



**The Archive as
intermediary
between past and
future**

Who and where are we?

- Staff of approx. 200
- Canberra, headquarters and home to
- Arc Cinema, storage vaults
- Sydney and Melbourne offices
- State access centres in State Libraries

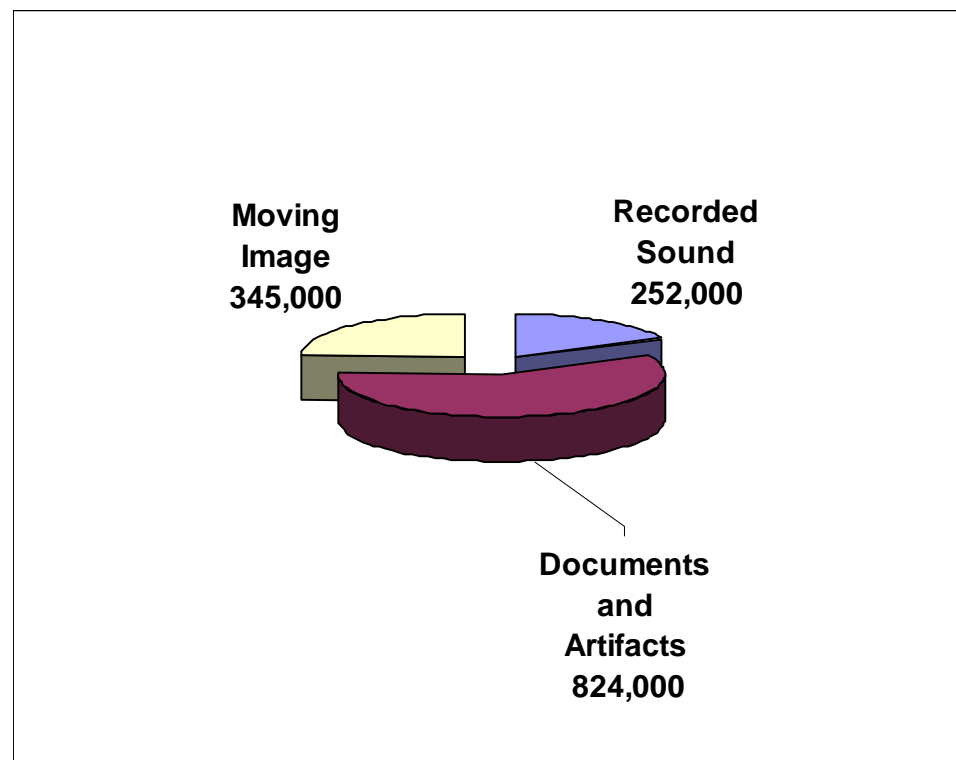


Strategic Objectives

- National leadership
- Collections, knowledge and connection with the public
- Inspiring experiences, engagement and learning
- NFSA is known for valuing partnerships
- Innovative people and a creative NFSA

The NFSA Collections

Total holdings: 1 421 000 items*



What do we collect?

Works produced in Australia and by Australians, and international works which have influenced Australian life and culture

Moving Image

- ❖ Film & Video
- ❖ Television
- ❖ Digital and New Media

Sound

- ❖ Radio and satellite broadcasts
- ❖ Music
- ❖ Sound art
- ❖ Oral history interviews
- ❖ Spoken word

Documents and Artefacts

- ❖ Photographs
- ❖ Posters
- ❖ Paper based records: scripts, manuscripts, private and production papers, publicity, scrapbooks, clippings
- ❖ Artefacts and audiovisual equipment

