEEDED TO BE INNOCENT OF THE LIE.
He was also a really strange person. I think if he’d have stayed on in that town, if he hadn’t come across the truth, he would have gone completely crazy. He was kind of an adolescent really. His development was arrested. That was part of his strange-ness and also part of his appeal to the audience. It was, in a curious way, a rites-of-passage movie.

TRUMAN BURBANK
Jim Carrey.
The Truman Show

Many of the USA reviewers tended to see the film less as a rites-of-passage journey than as a cautionary tale of the global media. Does the film have that specific intent about the media, or are the USA critics reading into it what they will?
One of the appeals of the script was its many plains and levels, and that’s one of them. I don’t think it’s necessarily the most interesting, but it’s there. It’s true that the American media concentrated on that, to the extent that sometimes I felt uncomfortable because it seemed as if, in the view of many, I was a self-appointed critic of television – headlines saying, “Weir against television”.

But they’re very concerned there, as are many people in the world, about the kinds of programmes... And it’s not just the content. It’s the loss, for many, of a sense of reality and the fact of children being exposed to so much television.

DO YOU SEE THE FILM AS MODERN-DAY BRAVE NEW WORLD?
I think you can look at it that way. World domination by giant corpora- tions with which the people are complicit. The walls of the prison are built by the very inmates.

BRAVE NEW WORLD ENDS WITH THE PROTAGONIST EXPECTING TO BE EXPELLED FOR HIS REBELLION, BUT THEN FINDS HIMSELF DISPATCHED TO UTOPIA.
And in this case, it’s a Utopia that the producer has constructed. I think that Christof [Ed Harris] is such an interesting character, he is a kind of artist. He sees himself as a great teacher, doing something very worthwhile.

There was a decision early on in talking to Ed that he would not be crazy, insane – in the legal definition. He is certainly a fanatic, but, on the other hand, while making billions of dollars he was doing something that he thought was beneficial to the world and was demonstrating a way to live. That’s what makes him truly sinister.

IS CHRISTOF BASED ON ANY ACTUAL PRODUCER OR FILMMAKER?
Not specifically. In my research I was interested in the couturiers, who are kind of quasi-artists: Armani, Karl Lagerfeld, Versace, who was alive when I was working on it. They generally dress in black, they have enormous influence on the world, and a very particular self-view, as if they were great artists and designers of more than just clothing. And the way they’re dealt with by the press. Their “vision” is implied each time they come out with a new line.

AT WHAT STAGE WAS ED HARRIS CAST IN THAT RÔLE?
At the last minute. Somebody else was cast and it just didn’t work out. I was deep into the film, in fact I was days away from shooting those scenes which were at the end of the schedule.
I think that involvement with the director did get a lot of the key people thinking. The campaign was masterful and, in a country which is very literal, fantasy, unless it’s of the most obvious kind, is not common in their movies. They like to have things very clear, and so this film was in jeopardy of being nothing more than a curiosity piece in the midst of conventional summer fare.

How did you work with Andrew Niccol on the script?
It was a long process. We started in November 1995 in LA and 10 drafts later we were finished. I re-worked the tone of the film. Everything changed really, other than the concept and the characters. We took it apart and rebuilt it.

That led eventually to Seaside, to a pristine community created in the style of the last century. Given that it was set in the near future, this would be the way people would like to live, almost like a holiday brochure really, an ideal island somewhere. And everything was for sale, everything from clothing to furniture to the houses themselves could be purchased in the mail order catalogue. That was the way we went.

There was an immense amount of detail. And we had a lot of fun. Andrew’s a New Zealander. I don’t know if that helped; I’m sure it did in the sense of humour that we shared. In the meantime, he wrote and directed Gottisco (1998), his first feature. I was anxious about the script—generator to a film with a complex character like that with only a few days, but sometimes there’s a benefit in not having too much time to think, reacting intuitively to a part.

He had a lot to work with because I could show him the programme [“The Truman Show”, the TV serial Christof masterminds]. And I had a very detailed backstory. I wrote up quite an involved piece about how the show was put together, and that concentrated on Christof.

Scott Murray has suggested that he could be the X Files’ Chris Carter. [Laughs.] I wonder what Chris Carter would think of that.

What of the other characters and actors?
With the cast of those close around to Truman—Laura Linney as his wife, Meryl, and Noah Emmerich as his best friend, Marlon—to keep the schizophrenia alive I would talk to them off the set as if they were in their actor persona. I would call them by their names. She was Hannah Gill, playing the part of Meryl Burbank, and Lewis Coltrane who was playing Marlon, everyone being named after an actor. I would talk to Meryl Burbank (Laura Linney), The Truman Show.

There was a long period of preparation, which wasn’t only spent working on the script with Andrew. I was always writing about the show for my own use, collecting material about the show. I even went so far as to make up swap cards that I thought could be in cereal packs and so on. They were called Truman trivia and on the back were details about an extra who’d been on the show, or the first person who’d died on the show and other arcane knowledge.

During all that time I was thinking this is going to be a difficult sell. Directors today have to be involved in the marketing. It has become so critical, unfortunately, and I began to think of marketing ideas and asked to meet the marketing department of Paramount before pre-production had even begun. They were astonished, and in a way interested, that I wanted to meet with them all.

Some 30 people came to the meeting—from television advertising, the internet department, the poster people, and I gave them Truman trivia cards. I told them, “I think you should sell this whole thing as if the show does exist.” None of that really happened, and they didn’t sell it that way, but I think the fact that I was there that early, whereas [directors] don’t normally come on until the film is made, worked. They came to see me on location and one of them said, “I know the guy who’s got the only computer programme to make up a face out of a myriad of other photographs.” That became the poster.

I think that involvement with the director did get a lot of the key people thinking. The campaign was masterful and, in a country which is very literal, fantasy, unless it’s of the most obvious kind, is not common in their movies. They like to have things very clear, and so this film was in jeopardy of being nothing more than a curiosity piece in the midst of conventional summer fare.
leave the studio. Every draft prior to that, including the one that they'd given the go-ahead on, had sequences outside the studio. At the end of the film, there was a neat tying-up of every aspect of it: you saw the villain, as it were, punished, and you saw Truman with his girlfriend. It had all kinds of stuff going on for ten minutes afterwards. I decided in that [last] draft that he shouldn't leave the studio, that it was interesting to walk into darkness, and for us to wonder what happened to him.

What they were concerned about was budget. It was one of those films that was like a horse that wanted to bolt. They knew that, I knew that, everybody did. It was potentially a money-eater at many levels, so they pegged the budget off, initially, around $50 million. It finally just couldn't be held at that and went to the low $60 millions, which wasn't a bad price given that Jim had cut his fee, the opticals and the difficulty of filming in that town.

I took the town of Seaside, which was a wonderful discovery and the only candidate for the town - that's one of the regulations of the council - and a lot are white. When the weather is good, there is very little atmosphere. It's very clear; it's almost like the sharp definition you get on a mountain top on a sunny day. Remarkable. That was wonderful for the look of the film, but caused a lot of problems for Peter photographing it. There was so much bounce. But, nevertheless, that was embraced. He just had to build the light up on the actors and use a lot of silks. We knew it was the look of the film - this squeaky-clean look of a commercial, everything idealized, a kind of toy-town - which was what David Thompson reacted to. It was such a sinister premise really, this convention of liars and the exploitation of a child, which is really where it began.

Firstly, most of the buildings are pastel - that's one of the regulations of the council - and a lot are white. When the weather is good, there is very little atmosphere. It's very clear; it's almost like the sharp definition you get on a mountain top on a sunny day. Remarkable. That was wonderful for the look of the film, but caused a lot of problems for Peter photographing it. There was so much bounce. But, nevertheless, that was embraced. He just had to build the light up on the actors and use a lot of silks. We knew it was the look of the film - this squeaky-clean look of a commercial, everything idealized, a kind of toy-town - which was what David Thompson reacted to. It was such a sinister premise really, this convention of liars and the exploitation of a child, which is really where it began.

Because the story involved the control of the weather, you couldn't take advantage of serendipity. One morning there was a brilliant fog there, but I couldn't see a reason to write it into the script. So we had to wait for the fog to clear. It was basically meant to be very sunny.

David Thompson's review of the film talked a lot about the lighting, describing it as a light-drenched film noir. How did you and DOP Peter Biziou create that look? Firstly, most of the buildings are pastel - that's one of the regulations of the council - and a lot are white. When the weather is good, there is very little atmosphere. It's very clear; it's almost like the sharp definition you get on a mountain top on a sunny day. Remarkable. That was wonderful for the look of the film, but caused a lot of problems for Peter photographing it. There was so much bounce. But, nevertheless, that was embraced. He just had to build the light up on the actors and use a lot of silks. We knew it was the look of the film - this squeaky-clean look of a commercial, everything idealized, a kind of toy-town - which was what David Thompson reacted to. It was such a sinister premise really, this convention of liars and the exploitation of a child, which is really where it began.

There are some obvious things we don't get to see in the course of watching Truman 24 hours a day. What were the criteria of what's included and excluded from view? No camera in the toilet [laughs]. That was Christof. I had to be Christof a lot. It was a very schizophrenic experience, he says laughingly, because I would be the director of the movie but I was also the director of the television show, which was all part of building up the logic of the piece of how it was put together. It had to work internally as a piece, which is true of any fantasy. It may be another world, but that world has to have its laws. Often I'd find myself switching to Christof.

So it was Christof who didn't want a camera in the toilet.

In fact, in the interview sequence we shot a lot more than you see, and some of that stuff was very funny, really. Christof was very proud that he'd not put a camera in the toilet. We constructed rules about where the cameras were and what they were shooting.

And then there's the sex life of Truman. I had to find ways of covering these things quickly and economically, so I had a couple of the carpark attendants talking about the fact that you never see anything when they go to
bed together; the camera always pans off. I thought that’s because they’re teasing them, which probably gave it an erotic content because he had such a broad audience.

**There is a woman in the USA who has a camera in her apartment watching her every moment.**

JennyCam. We tried to contact her, without revealing who we were, from the cutting-room. They [the editing assistants] introduced me to the website. I was astonished. You can’t think of anything that isn’t going to happen. But she likes it, can you imagine? She just thinks it’s wonderful. She plans to do it until she dies.

**I’ve never actually visited the site.** It’s incredibly boring, but there’s something interesting for their talent and fresh voice alone, but they give a quick reflection of their society. If they have the potential for a long career, after a certain number of films they become the country.

I love that saying that a film is its own country. When filmmakers begin their careers, they’re very teasing them, which probably gave it an erotic content because he had such a broad audience.

Andrew Urban’s review of the film calls it a very good parable of the Christian Church, with Christof as the Christ figure. Do you care to comment?

The film picked up metaphors as it went along. I was surprised as we began to put it together how it was relaying other meanings. I was rather more drawn to Greek legend. Christof is Zeus, in the sense that he’s trying to control the mortals.

In my reading, as I recall, the one thing Zeus could not do is interfere with fate. He could do other God-like things, including controlling the weather, but he cannot, as Christof/Zeus does, begin to interfere with the decisions his creature has taken, which is to leave. So Christof/Zeus crosses a line at the end and is punished for it.

There are all sorts of other understandings. Somebody gave me a secret of his world before now? And he answers, “We accept the reality with which we’re presented.” That was a very concise way of stating the theme of the film for me, and the implication that it has for any society with which you have been presented.

It’s certainly true to me of the late 20th century, where we seem to be accepting of many things that are intolerable and a distortion of what I think of as reality. Quite a few American journalists said to me, “This is a very bizarre story.” I don’t think so”, I’d say. “The times we’re living through are bizarre. The story is simply reflecting that.”

The key elements involved in the story are as old as stories themselves: the search for truth; a love story that’s part of the search for meaning; the overcoming of odds, of a conspiracy; a flight while pursued by forces of darkness. These are old things, plus the journey to yourself, the rite-of-passage. But, really, the context of the story is the times we’re in.

**Maybe that’s why the film needed to be written and directed by non-Americans.** It’s a funny thought, isn’t it?

**What was your response to the unfairly panned Fearless?**

I love that saying that a film is its own country. When filmmakers begin their careers, they’re very interesting for their talent and fresh voice alone, but they give a quick reflection of their society. If they have the potential for a long career, after a certain number of films they become the country.
Avid Media Illusion is the most advanced digital nonlinear compositing solution for creating both subtle and amazing effects. Media Illusion seamlessly merges paint, compositing, image manipulation and special effects into one artistic domain, allowing you to transform ideas into reality and making it a powerful companion to Avid's editing systems. Now you can conform your Media Composer sequences in the Media Illusion system using a familiar Avid timeline and the powerful Composition Link feature.

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Our years back, the ABC bought the entire Rank feature film library, some 500 titles. The prize, of course, was the Dirk Bogarde years, when Rank and British filmmaking was shown and recognized worldwide.

Serving those up one more time is not particularly newsworthy. However, in scooping up the prime material, the ABC acquired titles from the '20s to the '80s, with nearly half of these from the pre-1950 period.

Simultaneously, a few oddities surfaced on the commercial channels: Paul Robeson in *King Solomon's Mines* (Robert Stevenson, 1937); Lucile Manheim aiding the war effort; George Formby keeping 'em flying. Some old viewing copies from British International also had enthusiast screenings.

Most of the pre-World War II English material was not seen here, or indeed in its country of origin, for more than half a century. It was known only to nostalgic Anglophiles in their pension years. The London National Film Theatre had programmed for decades on the principle that its audience was not going to turn out for British films, though, when vintage material was finally printed up, it drew 80 percent attendance figures in Barbican Centre screenings.

All this was an insight into a National Cinema (and a number of other areas) unprecedented since the first years of Australian television when the networks bought the Hollywood packages, days you could turn on now-lost black-and-white Fredric March and Lee Tracy five nights out of seven.

To put this in perspective, serious enthusiasts are still talking about Henri Langlois' 1960s Paris retrospective of 200 Japanese films. Before it stopped screenings, the largest season yet undertaken by the Sydney Quay Cinémathèque was 20 sombre New Zealand features.

It's easy to suggest that a collection of this nature is not the preselected material you would hope to find in a film museum season. It is accumulated rather than compiled — on the Everest...
TREASURES

PLAY AUSTRALIA UNEELED TO LITTLE FANFARE.

IL FOR A ONCE-ONLY OPPORTUNITY TO VIEW THE

INTO SCORES OF UNLOVED FILMS OF THE 1930S.

principle. We can see these because they are there.

This proves as much a strength as a weakness.

After viewing several hundred, in years of eye-red­
dening, past-midnight sessions, suspicions have
been confirmed and assumptions confounded.

Who remembered that Charters and Caldicott sur­
faced in Sidney Gilliat’s work before they were
played by Basil Radford and Naunton Wayne?

How about the character advising that trans-
Atlantic ‘phone calls are seventy-five 1938 pounds
a minute, or the airliner in Robert Stevenson’s
would-be realistic Non Stop New York (1937) with
sleeper cabins and an observation platform?

One surprise is that frequently it is the earliest
material that has the best-quality signal. The black-
and-white films of the ’30s are often pin-sharp and
striking in their tonal range (even if there are a few
white mould spores in there), leaving the scary
thought that the tapes must have been struck off
the camera negatives.

Many of the later, more-marketable films look
as if they were made from indifferent 16mm
prints, and T. Hayes Hunter’s 1933 The Ghoul is
still derived from that murky negative Bill Everson
squeezed out of the East European archive 25
years back, blown up to get rid of Czech sub-titles.

Indeed, the copies made from preservation
materials are notably dupier, signalling the titles
that were considered worth saving, while the
remainder were left to rot. This raises some inter-
esting questions: Who thought Hindle Wakes
(Maurice Elvey, 1918) and The Man from Toronto
(Sinclair Hill, 1933) were the pick of this lot? Do
the original negatives still exist? If they are
doomed to decomposition anyway on the nitrate
that won’t wait, why not make these first-rate
video copies of them while the chance remains?

The mother lode in this library is the Gaumont
British-Gainsborough collection. The French giant
had subsidiaries around the globe and its English
1930s production has passed into the batch via the
usual string of mergers. Attention, of course,
focuses on the uncovered works of celebrity direc-
tors. The Hitchcocks are familiar, but there are
three rarely-seen films by Michael Powell.
Powell appears to have headed up the Gaumont British film unit. The 1933 _The Fire Raisers_ was his twelfth movie. Hopes rise as the credits list later collaborators, star Leslie Banks, designer Alfred Junge and editor Derek Twist, and the opening scene. With insurance adjuster Banks ignoring the fire officers and entering the blazing docks building to find the incriminating ledger, is spectacular. However, this seems to have swallowed the budget and, despite considerable ingenuity on Junge’s part and a nice turn by villainous Francis L. Sullivan calling his henchman “dago” and questioning Banks’ loyalty to Korda.

There’s more of the same in Asquith’s 1942 _Uncensored_, with Eric Portman’s jealous brother, Peter Glenville, selling out the patriots. Just as well his 1941 _Cottage to Let_ gets another airing. A good cast — Banks, Alastair Sim, John Mills, 14-year-old George Cole — do sub-Hitchcock with Nazis at the Garden Fête, intricate camera moves and death in a distorting mirror. This one at least entertains.

