



Das “SPELLBINDER”- Skript

*Das Spellbinder-Skript ist Teil des Episodenführers zu der Serie
„Spellbinder“ (<http://www.tzi.de/~tokra/spellbin.htm>)*



SPELLBINDER

Spellbinder is a Film Australia / Polish TV Production
in association with Channel Nine Australia

Executive Producers:	Ron Saunders Andrzej Stempowski
Producer/Director:	Noel Price
Writers:	Mark Shirrefs John Thomson
Director of Photography:	Danny Batterham Martin McGrath Geoff Burton
Production Designer:	Nicholas McCallum
Costume Designers:	Maria Wilun Julie Middleton
Editor:	Pippa Anderson
Number of Episodes:	26
Length of Episodes:	30 minutes
Principal Photography:	11 July 1994 - 15 Oct 1994 – Poland 23 Jan 1995 - 29 April 1995 - Australia
Completion Date:	September 1995
Format:	Shot on film, finished on video tape
Post Production:	Digital
Special Effects:	Conja Pty Ltd
Distribution Company:	Film Australia worldwide



PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS – THE ACTORS

MAIN AUSTRALIAN CAST

PAUL REYNOLDS

A smart 14 year old city boy, Paul is the hero of the **Spellbinder** series. Paul does well at school without really trying and is good with computers and video games. He tends to think before acting. Since his mother's death, Paul has become a bit of a loner and has trouble communicating with his family, particularly his hard working scientist father. Accidentally hurled into a parallel universe, Paul discovers a land where the industrial revolution never happened. Here, his modern knowledge is almost useless. As he struggles to find a way home, Paul discovers courage and abilities he never knew he had.

Paul is played by Zybch Trofimiuk, a Polish born Australian. Zybch won the 1994 Australian Film Institute Young Actors Award for his lead role in **Skytrackers**. Zybch was born in Warsaw, Poland on April 7th, 1979. His favourite activities include skiing, horseback riding and karate.

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RIANA

Thirteen years old, Riana is an impetuous, tough and courageous heroine. She becomes Paul's friend and ally in the Spellbinder's world. Riana is naturally smart but like everyone in her world except the Spellbinders, Riana has had no formal education and has never thought to question her world. As Riana tries to help Paul return to his world, her eyes are opened and she starts to see the injustice of the way Spellbinders rule. When Riana is dragged into Paul's world she finds it frightening. The people are rude, the air is hard to breathe and things like trains and elevators seem like magic. As she gets over her fear of technology, she begins to appreciate the freedom it brings.

Riana is played by Gosia Piotrowska, who is also a Polish born Australian. This is Gosia's first role in a television production.

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ALEX

Alex is Paul's best friend. He admires Paul's intelligence and uses it to get through school. When Paul is catapulted into the world of the Spellbinders, Alex does everything he can to rescue his friend. Alex is a cocky fast-talking teenager of Greek descent. He is street-wise and always has his eye out for a way to make money. Alex jokes his way through life, trying to do as little as possible. His aversion to schoolwork has kept him down a couple of years so he is older than most of the kids around him. Alex is not a good reader but by the end of the story has discovered the value and enjoyment of books. Although he is often crass, Alex can also be charming. He thinks he is god's gift to girls. Forced to spend a lot of time with Katrina, a girl who he at first dislikes, Alex gradually changes his attitudes to the opposite sex.

Alex is played by Brian Rooney and he has been in numerous Australian productions including **G.P.**, **Brides of Christ** and **The Ferals**.

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Australia

KATRINA

A girl in Paul's class. Fascinated by science, Katrina has a competitive relationship with Paul. Clever, determined and stubborn, she has always done well at school. Until this adventure began, Katrina always followed the rules. Now she is learning to break them and her parents aren't pleased.

Katrina is played by Michela Noonan. Her previous experience includes roles in **A Country Practice**, **G.P.** and **Home and Away**.

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ASHKA

A calculating, ambitious and ruthless Spellbinder, Ashka believes the Spellbinders are losing their authority. She sees Paul and his knowledge as the means to overthrow the existing power structure and enable her to rule the Spellbinder's land. At first Paul sees her as a friend but soon learns that she cannot be trusted.

Ashka is played by Heather Mitchell. Heather's impressive career includes roles in **Muriel's Wedding**, **Malcolm**, **Proof**, **GP**, **Embassy** and **A Country Practice**.

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BRIAN REYNOLDS

Paul's widowed father. In his mid-thirties, Brian is a talented scientist in charge of a private research and development laboratory. He is having difficulty reconciling his busy work life with the demands of being a single parent. Brian is shy around women and not good at communication, particularly about his feelings.

