



MOLLY



'MOLLY' SERIES INTRODUCTION

This two-part television event is a wild ride into the early days of the Australian music scene and the rise of one of its most internationally influential and powerful names - Ian "Molly" Meldrum.

An inarticulate country boy who hates attention, Molly becomes an unlikely Aussie treasure – the international power broker of pop, embraced by fans and rock royalty alike. But along with the success and his own rising star, Molly's deep-seated desire is to be loved for who he really is in the midst of his colourful life and friendships.

Surrounded by unconventional, free spirited and talented people, Molly led a cultural revolution bringing radical music, rock star glamour and a little mischief into Australian homes every Sunday night through the hit television music show Countdown.

It's the 1970s and Australia's music scene is burgeoning. Passionate music journalist Molly, Producer Michael Shrimpton and Director Robbie Weekes launch an unassuming TV music show called Countdown. It's an instant success, and becomes a groundbreaking phenomenon with a reputation worldwide as the single TV program that can make or break any recording artist or group.

Australia's biggest local talent appear on the show – many see a surge in music sales and breakthrough hits. Countdown promotes international acts including KISS, Madonna and Elton John, breaking new artists and songs along the way – thanks to its host Molly who can spot music superstars before they are legends, often becoming their confidante in the process.

But what Molly doesn't bet on is his own star potential. And while he indulges in the wild parties and glitz of his fame, Molly is most happy with his friends.

And when Molly suffers a near fatal accident in 2011, tributes pour in. Molly's passion for music and life is cemented in the heart of the entire nation.

CAST

Ian "Molly" Meldrum

Michael Shrimpton

Robbie Weekes

Lynne Randell

Caroline

Michael Gudinski

Camille

John Paul Young

Shirley Strachan

Alan Wade

Madonna

Raggsy

SAMUEL JOHNSON

TOM O'SULLIVAN

TJ POWER

KREW BOYLAN

BEN GERRARD

AARON GLENANE

REBECCA BREEDS

CONNOR CRAWFORD

BEN GEURENS

BENEDICT HARDIE

JACINTA STAPLETON

MICHAEL BEVERIDGE



PRODUCTION CREDITS

MOLLY is a Mushroom Pictures production in association with the Seven Network, Screen Australia and Film Victoria.

"There is no one else quite like Molly, and I say that with much admiration. To be able to explore the story of his early life and share that with our viewers is wonderful. He is a much-loved icon in Australia."

Brad Lyons,
Seven's Director of Network Production.

Director	KEVIN CARLIN
Producer	JOHN MOLLOY
Writers	LIZ DORAN MATT CAMERON
Executive Producers	MICHAEL GUDINSKI MARK MORRISSEY JULIE MCGAURAN
Consulting Producer	IAN "MOLLY" MELDRUM
Co-Producer	BETHANY JONES
Line Producer	BRENDAN CAMPBELL
Director of Photography	CRAIG BARDEN, ACS
Production Designers	BEN MORIESON CARRIE KENNEDY
Costume Designer	EDIE KURZER
Makeup & Hair Designer	KIRSTEN VEYSEY
Casting	MARIANNE JADE MAURA FAY CASTING
Editor	ANGIE HIGGINS
Composer	GREG J WALKER



EP1 SYNOPSIS

A music journalist from humble beginnings in country Victoria, Ian “Molly” Meldrum gets the chance of a lifetime – to create a music show for ABC TV. Along with talented young producer Michael Shrimpton and director Robbie Weekes, the gang form an unlikely team, and settle on the name Countdown for their modest TV show.

But Countdown is anything but modest. Ratings soar, making it the ABC’s biggest success. It’s a revolution for Australian music which finally has a relevant platform to showcase local talent – and develop its own unique voice. Skyhooks, Sherbert, John Paul Young, Renee Geyer and many others perform. Artists soon become household names. Their songs become hits.