However, before we write-off lesser Asquith, have a look at _Brown on Resolution! Forever England! Born for Glory_ of 1935, credited to the industrious Walter Forde but described in star John Mills’ autobiography as having location material by Asquith.

The framing story has officer Barry McKay pairing with working-class Betty Balfour pre-World War I (“In the service, they’re a bit fussy about a fellow getting married until he’s got his half stripe at least”; “Marrying above you is as bad as marrying below you”). She ends raising young Mills, in a phony three-wall set, till he too goes off to sea. He gets into a boxing match with some awfully nice Kraut sailors, and then the film’s quality really disturbing.

You can see the Powell of _Edge of the World_ (1937) and _I Know Where I’m Going_ (1945) in this one, but hopes fade as the atmosphere and suspense are traded off for easy laughs and a plot cobbled together from _The Ghost Train_ (Walter Forde, 1931) and _Jamaica Inn_ (Alfred Hitchcock, 1939), none too ingeniously. It’s easy to understand why Powell went independent and shifted his loyalty to Korda.

**Asquith**

Anthony Asquith also takes a pounding. His forgotten, 1933 _Lucky Number_ turns up, with Clifford Mollinson as a disgraced soccer player wandering penniless through a nocturnal, Germanic fun fair and unexpectedly bursting into the “Close Your Eyes and Wish For Happiness” song, mixing the plots of _Le Million_ (René Clair, 1931) and _Pennies from Heaven_ (Norman McLenn, 1936) alarmingly.

1939’s _Freedom Radio_, one of Asquith’s early collaborations with Anatole de Grunwald, here as co-writer, is a super creaky propaganda piece. Ladylike Diana Wynyard is a star in Nazi-controlled Norway, finally realizing the error of her ways and taking the clandestine station microphone from the fingers of dying doctor-husband Clive Brook. It has one of the best collections of ripe dialogue in the cinema: “They’re taking my granny to the police station”; “That was Wolfgang. They invade Poland on Friday”; “They like giving orders. They like taking orders. I know the German mentality.”

Just as well his 1941 _Cottage to Let_ gets another airing. A good cast — Banks, Alastair Sim, John Mills, 14-year-old George Cole — do sub-Hitchcock with Nazis at the Garden Fête, intricate camera moves and death in a distorting mirror. This one at least entertains.

However, before we write-off lesser Asquith, have a look at _Brown on Resolution! Forever England! Born for Glory_ of 1935, credited to the industrious Walter Forde but described in star John Mills’ autobiography as having location material by Asquith.

The framing story has officer Barry McKay pairing with working-class Betty Balfour pre-World War I (“In the service, they’re a bit fussy about a fellow getting married until he’s got his half stripe at least”; “Marrying above you is as bad as marrying below you”). She ends raising young Mills, in a phony three-wall set, till he too goes off to sea. He gets into a boxing match with some awfully nice Kraut sailors, and then the film’s quality really disturbing.

You can see the Powell of _Edge of the World_ (1937) and _I Know Where I’m Going_ (1945) in this one, but hopes fade as the atmosphere and suspense are traded off for easy laughs and a plot cobbled together from _The Ghost Train_ (Walter Forde, 1931) and _Jamaica Inn_ (Alfred Hitchcock, 1939), none too ingeniously. It’s easy to understand why Powell went independent and shifted his loyalty to Korda.
scenes of Mills holding off the shore party, sent to stop his sniping, instantly evoke the 'Tell England' landings. A shell bursts right next to him - on the side where he has now gone deaf, I notice.

This is the first of Mills' squadron of naval heroes, if you discount him squiring Jessie Matthews through Albert de Courville's 1932 "The Midship Maid.

Minimizing the graphic ending of C. Forrester's story, and the appealing treatment given a young, singing Howard Marion Crawford as a nice and therefore doomed German, show a sensibility closer to Asquith.

"Once admired, it still has interest and, of course, Major Strasser - he was a dominating figure of the European and USA silent film, and moved into German talkies with his impact only enhanced by a smooth vocal delivery. Veidt quit Nazi Germany, which attempted to retain him on a return visit that had Gaumont British rushing in its own doctor to guarantee the authorities of his fitness to travel. He became the company's big international star, though as late as 1932 he was still unable to speak the language, despite appearing regularly in the English versions of polygot European films, learning his dialogue parrot-fashion and still appearing more authoritative than the British stage-trained players around him. Veidt's rôle in the European gay scene should have preserved his icon status, but he even dipped out there - his spot going to John Wayne! Robert Milton's 1934 "Belladonna" was still officially lost, but five rare titles showed up. We can, at last, observe what the British cinema made of this heavyweight contender. There is comic-turned-director Walter Forde's 1932 "Rome Express." I remember studio head Michael Balcon apologizing on British television when he had to follow that one, despite a cast that included most of the celebrity character players on the payroll - Cedric Hardwicke, Donald Calthrop, Frank Vosper and Finlay Currie included.

Balcon could have thrown in Victor Saville's 1933 "Was a Spy," a halting espionage melo with a couple of eruptions into big sets and hordes of extras, with Veidt heading up the Huns, while Madeleine Carroll does Mlle Docteur.

A year later we get to Lothar Mendes' long-missing "Jew Suss" (1934), whose programming drew protests from local Jewish commentators. They had forgotten that, before the Nazi version, the Leon Fuchtwangler story of persecution had received this more accurate treatment. Even in cramped studio space, designer Junge builds a striking Wurtemberg: the black scorched marks above extinct braziers, the contrast of Veidt/Suss' tasteful home and Duke Vosper's opulent court with its secret panel and orgy rooms. A great-looking film, it does give Veidt a chance to create an imposing, conflicted character, though finally it is too grim and theatrical.

Also surfacing was the 1934 "Passing of the 3rd Floor Back," the then-celebrated stageplay in a version directed by once-esteemed Austrian "psychological" director, Berthold Viertel, who worked in Hollywood and was husband of Salka Viertel, writer on Garbo movies. Here Conrad shows up as a returned Christ, no less, losing his battle with Frank Cellier's corrupting property tycoon, with the set piece of the guest house boarders going on the Margate expedition where the camera passes over their boat as it reaches Tower Bridge. This is an ambitious venture, though also archaic and stagy. Trying again, Gaumont proffered Veidt in Forde's 1936 "King of the Damned," set in one of those tropical hell holes where sirens wake the convicts to do road work and feed the dead to the sharks as a hygiene measure. Conrad in his white suit becomes their leader after the rebellion and (anticipating "Bridge over the River Kwai," intriguingly) has them working more productively than the brutal guards. Despite its action set-piece revolt and pretensions, this is a simple-minded adventure yarn.

The studio had turned one of the most charismatic of all the cinema's performers into a bewildered mannequin. Korda would do better, but Veidt was never to regain his earlier screen authority and would sink to basher flicks.

"Lang"

Also a celebrity performer, Mathe son Lang is now forgotten. One of the few British stage notables.
Hal Hartley’s films are often inaccessible to many viewers because of his approach to storytelling. *Henry Fool* is the exception. It is more ambitious and less restrained than his previous work—"an epic", a visionary statement of impressive proportions.

Hartley says he has been thinking about Henry Fool (played in the film by Thomas Jay Ryan) for some time:

I had the name as early as 1981 in film school. He just hung around for 15 years, waiting for a place to manifest himself. After reading Samuel Beckett, I asked myself, "What would happen if the most important person in town is also the most depraved and dangerous?"

This character just pushes its way up to the foreground. I don’t know where this comes from.

So, the standard question of ‘influences’ arises. Hartley refers to Faust, James Joyce, Jean-Luc Godard, the Bible, Andy Warhol, Kaspar Hauser, David Byrne and Beckett. Hartley refers to Henry Fool’s life apprentice, Simon Grim (played by James Urbank):

Simon doesn’t talk because he sees things too clearly. He’s struck dumb. God says to Moses, ‘I’ll show you my presence, but you have to get in this crack in the mountain because, if you get too close, you’ll get wiped out.’ He comes down and can’t talk for a while. So what about Henry and Simon’s relationship?

I wanted the devil to be brought back into the American myth. The devil is an important part of our Christian tradition. He’s there for a reason.

When confronted with Henry, Simon sees reality. Other people would see a vision of hell. In reality, Simon can see reality all the time, but he doesn’t have eloquence. That’s what Henry gives him—eloquence.

So why this film now? I didn’t want to be just a craftsman when it comes to filmmaking. I wanted to pit my skills and intuition against the unknown. In some ways, Henry is such a push.

David Byrne, early in his career, once said he suspected the Talking Heads would develop a strong but small following that would slowly spread out. He thought that was great. I do what I have to do and trust the audience will come to see it. They may not come on the same day.

And yet, besides the intellectual depths to which this film rises, it also lowers itself to the scatological depths which many viewers believe Hartley has previously shied away from: vomiting, beatings, diarrhoea and sex. Perhaps his Catholicism has prevented such explicitness in previous works. Hartley disagrees.
I got the shot of her reaching ecstasy.
I have Tom reaching ecstasy.
How about the middle section?
Thomas Jay Ryan, who has been waiting to get a word in edgewise during my interview with Hartley, leaps in:
Hartley was so embarrassed. He couldn’t even look at us practically. It was so endearing. Nobody was comfortable. In fact, Parker summed it up when she yelled across the room, “Only for you, Hartley!”
The faithful followers of Hartley’s work know that he tends to use the same actors, and yet in this film he introduces us to his new lead actor. So how did they come together? Ryan:

Hartley came to see a god-awful production of *Othello* I was doing. The following week I got a phone call. Hartley said, “There may be a part for you in my next movie. Can I send you the script?” I remember hoping that I had lines. Maybe a waiter, or somebody who delivers flowers. Then *Henry Fool* arrives in the mail with a note saying, “You play the lead.”

Working with Hartley was liberating. For me, the great joy of acting is entering into an imagination that you trust, that’s larger than your own.
Images on a Wall

Acclaimed Australian scriptwriter and playwright Louis Nowra talks about birthplaces, cultural heritages, wayward directors and cinematic passions. By Margaret Smith

Were you born in Australia?

Yes, I was born in Melbourne. I grew up in Fawkner, a Housing Commission estate near Broadmeadows.

Was your family Anglo or European?

My family are Australian. The Housing Commission estate was regarded as one of the great failures of the Victorian government at the time. It was just popped down in paddocks in the middle of nowhere.

From an early age, did see that there was a class structure in Australian society?

At that time in Melbourne, if you had a bog Irish background - we were Catholic - you found it much more difficult to get on. Melbourne was run by Protestants and to be considered bog Irish was to realize where you were in the scheme of things. My father was a truck driver.

When did you start writing?

I know exactly when I started writing because, during the Vietnam War demonstrations, I was in a street theatre group and I was the only one who could type. Just as secretaries think “I could do better”, I started to change the plays I had to type. Then I started to write. I didn’t want to be a writer; I wanted to be an actor.

How long did it take before you were actually a writer?

It came about because I had a play on at La Mama, a one-act play, in 1973 or ’74. I remember leaving the play – I didn’t go to the opening night party – and thinking, “I’ve written the worst play ever; I’ll have to write something better.”

Did you realize that there was a class structure in Australian society when you were young?

I adored Walkabout because it hardly had any words. You see, I’ve never been a film writer who has particularly liked words.

Peter Weir once suggested that the treatment is often a truer vision of the film than the script because it’s about images rather than dialogue. Do you write treatments?

No, I don’t, because perversely I think a treatment squeezes out a lot of the juice of characters. [Producer] Jan Chapman said, when we did the telemovies together, “You’re one of the few writers I know who wants to cut dialogue.” I’d sooner have a film without any dialogue at all.

Which of your films comes closer to achieving that?

Probably Map of the Human Heart [Vincent Ward, 1993], because we started with just images on a wall; out of images eventually came a story.

What was the first play that really meant something to you in your development?

Inside the Island, because it was the first play I’d set in Australia; my previous plays had been set elsewhere. It was a play that some people thought was too extreme, because, in the late ’70s, early ’80s, there was that thought that anything extreme couldn’t happen in Australia. Some critics said, “I don’t like it because it couldn’t happen here”, as if the extremes of personality and behaviour couldn’t happen.

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I remember the premiere, where some members of the audience ran out during the performance. And I was thinking, "I've done something wrong here." It made me very nervous about writing things set in Australia. It had taken me so long to do so, but it got this extreme reaction and was pilloried by critics. The only thing that saved it financially was that Patrick White wrote a letter published in *The Sydney Morning Herald* for a couple of weeks saying he liked it, and that got the audience along.

I saw your play *The Golden Age*, which was surreal, but it had a softer edge as well. Curiously, *The Golden Age* is a love story that ranges from Tasmania to Melbourne to the ruins of Berlin. I was very interested in writing an epic and, at the same time, holding it together by a love story. It is very rare to have an Australian play that is a love story. Two mates in the trench having trouble with their sexuality.

Or mothers and sons, or daughters and fathers...

It is interesting that the great American theme is fathers and sons, but the great Australian theme is mothers and sons, except for Stephen Sewell, who sometimes writes about fathers and sons. It is very rare for Australian theatre, very rare.

When did you move into film and why?

I'd always been interested in movies, but not interested enough to write screenplays. Then, in middle '80s, I wrote a television movie script and sent it off to the ABC. It was a spur-of-the-moment decision to write such a thing, and it all began from there. Jan Chapman decided to produce *Displaced Persons* [Geoffrey Nottage, 1985].

What was that about?

*Displaced Persons* was set in the North Heads Quarantine station in 1945. A group of refugees arrive with a deadly disease, so they are forced to stay in a quarantine station and one by one they die. Here are these people who had escaped war-torn Europe and the camps, and arrive in Australia thinking that they are going to have a bright new future, but die of a disease right on the very edge of Sydney.

Was it based on a true event?

There was an event where displaced people arrived and a deadly disease ran through them. I took it from that particular point.

You worked with Jan Chapman on some of your other projects?

I'd written *Displaced Persons* as it were on spec. *Hunger* [Stephen Wallace, 1986] was her idea, and I thought I wouldn't mind writing something that was somebody else's idea.

During the middle '80s, Romanians were going on hunger strikes to get their wives into Australia. Jan thought that would be a very good story idea, because it was very emotional and it was about somebody coming from a Communist country.

Essentially, that was a great failure as a script. I was swamped by research that I didn't make them into real people. I didn't know how to handle it.
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YOU OFTEN TACKLE DIFFICULT SUBJECTS. APART FROM
IAN DAVID [Blue Murder], MICHAEL JENKINS, ETC.,
THERE’S NOT A STRONG TRADITION IN AUSTRALIA FOR
PEOPLE TO GO OUT AND DO RESEARCH. A LOT OF OUR
FILMS AND TELEVISION SERIES ARE DRAWN MORE FROM
PERSONAL EXPERIENCE.

In Australia, we have a tendency, because we are a
very middle-class culture, to base stories that are con­tained inside that suburban backyard fence. I think it
has been very hard for some writers to believe that
there is another world beyond their suburban front
yard. It is just as simple as that: we are a middle-class
culture.

IS THAT HARD FOR YOU?
What is very bizarre for me is that I could walk down
the street where I live and find that practically any
person is a migrant who has this extraordinary story
to tell: stories of what their parents have gone
through in Europe or Asia, or what they have gone
through. All these wonderful stories are around us
and yet they are not told.

I got a book the other day that is fascinating. I can
hardly believe that stories like these are not
being told more frequently.

The stories will come in the second or third genera­tion. It happens in all stories of migrants: first, people
arrive, work hard to pay for their children; the children
work hard and become doctors and lawyers; and the
third generation squanders it by becoming filmmakers!

YOUR FIRST FEATURE, MAP OF THE HUMAN HEART
[Vincent Ward, 1993], WAS A VERY AMBITIOUS
PROJECT. WHERE DID THE IDEA COME FROM?
I used to play tennis with Vincent Ward, whom I got
to know because I thought his first film, Vigil [1984], was
a rip-off from one of my plays. My agent got us
together and I realized it wasn’t—we just had similar
interests—and we got on famously. We were playing
tennis together and one day he said to me, “What do
you think about an Eskimo in the Australian desert?”
And I said, “I really can’t come at that Vincent. First of
all, I know nothing about Eskimos.” We continued to
play tennis and talk about the idea, and then I said,
“I’d be very interested if I could actually start the
story in the Arctic.”

From then we knew it had to be a love story, an epic
love story, and that it would be about World War II
and how that transformed the lives of some Eskimos.
Vincent lived at the time in a basement in Sydney and
we filled the walls of the basement with photographs.
We would come in after tennis, have a few beers, and
re-arrange the photographs on the wall until it even­
tually began to tell a story.

