

TBI Television Business International

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Content Fund
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streamer Pluto TV
unpacked
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Editor's note Manori Ravindran

The kids are alright

For the first time in a long time, we are seeing the sparks of palpable change in markets such as the UK, where there has been much anxiety in recent years over the future of original kids programming.

Now, the BFI's Young Audiences Content Fund appears to be well on its way to spurring positive results among broadcasters, and businesses from all backgrounds are looking for a piece of the \$70m pie. For an in-depth examination of the YACF's results so far, don't miss Ann-Marie Corvin's deep dive on page six.

Meanwhile, we take a closer look at how broadcasters such as the BBC are looking to fend off SVOD competition for teen eyeballs, while our Hot Picks break down the hottest animated and live-action children's and teen programming heading to Cartoon Forum, Brand Licensing Europe and MIP Junior.

Elsewhere in the issue, Pluto TV CEO Tom Ryan gives us a fascinating glimpse into how the channels-focused AVOD has upped the ante on the back of Viacom's \$340m acquisition earlier this year. Now that it counts CBS as a parent company as well, this is one streamer worth keeping your eye on, particularly as AVOD will be a hot topic at October's MIPCOM market. For a preview of what's in store there, head to page 30.

In this issue's TBI Scripted, we look back on the remakes that had people talking at June's Série Series drama conference in France – is there a soul among us who can resist *Call My Agent!*'s Camille Cottin as the French Fleabag? – and we unpack why so many limited series are becoming unceremoniously unlimited.

Finally, do take a minute to check out the outstanding programmes up for TBI's Content Innovation Awards. We have some exciting new categories such as Best Live Action Kids Programme and Distribution Innovation in the running this year, and I look forward to seeing many of you at the awards in Cannes on Sunday, 13 October. (And if you haven't yet booked your seat or table, it's not too late. Join us!)

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Well-being Tracy Forsyth

The 7 essential tricks to working a room

In this month's Well-being column, former BBC Studios exec and corporate wellness coach Tracy Forsyth shares her top tips on working an industry event and owning the room.

I have a confession. I'm an introvert masquerading as an extrovert for professional purposes. I can work a room full of people, chatting, making connections and having fun, but I'd probably rather be at home in front of a box set. Rather than staying up late in bars with scads of people, I'm much happier having dinner with a small group and getting home in time for an 11pm bedtime.

But often in our working lives we need to attend conferences, network a room of industry professionals and leave a lasting impression in order to broaden our network or get that next job. If you find the thought of walking into a room full of strangers daunting, here are the things I've learned that have made working a room more enjoyable.

1. Research who you want to meet in advance. Before you go, have a look at the speaker or delegate list and reach out in advance. Drop them a short email asking if they can meet you for a coffee or if you can grab them during a break or drinks to say hello. You don't need a complicated reason. I often introduce myself briefly in an email and explain that I just want to be on their radar and say hi. If you don't get a reply, try their PA. Be tenacious. When you see them, head on up to them and say you're the person who emailed them in advance – it makes it easier and shows you cared enough about meeting them to arrange it in advance.

2. Have your elevator pitch prepared. Before you go, practice your personal elevator pitch. A personal elevator pitch is a summary of who you are, what you are working on, what you are interested in working on and why it's of interest to them. Again, in advance, write it out, get it into a language you like and practice saying it out loud. It should trip off the tongue so that when you meet someone you want to impress, it comes out naturally with passion and energy.

3. Fuel for the conversational fire. Go prepared with something to talk about other than yourself. In TV, it's easy – we can talk about the latest shows, broadcasters, what's coming up or what you are excited about. Make sure you are up to date on industry news and goings-on so you don't feel clueless. Have some conversation

starters up your sleeve that lead you into an area you are passionate about and can talk about. This way, you keep the conversation flowing if it ever gets stilted.

4. Set yourself a challenge. If you are achievement-focused, set yourself a challenge on how many new people you will network with. So, if the drinks are an hour long, making three new contacts is a great number. It works out to 20 minutes per person, which is plenty of time.

5. Even important people get nervous or feel awkward at times. It's important to remember that even industry leaders, experts and panellists get nervous or feel awkward sometimes. I remember standing around between sessions at Edinburgh one year when I was a commissioner, not having anyone to talk to, and an agent eventually came up to speak to me, saying how awkward she felt not having anyone to speak to, either. We are all the same. We all think everyone else is having a much better time, and often it's not true. So, no matter how important someone is, they will always appreciate you approaching them, complimenting them on their work, wanting to talk to them and finding them interesting.

6. Don't cling to the only person you know. It's great to attend conferences and networking events with people you know but the danger is that you spend the whole time talking to them rather than other people. If you are going to go with a friend, then make a pact that you will divide and conquer the room together. Split up for a bit, target someone to network with and then either meet up again once the conversation is over or, even better, introduce each other to whomever you were talking to.

7. Make a gracious exit instead of looking over someone's shoulder. We all know the trait of people looking over your shoulder to see if there is someone more important in the room they should be talking to. Well, in a networking environment, it happens. Time is short and there are people to meet. So, if it happens to you, acknowledge it in a friendly way by saying, "I won't keep you. I'm sure there are loads of people you need to see, so let's follow up soon." Then move on. **TBI**

Tracy is a creative mentor for the Channel 4 Indie Growth Fund, the producer of the WFTV mentoring scheme and a professional executive coach. Follow her at walterwootze.com

About Town

Summer of streamers

If the summer of 2019 taught us anything, it's that the SVODs are dynamic beasts, increasingly transparent about their strategies and shouting about their successes. Facebook held its first major event in the UK for an original title, bringing Jada Pinkett-Smith to London to discuss the smash success of *Red Table Talk* and tease Latin American and UK versions of the format. Meanwhile, Netflix's director of original documentaries Diego Buñuel impressed at June's Sunny Side of the Doc market in La Rochelle, breaking down the secretive company's exec structure and calling for "insane" contemporary stories in not one, but two back-to-back presentations. Later, at the Edinburgh TV Festival, YouTube revealed its new education-focused content strategy, lifting the lid (and paywall) on new original *School Of...*, an innovative collaboration with philosophy collective The School of Life, featuring stylish influencer Jessica Kellgren-Fozard.



Netflix



Facebook



YouTube

Swings and Roundabouts



20 Yas Queen. A Channel 4 vet of 20-plus years, head of news and current affairs Dorothy Byrne rules.



35 Director and nicest-guy-in-showbiz Paul Feig started writing *Freaks And Geeks* when he was 35. There's hope yet.



7 US broadcaster Fox checked out of its *Paradise Hotel* reboot in August after just seven episodes.



G7 The British PM allegedly froze out Channel 4 News at the G7 Summit following Dorothy Byrne's MacTaggart Lecture.

6,157 days later



Alex Garland, writer of zombie masterpiece *28 Days Later*, said at a recent Fox Searchlight event in London that the third instalment of the hit 2002 film could be reimaged as a series.

Khoo's Kitchen Rules

TBI marketing exec Abigail Dede (right) stepped into Rachel Khoo's kitchen in Northwest London in August, where the British chef broke down her lemon wedding cake recipe – the very one she whipped up for her own nuptials (as you do). The August workshop, hosted by Discovery, came ahead of Khoo's latest series, the DRG-distributed *Rachel Khoo: My Swedish Kitchen*, which recently debuted on Food Network.



A fund indeed for a nation in need

The UK children's industry is already feeling the benefit of a new \$70m fund but what are the longer repercussions both domestically and internationally?

Ann-Marie Corvin reports



Eye Present and Pictor
Productions' Flix

Funding kids content is a challenge in many territories but the market failure of domestic children's programming in the UK has finally prompted government intervention.

One of its responses is the Young Audiences Content Fund (YACF), a three-year pilot scheme launched in April that has a pot of £57m (\$70m) with which to lure the British commercial PSBs back into producing content for the under 18s again.

ITV and Channel 5 still commission and broadcast some kids programming, while Channel 4 claims to air content that attracts young audiences. However, UK regulator Ofcom points out that the big three PSBs are spending 40% less on children's content than they did in 2006. And much of the current offering is acquisitions, the majority of which are animation.

For children's producers making original content with domestic broadcaster finance, the BBC – via its CBeebies and CBBC channels – has been the main game in town.

The YACF, which is being administered by UK film body the BFI, hopes to redress that balance by offering to support up to half of a kids' TV show's total budget – so long as it is PSB-minded and has a free-to-air UK broadcaster attached.

Since the YACF opened for business, fund head Jackie Edwards says she has been “pleasantly surprised” by the range and diversity of applications. She adds that several projects have already been greenlit, and that the first slate of YACF-financed content will be announced this autumn.

“There's been a great spread across all genres and formats: from lovely pre-school live-action, to teen drama and comedy,” she says.

