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Cinema Papers #128 December 1998

Scott Murray

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He’s Back!

Spielberg’s Return to the Front
rising sun pictures

making the real macaw “real”

3D character animation
digital visual effects
for cinema

In Post Production
In a Savage Land
Siam Sunset

Credits
The Real Macaw
The Quiet Room
Diana and Me
Dance Me to My Song
Sally Marshall is Not an Alien
Driven Crazy
20,000 Leagues Under the Sea

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Mario Andreacchio, Director

an extremely challenging brief...with the finest results and a dedication to perfection of an international standard.

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For further information or a showreel please contact Tony Clark or Gail Fuller.
Walerian Borowczyk was a critical darling of the early 1970s. But when he started to explore sexual relationships, his films were ridiculed, then ignored. SCOTT MURRAY believes the unseen Borowczyks constitute one of the cinema's great hidden treasures.

MUSEUM OF THE RARE

Films: Aniz, Dance Me to My Song, A Price above Rubies, Saving Private Ryan, Whatever

Edge of the Known World
ANDREW L. URBAN discovers what key graduates and players think of the first 25 Years of the Australian Film Television & Radio School

Playing Ball
Radha Mitchell is one of Australia's hottest acting exports and her new film, High Art, was a critical hit at Cannes. Mitchell talks to JAN EPSTEIN.

Creative Challenges
PAUL KALINA interviews SPAA President Nick Herd about the crucial issues facing Australian financiers, producers and directors.

Unfinished Business
DAVID COURT looks at three key developments in movies, content and new media.

Not Just Government
Two new players in the Australian investment scene explain their rationales for financing and producing Australian productions.

Moral Rights
LISA FRENCH examines the issue that just won't go away.

Profiles
TIM HUNTER and MARK SMITH profile the key international guests at this year's SPAA Conference.

Direct from a standing ovation at the 1998 Cannes Film Festival, Palace is proud to present one of the most extraordinary films you will ever see...

"I get a lump in my throat just thinking about this experience again and I feel humbled by Heather Rose's spirit... be brave and go dancing with Julia"
- Andrew L. Urban, URBAN CINEFILE

NOW SHOWING AROUND AUSTRALIA AT PALACE CINEMAS
DISTRIBUTING PROFIT RESULTS

Village Roadshow, the Australian-based international entertainment company, has announced a net profit for the year to June 1998 of A$70.1 million, an increase of 16.4 percent over the previous year. Sales Revenue increased by 12.3 percent to A$442 million and Total Assets for the group rose 21 percent to A$1,793 million.

During the past financial period, Village has continued the global expansion of its cinema exhibition business, opening 209 new screens at 24 sites across Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Greece, Italy, Argentina, Taiwan, Korea, Malaysia, Hong Kong and Thailand. Village Roadshow Chairman John Kirby said, "In cinema exhibition, we have continued to concentrate on locking in future sites, lining up the required funding and minimizing our investment in freehold properties. We have opened our first cinemas in Italy, Taiwan and Korea, and the patronage has been exceptional. Kirby added that with its substantial cashflow growth, new debt facilities, property sales and leasebacks, no further capital raising will be required for the next three to four years.

Less profitable was Australian film and television production company Becker Group Limited, which announced an operating loss before tax and abnormalities of A$44.4 million for the twelve months to 30 June 1998. Operating loss after tax was A$39.4 million, up from A$39.2 million in the previous financial year.

Kirby added that with its substantial investment in freehold property, we have continued to concentrate on locking in future sites, lining up the required funding and minimizing our investment in freehold properties. We have opened our first cinemas in Italy, Taiwan and Korea, and the patronage has been exceptional.

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WOW WINNERS

The 8th Women on Women Film Festival (WOW), presented by Women in Film & Television (WIFT) was held during September under the auspices of new director, filmmaker Georgia Wallace-Crabbe. Running from 25-7 September, the Festival opened with Rachel Perkins' Radiation, and featured Sally Potter's The Tango Lesson, documentaries, seminars and multimedia works, as well as a short film competition. This year, there were 25 Australian shorts showcased, and the winner of a $20,000 prize package (including film stock, processing, online editing and legal services) was Relative Strangers, directed by Rose-Warden.

OPENLY POSTING

The ever-evolving Open Channel in Melbourne's community-minded Fitzroy has recently acquired some very sexy non-linear editing and multimedia equipment, as well as some high-quality film, digital and analogue cameras. Thus, OC Post is the new post production/multimedia wing of Open Channel. With more staff and up-to-the-minute equipment, OC Post should be attracting a whole lot of business from filmmakers of all shapes and sizes. For more information, ring Ade Djajamihardja at OC Post: (61.3) 9419 5111.

MEGA ADVERTISERS

Cinema advertising company Media Entertainment Group

Science Fiction/High Adventure

Limited (MEG) is going out of its way to gain as large a foothold in the market as it can. Recently, it announced that it is now managing the screen advertising in all Palace Cinemas around Australia, and that Palace will be taking a significant placement of shares in the company. It has also signed a four-year agreement with the Longford, Nova and Luna cinema groups to manage all their cinema advertising. This is in addition to MEG's existing screen presence with Village Roadshow, IMAX and a number of other independent screens around Australia.

If that's not enough, MEG has also purchased On Screen Advertising in New Zealand and Fiji, and 50% of On Screen Advertising Limited in Argentina. There seems to be no end to its expansion at the moment.

GLAM DOC

Queer Screen presented the world's first gay and lesbian documentary festival, queerDOC, in October of this year. Held at the Chauvel Cinema in Sydney from October 9-11, queerDOC screened a number of films not seen in Australia before. Included in the programme were 1998 Sundance Film Festival Audience Award winner Out of the Past; Halietuljah - The Ron Athey Story; the premiere of The Man in the Iron Mask; Shooting Porn; We're Funny That Way and The Brandon Teena Story.

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SCHOOLS IN SUMMER

Fancy a quick film course over summer? Melbourne University once again is running Summer School in Filmmaking: From Script to Screen. Industry professionals such as Nadia Tass, David Swann, Ellery Ryan, Mac Gudgeon, Peter Stubbs and Sue Maslin will be running classes in areas such as Screenwriting, Writing for Television and Comedy, Lighting, Cinematography, Producing and Production Management, Directing Actors, Editing, Screen Language and a whole lot more. The course runs from 11-29 January 1999, from 10:00-18:00. For more information about programmes and tour dates, phone (61.3) 9347 5035 or fax (61.3) 9349 4443.

FILM FESTIVAL FURTHER AFIELD

The Melbourne International Film Festival, with some help from the Victoria Association of Performing Arts Centres and Arts Victoria, has taken highlights of this year’s Festival and some recently-released arthouse films on tour around regional Victoria. The Travelling Film Festival stopped off at Kyneton, Geelong and Warragul during October, and will continue to illuminate areas such as Ararat, Balmoral, Bal­­bral, Bendigo, Frankston and Wangaratta during 1998 and early 1999. Some of the films included in the Festival are TwentyFour Seven (Shane Meadows, 1998), Love Is the Devil (John Maybury, 1998), The Garden of the Finzi­­­­­­­­Contini (Vittorio De Sica, 1971), The Interview (Craig Manahan, 1998), Y’Aura T’­­ill de la Neige e Ñoël? (Will It Snow for Christmas?, Sandrine Veyesset, 1997), Western (Manuel Poirier, 1998), She’s So Lovely (Nick Cassavetes 1998), Mrs Dalloway (Marleen Gorris 1998), The Sound of One Hand Clapping (Richard Fianagan, 1998) and Afterglow (Alan Rudolph, 1998). For more information about programmes and tour dates, phone (61.3) 9417 2011.

NEW WRITERS, NEW PROJECTS

The Australian Film Commission has announced newly-funded projects under the New Screenwriters Scheme. They are:

• Twinkle, Twinkle (Lyn Chick). Based on the transcripts of the Woods Royal Commission, this script examines the world of an inner-city brothel where sex workers are paid in drugs.

• Hope (Michael Clinic). Fleeing the horrors of the Bosnian war, 13-year-old Nada and her mother Gordana find refuge in the quiet streets of suburban Adelaide. Here they must learn to come to terms with the burden of their recent experiences and their desperate need to assimilate into this new yet unfamiliar environment.

• Men Not Talking (Jonathan Empson). The story of four people who are united by geographical circumstances and how their lives are utterly changed by their meeting: two young men in America, finding their lives at an impasse, decide to go surfing and eventually arrive in Australia in search of the perfect wave; a suicidal woman grieves about the death of her Japanese lover; and a brutish escaped convict is intent on revenge.

• Sam’s Story (Joe Morley). Sam and his three adolescent friends are at a time in their lives when the decisions they make will determine who they are and the direction in which their friendship will take them.

• Crazyland (Matt Kay). A drug dealer is shot dead by a cop. The dead man’s girlfriend and her young daughter attempt to flee; however, she is persuaded by an investigative journalist to go to the press.

• The First Question (Samantha Jennings). A young girl struggles to escape artefact through love, but comes to realize that sincerity is not as simple an ideal as she had thought.

• Harmony of the Seven Sentiments (Hagen Lunau). Set in the 1880s, a hard-working Chinese immigrant is wronged by racist Anglo-Australians and, forsaking his ethics, sets out on life as a bushranger.

• Kill Sophie (Ali Turellio). When Sophie decides she wants to testify against a New York mob boss, the FBI is keen to protect her as a remote location as possible. That’s how an Australian detective becomes her guardian angel on a remote Queensland island. When the mob hitman arrives, the triangle is complete. All of these new screenwriters receive funding and mentor support.

GOING TROPPO IN A NEW DOMAIN

Tropfest has announced that for 1999 the event will be moving from Rushcutters Bay park in Sydney to the Domain near the heart of Sydney’s CBD. Festival Director John Polson believes that Tropfest will continue to go from strength to strength: Tropfest ’98 was a real milestone for us and has set the pace for future years. We are really excited about the move to the Domain and look forward to another great festival. Tropfest ’99 will screen in the Domain on Sunday 21 February, and will concurrently screen at a number of cafés around Australia.

AUSSIES POPULAR AT BERLIN ETHNOFILM FEST

In the home town of the multi-fest Berlinale, there seems to be an insatiable appetite for festivals, all served up in addition to the 365 days of pleasure provided by the Arsenal Cinema, the outlet for Germany’s great archive, the Deutsche Kinemathek.

One such festival, now in its third year, is the EthnoFilm Fest, a name which belies its wide range of documentaries showcasing far more than “scientific” films about other peoples “curious rituals”. Under the guidance of Wolfgang Davis, a scientist employed at the Berlin Museum of Ethnography, the Festival emulates from the Museum’s cinema to embrace wider questions of film style, genre, sociology and anthropology. One of the last “shoestring” festivals, now well established within the festival circuit, it offers an enjoyable panorama of films from all over the world. Free admission to the festival means one can also revel in the Museum’s collection on the way to the cafeteria.

Students from the Berlin Free University’s Institute for Anthropology simultaneously serve as audience and jury with the best film being selected by a democratic ballot. Special interest is given to women directors and films about women in society. A prize, called the “lychee”, for the worst xenopho-bia-depicting film, is also awarded. Although some films challenge the very guidelines of the Museum where they are screened, the resulting debate does justice to the curator’s response to demands for change.

Murnau, Pabst, Joe May and even Hitchcock directed. Anne Pratt’s Terra Nullius and Chris Hilton’s Advertising Missionaries have both been featured. Frances Calvert’s award-winning documentary, Cracks in the Mask, was screened in 1997 and unleashed a stream of debates on the role of museums in Western culture.

This year, Robert Wilkins and Paul Tan brought techno-aged Calling Young Hong Kong, which had the audience bopping at the same time as engaging with questions of style and genre. The Rough Shed served to dismantle some of the clichés held by Germans about outback lifestyles. Despite the warning on the cassette, “scarcely comprehensible English”, the irony of this film managed to reach its target.

Australian filmmakers are proving popular at this Festival because, it would seem, we are passionately concerned with so many issues of documentary including ethics and terms of negotiation as well as transparency in the filmmaking process.

The Fourth EthnoFilm Fest is scheduled for June-July 1999 and will focus on the history of Australian documentary film. Entries on VHS PAL cassettes should be sent to: Dr Wolfgang Davis, Museum für Völkerkunde, Aninallee 23, D-12489 Berlin, Germany. Tel: 0011 49 30 83011. Fax: 0011 49 30 84108459. Email: beckmann@zedat.fu-berlin.de

Because of Berlin’s enviable status, a good number of filmmakers make their way to the city and the Festival. They are fed, housed and watered by Davis’ network of supporters. In addition, they are often invited for an interview on the various radio stations in Berlin, one of which, Radio Brandenburg, involves a tour to the reconstructed studio complex where
1st in non-linear in AUSTRALIA
ONE AWARD AND AN INVITE

Keith Simpson's short film, *Two Girls and a Baby*, recently won the Audience Favourite Award at the Palm Springs Short Film Festival. Starring Claudia Karvan and Niky Wendt, it is about a lesbian couple who decide to have a baby with the help of a sperm bank. *Two Girls and a Baby* was also invited to be shown at the Feminale International Women's Film Festival in Cologne, Germany.

FOX TRACKDOWN

Leading Sydney audio facility Trackdown Digital Services is launching a new division, Trackdown Music Services, in the new year. Music editing and composition rooms are being built for its new studios in the Arthur Smith Pavilion at Fox Studios Australia (building #53, the old Showgrounds Arts and Crafts building), while Trackdown Digital will still be based in Camperdown, Sydney. Guy Gross will be its in-house film composer, working alongside manager Geoff Watson, technical director and music editor Simon Leadley and Tim Ryan. Trackdown Music Services will provide music editing, production, composition and programming services for the film and television industry. Recent credits include *In the Winter Dark, Radiance, Praise, Dark City, Passion and Welcome to Woop Woop*.

CRACKING IT A SECOND TIME

Due to popular demand, David Swann's family-based comedy *Crackers* is being re-released, at the suggestion of exhibitors, who are being pummelled by patrons for more opportunities to see the film. First released in July of this year, and earning $1.25 million in its first run, *Crackers* will hit our screens again from 19 November.

ANIMATED LOCALS WIN INTERNATIONAL CONTRACT

Australasian company Garner MacLennan Design has won the contract to design and produce the 3D animation and visual effects for a new 22-part USA science fiction series, *Farscape*, to be produced by the Jim Henson Company in association with Hallmark Entertainment. GMD will be responsible for the design, building and animation of 3D models, building textures and environments, and will be completing the final compositing and integration with live action.

TURKISH DELIGHTS

And new to our shores is the 1998 Turkish Film Festival, a collection of Turkish films not seen before in Australia. Touring three cities, Perth, Sydney and Melbourne, the Festival will screen seven films over three days in each city. Films included are

- *TURKISH DELIGHTS*, a strong ethnic identity (Greek)
- *Strong Ethnic Identity* (Greek)
- *strong ethnic identity* (Greek)
- *Ari (Alex Dimitriades)*
- *strong ethnic identity* (Greek)
- *son of a disappointed Greek mother*
- *dead-end lifestyle* (Greek)
- *trying to escape his everyday life using sex, drugs and disco* (Greek)
- *Italian Catholic presence: his brother Frank*
- *champion dancer*
- *thinks he looks like Al Pacino in *Serpico***

**ANNETTE (Donna Peacock)**

- *possibly in love with Tony for real but can't show it*
- *humiliates herself by getting stoned and sleeping with his friends*
- *she's over-the-top: can't control herself*
- *disappointed when Tony won't dance with her in the competition*

**BOBBY (Barry Miller)**

- *tragically trapped in Catholicism; gets his girlfriend pregnant and is trapped into marriage*
- *tries to get her back*
- *tries to seek Tony's attention but fails*
- *dies tragically in an accident on the bridge*

**CONNIE (Fran Drescher)**

- *outspoken, fun character who comes on to Tony*

Both Tony and Ari are trying to come to terms with their own identity including a strong sexuality.

They acknowledge the hypocrisy inherent in their ethnic identities. Tony says, “We dump on the Spiks and the Spiks dump on us”, as he acknowledges his big disco dancing win is yet another example of racism.

Ari simply yells out the car window to the Lebanese and Chinese to “Learn English. This is Australia!”

Tony achieves his goal at the end: he gives up the dance trophy in favour of honesty and maturity. He's going to change: move to Manhattan, grow up and have Stephanie as a friend — a ’70s happy ending?

Ari achieves a certain something at the conclusion of *Head On* by admitting that he'll never change. He'll always be a 'whore!' Oh, the cynical ’70s.

Beth Keen

bethk8@hotmail.com
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The Bandit, the highest-grossing Turkish film ever; Karshik Pizza, a satirical comedy about betrayal and revenge in the Istanbul underworld; The Town, a generational epic; Istanbul Beneath My Wings, the story of the first man to fly; Journey on the Hour Hand, an existential tale of a clock mender; Cholera Street; and the whimsical parable, Sawdust Tales.

The Turkish Film Festival is a community-based, non-profit event organized by Bruce Jeffreys with the assistance of the Istanbul Foundation for Culture and Arts, the AFI, the Turkish Consul-Generals in Sydney and Melbourne, the AFC and ScreenWest.

AFC GUIDELINES ON HOLD

The Australian Film Commission has withdrawn its 1998 draft co-production guidelines due to the Australian Broadcasting Authority which finalized the revised Australian content standard.

At its May 1998 commission meeting, the AFC adopted a revised set of guidelines for use in approving official international co-productions and circulated them for industry comment in Australia and with overseas organizations in the countries with which Australia has official co-production arrangements.

Taking into account the current ABA process and diversity of views expressed for the Australian content standard, the AFC resolved to withdraw the draft co-production guidelines 1998 so that the July 1997 guidelines continue in force. The AFC will revisit the co-production guidelines when the ABA draft standard is available.

The July 1997 guidelines will be available on request from AFC offices and from the AFC's webpage. The date on these guidelines reads March 1998 to reflect small changes to the earlier text which advised that treaties with Israel and Ireland had been signed.

APPOINTMENTS

The Australian Film Finance Corporation (FFC) has appointed Janine Pearce as its new Legal Manager in its Sydney head office, and Eva Orner as a Project Manager in its Melbourne office. Pearce has been working as Legal Counsel for Showtime Networks Inc in New York and replaces Sue Jonklaas, who left the FFC earlier this year. Orner has worked as a producer (Unold Desires, Secret Fears), and has worked as a production manager and film writer. She replaces Linda Klejus, who also left the FFC earlier this year.

Village Roadshow Pictures announced recently that Michael Lake has been appointed Executive Vice President of World Wide Feature Production, based in Los Angeles, and will sit on the Board of Directors. He retains his current titles of President of Warner Roadshow Studios and Managing Director of Village Roadshow Pictures Australia. He will be splitting his time between Los Angeles and Australia.

Gaye Lake has been appointed Director of the Sydney Film Festival. Prominent in the local film industry, Lake began her career with the Sydney Filmmakers' Co-op in 1979. While working as a freelance consultant in film marketing and distribution, representing Mrs Brown, The Sweet Hereafter and Head On, she has also, for the past two years, acted as Programming Director for the Mardi Gras Film Festival. During this time, the Festival enjoyed significant growth and strong support from local film-goers and the media.

When Johnston has taken up the position of Queensland Representative for the Australian Film Commission, for an initial period of nine months. A Swinburne Film School graduate, Johnson has lectured at Griffith University, directed commercials and written and produced documentaries. Recently he produced Grace, one of the short films for the Australian Film Commission's 1998 Indigenous drama Initiative, Shifting Sands: From Sand to Celluloid Continued ....

EP Distribution has appointed Roxanne Melloway to the newly-created role of National Publicity and Promotions Manager. Melloway was previously Publicity and Promotions Manager for Queensland at 20th Century Fox Distribution. She began her career in the USA before relocating to a position as Marketing Manager at the Brisbane International Film Festival.

Granger MacLennan Design has appointed Gillian Samuels as Executive Producer -- Broadcast. Samuels has extensive industry experience, previously working for Conja and Extro Design. Some of her recent projects include Nickelodeon on-air branding, opening titles for the World Cup Soccer on SBS and an on-air package for Network Ten's Sports Tonight.

American independent filmmaker Todd Haynes, the man responsible for Poison (1991), Safe (1995) and, most recently, Velvet Goldmine, talks about early cinematic experiences and influences on his own work:

The films that influenced me as a kid were films that kids are taken to see when they're my age. The first one was Mary Poppins [Robert Stevenson, 1964], my very first movie when I was three, and I almost had a psychotic obsession for Mary Poppins. There's probably a lot about that film, and a lot about film in general, that really deeply affected me, and made me respond by wanting to create things in response to it. I would draw pictures and play or perform the songs; relive the experience in all these different ways. It definitely inspired me creatively, and I guess that's my point; something about seeing films at that age got my motors running. And that would continue; there'd be certain films that would just really penetrate me.

It's funny, a lot of them were English in theme. The next one was Romeo and Juliet, Franco Zeffirelli's film [1968]. I went through a mas­ively romantic period; I was a little Shakespeare freak as a kid. I was probably so insufferable to be around, so pretentious.

Later, films that definitely hooked me were films that probably came out of the 1960s drug culture, experience movies like Performance [Donald Cammell and Nicolas Roeg, 1970], Women in Love [Ken Russell, 1969], A Clockwork Orange [Stanley Kubrick, 1971] and 2001: A Space Odyssey [Stanley Kubrick, 1968].

They were films that I thought a lot about in making Velvet Goldmine, because they invited you to go some­where you'd never been before. I think that was responding to a youth culture that wanted that and created that experience. They really wanted to be surprised and challenged, and, unfortunately, I don't feel like those kinds of films are made so much today. I was hoping that Velvet Goldmine might rekindle some of those feelings of mystery, and excite the imaginations of young people that see it.

I loved Hollywood films like Citizen Kane [Orson Welles, 1941] and Fritz Lang, but, moving into college, I would discover Fassbinder's work, who remains my most favourite film­maker. His Angst essen Seelen auf [Fears Eats the Soul, 1973] is one of my favourite of his films.

There are so many, and they're so different and varied, and the whole body of work is so astounding. But I was still very much into Hitchcock and Douglas Sirk. I also saw Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles [Chantal Akerman, 1975] in college; that remains a real pivotal film for me, as well. I love Nashville [Robert Altman, 1975], Lola Montès [Max Ophüls, 1955] and also a lesser known film by Max Ophüls, The Reckless Moment [1949], with John Bennett and James Mason, an amazing internal melodrama that I particularly adore.

I have an intellectual passion for a film like Picnic [Joshua Logan, 1955], which has a profound effect on me; I start sobbing from the opening credits through to the end. It definitely touches me in some bizarre way. I also love certain experimental films like Blow Job by Andy Warhol [1963] and Un Chant d'Amour [A Song of Love, 1950] by Jean Genet.
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There is a syndrome in Venice called mal de terra, where the pitching and tossing of the ferry boats can affect your equilibrium on dry land. Trying to embrace the expansive programme of the 55th Venice International Film Festival can have a similar effect, particularly when the city is choking with tourists and several major international events.

This year, the Festival seemed to have been designed for a rolling sequence of headlines. American directors and starlets were ushered in every two or three days, while the intervening slots were filled by their Italian and European contemporaries.

Major awards were given to people including Sofia Loren for her contribution to film. Then, the passing of Kurosawa was swiftly commemorated by a screening of his films. When Warren Beatty’s new film, Bulworth, received a standing ovation, it seemed a fitting prelude to the glittering award ceremony, where Beatty was honoured for his career in film, and Gianni Amelio’s Così Ridevano given the award for best picture.

The decision sparked a furious debate about the differences between the jury and public opinion, and whether perhaps the Golden Lions should have been given in the reverse order.

Throughout the Festival, there were mutterings that attempts to move Venice’s profile closer to the more commercial reputation of Cannes, with the introduction of a script and film market, were marred by the Italian style of management.

However, there was a strong acknowledgment of the need to revitalize the Italian film industry’s international profile.

Venice offered a comprehensive programme of excellent films this year: Spielberg’s Saving Private Ryan, segued to the Taviani brothers’ Tu Ridi; Peter Weir’s The Truman Show to Alessandro D’Alatri’s Tu Ridi (translated as You Laugh); Peter Weir’s The Truman Show to Alessandro D’Alatri’s Tu Ridi (translated as You Laugh). Exquisitely filmed, it traces the journey of a young blind boy who returns to Tagikistan with a friend to discover what he has lost through the ringing tune of instruments. Makhmalbaf said he went to Tagikistan because he wanted a coloured environment with a tint that he could no longer find in Iran since the Islamic Revolution.

The few days I spent in Venice allowed only a sample viewing of the programme and ultimately none of the films I saw were award-winners.

The Taviani brothers’ Tu Ridi (translated as You Laugh) captured both the darkness and the light in the two short films presented under this title. Using the form established in their earlier film Chaos, the Taviani’s Tu Ridi is about Felice, a former light-opera star, destined to work as an accountant in the back office of a theatre in Rome. When he begins to spontaneously laugh in his sleep, it sets off a disturbing chain of events that will lead to the demise of life as he knows it. Italian actor Alberto Albanese’s performance as Felice is delightful.

