Cinema Papers #132 May 2000

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Cinema Papers #132 May 2000

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This serial is available at Research Online: http://ro.uow.edu.au/cp/132
Publisher
Niche Media Pty Ltd, St Kilda, 60p

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Peter Greenaway. What is he banging on about?

Everyone’s Looking for Alibrandi.
Our association with talented craftspeople has enabled us to pioneer creative and technical developments during the past twenty five years.

Whether it's duplicating high volume, high quality video cassettes for the home entertainment and corporate markets, post producing television commercials, programs and feature films for local and international producers, designing complex digital visual effects, producing world class interactive tourist centres, developing a range of e-commerce solutions for business or providing an unparalleled range of passenger entertainment services, our dedicated teams know just what's required to deliver an optimum product.

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Regulars.

05. Editorial. 06. The Way We Were. David Parker recalls Cinema Papers early days.
“IT’S ALL THE RAGE”

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

ADRIAN MARTIN is a film critic for the age and author of PHANTASMS (PENGUIN, 1994) and ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA (BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE, 1998).

MICHAEL HELMS is writing an annotated bibliography of exploitation cinema to be published by McFarland & Co. In his own words: he wears only kangaroo skins when arguing the irrefutable truth about demons.

RUTH HESSEY is a Bondi Beach based actress and writer. For the past five years she was film editor on Metro At The Morning Herald and she has just accepted the job as host presenter for the Pay TV World Movies Channel.

DINO SCATENA denies he is Australia's premier rock journalist but as the Daily Telegraph's music editor, and a writer for US Rolling Stone and Nine, we reckon he's got most bases covered.

MICHAEL BOEY, showbiz editor for the Daily Telegraph, is a film journalism rarity - he doesn't have any novels, scripts or TV shows in development.

BARBIE PATTISON is a Sydney-based film director and writer.

EMMA CRIMMINGS is a reformed parking ticket addict who writes on film to back-pay her Perth court appearances. Currently co-editing a book on Australian short film, Emma wishes she had more time to be a filmmaker. Who doesn't?

LEITH WHANNELL WORKS ON ABC TV's RECOVERY, has given film reviews for Triple J and 3 RRR radio in Melbourne and written for Juice and Recovery magazines.

MADELEINE SWAIN has been addicted to sitting in darkened rooms devouring larger-than-life images since childhood. Among many other things she reviews films for the Melbourne Weekly and The Eye.

Welcome to Woop Woop

→Well, that was a long intermission but as you can see Cinema Papers, Australia's oldest film magazine, is back and determined to be a vital part of the growing local film industry at the dawn of the second century of cinema.

Now owned by Niche Media and kitted-out with new staff members, Cinema Papers retains a strong connection to its roots through its many long-standing board members. We hope readers, old and new, will appreciate where we take the magazine.

As we re-launch, Cinema Papers is reasserting its rock solid commitment to the local film industry with a cover devoted to the beautifully-crafted new release Looking For Alibrandi. Hopefully the recent Oscar wins for The Matrix and The Wog Boy's box office success have provided the local industry with a much needed injection of optimism.

The Wog Boy story shows distributing Australian films can be fulfilling and pay off financially. This subject is touched on by one of this issue's occasional columnists, distributor Alan Finney.

Finney joins director Phillip Noyce, actor Sacha Horler and journalist Michael Bodey in an open brief playground. Their columns present an interesting range of opinions which should inspire further discussion.

Emma Crimmings wrote our supplement exploring locations, studios and travel options for film crews wanting to shoot in Australia. Especially designed to enlighten Cannes readers, Emma was subsequently a shoe-in for the job of uncovering what actually goes on in that southern French city during the middle of May.

Adrian Martin's exploration of Australian romantic comedies is emblematic of where we're taking Cinema Papers. From a contemporary perspective Adrian has sought to uncover why so few modern romantic comedies work. Readers are invited to disagree.

Another new writer is Leigh Whannel who has reviewed Cordelia Beresford's A.F.T.R.S. graduating short film. We want to develop this section into a regular forum where short filmmakers can have their work given serious consideration and national exposure. So send 'em in.

Enjoy your choc top, now for the main feature... Action!
"Julia Roberts, RUNAWAY NOMINEE...already insiders are buzzing about a potential best actress nominee for 2000."

**From Steven Soderbergh the director of "Out of Sight".**

**Julia Roberts is Erin Brockovich**

She brought a small town to its feet and a huge company to its knees.

**Based on a true story.**

**At Cinemas April 13**

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"It is no coincidence that the halcyon days of the so-called renaissance of the Australian film industry (ie, the 70s through to the mid-80s) paralleled the advent and the success of Cinema Papers. The film industry then, bolstered by new tax incentives and a wave of interesting young directors produced everything from Mad Max (1979) and Gallipoli (1981) to Don's Party (1976) and The Getting of Wisdom and, of course, many more.

At the same time Cinema Papers was developing as a strong, critically astute journal which included production reports as well as comment on these exciting new films. When we made Malcolm in 1985 there was a sense that, within the flippancy and subjectivity of the review of Australian film in the daily newspapers, television and radio, there did exist a voice that was uncompromising, fair and informative. That informed critique is of paramount importance to the filmmaker - in fact, it is an important part of the process of the development of the industry as a whole. We, the filmmakers, crave for the critique from the trained mind - we need a journal that reflects and informs and leads. We need a journal that gives the writers space, that gives a platform for an intelligent, objective voice. It is unfortunate that since the mid 80s, as economic rationalism and conservatism swept Australia, that platform was eroded and for the subsequent years there has been a dearth of substantial support for film from the media.

So now we look forward to a new beginning and an opportunity to regain the old ground and hopefully surpass it. It is a new world out there; studios want big names and big stories; the independents are being bought by the majors, there are a plethora of screens but they are economically driven; the qualitative or niche film is struggling to find its rightful place and competition is at an all-time high. These are indeed interesting and challenging times.

It is timely that Cinema Papers is relaunching in this climate to again become a valuable part of the Australian film industry."
**The Australian Film Commission**

Theodorakis, composed the music.

The romantic comedy starring Lakis Lazopoulos and Zoe Carides is about a romance where women earn a very respectable AU$3.5 million in seven weeks from 39,000 admissions in Greece with a small budget. It was directed and co-produced by Melbourne-based John Tatoulis has earned a very respectable AU$3.5 million in seven weeks from 39,000 admissions in Greece with a 26-screen release.

The romantic comedy starring Lakis Lazopoulos and Zoe Carides is about a vendetta gone wrong. The original composer of Zorba the Greek, Mikis Theodorakis, composed the music. Tatoulis said it was relatively unprecedented for an Australian film to open overseas before Australia but the January release suited the Greek.

**Beware of Greeks Bearing Guns**

Aussie Euro-movie doing it Greek style

**Tax time looming**

The Australian Film Commission (AFC) will deliver a major information program to the film industry about the GST, including 75 seminars nationwide and an information booklet and helpline (operating between May and December). The program is funded through the GST Startup Office and will be co-ordinated through the AFC’s Industry and Cultural Development Unit. Interested parties should register for the seminars and workshops through their relevant industry guild or association.

**CROWING FOR ATTENTION**

"Gladiator will complete Crowe’s arrival as a major action star," recently purveyed a respected local reviewer about the pending release of director Ridley Scott’s Roman epic. The reviewer joked later, “If you can make it in Coffs Harbour as an action star you can make it anywhere.” A sly reference to Crowe’s widely reported nightclub brawl in November 1999. Opening locally on May 5, Gladiator features Russell Crowe as Maximus, a gladiator forced into exile and slavery by Commodus (Joaquin Phoenix), a jealous heir to the throne. And the buzz surrounding the film? At presstime favourable web reports are trickling in.

**Soft Fruit Official Selection At Cannes**

**Post-production simplified**

New technology promises to radically simplify the film production workflow, according to Adam Green, a US-based film and music producer who toured Australia in March. Steven Noble, editor of Australian Macworld reports Green spoke to industry figures and journalists at venues such as Cinemedia in a tour organised by Apple Computer Australia. He discussed the film industry’s uptake of a range of interrelated technologies, and demonstrated Apple products such as Final Cut Pro (video-editing software) and the Power Macintosh G4 (a desktop computer). To illustrate the changes made possible by the uptake of new technology, Green began by describing what he called “a normal Hollywood workflow from a number of years ago,” adding “we still use this.” First, he said, the production team would acquire the source material. Then, it would copy it. Next, it would work on the copy in an offline editing suite, producing an edit-decision list (EDL). Last, the team would grab the source material, the EDL and a huge stack of money, and head to an online bay to output the final work. The main reason for this convoluted workflow was the dramatic difference between the price of offline and online editing systems - it makes financial sense to reserve the latter for producing the final cut of broadcast-quality material.

Green said that as new film technologies improved, some television stations came to accept material exported directly from an offline editing system, rather than an expensive online editing bay. The result was a somewhat streamlined workflow in some parts of the industry. Now, said Green, the uptake of new technology was further simplifying workflows.

Digital video cameras (that is, those labelled 'DV', 'DVCPro' or 'Digital 8') now available were capable of generating video suitable for broadcast or transfer to film. Further, a single cable was all that was required to transfer these camcorders' output to a compatible computer (this would be any system sold as featuring 'FireWire', 'IEEE-1394' ports, such as an Apple Power Mac or PowerBook, a Sony Vaio, or a Mac or PC fitted with a suitable card). The result, said Green, "is a new production paradigm: one camera, one cable, and a computer". The immediate net effect of this rocket read is eerie in his own words, "a film about and for our own personal... conscience".
Contently Queer

Animator Adam Benjamin Elliot is making news again. He recently won the comedychannel Short Film Festival's prize for Best Film, with his third effort, *Brother*. The loosely autobiographical *Brother* concludes Elliot's trilogy which began with *Uncle* and was followed by *Cousin*. Other the comedychannel prize winners include: Best Animation, Michael Nicholson's *The Etag Saga*, AFI Distribution award, Christopher Benz's *Noise*, and the Open Channel Encouragement Award went to *Magic Happens*. *Brother* also recently collected the Mardi Gras Film Festival My Queer Career Best Short. *Cousin* collected a similar award in 1999. Though Elliot is openly gay, none of his films to date actually contain 'queer' content. The Executive Officer of Queerscreen, Richard King said, "I think it's purely about quality. They're both wonderful films." He added that queer filmmakers often bring an unusual perspective to their work which is as valid as films which explore queer themes.

New AFI Awards challenge the Logies

The Australian Film Institute has introduced five new television awards for 2000 in response to "changes within the industry". Announcing the new awards, AFI chief executive Ruth Jones said, "the awards as they were gave insufficient prominence to performance and the other crafts". "We thought television would be better represented if the awards were structured to recognize the different genres." The November 18 ceremony, to be held at Sydney's Fox Studios, will include awards for: Best Performance by a male and female actor in a guest role in a television drama series (for a one-off role in a single episode), Best Performance by a male and female actor in a tele-feature or mini-series (for a lead or support performance), Television Open Craft Award (for excellence in crafts such as cinematography, editing, sound, costume and production design, screen composition, hair and make-up and special effects).

Jones boldly claimed the AFI's carry more weight than the television's night of nights: The Logies. "The AFI awards are the serious awards in this country and they're the serious television awards also. The fact that they are peer assessed means they are taken very seriously." When reminded a number of Logies are also peer-assessed, Jones noted, "The Logies have got a way to go with that yet.

Denotes for entry: Documentary - April 28; Short Fiction - May 12; Short Animation - May 12; Feature - June 30; Television Drama - July 28

More Schtick

Producers of the AFI award winning documentary *Original Schtick* have secured an SBS pre-sale and AFC development funding to make a follow-up documentary, *Schtick Happens*. Producers Peter George, Bronwynne Smith and director Maciek Wszelaki, recently returned from the Sundance Film Festival where *Original Schtick* a film about the misadventures of art guy Robert Fischer was invited to screen. *Schtick Happens* will be a video diary of their journey with added material from elsewhere including the AFI awards. (see email this page.)

Industry archival underway

Film Australia has launched an initiative to improve access to its library of archival and contemporary audio-visual and stills materials. New library manager Bev Dalgairns is currently updating and expanding the databases for both sections to be available online later this year.
You need to know about GST!

The GST and changes to the current taxation system have serious ramifications for film industry practitioners. You cannot afford to bury your head in the sand and ignore these changes – they WILL affect you!

A series of FREE GST information seminars will be conducted throughout Australia in April and May. The seminars will be presented by industry expert Jane Corden and tax specialist Maria Benardis from Moneypenny Services.

GST key dates
GST commences on 1 July. You need to apply for your Australian Business Number (ABN) by 31 May to be GST ready at 1 July.

Who should attend?
The seminars are vital for ALL practitioners across the industry, from producers, directors, writers, composers to technicians and actors.

Seminar schedule and registration
The Seminar Schedule and information sheets, as they become available, will be posted on the AFC’s website.

Contact your guild or association or the AFC NOW for the Seminar Schedule and registration details.

Contacts
Email  gst@afc.gov.au
Sydney   02 9321 6444, Toll Free 1800 226615
Melbourne 03 9279 3400, Toll Free 1800 338430
Adrian Martin explores the weirdness of a romantic comedy with a solo star.
Pip Karmel's lively Me Myself I is being promoted as "a romantic comedy about oneself" - a strange, intriguing and thoroughly modern concept. Aren't romantic comedies meant to be about magnificent couples, like in the great screwball classics of yesteryear? It Happened One Night (1934), The Awful Truth (1937), His Girl Friday (1940), Adam's Rib (1949), Teacher's Pet (1958); these movies from Hollywood's golden era are about witty, feisty relationships built on an ideal of equality between the sexes.

Mixing up sex and work, thought and feeling, elevated dreams and everyday tensions, these films have come to stand as one of the supreme embodiments of the notion of love - what it is and how it goes - in 20th century popular culture. Of course the plots are unreal and fanciful, the stars (Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy, Irene Dunne) glamorous, the sentiments proudly optimistic. None of that alters how deeply, how sweetly these films can move, inspire and instruct us.

Me Myself I is not about two people destined to meet each other on the job, or in the street, or over a cup of coffee. As the title indicates, it is firmly centred on an individual, Pamela (Rachel Griffiths), and the life choices with which she is faced. These choices present themselves to Pamela's consciousness in an unusual, supernatural way: a nasty bump one day sends her off to a parallel reality.

Now, as well as the defiantly single, sometimes melancholic working girl she is in her 'real' life, Pamela is also the woman she once dreamed of being: a wife and mother, married to her teenage sweetheart, Robert (David Roberts). In fact, Me Myself I is at heart a 'trading places' story: while unmarried Pamela visits the daggy world of domesticity, married Pamela disappears into the foreign land of serious work, casual dating and time alone.

