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Jenny Watson, *The Princess and the Pauper 1990*, oil, acrylic and pastel on Belgian linen, 212.8 x 101.5cm.
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Growing up in Arts – a personal Australian perspective on film, television, music and management

by

Kim Williams AM
Chief Executive Officer
Foxtel

Kenneth Myer Lecture by the George Fairfax Fellow in
Arts and Entertainment Management
Edited by Ruth Rentschler

An event initiated by Ruth Rentschler
Centre for Leisure Management Research, Deakin University

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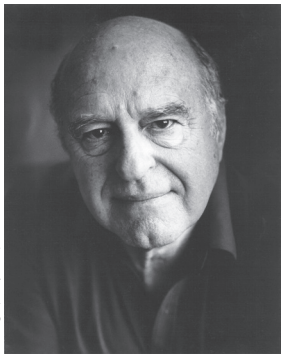
The George Fairfax Fellowship in Arts and Entertainment Management at Deakin University enables visiting practitioners and scholars in the cultural arena to enrich our understanding of national and international issues in cultural management. The Fellowship was made possible by the generous support of important donors, including the Myer Foundation, Dame Elisabeth Murdoch and the Faculty of Business and Law at Deakin University.



Photograph by Jacqueline Mitelman

George Fairfax AM
Hon LLD (Melb)
4 April 1928 – 8 September 1996

For more than twenty years, as technical adviser, chief executive officer and finally general manager, George Fairfax was the central coordinator of the design brief and planner of operational needs for the $200m multi-venue Victorian Arts Centre, establishing its operations, management structure and staffing. In this time he helped to establish the Arts Centre as, indisputably, one of the finest performing arts centres in the world today.

George Fairfax, actor, director, arts manager, was a man of great vision, integrity and generosity of spirit. Passionate about the importance of the arts in our lives, he had an extraordinary ability to draw the best from everyone whether they be artists, administrators or bureaucrats. As a fellow artist once put it 'he opened up the territory, created the conditions, maintained the landscape, made things possible. George was engineer, builder, carer and fighter for all of us'. George Fairfax has become a legendary figure in Australian theatre history.

George Fairfax's association with Deakin University extended over ten years. In this time, as chairman of the Arts and Entertainment Management Course Advisory Committee, a position he still held at the time of his death, George was instrumental in establishing the unique arts and entertainment management graduate diploma which, in 1996, was extended to include open learning students from all over Australia and New Zealand. George held the belief that the principles of running an arts organisation were much the same as any other business and that arts management needed to be taught, as it is at Deakin University, in an innovative school of management.

Deakin University has recognised the important contribution made by George Fairfax to this University by establishing the George Fairfax Fellowship in Arts and Entertainment Management. The Fellowship, which is awarded annually, brings distinguished practitioners and academics in arts and entertainment management from this country and from overseas to the University. It also provides the opportunity for open learning students to have first-hand experience and interaction with the visiting Fellow.

Vicki Fairfax
2010

Preface

This volume presents the Kenneth Myer Lecture by Kim Williams AM, Chief Executive, Foxtel and Chairman, Sydney Opera House Trust. He is the 2010 George Fairfax Fellow in Arts and Entertainment Management at Deakin University, a prestigious appointment which has seen eminent fellows from around the world visit Deakin for over twelve years of its successful operation. It is indeed an honour to have such a distinguished Fellow with us for 2010.

The issue of management, leadership and the arts is a composite of the senses. While past Kenneth Myer lectures have concentrated more on the oral delivery of the lecture with traditional presentation slides and a written document, this lecture takes an imaginative leap into the future. It is a multimedia extravaganza, made as much to be watched and absorbed by all the senses as listened to in the traditional form. The changes that Kim introduces us to in this lecture mirror the changes that have taken place in arts and entertainment management since its formal inception at universities.

One of the key themes of the lecture is national identity and the arts. How apposite to address this theme with debate going on in the community on the authenticity of one of Australia's most prestigious visual arts prizes for landscape, the Wynne Prize. This year Sam Leach won the prize for his depiction of a landscape that draws heavily on influences from Dutch 17th century art. Leach makes no bones about his testing of the visual links to the past, his use of the those influences and his departure from them. Argument has centred around the issues of appropriation, originality and of course national identity. Is this an Australian landscape? How is our national identity represented through the visual arts in paintings such as this one? That the final painting is a visual fiction of landscape tells us something about the arts and by metaphorical links, about arts management. These two fields of endeavour are bucolic in more ways than one. Not only do they link to rural life, an enduring theme in Australian national identity that Kim Williams refers to in his lecture, but they also suggest the links between conceptual fiction and arts debates. Arts managers need to be across these debates and know how to handle them as they occur frequently in this contested field.

Traditionally, arts management was seen unidimensionally, through the prism of the arts. There is nothing unidimensional about the national identity debates raised in this year's lecture. Educationally, arts management programs were located in schools of arts and performing arts, emerging as a consequence of the need to re-define and reinvigorate their offerings. Deakin University is truly unique in offering an integrated, creative arts management program in an innovative business faculty, nurturing artists and arts managers by having lecturers exposed to the latest issues and trends in management as well as experience in the cultural industry. In a sector concerned with performance, it has required a paradigm shift to see culture as fitting in a business environment. It is fitting that Kim's performance delivering the Kenneth Myer Lecture reflects the multi-dimensionality of arts and entertainment management today, touching on the perennial themes of national identity and the arts in a multimedia environment.

Kim Williams has been at the very forefront of the development of arts and entertainment management, spanning the traditional performing arts (especially music as both musician and administrator) and newer areas of film, television and multimedia. His lecture reflects these eclectic interests. His lessons offer us insights from the musical to the managerial. Kim Williams provides us with an overview of the development of arts management from its early days, given his broad and deep understanding of the field.

This publication places on record the importance of arts management as a continuing topic for debate as chosen by the George Fairfax Fellow. This volume places the development of arts management at the forefront of discussion, in order to emphasise its international importance to arts management students in the field.

Maria Cassera and Jenny Treloar both deserve thanks for their hard work and dedication to making the George Fairfax Fellowship such a success. Maria and Jenny have assisted in the preparation of the event surrounding the Kenneth Myer lecture. I appreciate their work which always shows dedication to the task, high standards and an enthusiasm that I value highly.

