

# Entertainment

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## What dreams are made of

**D**REAMS in all their incarnations – glimmering apparitions, prophetic visions, lifelong determinations – run unwaveringly through German filmmaker Werner Herzog's eccentric body of work.

There was the mad scientist determined to fly a dubious helium airship over the Amazonian rainforest in the 2004 doco *The White Diamond*, the blind-deaf women in his 1971 *Land of Silence and Darkness* who fought her demons after three decades of confinement, and 2005's *The Grizzly Man* who believed he could live with wild Alaskan bears (but was mauled to death in the attempt).

Herzog is a rebel with a cause, a consummate dream-maker obsessed with exposing the deepest reaches of the human soul, and, often unwittingly, acting as the link between his protagonists and their desires.

Unfortunately, he was about 30,000 years too late to connect on a personal level with the protagonists of *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, his 3D documentary that captures never-before-seen vision of the Chauvet Caves, a rambling set of French chambers that contain the world's oldest known paintings.

It's a subject that has fascinated Herzog for decades but even after spending a year immersed in darkness and archaeology labs in the French mountains, he still can't put his finger on what it is that draws him to the Palaeolithic era.

"Why do I like caves?" ponders the film-maker from his Los Angeles home. "I really do not know."

His heavily accented voice does not differ from the notoriously deadpan tone that narrates his films, giving his speech a slightly satirical edge.

"At [the age of] 12 I saw a book about the Lascaux caves in a shop and I just hoped that no



**FILMING CHALLENGE:** The crew of *The Cave of Forgotten Dreams* in the Chauvet Caves.

one else would buy it while I saved the money. It took me more than half a year to buy it, and the shudder of awe has never left me."

In 2009, Herzog was approached by a producer who'd read an article in *The New Yorker* about the extraordinary art in the caves, which, until their accidental rediscovery by French hikers in 1994, had been sealed for 32,000 years. "That moment," Herzog says, "was the awakening of my own intellectual fascination."

He knew there would be limitations in filming – 15,000-year-old caves nearby had recently been shut down because visitors' breath left mould on the walls – but the strict constraints presented an unprecedented challenge for the film-maker.

"I was only allowed three people with me. We had only four hours a day in the caves over a series of weeks. We couldn't move off the narrow metal walkway. But that's life," he says matter-of-

factly. "Yes, I wish I could have had much more time and chosen other camera positions but you just have to live with it. That's just the nature of film-making."

In the cave, archaeologists discovered fresh footprints left by cave bears, a species that became extinct more than 20,000 years ago. More than 4000 bones – skulls, rib bones and vertebrae – littered the floor. Glittering stalactites loomed from the cathedral ceilings. But, says Herzog, what was most extraordinary about the caves was the accomplished, extraordinary paintings, which adorned hundreds of metres of the caves' contoured circumference.

"When I saw that the artists had used the drama of the formation to create their masterpieces, it became immediately obvious that the film had to be in 3D," he says. But despite

### Today until October 2:

*Disney's Alice in Wonderland Jr.*, by the Tasmanian Musical Theatre Crew. At the Playhouse Theatre. Tickets are \$25, \$20 concession from Centertainment, phone 6234 5998.

**Tonight:** Mark Seymour and The Undertow, at Venue Six. Tickets are \$34.70 from oztix.com.au

**Tonight:** Sam La More and local supports Corney, Gillie and Finch, at PlanB from 10.30pm. Tickets are \$20 (plus booking fee) pre-sale from RuffCut Records and greentix.com

**September 30:** The Panics, at Wrest Point from 8pm. Tickets are \$28.50, go to [wrestpoint.com.au/shows](http://wrestpoint.com.au/shows) for bookings.

**October 5-6:** The Choir of High Hopes presents *Journeys*, at the Playhouse Theatre from 3pm and 6pm on October 5, and 6pm on October 6. Tickets are \$15, \$10 concession, \$35 family, phone 6234 5998 for bookings.

**October 7:** Adam Brand, at Wrest Point from 8pm. Tickets are \$51.50, go to [wrestpoint.com.au/shows](http://wrestpoint.com.au/shows) for bookings.

**October 9:** The Jezabels, at Wrest Point from 8pm. Tickets are \$28.50, go to [wrestpoint.com.au/shows](http://wrestpoint.com.au/shows) for bookings.

**October 13:** Jeff Lang and Jordie Lane, at the Republic Bar, North Hobart, from 9pm. Tickets are \$20 (plus booking fee) pre-sale from the venue.

**October 20:** Jeff Martin, at Wrest Point from 8pm. Tickets are \$28.50 pre-sale, go to [wrestpoint.com.au/shows](http://wrestpoint.com.au/shows) for bookings.

**October 21:** Leo Sayer, at Wrest Point from 8pm. Tickets are \$55, go to [wrestpoint.com.au/shows](http://wrestpoint.com.au/shows) for bookings

the film garnering praise for its high quality 3D vision, Herzog admits to being a 3D sceptic.

"You see, when watching a film in 3D you do not form your own parallel story. What you see is all you see. There's little to imagine. You already have the fireworks! But for this film it was imperative. And audiences seem to like 3D, and that's enough to take it seriously."

**VANESSA KEYS**

*The Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, now showing State Cinema

diary