Wisely, writer-director Karmel does not attempt to frenetically intercut both of these life paths, à la the Gwyneth Paltrow hit Sliding Doors (1998) or, in art cinema mode, Kieslowski's The Double Life of Véronique (1991). The plot sticks with Pamela 1, as she starts her new life with nothing to do but lay about and bonk her eternal beloved. But soon she finds herself stumbling through a minefield of unexpected truths, trials and intrigues lurking beneath the facade of suburban life.

What does Me Myself I have to do with the great tradition of romantic comedy? Certainly this much: women in such plots have often been faced with the conflicting lifestyle options represented by two starkly differentiated men. For Pamela, this amounts to the equivocation between not-what-he-was-once-cracked-up-to-be David and sensitive-but-apparently-already-attached New Age guy, Ben (Sandy Winton). It was a similar dilemma for Rosalind Russell in His Girl Friday, poised between staid, folksy Ralph Bellamy and fast-talking city-slicker Cary Grant; and the trend continues through to such Sandra Bullock vehicles as While You Were Sleeping (1995).

The choice for the 20th century woman of romantic comedy often boils down to this: security on the one hand, adventure on the other. This was always Katharine Hepburn's problem, in classics such as Holiday (1938) and The Philadelphia Story (1940). And no matter what preparations were in train for the old-style heroine - the marriage ceremony about to begin, the house already bought, the friends assembled at a party - it was always possible to
All Men are Liars and Bob Ellis’ The Nostradamus Kid (1993) are lazily, mindlessly misogynistic in their male-centered trajectories – no wonder so many films by and about women are opting for solitude as the best solution to the sex war.
Filmmakers all over the globe are still touched by that dream of trying, against all the odds, to make a decent romantic comedy. In the history of contemporary Australian cinema, these odds are stacked pretty high: our national record of achievement on the romantic comedy front is not an especially worthy one, especially after such instantly infamous disasters as *Hotel De Love* (1996) and *Dear Claudia* (1999).

It is true that Australia has yet to achieve success with a contemporary romantic comedy on the scale of *Sleepless in Seattle* (1993). But, in many respects, the prevalent responses among filmmakers to the question of how to make a movie in this genre today are the same in most countries. Three dominant trends can be diagnosed; I think of them as retro, anti and neo romantic comedy.

Only Hollywood – and even then, only occasionally – has been able to revive the romantic comedy in that backward-looking, nostalgic, retro mode. It takes the biggest stars, the plushest production values, and unlimited clips from a vault of the old classics to come anywhere near the original charm of the genre. But the result, quite often, is grotesque miscalculation – duds like *Forces of Nature* (1999) with Bullock and Ben Affleck that ape the plot moves and character types of the older films while displaying little understanding of the authentically populist and generous sensibility behind them.

For countries like Australia that make cinema on a necessarily smaller scale, one sly, backdoor way of creeping up on the old romantic comedy formula is via an extravagant plot premise. *Dating the Enemy*, by using the gender-switch idea on Claudia Karvan and Guy Pearce, takes the recently popular supernatural or ‘speculative’ option. *If Only*, *Lovers of the Arctic Circle*, *The Very Thought of You* and many other films of this ilk show a love affair playing itself out across several worlds or time-frames, each time with a different outcome. More earth-bound but just as playful is the retro romantic comedy based on the conceits of masquerade or mistaken identity, such as *All Men Are Liars*. Australians are much better at making anti romantic comedies. Droll ensemble pieces like Sue Brooks’ *Road to Nhill* (1998), jet black comedies such as Shirley Barrett’s *Love Serenade* (1996), or frankly misanthropic portraits in the vein of Monica Pelizzari’s *A Fistful of Flies* (1996): for these films, love – at least in its conventional, patriarchal construction – is a put-on, a lie that hides murky, mundane, uncomfortable truths. Is it any accident that women excel at stabbing at the heart of the classic romantic comedy and its underlying myths? At least, in the era of queer cinema, there is a new avenue of escape: defiled and downtrodden youngsters can finally realise their love for each other, and give up on the opposite sex altogether. *Me Myself I* and *Strange Fits of Passion* arrive at a somewhat gentler but no less level-headed conclusion: that a woman’s relation to her own development and self-esteem matters more than desperate dependence on some dream-man to make her a whole person.

There are many kinds of neo romantic comedy – a form which usually refers, in a lightly mocking, tenaciously affectionate, bitter-sweet way to the imaginary, magical world created within the classic
trying, against all the odds, to make a decent romantic comedy.

romantic comedies. In fact, the inaugural image of this trend was probably Gena Rowlands and her older, best female friend in John Cassavetes' Minnie and Moskowitz (1971) – watching Casablanca at a revival house, then going home to get drunk and have a good laugh or cry about the distance between movie mythdom and their daily, unglamorous reality. Australian filmmakers have often made films about this distance between ideal screen dreams and sad, struggling real life. Brian McKenzie's Stan and George's New Life (1992), John Ruane's Dead Letter Office (1998), Paul Cox's Lonely Hearts (1982), even Strictly Ballroom in its quieter, melancholic interludes: these movies recall the sensibility of the contemporary Finnish master Aki Kaurismaki, whose plaintive films (such as Drifting Clouds, 1996) set inarticulate, wistful couples against the slow corrosions of quotidian, social life, at home as in the workplace.

A more assertively joyous type of neo romantic comedy is the kind – spearheaded by films including Four Weddings and a Funeral and Go Fish – which celebrates new lifestyle options and arrangements. In this bag we find the Australian movies in which love, sex and relationships are inflected by something novel – whether the mingling of friends in a share-house (Fresh Air, 1999), the non-stop recording of a video camera (Video Fool For Love, 1996), or the dizzying confusions and possibilities of university student life (Love and Other Catastrophes, 1996). Gay and lesbian romances are spotlighted in many shorts, such as Kelli Simpson's Two Girls and a Baby (1998). In fact, many viewers will rightly conclude that same-sex love seems generally a much sunnier and lighter topic, much more adaptable to the romantic screen formulae of yesteryear, than heterosexuality with its apparently ceaseless rifts, guilts and torments.

The question remains as to why so few Australian romantic comedies seem to really deliver the goods. Yes, the world and its once innocent' traditions of popular cinema have changed. But does that mean that our filmmakers can entirely excuse themselves as mere victims of this history? That their only recourse is to dive for the pale sub-species of the genre, all those bleak or ironic or facile forms offered by modern romantic comedy in its retro, anti and neo modes? On one level at least, our national cinema must stand condemned. Whereas, in the great era of romantic comedy, men and woman on screen enjoyed a parity, a true give-and-take reciprocity of wills and wits, these days Australian filmmakers are often too content to reiterate modish truisms about the abyss between the sexes. The spark between lovers never quite happens in Thank God He Met Lizzie (1998), Me Myself I or Strange Fits of Passion. In Strange Planet (1999), everyone comes on like a solipsistic, two-dimensional poseur. All Men are Liars and Bob Ellis' The Nostradamus Kid(1993) are lazily, mindlessly misogynistic in their male-centred trajectories – no wonder so many films by and about women are opting for solitude as the best solution to the sex war.

Over in the realm of sombre drama, in the gruesome social-issue tragedy The Boys (1998), there is not even the faintest echo of love or laughter left between men and women. But why must we all be so fatalistic – especially where love, and the screen dreams devoted to love, are concerned? * See: Me Myself I review on p43.
ScreenSound Australia, the National Film and Sound Archive, is the treasure house of Australian film. From the first moving images in 1896 up to the present, ScreenSound collects, preserves and makes available Australia’s sound and screen history.

This heritage is preserved for all to share. We make the collection accessible by supplying footage and recordings for use in productions, through regular screenings of some of Australia’s greatest films, through interactive exhibitions, travelling shows, educational programs, video and audio products and on the Internet at www.screensound.gov.au.

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Setting the record straight
What really went on at the AFI awards

The getting of wisdom. sach a horler

'It's a strange thing to be asked to write a piece on the trials and tribulations of winning two Australian Film Institute (AFI) awards. It must be my vague European superstitious nature that prevents me from really acknowledging it as a subject of any interest. So instead some ruminations on a theme.

The night itself was fraught with the insecurities and vanities of 'The Frock'. My frock became more important than anything. Walking down the red carpet, hoping I'd slapped on enough makeup, deodorant and charm, I wrangled my scarf around my shoulders and answered the obligatory question 'Where'd you get that frock from?'... But the night was about more than awards and red carpets. When Bryan Brown got up to accept his gong, the night began to buzz!

We'd just lost the Referendum – the queen continued to reign her pointless reign and Bryan wanted to talk about it. He spoke about the events of the previous weekend, ...given that on Saturday evening, the country voted for an English monarch to long reign over us... and Sunday saw a celebration of American Film Culture [the gala opening of Fox Studios]... A bloke, I suppose could be forgiven for starting to wonder exactly who owns this country....

Controversy. People were at the edge of their seats. Then came the list of Aussie actors and (as the paper so eagerly reported) a bit of a return serve from Russell Crowe. Both actors had valid points but I think they were essentially talking about different situations. I was disappointed that, apart from one or two short blurbs, the media didn't seem to want to run with Bryan's theme. Photo spreads, fab fireworks, politicians and media magnates rubbing shoulders with American stars; this is what the media reported. Champagne flowing, gala opening nights and gee, the Olympics any minute now: Sydney was star struck! And everyone was saying how good it was for our film industry. But, please, a sparkling social calendar and a brand new movie studio, does not a healthy Australian industry make. There are many important ingredients, and the involvement and presence of Fox is great – and welcomed, but naturally limited and is no substitute for subsidy. Remembering that's how ALL the STARS of our industry got started – in films that were partly or wholly funded by the Australian Government. Toni Collette in Muriel's Wedding, Russell Crowe in The Crossing, Geoffrey Rush in Shine and Cate Blanchett in Oscar and Lucinda, to name only a spattering. On the night of the AFI's as I stumbled up some stairs, to meet the press, longing for a glass of something, I met Bob Carr. The New South Wales premier is said to be a man who likes a good book, known to battle through a great Russian or American history tome. A man who as Minister for the Arts supports and respects the industry. That night I saw his eyes glaze over as I discussed with him the dilemmas of our trade. How hard it is to get your first feature up, impossible your second, how important script development was, how distribution and marketing was a specialised skill, that few Australian films seem to 'cross over'... And the glaze in his eyes had the shiny hue of a spotlight. Had he too been fooled by the press and the glitz and the frocks and the studio, and the parties, and the stars flocking to Sydney, into believing that our Aussie industry was not only OK, but flourishing? I'm by no means just pointing the finger at Bob, but rather the phenomenon of the Glitz perception.

Walking down the red carpet, hoping I'd slapped on enough makeup, deodorant and charm, I wrangled my scarf around my shoulders and answered the obligatory question...... 'Where'd you get that frock from?'

A bit like Kennett was in Victoria where the message was apparently, 'We have the casino – stuff the unemployment!' Like Bob, former premier Kennett also appointed himself arts minister. I could cynically suggest the self-appointments were designed to garner invitations to champagne openings rather than any desire to tackle series industry issues, but I won't. Undoubtedly other major players in the spreading of this propaganda are the media, and reminds me of what it's like to win two awards in one night. The question people, and the media ask of me, The first question is often... "So when are you going to America..." A question that mostly floors me. Not because I'm not interested, because of course I am, very interested. Rather because of the implication of the question. Not so long ago the question might have had more depth, been more about the work. Like..."what's the quality of the scripts you're reading, any good roles? Anything inspiring? Done any auditions lately (that you didn't get] where you were reading, any good roles? Anything inspiring? Done any auditions lately (that you didn't get] where you were thrilled to meet the director. But the focus is clearly elsewhere. What effect does all this GLITZ have? How is any independent producer/distributor going to convince the papers, the tele, the mags, that their original Australian film deserves coverage and air time when, yes, the big man from The Green Mile is in town and he really wants to talk about losing some weight for The Oscars. There's some ratings! I drank a glass or three that AFI night, and it all became a blur. My frock wasn't faring much better, seafood bisque spattered on the front, tripping gracefully on my hem. I thought time to go home, get over the hangover, and get on with the work. 

PHOTOGRAPH BY KELLY KENNEDY

SACHA HORLER COLLECTED AWARDS FOR BEST LEAD ACTRESS AND BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS AT THE 1999 AFI AWARDS FOR HER ROLES IN PRAISE AND SOFT FRUIT.
In Bhutan, a tiny impoverished country high in the Himalayas, where religion still means more than money, there are many charming legends. Over sushi on a glittering Bondi Beach packed with nubile Olympic backpackers from all over the world, film producer, Raymond Steiner, tells an old Bhutanese legend. Since co-producing Bhutan’s first feature film, The Cup, Steiner has come to know a good deal more about the eastern mind than most film biz people.

Once upon a time, he says, Bhutan was famous for its many nuns. But there were so many holy women, that God took pity on them and planted a field of penises. For those with western notions of prudish piety, this frank, practical, religious tale comes as a bit of a shock. Certainly The Cup, which was directed by a reincarnated Bhuddist saint, Khyentse Norbu, will surprise those who imagine that a film set in a monastery should be rather earnest and slow.

If Scorsese or Bertolucci had made The Cup, it would have been – the one thing Hollywood never gets about eastern religion is the earthy humour which goes hand in hand with devout religious practice and disciplines. Norbu has puzzled western journalists, with his talk of Buddhist principles such as “elegance” and “outrageousness.” If you are too elegant, you become a slave of society. Too outrageous and you can’t fit in. The Tibetan monks of Bhutan, it seems, have much to offer the world (and Hollywood) and The Cup, with its rough cinema verite charm, and unpretentious assembly of homespun characters, has found favour from Washington to Cannes, from LA to Noosa. First-time director Khyentse Norbu is an extraordinary man too, but a quite typical Tibetan Bhuddist. Steiner notes that Rupert Murdoch who noticed that the Dalai Llama wears Gucci loafers. But of course to the Dalai Llama they are just shoes, “and that’s the point Murdoch will never get,” laughs Steiner.

Similarly, Norbu can move in the western world, through the crass tiers of consumerism and commerce, with his own spiritual grace quite in tact. “Oh we went to all the strip clubs in LA,” says Steiner, “And Khyentse was quite determined to see some lap dancing too.” The image of a high Tibetan Lama, in his saffron robes, at a lap dancing club is enough to make the mind wobble. “He had his girlfriend with him too,” Steiner says reassuringly. “Khyentse has never taken a vow of chastity.” Not all Buddhist monks do. If you are too elegant, you become a slave of society.

What drives a Buddhist monk to direct a film with a spiritual message which is capturing Western audiences with its earthy, humorous tone? Ruth Hessey explores Khyentse Norbu’s contribution to showbiz.
Buddhist elite. They have after all found some of their greatest supporters in the American entertainment industry – one which has become increasingly dominated by violent films, and backlit by a thriving porn industry. Indeed it is with some puzzlement that Steiner pulls out two rave reviews from the American press. Surprisingly they don’t come from arthouse publications but the two biggest money papers in the US – The Wall Street Journal and the New York Times. “Isn’t it extraordinary?” marvels Steiner. “The film seems to have touched these people more than anyone else.”

