

www.fti.asn.au

ftineWS

VOL. 13, NO. 2 Sep 2009



Life of the Town
Football Confidential

WBMC
Local & General

Shoot the Piano Player
Making music videos

COVER:
"D.I.L." by the Voltaire Twins,
directed by Kenta McGrath

PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF THE VOLTAIRE TWINS

DEADLINES

Short courses

fti.asn.au/learn/courses

Make a Sci-Fi Film

28 September – 2 October

This one-week workshop focuses on basic camera and editing skills through the creation of a science fiction short film. Participants will also be introduced to scriptwriting, acting, special effects and sound effects.

Filmmaking Fundamentals: Lighting for Film & Television

3 – 4 October

Explore lighting techniques and find out ways to tell a story with lighting. Through this workshop, participants will learn basic lighting principles through demonstration, discussion and practical shooting exercises.

Creating Comics, 5 October

Learn to design and draw characters and create a short comic strip in FTI's professional animation studio. For participants aged 12-16.

Stop Motion Animation, 7 October

Create characters using everyday objects and plasticine, and animate them in a short stop motion sequence with digital cameras and editing software. For participants aged 12-16.

Flash Animation Workshop

9 October

Create and animate 2D characters using popular animation program Flash CS3. For participants aged 12-16.

The Digital Camera Challenge

21 October

FTI gives several filmmakers each a different model of digital camera and

sends them out to shoot some challenging content. View the results and hear a discussion about the best ways to shoot digitally.

Filmmaking Fundamentals: Sound Production Recording

24 – 25 October

Learn professional techniques used to record high-quality sound on location – how to use different microphones; boom pole techniques; troubleshooting when recording audio; and what sounds are required for post production, such as music and effects.

Filmmaking Fundamentals: Scriptwriting & Storytelling

7, 14, 21, 28 November

This intensive course is an introduction to the basic principles of writing short drama scripts. Over four sessions, participants write 3 – 5 minute scripts and explore character development, point-of-view, plot and the script editing process.

The Cross-Platform Challenge

18, 25 November; 2, 9 December

Hear about some of the most groundbreaking productions occurring in the creative and commercial worlds and then make a low-budget cross-platform production shared on mobile technology, social networking, online video and GPS technology.

Filmmaking Fundamentals: Camera Skills

5 – 6 December

Learn the functions of a digital video camera, basic lighting set-ups, cinematography principles, and tripod and handheld techniques. Participants complete practical exercises and gain an understanding of visual language and storytelling.

Project funding

fti.asn.au/make/fund

OOMPFI!

Applications close 4pm, 24 September

The One-Off Members Production Fund – affectionately known as OOMPFI! – provides the successful applicant with a budget of \$5,000 cash and \$5,000 in-kind support to make a short drama, animation or documentary production.

50/50

Applications accepted year-round

50/50 provides members up to 50% off the price of equipment and facilities at FTI. The scheme aims to encourage greater local production in WA.

Screen Culture

fti.asn.au/watch/culture

Audience Development Fund

**Applications close 4pm,
Friday 30 October**

Open to one-off projects that have the potential to grow into annual events. Any project that promotes screen product in a critical context, enhances community participation or addresses screen policy issues and developments is eligible.

Screen Events Assistance

**Applications close 30 September;
27 November**

FTI provides the cinema free of charge for premieres of FTI-funded short films or WA content. The cinema is also provided at a discounted rate for events that further the development, promotion and appreciation of WA screen.



**Prue and Shane never lose.
Time to crash their little world.**

FTI Quiz 2009
Film • Television • Pop Culture

The Italian Club • Sunday 22 November
Stay tuned for further details

contents



THE FILM & TELEVISION INSTITUTE (WA) INC.

92 Adelaide St, Fremantle, WA 6160

Tel: (08) 9431 6700 Fax: (08) 9335 1283

email: fti@fti.asn.au website: www.fti.asn.au

BOARD

Lisa Bradock, Chair; Marjolein Towler, Rozi Aziz, Jeremy Emms, Cassie Rowe, David Smith, Graeme Sward, James Turnbull

STAFF

Graeme Sward, Chief Executive Officer
Murray Reynish, General Manager Services
Glen Adams, Facilities Officer
Anomie, Communications Officer
Daniel Balint, Making Movies Roadshow Coordinator
Jos Gibson, Finance Officer
Di Coleman, Facilities Manager
Michael Ellis, Marketing Manager
Yvette Coyne, Production Support Manager
Nat Eaton, Production Support Officer
Fern Nicholson, Training Registrar
Noah Norton, Training Facilitator
Ebbie Williams, Training Assistant
Jeremy Nottle, Technology & Systems Manager
Peter Gurbiel, Facilities Officer
Liz Sideris, Screen Events Manager
Helen Vidovich, Receptionist/Administrator
Phil Bebb, Professional Dev't & Training Mgr
Mandy Corunna,
Indigenous Community Stories Coordinator

FTI NEWS

Graeme Sward, Editor-in-Chief;
Phil Jeng Kane, Editor;
Terrence Kane, Design & Sub-editing;
Michael Ellis, Advertising & Marketing

FTI News is published three times a year. Contributions are welcome. While all care will be taken with submitted material, no liability will be accepted for any loss.

NOTICE: The views and opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect those held by the Board, management or staff of The Film & Television Institute (WA) Inc.

FTI gratefully acknowledges the financial assistance of Screen Australia, ScreenWest and Lotterywest



SCREEN AUSTRALIA



FTI NEWS is in your extended network, tweeting a Digg on FriendFeed about your 'blog post on Facebook.

