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TBI at the LA Screenings



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Legendary status

Former Sony TV sales boss Michael Grindon tells Jesse Whittcock how Legendary Television's emerging international sales division can offer an alternative to the Hollywood studios

Despite being the LA production studio behind *The Hangover* movie franchise, Legendary Entertainment's push into television has been anything but lethargic. Less than a year since former Sony Pictures Television International president Michael Grindon joined to launch an international TV sales unit, he says there is already "significant" business being done.

The distribution plan sprung into action in April last year, but its roots go further back.

In April 2013, Legendary founder, chairman and CEO Thomas Tull capitalised on Bruce Rosenblum's failed attempt to succeed Barry Meyer at Warner Bros. and brought the executive over to run a new unit, Legendary Television, as president. Less than a year later, Rosenblum had enacted a plan to go international, bringing in Grindon to oversee worldwide sales.

This was all part of plan to create a significant new market player. "If we were going to a small, boutique operation with one or two series a

year it really wouldn't be necessary to set up a distribution arm, but Thomas really wants to be a fully-fledged media company," says Grindon.

"We're not going to be the size of a Warner or a Sony, but we want to grow fast, get bigger and the level of investment we've been putting into our IP suggests we'll have a number of series on air in years to come."

The first project for market is *Colony* (above right) a near-future drama starring Josh Holloway (*Lost*) and Sarah Wayne Callies (*The Walking Dead*), which Legendary TV is



Franck under the collective pen name James S.A. Corey, launches with a pilot at the Screenings. The Alcon Television Group show for US cable channel Syfy is set 200 years in the future and follows a detective and a rogue spaceship captain as they uncover an interstellar conspiracy.

Further titles in the pipeline include Netflix comedy *Love*, which is from *The Hangover* director Judd Apatow. The streaming service has exclusive worldwide first-window rights to two commissioned seasons, after which Legendary will look to secure second-window, DVD and electronic sell-through agreements.

Legendary also has the follow up to zombie horror film *Dead Rising: Watchtower*, which Content Television sold as Grindon's distribution arm was too nascent to oversee sales when it was greenlit. As with its predecessor, *Dead Rising 2* will launch on Sony-owned platform Crackle.

There are also plans for series from the Nerdist Industries, Geek & Sundry and Amy Poehler's *Smart Girls at the Party* digital platforms, which Legendary acquired; and Grindon will sell Katie Holmes-starrer *The Kennedys – After Camelot* after buying its producer, Asylum Entertainment.

For a company a fraction the size of a Hollywood studio, Tull's business is certainly aiming big. "Our vision was to take a small team of experienced players and do things differently," Grindon says of the approach. "The advantage is we're all here together on one floor, and we can make decisions very quickly. That's been part of the appeal for talent."

"We don't have anything like the size and bureaucracy of a studio, and we don't have that

coproducing with Universal Cable Productions for USA Network. Grindon's unit has full sales rights for the show, whose writer Carlton Cuse (another *Lost* alum) is one of a number of high-end producers working Legendary TV.

"We developed the project and were happy to bring in USA as our partner, but obviously we wanted to hang on to a good portion of those rights," says Grindon.

Colony plays at the LA Screenings this week, apt given it is also shot in Tinseltown. It follows a family struggling to survive in a world in which Los Angeles has been occupied by hostile outside forces.

Also in the works are *Electra Woman* and *Dyna Girl*, which was produced through Legendary Digital Media for multichannel network Fullscreen; and *The Expanse*, a Syfy 'space opera' that represents a first foray into third-party distribution.

Electra Woman and *Dyna Girl* is a reboot of a 1970s series in which a pair of YouTube stars, Grace Helbig and Hannah Hart, play a pair of small-town, low-level crime fighters as they relocate to Hollywood in a world where superheroes are celebrities and have agents.

The distribution plan will likely see it launch on Fullscreen's upcoming subscription on-demand platform as an original content subs

driver before Legendary takes it out further.

"It's a very funny spoof on superheroes about two women who are minor league superheroes arresting people for parking violations move to LA to fight crime in a big way," says Grindon.