Perhaps it’s not so surprising. After several decades of physically energetic but emotionally bankrupt box office dynamite, the industry as it peaked in the 1980s is defunct. The audience too are weary of the Die Hards, the Rambos and even that late flower of the action genre, the Tarentino picture. Perhaps it is a sign that cheesy, silicon inflated mega budget dross has had its day, when a low budget foreign film directed by a reincarnated saint, becomes a worldwide hit. The slew of successful indie films which took the wind out the big studios’ sails in the late 1990s has begun to make its mark on Hollywood as the big studios invest in arthouse cinema. As a result the recent spate of American films are not only more independently minded, they are often biting, satirical indictments of western culture – look at American Beauty, Being John Malkovich, The Talented Mister Ripley, and Dogma.

Into this atmosphere of increasing frustration with materialism, and the urge to find a deeper meaning in life and express it with more complex character driven films, comes a little film about a group of Tibetan monks and their struggle to obtain a television, in a humble little country no-one has heard of. What is that people are responding to? It is a spiritual message imparted with a lack of dogma and a humour which we don’t associate with religious institutions in the west. Norbu’s style is simple but not naive. Despite a demanding schedule of duties as the chief administrator of several Buddhist monasteries, he has been thinking about cinema since attending screenings of Satyajit Ray, Yasujro Ozu, and Andre Tarkovsky in London while he was studying Buddhist philosophy at the age of 19. More recently he served as consultant to Bernardo Bertolucci, on the film Little Buddha. A three-week course at the New York Film Academy was enough to provide the basics as he mulled over his feature film idea – the story which was to become The Cup.

No-one has been more surprised by the past six months on the road with this modest little film. As the success of the film has run far ahead of the wildest dreams, the circuit of publicity tours and international film festivals has become increasingly hectic. Through a strange serendipity, Norbu’s key collaborators have been Australians – Bondi-based cinematographer Paul Warren, Malcom Watson, one of Norbu’s students and also his personal assistant who became the film’s co-producer, and Steiner, a seasoned American filmmaker who lived in India but is now based in Australia.

The change in lifestyle – from a relatively sober and contemplative life to the intoxicating whirl of the film biz and the media – has taken its toll. Norbu has had to forgo the usual spells of solitude and contemplation which allow him a respite from his responsibilities, and while he has two more screenplays, “the world will have to wait a couple of years,” says Steiner, “before he finds the time to make another film.”
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For information on these programs please phone Bruce Molloy on 07 5595 2537.
During the six to twelve months between shooting movies I pretend to regain control of my other life. In Los Angeles I head for a little gym off Melrose Avenue, in the heart of old Hollywood, where I can huff and puff climbing a stair master right beside live TV sit-com actors. I also get to chew the fat with one or other of the black athletic trainers who work out recording executive clients at the gym. It’s the only chance I’ll have all year in this city to talk more or less equally with an African American.

In this gym – like the rest of Hollywood – most everyone seems to lead double and triple lives. This particularly pleases me as I’ve spent so much time shooting those big screen adaptations of the Tom Clancy spy novels. Even though they arrive in disguise, dressed as security guards, real-estate brokers, insurance sellers or waiters, one doesn’t need to be Jack Ryan to identify these sometimes flamboyant and excessively beautiful people as would be actors, musicians, writers and producers. Or at least that’s why they came West in the first place, seeking the fame that will supposedly be followed by fortune. For most migrants Hollywood remains a mirage, mesmerising with its opportunity. When I first came here 10 years ago an agency sent an octogenarian baby-sitter to look after my pre-teen daughter. Back in the 1930s a small-town beauty contest prize had earned Miss Dee a one way train ticket to LA and a screen-test. Fifty-eight years later she displayed not a trace of outward dismay despite still waiting for her first paid show-biz assignment. ”So many actors, so few roles,” she says as she settled down to study the trade magazine announcements of the numerous upcoming projects. Maybe her patience was bred from depressed depression era expectations. It wouldn’t be the same today, Boiler Room is the title of easily the most profound and spiritually questioning movie so far this year. First time writer/director Ben Younger’s portrait of a Long Island college dropout who willingly drowns himself in a fraudulent get rich quick stockbroking scheme perfectly captures the current mood of America... of Hollywood... Indeed of my little Melrose Avenue gymnasium – GREED. Maybe it’s the same where you live?

Fuelled by daily tales of internet rich multi-millionaires, the new obsession involves continually speculating about how to claim a piece of the action for oneself. Like a 21st century cargo cult, the net is worshipped as a God who can be expected to reward devotees by ejaculating gold from the computer screen. Just today a 25-year-old assistant working in my office remarked how taking the job had cost her $850,000 US. This is the value of stock options she forfeited by leaving her former employer just before the company was absorbed by internet powerhouse Yahoo. In a community already traumatised by the perceived gaps between winners and losers, she now fears that all chance to join the victors’ circle has been permanently lost. Given the abundance of column inches devoted to the phenomenon of Internet Billionaires by American newspapers and magazines, it’s perplexing to discover that very few net companies are actually making profits. The wealth is generated by selling the paper value of shares that bear little relationship to actual earnings. The share prices are driven by speculation as to what might happen. But right from the beginning the web enterprise that has consistently generated profits is the same one that you’ll probably never be able to buy shares in – Sex. Led by a black trainer called Terrell, a group of workout mates in my gym have concocted a scheme to both exploit their under utilised talents and join the internet gold rush. For $50 a year web subscribers will shortly be able to choose to watch one or all of the 17 “voyeur” cameras the group have set up in a suburban house in which five young actresses from the gym will live. Of course the web is overflowing with sites like this. A very unremarkable woman called Jenny has turned herself into a worldwide celebrity by broadcasting 24 hours a day from her Washington DC bedroom. But the folks from the gym view their site as an opportunity to combine the lure of voyeurism with good old-fashioned Hollywood entertainment values. The ”actresses” for example are all “trained” which in this place is not the same as NIDA, the daily routine before the cameras will be partially scripted, the camera positions have been chosen by a young video director, the lay-out of the website has been designed by a fledging TV writer. Maybe I’m just romanticising a smutty get rich scheme, but I like to consider my gym mates as 21st century movie pioneers. Sure their voyeur web site combines elements of Sliver, The Truman Show and Ed TV, except each of those movies described situations where the cameras operated as malevolent intrusions. My guys are improvising nothing less than a new form of movie, which changes the relationship between viewer, actors and technicians and rewriting the rules of distribution. The viewer assumes the role traditionally performed by both editor and writer, deciding which story to follow and interacting with the actors online. In theory the story itself is set up to last forever. A vision of the future, or just a reflection of the past? High art or low porn? Time will tell.

Like a 21st century cargo cult, the net is worshipped as a God who can be expected to reward devotees by ejaculating gold from the computer screen.

PHILLIP NOYCE IS AN AUSTRALIAN DIRECTOR LIVING AND WORKING IN LOS ANGELES AND NEW YORK. HIS FILMS IN AUSTRALIA INCLUDE NEWSFRONT AND DEAD CALM. HIS FILMS IN AMERICA INCLUDE CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER AND MOST RECENTLY THE BONE COLLECTOR.
Looking for Alibrandi is Robyn Kershaw’s first feature film credit as producer but as she tells Michaela Boland it’s the culmination of many years hard work in the business of entertainment.

Everyone’s looking for

When director Kate Woods discovered Looking for Alibrandi was the ‘most stolen’ book from school libraries she knew she wanted to direct the film. That was two and a half years ago. Now Alibrandi is ready for release and Wood’s feature film directorial debut is garnering strong critical accolades. Set in Sydney’s eastern suburbs the story portrays three generations of Italian Australian women as they struggle to accept events long-affecting their lives.

Helmed by experienced actors Anthony LaPaglia and Greta Scacchi as the maladjusted parents of a teenage schoolgirl, Alibrandi showcases a trio fresh young talent. Pia Miranda is Josie, a third generation Australian carrying the Catholic burden of her forbears’ tragedies. Matthew Newton (son of Bert and Pattie] portrays John Barton who is labouring beneath the expectations of a high achieving father. And Kick Gurry is Josie’s love interest, Jacob Coote who encourages her teen rebellion.

Another cast stand out is Rome based actor Elena Cotta who portrays Josie’s grandmother Nonna Katia. Cotta was cast just two weeks before pre-production after producer Robyn Kershaw hatched a madcap plan which involved travelling to Italy in search of their woman. The scheme more than paid off. Kate Woods says, “I was determined Nonna was going to be Italian. There is a group of fabulous ethnic [Australian] older women actors but they are not necessarily Italian and I didn’t think it was fair on them or on the story. “We went away to Italy just blindly, knowing we were going to come back with Nonna and we did.” But the madness didn’t stop there. Cotta doesn’t speak any English, so once cast, she had to learn her role phonetically.

With Scacchi and LaPaglia on board, Woods and Kershaw opted for an open call in their quest for the younger actors. Three thousand auditions later Gurry and Miranda were secured, with Newton joining the cast literally the day he completed NIDA. Though the casting was arduous, Woods says the freedom to search for new actors was liberating.

Robyn Kershaw is at home in beachside Bronte with her two-year-old daughter pulling focus in the background. Lydia was just four months old when mum hit the ground running with Alibrandi. Robyn Kershaw: I was doing the little pre-bibles that we gave to investors with her in a baby capsule underneath the desk. I had someone who would come and look after her when we were doing the auditions and I would pump off [breast milk] while we were working out... "Yes I think we should see this group again and that group"... laughs

Cinema Papers: As general manager of Sydney’s Belvoir Street Theatre you orchestrated tours to exotic destinations including the USSR and facilitated the world premieres of stage plays which were subsequently made into feature films including Radiance, Cosi and the SBS teleseries Aftershocks, but this is your first film with a full producer’s credit. How did you come to co-found a production company in 1997 with Tristram Miall [Strictly Ballroom, A Little Bit of Soul].

RK: When I left Belvoir I went to film school (AFTRS) to do the one-year extension course. I was there with
Alibrandi
"Young boys and young girls relate strongly to it because it is the story of the outsider and at that age I think we're all feeling like we're the outsider." Robyn Kershaw
Australians are a funny people—they love their comedies and enjoy a joke...

Too much of a good thing


Yet Australian producers have just had explicit evidence thrust in front of them that comedies work in this country. Evidence too obvious to ignore.

A critical producer could argue quite convincingly they don’t even have to be great comedies to work. It’s not overly brattish to suggest a couple of them looked as though they were shot and edited on Gladwrap.

And then the brattish director Stephan Elliott admitted in the recent documentary, *Killing Priscilla, Queen Of The Desert* (d. Elliott, 1994), was overrated. All these bad comedies done good. Of course, it would be simplistic, even suicidal, for all our filmmakers to rush out and make comedies (not that our filmmakers and financiers haven’t made simplistic or suicidal choices before).

But recent evidence suggests you can put one million dollars in your box office kitty before you roll the camera and find a solid comedy franchise. *Sir Les Patterson Saves The World* (d. Miller, 1987) is the exception that proves the rule.

But every Australian short filmmaker knows the rule already. They’ve been submitting one-gag films to *Australia’s* short film festivals for years now.

It’s the Tropfest Syndrome. Throw a pun in the title, a twist in the tale and a gag to conclude and you’re Tropfest-bound. It doesn’t matter if you can’t stretch the gag to the specified seven minutes. Your set-ups can be as subtle as Adam Sandler and your punchlines just as predictable but Tropfest audiences love them. Other festival directors hate them. *Australian* film festivals are inundated with hundreds of shorts indistinguishable from one another.

It’s turgid viewing if ever you’re curating, previewing or judging the things.

The majority of our new short filmmakers blythely follow the rules of the Tropfest School for Crowd Pleasers or the Swinburne School of Bleak Social Realism. That’s why our animators look so good today. They’re the originals.

But Tropfest shouldn’t bear the weight of our bored festival directors. Tropfest is a public, populist festival. Its winners, by necessity, will be crowd pleasers. It’s just they get to win too easily. The competition is extensive (Tropfest received more than 400 entries this year) but hardly talented. No, the burden Tropfest should carry is this. It merely perpetuates the Hollywood dream for the not-so talented. They love the whole idea of Tropfest because short films are sexy. And Tropfest is sexier. It promises a creative, wealthy and famous life ahead. But it’s just a promise. Tropfest manifests the madness of our film industry; it promises so much but delivers so little. Not that the Tropfest audience is bothered by such piffle.

Tropfest manifests the madness of our film industry; it promises so much but delivers so little. Not that the Tropfest audience is bothered by such piffle.


joy that comes from being associated with something so glamorous. Tropfest director, John Polson argues, “It’s another avenue for showing *Australian* audiences *Australian* movies because, let’s face it, they’re not exactly running out to every Australian film that comes along. I think it’s a nice way to say, ‘Hey have a look what we can do’ because we spend most of our year watching Hollywood movies.”

But Tropfest finds favour precisely because of the glamour and its Hollywoodness. It’s a long way from the homely cheapness of the White Gloves Festival screenings.

But ask the filmmakers about their reality. Glamour or struggle? Ask the Tropfest entrant who spends the next couple of years paying off her film. Ask the internationally known actor who told me he’s down to his last $250. And ask producers who won’t go near a director who hasn’t gone to film school or shot commercially, Tropfest winner or not.

Yet Tropfest’s reality is of celebrities, champagne and a ticket straight to Hollywood.

Tropfest may be a pleasant Sunday evening in the park but it isn’t reality. Then again, some canny comedy filmmakers have recently shown the reality can be lucrative and fruitful. You just have to be pragmatic about it, not wishful.

MICHAEL BODEY IS THE DAILY TELEGRAPH’S SHOWBIZ EDITOR.
About this time each year the international film industry turns its attention toward Cannes in France. From May 10 through 21, La Croisette will be electrified with flowing champagne and well-coiffured air kissers. Emma Crimmings spoke to festival scouts Pierre Rissient and Christine Ravet on their recent trip to Australia about the structure of Cannes 2000 and the films likely to earn an official guernsey. Now she explains what the flesh pressing and endless standing ovations are really about.

→ For 15 years Pierre Rissient has made an annual pilgrimage to our shores in search of titles to recommend for official selection in – "In Competition" and "Un Certain Regard". Christine Ravet, however, is on her first excursion to Australia, viewing films for the "Directors' Fortnight". She confided her surprise at the number of films being produced here. Asked what distinguishes the Directors' Fortnight from the other sections at Cannes, Ravet said, "the Directors' Fortnight is primarily a section where we try to discover young directors. It is mainly first films from unknown filmmakers that we are after. Ana Kokkinos' Head On is an example of what we have chosen in the past."

A number of Australian films she had seen, "did not have anything to say". However, there were a few exceptions, two of which she intends to recommend on her return. She cautioned, "even if I like a film and recommend it strongly it does not necessarily mean it will get in. There are a number of scouts like me and there are so many good films. Particularly with the increase of good Asian films, the competition is very high."

