

CFTPA salutes Brightlight in Ottawa

by: Etan Vlessing Mar 6, 2006

Brightlight Pictures - which won the CFTPA's Entrepreneur of the Year award at last month's Prime Time conference in Ottawa - is no overnight success.

Principals Stephen Hegyes and Shawn Williamson worked separately in independent production long before they cofounded the Vancouver prodo in 2001. And even after pairing up, survival in an incredibly volatile industry was not assured for at least two years, Hegyes insists.

"Until that point, you woke up every morning and thought you might not make it to the end of the week," he recalls, on the phone from Vancouver after the conference.

But Brightlight's world didn't end - it instead was steadily filled with ample service and proprietary film and TV work. And now, Brightlight has been lauded by its peers for putting a lot of product in front of a lot of eyeballs, in Canada and internationally.

"We're thrilled to have won [the CFTPA award], especially if you look at the others who have won it in the past," Hegyes says.

Neither partner was able to attend the CFTPA conference. Williamson was prepping the feature White Noise 2: The Light, while Hegyes was at the Berlin film festival. The award was accepted by Brightlight's VP of legal affairs Karyn Edwards.

The key to their success seems to be the pairing of Hegyes' film financing expertise with Williamson's production prowess. Together, they have achieved sustained success at getting product made, whether for themselves or others.

"We stick to what we know: producing. But within that business, the diversity has helped by keeping us in a position where we have a great deal of work, servicing films for Hollywood, and financing and making our own films," says Hegyes.

Brightlight's most notable recent success is the Canada/U.K. coproduction White Noise, the Michael Keaton-starrer that has grossed over US\$85 million and spawned a sequel.

The company's credits also include Bruce Sweeney's feature Last Wedding, the CHUM teen comedy Going the Distance and service work on Hollywood films such as Edison, 88 Minutes and The Wicker Man.

Key partnerships for Brightlight include a multi-picture deal with Los Angeles-based H2O

Motion Pictures, Britain's Gold Circle Films (White Noise) and Germany's Uwe Boll (BloodRayne, Dungeon Siege).

Brightlight, in fact, has never shrunk from thinking globally.

"Vancouver is a wonderful place to shoot, but if you don't hop on a plane and head to international markets, you won't get anything off the ground," says Hegyes.

© 1986-2007 Brunico Communications Ltd.

® Playback is a registered trademark of Brunico Communications Ltd. Use of this website is subject to Terms of Use. View our Privacy Policy.