LIFE OF THE TOWN 4
Playing the game in a small town

PRODUCTION SUPPORT 6
Funds, festivals and awards

DEADLY LAUNCH 7
Number 4 hits the screen

SHOOT THE PIANO PLAYER 8
Making music look good

WBMC 11
Rising star

WASA NEWS 15
New deadlines for the Screen Awards



Join the FTI!
Sign up today at fti.asn.au



Life of the Town

We interviewed filmmaker PAUL ROBERTS about *Life of the Town* – his new series about life, football and everything else in the small South-West town of Ongerup.

I have always been interested in the sociology of sport and have made other films in that area. I've been interested in AFL as a rite of passage for young people and a point of accomplishment for indigenous people and as a unique game in itself.

It's underrated as a game by people who watch soccer and have the temerity to call it football. To play it well requires wonderful skills and esoteric teamwork – and I love it.

The subject came about this way: small towns in Australia are under threat. Drought has affected commodity prices. These economic changes have led to the depopulation of the country. Australians are city dwellers by and large, but the Australian Myth is rural. Contemporary Australia is highly urbanised – the reality is that most of us don't know how to live in a small community and I think we should.

I had this as my basic idea and took

various proposals to ABC and SBS based on different country towns and they were all roundly rejected. So I took the idea to NITV [the new National Indigenous TV network] and they proposed something bigger. They wanted a series that concentrated on a single town.

The way I found that town was through a third party. I have a very close friend, Les Eades, who lives in Narrogin. He was the associate producer of one of the films I did on Indigenous sportsmen, *Black Magic*. I rang him up and I told him that I had financial interest in another program that I was making in the South-West. I asked him what town would be good to focus on. He said Ongerup.

Why? "Go and find out", he said. Les is a very dear friend, a rare man, a Nyoongar man, and when I go down south I always stop in Narrogin. I never tell him I'm coming but he always knows. He makes the best kangaroo stew in the Great Southern. He always has a pot of the stew ready. I knock at the door and he says, "You're late." True story.

The series was always going to be a character-driven longer piece. That was the plan. How does a tiny little town of 250 people, who believe that if the footy team folds, the town will die – how do they work that out?

That threat is always there. The football or the netball team is always looking for

sponsorship and this is the case whether you're in Ongerup, WA, or Clare, South Australia, or Mudgee or Deniliquin. Wherever; you'll find this – a struggle to maintain the sporting clubs...

You'll see towns where the football club has shut down or amalgamated with a bigger town and there's a lot of pain about that. Ongerup have maintained a team, but in for the last twenty years, their population has halved. People have considered amalgamating the team with Borden's.

Because the show was commissioned by NITV, it was important for some of the characters to be Indigenous. The thing is that there are no longer any Indigenous families living in Ongerup. People were moved out of the town – generally the Boultons, the Pennys and the Woods – they were moved out from the 1970s as part of government policy. They were moved on to bigger towns...

Ongerup, I found out, has always had a reputation as a harmonious town in terms of race relations and in terms of class structure – so there's a feeling in the town that no-one is more important than anyone else. People are at pains to point this out – tolerance is what they believe in and what they practice.

So the Nyoongar people you talk to, who now live in other towns like Katanning and Gnowangerup, have nothing but positive stories to tell about the local Wadjallas...

For the last four years, the Ongerup coach has been Nyoongar. Previously, Robbie Minter took the team to the Grand Final in 2007. Now the coach is Chris Penny, who is the oldest player for Ongerup. He's a fantastic footballer. He and his brothers play for Ongerup because their father did.

Our shoots took us from the third game to the last game. We covered the ups



and downs of the team through a whole season. We covered all the games because we needed to see each one and have the alternative dramas behind each game. The football club is a metaphor for the survival of the town. We shot in ten blocks, varying from three days to blocks of ten days. Because it's a character-driven series, each episode is about one or two characters. And some of the episodes are founded on a single character.

Brendan Deering is the heart and soul of the club, a multiple fairest-and-best winner. He's now in his 50s. He is, in a sense, the life of the town of Ongerup. So we built an episode around him.

Football, in a way, is not what this is about. My job was to get into the lives of the people, the families, the players, their wives, children. It's what I try to do every time. I try – through interviewing technique and what I hope is empathy – to explore what makes people tick. And to explore how people work together.

The great creative pleasure of this series was that we were permitted to do longitudinal storytelling. It's quite rare in Australia. Indie docs are usually commissioned because there are rarely budgets for longitudinal storytelling to actually track a community or person over a long period of time. We had the opportunity to do this here and it was a wonderful experience for me.

What we found when we had a premiere screening down in Ongerup is that

people were just rapt in what we'd done. They were over the moon and that indicated to me that I had underestimated how worried they would be about how they would be portrayed. One bloke said, "I thought you would make us look like idiots." I felt humbled by that. I really think the way those people conduct their lives – the way they encourage dialogue between Nyoongars and Wadjallas – is awesome. I think they are living what is a myth in a city. They are not glued to their computers. They say hello to one another and they greet one another. They celebrate together. I think that is incredibly worth portraying.

I think this is a really important production in terms of Australian independent documentary. Increasingly, public broadcasters have commissioned works that are "top down". They operate on the corporate model and they are dominated by managers and marketers rather than filmmakers.

We got a very positive reaction from NITV commissioning editor Kelrick Martin – he's a filmmaker himself. He has a wonderful eye for storytelling on film. His feedback has been positive and also extremely perceptive...



The series is narrated by Dale Kickett [above], an ex-Fremantle Dockers fairest-and-best player. He's done a terrific job. The DOP was Anthony Hanson. Most of the toil on a series like this goes into post-production. Regg Skwarko and Nic Dunlop have edited the show – a massive job, looking at 90 hours of material and whittling it down to thirteen half-hour episodes. Graeme Sward has been staunch as EP. The writing, directing and producing was done by me, except for some of the directing, which was the work of Brett Cullen.



