


TRANSMISSION

presents

Fred Schepisi's

THE EYE OF THE STORM



Starring

Geoffrey Rush

Judy Davis

Charlotte Rampling

IN CINEMAS 2011

For all queries, please contact:
Chris Chamberlin (Pop Culture)
chris@popculture.net.au
+61 404 075 749

SYNOPSIS:

ONE LINE SYNOPSIS

Elizabeth Hunter, controls all in her life – society, her staff, her children; but the once great beauty will now determine her most defiant act as she chooses her time to die.

SHORT SYNOPSIS

In the Sydney suburb of Centennial Park, two nurses, a housekeeper and a solicitor attend to Elizabeth Hunter as her expatriate son and daughter convene at her deathbed. But in dying, as in living, Mrs Hunter remains a powerful force on those who surround her.

Based on the novel by Nobel Prize winner Patrick White, *THE EYE OF THE STORM* is a savage exploration of family relationships — and the sharp undercurrents of love and hate, comedy and tragedy, which define them.

LONG SYNOPSIS

In a Sydney suburb, two nurses, a housekeeper and a solicitor attend to Elizabeth Hunter (Charlotte Rampling) as her expatriate son and daughter convene at her deathbed. In dying, as in living, Mrs. Hunter remains a formidable force on those around her. It is via Mrs Hunter's authority over living that her household and children vicariously face death and struggle to give consequence to life.

Estranged from a mother who was never capable of loving them Sir Basil (Geoffrey Rush), a famous but struggling actor in London and Dorothy (Judy Davis), an impecunious French princess, attempt to reconcile with her. In doing so they are reduced from states of worldly sophistication to floundering adolescence.

The children unite in a common goal — to leave Australia with their vast inheritance. Moving through Sydney's social scene, they search for a way to fulfil their desire. Using the reluctant services of their family lawyer Arnold Wyburd (John Gaden), a man long in love with Mrs Hunter, they scheme to place their mother in a society nursing home to expedite her demise.

Panic sets in as the staff sense the impending end of their eccentric world. Mrs Hunter confesses her profound disappointment at failing to recreate the state of humility and grace she experienced when caught in the eye of a cyclone fifteen years earlier.

For the first time in their lives, the meaning of compassion takes the children by surprise. During a ferocious storm Mrs Hunter finally dies, not through a withdrawal of will but by an assertion of it. In the process of dying she re-lives her experience in the cyclone. Standing on a beach, she is calm and serene as devastation surrounds her.

CAST:

CHARLOTTE RAMPLING

Elizabeth Hunter

Acclaimed actress Charlotte Rampling began her career at seventeen as a model. In 1966 she appeared as Meredith in the film *Georgy Girl* and after this her acting career blossomed in both English and French cinema. Rampling has often performed controversial roles. In 1969, in Luchino Visconti's *The Damned* (*La Caduta degli dei*) and in Liliana Cavani's 1974 film *The Night Porter*, playing alongside Dirk Bogarde.

She gained recognition from American audiences in a remake of Raymond Chandler's detective story *Farewell, My Lovely* (1975) and later with Woody Allen's *Stardust Memories* (1980) and particularly in *The Verdict* (1982), an acclaimed drama directed by Sidney Lumet that starred Paul Newman. Her long list of films also includes Alan Parker's *Angel Heart*, Ian Softly's *The Wings of the Dove*, Michael Cacoyannis' *The Cherry Orchard*, Julio Medem's *Caotica Ana* and Dominik Moll's *Lemming*.

Charlotte has collaborated extensively with the director Francois Ozon appearing in the *Under the Sand* (2001), *Swimming Pool* (2003) and most recently *Angel* (2006). She also starred in Laurent Cantet's *Heading South* (*Vers le Sud*), a 2005 film about female sexual tourism. Other recent films include Mathieu Kassovitz' *Babylon AD*, Saul Dibbs' *The Duchess* with Keira Knightley and Ralph Fiennes, Duncan Ward's *Boogie Woogie*, Mark Romanek's *Never Let Me Go*, Todd Solondz' *Life During Wartime*, and *Streetdance*. Charlotte has recently finished work on Lars von Trier's new film.

GEOFFREY RUSH

Basil Hunter

AFI, Oscar, BAFTA and Golden Globe Award winner Geoffrey Rush is one of Australia's most respected actors. His career has spanned over 70 theatrical productions and more than 20 feature films. For his role as pianist David Helfgott in *Shine*, Geoffrey won the 1997 Oscar for Best Actor, an AFI Award, New York and Los Angeles Film Critics' Awards, a Broadcast Film Critics' Award, a Film Critics' Circle of Australia Award, a SAG Award, a Golden Globe, and a BAFTA.

For his performance as Henslowe in *Shakespeare in Love* (1999), Geoffrey received a BAFTA Award, and Oscar and Golden Globe nominations for Best Supporting Actor. In Shekhar Kapur's *Elizabeth*, for his role as Walsingham, he received a BAFTA nomination for Best Supporting Actor.

He was also nominated for the Golden Globes, SAG and Oscar Best Actor for his performance as the Marquis de Sade in Philip Kaufman's *Quills* (2001).

Other films include *The King's Speech*, *Les Miserables*, *The Warrior's Way*, *Mystery Men*, *House on Haunted Hill*, *The Tailor of Panama*, *The Banger Sisters*, *Frida*, *Intolerable Cruelty*, *Munich*, *Elizabeth: The Golden Age*. He is the voice of Nigel in Pixar Animation's hugely successful animated feature *Finding Nemo*, and the swashbuckling Barbossa in Jerry Bruckheimer's *Pirates of the Caribbean* trilogy. These blockbuster films have set box office records internationally. He is also the voice of Ezylyrb in Animal Logic's *Guardians of Ga'Hoole*.

Geoffrey's portrayal of the title role in the HBO biopic *The Life and Death of Peter Sellers* earned him a SAG Award, a Golden Globe and an Emmy as Best Actor in 2005.

Geoffrey's Australian film credits include *Bran Nue Dae*, *Candy*, *Lantana*, *Swimming Upstream*, *Harvey Krumpet* (Oscar winner for Best Animated Short 2005), *Ned Kelly*, *On Our Selection* and *Children of the Revolution*.

After taking a degree in English at the University of Queensland, Geoffrey travelled to Paris in 1975 to study at the Jacques Lecoq School of Mime, Movement and Theatre. He was a principal member of Jim Sharman's pioneering Lighthouse ensemble in the early 80s, where he played leading roles in numerous classics.

In 1989, Geoffrey's lead performance in Neil Armfield's production of *The Diary of a Madman* earned him the Sydney Critics' Circle Award for Most Outstanding Performance, the Variety Club Award and the Victorian Green Room Award. This highly acclaimed production toured Moscow and St Petersburg before a triumphant return season at the Adelaide Festival. He has had starring roles in Gogol's *The Government Inspector*, Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya* and Mamet's *Oleanna*, in which he co-starred with Cate Blanchett. In 1993 he received the prestigious Sidney Myer Performing Arts Award for his work in Australian theatre.

In 2007 he played the lead in Ionesco's *Exit The King* at The Malthouse in Melbourne and Belvoir Theatre in Sydney. He co-translated this play with long-term theatrical collaborator and director Neil Armfield. Geoffrey recently performed *Exit The King* on Broadway to rave reviews. He also received the highest of theatre honours by winning the Tony Award for best actor for his performance of the dying king.

JUDY DAVIS

Dorothy de Lascabanes

Judy Davis is one of Australia's most versatile actors. Internationally acclaimed, with a career spanning over thirty years, Judy has impacted audiences with a variety of award winning film and television performances. Graduating from drama school NIDA in 1977, Judy first came to prominence for her role as Sybylla Melvyn in the coming-of-age saga *My Brilliant Career* (1979), for which she won BAFTA Awards for Best Actress and Best Newcomer. Following this she played the lead in such Australian New Wave classics as *Winter of Our Dreams* (1981) (as the waif-like heroin addict) and *Heatwave* (1982) (as the radical tenant organizer).

The two-time Emmy Award winner is best known for portraying formidable real-life women on TV, including the notorious felon, Sante Kimes, in *A Little Thing Called Murder* and Hollywood legend, Judy Garland, in the miniseries *Life With Judy Garland: Me and My Shadows*. Davis made television history when 'Life With Judy Garland' received the most nominations for a single performance and won every award she was nominated for, including the Emmy, Golden Globe, Screen Actors Guild and the American Film Institute Awards. Her other significant television roles include her Emmy Award winning role portraying the woman who gently coaxes rigid military woman Glenn Close out of the closet in *Serving in Silence: The Margarethe Cammermeyer Story*, with subsequent nominations for her repressed Australian outback mother in *The Echo of Thunder*, her portrayal of Lillian Hellman in *Dash and Lilly*, her frigid society matron in *A Cooler Climate* (1999) and her interpretation of Nancy Reagan in the controversial biopic *The Reagans*.

Davis received Academy Award® nominations for her roles in *A Passage to India* and Woody Allen's *Husbands and Wives*. Woody Allen is a great admirer of Judy's work, and has described her as "good looking, smart and quick-witted and unpredictable", and consequently has cast her in five films, including his current production, *Bop Decameron*, where she will play his onscreen wife.

Additional film credits include *Marie Antoinette*, *The Break Up*, *Kangaroo*, *Impromptu*, *Naked Lunch*, *Barton Fink*, *The Ref*, *On My Own*, *Children of the Revolution*, *Absolute Power*, *Deconstructing Harry* and *Celebrity*. Australian productions include *Swimming Upstream*, opposite her *Eye of the Storm* co-star Geoffrey Rush, and AFI award winning roles in *Kangaroo* and *High Tide*.

In theatre, Judy made her professional debut as Juliet, opposite Mel Gibson's Romeo. She also played both Cordelia and the Fool in a 1984 staging of *King Lear* for the Nimrod Theatre Company. Her other credits for the company include their productions of *Miss Julie* / *The Bear*, *Inside The Island*, and in 1986 the title role in *Hedda Gabler*, a landmark performance in Australian theatre. In the early '80s, she

portrayed French chanteuse Edith Piaf in the play *Piaf* at the Perth Playhouse, and also starred in *Visions* (Paris Theatre Company). In 2004 she made a return to stage and starred in and co-directed *Victory*, as a Puritan woman determined to locate her husband's dismembered corpse. Other stage directorial credits include *The School For Scandal* and *Barrymore*, all three of which were for the Sydney Theatre Company. Most recently she portrayed the role of fading actress Irina Arkadina in Anton Chekhov's *The Seagull* at Sydney's Belvoir St Theatre to critical acclaim and sold out audiences.

COLIN FRIELS

Athol Shreve

As one of Australia's best-known actors Colin Frieis has extensive Australian film credits. These include the crime comedy *Malcolm* (1986), a role that earned him the Australian Film Institute (AFI) Award for Best Actor and remains one of his best loved roles; *A Heartbeat Away* (2010); *Tomorrow When The War Began* (2010); *Matching Jack* (2009); *The Informant* (2007); *The Nothing Men* (2007); director Mark Joffe's hit comedy *The Man Who Sued God* (2001) with Judy Davis and Billy Connolly; Alex Proyas' sci-fi thriller *Dark City* (1998), the critically acclaimed *Angel Baby* (1995); the heart-warming *Cosi* (1996), which also stars Toni Collette and Rachel Griffiths, Rolf de Heer's *Dingo* (1991), Gillian Armstrong's *High Tide* (1988), the Maralinga story *Ground Zero* (1987); the adaptation of the D.H. Lawrence classic *Kangaroo* (1986), and the critically acclaimed adaptation of author Helen Garner's *Monkey Grip* (1982) with Noni Hazlehurst.

Colin's international films include Bruce Beresford's *A Good Man in Africa* (1994); *A Class Action* (1991), in which he stars opposite Gene Hackman; *Spider-Man* director Sam Raimi's *Darkman* (1990); and *Prisoners* (1981), opposite Tatum O'Neal.

Colin is very well known to television audiences in Australia; in the 1990s he spent several years on screen in one of his familiar roles as Frank Holloway in the popular television series *Water Rats*, a role that earned him the 1998 People's Choice Award for Best Actor in a Television Drama. In more recent years Colin again appeared in a leading role in the Network 10 series of tele-movies *Blackjack*. Other memorable television appearances include *Halifax FP* (for which he received the 1995 AFI Award for Best Actor in a Television Drama); the 2001 ABC miniseries *The Farm*, with Greta Scacchi; *Stark* (1993), based on Ben Elton's novel of the same name, and *My Husband My Killer* (2001).

Included in Colin's work on stage are his performances for the Sydney Theatre Company in the successful 2002 production of *Copenhagen*; Judy Davis's production of *The School For Scandal* in 2001, the title role in *Macbeth* (1999); and Richard Wherrett's 1994 production of *The Temple*.

ROBYN NEVIN

Lal

Robyn Nevin has appeared with all of Australia's major theatre companies, originating many memorable roles including Miss Docker in Patrick White's *A Cheery Soul* and Kate in David Williamson's *Emerald City*. Robyn's recent stage credits for Sydney Theatre Company include *Long Days Journey Into Night*, *The Year of Magical Thinking*, *The Women of Troy*, *Love Lies Bleeding* and *The Cherry Orchard*.

Robyn has appeared in many of Australia's most iconic films including *Bad Eggs*, *The Castle*, *Emerald City*, *Careful He Might Hear You*, *The Chant of Jimmy Blacksmith* and *Caddie*. She also appeared in the highly successful *Matrix* films. An award-winning director, Robyn has been Artistic Director of Sydney Theatre Company, Artistic Director of the Queensland Theatre Company, and an Associate Director of Melbourne Theatre Company from 1999 to 2007. Her directing credits for Sydney Theatre Company include *Mother Courage*, *Summer Rain* and *Hedda Gabler*, which toured to BAM in New York City in 2006.

JOHN GADEN

Arnold Wyburd

John Gaden's extensive theatre credits include – Malthouse Theatre: *The Trial*. Sydney Theatre Company: *Gallipoli*, *The Serpent's Teeth*, *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Art of War*, *The Season at Sarsaparilla*, *The Bourgeois Gentleman*, *The Last Echo*, *Mother Courage and Her Children*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Democracy*, *The Miser*, *Victory*, *Copenhagen*, *Major Barbara*, *The White Devil*, *As You Like It*, *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?*, *Saint Joan*, *Money and Friends*, *Coriolanus*, *Death and the Maidens*, *The Secret Rapture*, *The Way of the World*, *As You Desire Me*, *Amadeus*, *Hamlet*, *The Man from Mukinupin*, *Close of Play*. Other theatre: Company B's *Stuff Happens*, *Fever*, *Waiting For Godot*, *Signal Driver*. Company B/Black Swan's *Cloudstreet* (national and international tour). Company B/MTC's *The Signal Driver*. Bell Shakespeare's *Henry IV*. STCSA's *A Hard God*, *Ring Round the Moon*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Dream Play*, *The Winter's Tale*, *King Lear*, *Shepherd on the Rocks*, *Wild Honey*, *The Real Thing*, *Dreams in an Empty City*. Opera Australia's *Ariadne auf Naxos*. Melbourne Theatre Company's *Hysteria*, *Uncle Vanya*, *Racing Demon*, *Present Laughter*, *The Tempest*. Nimrod's *Jumpers*, *Galileo*, *Kold Komfort Kaffee*, *Travesties*, *Young Mo*, *Dirty Linen*, *The Recruiting Officer*, *The Duchess of Malfi*.

