

MEDIA KIT

CARELESS LOVE

A film by John Duigan



104 minutes

Available on digital files for D and E Cinemas
Dolby Digital

Written and directed by John Duigan
Produced by Jenny Day and Geoff Burton
Presented by Spirited Films & Luminous Pictures

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CARELESS LOVE

Synopses

Log Line

Sometimes you have to be two different people.
What happens when they meet?

One Line

When Linh, an Australian Vietnamese university student secretly starts part-time work as an escort she tries to keep her two lives in separate compartments but it doesn't take long for the worlds to collide.

One Paragraph

Careless Love tells the story of Linh, a Vietnamese Australian university student who secretly starts part-time work as an escort. She develops a close rapport with one of her clients, an enigmatic American art dealer, who books her on a regular basis. For a time she manages to keep her two lives in separate compartments. But when she falls for a fellow student her worlds collide and she must deal with the emotional chaos that follows.

One Page

On a stormy Sydney evening, Linh, a young Vietnamese-Australian university student, climbs into an anonymous car to begin work as a part-time escort. Her driver, Dion, and Mint, the Thai girl sitting in the back, will be her constant companions as she travels the city from job to job, negotiating her way through experiences that are often confronting to Linh whose moral compass has to be re-adjusted after each evening's work.

Linh's father has lost his job and her family are in danger of losing their house. Linh's new income helps pay the mortgage, but to keep her prostitution secret, she becomes a consummate liar. Her parents are only too pleased she is able to help and believe her lies. Not even her closest friends know – least of all her boyfriend Jack.

How all this affects Linh emotionally is glimpsed in the relationship she forms with one of her regular clients, Luke, a former US Marine dealing in looted art works from Iraqi museums. They talk about Linh's studies in social anthropology and religion and Linh gradually adapts to the double life she leads.

When finally Linh's two worlds collide, she struggles to deal with the shock and distress of those close to her and the value judgements of a society whose double standards she has witnessed first-hand.

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Main Cast

Nammi Le **as LINH**

Nammi Le was born in Vietnam. At three months of age, she, her parents and her one-year-old brother left their homeland in a fishing boat her father had secretly converted to enable them to escape, along with other family members and some local villagers. During the voyage, the tiny leaky boat was boarded by Thai pirates who confiscated all valuables from the passengers. Another valuable that one pirate tried to take away was Nammi's brother. After much pleading from Nammi's mother to the pirates' 'captain', the baby was returned to his family. Eventually the boat completed its journey on a Malaysian beach, where locals helped the passengers burn it, to ensure the coast guard could not tow them back out to sea. After several months in a detention camp, the whole family flew to Sydney where they have lived ever since.

At school, Nammi developed an interest in painting, but her principal focus was on academic subjects and she went on to study Commerce at the University of New South Wales. After graduating, she worked for Price Waterhouse Coopers for several years.

In 2007 she was offered a lead role in an independent Australian film, *Ra Choi*. The film centred on a group of four troubled street kids from the Western suburbs of Sydney, and their exploits in the midst of gang turf war, drug taking/dealing and prostitution. The film was shown at various festivals including the Sydney Film Festival and the London Australian Film Festival.

Shortly after, Nammi travelled to Europe and during this period resumed her earlier interest in painting. While there, she was cast by John Duigan to play *Linh* in *Careless Love*. One of her self-portraits is used as a key prop in the film.

Peter O'Brien **as LUKE**

With a career spanning over twenty years, Peter has contributed to an impressive list of film, television and stage productions in Australia and internationally. He is currently to be seen alongside Essie Davis in the new ABC series, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries*.

Peter's numerous television credits include the ABC comedy *30 Seconds, Rogue Nation, Day of the Roses, Through My Eyes, White Collar Blue, Hell Has Harbour Views*, the *Underbelly* series and most recently *Crownies* and *Dance Academy* for the ABC. His international credits include *Gossip Girl*,

Nightmares and Dreamscapes: From the Stories of Stephen King, Dr Who, Casualty, The Innocent, Deceit and Queer as Folk.