***Life of the Town* airs on NITV from September 6 for 13 episodes.**

Going to Town on a Budget

Life of the Town is a series made on a shoestring. FTI's Graeme Sward is very proud of the results. "It's fantastic to see how much is achievable even on an ultra-low budget," he said. He added that the production was another success for FTI's Excalibur Productions. "It is connected to but remains a separate entity from FTI," he said. "Its broad objective has been to offer independent filmmakers a company structure to work under while maintaining their independence."

ScreenWest has made funding available for WA productions for NITV. They have invested in *Life of the Town*. Screenwest's Indigenous Project Officer Debra Miller sees the story about the struggle of small towns as a common one across the country, but said it was rare to see a WA perspective on this national problem. "ScreenWest supports regional stories – the fact this one focuses on the South-West is great," she said.

NITV Commissioning editor Kelrick Martin remembers suggesting that the original idea for a one- or two-parter be extended to a full thirteen half-hours. "We wanted to see more South-West Nyoongar culture represented on a national platform," he said. "It's not a specifically indigenous series and yet it deals with reconciliation and partnership between indigenous and non-indigenous communities." ●

FTI-funded films fly

A NUMBER of FTI-funded films have travelled well in the last few months. FTI members particularly and West Australians in general will be happy to see the product and talent of the state being displayed interstate and internationally.

The first of the HYPERLINK films, funded by ScreenWest/FTI, is *Water* (d. Corrie Jones, p. Sarah Shaw). It has received an AFI Nomination for Best Short Fiction Film and is part of the Melbourne International Film Festival's Accelerator program.

The film was also shown at the Sydney Film Festival in June. Production Support Manager Yvette Coyne was there and reported the buzz of seeing the film with an audience who were completely fresh to it. Coyne said that there were a good ten seconds of silence at the end of the film, followed by a huge round of applause.

The film screened at Dendy Opera Quays, as did Britt Arthur's *My Uncle Bluey*. This LINK-funded short documentary (d. B. Arthur, p. James Grandison) also represented WA at the Sydney Film Festival. The film has been nominated for an ATOM award – Best Short Documentary in the General Industry section, and is also a nominee for Best Achievement in Directing for Short Film at the 2009 Australian Director's Guild Awards.

Yvette Coyne believes there is a real level of initiative shown by many of the producers of the funded FTI films. She cites examples like Tenille Kennedy negotiating a distribution deal for the three shorts she has produced through FTI-run schemes (*Caravan*, *Before Closing*, *Dogs Run Loose Around Here*) as an example of this. LINK film *Legacy* (d. Grant Sputore, p. Poppy Dowle, David Smith) is yet another. It has screened at the Palm Springs Short Film Festival, the Cambridge Film Festival and the Perth International Arts Festival, among others.

Some of the other films that have been made through FTI-run schemes and have won awards or journeyed on the festival circuit nationally and internationally:



ABOVE: Director Corrie Jones in Sydney, at the premiere of his HYPERLINK film *Water*

LINK

Tinglewood

(d. Alex von Hoffman, p. Antony Webb)

- 22nd Annual WA Screen Awards 2009 Winners:
 - Best Visual Effects – Wil Manning
 - Best Sound – Ben Beverley
 - Young Filmmaker of the Year – Antony Webb
- Nominated ATOM Awards - Best Short Production, General Industry section
- Selected for CinéfestOZ screenings
- Selected for Get Your Shorts On! Revelation Film Festival
- Selected for Horror UK Film Festival

The Water Was Dark And Went Forever Down

(d. Miranda Edmonson, p. Kate Beverly)

- Rhode Island International Film Festival
- International Film Festival of Ireland
- South African International Film Festival

OOMPFF

Dogs Run Loose Around Here

(d. Michael Hoath, p. Tenille Kennedy)

- Sydney Underground Film Festival 2008
- Bondi Film Festival
- Show Me Shorts Film Festival (NZ)
- Reel Life Short Film Festival [winner of Best Screenplay]
- 7th Angry Film Festival in Melbourne, 2009
- 2009 Flickerfest International Short Film Festival
- St Kilda 2009

RAW NERVE

Victims

(d. Julia Negow, p. Gregg Johnson)

- Newtown Flicks
- Get Your Shorts On! Revelation Film Festival
- San Francisco Short Film Festival
- Rottneest Film Festival

Recently funded

There are a number of competitive funds available at FTI. March to September is "funding season" but there's no time like the present to start honing that documentary, drama or animation script to a fine edge. Some people who did just that have their projects listed here:

RAW NERVE

- *Loves Labors* (drama) – p. Megan Riley, d. Penny Bedford
- *Trash Out* (doco) – p. Phillip Walker & Orellie Tyler, d. Phillip Walker
- *R.I.P. CUBs* (doco) – p. & d. Jules Duncan
- *Crows Feet* (drama) – w. & d. Megan Pilankis
- *I Will Not Be Outbid* (doco) – p. Mel Judkins, d. Tasha Stephenson

OOMPF – One Off Members Production Fund

– Round 1

Projects in Pre-Production:

- *Because You Smell* (comedy)
p. Ethan Marrel, d. Julia Ngeow
- *Goodbye Cruel World* (drama)
p. Jonathan Miller, d. Adrian McFarlane

LINK – Round 1

- *Nick's Fight* (doco)
p. & d. Josh Lee
- *It's Just Gary* (drama)
p. Kate Bailey,
w. & d. Vincenzo Perella & Dan Osborne

