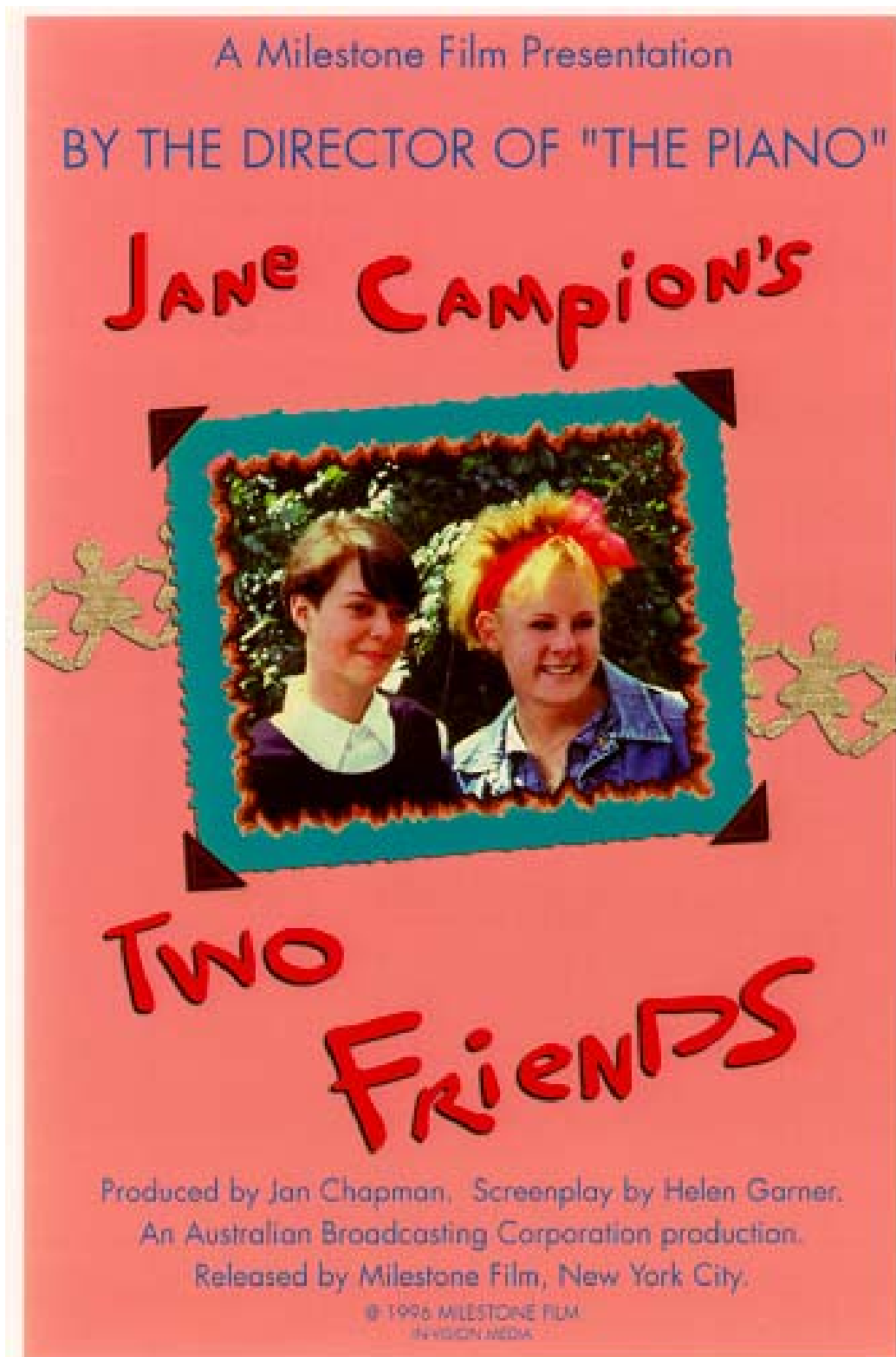


The first feature film by the acclaimed director of "The Piano" and "An Angel at My Table"



Milestone Film • PO Box 128 • Harrington Park, NJ 07640
Email: milefilms@aol.com • www.milestonefilms.com

Production Credits

Executive Producer.....Jan Chapman
Director.....Jane Campion
Screenplay.....Helen Garner
Cameraman/Director of Photography.....Julian Penney, A.C.S.
Production Manager.....Carol Chirlian
First Assistant Director.....Kate Woods
Second Assistant Director.....Garry Stephens
Music Director.....Martin Armiger
Sound Editor.....Des Horne
Unit Manager.....Beverley Powers
Continuity.....Rhonda McAvoy
Production Secretary.....Susan Wells
Designer.....Janet Patterson
Assistant Designer.....Catherine Silm
Props Buyer.....Adrian Cannon
Wardrobe.....Wendy Chuck
Makeup.....Sandie Bushell
Stand By Props.....Ian Haywood, Claude Fortuna & Justin Sears
Special Effects.....Laurie Faen
Focus Puller.....Brett Joyce
Clapper/Loader.....Jed Quinn
Sound Recordist.....Chris Alderton
Boom.....Geoff Krix
Electricians.....Martin Perrott and Pierre Drion
Grips.....Alan Trevena
Editor.....Bill Russo
Assistant Editor.....Philippa Byers
Publicity.....Georgie Brown
Still Photography.....Martin Webby
Camera Assistant.....Gerard Quinn
Sound Assistant.....Geoff Krix
Extra Sound Effects.....Tony Vaccher
Assistant Sound Editor.....Sasa Vitacek
Dubbing Mixer.....Stephen Hope
Negative Matching.....Brian Jamieson
Film Grading.....Arthur Cambridge
Colorist.....Caro
Graphics.....Lynn Barrett
Casting Consultant.....Jennifer Allen
Casting Assistant.....Irene Gaskell
Piano.....Dennis Hennig
Student Pianist.....Maki Toda
French Horn.....Susan Clarke

Madrigal Group from Kambala Church of England Girl's School
Gone With the Wind theme courtesy of Warner Brothers Inc.

