



FESTIVAL DE CANNES

OFFICIAL SELECTION
UN CERTAIN REGARD



One hundred and fifty spears, ten canoes, three wives...trouble.

TEN CANOES

A FILM BY ROLF DE HEER AND THE PEOPLE OF RAMINGINING

FILM FINANCE CORPORATION AUSTRALIA presents a FANDANGO/VERTIGO production, in association with SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FILM CORPORATION, ADELAIDE FILM FESTIVAL and SBS INDEPENDENT TEN CANOES
CRUSOE KURDALL, JAMIE GULPILL, RICHARD BIRRINBIRRI, PETER MINYGULLU, FRANCES DJILGINING with DAVID GULPILL as the Storyteller
Director of Photography IAN JONES, ACS, Film Editor TANIA NEHME, Sound Design by JAMES CURRIE, TOM HEUZENROEDER, Art Director BEVERLEY FREEMAN
Associate Producers RICHARD BIRRINBIRRI, BELINDA SCOTT, NILS ERIK NIELSEN, Executive Producers SUE MURRAY, DOMENICO PROCACCI, BRYCE MENZIES
Producers ROLF DE HEER, JULIE RYAN, Written by ROLF DE HEER in consultation with the PEOPLE OF RAMINGINING, Co-Director PETER DJIGIRR, Directed by ROLF DE HEER



TEN CANOES

A FILM BY ROLF DE HEER

INTERNATIONAL SALES

wild bunch

PARIS OFFICE

99 Rue de la Verrerie
75004 Paris - France
tel +33 1 53 01 50 30
fax +33 1 53 01 50 49

CANNES SALES OFFICE

23 rue Macé - 4th floor
Corner of Croisette
(above Louis Vuitton shop)
tel +33 4 93 99 31 68
fax +33 4 93 99 64 77

CANNES MARKETING OFFICE

5 square Mérieux - 1st floor
tel +33 4 93 68 71 62
FAX: +33 4 93 68 82 94

SALES AGENTS

Vincent Maraval
+33 6 11 91 23 93
vmaraval@exception-wb.com
Gaël Nouaille
+33 6 21 23 04 72
gnouaille@exception-wb.com
Carole Baraton
+33 6 20 36 77 72
cbaraton@exception-wb.com
Silvia Simonutti
+33 6 20 74 95 08
ssimonutti@exception-wb.com

www.wildbunch.biz

INTERNATIONAL PR

THE PR CONTACT

CANNES OFFICE

All Suites Garden Studio,
All Suites Residence,
12 rue Latour Maubourg

Phil Symes
+33 6 09 23 86 37
Ronaldo Mourao
+33 6 09 28 89 55
Virginia Garcia
+33 6 18 55 93 62
Cristina Sibaldi
+33 6 23 25 78 31

festival@theprcontact.com
philsymes@theprcontact.com
ronaldo@theprcontact.com

FRENCH DISTRIBUTION

Memento

AUSTRALIAN SALES

PALACE FILMS

233 Whitehorse Rd
Balwyn Vic Australia 3103
tel +61 (0)3 9816 1716
fax +61 (0)3 9817 4921

www.palacefilms.com.au

Short Synopsis

It is the distant past, tribal times. Dayindi (played by Jamie Gulpilil, son of the great David Gulpilil) 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.

In English storytelling (by David Gulpilil) and subtitled Ganabingu language, this is a film unlike any you have ever seen.

Long Synopsis

A thousand years ago, tribal times in the north of Australia. Ten men, led by old Minygululu, head into the forest to harvest barks for canoe making. It is the season of goose egg gathering.

Minygululu learns that young Dayindi, on his first egg hunting expedition, has taken a fancy to Minygululu's third and youngest wife. Tribal law is in danger of being broken: Minygululu deals with the situation by telling Dayindi an ancestral story, a story that will take a very long time to tell, all through the next days of canoe making and swamp travelling and goose egg gathering. This is that story:

Long ago, in mythical times, just after the great flood covered the whole land, Ridjimiraril lives with his three wives, wise Banalandju, jealous Nowalingu and beautiful young Munandjarra, in a camp with others, including Birrinbirrin, a fat man who loves honey. Some distance away, in the single men's camp, lives Yeeralparil, Ridjimiraril's younger brother. Yeeralparil has no wives yet, and none promised, but is keen on that beautiful Munandjarra, who he feels should be his.

One day, a Stranger approaches, without warning. The men are alarmed, especially when the Stranger claims he is there to trade in magic objects. He is given food and sent on his way. The sorcerer comes to warn the men of the possible dangers, but declares the camp is safe. Life goes on as normal.