John's television credits include *Frontier*, *Mother and Son*, *Big Toys*, *Homicide*, *Burke and Wills* and he's appeared in films including *Wilfull*, *Bartleby*, *A Little Bit of Soul*, *Thank God He Met Lizzie*, *Children of the Revolution*, *On Our Selection*, *Muriel's Wedding* and *Caddie*.

From 1979 to 1984, he was Associate Director of the Sydney Theatre Company. He was also Artistic Director of the State Theatre South Australia from 1986 to 1990 and on the Board of the Adelaide Festival from 1994 to 1996.

HELEN MORSE

Lotte

Since early work with Jim Sharman – *A Taste of Honey*, *Terror Australis*, *As You Like It* – and whistle stop tours for the Arts Council, Helen has worked with most of the leading theatre companies in Australia in over eighty productions of classical and contemporary plays. She has played diverse roles ranging from an eccentric, cartwheeling governess/magician in *The Cherry Orchard* (MTC) and the disembodied 'Mouth' in Beckett's *Not I* (Nimrod) to Blanche in *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Harvest T/C & MTC), Ariel in *The Tempest* (MTC) and Paulina in A.Dorfman's political truth game *Death & The Maiden* (STC). She played Desirée Armfeldt in Stephen Sondheim's *A Little Night Music* and twin Aunts in a musical version of Steele Rudd's *The Selection* (MTC).

Her theatre work includes *Duet For One*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Crucible*, *Twelfth Night*, *Mrs Klein*, *The Recruiting Officer*, *Our Country's Good*, *Arcadia* (MTC); *Private Lives*, *A Happy & Holy Occasion* (HVTC); *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *'Tis Pity She's A Whore*, *Under Milk Wood* (STCSA), *Arcadia* (STC tour). She played Katherine Mansfield in Alma de Gröen's *The Rivers of China* (STC & MTC) and received a Green Room award for de Gröen's play about Anna Akhmatova, *The Woman in the Window* directed by Kate Cherry. She was in Michael Gow's *Europe* (MTC) and *Away* (Playbox); Nick Enright's *Good Works* (Playbox/dir. Kim Durban); *The Breath of Life* (Hit Productions); *Frozen* (MTC & STC) and played Theodora Goodman in Adam Cook's adaptation of Patrick White's *The Aunt's Story* for the MIF & Belvoir.

Helen has worked with Keene/Taylor Theatre Project in *The Funniest Man in the World*, in *Kaddish* for the 2000 Sydney Festival and with Ariette Taylor in *Ivanov* at 45 Downstairs in 2005. She has performed poetry of Judith Wright, Emily Dickinson & Sylvia Plath with the Martin Mackerras/New Music Lighthouse Ensemble and *Love & Other Catastrophes* with Ensemble 21 at Malthouse.

Helen's film work is extensive and has included roles in *Picnic At Hanging Rock* (AFI Best Actress), *A Town Like Alice*, *Agatha*, *Caddie* (AFI Best Actress), *Far East*, *Iris/Out of Time* based on the life of NZ poet Robin Hyde (Iris Wilkinson) and in 2006 a short film – *Syllable to Sound* – about poetry of protest.

In 2007 she read Samuel Beckett with Dublin's Gate Theatre Co and Lou Reed during the Sydney Festival; Homer's *Iliad & Odyssey* at the Stork Pub Theatre; *Songs, Sonnets & Rock'n'Roll* (Richard Piper & friends); and short stories for *Beyond Cuisine* (Wattle Cafe/45 Downstairs/Williamstown Writer's Festival). In April 2008 she voiced the poetry of Peter Steele within Gordon Kerry's score for *A Kind of Radiant Darkness* with ANAM.

Later in 2008 she played in Robyn Archer's *Architektin* directed by Adam Cook (STCSA). In 2009 she performed in Kate Cherry's production of Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking* for Black Swan State TC for the Perth International Festival and WA tour and narrated the text for *Charlotte Bronte – A life in Letters* in concert with the MSO Chamber Players. She worked with Here Theatre on Jane Woollard's *Prophet & Loss* and was part of the creative development of *Sundowner* for Kage.

ALEXANDRA SCHEPISI

Flora

Alexandra Schepisi has been acting on stage and screen since 1993. She graduated from the Victorian College of the Arts in 1997. Her film credits include *Matching Jack*, directed by Nadia Tass, *The Boys are Back* directed by Scott Hicks, *The Heartbreak Tour* (dir Ben Chessell) and *Little Deaths* (dir Toby Angwin).

On TV she has appeared in *Underbelly*, *The Secret Life of Us*, *City Homicide*, *MDA* and *Blue Heelers* amongst many others.

On stage Alexandra has performed for the Melbourne Theatre Company, Malthouse Theatre, Playbox, Adelaide Festival Centre and many independent companies.

MARIA THEODORAKIS

Mary DeSantis

Maria is an award-winning actress of stage, television and film. Her television appearances include *What Ever Happened to that Guy*, *Saved*, *Satisfaction* (Season 2), *Rush*, *Crashburn*, *Marshall Law*, *Halifax FP*, *The Arts Show* and *Stingers*.

Her film credits include her AFI Award winning role (Best Actress) in *Walking on Water*, *Bare*, *Evil Never Dies*, *Car Lady* and *Bike Girl* and *The Eye of the Storm*.

Her theatre roles include *Bare Witness*, *Construction of the Human Heart*, *The Spook*, *The Furies*, *Birthrights*, *Charitable intent*, *Teratology Project*, *Paradise*, *Measure for Measure*, *Jump*, *Panacea*, *Who's Afraid of the Working Class?*, *40 Lounge Café*, *The Balcony*, *Candide*, *Shades of Blue*, *Electodiva*, *Tickets to Heaven* and *Tidal Wave*.

DUSTIN CLARE

Col

Dustin Clare – a Graduate of WAAPA – won the Logie Award for Most Popular New Male Talent in 2007 for his role in McLeod's *Daughters* and two years later was nominated for the Silver Logie for Most Outstanding Actor for his performance in *Satisfaction*. His other television credits include *Underbelly 2: A Tale of Two Cities*, *Air Australia*, *Headland*, *All Saints* and *Spartacus: Gods of the Arena*.

His film credits include *Iron Bird* and *The Eye of the Storm*.

CREW:

FRED SCHEPISI

Director

Fred Schepisi (b. Melbourne, 1939) began his production career in the advertising world before joining Cinesound Productions then starting the Film House where for 20 plus years he directed both commercials and documentaries. His first feature-length film was the semi-autobiographical *The Devil's Playground* (1976), which won 6 AFI awards including Best Film, and established Fred's reputation as a talented director, writer and producer. The success of his second film *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* (1978) took Fred to the U.S where he directed *Barbarosa* (1981), *Iceman* (1983), *Plenty* (1985), and *Roxanne* (1987) before returning to Australia to co-write and direct *Evil Angels* (a.k.a. *A Cry in the Dark*, 1988) *Evil Angels* received numerous awards and nominations including the AFI Best Achievement in Direction and Best Screenplay Adaptation and 2 Golden Globe nominations for Best Screenplay and Best Director.

Fred also produced and directed the screen adaptation of John Guare's play *Six Degrees of Separation* (1993) starring Stockard Channing, Donald Sutherland and Will Smith. His other film credits as producer and director include *The Russia House* (1990), *Mr Baseball* (1992), *IQ* (1994), *Last Orders* (2001) and *It Runs in the Family* (2002). In 1996 he was called in to direct new material and restructure *Fierce Creatures*.

In 2004 Fred co-produced and directed the film adaptation of the best-selling novel by Richard Russo *Empire Falls* (2004). Starring Paul Newman, Ed Harris, Joanne Woodward, Robin Wright Penn and Helen Hunt, the film debuted in the U.S on HBO, was nominated for a number of awards and won Golden Globes for Best Mini-Series or Motion Picture made for Television and Paul Newman as Best Performance by an Actor in a Supporting Role in a Series, Mini-Series or Motion Picture Made for Television. It was also nominated for various Emmys with Paul Newman winning as Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Miniseries or a Movie.

Fred has just completed work as producer and director on *The Eye of the Storm* (2011) starring Geoffrey Rush, Charlotte Rampling, Judy Davis, Alexandra Schepisi, Helen Morse, John Gaden and Robyn Nevin.

Fred was recently awarded the Order of Australia for his service to the Australian film industry first as a mentor and then as a director, producer and screenwriter.

ANTONY WADDINGTON

Producer

After graduating high school in LA, Antony studied acting at the Sydney Theatre Company & The London Academy of Music & Dramatic Art. He earned a BA from the University of Technology Sydney '94 (film production & screen writing); followed by an MA in Performance Studies at Sydney University '98. He also included ancillary studies such as the Cinema Studio & Script Editing courses at the Australian Film, Television & Radio School.

The 1980's & 90's were spent working as an actor with companies such as the State Theatre Co. of South Australia, the Sydney Theatre Co. (Strindberg's, *A Dream Play*), The New England Theatre Co. (*Mass Appeal*). There were national tours with several large commercial productions such as *Crown Matrimonial* & *Aren't We All* with Rex Harrison & Claudette Colbert. Antony spent several years touring NSW and Victoria performing theatre in education; he also worked in TV with guest roles in *The Young Doctors*, *Sons & Daughters* & *Water Rats*. He played D.H. Lawrence in two Sydney seasons of the stage adaptation of *Lady Chatterly's Lover* and was Col. Hathi, in the musical version of *The Jungle Book*.

From 1989 he has worked in conjunction with Paper Bark Films where he associate produced many training films as well as music videos for Sony Music, WEA, EMI and Mushroom Records, with performers such as the Divinyls, Icehouse and Kate Ceberano.

His film credits include:

Executive Producer and Stills Photographer: *Spirits of the Carnival* 1996 for Discovery Channel and Network Ten, (Awarded U.S. International Film & Video Festival, Illinois – Certificate for Creative Excellence).

Co-Producer, Co-Writer and Stills Photographer: *Tides of Passage* 1993; made in conjunction with the State Library of N.S.W. and the A.B.C.

Co-Writer, Associate Producer and Stills Photographer: *Photographers of Australia* – Dupain, Sievers, Moore 1992; made under the National Interest Programme at Film Australia for Masterpiece S.B.S.

Production assistant, performer and casting: *Urban View* 1989 (16mm – 38min. short film,)

Ten years in development, *The Eye of the Storm* is Antony's first feature length drama.

GREGORY READ

Producer

Gregory Read is an Australian film director, editor, producer and writer, who served an apprenticeship for his production career in the world of advertising.

Gregory established Paper Bark Films Pty Ltd in 1987 and produced and directed television commercials, music videos and corporate Films under this banner.

In 1992 Gregory directed and co-produced, with Film Australia, the documentary *Photographers of Australia* – Dupain, Seivers. He then independently through Paper Bark Films produced and directed the documentaries, *Tides of Passage* (ABC/1994) and *Spirits of the Carnival* (Channel 10/1996). During this period he co-produced and 1st assistant directed independent feature films.

In 2006, Gregory wrote and directed the British/Australian co-produced Feature film *Like Minds* starring Toni Collette (a.k.a *Murderous Intent*, USA); wrote, directed and produced the Discovery documentary *Rocket Compulsion* in 2011; and has produced with Antony Waddington the feature film *The Eye of the Storm* (releasing 2011). Gregory is currently developing through Paper Bark Films a number of feature and documentary projects including the adaptation of John Katzenbach's (Just Cause/Hart's War) book *The Madman's Tale*.

JUDY MORRIS

Screenwriter

Judy Morris is one of Australia's leading award winning artists, who works internationally as a performer, writer and director. She is the winner of The Australian Film Institute and Logie Best Actress Awards. Judy co-directed and co-wrote the Academy Award and Bafta Award winning film, *Happy Feet*.

A NIDA graduate, Judy is also AMEB qualified in music and RAD qualified in dance.

Judy is the writer of the screenplay adaptation of Patrick White's Nobel Prize winning novel *The Eye Of The Storm* and is the Musical Director of the musical film *The Goddess*. Her other numerous credits include writer on *Dinotopia* for Hallmark USA. Writer on *Meerkat Manor The Movie* for Oxford/Discovery/Animal Planet. Writer on BBC film projects including *The Hogg*s. Co-writer of *Babe, Pig In The City*. Writer of *The Legend* for feature film produced by AFTRS and NIDA. Writer of the pilot for the series *Pied Piper*, commissioned by Channel 5 UK. Director of the feature *Luigi's Ladies* which was selected in competition for the American Cinetex Comedy Awards by the American Film Institute.

Judy has performed leading roles in many feature films including *The More Things Change*, *Pharlap*, *In Search Of Anna*, *Maybe This Time*, *The Plumber*, *The Picture Show Man*.

She has performed leading roles in more than a hundred and fifty television programs including *Jimmy Dancer*, *Mother And Son*, *Bangkok Hilton*, *Eggshells*, *Dirtwater Dynasty*, *The Last Frontier*, *Twisted Tales* and *Ballykissangel*.

Leading roles in theatre include Heloise in the Sydney Theatre Production of *Abelard and Heloise*, *The Pillars Of Society*, and *The Butterfiles Of Kalimantan*.

Judy has recently written two commissioned screenplays. One for the UK. One for Australia.

SALLY AYRE-SMITH

Co-Producer

Sally has been involved in the film and television industry all her working life.

She has come from a solid 30 year background of film and television experience, starting in the industry as a production co-ordinator and quickly becoming sought after as a production manager/line producer.

Sally has worked as a producer since 1997. *SeaChange* (Series 1, 2 & 3) was Sally's first major credit as Producer and in 2002 she produced a telemovie for Network 10 called *BlackJack* starring Colin Friels and directed by Peter Andrikidis.

Sally went on to produce the feature *The Jammed*, which won numerous awards. Sally co-produced *The Black Balloon* with Tristram Miall and in 2009 co-produced *The Kings of Mykonos* with Emile Sherman and Nick Giannopoulos. Sally has just co-produced *The Eye Of The Storm* with Fred Schepisi in Melbourne starring Geoffrey Rush, Judy Davis and Charlotte Rampling.

AWARDS

MOST OUTSTANDING DRAMA SERIES 1998 "Logie TV Week"

MOST OUTSTANDING DRAMA SERIES 1999 "Logie TV Week"

BEST DRAMA SERIES ON TV 1999 "People's Choice Award"

BEST TV SERIES 1999 "The Grenfell Henry Lawson Festival of Arts Award"

MOST OUTSTANDING DRAMA SERIES 2000 "Logies TV Week"

BEST EPISODE IN A TV DRAMA SERIES 2001 "AFI Award"

BLACK BALLOON Golden Bear BERLIN 2008

BLACK BALLOON Best Children's Feature Asia Pacific Awards 2008

IF AWARD FOR BEST FILM, BEST SCRIPT, BEST MUSIC 2007 "THE JAMMED" NOMINATED FOR AFI FOR 7 AWARDS FOR 2008 FOR "THE JAMMED"

NOMINATED FOR AFI FOR 10 AWARDS FOR 2008 'THE BLACK BALLOON'

JONATHAN SHTEINMAN

Executive Producer

Jonathan Shteinman is one of Australia's most prolific producers having produced or executive produced eighteen feature films over the last two decades including films like *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, *The Children of the Silk Road*, *Oyster Farmer* and the award winning *Angel Baby*.

Jonathan's films have starred great Australian actors like Cate Blanchett, Toni Collette, Geoffrey Rush and Russell Crowe as well as international stars like Dennis Hopper and Chow Yun Fat.

Jonathan is a former Investment Manager of the *Australian Film Finance Corporation*, Board member of the *Screen Producers Association of Australia* and of the *South Australian Film Corporation*.

EDWARD SIMPSON

Executive Producer

Edward Simpson is an actor, pianist and producer.

