A NEW ORIGINAL SERIES

WORLD ON FIRE

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“KESHET’S HIT RETAINS POSITION AS NUMBER ONE TALENT SHOW”

-FORMATBIZZ-

“RISING STAR PROVES THAT IT CAN CHOOSE A REAL WINNER”

-WALLA-
UK Screenings 2019

London calling

This year marks the first time TBI has put our market-leading UK Screenings issue in print – a move that ought to tell you plenty about the growing prominence of the event, and what it means for distributors in our backyard.

ITV Studios Global Entertainment’s Ruth Berry nails it when she astutely points out that you can no longer “save your ‘ta-da’ moment” in today’s TV climate: the conveyor belt of content stops for no one, and no market. Just look at the staggering £1.2bn in high-end TV production spend out of the UK in 2018.

As such, what began as BBC Studios’ dazzling charm offensive for international buyers has quickly become a must-do event for distributors big and small, with businesses now methodically speaking to one another to plan their own content showcases accordingly.

This year, international buyers will have their pick of premium offerings, with top titles including BBC Studios’ long-awaited Good Omens, Warner Bros. International Television Production’s World’s Best, Cineflix Rights’ An Ordinary Woman and Passion Distribution’s Mums Make Porn just a few of the punchy titles sure to impress buyers.

Elsewhere in the issue, distributors such as DRG’s Richard Halliwell raise the alarm about the importance of effective marketing to cut through in a 496-scripted show universe, with Endemol Shine International’s Cathy Payne stressing how distributors need to care for content across a series run – not just prior to launch.

For now, a big welcome to all the buyers congregating in Liverpool and London this month, and best of luck to our friends in distribution. Happy Screenings from TBI.

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Lilla Hurst, Drive
Boom time for high-end TV

As we begin 2019, it’s important to take stock of the numbers. The last reported TV export figures for the UK are from Pact, which shows that estimated total revenues for 2016/17 added up to £902m.

The US, Australia, France, Germany and the Nordics were the UK’s largest export markets (as shown on the right), followed by Western Europe, Canada, China, Italy and Central Europe.

Genres that made the most sales included entertainment (£44m), factual (£43m), kids (£38m) and drama (£16m).

The British Film Institute (BFI) also recently launched its 2018 interim figures on the impact of screen sector tax relief implemented by the UK government in 2013 across high-end TV, animation, films, kids’ TV and gaming.

The findings show that the combined spend on high-end TV and film production in the UK reached £3.1bn, the second-highest year on record following 2017’s record performance of £3.28bn.

High-end TV, which is defined as a drama or documentary with a per hour budget of £1m, pulled £794.5m in inward investment, down by 2% on 2017’s consolidated spend of £810.7m. The interim spend at this point last year was, however, £684m. An overall £1.2bn was spent on the production of qualifying high-end programming in 2018.

For high-end TV, growth in inward investment was largely due to global content providers such as Netflix and Amazon.
**UK TV EXPORTS**

- **£902m** Total export revenues
- **£51m** Nordics
- **£52m** Germany
- **£60m** France
- **£1.2bn** £1.2bn, +4% The amount spent on the production of high-end TV programmes in the UK
- **£794.5m** £794.5m, -2% The amount of inward investment and co-production that came in from international markets
- **£73m** Australia

**UK’s most exported shows**

- The Crown
- Outlander
- Planet Earth II
- Sherlock
- Midsomer Murders
- The Crown
- Outlander
- Planet Earth II
- Sherlock
- Midsomer Murders

**China**

Most producers told Pact they are confident that their revenue would grow in 2017/18, with a particular focus on increased sales in China. We saw this in action in 2018, with Fremantle, Endemol Shine and CBS all striking deals with the territory.

**Source:** Pact TV Exports Report 2016/17, BFI Screen Business report 2018

For the latest in TV programming news visit TBIVISION.COM
BBC Studios’ new chapter

President of global markets Paul Dempsey tells TBI how the annual Showcase event has evolved, and how the merged producer-distributor is navigating the new content landscape

This year’s Showcase is, in many ways, a landmark year for the UK’s public service broadcaster, which will, for the first time, welcome more than 700 buyers to Liverpool under the newly merged BBC Studios banner.

The merger, which completed in April 2018, saw commercial distribution arm BBC Worldwide unite with production banner BBC Studios, a move that is in line with an industry norm that has borne super-indies such as Endemol Shine Group, Fremantle, All3Media International, Banijay Group and ITV Studios.

Paul Dempsey, president of global markets for BBC Studios, tells TBI that the merged entity is simply another evolution for the business as well as Showcase, which sees buyers from all corners of the world fly in for four days of screenings, panels and parties.

“In the past, Showcase was a distribution show where people looked at screeners and finished tape and did licensing deals based on finished product. But now, it increasingly
On-demand future

This year’s Showcase – the 43rd annual event – also comes at a time when conversations around rights ownership reaches new levels, with dialogues around branding and windowing being front of mind for producers, broadcasters and distributors, including BBC Studios.

Dempsey has spoken out previously about the extensive discussions needed to retain attribution for distributors and producers, and says the business has developed “an expertise and sophistication in understanding the value of our IP across different windows”.

“We are clear in the way we look at different scenarios and how we exploit rights, and if you’re doing something globally versus regionally,” he says. But ultimately, “there is no blueprint for it.”

As for how the BBC’s recent public consultation on the reinvention of the iPlayer on-demand service – a proposal that could see all programmes on the platform made available for at least 12 months, with complete series box-sets for certain titles available for longer, alongside archive – Dempsey says talks are underway.

“There’s some discussion at the moment about what the extension might be, but any decision we make, we will do as a group and it will be in the interest of the license fee payer,” he says.

“It’s a significant area, especially for the UK and the UK’s public-service broadcasters to ensure that value for our audience is maintained.”

Meanwhile, just over a month after Showcase wraps and the industry gets ready to descend on Cannes for MIPTV, a cliff edge awaits for the UK in the form of Brexit.

While channels businesses such as Discovery have already begun rolling out relocation strategies – with applications underway for new broadcast licenses in the Netherlands for Discovery’s European pay-TV channel portfolio – Dempsey says BBC Studios has “genuinely spent time looking at this”, and is not concerned.

