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Ricky
&
La Banda

BOWIE'S LEGACY
PITCH & PLAY: ELECTION TIME
GAME OF APPS: CHALLENGE ACCEPTED



THE POWER OF INNOCENCE

MAGNIFICENT
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IN THIS ISSUE

12 *Ricky & La Banda*22 *Challenge accepted*

18



26

34 *Bowie's Legacy*

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Georgi R. Chakarov
 Editor-in-chief

Preserving the Legacy



David Bowie passed away a few days ago. I doubt anyone would ever be able to sum up his influence on music, fashion, visual arts, self expression and even technology. But I would like to focus here on the essence of his personality – both as an artist and a human being – and that is the constant search for the new and innovative; the drive to change yourself and the people around you. I believe this is the Legacy Bowie left us.

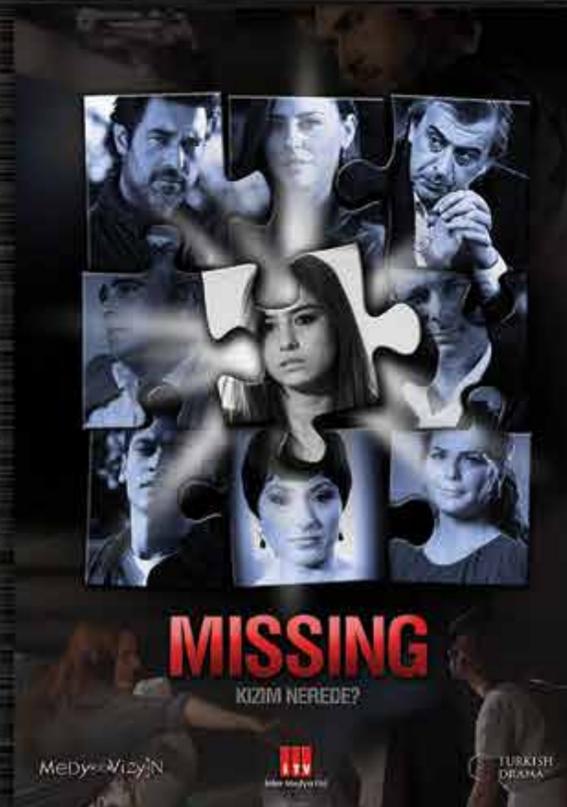
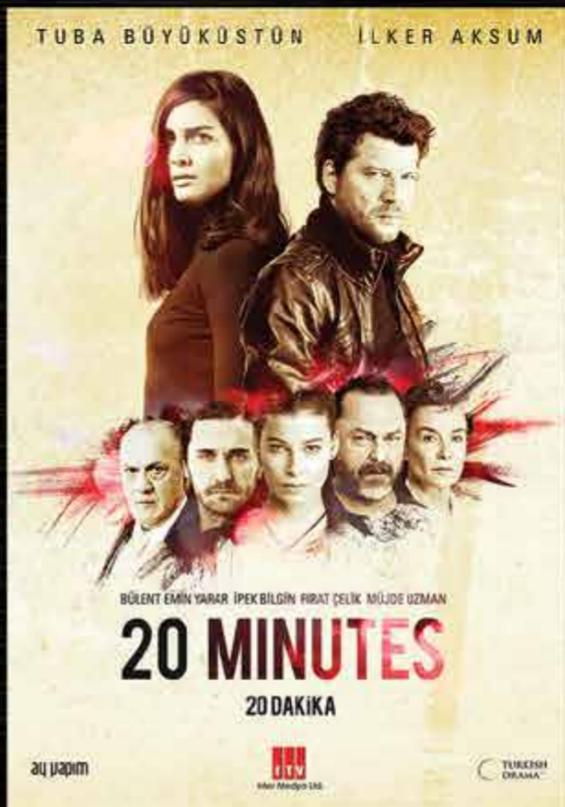
The *New Bowie* was never quite the same as the *Old Bowie*. How was that possible?

Just like his character in *The Man Who Fell to Earth*, Bowie was curious about everything surrounding us. He was on a constant search for reinvention and knowledge. He was not afraid to kill *Ziggy Stardust*, *Aladdin Sane* and *Major Tom* time and time again. Because he could not succumb to the role of being just one persona, just one idea. There were too many ideas and influences out there.

Bowie was ahead of his time because he was open to the world and the people around him. He was not shut down in his own ego; he was constantly running away from it, with his next impersonation. He turned his ideas into *Sound and Vision*, into *Aliens and Earthlings* with own drama. And by the time we, his audience, had realized what he wanted to tell us, he had already moved to his next character, his next story to once again fascinate and puzzle us.

I hope we will be able to keep his Legacy.

Hats off.



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TV3 without big reality projects this year?

MasterChef NZ and *The X Factor* are being “rested” by TV3 New Zealand in 2016. *MasterChef NZ* pulled low ratings in its first season on TV3 after being previously chopped by TVNZ. Mediaworks group content director Andrew Szusterman said it appeared New Zealand’s appetite for cooking programs had gone off the boil. MediaWorks did confirm returns for *The Block NZ*, *The Bachelor NZ* and *Grand Designs NZ*, all of which it said had rated well.



SVT aired the first live VR show in Sweden

As part of its charity show *Musikhjälpen* SVT1 realized the first live Virtual Reality broadcast in Sweden. The goal was to give viewers the feeling that they are right next to the host and stars taking part in the show aired live from the Central Square in Linköping. A smartphone or any type of VR headset accompanied by the SVT 360 app allowed viewers to view content in 360 degrees. SVT promises even more projects with VR in the future.



De Mol to look for new boy and girl bands

John de Mol revealed in an interview for Radio 538 that he is working on a new format which will have the goal to create new boy and girl bands. He said that the show is prepared for a fall 2016 launch and it will be different from *The Voice* and going back to “the old structure”. It is unclear which broadcaster will air the new concept from Talpa, as RTL4 is planning a new season of *The Voice* for the next fall season.



Televisa's big 2016 premieres

As usual the Mexican Televisa will have a busy year with a number of big premieres. *El Hotel de los Secretos* (local remake of Spanish *Gran Hotel*) will premiere on January 25 on Univision. *Camino Hacia del Destino* will start on the same date in Mexico, *Corazon que Miente* will begin on February 8. *Sueno de Amor* starts on February 22. Without an exact launch date are the telenovelas *Frente al Mismo Rostro* (adaptation of *Lazos de Amor*) and *Dos Dianas*.



French adaptation for The Fall

BBC Two’s hit crime drama *The Fall* will be adapted for the French TV leader TF1. The screenwriter Virginie Brac will be working on the project, which will be an eight-episode miniseries. The original series will end after its upcoming third season.



Diomedes was Colombia's most-watched show in 2015

RCN’s biopic *Diomedes* became the most-watched show during the past year. It averaged 12.9 rating points. On the second spot was the second edition of *The Voice Kids* on Caracol with 12.8 points followed by RCN’s *Lady* with 12.7.



Korea makes own Good Wife

CJ E&M confirmed that they will be producing a Korean version of hit US series *The Good Wife*. The show will air on tvN in 2016. The series will be directed by Lee Jung Hyo. It will be written by Han Sung Woon of *Spy*.



Ellen keeps the show rolling

The Ellen DeGeneres Show has been renewed by the NBC Owned Television Stations in a deal with Warner Bros. Domestic Television Distribution through summer 2020 (the 2019-20 television season). The series, from Telepictures Productions, will continue to air on 10 of the NBC-owned stations, including WNBC in New York, KNBC in Los Angeles and WMAQ in Chicago.



Hugh Laurie is back

Hugh Laurie is making a comeback to the US “television” scene after signing a deal with Hulu for two seasons of new drama *Chance* based on a novel from Kem Nunn. Laurie will play a forensic neuropsychiatrist named Eldon Chance. The doctor enters San Francisco’s criminal underworld after making “an ill-advised decision involving a patient possibly suffering from multiple personality disorder”.



Reshet has a new deputy CEO

Reshet announced that Ronit Ganon-Amit has been appointed to the position of Executive Vice President, becoming the deputy of CEO Avi Zvi. She replaced Ilan Tuviah who left after 10 years with the company. Ganon-Amit joined Reshet a year ago, taking over responsibility for the strategic development of the network. Before that she was VP of Customer Service at Yes.



America TV bets on big shows

America TV Peru has presented its top ten proposals for 2016. Along with the second season of *Ven, Baila, Quinceañera*, the channel will launch the miniseries *Valiente Amor* and *Nadia*. The joint production with Telefe, *Lucas*, will be launched during 2016. The criminal series *Diario Forense* will also entertain the local audience. *Maldito Dinero* and *Historia de Red* are in the plans as well, together with the shows *Mathi Nait* and *El Gran Show*.



Fiction dominated the Spanish air in 2015

According to Barlovento Comunicación’s annual report, fiction was the most aired content in Spain during 2015 with a 31.5% share. News and current affairs programs got 18.4% followed by the entertainment programs with 16.6%. The culture content got 15.4% share.



Dutch play a Game of Drones

RTL5 is working on a brand new game-show titled *Game of Drones*. A channel rep said that the devices have already been selected and they expect to make a visual spectacle since all of the drones will have cameras on board. The new format is developed in cooperation with Martijn Krabbé’s *Wise Monkeys*.



The cost of making series in Norway

The Norwegian Film Institute and NRK have revealed the budgets of the local series premiering this year. The Top 3 includes: *Nobel* (NRK/Monster Scripted) - 68 million crowns, *Acquitted* (TV 2/Miso Film) - 60 million crowns, *Mammon* (NRK) - 50 million crowns.



■ Mega replaces Turkish drama with local fiction

Megavisión is enjoying big ratings for its brand new prime-time proposal *Pobre Gallo*. The channel announced that it will substitute the Turkish series in its schedule with own fiction productions. *Pobre Gallo* is the fourth original series of Mega as it will start shooting a fifth and a sixth title soon. The channel aims to become Chile's leading fiction powerhouse.



■ Record's *Os Dez Mandamentos* to sweep Latin America

The Biblical telenovela *Os Dez Mandamentos* is Record's most watched original series since 2008. After threatening Globo's throne in the Brazilian primetime, the show has now started conquering Latin America. Its premiere in Chile gave TVN the leadership in its slot with a peak of 16 points. The series is also among the top proposals of America TV in Peru.



