

ACOFS Bulletin

Australian Council of Film Societies

NUMBER 69

February 2022

This Issue contains information important to your office bearers and film society programmers. Please also pass it on to all your committee and other interested people - including those who are not on email.

And please ensure it does not get caught up in spam filters!

In this issue:

1. From the Editor
2. Member Societies
3. Discounted DVD screening rights fees.
4. Reports from State Federations
5. News from the DVD Distributors
6. NFSA New Additions
7. Drop Me a Line
8. Random Thoughts
9. Resolving DVD Sound Issues
10. Letters
11. Future Deadlines

1. From the Editor – Ian Davidson editor@acofs.org.au

Societies seem to be up and running again in 2022. But are all operating again and have all survived?

I have heard from many societies in 2022, so they are active again, but others have been very hard to contact – as if they have lost their mojos and still waiting for the world to return to normal. But what is normal?

We would like to hear from you about what your new “normal” is like. Do you have to do things differently now that Covid is still hovering in the community?

It has been almost three years since our last film society survey, and some societies have decided to close in that time, but I am pleased to note that other new societies have started, so the number of active film societies now seems to be about the same as three years ago.

Let's hope that we really are over the worst and that we can all get on with our lives, and that film societies can pick up where they left off and catch up with some of those films we have missed.



2. Member film societies

Over 145 Australian film societies, film clubs and film festivals are members of the six state Federations associated with ACOFS, and these represent a total of approximately 14,000 film society members across Australia.

The relevant State Federations which are members of ACOFS are:-

- Federation of Queensland Film Societies
- Federation of Victorian Film Societies inc.
- NSW Federation of Film Societies
- SA Federation of Film Societies
- Tasmanian Federation of Film Societies
- WA Federation of Film Societies

We invite you to explore the vast wealth of information and ideas available across the ACOFS website at www.acofs.org.au especially the ACOFS bulletin, the many Fact Sheets, and through the ACOFS website, contacts for each of the state federations, and their informative websites.

And don't hesitate to contact ACOFS if you have further questions or want to discuss starting or registering your Film Society! secretary@acofs.org.au

3. Discounted DVD screening rights fees.

To be able to take advantage of the special DVD screening rights agreement between ACOFS and the DVD distributors (who represent the DVD rights owners) a film society must meet the following conditions

- Be a current member of a State Film Federation, who in turn is a member of ACOFS.
- Seek permission to screen that DVD and receive permission from the rights owner, or their representative.
- Screen the DVD "non-theatrically" (ie to members only).
- Not charge individual admission to the screening.
- Not promote the screening without clearly stating "Members only".
- Screen each DVD once only for each rights payment made. (Although there may be a reason you need to screen it twice, in which case speak to the rights owner and they may offer a discount for the second screening)

A society wishing to obtain screening permission for a particular DVD needs to be able to quote their Federation membership number to the rights owner when they seek the rights. This is a membership number granted annually by the State Federations to prove membership with a Federation and hence, ACOFS.

To date ACOFS has not been able to negotiate any agreement with any streaming service (such as Netflix, HBO) regarding either screening downloaded material (either live or buffered) nor relating to the screening of DVDs of material produced by the streaming services. In some cases a streaming service may have in its catalogue, material which is sourced from another distributor and available on DVD commercially, in which case you would seek the screening rights from that original distributor.

4. Reports From State Federations

FVFS – Victoria

The FVFS has waived membership fees in 2022 for all existing 2021 members, although new members would be welcome but will need to pay the normal membership fees.

Two societies have opted not to rejoin the FVFS in 2022 (one because they have closed, the other because they wish to operate outside FVFS guidelines). A further two appear to be in recess because we cannot contact them. There are currently 78 active film societies or film festivals in the FVFS.

5. News From the DVD Distributors

These titles have been provided by the respective distributors as being either new acquisitions or titles of interest to film societies. Only distributors who have provided information are included here, but all distributor contacts are still listed in ACOFS Information Sheet 3B.

These lists are an indication of who holds the screening rights for the films/DVDs, but these distributors can not necessarily supply the DVDs.

ACOFS Fact Sheet 3B, which is updated regularly, can be downloaded from www.acofs.org.au/resources. The contact details are included here only where they have changed recently. The latest update of Fact Sheet 3B was on 24 June 2021, so if you don't have the latest, download it from www.acofs.org.au/resources.

