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Printed in England by Wyndeham Grange Ltd, Southwick, West Sussex BN4 4EJ

Television Business International (USPS 003-807) is published bi-monthly (Jan, Mar, Apr, Jun, Aug and Oct) by Informa Telecoms Media, Maple House, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7AD, United Kingdom. The 2006 US Institutional subscription price is \$255. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by Agent named Air Business, C/O Priority Airfreight NY Ltd, 147-29 182nd Street, Jamaica, NY11413. Periodical postage paid at Jamaica NY 11431. US Postmaster: Send address changes to Television Business International, C/O Air Business Ltd / Priority Airfreight NY Ltd, 147-29 182nd Street, Jamaica, NY11413. Subscription records are maintained at Informa Telecoms Media, Maple House, 149 Tottenham Court Road, London, W1T 7AD, United Kingdom. Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

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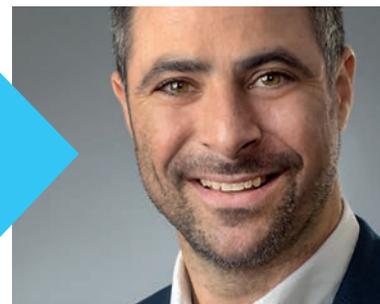
TBI takes a look at the latest comings and goings in the international unscripted TV business

Endemol Shine's former Asia MD **Fotini Paraskakis** has joined The Story Lab as executive VP of entertainment, overseeing both scripted and unscripted



Amazon Prime is set to develop a reality fashion series from *Project Runway* duo Heidi Klum and Tim Gunn, who have moved over to the platform from Bravo

MGM's Big Fish Entertainment, the production house behind *Live PD*, has appointed Sirens Media's **Daniel Markell** as senior VP of development



Pilgrim Media Group has inked a production deal with Michael Canter and Jeff Krask, the executive producers behind iconic game shows such as *Family Feud* and *Deal or No Deal*

Keshet Productions UK added more talent to its unscripted development team, hiring former Endemol Shine producer **Jamie Ormerod** as director of development



Amazon's head of unscripted, Heather Schuster, exited the company after an internal investigation into alleged inappropriate behaviour was administered by the business

Shiver, the ITV Studios label, appointed Channel 4 commissioning editor **Simone Haywood** to the newly created role of head of factual entertainment



Wonderhood Studios, the business created by ex-Channel 4 chief David Abraham, appointed BBC Studios' Samantha Antstiss as co-founder and creative director for unscripted

Middlechild appointed former Boundless exec and *The Recording Studio* producer **Tony Dillamore** as its head of development





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Beat the Internet with Vice

TBI visits the set of Vice Studios and UKTV's game show *Beat the Internet with John Robins*, which tests UK audiences on their search term prowess and marks a new chapter for Vice. Kaltrina Bylykbashi reports.

If someone said a new format would be coming to UK screens in the style of *Generation Game* or *Family Fortunes*, Vice would not be the producer that instantly springs to mind. But with their new game show, *Beat the Internet* for UKTV's Dave, Vice is out to show it's capable of dipping its toes in mainstream entertainment.

Far from the drug documentaries and political reportage Vice has become known for, *Beat the Internet* is a simple play-along affair where four contestants are prompted to guess the endings to internet search terms.

And unlike what you'd expect from Vice, the format's producers have made it a strict rule to keep every round family-friendly. That means no swearing and no sexual content.

"It doesn't have to be clever, it wasn't trying to be edgy, and it wasn't trying to be upsetting," says series creator Dan Louw. "It didn't necessarily reinvent the wheel – we just enjoyed playing it and thought the simplicity of it cut against a lot of the shows out there at the moment."

The format had been placed on the sidelines for some time for this reason. Exec producers Louw and Yonni Usiskin simply never thought

anyone would pick up such a title from the studio, having never attempted a game show previously.

It was on an off-chance that the duo were having a general meeting with UKTV's director of commissioning, Richard Watsham, when he mentioned that he was looking for a high volume game show and was struggling to find one.

"We showed it to him and I honestly felt – for the first time in my career – that it was commissioned on the spot," says Louw.

