



Dr Plonk Press Kit

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“A good press kit is a precondition to
a successful moving picture show.”

Dr Plonk, 1907

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The Short Synopsis

It is 1907...Dr Plonk, scientist, inventor, calculates that the world will end in 101 years unless immediate action is taken. But what proof will convince Prime Minister Stalk?



The Not Quite So Short Synopsis

It is the great year 1907 and Dr Plonk, famous scientist and inventor, calculates that the world will end in 101 years unless immediate action is taken. As befalls visionaries through the ages, Plonk is ridiculed for his beliefs, by politicians, by bureaucrats, by even his faithful manservant, the deaf-mute Paulus.

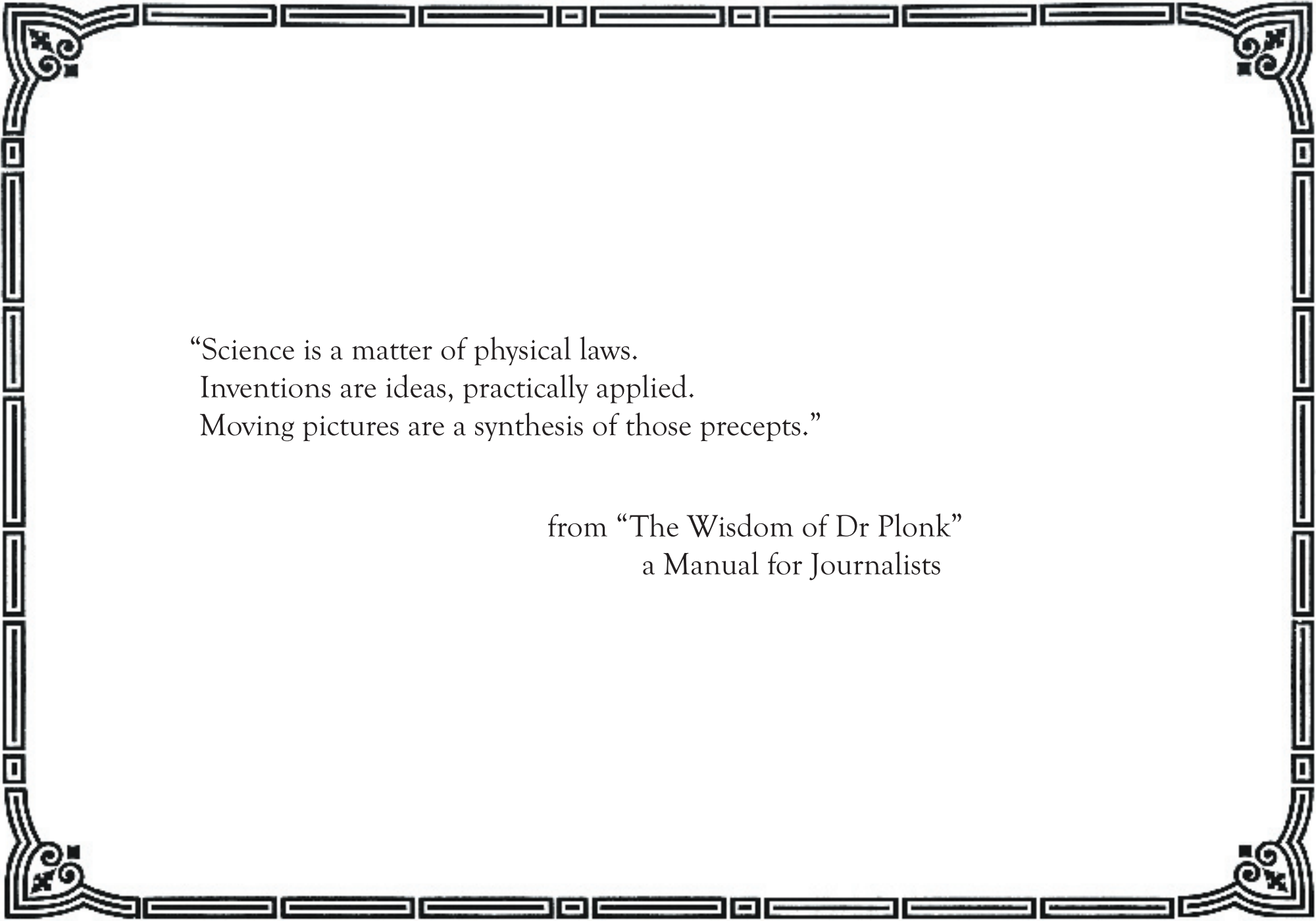
Proof is required and the only acceptable proof lies in the very future that's ending. Being the lateral thinker that he is, Plonk invents a time machine. In quick succession Tiberius the dog, Plonk and Paulus all visit the future, 100 years hence; even Prime Minister Stalk and Mrs Plonk make the trip. Not everyone returns, but all find the year 2007 a somewhat different place than they expected...





The One-Page Synopsis

Dr Plonk, famous scientist and inventor, works away in his laboratory, trying to make sense of the world. It is the year 1907. Plonk is somewhat less than ably assisted by his deaf mute assistant, Paulus, and further disruptions to the clarity of his thought are provided by the winsome Mrs Plonk, and by his Tiberius, a dog



“Science is a matter of physical laws.
Inventions are ideas, practically applied.
Moving pictures are a synthesis of those precepts.”

from “The Wisdom of Dr Plonk”
a Manual for Journalists

Why a silent comedy? (Why not?)

Dr Plonk (the film) was invented in December 2005, when writer/director Rolf de Heer opened a refrigerator at his office that contained 20,000 feet of old bits of unexposed film stock. It was truly a lightglobe moment, as he visualised what these scraps might look like if run through a camera...likely just as bad as one of the old silent films and hey presto, there's an idea for a film and here's already half the stock for it instead of having to throw it away.

What, however, makes anyone think that a contemporary audience will go for an old-style black and white silent comedy? Give it contemporary relevance, of course. But it still needs to be grounded in the past, which means shooting it all in contemporary times is not so interesting. Two time spans are required...last century and this century. And there's really only one way to travel between centuries, and that's with a time machine.