■ TVN and TV Publica with joint project

The Chilean and the Argentinean pub-casters TVN Chile and TV Publica, are preparing a joint series production billed *Bichos Raros*. Produced by Parox, the filming of the new production will end on March 11. The 13-episode story will revolve around a family, which leaves life in the capital behind and moves to the province.



■ Canal 13 Paraguay changes its name

Canal 13 Paraguay announced the change of its name. From now on the broadcaster is called RPC (Red Paraguaya de Comunicación).



■ Unicanal drops Argentinean shows

The new owner of Paraguayan net Unicanal, Javier Bernardes, announced that starting from 2016 the channel will gradually stop airing shows from Argentina's El Trece. The reason for this decision is that the channel will put the focus on domestic productions.



■ Book adaptations to dominate Year of the Monkey

It looks like The Year of the Monkey will be the year of book adaptations on Chinese television. More than 90 percent of the dramas that are scheduled to air in 2016 are adaptations of online novels or other literary sources. The other genre that will keep its presence in the grids is period/ancient dramas and fantasy skeins.



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Ricky & La Banda

Ricky Martin is a true pop culture phenomenon. His talent, charisma and powerful global hits raised Latino music to a whole new level, paving the way to success to international superstars like Enrique Iglesias and Jennifer Lopez. Now, Ricky has taken on a new mission – creating the next topbilling Latino boy band as part of the show **La Banda**. The experience and satisfaction have been fantastic and this is “only the beginning,” as Ricky tells Georgi R. Chakarov.



Ricky, it's been less than a month since the first season finale of *La Banda*. Are you happy with the results of the project?

I am so happy with the results of the first season of *La Banda*. Seeing these amazingly talented artists expressing themselves through music was just so inspiring.

How did you feel selecting Latin America's next big boy band alongside Laura Pausini and Alejandro Sanz?

Next to Laura and Alejandro, I'm really excited with the boy band that the audience has selected. We have a lot of work to do. This is only the beginning.

Will you be directly involved in the management of the band?

The opportunity to work with young artists that are dying to say something through music, and for me and my management team to be able to help, inspires all of us. I was in a boy band myself and I am excited to share with them my experiences and everything I've learned.

You have been also involved in other talent-search formats around the world. What is the difference between *La Banda* and other shows looking for musical talents?

La Banda is different because the fans have the power. The way it works, is artists will walk into a runway and they literally have one minute to convince the audience why they have to vote yes for them to walk into the audition room and then meet with the judges once they passed the first round.

Why did you join this project?

The fact that I've been doing this since I was 12 and now I have the opportunity to relive all those emotions that I went through when I started my career is pretty refreshing. That's what this project has given me.

You actually started your career auditioning to become a member of



Menuendo back in the 1980s. And I believe you got turned down two times... How does it feel to be on the other side and decide the fate of young talents?

I've experienced what they went through when I was in a group, so I feel inspired that I can share with them what worked and what didn't work for me.

Menuendo was a launchpad for your career. What were the lessons that you learned as a boy during that period?

During that time, I became part of a band that was already structured and here, I want them to be themselves and discover their own identity with our guidance.

When was the moment you felt you have reached the top? What has been the biggest challenge you have faced? What inspired you the most to become the Ricky Martin we know today?

At least for me, there's no such thing as reaching for the top as we are always striving to be better. When I received my first Grammy it was one of the best moments of my life. Persistence and surrounding myself with the right people carried me through. You need to have fun and be in the moment. I never stopped dreaming.

“ You need to have fun and be in the moment. ”



GETTY IMAGES

You have two boys. Will they also become music stars one day?

My kids are with me all the time and their playground is backstage at an arena. That's what is normal for them and they are healthy and happy. It's 'inevitable' for the pair to be playing with different musical instruments. When they grow up they will make their decisions.

What do you like to do in your free time? Do you watch lots of television?

My free time is spent with my sons in my island of Puerto Rico.

You have been an ambassador for many great causes. But if you had the power to change only one thing in the world today, what would it be?

I am committed to defending children's rights to combat human trafficking as it finds more children than we can imagine. It's never ending and we must continue to fight.

My foundation, Ricky Martin Foundation, is dedicated to the wellbeing of children around the world. There's so much we can do to stop this.

Your latest album has gone platinum and your global ONE WORLD TOUR continues this year in Latin America. Do you find the time to make new music? What are your plans for the year ahead? More touring or recording a new album, perhaps?

I continue to work on several projects and I will be releasing the latest video for my new single. I've been touring New Zealand, Australia, North America, Canada, Mexico and now we are going into our second leg of the tour in Latin America. ■

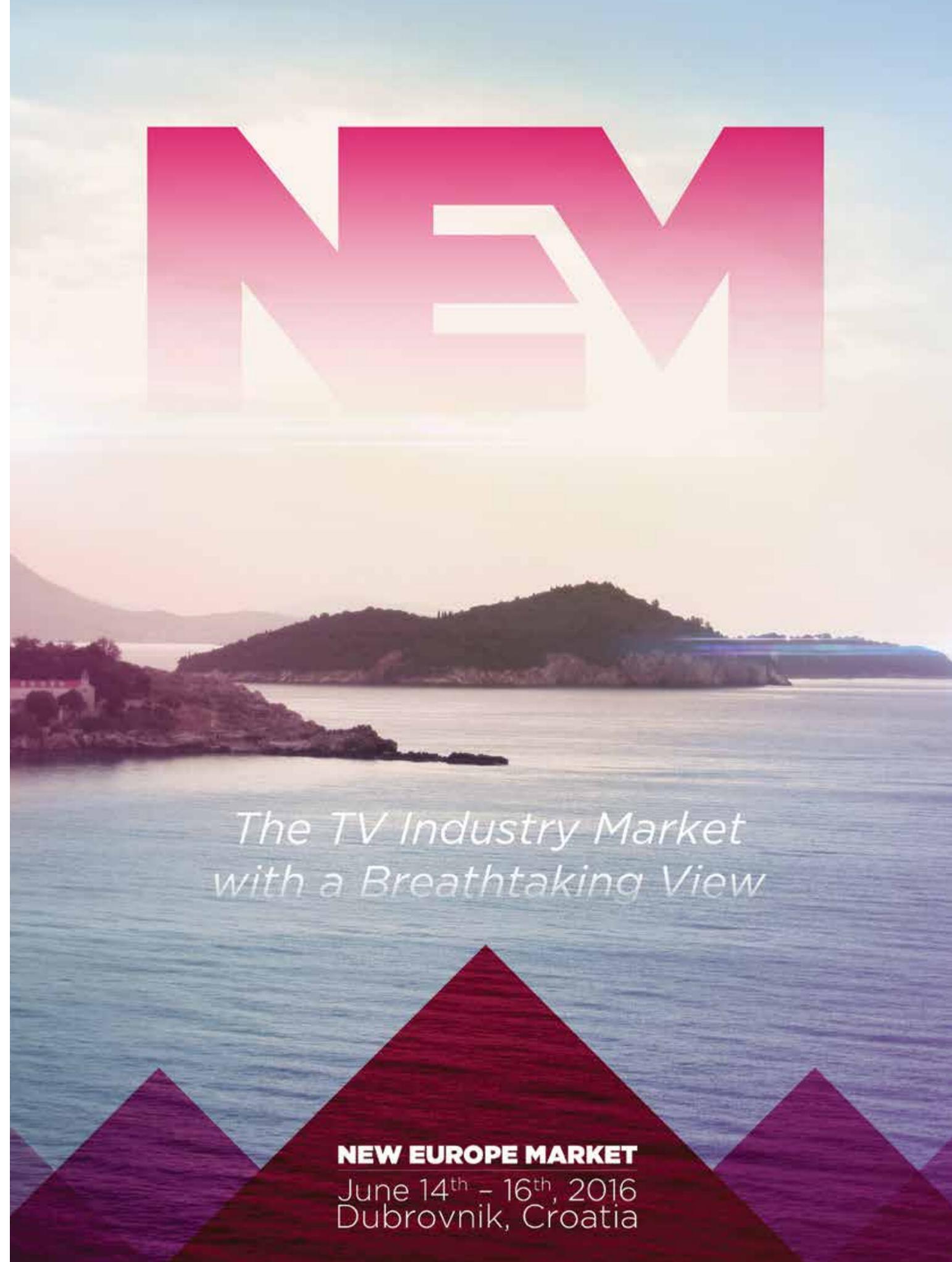
RICKY MARTIN began singing at the age of six. He joined Latin boy band Menudo just before he became a teenager. After his huge success, he left Menudo when he was 17. He starred in his first Mexican telenovela in 1990 and also appeared in US soap *General Hospital*, while also performing at Broadway and launching his solo career in Mexico. His international breakthrough came with the release of the 1995 single *Maria*. Five years later, *Living' La Vida Loca* turned him into a global superstar and the album *Vuelve* won a Grammy for Best Latin Pop Performance. Martin has sold over 70 million copies worldwide.

Martin is the founder of the Ricky Martin Foundation which fights against human trafficking among others. His two twin sons were born in 2008. Ricky started appearing as a judge in music talent shows in 2012. He joined Univision's *La Banda* in fall 2015.



LA BANDA sees Ricky Martin, together with Laura Pausini, and Alejandro Sanz set out to find the ultimate Latino boyband. The format was developed by Univision Communications, Simon Cowell's SYCO Entertainment and Haim Saban Brands, and co-produced with FremantleMedia Latin America.

Season 1 premiered on September 13 and ended on December 13, 2015. In its first full season run, La Banda reached over 18.8 million Total Viewers 2+ and averaged in excess 1.1 million Adults 18-49 and half a million young adults 18-34. La Banda was the #1 entertainment program across the Hispanic demo. Castings for Season 2 start this January in Puerto Rico with auditions open for both boys and girls.



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Servant of the Nation

What happens when an ordinary teacher becomes the President?

Frank Underwood has been in the race for years playing the hard political game in *House of Cards*. Now, in a new comedy series from Ukraine we actually find out what it could be like to become the President of the State without any experience. Kvarstal 95's **Servant of the Nation** tells the story of a teacher who becomes the head of state overnight.

Due to the show's huge success in Ukraine and in tune with the upcoming US elections, TVBIZZ Magazine picked the show as its title for the Pitch & Play initiative of our NATPE Miami 2016 edition.



Volodymyr Zelensky
Creative Producer,
star

→ Volodymyr Zelensky, Creative Producer and star of the show, shares some details about the project.

The idea?

