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COURSES FOR EXHIBITORS IN 2003

Interview with Walter Vacchino

One of the training courses for exhibitors promoted by MEDIA Salles in 2003 will be held in Rome in collaboration with ANEC. In your dual role as Vice-President of MEDIA Salles and President of ANEC, will you tell us about the reasons and objectives for this collaboration?

Both MEDIA Salles and ANEC see cinema exhibition as one of the key sectors - as recent studies confirm - for promoting the development of the European film market. This is why it is more appropriate than ever to encourage synergies, particularly for an aspect as important, yet equally as neglected up to now, as training for the managers of cinemas. The opportunity for exhibitors to improve their mutual knowledge of the markets in which they operate, with regard both to legal and fiscal aspects, as well as to those related to economic conditions - for instance rental costs and advertising receipts - is a concrete opening for creating common ground on which comparisons can be made, also with a view to drawing up proposals for greater concordance in the regulations governing exhibition throughout Europe.

Why do you consider training important for exhibitors in Italy?

Italian cinema exhibition is an extremely varied sector, with widely varying cinema-going demands that are met by different structures, from multiplexes to town cinemas. For this reason it is important to offer exhibitors opportunities for broadening their knowledge of the market, especially by opening up perspectives on the international situation, and to help them diversify their offers as much as possible. Faced with this ongoing evolution of the market, constant updating is also essential, both from a technological point of view and in terms of a wider knowledge of marketing techniques.

In your view, what are the topics of most interest to Italian exhibitors?

Apart from everything I have already mentioned, a topic of great interest regards strategies for the promotion of cinema-going, in view of the extreme variations in admissions rates according to the time of year. In fact, new ideas must be found for boosting admissions during the summer, which has always been a weak season for the Italian market.

Another "burning" question is that of the opportunities and risks represented by the advent of digital technology in cinemas. Whilst the changes that digital technology brings to production are quite clear, light still has to be shed on the possible advantages for exhibitors and, no less importantly, for audiences.

The course in Rome will again be attended by exhibitors from the whole of Europe, both Western and Eastern. What is your opinion of the international scenario of cinema exhibition?

I don't think the situation lacks its encouraging bright spots but some darker areas also exist. Whilst the increase in cinema-going over the past ten years is undeniably a positive factor, not all the hopes that characterised European exhibition have seen concrete results. The confidence -

typical of many choices made over the past decade - that an increase in the number of cinemas would guarantee market growth has, for instance, been downsized to some extent.

The exchange of experience is a basic feature of the courses promoted by MEDIA Salles; what do Italian exhibitors have to offer their colleagues from the rest of Europe?

Firstly the special nature of their own experience which has matured on the dynamic market of the past few years, characterised by the advent of multiplexes and the restructuring of many town cinemas.

In an urban context such as that of Rome, where the course is to be held, there will thus be the chance of visiting different types of theatres and analysing them with the help of the exhibitors who manage them. It will be an important opportunity for exchanging ideas and projects and all the more significant since the experience is open to exhibitors from the whole of Europe, both from the west and from the east.

In your opinion, what is the role of MEDIA Salles over the coming years?

MEDIA Salles will attempt to broaden and diversify still more the offer of services specifically for cinema exhibitors throughout Europe, with the aim of promoting the international circulation of European films. A particularly interesting sector will continue to be that of children's films, where the objective will be to give European children's films greater visibility. The model for the initiatives to be developed is that of the Focus on Europe "Kidflix Special" event, the most recent of which was held last November at "Castellinaria", the International Children's Film Festival in Bellinzona. Through the exchange of experiences and considerations on audience-participation techniques in cinemas, this Focus event encouraged exchanges by over 50 exhibitors from all over Europe on the most effective ways of promoting European films for children and schools.

What is more, this Focus on Europe gave exhibitors the chance to get to know a selection of European children's films that will be circulating internationally. Particularly significant was the screening of *Pinocchio* which allowed exhibitors from countries such as Belgium, France, Germany and the Netherlands to see the film - and the reactions of the young audience - before its release in their own cinemas.

So there are several directions to pursue, then. Will there be others to come?

