

ACOFS Bulletin

Australian Council of Film Societies

NUMBER 73

February 2023

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 your Bulletin does not get caught up in spam filters!

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

In my last report (Nov 2022) I said that very few members have experienced difficulty in obtaining requested DVDs because of the impact of streaming services. I have since come across one movie that I wish to screen, that the distributor has stated “No DVDs have been created for this film in Australia. It is only available as a digital download or to stream. The reality is that fewer films are being produced for DVD now and a lot of films will only be available on digital moving forwards.”

If this film is available from overseas with English subtitles I will be able to purchase a copy and still pay the local distributor for the screening rights. If I still cannot get a DVD, I will be able to download the film digitally (legally of course), and pay the screening rights to the Australian distributor as usual. All I need to do is get familiar with handling and screening downloaded movies! Hopefully they will still be High Definition, and 5+1 Audio!

Ian Davidson. Editor, ACOFS Bulletin.



2. From the ACOFS President

c by Prodos

Who Shot Shakespeare?

Here's something weirdly wonderful you might like to try for your film society!

Last year the creative whirlwinds of **Barossa Film Club** (SA) hosted a mini-film festival which included screening four films of live theatre from “Australian Theatre Live”.



Huh? A filmed stage-play? Why would anyone want to watch something like that?
I haven't had a chance to watch any of these film productions yet, but when the tireless Barossa Film Club president, **Robert Chrzaszcz**, told me about it earlier today, I was intrigued ... and asked him to send me some details. So here's the trailer to "The Loves of Apollo and Dafne by Cavalli". Do give it a whirl!
The singing is amazing, the camera work, really nice, and the staging and costumes for this production, colourful, sometimes bizarre and often hilarious:
<https://youtu.be/uPa8uwGiYYo>
Yes, it works! Filmed stage plays! Thanks, Robert. Now, I get it!
To find out more, email **Sean Landis**: sean@australiantheatre.live

International BFF?

Many (most!) film societies enjoy presenting a diversity of films – including foreign language – non-English -- films. There's a lot of beautiful work out there, and it's a thrill to discover it and share it!

But as well as "foreign" films, there are also a lot of "foreign" film *societies* out there! All over the world! Cuba, Mexico, Morocco, Portugal, Iran, Spain, Ecuador, Germany, India ... and the list goes on.

What do they screen? What does film culture mean to them? How are they similar to us and how are they different?

Most important of all: Can we learn something from them? Is there knowledge and resources we can share for mutual benefit? Or just because it's a good and proper thing to do?

In Australia anyone with a semi-orderly mind and an extra-ordinary passion can set up and run a viable film society. And the *really* smart ones of course (!) join an ACOFS-affiliated state Federation!

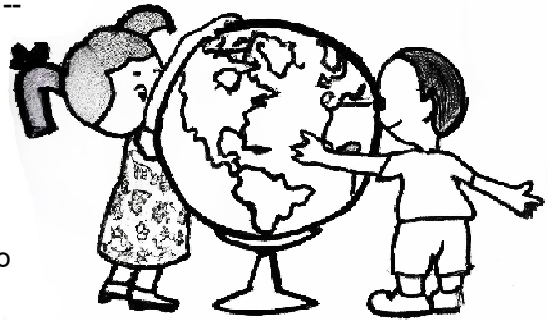
However ... it's not that straightforward in some of the countries listed above. I'll let you guess which.

Yet the **International Federation of Film Societies (IFFS)** – through the national representative bodies of all these countries (organisations, sort of like ACOFS) – does its best to keep films and free speech flowing across the globe. It tries hard. Sometimes it succeeds. It's harder than it looks.

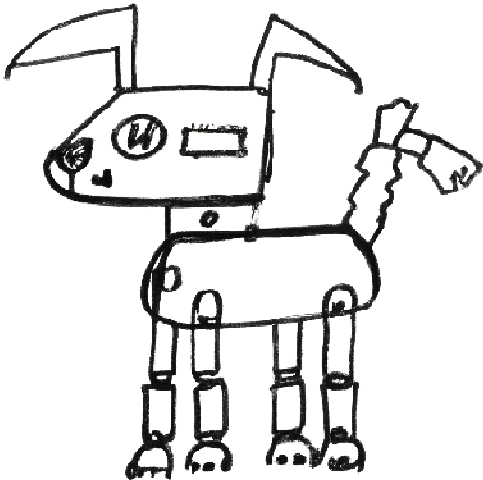
It's interesting and odd to me that neither Canada nor the USA are represented at the IFFS. One of the reasons is that neither of these countries has a formalised, structured film society movement. Why is that? I've done a lot of research on the once-ginormous film society movements of both these incredible nations. Perhaps we can talk about it in a future Bulletin. There are many lessons to be learned!