As Countdown goes from strength to strength, attention soon turns to Molly – who reluctantly steps up to become the show’s host. Despite his often tongue-tied presentation, Molly wins over audiences, but not always network executives who view his ramblings as undisciplined. That doesn’t stop Molly, whose passion continues to make Countdown hugely popular and puts Australian music on the global map.

With his down-to-earth manner, Molly forges strong relationships with major stars and launches the music careers of many bands. Then, from rock royalty to actual royalty, in 1977 Molly

conducts his most awkward Countdown interview ever – with Prince Charles. And when confronted by the biggest interview of his life he right royally stuffs up, nervously fumbling his way through the entire taping. It’s an iconic television event.

As Molly’s notoriety continues to soar, one thing remains – his down-to-earth spirit. When faced with the choice between fame and friendships, Molly continues to stay true to his mates. His loyalty to those he cares about is never compromised.

Molly’s fast-paced life comes to a head at the infamous 100th episode of Countdown. Exhausted and nervous, Molly takes a pill to help settle him down. What unfolds is one of the greatest debacles in Australian TV history. And as Molly comes crashing down, so does one of his most cherished friendships.



EP2 SYNOPSIS

Molly is now the power broker of pop – the most influential name in Australian music. He travels the world as the confidante of the music industry's elite, and gains exclusive interviews with international bands including KISS, Madonna and Rod Stewart.

Meanwhile, Countdown's producer worries that Molly's partying has made him less reliable. He hires former pop sensation Lynne Randell to be Molly's personal assistant and manage him. But the two only get up to more mischief.

Molly's star continues to rise. He is made King of Moomba, and produces the Australian leg of 'Live Aid'. But Countdown is left behind. Cold Chisel and Midnight Oil refuse to perform on the show branding it a fraud, a lip-syncing show for teenage girls. Molly can't help but take it personally.

Away from the limelight, Molly searches for a place to hang his hat in his chaotic life and colourful relationships. As his friendships continue to be his bedrock, Molly struggles with the loss of some of those dearest to him.

By the mid-1980s the music industry has started to change. Countdown's popularity is dwindling, unable to compete with slick music video shows on commercial networks, such as MTV. It signals the end of an era for Countdown after 13 epic years. Molly celebrates the only way he knows how – with a party.

But his biggest moment is when he faces the public after his near fatal accident – only to realise just how loved he truly is.



MOLLY 7



SAMUEL JOHNSON

MOLLY MELDRUM

Award-winning actor Samuel Johnson brings to life Australian music icon Molly Meldrum.

A recognisable personality in Australian entertainment, Johnson was Meldrum's first pick to portray him. In preparation for the role, Johnson watched old Countdown episodes to master Meldrum's mumbling and fumbling communicative style.

Johnson started his acting career at an early age with small roles in various TV shows including Ocean Girl and Home and Away before his breakout role as womanising writer Evan in The Secret Life of Us.

He went on to star in the telemovie After the Deluge with David Wenham and Hugo Weaving, which earned him an AFI Award.

Some of his TV credits include The Secret River, Paper Giants: Magazine Wars, Small Time Gangster and he was well known as a regular cast member on seasons 1-5 of Rush. Films include Crawlspace and Crackerjack.

Johnson is also well known for his radio and voiceover work, and has voiced ongoing campaigns for Vodafone, Suzuki and Pedigree.

Quotes

"To be honest, this is the holy grail, both creatively and personally. Molly is a character. As an actor this is the best role you could ever hope to find. You spend your whole career dreaming of a role like this. I was terrified, but the panic was convincingly overshadowed by my excitement about the opportunity.

"I was terrified about all the Countdown things that we recreated, including the Prince Charles interview. Some of those moments are folklore in Australian TV history. There's an obligation for us to honour that.

"It's bizarre when you rock up to work and John and Yoko are flying through, Olivia Newton-John is there and Freddie Mercury is taking me on a ticker tape parade.

"It was about us re-creating moments in history, so it was about a lot more than us. All of the actors were really keen to serve the history."



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