



TRADES

Tuesday, May 18, 2010

John Hurt joins Lars von Trier's 'Melancholia'

Lars von Trier has completed casting on his new disaster movie "Melancholia," adding John Hurt to a cast that includes Kirsten Dunst, Kiefer Sutherland, Charlotte Rampling and Charlotte Gainsbourg, who won the best actress prize in Cannes last year with von Trier's shocker "Antichrist." Father and son Stellan and Alexander Skarsgard as well as von Trier regular Udo Kier complete the cast of the \$7.5 million production, which starts shooting July 19 in Trollhattan, Sweden. A 2011 Cannes Competition slot is all but guaranteed for "Melancholia," though von Trier will have a hard time topping the scandal he set off with "Antichrist" in 2009. Peter A. Jensen, head of von Trier's production firm, Zentropa, and an executive producer on the project, described "Melancholia" as a "beautiful film about the end of the world," but was cagey about disclosing any plot points. He would only hint that the story hinged on a "large object from outer space approaching Earth" that affects the planet's inhabitants. Zentropa Denmark is producing Melancholia together with Slot Machine in France, Zentropa International in Cologne, Sweden's Memphis Film and Trollhattan Film. Meta Louise Foldager, who produced "Antichrist," and Louise Vesth ("Zoomers") will produce. TrustNordisk is handling sales.

Charlie Sheen staying on 'Men'

Charlie Sheen has made a two-year deal to stick with "Two and a Half Men." This will keep CBS' Monday night comedy block in strong place for another season. Sheen's publicist released this statement: "To put a fitting end on the two and one-half months of whirlwind speculation, I'm looking forward to returning to my CBS home on Monday nights. I want to thank (CBS Corp. president and CEO) Les Moonves for his support." Sheen initially wanted \$2 million per episode, but at least one report says Warner Bros. climbed significantly from its initial offer (which sources say was around \$1 million). It also means that the Sheen camp's "He's leaving the show!" leaks were probably at least 50% negotiation ploy.

Ellen Page to star in 'Freeheld'

Endgame Entertainment is developing a dramatic feature based on Cynthia Wade's award-winning short documentary "Freeheld," with Ellen Page set to star. Ron Nyswaner, an Oscar nominee for "Philadelphia," is writing the screenplay based on the true story of New Jersey car mechanic Stacie Andree, who'll be played by Page, and her police detective girlfriend Laurel Hester, who both battled to secure Hester's pension benefits after she was diagnosed with a terminal illness. Wade's doc won the Oscar for best short documentary in 2008. The Endgame-financed film will be produced by Endgame's James D. Stern, Double Feature Films' Michael Shamberg and Stacey Sher, Vie Entertainment's Kelly Bush, and Wade. Endgame's Doug Hansen and Adam Del Deo will exec produce. "As a documentarian and feature producer, you always look for powerful stories with subject matter that will resonate with audiences, and Cynthia's remarkable chronicle of the battle forged by two women did just that," Stern said. Nyswaner's adaptation of "Hamlet" for director Catherine Hardwicke is currently in production; he is repped by UTA. Page, repped by WME and Vie Entertainment, will next be seen opposite Leonardo DiCaprio in Christopher Nolan's upcoming "Inception."

USA orders two pilots

USA Network has greenlighted two new pilots that are expected to be shot this summer. "A Legal Mind," on which Doug Liman serves as an executive producer, revolves around a brilliant young man who gets a job at a big corporate law firm without having his college degree. "Necessary Roughness" features a tough, divorced female sports therapist as the protagonist. The show is Sony TV's first pilot picked up by USA.

Montecito, Paramount plan 'Field Trip'

Montecito and Paramount are going on a "Field Trip." Montecito, run by Ivan Reitman, Tom Pollock and Joe Medjuck, has dipped into its discretionary fund to pick up a sci-fi-tinged adventure comedy pitch from Jordan Cahan. Paramount and Walden Media also are co-financing "Trip's" development. The logline is being kept hidden in a locker, but the story is known to involve time travel, a high school teacher and his students. The Montecito principals will produce with Greg Lessans, who produced 2008's "My Best Friend's Girl," a comedy starring Dane Cook and Kate Hudson that Cahan wrote. The UTA-repped Cahan, a graduate of the Disney Fellowship program, also has the comedy "Part-time Pirates" set up at Fox.

Central Talent Booking