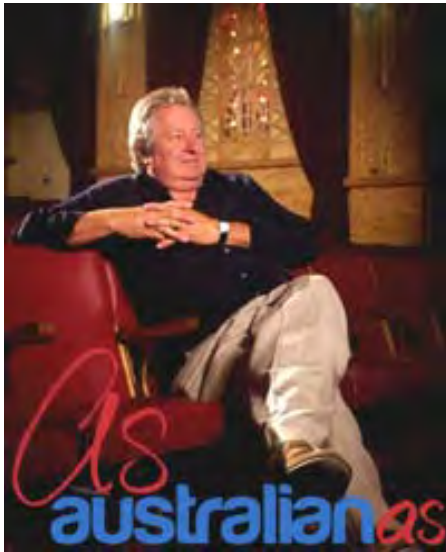


The Roxy Picture Show Man: John Wood (aka Yiannis Xylos)



(L) John Wood appearing in an episode of "As Australian As" featuring the Roxy Theatre



(R) Angelo Crones, Theo Poulos and John Wood outside Peters Café

At the 75th anniversary celebrations of the Roxy Theatre, the renown Australian actor John Wood (Senior Sergeant Tom Croydon from *Blue Heelers*) acted as Master of Ceremonies during the Gala Ball and also presented a special screening of an episode of "As Australian As" on the Bio Channel that featured the restored Roxy Theatre in Bingara.

John's love affair with the Roxy goes back to when he appeared in the David Williamson play *The Club* five years ago in Bingara. For John, the Roxy Theatre and its magnificent Art deco architecture and ambience and its quaint rural setting is one of the stories that makes him appreciate what it means to be "as Australian as". In an interview given by John when he was in Bingara for the making of the documentary, he commented that what also really appealed to him was the human element behind the building of the *Roxy Cafe* in 1936 by the three Kytherian Greeks

John Wood was sufficiently impressed by the efforts of Sandy McNaughton and the local community in the restoration project that he remarked at the time that he was looking forward to receiving his invitation to the opening.

Well John Wood did get an invite and he was a hit at the Ball. Affectionately renamed Yiannis Xylos, John took to his Greek persona with aplomb. As the night of the ball wore on and into Sunday the relative quiet of this country town was punctuated from time to time by calls of "yiassou Yianni". We even got to hear John Wood's Greek mafioso accent – imagine a cross between Robert De Niro and Con the Fruiterer.

Yiannis spoke eloquently at the opening and mingled with locals and Greek-Australian visitors to the town. He also revealed another passion of his, that of the campaign for the raising and partial restoration of Australia's first battleship, the Monitor-class HMAS Cerberus, which lies partially submerged in Half Moon Bay in Victoria. But that's another story.

Our weekend at Bingara was truly enriched by making the acquaintance of John (Yiannis) Wood.

George Vardas