

London's Top 10

- (1) **A View To A Kill** (UIP) Odeons Leicester Square, 1 Kensington, 1 Swiss Cottage, Coronet 3 Westbourne Grove, Classic 2 Chelsea £50,379
- (2) **Brewster's Millions** (UIP) Plaza 1, ABCs 1 Bayswater, 2 Edgware Road, 2 Fulham Road £40,868
- (3) **Witness** (UIP) Plaza 2, ABCs 3 Bayswater, 1 Fulham Road, Classic 3 Oxford Street £23,625
- (4) **Police Academy 2 - Their First Assignment** (Col-EMI-War) Warner 2, Classics 2 Haymarket, 2 Tottenham Court Road, ABCs 2 Bayswater, 1 Edgware Road, 3 Fulham Road £22,928
- (5) **The Purple Rose Of Cairo** (Rank) Classics 1 Oxford Street, Royal, Odeon 4 Kensington £20,777
- (6) **Insignificance** (Palace/Recorded Rel) Odeon Haymarket £16,935
- (7) **Return To Oz** (Walt Disney) Leicester Square Theatre, Odeons 2 Kensington, 2 Swiss Cottage, Coronet 1 Westbourne Grove, Classic 4 Chelsea £16,336
- (8) **Mask** (UIP) Empire 1, ABC 5 Fulham Road £14,906
- (9) **Birdy** (Col-EMI-War) Odeons 3 Kensington, 3 Swiss Cottage, Classic 3 Chelsea, Cinecitta 4, Screen on Baker St 2 £12,326
- (10) **Beverly Hills Cop** (UIP) Empire 2, Classic 2 Oxford Street £11,489

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US Top 10

- (1) **Back To The Future** (Univ), 1,506 screens \$7,332,083
- (2) **Volunteers** (Tri-Star), 1,560 screens \$5,184,360
- (3) **Pee Wee's Big Adventure** (Warner Bros), 840 screens \$4,404,500
- (4) **Return Of The Living Dead** (Orion), 1,506 screens \$4,403,169
- (5) **The Year Of The Dragon** (MGM/UA), 982 screens \$4,093,079
- (6) **Summer Rental** (Paramount), 1,595 screens \$3,708,812
- (7) **National Lampoon's European Vacation** (Warner Bros), 1,350 screens \$2,731,969
- (8) **Fright Night** (Columbia), 1,110 screens \$2,438,836
- (9) **Real Genius** (Tri-Star), 956 screens \$2,203,206
- (10) **Cocoon** (20th Fox), 789 screens \$1,771,970

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'Precedent set' in Brazilian piracy court case

LONDON (Aug 22): The Motion Picture Association of America has reported what it calls a "precedent setting" court decision in Brazil against video piracy affecting foreign copyright holders, writes John Hazelton.

Despite its burgeoning video recorder population (predicted to grow by over 50% this year), the

Brazilian video software market has so far been dominated by pirates, with little legal protection for legitimate distributors.

On Aug 7, however, a civil court judge in Rio de Janeiro ruled in favour of an action brought by Walt Disney Pictures and Universal City Studios against the Brazilian Association

of Videocassette Distributors and a local cassette rental club.

The judge said that the rights of foreign-domiciled companies enjoy full protection of their copyrighted works according both to Brazilian national law and international conventions to which the country is a signatory.

The case follows two other recent successful actions in the

piracy-ridden Latin American video market.

Three thousand illegal cassettes were last week seized from three stores in Panama and in Rio de Janeiro and a joint action by the MPAA and the American Film Marketing Association resulted in the seizure of 95% of the stock of a local video store.

US actors to support PGA

LOS ANGELES (Aug 22): In an unexpected move, the Screen Actors' Guild of Hollywood board of directors voted unanimously to back the Producers' Guild of America in the event of a PGA strike, and also warned SAG members that any of the ranks who performed the work of striking producers would be disciplined, writes Frank Barron.

Members who performed such work would be charged with "conduct unbecoming a member", the board stated, and could also face expulsion from the Guild. The SAG in New York was reported ready to back the Hollywood branch in its decision.

If it doesn't get a first-ever industry-wide contract, the PGA is threatening to strike Hollywood's major motion picture and television production companies. It will have the backing of the Teamsters union, which is now affiliated with the producers' organisations.

Producers, according to president Renee Valente, have never, for one thing, received residuals on reruns.