Brian Reynolds is played by Andrew McFarlane. His illustrious career includes major roles in **The Sullivans**, **Cop Shop**, **Flying Doctors** and **Paradise Beach**.

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MAIN POLISH CAST:

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GRYVON

Ashka's seventeen year old apprentice is arrogant, malicious and cunning. Gryvon will do anything Ashka asks as long as it helps him to become a Spellbinder. He and Paul take an instant dislike to each other.

Gryvon is played by the Polish actor, Rafal Zwierz. Rafal has had extensive acting experience. He has starred in a range of Polish productions as well as the German production **Police Station**, the Canadian production **And the Violins Stopped Playing** and the American production **The Poachers**.

CORREON

A cantankerous Spellbinder in his fifties, Correon has spent his life studying books. When Paul appears, Correon's entire belief system is challenged. At first, he sees Paul as a threat but as they are forced to journey together, a friendship develops and Correon realises there are things he still has to learn.

Correon is played by the Polish actor, Krzysztof Kumor. Krzysztof is well known to Polish audiences. His impressive career spans a wide range of performances in theatre, radio, film and television. His film work includes roles in the German film **Crash** and the American film **Escape**.



SPELLBINDER – STORY OUTLINE

Spellbinder is a fantasy adventure series about a suburban teenager, Paul Reynolds, who finds himself accidentally marooned in a world parallel to his own. It's a world where the industrial revolution never happened and people live in rustic villages. They are ruled by the Spellbinders, men and women with seemingly magical powers who control the populace by manipulating their fear and ignorance.

For Paul, the dangers are immediate. He is recognised as an outsider and accused of being an enemy of the Spellbinders. Paul is saved by a courageous girl, Riana, who gives him refuge in her village. When Paul discovers that the Spellbinders use science and not magic, he realises that they are his only hope of getting home. But Ashka, a ruthless Spellbinder, wants to use his knowledge to gain control of her world.

Paul befriends Correon, an old Spellbinder, who understands the threat that Paul's knowledge presents. Using Riana's physical skill and Paul's modern know-how, the three outwit Ashka and Paul finds his way home. In order to save Riana's life, Paul has to drag her into his world. Now Riana, who grew up in a closed rustic community, must contend with the chaos and complexity of our modern world. Her confrontations with technology are both amusing and frightening.

To make matters worse, the Spellbinder Ashka finds a way into our world. She tricks Paul's father into helping her combine Spellbinder technology with our science to make her invincible. The challenge of defeating Ashka requires all of Paul and Riana's courage and ingenuity.

Spellbinder is a thrilling mix of adventure, fantasy and fun. While the narrative is action driven, the focus is on character and the capability of children to undergo positive change and confront adversity using their wits and imagination's.



SPELLBINDER – PRODUCTION STORY

Spellbinder, a 26-part adventure and fantasy series, is a co-production between Polish TV and Film Australia and was funded by the Australian Film Finance Corporation. Shooting for the first 13 episodes of **Spellbinder** commenced on July 11, 1994 in Poland and was completed on October 15th. Poland was an ideal location for the pre-industrial revolution scenes of the Spellbinder world - the lush forests and the magnificent castles make a perfect backdrop for the adventures of the young heroes, Paul and Riana. Paul's modern world was filmed in Sydney for the remaining 13 episodes, which commenced in Australia on January 23 1995 and ran for 14 weeks. Post production was completed in September 1995. Editing was done digitally at Film Australia on Lightworks. Computer generated special effects were done in Australia by Conja Pty Ltd.

Spellbinder was screened by the Nine Network in Australia late 1995. It has since been shown throughout the world and received international acclaim.

SPELLBINDER – LIST OF MAJOR CHARACTERS

Main Australian Cast:

Heather Mitchell *Ashka*
Andrew McFarlane *Brian Reynolds*
Zybch Trofimiuk *Paul Reynolds*
Gosia Piotrowska *Riana*
Brian Rooney *Alex*
Michela Noonan *Katrina*

Main Polish Cast:

Rafal Zwierz *Gryvon*
Krzysztof Kumor *Correon*



SPELLBINDER II: LAND OF THE DRAGON LORD

A Film Australia co-production with Polish Television, Shanghai Film Studios and the Nine Network with assistance from the Australian Film Finance Corporation

Spellbinder II is the long-awaited sequel to the internationally acclaimed award-winning **Spellbinder** TV series. Filmed on location in Australia, China and Poland.

