

Fox Could Catch Saban's Mighty Morphin Power Rangers

DEAD END DEALS: After being abandoned by WEA earlier this year, Saban Entertainment is looking for a new distribution partner again.

The children's label, best known for its Mighty Morphin Power Rangers series, is shopping the line. According to a source at Saban, the label will soon be inking a new deal.

Studio observers say that Saban has been making the rounds of several independents, including Vidmark Entertainment, but 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment is the most likely candidate to pick up the line.

That move makes the most sense,

since the Fox Children's Network is about to merge with Saban.

Wherever it lands, the new home will be Saban's third in as many

years. In 1993, PolyGram Video debuted the Power Rangers, only to lose it a year later to WarnerVision in a multimillion-dollar deal.

When WarnerVision's operations were shifted to Warner Home Video earlier this year (Billboard, March 16), Saban was left out in the cold. New product shipments stopped after WEA, which distributed WarnerVision product, decided to exit home video in August. In addition, Saban has to cope with the fact that the Power Rangers don't have the retail clout they once had.

So, in the last year, Saban has tried to revitalize the franchise with exclusive-to-video footage, promotional partners, and line extensions targeted to girls. It has also acquired other series, including Sweet Valley High, in order to broaden its market.

But with increased competition from other kids' product and theatrical sell-through titles, it's unlikely that any "Power Ranger" title will sell a million units again. And this time around, Saban is unlikely to get the multimillion-dollar terms it had from WarnerVision.

GEM STONES: Columbia TriStar Home Video has gone into the vaults and dusted off four of the studio's most endearing TV series for fall release.

In stores since Sept. 24, tapes with episodes of "I Dream Of Jeannie," "The Flying Nun," "Bewitched," and "The Burns And Allen Show" are priced at \$9.95. Three-tape gift sets are \$24.95, under the TV Screen Gems label.

The initial launch consists of 12 tapes. Each contains two episodes; the 47-minute pilot of "The Flying Nun" is also available for \$9.95.

Marketing VP Nancy Harris says intensified sell-through efforts prompted the creation of the line. "A few years back, the company focused on rental product," she says,

"but now we're looking at releasing more sell-through, and we're looking at everything for that market."

Columbia relied on consumer research to determine the shows it would release, except for "The Burns And Allen Show," chosen to honor the late comedian. Top choices "Jeannie" and "Bewitched" have been reborn on Nickelodeon. "The Flying Nun," which consumers also ranked high, hasn't been on TV for 10 years.

The first episode of "The Flying Nun," starring Sally Field, aired only once in its entirety, when it premiered in 1967. "All the other versions that have aired have been edited down, so this is an exclusive for video," says Harris.

While a release schedule for additional series hasn't been set, "we're talking with retail about our options," she says. "They'll determine whether we'll expand on the series currently out or if we go back and pick others."

Candidates in the Columbia library include "Gidget," "Route 66," "The Donna Reed Show," "Mary Hartman, Mary Hartman," "Soap,"

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SHELF TALK

by Eileen Fitzpatrick



Top Video Sales™

COMPILED FROM A NATIONAL SAMPLE OF RETAIL STORE SALES REPORTS.

