

Commentary



Ricky Gervais returns to the Globes podium after a biting 2010 show. The Oscars, meanwhile, reverted to the ever-reliable Billy Crystal.

Kudos at crossroads

By CHRISTY GROSZ

If the past week of awards-related turmoil has highlighted anything, it's that the Academy of Motion Picture Arts & Sciences and the Hollywood Foreign Press Assn. have two very different sets of priorities when it comes to their kudocasts.

Wednesday's confirmation of Ricky Gervais as the host of the Golden Globes highlights the differences even more clearly. Both entities say they're interested in generating bigger ratings, but one of these orgs is not like the other.

While the Academy very much wants to keep ABC happy about its hefty license fee by attracting a younger demo, it is equally eager



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TV'S HEAD HONCHO

WB's Rosenblum wins ATAS election

By BRIAN LOWRY

Bruce Rosenblum has been elected chairman of the Academy of Television Arts & Sciences, defeating vice chairman Nancy Bradley Wiard in a vote by the board of governors Wednesday night.

As president of the Warner Bros. Television Group, Rosenblum becomes the highest-ranking exec to head the organization that presides over the nighttime Emmy Awards since then-Walt Disney Studios chief Richard Frank completed his stint in the mid-1990s.

Although the race looked like a mismatch — Wiard is a freelance producer and consultant who represents the academy's daytime branch, having left "The Young and the Restless" eight years ago — her insider status as the No. 2



WB TV topper Bruce Rosenblum is the highest-ranking exec to lead the TV acad in nearly 15 years.

man John Shaffner kept the outcome in doubt.

Perhaps the most pressing challenge Rosenblum will face at the

TV acad will be the networks' desire to streamline the Primetime Emmy ceremony and enhance its entertainment quotient by reducing the number of on-air awards. Past attempts have yielded strong pushback from key constituencies — particularly the guilds representing writers and directors, some of whose categories would be likely casualties.

In an interview, Rosenblum downplayed the significance of possible revisions to the Emmys, noting that changes to the broadcast "have been contemplated for years" and will eventually be determined via a consensus of the board. In terms of the leadership, "I don't think the primary role is limited to the primetime Emmys," he told *Variety*.

Where he hopes to be proactive, See ATAS page 19

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V PAGE: Bill Condon savors the bow of "Breaking Dawn." **20**



Google gets its groove on

By ANDREW BARKER

Mounting a belated challenge to Apple's dominance of the digital music retail market through iTunes, search giant Google unveiled its full music service, dubbed Google Music, at a press conference in Los Angeles on Wednesday.

Google launched a music cloud-storage service in invitation-only beta in May and has now opened that service up to all U.S. residents; users can store up to 20,000 songs in their personal cloud "locker" for free. More notably, the company announced that it would begin selling music through its Android Market, with all music purchases added immediately to the cloud and available on all connected Web and mobile devices.

"Other cloud music services think

See GOOGLE page 19



Producer-director Marc Scarpa oversees the team dedicated to creating an array of online content for Fox's "The X Factor."

DIGITAL ADDS 'X' APPEAL

By ANDREW WALLENSTEIN

The production truck parked just outside where "The X Factor" shoots on Stage 36 in the CBS Television City complex is filled with 20 people hunkered over monitors. But they've got nothing to do with the live telecast.

That's because the unscripted Fox series has a huge separate staff that works alongside the broadcast crew on TV's biggest digital extension to a primetime series since NBC set the new standard with "The Voice" earlier this year.

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B.O. looks to 'Dawn's' early light

By ANDREW STEWART

Hollywood is bracing for another mad rush of hardcore "Twilight" fans, as Summit rolls out the franchise's penultimate offering "Breaking Dawn — Part 1" in nationwide midnight screenings tonight.

As of Wednesday afternoon, the film's approximate midnight count stands at 3,250 locations, before expanding Friday to 4,061.

While B.O. pundits are predicting "Breaking Dawn" could reach \$140 million through Sunday, Summit has more modest expectations, ranging between \$110 million and \$125 million.

"Breaking Dawn" launches day-and-date with the U.S. in 54 overseas markets.