NICK SHORTS

- *The Nerds!* (working title)
p. David Downie, w. & d. Todd Millias
- *StepMonster*
p. Kate Rothschild, d. Tim Beeson
- *My Extraordinary Little Sister*
w. & p. Kate Vyvyan, d. Tim Beeson
- *The Paper Tale*
w. & d. Sohan Ariel Hayes
- *James Blonde*
p. Bridget Curran,
w. & d. Jesse Emmerson & Gaeton Raspanti
- *Backstage*
p. Jacob Fjord, d. Pierce Davison



Deadly Launch

ON THE NIGHT of August 11, over 200 guests joined filmmakers from Roebourne, Broome, Margaret River, Perth and Fremantle at the Maritime Museum, for a sneak preview of ABC's **Deadly Yarns** short films which screen nationally as part of the ABC TV's *Message Stick* program on Sunday 6 and 13 September.

The five films – by emerging Indigenous directors, writers, actors and producers from Western Australia – make up the fourth instalment of the *Deadly Yarns* series, and were well received by the audience. The *Deadly Yarns* development program provides first-time filmmakers an opportunity to learn their craft with advice and assistance provided by seasoned industry professionals.

Minister for Culture and the Arts, John Day, has praised the *Deadly Yarns* initiative, which is the result of a joint partnership between ABC TV, ScreenWest and FTI.

"*Deadly Yarns* films have been applauded by the wider community through screenings at national and international film festivals including the Perth International Film Festival in 2008 and 2009. It is a source of great pride for the Western Australian Government to be supporting this valuable program. We're particularly proud that this year four out of five films are regional stories," the Minister said.

This year's crop of *Deadly Yarns* is an eclectic collection of stories, including:

- *Culture Clash* – A comedy about a father's attempt to rescue his son from a possessed gaming console (filmed in Perth).
- *Mabuji* – The story of a fallen horse musterer who re-appears at every horse mustering time on the stations (filmed in Roebourne).
- *George and the Ngurrungua* – A story by Bunaba elder George Brooking and his strange encounter with a peculiar animal (filmed near Fitzroy Crossing).
- *Music Men* – A documentary on a much loved musical dynasty from Port Hedland (filmed in Port Hedland).
- *My Nan and the Yandi* – During Australia's longest strike, the ten-year 1946 Pilbara strike, it was the humble practice of "Yandying" that enabled hundreds of Pilbara men and women and children to survive (filmed in Marble Bar).

ScreenWest CEO Ian Booth also announced that Index, a new short film initiative funded by ScreenWest and Screen Australia and managed by FTI, is open for applications. Index is designed as the next stepping stone scheme for Indigenous filmmakers who have completed at least one or more *Deadly Yarns*, independent, or Screen Australia equivalent film. ●



Shoot the Piano

How does the West Australian music video scene work? We talked to the people who make the images that go with the music. ANOMIE reports.

FOR ME, this article started with the Art of the Music Video panel as part of Revelation Perth International Film Festival in 2007 when Perth filmmakers, musicians and academics debated the place of the music video in experimental film and its influence on features. That's when I began to see the value of the music video as a development of the filmmaker's art.

Then, during the WAMi Festival 2009, FTI hosted the Future of the Music Video panel, where academic Michael Cunningham and local filmmaker Grant Sputore of The Penguin Empire covered the marketing and production issues involved in getting a music video seen. My interest deepened.

I spoke to seven local music video film makers and I realised that this career pathway is not only legitimate and proven,

but also one that allows for individual differences, tastes and skills in the developing artist.

There are mavericks, outsiders and rebels as well as some business-creatives represented in this group. Mostly their development has been organic, intuitive and random as dictated by creativity, but also there's been the pragmatics of the medium that have assisted these filmmakers. As you might expect, they all have a love of music and the sonic world.

This article represents the diversity of views grouped into general headings in the hope that a rounded and detailed picture of the music video emerges direct from the mouths of the people making the pictures.

Opinions from: **Michael Cunningham, Steven Hughes, John Mcliver,**

Kenta McGrath, Steve McCallum, Mat de Koning, Noah Norton, Sam Price and Grant Sputore.

Marketing and Promotion

Music videos started life as short promotional films for songs on the radio. They were considered as having no intrinsic artistic merit. Formerly, television was the primary platform for the music video, but the Internet has changed that.

Academic Michael Cunningham cites the OK Go music video (YouTube – 47,528,284 views, uploaded 31 July 2006) as an example of what can happen if a video goes viral. Viewers interacted with the video by making their own mash-ups and the song was played during the breaks at the AFL,



Player

ABOVE, LEFT TO RIGHT: Filmmaker Steve McCallum; John Macliver from Cut & Paste; Tegan from the Voltaire Twins; "Oh Brother" by Eleventh He Reaches London, a Penguin Empire shoot directed by Sam Price

which created an income for the musicians through publishing rights.

MACLIVER: The aim is that, by the time the music video is released, people will actively search for the clip because they've seen references pop up randomly on different social networking sites. The first action is to ensure that the music video is on the band's website, MySpace or Facebook pages because anyone who's a fan of the band will check updates. If a band has a new album coming out, people check for information.

GRANT SPATORE: Bands need to organise video content of any form, such as a video blog of the band on tour or behind-the-scenes of the music video, uploaded to the site to keep it active. The video content may have low production values, but the musicians are still selling an image and identity and video content should be consistent to this image, with bands staying "in character". Funny and different are key characteristics of internet content that goes viral, but knowing your market and knowing

your product is the key.