That being established, thoughts turn to how. Well to get the same feel as an old film, it'll have to be shot like an old film, with a very small crew, sort of make it up as you go, no lighting, using a hand-cranked camera and in black and white. All very useful, because most of that costs less than it costs to make films in the conventional manner, and if this thing is to be financed, it had better sit at a pretty low budget.



A long, long shoot will be needed, to discover how to do this in the first place and to have plenty of time to rehearse and invent on set, because all the tricks, stunts and special effects have to be done within the frame, rather than fudging it by cutting or in post-production.

The smaller the crew, the longer a shoot can be afforded. Better have someone to crank the camera and take light readings; and a stunt co-ordinator even though they didn't have them in the old days but there are now issues of work place safety and actors are no longer also stunt performers, as they were back then; and with a time machine going back and forth we'd better have a special effects co-ordinator, for all those puffs of smoke and the like; and someone for wardrobe and props and the like; and we'll probably need someone who's generally handy, can turn their mind and hands to fixing and carrying and creating things when needed; plus, of course, a director, can't really do without one of those. And that's really it, a core on-set crew of six, and we'll pick up any additional help required as needed. And won't that be a lovely way to make a film?



The Silent Performers

Dr Plonk (the character) was invented to fulfil the need of having a character who had the capacity to create a time machine back in 1907, so a famous scientist and inventor was only logical. At about this time, producer Rolf de Heer began to think about how to finance the film, and that he'd need actors who might get financiers excited, or at least intrigued. Maybe the thing to do would be to populate the film with people who had a lot of physical skills, like that busker, Mr Spin, who plays Rundle Mall in Adelaide and juggles and balances and can really draw a crowd. So Mr Spin alias Nigel Martin alias Nigel Lunghi was tracked down and talked to and cast, and the character of Dr Plonk really started to be formed around him. And indeed financiers were intrigued by the idea of casting a street performer.

Then one of the financiers suggested actor Paul Blackwell, which was not a hard thing to take on board because Paul is so right for a film like this, great comedy skills and a great inventor of business (he'd worked with de Heer 10 years previously). Hence the character of Paulus, Plonk's deaf and mute sidekick, was created, to take full advantage of the range of Paul's skills. And Paul the person just happened to have a little dog called Reg, who was obsessed with balls; Tiberius was created.

Dr Plonk needed a wife of course, and what better wife than Magda Szubanski, who was cast for her comic skills and suitability for the role, but whose casting just happened to make all the financiers terribly happy.



All well and good having a cast of talent, but the problem still remains as to how to have them act in a style that is both true to the past yet believable to a contemporary audience. Pure luck or stroke of genius? The character of Paulus can't hear. How do you attract his attention? Kick him in the bum. How do you speak to him? Eloquent gesture. End of problem.

The Art of the Hand-Cranked Camera

It's a lunatic concept, really, trying to use 100-year-old technology to make a modern day feature film. It doesn't work any more.

A ninety-year-old Universal camera was bought. It was loaded with contemporary film to be tested. The film fits, but how do you focus it? Ah, there's this little window here, behind the gate. You should be able to see an image on the back of the film.

But you can't. Film stocks of today aren't like film stocks of the past, you can't see images through them, there's too much emulsion now. Sell the camera.

Slowly all ideas of precisely duplicating the past are consigned to the rubbish bin. A more modern camera is adapted to take a hand-cranking mechanism. Old lenses are sourced, but they're only half as old as they should be. The real old ones don't fit. Still, there's something that'll work. Now to crank it.

How fast is eighteen frames a second? Or sixteen? Or seventeen? In

who knows what ditties they sang anymore? And what if you're like Dr Plonk's cranker Judd, who can't sing and crank at the same time? Enter new technology: a digital tachometer to work out speed; then a digital metronome attached to the camera and fitted right next to the cranker's ear. Simply dial in the required speed, listen to the tick and crank.

And film stock...black and white stock, and its processing, is simply too expensive for the budget, and besides, there's already the 20,000 feet of old colour stock, some of it ten years out of date. A search is on for more old stock, and anything will do: leftovers from other films; donations from other people's fridges; stock resold cheaply because it's been out in the sun and not used. Doesn't matter if it doesn't match, stock never used to match in the old days either.

Add a tripod and a hefty head to minimise camera movement due to hand-cranking, and that's practically the equipment needed to shoot the film.



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The Sound Recordist in Silent Film

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What Does a Time Machine Look Like?

A time machine can look like anything at all, really, there being no convincing precedent for such an instrument. And Dr Plonk being a comedy, and set initially in 1907, and being a silent comedy at that, where all sorts of silliness is allowed, the three main architects of the look and function of the time machine (director, designer and constructor Dennis Presello) decided to have some fun with it.

A rough look was arrived at by the exchange of drawings and ideas. Dennis then went about building, and whilst building, adding (depending on what he could find as materials at the dump). By the time he'd finished it took three people to operate the machine at full function, just about everything being manual rather than motorised.

And so it was with the Plonkmobile. At first design and initial construction phase it was not meant to be self-propelling, but the temptation to have it so proved too much. "Why didn't you tell me so before?" said Dennis to the damn director, "I would have designed it differently!"

But Dennis was up to the task, and with various chains and sprockets, and a starter motor and car battery, the Plonkmobile became indeed mobile.

Meanwhile designer Beverley was grappling with the laboratory set,

be colours that we see as opposites, but in black and white they're virtually the same. Many digital stills printed in B&W later, she found her colour combinations and began work on the set (with a little help from the local dump). When the first test footage of the lab was screened, it looked like...well, it looked like a 1907 B&W movie.



“And...Action!”

A leisurely 12 week winter shoot was embarked upon...leisurely because of its length, but also because for the exteriors there was no artificial lighting, and winter shooting hours are consequently quite short.

It was quite a peculiar way to shoot. Some scenes required a crew of only two (camera and director) and cast of one (Dr Plonk), since the actors largely did their own makeup and wardrobe. At these times it was simply a matter of putting the camera down in the right spot, working out a bit of the action and cranking.

There was a sort of schedule, but this was fairly fluid depending on the mood and inclination of the director. One example is scene 171, which, in the script, reads just four words...”The police chase Plonk.”. The entire six person crew plus three cast turned up to shoot it on its scheduled day, but most were sent away as the director said “I don’t feel like shooting this today”. Cast, director and stunt co-ordinator stayed behind and spent the day working out what these four words meant, or what they could mean.