THIS WEEK	LAST WEEK	WKS. ON CHART	TITLE	Label Distributing Label, Catalog Number	Principal Performers	Year of Release	Rating	Suggested List Price
1	1	6	ALADDIN AND THE KING OF THIEVES	Walt Disney Home Video Buena Vista Home Video 4609	Animated	1996	NR	24.99
2	2	4	BRAVEHEART	Paramount Home Video 33118	Mel Gibson Sophie Marceau	1995	R	24.95
3	RE-ENTRY		THE WIZARD OF OZ ♦	MGM/UA Home Video Warner Home Video 205898	Judy Garland Ray Bolger	1939	G	19.98
4	4	9	COPS: TOO HOT FOR TV! ◇	MVP Home Entertainment 1001	Various Artists	1996	NR	19.98
5	6	291	THE SOUND OF MUSIC ♦	FoxVideo 4100444	Julie Andrews Christopher Plummer	1965	G	19.98
6	3	2	THE BEATLES ANTHOLOGY	Capitol Video Turner Home Entertainment 5523	The Beatles	1996	NR	159.95
7	11	3	COPS: CAUGHT IN THE ACT	MVP Home Entertainment 1004	Various Artists	1996	NR	19.98
8	25	2	MUPPET TREASURE ISLAND	Jim Henson Video Buena Vista Home Video 7076	The Muppets Tim Curry	1996	G	22.99
9	5	20	NATURAL BORN KILLERS: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT	Vidmark Entertainment 6398	Woody Harrelson Juliette Lewis	1994	R	29.99
10	7	16	PLAYBOY: THE BEST OF JENNY MCCARTHY	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0810	Jenny McCarthy	1996	NR	19.95
11	8	4	PLAYBOY: WET & WILD-BOTTOMS UP	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0794	Various Artists	1996	NR	19.98
12	15	14	HIGHLANDER: THE DIRECTOR'S CUT	Republic Pictures Home Video 5895	Christopher Lambert Sean Connery	1986	R	19.98
13	10	4	ALL DOGS GO TO HEAVEN 2	MGM/UA Home Video Warner Home Video M505541	Animated	1996	G	22.98
14	13	13	GHOST IN THE SHELL	Manga Entertainment PolyGram Video 8006355293	Animated	1996	NR	19.95
15	NEW ►		SEVEN (DIRECTOR'S LETTERBOX EDITION)	New Line Home Video Turner Home Entertainment N4485V	Brad Pitt Morgan Freeman	1995	R	19.98
16	9	7	HOMEWARD BOUND II: LOST IN SAN FRANCISCO	Walt Disney Home Video Buena Vista Home Video 7893	Michael J. Fox Sally Field	1996	G	22.99
17	12	16	CLUELESS	Paramount Home Video 33215	Alicia Silverstone	1995	PG-13	14.95
18	NEW ►		THE USUAL SUSPECTS	PolyGram Video 8006302273	Stephen Baldwin Kevin Spacey	1995	R	19.95
19	17	7	THE ABYSS	FoxVideo 1561	Ed Harris Mary Mastrantonio	1989	PG-13	19.98
20	19	19	JUMANJI	Columbia TriStar Home Video 11743	Robin Williams	1995	PG	15.95
21	14	16	HEAVY METAL	Columbia TriStar Home Video 74653	Animated	1981	R	19.95
22	16	22	THE ARISTOCATS	Walt Disney Home Video Buena Vista Home Video 0252	Animated	1970	G	26.99
23	22	27	BABE ◇	MCA/Universal Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. 82453	James Cromwell	1995	G	22.98
24	21	9	PLAYBOY'S HARD BODIES	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0793	Various Artists	1996	NR	19.98
25	18	6	A TRIBUTE TO STEVIE RAY VAUGHAN	Epic Music Video Sony Music Video 50144	Various Artists	1996	NR	19.95
26	NEW ►		PENTHOUSE: WILD WEEKEND WITH THE PETS	Penthouse Video WarnerVision Entertainment 57013-3	Various Artists	1996	NR	19.95
27	39	2	GOOSEBUMPS: A NIGHT IN TERROR TOWER	FoxVideo 4463	Various Artists	1996	NR	14.98
28	RE-ENTRY		FORREST GUMP	Paramount Home Video 32583	Tom Hanks	1994	PG-13	14.95
29	23	29	PULP FICTION	Miramax Home Entertainment Buena Vista Home Video 1438	John Travolta Samuel L. Jackson	1994	R	19.99
30	29	7	CLERKS	Miramax Home Entertainment Buena Vista Home Video 3678	Brian O'Halloran Jeff Anderson	1994	R	19.99
31	34	2	GOOSEBUMPS: STAY OUT OF THE BASEMENT	FoxVideo 4464	Various Artists	1996	NR	14.98
32	NEW ►		PENTHOUSE: ALL ACCESS	Penthouse Video WarnerVision Entertainment 57004-3	Various Artists	1996	NR	19.95
33	27	6	UNDER SEIGE 2: DARK VICTORY	Warner Home Video 13665	Steven Seagal	1995	R	19.98
34	20	14	PLAYBOY'S RISING STARS AND SEXY STARLETS	Playboy Home Video Uni Dist. Corp. PBV0787	Various Artists	1996	NR	19.95
35	30	8	HOW THE WEST WAS FUN	Warner Home Video 13925	Mary-Kate & Ashley Olsen	1995	NR	14.95
36	24	18	AEON FLUX	MTV Music Television Sony Music Video 49810	Animated	1996	NR	14.98
37	28	18	MORTAL KOMBAT-THE MOVIE	New Line Home Video Turner Home Entertainment N4310	Christopher Lambert Talisa Soto	1995	PG-13	19.98
38	31	6	DANGEROUS MINDS	Hollywood Pictures Home Video Buena Vista Home Video 5781	Michelle Pfeiffer	1995	R	19.99
39	RE-ENTRY		THE HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER	Paramount Home Video 15356	Sean Connery Alec Baldwin	1990	PG	14.95
40	RE-ENTRY		TOP GUN	Paramount Home Video 15396	Tom Cruise Kelly McGillis	1986	PG	14.95

● 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. © 1996, Billboard/BPI Communications.

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