

the guide

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT



ADVOCACY FILMMAKING: Polly Green plans to use her Makorori Beach home as a base for both humanitarian projects, and the commercial work she does to fund them. Picture by Rebecca Grunwell

Humanitarian film in finals at LA festival

FILM
by Kristine Walsh

WHEN Polly Green took up white-water kayaking, she knew the thrill of the ride was never going to be enough. She decided that, if she was going to go for it, she was going to go hard: "I told myself that I was going to be the world champion."

That particular gong eluded her — the closest she came being the fifth placing she earned at the world champs in Austria six years ago. But today she has another, equally lofty, goal. Now reinvented as a filmmaker, she says she's aiming to earn a gold statuette at the Academy Awards.

US-born Green is already well on her way. Her debut short documentary, *Nomads* (2006), screened at more than 30 international film festivals and won half a dozen prizes, including Best Paddling Documentary (Reel Film Festival, Canada) and the Activism Through Adventure Award (Boulder Adventure Film Festival, US).

And the follow-up, *Soft Power Health* — again about kayaker Dr Jessie Stone's humanitarian aid efforts in Uganda — is tipped to get just as much attention. Green this month left for Los Angeles where *Soft Power* will be screened at the My Hero Short Film Festival, where it is a finalist for the Dan Eldon Activist Award.

With *Soft Power* fresh from the editing suite at her Makorori Beach home, it is just the beginning of a release Green hopes will be even more successful than that enjoyed by *Nomads*.

"My passion is telling stories about people doing positive things," she says. "And the My Hero festival is the perfect platform to showcase films that honour heroes from around the world."

My passion is telling stories about people doing positive things . . . and the My Hero festival is the perfect platform to showcase films that honour heroes from around the world

— POLLY GREEN

Green has, it could be said, used kayaking as a vehicle to take her into the world of filmmaking.

As a fine arts student at the University of Colorado, she was already a hardcore sportswoman when she took it up in the early 1990s.

Travelling the world to compete and teach kayaking, she used photography as a creative outlet.

That was until 2000 when she helped out on a National Geographic expedition in Vietnam. With the help of a supportive National Geographic crew member, she envisaged a new career in filmmaking and her travels took her to a small village in Uganda where she wrote and produced *Nomads*.

The following year she was the videographer for *Blue Planet Run*, a 95-day, 24-hour relay run around the world, founded to raise awareness about the need for clean drinking water. And she also produced *Running for Water*, a documentary about the run and the clean drinking water issue.

Green says her production company, Flair Films, is dedicated to "creating films that are inspiring, empowering and help create positive change in the world".

To do so requires a bit of travel from the filmmaker — a bit of a nomad herself. Having put down roots at the beach settlement just out of Gisborne, however, she hopes to spend more time at her homely hillside bach.

"There will be a lot of travelling for *Soft Power* and if I want to get it out there, that's just what I have to do," she says. "But I would really like to spend more time at home so am looking forward to doing more work in New Zealand."

That commitment to working in her adopted country has already borne fruit. Green has this year created a show reel for local DJ Hat (Jeremy Derbyshire) and a video for her countryman Peter Dickson — a writer/filmmaker, now also based in Gisborne — to promote his latest book.

Next on the list is a piece about Maori carving on the East Coast, to be produced for Tairawhiti Museum under the direction of artist Jo Tito.

And Green has also established a new arm to her operation — *homestoview.net* — which offers videographer services to commercial clients.

Projects like this, she hopes, will help fund her humanitarian filmmaking.

"I really want to keep that focus on telling stories that empower people, especially women," she says. "Wanting to win a gold medal was all very well, but this work just feels like it has a lot more substance to it."

The facts

■ Polly Green's film, *Soft Power Health*, screens at the My Hero Short Film Festival in Los Angeles on November 21.

■ A fine arts graduate, Green was a professional white-water kayaker before committing to filmmaking full-time.

■ Her focus is on making humanitarian films "that empower people . . . especially women".

