INTRODUCTION BY
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The national film and sound archive has developed an imposing list of Australian film titles available for screening in new prints. This venture has been made possible by generous support from the Post-Production House ATLAB Australia, and Kodak (Australia).

Most of the films for which new prints have been struck belong to the first two decades of the 'revival', but there are also several titles which derive from the pre-1970 period, including Charles Chauvel's classic, Jedda (1955) and Michael Powell's popular success They're A Weird Mob (1966).

The nearly sixty significant Australian films currently on the archive’s list are broadly representative of the output of twenty years of local filmmaking. It embraces the earliest days of the 1970s' revival, with the likes of The Adventures of Barry McKenzie (Bruco Beresford, 1972) and the much less well-known Morning of the Earth (Albert Falcen, 1971), and works its way through such groundbreaking titles as Sunday Too Far Away (Ken Hannam, 1975) and the huge commercial successes of The Man from Snowy River (George Miller, 1982) and Crocodile Dundee (Peter Faiman, 1986), for the moment cutting out at 1990 with Nadia Tass's engaging adolescent wish-fulfilment comedy The Big Steal. However, the list is refreshingly free from mere obeisance to either the critically privileged or the box office champions. It noticeably offers such titles as Pure Shit (Bert Deling, 1975), The F.J. Holden (Michael Thornhill, 1977), Love Letters from Terabita Road (Stephen Wallace, 1977), Palm Beach (Albin Thoms, 1980), Goodbye Paradise (Carl Schultz, 1983) and Sweetie (Jane Campion, 1989), films which, for one reason or another – awkward length, generic undclassifiability, downbeat proclivities, obdurately art house affiliations – have not received the attention they may deserve.

The films in the collection cover a wide range of genres, as even the titles referred to above suggest; they take in the full spectrum from multiplex to art house to specialist screenings; and they belong to a crucial period of Australian filmmaking. They warrant the detailed critical, scholarly scrutiny to which it is the intention of Metro magazine, over the next several years, to submit them.

The Series
Starting in early 2007 and to tie in with the availability of these new prints, Metro will foreground a series of essays, each of which will focus on a title in the Kodak/ATLAB Cinema Collection. The informing idea behind the series is that these should become the first port of call for anyone wanting to study in depth the particular films in question. The aim is that the essays should be definitive: not definitive in the sense of offering the last interpretive word about this or that film but from the point of view of providing indispensable material relating to the film's various contexts, detailed analysis of how the film works as a film, and a comprehensive account of how it was received, both critically and commercially. In such ways, it is expected that the essays will provide a valuable basis for further research, as well as recalling for the general reader how such resonant titles in our recent film history came to be as they are, and how they seem in hindsight as compared with what we made of them at the time of their release. Some of them may have lost their initial lustre; others, it may be felt, were undervalued in their time.

Contexts
By situating any individual film in its ‘context’, I have several things in mind. First, and most obviously, each essay will attempt to recreate the production circumstances of the film. When and where was it made? Did it involve much/any location work? How long did it take? Was the production attended by any particular difficulties? How was the screenplay developed, and from what kinds of sources? How was it financed: was it, for instance, like most Australian films of the period, dependent on government funding? How costly was it? How was it publicized?

Questions such as these may seem to one side of the film's aesthetic distinction or otherwise. However, this is not really the case, as many of these matters bear substantially on the nature and quality of the finished film. What is up there on the screen may well be at least in part determined by budgetary constraints, on the use made of location shooting, and so on. In order to place a discussion of, say, Sunday Too Far Away in the context of Australian film produc-
tion at the time, a full analysis of the film is likely to require attention to the circumstances of its making.

Texts

Neither in the matter of textual analysis nor in any other related to this series is there an intention to impose a grid or template on the authors. In broad terms, though, one would expect that, to varying degrees, the treatment of the film as a text would involve certain avenues of enquiry. One would suppose it important to consider the source of the film’s screenplay, whether, as many were, derived from literary antecedents, or whether original screenplays. To discuss, say, My Brilliant Career (Gillian Armstrong, 1976) without taking into account the semi-autobiographical novel by Miles Franklin on which it is based is no doubt a possibility, and for many of its viewers it might just as well be an original screenplay. But it is not: the anterior text has a certain status in Australian literature and in feminist discourse and one would hope that the relevant essay in the series would see these as bearing on the finished film. Other matters likely to emerge in textual analysis include the question of authorship (e.g., directorial and screenwriting influences), the kinds of genre associations the film exhibits, the importance of star personaie, the contributions of cinematography and production design, and so on. Listed like that, these can sound dull, but in the individual ways of the various authors it seems likely that their aesthetic appreciation, and their critical appraisal, of the film texts will take such matters on board. In examining how the films work as narratives in the medium of audio-visual moving images, there is inevitably a complex set of determinants responsible for the affective and intellec
tual responses generated.

Reception

The third main area of exploration the series will incorporate has to do with how the films were received. This includes both their domestic reception by critics and audiences and their international box-office careers, and the critical reactions they elicited if they managed to find overseas distribution. How important was a particular film in alerting world markets and audiences to the existence of an Australian film industry? What sort of after-life has the film had? Has it led to a wide range of critical exegeses or does it seem to have been forgotten since the time of its release? This may lead to consideration of whether or not such a film is too closely tied to its first release for serious later assessment – or whether it deserves re-evaluation.

The authors for the series of essays have been chosen on the basis of their particular interest in the film of their choice. They include academics from Australian and overseas universities and local film writers whose work is well known and its quality admired. As the series progresses, I hope to be able to spread the net as widely as possible. This series seems like an enterprise of some real value, and one would want to canvass a range of engaged talents and voices for the job.

‘Goodbye Paradise’

It seems very apt to be initiating this series with a study of Carl Schultz’s Goodbye Paradise, a film undervalued at the time of its release but graced with a hugely enjoyable performance from Ray Barrett and exhibiting a genre sophistication not then (or now?) common in Australian cinema. It remains perhaps the most accomplished film noir thriller of the revival, and the series has been fortunate in securing Andrew Spicer for its inaugural essay. Spicer is an acknowledged international authoritv on film noir; his 2002 book, Film Noir (Pearson) has become a standard text and his Euro-Noir, due out in 2007, is eagerly awaited.