“We haven’t identified any obstacles related to our content sales or production businesses. Nothing that could get in the way of us doing business with customers in the EU,” he says, adding that he doesn’t foresee anything that could seriously impact the distribution business.

“However, we will keep the channels business and that situation under close review and be alert as to what is happening. But from what we know, we don’t see any obstacles.”

SVOD involvement

At the 2018 showcase, BBC Studios hosted its largest delegation of digital clients, including the likes of Google, Apple, Netflix, Microsoft, Facebook-Oculus and Amazon, in addition to regional SVODs and telcos such as Showmax, Stan, Deutsche Telecom, iflix and Hulu.

This year, Dempsey says that the Asian BATs – an acronym of stock listings for Baidu, Alibaba Group and Tencent – are “equally significant” to the business as the FAANG players.

Indeed, BBC Studios’ relationship with China has only gone from strength to strength in recent years.

At last year’s Showcase, the business struck a deal with Chinese mobile video platform Migu Video for more than 2,200 hours of BBC content across factual, lifestyle and pre-school.

More recently, BBC Studios launched fan community BBC Earth Tribe with Chinese digital giant Tencent – a deal that will see more than 650 hours of BBC Studios’ natural history and documentary programmes such as Dynasties and Rituals placed on the platform, alongside Q&As with BBC Studios’ Natural History Unit producers.

“Attendance from those communities is up this year,” says Dempsey. “More of the people registered are reps at a senior level, and more new potential customers are coming this year as opposed to last year. It’s a good opportunity for them to efficiently speak to a wide range of our producers and account managers.”

TBI’s ones to watch

One Planet: Seven Worlds
David Attenborough will present the BBC
One landmark natural history effort, from BBC Studios Natural History Unit, BBC America, Tencent, ZDF and France Télévisions

Sanditon
Red Planet Pictures’ adaptation of the Jane Austen novel for ITV follows a plucky young woman and her barbed relationship

Dementia Choir
Curve Media embarks on a scientific experiment to determine whether music therapy can change the lives of dementia patients.
Going upstream for premium

The BBC Studios merger has allowed scripted execs to get closer to IP much earlier in the game – a strategy that is paying dividends across drama and comedy.

As a result of the BBC Studios merger, conversations for scripted programming are now further “upstream”, with the distributor coming in much earlier in the development chain around sourcing new IP and helping production partners.

Newly appointed scripted portfolio director Liam Keelan explains that his job now revolves around “getting closer to the production side” in relationships with third-party drama, comedy and children’s producers as well as BBC Studios Productions.

“We are opening doors where we can in the UK, US and abroad. It’s a slightly different expanded portfolio, but it is predominantly about getting to IP.”

Working with the best of British talent is what separates the business, says Keelan, noting that 99% of output “has a British element to it. “We are working with the best writers in the community and giving a voice to new and diverse writers.”

Top scripted priorities include 10-part crime procedural The Mallorca Files (Cosmopolitan Pictures/Clerkenwell Films), a BBC Daytime commission that also involves BBC Studios-backed SVOD Britbox out of the US, France Televisions and Germany’s ZDF.

“There are a lot of partners, but the authorial voice is [The Good Karma Hospital writer] Dan Sefton,” says Keelan.

Other stand-outs include Kirstie Swain’s Channel 4 relationship drama Pure; Andrew Davies’ adaptation of Jane Austen’s Sanditon, from Red Planet Pictures and Masterpiece Theatre; Stephen Poliakoff’s BBC Two Cold War drama Summer Of Rockets; and BBC Studios’ Good Omens, a co-production between BBC One and Amazon.

Keelan highlights that FAANG players such as Netflix and Amazon are “keen as ever” on co-productions with the public broadcaster, dispelling concerns from producers such as Jane Featherstone about the “co-pro tap” being turned off.

“It has not been my experience thus far,” he says. “I was out in LA and met with Amazon and Netflix and they’re still keen to get involved in BBC Studios output. They recognise the quality and range of talent that we have on and off screen.”

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COMING 2019

THE BAY

COMING 2019

STUDIOS
GLOBAL ENTERTAINMENT
Warm and authentic fare continues to dominate the formats market, with audiences craving feel-good programming that is heavy on positivity and light on conflict. BBC Studios looks to deliver with a physical gameshow that lends itself to family viewing and two fact ent formats.

Mighty Productions’ Lynne Sutcliffe and Hugh Rycroft – creators of Weakest Link and Tipping Point – are back with WonderBall, a 30-episode playalong quiz show from BBC Scotland that Sumi Connock, creative director of formats, describes as a “reverse lotto”.

“Usually, you want your balls to come out and be picked, but the last thing you want here is for your ball to be selected,” she explains. Three teams of two players are each given five numbered balls, which are drawn at random. Players are then asked questions and try to eliminate their opponents’ balls and keep theirs in the game. The last remaining ball is the WonderBall, and if the question is answered correctly, the jackpot is theirs for the taking.

“At Showcase, buyers will be given a WonderBall in their goodie bags, and have the chance to try out the format themselves and win prizes.”

Elsewhere, Irish broadcaster RTE’s 5 x 60-minute wedding format My Big Day: Home And Away offers close-ended episodes that find couples figuring out whether to wed at home or opt for a destination wedding. Couples are introduced to two top wedding planners who go head-to-head to convince the couple that they have the best vision. While one will push for a venue near home, the other will plan an elaborate event in an exotic overseas location.

Connock calls the primetime format “completely universal” and capable of “travelling really well”, adding that it will be shopped as both a format and finished tape.

Next up is Curve Media’s social experiment Dementia Choir, which is also being offered in the fact ent catalogue as finished tape.

“The series finds actress Vicky McClure – who has a personal connection to the disease – recruiting people with dementia to perform in their own choir, leading up to their first public performance. While the programme was originally a two-parter for BBC One, Connock says it could be extended into a longer run.

“It’s not a format that is dependent on talent – it could work without because it’s really about the choir and their stories,” she says.