We came up with the idea for the series about 7-8 years ago. The working title then was "Young Country". The idea of an ordinary honest guy becoming the President still remained very relevant all these years, so we decided to go for it in 2015. The genre is very multifaceted and new for Ukrainian TV – it's not just a comedy, it is a political comedy, sometimes satire, sometimes drama. It is very up-to-date and reflects the current sentiments of people. The director, scriptwriters and actors improvised and adjusted the story during filming. The promo line of the series was "based on a future true story".

Our efforts have been rewarded – the series has become not only the slot leader but also the highest rated TV-product, top charted internet video and most talked about premiere of the fall season on Ukrainian TV.

The format?

This is a political comedy about an ordinary school teacher becoming the President of Ukraine. He tries to live an ordinary life without all the 'President's privileges' and works really hard to clean out the total "mess" that is going on in the state and fights with the army of corrupted and deceitful bureaucrats.

Unexpectedly for everyone, the new Head of state, Vasiliy Goloborodko, lives an ordinary life. He resides in a typical apartment on the outskirts of the capital, doesn't have an army of bodyguards and uses public transport to get to work. He earns 200\$ and sometimes borrows money from his friend "until payday". But he forgot that the System, where everybody is used to steal, bribe and apportion, would fight back. Season 1 had 24 episodes of 24 minutes; a second one is planned for 2015 -2016.

The production?

We started the pre-production in February and filming in May. The premiere of the series was on November 16, so it took us approximately 9 months in total.

Is it expensive?

Since we could not use the real government buildings and the script involves a lot of those backgrounds, we had to build up the necessary scenery and decorations. As a consequence, the budget of the project had to add a few zeros. By Ukrainian standards the budget of an episode was rather high, but for instance in Russia for the same amount of money they film a sitcom in the pavilion.

VOLODYMYR ZELENSKY is the the co-owner and Creative Producer of Kvarstal 95. He is a multi-functional actor and author. For the last decade, Zelensky has been one of the most popular Ukrainian celebrities and well-known faces in Russia and CIS.

Kvarstal 95 was founded in 2003 and is among the leading Ukrainian producers of highly rated TV formats, TV films and series, feature films and animation projects with regularly high ratings. Some of their formats (*Crack Them Up, Go Dance!, Claim to Meladze*) have been successfully sold to dozens of countries.



Servant of the nation

► The screening

We asked several industry experts to watch the first two episodes of the show and share their honest opinion about its qualities and potential for international success.



Şenay Filiztekin Turan

Head of Drama Acquisitions, Global Agency

“First of all, congratulations for the success of this great project. When we evaluate it internationally, we can easily say that it has a potential for international distribution although the comedy genre always gets less interest compared to drama.

Of course political content has a limited TV audience and TV viewers are willing to see strong charismatic protagonists in the projects with strong dramas but it's nice to see the transformation of an innocent and pure man to a strong decision maker who kicks over the

traces in this project. The editing style with flashbacks is also interesting.

We also like the number of the characters in the project, it's not limited. It's an absurd comedy like a family that wins the lottery and it is giving the life lessons and telling the story of an idealist man as well.

For Turkey, it would have a chance for adaptation but channels and producers are willing to invest their money in strong dramas instead of comedies, because the competition is very tough here.



Isabelle Pechou

International Fiction Scouting Manager, France Televisions

“This TV series is a nice surprise. The concept first caught my attention: a teacher elected at the presidency of a country! Brilliant and universal. In these troubled days, the audience - no matter the country - would love to see a common person elected at the top of the state. Since he is a teacher, he has some knowledge and this appears as credible. His personal life is far from achieved and his dedication to his job, his honesty, energy and humor make us like him. Empathy is here.

The teacher is usually rather the subject of comedies which depict the difficulties of the job rather than giving the protagonist an extraordinary destiny, like here.

The second nice surprise was the bright production quality. And yes, we can already imagine how the plot would go and there won't be much surprise. This is not what we expect from

this show.

But more importantly, I went a little blurry in the mix of genres. This series belongs to satire, situation comedy (especially when the women of the family show they are emancipated), goes also on some touching drama-ish moments and has this mysterious political/puppetmaster conspiracy touch. This mix doesn't work everywhere.

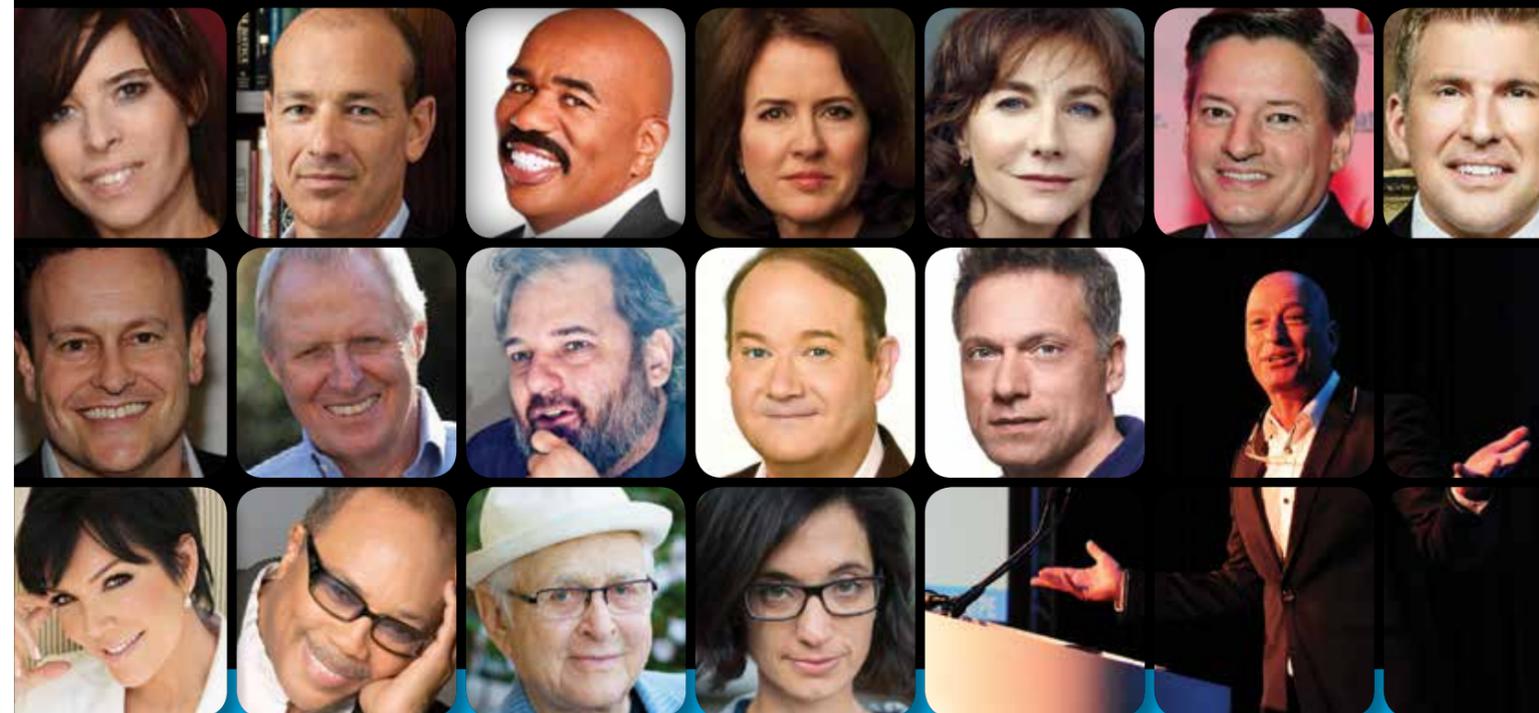
My overall view would tend to see this series more as an original concept with nice potential. Humor has to get adapted to the flavor of each country, whereas the brand ads could be an issue since they are not regulated the same way in each country (a lot of designers brands are shown at the beginning as they revamp the teacher into a leader).

It could be tricky to air this series as a ready-made in some countries, France included. ■

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Quiz Duel



Jörg Pilawa, host of Quizduell on ARD

Quiz Duel premiered on German pubcaster ARD in the spring of 2014. The show produced by the local arm of ITV Studios had a tough start in its daily access slot, suffering from technical mishaps and even hacker attacks. Despite the unimpressive ratings, ARD's management kept its faith in the show and the second season saw a number of primetime episodes which lifted its ratings, resulting in the commission of a third season. In November, the show posted its best audience ever with 2.37 million viewers and 12.6% share. The Quiz Duel (QuizClash) app is developed by Swedish Feomedia. More than 1.6 million users have downloaded the app with one hundred thousand users actively participating per show.

Challenge Accepted

Interactive quiz shows are not something new, but it seems that 2016 could be an important year for them. Are broadcasters and audiences finally ready to embrace them and bring the viewing experience to the next level of real-time engagement?

Internet statistics company Statista Inc. projects that almost every third person on the planet (31.1%) will own a smartphone in 2016. Could millions of app downloads turn into millions of viewers?

In this special feature TVBIZZ Magazine presents two big interactive quiz formats: **Quiz Duel** and **QuizUp** – the first has already aired successfully in Germany and the second was unveiled at MIP-COM 2015 and is set to hit the US screens in 2016. Two format powerhouses, ITV Studios and NBCUniversal International Studios, stand behind these two shows that offer viewers an interactive shared experience.



Frank Beckman
Coordinator ARD Access Primetime, talks about the commission of *Quiz Duel* and its success on the channel.

What was your first reaction when *Quiz Duel* was first pitched to you?

The idea to combine the successful non-linear application *Quizduell* with an attractive and entertaining TV show was thrilling. Creatives all over the world try to bring the two different worlds - Internet and Television - in a lot of different ways together. *Quiz Duel* is one of the most convincing attempts - with high ratings on TV and satisfying participation in the online game.

What audience did you want to target with such a novelty and somewhat risky format?

We expected that younger audiences would be attracted to such an innovative format. Nevertheless, our aim was to make the show also attractive for viewers, who do not take part actively in the game. TV is still a "lean-back-medium", especially in the pre-evening timeslot, in which we air *Quiz Duel*.

How many viewers play on average?

On average, about a hundred thousand users play per show. More than 1.5 million have registered for the game and downloaded the app.

After a slow start due to technical difficul-

ties, the show grabbed the viewers' attention after its primetime celeb editions in season 2. Did you expect that and was that the only reason for the success of the format?

The reason for the success is the combination of an exciting and entertaining concept and the performance of our excellent host Jörg Pilawa.

Do you think the show would have "survived" on a commercial channel?

This question you need to ask the commercial channels.