In 2011, Peter appeared in two feature films, Dale Bradley's *Undertow* and U-Wei bin Haji Saari's *Hanyut*. His other feature credits include Gavin Hood's *X-Men Origins: Wolverine*, Focus Films' *The Return* opposite Sarah Michelle Geller, *Hotel de Love*, *Fatal Contact*, *Act of God* and *The Pact*.

On stage, Peter has starred in *A Doll's House* for the Sydney Theatre Company, and numerous Melbourne Theatre Company productions including *Arcadia*, *A Flea in Her Ear*, *Game of Love and Chance* and *Miss Bosnia*. In the UK, he has appeared in *Butterflies Are Free*, *The Rivals*, *Macbeth*, *The Cherry Orchard*, *Loot* and on the West End *The Pirates of Penzance*. Most recently, he starred in *Three Sisters* for the South Australian State Theatre Company.

Peter has been nominated for five Logie Awards and awarded the prestigious Silver Logie Award twice, for Most Outstanding Actor in a Drama Series and Most Popular Actor. His performance in *White Collar Blue* saw him nominated for an AFI Award for Best Actor in a TV Drama.

In 2008, Peter completed a Directors Course at New York University and has since directed four short films. His latest, *Schadenfreude*, was in competition at the 2010 Flickerfest Short Film Festival, Adelaide Film Festival, St.Kilda Short Film Festival and the Budapest Int Film Festival.

Andrew Hazzard as JACK

One of Australia's young emerging actors, Andrew's television credits include lead guest roles on the Seven Network's TV drama series *All Saints*, an on-going lead guest role in the ABC TV series *Dance Academy*, and a lead guest role in the critically acclaimed series, *Underbelly The Golden Mile* – Australia's highest rating TV drama series of all time.

In 2010, Andrew appeared as a guest lead in *Cops LAC* for the Nine Network and also as a recurring guest lead in Seven's *Home & Away*. In early 2011, Andrew completed filming a lead role in John Duigan's new feature film *Careless Love*. Also in 2011, he appeared in a guest role in the popular ABC series *Crownies*.

On stage Andrew starred in the lead role of Melchior in the 2010 Australian premiere of *Spring Awakening* for the Sydney Theatre Company (Artistic Director, Cate Blanchett). Andrew's other theatre roles include productions of *Les Miserables*, lead roles in *Grease*, *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Cosi*, supporting roles in *The Sound of Music*, *Measure for Measure*, and the role of Zeke Baylor in the Australian stage version of Disney's *High School Musical*.

Andrew graduated from the three year course at The Actor's Centre in Sydney in 2008.

Penny McNamee
as CAROL

Since 2002, Penny has been establishing a career as a stage, television and film actress both in Australia and internationally.

In the US, she played a lead role in the feature film *See No Evil* for Lionsgate/WWE Films, a featured role in the HBO miniseries *The Pacific* and a lead role in the Warners Brothers miniseries *Salem's Lot*.

Back home, she is a familiar face on Australian television, playing lead or guest lead roles in the series *Hammer Bay*, *Headland*, *All Saints* and *White Collar Blue*, as well as the lead in the series pilot for *Penrose Street* for Southern Star.

On stage Penny played a lead role in the 2002 Jacobsen/Cameron Macintosh production of *Witches of Eastwick*, for which she was nominated for a Mo Award; the role of *Donna* in the Stables Theatre production of *Hurly Burly*, a role in *Up Close & Musical* at the Sydney Theatre in 2007, and most recently the lead supporting role in *Wicked The Music*, for which she won the Green Room Award for Best Female in a Supporting Role.

