
MEDIA RELEASE

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Ray Lawrence returns to the screen

Wednesday 17 December 2008: Internationally acclaimed Australian director Ray Lawrence (*Jindabyne*, *Lantana*, *Bliss*) was yesterday backed by Screen Australia to direct *Being Dead*, a poetic thriller about a married couple who are savagely murdered.

Being Dead is an adaptation of Jim Crace's haunting novel about the dark secret history that the murdered couple's estranged daughter discovers when she returns home.

"*Being Dead* is classic Ray Lawrence relationship territory – an intelligent and deeply satisfying murder mystery in the same vein as *Lantana*. Screen Australia is delighted to be supporting Ray's next film," said Ruth Harley, Screen Australia Chief Executive Officer.

Lawrence has been a successful and award-winning commercials director for more than 30 years. In this time he has directed three features: *Bliss* which screened in competition at Cannes Film Festival; *Lantana* which played to large audiences at the Australian box office and won seven Australian Film Institute awards; and *Jindabyne* which had its world premiere at Cannes and was nominated for numerous awards.

Emile Sherman (*Candy*, *\$9.99*, *Disgrace*) and Patrick Cassavetti (*Intimacy*, *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*) will produce the film with Iain Canning (*Control*, *Hunger*) as Executive Producer. Writer Beatrix Christian (*Jindabyne*) has adapted the novel and at Lawrence's request transplanted the story from the United Kingdom to Newcastle, New South Wales.

Finance for an additional four feature films was also approved at Screen Australia's December Board meeting.

Yael Bergman and Laura Waters, the producing team behind the hit television series *Summer Heights High*, received backing for *I Love You Too* – a romantic comedy about a commitment-phobic man-about-town and a gifted new age dwarf who go on a quest to win back the women they love. The film is written by comedian Peter Hellier and will be directed by Daina Reid.

Three documentary series secured funding approval including *Addicted to Money*, a three-part series that explores everything you need to know about the causes of the financial meltdown and what you need to survive in the New Economy.

Feature films, *The Place Between* and *Griff the Invisible* received Letters of Offer through the IndiVision Production Fund. *The Place Between* is the first feature by acclaimed Indigenous director Beck Cole (*Plains Empty*).

Screen Australia also backed 17 one-off documentaries, one television drama series and two children's television series.

Features

A HEARTBEAT AWAY

Pictures in Paradise Pty Ltd

Producer Chris Brown

Writer Julie Kincade

Director Gale Edwards

Sales and Distribution Hoyts (Aus/NZ) and Lightning Entertainment (ROW)

Synopsis Kevin Flack – is obsessed with becoming a rock guitar legend - when his father is hit by a bus just four weeks before a major competition Kevin is forced to become the musical director of his fathers Brass band. Without his father's knowledge Kevin decides to give the band a Rock & Roll make over.

BEING DEAD

See-Saw Films and Greenpoint Films

Executive Producer Iain Canning

Producers Emile Sherman, Patrick Cassavetti

Director Ray Lawrence

Writer Beatrix Christian. Based on the book by Jim Crace

Synopsis A haunting and tender account of a married couple found murdered in the dunes; how they got there, and what happens before they're found. *Being Dead* explores themes of love and family, life and death, how we live our lives and what we leave behind.

I LOVE YOU TOO

I Love You Too Pty Ltd

EP Greg Sitch

Producers Yael Bergman and Laura Waters

Writer Peter Helliard

Director Daina Reid

Sales and Distribution Roadshow Films

Synopsis *I Love You Too* is a romantic comedy about a commitment-phobic man-about-town and a gifted new age dwarf who go on a quest to win back the women they love.

LOU

Big and Little Films

Executive Producer Liz Watts

Producers Michael McMahon, Tony Ayres, Helen Bowden and Belinda Chayko

Writer/Director Belinda Chayko

Sales and Distribution Kojo (Aust/NZ) and Bankside (ROW)

Synopsis A young girl finds love through a dangerous game with her Alzheimic grandfather.

