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**SydneysBuzz**

Sydney Levine focuses on international film industry developments and analysis of the international film market related to buyers, sales agents, filmmakers, film festivals and distribution.

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## International Sales Agent of the Day: CMG

by guest blogger, Peter Belsito


**Edward Noeltner, CMG**

**ZAMBEZIA - 3D**  
**WORLD PREMIERE SCREENINGS DURING THE AFM**  
 SATURDAY NOVEMBER 5<sup>TH</sup> AT 3.00PM  
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Films need to be better – and different.

 —Edward Noeltner, President, [Cinema Management Group CMG](#), Beverly Hills

Let me begin by recalling when I first met Edward Noeltner. It was during lunch at a nice French restaurant in Paris, not far from Etoile / Arch de Triumph in an upscale part of Paris.

Edward was then Head of Television at Pandora Cinema. Also present that day was Ernst Goldschmidt who ran the company together with Christian Bourignon and Sudy Coy, EVP of Int'l Sales. I remember being impressed by this very smooth elegant man who told me he came from Arizona to Los Angeles and got a Masters Degree from USC Cinema. I thought to myself, 'Well he's come far.' Truth is Edward has kept rising. From there he went on to a top Executive position at AB Svensk, the biggest company in Scandinavia and then as Sr VP to Miramax International NYC for the Weinsteins during that company's truly great days. Then he came back to L.A. and began his new sales company CMG. During his first two years we were office neighbours in West Hollywood. We spoke recently at his offices during those days... he is now located in Beverly Hills.

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## "What's ♀?"

This symbol indicates women company owners, directors, producers and writers. Until women reach a parity with men in the biz, I'm running a tab on The Female Factor.

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## CINEMA MANAGEMENT GROUP

During his initial years, the company handled features and co-executive produced TV series and TV movies. The company now is focusing more on feature movie work and moving away from TV product. Upcoming Markets for them are in Hong Kong, Toronto, Pusan, AFM. They will NOT be attend the big TV markets MIP TV and MIPCOM in Cannes anymore. They see the necessity of going to Asian markets because many Asian buyers simply do not go to Berlin or Toronto, 2 of the bigger international cinema selling places. The company sells to 44 world territories (counting the Middle East and former Yugoslavia as one territory each). Other markets for them are Sundance, SXSW and Tribeca to buy new completed films. Berlin, Cannes, Toronto and the AFM are for selling.

A film which is an example of their new way of doing business is 'Zambezia' which they are Co Executive Producing with Triggerfish Animation, Mace Neufeld and 120 db Films. It is the highest budget 3D animated film ever seen from South Africa. Voices include Abigail Breslin, Jeff Goldblum, Leonard Nimoy and Samuel L. Jackson. It is an exciting coming of age tale of a young falcon trying to join the Hurricane Air defense Force of the bird city Zambezia.

CMG is also preparing three additional 3D animated films. Among these are 'Khumba' from South Africa and 'Sarila' from Canada.

Edward was reflective and emphatic when we spoke of his company's direction. 'The traditional sales agency business no longer works. We have to expand our involvement in the future. We must become Executive Producers ever earlier in the process of film making. We have to become involved in financing, script development and give post-production notes.'

They currently have six projects in the production pipeline. This is a different process for CMG because the company is 'hands on' in all of these films. And, Edward added,

They are all of good quality, well produced, and have commercial marketing hooks which is good for our international clients. The core of our business today are satisfied returning clients.

He goes on.

So now we are branching out with our product from genre driven films to what I'd call art house crossover. A film like LOOSIES is such a film, a thriller with a romantic twist produced by Chad E. Verdi productions. I'd define our way forward, as Executive Producing quality genre and art house crossover films... arranging / participating in financing and gap financing, pre sales, finding and bringing in equity investment. Plus we'll do script notes and especially casting participation. For example, with all our new projects we'll prepare short lists of possible actors to approach and then get our partners' input, very important, because we need a good bankable cast to sell the movie.

Formerly CMG was a powerhouse in the TV selling markets. A good example was their Simon Wiesenthal series of 10 documentary features – sold out. There was also the 'Legend Films Collection' (John Wayne, Abbot and Costello, Shirley Temple). They put the financing together for 'Happy Tree Friends' the animated comedy series for "big" kids.... which they sold out for the world.

The higher Euro and the ever rising expense of the Markets helped them to change their thinking about their company's direction. Their evolution of thinking about positioning the company into a leader internationally lead them to quality theatrical product. Edward says, 'Developing a quality feature film line to me is more exciting and relevant than TV.' He laughs, 'I guess it's in my blood.'

So what's in the future? 'Everyone in our business is under the same demands – you have to put out BETTER PRODUCT. Quality is improving.' To emphasize the change in the U.S. market, he points to a really good French film recently 'Potiche' with big stars Deneuve and Depardieu. The company Music Box is from Chicago headed by William Schopf does US theatrical distribution and has had a string of successes with their brand of quality arthouse and genre driven properties principally from Europe. Another trend is more films made and fewer films getting distributed. France for example makes 240 films per year and at most 10% or 24 films come to the US. He thinks distributors are releasing less film because 'they have to make each one work more due to ever rising costs of marketing and exhibition.' So a big trend is less films being distributed from every company.