After a fight with Banalandju, Nowalingu vanishes. Ridjimiraril is convinced his beloved second wife was taken by the Stranger, but the consensus is that being jealous, she simply ran away.

Months later an old uncle reports having seen Nowalingu in a distant camp with the Stranger. The men are galvanised into action: a war party sets off, but without Yeeralparil. Both brothers cannot go... if the older one is killed, the younger one must take over his wives. Yeeralparil hangs around the main camp in the hope of seeing Munandjarra, but Banalandju ensures a safe distance between the two.

The war party returns, without Nowalingu: the old uncle's eyes must have deceived him. Ridjimiraril, still convinced it was the Stranger who took Nowalingu, slides into depression, until Birrinbirrin runs into camp with the news that the Stranger has been seen nearby. Ridjimiraril tells Birrinbirrin he's going to talk to the Stranger but grabs his spears and takes off, Birrinbirrin puffing behind.

Deep in the bush they see the Stranger, squatting for a shit. Ridjimiraril launches a spear. An inspection of the body, however, reveals that Ridjimiraril has killed the wrong stranger. There are sounds of approaching people. Ridjimiraril breaks the spear off and they quickly hide the body.

But they do not hide it well enough. Days later Ridjimiraril and Birrinbirrin are accosted by a group of warriors including the Stranger. They have identified the spearhead in the Stranger's brother's body as having been made by Birrinbirrin, and they want payback. Ridjimiraril confesses, and the location and time for the payback ceremony is agreed to.

A sad little procession of men leaves camp for the payback. This time Yeeralparil can go, as only one person is to be speared, either Ridjimiraril or his payback partner. Yeeralparil argues that it should be he, young and nimble, who ought partner his brother. Ridjimiraril agrees, and together the two brothers face the spears from the aggrieved Stranger's tribe. That is the law, and the law must be upheld.

Ridjimiraril is speared. Justice done, he is helped back to camp. Banalandju tends his wound, but instead of getting better, as he should, Ridjimiraril declines: it is as if a bad spirit has invaded his body. Even the sorcerer can do nothing. In his last moments before dying, Ridjimiraril staggers to his feet and begins to dance his own death dance...then he collapses and dies.

After all the correct ceremony has been performed, Yeeralparil finally moves into the main camp, to be with his Munandjarra. But he's inherited a great deal more than he expected...

Minygululu's story is over, the goose egg hunters return home. Dayindi has learnt his lesson, and when opportunity presents, he declines...maybe some day he will have a wife, but it won't be someone else's.

Glossary and Explanations

Yolngu: The literal translation of Yolngu is simply, "the people", but it is used nowadays as a term to describe the group of Australian Indigenous people (aboriginals) living in or originating from central and eastern Arnhem Land in Australia's Northern Territory.

Balanda: A word meaning "white person(s)", coming from the word "Hollander"...the Dutch were the first white people to come into contact with the Yolngu.

Ramingining: A town of about 800 Yolngu people in the northern part of central Arnhem Land. The town was created in the early 1970s when the Mission of Millingimby became overcrowded. This meant that Yolngu from different areas were brought to live together, some quite a long distance from their traditional lands. There are fifteen or sixteen clans represented in Ramingining and about 8 different language groups.

Arafura Swamp: A large area of freshwater wetlands just south and east of Ramingining. The swamp extends to 130,000 hectares during the wet season, and is home to an incredible variety of bird, plant and animal life, including possibly the largest biomass of crocodiles in the world.

Magpie geese or *Gumang*: One of the many species of birdlife on the swamp, the Gumang is a black and white native goose which was an important food source in times gone by.

Goose Egg Gathering: Also known as Goose Egg Hunting. Expeditions by canoe of up to a week at a time used to be launched onto the swamp towards the end of the wet season, when the magpie geese had laid their eggs. Eggs were collected in numbers and the birds hunted for their meat.

Ganalbingu: The name of one of the clans local to the Arafura Swamp area. Ganalbingu means "magpie goose people". It was hence an important clan in the life of the swamp (and in the making of "Ten Canoes").

Payback, or *Makaratta*: A formal and ritualised form of punishment or retribution, usually with attendant ceremony. Warriors from the aggrieved tribe throw spears at the perceived culprit until blood is drawn. Sometimes the wound is fatal, sometimes only minor. Occasionally a partner is chosen by the culprit, and both face the spears. Justice is deemed to be done when either one, the innocent or the perceived guilty, is hit. In many areas payback has been further refined to be a simple close-range spearing of the culprit in the leg.

Death Dance: When someone was at the edge of death, ceremony would start. People would gather and initially a dance would be performed for the dying person, to help him begin to make connections with his ancestors in the spirit world. Occasionally a person, still capable but knowing he was going to die, would perform the death dance himself. Ceremony would continue on and off for up to twelve months after the person had died.

