

OCEANIA

**WHEN THE
GANGS TAKE
OVER THE
HIGHWAY...**

**...Remember
he's on
your side**



**MEL GIBSON, JOANNE SAMUEL,
HUGH KEAYS-BYRNE, STEVE BISLEY, TIM BURNS, ROGER WARD in "MAD MAX."**
Produced by BYRON KENNEDY, directed by GEORGE MILLER, music by BRIAN MAY.
A Roadshow release.



Australia

History of Film Industry

Australia was introduced to Edison's peepshow Kinetoscope earlier, but projected film was first presented by Carl Hertz, an American magician who had been performing in London at the Egyptian Hall. Hertz came in contact with Robert Paul and his Theaterograph camera/projector. He bought a camera and several films and learned how to use them.

After his engagement finished, on March 26, 1896, Hertz boarded a ship for South Africa, where he was most likely the first person to show films at sea. On his arrival, Hertz gave his magic show and the first presentation of film on May 11, 1896 at the Empire Theatre of Varieties, in Johannesburg. Hertz visited various towns in South Africa and then went on to Australia.

Hertz gave a presentation of the Theaterograph to a special invited audience at the Melbourne Opera House on 17 August 1896, and four days later, on the 22nd, gave the first public performance to a paying audience. After his engagement there, Hertz left for a tour of Asia.

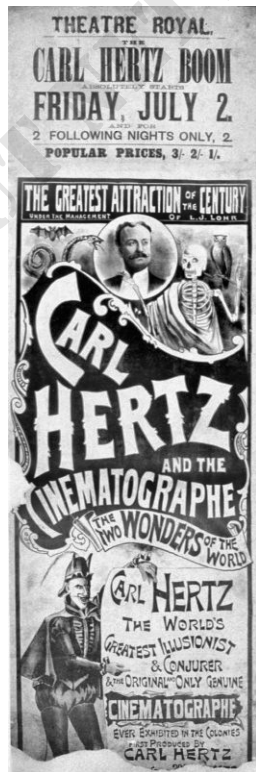
Henry Barnett, a photographer in Sydney, teamed up with Lumiere representative, Marius Sestier, and held a private screening at Goodman's Lyceum Theatre in Sydney on September 17, 1896. Soon afterwards, they opened the Salon Lumiere at 237 Pitt Street, Sydney where on October 27th, they premiered *Passengers Alighting from Ferry 'Brighton' at Manly* and a few other local films which are considered the first films produced in Australia.

For the next few months, numerous films were produced, including films of the VRC Derby on October 30th and the Melbourne Cup on November 3, 1896. These and others soon appeared in the Lumiere catalog.

Sestier parted with Barnett early in 1897 and continued to tour Australia until May, when he returned to France. Sestier left behind several trained cameramen and his equipment and basically established the native Australian film industry.

Barnett continued with the Salon Lumiere for a few months, then began filming a variety of Australian scenes. He then moved his photography business to London the following year.

The following year, Carl Hertz returned from his tour – as shown in the two daybills on the right. Notice that by this time, Hertz had changed to utilizing Lumiere equipment with his “Cinematographe.”



Other early Australians of note are:

Herbert Booth (right) was the son of William Booth (the founder of Australia's Salvation Army). In September, Booth arrived as the new head of the Australasia Salvation Army. One of the major aspects of Booth's position was to give lectures and show programs that would benefit and raise money for the Salvation Army.



Booth immediately recognized the potential use of film in his presentation (which had already incorporated the magic lantern). By 1897, short films were part of his lectures, and by the following year, the Salvation Army had gone into film production.



Australians enthusiastically embraced the new film industry. Within a few years, William Gibson, Millard Johnson, and John & Nevin Tait (Tait Brothers) combined Perry's multi-reel documentary knowledge with local bushranger legends and produced the world's first full length feature film, *The Story of the Kelly Gang*, six years before any other country was able to do so. This was considered similar to an Australian Robin Hood and was a success in both Australian and British theaters.