Executive Producers:	Ron Saunders Andrej Stempowski Charley Zhuo Kris Noble
Producer/Director:	Noel Price
Associate Producer:	Zoe Wang
Writers:	Mark Shirrefs John Thomson
Director of Photography:	Danny Batterham
Production Designer:	Nicholas McCallum
Costume Designer:	Julie Middleton
Editor:	Pippa Anderson
Number of Episodes:	26
Length of Episodes:	30 minutes
Principal photography Period:	4/6/96 - 20/6/96 Poland 27/8/96-23/11/96 China 1/2/97 - 20/3/97 Australia
Completion Date:	March 1997
Format:	Shot on film, finished on video tape
Distribution Company:	Film Australia Limited



PRINCIPAL CHARACTERS – THE ACTORS

MAIN AUSTRALIAN CAST:

KATHY MORGAN

13 year old **Kathy Morgan** is an intelligent and strong-willed girl who speaks her mind and often acts without thinking of the consequences. She has a crush on Tony, her next-door neighbour, who is the star of her favourite TV show Love Beach. Her adventures in the Land of the Dragon Lord challenge Kathy to overcome adversity with courage and imagination, and leave her with a more grown-up insight into her family, relationships and herself.

Kathy is played by rising young star **Lauren Hewett**, who has already had a number of major career highlights. She received an Australian Film Institute Award for Best Acting by a Juvenile in a feature Film for her role in Film Australia's **Act of Necessity** in 1990 and in 1993 she received the Australian Film Institute Award for Most Outstanding Acting by a Young Actor on Television for her role in **Halfway across the Galaxy and Turn Left**. Her film and television work includes roles in **The Echo of Thunder**, **Strictly Ballroom**, **The Miraculous Mellops Two**, [Ocean Girl](#), **Kideo**, **Level 13**, **A Country Practice**, **GP**, [Mission Top Secret](#) and a guest role in the top rating Australian soap **Home and Away**. Lauren's hobbies are shopping, listening to music and spending time with her friends. Favourite foods are pasta and chocolate. Lauren has a pet rabbit called "Bun Bun" or "Bunny". Lauren likes swimming, but doesn't like going on long walks.

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A Letter from Lauren Hewett

While working on Spellbinder 2, I got the chance to travel to Poland for 8 weeks, and China for around 14 weeks. Both of these countries were extremely different to each other, and I enjoyed them both immensely.

It was a great experience to work in other countries with people from totally different cultures to your own. The language barrier made filming hard, but with the interpreters and sign language, we got the job done.

The costumes and sets of the show are fantastic. Although, a light haired, blue-eyed girl, in a Chinese outfit, looks a little different. Although filming was at times hard, in the end, the Australian cast and crew were proud to be a part of such a rare experience. I hope that you enjoy the series.

Lauren....



JOSH

Kathy's brother, 16 year old **Josh Morgan** is a good humoured and courageous teenager, who also likes teasing his little sister. Computers are his consuming passion, and in the Land of the Dragon Lord, Josh's ingenuity and computer skills play a vital role in overcoming many of the challenges that confront him and his friends and family in the Land of the Dragon Lord.

Josh is played by 21 year old Australian actor Ryan Kwanten, who has appeared in guest roles on a number of Australian series including **Home and Away, GP, Hey Dad!, A Country Practise, Echo Point** and **Water Rats**. He is also an accomplished athlete and has competed successfully in numerous events in Surf Life Saving, Biathlon, Triathlon, Rugby League, Swimming and Touch Football at both state and national level. He is particularly interested in food, and regularly eats out at a wide variety of restaurants, with Italian food (lasagne, pizza, bolognese etc) rating highly. Ryan likes music, including the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, Jeff Buckley, Led Zeppelin, Matchbox 20, INXS. He also loves to travel and loves adventure (skydiving, bungee jumping, surfing large waves and so on). He has a dislike for smoking, drugs, insincerity, and rainy and windy days.

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ASHKA

Ashka is a ruthless, power hungry Spellbinder from another parallel world. The world of the Spellbinders is a world where the industrial revolution never happened and the Spellbinders have seemingly magical powers. Ashka is ruthless and will do anything to get what she wants. A clever and seductive manipulator of people, she wears a Spellbinder power suit which uses electro-magnetism to hurl destructive bolts of energy.