Based in Sydney, he trained as a lawyer, completing a combined Arts/Law degree at Sydney University, majoring in music and economics, before pursuing further professional acting training at LAMDA (London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art) in the UK, and with L'Ecole Philippe Gaulier.

He has acted in and produced many theatre shows and music festivals in Australia and the UK (notably performing in *2 Pianos 4 Hands*, which toured 16 cities for 350 performances) and has acted in various short films.

The Eye of the Storm is his first feature film.

IAN BAKER

Director of Photography

Ian Baker's extensive film credits as DOP include: *The Eye of the Storm*, *Evan Almighty*, *Japanese Story*, *It Runs in the Family*, *Queen of the Damned*, *Fierce Creatures*, *The Chamber*, *I.Q.*, *Six Degrees of Separation*, *Mr. Baseball*, *Russia House*, *Everybody Wins*, *The Punisher*, *Evil Angels (A Cry in the Dark)*, *Roxanne*, *Plenty*, *Iceman*, *The Clinic*, *Barbarosa*, *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith*, *The Devil's Playground*, and *Libido: "The Priest"*.

Ian's television credits include *The Last Frontier* and *Empire Falls*.

KATE WILLIAMS

Editor

The Eye of the Storm is the fourth film Williams has edited for Fred Schepisi. Two were adapted from novels - Graham Swift's *Last Orders* and Richard Russo's *Empire Falls*, for which Williams received an Emmy nomination. In 2009, she edited Russian-Israeli director Dover Koshashvili's feature, *Anton Chekhov's The Duel*.

Born in Melbourne, Williams studied English literature and fine art at Monash University before studying photography at Prahran College, 1988-1990. She has lived in New York since 1991. She was First Assistant Editor on both *Six Degrees of Separation* and for Jill Bilcock on Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo and Juliet*. She edited the twice Oscar nominated film *Frozen River* for director Courtney Hunt. She edited three

features with actor-director Steve Buscemi: *Trees Lounge*, *Animal Factory* and *Interview*. In 1997 she cut the award winning *The Myth of Finger Prints*. She returned to Melbourne in 2000 to cut Clara Law's *The Goddess of 1967*. She edited Michael Almereyda's feature documentary *This So Called Disaster*, which followed Sam Shepard's process as he directed Nick Nolte and Sean Penn in The San Francisco production of *The Late Henry Moss*.

MELINDA DORING

Production Designer

Since graduating with an MA in Film & TV Design from the Australian Film, Television and Radio School in 1998, Melinda Doring has designed a number of highly regarded Australian feature films.

Melinda has just completed work on Paperbark Films ambitious feature *The Eye of The Storm*, set in Sydney in 1972 and based on a novel by the Nobel Award winning author Patrick White and directed by the legendary Fred Schepisi.

2009 and early 2010 Melinda designed *Oranges and Sunshine*, a UK /Australian co-production for Sixteen Films and See Saw Pictures directed by Jim Loach (based on *Empty Cradles* the incredible true story of the UK social worker/whistleblower Margaret Humphreys and her investigations into Child Migration Policy that lead her to Australia in the mid 1980's).

In 2008 Melinda was production designer on the UK/Australian co-production (Miramax/Tiger Aspect/Southern Light Films) *The Boys Are Back*, which called for a complete build of the central characters house. The film was shot on location in South Australia and London and directed by Scott Hicks.

Prior works include:

The supernatural UK/ Australian Thriller *Triangle* directed by Christopher Smith, the stop animated feature *\$9.99* directed by Tatia Rosenthal for See Saw Films, *The Home Song Stories* directed by Tony Ayres, for which she won both an AFI award and an IF award for Best Production Design in 2007, *Unfolding Florence* a feature documentary directed by Gillian Armstrong, the AFI awarded short feature by Porchlight Films *Jewboy* directed by Tony Krawitz and the critically acclaimed *Somersault* directed by Cate Shortland for which Melinda won an AFI in 2004 for Best Production Design (the film was selected for Un Certain Regard, Cannes 2004).

Melinda is also a well-regarded costume designer, her credits include, *Suburban Mayhem* directed by Paul Goldman, and *Little Fish* directed by Rowan Woods – both of which she was nominated for AFI Awards for Best Costume Design.

TERRY RYAN

Costume Designer

The recipient of an Emmy Award nomination and four Australian Film Institute (AFI) Awards, Terry Ryan is one of Australia's most experienced costume designers for film, television and theatre.

Terry's recent film credits include costumes for *The Eye of The Storm* directed by Fred Schepisi, *Tomorrow When The War Began* (2009), *Knowing* directed by Alex Proyas and starring Nicholas Cage (2008) and *How to Change in Nine Weeks* (2007). Other film credits include Peter Jackson's *King Kong* (2004); *Anaconda 2*, directed by Dwight Little (2003); *Inspector Gadget 2* (2001) *The Hard Word*, starring Rachel Griffiths and Guy Pearce (2001); Andrew Dominik's cult Australian feature *Chopper* (2000); *A Little Bit of Soul*, directed by Peter Duncan (1998); Bruce Beresford's war drama *Paradise Road*, starring Glenn Close and Cate Blanchett (1997); *Dating The Enemy* (1996); and the classic Australian comedy *Muriel's Wedding* (1993).

For his work on the Australian film *Passion*, a Peter Duncan-directed biopic on the life of Percy Grainger, Terry received the 1999 AFI Award for Best Costumes. He received the same award for *Children of The Revolution* – also directed by Peter Duncan - in 1996, for *Billy's Holiday* in 1995 and for the D.H. Lawrence adaptation *Kangaroo* in 1985.

For theatre, Terry has designed costumes for Australian and New Zealand tours of *Jesus Christ Superstar*, as well as *The Temple*, *Three Sisters*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Harold in Italy* and *Midsummer Night's Dream* for the Sydney Theatre Company. Terry has also worked with Griffin Theatre Company and the Victorian State Opera.

Terry received an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Costumes in a Series in 2002 for the big-budget sci-fi show *Farscape*. Other television highlights include the Australian miniseries *The Road from Coorain*, which received four awards at the 2002 AFIs, and *My Brother Jack*. He designed costumes for the US tele-features *Invincible*, starring Billy Zane and executive produced by Jet Li and Mel Gibson, and the ABC's *The Three Stooges*.

PAUL GRABOWSKY

Composer

Paul Grabowsky is a pianist, composer, arranger, and conductor – and is one Australia's most distinguished artists.

Born in Lae, Papua New Guinea in 1958, Paul was raised in Melbourne where he attended Wesley College. During the late 70's he became prominent in the music scene in Melbourne, working in various jazz, theater and cabaret projects.

He lived and worked in Europe and the US from 1980-85, during which time he performed with many jazz luminaries including Chet Baker, Art Farmer and Johnny Griffin. He returned to Australia in 1986 and established a reputation as one of Australia's leading jazz musicians with such bands as his own trio and sextet, the Wizards of Oz and as musical director for singer Vince Jones.

He was musical director of *Tonight Live with Steve Vizard* from 1990-1992.

He has written the scores for over twenty feature film scores in Australia, the UK and US including *Innocence* (Paul Cox), *Last Orders* (Fred Schepisi) and *Shiner* (John Irvin). Other selected film credits include: *Unfolding Florence*, *Swerve*, *Matching Jack*, *It Runs In The Family*, *Jungle Book 2* and *Siam Sunset*. His television credits include the series *Phoenix* and *Janus* and the Emmy-winning *Empire Falls*. His works for the theatre include two operas and various multimedia works.

He is the founder and AD of the Australian Art Orchestra, with which he tours both nationally and internationally. Recent AAO projects have concentrated on collaborations with traditional and contemporary indigenous performers, something that Paul passionately advocates.

Among his numerous CD releases are two for the Hush series, designed to assist in the healing environment of Melbourne Children's Hospital.

He has won four ARIA Awards, two Helpmann Awards, several Bell Awards and a Deadly Award. He was the Sidney Myer Performing Artist of the Year in 2000, and received the Melbourne Prize for Music in 2007.

He was Artistic Director of the Queensland Music Festival from 2005-2007 and has been Artistic Director of the Adelaide Festival since 2008.

Legendary US saxophonist, Branford Marsalis is featured on Grabowsky's score for *The Eye of the Storm*. The two had previously collaborated on Grabowsky's 2004 album *Tales of Time and Space*.

NIKKI BARRET

Casting

Nikki Barrett has been casting Australian Film and TV for over 20 years, as partner in Alison Barrett Casting and later as the head of Barrett Casting. Her extensive work has included over 50 films, many award winning, including *Mao's Last Dancer*, *Somersault*, *Australia*, *Jewboy* and *Candy*.

Most recently she was involved with Jonathan Teplitzky's feature *Burning Man*, *Happy Feet 2* and Fred Schepisi's, *The Eye of The Storm*.

INTERVIEWS WITH CAST & CREW:

FRED SCHEPISI

Director

What was it about this story that attracted you to it?

FS: You know I've read quite a few Patrick White novels and I like them. Sometimes I find them difficult to get into and Antony Waddington came to me with the idea of doing this and I thought oh my God (laughs). Can I get inside the material? He convinced me that I could. And I like doing work when I can't fully understand what it's about, so I go on a journey where I learn something during the process. But it makes me nervous and kind of gets your creative juices going - and this book did that for me. It's kind of unusual territory for me and I thought it would be a great thing to explore and Antony convinced me.

One of the things was I was concerned that the film might be very static, that it really features a very old person who's infirmed and in bed or lying down most of the time. It made me worry, would the novel be able to be translated into film in a way that would really interest people? And I think that the work that Judy Morris did in writing the script and then getting us together and kind of attacking it to make sure it would translate, without losing any of the values that are in the book, was fantastic. That took quite a process - for various reasons, it went on for about five years.

That's my next question in fact... Why did you want to work with Judy Morris in particular?

FS: When Antony brought me the book, we put our heads together to figure out who would be the best person to write this. It just occurred to me that Judy Morris would be suitable for translating Patrick White. She started as an actress - and still is an actress - then started writing for George Miller on *Babe* and *Happy Feet*, two films that wouldn't seem to make her suitable for translating Patrick White. But because she was an actress and because a lot of what the book is about is how people act, no matter what walk of life people are in and they act differently in front of various kinds of people - I thought she would understand that. She also knew the world that Patrick White was from, lived in that circle a little bit, so she had the knowledge that I don't have. She walked and worked in that society.

How well do you think White's characters have translated to the screen? Were any of them particularly challenging?

FS: It's a challenging book. One of the characters was an actor, the others aren't, but Patrick White believes that everybody is an actor and they play certain roles in different areas of their life at all times. So the difficult thing in translating that was getting it across, getting a theatrical image and theme across. We used mirrors and things like that to help that, without labouring the point. You've got to let people find that aspect for themselves

And you've got a character, say for instance Judy Davis who plays a daughter, who's extremely uptight, highly strung, anxious, at war with her mother etc, and you've got to do that character in a way that just doesn't become a person who you would like to kill halfway throughout the movie. You've got to get inside the complexity of that character to humanise her and understand how she got to the point. Then say with Geoffrey Rush's character, who plays the brother, he's a whole different thing, because he's just in total denial and seems to be a wonderful, happy person who isn't as fraught or tortured by his relationship with his mother, with his family, with his sister. But they're all rather estranged. So it was getting the balance, where you get that across without labouring it. You start to realise that he's not as shallow as he seems and has his own emotional journey to resolve.

Then finally you've got the mother, who's lying around all the time, in bed, on couches, dying, who's extremely seductive but like a viper underneath, ready to attack. She does anything to preserve her way

of life – to have things done exactly as she wants them, which is how she’s lived her life. She’s made the family dysfunctional. So they’re all really fascinating and difficult characters to be and you’ve got to avoid the trap of making them one-note caricatures.

Do you think the story is particularly Australian?

FS: THE EYE OF THE STORM is set in Sydney in 1972 and it’s an unusual film for Australia because it looks at an area of society that’s rarely looked at. And the wonderful thing about the book is that through the nurse characters it also looks at what you’d call a “normal area” for the majority of people.

But you’re looking at a society that’s not often looked at in Australia, people of a certain class, of a certain economic structure, and it is very Australian, because it’s unique to us, the way all that behaves. It’s unique to us, that kind of cultural cringe we have of – ‘Oh yes, we’re upper class, we’re marvellous, but we’re not as upper class as people in England that we would wish to emulate.’ It’s examining all of that. So in those terms it’s very Australian. But in terms of how families operate, how societies operate, I think it’s international.

I think it’s always good to be incredibly specific to a country and a culture when you’re doing something, because that’s a discovery for a lot of people when they’re watching the film – entering into a world they don’t normally get into and the surprises you always find for yourself when you get in there.

Does your approach to each new film start roughly in the same manner, or do you let your material guide you, in your working manner?

FS: You know people ask a lot whether you have a technique or a grammar. I like to refer to it as grammar – and in making films I have a grammar – a particular way of doing certain things. But every time we start a new film it’s an entirely different subject, and you have to subjugate entirely everything you can do to that subject. You’ve got to land on something that is the best way of presenting the material – the clearest way, the one that has the undercurrents, all of those things. It focuses – the story, and the journey – on the right people, at the right time. And so all your techniques and grammar and everything has to be subjugated to that. One of the difficult things is that halfway through a film, you’ve already learnt a hell of a lot more than you knew before you started the film. And the hard thing is, you cannot apply any of that to the film you’re making because you’ve already given it a style and a logic and a discipline that the subject demands, and you’ve got to stay with that, through to the end - even if you know, if you started over, you could already do it better than you’ve been doing it.

Would you talk a bit about the process of casting the film, and what you were looking for, in terms of qualities in the actors?

FS: With casting we talked about how difficult the characters were to get them fully rounded, and I think that casting is probably about fifty per cent of the director’s work. If you cast correctly, half your job is done. Because those actors bring innate qualities with them and hopefully vision and talent that will realise the vision you’ll all end up having, about who they should be and how they should operate.

Probably the hardest role in this film to cast is Mrs Hunter because she’s upper class, but she didn’t start out as upper class. She married into money and class then very quickly took on a role. And she really wanted to be more than that - forcing her children out into the world to get what she called proper titles. It’s no good being a - Sir in Australia, but being an English Sir really means something. Marrying a European prince really means something. There’s no princes in Australia - not officially anyway (laughs).

So to find somebody to play Mrs Hunter with value, with star quality, of that kind and of that age in Australia, I knew was not really possible. So we had to look abroad and find somebody - probably English was the best way to go, which we did with Charlotte Rampling - who would have the qualities that you’re looking for, but somehow be able to make it Australian. A little off-centre to what you’d expect. Fortunately Charlotte Rampling was there. Obviously we looked at a lot of different people, but once

we thought of Charlotte Rampling and the fact that she was quite prepared to allow herself to be 15 years older than she is, without creating any fuss or worry, plus then you could make her, quite easily in her case, even younger than she is, for the parts from the past; it sort of solved itself and it became that nobody but Charlotte Rampling could do it. Then we were lucky that Geoffrey Rush and Judy Davis really responded to the project, because they're perfect to play the brother and sister. So what could have been very difficult turned out to be very easy.