■ Green's next project — in collaboration with artist Jo Tito — is a short documentary on Maori carving on the East Coast, commissioned by Tairawhiti Museum.

Inside The Guide

■ Compelled to co-ordinate a fundraising album for Plunket, singer/songwriter Monique Rhodes is in Gisborne this week to sing for a good cause — pg 24

■ Between them band members have a musical history wider than the ocean and a shared love of Queens of the Stone Age . . . and LugaRu are ready to unleash that on a possibly unsuspecting audience — pg 25

■ There is still a week to go before the Gisborne leg of the NZ Film Festival comes to an end so, without so much as a popcorn bribe, reviewer John Gillies agreed to sneak a peek — pg 26

Local pair represent home team at Big Day Out '10 — Guide has tickets to win



BIG GIG: Former Gisborne drummer Chris Livingston (left) and bass player Anaru Ngata (right) who, with guitarist Tristan Dingemans (HDU), make up Mountaineater which will next year play the Big Day Out.

ENTERTAINMENT

GISBORNE drummer Chris Livingston is a long-time fan of former Flying Nun noisy band HDU, as is bass player Anaru Ngata who, like Livingston, is currently based in Dunedin.

So both, it's fair to say, were pretty pleased when they got the chance to meet HDU frontman Tristan Dingemans at a gig — even more so when he invited them to join him for a jam.

The result was the trio Mountaineater in which Livingston, Ngata and Dingemans play an atmospheric squall of

Turn to page 25

Creative Tairawhiti 2009
Art Mart

Sunday Nov 29th
10 - 2pm
Marina Park

Artisans selling handmade items, sculpture, furniture, clothing, jewellery, crafts (no cheap imports)

RAIN DATE: SUNDAY DECEMBER 6TH



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Warhol's 'thrilling' Jackson portrait sells for over \$1 million

A THRILLER-era silk-screened portrait of Michael Jackson created by Andy Warhol sold at auction this week for \$NZ1,033,000 to an anonymous collector. The 1984 portrait depicts a smiling Jackson in a jacket with squiggles of red and yellow in his hair. The seller was also anonymous, a private collector based in New York who bought the image from the Andy Warhol Foundation in the 1990s. — AP

Day schedule allows for R&V plan

THERE is yet another roll-out of acts to be announced for this year's Rhythm & Vines, the New Year's Eve mega-music festival to be held at Waiohika Estate, just out of Gisborne.



three days of the festival, but can get to just one or two.

The day schedule for acts announced thus far is:

December 29

Moby; The Editors (pictured); Biffy Clyro; Roots Manuva; Future of the Left; Major Lazer Sound System; White Rabbits; Ajax; Bag Gang; Opensouls; Sola Rosa;

When it is, keep an eye on The Guide for the chance to win free tickets to R&V 2009.

In the meantime, team R&V have outlined their day schedule. This is good news for those who may not be able to go for the full

Raiders; Bang Turn to page 25

Xmas cheer all goes to Plunket

ENTERTAINMENT

THOUGH usually based in France, singer/songwriter Monique Rhodes was last year in Rotorua — as part of a nationwide tour with Shona Laing — when the sentences were passed down in the Nia Glassie child abuse case.

In a roundabout way it was that, she says, that made her commit to working to make a positive difference to the lives of families whenever the opportunity arose.

And it is that commitment that this week leads her to Gisborne.

Rhodes is again on tour, this time to promote the Plunket fundraiser album Merry Christmas Baby, for which she has gifted the song Forever Strong.

Rhodes says that, when she and Laing left Rotorua all those months ago, they picked up a 16-year-old hitchhiker whose story only strengthened her resolve. "She told us that it was her baby's second birthday and she was trying to get to Tauranga to see him," Rhodes says.

"Despite it being sex with a minor when she conceived the child at 13, the father had been given custody — a decision you might question if you had seen him, as we did, when we pulled up. No child in sight, walking up the street with his two friends, drinking a bourbon and coke from a bottle and his only greeting to the mother of his child being a rude hand gesture.

"She was young but she was determined to be part of her child's life. Where was her support? Who was there to help her and her child?"

