

THE YOUNG GUNS

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Forget the slacker factor. These 29 under-thirtysomethings are moving too fast to slow down now. Meet the people creating the future of pop culture.

Sydney writer, director and warehouse-dweller Gregor Jordan, 28, is still basking in the success of his three-minute-something film *Swinger*, which won the Jury Prize for short film at the Cannes Film Festival in May. Jordan has just returned from the US with actress Jacqui McKenzie (they met at the screening of *Angel Baby* at the Brisbane International Film Festival in August) after being invited to attend the Telluride Film festival in Colorado. Jordan's second short film, *Stitched*, is in post production and finance is being arranged for his first full-length feature, *Two Hands*. *Swinger* was made for \$500, shot in Jordan's Taylor Square warehouse and consists of a single shot in which a young man hangs himself just as his answering machine records three messages bringing good news.

Hilary Bell, the 29-year-old daughter of thespians John Bell and Anna Volska, is carving an international career of her own as a playwright. Bell travelled to Europe for a reading of her play, *Fortune*, at France's prestigious national theatre, La Comedie Francaise, and is now renting a flat in Spain where she plans to work on several more plays for the next six months or so. Bizarrely enough, *Fortune* (about a Chinese giant in the Australian goldfields), has also been produced by the Kumo Kahua Theatre Company in Honolulu.

Ben Lee is the essence of understatement. Ask the 17-year-old Bondi Junction school kid what he's up to and his answer is "not much". "Not much," it should be explained, includes studying in Year 11, releasing another solo single, releasing an album with his band Noise Addict and gearing up for Australian and overseas tours in the end-of-year school holidays. Apart from that, he's a total slacker.

Babe the pig has come a long way since his humble origins in a mass-production piggery. Sources close to the pork world reveal that since the success of his movie (*Babe* made more than \$12 million in its first three days in the US and will be released Australia-wide on Boxing Day), the pig has received offers from Hollywood and is considering his options. Babe - who used 48 body doubles in his motion picture debut - is about 18 months old, but according to specialists in animal husbandry and pig wrangling, this equals about 24 human years. Since filming ended, Babe has kept his trotter in with sheep herding, but has devoted an increasing amount of time to his other hobby: gourmet food.

This year's winner of the Australian Vogel Literary Award has jumped the gun and owned up to plagiarism before his book gets published and becomes a rampaging best seller. Upon winning the award, Richard King, 27, of suburban Melbourne, admitted that his manuscript *Kindling Does for Firewood* borrows heavily from Peter Pan. King also confessed that he'd written most of the novel smashed. On ya Ricky.

Fur's lead singer and guitarist Kim Myer, 20, remembers the naming of her band like it was yesterday. "Simon (the drummer) just said 'Fur' and we just said 'oh, cool'." Oh well. It was a step up from the name of their high school band, anyway. Back then they were known as The Synthetic Goats. The members of the Gold Coast-based group (who are about as chatty as H.B. Bear after a valium overdose) will tour with Powderfinger and Sidewinder at the end of the month and have just released their second EP. The band's seriously fabulous version of *Ride On* can be heard on the AC/DC tribute album *Fuse Box*.

Hey kid, wanna get into some Techno Digesto Fetishism? According to cyber freak Troy Innocent's homepage, TDF is: "A new product for erotic interaction between two or more

registered users in cyberspace ... (in which) on-screen interaction with a simulated partner is supplemented by edible physical models." The 24-year-old Melbourne computer graphics designer was responsible for the virtual band known as The Shaolin Wooden Men and has just received \$150,000 from the Australian Film Commission to produce an interactive cd-rom.

Feral Triple-J radio announcer and natural blonde Helen Razer ("of course I'm not over 29 ya slut and f---ken don't say anything rude about me, right?") believes that any modern girl who isn't familiar with French post-modernist feminist philosophy should be ashamed of herself. She and the buxom half of the breakfast show, Mikey Robins, have just written a book called *3 Beers and a Chinese Meal* and Razer, 27, is now engulfed in a second work which has something to do with feminism and a girl she really hated at high school.

Anyone who missed 24-year-old Mogadonna close this year's Sleaze Ball with her breathtaking rendition of *Don't Leave Me This Way* can catch the former *Bitch Of The Year* when she is interviewed on the English television show *Eurotrash*. Mogadonna was the queen who showed Hugo Weaving the ropes (among other things) for *Priscilla* film.