And of course, finding the nurse (laughs) was not easy. Finding the actor to play the character of the main nurse was always going to be one of the most difficult things in the film, because she represents the bulk of our society. She's not the upper echelon in terms of class or economic strata (like the three main characters); she's with all of us. Lower class, middle class, that kind of thing. And you didn't want somebody to play a real ocker or anything like that, you'd want somebody to play it like it really is, with all the subtlety, and struggle and everything. My daughter Alexandra plays the nurse and as a director you kind of go, oh my god, I cast my own daughter; it's going to be difficult for her, difficult for me. People were going to go 'oh, it's nepotism' and you wonder if you're putting yourself in a difficult position if it's not as good as it should be. Is she going to get blamed for it, are you going to get blamed, or both of you? So we cast a very wide net trying to find the right person for that role but I would not make the decision. We tested a lot of people for that role. It was a really, really difficult part, because it represents the main group of the populous in Australia and it had to be just right. I think we narrowed it down to four people in the end after casting a very wide net and I was too constrained to make the decision. So we were making a location survey with all the heads of department and we were on a bus, travelling on a Queensland road at the time and I got everyone together and said 'alright, let's look at this, I want honest opinions, who's the best out of these four people?' And everybody said we'd be absolutely mad if we didn't cast her - and they were right.

You have an association with several of the crew - an ongoing collaboration with several of the participants in the film such as Ian Baker (DOP). How did that language between you affect the work?

FS: It's always very helpful to work with people you've worked with, if they are contributing and pushing you and pushing themselves to go to better places all the time. If they're doing that and you're doing that as well, you're not having to push bona fides every time with new people. You're not having to explain why you do something or why you feel something because if you've been working with someone for awhile, they know exactly what you're doing and they can evaluate very quickly whether you're going to push something in the right way or the wrong way.

Directors get a hell of a lot of credit for everything. Sometimes I think that's fair because we get a hell of a lot of blame as well if you screw up. But really you're getting a lot of credit for extraordinary work done by a lot of other people – cameramen, editors, production designers, sound designers, even the boom operators – some of the things they have to do to get what is needed for the film. And you know we shouldn't leave out actors obviously! The credit needs to be spread around. Like the producers, people who are seemingly in the background, making sure that everything is there and that everything's working, so you can do what you need to do.

I think that the director's role in the end is having a vision and then focusing everybody to that vision. You're encouraging them, to contribute everything they have to contribute, but focusing it, so that all heads are in one direction. So there's a real advantage in working with people that you've worked with before – Ian Baker, Kate Williams, Paul Grabowsky, Glen Newnham, there's a whole raft of people on crews that I work with if I possibly can.

Would you talk a bit about design and what you wanted for the look of this picture?

FS: First of all I have a belief that the subject dictates an approach and that the approach has to have a logic, a style and discipline. Nabokov has written a couple of books on lectures on Russian literature. The thing he talks about most is creating a world. And if you're creating a world, the world has its rules,

its logic, its discipline, etc. and if you break them, you really lose people's belief in what they're watching. You can go into the zaniest place, and a lot of people make the mistake of going to a zany place and just doing anything they want to, because they think, well that makes it zany. Well, no it doesn't. If you go to a zany place, you've got to create that world, a whole set of rules, in which that operates or doesn't operate.

And even if the audience doesn't understand that, they believe it. They know it. They feel that it's there and it seems right. So in a drama, particularly in *THE EYE OF THE STORM*, you've got to be very clear for yourself and everyone you're working with, what the rules are and stay true to them, and people will follow you anywhere if you do that. One of the great parts of that is in production design.

The production design isn't just about 'oh, we're in the room, with a person of this class and a person of that money'. No. It's got to be way more specific. Everything in that room has to relate to the story of telling who that character is. Even if you only glimpse it out of the corner of your eye, you won't get stuck going 'what's that over there?' if it's perfectly true to the person. You'll register it and if it's unusual, you won't be stopped by it, you'll just go in and feed what you're looking at. It's an incredibly important detail. So production design to me is a largely uncredited thing. It obviously gets credit if you have an extremely glamorous set, but most people don't realise the details and what they're adding. You don't have to show the room and do this and describe this location, you just stay with the characters and people pick up on that stuff within the drama, rather than stopping to set it up all the time.

The other thing is, good production design has motifs running through the film. In this case, there's a lot of entrances and doorways, there's a lot of curtains over beds, bay windows being opened and closed, which is a theatrical motif, enhancing the whole acting undercurrent that goes through the film. And mirrors. There are mirrors all over the place, being used again for this isn't just this character, this character is observing themselves all the time. It's a vain, and semi-theatrical, vain motif. Anyway, production design's pretty important!

The pieces of music you've been working around the production has already had a serious effect on people. Would you talk a bit about the music in this.

FS: Another thing about films that people don't realise is the sound is fifty per cent of the film. You could hear activity outside the window, but you don't have to see. It might be you're next to a school, somewhere you shouldn't be. Those kind of things. So you can frame using sound. I think that's a very important thing and it needs an energy, sound effects. Whether you have quiet or you have noise - it builds an energy through the film, and when it's missing, then it goes flat and nobody understands why. So one of the most important things is getting all the sound effects exactly right, in detail, the same as when you're doing production design. It's got to relate to those people, where they live, etc.

Now the most important part of the sound as well is music. And a lot of people just block music into the sampling, or drive of the film, and they pick songs, and pick a bit of classical music or they do something else. To me, music needs to be designed like an overall suite if you like. So you might have one, two, or three themes for various characters - or two themes, and one for the film as it were - and you kind of introduce it and gradually build it throughout. Not just to give energy. Not to overstate emotion. But to give you information you cannot otherwise get. You can call it subtext if you like. But it's an emotion, subtext. It drives you along. It points out little things - what this person's saying is not what it seems - there's something else going on here that we don't know.

As it builds through the film. You start to get to know the themes and you can play them differently. You can combine them with people coming together. So that you almost don't know the set up, but you're getting an emotional hit, and if you saw it without the music, you might get the emotional hit because of the way the actors are playing it, but you get a higher emotional hit and you're not sure why, and I don't mean to be arrogant about this, but it's because you've been trained to by the music, for the whole film. And when that piece of music plays, you're not conscious of it - you're just taken to a better place.

Paul Grabowsky and Branford Marsalis are worked on the music, can you talk a little bit about working with them, please.

FS: A lot of people work with music. I know a writer who writes with music. I couldn't do that - it would distract me. I know for instance directors like Peter Weir use music on the set to create moods, which is a very interesting way of going. Again, that would distract me. But I kind of get the point. I sort of understand it.

I was really lucky on this film because Branford Masalas (US saxophonist) and his quartet, happened to be coming through Melbourne and had played a concert at the Town Hall and the sound in the hall, according to them, was the best they had experienced anywhere in a very long time. So they had a little conference and decided to play some of the stuff they never play, because it doesn't sound good enough in those halls. And they played a piece called 'Hope', which featured Branford and was written by his piano player. It was just a grabber! It just sort of spoke to me immediately - that this describes the film that we're making. It's got ethereal qualities and it's got tension in it, and it builds to a really disturbing climax, and then releases in a beautiful way. So I thought this could be a guide for just how the film would go, not necessarily as music in the film.

So I had a chat with Marsalis, because he worked on Russia House, and I asked him if I could get a copy of it, and he sent me an mp3 file and I spoke to Paul Grabowsky, the composer, about it and said 'What do you think? Do you think this describes the film we're talking about?' and he got it straight away. So it gave us a focus, and one of the focuses was, why don't we get Branford to come and play on the film, because he's the best there is in the world on sax, classically and jazz, and he understands film, so it became a guide. We didn't imitate it or anything like that, but it became a guide for how we would write the music. Paul wrote the music then we did some dummy recordings, rough recordings, using local musicians and things, which enabled us to layer up with the film where we thought it should go.

Paul tried out some pieces in unusual places and really, it was terrific because it gave him a guide to what really worked, and he went on again and re-wrote everything for every cue, taking advantage of that knowledge. So when Branford Marsalis came out, and we recorded the core stuff - Paul on the piano and Branford on soprano sax, drums and bass - it just went swimmingly. It was one of the happiest experiences I've ever had.

My last question is that I've noticed that journalists that have already spoken with you throughout this production have remarked on the fact that you've spent many years in the US, the UK and Europe, making pretty high-profile international films, and this is your first film in Australia for quite a few years after EVIL ANGELS. Has that been a positive experience for you? Or is there anything about that experience you would like to talk about?

FS: It was interesting working back in Australia, for various reasons. It's been a long time since I did. Some of those reasons are just money and not being able to get the required amount of money to do what I would like to do. So it was good to get the chance to find people, who were required to get out there and get money, and to understand that sometimes it does take a specific amount of money to make the quality of the film. If you're used to working in Australia and getting lower and lower and lower budgets, people don't realise the difference. Unconsciously they make excuses for it but they accept the quality. What's the right word - they accept it for what it is. They look for the good points in it.

But if you really want to do something of international quality, on what might seem to be a smallish, contained subject in production, it's hard to get people to realise that it isn't small. It's actually quite large, and actually requires a lot of time, a lot of money and the right care spent in the right place, to create a substantial work. So you've got to go through that and I was very glad that a lot of people here got to understand that and fought for it.

I liked the fact that a community of private investors wanted to see something of quality made and just went for it. They didn't go through all the normal nonsense. They just went this is going to be worth doing, and we're going to be in it. I just thought that was fantastic.

You've always got to adjust when you come to a different country, to the mores of that country, and attitudes of crews etc. So I don't come here expecting to do what I do in America or England or anywhere else. I treat Australia as though I'm going to a different place, and I re-learn what's the system here. I don't always like it (laughs) but you re-learn it and I found apart from the incredible bureaucracy and excessive contracting and all of that, doctors and nurses on set, safety officers and all that - this kind of imposition bureaucratically - I just learnt to ignore it. But if you do, the crews were fabulous.

I mean what they did, in the time we had, the kind of passion... My son, who worked as 3rd Assistant Director, works in America all the time, and he couldn't believe the grips and electricians and everybody were passionate about the work they were doing. They cared as much about getting it right as the actors and I did. They were proud of it. And that infuses the result - it makes it all better.

CHARLOTTE RAMPLING

Charlotte, could you just tell us what it's like being back in Australia, because you were here 20 years ago?

CR: This is my third trip to Australia. I made a film maybe 20 years ago, *Hammers Over the Anvil* by Anne Turner, with Russell Crowe, before Russell Crowe went off to Hollywood and became a major star. That was in Adelaide.

What was your reaction when you heard about another film in Australia?

CR: Fred Schepisi called me - I'd read the screenplay - and he called me one day out of the blue, which was really nice. It'd never happened, a director calling me out of the blue, apart from Sidney Lumet who called me for *The Verdict*. So when you have the director calling you up directly and saying "what do you think of my film? Would you like to do it?" it's very different from getting a screenplay through an agent and reading it and feeling a bit lost or not, or a bit confused.

The story was complicated from the point of view that I would be playing a woman of 75 then a woman of 55, but mainly a woman of 75 - the crux of the story is about an older woman. So I said that I needed to read the book, which I did, which took a long time. It's a very long, profoundly moving extraordinary book - and it was after reading the book and then talking with Fred again, I said I thought I was ready to say yes. But the film wasn't financed then, but now about a year after we spoke, here we are.

So what attracted you about the character of Mrs Hunter?

CR: She's one of those irresistible characters because you think she is completely awful when in fact she is completely amazing. Those monsters. I like monsters.

What were her more endearing elements?

CR: I don't know? I can't even explain what it's like playing somebody like Mrs Hunter, because I - I don't know. I mean I only play her because I love her. Otherwise I wouldn't be playing the character, because I wouldn't want to be playing somebody that, let's say, I don't know. She's an extraordinary woman. But she's probably unforgiving in a lot of areas and probably completely politically incorrect, psychologically incorrect. But she's an amazing person.

Had you read Patrick White's work before?

CR: I was not familiar with Patrick White's work before. I've just read two books. I read Voss after I read The Eye of the Storm. He's a major, major writer, that's for sure.

What do you think Patrick White was saying, what is the story?

CR: I think the story is Australia, and Patrick White's novel is a story of Australia at that time, which is the 1970s, in Mrs Hunter's class. You know she's upperclass, her husband's rich, they've got big estates, and it's how they lived in that time, away from England, and the Australia of the 1970s. Very much about a way of life that was different from what was going on in England at that time, very much. I think for Australians to see that class of people, will be very interesting. Perhaps they haven't seen it so much in films, it's been other classes that have been focussed on.

Do you think it'll appeal to Europeans? Do you think it's giving another perspective to Australia that they perhaps hadn't seen before?

CR: I would think it will give another perspective to Australian life that people haven't seen and the way Fred is filming it, it's going to be – well, there's something quite epic about it, I think.

You've worked with many, many directors before - what's the experience like, working with Fred Schepisi?

CR: Fred is a very patient man, which is quite unusual in filming, because filming is very nerve-racking, in a sense that things have to be done in a certain time, during a certain day, on a certain schedule, in a certain place. Everyone has to be, and everyone has to do, and everyone has to make it happen. It's a highly, highly charged thing, filming each day, for everybody. There are certain moments that you see, which are blissfully calm, but the actual getting to there is actually very complicated. Fred is one of the most calming influences I've had with a director. He's like a gentle giant. He never raises his voice. People just completely respect him - he just has to raise an eyebrow and people have to know what he wants. He's completely focussed on his actors, he knows when things work, so you're perfectly happy to do it again, many times. He won't stop until he knows it's getting what he wants.

This is very reassuring for an actor, because if you're left too much to gallivant around in all directions, you get lost and tired and nervously exhausted, and can't really give much of a performance after a few takes. But he keeps you very channelled and very secure. So he's a very special man, Fred.

You've been through all sorts of different experiences on this film, from being closed in a room for a long time to down in a bunker, can you talk a little bit about some of the physical or emotional experiences?

CR: Well the physicality of this film has been for me really the ageing process, which was done very delicately. Everything that I have already on my face is just painted in more, like a canvas, so I look exactly like I do now - just an older version. But then it was in bed most of the time, so to make a character come alive and be interesting, obviously Fred with his camera works and cranes and things would have a lot of things happening. We were just in one not too big room, and it was a fascinating challenge. I loved it.

I loved the idea of making things happen out of not many props around, just to make something credible. And also to make it believable that I'm not the age I am - and to make that believable to me. When it's believable to me it's more believable to an audience, because that's what actors do. There's wasn't any kind of fakeness or falseness, or a moment of doubt that I didn't think that I was that age, and she's also

not a well woman, but her mind is more or less ok. That's where she shows how powerful she is, as a brain and as a woman and as a matriarch and as a controller of people – but also as someone who loves life.

What was the experience like? How do actors deal with all that physical work, as well as having to go into that emotional world of those characters? For example going into the bunker, it's cold, and wet!

CR: Well actually filming in say the bunker that you're seeing in, when we're in the storm, was a brilliant construction in a studio. But we had the wind, we had the rain, we had the noise, so it felt very real. It didn't feel like I was completely simulating. It was freezing cold, I was wet, I couldn't stand it anymore, it was scary, it didn't need too much. Sometimes when you're filming you just have a blue screen or a green screen and you have to fight dragons on absolutely nothing there. That's more difficult. That's awful, that's very tiring. But that bunker was OK.

Is there anything else through the experience on this film that stood out – the most challenging aspect?

CR: There's a similarity of the process of filming all over the world, which is comforting. The only thing that was different in Australia for me was that I couldn't go home on weekends, and I got a bit lonely. But the people here are very friendly and lovely, that wasn't the problem. Making a film is about joining a group of people that you don't know at all, and it's like you know them. They're all different versions of the same people in a global sense, and it's really - well, there's something wonderful about that. There's the actors and the director and the production, there's the grips, there's the sound, they're all there, and they all know you, because we're all in the same business. We've all done this.

