

up *All Stars* for its 1990-91 schedule.

Among other announcements pending from DIC: Several major advertising sponsorships (joining McDonald's and Mattel Toys) for its *Pepe Plata* live-action and animation two-hour block on the Spanish-language Univision Network; license agreements with 25 toy and miscellaneous children's product manufacturers for *Captain Planet and the Planeteers* (distributed by Turner Program Services domestically and overseas, including domestic cablecasting on TBS); five or six series for overseas distribution with Silvio Berlusconi Communications (BROADCASTING, April 30), in addition to the opening of a DIC office in either France, Britain or Italy, and restructuring of the syndicated half-hour *Super Mario Bros.*

Super Show (distributed by Viacom Enterprises) to include a new five-minute "live-action magazine" segment featuring two yet to be cast comics (replacing Captain Lou Albano and Danny Wells).

One sour note for DIC occurred when Saban International N.V. (a division of Saban Entertainment) filed suit two weeks ago with U.S. District Court in Los Angeles seeking \$5 million in compensatory damages against the animation house for allegedly breaching an international distribution agreement for up to 800 hours of DIC library product. Saban's complaint is also asking for an injunction barring DIC from making other foreign distribution deals. Saban International, according to DIC, only handles the foreign distribution of *Camp Candy* (which DIC also produces

for NBC's Saturday morning lineup). Saban has also partnered with DIC in producing other NBC animated series, including *The Karate Kid*, *Captain N: The Game Master* and *ALF* (with Alien Productions).

The relationship between the two apparently deteriorated last February when DIC filed suit for unspecified damages with Los Angeles Superior Court against Saban Productions over rights and royalties to music used in DIC-produced TV shows. Saban and DIC officials declined to comment on the pending litigation from both suits. However, a DIC spokesman indicated Haim Saban, Saban International president, would maintain his co-executive producer title with *Camp Candy* for at least this season. —MF

Paramount, Arsenio Hall plan 'Party Machine'

Nia Peeples will host half-hour music/variety show; Paramount positions it as companion to 'Arsenio'

Nia Peeples is not exactly a household name, but if Arsenio Hall Communications and Paramount Domestic Television have their way, late fringe talk strip *The Party Machine with Nia Peeples* will be riding the coattails of syndication's highest-rated hour late night strip, *The Arsenio Hall Show*. Planning *Party Machine* as a half-hour strip for January 1991, Paramount is banking on incumbent *Arsenio* stations to be lured to a youth-oriented music/variety program as the perfect late night flow between those shows.

However, a New York station representative who said he was contacted by a client station general manager said that Paramount pitched *Party Machine* at an unusual four minutes national and two minutes local barter advertising split. Other industry sources have banded about 4/2 and 4/3 splits, but Paramount officials declined comment on the financial terms of the program. Normally, most half-hour, first-run syndicated programs offer stations at least 50% or more in local advertising time.

According to the rep source, Paramount sales executives conveyed to the general manager that the studio needs to retain the four minutes of local ad time "because *Party Machine* is designed for late night and will be so expensive to produce, we'll



Nia Peeples

need that four-minute advertising split to recoup and eventually make some money on our investment."

The station rep said Paramount has been signing year-to-year contracts for *Arsenio* (which is offered on a straight barter split of seven minutes national, seven minutes local). "You can bet that Paramount will be using leverage in getting *Party Machine* cleared at the same time with *Arsenio* renewals," the source said. "It's nothing new in this business to hear a syndicator say 'we'll take our show across the street to another station that will love to have *Arsenio* and *Nia* in their

late night lineup.'"

When asked if the studio plans to use leverage tactics to have *Party Machine* cleared with *Arsenio*, Frank Kelly, executive vice president, programming, Paramount Domestic Television Division, said that "once station people see the presentations we have in store, [*Party Machine*] will stand on its own." He added: "I think it will make a great marriage for the stations already succeeding with *Arsenio* in late fringe and looking for stronger late night flow."

The announcement of *Party Machine* ended speculation over what Paramount and Hall are grooming as *Arsenio*'s lead-out companion piece ("Closed Circuit," April 30), and gives the studio its first 1990-91 syndication entry since Paramount's *Hard Copy* news magazine entered first-run syndication in September 1989. *Arsenio*, which was Paramount's first foray into weekday late fringe, also went into distribution in midseason 1988-89, in January 1989.

Peeples has appeared on *Arsenio* in the past as a back-up singer and dancer, and played performing arts student Nicole Chapman in the first-run syndication of *Fame* (distributed by Metromedia and MGM Television) from 1984-87. She also hosted *Top of the Pops*, a defunct music series on CBS during the 1987-88 season. Lately, Peeples' singing career also has blossomed with her first album, "Nothin' But Trouble." Peeples currently has a recurring role in NBC's *Nasty Boys*, and does guest video jockey stints on the MTV cable network.

Preliminary response to a late night musical vehicle starring Peeples appeared favorable. A competing general manager in Detroit said independent WJBK-TV with *Arsenio* has raised Detroit's weekday HUT levels to 22.6% of the audience in late fringe, its highest marks ever. The source added that *Arsenio* (at 12:30 a.m., ET) averaged a 5 rating, 24 share during last February's sweeps, and said it provides Paramount "a layout to present what kind of great flow these younger demos will bring to *Party Machine*."

The show will be taped at an adjacent soundstage to *Arsenio* on Paramount's Hollywood lot (sharing the hour program's vid-

NorthStar-Recom co-ventures

NorthStar Entertainment Group and Recom Inc. have entered into a production co-venture project to produce two made-for-television movies and a five-hour mini-series. The two parties have pegged more than \$20 million for the production of the three projects, expected to be completed over a two-year period. The projects will either be sold to the broadcast networks or to pay or basic cable. The mini-series, titled *The Tuskegee Airmen*, is based on a highly decorated, all-black flying unit that fought during World War II. Herman Rush, former president of Columbia Pictures Television and current chairman and chief executive officer of Rush Entertainment, is executive producer of the project with Jonathan Stathakis, head of West Coast operations, NorthStar Entertainment Group.

The two made-fors are *Shanghai Pierce*, a true-life look at a wild character out of the old west, and a look at the life of George Washington Carver.

NorthStar Entertainment Group, formerly the CBN Producers Group, currently produces *Bordertown*, *Rin Tin Tin: K-9 Cop* and *Gerbert*, all for The Family Channel.