What is the future of *Quiz Duel* on ARD after the success of season 3?

In the next few weeks we will decide how to proceed.

Do you plan any other interactive formats?

In our primetime show *Spiel für dein Land* (Play for Your Country) the audience can join in with an app as well. Users in Switzerland, Austria and Germany compete live against each other or have to answer questions about typical behavior in their countries. These "polls" have surprising results - a really entertaining part of the show.

Quizduell

Quiz Duel



Ellen Vukic
Executive Producer ITV Studios Germany, tells us about the birth of the idea, the development of the format and the complicated technological process that goes on behind the scenes of *Quiz Duel* every evening.

How was the idea for the format *Quiz Duel* born? It has been almost less than a year between the launch of the Quizduell app on the German market (2013) and the premiere of the show on ARD (2014).

The idea came together through different ways. First, we of course followed the success story of the *Quizduell* app that happened not only here in Germany, but basically all over the world. We started to think about using that hype to create a TV format. Then, we found out that our Swedish sister company had actually already acquired the TV rights, so we were good to go. At the same time, our host Jörg Pilawa had the idea of turning the app into a TV show, as well. So we decided to join forces and take the show to ARD.

Tell us about the pitching process. Was the idea pitched only to ARD? How did the broadcaster react at first to the concept?

Yes. ARD immediately expressed interest in our idea and we continued developing the show in close cooperation. Luckily, ARD and we saw eye to eye on not only turning the app into a show, but in integrating the app into the show and creating a truly interactive format.

What was the biggest challenge in the execution of the project?

The biggest challenge was to connect the TV world with the online world, mostly on a technical level. Programmers for the app and the TV gameshow software needed to work very closely together to figure out how their systems, that would need to function on their own as well, could also work together. And then there were issues like creating a viewing experience that doesn't feel out of sync. Usually, a TV signal needs a few seconds to reach the viewer. But a screen in the app is published immediately. You need to figure out how to align the events that happen in the show with the events that

happen in the app. The app must enhance the viewing experience and not destroy it.

It seems that the format began to score with the viewers after the primetime editions with celebrities in spring 2015. Is this what triggered the change in viewers' interest or was it just a matter of time for them to get used to the format?

It is of course always a great chance to reach a primetime audience. But the show needed to find its audience in the pre-evening slot, which it did quite on its own. The ratings consistently rose over time.

Did you at any point doubt in the success of the format?

Never. Even though we had quite a rough beginning and it was a huge challenge, we always kept believing that this would work, that the audience would welcome the chance to participate in a quiz show from the comfort of their home.

How expensive is your show compared to other quiz formats?

We broadcast live every day. And on top of the usual TV show, there needs to be extra effort and personnel concerning the programming and running of the app.

Are interactive quiz formats going to get more popular? What is the future of such formats?

We strongly believe so, yes. Viewers have always watched quiz shows to test their knowledge, to learn something new and to quiz along. Now they have a chance to actually show what they know and directly influence the show they are watching. Jörg Pilawa for example currently presents the primetime show, *Spiel für dein Land* (Play for Your Country), which also allows viewers to actively take part via app. That is just proof that interactive formats work.

QuizUp was created by Jeff Apploff and Wes Kauble, and is executive produced by Apploff and produced by Universal Television and Apploff Entertainment. The premise of the show is simple: If the in-studio contestant wins eight trivia battles against eight different competitors who are watching and playing from home, they can win up to \$1 million. If any of the at-home players win their battle, they'll win the money allocated to that round. The show uses the popular QuizUp app developed by Plain Vanilla Corp and boasting over 75 million users worldwide. NBC will launch the show this year.



Tell us about the idea to create a TV show from the popular app QuizUp. How did it all start?

The QuizUp app team had been in touch with Apploff Entertainment about whether there might be an opportunity for a TV adaptation of their internationally renowned app. The idea was then pitched to NBC's Paul Telegdy (President, Alternative & Late Night Programming) and like the rest of us he loved the simplicity of the app gameplay and saw its potential as a TV show. The show was in development for the best part of a year and pretty soon our SVP Format Sales & Production, Yvonne Pilkington, and I got involved on behalf of NBCUniversal International Studios. The plan was always to take the show to market ahead of it airing in the United States.

What audience does this novelty format target?

The fantastic thing is that QuizUp already has tens of millions of players around the world. Given the app's users are younger than the usual quiz show audience, there's a huge group of potential viewers who already know and love the game. But we see this as a big mainstream entertainment event, so we've done a lot of work to make sure that even if you've never heard of QuizUp, let alone played it, you can enjoy the spectacle of our player in the studio taking on contestants who join us from homes around the country.

What is the biggest challenge in the execution of the project for an interactive quiz?

The team have spent a lot of time making sure that the technology is totally secure - we're doing something that's never been attempted before - having players at home joining our studio contestant in a series of exciting quiz battles. The sense that anyone in the country can take part in our show is really exciting. Beyond that, we're bringing the same discipline to bear

on the development of the show as we would for any huge entertainment launch...this has to work as a show for a broad audience, not just people who love taking part in quizzes.

How expensive is the format compared to other quiz formats?

Quiz shows haven't been a big part of the primetime schedule in quite some time, so I'm not sure how relevant those comparisons are. Having said that, this is an ambitious show, so it requires a certain level of investment from our network partners.

In Germany, ARD airs the interactive format Quiz Duel which is also based on a popular quiz app. Are there any similarities between the two formats?

They are very different concepts even though they share a similar starting point. *Quiz Duel* features teams, whereas our show sees one in-studio contestant taking on the whole nation! The Battle dynamic at the heart of our show is a simple yet compelling bit of gameplay and it means that we ask many more questions across the hour than other quiz shows. I'm all for competition, so may the best format win!

The format was unveiled big time at MIP-COM 2015. What was the reaction of the industry?

I think it's fair to say that *QuizUp* was the entertainment format that caught the imagination of the market. At the end of the day broadcasters buy shows because they're excited by the possibilities they can see in a format. Selling the show to ITV was a hugely important moment...it's so rare to sell a show in the room, but when that happens, you know you're onto something big.

When will the format go on air?

I can't go into specifics, but let's just say that 2016 is going to be a very big year for *QuizUp*. ■



David Mortimer
Senior Vice President, Factual and Entertainment at NBCUniversal International Television Production, answers the questions of Iliyan Stoychev

Getting great shows on air:

Keshet Studios' mission possible

The US operations of Keshet International (KI) were officially launched less than a year ago but the company has already emerged as one of the key new players on the competitive American market with a wide range of upcoming projects. CEO **Alon Shtruzman** shares his vision on the strategy and future development of Keshet Studios with Stanislav Kimchev.

In July 2015 Keshet International announced the creation of a US-based scripted studio. What prompted you to set up a US operation, following operations in the UK and Australia?

This was a natural development, an evolution of our business in the US. The US has always been a critical and significant business for KI where we have shows like *Homeland*, *DIG* and *Tyrant* and it only makes sense as a business to have people on the ground and to have a studio. In the US, packaging (meaning attaching the right talent) and adapting the show to the local market are imperative nowadays to have something on air. It was always imperative but since the market is becoming more and more competitive and there are so many producers pitching and selling shows, finding the right piece of talent and the right local aim for the show is critical to getting a pickup. And obviously being part of the creative show-making is also important to us because we want to make sure that it is actually successful and will be renewed. And the way to do it is by having people on the ground.

We value local talent, we submit content via a local team. Even though we create global formats, we need to support our team adapting our shows based on local sensibility. That together with the NBC deal and our properties in development with ABC and others obviously has allowed us to increase the volume of development in the US, which gave us a good reason to work

up our business and set up a local office. Also bear in mind that a big part of the business is retaining relations with buyers and writers, and this is something you should do on a daily basis. In order to retain this ongoing dialogue you need someone on the ground. So yes, all of that together obviously brought us to launch Keshet Studios.

Who are the key people in the US team?

Keshet Studios is divided into two different activities: scripted, which is headed by Peter Traugott and non-scripted, which we recently appointed Rob Lee to lead. Peter is a key person. He is a very established producer in America. He's been around for 20 years, working at FOX and NBC and his relations with writers and buyers are exquisite. He's running the scripted activity and he has a team where his second in command is Rachel Kaplan. She is a very experienced developer, she's an EDP development and she's working with Peter on identifying properties, developing the scripts, and working with talent.

Rob is an exceptional and unique creative force in the non-scripted space - he has a great track record having worked at IMG, ProSieben, CORE Media and Zodiak as well as running his own production business. So those are the key people. Obviously, we also have a supportive team of coordinators, business affairs, accounting, etc. but the creative leadership is down to Peter and Rob.



ALON SHTRUZMAN is the CEO of Keshet International, the global distribution and production arm of Keshet Media Group. Since joining Keshet in 2012, Shtruzman has grown the business to include four international offices in London, Los Angeles and Sydney as well as launching some of the biggest international formats.

Alon Shtruzman began his career at Israel's Cable Programming (ICP) consortium where he became Creative Director and Head of Original Production. After working at independent channels as well as founding Israel's first interactive TV studio, Zoe Interactive, he returned to ICP as MD, helping to merge the company with HOT. In 2007 Shtruzman joined Fox International Channels before becoming COO and President of Playcast - the position he held prior to his current role.



Homeland



DIG



Tyrant

What is the main difference between Keshet Studios and other US studios and production companies? What are the aces up your sleeve that will allow you to stay ahead of the competition, which we know is very tough when it comes to scripted content in the US?

I would say that what makes us unique is our ability to finance development, whereas most other production companies are still reliant on the traditional financiers. Depending on the project, that allows us to present fully developed materials and attach the best creative elements before we approach a broadcaster. Another thing that differentiates us and one of our biggest advantages is that we have a very prolific pipeline of international properties coming from not only Israel but also the UK. Recently, we have also acquired third-party party formats.

KI in general is a very IP-driven company, we produce but our original “claim to fame” is developing and creating great IP and that’s the DNA of the company everywhere, and each one of our outposts, whether it’s London or Hong Kong is only driven by creating great IP. I think that’s the legacy of Keshet Studios – it’s great IP with a pipeline that generates a few dozen new properties every year. I think this proliferation puts us in a very competitive position. We’ve been to markets every year, with a big number of shows, and very diverse – there’s comedy, there’s drama – I think there’s something for everyone. I think our international background and very prolific pipeline allows us to bring a bigger and more diverse slate to the US market.