We lead a gypsy life. We go from encampment to encampment, and there's a feeling about filmmaking, which I've always loved, and would miss terribly if I wasn't able to do it, because it's different, it's uncomfortable, it's usually conditions that are not great, not financially, but just the climate, or it's uncomfortable, or it's cold. You have to wait a long time, you have to keep doing the same scene over and over again, you're in the water, out of the water, whatever you're doing. But there's something very rewarding about it all. It's like when you've done it, you feel like you deserve a reward, and you can have a nice meal, and it's fine, because the actual filming is not very enjoyable, but the fact that you've done it is really enjoyable.

It's a sense of achievement.

CR: Yeah. Yeah. And we're not doing anything that counts really, we're not changing the world. We're giving people hopefully entertainment, enjoyment, perhaps thinking about subjects in a different way, creating other ways of seeing the world. That's all we're doing, so we have to keep a humour about it. We're not charged with major missions here. We're just hopefully giving people a good hour or two, maybe in the evening, to share with.

I mean I love watching films so when I watch a film (claps) when it's a good film, I'm really happy.

Can you talk about your experience with some of the Australian actors, John Gaden, Helen Morse, Robyn Nevin, Judy Davis, and Geoffrey Rush of course.

CR: I had tremendous partners in this film. Geoffrey Rush plays my son, but I look a bit older when he plays my son, because we're almost the same age, which is really lovely. I suppose I shouldn't say that, it's really not worth printing, but the tricks of filming really are very interesting. And Judy Davis is my daughter. Two tremendous actors, really tremendous actors, who've been recognised worldwide, but I'm not saying anything that a lot of people haven't said. And John Gaden, who I didn't know, and Helen Morse, Alexandra Schepisi, who plays one of my nurses. It was not an action picture, but we have a little

bit of action in the story, it's a film about a family, and the way families interact, the savage and quite dire things people can do to each other within a family. We were a very tight-knit cast, choreographed all the time together. I was always with my nurses, and being visited by a son and daughter and all that. So it played beautifully from an actor's point of view, the way we all intermingled.

Did you have much rehearsal time at all?

CR: We had a few day's rehearsal before, so that we could get the script as we wanted it, with Judy Morris, who's done a very fine adaptation of the book, and we were able to work with her and the actors together for 3 days, to get us all comfortable with that, and then we started.

How have the producers been?

CR: Antony Waddington, he was the one with the great love and determination and devotion. He made this thing happen, in the sense that he was the one who found the book, who wanted to do the book, and followed the book through until others joined him on-board. That needs a lot of determination, so thank you.

GEOFFREY RUSH

Do you recall your response to reading the script for the first time?

GR: Ah yes I read the screenplay in the context of that I got to know Fred socially because I'm patron of the Melbourne International Film Festival. That was in about 2001, and I got to meet Fred socially at premieres of Australian films, and we started having some fairly interesting conversations about the state of the art and whatever, because he's a pretty affable, social being. And then some years later – in about 2007 or 2008, he said 'I've got a screenplay that's being developed, Patrick White's THE EYE OF THE STORM, and it's looking fairly promising', which was encouraging, because that kind of story wasn't really part of the filmmaking tradition in Australia.

He said Judy Davis is champing at the bit to play Dorothy, and Charlotte Rampling looks like she's on board, and he said 'I think you'd be ideal casting for Basil Hunter'. I didn't know this novel, but then it all started to fall rapidly into place. He said 'I think we're all up and running', and we worked around various people's schedules and stuff, and it all kind of miraculously happened, which is great.

Could you talk to us a bit about the defining character traits?

GR: The defining traits of Basil... Fred, having read the screenplay with the novel, thought we'd possibly have a kind of society melodrama. But I know that within Patrick's novel, there's a lot more subtext, and he said I think we should explore the inner lives of the characters as Patrick has given us interior monologues as it were, and try and invest those characters with that kind of resonance and depth. I've worked on a couple of Patrick's later plays in the 80s in Adelaide and I got to know of him on Shepherd on the Rocks and Netherwood.

Patrick was a big figure in the theatrical landscape, because he was writing old expressionistic plays long before anybody else had touched that texture. But Patrick's kind of temperament - he adored the theatre, he adored actresses, and his insights about the actorial psyche are scarily accurate, but also very playful in terms of Basil.

I'm not sure who he was basing Basil on, but when I was first talking to the hair and make-up department in pre-production, we used as a reference, people like - because of the era the film's set in,

in the early 70s - we looked at people like Peter Finch, or on a Shakespearean level, on an international scale, someone like Keith Michel, even perhaps in terms of the knighthood, it could be Sir Robert Helpmann or maybe a touch of John McCallum.

We had those as references to try and find who Patrick was basing it on. But I think he was pretty much inventing the character for his own purposes within the dynamics of this family. But then once we got to shooting the film, and got inside the scenes and the family dynamic, it became more and more frighteningly semi-autobiographical (laughs).

Were there any difficulties or challenges in realising Basil that you encountered?

GR: No. On a theatrical level, it's got wonderful echoes of Chekhov, the scale of what you're looking at, the rich inner lives and the dynamics of the characters. And as a cinema counterpart, if this wasn't an Australian film, I'd be looking at something European, like an Almodovar film, where you've got this phosphoresce to the world. So it was keeping those things on the boil, and trying to find something that was credibly a reflection of our culture back in the 70s, the dying ages of that kind of dynastic family set-up.

Where there any surprises along the way for you, both intellectually or aesthetically?

GR: I think whenever I got into trouble I would always go back to the novel, because in and around some of the dialogue from the novel that had been quite specifically placed into the screenplay, it was always good to go into the internal monologues within the prose. Because it's quite a radical novel - it's not a linear novel. It jumps time frames and I think Patrick wrote this and probably got the Nobel prize for literature because of this novel back in '72, '73. It has some very radical and very progressive techniques that remind you a lot of James Joyce and wild raves, that characters go into inside themselves. It jumps from first person to third person, and the timeframes of the storytelling make quite extraordinary shifts. That's one of the great joys about it as a piece of literature. So it was looking at that and trying to find a way of making that work as credible cinema characters. Because within a two hour film, the journey is quite different to sitting with a 600 page novel over a couple of days.

Does Patrick White as an artist inspire you as an Australian coming in behind him?

GR: Patrick as a writer had a fair impact. I was part of Jim Sharman's ensemble in Adelaide at the State Theatre Company in the early 80s, when the whole notion of the State subsidised theatre was a generation old. And Jim came in to direct the Adelaide Festival in 1982, and he went straight into creating this ensemble at Lighthouse, and part of the premise of the programme was that it would do less performed, neglected European classics like *Mother Courage* or *The Prince of Hamburg*, for example, and in and around that he had a number of Australian writers like Stephen Sewell, whose great work, *The Giant is Dancing*, premiered there.

And Patrick White, he got to write, *Signal Driver* as the opening play of the company, and then we did another play of his, *Netherwood*, in the second year. So there was a real feeling of, I suppose reinventing the career of a writer who had been neglected. Within 10 years of winning the Nobel Prize for literature, it seemed as though he was out of fashion. And yet single-handedly, two of my major theatrical mentors, Jim Sharman and Neil Armfield, between them, rediscovered Patrick's theatrical writing. Jim did a very famous production of *The Cheery Soul*, back I think in the mid 70s, that Robin Nevin was in, and Neil has subsequently done *Night on Bald Mountain*, *The Ham Funeral*, and *Shepherd on the Rocks*.

So there was a discovery that within our heritage we had this remarkable writer and I remember when I saw *The Ham Funeral*, which must've been in about '89, in Sydney, thinking this play was written in the late 40s, pre-dating Beckett and all the great absurdist who were recognised internationally, by about 5 years. It was a coming of age story written with theatrical dimensions that were way beyond some of the more conventional narratives that were part of our playwriting scene at the time.

Do you think White's commenting on Australian society, either indirectly or specifically, in this work?

GR: There's such a phenomenal breadth in the world of Patrick White's novel that almost defies description, because on one level, you do get the melodrama of a family, but his perception, his gift, his skill as an author to go inside, deep into the inner world of those characters, is quite remarkable - with always quite astonishing, ground-breaking, literary techniques. I would never want to say that he was merely a satirist, yet there is always that slightly cunning, curmudgeonly, outsider view that can be quite acerbic and wicked and cool, and also glorious, because he will drag elements out of characters - you know, their moments of epiphany. As you read it, you're getting these shivers up your spine thinking 'wow, that is such a sharp, human, pure insight into a moment in someone's life' that becomes very accessible.

Can you talk a bit about working with Fred Schepisi, please, and the experience for you?

GR: Fred Schepisi looms large in my mind. When I started out working professionally as a theatre actor in the early 70s, it was just before the big 70s boom in Australian filmmaking. I remember in the early 70s, '72 or '73, going to see a film called *Libido*, which was I think 4 short films made by a handful of filmmakers and Fred had done one of those. And within 3, 4, 5 years he went on to make *The Devil's Playground* and *The Chant of Jimmie Blacksmith* and you thought, here's somebody on an exponential trajectory declaring their hand as a major original filmmaker.

And then subsequently when his career went international, I was always in a bit of awe that he was one of those, for want of a better word, an auteur, who never put his overt fingerprints all over the project. He just seemed to be able to draw the story out and tell it with the greatest elegance, the most original angle. The diversity of films like *Evil Angels* or *Roxanne* or *Last Order* or *Six Degrees of Separation* - they're all masterworks and you sort of know it's a Fred Schepisi film but there's nothing on top of it that says he's letting you know he made it. He keeps it beautifully anonymous, and seems to have worked with phenomenal actors on every project, and drawn things out of them.

I happened to see *Six Degrees of Separation* on TV the other night and I had to get to bed, because I knew I had an early call, but I couldn't stop watching it, because there was such an elegance, for a piece that's so theatrically based. I was amazed by how light and fluid and dexterous he'd made it as a piece of pure cinema. Which was good to feel while we were making this film, because there's a theatrical edge to this writing, and I knew that we were in pretty good hands, with somebody who was able to get inside the frame and work so closely with the actors. He's one of those guys that can come up and say 'look, I want to do one more take, there was one moment in the scene', and he'll give you a specific goal on one particular line, where he thinks 'I need a beat'. Because he's also very cleverly editing the shape of the scene, once he's sees it happening on the floor. And that kind of specificity is rare.

Could you talk to us a bit about the ensemble in this particular film, contemporaries and otherwise, who you were working with?

GR: Well it was a great drawcard to know that Judy Davis was throwing her hat into the ring with great excitement. I've worked with Judy a couple of times and the first film we did together, which we didn't actually meet on, was *Hoodwinked* back in 1981, when I was a fledgling, and she was already a major, established, film actress. But then I've worked with her on *Children of the Revolution* and *Swimming Upstream*, which we shot in Brisbane. She's one of our greats.

And Charlotte?

GR: And Charlotte of course. When I was living in London in the mid 70s and *The Night Porter* came out, everyone in my generation just went 'Charlotte!' And to know that she was ready to commit to play this decaying woman who had former beauty and elegance, I thought, this is great, great casting.

JUDY DAVIS

How did you first hear about this screenplay, THE EYE OF THE STORM?

JD: It was about seven years ago, I was sent an early, quite different draft. So that's a long time, and a testament to the dedication of the producer, Antony Waddington, that he finally managed to get the budget up. It's the kind of film that's become difficult to finance.

Were you familiar with the book, THE EYE OF THE STORM?

JD: I hadn't read it. I think for some reason I had it in my head that it was one of the really difficult White novels. Perhaps I was getting it confused with *The Solid Mandala*, which really is very difficult. What is similar about the titles? Nothing. And it's not as if I'm not a fan of White's, because I really am, but it was one of them I hadn't read.

So then the script came and I thought, I'm not going to read the book yet, because I'll bloody read it and I'll get all excited and the process will begin... that happens, whether you like it or not, your subconscious starts going. So I didn't actually read the book until I knew for sure they were making the film. And it was an extraordinary surprise; beautiful - and funny, it's such a funny book. I think a lot of people get scared-off by White ... they think he's going to be just too hard. And some of them are a difficult read. But *The Eye of the Storm* is not, in my view, difficult. You have to concentrate when you read, but you should anyway, when you read a book.

What is it you think he was trying to say?

JD: Far be it for me to position myself as an academic, but I believe the book is mostly about the great issue, love. And the absence of it, the damage it can do to people if they feel they've been deprived of it, or if they didn't get enough of it. The mother is a woman who, in the end, feels that she doesn't even know what it is. She asks her nurse what she thinks love is, and the nurse tries to tell her.

The daughter comes home to visit her mother, an old woman whose life is drawing to a close. It comes to us all - you didn't love them enough, they didn't love you enough. There's so much emotional baggage between you, it's kind of too late ... you can't have those conversations. The mother's not strong enough to cope with them. It's an issue we all wrestle with.

Also, talking to John Gaden, about the separation from your country, between England and Australia, and never feeling quite English or Australian, experiencing loneliness...

JD: Well of course White in the end chose to come back. But – look I didn't know Patrick White, but it might be fair to say he had a troubled relationship with Australia - in part, perhaps because of his homosexuality. In those days of course it was illegal ... but it's only partly that.; the novel examines the upper class, the so called squattocracy. Elizabeth Hunter's two children are the products of this very sexually alive woman, born in a low class family, who marries into great, great wealth, but the children are both barren. And I think White is saying something about that class: - its self-absorption. He can see the end coming – Britain joined the Common market in the 60's.

Being an adaption of an original novel that was written 30 years ago, has hindsight brought anything to the story now that you're interpreting this 30 years later?

JD: White was never the victim of the era that he was writing in. He examines moment to moment – very psychological. He loved painters, and you can easily read his love of painting, his understanding of painting in the way he writes. He paints pictures with his words, and you have to read his novels with that knowledge, or with that concentration. He creates landscapes, or an urban environment, with a shake of face, or the light falling on the street. It's all very painterly. Beautiful.

There's a lot of detail in the book, and once you'd read it, how useful was that in your interpretation of Dorothy?

JD: We had three weeks rehearsal before we started filming - Geoffrey, myself and Fred. We went through the script, and went through the book - this was all at Fred's suggestion, too. He called me and said: "next time you're reading the book there might be some things we've missed". There was a bit of work done, to try and nudge Dorothy a little bit closer towards the woman Patrick White had written.

Dorothy is damaged, resentful, carrying a lot of bitterness towards her mother. Unloved - she thinks she's unloved. She probably is unloved, and she doesn't know what love is either. None of them really know what love is; that knowledge perhaps is learnt from one's mother, So emotionally very fragile, self-engrossed, funny. She's very funny in the book. They all are.

So we tried to draw Dorothy closer to White. And I don't know whether - who knows, the film isn't finished yet - whether that was the right thing to do. I did feel I had to follow my instincts there. And I did think that White is brilliant at character. So there were elements in Dorothy that I would have missed dreadfully if we hadn't been able to insert them. I also felt that in doing that, we defined more clearly for ourselves what the great themes of the novel and the script were. White was a great writer, so it was terribly important to me that we honoured his work. Not slavishly - you can't, it's a different medium - but in the important thematic ways.

So what attracted you to want to play this role?

JD: I wanted to work with Fred. I've always thought that he was, out of his generation of filmmakers - I didn't really think there was anybody who could touch him. I'd had an opportunity to work with him years ago, and didn't, and I thought this could be - this will be, so interesting. A director of Schepisi's calibre, working on that kind of material, could really be a once in a lifetime opportunity. The fact that I felt that poor old Dorothy needed a bit of work didn't faze me, because that will often happen. I've kind of grown used to working like that over the years. You look at the whole package of the people you're going to work with ... Geoffrey Rush, who I've worked with twice before ... Charlotte Rampling, who I've always admired.

Can you talk a little bit about working with Fred? Now that you've had the opportunity, what's it been like?