Rhodes says that, coincidentally, around the same time she and Laing were asked to support Plunket Wanganui, which they did.

"I could see there were volunteers all over New Zealand who were trying to fundraise for their communities so they could offer Plunket services to local families," she said. "So I decided that the power of music could help make the change in our mindset that this violence towards children must stop and that's where Forever Strong came from."

Rhodes then approached fellow musicians — among them Opshop, Jordan Luck, Jackie Clarke, House of Shem, Annie Crummer, Whirimako Black, Laing, Kirsten Morrell, Nathan King, and Hollie Smith — to contribute songs to a fundraising Christmas album to benefit Plunket, and says "the response from this staggering roll-call of Kiwi musicians was amazing".

Gisborne promoter Jane Egan says that, while entry to Rhodes' gig this weekend is free, she hoped audience members would support the cause by buying a copy of Merry Christmas Baby.

And according to national Plunket president Carol Becker, money raised through sales of the album will stay in the area where it is purchased to help local communities.

Rhodes says that she just hopes it will make a difference: "It is my Christmas wish that, with the help of this album, our children have the chance of a good life."

■ Monique Rhodes plays at Bushmore Estate this Sunday from 2pm.



MERRY CHRISTMAS, BABY: It's not her own career she's promoting on the tour that this week brings her to Gisborne... singer/songwriter Monique Rhodes is instead on a fundraising drive for Plunket.



VISUAL ARTS EXHIBITIONS

■ **Te Wananga o Aotearoa** — Tuturutanga, final exhibition of the year featuring ta moko, sculpture, ceramics, carving, weaving and painting. (Opens tomorrow.)

■ **PaulNache** — New works by Brian Campbell, Valerie Bos (pictured above), Irene Ferguson & Michael Harrison.

■ **Kahukura Gallery** — To Celebrate Diwali, arts and crafts from India and Aotearoa.

■ **Tairawhiti Museum & Art Gallery** — Introduced & Naturalised, by Lina Marsh; Ornament: The Art of Pleasure; The Rutherford Trust Collection.

■ **Studio 66 (upstairs, Poverty Bay Club)** — Works by contemporary jewellers including Helena Andersson, Joanna Campbell & Zita Wespel-Rose.

■ **Zest Cafe** — Landscape Altering, new works by Erika Holden.

■ **Cafe Villaggio** — Capture The Moment, photographs on canvas by Merlene McGuffog.

Poledancing a new outlet for 'niece's' artistic genes

NATALIE Te Kanawa, who says she is Dame Kiri Te Kanawa's niece, is expressing the family's artistic genes in a whole new direction — poledancing.

Te Kanawa the younger has brought together poledancers from both sides of the Tasman for a national championship which starts in Melbourne today.

"This is a competition designed to showcase all the styles of pole from across Australia" she said.

"The inclusion of men allows a demonstration of the circus and acrobatic pole that is often overlooked when people talk about pole dance."

Te Kanawa said that in 2005 there were only six companies teaching pole dancing in Australia, but today there are over 120. — NZPA

Artists unite for street-style Experience!

ENTERTAINMENT

THE organiser of a visual and music arts event being staged this weekend says he just wanted to provide the opportunity "for artists to get their stuff out there".

Louis Moeau — otherwise known as hip hop producer/performer O.M.G — has pulled together a line-up of musicians to perform all day at the Grey Street Skate Park.

And while the emphasis is hip hop and r&b heavy, it doesn't stop there. Indie foursome The Dead Exes (formerly The In-Outs) will be on the bill alongside the likes of reggae band Sons Of Io; rappers Ashak, Raf & Cast, ADB Wreckords, Shamuda, S.O.E, Bludline and Mr Skar; and DJs JX and Ren.

The entire event, dubbed The Experience!, will be interactive. Moeau has been spreading the word among techtonic, shuffle, puzzle, break and krump dancers to ensure there is a good turn-out



EAST COAST EXPERIENCE: Hip pop/rhythm and blues performer Shamuda (Shayne Biddle) is part of a big line-up booked to play the Skate Park this weekend.

for the displays and competitions.

