

nos Aires and its province. Production will be carried in Italy. "Death in Midsummer" is the name of a short-story collection Mishima published in 1947, four years before his suicide. The story turns on a young middle-class couple vacationing on the Izu Peninsula with their children. When the wife, to escape the heat, leaves her children in the care of her sister-in-law, two of them drown. "Devil" expands outward from where "Midsummer" leaves off, charting the couple's tragic journey through mourning, as pain and loneliness generate a radical change in their perception of life and even their physical world as their reality is altered permanently.

See DEAL page 33

Balada'

Paris-based sales company ZED has taken worldwide rights outside France to the "Balada," a film pickup, the "Balada" Distribution-sold prison thriller "Cell 211" closed a deal for Japan with Nettleseum and Shochiku. "Balada," now shooting, is set in 1973, in the last years of Franco's dictatorship, described by de la Iglesia as a "grotesque tragedy," the Spanish-language pic moves from early scenes of the Spanish Civil War to 1973, when two clowns from rival families fall in love with the same femme trampeuse artist in a circus in Spain. "Balada" is produced by Fernando Herrero and Mariela Gornievska's Madrid-based nasol Films. France's rique co-produces. (3.8 million), according to Robert. Tornasol's pics award nominee "The Se- last film, the Elijah Wood was distributed by Warsawing Spanish film of 2008.



Mark Ruffalo, Ben Kingsley, Michelle Williams, director Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio get together for the "Shutter Island" photocall. The chiller premiered in Berlin's official competition on Saturday evening.

Helmer's going 'Wandering'

By ED MEZA

German helmer Benjamin Heisenberg, whose adrenaline-fueled drama "The Robber" is screening in competition in Berlin, is going for laughs on his next movie, "Wandelsterne" (Wandering Stars), about the misadventures of an odd couple.

Heisenberg has just finished the script and is putting together financing for the pic.

Heisenberg made a splash with his 2005 drama "Sleeper,"



HEISENBERG

which explored post-9/11 paranoia and the abuse and manipulation of fear. He's also made a name for himself as an artist, sculptor, and one of the founding editors and publishers of film magazine Revolver.

"Wandelsterne" will be a departure from Heisenberg's more serious previous works.

"It's very different than what I've done before. I've been trying to write comedies for a long time but they always turn to tragedies," he said. "But pain is close to

pleasure, so we'll see what happens now."

The story revolves around two quirky friends, an older man and a younger man, who have a chaotic and philosophical relationship, and their absurd experiences. Pic will likely shoot in 2011.

"It's a buddy movie with a certain amount of melancholy to it, but it's going to be very funny," Heisenberg said.

See HEISENBERG page 33

Digital media venture bows

By JOHN HOPEWELL

As Europe's film business debates its digital future, Spain's Media Business School has joined forces with key European film-TV clusters and digital media players to launch ImMediaTe, a support service for improving companies' digital media biz.

Partners include Italy's Filas, a Lazio-based technology service company, and Berlin's Institute of Electronic Business, a public/private-sector information society research firm.

ImMediaTe, which runs for three years, has a double aim, said MBS director Jose Garasino: to coach and train companies on how to develop a digital biz and to court and tutor investors on digital biz financing.

The new initiative will hold

See VENTURE page 33



Paris-based ZED has taken worldwide rights to "This Way of Life."

'LIFE' DUO FRAME 'PORTRAIT'

By JOHN HOPEWELL

Thomas and Barbara Sumner Burstyn, whose "This Way of Life" bows in Berlinale's Generation KPlus on Sunday, are working on a new collaboration at their Cloud South Films shingle, "Yolanda's Last Portrait."

A theatrical docu feature, "Portrait" turns on an aging artist in her crumbling mansion in St. Johns Wood in London. An artist of the purest kind, with little or no acknowledg-

ment of the usual domestic facets of life, she's now old and unwell and her brother, a scientist, has moved in with her.

In "Portrait," "they live out a giant, daily universal battle between the pragmatic and the romantic writ small but intense," said Barbara Sumner Burstyn.

As on "Life," Thomas Sumner Burstyn is directing and filming; Barbara, a Quantas

See COLLABORATION page 33



GARASINO

VENTURE

Continued from page 4

five events, each lasting one to two days. The first forum, to be held in June, will most probably take place in Barcelona.

Forums will focus on different aspects of digital media. All will pursue matchmaking between companies and investors, and further training and coaching on finance access for companies.

Each forum will target around 10 small and medium-sized enterprises, Garasino said.

ImMediaTe also has the backing of Europa Innova, an initiative of the EU's European Commission.

ImMediaTe has created a business service network drawing in clusters with regional

knowledge — Paris' Media Deals and Cap Digital, 22@barcelona and Amsterdam's IIP Create. ImMediaTe looks set to be based out of Smart City Malta.

Rome's Innova and Media Deals will provide finance coaching. The MBS, Living Labs Global and IEB will focus on management training and strategic planning.

Launched in 1990 by the EU Media Program and the Spanish government, the MBS will hold its long-running Mega European Master in Audiovisual Management (MEGA) course this summer in Ronda, Andalusia. It will also launch second editions of a Multi-Platform Business School this August and a Film Business School — Latin America, taking place October in Brazil.

COLLABORATION

Continued from page 4

Media award-winning journalist, wrote and is producing.

The new production, ready for delivery in October or November, comes as Paris-based sales company ZED has taken worldwide rights on "This Way of Life."