Since Australia was originally utilized as a British penal colony, Australia had created a very unique genre called "bush-ranger" stories. These stories had been around for a long time.

Notice this vaudeville daybill (right) from Edinburgh in 1851, which includes bush-rangers. It's no wonder that these Australian legends rapidly moved to film.

While Australians took to bushranger stories, the censorship boards did not. South Australia banned bushranger films in 1911, and Victoria followed in 1912. The NSW police department banned the production of bushranger films in 1912. *The Kelly Story*, however, outlasted the ban and has been re-filmed a number of times since. Unfortunately, only a few minutes of footage from the original film have survived.



By 1912, Australia had produced 30 feature films. In 1913, for some reason, all production, distribution and exhibition in Australia merged to form Australasian Films, called "the combine." Australasian abruptly stopped all feature length production. As the war broke out in Europe, there was an initial stimulation of the industry. However, as the war continued, Australia moved more inline with England. After the war, the repercussions were then very similar, with the Australian film industry floundering.

During the 1920's, the industry took a sharp decline. U.S. and British production companies took over the Australian distribution and exhibition chains. American films dominated the screens; Australian features were often excluded from cinemas. The few standouts were three sequels to the *Sentimental Bloke* which ended in 1925 when Lotte Lyell died. Most of the major films were not that successful, even the attempt at a super-production, *For the Term of His Natural Life*.

Australia had the distinction of being the world's leading importer of Hollywood films in 1922, 1926, 1927, and 1928. In 1927, 87% of the films shown in Australia were Hollywood made films, with 5% from England and 8% from other countries. When British quotas were introduced, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand created a film buying group to counter the Hollywood domination. In 1927, the Australian Royal Commission was held and defined "British" in such a way that Australian productions were included in the UK quota legislation. This did little to stop the decline, and by 1929, no productions at all were released.

The Sound Era

The Jazz Singer premiered in Sydney on December 29, 1928. By 1936, only four countries in the world were completely “wired for sound:” the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. As Australia had suffered in the 1920’s for its alignment with the British film industry, this time it reversed and catapulted Australia to the forefront. It seemed that with the immediate availability of films (most countries had to worry about providing only films in their language) plus the legislation of the quotas still in place, Australia braced for an influx in film production. “British-only” sound cinemas were opened in the early 1930’s in Sydney and Melbourne. Australasia reorganized and called its distribution arm “British Empire Films” to supply their theaters.

Cinesound was the most active of the Australian film studios in the early sound era. Cinesound was founded in 1932 as a subsidiary of the Greater Union Theaters to take advantage of the quota restrictions and provide the Greater Union theaters with local alternative programming. Stuart Doyle, who was the Managing Director of the Greater Union Theaters, appointed his assistant, Ken Hall, as the General Manager of Cinesound and head of production. Cinesound produced newsreels, documentary films and a popular series based on Steele Rudd’s Dad and Dave characters. These were also moderately popular in the UK. Cinesound produced a total of 17 films with Ken Hall directing all but one of the films.

The only real local competition to Cinesound in the early sound era was Efftee, named after the initials of its founder Frank Thring. Thring wanted to take advantage of the quota legislation and be part of a local stabilized film industry. Thring brought in RCA sound equipment and tried to focus on providing a full evening’s program, consisting of a feature film and a couple of shorts, similar to the goal of Cinesound. His films were moderately successful with his single star, George Wallace. Unfortunately, in 1938, the quota legislation was repealed and he lost support and had to close down.

In 1940, as World War II escalated, Cinesound turned more to producing newsreels when the Australian government decided to channel news to the public through the two existing newsreel companies in Australia: Cinesound and (Fox) Movietone. In 1942, Cinesound was used by the United States Signal Corps to prepare newsreels for the American troops in Asia. Cinesound also produced Australia’s first Academy Award for a war documentary short in 1943, titled *Kokoda Front Line* shot by Damien Parer.