And though special boards have been set up for graffiti artists to demonstrate their artform, a spare one will be available so "anyone who thinks they have the skills" can have a go.

"There's just a donation for that, and they get a can of paint that they can work with," Moeau says. "They

just have to make sure that the can gets turned in at the end of the day."

■ The Experience! will be on at the Grey Street Skate Park this Saturday (10am-4.30pm).

LAWSON FIELD Theatre
THURSDAY, November 19, 7.30pm
Sue Nicholson
Join Sensing Murder psychic Sue for an up-close and personal evening of connection with The Other Side

WAR MEMORIAL Theatre
WEDNESDAY, November 25, 7.30pm
The Barbirolli Quartet
Prize-winners of the Royal Over-Seas League International Music Competition — London

WAR MEMORIAL Theatre
FRIDAY, November 13, 8pm
Carl Barron
Carl has performed in the Comedy Festival for the past 5 years

Tickets available at
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"The audience loved every minute of it..." DOMINION POST

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► **Guidegossip**

'Climate change blockbuster' asks hard questions

AS a way of raising awareness, the Earth Centre is promoting a special screening of the film The Age Of Stupid, which is pitched as being a "climate change blockbuster".

The film is a drama-documentary-animation hybrid which stars Pete Postlethwaite as a man living alone in the devastated world of 2055, watching archive footage from 2008 and asking "Why didn't we stop climate change when we had the chance?"

It screens at the Odeon Multiplex on November 19 (8pm).

► **Theguide**

MUSIC

- **Cosmopolitan Club** — Live music from popular Auckland entertainers Caviar; tomorrow.
- **The Winemaker's Daughters** — Tribute to Queens of the Stone Age and more from local band LugaRu, with support from Swallowmoth; tomorrow.
- **Smash Palace** — Live heavy metal for Friday the 13th with local bands Horsamiss, Exile & Deathciple; tomorrow.
- **Sessions Bar** — Ten-piece rock-reggae band Three Houses Down on their Breakout album release tour; tomorrow.
- **Poverty Bay Club** — 38:40 DJ collective, with DJ Robba; tomorrow.
- **Grey Street Skate Park** — The Experience!, with live music all day plus dance and graffiti art demonstrations and competitions; Saturday.
- **The Rivers** — TRAMPS open mic for acoustic music & poetry; Saturday (from 2pm).
- **The Irish Rover (upstairs)** — Katchafire, one of the country's premier reggae bands; Saturday.
- **Soho Bar** — DJ Reclouse, aka Matthew Chicoine, bringing an eclectic set incorporating tropical, techno & funk; Saturday.
- **Bushmere Estate** — Live music from France-based NZ singer/song-writer Monique Rhodes; Sunday (2pm)
- **Tatapouri Sports Fishing Club** — The Brothers Brown . . . Mike & Bill play the classics; Sunday (3pm)

COMEDY

- **War Memorial Theatre** — Observational humour from top Aussie comedian Carl Barron; tomorrow.

COMING UP

- **DJ Franky D Roose** — Sounds that have "one foot in the seventies, one foot in the eighties, and a head in the noughties". Winston's Bar (Poverty Bay Club); November 20.
- **NRG** — Live music from popular local band. Cosmopolitan Club; November 20.
- **Acoustic Open Mic Night** — Register on the night and have a go. Plus a showcase performance from Big Water. Poverty Bay Club; November 20.
- **Charlie & The Sweet Factory** — Over 100 performers in the Nadine Antoinette School of Dance end of year show. War Memorial Theatre; November 21 (1.30pm & 6pm).
- **MC/DJ duo Robba & Dreadeye** — Drum 'n Bass, Breaks & Deep Electro, delivered with support from DJ Gadgit. Soho Bar; November 21.
- **The Angry B/Vers** — Live blues. Bushmere Estate; November 22.
- **Poverty Bay Blues Inc** — Monthly jam night. Poverty Bay Club; November 24.
- **The Barbirolli Quartet** — The best chamber music ensemble the Royal Overseas League could find. Lawson Field Theatre; November 25.
- **The Ultimate Gig** — Supporting the It's Not Ok anti-violence campaign. Featuring MCs, DJs, fire fairies and more. Marina Park; November 27 (from 5pm).
- **Just 'n Time** — Live music from Shannon trio. Cosmopolitan Club; November 27.
- **The Nervous Surgeons** — Pop/punk trio, with The Dead Exes (formerly The In-Outs). The Winemaker's Daughters; November 27.
- **Tommy & the Fallen Horses** — High energy rock reggae, with support from LRG. Soho Bar; November 28.
- **Kitt Higgins & Friends** — Live music. Bushmere Estate; November 29.
- **Creative Tairawhiti Art Mart** — Annual showcase for hand-crafted goods. Marina Park; November 29.