Ruth Rentschler

Melbourne, April 2010

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Abstract

Kim Williams' experience of music from an early age 'made him' as a person and as a manager. Film and TV informed his perspective on what it is to be an Australian. Kim follows a personal journey in music which charts the way in which music and the community of players in it developed him as a manager and informed his growth and development, first in arts management; then in his career as a media executive. His views are interlaced with perspectives on our national identity based on the premise that 'the role of film, radio and television in the development of Australia's contemporary identity since Federation' is more prominent for nations with longer inherited histories which inevitably drive different outcomes. "We are, as the national anthem says, 'young and free' and more open to the impact of film and TV than older societies", he says.

Growing up in Arts – a personal Australian perspective on film, television, music and management

Preamble

Our assembly is being held on the traditional lands of the Kulin Nation. I would like to acknowledge them as the traditional owners. I would also like to pay my respects to their Elders past and present and to the Elders of other communities who may be here today. As an Australian I value the opportunity to acknowledge country as a simple act of reconciliation and trust that the acknowledgement and respect it invokes, resonates with many here today.

Symbols matter. History matters.

Introduction

It is an honour to be named the George Fairfax Fellow in Arts and Entertainment Management for 2010 by Deakin University. I knew George well. We first met when I was appointed as an impossibly young 20 year old to become a foundation member of the Music Board of the Australia Council in 1973. George and I sat as members of the Dance Panel—he from the Theatre Board and I from the Music Board. We had many wonderful discussions and professional encounters over the years that followed.

I also knew Ken Myer from that time and subsequently when he was the Chair of the newly incorporated Australian Broadcasting Corporation. I well remember his frustrations in that role. He was a marvelous man with a restless energy and idiosyncratic personality that was as special as it was unique. It is a privilege to give the Kenneth Myer lecture tonight. I hope I do justice to them both.

When asked to give this address by Professor Rentschler, Ruth had indicated that this annual lecture was intended to stimulate debate in the wider community through an exposition of ways in which the arts and management in the arts has evolved. So I thought I would aim to speak not about the 'what' and the 'how', but rather look to the 'why' through the personal prism of my own very fortunate life.

- Why do we work in the arts and arts management?
- What do the arts do to make us as individuals and as a nation?
- Why should we support arts management programs such as the one at Deakin University?

I want to attempt to answer these questions this evening in a personal way, beginning with how I got into arts management: as an artist, or, more precisely, a musician. I then move onto the way in which film and television have been central to the development of our contemporary national identity.

Music made me who I am

Put simply, in my formative years music made me who I am. Film and television have enabled me to feel confidently, and frankly, passionately Australian.

The arts generally are under resourced and unevenly supported in our country. They need continuing national investment from Government. The arts deserve better from many public and private institutions in teaching, interrogating and celebrating creative endeavour across the spectrum of its personalities so as to assist the arts and creativity to grow, prosper and permeate the national soul. Australia and its citizens deserve nothing less. More importantly in my view we need it to maintain a strong international voice in an increasingly dynamic and competitive world.

It has been observed by many people that an early arts training has a profound influence on a person's character and outlook. That arts influence manifests itself in a variety of ways: clearing the mind; exercising the imagination; in conflict resolution; issues of integrity; and in the capacity to foresee the consequences of action or decision.

Up until giving a speech about the personal impact of music a few years ago, I had not previously ever sat back and thought about the way in which music has influenced my thinking pervasively. And so in presenting to you today music will be one of my natural companions .

I was born in 1952; three years after Gwen Meredith's serial, *Blue Hills*, began its 27 year run on the ABC when those four strong women—Bella, Fleur, Mabel and Granny—populated the nation's homes until 1976. Clearly Australia is a very different place from the time of Gwen Meredith's serial. The evocative theme spoke to that idyllic, secure country place where Australians metaphorically travelled and shared the joys, trials and tribulations of a near perfect country community. It was a shared fantasy. It was a fantasy built on certainty. It was a fantasy that was safe and secure. Many of the social values reflected in the series and that sense of a close affinity with the land is reflected time and again in our film, our literature and in our numerous television series, such as those exceptionally long running programs from the 1970s and 1980s, such as *Bellbird* and *A Country Practice*.

That sense of closeness with and fantasy about the land speaks to and reflects a heartland of Australian sensibility. This is something I will revert to later. The *Blue Hills* theme is, as best I can remember, the first piece of music which I recall with striking clarity from my early childhood. My Mum loved it so.

Ever since *Blue Hills*, music has been fundamental to my view of the world and my enjoyment of it. Music has provided almost a natural prism through which I observe and perceive things so that I never really stand back and think about it deductively or didactically. I always have music in my head. I carry it around and it resonates inside me.

Music is, I believe, fundamental not only to a well rounded education but also to an expansive world view. There are many reasons for this. Music teaches us about things that are not discussed or emphasised in our lives generally or sufficiently. It teaches us about beauty and the enduring value of human creativity.

Music, like all the arts, provides emotional nourishment. And whilst this is not a contest with the other arts, music is particularly special because it is not primarily about our physical world paying only passing reference to it. Music is about another mental and emotionally felt place and experience. So often it is not about words or images of our terrestrial world but rather about invoking deep inner feelings and primal activators in us all.

Music is the only creative art that is found in all human cultures. It is universally necessary and central to life whether in an African forest or an Arabic souk; or in a formal concert hall to the many variants and music forms we might know on the world stage.

Music features virtuosity in many guises and in many places. It can be about the most simple, pure notions of love through to the most complex romantic expressions of the feelings, conflicts and bonds between men and women. It offers us an expression of the pantheon of all human experience from the most vulgar to that which is sublime and in a way that can be gripping and a source of constant self renewing abundant satisfactions.

Let me list some of the virtues of music:

- Music can lift our spirits and move us like no other art form whether it be from the magnificent sound of a single instrument through to the glory of the human voice.
- Music is central to our most sacred devotions and to our most frivolous and delicious entertainments.
- Music is at the core of all human experience and expression.
- Music is one of the most aspirational and inspirational phenomena for youth across our planet.
- Music can provide deep satisfaction through playing, composing, dancing or listening. It is portable and now pervasively available.
- Music provides a creative partnership to lift excitement, atmosphere and meaning in other areas of human creativity such as the theatre or film or television. It can also reveal new found wonders in the way it can genuinely surprise one in its profundity.