Ashka is played by renowned Australian actress Heather Mitchell. Heather's impressive TV and film career includes roles in **Muriel's Wedding, Malcolm, Proof, GP, Embassy, The Everlasting Secret Family, A Country Practice, Children of the Revolution** and **Thank God he met Lizzie**. Heather stars opposite Oscar winner **Geoffrey Rush** in the recently released Australian feature film **A Little Bit of Soul**, released in March 1998 by Columbia TriStar Film Distributors. Her extensive stage work includes lead roles in **Burn This, The Homecoming and Coriolanus** for the Sydney Theatre Company, and **Uncle Vanya** and **Hayfever** for the Melbourne Theatre Company. Heather also portrayed the villainous Spellbinder **Ashka** in the first series of Spellbinder. **Spellbinder** has now been seen in over 85 countries around the world. She recreates this role in its sequel, **Spellbinder II: Land of the Dragon Lord**.

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MEK

Mek is a scientist from The Land of the Dragon Lord who has discovered a way of traveling between parallel worlds in his invention: a trans-dimensional bamboo boat. **Mek** is in his late 20's. He is a clever but eccentric scientist who is intensely curious about everything. He is also easily distracted.

Mek is played by Australian actor Anthony Wong. In addition to his theatre and live performance work, Anthony Wong has appeared on a number of Australian TV series including roles in **Home and Away**, **Mission Impossible**, **Cassidy**, **The Saint in Australia**, **Embassy**, **Boys from the Bush**, **A Country Practice** and **Singapore Sling**. His film work includes **Lillian's Story** and the lead role of *Kar Ming* in the acclaimed Australian film **Floating Life**, Directed by Clara Law. Anthony appears in **China Dolls**, Film Australia's documentary from Director Tony Ayres.

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TONY

Tony, Kathy's 17 year old neighbour is a TV soap opera star with a big ego. He is handsome and he knows it. So do his adoring female fans. At first Kathy tricks Tony into helping her find the trans-dimensional boat and return to the Land of the Dragon Lord to rescue her parents, but finally she trusts him with the truth.

Tony is played by Australian actor **Justin Rosniak**. Justin has chalked up a substantial list of productions in his short acting career including being a regular for 12 weeks in **Home & Away**, guest appearances in **A Country Practice**, **Rafferty's Rules**, **G.P** and **Police Rescue**. He was also a co-star in the feature film **Sweet Talker** and **The Big Wish**, a telefeature produced in 1989/90. He also had the role of Jake in two series of **Eggshells**, on ABCTV. In 1994 he appeared in the ABC production of **Top Silk**, and the following year in **Home and Away** as Joseph for Channel 7 and as Sean in **Naked** for ABCTV. Justin appeared as Gerard in Film Australia's acclaimed science fiction kids series [Return to Jupiter](#), 3 years after the first series [Escape from Jupiter](#).

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CARL MORGAN

Kathy's father **Carl Morgan** in **Spellbinder II: Land of the Dragon Lord**. **Carl Morgan** is about 40. He is an ex-football player who still regrets giving up his career for his family. He runs a sporting goods store and loves camping and the outdoor life.

Carl is played by Australian actor Peter O'Brien - well known to Australian TV audiences for his work on numerous Australian series. His TV work includes the lead roles of Shane in **Neighbours**, Sam in **The Flying Doctors**, as well as roles in **Shark Bay**, **Water Rats**, **GP** and **Law of the Land**. Peter has also worked extensively in the UK with roles in **Jackanory**, **The Gift**, **Kangaroo Valley** and **Driving Force** for BBC TV, **Taggart** and **The Stonehouse Affair** for Scottish Television, and **The New Alexei Sayle Show** for Channel 4 UK. Peter appeared as the regular character *Dr Scissors* in the comedy series **Cardiac Arrest I and II** for LWT Channel 4 UK. Peter also worked in theatre in the UK, including the roles of Malcolm in **Macbeth** and Yasha in **The Cherry Orchard** for the Nottingham Playhouse. He also appeared as *The Pirate King* in the **Pirates of Penzance** in London's West End. His recent theatre work includes the role of Septimus in Tom Stoppard's **Arcadia** and the role of Lidija in **Miss Bosnia** for the Melbourne Theatre Company. His film work includes the role of Joe Connor in Rosa Colosimo's feature **A Kink in the Picasso**, and the role of Norman in the recent Australian feature film **Hotel de Love**.

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VICKY MORGAN

Vicky Morgan is Carl's wife and the devoted and loving mother of Kathy and her brother Josh.

