

ZOMBIE FEST INSIDE!

FILMINK

AUSTRALIA'S NUMBER ONE MOVIE MAGAZINE

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IN TOO DEPP

Johnny Depp Goes From
Indie Icon To Disney Darling
In Pirates Of The Caribbean

PLUS THE THUNDERBIRDS, AMERICAN SPLENDOR, ROMPER STOMPER,
VINCE COLOSIMO, BRETT STILLER, ABE FORSYTHE, CHEN KAIGE, JAN DE BONT,
THE DANDY WARHOLS, ALEX LLOYD AND ANDREW & MATTHEW JOHNS!

NICK GIANNOPOULOS
"I WANNABE Taken Seriously!"

ANGELINA JOLIE
Can A New Bikini Save
Tomb Raider 2?

HONEST CUSTOMER
Hollywood Heartthrob
Josh Hartnett

ROBERT CARLYLE
What's Under The Kilt?

NAKED AMBITION
In Praise Of Sacha Horler

Australia's BEST Movie & DVD Reviews



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FROM THE EDITOR

Our two biggest star interviews this month prove something beyond doubt: that you can have commercial success and credibility at the same time. Johnny Depp has long been one of the most admired and universally liked actors in Hollywood. Not only is his charismatic screen presence undeniable, but his choice of roles and films seems informed by a desperation to do good work rather than out of a need to raise his profile or bring in the big money. After a resume filled with hip, perfectly chosen films, Johnny Depp now finds himself in the biggest hit of his career with the swashbuckling *Pirates Of The Caribbean*. FILMINK's Philip Berk catches up with the actor in LA for a chat about France, family life and finally finding that long deserved smash hit. Angelina Jolie was an actress with instant credibility, swinging early praise for her earthy, fiery performances in films like *Gia*, *Pushing Tin* and *Girl, Interrupted*. For Jolie, it was the blockbusters that brought her undone, with big budget garbage like *Gone In 60 Seconds* and *Tomb Raider* nearly sinking her outright. But her brand of kinky cool kept her afloat, and now Jolie tries to right some wrongs with the

superior *Tomb Raider* sequel. FILMINK's David Michael visited the set of the film and found Angelina Jolie ready for action. Also chasing some credibility after his huge commercial successes is *Wog Boy* star Nick Giannopoulos, who debuts as a director with his new comedy *The Wannabes*. FILMINK's Dov Kornits met with the famed comic for a candid, no holds barred discussion about his place in the Australian film industry and his plans for the future.

After the ill-conceived *The Beach*, director Danny Boyle (*Trainspotting*) gets his credibility back with *28 Days Later*, a bloody, kinetic zombie film that revamps and reinvents the British horror film with staggering brilliance. FILMINK's extended interview catches all the agony and ecstasy of getting the film made.

American Splendor is a perfect example of instant credibility, with the film garnering masses of praise at film festivals around the world. It's finally coming to Australia and FILMINK's Gaynor Flynn takes you into the headspace of its exciting debut directors.

Credibility is an elusive beast, and this month, FILMINK looks at some people chasing it - or letting it chase them - in the film world.

FILMINK...where movies matter. Erin Free - Editor

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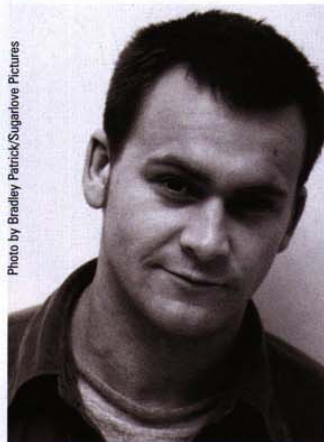


Photo by Bradley Patrick/Sugarlove Pictures

PHIL SHEATHER

Freelance photographer Phil Sheather's work has appeared in *Rolling Stone*, *Ralph*, *In Style*, *Harper's Bazaar*, *Who Weekly*, *Smash Hits* and *The New York Times*. Phil has also done unit stills on films ranging from *Ned and Liquid Bridge* to *The Matrix Reloaded*, as well as publicity shots for Foxtel, and he also regularly shoots for The Sydney Theatre Company, ATYP and Warner Music. Phil is a regular contributor to FILMINK, and this month delivers some characteristically stunning shots of Australian actress Sacha Horler. "The first live gig I shot was Faith No More at the Hordern Pavilion," says Phil of his first job. "The adrenaline built inside not only because of my nerves but the sheer energy of the crowd that was literally screaming at me from behind the pit. By the way, Mike Patton is an extremely

difficult person to photograph live; he's all wild, uncontrollable movement, which is very hard to capture in low light. He must have been an A.D.D kid!!!"

