

News

Fox, NBC score Wed. victories

'Temptation' proves too much for 18-49 demographic to resist

By Cynthia Littleton

Fox towered over the Wednesday primetime competition in the key adults 18-49 demographic with another strong delivery from its risqué reality-based show "Temptation Island."

The latest installment of "Temptation" seduced 17 million viewers from 9-10 p.m., which fell below the delivery of NBC's "The West Wing" (18.2 million) in total viewers. But "Temptation" pulled in a whopping 9.4 rating/22 share in adults 18-49, compared with "West Wing's" 6.7/15, though "Temptation" was down slightly in the demo from the previous week.

Fox also saw its new 8:30 p.m. sitcom "Grounded for Life" (10.4 million, 5.3/13 in 18-49) post-mod-



Viewers elect NBC's "West Wing."

est growth from its 8 p.m. lead-in, a "That '70s Show" rerun.

NBC rebounded to the No. 1 spot at 10 p.m. with "Law &

Order" collaring 19.3 million viewers and a 7.3/19 in the demo.

CBS hobbled through the night with a weak performance at 8 p.m. from the sitcom "Bette" (6.5 million viewers, 2.2/6) and a lackluster turnout from 9-11 p.m. for the telefilm "Jewel" (9.7 million viewers, 2.5/7).

See TV RATINGS on page 58

Soderbergh: Expect reduced role for studios

More Berlin fest coverage on pages 18, 19, 53.

By Stuart Kemp

BERLIN — Director Steven Soderbergh said Thursday that the global film industry is likely to see a dramatic change in the role of the Hollywood studios during the next five years.



Soderbergh

Speaking at a packed news conference to herald his film "Traffic," screening in competition at the 51st Berlin International Film Festival, Soderbergh

See SODERBERGH on page 53

WGAW Davies nod to Haggis

By David Robb

Emmy-winning writer-producer Paul Haggis will be this year's recipient of the WGA West's Valentine Davies Award, given each year to a writer who has "contributed to the entertainment industry as well as the community at large and who has brought dignity and honor to the profession of writing everywhere."

See HAGGIS on page 57

Napster push for Rosenbergs

By Tamara Conniff

Napster Inc. has entered into a promotion deal with pop-rock band the Rosenbergs and will sponsor their North American tour, the company said Thursday.

In what Napster calls a "bold marketing move that lifts the concept of music sharing from the

See NAPSTER on page 57

Techies make Oscar case at visual effects bake-off

By Sheigh Crabtree

The visual effects branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences might be able to create inclement weather out of thin air, but members were hard-pressed to make any certain predictions at the annual pre-Oscar bake-off.

Skies will clear Tuesday, when three of the seven contenders will weather the voting process and receive nominations for the Academy Award in visual effects.

Up for consideration for the visual effects Oscar are "Dinosaur," "Hollow Man," "The Perfect Storm," "Gladiator," "Cast Away," "X-Men" and "Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas."

"It's a very difficult decision this year," said Oscar winner John

Gaeta ("The Matrix"), who bent spoons last year to beat out "Star Wars: Episode I — The Phantom Menace" and "Stuart Little."

Wednesday night's event at the Samuel Goldwyn Theater in Beverly Hills, which lasted for more than four hours as each contender used the allotted time, began with a welcome from branch governor Richard Edlund ("Bedazzled," "Air Force One"), who cited a "big year for visual effects."

"Dinosaur" led the lot with an introduction from Disney's Neil Krepala. "Cutting-edge wasn't enough; we had to look four years into the future," the visual effects super said. Any dino-doubters in the room were easily put in check by a splendidly edited FX reel.

See BAKE-OFF on page 57

5 first-timers get DGA docu noms

By Eric C Sanitate

For a third consecutive year, the Directors Guild of America has nominated five first-time contenders for the guild's outstanding directorial achievement in documentaries nod.