Vicky is played by Lenore Smith - a familiar face on numerous Australian TV series including **The Restless Years**, **Kingswood Country**, **The Young Doctors**, **Cop Shop**, **The Sullivans**, and **GP**. She played the continuing role of Kate Wellings in Crawford's **The Flying Doctors** for 7 years, a role which earned her a 1990 silver Logie Award nomination for most popular actress. Lenore also received a 1988 Penguin Award for best Actress. Her theatre work includes roles in **Steaming** for Gary Penny productions, and the national tour AR. Gurney's **Love Letters**. In **Spellbinder II: Land of the Dragon Lord**, Lenore is reunited with actor Peter O'Brien, who plays her husband **Carl Morgan**. Lenore last co-starred with Peter in the famous Australian series **The Flying Doctors**.

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SUN THE DRAGON LORD

The character of **Sun**, played by young actor **Leonard Fung**, is a spoilt and pampered 10 year old boy with too much power. He has had too much responsibility thrust on his shoulders too quickly. A lonely little boy, Sun is also scared on being on his own. Through the story, and with Kathy's help, he gains maturity and wisdom.

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MAIN CHINESE CAST:

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PRINCESS AYA

Sun's sister **Princess Aya** is in her early 20's. She is romantic but has a mind of her own and a strong social conscience. She is mature and perhaps would be a better ruler of the The Land of the Dragon Lord than her spoilt young brother.

Princess Aya is played by renowned Chinese actress **Hu Xin**.

JASMINE

Jasmine is a 15 year old girl from a fishing village in the Land of the Dragon Lord. She is superstitious but also tough and courageous. She dreams of leaving her village to become an entertainer and thinks her prayers have been answered when she mistakes Josh for a water spirit who can grant her three wishes.

Jasmine is played by young Chinese actress **Gui Jielan**.

SHARAK

The aggressive leader of a Barbarian Army from the land beyond the border of the Land of the Dragon Lord. **Sharak** plans to invade the Land of the Dragon Lord and claim it for himself.

Sharak is played by renowned Chinese actor **Ye Mung**.

THE ORACLE

A powerful and ancient computer that organises the lives of everyone in the Land of the Dragon Lord. It has brought peace to the land but at a cost. It provides the Dragon Lord with his supernatural powers.



MAIN POLISH CAST:

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GRYVON

The Spellbinder **Ashka's** devoted apprentice **Gryvon** appears in the second episode of Spellbinder II: Land of the Dragon Lord. He helps Ashka escape from the world of the Spellbinders only to be abandoned there forever.

Gryvon is played by Polish actor **Rafal Zwierz**.

DR. ELVO

Doctor Elvo appears to be in his 30's but is actually 230 years old. He appears more rational than the other immortals but is hiding a secret agenda.

Dr Elvo is played by Polish actor **Lech Makiewicz**.

LEM AND GUIN

A couple in their 40's who are in reality 300 years old. **Lem** and **Guin** are desperate for a real child of their own and think that their prayers have been answered when Kathy arrives in their world.

Lem and Guin are played by Polish actors **Wenanty Nosul** and **Katarzyna Walter**.

JEZ

Jez is 16 years old. He becomes Kathy's friend when she and Mek accidentally travel to his world - **The Machine World**. He was born underground in the machine world and will now risk everything to stay on the surface. He is tough and courageous.

Jez is played by young Polish actor **Adam Siemion**.

LIN

An old and wise woman, **Lin** is one of the elders of the machine world. She is the leader of the survivors of the war with machines.

Lin is played by Polish actress **Katarzyna Laniewska**.



LIST OF MAJOR CHARACTERS:

Main Australian Cast:

Heather Mitchell *Ashka*

Peter O'Brien *Carl*

Lenore Smith *Vicky*

Lauren Hewett *Kathy*

Ryan Kwanten *Josh*

Anthony Wong *Mek*

Leonard Fung *Sun*

Justin Rosniak *Tony*

Main Chinese Cast:

Hu Xin *Princess Aya*

Gui Jielan *Jasmine*

Ye Mung *Sharak*

Wei Quiming *Master Ling*

Zhang Yucheng *Zenzo*

Geng Baosheng *Gobbo*

Wang Ya'nan *Roggar*

Li Xuetong *Den*

Main Polish Cast:

Rafal Zwierz *Gryvon*

Wenanty Nosul *Lem*

Katarzyna Walter *Guin*

Lech Mackiewicz *Dr. Elvo*

Adam Siemion *Jez*

Cezary Morawski *Hugo*

Katarzyna Laniewska *Elin*

Lech Dyblik *The Arbiter*



SPELLBINDER II – Land of the Dragon Lord

PRODUCTION STORY

Spellbinder II - Land of the Dragon Lord is destined to be one of the most watched children's drama series ever made. A triumph of international co-operation, this 26 episode children's fantasy adventure series is a Film Australia co-production with Polish Television, Shanghai Film Studios and the Nine Network Australia.