The UKTV team has generally been commissioning titles for Dave that are

On set with *Beat The Internet*

Patel and Robins

“different, original and unique”. At this year’s Edinburgh International TV conference, Steve North, UKTV’s general manager for comedy and entertainment, explained that Dave is looking for new talent to join its well-known panel shows and will begin to commission more international titles.

“All credit to them, we hadn’t really made anything like that at that point, but they really let us do it,” says Louw. “They’ve been really hands off, and they let us hire anyone we wanted. They just assumed everything would be fine on the version that they bought.”

There are a few reasons Louw and Usiskin believe that this was the right time for such a title. One is the show’s departure from a really high-budget, shiny-floor format. Louw admits that they wanted the title to hark back to classic formats, rather than high-concept, complex new shows.

TBI visited the set in August, and it’s very much a stripped-down, small studio. Four podiums, a big screen and John Robins and co-presenter Sunil Patel are pretty much all of the props involved in the format.

There’s only one thing the title asks from the audience: “to play along, play along, play along,” says Louw.

Furthermore, Louw believes that there are more channels today willing to take a risk on something that they haven’t tried before.

“There’s some really great people at channels at the moment acting like they’ve got nothing to lose. It’s fantastic,” he says.

Usiskin adds: “I think we’ve come out, we’ve had to take our own risks, and the market is allowing people to do that if they’re brave.”

Lastly, Vice’s secret weapon has been John Robins himself. The joint-winner of 2017’s prestigious Edinburgh comedy award is what brings a fresh spin to the format, according to the Vice execs.

“We wanted to bring in new talent and someone with their own sense of comedy that would cut against a fairly simple game show,” says Usiskin.

“John brings a really local flavour to it, and a sort of colloquial Britishness that I think appeals to a Dave audience and a British audience.”

Keith Cotton, the series editor, tells TBI that John and Sunil are what brings that “crunch” to the show - or the Vice element that brings the entire thing together.

Looking to the future, the Vice team mentions that *Beat the Internet* has already had some international interest via distributor All3Media International, suggesting the title can travel.

“What we’ve produced is a quintessentially English show in terms of its tone and a quintessential Dave show in terms of its comedic tone, but there are bits of it that can easily transform in any other territory,” says Louw. “At its heart it is a play-along quiz where you’ll always feel like you know the answers.”

In the meantime, Vice is likely to keep creating shows that are unconventional for the studio, “even if edgy is us not being edgy,” says Louw.

He adds: “Unfortunately we can’t mention what Vice Studios has commissioned since this show started production: it’s weirdly a really varied slate. It’s stuff in genres that you wouldn’t expect from us.

“Everything we’re making at the moment really cuts against what we’ve done before and I think it’s fantastic we’ve been allowed to do it.” **TBI**

Hot Picks



Evil Monkeys

PRODUCER: Renegade Pictures

CHANNEL: ITV2 (UK)

DISTRIBUTOR: The Story Lab

CONCEPT: A human zoo where humans are trapped and evil monkeys are running the show

Few distributors have as varied a slate as The Story Lab, which has built its brand upon the likes of prime-time entertainment format *Ninja Warrior* and visual dating show *Game of Clones*. The distributor, which is backed by Japanese ad agency Dentsu Aegis, is now betting that broadcasters will go ape over its latest entry – another highly visual entertainment title featuring celebrities and monkeys.

Evil Monkeys was first pitched to Story Lab a year back by *Don't Tell The Bride* producer Renegade. "Half the room fell in love with it, and the other half thought it was a joke, but we decided to go for it," explains Michael Iskas,

global president at The Story Lab.

In each self-contained episode, a cast of celebrity contestants are held captive by a group of apes named Margaret, Snowdrop, Donal and La-a who challenge their human prisoners to a series of challenges – all themed 'Hear No Evil, See No Evil, Speak No Evil' – in order to secure their freedom and win a prize for charity.