New voices

The former BBC Children's acquisitions and animation head, whose seven-strong team is divided between Leeds and Salford, has been travelling across the country to communicate the terms of the fund.

“This year was very much about engagement and encouraging new talent. New voices and diversity are among the fund's priorities,” Edwards explains.

Some of the more established kids companies, who would be eligible to apply for the fund, are even offering their expertise to help these newer players. Lucinda Whiteley, co-founder and creative director at Novel Entertainment, says she is happy to help fledgling companies through the application process.

“As a mature business we've decided that it's not for us to just hammer ideas out there and not give back to the industry,” she explains.

While the *Horrid Henry* producer is working on

ideas that would fit the bill for the fund, including a factual idea for 6-9s, she adds that the idea is to support “new regional voices”.

“We view this as an opportunity to support new and diverse voices by offering our skills and business acumen,” she adds.

To attract emerging producers, the YACF is also funding a £3m (\$3.3m) development pot for indies to flesh out ideas, and there is no ceiling on how much they can ask for and they don't need broadcaster backing.

Genevieve Dexter, founder and chief executive of boutique distributor Serious Lunch, thinks such an approach is a smart and inclusive move to fast track new talent.

“The fund needs to get things made now, and may end up relying initially on companies with a track record, so the development area is a great way of giving new voices access,” she says.

Dexter, who is also CEO of London-based animation company Eye Present, adds that the firm may use the fund to part-finance *Flix*, a new animation project presented at this year's Cartoon Forum that tells the tale of a young pug dog born to cat parents.

IP retention

For their part, the PSBs need to provide not only their platforms but also a decent proportion of the budget – although producers are free to seek match-funding from other sources, including distributors, international co-producers and other regional funding.

The YACF can also be used in conjunction with the UK tax credit scheme, which offers a possible 25% rebate on productions where the UK core expenditure is more than £1m (\$1.1m) per broadcast hour.

Ed Galton, managing director and chief commercial officer at kids' producer-distributor Cake Entertainment, believes that for bigger projects, this puts producers in an incredibly powerful position.

“If you can tap into the UK tax credit as well as the fund, you can essentially get 70% of finance from one territory – that's a huge bonus in terms of IP retention,” he says.

Asked whether it would be a challenge to fully fund projects, even with YACF funding, Anne Brogan, managing director of *Jamillah And Aladdin* producer Kindle Entertainment, said that it would, but “no more so than funding a kids show for the BBC”.

The producer, who has made one submission to the fund already, adds: “It's worth remembering the BFI money doesn't have to be recouped. That's a massive bonus and it gives us much more chance of attracting other investment.”

“There's been great spread across all genres and formats.”

Jackie Edwards,
YACF fund head



\$3.6m

The separate pot of development money for producers



Rise in ITV's commissioning budget for kids' content

PSB reaction

Broadcaster reaction to the fund has been largely positive, serendipitously tying in with Ofcom's new powers to impose mandatory kids quotas on commercial PSBs.

The UK regulator has stopped short of forcing the broadcasters' hands, opting instead to write to them earlier this year to ask for their plans to boost kids content.

They replied in kind this July, using the Children's Media Conference in Sheffield to publicly announce their intentions, as well as to outline the kinds of programming they wanted to use the fund for.

Viacom-owned Channel 5 plans to increase investment in its pre-school strand Milkshake! by at least £1m (\$1.1m) and has committed to doubling content production by 2021.

Viacom International Media Networks Kids VP in UK and Ireland, Louise Bucknole, has



Jamillah And Aladdin

said that the channel is keen to add more pre-school live action to its portfolio and so far Channel 5 is developing six potential projects for the fund.

ITV, meanwhile, has raised its commissioning budgets by 10% and is on the hunt for live-action shows, with producers given a deadline of 30 August to submit to the first commissioning round.

The broadcaster's head of digital channels and acquisitions, Paul Mortimer, tells TBI that the broadcaster is looking for content "that reflects the lives of our audiences, particularly gameshow or craft formats".

He adds: "We've received some good ideas in scripted and non-scripted. Without the fund we would not have been able to commission these."

He argues that UK live-action shows, particularly factual formats, receive little interest from international buyers. "So what the fund allows us to do is work with two or three partners to achieve this, and also fund development."

He adds that there are still no plans to appoint a kids' commissioning champion, with ITV continuing its policy of commissioning via genre specialists across factual, comedy, entertainment and drama.

"What we do have now is more people working on CITV than ever before," he adds, "and I'm seeing far

more kids producers, particularly from the regions."

While C4 has not laid out its plans in detail, the broadcaster has committed to digging deeper into its remit to cater for those aged over 10, and particularly the 16-18s.

The broadcaster is also close to launching an online proposition aimed at teenagers as part of its plans to fulfil its Ofcom PSB commitments for kids.

BBC abstention

The only public broadcaster so far to resist actively participating in the fund is what was, until recently, the only game in town.

The BBC will not seek funding from the initiative, a stance which many believe stems from the way money from the fund was made available in the first place.

The YACF comprises £57m (\$69m) of licence fee money that was diverted from the BBC's 2006 settlement for digital switchover.

Technically, the fund was money the BBC had given back to the government, which it hadn't used – an underspend – but some view this as a form of 'top slicing' the licence fee, which, they argue, is 'robbing Peter to pay Paul'.

Greg Childs, Children's Media Foundation chair and a long-time campaigner for the fund, believes the BBC is "understandably wary" of taking money from a fund that it might one day be obligated to finance.

"The CMC and [UK producers trade body] Pact have made it very clear that we would be reluctant to see any future BBC top-slicing, which would inevitably come out of the children's budget – so that's not an option," adds Childs.

The broadcaster might also consider this contestable fund to be aimed at the commercial PSBs. Either way, Edwards says that the broadcaster does qualify and that the door remains open.

"Ultimately the fund offers indies a chance to get shows greenlit that might otherwise not have happened – the BBC is definitely in the scope and we would welcome applications," she says.

Regional broadcasters

The fund also has a remit to bolster the programming of regional broadcasters, including S4C in Wales and BBC Alba in Scotland.

The latter, a Gaelic-language broadcaster, transmits two hours of kids programming and keeps the branding of CBBC and CBeebies, but uses its own Gaelic-speaking presenters for the continuity links.

Programming is largely comprised of BBC content and its own international acquisitions, many of them

"The fund needs to get things made now... so the development area is a great way of giving new voices access."

Genevieve Dexter,
Serious Lunch



animation, allowing them to be easily localised into Gaelic.

Channel commissioning executive Bill Macleod now plans to use the fund to increase the channel's live-action output. The genre, he explains, is particularly important for children learning the language as they pick up their linguistic cues – the way the mouth forms around certain words – from content that plays out in front of them.

“That’s why the YACF is such an exciting proposition for us. I can’t tell you how embattled minority language broadcasting has been – to have the sense that we are supported, acknowledged and respected is refreshing,” he says.

BBC Alba is also working on a short drama and a short doc with the European Broadcasting Union (EBU), which it hopes will qualify for the fund, and is also in talks with its Celtic cousins in Wales (S4C) and Northern Ireland (TG4) to explore further collaboration.

Macleod adds that BBC Alba lobbied its parent broadcaster hard to participate in the fund. He adds that because the majority of the channel's funding comes from the Scottish government, it was in a strong position, especially given S4C's eligibility for the fund.

Others point out that combining cultural specificity with global resonance to attract co-production partners is one of the key challenges producers using the fund face.

“I don’t think that the two things are in opposition to each other,” Brogan adds, who adds that this conundrum has always existed in kids TV.

However, she points out: “The more authentic and local your content, and embracing it is of your immediate culture, the more resonance it can have globally.”

As a case in point, Brogan references NRK's breakout teen hit *Skam*, which was very rooted in Norwegian culture but addressed issues all teens face. It has subsequently been picked up as a format by Facebook.

Edwards and Childs both mention Adastra Entertainment and CBeebies' quirky international hit *Grandpa In My Pocket*, set in a small seaside town. “I think what makes that travel is its hyper-real look and the magical aspect,” Edwards adds.

The SVOD factor

But does Brogan think the initiative will help the PSBs compete with SVOD giants such as Amazon and Netflix, which are fast becoming the go-to for kids of all ages?

“In terms of having an equal slate, no – but the PSBs



will be able to compete on a smaller canvas by making a few bold commissions that punch above their weight,” she says.

There have been concerns, mainly from the BBC, that the fund may inadvertently end up using public money to subsidise SVODs through second-window deals, but the YACF has been clear on its holdback policy.

“We will be taking a view on the length of second-window holdbacks within the UK on a case-by-case basis, but we will require a minimum of a two-year holdback in every case,” says Edwards.