Earlier this evening I was speaking with the President of the IFFS, **João Paulo Macedo** (he's from Portugal, in case you were wondering) and put a proposal to him. If he accepts it – and I don't see why he wouldn't -- interesting things are coming soon to our fair land. But if he doesn't, we'll do it ourselves anyway. Whatever.

I think it would be just great to get to know more about all those other film societies. Don't you? One of the most beautiful qualities of Australian culture is how OUTWARD LOOKING it is. As a People we have enormous curiosity about ... everything!



FISMO™ Update



In the previous ACOFS Bulletin, I reported on the development of a new app I'm building for the Film Society Movement. It's still in development.

Although the hope was to have **FISMO 1.0** released for general testing by the end of last year, I decided to swap out one of the Open Source scripts (i.e. programming languages) I was using and, instead, license a different one - an expensive proprietary script – thus adding several months to development as I negotiated the license and scrounged up the money for it. But it was worth it for the smoother, faster functionality it will give the app.

I've been doing most of the scripting/programming myself, but have now raised funds via (the non-government-funded non-profit) *Screen & Study Institute* to hire a software engineer to help out with one small

(but vital) segment of FISMO's software stack that's eluded me so far.

FISMO™ will locate the correct non-theatrical screening rights issuer for any DVD you're looking for with at least 85% reliability.

FISMO™ is trainable. Among other things, that means whenever it fails, it can be adjusted to be less likely to fail next time it faces a similar scenario.

FISMO™ will also provide other practical assistance & tools to those film societies (and Federations) who are interested in trying it. But more about that after version 1 comes online.

Hundreds of hours have already gone into its development and I feel confident we'll have a demo for you very soon.



Something FISMO™ can't do. Yet.

A Film Society in NSW contacted me recently. There was an Indie film they were very keen to screen ... but were unable to find the Distributor in order to purchase the non-theatrical screening rights for a showing.

Actually, they did successfully identify the Distributor – who was also the film's Producer -- but the Producer's website was down for maintenance ... and there were no contact details anywhere.

The first thing I did, was to enter the domain name into *The Wayback Machine* at archive.org. For a lot of websites, *The*

Wayback Machine records snapshots of previous versions of those websites. My hope, of course, was that I might be able to find a contact email address from an earlier version of the site – before it went into “maintenance mode”. But, no luck with that, this time.

However, the next method bore fruit! I was able to locate the Distributor by doing a “domain whois” search on the domain name of the website. From that information, I was able to identify the administrator or “technical contact” for the domain name. I then wrote to that email address and – Voila! -- succeeded in reaching the Producer/Distributor (a lovely fellow, by the way). We exchanged emails, then spoke on the phone & this fine fellow was more than happy to make his rights available to our friends in NSW.

FISMO™ Score? Humans: 1. Machines: 0.

Redesigning the ACOFS website



I'm currently redesigning the ACOFS website. The new design is being built offline and will go live when FISMO™ does. The aim is to make the ACOFS website work more smoothly with FISMO™. And with Search Engines. Oh! And with humans too. Just like you and me.

Need a simple, free website for your Film Society?

You can have one now!
If your Film Society is a member of an ACOFS-affiliated

Federation, you can get a simple, free, fully maintained website.

It will include an **"About"** page with details about your film society. A **"How to Join"** page. A **"Contact"** page for those who want to get in touch. And a **"Program"** (or "Programme") page listing your year's screenings and events – including trailers of upcoming films for your website visitors to watch.

The cost is zero. There is no advertising embedded into the website. There are no catches. And whenever you need your website updated, that gets done for free, also. Your site is always secure, up-to-date, and fully maintained.

To get online now, email me directly to find out more: prodos@prodos.com



ACOFS AGM 2022

Other than the shocking news that I became the ACOFS President (whatever that means) the most significant thing decided at the AGM was to look over the ACOFS Constitution to make sure it complies with the current Act governing Associations.

This is not an invitation to a revolution and I won't be supporting any kind of major overhaul

or anyone's pet projects. We're talking here about minor tweaking – if that.

Personally, I don't see it as a high priority, but the meeting decided it, so there you have it. Democracy at work.

You might also be interested to know that the AGM was conducted using a system called GAGGLE. It's not a video conferencing system. It's a mailing list system. It uses email.

It's the second time we've used GAGGLE. The first time worked better because I didn't have to chair the meeting AND operate the technology at the same time, the way I had to do this time around (since our beloved then-Chairman -- the singing, dancing, personality extraordinaire -- Mark Horner) took ill a few hours before the AGM was about to start. Holy Freakin' Moly!