While dodging direct questions about which films she had recommended, Ravet said the festival has undergone considerable changes recently. Last year Marie-Pierre Macia took the reigns of Directors' Fortnight following Pierre Henri Deleau's 30-year stint. Other major changes include the end of Pierre Viot's 15-year reign as Festival President, with Gilles Jacob appointment as his successor. Both selectors viewed close to 20 films with the titles below tipped as the odds-on favourites for a trip to Cannes.

EMMA CRIMMINGS HASN'T SEEN THE FILMS BUT SHE HAS GRILLED THOSE WHO HAVE

| WALK THE TALK | PROD: JAN CHAPMAN | DIR: SHIRLEY BARRETT | AG: DREAMWORKS AUST |
| THE OLD MAN WHO READ LOVE STORIES | PROD: MICHELLE DE BROCA | DIR: ROLF DE HEER | AG: PANDORA |
| THE MONKEY'S MASK | PROD: ROBERT CONNOLLY & JOHN MAYNARD | DIR: SAMANTHA LANG | AG: LE STUDIO CANAL + AUST DIS: FOOTPRINT FILMS |
| INNOCENCE | PROD: MARK PATTERSON | DIR: PAUL COX |
| MALLBOY | PROD: FIONA EAGGER | DIR: VINCE GIARRUSSO | AG: BEYOND |
| SERENADES | PROD: SANDRA LEVY | DIR: MOJGAN KHADEM | AG: SOUTHERN STAR FILMS |
| YOLNGU BOY | PROD: PATRICIA EDGAR | DIR: STEPHEN JOHNSON | AG: BEYOND, AUST AUST DIS: PALACE |
| CHOPPER | PROD: MICHELE BENNETT & AL CLARK | DIR: ANDREW DOMINIK | AG: BEYOND |

Australian product at Cannes
Unconventional road movie starring Rose Byrne and Rikiya Kurokawa as BG and JM. The Goddess of 1967 is set in the Australian desert. JM has left his home city, Tokyo and is following a dream to buy his ultimate car, the Citroen Goddess DS 1967.

Each year about 50 feature films and a dozen short films are chosen for official selection at Cannes. They are screened in the following categories:

IN COMPETITION
Considered the most prestigious category, the films In Competition are selected from around the world and compete for the following awards: The Palme d’Or, Grand Prize, Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Director, Best Screenplay. The award winners are decided by a jury of industry practitioners. Chosen by the Film Festival Board, Cannes has two official juries: the Feature Film Jury and the Short Film and Cinefondation Jury. Australian films which have screened In Competition include: Rolf de Heer’s The Quiet Room and Dance Me to My Song, Gillian Armstrong’s My Brilliant Career, Samantha Lang’s The Well, Fred Schepisi’s Evil Angels and Jane Campion’s The Piano (which shared the Palme d’Or in 1993).

OUT OF COMPETITION
These are generally films by directors who have either previously won awards at Cannes or for other commercial and/or strategic reasons do not wish to enter their films in competition. Films falling into this category also include those which require special programming such as a midnight screening. In 1999 An Ideal Husband starring Cate Blanchett screened in this section.

UN CERTAIN REGARD
This section is non-competitive, however, there are filmmakers within this section who are presenting their first film and are therefore in competition for the Camera d’Or.

CINEFONDAION
In 1998 the Cannes International Film Festival announced a new section, the Cinefondation which aims to uncover and encourage new filmmakers. The Cinefondation, presents a program of graduate films (short and medium length fiction and animation films) selected from the best film schools internationally. There are three awards given in this section with the first prize winner provided with a guarantee screening of their first feature film. Last year the Australian Film Television and Radio School was represented with Mairi Cameron’s graduating film Milk.

SHORT FILM
Short films (under 15 min) selected internationally, compete for the Palme d’Or Short Film Award. Festival rules allow the Jury to select two short films for this award.
Chopper
Chopper follows the absurd life of notorious criminal Chopper Read. Featuring Eric Bana in the lead and Simon Lyndon as Chopper's best friend, Jimmy Loughnan, the film is set both inside and outside Melbourne's Pentridge Prison. It follows the mad struggles of the celebrity crim as he seeks power through chaos.

Yoongu Boy
Produced by the Australian Children's Television Foundation, Yoongu Boy follows three boys linked by ceremony, kinship and a common dream. Set in north-east Arnhem Land, it stars Sean Mununggurr, Nathan Daniels and Sebastian Pilaku, whose characters find themselves on the wrong side of the law in two worlds.

Serenades
Serenades is a love story set in the desert a hundred years ago. Starring Aden Young as the son of the Lutheran pastor and Alice Harins as his friend, the daughter of an Afghan father and an Aboriginal mother. United by their love of music, the pair separate but meet up as adults.

The Monkey's Mask
Private detective Jill Fitzpatrick (Susie Porter) dives head-first into murder, manipulation and the consuming power of sex, as she falls hopelessly in love with Diana (Kelly McGillia), one of her suspects in a missing person's case. Guided by Diana through a surprisingly sleazy Sydney poetry scene, Jill becomes a victim of her own infatuation when the missing person turns up dead.

INTERNATIONAL CRITICS' WEEK
Non-competitive, the Critics' Week is the oldest of the official side-bar sections at Cannes. Founded in 1962 by Georges Sadoul, the section has been responsible for the discovery of filmmakers such as Jacques Rozier, Chris Marker and Bernardo Bertolucci (who has recently agreed to become the first ever sponsor of the week event for Cannes 2000). Jose Maria Riba is the new director of the Critics' Week which brings to the screen directors' first and second full length feature or documentary films as well as first and second shorts. The two Australian films chosen for this section last year were John Polson's Siam Sunset and Elise McCredie's Strange Fits of Passion, which was also in competition for the Camera d'Or.

MARCHE DU FILM
The Cannes Market is the commercial side of the film festival. Over 5000 participants attend and around 1000 films are screened. The market has been very effective for Australian films.

OTHER FORTHCOMING AUSTRALIAN FILMS

→UNOFFICIAL SELECTION
The official side-bar sections are part of the Cannes Festival, however, the films in these categories are not engaged in competition (with the exception of the Camera d'Or which is open to all first-time feature films). They include: Directors' Fortnight, International Critics' Week and Marche Du Film.

DIRECTORS' FORTNIGHT
Once again non-competitive, the Directors' Fortnight showcases the work of only feature filmmakers (usually first time) from around the world. This year the Directors' Fortnight will be in its 32nd year, emerging as a product of the May 1968 "cultural revolution" in France which also managed to halt the festival proceeding for that year, the section was originally claimed as a fortnight (quinzaine) for directors (réalisateurs). Both PJ Hogan's Muriel's Wedding and Ana Kokkinos' Head On have screened in this event.

Moulin Rouge
PROD: MARTIN BROWN, FRED BARON, BAZ LUHRMANN, DIR: BAZ LUHRMANN, AG: FOX INTERNATIONAL, AUST DIS: 20TH CENTURY FOX

DogWatch
PROD: RICHARD BRENNAN, DIR: LAURIE McINNES, AG: INTRA FILMS, AUST DIS: GLOBE

He Died with a Felafel in His Hand
PROD: ANDREW MCMHAIL, & DOMENICO PROCACCI, DIR: RICHARD LOWENSTEIN, AG: INTRA FILMS

Looking for Alibrandi
PROD: ROBYN KERSHAW, DIR: KATE WOODS, AUST DIS: ROADSHOW

Better than Sex
PROD: BRUNA PAPANDREA & FRANK COX, DIR: JONATHAN TEPLITZKY, AG: FRANCE TV, AUST DIS: NEWVISION

Beware of Greeks Bearing Guns
PROD: COLIN SOUTH & JOHN TATOUILS, DIR: JOHN TATOUILS, AG: TRIDENT, AUST DIS: PALACE

Bootsmen
PROD: HILARY LINSTEAD, DIR: DEIN PERRY, AG: FOX SEARCHLIGHT, AUST DIS: FOX

City Loop
PROD: BRUCE REDMAN, DIR: BELINDA CHAIKOVSKY, AG: BEYOND

A Wreck, a Tangle
PROD: NICK ROLLER, DIR: SCOTT PATTISON, AG: BEYOND

My Mother Frank
PROD: SUSAN VASS, PHaedra VASS & JOHN WINTER, DIR: MARK LAMPRELL, AG: BEYOND

King of the Mountain
PROD/DIR: DARREN LINES

Jet Set
PROD: ROBERT BREWER, (ANIMATED), DIR: JONATHAN OGIULIE

Angst
PROD: JONATHAN GREEN, DIR: DANIEL NETHEIM, AG: BEYOND FILMS

The Dish
PROD: MICHAEL HIRSH, DIR: ROB SITCH

Mr Accident
PROD: WARWICK ROSS, DIR: YANDO SERRIOUS, AG: UNITED ARTISTS FILMS

Risk
PROD: MARIAN MACDONWAN, DIR: ALAN WHITE, AG: BEYOND, AUST DIS: ROADSHOW

Russian Doll
PROD: ALLANAH RITZERMAN, DIR: STAVROS KAZANTZIS, AG: BEYOND, AUST DIS: BEYOND

Silent Partner
PROD/DIR: ALKINS TSILIMIDOS
Peter Greenaway visited Australia recently without a new release tucked safely under his arm. Instead he wore an opera director's hat and a comfy demeanour. The audiences clapped politely and the academics gushed but Michaela Boland walked away wondering.

Peter Greenaway loves a stoush. On a previous trip to Australia he was a headline-grabbing media darling with a quote for every occasion. Mostly he was defending his style of filmmaking, occasionally he tried to explain what it was all about. But as guest star of the Adelaide Festival, the director of The Cook The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover, A Zed and Two Noughts and The Belly of an Architect was more interested in discussing his latest opera, Writing to Vermeer.

Reviews of Vermeer, which Greenaway wrote and co-directed with his partner Saskia Boddeke, have been a mixture of praise and derision, often within the same text. On the whole, critics praised the opera's visual splendour but queried an apparent lack of plot in the fictionalised story of three women in the life of the Dutch painter. The wife, the mother-in-law and the model are writing letters to the absent painter who is visiting The Hague during a period of social and political turbulence throughout Holland. Visually, the multimedia extravaganza is reminiscent of Greenaway's most recent Australian theatrical release, The Pillow Book (1996) and Prospero's Books (1991). There is unreadable scrolling text projected onto the stage and parchment being written by the three lead women at the rear. And again, like so many of Greenaway's films, this opera is visually rich to the point of decadence - think The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover (1989), think The Draughtsman's Contract (1982), or conjure any Greenaway film you like. Again there is water, 18,000 litres of the stuff pour onto the stage from above but this time it's not an excuse to get the actors' gear off. Drenched women (and there are no men on stage) stay fully clothed and sodden. Though sung in English, it is utterly impossible to follow Vermeer's narrative, if indeed the opera contains one.

Greenaway films are often criticised for the same reason. Universally proclaimed 'very much a Greenaway work', the director is refusing to undertake solo interviews about the opera, and is insisting on Boddeke's presence. He will...
For two hours the director describes his influences, his entry to film, his recent projects (mainly European operas) and his political perspective (anti-Thatcher).

However, engage in media interviews solo to discuss film exclusively. So exclusively film we will talk but it’s not that easy.

Arriving in Adelaide Cinema Papers learns the director has journeyed to Flinders University on the city’s outskirts to deliver a lecture to students. “Maybe the journalist would find it useful to sit in and then catch the director afterwards?”

Dressed in a purple blazer and royal blue shirt buttoned at the neck, Greenaway’s usually dour face brightens as he seeks to entertain and inform the two hundred or so students and lecturers.

Explaining he will address the audience as though they know nothing of his work and life Greenaway confesses up-front he will inevitably be hypocritical.

In time he comments that opera cannot be captured on film, then completes the lecture with a film clip from his opera Rosa (1992).

For two hours the director describes his influences, his entry to film, his recent projects (mainly European operas) and his political perspective (anti-Thatcher).

We learn he enjoyed a “rather normal bourgeois education” before disappointing his family with his aspiration, from an early age, to be a painter. He attended a minor art school and then discovered film through Swedish cinema, dubbed as ‘soft porn’ by the prudish British.

A first year drama student neatly summarised the lecture afterwards; “I understand why he did the monologue about his life but it could have been shortened a bit”.

This student confides her teacher is a huge Greenaway fan who has screened Prospero’s Books (1991) for the class, which also attended a dress rehearsal of Writing to Vermeer. “So I’m very familiar with his work”, she added.

So, Greenaway, who claims to have made 70-odd films including eight features, correctly picked the level of audience familiarity with his work. He just went on too long. As is his signature.

As the lecture moves into question time Greenaway requests challenging questions please! He thrives on conflict and the review culture is so dull and bland here in Australia. This broadside inspires a student to gleefully hail forth (inaudibly for Greenaway) “That’s because the media are dickheads!”

Fabulous stuff.

One of those dickheads, John Slavin opera critic for The Age, had recently described Writing to Vermeer as, “a kind of water torture for cast and audience alike”. Though “saturated with visual gorgeousness” it was “difficult to define any narrative line in the production”.

Slavin’s sentiments were echoed by a Flinders University student, who had seen the opera and was

buoyed by Greenaway’s desire for conflict. She asked why there were no subtitles accompanying Writing to Vermeer to make it possible to follow a narrative. Greenaway responded that when the opera played in Holland it was accompanied by Dutch subtitles, though most Dutch understood English anyway.

Vermeer will play in only one other marketplace, New York, later this year. “I acknowledge the problem, we must work to (inaudible) that”.

The Adelaide Festival’s showcase event is a work in progress.

As the lecture goes on and on, Cinema Papers’ interview with Greenaway is looking less likely. This evening he has a film to introduce, a Greenaway retrospective festival side bar is running concurrently with the opera. The director has already presented a masterclass this morning, he introduced The Draughtsman’s Contract to a sell-out cinema audience last night and later this evening is the fourth and final performance of Writing to Vermeer at Adelaide’s Festival Theatre.

When the lecture finally wraps the interview...
appointment appears to be cancelled as the director vanishes from the auditorium. But at the Adelaide Festival club just after midnight, tabloid-style, _Cinema Papers_ spots the director relaxing with his cast and celebrating the close of a sell-out season. Time to pounce awkwardly and the director graciously agrees to ten minutes in a 'quiet spot'.

When Greenaway visited Australia in 1994 to promote _The Baby of Macon_ he enjoyed the full gamut of publicity. Once dubbed 'The world's most controversial filmmaker', he conducted everything from soft popular press interviews to an interrogative session on ABC's _The 7.30 Report_. He even went a few rounds with scriptwriter and raconteur Bob Ellis on SBS.