And for me what is fundamentally important about music and what makes it so very special is that it is about using the sense from which, in the experience of life we are most desensitized: our hearing. Sight, taste, touch and smell are all senses which we can switch off. We can elect not to experience any particular one of them. We can't switch off our hearing in the same way and therefore what we do is have much less awareness of and sensitivity about, the aural universe—often a cacophony—which surrounds us.

Life noise is an atmospheric accompaniment that we are inured to; resulting in the outcome that all too often we are poor listeners. Poor listening can be to something being said or to the rich aural domain provided by any number of musics.

I suppose that I first fell seriously in love with music when I was twelve and took up the clarinet at school through the encouragement of my closest male friend to this day, Richard Gill.

I had arrived at the clarinet by way of the flugelhorn and before that the banjo.

When I was about nine, my maternal grandfather had given me a large and beautiful old banjo which I believe he had owned for decades. I remember it as being monstrously large, more than half my then height.

So my mother enrolled me in classes with a local music teacher, Mrs Bulger. Mrs Bulger was head of the eponymous Bulger Academy of Music where it was proudly stated on the polished brass plaque at the front of the studio annexe to her home in Reserve St, West Ryde, that the following were taught: Elocution Pianoforte, Banjo, Violin, Singing and Music Theory.

Mrs Bulger, rest her soul, did not (I think) care much for music or indeed children. She was of ill and short temper. I still recall playing this huge banjo, or rather trying to, as it was far too big for me. Whenever I repeated a mistake she would push my fingers into the strings until it really hurt. She even cut the skin on one or two occasions. She would say to my mother that I had weak fingers and we should strengthen up the skin by soaking them in brine or some such similar nonsense.

I was really fearful of Mrs Bulger. Like so many kids in that era of around 1961, I said nothing to my mother other than about the awkward size of the, as I recall it, quite monstrous beast of an instrument. A smaller one was acquired with which more agreeable results were experienced.

However my fear and loathing of Mrs Bulger increased exponentially. I was transfixed with fear when the day of the fateful music lesson approached each week. After what seemed like an eternity but was probably only a matter of months I burst into tears and confessed all to Mum. The Bulger Academy ceased to play a part in my education.

Arts Life Lessons

So this was my *first arts life lesson*: you need to like and respect your teachers to get ahead.

The lesson with Mrs Buldger didn't stop my curiosity about and eagerness to learn music. I thought music was great. I had enjoyed learning to read music and even after my Bulger tuition had ceased, I used to play the instrument for my Grandpa.

I recall being surprised and greatly pleased when I would play to him or my elderly Uncle Douglas. I played tunes that were quite foreign to me, such as Annie Laurie or Home Sweet Home. They would recognise and identify whatever piece I was muddling through.

I learnt to enjoy the pleasure that my playing brought them. It made me feel warm and close. So I suppose that that was my *second life lesson*: the special sense of connection in delivering a performance for others. I value it in actors and musicians beyond words.

I made my way from the public primary school in the Sydney suburb of West Ryde to another public school, Marsden High School in Ermington, where much to my surprise and delight the school offered me an instrument to learn.

At a time when our nation is creating a new national curriculum, how good would it be for every child to receive as part of their education the gift from the nation of a musical instrument!

It would cost, but surely incentives or approaches can be found? What could better demonstrate the dictum: 'pay taxation, buy civilization'?

But to revert to my schoolboy music…I had started on the flugelhorn because that was all that was available in the storeroom. As soon as a woodwind instrument became available I changed. A long relationship with the clarinet ensued.

First I learnt from Reg Bryson. Reg was a peripatetic teacher who would arrive at home in his FJ Holden on Tuesday afternoons promptly at 4 o'clock. He was a nice guy but a pretty ordinary teacher. Then I went to the Conservatorium first to study with Douglas Gerke and finally to study with the great musician Donald Westlake, a truly fine player who was the second major adult influence on me after Richard Gill.

It was there I got a pair of Symphony 1010 clarinets. This was a major moment.

I played quite well and learnt the daily discipline that only a musical instrument or advanced sport can bring to a young person. I practised constantly: before school, at school, during the lunch hour and after school.

From third form I had started actively composing my own music and that was to continue up until I was thirty or so. I loved writing music and will probably go back to it for personal pleasure at some time later in my life.

I was in awe of others at that time with nascent friendships with the leading Australian composers Ross Edwards, Peter Sculthorpe and Nigel Butterley. Peter was especially generous towards me particularly when I went to university in 1970. He gave me, as he has done with so many others enormous support and encouragement. He is a rare and wonderful giant in Australian music affairs.

In closely watching and speaking with Peter, Ross, Nigel, and other leading creators such as Richard Meale and Don Banks in the senior ranks and many of my young composition peers at that time who have gone on to have substantial careers such as Richard Mills, Carl Vine, Moya Henderson, Gregg Howard, Vincent Plush and too many others to recall, I realise that one thing that drove us all was a very open and focussed approach to our work. There was a frankness about providing criticism and other feedback at times in ways that could only be described as being unusually direct.

I suppose that represents one of *the third life lesson* from music. There is a degree of professional accountability for work and content that can generate critical response in ways that can be quite character forming! And that is a very good thing. It has influenced my life ever since.

I have always been open to professional feedback and criticism and similarly have never been afraid to provide it. There can be no doubt that quality follows from the rigorous standards that apply in music. Criticism and critical engagement are part and parcel of the profession. These lessons stood me in good stead in my role as a manager, first in the arts and then in the entertainment industry.

The notion of absolute standards is central to mainstream western music cultures not only in classical music but in jazz, rock and roll and in popular light music. Setting standards and being prepared to give and receive criticism are important for management too. It has always been my view that Australians generally do not receive criticism well. Our inability to receive criticism is matched only by our inability to give criticism in a way which is thoughtful, caring, constructive and nourishing.