An Australian Broadcasting Corporation production.
© 1986 Australian Broadcasting Corporation

The Cast

Louise	Emma Coles
Kelly.....	Kris Bidenko
Janet.....	Kris McQuade
Jim.....	Stephen Leeder
Chris.....	Debra May
Malcolm.....	Peter Hehir
Charlie.....	Tony Barry
Alison.....	Kerry Dwyer
Chemist.....	Arthur Faynes
Cleaner Girl.....	Kim Antonios
Cleaner Woman.....	Denise Roberts
Con.....	Jim Madias
Dead Girl's Father.....	John Sheerin
Dinner Party Guest.....	Jim Waites
Italian Janitor.....	Mario Monti
Jason.....	Peter Griffiths
Jason's Father.....	Ken Porter
Kate.....	Amanda Frederickson
Kevin.....	Steve Bisley
Kissing Couple.....	Georgia Anderson and Murat Bayari
Little Helen.....	Lisa Rogers
Matthew.....	Sean Travers
Mother.....	Carolyn Devlin
Mother.....	Elizabeth Gentle
Panky.....	Peter Bowden
Phillip.....	Martin Armiger
Renato.....	Giovanni Marangoni
Renato's Friend.....	Steven Walton
Sam.....	Benny Ulizzi
School Principal.....	Lynne Murphy
Shop Assistant.....	Lorna King
Sick Girl.....	Kirsty Gowans
Soula.....	Emily Stocker
Teacher.....	Neil Campbell
Teacher.....	Sher Guhl
Wally.....	Rory Delaney
Woman Friend.....	Jane Ahlquist

1986. Australia. 76 minutes. 16mm. Aspect ratio: 1:1.66. Eastmancolor.
Premiered: 1986 in *Un Certain Regard* at the Cannes Film Festival.

Winner of the Australia Film Institute's Awards
for Best Television Movie, Director and Screenplay.

Restored by ABC, Bill Russo, Cinema Arts, Zounds and Milestone Film & Video.

World Theatrical Premiere: April 24, 1996 at Film Forum, New York City

“It’s based to a certain extent on a friendship I had when I was at school. I was very innocent and naive and I thought she was too. Years later I met someone from the same suburb, and I asked him if he had known X. He said, yes, we all knew her ... she used to turn it on for the boys behind the boatshed. I had no idea that was going on, even though we were very close; she had a secret sex life I knew nothing about.

I knew the story I wanted and I knew the girls; one a little more ratty, more prey to her hormones than the other. I wanted to do something about girls and their passionate friendships in early adolescence, which the pressures of life break up.

I wanted to do something about clever girls, whose cleverness is betrayed by their own emotional and hormonal turmoil; when I was a teacher I saw it all the time, suddenly they would go scatty and their brains would fly into a million pieces.

I was amazed at how quickly I wrote it. It only took me a couple of weeks ... I laughed and I cried, it was very emotional ... It’s very different from writing a novel, where everything has to be polished and buffed and perfect. With this I’m just the first link in the chain. I just hand it over to someone else.

I was surprised at how Jane could take an idea of mine and take a different slant on it, and yet understand exactly what I was on about. She’d find a richness I didn’t know was there ... I love the way she has done it, there are a lot of laughs but ultimately it’s full of pain.”

— Helen Garner, Sydney Morning Herald, April 24, 1986

“The script of *Two Friends* was tender, true and fresh. I liked it a lot. I didn’t want to muck it up ...

Basically it was a matter of achieving a tone and being true to the material. To do this I made a few radical choices. The material in the script was so good, that I didn’t have to prop it up, just let it speak. So I decided to make the film a series of wide shots and very long takes, with the camera in a fixed position. There are no connected close-ups and very simple editing — just scenes connected together ... We’re not trying to say ‘here’s an important moment’ and then go for a close-up. The audience can choose what to focus on ...

Because of the unusual nature of the script, I didn’t want to use classic framing. I tried to set up a situation where different things became important ...

I think my art background has given me more confidence in trusting myself and taking risks. Things aren’t as set as people make out in film. A lot of people compromise their vision for the box office. I’m not prepared to do that. You have to remain firm about what you think is a good idea, and make it work. In this case we could have found ourselves pressured to do things, but we ignored the negative, and finally had no restrictions on doing what we wanted.”

— Jane Campion, from the original Australian press kit

Introduction

In writing *Two Friends*, Helen Garner employed a challenging structure — the screenplay begins in the present and then moves *backward* in time. Like Harold Pinter's *Betrayal* (a film Garner admired), as the film reveals more and more about the situation and characters, the characters *themselves* know less and less. The film opens in the midst of a long-evolved story. At the wake of a teenage girl (at first it is not clear who died), a divorced couple discusses their own daughter Louise and her friend Kelly — the two friends of the title. The girls seem like night and day — Kelly is a bleached blonde punk living at the beach and Louise is a straitlaced and studious private school girl. It seems unlikely that these two were ever close. The film then proceeds backward in time, revealing the everyday tragedies and teenage angst that separated these best friends. With each jump back in time, the girls become more and more similar in nature and looks. By the end of the film the two sport identical haircuts and school outfits and look like sisters as they toast their happy future together. The cumulative effect of this unraveling of time is heartbreaking and powerful — the innocence of the giddy young girls at the film's finale is underscored by the sadness and loss that await them. Jane Campion and Helen Garner constructed *Two Friends* out of the keenly observed minutia of daily life, and the film's emotional impact grows with each viewing. Garner says about the film, *"I really like the sense of it developing; you know what happens right from the start, bits slot into place behind you, you work backwards in an emotional way and the pattern is finally fitted together for you ... I can't bear having things explained. People don't trust audiences to understand anything."*

Synopsis

July 1985

Two Friends opens in winter as Louise's divorced parents, Janet and Jim, are attending the wake of a teenage girl who has overdosed on drugs. Jim worries about their own daughter, but Janet reassures him that Louise is *"all right."* Jim asks if Louise's friend Kelly, *"the sexy one,"* is also okay. Janet replies that she doesn't know, she doesn't think so.

Kelly, 16, is walking on the beach with her boyfriend. Both are dressed in punky clothes and look tired and vacant.