'DRAGON' OPENS TO STORM OF PROTEST

LOS ANGELES (Aug 22): "I don't care what you say about me, as long as you spell my name right" might just as well pertain to the controversial "Year Of The Dragon" film, which opened last week in the US to big box office numbers, mixed critical reviews and protesting and picketing by members of the Asian-American communities in New York City. More picketing was expected in other major US cities.

The Michael Cimino picture started off its first three days of release by taking in \$4,093,079 in 982 theatres. In Los Angeles, the film was number one at the ticket

By Frank Barron

windows the first weekend, grossing \$238,365 in 15 area houses.

As with "The Deerhunter" and "Heaven's Gate", Cimino was raked over the coals by both print and broadcast media. Critics openly decried "excess violence" in the film. Some nationwide critics hailed the picture as outstanding, while others took the movie to task.

At the prestigious Loews Astor Plaza in New York City, the coalition against "Year Of The Dragon" protested vehemently,

handing out statements purportedly from novelist Robert Daley, on whose book the film was based.

Reputedly, Daley had said, "I deplore the violence in the film and the racism in the film. The Chinese characters are depicted as a bunch of insensible Orientals who hold life cheap."

The coalition, which includes seven diversified organisations, ● Continued on page 2

Americans bid for Irish film studio

DUBLIN (Aug 22): An American film production and marketing company has been set up to buy

By Michael Dwyer

Ardmore film studios in Ireland.

The studios have been placed on the market again, this time by the liquidating firm of Arthur Young in Dublin, following the financial problems of shipping magnate Mahmud Sipra who bought the property last year for £1 million.

The Los Angeles-based Irish

Film Corporation is bidding "a realistic sum which will reflect the value of the studios", according to its president, Scott Macmillan, who has spent the last three weeks in Ireland inspecting the studios and having discussions with the liquidator and former Ardmore employees.

Because of the nature of the sale — the studios are up for sale by tender — Macmillan declined to state how much his company is prepared to pay, although he believes that theirs will be the best ● Continued on page 2

23 to compete at Venice

VENICE (Aug 22): The 42nd Venice Festival opens Monday, Aug 26 with two of the 23 competition entries: at 7pm the Spanish film "Los Paraisos Perdidos", by Basilio Martin Patino and, at 10pm, the British entry, "Legend", by Ridley Scott. The International Critics Week will begin the same afternoon with the Hungarian film, "A Tanitvanyok", by Geza Bereményi, writes John Francis Lane.

Frank Capra's stroke two weeks ago means that the 88 year-old veteran Hollywood director will not be able to come to Venice after all. He was to be on the jury and to receive the Golden Lion for life achievement ● Continued on page 82

Gavin in Zenith deal

LONDON (Aug 22): Zenith Productions, the film and special projects arm of Central Television, has appointed independent sales agent Bill Gavin to handle world sales on three of the company's forthcoming features, writes Alex Sutherland.

Gavin, who in 1984 set up his own Gavin Films sales company after leaving Goldcrest Films and

Television where he was director of distribution and marketing, will handle "Love Kills", the story of pop idol Sid Vicious and Nancy Spungen; "High Places", about osteopath Dr Stephen Ward who was at the centre of the UK's famous Profumo scandal; and "Personal Services", inspired by the lifestyle of famous brothel ● Continued on page 2

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VIDEO NEWS

Video theatre idea is taken to Europe

LOS ANGELES (Aug 19): The man who brought video store franchising and video theatres to the US is now taking his concepts to Europe.

By B J Franklin

Bert Tenzer has been a pioneer and a prophet in the video cassette industry since it began. A film producer, back in the '70s he looked at those new VCRs and Betas and decided that one day the video age was going to swallow up the cinema industry.

So he opened one of the first video stores in the US, The Video Connection. Then he set up the first video retail franchise operation in the US, and today there are 300 franchised Video Connection stores in 30 states. In 1983, Tenzer took his company public and formed a production arm, Direct Broadcast Programs, to make product to be sold (or rented) through the stores.

He had been one of the first video retailers to offer video cassette rentals, as opposed to selling them outright — a move strongly opposed at that time by the major motion picture studios, whose first reaction was to withhold their product from him.

But a sharp pencil and some calculations convinced the studios that even though they could not share in the rental income a new industry was born.

Today there are some 22,000 video stores across the US. Eleven million VCRs have been sold in the US just since last January, and we are looking at a \$4 billion industry.

And Bert Tenzer, the pioneer? His newest move is the establishment in July of the first of a projected (by the end of the decade) 1,000 "Viditheatres", and licensing of the Viditheatres to the Video Connection stores. Purpose of the Viditheatres is to provide a way to introduce, showcase and pre-sell original, made-for-video productions.