In music the situation is quite different from management or society generally, because music is built on disciplined layers of careful study. The process of music development requires musicians to develop a special disciplined approach which not only welcomes criticism but actively seeks it out. Music and the health of music, like many of the arts, are dependent on a forensic approach to review and assessment. Management could learn much from this approach in our nation generally.

The *fourth life lesson* I acquired in the process of my university study and the active community of composers and performers with whom I worked and studied was the need to recognise that there are no short cuts. Success required a lot of effort and a consistent quest for knowledge. It was hard work. You simply have to learn the repertoire. There is no way to avoid it.

One of the remarkable things about music is that it provides us with *a fifth life lesson*. It teaches us that a violinist in Sydney can meet one in Riga and they will both comfortably assume an equal familiarity with a vast body of repertoire as being core to the practice of their craft. It is something which, of all the arts, is probably only true of music and musicians. The discipline acquired in learning music, requires study, rehearsal, focused effort on composition and intense concentration over many hours. They are the sort of life skills that travel with musicians forever. They are invaluable and have been central to the work ethic that has informed my life ever since and informed my approach to mangement.

From Music to Management

It was in my time at Sydney University that I first started to discover management. I owe all my early experience of management to a diversity of experiences in promoting all manner of concerts from the preposterous to the transcendent.

First, I was made the concert organiser of the International Society of Contemporary Music by that splendid, brilliant old scallywag, Donald Peart. Donald was the inaugural Professor of Music at the University of Sydney. Donald and I had a tense but rich relationship. He inducted me into the experience of managing concerts, contracting musicians, scheduling rehearsals, writing advertisements and brochures and even selling tickets.

Clearly he hated all that side of things. He left it to me and others. We were left to our own devices in putting on events. It was a real process of trial and error, I can assure you. And if the most valuable experience is, as I believe, a catalogue of screw-ups, then I had many rich experiences in that period. These are experiences I have never forgotten.

It was also during the period at University that my understanding of the musics of the world expanded dramatically. I learnt from a pair of brilliant ethno musicologists, Willem and Rebecca Adriaansz about Japanese, Indian and Pakistani music. I learnt about Balinese and Javanese music. Later I was to learn about an array of folk and other ethnic musics from William Mann on a scholarship in Holland.

In parallel, I learnt to like popular music from friends at the University. I discovered the Beatles, the Stones and artists like Steve Winwood and Eric Clapton, who were and are still pretty central to my taste. Subsequently I have discovered the joys of modern chanson. Two of my favourite song writers of the twentieth century are Irving Berlin and Cole Porter. I suppose my love of and engagement with popular culture has followed from there in tandem with a devotion to the classical canon.

If there is *a sixth great life lesson* in music, it is the lesson of the expansive tolerance and acceptance of many ways to express ourselves. That is central to the experience and practise of it. Music and tolerance are from my experience very close bedfellows.

Following University I had other managerial positions first in opera, then at the NSW Conservatorium under its then Director, Rex Hobcroft. As I mentioned, I was also a member of the inaugural Australia Council Music Board back then.

Then I became the General Manager of Music Rostrum Australia of which Roger Woodward was the Artistic Director and Rex Hobcroft the Chairman. Rostrum ran a set of music festivals in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide in each of 1974 and 1975. I still remember the feeling of creeping incapacity when one of our then Board Members, Donald McDonald said: "Kim, we must have a detailed cash flow". I replied "certainly Donald, as long as your first tell me what it is."

So it was through music when I was 22 that I first learnt about balance sheets and Profit and Loss statements (more Loss than Profit, I am afraid to say) and about comprehensive budgeting and finance. I'd venture to say that no arts manager should ever be afraid to ask questions or to admit to not knowing something. It is only by admitting ignorance that we really are open to learning. This was my *seventh life lesson* from music that I applied to management.

The festivals were a classic example of being thrown into deep water administratively. In fact, it was more like being thrown into a very distant part of the ocean. I rapidly learnt to tread water and to swim fast.

Study and work followed in Italy with the late, great composer Luciano Berio and the unforgettable soprano Cathy Berberian. Management in that period included a bunch of stuff with the Israel Chamber Orchestra and research and a lot of work in the preparation of several recitals for Cathy. The first prepared recital was a history of singing and of composed song entitled *VocaLectuRecital* for the Holland Festival. The second was a recital of music only by women entitled *Fine Women and Song!* The last was a recital built around folk music across the planet.

On returning to Australia, I worked at Musica Viva for almost seven years and finished there as General Manager in early 1984. That period rounded me as a manager. I had a fine mentor in its Chairman Ken Tribe. I will be grateful forever for his generosity in the counsel he gave me over half a lifetime.

I don't think I can ever convey just how expansive the experience of arts management generally was back in the seventies. Nor can I convey in particular how very demanding it was in Australia back then when one had to be a jack of all trades.

In my case I learnt to be programmer and planner, budgeter, negotiator of contracts, manager of foreign currency, advocator of sponsorship, developer of marketing campaigns, implementer of the campaigns, down to writing ads and preparing press kits. Most early arts managers "did it all" in the arts companies back then. It was very much a do-it-yourself era. And did we work hard and learn hard! There was a wonderfully generous camaraderie during that period in the diverse companies in which we all worked and I still have many friends and colleagues from that time.

Colleagues were terrifically generous guides in that period and I owe a lot to them for their patience and for what they taught me. In the arts, generosity of spirit and openness to help and respond to the needs of others is one of the most special experiences I have had from an active life in the creative community. There is much to be learnt from the selfless sense of community and interdependence that is reflected in it. It made many of us strong, resourceful managers and gave us confidence and resilience. I have many happy memories from that time.

I left Musica Viva to take up the position as CEO at the Australian Film Commission twenty seven years ago. But within a year I was back at Musica Viva as a Board Member. This was a position I only relinquished in 2004 after twenty years including six as the Chair. It has been my most enduring relationship with the performing arts.

I cherish chamber music more than any other. You can't beat a good string quartet, quintet or sextet in my book! It is music making at its most precious: intimate; intense; conversational; fiery; dramatic; and at times so ethereally beautiful that it simply and literally takes your breath away.

Pulling the Management Strings

From working at the Australian Film Commission I have moved on to have a commercial business career in the film and television industries. *One incidental lesson* there has been that few filmmakers really get music properly (the magical combination of Fellini and Nino Rota and a few other examples being exempt).

