

Hollywood Report

Martin A. Grove

Triton, too: In talking here Friday about Triton Pictures with Jonathan Dana, its president and CEO, our focus was on independent film distribution and how that segment of the movie business has been getting healthier.

Of course, what really drives the health of any domestic theatrical film distributor, major or independent, are successful pictures. Along those lines, Dana has particularly high hopes for Triton's next two releases, "Twenty-One," directed by Don Boyd and starring Patsy Kensit ("Lethal Weapon 2") and Maynard Eziashi (best actor winner at the Berlin Film Festival for "Mister Johnson") and "Mindwalk," directed by Bernt Capra and starring Liv Ullmann, Sam Waterston, John Heard and Ione Skye, both of which are to open this fall.

"'Twenty-One' got a tremendous amount of attention at Sundance this year," Dana told me. "If you recall our conversations many years ago regarding Emily Lloyd and 'Wish You Were Here,' this is probably the most similar picture that we've been involved with." Lloyd's role in "Wish," which Dana had acquired for Atlantic Entertainment when he was its motion pictures and television president, established, as he quite correctly predicted at the time, Lloyd's career. The new film, he adds, "is a picture that is going to create the possibility of a new star. Patsy is going to get a lot of attention because she's quite extraordinary in the film."

"'Twenty-One,' to which Triton acquired all North American distribution rights last April, "was produced by Morgan Mason and John Hardy, who were among the group that produced 'sex, lies, and videotape.' While that film is sort of a one-of-a-kind film, I think it's fair to say at this point that 'Twenty-One' assumes a lot of the mantle of that picture in that it deals with young people coming to terms with themselves and the relationship they find themselves in in an increasingly confusing world. It's very hip and very funny and very sexy and very aggressive and very interesting."

Triton will launch "Twenty-One" in early fall: "The distribution pattern will probably be a first-wave platform in three or four cities. We'll hit the major media cities with it first. We're finalizing that now. My guess is it will probably (open first in) New York, Chicago and L.A. and, possibly, we'll go day and date in Toronto."

"Mindwalk," Dana notes, "will come out in mid-to-late fall. It's an extraordinary story. It's based upon the work of a man named Fritjof Capra (who wrote) the book this movie's based on called 'The Turning Point.' Fritjof Capra also wrote 'The Tao of Physics.' Two million copies have been printed of those books. It's an extraordinarily environmentally themed film which has been a real example of a picture working unbelievably well on the festival circuit. And now the picture's ready for its next step, which is to go to the commercial market. It's a conversational motion picture (about) the meeting of the minds between a scientist, a poet and a politician, and deals in an interesting and challenging and passionate way with the issues of today, environmental, social and cultural, and is most (easily) compared to 'My Dinner With Andre,' although it's quite different."

Martin Grove is seen on CNN's "ShowBiz Today"

Mondays at 2:30 and 10 p.m. PDT.