In the end they meant a lot, ten days of shooting in fact, and taking up almost an eighth of the film, with a chase sequence involving trolleys, ladders, scaffolds, barrels, cars, rafters and high wire tricks... just like in the old days.



Only in the studio set, reduced from six weeks to four due to the profligacy of the chase sequence, were shooting days anything like normal. There was a lighting rig of five hundred compact fluorescent tubes to replicate daylight (hey presto, flick a switch and we’re lit) so time could be spent rehearsing, working out routines and getting the comic timing right, without any regard to technical limitations (sound, lighting) so often present on a conventional set.

Although it was all approached seriously, actors and crew had fun on the shoot, a far cry from the usual stresses of making a film.

Old Technology, New Technology

Ah, the best laid plans...

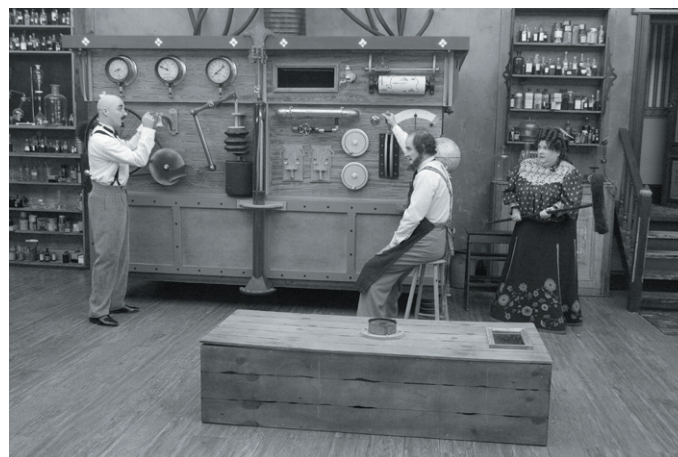
Original intention: process the film normally, get B&W workprint, edit the old way, splicing bits of film together. Actual procedure: process the film normally, get digital telecine at high-definition onto hard drive, transfer into new-fangled non-linear editing system at HD, edit, clean up and grade to B&W HD ourselves, send hard drive with digital graded film away to be scanned out onto film negative.

How times have changed. Early on in testing it could be seen that even ten-year out-of-date film stock wasn't going to get a look approaching the look of the old classics. Film stock has changed too much, become of much sharper definition and finer grain, and the camera lenses weren't old enough and were consequently too sharp.

The image had to be degraded but controllably so, and oddly enough, the much more straightforward film route could no longer be afforded. A very simple process had to be replaced by an extremely complex one to duplicate a look previously arrived at in a very simple manner.

There was the added issue of the time scales in the story of the film. Ultimately decisions were taken to give 2007 a different look to 1907, more modern, with less contrast and grain. Words like panchromatic and orthochromatic were bandied about even though few knew what this really meant, the only question being, "What's it going to look like?"

In the end, it looks like it's meant to look, though not without a great deal of suffering from those involved in making it look that way.



Bloody Hell, 85 Minutes Of It!

Ah, the best laid plans...

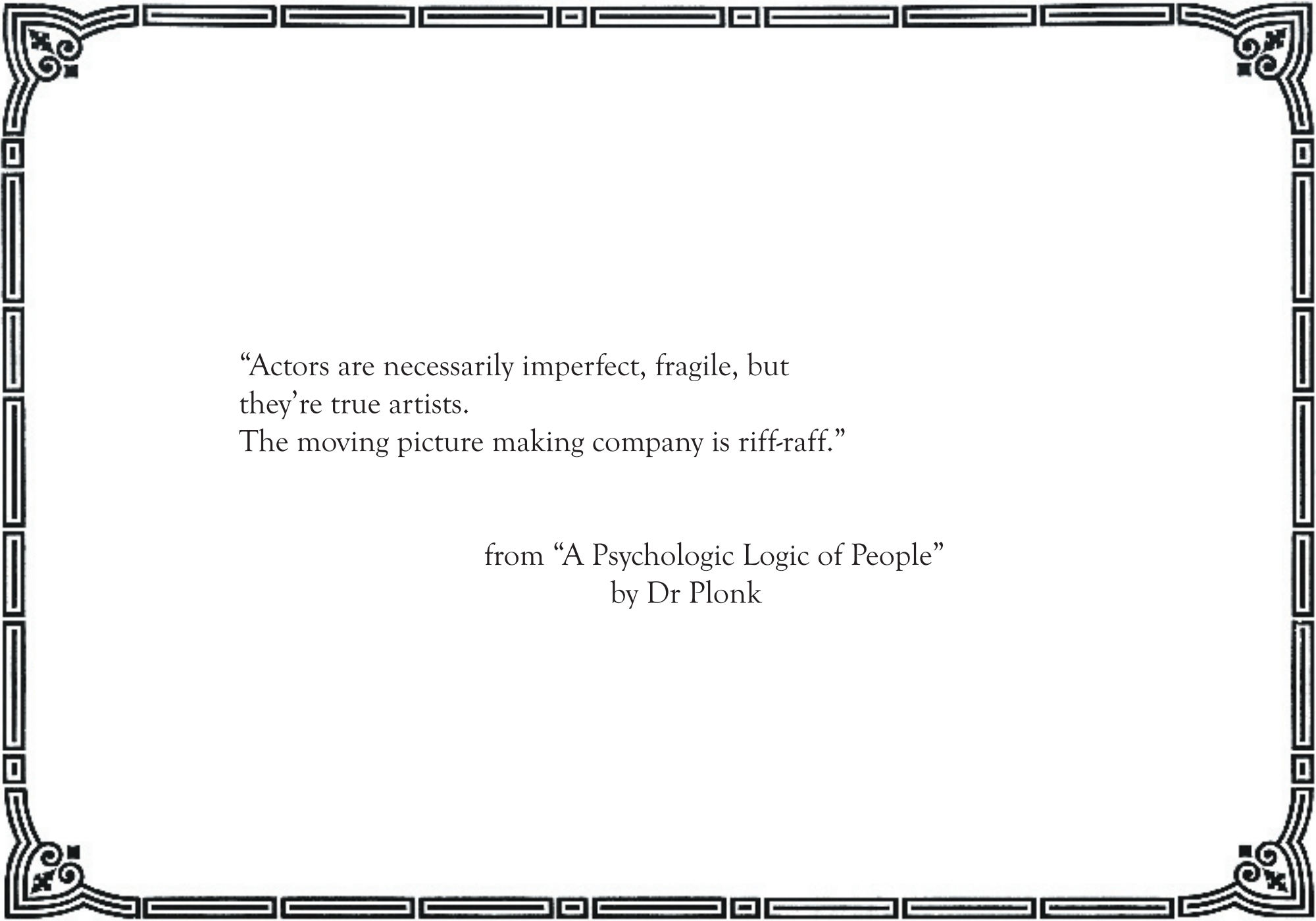
Original intention: there's one of the world's best Wurlitzer organs in Adelaide, the type that rises up out of the stage and used to accompany silent films; by the press of a computer key, this Wurlitzer will automatically replay precisely what's already been played; the score would be written for that, and during the world premiere it'd be recorded, including audience sounds; then a clean version would be made and lined up against the 'audience' version, and the two mixed together so as to control the level of audience sound (laughter maybe?); all this was simple and very efficient (and very cheap). Actual procedure: nothing like that.

