

Big screen finds Eugene

Independent films are on the rise and artists are cutting costs by filming in Oregon

Ryan Bornheimer
Senior Pulse Reporter

Hollywood is still the filmmaking capital of the world. But the "movie factory" may want to look over its shoulder to see what's sneaking up from behind. The world is getting smaller, and homegrown filmmakers are turning up all over. Eugene is no exception.

Oregon has always been an attractive area for the film industry; it is near California and offers a wide variety of locales.

In the 100 years of producing this relatively young art form, Hollywood has often ventured into the Northwest to shoot movies. Everyone from Robert Mitchum in 1939's "Rachel and the Stranger" to River Phoenix in 1985's "Stand By Me" has wandered through Eugene to make their mark on film.

It doesn't take a long visit to Eugene to recognize its artistic spirit. And anyone who's seen a movie at Bijou Art Cinemas knows this movie theater's celebration of independent film is an extension of that spirit. But these movies, though unlikely to pop up at the local cineplex, are still commercially released films.

If there are audiences in Eugene for independent movies, one has to assume that there exists a desire to take an active role in them as well. Though a distinct network of independent filmmakers may appear elusive, there is reason to believe that at any moment, the talk of the film industry could spring up from our own backyard.

Oregon filmmaker Erich Lyttle is a perfect example of that possibility. Lyttle and his producing partner Dan Wilkins operate Legacy Films, a production company with offices in Eugene and Portland. Their docudrama, "Have You Seen Clem," was filmed partially in Eugene and shown this summer at McDonald Theatre to a crowd of 500 people. At the moment, the film is making its way to movie houses across the country as the filmmakers seek a distribution deal.

Lyttle, a southern California native, says there are many benefits to making movies in Eugene.

"One of the good things for us was the benefit of avoiding union entanglements that exist in California," Lyttle said. This is a huge cost-saver for an independent filmmaker. "Clem," originally budgeted at \$250,000, eventually cost approximately \$900,000 — still well below the ever-escalating cost of higher profile films.



Mark McCambridge Emerald

The artistic spirit of Eugene fosters a burgeoning independent film community.

Lyttle employed the same 16-millimeter camera used to film "Leaving Las Vegas" as well as a digital video camera. He not only saved money but used the various formats to heighten the film's "dual identity" theme. In addition, the crew consisted of basically five people, all from Eugene — evidence that Hollywood's filmmaking monopoly continues to dissipate.

Ralph Conradt is a local filmmaker who sees the future of filmmaking everywhere.

"In this day, anyone with a \$2,000 DV camera and \$1,000 PC can produce a high quality film for theatrical distribution," Conradt said. "It's a great time to be a filmmaker."

Though his work is mostly in productions for the National Institutes of Health, Conradt is currently making a documentary tracking his son's recovery from a catastrophic brain injury suffered in a high school football game.

The Mid-Oregon Production Arts Network offers further evidence of Eugene's burgeoning film community. This important resource for local filmmakers is a non-profit association of over 200 professionals working in film, television and video, as well as in audio and multimedia. The

organization works to promote local media professionals. Their Web site, mopan.org, contains a directory of its members and includes listings of everyone from local casting directors to camera rental houses.

Networking is the key to working in independent film. Austin Storms, a Eugene native now living in Portland, was the sound-recorderist for "Clem" and says he never would have discovered these opportunities without the connections he has made in Eugene.

"If I were to offer any advice to independent filmmakers in Eugene, it would be, get to know people," Storms said. "Eugene is a growing city with a lot of opportunity. It's funny. When I lived in Eugene, I was always going to Portland to find work. Now that I live in Portland, it seems like I'm shooting something in Eugene every other day."

Anyone thinking about rushing off to big cities to make their break in movies should take note of these filmmakers. It may not be Hollywood, but Eugene offers more than meets the eye, and the seeds are being sown for the future of the art form.

Contact the senior Pulse reporter at ryanbornheimer@dailyemerald.com.

A Refreshingly Unique Restaurant . . .



FIFTH PEARL BUILDING
207 E. 5TH ST.

484-4065

LOUNGE 345-2832
DINNER 5:30-10 T-S

kegs to go

Neighbors
Bourbon Street Lounge

Let Neighbors Help You Plan Your Next
Tailgater Or NFL House Party!
Eugene's Widest Selection Of Draft Beer To Go!
Pumps, Keg Coolers, Cups, & Ice Available

Just 2 Blocks East Of Campus
1417 Villard Phone: 541.338.0334



Enjoy dinner, dancing, and hot tropical nights at our

Latin Cuisine & Bar

Come experience the sizzling atmosphere at Eugene's
most tantalizing night club!



SALSA LESSONS:

BEGINNERS:

Wednesdays, 7pm

ADVANCED/

INTERMEDIATE:

Thursdays, 8pm

BEGINNERS:

Fridays, 9pm

and Saturdays, 9pm

80's Night:

Tuesday

100 E. Broadway • 484.1747

homecoming
special

We're out to freshen your environment



Offer expires Oct 31st, 2002

One coupon per customer

Flowers and plants are
like a breath of fresh air

Eugene's Flower Home
THE UNIVERSITY FLORIST

Owners are
UO alumni!

610 E. 13th at Patterson
485-3655



BIJOU
492 E 13th 686-2458
For the week of Friday, October 25th!
Sign-up for our weekly WebPage Update!
www.bijou-cinemas.com

"Pioneering funny and unrelentingly furious gem."
—Lisa Schwarzbaum, ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY

IGBY GOES DOWN
Kieran Culkin
Claire Danes
Jeff Goldblum
Amanda Peet
Ryan Phillippe
Bill Pullman
Susan Sarandon
6:00 & 9:30 Nightly Sat Mat 3:00pm

"A FEVERED, FASCINATING TALE."
—Richard Corliss, TIME Magazine

THE PIANO TEACHER
ISABELLE HUPPERT
ONE WEEK ONLY! 7:00pm Nightly
Sun Mat 2:30pm (in French with English subtitles)

THE FAST RUNNER
MUST END SOON!
4:45 & 8:00pm Nightly
Sun Mat 1:30pm (in English with English subtitles)
BIJOU LateNight \$5 Th-Sa \$4 Su-We

IGBY GOES DOWN
11:30pm Nightly Sat Mat 3:00pm
SOON: THE PRODUCERS

MARGARET CHO LIVE IN SEATTLE
11:15pm Nightly Sat Mat 2:45pm
NEXT: 25 HOUR PARTY PEOPLE

You'll Be Speechless!

**COSTUME RENTALS
VINTAGE CLOTHES**

Time Warp
Nobody's Baby

365 E. 13th Street • 343-6842 • M-Sat 11-6 • Sun 12-4