The nature of my commercial work is and has always been demanding.

Many of my leadership, management and persuasive skills are directly attributable to the discipline and experience of my music life, in all its strands, from school up until my 30s. Moreover it was in the arts that I learnt to never, ever, give up. I learnt to keep on trying and to come at a problem from a variety of angles until a solution is found.

The arts in this country—frankly as in most countries—have a tough time of it. There is not enough money, the market is hard and the activity expensive because of the nature of Australia's demography and geography. However we have seen our creative community achieve a huge amount and as an Australian I take real pride in the breadth and quality of that achievement. These are great things in our country. They are all the product of tenacious conviction from exceptionally talented fellow Australians.

Prometheus Bound

Much that is done in our country in music is not acknowledged. None of it could happen without support. The need for committed education is overwhelming. For example, as a nation, we fail our children in music education with a daunting, tragic consistency.

So that has been a rather circuitous route to reveal some of that which has informed my development as an individual. Arts education has had an enduring impact on my life. I can't imagine life without music. I find music is the great energiser. It provides a balance in life that for me that is as central to survival as breathing. Music has made me who I am.

The other aspect of my experience, as with us all, has been the progressive development of a personal sensibility of what it is to be an Australian. Having spent the last 27 years actively working in film and television I have had plenty of opportunity to reflect on what has driven that sense of self and nationality.

I am sure we all agree that our nation has many diverse identities in its people, allied with unifying themes that are central to a shared perception as to what it is to be an Australian. Those views have evolved over the last century in substantial measure from the impact of our literature and art; from immigration; from our numerous and varied sources of political and social leadership; but also very strongly from the impact of cinema and the print and electronic media.

A nation's personality, its identity and how that manifests itself is a complex issue. Describing it is riven with the danger of persistent recourse to generalisation. What it is to be an Australian and that which defines us is at the heart of our national being. In our young nation—and I refer here to the time since political Federation in 1901—the role of film, radio and television in the development of that contemporary identity is more prominent than for nations with longer inherited histories which inevitably drive different outcomes. As the national anthem says, we are 'young and free'. We are more open to the impact of film and TV than older societies.

Film, television and radio have had a central role in driving the popular sense of what it is to be Australian. They have had an important role in imbuing Australians with our sense of self-reliance, reinforcing our quirky humour matched with a projection of an uncanny optimism. Each of these attributes I describe as core to the national personality. They also have reflected that sense of egalitarian idealism which is close to the heart of the Australian sense of self or at least aspiration.

Narratives Matter in Nation Building

Narratives matter in nation building. Story telling is central to the growth and development of nations, as is a sense of security of place and our position in it. In my view, popular narratives make much of that come together as reflected in the quality of the content of the national conversations at play within any developed society.

The centrality of narratives to our aspirations and our sense of social direction is one of the defining 'why' reasons for having an active creative community. An active creative community needs to be provided with consistent support in all its manifestations, from money through teaching, management, criticism and old fashioned publicity and commentary.

Australians have a long uninterrupted continuity with film and cinematic experience from the late nineteenth century. Fittingly for our country, one of the oldest surviving pieces of moving imagery anywhere is that of Maurice Sestier and Walter Burnett of the *Melbourne Cup of 3 November 1896*.

Needless to say it was an instant national hit. And that reveals one of the central relevant aspects in the development of our national identity. Cinema travelled across Australia very rapidly. What an audience saw in urban Melbourne was also being viewed in remote cinemas from Cairns to Broome or from travelling picture showmen across Australia. Cinema was a binding agent central to the development of a national spirit from Federation. Documentary film making has been at the backbone of Australian film effort ever since. It provides the most consistently important area of original Australian filmed work.

Charles Tait's film, the *Story of the Kelly Gang* of 1906 is often referred to as the first feature film. The importance of it is extraordinarily high. It ran for almost an hour in continuous narrative at a time when 20 minute films ruled the day. It depicted one of the great national icons in Ned Kelly, who only 25 years after his execution was rapidly becoming a national legend of mythic proportion. It was a spectacular commercial success. The Tait family completed a further nine feature films in the next six years alone.

In fact in the first decade after Federation in 1901, Australia produced over fifty narrative feature films. Australia was easily the most active producing nation of extended narrative films at that time. With nationwide distribution, the centrality of a body of produced work to the growth of a national identity should not be underestimated. It has been undervalued in Australian history. Australians' fascination with bushrangers and the challenge of the land and its cultivation is vividly reflected directly from that time. The theme of the outsider travels from The *Story of the Kelly Gang* onwards.

Through the First World War and on through the later days of the silent era in the 1920's we see the emergence of several essential elements which have informed the view of Australians about themselves ever since. This is seen in particular through the work of director Raymond Longford and his remarkable companion, Lottie Lyell.

In the film, *The Sentimental Bloke* of 1919 we see C. J. Dennis's characters realised with Doreen played by Lottie Lyell and Arthur Tauchert as the redoubtable "Bloke".

The film spoke to a new-found national confidence after the vicissitudes of war and its immediate celebration in irreverent, at times quite riotous comedy with all that playfulness with language many know and love so dearly, seen in the flash cards. This comedy was not confined to the genius of Longford (and he was most assuredly a genius) but was also seen in the works of directors Franklin Barrett and the remarkable Tad Ordell who's *Kid Stakes* of 1927 celebrated Fatty Finn and his childhood antics. It is a silent masterpiece. *Kid Stakes*, *The Sentimental Bloke* and one of the other great classics of Raymond Longford, *On Our Selection* spoke of the simple celebration of working people in a young nation still finding its way. Whether in Woolloomooloo or on the land, the naturalism of the performances and the settings is still intensely endearing and spoken with remarkable effect to audiences across Australia forging a national awareness.

The period of original creative activity in the silent era saw the national ethos and personality being affected through the symbiosis that is always at play between the spirit of a nation's people and the entertainment which they consume.

One of my particular pleasures at The Australian Film Commission was being able to promote the special screening of the restored print of *Kid Stakes* at the Cannes Film Festival in the mid 80's. It was a wonderful success. It was a magical moment in which world cineastes watched in wonder and laughed at our irreverent sense of humour.

