



TRADES

Monday, February 22, 2010

'Shutter Island' wins weekend boxoffice

Better late than never -- much better, as it turned out. Bumped by Paramount from fall to winter release, Martin Scorsese's Leonardo DiCaprio starrer "Shutter Island" docked at the high end of pre-release projections with an estimated \$40.2 million. The R-rated suspense thriller's outsize bow gave the film's director and topliner new personal bests. The previous weekend's boxoffice champ -- romantic comedy "Valentine's Day" from Warner Bros. -- fell a big 69% from its opening tally but still wooed \$17.2 million in second place for a 10-day cume of \$87.4 million. Fox's family adventure "Percy Jackson and the Olympians: The Lightning Thief" dropped a modest 51% in its sophomore session to \$15.3 million in fourth place with a \$58.8 cume, while Universal's Benicio Del Toro starrer "The Wolfman" shed 69% from opening grosses for \$9.8 million in fifth with a \$50.3 million cume. Collectively, the weekend's top 10 finishers rung up \$118 million, or 5% more than top performers in the comparable frame last year, boxoffice tracker Rentrak said. Among limited bows, Summit Entertainment unspooled Roman Polanski's "The Ghost Writer" in two New York theaters and two in L.A and grossed \$179,000, or an impressive \$44,750 per venue. "Writer" -- which etched Polanski the Berlin Film Festival's Silver Lion Award on Saturday -- broadens into 10 additional markets Friday.

Two more actors get 'Hall Pass'

The Farrellys have given a "Hall Pass" to some new actors. Stephen Merchant and J.B. Smoove are joining the New Line comedy that stars Owen Wilson, Jason Sudeikis and Jenna Fischer. The story revolves around a pair of married couples who decide to experiment with the concept of a free pass for the husbands to use for guilt-free romantic encounters outside their marriages. Merchant and Smoove will play friends of Rick (Wilson) and Fred (Sudeikis) who accompany them as they cut loose and attempt to cash their tickets. Bobby and Peter Farrelly are directing the script they co-wrote with Pete Jones and Kevin Barnett. The Farrellys also are producing with their Conundrum Entertainment partner Bradley Thomas. The movie starts shooting Tuesday in Atlanta.

Rachael Leigh Cook to star on Fox's 'Nirvana'

Rachael Leigh Cook has been tapped as the female lead on Fox's comedy pilot "Nirvana," and Sean Faris has landed the lead in "The Wyoming Project," Amy Sherman-Palladino's drama pilot for the CW. In other pilot castings, Jere Burns has landed the lead in Fox's comedy "Strange Brew," with Aya Cash, Skylar Astin and Mo'Nique also cast; and Charles Dutton, Lea Thompson and Jeff Davis have been added to TBS' hourlong pilot "Uncle Nigel." "Wyoming" centers on 22-year-old Gideon Thorpe (Faris), a horse trainer who becomes the patriarch of a Wyoming ranch responsible for his three younger sisters after their parents die. Also cast in the pilot are Renee Smith as the oldest sister, an unstoppable multitasker and surrogate mother to her younger siblings. "Nirvana" revolves around two grown Indian-American brothers who clash with their controlling immigrant parents as they assimilate American culture, particularly one son, who lives with a white girlfriend (Cook). Cook is repped by Paradigm. "Brew" revolves around a family that owns a small regional brewery and struggles with working and living together.

Katee Sackhoff to star in ABC crime drama

"Battlestar Galactica" alumna Katee Sackhoff is set to star in ABC's untitled Richard Hatem drama pilot. Sackhoff, who co-stars on Fox's "24" this season, fielded multiple offers this pilot season before settling on the Richard Hatem project. The crime drama centers on a beautiful female detective (Sackhoff) who teams with a disgraced ex-cop to solve crimes and untangle the conspiracy that sent him underground. The producers of "24" are tightlipped about any plot twists on the real-time action drama, but it's understood that Sackhoff's story line would allow her to take on a new series for next season even if "24" was to return for a ninth cycle. Sackhoff, who played Kara "Starbuck" Thrace on "Battlestar Galactica," toplined NBC's drama pilot "Lost & Found" last season.

'Hurt Locker' tops BAFTA Awards

It was Kathryn Bigelow's night at the Orange British Academy Film Awards on Sunday, with the favorite "The Hurt Locker" sweeping the board with a haul of awards, including best film, best director, best original screenplay, best cinematography, best sound and best editing. "My heart's beating so fast I can barely talk," she said as she took the podium to accept the best director award. "I think the secret to directing is collaboration, and I was so lucky to have an incredible cast and crew. This is deeply moving -- we all felt an incredible responsibility to honor the courage of the men and women in the field." "Avatar," which had been nominated in eight categories, won in the special visual effects and production design categories. "A Single Man" star Colin Firth was named best actor, while British newcomer Carey Mulligan was awarded the best actress award for her role in coming-of-age drama "An Education." Christoph Waltz took home the best supporting actor award for his role in Quentin Tarantino's "Inglourious Basterds," using his time in the podium to pay tribute to the director. The best supporting actress award for Mo'Nique was collected by "Precious" director Lee Daniels. "Twilight" star Kristen Stewart was named Orange Rising Star, while Jason Reitman and Sheldon Turner were handed the best adapted screenplay gong for "Up in the Air."

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