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DGA plays critical favorites

Orion Classics execs in talks with Par, SPE

By Andrea King

The top three executives at Orion Classics are reportedly in talks with Sony Pictures Entertainment and Paramount Pictures regarding employment at either company if Orion Pictures, in Chapter 11, does not find a buyer soon.

Meanwhile, sources said that two European concerns, Canal Plus and Polygram are both interested in buying the Classics division of Orion. However, highly placed Orion sources said that no offer for the classics division has been made by any company.

Insiders said that Sony Pictures
See **CLASSICS** on page 8

Allen succeeds Grad at MTM TV

By Lisa de Moraes

Bill Allen has been named president of MTM Television, replacing Peter Grad, who is leaving after five years.

Allen had been executive vp of MTM Television since 1988.

Grad has been with MTM since 1987, coming on board as president of MTM Television after seven years as senior vp creative af-
See **ALLEN** on page 39

Holland harvests 'Secret Garden'

By Andrea King

"Europa Europa" director Agnieszka Holland is set to helm the American Zoetrope production of Frances Hodgson Burnett's enduring children's classic "The Secret Garden."
See **HOLLAND** on page 42

DGA Feature Film Nominees



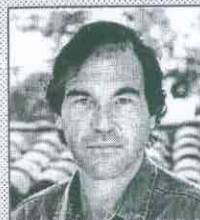
Jonathan Demme
"The Silence of the Lambs"
Opened Feb. 14, 1991
Gross: \$130.7 million
First DGA nom



Barry Levinson
"Bugsy"
Opened Dec. 13
Gross: \$36.7 million
Third DGA nom



Ridley Scott
"Thelma & Louise"
Opened May 24
Gross: \$44.7 million
First DGA nom



Oliver Stone
"JFK"
Opened Dec. 20
Gross: \$50.5 million
Third DGA nom



Barbra Streisand
"The Prince of Tides"
Opened Dec. 25
Gross: \$52 million
First DGA nom

Noms to Stone, Streisand, Scott, Levinson, Demme

By Jeffrey Daniels and Anita M. Busch

The Directors Guild of America honored three directors with first-time nominations Tuesday, including actress-director Barbra Streisand, who became the third woman to be nominated for the coveted directorial achievement award.

The five DGA nominees are Jonathan Demme for Orion's "The Silence of the Lambs," Barry Levinson for TriStar's "Bugsy," Ridley Scott for MGM-Pathe's "Thelma & Louise," Oliver Stone for Warner Bros.' "JFK" and Barbra Streisand for Columbia's "The Prince of Tides."

All but director Scott were con-
See **DGA** on page 41

King World cuts short KRON hold on game pair

Switch to KGO salvo in war on early prime

By Steve Brennan

King World Prods. is prematurely moving "Wheel of Fortune" and "Jeopardy!" off incumbent KRON-TV in San Francisco next month to rival KGO-TV in what amounts to a declaration of war against West Coast primetime shifts.

NBC affiliate KRON may now have to honor its contractual obligations for barter and cash payments to King World for the programs — while they air on the rival ABC O&O.

King World's move is a direct response to KRON's decision to shift its primetime forward one hour to 7-10 p.m. beginning Feb. 8 on a 16-month experimental basis. The move would have meant King World's top-rated access game shows airing in non-access time periods — a scenario fiercely opposed by the syndicator.

The shows were due to shift stations next September but King World confirmed Tuesday that they will head to their new home
See **KING WORLD** on page 40

OMB backing rereg substitute

• Related story on page 8.

By David Kelly

WASHINGTON — The Office of Management and Budget, speaking for the Bush administration, stated for the first time Tuesday that it supported retransmission consent but urged passage of the substitute cable reregulation bill instead of S.12, which is being debated this week.

"The administration supports Senate passage of the Packwood-
See **OMB** on page 8

WHAT'S INSIDE

CBS in ratings comeback	3
Disney's stock skyrockets	3
Star power high on Broadway	14



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DGA

Continued from page 1—
sidered critical favorites for nominations.

Because it is bestowed by professional colleagues, the award from the DGA is considered the highest honor a director can receive. The nominations were announced Tuesday by DGA president Arthur Hiller, who noted that since 1949 only three DGA winners have not gone on to win the best director Academy Award.

The DGA will hand out its award March 14 at the DGA's 44th annual awards ceremony after a winner is chosen by a vote of the guild's membership.

In a surprise announcement, Scott's nom for "Thelma & Louise" is understood to have elbowed out Terry Gilliam, for TriStar's "The Fisher King."

Scott said he was honored by the DGA's recognition of his work, particularly considering the field of players. When asked if he was surprised, Scott said, "not absolutely, because I think this particular film is what people want to see."

Scott, Demme and Streisand are first-time nominees by the DGA. Streisand, who was not recognized by the DGA in the past for her work on "Yentl," has now rewritten the guild's history books as the third woman ever to be nominated.

Regarding Streisand's nomination, Columbia chairman Mark Canton said, "We have said all along that the director's vision on the film has been the central ingredient to the quality of this movie, and I've long maintained that it's impossible to have anyone get the kind of acclaim as an actor that Nick Nolte has been generating without attributing a healthy part of it to the direction."

Nolte received the best actor Golden Globe by the Hollywood Foreign Press Assn. earlier this month as well as the top acting honor from the L.A. Film Critics Assn.

Streisand is the only artist ever to have been honored with the Oscar, Tony, Emmy, Grammy and Golden Globe awards.

This marks the third time that both Levinson and Stone have been nominated for DGA honors.

Levinson was nominated last year for "Avalon" and won the award for the 1988 Dustin Hoffman and Tom Cruise starrer "Rain Man," which went on to win the best picture Oscar.