Amalgamated Movies

Collective
Dissident, The
French Exit
Girls Can't Surf
Last Call
Painter And The Thief, The
Peninsula
Peter Rabbit 2
Runaway Joe
Saint Maud
Supernova
Unholy, The
United Way, The
Vault, The



Also, see their website:- www.amalgamatedmovies.com

Antidote Films

Antidote charge just \$35+ GST for screening rights for most of their DVD titles. For example:

Alick and Albert. 93 min.
Love Opera

Limelight

(Rights Booked through Amalgamated)

Beats
Come Back Anytime
Diana's Wedding
Escape from Mogadishu
Everything Went Fine
Gardener, The
God of the Piano
Helmut Newton: The Bad and the Beautiful



Jonsson Gang, The
Mermaid in Paris, A
Mystery of Henri Pick, The
Rosie
School Life
Skies of Lebanon
Son, A



Pivot Pictures

Family, A
Golden Voices
Killing of Two Lovers, The
Lion Spy
Love You Like That
Miss Marx
Preparations to be together for an Unknown Period of Time

Roadshow

According to Domenic Malsom, all up-coming film availabilities are listed on the Collections section of the Roadshow website at: <https://ppl.roadshow.com.au/collections> .

Ronin Films

For member prices refer to the “private purchase” price, but remember you then have to pay the appropriate screening rights fee. Ronin will accept the recommended \$50 plus GST for DVD screening rights. www.roninfilms.com.au for details and purchase prices. Many of their titles are now available from KANOPY STREAMING, but approach Ronin for the DVD or digital file and screening rights at a film society. Craig McConnell on orders@roninfilms.com.au

Eg: Skin of Others, The

Titan View

Their new contact is john@titanview.com

Umbrella Entertainment

For a full list of all Umbrella Entertainment Public Performance Rights List, contact sales@umbrellaent.com.au . Kristy is no longer at Umbrella, so your new contact there is nikita@umbrellaent.com.au

Apache territory
Apex
Australians at War (Box Set)
Big Boss, The (1971) (BR)
Big Clock, The & This Gun for Hire. (BR)
Buena Vista Social Club (BR)
Come Play
Cosi (BR)
Deathcheaters (BR)
Devil’s Playground (BR)
Last Black Man in San Francisco
Luce
Man From Hong Kong (BR)
Merry Christmas Mr Lawrence (BR)
Never Look Away (BR)
Operation Mad Ball & Wackiest Ship in the Army, The (BR)
Pan’s Labyrinth (BR & DVD)
Paper Tigers, The
Picnic (1955)



Playing Beatie Bow (BR)
Puberty Blues (BR)
Risen
Robin Hood Men in Tights
Run Lola Run (BR)
Sex and Zen (BR) Rated R
Shame
Silent Hill (BR)
Sparks Brothers, The
Stir Crazy & Hunky Panky (BR)
There's Always Tomorrow (1955)
Tin Drum, The (BR)



Contact theatrical@umbrellaent.com.au

Call on 03 9020 5136 or sales@umbrellaent.com.au

For Australian titles in the Umbrella catalogue, Umbrella may be able to assist you to invite the director to attend your screening for a Q and A.

(Contact Umbrella for a full list of non-theatrical titles or 4K restorations.)

Umbrella also invite you to inspect their new on-line store. www.Umbrellaent.com.au

Vendetta

New contact: henry@vendettafilms.co.nz

Match, The
Rose Plays Julie
Show, The
When Hitler Stole Pink Rabbit

6. NFSA New Additions

The following are listed on the National Film & Sound Archive website as having been added in the last 90 days.

Berlin Um Die Ecke (BR)
Die Stadt von morgen – Experimentierfeld Asien. (BR)

7. Drop me a Line

Thank you to all the readers who have emailed me. If you want to have your say, please send all comments, suggestions and articles to ian24davidson@gmail.com

This newsletter is intended to reflect information and news from all societies, so please let us know about anything of interest at your society.

Many thanks for all contributions. Ian Davidson, editor.

8. Random Thoughts

Occasionally the characters in a movie tell jokes. Here are some good ones:

1. Nick (Jason Bateman) told the sloth this riddle at the DMV. "What do you call a three-humped camel? Pregnant!"
2. In Jurassic Park, Tim (Joseph Mazzello) asks: "What do you call a blind dinosaur?". Dr. Alan Grant: "I don't know. What do you call a blind dinosaur?" Tim: "A Do-you-think-he-saurus."
3. In Coming to America, Saul (Eddie Murphy) tells: "A man goes into a restaurant. He sits down, he's havin' a bowl of soup. He says



to the waiter, 'Waiter, come taste the soup.' Waiter says, 'Is there something wrong with the soup?' He says, 'Taste the soup.' Waiter says, 'Is there something wrong with the soup? Is the soup too hot?' The man says, 'Will you taste the soup?' 'What's wrong? Is the soup too cold?' 'Will you just taste the soup?' 'All right, I'll taste the soup. Where's the spoon?' 'Ah-ha!'"