Got something going on?
Let The Guide know at guide@gisborneherald.co.nz,
or telephone 869-0635.

LugaRu bring years of experience to the stage

MEMBERS of Gisborne band LugaRu may not be able to spell that well — the legendary lupine creature after which they've named themselves is actually the loup-garou — but they sure can play. Between them the four members have occupied spaces in more than a dozen bands.

For much of that time they have worked on original music, drummer Robbie Bloomfield in bands like Flat Hamster Man and Wretched Skinny; singer/guitarist Rubin Anderson in the likes of Chaos Engine and East Witch; guitarist Brendan Crennell in acts including Burning Iris, Mail Order Brides, and Audient; and bass player Hilton Goldsmith in outfits from The Z-Cup Mama to Makuzi Three.

For Goldsmith, though, a lot of fun was to be had from a side-project he worked on while living in Wellington — a band that played tribute to Californian quartet Kyuss which, he says, "was like Black Sabbath on steroids".

And when he returned to Gisborne he infected his new bandmates with a similar enthusiasm, except this time around they pay homage to Kyuss frontman Josh Homme's next band, Queens of the Stone Age.

"It works for us because we know it is music that people really enjoy . . . sort of rock and roll with a new-age twist," says Crennell. "We see it as a way of getting our sound really tight before we get focused on working on original songs."

That's if they get the chance to do that. The few gigs LugaRu have played to date have, by all accounts, been a blast.

And it's not over yet. They have a gig planned for tomorrow, with support from Swallow Moth (formerly Insane Asylum), made up of Goldsmith's sister Gana Goldsmith on guitar, along with bassist Amy Maynard and drummer Kayla Turei.

■ **LugaRu and Swallow Moth play at The Winemaker's Daughters tomorrow.**



Brendan Crennell (guitar), Rubin Anderson (guitar/vocals), Rob Bloomfield (drums) & Hilton Goldsmith (bass).

Passion Pit lead BDO's second roll-out of acts

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noise, first releasing it to much acclaim at a gig in Port Chalmers in October last year.

Since then, they've toured steadily, playing venues in locations from Nelson to Napier. And now they've been named as one of the acts to appear at January's Big Day Out music extravaganza in Auckland.

■ **In Livingston and Ngata, Dingemans has found a rhythm section capable of joining him on some of the most mind-blowing guitar journeys known to man** ▶

— BDO 2010

Mountaineater was among the second roll-out of national and international acts announced yesterday, the others being Passion Pit, Simian Mobile Disco (DJ), Sasha, Jet, Midnight Youth, Head Like A Hole, Beenie Man, Devendra Banhart, The Veils, Deja Voodoo, Kidz In Space, Cairo Knife Fight, True Lovers, Bandicoot, Lord of Tigers, and The Silent Disco.

They join acts including Muse, The Mars Volta, Lily Allen, Kora, Groove Armada, Kasabian, Dizzee Rascal, PNC, Peaches, Ladyhawke, Girl Talk, Dimmer, Rise Against, Mastodon, Karnivool, The Horrors, Gin Wigmore, Powderfinger, Calvin Harris, Eskimo Joe, The Temper Trap, Minuit, James Duncan, and The Checks to make up what is becoming an intriguingly diverse line-up for 2010.

