

# Art imitates life in *Dolphin Tale*

CLEARWATER, Florida: The little injured dolphin they called Winter couldn't have come along at a better time for the Clearwater Marine Aquarium, a rustic sea life rescue center occupying the city's old sewage treatment plant.

The nonprofit public aquarium was about ready to go belly-up at the end of 2005 when the baby bottlenose dolphin was brought there after getting her tail tightly entangled in a crab-trap line. She lived, but her tail fluke withered away, forcing the young animal to learn how to swim with just a stump and then adapt to a revolutionary prosthetic. Winter's inspirational story of perseverance made her a global media star, quadrupled attendance at the aquarium and spawned a lucrative line of toys, books and other merchandise.

Now Winter is a movie star. The charismatic animal plays herself in "Dolphin Tale," a family-friendly 3-D movie starring Harry Connick Jr., Morgan Freeman, Ashley Judd and Kris Kristofferson, opening Sept. 23.

The production is based on Winter's unlikely story of surviving the loss of her tail, then thriving and inspiring human visitors - including war veterans - who have lost limbs and are adapting to their own prosthetics.

The story got some fictional tweaks - a troubled boy (Nathan Gamble) who bonds with Winter was created as a central character who finds the gravely injured animal - but the movie sticks close to the real events surrounding the loss of Winter's tail and her recovery at the aquarium. And in another twist on art imitating life, in the movie Winter's presence helps save the modest marine rescue center from financial ruin. A big chunk of the film was shot at the facility last fall.

"Largely what you see with her rescue, her rehabilitation, the (prosthetic) tail being made, the fact it was filmed here and Winter stars as herself, it's pretty much real life," aquarium CEO David Yates says.

Connick, who plays a veterinarian and director of the marine rescue hospital, says he didn't find out the script was based on a true story until after he had read it.

Winter wasn't expected to survive when brought to the aquarium in December 2005 and was left with a rounded stump after losing her tail. A team of more than 150 volunteers and veterinarians spent more than four months nursing her back to health around the clock.

"When she arrived here we didn't think she would make it through the night," says trainer Abby Stone. "She was stressed, she was not physically doing well, she had been through a major ordeal. Most animals in that situation would not have made it."

Winter learned how to swim without her



In this Aug. 31, photo, Winter the dolphin swims at Clearwater Marine Aquarium in Clearwater, Florida. (AP)



Clearwater Marine Aquarium senior marine mammal trainer Abby Stone works with Winter the dolphin Wednesday, Aug. 31, 2011, in Clearwater, Florida. (AP)

tail - amazing her handlers with a unique combination of moves that resemble an alligator's undulating swimming style and a shark's side-to-side tail swipes. She uses her

flippers, normally employed for steering and braking, to get moving.

The prosthetic tail - made of rubberized plastic and carbon fiber - is a wonder of mod-

ern science, with the developers, Hanger Orthopedic Group's Dan Strzempka and Kevin Carroll, having to design the intricate tail fluke as well as figure out a way to keep the whole thing on her body. The solution was a sleeve created from a sticky gel composite that slips down onto her stump and creates suction when the prosthetic appendage is applied.

Since Hanger got involved, Strzempka has taken new amputees to see Winter at the aquarium. Interaction with her has been especially effective in coaxing children to wear their new prosthetics, which can feel strange and uncomfortable at first.

"It's amazing to see the impact she has on people," Strzempka said. "When we first got into this, we thought we could help this dolphin. She's helped us 20 times more than we could ever help her."

Winter wears the new tail only a half hour at a time, three or four times during the day, as her handlers continue to get her used to it and give her spine a break from the strain of the side-to-side swimming. She is trained to follow commands and patiently allows the prosthetic to be put on and taken off in front of adoring crowds.

Director Charles Martin Smith says Winter was so social and animated that capturing her engaging behaviors on film was relatively easy. She enjoys human contact, which he says opened up a lot of possibilities for filming people in the water with her.

"I spent those first three days just walking around and learning about her," Smith says. "She likes to carry toys around on her (nose), so I wrote that into the movie. She has a blue mattress that she likes to jump up on and float around on like a little kid, so I put that in the movie."

She has this signature sound that she makes that they call a 'tweety bird' - like a little high-pitched bird trill - so I wrote that into the movie." Winter captivated everyone, including Freeman. The veteran actor plays the specialist who takes on the challenge of designing the new appendage for the tailless animal. Freeman had never even been near a dolphin before.

The aquarium got a significant expansion thanks to the movie, after Smith decided he needed a nicer pool to film some of the water scenes. The other concrete tanks were left over from the aquarium's previous life treating the city's sewage. Yates says a second aquarium building is opening in downtown Clearwater that will display the movie props.