But this time he appears to be in a more comfortable space. Greenaway doesn't disagree, "I've never felt comfortable being described as a filmmaker. I started as a painter... I have an idea I'm going to end up as a writer, but now I'm wearing a different hat, I'm in the music world."
But as a self-confessed conflict lover has this trip to Australia been dull?
"Everything has been very gentle, very kind... yes, maybe a little tedious. There’s no conflict, antagonism, criticism. There’s nobody saying ‘Hang on a minute, let’s query your arguments’.

"The reviewing is bland and sweet and apologetic so even if they find an issue they don’t like they skirt around it. It’s a bit like the Australian voice patterns which always are interrogative as though you make an apology almost before you speak.”

Greenaway asks what the hell are young people talking about? “Sports and their mortgage? These Aboriginal kids are hanging themselves in Australian jails... we’d have demonstrations out in the street! What is it about your complacent environment among young minds?”

Greenaway’s most recent feature, 8 1/2 Women, screened at Cannes in 1999 but has not been picked up for distribution in Australia.

“We had a great furor at Cannes where Holly Hunter walked out (she was head of the jury) saying how much it was a thoroughly disgusting and totally unacceptable film. It was about extreme forms of, as they saw it, misogyny.”

The director suggests the film about a man and his son who set up a private bordello, may have suffered due to the mainstream success enjoyed by The Pillow Book.

“We made 8 1/2 Women as a homage to Fellini, ‘Who the hell is Fellini?’ a lot of people say.”

Greenaway loathes the restriction of market expectations and always refused to entertain suggestions he consider making "Son of a Draughtsman’s Contract" or "Belly of an Architect Part 2. "I seek to go on new journey all the time”, he says.

But he did suck from the Hollywood trough when he needed to buy his house or “pay off a car”. He claims he was the first director invited to steer Who Framed Roger Rabbit? Um, he rejected the offer.

"I have a great disenchantment about boring late twentieth century cinema. Cinema for me died in the late 1970s and it’s very important for us to find new ways of organising the cinema experience. My initial foray into operas and music theatre was to find new ways to revitalise centre stream cinema.”

Outlining his many artistic and musical achievements of recent years the director confides he has an incredible 25 scripts waiting to be made, though "I will almost certainly never make them". This predicament has lead him to consider, for the first time, various potential collaborations. He would consider another director taking over his script and he is also open to directing somebody else’s.

Upon returning to Europe (Greenaway lives in Holland) he is poised to commence "a huge project called Tulse Luper’s Suitcases”. A 52-part television series with variations for DVD, CD-ROM, cinema and the world wide web, it will cost “millions and millions of pounds” and take three years to complete.

After that, "I plan an even bigger work called The Historians which will take another three years”. He didn’t offer any more information but lunged enthusiastically forward, “It’s all multimedia fest we are pursuing greedily while the possibilities still exist.”

Despite the onscreen lushness of his various films, Greenaway told the university audience his feature film budgets rarely exceed two million UK pounds, with funding from television pre-sales facilitating their production.

An old-fashioned auteur, after training as an editor he moved into directing. “I’m a product of the 60s when European cinema was strong and progressing” but "the world now has seen the dearth of the European independent movie”.

Thanks in part to Miramax cannibalising the ‘arthouse’ genre? “In some strange way they have shat in the nest and burnt the bridges because they have over-capitalised on it in a most appalling way. They buy up product deliberately so that nobody can buy it and never ever show it. They tend towards the Sunday Supplement end of the art market: coloured and daring, enough frisson to excite but not too much over-excitement to send the audiences away. Shakespeare in Love is absolutely the ultimate Miramax production.”

Here’s hoping Miramax doesn’t purchase one of Greenaway’s 25 scripts; who knows, we might never get to see it. •

CINEMA PAPERS. MAY 2000 [33]
Is there an Australian cultural thought police?

Of course that idea is misguided, inaccurate, paranoid and stupid.

most Australian movies are labelled
as specialist and arthouse because
the industry says the Australian public
has been somewhat reluctant to see
local films, despite their admirable
creative integrity and quality.
But it doesn’t have to be this way. Why
can’t Australian movies embrace
populist values and conventions?
Why can’t Australian moviemakers
have the freedom to embrace any
gener or budget they wish and
therefore seek an audience as large
as possible? Why not tell stories and
draw characters that reflect ordinary
australians living in a complex and
ever-changing society?
Why don’t we have more Australian
films sitting comfortably in that
fantastic middle-ground somewhere
between head on (d. ana kokkinos)
which earned just over $1 million and
the castle (d. rob stint) which earned
$10 million plus?
The only recent films to earn over
$5 million are two hands (d. Gregor
Jordan), the craic (d. ted emery) and
recently the wag boy (d. aleksi vellis).
each of these films benefited from
mainstream themes, actors and a
mainstream marketing focus.
If one was into conspiracy theories
they might argue that an Australian
cultural thought police exists but of
course that idea is misguided,
inaccurate, paranoid and stupid.
However a recent AFC Report* on the
industry states: “Almost without
exception, distributors expressed the
view that when Australian critics didn’t
like a film, they frequently attacked it
in a way which was personally
insulting to the filmmakers and/or
vitiolic and extreme in the level of its
criticism.”
The report quoted a distributor
commenting, “The media can be
incredibly vocal in their criticism,
much more so with a ‘bad’ Australian
movie than with a ‘bad’ American
movie. The vitriolic is unbelievable.”
This point is central to the media’s
attitude towards homegrown product.
many commentators divide Australian
filmmakers into three groups.
There are the ‘old farts’ who have had
their chance and are no longer
exciting or fashionable. There are
aussies who have fled overseas and
occasionally return providing
interesting news stories and feature
coverage for the media. But if
Australian films and there certainly
was no favoured nation treatment of
our films by commentators.
There was, however, an open,
accepting and generally positive
attitude towards the possibility of us
delivering satisfying entertainment.
There was not an absence of criticism
or judgment. In fact, a common fear
concerned the potentially negative
image that some of our movies would
present overseas. And there was very

Why don’t we have more Australian films
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an Australian film it is perceived
as earnest and out of touch with
current values.
The third group comprises newcomers
who are supported and praised for
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budget, edgy, provocative,
unconventional and produced against
the odds. While not succeeding in
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*Australian Film Commission Report:
Distributing Australian Films,
August 31, 1999

ALAN FINNEY IS VICE PRESIDENT AND
GENERAL MANAGER OF BUENA VISTA
INTERNATIONAL AUSTRALIA. HE HAS
WORKED IN THE FILM AND TELEVISION
INDUSTRY SINCE THE 1960S. IN 1971, HE
JOINED ROADSHOW FILM DISTRIBUTORS AND
BROUGHT TIM BURSTALL’S MOVIE STORY TO
ROADSHOW’S ATTENTION. THIS ACQUISITION
LED TO THE FORMATION OF HEXAGON
PRODUCTIONS THE FIRST ONGOING JOINT
VENTURE BETWEEN PRODUCTION AND
DISTRIBUTION ENTITIES IN CONTEMPORARY
AUSTRALIAN HISTORY. AS THE COMPANY’S
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FINNEY ACTED AS
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ON FILMS INCLUDING
ALVIN PURPLE, PETERSEN, END PLAY, ALVIN
RIDES AGAIN, ELIZA FRASER AND THE LAST OF
THE KNUCKLEBONES. BEFORE MOVING TO BVS IN
1998 FINNEY WAS MANAGING DIRECTOR OF
ROADSHOW FILM DISTRIBUTORS.
Whether you’re shooting in 4:3 or 16:9, you only need one camera on hand and that’s the new Panasonic AJ-D610WA. Built and priced with stringers in mind, the AJ-D610WA has everything including 3 high resolution viewfinders. Superb picture performance derives from a 2/3" IT CCD block which provides exceptional low light shooting (2000 lux at F11). And, a low power consumption of 24W allows you to shoot even longer. It’s this understanding of what stringers need that makes the Panasonic AJ-D610WA such a hit, but with over 80,000 DVCPro products already sold did we really need to point that out?
Despite travel guides covering every square inch of the globe, when it comes to seeing the world through the eyes of a film buff, you’re pretty much on your own. Barrie Pattison plugs the gap with this look at what’s out there in the strange and sometimes inspiring world of cinema as theme park.

on 25 frames a second
inform and distract film enthusiasts. The movie theme park may have been born when Universal decided to recoup some of its investment in Steven Spielberg’s mechanical shark from *Jaws* (1975), but it has now grown to the point where it not only offers a major income stream to the studios but often operates as a profitable stand-alone venture. The cynical observer might even wonder if many movies these days aren’t made simply to provide forthcoming attractions for the theme parks [and, of course, great merchandising opportunities].

The cinematic concept has blossomed over the past few years in Munich, and Bavaria Atelier, half an hour from the town centre, offers a unique tour. These studios have a 79-year history of active production, and hosted Hitchcock’s first movie, plus the work of Karl Grune, Wilhelm Dieterle, Max Ophuls and Hans Albers. They have also been home to post-war Pabst, Kautner, Welles’ *Othello* (1952), Kubrick’s *Paths of Glory* (1957), *Cabaret* (Bob Fosse, 1972), and various films by Wenders and Fassbinder. Despite this rich history, the tour developed almost accidentally. The submarine interior for Wolfgang Petersen’s *Das Boot* (1981) had been built as one life-size welded unit. The studio was about to have the thing cut up for scrap in 1981 when it found there was huge interest from school groups wanting to see the boat. Quick to sense an opportunity, the studio’s management started charging for tours of the hull. Soon the Berlin street from *The Serpent’s Egg* (Ingmar Bergman, 1978) was added to the tour. In the first three months, 100,000 visitors passed through.

Now Bergman’s Berlin has been replaced by a much-used plaster-and-timber Munich standing street (with real cobblestones), but Wolfgang Petersen is still very much in evidence. The original Rock Biter from *The Never-Ending Story* (*Die Unendliche Geschichte*, 1984) is there, though Furtur has had to be renovated; so popular was he with young visitors that he was almost worn away by the touch of tiny fingers. A passageway from the *Enemy Mine* (1985) spaceship has become both a popular attraction and a favourite location-for hire for disco parties. There is also an exhibit on the German Marienhof television series, and an effects-miniature display from *Smilla’s Feeling for Snow* (*Smilla August, 1997*).

For all the innovation, the submarine hull remains the prime reason to visit Bavaria Atelier. Up close, it seems even more claustrophobic than it did on screen. Moving around inside its impeccably detailed passageway is an unforgettable experience, which staff add to by swinging sailor-style through the hatches on the over-door handles. It’s interesting to note that this hull has now lasted considerably longer than most of the genuine U-boats. What makes Bavaria Atelier unique is the fact that the attractions are real. Rather than being cooked-up in some theme-park workshop, these attractions are elements of actual productions, both historic and ongoing.

### Old England Forever

Britain has determined to carve out its own slice of the movie-tour market over the past decade. The British Film Institute’s Museum of the Moving Image, butted onto its National Film Theatre in London’s South Bank arts precinct, is the centrepiece of this strategy. MOMI is a hybrid of the Round House exhibition the BFI staged in the 1970s, with rooms devoted to different aspects of film, and of Henri Langlois’ Paris museum, replicas of whose *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1926) robot and three-dimensional-motion toy doves appear. The attendants are dressed in costume and play characters from film history, delivering commentaries aimed primarily at school groups. I was warned that it hadn’t been put together with ‘Big People’ in mind.

The day I was there, the kids seemed to be having a good time designing their own Zostrope strips and being choreographed to Busby Berkeley scores. ‘What they thought of the photos of Mabel Pollitt and an avant-garde chamber one can only guess.’ Following the Paris model, MOMI has extensive exhibits on the pre-history of cinema. There’s an authentic-looking Edison Kinetoscope, though, on closer inspection, it turns out to contain a video image (incidentally, running well under the original frame rate).

The whole operation was thrown together in the period when hands-on was all the go with museums, and consequently it suffers from the effects of thousands of customers having had a go. On the day I visited, several of the attractions had broken down, and still others were not functioning at their best. There are signs of change amid the chaos, with new temporary exhibits, like the Hammer event, moving away from the risk of mechanical failure. Sadly, they do so by opting for uninspiring static presentations. The museum’s critics worry about the shift from the activities on which enthusiast work depends, and observe that many of MOMI’s problems stem from the fact that it is a committee-designed attraction that tries to house incompatible aims under the one roof. The museum is reportedly now in danger of closure. Also, disappointingly, the Bradford Museum of Photography in West Yorkshire was closed while I was in the UK, undergoing a £13 million renovation. A horror film event I’d planned on attending was cancelled.

The great attraction in the Bradford museum is the Pictureville Cinema, a functioning three-strip Cinerama theatre where the Cinerama camera forms a crucial part of the permanent exhibition. Faced with a choice between adopting modern technology or going back to a screen of strips angled towards the viewer, they chose the original louvered concept, designed to minimise cross-reflection within a 146° curvature. Directional sound booms out of five speakers.

The limited choice of films is a handicap, but Big Screen enthusiasts make a pilgrimage to this location, now one of just two public Cinerama presentations left on the planet (two more are run privately, one of them in Australia).

### Channel hopping

The heart of the movie-enthusiast culture remains across the Channel in France, the birthplace of the first film societies and art cinemas. In fact, one could argue that all of Paris is a cinemathèque. You can still attend the Musée Grenou where Emile Reynaud presented his 1888 pre-cinema Theatre Optique shows and where René Clair set *Fantômes du Moulin Rouge* in 1925.
From me to run someone chattily through the wonders of their system while I was trying to follow an untranslated Maurice Tourneur movie. The enti-
place was hit by a breakdown halfway through, and my tape ran out before the end. It turned out the movie was held on two cassettes with a 20-minute overlap, though there was no indication of that in the system.

The Videothèque’s library of 6000 titles would take some getting through, but the collection is all French – and even Paris-oriented, and not cheap at 30 francs ($9) for two hours. The Videothèque also has screenings, respecting the format in which the material was first produced – tape on monitors, film projected – but I noticed that several other people did as I did and quit to walk up the road and see films shown at the Cinémathèque when the session time came up.

At Euro Disney, the troubled theme park on the outskirts of Paris, the Francis Ford Coppola-George Lucas creation Captain EO (starring Michael Jackson) is still in situ, even if the lasers that shot out from the screen in the Disneyland presentation in Anaheim, US, are not. This two-projector stereo film is a staple of the Disney parks, as is Star Tours, in which C3PO (voiced here, as in the Star Wars movies, by Anthony Daniels) guides you through one of the more jolting simulator rides.

Perhaps the most notable attraction at Euro Disney is From Time to Time (1990), the most ambitious of the Circle Vision 360 productions, in which nine movie screens surround a standing audience. This is one of the few screened attractions that still has a pre-show (cost-cutting has all but wiped them out). Before viewers are marched into the circular viewing space, robotic models Timekeeper and 9-Eye set up a journey through time that culminates with the nine-lensed droid going out of control.