When Wurlitzer was laid up against the cut of the film, it didn't work. No matter what was tried with Wurlitzer, the film resolutely rejected it. 85 minutes of non-working Wurlitzer seemed a bit much to foist upon an audience so a rethink was in order.

Director and composer collaborated about different sounds, different instrumentation. Music from Melbourne band The Stiletto Sisters was heard (amongst others) and there seemed to be an instrumental fit of sorts...violin, accordion, upright double bass. In the end a piano was added for further variety, and it became The Stiletto Sisters plus one.

Composer back in Thailand (where he works his day job saving the world), composing at night, sending computer-generated music by email. Though the computer instruments don't sound right, the music is mostly working. But there's 85 minutes of the bloody stuff to do, a much more complex and lengthy score than said composer has ever attempted. Deadlines come and go, music accumulates and is finally recorded in a studio, where it does all sound right, and lovely, and exciting. Lucky the world premiere is with live music, because there is, at that stage, not yet a print with music on it in existence.





“Actors are necessarily imperfect, fragile, but
they’re true artists.
The moving picture making company is riff-raff.”

from “A Psychologic Logic of People”
by Dr Plonk

Nigel Lunghi (alias Mr Spin) as Dr Plonk

Nigel doesn't know if he was born in this century, last century or the one before; he can't make up his mind if his name is Lunghi, Martin or Mr Spin. This is because he is a street performer, sufficient reason to cast him in the role of Dr Plonk (just to confuse him even further) for he has no acting qualifications or experience whatsoever.

But he does have other talents that make him entirely suited to the moving picture industry: he can juggle seven balls whilst spinning a ring on one leg and balancing another ball on his head; he can unicycle backwards, one legged, juggling shoes while balancing a glass of water on his chin; he can juggle knives and baseball bats (particularly useful when talking to movie reviewers); and he can balance just about anything on his nose (this last act seems to impress producers, who are easily impressed by anything they know nothing about).

Audiences like the prospect of seeing someone, anyone, even Nigel, fall from their unicycle or drop their balls. From the streets of Adelaide to the bright lights of the Edinburgh Festival, from Shrewsbury to Glastonbury to Bath, from Prague to Niagara Falls, people have thrown money into Nigel's hat, even though he rarely obliges them by falling off or dropping anything.

He was not surprised to receive his call to stardom because in his field he is a star already. What worried him was from whom the call came...he didn't relish the prospect of juggling clingwrapped cats.

But he had nothing to fear apart from exploding coffins, speeding trains and being dangled from great heights. Says Nigel, "I never knew making movies could be so much fun! Or aren't they all like that?"



Paul Blackwell as Paulus

Unlike Nigel, Paul is an actor. He's trained as an actor, he's won awards for being a really good actor. He works in the theatre, all over Australia, playing unpronounceable characters from the classics, like Estragon in *Waiting for Godot* and Khlestakov in *The Government Inspector*.

Paul even worked in the theatre at night while shooting *Dr Plonk* by day, but he reckoned that was pretty cool because he didn't have to learn any dialogue for the film and he could still be one of the stars whereas in theatre if you have no words to say you're only one of the spear carriers.

Clearly theatre directors know more than film and television directors: those latter ignoramuses only occasionally cast him, and then in dodgy roles like the ship's cook in *Patrol Boat* (*Patrol Boat?*) and George the Foreman in that film *The Honourable Wally Norman* (there are those who reckon that if they'd made him Wally, the film might have been funnier); theatre directors, on the other hand, cast Paul everywhere and all the time...they make him do Shakespeare in Sydney and Patrick White in Melbourne and even opera in Adelaide and bizarre plays like *The Trackers of Oxyrhynchus* and Aristophanes' *Frogs* and *Picasso* at the *Lapin Agile*. For over twenty years Paul has been treading the boards, patiently peddling his craft while waiting for Rolf de Heer to write *Dr Plonk*.

Paul's other claim to fame is that he is owner and master of Reg the Dog (although Reg would say he chose Paul as his human companion).



Magda Szubanski as Mrs Plonk

There's something about Magda that nobody ever talks about. That something is that she's an actor of considerable comic talent, that she has a prowess, a real skill for physical and character-based comedy.

If that is rarely talked about, what is being said about Magda? That she's a big star? A huge star? In a manner of speaking, yes. As Sharon Strzlecki in the TV sitcom *Kath & Kim*, Magda is a household apparition all over Australia, and increasingly so in the USA and the UK.

And who can forget her endearing role as Mrs Hoggett in that worldwide hit movie *Babe*, and its sequel *Babe: Pig in the City* (which was not quite such a worldwide hit but in which Magda is endearing and funny all the same).

But starring in hit films and hit TV shows is not all Magda does with her life. She writes, and produces, and creates characters, and wins awards for being funny and clever and popular (The Most Popular Person On Australian Television for three years running; no less than seven Logie Awards, Australian television's highest accolade; three Awgies from the Australian Writers Guild; an Australian Film Institute Award for Best Actress; and other stuff, like two People's Choice Awards and a Mo Award for Excellence in Live Performance). It's no wonder other actors get jealous...there is no end to this woman's talents.

