

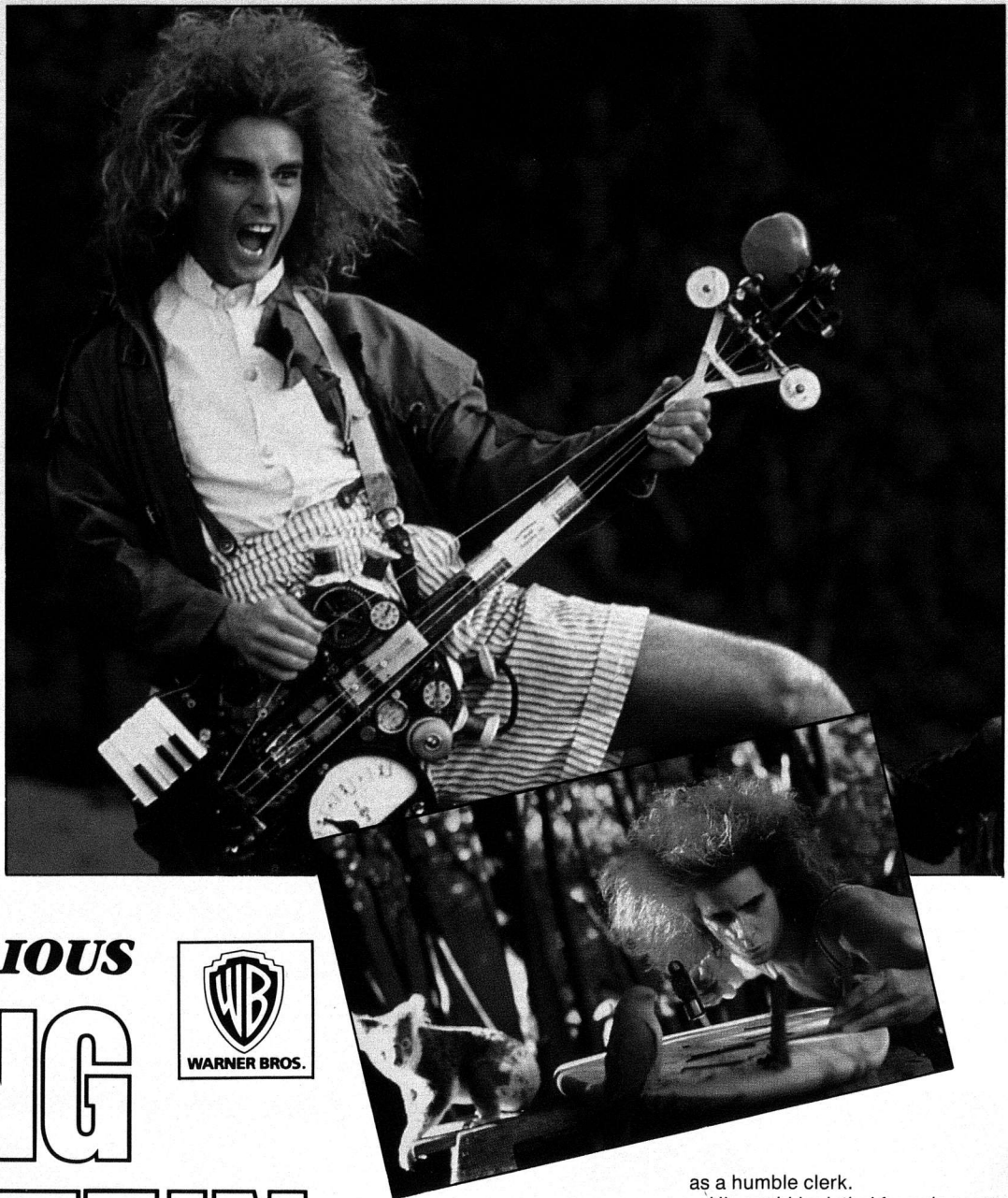
S

trange things can happen over a few drinks. Case in point: changing your name from Greg Pead to Yahoo Serious.

Which is precisely what the director/star of **Young Einstein** did. In the middle of a drinking bout he had the uncontrollable urge to change his name to Yahoo. "You're not serious?" replied ex-classmate and future collaborator David Roach and faster than you can split an atom, a name was born. And legalized. It's right there on his Am/Ex card.

Lean and woolly-haired, Yahoo Serious is exactly that. A serious, Australian filmmaker who sometimes puts in 20 hour days to maintain creative control. Already being compared to Keaton, Chaplin and Woody Allen, Serious says "I'm always interested in the changing edge of culture, what is happening on the leading edge of science, the arts, knowledge and the media." After being expelled from art school for his less than artful expression, (painting huge jokes on the walls), Yahoo began a clandestine relationship with film, editing at a local TV station, where he and David Roach made a series of respected documentaries.

The idea for **Young Einstein** came to Serious when he resur-



YAHOO SERIOUS YOUNG EINSTEIN



rected a script penned by himself and Roach about the invention of rock 'n' roll. "What if Einstein had been the inventor?" And lo, the story of the prodigy who longs to be a physicist was conceived. Einstein's simple, farming folks do not comprehend "Physicist, eh? What do they grow?"

In an effort to get backing, they produced a 16mm, \$20,000 mini version of **Young Einstein** to show what they were capable of doing. To raise that \$20,000 they "begged and borrowed from friends, hocked personal belongings and persuaded people to work for us for nothing" recalls Roach.

It worked. They got their backing and **Young Einstein** was released in Australia and has become the country's 4th most successful film (the first three being *Crocodile 1* and *II* and *E.T.*) with the largest Aussie grosses in Warner Bros history. Roach and Serious wrote and produced the finished product with Serious directing.

This tale of Albert Einstein growing up in the Tasmanian bush reveals such little-known facts about the genius as his invention of the electric guitar, the creation of effervescence in beer and his romantic liaison with the teenaged,

scientific beauty Marie Curie, long before the Madame could be added to her monogram.

With his pet Tasmanian devil (Aussie's best friend) he first splits the atom attempting to put some zing into Daddy's home brew and in his quest to perfect and patent this formula he goes boldly where no self-respecting, guitar-toting genius has gone before: Civilization. Where, in between playing lead electric viola (known in the modern world as a guitar) with a band of guttersnipes and teaching nuclear physics to neighboring hookers, he meets the coltish Miss Curie, who is on a scholarship at the University of Sydney, all part of her Noble prize winnings. Our hero falls in love. And, as the course of love seldom runs smoothly, she is coveted by the slick Preston Preston, head honcho of the local patent office where Einstein toils

as a humble clerk.

His could-be lethal formula soon finds its way into Preston's hands where it is quickly hustled to the beer syndicate. The Malt Mafia? And before he can intercede, Einstein is spirited off to the nearest lunatic asylum.

Through genius and cunning, he escapes and finds himself at the 1906 Science Academy awards and rubs elbows with such luminaries as the 16 year old Adolf Hitler, the urbane Elephant Man and Sigmund Freud.

"As you can see, we spared nothing... nor anyone... for the sake of historical accuracy," says Serious solemnly. "Our film is a sort of cross between *Dr. Zhivago* and a *Bugs Bunny* cartoon. While we may have taken a few creative liberties with the facts, I think we've stayed true to Einstein's spirit."

Relatively speaking.

— A. Colgoni