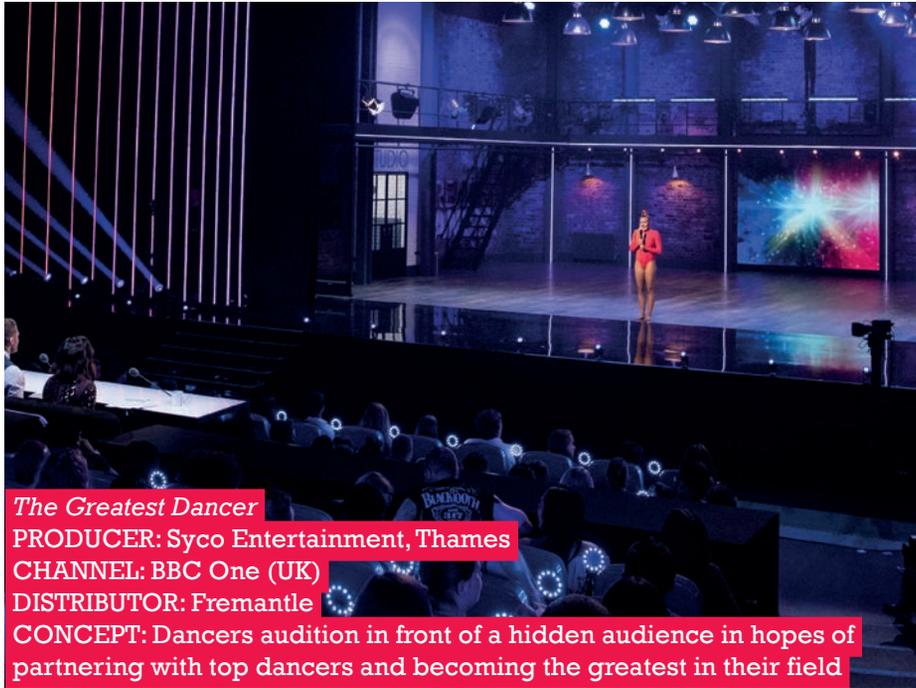
The celebrities wear different sensory restraints in each game, where each of them can't either see, hear or talk, forcing them to rely on each other to complete the task.

Iskas highlights the intense logistics needed

to coordinate animatronic monkey suits – the monkeys are not real, in case you're wondering – in South Africa, where a broadcast pilot was shot for ITV2 earlier this year.

While some may wonder about the cost of animatronic ape suits, Iskas assures that the kits are "not that expensive" to rent or use for a few days.

He adds that the format appeals to the millennial audience due to the celebrity angle, but the monkeys also cater to the family demographic. "It ticks a lot of boxes for us," he notes, adding that Story Lab is initially targeting Europe and the US.



The Greatest Dancer
PRODUCER: Syco Entertainment, Thames
CHANNEL: BBC One (UK)
DISTRIBUTOR: Fremantle
CONCEPT: Dancers audition in front of a hidden audience in hopes of partnering with top dancers and becoming the greatest in their field

Fresh from a rebrand, Fremantle will hit the market with a major prime-time dance format from Simon Cowell's Syco Entertainment and Fremantle-owned Thames.

The idea behind the commission, explains Fremantle director of global entertainment Rob Clark, is for the BBC to "own the dance space in the UK".

"They wanted to create something that could sit alongside *Strictly Come Dancing* so that they could become the home of dance," says Clark.

The programme features dancers from a variety of backgrounds, including ballet, jazz, hip hop and Bollywood, who must impress a hidden audience before advancing to perform

with "dance captains" – including singer Cheryl, *Glee's* Matthew Morrison and *Strictly Come Dancing's* Oti Mabuse – who will teach them a variety of dance styles before one dancer is crowned the Greatest Dancer.

The format has an authentic feel thanks to fixed-rig cameras in reception areas that capture the moment dancers enter the audition and move into the dance studio.

"These contestants never meet a host or members of the production team – they come in as if they were doing a dance audition. But on the other side of the mirror is a huge video screen, and you can see everything," says Clark, adding that the show aims to tell a different dance story.

"This is very different from how we told the stories of variety and singing [in *Got Talent* and *Idol*]. This is a reinterpretation of that," he notes.

The Greatest Dancer was commissioned for BBC One by Charlotte Moore, director of BBC content, and Kate Phillips, controller of entertainment commissioning, while the commissioning editor for the BBC is Kalpna Patel-Knight.