Ballet dancers are all class. During a wrestle with the Fairfax voice mail system, Gideon Obarzanek leaves a message consisting of a heap of clicks, some banging and muttering and then an emphatic f-word. The 28-year-old choreographer and self-described "dance slut", formerly of the Sydney Dance Company, is rehearsing for his dance group's debut performance which begins its Sydney season at the Performance Space from November 23. According to Obarzanek, *Chunky Move's* show includes a scene where "a large man in huge plastic bubble shorts that are stuffed with teddy bears dances while a man in a bear suit is being f---ed by a character called *Porno Hunter Superstar* after she's shot him with a gun". He admits it's kind of weird.

We still think she's sensational even if boring old Tina Arena stole all the limelight at the ARIA awards. Despite being a hot favourite, Christine Anu, 25, only picked up a prize for best Aboriginal Islander release for her excellent debut album *Stylin' Up*.

Barrie Kosky is the bloke who described conventional productions of 19th-century opera as "f---ing a dead corpse". The controversial 28-year-old director of next year's Adelaide Festival was booed on the opening night of his production of *Nabucco* in the Opera Theatre. The fashion-conscious will note that his glasses are even thicker than his skin.

Loves cats and guitars, hates the usual rubbish in magazines and has extra-short attention span. Kylie Purr, 22, of Newtown, is responsible for *Purrzine*, which comes out whenever she gets round to finishing it - so far about once every eight months. The 300 copies of the last edition sold out fast and the 500 copies of issue number four (ETA January) will come with a cassette containing tracks by DEF-FX and *Regurgitator*. Meanwhile, Kylie's band, also called *Purr*, is in the process of recording its first EP. This will not include any cat numbers.

Nick Donkin's next job is to animate a team of stunt-riding fleas on the back of a dog for an English chip commercial. The 27-year-old's *Flying Gherkin* production house specialises in the excruciating art of stop motion animation, in which ball and socket puppets are brought to life by taking 25 shots for each second of film. Donkin, who likes to describe himself as a film school dropout, has also made rock video clips and his short film, *Junkie's Christmas*, written and narrated by William S Burroughs, was presented by Francis Ford Coppola on American cable television last year.

Elizabeth Pulie won't be offended if you think her work is meaningless. The provocative 27-year-old artist views the function of art as purely decorative. Her latest piece, a panel of 25 individual paintings, can be seen at the the Museum of Contemporary Art's annual *Primavera* exhibition of young artists.

The all-singing, all-dancing, almost-all-nude Dannii Minogue might do more to shape popular culture if she stopped shaping herself. We reckon Kylie's little sister looked a lot better fat.

Classical guitar wild thing Slava Grigoryan, who recently toured the country with maestros Leo Kottke and Paco Pena, is about to become another Australian export. Grigoryan plans to move to London at the end of the year to coincide with the international release of his CD. The serious young man will not confirm or deny rumours that he plans to form a Knack tribute band, mainly because we don't have the nerve to ask him.

No list of baby achievers could be complete without novocastrian kiddy stars silverchair. Not only did the band clean up at the ARIA awards, but there's even a send-up song. This means big time in anyone's language, even if the silverpram rip-off is a heap of crap.

Stephanie Koutsoubos is the chick who won the Australian round of the Smirnoff International Fashion Awards in August with a kinky dress made of cracked egg shells and blue chicken and ostrich feathers. The 21-year-old Melbourne fashion student will fly to South Africa next month to take part in the \$12,000 international final of the award. She and a mate also manufacture clubwear under their own label, Steflion. None of these garments contain egg products of any kind.

Poor young Daniel Lapaine, 24, doesn't know whether his square-jawed himbo good looks are an asset or a liability. The NIDA-graduate appeared in Muriel's Wedding as the nasty South African swimmer and, just for a change, played a German Nazi in the ABC mini-series Bordertown.

The most disgusting thing about the band Single Gun Theory is that all its members actually have lives. Jacqui Hunt, 29, for instance, has the hide to hold down a day job as a fashion designer while also composing songs for the band's fourth album, performing live when she has to and developing her own label, Petra St Clair. Bloody overachiever.

Stuart Clarke doesn't get to play every computer game sent to his office but he does his best. Plus he leads what he describes as a computer games lifestyle. The 24-year-old editor of Next Media's Hyper magazine was instrumental in establishing the publication's net site, Hyperactive, which won the Australasian Interactive Multimedia Industry Association's (AIMIA) best World Wide Web site award in July.