Since Grindon exited SPT in 2010, the potential for shows such as *Electra Woman*... have grown exponentially, he says. "Where broadcast channels dominated with some cable channels, digital media is really making a difference, and provides opportunities for new windowing

"We're not going to be the size of Warner or Sony, but we want to grow fast, get bigger and invest in intellectual property"
Michael Grindon



models. These pieces done for digital media can have very unique distribution patterns, which can vary by territory."

The Expanse, meanwhile, penned by George R.R. Martin associates Daniel Abraham and Ty

sort of volume to deal with: we're not selling 30,000 hours of television. We can embrace different models that we can follow without the burden of large overheads and different kinds of deal structures." **TBI**

+++US NETWORK PICK-UPS 2015-16+++US NETWORK PICK-UPS



DR. KEN (Prod: Old Charlie Prods, ABC Studios, Davis Ents, A Stern Talking to Prods, Sony Pictures TV Dist: Sony)

OIL (Prod: AC Signature Dist: Disney)

OF KINGS AND PROPHETS (Prod: ABC Studios Dist: Disney)

QUANTICO (Prod: ABC Studios, Mark Gordon Company Dist: Disney)



Dr. Ken



Limitless

ANGEL FROM HELL (Prod: CBS TV Studios Dist: CBS)

CODE BLACK (Prod: ABC Studios Dist: Disney)

CRIMINAL MINDS: BEYOND BORDERS (Prod: ABC Studios, CBS TV Studios Dist: Disney)

LIFE IN PIECES (Prod: 20th Century Fox TV, Kapital Ents Dist: Fox)

LIMITLESS (Prod: CBS TV Studios, K/O Paper Products,



BORDERTOWN (Prod: 20th Century Fox TV, Banana Zoo Prods, Fuzzy Door Prods, Bento Box Ents Dist: Fox)

GRANDFATHERED (Prod: ABC Studios, 20th Century Fox TV Dist: Disney)

LUCIFER (Prod: Warner Bros. TV, Aggressive Mediocrity, Jerry Bruckheimer TV Dist: Warner Bros)

MINORITY REPORT (Prod: Amblin TV, Paramount TV, 20th Century Fox TV Dist: Fox)

ROSEWOOD (Prod: 20th Century Fox TV, Temple Hill Ents Dist: Fox)



Minority Report



Blindspot

BLINDSPOT (Prod: Warner Bros. TV, Berlanti Prods Dist: Warner Bros.)

COACH (Prod: Universal TV Dist: NBCU)

COAT OF MANY COLORS (Prod: Warner Bros. TV, Magnolia Hill Ents Dist: Warner Bros.)

CHICAGO MED (Prod: Universal TV, Wolf Films Dist: NBCU)

CROWDED (Prod: Universal TV, Hazy Mills Prods Dist: NBCU)

GAME OF SILENCE (Prod: Sony Pictures TV, Universal TV, Carol Mendelsohn Prods Dist: NBCU)

HEARTBREAKER (Prod: Universal TV Dist: NBCU)



Containment

CONTAINMENT (Prod: Warner Bros. TV, My So-Called Company Dist: Warner Bros.)

CRAZY EX-GIRLFRIEND (Prod: CBS TV Studios Dist: CBS)

DC's LEGENDS OF TOMORROW (Prod: Warner Bros TV, Bonanza Prods, Berlanti Prods Dist: Warner Bros.)

PICK-UPS 2015-16+++US NETWORK PICK-UPS 2015-16+++US

THE CATCH (Prod: Shondaland, ABC Studios Dist: Disney)

THE FAMILY (Prod: ABC Studios, Mandeville TV Dist: Disney)

THE MUPPETS (Prod: ABC Studios Dist: Disney)

THE REAL O'NEALS (Prod: ABC Studios Dist: Disney)

WICKED CITY (Prod: ABC Studios Dist: Disney)



The Real O'Neals



Wicked City

Yet To Be Named Co., Relativity Media Dist: CBS)

RUSH HOUR (Prod: Warner Bros. TV Dist: Warner Bros.)

SUPergirl (Prod: Warner Bros. TV, Berlanti Prods, DC Ents Dist: Warner Bros.)