TBI understands that the program could be well-placed to receive the highly coveted Saturday night prime-time slot in January on BBC One.

Alone At Home
DISTRIBUTOR: Sony Pictures
Television International Distribution
PRODUCER: Electric Ray
BROADCASTER: Channel 4 (UK)
CONCEPT: Kids aged 8-16 are left to fend for themselves for four days

A group of kids get four days alone at home in UK producer Electric Ray's latest offering, which provides an intimate view of modern families for British broadcaster Channel 4.

Shot over two school days and a weekend, parents empty the fridge and leave children aged 8-16 at home with a budget to follow. The kids, in turn, do whatever they like: whether that's going to school, staying home, leaving the house or throwing a party.

The parents, in turn, also spend four days on their own, and are given the chance to reflect on their relationship and parenting style.

The children have to make a meal for the parents when they get home on the fourth day

– making them cook, shop and decide whether to clean up.

"*Alone At Home* offers a funny and thought-provoking look at the challenges of life as a parent – and a child. Can the parents trust their kids? Can kids survive on their own?" says Meredith Chambers, managing director of Electric Ray.

"There's a sense of wish-fulfilment for the children as they take off on adventures with no one to stop them, while the parents' stories are very powerful as couples re-connect with each other."

Chambers says the show taps into a wider cultural trend about the limits of parenting, and how much independence to give one's children.

"Helicopter parenting is happening in every territory and experts say it's stopping children from developing the life skills they need to grow. In Scandinavia, they even refer to it as 'curling parenting' – sweeping all problems out of a child's way.



"This is a fresh take on the parenting show genre because it does something bold – it takes away the parents and the experts. Both the parents and their kids learn by their own actions," says Chambers.

Showdown

PRODUCER: Tedy Productions and Keshet Broadcasting
CHANNEL: KBL (Israel)
DISTRIBUTOR: Keshet International
CONCEPT: Two artistic titans face off and mentor the next great star

Keshet had a ratings hit on its hands this summer with *Showdown – Aviv/Eyal*, a shiny-floor entertainment show featuring two major Israeli musicians with an intense rivalry going head-to-head to find the next big star.

The 21 x 75-minute show features Aviv Geffen and Eyal Golan in a “gladiatorial” clash of Mediterranean melodies versus Israeli rock. Contestants have to impress both artists in initial auditions before advancing to the next round, in which they prepare a song with both Geffen and Golan.

However, when they hit the stage, they need to make an on-the-spot decision as to which version of the song to sing, bruising someone’s ego along the way and making it onto a larger team that is slowly whittled down to find the ultimate winner.

Rose Hughes, senior sales manager with



Keshet International, says the format – which has been greenlit for a second series in Israel – can be scaled up or down, and can feature either high-profile stars or up-and-coming artists.

“In Israel, we cast two huge stars who have a rivalry that is well-known, which made for very compelling TV,” she said. “But the rivalry doesn’t have to be as intense as that. They can just be artistic rivals who think their music is best. That will always make compelling TV.”

Keshet is selling a 13-part version of the format that is more “European-friendly” and speaking to a number of channels and producers.

Singerella

DISTRIBUTOR: Armoza Formats
CHANNEL: TBA
PRODUCER: Armoza Formats
CONCEPT: A would-be singer with unfulfilled dreams gets a musical makeover in three days

Hot off the success of *The Four* on Fox, Avi Armoza is back with another feel-good format, complete with a fairytale ending.

In each episode of hour-long format *Singerella*, friends and family nominate a woman with unfulfilled musical dreams to get her moment in the spotlight with a big-name artist. The catch? She has just three days to prepare for the performance, meeting with voice coaches, performance directors and stylists along the way.

Armoza conceived of *Singerella* when he was in the process of developing *The Four* and was drawn to the quick readability of the format.

“The name stayed with us and we went back to it after *The Four* was established. The name is very important. We thought it was a strong brand in itself that tells a story.”

A key element of the format, says Armoza, is the “emotional” dimension and storytelling aspect. “It also fills a need by broadcasters for feel-good shows that give back to society.”

While the artist-led performance may seem like a costly bet, Armoza notes the format can be scaled up or down as needed: the key is hooking filming to a pre-existing event.