The nominees are Charles Braverman for "High School Boot Camp," Laurie Collyer for

her Puerto Rican family study "Nuyorican Dream," David deVries for "The True Story of the Bridge on the River Kwai," Mark T. Lewis for "The Natural History of the Chicken" and Michael Mierendorf for his look at child abuse, "Broken Child."

The winner will be named March 10 during the 53rd annual DGA Awards Dinner at the Century Plaza Hotel in Century City.



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Bake-off

Continued from page 4—

From exquisitely detailed lemur hair rendered in *Alias/Wavefront's* Maya to grand vistas of live-action plates matched with full-blown computer-generated characters, the reel came the closest of any to winning over the audience.

Digital Domain's Kevin Mack introduced "Grinch" and said the movie contains more than 600 visual effects shots totaling 43 minutes of pure CG. The reel showed work enabled by custom Who construction kits and snow particle systems, though the presentation might not have been enough to melt the crowd. Mack also noted the contributions of Rhythm & Hues and Centropolis.

An anxious John Nelson set out to prove that "Gladiator" was worth its CG mettle in a room of projects packing higher shot counts. "We used FX to complete (director Ridley Scott's) vision," said Nelson, who then advised members where to look before the reel played. An opening battle sequence featuring a formidable digital army led to Mill Film's

mighty Colosseum peopled with 3-D characters. The crowd had a laugh when an audience member asked whether the tigers were real or CG. "Tigers don't look pissed; they are pissed," Nelson said of the show's animal trainer's warning to him.

"We didn't set any records — 600 shots seems to be the average these days," said "Hollow Man" super Scott E. Anderson of Sony Pictures Imageworks. The reel elicited gasps from audience members as sequences demonstrated an invisible Kevin Bacon being doused in water, fire and blood and an exceptional swimming pool sequence completed by Tippett Studios. In the same vein, the pristinely rendered physiology of Bacon wowed the house, as did the subtlety with which his CG performances were animated.

Ken Ralston, also of SPI, rowed the boat ashore with his introduction of "Cast Away." Citing 350 effects shots, he mentioned goat removal off the island's mountain side in Fiji in addition to the removal of Helen Hunt from one scene that was met with a loud clap from one audience member.

Another audience member asked Ralston what it was like to animate the flying Porta Potti, to which Ralston replied, "If I wait just one second, I won't have to answer that." Indeed, the red light flashed, and his time was up.

"Perfect Storm's" Stefan Fangmeier introduced Industrial Light & Magic's work as "perfectly planned in good German fashion," alluding to the fastidiousness of his crew and that of director Wolfgang Petersen. The challenges of the photo-realistic work showed onscreen in sequences when staged actors were matched with CG mattes and engorged in darkened practical and CG atmospheric effects.

One week before the bake-off, "Matrix's" Gaeta was waxing enthusiastic about "Hollow Man," "Gladiator" and "Dinosaur," but at the end of Wednesday night's event, he found himself recalculating due to a glitch in the matrix. "There are a lot of entries with similar magnitudes of work," he said. "I had a hard time voting." "Dinosaur," "Hollow Man," "Perfect Storm," and "Gladiator" were neck and neck in an informal

poll conducted after bake-off votes were cast. Should "Gladiator" make it to the arena, insiders speculate that it will win the hearts of the general Academy. The problem is that "Gladiator," with its 90 FX shots, might not rise to the level when standing against heavy duty FX'ers "Dinosaur," "Perfect Storm" and "Hollow Man." Meanwhile, "Hollow Man" suffers from a unpopular story that could do little to woo sentimental Academy members despite being a strong favorite among computer-graphic types.

"I have no idea who will take home the gold," Visual Effects Society executive director Tom Atkin said after the session. "Each year, the challenges for artists and technologists become greater and more complex. The trick is that the work is becoming more difficult to actually spot. In my opinion, there is no single film that clearly stands above the rest like 'Titanic' did in '98." □

Barbie

Continued from page 3—

computer-generated Barbie movie.