Tu Ridi is highly comic and yet bitter-sweet; even in death there is laughter, even in love there is sadness. The sec-
end short film, *Due Sequestri* (*Two Kidnaps*), is a disturbing portrait of a kidnapper and his victim, a young boy. This is a journey into criminal madness. A man whose innocent, almost child-like character is capable of much darker things. When he takes the child to a mountain retreat, the event is a turning point, where Jacqueline du Pré's career as a virtuoso cellist is well-known. But her story, the intricate family relationships, the devastating effects of rivalry and the cruel toll of multiple sclerosis are mirrored in the story of a doctor who was kidnapped in the same region 100 years before.

Anand Tucker's *Hilary and Jackie* was a wonderful surprise. The film is a realistic portrait of the war. Alessandro d'Alatri's film brings the humanity of Elizabeth the First of England. A stunning performance by Cate Blanchett as Elizabeth traces the maturation of a young woman from wide-eyed and innocent to the self-professed Virgin Queen of England. In spirited fashion, we see the political allegiances of marriage, and the backroom dealings of the players at court, seemingly innocent yet ultimately perilous. Lavish costumes, an extraordinary cast which includes Geoffrey Rush and Joseph Fiennes, and beautiful cinematography make this film a must for anyone who enjoys the pomp and circumstance of an historical drama.

Daniele Luchetti's *Piccoli Maestri* (*The Young Masters*) is the story of the young partisans who left university to fight in the mountains of the Veneto region in World War II. Against a stunning backdrop, we see naïve and fiercely-proud young men slowly learning about the perils of war. There is a hilarious moment in the early stages of the film, where the group are looking for acts of solidarity to perform. They rob a cheese factory and attempt to distribute it to nearby villagers who refuse, knowing that, if they are caught with the cheese, they will be killed. Although this film has its share of death and violence, it is not a bloody horror show. Instead, it explores the conflicts within. To capture a collaborator is not enough; when the group are in danger, do they have the courage to kill him? This film is also based on a book and, from the comments of many Italians in the audience, is a realistic portrait of the war.

The American films, with their preponderance on politics, war, violence and voyeurism, gave way to the English and European films, a more subtle and emotional portrayal of the highs and lows of the human condition — the inner-life rather than a homogenized moral play.

**Awards for the 56th International Venice Film Festival**

**Golden Lion**
Così Ridevano (Gianni Amelio)  
**Silver Lion for Best Director**
Emir Kusturica, *Black Cat White Cat*  
**The Grand Jury Award**
Lucian Pintile, *Terminus Paradise*  
**Golden Lion for his Career**
Warren Beatty  
**Best Male Actor**
Sean Penn in *Hurly Burly*  
**Best Female Actor**
Catherine Deneuve in *Place Vendome*  
**Golden Osella for the Best Original Script**
Conte d’Automne (Eric Rohmer)  
**Golden Osella for the Best Photography**
Luca Bigazzi, *L'Albero delle pere*  
**Golden Osella for the Best Original Music**
Gerardo Gardini, *La Nube*  
**Golden Medallion from the President of the Senate**
Mhosen Makhmalbaf, *Le Silence*  
**The Marcello Mastroianni Award**
Niccolo Senni for *L'albero delle pere*  
**The Winner of International Critics' Week Award**
*Orphans* (Peter Mullan)  
**Cinemanovenire Award**
Lo Nube (Fernando Solanas)  
**Vivre Au Paradis** (Bourdemi Guerdjou)  
**Le Silence** (Mhosen Makhmalbaf)  
**Les Pierrot Award**
Peter Mullan for the direction of *Orphans*  
**Fedic Award**
Del Perdutto Diamore (Michele Placido)  
**Film Critics Award**
*New Rose Hotel* (Abel Ferrara)  
**FIPRESCI Award**
Bure Burata (Goran Paskelievic)
Courting Success

by Paul Kalina and Scott Murray

Are a week goes by without the arrival of another short film festival somewhere in Australia. In addition to the well-established St Kilda Film Festival, Flickerfest and Tropicana, myriad regional centres, from Noosa to Hobart, are staging their own annual short film events. Airlines, coffee manufacturers and local street traders are all getting in on the act. More people are making shorts, more people are flocking to see them and, it seems, the money is following close behind.

One person who is unsurprised at the resurgence of cinema's oldest form is Roger Gonin, one of the directors of the Festival du Court-Métrage, Clermont-Ferrand. The festival, now in its 21st year, is the most important and largest short film festival in the world, supporting a market, and national and international competitions. Gonin was in Australia recently as a guest of the St Kilda Film Festival.

The resurgence in short filmmaking is not restricted to Australia. According to Gonin, the festival at Clermont-Ferrand is receiving more and more entries from Latin American countries and European nations which in the past produced very few short films (such as Italy). He estimates that 200 short films are now made in Italy each year.

Even 'A-list' international film festivals are looking to incorporate shorts into their events. Gonin: Cannes now wants to have a special section just to discover new talent. The people at Sundance told me last year they are thinking of having an international short film festival as well. Even in the USA, where short films are not well appreciated and there is no venue, more and more people are interested in them. Gonin believes that much of the interest in shorts is a product of both filmmakers and audiences searching for new, alternative styles of filmmaking: "What the independents were doing in feature films, now it's more in the short film area where people are doing it."

Gonin admits that the production values of shorts have increased overall, and signals concerns that, like the USA indie film, the qualities intrinsic to this mode of filmmaking may become sacrificed:

The problem will be if there isn't still space for really crazy films with no budgets. I'm very glad that there is funding for high-production short films. But if it is the only way to make short films, I'm afraid that short films will cease to be the alternative cinema we need. Until now it has been this [alternative]. It is still the place where we can find very astonishing movies. These filmmakers, Gonin says, are vitally important to the mainstream feature film industry:

I like to think that the filmmakers making different sorts of short films want to make that sort of feature. I was in Cannes watching these short filmmakers making their first features, like Erick Zonca [La Vie Rêvée des Anges] and Thomas Vinterberg [Festen, or The Celebration], bringing the same spirit to a feature film.

What also pleased me is that there are young producers following the directors into features; just like the directors, they grow with them. That's a good thing for me. That's how a new generation will go into the industry and make something interesting, I hope.

Watching the latest batch of locally-made shorts, Gonin speaks cautiously of the balance between high-production values and risk-taking in Australian shorts. He is full of praise for Ivan Sen's Tears, which was awarded Best Film by the jury of the St Kilda Film Festival on which Gonin sat: Tears is a very simple idea. You ask, "What is it about?" Okay, a couple walking along a road in the desert, a car stops by them, they exchange some words, go a bit further, wait for the bus, she goes into the bus, he stays. What is this about? You have to do something very important to make this into a film.

If I were somebody having to make a decision about funding this, I wouldn't know [what to say]. But it's a marvellous film; because of the way it's done, you understand everything, everything the characters have in their minds. And this is what we expect of films.

But maybe there's a lack of films that are about this craziness we spoke of before, films made with nothing, which were made some years ago at the Swinburne school. I miss this kind of film; sometimes very rough, but with energy, like Spventosaussi [Luigi Acquisto, 1986] or Dance of Death [Dennis Tupicoff, 1977], the first of many films dealing with television entertainment. It was amazing what it was about, the link between this sordid television play and death. It was marvellous because it said it in a very simple way.

The pity is when people want to look professional. That's what makes me really concerned. What does professional mean? That people are paid? In short films, a lot of people don't get paid, so what does it mean to "look professional"? Plenty of films and television are professional, they are watchable, but that is all, and we expect more of short films.

When we began the international section, for us the Australian short films were totally crazy. Jane Campion's films, this kind of thing. It was a different world, where people were obsessed with family problems. These films were outdated for us, but the way it was done was very impressive and enthusiastic. It is not the problem if the films are not well done, because at least the characters are talking about their lives, their youth, important problems about their existence.

But if they want to be too smart, too professional, when the funding bodies ask them to do this, that is the pity, because they might want them to be professional too early; it takes time. They don't want to invest in the long term, they
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Peter Doyle
Creative Director,
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festivals

Telluride Film Festival

by Jerry White

It had been expected that this year’s Telluride Film Festival would be a little different. It was the 25th anniversary and the rumours that an extravaganza was to unfold began right after the 24th edition, when it was announced that the 1998 Festival would have an extra day to commemorate the milestone. This in itself was exceptional, given that it is the only time that the great eccentric among American film festivals has altered its traditional four-day format. This extra 24 hours turned out to be the most minor of the commemorative elements, which included a reunion of all the Festival’s past guest directors (who include Errol Morris, B. Ruby Rich and Bertrand Tavernier), a huge bash on the top of a mountain and several programmes that celebrated cinema’s connection to silver (to commemorate the Festival’s Silver Anniversary). Through all the hoopla, it was still possible to see one of the film world’s oddest combinations of the old and the new, the Hollywood and the obscure, the common and the unspeakably rare.

The Telluride Film Festival has become known as a film purist’s paradise (a reputation shored up by the very simple difficulty of getting to the tiny, remote mountain town where it is held) and the intensity of this year’s commemorative version served as a happy confirmation that the Festival deserves the reputation.

An Irish theme ran through this year’s event, led in part by John Boorman (who lives in Ireland). He brought his newest film, The General, a biography of the Dublin gangster Martin Cahill, fresh from his win as Best Director at this year’s Cannes. Shot with devastating clarity in black and white by Irish cinematographer Seamus Deasy, the film’s raw visceral impact is enormous. Boorman pulls away in The General from much of the simple bloodshed that marks the gangster film, instead focusing on what an eccentric character Cahill was: loyal, treacherous, violent and kind. It’s a complex film with a keen visual sense, and says a great deal about the minor betrayals and hypocrisies that define Irish life.

Shot with devastating clarity in black and white by Irish cinematographer Seamus Deasy. [The General]’s raw visceral impact is enormous.

This wasn’t the only Irish contribution from Boorman, who was also at the Festival in the capacity of returning guest director (he served at that post in 1993). The Festival asked each of these guests to choose a film to bring, and Boorman’s choice was a very rare version of The Informer. This was not the famous John Ford 1934 version, but the unknown Arthur Robison 1929 version. Made just as sound was being introduced to motion pictures, the film is defined by a moody, silent-era visual style that suits Liam O’Flaherty’s story of betrayal and Catholic guilt exquisitely well. The second half of the film, however, also features an utterly botched attempt to dub in voices, and this half-effort to take advantage of emerging but incomplete technology makes this, in Boorman’s words, the best of films and the worst of films. Clint Eastwood, tributed here in 1990, sat in the back row for this film and seemed quietly fascinated and confused.

Continuing the Irish theme was the glitziest event this year: a tribute to acting legend Meryl Streep and the American premiere of her new vehicle, Dancing at Lughnasa. Streep attended (Telluride will tribute only those who come), speaking both at the aforementioned mountaintop bash and at a seminar on women and film acting (alongside Patricia Arquette, Katrin Cartlidge and Pascale Bussières). Streep held forth on the unreasonable expectations made of female actresses, noting at one point that she gave up her theatre career primarily for her family, so she wouldn’t always be working or on the road.

The film on display, Pat O’Connor’s adaptation of Brian Friel’s widely-produced play about rural Ireland, had a sense of loss and melancholy that recalled some of Streep’s musings at the seminar. Nevertheless, it over all felt like a very sentimental staging of a very complex piece of theatre. Streep came off magnificently as the matriarch and melancholy that defined some of Streep’s most accomplished performances (alongside Patricia Arquette, Katrin Cartlidge and Pascale Bussières). Streep held forth on the unreasonable expectations made of female actresses, noting at one point that she gave up her theatre career primarily for her family, so she wouldn’t always be working or on the road.

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5th Mumbai International Film Festival for Documentary, Short and Animation Film 1998

by Jeni Thornley

"In a world which has degraded all its notions of authenticity, the trauma of the documentary is to seek a new birth. It has to find for itself a new body."

Kumar Shahani

Celebrating its fifth year, the Mumbai International Film Festival for Documentary, Short and Animation Film (MIFF) is perhaps the most significant Festival for documentary and short film and video in the Asian region. The Festival reflects India: vast (more than 400 films), diverse, political, generous, occasionally chaotic, yet organized with fine attention to detail. If documentary is being reborn, India may be the birthplace.

At MIFF, documentary film is often referred back to ancient lineages. Amrit Gangar, Curator of the Retrospective Programmes, calls forth the Jaina principle of anekantavada to talk about documentary as a concept of reality which can accommodate both identity and difference, permanence and change. Anekantavada is a mental eye which is open to all directions, all interpretations.

Bankim, the Director of the Festival, also invokes ancient Indian texts:

The documentary film provides us a testimony, panini. In principle, the documentary film is a means of getting correct knowledge, pramana, and that is what the documentary film essentially strives to comprehend.

These philosophical concepts underlie MIFF’s vision. They create a Festival where the spirit of documentary is thriving and polytheistic, especially in the range of documentary genres represented. As well, the Griersonian concept of documentary as part of a movement for social change is living.

MIFF reflects the film society movement, which isn’t surprising as Films Division, part of India’s Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, is its organizer. Films Division is both Indian and Griersonian, and, like Grierson’s original EMB and GPO Film Units, Film Australia and Canada’s NFB, it is inspired by the notion of film as part of a democracy, education and social change.

The Festival comprises: the main Film Competition and Film Information sections, open to both international and Indian filmmakers; the parallel Competition Video and Information Video sections open to Indian filmmakers; Fifty Years of Indian Independence through Documentaries; Retrospectives/Special Screenings; Film School Screenings; Forums; and Press Conferences.

Some films also show outside the Festival in spontaneous street screenings. Well-known activist filmmaker Anand Partwardhan, honourd at MIFF 98 with a Retrospective of selected works – Bombay Our City; In Memory of Friends; In the Name of God; Father, Son & Holy War – screened his new video, Fishing in the Sea of Greed, out-tioning; Tuberculosis; Vehicular Pollution; Solid Waste Management; and Mentally Challenged Children.

There was a visible Australian presence at MIFF. My diary film, To The Other Shore, was invited into Competition along with Fiona Cochrane’s Gorilla Girls, which received a Certificate of Merit; The Butler by Anna Kannava; Kay Rasool’s Temple on the Hill; and Tom Zubrycki’s Billal. Melanie Guiney, the Convener of the 6th International Documentary Conference, Brisbane, 1997, was a Member of the Jury.

The main Competition tends to be dominated by films from the West. Often, the selection reflects cultural diversity, human rights and Indian themes or subjects. The rhetorical documentary, Zakir and His Friends (Lutz Leonhardt, Switzerland), on Indian tabla player Zakir, won Second Best Film in the non-fiction category.

John Edginton’s Mumia Abu-Jamal: A Case for Reasonable Doubt (UK), a powerful investigative film on Black Panther Mumia’s struggle for justice, was recognized with two major awards. Sehjo’s Singh’s Kol Tales (India), which poignantly observed the life of the Kol people and their upper-caste masters, the Dadas, received the International Jury Award.

One of the most dynamic programmes is the Video Festival.

Shonali Bose’s Lifting the Veil.
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Explore and Heighten

by Dean Carey

How does a director find the level of a scene and the pitch the scene best works at? And how do actors remember what they did from their inspired rehearsal to the day of shooting?

Explore and Heighten aims to help both actor and director to zero in on the scene's essence and also enable them to find it again. Originally created for improvisation by Viola Spolin, I use this exercise whenever I direct because it rockets both you and the actors toward detailed investigation. I sometimes use the words Embrace and Amplify rather than Explore and Heighten; you may wish to replace them with your own.

The premise of the exercise is quite simple. After running or even reading a scene (for this exercise works brilliantly in an audition or screen test), you suggest to the actors that they explore and then heighten one aspect of the scene; the aggression, or the love, or the fear, or the indecision, or whatever element you feel the scene may be driven by.

Of course, the aspect you choose may not suit the entire scene. It may only fuel one beat and then another aspect will be chosen to fuel the next beat. This changing dynamic then helps to create strong atmospheric changes during the scene which in turn creates the journey.

To make the exercise fruitful, both actors need to commit to both parts of the process; to explore throughout every moment of the scene the particular element you have chosen, and then heighten it accordingly. This means if you have chosen "tension", both actors explore as many ways as possible to contact and experience the tension moment by moment. Once the tension has been contacted and deeply felt, then heighten it as much as possible. In other words, reveal the consequences of the tension whenever you can, through looks, pauses, physical moves, psychological actions, defensiveness, aggression, word emphasis, etc.

The reason the exercise is called Explore and Heighten is that the word explore means to experience - experience on physical, psychological and emotional levels. But any scene requires you to do more than experience - you must make manifest the consequences of what you are experiencing. This then informs the scene and creates potent exchanges which drive the story forward. So, when you heighten the chosen dynamic, this will occur. This second part of the process heightens and therefore releases what you are experiencing back into the scene.

Once you get used to using this exercise, you'll begin to choose elements to explore and heighten which absolutely make the scene speak. The more you zero in on the unique dynamics which create the scene's life and drama, the more the scene will spring to life.

Below are a list of some of the dynamics which I have found have rocketed a scene into the exact arena in which it needed to exist.

Explore and Heighten:

- the love the lack of love the need for love
- the distance between you the extreme familiarity between you
- the aggression the blatant deceit before you
- the tension the blame
- the tenderness the lack of tenderness the fun
- the camaraderie the sense of crossed purposes
- the baggage between you the sexual charge between you
- the sense of abandonment you feel the devil-may-care attitude
- the ego clash you are involved in the reserve and conservatism
- the radical maverick attitude the righteousness you feel
- the self-consciousness you feel the damage done
- the hope
- the hopelessness
- the burden you're both carrying the inappropriateness of each moment
- the sting of truth the acute pain of imminent separation
- the aloof and distant regard for each other
- the shock of each discovery the unpredictability
- the utter predictability the potential for reconciliation
- the devastation of betrayal the gulf of irreconciliation, etc.

As you see, each element would produce vastly different results and would set the actors on a precise investigation.

You can also explore and heighten other elements, such as: the temperature; time; and elements such as wind, rain, terrain. On location, these elements can connect actors immediately to their surroundings and produce a sharp and atmospheric reality.

Explore and Heighten:

- the driving rain
- the bitter almost numbing cold
- the unrelenting heat
- the inappropriateness of each moment
- the burden you're both carrying
- the damage done
- the hope
- the hopelessness
- the burden you're both carrying the inappropriateness of each moment
- the sting of truth the acute pain of imminent separation the aloof and distant regard for each other the shock of each discovery the unpredictability the potential for reconciliation the devastation of betrayal the gulf of irreconciliation, etc.

Just before your third take and after everything technical is finally in order, you can generate the exact meaning the scene requires. It's also simple as it doesn't take five minutes of discussion and debate. If you happen to choose something which doesn't begin to yield fruit, simply stop the scene and change the element. It fast-tracks the rehearsal process and keeps the focus always on the scene and the relationship between both players.

In auditions and screen tests, this exercise allows you very quickly to see if the actor can take direction and change accordingly. Once again, it doesn't require a long audition to see all you need to see. Simply do any one page of dialogue four times, each time focusing on a totally different element. You'll see flexibility, range, depth, sense of atmosphere, connection and use of language, use of...
"Let us say that his work now belongs to the Museum of the Rare, where it will one day be exhibited. The dates will be merely given for reference."

- Robert Benayoun

Several directors have had spectacular falls from grace through no fault of their own. Most famous is Orson Welles, the accepted wisdom for decades being that he went seriously downhill after Citizen Kane (1941). That was, of course, a criminal libel, and today more and more people see Citizen Kane as just the start of a magnificent career that includes many masterpieces.

Another spectacular decline has also been attributed to Walerian Borowczyk.

By Scott Murray.

A Life and Career

Borowczyk was born on 2 October 1932 in Kwikcz, Poland. His father was a painter and Borowczyk followed in his footsteps, studying at the Academy of Fine Arts in Cracow. Borowczyk remains a painter to this day.

However, another interest also blossomed, as Borowczyk explained to Sue Adler in Cinema Papers:

[When I was 14 years-old, I saw a 16mm movie camera in a shop window. It was open, revealing all the internal mechanisms. I was spellbound. As you can imagine, such goods were rare in Poland at that time. [...]]

To this day, I am fascinated by moving pictures: sculptures which are mechanical. [...] The fundamental thing for me is the miracle which allows 24 frames a second to give the illusion of movement. This is the truth of cinema.

So began Borowczyk’s experiments with cinema:

My first films were shapes or forms in motion. Sometimes I used actors and sometimes I would relate a little story or make a documentary or simply show abstract forms moving in a universe of music. I did everything myself and I experimented a great deal; I taught myself how to edit. [...] For me it is not a question of film and camera, it is the miracle of how you can recreate and improve or change and deform nature. After forging a celebrated career as an animator and short-film director in Poland (working, on occasion, with Jan Lenica), Borowczyk moved to Paris in 1958. There he crafted the surreal and nightmarish Les Jeux des Anges (1964), one of the true masterpieces of the form.
In 1966, Borowczyk made his first feature, the animated *Théâtre de Monsieur & Madame Kabal*, which was critically applauded, if not widely seen. He then moved into acted features with *Goto, l’île d’amour* (*Goto, Island of Love, 1968*). Borowczyk was instantly hailed as a genius, and his next feature, *Blanche* (*1971*), seemed to seal forever his reputation as one the world’s greatest directors (the greatest, according to Phillip Adams at the time).

However, artists don’t always follow the paths their devotees wish to take. When Borowczyk made *Contes Immoraux* (*Immoral Tales, 1974*), a highly-successful compilation of four stories about sexual taboos, the critics united in vocal protest. Never has a director been so quickly and emphatically abandoned.

Borowczyk then returned to Poland and perplexed the doubters by making the elegant and classical *Island of Love* (*L’île d’Amour, 1976*). It was instantly hailed as a genius, and, at the time, *The Story of a Sin* (*Dzieje Grzechu, 1975*). The critics did an abrupt volte face and decided *Contes Immoraux* was just an aberration — the result perhaps of a Communist-raised director having enjoyed the freedoms of the West a little too enthusiastically — and applauded *The Story of a Sin* as a triumphant return to Borowczyk’s true artistic self.

Borowczyk had other intentions than pandering to reviewers, however, and made the film that finished him critically: *La Bête* (*The Beast, 1975*). It, too, was a box-office success, audiences delighting in this witty and subversive masterpiece, but, except in France (Robert Benayoun, Ado Kyrou, et al.), was damned in print. Censors also took exception in many countries (including Australia) and banned or cut it.

In reality, almost all the critics who panned *La Bête* only saw a butchered version of the original. Journalist ethics should have stopped them writing anything. After all, would anyone seriously consider reviewing Peter Carey’s *Jack Maggs* if more than 20 percent had been snipped from it at random? Or would art critics have reviewed Leonardo’s *La Giaconda* (*Mona Lisa*) if the head had been scissored out?

If *La Bête* finished Borowczyk with the critics, the ‘70s films that followed ensured that they would never forgive him: *La Marge* (*The Margin, 1976*), *Interno di un Convento* (*Behind Convent Walls, 1977*), *Les Héroïnes du Mal* (*Heroines of Evil, 1979*). (That they made money didn’t help, either.) Even Tom Milne, one of the finest critics writing in English at the time, and a perceptive reviewer of Borowczyk’s early works, laboriously tore into each new Borowczyk, again on the sole evidence of mutilated prints. It is hard to think of any director so shabbily treated.

The critical savaging had much to do with one thing: Borowczyk had exercised his right as an artist to discuss what interested him, in this case sex, and to show its representations. Borowczyk’s motto had become that of La Rochefoucauld, who in *Maximes* writes: “Love, totally agreeable that it is, pleases more by the manner by which it shows itself than by itself.”

The critics saw it another way, accus-
horror Movies 1956-1984. 11 (They also have a chapter on the equally-marginalized Alain Robbe-Grillet.)

On the Internet, too, there are now several Borowczyk sites, including www.vidmarc.demon.co.uk, which has a full filmography, with credits, stills and video slicks reproduced. The site’s founder, Marc Morris, states that there is an increasing number of articles by film students12 and has recently posted a fascinating one by Kerri Sharp13.

Meanwhile, Dr. Jekyll and les Femmes is quietly assuming the mantle of Borowczyk’s finest film (though equally good cases can be put for Ars Amandi and Les Héroïnes du Mal), just as Orson Welles’ middle and late work is now seen as the crowning achievements of a dazzling and rich career, Borowczyk’s ‘miss-
ing features are gaining in reputation and status. As increasing numbers of people see these films, the accepted wisdom that critics successfully imposed for decades will be seen for the libel it always was. Public displays of contrition would be a healthy next step.

Welles and Borowczyk stand tall not only for the fineness of their work, but for the courage by which they stuck to their visions against often extraordinary financial and condemnation pressures. They are models to all artists today.