“You must plan your schedule around an event with a particular artist – that’s an essential element to the show,” he explains.



Songland

PRODUCER: Universal Television Alternative Studio and Live Animals in association with Dave Stewart Entertainment and Levine’s 222 Productions
CHANNEL: NBC (US)
DISTRIBUTOR: NBCUniversal International Formats
CONCEPT: New songwriting talent get the chance to have their work recorded by a famous artist

Maroon 5 frontman and *The Voice* judge Adam Levine executive produces this long-simmering songwriting competition, in which five undiscovered songwriters have the opportunity to prove they can pen the next chart-topping hit.

Each self-contained episode features a new group of songwriters who pitch and perform their original songs to a panel of three visionary producers and one major recording artist. Three are ultimately chosen to move forward to the studio and record, with the artist selecting one song to record as a single and release worldwide.



“We wanted to try a different format for a music show that takes the viewer through that journey to the end, but which also gives you the ability to release the song at the end of each episode, and download the song,” says Ana Langenberg, SVP of format sales and production at NBCU International Formats.

The business is targeting broadcasters as opposed to digital platforms, and most territories are on the table.

Songland has been in the works for several years but has been delayed due to song ownership concerns by writers.

However, NBC now highlights that artists own all copyrights up until they are selected to the programme, at which time they may have to deal directly with producers and other third parties. “This is not a way for NBC to get their hands on cheap music,” assures Langenberg.



Football Genius
DISTRIBUTOR: Hat Trick International
PRODUCER: Hat Trick Productions
CHANNEL: ITV (UK)
CONCEPT: A football comedy quiz show testing fan knowledge

Bolstered by England's performance in the World Cup, football is back in the UK in a big way –if it was ever gone, that is. ITV's logic is that regardless of how seriously people take the game, there's a lighter side to the sport that has mainstream appeal.

Enter *Football Genius*, which will see two teams of football fans led by captains Paul Sinha

– known to audiences from *The Chase* – and Olympic Gold medalist Sam Quek competing against each other across a virtual pitch, proving their football knowledge in hopes of taking home a trophy.

"No matter how seriously people take the game of football – and millions of fans are absolutely passionate about it – there is a

funny side to the game that everyone enjoys," explains Sarah Tong, director of sales for Hat Trick International.

"There is always lots of banter surrounding individual players, teams and fans – especially since the growth of social media – and we felt it was important that *Football Genius* reflects that.

"It's a proper quiz, requiring proper football knowledge but when someone gets an easy question wrong, they won't get away without a bit of playful humiliation."

The talent fronting the format is key, says Tong, noting that comedian Tim Vine was selected for the ITV show because he appeals to a wide audience – not just ardent football fans.

Not all the questions are at 'genius' level, either. "The managers have to choose what level of question the teams must answer and sometimes they choose easy questions, which anyone who has a smattering of football knowledge should know."

Tong hopes to sell the format into any territories in which football is a major part of the local culture, meaning *Football Genius* could potentially travel into Europe, Africa and South America, to name just a few territories.



Flirty Dancing
DISTRIBUTOR: All3Media International
PRODUCER: Second Star Productions
BROADCASTER: Channel 4 (UK)
CONCEPT: Strangers take part in a choreographed dance routine hoping to find their match

In the 1950s, up to 75% of couples met on the dancefloor. How times have changed. UK broadcaster Channel 4 is looking to give the BBC's *Strictly Come Dancing* a run for its money, while bringing back some of that '70s magic with primetime format *Flirty Dancing* (not to be confused with *Dirty Dancing*).

The 5 x 60-minute show pairs two couples per episode. Host Ashley Banjo (pictured), a British choreographer, meets the singles before devising a two-minute bespoke dance routine for the pairs. The singles then have separate training sessions to learn the routine, before finally coming together on the day of the dance.

Unaware of who they are about to be dancing with, the music starts and the singles turn to meet each other for the first time as they dance without words. Each single is then asked to decide, based solely on the dance, whether they want to see each other again, and their decisions aren't unveiled until the end of the episode.

Nick Smith, executive VP of format production for All3Media International, says the show could sell into most countries, but "the Nordic countries will be especially keen".

