

RON MERK

Production/Distribution Experience

Since 1967 Ron Merk has been an independent producer, director, and writer and distributor of animated and live-action features and TV specials. His specialty has been films for the family and children's market. Ron's wide range of experience includes a special emphasis and skill in concept, story, and visual development. Ron's most recent feature, the animated "Marco Polo-Return to Xanadu," has won numerous U.S. and international festival awards. The film was also one of the nine films that qualified for the first-ever animated feature Oscar in 2001. "Marco" is being released in the U.S. and Canada by Warner Bros.

Ron has also involved in the importation and release of some classic foreign films, including Antonioni's "La Notte" and Czech director Jiri Trnka's animated masterpiece, "A Midsummer Night's Dream." He has imported more than 100 films from all over the world and been instrumental in the marketing and distribution of these films in the U.S.

Ron has a extensive background in merchandising, product design, licensing. For seven years he was the Supervising Art Director for The Tooniversal Company's limited edition animation art publishing division, working with all of animation's most famous characters under license from Warner Bros., Speed Racer Enterprises, MGM and King Features.

Ron's work on Broadway includes creation of the multimedia elements utilized in the long-running show "Oh! Calcutta!" His short films, slides, animation and other materials created as part of the show's design have been seen in the New York version as well as the National Tour of this erotic entertainment classic. Also in the erotic genre, Ron's company co-produced "Ribald Classics" starring Patrick MacNee with The Playboy Channel. Based on bawdy tales from Chaucer and Bocaccio, this six-story period piece was shot entirely in Slovakia, utilizing historic locations and castles.

In 1990, he was involved in the first co-production of the Czech Film Studio, Barrandov, after the fall of Communism. "Looking for Lennon" was the first of two films he co-produced with the Czech director, Milan Cieslar. The most recent co-production, "Lebensborn," is now in international release. Lebensborn has been screened at more than 50 festivals, and won numerous prizes. Ron's work on this project included script consultation, as well as writing the English sub-titles for the final version of the film. He was also involved in creating the marketing campaign for the film.

Ron has been active in numerous film restoration projects, including Arnold Schwarzenegger's first film, "Hercules in New York," now in release through Lions Gate Entertainment. He works closely with a number of archives, including The UCLA Film and Television Archive, The Film Department of The Museum of Modern Art, The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, and The Library of Congress.

Ron's company, Premiere Pictures International, also owns and operates a substantial stock footage library called "Footage-To-Go," which includes The Western Electric Company industrial films, animation footage, Eastern European collection, Sports and Lifestyle footage, and one of the most important collections of footage about the City of New York. The company licenses the footage from its collection to producers of TV programs, feature films, documentaries and commercials. Footage from the library has been utilized by programs such

as Inside Edition, Biography, HBO Sports, and all of the major networks and cable stations.

As an author, Ron has been published in a number of film-related magazines, including Animation Magazine, Animation World Network's on-line magazine, Film Festival Today and Release Print. He is currently writing a series of articles about the difficulty of independent films finding distribution in the United States, aptly titled "Distribulation."

Ron has appeared on panels at numerous U.S. and international films festivals, talking about subjects as diverse as script writing and theatrical distribution. He was a member of the feature film jury at the San Jose Cinequest International Film Festival in 2003.

Ron's involvement in the business as well as the artistic side of the motion picture industry has given him a unique perspective on both the making of films, their artistic merit, and the ultimate fate of films on the festival circuit and in the marketplace.