LUV SUX

Vitascope International Pty Ltd

Producers David Hannay, Richard Turner and John Bickford

Writer Michael Gillett

Director Richard Turner

Sales and Distribution Arkles (Aust/NZ) and Odins Eye (ROW)

Synopsis At 17, Matt is a bit concerned about his future. So are his parents. Both are loving, caring individuals who only want the best for their son. But only one is human. The other is a five hundred year old vampire.

IndiVision Production Fund – Letters of Offer

GRIFF THE INVISIBLE

Everyday Pictures

Producer Nicole O'Donohue

Writer/Director Leon Ford

Synopsis Griff is a super hero. But no one knows. Because it's a secret.

THE PLACE BETWEEN

Scarlett Pictures Pty Ltd

Producer Kath Shelper

Writer/Director Beck Cole

Synopsis When Karen Burden is released from jail after three years, she quickly discovers that between guilt and forgiveness is the place between.

Television Drama

RESCUE

Southern Star Entertainment

Producers Sarah Smith and Julie McGauran

Directors TBC

Sales and Distribution Nine Network and Southern Star International

Synopsis Dean Gallagher, 29, and Chase, 26, are brothers. Competitive alpha males, they argue over everything, agree on nothing, but defend each other from outsiders no matter what. They're also members of the Special Operations Rescue Unit. Together they go about their everyday jobs of saving lives.

Children's Television

CHATROOM CHICKS

Southern Star Entertainment

Supervising Producer Dennis Keily

Producer/ Noel Price

Writers Shelley Birse, John Armstrong, Sue Hore, Kym Goldsworthy, Noel Price

Director Ralph Strasser

Sales and Distribution Nine Network and Southern Star International

Synopsis Chatroom Chicks is about three young teenage girls – one German, one Singaporean and one Australian – who become friends while studying together at an international school in Singapore. The girls are united by their bright, lively personalities and by their common interests in contemporary dance – an activity in which they all excel.

DANCE ACADEMY

Werner Film Productions

Executive Producer Bernadette O'Mahony

Producer Joanna Werner

Writers Samantha Strauss and Liz Doran

Sales and Distribution ZDF Enterprises and ACTF

Broadcasters ABC and ZDF

Synopsis When Tara Webster leaves her home in the country to be a student at the National Academy of Dance, she is sure all her dreams are about to come true. But does Tara have what it takes to make it in this high-pressured world when

sometimes being an ordinary teenager can be difficult enough?

International Documentaries

ADDICTED TO MONEY (series)

Electric Pictures

Executive Producers Andrew Ogilvie

Producers Andrew Ogilvie and Andrea Quesnelle

Writers Simon Nasht and David McWilliams

Director Simon Nasht

Sales and Distribution ABC TV (Aust), RTE (Ireland), S4C (Wales) and ABC Sales (ROW)

Synopsis Everything you need to know about what caused the financial meltdown, what lies ahead, and what we all need to do to survive in the New Economy.

LOGGERHEADS: THE LOST YEARS

Gulliver Media Australia Pty Ltd

Producers Larry Zetlin and Chris Carroll

Director/Writer Jeremy Hogarth

Broadcasters ABC TV and National Geographic TV

Sales National Geographic TV International

Synopsis The film follows the life story of an individual female Loggerhead Turtle from when her mother lays the clutch of eggs, to when, thirty years later, she struggles ashore to lay her first clutch of eggs in the beach sands from which she hatched.

PENGUIN ISLAND (series)

360 Degree Films

Producer Sally Ingleton

Sales and Distribution ABC TV (Aust), Arte France, and NGTI (ROW)

Synopsis The Little Penguins of Phillip Island, Australia, are 'A list' celebrities. Each year a half-a-million tourists come to watch their nightly parade - but it's their private lives that are really interesting. With the help of a dedicated team of scientists we lift the lid on a world where relationships are fraught, affairs commonplace, and danger lurks around every corner.

SALAM FATHER

Artemis International

Producers Brian Beaton

Director/Writer Max Walker

Co Director Salam Ziusudras

Broadcasters SBS TV and Al Jazeera

Sales SBS Content Sales.