DID VINCENT WARD CHANGE YOUR SCREENPLAY
IN THE SHOOT AT ALL?
The shoot was very, very difficult, in that we went in
thinking we had more money than we really did. I had
to go back to Montréal and England during the shoot,
and every day I would rewrite the scenes because we
were running out of money. The shooting script we
had was not what we ended up with during the shoot.
It was extremely difficult, not only because of
rewrites, but because of the pressures every day from
the production guarantors who took over the film. By
the time it got to editing, which I was involved with
closely, we were changing the story.

What you actually see has almost an hour-and-a-
half of story missing. We shot some of it, but from the
bombing of Dresden we had another hour of film story
[laughs] of which we only shot a fraction. In some
respects we wanted to do a David Lean epic.

ON A LOW BUDGET?
All we needed, he said cavalierly, was another 15
million dollars. I could fully understand why Vincent
couldn’t shoot some scenes and why we had to
change so much of the story in editing. It was a
remarkable achievement to get what we actually did
end up with.

THE ARCTIC SCENES WORK BEST IN THAT FILM,
MAYBE BECAUSE THEY WERE SO AUTHENTIC.
I think they were the purer ones because we still had
all the money when the Arctic scenes were shot. In
the German and Montréal scenes, we began to run
out of money in a rather severe fashion.

It certainly was a wonderful thing to do. Vince and I
were in the Arctic for about three months, and he and
I stayed in various villages of Inuit and Duna-Za Indi­
ans. It was not only a wonderful film to research, but
we met some fascinating people.

YOU HAVE BEEN CONSISTENTLY ATTRACTED TO
INDIGENOUS PEOPLE, HAVEN’T YOU?
My mother’s first husband was Indonesian and my
aunties both married Javanese. They were in exile
from Indonesia because they fought on the Dutch
side during the war of independence.

In my upbringing, I vividly remember that my two
uncles weren’t allowed to go back to Java because
they were on the black list. They couldn’t see their
mothers, who both died while they were in exile. I
always remember that sense of my two uncles’ being
displaced and in exile. I guess I was always fascinated
that they were Indonesians in very white Australia.

My first novel, The Misery of Beauty, contained
probably the first gay Aboriginal character in Australian literature. The first Aborigine that I was ever very close to was a drag queen.

**Can we talk about Cosi?** (Mark Joffe, 1995) briefly.

Cosi was a film that I enjoyed writing to a certain degree, but I found that the combination of half-American money and half-Australian money meant that the script, to a minor but interesting degree, had to be compromised. We had to make a crucial decision that I now regret, though I was part and parcel of the decision. Not setting it in 1971 saved us a lot of money, which, to me, gave it a much more interesting design.

I now regret, though I was part and parcel of the decision. Not setting it in 1971 saved us a lot of money, which, to me, gave it a much more interesting design. That is an indication of how to save a lot of money, but in so doing you actually remove something crucial. These days you wouldn’t need those big sets to show the Vietnam era. It could have been done in a cheaper way if the director was innovative.

You could, but just the idea of 1970s’ clothes, cars and music blows the budget to a degree which is a lot on a small-budget movie.

**You worked again with Mark Joffe on The Matchmaker (Mark Joffe, 1998).**

All film projects, to me, have problems that you have to surmount. Unlike plays, films seem to be hurdles, and with The Matchmaker it was a project that was put on the back-burner by Working Title Films.

They asked Mark whether he would be interested in having a look at it. I’d worked with Working Title on Map of the Human Heart, so Mark and I went to Ireland where we tried to decide whether we could punch up the story. I did my pitch on how to revise and revitalize the story, and Working Title liked it.

Then I came back to Australia, wrote a script and they said, “Let’s do it.” Mark went to film it, saying that he wanted me to join him in Ireland to re-write the script again, but I never heard from him. He got another writer in, so the script of The Matchmaker contains little of my script.

I think Mark wanted something a little less quirky, a little softer, to appeal to the American market, which is his decision. I have no argument with that at all. It is his throw of the dice; he is the director. I am not precious about my scripts; it is a director’s medium!

**With Heaven’s Burning (Craig Lahiff, 1997), I suspect the script in intention may have been quite different to the movie, which became a B-grade genre film. There was a more clever film in there which wasn’t as violent or gratuitous.**

Films seem to be about problems, hurdles to overcome and solutions to be found. Working Title Films was interested in doing my script, which was then called “Andalusia.” It was set in Europe and was about a former Stasi Officer on the run with a French-Algerian girl. Because I was Australian and the movie would have to be financed by the European Script Fund, it was having a difficult time being considered, so I showed it to Craig Lahiff and he said, “Why don’t we do it, but set it in Australia?” We got on well, sharing a similar love of Don Siegel movies, and I thought, “Why not do Don Siegel meets Tristan and Isolde?”

As you can see, the film had a weird genesis.

These two films seem to suggest that the directors weren’t sure enough about the authenticity of the film, and perverted your original idea. I don’t see it like that. Directors can do what they damn well please. I hope they don’t, but I am merely there to service their vision. In that respect, you could say that the reason why Mark Joffe didn’t like my take on The Matchmaker was that I was at odds with what he wanted to do – which is fair enough.

I happen to like Heaven’s Burning because it does what Craig and I set out to do, which was to do an Australian film that raced like a locomotive through the story. I thought many Australian films were moving too slowly.

Film is a collaboration where the director has the final say. Any writer who whinges and whines about what a director has done to his script has no idea what film is. Writers are paid a lot of money to provide a blueprint, and essentially screenwriters are the golden spittown in the gaudy bar of movies.

**How did you collaborate with Rachel Perkins?**

Radiance was a play of yours first.

She had seen an extract at the Eora Centre, the Aboriginal Centre in Sydney, and thought it wonderful. She approached me and asked to film an extract. I was being absolutely calculating – I thought if she blinked when I said this then we weren’t going to do a film – and I said, “Why don’t we do the whole thing?” She paused momentarily, didn’t blink, and said, “Why not?” That is how it happened.

The money came together quickly, and luckily we had Andy Meyer who put a lot of his own money into it, so it was real money. Even though it was small budget, we could handle it because there...
Unwelcome strangers

What kind of person terrorizes the innocent and talks to the camera at the same time?

RAYMOND YOUNIS investigates

In the Winton dark

BRIAN MCFARLANE examines dark goings-on in the bush, with a quartet of valley folk attempting to find solace together when violence threatens their environment.

Suck what?

Ever since Alan Finney vowed "no more shorts", audiences have had to visit festivals to see short films or tune in late night to SBS. MICHAEL HELMS finds a film he believes deserves to be on the big screen.

A golden age

JOHN CONOMOS delights in a new book on the surrealist masterpiece by Buñuel and Dali, and a time of true cinematic exploration.

WANT TO DANCE? • WANT A BEER? • WANT TO KILL?
inreview

Films continued

Rodgers and Hammerstein soundtrack, Elliott fired the original composer, Stuart Copeland, and brought in the talented Guy Gross. These changes have not only made the film more riotous and entertaining. They have also sharpened the film's satire and made it appear, in retrospect, much blacker and more prescient than it appeared just fifteen months ago.

Welcome to Woop Woop has been called an anarchistic, a gross comedy in the '70s tradition of The Adventures of Barry McKenzie (Bruce Beresford, 1972). There is truth in this, which Elliott underlines by casting, in uncouth roles, Barry Humphries as Blind Willy, and Alan Finney as Daddy-O's grinning thug. But there is more to the film than this. Welcome to Woop Woop is a frightening, bizarre coupling of The Lord of the Flies with The Cars That Ate Paris (Peter Weir, 1974). Waco meets Wake in Fright (Ted Kotcheff, 1971) this side of the black stump. It is unsettlingly Australian, by way of L'Ti Abnerland, and the Beverly Hills Billies. But not nearly so amiable.

Woop Woop is the reverse of 'Cocodille' Dundee (Peter Finch, 1986). Plotwise, Johnathon Schaech as Teddy Bojangles, the Yank held prisoner by Daddy-O in Yobboland, is closer in character, sweetness and innocence to Hogan's Mick Dundee, who, far from being unsophisticated and a bully, is street-smart, highly moral and gets on well with women.

Woop Woop is also the flipside to Elliott's own Priscilla, Queen of the Desert, where, after initial hostility in an outback town, the three gays win out over prejudice and bigotry. What Elliott seems to be saying in Woop Woop is that Australia is going backwards. Just as Pauline Hanson has mined the crude, unsophisticated vein that lies beneath the surface of the Australian stereotype, which in tough times tips easily into racism and fascism, so Daddy-O can be seen as a gross caricature of what Pauline Hanson is seen to represent.

Elliott's command of film, and his love of kitche and the outrageous has allowed him to thumb his nose at "political correctness" and launch a broadside against all that he perceives to be evil and ugly in the Australian character. Daddy-O is a vulgar, beer-swilling, tap-dancing villain of the first order, an autocrat posing as a poter familists who rules with an iron fist his fiefdom of Woop Woop (a shanty town built on the site of an old asbestos mining town in the dead heart of Australia). Elliott lampoons Daddy-O mercilessly, but for all his jocularity, and sentimental concern for his over-sexed daughter, Angie (Susie Porter), and sick wife, Ginger (Maggie Kirkpatrick), Daddy-O is a frightening thug. Wearing a sleeveless footy jumper, with a tennis sweat band around his head, there is nothing he will not do to prevent the hapless Teddy, or anyone else, from leaving Woop Woop and thwarting his will.

Elliott's flair for plumbing humour and the depths of bad taste is everywhere evident. Most spectacular is his use of the soundtracks of Rodgers and Hammerstreet musicals as a Greek chorus. When Angie first meets Teddy and the Combie van rocks with their love-making, the soundtrack erupts to the strains of "I Can't Say No!" Similar commentary is provided with songs from Oklahoma, The King and I, South Pacific, The Flower Drum Song and The Sound of Music. The most apposite perhaps is the use of "Climb Every Mountain" from The Sound of Music, which is the leitmotiv associated with the attempted flight in a tractor of Teddy and Krystal (Angie's sister, played by Dee Smart) from the long reach of Daddy-O, who pursues them. It's only a short step in the imagination to equate Teddy and Krystal's flight from the fascist Daddy-O, to the flight of the Von Trapp family from Nazism, over the Austrian Alps. Similar in feeling is the funeral of Ginger, Woop Woop's matriarch, whose funeral pyre (a giant mound of the town's garbage) is lit by flaming torches at night to a full-throated rendition of "You'll Never Walk Alone", from Carousel.

The emotional pull of Welcome to Woop Woop at this point is quite extraordinary, the scene gaining power and political point from visual associations with Viking funerals and massed Nuremberg rallies, all instinctively appropriate to the film's sub-textual theme.

It's not drawing a long-bow to see Welcome to Woop Woop as a film which, in the late '90s, dares to tackle head-on one of Australia's most sacred cows: the myth of the blokey, genial, dinky-di, unsophisticated but decent Aussie who believes in a fair go for all. Woop Woop exposes the dark side of sunny Australia with exuberance and glee. One of the film's most startling and memorable scenes is the appearance out of the Aboriginal darkness of Daddy-O's nemesis, Big Red. But there is ambivalence there, too, fear mingled with affection, which betokens perhaps the director's own nostalgia and longing for the days of the picket fence.

Paul I AMo Frisch with cast and props, Film noir.

Michael Haneke has been exploring the representation of violence in the mass media for some time. Benny's Video (1992) examined the link between film representations of violence and a sort of heightened indifference to human suffering and pain; 72 Fragments of a Chronology des Zufalls (Fragments of a Chronology of Chance, 1994) extended this analysis by focusing on the indifference to mass suffering. These earlier films are certainly memorable, but the cinematic strategies and impact were not always sufficient to bear the conceptual content.

Funny Games offers a deconstruction of the thriller genre, and is in many ways Haneke's most effective and engaging film to date. It begins in the vein of the classic Hollywood thriller, with at least five recognizable conventions being mimicked; the initial suggestion of an existing order, a false sense of security in an idyllic place, a remote setting, the entrance of a sinister figure or the introduction of a source of imminent danger and the terrible disruption of that existing order. There are nods to films like A Clockwork Orange (in the costumes), to Hitchcock and film noir.
The film deals with a familiar scenario in this genre: a family in a remote holiday home. A young man appears at the door (even though the family’s house is well protected by a high fence and gate). He says that he is a friend of one of the neighbours; he entered the property through “a hole in the fence”. He asks for eggs and is allowed to enter the house. He is then joined by a friend: both refuse to leave; both terrorize the family with golf clubs and, later on, with a gun. But just when the viewer is beginning to get a sense of déjà vu, Haneke adopts an audacious strategy: he allows one of the intruders to address the audience. (This is the only character who is allowed to speak to the audience in the film. There is, as it were, an implicit understanding between the violent man, who is about to wreak havoc within the family home, and the audience.)

Haneke allows this character, Paul (Arno Frisch) – a name that becomes grimly ironic in the course of the film – to comment on the conventions of the genre on a number of occasions. For example, before he assaults a member of the family, he turns and winks at the audience, as if to remind the spectators of the complicity between his desire for violence and their expectation that violence will serve its function as a form of mass entertainment in films of this kind. Haneke does more than evoke this complicity; he suggests that the production of ‘games’ in which violence is represented is itself conditioned by the audience’s mass appetite for scenes of violence and carnage, and, whereas, that this appetite seems to demand more and more sensational representations of violence.

On another occasion, the wife pleads for the quick death of her husband (in order to spare him gratuitous suffering). Paul suggests that this would be inconsistent with the conventions that govern films of this kind and, with the expectations of viewers who would gain less pleasure, less entertainment value, from a curtailing of the violence! It is clear that the film is concerned on a profound level with the spectator’s desire for prolonged and, therefore, more suspenseful representations of violence or cruelty or bloodshed. The representation of the prolonged torture of the family fulfils the audience’s appetite for violence as a means of mass entertainment. (At one stage, when things have already reached a terrible stage, Paul can still say, “We’re not even up to feature-length yet!”)

The film is concerned with three key issues: first, the othering process in Hollywood thrillers (by which thugs, rapists and other criminals are demonized as ‘other’; that is, as drug addicts, members of minorities or ethnic groups); second, with the effects of representations of violence upon audiences on a mass scale; and, third, with the problematic nature of that desire which informs and fuels cinematic representations of violence as forms of mass consumption.

With regard to the first issue, Haneke deliberately subverts the genre convention: the killers are not members of a minority group; they are not Orientalized or racialized. They are not entirely demonized either. They come from the same class as the victims; the danger comes from within, in a sense.

With regard to the second issue, Haneke has been arguing for some time against the disinhbiting effects and the domestication, so to speak, of mass-produced and mass-consumed representations of violence in the media (more on this in a moment). With regard to the third issue, his films are profound meditations on the disquieting relationship between the spectator’s desire and a sort of non-reflective but implacable complicity in the dynamics of brutalization. It is the position of the spectator that is paramount in these films.

Haneke’s argument seems to be that mass-produced and mass-consumed representations of violence are causally related to a sort of disinheritance, because the artificiality of the images (simulacra) supersedes the brute reality of violence. In other words, representations come to take the place of reality. As a consequence, violence itself begins to seem less disturbing, more easy; one seems to be less accountable. In this sort of postmodern dystopia, Haneke argues, the fear that adverse consequences create is diminished. The sense of the horrific is diluted, diminished and transformed.

The antidote to all of this is provided in Haneke’s films, also: they serve to unmask explicitly the formal and conventional structures which sustain the complicity between the spectator’s desire and representations of violence; between the spectator’s pleasure and the demands of the genre. Haneke’s films make explicit what the genre conceals in order to be able to function as a genre (thriller). It is in this sense that Funny Games is a timely and thoughtful deconstruction of the genre. The aim is not to explore the reality or nature of violence. The aim is to present and clarify the role of the spectator with regard to the reception of simulation in the mass media. This is an ethical project of the greatest importance which revolves around questions of exploitation, victimization, complicity and disinheritance.

Haneke has not demonstrated the causal relation between representations of violence and the effect of disinheritance (though one might argue in his defence that that is not the filmmaker’s task). Haneke also fails to observe an important distinction between representation and reality (for it seems that no representation of a violent event can be identical to an actual event itself). It is neither obvious nor self-evident that disinheritance or increases in violence necessarily follow from the mass reception of representations of violence. Indeed, much recent research would suggest that things are more complex.

The main problem, however, is that pugnacious talk about simulations of violence (more representations, more consumption, more disinheritance and so on) does not translate readily into qualitative terms. There is a very real danger here, namely that the focus on media representations as causal factors will obscure our view of other relevant causal factors. There is also a very real risk of assuming that there is only one cause of the alleged damaging effects.

In any case, Haneke’s film is a vitally important one, not least because it reminds the spectator of his/her generally concealed rôle (‘concealed’ because the dynamics of the genre conceal in order to be ‘effective’ or ‘successful’ or ‘suspenseful’ or ‘entertaining’). It is also a cracking good thriller for the most part, although its self-reflexive insertions are intended to, and do, alienate the spectator. In the final analysis, it may be that Haneke has reinvented the genre. This is a fiercely intelligent and articulate film that succeeds, arguably, with other similar attempts (for example, Mon Bites Dog [C’est arrivé près de chez vous, Rémy Belvaux, 1992] or Henry: Portrait of a Serial Killer, [John McNaughton, 1990]) fail – they end up replicating the very things that they set out to attack, especially in terms of not alienating (or in terms of entertaining the spectator). Haneke’s film cleverly avoids this trap. It will be quite a surprise if this film does not turn out to be one of the most thought-provoking and innovative films of the year.