JD: He's a gorgeous man - very disciplined, always calm on the set - particularly around the actors, no tension in him. That makes an enormous difference to actors. We do tend to be sponges, we can pick things like that up quickly, and it can unsettle.

There's a paternal thing that really wonderful directors have - or maternal, depending. Some directors understand it and some don't. An actor has to feel that they're in a safe zone.

Do you think this is a particularly Australian film, or is it an international film?

JD: I think it's an awfully Australian film. It's really Australian. Now, what do I mean by that, though? Well, you made the distinction (laughs). I wouldn't have, necessarily. I wouldn't know what the hell "Australian" means. It gets bandied around all the time - "it's un-Australian", "that's Australian". I mean, we're up near the Queensland border at the moment ... I don't recognise anything ... it's a different world entirely. I live in Sydney, this was filmed in Melbourne - different place. I think we make massive generalisations about this country and we do ourselves a disservice. Our Northern Territory could be another country. So in that respect, is it an Australian story? Who knows?

I don't think these are things we should concern ourselves with. Have we managed to tell a story that has enough humanity in it to interest an audience? Real humanity, which is sometimes not that easy to

look at . . . if we've managed to achieve that, and bring the humour and the despair – if we've managed to do that, then there's no reason why anybody wouldn't want to watch it.

But is it a film that's been true to where it's set, the particular world that White was writing about? Then my answer would be we've been as true as we could be. As true as we've managed to be. The great American films by the way, are not trying to be "international." The best films have an acute sense of place.

Are there many other roles like this character Dorothy out there that you can get stuck into?

JD: Look, there are not many writers like Patrick White around, so there's probably not that many roles like this, no. She's fragile, and yet she's very strong.

There's a little bit of Theodora Goodman, from "The Aunt's Story" in Dorothy. And I know that book quite well, so it's been fascinating to see the similarities, and just borrow the tiniest bit from Theodora and just inch it. It would be a tragedy if one day White disappeared from our libraries. It would really be a tremendous cultural loss for the generations to come.

He's not an easy writer to read, but that's actually a good thing. It's not a bad thing. And he had a difficult relationship with Australia, and that created some extraordinary novels that we should not be frightened of embracing. I think we tend to mistrust self-examination and self-criticism, but they are crucial – they refine a culture and push it into more fertile territory.

Helen Morse was talking about her character, a Jewish woman who's been thrown into travel, who's had to migrate because of wars and so on. There's the Second World War and all those other political-social aspects to the story that aren't spelt out, but they seem to be imbedded.

JD: A sense of displacement, yes. Well, Basil, Dorothy, even Elizabeth, marooned in her bedroom, half-blind. And it's in Patrick White, himself.

For instance, he started writing the Aunt's Story in '56, '57, when he was in Alexandria - all the scenes in the town, with the sense of foreboding, of something about to happen, with shutters closing, was White in Alexandria, with the Arab uprising. And the Europeans, who had lived such a comfortable, glamorous life there, closing the shutters. But then he caught the boat back to Australia while he was in the midst of that novel, and finished it in Australia. Again, I didn't know him, but one can only assume that he finally came to believe the great stories that he would write would be set in the country he was born in.

What would be that defining aspect of this film that White would capture in that way? How is it defined?

JD: The character of Elizabeth Hunter is very recognisable to me. I've known women like her. I've known women like Dorothy. It's a hard question, that's a hard question to try to give a response to . . . I feel it when I'm playing it. Perhaps there's something about the class confusion, or the class difficulties, that may be a particularly Australian, or a particularly Sydney thing. It's a very volatile city, and it always was, even when it was a penal colony.

The class issue began at the beginning of settlement with the emancipated convicts moving in, and then not only moving in, but flourishing and doing brilliantly, often better than the chap who bought his family and his farming implements, out from England. And 'this bloody guy who was stealing watches six years ago is now doing better than me' – that volatility.

The volatility that comes with all the different waves of migration. We see it now, with the Afghans and the Sri Lankans, people coming from war zones, but we don't consider them legitimate refugees. Why

are we so vulnerable to that? I think it's in our history... fear of 'another wave' ... having to regroup and reshape - a sense of displacement. White understood that.

Flora is very bitter about her place in the class system, bitter about society's expectations of her as a female - that she's just supposed to breed and cook. Her resentment is very deep.

That's an Australian quality, isn't it: "you will not put me in that box"; that need to burst free and define yourself in your own terms. You can't do that in France, it's a very controlled society. So is England. Even America - it's a much more formal society than Australia. But I think we do believe that we can do that - we can define ourselves. That's something that comes up in White's books.

He left Australia for freedom.

JD: He was sent to school in England, as a boy. But he liked it there, eventually. I think he was defined there as 'that Australian'.

He was homosexual. That would probably be difficult. But it was probably easier there than it was back here. Very difficult, I think, in the 50s and the 60s, to be a gay man in a relationship in Castle Hill.

That seems to be the defining element to the stories, the displacement, looking for love.

JD: Maybe we should check with David Marr.

ANTONY WADDINGTON

Producer

So Antony what possessed you to make this film?

AW: Several things. I had spent some time looking for a project that made me feel inspired, and allowed me to think that it would be worth doing whatever it takes to get it there. Had I known it would be a 10 year process at that time, I'm not sure I would have launched out on it, but I'm glad I didn't, because we're here now, and I'm glad we're here. So a combination of Patrick White's work, which is spectacular, the best, and I also wanted to see this world – this bourgeois Australian world on film.

I'm not sure why we don't explore this part of our society more; it's been here almost since day one of European settlement – almost. And we don't seem to look at it much. I'm not saying that it's more or less important than any other element of society, but it's part of ours, and White revealed it so thoroughly in all its rawness and in all its beauty. And I think that appealed to me as well.

So when did you first come across the book, THE EYE OF THE STORM? What's your first memory of it?

AW: The first time I remember seeing The Eye of the Storm, the novel, was on my parent's bookshelves as a kid, amongst several other Patrick Whites. I never read it as a child - the first of Patrick's books I read was Flaws in the Glass, his autobiography, when I was working in Queensland. And it moved me greatly, along with another book I read at the time, by Manning Clark, his autobiography of his childhood growing up in Australia. I just felt there was much in them I could relate to. Not in terms of anything I might have achieved, professionally, but I mean in terms of the mores of their tribes, that they revealed and I thought – it's great when you read someone and you feel like they're speaking directly to you. I suppose that's what makes elements of great writing so appealing to you, because then we have that one-on-one connection with the writer.

And then in terms of this particular novel and then optioning the rights, which occurred ten years ago, was a series of events that encouraged me to do it. One was knowing an elderly woman who died, who lived in Macquarie Street, and would have died in her 90s, just prior to us getting the option, and she was a very intriguing character. At the time I remember having a discussion with a couple of people, saying this woman had an amazing life, a fascinating life, and it'd make a great film. That conversation led to me finding out who had the rights, and to approaching Barbara Mobbs, who was Patrick White's agent, and is the executor of his literary estate, and to a series of conversations with Barbara that led to her granting the rights for us to pursue

What was your first strategy?

AW: The first strategy in terms of my approach as a producer was to work with another team. There were three of us and we were co-writers. Unfortunately, ultimately the work didn't receive the response that I or we had hoped for, and it was made very clear to me, both in Australia and internationally, that if I was going to get a project like this over the line, it required a team as commensurate in their fields, as White was as a writer.

So I went back to the drawing board. That was a three-year lesson, like going back and starting your masters again or something. I had to start again and that was the process of thinking, well, if I do need a team of White's calibre, then who would be the dream director to work with? And for me there was no question – the immediate answer was Fred Schepisi, one of my favourite directors, I think my favourite Australian director, definitely. One of the masters of our time as we all know. In particular for some of the work he'd done – *Six Degrees of Separation* – was a not dissimilar drama of manners, similar social milieu – obviously New York, this is Australia – but Fred knew how to make those intimate dramas, and so I approached him.

And Fred did one of those leanings over the table and just quietly leaning his finger at you said "If I'm going to do this, I want Judy Morris to write it", and I said "ok, I'll try it". So I approached Judy and it was hard to get a hold of Judy because she was in her three year whirlwind of *HAPPY FEET*, in LA and Australia, and we had several meetings, and Judy read the novel, and said 'I can see something in there', and then she and Fred had a meeting in New York, and they did some basic work, and Jude said, 'yep, ok, I'll do it', and so at that point I had to raise money.

I had early money from the Seaborn Broughton foundation and the wonderful philanthropist behind it, Dr Rodney Seaborn, who's no longer with us. It's a shame because it would have been wonderful for him to see this realised, and he encouraged me to go and have a chat to Edward Simpson, who produced a couple of arts and music festivals, who'd been an actor, was an actor, had worked in the musical theatre as well, as a performer. I chatted with Ed, and he liked the project and responded, and decided to invest at that point, so we could pay Judy Morris to write our screenplay, in conjunction with Fred, but largely Judy's work of course.

So that was a several year process, and it had to go through quite a few drafts, and a terrific exciting process for me, because Fred and Judy included me completely. None of my questions were too annoying for them, and then we went back to the Film Commission, and they liked what they'd seen, and they said, look, we'd like to put money into this now, which was a delight, of course, for all of us, and more drafts were written. So there's been a rigorous screenplay development programme, and that was a several year process.

And then once we all felt that the screenplay was at a level where we could go and take it to people, we worked out a plan with Fred. There were a couple of people we knew we wanted, we hoped for, that was Geoffrey Rush and Judy Davis, and John Gaden, who's been a stalwart supporter of this project since day one. He turned up to early finance meetings ten years ago, and talked about the importance of White, and his place in our literary and theatrical canon. So there was a role in it that he was born to play – that's Wyburd the solicitor, and Fred then went to Geoffrey, and we got a very quick and positive

response from Geoffrey Rush, which was one of those thrilling moments, indeed turning points along the way.

On the strength of that, we went to Judy, and then Fred approached Charlotte. He went to London and had several meetings with her to discuss it. I think it's difficult for any actress to play an elderly woman dying, because I think it still, it shouldn't be, but I think it's still harder for women in that sense, and so it took an actress of great confidence and I would say, daring, to take that on. And, someone of that generation, who could believably play Geoffrey and Judy's mother and who we could also see as the ravishing, great, society hostess, able to sweep any man of any age off his feet, hard-core, plus play a well-to-do Australian woman, which is a particular dialect as well. No easy find. But Fred had these wonderful meetings with Charlotte, I wish I'd been there, but he recounted them and said they were very positive and productive, so at that point, we had Charlotte on board.

So it was time to raise money. Edward Simpson and I worked out an approach with - I should say, our executive producer Jonathan Steinman has been involved for five or six years, guiding along the way, and so we worked out how we would approach our private financial investors at that point. Edward and I worked on that. Edward sourced a lot of names that we could approach, and we wrote to many, many people, had many, many meetings, most of them weren't positive ultimately, and yet sufficient were, and the ones that were, allowed us to be here, quite frankly.

Our private investors have been terrific on his project, and once they realised what the team was like in terms of Patrick White, Judy Morris, Fred Schepisi, Geoffrey Rush, Judy Davis, Charlotte Rampling, John Gaden and on and on, they were very intrigued, and they would read the work, and the ones who believed in seeing a fine arts production of this calibre come to life, stood up and said yes, count us in. I wish I could mention their names, I would dearly love to, because I can't sing their praises enough, but they've asked for us not to do that, we must respect that, but that process was a several year process.

Right up until the end, we didn't think we were there. But things turned around. I had optioned the rights through Paperbark Films, ten years ago, and I did that because I've made several films with Gregory Read. Greg was busy during that time doing other projects, and I was independently producing this through Paperbark, but it turned out that a film Greg had been working on in New York was put on hold. Greg suddenly had all this time, and he came back to Australia and said 'right, let's get this going' and it was just the impetus that we needed at that point, because it gave another thrust to everyone's momentum. So we then had another person working full-time focused on the project and within a period of two, three months, the project turned around, elements started locking into place very quickly. It was one of those phases when the planets align, and it was one of those moments where we would feel elements lock into place in our favour.

And still anything could have fallen over; it could have fallen over into the second or third week of shooting. It's a delicate procedure and we thought we'd have one investment from one body, but because of timing and shooting schedules and constraints with actors, other commitments, we had to just go. So we had to go on our own without a sizeable chunk of the money we were expecting which was very difficult, so we were down in Melbourne, setting up a production office, thinking 'can we pay all these people?' But I'm very pleased to say that we have done so, and have done so along the way, and having Jonathan and Edward and Greg all working hard on that front got us along.

So everybody has their special qualities and can bring something together to the project, what do you think your strongest point is in bringing this project along?

AW: Well, I would define myself at the outset as a creative producer on this project, I think I have an empathy for the drama, having trained and worked as an actor here in Australia, and indeed, quite a few of the actors I've worked with over the years have been in this production, which has been a great thrill. Having worked in documentary as a producer with Greg, I've had those skills to bring. I think one of the

terrific things about working in Australia, working in documentary in Australia, working as an actor in Australia, so many people can do so many things, you know?

Greg's written and directed and produced. I haven't directed, but I think one of the things is we can bring all these qualities to bare on a project, and you can do that in Australia. People don't categorise you, and once you're in that box, you're not allowed to move out of it. You can do that in a particular field, and you can do that across fields, I think. I would say that's been useful. This has been the biggest project I've worked on as a producer.

**So what would be the thing that you've learnt the most since starting the production?
It's a very different experience, making a film as opposed to thinking about making a film.**

AW: If I'm thinking about what I've learnt the most in this project, given that we're still only three quarters of the way through (at time of interview), there's not one thing that stands out as opposed to any other, in that overall, it's the steepest learning curve I've ever experienced in my working life, so on many fronts it's been a challenge. There are artistic choices and decisions to make, and Fred has been entirely inclusive in that process, which has been a great joy, so my hat as a creative producer, the creative part of that term, has been satisfied. Judy Morris has been involved in that, and at times there has been very rewarding discussions with the actors. So that has been revealing. And then ultimately, there's only so much money, and what you can do is governed, to a large extent, to what the funds are. What's going to allow you to realise Fred's vision. And there are times when it feels like we're saying to Picasso 'you can't have any more paint', which is quite distressing really. Yet we have to do it, because otherwise we wouldn't be being responsible to our investors, to where the other funds have come from, to our completion guarantor.

So it's been a learning experience on all those fronts – the logistics of a travelling circus of this scale. It's not on the scale of Hollywood productions that Fred is used to working in, but it's certainly a large budget for an independent Australian film, and maybe there's never enough money to do what you want to do, I don't know. But it's also been fascinating watching Fred thinking, well I presume he's thinking 'ok, this is what I've got at my disposal in terms of resources, and people and technology to achieve a certain shot – 'how am I going to realise that to get the best out of it that I want?' and that's fascinating. So it's a learning curve on every front - In terms of economics, fundraising, in terms of creativity.

There must be days that you do question the reason you're doing this in the first place.

AW: There have been moments, absolutely, because the pressure's profound and they come at you from every angle, and you just don't think they're going to stop and you don't sleep and the urgency and intensity of every one of those requests or demands or situations seems overpowering. And yet, not more or less than any other film I suppose, and it's probably always reasonably healthy to step back and say 'it is only a movie we're making'. It's one we all believe in passionately and hope for the best from, but at times you need to be able to step back and just take a deep breath. I wish I had been able to do that in the heat of the moment more often. But nonetheless, we're getting there and we're three quarters of the way through our shoot, and things are looking good, so I'm thrilled with where we are and what we're seeing on screen.

GREGORY READ

Producer

How did you first become involved with THE EYE OF THE STORM?