One could argue that this article is another cog in the resurgent interest in Borowczyk’s work, but that wasn’t ever its motivation. Through the Internet, films cut, unreleased and/or banned have become obtainable (local censorship permitting). Unseen films can now be watched, others revisited after twenty years. 14 The art effect for this writer has been a stunning confirmation of a long-held belief in Borowczyk’s position as one of the cinema’s rarest treasures: a profound, disturbing, idiosyncratic filmmaker of extraordinary and individual gifts. His vision is often unbearably dark; his despair at the way human beings befoul what is natural can be painful to experience; but there is humour, odd fragments of hope; and his sense of lighting, composition and editing are unparalleled.

This article is not an attempt to say, “Here is a great director.” Borowczyk needs no one to champion or defend him, only voices to suggest to those who have not yet travelled down his imaginative roads that the journeys, whilst unsettling, are also unforgettable. One finishes a Borowczyk, as one so infrequently does a post-war American film, exalting in the enormous potential of cinema, and rejoicing that, in a universe of overwhelming cinematic blandness and cowardice, at least this Polish director has had the courage, often under enormous political and critical censure, to create his extraordinarily precious Museum of the Rare.

Shots & Animations

Shorts: 8mm and 16mm
1966: Mals d’Aout.
1953: Gowa (The Head, animated).
1954: Photographies Vivantes (documentary); Atelier de Fernand Leger (documentary).
1955: Jesien (Autumn, documentary).

Shorts: 35mm
1957: Byl Sobie Raz (There was a Time, co-director Jan Lenica, animated, 11 mins); Nagrodzone Uczucia (co-director Jan Lenica, animated, 30 mins); Strip-tease (co-director Jan Lenica, animated); Dni Oswiata (School Days) co-director Jan Lenica, animated; Sz tandar Miodych (co-director Jan Lenica, animated).
1958: Dom (The House, co-director Jan Lenica, animated, 14 mins); Sz kola (The School, animated).
1959: Les Astronautes (co-director Chris Marker, animated); Terre innon nuce (animated, 2 mins); Le Magicien (animated); La Tete (animated); La Foule (animated); La Boile a Musique (animated).
1963: Encyclopedie de Grand-maman en 13 Volumes (animated); Holy Smoke (publicity short); Renaiss ance; Les Stroboscopes: Magasins du XIXe Siecle (publicity short); Les Bibliothéques (publicity short); Les Écoles (publicity short); La Fille Sage (publicity short); L’Ecriture (publicity short); Gancia (publicity short).
1964: Les Jeux des Anges (animated, 14 mins); Le Petit Poucet (publicity short); Le Musée (publicity short).
1965: Le Dictionnaire de Joachim (animated); Theatres de Monsieur et Madame Kabal: Un Éte Torride (animated).
1966: Rosalie
1967: Diptyque; Gavotte.
1969: Le Phonographe (animated).
1973: Une Collection Particuliere (14 mins)
1975: Brief von Paris (documentary, 45 mins)

Animated Feature
1966: Théâtre de Monsieur & Madame Kabal (80 mins)
Goto, l'île d'amour (1968)

Alternative titles: Goto, Island of Love (UK), Goto, l'Isola dell'amore (Italy)

Les Productions René Thévenet [et] Euro-Images présentent [...] GOTO (1) Goto (2) l'île d'amour. [ID not given; atb 1968.]


Synopsis: In 1887, an earthquake cut off the island of Goto from the rest of the world. Ruled now by Goto III (Pierre Brasseur), the island's small population works in the quarry and the fortress. The worst criminals are sentenced to on-stage combat, the loser being guillotined. Grozo (Guy Saint-Jean) flies his combat with Gra (Michel Thomass), into the lap of Goto's wife, Glossia (Ligia Branice). Grozo is arbitrarily pardoned and Gra guillotined. Grozo is then appointed assistant to Gomo (René Dary), Glossia's father, who is in charge of catching flies, feeding the dogs, and polishing Goto's and Gomo's shoes. Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his responsibility for his fly-traps, Grozo assumes Gomo's shoes. Ever ambitious, Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani). Grozo kills Gomor and exposes to Goto his wife's love affair with Lieutenant Gono (Jean-Pierre Andréani).

Rightly acclaimed as a master-piece, Goto, l'île d'amour is a terrifying look at the rapid rise of Grozo, a weak but ambitious man who has learnt all manner of devious behaviour from the totalitarian system in which he lives.

It is no surprise that many iron-curtain countries are now controlled by mafias, because the communist system forced people to act in underground ways (be it for political dissent or simply finding food). These adaptive skills do not fade away with a tyranny's demise, but find full force in black-marketeering and other criminal activity. Given Borowczyk had fled Poland for Paris, it is hard not to read Goto as a personal statement about his former communist homeland.

If Grozo represents the inevitable future, Goto stands as the archetypal cause, a despot whose unpredictable moments of kindness hopefully invite the suppressed to view him as a kindly father figure. The easily-seduced Philip Strick describes Goto as "benevolent"20, despite Goto's ruling over an inhuman world of repression, torture and death, where love is denied air and prostitution institutionalized as its alternative. Control the desire and one controls the person.21

A second theme, which Borowczyk tackles repeatedly in subsequent films, is the desire of men to control and possess women, and the ways they go about it. In Goto and the subsequent feature, Blanche, women suffer cruel fates because they can see no way out of their predicaments. In later films, such as La Bête and Les Héroïnes du Mal, women fight back, often violently, and become true feminist heroines.

Grozo wants Glossia, who is married to Goto and in love with Gono. He will do anything to get his way. The sequence where Glossia's adultery with Gono is exposed to Goto is one of the film's finest. Having killed Gomor and assumed responsibility for his fly-traps, Grozo uses them as a means to spy on others. He places traps where there are no flies. He removes his shoes so he cannot be heard approaching. He locates Goto in an attic. Through a brilliant piece of game-playing, he induces Goto into ordering him to use some binoculars (a crime for which Grozo was originally arrested). Grozo pretends to resist, but takes them and knowingly uses some binoculars (a crime for which Grozo was originally arrested). Grozo pretends to resist, but takes them and knowingly focuses where Grozo has been looking. Grozo then apprises Goto of the easy seduction of Glossia, who is making love behind a dangling blanket at the riding school (till a horse accidentally pulls it away). Goto takes the binoculars and, naturally, focuses where Grozo has been looking.

Grozo has brilliantly engineered a betrayal while appearing to have done only what he was ordered to do. He is the archetypal conniver (communist) or corporate back-stabber (capitalist). With Grozo now...
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exposed, Grozo has a prime candidate to frame for his subsequent murder of Goto. Not long after, he is leader of this small island, but Glosia will never be his. When he challenges her through the castle, she throws herself from the metal steps.

The ending of Goto seeks not to punish Grozo in the Hollywood sense (i.e., have him killed), but reveals the hollowness at his core in two close-ups which rank amongst the most powerful delineations of grief in cinema. There is no desire on the audience’s part to wish Grozo physically eliminated, because he is already destroyed from within.

It is only then that Glosia opens her eyes. Many have seen this as a triumph of the pure over the impure, but Glosia closes them again, as if this is a world of which she wants no part.

Goto Ille d’amour is a clever, witty, piercing shriek of despair.

Visually, Goto is much in the style of Borowczyk’s shorts. The cutting has an ‘animated’ feel, and the interest in bizarre locations and sets creates a graphic feel. Masterfully thought it is, Borowczyk was only just beginning to explore montage and it is far less sophisticated than in his later works. That is not to suggest it is any less arresting; in fact, the simplicity, the almost naif quality, gives Goto a tone unique in cinema – though Tarkovsky’s Stalker (1979) would conjure and play with not dissimilar terrains.

At the time, some critics suggested the actors were filmed and used like objects. While that criticism is based on a false presumption about what acting should be (Robert Bresson has suffered the same attacks), the performances in Goto are extraordinarily expressive, much of it influenced by the dramatic styles of silent movies (Liga Branie, in particular).

The acting, let alone Borowczyk’s stark industrial sets, owes much to the theatre of Samuel Beckett, Jonezco and others. Critics latched on to Franz Kafka’s In the Penal Colony as an obvious literary source, but failed to point out the absurdist nature of the theatrical spectacle (which Goto self-referentially comments on via the stage show). They missed too, it seems, the black comedy; Goto is a very funny film. The scene where Grozo positions himself below Gra in the execution structure, hurling out insults at the condemned man, is as chilling a depiction of bestial spirit as one would ever wish to experience.

In this very black comedy, Borowczyk has all manner of fun at the expense of (then) iron-curtain countries and the quirkiness of some of their advances. The USA was very convincing at portraying the whole Soviet world as highly advanced technologically, but the reality was Russia and its satellite nations were often technologically backward. They also had all manner of inventions which bore little resemblance to the slicker developments in Western countries. (One thinks of Billy Wilder’s 1961 Two Threes, where a Russian boast about the quality of their Coca-Cola rip-off brings the quip about it being sold to the Albanians, who “used it as sheep dip”)

Goto is littered with pre-Dickensian machinery and bizarre inventions, most notably the complex fly-trap designed by Gorom. Brilliantly designed by Borowczyk, the objects are photographed with an obsessive’s eye, though never used for decorative effect. As Borowczyk explained to Carlos Clarens in Film Comment: “Through objects you discover human nature, [...] It’s mostly indoors that we find objects, craftsmanship, the hand of man.” Outdoors it is nature that dominates; rocks, grass, trees, indoors, one loses touch with nature; we’re in the presence of objects, movable things that can be displaced. And the rapport with these objects is totally different from that with rocks. Because of this, I want each object to be something other than neutral, I want it to take part, because we choose objects in life and we live with them.

All Borowczyk films are filled with objects, both familiar and strange. They are generally seen in use, often by someone discovering the object for the first time. Their somewhat tentative exploration is invariably covered with many close-ups and quick cuts, giving life to the object and an exhilarating thrust forward to the narrative momentum. (These vignettes are a joy for all VCR-owners, as re-viewing can more fully reveal the inventiveness and intricacy behind the montage.)

In an interview with Ecran’s Max Tessier, Borowczyk states: “An object is a revealer of a character: it dramatizes the relations with reality. You will not find an object in my films which does not have its reasons to be where it is found. Sometimes it is the spectator who has an encounter with an object, sometimes it is me. There exists also a certain “symbolism” of objects, but I create them less than I use them: I don’t show a crucifix to symbolize religion. I find the significance is already used, but I find the meaning has already been used, but only in its context.”

Blanche (1971)


Le Seigneur’s request, Le Roi sends Bartolomeo away to deliver a letter. When confronted by a jealous Nicolas in the forest, Bartolomeo suggests they be friends and return to the chateau. Bartolomeo reads the letter he was to deliver and realizes Le Roi is going to have Blanche kidnapped. In the many machinations that follow, Nicolas is killed in a duel; Blanche and Le Seigneur both commit suicide; and Bartolomeo’s mutilated corpse is dragged behind horses through the forest.

This is a film of terrifying bleakness, an excoriating tragedy set in motion by the desires of four men to possess the one woman.

Le Seigneur sees Blanche as his property and believes he has the right to kill anyone or -thing that trespasses in his domain (“If a stag wanders into my forest, it is mine”) or interferes with his goods (“Haven’t I the right to kill an adulterer?”)? These are the views not only of a feudal lord, but of men who physically or mentally control their wives.

Le Roi believes he can possess anything in his realm, overriding the claims of the lesser Le Seigneur. He first tries to seduce Blanche with flat­tery (“I heard [your] name sung by a nightingale in my sleep”), and even appeals to her sympathy, saying she looks like a girl he once loved (“The smell of roses always reminds me of her”). But when Blanche fails to fall for his wooing, he marshals his army by letter to come kill her husband and kidnap her.

The handsome, youthful Bartolomeo has the arrogance of the sexual rogue who believes all women, including Blanche, will submit to his charm.

Nicolas is a romantic dreamer who believes purity of love tran-
scends all, but demands violent retribution the instant he feels sexually betrayed. "Cut off your hair and hang yourself, he screeches at Blanche. When she remains silent, he threatens, "I'll crush your little hands unless you answer." So much for the nobility and sanctity of romantic love.

Blanche, no doubt forced into marriage to Le Seigneur, is in love with Nicolas, but keeps the relationship platonic. Everything she does, she does innocently, purely, but that only exacerbates the worst thoughts of men. For instance, Blanche does not know that Bartolomeo has slipped into her chamber and is hiding in the alcove, so she has no hesitation swearing on a crucifix that no one is there.

Convinced of her infidelity, Le Seigneur orders the alcove to be bricked up. Ever the manipulative politician, he justifies his act by saying he is ensuring his wife’s reputation: “We must protect her from any suspicion of perjury.”

When Le Roi later has the wall pulled down, a near-dead Bartolomeo is dragged out, only to be flung immediately into a duel with Le Seigneur. Nicolas offers to take his father’s place and demands that Blanche bless Bartolomeo, saying “If she is guilty, her blessing will be fatal.” But during the fight, Nicolas deliberately lowers his shield and is struck a fierce blow. Before dying, he reiterates his love for Blanche, saying, “I wanted to die by the hand she blessed.” He has to die, because that proves Blanche’s blessing was not fatal and, therefore, she is innocent.

One could argue Nicolas has redeemed his love by a selfless act, but his fickle about-turns have nothing to do with Blanche; they are a reaction to other men’s actions and views. The whole code of chivalrous behaviour enacted by men over the centuries, supposedly for the benefit of women, is totally independent of them. Women did not ask men to behave this way; men imposed it with the justification of its being for the woman’s benefit.

Borowczyk, here and in his other films, refuses to posit society-approved forms of love as anything noble or meaningful. He is a true disciple of de Sade in believing in true exchanges between people as being natural, honest events, often outside the invented codes of human behaviour. Love is a concept, constructed by men, which inhibits rather than frees. There is no ecstasy in love, only defeat (and often death).

The one positive in the behaviour of these men is the extraordinary scene in the forest where Bartolomeo has been stopped by Nicolas and challenged to a duel. Bartolomeo tries to refuse, but is forced into fighting. He swiftly overcomes Nicolas, but, instead of killing him, asks that they be friends. There is a tenderness in this scene that is extremely touching and unlike anything else in Borowczyk. It is as if Borowczyk sees within the absurd rules of human society a greater chance for men being truer amongst themselves than in the more artificially-coded relationships with women.

One knows both men will die, though the tenderness is rekindled when Bartolomeo comforts the dying Nicolas. But the perversity of man’s rule on this planet has meant that what was so sweet between the men once led to them not fighting; now it is comfort in the aftermath of violence.

Borowczyk has one of the bleakest views in cinema, as

How to see these Borowczyk

Several of Borowczyk’s shorts, including Jeux des Anges, are available on a compilation tape from Luminous Film & Video Wurks, as is Théâtre de Monsieur and Madame Kabal. Goto, l’île d’amour is shown on SBS, whereas the National Film & Sound Archive has a 16mm copy of Blanche. It has also been released on video in London, along with Goto.
One of the most eye-catching films at Cannes this year was High Art, Lisa Cholodenko’s aptly-named film about heroin chic and photography which saw Australian actor Radha Mitchell win plaudits for her rôle opposite Ally Sheedy. Jan Epstein was on hand.

How does a Melburnian get to play a New Yorker?
Well, the Melburnian packs her suitcases and goes to America in search of work! Something you have to consider is your accent. Adopting an American accent is actually not as easy as you might imagine, although you’re surrounded by Americans and you’re mirroring that the whole time.

Your accent even now has an American twang. Perhaps it’ll be different when you go back to Australia.
I don’t know. People have said that to me recently, I don’t know if it’s true, I can’t hear it.

What was it like having such an upfront, full-on rôle in the movie, High Art? You play next to Ally Sheedy.
I’d gone to America and was promoting Love and Other Catastrophes [Emma-Kate Croghan, 1996] with the Sundance Film Festival, and I had this ambition to stay in America and pursue work. It took me a while to find an agent, but then I got this cool agent. They gave me this script and I sent a tape to [director] Lisa Cholodenko, because they weren’t actually looking for actors outside of New York; they didn’t have the budget for that. Lisa really responded to the tape and wanted me to come, and I met Ally at the audition.

I guess at this point I wasn’t really considering what it would be like playing a lead rôle opposite Ally Sheedy; I was thinking that Sidney was a character I really understood, and I kind of felt I deserved it. [laughs.]

What parts of Sidney’s personality did you identify with?

What I really liked about the character in the script, and the script in general, was that they respected the audience’s intelligence and didn’t piece it all together for them. The character doesn’t explain a lot of the things that she does, and yet she’s — pretty much from the first scene — putting herself in an uncomfortable position. Everyday, she’s extending herself in the world and pursuing reality from a different place to her comfort zone. I really liked that. She’s learning about herself as we are. We don’t really know who she is, and she doesn’t really know who she is, but she’s constantly learning, and I think that’s what youth is about.

Do you feel you’re learning about yourself through acting?
I’m learning about myself, because I haven’t sat still for the past seven months. I’ve been packing and unpack-
EXACTLY YOUR TRADITIONAL MIDDLE-CLASS KIDS GOING TO COLLEGE. They probably were usual middle-class kids going to college; they just weren't doing exactly what their parents would want them to do. That was a great film, and it broke a lot of ground in Austral-ian film, because it was a college flick. It was about young people, it was funky and, in many ways, like a lot of the American films we've seen—not your cheesy American films, but your independent American cinema.

DO YOU FEEL COMFORTABLE WITH INDEPENDENT CINEMA AT THE MOMENT? What would you do if you were offered a Kate Winslet role in a big blockbuster? Just take it by the horns, baby! [laughs.] I'm interested in working with people, obviously, who are passionate about what they do, and I've been lucky recently. I've worked with a lot of writer-directors, or with directors who have been involved in their project for years. In fact, everyone has been a first-time director, and when you work with first-time directors, yes, you're working with people who don't necessarily know, but that's good. They don't have habits, they're open to things; and, at the same time, it takes a lot of time to get your first film off the ground, and their passion for that is great.

YOU'RE MOVING VERY QUICKLY IN YOUR ACTING CAREER YOURSELF. You've moved a long way from Neighbours. How did you come into acting? Neighbours, for me, was just a thing to make some money. It was never my intention to be a soap star at all; it was uncomfortable to be doing the show. For a while it was fun, and I met some cool people, but it's not a genre that I love. I really don't feel it's happened rapidly at all; I feel like I've worked really hard and it's taken a long time. Did you go to film school, or were you in the theatre when you were at school or university? Being an actor is something that I've been doing consistently for about two years now, without doing anything else. Before that I was a high-school student who did a bit of acting, and then I was a university student who paid my rent by doing guest roles in different things. Then Love and Other Catastrophes came out, so I did the film circuit and decided that I wanted to do Neighbours to earn some money and then pursue film overseas. So I guess it was kind of conscious, but at the same time I was open to whatever would happen.

SOMEONE LIKE ALLY SHEEDY IS A VERY EXPERIENCED ACTOR. WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN LEARNING FROM BEING OPPOSITE LEAD WITH HER? It's more like an appreciation; when you're working with someone, whether they're experienced or not, if they know what they're doing and if they're very present as actors in a situation, then it reflects in your own work. It's like playing ball or something; you want to play with someone who can play. So obviously that was of benefit to me. If it had been someone who didn't know the character, then the film wouldn't have been the same. She's a great actress.

WHAT'S IT LIKE BEING IN CANNES? IS IT WHAT YOU IMAGINED IT MIGHT BE? Yes! [laughs.] I've been here before. I got off the plane and I didn't have a visa, that was a bit difficult. I realized on the plane that you needed a visa. I had one before, and it was like, "Oh my god, they're not going to let me in." And they didn't; they took me into custody. It was like police custody. And I'm trying to explain my plight in French, "Excusez moi, m'sieur, j'em..."

CINEMA PAPERS • DECEMBER 1998
Creative Challenges
The 13th Screen Producers' Association of Australia Conference. By Paul Kalina.

Despite a world-wide economic meltdown, attempts to impeach the President of the USA and a movie that everybody said would never make it turning out to be the most financially-successful film of all time, here, in Australia, the screen production sector has enjoyed a year of reasonable stability and embraced prospects of increasing growth.

However, as the industry gathers for the 13th annual Conference of the Screen Producers' Association of Australia, some cautionary signs are on the horizon. Concerns over a 25 percent decline in government funding over the past three years are rife, and the Gonski Report continues its long haul through the legislature. And, despite the wait, the probable end-result is likely to disappoint many.

FLICs
While Gonski recommended a 120 percent tax deduction for private investments in Film Licensing Investment Companies (FLICs), the Government seems committed to a 100 percent deduction, as well as a treatment of capital gains tax different to Gonski's proposal.

Admits Nick Herd, Executive Director of SPAA, who is undertaking his second Conference: "We're yet to see whether the reforms which the Government is introducing through the FLICs scheme will pay off in terms of encouraging a greater level of private investment. The legislation is before a Senate Committee. However, the Liberal Government, returned to office on October 3, appears unlikely to yield on the 100 percent limit on deductibility.

SpAA, nonetheless, supports a trial of FLIC, and is committed to the so-called many-doors approach advanced by Gonski. Herd believes that the FLIC model, albeit with the reservations above, has the potential to form the basis for a reasonably capitalized entity that's investing in production across a slate of both film and television. If there's any prospect for encouraging private investment and broadening the base of funding in the industry then it has to be explored.

It will be trialled over two years, with a cap of $20 million. A selection panel, compromising individuals with production and financing expertise, will be constituted. The trial will be reviewed at the end of the two-year period. The legislation carries a provision for more than one licence to be issued, and for the Minister for Communications and the Arts not to issue all of the licences at the one time.

If the FLIC model works as a way of raising tax investment in the film industry, it is expected that soBA will be phased out. The Government, says Herd, would have to review this at the end of the two-year period.

Herd believes there is a future for films funded under soBA. But, he cautions, "The difficulty is that film continues to be a high-risk investment and there is a lot of competition from other sources of investment. There are a lot more sophisticated options available for private investors to put their money. But I think there will continue to be a role for totally privately-funded films."

The sticking point on capital gains tax concerns the zero cost base treatment of the shares. Treasury is recommending the shares be treated like any other capital gains tax, but Gonski recommended the base price be the nominal cost of shares.

Feature Development
These financing issues aside, another key issue for SpAA, according to Herd, is the funding of development. Herd is concerned at the contraction in development funding at the AFC, though he adds that,

It's not just a matter of throwing some more money at development, but looking at the ways in which we undertake development - particularly from a producer's perspective, to seek ways in which the producer can spend more time in development. There's always a lot of pressure on producers to move projects forward, to go into production, because in the development phase it's often difficult, unless you're highly capitalized, to afford development. You're in the situation where you're scraping together funds in order to continue development for as long as possible.

Herd believes that the recent decision of the FFC to engage script assessors for feature projects reflects the problems of contracting funds for development, as well as the poor performance of a number of films in the marketplace. It's a decision that SPAA is highly critical of.

From SPAA's point of view, we agree that development is an issue, but have a problem with the solution the FFC has come up with in terms of it wanting to engage in script assessment at that point of the development process.

The FFC becomes involved in projects when they've gone through a development process. They've gone to the marketplace, they've got the marketplace attachments and they're coming forward with the support of the marketplace, whether they be Australian-based sales agents or international sales agents.

The concern we have is that the FFC is coming into this process late and possibly using script assessment as a way of declining to invest in projects. We're concerned that it changes the nature of the organization and moves the FFC more closely to the role of the executive producer rather than an investment agency.

Herd and SPAA are advocating for an industry-wide solution: We really need for the industry to sit down and look at how we're doing development, and how we go about getting better scripts. That's what SPAA, the Writers' Guild and ASDA have endeav-
Two significant issues that have dominated SPAA’s work over the last year have been Moral Rights and the legal challenge to the Australian content rules. Following the decision of the High Court that New Zealand production can count toward broadcasters’ Australian content quota, the ABA has been directed by the High Court to remake the Australian Content Standards so that it is consistent with the CER Treaty obligations.

We think that the Court has presented the ABA with a difficult if not impossible task to try to make the obligations under the CER, which are about national treatment for New Zealand persons in the provision of services and making programmes, consistent with the objects of the Broadcasting Services Act, which talks about reflecting Australian identity and character on Australia’s television screens.

The industry has argued and lobbied to have the Parliament resolve the issue for the ABA by changing the Broadcasting Services Act. We were successful to the extent that a resolution to that effect was considered by the Senate in June of this year, which resulted in a tied vote with a reference to a Senate Committee which is looking at the possibility of amending the Broadcasting Services Act at the same time as the ABA’s reviewing the standard.

We will continue to push for that legislative and diplomatic solution. We see this as a really fundamental issue about how we approach the regulation of our cultural industries. We’re arguing that essentially Australia should have the same approach as the Canadians and the Europeans – to not have issues of trade liberalization confused with measures designed to encourage the development of cultural industries.

Herd stressed that it’s not about attacking New Zealand programmes and their makers, though SPAA does take issue with the possibility that New Zealand producers may be able to sell into the local television market at discounted rates. For New Zealand producers, Australia is a secondary market, their main production costs covered in their own domestic markets. They therefore have the same access as Australian producers would have, except that Australian producers have to find the cost of production domestically. Herd maintains that this issue must be dealt with by the ABA.