There's no point putting down here that Magda was one of the voices in *Happy Feet* because that's irrelevant; in *Dr Plonk* she doesn't speak at all because it's a silent comedy. But her ample talents are still wonderfully on display and she enjoyed making the film more than she did dangling in a harness on a wire for weeks for another film she once did.



Reg as Tiberius

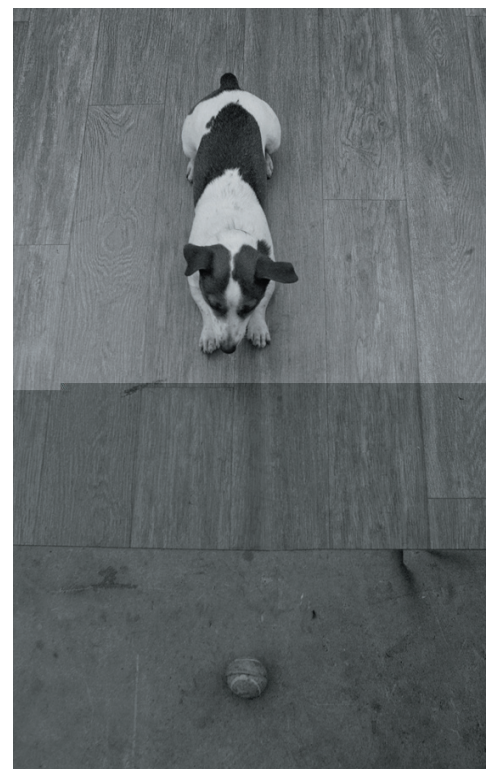
Putting a bio of a dog in a press kit seems rather silly, but everybody said we should, so we did. It ought really be very short, four words maybe ("Reg is a dog" would be adequate) but everybody said we should put in more than that, so we have.

Reg is a Millenium Dog, a Jack Russell Terrier born in the year 2000. He came to the Modbury Pet Shop from Geelong as a six week-old puppy, so his lineage is unknown. Reg doesn't remember his mother and never knew his father.

Paul Blackwell, that generous actor who was years later to star in Dr Plonk and bring Reg his first starring role, went to that selfsame Modbury pet shop to look for a Christmas present for his children. Reg decided that he was the one...he threw himself up against the side of the cage at Paul's approach saying (in dog language) "Pick me! Pick me!". The pet shop lady, seeing a possible sale, said, "Well, he's made your decision for you". So Paul bought the as yet un-named pup because he was a small breed which meant that they could all fit in the car (all this stuff is true).

When Paul asked Reg if he wanted to be in the film, Reg asked who was directing it. Paul said "Rolf! Rolf!". Reg figured anyone with a name that sounds like a barking dog must be okay, so he agreed to do it (this seems likely to be untrue but Paul tells the story so it's in here).

Reg now weighs seven and a half kilos and lives a modest life in Adelaide with the Blackwells, the family he has chosen to love, protect and entertain. He likes balls and bones.



Rolf de Heer - Writer/Producer/Director

Rolf de Heer is obviously as confused as his lead actor: he says he's Australian but was born in Holland; he doesn't know if he wants to be a writer or a producer or a director so he does all three; and he can't make up his mind what sort of films to make so he makes a completely different one each time.

First he made a children's film (*Tail of a Tiger*, 1984); then he made a science fiction mystery thriller (*Incident at Raven's Gate*, 1987);

black comedy so black that some people wanted it banned (*Bad Boy Bubby*, 1993).

As if to make up for that transgression, he next made an ecological polemic (*Epsilon*, 1995); a very serious film about a child (*The Quiet Room*, 1996); and an even more serious film about a disabled person (*Dance Me To My Song*, 1998).

"Where to next?", he might as well have asked. How about a magic realist adventure/romance (*The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*, 2000); or a political, period road movie without roads (*The Tracker*, 2002); or a psychosexual thriller (*Alexandra's Project*, 2003)?

Not content with mixing his genres, he then began to mix his languages, with a prehistoric comedy/drama shot entirely in Australian Aboriginal languages (*Ten Canoes*, 2006); and then this one, a silent comedy which has no languages at all (*Dr Plonk*, 2007).

It's a sorry tale of confusion, really, that extends to the public and film festivals alike. Some of the films do well enough with audiences, while others make audiences argue. A few leave audiences indifferent and they don't turn up in sufficient numbers to warrant the cost of releasing them. Those latter ones seem to be the ones that festivals like Cannes, Venice and Berlin like best, so they're obviously not a complete waste of time and money. One can only hope that in *Dr Plonk*, de Heer has found a film that pleases everyone...there can't be many genres left to try.



Julie Ryan - Producer

There are those who consider the pairing of the words “good” and “producer” a oxymoron, but Julie Ryan is a living contradiction of that notion...she’s a good producer.

She learnt how to be a good producer by working hard in the production area of films like *The Sound of One Hand Clapping* and *Dance Me To My Song* and then getting thrown in the deep end on the big-budget international co-production *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*, starring Richard Dreyfuss and Hugo Weaving and shot in the steamy jungles of South America.

On that project she was the Australian co-producer, doing battle with various French, Spanish and Dutch co-producers, most of whom seemed to have interests other than making a good film. But Julie never stopped battling, and in the end it was a good film, and that’s because Julie had learnt to be a good producer and not let her ego get in the way of the film, unlike most other producers.

Every film she’s ever produced has been nominated for Best Film at the Australian Film Institute Awards: *The Tracker* in 2002; *Alexandra’s Project* in 2003; *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* in 2005; and *Ten Canoes*, which won, in 2006. And each of those films is also highly decorated at international festivals, like Cannes and Venice and Berlin.

With *Dr Plonk*, Julie hopes to break that pattern. “Film is a funny thing, and *Dr Plonk* is a funny film, which makes it doubly funny”, she says. “We don’t want people to take it seriously because there’s nothing in it that ought be taken seriously”. Audiences to date tend to agree.



The 3 EPs

Executive Producers are normally faceless people. Our executive producers are not normal, so here are their faces.