According to Childs, the SVODs may even hold the key to the fund's future once the pilot finishes in three year's time. A kids TV levy on the big SVOD platforms has been one option mooted, with Australia and France already proposing similar plans.

“This could produce large sums of money to fund PSB competition,” he says, although he acknowledges that Pact is generally nervous about levies, believing that they skew the marketplace.

“But if it's a way of getting incredibly high-value companies to contribute to the territories they operate in, then that's one way of doing it,” Childs argues.

One other concern levelled at the fund is that broadcasters are reserving it for the shortfall of live-action shows, which may leave animation producers out on a limb.

Certainly, the launch of a separate BFI initiative for animation this August was very timely. The new, lottery-funded Short Form Animation Fund, which will award up to £120,000 (\$146,000) to up-and-coming animators working on ambitious projects, may go some way towards addressing animators' concerns.

In the main, however, the industry has been impressed with the BFI's orchestration of the fund and with how quickly Edwards and her team have embedded themselves within the kids TV community.

And, as Childs adds, after years of government lobbying, what's not to like about £57m? **TBI**

Skam was picked up by Facebook in 2017



Number of projects for the fund from Channel 5

How children's TV is changing tack to capture teen audiences

Helen Dugdale investigates how producers and broadcasters such as the BBC are changing their tactics to better reach teen audiences in the face of deep-pocketed SVODs that are masterfully catering to this demographic

At this year's Children's Media Conference in Sheffield, youth climate activist Noga Levy-Rapoport blasted kids' content makers for not listening to the voices of young people or taking their opinions seriously. The industry promised to listen and do more.

Judging by the raft of new shows coming up for the teen audience this autumn and winter, they are keeping their word.

Flatmates reflects the BBC's attempt to engage 13-16s

The BBC is one of the main players offering new content for the oft-overlooked age range of 13-16 years, bringing grittier and more challenging programmes to the iPlayer catch-up service.

"We're carrying on the interesting conversation that we already have with the pre-schoolers and the 6-12 year-olds, but on the iPlayer," explains Cheryl Taylor, head of content for children's.

"Now as kids are creating and curating their own content, those age brackets are a challenge. On the iPlayer, we're just nudging up the content. We've got a big drama called *Get Even* coming out, which is a murder mystery set in a school and the characters are trying to find out who murdered their classmates.

"It's beautifully written and is lifting the debate up a few notches in maturity and the places we can get to. It's the next step on from *Hetty Feather and The*



Four O'Clock Club."

Taylor's team is also launching *Flatmates* – a brand extension of CBBC's *Millie Inbetween*, in which the older cast members share a flat.

Steven Andrew and the team at Zodiak Kids are behind the eagerly awaited series, which launches on iPlayer in early August. The business, he says, has a lot going on, including a new series of CBBC's *Secret Life of Boys* and CITV's *Scrambled!*.

"The big thing, though, is *Flatmates*, which is new territory for us," he says. "The show sees step-siblings Lauren and Craig from *Millie Inbetween* and ex-boyfriend Declan living in a flat in Manchester. It's their first step to independent living. It's great to see the BBC returning to an audience that they did originally serve," highlights Andrew, an executive producer at Zodiak Kids.

Elsewhere, David Michel, founder and CEO of Paris-headquartered Cottonwood Media, is looking forward to the third season of Hulu and France Télévisions' *Find Me In Paris*.

"Our main launch is the special season of *Find Me In Paris*, which wraps up the whole story. It introduces new characters, which leads nicely into a new spin-off show," he says.

"The spin-off is in development with partners. We have the actors from *Find Me In Paris* who are growing up, graduating from ballet school, and so we're closing this chapter. In addition, we have a few other live-action shows in early development. We're looking at high-budget shows with an English cast and crew, just like we did with *Find Me In Paris*."

Hadas Mozes-Lichtenstein, founder and head of international at Israel's ADD Content, says the business is focused on bringing additional seasons of well-loved shows back for the teen audience.

"We have the second season of our YA answer to *Grey's Anatomy*, *The Station*, airing in November on Kidz HOT, and the third season of compelling YA thriller *The Missing* will air in September on Nickelodeon in Israel."

Meanwhile, DHX is delivering the second season of their spooky anthology series *Creeped Out*, a co-commission between Family Channel and CBBC.

"We've sold the first season of *Creeped Out* as a Netflix Original and they've also just picked up a second season that will roll out next year," explains Josh Scherba, president of DHX.

"Another series we're currently in production on is with the creators of *The Next Step*. This time, it's a family comedy-drama called *Springboard*, and is set in the world of competitive gymnastics."

The project has been pre-sold to CBBC, says Scherba, who adds that while *Springboard* is not

"Love Island is an example of a show that listens to its audience. They watch what is happening on social media and adjust the editorial accordingly, and tease moments from casts members that are popular. They have definitely tapped into that zeitgeist."

Cheryl Taylor,
BBC



The Missing deals with relatable teen issues within a compelling thriller arc

an official co-production, the channel is working "closely" with DHX.

The blueprint for capturing wandering eyes

What exactly is the blueprint for creating engaging and entertaining content to catch the eye of constantly distracted teens? Mozes-Lichtenstein at ADD Content suggests Nickelodeon's *The Missing* holds the secret.

"We have produced three seasons of *The Missing*, which has captured the entertainment and relatability element that audiences are looking for. It deals with ordinary problems of young high-schoolers – love, friendship, parents and adolescence – while also engaging them through a mystery thriller arc that drives the narrative.

"On one hand, you have characters you connect to but also a story to be hooked on. It's important to have a mixture of both for that audience."

DHX's Scherba adds: "For engagement, you need serialisation. Consumption patterns have changed and you're more likely to watch multiple back-to-back episodes. By telling a bigger story, there is more pay-off the more you watch, which is increasingly an expectation today."

Cottonwood Media's Michel believes there is no secret recipe for catching the eye of this challenging demographic – it's simply down to great shows.

"It's popular to replicate a format that is working, but when you do that, it just becomes boring and predictable. One of the keys to the success of *Find Me In Paris* and *Totally Spies* is that when they were developed, there was nothing like them. There is so much clutter in this day and age that you just want to be surprised."

The BBC's Taylor flags that the secret comes down to inspiring characters, a brilliant plot, life and death scenarios and "fabulous" production values.





“Comedy is also still massive as we’ve seen with the success of *Derry Girls* and *Inbetweeners*. It’s an area that I want to investigate,” she adds.

Giving them what they want

With the new autumn and winter programme slates offering an abundance of quality drama and comedy for teens, how can the industry be sure that it is catering to this delicate audience?

“Making teenagers laugh is hugely important,” says Andrew from Zodiak Kids.

“There’s lots of funny stuff in *Flatmates*, but we also look at mental health, so there’s serious stuff in there too. You want the stories to feel authentic and fun but also deal with some of the tricky aspects of growing up. It’s key to keep your audience involved and use research.”

Andrew notes that the teen audience is “much pickier and more discerning”. As such, the business takes every opportunity to visit schools and run workshops where they ask teens about certain concepts they can then “plot all the way through the development process”.

Find Me in Paris (top) and *Secret Life of Boys*

“There is so much clutter in this day and age that you just want to be surprised.”

David Michel,
Cottonwood Media



Taylor believes that the BBC can learn something from the producers of ITV2’s *Love Island*, which she deems “a show that listens to its audience”.

“They watch what is happening on social media and adjust the editorial accordingly, and tease moments from cast members that are popular. They have definitely tapped into that zeitgeist.”

Social media platforms play a major part in the everyday lives of teens, so programme makers need to engage and, most importantly, listen to the audience in this space.

Mozes-Lichtenstein from ADD Content says: “This audience doesn’t necessarily read reviews in newspapers, online or other traditional outlets that adults are exposed to. Most of the young people we’re trying to reach are on social media, so that’s where the conversation is important.”

Cottonwood Media believes social channels are so important that it has just launched an in-house digital marketing department to look after all its own content.

“For *Find Me In Paris*, we relied on the broadcaster doing the social media and some of them did amazing work, but others didn’t have the capability to push the show and make it discoverable, so we’re building a team and doing it internally. Social media is critical to us,” says Michel.

Taylor adds: “If we want them to share our content, it needs to be funny enough. We’re competing with the audience as they are essentially creating their own content all day long, so we need to be in that conversation if we’re going to make a big impact.”

Zodiak Kids is going further than other producers by getting the teen audience involved in the programme during its creation.

“For me, part of the blueprint is getting insight into the audience and getting that into the programme. It’s vital to get them to be part of the conversation from the get-go, as well as being able to have a conversation [once the programme has aired].”

Andrew says the development process for *Flatmates* was “very different” in that regard.

