

## SHORT CUTS PAUL KALINA



### Stars rally for hidden gems

"TWICE in my life I have understood what genius is: the first time was looking at the definition in the dictionary; the second was meeting Pierre Etaix." So said the great American comic Jerry Lewis of the largely unknown French filmmaker, illustrator and performer Pierre Etaix. Before becoming a filmmaker, Etaix worked with Jacques Tati, storyboarding gags for Tati's masterpiece *Mon Oncle*. (A book of Etaix's distinctive drawings was published late last year by ACR Editions, Paris.) Between 1962 and 1970, Etaix directed five features, which he co-wrote with one of France's most acclaimed scriptwriters, Jean-Claude Carrière, and the pair garnered an Oscar for their collaborative short film *Heureux anniversaire* in 1963. But for the past decade and more, the five features by Etaix and Carrière, which include the much-acclaimed *The Suitor*, *Yoyo* and *Land of Milk and Honey*, have been unavailable because of a rights dispute, which Etaix's supporters claim to be worthy of a Marx Brothers' comedy. Film festivals the world over, as well as commercial distributors, including one in Australia, are clamouring to resurrect Etaix's neglected career. An army of film-world notables, including Woody Allen, Michel Gondry, Leslie Caron and Eugène Chaplin, are among the 2000-plus signatories to an online petition for the reissue of Etaix's films. The website, [lesfilmsdetaix.fr](http://lesfilmsdetaix.fr), also contains a short film of Etaix and Carrière, now aged 79 and 76 respectively, demonstrating the plight of their films and praying to Saint Antoine de Padoue, the patron saint of lost causes. The Pierre Etaix campaign has a local connection — actor and author Frank Bren is writing a book on him.

### Bradbury bites back

DAVID Bradbury has been awarded the 2008 Film Australia Stanley Hawes Award for outstanding contribution to Australian documentary. But the accolade and \$5000 prize did not stop the dissident filmmaker's attacks on the establishment at the Australian International Documentary Conference, where the award was announced yesterday. He likened the "quasi-fascist rule of John Howard" to a virus that infected broadcasters reliant on Canberra for their funding and survival, and criticised the ABC and SBS for programming "dross and lifestyle-oriented documentaries" that were not in the national interest. "Too often in the last decade the public broadcasters have applied the commercial imperative 'will it rate its socks off?', rather than 'does this documentary have genuine merit and is it worth funding because it tackles the hard issues that the audience needs to hear about?'"

### Festival call for comedy clips

IT'S "open mike" time for filmmakers. The Melbourne Comedy Festival is relaxing entry criteria and calling for "short films, animations, PowerPoint presentations, YouTube clips, filmed stand-up, whatever". Amateurish productions and ill-conceived ambition are encouraged. Twenty finalists will have their work screened at Federation Square and qualify for a prize. Entry forms are available at [comedyfestival.com.au](http://comedyfestival.com.au). The festival runs from March 19 to April 13.

### Thought-provoking docos

THOUGHTFUL, rather than conspicuous, consumption is the theme of the Feast on Film program, which takes place as part of the Taste of Slow Festival from Monday until March 5 at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image. The conscience-raising program includes Hubert Sauper's Oscar-nominated *Darwin's Nightmare*, *Strawberry Fields*, about the struggles of strawberry farmers in the Gaza Strip, and an expose of the multibillion-dollar coffee trade, *Black Gold*. Visit [atasteofslow.com.au](http://atasteofslow.com.au) for screening details.

[pkalina@theage.com.au](mailto:pkalina@theage.com.au)

*THE AGE - 21 février 2008*  
*Australie*

THE  AGE  
Newspaper of the Year

## Stars Rally for hidden gems

« TWICE in my life I have understood what genius is: The first time was looking at the definition in the dictionary; the second was meeting Pierre Etaix" So said the great American comic Jerry Lewis of the largely unknown French filmmaker, illustrator and performer Pierre Etaix. Before becoming a filmmaker, Etaix worked with Jacques Tati, storyboarding gags for Tati's masterpiece *Mon Oncle*. (A book of Etaix's distinctive drawings was published late last year by ACR Editions, Paris.)

Between 1962 and 1970, Etaix directed five features, which he co-wrote with one of France's most acclaimed scriptwriters, Jean-Claude Carrière, and the pair garnered an Oscar for their collaborative short film *Heureux anniversaire* in 1963.

But for the past decade and more, the five features by Etaix and Carrière, which include the much-acclaimed *The Suitor*, *Yoyo* and *Land of Milk and Honey*, have been unavailable because of a rights dispute, which Etaix's supporters claim to be worthy of a Marx Brothers' comedy.

Film festivals the world over, as commercial distributor, including one in Australia, are clamouring to resurrect Etaix's neglected career.

An army of film-world notables, including Woody Allen, Michel Gondry, Leslie Caron and Eugène Chaplin, are among the 2000-plus signatories to an online petition for the reissue of Etaix films.

The website, [lesfilmsdetaix.fr](http://lesfilmsdetaix.fr), also contains a short film of Etaix and Carrière, now aged 79 and 76 respectively, demonstrating the plight of their films and praying to Saint Antoine de Padoue, the patron saint of lost causes.

The Pierre Etaix campaign has a local connection - actor and author Frank Bren is writing a book on him.

Paul Kalina