Judd Overton - Director of Photography

Judd grew up in the driest permanently inhabited place on earth, in central Australia, a place with harsh red landscapes and limitless horizons. This has nothing to do with his work on Dr Plonk but it might explain the way he sees the world, which has led him to be such a prize-winning and in-demand cinematographer so early in his career.

Judd first worked with Rolf de Heer in 1997, as the clapper/loader

puller on The Tracker. He worked on other films too but then went back to school to learn more about what he already knew, how to capture images for films.

He must have been a good student because in the three years since he graduated he has shot a whole lot of shorts, music videos and television commercials, some of which have won prizes, and he has shot three feature films, none of which have won prizes (this latter anomaly only exists because none of the three features have yet been released).

Dr Plonk provided Judd with some special challenges, which film school didn't particularly prepare him for. He had to perform strengthening exercises on his right arm in order to crank the camera sufficiently well (hand-cranking has not been taught at film schools for many years) and he had to design a lighting rig using compact fluorescent tubes (how can a domestic lightglobe possibly

get him sufficient depth of field?). But he rose to these challenges, and more, and Billy Bitzer would have been proud of him.



Beverley Freeman - Production Designer, Hair/Makeup and Wardrobe Designer

One job on a film is never enough for Beverley, she wants two or three or four all at the same time. She figures that this will save the production money and make her indispensable and she's right...Dr Plonk is the eighth film she has done in collaboration with Rolf de Heer.

Everyone has their limits, but as a simple makeup artist who also did hair, Beverley didn't understand that. On Bad Boy Bubby she added costume to her normal repertoire, and then on Epsilon, props and the art department were added to her duties. There seemed no end to what this woman could achieve, and de Heer began to fear for his own job.

On The Quiet Room Beverley took on hair, makeup, costume design, production design and continuity. She'd finally met her match. It was too much for her and her continuity slid into discontinuity. Luckily for her the film survived this debacle and was selected for Competition at Cannes, but Beverley was never the same...nowadays she only does the work of a maximum of four people, and on big days she even gets some people to help her.

Variety doesn't faze her as she takes on big outside films (The Tracker, Ten Canoes) and small inside films (Dance Me To My Song, Alexandra's Project) with equal aplomb. She even does other people's films, like Black and White, The Life Of Harry Dare and Heaven's Burning.

But Dr Plonk is Beverley's crowning glory...design in two different centuries, a scientific laboratory set complete with time machine, masses of extras in both 1907 and 2007, this film had everything for someone of Beverley's prodigious set of skills.



Tania Nehme - Editor

It is said that a film is made twice...once during the shoot, and again, properly, in the edit room. The edit room is Tania's domain, and she has made films there that have graced the screens of the most important festivals in the world, Cannes (three times), Berlin (twice) and Venice.

Tania first worked with Rolf de Heer in 1987, as assistant editor on Incident at Raven's Gate. The experience was enough to make her leave Adelaide, but whilst away, she went to film school. There she underwent a wonderful transformation, from assistant editor to editor. She even got nominated for an award back then.

Emboldened by her new status, she returned to Adelaide and worked diligently on shorts and television drama until she was rediscovered by her former colleague and began work on his feature film, Epsilon. This proved to be an epic introduction to movies, because Tania worked on it for almost two years (not because she was slow, but because it took them a very long time to shoot it).

Even before Epsilon was finished came The Quiet Room, then in quick succession a number of films with long titles: The Sound of One Hand Clapping, Dance Me To My Song and The Old Man Who Read Love Stories. Films with long titles often meet with limited success, and these were no exception, but they were well edited all the same.

And now, lasting all of this century so far, has come Tania's purple patch, littered with nominations and awards for both editing and sound editing...The Tracker, Alexandra's Project, Ten Canoes and most recently, Dr Plonk.

Not content with working excessive hours for insufficient pay on features, Tania has also edited documentaries, television, short features and even DVD extras.



Graham Tardif - Composer

Graham had the good fortune (or misfortune, depending on your point of view) of meeting Rolf de Heer in 1978, when the latter was still at film school. There he composed the music for Rolf's diploma film, *The Audition*, which was not nominated for any prizes and has luckily been long forgotten.

But it did lead to their working together on Rolf's first film in the real world, *Tail of a Tiger*, the beginnings of a collaboration that has lasted almost thirty years and shows no sign of ending, much to the chagrin of other film composers who'd like a bit of the action.

The scores Graham writes are as varied as the films de Heer makes. They run the gamut from eerie electronic scores (such as *Alexandra's Project*) to full scale orchestral with choir (*The Old Man Who Read Love Stories*) to song based scores (like *The Tracker*).

After *Ten Canoes* became only the second of Rolf's films that he didn't score (the other was *Dingo*, composed by Miles Davis and Michel Legrand), Dr Plonk provided Graham with his biggest challenge...an uninterrupted eighty-five minutes of music with echoes of an old-time film score, able to be played live by no more than four musicians and yet have enough variety to keep an audience engaged for the best part of an hour and a half. "Hardest thing I've ever done", says Graham nonchalantly, "but the most fun I've had with any score".

Graham Tardif is something of a Renaissance man. Apart from composing great film scores, he has directed documentaries, written novels, performed humanitarian work in the jungles of Burma and is currently in charge of Tsunami reconstruction in Thailand for World Vision.



The Stiletto Sisters with Samantha White

Somebody else's publicity line describes the Stiletto Sisters as "...a dynamic and vibrant trio featuring the sparkling eyes and ready smiles of Hope Csutoros on violin, Judy Gunson on piano accordion and double bassist Jo To." This clearly does them a disservice, because the very first Plonk director Rolf de Heer knew of them was by hearing them live on his car radio, and there were no sparkling eyes or ready smiles in evidence anywhere.

What was in evidence was their music, their wonderful, skilful playing, so much so that, having missed the introduction, he thought they must have been some Very Famous Eastern European Trio. When he discovered at the end of the piece that they were just a mob of Melbourne girls he thought "Hah, these are the girls for me!" And they were.

Musicians generally have boring CVs. They study music, then, if they're any good, they play all over the place with lots of different people. Hope, Judy and Jo are no exceptions: they studied, then played all over the place with lots of different people. But the Stiletto Sisters are anything but boring...they really do sparkle and smile, they really are vibrant and dynamic, but most importantly, they play wonderful music wonderfully.