Synopsis Salam Ziusudras' father's remains were recently found in a mass grave in Iraq 26 years after he mysteriously disappeared. Knowing nothing about his father – or what happened – Sam embarks on a mission from Australia to Iraq desperate for answers. What he discovers is a world of underground politics, spies, friendship, betrayal and a box of super 8 footage that uncovers a past undoubtedly responsible for shaping Salam – and his life – to this very day.

Domestic Documentaries – One off Documentaries

BLANK CANVAS

Vast Productions**Producer** Joanna Buggy and Tim Slade**Director** Tim Slade**Broadcaster** Foxtel**Synopsis** The Sydney Dance Company has one year to secure its long term survival, to find a new leader and to create magic from a blank canvas. From the award winning team that brought the documentary *4* to the screen.**KILL OR DIE****Umbrella Film Services Pty Ltd****Producers** Tom Burstall and John Hipwell**Writer** Simon Palomares**Key Writer/Director** David Swann**Broadcaster** SBS**Synopsis** *Kill or Die* is a humorous examination of a cross cultural mid-life crisis. Simon Palomares of *Wogs out of Work* fame, must go back to Spain to care for his ailing cantankerous father, juggle his family commitments back in Australia, whilst struggling to find out where he truly belongs. Is it Spain or Australia? To find out he enters the bloody gladiatorial arena of Spanish stand up comedy and, not unlike a bullfight, he must kill or die trying.**A PACIFIC SOLUTION****Jotz Productions****Producer/Director** Tom Zubrycki**Sales and Distribution** SBS TV**Synopsis** A group of Islanders from the tiny pacific nation of Kiribati affected by severe climate change are imported as guest workers to rural Australia.**SHINTARO****ScreenWorld Pty Limited****Executive Producer** Sue Clothier**Director** Marco Sinigalia**Sales and Distribution** SBS TV and Sales SBS Content Sales**Synopsis** In 1964 a sensation swept through Australian lounge rooms leaving an indelible impression on the children of that generation. That sensation was *The Samurai*, the first foreign language cult television series from Japan to be seen in Australia.**Domestic Series****LAW AND DISORDER**

ScreenWorld Pty Ltd

Executive Producer Sally Regan**Series Producer** TBC**Director** Ivan O'Mahoney**Broadcaster** SBS TV and Sales SBS Content Sales**Synopsis** *Law and Disorder* is a three part series delving deep into the murky world of government misconduct, crime, corruption and the ordinary citizens who try to expose it all.**Special Documentary Fund****AMERICA**

Storm Productions**Producer/Director** Esben Storm**Synopsis** AMERICA. Is it F.....? Esben Storm with the noted author Don Watson travels to present a portrait of America through the looking glass of the 2008 Presidential election.**ANNA'S ADVENTURES****Iris Pictures****Producer/Director** Jessica Douglas-Henry**Synopsis** Anna's Adventure is a cross media project that follows Dr. Anna Donald's journey as she grapples with the big questions of existence in her daily battle with cancer.**THE BALL****Princess Pictures****Producer** Yael Bergman and Laura Waters**Director** Jessica Leski**Synopsis** How do you celebrate coming of age when you can never really grow up? A documentary following six teenagers with special needs as they prepare for high school's greatest rite of passage; 'The Debutante Ball'.**DR SARMAST'S MUSIC SCHOOL****Circe Films****Producer** Beth Frey**Director** Polly Watkins**Synopsis** Dr Ahmad Sarmast, an Afghan musician returns home to his country to re-open the only vocational music school in the hope of revitalizing Afghanistan's devastated music culture and giving war orphans the chance to realise their dreams and transform their lives.**LOVE: IN THE TIME OF ECONOMY****Tarpaulin****Producer** Tom Murray**Director** Tom Murray and Madeleine Hetherington**Synopsis** An experimental documentary on the big things in life - birth, love and death – and how 21st Century family and work arrangements are impacting on these profound life experiences.**Commissioned Production****ART & SOUL****Screen Australia in association with Hibiscus Films Pty Ltd, ABC Television, the NSW Film + Television Office and the Art Gallery of NSW****Producers** Bridget Ikin & Jo-anne McGowan**Writer/Presenter** Hetti Perkins**Director** Warwick Thornton**Executive Producer** ABC Television Debbie Lee**Synopsis** *Art & Soul* is a major 3 part series about contemporary Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art. Guided by the distinguished Aboriginal curator Hetti Perkins (eldest daughter of activist Charles Perkins; Senior Curator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander art at the Art Gallery of New South Wales, Sydney), *Art & Soul* is a personal journey of discovery into a world of ideas and the imagination.