You can find out more about using this approach for *your* meetings at GAGGLE.mail. It was praised by Delegates in WA, QLD, NSW, and SA.

PS: As it's a non-standard method of conducting meetings, I did run it past a lawyer to ensure it complied with the Act's "Use of Technology" clause.

Until next time,

Stay Fabulous & Make it Awesome with ACOFS!

At Your Service,

Prodos S N Marinakis

3. Reports from State Federations

3.1 From Victoria – FVFS

Re-affiliation with the FVFS was due by 1st January, and like every year, less than 50% (only 40) had re-affiliated by the due date. We know that two film societies have ceased operating in the last two years, but we will not know if there are more until we hear from them (or not!). We have one new society and have enquiries from five more potential new societies, so hopefully we will end up with a net increase again this year. What is noticeable with the societies re-affiliating in 2023 is how many of them have fewer members than before COVID. Not that we can blame COVID directly, but rather, few societies have been seeking new members over this period and have suffered through natural attrition.

This year, the FVFS has had some membership applications from film societies that allow paid admission to screenings, or request a small charge from members who attend a screening (in order to keep the membership fee down). As a result, the FVFS has re-worded the requirements to be a member of the FVFS. The majority of FVFS member film societies screen DVDs to members only, in a public location. Their screenings are therefore defined as "non-theatrical" and they are able to make use of the ACOFS DVD rights agreements, and benefit from reduced DVD rights payments as a result. Screenings of film societies that admit non-members or charge for admission are defined as commercial screenings and are expected to pay the higher screening rights fees, similar to those being charged for screenings rights when using DCP equipment or physical film. Our Information sheet 01 (available from www.fvfs.org.au) expands on our acceptable membership categories.

4. The IFFS Quijote Award

Just received, from the International Federation of Film Societies, is the announcement of their short list and final winner of their Quijote Award. In their words

"Curiously, the three of us chose the same films, although in different order: Argentina, 1985, Los reyes del mundo, La caja, El mundo de Nelsito and El suplente. And, after a long debate and after each one of us justified our choice, we decided that the film chosen for the Quixote 2022 Award was the Colombian film Los Reyes del Mundo by Laura Mora. Our justification, as we put it in the Act, was: "for being the film that in our opinion comes closest to the film club spirit, both formally and in terms of its content. For having a great script that delves into Latin American social and cultural issues with an impeccable formal approach based on a rhythm adjusted to the needs of the story and a photography that influences and defines the characters at all times. For dealing with a burning issue in Colombia, such as the expropriation of land and the difficulty of recovering it. For dealing with the subject of adolescence without condescension. And, finally, for its praise of friendship, so necessary in our times"."

5. DVD Screening rights

Are you new to programming or getting screening rights? Or have you just forgotten the essentials? Well here is a brief overview of your obligations and the process that

ACOFS has put in place to enable quick and easy confirmation that DVD screening rights are cleared before screenings.

It is a legal requirement that anyone wishing to screen a DVD (or movie) in a public place or where public can attend, obtain approval to do so from the rights owner, and this usually results in a modest fee,

Organisations, such as film societies that screen non-theatrically (ie to members only and do not charge for admission) may qualify for rights fees that are significantly cheaper than the commercial rates paid by any cinema or group who charge for admission to screenings.

The term “Non-theatrical” is an important term, but not well understood. It does not relate to the venue where you screen, but is a definition of the type of audience you screen to. A “Non-theatrical” audience is one of “members only”, and does not include anyone who has paid for individual admission. Examples are film societies, motel chains, clubs, tour buses, etc.

ACOFS has put in place guidelines for finding the rights owners of each DVD and applying for the associated cheaper rights fee. It is explained fully in ACOFS Fact Sheets 3A and 3B which are free to download from www.acofs.org.au/resources,

In summary:

- Decide on a draft program and check that you can obtain the DVD. Note that the rights owner is not obliged to supply a DVD, either for purchase or loan!
- Search the on-line classification index at <https://www.classification.gov.au/> for your preferred titles, and find the company that sought classification (ie censor) clearance. The listing may not mention a DVD, but never mind. The owner of the rights in one technology is likely to own the rights in all technologies.
- Check ACOFS Fact Sheet 3B to determine which company represents that rights owner, and determine the contact details.
- Notify that contact of your desire to screen that DVD, the time and place, and your film society and expected size of the audience. Quote your membership number (allocated annually by your State Federation).
- If approved, you will normally receive a confirmation within a few days, and an invoice closer to the screening date.
- Note that the screening rights for older films may have expired. That means it may not be possible to obtain permission to screen that particular movie unless you find the owner of the international rights, which may not be easy, and ACOFS cannot assist.
- Films made for streaming services are often not available on DVD, or if they are, permission may not be possible to screen to your society.
- Screenings of movies on DCP or physical film are not covered by this agreement, nor is any situation where public is admitted or anyone pays for admission. The normal commercial rates apply in these cases.

