

cinemabusiness

THE LEADING MAGAZINE FOR THOSE WHO SHOW, DISTRIBUTE AND MARKET FILMS

ISSUE 47 JULY 2008



Wheely cute

London's Royal Parks are home to tiny cinema Page 9



Hip hop art

Hand-painted poster launches The Wackness Page 23



Online scrapbook

Jane Campion's Bright Star launches website Page 28

A digital world

How film-makers are embracing the web Page 16

PLUS Every UK film release



Joking apart

Batman and Joker come out to play again Page 31



REEL BIG OPENING
KC Suri hosted a champagne reception to mark the opening of Reel Cinemas' new 4-screen venue in Andover, Hampshire. The cinema shares its footprint with a new ASDA superstore.

Electric opens second sofa screen

Birmingham arthouse makes space for 78-seat auditorium by relocating dubbing theatre

Birmingham's Electric Cinema goes from strength-to-strength with the opening of a second auditorium with digital projection. The Electric's owner, Tom Lawes told *Cinema Business* the idea of resurrecting the second screen, after five years as a single screen, was prompted by the closure for refurbishment of the Midlands Arts Centre (MAC).

The new 78-seat Screen 2 continues the successful template set by Screen 1 in 2004. The screen features black leather sofa seating and also offers a bespoke waiter/waitress service (CB May 2005). "It came to me in January that I could move the sound dubbing theatre into the basement



and launch the second screen to cater for those who would have previously gone to the MAC," Lawes said.

The refurbishment cost over £100,000, which was financed by Lawes himself. The major outlay of the project being the £60,000 needed for the DCI compliant 2K digital projector.

"Screen 2 now gives us the opportunity of showing mainstream films in the main auditorium and then have the scope to show more specialised fare in the second screen.

"Those who wish to see the big commercial releases in a more comfortable environment, and those who wished to view more specialised content, such as arthouse, documentaries and world cinema, can now do so," Lawes said.

The Electric's Screen 2 will also show alternative content including sporting events, opera and pop concerts. According to Lawes this additional screen is predicted to increase annual revenues by 40%, taking the Electric's turnover to £500,000 a year.

"The Electric has come a long way since we first opened. In that first year the turnover was just over £50,000. We have built up our audience, now there are approximately 40,000 visitors annually," Lawes said.

The Electric's digital Screen 2 opened on 4 July with the Oscar-nominated *Mongol*, plus *Blade Runner: Final Cut* and screenings of *The Wizard of Oz*.



HANCOCK IN 4K

Audiences at the Odeon Guildford were the first — and only — in Europe to see the new Will Smith film *Hancock* in a 4K digital format. All *Hancock* screenings at the venue are being shown using Sony's SRX-R220 digital cinema projectors. These produce an 8.8 million pixel picture with an image quality four times the resolution of high definition television. The 4K SXRD projection systems are installed in two screens at the venue. Gerald Buckle, digital development manager at Odeon, said: "After the success of our *Spider-Man 3* screening last we are confident that showing *Hancock* with Sony's 4K projector will draw in the same large numbers."

Omniplex opens Ireland's first all-digital cinema

Omniplex Cinemas, part of the Ward & Anderson cinema group, opened Ireland's first all-digital cinema on 4 July.

The 1,577-seat, eight-screen Wexford Omniplex cost 9m euros (£7.12m). It is equipped with DCI compliant Barco 2K digital projectors with Doremi servers supplied by Digital Cinemas. All screens are fitted with Dolby Digital sound processors and Crown amplifiers with up to 17 JBL speakers.

The site is also equipped for 3D presentations, which begins with a programme of 3D features in October with *The Nightmare Before Christmas* and *Final Destination 4*.

Although films will be shown digitally, one screen is also equipped with conventional 35mm projection for showing older films and reissues.

An Omniplex spokesman said that a full digital rollout is planned

and that the Wexford site is the first step in a two to three programme for digital changeover. The next site being developed is the eight-screen Dundonald, in south Belfast, which will be fully digital by the end of 2008.

Paul Anderson, Ward Anderson's managing director, said: "The Omniplex Wexford is one of the first cinemas in Europe (and the first in Ireland) to fully embrace digital projection. Omniplex Cinemas has always been at the forefront of technology and continues to break new ground to provide better presentation facilities for our patrons."

The Ward & Anderson Group now operates 16 cinemas in the Republic and six in Northern Ireland.

Opening films at the Wexford Omniplex included *Hancock*, *Kung Fu Panda*, *Chronicles of Narnia: Prince Caspian* and *Wanted*.