Elsewhere, Connock says it is “just the beginning” for BBC Studios’ scripted formats, which had recent success with international adaptations of Doctor Foster and Luther.

“We’ve got world-class dramas with really strong, impeccably defined characters, and what we’ve found is that big characters give you really big successes,” says Connock.

A scripted formats session at Showcase will discuss key trends, as well as how clients can create local versions and what they can expect from BBC Studios around expertise and consultancy.

The business will also launch new comedy format Stath Lets Flats, which aired on Channel 4 last year and has been renewed for a second series.

“This show really works for us because it’s that classic comedy set-up, centered around a family business, and Stath is that sitcom hero with no self-awareness and big dreams,” says Connock. TBI
CORONER

EVERY BODY HAS A STORY

A NEW 8 x 60 MIN SCRIPTED SERIES FROM THE CREATOR OF ROOKIE BLUE
Newly appointed unscripted portfolio director Mark Reynolds says the merged BBC Studios is “more focused on premium than ever” with a clear set of priorities across all genres, including natural history, science and history.

In recent years, some of the BBC’s most premium, global-facing content has emerged from natural history, with the likes of Planet Earth II and Blue Planet II smashing ratings domestically and selling well overseas. This year, Studios hopes to continue that story with Dynasties, which is “performing consistently with the success of Blue Planet II”, according to Reynolds.

Patricia Fearnley, head of natural history, also highlights One Planet: Seven Worlds as a landmark series that demonstrates the vast potential of cutting-edge drone technology in the genre.

“The use of drones and the new technology being applied to them has transformed the storytelling in this series,” she explains.

“It has helped the team to ensure they can deliver on new stories, species and locations because these drones can fly longer than ever before, go further than ever before, and are quieter and more stable than drones ever used to be, which has opened up a world of opportunity.”

Other natural history offerings include Earth from Space, which uses the latest technology to provide a fresh look at the planet; First Year on Earth, which combines animal photography with stories of survival; and animal drama Serengeti, which tracks a year on the plains for a group of animals.

Meanwhile, Studios is growing its science portfolio with The Planets, which Reynolds describes as having the “epic visual scale” of a Hollywood movie combined with “dramatic narratives” – all of which provide a new take on the solar system.

The series is a co-production with US public broadcaster PBS, and co-produced with China’s Tencent and its Penguin Pictures division.

“We continue to work with a number of co-producers in both the US, Western Europe and Asia – some are very long-standing, while others are newer to this arena,” says Reynolds, noting that China is a key market for high-end specialist factual. Asia also happens to be a growth market for the distributor’s scripted formats business.

“A number of platforms such as Tencent, Migu and Youku are keen to work with us on our content,” says Reynolds.

Elsewhere, 8 Days marks the 50th anniversary of the moon landing with a unique re-telling of the journey, combining newly released sound archive with CGI and drama, while in the history space, Icons examines the impact significant figures have had across the 20th century and the transformative cultural and societal shifts of the period.

One icon, in particular, comes into the spotlight with David Bowie: Finding Fame, which uses original sound recordings and lost archive.

Meanwhile, BBC Studios’ documentaries slate caters to a range of content, providing a “new take or interesting talent that can give the viewer new insight into an area they may think they know or wouldn’t necessarily come to,” says Reynolds.

“Our documentaries are defined by the very best access to people, places and institutions or they are authored by trusted presenters, making sure we offer an unbiased view and tell difficult stories that the world’s audience needs to know,” he adds, highlighting two-parter Our Dementia Choir with actress Vicky McClure, showing the devastating effect the disease has on individuals and their loved ones.

Fact ent offerings aim to be “aspirational and smart with purpose” and this year includes The Misadventures of Romesh Ranganathan, along with returners such as The Great British Bake Off, Sewing Bee and Old House, New Home. TBI
21-23 AUGUST 2019

“EDINBURGH IS THE BEST PLACE TO TAKE THE PULSE OF THE INDUSTRY AND TO CONFIRM ONCE AGAIN THAT CONTENT IS KING”

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Event schedule

UK-based distributors are gearing up to show off their new slates to international buyers this February. Here, TBI gives you the low-down on what’s happening and where.

**BBC Showcase**

**Feb 17-20**

ACC Liverpool

Sunday 17 February: 2-6 PM
Monday 18 February: 8 AM - 6 PM
Tuesday 19 February: 8 AM - 6 PM
Wednesday 20 February: 8 AM - 12 PM

**London Screenings**

**Feb 15**

- **ITV Studios Formats Festival**
  - AM The Ham Yard Hotel, Soho

- **Warner Bros. Formats Festival**
  - PM The Ham Yard Hotel, Soho

**Feb 20**

- **ITV Studios Drama Festival**
  - PM Roundhouse, Camden

- **Passion Distribution Showcase**
  - 4-6 PM The Ivy, Covent Garden

- **Cineflix Rights**
  - 6-9 PM Archer Street Cocktail Bar, Soho

- **TCB Media Rights**
  - 7-10 PM Century Club, Soho

**Feb 21**

- **Endemol Shine - Deep Water**
  - 10 AM Charlotte Street Hotel, Fitzrovia

- **TVF International Showcase**
  - 4-6 PM The Zari Gallery, Fitzrovia

- **Sony Pictures Television Unscripted Formats Showcase**
  - 5-7 PM Sony Pictures Europe House, Soho

- **MGM Studios Presents**
  - AM/PM Curzon, Bloomsbury

- **All3Media Drama Upfront**
  - AM/PM West End Cinema

**Feb 22**

- **Fremantle**
  - AM The Ham Yard Hotel, Soho

- **MGM Studios Presents**
  - AM/PM Curzon, Bloomsbury

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ITV Studios sets up ‘bigger, better’ showcase

ITV Studios Global Entertainment had a stellar debut drama event last year with an oversubscribed show that left an impression on buyers. This year, it plans to go ‘bigger and better’ with 400 guests set to arrive at the iconic Roundhouse in Camden, making it one of the largest screening events held this February.

“...the main learning from last year was to get more space,” says Ruth Berry, ITVS GE’s managing director. “And the feedback we got is that the buyers were really excited about just being immersed in the content via panels with the writers, creators and producers.”