JOHN MACLIVER: The main narrative behind the Harlequin League's "All Your Wars Are Won" video was a backyard arm-wrestling championship. To get people aware of the music video, we interviewed each of the fictional competitors and posted these interviews on Facebook and MySpace. ("Gorilla Allen", YouTube - 213 views, uploaded 7 April 2009)

GRANT SPATORE: You are looking to create a music video that will be watched. Your video is going to be viewed online, and this has implications for how it will be watched. Online, videos can be connected so that a series can be watched in sequence. This is vastly different to music programs on television that are unlikely to program a music director's body of work. The Penguin Empire's Downsyde music videos, "Fortune and Fame" (YouTube - 25,429 views, uploaded 31 August 2008) and "Lifespeed" (YouTube - 1673 views, uploaded 12 April 2009), work as a series.

STEVEN HUGHES: Videos are short, snappy and easy to digest and can show a range of our skills in a limited amount of time. Our experiences in Radio Dingbat, podcasting, Flash video and internet streaming solutions all contribute to a new-found ease of getting our works seen by as many people as possible. It comes down to how the labels/artists you work with get the clip out there, so we'd recommend working with focused music producers.

JOHN MACLIVER: Mat de Koning did a very simple Super 8, really cheap music video, ("Five Beds for Bitsy", YouTube - 707 views, uploaded 18 January 2009). Because Will Stoker has become better known as a West Australian performer, the music video has given Mat reach to people who wouldn't necessarily go out and source his short films.

NOAH NORTON: I think it is important when you're making the video that you define the boundaries to the band - what your responsibility as the producer of the clip is

CONTINUES PAGE 10



ABOVE, LEFT: "Which Way To Go" by the Eddy Current Suppression Ring, a Radio Dingbat shoot directed by Dominic Pierce (behind camera)
ABOVE, RIGHT: The Voltaire Twins

Shoot the Piano Player

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

to distribute it. Obviously you want to be able to have rights to your video for your showreel and your YouTube channel for instance, but you also have to ensure that the band or manager are promoting the clip, because basically it's in everyone's benefit. Putting it onto tape for *Rage* can be expensive and you should negotiate this at the start because, as a filmmaker, you are best placed to deliver the clip in the required formats at the best price.

Finance

For Will Stoker's video "Five Beds for Bitsy", de Koning wanted to shoot in Super 8. Rather than shoot digitally to allow for his own payment, he put the money towards Super 8 stock and processing. For many makers of music video, it is a poorly-paid labour of love. In the best-case scenario, it can lead to greater professional recognition.

JOHN MACLIVER: All of us working on Cut & Paste have side projects and we bring each other onto them, because we know how we work and no-one gets paid so we don't get paid together. A music video made for \$500 means all the money goes straight into production costs and no-one gets paid. With \$3,000, you can pay people a little bit – not what you want to pay them, but a nominal fee that shows you appreciate what they've put in.

MAT DE KONING: The band come to me and say, "We have no money" and because they know I'm a big fan, I end up working for little or no money. Or I have an idea

for a song that I'm really psyched on, so I pitch it to the band and they say, "Yeah, we're super keen but we don't have any money" and I do it anyway for little or no money.

STEVE MCCALLUM: As I did more music videos I'd get more money but I'd spend more money. I had a couple of guys – which I've now found out is called production design – build crazy sets, like a wooden horse or a room where all the action takes place. I'd get a budget for, say, \$7,000, and I'd immediately go, "That's \$4,000 more than the last clip, so I can spend that on a build and make the same amount of money". I kept spending the money rather than making money. The more money I got, the more it got spent in production design, or hiring lights.

STEVEN HUGHES: The bigger the artist and/or label, the bigger the budget, but we find that also means the more inflated the video concepts – thus resulting in the same bargain-hunting and favour-seeking as usual. It must be said, though: you can make a great video for no money, or a bad video with heaps of money – it all comes down to creativity.

KENTA MCGRATH: A band like the Voltaire Twins, with a consistent aesthetic in their music, photography and image, need a certain amount of gloss. However, because they were paying out of their own pockets rather than through a label, it still had to be reasonably priced, so we tried to think of ways in which we could get a really, really nice look and get as much in-kind

support as possible. We needed something really self-contained that could be shot in 24 to 48 hours. We're getting paid sweet fuck-all, but that's the fun of it.

NORTON: Because you can shoot a music video in a fairly short amount of time, you should be able to afford to pay your crew for that one day. There are a lot of people who make music videos who own their own camera and edit from home so as not to have to rely too much on crew simply because they can't afford to pay them.

MACCALLUM: I made a living out of corporate videos and music videos. For the last two years prior to this one, I did nine music videos a year. Because I'm self-sufficient, I'm filming, editing, producing and directing myself; I didn't need to pay anyone. It's just me and the band, so they'd get a really great deal for a music video and I'd get to live off the work.

Creativity

Music video can sometimes give filmmakers an opportunity to explore the technical gadgets and techniques that a more story-based film might not. At their best, a music video allows storytelling without the burden of a fully logical, scripted story arc.

STEVEN HUGHES: We make music videos because, first and foremost, we love music. In other mediums, there is often no such direct way to get experimental and creative and guarantee an attentive viewer at the end who absorbs what you have created – a liberty that we can make use of to further our creative scope and fuel our other film projects.

CONTINUES PAGE 14

WBMC

West Australians know there's a weird confluence of creativity where Walcott and Beaufort Streets meet. A number of this state's premier producers of documentary and drama reside in this part of Mount Lawley. WBMC can be found there and, though they're one of the newer players, they are definitely being seen and heard. PHIL JENG KANE reports on their road to success.