CRAIG DIXON

After weighing up his future for the last few years, twenty-three year old Craig Dixon is finally keen to kick-start a career in film journalism. A student at the Australian College of Journalism and a contributor to film sites DVDBits.com and JoBlo.com, Craig makes his FILMINK debut this month, interviewing fellow Brisbane boys Peter and Michael Spierig, the twin brothers behind the latest cult zombie movie, *Undead*. "It was a real thrill to talk to these guys who have such a respect for the horror genre," says Craig. "Not to mention the balls to completely finance it themselves when Australian horror films are a real rarity."

And why has home-grown horror really never taken off? "I'm not sure. It just seems to be a genre that Australian filmmakers have rarely tapped into. It's hard to make a good horror movie, let alone an original one, and I'm just excited that the Spierigs have managed to pull it off."



DEEPA KANDASWAMY

Deepa Kandaswamy is a writer-engineer based in India. Her work has previously appeared in *The Hindu*, *ABC News*, *Khaleej Times*, *The Christian Science*

Monitor and *Time Out, N.Y.* This month, Deepa looks at a new filmmaking phenomenon: the filming of Indian movies in Australia. "My favourite thing about Indian movies in general and Tamil movies in particular is the unique way they tell stories," Deepa says. "They have not changed their style completely despite Hollywood's influence. I think in the long run this has worked to their advantage. The movies are targeted at the viewer's emotions and it is not unusual to have audiences throw money at the screen or whistle or weep or laugh as if the character in the movie is real. If the movie doesn't appeal to both the head and the heart it is bound to be a flop. It's a tough circus act but the majority of Tamil directors manage to do all right."



BOLLYWOOD & BEYOND

Indian cinema is currently kicking up a storm around the world, and it's not all Bollywood. Three separate Indian regions all have thriving film industries and they all have a special connection to Australia. A number of Indian films have been shot in Australia recently - using both Australian actors and crews - and have been strengthening the local industry. Indian based journalist Deepa Kandaswamy takes a look at the growing connections between the Australian and Indian film industries, with a particular focus on the recent Tamil film *Nala Damayanthi*.

The Indian film industry is the largest in the world, with an annual production of over 800 movies per year. Most foreigners, however, think that the Indian film industry is merely a single entity known as Bollywood. This is a mistaken impression; the Indian film industry is a mosaic of various regional language-based film industries that cater to different lingual groups in India and abroad. The big three of the Indian film industry are the Hindi film industry (or Bollywood) operating out of Mumbai; the Tamil film industry operating out of Chennai; and the Telugu film industry that operates out of Hyderabad. Each industry averages an annual production of over 100 feature films per year.

The Tamil film industry - perhaps the most under rated of the three - was founded over 80 years back and has its roots in India's independence struggle against Britain. Most of the actors, script writers and directors in early Tamil films usually had a background in theatre.

Today, the Tamil film industry not only caters to the Tamils of India, but also to the Tamils and the Indian diasporas who live in various parts of the world. Dubbed and subtitled versions of Tamil movies are particularly popular in the United States. In fact, the first non-American actor to have been made the honorary mayor of New York for a day was the late Sivaji Ganesan, whom the American actor Marlon Brando is reported to have admired.

It was the Tamil film industry which first chose Australia as a desired filming location. This is now being copied by other major film industries of India that used to previously film in locations in the US, Canada, Switzerland, South Africa and the UK. Initially, in the early 90s, Tamil films started to film song sequences in Sydney, Melbourne and the Australian outback using Aussie dance groups. Now it has progressed, with almost entire Tamil films being shot in Australia using Australian production companies, Australian actors in the supporting cast and Australian technicians and stunt men.

