

Films and Video

From Worldcon Runners' Guide

Contents

- 1 Films and Video
 - 1.1 Hugo Nominees
 - 1.2 35MM Equipment
 - 1.3 Main Track Films
 - 1.4 Secondary Track Films
 - 1.5 Japanimation
 - 1.6 Unions

Films and Video

Hugo Nominees

Ideally, all of the films that are Hugo nominees should be shown at the con. Unfortunately, in most cases they are so new that they are not yet available on video, much less 16mm. This usually means 35mm equipment must be used.

If the nominee Film/Video comes from outside the Con country the production company may decide to refuse to produce a copy because "it might be copied and pirated before we are planning to show it." Sometimes the only way out (after convincing them of the immense honour involved) is to have the film/tape hand carried by a trusted member of the production company, shown only in her/his presence and handed back immediately after each use. Is 007 available?

35MM Equipment

In addition to Hugo nominees, film studios sometimes make available premieres of new films. This is not as common as we would like, partly because of the timing—most quality SF films are released either for Christmas or summer and are not available in finished form by Labor Day. Nonetheless, sometimes trailers are available—in 35MM.

The main problem with 35MM is price, particularly in a union facility.

Electricians have to run special electrical lines, stagehands are required to set up the screen if it is above a certain size.—And of course union projectionists will be required to run the films, with a minimum

"call" of several hours. The room to be used will also have to be available for at least a couple of hours for setup to be done.

Then, too, many hotel or convention center rooms that are used for films are barely adequate for 16mm, much less 35mm. Ceiling height, presence of mirrors on the walls, pillars, door placement—all of these need to be taken into account when determining where to show films.

Main Track Films

The main track of films should be a combination of old favorites and obscure, little known films. Too many people in charge of Worldcon film programs have gotten the bulk of their material from the three or four largest film rental companies. People who attend the Worldcon expect to see the unusual and different, and not just the stuff they can find in their local Blockbuster Video store!

Some of the rare films that should be sought include titles like: Victory Through Air Power, Rocket Man (script by Lenny Bruce), the sequel to Plan 9 From Outer Space, Captain Kronos, Vampire Hunter, etc.

Running amateur films is an interesting idea that hasn't been tried often enough. Given current technology, though, perhaps amateur videos might get more results. If this is done, reps from the committee should pre-screen submissions.

Short subjects should be used in large quantities, and sandwiched between features. Cartoons are always popular, especially Warner Brothers material.

Late-night turkey shoots are popular. Showing a really bad and/or popular movie at midnight is often done. Famous bad films include Attack of the Killer Tomatoes, Plan 9 From Outer Space, etc. Perennial crowd pleasers include: Buckaroo Banzai, Phantom of the Paradise, etc.

Morning serials are also an idea. Rather than running serials all at once, do a chapter a day of a couple of serials. Rather than the more common Flash Gordon stuff, try something less known like The Crimson Ghost or Spy Smasher.

Secondary Track Films

If funds are available, a second track of films is a good idea for Worldcons larger than 5000. This track especially can be used to show favorite films that are voted on by attendees of the main track.

Japanimation

Japanimation programs are like role playing games. Their following is fanatical and the hard core Japanimation fans will remain transfixed in the room throughout the con. The larger Japanimation groups can easily put together a self-contained program—just give them a room and cover the costs of video projectors and screens.

Unions

These are not people to mess with. Of all the unions to deal with, the projectionists are the ones that most often result in problems if not handled well.

Check local rules very carefully. Union jurisdiction can vary not only from city to city and hotel to hotel, but from room to room! In some facilities, meeting rooms under a certain size are not covered by projectionist jurisdiction. Movie projectors are not the only problem; slide projectors are often covered.

An extremely sensitive issue is whether they will insist on doing all the handling of projectors themselves, or whether they will allow fan staff to assist and/or do the work. Likewise, their attitude on how to cover multiple film rooms can vary.

Traditionally, the union guys come in all business and scratching their heads, and as the convention goes on, they relax and start giving the concom breaks, both on their charges and how strict they are on various rules. But this cannot be counted on in advance!

If there are any problems with union projectionists, the rule of thumb is: get everyone **away from** the projectionist and call the Facilities Liaison **immediately** with the highest priority scream you can muster! These guys literally have the power to shut down the convention! If they decide to raise a stink, they will take the electricians and stagehands out with them.

A dirty little secret is that there is often more than one rate possible for projectionists (and other union staff.) The hotel will usually tell you that projectionists are arranged through their in-house video service. What **they won't tell** you is that they add a surcharge onto the union rate! **If instead you contact** the local union shop steward directly, the hourly rate can be as much as \$10-15 lower! (This situation can vary from city to city)

Likewise, check the hotel rules carefully as to whether you are **required to get** equipment via the hotel's in-house service, or whether you are allowed to rent it from outside sources, or simply purchase your own. If concom members work at local universities, it is possible for the con to rent equipment from a local university for rates **significantly lower than** the hotel will charge. (Be sure to get lots of extra bulbs!)

Copyright © 2002 | Worldcon Runners' Guide
(<http://www.noreascon.org/users/sflovers/u1/wcrg/index.html>) | Table of Contents
(<http://www.noreascon.org/users/sflovers/u1/wcrg/toc.html>) | crg@sflovers.org
(<mailto:crg@sflovers.org>)

"World Science Fiction Society", "WSFS", "World Science Fiction Convention", "Worldcon", "NASFiC", and "Hugo Award" are service marks of the World Science Fiction Society (<http://www.wsfs.org/>), an unincorporated literary society.

Retrieved from "http://wcrg.conrunner.net/wiki/index.php?title=Films_and_Video"
Category: Eighth Edition

■ This page was last modified on 11 July 2009, at 23:29.