

EMG hails Caesar, 'Machine'

Company ramps release slate, pushes vertigal integration

By Gregg Kilday and Jay A. Fernandez

Exclusive Media Group is partnering with producers Mark Canton and Gianni Nunnari on a film about Julius Caesar, written by William Broyles Jr. and based on Conn Iggulden's "Emperor Series," with hopes of launching a projected trilogy.

And as it ramps up to release six- to eight films per year stateside, Newmarket Films, which EMG acquired in November, has picked up U.S. distribution rights to the 3D, live-action/stop-motion movie "The Flying Machine," which Exclusive Film Distribution is

selling in territories outside Asia.

The moves are emblematic of EMG's push to become a vertically integrated film development, production, distribution

and marketing business, with production labels Exclusive Films, Hammer Films and Spitfire Pictures, U.S. distributor Newmarket, sales arm Exclu-

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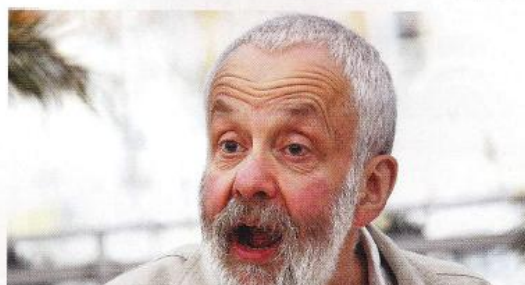


PHOTO: LUC VERNANDE/AFRETTY IMAGES

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sive Film Distribution and Exclusive Labs, which will turn out new media fare.

At their terrace suite at La Lerina on the Croisette, exclusive principals Nigel Sinclair, Guy East and Chris Ball offered up a progress report on the new company, created in May 2008 when Cryte Investments acquired both Hammer, the venerable British production company, and Sinclair and East's Spitfire.

As part of a three-pronged production strategy, Exclusive will lend its name to high-end pictures like "The Way Back," its Peter Weir-directed tale of an escape from a Soviet labor camp, starring Colin Farrell; Hammer will be reserved for genre fare, such as the upcoming "The Resident," starring Hilary Swank, and "Let Me In," directed by "Cloverfield's" Matt Reeves; and Spitfire will focus on docs, many with a music background, like "The Last Play at Shea," a look at the last days

"The missing piece of the puzzle was distribution. You can't rely on U.S. studios to pick up films, so the next evolution in our business was to have our own U.S. distribution."

— EMG's Nigel Sinclair



of New York's Shea Stadium produced in cooperation with Billy Joel's Maritime Pictures, and a new documentary about George Harrison, which Martin Scorsese will direct.

"The missing piece of the puzzle was distribution," Sinclair explained of the decision to acquire Newmarket, which Ball and William Tyre founded in 1994. "You can't rely on U.S. studios to pick up films, so the next evolution in our business was to have our own U.S. distribution."

In December, "Machine" will become the first EMG title to go out through Newmarket, whose 2010 slate also includes Alejan-

do Amenabar's "Agora," opening in May, and the Sundance pick-up "Hesher," starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt, which is set for October. Lionsgate will handle home entertainment distribution for Newmarket.

From Polish animation studio Breakthru Films and Beijing-based Bona International Film Group, "Machine" celebrates the music of Frederic Chopin. Pianist Lang Lang appears in the live-action portion of the film, performing the composer's music, which inspires a young girl's flight of fancy to stops around the world. Heather Graham plays the young girl's mom.

The movie's multiplatform release will also employ 24 short films based on Chopin's "24 Etudes" as well as an online game.

U.S. distribution rights to two of Exclusive's first three productions — "The Resident" and "The Way Back" — are still up for grabs. EMG is likely to unveil "Back" at either Venice or Toronto.

"Let Me In" will be released by Overture, which co-produced, in October and the EMG execs said

they were confident that, despite the uncertainty surrounding Overture's future, the distributor was committed to the roll out.