Levinson's gangster epic "Bugsy," which stars Warren Beatty and Annette Bening, was named best drama at the Globes and also

received the Los Angeles Film Critics Assn.'s best picture and best director honors. Beatty received the best actor award from the National Board of Review.

"Barry's done a sensational movie. It's the kind of film that Hollywood is known for all over the world," said TriStar Pictures chairman Mike Medavoy. "I'm disappointed Terry (Gilliam) didn't get nominated and I'm hoping that the picture will."

"The Fisher King," which stars Robin Williams and Jeff Bridges, was the runner-up for best picture by the Los Angeles Film Critics Assn. and won Williams a Golden Globe for best actor.

Stone previously won the guild's highest honor for "Born on the Fourth of July" and "Platoon," which was also went on to win the best picture Oscar in 1986. "Fourth of July" also won Stone the 1989 best director Oscar.

"For the studio and for Oliver... what better tribute could you have than to be recognized by your peers," said Rob Friedman, president of worldwide advertising and publicity for Warner Bros. "We're thrilled that they have chosen to recognize his work, and it adds another rung to the ladder when seeking support from the Academy."

Demme has already won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for best director as well as the National Board of Review's highest directing honor. The two organizations also honored "Silence of the Lambs" as best picture.

"Silence" stars Jodie Foster and Anthony Hopkins have also garnered top acting honors from the New York critics group. Golden Globes also singled out Foster as best actress in a drama, while Hopkins walked away with best supporting honors from the NBR.

"It's rewarding that a film released a year ago would get this kind of distinction," said Chris LaMonte, executive vp marketing for Orion Pictures. "It's a test of the Orion legacy that we make films that are artistic as well as commercially viable."

"Silence," which was released early last year, brought in \$130.7 million in boxoffice domestic gross receipts. "Bugsy" has grabbed nearly \$36.8 million since being released Dec. 13, while "JFK" has tallied \$50.5 million since its Dec. 20 release. "Tides" has washed in \$52 million since its Dec. 25 release and the summer hit "Thelma & Louise" grossed about \$44.7 million.

The DGA's television award nominations are expected to be announced early next week. □

Penta pics going to Spain via deal with UIP

By James Ulmer

In a deal that corrals the final territory into its pan-European distribution network, Penta Europe has signed an agreement with United International Pictures for the distribution of 26 Penta films in Spain.

The deal, which covers theatrical and video rights and was inked Tuesday, will funnel to Spain features from PentAmerica, Penta International and Penta Italy, as well as pictures that Penta has acquired for both Italy and Spain.

"With this deal we've concluded Penta Europe's distribution plans throughout all available European territories, which has been the dream of (Penta chairman) Vittorio Cecchi Gori," Massimo Graziosi, Penta International's president and chief operating officer, said Tuesday. "This is a very European type of distribution because it sees Europe as essentially one unit."

Among the films included in the UIP deal are Bob Rafelson's "Man Trouble," Ted Kotcheff's "Folks" and Michael Lessac's "Before I Wake" — all from PentAmerica. Also in the package are three co-productions with Fox: Irwin Winkler's "Night in the City," George Gallo Jr.'s "29th Street" and Dale Launer's "Love Potion #9."

The deal also boasts Castle Rock pictures through Penta's 11-picture output deal with New Line (HR 10/2): Peter Yates' "Year of the Comet," Andrew Bergman's "Honeymoon in Vegas" and Billy Crystal's "Mr. Saturday Night."

In addition, UIP will also distribute three pictures that Penta has acquired from the United Kingdom's Working Title, as well as two Largo pictures — "Malcolm X" and "Back in the U.S.S.R." — and Spelling International's "Twin

Peaks: Fire Walk With Me."

Among the five Italian films in the Spanish package is Penta's current hit "Johnny Stecchino," written, directed by and starring Roberto Bernigni. That film has grossed around \$33 million in Italy since its release last fall, which Graziosi hailed as "an all-time record in Italy for any picture, domestic or foreign."

Also on board is Italy's Oscar-race entry "Mediterraneo," "Volere Volare" and "Mura di Gomma."

Penta's pan-European distribution network now lists First Independent in the United Kingdom; France's Ariane Films; Switzerland's Monopole Pathe Films and Germany's Jugendfilm.

Closing the deal with Penta was UIP's European vp Tony Themistocleous, who has shared a long professional association with Graziosi. □

Arista promotes Jakwerth in PR

Arista Records has promoted Kim Jakwerth to associate director of national publicity, the label announced Tuesday.

Jakwerth, a four-year veteran of the label, will be responsible for booking all West Coast-based television for the label and will continue to handle all tour publicity on the left coast.

Until now, Jakwerth held the position of manager, West Coast publicity.

"Kim has been a major part of the publicity department's success in the television area," said publicity vp Melani Rogers. "Her television campaigns for Candy Dulfer and Curtis Stigers are representative of her ability to break new artists for Arista." □

Beck flies coop at Blockbuster

FORT LAUDERDALE, Fla. (DJ) — Scott Beck, the vice chairman of Blockbuster Entertainment Corp., resigned from the video-rental company to help build a small fast-food chicken chain.

To outsiders, Beck's departure is a clear signal that Blockbuster has evolved from a fledgling entrepreneurial company to a more mature business. From its roots in 1985, when Blockbuster had only 19 stores, the chain has emerged as the industry leader, with more than 2,000 stores. In the past year,

Blockbuster had been bolstering its executive suite, adding two officers from retail heavyweights Toys "R" Us, and Lerner-New York, a unit of Limited Inc.

The growing corporate environment at Blockbuster made Beck, 33, eager to move on to more entrepreneurial ventures, said industry analysts and consultants.

Beck couldn't be reached for comment. According to the company's May proxy statement, he held 3.9 million shares, or 2.6%, of Blockbuster's common stock. □