



TRADES

Tuesday, January 26, 2010

'Avatar' breaks 'Titanic' worldwide record

"Avatar" is the winner and new worldwide boxoffice champion. After six rounds on the foreign circuit, "Avatar" is now the biggest-grossing film of all time, as earlier predicted. Distributor 20th Century Fox said the James Cameron mega-budget blockbuster's worldwide cume -- excluding Puerto Rico -- was through the weekend just \$2 million shy of "Titanic's" global boxoffice record of \$1.843 billion. (Boxoffice in Puerto Rico, although generated offshore, is considered by Fox as part of its domestic total.) The distributor confirmed that "Titanic's" historic benchmark fell as of early Monday. "Avatar" rolled up an overseas cume through Sunday of \$1.292 billion, exceeding by \$50.1 million "Titanic's" 13-year international boxoffice record of \$1.242 billion. The foreign record actually fell Saturday, as earlier predicted.

Tim Burton to head Cannes jury

Director Tim Burton will head from Wonderland to the French Riviera in May to preside over the jury at the 63rd Festival de Cannes, organizers said Tuesday. Burton is no stranger to the Croisette. He was a member of the Cannes jury in 1997 and the short film jury in 2006. His "Ed Wood" biography screened at Cannes in 1995. "After spending my early life watching triple features and 48-hour horror movie marathons, I'm finally ready for this," Burton said of the honor, adding: "When you think of Cannes, you think of world cinema. And as films have always been like dreams to me, this is a dream come true."

Fox enlists Marc Webb to helm pilot

A week after landing the "Spider-Man" reboot, director Marc Webb has been tapped to helm his first pilot, Fox's "Midland." Meanwhile, Jeff Nachmanoff has been hired to direct another drama pilot, ABC's "187 Detroit." Written by "The Beaver" scribe Kyle Killen, the 20th TV-produced "Midland" is a soap set against the backdrop of an oil business that centers on a polygamist living a double life. Former music video director Webb, repped by Gersh and Anonymous, made a splash with his feature-directing debut, last summer's romantic comedy "(500) Days of Summer." He beat out a number of other directors to take on Columbia's "Spider-Man" franchise.

ABC Family eyeing 'Huge' drama

ABC Family is close to greenlighting an hourlong project based on Alloy Entertainment's young-adult novel "Huge" by Sasha Paley. "My So-Called Life" creator Winnie Holzman wrote the script with her daughter, Savannah Dooley. The project, described as "Glee" meets "Ugly Betty," explores how young girls deal with body-image issues. It is set at Wellness Canyon, a weight-loss camp, and revolves around two girls from different backgrounds who fall for the same guy. Holzman is executive producing the project with Alloy's Leslie Morgenstein and Bob Levy. Veteran writer-producer Robin Schiff, who executive produces the ABC Family comedy series "10 Things I Hate About You," has

been involved in the project from the get-go and is expected to serve as an executive producer.

Gavin Hood eyeing Alaskan adventure pic

Gavin Hood is in negotiations to direct an untitled Alaskan adventure project for Walden Media. Mark Johnson is producing. Based on Gay and Laney Salisbury's book "The Cruellest Miles: The Heroic Story of Dogs and Men in a Race Against an Epidemic," the true story centers on a 674-mile journey undertaken by 20 men and 200 dogs who rushed a diphtheria antidote to Nome, Alaska, in 1952. The group braved temperatures of minus-60 degrees, a phenomenon known as ice fog and other dangers, capturing the attention of the lower 48 states. One lead dog even got a statue in New York's Central Park.

Central Talent Booking