We are launching a research study, under the auspices of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs, aiming to evaluate the conditions and prospects for a system to promote Italian films in markets with development potential in Europe - regarding in particular Central and Eastern Europe, Asia and Latin America. The project, which is currently being drawn up, will study the feasibility of promotional action on behalf of Italian films and their circulation through a network of theatres particularly committed to quality programming by diversifying the offer and locating audience sectors wishing to come into contact with the various expressions of international cinema, with special attention to young people.

SPECIAL FOCUS ON EUROPE AT "CASTELLINARIA"

For the second year running they arranged to meet at Focus on Europe at "Castellinaria", organised by MEDIA Salles from 15 to 17 November 2002, during the fifteenth Children's International Film Festival in Bellinzona. 60 operators of 10 different European nationalities took part in this event addressing exhibitors who organise special programming for children and schools.

As well as taking part in discussions during the seminars, the participants were also able to watch the screening of several trailers and children's films (*Minoes*, *Pinocchio* and *Hilfe, ich bin ein Junge*), some of which they shared with the festival's young audience. On the last evening of the Focus event, **Saturday 16 November**, which was also attended by the star of *The Magdalene Sisters*, Eileen Walsh, to sustained applause from the audience, MEDIA Salles awarded a prize to those cinemas that had distinguished themselves for the quality of the initiatives organised to promote the cinema with younger

(continues on page 4)

MEDIA SALLES' COMING EVENTS

53RD BERLIN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL 11 February, from 10.15 to 11.15 am

Italian breakfast at the Cinestar IMAX on the occasion of the presentation of the "European Cinema Yearbook" - 2002 final edition - and of the Newsletter

"European Cinema Journal" no. 1/2003.

To contact MEDIA Salles in Berlin:
MEDIA Programme stand no. 196,
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TRAINING FOR EXHIBITORS: DOUBLE THE OPPORTUNITIES

In 2003 there will be two

"European Cinema Exhibition:

A New Approach" courses, promoted by MEDIA Salles and organised in collaboration with EFC - European Film College - and DB - the Danish Cinema Exhibitors' Association:

Ebeltoft (Denmark), 4 - 8 June 2003

Rome (Italy), 24 - 28 September 2003,
in collaboration with ANEC, the
Italian Cinema Exhibitors' Association.

The courses are open to all European professionals within cinema exhibition sector: a selected number of participants will be chosen amongst the applicants.

Deadline for the application to the Ebeltoft course: 30 April 2003
Deadline for the application to the Rome course: 15 July 2003.

Further information and application forms are available on MEDIA Salles' Website:
www.mediasalles.it

THE PRODUCTION OF FILM STATISTICS IN FRANCE

Interview with Emmanuel Cocq (CNC)

Emmanuel Cocq is from the Research and Statistics Department of the CNC, the French National Film Centre. Under the direction of the Ministry of Cultural Affairs and Communication, the CNC produces statistics on French film and audiovisual markets. They mainly cover the sectors of production, distribution, admissions to cinemas, film exports, films on tv and on video.

Mr Cocq, in what ways are statistical analyses of use to the cinema market?

Statistics are valuable to any government wishing to develop its cultural policy. The data collected and analysed by the CNC, allows relevant intervention from the government and helps to develop the French programme industry. It provides a solid basis for all types of economic analyses undertaken by public research departments, universities or marketing departments in private companies. It also helps French companies who wish to invest in this market, to evaluate its economic potential and detailed strategies.

How is the data collected?

The production of these statistics is made possible by a set of administrative procedures managed by the CNC. These procedures permit the collection of the necessary figures: for example through the economic information that a producer requesting financial support must provide on his production budget. Some other statistics are collected through a specific tax-collection procedure, for instance the number of admissions to cinemas.

Does this mean that exhibitors are expected to let you know the exact number of admissions for every screening?

Each exhibitor in the film industry is required by law (dated 1946) to provide information to the CNC through his tax declaration: for each film on screen (even for a single screening) the exhibitor must complete and transmit a weekly report note (*bordereau*) mentioning the title of the film; its register number (visa number); the number of admissions; the ticket price and the screen where the film was shown; the quantity of pre-numbered tickets bought from the CNC.