His video industry, Tenzer asserts, "has had to lean on an old structure created for another purpose". Feature motion pictures are produced primarily for theatrical showings, and those theatrical runs generate word of mouth and a built-in audience for the movies by the time they reach the video stores. Made-for-video films, on the other hand, have had no platform for building their own word of mouth.

'The plan is for . . . the video store to be transformed each night into a Viditheatre'

The Viditheatre is to be a 25-70-seat area within the video stores set aside by sliding panel walls or draperies, where product can be screened via front screen (similar to those used on airliners) or rear-projection TV with attached stereo system.

The plan is for a 99-cent ticket price, reserved seats, refreshments and concession stands, and the video store transformed each night into a Viditheatre. Core of the audience in the beginning will be almost half a million members of the video clubs run by the existing Video Connection stores. To encourage production of

made-for-video product, Tenzer is further establishing a national academy for video producers, with panels of top producers and home video executives screening and selecting product to be exhibited in the Viditheatres. He is even planning an annual video awards TV special, with the Viditheatre audiences doing the voting.

In addition, Tenzer is producing a series of TV shows called "Your Video Connection", a sort of news magazine format with a variety of news items concerning the video field, interviews, lists of top 10 video cassettes, and so on, to be hosted by himself and internationally-known star Zsa Zsa Gabor. The shows also will showcase the Academy's selections and give them even wider exposure, Tenzer explains. The first show aired in the US on Aug 15.

'The video industry has been very amateurish . . . it is time for a highly sophisticated operation'

Now that he has the whole operation set up and running smoothly in the US, Tenzer is looking to expand into Europe. He is currently on a trip to Germany and England, looking for franchisers (not franchisees yet) in those two countries.

"We intend to clone our operation overseas," Tenzer says. They have their own "university" in the US to train their personnel, and will bring key people to Europe to train the employees there. Zsa Zsa (who owns a piece of the company) will go over to participate in the marketing and initial promotions of both the Video Connection stores and Viditheatres and the Direct Broadcast Programs. The TV show also will be shown on UK TV to support the effort. A complete package.

"The video industry has been very amateurish, very 'ma and pa'," Tenzer says, "and it is time now for a highly sophisticated operation similar to McDonald's. I see the second evolution of our industry. The small rental store is not the future. It will be more of a true centre in the community."

In the future, Tenzer predicts, the customer will buy video product either from this vertically integrated centre, which will sell hardware as well as renting and showcasing the software and will offer such services as taping weddings and editing tapes — or from mass merchandisers such as drug stores or supermarkets served by rack jobbers.

This from a man who predicted seven years ago that the day would come when a customer could buy any movie for \$19.95 regardless of what it is, a prophecy that is well on its way to coming true.

MCA Home Video in Hollywood has just announced the reduction of the "suggested retail price" of all its music videos released prior to April 1985 to \$29.95. Previous suggested list prices ranged up to \$69.95. Those already priced under \$29.95, of course, will not be affected, according to the announcement by MCA Home Video president Gene Giaquinto.

Draft code of practice published

THE ALLIANCE of Video Retailers has published a draft version of its voluntary "Code Of Practice" in conjunction with the Department of Trade and Industry and the Local Authorities Co-ordination Body on Trading Standards (Lacots).

The document — which out-

lines "desirable professional conduct" for video retailers — incorporates amendments, additions and deletions suggested from within the industry and from interested Government sources.

The booklet will now be circulated, via Lacots offices, to

over 100 Local Government Authorities and copies can also be obtained from the Alliance's offices (by both members and non-members).

The Alliance will shortly be issuing an explanatory booklet to its members on the workings of the Video Recordings Act.

Thorn EMI starts new video, theatrical scheme in Holland

HENK PENSEEL told *Screen International* that "Stronghold" (English title of a Dutch/Belgian co-production, "Wildschut"), the story of a family held against their will, which did not fare so well in theatres, is doing great business on video.

Within a month of its July 1 launch, over 1,500 copies were sold, which means a return of about £100,000. "Stronghold" is ready for worldwide release in an English version by Cannon.

The first theatrical film Thorn EMI Holland distributed was "A Passage To India", which currently stands at over 250,000 admissions. New releases, Penseel says, include "Flashpoint", "Morons From Outer Space", "All Of Me" and "Wild Geese 2". The company is expecting a great success for this last film, as "The Wild Geese" did extremely well in Holland.

Theatre owners all over the country are very pleased with Thorn EMI becoming a theatrical distributor.

"In the matter of film distribution, Holland is still relying on old methods," said Penseel.