Jeff Blyth has directed previous Circle Vision productions, including Wonders of China and O Canada, and here works with specialist producers Antoine Compin, Charis Horton and (something of a surprise) John Badham.

It does offer the usual catalogue of tourist destinations, but it is the engulfing, detailed recreations of past times, peopled by crowds of costumed extras, that make From Time to Time so notable.

**Futuroscope**

Le Parc Futuroscope, a little more than an hour out of Paris in the town of Poitiers, is the ultimate moviegoer destination. Here is just about every recent movie system that has demonstrated viability: giant screen, circular projections, 3D, simulators, and a video wall, all housed in gleaming, futuristic, purpose-built structures. There are special kids’ areas, too, which allow the older buffs to indulge their own interests in relative peace. Shown in Circlevision is the 1997 Europe by Trimaran, an in-house production that follows the multi-hull yacht race from Venice to Marseille and London. This is a major undertaking, projected to a standing audience of 450 people from nine 35mm projectors.

Another of the specially produced attractions is shown in 70mm at 48 frames a second, with the audience in a hydraulic seat simulator system. Ania Asal’s 1996 Poitou-Charentes Emotions is a travel piece in which comedian Michel Lepp is shown the attractions – markets, oyster farms, barrel making, fishing, cathedrals – by a girl narrator. The joky style offers a welcome counterpoint to the tourist pitch, though the super-sharp image is the most notable feature.

Futuroscope has the world’s only permanent IMAX Magic Carpet installation, which was running Flowers in the Sky. This traces the Monarch butterfly’s amazing 3000-kilometre migration from Canada to Mexico, complete with a snapping alligator scare, striking air-to-air shots of the Monarch in flight, and a Mexican butterfly festival finale.

One of Futuroscope’s most impressive attractions is the Wall of Images. Constructed of 850 video monitors playing seven laser discs synchronised by five computers, this is the largest installation of its type in the world. La Vienne Dynamique is an industrial promotional presentation, which tries to attract high-tech employers to the area by demonstrating just what the local area can do. Another attraction of particular interest was Jean-Jacques Annad’s Wings of Courage (1995), the first fiction film to be made combining the Polaroid 3D and IMAX processes.

The film has not been too well received, but I was surprised to find that it impressed both as drama and as an attempt to extend the range of the technology. But it is not only the scenic material that impresses. Much of the action takes place in small, decorous whose roofs have been made to extend back over the camera position (the same device is used in Stephen Low’s Across the Sea of Time, and creates the impression that viewers are actually in the room with the players).

The Lake of Images is a night-time presentation using 35mm film and laser images on water and fog, complete with surround sound. I’d seen similar attractions and was all set to give this one a miss. I’m glad I didn’t. Some of the sequences are stunning and without precedent. A digital multicolour airship turns in three dimensions, a slow-motion dove rises from the water, coloured jets of water pulse in time with the music. Whether this is merely a blind alley of showmanship or an early step towards a new form of cinema is hard to say, but the effect is dazzling.

I was lucky enough to spend some time with Futuroscope’s technical director Thierry Lucet. I liked his description of the standard cinema version of Wings of Courage as being “dans deux Ds” (without two dimensions).

Lucet was forthcoming about the problems with the systems. Rolling loop mechanisms are high-maintenance; the screens for the multitude of systems are all made of the same material, even though it produces a dull image in the light-hungry 3D format. He pointed out that one of The Lake of Images items was about to be deleted because it wasn’t sharp enough.

It was clear that Parc Futuroscope has considered the philosophy of what it was doing as much as the mechanics.

Futuroscope can afford to be confident. Overall, out of its 20-odd hi-tech exhibits, each running a screening every half-hour or so, fewer than one show a week is lost due to technical problems, a stunningly small number. What’s more, having such a concentration of technologies and technicians in the one place now means that when something breaks down it’s fixed quickly.

The statement here is clear. This is a place where people daily work at redefining the movieng experience. The science park in which they are located has had less impact on its activities than many pundits had predicted.●
Cordelia is Bruce Beresford's daughter... and even though I'm sure she doesn't go around advertising it and she wants to be known as an artist in her own right and all that, let's face it, everyone wants to know if Greg Norman's son can play golf.

young photographer strolls over for the day to take some portrait shots of the family, but he ends up focusing on the sexually repressed maid, eventually unleashing her passion and sealing her fate with the family. The film contains no dialogue, and the story is rendered mostly through dance and movement, set to a fervent violin score. Cordelia is Bruce (Picnic at Hanging Rock) Beresford's daughter. I just thought I'd mention it, because even though I'm sure she doesn't go around advertising it and she wants to be known as an artist in her own right and all that, let's face it - everyone wants to know if Greg Norman's son can play golf. While some people may mutter that being the daughter of a well-known filmmaker - read 'wields a lot of power in the industry' - means that everything right up to your first picture deal would be a proverbial breeze. I believe in some ways it would actually make things harder. Oh, it's that Beresford girl's film. I'll be watching this one extra close, looking for whiffs of genius. Taping off at the first hole of a golf course is always nerve-racking - imagine a gaggle of onlookers whispering "let's see how this Norman boy does." So try and forget that fact for the rest of this piece. Got it? Nice. Whether through, ahem, said connections or not, Cordelia has found two top class dancers in Narelle Benjamin and Solon Ulbrich to play the leads of the maid and the photographer. Their wrathful, desperate movements on screen infuse the film with just the right amount of pent-up lust, turning what could have looked like an advertising piece. Got it? Nice. Regardless, they give filmmakers a chance to display their skills in one area without excelling in all others (the short films with witty little story lines that were crappily shot, for instance). Cordelia has abundant talent. Restoration incorporates a wide range of styles. She has picked a subject matter (lust) and a medium (dance) which will best allow her to give the film the sharp, theatrical look she has ably given light to. Having deservedly received last year's AFTRS award for Cinematography of The Year - high praise indeed since good looking films are what they specialise in. Here's hoping it isn't too long before she is behind the lens on a feature film. Who knows, it could even be one of dad's - and he'd be lucky to have her if it was.

The film does not intend her directing and writing debut to be one of those quirky, urban shorts with the really clever twists at the end so favoured by film students who've already written their Best Picture acceptance speeches. What she did intend was for the film to showcase her skill at constructing an image, and if this were the film's sole purpose then she has succeeded admirably. In particular, her deft use of shadows to add a subtle menace to the scene where the maid dreams the photographer has come to seduce her, shows off her very choreographed and 'placed' shooting style.

This said, however, the film concentrates so much on its atmosphere and look that not much room is left for anything else. The relationship between the maid and the photographer is explored in such a rudimentary way, and the final outcome is so rote, that, condensed down to 30 seconds with only brief flashes of the film's best shots, this could well be a commercial for an expensive European perfume. Short films are always dangerous territory, like being asked to summarise yourself in three words. Regardless, they give filmmakers a chance to display their skills in one area without excelling in all others (the short films with witty little story lines that were crappily shot, for instance). Cordelia has abundant talent. Restoration incorporates a wide range of styles. She has picked a subject matter (lust) and a medium (dance) which will best allow her to give the film the sharp, theatrical look she has ably given light to. Having deservedly received last year's AFTRS award for Cinematography of The Year - high praise indeed since good looking films are what they specialise in. Here's hoping it isn't too long before she is behind the lens on a feature film. Who knows, it could even be one of dad's - and he'd be lucky to have her if it was.

Cordelia is Bruce Beresford's daughter... and even though I'm sure she doesn't go around advertising it and she wants to be known as an artist in her own right and all that, let's face it, everyone wants to know if Greg Norman's son can play golf.
What Sample People is trying to say to the world is ultimately as confused as its cardboard characters. It wants to be cutting edge, the modern face of Australian cinema, it wants to be beautiful, ugly, a comedy, a gritty drama, everything. But it ends up not being much of anything at all. The elements which are supposed to shock or impress don’t quite do the job. It’s all too overwrought. “It’s a violent city,” characters keep saying, urging us to believe this tale takes place on “a magic day”. In the meanwhile, here, look at some more shades of ultra-violet and infra-red. And watch out for the slapstick: Whack! Bang! As funny as an iron bar over the head.

Even Sample People’s setting is confused. The background is Sydney’s inner-city drug-infested underground dance scene. But projected on to it are mostly two-dimensional near-cartoon figures that behave like they’ve just walked in off the history pages of The Simpsons, with a blue-light disco than a hardcore modern nightclub.

So thank God for Ben Mendelsohn – his camped-up, mischievous John easily steals the show. Not that the heavily-tattooed Kylie Minogue (Jess, the local gangster’s in-house vixen) doesn’t try her darnedest. But Kylie was probably too busy trying to look sultry in a drug-laced disco way to notice she doesn’t get many lines for a credits -topper [lines of dialogue, that is]. Incidentally, even though they don’t appear on screen together at any point, this is the first time Mendelsohn and Minogue have worked together since The Henderson Kids [Channel 10] and Fame And

Interesting individual recordings [Killey Gaffney doing Spilt Enz’s One Step Ahead and The Mavis’s reviving Jim Keays’ bizarre Boy From The Stars], The soundtrack sounds more suited to a blue-light disco than a hardcore modern nightclub.

Misfortune [ABC] mini-series in 1985. The rest of the ensemble of Sample People is a mismatch of stereotypes. There’s speeders, trippers, wankers, Westies, roughs, dream boys, dream girls. There’s even a local mystic: Phil (played by Ghandi Macintyre), the Indian proprietor of the kebab shop. He throws around proverbs such as: “Decide what to serve and serve it well.” And: “You know, Len, milk is a real mover. The customer will come for the milk but, seeing other products, will also leave with the fizzy pop.” Much like Apu from the Kwik-E-Mart in The Simpsons, no?

Still, some of the actors manage to make something out of not-a-lot. Journeyman actor David Field plays it straight and tough as the baddie TT (although he could have done without his character specifically verbalising the fact that he’s simply a pastiche of every Robert De Niro and Al Pacino gangster that’s beaten him to the big screen). While youngsters Joel Edgerton (Sem) and Paula Arundell (Cleo) are the most natural and believable things in the mash.

In the end, it all comes out feeling a lot like Starstruck [d. Armstrong 1982] despite the producers obviously aiming at Pulp Fiction [d. Tarantino 1994]. If there’s a “Drugs are bad” message in there – if that’s what Sample People is saying – then it sort of gets lost in the “Drugs are cool” images which make up much of the film. Now, discussions about explicit drug-use in cinema are about as boring as a psychedelic-scene-through-the-eyes-of-a-tripper (we get one of those here too, but surely no pusher in the world is going to be sad to see Kylie Minogue with a note jammed [literally] up her nose. Your business doesn’t get that sort of free-advertising every day.

The writers and producers of Sample People obviously had too many influences pushing and pulling at their thoughts while conceptualising this project. Maybe they should have listened to the character that shouts out: “You’re not in LA, bro.” If their idea was to make the audience laugh nervously, sweat as much as the actors (all except a couple of the characters are constantly covered in a slight sheen of sweat for one reason or another), well then, where was the tension? It’s just so bloody obvious so far out how all the story’s subplots would eventually meet up. So you sit there waiting for Sample People to surprise you. And it never does.
"Sample People is a mismatch of stereotypes. There's speeders, trippers, wankers, Westies, roughs, dream boys and dream girls."
Looking for Alibrandi

DIRECTOR
KATE WOODS
CAST
PIA MIRANDA, GRETA SCACCHI, ANTHONY LAPAGLIA, KERRY WALKER, ELENA COTTA, MATTHEW NEWTON, KICK GURRY
PRODUCER
ROBYN KERSHAW
DISTRIBUTOR
ROADSHOW
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
AUSTRALIA

Early in Looking for Alibrandi a character remarks that things are not all quirky and cute. Fortunately this observation could also be applied to the movie itself. So, after a long line of Australian films falling into just that category, the cinema-going public can breathe a sigh of relief...

Alibrandi is the first film from director Kate Woods after a long and distinguished career in television (Simone de Beauvoir’s Babies, Wildside, Janus). Adapted by Melina Marchetta from her own novel, the film tells the story of Josie (Pia Miranda) a young Italian girl growing up in Sydney and dealing with a host of various teen pressures including exams, first love and parental problems - the usual things.

Despite an unpromising, rites-of-passage-by-the-numbers beginning, this is not another Anywhere But Here (d. Wang, 1999). Things really get interesting with the introduction of Josie's teen crush, golden boy, John Barton (Bert's little boy, Matthew Newton, looking for all the world like an Australian Leonardo DiCaprio - must be the hair). Suddenly the film takes us into a very different but welcome terrain and keeps us there throughout.

In around 90 economic minutes, Alibrandi manages to explore a whole range of issues in surprising depth.

And it does so with a refreshing amount of compassion and gentle humour. It also refrains from offering any easy answers, managing to advocate tolerance and compassion without reverting to sickly sentimentality. It will come as no surprise to anyone to learn that this is a school text - as we tread delicately across such minefields as cultural clashes (Italians and Anglo), age clashes (Josie and her grandmother), teen suicide and the trials and tribulations of single motherhood. What prevents the whole thing from sinking into a worthy morass is the quality of the writing and the above average performances.

Pia Miranda delivers a polished performance as Josie in Looking For Alibrandi.

Once one gets over the shock of seeing Greta Scacchi playing the mother of a teenager, it’s possible to enjoy her wonderfully restrained performance. Anthony LaPaglia too has a limited amount of dialogue but manages to communicate a whole wealth of information with just a look. But maybe the older players had to raise their game. With such polished performances from the junior members of the cast (especially Miranda, Newton and the delightfully named Kick Curry), perhaps they were feeling the next generation nibbling at their heels...

MADELEINE SWAIN
See feature on page 22

Me Myself I

DIRECTOR
PIP KARMEL
CAST
RACHEL GRIFFITHS, DAVID ROBERTS, SANDY WINTON, YIEL STONE, SHAUN LOSEBY, TREVOR SULLIVAN
PRODUCER
FABIEN LIRON, CO-PRODUCED BY ANDRENA FINLAY
DISTRIBUTOR
BUENA VISTA INTERNATIONAL
COMPOSER
CHARLIE CHAN
COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
AUSTRALIA
RATING
M

"O God! That one might read the book of fate, and see the revolutions of the times" [Henry IV] or more importantly the outcome of marrying one's childhood sweetheart.

Put simply, Me Myself I is the colonial Peggy-Sue that never got married. Rather, rejecting a premature proposal from a young love, this destiny disrupting protagonist becomes a successful journalist called Pamela who finds herself waking to a very freaky Friday. Adding another twist to the recent spate of fate-films, writer-director Pip Karmel teamed up with producers Andrea Finlay and Gaumont's Fabien Liron to create an existential homage to the 'what if' phenomenon.