Filming for **Spellbinder II - The Land of the Dragon Lord** commenced in June 1996 with a 7 week shoot in Poland, followed by 13 weeks in China and 7 weeks in Australia. The series was released in October 1997.

While **Spellbinder II** is a children's drama set in numerous parallel worlds, its quality, and the story of how it was made, is very grown up.

Spellbinder II breaks new ground: its makers say it represents the first time China has been a major partner in a big foreign television drama. Over the past decade, Australia has increasingly looked overseas to fund television projects. Film Australia used its foreign partners in **Spellbinder II** - Shanghai Film Studios and Polish Television to great effect to create a series, which uses overseas money, talent, crews and locations. All three countries helped develop the scripts.

The lead actors are Australian, but only 25 per cent of the filming took place in Australia. Half of it was filmed in China, and another quarter in Poland, using mostly local crews under an Australian producer/director, Noel Price.

The show's predecessor, **Spellbinder**, was also a co-production, between Film Australia and Polish Television. It sold to 85 countries, sparked a rash of Internet sites and attracted a huge worldwide audience. The main people behind both series are executive producer Ron Saunders and Noel Price, both veterans of many foreign co-productions. Children's drama has often led the field in the quest for overseas money because it is expensive to make and difficult to make a profit from.

Saunders says locating overseas partners, negotiating scripts and adapting to foreign work practices can be difficult, but worth it - particularly in the case of **Spellbinder II**. After the success of the first **Spellbinder** series, Saunders "targeted China as a place that we wanted to try to work with". He spent time in China looking for a partner. "Finally, the Shanghai Film Studios, who are quite used to commercial deals recognised the value of it", he says.

China, Poland and Australia all invested in the series, (the Australian Film Finance Corporation and Channel 9 were also investors, with Polish Television and Shanghai Film Studios making substantial contributions of facilities, cast and crews). The result is a sumptuous looking series indeed.

Saunders says "This is the most expensive looking children's series that's ever going to be made". The show moves from the Australian countryside to Polish castles to Chinese imperial villages awash with canals. Those locations came free. "We were lucky that we



were able to access all these huge sets the Chinese built for a major mini-series a couple of years earlier": Saunders says. "And of course they've got warehouses full of Chinese costumes. So we had all this stuff that we could play with... If we'd set out to build what we've ended up filming, it would have cost a million dollars a half hour" he says.

Spellbinder II stars Heather Mitchell as the villainous Ashka, with Anthony Wong as Mek, 16 year-old Lauren Hewett as Kathy and 15-year-old Leonard Fung as Sun.

The Polish crew had worked with Australians before and were used to our methods, but China was a different story Hewett says: "The Australians went there to film it how we film it and so it took the Chinese crew, I guess about two weeks to get into it. But once we got to know each other a little bit, it worked out fine"

Call sheets are standard in Australia, but were a very foreign concept in Shanghai. Says Wong: "We found a lot of Chinese crews were used to an *auteur* situation where the director would come on the to set and say: "What do we feel like doing today: We were being very structured and very disciplined ... so that was difficult"

Noel Price found the experience of filming in China "exhilarating and exhausting: In Chinese Film-making he says, "the director is god and people do what the director wants, which is flattering for the first five minutes".

He encouraged more delegation. "It was difficult for them to come to terms with it, but they did adapt and now they are using that system on another production they're doing because it clearly does work more efficiently.

Philip Nelson, Manager of Sales and Marketing at Film Australia is confident of the series success: "We anticipate **Spellbinder II** will be at least as successful as the first series, due to the very strong production values attained while shooting in China and Poland and because of the very strong and exciting storyline." he says.

These days Australia is involved in so many foreign co-productions that **Spellbinder II - Land of the Dragon Lord** is the tip of an iceberg. Foreign co-production is not the future of Australian television; it's the present.



SPELLBINDER AND SPELLBINDER II

INTERVIEW WITH THE WRITERS - MARK SHIREFFS AND JOHN THOMSON

With the two series of Spellbinder, there are only two characters that remain constant between the two shows - Ashka and Gryvon. Was that simply dictated by story or did actor availability have something to do with it?

JT: Dictated by the fact that they said "we want a sequel but you can't use any of the same kids"...