BALLETS RUSSES - OUR CULTURAL REVOLUTION**Screen Australia in association with Flaming Star Films & Film Victoria****Producers** Marianne Latham and Lavinia Riachi**Director/Writer** Mandy Chang**Executive Producer Flaming Star Films** Sharyn Prentice

Synopsis After seventy years the thrill and glamour of the fabulous Ballets Russes is still as vibrant as ever, and in homage to their brilliance, The Australian Ballet is re-staging one of their greatest productions, "The Firebird". This is the behind-the-scenes story of that re-creation, an historical look at the Ballets Russes 1930's tours of Australia and a celebration of how this thrilling dance company changed our cultural landscape forever.

CATCHING CANCER**Screen Australia in association with Pemberton Films & December Films****Producer** Tony Wright**Writer/Director** Sonya Pemberton**Executive Producer Pemberton Films & December Films** Sonya Pemberton & Tony Wright

Synopsis Sixteen cases of breast cancer in one workplace carry odds of one in a million. A team of Australian scientists are asking - could the cause be an infectious agent, such as a virus? Twenty per cent of all cancers are known to be the result of infections – could it be more? Catching Cancer sets off in global pursuit of infectious cancers, and reveals how finding a viral trigger is not a cause for panic; rather it's a cause for hope.

CHARLES DARWIN VOYAGES AND DISCOVERY (WEBSITE)**Screen Australia Digital Learning in association with Australian National Maritime Museum and Ryebuck Media****Producer** Tim Gurry**Writer** Robert Lewis**Director** Troy Mortier**Education Writer** Robert Lewis

Synopsis 2009 is the 200th anniversary year of Charles Darwin's birth and 150 years after the publication of his famous evolutionary theory on the Origin of Species, so join Charles Darwin aboard HMS Beagle on the voyage of a lifetime. Explore the world of Darwin and his colleagues and see how their work continues on new scientific frontiers.

HONEYBEE BLUES**Screen Australia in association with Mitra Films - part of the SBS Screen Australia Science Initiative.****Producer** Anna Cater and Susan MacKinnon**Writer/Director** Stefan Moore**Executive Producer Mitra Films** Susan MacKinnon

Synopsis From the native bush and orchards of Australia to the industrial farmlands of America and the highlands of Papua New Guinea, *Honeybee Blues* is a scientific detective story that tells a 21st century cautionary tale. Will science be able to stop the devastating march of the destructor mite which is currently decimating honey bee populations around the world. At stake is the future of the environment, our food supply and life as we know it on planet earth.

NED KELLY UNCOVERED**Screen Australia in association with Renegade Films**

Producer/Writer/Director Alex West

Synopsis Tony Robinson joins a team of Australian archaeologists and historians to help uncover bullet by bullet one of the most amazing stories in Australian history, Ned Kelly's last stand at Glenrowan. Along the way he uses the new scientific revelations they uncover, to assess whether Kelly was a revolutionary or simply a common criminal and to set the iconic story in its proper national and international context.

Producer Offset

Since the Producer Offset's inception, 190 projects have been issued with provisional certificates: 75 features, 79 non-feature documentaries and 36 other projects (e.g. TV series, telemovies, direct-DVD/online, short-form animation). Fourteen final certificates have been issued (two features, eight non-feature documentaries and four other projects) with a total determined QAPE of A\$27,711,279m. Five further applications for final certificates are under consideration.