“We got the [actors] in and had them workshop the different parts,” he says. “This became the foundation for the series. To make anything within the teen space, it needs to feel authentic and they need to be part of the process.

“Having done that, we also [presented] the storylines and characters to another group and got their feedback. It didn’t give us all the answers, but it did set the scene for the direction we went in.” **TBI**

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Malory Towers

Distributor: DHX Media

Producer: DHX Media, King Bert Productions

Broadcaster: CBBC (UK), Family Channel (Canada)

Logline: Based on the iconic book series by Enid Blyton

Malory Towers is the much-anticipated TV adaptation of the eponymous novel series from Enid Blyton, which follows 12-year-old Darrell Rivers as she leaves home for the first time to attend an all-girls' boarding school.

The 13 x 30 minute live-action series is aimed at kids aged 6 to 12 and has been greenlit by CBBC in the UK and DHX Television's Family Channel, with an expected

premiere date of 2020.

The show is being produced by Toronto-based DHX Media and King Bert Productions, the UK-based outfit that was launched in 2014 by children's author and comedian David Walliams with fellow comedian Miranda Hart.

The series is set in the 1940s on the cliffs of the UK's Cornish coast and explores a nostalgic world of midnight feasts, lacrosse, pranks and lasting

friendships.

"For a contemporary audience, the show is both aspirational and inspirational, telling the story of universal experiences including shifting cliques, fear of missing out (FOMO), bullying, crushes, peer pressure and self-doubt," DHX says. "The girls keep an eye on each other and, like a family, are forever connected by their shared experiences."

It has been adapted for TV by Rachel Flowerday and Sasha Hails, with Rebecca Rycroft (*Evermore Chronicles*, *So Awkward*) and Bruce McDonald (*Creeped Out*, *Heartland*) set to direct.

The show – an official Canada-UK treaty co-production – is being executive produced by DHX trio Josh Scherba, Anne Loi and Michael Goldsmith, alongside Jo Sargent for King Bert and the BBC's Amy Buscombe.

DHX Media is selling the series internationally after adaptation rights were acquired from Karen Lawler at Hachette Children's Group, owners of Enid Blyton Entertainment and publisher of *Malory Towers*. It was commissioned earlier this year by Cheryl Taylor, head of content for BBC Children's, in association with Canuck network Family Channel.



Stinky Dog

Distributor: Dandeloo
Producer: Dandeloo, Folivari, Panique! Pikkukala
Broadcaster: France Télévisions
Logline: Based on the famous series of books written by Colas Gutman

This 2D animation is set to have its exclusive world premiere at this year’s MIP Junior, where Emmy Award-winning French producer and distributor Dandeloo will be showcasing the first two episodes of the slapstick series.

The 52 x 11 minute show has been commissioned by France Télévisions and is based on the series of books written by Colas Gutman, which were illustrated by Marc Boutavant and published by L’école des Loisirs.

The series follows a couple of misfits, Stinky Dog and his friend Flatty Cat, who live in a rubbish bin and who are regarded as down-and-outs by those around them.

Each episode tracks the duo as they undertake adventures, which are often complicated because of Stinky Dog’s impulsiveness. Yet during these “wild and hairy pursuits,” the studio says, “he sends hypocrites flying and knocks thieves for six... even if it’s usually only through his own clumsiness”.

The show is being targeted at 6 to 10-year-olds and has been produced by an array of European outfits, including Dandeloo, Folivari, Belgian production company Panique! and Catalan animation studio Pikkukala. It is due to deliver in 2020.

friendZspace

Distributor: Henson Independent Properties (HIP)
Producer: Shellhut Entertainment
Broadcaster: TBC
Logline: Merges wild adventure and character-driven comedy with gripping storytelling

Created by Emmy-nominated Dan Clark (*Yo Gabba Gabba!*, *Team Smithereen*) and Oscar Covar (*The Tasty Tales of the Food Truckers*, *Team Smithereen*), this 52 x 11-minute show follows three children from Earth who travel across the universe to make new friends.

A CG series aimed at kids aged between 5 and 8 years, *friendZspace* (working title) is a comedy adventure show that follows the trio as they hop from planet to planet on a mission to make friends with “outer-space” kids.

They then share their findings via posts to kids on Earth, with the series driven by the act of befriending children who are very different from themselves. It explores themes such as communication, finding shared

interests, making a connection, and nurturing new friendships, but is also irreverent and aspirational.

The show is being produced by Thai animation company Shellhut Entertainment and has been funded by Asian financier T&B Media Global, with a delivery date of 2021. Henson Independent Properties is distributing globally, with the show aimed at combining adventure and character-driven comedy with gripping storytelling for both boys and girls.

“This new original series provides a rich and immersive world of fresh characters with messages of unity, acceptance and friendship,” says Claudia Scott-Hansen, SVP of global distribution at The Jim Henson Company.



Super Shiro

Distributor: TV Asahi

Producer: Science SARU

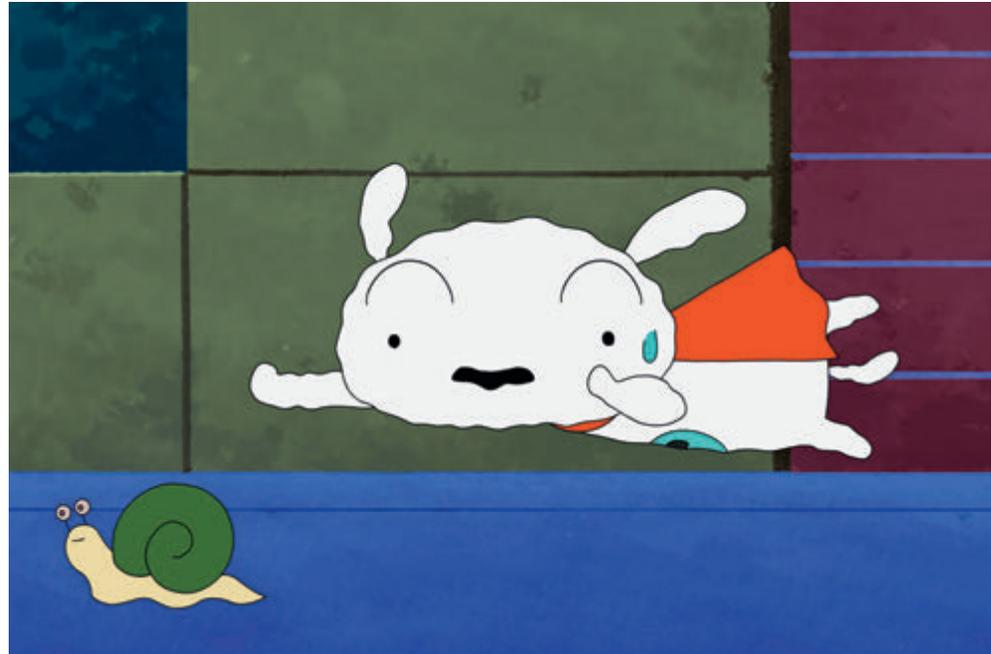
Broadcaster: TV Asahi (Japan); Pogo, Cartoon Network, Boomerang (APAC)

Logline: An ordinary-looking dog living with an ordinary family

This series aimed at kids aged 4 to 8 is from Japanese broadcaster TV Asahi and follows the exploits of Shiro, an ordinary-looking dog living with an ordinary family who is actually a superhero dog.

Super Shiro has been inspired by the hugely popular “Crayon Shin Chan” franchise, which has aired internationally since 1992, and is being produced by Science SARU, a Tokyo-based animation studio led by Masaaki Yuasa.

Yuasa was a Cristal Award Winner at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival in 2017 and recently won the 41st Japan Academy Prize for Animation of the



Year, having guest-directed episodes of shows including *Adventure Time* for Cartoon Network.

The story of *Super Shiro* follows canine lead Shiro, whose mission is to secure mysterious bones that are said

to have the power to rule the world. The show explores whether Shiro can get to the mysterious bones before they fall into the hands of a clever but evil dog.

The 48 x 5.5-minute show is set to launch in early 2020

across Turner’s kids channels Cartoon Network, Boomerang and Pogo. Yoshito Usui is behind the original IP, while Yuasa is attached as director. Tomohisa Shimoyama is attached to direct, and Kimiko Ueno is screenwriter.

The Snail And The Whale

Distributor: Magic Light Pictures

Producer: Magic Light Pictures

Broadcaster: BBC (UK), ZDF (Germany)

Logline: A delightful tale of adventure and friendship

From Oscar-nominated and BAFTA-winning UK production outfit Magic Light Pictures, *The Snail And The Whale* is the company’s latest book adaptation being produced for the BBC as part of its Christmas slate.

The show, a 1 x 30-minute special, is a tale of adventure and friendship that has been based on the global hit book, which was first published 16 years ago and is by award-winning author Julia Donaldson and illustrator Axel Scheffler.