ZOO (Prod: CBS TV Studios, James Patterson Ents, Midnight Radio, Treeline Films Dist: CBS)



Supergirl



Zoo

SCREAM QUEENS (20th Century Fox TV, Ryan Murphy Prods, Brad Falchuk Teley-Vision Dist: Fox)

THE FRANKENSTEIN CODE (Prod: 20th Century Fox TV Dist: Fox)

THE GUIDE TO SURVIVING LIFE (Prod: 20th Century Fox TV, The Jackal Group Dist: Fox)

THE GRINDER (Prod: 20th Century Fox TV Dist: Fox)

THE X-FILES (Prod: 20th Century Fox TV, Ten Thirteen Prods Dist: Fox)



Scream Queens



The Guide to Surviving Life



The Player

HEROES REBORN (Prod: Universal TV, Imperative Ents, Tailwind Prods Dist: NBCU)

HOT & BOTHERED (Prod: Universal TV, UnbeliEVable Ents, Tall and Short Prods Dist: NBCU)

PEOPLE ARE TALKING (Prod: Universal TV, Will Packer Prods Dist: NBCU)

SHADES OF BLUE (Prod: Universal TV, Nuyorican Prods, EGTV, Ryan Seacrest Prods Dist: NBCU)

SUPERSTORE (Prod: Universal TV, The District Dist: NBCU)

THE PLAYER (Prod: Sony Pictures TV, Davis Ents, Kung Fu Monkey Dist: Sony)

THE REAPER (Prod: The Weinstein Co. Dist: TBA)

YOU, ME AND THE END OF THE WORLD (Prod: Working Title TV, Sky, Bigballs Films Dist: NBCU)



DC's Legends of Tomorrow

Key (full distribution companies' names)

CBS: CBS Studios International

Disney: Disney Media Distribution

NBCU: NBCUniversal International Television Distribution

Sony: Sony Pictures Television

Fox: 20th Century Fox Television Distribution

Warner Bros.: Warner Bros. Worldwide Television Distribution

Muppets, medics and movie characters will be filling US network schedules over the next year. Jesse Whittock examines the trends, and what this means for buyers at the LA Screenings



Puppet masters



Over the next US broadcast season, audiences will finally learn the backstory of the *Muppets*. They will also be introduced to the latest contenders vying to become 'the new *ER*', and television versions of the *Rush Hour*, *Uncle Buck*, *Limitless* and *Minority Report* movies.

The 2015-16 broadcast schedules look like a mix of the familiar – medical dramas are back in vogue, new procedurals abound, and thrillers and the usual half-hour multi-cam family comedies are all there – alongside some high-concept efforts thrown in as cable sensibilities filter through and the networks look for the next (unexpected) hit.



ABC, perhaps spurred on by the success of Monty Pythonesque *Galavant*, counts *The Muppets* as a big play this time round. The show, which brings America's most popular puppet comedians back together after a two-year broadcast network absence, comes from *The Big Bang Theory*'s Bill Prady and 3rd *Rock From the Sun*'s Bob Kushell.

But where the *Muppets* once performed in variety shows and entertainment segments, the 2015-16 vintage will be a more grown-up affair. Mark Endemano, Disney Media Distribution's senior VP and general manager, EMEA, tells TBI that *The Muppets* will still be a family-viewing series, but there will be a 'mockumentary' tone found in the likes of *The American Office* and *Parks and Recreation*.

"It's not often you get the chance to take something with such heritage and modernise it for today," says Endemano. "Think of *Modern Family* and how they made that with a mockumentary style with classic dual-level humour."

DMD's other comedies are David Windsor and Casey Johnson's multi-cam family effort for ABC, *The Real O'Neals*, about a perfect family that is rocked to the foundations when son Kenny reveals he is gay; and *Grandfathered* for Fox, which stars John Stamos as a playboy who finds out he not only has a son, but also a grandchild. The latter is just the third for another network in ABC Studios' history.

The Fox network, eager to find new comedies, has ordered animated comedy *Bordertown*, which is from Seth MacFarlane and his fellow *Family Guy* writer Mark Hentemann; *The Guide to Surviving Life*, a young ensemble piece about people in their twenties; and horror-comedy *Scream Queens*, which is from Twentieth Century Fox Television, Ryan Murphy Prods and Brad Falchuk Teley-Vision.