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Praisers laud Burnett

By DAVE McNARY

Hollywood publicists have tapped Carol Burnett to receive a lifetime achievement award at the Intl. Cinematographers Guild's 49th annual Publicists Awards, set for Feb. 24 at the Beverly Hilton Hotel.

The org noted Burnett's six Emmys, two Golden Globes, special Tony Award, Peabody, Kennedy Center Honor and Presidential Medal of Freedom.

"Carol Burnett has had an extraordinary career and a reputation for direct involvement in the promotion of the shows and movies in which she has starred," said Henri Bollinger, awards committee chairman. "She has a clear understanding of the role publicity plays in the success of TV shows and movies."

Previous recipients of the award include George Burns, Lew Wasserman, Warren Beatty, Arnold Schwarzenegger, Clint Eastwood, Julie Andrews, Harrison Ford and Robert Zemeckis. This year's recipient was Sylvester Stallone.



Burnett



According to Fandango, nearly half of midnight ticket buyers plan to

TWILIGHT

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Like the previous "Twilight" offerings, the franchise's second-to-last pic will see a mostly front-loaded perf by teens and young adults, though Summit prexy of domestic distribution Richie Fay said repeat viewings by femmes could continue to propel grosses.

"Sometimes girls will come out one screening, only to buy a ticket for the next show," Fay said.

According to online ticketing service Fandango, the film had sold out more than 2,500 showtimes by early this week. The site also reported that 47% of ticket buyers plan to attend the midnight screenings in formal wedding attire.

"Breaking Dawn," budgeted for a reported \$110 million, picks up with human-vampire couple Bella Swan and Edward Cullen as they prepare for their wedding.

'Twilight' at midnight

Midnight screenings have increased in popularity since the franchise's first installment.

Pic (Year)	Box
Eclipse ('10)	30.0
New Moon ('09)	26.3
Twilight ('08)	7.0

*in millions of \$

Summit announced in June 2010 would split author Stephenie Meyer's final "Twilight" book into two parts, with "Part 2" set to bow the time next year.

"Part 1" faces a high all-time midnight record (\$43.5 million) set this summer by "Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part 2." It's hard to say whether "Breaking Dawn" can break that record, since "Deathly Hallows" benefited from a wider demo of kids on vacation. The pic was also the final "Potter" in the series.

Either way, "Breaking Dawn" could one-up its predecessors' midnight grosses.

The franchise's third offering, "Eclipse," kickstarted its Stateside run last year with \$30 million, while "New Moon" earned \$26 million from late-night screenings. Much like "Deathly Hallows: Part 2," "Eclipse" benefited from summertime berth; the latter pic, which earned \$157.6 million in its first six days, also bowed at a record number of locations — 4,400.

"New Moon," meanwhile, launched this same weekend in 2009 for a three-day total of \$142 million. That's a fair opening benchmark for "Breaking Dawn," according to some pundits.

Fay said group ticket sales for "Breaking Dawn" are just as robust as the previous two "Twilight" films, with corporate buyouts (businesses purchasing entire screenings for giveaway purposes) boosting pre-sales for "Breaking Dawn."

X FACTOR

Continued from page 1

"X Factor" has successfully cultivated a fervent following on Twitter and Facebook since its September launch, and the show has since added a Verizon-sponsored Xtra Factor app that synchronizes an elaborate content companion to both Wednesday and Thursday telecasts. While the app's available on iOS-powered devices like the iPad, the Android version is particularly robust, giving viewers the ability to vote five different ways and to access backstage cameras.

Viewers can also watch behind-the-scenes footage via a live one-hour Pepsi-sponsored pre-show that precedes every Wednesday broadcast; it's available at TheX-FactorUSA.com. In addition to talking heads gabbing about the upcoming episode and interaction with fans via Skype, the pre-show takes advantage of cameras so close to the action that one is even planted behind a mirror in case you want to see your favorite contestants fixing their lipstick or adjusting their collars.

This three-ring circus of social media, second-screen app and on-line pre-show is made possible for several reasons. For one, blue-chip brands like Pepsi and Verizon are footing the bill for the "X Factor" bells and whistles.

"Sponsorship dollars enable this grand experiment," said Don Wilcox, VP and g.m. of branded entertainment at Fox.com. "This show in particular was an inflection point for digital coming to the forefront for a lot of clients."