MS: So that was a decision that was imposed upon us by the producer. Quite reasonably so. So we had to come up with a completely new story that just involved Ashka.

Speaking of Ashka... you seem to have a knack for writing very charismatic, interesting villains. Is that something you deliberately set out to do for a children's audience?

JT: This was a 26-part story. So you're not going to be able to drive the story forward unless there's some big obstacles that get in the way of your main characters. And your biggest obstacle tends to be someone who wants something different to what they do. You've got to get a good villain. I think one of the things that a lot of children's television falls down with, is that the villains aren't good. They're played for comic relief or they're bumbling buffoons.

MS: If you make your villains stupid your kids don't look heroic, because there is no struggle, there's no real conflict. You have to believe that the villain will actually be able to defeat the kids, the give value to the kids' efforts.

JT: But I think one of the important things about this kind of drama is that the subtext of it all is trying to say to your audience, that tomorrow your whole life could change, things could be completely different tomorrow. So live in a state of excitement and expectation. But when things go wrong, if you use your brains and you find a bit of courage, you can win. It's what kid's stories have been doing for thousands of years.

MS: There's a message of hope and encouragement.

JT: And belief in your own abilities. None of that stuff works if your villain is...

MS: ...silly or pathetic. Because life's struggles aren't like that. You know, kids go through problems at teenage years and they seem insurmountable - like teenage suicide. It's because kids look at their lives and think.. ""If the rest of my life is going to be like this, it's not worth living". Without being very up-front about it, we're trying to send a message of; "Believe in yourself, have courage, have faith, use your wits and you will survive".



JT: Also both Mark and I, when we were actors, got to play villains and enjoyed it greatly. And there's nothing better than playing a villain. So you discover those evil disgusting, nasty, power-hungry parts of yourself. And you're too nice person to use it in real life so you sublimate it into your writing and have a great deal of fun.

Is there going to be a third series of Spellbinder?

MS: Ah, no. There was one vague moment of idiocy then the producer of Spellbinder said, well we could do a third series in Brazil, in a rainforest.

JT: Peru. It was going to be Peru.

MS: But, no. Although there is some talk at the moment of a Spellbinder film. But there's a lot of bridges to cross before that would be possible...we've still got to come up with an idea for it.

JT: We've also got a few other scripts that we need to get back to. We've also got a comedy feature script and another idea for a science fiction story. It's just finding the time. Can't really complain, we just haven't stopped working. A holiday would be a good thing.

MS: Yeah!

Do you do much research for your scripts?

MS: The thing we did with both Spellbinder and The Girl From Tomorrow was the research and the science, so that the electromagnetic technology that the Spellbinder's use, in some ways, is feasible. So when you're creating a fantasy world you actually have to make sure that you make it believable. So a lot of effort goes into setting it up and making sure that it's all consistent.

JT: And none of this stuff ever hits the screen, but it enables us to work from a solid base. The first Spellbinder series - we'd imagined that the Spellbinders came about 'cause right back when the Romans were invading northern Europe and England, the Druids got their s...t together and discovered the power of electromagnetism. We had these wonderful images of long lines of Roman soldiers with all their iron armour all clanked together, being completely stuck. That's where the power grew. The Romans actually got defeated.

MS: And the Druidic civilisation actually grew and became these sort-of wizard scientists. This whole civilisation grew up with these people in charge and because of the nature of religion the power was held by the people at the top. That's what it's like in the Spellbinder world, this small group of people keep control by withholding information and suppressing new ideas.

JT: And eventually they took over the whole world and then f...ed it all up and then we're at where we were. Whereas **Spellbinder: The Land of the Dragon Lord** - basically we're still in Australia, it just happens to look Chinese. We researched and discovered these amazing facts. 450 years ago China had the biggest naval fleet the world has ever seen. Something like 90,000 Chinese sailed into Lisbon harbour 450 years ago. Lisbon was a town of about 25,000 people.



MS: And then the Emperor said, "That's it". The new Emperor said, "No more of this", and closed China off from the rest of the world, to maintain isolation and purity.

JT: It was a power thing - the merchants were getting too strong, so he closed off their supply. Burnt all the ships - hundreds, And they visited Australia, that's all been proved now. It's incredible. So we thought, okay, what if Australia was actually settled by the Chinese 400 years ago and 200 years ago they invented the computer. Now that sounds interesting. So you get your starting point and then...

MS: ...take it from there.

Write to John and Mark at: <mailto:mshirre@ibm.net>.