There is also Rob Lowe sitcom *The Grinder*, which Fox is coproducing with former employee Gail Berman's production firm The Jackal Group. It sees the *West Wing* actor playing a TV lawyer who decides to become the real thing after moving back to the family town when his popular show ends.

Twentieth Century Fox Television Distribution has all four on its slate, along with CBS effort *Life in Pieces*, an Aaron Kaplan effort that has been handed a post-*Big Bang Theory* Monday night slot from November.

"Everyone is looking at trying to portray family," says Marion Edwards, international president, Twentieth Century Fox Television Distribution. "*Modern Family* was a very big success, and people are looking to find the next really human family. This shares some of the sensibilities. Often in comedy you find people being extreme, but there is enough humour in real life."

CBS and writer Tad Quill are working on single-cam comedy *Angel From Hell*, which stars Jane Lynch and Maggie Lawson. The show is centred around the larger-than-life Amy (Lynch) who enters Allison (Lawson)'s life claiming to be her guardian angel. The pair form an unlikely friendship, though Allison is unable to ascertain if her new pal is for real or just crazy. CBS Studios International is on-hand to sell the show internationally.

CBS is at the forefront of another ongoing trend this season – ordering TV adaptations of movies. It has taken Bradley Cooper action flick *Limitless* and comedy franchise *Rush Hour* to series. Cooper executive produces the former and will appear. CBSSI will sell the show, which follows a man who is coerced into working with the FBI due to his use of brain-boosting drugs.

Rush Hour, meanwhile, follows a similar set-up to the original movies, in which Jackie Chan played a by-the-book Hong Kong cop paired with a cocky African-American LAPD cop (Chris Tucker). In the Warner Bros. Television-produced and distributed reboot, little-known actors Jon Foo and Justin Hines play the leads.

There are also reboots of *Uncle Buck* (for ABC) and *Minority Report*

CBS SETS NO LIMITS AND OPENS ZOO

With a settled and super successful programming grid in place, CBS's new season presentation was notable for the twenty-plus number of recurring shows (and the end of the original *CSI*), as well as for the roster of seven new series. Three of the new offerings will be shopped by CBS Studios International.

Relativity's hit movie *Limitless* gets a TV outing with the film's star, Bradley Cooper, among the stellar list of exec producers, and also making an on-screen appearance.

It follows Brian Finch, played by Jake McDorman (*American Sniper*), as he is coerced into helping the FBI after discovering the extraordinary effects of a mysterious brain-boosting drug called NZT.

CBS has given the show a plum spot in its schedules, making it the nearest you can get to a sure thing in US network TV. "The international market is clamouring for procedurals and they are working increasingly well," says Armando Nuñez, president and CEO, CBS Global Distribution Group. "But first and foremost it needs to work in the US and *Limitless* has the biggest chance because it is on CBS, on Tuesdays [at 10pm] after two top dramas in *NCIS* and *NCIS: New Orleans*."

CBSSI has done a huge level of business with *CSI* – which was the most successful series in the world for several years, before being eclipsed by another CBSSI-distributed franchise in *NCIS*. The end of its network run does not, however, mean the end of *CSI* on screens around the world. Talking about the end of the king of the procedural genre, Nuñez says: "*CSI* is really the series that reintroduced American content to primetime around the world. There are platforms that haven't been invented yet that will be carrying it in years to come, and *CSI: Cyber* is carrying on the tradition."

Another drama focus for CBSSI is *Zoo*. The CBS net has carved out a new summer window for event series and *Under the Dome* and *Extant* have bucked the usual summer trend of programming reality, repeats and lower cost product, and won over viewers in the process.

Based on the eponymous James Patterson novel, *Zoo* is the next CBS summer event series. The show follows a renegade zoologist investigating a wave of animal attacks on humans. Patterson is among the exec producers.

"*Under the Dome* used a new model of programming and was successful almost everywhere," says Nuñez. "Then along came *Extant* and that was hugely successful, and this summer, with *Zoo*, there will be three event series. Internationally, they perform well in linear and SVOD and the market is excited about *Zoo*."