In 2001, the CNC dealt with 480,000 *bordereaux* sent by more than 2,000 exhibitors. All these reports are registered in an electronic database from which the statistics are extracted. Nowadays and in growing numbers, the largest exhibitors transmit the results of the week through electronic report slips. Moreover, the CNC provides financial supports to small exhibitors who wish to install the necessary equipment for the electronic transmission of weekly reports.

What does the CNC offer in return?

The information thus collected allows for the exact determination of the levels of support provided to each producer, distributor and exhibitor. It also determines the taxes that each exhibitor must pay to the CNC.

The results are used to calculate the automatic economic support that a producer will receive for his next film. As producers may qualify for allocations from the automatic support fund on the basis of their film's box office results, more admissions mean more financial support. This system explains how important it is for all the players on the French film market, to have an accurate knowledge of admissions figures and receipts.

How often are the results made public and in what form?

The CNC publishes monthly statistics on admissions and a complete "Annual Report". In addition to these, come regular economic studies on the film industry and film markets. Most of them are also available in Internet, on www.cnc.fr

MULTIPLEXES: A RESEARCH STUDY BY THE BOCCONI UNIVERSITY USING MEDIA SALLES' DATA

To offer the means for gaining a thorough knowledge of cinema-going in Europe, as well as an accurate vision of the role of the cinemas within the industry as a whole, and thus to encourage analyses of cinema exhibition: these are some of the basic aims underpinning MEDIA Salles' decision in 1992 to launch the elaboration of the "European Cinema Yearbook". The validity of this decision has been confirmed throughout the years by the numerous research studies arising from the body of information and data offered by MEDIA Salles. The most recent of these is the survey "The development of film viewing in cinemas", carried out by Giuseppe Delmestri, Luigi Proserpio and Giovanni Tomasi of the Bocconi University of Milan on behalf of AGIS Lombardy - a study grounded on the body of information published by MEDIA Salles for the 1989-2000 period.

The aim of the analysis is to identify the most important factors in explaining a rise or drop in audiences. If it is universally recognised that the European countries and the United States experience different situations in the type of products on offer and the processes of distribution to the public, it is not as simple to identify the demographic and economic factors that influence cinema-going and to analyse how one of the most important phenomena in the history of cinema exhibition, i.e. the advent of multiplexes, came about at different times and in different ways in the various territories.

In dealing with this issue, one of the approaches chosen by Giuseppe Delmestri is that of analysing a particular demographic factor, i.e. the incidence of the 15-34 age range of the populations in the territories compared. This is, in fact, the sector of the public that tends to favour the "multiplex" formula. The research shows wide variations in the composition of the population by age in the various European countries: in Italy the 15-34 age range represents only 28% of the total population, whilst in Ireland it constitutes 33%.

Not only is the replacement of one generation by the next slower in Italy than in Ireland but, taking into account the estimates published by Eurostat, it can be observed that in the next few years the incidence of 15-34-year olds in Italy is destined to fall to well below the European average.

It would thus seem to be wise not to direct the offer of products and the transformation of structures too much towards a "youth style". Without halting the opening of new multiplexes, in Italy it would be necessary - maintains Delmestri - for authorisation to be granted on the basis of the cultural and urban characteristics of each catchment area. At the same time a certain network of smaller cinemas should be maintained, in order to guarantee a varied offer for all target audiences. In the not-too-distant future digital distribution, when and where it proves to be economically viable, may favour this

diversification and allow operators to put together strategies suited to the spectators' different requirements.

THE 2002 ADVANCE EDITION OF THE "EUROPEAN CINEMA YEARBOOK" AT THE "GIORNATE PROFESSIONALI"

On 30 November 2002 Jens Rykaer, President of MEDIA Salles, and Walter Vacchino, Vice-President of MEDIA Salles and President of the ANEC, presented the "European Cinema Yearbook" - 2002 advance edition, during the "Giornate Professionali" in Sorrento.

