Entry type: Person
Entry ID: AWE4724

Levy, Sandra

Occupation Director, Producer

Summary

Sandra Levy is an Australian film and television producer. Levy has held a number of head positions in the Australian television industry, including Director of Television at ABC. In 2007, Levy was appointed CEO of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School. Throughout her career, Levy has produced a number of iconic Australian films including *High Tide* (Armstrong, 1987), *Police Rescue: The Movie* (Carson, 1993), *The Well* (Lang, 1997), *Secret Men's Business* (Cameron, 1999) and *Serenades* (Khadem, 2000).

Details

Sandra Levy studied English literature at the University of Sydney. At university, Levy became a fringe member of the left wing political set, the Push.

After Levy graduated, she began to make small budget films. In 1978, Levy co-produced the short film *Showtime* with Jan Chapman. *Showtime* tells the story of a young woman who takes a teaching position in a small country town. The townspeople, however, begin to suspect a relationship between the young teacher and another woman. The short film raised questions about how the town believed this relationship would have dangerous implications for the school children.

In 1986, Levy produced *High Tide*High Tide. The film was directed by Gillian Armstrong and written by Laura Jones. Judy Davis won an AFI Award for her performance as the lead character, Lili. Lili is a back up singer for an Elvis impersonator who gets stranded in a small coastal town. While stuck in the town, Lili befriends a teenager girl who is in fact the daughter she left as an infant.

As a trainee at the ABC, Levy became experienced in script editing and production: 'I just thought I'd landed on the moon. It was like all of the skills that I had, all of the interest I had in ideas, and the literary, intellectual, political, creative interests came together. From that moment, that was it.' From 1987 to 1989, Levy was Head of Drama at ABC.

From 1989 to 1998, Levy was Head of Drama at Southern Star. In 1997, Levy produced *The Well* (Lang), a psychological thriller written by Laura Jones. *The Well* is about two very different women who form a tender, yet manipulative, relationship. When one of the women runs over a stranger on the road near their house, a battle of wits between the two women in triggered.

Between 2001 and 2005, Levy was Director of Television at ABC. Her time at ABC was successful, with an audience increase of 24 per cent, and the introduction of popular television shows including: *Kath and Kim, New Inventors, Spicks and Specks, Enough Rope with Andrew Denton, The Chaser*, and many more.

In 2002, Levy produced the successful film *Serenades* (Khadem). *Serenades* tells the story of Jila, the daughter of an Afghan father and Aboriginal mother. Jila grows up in a mission and is best friends with Johann, the son of the Lutheran pastor. After the death of her mother, Jila is taken from the mission and raised a Muslim by her father. As adults, Jila and Johann meet again and fall in love, however are restricted by their cultural backgrounds.

In 2006, Levy was Head of Drama at Channel 9. In 2007, Levy was appointed CEO of the Australian Film, Television and Radio School.

Levy has been married and divorced twice and has one son.

Published resources

Resource
Trove, National Library of Australia, 2009

Book
Look At Me!: Behind The Scenes Of Australian TV And The Women Who Made It, Hogan, Christine, 2006

Edited Book
The Oxford Companion to Australian Film, McFarlane, Brian, Mayer Geoff and Bertrand, Ina, 1999

Article
It's her ABC, 2004,
http://www.smh.com.au/news/TV--Radio/Its-her-ABC/2004/12/03/1101923328002.html

Resource Section
The Knowledge - Sandra Levy, Urban, Andrew, 2010,
http://www.aftrsmedia.com/CSB/the-knowledge-sandra-levy/

Site Exhibition
The Encyclopedia of Women and Leadership in Twentieth-Century Australia, Smart, Judith and Swain, Shurlee (eds.), 2014,
http://www.womenaustralia.info/leaders

Archival resources

National Film and Sound Archive
The Well : Original Release

Showtime

[Women Working in Television Project. Interview with Sandra Levy]

Come in Spinner

National Library of Australia
[Biographical cuttings on Sandra Levy, film producer, containing one or more cuttings from newspapers or journals]

Author Details
Hollie Aerts

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