What projects have you already adapted in the US and what projects is Keshet Studios currently working on? When announcing its launch, Keshet US noted that it already had several projects in the pipeline, can you reveal in particular some of them?

Unfortunately, as you know, we can’t announce projects in an early stage. In January when the pilot picks-ups should be announced, it will be easier to speak about these projects.

I don’t think I can provide you with any scoops, but I can definitely mention shows like *Imported* which is a comedy about an American footballer in the UK, kind of “fish out of the water” format, which is very funny and corresponds with football and sports and the world of celebrities. The show was a big success in Israel, now we are developing a US version. In Israel it was originally an Israeli football player who goes to play in the UK and in the American version we feature an American footballer (or “soccer” player), but again it’s about the cultural collision between the UK and this American football player.

Another comedy is *Oh Mama*, as opposed to *Imported* it was developed for the US and it’s a comedy about a young couple that discovers their two moms have begun a romantic relationship. It’s a very cheeky and smart, sexually challenging comedy. These two projects are in development with NBC. Obviously, there are many other projects with the network and other networks and channels but again, we can’t really announce anything now.

I can give you numbers – we have more than a dozen projects in development with clients, with buyers in the US.

Keshet also has an unscripted venture in the US, formed in conjunction with dick clark productions. Will the two companies work together and cooperate on the creation, distribution...?

Absolutely. We have a great relationship with dick clark productions, with shows in production and development. We are big believers in collaboration, and for us the collaboration with dcp allows us to develop and produce more shows, so we work with them side by side with our US studios operation.

“**Developing and creating great IP is the DNA of the company**”

What are the plans for the company – more adaptations of existing Keshet formats or creating new ones for the domestic and international markets? Will you work with other US production companies on creating new scripted formats?

That’s a great question and the answer is yes, yes and yes. Again, our strategy is driven by volume. Our job is to get as many shows as possible on the air. And obviously part of it is collaborating with other companies. We rely strongly on Keshet International’s diverse catalog and we are now developing in the UK and in the US as well as shopping third-party material. We announced recently the acquisition of a French format called *Chefs* – it’s a French series which aired on France 2 and it was a big success in France. We bought the rights for the US adaptation. We have a very prolific acquisition department that works hard to find interesting formats for us from all over the world.

So in terms of content – it’s everything – it’s in-house original, we meet with local writers all the time and we look for original American properties, we develop shows in the UK and we also buy third-party. For me the goal is getting great shows on air. And we look for great shows everywhere, so definitely collaboration, definitely in-house original. We always look for great writers, and if the writer has an agreement with some other production company – yes, we can collaborate. If there’s a reason to collaborate, and if the collaboration allows us to create a better show, then absolutely. We’re always happy to collaborate in the interest of creating great shows.

In a recent interview for CEETV, your colleague Keren Shahr announced that you are also going to do much more in the digital space in the coming year. What partnerships are you currently negotiating? Could we see partnerships between Keshet Studios and for instance Netflix, or Amazon, or Hulu?

We’re now in discussions with key partners in the US and we’re

looking to expand our presence not only in terms of digital platforms but also in terms of online genres because there is a growing appetite for content. So obviously we’re talking to Amazon, Netflix, and Hulu, who are the major OTT players, we’re also in discussions with the main television players. We are definitely hoping to grow our presence on the key platforms and because of that we are also developing plans in the short-form space. We’re planting the seeds now and I think at some point in the next year we’ll be ready to announce something more tangible.

We see digital and online as the space of the future of media, there’s no doubt that non-linear television, OTT, online short forms, YouTube personalities – all those phenomena will completely change the television space and as an innovative company, which is proud of being disruptive and only aiming for innovation, we’ll definitely be exploring this space, we have big plans.

You are actively engaging in scripted co-productions and investments, leveraging your ties and reputation in the scripted genre worldwide. What are Keshet’s latest partnerships on an international level in this respect?

We now have a very busy, multi-faceted network of scripted projects worldwide originating and harnessing talent from Israel to the US to Asia and Europe. We’re not only selling our scripted formats to be adapted by partners in places like Korea, Mexico and China, but we’re now leveraging our presence on the ground in each territory (Latin America, the UK/Europe, Asia) to source local properties which can be fed back into KI production entities and produced by our outposts in other markets. Examples of this include *Dating Hunter*, a Chinese comedy, and *Chefs*, a French drama, which have both been optioned by Keshet Studios for the US. We’re also soon to announce a new drama co-production in the UK and will of course launch our first, *The A Word*, which we are co-producing with Fifty Fathoms for BBC One in Spring 2016. ■



The Golden Apple:

Bulgarian legends come to life in new animated series

One can hardly talk about success stories when it comes to animated series from Central and Eastern Europe. Even though there are numerous talented artists who come from the region, there are just a few titles that have become hits internationally. One of the very few recent examples is Russia's *Masha and the Bear* which was recently sold to Netflix and is airing in more than a hundred countries.

Before the fall of the Iron Curtain, there were popular Eastern European animations like *Nu Pogodi*, *The Mole* (Krtecek), *Professor Baltazar*, *The Mézga Family*; etc. but even those hits failed to overcome the boundaries set by the geopolitical realities of that time and became hits only in the communist block. Neverthe-

less, the big state animation studios, which struggled to survive after the fall of communism, produced talented artists who continued their work for big animation studios and production companies in the Western world. Now, a Bulgarian cartoonist who worked with Cartoon Network, is preparing on a new fantasy animated series which is based on Balkan folklore and mythology. The trailer for *The Golden Apple* was officially released in November, generating over 350.000 views for its two versions on YouTube in only two weeks.

Author **Dimitar Petrov** tells Yako Molhov how the idea was born and what are the perspectives for such a project which TVBIZZ Magazine presents during NATPE Miami 2016.



Dimitar Petrov
creator and art director

Mr. Petrov, tell us how did you come up with the idea about this project and what is it about?

The idea came to me about three years ago. I was working at Cartoon Networks Studios Europe back then and my work there showed me what was needed to create a professional, modern animated TV series. In Bulgaria we have rich legends and folklore and but no one has made animated series based on these legends. I decided to try and develop something in that field. So, *The Golden Apple* started as a passion project of mine.

Later on, it developed more and I contacted our future lead designer, Svetla Radivoeva – who was working at Disney at that moment and when I pitched the project to her, she had a really positive reaction. That's when she came on board and we comprised the core team, prepared the entire visual style of the show and developed the story and everything behind it.

From the very beginning, this project was aimed at both the Bulgarian and international audience. The people that I showed it to first were my colleagues

from Cartoon Network who are French, Belgian and English. And they had a really positive reaction.

Your project is loosely based on the Bulgarian legend for the golden apple and the dragon which in local traditions is called zmei. What is the balance between traditional folklore and legends and your ideas?

We are trying to walk a very thin line between contemporary narrative and something which is ethnic and which is traditional. My idea is to present a modern story which you can relate to no matter where you come from; then get this modern story and put it in an exotic environment no one else has seen before which is based on Bulgarian legends and folklore and Balkan legends in general because there are elements which are common.

It has been planned with 24 episodes, 24 minutes each in which the kuker brothers would have to learn that the world is not as black and white as they think it is and the two girls would have to find out that the world is very different from what they are used to.

You've worked for Cartoon Network in the UK on *The Amazing World of Gumball*. In a recent interview you commented that the stylistics of the project is based on popular Western animations, what foreign series inspired you for this project? Can we say that *The Golden Apple* will be the Bulgarian *Samurai Jack* since it has a similar style?

Our idea with the visual style is the same with the story, we are trying to walk a narrow line between contemporary and something modern and which is ethnic and exotic so that's why we based our visual style on the amazing American illustrator Eyvind Earle. He has been a tremendous influence on Western animation because almost every major animation production since the 50s or the 60s has been moved or inspired by Earle's works. And that includes *Samurai Jack* which is based on his style but combines it with Asian influences. What we do is that we base our style on Earle but we fuse it with traditional Eastern European and Bulgarian elements – the architecture, the costumes of the characters, the ornamentation and the graphic elements.

Something else which we have planned for the series is that because the adventure starts in a relatively civilized world, the more our characters venture in the wilderness, in the mountains where the spirits are more powerful, the more the Bulgarian elements will be relevant – elements, ornamenta-

tion; etc. The series will start in a more Western-influenced setting in terms of visual style and the further the story progresses, the more we will see traditional elements from the Balkans and Bulgaria.

How many people are working on the project and how did you find them? Are only Bulgarians involved?

We are 25 people from 6 different countries. Half are foreigners. We've talked also with other foreign professionals. What's leading for this project is to find people who are professionals in their field who are really good. And it's great that there are lot of Bulgarians who are working for foreign studios and are really good.

Svetla Radivoeva has worked for Disney on several Oscar titles. Also, Teodora Filipova who teaches animation at the European Institute of Design in Milan, is an excellent professional and is our technical animator. She also works for several studios in Italy and has amazing experience.

Stanislav Tsvetkov, the lead animator for the trailer, works from Cyprus and he has worked on *Asterix and the Vikings* and several other big productions.

Most of the people are with huge experience from big studios and working abroad. Maybe 80-90% of the people on the team we contacted through the internet. We were a very small team of five people before we announced publicly the project about a year ago and a lot of peo-

ple started writing us and showed interest in the series.

You announced that you were looking for partners to finance the project. Have you been already contacted by interested parties, following the successful campaign for the trailer of the project on YouTube?

We are currently in several campaigns. *The Golden Apple* has been in development for three years with no financing so far. The trailer is the final thing we produced without financing. It was meant to be a proof of quality. If we have proper financing, the level we would work will be much higher. There is currently a kickstarter campaign which is gathering funds for the pilot episode and we also had a pretty successful ad campaign for our first trailer. After the kickstarter campaign has finished, we will start contacting potential distributors and investors which might be able to finance the project.

The good news is that since we are working on a cloud-based environment, working from Bulgaria, we are able to produce top-quality animated series which will be 3 to 5 times cheaper compared to other quality series produced in Western Europe.

How would you describe the project in several words? If pitching it to investors, what are its strengths and what makes it unique?

It's modern, relatable story, set in a diverse fantasy world that has never been seen before. It is based on Balkan legends and folklore which is widely unfamiliar and very interesting. We have top professionals from some of the biggest studios in the world, producing something of very high quality on a very competitive price. *The Golden Apple* is around 5 cheaper than similar Western European and US series.

You started your work as an animator and designer for video games. Have you planned spinning off the project in other areas, i.e. creating a video game, comics, perhaps a movie?