However the Plonk score was a little more than even the Stiletto Sisters could manage by themselves, so pianist Samantha White, from Adelaide, was added to the trio for the occasion. Samantha

studied music and then played all over the place with lots of different people. In other words, she fits in well with the Stiletto Sisters. She also sparkles and smiles and plays wonderful music wonderfully.



Technical Details

Format:	35mm, Black and White
Screen Ratio:	1.33:1 (4:3)
Shoot Locations:	Adelaide (plus one sequence in Ramingining, Arnhem Land)
Stock:	Short ends, mainly Kodak, dating back to 1996
Running Time:	84'30"
Sound:	Dolby Digital
Year:	2007

END CREDITS:

A

FILM FINANCE CORPORATION AUSTRALIA

presentation

in association with

FANDANGO

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FILM CORPORATION

ADELAIDE FILM FESTIVAL

&

PALACE FILMS

Dr Plonk

NIGEL LUNGHI
(alis Mr Spin)

Paulus

PAUL BLACKWELL

and

MAGDA SZUBANSKI

as Mrs Plonk

Writer, Director, Producer
ROLF DE HEER

Producer
JULIE RYAN

Photographed by
JUDD OVERTON

Production Designer
BEVERLEY FREEMAN

Stunt Co-ordinator
GRANT PAGE

Music Composed by
GRAHAM TARDIF

Film Editor
TANIA NEHME

VFX & SFX Supervisor
JON ARMSTRONG

Key Props & SFX
DENNIS PRESELLO

Production Manager
KATE CROSER

Music performed by The Stiletto Sisters
Violin Hope Csutoros
Piano Accordion Judy Gunson
Double Bass Jo To

with Samantha White on Piano

- 1907 Cast -

Prime Minister Stalk	Wayne Anthoney
Maltreated Maid	Phoebe Paterson de Heer
Knock-down Policeman	Bogdan Koca
Man on Trolley	Quentin Kenihan
Chauffeur & Busking Clown	Sam Brooks
Park Bench Women	Celine O'Leary
	Joey Kennedy
	Joanna McGovern
Irascible Old Man	Jeff Scott
Botanic Gardens Policeman	Joshua Jaeger
Policeman Double	Ned Sullivan
Hippy Girl	Pip Schapel
Dog Walker	Chris Farrant

Advisors Ian Beaton
Peter Rodgers
Philip Elms
Valdis Anderson

Knock-down Lawyer Bryce Menzies
Drunk Pedestrian David Jobling
Salvation Army Woman Evette Cabot
Stretchers Bearers Shane McNeil

Mounted Policemen Ian James Colmer
Snr Const. Peter Colbey
Snr Const. Phillip Blyzno

Kissing Man Pete Monaghan
Kissing Woman Georgia Richmond
Conductor Murray Billett
Train Drivers Craig Dunstan
Ian Johnston

Parliament House Pedestrians

Shaun Mansell, Peter Ferris, Sandy Cameron, Annemarie Kohn,
Cam Rogers, Key Peterkin, Chris Corin, Ned Sullivan, Renee Gentle,
James Reed, Hugh Sullivan, Emma Forgie, Sarah Croser, Steve Ingham

Steam Train Pedestrians

Deborah & James McKeown, Lea & Jill Blair-Jenke, Teresa Brown,
Kay & Susannah Inverarity, Wendy Tonzing, Jessie & Andrew Ratledge,
Oliver Beecroft, Dylis Mort, John & Mavis Smith, Neville Wuttke,
Lynne Cook, Rob Cooper, Roxanne, Megan & Alistair Legge,
Adelle Micklethwaite, Dawn & April Owen, Richard Oldham

Cart-pulling Dog Tara (Bark Busters)
Sniffing Dog Sally (Bark Busters)

- 10,000 Years Ago Cast -

Richard Birrinbirrin, Bobby Bunungurr, Billy Black, Jason Dixon,
Michael Dawu, Jamie Gulpilil, Steven Wilinydjanu, John Djoma,
Mark Muruwirri, Gerald Rankin, Alberto Daymirringu

- 2007 Cast -

Wanted Poster Policeman	Simon Yates
Wanted Poster Policewoman	Jo-Ann Lancaster
Car Factory Guards	Dan Aubin
	Ruben de Waal
Prime Minister Short	Hon. Mike Rann
TV Shop Proprietor	Chris Corin
Painter	Grant Page
Senior Warehouse Policeman	Nils Erik Nielsen
Parliament House Guards	Perry Brook
	Shannon Riggs
Prime Minister Guards	Anthony McAulay
	Paul Duif
City Policemen	Jeff Lang
	Matthew Ween
	Ben Princi
City Policewoman	Sonya Humphrey

Warehouse Policemen

Cam Rogers, Matthew Ween, Ben Princi, Ian Bennett, Nick Demourtzidis
Guy Sullivan, Lachlan Coles, Josh Markey, Allan Browne, Peter Heaver
Stephen Degenaro, Shane Hatchard, Daniel Calo, Brendan Dodds,
Jonathon Johnston, Ian Richards, Phillip Petrizza, Chris West

Housing Estate Families

Oliver Snelgrove, Louise DeGaris, Jimmy Simpson, Klayton Stainer,
Victoria Slaven, Jane Dinning, Paul Garner, Brodie Watson-Victory,
Karoline Zorba, Deborah Landau, Terry Izatt, Jesse Geer, Maleah Martini

Busking Crowd

Saskia White, Jai Lee-Martin, Anna Russo, Bella Brooks,
Gus Brooks, Archie Brooks, Jascha Boyce, Saskia Schwarzer
Tasma Jefferies, Alex Charman, Zoe Charman, Ross Brooks,
Alessandro Gavello, Riley Sutton, Katherine Ellis, Paul Cleaver

Executive Producers	Sue Murray
	Domenico Procacci
	Bryce Menzies
Associate Producer	Nils Erik Nielsen