After the war, J. Arthur Rank bought the controlling interest in the Greater Union theaters as an outlet for his British films and discouraged local film production, eliminating film production of Cinesound.

Charles Chauvel, who had been an independent film maker since 1926, actually became the dominant film maker after the war. Chauvel produced several films including Australia’s first color film, *Jedda* in 1955, using Aboriginal actors in lead roles.

From 1946 until 1969, Australian film production averaged just over two films per year, and none at all in 1948, 1963 and 1964. Australian films were basically films made in Australia by foreign production companies.

In 1970, as the population in Australia approached 12 million, there were 998 theaters and 188 drive-ins.

In 1973, the Australian film industry was finally rescued by the government funded creation of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. Suddenly, this program turned out a new generation of talent such as Gillian Armstrong, Peter Weir, Phil Noyce and Bruce Beresford and the launch of international careers for many screen actors including Judy Davis, Sam Neill and Mel Gibson.

Australia produced nearly 400 films between 1970 and 1985 - more than had been made in the history of the Australian film industry.

At the end of the 1970's, analysis of why a majority of government funded Australian films were not box office successes but certain independent films like *Mad Max* were extremely successful, caused a change in the structure, called 10BA. This created financial funding instead of government supervision which allowed more creativity of the studios and a lot more stable film industry. In 1988, the Film Finance Corporation was established to replace and expand the 10BA program which added more stability. Since then, the Australian film industry has made monumental advances, climbing to a box office share of 8% in 2001.

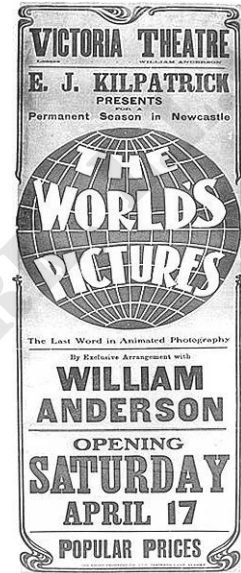


Australia First in Film

- * The first public film exhibition was on August 22, 1896 by Carl Hertz at the Melbourne Opera House. He used an R. W. Paul projector and films.
- * The first film produced in Australia was *The Melbourne Cup* on November 3, 1896.
- * The first feature film over an hour was *Story of the Kelly Gang* show on December 26, 1906 which was the first in the WORLD.
- * The first "talkie" was *Fellers* in 1930.

AUSTRALIAN FILM POSTERS

The initial film posters used in Australia were similar to the show bills used in other parts of the world. These consisted of typographical information about the shows/films that would be showing. Here are five examples:



With the popularity of graphic posters gaining favor throughout the world, the film industry adapted this style to its exhibitions. Beautiful stone lithographic posters were issued up to World War II. From the end of the war until the mid-1960's, Australia introduced a new process for printing its movie posters. Known as "hand litho," this new technique utilized zinc plates that were rolled on a large printing drum. The inks were applied to the plate by hand.



POSTER SIZES

Australia produces 25-60 films per year. Because the country is English-speaking, many of their movies and stars are shown and received as American. With the popularity of such stars as Paul Hogan, Mel Gibson and Russell Crowe, the Australian film industry is making an impact of the American market.

Australian posters primarily come in these sizes:

Three sheet - not as common - normally measures 41x80"

One sheet - measures 27x40". In 1939, one sheets were almost eliminated because of the paper shortage from World War II. This limited use remained until the 1970's.

Daybills - the most common and very sought after because of their size and artwork. There are three primary variations of daybills:

Early daybills were 15x40", half of the 30x40" production sheets. This size was the dominant until World War II when the size was reduced. Some had a space across top like the United States window cards to write times and location.

Starting with World War II, the size was reduced to 13x30" so three could be cut from the 30x40" production sheet instead of two.

The size was reduced again in the 1980's to 13x28" and then slowly became 13x27" and then 13x26" - on a glossy paper

Mini Daybill - measures 10x30 - these were a product of WWII because of the paper shortage. 4 of these could be produced from a 30x40 production sheet. Rare.