The first season is planned but we have potential for more than one season and we are keeping it open. *The Golden Apple* has been developed as a franchise, rather than a single project. We have ideas for at least two feature films in the same universe, one which is the story of the kuker warriors. We have ideas for video games, comic books, various types of merchandise. For example, the colorful sheep which we hope will become a fan favorite, people are requesting to have plushy toys made. All the characters can be used for a variety of products. We want *The Golden Apple* to be the first of a series of projects.

What's the role of the music in this project? Lots of people have asked about the music used in the trailer,

will it play a major role in the series?

The music for the trailer and for the series is composed by Georgi Strezov who is an amazing Bulgarian composer. He has been working as a composer for films and games since he was 16. He is now 26. Our philosophy behind the music in *The Golden Apple* is the same as the story and the visual style – we try to blend commercial, modern sound with ethnic elements to make it sound exotic. Georgi did an amazing job on the music of the trailer. Music will play a huge role. Bulgarian legends are very music-based.

The world of *The Golden Apple* in the first season is divided into three geographical locations, each with a different visual tone and a different music style. We have several characters that are very musical, i.e. Tina the water nymph.

You mentioned there will be a Bulgarian and an English version of the series?

The project is developed both for the local and for the international market. The scripts are written in both English and Bulgarian. I have talked to people from England, France, Belgium and even Romania who are interested in working for this project. It will be a very international project. We will probably hold auditions for voice actors in English and in Bulgarian as well. Three of the four main characters in Bulgarian are cast already. We will be aiming at top talent for this project. ■



We fuse traditional Eastern European and Bulgarian elements – the architecture, the costumes of the characters, the ornamentation and the graphic elements



THE CHARACTERS



Vihra

Vihra is a 14-year-old girl, whose hair is a cloud and changes with her mood. She is the daughter of a Zmei – a spirit of storms, and a human. The story follows Vihra on her journey to find the golden apple – a mythical wish granter, which only appears once a century.



Vlad and Bran

She is joined by Vlad and Bran – two brothers who dream of becoming Kuker warriors, and Tina – a little samodiva nymph, with angelic voice and mischievous personality.



Tina

On her journey, Vihra is joined by Tina – a young, thrill-seeking Samodiva nymph. Tina is a wild, rebellious young water spirit, who wants to escape the boredom of her conservative home forest.



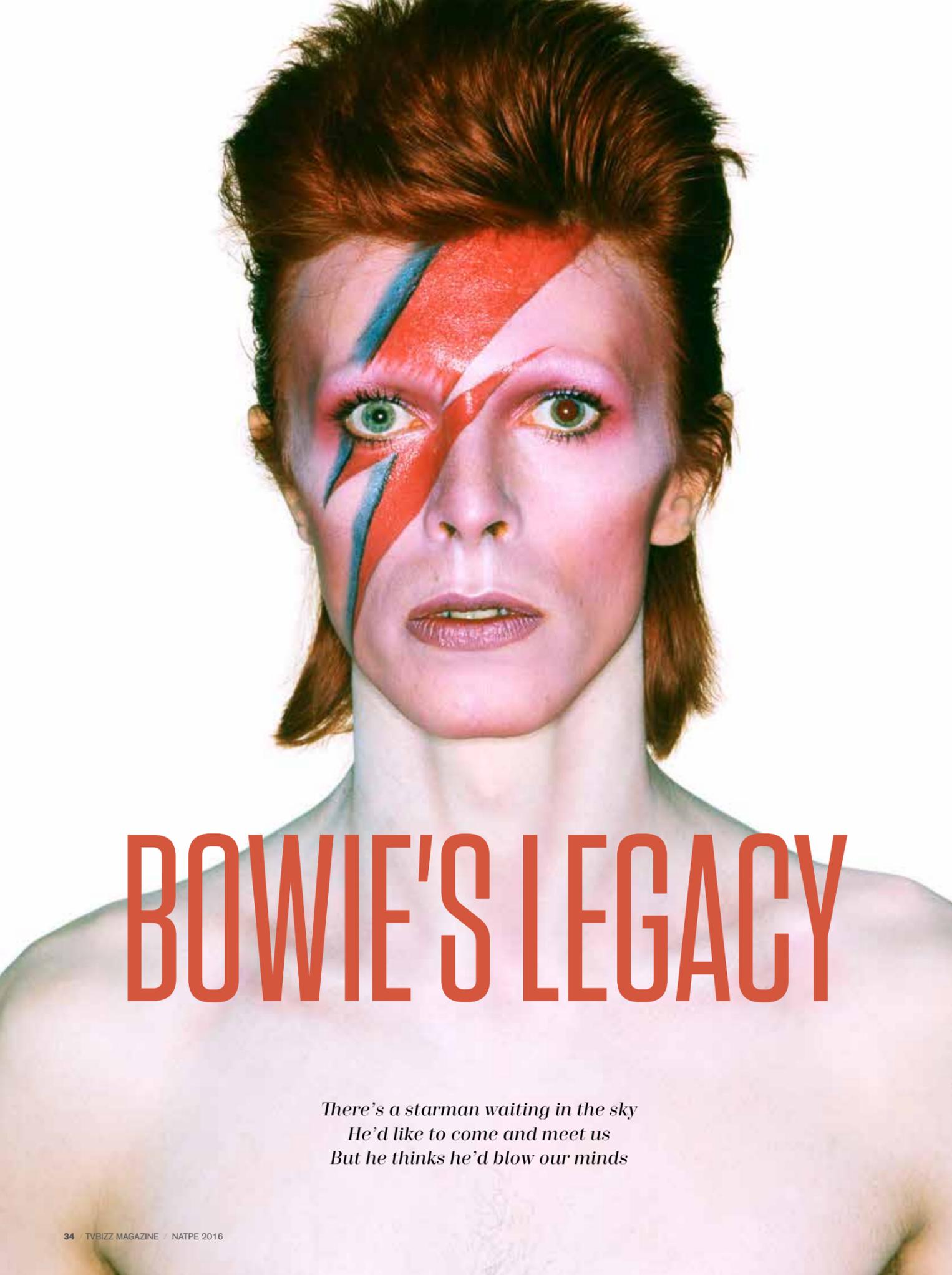
Greycloaks

Our heroes need to get to Kuber mountain and find the apple before everyone else and especially before the invading army of Greycloaks – a union of various tribes and people searching for a new place to settle after they have used up the natural resources of their previous home.



Harry

The Sheep (Harry) is the comic relief character of the series. Throughout the season, we will see him at random moments somewhere near our characters – always munching away on something, always completely casual and uninterested in the events taking place in the story.



BOWIE'S LEGACY

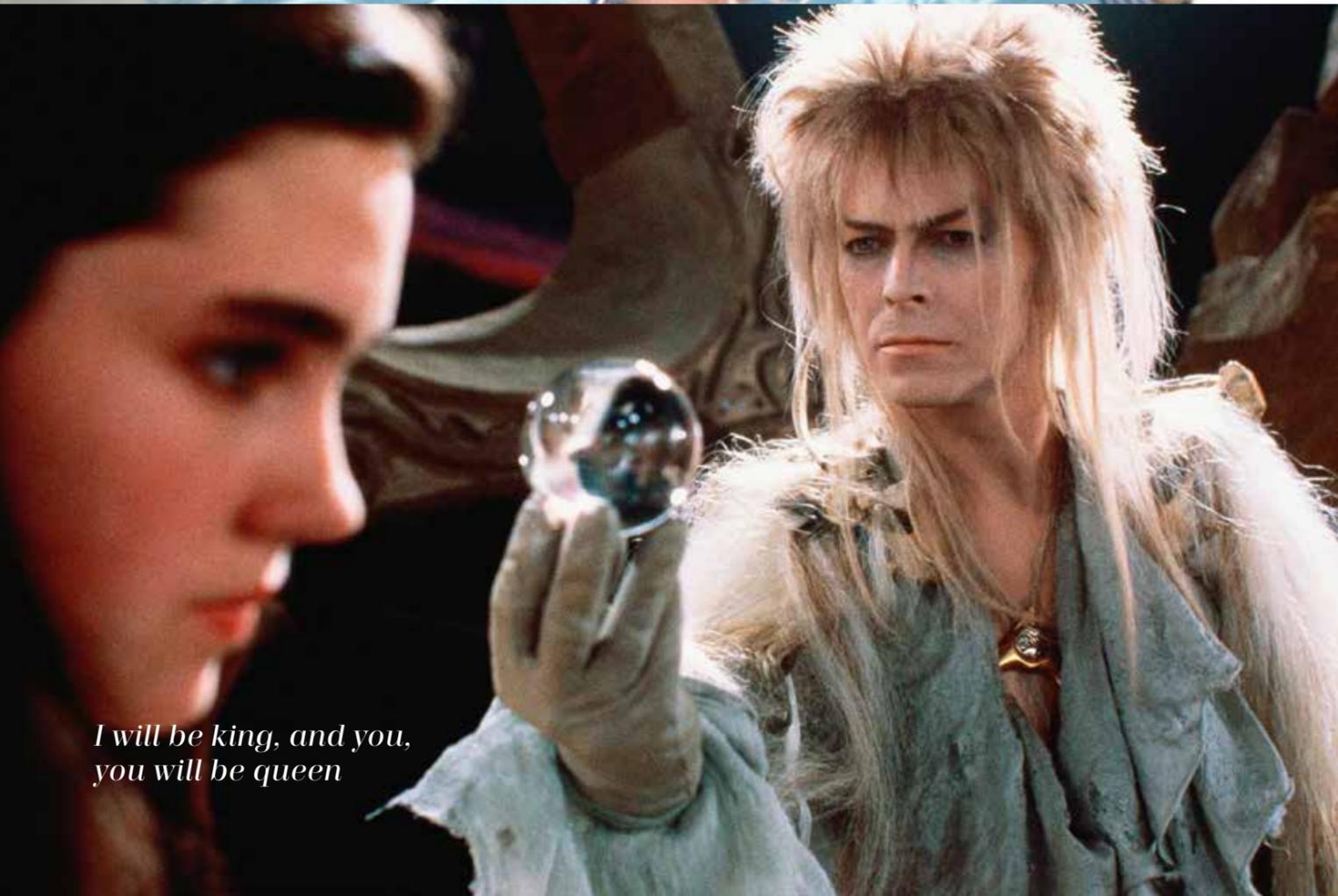
*There's a starman waiting in the sky
He'd like to come and meet us
But he thinks he'd blow our minds*



*You know, I'll give you television
I'll give you eyes of blue
I'll give you a man
who wants to rule the world*



*Now the workers have struck for fame,
'cause Lennon's on sale again*



*I will be king, and you,
you will be queen*



*Ain't there one damn song that can make me
break down and cry?*



*For years and years I roamed, I gazed
a gazeless stare*



*Time takes a
cigarette, puts it
in your mouth*

Planet Earth is blue, and there's nothing I can do



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The Oculus Rift

We are living in dynamic times, with each year bringing new, fast-evolving technologies to television, many of which have been prematurely called “The Next Big Thing”.