EARLY DAYS

FIRST THINGS FIRST. We begin our interview with the question everyone wants answered: What do those four initials stand for? It's a bit of a mystery. Certainly no-one outside of WBMC can tell you. And asking them won't help you either. Aidan O'Bryan refuses to say. Actually he laughs and then refuses to say. "It's nice to have a name that allows for any possibility," he replies. WBMC's Janelle Landers won't say either. "We heard it stood for Why Bust My Chops?" I ask. "Possibly," O'Bryan says. "I'm happier for people not to know."

Additionally, the pair won't allow a convenient job title to hang on them. They have taken all kinds of roles in their various productions and have decided to be called Producers or Directors or Heads of. "We don't even have a job title on our business cards," Landers says, showing me. They talk about their organisation's flat structure quite seriously. But then Aidan comes up with a title he doesn't mind. "You can call us the slightly-higher-ups of WBMC."

WBMC's rise may seem equally as mysterious to some who watch the local film scene, because much of that rise seemed to take place out of sight. Their development into a company that makes television and feature films has been somewhat non-traditional. Unlike many production companies that began life with a specific aim to make television commercials or programs for a broadcaster, WBMC was a web development business when O'Bryan started it back in 2000.

He believes they were ahead of the curve in terms of people's web-savviness. WBMC made websites, but O'Bryan saw an opportunity to take a sponsored site for university students and link it with a television show on community television (i.e. Access 31.)

Unilife.tv was born. The show had a magazine format and delved into tertiary student life. It also had its audience-boosting controversial moments that caused some stress for the management of Access 31. O'Bryan fondly recalls shooting a presenter doing a nude run through a lecture. Thirteen episodes were produced, which was a heavy workload for television newbies.



TOP & CENTRE: Images from the feature documentary *Something in the Water*
ABOVE: Janelle Landers and Aidan O'Bryan

In 2001, WBMC embarked upon yet more television on Access 31. This was a magazine program featuring the test-driving and rating of high performance vehicles, called *Race Scar*. The pace of work on this one was even more hectic than the precious show. The team made 36 episodes.

For both programs, WBMC created web-based elements which were as crucial as the free-to-air component. O'Bryan says the show achieved some intriguing firsts. It was the first show in Australia with text-message interactivity – viewers paid for a service which would SMS a reminder to watch the show. *Race Scar* was also one of the first shows in the country to offer video download content from the associated website.

But the workload of producing the weekly program proved too great, particularly when the remuneration for this model of Web plus TV on Access 31 wasn't sufficient to cover all

CONTINUES NEXT PAGE

WBMC

FROM PREVIOUS PAGE

the hours and personnel it took to get the show on air and promoted. O'Bryan estimates he was putting in 80 hours a week on producing *Race Scar*.

O'Bryan hadn't set out to be a filmmaker and didn't feel as trained in the business and skills of making broadcast television as some, so he decided that meeting others who were expert in the industry would be helpful to his development. To this end, he credits the ScreenWest Practitioner Development Travel Grants for enabling him to attend a number of important conferences.

He says the first Australian International Documentary Conference that he attended made him more aware of how to develop ideas for television. O'Bryan admits he doesn't always agree with his fellow Australian documentarians about how money should be sourced, or how government funding agencies should be approached, but at the time he found AIDC an eye-opener. MIP-TV was yet another important step. Being a vast European television market it accorded even better with his more commercial sensibilities.

It was at a Screen Producers Australia Association (SPAA) Conference that O'Bryan was introduced to Janelle Landers through a friend, Marcus Gillezeau of Firelight. Landers was working there at the time.

LANDERS

Landers' background was in photography and visual arts. She eventually decided to study Media Arts Production and Law at the University of Technology, Sydney. Strangely, Law was "something to fall back on". She had the idea of possibly entering Entertainment Law, but eventually decided she wanted to make films more.

At the time Landers was working at Firelight, she had also successfully sourced funding for the documentary *Arranging Love*. The film was directed by Sheila Jayadev and explored the realities of the arranged marriage and the rules of relationships for second generation Indian-Australians. The short documentary film has been screened at numerous international festivals and has won a slew of awards.

Landers was producing the documentary, applying for funding for other projects and doing occasional legals for Firelight. She had begun the Media Arts Production degree thinking her visual background would make her a likely cinematographer, but Landers discovered she enjoyed and had a flair for producing.

So Landers made the big decision to work with WBMC in Perth. She says some of the advantages include fewer competing production companies seeking out local broadcaster



TOP: Hi-performance motoring program *Race Scar* ABOVE: mY Generation episode, *Y God*
BELOW RIGHT: A scene from *The Key to the Mystic Halls of Time*

or ScreenWest funding. And there was the diversity of WBMC's slate – there were greater multimedia possibilities than in more traditional film or television companies.

In addition to WBMC's regular web clients, the company worked on an online documentary, *The Great Southern Arc*, as well as a project O'Bryan describes as "the greatest pole-dancing fitness DVD ever made in Western Australia."

They also sought funding for a large and very detailed project which would document the history of farming in Australia. This so far remains on the shelf, but the pair has done a great deal of research on it and are committed to finding the finance for it.

PRODUCTION BOOM

A lot happened in a very short time for WBMC. The beginning of this era of their history is an idea they had in 2006: that there might be a dedicated market for a small documentary about West Australian music.

They had good contacts with a number of contemporary WA bands and thought a film documenting the boom in the WA music scene would be a good subject to pursue. The more the duo worked on the ideas, the clearer it became that not only did people want to know about Eskimo Joe, End of Fashion and Little Birdy, but there was also an audience who wanted the context and history of WA rock. So the research and the scope of the project was extended.