The duo were previously behind *The Gruffalo*, *The Highway Rat* and *Stick Man*, all three of which have already been turned into TV properties by Magic Light.

This latest TV adaptation follows the journey of a tiny snail who longs to see the world and manages to hitch a ride on the tail of a great humpback whale.

Magic Light describes the show as a “joyous, empowering story about the wonder of the world and discovering that

however small you are, you can make a difference,” with the story following the snail as it saves the whale after it becomes beached.

The show is set to premiere

in the UK on BBC One as a highlight of its 2019 Christmas schedule, with German broadcaster ZDF also on board as a core partner, with the latter set to air the special in 2020.



Mush-Mush & The Mushables

Distributor: Cake

Producer: La Cabane Productions, Thuristar

Broadcaster: Boomerang (International), Canal+ Family (France), Pivi+ (France), VRT-Ketnet (Belgium), RTBF (Belgium), RTS (Switzerland), RTL Telekids (Netherlands)

Logline: Comedy adventures of the Mushable community as they put the fun back into fungi

A comedy adventure series that follows the lives of a group of fungi, *Mush-Mush & The Mushables* is a 48 x 11-minute show that attempts to tackle subjects such as self-discovery and encourage exploration of the outdoors.

The series, which also includes 2 x 22-minute specials, follows the lives of the Mushable community, each of whom has a special gift.

“Mush-Mush can communicate with nature, Lilit shines bright like a light and Chep has an impressive memory,” explains distributor Cake, which is also onboard

the show as a coproducer with Paris-based La Cabane Productions and Belgian animation outfit Thuristar.

“As they get to know their talents and their limits, the Mushables find there is still a lot to discover about growing up,” says Cake.

The show, which has been created by Elfriede de Rooster and is being directed by Joeri Christiaen, is set to premiere in 2020 internationally on Boomerang. It has also been acquired in France by Canal+ Family and Piwi+, in Belgium by VRT-Ketnet and RTBF, in Switzerland by RTS and in the Netherlands by RTL Telekids.



The Station

Distributor: ADD Content

Producer: ADD Content

Broadcaster: HOT Kidz (Israel)

Logline: A YA show about a group of high schoolers who volunteer at Israel's Red Cross



Described as the young adult genre's answer to Shonda Rhimes's hit show *Grey's Anatomy*, *The Station* is an innovative Israeli show that revolves around a group of students who work for Mada, Israel's Red Cross.

The 50 x 30-minute series follows the teenagers as they attempt to cope with all the usual worries and dramas of being young adults, but who also feel compelled to put themselves in high-pressure situations to save lives.

The show was created by Shahar Segall and Oren Jakobi, and has been commissioned by Israeli children's network HOT Kidz. It is produced by ADD Content and – although making its way to MIPCOM for the first time – is already into a second season, after the first run debuted earlier this year.

A third season is now in the

works following ratings success, with shooting set to begin in September.

The series combines action and adrenaline – think ambulances, motorbikes and emergency medical situations – but also attempts to touch on universally resonant themes like racism and cultural identity.

ADD Content says the show, available as a format or finished series, differentiates itself in the young adult genre by focusing on real life situations.

“In an era in which most YA shows deal with science fiction and imaginary superheroes, *The Station* shows real life courage and authentic leads which audiences can both relate to and be inspired by. Volunteering in Israel grew substantially following the series airing, proof that its impact for young people goes beyond entertainment.”

Pikwik Pack

Distributor: Guru Studio

Producer: Guru Studio

Broadcaster: Disney Junior (US, India, South Korea, Aus, NZ), Hulu (US), Treehouse (Canada)

Logline: Follows four adorable animals as they deliver magical packages

This 52 x 11-minute animated pre-school series is currently in production with Canadian production outfit Guru Studio and follows a quartet of kind-minded animals as they deliver magical packages to people living in the town of Pikwik.

Guru, which is behind previous hits including *Paw Patrol* and *Abby Cadabby*, says the show is “packed with silly hijinx, big adventure and heartfelt charm that will entertain preschoolers while underscoring the value of teamwork, responsibility and critical thinking.”

The show is due to launch in



2020 and already has partners onboard including Disney Junior, which has taken rights for the series in the US, India, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand.

It is also being produced for Treehouse, the Canadian network owned by Corus

Entertainment, and has been acquired by US-based streaming service Hulu.

Aimed at kids aged 2 to 5, *Pikwik Pack* revolves around Suki the hedgehog, Axel the raccoon, Tibor the hippo and Hazel the cat as they transport their deliveries “filled with love”

to the kind citizens of Pikwik.

Each episode tracks the animals as they deliver surprise packages to those addressed on the tags, experiencing a variety of challenging environments, including rough rapids and foggy forests, but always working together.

Love Monster

Distributor: Boat Rocker Rights/UYoung

Producer: Boat Rocker Studios

Broadcaster: CBeebies (UK)

Logline: A quirky, animated preschool series full of heart



This 2D animated pre-school series is based on the bestselling books by Rachel Bright and attempts to provide “big life” learnings to younger viewers.

The 54 x 7-minute show is based on a googly-eyed hero called *Love Monster*, with the series following the character as he navigates the challenges of being the only monster in a world of cute, fluffy things.

The show is described as “a ground-breaking collaboration” by Boat Rocker Studios, which is producing the show, having partnered with the BBC and Chinese-focused distributor UYoung.

Reflecting the themes of Bright’s novels, *Love Monster* attempts to showcase the importance of kindness,

empathy, connection and instinct, using the character’s warm and witty adventures to get their message across.

“With a lot of help from his friends – a host of vivid and engaging characters – and a little serendipity, *Love Monster* learns to follow his heart rather than his slightly ‘over-thinky’ head as he searches for the right thing to do, while building his inner confidence,” the studio says.

It is to premiere in the first quarter of 2020 on BBC pre-school network CBeebies, with Boat Rocker Rights set to distribute the series and manage the global brand and licensing outside of China and Southeast Asia, where it will be managed by UYoung.

Pluto TV finds its Big Bang

Pluto TV was thusly named because of the AVOD platform's perceived underdog status in a galaxy of SVODs. Now, with the multi-billion-dollar backing of ViacomCBS, its universe is fast expanding – but it vows not to become Viacom Now. Manori Ravindran reports.

When it launched in 2013, Pluto TV was doing virtually the opposite of most major content platforms looking to break through. The US-only AVOD service was free in a world of paid; linear in an age of on-demand; and advertising-focused in a time when the likes of Netflix was expected to annihilate the advertising business.

They were seemingly wrong three times out of the gate, according to Tom Ryan, co-founder and CEO. But he stuck to his guns. Why? Because people like being programmed to, he tells TBI.

“What we thought was sorely missing in the OTT market was taking the best of what traditional TV

had done in recent years and modernising it with a new offering that could really curate to customers' interests,” explains the former EMI Music and Virgin Mobile exec, who founded the service with fellow entrepreneur Ilya Pozin.

The concept is straight-forward: available as an app or built-in platform among connected or smart televisions, Pluto TV provides a live experience with a 150-plus channel grid that is expertly curated. Crucially, it's free, relying on an ad-supported model, with ad loads that are half those of linear TV.

Specialised channels include the likes of Pluto TV Weddings, Dogs 24/7, Pluto TV Food and Pluto TV Surf; programme-specific channels for *Forensic Files*, *Midsomer Murders* and *Fear Factor*, among others; as well as content partnerships with Gusto TV and Viacom-owned UK broadcaster Channel 5's catch-up service My5, which, in turn, features three Pluto TV channels on its own platform.

The latter deal was borne out of Viacom's headline-grabbing \$340m acquisition of Pluto TV earlier this year.

Taking flight with Viacom

Making good on last year's promise to seek out “alternative” direct-to-consumer offerings for the business, Viacom boss Bob Bakish wasted no time in swooping for Pluto TV in January, immediately proclaiming that the service would be a “true game changer”.

Indeed, backing from Viacom has seen Pluto TV grow from 12m active monthly users in January to 18m – a 50% jump that doesn't even apply co-viewing multiples. “Once there is a [third-party] measurement system for us and the industry, that 18m number will be even higher,” says Ryan.

Viacom CFO Wade Davis revealed in August's Q3 results that the business was plotting “a smooth, aggressive rollout” of Pluto TV throughout Latin America and in 19 territories around the world, including a major push in Europe.

“There is a big opportunity for us internationally,”

The Hills: New Beginnings prompted Pluto TV to launch a channel offering the original show



Davis promised, with Bakish highlighting plans to target broadband-only customers along with TV operators, as well as bundled video customers.