IN THE WINTER DARK

DIRECTED BY JAMES ROBIE. PRODUCER: ROSEMARY BROWN. SCREENWRITER: JAMES ROBIE, PETER RAINEY. BASED ON A NOVEL BY TIM WINTON. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: MARTIN MCGRATH. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: NICHOLAS MCCALLUM. COSTUME DESIGNER: WENDY CORK. EDITOR: SURESH APArIYAR. CAST: BRENDAN BATEMAN (AS STUART), RAY BARRATT (MAURICE STUBBS), RICHARD FLANAGAN (Maurice Jacob), HELEN OTTO (Donnie). AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTOR: GLOBE, AUSTRALIA. 95 MINS.

The first thing we see is mist swirling over craggy mountainsides, and the first thing we hear is a voice intoning, “I started to have these dreams.” This recalls the unfulfilled melodramatic promise of Picnic at Hanging Rock (Peter Weir, 1975) and how it lost interest in narrative power, settling for a series of seductive images instead.

In the Winter Dark doesn’t do this, but, though its first twenty minutes or so seem to set up potentially productive tensions among its characters, it isn’t in the end the persuasive rural melodrama it might have been.

In a number of ways it invites comparison with the recent The Sound of One Hand Clapping (Richard Flanagan) – and suffers from it. Both involve violent events in difficult mountain terrains (the Blue Mountains here); both are concerned with coming to terms with the present in the light of interpreting the past; and both are marked by a narrative mode which eschews the linear in favour of something more like a mosaic of moments and episodes and flashbacks. The new film dispels its interest between a tale of rural danger and one of fractured relationships.

The story of the In Winter Dark, derived from a novel by Tim Winton, is essentially told in a long flashback, with other discontinuities along the way. It opens with the discovery of a body lying in a muggy forest: the body belongs to Ida Stubbs (Brenda Blethyn), who was about to leave to marry a man who picks it up, weeping as he does, soon proves to be her husband, Maurice (Ray Barrett). The long central section of the film will explain how the body came to be there, and the film ends as it began: with Maurice clutching the body and then a fade to him sitting on his verandah bathed in a golden light, awaiting “redemption or punishment” and finding there’s only the sunrise.

There are two sets of characters in the mountain valley setting.
The Stubbses are presented as ordinary, their house and meals smothering by a wild cat, for them "when no one else would"; there has been a fake pregnancy and an uncool taste in music which sounds like Magic 693 (there’s Conway Twitty, Neil Diamond and Merle Haggard). He lives alone in the best house in the valley, having retreated there for somewhat obscure reasons. Pregnant Ronnie (Miranda Otto) is the pretty-spoken partner of a guitarist who has left her alone in their vaguely hippy-style house. Murray rescues her from a night of exposure in the rain and they form an edgy relationship, in which she communicates largely in four-letter words.

The two pairs are brought together by a series of attacks by some marauding creature, possibly a feral cat, which kills Maurice’s sheep and Ronnie’s Muscovy ducks. Rather than involve the authorities, Maurice organizes a hunt for the creature, and this leads to Ida’s fatal running out into the night, just as Ronnie’s baby decides to arrive. That is, there is a lot going on, some of it more convincing than others. The writing of the scenes in which the two couples eat together to discuss what to do, and those in which the two men first go off on a Spotlighting expedition to track the creature, alternating with scenes in which the two women get drunk as they try on maternity clothes, is often awkward, not rooted in the way their characters have been presented to us. Where The Sound of One Hand Clapping builds a sense of something genuinely dreadful in the past as a key to understanding the present, in The Winter Dark lacks the intensity of feeling and detailed interest in its characters which would make its development seem more than merely portentous.

There is skill in the way in which themise-en-scène is manipulated to distinguish among the Stubbses, Jacob and Ronnie’s ways of living and thinking, but the cutting from one to the other becomes either intrusive or predictable and the musical soundtrack keeps nudging us uncomfortably to anticipate the next revelation. For instance, in the clumsy scene in which the four sit around Ida’s meal table to discuss how to handle the attacks of the unknown predator, director James Bogle cuts in a maddeningly unsubtle way from one unrevealing medium close-up to another. A flamboyant visual and editing style can be a source of pleasure if one feels it is serving some purpose; when it looks merely obvious, as in a match-cut between a rifle going off outside and Ida dropping a jar of fruit inside, it just draws attention to itself.

There are only four roles of any consequence: hardly anyone else is even seen, and you could scarcely ask for a more accomplished quartet than Bogle has assembled here. If it’s not quite clear what British Brenda Blethyn, one of the best film actresses in the world, is doing here, it is also true to say that she is wholly convincing as the farmer’s wife with a sup­pressed past. Ray Barrett’s scruffy features have assumed almost iconic significance in Australian cinema, but here his effortless command of the screen is at the service of a curiously ill-defined rôle: the screenplay never seems properly to get inside this bulky countryman with a tormented inner life. Roxburgh and Otto, two of the “hottest” young Australian actors, are frequently left making bricks from the screenplay’s straw. All four are vivid performers; whatever goes wrong with the film is not to be laid at their door.

Not having read Tim Winton’s story, I can’t be sure how much is the fault of undue respect for an oddly non-compelling set of circumstances. The film often looks wonderful — coincidentally, it has the same cameraman, Martin McGrath, as The Sound of One Hand Clapping — but, without making the earlier film sound like a masterpiece, it has to be said that this time the beautifully-composed and lit images seem less meaningful one by one and fail to build the sense of dread suggested in the opening sequences.

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unable to get a grip on late twentieth-century morals or, alternatively, happily set in its eccentric ways. And as in her recent television material (Simone de Beauvoir’s Babies, SeaChange), the leads on whom we focus stand out markedly—they’re a little brighter, a little more ambitious for fulfillment and a place in the modern world than those who form the backdrop.

Dead Letter Office is satisfying on many levels; in tone and style, it brings to mind films like Heezy (James Mangold, 1996) and perhaps Ted Demme’s 1996 Beautiful Girls (there are obvious echoes of Spotswood [Mark Jaffe, 1993], too, but Spotswood is more comedic), but for me the script clings too much to television convention and sketchy characterization (in which one-liners and snappy retorts abound) to take it fully into that league. It’s as though Cox wants to deliver a substantial drama but is defeated by some assumed need to play it for the off-beat, the unexpected, the whacky—which, ironically, the script is also highly schematic. Wisely, Ruane has eschewed whimsy for drama as far as possible, keeping the focus squarely and seriously on Alice and Frank’s relationship and playing down the Joker element which could undermine its impact. This is not to say the film is without humour—on the contrary—it’s predominantly wry rather than whacky. In taking this approach, he’s enhanced the script’s cinematic potential and brought a good measure of charm and maturity to the film.

But for me, the script constrains the film’s possibilities considerably. One of the problems is the lack of an effective subplot. Aside from some symbolic play with a pigeon who’s adopted the Dead Letter Office as home, there’s little to underscore the Alice-Frank story. The Office’s imminent demise is apparently intended to serve this purpose, to provide narrative and thematic resonance to the main story’s exploration of issues such as personal loss, change and renewal. Its metaphorical significance is obvious but it falls on two counts. First, Alice and Frank’s three colleagues are too thinly drawn. They’re only a step or two removed from caricature and while Ruane’s direction downplays this, as I’ve mentioned, it’s disappointing that their capacity to enrich the story isn’t utilized. For example, Mary (Georgia Nardi) is afforded a couple of acutely significant lines (“A girl like you could never hope to understand a man such as him,” she cautions Alice about Frank), but there’s no room for this or any other secondary relationship to offer more. Similarly, the hippie lover is merely incidental comic relief.

Second, there’s the issue of the Office and its operations. This is a work-based firmly in contemporary reality; it doesn’t call for any real suspension of disbelief and, accordingly, we’re implicitly asked to accept the Dead Letter Office as a contemporary workplace. But here’s a portrayal of the public sector as it was around twenty years ago, rather than as it is in the late 1990s. This isn’t simply a matter of pedantry but of the script pushing a particular, anachronistic line about the politics of bureaucratic change, which is out of touch with the reality it purports to understand. It’s the old line about the public service as a kind of rest home for nuff-nuffs and little Aussie battlers, and the cruel contempt of “them upstarts” who don’t give a damn. It’s not that the closure of the Dead Letter Office isn’t credible or that the public sector isn’t rife with perceived managerial amorality, but that the machinations in this case are well out of date. (They’re also inconsis-

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ten first features from acclaimed short-film directors have far too many expectations foisted upon them, and invariably fail to live up to those expectations. Broken Highway (Laurie McNines, 1993) and BeDevil (Tracey Moffatt, 1993) are two cases in point, and some would say that The Well (Samantha Lang, 1997) also falls into that category. But sometimes first features not only live up to the anticipation and expectations, but surpass them, and Head On is definitely one of these.

Director Ana Kokinos impressed a good many people with her 95-minute short, Only the Brave, in 1994, a film that dealt with ethnic, sexual and familial identity through two teenage girls living in Melbourne’s northern suburbs. She treats similar ground in Head On, a film adapted from the-unrelenting but well-received novel, Loaded, by Christos Tsiolkas. This time, though, the main character is a young Greek man, Ari (Alex Dimitriades).

Ari is 19, unemployed and living a fairly full-on lifestyle. Over a 24-hour period, he party hard, takes lots of drugs and has sex with a string of anonymous men. His two closest friends are poles apart: Joe (Damien Fotiou) has just become engaged, lured by the offer of a house and security; Johnny (Paul Capelis) is gay and drags up as Toula, his dead mother, when he goes out. Ari is wrestling with a lot of pressures: family expectations, cultural expectations, sexual expectations, the whole shebang.

Everyone expects him to live the acceptable Greek life: find a girl, get married, get a good job, make lots of money, buy a house, raise a family, make your parents proud.

But Ari just doesn’t want that. He doesn’t know what he wants, but he knows that that’s not it. So he loses himself in a fast-forward lifestyle where those things don’t count. The trouble is, they do, and Ari’s on a constant collision course with no real sign of escape.

There is quite a lot that is remarkable about this film. Firstly, it’s an impressive adaptation of a difficult book. Tsiolkas’ Loaded is a frenetic first-person narrative full of flashbacks and interior monologues that is very visual but difficult to visually realize at the same time. Somehow, the team of writers—Ana Kokinos, Mira Robertson and Andrew Bovell—has produced a script that captures the level of energy and energy, as well as presenting Ari’s more esoteric and abstract impressions and opinions. And aside from one scene in a police detention cell not in the original novel (not surprisingly, the weakest part of the film), the script follows the novel’s narrative path. Comparisons with the novel notwithstanding, it is a remarkable film, because it is so uncompromising, especially in its portrayal of Ari’s sexual encounters. From a particularly-convincing masturbatory scene at the start of the film, through back-alley episodes, to his passionate and aggressive sex with

**dead letter off**

**head on**

**directed by ana kokinos. producer: jane scott. screenwriters: andrew bovell, ana kokinos, mira robertson. director of photography: simon grant. production designer: mario di falco. costume designer: anna bordogna. editor: jill rigg. sound designer: louise carmack. cast: alex Dimitriades (ari), paul capelis (johnny), julian garner (sean), tony nikolakopoulos (dimitri), elena mandalis (betty), eugenia frangos (sofia), damien fotiou (joe), andrea manandulis (aleks), maria mercados (tasha), dina karajanos (dina), alex pappas (pete), vassilis zapfa (vasillus). Australian distributor: palace. 1998. 35mm. 104 mins.

**aeri and betty (elena mandalis). head on.**
in review

Films continued

his brother's housemate, Sean (Julian Garner), towards the end of the film, not once is the act of sex shied away from. There's certainly nothing explicit or pornographic, but its representation of man-to-man sex is frank, fast and full-on. Ari may be struggling with identifying his sexuality, but he certainly has no problems with the act itself. And it's dealt with as just another aspect of the film, not once is the act of sex explored and the extraordinary exploration of cultural identity. And while we're on that subject, mention must be made of Dimitriades and the extraordinary performance he gives as Ari. He's come a long way since Heartbreak Kid (Michael Jenkins, 1993) and Heartbreak High (series), and brings to the part strength, complexity and a wholeness that commands attention. Given that he's on screen for the entire film, that is a remarkable and powerful achievement. The rest of the cast are a great support for Dimitriades, with not one slack performance between them, and a great credit to Kokkinos, who has directed them with understanding and purpose. Head On is best described as a driven, focused and unrelenting film. Kokkinos' uncompromising vision of the film makes it a strong and rare work - one that some may find discomforting and others challenging, but one whose inherent truth cannot be denied. © TIM HUNTER

heathens


A theatrical run and television screening might have instantly vaulted Year of the Dogs (Michael Cordell, 1997) to the top of the public profile ladder, but it certainly hasn't been the only Aussie-rules documentary to take to the face in recent years. In fact, Heathens, the arm-pit camera view of a bunch of rabid St Kilda fans by documentary maker Megan Spencer, was in production long before Dogs opened a lens. Now, savvy local video company Siren has teamed up with no one slack performance, the film shines through in this neat package, which is almost undermining Cannell's anthropological in approach, a sure way to make its documentary devoted to a who entices him back to her own abode. © MICHAEL HELMS

sucCUBUS


Currently, there's some sort of critical re-emphasis percolating on the importance of the short film. While a variety of new and different film festivals are providing showcase cases for films that are longer than 60 seconds but under one hour, there's no doubt that the theatrical exhibition of shorts in Australia has no immediate economic viability, no matter how they're packaged. If anywhere, the commercial future of the short film in Australia probably lies in cable television. As always, there are anomalies, of which the 36-minute Succubus, directed by Harry Weinmann, is a card-carrying leader. Essentially, Succubus is the tale of an encounter between a young guy dosing down in a city laneway and an older woman who entices him to come back to his own abode.
Strange consequences await both parties. From its opening frames, Succubus cleverly goes about creating its own thoroughly-mapped-out and entirely-convincing dramatic universe. Opening credits of gold set against a rich background of cobalt turn to dust as we dive into a familiar yet different view of the Melbourne skyline.

A shadow caresses a sleeping man before we’re all led into the home of one Lilah Liebmann, a woman of obvious wealth and taste. Although we’ve already been alerted by the gothic décor and opening shadowplay, in the tradition all sorts of renderings of the fantastique, all is not what it seems. While the use of special effects play a central role in the actual revelation, the ability of Succubus to dramatically engage rests solely with the acting of its stars, Stephanie Power and Nick Barkla. By its end, we all should’ve been transported, if not transformed.

Succubus is the sort of short that should precede a feature. At once, it’s mysterious and fascinating, despite being the first film to be directed by Harry Weinmann. The craftsmanship of the technical talent is a constant, from the elegant cinematography of Ellery Ryan to the haunting and lyrical score of Rajan Kamali, the production design of Simon McCutcheon, the prosthetics make-up work of Jose Perez and computer-effects work that is often invisible, all hands seemed to have been working at optimum performance, which speaks volumes for Harry Weinmann who orchestrated all.

Perhaps it can all be put down to thorough preparation and Weinmann’s background in storyboarding preproduction. While it might read like some sort of exercise in retro-chic, the finished product of Succubus is more related in tone and style to the director’s stated influence of German Expressionism than he could’ve probably hoped for. It’s the real thing. Whether Succubus can find a home in the multiplex world of modern cinema remains to be seen, but don’t knock back any opportunity to see it.

© MICHAEL HELMS

TERRAIN

DIRECTED BY TERRY KYLE. PRODUCER: TERRY KYLE, PETER GREGORY. ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: BELINDA GAUTSCHI. SCRIBTWRITER: TERRY KYLE. DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY: PETER GREGORY. PRODUCTION DESIGNER: ADAM HAY. COSTUMES: CRASH HANSCICK. SOUND RECORDIST: JEFF LICEHR. CAST: JONATHAN HARDY (JALLEX), AMANDA MCKESS (ASIA), GERWYN LAGACE (CANN), DANIEL REY (SOPHIE), SALLY DAY (ADRIANNE), MARK JAMES (FELLOE). ARCHIVAL FOOTAGE.

FILMED: JANUARY-FEBRUARY 1994. AUSTRALIA. 95 MINS.

T errain is listed in Scott Murray’s catalogue On The Small Screen 1970-1994 as being produced on video and as being an unreleased theatrical feature. It was made in Queensland in 1994 on a small budget, written and directed by Terry Kyle. It seems to be the work of film students. It is set in the galaxy, a small group working in a research station on a distant planet, which to all intents and purposes is like earth except that there is something destructive in the atmosphere which has had catastrophic effects on the mission leader.

One of the difficulties of this kind of film is picking up who is who and who is doing what in the beginning. The technological jargon gets in the way of identifying characters and working out what the tensions are and where they come from.

