

A*Vision Set To Take Over 'Rangers,' 'X-Men' Distrib?

MUM'S THE WORD: Executives at PolyGram Video and Saban Entertainment aren't talking, but the word on the street is that A*Vision Entertainment will begin distributing Saban's "Mighty Morphin Power Rangers" and "X-Men" by this summer.

Retail accounts got the news from PolyGram at last month's National Assn. of Recording Merchandisers convention, on the heels of Saban's distribution deal with A*Vision for rental product under the Libra Home Entertainment banner (Billboard, April 2).

At that time, Libra president David Goodman wouldn't discuss any kid vid issues and praised PolyGram's performance.

"With any license there are time limits, but at this point we're not ready to discuss what's happening with kids," Goodman said. "Right now, we're happy with PolyGram." With sales for the first five titles topping 4 million units, they should be ecstatic.

PolyGram has just released five more titles in the "Green Ranger" series. Those could be its last.

Sources familiar with the pending A*Vision deal say the company is paying an "enormous" advance against a "tiny" distribution fee. In most cases, distribution fees range from 15%-20%, but A*Vision is settling for somewhere around 5%.

Those who passed on the project say the financial risk was too high and A*Vision's pockets are too deep.

"WE'RE BACK" AND BACK Again: Retailers knew that Walt Disney Home Video's "The Fox And The Hound" would be a big hit. Now it turns out that MCA/Universal Home Video's "We're Back" is running a close second.

"'We're Back' has performed two to three times above what we've expected," says Target's Bob Pollack, divisional merchandise manager of music, movies, and books. "'Fox And The Hound' is still No. 1, but 'We're Back' is getting close."

In stores for only a month, Musicland's Suncoast Motion Picture Co. has already reordered the title several times, says VP/head buyer Peter Busch.

"This is the only significant direct-to-sell-through title that has sold more in its third week of release than its first week," Busch says. "That's pretty amazing."

Initially the title shipped approximately 2 million units. Distributor sources say another 400,000-500,000 units have shipped since the street date. Retailers point to heavy television advertising as a key factor.

MCA/Universal targeted the top 50 markets with ads for the first three weeks of release, says Andrew Kairey, senior VP of sales and marketing. The fact that Steven Spiel-

berg (whose name is on the box, alongside his Amblin Entertainment) picked up an armload of Oscars last month didn't hurt. "His name is more heightened and adds more credibility than ever before," says Kairey.

Anticipating some added store traffic with the April 26 release of FoxVideo's "Mrs. Doubtfire," MCA/Universal will "surround 'Doubtfire' with 'We're Back' television ads," Kairey says. "We have a great opportunity to keep the momentum up."

WHAT A Difference A Day Makes:

SHELF TALK

by Eileen Fitzpatrick



Warner Home Video sales reps were telling their accounts about a \$3 rebate for "Ace Ventura, Pet Detective," only to have the whole program

changed overnight.

Originally, wholesalers and chains heard that Warner would guarantee consumers \$3 direct for the June 14 sell-through title, priced at \$24.96, with no additional purchases.

However, those plans were scrapped in favor of a \$5 rebate with purchases of "Ace" plus another Warner feature. If the studio doesn't change its mind again, the titles included in the "Ace" rebate plan are "Robin Hood: Prince Of Thieves," "The Bodyguard," "The Fugitive," "Batman: Mask Of The Phantasm," and "Dennis The Menace."

FOREIGN AFFAIRS: Sight & Sound Distributors will launch a new consumer publication aimed at foreign film buffs.

The debut issue of the monthly, called Works Of Art, will be included in May sales kits mailed to Sight & Sound's 4,000-plus Marquee dealers. Consumers may receive the publication direct by filling out a subscription form in the magazine. Dealers also can receive bulk copies through a similar subscription form.

"Foreign films is an area that's often neglected, but they have a huge following," says PR coordinator Lynn Petersen.

Dealers who sign up for "Works Of Art" also will be part of a marketing campaign that will target P-O-P materials directly to them.

"A lot of times, a dealer will get a poster for a foreign title and throw it away," says Petersen. "But dealers who get this magazine will be the ones most likely to use this type of P-O-P, and we'll be able to target them."

In other Sight & Sound news, Hallmark Card marketing executive Renee Joshu has joined the company as VP of sales. She fills the spot vacated by John Jump, who jumped to senior VP a few months back.

NAT GEO SPINS SALES: After struggling in the documentary section, National Geographic Video has

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Top Video Sales

COMPILED FROM A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF RETAIL STORE SALES REPORTS.