Back in the day, when I was a student, my professors in journalism asked me what TV would look like in 10 years; my answer was “If I knew exactly, I would be a billionaire.” Still, it is not so hard to guess which technologies will become popular with users; it is much harder to forecast if they will stay long enough or will be quickly replaced by the next, “bigger thing”.

Many call Virtual Reality (VR) the next hit technology that will soon conquer our daily lives and also our TV sets. New technologies, however, often quickly prove not as mainstream as predicted, with many experts failing to take into account the drawbacks which can prove a deal-breaker for common users.

Such was the case with 3D – the hit technology of 2010 which quickly lost its staying power and while still used, lost much of its appeal six years later. There were a number of reasons – high cost, different glasses that you should have to wear, physical complications of long use as well as the lack of content. And if I have to be honest – I’ve been the proud owner of a 3D Smart TV for 3 years now, with the 3D part being used “very, very rarely”.

3D was quickly replaced by 4K TV (or Ultra HD). Not much to explain when it comes to the technology – simply a 2D viewing experience with higher resolution and most recently – curved screens. Its impact in the TV world remains to be seen.

Virtual Reality, however, is a totally different thing, and it is not at all new, if one traces back its origins. Some experts even go as back as the nineteenth century and the 360-degree murals (panoramic paintings): that is if we describe VR as a means of creating the illusion that “we are” somewhere “we are not”. The advance of the computer age and other technological inventions led to the contemporary idea of VR being a simulation brought to the user by a pair of glasses that immerse them in a new world. If we come to think of it, flight simulators which have been used for many years, are also virtual reality devices but on a different scale. A story by science fiction writer Stanley G. Weinbaum from

the 1903s contains the idea of a pair of goggles that let the wearer experience a fictional world through holographics, smell, taste and touch – making him a true visionary of the field. And these goggles are already here, “on a massive scale”.

In early January Oculus (acquired in 2014 by Facebook) announced that it will begin selling its Rift VR headset. But will those be more successful than the headset released in the 90s by Sega which obviously failed to become a household item? It is highly unlikely that will happen in 2016, since VR suffers from the same drawbacks as 3D does – lack of content, physical problems due to prolonged use and – no word about the price yet, though in earlier interviews, Oculus reps commented that it won’t be more than \$350. But as it usually happens, on January 6, Facebook announced that Oculus Rift will cost... \$599. And is already available for preorder.

Still, the VR market is evolving much faster than 3D or 4K. According to Piper Jaffrey, it is expected to reach \$5.4 billion by 2025. The major broadcasting groups and studios are also investing heavily in VR content. 20th Century Fox used the Consumer Electronics Show in Las Vegas (Jan. 6-9) to launch The Martian VR Experience, which allows viewers to step into the shoes of astronaut Mark Watney (Matt Damon) and explore Mars. A few days ago, the same company announced a key investment in smart glasses designer and manufacturer Osterhout Design Group.

Another company that is focused on VR – Jaunt – recently announced the creation of Jaunt Studios, a new arm of the company that will be focused solely on developing, producing and collaborating on live-action virtual reality experiences. Companies like Sky and ProSiebenSat.1 Group have



On the set of a BBC Visual Perceptive Media project

already made solid investments in the company.

And while titles like “VR TV is here” are getting more popular, with Netflix announcing that its shows are now available to stream on Oculus-made Samsung Gear VR, the truth is that VR TV is not anywhere near the mass TV viewers. At least not in 2016. And there’s a catch about the Netflix shows on Samsung Gear VR – they will stream in standard two dimensions. So “What’s new”?

Visual Perceptive Media

The BBC recently announced that it is working on a new project called Visual Perceptive Media. Broadcasting over IP enables the company to create all kinds of new content experiences that would not be possible or scalable on “traditional” TV or radio. Among the new content experiences BBC is researching is personalized video, tailored to many individual users. BBC is investigating how to create personalized media which feels natural to the audience and exciting for the storyteller as it scales for millions of individual audience members.

Visual Perceptive Media is a film which changes based on the person who is watching the video. Rather than drawing on sensor data to profile the environment, it focuses on the users. It uses profiled data from a phone application to build a profile of the user and their preferences via their music collection and some personality questions. The data is then used to inform which assets are used in which order, what real time effects are applied and ultimately when. Cinematic effects twist the story one way or another.

Senior “firestarter” producer Ian Forrester agreed to explain Visual Perceptive Media in detail.



Ian Forrester
Senior “firestarter”
producer, BBC

Mr. Forrester, BBC recently announced that it was developing a new content experience called Visual Perceptive Media. Tell us more about this project and how it works.

Visual Perceptive Media is our first visual version of a technology we call Perceptive Media. There have been projects before including Breaking Out - www.future-broadcasts.com, and Perceptive Radio. Both which were audio based.

Perceptive Media creates something more aligned to a theatre performance in your home. It can be slightly different each time based on different data points, but is still true to a storyteller’s view.

What are the prerequisites for Visual Perceptive Media to work, i.e. how it is different from traditional TV?

Visual Perceptive Media is one of many projects around BBC R&D’s work into object media.

Object media works on top of IP (internet technology), which we use everyday online. The big difference from traditional TV/broadcast is in the delivery and the potential experiences it enables. If you break up the media into objects you could resemble them together differently at the moment of viewing. This is what

we are doing in Visual Perceptive Media.

IP and Broadcast are coming together and we are exploring new experiences and possibilities.

The project is still in development. What stage you are currently in?

We are still in technical development and conducting internal research trials with visual perceptive media. Each one of the different object media projects, are at different stages.

What type of content will Visual Perceptive Media focus more on, scripted, non-scripted?

Our first Visual Perceptive Media experiment is only a short drama currently but the technology could be adapted and used on a wide range of different visual experiences. We’re at a very early stage and are still exploring which formats could benefit from this new technique, but this could include drama, documentaries, cinema, children’s, etc.

Virtual reality seems like the next big thing not only for TV but also for gaming; etc. Is BBC Research&Development working in this area as well?

We have a number of projects working around virtual reality. You can see them on our blog. Perceptive Media isn’t competing with VR, instead you can imagine VR being perceptive. We are the User eXperience department of BBC R&D and are looking at how they fit or complement each other.

Interactive content is another side we are looking at but our focus is experiences for every tax payer, this includes those who may have accessibility needs to those young, old or just want to sit back relax and watch. We are building scalable experiences which are unique to everybody. ■

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JANUARY



New entertainment formats on ZDF

ZDF announced two new entertainment formats on Saturday night for spring. *Das Spiel beginnt! - Die große Show von 3-99* (*Game On - the Great 3-99 show*) launches on March 7. In the three-hour long show a team of celebrities will play different types of games against a team of children. *One in a Thousand*, co-developed with BBC Worldwide, also launches in the spring.



New sales executive at Armoza

Armoza Formats has recruited Yael Shaoulian as Sales Executive, placing her in a newly created role, heading up all deals for the UK, Ireland, France, the Netherlands and Belgium. This move comes as Armoza continues to expand following strong growth over the last few years, and points to the company's planned increase in focus on more territories.



MTG TV cuts staff

MTG TV Sweden starts cutting staff as part of a new restructuring process. MD Anders Jensen said that it is still unclear how many jobs will be cut. Reportedly, the cuts may affect 40 of the 140 employees of the broadcaster. The company was left by marketing chief Stephanie Smitt Lindberg and press director Max Lagerbäck, replaced by Susanne Nylén.

FEBRUARY



SBS6 plans new music show

SBS6 has announced that Nick & Simon will cooperate with music and cabaret duo Jurk! on a new music project for the channel. *Lekker Nederlands heten* (*Nice Dutch Hits*) will see well-known hits re-written and performed by famous guest singers.



Backstrom a big hit in Sweden

TV3 Sweden premiered the new US series *Backstrom* with excellent results. The Fox show premiered on February 1 with 460,000 viewers. The channel posted 4.6 rating in the target demo 15-49 and 7.0 rating in the 30-59 demo in the 21.00 slot.



Endemol launches online reality show

Endemol Netherlands is launching a new online reality show on YouTube. *World of Cinemates* will follow the life of Kelvin Boerma (18) and Peter de Harder (21), aka Cinemates. This is the first project for Endemol Beyond in the Netherlands.

MARCH

FremantleMedia brings *Extreme Love* to Cannes

Extreme Love - a fresh new dating format being brought to MIP-TV by FremantleMedia - challenges a group of modern-day Prince Charmings to win the hand of their princesses. Created by Israel's Studio Glam, *Extreme Love* invites 10 would-be wooers from all walks of life to a remote location where they have to compete for the affections of a modern-day maiden and survive harsh living conditions in order to survive.



Endemol Shine preps *Cook Off* show

Endemol Shine Iberia is working on a new format for RTP1. *Cook Off - Duelo de Sabores* (*Cook Off - Duel of Tastes*) premieres in May, replacing *Got Talent*. Season 1 consists of 13 episodes and sees chefs Cordeiro and Kiko evaluating the performance of the contestants.



Global Agency announces new format *Stairway to Fame*

Global Agency launches the new entertainment format *Stairway to Fame* at MIPTV 2015, as one of the key titles in its line-up. *Stairway to Fame* is a studio based, 14-week long marathon to find the next big vocal star. The concept was created and developed by Rafet El Roman, one of Turkey's most popular singers, to discover and support new talents. The format's key distinguishing point from other singing talent shows is that the contestants appear behind a frosted panel in the first stage. They get their first votes from the judges according to their singing performance alone.

APRIL



17 to leave Endemol Nordics after merger with Shine, including MDs

A total of 17 people from Endemol Nordics will lose their jobs, while the MDs of Endemol's operations in Denmark, Norway and Sweden (Nordics) will leave as well. These are Rikke Nissen, Eric Linschooten and Michael Porseryd. Michael Starck is the only one joining Shine's Meter Television from Endemol Sweden. Endemol Shine Nordics becomes the biggest producer in the Nordic region following the merger of the companies.