Terrain has a brief running-time, but it moves quite slowly trying to create the other-worldly atmosphere, and the tension is not achieved, even in the climax. The film has a strong plot resemblance to John Tatoulis’ Zone 39 (1996), highlighting Australians’ love for science fiction as well as the difficulties in making it.

© PETER MALONE

SEE JACK RUN


A small-budget Australian tele-feature with a brief running-time, See Jack Run was made at Open Channel, Melbourne. Based on the play Who Cares by Gillian Wadds, it focuses on a teenager, Brian Johnson (Trent Mooney), who has learning difficulties and comes from a socially problematic background.

Like Don McLeinn’s Mall (1988), which was set in St Kilda and made the suburb and its environment the equivalent of a character, See Jack Run uses inner-city locations and Port Phillip Bay. Also like Mall, it covers a great number of social problems into its short running time, probably too many. Drugs, trucancy, absentee parents, teenage pregnancy and Catholic moral teaching are all issues.

Brian is also a poetic dreamer. Throughout the film, he tells the story of his fantasy of sailing the ocean, going to Africa and encountering a witch-doctor with a special plant that can give a dead child new life. This acts as a kind of chorus focusing on his ambitions and potential.

However, the facts of the plot concern his being at school, his inability to read, his covering-up, his being befriended by a teacher who wants to teach him to read (perhaps the use of Romeo and Juliet is a bit optimistic in terms of comprehension as well as for suggesting interpretations of Brian’s doomed life), the callow condemnations of the science master/sports master. It also involves teenage friendships and relationships, his girlfriend’s pregnancy and his brother’s drug habits.

The film is unevenly acted and shows signs of its small-budget production values. However, it holds some interest and certainly has proved to be useful viewing for city teenage student audiences and for parents.

© PETER MALONE

LIVING COLOR


An unreleased theatrical feature that hails from Queensland, the film is basically a twist on a stalking game. A deanged man wants to kill a young woman because of his woman-hating ideology. The woman’s lover is also trapped and becomes part of the killing game.

The film creates some tension, but it tends to rely on a blood-and-guts approach to terror and mayhem. And the mayhem, male-female violence and male-male violence, is protracted well beyond its dramatic power.

One of the difficulties with Living Color is that its screenplay degenerates into the ‘you bitch’ mode and relies on aggressive swearing rather than more imaginative ways of communicating hostility and building up tension. What is disturbing about the film is the rampant misogyny of the killer. Because he comes all full blast from the beginning, his anti-women attitudes have no well-drawn character base and so remain at the level of gratuitous rantings, which an audience can only take so much of. The killer would be at home ‘in the company of men’, taking the callous attitudes and behaviour of Chad in Neil Labute’s film to its murderous conclusions.

The film looks and sounds more like a practice exercise in the cat-and-mouse genre.

© PETER MALONE
end, and, in the process, "activates the you". It is this "I-You" relationship that engages a whole range of emotions, desires and sometimes inconsistent responses. O'Rourke reconstitutes his identity. In so doing, he does not fully identify himself with the "transnational male imaginary" (p. 33) which characterizes the groups of Australian or American men in Thailand and their "power as critics"; their "distance and power" comes at a great cost - namely, the reduction of Aoi to a disempowered, helpless victim. Some male commentators, on the other hand, deny Aoi's agency but in order to reinforce their own entrenched power.

Berry draws attention to many films (for example, the Joe Leahy series) in which Australia is represented as a western nation which reconstitutes itself in relation to "an Asian Pacific other" (p. 42). Australia's identity is problematic, however: if one grants that national questions about authorship: the fictional filmmaker (he is given fictional status in the film's opening) records Aoi's life from the point of view of the consciously invoked "author". The adoption of this "fictional auto-inscription" makes it impossible for the film to fulfill its objective: namely, to subvert "the investment in the discourse of truth that is revealed as a consequence of the filmmaker's intervention" (p. 68). So, the crucial question is not whether Aoi's life is the "truth" or not, but rather whether the terms of the film are legitimate. A logic of alienation is unleashed in the face of the "Orientalist other" (p. 59) and it is one which cannot be controlled by the very figures who give it form. Aoi is trapped in a sense (for example, she must pay her father's debt), but Cohen discerns a "potential transformation of the forms and institutions of this world" (p. 70) in the film. Aoi's situation is one of "fated tragedy" (p. 70): if it is not possible for her to be a "good woman" of Bangkok, it is nevertheless possible for her to be conscious of "goodness". This is the form of her "transcendence". The filmmaker does not give form and meaning to the story in order to redeem it in aesthetic terms and provide a reply to nihilism. Rather, one finds a tension between the form of the film and the form of Aoi's life: O'Rourke "crosses from documentary into fiction and Aoi (momentarily) crosses from her life into film" (p. 72). The narrative of "truth" which Aoi's voice represents becomes dominant and, as a consequence, this creates a gulf between the filmmaker's form and the life which it is attempting to encompass. The effect is one of discontinuity. That form which is supposed to uncover and redeem her existence is disrupted. In this way, O'Rourke's film suggests, "despite his intentions" (p. 72), that life cannot be displaced by form. O'Rourke employs parody to undermine power relations in documentary films and yet is attacked by critics for such "anti-humanist moves" (p. 72). He is the "elusive parodist" who allegedly betrays his colleagues and admirers and is in turn betrayed by the parodic nature of the film. The key issue is the dynamics of representation.
with regard to “the power to con- trol women” (p. 73). The film finally criticizes humanism in the sense of rejecting the “truthful discourse” of documentary films and in introducing a discourse of the “author” not in order to provide another “truth” but rather to deconstruct approaches that would resist such strategies.

The volume is a valuable anthology with insightful bridging essays. However, other readings strike one as unsatisfactory or problematic because they are so decontextualized. O’Rourke has made it clear, that the author-filmmaker is not a dehistoricized, generalized or essentialized male observer or participant. The male narrator’s starting point is one of incipient and profound crisis. The narrative foundation is unstable, disturbed, anguished. It is difficult to see how decontextualized and ideologically-motivated interpretations of the film can do justice to its trajectories if this point is ignored or overlooked. It is surprising to find so little discussion of the trou- bled foundations out of which the film’s trajectories spring. Indeed, such narratological complexity makes the film seem much more sophisticated than many of its interpretations. Moreover, it is puzzling to see the extent to which many interpreters have failed to consider the disanalogies between the “author” and the essentialized male gaze which is set up in order to be attacked by a number of the film’s critics. The lines of interpretation discussed are insightful and important but raise problematic questions; there is no explanation of how Australia can “forget” its “original sin” or how it is possible to do so and, moreover, there is no explanation of how being “thin” Asia can lead to a sense of compatibility (for surely one does not follow from the other). Deconstructive readings are offered which can be quite incisive but they would seem to undermine the very possi- bility of emancipation, and the very possibility of any coherent talk of emancipation, with regard to figures such as Aoi but then perhaps this is O’Rourke’s intention. Such caves aside, however, the volume as a whole will provide an invaluable starting point and source book for future discussions of the film.

The series to which Hammond’s book belongs is, I find, at certain times too parochial in its selection of authors. Certainly, there is the odd non-English author in the series (for example, Saimi Rushdie, whose reading of The Wizard of Oz makes it uncontest- ably one of the finer examples of the series; Albert Manuguel’s Bride of Frankenstein; Jim Kitson’s Gun Crazy; and Adrian Martin on Sergio Leone’s Once Upon a Time in America, another critic who belongs to the minority tradition of film criticism anchored in a cinéphile’s embrace of the medium itself. The series needs to be opened up more, notwithstanding the non-English authors included so far, to negotiate a wider non- nationalistic pluralism of critical voices.

L’Age d’Or is indisputably regarded as one of the most impor- tant collaborations of surrealism, a cinema precursor, of surrealist cinema history, combining the unique creative talents of Luis Buñuel, one of cinema’s enduring giants, and Salvador Dalí. The film itself, which is a highly powerful combination of scorched visual poetry and social criticism, is sel- dom seen nowadays. For many years, L’Age d’Or has been the source of censorship and puritan­ ili­cal vilification. It has become a cult classic of the avant-garde cinema for its subversive amor­ fou eroti­ cism and social criticism of the moral and political bankruptcy of traditional bourgeois values. It should be noted that this film, the second collaboration between the two proto-surrealist filmmakers, was the first time that the filmmakers deployed social criticism in their work.

In fact, L’Age d’Or, as Hammond illustrates, was inspired by Buñuel’s reading of the Marquis de Sade. The surreal poet Robert Desnos introduced Buñuel to de Sade, and, according to Buñuel, de Sade’s notion that it is only in the imagination where humans are truly free, a notion that coloured this dark, subversive film and the filmmaker’s subsequent films. De Sade dazzled Buñuel with his transgressive, revolutionary world of social customs, insects, sex and theology. Financed by the de Noailles, the liberal arts-loving aris- tocrats who also financed Un Chien Andalou (1929), L’Age d’Or did not emphatically deploy the free asso­ ciation of ideas style of scripting as Buñuel and Dalí did for their first film. It nevertheless displays a sub­ tle narrative line (unlike in Un Chien Andalou) that passes from one small detail to another, and so on, something one can observe in Buñuel’s Le Fantôme de la Liberté (1954).

By the time L’Age d’Or started to be filmed both Buñuel and Dalí’s friendship was very strained for a number of reasons, including the appearance of Gales in Dalí’s life, Hammond’s thoroughly-detailed, sharply-delineated and entertaining introduction to the film explores its complex sources of inspiration and influences, its remarkable “oneiric” collage textual characteristics and “film maudit” status in world cin­ ema. Adopting the metaphor of the scorpion’s tail with its various dis­ tinct sections and its deadly poison end sac, Hammond gives us a fe­ lucid speculative and historically-informed reading of the film, its intuitive mise-en-scène textual strategies of montage, framing, movement within frame, camera angle, lighting and use of the Louis Duc­ l­ inspired photog­ en­ t shot - a key stylistic central to Buñuel’s early cinema and the French avant-garde, which (after Griffith, De Mille and D’Or) high­ lights big close-ups of objects (other than the face) in order to make the object-world strange. L’Age d’Or started as an enton­ m­ o­ y­ o­ l­ o­ g­ o­ y­ o­ s­ e­ s­ e­ s­ o­ n­ t­ i­ c­ b ­ h ­ v ­ i ­ o­ r­ s­ c ­ n­ o­ p­ r­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D ­ r­ i­ e­ n­ t­ a­ l­ v­ i­ l­ i­ f­ i­ c­ a­ t­ i­ o­ n­ s­ D － 45
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Fox City
by Barrie Smith

Controversial one day, accepted the next: Fox Studios is up, running and fully booked. The Australian newspaper in June '98 described the new film city as "controversial". The evocative label bore back in time to when minority figures in the NSW State Government tried desperately to rally public opinion against it.

Well, like death, taxes and Mt Everest, Fox Studios Australia is here – and here to stay.

The 24ha film studio complex occupies the old Sydney Showground, now "out West", while the $120 million movie centre sits comfortably and accessibly a few minutes' drive from the CBD and ten kilometres from Sydney airport.

In the run-up to the official opening on 2 May, there was vocal opposition to the Murdoch group's acquisition of the site, but little antipathy from Sydney film technicians – and none from the production fraternity itself.

Early on, when little was known, there was concern that Fox, becoming such a huge employment force, would control and depress technician fees. As it eventuated, the venture is in fact a huge facility – open for hire to all and sundry – and Fox Sydney management has taken every step to avoid being seen as a prime employer.

This writer has visited the site a number of times (see first report in Cinema Papers, no. 116, May 1997) and seen the transition from a country show environment to a Hollywood quality facility.

Mix
The site is leased by Fox for 40 years with a ten-year option and breaks down into three zones: largest is the production areas (45 percent of the site); the other two are the studio tour and the public access areas (total around 50 percent). Currently, six stages are completed and in use.

According to Fox Studios Australia CEO Kim Williams, the public precinct "is quite fundamental to the commercial viability of the place. We've never made any secret of that."

In Williams' view, Film studios are inherently cost-centres, rather than profit-centres. They are very expensive things to build. So, from the outset, we've never been shy about it making it clear that the public development is quite fundamental to the financial viability and sustainability of the place.

Finances aside, Williams concedes public acceptance is "an important component in terms of celebrating film and television as the great creative products of the 20th century". He sees it as being quite logical for a major production complex to cosy up to a public access facility, and believes the mix of work and play environments can "lift the veil" on film and television activity in a way that will "inform, entertain [and] amaze the public".

The showcase will be the "backlot experience" – an opportunity to gain insight into the entire film and television production process, everything from casting, set design, special effects, stunts, make-up, wardrobe to digital post-production.

Williams:
It's a hard task to create something which is informational and educational, but at the same time entertaining and compelling. We're involving some important creatives in that process. Baz Luhrmann and Barrie Kosky are working on, what I think will be, a quite remarkable performance demonstration for the public – an immersive experience.

It is expected that 1.4 million people will visit the exhibition in its first year. Williams confirmed that, Wherever possible in the retailing
area, we've endeavoured to relate it to film and television. There'll be a very substantial music store here with the capacity for live performances and live broadcasts to originate from there.

Meal breaks
Next to the post-shoot beer, most crews take great interest in food as the shooting day grinds on. Initially, there were no plans for the company to provide restaurants, leaving crew meals to the production companies and freelance caterers.

This has now changed, as Williams explains:
We will have a proper and substantial coffee shop that will operate through very extended hours to provide sandwiches, hot foods at lunchtime and other services through the day. We've been very eager to respect and reinforce the basis on which the Australian industry has grown up, which is built on its being freelance and on there being a wide variety of service providers to the industry.

There is also a restaurant, which we'll call a commissary, but it's just a general-purpose eating place; the public will be allowed to go there as well.

Fully booked
Williams:
We're fully occupied at the moment with two productions: *Babe 2* is wrapping production at the moment (June '98), while still continuing on some exterior shots. And we have *The Matrix* which is occupying five of the sound stages; that will be here for about another two months. It is expected a big overseas-sourced production will move in immediately after *The Matrix*.

Future bookings?
Williams:
We're holding bookings through until the year 2002. It's been reported that we're fully booked until then, which we've never said. But we are fully booked through the start of next year and then we have a series of quite substantial, sporadic bookings until 2002.

Disquiet
Some still fear that Fox will become a monster facility and, simultaneously, a prodigious competitor in the production sphere itself. Williams agreed that Fox "works in a variety of rôles; (one is) as a facilities company servicing the tenants on the site - both permanent and itinerant tenants."

He added that the company could be of further assistance to production companies "as a production services company", to provide things ranging from employer of record services and liaison with a variety of government agencies. With a number of producers, we've provided location advisory services. We've done comprehensive location surveys and detailed documentation of external locations.

In the realm of direct production, Fox Studios has a joint venture with Icon Productions (Mel Gibson and Bruce Davies), and a body of independent developments which Fox has initiated itself. An important one is the relationship with Baz Luhrmann. Williams says, "We work closely with Baz. He is absolutely independent and Fox treasures and respects his independence."

In dealing with other entities there would be, Williams confirms, "a much more active relationship through the development process".

Then the question arises: Who gets priority in booking a stage for a production period? Would Fox have the edge? Williams:
You can only operate a place like this on one basis: it's first come,
When asked how he viewed the competitive environment with Fox in Sydney and Warner-Roadshow's Gold Coast stages, Kim Williams diplomatically explained that Fox has a very cordial relationship with our colleagues on the Gold Coast. They've been running an enterprise now for 10 years and a very large amount of work has passed through there.

In contrast, Williams sees the Sydney amenity as providing services and resources that are much needed, but have not been available to Sydney-based productions previously. In terms of international work it actually increases the level of interest in using Australia.

Williams is convinced Sydney is the fulcrum of production. The two major production cities in Australia are Sydney and Melbourne – and Sydney clearly has certain advantages in that a large body of the creative community lives here.

Sydney is the international gateway to Australia. It's the home to many important filmmakers and to a whole range of cinematographers, technical support personnel, editors, musicians – and, I suppose, above all – actors.

Would there be a cost saving in using Fox as opposed to shooting at the Gold Coast? Williams:

I've never done a financial analysis of the relative cost between production in Sydney and the Gold Coast. I imagine there would be certain cost savings.

**Rates**

Like the proverbial piece of string, there are prices and prices when it comes to the hire of a stage. Williams expresses it this way:

Clearly things are negotiable according to the period of occupancy, the number of stages that are taken. The rack rates range from a low of around $7,000 a week (TV stages) up to a high of $28,000 a week for the major stages.

---

**The Public**

Two cinema complexes will be operated by Hoyts: a mainstream multiplex art deco design, “echoing the romantic era of the 1920s and 1930s” will have 11 screens; the art-house cinema will comprise four screens. Seating will range in size from 150 seats to 500 seats.

In the “pro precinct”, there will be two television stages, all can be used in any way.

THE STAGES

Essential rules apply in terms of the noise level sound design to all stages: 80dBA exterior level achieves 30dBA inside due to the design of the overall structure with a NR 25 rating. This is achieved via sound lock doors and the accuracy of their design, bi-fold large elephant doors, and the design of roof and walls. In total, 10 layers make up the roof to ensure the sound rating is maintained.