Viacom's ambitions for Pluto TV now appear even greater in scope following its long-awaited merger with CBS this summer – a deal that, with regulatory approval, is to close at the end of this calendar year and sees the businesses operating as ViacomCBS, claiming an international reach of more than 4.3bn TV subscribers.

While the merger had not completed during the time of this interview, TBI asked whether it's safe to assume Pluto TV entered the deal with Viacom open to such an outcome, considering a reunification of Viacom and CBS has been touch and go since 2016.

"Sure, we obviously think about how we can grow Pluto TV," Ryan admits.

Indeed, Bakish confirmed post-merger that CBS content such as CBS Sports HQ and ET Live will land on Pluto TV, and it's likely there will be further synergies once the ink is dry.

Then, there's the matter of CBS catch-up and streaming service CBS All Access, which has been well ahead of the broadcaster-driven SVOD curve, and presents further opportunities for integration.

"This is not Viacom Direct"

But to what extent will Pluto TV simply become an AVOD outlet for Viacom and CBS? Ryan quickly flags that there are no quotas in place for content-sharing – certainly from Viacom.

"This is not Viacom Direct or Viacom Now – this is Pluto TV," he says firmly.

"Viacom is a very important content partner across a variety of areas of our business including ad sales, distribution and international expansion, but by no means is Pluto TV becoming a streaming outlet for Viacom content."

The platform, he reiterates, is first and foremost a broad-based aggregator that will continue to do business with a number of third-party content partners, such as CNN and the BBC – both of whom, it should be said, joined the service post-Viacom acquisition.

That being said, shortly after the acquisition, 14 Viacom-branded channels debuted on Pluto TV, and a further 13 channels from MTV and other networks are also set to be added. In addition, the platform is increasingly supporting the launches of new Viacom properties via curated channels.

"We did a channel with old seasons of *The Hills* in timing with the [reboot, *The Hills: New Beginnings*]," Ryan explains, adding that a *Dora The Explorer* channel also launched ahead of Paramount's film *Dora And The Lost City Of Gold* this summer.

Curation, curation, curation

Such channels are Pluto TV's calling card against competitors such as Tubi TV, Dish Networks's Sling TV and Hulu's Live TV service, according to the exec, pointing out the parallels to the cable TV model, which similarly relied on niche interests in its early years.

"The hard work is standing up these curated, branded channels that really stand for something in a particular content category," says Ryan. "In many ways, we drew inspiration from the things cable TV had done right in terms of creating these interest-based channels that take the work out of entertainment for customers."

In addition to an acquisitions team, which works against a defined programming strategy, dozens of content curators serve as experts in their respective channels. This team of "true experts", says Ryan, is critical to the offering, which will become more personalised over time.

"One of the curators is a former mixed martial artist who got into the entertainment industry and he's helped us curate channels around fight programming that have become extremely popular and really resonate with an

"Viacom is a very important content partner across a variety of areas of our business, but by no means is Pluto TV becoming a streaming outlet for Viacom content!"



audience that loves and understands programming about fight-based sports.”

With an almost ascetic focus on curation of existing content – a lot of which are catalogue titles, but include a growing segment of more current shows – what you won’t see on Pluto TV anytime soon, warns Ryan, is original programming, where a success or failure is wholly borne by the platform.

“We are a shared-success model and the focus is on generating revenue through advertising, which is growing very rapidly and our content partners are extremely happy with the progress and money they’re making from us – not to mention the data and promotion to our audience,” he says.

“Ultimately, new programmes and originals require significant investment where it’s not shared-success at all.”

The platform had a brief dalliance with originals in picking up canned Seeso original *Bajillion Dollar Propertie\$*, whose fourth season was without a home after the short-lived NBCUniversal-backed comedy streamer was shuttered in 2017. Pluto TV swooped for the unaired season – an “opportunistic” strategy that could be repeated.

“There’s so much great content out there that can be curated to enhance the offering we already have that we don’t really see the funding of original content as a near-term necessity.”

Pluto launched a Dora The Explorer channel ahead of this summer’s film, Dora And The Lost City Of Gold



But, ultimately, organising content into user-friendly formats is “fertile ground” for the business.

“There’s so much great content out there that can be curated to enhance the offering we already have that we don’t really see the funding of original content as a near-term opportunity or necessity,” he says plainly.

Enhancing distribution

The next major play for Pluto TV is distribution, particularly in Europe, where the business is overseen by MD Olivier Jollet. Pluto TV launched in the UK in October 2018 and in Germany a month later, both via Sky’s Now TV service.

“We launched with, admittedly, a pretty skinny channel offering in both markets because the focus, when we were an independent company, was to make sure we remained the leader in the US,” says Ryan.

“But we were pleased with the launches so the key focus now is adding channels and content to the product in the UK and German-speaking markets, and then adding to the distribution footprint.”

Pluto TV recently rolled out on Amazon Fire TV – one of its primary partners in the US – in both markets, and similar partnerships will originate out of Europe, which Ryan calls “a critical component of overall growth”. Also expected are further smart TV link-ups – such as the deals with Samsung’s TV Plus and Vizio’s WatchFree that see Pluto TV serving as the default built-in experience.

“That’s far superior to just being present in an app store on one of the platforms,” says Ryan.

Although penetrating markets such as India is unlikely, given Viacom18’s existing AVOD service Voot, Latin America is a target for 2020. For Ryan, the objective is making Pluto TV the global AVOD leader, not simply dominating the US.

And, indeed, Viacom – and now CBS – allows them to do so.

“This market is getting more and more competitive, but we have a unique product that is uniquely distributed and whose content offering is getting better and better – and we have a huge head start. Leveraging Viacom’s international footprint and assets throughout Europe and Latin America is going to be critical to accelerating that.”

What’s abundantly clear is that, in just a little over five years, Pluto TV has shed its underdog status.

“We saw Pluto TV as this celestial being out there in the galaxy – something that was really out there, coming up with a version of TV that was different to traditional TV,” says Ryan.

“Those contrarian beliefs have fortunately paid off.” **TBI**

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Winning the remake game

How are high-profile remakes of *Fleabag* and *Tytgat Chocolat* securing success in their home markets on the heels of knock-out originals? Nick Edwards reports from Série Series

Canal+ original *Mouche* stars *Call My Agent!* star Camille Cottin

The age-old question in the delicate arena of scripted formats reared its head in force at this summer's Série Series festival in Fontainebleau, France: how do you remake a successful show so that it is relevant to your home audience whilst keeping the essence of what made the original so great?

At first glance, BBC Three's *Fleabag* may not seem the most likely candidate for the remake treatment. After all, in the age of cash-flush streamers, when we have access to seemingly all TV shows regardless of where they are made, why would you remake such an idiosyncratic show as *Fleabag*, as Canal+ has done?

The key here is that despite Phoebe Waller-Bridge's show being available on Amazon in France, Amazon itself is not yet as widely recognised as a TV provider as it is in other countries. In France, Amazon is still known primarily as a retail giant – a place to buy books and groceries, mainly – and its role as a platform for original content is limited.

Besides issues of distribution, however, the key to the potential success of Canal+'s remake, *Mouche*, lies in the fact that whilst the story takes place in Paris rather than London, it shares many of the social peculiarities of the original.

Much of it is played scene for scene with writer-director Jeanne Herry “sprinkling in a handful of scenes, tweaking others and, in rare cases, developing some further”, as she told the audience in Fontainebleau.

For example, in *Mouche*, Herry developed the funeral of Fleabag's mother much further than in the original, which, interestingly, Waller-Bridge then did in the second season of the BBC Three show.

Elsewhere, *Everybody Is Perfect* is an Italian remake of the Flemish show *Tytgat Chocolat* (*Team Chocolate*) from VRT, which follows the story of a young man with Down's Syndrome who works at a chocolatier as he embarks on a daring journey across Europe to reunite with the love of his life, who has been deported by immigration services.

The Flemish version of the Reel One Entertainment-distributed format has won praise for portraying characters you wouldn't normally see on screen and tackling issues faced by the Down's community with intelligence and sensitivity. It has been so well-received that it is being redeveloped by a number of different broadcasters, including the UK's Channel 4.

Meanwhile, the Italian version of *Tytgat Chocolat* for public broadcaster Rai has been tweaked to its particular audience's tastes by focusing more on relationships, particularly between father and son, who get to know each other more deeply as the story unfolds. The show also comments more daringly on issues related to sex than the original.

Screenwriter Fabio Bonifacci says he was touched by working with the actors, describing the emotion they brought to the show as “magical.” It is this element that Rai hopes will resonate with its primetime audience.