Louise, 15, dressed in a private school uniform, returns home from school to find Matthew waiting for her with the news that he recently ran into Kelly at a club. Louise is not overjoyed to see him, but asks a lot of questions about her former friend. He tells her she's living with an older guy — Panky, around 20 — and has been squatting. Later, Louise tells her mother Janet that Kelly is a bitch for not coming to her birthday party and for never calling anymore. *"She's hardly a person anymore,"* she says.

At a local pharmacy, Kelly buys a cheap vase and has it gift wrapped for her mother Chris. She takes it to her family's home, where all are celebrating Chris's birthday. As soon as she arrives, her stepfather Malcolm berates Kelly for the way she's dressed, telling her that she looks like a smack freak. When her mother won't intercede on her behalf, Kelly drops the gift on the floor and leaves.

Janet tells her friend Alison that Kelly's parents shouldn't just let her go — that Kelly needs taking care of. Maybe, she says, she should have taken her in herself. Alison replies that Kelly would have just driven her crazy. Janet replies, *"but somebody ought to have done something."*

Kelly sends Louise a letter, which she seals with a kiss. Louise reads it sitting at the piano. Kelly apologizes for being out of touch and tells about being *"starving and totally broke"* for the past few months — she is surviving on the dole and the money her father sends. Kelly writes that she hasn't seen her family but is going over tonight for her mum's birthday and hopes she'll get a cooked meal. She sends her love and asks Louise to come visit her at the address on the envelope. In a PS, she apologizes for

missing Louise's birthday — "something came up." As Kelly's voice-over reads the letter, Louise furiously practices her piano lessons. When she finishes playing, Louise rests her head against the music stand, visibly shaken.

Five Months Earlier — February 1985

Louise and Matthew meet on the bus and shyly become friends. He walks her home from school and carries her French horn. One day as they get off the bus together, they meet Kelly (whose hair and dress are much less extreme than in the previous section). Louise complains that Kelly's stepfather kept Kelly from going to City Girls' High. Kelly says that she may be leaving school soon anyway. At Louise's house the three look through old photo albums and Kelly makes fun of Louise's orthodontic plate. After Matthew leaves, Louise asks why Kelly mentioned her plate "in public" like that. Kelly makes a joke of it and suggests they have some vodka. But Louise says she has to do her homework.

That night, Kelly has a fight with her stepfather and threatens to leave and go live with her real father. "Don't be stupid," he replies, "he doesn't want you loafing around his flat." She stays up late, numbly watching television.

The phone rings during a dinner party Janet is having for a few friends. Kelly is calling from her father's apartment. Janet invites her to come over and wait for Louise, who is over at Matthew's, but Kelly says she's okay. After her father goes out unexpectedly on a date, Kelly is left alone with Kevin, his middle-aged friend, and the two play a board game. Later that night Kelly awakens and wanders through the apartment. Kevin invites her into his room. She gets into his bed, but bolts when his attentions become too passionate. Grabbing her things, she leaves the apartment and walks hurriedly through the deserted streets. She winds up on Janet and Louise's doorstep and spends the night.

A few days later Louise looks out her second-story window to see Kelly and Matthew pass by together.

One Month Earlier — January 1985

Janet and Louise are shopping for Louise's new City Girls' uniform — which is expensive and definitely not fashionable — so both are in bad moods. They run into Kelly who makes fun of Louise's new clunky shoes. A few days later the girls go to the baths (swimming pool) together. Kelly goes off to flirt with Renato and his friends while Louise swims and reads. That evening Kelly borrows the phone at Louise's house and a few minutes later Sam, a young man around 20, comes to the door. As he and Kelly settle in on the couch, Louise beats a hasty retreat out the back door. Janet joins her and both mother and daughter are furious. Kelly comes out, apologizes and leaves with Sam. Janet cleans up the glasses of whisky the couple has left behind. That night, Janet yells at Louise while trying to shorten the hem of her uniform. Louise bursts into tears and asks "Why are you being so mean to me? *I* haven't done anything wrong." They hug.

One Month Earlier — December 1984

It is an orientation reception at City Girls' High for incoming students and parents. Jim and Janet are there with Louise, and Kelly is with Chris and Malcolm. After a stuffy welcoming speech by the principal, a small madrigal group sings. Kelly and Louise are obviously enthralled. That evening Malcolm tells his wife and Kelly that he hated the principal's way of talking down to the audience and found the whole place elitist and archaic. When Kelly protests that she "really, really" wants to attend, he says that he will think about it.

Kelly and Louise convince Janet to let them throw a party for the end of term. They decorate the living room in tinsel and streamers. As the guests begin to arrive, Janet goes out for a walk with Alison. When she gets back, she finds Kelly making out with Renato on the couch and all the other girls upset because the boys have stolen cheap champagne from the refrigerator. Janet's return has routed the boys and the party continues with the girls dressing up and dancing.

A few days later the girls burst in on Janet as she is cleaning the bathroom. Both are in tears because Malcolm won't let Kelly go to City Girls'. When Louise begs her mother to speak to him, Janet says she can't — he'll only resent her butting in. On Christmas day, Kelly drops in on Janet, Jim and Louise while her family waits in the car outside. As they exchange gifts, Kelly tells them that Malcolm won't change his mind.

Two Months Earlier — October 1984

Rows of girls are bent over their desks, working furiously on their entrance exams in a classroom at City Girls' High. Outside afterward, Kelly and Louise compare notes — both finished the test. Louise says that she wrote her essay, "The Most Unusual Person I Have Ever Met" about Kelly. A few nights later the girls watch *Gone With the Wind* on TV and sob through the end credits.

Janet and Louise are going for a walk. They discuss teenage rebellion and the conversation turns to Kelly. When Janet suggests that Kelly is more interested in boys and sex, Louise tells her that Kelly is on the pill.

At school, Kelly and Louise collaborate on a letter to the editor. It begins "We are two young girls who do not wish to die. Our lives are before us. We want to study, to learn about the world. But every time we open a newspaper we read about the arms race ..." In class a few days later, Kelly writes Louise a long note in which she worries about the results of the City Girls' entrance exam — "If I don't get in I will kill myself I swear ... I just could not *bear* another four years in this hell hole without you." She also writes about boys, vacation, living with her father and what color to paint her room.