6. News From the DVD Distributors

These lists are an indication of who holds the screening rights for the films/DVDs, but these distributors can not necessarily supply the DVDs. The contact details are included here only where they have changed recently.

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. This information sheet, which is updated regularly, can be downloaded from www.acofs.org.au/resources

The latest update of Fact Sheet 3B was on 2 Feb 2023, so if you don't have the latest, download it from www.acofs.org.au/resources.

Note. ACOFS receives regular emails on all released titles as well as emails in response to specific requests for Non-Theatrical titles, so the following list may include some titles which do not have non-theatrical rights. At least this list identifies the company who is most likely to hold those rights!

Amalgamated Movies

Bandit
Black Site
Bullet Train
Invitation, The
Lancaster
Prizefighter
Quiet Girl, The
Woman King, The
Where the Crawdads sing
Footrot Flats
Bosch and Rockit

March 30th Onwards:
I Wanna Dance With Somebody
Lyle Lyle Crocodile

April 15th Onwards:
Man Called Otto, A

Antidote Films

Boys Who Said NO! The
Chef Antonio's Recipes for
Revolution
Los Hermanos - The Brothers
Love Opera
Moment in the Sun, A
Monster Specimen, The
Hillend History Collection:, The
After the Rush (4 disc set)
Gold and BO Holterman
Golden Days Revisited, The

Now Streaming on Watch.Antidote

Meet the Wallas
Boys who said NO! The
Chef Antonio' Recipes from a
Revolution
Brothers, The
Streaming for Free:
School Life
Irish Pub, The
Utopia
Waco
Death of a Gentleman
Most Dangerous Man in America,
The
Coming War on China, The

iCandy Pty Ltd

Andrew Curry
cuz@icandyproductions.com.au
0403067879
"A Boy Called Sailboat"

Limelight Distribution

(Rights Booked through Amalgamated)
Country Cabaret
Good Doctor, A
Huda's Salon
Jack Mimoun & The Secrets Of Val Verde
Redemption Of A Rogue

Madman

(DVD rights booked through Amalgamated Movies)

Emily
Fire of Love
Worst Person in the World, The
Velvet Queen, The

Flee
You Won't be Alone
Naval NY

Pivot Pictures

lou@pivotpictures.com.au

Conference, The
Taste of Hunger, A
Murder Party
Darklands
Ramblin Racer

Potential Films

lisa@potentialfilms.com

Bad Luck Banging Or Loony Porn
Drive My Car
It Must Be Heaven
Marina Abramovic in Brazil - The
Space Between
Night of the 12th, The --- March
Rockabul
Song Keepers, The
Splice Here ---- TBC

Third Wife, The
Three Summers
Trouble With Being Born, The
Wajib
Wheel Of Fortune and Fantasy ---
February
Wild Things
Working Woman

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> .

Operation Fortune: Ruse de Guerre

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*

Japarta

My Rembetika Blues

Umbrella Entertainment

Go to www.umbrellaent.com.au/screenings to view their full catalogue and complete a
booking enquiry. Bluray and DVD materials can also be purchased via their
webstore directly. www.Umbrellaent.com.au

Or contact nikita@umbrellaent.com.au or theatrical@umbrellaent.com.au or call on 03
9020 5136.

Contact Nikita to be added to the mailing list of new releases.

*For Australian titles in the Umbrella catalogue (of which there many), Umbrella may be
able to assist you to invite the director to attend your screening for a Q and A.*

7. 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, 1957 - BR

The Case, You, 2020 - DVD

Freies Land, 2019 - DVD

The Meaning of Hitler, 2020 - DVD

8. Drop me a Line

Thank you to all the readers who have emailed me in the past. 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.

Ian Davidson, editor.

9. Random Thoughts

The recent release of "A Man Called Otto" is a clear remake of the 2015 Swedish film "A Man Called Ove". There was not even an attempt to disguise the fact, as the title was so similar.

How many other examples do you know of straight remakes – or copies of films into a different language, with, presumably, a different cultural background?

10. Letters

None this quarter. Where are all our budding authors – or stirrers?

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. Amusing anecdotes are always welcome.

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If you want to have the ACOFS Bulletin emailed to you directly, please email me at

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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.