

TYING THE KNOT**Film Factory Assembles 'Wedding' Pre-Sales****Spanish comedy books European territories**

JOHN HOPEWELL

PROVING IT'S not just French comedies that travel, Film Factory has inked pre-sales in German-speaking Europe and Russia on Javier Ruiz Caldera's "Three Many Weddings," which world prems here, closing Venice Days.

Tiberius has taken all rights to Germany, Austria and German-speaking Switzerland; Daro has acquired Russian rights. Both bought Ruiz Caldera's prior movie, "Ghost Graduation," which Fox picked up for North and Latin America and Family Films has just bought for France.

"Weddings" was due to screened to industry and press Wednesday.

"Weddings" is shaping up as one of Spanish cinema's biggest box office bets of 2013. Warner Bros. will release the laffer in prime box office time Dec. 6, which kicks off a bank holiday weekend.

Inma Cuesta plays a young woman who is invited to the weddings of three ex-boyfriends in the same month, plunging her into a desperate search for a marriageable man.

The first comedy from "The Impossible" producer Apaches, "Weddings" is produced by comedy specialists Think Studio and Ciskul, plus Atresmediacine, the film arm of Spain's broadcast network group Atresmedia.

"We were delighted by the screenplay," said "Weddings" producer Francisco Sanchez. "The global nature of weddings is all for the better."

Film Factory will organize two private screenings of "Weddings" in Toronto. "Weddings" is also sparking remake interest, said Film Factory CEO Vicente Canales.

Both of Ruiz Caldera's previous films, Spanish film spoof "Spanish Movie" and comedic fantasy film "Ghost Graduation," have sold well abroad.

**TUNED UP** "The Art of Happiness," from Alessandro Rak, opened Critics' Week in Venice.**FRANCO FORCE****Elle Buys Italian 'Art'****French shingle nabs animated feature aimed at the adult aud and a rarity from Italy**

NICK VIVARELLI

PARIS-BASED SALES company Elle Driver has acquired all international territories outside Italy on ambitious Italo animation drama "The Art of Happiness," by Alessandro Rak, which opened the International Critics' Week here at Venice.

Pic for adult audiences about a Neapolitan cab driver and former musician searching for spirituality as he drives the city's garbage-strewn streets, marks a rare case of a young Italian animation director managing to make his feature film debut.

"Italy lags behind in the animation sector, especially in terms of being able to adapt to changing storytelling forms for new media," said producer Luciano Stella. "We are trying to change that."

Rak is a graduate of Rome's Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia Film School and also a graphic novelist.

Pic is produced by Stella and Naples shingle Mad Entertainment, and will be distributed in Italy by Istituto Luce Cinecitta.

Elle Driver is emerging as a high-profile Venice player, holding rights to multiple features playing on the Lido and being sold at the Venice Film Market, including "Miss Violence," by Greek helmer Alexandros Avranas, and "Les Tarrasses," by Algerian Merzak Allouache, both in competition.

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Luciano Stella

CLASSIC PLAY**Wide Wrangles Edgy Deals****Distrib's busy with arthouse and documentary sales**

ELSA KESLASSY

LOIC MAGNERON'S Wide, which is presenting a pair of Satyajit Ray films at Venice Classics, has closed a raft of sales across its slate of arthouse titles.

Karlovy Vary competition player "The Priest's Children" has sold to Italy (Officine UBU), Norway and Iceland (KIB Media), Spain (Kiss Comunicacio), Sweden (Starlet Media) and Denmark (Reel Pictures).

A subversive comedy helmed by Vinko Bresan, pic centers on a small-town Catholic priest who, with the help of a few fervent believers, embarks on a vicious crusade to abolish contraception leading to a wave of unwanted pregnancies.

Jean-Louis Daniel's "Shanghai Belle," a chronicle of young foreign models experiencing drugs, sex and high-glam prostitution in Paris, has sold to Japan (Epcott), Germany (Donau) and South Korea (Alto Media). "Belle" is part of a trilogy.

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