“Even if you accept that there is some obligation under the CER, it has to be on the basis of fair competition.”

Moral Rights
The moral rights issue has been on the table for some time. In June and July 1998, the Government took the moral rights legislation out of the Copyright Amendments that went through Parliament because there was still no resolution in relation to the issue of how waiver was to be treated in the legislation. SPAA argued that there needs to be in the legislation an option over negotiation of waiver.

The Australian Writers’ Guild and Australian Screen Directors Association were opposed to any form of waiver, except in relation to people who were employees.

SPAA is continuing to talk to the Guild and ASDA about a compromise proposal, with a view to an agreement amongst all the players, which includes the Guild, SPAA, ASDA, broadcasters and distributors, that can be incorporated in the legislation.

From our point of view, we recognize that Australia has a commitment to introduce a workable moral rights régime. We want to see it work for everybody, and we also want to get this issue of moral rights resolved and off the agenda, because I think there are more pressing issues for the industry to confront.

Overseas Guests
As usual, a number of high-profile guests will be attending this year’s Conference, including director, producer and writer George Lucas, Laura Ziskin (Fox 2000), Paul Webster (Channel Four Television), Eric Fellner (Working Title), producer Gayle Ann Hurd, Wendy Palmer (Goldwyn Films) and Tony Safford (20th Century Fox).

Herd says the Conference has moved away from being solely about business issues and who’s buying what to looking at more creative aspects of producing.

Last year we had Saul Zaentz as a keynote speaker, this year George Lucas, who was attracted to come because it isn’t a Conference just about the business. It isn’t a market, although people do come to SPAA because of the opportunities it provides to network and to make contacts. The formal sessions of the Conference have this emphasis on creative issues and the experiences of a whole range of producers in film and television.

Herd believes that the experiences of producers like Zaentz are highly relevant to local producers.

At last year’s Conference, a lot people were inspired by his commitment and persistence to the vision of what he wanted to make, although perhaps on a scale larger than a lot of Australian producers are used to working with. They took from that the sense that if you believe in the project and are willing to persist with it, you can see the vision that you, your directors and writers have on a project through to the end and not compromise on that vision. I think a lot of people found that to be very inspirational.

There are similarities in each of the markets producers work; the creative elements, the business elements, getting ideas, listening to how others in the industry work. That is how you can make your own particular project work.

Our task is to do through some of the discussions we had earlier in the year – looking at different ways of approaching development, ways of fostering teams of writer/director/producers. We’d like to see a more integrated approach to development, as well of course as having enough money there to help people through the development process.

NZ and the High Court
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Unfinished Business

Movies, Content and New Media. By David Court.

In political terms, there were four great, catalyzing events in the ‘renaissance’ of the film industry. The first was the 1956 regulation requiring all commercials shown on Australian television to be Australian-made, a decision commonly reckoned to have created the skills base necessary for the emergence of local movie production in the 1960s.

The second event was the creation of the Australian Film Development Corporation in 1971 (the precursor to the Australian Film Commission). The third was the enactment of the 10BA tax legislation in May 1981; and the last, the establishment of the Australian Film Finance Corporation in August 1988.

The policy framework is wearing a little thin. It is 17 years since the definition of “Australian film” was last revisited. In the interim, there has been a wave of globalization, evidenced here by the continuing, relentless talent drain to Hollywood, and the arrival of two USA studios on our shores, Warner Bros. and Fox (with a third, Paramount, waiting in the wings). Pay-Television has landed, with its vision of ubiquitous, 500-channel programming. And now the World Wide Web has begun its wholesale reconstruction of the media universe.

Looking around this landscape, as a Martian might, there are several things that stand out, to say the least. Here are three, in no particular order.

Why does an industry that prides itself on its international standing, and ‘discovers’ and develops so many talented filmmakers, play such a limited role once they are launched successfully in the global movie market? Why don’t we get their repeat business, their big pictures, to make, own and distribute internationally, and ‘discovers’ and develops talent, infrastructure and accumulated expertise, why do Australian movies still lose so much money? To break it down, how much of the loss is a cultural deficit – the cost of localism – and how much a systemic condition of the movie business?

These few questions, if we could answer them, might furnish us with intelligent policies for going forward.

The film industry is a puzzle, not only for Martians. On the one hand, there are the losses and the continuing need of subsidies, and, on the other, the evident success of Australian actors, designers, directors, DOPs, editors and writers in the global movie business – and their disproportionate representation in Hollywood. There is also the evidence of efficiency. Frame for frame, Sydney movie production costs are reckoned to be 30 percent cheaper than Los Angeles. So, if we fail, it is not for want of talent or efficiency.

Here, it is instructive to compare the average profitability of Australian and American movies. In Australia, as noted, the average return to copyright owners is a loss of about 50 cents in the dollar (ignoring the opportunity costs). In America, for the Hollywood studios – wait for it – the average return on copyright is ‘break-even’; that is, a mere return of capital with no interest or dividend.

For the studios, break-even equates to a capital loss of about 15 percent per annum, this being the minimum return on funds necessary for BBB corporate respectability. Multiplied by the normal economic lifespan of a movie, which is rarely less than three years, and commonly four or five, it suggests an effective loss in the order of 50 to 100 percent – not much better than the crude losses of Australian movies.

Of course, the idea that Hollywood is grinning and bearing its losses, while it undertakes what is possibly the most successful cultural invasion in history, is plainly fatuous. Far from losing money, Hollywood has been one of the great engines of the American economy.

In the movie business, the normal distribution of the retail dollar is 90 cents to the middle-man and 10 cents to the creators and copyright owners — paid last, after everyone else has recouped their costs and made a profit. For their creators and copyright owners, movies are a lousy bet: first to commit and last to recoup. But they generate tremendous upstream profits for the middle-men, for every agent and distributor with some proprietary lock on the long river flowing from the source of creation to the mouth of consumption.

The dilemma of the film industry is that despite its exemplary performance against almost every known industry measure – hits, awards, talent, skill-base, cost-efficiency – its return on investment to copyright investors is below investment grade, and propped up by subsidies. The movies may be jewels, but the copyright is junk.

The consequence of this one failure is a capital drought. There is no money to fund the big pictures, no money for the un contemptually formatted of the new media, and precious little for experimentation.

Addressing this failure is the key to the future of ‘Australian content’. We have to create a market in copyright instruments that is deeper, more transparent, more equitable and more efficient than the present market – or else resign ourselves to the colonizing power of the middle-men and the shrinking viability of local culture.

Much of this reform can be achieved within the present policy framework. We have a
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How Home Offset saves interest - without extra repayments

If you have a $100,000 Home Loan

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Current variable rate: 7.11. Conditions, fees and charges apply. Full details available on application.

Bank of Melbourne cuts the cost of banking
Marked Review

In an ever-adapting marketplace, two new companies detail their respective philosophies: Entertainment Finance Group (financing the industry); Scanbox Australia Pacific (production and distribution).

The formation of the Entertainment Finance Group earlier this year signalled the arrival of an alternative funding source for the local entertainment industry. The Entertainment Finance Group (EFG) is a Melbourne-based company acting as the local representative of Imperial Bank, Imperial Bank, which has its head office in Los Angeles, is a world leader in entertainment finance. In 1997, Imperial Bank financed more films than any other private financing organization in the world. According to Justin Pearce, Executive Director of EFG, Our mandate is to provide Australian and New Zealand producers and distributors of film, television and multimedia product with an alternative source of funding and access to a large knowledge base. The two main forms of finance available are Pre-sale Finance and Gap Finance.

Pre-sale Finance Pre-sale finance is debt finance secured against pre-sale agreements (also known as minimum guarantees or distribution guarantees) struck with territorial distributors. EFG assesses the wording of the pre-sale contract and the financial standing of the distributor. In doing so, EFG will tap into Imperial's extensive historical database which details the previous payments histories of distributors. There is no upper limit on the dollar value of pre-sale agreements that will be considered. Producers are not required to provide collateral security, such as the family home, in order to finance against a bankable pre-sale agreement.

Gap Finance From the perspective of the local industry, the most interesting type of finance offered is gap finance. Gap finance enables producers and distributors to secure debt finance against a project's potential revenue. This form of finance is currently only available for film and television projects. Typically, some territorial rights to a film or television project (e.g., Germany, Australia, etc.) would be pre-sold in order to attract funding. The remaining/unsold territories are kept for exploitation at a later date when a more complete product is available. Those unsold territories are security for a gap finance loan. Revenues from those territories will be used to repay the loan. In a standard structure, once the gap finance loan is repaid, further revenues revert to the distributor/sales agent, the producer and equity investors in the ordinary course.

EFG looks to place a value upon unsold territories as security for gap finance by reviewing the elements of the particular project and the parties involved. Pearce explains, "The amount of gap finance available will depend upon such things as cast, storyline, director, producer and budget."

Other Products Equity investors in any project can make use of the Bank's revenue collection service. The Bank uses its industry presence to assist in the collection of contractual payments from territorial distributors. Larger companies can use film, television and multimedia receivables as a borrowing base for a line of credit. Those companies looking to expand via acquisition can also secure acquisition finance against the film, television and multimedia assets of target companies. EFG has projects currently in the works in each of the film, television and multimedia industries.

Some publicly-known examples of projects that have secured pre-sales and/or gap finance through alternative sources are:

- What Becomes of the Broken Hearted, sequel to Once Were Warriors, produced by Sequel Productions and starring Temuera Morrison as Jake;
- Komodo, produced by Scanbox Asia Pacific Ltd, with special effects by the team who created MouseHunt;
- Muggers, starring Matt Day and Jason Barry, produced by David Redman and distributed by Winchester Films; and
- SLC Punk, produced by Sam Maydew and Peter Ward, and distributed by Beyond Films Ltd. The Entertainment Finance Group can be contacted on (61-3) 9614 4121.

Operating out of its Collins Street, Melbourne, office, Scanbox Asia Pacific Limited (SAPL) - a subsidiary of Scanbox Danmark - has quickly established itself in the business of producing low-cost commercial films with a clear action, adventure/thriller focus with budgets under US$10 million.

Scanbox films are designed primarily, but not exclusively, for release directly to international Pay Television, video and free-to-air television. General manager, Devesh Chetty, is 30 years old. With a strong line-up of films on the slate, he is confident of a profitable and exciting future for the company. In September 1998, SAPL announced an end of financial year net profit of A$3.8 million. Following twelve months of rapid expansion, SAPL is the second most profitable entertainment software company operating in Australia.

At the same time, SAPL announced it is handling the international distribution of Sample People, a feature starring Kylie Minogue, which begins principal photography in Adelaide in early November. SAPL is 51 percent owned by Scanbox Danmark. Recent developments within the Scanbox group has led to SAPL undertaking some of the higher-budget film production activities with no risk to SAPL beyond US$5 million.

The companies also recently restructured their distribution activities and now Scanbox owns 50 percent of Scanbox International, a global film distributor. In November 1997, SAPL also acquired the Cannon and 21st Century film libraries, giving the company access to and total copyright of 132 feature films. Earlier this year, SAPL established a new USA-based home entertainment company, Sterling Entertainment. This is an equal joint venture with the Canadian listed company, Lion's Gate Films Inc. Sterling Entertainment is one of only four video distributors operating across the entire USA. This move vertically integrates SAPL's business down to retail level in the world's largest rental market, valued at US$6.5 billion per year. Generally, SAPL films are not destined for large-scale cinema release. The company, therefore, does not compete in the high-risk box-office film business dominated by large Hollywood studios. SAPL's strategy is to produce profitable films and retain total copyright ownership.

In the past twelve months, SAPL has delivered four feature films: Sanctuary, Post Mortem, Late Last Night and Foreign Fields. Over the next year, the company has plans to increase its output to twelve films, having confirmed: Komodo: The Living Terror, to be directed by Academy Award-winner Michael Lanteri; New Blood, to be directed by Michael Hurst and filmed in Canada; and Sample People. Additionally, the company recently acquired the international distribution rights to the Australian police thriller, RedBall. With increased production output, strengthened distribution and a lean management team, SAPL looks forward to extending its involvement in the Australian film industry in the future. Scanbox can be contacted on (61-3) 9614 6111.
Moral Rights

The story so far and where to from here? By Lisa French.

Australian writers recently took to the streets for the first time in 70 years. The issue was moral rights - without a waiver.

Moral rights are a hotly-debated topic within the film industry and elsewhere in the arts in Australia (although it would be true to say that other sections of the arts have been strangely inert in their protest). Personally, I've recently participated in a battle to save the largest glass ceiling in the world, the hand-painted Leonard French ceiling at the National Gallery of Victoria. I was appalled to discover last year that the Gallery was not only proposing dismantling it to flip the orientation, to place it in a glass gallery similar to the Chadstone shopping complex (where the impact of the ceiling, which relies on a vault-like space, would be lost), but it had not even consulted with the artist prior to making the announcement. The National Trust and fans of the ceiling won this battle to preserve it in situ; this was a battle which might not have been necessary if moral rights legislation existed.

In a joint media release on 2 July 1998, Senator Alston and the Attorney-General Daryl Williams announced that provisions to establish moral rights (in the Copyright Amendment Bill) would be withdrawn from the Bill before the Senate to establish moral rights. They also gave an undertaking that a Bill on moral rights will be reintroduced before the end of 1998, "following further consultations with interested parties to resolve differences on the waiver of the rights". The withdrawal (and the rethink it implies) is good news for pro-moral rights campaigners, given that Senator Alston was quoted in The Sydney Morning Herald as saying, "moral rights in film were inappropriate in a commercial, collaborative art form such as film".

To waiver or not to waiver is not the question according to the Australian Writers' Guild, Australian Screen Directors Association (ASDA) and the Labor Government. Bob McMullan, the then-Shadow Minister for Industrial Relations, Finance and the Arts, released a statement stating that, "On balance, we have concluded that the loss of rights to artists is too great a price to pay against the uncertain risk to industry investment."

At the Moral Rights forum held at the Melbourne International Film Festival (MIFF), screenwriter Jan Sardi said that there was no value in legislation which does not safeguard artistic and cultural integrity, and that the idea of a waiver offered 'Claytons' legislation which betrays the community at large.

The legal foundation for the protection of moral rights is the Berne Convention. In 1886, a gathering of artists, bureaucrats and legislators convened in Berne, Switzerland. This meeting resulted in the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, a raft of rights which was to be written into the laws of the participating nations. Australia has been a signatory to the Berne convention since 1928. Moral rights specifically give the artist the right to recognition (paternity) and the right to integrity in a work (although other rights are sometimes claimed).

In his Cinema Papers article on moral rights, Australian producer-director John B. Murray said that: "The essence of moral rights is a reflection of the Declaration of Human Rights; Article 27 (2): Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interest resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which he is the author."

At the Sydney Film Festival, Ian David quoted the Copyright Council, saying that it provides, a recognition that a work is an extension of the creator's personality, and as such both the work and the creator's relationship to the work must be acknowledged and respected. Moral rights recognize that there is more than a causal link between the author or artist and the work s/he creates. Whilst Australian copyright law recognizes and protects the author's economic rights (in relation to reproduction, publication, performance, broadcast, etc.), it does not recognize the author's intentions and his/her relationship to the work. The spirit behind moral rights is to protect the artist's work so that it is seen as it was intended, and that it is not mutilated or used inappropriately. Ian Collie, Executive Director of ASDA, has said that, Art has always compromised itself with commerce. But there are limits - in particular where a work is released into the marketplace which misleads consumers into thinking that the altered work is the actual work or that it has been endorsed by the director.

Filmmaker Baz Luhrmann has described the importance of moral rights in the following way:

With moral rights protection, when an audience sees a film that I've written, whether it is today or in 50 years, they will know they are seeing the work as I want them to see it. At the MIFF forum, Jan Sardi gave an example of an inappropriate use, quoted by Geoffrey Atherden, the writer of Mother and Son. If someone wanted to edit it to promote euthanasia, moral rights legislation would allow Atherden to stop it. This is a basic tenet of moral rights: that the work can't be altered without the artist's approval. In this way, the artist is able to act as a protector of cultural integrity or, in fact, as a trustee for the public.

A film called The Iron Curtain was made in the USA and the producers used music by Shostakovich, Prokofieff and others without permission - USSR citizens didn't have copyright protection in the USA - but acknowledged them in the credits. The musicians sought an injunction (which was unsuccessful in the USA), because they felt libelled given that the film's theme was objectionable and unsympathetic to their political ideology. Another American example was the playing of Fred Schepisi's Evil Angels at a faster speed by a television network to fit a particular time slot.

The complexity of moral rights creates great problems for all involved, especially on collective works such as films. Sixty-seven countries grant moral rights to writers and directors. The Screen Producers' Association of Australia has had quite a win in that Australia is the only country out of the 67 (except Canada) where the producer has been put into legislation as author. Phillip Adams describes this as being like suggesting that, "Sotheby's should be deemed the painter of van Gogh's Irises and Christies' of Monet's Waterlilies." Although SPA claims to support moral rights, it has also argued for a waiver which would, in effect, be a step back from the rights a producer currently has under common law (where an author may be able to bring actions for defamation or breach of contract when his/her integrity is damaged). Australian Writers Guild President Mac Gudgeon has said that a waiver is contrary to the spirit of moral rights and that:

A waiver means that the writer and director get moral rights but then waive them, effectively leaving the producer holding the rights. This is akin to granting free speech, then prosecuting anyone who exercises that right.

Just who should be regarded as the author has been the subject of some debate. Writers have had to battle to be included as authors. Previously in Cinema Papers, John B. Murray offered a useful discussion on who the author is and describes him/her as the creator, as the "one who conceptualizes, implements and governs the execution of his or her idea in a chosen medium" and "predominantly determines the content, nature and style of the expression to be realized in physical/material form."

The industry has worked this year on a consent framework for cinematograph films (a kind of self-regulation), where within Australia, on a case-by-case basis, authors may consent to changes in the work for time-slot requirements, advertisements, to
accommodate broadcasting law and avoid breaches of it, and to make foreign-language, in-flight or promotional versions. Other alterations would require the author's consent. This was not seen as ideal, but as a compromise position for all parties. However, after months of negotiation, this agreement fell through following further lobbying by SPAA, FACTS, television networks (commercial, pay and government) and a new player, Fox Studios Australia, which, according to Gudgeon, "has been instrumental in the campaign to return to the waiver".

In the USA, writers do not have moral rights and American studios could be seen to have a vested interest in applying pressure to ensure Australian writers don't get moral rights, because ultimately American writers might go after them. In fact, The Sydney Times reported that the Writers Guild of America West has supported Australian writers.

The problem now is that agreement has to be nutted out again so that the Bill can go before the Senate.

At the MIFF forum, Chris Lovell, a senior commercial partner of Holding Redlich, made a useful attempt to summarize the current positions on moral rights. He said that what was in dispute was whether the entity that actually produces the film can seek a waiver of moral rights from the people who own them.

At the same forum, writer Michael Brindley put it that the producer's view is that s/he has paid for it and, therefore, they should be able to do what they see fit, despite the fact that it is the writer and director whose work is misrepresented to the world.

Writer Ian Sardi described it in the following terms: the writer may spend years writing the production, the government funds it in the recognition of the cultural significance of Australian stories, the production might also get government funding on the same basis and Australians spend twelve months making it. The writer might also get government funding on the same basis and Australia might receive three-quarters of the production costs and a foreign buyer can take it and do anything with it without consultation with the author or regard for the time, effort, government money and cultural content. Ian Sardi illustrated this at the Sydney Film Festival, saying that without moral rights owners might do whatever they liked, and gave the following example of intellectual chauvinism: a Japanese billionaire recently bought an impressionist master so he could have it buried with him.

At MIFF, Lovell summarized the two sides of the debate. He said the producers have argued that film production is an industry where the creative team are but one link in the food chain and that they are beholden to the market (television networks, film distributors, etc.). According to SPAA, that market won't accept programmes where moral rights are attached. While Lovell described this as the current position, he agreed with Brindley's argument that this isn't going to be SPAA's final position and it will generally wear what it has to and may well come around to a different view. This can perhaps be illustrated by the fact that, in April 1998, the Nine Network allowed a moral rights clause for writer Mary Morris on Misery Guts. Lovell stated that in a very competitive industry, where around 85 percent of English-speaking product is produced by one country, the USA (which does not have moral rights), the Australian industry will be put at a competitive disadvantage. Lovell stated that the UK, Canada and New Zealand have waiver provisions and the USA has no moral rights whatsoever. He said that producers say the rights in a work, such as in the script, are negotiable and why shouldn't moral rights, be in the same position? They say the waiver does no more than allow negotiation.

This final point is all made more complex by the fact that moral rights may extend across the entire film and television spectrum, and a director or writer of a television commercial might claim rights. The AWG has claimed this is a smokescreen to induce unrealistic panic, but it does illustrate how wide the issue is. However, it should be noted that the consent clauses which were worked out only applied to a cinematograph film and not to all the other areas. In addition, performers have made claims for moral rights and this adds a further complexity.

Lovell summarized the writers' view, saying that moral rights have existed for years in most countries and the market has learned to live with them; that moral rights are rarely enforced (he stated that, as far as he was aware, this had only occurred twice in French history in relation to film) and this is in a country with basically taking away with one hand what is given by the other (and producers may not engage writers who refuse to waive); that moral rights are needed to protect only extreme abuses of creativity; and, finally, the consent clause only covers features, documentaries and mini-series or features and not series and serials, advertisements, corporate and, most important, multimedia. Brindley pointed out that the argument regarding the fear of production being brought to a halt by writers demanding control is unfounded given that moral rights cannot be claimed if a work does not exist; therefore, production can't be held up. The writers have been at pains to illustrate that examples of problems caused by granting moral rights have not been forthcoming.

The position (at the time of writing this) is that the industry organizations, guilds and unions, broadcasters, etc., are currently trying to come to agreement. The original consent clause, it seems, will still be used, but a new approach is being negotiated and is likely to be in draft form shortly. This new approach brings the legislation back to consider the idea of authorship as central and so far it has wide provisional support. The proposal, which I understand was put up by writer Ian David, is for "Joint Authorship". Under a "Joint Authorship" agreement, a need for waiver is removed. It means if authors have this agreement, they cannot take a moral rights action without the other author's agreement obviously this does not apply to single authors who would use a contractual agreement such as the Consent Clause, although it is not inconceivable that a single author be asked to sign "Joint Authorship" agreement. "Joint Authorship" provides some certainty, especially, say, in serials where there is a creator and various authors, and it is likely to cover problem areas such as advertising. If agreement is reached, it is likely that this will be accepted and put up by the government. This means that, so far, both certainty and moral rights are elusive, but all parties seem to be optimistic and are negotiating in good faith.
Profiles

Mark Smith and Tim Hunter look at key international guests at SPAA98.

Matt Brodie
Director of Acquisitions for Miramax Films, Matt Brodie is responsible for covering film festivals and screenings, tracking independent projects, and looking for pre-buy and co-production packages for both Miramax and Dimension Films.

Brodie is responsible for two yet-to-be-released German films, Beyond Silence and Comedian Harmonists, also overseeing the feature-film development of the Australian short, Titianna Boobenini. He worked on Maya Angelou’s Down in the Delta and recently helped to bring in Guinevere, which is currently in post-production.

Before joining Miramax four years ago, Brodie worked for independent producer Todd Harris at Davis Entertainment.

Jules Burns
Joining Granada in 1976 as Manager of Regional Programmes, Jules Burns has worked as Head of Programme Services and Director of Business Affairs. In December 1993, he was appointed to the Board of Granada Television as Director of Programme and Management Services and Managing Director of Granada Enterprises, remaining in this role until his appointment as Joint Managing Director of Granada Television in late 1994.

Following the restructure of Granada Media Group in August 1996, Burns became Joint Managing Director of Granada Productions alongside Andrea Wonfor.

This umbrella group is responsible for the development of all the programme-making and distribution operations. It includes Granada, London Weekend and Yorkshire Tyne Tees Productions, Granada Film, the London and Manchester Studios, Granada Entertainment USA and International Drama, The Animation, Media Products and Learning divisions and the international distributor.

Becoming Chairman of Granada Sky Broadcasting in 1996, Burns is also on the boards of the Manchester United Television channel and the Home Shopping Channel. He is a member of the Royal Exchange Theatre Board and the Manchester 2002 Commonwealth Games Board.

John Copeland
John Copeland, Executive Vice-President of Nettex Digital Entertainment Inc. (NOE Inc.) and producer of Babylon 5, was recently declared “the producer’s producer” by Millimeter magazine.

Film making has been an all-consuming passion for Copeland since his first student film as a sophomore at Chapman University, from where he graduated in 1973 with a degree in Film and Theatre.

In 1974, Copeland was “taken under the wing” of English producer Euan Lloyd. As a production assistant at London’s Twickenham Studios, he met and was influenced by directors Blake Edwards and Richard Lester, and the stunt co-ordinators Kit West and Bob Simmons. During this two-year period, Copeland was elevated to 1st Assistant Director and worked as a 2nd Unit Director on The Paper Tiger (1975).