At Cannes, EMG is offering new title "The Woman in Black" for sale. Project is based on Susan Hill's ghost novel, "The Woman in Black." The 3D film adaptation is being directed by James Watkins ("Eden Lake") from a screenplay by "Kick-Ass" writer Jane Goldman.

Meanwhile, EMG has shifted the focus of its Spitfire Pictures label so that it will house all of the company's documentaries, such as "Shea" which had its premiere at the Tribeca Film Festival, "Amazing Journey: The Story of the Who" and the Bob Dylan doc "No Direction Home," directed by Martin Scorsese.

Sinclair hopes to make one documentary per year, almost exclusively music-based, and has Scorsese finishing up the editing on "Living in the Material World: George Harrison."

Spitfire also is preparing a Formula One project about the evolution of safety in the races that is shooting at the Grand Prix on Sunday. **THR**





Scorsese in post with Harrison doc

Director Martin Scorsese was in Cannes to discuss his latest project, *Living In The Material World: George Harrison*, a documentary about the late Beatles star.

The film, which is currently in post, is being produced by Harrison's widow Olivia together with Nigel Sinclair, who produced Scorsese's 2005 *No Direction Home*.

The film will feature never-before-seen footage and interviews with big names including Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton and Yoko Ono.

Speaking to *Screen* at the Cap d'Antibes Beach Hotel outside Cannes, Scorsese described the project as a "labour of love".

"I've been a great admirer of his music for years, so I was interested in the voyage that he took as an artist," added the director, who worked on the project while making *Shutter Island*.

Exclusive Media Distribution is handling international sales on the project, which is due for a 2011 release. "We haven't yet decided what to do with the American rights, but obviously we'd be honoured to be at Paramount, and Marty has a relationship with them," Sinclair said.

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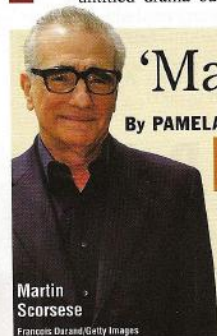
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Screen Int - May 16

F director Courtney Hunt has set up her next project at Focus Features, an untitled drama based on WAM Films' Stephanie Danan and Alain Chabat are producing. Focus holds worldwide



Martin Scorsese
Francis Durand/Getty Images

'Material' furlled

By PAMELA McCLINTOCK

Here comes the sun. Martin Scorsese announced Thursday that he has finished shooting documentary "Living in the Material World: George Harrison," working in tandem with Olivia Harrison, the musician's widow.

Producers are Scorsese, Harrison

See 'MATERIAL' page 56

Hawke flies



Francis Durand/Getty Images

Director Martin Scorsese and producers Olivia Harrison and Nigel Sinclair announced the completion of the doc on George Harrison.

'MATERIAL'

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and Exclusive Media co-chair/CEO Nigel Sinclair. A 2011 release date is being eyed.

Exclusive, which holds worldwide rights, is shopping the project at Cannes, where Scorsese and Harrison are promoting the doc. There's no domestic distrib yet.

"Living in the Material World" is a production of Scorsese's Sikelia Prods., Olivia Harrison's Grove Street Prods. and Exclusive's Spitfire Pictures documentary label.

Scorsese is fascinated by rock 'n' roll musicians, and has chronicled some of the most iconic artists of the 20th century, including the Band ("The Last Waltz"), the Rolling Stones ("Shine a Light"), Bob Dylan ("No Direction Home: Bob Dylan") and, now, George Harrison.

Scorsese said the former Beatle's life was a remarkable musical and spiritual voyage. He and Olivia Harrison both said George Harrison was always trying to find the balance between the physical and the spiritual, hence the film's title.

"I grew up a Roman Catholic and wanted to become a priest, so it is a subject matter that has never left me. The more you're in the material world, the more the search for serenity," Scorsese said.

Harrison said she spent countless hours poring through her husband's notes, cassette tapes and photos. Many of those materials have never been made public before.