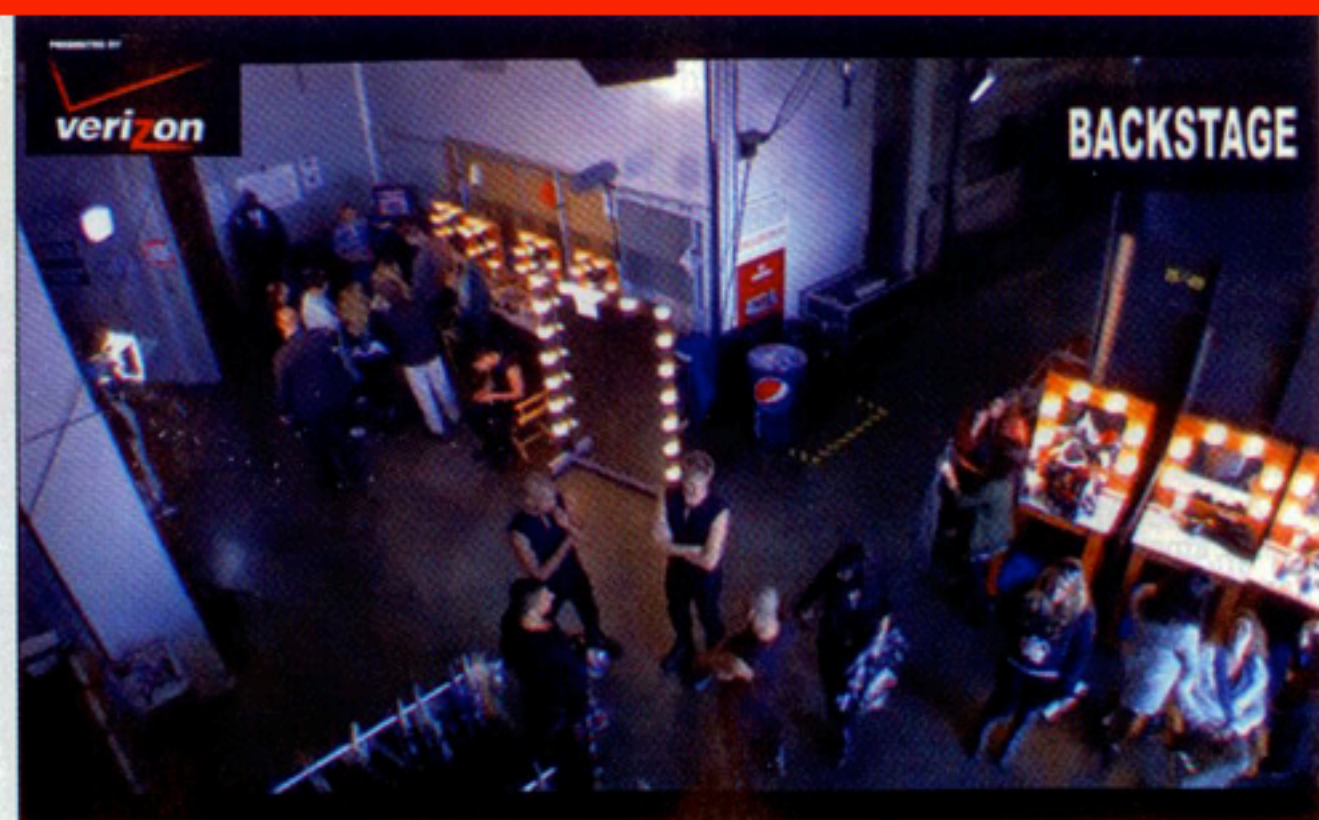
Sponsored spark

There are even more sponsored digital elements surrounding "X Factor," from a standalone social network at PepsiSoundOff.com currently devoted to discussing the series to Pepsi Choice Performance, which will let viewers design an upcoming on-air performance by polling their preferences for dance style, special effects, wardrobe and props. Sony Electronics is behind a "Factor" online-video series, "All Access Pass."