Stage walls are acoustically treated, incorporating specialized barriers and effective sound absorption materials to reduce the internal reverberation time. Acoustically secure cable ports ensure minimal intrusion of sound when used in conjunction with external support vehicles.

Although configured as four film and two television stages, all can be adapted for either use. All the stage floors are concrete and are covered either with durable plywood or vinyl for television applications.

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**Ancillary Tenants**

A rundown on who is already on site at Fox:

**Cineffects.** Mechanical, atmospheric, pyrotechnic and physical effects.

**Faith Martin.** Casting agency.

**Fox Icon.** Joint venture between Fox Studio Australia and Icon Productions.

**Global Television.** Broadcast vehicles, cameras, videotape machines, digital FX units etc.

**Kodak.** Film storage and support for Cineon systems.

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**Maura Fay and Associates.** Casting agency.

**Moneypenny.** Specialist accounting and financial management services.

**Multiliners.** Casting Consultants.

**Panavision Australia.** Post-production facilities.

**Pride Studios.** Physical, mechanical and atmospheric effects, design and construction services.

**Prototype.** Casting agency.

---

**Stage One**

**Area:** 3,535 sq.m

**Dimensions:** 86 x 41.1 x 20m

**Soundproofing:** 80 percent

**Special Features:** House in a restored heritage Pavilion.

**Stage Two**

**Area:** 3,007 sq.m

**Dimensions:** 64.4 x 46.7 x 15m

**Soundproofing:** 100 percent

**Rack Rates:** 28.1 x 26.5 x 10ft high (40 x 60 x 10ft deep)

**Special Features:** Air-conditioned, one elephant door.

**Stage Three**

**Area:** 1,324 sq.m

**Dimensions:** 40 x 33.1 x 12m

**Soundproofing:** 100 percent

**Rack Rates:** 33.1 x 22.7 x 10m

**Special Features:** Air-conditioned, two elephant doors, ancillary building with production offices etc.

**Stage Four**

**Area:** 751 sq.m

**Dimensions:** 33.1 x 22.7 x 10m

**Soundproofing:** 100 percent

**Special Features:** Air-conditioned, one elephant door.

**Stage Five**

**Area:** 935 sq.m

**Dimensions:** 35.3 x 26.5 x 10m

**Soundproofing:** 100 percent

**Special Features:** Air-conditioned with TV rating, two elephant doors, cyc tracks.

**Stage Six**

**Area:** 765 sq.m

**Dimensions:** 28.1 x 26.5 x 10m

**Soundproofing:** 100 percent

**Special Features:** Air-conditioned with TV rating, two elephant doors.

---

**Show Film.** Travel and freight services.

**Soundfilm.** Post-production sound, sound mixing facilities, ADR, Foley.

**Spectrum Films.** Post-production facility.

**Stage and Screen.** Travel and freight services.

**Studio Kite.** Special effects.

**The Stunt Agency.** Stunt coordinators.

**TropNest.** A writers’ initiative.
In the mix
by Dina Ross

It's human nature to try and pigeonhole artists: this one is traditional, that one avant garde; he is a crowd pleaser, she dares almost too much. Compartmentalizing is our way of playing safe and making sense of individual talents. But it doesn't always work that way.

How can you neatly label the music group Supersonic, for example: three musicians-cum-composers-cum-film directors, who cross musical boundaries with such ease, that even describing the work they do is almost impossible? One moment they are writing upbeat jingles for commercials, the next lyrical full-scale film scores. Perhaps the easiest way to comprehend the Supersonic style is to listen to their latest CD, Scope. The musical range covered is mind-boggling. From the jazzy "Critical Mass" to the eerie, outer-space ambiance of "Flashlight"; from the dark drum and bass of "Teddy" to the Henry Mancini-esque "Toy".

The world of Supersonic is one where traditional instruments happily co-exist alongside state-of-the-art digital technology and where the mood sequences swing from the romantic to the absurd, the funky to the psychedelic. Yet the technology never replaces the emotive content of the music. It is always listenable and audience-friendly. To call Supersonic one of the most versatile music trios working in Australia today is no understatement.

Yet, when you talk to Supersonic, there is no indication that the broad sweep of their collective imagination is in any way unusual. It is all in a day's work, beavering away in the four studios that comprise Supersonic's headquarters in the heart of Sydney's Kings Cross: one for each of the musicians, and a central studio for mixing. It is a far cry from their early days, when the group came together in 1990. Andrew Lancaster, Paul Healy and Antony Partos met when they were studying music in Sydney. There was an immediate rapport. Says Partos: We knew straightaway that we could make music together and, more importantly, that we could concentrate on writing our own work and still be able to collaborate on joint ventures. That is the secret to our versatility perhaps: being able to pool our resources, bounce ideas off each other, cross-fertilize, and still have the time to develop our own creativity.

The three start and finish each other's sentences as people working together for a long time tend to do. They talk about their early days as struggling musicians, studying, working, writing whatever music they could to make ends meet. Eight years ago, moving into their Kings Cross studio was a gamble, rents were high, they were starting out. It was just one studio then. But the work kept coming in. And coming in.

Advertising was their bread and butter at first and even now forms an important part of their portfolio. You may not know you are listening to a Supersonic melody when you tune in during a television commercial break, but the chances are high: Pepsi, Optus, Kelloggs, Nike, Fosters. There's a distinctive quality to the sound: clarity, sophistication, a marrying of the music to the message.

Lancaster: We are able to write to the brief, that's important. A client, an advertising agency, has a vision and our role is to interpret that vision through music.

They agree that writing for corporates can be tough, as composers battle against popular trends and expectations.

Healy: We do try and influence the agencies to be a bit more daring if we can. There's a tendency for all commercials to sound the same, which we actively dislike. A little while ago, the buzz word in ad music was The Prodigy. The creative directors had all heard this band, and thought...
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it was the cutting-edge. So the brief went: “Make it sound like The Prodigy. [The three laugh.] Our challenge was to convince them there’s often another way that is just as effective.

So writing music for performance – theatre, dance, film – refreshes the creative parts some jingles cannot reach.

Supersonic has completed the score for the Sydney Theatre Company’s production of Patrick Marber’s play of sexual intrigue, Closer, seen in Melbourne in July. Other collaborations have included the score for the AIDS trilogy, Angels in America, for Melbourne Theatre Company and Belvoir Street’s confronting, post-modern Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead.

Healy worked on the music for Barrie Kosky’s forthcoming production at the STC of Eugene O’Neill’s Mourning Becomes Electra. None of these commissions could be called ‘easy music’ – each demands the concentration and participation of the audience, yet at the same time the music must allow the action and dialogue to flow undisturbed.

Partos: Writing for the stage or for dance companies is exhilarating, because you can take risks you would never dare in film. For Chunky Move Dance Company, we have composed a variety of works, loud, aggressive, insinuating. It’s very liberating.

Lancaster: In fact, we’re composing the music for Chunky Move’s one-hour ABC-TV special, WET, which is a dance-drama tele-feature.

Healy: And we’re always interested in new ventures. We have just submitted a proposal for the mdTV Project, commissioned by OzOpera, MusicArtsDance Films and ABC-TV, which seeks new, original, music and concepts. Working with a number of different groups is very important to us, as you need to keep ideas fresh, seek a variety of outside stimuli.

The ABC and SBS have been important sponsors of their talent. Their compositions have included scores for the series Seven Deadly Sins (“Lust” and “Greed”), which won the Australian Composers Guild Best Music for a Mini-series award) and music for SBS’s irreverent Eat Carpet. Lancaster edited an SBS special on the SBS Youth Orchestra and Partos has composed the soundscape for the 18-minute film, Empire, produced for the ABC’s Indigenous Programs Unit as part of last year’s Festival of Dreaming. It is an immensely lyrical, hauntingly beautiful work, highly emotive, darkly dignified.

Partos: The work is an elegy, a tribute to those Aborigines and early Australians who died in the name of empire building. In its quiet way, the film is a savage indictment of colonization. Essentially, what you see is a series of landscape shots: parched earth, the salt-encrusted skull of a bird, a Union Jack in tatters. The vision is bleak. Only finally, the rains come, offering some promise of hope. The work was performed by the Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, with whom I have a long association, and broadcast as part of the series, “Three for the Lucky Country”. I’m hoping to receive a grant to enable me to compile all the work I have done with the TSO on CD.

To date, the three have completed the scores and/or sound designs of some 25 short films and documentaries, including Idiot Box, directed by David Caesar, a particularly inventive project as composition, sound design and editing were incorporated into the brief. Another film, the short Bullet Proof and Blind, won several awards for sound in 1995. New departures also include working on music video clips with artists of the calibre of Nathan Caveleri and the Jaynes.

Healy: Diversity, you see, diversity. I mean, there’s Antony’s work with the TSO, I’m working on a new CD with the working title, Porn Star; Andrew’s going to collaborate again with Castard and is joining forces with their lead singer David McCormack to work on the music for David Caesar’s next film, Mullet.

So where do they go from here?

Partos: We would all say that there are two major goals for us this year. The first is for each of us to be recognized for the diversity of things we do. Andrew, for example, is known to some members of the music industry as a director and sound designer, not as a composer. We have all suffered from the ‘pigeonhole syndrome’. But, most importantly, we are looking for feature films to work on, films where music is an integral part of the action. The more complex, the more esoteric the concept, the better.

Shekhar Kapur, the Indian director whose film Bandit Queen (1994) created a stir, especially in India where it was banned, recently finished filming his first English-language film, Elizabeth, for the British production company Working Title. The film stars two Australian actors, Cate Blanchett, as Elizabeth I, and Geoffrey Rush, as Sir Francis Walsingham, her confidante.

That’s not the only Australian connection. As well as procuring the talents of Australian editor Jill Bilcock, Kapur also commissioned composer David Hirschfelder to write the score, which has been recorded and mixed in Melbourne.

While it was Hirschfelder’s idea to record the score in Australia, Kapur had been primed to possibly make further use of the post-production facilities here. “I think at one point Jill spoke to me about doing post-production here”, he explained during a break in mixing the soundtrack. Every facility I’ve seen in Australia offers great post-production expertise, but I think Working Title has already got a director from India, and they didn’t want the director from India to go to Australia and do the post-production there; they’d feel a little out of control. They want some more control over the film than that. Kapur is constantly amazed at the number of Australians involved in the international film industry, a phenomenon which he thinks is tied up with Australians’ urge to travel and search for identity. However, it was something a little more basic that convinced Kapur that Hirschfelder was the man for the job. “PolyGram set up a meeting with me in a place called the Soho House in London, and sometimes just two people get along”, he said.

I had not seen Strictly Ballroom [Baz Luhrmann, 1992], and I’d heard the score of Shine [Scott Hicks, 1996], but I think that’s not why it happened. It happened because of a connection. Sometimes it’s very difficult to make that, and try and understand that connection. I’m always looking for how much emotion will be given. Once you’re a composer, obviously there are certain parameters of your art that you accept. You can take five painters of equal technical ability, and one of them’s great and one of them’s boring. The one that’s great’s difference is attitude and emotion; how much of themselves they give. So, I instinctively look for people that will give their soul.

Having assumed that he [Hirschfelder] did a film like Shine and had been nominated for an Oscar, I felt that he had the technical ability. I felt that warm, and I felt that here was a man that scored with a heart, and was desperately in search for things to connect with.

We discussed things and, within about twenty minutes of meeting, we just went to a piano that was in the club, he played some notes, and I thought, “If a man can give me notes that I like so fast, then I need to hang on to him.” Those notes became the love theme, and they were made in twenty minutes in a club in Soho on a piano.
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**Film and Television Studies may be a relatively new field of study at Bond University, but it’s proved to be a fast developer.**

"The success of the Bond Film & Television program results from four factors," says Professor of Film & Television, Bruce Molloy.

"First, is the balance between theory and practice; second, the strong professional input, both from the advisory committee that oversees the courses and from the many industry professionals who contribute to the teaching program; third, the enthusiasm, creativity and dedication of both staff and students, and fourth is the fact Bond University works to three semesters in each academic year, allowing completion of both undergraduate and postgraduate Film and Television degrees in minimal time."

**An Effective Team**
Professor Bruce Molloy has been a director of Barron Entertainment, makers of "Ship to Shore" and "Kings in Grass Castles", and a board member of the PFTC and the Brisbane International Film Festival (BIFF). Another member of the teaching team is Bridget Goodwin whose documentary "A Young Tree Green" was screened on prime time on ABC TV on September 8.

**Unique Internships**
A unique feature of the Bond Film & Television course is its link with the Warner Roadshow Studios at Coomera. Advanced students have been interns at the studios, many of them finding employment based on the experience and contacts they gained there.

---

**Lights Camera Action**

Over the past three years, students have undertaken internships on numerous productions including "Flipper #2", "Pacific Drive", "Meteorite", "Project X", "Fire", "Medivac", "Dear Claudia", "Black Ice" and "Misery Guts".

**Masters Students in the News**
Well-known Gold Coast ABC TV reporter Karen Berkman, a one-year Master of Film and Television student wrote a feature script, "Suspicion", as part of her studies, and is currently under consideration by a major Australian producer.

Nicole McCuaig, who will graduate with a master's degree this year, won the documentary prize at this year's Queensland New Filmmakers Awards for her dramatic expose of Schoolies' Week, "Rage of Innocence", which screened on ABC TV in February this year. Nicole's next project, a feature film, has received development funding from the Pacific Film and Television state film agency.

**The Future**
"With the prospect of introducing a new masters in interactive media, and with plans for expansion of in-house production, the future for Bond's film and television students appears very bright indeed", said Professor Molloy.

For further information please contact

**Brett Hartley:**
Phone: (07) 5595 2508; Fax: (07) 5595 2545
Penélope Cruz. A little original casting would be a relief.

The film starts brilliantly, an eerie and moodily documentation of a handsome and wealthy bachelor as he does nothing with his life, other than play tennis and try not to spend two nights with the same girl. With such a partner turn-over, it is to be expected he finds a psycho in the pack. The result is personally disastrous and leads to the film’s unsettling shift into science fiction.

In many ways, the film parallels the work of major British writer Christopher Priest. His books always begin realistically, but by half-way have shifted to pure fabulation. John Fowles has written extensively about Priest’s great narrative skills, but also expressed his anxiety at reaching that point in each book when novelistic reality is abandoned for science fiction (or some other fabulist form).

Open Your Eyes has the same concerns. The last half feels like it has come from another film, as if some of Gottaca (Andrew Nicol, 1997) got swapped with it at the lab. The futuristic elements are potentially interesting but rendered somewhat silly, the direction rather clunky. The open ending is also annoying. No wonder the director has got into verbal disputes with audiences at festivals around the world.

Ultimately, given all he has asked his audience to accept, there is an arrogance in snubbing his nose at them with such an open-text ending. All films are open texts; do we really have to have it shoved so unsubtly in our faces?

12:00 Sunday 2 August

Vincent Minnelli moved from theatre to film at the ripe old age of 40 (middle-aged yet-to-be-filmmakers don’t despair) to make the classic Cabin in the Sky.

With all an-black cast (cinema’s first), and great comic performances by Ethel Waters and Eddie Anderson, this is pure delight. Waters can also belt out a tune, as does Lena Horne in her first screen role.

Cabin in the Sky is both a witty addition to the gone-to-heaven-and-turned genre (cf Here Comes Mr Jordan) and the black musical. While some of the stereotyping might upset the puritanically correct, for the rest the sheer narrative momentum and the obvious joyousness at work will be a real high.

Then, too, there is Lena Horne pulling up her skirt to reveal her garter and what makes her a women (as the dialogue hints), before singing the gloriously explicit “Honey in the Honeycomb”. How did that ever get past the censors?

14:15 Sunday 2 August

Ulrike Koch’s The Saltmen of Tibet is ethnographic filmmaking for the committed (in this case, a more-than-full cinema). It is a minutely-detailed look at the life of tribesmen who cross the “roof of the world” to collect salt from the high lakes of the Himalayas. This patriarchal culture, where no women are allowed on the trip and all men are strictly classified as to tasks and position, is one of the few cultures left untouched by modern man (despite the worst efforts of the Chinese).

Like many a great ethnographic documentary, this is slow-going, carefully capturing the lifestyle and pace of its subjects. As such, it is immensely valuable, especially to those fascinated by Tibet or vanishing peoples.

The pity is that it was shot on video (and then telecined onto 35mm film). While the end result could be argued to be an advance of telecines of the past, it is ghastly to watch in a cinema. Video belongs on television, where it is looked kind of acceptable; in a cinema, it is an abomination.

Still, the capacity audience seemed to feel differently, communally relishing this record of a special people.

“Communal” is not a bad word for Brisbane. Being a less-hectic city than Sydney or Melbourne, without its pressures and angst (though the new parliament had just sat and the battles there were rather frightening). As a result, the Brisbane Film Festival has all the pleasures of a regional international festival, such as Valladolid in Spain. Its range of films is wide and well-chosen, without the inordinate number of already-bought films that bedevilled the big festivals last year (but not this).