Since 1976, Copeland has worked with NDE Inc., rising through the ranks, from production assistant to producer. He has served as producer on: the Emmy-awarded Babylon 5; the documentary The Wild West; and a state-of-the-art corporate films, Block Wing and Spirit of Flight, which were used to obtain Congressional funding for the F-22 fighter aircraft.

Paul Federbush
Paul Federbush, Vice President of Acquisitions and Production, has been with Fine Line Features since 1995.

An alumnus of New York University, Federbush was instrumental in the acquisition of the Academy Award-nominated The Sweet Hereafter (1998) and All Over Me (1999).

Federbush also served as the Creative Executive in charge of production on Love/Value/Compassion (1997).

Eric Fellner
Eric Fellner is the co-Chairman of Working Title Films, alongside Tim Bevan, a partnership that began in 1992 with the full backing of Polygram. Fellner’s roots are in low-budget British films, his first as a producer being Alex Cox’s controversial Sid and Nancy (1985). He produced more than ten films before joining Bevan, including Pascali’s Island (1988) and Hidden Agenda (1990).

Working Title Films produced the successful Four Weddings and a Funeral (1994) and has a full slate of films including The Hudsocker Proxy (1994), French Kiss (1995), Dead Man Walking (1995) and Mr. Bean (1997).

Susan Glazer
Susan Glazer is the Vice President of Acquisitions and Production for October Films, joining in 1995, to head acquisitions in the New York headquarters before relocating in 1996 to run the acquisitions department from October’s newly-created Los Angeles office.

Glazer has assisted in acquiring in finished or in script form: Robert Duval’s The Apostle (1998); Lisa Cholodenko’s High Art (1998); Pulp Avail’s The Best Man (1998); Todd Solondz’s Happiness (1998); and Mike Leigh’s Career Girls (1997).

Formerly working in acquisitions at Northern Arts Entertainment and First Run Features, Glazer also served as Program Director for the 1992 Independent Feature Film Market. She was a member of the Programming Committee for Thirteen/WMET and a founding member of the Board of Directors of the New York Women’s Film Festival.

Gary Levinsohn
Gary Levinsohn is a founding partner of Mutual Film Company and is responsible for the production, financing, acquisition and distribution of a number of films in the USA and internationally.

Recently, he founded Mutual Film International with international partners BBC, Tele-Munchen, Toho-Towa/Marubeni and UGC-PH.


Previously a consultant and sales agent with Dino De
Laurentiis Communications (DDLC), Levinsohn was responsible for the distribution of all DDLC product in all media.

He was retained by DDLC to oversee the solicitation and sale of the De Laurentiis library.

 Classical Asia Inc., a company formed by Levinsohn, acquires and distributes television rights to all territories in South East Asia, excluding Japan, having acquired in excess of 400 hours of programmes to date.

At Goldwyn he has supervised the production or acquisition of such films as: The Madness of King George, Lolita, The Chambermaid on the Titanic, I Shot Andy Warhol, Bent, The Preacher’s Wife, Big Night, Kissed and the recently-released Welcome to Woop Woop.

In his role as an independent producer, Manulis was responsible for The Basketball Diaries for Palm Pictures and New Line, Swing Kids for Hollywood Pictures, Foxfire for Rysher Entertainment, Daybreak for HBO and Three Ways Home at New York’s Astor Place Theatre. Projects that he has executive-produced include his own creation, the CBS series, Comedy Zone, Hollywood Pictures’ V.I. Warshawski and HBO’s Blind Side.

Manulis is a Harvard University graduate, a member of the Writer’s Guild of America and serves on the Board of Director’s of The Liberty Hill Foundation.

McCallum has only worked with writer-director George Lucas since 1990, collaborating on the feature film Radioland Murders, and the award-winning television series, The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles.

McCallum produced the restoration of the Star Wars Trilogy Special Edition and the new Star Wars, which has recently completed filming in England. Currently, he is preparing for the next instalment of the Star Wars saga.

WENDY PALMER
Wendy Palmer is the Chief Executive Officer of Goldwyn Films, a company recently formed by MGM to complement its MGM and United Artists production labels.


During 15 years in film investment sales, Palmer has represented more than 200 films. Goldwyn Films also represents the early catalogues of David Lynch, Pedro Almodóvar, Gus Van Sant and Jocelyn Moorhouse.

Currently participating in the Film Policy Review Committee on future strategy for British film, Palmer is also chairing the sub-committee on Exports.

TONY SAFFORD
Tony Safford is the Senior Vice President of Acquisitions for 20th Century Fox. Previously he worked for Miramax as Executive Vice President of Acquisitions, West Coast Productions, acquiring the Australian films Strictly Ballroom (1992), The Piano (1992) and Muriel’s Wedding (1994). He was also Director of The Sundance Film Festival.

LAINE SPERBER
Elaine Sperber, Head of Drama for Buena Vista Productions, leads the development and production of comedy and drama series for the burgeoning number of Disney Channels worldwide.

Educated at the University of California Berkley, Sperber began her career as an executive at the San Francisco International Film Festival. After developing and producing children’s drama for the Learning Corporation of America, she continued producing a number of Emmy award winning “After-School Specials” for the ABC Network.

Re-locating to Los Angeles to develop projects for London Films, Sperber later moved to HBO. As Vice President of Production for HBO Pictures, she was the executive in charge on many films, including The Josephine Baker Story (1991), Stalin (1992) and Citizen Cohr (1992).

While at HBO, Sperber produced the films, Perfect Witness and Framed. At Walt Disney Pictures, she produced A Far Off Place (1993).

In 1995, Sperber moved to London to consult for the Disney Channels, helping to establish their original programming division. She is an active member of the RTS and BAFTA.

AURA ZISKIN
Laura Ziskin is President of Fox 2000 and one of Hollywood’s leading independent producers.

After graduating from the USC School of Cinema, Ziskin worked with Jon Peters on A Star Is Born (1976) and was Associate Producer on The Eyes of Laura Mars (1978), before going on to partner Sally Field in producing Murphy’s Romance (1985).


Nicole Kidman won a Golden Globe Award for the Ziskin production, To Die For (1994). Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt both received Academy Awards for their roles in As Good as It Gets (1999), a film developed and executive produced by Ziskin.

In October 1994, Ziskin was named President of Fox 2000 Pictures, a feature film division of 20th Century Fox. Ziskin has been actively involved in issues concerning the environment and families, serving on the boards of: Americans for a Safe Future; the National Council of Jewish Women; and Education First.

Recently, Ziskin was honoured by Senator Barbara Boxer as a Woman Making History and received Premiere magazine’s First Women in Hollywood Award.

ANDREA WONFOR
Andrea Wonfor has been joint Managing Director of Granada Television since 1994, joining Granada Television in late 1993 as a director of programmes, she was responsible for all programme output including Coronation Street, Prime Suspect, Cracker, This Morning, World in Action, You’ve Been Framed, Stars In Their Eyes, The Krypton Factor and Children’s Ward.

Prior to Granada, Wonfor worked as Deputy Director of Programmes and Controller of Arts and Entertainment at Channel Four. A founding Managing Director at Zenith North, her early training was at Tyne Tees.

LI MILLARD
Acquisitions & Production Development, Winchester Film & TV (UK)

ZAKIYA POWELL
Plaza Film Company (UK)

TOM STRUDWICK
Vice President, Acquisitions & Production, Goldwyn Films (UK)

ERIC WEISSMANN
Partner, Weissmann, Wolff, Bergman, Coleman & Silverman (USA)
that, in creating a film and television school, you’d have the opportunity for a tremendous diversity of experience.

_How do you see your role? To what extent do you feel what you did was critical to the establishment of the School?_ I wouldn’t identify myself in isolation as being absolutely critical, but it’s clear that there was a ring of people who were close to each other. I was close to Erwin Rado. I was close to Colin Bennett. I was close to Phillip Adams. We knew, incidentally, that there was a Sydney push which went along somewhat parallel lines. There’d been a UNESCO conference which had taken place in Sydney about film culture and film

Holt, who’d had a fairly close association with theatre.

_of the arguments, the conflicts around the School in which you were involved, is there anything that stands out?_ Oh, of course. One very early issue was the actual location of the School because a number of us – Phillip and myself were very keen that the School should be in Melbourne. We saw the danger – a danger which I think has been underlined by subsequent events – that with the location of the Australian Council for the Arts as it then was, the Australia Council now, in Sydney and a lot of the other associated organisations being in Sydney, that you’d have such a degree of concentration of patronage in the one city that what was taking place in the other major cities, let alone Melbourne – Sydney’s great rival – was going to find it difficult to compete. And we thought that because Melbourne did have this strong film culture, that there was a good case for putting the School in Melbourne – that was one issue that Phillip and I lost.

**Barry Jones**

Film Committee, 1969; Foundation Chair of Council, 1973-75

_your association with the School goes back to its very beginnings, to the seeds of its inception. Do you remember how that came about?_ I think it’s important not to see the School in isolation. The School was part of the development of a film culture in Australia, and I suppose it’s fair to say that a lot of the original thinking came from Melbourne, because Melbourne had a very strong film festival directed by Erwin Rado and a good tradition of

film criticism. I think Colin Bennett of _The Age_ played a particularly important role in that Phillip Adams, at that stage, was a Melbourne person, as was I, and I think we were terribly intoxicated by what we’d seen of European films. Our knowledge of the world was to a very large extent shaped by what we saw in films. We took it for granted that if you’re thinking of a representative Canadian or a representative Swede, it was very likely that what he understood of Australia would come from television or from film. Therefore, it was important, we thought, for Australia to develop its own film culture and we saw the Film School as being an essential element in that.

_and did that notion of a film school come out of the fact that there wasn’t a very large industry, so there wasn’t an opportunity for people who wanted to get into the film industry to find a way of training?_ There was de facto training in the production of film commercials and also in, for example, what Hector Crawford was doing. Nevertheless, our hope was
number of other independent, but rather striking, films in America. [...] Professor Toeplitz would speak to us after we'd completed each of our movies, and he'd look at them and then he'd talk to us about them. He didn't say a lot, but the things that he said were very succinct. I can still remember them to this day. Then, when it was all over, he called me into his office and he said, "You know how to make movies now. You can get them in focus and you know what acting is and how to start and finish a movie, but you'll never make a good movie until you know about life and the world. And you won't make a good movie for at least another five years." And he also called Gillian Armstrong in and said the same thing to her, and to both of us he said, "Here is an airline ticket to this film festival in France and here is — forget how much — a thousand or two thousand dollars, and I want you to go and not come back for at least six months. I want you to go and I want you to study the world. I want you to look at people in other countries and I want you to see how they live. I want you to look at all the greatest art that's in the world and I want you to study it and I want you to draw some conclusions about the commonality of the human experience and, when you've processed those, then you'll be ready to make a movie that will be really, truly worthwhile. Until you do that, you won't and you never will."

So, Gillian and I set out; it was insane really. I don't know whether they just found some money that they had left over and, as is often the case with public service situations, if you don't spend it you won't get it again in the reallocation next year, or whether it was just an inspired benevolence. But we set off and did exactly what he told us. We went to art galleries, every art gallery: the Pravda, the Louvre, the Metropolitan Museum in New York and so on. We met film students. We visited sets. We watched movies and from this journey we both realized one really important asset that we had, as Australians, and that was, with hardly any cultural history, we had nothing to be afraid of. I realized what fear a French film student lived in. It was fear of being as good as the greatest that the world has ever known. The greatest painters, the greatest writers, the greatest filmmakers. We had no such fear because there were hardly any celebrated artists in Australia, certainly not celebrated on a world level. Suddenly I realized that we could do anything without fear and that this was a huge advantage. I came back and, sure enough, exactly five years later, started work on Newsfront [1979], which was my first real feature film. Five years and six months later, Gillian started work on My Brilliant Career [1979], which was her first real feature film. So Professor Toeplitz was right in several ways. [...] What of the rest of the period after you left the School? Did you stay in touch with the School?

Yes, I went back to the School, for mercenary reasons. I got a grant from the experimental film fund of about $25,000 to make a film called Backroads [1976]. I'd spent the $25,000, but the film was incomplete so I took a job working as a producer, just like Fred Schepisi had done when I was there, and produced some short films for the second-year students. I guess this was in 1977. The truth is that it was a chance to earn double the salary I was earning as a production assistant at Film Australia and I did spend some time advising the students. But my major preoccupation was earning enough money to pay David Huggett, who was editing Backroads, and his assistant, Frans Vandenberg, and just trying to finish that movie, so I was a bad teacher. But maybe not, because I guess if the students thought about what I was doing, they'd realize what you had to do in order to truly make movies. So maybe I wasn't such a bad teacher after all, because by example maybe you can teach the best.

Do you see a role for people like yourself to go back to the School now?

Oh yes, absolutely, although I sometimes wonder, you know. I did go back also and teach a directing class at one point during Jane Campion's year.
think I remember advising her group that, if you’re in doubt about what to do, just take a wide shot and a close-up of everyone in the scene and you can’t go wrong.

Gillian Armstrong
Interim Training Scheme, 1973; Member of Council, 1989-91
In the year that you had at the School, what were the things that you did?
Well, basically, we were meant to make three films in the year, although a couple of people said, “Well, can I combine my budgets and only make two films and make them longer?” or whatever. To get the ball rolling, Storry Walton approached a number of Australian authors and said, “Do you have a short story that you’d be happy to let the students make into a little film.” There was Hal Porter, Alan Marshall, quite a group of esteemed authors, and we were given them all and asked to choose, to see if there was anything we wanted to do. But they were pretty flexible, you didn’t have to do this.

I think Ron Saunders decided he’d go back to Adelaide and do a film where he cut off chicken’s heads – Ron was in his Adelaide hippy phase. I chose an Alan Marshall story from a book called How Beautiful are thy Feet and the film was called One Hundred a Day [1973]. It was a chapter from the book that was written during Alan’s time at a shoe factory. It was the first thing that I did and even I’m amazed when I see that compared to my final film at Swinburne – admittedly there was a year in between where I was learning to synch rushes for commercials – but it was such a wonderful piece of writing. If you read the story, it’s almost written in a filmic rhythm and I decided to shoot in black and white. I tried out various actors – for the first time in my life I had a professional cast – and I had a crew from Film Australia who shot it and I think they did an extraordinary job. Well, everyone thinks they did; in the end it won the Kodak best black-and-white photography award and it also won a best editing award for David Stiven, who went on to do the Mad Max films.

After that, we were meant to do a documentary and I decided to do a drama-documentary because I’d always wanted to learn about drama. So I chose a real person and we recreated a story from his life. The film was called Satdee Night [1973] and the setup was this: this was Hal Porter’s story from his life. The film was actually taken up as one of the very first films that was ever made in Australia that had a gay subject. I’m quite proud of that; that it’s been run in gay film festivals around the world. The whole idea was to underplay the fact that he was looking for a man, not a girl.

And then the final film I made was from a Hal Porter short story called Gretel [1973], which David Stratton very kindly selected for the Sydney Film Festival. [...] that was shot by Tom Cowan – and that was the film that was then selected for the Grenoble Film Festival, with one of Phillip Noyce’s films. [...] All Phil and I cared about was meeting other student filmmakers, getting their addresses, because then we went backpacking for six months and it was great to have somewhere we could bed down in Munich and in Vienna and so on. It was a wonderful experience to have done that and to have met these filmmakers from all around the world.

What about now, looking at the School with your perspective today?
I really think that the School has done an incredible job. There’s wonderful talent that’s come out, not only in the directing area but in design, sound and camera. Probably my only regret is that the building is so far away from the city. They have such a fantastic library and so much is going on here, I just think there would have been always more of the film community – people like myself – able to pop by and talk about film and go to screenings. I think it’s a pity that it was isolated out there. A film school shouldn’t be in university land, it should be near an urban environment. When I was at Swinburne, the half the films were shot in the train station and the main street in Hawthorn.

Something that I’ve been asked continually in the last fifteen years is why do we have so many wonderful women filmmakers coming out of Australia. And I think we really should give the School credit for a lot of that. I know when it was first set up, certainly there was a lot of lobbying from the Sydney women’s film group to make sure that they would choose an equal number of women to men. Obviously, it was a very strong feminist time. There was political pressure, but I think that pressure has really paid off and it’s interesting to see now how we’re actually spoken about with amazement all around the world. They say, “Why does Australia have Jane Campion, Jocelyn Moorhouse, Samantha Lang?”... the list goes on and on. In America, even though women have made big strides in the film industry and there are a number of very commercial, very successful women directors, the American film industry lacks women who have a particular vision and an individual voice. I think that’s something that the School should be proud of, that there are so many women who had the chance to learn in a protected environment. That’s what was needed in the beginning – in those old days, when it was still a man’s world.

Storry Walton
Executive Director, Interim Training Scheme, 1972-73; Deputy Director, 1974-80; Director, 1980-85
You need a full-time course also to let the students’ ideas be challenged at every possible level: their stylistic approach, their intellectual approach, and so forth. You need a full-time course in order to allow students to experiment. To make mistakes, perhaps?
To make mistakes, but there is no point in making mistakes if that’s not part of a critical atmosphere in which students feel secure to make their mistakes and, after the mistakes have been made, to come away saying, “I have a better critical appreciation of my craft.” The three-year course was the only place where you had time to experiment. That’s a word which I would write down in gold. It’s a dirty word in many places, but a good three-year course represents the only opportunity that you have to go to the very limits of your imagination. Why that’s practical in the end is that, odds on, ten or fifteen years after you’ve graduated, some producer is going to come along with a blazingly difficult idea and say, “Look no one’s going to be able to do this!” and you’re going to be able to say, “I can, because I’ve been into that imaginative territory before.” I tried this idea out at the film school, “I worked with Joe Strick” or “I worked with Bill Fitzwater”, and they were as mad as snakes and they gave me the confidence to trust my ability and to experiment.

As I said when I left the School, I saw no purpose for the full-time programme unless its rôle was conceptual and artistic, unless it created an environment that honoured and taught our traditions but, above everything else, also encouraged experimentation, innovation and the widest range of expressive uses of film and video – this opposed to the singular concentration on technique and craft.
In our industry, some people perceived good, tough professionalism to be threatened by the dreamer, the poet and the experimental. This was just the
damp cloud that often darkened Australian intellectual and artistic life. I have always believed that the vitality of the mainstream of film and television is dependent on the vigourity of the mainstream of film and always from the edge to the centre. A was: if you chose the right students, rather than exploring and researching Decidedly not easy. It seemed to be achievement that often darkened Aus­

t to imple­ment? the arts and craft, of history and so on, and that takes time – lots of it. and so on. It would have been very easy for those pressures of the produc­
tion slate to overwhelm all the contemplative aspects of the curricu­
lum. But if the course was to be only about making the film, without exami­
nation, you didn’t need the elaborate structure of a school. You could have achieved that through a grant system with some training weekends added. There was an obligation, we felt, through a three-year course, to incul­
cate a much broader understanding of the arts and craft, of history and so on, and that takes time – lots of it.

P. J. Hogan

Scriptwriting, 1981-83
To what extent do you think the School prepared you for what happens in the real world with producers and others in the film industry?
I don’t think anything can prepare you for the real world. Everybody’s experi­ence is different. I don’t think that anyone can give you a course in the film industry reality. For example, in my year there was Jane Campion, and Jane was virtually famous on gradu­
ation. Then there were other students who were unemployed for years and made their breakthrough films years later – for example, me.

so, it was glad that it didn’t prepare me for reality because I think that’s something you have to experience for yourself.

What did it give you as a filmmaker?
It gave me a love of film and a love of Australian film which was very impor­
tant, because when I went to the School I had not seen an Australian movie. I was surprised that there had been Australian movies. This sounds disgraceful, doesn’t it? But, you know, I came from a small town and every­thing I read about Australian movies was negative. I don’t remember ever reading any positive press about an Australian film and so I avoided them. The general feeling was that Australian movies were boring and dull, and American movies were much better; and I went to the School and I discov­
ered that Australians had stories to tell. They were interesting stories; that we’d already made some magnificent movies, but Australians weren’t going to see them and I just fell in love with Australian cinema. I fell in love with European cinema. I’d never seen a foreign film, a film in another language, so really, it wised me up. […]

Pip Karmel’s first feature film as a writer-director is Me Myself, fully financed by Gaumont Films (France) and produced in the second half of 1998.

Other than Jocelyn Moorhouse, whom I imagine you would accept as having had some influence on you as a filmmaker…
Oh yes, most definitely. …was there anyone else at the School that had any significant influence on you?
The other person is Jane Campion. I was very young and ridiculously naive when I went to the School, and, even before Jane became a world-known filmmaker, you knew she was going to become a world-known filmmaker. She was very caring of me, which was won­derful, because I think I really needed other people’s validation at that time, because when I went to the School I did feel like a bit of a fraud. All the other students had made films and I never had. Jocelyn, for example, had a library of Super 8 movies, we formed this clique and I think I learned as much from these people as I did from the lecturers.

Do you remember the film that you made there, how you felt in the process of making it.
Oh, it was just wonderful. It is called Getting Wet (1983) and it is a story from my childhood, which I exagger­ated and made end as I would have liked the experience to end but didn’t. We shot it in Klamath, outside of Sydney, over two weeks and it was a fabulous two weeks. The film came together quite well and was a big lesson to me because it went on to win the AFI Award for Best Short Fiction the next year. I thought, “Well, that’s it, I’m a star. I’m going to be fitted by every­body” and I waited for the phone to ring and it didn’t ring. So, I didn’t really need the School to wise me up. It came pretty swiftly.

My next film wasn’t until 1986 [The Humphry Dumpty Man] so I loved every minute of making that film. I’m very thankful that my first short film was a blessed experience.

Would you go back and be a guest lecturer? Would you want to do something like that at the School?
I would, but I’d be very nervous because I remember how horrible I was as a student. I remember when John Frankenheimer came to the School and we all hated him. We all thought he was a big Hollywood hack; he’d just fin­ished directing Prophecy [1979], which several of us had gone off to see, and that buried him for us. We just thought “Hack, total hack” and we were horri­ble with this man. Then afterwards I saw The Manchurian Candidate [1962] and realized that I’d been in the pres­ence of a genius, and was too stupid to have read up on him or understand that everybody’s career has its ups and downs. Right now, Frankenheimer is on an up. I mean, I’ve been in the States and John Frankenheimer is the televi­sion director de jour.

So, you’d go back with some trepidation?
I would go back with some trepidation because I know they’d all hate me [laughs]. But, you know, I think that’s what students are meant to do. You’re meant to be arrogant. It’s the only thing that gets you through.
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Mental mind-fuck
Alex Proyas' 'Dark City' may well be the best Australian film of 1998, but many missed its cinema release. Now there is the chance to see on video what Michael Helms describes as a brilliantly stylish film noir.

Yeah, whatever
Susan Skoog revisits high school and Mark Smith finds hope in this striking debut.

Film

SAVING PRIVATE RYAN


An elderly and slightly infirm man (Harrison Young) walks along the picturesque Normandy coast to a place of great calm: an Allies war cemetery. Anyone who has visited such sites in France would be aware of their extraordinary presence, how they feel in indescribable ways the most precious and beautiful places on earth. Director Steven Spielberg has succeeded to a notable degree in capturing the essential essence of the place.

Visibly distressed, the man kneels on the immaculately-kept grass running between the myriad white crosses. As the camera tracks forward to an extreme close-up of his harrowed eyes, he remembers back.

The film cuts to Captain Miller (Tom Hanks) leading his men ashore on Omaha Beach, D-Day, 6 June 1944. What follows cinematically has already been secured a place in the pantheon of great battle scenes, a 30-minute tour de force of bravura filmmaking - its sole intent being to make the audience feel it is there, amongst the slaughter, hunkered down by German gunfire.

It is a terrifying, visceral sequence and its virtues have been deservedly praised. It is hard to think of a more claustrophobic sequence, where the arbitrariness of death is so strongly felt.

It is not just a visual assault (Spielberg uses 1940s cameras and lenses to recreate the look of the war as photographers, still and motion, recorded it at the time) but aural (never have so many bullets whizzed so perilously close). The only puzzling aspect of this striking display is the varying of camera shutter and speed, rendering some action staccato and other bits speeded-up. Everything is insanely hectic, with soldiers having no time to assess the hell they are in. Sometimes, however, the tech-

ANTZ
Karl Quinn gets down amongst the bugs.

Saboteur Horvath (Tom Sizemore) and Captain Miller (Tom Hanks): Steven Spielberg's Saving Private Ryan.
Miller and his protesting men then begin their seemingly-absurd journey behind enemy lines to find Ryan, who was airdropped kilometers from his intended target. These scenes of moving forward are some of the film’s least successful. The soldiers’ talk and behaviour feel out of time and place, as if from a Vietnam movie. The Irish landscape is also a poor substitute for France, intensifying the feeling of artificiality the film is starting to fall prone to. The actors, too, fail to convince that they are actually soldiers anywhere, or that they have been through hell together. Spielberg has gone for an ad-lib feel but falls well short, the most poignant moment coming when Private Reiben (Edward Burns) recounts a memory to his fellow soldiers in the bombed-out village of Ramelle, itself an unconvincing and plastic-looking set.