A few days later, Kelly's front door bursts open as the two girls and Janet barge in, jubilant and holding a bottle of champagne. Kelly calls out "We passed! We passed! We passed!" Chris warns them that Malcolm is asleep but he joins them, clearly just awakened. He offers congratulations and they pour champagne. The girls deliriously babble that they were the only two in their class who passed the exam. They raise their glasses, and Kelly asks "What'll we drink to?" Chris cries out the toast, "To the girls! To our clever girls." Louise and Kelly hug. Kelly throws her head back and whoops with joy.

A Glossary of Australian Slang in Two Friends

<i>baths</i>	swimming pool.
<i>bludge</i>	scrounge, to impose on others, evade responsibilities.
<i>Bondi (place)</i>	magnificent, if polluted, Sydney surf beach and adjacent suburb with plentiful rental accommodation. Popular with the young and disaffected.
<i>busk</i>	play music in a public place for tips.
<i>Canley (place)</i>	working class suburb in the far west of Sydney.
<i>daggy/dag</i>	derived from the sheep's dirty bottom, but often used quite fondly. 1) A funny character, anyone who does not fit the regular mold. 2) Untidy, slovenly. 3) Neat and tidy person who lacks style or panache.
<i>dole</i>	public assistance.
<i>foul</i>	disgusting, awful.
<i>leso</i>	lesbian.
<i>moll</i>	tart, like bikie or gangster's moll. Disreputable or ugly woman or girl.
<i>plasticine</i>	colored modeling clay.
<i>Poleconomy</i>	a board game.
<i>poof</i>	gay man or boy.
<i>cerepax</i>	prescription medicine like valium for nerve sedation and sleeping.
<i>"the shits"</i>	on the outs, annoyed, put out, exasperated.

slack.....lazy, careless, slow or sluggish.
spewed.....vomited.
spunk.....hunk.
tucker.....food, meal.
uni.....university.
vegemite.....mysteriously popular yeast and vegetable extract for spreading on toast,
 etc. Baby boomers identify very strongly with a childhood radio/TV jingle
 which labeled them “good little vegemites.”
wog.....a Greek or Italian immigrant.

Cast

Emma Coles (Louise). The role of Louise was Emma Coles’s first foray into film. A pupil at Forest High School near Sydney, she auditioned for the film after the Australian Broadcasting Corporation’s casting department approached her drama teacher to find interested teenagers. Emma sacrificed her long blond hair for a short dark contemporary style for the role — a radical move for a pretty fourteen year old.

Kris Bidenko (Kelly). Fifteen-year-old Kris Bidenko was cast at the suggestion of Jane Campion after the two had worked together on a 30-minute film for the Women’s Film Unit entitled *After Hours*. Kris had been selected from the Australian Theater for Young Pupil, where she studied drama. After graduating from school, she has continued working as an actress in theater and film.

Kris McQuade (Janet). Kris McQuade has performed in many facets of the entertainment industry including rock opera, touring music/theater/circus, soprano recitals as a singer-dancer, stage, television and feature films. Her theatrical credits include “The Lower Depths” for which she won the National Critics Best Actress Award in 1977. She also has appeared in many Australian television dramas including the controversial *Scales of Justice* and the outstanding *Palace of Dreams*. She has also appeared in many Australian films including *Strictly Ballroom* (1992), Dusan Makavejev’s *The Coca Cola Kid* (1984), *Love Letters from Teralba Road* (1977) with Bryan Brown and *Fighting Back* (1982) for which she won an Australian Film Institute’s Best Supporting Actress Award. Her most recent role is *Billy’s Holiday* in 1995.

Stephen Leeder (Jim). Stephen Leeder has appeared in many television and film productions including *Resistance* (1994) and *Fatal Bond* (1991).

Peter Hehir (Malcolm). Peter Hehir has starred in such films as *Return to the Blue Lagoon* (1991), *Rikky and Pete* (1988), *Kangaroo* (1986), and *Heatwave* (1983).

Tony Barry (Kelly’s father Charlie). Tony Barry has been a lead actor in such films as *Possession* (1995), *Never Say Die* (1988), *Shame* (1987), *The Coca Cola Kid* (1984), *We of the Never Never* (1982), *Goodby Pork Pie* (1981) and *Hard Knocks* (1980).

Jan Chapman (Producer)

After completing a Bachelor of Arts in Fine Arts and English Literature at Sydney University (and a brief stint as an English and history teacher), Jan Chapman began her film career as a director of short independent films. She joined the Australian Broadcasting Corporation as a director on the series *Learned Friends*. In 1982 she went on to produce a twenty part television series entitled *Sweet and Sour*. It was a landmark production in Australian television which went on to win many awards and a platinum record for the soundtrack. It established Chapman’s reputation as an innovative producer and sparked her interest in the collaborative process between director, producer and writer. Her other work for ABC at

that time included *Displaced Persons*, the acclaimed mini-series *Come in Spinner*, *Lizard King*, *Hunger*, and *Dancing Daze*. With *Two Friends*, Chapman began her professional relationship with Jane Campion. In 1989, Jan Chapman formed her own production company. The company's first feature project was Gillian Armstrong's *The Last Days of Chez Nous* (1992), which reunited Chapman with scriptwriter Helen Garner. In 1992 she reunited with Jane Campion for *The Piano*. Since then, Chapman has produced a series of six one hour dramas, *Naked: Stories of Men* for ABC, which will air in 1996. She is currently working on *Love Serenade*, with first-time director Shirley Barrett. This feature is currently in post production in Sydney and due for release in mid-1996.

Jan Chapman on Two Friends

"The story was about the breakdown of friendship between adolescent girls and seemed to me to be representative of friendship generally. I know Helen is very interested in that. She deals with very specific details of domestic life and seems to give them much greater significance. I thought Jane would be the perfect director for Two Friends because her films have also shown an interest in that kind of detail."

