



2016 NATIONAL “CINEMA PIONEER OF THE YEAR” PETER FENTON OAM

Peter Fenton began his film career as a sound mixer with Merv Murphy's Paddington production company Supreme Sound in 1958. The complex, which included a laboratory, specialized in cinema and television commercials as well as documentaries and an occasional television pilot. Peter had worked with radio 2UE as an on-air panel operator and later production operator recording commercials, jingles and serials since leaving Parramatta High School in 1953.

After a brief stint at Natec Studios in the Sydney's Savoy Theatre building, where he also recorded music for film and television, Peter moved to Artransa Park Studios, French's Forest, Sydney's largest production studio in 1964. Appointed Chief of Sound he continued to mix documentaries and commercials as well as his first feature *"You Can't See Around Corners"*, a spin-off from the TV series.

In 1972, Peter joined Ron Purvis's United Sound Studios in Pier Street Sydney. The complex was modelled on Glen Glenn Sound in Hollywood with editing rooms, a Foley and ADR stage, mixing theatre and music studio all with 35mm projection. It was Australia's only complex with all these facilities.

When the film industry began its extraordinary resurgence soon after, Peter was able to concentrate on feature films. Over the next 25 years he was chief sound mixer on well over 100 Australian features as well as international films directed by Australians and post produced in Australia.

His early credits included many features by directors who were to gain international recognition. These included *"Picnic At Hanging Rock"*, *"The Year*

Of Living Dangerously" and *"Gallipoli"* for Peter Weir, *"The Devil's Playground"* for Fred Schepisi, *"Newsfront"* and *"Heatwave"* for Phillip Noyce, *"Caddie"* for Donald Crombie, *"My Brilliant Career"* for Gillian Armstrong, *"Alvin Purple"* and *"Eliza Fraser"* for Tim Burstall, and *"The Getting Of Wisdom"* and *"Don's Party"* for Bruce Beresford.

Other credits included *"Sunday Too Far Away"*, *"Kitty And The Bagman"*, *"Patrick"*, *"The Picture Show Man"*, *"Bliss"*, *"Stone"*, *"Monkey Grip"*, *"Mad Dog Morgan"*, *"Storm Boy"*, *"Tim"*, *"Fatty Finn"*, *"Summerfield"*, and *"The Mango Tree"*. All these films had mono sound tracks mixed at United Sound's Pier Street studio.

From the early 80s through to the late 90s, the majority of films were being mixed in Dolby Stereo. With United Sound studios swallowed by the development of Darling Harbour, Peter mixed stereo features at Film Australia, Atlab, Colorfilm and Soundfirm's Melbourne studios. These included *"Starstruck"*, *"Phar Lap"*, *"High Tide"*, *"Burke and Wills"*, *"Goodbye Paradise"*, *"Quigley Down Under"* and *"Lightning Jack"*, as well as five Fred Schepisi features, *"Evil Angels"*, *"Mister Baseball"*, *"The Russia House"*, *"IQ"* and *"Six Degrees of Separation"*. His last film was Bruce Beresford's *"Paradise Road"* in 1997. On his retirement from film mixing, Peter wrote several biographies on Australian sport, his other passion.

When the Australian Screen Sound Guild was formed in 1998, Peter shared the inaugural Lifetime Achievement award with his great friend, the late Ron Purvis, and in 2012 he was awarded the OAM for services to the Australian Film Industry.