

## Document Citation

Title	<b>Angst</b>
Author(s)	David Stratton
Source	<i>Variety</i>
Date	2000 Aug 07
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	19
No. of Pages	1
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Angst, Nettheim, Daniel, 2000

## MELBOURNE

## ANGST

(AUSTRALIA)

A UIP (Australia) release of an Australian Film Finance Corp. presentation of a Green Light production, in association with the NSW Film and TV Office, Australian Film Commission. (International sales: Beyond Films, Sydney.) Produced by Jonathon Green.

Directed by Daniel Nettheim. Screenplay, Anthony O'Connor. Camera (Moviela color), Tristan Milani; editor, Martin Connor; music, David Thrussell; production designer, Tara Kamath; art director, Kylie Rose McLean; costume designer, Jackline Sassine; sound (Dolby Digital), Andrew Belletty; assistant director, Richard McGrath. Reviewed at Melbourne Film Festival, July 22, 2000. Running time: 85 MIN.

Dean .....	Sam Lewis
Jade .....	Jessica Napier
Ian .....	Justin Smith
May .....	Abi Tucker
Mole .....	Luke Lennox
Heather .....	Lara Cox

By DAVID STRATTON

**T**hough it covers familiar territory — the romantic and sexual hang-ups of urban twentysomethings — Daniel Nettheim's first feature is a sympathetic, engaging comedy reminiscent of a French relationship pic. An excellent ensemble cast of attractive actors portrays a bunch of wounded characters trying to sort out their lives in a confusing world. Though young, hip auds will enjoy this assured, minor-key film, the low-budget "Angst" will face an uphill battle against higher-profile Yank product, with overseas chances probably limited to fest exposure and, later, ancillary.

Dean (Sam Lewis) shares a small apartment with his best friend, Ian (Justin Smith), and his ex-girlfriend, Jade (Jessica Napier), for whom he still has a yen and with whom he shares a passion for schlock and horror movies (posters for "Four Flies on Grey Velvet" and "Dawn of the Dead" adorn the walls).

Recently dumped by his middle-class girlfriend, Heather (Lara Cox), because he inadvertently ejaculated on her favorite stuffed piglet, Dean is helping Jade end her relationship with a nerdy lover. Ian, meanwhile, gathers material for a standup comedy routine. Also residing in the apartment is the trio's cat, Cronenberg.

Dean works part time in a video store specializing in schlock, and it's there he meets the Goth, punkish May (Abi Tucker), who stops by to rent a copy of "The Crow." It's attraction at first sight, but May proves elusive at first and Dean is still hung up on Heather, though she's now planning a fashionable wedding.

While floundering through life fearing he may end up like the homeless old men he sees every day on the streets (depicted almost as zombie-like creatures, in keeping with Dean's obsession with George Romero pics), Dean makes a half-hearted attempt to find a sexual partner via the Internet but, in a particularly funny scene, his blind date with cyber-slut Barbarella results in a highly embarrassing encounter.

Eventually May helps him exorcise his demons, in a mutually satisfying fashion. Ian, meanwhile, has found the confidence to try out his comedy

routine before an audience, and Jade has become motherly toward Mole (Luke Lennox), a homeless 16-year-old who tries to rob Dean's vidstore.

Filled with sexually explicit dialogue, mostly about oral activity (at which Dean claims peculiar expertise), the film zips along with a freshness and vigor and a sharp ear for pithy modern language. Anthony O'Connor's screenplay succeeds in its relatively modest aim of exploring the angst-ridden lives of characters who get off on the fear and horror they experience while continually watching gorey pics.

A bright young cast enlivens the proceedings, with Lewis an engaging, if perhaps rather too good-looking, lead, and Smith tremendously sympathetic as his buddy. As the well-contrasted femmes, Napier and Tucker (latter warbles attractively over the end credits), are delightful.

All technical credits, starting with Tristan Milani's polished camera work, are on the button. A couple of sequences in which some predictable action is fast-forwarded, as if on video, amusingly help to cut to the chase.