Production Accountant & Music Post Co-ordinator	Mark Kraus
1st AD (Warehouse)	David Wolfe-Barry
Production Secretary	Bettina Hamilton
Production Assistants	Michael Clarkin
	Sharyn Pancione
	Natasha Phillips
	Sasha Leonard
	Kay Koutris
	Rebecca Fazzalari
	Corey Mansfield
	Joshua Jaeger
Location Security	Simon Herden
Clapper Loaders	Cara Hurley
	Sian Bates
	Nick Berrysmith
	Nima Nabili Rad

Lighting Consultant	Robertto Karas
Lighting Assistant	Kyle Bockmann
Props Buyer	Alex "Obie" O'Brien
Set Construction	Paul Spencer
Set Decorator	Philip "Sunday" Hopkins
Construction Assistant	Steve Craig
Costume Maker	Eva Zorkovic
Costume Ass't, State Theatre	Tania Prosdocimo
Wardrobe & Make-up Assistant	Jen Rossiter
Costume Assistant	Heather Wallace
Art Department Assistants	Tuesday Stone
	Joel Allan
	Nathan Christoffel
	John Malone
Nurse	Airlie Thomas
Safety Officer	Peter Schloithe
Traffic Control	Filcon Safety Group
Armourer	Marcus Bosisto
Unit Publicist	Cathy Gallagher
Stills Photographer & EPK	Jon Armstrong
Additional Stills & EPK	James Geurts
Animal Trainer	Chris Farrant (Bark Busters)
Caterer	Sam Brooks
Extras Casting	Trent Baker (Actors Ink)
Digital Intermediate	Speedwedge
DI Producer	Leonard Coster
Film Laboratory	Movielab
Lab Liaison	Kelvin Crumplin
Dubbing Facility	The Lab

Music Record	Adelphia Studios
Music Mix	Sing Sing Studios, Melbourne
	Mixmasters Studios, Adelaide
Recording Engineer & Mixer	Mick Wordley
Score Transcription	Julian Barnett
Film Mix	South Australian Film Corporation
Film Mixers	James Currie
	Adrian Medhurst
Dolby Consultant	Bruce Emery
Website	Digital Monkey
Travel Agent	Kristine Placanica (Ontourage)
Completion Guarantor	Anni Browning (Film Finances)
Insurance	Tony Gibbs (HW Wood)

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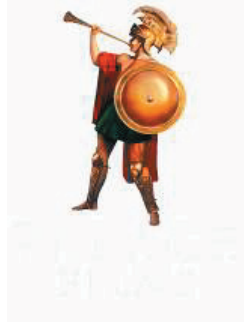
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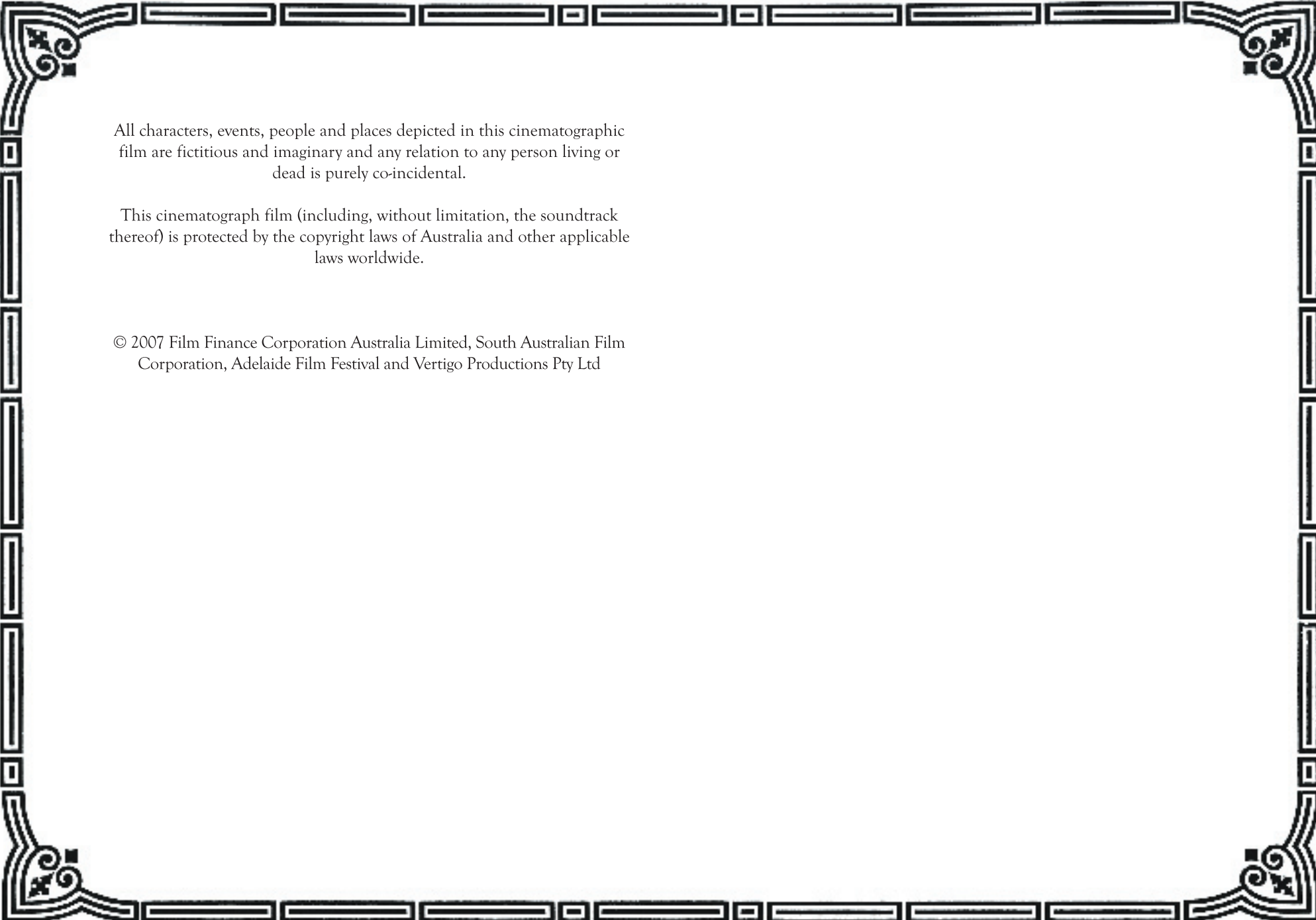


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