Eyeworks prepares new dating format

Eyeworks Spain is working to create a new dating format. The new show is expected to follow the trend set with the shows *Who Want to Marry My Son* and *A Prince for Corina*.



Shine Iberia to produce two formats for TVE1

Shine Iberia works on two new projects for the Spanish pubcaster TVE1. Those are *Food Trucks* and *Hollywood Game Night*.

MAY



Banijay International secures distribution to *Sing It On*, the real-life *Pitch Perfect*

Banijay International has secured international distribution rights to the much-anticipated *Sing It On*, a brand new, original docu-reality series inspired by the blockbuster movie *Pitch Perfect*. The independent content distributor will launch the series to the international market following its initial run in the U.S. on Pop. Set in the fiercely competitive world of collegiate a cappella, the 8 x 1-hour series *Sing It On* is executive produced by Academy Award® winner and nine-time Grammy Award®-winning singer-songwriter John Legend.



ITV completes acquisition of Talpa Media

ITV has completed the acquisition of Talpa Media, the entertainment show producer behind worldwide hit formats, including *The Voice*, *The Voice Kids*, *Utopia*, *I Love My Country* and *Dating in the Dark*. This follows the previously announced agreement in March. The acquisition is a further milestone in the company's strategy of building an international content business that creates and owns entertainment formats and dramas that sell internationally, and significantly strengthens ITV's position as a leading producer in Europe.



RTL4 to revive two classic shows

RTL4 is working on the revival of two classic shows. *Sterrenslag*, the local version of US format *The Battle of the Networks*, was originally aired on AVRO between 1977 and 1998 and saw special episodes in the summer of 2004. Ten years later, RTL4 is reportedly looking to reboot the show with Paul de Leeuw. The other show set to return on Dutch TV screens is *The Price is Right* (*Prijzenstag*). It was last aired on SBS6 in 2012 to unimpressive ratings.

JUNE



Nine considers doing own celebrity themed reality show

Nine Australia is considering making its own celebrity themed reality series. Multiple sources say the network now hopes to revive *Celebrity Apprentice* for broadcast, and it will shorten the next instalment of its normally high-rating renovation franchise to make room in its schedule. It's understood that in March the network asked Endemol to begin quietly casting for a celebrity version of *Big Brother*.



Talpa comes up with grateful show *Why Wait?*

Talpa and SBS6 are asking *Why Wait?* in a new show which urges viewers to share their gratitude to loved ones in a special place. The producers claim that usually such speeches are made during funeral ceremonies but now people will have a chance to show their appreciation at a special place with the help of host Jochem van Gelder. The new format premieres in the fall.



TF1 commissions *The People's Quiz*

NBCUniversal International Formats has signed a deal to revive its hit format *The People's Quiz* in France. TF1, France's leading broadcaster, has commissioned 2 x two hour specials of this classic quiz, which was originally a Fever Media show created by David Mortimer & Richard Hopkins. The show entails a nation-wide search for the king or queen of general knowledge. Only the strongest contestants make it through to the studio shows, culminating in a grand final in which they must compete for a substantial cash prize.

JULY



TV3 unveils new dating reality *Bikini Island*

TV3 Denmark has confirmed the start of its new dating reality project *Bikini Island* this fall. As TVBIZZ reported earlier, the original concept comes from Mastiff Denmark. The 12 contestants will live on two rival islands in Cambodia. In order to win the show they will have to survive and stay on the most inhabited island so they will have to use the right tactics until the very finale.



TF1 to launch an interactive game-show

TF1 will launch another show after *Win Your Wish List* and *Boom!*. The new production is billed *La 7ème Porte (The 7th Gate)* and it will be an interactive game show. It will be an entirely local format as the shootings will start during the fall season.

Netflix pushes programmatic

Netflix believes that programmatic advertising can provide numerous benefits for its brand – not least the ability to deliver personalized marketing messages at scale. Kathy O'Dowd, Netflix's global director/programmatic marketplace and channel development, commented: "We are moving to programmatic, in part, because it is so efficient". "We can be more individualized in the kind of marketing that we're doing – and that's ultimately, I think, every advertiser's dream."

SEPTEMBER



Dance Dance Dance generates 700.000 views on RTL XL

RTL4's *Dance Dance Dance* started with 1.3 million viewers on September 5 but fresh data from RTL Netherlands indicates that the audience has grown beyond the 2-million mark with catch-up viewing. The broadcaster announced that the new dancing show from Talpa got 700.000 views on RTL XL.



New Keshet reality mixes elements from *Survivor*, *Big Brother* and *The Amazing Race*

The Israeli press has started leaking information on the upcoming new reality format from Keshet which is described as a mix between *Survivor*, *Big Brother* and *The Amazing Race*. Three teams will take part in Amazonas. Each week one of the teams will lose one of its members who will consecutively join one of the two other teams. The goal is to have two teams at the end of the show which will decide who is the winner.



100 Code premiere wins the slot for Kanal 5 among the Big 5

Overnight data from MMS indicates that the premiere of crime drama *100 Code* gave Kanal 5 Sweden the first spot in the 21.00 slot in the target demo among the top 5 Swedish nets. The series averaged 3.0/15.1% share in 15-44, beating TV4 Sweden's *Broadchurch* which had 2.8/13.8% share. Only Sjuan's *The Great Bake Off* had better results in this demo - 3.5/17.4% share. Still, *100 Code* took only 8.3% share in the 15-24 demo. It scored 15.1% in 12-59 and 341.000 viewers and 3.6/11.3% share in total viewers.

AUGUST



Seven sues Nine over *The Hot Plate*

Seven Australia is suing Nine Australia and Endemol Shine Australia in a copyright claim against *The Hot Plate*. Federal Court judge is to decide if Seven has a case of copyright infringement and whether *The Hot Plate* should be taken off air. News Corp reports Seven will claim *The Hot Plate* used almost identical casting, costuming, sets, music, promotion and judging processes to *My Kitchen Rules*.



De Mol slams talk of death of radio and TV

In an interview for the *De Coen & Sander Show* on Radio 538 (which he owns), Talpa owner John de Mol said that talk of death of radio and TV is a big nonsense. "I think all the doomsayers predicting that radio and television are over, are not right. I don't see this happening in the next 10, 20 years. The economic basis of mass communication in radio and television is still so interesting," he said.



Super start for *Boom!* in France

TF1 'exploded' before the eyes of 3.3 million viewers with its new game format *Boom!* on August 10. The show averaged 24.7% share in the 19.05-19.50 timeslot and got the attention of 27.3% of the housewives under 50. This score is the highest for the channel in this slot since August last year in both demos- total audience and housewives under fifty.

OCTOBER



NRK sketch format sold in France

NRK reports that it has sold its original sketch format *Broren til (The Brother of)* to commercial net D8 in France. The concept sees people stopped for an interview in the street, while the conversation continues "a double" of the interviewee joins. The French version airs as part of the popular talk format *Touche pas a mon poste*.



New Dutch format sold to 8 countries #MIPCOM

Producer Harry de Winter announced that NPO1's format *What the Frans* has been sold to 8 countries during MIPCOM. Countries which have picked up the show include Germany, Spain, Switzerland, Finland, Austria, Sweden, Denmark and Norway. The format produced by David & Co sees ordinary people learn to do extraordinary things in order to surprise their friends and relatives. The show airs on NPO1 and gets over a million viewers and close to 20% share in its 20.30 slot.

RED ARROW INTERNATIONAL

New Red Arrow formats prove global hits

MIPCOM 2015 formats *Kiss Bang Love* and *The Day the Cash Came* have been secured by Seven Network Australia and a wealth of other territories.

Following its launch at MIPCOM 2015, Red Arrow International has licensed *Kiss Bang Love* to eight territories in total including Seven Australia, plus Italy, France, Spain, Belgium, the Netherlands and Finland. *The Day the Cash Came* has been licensed to four territories worldwide including Endemol Shine Australia for Seven Network, and to Belgium and the Netherlands.

NOVEMBER



Vivendi's statement on Zodiak-Banijay deal

Vivendi said to have entered into an agreement with the view to entering into Banijay/Zodiak's share capital, and acquiring a 26.2 pct interest: transaction (scheduled to be completed during H1 2016), represents a cash payment of 290 million euros, including 100 million euros to acquire an interest in Banijay Zodiak; will also subscribe to two bonds for 100 million euros and 90 million euros to be issued by Banijay Zodiak and Lov Banijay.



Keshet and Reshet change broadcast days

Starting November 1, Keshet and Reshet have changed their days of broadcast on Channel 2 Israel. Reshet will now air from Sunday till Tuesday, while Keshet takes over Wednesday-Saturday. The new season of *Survivor* was launched on November 1 on Reshet. It was preceded by the premiere of *False Flag* on October 28 night which scored the excellent 30% rating for Keshet.



Huge numbers for Rai 1's new crime miniseries

The new crime miniseries *Sotto Copertura (Undercover)* premiered with huge numbers on Rai 1 on November 2. The new offering attracted 5,849,000 viewers scoring 21.75% share. Canale 5's *Squadra Antimafia 7* could not compete with these numbers and got 3,434,000 viewers and 13.35% share. *Peking Express* on Rai 2 conquered 2.5 million viewers with its season finale with the strong 10.2% share.

DECEMBER



De Mol to look for new boy and girl bands in new format

John de Mol revealed in an interview for Radio 538 that he is working on a new format which will have the goal to create new boy and girl bands. He said that the show is prepared for a fall 2016 launch and it will be different from *The Voice* and going back to "the old structure". It is unclear which broadcaster will air the new concept from Talpa, as RTL4 is planning a new season of *The Voice* for the next fall season.



Een announces new dance show

The well-known choreographer Ish Ait Hamou will front Een's new dance show *Dansen met Ish (Dancing with Ish)*. The format will be a competition of two teams with little dancing experience. They will go through tough physical challenges in order to prepare for the dance battle. Ish Ait Hamou will be the coach of both teams. His goal is to prove that anyone can dance.



TV4 unveils interactive gameshow from Elk

TV4 Sweden has now confirmed a new gameshow sponsored by the Post Code Lottery which will replace *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*. *En ska bort (Odd One Out)* comes from Elk Entertainment and will air on Saturday nights at 19.30. This will be an interactive show in which contestants and viewers will be picking the odd object/photo out of four. Åse Ericson, Event Chief at Postkodlotteriet, said that they want to reach a bit younger audience compared to WWTBAM. ■



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