These are elements the distributor is keen to elevate for its 20 February event. The larger space has arrived in the form of the Roundhouse, where ITVS GE hopes to host another “immersive” event that reflects the vision of its creators. From lighting to music, every detail will attempt to mirror the creator’s work presented to the buyers that day, according to Berry.

ITVS GE’s headline act will be World War II drama *World on Fire*. The multifaceted drama starring Helen Hunt will tell the story of the war through the eyes of ordinary people across Poland, Germany, the UK, France and the US.

“It’s one of the most epic and powerful dramas we’ve had in a while,” says Berry. “I’m excited to distribute a show that I think is so important for the world and for younger generations, helping shape the way they understand history and getting their point of view.”

ITV’s Mammoth Screen will produce the title for BBC One.

The ITV Formats Festival was one of the first events to take advantage of the international buyers heading to the UK in February. Now hosting its seventh annual event, the distributor’s Global Creative Network MD, Mike Beale, reveals what’s to come.

“...Topping a year of format success with *Love Island* will not be easy for ITV Studios, but the distributor plans to kick off 2019 by introducing buyers to key titles it believes will have a global impact.

Heading up the Formats Festival slate will be *Operation Live*, a ground-breaking new series that takes viewers inside the operating theatre to watch real-life procedures in real-time.

Beale says the show led Channel 5 in the UK to attract up to 25% audience share across several episodes and hopes this can be recreated worldwide. The format is to air in Australia as a two-night event series.

The title will be joined by visual game show *Catchpoint*, a family-friendly game show combining physical fun with a new question mechanic that launches on BBC One this spring. The premise of the game is simple: contestants must not drop the ball while trying to answer a string of questions.

Meanwhile, Welsh broadcaster S4C’s physical game show format *The Chamber* will also be screened.

“The new shows to screen tackle their genres in different ways from what’s available in the market place,” says Beale.

*The Chamber*, for example, will see contestants take on a trampoline course in an abandoned slate mine in North Wales. “The location, set up, and the fact that it’s filmed in an underground cave is all unique,” he explains.

With 200-plus buyers set to attend ITV’s latest Formats Festival, Beale tells TBI the event has been growing in attendance year-on-year, up 40 buyers from the 160 attendees last year.

“We started the screenings to reposition ourselves as a formats business when I first joined. ITV was then seen as a channel and not a distributor,” explains Beale.

“We’ve learnt a lot about what our buyers like to get out of it over that time.”

“It enables us to showcase our formats more fully and give context that the written word or promo alone cannot encapsulate. The fact that the shows are also presented to them by the original creators and producers gets to the heart of the concepts.”

On top of giving buyers an exclusive look at new launches for 2019, some of which will be marketed at MIPTV, ITV will also update them on the continued success of evergreen titles such as *I’m A Celebrity*, *Hell’s Kitchen* and *Come Dine with Me*.

For the most part, Beale says this year’s screenings will be business as usual, where the
Another Mammoth title, *Noughts & Crosses*, based on Malorie Blackman’s bestselling novels, is also on the slate. The drama will focus on a young romance set in a world where the black race is dominant.

“It’s a really exciting project. It’s international. We’ve gotten a lot of interest from international buyers on that and we’re excited to immerse them deeper into the series as they haven’t seen much of it yet,” says Berry. “Presenting what it is going to look like and how it’s going to feel will be a priority for us at the festival.”

The last showstopper will be the Rob Lowe-led (*The West Wing*) British police procedural *Wild Bill*. The title will place the US actor in Lincolnshire to solve British crimes in an unconventional manner.

“He’s a real fish out of water because people are just looking at him and thinking ‘what are you doing here?’” Berry adds.

The titles are a clear example of how much ITV Studios GE’s drama slate has grown over the years and it’s one reason why the UK screenings have become all the more important for the distributor.

“We work with a stable of phenomenal producers who produce content all year round. Our slate’s getting bigger and stronger, therefore we need points throughout the year to sell them,” Berry explains.

“Historically, people have focused on two key markets in the year. We’re finding it’s difficult to hold shows back solely for those events.”

The UK screenings are an event that the exec plans to come back to for some time as it allows direct communication with buyers early in the year.

“You can’t save your ‘ta-da!’ moment now,” she says. “We are constantly out there with new shows, and with such a large number of dramas coming through, they’re scheduled at different times throughout the year. So it’s really about finding the right time to talk to buyers and keeping a conversation going throughout the year.”
The distributor’s invite-only Drama Upfront will be its largest yet with 220 buyers set to attend. Stephen Driscoll, All3Media International’s EVP for EMEA, hopes to engage them in conversation about “co-production, pre-sale and scripted format opportunities”.

“The event is the perfect forum for us to present our upcoming drama slate and discuss our customers’ evolving needs,” says Driscoll. “The environment and approach ensure a good two-way dialogue with buyers of drama.”

Leading titles will include a list of projects from Two Brothers Pictures, including the second instalment of Fleabag, as well as The Missing offshoot Baptiste, which will see the popular detective Julien Baptiste return for his own show after a near-death experience.

Two Brothers’ eight-part drama The Widow and psychological thriller Cheat will also make an appearance on the slate.

The distributor will additionally showcase work-in-progress titles such as the Studio Lambert, Liberty Global and Amazon-produced The Feed, The Forge’s Dark Money and Australian acquisition Diary of an Uber Driver.

“Our strength this year is our range in terms of content,” says Driscoll. “Each show has a different appeal. We can offer warmth, humour and action and all manner of thrillers.”

The Feed is a psychological thriller from The Walking Dead scribe Channing Powell, based on the recently published novel by Nick Clark Windo. It is set to launch globally in 2019.

Produced for BBC One, Dark Money follows a working-class father who accepts a substantial pay-off from a renowned filmmaker to keep silent about the molestation of his youngest son.

Meanwhile, ABC Australia’s Diary of an Uber Driver is a heart-warming series drawn from true stories. Based on a popular blog and e-book by Ben Phillips, the title follows Ben as he learns from his passengers to piece together his place in the world.