Ivy MAK
as MINT

Since graduating from the Ensemble Acting Studios, Ivy has worked on a number of film, television, theatre and radio drama productions. Ivy's feature film credits include the AFI and international award-winning feature film *The Home Song Stories* (director Tony Ayres), Julia Leigh's *Sleeping Beauty*, screened in Un Certain Regard at Cannes in 2011, and *Random 8* due for release in 2012.

Television credits include featured roles in the telefeature *A Model Daughter: the Killing of Caroline Byrne*, *Cops LAC*, *All Saints*, *White Collar Blue* and *Magical Tales*.

Ivy has also written short films that have been screened internationally at New York's First Sundays Comedy Film Festival and the Chicago International Film and Video Festival (winner of a Gold Plaque).

Hugo Johnstone-Burt
as SEB

Hugo graduated from the National Institute of Dramatic Art in 2009. His roles at NIDA included *Jason* in *Rabbit Hole*, directed by Tony Knight and *Jack* in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, directed by Kevin Jackson. Upon graduation, Hugo was immediately cast in the role of Adam Andrew in

ScreenTime's widely successful series *Underbelly: the Golden Mile* directed by Tony Tilse.

Hugo's next role was playing the much-loved character of *Fish Lamb* in the critically acclaimed television adaptation of Tim Winton's classic Australian novel *Cloudstreet* to a six-part mini series.

Hugo's debut feature film role will be seen in the upcoming musical comedy *Goddess.com* directed by Mark Lamprell, and starring singer Ronan Keating and Australian comedian Magda Szubanski. Earlier this year he also played a supporting role in John Duigan's feature film *Careless Love*.

Hugo latest project is the highly anticipated new series for ABC Television, *Miss Fisher's Murder Mysteries* in which he plays the role of *Constable Hugh Collins* opposite Essie Davis.

David Field as DION

With a career spanning over twenty five years, David has performed numerous lead and supporting roles in feature films, telemovies, television series and stage productions. Memorable film roles include *Black Rock*, *Two Hands*, *Chopper*, for which he won the Urban Cinefile Award for Outstanding Performance in a Supporting Role; *The Night We Called It a Day*, which won him the FCCA Award for Best Actor in a Supporting Role; *Getting Square*, AFI Award nominee for Best Actor in a Supporting Role; *The Oyster Farmer*, *West* and *Unfinished Sky*.

On television he played a lead role in two series of *City Homicide* for the Seven Network, and featured or guest roles in the series *Wildside*, *Stingers*, *Blackjack*, *Wilfred* and *Rake*. In 2001 he won the AFI Award for Best Actor in a Telefeature or Mini Series for the telemovie *My Husband My Killer*.

Highlights of David's stage career include the role of *Eddie* in *A View From the Bridge*, the Sydney Theatre Award Winner for Best Actor in a Lead Role; and the role of *Ball* in the STC's production of *Victory*, for which he won a Helpmann Award for Best Male actor in a Supporting Role.

David has directed several stage productions and in 2008 directed the feature film *The Combination*.

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Key Creatives

JOHN DUIGAN **Writer/Director** **Executive Producer**

John Duigan was born in 1949 in Hampshire, England, of an Australian father and an English mother. In 1961 the family moved to Australia. While studying at Melbourne University, Duigan worked as an actor with two of the leading Australian experimental theatre companies, La Mama and The Australian Performing Group. He also acted in several short films, playing leads in Bryan Davies' *Brake Fluid* and Nigel Buest's *Bonjour Balwyn*.

After completing his Masters degree in Philosophy, he began working as a Writer/Director of feature films. A first success, *Mouth to Mouth*, won the Jury Prize at the 1979 Australian Film Awards. For the multi-award winning mini-series *Vietnam*, in which he cast Nicole Kidman in her first dramatic role, he won Best Director at the Penguin Television Awards. Other Australian-based films included *Winter of Our Dreams*, with Bryan Brown and Judy Davis, for which he was nominated for Best Screenplay at the Australian Film Institute Awards, *The Year My Voice Broke*, which won AFIs for Best Film, Best Director and Best Screenplay, the Australian Writer's Guild award for Best Screenplay, Australian Critics Circle award for Best Film and Jury Prize at Rio De Janeiro; *Flirting*, for which he cast a young Naomi Watts in her first screen role, also an AFI Best Film and Critics Circle winner, and *Sirens* with Hugh Grant, Best Film winner at St. Petersburg.