Mainframe, a producer of computer animation, is expanding into longform computer-generated imaging for feature films and interactive entertainment. Among its well-known projects are the computer-animated 1990s television series "ReBoot" and the direct-to-video movie "Casper's Haunted Christmas."

"It's (Mattel's) marquee property, and it's the first time they've created a feature-length entertainment with Barbie," said Dan DiDio, vp creative affairs at Mainframe.

For the Barbie project, Mainframe has developed special software to add extra "flow" to Barbie's hair and clothing.

Tim Curry will be a starring voice, according to Mainframe, and newcomer Kelly Sheridan will provide the voice of Barbie.

Voice direction will be supplied by Andrea Romano, an Emmy winner who has worked on the animated TV series "Animaniacs."

Arnie Ross, a Broadway and symphony orchestra composer, will arrange the score, which will be based on Tchaikovsky's "The Nutcracker Suite." The dance sequences will be motion-captured with five principal dancers from the New York City Ballet.

No budget figures for the project have been released. Mattel is expected to unveil the project at the Toy Fair in New York, which starts Sunday.

Mattel officials were unavailable for comment at press time. □

Napster

Continued from page 4—

digital arena and returns it to the streets," the file-swapping company will finance 10,000 extra copies of the Rosenbergs' "Mission: You."

When the album hits stores Feb. 20, the 10,000 CDs will be bundled with the original as a two-for-one sale. Napster's copy of the album will bear the Napster logo and a message: "Support Napster, share the music ... bonus CD to share with a friend."

All of the Rosenbergs' songs will also eventually be available online via the file-swapping service, Napster said.

Napster is financing a month-long Rosenbergs club tour starting Thursday in Raleigh, N.C.

The amount of money Napster is investing in the project was not disclosed.

Napster is the target of a copyright-infringement suit brought by the Recording Industry Association of America on behalf of the five major label groups — Sony Music, EMI, Warner Music Group, Universal Music Group and BMG Entertainment. BMG's parent company Bertelsmann AG entered into a strategic alliance with Napster in October but will not drop the lawsuit until a business model that compensates copyright holders is developed.

Because the Rosenbergs own their own master works, they have full authority to make their songs available on Napster without getting the permission from their management company/record label Discipline Global Mobile.

"We love the idea of more people listening to and wanting to share our music," said David Fagin, lead singer of the Rosenbergs. "Napster made that easier online. With their help, we're making it easier offline as well. How many times have you popped in a CD and thought about a specific person you knew who would love the thing? Now, you can hand them one right away." □

Haggis

Continued from page 4—

Haggis, who won Emmys in 1987 and 1988 for producing and writing "thirtysomething," is a writer and executive producer on CBS' "Family Law."

Haggis also is one of Hollywood's leading champions of human rights. In 1988, he hosted the Dalai Lama's first outreach to the Hollywood community about China's atrocities in Tibet. A year later, a handful of students from China who escaped the Tiananmen Square massacre met at his home to organize a secret fax campaign.

Haggis also has hosted events for Amnesty International, El

Rescate, the Christic Institute, the Center for Victims of Torture, the Office of the Americas and the Citizens Commission on Human Rights.

Haggis is an active member of the Entertainment Industries Council and is organizing on behalf of For the Arts, an endowment to put arts back into the public schools, and the Hollywood Education and Literacy Project. Two years ago, he founded a scholarship fund for inner-city youth.

"Paul Haggis demonstrates that even the busiest among us can find the time to help others," WGA West president John Wells said. "He has worked tirelessly to right injustice and devoted his

energies and his resources to making a difference. We are proud to present him with the Valentine Davies Award."

Valentine Davies, for whom the award was named, was best known for writing the Academy Award-winning story for "Miracle on 34th Street." Davies died in 1961.

Past recipients of the award include Michael and Garson Kanin, Garry Marshall, Hal Kanter, Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee, Norman Lear, Ray Bradbury, Barry Kemp, Philip Dunne and last year's recipient, Alan Alda.

The award will be presented March 4 at the 53rd annual Writers Guild Awards. □