"I saw Jane's short films and like them a lot ... Jane has one of the clearest visions of what she wants to do of anyone I've met. I told her she could do it only if she really loved it — the next day she was back in the office having read the script saying she had to do the film."

— Jan Chapman, 1986

Jane Campion (Director)

Jane Campion was born in New Zealand in 1954, and grew up in Waikanae, a picturesque seaside town north of Wellington. Her parents are opera and theater director Richard Campion and actress and writer Edith Campion. Jane Campion earned a Bachelor of Arts in structural anthropology at Victoria University in Wellington and a Diploma of Fine Arts, begun at the Chelsea School of Arts, London and completed at the Sydney College of the Arts. It was during this time that she began making short films. Her first, *Tissues*, was a black comedy about a father charged with child molestation. On the basis of this film, she was accepted to the Australian Film and Television School where she graduated in 1984 with a Diploma in Direction. There Campion directed her short films *Peel*, *Mishaps of Seduction and Conquest* (video), *Passionless Moments*, and *A Girl's Own Story*. In 1984, Campion was chosen to write and direct the 30 minute drama *After Hours* for the Women's Film Unit. In 1985, she received funds from the Australian Film Commission to make *The Piano*. Instead, she decided to accept an offer from Australian Broadcasting Corporation and one of its producers, Jan Chapman, to direct *Two Friends*. It was a major break in her career. The experience of directing a feature and the film's international critical acclaim not only gave Campion confidence to speak with her own cinematic voice, it also started her long partnership with Chapman.

In 1986, Jane Campion had a meteoric rise to success as her three short films and *Two Friends* all were accepted for the Cannes Film Festival. The films received rave reviews, with *Peel* winning the *Palme d'Or* for best short. With her following films *Sweetie* (1988) and *An Angel at My Table* (1990, originally a three-part miniseries for television), she became one of the most acclaimed new directors in world cinema. *The Piano* (1993) fulfilled this promise as she became the first woman to win the *Palme d'Or* for Best Film at Cannes and only the second woman director ever nominated for an Academy Award. In all, *The Piano* was nominated for six Oscars — winning three — including Campion's own for Best Screenplay. Campion is currently working on *Portrait of a Lady* (based on the Henry James novel), which is being produced by Propaganda Films (Monty Montgomery, producer), and set for November 1996 release by Gramercy Pictures. She has also recently signed with Miramax to direct *P.J. Waters*, which she will write with her sister Anna Campion. According to reports, the film is about a woman who joins a religious cult and develops an unlikely relationship with a man hired to retrieve her.

Jane Campion on *Two Friends*

“I want to make films that are adventures for myself as much as they are for the audiences. I don’t want to make films that are safe.”

— *Canberra Times*, 1986

“I’m not committed to niceness. I’m committed to seeing what’s there. As a very young filmmaker I was particularly committed to what was nasty, what isn’t spoken about in life. Now it’s a bit more balanced ... As well as being about that period of adolescence when emotions are just coming through, it’s also about the confusion of children of parents of the permissive generation.”

— *The National Times*, Australia, 1986

Helen Garner (Scriptwriter)

Helen Garner was born in 1942 in Geelong, Australia and was educated at Melbourne University. A former high school teacher, she has become one of Australia’s most respected authors, as well as essayist, screenwriter, film critic, and journalist. Garner’s first novel, *Monkey Grip* (Penguin Books in the US) was published in 1977 and became an award-winning film by Pat Lovell which was shown at the Museum of Modern Art as part of their Australian series. In 1980, she wrote *Honor and Other People’s Children* and four years later, *The Children’s Bach*. Her more recent works include a collection of short stories, *Postcards from Surfers* (1985), the novel *Cosmo Cosmolino* (1992) and the short story “A Scrapbook, An Album” which appeared in the anthology, *Sisters*. Her latest and most controversial book is *The First Stone: Some Questions about Sex and Power* (1995), which is her first work of non-fiction and concerns a college professor who had been accused of sexual harassment by two of his students. Garner also wrote the screenplay for Gillian Armstrong’s *The Last Days of Chez Nous* (1993). The script for that film and *Two Friends* were published together in Australia in 1992 by McPhee Gribble (Penguin Books). Her work is noted for being fiercely honest, often funny and always surprising. She currently lives in Sydney. She also has appeared in one film, *Pure S* in 1976.

Helen Garner on *Two Friends*

“I wrote Two Friends before I’d seen Jane Campion’s work, but when I did see her short films, and when she read the screenplay of Two Friends, we knew immediately that we would be able to work together.”

“In Australia, where inflated myth-making and large gestures are the prevailing mode in film, it takes a bit of nerve to keep working back towards the plain, the daily, the simple, the small mysteries of ordinary life. I took one look at Peel and fell in love with Jane’s imagination.”

“Her short films have a very exhilarating and unsettling effect on me. The camera seems always to be in an unexpected place. I feel she is gently urging me to look at the world I know in a fresh way, from an angle slightly at odds with the usual one, tilted and tinged by her own idiosyncratic touch. The effect of this is both hilarious and moving.”

“Her work looks simple but it is dense. Her approach is oblique and subtle. The tone of her work manages to be both intimate and discreet. She knows how to use inanimate objects — a shoe, a chair, a curtain — to suggest a whole range of emotion which she refuses to spell out in dialogue. She expects the viewer to do some work, and she makes that work a pleasure.”

— Helen Garner, 1986

Helen Garner's Introduction to the Published Screenplays of The Last Days of Chez Nous and Two Friends

You can write a whole novel with your left arm curved round the page. You can get to the end of the last draft without having shown it to a single person or made one compromise. Even if you have to battle with an editor, the book reaches the reader pretty much as you intended it. All its mistakes and failures are yours, totally and forever, and so are its little glories. When the chips are down, you are the book, and the book is you.

Why would a novelist turn her back on this marvelous freedom, this privacy and independence, and sneak into the bunfight of screenwriting?

I did it for the money. That was my first reason, anyway. At a friend's wedding I met a producer I liked who asked me to contact her if I ever felt like writing a movie. Naïvely, and being broke at the time, I rushed home and rummaged in my folder of unexamined ideas. Out of it stepped Kelly and Louise, the young girls who became Two Friends.