A resonant and often stunningly shot portrait of a sprawling, vivacious Maori family that abandons material comforts and a dourly domineering patriarch grandfather, "Life" chronicles the ups and downs of their move to New Zealand's wild Ruahine Mountains, hunting for food, rearing wild horses and having fun.

"The Karenas are unique in their true disconnect from the 'market' view of life," Barbara Sumner Burstyn said. "We've all ingested it to such an extent we hardly notice how much authenticity we've lost, how our lives are modulated by the buying and selling of ourselves."

"Life" was sold to Canada's Knowledge Network before the ZED deal.

For ZED, an established high-end TV docu producer-distributor focusing on docus chronicling man moving in harmony with nature, "Life" marks its move into theatrical docu-features.

"It's a logical evolution for a company that's been doing big-budget TV documentaries," said ZED's Celine Payot. Berlin initiates "Life's" sales campaign.

"Life" plays Generation K Plus Sunday and Feb. 21.

For ZED, a high-end TV docu producer-distrib, 'This Way of Life' marks its move into theatrical docu-features.

TOLSTOY

Continued from page 6

controversial and there are currently no plans for any major official Russian national events, something the producers attribute to the controversy over Tolstoy's excommunication by the Russian Orthodox Church in 1901 that was reconfirmed

Natalia Kalantarova), with the assistance of ARRI Film & TV Services, the doc promises a glimpse into the loves, family life and civic role of Tolstoy during the last two years of his life.

Also on the literary anniversary front, a feature film adaptation of Russian playwright Anton Chekhov's "Ivanov" — about an intellectual

CINEMA CARETAKER

Czech official champions pics, culture

By NICK HOLDSWORTH

It took the collapse of a government and the appointment of a man of culture to get the new Czech film incentive plan through a parliamentary vote.

Now, nearly six months later, film professionals in the central European country are awaiting the green light from European Union officials in Brussels to usher in a new financial wave for Czech filmmakers and international co-producers who choose to shoot in the country.

Vaclav Riedlbauch, a musician-composer who has been general manager of the Czech Philharmonic orchestra since 2001, expected to be in office as a minister in a caretaker government for just a few months after a coalition government collapsed in disarray last April. But he's still there — new parliamentary elections are not scheduled until late May this year — and he never expected to be in office to see the film incentives plan that includes a 20 percent tax rebate on films shot in the Czech Republic come to fruition.

"I knew that I did not have much time and so decided that

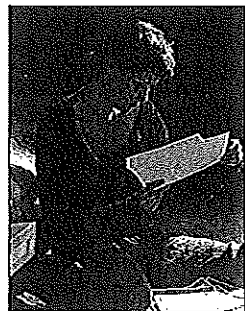
getting the film law passed must be a priority," Riedlbauch, 62, told *Variety*.

He is in Berlin as part of his country's delegation supporting "Kawasaki's Rose," the new film by Czech directors Jan Hrebajk and screenwriter Petr Jarchovsky that opened the Berlinale's Panorama Special on Friday.

With a caretaker government largely made up of business people and others like him drawn from the worlds of culture and industry, Riedlbauch said he felt there was an opening that had not existed in years of political wrangling over a new film law long sought after by producers and filmmakers.

"I saw an opportunity not so much simply to bring in a new law but to look at the whole concept of cultural support. It was not really so specifically about funding but to put on the agenda the idea that culture deserves support."

Riedlbauch is now keen to push a plan to extend state funding for domestic production that is currently paid for out of a levy on Czech public television advertising. That source of funding is due to end



Czech pic "Kawasaki's Rose" opened the Berlinale's Panorama Special.

when Czech television switches from analog to digital, but Riedlbauch hopes to secure agreement for other sources to continue the support given in the past three years to Czech filmmakers.

In the meantime, with approval of the new film law expected from Brussels next month, Riedlbauch is looking forward to a "new wave" for Czech filmmakers, foreign co-producers and the country's leading studio complexes.

"There are already a number of countries in Europe that have film-incentive laws; we are glad that we are now on verge of joining that path," Riedlbauch said.



RIEDLBAUCH

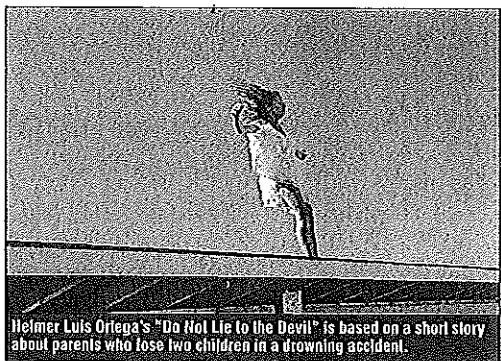
HEISENBERG

Continued from page 4

Also focusing on a quirky character, "The Robber," Heisenberg's Golden Bear contender, follows an adrenaline junkie who runs marathons and robs banks to get his endorphin fix.

"This is what I really loved about it," says Heisenberg. "Bank robbers that don't use cars or big machines, but they just go in, take the money and run. I love that as a theme, the aspect of running, moving by yourself, by your own strength, through nature, or wherever you go."

Produced by Vienna-



Helmer Luis Ortega's "Do Not Lie to the Devil" is based on a short story about parents who lose two children in a drowning accident.

DEAL

Continued from page 4

"Aside from all the pain and

"Midsummer" marks Ortega's fourth feature before he turns 30. While both "Saints" and Ortega's soph feature,