

Anti-Apartheid Pic Group Will Cohost 'World' Benefit

New York, June 13 — The group Filmmakers United Against Apartheid, formed last year by Jonathan Demme and Martin Scorsese, is co-hosting a benefit premiere June 15 of Chris Menges' "A World Apart" in connection with Atlantic Entertainment Group, British Screen and Working Title, pic's distrib and production companies.

Woody Allen, Danny DeVito, Spike Lee and Atlantic topper Tom Coleman also are hosting the evening event at Cinema I, for the benefit of the Africa Fund and its anti-apartheid work.

Post-screening pour (black tie optional) is set for the Center for African Art. Organizers are collecting \$50 for both events and \$20 for the Cinema I screening only.

"A World Apart," starring Bar-

bara Hershey, has its first U.S. theatrical play June 17 at Cinema I, with bookings to follow elsewhere July 1. Hershey, Jodhi May and Linda Mvusi shared best actress honors at the Cannes Film Fest for their work in the pic.

Panel Roster

The benefit preem's sponsoring committee includes Bob Balaban, Fabiano Canosa of Joseph Papp's Public Theater, Robert DeNiro, Danny Huston, Roland Joffe, Steven Van Zandt, Susan Sarandon and Sting.

The Africa Fund, set up in 1966, is an educational and humanitarian assistance group. FUAA has more than 120 feature filmmakers participating in the United Nations-endorsed cultural boycott of South Africa, per benefit organizers.

SportsChannel Pacts With NHL

SportsChannel America, an affiliate of Rainbow Program Enterprises, has shelled out \$50,000,000 to land a three-year exclusive National Hockey League deal that gives the regional channel a national profile.

The deal calls for SportsChannel to offer up to 50 regular season games, the annual NHL All-Star Game and the Stanley Cup playoffs.

The agreement, said Rainbow president-chief executive officer Marc A. Lustgarten, represents "an expansion from regional to national of the already well-established relationship between the league and the SportsChannel."

Mickey Rooney is taking his one-man show "Mickey Rooney In Mickey Rooney" up to San Francisco for a limited run, June 15-26 at the Theater on the Square. It's a retrospective of his life and career.

In the past, NHL regional games — along with NBA and Major League Baseball regionals — aired on the five SportsChannel regional services in New York, Chicago, Philadelphia, New England and Florida.

Under the new agreement, SportsChannel America would not only serve its existing regional services but also those operated by other ownerships as well as new cable services still in the planning stages. Those proposed services were not identified.

Lustgarten estimated that will give the NHL an audience in excess of 30,000,000.

"Unlike a national sports network, which produces and distributes only a single event on a given night, SportsChannel America will produce and distribute up to four events per night so that each market can select the game with the greatest regional appeal," Lustgarten said.

Birtwhistle, Golding Given Knighthoods

London, June 13 — Theater and opera composer Harrison Birtwhistle and novelist William Golding received knighthoods in the annual mid-year royal honors list marking the birthday of Queen Elizabeth II. Golding, author of "Lord of the Flies," etc., won the Nobel prize for literature in 1983.

Arts Council chairman Sir William Rees-Mogg was made a life peer with a seat in the House of Lords.

Another legit figure, West End producer Eddie Kulukundis, married to actress Susan Hampshire, was awarded the Order of the British Empire, though not for services to the arts. Instead, his honor is for service to sports as chairman of a fund-raising organization, the Sports Aid Foundation.

Dame of the British Empire, distaff equivalent of a knighthood, was bestowed on former prima ballerina Beryl Grey for services to the London Festival Ballet, of which she was artistic director from 1968-79.

Besides his Arts Council post, Rees-Mogg is a former editor of the Times of London and a former governor of the British Broadcasting Corp., and recently was named by the government to head a new watchdog panel, the Broadcasting Standards Council.

Veteran character actor Michael Bryant, lately a National Theater mainstay whose film credits include "Gandhi" and "Nicholas And Alexandra," opera diva Valerie Masterson and broadcaster Patrick Moore all were made Commanders of the British Empire. Moore was recognized for popularizing astronomy via a long-run TV series, "The Sky At Night."

Other OBE winners included actor Robert Edison, jazz instrumentalist-composer John Westbrook and John Tunnell, concertmaster of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

J2 Aims For Its Second Made-For-HV Breakthrough

By TOM BIERBAUM

J2 Communications is hoping it's got another breakthrough made-for-homevid program on its hands with a new "self-awareness" and fitness tape that's being aimed at the largely unserved teen audience. The project was conceived by "Who's The Boss?" actress Alyssa Milano, whose appeal as the tape's star will play a key role in J2's marketing strategy.