From 1994, he was based mainly in the UK, working there and in the United States over the following twelve years. In Mexico he directed *Romero*, winner of the American Humanitas Prize and Best Film on a Latin-American subject at the Havana Film Festival, *The Journey of August King*, *Molly* and *Lawn Dogs*, winner of the Golden Raven and The Grand Prize of European Fantasy Film at Brussels, and Best Film as chosen by the audience in Athens, Potsdam and Stockholm. In the UK, he directed *The Leading Man* starring Jon Bon Jovi, from a screenplay written by his sister Virginia, *The Parole Officer* starring Steve Coogan, and wrote and directed the telemovie *Paranoid* and the Canadian/UK co-production *Head in the Clouds* starring Charlize Theron and Penelope Cruz, winner of Best Film and Best Director at the Milan International Film Festival and four Genies at the Canadian Film Awards.

John has had three novels published. Between 2005 and 2010, he returned to his studies in Philosophy to work on a text book of secular ethics, after which he resumed work on film in Australia with *Careless Love*. He currently divides his time between Australia and England.

**JENNY DAY:
Producer**

Jenny's long, successful career includes producer roles on short films, feature films and documentaries. Her production credits during the 1970s and early 1980s include the feature films *Mad Max*, *Blue Fin*, *Breaker Morant*, *The Earthling* and *Mad Max 2*.

In the mid 1980s she began a collaboration with filmmaker Bill Bennett, acting as associate producer on his first award-winning feature film *A Street to Die* and producing his next features *Dear Cardholder* and *Jilted*. In 1989 she worked as associate producer on George Ogilvie's feature film *The Crossing*.

During the 1990s she produced the feature film *Resistance*, co-produced the *Blood Brothers* documentary series with Rachel Perkins and Ned Lander, collaborated with Gillian Armstrong on the feature documentary *Not Fourteen Again*, winner of the 1995 AFI Award for Best Documentary, and co-produced Rachel Perkin's first feature film *Radiance*

More recently Jenny has collaborated with director Geoff Burton on the documentary *Mohammed Hossain's Intensive Care* for SBS, co-produced Safina Uberoi's Foxtel award-winning documentary *A Good Man* and collaborated with Gillian Armstrong again to produce the feature documentary *Love Lust & Lies*, which was released theatrically in Australia in 2010 before screening on ABC1.

**GEOFF BURTON
Producer**

Although Geoff is probably best known as one of Australia's leading cinematographers, he has also forged an impressive career as a director of feature films, television dramas, documentaries and dramatised documentaries. Over the years Geoff has collaborated with both John Duigan and Jenny Day on a number of projects.

His credits as a drama director include co-director of the highly successful feature film *The Sum of Us* starring Russell Crowe, John Polson and Jack Thompson, the telemovie *Aftershocks* for SBS and the feature documentary *The Fall of the House*, about the composer Eugene Goossens. As well Geoff has directed a number of broadcast documentaries and dramatised documentaries for ABC TV and the prestigious two-hour special, *Flight Over the Equator* for the Discovery Channel.

Working as director of photography, Geoff has made a total of 46 Australian and US feature films. Most awarded favourite films include *Sunday Too Far Away*, *Storm Boy*, *A Street to Die*, *The Year My Voice Broke*, *Flirting* and *Sirens*. More recently Geoff was DOP on Michael Rowland's feature film *Lucky Miles* and collaborated with Ana Kokkinos on *Blessed*.