Deborah Sargeant, chief creative officer of Objective Media Group-owned producer Second Star, notes that a celebrity version of the format is "very possible", and discussions are currently taking place with Channel 4 around a celebrity spin-off.

"Every country has their own famous dance talent and it is a great vehicle to show off their talents," adds Smith.

"Also, because those taking part have no idea who they are dancing with until the dance begins there is a great opportunity to include celebrity contributors."



Heist

DISTRIBUTOR: Endemol Shine International

PRODUCER: Shine TV

BROADCASTER: Sky One (UK)

CONCEPT: Eight citizens tipped off about an abandoned treasure must hide it from detectives for two weeks.

Hunted producer Shine TV is back with another factual thriller that needs to be seen to be believed. Set in a small market town in Yorkshire, *Heist* involves eight ordinary citizens who have been tipped off about valuable treasure that has been abandoned.

If they can first find the prize and hide it for two weeks from detectives that are

determined to track it down, it is theirs to keep.

But as news spreads of the missing treasure and investigators armed with modern technology and old-fashioned sleuthing devices bear down on them, can these citizens outwit everyone, keep their secret and preserve the prize?

Lisa Perrin, CEO of Creative Networks for

Endemol Shine Group, says the format “plays to the best of cops and robbers”.

“It is very tense, and all shot like a high-end drama,” she says. “It is based on real things that have happened when people commit a big crime. They move the money straight away, and can’t help spending some of it.”

Perrin notes that the format is a “big show” for Comcast-owned UK pay-TV broadcaster Sky, which is considering box-setting the show – a commonplace strategy for drama, but rarely done for an unscripted show.

“We really tried to reinvent non-scripted and thought about what non-scripted and factual entertainment looks like for Sky. Overall, there is a feeling of increased competition from global SVODs, meaning that broadcasters are looking to take risks like this.”

The show trialed a new filming technique, with much of the footage – which is largely filmed on contestant’s phones – being stored in the cloud, allowing the show to be live-produced.

Endemol Shine is looking to place the format in the Nordics and other European countries, but it could also work in the US.

The Big Audition

DISTRIBUTOR: Warner Bros.

International Television Production

CHANNEL: ITV (UK)

PRODUCER: Twenty Twenty

CONCEPT: A fly-on-the-wall look at the audition process for a range of West End gigs

ITV’s latest entertainment foray goes behind the scenes of the all-important audition process – whether that’s for hand models, West End singers or actors playing Henry VIII for Hampton Court Palace.

Warner Bros. Television Productions UK-owned prodco Twenty Twenty is behind the 6 x 60-minute fixed-rig show, which is shot in a Soho studio.

Executive producer Clair Breen explains that the business got in touch with a number of companies about their casting schedules and asked if they were keen to use a specially refurbished studio, decked out with fixed-rig cameras to capture the audition process.

The tone of the show is similar to Twenty Twenty’s hit format *First Dates*, which is now on to its 11th series on Channel 4, and also relies



heavily on a fixed-rig set-up.

“There are no judges,” she says. “These are genuinely the casting directors of companies who just happen to be using our space.”

At the end of each episode, one auditionee – and sometimes more – is told they’ve got the gig.

The format, which was launched on ITV on October 5th, reflects a trend in production that

is moving away from glossy auditions in which participants are fully aware of the cameras and crew.

“Doing fixed-rig is mixing it up and shedding a whole new light on auditions,” says Breen.

“Our show also has a lot of variety. At this point, the public is savvy and knows about dance auditions, but we are showing things they didn’t know existed.”

Fremantle

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TV's love affair

After the resounding success of the UK's fourth season of *Love Island*, TBI catches up with ITV Studios' Nordics and Global Creative Network MD, Mike Beale, to discuss the appeal of the dating format, its international transcendence and where the studio is heading next

Love Island (UK) closed the latest series with 3.6m viewers, the highest of all time for ITV2. What's the secret to its success?

We've given it time to grow and become a phenomenon. It had time to settle down into its final shape and format, which is where we're at in seasons three and four, where it really found its identity.