The "X Factor" digital extravaganza is an outgrowth of the super-sized vibe that Fox, FremantleMedia and Syco wanted to bring to every element of the show. Star and exec producer Simon Cowell made it known from the planning stages of "X Factor" that the series needed a robust online presence.

Cowell is said to be particularly avid tracker of "X Factor" Internet activity, so much so that there's been plenty of speculation that his reconsideration of Lauren Amaro, a contestant who was voted out only to be reinstated by him, was prompted by the video streams she racked up on the series' YouTube channel.

"Simon is attuned to real-time data," said Owen Leimbach, an exec producer of "X Factor's" digital efforts. "If he could have everyone in America walking around with those dials from focus groups, he would."



Fox's "The X Factor" offers viewers live access to backstage cameras via a Verizon-sponsored app, part of an elaborate digital strategy.

Leimbach is with Sony Music Entertainment, which is partnered with Cowell in his Syco shingle. Cowell brought them in to handle digital operations in tandem with Fox.

Cowell's embrace of the digital extensions has been instrumental in knocking down the traditional barriers that exist between a production's TV and digital units. The integration between the digital and telecast production teams is evident both onscreen, where Cowell himself has made multiple plugs for the Xtra Factor app, and behind the scenes, where the TV crew give their digital counterparts the lyrics for each song performed to be uploaded in the app just hours before the show begins.

Most of the staff inside the truck are focused on the pre-show, but in an adjoining section sits a five-member team from TV Plus, the third-party developer powering the app. They upload to the app over 100 factoids, videos, polls, photo galleries, tweet excerpts, fashion analysis per episode as it plays. As a song performs, the Xtra Factor app allows you to purchase it or rate the performance across various metrics from song choice to style.

"There's something about live in terms of engagement with the app that you just don't get with a website," said Marc Scarpa, the producer-director overseeing the pre-show and the app for Sony Music.

But the website is lively in its own right, particularly before the latest "X Factor" episode begins. The pre-show crew has access backstage to the point where on this reporter's visit, one pre-show correspondent stood waiting to ambush Antonio "L.A." Reid with a vinyl copy of a forgotten album he produced as a member of forgotten '80s R&B group the Deele, when the now-smooth-domed judge had a bouffant hairdo.

The pre-show is hosted by Taryn Southern together with Philip Lomax, a former "X Factor" contestant eliminated from the series. To say they work off the cuff is putting it mildly.

Thirty minutes before their show last week, one of their guests that day is a friend of Southern's, YouTube sensation Olga Kay. Kay happens to mention that she knows how to juggle, which prompts a producer to interject. "Can you do

that on the show?" he asks.

About an hour later, she is expertly tossing several apples in the air for the online audience.

Fox pleased

Fox isn't releasing traffic numbers for the pre-show but is pleased with the results, according to a spokeswoman.

Twitter is also deeply integrated into the telecast, with frequent teasers to the accounts of the judges and contestants. But Facebook also plays a key role online; logging into the "X Factor" website is done via Facebook, which grants points for every interaction a user has with "X Factor" content. The site will soon introduce a rewards catalog where points can be traded in for "X Factor"-branded merchandise.

"X Factor" employs four staffers whose sole job is working social media, distributing dozens of content extras throughout the week and responding to every viewer inquiry regarding the series.

"X Factor" has been a power player in social media since its inception. In October, social-media tracker Trendrr found it was the most buzzed-about series in the broadcast category across a combination of Facebook, Twitter and check-in services like GetGlue. Another tracking service, Bluefin Labs, found that measured across all TV series airing first-run episodes season to date, "X Factor" is second only to another Fox series, "Glee."

For all the energy expended online, it's questionable whether all those tweets have redounded to the telecast. While "X Factor's" performance has been solid enough to have already earned the series a second season, it fell short of sky-high expectations. "The jury is out on the ratings piece of it" as far as whether the digital activity boosts overall viewership, Wilcox conceded.

Whether "Factor" will match the scale of its current digital efforts next season has yet to be determined. But taken together with what "The Voice" has done and the unprecedented digital depth Bravo is supplying to the current season of "Top Chef," the DNA of reality-TV franchises is being altered more and more with digital part and parcel of the overall experience. Time will tell whether they remain a fixture for primetime skeins or fade as quickly as the latest Internet fad.