KATHRYN MILLISS
Director of Photography

After graduating from Swinburne in the mid 1980s, Kathryn performed a number of roles in the camera departments of feature films, including *Flirting*, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Sirens*, *The Sum of Us* & *To Have and To Hold*. Kathryn in fact worked in every camera department role on John's films, from Clapper Loader on *Flirting* to Focus Puller on *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Sirens*, where she also shot 2nd unit.

In 1996 she was Director of Photography on the feature film *Thank God He Met Lizzie*, directed by Cherie Nowlan. More recent credits as DOP include the award-winning feature documentaries *Helen's War* and *Forbidden Lies* (director Anna Broinowski), and *The Fall of the House* (director Geoff Burton).

As well Kathryn has worked as DOP on numerous television documentaries and documentary series, including *Poms*, *Silma's School*, *Not Forgotten*, *Art House* and *Making of Modern Australia*, and on the Australian chapters of Michael Apted's documentary series *49 and 56 Up*.

COLIN GIBSON
Production Designer

Colin's long and distinguished career in the art department of feature films dates back to 1982 when he acted as standby props on Michael Caulfield's feature film *Fighting Back*. During the 1980s and early 1990s he performed and perfected this role on a number of memorable Australian films including *Bliss*, *The Last Days of Chez Nous*, *Reckless Kelly* and John Duigan's films *Flirting* and *Sirens*.

During the 1990s Colin's credits as art director include the feature films *Young Einstein*, *The Adventures of Priscilla*, *Queen of the Desert* (on which he was also associate producer), *Babe*, *Babe: Pig in the City*, *The Beast*, *Welcome to Woop Woop* and *Nim's Island*.

More recent credits as production designer include the 2001 feature film *Serenades* and the cable television series *Love My Way* and *Dangerous*. He is currently in pre-production for the fourth film in the *Mad Max* series, *Fury Road*.

MARK WARNER
Editor

Before re-locating to Australia eight years ago, Mark had forged an international reputation as the editor of a long list of successful, international feature films.

Dating back to *Rocky III* in 1982, his credits as editor include the feature films *A Soldier's Story*, *Big Trouble in Little China*, *Cocoon: The Return*, *Leap of Faith*, *Rich in Love*, *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* and *The Devil's Advocate*. Mark first collaborated with director Bruce Beresford as editor of his feature film *Double Jeopardy*. For his subsequent editing work on Beresford's 1989 film *Driving Miss Daisy*, Mark received an Academy Award Nomination for Best Editor. More recently he edited *Mao's Last Dancer*, released theatrically in Australia in 2010.

Other editing credits for Australian films include *Like Minds*, *Matching Jack*, *Sanctum*, released theatrically in 2011, and Mark Lamprell's *Goddess.com*, due for a 2012 release.

He is currently working in LA on a new Taylor Hackford feature film.

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Director's Statement – John Duigan

In recent decades, attitudes towards sex have changed radically, and the necessary association between sex and love no longer holds. Sometimes the act of 'love-making' is an expression of love, sometimes merely one of pleasure. Today many single men, and equally as many single women, go out at night entertaining at least the possibility of a fleeting sexual encounter with little expectation that a relationship will result. If it does, well and good, if not, no skin off their nose.

Amongst the many consequences of this shift in attitudes is the fact that, usually for economic reasons, a greater number and range of women may at least contemplate the possibility of working for a period in the sex industry. Increasing numbers of university students, for example, work part-time as prostitutes not only to pay expenses and accommodation, but the fees for their courses, preferring this to the prospect of graduating with a large debt. A few years ago in France, President Chirac was asked in a public forum if he was aware that Government policy towards student tuition costs was turning a whole generation of students into hookers!

On the surface at least, however, these changes in social mores have yet to make inroads in society's principal declared value system. As politicians from right and left alike are fond of proclaiming, the Family is the mainstay of Society. From this perspective, as Linh puts it in *Careless Love*, prostitution is a socially subversive practice at odds with the notion of the faithful couple central to the idealised family unit. Accordingly, prostitutes should be considered social pariahs, and treated as such. They were in the time of Mary Magdalene, and still are to this day, as borne out in the experience of the many prostitutes around the world who at best are ostracised, at worst suffer assault, gang rape or murder at the hands of clients or the self-appointed enforcers of public morals.

