



South Australian Film Corporation



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## Adelaide Studios Sound Mixing Theatre named for SA sound pioneer Michael Rowan

Adelaide: Adelaide Studios internationally renowned Sound Mixing Theatre was officially named after South Australia's 'godfather' of sound Michael Rowan, it was announced by Minister for Innovation and Skills David Pisoni today.

The Michael Rowan Sound Mixing Theatre is currently playing host to feature film *I Am Woman*, directed by Unjoo Moon, which will world premiere at the Toronto International Film Festival. The film stars Adelaide's own Tilda Cobham-Hervey as legendary singer Helen Reddy, and is produced by Moon together with Rosemary Blight (*The Sapphires*, *Top End Wedding*).

In making the announcement, Minister Pisoni paid tribute to Michael Rowan's 40 year contribution to establishing South Australia as a global leader and a technical frontrunner in the competitive sound post-production business.

Minister Pisoni said "Michael Rowan is one of the many expert technicians and unsung heroes that have made South Australia's post-production facilities celebrated the world over. Michael was recruited to the fledgling SAFC from Flinders University in 1974, and by the mid 80's had established the Studios' mixing theatre to compete on the international stage – with a console he built himself."

"Michael's ingenuity and innovation in the pursuit of excellence has helped to cement South Australia as a world-class destination for sound post-production, and is the reason why it is so fitting that the facility here should now be known as the Michael Rowan Sound Mixing Theatre," he said.

Michael Rowan constructed, operated and maintained the SAFC's sound mixing theatres from the earliest days at the 'Queens Studios' in Norwood, to the original mono mixing theatre at Hendon, to the first Dolby Stereo Mixing console in 1982, the first Foley Studio in 1984 and finally receiving Dolby Premier Accreditation for the Adelaide Studios Mixing Theatre in 2012, at that time the only one of its kind in Australia, and the industry's highest accolade.

Michael's technical ingenuity and his ability to negotiate with producers brought in over 100 international productions to the SAFC, alongside local productions including award-winning films selected for Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Sundance, Toronto and even the Oscars.

**Michael Rowan** said "In 1974 I was hired by John Morris, the then Head of Production at SAFC. He changed my life giving me a dream job which introduced me to the wonderful people and technologies of the film industry. Thankyou for this honour, I will treasure it every day."

Acclaimed Sound Designer **James Currie** who spoke at the event said "When I think of Michael Rowan - I see an artist, questioning, understanding the indivisible, the unsolvable and quietly nodding with the satisfaction that he may not know the answer immediately but confident that it will come eventually. His infuriating modesty is armed with a dry sense of humour and casual temperate air of a genius at work.

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Producer **Rosemary Blight** who brought *Top End Wedding* and now *I Am Woman* to South Australia for their sound mix said "I choose to bring our films' sound post production to Adelaide Studios. The Studios have a world class sound mixing stage and a team of extremely experienced and talented sound professionals. It is also always a pleasure working in such a beautiful city."

Managing Director of Syncit, sound mixer and sound editor **Pete Smith**, currently mixing *I Am Woman* said "I believe Michael Rowan was instrumental in developing the foundations of a strong and creative South Australian film sound community, both with his technical and leadership skills."

Director/writer/producer **Rolf de Heer** said "Were it not for Michael Rowan's ease, geniality and understanding of what is a fair deal, I would not have come to South Australia to make a film in the first place. Were it not for the wonderful mixing theatre he hand-built at Hendon Studios, I would not have discovered sound. Were it not for his foresight, I would not have been enticed back to South Australia to make more films...*Bad Boy Bubby*, *The Quiet Room*, *Dance Me To My Song*, they would never have been made. Were it not for his technical genius in building the mixing theatre at the new studios, I would not have wanted to keep coming back for the post production of the films I do. I can practically dedicate my career to him."

Renowned foley artist **John Simpson** said "I am so glad that Mike gets a gong for all his hard work, nobody deserves this more than Mike, if it were not for him I would not be where I am today, and SAFC would not have the quality sound department it now has. The words mixing theatre and Michael Rowan should be locked together in the history of the SAFC, the reputation of the facilities and the quality of the sound all stem from Michael Rowan."

Managing Director of Rising Sun Pictures **Tony Clark** said "Michael's name may not appear on the front of the seminal Australian films, but the sound of these works passed through systems he designed and components that he soldered, which contributed to putting these films, and our state's industry, on the map."

Sound Designer and editor **Duncan Campbell** whose credits include *I am Mother*, *The Hunting and Storm Boy* said "Spanning decades, Michael has been an innovative pioneer for the sound community and has always gone over and above to strive for technical excellence. From the early days of designing and building a sound mixing console, to more recently being one of the key engineers which led to the theatre receiving its Dolby Premier accreditation. It is only natural that his achievements and his legacy be honoured with the naming of this mixing theatre. We cannot thank you enough and we couldn't imagine a more deserving person. Thank you Michael."

*Look Both Ways* and *My Year Without Sex* producer **Bridget Ikin** said "For me, Adelaide - and of course the SAFC - has always been synonymous with the best in sound recording, design and mixing. Although I have not met Michael Rowan, what better way to celebrate his instrumental role in securing the SAFC's reputation as national leader in the 'soundscape', than to name the wonderful mixing theatre after him."

**Jane Ballantyne**, Producer of Paul Cox's *Man of Flowers*, *Lust and Revenge* and *My First Wife* said "I recommend highly that public recognition be finally given to Michael Rowan possibly by naming the Sound Studios in his name and possibly a recommendation for an Order of Australia Honours Award for his services to the Arts."

Producer of Paul Cox's *Force of Destiny*, **Mark Patterson** said "Michael Rowan has been across most of my films in one form or another. When I first started in film as a youngster, he was one of those looming figures of the industry to be feared!! But as I grew into the industry, I found he was to be admired and now to be cherished. His longevity and skills are extraordinary. Bravo Mike!

Acclaimed Sound Designer **Tom Heuzenroeder** said "Michael can be thought of as one of the godfathers of the SAFC... making the studios at Hendon the envy of other states in Australia."

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COSPECTIVE CEO **Rory McGregor** said “It is no exaggeration to say that post production at the Adelaide Studios exists because of Michael Rowan.”

Heesom Casting’s **Angela Heesom** said “Mike is a favourite of so many of SA’s professional filmmakers. He has brought not only great prowess and skill, but enormous heart to his work amongst us.”

**Judith Crombie**, SAFC CEO (2000-2004) said “Michael is an unsung hero of the Australian film industry.”

**IMAGES FOR MEDIA** – including historical images, and images from today’s event.

<http://bit.ly/2KbfVKp>