Me Myself I is the portrait of a single 30-year-old Cartesian Cogito, but this time split three ways. "I think therefore I am": Pamela Drury, an unhappy journalist who at the age of 30 wishes to die because she is unable to get a man; Pamela Dickson, the multi-skilled mother of three who has a man, a dog and a Jeep Cherokee; and lastly Pamela Drury, the now well adjusted and happy journalist... I think? The identity crisis really starts to gather momentum when Pamela Drury (unhappy journalist) is thrust...
A sturdy imagination with which to suspend disbelief is strongly advised when watching *Me Myself I*.

*Pitch Black*

**DIRECTOR**
DAVID TWOHY

**CAST**
VIN DIESEL, RADHA MITCHELL, COLE HAUSER, KEITH DAVID, LEWIS PITT-GERALD, CLAUDIA BLACK.

**PRODUCER**
TOM ENGLEMAN

**DISTRIBUTOR**
UIP

**COUNTRY OF ORIGIN**
USA/AUSTRALIA

**RATING**
M

**DURATION**
103 MINUTES

> *Pitch Black* comes crashing onto the big screen at a time when serious sci-fi horror is all but dead. While it is easy to stand-out with a semi-decent product (as its nearest current rival *Supernova* apparently is) we’re talking major personal and long-term impact here.

Shot in Coober Pedy and Queensland, director David Twohy sets out to scare into an unexplained parallel universe inhabited by Pamela Dickson (multi-skilled mother) after marrying her childhood sweetheart Robert Dickson (David Roberts).

A sturdy imagination with which to suspend disbelief is strongly advised when watching *Me Myself I*. In addition to why an intelligent and successful young woman would wish to top herself over her marital status, one question that continued to nag throughout this film was, what if Rachel Griffiths had declined the opportunity to play the plural Pamela.

The answer is simple – the film may never have worked. Griffiths’ ordinariness is spectacular; one moment she reminds you of a painful school friend and the next moment, she is long, elegant and sexy.

Best known for her editing credits on *Shine* (AFI award Best Editor), Karmel’s direction of Griffiths’ comic agility is well managed, permitting at once a playful and yet controlled style.

There is one scene involving a diaphragm that should not be missed. Overall, the performances are strong with the supporting cast gallantly attempting to abate the momentary hemorrhages of absurdity erupting from the script.

> *Muggers* is one of those films that starts off reminding you of one film, then swiftly switches to another, and another. Until eventually you find yourself thinking more of the films of audiences and succeeds in the most surprising way. After opening with a skull fuck joke, ([the films’ only concession to humour], the story becomes increasingly grim.

From placing a bunch of stranded space travellers on a planet bathed in total darkness to having male lead Vin Diesel’s eyes surgically enhanced for night vision, brilliant ideas flash through *Pitch Black* like lasers.

One of Twohy’s main achievements is a credible humanist streak. *Pitch Black* is populated with heroes with that self-up and fuck-ups that can’t hero.

Radha Mitchell (*Love and Other Catastrophes, High Art*) is one of the latter. Rather than being unlikeable (and she may have well been if she’d kept an Aussie accent) Mitchell is enigmatic, full of self-doubt and consistently highly believable.

Forget about any other strange planets *Pitch Black*’s unnamed asteroid is the one to visit.

*MICHAEL HELMS*
which it reminds you, than of the film in hand. And that’s its chief problem: an unwillingness to choose a style and stick with it. There’s nothing wrong with being eclectic, but when it’s done through the night streets of Melbourne, is certainly stylish (even if it does smack of The Naked Gun [d. Zucker 1988] but what follows doesn’t live up to this promise. Brad and Gregor (Matt Day and Jason Barry) are a couple of med students, nearing their final exams but finding themselves in all sorts of hot water financially. Their future careers as cigar-smoking, golf-playing, secretary-fondling medical men are under serious threat if they can’t come up with cold hard cash to pay their debts, buy text books and get the local gangster off their backs. So there’s computer hacking to be done. But before we find ourselves marooned in Love and Other Catastrophes (d. Crogan 1996) territory, the film whips out its funny bone (sorry) and delves into the charming world of the illegal organ trade. Despite the pleasantly amoral slant employed by Murphy, it’s here the film falls down. This is the thing about black comedy: it has to be black and even cheeky flicks you’ll see, as appealing as ever, laying on his usual crooked charm, and Barry matches him blow for blow. There is also a lovely sequence where the boys go to town cleaning up their derelict lodgings with no discernible effect. If only the rest of the writing had been this sly.

The young monks are punished for mischief during a puja (ceremony). The young monks are punished for mischief during a puja (ceremony). The young monks are punished for mischief during a puja (ceremony). The young monks are punished for mischief during a puja (ceremony).

There’s no doubt about it – soccer fans are among the most diehard sport fans in the world – they cram the stadiums, paint their faces and even riot upon occasion. Fanaticism reaches a fever pitch at World Cup time. So it’s no surprise to find that someone has had the nous to make a film about it.

What is surprising, however, is that The Cup was made in Bhutan by the country’s first feature filmmaker, Tibetan lama Khyentse Norbu. Khyentse is the incarnation of Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo; a great religious reformer. A man you’d expect more at home studying with the Dalai Lama (which he has) than starring in a film. We all know what a hotbed of vice Hollywood can be. Yet, The Cup is one of the most delightful and even cheeky flicks you’ll see, largely in part to Khyentse’s intelligent story-telling and eye for drama. The premise is fairly simple and, believe it or not, apparently based on a true story. Revealing the oppression of the Chinese government in Tibet, two young Tibetan lads make the hazardous journey across country to a small Tibetan monastery nestled in exile at the foot of the Himalayas. Expecting hallowed halls and dignified chanting the duo are instead thrown into an unexpectedly haphazard environment where soccer slogans adorn the walls and World Cup fever is running high.

The antics stem in most part from one truly obsessed fan, novitiate Orygen (cheeky performance by Jamyang Lodro), whose brazen behaviour and passion for the game soon has everyone in the monastery caught up in the fervour. Everyone except Geko (Orgyen Tobgyal) who wants the boys expelled for their antics. Orygen’s soccer madness peaks when he suggests that the final match be shown in the monastery itself. This time it has gone too far? Will he see the final, where will they find a satellite dish, or for that matter, even a TV? Will Buddha smile upon them?

First time filmmaker, Khyentse has woven a story that reveals as much about the touchstones of Tibetan culture as he does about humanity’s passion for sport. The film was shot entirely on location in a fully functional monastery and cast with monks who had no acting experience, speaking dialogue in English, for scenes which they learned on a day-to-day basis. The Australian contingent, led by director of photography Paul Warren, and editor John Scott ensure the film looks crisp and the Himalayan countryside makes for a beautiful backdrop. The Cup should warm the cockles of even the most jaded filmgoer.

Madeleine Swain

The Cup

DIRECTOR
KHYENTSE NORBU

KEY CAST
JAMYANG LODRO, ORGYEN TOGYAL, NETEN CHOKLING, LAMA CHONJOR.

PRODUCER
MALCOLM WATSON AND RAYMOND STEINER.

DISTRIBUTOR
DENDY FILMS

COUNTRY OF ORIGIN
BHUTAN/AUSTRALIA

DURATION
93 MINS

CINEMA PAPERS.MAY 2000
Rozema really takes Austen to the dark side with the inclusion of a sex scene (at last a Jane Austen film loses its virginity) and strong hints at lesbianism and incest!
The market for film writing is voracious. You’ve barely broken the spine on the latest Conversation With... compendium or a now trendily ubiquitous anecdotal history before the next one craves your attention. This unforgiving environment will treat The Oxford Companion to Australian Film harshly. In another era, it might have been welcomed.

The factual errors in this extensive volume have been well documented by the daily newspapers. They can be fixed but its tone can’t be. The Companion perpetuates the plodding, workmanlike ambition that damns much of this country’s film scholarship and writing. It’s too timid to be great. Pedestrian writing, gutless qualifications and colourless comment litter the text. Nor does it provide context beyond facts, the only reason a book like this should be valuable in our information age.

The volume is also damned by the absence of crowd-pulling, exciting writers, by an absence of vitality, and the inexcusable absence of facts (for instance, no mention of Tropfest under the entry for John Poison).

Brian McFarlane’s introduction hopes for a “lively, readable and scholarly record”. One out of three is not good enough. The British Film Institute has an enviable approach to its industry — more, broader and livelier. Its Modern Classics series is a lively addition to film reading, albeit a pricey one, at $25, for Australian readers.

David M. Lubin’s Titanic is typical. It is a smart dissection of the film, sometimes drolly academic and at other times stridently contentious. Lubin is sharp enough to acknowledge the hype surrounding the film yet he writes accessibly of the pop hit’s visual aesthetics and psychology. He even points, convincingly, to Titanic’s screwball comedy origins. It’s almost enough to excuse James Cameron for his un-ironic ‘king of the world’ exclamation. A sprightly read and I look forward to the BFI’s upcoming series profiling directors. The BFI shouldn’t be concerned about its new, upstart competitor, the British Bloomsbury Movie Guide series. On the strength of author Mick Brown’s analysis of Performance (d. Roeg/ Cammell 1970), Bloomsbury lags way behind.

At first glance, Identifying Hollywood’s Audiences also struggles with format, looking like footnotes in search of a thesis. But it is an intriguing sideways move by the BFI’s publishing arm, from analysis of films as text to analysis of what the audience wants. This collection of essays on film research, particularly its 1930s genesis, is an eye-opener and a marvellous addition to film knowledge.

The BFI’s British Cinema of the 1990s is less successful than Identifying Hollywood’s Audiences. The Brits really know how to celebrate their own films but this collection of essays is wishy-washy. It doesn’t quite know what to say other than ‘anything can happen’. It is introspective and useful only if you see parallels between the Australian and British film industries. Britain’s enormous National Lottery Fund distribution to film funding suggests you shouldn’t see any parallels.

Stanley Kubrick, Director — A Visual Analysis could be useful for a budding director but for other readers it is no more than a listless hagiography. It falls for a common film writing trap by not exercising the clarity or dignity of its subject. Worse, its author Alexander Walker was Kubrick’s friend. This is fandom dressed up as scholarship — as it would need to be to gain full authorisation from Kubrick and stills direct from prints. And if you wade through the sycophantic analysis, all you’re left with are some foggy reproductions and only eight pages of colour. And the epilogue is little more than a ‘My Part in Stanley’s Career’. It defiles what could have been a marvellous book.

Michael Bodey
Fox Studios Australia

Projects past, present and future
• The Matrix, Babe: Pig in the City
• Farscape, Mission Impossible II
• Moulin Rouge
• Star Wars II & III

Two new screening rooms have now been added to the facilities at Fox.
• 50 & 25 seats
• Double head screenings
• PAL & NTSC video replay
• Dolby Stereo, Dolby Digital and DTS replay
• Lucasfilm THX certified

Fox Studios now has a 747 interior set. The set consists of:
† First Class
† Business Class (main)
† Business Class (upper)
† Economy Class
† Flight Deck

The set is pre-lit with Kino Flos, and there are additional props and dressing available. The set is located in a 3,200sq metre (34,400sq ft) warehouse at Homebush Bay Waterfront Estate 30 mins from Fox Studios.

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Australia is increasingly becoming a popular destination for international productions. Fuelled in part by the opening of Fox Studios, this attention has also been generated through a combination of the country’s reputation for a high level of expertise and its spectacularly diverse range of locations. In order to provide an overview of the country’s studios, locations and travel services available Emma Crimmings spoke to just about everyone involved in moving, housing, accommodating, promoting and locating just about anything.
 STUDIOS, LOCATIONS, TRAVEL.

**Studies.** With the attractive bait of Sydney’s Fox Studios Australia (“Fox”) and the Gold Coast’s Warner Roadshow Movie World Studios bringing major productions onto our shores and alerting others in the process, the demand for studio space continues to increase.

→ According to Fox’s communication manager, Victoria Buchan the facility has constant bookings up until later in the year. With Bazmark’s Moulin Rouge booked in until April and the first of Lucasfilm’s Star Wars pictures pushing into ‘hyper-space’ until the Olympics, Fox’s schedule is looking tight. However, according to Buchan there are often gaps in the slated production that can prove particularly advantageous for productions such as the SBS Independent/Australian Film Commission million dollar movie, *La Spagnola*. With Fuhrman’s Moulin Rouge occupying five of the six sound stages *La Spagnola* managed to negotiate a deal with Fox to shoot in the remaining spare stage.

In terms of new developments, Fox has recently opened its construction workshop which, according to Buchan, will free up the sound stages where previously construction had taken place. Other recent features include a 747 plane set. Production Liaison for Fox Studios, James Bramley, enthusiastically details how the aircraft was originally built for Paramount Picture’s Mission Impossible 2, however, since its arrival the plane has already attracted a number of productions including a US movie of the week, Nowhere to Land. Costing $10,000 a day or $30,000 a week productions can access the low flying feature at Homebush Bay Waterfront Estate where it is housed.

Beyond the tinsel on offer at Fox, Sydney also boasts a diverse range of smaller facilities that are currently enjoying the flow-on effect generated by the boost in international productions. Max Studios, located in Alexandria (near Fox Studios) has been enjoying the spill-over from its attractive neighbour with productions such as the ICON Television/Story Entertainment/Columbia TriStar TV production of The Three Stooges using much needed studio space.

Mentmore Studios in Roseberry enjoyed a constant stream of bookings, including feature films such as Red Planet, Birthday Girl and Holy Smoke, despite being damaged by last year’s hailstorm. (However, the damage provided the studio with the opportunity to upgrade and refurbish.) Barcoo Studios, located in Sydney’s northern suburb of Roseville, has two studios.

South Australia’s Hendon Studios recently enjoyed a busy 12 months with Barron Entertainment’s children series Chuck Finn using the space for most of last year. Also left with very little breathing space is Victoria’s Melbourne Film Studios (‘MFS’). Owned by filmmaking team Nadia Tass and David Parker, the MFS has recently undergone extensive renovations following a fire that damaged the site last April. Studio Manager Rasa Zdanius explained once the studio re-opened it was booked until November.

Funding problems has resulted in Studio City, the production complex which was to begin construction in March at Melbourne Docklands, being put on hold. Mark...
Triffit, spokesman for the consortium says discussions are underway to finance the project through private equity. The Docklands Studios has been a much debated and anticipated project which, if and when realised, would become a major force in feature film and television production - consequently increasing Victoria’s market share of total Australian production.

Located within a 45 minute drive south of Brisbane or 15 minute drive from the Gold Coast, the Warner Roadshow Studios continues to enjoy a constant stream of international business. With companies such as Coote/Hayes/UNP Pictures currently shooting the second telemovie in a series of four, space is at a premium. The first telemovie Max Knight: Ultra Spy, finished shooting late last year. The Product is currently shooting while the third, Rubicon is in preproduction, says Lynn Benzie the studio manager. Other productions in the pipeline include Coote/Haye’s series Beast Master and the Disney productions Stepsister From Planet Weird (Television) and Rip Girls (Pictures).

