

Warner Bros. unspools 2001 releases

Mike Szymanski
TMS Campus

Warner Bros. Pictures showed a select group of journalists and critics some sneak peeks and the rest of its line-up for the year.

Haley Joel Osment's blue eyes as the robotic boy in Steven Spielberg's "A.I. Artificial Intelligence" got some gasps as he uttered his Pinocchio-like whine of "Please make me a real boy." Bill Murray got some laughs as animated creatures inside his body take over in "Osmosis Jones," but the biggest laugh came from the summer movie "Cats and Dogs."

"That's going to be the sleeper of the year, this year's 'Babe,'" said one critic on the way out of the screening.

The film, about the struggle for world domination between cats and dogs while the human race remains oblivious to it, is simply hysterical. The power-mad Persian cat Mr. Tinkles, played by the voice of Sean Hayes, is organizing all the cats in the world and fighting against pups led by a Beagle named Lou.

"This is our show and tell," said Brad Ball, the president of domestic theatrical releases for WB, introducing the film clips to the three dozen journalists. "I hope this is not a Friday night opening," he laughed.

He also quipped that the journalists would be viewing

"Pokemon 16" and that he would be handing out rare Pokemon cards at the end of the screening. (Although Warner Bros. is releasing Pokemon movies, there were no clips of future films in the patch of trailers the journalists saw.)

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The race-car film "Driven" and Jennifer Lopez's action/romance "Angel Eyes" seemed to spark interest, as did John Travolta playing an brutal heavy in "Swordfish" and David Mamet's crime drama "Heist" with the golden cast of Gene Hackman, Danny DeVito, Rebecca Pidgeon and Patti LuPone. The Mametisms like "He's so cool, the sheep count him" met with great laughs.

The movies that seemed to be met with some skepticism included the Western action comedy "American Outlaws" starring Colin Farrell, Kathy Bates and Scott Caan; "The Salton Sea," starring Val Kilmer and Vincent D'Onofrio; and "Affair of the Necklace," the

18th century period film starring Best-Actress Oscar winner Hilary Swank.

The long-anticipated Mark Wahlberg comedy in which he becomes an 80s rock star, "Rock Star," met with giggles and the high-tech horror film "13 Ghosts" seemed to send shivers up a few spines.

Other movies this year for WB include "Summer Catch" with Freddie Prinze Jr., "Training Day" with Denzel Washington, "Juwanna Mann" with Vivica A. Fox, Jim Carrey in "The Majestic," Cate Blanchett in Charlotte Gray, "Hearts in Atlantis" with Anthony Hopkins and an all-star cast in "Ocean's 11."

A shocking explosion rocked the audience for Arnold Schwarzenegger's "Collateral Damage" when terrorists blow up his wife and son, and Robert DeNiro reprises a role as a gritty cop in a seemingly exciting drama "City by the Sea."

Finally, one of the most anticipated movies of the year met with applause as the audience watched special effects of incredible proportions in the new trailer for "Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone." Look for that Nov. 16.

Industry NEWS

Madonna has released the dates of her long-awaited world tour. She'll kick off her "Drowned World Tour," her first in eight years, June 5 in Cologne and wrap up the 18-date tour September 9 in Los Angeles.

Joey Ramone, frontman, cofounder and driving force behind America's premier punk band, the Ramones, died Sunday after a battle with lymphoma.

Actors Josh Brolin, 33, and Minnie Driver, 30, are engaged; however, their wedding date has not been set, according to People magazine.

Famke Janssen ("X-Men") is in negotiations to star as the leading villainess in Columbia Pictures' "Men in Black 2." Director Barry Sonnenfeld is bringing back Will Smith and Tommy Lee Jones.

A 30-year-old graduate student of Santa Barbara became the eighth top prize winner Sunday on ABC's "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire." Bernie Cullen won the \$1 million prize by correctly identifying "N" as the letter that must appear at the beginning of the registration number for all non-military aircraft in the United States.

(Industry News is a collection of stories from E! Entertainment, Billboard.com, Entertainment Weekly and ETOnline.com that are compiled by Jason Chick, A&E Editor)

NUMBERS

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The pace of theater closings increased dramatically during the first quarter of 2001. Twice as many theatres closed this year.

Morissette in D.C. to support Napster

Jason Chick
A&E Editor

Alanis Morissette testified last week before the Senate Judiciary Committee because she said Congress ought to know how the artistic community feels about Napster. Morissette voiced her opinions along with Eagles front-man Don Henley on the controversial song swapping site before a packed house of Napster fans, music industry executives and Napster's CEO, Hank Barry.

During the hearing, Morissette and Henley said artists tend to be second-class citizens to the labels when it comes to Web-based mu-

sic. Both singers voiced their support for Napster and asked Congress to heed artist concerns if they decide to write any laws regarding the future of the recording industry.

"Though I cannot speak for every artist, my initial resistance to the new services created online was based on the debate having been framed in terms of piracy," Morissette said. "Being labeled as such by recording companies, it understandably sent a ripple effect of panic throughout the artistic community. But what I have since come to realize is that for the majority of artists, this so-called 'piracy' may have actually been work-

ing in their favor."

She sided with Henley, a long-time proponent of artists' rights, in arguing that the recording industry's lawsuits against Napster should not stunt the growth of the Internet as a viable portal for artists to distribute their songs.

"I am here to emphasize how important I believe it to be, as you are considering constructing legislation that will govern the future of digital music distribution, that I, along with all artists, be actively involved in helping to develop what I know can be gratifying solutions for all involved," Morissette said.