One exception is the extremely tense sequence when Private Caparzo (Vin Diesel) lies bleeding on the ground, pinned there by a German sniper (Private Jackson (Barry Pepper)). Jackson himself dies while sniping from a church tower, in one of the film’s far-too-neat moments of storytelling. A pivotal scene in the debate between the one and the many occurs when Miller, instead of safely circling with his men around a German machine-gun nest, decides to take it out. At the loss of one man, the Americans rout the nest and prepare to kill the sole surviving German, despite his having surrendered. It is then that the squad’s newest recruit, Corporal Upham (Jeremy Davies), a translator from a map unit with no battle experience, protests.

In the debate that follows, which descends into one American threatening to kill another for insubordination, Miller realizes the only way to still his men is to reveal a part of what lies behind his military persona: that he is a schoolteacher from Pennsylvania. A crack in the game-playing of war has appeared and the audience knows instinctively Miller is doomed. They are even more sure of it when he lets the German go, because the inevitable irony, indeed cliché, of such war stories is that the spared man will return to kill those who showed mercy (cf Erich Maria Remarque’s A Time to Live, A Time to Die).

The final act begins with the arrival at the village of Ramelle, where the newly-found Ryan refuses to be relieved of duty, and Miller’s company, opting to create some victory out of their mission (i.e., to save Private Ryan), stay to fight a probably suicidal battle. This sequence, too, has been much praised as a superb action set-piece, but it has little of the dramatic impact of Omaha Beach, and the failures of the script to engage one more in the ethical/drama/decency drama at stake leave one in the absurd position, created by so many war movies, of wondering which men will die and which will not. In this case, whether it is Miller or Ryan is never at issue, the audience having resolved that hours ago.

Perhaps this was intended, because Miller’s fate (billed by the spared German in surprising, but effective, long-shot) is touching in its pathos. Quiet deaths are often the most moving and Miller’s is no exception. One feels the loss strongly, and for his wife back home, who so happily tendered the roses in his presence.

Of course, there is an argument that no death in cinema should not be afforded meaning, be not made felt, but that is rarely the case and any filmmaker who can make an audience treasure a soul, and powerfully regret its deprivation, is a filmmaker to be noted.

It is a pity, then, that Spielberg, one of the cinema’s most naturally-gifted filmmakers, should resort to trickery.

Throughout the film, one thinks back to the start and the old man remembering back to Omaha Beach ... but that man is Ryan and he was never at Omaha. This fake ‘flash-back’ is a stupid and transparent ploy to muck in and make me think Miller survived the war; it cheapens the whole enterprise.

Prior to Miller’s death, he tells Ryan, whom everyone has managed to keep out of harm’s way, to “Earn it.””, to make his salvation from death a reason, an impetus, for living a good life. Corporal Upham then rounds up the remaining Germans, sees the one whom he had demanded to be spared and shoots him in cold blood.

In one sense, Spielberg does in this moment manage to rise above the cliché of the pondered-man-with-no-returns-as-killer through Miller’s “Earn it.” The German had been spared death, given a second chance of life, but he abused the blessing by going back to kill those very Americans he had professed to like. He represents an opportunity abused, a lesson Ryan will no doubt take with him as he attempts to live up to Miller’s exhortation.

Spielberg seems here to directly addressing his American public, by telling them to “earn” their time on this planet by living good lives. Others have died for them and they shouldn’t abuse that sacrifice. He closes with an American flag flapping daintily in the sky, a decision non-Americans may find singularly inappropriate.

Spielberg has made several films about, or touching on, World War II; from the light-hearted Indiana Jones series to the uncertain comedy of 1942 (1979), from the monumental triumph of Empire of the Sun (1987) to the anguished personal statement of Schindler’s List (1993).

The latter two, with Saving Private Ryan, form a sort of unofficial trilogy. The first is a brilliant, evocative, cold-hard look at a child’s battle to survive in a Japanese-occupied China (based on the part-autobiographical book by J. G. Ballard). Spielberg eschews all sentimentiality, sidesteps all cliché and conjures up one of cinema’s greatest war films, and one of the true post-war American masterpieces. Schindler’s List, too, is a dazzling piece of craft, a harrowing descent into the banality of evil. Whereas in Empire of the Sun, however, Spielberg understands and makes believable the cultural background to Japanese action, and even has his lead character empathize with aspects of it (to the outrage of many critics and veterans), in Schindler’s List Spielberg occasionally drifts into caricature. At the flamboyantly-noirish restaurant scene, where Schindler (Liam Neeson) starts his seduction of high-ranking Germans, Spielberg portrays them as fat, stupid, sexist, indulgent, degenerate, greedy, uncouth, vile, loud-mouthed, et al. He even has them eat with their fingers! His understandable hatred of Nazis has let his art suffer (only momentarily, though).

For two-and-a-half hours, Saving Private Ryan makes no such misjudgment. With only one key character being Jewish, Private Mellish (Adam Goldberg), there is sense of Spielberg’s standing back, objectively. But then he crushes that promise with a scene where a German knife-kills Mellish with a sadistic relish that outdoes the worst racist caricatures of B-grade propaganda movies. And this 54 years after the events which this film portrays; rage lives long.

This five-decade gap raises other questions about the film itself. Apart from the pyrotechnics at Omaha Beach, which reveal a modern aesthetic, the film is narratively and thematically old-fashioned. It poses no telling role to the world in which one lives, offers no lessons for handling a Kosovo or Iraq, arguing only for decency and deserving one’s existence.

Also puzzling is the portrayal of Upham. He is the only American who speaks German and French, the only one who has made an effort, who has a desire, to understand another culture and its people. Yet he is the harbinger of death; his demand that a German life be not wasted results in the death of several of his fellow Americans, including Miller. Spielberg may not have thought this through, but the film, by its very narrative construct, can be argued to be advocating against the crossing of racial divides.

There will be many such issues and debates raised by Saving Private Ryan, and it may well be one of those films where analysis is long reviled and discussed.

On viewing, and only with a few hours in which to digest its intricacies, Saving Private Ryan does not appear to be the great film so loudly proclaimed by the American press, or even of the same significance as other, better, Spielberg war films. But it does have some extraordinary moments, does raise important issues (if in a somewhat muddled way) and does represent a real return to form after last year’s Amistad.

Spielberg has already given us a masterpiece on war, and one might both remember that and be grateful for this necessary, if flawed, reminder of great sacrifices made. They may not have been asked for by everyone, but hopefully they will be felt and appreciated by all.
Some of them have even won awards. But there has been something stifled about them; not an attempt at self-justification, exactly, more a refusal to make such an attempt, which almost amounts to a sort of self-justification (along the lines of, “I’ve done nothing wrong, so why should I have to justify myself?”).

The Soon-Yi thing has tainted everything. That is not a moral judgement, simply an aesthetic one. And that’s where Antz comes to the rescue. By giving us a Woody Allen film without making us look into Woody Allen’s eyes — without forcing us to ask, “Can I trust, believe or even like him any more?” — it allows us to slip back into that innocent time when you either found the guy funny or you didn’t. Simple.

In Antz, Allen provides the voice for Z-495 (Z, for short), a neurotic, self-obsessed worker ant struggling to come to terms with the apparent meaningfulness of his existence. He falls in love with a beautiful, seemingly-unattainable girl, he embarks upon a quest which he really should fail, but, thanks to a combination of luck, guts and intelligence, he emerges triumphant.

The opening scene harks back, ironically, to what many consider the golden age of Allen’s career, the late 1970s. Over a soundtrack of Z’s recounting his woes to his psychologist, we are treated to a tilt shot in which the camera moves down from the familiar Manhattan skyline (actually composed of blades of haphazardly-cut grass) to the world below. Talking to his shrink, Z rails against having to do everything for the sake of the ant colony, rather than himself. He ends his ant rant with the line, “I feel so insignificant,” to which his analyst replies, “That’s great; you’re really making some progress.”

But Antz has grander ambitions than merely to parody the Allen oeuvre. It may appear to be yet another kids’ film tricked up in adult-friendly packaging, but this is, in fact, a serious-minded comedy with nothing less than the future of Western civilization as its topic. Its three acts effectively argue the case for and against the collective, for and against the unfettered reign of individual will, and for — and only for — a hybrid socio-political system in which there is room for individualism, but not to the detriment of society at large. Antz could be a manifesto for Tony Blair’s much-trumpeted “third way”, arguing as it does that communism is dead, laissez faire capitalism is killing us and the future lies somewhere in between.

Full credit should go to the filmmakers for paying almost as much attention to the story as to the means of telling it. Compared to Toy Story, the film is fully digitally-animated feature to be released, Antz is a masterpiece of characterisation, cameos and complex plot developments. There are even a few genuine surprises, including a magnificent scene in the world beyond the colony when Z and his unwitting travelling companion, Princess Bala (Sharri Stone), nearly drowned in a single droplet of water.

On a purely technical level, Antz is magnificent. Novelty no doubt contributes greatly to the enjoyment factor, but there is something magical about a room of ants dancing that a room full of humans could not inspire. Another year or two, a few more digitally-animated features, and we’ll probably all take this stuff for granted. It will be a shame, because, as Woody Allen well knows, once the magic is gone, it takes an awful lot to bring it back.
experiences in her passionless marriage and the formal structure of Mendel’s Judaism.

Ramon’s initial friendship and subsequent romantic interest enables Sonia to express her blossoming sexuality and independence, after she is wrongly accused of adultery and exiled by her husband and family.

But, however tenable Ramon’s rôle in assisting Sonia on her journey of self-realization is, the premise that it would take a jewellery buyer to make Ramon aware of his artistic talent is a little far-fetched.

In Fresh, the combination of drugs and violence controls the life of Fresh and his heroin-addicted sister. Sonia is similarly controlled by the repressive influences of her religion and its overt patriarchal hierarchy, the repressed and ordered life of the Jews becoming a direct and obvious contrast to the candid sexuality of Ramon and his multicultural friends.

The high religious morals of Sonia’s family are shown to be superficial, through their preoccupation with the pursuit of wealth and material gain, and through their inability to accept her individuality. Furniture covered in protective plastic, a soft furnishings saleswoman and the pursuit of possessions are juxtaposed against Ramon’s and Sonia’s love of jewellery and sculpture for its artistic merit.

A strong and recognizable cast helps make the film’s experience enjoyable, with Zellweger, best-known for her rôle opposite Tom Cruise in Jerry Maguire (Cameron Crowe, 1996), giving a solid performance as Sonia, while Christopher Eccleston, as the obdurate Sender, is truly memorable.

But, those going to see this film on the strength of Fresh, or expecting a similar emotional roller-coaster ride, will be disappointed. A Price Above Rubies, while essentially entertaining, is less confronting, and lacks the vibrancy and intensity of emotion that Yakin’s earlier piece captured and conveyed so well.

Even before this film is seen, the assumption that Dance Me to My Song is a ‘remarkable’ film will already have become part of the viewer’s expectations. That is because it deals with cerebral palsy and, more specifically, because the script was co-written by Rose. She, a woman born with the disability and who also plays the lead rôle of Julia in the film. So, the cards are on the table before the film starts, and that will be enough to turn some people away, to intrigue others, and generally prepare the audience for what it is about to see.

Julia (Rose) lives on her own, but has a full-time carer, Madelaine (Joey Kennedy), who feeds and bathes Julia, and does her shopping. Madelaine doesn’t seem too enamoured with her job; at the start of the film, she is running late for work, and obviously resents Julia as she assists her in her morning ablutions. Julia, on the other hand, is obviously frustrated that she is so reliant on this woman, but completely helpless to do anything about it.

The establishing of this rather spiky rapport is lengthy, and uncomfortable to watch, especially since Julia is completely vulnerable and exposed, and treated in a less-than-sympathetic way by Madelaine. It certainly makes the viewer acutely aware of Julia’s situation, and therefore makes sense of the arrival, or acquisition, of Eddie (John Brumpton) in her life.

I say acquisition, because Julia does acquire him, and rather aggressively, too. Madelaine has left her alone, without her speech computer and with the phone disconnected. So when Julia sees Eddie walking down the street, she literally accosts him, while in her wheelchair, and persuades him to enter the house and reconnect the phone. Madelaine returns while Eddie is still in the house, targets him in her manhandling sights, and the battle for Eddie’s attention and affection begins.

So, is this a remarkable film, beyond the obvious reason? That’s a difficult question to answer, in many ways, it’s hard to divorce the disability from the script and the direction itself. Everything is there to service the telling of Julia’s story — even the other characters — but none of it feels contrived. Julia is at the core of the film, and she is such an admirable, vulnerable and human character that she carries with her the film’s power, thanks to Rose’s brave and committed performance.

That’s not to say that the script, the direction or the other actors are weak. They too are remarkable. The film does not preach; it presents instead a collection of characters, all with their own flaws and agendas, and shows how they all deal with the presence of disability in their lives. Kennedy is completely contemptible and pitiable as Madelaine, and Brumpton is quite impressive as your average Joe, forced to deal with a side of life he’d initially rather not have to. It is through Eddie that the audience is also able to come to terms with Julia’s life. The only suspect link, and it’s a petty complaint, is the character of Rix (Rena Owen). Julia’s carefree ex-carer. Her treatment of Julia is so completely different to Madelaine’s that it smacks of con­trivance. Her acceptance and genuine affection is, nevertheless, a welcome relief and counterpart to Madelaine’s meanness.

Dance Me to My Song is not an easy viewing experience. Even now, it’s difficult to talk about, which says more about society’s perception of and treatment of those with disabilities than it does about the film. It is, because of that, an important film (that sounds so pompous, but there’s no other way of saying it), and one that both Rose and de Heer, who was sensitive enough to allow Rose to shine through as scriptwriter and performer, should be applauded for making.

Far from being a ‘remarkable’ film, according to this reviewer, Dance Me to My Song is a welcome relief and counterpoint to Madelaine’s meanness. It certainly makes the viewer acutely aware of Julia’s situation, and therefore makes sense of the arrival, or acquisition, of Eddie (John Brumpton) in her life. I say acquisition, because Julia does acquire him, and rather aggressively, too. Madelaine has left her alone, without her speech computer and with the phone disconnected. So when Julia sees Eddie walking down the street, she literally accosts him, while in her wheelchair, and persuades him to enter the house and reconnect the phone. Madelaine returns while Eddie...
Anna's mint cigarettes, both "cool tracks, including The Pretenders, Iggy Pop, Patti Smith and Blondie, performances and a great soundscape. But it is also a time of with drugs and alcohol, and of lost adolescence is when life burns future. It's a girl's experiences with this pair that ultimately, and unexpectedly, its most brilliant and brightest. Anthony Skoog's sentiment encapsulating Skoog's sentiment of a plain old cigarette. "The marijuana, but quickly returns to the close that a freshly-lit Marlboro adult's surrounding her. Brenda in abandoning herself to family, replete with violent and incestuous stepfather, offers no help but notice that, while he leantures are all professional in its title, it doesn't matter whether weird science, sour-milk drinking humanoids, bio-behavioural aliens or oversize lizards are standing over humanity ready to usurp daily life, wage biological warfare or simply crush us into non-existence. Science-fiction movies love to threaten our connections to the world; ditto film noir, but usually in a much less grand, more personal and realistic way. To show what motivates the theft, corruption, property destruction and murder it pictures, film noir thrives on throwing up a more readily-explained array of human excuses like greed, lust, stupidity, paranoia, envy and despair. Dark City is drenched in alienation and desperation. When we first meet John Murdoch ( Rufus Sewell), a soft-focus Ray Liotta, he is partially submerged in chalky, red bath-water. With a trickle of blood on his forehead, Sewell awakens a little more than daunted by his hotel-room surroundings. Things just aren't right. Disoriented, he knocks over a goldfish bowl and crosses against hand luggage bearing the initials KH. A sunny postcard from a place called Shell Beach momentarily spearheads scraps of a flashback. Then the phone rings. A dazed Murdoch answers. A classic noir scenario. Prior to meeting Murdoch, a listings voice-over from a Dr Schreber (Kiefer Sutherland, who's developed a penchant for playing characters with mouth damage: check out Freeway) provides a confession that he has betrayed the world by working for The Strangers, a dying race of ancient beings. Not so classic film noir. As the camera descends from a black-ink sky, the pre-credit sequence surrounds us in the basic aesthetics of Dark City: an anonymous metropolis of brown concrete skyscrapers bound by roads and highways in full automotive swing. It's drab but clean, worn but sharp. Light sources are all practical but minimal. We're then dropped straight into the increasingly-familiar stasis of a peak-hour traffic crawl. The period could be the mid-'80s, but, when a VW comes into view, the precise location blurs. Another feature of the overall design here: recognizable but alien. A cinema marquee promotes Book of Dreams. At the stroke of a clock, and for no immediately-apparent reason, everything comes to a complete standstill. Citizens drop like flies, lying slumped over steering wheels and footpaths as the opening titles spin toward us. Back at the hotel, Murdoch's disorientation continues with Schreber's agitated voice coming down the phone line urging him to run for his life. An experiment has gone wrong, he breathlessly explains to the confused Murdoch, who finds his motivation when he discovers that he's shackled up with a blood-splattered female corpse. Did he commit the crime? Murdoch narrowly misses the appearance of a team of The Strangers, wide-brimmed-hat wearing mystery figures in dark, floor-length coats who burst out of a lift. Downstairs, the desk clerk greets Murdoch with the news that his three-week room-bookings has expired and the bill must be paid. He stumbles into the street awash with uncertainty and oblivious to The Strangers, room raid. Elsewhere, Emma Murdoch (Jennifer Connelly), John's estranged with whom she is microphone in a bar, torch-singing to a largely-bored audience. Possing as Murdoch's psychiatrist, Schreber lures her to his office. She enters while he's playing with a rat in a maze. Schreber claims something has happened to her husband, and Emma must let him know as soon as he makes contact with her. William Hurt next appears as staid and correct Inspector Bumstead. We learn Bumstead's the new man on the case because the previous detective, Walenski ( Colin Friels), got the "heebee geebies."

For the moment that's all, as Dark City continues to pass out its plot in discrete information packets: We have to go down to the Automat, a coffee shop by any other name, to glean from a newspaper headline that six hookers have been killed. The city's running scared, as is Murdoch, who gets his formal ID back in just enough time to be saved from police investigation. Aided by a prostitute (Melissa George), he finds himself in another hotel room. Again, time stands still, but Murdoch remains mobile as another assault group of Strangers chase him onto a rooftop directly beneath a Shell Beach billboard. An instant urban facelift shears the skull off the unfortunately named Stranger, Mr Quick (who isn't). A luminous insect-like creature emerges from his empty skull. Dark City then hurries forward in several ways, some unexpected, some not. Murdoch's resolve to understand his own situation is naturally strengthened when he discovers the telekinetic ability he mutually shares with The Strangers. More than a little illuminationoccurs when we're taken beneath the city streets for a conference of several hundred bald and leather-clad Strangers. In an infinitely-black hole that's a cross between a burnt-out Elizabethan theatre and an electronic Church to the God of timekeeping, it seems The Strangers have seriously underestimated Murdoch. As a group, they engage in a ritual focusing of energy called "tuning", which is responsible for the shifting reality. Murdoch rapidly becomes aware of. Like its opening credit sequence, Dark City is a swirl of narrative threads, some of which become neatly tied off while just as many aren't. For some viewers, the narrative gaps will alienate as much as the main character, who spends his time in manufactured ignorance, his eyes cast upward, and more befuddling of the strange, fantastic dream nature of this almost supernatural piece of celluloid. It also aligns itself with the maker's intention to make Dark City as appealing to the emotions as to the intellect. A tall order by any standards, but an ambition it often meets just as its pinballs between high art and graphic-noir action. Sometimes the imagery overwhelms the story, but then the scenery often becomes the story. While the list of serious science fiction films is long, and many have previously utilized noir conventions — from Alphaville (Jean-Luc Godard, 1965) to Soyent Green (Richard Fleischer, 1973) and Blade Runner ( Ridley Scott, 1982), to name but three examples from the past three decades — it's fair to say, with no recourse to simply feeding the hype machine, that Dark City has fused genres to create something that stands alone. There's no getting around the fact that Dark City is both innovative and inventive. In many ways, it indexes the limits of fantastict film production past to offer in the present what film production in the future could perform. Like film noir, its development came about with the aid of new technologies, but new film tools are not the sole reason for its existence. The sure, the manipulation and creation of CGI that wasn't possible a couple of years ago is on display, but so too is as much mooclip work, simple and ingenious production design of both the aural and audio kind, and basic in-camera invention. Dark City is both a consolidation and development of all the previous work of Proyas, but especially The Crow (1994). Hey, after years of crafting the slickest commercials, no one smashes a fish-tank like Proyas. With Dark City, he's headed a team that's created a complete ficilm world unto itself, and it's as credible and seductive as the viewer wants it to be. Sophisticated fantasy hasn't been this good since the pilot for David Lynch's Twin Peaks moments tardly had audiences pinned to their cinema seats. Dark City does it better. In the words of Richard O'Brien, who plays Mr Hands, "A mental mind-fuck can be nice. If you don't catch it at your multiplex, catch it now with repetitions. MICHAEL HELMS FURTHER READING: see Michael Helms' interviews with Alex Proyas and Andrew Mason (Cinema Papers, no. 125, May 1998, pp. 18-21, 45)."
anyone who has sat through the final moments of this film can attest, the body of Barolomeo torn between four horses, and dragged mutilated through a darkening forest. It is the supreme example of Borowczykian montage, with a horrifying crescendo of sound and an intensifying rhythm of cuts.

As well as its extraordinary craftsmanship, Blanche is a further riposte to those who have accused Borowczyk of caring too little for performance. This is a beautifully-acted film, not least of its virtues being the performance of Michel Simon as Le Seigneur.

During the opening scene of festivities, Le Seigneur seems almost an incidental character and actor, almost undirected and out of place. Only very subtly does he begin to exercise his will ... and the audience become aware of it.

This is a riveting portrayal of a convincing, wily old man, so used to his machinations that he can't stop himself from a path he knows will lead to total destruction. Or can he? Perhaps his desire for getting his own way is so great that he prefers annihilation to loss of control. In many ways, he is a soul brother to Grozo in Goto, l'île d'amour.

Much of the acting, in fact, continues Borowczyk's long-held fascination with silent movie traditions, especially the shots of Blanche, cloak half across her face, watching as men debate her fate.

There is a theatricality, too, in the staging of action against the one-walled sets (for example, the stairs to the entrance below). This technique influences the staging of action against the one-dimensional walls (for example, the stairs to the entrance below). This technique continues Borowczyk's long-held fascination to loss of control. In many ways, he is a soul brother to Grozo in Goto, l'île d'amour.

When Max Tessier in Ecran suggested to Borowczyk that “none of your films has a direct relationship with the present, with an actual reality”, the director replied: "(It isn’t the rôle of the cinema to reproduce reality in all its details. On the contrary, true creation is exaggeration, a generalization through fragments. I consider that to speak of “serious contemporary problems” is not specific in itself; everyone is evidently contemporary in what he says. Anecdotally, I appear to return in reverse, but in reality what I’m saying concerns us, today like yesterday. Like always, it is a question of a parabola, of a metaphor, one that crosses fragments of reality.

It is not an obsession of the past, but moreover a predilection. We have the privilege of seeing the past when we are imagining only the future, and, what we understand of the present (that is to say, we ourselves), it is thanks to this past, to this tradition." Blanche is a stunning testament to this tradition. There is no question of its permanent status. It is indisputably a masterpiece.


ACKNOWLEDGMENT: Many thanks to Rolando Caputo for his encouragement and incisive comments.


2 It is intriguing how Borowczyk’s introduction to film so parallels Jacques Demy’s. As a boy, Demy saw a self-wind camera in a shop window in the arcade he so lovingly iconizes with sweeping tracking shots in Lola (1962) and Les Paradisaux de Chebourg (1962). Agnès Varda recreates Demy’s first seeing the camera in Jacquot de Nantes (1995).

3 Sue Adler, “Entemptions to Voyeurism”, Cinema Papers, February-March 1985, p. 23. Borowczyk was interviewed in French and the interview translated by Adler.

4 Sue Adler, op. cit., p. 23. Again there is a parallel with Demy, as shown in Jacquot de Nantes.

5 “L’amour, tout agréable qu’il est, plait encore plus par les manières dont il se montre que par lui-même.” Quoted at the beginning of Contes Immoraux. Translated by this author.


7 Sue Adler, op. cit., pp. 22-7.


10 Borowczyk also directed an episode of two assistants réalisateurs.

11 This credit is given major prominence. It is also perhaps worth noting that Patrice Leconte is one of the three “2e assistants réalisateurs”.

12 Goto, l’île d’amour is set in an unspecified and imaginary time and place which mimics the present. Some critics call it a period film, but there seems no basis for such a view.


14 Borges’ short story, “Pierre Ménard, Author of the Quixote”, remains the most profound demonstration of this fundamental truth.