GR: Antony approached me ten years ago saying he had spoken to Patrick White's literary agent, Barbara Mobbs, about adapting Patrick's book, *The Eye of the Storm*, into a feature film and she was

interested. I thought it was a wonderful idea - So we optioned the book. Antony and I had worked together on a number of projects before, so I was pleased to have the opportunity to work with him again on such great material and give it my best shot at bringing it into production. We needed to find an Australian director who could work with such dense material, so Antony approached one of my favourite Australian directors, Fred Schepisi. Antony pitched the film to Fred and he came on board.

So were you a fan of Patrick White? Have you always been a fan of Patrick White?

GR: I didn't know a lot about Patrick White. I had heard of the man, but I hadn't read any of his work. So this book was fresh for me - a bit of Australian literature history, which I had never actually come across before. So for me it was like discovering Patrick White - such an exciting process. Then having read the book and realising how complex it was in regards to the way it's written, it was great to see how the writer Judy Morris adapted the core elements and nuances of the story into her screenplay so effectively.

It must have been a very daunting idea, something as big as this book to adapt, what was your thought process?

GR: I knew it was going to be a big challenge, but if you can get the right team together, all sorts of things are possible. I remember talking to Antony about the challenge of taking on such a project wanting nothing more than doing the book justice. The last thing you want to do is take a Nobel Prize winning author's work and adapt it into something which is not going to translate to the screen. So first thing I did when reading the book and speaking to Antony about it was ask how it would adapt. Would this be possible? Then we spoke to Fred to get his ideas on who would be the right writer to do that adaption. Since Fred would be interpreting this screenplay, it was important to us that Fred believed in the ability of the writer to achieve such an adaption.

And how did Judy Morris first become involved?

GR: Fred suggested that Judy would be a perfect person to write this screenplay as she understood the world that Patrick was writing about. So Antony approached Judy, and that's how we got Judy involved. We raised some development money with help from our Executive Producer, Edward Simpson which enabled us to pay for the work on the adaption. That's where Ed and Ant's collaboration really came to the fore. Judy did a wonderful 1st draft, Fred was right, we had found the right person.

You're a writer/director yourself, what are the sorts of things you've learnt about this process, as a producer, instead of as a writer/director?

GR: (laughs) Which part? I learnt things all the way through. Firstly, because I write original material, dealing with the book and adaption was a whole new experience which I found extremely daunting. It was a real learning curve, it really was. You've got to be so careful in terms of what you keep in and what you take out. So that in itself was fascinating, because when I'm writing my own material, the characters are being invented and they evolve, I build in their motivations and they do what I want them to so they can play out my story. But in adapting a book, if you want to go with a certain narrative structure or character motivation that is not true to the book, you can't. You've got to be true to the material - and certainly true to the overall story. Obviously sometimes you do create new scenes, which aren't in the book, mainly to bridge story and help get from A to B more efficiently - I found the whole process intriguing, watching how Judy Morris would take such material and then translate it, because for me it was something a little more foreign. I had always thought of adaption as a distillation of the original material. But it is much, much more.

And then there's the producing side of it, pulling together the resources to make the film happen. Helping Fred to realise the film and working closely with Antony and Ed to see how the investor's money would be best put to a project like this, and how to make a certain budget work. That's always a challenge. The producer's perspective in creating the film we want to make is very different to the

director's perspective, because as a Producer I need to deal with creating a budget and schedule, and I need to know if I can raise enough money to enable a director to achieve their own unique vision. And I've got to be sure of what Fred's vision is, that's the tricky bit, because I'm not always sure of how he's going to construct a scene, Fred likes to keep me guessing. I may have an idea about how we can realise a scene within budget, we speak, Fred says he's going to do this, but in reality things change, ideas gestate over pre production, some times right up to the day of shooting that particular scene. So as a producer you truly can't expect to know what the directors final approach is going to be and how many shots he likes to do to achieve his vision, you need to approximate. Budget dictates that you can't always have everything you want on set, but at the same time you don't want to hinder the production in any way by saying you can't have a camera crane, on this day or that, because I don't think you will use it. So that's been educational.

The most exciting part for me is watching Fred work. It's wonderful seeing a master film maker, who's films I grew up on, work with this material and how he works with the actors. For me as a director this is has been such a rewarding experience.

What are some of the little tricks of the trade that you picked up?

GR: I think there's lots of different things the Fred does. The way he moves the camera, where it's maybe not so obvious that you would do that. How he engages the audience in the cut. How he's considers and constructs the narrative - they're all tools that are interesting enough, but what is different is how Fred implements and uses these tools, in his own individual way. I think there are a thousand tools, but then which ones do you use and in which order and how do you put the puzzle together? To me I find that fascinating.

He's very much a character driven director. He focuses very much on performance, and that's very exciting for me. I love character as well. But to actually see close hand, the way he works with the actors, the way he just does little tiny things, little whispers, little words, that just put them on track, or put them off a little bit, it's very exciting, so I find that quite thrilling. It's very rewarding to see someone like Fred at work.

What's been something that stands out the most about this whole process?

GR: What stands out for me the most on the production is working with a visionary like Fred. It's been a really exciting process, being able to work with such an experienced director and being able to be there on the sideline as a producer, with Antony, to help them bring this book to the screen. I've been able to stand back a little bit more from the coal face, so to speak, and actually observe someone else working, and creating their vision. It's a very different place to sit on a film than when you're directing, it's fascinating seeing how Fred interprets the screenplay, how he works out what the shots are going to be, and how he works with Ian Baker, the cinematographer, to create his look for the film. To be really swept up by that, to be excited by what he's doing, to be able to see how these shots are being assembled by our editor, Kate Williams is so illuminating. I found it gave me a broader view of the film making process, standing back a little bit as an observer, but at the same time be intrinsically involved with Antony, overlooking the whole production, and making sure that all the little pieces are in place. And that's been a very different perspective, and a very exciting one, for me.

This is an epic. Most Australian films are small budget films about small families - they're low budget. This one is big ideas, big budget, for an Australian film. What's that been like?

GR: It's a big story. It's a book that required to be approached a certain way. When Antony and I started to put the film together, looking at budgets and all the elements, we soon realised it was a very ambitious project that would be a challenge. I remember back, when we were working on the budget, we estimated what it would cost to make such a film, and then once we got a budget we realised we needed much more money, but we could only get so much money. So Antony and Edward would go out and try to

raise the finance required, they would get numerous knock backs then out of the blue, someone would come in and invest, and you think that's fantastic, but you know you always need that little bit more, because if you don't have the appropriate budget you just can't physically make the film you want to make.

One of the biggest challenges is working around existing actor schedules. For example Geoffrey Rush was going off to do another film, and we knew the dates, so we had a certain date to work towards to shoot our film. We needed to raise a bit more money, we were getting close, everything else was falling into place but we were just that little bit short. We kept shortening the amount of time we had Geoffrey for because we knew he had to leave on a fixed date and we couldn't start our shoot until we had all the money in place. This reduction in time caused all sorts of scheduling issues as we had to shoot Geoffrey out first, the bounce on effect of what we shoot where and when, was impacting the budget as we couldn't shoot the scenes in a cost effecting order. We just scrapped in, within a week of us wrapping Geoffrey he was on another film.

Not many producers spend every day on set. How is that relationship between you and Fred been, being there?

GR: It's been fantastic. Fred's been very happy, having both Antony and I on set. It's been a bit of a partnership in that respect, because we've been able to action things very quickly. Issues come up all the time, it's a very tight budget, and we know we have to watch every single element of the production. So to be able to be there, to be able to make decisions, and also to help, doing things along the way, which are relevant to the film being realised, is critical. I believe it is very important for the producer to be around during the shooting process and it's also a very rewarding experience for me.

Screenplay by – JUDY MORRIS

Can you tell us a little bit about how you first became an actor?

JM: I always wanted to be an actor. I wanted to be an actor from when I was born. I started seeing movies when I was about three years old and my mother was very gracious and allowed me to go to the paying sessions in the morning, in the afternoon, and in the night. So I would go and see them about seven times and then I would act out a film. So film was always a passion for me, from a very, very, very early age.

You then became an actor, what was your first role?

JM: I started working when I was quite young. I come from a family of musicians and I started doing a nightclub act when I was quite young, and my mum would go along and supervise me, which I probably needed. I would go along at a very young age and be singing My Heart Belongs to Daddy. I think I was about twelve then.

So where did that lead?

JM: That lead to my day in television, a television show in Brisbane, where I did singing and dancing. I did radio plays at the ABC when I was still a kid. I then auditioned for NIDA straight from school, then came down to Sydney and went to NIDA. It was a pretty straight course and I think that I was quite lucky, in that from when I was young, I knew what I wanted to do. It could have been really disappointing if I never got the chance to do it, but I was lucky, very lucky.

So what was your first film role?

JM: My first film role was in a film called Three to Go, I believe, which the Commonwealth Film Unit, as it was called then, did. Peter Weir worked on that film. There were three or four different directors and I did one of the films within that film, so I guess that would have been it.

And was Libido 1972?

JM: I did Libido in 72. That was quite a groundbreaking film for the Australian film industry at the time. It had, well it had Fred on it, which was fantastic. It was the beginning of careers for really terrific people, and I worked on a film within that film called The Child and that was directed by Tim Burstall.

You were awarded a very high Australian award after that, can you tell us about that?

JM: I did receive the AFI award for best actress for that.

Did that have a big effect on your career at the time?

JM: I think for actors it's always about luck and timing and being in the right place. I know so many brilliant actors that have never had the luck of timing, or the right vehicle, and I think if you hit a vehicle that - it's all about the heat that goes around things for actors I think, and I think that you can be very brilliant, and never strike that heat because you're not in the right place at the right time. So it was very good for me, and very lucky for me, because it's hugely a matter of luck.

So you went on to do a lot of television after that period, then?

JM: I did a lot of films. Some television, in the 70s. It was a very vital time in the Australian film industry. There was a lot of work around. Again, fortunately - luckier than today. But it seemed that films just rolled on and on and I was very lucky to be in quite a lot of those films.

Then you became a writer – how did you make the transition from actor to writer?

JM: All the time I was acting, I always knew that I wanted to do something else as well. I loved acting, and I still love acting - I have huge respect for actors. But always, from when I started making films, I always felt that I was interested in every aspect of it, not just the acting. So I knew from quite a young age that I would eventually, or try my very best, to work on the other side of the camera, as well as acting. So it was something that was always in the back of my head, it was just a foregone conclusion for me, that I would do that. Then the opportunity arose for me to go onto the other side, as a director. Really I was thinking more of directing at that point. Then I went into Kennedy Miller - George invited me in, because of the film that I directed, and I was working there. I was going to direct something, and I was working in a writer-director team, and then I started writing. Then I just kept writing. Writing was never really the thing that I aimed for, but it seemed to be something that came to me, and people employ you and say 'well you can do this' and you say 'yeah, ok'. Then of course it became an incredible passion. It happened on its own account, with its own life really, I got into it.

Are the disciplines similar, do you think, acting and writing?

JM: They're very different in that people are not looking at you, that's huge. Writing is very different from acting - to not have people absolutely scrutinising you, which becomes a part of acting that you have to get really used to. But to be a writer, you get to go and creep away somewhere and do it.

But I think they're very similar in that they're investigative of characterisation and I think a lot of actors turn to writers, because it's the same area that you're interested in - the area of breaking down and

observing and looking at characters, trying to understand them, and build them from the ground up. All of those things are similarities between acting and writing.

You're a writer/co-director, what was that the first major film you worked as a writer on?

JM: I co-wrote Babe: Pig in the City with George Miller. So I did a lot in there. That was great, to have those opportunities. Then I wrote on other films. I wrote on films in England and I wrote on television in England, because I lived there for quite awhile. Then I came back to do Happy Feet. But I had directed a movie before that as well. So Happy Feet was the biggest in terms of it was a huge commitment. It was nearly four years of my life, and very demanding and very exciting.

Happy Feet, we can't say it's anything but exciting! It's always good to work on something successful. You have no idea when you're working on things. You have a fair idea - but if it's successful, great!

When did you first become involved in THE EYE OF THE STORM?

JM: Antony Waddington approached me about The Eye of The Storm, and asked me if I would be interested in working on it, because Fred Schepisi had apparently shown interest in my writing. Thanks Fred, thanks Fred! And that was so exciting for me because I'd been a huge admirer of Fred's, since I was a kid, really. We started out quite close to each other, in the fact that we were working on the same project when we were young, so I've known him all my life, and always have had huge respect for him. I don't know why he asked for me but I'm happy that he did. This is an extraordinary film and an extraordinary chance to do something special.

Were you familiar with THE EYE OF THE STORM?

JM: I'd always read a lot of Patrick White. The Eye of the Storm was one of my favourites. I had always been a fan of Patrick White's, because I always thought he wrote in a way that blew my mind, particularly in his character assessment, and his attention to detail, and his observational capacities that were just extraordinary. I can only imagine, he just pores over someone when he's with them and just dissects them, which I always found remarkable. So I always loved Patrick White novels. Always a fan of Fred's, always a fan of Patrick's.

It was a very big novel, what was the path like to actually assess that book, and how did you approach the script?

JM: The Eye of The Storm is over 600 pages long, so it was quite a large challenge to begin thinking how to distill that and make the plot very strong. Because I do believe you have to have a very strong story. But Patrick's character's were so brilliant, really, that they'd lead you to a story. But yes, it was a huge challenge and sometimes I did go 'oh my goodness, this was very brave of me, to take this on'. But yeah, 600 pages - you have to distill it down to something more like 100 pages. It's a big distillation.

Where there days when you were looking at a blank page?

JM: The way I write, there would be very few times when I'm looking at a blank page. I'd be sitting down and spurt out any old rubbish onto a page if it's not coming to me, just to get myself going. So I tend not to look at a blank page, but I certainly look at a lot of things the next day and go 'goodness, what was I thinking?' and work from there. Other days something magical happens and you think 'ooh, that could be quite good'.

What was the process like? Fred was obviously on board early on - can you talk about the process of working with Fred and the whole process of writing?

JM: Working with Fred Schepisi has been a joy for me. It's not so much that I think about the process

with him, it's just that I understand everything he says. When he says something and gives you a note or an observation or something doesn't work for him, he says things that I find very easy to comprehend. That's not always the way with people. Sometimes you can just think 'I don't know what you mean by that' or 'I don't know where your head is' but I just find it's incredibly stimulating and good to work with him, because one, he has a huge sense of humour which is very important to me, and will send things up as you're going along, so that when you're feeling a bit dark he's always there with a good gag. That's always good.

Two, just that sense of feeling actually very comfortable with him and the way he thinks. That all felt like a very natural process for me, to work with him. It's never been hard, and he can be quite honest. I'm quite happy with that.

Can he be brutal at times?

JM: He's never been brutal with me, but he's completely honest, and I like that, because I trust that. He says 'that just doesn't work', or 'that's no good'. I don't think that's being brutal - I think that's the way I personally like to work. I like to work with someone who can be honest. If you didn't think that someone liked a lot of what you did, that could be difficult. That was never the case. I just find that he's extremely straight and it's very visceral I think with him, and also very natural, for him. He's a very instinctive artist, that's my feeling. Fred may disagree, but for me, that's the way I feel. Because of that nothing was ever brutal, it was just incredibly encouraging, and supportive.

Did you always believe this film would be made?

JM: With films it's not unusual for it to be a very long process. It has been a long process on this film, but I have worked on a lot of projects where that has been the case. I know how hard people struggle, and how long it takes for films to get up. I always believed that this film should be made. You never know whether something's going to be made, but I always believed deeply that it should be made. I thought that it presented a particular type of Australia that is different and needs to be presented. I hoped that people would see that and come to that party. But yeah, I definitely would have been disappointed if that film hadn't been made.