Australian scepticism and the obligation to never take ourselves too seriously is clearly evident in the work from that time. Similarly the stories are about the resourcefulness of ordinary people: their struggle and survival. There is a simplicity and directness contained within them. There is an abiding sense of a national code of fairness that runs through the national narratives to the present day.

There is a national fascination and commitment seen whenever Australian history is well executed in Australian film and television. Witness the record viewing levels achieved by mini series such as *ANZACS* or the sequence of the exceptional Kennedy Miller Mini-Series of the eighties *The Dismissal, Bodyline, Vietnam* and *The Cowra Breakout* or the ABC series from the early *Stormy Petrel* through to *Curtin*.

Many of our most important cinematic productions since the mid seventies have also been based on Australian history starting with the readily remembered Breaker Morant, Gallipoli and Phar Lap. Each touches a nerve in most Australians with often fervent nationalistic overtones.

Films of the silent era provided the base for genuine nationally delivered entertainment. The first radio services only commenced being licensed for limited service areas in 1923. The ABC was not incorporated until 1932. It took a very long time for the ABC to deliver its services nationally. National connection was by way of cinema and to a lesser degree print. Cinema was central to the experience of Australians. Australian stories were central to the experience of the medium right through until the arrival of the talking picture in 1928. The going got a lot harder after that.

With the arrival of the talkies another of the key influencers of national opinion and character blossomed: the newsreel. No nation loved the newsreel more than Australia. We had an intensely competitive newsreel market from the early silent formats right through until the last produced example on 27 November, 1976.

From their inception around 1910 through to the golden production era in the thirties, forties and fifties, the Australian newsreel was the voice of the nation. Newsreels are a repository of much of the most valuable material in the National Film and Sound Archive. Who can think of the Second World War without remembering the searing images of Damien Parer's *Kokoda Frontline* which won for him the first Academy Award to an Australian?

The newsreel era was paid brilliant tribute in Phillip Noyce's 1978 film *Newsfront*.

Despite extensive and at times ferocious distribution challenges, Australian film continued to advance in the thirties though a variety of intrepid producer entrepreneurs.

This was most particularly seen in the work of two notable directors, Ken G Hall and the incomparable Charles Chauvel. Chauvel together with the cinematographer/director Frank Hurley are my lifetime Australian creative heroes.

Ken G Hall whom I had the good fortune to know, was a prolific and successful producer. He ran the substantial Australian studio Cinesound. As a director his comedies stand high. He saw the renewal of the Steele Rudd characters in *On Our Selection* in 1932 which held the box office record for an Australian film until the 1970's. Another in the Steele Rudd series—*Dad and Dave Come to Tow*n—still stands well with its larrikin fish out of water banter delivered with a sure touch. As with several films starring the great comedian George Wallace made by Hall, *Dad and Dave Come to Town* is a quintessentially Australian comedy piece with an irreverent wit and innocence matched with an inner confidence. It was released in 1938, a turbulent time just before the beginning of World War II. It was most welcome as a release from world troubles. It was subsequently widely and successfully released in the UK in 1939.

It was around the time of the late Dad and Dave films and on through World War II that Australians experienced the dramatic impact of radio on the national personality. Ruling the air waves were Jack Davey, George Wallace, and the unsurpassed Roy Rene, the inimitable 'Mo' who was often praised as Australia's Chaplin in his power and originality.

Mo was lascivious and magnificently vulgar. He was the quintessential example of the Australian lair, who was always on the make for a fast 'quid' or a 'Sheila'. Having made only one film, stage was his medium until he found how brilliantly his talent for timing worked on radio. For six years he was the national star. That ribald sense of going a little too far but not quite over the top permeates Australian comedy to this day, right up to the recent examples with the *D Generation, Working Dog, Fast Forward, Andrew Denton's* brilliant work in the nineties, *Kath and Kim* and the work of the *Chaser* team. It is readily seen to represent what it means to be Australian.

I do not believe it is possible to do justice as to the quality of the impact of Charles and Elsa Chauvel on the national spirit of Australians and the way we see our country and our society. For many Australians, Chauvel, with Elsa, from the mid 20's through until the mid 50's, represented THE Australian Cinema.

He was the writer/director. She was his creative writing and producing partner. The dramatised documentary *In the Wake of the Bounty* is of course famous for revealing a young, raw actor, Errol Flynn. Flynn was catapulted to international fame and fortune from this documentary. Nonetheless, it is for the bold and original epics that the Chauvels will be remembered. I hope over time they will be revered.

Forty Thousand Horsemen was the first really striking representation of a generation of Australian men in war defending King and country. This film provided a striking confidence in its representation of laconic Australian character and independence. Its impact here and overseas was dramatic. Its evocation of Australian mateship and egalitarianism has resonated ever since. This is seen in Ken Hannam's *Sunday Too Far Away* which had a similar impact on people of my generation.

Charles Chauvel was imbued with a most endearing Australian trait: he was an incurable optimist. That is what kept him going through 30 tough years of film making at a time when making a film in this country was about as easy as planting a crop in drought zones today. So great was his optimism that between making films—and there were big in betweens—that he wrote and self published courses on screen writing and film making. I own several of them. Can you imagine such commitment? Can you imagine such persistence, such confident optimism?

Commitment, Persistence and Confident Optimism

Commitment and confident optimism are some of our most enduring national characteristics. They are attributes that I would describe collectively as being reflected in cheerful persistence. I believe they are central to an Australian ethos. These attributes are the building blocks of much that is central to our national psyche in Australia. They include persistence in the face of tough odds, due to our physical isolation. They are part of our ornery nature and they are an embedded part of "place" as it rapidly implants itself in immigrants no matter what their ethnicity.

Jedda from 1955 stands as the enduring film landmark from the Chauvels. The first sign of almost blind optimism was that it was made in colour at a time when there were no colour laboratories in Australia. The Chauvel's had to ship the material to Britain for processing. They did not see a single foot of film before principal photography was completed. In an even greater act of optimism in a land that was then stridently monocultural it is an Aboriginal story of a stolen woman, isolation and love with a tribal man told with great sympathy. Both roles were, unusually for the time, played by Aboriginal: Ngarala Kunoth as Jedda and Robert Tudawali as her ill fated lover, Marbuck. Jedda evokes a sense of kinship to land and people not seen previously and stands proud and alone in creating an epic about Aboriginal experience, love and loss with a heart rending closure which lives with one always.