Some Australian lobby card sets were used, but were normally in black and white measuring 11x14" on card stock like the U.S. versions. Most are rare because of the limited number printed. It is more common to find U.S. lobby cards with Australian Censor markings on them.

An odd poster that was produced for a few major films in Australia was the Photo Sheet. This measures 27x40" and looks like six lobby cards and a credit tag across the bottom.

Also available in limited quantities was the Australian 12 Sheet and the 24 Sheet. The Australian 24 Sheet normally measures 104 x 232 which is slightly smaller than the US 24 Sheet

MARKS AND DISTINCTIONS

Printers


Fortunately, Australia is one of the countries that put the printer on the bottom of their posters. The difference is the size of the market and the way printing was handled. This is quite unusual. A lot of the printing was done by a process called hand litho (referenced above).

One oddity with Australian film posters is that it is common for different printers to print different sizes. The posters issued for the 1946 film *The Postman Always Rings Twice* are examples of this. Offset Printers printed the Australian one sheet while Simmons did the daybill.

Australia was the main supplier for New Zealand posters. Because of drastically different censorship restrictions, there were times that films were shown in New Zealand at totally different times than they were in Australia. This created a LOT of oddities, such as numerous restrikes and reissues - AND sometimes these were done by different printers.

Australia is known for smaller releases, so it was not unusual for a distributor to have additional posters printed when a release is a little more popular than anticipated. The oddity is that sometimes they are printed like the first run and sometimes even printed duo-tone for the SAME release. This creates a collector's nightmare.

Since there is no real numbering system on the posters, sometimes the printer information will help to date the poster. For example, one of the largest printers of Australian film posters is M.A.P.S. Litho Pty. In late 1974, they changed the font of their logo. The image on the left is the logo used through late 1974. The image on the right is after the change:



M.A.P.S. LITHO PTY. LTD.



M.A.P.S. Litho Pty. Ltd.

One of the most famous of the Australian printers is the Richardson Studio. A sample of Richardson artwork can be found on the daybill for the film *Swamp Fire*. An image of this poster is on the right.

John Richardson produced the artwork primarily for Paramount from the 1920's, when he opened, until the early 1960's. Richardson also produced artwork for other printers.

On our Australian site, we have started documenting the Australian printers and their addresses to help date their release.



CENSORSHIP

The censorship structure that Australia operates under is quite unique, as opposed to other countries with individual territory controls like Canada.

Under the Constitution, the Commonwealth Government has the power to make laws with regard to telecommunications (including broadcasting) and imported material, but not locally produced material. Locally produced material is under the jurisdiction of the individual State governments.

Because of this, censorship provisions vary greatly between each state or territory. A Commonwealth Film Censorship Board was first established under the provisions of the Customs Act in 1917.

In 1948, the censors banned - as a general rule - nearly all horror films. This was also a retrospective ban which meant that the vast majority of 1930's and 1940's horror films, including the Universal classics and films like *King Kong*, were banned and not allowed to be shown.

In 1949, Western Australia, Queensland and Tasmania signed agreements with the Commonwealth to delegate their film censorship powers and functions to the Commonwealth. The other States followed suit later.

In the early 1960's, censorship eased. This allowed early horror rereleases which had been released before the censorship ban to be shown, and major horror films that had been excluded shown for the first time. The problem was that they were heavily cut and edited so they could get either a For General Exhibition or Not Suitable for Children rating. All violent scenes were deleted, which was a major difference for the film.

Since 1970, when the censorship moved to more of a board control instead of individual preferences of the censors, there has been more relaxing of the censorship. BUT Australia still has a very stiff censorship policy which has heavily affected the film releases. It is still obligatory for theaters to show a censorship certificate on the screen immediately before each film begins.

What should poster collectors look for?

In 1970, the Commonwealth Film Censorship Board changed the way the ratings were displayed. They changed from words to letters. This is a major indicator when it comes to dating reissues.



Old System



New System