J2 president-chief executive officer Jim Jimirro thinks this production has a shot at being the company's second big breakthrough tape, after Tim Conway's "Dorf On Golf" comedy program (which has sold 140,000 units).

Because Milano is one of the hottest teen stars on TV, and because there are many promising paths for the marketing of videocassettes to teens, Jimirro is hopeful J2 can turn the tape into another top seller.

The program is called "Teen Steam: Ya Gotta Let It Out." Its general message involves the use of dance movements and other typical teen activities to work out the frustrations of everyday life, while building fitness. Milano says the idea sprung from her personal practice of using dance and fitness routines to relieve frustrations.

J2 is financing the \$130,000 production, which tapes this week. Rock video specialist Propaganda is the production company, and Milano's mother, Lin Milano, serves as exec producer. Father Tom has provided the original score and Lin has designed the wardrobe. She believes the family nature of the project will give it a warmth that will encourage identification and participation by teen viewers.

Jimirro says interest on the part of potential corporate partners is strong, so there may be some sort of commercial on the tape or, more likely, at least one or two marketing crossover relationships that probably wouldn't result in any on-tape blurbs.

He expects to license the trademarked "Teen Steam" logo for various items such as sweat-shirts and T-shirts, and may be able to tout those items on the tape itself if deals are worked out early enough.

Also in the works is a single of the "Teen Steam" theme, sung by young Milano, that is slated for release as a record and a promotional video.

Easy Puzzle

Jimirro believes the teen audience presents an easy-to-solve marketing puzzle because it's found so consistently in such locations as film theaters, record stores, fast-food outlets and clothing stores. J2 will start off with a marketing budget roughly equal to the \$130,000 production budget to exploit those promising channels.

One of the few previous made-for-vid projects that tried to break the ice and reach the teen audience was a CBS/Fox Video fitness tape featuring "Cosby Show" star Tempestt Bledsoe, which has apparently not scored the breakthrough success for which Jimirro is shooting. He thinks CBS/Fox didn't come up with the marketing combination needed to get the word out on the project and make it an in-demand teen item.

Milano's tape is scheduled for a Sept. 8 release at \$19.95. It's expected to be about 35 minutes in

of warmup, exercise, dance and cool-down, but with some quick entertainment segments interspersed throughout.

Distribution will focus on popular teen shopping locations, especially record stores, and also including drug stores, discount outlets and book stores. Direct-response channels are eager for a shot at the tape, Jimirro said, and a special offer may also be made to the thousands of fans who write to the "Boss" star weekly, he added.

Startup of production for the new season of "Boss" episodes will be held up by the WGA strike, but Milano remains busy, working on the "Teen Steam" project and an upcoming NBC vidpic, "The Prom."

She's scheduled to support the video with a promotional tour.

WGA, Producers Reps Sked Meeting Today

While formal negotiations between management and the Writers Guild remain in recess, the chief negotiators for the Alliance of Motion Picture & TV Producers and Writers Guild of America will meet today.

Brian Walton, repping WGA, and Nick Courtier III, president of the Alliance, will convene, presumably to discuss what happens next in the deadlocked negotiations.

By mutual consent, the principal parties agreed Saturday night on a recess, a pause for each side to consider the situation.

Deadline Near For Newman Award Entries

Applications are now being accepted for the 1988 Scott Newman Drug Abuse Prevention Award for television programming. The award is to encourage and reward creative, informative and accurate television programming about drug and alcohol abuse prevention and intervention.

Award categories include prime-time, daytime, documentary/news feature and children's programming. The writer of a winning program in each category will receive a \$10,000 cash prize.

Qualified entries must have aired nationally between June 21, 1987 and June 10, 1988. Application forms and a ¼" cassette must be submitted to the Newman Center no later than June 17.

ITC Awarded \$4.3 Mil In 'Barbarosa' Dispute

New York, June 13 — A Federal Court judge here has ordered Nelson Film Partners and its principal Frank Menke to pay ITC Entertainment \$4,300,000 to settle a breach-of-contract dispute involving the 1982 Universal release "Barbarosa."

ITC brought the action against Nelson when Menke failed to pony up most of the \$7,875,000 he had agreed to pay for rights to the pic.

In a related matter, Federal Judge Charles E. Stewart ruled that ITC had a "priority interest" over a law firm, Tenzer, Greenblatt, Fallon & Kaplan, to funds in an escrow account linked to Menke's rights in the 1981 Universal release "On Golden

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