We Need Ten Canoes!...Origin of a Film

The country of the Arafura Swamp area is traditional to David Gulpilil, the great indigenous performer and Australian screen icon. Towards the end of 2000, David was cast as the lead in 'The Tracker'. Upon meeting director Rolf de Heer some months before the shoot, David invited him to Ramingining, to see his traditional lands and travel the Arafura Swamp. Rolf accepted and the two of them spent the time between Christmas and New Year together, talking, fishing, eating bush food and learning to understand each other. Even then David was keen on Rolf making a film there with him and his people.

During and after the filming of "The Tracker", David renewed his invitation to Rolf to make a film in Ramingining - maybe a Western with cowboys and cattle, or a massacre film, even "The Tracker 2". Finally, in June 2003, David received a phone call from Rolf...could he come and talk about making a film together, David to star and co-direct, all shot on the traditional lands of his people, in their language.

The initial discussions included a number of David's influential contemporaries, such as Richard Birrinbirrin and Bobby Bunungurr. But nothing was decided. Then, on the morning of Rolf's departure, David came to see him. "We need ten canoes," he said. Rolf looked at him blankly. "We need ten canoes," David repeated. Suddenly Rolf understood that David meant this for the film. "David, we don't even know what the film is really about, how can we need ten canoes?". David looked at Rolf as the ignorant Balanda he was and left, re-appearing half an hour later with a photo, black and white, taken almost seventy years before. Rolf took one look at it and said, "You're right, we need ten canoes".

The photo, of a group of ten men in their bark canoes on the swamp, was profoundly cinematic. It spoke of a world of long ago, where life was different to anything that could be imagined by almost any Balanda anywhere. To enter that world would be the essence of real cinema. And there were more of these photos. The film had started to form.

The Donald Thomson Photographs

That photo of the ten canoeists was taken by the extraordinary photographer Dr Donald Thomson, an anthropologist who lived and worked in Arnhem Land in the mid-1930s, when life for the original inhabitants was still culturally little influenced by the coming of white people...there had been wars against the Yolngu people of Arnhem Land, and massacres, but they had never been conquered and had thus retained, in very large measure, their traditional lifestyle.

Thomson left a legacy of immense importance: a portrait of a people and a way of life that would otherwise have been lost. The Thomson Collection of some four thousand black and white glass plate photographs of so many aspects of Yolngu culture is held in Museum Victoria (there are another seven thousand photographs taken in Central Australia and on Cape York).

Some of these photos have made their way back to Ramingining, and become part of the culture. There's such a concept as "Thomson Time", fondly remembered. The web of kinship is complex: everyone is related to someone in the photographs, and everyone takes pride in them. They are their continuity, their history.

Life Then, Life Now

Life for the pre-contact Yolngu had its hard times, but they had adapted very successfully to their environment. Their ceremonial and spiritual life was extremely rich and complex, due in part to the abundance of the food supply, which allowed them time to develop ritual and ceremony.

They were semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers, moving seasonally within well-defined boundaries depending on the availability of food. They had a very complex kinship system, which determined extremely strict marriage rules; a highly developed system of law; and an extensive trading network with other tribes great distances away.

Western culture, mainly in the form of cattlemen, didn't really arrive until the 1880s, and was strenuously resisted. Many Yolngu were massacred, but they continued to hold out against white incursion. It was not until Thomson in the 1930s that peace, and ultimately a conversion to a mixture of white and Yolngu ways, came.

Nowadays life is very different for the people of Ramingining. There is a supermarket and a takeaway shop. People live in houses with plumbing and television, and do their banking over the internet. Some of the old ways remain: the kinship system, though modified, is still strong; some of the ceremonial life is as important as it was a century ago; people still hunt and fish, though 4-wheel drives, guns and fishing lines are increasingly the tools of choice. Conventional work is scarce and increasingly there is engagement with the arts and craft, which in turn helps keep some of the traditions alive.

A Story to Please Two Cultures

The story and script were created with the community. The Yolngu storytelling tradition is strong but its conventions very different to those of the West. It became clear that the challenge was to make a film that would satisfy both local tastes and requirements, and a Western cinema audience. Over the next year and a half, Rolf visited Ramingining on numerous occasions. Each time, more of the Yolngu would get to know him, and the circle of consultation became wider. This was crucial.

There were several storytelling problems to overcome. The first was the desire of the locals to have goose egg gathering (the ten canoes photo was taken during such an expedition) central to the film. The problem: goose egg gathering itself is particularly non-dramatic in the paradigm of Western cinema.

