


Away from the rigours of management, Maddie relished the tasks collectively referred to as 'creative producing.' "I loved being involved in casting, discussing the script, planning things with the director." This was one area where the school gives particularly good grounding with its emphasis on multi-skilled film-practitioners. "The school is very broad in what you learn, so even though I'm producing I have a strong understanding of where Cath is coming from as the director and writer, and I'm also well informed about the other departments; design, camera, etc."

"On top of that, Cath is such a wonderful creative person, and always welcomes fresh ideas." Again I register my disappointment. What about those epic battles between director and producer? It seems the school is intent on placing a strong emphasis on collaborations between different contributors. "The whole process is structured so that we get together early and plan the direction of the whole film. It's great for the director/producer relationship, and we also select our own crews, so we know we're with people we can work well with." Thus Maddie can happily say there were no director tantrums, crew walk-outs, prima donna actors, and no nervous investors. And the final cut? "No disagreements so far."

Ghostdeath is in the latter stages of editing with a 'temp' soundtrack in place, and everybody is very pleased with the result. "It's the most exciting thing, seeing the whole project come together. A script is really just an outline, but seeing it come to life with all its elements over a period of time is really magic." As for producing, it's something that Maddie Stewart is looking forward to doing again in the future. "The sense of satisfaction is that it is you driving the project. You begin to realise in one sense that everything you do is part of the creative process. When you see the film and everything is taking place in front of the Opera House and it looks amazing, you take a lot of pride knowing you pushed hard enough to get it. Really, it's Cath's vision, but then, as the producer, you've helped her achieve it."

And that, it would seem, is the magic of cinema. Getting the film made. Putting a vision up on screen for people to enjoy, despite the seemingly shut doors, logistical quagmires, and endless tasks that all need to be completed by yesterday. I'm reminded of Orson Welles' comment that to make a film one needs an army. "Hmm," Maddie responds, "that would have been useful." 

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