Eventually WBMC made a theatrically releasable 75-minute feature called *Something in the Water*. It screened to strong houses in Western Australia. There were plans to screen it in

other capital cities and do a regional tour of the film with some of the bands. However, by this time, the former AFC and ABC had also become involved. WBMC were working with the ABC's Jennifer Collins to prepare the material as a JTV doc. A 55-minute cut was made of the material, which Landers feels is more concise: "The feature version is for the buffs who want to hear more of the music," she says.

The documentary was aired to a strong response from television audiences nationally, which gave lie to an early criticism of the project at feature stage – namely, that a documentary about WA music was of no interest to the rest of Australia.

This period overlapped with WBMC's work on the *Gen Y* series. The company had won a ScreenWest Stepping Stone Grant and were set to make the West Australian half of a six-part documentary series with South Australia. *Gen Y* concerned itself with Australian youth and how they dealt with big issues like religion, politics and housing, among others. Local filmmakers Ben Lucas, Janine Boreland and Britt Arthur worked on the three WA episodes. O'Bryan says WBMA learned a great deal about delivering television at a professional level by working with SBS.

Then came the third project of the WBMC trifecta. In October 2007, they won the West Coast Visions low-budget feature grant from ScreenWest. The project was a script called *Wasted On the Young*, written by director Ben Lucas.

Landers and O'Bryan had worked with Lucas on the short *The Key to the Mystic Halls of Time* (2006), which was where his approach to filmmaking first made an impression on them. "Ben has worked in practically every capacity on a film set," Landers explains. "And he is happy to let department heads do their job because he really understands what that job is." She also describes him talented and very personable and laid-back. "We call him Zen Ben," she laughs.

From there, it took a great deal more work to make the script as ready as it needed to be for shooting. There was a week-long Rottneest hot-housing session that involved Scott Meek, with feedback from ScreenWest's Victor Gentile. Meek, a former FFC evaluation manager and former head of ABC drama, was an invaluable resource as a producer mentor on the project. His involvement, as well as Sue Taylor's mentoring skills, were made possible by Screen Australia mentor funding.

By the time they were ready to shoot, Lucas, O'Bryan and Landers had cast extensively and well, thanks to the participation of veteran casting director Greg Apps. The team had wanted Apps' expertise from the start, but felt it was unlikely he would want to work on such a low-budget feature. O'Bryan says he sent the script expecting a knock-back and was delighted that Apps was enthusiastic about the project from his first reading.

The shooting and post-production of the film has occupied a number of local talents for months. While in editing, Landers

and O'Bryan are working on their marketing plans and strategising. "Its release is really important for us," O'Bryan says. "We think that Ben and the film deserve an 'A-Festival' premiere. It's not the right film to play at Cannes, but it's the right film to play at Berlin or Toronto or Sundance."

The film will be completed by Christmas.

NEXT

Landers says, "It's only in the last few weeks that we've been able to come back to real life and turn our minds to sustaining ourselves until the film's release. We have to think about what's next and continue to develop projects. We're a company with a broad range of talents who work for us. And all those people need to get paid."

Like all filmmakers, they are concerned with the potential box office for the project. "In the best of all possible worlds, the film comes out and makes money," O'Bryan says. "Everyone who has seen any of it marvels at how good it looks for the money."

"We stretch the dollar," Landers points out. "We always put money back into the project to make it better," she says, "but we need to stop doing that."

"When you're in the middle of making a film, it's your last chance to make it really good," O'Bryan says.

Although they are well positioned now to work on documentary or feature films or television, the company is keeping itself open to all possibilities. WBMC will still pursue ideas that are purely online ventures. They will continue to do work they believe in for organisations like Greening Australia and The Wilderness Society.

"Our slate will remain quite diverse," says Landers. O'Bryan agrees: "There's a lot of people who suggest that you can't make documentaries and feature films and games, but we totally dispute that."

"It's about the stories and the communication. It's not about the platform." ●



Shoot the piano player

FROM PAGE 10

KENTA MCGRATH: The attraction for us is trying a completely new medium. We expect it to complement what we do in drama and documentary. You have to consider the music, that's the parameter. I think this scenario is really exciting.

STEVE MCCALLUM: I just always felt that when I was making music videos for bands I was contributing to their music. Probably my most successful collaboration was with Snowman. We did five clips together and they really took it seriously and loved the creative process and saw it as an addition to their music and image. I love making music videos in this way.

JOHN MACLIVER: If you integrate a narrative into the clip you can push yourself as a short film director. My future direction will always be film clips and documentary because that's what interests me. It's good for experimental filmmaking.

NOAH NORTON: Your crew members can use it as an experimental ground. Directorial-wise, it doesn't necessarily show you can build a character. For me, a lot of the skills I've built as a filmmaker have come from the music videos that I've done. If you come from music videos, you can be labelled as a music video director and in an industry focused on story, story, story, if you're looking at a bunch of showreels for directors applying for funding for drama and you have this great music video clip – beautiful images, something special and unique, but there's no drama – you can never be sure it's going to translate, and I think there's a stigma in that sense.

STEVE MCCALLUM: I've applied for short film funding and the one thing they do say is experience directing actors. I'm aware of that lack of experience but I think my music video experience has given me a really good grounding. I'm coming from a background where I can add something different from those who have gone through a short film path. By this path I mean doing a kooky little short with a twist at the end that's kind of humorous, then progressing to bigger budgets. I don't really like films like that so I don't see that as a viable pathway for me. It's probably going to be a bit more abstract and will have my visual style – my strength is my visual style.

Production Process

Budget and time constraints can make the process of shooting and posting a music video an incredibly quick turnaround. Some filmmakers argue that's what makes the form as robust and fascinating as it is.