15 Max Tessier, op. cit., p. 64.

16 Mardus, British Film Institute


18 See description of methodology, pp. 5-7.

19 Anything in [ ] is not from the credits but other sources; it should be mistrusted accordingly.

20 Borowczyk, Césinde Enesque: Le cas étrange du Dr Jekyll et Miss Osbourne, with a preface by André Pieyre de Mandiargues, Collection La Vue, B. Diffusion, Paris, 1981.

21 Some copies of the film have the few colour shots printed in black and white. As with Zeilig (Woody Allen, 1983), the colour shots were originally spliced into each print, rather than the whole film printed on colour stock (to the visual detriment of the black-and-white sequences). Regrettably, the version shown on SBS has no colour.

22 This is the reading on the author’s VCR.

23 Borges, ibid.


25 There is an entire essay (if not book) to be written on the parallels between the social analysis of de Sade and the films of Borowczyk.

26 The jump cutting of planes; unusual and off-centred compositions; bizarre sound effects complementing or contrasting with the sudden shifts in perspective; little interest in structuring a scene according to standard chronologies or placements; and so on.

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41 Sometimes rendered “d’Arblay”.


43 There is an entire essay (if not book) to be written on the parallels between the social analysis of de Sade and the films of Borowczyk.

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52 Max Tessier, op. cit., p. 64.
Rachel Perkins
Producing, 1995

You had a lot of experience as a filmmaker before you came to the School. What brought you here and why did you want to do the course? A lot of the experience I'd had was in documentary and current-affairs programming, and I wanted to get into drama; it seemed like the School was the way to get there quickly. How did you actually get to the School?

There’d never been any indigenous students in the producing sector in the whole of the School’s history. So the School put up these indigenous scholarships, and I applied for the producing extension and got it. Previously, there’d been Anne Pratt who’d done editing and Warwick Thornton who’d done cinematography. So I was the third full-time indigenous student.

And did you have an idea of what you wanted the School to give you professionally?

I wanted to learn about drama and I wanted to learn the right words for things; everyone was always talking about genre and adaptation and cinema vérité and film noir, and I didn’t know what anyone was talking about. I thought, “If I want to get ahead, I have to learn the industry norms and standards and the words, and polish what skills I have.” I thought the School was the way to do that.

Originally, I would have liked to do directing, but they were only offering a three-year course then, and I was definitely not going to stick around for three years. So I did the producing course, instead. I’m a producer-director, so that worked okay for me. I produced drama while I was here and then, the year after I left, I directed a feature, so I think you get what you need to get out of the School. In that sense, I suppose it worked well for me.

Was there any aspect of the experience that was negative for you?

I think the only aspect that would have been negative was the inflexibility of the curriculum, that it didn’t acknowledge, to the degree that I wanted it to, external projects that I wanted to get accreditation for. I was curating a film festival in Berlin. I was making a short film for Channel 4 and that was seen as being not the right thing to do. You come to the School, you have to do the course and not make outside films.

Did you make any professional associations at the School that have continued beyond the School?

Absolutely; I met many people whom I’ve subsequently worked with. I’m developing a feature with a fellow producing student, Robyn Kershaw. Another producing student was production manager on my feature, Radiance, and cinematographer, Warwick Thornton, shot it.

Andrew Lesnie
Cinematography, 1976-78

What was the difference in you, both as a person and as a filmmaker, between when you came to the School and when you left the School?

As a person, I just wasn’t as naïve. It was a huge personal growth experience, and technically it was a grounding experience because the dream of being a filmmaker didn’t go away. I headed into cinematography. I did direct at the School, but there are certain things that you get out of your system, which is terrific. Then you decide whether your interests are keener in particular areas, and for me it was cinematography.

How quickly did you find employment after you left the School?

Immediately, as a camera assistant at the ABC; I had worked briefly at the ABC before I went to the School. Then I went freelance as a stringer after that.

What do you regard as your first big break?

Probably as second unit director of photography on Bodyline [1984], with Dean Semler as the main unit DOP. I had met George Miller making a documentary on Mad Max 2 [1981] and then a couple of years later I’d shot a short film called Stations [1983] which was directed by Jackie McKimmie; they saw it at the Greater Union awards when Bodyline was about to commence production and they rang me.

Later, you were DOP on Chris Noonan’s Bare [1995]. Were there things you were still learning on that film, for example?

Oh, I’ve concluded that if you’re not learning on anything you’re doing at the time then it’s pointless. I regard the whole thing as an ongoing experience. Every film is like a new challenge. I start every film I’ve never shot a frame of film in my life.

Any especially memorable lessons the School gave you professionally?

I was introduced to probably the biggest connection I had – Don McAlpine, who was tutoring occasionally at the School – and ended up being attached to The Getting of Wisdom [1977] as a runner. I clapper-loaded for him on Patrick [1978] and I focused for him on Now and Forever [1983]. He’s not only an amazing man but he’s a terrific educator. He’s very giving with information, always happy if you keep throwing questions at him and inquiring about what’s going on.

You’ve been back to the School, lecturing. Yes. We did an exercise with the cinematography and the sound departments so that they develop an appreciation of each other’s skills and requirements. We also did a collaboration between the cinematography and the design departments called “Perfecting the Picture.”

Do you notice any differences in the School culture since you left?

Well, apart from the fact that it’s a different building and apart from the fact that I’m older, so I’m probably viewing it from a slightly different perspective, I think there are a number of amazing similarities, actually. There seems to be an ongoing struggle within the organization, partly based on the fact that you’ve got an incredibly idealistic student body housed within a government department – which was exactly the same when I was at the School. It was like the bureaucrats upstairs and the student body downstairs. There was always this unofficial war going on; in a way, I felt that should struggle ever cease then you may as well close the place down because I think it’s a kind of mutating process in itself.

Pip Karmel
Editing, 1985-87

You interrupted your course at the School to answer Scott Hicks’ call to edit his film, Sébastien and the Sparrow [1989]; how did the School respond to that?

I took off several months in the middle of my second year and the School gave me credit for the editing, so when I came back I had nearly fulfilled all my editing requirements.

How did that experience advance your filmmaking skills?

Enormously. At the School, I had the opportunity to edit student films. So the experience of going back into the industry – because I had come from the industry as an assistant editor – was like taking the next step up, I suppose, and gave me a level of creative freedom and authority as well, which was priceless at that time in my career. I gave the confidence to say, ‘Okay, I’ve had that experience in editing and now I want to concentrate on directing.’

You spent five years doing an arts degree before discovering film, and then went to the School to do an editing course, rather than directing. My original intention was not necessarily to be a director; I wanted to study editing because I thought that was a more sensible way into understanding how film works. When I was at the School, I didn’t quite understand how students could go into the School saying, “I want to be a director” without any background in film.

How did the experience at the School affect your filmmaking ambitions and options?

I guess the opportunity the School gave me was to provide a bulk of experience editing other people’s films and then, of course, I had the opportunity to direct my own film [Hit and Miss], and that is an opportunity you don’t get outside the School. When I was there everybody had a chance to make a film, and sometimes that shows up talent in people who didn’t set out to do directing.

After you left the School, you again worked with Scott Hicks, editing Shine [1986]. Why does he call you “Madam Lash”?

[Laughs.] Scott and I have a working relationship that’s very... healthy. I think the quality he likes in me when we work together is that I’m really ruthless in my approach to the material and I’m not backward in coming forward in saying what I think.

You once told me in another interview that you only really edit for Hicks; is that still the case.

Well, now my directing career is starting to move, I don’t edit. I haven’t been doing any editing.

How would you summarize your experience of the School?

The School for me was a very important bridge from being an assistant in the industry, where the chance of moving much further looked like taking a very long time. It was my aim in going there to close that gap. That’s exactly what it helped me do. I got the experience, the confidence and the entrée to the film industry. And then, because I won the Graduate Filmmaker Award [Hit and Miss], I was able to go straight into employment with Film Australia as a writer-director. So the School was invaluable.

1 Edge of the Known World: Impressions of the First 25 Years of the Australian Film Television & Radio School, Australian Film Television & Radio School, North Ryde, 1998. The extracts have been slightly edited to conform to Cinema Papers house style.
the film is ostensibly a narrative, starting and backwards, featuring a great Flaherty (a debt which the Festival's modern documentary and which hear­move away from the simple obsession was. If only...

templating. This seems odd, given how festivals: telluride of the great Ethiopian distance runner, able films of the Festival was Leslie Dollhouse (1995), Solondz here moves from the success of Welcome to the Dollhouse (1995), Solondz here moves into much darker, creepier material, weaving an extremely complex narr­ative that involves (among other things) paedophilia, rape, decapitation and computer programmers. It is far more than he can coherently pull together and the film is scarred by a smarmy, look-hooid-and-ironic-I-am sense of the absurd. Although it has the mak­ings of a major statement about American isolation, it also seems to take his material seriously enough to make any of it worth con­templating. This seems odd, given how in introductions he awkwardly insisted that this was a serious film, seeming rather taken with how disturbing it all was. If only...

One of the most accessible, enjoy­able films of the Festival was Leslie Woodhead's Endurance, a biography of the great Ethiopian distance runner, Haile Gebre­slasie. Formally, the film is an odd combination of a leap for­ward and backwards, featuring a great number of staged sequences that move away from the simple obsession with realism that has plagued most modern documentary and which hear­ken back to the films of Robert Flaherty (a debt which the Festival's programme notes mentioned). The film is ostensibly a narrative, starting when Gebre­slasie was a young boy and ending with his victory at the 1996 Olympics. This description is really quite deceptive, however, given the visceral, lyrical sensibility that clearly drives Woodhead, and which is ev­ident in the lush, kinetic imagery of the film. Although Endurance goes into some detail about the difficulty that Gebre­slasie endured as a young child, these elements pale in compari­son to the raw force of his athletic ability, which Woodhead has the good sense to evoke with a spare simplicity.

Dutch-bom Rolf De Heer was at Tel­ luride to show his new feature, Dance Me to My Song, which is credited as "A Heather Rose Film". De Heer directed, but said he felt that this was obviously a film about Heather (she wrote it and stars). Rose has cerebral palsy, and the film is primarily concerned with the day­to­day battles she wages to simply maintain her independence. While there are occasional lapses into emotional manipulation, some of de Heer's images of handicapped people are quite unprecedented, both in terms of gentle lyricism and simple, painful brutality.

Austria also put in a solid showing in the shorts department, with one from Australia and two from New Zealand. The most visually-adventurous of these was certainly Kiel Elroy Ellkayem's '50s horror movie spoof, Larger than Life, which featured crisp black-and-white photography and a spine­tingingly ren­dered giant bug. Ellkayem's countryman, Peter Salmon, illustrated a similarly­imaginative nature with his pixilated Playing Possum, which suggests that there are little monsters out there fight­ing over the roadkill on New Zealand's highways.

Indian Lynne-Marie Danzey's short, Fetch, seemed to be an absurd tale of a blind date gone bad, but in the last 15 seconds or so takes a truly startling turn into the appalling. It pro­vided the shortest, although also the loudest, laugh of the Festival.

Midway through the weekend, the great Japanese master, Akira Kuros­awa, died, and, Festival co-director Tom Luddy insisted on a moment of silence for him at the beginning of a tribute to Susumu Hani, a key figure in the Japanese new wave of the 1960s and now a prominent wildlife photog­rapher. It was a sad moment, but also an odd microcosm of the Telluride experience. In the midst of Trenzy, we paused, to remember what had come before, and to try to understand how, through that past, we might move forward. |

The 15 festivals: mumbai against liquor in the state of Andhra Pradesh. The filmmakers worked with the women via village literacy pro­grammes to dramatize their struggle against institutionalized bootlegging. The women take to the streets in a mass movement of 50,000 to achieve total prohibition.

Lesser Humans, on the manual human excreta scavengers in Gujarat, directed by Stalin K., demonstrates the ability to be both polerical and humanistic as it investigates the slavery suffered by the Shangi (scav­enger) caste group.3 Lesser Humans won second place in the Video Awards. In YCP 1997, by K.P. Jayasankar and Anjali Monteiro, six poets and artists in Yerwada Central Prison, Pune, share how they creatively cope with the pain and stigma of incarceration. The video received a Certificate of Merit.

Lifting the Veil by Shonali Bose uses polemics to passionately analyze the impact of globalization and the reality of today's 'new' and 'old' India. A look at film curator Amit Gangar's work with the MIFF Retrospectives over the years is to witness an erudite and sophisticated vision of documentary as an art form as well as educational, political, social expression. In MIFF '98, films from India's Mani Kaul, Pramod Pati and Anand Part­wardhan screened along with Patricio Guzman's early doc­umentaries. Guzman presented his new film, Chile, Obsinate Memory, which takes the tale of his historic Bat­tle of Chile (1973-9) further by three decades as he returns to Santiago.

Both Mani Kaul and Pramod Pati show a film craft which pushes experi­mentation and the line between fiction and documentary to the innermost recesses of creative inspiration. So, too, does French film poet and experimental video artist Robert Cahen, who presented 12 films in his Retrospective. When asked about the harmony and beauty of the world depicted in his films, he replied: What really counts for me is trans­lating emotions into images and meanings. Deep emotions that, while beautiful, are dreadful, and are the foundations of existence. The Retrospective programme also included: 39 short films from the Archive of the International Short Film Festival, Oberhausen, presented by Angelo Haardt, former Director of the Festival; a tribute to Studio D: the Women's Studio of the National Film Board of Canada and its director, Kathleen Shannon; films from the Sam Spiegel Film and Television School, Israel; the Film and Television Institute of India, and a homage to Bert Haanstra, Holland.

"Fifty Years of Indian Independence through Documentaries" was another inspiring programme. Here was a chance to see rare gems, such as Satyajit Ray's elegiac documentary, Inner Eye (1992), about the famous blind painter, Shri Binode Behari Mukherjee, Ray's teacher, as well as Ray's wonderful 1962 biographical documentary, Rabindraath Tagore.

Some of India's most significant political and social documentaries made up this programme: Bhopal: Beyond Genocide (1985) by Mulay and Bose; Meera Deewan's film on dowry deaths, Gift of Love (1982); and Fali Bilomoria's House That Ananda Built (1967).

There's no doubt that documentary film in India suffers a marginalization next to the feature film industry. Raising budgets, distribution and exhibition are as difficult for documentary makers in India as anywhere. However, a vic­tory was achieved in 1997 by the Indian Documentary Producers' Association (IDPA), when it successfully negotiated, with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, a reserved weekly docu­mentary half-hour on Doordarshan National Network.

Australian documentary filmmak­ers might shift our Euro-centred film festival focus and turn more to the Asian region. MIFF is a dynamic doc­umentary film festival, perhaps not yet as a marketplace for Australian film­makers, but as a rich cultural event where passion, love and respect for documentary exists. MIFF's generous and inclusive concept of "what is documentary" permits a creative environment for documentary filmmakers of many persuasions.

Jeni Thonley's visit to MIFF was sponsored by the Australian Film Commission.

1 Kumar Shahani is an Indian document­ary and feature director.
3 Bankim, Foreword, MIFF catalogue '98, F-1.
4 Amit Gangar refers to "this ability to polemize and humanize" as a unique quality that filmmakers Anand Part­wardhan and Patricio Guzman share. MIFF Festival News, Vol V, No. 1, 1998, p-3
5 Robert Cahen, "Seven Flying Visions", MIFF catalogue '98, R-22.
actor something different to explore.

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These transactional analysis models show the life games we are involved in at any given second. And the game changes depending on circumstances. This is a great way to plot the journey in a story or scene. A scene could start with both not being okay, then end with one person convincing the other that they are both okay; or the reverse; or both people starting out in one state then ending in the opposite.

Next column, let's explore these games and how simple it is to actually nail the game the scene is built around. I'll include sample scenes from film and television so we can see these games in action. We'll also look at further exercises to reveal the game. See you then.

17 Inperormance

imagery, ability to listen and yield, development of relationship, etc.

Know, too, you can also give each actor something different to explore and heighten:

- Player A explores total non-compliance, whilst Player B explores the utter determination and courage it will take to change his will;
- Player A explores his total desire for intimacy and seduction, whilst Player B explores a total distance, aloofness and disinterest;
- Player A explores the rage he feels at not getting his own way, whilst Player B explores her delight and relish at Player A's suffering.

These combinations obviously rocket the scene and both actors toward a total involvement in each other and in the adventure of the scene.

ABC's Wildside often succeeds brilliantly in creating and maintaining psychological atmosphere by one major element being explored and heightened by every cast member in the scene. Elements like: explore and heighten everyone doing everything they can to stay in control when all you want to do is explode; or explore holding nothing back as you drive relentlessly toward your ultimate goal; or explore no one giving anything away at any second; or everyone in the scene explore making sure everyone else in the scene knows you're boss and what you say goes.

These elements can bring a scene to an absolutely recognizable level for an audience. For a scene can be quite simply plotted as a journey between the states of:

I'm okay, you're okay, to;

I'm okay, you're not okay, to;

You're okay, but I'm not okay, to;

You're okay, I'm not okay, to;

We're both not okay.

These transactional analysis models show the life games we are involved in at any given second. And the game changes depending on circumstances. This is a great way to plot the journey in a story or scene. A scene could start with both not being okay, then end with one person convincing the other that they are both okay; or the reverse; or both people starting out in one state then ending in the opposite.

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18 Unfinished Business

structure for private capital formation, the 101 and 10BA concessions, and a sophisticated network of public investment agencies including the AFC, FCC, ABC, SBS-I and Film Australia. If we could fit these tools to the new task, we could have some hope of its accomplishment.

1 Editor: From 1969 to 1997, there were 519 theatrically-released features. From 1970 to 1994, there were 460 unreleased features and tele-films. Research is incomplete on the 1995-7 period, but assume at least another 50, given the recent rush of self-funded features.

2 See Harold Vogel, Entertainment Industry Economics, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1986, pp. 86-92. While noting the difficulty of statistical extrapolation - the fact that people can drown in a river with an average depth of six inches - Vogel calculates that on average the movies produced by the Hollywood studios yield negative returns at the copyright level. He offers two explanations: the first, a non-sequitur, is that "the occasional winners pay for the many losers"; the second, and more compelling, is that the core business of the Hollywood studios is movie distribution, the upstream profit centre of the movie industry.

3 Examples of Hollywood's extraordinary parsimony in the matter of movie profits are legion. In a recent case, Winston Groom, the writer of Forrest Gump, sued the movie's distributor, Paramount, for the three percent share of net profits he was due under his writing agreement. According to Paramount, despite grossing more than US$400 million at the box-office, the film was still in the red. To settle, Paramount offered Groom a US$250,000 "advance" on future profits. For writers and other creators of copyright, it was a gloomy but familiar outcome.

4 Observing all this, our Martian interlocutor might be tempted to a few conclusions. One might be that there are always individuals and institutions willing to subsidize entry; their own or someone else's, into the market for 'content'; another, that there are always counterposed individuals and organizations willing to take them up on this; and the third, that consumers fully expect this kind of subsidy, having become accustomed, by a century of advertising, to low and even zero-priced media.

12 Shorts

want results very shortly, and that is a problem everywhere.

Gonin, too, has concerns about the "calling-card" syndrome, the tendency of eager new filmmakers to use their short films as a way of cynically selling themselves to the feature industry. Indeed, says Gonin, the problem is that it works; indeed, sometimes works too well. He sees this more as a problem of film financing, a problem that relates not only to shorts.

There's a lack of ideas, of criticism, of how to speak about films. At Clermont-Ferrand, we invite people to comment on the films they have seen, a witness. We need to develop this: directors, producers and people who are able to talk about short films.

Today, if a film is a blockbuster, you can't say anything [against it] or you're thought of as being an elitist. People don't talk about cinema and that's a real problem. Cinema magazines are disappearing, even in France, where there are a lot.

You know, with features you get your presskits, production notes and often a lot more, but with short films it can be very hard: there are no stars; people don't know how to speak about it, and there's a lot to be done in this area. Because people are watching films, they are watching images all the time, but they don't know how to speak about them.

Most of the money for short film production in France comes from the national government, but increasingly regional governments are becoming involved.

I don't think Giscard D'Estaing [President of the Auvergne region] is crazy about film, but he just realized that there is good exposure in promoting the region through film. Short filmmakers come, they learn about the region and maybe they will shoot a feature there later on. I think this is an investment, a promotion.

Short films are mainly made by young people, so when you have plenty of young people wanting to make films in your region, that means the region is quite alright.

In other countries, it's a bit the same. Now in England, there are regional arts councils wanting to work with regional television; they've realized that this is a not too costly way to promote the region. Short films now have exposure throughout the world. If we assume 5 years ago, the market was mainly French television, but now people are coming [to the short film market at Clermont-Ferrand] from all over Europe, mainly. French cable networks, such as Arte and Canal Plus, are important purchasers and programmers of shorts.

They think that it's good to show short films to keep a young audience, because they are made by young people - and the community is looking at these films thinking they are made by young people who are going into features.

In France, a few years ago people didn't know the meaning of court-métrage, because it doesn't have the meaning that "short film" has in English. Even in the media they are saying, "he did some court-métrage".

The public is following these people; they know Jean-Pierre Jeunet did Fouaistes.

It's part of national identity: short films really are about cultural and national identity, it's where people can relate to their own cinema. And plenty of people want to have a different kind of cinema, they want to have this simple cinema that relates to them, that's not too far from their own lives - even if it's totally different, like Jeunet, who makes these fantasy films. They have this identity, they know where he's coming from.

In Brazil, they did this short film festival in Sao Paolo; now there are plenty of short filmmakers and we are waiting. Jorge Furtado was awarded many times at Clermont-Ferrand and everywhere people are expecting a new cinema - because there were good films from there a long time ago. These really independent minds that make short films and go into features, I think that's the future.

The market for short films has commensurately increased. Up until five years ago, the market was mainly French television, but now people are coming [to the short film market at Clermont-Ferrand] from all over Europe, mainly. French cable networks, such as Arte and Canal Plus, are important purchasers and programmers of shorts. They think that it's good to show short films to keep a young audience, because they are made by young people - and the community is looking at these films thinking they are made by young people who are going into features.

In France, a few years ago people didn't know the meaning of court-métrage, because it doesn't have the meaning that "short film" has in English. Even in the media they are saying, "he did some court-métrage". The public is following these people; they know Jean-Pierre Jeunet did Fouaistes.

It's part of national identity: short films really are about cultural and national identity, it's where people can relate to their own cinema. And plenty of people want to have a different kind of cinema, they want to have this simple cinema that relates to them, that's not too far from their own lives - even if it's totally different, like Jeunet, who makes these fantasy films. They have this identity, they know where he's coming from.

In Brazil, they did this short film festival in Sao Paolo; now there are plenty of short filmmakers and we are waiting. Jorge Furtado was awarded many times at Clermont-Ferrand and everywhere people are expecting a new cinema - because there were good films from there a long time ago. These really independent minds that make short films and go into features, I think that's the future.
Dub, Dub, Dub

by Barrie Smith

If you thought all the high activity in film and video production began and ended at the production phase, prepare to be surprised at the size of the duplication industry.

While the Atlab film laboratory in Sydney goes hell for leather in its 35mm release-print division, propelling out vast quantities of feature-film copies to feed the hunger of simultaneous release patterns in multiplex cinemas across the country, other companies of varying size in the main capitals are supplying consumer demand in a more direct fashion by briskly engaging in tape duplication of all types of titles—movies, 'how-tos', music videos, corporate messages—for all sorts of clients, running to all sorts of lengths.

The current medium is VHS, but advanced distribution technologies such as DVD may well have a major impact on the business as it calls for massive set-up costs. We took a look at some typical organizations.

Silver Trak

Sited in the heart of Sydney's video-post industry, Ron Anderson's Artarmon company has been in tape assembly and dubbing for 16 years. Silver Trak considers itself to be the second-largest audio cassette duplicator in Australia, but it was only in 1993 that it began to become a serious video duplicator as well.

The company is able to play out from most formats—Digital Betacam, SX DVCPro, DVCAM, SP, etc., while the dub format is mostly VHS—to the order of around three million cassettes annually. Duplication machines are mostly Panasonic and Sharp HiFi VHS VCRs.

CD-ROM burning and extended-release runs of CDs is a new service, relying on a Windows NT-controlled robotic duplicating system. Ron Anderson has found this popular with independent filmmakers wanting a CD of their production.

Anderson states the average release length of his company's duplication efforts would be in the order of 65 to 70 minutes, which would be slightly different to some of the larger duplicators like Southern Star and AAV, which do more movie features.

And, due to the nature of titles Silver Trak handles, "a lot of 10-, 15-, 30- and 60-minute videos" pass through the company's tape decks. International standards are sometimes handled—NTSC and SECAM—but Anderson "can only recall doing two SECAM jobs in the past two years".

We don't have high-speed equipment, simply because our business is
Anderson is not greatly concerned about copyright as most of the company’s duplicates are handled very well by its proponents, from the complication point of view and from the timing, zoning of regions, etc. Silver Trak’s Anderson feels there’s confusion within the DVD industry amongst those who should know better, let alone the disquiet and ignorance in the consumer marketplace.