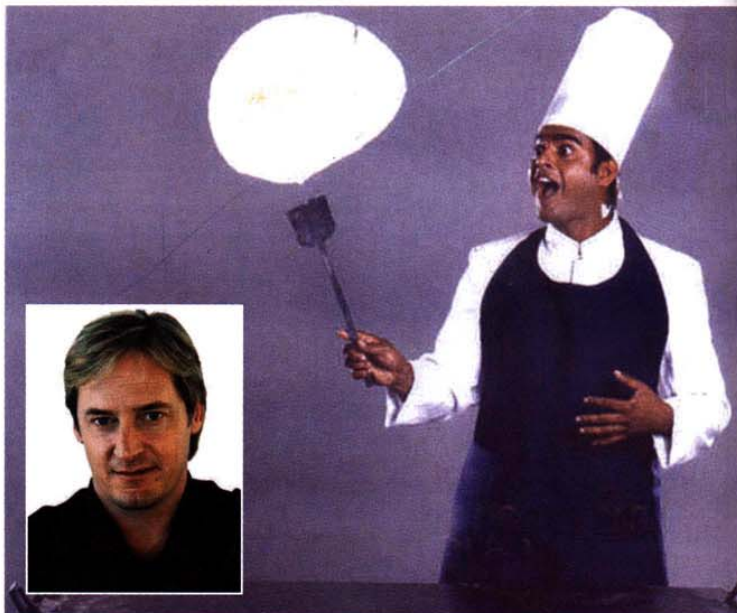
WORKING IN A TAMIL MOVIE

The Tamil film *Nala Damayanthi* - which has been a huge hit in India, and tells of a young Indian man who heads to Melbourne to make some money to pay for his sister's wedding expenses - was recently shot almost entirely in Australia. It appears that the Australian actors who played the supporting roles in the movie

were pleasantly surprised with their experience on a Tamil movie.

Bruno Xavier - an Aussie actor better known as the Nestle Yogurt Guru character on Australian TV ads, and who has starred in films such as *Escape From Absalom*, *Garage Days* and *Pizza The Movie* - plays Aussie lawyer Ivan (who helps the film's lead character deal with the immigration authorities) in the Tamil movie. "This is my first Indian film," Xavier says of the experience. "Everybody was helpful and accommodating. The director and cast made an extra effort to make the environment more comfortable for me and helped me feel at home. I was treated as if I was a regular member of the production and not just the new kid on the block."

actors or crew. The natural tendency is to think that no one knows what's going on. Our film cultures appear so different that the first day seems crazy. All the Australians in the film had a difficult beginning. Everyone speaks English, but it's only the actors who can be easily understood. All of the actors helped me with the script, but it was my co-star Anu Hassan who really sat with me and translated the whole script scene by scene, and my scenes word by word. It takes a while to realise that these people really know what they're doing. So I decided I better relax into it and work out the difference in the processes of filmmaking. From that moment, I was rewarded with a wonderful learning curve



Aussie actor Mark Jensen (*Acting Out*, *Go Big*) plays policeman Inspector Hector in the Tamil film. "It was a most bizarre and wonderful acting experience," Jensen says. "Having only seen small bits of Indian film on TV, I was expecting unintelligible over-acting with ridiculous, flamboyant, dance sequences cobbled together quickly and without expertise. It didn't help when I arrived in Melbourne to find that the script was totally written in the Tamil language; only my actual dialogue was in English. All the directions and other characters were totally indecipherable. I had no understanding of the abilities of the producer, director,

in the craft of acting. Their huge experience meant there was not a wasted shot, never a wasted take, never an ill considered set-up."

THE DIFFERENCE IN FILM CULTURES

According to the Aussie actors, the film culture is different on Indian movies. A top Australian director may have directed five to ten feature films, while Indian directors are considered experienced only if they've done at least 30 feature films. Also very different is the way in which most Indian directors, especially of Tamil movies, act out the scene if requested by the actors, a process rarely seen by Australian actors.



modulate his voice, he was rather taken aback by the fact that I dubbed for five or six lines at one shot. They should come see our dubbing artists! They can do MUCH more than that at one shot and probably in one take too!"