Secondly, the old times were precious to the community; the Yolngu collaborators did not want to depict them as times of conflict. And conflict was essential if the film was to work for a Western audience.

And the third major problem was that the Thomson photos were in black and white...the cultural history of the people was in black and white, but the film was contractually bound to be a colour film.

These problems were solved by setting the main dramatic part of the story in mythical times, when for the Yolngu anything was allowed to happen, and shooting it in colour...that dramatic story could then be told as a cautionary tale during a hunting expedition, which would be shot in black and white. A script which pleased both cultures was then possible.

Language...the Cosmological Divide

Ramingining is a place of many languages. People speak to whoever in their own clan language, which is well understood by most others, who then tend to reply in their own particular language. In the film, for example, several of the canoeists are Ganalbingu speakers, but Minygululu speaks Mandalpingu, David Gulpilil's language. Crusoe Kurddal, who plays Ridjimirril, speaks another language still, one from Maningrida. But in general, each understands the other perfectly well.

For many of the Yolngu residents though, English is perhaps their fifth or sixth language...spoken rudimentarily if at all. They understand a little more than they can speak, but it becomes very difficult to know how much. And there is an immense difference between the Yolngu languages (how they are spoken and structured, their tenses and syntax, the very cosmology they describe), and English.

It was fortunate that several of the cast, notably Peter Djigirr, Richard Birrinbirrin and Frances Djulibing, were good English speakers. They and others would work through the communication problems between actors and director until everyone seemed to know what to do and what to say.

Who Does the Casting?

There were a number of stages to the casting, each more unconventional than the next.

During the construction of the story, the participants had clear claims to being in the film and assumed they would be in it, but weren't always obvious casting. Birrinbirrin, for example, was overweight, in a way that no Yolngu would have been. And so a role had to be created especially for him.

Then there were the canoeists. The ten men in Thomson's photo have, over the years, been individually identified, and many in Ramingining are related to at least one of them. Those with the strongest claims chose themselves to play their ancestor, as they saw it, and that was the end of that.

The third stage was the most complex. If the characters had a certain kin relationship (for example man and wife), then the actors playing those characters had to be able to have the same relationship. Every Yolngu is classified as either Yirritja or Dhua. A Yirritja man cannot marry a Yirritja woman, and hence half the women in Ramingining, being Yirritja, were excluded from consideration for that role. And there are a number of subsections...if you're of the wrong Dhua subsection, then you can't be seen on screen married to a Yirritja man either.... And if a character has a relationship with two other characters, then both relationships have to conform to the kinship system. From an already small pool of available actors, there was sometimes only one person who was possible for a particular role.

The First Swamp Canoe

As the shoot drew nearer, it became time for the Yolngu to begin making all the artefacts needed for the production: spears and stone axes; dilly bags and canoes; arm bands and shelters. As in old times, the work was divided very distinctly along gender lines...the men made the canoes and the weapons, the women the huts, bags and body decorations. There was the feeling of doing something special, of cultural renewal, of bringing back the old times.

The canoes were a particular example. Those of the Arafura Swamp were designed to function in the precise environmental conditions of the swamp. There were no other canoes like them anywhere in Australia, but none had been built here for decades. The expertise, however, still existed among the older men, in particular Minyngululu and Pussycat.

Appropriate trees were selected and a sheet of bark up to four metres long and a metre wide was cut and pried off each tree in a single piece. The barks were soaked overnight, then heated through and softened on a fire, bent into shape and sewn using natural 'string' gathered from certain shrubs.

There was gathering excitement, more so among the younger men who had never seen this before, as the canoe took shape. By the end of the day, it had been completed. This one canoe was a small miracle, even for the Yolngu...forgotten aspects of their culture were being brought back from the brink extinction, and they knew it.

The Camp

Meanwhile the production crew arrived and began to transform Murwangi, an old cattle station at the edge of the swamp which was to serve as the base for filming, into something at least notionally habitable. Tent city sprang up among the scattering of rusty sheds. The camp was a living, vibrant, noisy entity. The cast generally brought wives, husbands and families and friends, and it was not long before more tents had to be shipped in. Children played around the camp and roamed the surrounding areas, those not working would go fishing or hunting.

There was a real benefit to this cheek-by-jowl living, and that was on set. The Yolngu and the Balanda, by their enforced closeness and intermingling during time away from shooting, were very quickly and substantially demystified to each other, both personally and culturally. This led to a very easy and trusting atmosphere on set, which was generally much calmer and quieter than camp. With the increased understanding of both cultures, people were able to really enjoy working together on set.

