

EU

EUROPEAN
UPDATE
by Andreas Fuchs

DIGITRAINING TALK

Given the focus on digital cinema in this issue, we are offering some interesting quotes from participants at the fourth annual MEDIA Salles DigiTraining Plus program "New Technologies for European Cinemas," held at Barco headquarters in Kuurne, Belgium.

Tonie de Waelem, Royal Belgian Filmarchive, Antwerp, Belgium: "[This is] an ideal way to get introduced to d-cinema; you end up with more questions than answers, but it gives you the tools to start real thinking on this evolution...and that's exactly what all exhibitors should do right now."

Riitta Haapiainen, SES Auditorium Ltd., Helsinki, Finland: "When I came here I didn't understand that digitalization of cinemas was already this far advanced. Now I am looking forward to seeing my own digital projector and server. And because of this course, I am completely calm and not nervous anymore... I thank you for that."

Peter Gustafsson and Michael Kristiansson, Fregatten Bio AB Filmhuset Facklan, Kungsbäcka, Sweden: "We were confused when we came here. We are still confused, but at a higher level."

Matthias Holtz, Folkets Hus och Parker, Stockholm, Sweden: "The future of cinema is digital and the most important thing is that, in that future, the number of screens in Europe will not decrease thanks to too-expensive digital technology. We need to digitalize all cinemas, not only the big-city multiplex." The full version and more is available at www.mediasalles.it.

VILLAGE CZECHS OUT BARCODES

Just in time for the day-and-date blockbuster season, Village Cinemas in the Czech Republic (villagecinemas.cz) became "the first cinema chain in Europe to have the ability to deliver and redeem tickets on customers' mobile phones." Mobile-solutions provider Mobiqua, whose patented barcode/text messaging technology is available on six continents and in over 30 countries (mobiqua.com), further noted that this application "will run in conjunction with the print-at-home and box-office collection methods of ticket delivery."

Derek Forbes, regional manager for Europe

at ticketing systems partner Vista Entertainment Solutions (www.vista.co.nz), noted that "mobile phones continue to increase in prevalence and utility, and their use in ticketing is a natural progression." Tomas Palicka, country general manager for the Village 14 at Andel and Cerny Most 8 in Prague, agreed, "The high quality and innovativeness of this service will attract lots of customers to our cinemas that are used to shopping online and use modern technologies."

VENICE SELECTS DOREMI

With the official selection process for *La Biennale di Venezia* in full swing at press time, Doremi Cinema (doremicinema.com) had an early July head start as the official digital-cinema technology partner of the 64th Venice International Film Festival (August 29 to Sept. 8, 2007). "Such a decision is a great recognition of [our] leadership in the digital-cinema market," said Patrick Zucchetta, managing director of Doremi Europe.

For one, Doremi's DMS-2000 mastering station was used in the production of all digital-cinema packages (DCPs) prepared by *Bewegte Bilder* (Germany) and *Digimage* (France). Secondly, digital film presentations ran on the company's DCP-2000 server. According to marketing director Ramzi Shakra, the Biennale's cinema department based its decision on both "the quality and reliability" of these Doremi products and their "large market adoption. Furthermore, *La Biennale* considers Doremi Cinema an important partner, as the Venice Film Festival is definitely moving to digital cinema."

EFP FÊTED IN KARLOVY VARY

For its 10th birthday, European Film Promotion (EFP-online.com) couldn't have wished for a better present as its annual showcase at the Karlovy Vary International Film Festival. The screenings of ten films in the "Variety Critics' Choice: Europe Now!" were sold out. With *Variety* editor-in-chief Peter Bart serving as president of the main competition jury, the popular "Sunday Morning Shootout" was also taped at the event.

Directors in attendance were Andreas Prochaska (Austria), Alanté Kavaité (France), Sonja Heiss (Germany), Jeanne Waltz (Switzerland, France), Alexander Eik (Norway), Steve Hudson (Ireland, U.K., Germany), Grzegorz Lewandowski (Poland), Col Spector (U.K.) and Ole Christian Madsen (Denmark).

ROME PONDER'S NEW RATINGS

The Italian cabinet of ministers is taking a hard look at a new ratings system. The current system, in place since 1962, only issues one restriction for films when they are only suitable for 18 years and older. The current proposal is more in line with other European countries in that four age groups would be introduced. Films would be either classified for all audiences or restricted to ages 10, 14 and 18. Organizations and exhibitors that don't cooperate could be fined up to 100,000 euros (US\$137,500) as well as with possible jail time.

BRITAIN LOVES FILM

The latest numbers of the U.K. Film Council's Research and Statistics Unit show some sensational developments. Over the past ten years, U.K. box-office revenues climbed 56% from £489 million in 1997 to £762 million in 2006 (US\$1.561 billion), although 2006 was down one percent from 2005. Films based on stories by U.K. writers (yes, that includes J.K. Rowling) earned US\$13 billion in five years, and international demand for British films is up as film exports reach an 11-year high, growing by 65% between 2003 and 2005 to £967 million (US\$1.981 bil.).

The U.K. continues as the world's number-three filmed entertainment market, with revenues of US\$6.6 billion in 2005. U.K. films took in \$2.2 billion in movie theatres around the globe, representing approximately 500 million admissions. *The Da Vinci Code* was the strongest U.K. film worldwide, grossing US\$758 million. At U.K. cinemas *Casino Royale* was the top performer in 2006, taking £55.5 million (US\$113.7 mil.). The top 20 U.K. films grossed £151 million (US\$309.3 mil.), a share of 19%. The inde-

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BOX-OFFICE RESULTS FOR THE TOP 10 U.K. FILMS RELEASED IN THE U.K. AND REPUBLIC OF IRELAND, 2006

| | TITLE | COUNTRY | GROSS (£ MILLION) | DISTRIBUTOR |
|----|------------------------------------|--------------------|-------------------|------------------|
| 1 | <i>Casino Royale*</i> | UK/USA/Cze | 55.48 | Sony Pictures |
| 2 | <i>The Da Vinci Code</i> | UK/USA | 30.42 | Sony Pictures |
| 3 | <i>Flushed Away*</i> | UK/USA | 11.13 | Paramount |
| 4 | <i>The Queen*</i> | UK/Fra/Ita | 9.00 | Pathé |
| 5 | <i>Stormbreaker</i> | UK/Ger/USA | 6.79 | Entertainment |
| 6 | <i>Children of Men</i> | UK/USA | 4.86 | Universal |
| 7 | <i>The History Boys</i> | UK | 4.22 | 20th Century Fox |
| 8 | <i>Wind That Shakes the Barley</i> | UK/Ger/Ita/Spa/Ire | 3.91 | Pathé |
| 9 | <i>V for Vendetta</i> | UK/USA/Ger | 3.58 | Warner Bros |
| 10 | <i>United 93</i> | UK/Fra/USA | 2.90 | UIP |

Source: Nielsen EDI, RSU analysis

Box office gross = cumulative total up to March 4, 2007 / Films with an asterisk (*) were still being exhibited on March 4, 2007 / Copies of the 2006 Statistical Yearbook available at www.ukfilmcouncil.org.uk.