Brisbane’s is a festival growing in stature and one hopes the political turmoil in the north do not negatively affect what is now a major culture event in this country.

1 See Michael Kitson, “John Ruane’s Sentimental Comedies”, in Cinema Papers, no. 125, June 1998, pp. 32-4, 73.
2 See Margaret Smith, “Miranda Otto: Truth or Dare”, Cinema Papers, no. 120, October 1997, pp. 18-22, 42.

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Radiance

The most popular film (according to one report) of the Festival, surprisingly, was Rachel Perkins’ Radiance.3 This is surprising because of the painful nature of the subject matter: three grieving sisters trying to make sense of the past life (and death) of their mother. The film’s tendency towards naturalism is on occasions undermined by the artificial that is introduced by the narrative frames (Madame Butterfly and Louie Nowra’s play of the same name). But the film catches fire when the emotional fragility of each of the sisters is explored and allowed to unravel before us on the screen. Such epiphanies carry a tremendous charge and, though these scenes are painful to watch, they are for the most part represented with piercing insight and clarity.

The performances in these scenes are remarkable indeed, from Rachael Maza (the breakdown of her character, Cressy, is overwhelming precisely because the character had seemed so restrained in earlier scenes); from Trisha Morton Thomas (whose character had been slightly less restrained than Maza’s); and from Deborah Mailman (as the ‘modern’ hybrid, Nona).

Indeed, the film is rather restrained in style; its strength comes from the three central performances and from the accumulated weight of tragic absence that becomes resonant and timely in broader historical terms: absent parents — ever-present absence that becomes resonant and timely in broader historical terms: absent parents — ever-present ghosts — that haunt the fabric of these characters’ lives.

This is a timely and thoughtful film for thoughtful people: there are half-evoked but nonetheless deeply affecting subtexts about dispossess and the negative impact of colonization upon traditional ways of life and rites of passage, just as there are allusions to division and separation. This is a courageous and painfully honest film. One hopes that Australians will respond to it at the box-office.


27 ranking the treasures

who did not consider movies beneath his dignity, he appeared constantly through the silent period (significantly in Maurice Elvey’s 1922 Wandering Jews). Upon the arrival of sound, he showed a developing understanding of its demands, and ambitious productions were mounted around him. In Milton Rosner’s intriguing 1933 Channel Crossing, Lang is an orchid-wearing tycoon trying to escape the consequences of the stock-market crash — one of the few British films to touch a subject which Hollywood treated extensively.

A year later he is Nova Pilbeam’s divorced actor dad in Little Friend, a film aggressively in the trappings of progressive cinema — Germanic dream sequences, overwrought camera, all-white décors. This is again the work of Berthold Viertel, confirming that his English films unfortunately now seem merely ponderous.

Arliss

George Arliss, whose success in Hollywood at the age of 60-plus was surprising, fits right in here with his archaic stage successes not all that different from the work done around him in the British industry. Rosner’s 1935 The Guernor is agreeable and unconvincing as tramp Arliss uses his distant connection to the Rothschilds to outwit stock swindlers.

His exotics are more interesting. In East Meets West, directed by Herbert Mason in 1936, “Old Fox” Arliss, Sultan of Tunara, plays the Raj, favoured by his Oxford-educated son (“England is strong and splendid”) against wily orientals represented by the ever-admiring Romney Brent. Mason’s 1936 His Lordship has twin Arlisses, one an old Arab hand and the other a snotty Lord who pontificates, “There are only two things to be done with orientals: persuasion and troops.” As with Victor Schertzinger’s 1939 Technicolor The Mikado, the studio Eastern design reveals that the accomplishment represented by Thief of Bagdad is not the stands-alone achievement it appeared to be.

The second part of this article will be published in the next issue of Cinema Papers.
**Cinema and the Senses**

Visual culture and spectatorship

**November 13–15 1998**

**University of New South Wales**

An international conference organised by the School of Theatre, Film and Dance, UNSW, and the Department of Art History and Theory, University of Sydney.

International keynote speakers: Patrice Petro (University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee) and Ashish Rajadhyaksha. The Indian film director Kumar Shahani, will be an international guest at the conference. There will also be a screening of his most recent work. Local speakers include Meaghan Morris, Adrian Martin, Helen Grace, Ross Gibson, Cathryn Vasseleu, Simon During and Therese Davis, Alan Cholodenko, Laleen Jayamanne.

Registration: $120, concession $60. Daily rates available.

Contact: 02 9385 5635 or 02 9351 4213
Email: J Brooks@unsw.edu.au or g.kouyaros@unsw.edu.au

Cinema and the Senses has been assisted by the Australian Film Commission, the India Council of the Department of Foreign Affairs, the Power Institute, University of Sydney, and the University of NSW.
available should the film be lucky enough to survive time in other ways, if you know what I mean.

IT'S AN EXAMPLE ONE WOULD HOPE OTHERS WILL FOLLOW. I UNDERSTAND YOU'VE MADE AN EXHIBITION COPY AND A PRESERVATION COPY OF ALL YOUR FILMS.

I love that idea that there's something there that looks like it did when it left my care.

ARE YOU DEVELOPING PROJECTS THAT HAVE THE POTENTIAL TO BE FINANCED AND FILMED IN AUSTRALIA?

I'm not developing anything at the moment; I'm reading scripts. It was certainly never my intention to only make films in America. As you know, I live here, I cut my pictures and mix them here, and work on the screen-plays here. It's been a case of going off to location.

Initially when I went to America, I was ready for a break. I'd made five feature films, shorts and a television movie, and it was time to have a change of scenery, new people and new stimulations, just like a painter goes to another country to reinvigorate himself.

But that period is long past and now I've made, I think, six features there. Nothing would please me more than to do something here, or anywhere else other than America, just for a change.

I love that saying that a film is its own country. When filmmakers begin their careers, they're very interesting for their talent and fresh voice alone, but they give a quick reflection of their society. If they have the potential for a long career, after a certain number of films they become the country. You don't think of Bergman as Swedish, first off. "A Bergman film": he could live in Bergamnia for all I know. There is no other Swede like him. You don't go to Sweden and say, "Gosh, this is Bergman country." You could get the feeling of a Bergman film on a foggy night in a forest outside Sydney. They create a landscape, as Hitchcock did, which is so recognizable it becomes Hitchcockian.

Nationality is of interest, but it's not significant, other than when somebody is beginning their career. They give a very fresh view of their country.

But I feel energetic, invigorated, stimulated. Naturally, when you get a good reception to a film, it's encouraging. In fact, the danger is to go off too quickly onto something else. There's a dangerous period when you feel somewhat invincible, like the Roman general, when he got a triumph in Rome and the slave had to whisper, "You're only human."

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2. D. Harvey, ibid, p. 45.

3. D. Harvey, ibid, p. 51.


5. D. Harvey, ibid, p. 53.


10. CCH, ibid, 7-480.


12. AGPS, ibid, p. 2.

13. AGPS, ibid, p. 49.

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H O W  D ID  Y O U  FEEL A B O U T  TH E  TH R EE

were just a few characters. It was
she is not shy in saying what she doesn’t
We had a wonderful time. We
plays into screenplays
such a small budget. It was originally a
the ambience of North Queensland and
that they were watching a play and yet
making sure the audience didn’t think

One has to take the financial constraints
not being afraid of claustrophobia.

I  was near Yeppoon staying in a motel.
Interestingly enough, it is the only play
of mine that I  can go and see again and
again. I don’t know the reason for it. It
must be something about the emotions
between the three sisters. With
the film, I found that I had those same
feelings of involvement.

W H E N  Y O U  W R O T E  I T ,  W A S  I T  I N T E N D E D
T O  B E  A  I N D I G E N O U S  D R A M A ?

I was near Yeppoon staying in a motel.
Yeppoon has a lot of mud flats and I
saw a figure on the mud flats and I
thought it was a very evocative image.
I rarely spend time in my private life
with actors, but, as coincidence and
events would actually have it, the most
time I ever spent with actors has been
with Aboriginal actors Justine Saun-
ders, Rhoda Roberts and Lydia Miller,
as friends.

I  was the first time I’d ever thought,
as a writer, “That is an interesting
aspect of them.” So when I wrote parts
for Lydia in my plays, it was the first
time that as a writer I was taking parts
of the actor’s personality and putting it
in a character. A lot of writers do that,
but it just so happened these were the
actors that I knew more than any other
actors.

I  was down in Melbourne and I was
thinking about this image and I imag-
inated Lydia, Rhoda and Kylie Belling.
The next day, Lydia knocked on the
doors. She was passing through Mel-
bourne, and said, “I’ve been thinking
of this idea. Why don’t you write a play
for me, Rhoda and Kylie?” It was a
completely out of the blue, an absolute
case of serendipity! I said I’ve been
thinking of this idea, so I wrote the
play Radience, and then Kylie couldn’t
do it, Rachel Mazza did the premiere
and later the film, so actually Radience
came out of wanting to do a play for
these actresses.

W A S  W O R K I N G  W I T H  R A C H E L ,  A  W O M A N
DIRECTOR, A N Y  D I F F E R E N T  T O  A N Y  O T H E R
COLLABORATIONS?

I’ve worked with women directors a lot
in theatre. It was interesting that the
premiere of the play was directed by
a woman, Rosalba Clemente. I actually
thought that it was a great help, because
somehow a woman director can get the
cruelty of how women treat other
women better than men can – the
psychological cruelty and how one can
whittle away at one another. Having
been brought up in an all-woman house-
hold, I fully understand that. A man may
go for an easier way of describing and
painting the emotions, so I think having
a woman was important.

I T S  A  B R A V E R  F I L M  T H A N  A N Y  O F

One of the things about it that Rachel
and I talked about during the writing
was not to be afraid of a richness of
emotions.

Y O U  H A V E  A L W A Y S  B E E N  I N T E R E S T E D

We often forget, especially in the 20th
century, how all of us are caught up in
big events and we don’t recognize it.
My main concern is never to make any
of my characters abstract. It has to start
from the personal; they have to be
interesting characters who get caught
up in large events.

With Radience, my and the original
actresses’ concern was that, whenever
people do films with Aboriginal actors,
they become abstractions; they
become vessels for political stances
and, generally, victims.

L O O K  A T  W I L D I S E :  T H E Y  E V E N  G A V E  T H E
ABORIGINAL ACTOR A R O N  P E D E R S O N
A N  I T A L I A N  P A R E N T .

[Laughs] I like that.

In Radience, the crucial thing is the
emotions between the sisters. That

they are Aborigines is never mentioned,
because, like any group of people who
are Aboriginal, they don’t sit around
discussing their own identity.

The other thing that was very impor-
tant was we didn’t want to do a film
where people think, “All right, I’ll go
and see it because it is my duty.” We were
really keen that it was a film that people
tell others to go see: “It is funny, it is
moving and, by the way, they happen to
be Aborigines.”

A R E  Y O U  T H I N K I N G  O F  D I R E C T I N G ?
Yes, I’m going to direct, but I must say
this is not because I’m annoyed with
what directors have done to my scripts.
I have written what they wanted. The
great irony is that I would never have
wanted to direct the film scripts I have
written. I am inclined towards a differ-
ent style of directing and directors.

W H I C H  D I R E C T O R S  A R E  T H E Y ?
[Sergei] Paradjanov, director of the
astonishing The Colour of Pomegran-
ates [Sayat Nova, 1972]. I am attracted
to visually-flamboyant films like Nic
Roeg’s Eureka [1981], one of the great
unsung movies of the past 20 years.
David Cronenberg’s The Brood [1979]
also had a huge impact on me.

W H A T  I S  T H I S  F I L M :  H A S  T H E  I D E A  C O M E
F R O M  Y O U ,  O R  S O M E W H E R E  E L S E ?
Well, it is a mixture of both, but it
started out of images. That is how it
always begins. I see a figure in a cer-
tain landscape and I want to know why
that person is there.

The best films are dreams. I’ve just
been working in LA with Kathryn
Bigelow, who directed Near Dark
[1987] and Strange Days [1995]. Near
Dark is to me one of the most exciting
films of the ’80s, a vampire movie set
in the American mid-west, and it has
all the power of wonderful movies in
that sometimes you actually think it is
a dream you are watching.

C I N E M A  I S  S O  M U C H  M O R E  P O W E R F U L
B E C A U S E  Y O U ’ R E  I N  A  D A R K  P L A C E  L I K E
I N  A  D R E A M .  W I T H  T E L E V I S I O N ,  Y O U  A R E
W A N T  T O  B E  I N V O L V E D  I N  O T H E R  F O R M S
O F  T H E  C R E A T I O N .

I am very lucky in that I achieve a deep
satisfaction out of writing my plays and
novels. What I like about being
involved in films is to be part of a film’s
creation with the director, to travel to
places I would never have normally
gone ... and the money.

A U S T R A L I A N  F I L M  I N D U S T R Y  I S  A T
A N D  W H E R E  I T  M I G H T  G O ?

The difficult thing for the Australian
film industry is going to be the move
from the small budgets we have been
dealing with to larger ones. With that
comes a certain level of compromise.
One of the interesting things is that
move from quirky movies into some-
thing that is emotionally truer and
richer.

I think the quirky Australian movies
are wonderful, but they are very defen-
sive in that they want their cake and
eat it, too; they want you to feel the
emotions and, at the same time, they
want you to laugh at the emotions.
Whereas with The Boys [Rowan
Woods, 1998] and Radiance, they are
vulnerable movies; either good or
bad, they are vulnerable. Muriel’s
Wedding [P. J. Hogan, 1994], Strictly
Ballroom [Baz Luhrmann, 1992] and
Cosi [Mark Joffe, 1994] are not vulnera-
bles; they are films where the humour
is defensive.
The end of the black & white credit roll?

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DIVING SCHOOL

D: KEVIN CARLTON E: EVA PUNCH
P: ABC, ATVEA
D: HALLMARK ENTERTAINMENT

THEIR EMPIRE

D: KEN CAMERON E: REBEL PENGUIN-RUSSELL
P: SUE MALLERY, STEPHEN JOHNSON W: ALISON NISSELY
P: ABC, ATVEA

THE BEACH

D: SEAN McKEE, JANE MANNING, OLIVE HONE, NAIMA BARNETT
P: SBS, ABC, RTE
D: PIC, PBS

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Features in Planning

THE MAGIC PUDDING

D: SIMON WICHER E: EMMA WINCHESTER, STEPHEN HAYES P: ERIK SULLIVAN W: DAVID WILIAMSON
D: HALLMARK ENTERTAINMENT

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Documentaries

DIVING SCHOOL

(6 X 30 MINUTE NON ACCORD SERIES)

PROSPERO PRODUCTIONS

D: JULIA REDWOOD E: EVA PUNCH
P: ABC TV, CHANNES 5, RTE, DISCOVERY EUROPE
D: PREMIERE UK

George Gittens is one of the last 20th century’s most interesting painters. A social realist expressionist painter, Gittens has witnessed and painted the major social and military conflicts over the last ten years. The film will document the work he has produced on his world travels and will follow him to China where he’ll paint the workers and people involved in the construction of the Three Gorges Dam in the Yangtze River. Eye Witness will provide an insight into the dark and heroic side of the human condition as we approach the millennium.

WINDS OF CHANGE

(3 X 55 MINUTES, 4 X 40 MINUTES, 3 X 45 MINUTES, NON-ACCORD SERIES)

ALLEY KAT PRODUCTIONS LTD/ ELECTRIC PICTURES LTD

D: ALAN CARTER E: PAUL CARTER, ANDREW GULLIV
P: ANDREW GULLIV
DISTRIBUTOR: SBS, BBC, RTHK
D: FUT AUSLIA

A western culture tries to find some meaning, clues or global trends in the lead up to the new millennium, a series which they could do well to look at. The series is a broad sweeping series on the great rise of these fantastic and decent dramatic decline of the ‘tiger’ economies of the ‘Asian Century’. Both for the region and globally it is a timely title to try and get to know from the inside what the human impact of this huge social change, the series will go beyond the statistics to present the view from ‘inside the bubble’ in Indonesia, Vietnam and Hong Kong.

Features in Planning

THE MAGIC PUDDING

Production company: ENHANCED ENTERTAINMENT Director: KARI KANG Executive producer: GERRY TRAVERS Scriptwriter: MURRAY GILMOUR Based on the novel titled: THE MAGIC PUDDING

by Nicholas Lindsay
Director of animation: ROBERT SMIT
MARKETING International sales agent: BEYOND FILMS
CAST
The voices of: GEOFFREY RUSBY (BUNNY BLUEGUN), HUGO WEARING (BILB BARNACLE), JOHN LAWRENCE (RUPPUS SIMPSON), SAM NEIL, JACK THOMPSON
SYNOPSIS
Nim Press Lindsay’s classic tale, NEW, written to settle an argument over whether children preferred stories about food over those of fantasy, is
coming to life in a feature-length animated film.