All3’s first non-English project, from Swedish scribe Jesper Harrie, Blinded will also join the list, along with the latest instalment of Miss Fisher’s Murder Mysteries.

Special guests including writers, producers and talent will be brought in by the distributor to immerse buyers in the content, including The Forge executive producer George Ormond, Two Brothers Pictures’ Jack and Harry Williams, Studio Lambert’s Sue Hogg, as well as talent such as Tcheky Karo and Tom Hollander.

Writers Jack Thorne, Bash Doran, David Hare and Channing Powell will also make an appearance.

The distributor will add further variety with a virtual factual upfront, which will offer up interviews with non-scripted producers, early footage of titles and research that gives buyers the feel and tone of upcoming programming. TBI
Fremantle rolls out global event titles

Fremantle is taking buyers around the world with a slate of scripted and unscripted titles that touch on experiences across continents.

Jens Richter, Fremantle’s International CEO, says the business will bring a packed slate of programming to London to get ahead “in a market where more and more pre-sale activity is happening”.

At the event, Fremantle will have director Gurinder Chadha presenting *Beecham House*, a Delhi-based drama set in the 19th century. The title “opens a window to a point in history that we haven’t seen on screen before,” according to the exec.

*Baghdad Central* will also join the showcase, with Euston Films producer Kate Harwood and cast discussing their experience of filming the series in Morocco. The six-part drama, based on the novel by Elliot Colla, is set in Baghdad in 2003 just after Saddam Hussein has fallen.

Eleanor Catton will also talk the buyers through bringing her Booker Prize-winning novel *The Luminaries* to life and show a few clips from the series, which is currently in production in New Zealand.

In addition, Fremantle’s scripted slate will include Latin American drama *La Jauria*, with co-producers and Oscar winners Juan de Dios Larrain and Pablo Larrain on the stage to discuss the show.

A big differentiating factor at this year’s showcase will be Fremantle’s incorporation of non-scripted titles.

“We’ve changed the event this year to include a number of big factual highlights,” says Richter. “Both *Expedition with Steve Backshall* and *Enslaved* are event series. With the combined talent, locations, production values and storytelling, they are on par with our big drama launches.”

*For Expedition with Steve Backshall*, expert producer Wendy Darke will be in town along with Backshall to give buyers a glimpse of the project, which sees the team travel unexplored lands.

*Enslaved*, which is hosted by Samuel L. Jackson, retraces the traumatic sea voyage endured by millions of Africans over hundreds of years as they were transported from their homes to the New World and a life of slavery.

“The event has grown year-on-year,” says Richter. “It’s a fantastic opportunity to give buyers an exclusive insight into the live productions of some of our biggest upcoming event programming.”

Over 250 global buyers will attend the event, to see creatives, writers and actors on stage, and watch early video material for the productions.

“This is a great opportunity for the clients to get a glimpse into all of our new projects,” says Richter. *TBI*
Warner Bros. International Television Production (WBITVP) makes its debut at UK Screenings this year, with the studio’s global division presenting three punchy primetime formats premiering in the US across the next month.

The involvement of WBITVP – which is sharing a venue with ITV Studios – is a reflection of the “range and breadth” of the catalogue, as well as a “very strong flow of IP” this quarter, according to Andrew Zein, SVP creative for format development and sales.

“Overall, UK Screenings is a good thing. It means there is a critical mass of strong new content that will justify getting buyers to come here.”

WBITVP is offering three new primetime US shows from the major networks – each distinctly original and a potential fit for commercial or public-service broadcasters looking for the “holy grail” of primetime entertainment.

“There are more new first series coming out of the US in unscripted in a long time. There is still so much innovation,” says Zein, highlighting Mark Burnett and Mike Darnell’s *World’s Best*.

“*Got Talent* has been hugely successful and understandably so for more than a decade, but it did seem odd that talent searches haven’t moved on, and have cheated their way through reinvention by sneaking in foreign acts into the US or UK shows. Embracing that was where *World’s Best* came from,” explains Zein.

Hosted by James Corden, the global-facing series debuted on CBS in the coveted post-Superbowl timeslot on 3 February. International participants must impress a panel of judges including RuPaul, Drew Barrymore and Faith Hill as well as penetrate the “wall of the world” – a group of 50 experts from 38 different countries who score the competition.

“People are used to seeing the best via Youtube, so we are putting that global talent at the heart of the show,” explains Zein, adding that the idea of only three judges was “slightly out of date”, hence the expanded roster, who are all leading practitioners across the performing arts.

Other offerings include *Mental Samurai*, which launches on Fox on 26 February, and *Million Dollar Mile*, which debuts on CBS on 27 March.

Hosted by Rob Lowe, *Mental Samurai* is produced by American Ninja Warrior producer A. Smith & Co. Productions as well as Warner Horizon Unscripted & Alternative Television and Apploff Entertainment.

It is billed as the first obstacle course for the mind, with contestants looking to answer questions correctly across categories of knowledge, memory, puzzles and sequencing – all while being physically moved around a set in a specially designed, rotating capsule.

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“It’s got the dynamism and energy you expect from a younger and more irreverent network. It’s fast, fun and entertaining, and the physical nature of what we put these people through has the effect of making it harder,” says Zein, noting that the studio may hub the format, making it easier for buyers to shoot and scale the programme to specific needs.

Meanwhile, *Million Dollar Mile* puts everyday athletes to the test, shutting down a major city’s streets and erecting an elaborate course. The only thing standing in the way of contestants and a $1m prize upon completion of the course is a group of elite athletes doing everything they can to stop them.

“It’s got that same chase and hero-versus-villain element that you see in something like *The Fast and the Furious* to *Running Man*, but put in a recognisable environment in a TV format,” says Zein. TBI
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Lionsgate shoots for the Starz

Two high-profile Starz offerings and an OWN drama highlight Lionsgate’s slate, which is benefiting from the trailblazing success of prior dramas such as The White Princess.

US studio Lionsgate is quickly becoming a staple in the UK Screenings circuit and has three high-profile dramas on offer for buyers this year – two of them originating from the studio’s network Starz and another from US cable channel OWN.