► **Guidegiveaway**

It will cost around \$130 a pop to be part of the Big Day Out crowd at Auckland's Mt Smart Stadium on January 15 — unless you can get in for free. The Guide has to give away two tickets to BDO 2010. To be in to win, just name two former Gisborne musicians who will be on the bill and your name will go in the draw.

Entries by next Tuesday to The Guide, c/o The Gisborne Herald, P O Box 1143, Gisborne or guide@gisborneherald.co.nz

John Butler Trio saved for last night

Lisa Mitchell; Dane Rumble; PNC; P Money; Optimus Gryme; Vital Sound System; Jason Howson; P Vans; R.I.A.; DJ Robba & MC Dreadeye; and more.

December 30

Empire of the Sun; 2manydjs (live); LCD Sound System (DJ); Fake Blood; The Juan McLean; The Proxy (live); Kora; State of Mind; Iva Lunkum; The Family Cactus; An Emerald City; Bionic Pixie; Brand New Math; Dictaphone Blues; Vital Sound System; Dan Farley; Bondi House DJs; Dean Campbell; Nick D; 38:40; Shirtpants; Alex Bull, Beat Mafia; and more.

December 31

John Butler Trio; Krafty Kuts; Midnight Youth; The Checks; Emerson Todd; Dick Johnson; Computers Want Me Dead; Six60; Blackbird; Antiform; Dan Aux; Tim Richards; Aural Trash; Joel Armstrong; Logan Baker; Vital Sound System; Cam Robertson; BrazilBeat Sound System; Mikey Havoc; Cool Kids Club; Maya & Vanya; Ange; DJ Hat; DJ Lotion; and more.

■ **R&V 2009 will be on at Waiohika Estate on December 29, 30 & 31. Tickets at rhythmandvines.co.nz or at Ticketmaster.**

Friday 13

Caviar

A top band from Auckland, regular at the Cossie, great entertainers, a must if you want a great night out. 8pm in Endeavour Lounge till late.



Friday 20

NRG

Great local band, talent to burn, you know them, don't miss them. 8pm in Boulevard Bar till late.



Friday 27

Just'n Time

Top trio from Shannon, don't miss out, treat yourself to a fun night of dancing and singing. 8pm in Boulevard Bar till late.

Members, affiliated members and visitors welcome

GISBORNE COSMOPOLITAN CLUB
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Website www.gisbornecossie.co.nz



Numbers show Gisborne leg of festival in good health

THE Gisborne leg of the 2009 International Film Festival rolls over into its second half this week with just six days to go until the films are shipped back to Wellington.

Ten of this year's picks have already screened at host venue the Odeon Multiplex and there is another 14 to go before the festival closes next Wednesday, many of those The Guide favourites including claymation wonder *Mary & Max*; modern architecture porn *Visual Acoustics*; post-apartheid exploration *Disgrace*; and charming Japanese anime *Ponyo*.

The festival screens in Auckland, Wellington, Christchurch and Dunedin, as well as 12 provincial cities around the country, including Gisborne.

When he popped in to see The Guide last year, festival director Bill Gosden said that, for provincial venues, the festival was never going to be a money-spinner.

"Most theatres will get the same number of patrons at a couple of screenings of a James Bond film as they will at screenings of 25 festival films so there is a lot of work involved," he said.

"It's more about providing a service . . . about giving people access to films they might not otherwise see."

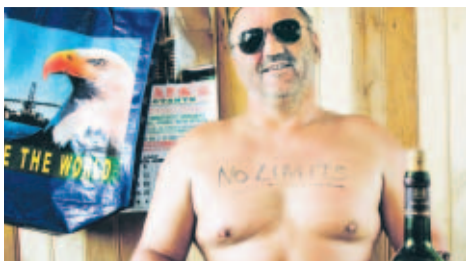
With numbers attending festival films at "a couple of thousand" annually, Gosden described Gisborne as not the strongest centre in terms of attendance, "but not the weakest either".