Crocodiles, Leeches and Mosquitoes

The shoot itself was divided into distinct halves. First would be the black and white canoe making and goose egg gathering material, based on and at the edges of the swamp, then would come the colour material from the mythical times, to be shot mostly at the camp the Yolngu women had built and also in the forests and surrounds.

The swamp shoot was a long, hard haul for Yolngu actor and Balanda crew alike. None of the cast had acted in a film before. They had not only to relearn old traditional skills, but also learn the new skills associated with screen acting. There was also a sense of responsibility for these foolhardy Balanda, who obviously weren't

aware of the dangers - why else would they stand waist-deep in the crocodile-infested swamp all day?

First screening of rushes was both riotous and awesome. Every Yolngu in camp crammed into the editing hut and laughed at the antics of the cast, and at what they said. But whenever a shot appeared that reflected the Thomson photographs, there were gasps and mutterings of recognition, that those on screen, and those contributing in other ways to the film, were, almost magically, rebuilding their history.

Eventually the black and white section was completed, and everyone moved to dry land. The pace of filming picked up to such a degree that the shoot finished early. Mixed with the satisfaction of having achieved what had seemed impossible, with the happiness for both Yolngu and Balanda of being able to return to some sort of normality, there were tinges of regret all round that this great, glorious and difficult adventure was over, and that the like of it would probably never again be experienced by anyone, ever, anywhere.

How the Film Has Been Received by the Community

There are three versions of the film so far: one with Yolngu languages dialogue and English subtitles and storytelling by David Gulpilil; one with both Yolngu languages dialogue and storytelling in Mandalpingu by David, with English subtitles; and the Yolngu version, no subtitles, everything in the languages of the people whose film it is.

It was this last version that played open air in Ramingining one steamy wet season night, as soon as it was ready, before any public screening. A projector and screen were flown in and people began gathering, hours before the screening. By the time it was dark, there was not a soul in the streets and houses of Ramingining...it would have taken four basketball courts to hold everyone.

The film brought laughter, pride and joy to an entire community, even those who'd had their doubts about it being made. For days it was a dominant topic of conversation. Old ways and new ways were questioned. Culture was discussed, and history, and what it means to be Yolngu. And people who had contributed to it, were changed... they had a confidence in their place in the world not seen before.

What the Film Means...Djigirr Speaks

We come from this land. People, Balanda, always come, miners and that, and we always say no to them, no mining, because we don't want to lose our culture. White man's ways will just destroy us.

We have our law from long time ago, important law for everything, but all them white men come more and more and we can't stay in that law. That law just dropping away. If we go more further with losing our law then maybe white men can tell us, "Where's your culture?...Nothing, you're lost, all bad luck for you."

But you film mob came here to lift up this law for us, to show how they used to sit a long time ago, them laws. So white men can see, we can see, anyone can see, we got that law.

If we can't do this movie, all them Balanda put us down, but you people just come to lift us up, to teach them, because we don't want to lose our culture, you know. We gonna try and lift up that law for us with this movie, so they can recognise, "Ah, these people still got that law for them, culture, all that." It's really important this movie get

done from the start to the end. We gonna show this film, and then they can recognise, all them white mens...that's nicer.

What the Film Means...Djulibing Speaks

When I first came here for the film I thought, I'm not gonna do this, I'm not gonna do that. But they took me out to the mosquito huts our women built for the film. I felt free then, I could feel the old people was with me, I could feel them. Now I'm getting brave and I'm gonna do whatever I have to do, whatever the director tells me to do. I'm very proud of myself...it's good to be playing a traditional woman, the way I look for the film.

It is my destiny to do this, so all over the world they can see how my ancient ancestors had been like this before. Behind the black and white photos is the big story, and the kids of Ramingining have never heard that story...they just laugh at the funny photos, which is no respect. If they make fun of me I'll crack their heads together.

This film is for the kids' future, so when they grow up they're gonna see, because not enough of the older people is trying to teach the younger kids. It's very important what we're gonna do here with the acting so everybody can see and understand how people was first like this. This is not just only for me...I'm doing this for my grandkids and for the next one generation to generation. They can learn what's in this film, this movie is gonna remind them about our ancient ancestors.

Everything is changing, everything is going going gone now. The only thing they know is some ceremony...they not even normal kids anymore. Maybe they gonna keep this film with them so they can put it in their head.

What the Film Means...Gulpilil Speaks

I got tears falling down, I been crying seeing that movie, it's such a good movie. I'm proud of my people who are in that film, acting is beautiful, just perfect, everything, everybody is just great. It will hold them in the heart, the people who will see it, it'll take you way down to the wilderness.

I showed a photograph from Donald Doctor Thomson to Rolf de Heer and said what do you think? Rolf de Heer started to write that story with Ramingining people, my people, and we started to work together.