Anderson feels he can foresee seven years of actual growth for VHS from now:

What happens after that I haven’t got a clue. Somewhere between 4 and 7 years from now there will definitely be a plateau in VHS and it will then co-exist for a period of time – then there will be a sorting out and obviously a decline in tape-based product. But exactly when that decline will level or bottom out, who knows.

Clear ownership
Copyright is a touchy subject with anyone involved in copying videotape. Anderson is not greatly concerned as most of the company’s duplicates are made for corporate clients, who can demonstrate clear ownership of all rights, adding, “It’s only in the rarer situations where we scratch our heads and think, “We should have got a person to sign our copyright documents.”

From our observations, I believe the piracy of VHS cassettes has always been a fairly small problem in Australia, compared to other countries. But Anderson has noticed the stage of piracy has “appeared to move towards CDV or Video CD”. This has been visible as individuals, in metro minority communities, copy both ethnic and Western movies as well as CD-ROM computer software. Because CD-R is such an available medium, it is very easy to make copies and they’re always very good copies. It’s such a simple thing to do in the back of the shop or the house. Currently, Silver Trak operates nearly 400 VCR duplicating decks in Sydney. This is augmented by 50 recently installed in the Melbourne office and another 230 in Auckland.

Silver Trak’s Tel: (61.2) 9439 5355.

Video 8
Only a few blocks away is Video 8, a 30-year-old veteran of the duplicating business. Company head Kevin Hurley was away in Europe at the time of the interview – checking out DVD at IBC. According to staffer Pip Hurley, the company is “very interested” in the technology and has had “very positive feedback” from the marketplace. She feels the move is “just a matter of when”, adding that Kevin Hurley believes, “it’s not whether you’re going to do it, it’s when you’re going to do it!” Video 8 has already put much time and energy into R&D on its implementation of the medium, with some discussion on whether to build a pressing plant or get involved in the glass mastering that is the crucial beginning of the process.

Hurley feels that, with all the existing programme material that will have to be transferred to High Def format, maybe our telecines will play a part in that. These can already handle the 16:9 aspect ratio, but there are other matters such as interactivity and AC-3 sound to be considered.

The company’s bulk duplication department operates a 24-hour workcycle using real-time VCR decks. The output Hurley describes services the high-end corporate end of the market – training videos, commercial announcements, documentaries and many of the release movies you see in hotel rooms – but not the “entertainment” end.

This throughput constitutes many short runs, varying from five-minute corporates right up to three-hour loops for trade shows.

In terms of equipment levels, the company can handle virtually all formats, “anything from VHS all the way up to Di, Digital Betacam, Betacam SP, etc.” And all the varying standards: PAL, NTSC, SECAM.

Standards conversion
Video 8 has a highly-regarded standards conversion operation, set up, according to Hurley, “to the point where even our competition have to use us”. Video 8 has the only Alchemist CleanCut in Australia, which dramatically elevates the quality of NTSC-to-PAL conversions. This machine is often employed by companies such as Channel Seven to convert incoming high-level programming, such as the Nagano Winter Games material.

Other conversion work is performed for such companies as Southern Star,
NEGTHINK Pty Ltd is proud to be POS conforming and/or NEG matching the following Australian feature films:

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- Praise EMCEE FILMS (completed)
- Kick THE JAMES GANG PTY LTD
- Fresh Air R.B. FILMS
- A Change of Heart A CHANGE OF HEART PRODUCTIONS
- The Game Room KYKO FILM PRODUCTIONS
- Savage Land SAVAGE LAND PRODUCTIONS
- Strange Planet STRANGE PLANET FILMS

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Telecine

Video 8 operates three telecine chains, with two of them very heavily involved in the telecine rushes service used by feature filmmakers. Hurley:

Currently we’re doing six features, including The Matrix, Babe in the City, Jane Campion’s Holy Smoke, Bill Bennett’s Savage Land. Transfers are mostly made to Avid drives or feature filmmakers. Hurley: with two of them very heavily involved

Telecine company is in the telecine rushes service used by Telecine company is in the telecine rushes service used by or, if the client wants, a tape backup. Or, if the client wants, a tape backup. In copyright matters, Hurley states the In copyright matters, Hurley states the which prevents a copy anyway. which prevents a copy anyway.

Alarms bells

In copyright matters, Hurley states the company is very cautious. We get calls in here all the time, consumers who say they’ve just got back from LA and they can’t play this copy of the latest movie and I say, “Find the distributor, go and see them and they will swap the tape.”

If someone walks in with the latest release of Titanic and orders 10,000 copies, the alarm bells would be sounding.

Quite often, people walk in off the street with stuff that we know originates from one of our other clients. A client may send off a Digital Betacam and make 10,000 copies of it. Then someone walks in with a VHS and wants us to make 500 copies from the VHS, so we get straight on the phone to the client to protect their interests. Half the time, we’ve encoded the tape with MacroVision, which prevents a copy anyway. Video 8. Tel: (61.2) 9439 4144.

AAV

The company that could justifiably be labelled the Big Daddy of the Dubbers is AAV Duplication Services. With a mass of one-inch, D2, analog and Digital Betacam playback units feeding around 6,000 Panasonic pro duplication machines in the Melbourne, Sydney and Auckland plants, the company’s Ted Gregory describes the unit as “the dominant duplicator in Australia by far”. The range of output falls into two streams: duplication for major corporate clients, and home video entertainment duplication work of motion-picture titles for companies such 20th Century Fox, Columbia Tri-Star and Walt Disney. Naturally, the majority of business is VHS dubs, primarily for the home video market; two sub-divisions concentrate on the low-volume, corporate duplication and standards conversion work.

At the time of the interview, the company was in the last days of an order for VHS duplicates of Titanic. Gregory rates it as, The largest number of units we have duplicated for one title. Bear in mind, the duration of the programme [more than three hours], but we will have used something like 275,000 kilometres of video tape to produce the million-plus units that we’re doing. Gregory is unconcerned about copyright issues.

It is never an issue with us, because we only deal with the major studios, and they really own the copyright to the product. AAV Duplication Services. Tel: (61.3) 9562 8077.

DVD variants

The next major hurdle in the company’s operation is naturally the challenge of DVD. Gregory: We have had a business plan on DVD in place for many years, but the main difficulty is that the format has changed in that time and there have been many variants of it. Currently, the one that seems to be the one that will survive is DVD9 but, in the main, DVD’s primary function initially will be in DVD-ROM rather than an entertainment format. Although well aware that all the major studios are already releasing programmes on DVD, Gregory said, If DVD is as successful as VHS has been, then it will take 10 years to get a 40 percent market penetration; if it was as successful as, say, CD audio, it will take eight years. So, it’s not as if VHS is going to disappear overnight; it will be a phased transition. Supporting this estimate is the inescapable situation that currently estimates there are 650 million VHS machines in the world. Gregory: The installed base is pretty big: 87 percent of all US households have at least one machine. So it will take its time. Gregory takes the attitude that, You can’t have a plant ready for production until such time as there is reasonable volume throughput. And, at the moment, there is not. But we have talked to various partners about how we will provide our clients with that service. AAV Duplication Services. Tel: (61.3) 9562 8077.

PRESS RELEASE

In response to the increasing use of the new professional digital format, Film and Tape Sales (FATS), an independent duplication facilities and professional tape provider, has recently invested in Panasonic DVC PRO VTRs. These top-of-the-line AJD 750 machines have been commissioned to transfer tape from any format on site at FATS facilities, but are also available for hire.

FATS’ director, Robert Angelí, says: The lightweight, high-quality and well-priced DVC PRO cameras are being used more and more by professional crews for corporate videos. However, because it’s new, not many post-production facilities have the VTRs to edit it. They usually need the DVC format transferred to Betacam, and that’s where our service comes in.

The demand for DVC PRO has been very strong, says Angelí: But this is understandable, considering that smaller edit facilities don’t want to outlay the money on a DVC PRO VTR at this early stage in the adoption of the format. Being digital, there is no loss of quality in the transfer to Betacam.

With three-hour playtime, Angelí claims that DVC PRO is set to grow – especially as it has now been adopted by a number of TCV broadcasters.

FATS has recently streamlined its duplication packing facility and materials handling, resulting in faster job turn-around and cost savings to the customer.
The end of the black & white credit roll?

Planet X

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Following a Board meeting held in August 1998, the FFC has entered into contract negotiations with the producers of the following films:

**Feature Film**

**HE DIED WITH A FELAFEL IN HIS HAND**

**CLOSE CONTACT**

100-MINUTE TELE-FEATURE

SCREENKITE PTY LTD

D. Scott Hamer, P. Ian Bradley

ELP: Des Monaghan

W: Ian Moody, Anne Lucas

PRO-SAT: Seven Network

DIST: Channel Television International

Liz Price, a young, divorced financial controller, turns up in bed and goes back to sleep after her married lover and business partner, Dave Wyatt, gets up to go home to his wife. But Wyatt never makes it home. He is gunned down outside his door, shot down by a stray-fired shotgun fired at close range in classic gangland style, and Liz finds herself plunged into a web of intrigue and murder.

**Documentaries**

**MAVERICK OR MADMAN**

85-MINUTE ABC ACCORD

FRONTLINE FILMS PTY LTD

D. David Bradbury

P. David Bradbury

W: D. David Bradbury

PRO-SAT: Seven Network

John Walmsey is a man with a mission: to become Australia's biggest private investigator and rid the nation of feral animals. The concept is simple: fence off an area of bush, kill all the feral cats and foxes, release a range of native mammals and watch them multiply. He says it is the only way to save our wildlife, but many conservationists disagree, and there are those who see him as a right wing madman more intent on building his own empire than saving endangered species.

**Russian Brides — Caught in the Net**

(50-MINUTE ACCORD DOCUMENTARY)

O N A FILMS PTY LTD

D. Richard Dennis

P. Richard Dennis

W: Richard Dennis

PRO-SAT: Seven Network

Two Australian males searching the internet for potential marriage partners discover women in Russia doing the same thing. Mark is an English-born actor living in Sydney, and John is a farmer from Bowraville, NSW. Mark travels to Siberia and John to St Petersburg to witness everyday Russian life. They share in the women's lives, at work and at home, and discover something about the character of Russian women, and the difficulties they face. When the women come to Australia, final decisions must be made regarding their future relationship.

**In Introduction**

SAMPLE PEOPLE UNDERWAY • SUN SETS ON SIAM • PASSION IN FITS AND STARTS

**FFC Funding Decisions**

**Feature Film**

**Boiled Olives**

**Paradise Lost, Paradise Found**

**Russian Brides — Caught in the Net**

**Holy Smoke**

**In a Savage Land**

**Our Town**

**The Last Film Olympics**

**THE MAGIC PUDDING**

**Production company**

**ENERGY ENTERTAINMENT**

**Principal Credits**

**Directed by: Karl Yanch**

**Executive Producer: Barry Travers**

**Scriptwriter: Morris Gleitzman**

**Based on the novel that THE MAGIC PUDDING by Norman Lindsay**

**International sales agent: BEYOND FILMS**

**The Voices of: Geoffrey Rush, Jack Thompson**

**Marketing**

**A Change of Heart**

**Principal Credits**

**Directed by: Reg Hay**

**Produced by: Murray Fardy, Rod Hay**

**Cast**

**Craig Haywood, Great Bowler, Rod Hay**

**A Change of Heart**

**Synopsis**

A bittersweet comedy about one night in the lives of six people working in a Brisbane Pizza parlor as they confront questions of love, identity and the meaning of life.

**Demons in my Head**

**Production company**

**Jung**

**Executive producer: Grant Ho**

**Directed by: Neil Johnson**

**Synopsis**

**Paradise Lost, Paradise Found**

**Production company**

**AUSTRALIAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURES**

**Produced by: Michael John**

**Principal credits**

**Produced by: John Ewen, Wayne Groom**

**Scriptwriter: Karl Yanch**

**Synopsis**

**Marketing**

**A Change of Heart**

**Synopsis**

**Cinema Papers** • December 1998
**NEW ZEALAND**

A meteorite crashes into the back garden of Travis Basso. Upon opening it, he discovers a helmet that allows the wearer to bring strange objects across from another dimension.

**PASSION**

Production company: **MATT CARROL Films** Distribution company: **BETWEEN FILMS**

**PRINCIPAL CREDITS**

Director: Peter Duncan
Producer: Matt Carroll
Wardrobe supervisor: Peter Goldsworthy
Sound: Rob George
Based on the children’s book **Percy & Rose** by Rob George

**Government Agency Investment**

Funding: **FCC**

**Marketing**

International sales agent: **BEYOND FILMS**

**Synopsis**

In a playful and violent portrayal of travis Basso, 30 and living in a bungled IRA mission. Fearing the arrival of his son Evan is a romantic comedy about a couple marooned on an island.

**La CRIAC**

Production company: **FOSTER-GANCE Distribution company**

**Principal CREDITS**

Director: Dan Foster
Producers: Marc Garde, Dan Foster
Scriptwriter: Steve Lowery
Location: Melbourne, Broken Hill, Sydney, Gold Coast

**Synopsis**

An experienced American cowboy travels to New Guinea to study the Komodo Dragon.

**In A SAVAGE LAND**

Production company: **BILL BENDIT PRODUCTIONS**

**Synopsis**

The trip to New Guinea is a study of the social mores of a group of villagers. Their relationship begins to break down when the woman realises her husband is wrongly interpreting the research to further his own academic ambitions. She enlists the help of a pearl trader to travel to an island where she intends to research a village of headhunters, and begins to fall in love with the man. When she returns to her husband, war has broken out in the Pacific and the Japanese are planning to invade their island.

**THE MISSING**

Production company: **UPSIDE DOWN FILMS Pty Ltd**

Distribution company: **ROADSHOW FILMS**

Production: 21/4/98 – 17/6/98

Locations: Melbourne, Parkhaven SA, Broken Hill, NSW, and Rome, Italy

**Principal CREDITS**

Director: Manuel Alberti
Producers: Lynna Rose, Jim Stark
Line producer: Yvonne Collins
Scriptwriter: Manuel Alberti
Director of photography: Geoffrey Ireland
Production designer: Christopher Kennedy Costume designer: Karen MacGibbon Director: Lynne Collins

Extra casting: Inez Vogler Cultural contact: Ken Saunder surveillance artist: Hugh Marcantonio

**Production Crew**

Producer: Wandacolour Productions

**Production**

Production: **AUGUST – SEPTEMBER 1998**

Budget: $7m

Length: **90 mins**

**THE DROVER’S BOY**

Production company: **YARADA PRODUCTIONS**

**Synopsis**

A feature film aimed at the 6-13 year old audience.

**Feature in Production**

**LINDA EVE**

Production company: **DEAR CLAUDIA**

**Synopsis**

Walter and Claudia crash into the story who are almost 30 and live, work and up in a bungled IRA mission. Fearing the arrival of his son Evan is a romantic comedy about a couple marooned on an island.

**LINDA EVE**

Production company: **DEAR CLAUDIA**

**Synopsis**

Walter and Claudia crash into the story who are almost 30 and live, work and up in a bungled IRA mission. Fearing the arrival of his son Evan is a romantic comedy about a couple marooned on an island.

**FRESH AIR**

Production company: **RB FILMS**

**Production**

Production: **SYDNEY – MAY 1998**

**Synopsis**

The trip to New Guinea is a study of the social mores of a group of villagers. Their relationship begins to break down when the woman realises her husband is wrongly interpreting the research to further his own academic ambitions. She enlists the help of a pearl trader to travel to an island where she intends to research a village of headhunters, and begins to fall in love with the man. When she returns to her husband, war has broken out in the Pacific and the Japanese are planning to invade their island.

**KOMODO – THE LIVING TERROR**

Production company: **SCANDIN ASIA PACIFIC**

**Synopsis**

An adventure thriller about a young boy who suffers the unspeakable – losing his father – while he is on what was always their favourite island getaway. As a result of this, the boy becomes completion guarantor: Walter Basso a young doctor takes him back to the scene of his father’s terror – and the real living and breathing dragons that exist today – the Komodo Dragon.
A haunting thriller which tells the story of Tommass, a high-ranking Viridian priest, who is forced by circumstances to question his faith and values.

THE MATRIX

Production company: Matrix Films Pty Ltd
Distribution company: Warner Bros.
Location: Sydney, Vic.

Principal Credits

Directors: Larry and Andy Wachowski
Producers: Joel Silver, Andrew Mason
Executive producer: Barbie Deborah
Screenplay writers: Andy Wachowski
Director of photography: Bill Pope
Production designer: John Paterson
Costume designer: Kim Barrett
Editor: Zach Staenberg

Unit production manager: Carol Hughes

On-set Crew

1st assistant director: Colin Fletcher
Make-up supervisor: Steven Byrnes
Unit publicist: Fiona Searson, DDA

CAST

Keanu Reeves (Thomas “Neo” Anderson), Laurence Fishburne (Morpheus), Carrie-Anne Moss, Hugo Weaving, Patrick Rivier, Chad Faust, Laetitia Stephen.

Production company: Warner Bros.
Distribution company: Warner Bros.
Location: Sydney, Vic.

Principal Credits

Director: Lilly Wachowski
Screenplay writers: Andy Wachowski
Director of photography: Bill Pope
Production designer: John Paterson
Costume designer: Kim Barrett
Editor: Zach Staenberg

Unit production manager: Carol Hughes

Production survey continued
SNOWDROP

SOMETHING IN THE DARKNESS

TWO HANDS

WASTE

Film Australia Projects

IN PRODUCTION

AUSTRALIAN BIOGRAPHY SERIES 7

(7 X 26 MINUTE EPISODES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM

D: Rob Hughes
P: Rob Hughes
EP: Mark Hadley
W: Rob Hughes

A series which profiles influential Australians of the twentieth century.

AUTO STORIES

(4 X 26 MINUTE EPISODES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM WITH DECEMBER FILMS Pty Ltd

D: Helen Gwynn, Steve West, Catherine Marchesi, Fiona Henstridge
P: Tony Wright, Stuart Mendes
EP: Franco de Chiers
W: Helen Gwynn, Steve West, Catherine Marchesi, Fiona Henstridge
DPs: Nina Adams, Catherine Marchesi
Ex: Tony Stevings, Kim Moore

A character-driven series which explores themes of vanity, responsibility, deception, pride, obsession and love through our relationship to the car.

CHRISTMAS ISLAND – AUSTRALIA’S UGLY DUCKLING

(55 MINUTES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM WITH WILDFILM AUSTRALIA Pty Ltd

D: Matthew Kelley
P: Peter Du Cane, Samantha Kelley
EP: Franco de Chiers
W: Peter Du Cane, Matthew Kelley
DP: Ian Foreman
Ex: David Foggo

The story of Gordon Bennett and the Christmas islanders who took on the Australian government to dismantle the archaic and racist institutions on the island.

THE DIPLOMAT

(52 MINUTES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM WITH EMERALD FILMS

D: Tom Zubricki, Sally Brownings
P: Stefan Moore
W: Wilson Da Silva

The Diplomat will document a year in the life of Jose Ramos Horta, Nobel peace laureate and exiled roaring ambassador for East Timor’s independence movement.

THE LAST FILM OLYMPICS

(60 MINUTES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM

D: Peter Butt
P: Rob McAlley
EP: Mark Hadley
W: Peter Butt

The Last Film Olympics compares the 1956 Melbourne Olympics with the high-tech 2000 Sydney Olympics.

THE MAKERS

(10 X 15 MINUTE EPISODES)

FILM AUSTRALIA WITH THE ABC

D: Don Featherstone
P: Wendy Mailt
EP: Stefan Moore
DOP: Daniel Featherstone

The Makers is a ten-part series for secondary school students designed to profile the vision, talent and creative process of a number of artists.

ONCE WERE MONKS

(5 X 26 MINUTE EPISODES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM WITH MARACAS FILMS

D: Luis Acquesti, Andrew Bally
P: Luis Acquesti, Stella Zambartaro
EP: Franco de Chiers
W: Luis Acquesti
DOP: Jams Grant, Valerian Campon

The lives of a group of men in a religious order are turned upside down when they are forced to move from their monastery into a pub.

OUR TOWN

(65 MINUTES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM WITH CAMERAWORK PTY LTD

D: Donna D’Rourke
P: Dennis O’Rourke
EP: Stefan Moore
DOP: Dennis O’Rourke

A documentary about Gunumbi - an isolated community in far outback Queensland where more than half the population is Aboriginal.

THE POST

(55 MINUTES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM

D: Helen Phillips
HELEN BARROW
EP: Stefan Moore
DOP: Helen Barrow

A one-hour documentary looking at life in present-day Cambodia from the perspective of journalists working on an English-language newspaper in Cambodia, The Phnom Penh Post.

SADNESS

(55 MINUTES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM

D: Tony Ayres
P: Michael McMahon, Meglan McMurtry

The story of William Yang’s successful stage show, exploring his Chinese-Australian identity and his experience of loss during the AIDS epidemic.

IN POST-PRODUCTION MAN OF STRINGS

(55 MINUTES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM WITH ROMAN FILMS

D: Gary Kildea
P: Andrew Pike
EP: Stefan Moore

A portrait of the life and work of Czech-born musician Jan Sedlka, one of the foremost violinists and string teachers in Australia.

OUR CENTURY

(26 X 22 MINUTE EPISODES)

FILM AUSTRALIA NATIONAL INTEREST PROGRAM WITH LOOK TELEVISION, THE NEFA & THE NINE NETWORK

D: Alec Morgan, Ben Uitt
P: Will Davies
EP: Mark Hadley

Our Century is an entertaining, ambitious television tribute to the last hundred years of Australia. It looks at the social movements, critical events and people who have shaped our nation.

Documentaries

MALANGAN

Production company: WRITTEN IN THE LANDSCAPE PRODUCTIONS Pty Ltd

D: Peter de Haan - 16/9/98 – 19/9/98
P: Andrew Green
W: Peter de Haan
DP: Mark Hadley
Ex: Andrew Green

A documentary about Gunumbi – an isolated community in far outback Queensland where more than half the population is Aboriginal.

THE ADVENTURES OF LANO & WOODLEY – SERIES 2

(4 X 30 MINUTE EPISODES)

PUL/GRAN INTERNATIONAL TELEVISION P/L

D: Peter de Haan
P: Mark Hadley
EP: Franco Woodley

A look at the lives of Lano and Woodley as they travel the gamut of high stakes, low escapades. From accidentally kidnapping a baby, to re-creating the story of Christ, from giving away a trip of a lifetime to skiing across an Olympic pool dressed as a penguin; from exposing a corrupt politician to a self discovery weekend, Lano and Woodley run the gamut of low stakes, high responsibility fiascos.

Short Films

THE CHICKEN AND THE EGG

Production company: FRED'S FILMS

D: Peter de Haan
P: 19/9/98 – 19/9/98
W: Peter de Haan
DP: Andrew Green
Ex: Andrew Green

A look at the lives of Lano and Woodley as they travel the gamut of high stakes, low escapades. From accidentally kidnapping a baby, to re-creating the story of Christ, from giving away a trip of a lifetime to skiing across an Olympic pool dressed as a penguin; from exposing a corrupt politician to a self discovery weekend, Lano and Woodley run the gamut of low stakes, high responsibility fiascos.

IN PRODUCTION

“Introduction” is compiled by Tim Hunter.
Please contact him at Cinema Papers, Tuesday - Thursday 9-5 Friday afternoons, on 05 9416 2644 or fax 05 9416 4088.
The Australian Writers Guild is the professional association for all performance writers, film, television, video, theatre, radio and multi-media.

If you work in the industry or are serious about becoming a writer it is essential that you join the Guild. Our services include,

- negotiation of collective agreements
- issuing of model rates and contracts
- lobbying government for funding and copyright protection
- script assessment and script registration service
- professional development activities
- membership to AWGACS, the Guild's collecting society

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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 dash means not seen).

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<tr>
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<th>Film Title</th>
<th>Reviewer 1</th>
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**SPOTLIGHT: Otherworldly Visions**

There's been a fair bit of visionary work in cinema of late, and much of it coming from Australian and New Zealand directors. Earlier this year, Alex Proyas presented an astounding vision of a constructed cityscape in *Dark City*. At times echoing Terry Gilliam's *Brazil* (1985), Proyas' city is full of shifting skylines, impenetrable shadows and elusive memories. In a similar way, Peter Weir constructs a completely separate reality for his hero (Jim Carrey) in *The Truman Show*. Truman's world is one more akin to 1960s American sitcom world, where everything is bright and new, and is, like *Dark City*, an environment created and controlled by outside forces.

On the other hand, Vincent Ward treads the inner landscapes in *What Dreams May Come*. When Chris (Robin Williams) dies, he discovers that his vision of the afterlife is one created from his own memories - in his case, his wife's paintings. Other dreamscapes he encounters past death are also constructs from people's memories, but the landscape of hell seems to be a universally recognized Dante-esque interpretation. Perhaps those who go 'down to the other place' have no real imagination of their own.

Interesting questions about the nature of truth and reality are raised in all of these films, but, in a very 1990s way, they are not answered fully, because that would defeat the purpose. After all, isn't this the age where everyone has their own truth and their own reality, and doesn't each person need to find that for themselves? Well, that's my truth anyway. TH
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