Film also uses never-before-seen footage in tracing the guitarist and songwriter's life, from his days with the Beatles until his death in 2001. It includes interviews with those closest to him, such as Paul McCartney, Ringo Starr, Eric Clapton, Eric Idle, Tom Petty, Yoko Ono and Phil Spector.

Harrison wrote and released songs until his death. One note his widow found: "Goats on a roof."

Project reteams Scorsese, Sinclair and exec producer Margaret Bodde, who worked together on "No Direction Home."

"Living in the Material World" is now being edited by David Tedeschi, who cut both "No Direction Home" and "Shine a Light."

Scorsese said he worked on the doc simultaneously with "Shutter Island," and that working on a nonfiction film and a feature at the same time is a liberating experience. Similarly, he worked on "No Direction" at the same time he was making "The Aviator."

"In a complicated way, it frees me from the constrictions of a feature. I have a narrative freedom," Scorsese said.



DOCS DOCK AT SPITFIRE

By **PAMELA McCLINTOCK**

Exclusive Media is rejiggering its structure, designating Spitfire Pictures as a doc label.

That gives the company three production units. Other two are Exclusive Films, which is in post on Peter Weir's "The Way Back," and genre label Hammer Films.

In making the announce-

ment, Exclusive Media's co-chairs Nigel Sinclair and Guy East said filmmaker Paul Crowder will direct "Formula 41" for Spitfire, with Mark Monroe ("The Cove") set to write.

Martin Scorsese's latest doc, "Living in the Material World: George Harrison," also will go out under the Spitfire banner. Scorsese is producing with Sin-

clair and Olivia Harrison.

Exclusive announced that its U.S. distribution company, Newmarket has acquired North American rights to Exclusive's 3D animation adventure "The Flying Machine." Project is being shopped by Exclusive's international sales team at Cannes, along with the Harrison doc.





'World' travelers

Martin Scorsese, Olivia Harrison and Nigel Sinclair hit Antibes on Saturday to talk about their George Harrison documentary "Living in the Material World: George Harrison."

End of long, winding road

Scorsese doc focuses on former Beatle's journey

By Jay A. Fernandez

Martin Scorsese swept into the Cap d'Antibes Beach Hotel down the coast from Cannes on Saturday afternoon with George Harrison's widow, Olivia. The two have been collaborating on a documentary about the famous songwriter for the past three years and finally have the end in sight.

Titled "Living in the Material World: George Harrison," the documentary will take on the whole of the Beatles guitarist's life before, during and after his time in the world's most popu-

lar and successful band. Producer Nigel Sinclair of Exclusive was Media Group, home of the Spitfire Pictures label that will release the doc, also on hand to provide background and perspective on the forthcoming project.

"His music is very important to me," Scorsese said of Harrison. "So I was interested in the journey that he took as an artist. The film is an exploration. We don't know. We're just feeling our way through."

Among other things, Scorsese says he related to Harrison's

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Scorsese

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quest for "spirituality," something the filmmaker has explored his whole life, and especially in movies from "Mean Streets" to "Kundun."

"That subject matter has never left me," Scorsese said. "The more you're in the material world, the more there is a tendency for a search for serenity and a need to not be distracted by physical elements that are around you."

"He always said he gave his nervous system for the Beatles," Olivia chimed in.

"I'm an outsider on this," said Scorsese, taking on the project from the perspective of a curious fan. He tells the story of one morning getting ready for school at NYU on the Lower East Side in the early '60s, when an AM radio DJ announced that he was going to play the very first stateside single of the Beatles. Scorsese says he heard the song and felt it was the first time U.K. pop could really hold up to American pop music.

Scorsese met Harrison several times: first when he, Jack Nicholson and Robbie Robertson knocked on his door in a frantic moment during the filming of "The Last Waltz" in the late '70s, and then again in the early '90s.

Olivia finally initiated the current project several years ago because she says she had been approached by numerous production companies, including the BBC, looking to make a documentary about Harrison from the moment he died in 2001. She resisted at first because Harrison had always wanted to do his own documentary using his own archive of videos.