I had to talk to Gudthaykudthay and Minyngululu and Bunungurr and Bunyira and Djigirr and Birrinbirrin and I said okay, we'll make that canoes. I wasn't even there but they started to work on the canoes and it's really hard work but it was really perfectly done.

I thought it wasn't gonna work but you know it was a thousand millions of mosquitoes and leeches and you name it but I tell you what, lucky it was Rolf de Heer, if Rolf de Heer wasn't there it wouldn't have been happening this story, this story of my people.

All I did when they showed me the film and the film started, I start to cry...I remember those days, I remember...and now I can see it in the film. I saw it. I really want to thanks to Rolf, what he done for my people and my people's story and a true Australian story, fair dinkum. That story is never finished that *Ten Canoes* story, it goes on forever because it is a true story of our people, it is the heart of the land and people and nature.

The Cast

CRUSOE KURRDAL (Ridjimiraril)

Crusoe Kurddal is the son of Crusoe Kuningbal and Lena Kuriniya, and the brother of Timothy Wulanjirr and Owen Yalandja. Known for his large mimih sculptures, reminiscent of those made by his father, he started making them following his father's death in 1984. He is also an accomplished dancer and has performed throughout Australia and overseas. TEN CANOES is his first acting role.

JAMIE GULPILIL (Dayindi/Yeeralparil)

Twenty-two-year-old Jamie Gulpilil, is the son of the great actor, David Gulpilil. His interest in acting began when accompanying his father to various film shoots and film premieres. He was born and continues to live in Ramingining. TEN CANOES is his first acting role.

RICHARD BIRRINBIRIN (Birrinbirrin & Associate Producer)

Born in 1953 at Milingimbi Mission, Birrinbirrin was initiated on the beach outside his father's (David Malangi) self-built home. Malangi was keen that his children received balanda and yolngu education and Birrinbirrin was a mental health worker for the Ramingining Clinic for 10 years. He made his performing debut in New York in 2002. Birrinbirrin has travelled to Taipei, Tokyo and Canberra to make public art.

A keen supporter of TEN CANOES during its development phase, Birrinbirrin's enthusiasm and assistance provided important introductions for the filmmakers to the Ramingining community. He is currently (2005) a recipient of an Australia Council grant for New Work. Treasurer of the Aboriginal artists' co-operative, Bula'bula Arts, in Ramingining, he is also an executive member of ANKAAA (a peak Indigenous Arts advocacy organisation).

PETER MINYGULULU (Minygululu)

Peter Minygululu, an exhibiting artist and ceremonial leader, was born near Mirrngatja around 1942. During the development of TEN CANOES, Minygululu was consistently supportive of the project. He is not only an authority on making traditional artefacts such as bark canoes, he also remembers the time when poling across the Swamp to collect the magpie geese was an annual event.

FRANCES DJULIBING (Nowalingu)

When Rolf de Heer was casting in Ramingining, he kept meeting the vibrant and vivacious Frances Djulibing, who worked at the local shop. He quickly believed she would be perfect for the role of Nowalingu. Her enthusiasm was second to none. She had always wanted to act in a film but never thought it was possible given she lived in such a remote area of Australia.

PHILIP GUDTHAYKUDTHAY (The Sorcerer)

Born in 1935, Philip Gudthaykudthay is the most senior artist from Ramingining. Taught by great artists such as his father Dawidi and his uncle Djawa, he has been painting since the 1960s. A stealthy old man with a languid gait, *Pussycat*, as he is known, is a senior ritual leader. His nickname comes from one of his principal totems, *Burruwara*, the native cat.

Gudthaykudthay first sold his paintings in the 1960s. He was living on the mainland at Nangalala and working as a fencer, stockman and crocodile hunter. The first Ramingining artist to have a solo show in 1983 - it was a sell-out - he has participated in numerous national and international exhibitions, including four more solo shows.

DAVID GULPILIL (The Storyteller)

David Gulpilil was born in 1953, in Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia. He grew up tribally near Kakadu National Park. In 1969 Nicholas Roeg cast David as the lead in *WALKABOUT* filmed on location in Northern Australia. Subsequent credits include *MAD DOG MORGAN* (Philippe Mora); *THE LAST WAVE* (Peter Weir); *STORM BOY* (Henri Safran); *THE RIGHT STUFF* (Philip Kaufman); *DARK AGE* (Arch Nicholson); *DEAD HEART* (Nick Parsons); *SERENADES* (Mojgan Khadem); and Wim Wender's *UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD*. Gulpilil also appeared in *CROCODILE DUNDEE*, choreographing the Aboriginal dance sequences, and starred in *RABBIT PROOF FENCE* (Phillip Noyce).

