Intl. TV Newswire: Movistar Plus, ZDFE, Beta, Oble and Moonbug Deals, Blue Ant Hires

Lisbeth Salas

In this week’s International TV Newswire Movistar Plus booms on Phase II COVID-19 consumption; and there are deals a plenty. ZDF Enterprises sold “Queens of Mystery” while Beta’s “Love, Inevitably” was a ratings hit in its first week before sales in France, Switzerland and Brazil were announced. Recently premiered clairvoyant Canadian series “The Outbreak” has started selling international for Oble which made a deal with Russia’s Start SVOD platform, and Moonbug sold five kids’ series to African SVOD giant Showmax. Meanwhile, Blue Ant International has hired former Discovery Inc. exec Gerbrig Blanksma as senior vice president, international sales and partnerships.

CCVID-19 Phase II Consumption Hits Highs at Movistar Plus

Phase II COVID-19 consumption is kicking in, at least for Spain’s booming Movistar Plus. But it’s unlikely to be a lone example. In a first phase, London-based consultancy Enders Analysis predicted at the beginning of crisis, there would be a feeding fever for news. As audiences tire of crisis, however, they will turn ever more to fiction and entertainment. In Spain, free-to-air news outlets are still rocking: Up 69% in the case of Mediaset España’s morning magazine “El
Programa de Ana Rosa.” Pay-TV is another story. Movistar Plus is also rocking, consumership up 51% in the last seven days compared to pre-COVID-19 weeks, but viewing is now being driven by a banner series, “La Línea Invisible,” and movies. A chronicle of when, how and why under Francisco Franco’s regime, Basque separatist org ETA's crossed the line dividing resistance and its first murder, “La Línea Invisible,” which bowed on April 10, has proved the most-watched Movistar Original Series ever with more than half the households viewing the entire series. Meanwhile, hours seen of movies have skyrocketed 67% versus pre-coronavirus levels. One reason. Movistar Plus’ sale of its Lite program option app, including all original series, to other platform subscribers at just $9 a month. Another: It’s far easier for families to watch a movie together than a series. At this rate, numbers for live soccer transmissions, when they return, should be truly explosive.

**Doc Producer Jon Ossoff’s Georgia Senate Seat Bid Goes to January Runoff**

**ZDF Enterprises Sells “Queens of Mystery” Internationally**

Germany’s ZDF Enterprises (ZDFE) has sold Acorn TV’s six-hour drama “Queens of Mystery” to several broadcasters, including Sky Germany, All Media Baltics in Lithuania, ITV International Channels, Latvia’s LTV, bTV in Bulgaria, Megogo and Okko in Russia and CIS, ProSiebenSat1 in Germany and several VOD platforms such as Amazon, iTunes and Google. Commissioned by Acorn Media Enterprises from Sly Fox Productions and Ferncroft Media, the series was created and written by “Doc Martin” and “New Tricks” scribe Julian Unthank. Season 1 has already premiered in North America as an Acorn TV Original, and turns on Matilda Stone, a female detective sergeant, and her three crime author aunts who work together to solve Stone’s cases.

**Beta Announces Major Deals for “Love, Inevitably”**

Backed by Beta Film Mediaset Italia and Mediaset España in a ground-breaking collaboration, the Beta Film sold Spanish-Italian rom-com “Love, Inevitably” has proved a ratings hit for Mediaset España’s main channel Telecinco, for whom the program won a muscular 14.6
% market share (and 2.5 million viewers) with its Easter weekend premiere on April 7th. Follow the series’ impressive bow, Beta announced sales of the series to TF1 in France, RTS in Switzerland and Globo TV in Brazil, as well as a German deal now in final negotiations. Produced by Cross Productions, a Beta subsidiary, the series follows two strangers from Seville and Rome who first cross paths in Prague before a series of further chance encounters pull them closer together while each struggle with issues back home.

Love, Inevitably Beta

Oble Closes First Deal on “The Outbreak”

Predictive Canadian series “The Outbreak,” a fictional tale of the propagation of a dangerous coronavirus in the city of Montreal, has begun selling internationally for Paris-based TV and digital content distribution company Oble. Russian SVOD service Start, part of Yellow, Black and White, was the first buyer of the show, which launched a dubbed version on April 15. The timely series, produced by Sphère Media, is the story of Anne-Marie Leclerc, director of the Emergency Public Health Laboratory of Montreal, tasked with
identifying potential causes of public health emergencies, who is faced by a viral epidemic and recalcitrant male medics.

Blue Ant International Have Hired Gerbrig Blanksma

London-based Blue Ant International have announced the appointment of Gerbrig Blanksma as senior VP, international sales and partnerships. Blanksma will be responsible for overseeing the company’s international sales across the U.K. and Italy and tasked with adding new third-party content to the division’s catalog. She will also head sales and partnership opportunities for pan-regional buyers based in the U.K. across all platforms. Reporting to executive vice president Solange Attwood, Blanksma will work from the company’s London offices. With more than 13 years of international distribution experience, Blanksma was most recently director of international sales and licensing for the U.K. and EMEA at Discovery Inc. and Scripps before that.
Moonbug, Showmax Partner on Global Initiative

Global development and distribution company Moonbug has partnered with pan-African SVOD platform Showmax. On Wednesday, five Moonbug series were made available in 56 markets across Africa: “Little Baby Bum,” “Morphle,” “Gecko’s Garage,” “The Sharksons” and “Supa Strikas: Seasons 1-5.” Focused on values-based content for kid audiences, Moonbug’s content is meant to support children’s development of cognitive, emotional and physical life skills, regardless of geography, culture or background, making it ideal for international distribution. Moonbug series are available in up to 15 languages on major platforms worldwide including Amazon Prime Video, Cartoon Network, DisneyXD, Hulu, Netflix and YouTube.