

ABOUT TOWN

★ WITH MELISSA KENT ★ PICTURES: SHANEY BALCOMBE, ARSINEH HOUSPIAN ★ EMAIL: PARTIES@THEAGE.COM.AU



Tim Ferguson, Peter Rowsthorn and his daughter Maggie.



Tex Perkins and daughter Tuesday.



William Jarratt with his mum, Noni Hazlehurst.



Johanna Drake, Rosemary Drake and Prue Dwyer.



Boatmen Rhys Darby, Bill Nighy and Nick Frost make a friend.

★ Pushing the Boat out, gently

The Boat That Rocked premiere, Village Cinemas, Crown

THE boat didn't really rock so much as gently sway, but then it was only tooting up the Yarra River rather than the North Sea. Actors Bill Nighy, Nick Frost and Rhys Darby ventured across the Yarra's mighty ripples in an old fishing tub before disembarking onto the red carpet for the premiere of *The Boat That Rocked* at Crown on Monday night. The film – written and directed by Richard Curtis – tells the story of a pirate radio ship which broadcast rock'n'roll from the North Sea in the 1960s.

It's Nighy's third Curtis film (after *Love Actually* and *The Girl in the Cafe*) so naturally we wanted to know – do you have a favourite? "I would say *The Girl in the Cafe*," the debonair Brit told us. "It was one of my favourite jobs. It was a different part for me, in that rather than playing a rock'n'roll idiot or

a squid or a zombie or a vampire, I got to play a real human being."

Darby, the ginger-haired Kiwi star of *Flight of the Conchords*, plumped for *Love Actually*. "I went to see it with my partner so it's kind of special for us," he said. Nick Frost, best known as the foil for Simon Pegg in *Hot Fuzz*, confessed to being a huge fan of the Curtis-penned sitcom *The Black Adder*. "He is kind of the headmaster

Ryan Ritchie and Paris Wells.



of British humour," he told us. "There is a lot of criticism of Richard and I think that's a shame because who doesn't want to go to the cinema and be happy for two hours?" Among those grooving to 1960s tunes in a riverside marquee were Peter Rowsthorn and his daughter Maggie, Tex Perkins and daughter Tuesday and Noni Hazlehurst and son William Jarratt. Comedian Tim Ferguson was another *Love Actually* fan: "I cried at the credits, you know when people are arriving at the airport and all hugging each other?" Curtis' biggest fans live here in Mel-

bourne – his aunt Rosemary Drake and cousins Prue Dwyer and Johanna Drake, who were guests at the party. "Oh, I love all of his films! He's a lovely nephew," Mrs Drake gushed.



Andrew Lawrence and Mario Joyner

Robyn Butler, Lee Naimo, Benny Davis and Jordan Raskopoulos, and Wayne Hope from *Axis of Awesome*



Greg Fleet, appearing in his 21st festival.

Jeff Green and Claire Hooper, taking their comedy seriously.

★ Gags in hard times

Melbourne International Comedy Festival opening, Princess Theatre

"IT'S been a shit year! We've had it up to here with fire, floods and fear!" warbled host Paul McDermott in a razzle-dazzle song and dance number, and we couldn't have said it better ourselves. On that note, all 21 comedians on the opening night bill at the Princess Theatre on

Wednesday got down to making us laugh. Highlights included political comedian Janeane Garofalo, *Axis of Awesome*'s amazing four-chord pop medley and Stephen K. Amos' story of meeting Prince Harry, who told him

"you don't sound like a black chap". Local favourite Greg Fleet, who is appearing in his 21st festival, told us: "Apparently there are comedians who've been around longer than me. Er, like Bob Hope." Brit comedian Jeff Green summed up the atmosphere backstage: "It's dog-eat-dog back there," he whispered. "It's like a shrinking waterhole at dusk, that's what it's like. Not really. Generally, for a group of self-employed people out for themselves, there's a remarkable amount of bonhomie and camaraderie." *Good News Week* star Claire Hooper admitted to some pre-show jitters: "I'm not sure how long my show is. I've only trialed in Adelaide, so I guess it's either half an hour longer, or half an hour shorter. I can never remember which."



Otteren and Luke Balgoue

Suzanne and Kenneth Cobonpue

Wendy Bannister and Lucy Folk.

★ Designer to stars

Kenneth Cobonpue in Melbourne, Hermon & Hermon, Richmond



Suzanne Edgcombe and Gina Lynch

BRAD Pitt, and presumably Angelina Jolie, sleep in his bed. George Clooney sits on his chair. Famed Filipino furniture designer Kenneth Cobonpue, who has celebrities clamouring after his unique creations, was in Melbourne last week to unveil his new collection in Richmond furniture store Hermon & Hermon. Aside from furnishing the homes of Clooney and Pitt, Cobonpue has also furnished Nobu restaurants around the world, and was commissioned by Warner Brothers to create a casino set for the coming *Ocean's*

Thirteen. The designer is famed for his use of organic shapes and eco-friendly materials. Guests at Wednesday's soiree, including David and Karina Reyne, Bruce and Chyka Keebaugh and stylist Wendy Bannister lined up for a glimpse of Cobonpue's exotic designs before leaving with a goodie bag that included a miniature Yoda chair, one of his best-selling designs.



David and Karina Reyne.