One of Australia's most accomplished exponents of traditional Aboriginal dance and the didgeridoo, he has toured widely with his troupe in Australia, the US, Great Britain, France and Japan. In 1987 he was awarded the Australia Medal, one of the highest awards to Australian citizens, for services to the Arts.

TEN CANOES is his second feature with Rolf de Heer. In 2002, Gulpilil received numerous acting awards for his role in *THE TRACKER*, notably winning Lead Actor at the AFI Awards, IF Awards and the Film Critics Circle Awards. He also won Best Actor at the Tudawali Awards.

The Crew

ROLF DE HEER (Writer/Director/Producer)

De Heer's first film, TAIL OF A TIGER (1984), attracted critical and commercial success and played at the Berlin Kinderfest. INCIDENT AT RAVEN'S GATE (1987) was a science fiction mystery thriller, followed by DINGO (1990) a musical odyssey starring jazz legend Miles Davis in his only film role.

BAD BOY BUBBY (1993), de Heer's first collaboration with producer Domenico Procacci, won the Grand Special Jury Prize and International Film Critics Prize at the 1993 Venice Film Festival, as well as four Australian Film Institute Awards. He spent the next two years working on EPSILON (1995), and THE QUIET ROOM. The story of a family breakdown as seen through the eyes of a child, THE QUIET ROOM was screened in Official Competition in the 1996 Cannes International Film Festival.

In 1997 de Heer directed DANCE ME TO MY SONG, selected for Official Competition at the 1998 Cannes Film Festival. In 1999, he spent three months in the jungles of French Guyana shooting THE OLD MAN WHO READ LOVE STORIES. De Heer's next film, THE TRACKER debuted to standing ovations at the 2002 Adelaide Festival of Arts and was in Official Competition at the 2002 Venice International Film Festival. The film won, among others, the Special Jury Prize at the 2002 Valladolid International Film Festival, Best Film at both the 2002 Circle of Film Critics Awards and the 2002 IF (people's) Awards.

ALEXANDRA'S PROJECT debuted in Official Competition at the Berlin International Film Festival in 2003 and went on to screen at numerous international festivals including Puchon, Edinburgh, Telluride, Toronto and Montreal. TEN CANOES is de Heer's eleventh feature.

PETER DJIGIRR (Co-director & Canoeist)

Djigirr is a key member of the Arafura Swamp people. He was born in 1963 in the country around Djilpin Gorge. He is known as the "crocodile man" and is regarded as the local expert on catching crocodiles and locating their eggs for harvest on the Swamp each year.

Djigirr's assistance as co-director was vital during the shoot. He was involved extensively in casting, locations and logistics, and was a key liaison between the Yolgnu community and balanda crew.

JULIE RYAN (Producer)

After briefly working as an assistant in a film publicity company, Julie Ryan entered the Australian film industry in 1996 when she worked as production secretary with Rolf de Heer on THE SOUND OF ONE HAND CLAPPING. She joined Vertigo Productions as production manager on de Heer's feature film DANCE ME TO MY SONG, which was selected for Cannes in 1998. She then produced the award winning SBS documentary, HEATHER ROSE GOES TO CANNES. In 1999, Ryan spent three months in the jungles of French Guyana co-producing her first feature film, THE OLD MAN WHO READ LOVE STORIES, starring Richard Dreyfuss and Hugo Weaving. Ryan's next feature with de Heer, THE TRACKER, was selected for the Venice International Film Festival in 2002. ALEXANDRA'S PROJECT, her third consecutive feature as producer with de Heer, was selected for official competition at the Berlin Film Festival.

IAN JONES, ACS (Director of Photography)

Ian Jones has worked extensively in Australia and internationally. In 2000, Jones worked as 2nd unit director / Director of Photography on RABBIT PROOF FENCE with director Phillip Noyce. Jones has also worked with Noyce on CLEAR AND PRESENT DANGER as well as operating on such notable feature films as THE RUSSIA HOUSE for Fred Schepisi, BORN ON THE FOURTH OF JULY for Oliver Stone and Baz Luhrman's STRICTLY BALLROOM. TEN CANOES is Jones's fifth feature film with Rolf de Heer having worked with him on both DINGO (1990) and BAD BOY BUBBY (1993) and THE TRACKER and ALEXANDRA'S PROJECT.

TANIA NEHME (Film Editor)

An editor since 1986, Tania Nehme edited numerous documentaries, commercials and short dramas before she cut her first feature, EPSILON, for Rolf de Heer in 1995. A graduate of the Australian Film Television & Radio School Nehme TEN CANOES is her seventh film with de Heer having cut DANCE ME TO MY SONG, THE QUIET ROOM, THE TRACKER, ALEXANDRA'S PROJECT and THE OLD MAN WHO READ LOVE STORIES.