For Linh, her family is also important: she chooses to work as an 'escort' (to use the euphemistic term) to help prevent her parents' house from repossession. In so doing, she has to come to terms with the way, as a prostitute, she is perceived by other people - by clients, her fellow students, a group of rugby players, the police, and by those closest to her. It is difficult to maintain a sense of yourself independent of the feedback one gets from those around you, and as she grapples with this on an emotional level, she tries at the same time to analyse her experiences in terms of her university studies.

Most films and television dealing with the sex industry focus on the extremes. On the one hand, the important issues of sexual slavery and trafficking, and of prostitution as a by-product of drug addiction; on the other, the idealised and glamorous world of upmarket call-girls as per the recent UK series *Belle de Jour*, or the Cinderella mythologies of *Pretty*

Woman. In Australia, where most prostitution is legal, reality for the majority of sex workers is almost certainly more prosaic.

Any number of stories could be drawn from this 'mainstream' group; *Careless Love* tells one, describing the experiences of an intelligent young woman negotiating her way through what will be a formative chapter in her life that may or may not leave enduring scars. It also illustrates some of the contradictions inherent in a culture that continuously promotes and celebrates uninhibited sexual behaviour while at the same time preaching the virtues of the faithful nuclear family.

CARELESS LOVE **Reviewed by Bob Ellis**

The Good Whore of Coogee: Duigan's Careless Love

For twenty odd years John Duigan's *The Year My Voice Broke* was the best Australian film -- till *Beneath Hill 60*, *Snowtown* and *Samson and Delilah* overtook it, in my view. And *Careless Love*, his latest, is in its league. Like most of his work it has confidence, clarity, wit, the range and force of a novel, superb individuated performances and a morally troubling narrative.

It is about a university student who works as a prostitute part-time; not, as is often the case, to pay her fees and rent, for she has a scholarship, but to send money back to her father, a laid-off worker still waiting for his coastal South Australian factory to reopen, who is now behind in his mortgage and may lose the family house, and, as a Vietnamese boat-person grown old and pathetic, will get no mercy from the smarmy white bank manager if he defaults.

Linh, the student, finds in the course of the film a boyfriend, Jack, who does not know what she is doing at night -- she claims she is in the library, studying late -- nor suspect her of any romantic duplicity, though he himself is not quite finished, it seems, with a former love he has difficulty shedding. Linh tries to keep her two different lives 'in different parts of my head'. She whores, she reads, she takes notes, she shares a bed with her mild-mannered bloke, she has sex with him, she has nightmares, he observes her nocturnal distress, she is always short of sleep, she comes late to classes, she is sometimes in physical danger, once with half a football team.

She has for a while a relationship, paid but affectionate, with a bearded American painter and art collector and winter surfer of indeterminate age who may be CIA; and she copes, narrowly, with her two lives, visiting her father and mother and brother in Port Augusta and lying, effectively, about her arrangements. She has the makings of a good university tutor,

a moral philosopher, an actress, a novelist, an activist, a party leader. And her father, believing she is a 'fashion model', lavishly paid, continues to service the mortgage with her large mysterious earnings, not questioning her too much, not wanting to know.

Though rarely naked in the scenes we are shown, we sense that she is good at her job. She answers with wit but remains submissive, plays dumb and virginal, when this is required, with a clanking heavy accent in pidgin English. She plays smart when that is amusing to them, before she submits to their gross penetrations and impotent failures. She hears out the lofty theories of the obese, effusive dimwits whom she eventually goes down on. She plays, for an hour or so, the good wife, the mistress, the incestuous daughter, the naughty smackable schoolgirl; and then she goes back to her studies.