4. In Bicenennial Man, "Two cannibals were eating a clown. One turns to the other and says, 'Does this taste funny to you?'"
5. In 28 Days Later Mark (Noah Huntley) says "A man walks into a bar with a giraffe. They both get pissed. The giraffe falls over. The man goes to leave and the bartender says, 'Oi. You can't leave that lyin' there.' And the man says, 'No. It's not a lion. It's a giraffe.'"
6. In Fargo, Marge (Frances McDormand) says "Say Lou, didya hear the one about the guy who couldn't afford personalized plates, so he went and changed his name to J3L2404?"
7. In Mary Poppins, Albert (Ed Wynn) said "Yesterday, when the lady next door answered the door, there was a man there, and the man said to the lady, 'I'm terribly sorry, I just ran over your cat.'" 'I'd like to replace your cat.' And the lady said, 'That's all right with me, but how are you with catching mice?'"
8. In the Pursuit of Happyness, Chris Jr. (Jaden Smith) said "Hey Dad, you wanna hear something funny? There was a man who was drowning, and a boat came, and the man on the boat said 'Do you need help?' and the man said 'God will save me.' Then another boat came and he tried to help him, but he said 'God will save me.' Then he drowned and went to Heaven. Then the man told God, 'God, why didn't you save me?' and God said 'I sent you two boats, you dummy!'"

9. Resolving DVD Sound Issues

Hi All ACOFS members & ACOFS Bulletin readers

Have you, or your film society, had any of these problems?

Recently, a northern Tasmanian film society sought advice about the sound problems they face when screening DVDs in their regular venue. They reported that their venue's boxy shape makes it difficult to achieve the correct acoustics, with many films having bits of dialogue that are hard to hear. This especially applies when characters in films speak with a broad regional accent, or are soft-spoken. They wondered if specially designed DVDs were available whose acoustics would suit larger venues.

It was clear from the replies, including one each from Victoria & WA, that sound clarity is a widespread problem for film societies & their members. This is what they advised:

Most DVDs come with 5+1 channels of sound. If these are all lumped together into two stereo speakers, there is not much you can do about it. But if you are using 5+1 speakers (ie two main front speakers, two smaller rear surround speakers, a centre front speaker, & also a sub-woofer) then most of the sound effects & music will come from the two front stereo speakers - with much of the dialogue coming from the front centre speaker. If so, you can usually boost this centre channel by several decibels to increase your members' chances of hearing the dialogue clearly. Incidentally, DVD sound systems often have multiple settings to choose from - ie for use in cinemas, halls, & lounge-rooms etc. Use trial and error to pick the best option.

However, another film society advised that if you run Dolby 5.1 through a normal stereo system, ambient sounds tend to amplify compared to the dialogue. So, if your DVD has soundtrack options, & you are running through a normal stereo system, it may be wiser to switch instead to Dolby 2.1.

Sometimes accents are hard to follow. This may apply in some American films, and also with Scottish, Irish, Indian, & Caribbean dialogue - and even some regional English dialects. In this situation, you could try displaying the subtitles. These may be marked as "captions for the hard of hearing" - if they are in the same language as the

movies. Their disadvantage is that they often add descriptions of the sound effects as well as the dialogue. Granted, while that's a slight distraction, it's surely a small price to pay for an improved understanding of the film!

In addition, many film viewers find diction is often mumbled in today's movies - particularly those from the USA. Unfortunately, there's little that can be done about that apart from showing the subtitles - if available. Alternatively, you could encourage your members to accept that this is naturalistic (ie how people actually speak to each other in real life), and you don't have to hear every word - just the important ones, and the conversation's general gist!

One society asked: "Have you considered using furnishings to improve sound? If so, have you tried hanging up curtains or drapes, or putting down extra floor coverings?" The intention of both of these would be to reduce the effect of sound either bouncing around the room, or being reflected around it.

However, another film society's solution, in a hall where there are no soft furnishings or curtains, is to use just two 1000 watt speakers - placing them together in the front centre of the hall, and positioned forward from the screen. This has improved dialogue, especially for those of their audience who are 'hard of hearing'.

Another reply told of how their film society has a 10+ year old Sony cinema 'home' 7.2 theatre surround sound system with 10 speakers. This gives them almost the same clarity as in a commercial cinema. Despite this they find that many films have less than perfect sound, and diction is often poor. So they now run subtitles whenever these are available.

They also say that, with subtitles, the base of the projected image needs to be above head height - so everyone can see them. This might require the projection to be made smaller, so that the film's base can be raised. Naturally, this depends on the hall's design and the height of the screen.

There were also some suggestions from individuals. One noted that lip reading is a natural response to 'aging hearing'. Perhaps older film viewers are already doing this at our movies. Another suggested trying out different seating positions in the film society's regular venue - to suit 'aging eyes, ears, and neck!' He reported that, in some positions in his society's venue (a tiered theatre) that his eyes favoured, he often heard virtually nothing unless he used his hands to "cup" his ears - despite this being quite tiring when watching a 2 hour film! But then he tried moving halfway down, and sat right in the centre, and at last could hear pretty well everything. Pleasingly, his eyes & neck seemed to manage Ok as well!