(for Fox). The former, from ABC Studios and Universal TV and sold by DMD, sees Mike Epps step into the iconic John Candy role from the 1989 comedy.

Minority Report is from Amblin TV, Paramount TV and Twentieth Century Fox TV, with the latter's sales arm attached to distribute. It is set 11 years after the 2002 released neo-noir in 2065, and follows a man who can see the future and a female cop, who race to stop terrible crimes.

Also on the high-concept front is the buzzy *Blindspot*, which has landed the coveted post-*Voice* Monday night 10pm slot on NBC. The show, which Warner Bros. is selling internationally, begins with the discovery of a woman in the middle of Times Square who has no memory, but is covered in tattoos that are clues to a criminal conspiracy.

It's not all so high-concept, however, and medical dramas have made a big return this season after an intense development period at all of the studios in recent years. "People are always fascinated by medical drama," says NBCUniversal International Television Distribution and Universal Networks International, Belinda Menendez.

NBCU's efforts this year are CBS's *Chicago Med*, the latest from Dick Wolf's Chicago procedural franchise, and Universal TV-produced NBC series *Heartbreaker*, which stars Melissa George as a quirky-but-brilliant heart surgeon, and is based on the life of Dr. Kathy Magliato's book *Heart Matters*.

Menendez says the need to find the 'new *ER*' is growing as ABC stalwart *Grey's Anatomy* nears the end of its natural lifecycle. "We've got a real opportunity with *Heartbreaker*," she adds.

Twentieth Century Fox Television Distribution also has a new medical, in the shape of *Rosewood*, which follows a brilliant private pathologist with a secret, who helps the Miami PD solve cases through intensely thorough autopsies. Disney also has CBS's *Code Black*, which is set in a notoriously busy emergency room.



Zoo

DISNEY MAKES DRAMATIC CONNECTIONS

Disney Media Distribution's senior VP and general manager of distribution, EMEA, Mark Endemano, points to links with the past as a key element of the 2015-16 season slate. "Connections to returning shows jump out," he says, referring to the upcoming *Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders* and *The Catch*.

The former, an ABC Studios title for CBS, is latest in the *Criminal Minds* canon, coming after the original continuing series and 2011's *Criminal Minds: Suspect Behavior*. The series follows *CSI: NY* star Gary Sinise as head of a unit that helps Americans in trouble abroad.

"All studios are always under pressure to create more top-quality procedurals with an international flavour that can connect at a local level and with great American production values," says Endemano. "We think we have one here."

The Catch, meanwhile, is the latest in the Shonda Rhimes catalogue. Her existing trio, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Scandal* and *How to Get Away with Murder* created a formidable Thursday night ABC drama block. The latter only trailed Fox juggernaut *Empire* in the new season drama rankings this year.

"There is no such thing as too much Shonda," says Endemano of concerns of Rhimes' network TV takeover. "I don't know how she keeps doing it, but she keeps doing it."

Coming from ABC Studios and Shondaland, *The Catch* is a thriller from Rhimes, her long-time production colleague Betsy Beers and writer Jennifer Schuur. It follows Mireille Enos (*The Killing*) as a successful fraud investigator who becomes the victim of a scam by her fiancé. In between cases, she must find him or risk losing her career.



Of course, it wouldn't be the Screenings without new crime procedurals, and Disney-sold CBS series *Criminal Minds: Beyond Borders* and Warner's Fox network effort *Lucifer* are two examples. Superhero shows, meanwhile, include Warner's *Supergirl* for CBS.

CBS also has another summer event series in the shape of James Patterson series *Zoo*. Nor would it be the Screenings without a Shonda Rhimes show, this year's offering is ABC's *The Catch*, about a fraud investigator. **TBI**

FOX FOLLOWS PROCEDURE



Two things have happened recently at the Fox studio to leave Twentieth Century Fox Television Distribution with one of the biggest slates in recent memory: buyers' demand for procedurals is growing and the introduction of Dana Walden and Gary Newman as combined studio and network chiefs has brought production and channel closer together, says TCFTVD president Marion Edwards.