JAMES CURRIE (Sound Designer)

James Currie has worked in the film industry for nearly three decades as location recordist, sound editor, mixer and sound designer. He has worked on seven films with Rolf de Heer including TEN CANOES, ALEXANDRA'S PROJECT, THE TRACKER, THE OLD MAN WHO READ LOVE STORIES, BAD BOY BUBBY, INCIDENT AT RAVENS GATE and DINGO. Sound designer on 26 productions, he has also worked extensively with filmmaker Paul Cox on films such as LUST AND REVENGE, FATHER DAMIEN, the recently released THE DIARIES OF VASLAV NIJINSKY and INNOCENCE,

TOM HEUZENROEDER (Sound Designer)

After gaining work experience on the set of Rolf de Heer's BAD BOY BUBBY, Tom Heuzenroeder has worked as a sound editor and composer since 1995, starting in radio, theatre and television. In the last six years, he has worked almost full time in the film industry, working again with Rolf de Heer, and Sound Designer James Currie, on THE OLD MAN WHO READ LOVE STORIES, THE TRACKER, and TEN CANOES. Tom was also the sound effects editor on Greg McLean's WOLF CREEK.

The Credits

Ridjimiraril	Crusoe Kurddal
Dayindi/Yeeralparil	Jamie Dayindi Gulpilil Dalraithngu
Birrinbirrin	Richard Birrinbirrin
Minygululu	Peter Minygululu
Nowalingu	Frances Djulibing
The Storyteller	David Gulpilil Ridjimiraril Dalraithngu
Banalandju	Sonia Djarrabalminym
Munandjarra	Cassandra Malangarri Baker
The Sorcerer	Philip Gudthaykudthay
Canoeist/The Victim/Warrior	Peter Djigirr
Canoeist/The Stranger	Michael Dawu
Canoeist/Uncle	Bobby Bununggurr

Incidental Music Performed by
Steven Wilinydjanu Maliburr
Rupert Gaykamangu
Kelvin Dangawarra Gaykamangu
Roy Gaykamangu

Traditional Music Performed by
Richard Birrinbirrin
Peter Minygululu
Billy Black
John Nudumul
Mark Muruwirri

Production Co-ordinator	Kate Croser
Unit Nurse/Continuity	Airlie Thomas
Post Technical Supervisor	Jon Armstrong
Sound Mixer	Rory McGregor
Translators	Brian Yambal Gladys Womati
Additional Translators	Anthea Nicholls Daphne Bunyawarra Dick Yambal Durrurunga
Sound Mixing Facility	South Australian Film Corporation
Legals	Bryce Menzies, Marshalls & Dent
SBS Commissioning Editor	Miranda Dear
Distributor, Italy	Fandango, srl
Publicist	Cathy Gallagher
Stills Photographer & Video	James (Jackson) Geurts
Unit & Video	Charlie Hill-Smith
Grip	Rick Belfield
Gaffer	Tobias Andersson
Boom	Mike Bakaloff
Focus Puller	Ricky Schamburg
Camera & Steadicam Operator	Greg (Mango) Gilbert
Production Accountant/ Location Sound Assistant	Mark Kraus
1st Assistant Director	Karen Mahood
Art Director, Hair, Makeup	Beverley Freeman
Sound Design	James Currie Tom Heuzenroeder
Film Editor	Tania Nehme
Director of Photography	Ian Jones, ACS
Associate Producers	Richard Birrinbirrin Belinda Scott Nils Erik Nielsen
Executive Producers	Sue Murray

Produced by Domenico Procacci
Bryce Menzies
Rolf de Heer
Julie Ryan
Written by Rolf de Heer in consultation with
the people of Ramingining
Co-directed by Peter Djigirr
Directed by Rolf de Heer

Inspired by the photographs of Dr Donald Thomson

Filmed entirely on location in Arnhem Land, Australia

Distributed in Australia & New Zealand by
Palace Films

International Sales
Wild Bunch

Supported by
Bula 'bula) Northern Territory

Developed with the assistance of the
Australian Film Commission
An Australian Government Agency

Produced with the assistance of
The South Australian Film Corporation
Adelaide Film Festival
SBS Independent

Principal Investor
Film Finance Corporation of Australia

All characters, events, people and places depicted in this cinematographic film are fictitious
and imaginary and any relation to any person living or dead is purely co-incidental.

© 2006 Film Finance Corporation Australia Limited, South Australian Film Corporation,
Adelaide Film Festival, Fandango Australia Pty Ltd,
Special Broadcasting Service Corporation