Now in its eleventh edition, this research study analyses cinema-going in 18 territories in Western Europe and in 14 belonging to Central and Eastern Europe. Over 40 comparative tables show the trends in cinema exhibition in the 1989-2001 period, including box-office, ticket sales, pro-capita frequency and the market shares of films according to their nationality. In presenting the Yearbook, Jens Rykaer emphasised what a positive and unique year 2001 had been, with a growth in audiences both in Western Europe, where a total of 957.8 million tickets were sold (+10.5% compared to 2000), and in Central and Eastern Europe, which registered 106.2 million admissions (12.4% more than in 2000). One of the factors that contributed to this excellent result is the success of domestic productions which achieved significant market shares in France (41.7%), Denmark (27.9%) and Spain (17.9%). In Germany the increase in admissions in 2001 (around 178 million in all, i.e. 16.6% more than in 2000) was certainly influenced by the domestic production *Der Schub des Manitou*, which accounted for 10.5 million admissions. In Norway, which counted a total of around 12.5 million admissions in 2001 (7.7% more than in 2000), the two domestic films *Elling* (770,000 admissions) and *Cool and Crazy* (557,000) made a considerable impact. The overall growth in admissions in 2001 is all the more worthy of attention in the light of the first results available for 2002, which register varying dips in frequency on big markets such as France, Spain and Germany.

The Yearbook, available on the MEDIA Salles' Website (www.mediasalles.it), also provides a comparison between Europe and the USA, Australia, Japan, Hong Kong and Canada, as well as the situation of multiplexes in Europe (sites with at least 8 screens), updated to 1st January 2002.



Jens Rykaer, President of MEDIA Salles, and Walter Vacchino, President of the ANEC and Vice-President of MEDIA Salles, at the presentation of the "European Cinema Yearbook" - 2002 advance edition - at the "Giornate Professionali" in Sorrento, Italy, on 30 November 2002.

CINEMA-GOING IN HUNGARY

It is nearly ten years since the cinema-operating companies directed by the central government closed down. At that time even professionals did not think that multiplex cinemas would appear on the market. During the last six years these multiplexes have completely re-shaped the market and now Budapest seems to be beyond saturation point. Multiplex cinemas have opened in other important provincial towns.

Now the major operators on the market are Multiplex Operation Ltd. (InterCom), I.T. Hungarian Cinema (Israeli multiplex operator) and Palace Cinemas. Though the building of multiplexes has continued relentlessly. Palace Cinemas, as a new participant in the market, has opened a new complex in Budapest, the MOM Park (9 screens), in 2002 and has taken over two others - Westend (14 screens) and Campona (11 screens) - from Ster Century, which withdrew from the Hungarian market last year.

Multiplex Operation and I.T. Cinemas, as the largest companies among multiplex operators, have indirect relationships with the two largest companies distributing the vast majority of American blockbusters. The losers in the great transformation were traditional cinemas. The primary reason is that prints of new films are only available for traditional cinemas several weeks or months later than for multiplexes. Some fortunate cinemas especially in big cities changed their profile in good time and have turned to European and Hungarian films. They present films that the audience cannot see in multiplexes and they also endeavour to screen non-blockbusters with considerable discounts in price.

According to statistics, while in 1990 the market share of American films was 50%, it reached 93.2% in 2000¹. One of the main reasons for this is that traditional cinemas used to present fundamentally all the films made in and brought into the country, whilst now multiplexes select only one or two productions that are expected to bring success and these are billed to screen for a short time. If traditional and art cinemas were not in existence, in spite of all the difficulties, the audience would not have a chance to see a considerable number of films. Apart from Budapest, there are only some cinemas that can undertake the task of presenting European and Hungarian films mostly with the help of the local government as they are unable to compete economically with multiplexes.

From 2003 there will hopefully be new opportunities for traditional cinemas in the provinces as the renovation and operating programmes of larger towns in the provinces are included in the programme of the new government which took up office in spring. The condition for support is that these cinemas should turn to art productions and undertake to screen mostly European and Hungarian films

in their programmes. The government wants a nationwide network of cinemas to come into being. With a development programme these cinemas would come to the same high technical standard as multiplexes and offer a choice of good quality to the audience.

A new bill regarding films is in preparation. One of the important parts of this law is that support for the cinema industry should be differentiated between companies involved in production, distribution and operation. With the harmonization of media laws European Union support could be available for the cinema industry.

The situation is contradictory but does not seem hopeless. It is to be expected that the multiplex market cannot be increased and some of the multiplexes with low occupancy rate may get into difficult situations. The situation of traditional and art cinemas is difficult at the moment but we have heartening prospects for the future.

