

# DISTRIBITS

## Hitch Signs Lehman

Alfred Hitchcock has set Ernest Lehman to write the screenplay for *The Short Night*, his next film for Universal. The film is based on the Ronald Kirkbride novel of the same name. It is Lehman's third script for Hitchcock. His previous ones were for *North by Northwest* and *Family Plot*. According to Universal, Hitchcock returns in *Short Night* to the romantic suspense genre of *Rebecca* and *Notorious*.

## Sutherland to 'Body Snatchers'

Donald Sutherland has been signed for a starring role in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* to be filmed this year by producer Robert H. Solo and director Philip Kaufman for United Artists release. Sutherland has most recently been seen in *1900* and Fellini's *Casanova*. *Body Snatchers*, a Solofilm Co. production, will be filmed from W. D. Richter's screenplay of the Jack Finney novel. The science fiction novel was previously filmed in 1956. The new version is scheduled to go into production soon on Northern California locations.

## Belushi in 'Lampoon' Film

John Belushi has been signed for a starring role in Universal's *National Lampoon's Animal House*, a college comedy set in 1962. The film, which is from an original screenplay by Harold Ramis, Douglas Kenney and Chris Miller, is being produced by Matty Simmons and Ivan Reitman and directed by John Landis. Principal photography began Oct. 24.

Belushi plays "Bluto," the chief "animal" of a fraternity house. Now in his third season as actor and writer on NBC-TV's *Saturday Night Live*, he recently made his motion picture debut in *Goin' South* with Jack Nicholson. Belushi has also worked as actor, writer and director on The National Lampoon's off-Broadway stage shows and radio series. He was also a member of The Second City improvisational comedy group.

## Ski Picture for Columbia

Rastar Films will produce *Freestyle*, a film about the world of freestyle ski competition, for Columbia Pictures release. Steve Carver, who recently completed *The Moonbeam Rider* with Brenda Vaccaro and David Carradine, will direct. Gray Frederickson, co-producer of *Apocalypse Now*, is producing. The script by David Freeman focuses on a champion skier who must face the fact that his athletic career may be coming to an end. *Freestyle* will be shot on location in Heavenly Valley, California in January.

Rastar projects in post-production at Columbia include *Casey's Shadow*, a film with Walter Matthau for release in March, and Neil Simon's *The Cheap Detective*, which is slated for spring.

## French Thriller Shoots

Henry Lange's *World Order and Security*, an action-suspense thriller, has begun principal photography in Paris under the direction of Claude D'Anna. A Dedalus-Seuil Audiovisual co-production, the film stars Dennis Hopper, Bruno Cremer and Laure Deschanel.

## Bauer Gets Handke Pic

Bauer International has acquired the American and Canadian distribution rights to *The Left-handed Woman*, the first film to be directed by West Germany's acclaimed playwright-novelist Peter Handke. Handke described the work, which he also wrote, as a "monumental film about the everyday lives of women, men and children." The cast includes Edith Clever and Bruno Ganz, the stars of Eric Rohmer's *The Marquise of O...*, and West German director Bernhard Wicki. The film, which will soon be published in novel form, was shot in Paris. The film's producer, Wim Wenders, has directed two Handke works for the screen, *The Goalie's Anxiety at the Penalty Kick* and *False Movement*.

## Auberjonois into 'Eyes'

Producer Jon Peters has signed Rene Auberjonois for a featured role in the suspense drama *Eyes*, the first of several film projects being developed by the Peters Organization. Auberjonois plays a business associate and close friend of a noted fashion photographer, portrayed by Faye Dunaway. *Eyes* is being directed by Irvin Kershner (*Up the Sandbox*) on location in New York for Columbia Pictures release. The original screenplay is by John Carpenter and David Zelag Goodman. Jack H. Harris is executive producer; Laura Ziskin is associate producer.