Eight-part drama The Spanish Princess is based on Philippa Gregory’s novels The Constant Princess and The King’s Curse and follows teenaged princess Catherine of Aragon who was promised the English throne as a child but must fight for her rightful place upon arriving in England.

“It’s a powerful story set in 16th-century London about the royal court intrigue that is uniquely told through the perspectives of women,” explains Agapy Kapouranis, the newly appointed president of international television and digital distribution who took over from Peter Iacono in October.

The drama – which follows in the vein of Starz hits The White Queen and The White Princess but is not a sequel – has been hotly anticipated by a number of buyers who have picked up the prior series via output deals. “So many people want to license this story,” explains Kapouranis.

Also on the slate from Starz is The Rook, Lionsgate and Liberty Global’s UK-shot paranormal thriller about a woman who wakes up in a park with complete amnesia, unable to remember her background or identity, but who must play the part of the person she inhabits to uncover who she really is.

“Clients have been asking about The Rook because it’s an international story. It will launch on Starz and Liberty Global’s international footprints, but we still have some markets open, with interest from major clients.”

Rounding out the trifecta of programmes is OWN’s Atlanta-set thriller Ambitions, which stars Robin Givens as a high-powered lawyer fighting for control of her family’s law firm while dealing with a turbulent domestic life.

Lionsgate’s presentation to buyers comes at a juncture that sees the studio ramping up its own SVOD capabilities via Starzplay, which is available on Amazon Prime Video Channels in the UK and Germany, as well as in Canada under the Starz brand. Lionsgate also plans to launch the platform across France, Italy and Spain.

However, Kapouranis says the studio is able to carefully balance its own SVOD ambitions with those of third-party outlets.

“How we differentiate ourselves from everyone else launching platforms is that Lionsgate owns Starz and we work together very closely, which is incredible because I think that’s different from the bigger studios,” says the exec.

“I tell all of our clients that we want to support them in launching with the best content they can in whatever market they are targeting. And given the breadth of content we have at Lionsgate, we have been able to balance licensing content to Starzplay while licensing content to our clients all over the world.”

According to Kapouranis, the business is in “lockstep” in how it is supporting its Starz investment while continuing to build a “thriving global distribution business.” TBI
Cineflix showcases a scripted boost

The distributor will be bringing the Muse Entertainment, Back Alley Films and Cineflix Studios drama *Coroner* to the event, along with season two of *Pure* and Russian original *An Ordinary Woman*.

The Soho-based event, held on 20 February, will also feature a list of factual hits such as Cineflix production *Legends of the Deep*, UKTV’s *Inside the Operating Theatre* and a blue-chip doc marking the 50th anniversary of the first moon landing, *The Day We Walked on the Moon*.

“We’re ramping up our scripted activity,” says Chris Bonney, CEO of Rights at Cineflix Media.

“We have more shows on our slate and more projects in development thanks to the work led by Cineflix Media’s senior VP of global scripted co-productions Julien Leroux and our talented acquisitions team.”

*Coroner* will lead the scripted slate, with a special buyers’ screening on 21 February at the Soho Hotel. The character-driven drama follows Dr. Jenny Cooper, a recently widowed coroner who investigates suspicious, unnatural or sudden deaths in Toronto.

Bonney says he is also excited by the 4 x 60-minute doc *Legends of the Deep*, originally made for Discovery Science US, which features Céline and Fabien Cousteau, the new generation of the legendary family, as they dive deep to explore some of the greatest ocean riddles of all time.

Elsewhere, Bonney says he also looks forward to international buyers’ reception to *Inside the Operating Theatre*, an exclusive and intimate insight into four busy operating theatres at Queen Elizabeth Hospital in Norfolk, UK.

### A MIPTV preview

The Cineflix boss says the UK screenings have opened up an opportunity for the company to give a special preview and sneak peek of its slate for key buyers ahead of their launch at MIPTV.

“It helps our team gauge interest in our new programming in advance of MIPTV and prepare for discussions at the market,” he says. “There’s no substitute for face-to-face meetings with clients to build and sustain successful professional relationships and our business with them. It’s an enjoyable, relaxed event rather than a hard sell.”

Bonney adds that the company has production partners attend because it has found it useful to allow buyers and producers to meet and chat about the shows they’re making and what’s working well for broadcasters internationally.

Cineflix further takes the opportunity to bring its global sales and acquisitions teams together to discuss strategy and share experiences and feedback from clients worldwide. **TBI**
Diversity is key for Passion projects

An eclectic slate of thought-provoking and entertaining content will lead the way for the Passion Distribution Showcase, held once again at London landmark The Ivy.

Passion will open its doors to 80 buyers for the fifth year straight, providing an opportunity to "entertain and inform" clients of its upcoming slate ahead of MIPTV, according to CEO Emmanuelle Namiech.

The leading content at the event will be factual and entertainment programming. Heading up the list will be Passion’s documentary commission One Hour That Changed The World: The Moon Landing, a celebration of the historic 50th anniversary of Apollo 11.

The doc “provides a unique mix of scientific detail and also human perspective on a momentous point in history,” says Namiech.

Fact ent format Mums Make Porn will also be in the line-up, a series which follows a group of ordinary mums who are concerned about the impact of easily accessible online porn.

The mums are ultimately asked to produce their own ‘porn’ film with the help of experts that creates a debate and promotes healthy attitudes towards sex and relationships for the next generation.

“It gives insight into both modern parenting and one of the crucial issues facing teenagers today,” Namiech says.

Meanwhile, Paradise Hotel will also make a comeback after a decade’s hiatus. Having first aired on Fox US in 2003, the show follows a group of singles who check in to an exclusive tropical resort for the chance to win big money.

This time, the format will feature a twist – viewers can play along at home. Using social media, they will try and influence what happens on screen, including helping to decide who stays and who goes.

Stressing the importance of face-to-face contact, Namiech says, “Showcase is an increasingly important opportunity to connect with our clients.” TBI
TVF gets up close and personal with Icons

From Raffles to Richard Branson, TVF International goes inside storied institutions and meets global icons for its Zari Gallery-based screening this February

TVF sales boss Harriet Armstrong-Clarke is bringing three new landmark titles to the event, all focusing on epic locations and notable individuals.