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Another reason for this decline of quantity of films to the market is that there is not the same revenue turnover (i.e. it's lower) from all important TV and DVD markets. 'There's been a change of lifestyles, people just do not seem to collect DVDs anymore.' Free TV is buying a lot less film. The proliferation of cable channels means buyers pay ¼ the price now for a film. Free TV is not buying indie films like they used to. Many independent films are not on TV and the market is reduced and distributors who buy less films than as they used to. For example a some TV buyer had over 100 slots a year... now they only have 52 slots for films per year and they will only buy that many and no more. But US based producers produce many hundreds more films than this.

**EDUCATION & FILM****SCHOOLS**

Aalto University, Finland

Edward sees the solution as producing educated and better films. 'The King's Speech' was a great film and successful. He predicts 'Iron Lady' with Meryl Streep about UK's Thatcher will play. (I'd add another recent good if not perfect film 'The Help'.) So, towards this end, with all of the 'new productions' of CMG such as Zambezia, Khumba, Sarila and Littlest Angel, they are intimately involved from script phase on. 'This is the future for us'.

Bay Area Video Coalition

Beit Berl College of Art,  
 Israel

Binger Institut, Netherlands

This is from Edward Noeltner's official biography –

BFI Education - Kirikou and  
 the Sorceress U.K.

Cambodia Bophana,  
 Cambodia

Edward Noeltner  
 President

CILECT Association of  
 International Film Schools,  
 Belgium

Edward Noeltner is a seasoned and well-respected executive in the field of international motion picture licensing, distribution and sales. He has licensed worldwide many major Academy Award winning feature films such as "Chicago", "The Hours", "Frida", "Shine", "Kolya"; award winning foreign language arthouse titles such as "Faithless", "Under The Sun", "Tango", "Four Days in September", "Owl and the Sparrow" and prestigious film libraries such as SF's Ingmar Bergman collection, The Douris Corp's Buster Keaton collection and The Rohauer Collection.

Escuela de Cine Black  
 Maria, Colombia

Escuela de Cinema y  
 Audiovisual Comunidad de  
 Madrid (ECAM) , Spain

Escuela Internacional de  
 Cine y TV, Cuba

His international and domestic clients include some of the best-known companies in distribution (Lionsgate, Samuel Goldwyn Films, Pathé, RCV Ent., Central Partnership, Lucky Red, BAC Films, Videocine etc..) as well as television broadcasters (Showtime, Sogecable, Canal Plus, BSKyB, SuperChannel). Mr. Noeltner has 25+ years of experience distributing feature films internationally, negotiating all forms of international distribution and acquisitions agreements and has most recently co-executive produced a 13 x half hour animated series for DVD distribution and TV broadcast.

Fachhochschule Mainz,  
 Germany

Film Specific, U.S.

Ghetto Film School, N.Y.,  
 U.S.

Mr. Noeltner's has held the following positions: President, Senator International (Berlin), Head of Television at Pandora Cinema (Paris), Sr. Vice President Int'l Distribution at AB Svensk Filmindustri (Stockholm/Paris), Sr. Vice President and Head of Sales at Miramax International (New York) and is now President and Managing Director of Cinema Management Group (Los Angeles). Mr. Noeltner has a Master of Arts degree from USC Cinema in Critical Studies and is perfectly trilingual in English, French and German.

L'atelier Ludwigsburg-Paris,  
 Germany, France

La femis, France

Haiti Cine Institute, Haiti

Jason's Blog from UCLA  
 Film School, U.S.

MEDIA Business School,  
 Spain

Sundance Audience Award Winner for Best Documentary Feature, [Buck](#) was acquired by [CMG](#) for international representation. This is the third year in a row that CMG has secured international sales rights to an award winning documentary feature from Sundance which includes 2009 Special Jury Prize winner for Best U.S. Documentary for Chris Rock's [GOOD HAIR](#) and 2010 winner in the same category for [Gasland](#). The deal for CMG to acquire all international sales rights was negotiated by [Edward Noeltner](#) of CMG with [David Koh](#) and [Josh Braun](#) of Submarine, who represented BUCK at Sundance and closed the domestic theatrical distribution deal for BUCK with Sundance Selects/IFC Films following the film's premiere screening. The film has been a continuous surprise for audiences who thought they were going to see a film about horses and left realizing they saw a mirror of themselves.

MEDIA Professional  
 Training

National Film and TV  
 School, U.K.

National Film School Lodz,  
 Poland

New York University - Tisch  
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 Graduate Film Division,  
 U.S.

CMG is also repping [Gasland](#) which is shortlisted for the Academy Award for Best Documentary. New Video has U.S. rights. Edward Noeltner and Dene Anderberg, CMG VP Sales and Operations screened footage from the film in the Berlin sales office.

Pontificia Universidad  
 Católica de Chile , Chile

Power to the Pixel U.K.

CMG is a full service international sales company with over 100 titles in its catalogue. For more information, please consult <http://www.cinemamanagementgroup.com>.

Skillset

The European Graduate  
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SydneyLevine posted to [Documentary](#), [Film Distribution Company](#), [U.S. Distributors and Distribution](#), [Independents](#), [International Film Festival](#), [Sundance](#), [International Film Market](#), [AFM](#), [EFM \(European Film Market, Berlinale\)](#), [People](#), [International Sales Agent](#) at 10:30 am on October 14, 2011 | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

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5

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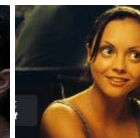
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