But within a week I realized that though the money is a spur, it's also only a mirage, once you've sat down at the desk. I found that film writing is powered by the same drives as fiction. You do it out of curiosity, and technical fascination, and the same old need to shape life's mess into a seizable story.

I've seen a lot of movies, but I hadn't a clue how to write a screenplay. The formal stages of its development – outline, treatment, drafts – were utterly foreign to me. When I write a novel or a story, I never plan. I circle round the dark area of life (mine, or someone else's) to which my curiosity is attracted, and I search for a way in. My method of work is a kind of blind scrub-bashing, a blundering through a trackless forest.

But now I found I was required to sit up brightly in a watchtower and tap out a preliminary map of the territory. I had to turn my old, organic, secretive, privileged, hyper-sensitive work process inside out.

This was the hardest part of the change, for me. I'm usually used to working alone. It suits my nature. I can't stand it if anyone (no matter how dear) comes into the room behind me while I'm working. I have to cover the pathetic, scrambled mess on the page. I like to get the thing as perfect as I can make it, before I hand it over.

With movies, this won't wash. I had to learn to walk into someone else's room, whack down my idea like a lump of raw meat, and watch it quiver while it was rolled and prodded on the table.

This might easily have been as gruesome as it sounds; but in fact my brief experience of filmwriting has been an intense pleasure, because of the caliber of the people who introduced me to it: Jan Chapman, who produced both these films, and the directors Jane Campion (Two Friends) and Gillian Armstrong (The Last Days of Chez Nous). Long script sessions with these three classy, generous and challenging professionals taught me to drop my defensiveness and become more flexible at an earlier stage, before my thoughts could set themselves in concrete. They showed me the priceless art of the apparently dumb question, and the calm brazenness that is required in order to ask it ... I learnt (from Jane Campion in particular) to follow and trust intuition, no matter how alarmingly it swerves. And most valuably of all, because it applies to everything written in any genre, all three of them forced me to learn and relearn the stern law of structure ...

Special effects a novelist might pull off on the page by bluff or flashy language simply will not transpose to film. Everything has to be re-invented through the eyes. It was very squashing to have to leave my precious prose at the door and be pushed back again and again to the bare bones of structure and dialogue. There is nothing else, it seemed at times. So hard, to be so stripped!

But there's a payoff: how shockingly easy it is just to write 'Night, a desert motel', or 'She takes her father's arm', and to leave the rest, the complex labor of providing the detail that will fill the bare places and acts with meaning, to the director's incredibly numerous and expensive army of actors and technicians! The ease of it seemed criminal; I felt almost guilty.

Does anyone understand the alchemy of many imaginations that distills a film? An actor's mistaken emphasis can throw a whole carefully crafted piece of psychology out of whack. The wrong brand of teacup on a table can skew a family's fantasy of itself. But by the same token, the tiny upward movement of one facial muscle, spontaneous, unconscious, impossible to write, can transform the emotional mood of an entire sequence. A director can take hold of your stick of an idea and make it blossom into a poetry your plodding typewriter could never have dreamt of.

... These are only a few of the lessons I have learnt. I don't know yet whether I will have another chance at applying them to a film. I think I will always prefer to write fiction. Collaboration, if you're used to the long spells of obsessive loneliness that fiction demands, is weirdly over-exciting. You go home each day suspecting that you have made a complete fool of yourself. It feels illicit. All that laughter! Can this really be work? People hanging around whose job is to bring you a cup of tea! A sandwich on a plate! And to clear away the crockery afterwards while you go on talking! You are afraid of being swallowed up by the seductive machinery of it, the intricate balancing of forces that you barely understand.

And as for the money – the appalling sums it costs, to make your ideas visible – I will never get used to this. Thinking about it nearly makes me keel over. Yes, at the beginning I really thought I was doing it for the money. But now I know that if I do it again, it will be for the slightly crazed pleasure of collaboration, and for the subtle little quiver of possibility that the enterprise gives off at the start – the distant flicker of a not yet perfected story that might end up satisfying and deep, if the chemistry is right. And, of course, for the moment when you sit down in the dark and see your characters walk and talk, with tones in their voices and expressions on their faces; when you see them spin away from you and out into the world of strangers.

— Helen Garner, Melbourne, 1992

reprinted by permission of Helen Garner, courtesy of McPhee Gribble

Janet Patterson, Designer

Born in Sydney, Janet Patterson received a Diploma in Costume and Textile Design and a Bachelor of Arts in Interior Design. From 1980 to 1990 she was a production designer for ABC, working on such award winning projects as *Edens Lost*, *Body Surfers* and *Come on Spinner*. As a costume and production designer, Patterson has established an international reputation for her work on *The Piano*, for which she was nominated for an Oscar for Best Costumes; Gillian Armstrong's *The Last Days of Chez Nous* and now, Campion's *Portrait of a Lady*.

Martin Armiger, Music Conductor and Phillip

Martin Armiger is one of Australia's busiest film and music composers. A member of a very successful band in the 1970s, The Sports, he later became involved in music for film and television. Among his other credits include *Young Einstein* (1988), *Sweetie* (1989), *The Crossing* (1990) and *Waiting* (1991).

Bill Russo, Editor

Much of the credit for restoring *Two Friends* belongs to Bill Russo, who supervised the lab work done in Australia. Russo started out as an accountant (which lasted all of five months) before becoming a surfing photographer. From there he went into advertising and then to film production where he finally wound up as an editor which he has been doing now for twenty years. Starting out on documentaries and news for ABC, he has been working principally on dramas since 1980 and has become a highly respected editor.

He has had the privilege of working with many of Australia's finest film people including Campion, Chapman and Chris Noonan.

Julian Penny, Cinematographer

Julian Penny was trained at ABC and worked there for many years as a director of photography on many of their best dramas and documentaries, winning the Australian Cinematographer's Association's Golden Tripod on a number of occasions. His work includes *Scales of Justice* (1983), *Natural Causes* (1985), *Traveling North* (1986), *The Everlasting Secret Family* (1987), *Ocean Boulevard* (1990, telemovie), and *Offspring* (1993).