"Since Dana Walden and Gary Newman took over a relationship has been growing between our production units and the network similar to what CBS, ABC and NBC have," she says. "That's why you'll see more additional content."

As a result, Fox has three procedurals on show this year. *Minority Report*, already much-anticipated, has Steven Spielberg's personal seal of approval and is the first of his movies to be adapted for TV.

Set in 2065, a decade after the film, the show follows a 'pre-cog,' who is able to see crimes before they happen, and a female police officer as they attempt to stop criminals using their paired talents. "It's futuristic in an accessible way," says Edwards.

Early screenings have been well received, as have those for *The Frankenstein Code*, another sci-fi-themed drama. It follows a corrupt police officer given a second chance after being brought back from the dead.

"It's intriguing to all of us to think on the chance to come back and fix the mistakes of the past but also about the dangers of that," says Edwards.

The central character of medical procedural *Rosewood*, a Miami private pathologist, meanwhile draws comparisons to that other famous network doctor, Quincy, says Edwards.

"Networks can be big and more fun than cable, which has gone down a really dark path, and in this we have a wonderful and appealing central character," she says. "Rosewood is relentlessly upbeat but gets himself involved in these murder cases because he spots the effects crimes have on bodies that the police have missed."

NBCU'S LATIN LOVE-IN



Game of Silence

NBCUniversal International Television Distribution has trio of shows featuring huge Latin American female stars on its slate this year. Jennifer Lopez is producing and starring in police drama *Shades of Blue*, America Ferrara fronts ensemble workplace comedy *Superstore* and Eva Longoria is in meta mode playing a telenovela actress in *Hot & Bothered*.

"The three women are all international stars and that's how they're

perceived by our customers," says NBCUITVD president Belinda Menendez. She says it is the star power, and not their Latina backgrounds, that acquisitions executives really care about.

The straight-to-series *Shades of Blue* sees Lopez playing a cop in a tight-knit crew of officers that not only protects the public but also engages in corrupt practices to line their own pockets. "It is a procedural with extraordinary talent behind and in front of the camera," says Menendez.

Actress and singer Lopez's prodco, Nuyorican Productions, Ryan Seacrest Productions and E!TV are coproducing the show along with Universal Television.

Ugly Betty star Ferrara, meanwhile, plays alongside *Mad Men*'s Ben Feldman among others in half-hour sitcom *Superstore* as workers in a giant mega-store.

Though workplace comedies are hard to get right, Menendez points to the international success of *The American Office* as proof a home-run can mean distribution gold.

Hot & Bothered, meanwhile, looks like an obvious network play to attract Hispanic American audiences to NBC. Another half-hour comedy, it follows *Desperate Housewives* alumna Longoria as the star of a popular telenovela battling behind the scenes to steal the spotlight from the rest of the cast and crew.

The fact she also butts heads with hapless network executives and unfocused writers may well tickle the fancy of channel buyers who found success with *30 Rock*, which was one of NBCUITVD's most-successful comedies of the past decade.

SONY AIMS TO BE THE MAIN PLAYER

Sony, the only studio not affiliated to a network, had the buzziest show of the 2013 screenings with *The Blacklist* and coming from the same stable, Davis Entertainment, is *The Player*.

It follows former FBI agent Alex Kane, played by Philip Winchester (*Strike Back*), as he gets sucked into a world overseen by a mysterious secret society that runs a high stakes game of chance.

Part of that mysterious society, Mr Johnson is cast opposite Kane and marks a TV outing for Hollywood A-lister Wesley Snipes.

"Two years ago we had *The Blacklist*, which was the most sought-after show at the Screenings, and this year we have that again with *The Player*," says Keith LeGoy, president, international distribution, for Sony PicturesTelevision.

He adds: "It's on the same network [NBC] that spawned an international hit with *The Blacklist*, but has its own identity. There has been a lot of buzz from the beginning and that increased with the casting. Everyone wanted to work with Wesley Snipes and we got him. I think people realise this will be a global franchise."

Sony also has *Dr. Ken*, the ABC half-hour comedy, also from Davis Entertainment. It has *The Hangover* and *Community* star Ken Jeong as a grumpy, beleaguered doctor.

