

TELECASTINGS

New Disney division

Walt Disney Pictures is preparing to return in a big way to supplying television programming. It announced last week it was forming a program distribution arm to supply local stations with product from the Disney library, and has recently concluded several network deals for series, pilots and specials.

Disney last week appointed Robert Jacquemin, executive vice president, sales and marketing, Paramount Television Domestic Distribution, to the newly created post of senior vice president, domestic television distribution, for Walt Disney Productions. Jacquemin will be in charge of all sales, marketing and production activities for Walt Disney Productions' expansion into syndicated programming.

Jacquemin is the sixth Paramount executive to join Disney in the past six months. Michael Eisner, former president of Paramount Pictures, is now chairman of Walt Disney Productions, and Jeffrey Katzenberg, formerly Paramount's top motion picture executive, left to join Disney in a similar capacity. Bill Mechanic, who headed Paramount's theatrical sales to pay television and co-production deals with pay TV, is now doing the same for Disney. Helene Hahn and Ricardo Mestres, two other former Paramount executives, have also joined WDP.

Eisner described Jacquemin's appointment as a "turning point for Disney, representing the further expansion of the company into all facets of television."

Jacquemin will join Disney June 1, when his Paramount contract expires. "In no uncertain terms Disney instantly wants to become a major distributor," he told BROADCASTING. "They have 30 years of television [programs] and four to five decades of theatricals that have been held out of syndication... Most of this product has never been released."

Jacquemin said his first priority is to "staff up" and hire research, sales, advertising and promotion and business affairs people and open regional sales offices. Disney will then analyze its program library and determine the elements to be brought to market and the timetable for releasing product. He also said Disney plans to become a distributor of first-run programming.

Jacquemin's appointment followed several other television programming developments at Walt Disney Productions. After being absent from network television for more than two years, the company has now planted its flag at each network. It's producing a new series, *Wildside*, which premieres on ABC-TV March 21. Next fall it will have two animation series on Saturday morning: *The Gummi Bears* on NBC and *The Wuzzles* on CBS. ABC has also picked up an Easter holiday special from Disney, and NBC is running a Disney special produced at Radio

City Music Hall that will preview Disney's new stage show there. And, according to a spokesman, Disney is negotiating with the networks to bring back the Disney anthology series that ran for 29 years on network television. "It will be revived," assured the spokesman, "but in a format suitable to today's audience, more sophisticated and front-loaded with stars."

Until recently, the spokesman explained, Disney was concentrating on supplying its pay cable service, The Disney Channel, and considered most other television programming ventures in conflict with that objective. But since Eisner and Katzenberg took over, the spokesman continued, the company has moved to re-establish its presence in all areas of television programming, including the sale of Disney product to other cable services.

Worldvision report

Worldvision Enterprises, which has made a major push into first-run syndicated programming, is claiming a sales boom for several of its new series scheduled to premiere

this fall. The Taft Entertainment unit is clearing between \$35 million to \$40 million in new product, according to John D. Ryan, senior vice president, domestic sales, with nearly \$30 million earmarked for animation programming.

Leading Worldvision's first-run sales are 17 new 90-minute animated episodes titled *The Funtastic World of Hanna-Barbera* (the H-B animation house is also a subsidiary of Taft). The 90-minute blocks are composed of three animated series: *The Paw-Paws*, *The Funtastic Treasure Hunt* and *Galtar and the Golden Lance*.

Funtastic World has been cleared on 70 stations representing 70% coverage, Ryan said, on an advertiser-supported basis with two minutes held back per half-hour for national sale. Stations get three runs per episode each year, Ryan explained, but are being required to make a two-year commitment to the series. Stations in the lineup include WNBC-TV New York, KCOP(TV) Los Angeles, WFLD-TV Chicago, WTAF-TV Philadelphia, KBHK-TV San Francisco, WXNE-TV Boston and WDCA-TV Washington.

Ryan said nearly all the stations signed up

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has acquired

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The undersigned acted as broker in this transaction and assisted in the negotiations



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