And this for a hundred years or so has been, I suppose, a common story of our modern age, a frequent unprinted memoir of tens of thousands of 'liberated' girls in other towns, more so since foreign students have studied here and needed, from time to time, to send money back to their families. The division of self it requires is easier of course in another country, a far-off city, a metropolitan drug-affected student coffee-house culture. Sometimes it goes no further than nude modelling. Sometimes it includes blue movies; sometimes urination; chains; whips; thongs; tattoos. But it is always, always, in whatever decade, an avid swift seizing of the brief and fleeting interim of youth and beauty and Fast Lane living to make money out of it while it lasts, money you then spend elsewhere -- on drugs or on jewellery sometimes, no doubt, but sometimes, as here, on what might be called, without scorn, 'family values'.

As befits the story, we sometimes do not know if she is lying, and we do not find out. As befits the story, we see an older, coarser Asian woman in the same trade, a version of what she may turn into, being buggered by two cops over a car boot and being unable to help her. Always a violent end is near and she, like the raucous older strumpet should get out fast. Next week, perhaps. Next Tuesday.

The many male customers are drawn in depth in varying degrees of repulsiveness, pathos, perversity and physical threat. We fear she may be killed, and know she shares that feeling. We are sometimes reassured by her pimp Dion, played by David Field, a brutish, wily, stoic, working-class, fair-go Aussie man who knows she will scarper eventually and looks out for her nonetheless, not himself having sex with her because that is not the deal; and by her CIA friend Luke, who brandishes a gruff Bogartish insouciance and will, we believe, look after her. But we always fear for her.

We realise with a shock towards the end that the shadowy, secretive sub-Kafka nightmare she is in is a legal business venture, responsibly administered by tax-paying citizens who put their girls through compulsory government health-checks; and the money she earns by, say, test-driving a new vibrator in a room full of beaming coked-up wanking students is not ill-gotten or unacceptable. It is a normal, accustomed, sanctioned, free market business pursuit in a global economy.

Which raises the question, of course, of what in fact is wrong with what

she is doing? Anything? And why should she lose her future in academia or suburbia or true love if she is found out? And will she, in fact? Or is the world a little different now? A little more tolerant? Maybe. Maybe it is.

This is a wonderful film, raising as all fine drama does big questions of how a society is run, where justice truly lies and what are the lineaments of evil and good we see overlapping and intermingling in characters here before us. And who among us if used against his deserts would 'scape whipping, as Hamlet of Elsinore asks of Ophelia, the pregnant girl he carelessly whanged and cast aside.

It is, one might venture to say, John Duigan's companion-piece, thirty years on, of his earlier, grimmer urban fable *Winter Of Our Dreams*, about a sadder, smack-smitten, lovelorn hooker played by Judy Davis and her nervy junkie roommate, played by Baz Luhrman. They should be seen soon in a double feature, as the measure of a calm and capable auteur whose work, now and then, touches the hem of greatness.

The lighting and composition of Kathryn Milliss is majestic, assured and revelatory. It is like seeing Sydney for the first time, with its tropical palms and unexpected night harbour vistas, its candlelit dinner parties, morning joggers and sudden thundering rainstorms. The set design by Colin Gibson is wonderful, though a fair bit of it seems to be Duigan's unaltered Coogee flat, a work of art itself which he uses deftly and modestly.

Peter O'Brien, who plays Luke, has an impact like George C. Scott and may be a future superstar. Nammi Le, who plays Linh, is one I think already. All the parts are well played, Andrew Hazzard especially as Jack who is a ringer for the young Peter Weir and will appeal as Hugo Weaving did to the next generation of doctors' wives, and Ivy Mak, as the older prostitute Mint, a coarse, unstaunchable, vulgar tower of strength.

Duigan's script is as good as anything by Ruth Praver Jubhvala, the adaptation, it seems, of a classic novel as yet unwritten, and his direction as quiet and measured and unostentatious and lucid as that of Louis Malle or James Ivory.
