

Creating Australian Television Drama: A Screenwriting History

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Creating Australian Television Drama Screenwriting History: A Journey Through Time



Creating Australian Television Drama: A Screenwriting History by Susan Lever

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English
File size : 936 KB
Text-to-Speech : Enabled
Screen Reader : Supported
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
Word Wise : Enabled
Print length : 292 pages
Lending : Enabled



The Australian television drama landscape has undergone a remarkable transformation over the decades, evolving from humble beginnings to become a global force in storytelling. At the heart of this evolution lies the work of talented screenwriters, whose creativity and vision have shaped the iconic shows that have captivated audiences both locally and

internationally. In this article, we embark on a journey through time, exploring the key milestones and influential figures that have shaped the history of Australian television drama screenwriting.

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Early Beginnings: The Birth of Australian Television

The advent of television in Australia in the 1950s marked a pivotal moment for the entertainment industry. Early television dramas, such as "Autumn Affair" (1958) and "Consider Your Verdict" (1961), were heavily influenced by British and American models, featuring melodramatic plots and traditional storytelling techniques. However, as the industry matured, Australian screenwriters began to forge their unique identity, drawing inspiration from local experiences and perspectives.

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The Golden Age of Australian Television Drama: The 1970s and 1980s

The 1970s and 1980s witnessed the golden age of Australian television drama, with the emergence of groundbreaking shows that pushed the boundaries of storytelling and showcased the talents of a new generation of screenwriters. "Number 96" (1972-1977), a groundbreaking soap opera, tackled controversial social issues and featured complex characters, while "The Sullivans" (1976-1983), a historical drama, captured the hearts of millions with its epic portrayal of a family during World War II.

One of the most influential figures of this era was John Misto, a prolific screenwriter known for his ability to craft compelling stories that resonated

with Australian audiences. His work included the acclaimed dramas "Prisoner" (1979-1986) and "Return to Eden" (1983), which became global hits and showcased the unique Australian voice in television drama.

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The International Breakout: The 1990s and Beyond

The 1990s marked a turning point for Australian television drama, as a new wave of talented screenwriters emerged, capturing international attention with their fresh and innovative storytelling. "Blue Heelers" (1994-2006), a rural police drama, became an instant hit both in Australia and around the world, while "All Saints" (1998-2009), a medical drama, showcased the emotional depth and character-driven narratives that would become hallmarks of Australian television drama.

Jane Allen, a renowned screenwriter and producer, played a pivotal role in this international breakout. Her work on "Blue Heelers" and "McLeod's Daughters" (2001-2009) showcased her ability to create relatable characters and gripping storylines that resonated with audiences worldwide.

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The Digital Age and the Rise of Streaming: The 21st Century

The 21st century has ushered in a new era of digital distribution and streaming services, transforming the way Australian television dramas are produced and consumed. Streaming platforms such as Netflix, Stan, and Amazon Prime Video have provided a global stage for Australian

screenwriters, allowing them to reach audiences far beyond traditional broadcast networks.

One of the standout shows of this era is "Wentworth" (2013-present), a prison drama based on the classic series "Prisoner." Created by Lara Radulovich and David Hannam, "Wentworth" has become an international sensation, captivating audiences with its complex female characters and unflinching exploration of social issues.

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The Future of Australian Television Drama Screenwriting

As Australian television drama screenwriting continues to evolve, the future holds endless possibilities. With the rise of new technologies, diverse voices, and a global audience hungry for compelling stories, the stage is set for Australian screenwriters to continue pushing the boundaries of storytelling and creating iconic shows that will captivate generations to come.

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The history of Australian television drama screenwriting is a testament to the creativity, vision, and resilience of the talented individuals who have shaped this vibrant and dynamic industry. From the early pioneers to the contemporary masters, Australian screenwriters have consistently delivered groundbreaking shows that have entertained, inspired, and captivated audiences both locally and globally. As the future unfolds, the Australian television drama screenwriting landscape promises to continue to flourish,

with new voices and innovative storytelling techniques pushing the boundaries of this beloved art form.

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Alt Attributes







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