Extract from interview with George Ivanoff (<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~ivanova>).
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SPELLBINDER I & II MERCHANDISE

BOOKS

Spellbinder - Land of the Dragon Lord ISBN 0 7336 0414 5

Spellbinder - Lost Between Worlds ISBN 0 7336 0415 3

Authors: Mark Shirrefs and John Thomson with Jill Wayment

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also video copies of SPELLBINDER and SPELLBINDER II are available from the above address.

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Email: preview@netspace.com.au

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SPELLBINDER I & II WEBSITES

There are a number of terrific Spellbinder sites on the World Wide Web. Check out Film Australia's official Spellbinder site at:

<http://www.filmaust.com.au/showcase/>

There's also a great unofficial Spellbinder sites at:

<http://www.tzi.de/~tokra/spellbin.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/6992/sb2main.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/5697/spellb.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/TelevisionCity/6975/sb1main.htm>

<http://www.geocities.com/Hollywood/Lot/3658/news.htm>

<http://www.huizen.dds.nl/~evdmeer/spellb.htm>

<http://www.privat.schlund.de/s/spellbinder/seiten/link.htm>

which provides information about cast members, fan pages, interviews, news items, broadcast dates and links to other Spellbinder sites all around the world.



HINWEISE FÜR DIE BESTELLUNG DER SPELLBINDER-BÜCHER

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(MaFu) In dieser Datei erfahrt Ihr, wie Ihr die Begleitbücher zu "Spellbinder - Im Land des Drachenkaisers" bestellen könnt. Leider sind die Begleitbücher zu der ersten Staffel von "Spellbinder" nicht mehr verfügbar und werden voraussichtlich nicht mehr neu aufgelegt. Aber die beiden Begleitbücher zu der zweiten Staffel sind noch verfügbar. Sicherheitshalber könnt Ihr Euch auf der Website von Film Australia oder per E-Mail informieren, ob die Bücher tatsächlich noch verfügbar sind. Die Adressen erfahrt Ihr weiter unten in diesem Text.

Zuerst benötigt Ihr australisches Geld, und zwar genau A\$25.00 (australische Dollar). Diese bekommt Ihr bei fast allen Banken und Sparkassen und je nach Kurs des australischen Dollars kostet es 30 DM bis 40 DM (bzw. 15,34 EUR bis 20,45 EUR). Für Euch ist es günstiger, wenn der Kurs des australischen Dollars im Vergleich zum EURO niedrig ist, weil der Ankauf von australischen Dollars dann billiger ist.

Wenn Ihr das nicht so machen möchtet, besteht unter Umständen die Möglichkeit, die Bücher per Kreditkarte (Eurocard/Mastercard, Visa, AmericanExpress) zu bestellen. Wenn Ihr oder einer Eurer Elternteile eine Kreditkarte besitzt, ist dies möglich. Dann kann man auch per E-Mail bestellen. Ob und wie das genau geht, erfahrt Ihr über E-Mail an die Adresse facilities@filmaust.com.au oder über die Website <http://www.filmaust.com.au/>.

Aber zurück zu der Möglichkeit "Geld schicken". In diesem PDF-Dokument findet Ihr auf den nächsten Seiten den Bestellvordruck, einmal mit Musterbeispielen und einmal blanko. In der Blanko-Datei müßt Ihre Eure Daten einsetzen.

Nach dem Ausfüllen und Ausdrucken des Bestellformulars packt Ihr es zusammen mit dem Geld in einen Briefumschlag. Sicherheitshalber befestigt Ihr das Geld lieber mit Büroklammern. Der geschlossene Briefumschlag wird dann - logisch - zur Post gebracht. Das Porto kostet 3 DM (Stand: Februar 2000).

Die Bestellung wird in der Regel recht zügig von Film Australia abgewickelt. Ich habe zum Beispiel die beiden Bücher am 17. Januar bestellt und bereits am 4. Februar habe ich beide per Express-Päckchen über den DHL-Expressdienst erhalten. Das Päckchen hat von Australien nach Deutschland nur vier Tage gebraucht.

Wenn Ihr dann die beiden Bücher in Euren Händen haltet, wünsche ich Euch viel Spaß bei Lesen.

Solltet Ihr noch Rückfragen haben, erreicht Ihr mich per E-Mail an Mario.Fuchs@web.de

Mario Fuchs

+-----+
| Episodenführer zu "Spellbinder" unter der URL |
| <http://www.tzi.de/~tokra/spellbin.htm> |
+-----+

Hans Mustermann
Musterstraße 123
D-12345 Musterstadt
Deutschland / Germany

Musterstadt, 1st January 2000

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