That, however, was before his staff had calculated the figures from last year's festival, which revealed that, in 2008, attendances in Gisborne had gone up 24 percent from the previous year.

"We hope this trend continues to ensure the future success of the festival," said publicist Rebecca McMillan.

Film selection is, of course, key to the success of any festival and Gosden has had some cracker picks for the 2009 Gisborne programme.

The Guide asked reviewer John Gillies to check out a couple that have yet to be shown — *Big River Man* (screening tonight at 8.15pm and on Sunday at 4.30pm); and *OSS 117: Lost In Rio* (screening Saturday at 8pm and Monday at 6pm).



BIG RIVER MAN (USA/UK, 120 minutes)

"CHARACTER-driven" is an understatement for the Film Festival documentary *Big River Man*.

At the heart of the film is Martin Strel, a 52-year-old Slovenian who wants to swim the Amazon River.

A barrel-shaped, big-drinking eccentric, Martin has the look of a prize-fighter who leads with his face.

Our guide is Martin's son Borut, whose love and admiration for his father is tempered by acceptance of his peculiarities. Borut is the organiser, publicist and interviewee on the Strel sponsorship drive. Navigator and all-round gofer for the expedition is Matt, who ditches his supermarket job for unpaid adventure and torment.

And then comes the Amazon — a mighty, brooding presence that threatens to possess them all.

We learn about Martin from the outside in. Under the direction of John Maringouin, Borut tells us Martin's long-distance swimming began as a child when he fled one of many beatings by jumping into a river and swimming until his father gave up following from the bank.

Now he swims some of the world's dirtiest, most endangered rivers to highlight the ravages of pollution. But you get the feeling something else is going on.

Before this, Martin had swum the Danube, the Mississippi and the Yangtze, creating records and damaging his health.

He dices with death in the Amazon, too, but it's his mental health that causes most concern.

After nearly 3300 miles of heartbreaking effort, he emerges successful. But what price success?



OSS 117: Lost In Rio (France, 101 minutes)

SPY spoofs can be fun.

With a pedigree that includes Matt Helm, Derek Flint, Napoleon Solo, Maxwell Smart, Austin Powers and James Bond, film and television spies have often refused to take themselves seriously.

Now add to the list Hubert Bonisseur de la Bath, the protagonist in the International Film Festival's *OSS 117: Lost in Rio* . . . agent "cent dix-sept" is every bit as funny as Don Adams's 86, but more po-faced.

The year is 1967, the place Rio de Janeiro, and French spy Hubert is forced into an accommodation with Israeli secret service Mossad.

Hubert assumes his Mossad-assigned female sidekick must be a secretary, then praises her motherhood potential.

When she rebuffs his advances with a catalogue of his faults, the only one he objects to is "tacky dresser".

For broad farce, though, my favourite scene is Hubert's attempt to prove his "provider" credentials by roasting crocodile on a spit.

OSS 117 had his genesis in a series of novels popular in France 50 years ago and director Michel Hazanavicius and star Jean Dujardin resurrected the character — complete with cussed stereotyping — for the film *Cairo, Nest of Spies*.

Lost in Rio is their second effort. I'd love to have seen the first.

■ The 2009 International Film Festival continues at the Odeon Multiplex until November 18. Programmes available at the venue, or on-line at nzff.co.nz

Filmguide

NEW RELEASES

NZ International Film Festival

A week to go with a schedule of 24 films. Full programmes available on-line (nzff.co.nz) or at the Odeon Multiplex.

The Vintner's Luck

A winemaker is coached by an angel in this fantasy set in the early 19th Century, based on the novel by Kiwi writer Elizabeth Knox.

2012

Apocalyptic sci-fi thriller following a researcher who, through a parallel universe, makes contact with his double in an effort to prevent the catastrophic prophecies of the ancient Mayan calendar from coming to pass.

Saw VI

With the now-deceased Jigsaw still directing events from beyond the grave, Hoffman emerges as the next heir to the killer's twisted legacy.