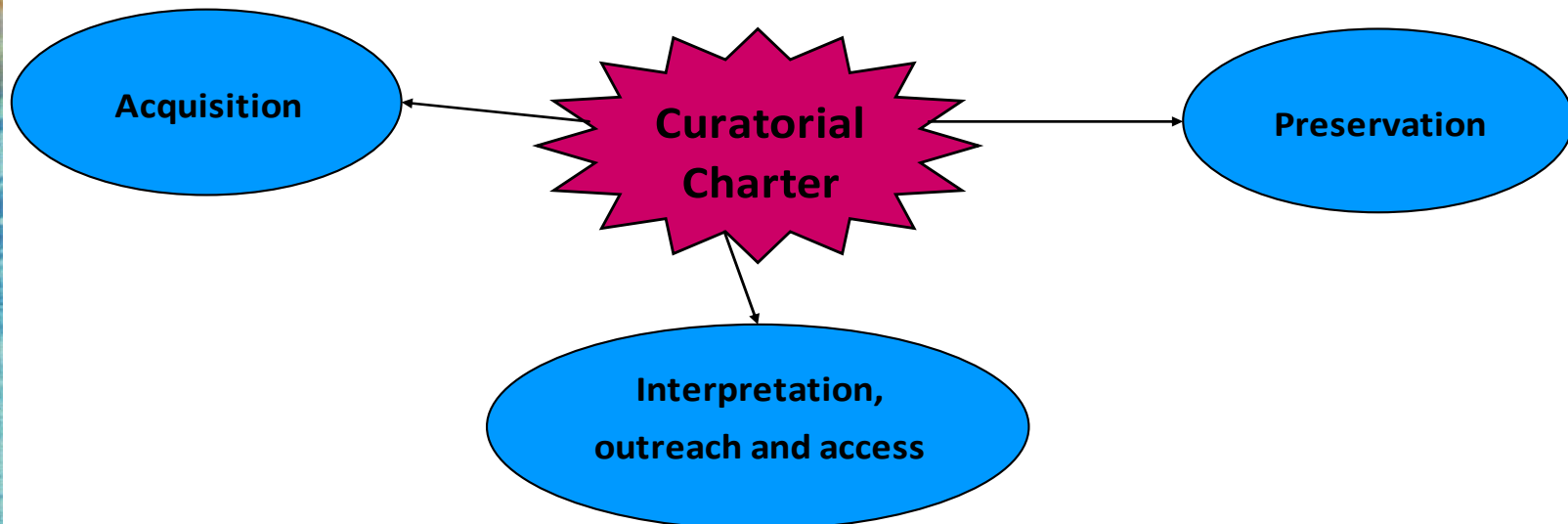
Guiding principles

NFSA aspires to:

Be the world's premier archive of Australian film, sound and emerging new media cultural heritage

NFSA mission is:

To excite people's curiosity and inspire their creativity through an informed understanding of Australian film, sound and emerging new media heritage, its cultural diversity and significance



We support creativity and research

Scholars and Artists in Residence



THE CORRICK COLLECTION: A CASE STUDY IN ASIA-PACIFIC ITINERANT FILM EXHIBITION (1901-1914)

Lash Anne Lewis

Defined narrowly, the Corrick Collection held at Australia's National Film and Sound Archive consists of approximately 135 early films shown by the Corrick Family Entertainers, a vaudeville-style musical troupe, during their international tours from 1901 to 1914. By taking a broader view, however, placing the collection within the wider landscape of film history, it quickly becomes apparent that it is more than just the sum of its parts: the Corrick Collection is an unusually rich archival treasure with great potential to inform a number of areas within the histories of both film and film archives, as well as providing a number of well-preserved and unusual examples of early cinema.

Considered in this larger context, the collection encompasses two broad swaths of film history – the beginning of the 20th century as it travelled thousands upon thousands of miles with the Corricks, and its existence as an archival entity at the end of the century and today. As a collection, it provides insight into the lives of early itinerant film exhibitors, as well as reflecting changes in archival practices and institutional change through its treatment since arriving at the archive nearly four decades ago. In terms of

volume, the Corrick Collection might be considered relatively small, but thanks to its depth and unique nature, it is undoubtedly a valuable resource capable of enriching our understanding of cinema's development.

This essay is prompted by an ambitious task recently undertaken by the NFA: to identify, organise and create new preservation items for the entire Corrick Collection. The project seeks to make these films more fully available to scholars, researchers and audiences for the first time in over a century. In support of that project, this essay is intended to introduce the collection in a way that highlights its unique nature and history, as well as what it contributes towards a further understanding of both the early cinema experience and the place of such collections in today's moving image archives.

After grounding my discussion of the collection by describing the Corrick artefacts in more depth, noting items of particular interest, I will consider it from two perspectives as it was used by the Corricks during their touring days, and as it has existed as an archival entity within the National Film and Sound Archive since first contact between the donors, the troupe leader's grandson John Corrick, and the institution. My examination of the Corrick family and their art focuses on their incorporation of film within what was initially planned as a chiefly musical production, and considers their place within the realm of itinerant exhibitions. In terms of the collection's experience within the NFA, I will attempt to determine how this body of work was transformed from a treasured family heirloom to an archival treasure of national importance, an ongoing process that began in the late 1960s. In looking at the process overall, shifts in institutional focus as well as archival theory and practice can be traced in the contours of the collection's history at the NFA. Finally, a consideration of these changes and the resulting decisions made within the NFA will provide a preliminary assessment of the challenges posed by the particular collection, and offer a glimpse into the often unseen work of a film archive.

THE CORRICK FILMS

As was typical of many exhibitors in cinema's early years, the Corricks presented a widely varied film program. Heart-wrenching dramas played alongside highly coloured trick films, actualities and cartoon events shared the screen with slapstick comedies. A show might begin with a view of Britain's King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra attending a college graduation ceremony, accompanied from the wings by the Corricks singing the national anthem – a combination that prompted cheers and standing ovations during performances in India. This crowd-pleaser would be followed by a range of images: elephants working in a Burmese forest, the misadventures of an elderly couple searching for an apartment, the magic of an 'express wallpaper'.