Bill Gosden on *Two Friends*

In 1986, as a critic for Wellington City Magazine, Bill Gosden wrote perhaps the first article on Jane Campion's young career, which is excerpted below. Ten years later, and now the director of the Wellington Film Festival, Gosden has written again on *Two Friends*, reflecting on what he considers one of his fellow New Zealander's best films.

"What a pleasure, then, to come to Jane Campion's first feature, which by the time you read this [July 1986], will have screened in the Wellington Film Festival, and, I hope, have brought her some of the hometown acclaim she so richly deserves.

Campion retrieves and incorporates many of the methods and thematic preoccupations from her short films and it's gratifying to see a fine young filmmaker progressing and developing at her own measured stride. Two Friends is a telefeature, although, like Peel, it's shot in widescreen, not the shape of your television. Produced by Jan Chapman for the Australian Broadcasting Corporation ... Two Friends is a fully fledged movie, the classic Girl's Own Story [a short film by Jane Campion set in the 1960s] for the mid-80s. It's the tale of two girls who have entered their teens inseparable, but are gradually pried apart by temperament, experience and class. The script is by Helen Garner, best known as the author of Monkey Grip, and it's superb. Like Pinter's icier Betrayal, it proceeds backwards in time, from a point where Louise, a bright, attractive and diligent schoolgirl, and Kelly, a Bondi punkette, living with a man, seem entirely unlike. We are drawn back to a high point in their camaraderie, a year earlier, when the seed of their separate development is barely discernible. We see several periods in between, each one of them a roundly informative, crisply delivered resumé, covering the many tributaries that flow into the everyday heartbreak that's taking place before our eyes.

Essentially, Kelly's middle-aged hippy stepfather forbids her to attend the 'snotty' girls' school she and Louise both hope to qualify for, but the film delves into the many other factors that make the separation feel as inevitable as we've already been shown that it is. It's helluva sad, but the structure plays against excessive pathos and makes us see exactly what's going on.

A wide range of characters is clearly delineated in script, performance and direction, and their complex interrelationships devolve in an immensely satisfying fashion. Like [Campion's] Passionless Moments and Girl's Own Story, this is a film you can watch over and over again for details you missed the other times. Campion's capacity to recapture the pains and confusion of adolescence is nicely complemented and contrasted with Garner's generous, wry humor, her sense that these difficulties are not forever. There are warm gusts of middle-aged headiness in the air whenever Louise's mother, Janet and her friend, Alison, get together and speculate about the tribulations of the youngsters.

The fathers of both girls are romantically absent and, as in Girl's Own Story, there's a sexual inflection to the way their daughters regard them. Adoring daughters is all these two men have in common, but both register vividly in the small amount of screen-time allotted them. Once again Campion's evocations of many

different environments are all deft and witty and characterize the people and incidents that inhabit them. The film is abundant with symbols and juxtapositions and color codings that merge inconspicuously into the material. The soundtrack, too, is inventively saturated and such set pieces as the private school orientation evening, where the senior mistress reprimands adult late-comers, have the ripeness of satire, while being firmly located in the unwinding narrative.

Easily the best feature I've seen from Australia or New Zealand in the last year, Two Friends pins down antipodean experience — and ambiance — so distinctively and originally that it's likely to mean a good deal to audiences in the country where its director went to school. Women, especially, are likely to be thrilled by the sharpness of the evocation of places and situations long forgotten. The frequently rehearsed argument that our films enunciate a national culture has rarely seemed so apposite.”

— Wellington City Magazine, 1986

“The particular social locations of the characters in Passionless Moments were drawn with great accuracy and economy. An Australasian audience could identify these characters: you might guess what car this one drove, or which bus stop this one got off at. (The joke was that all their splendidly evoked differences were transcended by a pan-suburban aptitude for passionlessness). Such an acute eye for the way people really do inhabit their houses — and their budgets — was not usual in Australian films where art departments more regularly labored to evoke a sun-baked past.

In Two Friends the art direction is a potent element in expressing the power of the world to disqualify the spirited, mutual affection of two schoolgirls. Class, observed so shrewdly in the short film, is the subject of Two Friends — where nothing transcends it, unless it is the director's identification with the confusion and pain of her protagonists.

There is a strong enough egalitarian tradition in Australia to make this a courageous film for a young woman to have made. This is especially true when class difference is deliberately observed in aesthetic terms, as a matter of taste or the lack of it. Despite the film's resounding emotional truth, there were many who found it too clever by far.

In Sweetie the art direction has moved beyond specific social observation, using terrifying patterns in linoleum to evoke inner states rather than outer circumstances. And with the grand, impassioned symbolism of The Piano, Campion could not be further from the telling detail with which she so eloquently enlivened Helen Garner's sharp, sad getting of wisdom.”

— Bill Gosden, Wellington, New Zealand
January 17, 1996

The Restoration of *Two Friends*

Two Friends is only ten years old, but much work had to be done both in Australia and the US to make the film look the way Jane Campion had originally planned. Film editor, Bill Russo related the story of the making of *Two Friends*:

“The film was Jane's first feature-length drama and was made for television. Jane, like many others was less than thrilled with the TV screen format and it was intended from the outset that she would impose her own preferred screen format on the film. A special viewfinder was made for the camera to guide the camera operator. This was inscribed with the dimensions as set out by Jane and to my knowledge does not fit into any of the standard film exhibition formats. This was not seen as too much of a problem at the time as it was only intended for TV release (although I suspect Jane hoped otherwise). As it turned out the Sydney Film Festival heard about the film while it was being shot, eventually looked at it and wanted to screen it.

“We struck a print that was masked with black at the bottom. There was some considerable discussion as whether it would be better letterboxed top and bottom but Jane insisted on the black only at bottom. You may have got the impression by now that Jane was very particular about these matters. If you have, you’re absolutely right.

“I was speaking to Jan Chapman yesterday and she asked me to emphasize that the film ... was at the muted/desaturated end of the color spectrum while still being very much a color film. Her memory is that shooting in black and white was considered an option but it was finally decided to go with color albeit in the muted way mentioned.”