The Soloist (pictured above)

About the relationship between real-life musical genius Nathaniel Anthony Ayers, who dropped out of Julliard and became homeless after developing schizophrenia, and journalist Steve Lopez, who "discovers" the former classical prodigy.

NOW SHOWING

This Is It

Michael Jackson takes a final bow in this concert film featuring footage of the late star as he practised for the 100 shows in London that never came to be.

A Christmas Carol

Ebenezer Scrooge (Jim Carrey) begins the Christmas holiday with his usual miserly contempt. But when the ghosts of Christmas Past, Present and Yet to Come take him on an eye-opening journey, he must open his heart to undo years of ill will.

The Imaginarium of Dr Parnassus

Immortal 1000-year-old Doctor Parnassus leads a travelling troupe that offers audiences a chance to go beyond reality through a magical mirror. But now the devil has come to collect on the deal Parnassus made with him.

Wendy & Lucy

Disillusioned with Indiana, Wendy packs up her car heads for Alaska, but finds herself stranded in a small Oregon town with no money and only her faithful dog, Lucy, to keep her company.

Julia & Julia

A secretary embarks on a year-long quest to cook all 524 recipes in Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, chronicling her trials in a blog that catches on with the food crowd.

For daily listings, check the classified advertising pages of The Gisborne Herald.



A FINE FINN: Finnish soprano Karita Mattila's performance in the title role of *Tosca* for the Metropolitan Opera (above) is the first time she has sung the part outside her native country.

Met Opera series is confirmed

TALKS about whether the Met Opera film series would screen in Gisborne and if so, at which cinema, have been concluded with the Odeon Multiplex taking the 2009/2010 series.

Distributors Rialto have committed to reviewing that next year but, in the meantime, the Odeon remains just one of 16 New Zealand theatres to screen the films, shot live at New York's Metropolitan Opera.

"The new series is a wonderful balance of repertory that includes four new works and a number of great operas that haven't been performed for a long time," says Met musical director James Levine.

The nine-film new series starts in Gisborne this month with Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* screening on November 29 (4pm) and December 2 (1pm).

The line-up continues with:

- *Aida* (December 20 & December 23)
- *Turandot* (January 17 & January 20)
- *The Tales of Hoffman* (February 7 & February 10)
- *Der Rosenkavalier* (February 28 & March 3)
- *Carmen* (March 7 & March 10)
- *Simon Boccanegra* (March 28 & March 31)
- *Hamlet* (April 25 & April 28)
- *Armida* (May 31 & June 2)

"*Tosca* combines Puccini's glorious musical inspiration with the melodramatic vitality of one of the great Hitchcock films," Levine says.

The opera tells the story of three people — a famous opera singer, a free-thinking painter, and a sadistic chief of police — caught in a net of love and politics. Finnish soprano Karita Mattila sings the title role for the first time outside her

native country.

Tosca opened in some centres at the weekend and Rialto's Andrew Shreeve said that any fears he'd held about an "opera overload" proved to be unfounded.

"Many cinemas held sell-out sessions which were not seen at this level in either of the two earlier series," he said. "This is pleasing and very encouraging for the season ahead."

Aida had already begun screening at some venues in Australia and the response there was equally encouraging, he added.

"I have just heard that they observed their best attendances ever, with most cinemas adding extra encore sessions to cope with an unprecedented level of demand."

■ Tickets for the Met Opera films are available at the Odeon Multiplex (\$30 and \$25 for concessions).

Actors pair up to tell tale of 'world's first transsexual'

OSCAR-winners Gwyneth Paltrow and Nicole Kidman are to play husband and wife in an upcoming film about the world's first transsexual.

Paltrow, 37, and Kidman 42, will play artists Greta and Einar Wegener in *The Danish Girl*, entertainment industry newspaper *Daily Variety* has reported.

Einar Wegener, who will be played by Kidman, was a male artist who underwent groundbreaking surgery to become a woman in 1931 after pretending to be a female model in a series of successful portraits painted by Greta Wegener.

South African actress Charlize Theron had initially been pencilled in for the role of Greta Wegener until being replaced by Paltrow. — AFP