## AA To Distrib Brooke Shields Pic

Allied Artists has acquired United States and Canadian distribution rights to *Alice, Sweet Alice*. The suspense film marks the debut of child actress Brooke Shields, a top model and recently the subject of a cover story in *New York* magazine. Her youth, her beauty and her role as a prostitute in Louis Malle's forthcoming *Pretty Baby* have generated a great deal of publicity for the actress. *Alice, Sweet Alice* was directed by Alfred Sole from a screenplay he wrote with Rosemary Ritvo. It is scheduled for release in major cities this month.

## 'She'll Be Sweet'

Sally Kellerman will co-star with Tony LoBianco in Trans-Atlantic Enterprises' *She'll Be Sweet*, an adventure-love story to be made in Sidney, Australia. Based on an original script by Colin Fyre, *She'll Be Sweet* is being directed by Gene Levitt and produced by Geoff Daniels. Robert D. Kline and Preston Fischer are the executive producers.

Over the past year Trans-Atlantic has produced five films in association with the Australian Broadcasting Commission, as productions of GGB KG for presentation by Trans-Atlantic. The films include *No Room To Run*, starring Richard Benjamin and Paula Prentiss, and *Barnaby and Me*, with Sid Caesar.

## Avildsen To Direct Two

Academy Award winning director John Avildsen has been signed by Universal to produce and direct two films, it was announced by Ned Tanen, president of Universal Theatrical Motion Pictures. Avildsen, who won his Oscar for directing *Rocky*, lists among his credits *Joe* and *Save the Tiger*. Universal vice-president Raphael Etkes will supervise the projects.

## Picture Service Salutes 'Talkies' In New Catalog

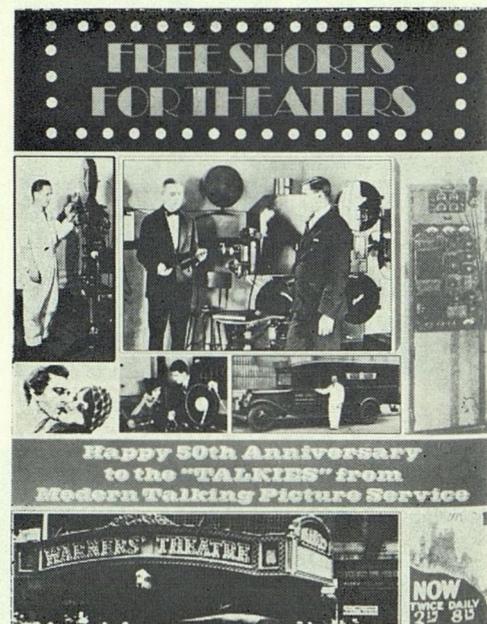
Modern Talking Picture Service, celebrating its fortieth year as a sponsored film distributor, salutes the Golden Anniversary of talkies in its latest catalog of free short subjects for theatres. The cover features historic photos from Modern's archives and those of Bell Labs and Western Electric, AT & T subsidiaries that developed and manufactured Vitaphone, the first sound-on-disc system that revolutionized the industry when *The Jazz Singer* opened on Broadway in 1927.

Modern was a part of the early "talking picture" experience. In the thirties the company was a service of Electrical Research Products, Inc., a Western Electric subsidiary, established to promote the non-theatrical use of sound equipment and films. Modern pioneered a network of projection services that showed industrial films in community organizations, schools and other non-theatrical meeting places.

Incorporated as a separate company in 1937, Modern has become the country's largest distributor of free-loan films, videotapes, cassettes and sponsored collateral materials. It provides theatres with free 35mm short subjects from industry, government, national associations and other sources.

## Kurosawa Film Debuts

*Derzu Uzala*, the winner of the Academy Award for best foreign film of 1975, made its American theatrical debut at New York's Sutton Theatre Nov. 6. The film, which is distributed by Roger Corman's New World Pictures, was shot in Russia by famed Japanese director Akira Kurosawa. A general release close to the New York opening is likely, possibly as early as Thanksgiving week.



The cover of the current catalog of free short subjects from Modern Talking Picture Service is a salute to the 50th anniversary of the talking motion picture. It features photos from Modern's archives and those of Bell Labs and Western Electric, which developed and manufactured Vitaphone, the first sound-on-disc system.