In addition to a wet set feature in studio 5, Warner Roadshow has also constructed an exterior tank on the lot (outside Stage 5), which has been successfully used for Flipper and Village Roadshow’s television mini series 20,000 Leagues Under the Sea.

Apart from the onsite facilities provided at Sydney’s Fox Studios and Warner Roadshow, both sites house tenants who independently lure work from all over the world. Fox Studios boasts industry specialists such as the digital post production house Animal Logic, Spectrum Films editing facility, sound post producers Soundfirm and stunts and pyrotechnics specialists AET.

Warner Roadshow has companies such as special effects and armoury Film FX, model makers The Model Smith, Panavision equipment hirers and visual effects and design specialists Photon.

Subscriptions to Cinema Papers now include a chance to win a $500 M-ONE-11 clothing pack. Only Australian residents are eligible. Entries for the M-ONE-11 clothing pack close 5pm Friday, 14/7/00. The winner will be notified by mail, and published in the October 2000 issue of Cinema Papers. The M-ONE-11 clothing pack will be supplied to suit the winner, i.e. male/female and correct size. Competition open to Australian residents only.
Locations. If it is locations you are after, Australia offers an incomparable diversity of options. Whether you are in search of a fully equipped ground-bound 747, a horizon tank large enough to accommodate Moby Dick or the lunar landscape of the interior, this country has either got it, built it, dug it or filled it. With the global film and television industry generating more than $50 billion income each year for the communities where filming takes place it has naturally become a local priority to encourage and support the constant flow of international productions electing to shoot here.

The organisations established to provide production support and encouragement are a number of state-based film commissions including Cinemedia’s Melbourne Film Office (MFO), the Pacific Film and Television Commission (PFTC), NSW Film and Television Office and the South Australian Film Commission (SAFC). Providing valuable production liaison services to existing international and national productions, these organisations are the best place to begin any preliminary location research.

Having recently attended the Association of Film Commissioners International (AFCI) Locations 2000 held in Los Angeles in February 2000, the MFO’s Director, Louisa Coppel explains that around the world there are about 300 film commissions, most of which are members of the AFCI. The AFCI is the official association of government film contacts worldwide. In Australia there are organisations fulfilling these functions in Queensland, Victoria, New South Wales, and South Australia. Also indicating a desire to have their locations promoted, the state governments in Tasmania, Western Australia and Northern Territory have all joined AusFILM, a national consisting of local public and private sector organisations with business interests in the expansion of film and TV production in Australia.

According to Coppel, MFO’s primary task is to attract film and television production to Victoria, thereby providing work to members of the industry and export film dollars to the state. In Victoria productions can access anything from subtropical rainforest to snow drenched mountains... and everything in between. “We also work with our industry here, and authorities such as the police, state government and councils, to ensure that filming works in the state.” Organisations such as the MFO, SAFC and PFTC provide a broad range of location and information services including location advice; assistance and liaison; initial location surveys; access to location library; access to publicly owned locations; web sites and a local production directory.

Coppel also suggests that it is important to highlight that organisations such as the MFO don’t try to take the place of the industry professionals whose role it is to provide those specific services. “Once a project has been wooed we expect the production company to employ location managers, a production team. However, if there are difficulties at any time or the project’s producers want introductions to Victorian creative and technical people, we certainly offer all the help we can. Part of the task of attracting people to town is to ensure that they have the opportunity to access as many of the services (such as post production, facilities etc) and people as possible to make the best choice of who they’ll work with, and to give our industry the best chance to ‘sell themselves.’”

Also in LA promoting their unique locations to location managers, producers and directors from all over the world was Queensland’s Pacific Film and Television Commission. PFTC’s chief executive officer, Robin James says, “Through the Queensland Government’s range of industry incentives, the PFTC aims to maximise the value of film, television and commercial production in Queensland and to assist in the further development of infrastructure to service such production.” The industry incentives offered by the PFTC to productions include payroll tax rebates, Queensland crew wage rebates, no charge fire and police services and advice and assistance on Queensland’s diverse locations.

“Added to all these are a perfect climate and a breathtaking variety of spectacular locations, many of which are accessible within 60 minutes of an international airport – there are coral reefs and tropical beaches, mountains, waterfalls, rainforests, rivers, jungles and deserts, cityscapes and towns, freeways and fields,” continues James. According to PFTC marketing manager Casey O’Hare, the commission offers filmmakers in Queensland professional advice and assistance at every stage of production, from initial inquiry through to completion of the project.
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Travel. What would a production be without the exotic and spectacularly remote location that must house a cast and crew of no less than a thousand and offers no accommodation within a 700km radius. Add to this a belligerent custom official who is in no rush with the rushes, and a second unit running way behind schedule? The answer is simple: an interesting challenge for one of Australia’s growing film travel, freight and logistic companies.

For any visiting productions, travel, transport, freight and accommodation are crucial factors in the overall planning. Australia is host to some of the world’s most competitive and experienced production travel and freight companies. Those on offer range from companies geared toward servicing multinational mega-shoots such as industry rivals, Stage and Screen Travel and Freight Services and Showfilm Services Australia, to smaller companies catering to the more independent market, such as TRAVELTOO.

Independently owned and Sydney based, TRAVELTOO’s general manager Greg Helmers suggests that the company owes its success to the highly personalised and individual service it provides. Helmers explains how accounts are handled by one consultant only. “We don’t just ‘leave you in the air’.” The consultant assigned to the account is dedicated to maintaining close communication in order to meet a production’s every requirement and negate every concern. Covering all production travel and accommodation needs (not freight), TRAVELTOO has worked with films such as: Holy Smoke, The Thin Red Line, Shine, Heartbreak High, Paradise Road, Birthday Girl and the soon to be completed Walk The Talk.

When examining the services and reputation presented by local industry competitors Stage and Screen and Showfilm, it is difficult to identify major differences. According to Showfilm’s national travel manager Ingrid Cruse, the fundamental difference between the two companies is that Stage and Screen is a Qantas preferred agency while Showfilm is part of the Ansett and the Star Alliance group. Showfilm, a wholly owned subsidiary of Ansett Australia Holdings, has recently established a network of film dedicated travel and freight offices at Fox Studios in Sydney, Warner Roadshow Studios on the Gold Coast and in Los Angeles. According to Cruse, Showfilm knows no bounds. Warner Roadshow’s Red Planet was one of the company’s major clients last year. A huge project involving multiple locations, Cruse recalls how the film went into preproduction and had six weeks before the first shoot was due to start in Iceland. “Approximately two weeks into the shoot the producers [without pushing back dates] pulled Iceland and decided to go into Jordan in the Middle East instead. In a period of four weeks we had to pull everything that had been put in place out of Iceland, resign deals with the airlines, find accommodation and get everyone into the Middle East.” The entire production was in the Middle East for a five week shoot followed by two days in Sydney and then to the modestly equipped Coober Pedy for another five-week shoot.

With the cast and crew virtually outnumbering the population of the remote outback town, finding accommodation was far from a simple exercise. Cruse recalls how she herself had to visit the town a number of weeks beforehand in order to solve the accommodation crisis. “I put advertisements in the local paper to find private accommodation. We had the local’s private homes rented for the crews. It was mad.” According to Cruse the project may have been one of their biggest – providing international air, domestic air, cars, accommodation, transfers, in fact anything you can think of to do with movement they did it. Currently servicing the NRL and national Cricket Board accounts, Showfilm had just scored part of the Star Wars contract.

Having recently been bought by Flight Centre, Stage and Screen is by no means a stranger to remote locations either. Providing the travel and freight for Bill Bennett’s In A Savage Land, the company had to negotiate fictional airport timetables with tropical realities. “You don’t get much more out of the way than the Trojan Islands... now that was an interesting project for all those concerned,” reminisces Tony Miles, manager of Stage and Screen.

In addition to portions of the major production pies, Stage and Screen enjoy a solid slice of the Victorian film and television market. Some of the productions serviced by the company include: The Matrix, Mission Impossible 2, Moulin Rouge, Babe 2, Jacky Chan’s Mr Nice Guy, the TV mini-series On The Beach, Noah’s Ark, Moby Dick, and Journey to the Centre of the Earth, Halifax, and Good Guys Bad Guys.

In conclusion, it is important to highlight that the companies mentioned above are by no means the only film travel, locations and studio service providers available. A more comprehensive coverage of companies offering services in this area can be gained from the Production Book, Encore Directory or state based film commissions such as those mentioned under locations.
STAR WARS EPISODE II - THE RISE IN Production

Production Crew

Director: George Lucas
Producers: Rick McCallum, Gary Kurtz, Kathleen Kennedy, Scott Rudin
Production Design: John Musker, Kenny Ortega

Synopsis

Darth Sidious, takes over the universe. The Clone Wars. The Jedi Knights struggle to defend the galaxy from the forces of evil. Meanwhile, Anakin Skywalker falls in love with Queen Amidala but begins to succumb to the Dark Side of the Force.

OUTBACK LEGEND

Outback Legend: Production Credits

Producers: Bill Marriott, Troy Dann
Director: Michael McDonnell, Troy Dann
Synopsis

A helicopter pilot working in Sydney returns home to Alice Springs to help his wife with the birth of their twins. But he is about to be swept away from them by unscrupulous activities.

SECOND DRILL

Verdict Pictures: Production Period: From May 2000

Principal Credits

Executive Producers: Carlos Scher, John Morrow, James Poadalis
Producer: Cameron James Miller
Director: Malcolm King
Production Designer: George Mentis
DOP: Don McAlpine

Synopsis

A young man casts aside the shackles of his middle class society to become the greatest dancer of all time - the God of Dance.

THE BANK

Arent & Pateman Ltd Production Period: From July 24 Principal Credits

Director: Gregory Connolly
Producers: John Maynard, Val Shaeffer
Screenplay: Robert Connolly
Director of Photography: Tristan Milan
Production Designer: Luigi Ritterino
Editor: Nick Meyers
Sound Designer: Sam Petty
Casting: Mulliners
Storyboard Artist: Tim Morris
Cast: David Wenham

Synopsis

A street wise Maori cop and a sophisticated Sydney cop team up to catch a internacional drug dealer who is likely in this town. But an unusual friendship begins to develop.

CRAB RACE

Cedar Enterprises Pty Ltd

Principal Credits

Director: John Meagher
Producers: John Meagher, Margie Wentworth
Production Designer: John Meagher
Director of photography: Ray Hennan
Executive Producer: Ben Curry
Editor: Barry Leffler C/F
Composer: Colin Black
Sound recordist: Paul Kalinski

Planning and Development

Script editor: Margie Wentworth & David Wenham
Casting: Bedford & Pearce
Consulting cast: Mathew Nix C/F - Bedford & Pearce

Synopsis

A young man cast aside the shackles of his middle class society to become the greatest dancer of all time - the God of Dance.

IN Production
ANIMAL X - SERIES 2

Series Documentary

Documentaries

Principal Credits

Executive Producer: Mike Searle, Jennifer Wilson
Producers: Mike Searle, Nigel Swain, Lindsey Wilson, Malani Ambrose, Linda Searle, Caroline Bertram

Synopsis

As with series one, ANIMAL X - SERIES 2 investigates animal stories from around the world. From ghostly phenomena to landknots and mysterious sightings to unknown creatures.

33 x 30 minutes

Produced in association with

AUSTRALIANS AT WAR SERIES生产的

Beyond Productions Pty Ltd in association with Mullion Creek Productions.

Supervising Producer: Stephen Appleby
Executive Producers: Mike Searle, Steve Best, Tim Clark
riters: Geoff Burton, David Goldie, Stephen Appleby

EDITOR'S TIPS ON THE BEST LATE TIE: THE FORGOTTEN SPECIES

Show Director: Sam McDonaugh, Linda Searle
Executive Producer: Mike Searle

Synopsis

The story of a famous sporting cup in the world and the longest tennis match in history, the Davis Cup, takes a dramatic turn when the Commonwealth of Australia wins the Cup. The story of a sporting match and the game has never been a richer persons’ sport, but for everyone, the story program explores the symbiotic relationship between Australian and the world of famous sporting cups in the world.

55 minutes

Produced in association with

THE DIPLOMAT

Network: SBS (UK)
Executive Producer: Sam McDonaugh
Director: Tom Zubrycki
Producers: Gordon Woman, Sally Browning
Principal Photography: Shoot period: 3/11/1999

Synopsis

The Diplomat documents the final year of a great statesman and the last days of the President of the United States. The Diplomat tells the story of the President through the eyes of the world leaders, offering a unique and timely look at a time of uncertainty and change.

60 minutes

Produced in association with

TEN MILLION WILDLANDS

Network: ABC
Executive Producer: Sam McDonaugh
Producer: Tim Zubrycki
Principal Photography: Shoot period: 7/2/2000

Synopsis

What is the secret world of the desert? Join the world-renowned photographer and artist, Tim Flannery, as he explores the hidden lives of Australia’s unique wildlife. A tale of courage, cunning and strategy.

8 x 22 minute Documentary

DISTRIBUTION: Great Southern
Director: Tim Flannery

Production Manager: Sally Browning

120 minutes

Produced in association with

THE COUNCIL OF THE ANCIENTS

Network: ABC
Executive Producer: Sam McDonaugh
Producer: Tim Zubrycki
Principal Photography: Shoot period: 3/11/1999

Synopsis

This is an international documentary that has produced such international stars as Mel Gibson, Judy Davis and Colin Review.

GUNS UNDER THEIR BUNS

Network: ABC
Executive Producer: Sally Browning

Production Manager: Tim Zubrycki

Director: Tim Zubrycki

Production Manager: Sally Browning

30 minutes

Produced in association with

YOVNEE

25 x 30 minute Documentary

Network: ABC
Executive Producer: Sally Browning

Production Manager: Tim Zubrycki

Director/Writer: Barbara Ochabsky

Synopsis

This documentary is a behind-the-scenes look at the life of Australia’s best-known international star. It centres on how, having already achieved so much, Yovonne Kenny maintains it, particularly in the face of increasing pressures in the arts.

55 minutes
One of Australia's most established distributors of arthouse films. Currently distributing *The Dinner Game* (Le Diner De Cons) and *Comedian Harmonists*. New titles for late 2000 include *Nijinsky* (Paul Cox) and *No Ball Players Here* (Monique Schwarz).

IN CANNES: Gray D’Albion Hotel - May 11-21

*Natalie Miller* (Executive Director)  *Shaun Miller* (Distribution Manager)
## The Oscar Contenders

The gurus rate recent releases.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie</th>
<th>Sandra Hall</th>
<th>Vicky Roach</th>
<th>Julia Rigg</th>
<th>Tom Ryan</th>
<th>Mark Naglazas</th>
<th>Sacha Moilitoris</th>
<th>Adrian Martin</th>
<th>Megan Spencer</th>
<th>Andee Paviour</th>
<th>Madeleine Swain</th>
<th>David Strallon</th>
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Our review gurus have rated a selection of the latest releases on a scale of 0 to 10, the latter being the optimum rating - a dot means not seen.
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