The producers have been with this story for a long time as well, what's it been like for the team?

JM: When the film started out it was basically Antony Waddington, Fred and I. That went on for many years like that, with the back up of Patrick White's executor, Barbara Mobbs. She was very instrumental in the fact that she responded in a way that was really positive with what was being done in the film and that gave us enormous hope, because we felt that if we could realise Patrick's vision in some way, she would be our best barometer for that. Her being supportive was really huge. It was huge for me to feel that and Antony would always hand on what Barbara had said, and I was like, 'oh, phew, thank heavens'.

We also got support very early on from people like John Gaden, the fabulous actor who is in the film, and was always there, and always behind it. David Marr was very kind in talking about it in an article. All of these things helped us a lot I think - the fact that people got behind the project in such a way. Geoffrey Rush - when he read it, which was quite a while ago, became extremely supportive and talked to other actors I know.

And a lot of other people came on later. A lot of other wonderful people that we have, like Charlotte Rampling, Judy Davis, Helen Morse, Robyn Nevin, Elizabeth Alexander - we have a legendary cast, just really fantastic. I hope I haven't forgotten someone extraordinary. So they all came on and were extremely supportive at a later time when casting was happening. But early on, there were people that were aware that there was a screenplay and came on at that point - and that helped us enormously. Then of course there's that little old thing called money and that's when Jonathan Steinman came on. Gregory, who is Antony Waddington's partner, came on as a producer, and Sally Ayre-Smith came on then as a co-producer. But that was all much later. But when it got to the deal of the raising of the money, we

had an excellent team that had come together there.

So you've seen rushes coming back now, how does that make you feel?

JM: Good! (laughs) Really good. I'm a really happy bunny! You never know with a film, until it's all cut. It's a long, very difficult process a lot of the time and that's when you judge it. But yeah, I couldn't be happier with the people and I'm just delighted with working with Fred.

I've now seen the rushes and I'm delighted, thrilled and I think that Fred has this amazing ability to make things simple, accessible, and at the same time make them very colourful and complex, without people feeling that they're being asked to feel something. I think again that's quite effortless for him, but it's a visual talent as well as a talent with actors, as well as a talent with sound. He's working with Ian Baker who he always works with and you just can't go beyond that team. They know each other obviously so well. Everything they've done together has been extraordinary, so to see all of the richness of that come together is beautiful for me. And of course I'm always a sucker for some extraordinary acting. In the end, we will know when the film's finished, and shown, and we see it all together.

What was it like, as a woman, writing a script based on a man's novel?

JM: People ask what it's like for a woman to write a man's novel. I think that with actors and with all really wonderful artists, it seems to me that often the males have a strong feminine side and that the females have a strong masculine side. When you read someone like Patrick White, it seems to cross the boundaries of class, sex, race, all of those things, so it was never an issue for me, that I was a woman writing a man's piece. I just think that his sensibilities are so complex, really, I suppose, that I think it applies to both women and men equally and he has a very good understanding. His female characters are beautifully written, as are his male characters, so you never feel, this is the man's point of view, and I'm going to have a problem with that. I don't think I ever thought of it, you know. Obviously, he's a male author, but that was never in the forefront of my thoughts. All I read was 'oh my goodness, this is the most extraordinary way to think of something, the most extraordinary observation'.

What would you say was the one thing Patrick White was saying in his novel?

JM: You know I think that he probably says a lot of different things to a lot of different people. But to me the thing he said, the thing that probably came out of it most strongly, is the idea of people staying in a storm, and that being correlated to life. The idea that people choose to go through the most extraordinary hardships. They want for survival, and stay in what I can consider an incredibly churning journey, for a lot of people. And yet they choose to stay there in the storm.

That's what the storm represented for me. Through all sorts of things, all the good things and all the bad things, that's what I take out of it. The choice to deal with it and stay in the storm, until the ultimate choice - when people don't anymore. That's to me the amazing transcendent moment in a way - when people get to the point when they chose not to stay in the storm anymore for some reason, whatever that reason may be. And with individual people we can never judge that point at which it's going to be. Whether it's going to be something small that kicks them over the edge, or something big, or whether they have the choice. Those were the things that just held me completely in that novel.

And that scene at the end represents?

JM: I don't talk about the last scene of the film. I would never talk about the last scene of a film! (Laughs) You have to go and see it to see what the last scene is.

FULL CREDITS:

THE EYE OF THE STORM

Directed by
Fred Schepisi

Screenplay by
Judy Morris

Based on the novel,
The Eye of the Storm written by Patrick White

Produced by
Antony Waddington
Gregory Read
Fred Schepisi

Executive Produced by
Jonathan Shteinman & Edward Simpson

Executive Producers
Bob Marcs & James Vernon

Executive Producers
Judy Davis
Geoffrey Rush

Director of Photography
Ian Baker

Edited by
Kate Williams

Music By
Paul Grabowsky
Featuring Branford Marsalis

Production Designer
Melinda Doring

Costume Designer
Terry Ryan

Make-Up Designer
Kirsten Veysey

Co-Producer
Sally Ayre-Smith

Casting
Nikki Barrett

Geoffrey Rush

Judy Davis

Charlotte Rampling

“THE EYE OF THE STORM”

Alexandra Schepisi

Helen Morse

John Gaden

Robyn Nevin

Colin Friels

Maria Theodorakis

Bille Brown

Jane Menelaus

An Antony Waddington Presentation

In association with RMB Productions

And The Australian Broadcasting Corporation

A PaperBark Films Production

A Fred Schepisi Film

Executive Producers

Andrew Mackie Richard Payten

1st Assistant Director and Associate Producer

Toby Pease

Made with the assistance of Screen Australia and Film Victoria

CAST (in order of appearance)

Mrs Hunter	Charlotte Rampling
Mary	Maria Theodorakis
Basil	Geoffrey Rush
Onslow Porter	Jamie Timony
Dorothy	Judy Davis
Club Porter	Bob Marcs
Flora	Alexandra Schepisi
Arnold Wyburd	John Gaden
Lotte	Helen Morse
Lal Wyburd	Robyn Nevin
Maggie	Jane Menelaus
Dudley	Bille Brown
June	Heather Mitchell
Peter	Simon Stone
Janie	Nikki Shiels
Carol	Louise Siverson
Athol Shreve	Colin Friels
Lurline Skinner	May Lloyd
Col	Dustin Clare
Edvard	Martin Lynes
Cherry Cheeseman	Liz Alexander
Doug Cheeseman	Barry Langrishe
Lady at lunch	Benita Collings
Club Desk Clerk	Justin Smith
Onslow Deck Clerk	David Harris
Rory Macrory	Peter Houghton
Anne Macrory	Trudy Hellier
Mogs Macrory	Monique Heath
Macrory Boys	Charlie Dean
	William Fisher
	Lachlan Thompson
Macrory Baby	Riley and Darcy Smith
Dr Treweek	Tim Robertson
French Waiter	Laurent Denis Boulanger
Mrs Hunter Stand-In	June Leijon
Basil Stand-In	Craig Christie
Dorothy Stand-Ins	Jodie Foreman
	Noni Dunstone
Mrs Hunter Stunt Double	Brittany Baldwin
Edvard Stunt Double	Marty Dance

Production Manager
Sandy Stevens

Production Co-ordinator
Kelly Vincent

Post Production Supervisor
Jane Ballantyne

Production Accountant
Trudy Talbot

Assistant Accountant
Kristin Kruger

Assistant Production Coordinator
Jess Rogers

Production Secretary
Rachael Deller Pincott

2nd Assistant Director
Todd Embling

2nd 2nd Assistant Director
Breeze Callahan

3rd Assistant Director
Nick Schepisi

Additional Asst Director
Andrea Hachuel Baldrige

Director's Assistant
Celine Ruse

Director's Attachment
Damian Walshe-Howling

Production Runners
BJ Turner
Voula Varsamakis
Scott Langman
Julie Ellera

Production Runner NSW
Tim Marshall

Script Supervisor
Kristin Witcombe

Camera Operator
Leigh Mackenzie

1st Assistant Camera
Chaz Lyon

2nd Assistant Camera
Steve Bailey

Video Split Operator
Garie Wetherill

B Camera/Steadicam Operator
Greg 'Mango' Gilbert

Additional Camera Assistants NSW
Ricky Schamburg
Robbie Mackinnon

Additional footage directed by
Gregory Read

Production Sound Mixer
John Wilkinson

Boom Swinger
David Vance

Gaffer
Rory Timoney

Best Boy Electrics
Chris Shanahan

3rd Electrics
Antonio Argiro

Assistant Electrics
Andrew Jepsen
Jeri Ranieri

Theatre Lighting
Niklas Pajanti

Additional Electrics
Trent Duggan

Additional Electrics NSW
Steve Monk
Phil Mulligan
Stephen Head

Key Grip
Rob Hansford

Best Boy Grip
Mark Hanneysee

Dolly Grip
Chris Hansford

1st Assistant Grip
Jason Hansford

2nd Assistant Grip
Tyron Robinson

Additional Grips
Peter Ruggieri

Additional Grips NSW
Benn Hyde
Maurice McKay
Charlie Howell-Lowe

Costume Supervisor
Alban Farrawell

Costume Buyer
Jeanie Cameron

Costume Cutter
Karine Larch e-Ndour

Costume Machinist
Leonora Ferguson

Costume Standby
Jilly Guice

Assistant Costume Standby
Celeste Blewitt

Costume Assistant / Runner
Leanne Caruana

Hair Designer
Cheryl Williams

Key Hair & Make-Up
Zeljka Stanin

Key Hair & Make-Up
Heather Ross

Make-Up & Hair Assistant
Catherine Biggs

Additional Make-Up Artist
Carolyn Nott

Art Department

Supervising Art Director - Janie Parker
Set Designer - Brian Nickless
Designer's Assistant - Leon Salom
Graphic Designer - Michael Wholley

Set Decorator - Glen W Johnson
Senior Buyer - Jane Murphy
Buyer / Dresser - Kim Reed
Buyer / Dresser - Anna McEwan

Props Master - Sandra Scurria
Standby Props - Dean Sullivan
Assistant Standby Props - Marney McKenna

Art Department Co-ordinator - Emily Saunders
Junior Buyer/Assistant - Angela Paraskevas
Art Department Attachment - Harriet Williams
Action Vehicles Co-ordinator - Aaron Cuthbert

Jewellery Design - Adrian Lewis

Construction Manager - Ross Murdoch
Construction Foreman - Steve Leslie
Set Builder - Alex Kocher
Carpenter - Marco Lunny
Trades Assistant - Jean Luc Tran
Trades Assistant - Josef Stanley

Head Scenic Painter - Clive Jones
Set Finisher - Ric Haddon

SFX Supervisor - Peter Stubbs
SFX Technicians - Mick Plummer, Tim O'Brien, Kevin Turner, Harry Ward, Michael Dempsey,
William McLaggan, Jac Fieguth, Julian Summers

Art Department NSW

Art Director - Jon Dowding
Set Decorator - Chrissy Feld

Buyer / Dresser - Christian Petersen
Buyer / Dresser - Brandon Specht
Art Department Runner - Devin de Araujo

Construction Manager - Andrew Gardiner
Leading Hand - Matthew Henneken
Set Builder - Matthew Gordon
Carpenter - Wayne Diskin
Scenic Artist - Chris Williams
Set Finishers - Dave Catton, Mark Kennedy

Head Greens - Di Bennett
Greens Assistant - Jodie Cooper
Greens Assistant - Larry O'Brien
Horse Wrangler - Tony Jablonski

Marine Co-ordinator - Gary McNamara

Art Department Sydney
Art Director - Alex Holmes

Set Decorator - Bev Dunn

Buyer / Dresser - Kate Campbell

Art Department Runner - Andrew Chrichton

Greensman - Jack Elliot

Location Managers - Tony Clarke, Peter Hicks ,Ashley McLeod

Locations Assistants - Ellie Hawker, Roger Paul

Location Scouts - George Akl, Richard Vette, Mel Dunstone

Unit Manager - Rick Kornaat

Assistant Unit Manager - Gordon Anderson

Unit Assistants - Lehi Tahau, Carl Beaumont, Ben Morrison-Jack, Karen Downes, Mark Cohn

Unit Manager NSW - Lehi Tahau Unit Assistants NSW - Ron Wyndham, John Luettkke

Caterer Hel's Kitchen - Helen Clarke

Caterer NSW Fleury's Catering - Eric 'Cookie' Fleury, Louise Fleury

Stunt Co-ordinator - John Walton

Safety Officers - Rainey Carah, Grant Page

Safety Officers NSW - Rob Simper, Laurence Pettinari

Safety Report Writer - Russell Frost

Unit Nurse - Sally Davis

Unit Nurse NSW - Kathleen Connole

Casting Assistant - Natalie Wall

Extras Casting - Tamasin Simpkin

Dialogue Coach - Suzanne Heywood

French Dialogue - Coach Brigitte Gualberto

Drama Coach - Elena Mandalis

EPK Producer - Rebecca McLean

EPK Crew - Gregory Read, Edward Simpson, Antony Waddington

Stills Photographer - Matthew Nettheim

Publicity - Chris Chamberlin

Title Design - Alex Stitt

Assistant Film Editor - Shaun Smith

Post Production Co-ordinator - Kristin Kruger

Post Production Script - Reezy Miller

French translations - Guillaume Capala

Visual Effects by
Iloura

Head of VFX - Ineke Majoor

VFX Supervisor - Glenn Melenhorst

VFX Co-ordinator - Georgia Smith

Data Manager - Chris Dwyer

Compositing TD - Alan Fairlie

Lead Compositor - Dom Hellier

Lead VFX artist - Paul Buckley

Compositors - Laura Dubsky, Matthew Pascuzzi, Genevieve Camilleri, Morgan Jones, Matthew Omond,

3D artist - Pawel Grochola

Clean up artist - Alan Lam

Lead Match Mover - Jason Gilholme

On set VFX
Supervisor - Chris Godfrey

Assistant - Sigi Eimutis

Digital Intermediate Services - Digital Pictures

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DI Colourist - Deidre McClelland

DI Producer - Rachel McKellar-Harding

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Re-Recording - Mixer Rob Mackenzie

Mix Assistant - Mischa Herman

Foley Artist - Mario Vaccaro

Foley Recordist - Adam Connelly

ADR Recordists - Liesl Pieterse, Chris Goodes, Simon Rosenberg

Sound Post Manager - Helen Field

ADR Facility (Paris) - Yellow Cab Studios

ADR Recordist - Steven Ghouti

ADR Dialect Coach - Leith McPherson

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No animals were harmed during the development or production of this motion picture.

Music composed, arranged and conducted by Paul Grabowsky

Music Supervisor Maggie Rodford

Music performed by
Branford Marsalis - Soprano Saxophone
Sarah Morse - Cello
Paul Grabowsky - Piano
Frank Di Sario - Double Bass
Niko Schauble - Drums

Melbourne Scoring Orchestra
Orchestra Leader - Robert John
Score Co-Ordinator - Rueben Zylberspic
Score Recording Engineer - Ross Cockle
Mixing Engineer - Niko Schauble
Orchestra Contractor - Robert John

Music recorded at
ABC Studio 346
Sing Sing Studios
Iwaki Auditorium

Wenn Mutter Music by
Paul Grabowsky

Lyrics by
Patrick White

Mirabell Music by
Paul Grabowsky

Lyrics by
George Traki

All Source Music Composed by Paul Grabowsky Score © 2010 Albert Music (APRA)

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