



Australian Government



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Australians return from Hollywood to develop local projects

Wednesday 22 April 2015: Today Screen Australia announces development funding of over \$620,000 for 16 feature films and professional development opportunities for two emerging filmmakers. This round will see some talented Australian writers, directors and producers heading home for a while.

Hollywood is awash with Australians doing great things behind the camera. Less visible but in high regard, they represent some stellar creative talent, which was nurtured in the local industry before hitting the big time. Many are now splitting their careers between Australia and the US, making time to return and develop new projects on home ground. Below are some exceptional Australian talent doing just that.

Bruna Papandrea (*Wild and Milk*) will produce **Addition** with **Cristina Pozzan** (*Return Home*). Papandrea is the executive producer of *Gone Girl* and co-founder of production company, Pacific Standard, with Reese Witherspoon. **Harry Cripps**, who recently penned Tim Minchin's Dreamworks animation *Larrikins*, will write the romantic comedy and **Kate Dennis** (*Offspring* and *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*) will direct.

Academy Award® nominee/winner **Ben Lewin** (*The Sessions*) is developing a biopic about notorious Australian composer and pianist, Percy Grainger, titled **Blue Rose**. In addition to directing, Lewin will write the film with **Wain Fimeri**, and **Chryssy Tintner**, **Jan Eymann**, **Judi Levine** (*The Sessions*), **Mark Lazarus** and **Gary Hamilton** (*Bait 3D*) will produce.

Jeffrey Walker (*Banished* – four episodes) will return to Australia to direct **Dance Academy: The Comeback**. Walker was working on Amy Poehler's new comedy, *Difficult People*, for Hulu in the US. International Emmy® nominee, producer **Joanna Werner** (*Dance Academy*), will adapt the popular ABC family TV series into film. Young ballerina, Tara, will return to screens pursuing her dream to be a star. AWGIE winner for Best Children's TV, **Sam Strauss** (*Dance Academy*), will write.

Other exciting development grants include:

Support for the Academy Award®-winning producers of *The King's Speech* and Emmy® nominees for *Top of the Lake*, **Emile Sherman** and **Iain Canning**, who will work on a political thriller with producer **Rachel Gardner** (*Slow West*). **Los Alamos**, set in the 1940s, follows a disgraced intelligence operative, thrown into a world of political espionage when he investigates a murder at Los Alamos – a high-security military base. Joining the team again is *Lion* writer **Luke Davies**. The same production team will also develop **The North Wind** with **Alice Addison**, one of the writers on feature film *The Hunter* and TV mini-series *Devil's Playground*.

Venice Film Festival winner, **Amiel Courtin-Wilson** (*Ruin and Hail*), will write, produce and direct thriller drama, **Hawkwood**. The visceral story, set in the backwaters of Africa, tells the tale of an ageing mercenary's transcendental journey from chaos to grace.

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Australian novelists and playwrights will also get a chance to shine in this new slate of feature films. Works by Joanna Murray-Smith, Peter Robb and Peter Carey will all be adapted for the silver screen.

Dirty Deeds producers, **Bryan Brown** (*Gods of Egypt, Deadline Gallipoli*) and **Deb Balderstone**, will continue to develop **Joanna Murray-Smith's** dramatic comedy, ***Palm Beach***.

Peter Robb's novella is the basis of ***Pig's Blood***, about a young man from Naples sent to Australia to settle an old family score. When he arrives, a young, fun suburban girl distracts him and his original plan with a scheme of her own – to kill her stepfather. **Jannine Barnes** will produce the film and **Grant Scicluna**, winner of two Berlin International Film Festival awards for his short, *The Wildling*, will write and direct.

Top of the Lake writer, **Gerard Lee**, will adapt Peter Carey's novel, *Theft: A Love Story*, in which a man leaves jail and tries to revive his former life as a famous artist. He faces the challenge of changing times, which drives him to swindle and forge. **Alicia Brown, Melanie Coombs** and **Mish Armstrong** will produce ***Theft***.

The Talent Escalator program will offer emerging directors **Corrie Chen** and **Billie Pleffer** an opportunity to work with industry experts to gain firsthand practical experience. Corrie will work as a director's attachment to **Shawn Seet** on the Channel 7 mini-series *Peter Allen: Not the Boy Next Door*. Billie will be attached to director **Glendyn Ivin** (*Gallipoli, Puberty Blues, Last Ride*) on the six-part miniseries *The Beautiful Lie*.

"Today's funding announcement sees internationally based, award-winning Australian talent returning home to develop bold and original local stories. It's an exciting range of films that will draw interest from all ages, celebrate Australian icons and tell unique Australian stories. It is also fabulous to have two very talented emerging directors placed with leading productions and experts in the industry, allowing them the opportunity to nurture their professional development," said **Nerida Moore**, Screen Australia's Senior Development Executive.

Below is the full funding list and further information about each project and placement.

SINGLE-PROJECT DEVELOPMENT: FEATURE DEVELOPMENT

ADDITION

Genre Drama, Romantic Comedy

Producers Bruna Papandrea, Cristina Pozzan

Director Kate Dennis

Writer Harry Cripps

Synopsis A romantic comedy about an extraordinary woman and an ordinary man.

BLUE ROSE

Genre Drama

Producers Chryssy Tintner, Jan Eymann, Judi Levine, Mark Lazarus, Gary Hamilton

Executive Producer Mike Gabrawy

Director Ben Lewin

Writers Ben Lewin, Wain Fimeri

Synopsis Once regarded as the world's greatest pianist, an elderly Percy Grainger reflects on his youth, when his young heart yearned for freedom and his Swedish love, Ella, while it was bound to his fragile mother, Rose.