Telling national stories imparts meaning to narratives. There are many national stories to be told and there is still a need to document Australian history in an way which is expansive, informed and opens our views. In my view this needs to take into account the importance of reconciliation with indigenous Australians. From reconciliation, we need to move forward as one nation. We can then look confidently outward to a better society, informed from respect and knowledge.

There has been a body of work in film and television of importance which addresses issues of meaning, life and purpose between indigenous and other Australians. Much of it, needless to say, is in a span of documentary work too large to detail here. Most recently it was seen in the superb television production of *First Australians* on SBS. It was produced by Rachel Perkins. There is also a more limited but important body of drama. For example Bob Weis' brilliant production *Women of the Sun* made for the SBS television in the early 1980s still stands as one of the singular moments in original Australian television.

Henri Safran's 1976 film *Storm Boy* played successfully as an allegory on several levels to Australian and international audiences. It is a beautiful film with a balance and lightness. It was an important contribution in its own modest way to addressing our most important national roadblock to real social maturity: the realisation of mutual respect, understanding and reconciliation with indigenous citizens.

It is a real joy to see the film which won the Best Film at the AFI awards in 2006 was the highly original *Ten Canoes* by Rolf de Heer and Peter Djigirr. The film invokes distant past, tribal times. The story goes like this. Dayindi covets one of the wives of his older brother. To teach him the proper way, he is told a story from the mythical past, a story of wrong love, kidnapping, sorcery, bungling mayhem and revenge gone wrong. The English language storytelling by David Gulpilil, and subtitles in the Ganalbingu language, lets the light hearted humour and the confident portrayal of a proud, connected and successfully functioning world shine.

The Best Film at the AFI awards last year was Warwick Thornton's equally brilliant *Samson & Delilah*. It was a major moment in cinematic maturity and originality for our nation.

The recent quite wonderful musical *Bran Nue Dae* also made by Rachel Perkins was a huge audience success and provides some cause for optimism about the good heart at the core of the Australian people.

From the 1950's there was an overpowering repressive social and political atmosphere which eschewed Australian creative endeavour generally as evidenced from the low production level of 37 films in the 20 year period from 1946. That roster included numerous foreign films such as *The Overlanders, Kangaroo, On the Beach* and *Bush Christmas*. These films were made by UK or US studios using Australia as a story base. This suffocating environment with its hidebound ways was soon replaced by a creative mainspring, not seen since the first careless explosive energy of the first decade after Federation.

In 1985 I devised and co-hosted a large celebration of a particularly important moment in the history of Australian television in Melbourne at the National Gallery of Victoria. It was to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the publication of a small manifesto. The manifesto was penned and published by the producer Hector Crawford. It posited the most spirited advocacy for Australian content on Australian commercial television as a minimum requirement for the issue of licenses which were by then proving to be permits to print money. The rules at that time confined the number of commercial broadcasters to two in the major markets and a solo one in all the others. They reflected the political nature of such allocations and regulatory settings that have bedeviled Australian public policy ever since, a subject which should be reserved for a speech on another day!

'Hec' had become a good friend whilst I was at the Australian Film Commission. I treasured my times with him. I treasured his reflections on his battle history in television and before that in his substantial radio career, which saw the export of over 20,000 hours of Australian radio drama. Crawford in television, like Chauvel in film, was one of the grand optimists. The creative studio which he ran in Melbourne was responsible for producing a diverse range of dramas. It projected a view of Australian society and its ways which permeated the sense of national self and purpose when Australia was still shedding its almost exclusively British and to a lesser extent United States centric view of the world.

His television career started modestly with a simple commission for *Consider Your Verdict*. Hector was with many others a tireless advocate for Australian content regulation. He was progressively more successful. What had been a rather constrained broadcasting regulatory body gradually changed in response to a more engaged political view as to national policy priorities from the late 1960s. This change coincided with the establishment of the Australian Film Television and Radio School and later the Australian Film Development Corporation which was succeeded by the Australian Film Commission and in the 1980s saw the establishment of the Australian Film Finance Corporation of which I was the promoter and inaugural Chairman.

The roll call of Crawford Productions is a recital of many of the hits of Australian television. There were a string of police shows *Homicide, Division 4, Matlock* and *Cop Shop*. There was a steamy serial called *The Box*. There was one of the benchmark pieces of Australian television, *The Sullivans*. This was the story of an ordinary Australian family set in war time Melbourne which ran for six years. It was exported to over 70 countries. The company moved into mini series in the 1980's with the hugely successful *All the Rivers Run*. This was followed by another evergreen that renewed the association of Australian audiences with the mythology and hankering for the bush on a weekly basis, which ran for over 10 years: *The Flying Doctors*.

Each program in its own way asserted a view as to what it was to be an Australian and what it was to be living now or in the past in our country. Each was a contributor to a sense of confidence in being Australian and seeing and hearing Australians living out their daily lives. And of course the most important thing about them all is that they were hugely popular—key to programming schedules as they were part of our daily lives, a central part of national social discourse.

That success was mirrored in many other productions in the 1960s and 1970s. The most memorable was probably *Number 96*, the saucy Australian serial set in a Sydney apartment building that combined melodrama and extravagant characters. It included high-camp tonality, lashings of comedy and most famously, sex in abundant quantity.

From the outset in early 1972, *Number 96* was a mega hit. It ran five nights a week for six years, with a spin off movie to boot. The show was part of Australia's coming of age with gay, Jewish, Lancashire, black and feminist characters. It had remarkably adventurous storylines. It spoke about genuinely profound change throughout the nation: - politically and socially.

The cultural cringe was broken by programs such as *Number 96* and the numerous Crawford Productions. Their later audiences and creative inheritors in the Grundy soap opera genre were *The Young Doctors, The Restless Years, Neighbours* and more recently *Home and Away*. Australian confidence in and about Australian work, Australian accents and story telling were changed by these productions.