Ultimately, if the experiences of the teams behind *Mouche* and *Everybody Is Perfect* are any indication, it is increasingly clear that scoring success with a remake comes down, in large part, to lifting and shifting the themes that made the originals great in the first place – themes that are, more often than not, universal. **TBI**

VRT format *Tytgat Chocolat* is being remade for Italy's Rai



Walter Iuzzolino: don't blindly follow the money

The theme of this year's Série Series could be distilled, quite simply, to power: who has it and who does not? When the most celebrated production of 2019 has arguably been HBO and Sky's *Chernobyl*, rumoured to have cost around \$7m per episode, it seems the answer is whoever has the cash.

But in his keynote speech, Walter Iuzzolino, founder and creator of Walter Presents, the VOD service that showcases non-English speaking series, contested the wisdom of blindly following the money.

Iuzzolino reminded the attentive audience of European writers, producers and execs that industries outside the US, such as Israel and Scandinavia, first made a huge impact on the global arena by producing shows on shoe-string budgets. A great example from this year's event was *Holy Mary*, a Maltese comedy with a minuscule budget of \$25,000 per episode.

Iuzzolino believes this focus on glossy or 'premium' productions could jeopardise creativity within the industry over the long term.

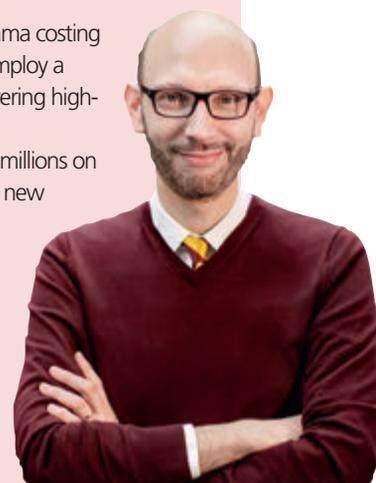
Recalling the launch of Walter Presents just three years ago, he says: “When a new series from Europe landed on my desk, 1 in 20 could be described as 'premium'. Now, it's the norm.”

Whilst production values may have risen – often the result of countries pooling their budgets as well as a far more sophisticated global market for buying and selling non-English language series – dramas often lose the unique flavouring and idiosyncrasies of its origin country, ultimately diluting the appeal of watching a series from another country in the first place.

With a standard 'premium' episode of European TV drama costing upwards of €1m (\$1.1m), it is common practice to only employ a handful of writers who have a proven track record of delivering high-end series.

This is sensible business logic – who would want to risk millions on a new writer? But the flip-side of the argument is how do new writers ever get a chance to prove themselves and, thus, create new ideas, new stories and new worlds that the industry so badly needs?

The defining characteristic of the golden age of TV drama is that it is a writer's medium. So, as Iuzzolino points out, if too much focus is placed on making things look spectacular rather than writing spectacular scripts, the medium itself will become dangerously undermined.





The future is unlimited

As more limited dramas are extended into returning series, the trend begs the question: should every drama imagined as a limited proposition return by popular demand? Manori Ravindran delves into the future of the limited series

If the behind-the-scenes turmoil of HBO's *Big Little Lies* has achieved anything, it has been to demonstrate the unique turning point faced by limited series that become unlimited.

The case, however unique, begs the question: can a series really be 'limited' anymore when the tectonic shifts rocking the industry increasingly call for returnable hits that lend themselves to SVOD-fuelled binge culture?

In July, such questions came to a head when the creative fall-out on the second season of the star-

studded *Big Little Lies* emerged, with allegations that the work of director Andrea Arnold – the British auteur behind acclaimed indie films *Red Road* and *American Honey* – was re-cut to better align with the choppy aesthetic of *Dallas Buyers Club* filmmaker Jean-Marc Vallée's debut season, which HBO execs originally intended as a one-off.

The creative community was outraged. *When They See Us* director Ava DuVernay tweeted that the industry was "lucky" to have Arnold, while *Crazy Ex-Girlfriend* creator Rachel Bloom scolded: "All these



Big Little Lies and *The Assassination of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story* have both won Emmys for Outstanding Limited Series

men had to do was be human beings instead of weird Hollywood robots.”

But for some, HBO’s decision to re-insert Vallée into the edit for season two was par for the course in a cut-throat marketplace where even a modicum of success has to be exploited to the utmost extent – and everything can come back by popular demand.

“You have the creative going, ‘This is where the characters should go’ and then there’s the network saying, ‘This is where we want it to be so it best meshes with the first season,’” explains Scott Kirkpatrick, the Los Angeles-based SVP for North and South America at *Doc Martin* and *The White Wall* distributor DRG.

“That was a wonderful story with a perfect, cohesive closure at the end, but it was so successful [and came at a time when] HBO was asking those big questions of ‘What are we going to do when *Game Of Thrones* is over?’ There is so much pressure for them to be performing at an [Olympic]-level of execution that it’s almost impossible to maintain.”

The end result was a discombobulated effort that, despite a knock-out performance from Meryl Streep, felt unnecessary, and serves as a cautionary tale of overt commercial needs clashing with artistic vision.

But where does that leave the future for limited series? Since 2014, when Primetime Emmy rules were changed to split the merged TV Movie and Miniseries categories due to the influx of the latter, the Outstanding Limited Series gong has gone to FX’s *Fargo*, HBO’s *Olive Kitteridge*, FX’s *The People v. O.J. Simpson: American Crime Story*, HBO’s *Big Little Lies* and FX’s *The Assassination Of Gianni Versace: American Crime Story*. All these shows started life as

limited propositions but were eventually expanded into ‘anthology’ dramas or returners except for *Olive Kitteridge*, which was closed-ended.

“Not everything is returnable”

Is the limited series, then, destined to be a glorified proof-of-concept for a longer-running drama or anthology series? One LA-based feature film director transitioning into television with a high-profile Netflix show tells TBI that “anyone who now makes a limited series fully expects that a second season is a possibility if it goes well”.

“Ever since the initial wave of ‘limited series’ that got stretched into recurring ones, such as *American Horror Story*, you basically have to have a second season pitch ready to go when you pitch the ‘limited’ series to begin with, or you’ll have a hard time getting your series ordered at all, unless you’re a huge name.”

The alternative can be a gruesome undertaking.

One senior scripted exec currently overseeing the expansion of a critically acclaimed limited drama that was “100% a closed-ended story” into a second season describes a long, laborious process.

“The treatments I’ve read are taking the show in a direction that is so far off tangent,” the source tells TBI. “The major characters are gone, so unless you start to introduce them in flashbacks or memories – which always feels like a cheat – you have to introduce new characters. It’s a tough thing to invent out of nowhere, and really challenging.

“Treatments being sent to top execs at networks are now getting negative feedback. It’s just all over the



“[Creators] have to say, ‘OK, I know you want more of this, but do I have more to say?’ If you don’t, then you’re in a living hell, where on the one hand you’re happy to have the resources to make a show, but on the other hand, it’s torture because there is no reason for making this show”

Frank Spotnitz, Big Light Productions



place,” they add.

Amanda Coe, the British writer behind BBC One limited drama *Apple Tree Yard* and the forthcoming *The Trial Of Christine Keeler*, recalls the ravenous calls for a follow-up to the former Emily Watson-starring drama, which is based on Louise Doughty’s eponymous novel and tells the story of a secret affair that goes horribly wrong.

“We were all very clear when we were making it – it couldn’t have been more of a limited series. But as it was going out, because it did so well, there was a whole story in [UK newspaper] *The Sun* about the planned sequel and I got asked a lot if there would be a second series. And I thought, ‘Really?’, because to me, that had run its course. Not everything is returnable.”

However, Coe – who is currently writing BBC One’s adaptation of the 1947 film *Black Narcissus* – also understands the demand, and market need, for continuity.

“With international co-producers involved, a longer format is always desirable because it’s harder globally to sell things that are three or four parts. [Distributors] prefer for things to return because familiarity is one of the things that breaks through when there is so much content.”

But the process is a juggling act, even for distributors.

DRG’s Kirkpatrick explains, “We have to balance not just the producers and writers, but also ask whether the partner also wants to extend a series. And all of their views about what will make a second season work can be different.”

Creators need to take a stand

Frank Spotnitz, chief exec of *Medici* and *Ransom*

prodco Big Light Productions and creator of Amazon’s *The Man In The High Castle*, points out that in scenarios where market forces are sometimes unstoppable, it falls to creators to decide how far they are willing to go with a project.

“They have to say, ‘OK, I know you want more of this, but do I have more to say?’ because if you don’t, then you’re in a living hell, where on the one hand you’re happy to have the resources to make a show, but on the other hand, it’s torture because there is no reason for making this show.”

Spotnitz cites the example of a writer who recently made a show for Netflix, only to be handed a three-season order. They ultimately exited the project altogether “because they said what they wanted to say”.

“That doesn’t mean someone else won’t come on board and find something great to say, but they’re ready to move on, which you have to respect.”

