



- [FILM](#)
- [TV & RADIO](#)
- [MUSIC](#)
- [ARTS](#)
- [BOOKS](#)
- [FASHION](#)
- [GOOD LIVING](#)
- [PEOPLE](#)

Mixing movies at home

By Alexa Moses

June 7, 2005



Fifteen minutes of fame ... filmmaker Michela Ledwidge's Sanctuary is the world's first remixable film.

Photo: *Tamara Dean*

As the DJ asked the audience: "Yo yo yo, is there a filmmaker in da house?" There will be a whole load of filmmakers "sampling in da house" in December, when the world's first remixable film, written and directed by Michela Ledwidge, is released.

Shot in Sydney last month, *Sanctuary* tells the story of a virtual reality superhero. There will be a conventional print of the 15-minute film that can be played in cinemas, and a DVD and website from which people download, manipulate and modify its elements, including multi-track sound, video layers, 3-D models, concept art, storyboards and performances. These elements can be mixed with other digital audio and video.

"Commercial film sampling will eventually happen because film sampling is already taking place," Ledwidge said. "As soon as you digitise something, it's available. *Revenge of the Sith* was available. Filmmakers are not being exposed to this because most of them aren't playing computer games."

Ledwidge's experiment has forerunners. The popular computer game Counter-Strike is a modification of another computer game, Half-Life. Counter-Strike was created when Half-Life's owners, Valve, released the computer code, allowing games designers to modify it.

The Goth industrial band, Nine Inch Nails, released the multi-track audio for their song *The Hand That Feeds* online. DJ Spooky remixed D.W. Griffith's 1915 silent film *The Birth of a Nation* and played his version at the State Theatre in January.

Sanctuary is being made for \$300,000, with funding from Britain's National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts, and the Australian Film Commission.

Not everyone has welcomed the technology. The actors' union, Equity, has tried to block the production, fearing that footage of actors could be misused.

Sanctuary will be released under a creative commons, or CC, licence, which allows audiences to copy and edit the film's digital elements for non-commercial purposes.

Simon Whipp, the national director of Equity, the actors' section of the Media, Entertainment and Arts Alliance, says actors' reputations and income could be threatened by releasing elements of the film for modification.

For example, "non-commercial use could include using an actor's performance in an advertisement for the Nazi party or the Communist party," Mr Whipp said.

The union says the CC licence is a problem in Australia where actors have no moral rights. The licence supports only the author's rights.

One actor, Mark Owen-Taylor, who performs in *Sanctuary* with Basia A'hern, is a member of Equity as well as supporting Ledwidge's concept.

"For me, it's like doing any other film. I don't mind if people put my face on a donkey at home," Owen-Taylor said.

"Why would a political party even care? They could get their mum to do it in the backyard."

[WIN a \\$16,000 holiday when you subscribe to the Herald for as little as \\$3 a week](#)

Our Advertisers

[Home](#) > [Entertainment](#) > [Film](#) > Article

Copyright © 2005. The Sydney Morning Herald.