DANCE ACADEMY: THE COMEBACK

Genre Family

Producer Joanna Werner

Director Jeffrey Walker

Writer Sam Strauss

Synopsis Former ballet student Tara Webster needs to find the courage to return from a crippling injury in order to fulfil her destiny as a star ballerina.

HAWKWOOD

Genre Drama, Thriller, Crime

Writer/Director/Producer Amiel Courtin-Wilson

Synopsis Jack is an ageing mercenary at the end of his career – ricocheting from crime to crime in the backwaters of Africa. When he finds work as a domestic body guard for a young family in a gated community, Jack's struggle with violence slowly begins to devour him. *Hawkwood* is a visceral, transcendental journey from chaos to grace.

THE HIGH GROUND

Genre Action Thriller

Producers David Jowsey, Stephen Johnson, Witiyana Marika

Executive Producer Jack Thompson

Director Stephen Johnson

Writer Chris Anastassiades

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LOS ALAMOS**Genre** Thriller**Producers** Emile Sherman, Iain Canning, Rachel Gardner**Writer** Luke Davies**Synopsis** Spring, 1945. Michael Connolly, a disgraced intelligence operative, enters a labyrinth of secrets and espionage when he arrives at the high security military base of Los Alamos. Sent to investigate a seemingly open-and-shut murder case, Connolly is thrown into the heart of the Manhattan Project and must navigate a path through military protocol, political intrigue and personal agendas in order to uncover the truth in the most secretive place in the world.**LOST CAT****Genre** Comedy Romance**Producers** Julie Byrne, Andy Cox, Kristian Moliere**Writer** Andy Cox**Synopsis** When Katherine's cat Tibby disappears and then returns sleeker and healthier than before, Katherine's world is turned upside down sending her on a cat's eye view-of-the-world adventure with new lover, Annie. Based on the comic memoir by Caroline Paul and illustrated by Wendy MacNaughton.**THE NORTH WIND****Genre** Drama**Producers** Emile Sherman, Iain Canning, Rachel Gardner**Writer** Alice Addison**PALM BEACH****Genre** Comedy, Drama**Producers** Bryan Brown, Deborah Balderstone**Writer** Joanna Murray-Smith**PIG'S BLOOD****Genre** Black Comedy**Producer** Jannine Barnes**Writer/Director** Grant Scicluna**Synopsis** Sent to Australia from Naples to settle a 22-year-old score, Salvatore's plans get complicated by a trashy suburban girl who just wants to have a good time and kill her stepfather. Based on the novella by Peter Robb.**PIG WING PIE****Genre** Animated action adventure**Producer** Martha Coleman**Director** Simon Rippingale**Writer** Erica Harrison**PINK MIST****Genre** Romance, Action, Drama**Producer** Sylvia Wilczynski**Writer/Director** Kim Mordaunt**Synopsis** The lives of three people, from three corners of the world, collide in Africa.**Media enquiries** Annaliese Zuzarte, Screen Australia**Tel** +612 8113 5833 | **Mobile** 0404 877 887 | annaliese.zuzarte@screenaustralia.gov.au

SALVATION CREEK**Genre** Drama**Producer** Heather Ogilvie**Writer/Director** Megan Simpson Huberman**Synopsis** After her husband and brother die within days of each other, a woman throws in her job, sells her house and buys a rundown waterside shack in a tight-knit community on idyllic Pittwater. In a place that demands an open heart, she unexpectedly finds friendship and love. Based on Susan Duncan's bestselling memoir.**THEFT****Genre** Thriller**Producers** Alicia Brown, Melanie Coombs, Mish Armstrong**Writer** Gerard Lee**Synopsis** *Theft: A Love Story*, adapted from the novel by Peter Carey. Michael 'Butcher' Boone springs from jail and in an effort to rekindle his former reputation as a 'famous artist' immediately begins a new dark work, a painting based on one of his dead mother's tea-towels. But times have changed and the only way forward now is scam and forgery.**SINGLE-PROJECT DEVELOPMENT: FEATURE MATCHED FUNDING****NEST****Genre** Action Adventure**Producers** Ying Ye, Gary Hamilton, Mike Gabrawy, Mark Lazarus**Director** Kimble Rendall**Writers** Kimble Rendall, Nick Parsons**Synopsis** While a team of scientists desperately search for a colleague trapped in an ancient labyrinth, they must fight a swarm of deadly, man-eating funnel web spiders and discover the secret behind their power and intelligence – before it's too late.**SINGLE-PROJECT DEVELOPMENT: FEATURE MATCHED INITIAL OPTION FUNDING****THE WEDDING OFFICER****Genre** Drama, Romantic comedy**Producer** Martha Coleman**Synopsis** Based on the novel by Anthony Capella.**TALENT ESCALATOR PROGRAMS: INDUSTRY PLACEMENTS****CORRIE CHEN PLACEMENT**Director Corrie Chen will be attached to director Shawn Seet during the pre-production, principal photography and post-production of the Channel 7 mini-series *Peter Allen: Not the Boy Next Door*.**BILLIE PLEFFER PLACEMENT**Director Billie Pleffer will be attached to director Glendyn Ivin (*Gallipoli*, *Puberty Blues*, *Last Ride*) on the six-part miniseries *The Beautiful Lie*.**Media enquiries** Annaliese Zuzarte, Screen Australia**Tel** +612 8113 5833 | **Mobile** 0404 877 887 | annaliese.zuzarte@screenaustralia.gov.au