Eventually, she realized it "was something that needed to be done," and was pointed to Sinclair, who had produced the Scorsese-directed Bob Dylan documentary "No Direction Home." But still, it was a traumatic experience for her to dig back through all of that history.

"This is a deeply personal journey for me, it's been excruciating," she said. "I've been archiving for five years — 35 years, really. Throwing cassettes and letters in drawers, little things and pieces of paper that you find that say, 'Goats on my roof! You think What does that mean?'"

She says that during the research period, Scorsese would ask for something from 1945, she would dig something up, and then get lost in old letters, drawings, ideas and reveries. Or she'd come across a lost cassette from 1966 with music she had never heard.

"So that's been wonderful, but emotional, too," Olivia said. "But I feel really safe, I feel protected. Marty had a connection with George, and they spent time together. And he's passionate about film and music as George was passionate about music and film."

"This is undertaken, not casually," Scorsese said. "It's a great deal of reticence and thinking."

And juggling, since the director was working on it as he developed and shot "Shutter Island." His editor on the Dylan doc, David Tedeschi, has been working on the Harrison piece as well, and would forge ahead when Scorsese was indisposed on the fiction film. Scorsese notes that their work on the Dylan film stretched from "The Aviator" to "The Departed."

"'Shutter Island' took a great deal out of me," Scorsese said. "This was a form of interest and a really good sense of ignorance

"Ultimately, we're trying to have the development of his own music tell the story, if we can. And the images that he shot, that (Olivia) shot, a lot of this is telling the story."

— director Martin Scorsese

— not knowing what you're getting into. I know the level is deep, and I know at some point there's going to be conflicts between the projects. But this is a labor of love, it's not something that has that kind of a deadline."

So Scorsese spent weekends and margins looking at footage and cuts of the Harrison work, and doing research. "Even though it's complex and it's hard to do, in a very complicated way it frees me from the strictures of the feature and makes me think — I hope — a little more clearly about the feature," Scorsese said of the process. "Because there's something in these films that had a



Fest director Lai Van Sinh envisions new ties to the international film industry.

Vietnam

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"We hope that through this event we can exchange more between Vietnam and the international film industry," fest director Lai Van Sinh said.

Short films, documentaries and narrative features all will be represented, with Vietnamese features sporting English subtitles and some of the most important local films from the past year included. Technicolor will spon-

sor a \$25,000 Asia Award devoted to completing postproduction on the best Vietnamese project, and a \$10,000 UniFrance & K+ award will be presented to the best French film selected by the Vietnamese audience.

"The festival will showcase the old spirit of Vietnam and the new development of the country," said head of programming Ngo Thi Bich Hanh, who points out that local boxoffice has risen 400% in the four years that she and Sinh have been planning the festival.

She and Sinh revealed that Hanoi's French-built, turn-of-the-century Opera House will host fest screenings and its National Convention Centre, which holds 2,500 people, will house the opening and closing ceremonies. The city happens to be celebrating its 1,000th anniversary (Thang Long) this year.

The deadline for fest submissions is Aug. 8 and the lineup will be revealed in early September. The five-person jury, which will include one Vietnamese member, is being recruited now.

"Our film industry is still new, but we believe we have good potential," Sinh said. **THR**

"Ultimately, we're trying to have the development of his own music tell the story, if we can," he said. "And the images that he shot, that (Olivia) shot, a lot of this is telling the story. There are some famous bits and some very interesting new material."

Added Olivia: "I think it's not only about George Harrison, but about how a person moves through life and deals with his own life. And it was a pretty intense life for a young person."

In addition to his achievements as a filmmaker and preservationist, Scorsese has now made a number of films — "Shine a Light," "Last Waltz," "No Direction Home," "The Blues" (he was even an editor on the "Woodstock" concert film) — that he is personally building a library of the history of rock.

"We certainly haven't done it intentionally," Scorsese said. "We never really intended to make a chronicle of rock music. But the music inspires so much of what I do with my fiction films that they both seem to be blending now. They seem to be interweaving!" **THR**

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