Tibor Bíró

Kossuth Cinema in Miskolc, Hungary

1. Source: "European Cinema Yearbook" 2001.

BUDAPEST FILM - INDEPENDENT HUNGARIAN DISTRIBUTOR WITH EUROPEAN FLAVOUR

Cinema admission has been quite stable in Hungary in the last ten years. Figures fluctuate between 13 and 16 million admissions yearly, 2001 being one of the best years with 15.7 million visitors. This means a 1.5 annual frequency per capita. This figure represents one of the best in Central and Eastern Europe. Nevertheless gross box office revenues have doubled in the last four years in Hungary, rising to almost 40 million euro in 2001. The rising gross box office revenues are the consequences of multiplex building, which began in 1996. Today Hungary has 26 multi-screen and multiplex theatres, which attract almost 80% of cinemagoers. At the present there are 100 screens with over 21,000 seats in multi-screen and multiplex in Budapest. There also exists a very healthy arthouse cinema network in the Capital, but sadly not in larger cities around the country. The average ticket price in Hungary is about 2.5 euro. Roughly 160-180 movies are released each year in Hungarian cinemas. Traditionally American movies have a market share of over 70-80 percent, the other 20-30% is divided between European, Hungarian and non-European films. The leading film distributors, InterCom and UIP-Duna Film handle the products of major studios, whereas Budapest Film is the leading film distributor of European, Hungarian and independent American movies. Budapest Film controls 7-8 percent of the market, but this share rose to 15 percent in the first nine months of 2002, thanks to hugely successful Hungarian and European movies. As almost every European country, Hungary also had its local hit in 2002,

European and Hungarian films distributed in Hungary in 2002

Distributor	No. of films	(%)
Budapest Film	35	44
Best Hollywood	10	12.5
Mokép	9	11
SPI	8	10
Cirko Film	6	7.5
InterCom	4	5
UIP-Duna	2	2.5
Others	6	7.5
	80	100

called *Valami Amerika (A Kind of America)* distributed by Budapest Film. This light-hearted yuppie comedy attracted over 500,000 visitors following *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets*, *The Lord of the Rings* and *Ice Age* (1.05, 0.8 and 0.55 million visitors respectively).

The strategy of Budapest Film has been to offer high quality European and American independent pictures, as well as distributing Hungarian mainstream and art-house movies. The company has been successful with this strategy in the last 10-15 years, which is also signaled by the fact that other independent distributors, such as Best Hollywood and SPI are also trying to break into this field. Budapest Film also owns a cinema circuit, which consists of a multiplex (13 screens) and a multi-screen (6 screens) theatre and an arthouse network of four cinemas in the capital.

Budapest Film releases around 40 titles a year, 15 of them are Hungarian and 20 are European films. Besides *Valami Amerika*, greatest successes of 2002 included *The Others* (80,000 visitors), *8 Femmes* (31,000 visitors), *Mulholland Drive* (30,000 visitors) and *The Curse of the Jade Scorpion* (27,000 visitors). The company also handled art-house fare such as *La pianiste* (22,000 visitors), and *No Man's Land* (7,000 visitors) among others. Highlights in 2003 include *The Man Without A Past*, *All or Nothing*, *The Magdalene Sisters* and *Sur mes lèvres*. Nevertheless Budapest Film's distribution activity suffers under the lack of an arthouse cinema network in larger cities around the country, and under the fact that arthouse movies are only released on 2 or 3 prints. This means that only one print is circulating around the country, so one cinema can only play these movies for one or two weeks. This results in the fact that 75-80% of the visitors of arthouse movies are concentrated in Budapest. The Hungarian government in co-operation with film professionals is just about to work out a support scheme, which would allow the distribution of more prints, resulting in better print supply to cinemas in larger cities besides the Capital.