The diversity of the surviving films once accessed by the Corricks reflects that tradition, containing examples of a wide array of topics, genres and producers. Examples include comedies such as *The Lost Child* (American Mutoscope & Biograph, 1904), *Le Tour du monde d'un policier* (A. Dentrice's *Tour of the World*) (Charles Léprieu, 1906), *Le Pêcheur miraculeux* (The *Best* Irresistible *Parade!*) (Pathe, 1909), *Her First Cuck* (James Williamson, 1906) and *Ceremonies* (Friedrich Wurlitz) (Ufa Film, 1909). Dramas screened included *A Little Child Shall Lead Them* (D.W. Griffith, 1909), *Marie-Anne* (Pathe, 1904), *First* (James Williamson, 1903) and *A Baby Show* (Edison, 1912). Trick films such as those featuring the talents of Segundo de Chomón – *Le Pêcheur invisible* (*The Invisible Fish*) (Charles Léprieu, 1906) and *Le Pêcheur invisible* (*The Invisible Fish*) (Charles Léprieu, 1906) were especially popular and frequently highlighted in advertisements and reviews. Actualities depicting life in various corners of the world, along with documentaries such as *A Canadian Winter Carnival* (Edison, 1909), *La Metallurgie au Creuset* (*Crucible Metallurgy*) (Pathe, 1905), *Manuel d'Anatomie* (Charles Urban, 1907) and





Inspiring creativity



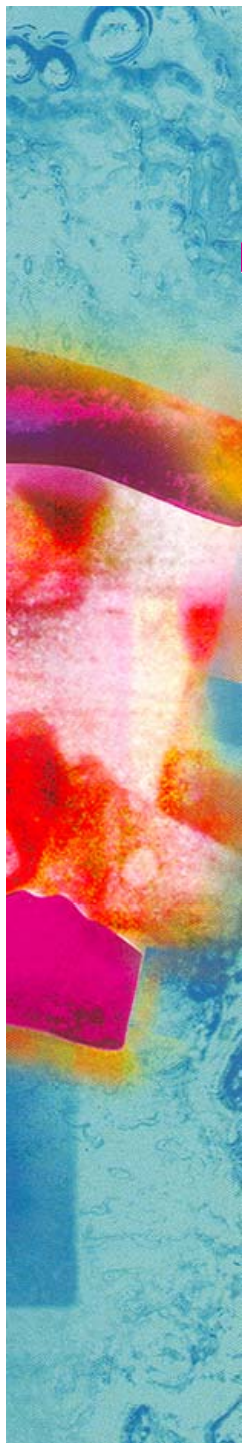
Research and fellowships

- Scholars and Artists in Residence (SAR) Fellowships
- CEO Fellowship
- Indigenous Research Fellowship
- Internship Program
- Arc Linkage Grants
- Staff Research

New Creator-Performers

Michelle Outram

- SAR Fellowship 2006
- *Not the Sound Bite!*



New Creator-Performers

Elizabeth Lea

- SAR Fellowship 2009 and subsequent *21 birds* (image on right)
- Impact of touring 1920s dance artists
- Footage – artists inspired by India



Slide Heading



New Creator-Performers

Robert Davidson

- SAR Fellowship 2008
- Voice portraits – NFSA archived recordings of Australians
- *Topology of Australians* – video clip

Australia's Silent Film Festival

- *For the Term of His Natural Life* (Norman Dawn, Australia, 1927)
- Restored 1981 – Palm Court Orchestra
- Silent Film Festival Screening, 11 September – Colin Orford (image on right)



The Corrick Project

- Legs on the Wall, Physical Theatre Company
- Use of NFSA held Corrick Collection – 140 films - 1901-1914



Corrick Family Players

- Corrick family
- 1902-07 – Touring Australia
- 1907-14 – Touring internationally

Corrick Film Collection, 1901-1914

- Jan 1901 – move to film
- Leonard Corrick, projectionist
- Films from France, USA, UK, Italy, Australia
- Drama, comedy, chase, trick, scenic, actuality
- Leonard Corrick, filmmaker

Corrick Film Collection since 1914

- Keeping the films
- Films reach NFSA
- Corrick Film Preservation
- Pordenone Film Festival partnership

Sydney Festival, Legs on the Wall

- New life for Corrick Films
- Jan 2010 – workshopping *The Conjuror's Lottery*
- Combines film with performance
- Integrates Corrick family players story



The Conjuror's Lottery

- 17 October – Rehearsals
- January 2011 – Premiere – Sydney Festival
- February-March
– Perth
International
Arts Festival



New Departure

- *The Conjuror's Lottery* as partnership
- New works pitched at young, contemporary audience
- Changing perception of archives