By the time Milestone licensed *Two Friends*, the one 16mm print that had been struck in 1986 had been junked years before, due to poor lab work and the inferior sound. In order to give the film its long-overdue world theatrical release, Milestone instigated a great search for the original elements. With the help of Jan Chapman and Bill Russo, the Australian Broadcasting Corporation was able to make a sparkling new interpositive off the original camera negative, masking it to bring back the original aspect ratio Campion had intended but which had been lost over the years. Here in the US, Milestone made a new optical soundtrack from the original magnetic tapes, using premier New York sound lab, Zounds. Milestone then hired Cinema Arts in Pennsylvania for the important work on the new internegative. Cinema Arts is famous for their archival restorations and superior lab work. In all, it took almost six months to complete the project.

Milestone Film & Video, Inc.

With more than 14 years experience in art-house film distribution, Milestone has earned an unparalleled reputation for releasing classic cinema masterpieces, new foreign films, groundbreaking documentaries and American independent features. Thanks to the company’s rediscovery, restoration and release of such important films as Mikhail Kalatozov’s award-winning *I am Cuba*, Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Mamma Roma*, and Alfred Hitchcock’s *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, the company now occupies an honored position as one of the most influential independent distributors in the industry. In 1999, the *L.A. Weekly* chose Milestone as “Indie Distributor of the Year.”

Amy Heller and Dennis Doros started Milestone in 1990 to bring out the best films of yesterday *and* today. The company has released such remarkable new films as Manoel de Oliveira’s *I’m Going Home*, Bae Yong-kyun’s *Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?*, Hirokazu Kore-eda’s *Maborosi*, and Takeshi Kitano’s *Fireworks (Hana-Bi)*, and now, Tareque and Catherine Masud’s *The Clay Bird*.

Milestone’s re-releases have included restored versions of Luchino Visconti’s *Rocco and His Brothers*, F.W. Murnau’s *Tabu*, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack’s *Grass and Chang*, Henri-Georges Clouzot’s *The Mystery of Picasso*, and Marcel Ophuls’s *The Sorrow and the Pity*. Milestone is also working with the Mary Pickford Foundation on a long-term project to preserve, re-score and release the best films of the legendary silent screen star. In recent years, Milestone has re-released beautifully restored versions of Frank Hurley’s *South: Ernest Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition*, Kevin Brownlow’s *It Happened Here* and *Winstanley*, Lotte Reiniger’s animation masterpiece, *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, Michael Powell’s *The Edge of the World* (a Martin Scorsese presentation), Jane Campion’s *Two Friends*, Gillo Pontecorvo’s *The Wide Blue Road* (a Jonathan Demme and Dustin Hoffman presentation), Conrad Rooks’ *Siddhartha* and Rolando Klein’s *Chac*. Milestone’s newest classic film, E.A. Dupont’s *Piccadilly* — starring the bewitching Anna May Wong in one of her finest roles — played at the 2003 New York Film Festival and is opening theatrically nationwide in 2004.

For 2004, Milestone will also be releasing *The Big Animal*, Jerzy Stuhr’s wonderful film parable (based on a story by Krzysztof Kieslowski).

Milestone has fruitful collaborations with some of the world's major archives, including the British Film Institute, UCLA Film & Television Archive, George Eastman House, Museum of Modern Art, Library of Congress, Nederlands Filmmuseum and the Norsk Filminstitut. In 2000 Milestone's 10th Anniversary Retrospective was shown in venues nationwide and Milestone donated revenues from these screenings to four major archives in the United States and England to help restore films that might otherwise be lost.

In 2003, Milestone released an important series of great silent restorations including the horror classic *The Phantom of the Opera*; an early neorealist adaptation of Emile Zola's *La Terre*; and an historical epic of Polish independence, *The Chess Player*. Other video highlights for the year included Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle and Buster Keaton's *The Cook & Other Treasures*, and three incredible animation releases: *Cut-Up: The Films of Grant Munro*; *Norman McLaren: The Collector's Edition*; and *Winsor McCay: The Master Edition*.

In 1995 Milestone received a Special Archival Award from the National Society of Film Critics for its restoration and release of *I am Cuba*. Eight of the company's films — Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep* (to be released in 2004), F.W. Murnau's *Tabu*, Edward S. Curtis's *In the Land of the War Canoes*, Mary Pickford's *Poor Little Rich Girl*, Lon Chaney's *The Phantom of the Opera*, Clara Bow's *It*, Winsor McCay's *Gertie the Dinosaur*, and Merian C. Cooper, Ernest B. Schoedsack and Marguerite Harrison's *Grass* — are listed on the Library of Congress's National Film Registry. On January 2, 2004, the National Society of Film Critics awarded Milestone Film & Video their prestigious Film Heritage award for "its theatrical and DVD presentations of Michael Powell's *The Edge of the World*, E.A. Dupont's *Piccadilly*, André Antoine's *La Terre*, Rupert Julian's *Phantom of the Opera*, and *Mad Love: The Films of Eugeni Bauer*."

Cindi Rowell, director of acquisitions, has been with Milestone since 1999. In 2003 Nadja Tennstedt joined the company as director of international sales.

"Since its birth the Milestone Film & Video Co. has steadily become the industry's foremost boutique distributor of classic and art films — and probably the only distributor in America whose name is actually a guarantee of some quality."
— William Arnold, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

Special thanks to

Bill Gosden and the Wellington Film Society
Bill Russo

Lee-Anne Higgins and Jan Chapman, Jan Chapman Productions
Helen Garner

Mark Slattery, Jane Benson, Anthony Dockrill and Peter Vile, Australian Broadcasting Corp.
Karen Robson, Esq.

Edith Kramer, Peter Moore and the Pacific Film Archive
Charles Silver and the Museum of Modern Art Film Department

John Allen and Mike Kolvek, Cinema Arts
Bob Warmflash, Warmflash Productions

Scott Eyman, Lynn Kalber, Karen Rosen Stetler and David Pierce

Two Friends is a Milestone Film & Video, Inc. Release
PO Box 128 • Harrington Park, NJ 07640
Email: milefilms@aol.com • www.milestonefilms.com