The 100-plus buyers attending will get a behind-the-scenes look at Singapore’s grandest hotel with Raffles: Remaking an Icon, a two-part doc that sees the famous Raffles hotel undergoing the most iconic restoration and renovation in its 130-year history.

A 2 x 48-minute series, it follows front-of-house managers, butlers, executive chefs and housekeepers in the everyday running of the five-star hotel.

“This is the first time anyone has been allowed behind the scenes of this iconic hotel and national institution,” says Armstrong-Clarke.

Fittingly, the distributor will be serving a traditional afternoon tea along with 100 brand new hours of content.

The distributor will also bring Peer to Peer into the fold, a 25 x 24-minute title that follows financier and philanthropist David Rubenstein as he interviews the world’s most successful leaders including Jeff Bezos, Tim Cook, Oprah Winfrey and Richard Branson.

The iconic personalities will discuss the personal and professional choices that elevated them to become world leaders in their field.

Another key title for the distributor will be New Species, a feature length doc for NHK, Globo and Arte.

The doc will visit an Amazonian region named Serra da Mocidade, where an expedition of 70 people, including 50 renowned scientists, identify more than 80 new species of animals, insects and plants in the region. Armstrong-Clarke says it is “cutting edge science at its best”.

“It’s been filmed over five years; they go to a place in the Amazon that no one’s been to before, and find previously unknown new species,” she says.

After a “runaway success” last year, the TVF exec says the distributor will continue to take part in the screenings as a lead in to MIPTV.

“The sales team were able to spend quality time with their buyers and we closed a raft of sales for the titles we presented ahead of MIPTV,” says Armstrong-Clarke.

“This year will be bigger and better, with more buyers, cakes, scones – and champagne, of course.” TBI
Are distributors the new marketeers?

With businesses such as Netflix doling out billions on marketing, distributors are rethinking how to set their programmes apart through noisy marketing strategies. Manori Ravindran reports.

In a period where distributors need to be nimble and multi-skilled, serving as pseudo-commissioners, producers and development execs, there is yet another string to add to their bows: that of marketeer.

In the “peak TV” era, it is no longer enough to buy, make and place content – distributors must also ensure that a programme cuts through the clutter and is found, both by buyers in the B2B space as well as consumers via effective B2C strategies. And while they’ve always done this to some degree, the stakes are higher in a 496-scripted show universe.

The marketing gold standard has perhaps been set by streaming giant Netflix, which almost doubled its marketing spend in 2018, dishing out around $2.37bn across the year, according to a recent US Securities and Exchange Commission filing, up from $1.45bn in 2017 and $1.1bn in 2016.

And if there is any doubt around the importance of brand awareness, it’s worth noting that one of the first major appointments for Disney’s forthcoming streaming platform was Jackal Group exec Joe Earley, who was hired as head of marketing and operations for direct-to-consumer and international operations for Disney+.

“From a distribution and content perspective, we have to find content that is noisy, but we also have to be able to support it from a marketing standpoint. The role of marketeer becomes increasingly important,” explains Richard Halliwell, CEO of The Cry distributor DRG, whose UK Screenings offerings include BBC Two cookery challenge show The Brigade.

Halliwell references the distributor’s experience with its regional SVOD and telco-focused drama commissioning club Atrium TV, which is gearing up to greenlight two to three projects.

“That provides a good example of how we need to innovate as a business. The content we give our buyers, first and foremost, has to be very...
noisy because these are buyers who are not filling schedules, but driving subscriptions. Therefore, the marketability of the product is key.”

One of Atrium’s calling-card projects is Quasimodo, a drama based on The Hunchback of Notre Dame character that is executed produced by Game of Thrones producer Frank Doelger and stars actors from the HBO hit, Peter Dinklage and Charles Dance.

“This will be the first project that Peter does following the end of Game of Thrones, and that’s a very good marketing opportunity for a business trying to build a good subscription base,” says Halliwell.

In a climate where programming can easily get lost in the black hole of content on services such as Netflix and Amazon, it becomes even more important for shows to have a shorthand – often talent – that facilitates discoverability.

“Content must be marketable, particularly as voice-based search becomes more mainstream,” points out Halliwell.

“We are still a B2B business selling to B2C companies of various scales and competencies, but we have to make it easier for [buyers] to market these shows. It’s not just about the script, talent and financing – marketing becomes a spoke on that wheel as well.”

Positioning and perception

Cathy Payne, CEO of distributor Endemol Shine International, which is presenting Anna Friel-starrer Deep Water at the screenings, observes that marketing has always played a key role in the business of buying and selling content, but the key difference is that the process is “more thought through” today.

“Content needs to be curated for specific licensee and market needs. All licensees must also be able to drop material on the same date,” she explains.

“With VOD comes focused needs in terms of marketing asset structure and delivery, which needs to be planned.”

One emerging tactic “gaining importance”, she says, is getting TV content into festivals that have traditionally premiered feature films, such as the Sundance Film Festival, whose Indie Episodic sidebar enjoyed breakout success this year, as well as Berlinale’s Drama Series Days and Berlinale Series.

In addition, some TV markets are increasingly creating a festival atmosphere around new programming with flashy premieres, à la MIP organiser Reed Midem’s Cannes Series festival.

What’s key, says Payne, is that this level of marketing “has to be a process that happens throughout the life of a title and across a series run – not just prior to launch.”

MGM is hosting two days of buyers’ screenings in London for dramas including Hulu comedy Four Weddings and a Funeral from Mindy Kaling and drama Perpetual Grace, LTD.

Chris Ottinger, president of worldwide TV distribution for MGM, says the business has moved from being “very restrained” around five years back to a “much more aggressive” marketing approach for such titles, simply due to the sheer volume of content in the market.

“With so many new dramas, how do you get yours to stand out? It’s about positioning and perception. Ratings are totally tied to awareness,” he tells TBI.

“We have to figure out ways to market and promote our shows so that our ratings are high enough and we’re making money because that’s driving ad sales,” he says, adding that distributors need to employ innovative strategies.

