

MM

FIVE EDITORS TO WATCH

RIISING STARS ON THE BLEEDING-EDGE OF THE CUTTING ROOM

Editors are often the unsung heroes of the moviemaking process. As the final stop on the way to a finished film, they're the ones who pore over countless hours of footage, looking for little nuances in an actor's performance or stunning images that will engage an audience in every way.

Every so often, an editor comes along who you know is going to leave his or her mark on the industry; rising masters who are proving that they've got what it takes to set new standards in the art form. Here are five of them.

SASHA DYLAN BELL

Australia-based editor Sasha Dylan Bell cut his professional teeth on music videos and demo reels, which led to stints in the cutting rooms of "Underbelly" and "The Amazing Race Australia." The talent Bell showed in those various formats brought him to the attention of director Michael Rymer (*Queen of the Damned*), who hired Bell to edit his latest feature, *Face to Face*.

Face to Face—based on David Williamson's play of the same name—has been a huge success for Bell, racking up more than 20 awards during its international film festival circuit run and scoring a theatrical release in Australia in September.

"For me, it's really about finding and understanding the point of view," says Bell of his approach to tackling a scene. "How it affects the characters

involved, where the scene has come from in the story, where it's going and then painting it with the right tone."

Bell is quick to acknowledge the role his mentors, like editor Steve Evans, have played in his success. "Before the edit began, he helped put the big task ahead into perspective for me, getting my head around the logistics of how to approach the onslaught of rushes that would be delivered on this film," says Bell of Evans' encouragement.

Bell also cites Rymer, who took a chance on the young editor with *Face to Face*, a project which Bell says "allowed me to grow as an editor."

ANDREW COUTTS

Toronto-based editor Andrew Coutts began his career as an assistant on television projects like "The Best Years" and "The Line," where he worked under Paul Day, one of the founding members of the Canadian Cinema Editors. By 2009, Coutts was editing one of Hollywood's biggest franchise films. Though his success seems to have come overnight, Coutts says it was anything but.

After serving as an associate editor on *Saw V* under Kevin Greutert, who had edited the horror franchise's first five films, Coutts was called in as the sole editor on *Saw VI* and *Saw 3D: The Final Chapter*, both of which were directed by Greutert.

That exposure helped Coutts make a name for himself in both horror and 3-D editing circles, where he's gained

a reputation for being fearless.

"When cutting *Saw 3D*, we were often told we couldn't do something," recalls Coutts, "but we had to test it



SASHA DYLAN BELL

to make sure it was true—and in many cases, it worked."

Continuing his upward trajectory, Coutts is currently editing Douglas Aarniokoski's horror film, *Nurse 3-D*.

MELISSA BROWN

Melissa Brown's reputation as one of the industry's up-and-coming talents began as an intern with the American Cinema Editors. Upon completion of the program, the L.A.-based editor began assisting on a variety of TV series, including "CSI."

Under the tutelage of "CSI" editors Barrie Wise and Alec Smight, Brown learned two important lessons: Don't fall in love with the first cut and good editing requires diligence. Yet Brown's

story is a great example of the importance of building—and maintaining—professional relationships. Because while her work on many critically acclaimed shows has led to a jam-packed work schedule, her opportunity to edit a feature film—Nicholas Ozeki's *Mamitas*—came about as a result of a collaboration she developed with Ozeki back in film school.

Originally shot as a short (which Brown also edited), after screening *Mamitas* at festivals, Ozeki was able to raise enough money to create a feature

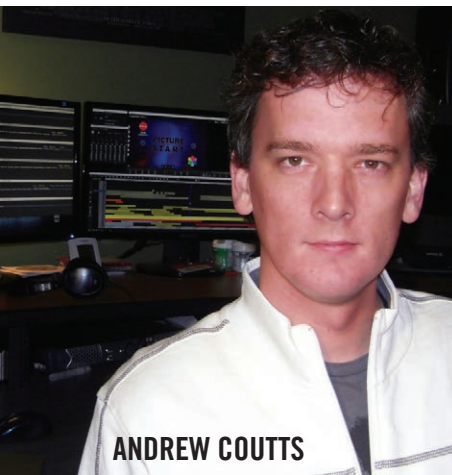
editor Eric Brodeur found his tech skills served him well when he made the leap to moviemaking. He started off pounding the pavement, knocking on doors and slowly working his way up the assistant editor ladder. Within a short period of time, Brodeur was sharing the editor's chair with frequent collaborator Youssef Delara on his first feature film, *Ijé*.

Brodeur's approach to cutting is "all about the story on the page and meeting the vision of the director, while honoring the writer's intent," he

Ziehl's *Shadow Witness*.

"I tend to either watch the master and then read the script or vice versa," says Hartzell. "It's always interesting to watch the footage first, then do a refresher pass on the script to see what I was expecting, what happened on the day and what to do next."

Throughout his career, Hartzell has had many mentors, among them Lori Jane Coleman ACE ("Covert Affairs"), Stephen Mark, ACE ("The X Files") and Michael Ruscio, ACE ("True Blood"), each of whom has taught him about



ANDREW COUTTS



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ERIC BRODEUR



MARK HARTZELL

version of the film, which Brown cut during a down period on "CSI."

"Being a low-budget film, I wasn't paid enough to 'quit my day job,'" says Brown. Yet the film is creating quite a buzz for Brown and Ozeki, who has garnered a Someone to Watch Spirit Award nomination for his directing.

When asked which director she would most like to work with, Brown says she hopes to continue collaborating with Ozeki. "We pushed each other to be better in both the short and the feature [versions of *Mamitas*], which is always a good thing."

ERIC R. BRODEUR

Initially working in the information technology field, Los Angeles-based

says. "Every cut, scene and act needs to have an impact and leave you wanting more."

Brodeur's current project, the Sundance-bound feature *Filly Brown*, is co-directed by Delara and Michael D. Olmos and stars Gina Rodriguez and Edward James Olmos.

MARK HARTZELL

After taking part in the American Cinema Editors' internship program, Mark Hartzell—who attributes his success to "an odd but fruitful combination of luck, talent, personality and timing"—has served as an assistant on "The Pacific," "Big Love" and "True Blood" and is currently in post-production on his first feature as editor, Scott

finding success—and compelling moments—in the cutting room.

These five young editors have set about following their dreams and, in the process, established themselves as talented voices in the industry. Voices that will have people talking about their work for many years to come. **MM**

Editor Gordon Burkell started Art of the Guillotine (www.aotg.com) to help build a community for editors and to create a vehicle to help editors and film academics share their knowledge and expertise to improve the art form. He recently released the AOTG app on iTunes for iPads and iPhones. Burkell currently lives in Toronto, Canada, where he edits and teaches film editing at Ryerson University.