That early work has blossomed in a breadth of programming and sophisticated series and mini series across the nation. Australians have revelled in story telling about themselves in urban and rural environs. Australians have embraced dramas that spoke of a world which was directly relevant to their own experience or connected with national streams of public curiosity and fantasy.

The 'Why' of Creative Industries

I am pleased to say that the inheritance from that time has permeated the company I have run for over 8 years—FOXTEL—which proudly commissions and promotes a very wide diversity of Australian film, drama, news, sports, arts, news, children's, documentary, general entertainment and music programming for the best reason of all: that's what Australians want to see. The current production for Showtime of Tim Winton's *Cloudstreet* is something about which we should all have a keen sense of anticipation.

The Australian content on FOXTEL is matched with a rich array of other offerings. It is a reflection of the appetites and aspirations of modern Australia. It is living evidence of the 'why' in creative industries.

The creative industries as they are often called are the 'why' of narrative story telling. The reason we support them is provided through the prism of my own experience, presented here tonight. I am an example of someone who has lived through the special transformation we have all experienced since the middle of the 20th century.

All modern societies are dependent on the common stories that bind and renew them if they are to have vitality, confidence and a secure heart. The story telling campfires of the 20th century were cinema, radio and television. The Australian cinema and TV campfire has been a mercurial creature which waxed and waned over the decades from World War 1 up until the mid-1970s, but has nevertheless been central to how Australians' view themselves.

The dramatic change experienced in television content was shortly to witness the renaissance of feature film production in a sequence of works which changed the national mood, energized national confidence and broke with the cringing, creatively impoverished and hesitant 1950s and 1960s forever.

This precious process in the cinema is described by the *Happy Feet* director George Miller so eloquently as one of "public dreaming". It has been renewed for Australian work over the last forty years or so with a force that is uneven, but still overwhelming. The broad product of work from the mid 70's through to recent times has seen a maturing of our creative spirit and the delivery of a sequence of works where the film makers and their creative teams and actors clearly speak for themselves .

That body of film work has been profoundly influential in reminding us of our history, investing it with relevance and meaning. It has given us fresh compelling stories from fellow Australians. It has lifted the national spirit from the gifted work of diverse cinematographers. It has delivered to us our sense of visual understanding and celebration of this land and its people. It has seen Australians take to the world stage as never before.

These have been some of the influences that have shaped and informed my life. We all share many of them.

My life has been spent in the service of Australian creative endeavour. It was informed first and in a continuing way from music. Then it was informed through the awakening of television drama in the 1960's. It was subsequently reinforced and ignited by the cinematic revolution from the 1970's and the modern era in which I have been lucky to be a professional participant from the 1980's. I call it "growing up in arts" because that is what it has been to me and I still have a lot of growing to do, I assure you all!

Film and television, theatre, the visual arts, literature, music and dance all have had a central role in reinforcing our national personality in its complex evolution into a confident Australian identity. As a result, Australia has developed as an interesting nation. Hopefully one which is aware of its capacity, with a well developed sense of future challenges.

I believe that the task before all of us is to draw from the work that others have driven with such enduring commitment and for so long. We need to understand that history and to learn from their achievements. We need to translate their action into fresh commitment from the never ending obligation to renew and refashion our society.

I believe in arts management we need to ensure that we protect and reinforce the base on which our modern endeavour has been built. The reason for this is that, regrettably, the foundations are still fragile. In a strangely Australian way, the challenge has become greater than ever. There is a terrible sense of déjà vu. People are likely to comment that: 'I've seen this movie before'. This is the case in so many mindless efforts in current modern review that permeate too many of our public debates on creative life and support for it.

I mentioned music as the great reviver and energizer. In saying so I am not jesting. Music matters. I believe music has a particularly special role to play in national cultural renewal by unlocking in each individual a yearning for something beyond the practical and utilitarian, something which is spiritual, something that matches the inner richness of Indigenous life and culture. Music is a metaphor for national narratives that provide lessons for managers. And that is a 'why' above all 'whys'.

We must remain vigilant and committed in the spirit of George Fairfax and Ken Myer to ensure that we move confidently into the next phase of our national creative expression. I trust that the next phase is one which evidences a maturity and confidence in understanding the centrality of creative endeavour to any purposeful national future.

We all have work to do!

Thank you.

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[i] Note that in the address, the Blue Hills theme commenced here. A wide variety of music excerpts were used throughout the presentation of this address, making it a seamless multimedia presentation available online at http://www.deakin.edu.au/buslaw/management-marketing/). The speech was delivered with 56 separate video and audio segments which utilised 96 excerpts from diverse music, film, radio and television works which were relevant to the speech and illustrated its themes.

[ii] At this point in the lecture there was a substantial film montage of a body of produced Australian films.

author's note

Kim Williams AM has been Chief Executive of FOXTEL since December 2001. He has had a long involvement in the arts and entertainment industry in Australia and internationally and has held various executive positions which include Chief Executive at each of Fox Studios Australia, The Australian Film Commission, Southern Star Entertainment and Musica Viva Australia, and as senior executive at the ABC.

Mr Williams has held numerous Board positions in commercial and public life over the last 35 years including as foundation Chairman of the Australian Film Finance Corporation which he founded in 1988 and most recently, as the Chairman of the Sydney Opera House since 2005. He was appointed as a Member in the Order of Australia in June 2006. In October 009 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Letters Honoris Causa by Macquarie University for his contribution to the arts and entertainment industry both in Australian and internationally.

editor's note

Ruth Rentschler (PhD 1999 Monash) is foundation professor in Arts and Entertainment Management at Deakin University. Ruth is the author and editor of publications in the cultural field including the *Cultural and Entertainment Industries Handbook, Shaping Culture, Innovative Arts Marketing, The Entrepreneurial Arts Leader, Creative Marketing* (with Ian Fillis), *Marketing Management* and *Reflections on ANZAC Day* (both with Anne-Marie Hede). She is Deputy Chair of the Board for Multicultural Arts Victoria. Ruth is a keen enthusiast for Aboriginal art and diversity. In 2004-05 she completed a project funded by the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies on the Aboriginal art market. She worked on important projects on inclusion with the Department of Victorian Communities and then the Office of Multicultural Interests. She recently completed a project on arts governance in partnership with Arts Victoria and Chamber Music Australia.