"We are constantly trying to introduce new marketing methods to release our films, and the theatre owners really do appreciate this."

As far as video is concerned, Penseel deeply regrets that piracy is still booming in Holland. About half of the total sales in Holland still go to the pirates.

A motion to deal with this matter has been passed to the Government, which will deal with it after the summer recess. Everyone agrees that piracy should be eradicated, especially since two big companies (PolyGram and Video Garant, both belonging to VNU, one of the biggest publishing companies in Holland) were forced to end their activities largely due to piracy activities.

For the forthcoming video retail trade market in Amersfoort, Thorn EMI is releasing "Dreamscape", "Flashpoint", "The Bounty" and "Cheerleaders' Wild Weekend".

"We will have to make a special effort for 'Dreamscape' since this film has never been

released theatrically in Holland," Penseel said. "The public has to get acquainted with this film, and the great advantage for video owners is that they are getting something brand new. 'The Bounty' will probably be released in theatres very shortly before we release it on video, and 'The Philadelphia Experiment' will be released at the same time on video and theatrically."

"This is quite normal, as every film contract carries an expiry date. Some distributors often buy so many films that a few of them are released very late. "When TESE has the video rights, we can stick to this final date, and so it is quite possible that theatrical release coincides with video release."

"However, whenever this happens, it is carried out in total agreement with the distributor. "The same thing happens with some French films, such as 'Tchao Pantin' and 'Banzai'."

"We want to reach the point where we will be considered as the most important major independent company. "We have developed a unique campaign where we simply show a comfortable atmosphere and suggest that this is what you get when you buy or rent Thorn EMI video product. It is quality, and you stay home for it."



● Annick Christiaens and Jack Monkau, the leads in "Wildschut" ("Stronghold").



● "The Killing Fields" and "Amadeus", both due for release later this year.

Arista sells 'Defiant', second deal with Vestron this year

LOS ANGELES (Aug 19): The classic Hall Bartlett film "The Defiant" has been sold by Arista Films to Vestron Video for release in the US and Canada, according to Arista president Louis George.

Negotiations were concluded between George and Ruth Vitale, director of acquisitions

for Vestron, and marks the second deal between the two companies this season.

Earlier, Arista had sold "Final Justice" to Vestron for release in the US, Canada, the UK, Holland, Australia and New Zealand.

Arista continues to have exclusive foreign theatrical

distribution rights on "The Defiant", which was originally issued under the title of "The Sandpit Generals".

The film, George said, is more relevant today than when first released, dealing with hunger and starvation among the children of the world.

BRIEFLY

Yard's horror list stays steady

AFTER HAVING been reduced in size for several months running, Scotland Yard's list of horror video cassettes which have been the subject of, or are advised as suitable for, prosecution under the Obscene Publications Act, has remained steady.

Forty-seven titles are listed in the August version, the same number as were contained in the July list.

The decision to remove "The Evil Dead" from the list, which followed the acquittal in court last week of the cassette's distributor Palace Video (*Screen International*, Aug 3), did not come in time for the title to be omitted from the August list. "The Evil Dead" will not appear, however, on the September list.

Cassette cases endorsed

THE LIBRARY Case Company, in association with dealers' body the Alliance, is to market a new video cassette case which, claims the Alliance, "guarantees conformity" with the Video Recordings Act regulations.

Under the Act, cassette boxes (even transit boxes, to which many dealers transfer cassettes while on hire) must carry the film's classification symbol on the front, back and spine.

The new cases have also been endorsed by the National Federation of Video Associations, the Video Trade Association and the South London Dealers Group and will be available at both the Viditel and Penta Hotel video shows.

Children's video set for release

VESTRON VIDEO'S specialis label Children's Video Library is to release its first original production, "It's Your Birthday Party! With Rainbow Brite And Friends", through 3,000 Hallmark party goods and greeting card stores across the US.

The programme — a co-production between CVL and Hallmark Properties — features live-action and animation.

It will be marketed with Hallmark's range of Rainbow Brite merchandise and will carry a \$59.95 price tag. US release date is Oct 16.

Concert and promo director signed

MUSIC programming production company Picture Music International and director Mik Brady have signed a deal whereby Brady is exclusively contracted to PMI to work out of its London office.

Brady, who has directed promotional videos for The Eurythmics, Thompson Twin Big Country, Jo Boxers, Dav Cassidy, Flock of Seagulls and Christine McVie, will work closely with PMI's production executive, Chips Chipfield.

Brady, formerly a sound engineer for pop group The Jar is the first director to be signed exclusively to PMI for concert and promo films.