Ottinger gives the example of syndicated programme Paternity Court, whose entire catalogue is available for free on YouTube.

“We’ve programmed a couple of episodes a week. That’s raised awareness for that show and ratings continue to grow,” he says, noting that although the show, which is syndicated across 90% of the US, is in its seventh series, viewership continues to rise.

“The reason we’ve seen growth recently
is because we are making the product more available. We’re putting the show on YouTube and even though we’re making money there, for me that’s as much about marketing and awareness as anything else.”

**Premium presentation**

For some distributors, presentation is paramount. *Killing Eve* and *The Night Manager* distributor Endeavor Content has a lean, premium slate of content that has, to date, sat online as part of parent company Endeavor.

“We have to get our shows positioned in the proper light, and because we deal with very high-quality programmes, we need to position them properly,” says Gary Marenzi, head of sales and partnerships for the business.

“We have been tethered to the IMG programming website but within the next few months, we will be launching our own site that is being led by our marketing team, with state-of-the-art graphics and accessibility,” says Marenzi. “That will be a new day for us because if you look at the B2B websites of the major studios, you can find everything there. That is the standard we have to play in.”

Heaney notes that buyers take note when titles are pushed by distributors because it indicates that “they have spent their own money” and serves as a seal of approval.

For businesses that may not have millions in marketing dollars available, however, some outfits employ more targeted approaches.

Andrea Jackson, founder of boutique *Fittest Family* distributor Magnify Media, operates with a small team of sales execs working out of different territories.

“The way we work is very targeted,” says Jackson. “Whether it’s with a format or a programme, it’s of less interest to be shouting about something in a broad, scattered fashion. “We need to target very specific people for them to understand what something is so that they can bite – we don’t necessarily need to communicate that message to millions of people.”

Magnify’s *modus operandi* is to communicate a specific brand “very directly” to select buyers – a strategy that “doesn’t require a huge marketing spend”.

“It requires good contacts, market intelligence and the dedication and perseverance to make sure that the person who needs to know about it, does.”

Even for a mega-distributor such as Endemol, honing in on key markets is essential.

“Our marketing and sales efforts are curated for territory and individual buyers’ needs, with increased sales activity on the ground in territory,” says Endemol Shine International’s Payne.

“You need all these different capabilities to compete. You can’t only be hiring traditional TV development producers and sales and marketing execs,” he says.

TCB Media Rights boss Paul Heaney notes that marketing ought to be a “watertight” percentage of revenue – with room to grow.

“It is another skill for a distributor to adopt – how to really promote a piece of content properly, and how you are qualified to do that as a distributor. We should know our markets and how to do it,” he says.

“There are some great distributors out there spending a lot on marketing. They are making average shows look really, really good and for that you have to applaud them.”

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Magnify’s *modus operandi* is to communicate a specific brand “very directly” to select buyers – a strategy that “doesn’t require a huge marketing spend”.

“It requires good contacts, market intelligence and the dedication and perseverance to make sure that the person who needs to know about it, does.”

Even for a mega-distributor such as Endemol, honing in on key markets is essential.

“Our marketing and sales efforts are curated for territory and individual buyers’ needs, with increased sales activity on the ground in territory,” says Endemol Shine International’s Payne.

“The distribution of television content to the consumer has changed dramatically over the past 10 years and the way we market to our prospective licensees needs to reflect that.”

**TBI**
It appears that the UK has something to offer the world in the dreary month of February after all.

For many years, the BBC has been hosting its Liverpool event to showcase its vast catalogue of programming to the industry. And in more recent years, canny competitors have been piggy-backing the event in hopes of face-time with their most valued buyers.

It’s an interesting situation: as we are increasingly bombarded with digital “solutions” to the more human-facing roles in our business, distributors and buyers seem to be – somewhat rebelliously – attending an increasing number of events throughout the year in order to further cement their relationships and exchange valuable intel.

In that time, an evolving number of international buyers and creators have been making a pilgrimage to London in late November to meet scripted royalty, and three months later, many are then making a return trip to see the BBC and other distributors.

How is it that we can attract such heavyweights to this grey, cold and soggy island in winter? Not a whiff of sunshine or the promise of poolside networking, yet they still come.

The answer, of course, is that UK-produced content is more popular globally than ever.

UK distributor revenues for the 12 months to 31 March 2018 reached £1.7bn – up 12.6% on the previous year. In the past month, we have seen UK-produced shows such as The Bodyguard and A Very English Scandal win at the Golden Globes. Meanwhile, Sid Gentle’s Killing Eve was one of 2018’s most talked-about series.

Tax relief for UK-made films, television series and video games is feeding a production boom that has allowed it to become a global hub of content creation, according to a report by the creative industries. The tax incentives have instigated a rush of inward investment as Hollywood studios and other international production outfits cash in on British talent — with premium television series such as The Crown and Poldark being recent examples.

There’s no doubt that the draw for buyers is drama – our writers, directors and actors are kicking serious ass – but the UK non-fiction business, from Blue Planet to Bake-Off, Gogglebox to Love Island and The Secret Life of 4 and 5 Year Olds is still topping the wish-lists of international buyers.

And it’s not just the TV industry that’s booming, either. UK box office figures in 2018 were the highest in decades, indicating that although the country is facing a political crisis and internal division care of Brexit, audiences are flocking to cinemas and their own home screens for much-needed escapism.

I’ve always maintained that it is the UK’s inclement weather that has driven the disproportionate levels of creative output. Perhaps meteorology coupled with political purgatory has conspired to cause this extraordinary period of originality?

Whatever the case, the joyous aspect of this climate for a distributor is that we continue to work with the most talented people in the business, and channel heads and buyers are always keen to hear what we are working on next.

Indeed, the “premium-ification” of scripted and non-scripted content has created its own financial challenges, but with that comes the need for pre-sales and co-production, which in turn provides another opportunity for distributors to use their creative deal-making expertise. And let’s not forget of course the aforementioned boost to revenues, which couldn’t be more welcome in Brexit Britain.

TBI

How is it that we can attract such heavyweights to this grey, cold and soggy island in the winter?
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