The first outing did okay – it pulled a young but large audience of 16-24's. But it was the discussions around it that brought in a broader audience. Then with further media coverage, it brought in a wider audience again. So suddenly

you've gone from what would be considered a niche youth audience into a broad, dare I say it, family audience.

It's also six weeks of entertaining soap opera that people can see their voice manifested in. If they think one of the contestants isn't right or they don't like how they react, they can respond through social media, and it appears in the show. That's what draws the audience in—it's not a post-produced, fairytale ending.

With a broader audience, the format also received more criticism for the mental impact it has had

on its participants. Why do you think this is?

The show is about those universal themes on relationships and people. Without getting too deep into The Guardian's and The Independent's opinions on the impact, I think it shone a light on young people's vocabulary and approach to relationships.

I've learnt a lot, especially as the father of an 18 year-old, about young men and how they interact with each other and with women. I think the audience has come away with very positive feelings.

The format has been adapted in seven



the physical one. We're really keen to promote that, we think it's really important.

I think we've got to look at what the next steps might be. Who do we put in it? What are some of those differences in relationships that we can create? But, I don't think we'd move too far from the format. *Big Brother* hasn't left its underlying format and it's gone on for 20 seasons.

Are there any emerging trends in formats, or does the dating genre still reign supreme?

There's a trend for cost-effective programming as everyone is squeezed. There's also a trend for programming that talks to its viewers across multiple platforms - or connects with the viewers - so they interact with the show. It becomes more than just television.

I don't think we're seeing hundreds of

have to arrive on those platforms. Also, the audience don't want to eat chocolate all the time. You want a piece of fruit every now and then. So, I just think they have to offer variety.

The uniqueness of players, like Facebook, can make the creativity more interesting because audiences can react instantly. They don't have to build apps and programs for it, so it's an exciting opportunity. It's tougher for places like Netflix who don't have that aspect, but they've got to do bigger stuff. It would still be a third of the cost of one of their bigger dramas though.

What are you focusing on next? What are your plans for MIPCOM?

We're looking at shows that have a track record, or are known to perform well. *Talkin' 'Bout Your Generation*, an original from the



territories, including across the Nordics and Australia. Why does it appeal internationally?

It talks to its target audience through mediums that they are used to hearing or seeing: Instagram, Whatsapp and Twitter. They can consume the material on all of those platforms, which ultimately brings them back to a linear viewing or catch-up digital viewing.

In Australia specifically, 50% of the audience were streaming the show, either live-streaming or on catch-up services. What you see is the audience start with catch-up services, then live-streaming and then linear, because you get to watch it with a group then. You watch it with your friends or family because you want to talk about it.

How does the format evolve from here?

We'll rethink what we do with the couples and the casting. The UK series is probably more mature now than the other territories and it's moved on each season. It's become more about the mental relationship as opposed to

formats that do that yet, but I think *Love Island* and other formats have encouraged it. Talpa has just launched *House of Talent*, which is doing that with a talent show. It's really interesting how they're talking to the viewer on multiple platforms. It means, almost, that they don't have to watch a half-hour linear episode, because they can keep up elsewhere.

There's also a continuing trend of looking back at formats that have worked. Channels can't afford to take massive risks on shows, so if you're going to make a new format you've got to make time for it to live and breathe. We're more in a time of evolution rather than revolution.

Increasingly SVOD players are bringing in reality formats to their platforms. Do you think we'll see more of this as time goes on?

I've always said this is an inevitability of economics. You cannot spend \$5m an episode on shows forever, so ultimately reality will

Australian Network, has just been picked up for a second season, and it is an entertainment comedy game-show for all the family. It's not the most expensive thing in the world, but it brings in an audience.

At the same time, we're bringing in *Spotless*, which was a special on ITV a year or two ago, and went to Nickelodeon in the US this year. It's a fun family game where they try to stay clean as we throw lots of paint at them.

The one new show we're bringing to MIPCOM is *I'll Get This*, which is for BBC Two. We take six celebs or famous faces and they go to dinner and each put down a credit card in the middle of a table. After a series of games, which encourages them to reveal stories about themselves, each contestant gets their card back with the loser paying for dinner.