Ilona Kozma

Head of Distribution - Budapest Film

Gábor Csurdí

Film Distribution Manager - Budapest Film

MEDIA SALLES AT THE CONFERENCE ON "THE TASTE OF OTHERS"

A mutual desire to make decisive improvements in the circulation of European films, to be achieved partly by means of greater co-operation between countries: this, briefly, is one of the most significant signs that emerged from the international conference on "The Taste of Others", devoted to the circulation of

European films in Europe. Amongst the speakers at the conference, which took place last December in Rome, was Elisabetta Brunella, Secretary General of MEDIA Salles, who summed up the situation as regards admissions in European countries. According to MEDIA Salles data, now published in the "European Cinema Yearbook" - 2002 final edition, the trend of non-domestic European films proves to meet with varying success, with peaks in admissions at two-year in-

tervals, especially of late, and with a tendency to be concentrated on only a few titles. The European film industry's lack of constancy in producing films with distribution potential and, at the same time, the sluggish mechanism for circulating the most successful products make it very difficult to maintain the admission figures recorded during the 'peaks' and which are without doubt proof that Europeans are not at all insensitive to their neighbours' films, when they have the opportunity to see them.

spectators. The "Euro Kids" first prize of 1,000 euro, was presented to **Cinéma Le Parc of Charleroi, in Belgium**. The second prize of 750 euro went to **Nuovo Teatro of Palombara Sabina (Italy)**. The third prize, of 500 euro, was received by **Espace Aragon of Villard Bonnot (France)**. In line with the aim of encouraging the circulation of quality products for young people, an award was presented to the Dutch film **Minoes**, produced by Bos Bros and distributed by Warner Bros. This film, judged to have high potential for international distribution, has already been a great success with young Dutch spectators (820,000 admissions since its release in December 2001 up to September 2002, a box-office of 4,500,000 euro).

NOTES FROM THE SEMINAR: PROGRAMMING FOR YOUNGER PEOPLE

How can children and young people be attracted to the cinema? How can they be turned into responsible spectators, capable of critical viewing and therefore less subject to the "impositions" of the market? How can we live up a circuit - that of children's cinema - where there is no lack of interesting titles but often a lack of opportunities for securing them and competing - or co-ordinating - with the many offers directed at potential audiences from so many different quarters? The speakers presented different examples and solutions but with some common features, such as: the necessity of a good exchange of communication not only with the audiences themselves, but also with those who regularly take care of their upbringing, i.e. families and schools, and the importance of involving young audiences more directly, through proposals that allow them to *do something with the cinema* and not only to go to the cinema: competitions, then, but also research projects to carry out with their classmates, exhibitions of drawings, debates.

"In our cinema," recounts **Maïthé Vialle**, who is the owner, together with her husband, of the **Cinéma Rex of Sarlat in France**, "every year we invent some sort of 'special event' to present a film that we feel is of some particular value". As last year, at the first screening of *Harry Potter*, when the entrance to the cinema was transformed into a grotto and the children were encouraged to dress up for the occasion. Or a few years previously, when the artist of *Kirikou et la Sorcière* came to the presentation of the film. "There were some children so young that they folded up inside their seats", continues Vialle. "Some of them, under four years old, put up their hands to ask our guest questions. Many returned to see the film with their parents, too". **Giancarlo Giraud**, of the "Club Amici del Cinema - Cinema Don Bosco" of Genoa, tells of a different experience but with the same objective. In collaboration with the library **Biblioteca Internazionale De Amicis**, the cinema promotes various cultural activities, with the support of 5 other cinemas in the city. These include the "Cinema and Children" series in which over half the films are produced in Europe and many regard classics of children's literature; "The library goes to the cinema", where a book-loaning service is offered in the theatre itself and, still on the subject of books, "Cineleggiamo": a free reading-voucher handed out to each child on entry to the cinema, which can be used to take part in the library's Sunday reading

performances. There is also the importance of direct contact with the schools, strengthened over the last two years by means of the "Cinema and School" award, set up in collaboration with **Agiscuola** for all the schools in Genoa, which can take part by choosing from the many sections available, from the writing of a film review to the creation of hypertexts on the cinema. Another story of great interest is the **Skedèn** project, described by **Daniela Serafini** of the **DB d'essai** movie theatre in Lecce. It is the story of a group of friends who founded a co-operative in 1995, to re-open a church hall that had been abandoned for many years. "We wanted to make use of a resource in our neighbourhood, to create job opportunities. Partly to become more specialised, in the face of the swiftly-advancing multiplexes, we decided to devote ourselves to young audiences. We wanted to attract younger children to the cinema and to make them into "responsible" spectators". This is how, step by step (and this is the meaning of the Hebrew word *Skedèn*), synergy was created with the local schools, focusing on close collaboration with the teachers, partly through workshops, as well as with some other bodies. Subsequently, in 2000, they joined the national "School at the cinema: children of the third millennium" project, which simplified the process of choosing and obtaining films and devoted close attention to the training of exhibitors and teachers. Thus



