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REVIEW



BATMAN BEGINS
Christopher Nolan's intensely dramatic reinvention of the DC Comics staple will be a huge international hit for Warner Bros, says Mike Goodridge.

REVIEW



INVISIBLE
Thierry Jousse's stylish and provocative debut offers adventurous distributors the opportunity for an upmarket erotic thriller, says Jonathan Romney

REVIEW

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✉ Oz's Roadshow, Becker unveil Cannes deals

✉ Sandy George in Sydney

09 June 2005 04:00

Roadshow

Roadshow has joined the list of buyers attached to Roman Polanski's unfinished version of the Dickens classic *Oliver Twist*, one of a trio of titles Australia's biggest independent theatrical distributor has acquired from Summit Entertainment.

Picked up from script is Tony Gilroy's directorial debut, *Michael Clayton*, regarded by managing director Joel Pearlman as a particularly hot title and set to star George Clooney as a fixer in a law company, and the tough action crime drama *Harsh Times*.

Harsh Times is the directorial debut of screenwriter David Ayer (*SWAT*, *Training Day*, *The Fast And The Furious*). Set in South Central LA, and stars Christian Bale, Freddy Rodriguez and Eva Longoria from *Desperate Housewives*.

Another film acquired on the strength of its script was *She's The Man*, about a teenager who poses as her missing twin brother. Andy Fickman is set to direct with Lakeshore handling sales.

Roadshow handles New Line and Warner Bros product as well as acquiring independent titles, including niche fare.

Becker

Becker Films International has scored a number of sales on psychological thriller *Feed*.

New UK distributor Showbox has bought UK rights, Paradiso has acquired Benelux rights and Phars Film has bought the Middle East.

The controversial film centres on the world of 'feeders' - men who seek out obese women and, for their own gratification, fatten them even more. In the film, one such woman disappears and a hotshot investigator with his own problems gets involved.

The film was directed by Brett Leonard (*Man-Thin*, *The Lawnmower Man*), and stars Alex O'Loughlin (*The Oyster Farmer*) and son-and-father Patrick and Jack Thompson, who is also executive producer.

At Cannes Becker also sold Hollywood/Bollywood romantic comedy *Mangold*, which has just wrapped production, to MD Media for Indonesian pushing the sales tally up to 10 territories.

Based on the promo only, Telepool bought German rights and Phars bought the Middle East on *Like Minds*. The psychological thriller stars Toni Collette and is director Gregory Read's debut film.

Ljubljanski Kinematografi bought the Middle East on another of Becker's Australian films, *Three Dollars*.

Becker president Reiko Bradley is still hoping to raise finance on the Islamic anthology film *Five Worlds* and *Where Love Reigns*, based on the true story of the love affair, 100 years ago, between Sabina Spielrein and Carl Jung, who was treating her at the time.

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HABANA BLUES

Benito Zambrano delivers a refreshing MTV-generation equivalent of Buena Vista Social Club, says Lee Marshall

REVIEW



BITTERSWEET LIFE

Kim Jee-woon's ultra-violent action noir should play well in Western territories that enjoyed the likes of Old Boy, says Lee Marshall

REVIEW



ALICE

Marco Martins delivers an atmospheric, yearning debut that should attract arthouse distributors willing to gamble on its emotional pull and visual panache, says Lee Marshall

Magna Pacific

Magna Pacific has also now signed off on two titles as a result of Cannes. *Lonely Hearts*, starring Salma Hayek and John Travolta, was acquired from Nu Image, and is based on the true story of a US serial killer in the 1950s.

The romantic comedy *Because I Said So*, from Mandate Pictures, stars Diane Keaton as a mother who goes searching for a partner for the eldest of her three daughters. Australian director Gillian Armstrong, who previously worked with Keaton on *Mrs Soffel*, will direct.

"Our aim is to acquire true theatrical movies with strong story lines and A list cast," Magna Pacific executive director Leon Coningham told *ScreenDaily.Com*. "We want thrillers, horror films and romantic comedies that have long-term DVD legs and are still selling in 10 years."

The previous partnership with Becker was not delivering such movies and this was one reason it was dissolved, he said: "We are the largest independent DVD distributor in the country and understand that 70% of the revenue base is from home entertainment. We have strong cashflows as a result, allowing us to take a long-term perspective on what is a risky business."

Madman

Six titles will be finding their way to Australia via Madman, another company with a significant presence in homes. They include Lumina Films' sexy raw Brazilian Prix de la Jeunesse winner *Lower City* from first-timer Sergio Machado, Celluloid Dreams' dramatic thriller *The Aura*, which sees *Nine Queens* director Fabian Bielinsky again team with actor Ricardo Darin, and *The Works' Tickets*, the collaboration between directors Ken Loach, Abbas Kiarostami and Ermanno Olmi.

The black comedy drama *Living And Breathing* was bought from Renaissance off script and is set to star Tom Wilkinson, Angelica Houston and America's desert landscapes. Wolfgang Herzog's documentary about the passionate, disturbed animal activist Timothy Treadwell, who lived with grizzly bears each summer in Alaska until he was killed by one, comes from Lions Gate. The sixth film, Michael Haneke's *Hidden*, will be jointly released by Madman and Dendy.

Potential

Potential picked up from Celluloid Dreams the documentary *Darwin's Nightmare*, which tracks the ecological and economic effects of a foreign fish species being introduced into Lake Victoria, and The National Film Board of Canada's *The Last Trapper*, a drama filmed in spectacular wilderness and depicting a dying way of life.

Celluloid Dreams also sold Potential the cross-cultural comedy drama *Sabah*, set in Toronto, and GreenStreet Films came up with Sally Potter's *Yes*, which principal Mark Spratt first saw in Berlin.

Sharmill

Finally, Sharmill has acquired the rights to *The Valet (La Doublure)*, the new romantic comedy from Francis Veber. Executive director Natalie Miller said: "We distributed Veber's previous hits *The Dinner Game*, *The Closet* and *Tais Tois*, and are very excited with the prospect of his new film which is currently shooting with Daniel Auteuil and Kristen Scott Thomas in lead roles."

Also purchased in Cannes was *Brasileirinho*, directed by Mika Kaurismaki, a musical documentary film about CHORO, a genuinely urban music that has evolved over the past 130 years into a modern tropical sound. Just before Cannes, Sharmill bought director Oliver Marchal's stylish French thriller, *36 Quai des Orfèvres*, starring Gerard Depardieu and Daniel Auteuil, and set on the streets of Paris.