"It was like a dream come true getting her story out there, because she has such an amazing story," says Stone, the trainer. "It was like the best thing that could ever happen to this facility." -AP

## TELEVISION BUZZ

### Royal Pains Mark Feuerstein joins the ranks of TV stars turned directors

When "Royal Pains" actor Mark Feuerstein took his seat in the director's chair Aug. 31, he joined a growing roster of TV stars moving behind the camera. The practice has become increasingly prominent as stars including "Mad Men's" Jon Hamm, "Chuck's" Zachary Levi and "Grey's Anatomy's" Kevin McKidd have taken directorial turns. It's a particularly popular strategy at USA Network, where everyone from "Burn Notice's" Jeffrey Donovan to "White Collar's" Tim DeKay to "Psych's" James Van Der Beek has directed at least one episode of their respective shows. (Roday has three under his belt, with another two forthcoming; Donovan got an additional director credit on the series' prequel film.) "Who knows these shows better than they do?" says USA Senior Vice President Original Scripted Programming Bill McGoldrick. The network frequently waits until a show is a few seasons in before granting the opportunity to its stars. -Reuters

### Sex and the City prequel *The Carrie Diaries* a go at the CW

The rumored "Sex and the City" prequel is a go at the CW. After hearing the pitch Friday, sources tell The Hollywood Reporter that the young-skewing network is moving forward with the project based on "The Carrie Diaries," the book series written by "Sex and the City" author Candace Bushnell that follows Carrie Bradshaw during her senior year of high school in the early 1980s. The project hails from Warner Bros. Television and Josh Schwartz and Stephanie Savage's Fake Empire, with former "Sex and the City" scribe/co-producer Amy B. Harris attached to adapt and serve as show runner. "Fake Empire's" Len Goldstein also is attached as an executive producer. The first book in Bushnell's origin story was published last year and, like "Sex and the City," is told from Carrie's point of view. It follows the aspiring writer through her relationship with Sebastian Kydd and rivalry with popular girl Donna LaDonna. The second novel in the series, "Summer and the City: A Carrie Diaries Book," was published in April and revolves around Carrie's first trip to New York. Both books have been big sellers, with Bushnell signing on this summer to pen two additional installments. Bushnell would likely carry an executive producer credit on the project. -Reuters

### Regis Philbin's next career move is a reality show

After 28 seasons, Regis Philbin just started the beginning of the end this week. The 80-year-old talk show vet announced his retirement from "Live with Regis and Kelly" earlier this year and he has an end date: Nov. 18. But if it were up to him, the end would've come a lot sooner. "I wanted to leave at the end of my contract in August," Philbin tells USA Today. "But they wanted to drag it out until November." Nevertheless, he's not exactly done with show business. He wouldn't do "Dancing with the Stars," but Philbin reveals that he has shot footage for a reality series pilot in Los Angeles just last week and he already has a name chosen: "This Week With Regis!" he says. "There are several things that interest me," he says. "You know these reality shows? I would love to do a real reality show where Regis goes out." He says that cameras followed him on a visit to an eye doctor and then to an appearance on "The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson," saying the cameras caught everything. "Whatever happened, happened," he says. Of course, the star is still waiting to see the edited product, but he has no delusions of grandeur that he'll knock the first family of reality TV off its throne. -Reuters

## FALL TV PREVIEW



A still from the set of "Happy Endings". (Agencies)

Jumanah Al-Ghadban  
Staff Writer

Genre: Comedy  
Running Time: 30 Minutes

**Who's In It:** Eliza Coupe (*Scrubs*) as Jane, Elisha Cuthbert (24) as Alex, Zachary Knighton (*FlashForward*) as Dave, Adam Pally as Max, Damon Wayans Jr. (*The Underground*) as Brad, and Casey Wilson (*Saturday Night Live*) as Penny.

**What's it About:** When "Friends" meets "Will & Grace" you get the birth of a new show, one which combines all the positive aspects of others and creates a hit on its own. "Happy Endings" starts off when an altar bound couple suddenly breaks up on their wedding day (Dave and Alex). Most would worry about dividing up their belongings (wedding gifts, any acquired belongings during the relationship) however with Dave and Alex it's wondering who gets what friend. This show centers on the relationship between a group of six friends: Dave and Alex; Brad and Jane; Penny and Max. They've been friends ever since Dave and Alex got together and it was that relationship that

## Happy Endings

kept the group dynamic going. However, after the breakup it's the survival of the fittest, each member does not know whether to support Alex or Dave and to side with which friend. This comedy brings forth lots of big questions that need to be answered; and they're answered in the funniest way possible.