His previous work gives a level of international recognition that will help



The Player

the sales drive, LeGoy says: "Everyone knows Ken from *Community* and *The Hangover* and that is important in a world where there are so many entertainment options. *Dr. Ken* is part of a tradition of fast, funny, brilliantly written heartfelt comedies."

It is little wonder that international buyers always cite the LA Screenings as their favourite trip of the year. As well as being wined and dined by the biggest entertainment companies in the world, who are presenting some of the biggest-budget and best content in the world, there are numerous non-studio players in town, looking to get some quality time with them.

As the likes of Globo, Televisa and Telemundo roll out the red carpet, many of the international firms are in town to meet the Latin American buyers. The international indies (where 'indie' is defined as 'non-studio') are then fighting for buyer time in between the Latin events and the studio sessions the week after, when the majors welcome the buyers to their lots. "There's always time to get the buyers, whether it is breakfast, or drinks, or dinner," notes one indie distribution boss.

now has a catalogue of TV fare from Tandem Productions, Red Production and Sam, as well as third parties. As the company positions itself as a Europe-based, international studio, it is

decided here. This gives us another chance to see them in person before MIPCOM."

As with other distributors, StudioCanal's slate is the same as its MIPTV line-up, and

"The Latins are very focused on the Screenings and a lot of their budgets are decided here"

Mirela Nastase



evaluating whether to have a screening in LA, but this year will just be in town to reach the Latins.

includes *Spotless*, which US cable net Esquire presented at its upfront, and Russell Brand and Michael Winterbottom's feature doc *The*

Independent thinking

The LA Screenings see thousands of buyers head to Los Angeles to peruse the Hollywood studio's latest offerings. However, May isn't entirely about the majors and the Latins and independents are keen to make the most of the buyers' time, reports Stewart Clarke

Suffice to say, a sociable buyer, from a broadcaster big or small, could be entertained almost 24-7 for the period of the Screenings.

French major StudioCanal's sales arm

"We are here just for the Latin market," says sales manager Mirela Nastase. "The Latins also do NATPE Miami, but are very focused on the Screenings, and a lot of their budgets are

Emperor's New Clothes. It also has *The Five*, the UK drama from best selling author Harlan Coban, and *Section Zero*, a French cop drama, from Olivier Marchal.

The latter will play well on cable rather than free TV in Lat Am. "It pushes the limit in terms of violence and bad language," Nastase says. "Olivier Marchal has produced another *Braquo*, but this time set in the near future."

Lionsgate straddles the studio and indie worlds by qualifying as both. It has its own screening and hosts a Nashville-themed party this year. Its line-up includes WGN America cable series *Manhattan* and Hulu's Jason Reitman (*Juno*) half-hour comedy *Casual*. It will also talk to buyers about the ABC procedural

"It is important to keep an eye on what's coming down the pipe from the studios... that affects our development and project slate"

Dan March



Sex, Lies and Handwriting, and the adaptation of Jean M. Auel's *Clan of the Cave Bear* for Lifetime. Other shows include *Empress of China*, which comes out of its pact with China's Hunan. For 2016 it hopes to have a the *Dirty Dancing* series, based on the hit movie, which is in development at ABC.

With so much for cable and SVOD the screenings takes on a different role for the likes of Lionsgate, as most projects are straight-to-series and ordered year-round. "This is not the only opportunity; the buffet goes on all year," says Peter Iacono, managing director, international television and digital distribution, Lionsgate Television. "We have ten new projects for cable or SVOD, but they are all straight-to-series so there is no pilot."

The Latin opportunity becomes more important given that fewer now attend MIPTV in April, says Lisa Honig, senior executive VP, television and digital distribution for FremantleMedia International. It might also, ultimately, have its own screenings event in LA in May (it had its first London screening event in February), although not this year.

FMI will be in town with shows including Paul Abbott cop drama *No Offence*, and given it will have launched on Channel 4's since its MIPTV launch, the sales team have ratings data in hand. The distributor will also have buzzy German drama *Deutschland 83*, and amid the golden age of drama, international buyers are less concerned about the provenance of scripted fare, Honig says. "There's an openness to content wherever it comes from. The strength of something like *Deutschland 83* speaks for itself. It just happens to be German."