There's no host, no voiceover and it breaks all the rules of normal TV, but at the same time it's very recognisable because it's essentially a dinner party. **TBI**

LAST WORD



LISA PERRIN

Let's binge-watch entertainment

At a time when TV drama has tended to dominate discussion in the industry, it is apt to remember the central role entertainment plays not just in the schedules but in the affections of the audience.

We are currently witnessing a resurgence in interest and enthusiasm in non-scripted programming from broadcasters around the world.

During uncertain times there is an ever greater appetite for feel-good television and the comfort blanket of familiar brands such as *Strictly Come Dancing*, which recently returned to BBC One in the UK with 8m viewers.

It has been a big year for entertainment across Europe, with *The Voice* reaching a peak of 7.1m viewers in France; *I'm A Celebrity* drawing 6.8m in Germany; *Survivor* reaching 4.1m in Spain and *The Mole* peaking with 3.7m in the Netherlands. They are the number one unscripted shows in all of their respective markets.

But it's not just about those big heritage brands – impressive though those figures are. According to research by The Wit, 75% of new programme launches are non-scripted.

And into this non-scripted arena have come the SVOD players, first with *The Grand Tour* on Amazon and now more recently with Netflix's *Queer Eye*.

The reboot of a 15-year-old format might just be the most noteworthy programme of 2018, not just because it showed the new players' willingness to embrace non-scripted but because

it was evidence of the audience's huge appetite for this sort of programming.

Beautifully made, big-hearted and laugh-out-loud funny, it was a joyful ray of light among all those drama box sets which – addictive as they are – can't always be relied upon to put a spring in your step. And the new competition of Netflix, Amazon and Apple will encourage all of the broadcasters (and producers) to up their game in the genre.

Leading the charge from Endemol Shine Group are three formats that are all new, all travelling and all returning to their home markets:

* *All Together Now* began in the UK and recently debuted in Brazil with more than 15m viewers

* *Family Food Fight*, our cooking reality show, which originated in Australia and has been commissioned in the US and Argentina

* *Big Bounce Battle*, our latest physical challenge format with parkour and trampolining at its heart, has generated a huge amount of interest around the world. Developed by the Netherlands and Germany it's also been picked up in France.

And soon to join this list is *The Talent Project*, which debuted on RTL4 in the Netherlands on September 21, a new singing entertainment format which nurtures raw talent in an intensive, 100-day training academy.

Broadcasters value entertainment so much because it is an opportunity for all of the family to sit around the TV and watch together – a precious commodity in an increasingly fragmented world.

This is even reflected in the casting. *Family Food Fight* has diverse, inclusive families at the heart of the show which celebrates different cultures and traditions. *All Together Now* has hundreds of different characters from drag queens to opera singers, and *Big Bounce Battle* pits people of all ages against each other.

But a linear TV presence by itself is not necessarily enough anymore.

The new generation of non-scripted needs to be alive to the challenges of the digital era, embracing social media as successfully as ITV2's *Love Island* has done, or by putting livestreams and highlights on YouTube, as we did with the relaunch of *Operación Triunfo (Star Academy)* in Spain.

By capturing millennials' attention on Twitter, YouTube, Facebook or elsewhere, you build engagement and anticipation, which, if you get it right, ultimately feeds back into audiences on the linear channel.

People have never watched more content than they do today – they just don't necessarily do it on the TV in the corner of the living room anymore. Broadcasters and producers must adopt a multiplatform approach to reflect this.

Non-scripted may also be learning a trick or two from the way in which drama has embraced and benefited from the on-demand age. People talk about binge-watching their favourite TV dramas all the time, but less so with their cherished entertainment show.

But there is no reason why people shouldn't be able to binge-watch non-scripted shows as well, so long as they are made in a way that suits that style of watching. The era of 'boxsettable entertainment' is upon us.

Non-scripted, then, is alive and kicking, not just one of the tools at a broadcaster's disposal, but at the heart of their schedule with a unique ability to appeal to a cross-generational audience.

Entertainment is changing, evolving, adapting...but diminishing? Hardly. **TBI**

There is no reason why people shouldn't be able to binge-watch unscripted shows. The era of 'boxsettable entertainment' is upon us.

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