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS. ON CHART	TITLE	Copyright Owner, Manufacturer, Catalog Number	Principal Performers	Year of Release	Rating	Suggested List Price
1	1	5	THE FOX AND THE HOUND	Walt Disney Home Video 2141	Animated	1981	G	24.99
2	2	4	THE FUGITIVE	Warner Bros. Inc. Warner Home Video 21000	Harrison Ford Tommy Lee Jones	1993	PG-13	24.96
3	5	3	WE'RE BACK!: A DINOSAUR STORY	Amblin Entertainment MCA/Universal Home Video 81289	Animated	1993	G	24.98
4	3	7	THE SECRET GARDEN	Warner Bros. Inc. Warner Home Video 19000	Kate Maberly Andrew Knott	1993	G	24.96
5	4	28	ALADDIN	Walt Disney Home Video 1662	Animated	1992	G	24.99
6	6	6	PLAYBOY: COLLEGE GIRLS	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0750	Various Artists	1994	NR	19.95
7	8	9	PENTHOUSE: 25TH ANNIVERSARY SWIMSUIT VIDEO	Penthouse Video A*Vision Entertainment 50549	Various Artists	1994	NR	19.95
8	11	4	YANNI: LIVE AT THE ACROPOLIS	Private Music BMG Home Video 82163	Yanni	1994	NR	19.98
9	10	9	UNFORGIVEN	Warner Bros. Inc. Warner Home Video 12531	Clint Eastwood Gene Hackman	1992	R	19.98
10	7	22	PLAYBOY CELEBRITY CENTERFOLD: DIAN PARKINSON	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0739	Dian Parkinson	1993	NR	19.95
11	9	6	PLAYBOY VIDEO CENTERFOLD 40TH ANNIVERSARY	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0748	Anna Marie Goddard	1994	NR	19.95
12	13	20	FREE WILLY	Warner Bros. Inc. Warner Home Video 18000	Jason James Richter	1993	PG	24.96
13	16	12	MIGHTY MORPHIN: VOL. 1-DAY OF THE DUMPSTER ◊	Saban Entertainment PolyGram Video 4400881193	Various Artists	1993	NR	9.95
14	14	6	THE MAGIC VOYAGE	Hemdale Home Video 7215	Animated	1993	G	19.95
15	12	19	THE BODYGUARD	Warner Bros. Inc. Warner Home Video 12591	Kevin Costner Whitney Houston	1992	R	19.98
16	20	6	PLAYBOY: NIGHT DREAMS	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0749	Various Artists	1994	NR	19.95
17	15	76	BEAUTY AND THE BEAST	Walt Disney Home Video 1325	Animated	1991	G	24.99
18	NEW ▶		MIGHTY MORPHIN GREEN RANGER: PART 1	Saban Entertainment PolyGram Video 8006311353	Various Artists	1994	NR	12.95
19	17	21	PLAYBOY 1994 VIDEO PLAYMATE CALENDAR	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0744	Various Artists	1993	NR	19.95
20	18	200	PINOCCHIO ◆	Walt Disney Home Video 239	Animated	1940	G	24.99
21	28	6	SCENT OF A WOMAN ◆	Universal City Studios MCA/Universal Home Video 81283	Al Pacino Chris O'Donnell	1992	R	19.98
22	19	10	BRAM STOKER'S DRACULA	Columbia TriStar Home Video 51413-5	Gary Oldman Anthony Hopkins	1992	R	19.95
23	34	23	CHARLOTTE'S WEB	Hanna-Barbera Prod. Inc. Paramount Home Video 8099	Animated	1973	G	14.95
24	21	43	GHOST	Paramount Pictures Paramount Home Video 32004	Patrick Swayze Demi Moore	1990	PG-13	14.95
25	NEW ▶		THERE GOES A BULLDOZER!	Kidvision A*Vision Entertainment 50701	Animated	1994	NR	12.95
26	27	10	MIGHTY MORPHIN: VOL. 3-HIGH FIVE ◊	Saban Entertainment PolyGram Video 4400881233	Various Artists	1993	NR	9.95
27	23	12	MIGHTY MORPHIN: VOL. 2-FOOD FIGHT ◊	Saban Entertainment PolyGram Video 4400881213	Various Artists	1993	NR	9.95
28	NEW ▶		THE REN & STIMPY SHOW: IN DISGUISE	Nickelodeon Sony Wonder 49216	Animated	1994	NR	14.98
29	NEW ▶		IT'S THE EASTER BEAGLE, CHARLIE BROWN	Paramount Home Video 83741	Animated	1974	NR	12.95
30	25	9	MIGHTY MORPHIN: VOL. 4-NO CLOWNING AROUND ◊	Saban Entertainment PolyGram Video 4400881133	Various Artists	1993	NR	9.95
31	29	34	HOMEWARD BOUND: THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY	Walt Disney Home Video 1801	Michael J. Fox Don Ameche	1993	G	22.99
32	26	7	SPEED RACER: THE MOVIE	Family Home Entertainment 27505	Animated	1993	NR	19.98
33	30	13	MIGHTY MORPHIN: VOL. 5-HAPPY BIRTHDAY, ZACK ◊	Saban Entertainment PolyGram Video 4400881113	Various Artists	1993	NR	9.95
34	24	9	THE ADDAMS FAMILY	Paramount Pictures Paramount Home Video 32689	Anjelica Huston Raul Julia	1991	PG-13	14.95
35	32	5	HOWARDS END	Merchant Ivory Productions Columbia TriStar Home Video 26733	Emma Thompson Anthony Hopkins	1992	PG	19.95
36	RE-ENTRY		LET'S PRETEND WITH BARNEY	The Lyons Group 2000	Various Artists	1994	NR	14.95
37	36	2	PAUL IS LIVE	PolyGram Video 8006305273	Paul McCartney	1994	NR	19.95
38	RE-ENTRY		PLAYBOY PLAYMATE OF THE YEAR 1993	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0734	Anna Nicole Smith	1993	NR	19.95
39	31	13	BAD GOLF MADE EASIER	ABC Video 45003	Leslie Nielsen	1993	NR	19.98
40	RE-ENTRY		PENTHOUSE: THE ALL-PET WORKOUT	Penthouse Video A*Vision Entertainment 50370-3	Various Artists	1993	NR	19.98

◆ RIAA gold cert. for sales of 50,000 units or \$1 million in sales at suggested retail. ▲ RIAA platinum cert. for sales of 100,000 units or \$2 million in sales at suggested retail. ◆ ITA gold certification for a minimum of 125,000 units or a dollar volume of \$9 million at retail for theatrically released programs, or of at least 25,000 units and \$1 million at suggested retail for nontheatrical titles. ◊ ITA platinum certification for a minimum sale of 250,000 units or a dollar volume of \$18 million at retail for theatrically released programs, and of at least 50,000 units and \$2 million at suggested retail for nontheatrical titles. © 1994, Billboard/BPI Communications.