PARADISE LOST, PARADISE FOUND
Production company: Australian International Pictures Production year: 1999
Principle credits:
Director: Neil Johnson
Producers: John Ewett, Wayne Groom
Scriptwriter: Gail Gerard
Synopsis: Paradise Lost, Paradise Found looks at what happened after the Mutiny on the Bounty.

Production Survey

Feature in Pre-Production

BORED OLIVES
Pre-production: October 1998
Location: Brisbane
Principal credits:
Director: Belinda Candy
Producer: Bruce Reeman
Scriptwriter: Stephen Davis
Synopsis: A witty sententious comedy about one night in the lives of six young people working in a Brisbane Pizza parlour as they confront questions of love, identity and the meaning of life.

A CHANGE OF HEART
Principal credits:
Director: Rod Hay
Producers: Murray Fane, Rod Hay
Cast
Chris Haywood, Grant Bowler, Roxanne Wilson, Tony Barry
Synopsis: A change of Heart is the story of a young boy who suffers irreparable — losing his family — while on holidays on what was always their favourite island getaway. As a result of this, the boy becomes catatonic until a young doctor takes him back to the scene of his terror — and the real living and breathing dragons that exist today — the Komodo Dragon.

PASSION
Production company: Matt Carroll Films Distribution company: Beyond Films
Principal credits:
Director: Matt Carroll
Screenwriter: Peter Greek
Synopsis: A feature film aimed at the 6-13 year old audience.

SIAM SUMMIT
Production company: Artist Services Production year: September, October, 1998
Location: Sydney, Australia
Co-producer: Paddy
Principal credits:
Director: John Polson
Producer: A. Clark
Synopsis: An adventure thriller about a young boy who suffers irreparable — losing his family — while on holidays on what was always their favourite island getaway. As a result of this, the boy becomes catatonic until a young doctor takes him back to the scene of his terror — and the real living and breathing dragons that exist today — the Komodo Dragon.

PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Casting: Jan Rowland, Neil Johnson
Dialogue coaching: Nick Price
Scriptwriting: Neil Johnson
Production crew
Inquiry: ROY & SUN ALLIANCE
Camera crew
Camera operator: Grant Hoi
Focus puller: Duncan Barrett
Chaser loader: Duncan Barrett
Camera assistant: Duncan Barrett
Camera type: Digital Betacam on set
1st assistant director: VELVET ELMDEN
Script assistant: Nick Price
Cinematography: Chris Lean
Make-up: Star FX — Lisa Jacob
Make-up assistants: Lisa McMahon, Jacinta Muller
Special fx makeup: Star FX — Lisa Jacob
Hairdresser: Star FX — Lisa Jacob
Art department
Art director: Gabe Kelliher
Props: James Dobbin, Jason Jude
Wardrobe
Wardrobe supervisor: Aurelle McAlpine
Post-production
Post-production supervisor: Neil Johnson
Casting
Mark Anthony (Marcia), James Dobbin (Bill), David Vallon (Winston in the Universe)
Synopsis: A meteorite crashes into the back garden of Travis Brown. Upon opening it, he discovers a helmet that allows the wearer to bring strange objects across from another dimension.

THE DOVER'S BOY
Production company: YARRA PRODUCTIONS Production year: August — October 1998
Budget: $7m
Length: 100 min
Gross: $25m
Principal credits:
Director: Chris Langsman
Producers: Stuart Murrind, Ted Exan
Executive producer: Ted Exan
Scriptwriter: Nevers Evans
Director of photography: Brett Anderson
Production designer: Robert Pernick
Financing: PRIVATE CAST
NARRACOl, William Innes, Ernie Dingco, Chris Haywood, Ray Barrettt, Justin Saunders
Synopsis: Australia's first western.

KOMODO — THE LIVING TERROR
Production company: SCABBAR ASIA PACIFIC Production year: 1998
Budget: $25 m
Pre-production
Production year: August — 18 September
Location: Warners Roadshow Movie Studio, Queensland, Australia
Principal credits:
Director: Michael Lantieri
Producer: Tom Lundie
Alain Riche Co-producer: Chris Brown
Director of photography: Bill Reiffer
Production designer: Nanny Brown
Synopsis: the disturbing and violent portrayal of Sunny Collier, who is terminally ill with weeks left to live, who pays two estranged army recruits to murder his grey lover, in an attempt to lure his son Evan into a cat and mouse game fuelled by a hidden agenda of suicide and self-retribution. It is the cruel story of a military man so guilt-ridden that he forces his only son into killing his mother, a situation that demonstrates the raw facts of life spent by a child. A lesson in exposure, and all we will have to encounter.

SILKIE
Production company: BLUEPRINT PICTURES
Synopsis: An adventure thriller about a young boy who suffers irreparable — losing his family — while on holidays on what was always their favourite island getaway. As a result of this, the boy becomes catatonic until a young doctor takes him back to the scene of his terror — and the real living and breathing dragons that exist today — the Komodo Dragon.

Features in Production

CAT'S TALES
Production company: SCREDROCKS PRODUCTIONS
Principal credits:
Director: RALPH LAWRENCE MANSION
Producers: BARRY LAWRENCE, VICTOR MANSION Associate producer: LORESTA FRITZEL
Scriptwriter: RALPH LAWRENCE MANSION
Director of photography: Coaching Mark Freeman
Editors: Glen Shirley, Sherry Harris Sound records: Roger Donald, Doug Shaw
Post-production
Shooting stock: FLICOLOR Film print: 35mm

HOLY SMOKE
Production company: JAN CHAPMAN PRODUCTIONS Production year: July, August 1998
Location: FUNDERS, SOUTHERN SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA
Principal credits:
Director: Jan Chapman
Producers: Jan Chapman, Steven Gould
Synopsis: A young American ex-cop finds himself in a damaging position when he falls hopelessly in love with his young client.

IN A SAVAGE LAND
Production company: BILL BENNETT PRODUCTIONS Production year: July — September 1998
Location: Tropical Rainforest, Queensland, NEW GUINEA, SOUTH AUSTRALIA Distribution company: Beyond Films Principal credits:
Director: Bill Bennett
Producers: Bill Bennett, Jennifer Bennett Writers: Bill Bennett, Jennifer Banner, Cliff Marketing International sales agent:
Beyond International, International Licensing
Hollywood partners, Beyond Films Finance
FCC, HOLLYWOOD PARTNERS, PMP (SHOptronics Australia), STRAND/NEW Oz Productions, International, SAFC

RUSK SWELL, MARTIN DONOVAN, MAYA STANGE
Synopsis: Set in the late 1930s, a newly married husband and wife anthropologist team travel to an island group in New Guinea to study the sexual mores of a group of villagers. The husband begins to break down when the woman realises her husband is wrongly interpreting the married couple's sexual activities. She enlists the help of a peasant trader to travel another island with a young English archaeologist who wishes to research a village of headhunters, and begins to fall in love with him. By the time she returns to her husband, war has broken out in the Pacific and the Japanese are poised to invade the island.

Strange Planet exploits the notion that it is better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.
Looking for Alibrandi
Production company: Belle Magazze Distribution: Beyond Films, Village Roadshow, Showtime
Director: Kate Woods
Producer: Robyn Kershaw Executive producer: Tristan Mill Scriptwriter: Jojo Moyes Director of photography: Toby Oliver
Editor: Martin Condon Production designer: Stephen Curtis Costume designer: Michael Wilkinson Composer: Alan Jones
SYNOPSIS
Julie Alibrandi, 17, searches for identity through a confusing maze of Australian and bi-cultural influences. It's a voyage around her mother, grandmother, girls' first boyfriend and an estranged father.

Muggers
Production companies: Clock End Films & Redman Entertainments Production office: Melbourne Distribution: Victoria Films, PolyGram Budget: $4m
Production: 31 August – 30 October 1998 Locations: Melbourne

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Director: Dean Murzyn
Executive producers: John Wollentence, Gary Smith, Chris Laub Line producer: Daniel Scrimgeour Scriptwriter: Robert T Taylor Director of photography: Pasadena Langender
Production designer: Padraig Pearse Costume designer: Stephen W Parsons Sound recordist: Michael Slater

PRODUCTION CREW
Production manager: Yvonne Collins
First assistant director: Richard Griceh Unit publicist: Fiona Seearson, DDA

FINANCE
FCC, Winchester Films, REP
Completion bond: First Australian Completion Bond Company MARKETING
Line: FCC, REP
International sales agents: Winchester Films

MATT DAY, JACOB BARRY
SYNOPSIS
Two medical students become involved in an illicit organ transplant scam.

PITCH BLACK
Production company: Antipode Pictures Pty Ltd Distribution company: PolyGram
Productions
Production: 27/28/29/30/31 March 1998 Locations: Cosgrove Fry, Warner Roadshow Studios, Errol Coast

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Director: David Twohy
Producers: Tom Enslin, Anthony winter, executive producers: Tim Fyfe, Scott Passion Executive producer: David Eggy
Production designer: Graham Tully Walker Costume designer: Marika Mardruski
Editor: Rick Sam

PRODUCTION CREW
Production manager: Sam MacKay

INPRODUCTION
Production Survey continued

Features in Post-Production

BABE: PIG IN THE CITY
Production company: Kennedy Miller Distribution: Universal-Pictures Production: September 1997

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Director: George Miller

PRODUCTION CREW
Visual effects: Travis, Stan Clark Studio
Art production: Colin Girish Animals
Animal trainer: Kanai Lewis Miller, Steve Martin

CAST
James Cromwell (farmer Hogsett), Maggie Sifford (Mrs Hogsett), Mickey Rooney

SYNOPSIS
Having triumphed at the National Livestock Show, the farmer becomes a hero in his but is in his enthusiasm to be at the side of his beloved "boss", the little pig becomes no more than a misshap which leaves Farmer Hoggett in traction confined to bed. With the bank threatening foreclosure, Miss Hogsett's only hope for saving the farm is to accept an offer for Babe to demonstrate his sheep-handling abilities at an overseas State Fair in exchange for a generous fee. Thus, Babe and Hoggett set off on a journey that takes them to a far away bookshop metropolis where Babe encounters a incredible variety of animal friends, experiences the joy and sorrow of life and learns how a kind and steady heart can mend a sorry world.

THE CRAIC
Production company: Foster-Gracie Distribution: Village Roadshow
Production: March 1998 Locations: Melbourne, Broken Hill, Sydney, Gold Coast

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Director: Greig Swenson
Producers: Marc Grace, David Foster Line producer: Steve Lucy

SYNOPSIS
Intrigued by the splendour of the land, the four friends take a detour in their car, only to find themselves in a world of bullies, beer, beer and more beer.

THE MISSING
Production company: Upside Down Distribution company: Roadshow Film Distributors

SYNOPSIS
Four friends try to discover the truth about the disappearance of a near and dear friend.

Production Survey
continued

Production companies: Variety Films, Dinesh
Distribution: Beyond Films
Production: 11/7 – 23/9/98

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Director: Yvonne Collins
Producer: Paddy Flynn

SYNOPSIS
A crippled passenger ship crashes onto an unknown island. The marooned space travelers struggle for survival on this seemingly lifeless sun-baked world. When a hurricane blows the planet into darkness, the world erupts with nocturnal life...and the real battle begins.

EARL DARIAU
Production company: J. McCleary Holdings Budget: $3.57 million
Production: March 1998 Locations: Brighton Island, Ravenswood, Gold Coast, Queensland

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Director: Daryl Kubik
Producers: Sue, Alan McCready
Scriptwriter: Chris Cubik

SYNOPSIS
Mean London turns into a scorched world. When a titanic eclipse erupts with nocturnal life...and the real battle begins.

THE MATRIX
Production company: Matrix Films Pty Ltd Distribution company: Warner Bros.
Production: 14/3/98 – 24/7/98

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Director: Larry and Andy WachowskI
Producers: Joel Silver, Andrew Mason Executive producer: Graham Broadbent Scriptwriters: Andy and Larry Wachowski

SYNOPSIS
A Mothra-like truck which tells the story of Tomamos, a high-ranking Vatican priest, who is forced by circumstances to question his faith and values.

PAPERBACK HERO

PRODUCTION CREDITS
Director: Anthony Boyd
Producers: Lawrence G. Golan & John Winter

SYNOPSIS
Two friends join a band of freedom fighters struggling against a fascist minority that control the earth. The machines keep their human slaves passive by literally plugging them into a virtual reality universe that appears to the 20th century world we know.

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CINEMA PAPERS • AUGUST 1998

[Image 0x-0 to 686x952]

[0x0]

[Barry Jenkins, Rowan Whitt, Austin Yatkus, Robin Lowry, Leah Purcell, Emma Wray]

The story of a young boy and an old man trapped beneath rubble in a collapsed building. The old man distracts the boy from the hopeless situation by taking him on a journey of the mind.

Two Hands

Producers: BUNDIFOLD

Distribution company: REP Films

Production: 24/9/98 – 12/9/98

Principal Credits

Director: Glenn Lemon

Screenwriter: Greg Jordan

Executive producers: Mark Turnbull, Ben Mounts, Tenille White

Assistant director: John Martin

Make-up supervisor: Cast

Synopsis

Two Hands follows the adventures of a young boy and an aspiring young hooligan who loses ten thousand dollars and has to earn his first bank job to avoid the bullet.

Waste

Production company: LEMDORP

Production: 3 P/L Limited

Distribution company: REP Films

Production: 8/9/98 – 6/7/98

Principal Credits

Director: Glenn Lemon

Screenwriter: Greg Jordan

Executive producers: Mark Turnbull, Ben Mounts, Tenille White

Assistant director: John Martin

Make-up supervisor: Cast

Synopsis

Waste is a comedy about two best mates Max and Joel. Born into a fast-food throw-away society and moulded by years of television, Max and Joel are forced to cope with the responsibilities of adulthood.

Documentaries

The Man in the Irony Mask

Production company: SCARLETT PICTURES PTY LTD

Production: 8/9/98 – 24/9/98

Principal Credits

Director: Paul Andrew

Screenwriter: Stephen Jones-Evans

Sound recordist: Mark Mac

Sound recordist: Jess Sullivan

Goverment Agency Investment Fund

Production: FFC & PACIFIC Film and Television Commission (PFC) SYDNEY

Synopsis

An astroturfed half-hour documentary which examines the life, work and personal experiences of a twenty, who longs to join Sugar Inc's international desserts company. Audrey Hepburn is the pivot of young Allie's life. Without her, his dreams of success in suburban Brisbane could mean nothing. The perfect escape from his overbearing mother is to go the local cheese and wine shop on a little black number, half-hearted, and hopscotching. Why is it only Kevin that fails to see that breakfast at Michael Hill Jeweller?

Tribe

Production company: CHANCELLORS AUSTRALIA

Pre-production: October 1998

Location: BRISBANE

Principal Credits

Writer/director: JUARN FALK

Synopsis

A day in the life of Beverley, the vegemite king at a tea party where everything goes wrong.

Sugar Inc

Production company: TAURLY PTY LTD

Production: AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 1998

Location: SYDNEY

Principal Credits

Director: CLARA CHONG

Synopsis

Audrey Hepburn is the pivot of young Kevin's life. Without her, his dreams of success in suburban Brisbane could mean nothing. The perfect escape from his overbearing mother is to go the local cheese and wine shop on a little black number, half-hearted, and hopscotching. Why is it only Kevin that fails to see that breakfast at Michael Hill Jeweller?
A panel of 12 film reviewers has rated a selection of the latest releases on a scale of 0 to 10, the latter being the optimum rating (a higher mean not seen).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Film Title</th>
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<td>DARK CITY</td>
<td>Alex Proyas</td>
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<td>DEAD LETTER OFFICE</td>
<td>John Rhys</td>
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**Spotlight: Climb every mountain**

Given its debilitatingly-constrained budget, would the National Film & Sound Archive, if forced to choose, preserve Head On or Welcome to Woor Woor? Obviously not Head On, if one reads only Melbourne newspapers, because every reviewer there preferred Woor Woor to Head On. In absolute contradiction, almost every Harbour-city critic felt the reverse. Triple J’s Peter Castaldi gave a 9 to Stephan Elliott’s film and a 5 to Ana Kokkinos’, while The Age’s Adrian Martin could only find it in his heart to award the latter a 1.

Despite the Melbourne support for the Sydney-based Woor Woor, accepted wisdom already has it that the film is an unredeemable dog, a classic Aussie disaster, the first title on everyone’s lips when a cynical group decides the current cinema needs a good drubbing. One recent afternoon, the Martin/Molloy radio programme had four people mercilessly tear into Woor Woor, despite none having seen it (as was meekly admitted at the end).

Yet, some wouldn’t mind betting that, when retrospectives of Australian cinema are mounted in decades to come, Woor Woor will be one of the first to be selected, a brilliant (if over-hyperactive) look at the hell of modern Australia, where most are too weak to stand up to tyranny and nice people advise the concerned to wait till the horrors have abated through natural causes. As Elliott well knows, the most powerful images in local cinema are of people climbing mountains (cf. Walkabout, Sons of Matthew, et al). Woor Woor, set in the pit of the present, tells us why. SM
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