However, that's not what I meant when I described this as a when "Friends" meets "Will & Grace" show. That description is reserved for the fact that it reminds you of "Friends" by the relationship you see between 6 friends, a pair of which (Alex & Jane) are siblings and the rest are friends that were acquired over the years. It reminds you of "Will & Grace" with the relationship between Penny and Max, which is similar to the relationship between Karen Walker (Megan Mullally) and Jack McFarland (Sean Hayes) in which a straight woman and a homosexual man are the best of friends who have the craziest antics that will have you roll on the floor from all the laughter.

In short, if you are looking for a show that will have you laughing along with its crazy characters this will be the show to tune into. It has concluded its first season of thirteen episodes and will be resuming its second season on Sept. 28 on ABC Network.

## Artists welcome EU music copyright extension

LONDON: Artists welcomed a European decision to extend copyright for recorded music to 70 from 50 years, after a years-long campaign by performers including Paul McCartney and Cliff Richard who faced their rights expiring in their lifetime.

The move will help the music industry claw back some of the revenues lost as it has struggled to respond to a digital revolution that has allowed widespread music piracy on the Internet with growing online distribution.

"At a time when certain interests seek to weaken copyright for their own purposes, this sends a vital message that the right of creators to earn a living is taken seriously by the EU," the Independent Music Companies' Association said.

Global recorded music sales fell 9 percent last year to \$15.9 billion.

"The European Union has finally acted to give performers and musicians in Europe a longer term of protection to ensure that they benefit from their performances, at least in their lifetime," said former ABBA singer-songwriter Bjorn Ulvaeus. "Now I won't have to see ABBA being used in a TV commercial."

"This is a great step forward for artists," said U2's manager Paul McGuinness. "Nearly 40,000 artists petitioned for this change and delivered a loud and clear message that politicians have taken heed of."

The step will bring performers' rights more into line with those of songwriters and authors, and also take the European copyright term closer to the US term of 95 years.

European Union member states will have two years to incorporate the provisions of the directive adopted on Monday into their national laws. -Reuters

## Banking panic and romance inspire film *360*

TORONTO: The global financial crisis and a 111-year-old play about sexual intrigue helped inspire the latest film by "The Queen" screenwriter Peter Morgan, in which characters from different global cities find themselves interlinked by good and bad choices.

"360", which had its world debut at the Toronto International Film Festival on Friday and will open the London Film Festival in October, follows characters ranging from a Slovakian sex worker to a Brazilian photographer as they travel through places as diverse as Vienna and Denver. While romance, infidelity and friendship are major themes, Morgan said the story sprang partly from seeing how the banking crisis of 2008 fed upon itself, with bad news from one lender or country having a domino effect on others. "I really don't want this film ever to be thought of as a metaphor for the banking crisis, but there's no doubt that's what I was thinking of when I wrote it," he reports in Toronto.

The film also drew inspiration from Arthur Schnitzler's "La Ronde", a play that scandalized Europe at the start of the 20th century with its frank depiction of characters moving from one sexual partner to another.

What interested Morgan was the way the fate of the play's characters intertwines and comes full circle, an increasingly relevant theme in an age of the Internet, air travel, flu pandemics and global commerce.

"I wanted to write something that reflected the post-Internet world, and the way in which we're all linked. And I thought the best way to do that was through romance and through individual choices," said Morgan, whose scripts for "The Queen" and "Frost/Nixon" were



Actors Dinara Drukarova, Maria Flor, Ben Foster, director Fernando Meirelles, executive producer Peter Morgan, actors Lucia Saposova, Gabriela Marcinkova and Mark Ivanir speak onstage at '360' press conference during the 2011 Toronto International Film Festival at TIFF Bell Lightbox on Sept. 10, 2011 in Toronto, Canada. (AP)

both nominated for Oscars.

The film stars Jude Law as a lonely British businessman seeking to meet an Eastern European prostitute, Rachel Weisz as a married woman having an affair with a younger man, and Anthony Hopkins as a recovering alcoholic on the hunt for his missing daughter. For Brazilian director Fernando Meirelles, who received an Oscar nomination for directing "City of God", the challenge was holding on to the thread of the story with so many intertwining plots and characters. Still, some early re-

views, which compare "360" to films like "Babel", have said the ambitious structure may stretch itself too thin. "With a starchy international cast and multinational locations, you never take your eyes off the screen for a second. On the other hand, this is a cold and cerebral movie, where one's attachment to any particular character or story is tentative at best," the Hollywood Reporter said in its review.

"You watch the film rather than get absorbed by it." -Reuters