

SHOW BUSINESS

Year of release: 1938 • Screenplay: Frank Morton Chappell, with Alex Rosenblum; Music: Frank Morton Chappell

Despite being A.R. Harwood's most expensive film (£8,000) and passing the requirements necessary under the New South Wales quota regulations, *Show Business* failed to find a major city release. The film was screened in a number of independent suburban and country cinemas, however. After Harwood's production company folded he spent several years working in various jobs, including a suburban cinema manager, insurance broker and real estate agent. In 1951 he raised money to make a partial remake of *Show Business*, titled *Night Club* but this also failed to receive a commercial exhibition.

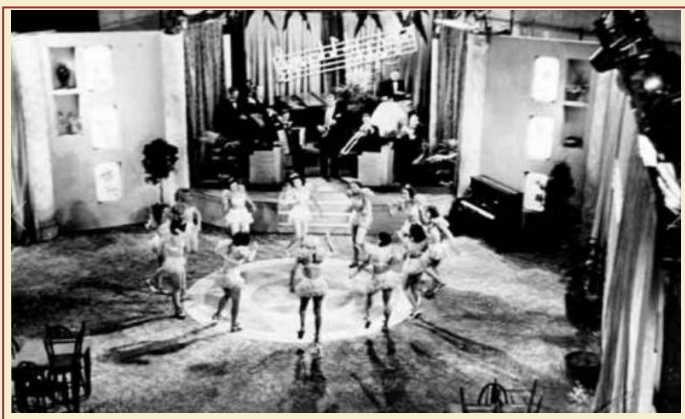
Essentially a musical comedy, *Show Business's* narrative concerns the Winter brothers, Bill and Wally, who attempt to persuade their wealthy father, Sir James Winter, to finance a stage musical and a movie which they wish to make. These projects are very much the result of their infatuation with Nina Bellamy, a scheming femme fatale, who has convinced the pair that she should star in both projects. When Sir James becomes aware of Nina's hold on his sons makes them a proposition that he will back them, only as long as they leave town without Nina knowing and work on their shows in secret somewhere else. Furthermore, they are to use only newly-discovered talent. Bill visits a country town where he discovers a talented local group of performers who he quickly signs up and takes to the city to star in his show. Meanwhile, Wally discovers a girl in a local film exchange, and together they plan to re-release an old Australian silent film with a comic commentary. Complications occur when Nina finds out about the brothers plans and attempts to wreck their chances of success. When this fails she tries to blackmail their father. This too fails, and she is finally exposed for who she really is.

Filming began in Melbourne in late-April 1938 at the Cinesound studio in St. Kilda. A lack of space saw the production transfer to the National Studios at Pagewood, Sydney a few weeks later. Shooting wrapped up in early July.

- 1938:** Village Theatre, Toorak (Melbourne), New Era Film Productions; 7 Aug.
[private screening]
- 90 min.; black and white; sound
- **Dir/Prod.** A. R. Harwood; **Ph Dir.** Arthur Higgins; **P Mngr.** Neville Bletcher; **Ast Dir.** [Chic Arnold](#).
- **Cast** incl. Bert Matthews (Cogs), Joyce Hunt (Nina Bellamy), Fred Tupper (Fred Hamilton), Chick Arnold (Red), Bonnie Dunn (Tap Dancer), Barbara James (Singer), Betty Matear (Jean), Jimmy McMahon (Wally Winter), John Barrington (Bill Winter), Guy Hastings (Sir James Winter), Douglas Stuart (Benson), Fay Astor (Elsie), Charmaine Ross (Joan), Paul Leon (Jackson), Jimmy Coates and his band; and the Pathe Duncan Ballet.
- 1939:** Central Theatre, Condobolin (New South Wales); 3, 5 June
- This is the first-known public screening of the film.
- 1939:** Theatre Royal, Camperdown (Victoria); 20 Dec.
- *Screened as support to Rose of the Rio Grande.*



Source: [Oz Movies](#)



FURTHER REFERENCE

- Pike, Andrew and Ross Cooper. *Australian Film 1900-1977: A Guide to Feature Film Production*. Melbourne: Oxford UP, in assoc. with the Australian Film Institute, 1998, 181-182.
- "New Comedy Comes To Town: Galaxy of Radio and Screen personalities in Musical Hit." *Lachlander and Condobolin and Western Districts Recorder* (NSW) 1 June 1939, 6.
- "Night Club." *Wikipedia* [sighted 8/02/2015]
- "Private Screening: *Show Business* - A New Era Australian Production." *Table Talk* (Melbourne) 11 Aug. 1938, 18.
- "*Show Business*." *Oz Movies* [sighted 8/02/2015]
- "*Show Business*." *Wikipedia* [sighted 8/02/2015]
- "Theatre Royal Wednesday December 20th: *Show Business*." *Camperdown Chronicle* (Vic) 19 Dec. 1939, 2.

Theatre Royal
CAMPERDOWN

PROUDLY PRESENTS

WEDNESDAY DEC 20

MOVITA and JOHN CARROLL
— IN —

"ROSE OF THE RIO GRANDE"

Hear These Songs:— "Ride, Amigos, Ride," "What Care I," "Song of The Rose,"

THE STORY OF A DARE-DEVIL MEXICAN ROBIN HOOD.

Associate Feature—

"SHOW BUSINESS"
— WITH —

BERT MATHEWS, JOYCE HUNT, FRED TUPPER,
CHICK ARNOLD

Plus Short Subjects— PARAMOUNT PICTORIAL "GOING PLACES."

NEXT FRIDAY & SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22 and 23.—NELSON EDDY in "SONG OF THE PLAINS" (Not Suitable for General Exhibition). Associate Feature: "POSTAL INSPECTOR."

Camperdown Chronicle (Vic) 19 Dec. 1939, 2.



HOW TO GET INTO THE FILMS

By A. R. (Dick) Harwood, Director of Productions at New Era Films Ltd.

The first thing to remember is **DON'T CALL AND SEE THE DIRECTOR!**

I am printing this in capitals because this is the most important rule of all.

If you are a film type or a film possibility, we'll hear about you sooner or later.

A producer's chief bugbear is the film-struck flapper who, with her hair done in faithful imitation of her pet star of the moment, calls in and asks for a job (preferably to star in a picture that will be released in a week!) so that she can impress her boy friend! This type usually cannot speak good English, airs either a very Aust-rile-ian accent or an elocutionary voice, and is generally quite bereft of talent.

The type we need is at present learning the art of acting in Little Theatre organisations, in repertory, or in radio or dancing schools. They have had the desire to express themselves artistically, and have started in and made their own opportunities.

I hear them over the radio, or see them in plays or revue . . . and if they have that certain "something" that makes good screen artists, I get in touch with them when I need their particular type—**THEY** don't get in touch with **ME!**

I heard Joyce Hunt, who plays Nina Bellamy, the "menace" in my current picture for New Era, "*Show Business*" (and whom you see, incidentally, in a scene from the show reproduced above, with Betty Matear as the maid) over the air—and I confidently predict a brilliant future for her.

Table Talk (Melbourne) 4 Aug. 1938, 9.