Other FMI titles for the screenings include

healthy number of cable series on its books. "It is the golden age and that is not about network TV anymore; the best series are not on network. Because of that the Screenings are important, but they are not the only opportunity."

international firms. "The buyers will often wait for the screenings, decide what they want and see what [budget] is left. We have to be there," says Henrik Pabst, managing director of Red Arrow International. "The Screenings are important for



"It is a time of year to see and analyse trends and what people are bringing to market"
Alon Shtruzman

Outside of speaking to the Latins, the screenings is a fact-finding opportunity for other distributors. Dan March and Klaus Zimmerman's Dynamic Television describes its raison d'être as "meeting the demands of channels, outside of what they are getting from the studios", says March. "Our goal is to focus on the programming needs that clients have that are not being met by the studios."

Dynamic has Icelandic noir drama *Trapped*, recently picked up by the BBC in the UK, as well as South African crime drama *Cape Town*, which is in production.

"It is important to keep an eye on what's coming down the pipe from the studios and what our clients are responding to, and that affects our own development and project slate," says March. However, the Dynamic boss adds that, Latins aside, the Screenings are not nearly as important as MIPTV or MIPCOM for independents. "We

our sales results, they attract the really significant buyers and they are all their to see how they can fill their schedules."

With the Latin attendance at MIPTV less strong than MIPCOM, the likes of Red Arrow are also effectively launching shows to some buyers. "We are presenting [US-flavoured Nordic noir cop series] *100 Code* to them for the first time," Pabst says. Red Arrow's other scripted offerings include buzzy Amazon cop series *Bosch*, which has just been renewed for a second run.

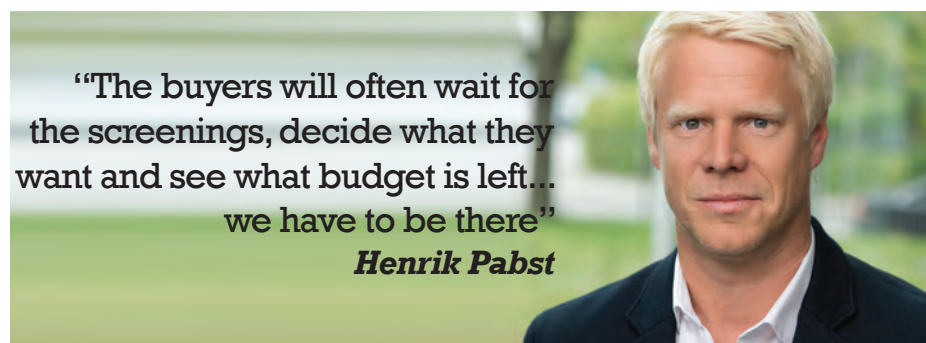
As part of the ProSiebenSat.1 group, Red Arrow will also benefit from some feedback from the buyers from its group. FremantleMedia also has channel relations as part of RTL as do ITV Studios, BBC Worldwide and others.

Keshet also has that buyer/seller dynamic, with acquisitions folk from the Israeli channel and sales agents from Keshet International in town to woo the Latins.

Outside of reaching Latin buyers, the Screenings are a good time to assess what's going on in the scripted world, says Alon Shtruzman, CEO of Keshet International. "For us it is a big part of the calendar, but we meet buyers all year, so it is not so much to sell but a time of year to see and analyse trends, and what is going on, and what people are bringing to market.

"Our buyers are here too so it is a hybrid experience. We want to see what is out there for our network and how it can help shape the schedule for the year."

In terms of scripted trends the Keshet International boss adds: "What we're seeing so far is less risk-taking, everyone is trying to avoid a 'walk on the wild side'. Buyers are looking for safe acquisitions." **TBI**



"The buyers will often wait for the screenings, decide what they want and see what budget is left... we have to be there"
Henrik Pabst

BBC pirate radio station sitcom *People Just Do Nothing* and Channel 5 cop procedural *Suspects*.

A-grade scripted fare often also means cable not network TV, says another distributor with a

have quality time talking about specific projects, whereas at MIP it is a more blanket approach."

Being in town when the buyers see the latest studio fare has another benefit for the

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