I hope these answer your queries if you have had any, and will be helpful to your film society and members.

David Harcombe [ACOFS & TFOFS] August 2021

10. Letters

Letter 1. If a DVD does not arrive

This query was received by David Harcombe - secretary ACOFS.

"Where the distributor has agreed and the film has been paid for but it doesn't arrive in time for the film. What should a film society do? Can they put one on that they have in stock, and then acknowledge this to the distributor - hopefully with the distributor's acceptance of a late payment etc?"

Response From I Davidson. (ACOFS)

"I don't know that this has ever happened in the situation where a society is using the ACOFS DVD rights agreement, because the agreement is written around the situation where the society owns the DVD. As most societies book their rights a year at a time, there is plenty of time to ensure that a DVD is available before even booking the rights, and then if there is a delay in buying the DVD, there is plenty of time for it to arrive. If a society does not have the DVD as late as the day before

the screening, the distributors I have dealt with are pretty accommodating, and willing to cancel the invoice and the society can then substitute another title at the last minute.

ACOFs advice to societies is not to promote any program for which rights have not been approved and for which a DVD has not yet been sourced. If they need to do so, they should mark the program as "To be confirmed - subject to availability" In the unusual case where a distributor has offered to supply a DVD but it has not eventuated as promised, then they are responsible for helping the society find an alternative.

No society I have dealt with is willing to rent a DVD because of a/ the possibility of it being damaged and b/ the possibility it is not available when wanted."

And a subsequent thought....

"Surely it is covered already by the dot points in ACOFS Fact sheet 3B?

Maybe ACOFS should just remind members more often, to re-read Fact Sheet 3B"

Comment from D Harcombe (Secretary ACOFS)

"You're right about the need to read the rule book. But I know that plenty of committee members, in their enthusiasm &/or haste, do not read the rule book- or fail to absorb the finer details to the level they should. Of the two film societies that I know well, one told me that they never advertise their program until it's confirmed by the distributors. The other one appears to me to advertise in advance. I suspect others probably do so as well.

Let's hope I'm wrong, but I bet I'm not!"

Letter 2. Booking Resource for Film Societies.

From: **Simon** simon@ourfilm.club

Hello!

I've been running a film club in Sydney for about five years now but Covid has brought us a few challenges.

Number one is the social distance requirements for venues, taking the upstairs room of the bar that hosts us down from a comfortable thirty to a narrow fourteen attendees that means some members unfortunately have to miss out.

We had been running off of Facebook Events which worked well up until we needed to implement the cap, and, nothing! The leading social media behemoth had no way of managing a cap never mind a waitlist, so, having searched around for something suitable and cost effective and finding nothing, I wrote my own:

<https://demo.ourfilm.club/>

(there's a little behind the scenes video of how the administrator account works too)

<https://www.loom.com/share/dc7301ab423b4b4ebcd67417f8ac1c89>

This makes adding events easier (as I added an open movie database lookup to pull in basic movie details) as well as making it easy for people to register their interest in attending, and, once the cap hits, managing a waitlist (with first come first served in terms of anyone cancelling their attendance, the first on the waitlist is then marked as going and emailed to let know).

Down the line I'm looking to add some nice to have features, like an admin section to manage members, the look and feel, mailing lists and setting the website up as a "progressive web application" which would allow members to

install it like an app on their phone for ease of access. But I figured right now is when people will need to manage RSVPS so have launched an "early bird" version with just the minimal features to do so. We've actually been running it a few months for our film club and have worked out the kinks and processes so it should be reliable and responsive from the start for new film societies.

To cover the costs of domains and hosting I'm looking to allow the first ten sign-ups to have lifetime membership at \$50 a year, usual price being \$10 a month (or \$100 a year discount) for everyone else.

If this is something you'd feel your film societies would appreciate having access to, I look forward to discussing the matter further.

Kind regards, Simon

11. Future Deadlines

We aim to distribute The ACOFS Bulletin at the start of February, May, August and November and would be happy to receive articles for publication at any stage – but note our deadlines are the end of the month preceding publication.

Items we hope to receive include new acquisitions and special DVD announcements from distributors, and items of interest to our film society readers, especially from members of other film societies.

ACOFS - Australian Council of Film Societies

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If you want to have the ACOFS Bulletin emailed to you directly, please email me at editor@acofs.org.au Our website is www.acofs.org.au

NOTES:

1. *If clicking on a highlighted link in this newsletter does not take you to your Internet browser, try copying it and pasting it into your browser search bar.*
2. *Please ensure your spam filter is NOT set to capture our emails which include relevant material from ACOFS, such as this Bulletin.*

ACOFS and the State federations do not necessarily endorse the statements or view contained in any personal statements in articles, letters to the editor or in the films mentioned in this Bulletin.