From left, Elisabetta Brunella (Secretary General of MEDIA Salles) and Michail Bakolas (Cinéma Le Parc, Charleroi, Belgium), winner of the "Euro Kids" award at Focus on Europe at "Castellinaria" 2002.

the circuit expanded and growing numbers of young people came along. Another cinema which was re-born, under different circumstances, was the **Lux Louis Delluc** at **Buisson de Cadouin**, a small French town of 2,000 inhabitants. The manager of the cinema, **Bruno Garrigou**, tells the story of its closure "at the end of the 70s when, for economic reasons, cinemas were turned into car parks or supermarkets" and its re-opening in 1998, thanks to the tenacity of a few people and funding from different quarters: Europe, the French National Film Centre, the Regional Council and the Municipality. In addition the ability to create links with associations and other bodies, the care taken over advertising, relationships with the general public, ticket prices (just over 4 euro) yielded very successful results: 33,000 tickets sold in '99, compared to the 15,000 estimated by the market research studies, more than 37,000 in 2001 and around 36,000 in 2002. A project specifically addressed to schools - it brought together around 700 from 5 different federal states in Germany - was presented by **Ingeborg Havran** of the Institut für Kino und Filmkultur, who was invited to

the seminar to speak in detail about the German film market for children and educational projects on behalf of younger audiences. The "Lernort Kino" project contemplates 4 categories of films in its catalogues (films based on novels, films in the original language, thematic films and classics) with a presentation file for teachers linked to each film, with questions and answers for the pupils. Once the programme has been chosen, each class can take part in a week of screenings at the cinema nearest to the school. For 2003 the intention is to extend the project to other German federal states.

NOTES FROM THE SEMINAR: THE POTENTIAL OF THE INTERNET

A new feature of Focus this year was the attention devoted to the potential of the Internet as a means of promoting cinemas and gaining audience loyalty.

It is **Paul Brett** of the British Film Institute who outlines some salient points in his presentation of the BFI Website: files full of data and further information, news that is periodically updated and a section especially for teachers, where material can be found for the preparation of lessons or the presentation of films, but where they can also communicate with one another, share their experiences and take a joint part in projects. "Interactivity," stresses Brett, "is one of the great advantages of the Web." This is what made it possible for two schools at a distance from one another, in the rural area of South Devon, to be involved in a common project entailing the screening of quality European films, workshops and discussion groups for their pupils.

But can the Web be used successfully not only by institutions promoting the cinema but also by individual cinemas? There are numerous examples of cinemas that also make use of their own Websites to present their activities. Up until now, however, this has frequently constituted a simple form of advertising at a limited cost but with low visibility. Is it possible to make the Web into a *meeting place* for encountering audiences outside the theatre and yet for inviting them to meet inside it?

This is the hope of **MEDIA Salles**, who, as well as outlining a new section of their own website during Focus on Europe - a section especially for those involved in programming for young audiences - also presented exhibitors with their proposal for an online research project on the subject of "Internet and the Cinema". The objective, as explained by **Paola Bensi**, who is responsible for the project, is to "respond to the growing attention of exhibitors to forms of *one-to-one marketing* and to the opportunities offered by new technology for managing customer relationships, allowing for the provision of information, the promotion of the cinema's offer, ticket sales, the collection of customer data and encouragement of customer loyalty".

The aims of the research, which is, in fact, targeted at young people, are twofold: on the one hand to link cinema-going habits to well-defined profiles of Internet users; on the other hand to evaluate the opportunities offered by the Internet for promoting cinemas. It is also to be actuated in two different ways: the "classical" distribution of a questionnaire in cinemas running programmes for young people, and the use of the potential offered by the Web for running an electronic version, thus extending the research to a national and European context.