These cultural filmmaking differences also appeared to have affected the technical side, particularly with the stunt scenes. "Initially the Australian stunt drivers couldn't fathom a way to do the car chase that was acceptable to the smash-happy filmmakers," says Mark Jensen. "Thirty crashed cars equals a good Indian chase. Multiply thirty cars by the Australian dollar and they had a problem. But with the stunts creatively designed, the Aussie stunt men were able to give the Indians the most exciting sequences. And all without bending a bumper!"

American suspense author Erle Stanley Gardner once said, "The reader should be taken on a roller coaster ride of emotions. Just when he thinks everything is going up, he should be taken down. This will keep him interested and constantly surprised and make him read the book." Indian movies use a similar technique and the emotional roller coaster takes the form

COLLABORATION

While shooting in another country, it's essential to form liaisons with production management companies, and technical collaboration becomes essential too. Tamil filmmakers have used Australian companies like Cine Oz, a production management company, and Sound Firm in Sydney, for this particular movie. Apart from this, Australian stunt men are highly respected and have been used before in other Tamil movies, along with a CGI company based in Brisbane. Currently, there are various projects under discussion.

"We did get some of the technical work done here," says Anu Hassan. "For instance we did the dubbing for all of the Australian voices. It was a pleasure working with Sound Firm because their technology is far superior, and in fact the director remarked on the perfect sync that we seem to have achieved."

While Indians are used to working longer hours and have a more unstructured working style, the Australians on the other hand have a more strict and disciplinary style. Most of the Indians and Australians who have worked together believe that combining or mixing the two styles would

Another good example of the differences between the Australian and Tamil shooting styles is the number of scripts available on the set - only between 2 to 5 scripts would be available. Each and every actor wouldn't be given the script. While this may seem strange in the Aussie film industry, it is considered normal in the Tamil film industry. Mark Jensen was shocked when he found only two scripts on the set - one for the entire crew and another belonging to the first assistant director.

Bruno Xavier observes that the attitude of Tamil filmmakers is very similar to that of low budget/art house filmmakers in the Aussie film industry. They try to get things done with the limited resources they have. But alternatively, Xavier believes that the level of preparation and pre-production utilised by Australian filmmakers would be very useful for Indian filmmakers. "It may not be as necessary in India, but when shooting overseas it would be beneficial to have a shooting schedule and to stick to it," says Xavier. Indian movies are actually notorious for not sticking to a time schedule, though Tamil films are comparatively better than other sectors of the Indian film industry.

"In each scene, the Indians ask themselves 'How will I affect the audience in this scene?'," says Mark Jensen of the



different approaches to screen acting. "Whereas the Aussies ask themselves 'How will I affect the other actor in this scene?' The difference does not amount to over-acting; indeed it's very naturalistic. It just allows the actors another avenue to be entertaining that is normally suppressed in our methods."

Anu Hassan, who stars in the movie and was also involved in assisting the director, found working with the Australian actors an exciting new experience. "It was interesting to work with Australian actors. Most of their work is done with live sound and they're not used to dubbing. So they dub in one line at a time. When I explained to an actor how I wanted him to



of song and dance sequences. At the emotional pinnacle or abyss, the character sings about that emotion. It appears that many of the Australian actors seem to have finally understood why Indian actors sing and dance, even though the movie cannot be dubbed a musical.

"Aussie movie makers do the same, but they just use different techniques," says Mark Jensen. "Make them laugh, and then WHAM, make them cry. On a social basis, you really get to know another culture when you work closely together. We may have learned more about India than any holiday could give us. And I certainly made sure the Indians will never forget Australia!"

be beneficial because of the advantages of each style of working.

This sort of collaboration will probably lead to more Tamil filmmakers (and probably other Indian filmmakers as well) choosing Australia as an alternate location. It could also perhaps expose more Australians to Tamil films, as opposed to just the Australian Tamil Diaspora. This way both countries, and especially their film industries, can benefit both economically and culturally.

A Beginner's Guide To Bollywood Indian Film Festival is on from September 4 - 14 at Sydney's Cinema Paris & from October 30 - November 9 at Melbourne's Hoyts Burke Street Cinema www.hoyts.com.au. ◆