JOHN MACLIVER: Most of the time, as an emerging director, you are dealing directly with the band. You sit down and talk to the band and negotiate how you want to articulate and give vision to what you both want out of the music video. "Musicians are musicians: you need to take their good ideas and construct them into something that's workable depending on your budget. There's not always \$2,000 to get a crane.

NOAH NORTON: The band aren't always aware of how much it can cost to make a video in terms of production requirements. You should go in there and use your skills as a filmmaker to say what you think works.

SAM PRICE: A music video is one of the easiest jobs that you could initially secure for yourself. We've shot every project on digital. Our last four projects have been shot on the Red. A band performing in daylight in digital can come across as looking flat and boring and ugly because you've got minimal control over the lighting. We shot one in daylight but that was a car chase (Downsyde, "Lifespeed") the pace and the action outweighs the lack of control over the lighting, and we were cutting really quickly.

JOHN MACLIVER: It's easier to do a good film clip in your early career than it is to do a good short film. There's always a bit more of a jagged edge involved with a short film. You have to have the film clip constructed in your brain all the time as you go along so that you can juggle if you get behind schedule. You are not constrained to Scene 1, Scene 2, Scene 3... however out of sequence they're shot.

NOAH NORTON: I've made the grave mistake of treating my "talent", the band that I was directing, like actors, giving them stage direction and asking impossible things of them, which can end up making them look and feel uncomfortable. It can be very daunting to have all these lights and do repeat takes. That's why it's good to get multiple cameras and try to let it happen a little bit more, to capture that essence of what those musicians are trying to do, because musicians are generally pretty interesting characters and you just want to let that out.

STEVE MCCALLUM: I've worked on three short films in the last two months, shooting or lighting for them. It's a different process because there's a lot more heads on board. It's been a massive change for me – having relied on my own instincts and ideas, now I've got to do storyboards and let everybody know what I'm doing and thinking. I like that there's so many people working towards one goal. If you manage it the right way, you can still get that really cool creativity and the results you want. It's nice involving other people in a big collaboration. It's been a huge change working with the structure and the organisation of making [drama] films because I've done it totally differently. I was still doing the same things – it's just that there's an actual order.

JOHN MACLIVER: Usually, when a band or manager comes to a filmmaker wanting a music video, the song's complete. After you've shot the music video, it's a two week turnaround for post-production onto *Rage*. You have deadlines that don't change, especially when you're dealing with managers of bands. This is great discipline for emerging filmmakers.

SAM PRICE: Usually, the last thing that musicians are thinking of is the music video, getting in contact with you two weeks before the release of the album. Sometimes the time pressure can really help you because decisions are made quickly and you can turn around the project to get onto the next thing. The band is more receptive to your ideas due to time constraints.

What is next?

Sputore suggests teaming musicians with filmmakers who want to do something different and express themselves visually as the best way to produce the high-concept idea required to get viewers, regardless of production values. Cunningham says that the music video's future is interactive: the song will provide the linear and temporal structure of the video with additional embedded interactive elements to draw audience and artist together. ●

ScreenWestnews

Prepare for a festival of chills and thrills

A collection of the best and most grotesque films from this year's *A Night of Horror (ANOH) International Film Festival* in Sydney will be screening in Perth from October 8-12, 2009 at Luna Leederville. The ANOH Perth event will premiere grisly shorts and features plus a spectacular mixture of haunting films inspired by iconic cult writer H.P. Lovecraft.

Festival directors and filmmakers will share their skills of independent horror filmmaking and their unconditional love of the genre at the *A Day of Horror* discussion panel on Saturday October 10, 2009.

If you enjoy suspense and lean towards the dark side for your entertainment, this event is not to be missed. For more information visit www.anightofhorror.com or www.lunapalace.com.au

ANOH Perth is proudly supported by ScreenWest and Lotterywest.



A scene from the horror short *Treevenge*

Short Film Marketing Grants

ScreenWest provides funding to assist newer filmmakers to cover the costs of marketing and promoting their short films or self funded low budget features to gain maximum exposure in the film festival circuit.

The Short Film and Self Funded Low Budget Feature Marketing grants, of up to \$2,000 per applicant, can be used to create press kits, festival applications or cover the costs of dubbing and postage.

The next round closes **October 26, 2009**. For more information on how to apply please visit the ScreenWest website www.screenwest.wa.gov.au/go/funding/funding-programs

Introducing AIEP... Audience and Industry Engagement Program

The ScreenWest funding program formally known as Screen Culture, has been renamed the Audience and Industry Engagement Program to better reflect its new focus. AIEP seeks to support the expansion of the local screen industry through projects that connect the Western Australian audience with filmmakers. Projects can include events, screenings or other activities.

There are two AIEP funding rounds annually, check the ScreenWest website for further details: www.screenwest.wa.gov.au/go/funding/funding-programs



Get a WASA on your shelf

I HAVE a secret confession: I've never won a Screen Award. Actually, that's not so secret, as you can check out winner's names under the History section of the WA Screen Awards website.

The actual award is pretty good-looking, as far as awards go. It's translucent, so it goes with everything. And the engraving is colour filled with real gold paint.

But looks aren't everything. There's the kudos. And if your production wins an award, you can forevermore preface it with "Award-Winning".

But it's not all about the Awards. The 23rd WA Screen Awards Ceremony is going to be a fantastic night out.

Here are some important dates:

DEADLINE FOR ENTRIES:
Wednesday 16 December, 2009

AWARDS NIGHT:
Saturday 6 March, 2010

Go to www.wascreenawards.com for more details.

Follow us on Twitter @wascreenawards

Are you an industry professional interested in judging the Early Career or Open Category awards? If so, please contact me on screevents@fti.asn.au. – **LIZ SIDERIS**