Metro to Anna Broinowski ... Metro to Anna Broinowski ... Hey Anna, if you're out there, we really wanted to talk to you about Hell Bento!! for this story, but your manager's not answering the phone and someone else seems to be living at your house. (Her film Hell Bento!! delves into Japanese counter culture, covering yakuza, dykes, nude rock bands and a heap of other juicy stuff.)

Kylie Kwong has only had one really bad kitchen day. It was last year, while she was searing salmon after a heavy weekend of Mardi Gras-ing. The Chinese chef burned herself so severely that she was off work for four weeks. Kwong, 26, is now head chef at Neil Perry's Wockpool and won't own up to any other mishaps.

Hip hop artist **Khaled Sabsabi** says his style of music is militant positive. But there's none of that gangsta stuff, OK? **Sabsabi**, 29, from Granville started out performing in garages and formed his first band COD (Count On Damage) in the late '80s. He has since been involved in numerous theatre projects as well as the youth project Hiphopera. To him, hip hop is poetry with a conscience and he uses it to raise issues such as cultural identity and xenophobia.

Anyone who hasn't heard of Helen Darville should give up now. Same goes for Helville Darmidenko, Heldemi Denkodar and anyone else who wears peasant blouses in public and has their right palm superglued to their chin.

WHEN THE casting agents for Police Rescue asked Leah Purcell if she'd consider losing her dreadlocks, the 25-year-old pay television presenter thought about it for a second and then said: "uhhh ... nuh." The show then contacted the NSW Police Academy to ask whether it had had any recruits with dreadlocks and a nose ring. Whoever answered the phone thought about it for a moment and said: "uhhh ... nuh." However, they added that the show's new squaddie would be de rigeur as long as she kept her hair up neatly while on duty. Before

anyone starts to think that she's some sort of fashion victim, it should be pointed out that Purcell, who grew up in the tiny settlement of Murgon, 300 kilometres north-west of Brisbane, got her nose pierced way before anyone else did. "I went up to this ear-piercing bloke out in the bush and said 'do you do noses?' And he said: 'We could try.' " The young singer, actress and dancer, who played Annie Marijuana in the Aboriginal musical Bran Nue Day, presents Soul Kitchen on the 24-hour music channel, Red. Purcell's got a big checklist of ambitions that she's been ticking off slowly (and sometimes very quickly) since she she was nine. Coming up next is forming a band, writing an Aboriginal sit-com and making it big time in America.

SAM YOUNG'S ambition in life is to make people realise that comics are more than just "literature for the illiterate". This and to eat only meat that he's killed himself, of course. The accurately named Young (he's only 23) published his first comic, a compilation called Issue One, at the age of 18 before winning the Nescafe Big Break Award and producing single story titles. His multi-award-winning publications Zero Assassin (about a hired killer described as a "mean, shallow, bastard") and Cyberswine ("part cop, full boar") will next month make history by becoming Australia's first full-colour comics. "In Japan, comics are respected," Young says. "The language is an art form in itself, whereas I think in the West, in America and Australia, we have forgotten that our written language comes from a pictorial base." Young also advocates the boycotting of all chicken and pork products on the grounds that chooks and pigs are kept in inhumane conditions.

The bit that got bleeped out during Paul Mac's acceptance speech, when Itch-e and Scratch-e won best dance act at the ARIA awards, was a big thankyou to all the ecstasy dealers. Honesty in art is a beautiful thing. Take that unkind idea that techno musicians don't do anything except sit round their bedrooms fiddling with expensive electrical appliances, for instance. Mac says it's 100 per cent correct. The 29-year-old beret-wearing Newtown-based half of Itch-e and Scratch-e says he's over touring. His \$40,000 worth of synthesisers just aren't as portable as the average Fender. He and Itch-e (who won't own up to his real name) don't even have to leave their lounge rooms to compose. Itch-e writes a first draft and sends it over on floppy disk. Mac boots it up, has a fiddle, then sends it back. It's all loads of fun, but Mac (whose other band is The Lab) says his favourite job ever was appearing as Knuckles on the ABC-TV children's game show Big Square Eye. He still can't believe that he got paid to play fart samples. Itch-E and Scratch-E's second album will be released next month.

* Emma Tom was disqualified from this list of fabulous under 30 year olds because she wrote it.