The exec, who is currently in the works on a drama about Leonardo da Vinci for The Alliance of ZDF, Rai and France Télévisions, points out that the scope of what constitutes a limited series will need to change.

Perhaps, he suggests, a limited series must be thought of as a three to four-season offering, rather than a one-season arc. In that case, Netflix’s cancellations of some of its originals after three seasons on the platform could be seen in a different light.

“Increasingly, you’re going to see shows that are two, three or four seasons, or they’re just designed to be shorter because the definition of what a TV series is is in flux. This is as it should be, because TV series were developed under a broadcast model and now we’re in a different world. There are all sorts of different approaches we can take now, which is really exciting.” **TBI**



Apple Tree Yard received calls for a second season, despite being imagined as a limited drama

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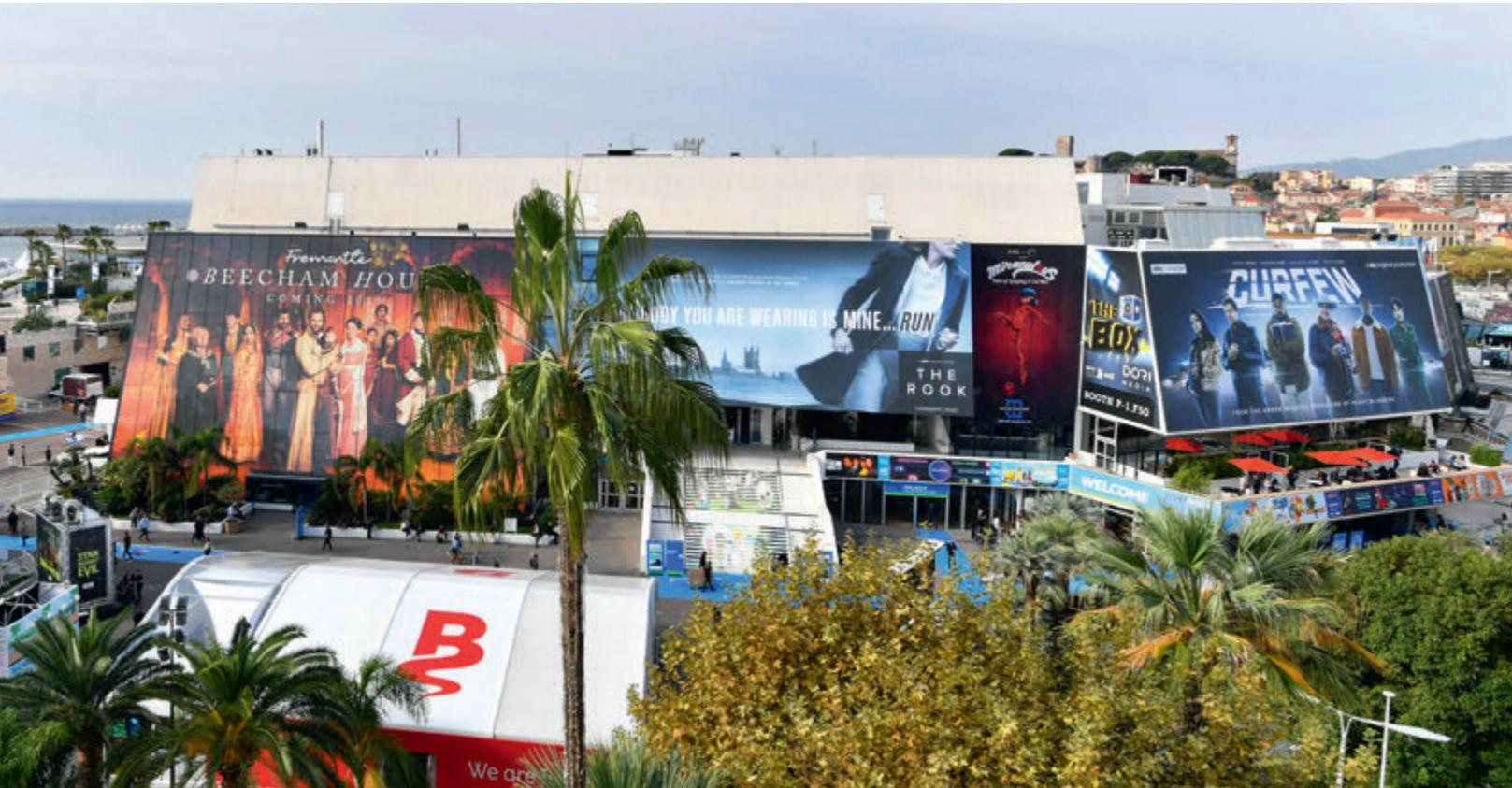
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Changing times at MIPCOM

Laurine Garaude, head of TV at MIPCOM organiser Reed MIDEM, tells Rich Middleton how the world's biggest TV market is adapting after a frenetic year of change in the content business

As the TV business prepares to descend on Cannes again this October for MIPCOM, delegates are likely preparing themselves to find an industry in the throes of seismic change.

Across almost every facet of the business, the surge of direct-to-consumer streaming services is revolutionising the content marketplace. From the way shows are developed and financed, to the talent in front of and behind the camera, to the methods by which the finished product is distributed to viewers, the pace of change in the world of content has arguably never been greater.

It makes sense then that the theme for MIPCOM 2019 is labelled 'The Streaming Offensive', says Laurine Garaude, director of television at MIPCOM organiser Reed MIDEM. A raft of conference sessions and keynote speeches are planned to provide insights on this changing landscape to the event's roughly 14,000 participants, who herald from more than 100 countries.

"More than ever, we are putting the focus on the content this year,"

she says, outlining plans to move away from a single country of honour in years gone by to a quartet of countries for 2019.

Programming, producers and ideas from China, Japan, Russia and Argentina – all former countries of honour in the past – will be placed centre stage, reflecting the surging interest in the market from these parts of the world. "They all bring major delegations," Garaude says, adding that China is the seventh-most represented country at the event, with Russia in eighth spot and Japan in ninth.

But where cocktail conversations on the Croisette in recent years have tended to revolve around Netflix and Amazon's impact on the market, this year's edition is likely to be dominated by the imminent entry of streaming services from the world's biggest media companies. WarnerMedia, the US giant behind soon-to-launch HBO Max, is one such outfit and Robert Greenblatt, chairman of WarnerMedia Entertainment and direct-to-consumer, will be in town to be crowned Personality of the Year and provide his opinions on where the market is going.

Competition will also no doubt be discussed, with Apple TV+ and Disney+ also poised to provide the next turn of the wheel for the SVOD market in the coming months – with repercussions across the world for third-party buyers of the latter’s content. But attention is also increasingly turning to the flourishing AVOD sector. YouTube, NBCUniversal and smaller operators such as Tubi TV are all focusing their attentions on this end of the spectrum, looking for competitive advantages that will enable them to thrive in a fast-changing market.

Reflecting this transformative ecosystem, MIPCOM’s line-up of Media Mastermind Keynotes should offer a variety of viewpoints, Garaude suggests, with James Farrell, head of international originals at Amazon, Tubi founder and CEO Farhad Massoudi, and Twitter’s Kay Madati, who heads up content partnerships for the social media giant, all due on the podium.

Garaude is also keen to highlight Mip Junior, which takes place over the weekend, and MIPCOM’s focus on improving diversity within the business, with the Diversity and Inclusion Program now moving into its third year and again featuring high-level networking events. The Diversify TV Excellence Awards, designed to champion inclusion in all forms across the international content industry, will also return.

Elsewhere Dream Hampton and Brie Miranda Bryant, executive producers on Lifetime’s docuseries *Surviving R. Kelly*, will be in town as headline speakers for the eighth annual Women in Global Entertainment lunch.

The two-day Production Funding Forum is also returning, providing an opportunity for producers and financiers to cut through the clutter and turn paper ideas into viable business propositions on screen. Such schemes have always been important, of course, but in today’s competitive, increasingly consolidated environment, they are arguably more vital than ever.

Indeed that competition has driven rampant M&A since the last time the MIPCOM signs were wheeled out in Cannes, with conversations no doubt exploring just what Hasbro plans to do with its \$4bn acquisition of Entertainment One. Then there’s the massive changes in distribution, with Disney now selling wares from Fox, having formally closed its deal for the Rupert Murdoch-founded company earlier this year, and NBCUniversal Global Distribution becoming home to Sky Vision content. It might not bode particularly well for the job pool as efficiencies kick in, but acquisition execs might at least be thankful that they will spend less time walking between meetings.

Despite this, the content available to those on the acquisition trail appears as rich as ever. Talent headed to Cannes includes RuPaul Charles, of VH1’s *RuPaul Drag Race* fame, along with Patrick Dempsey and Alessandro Borghi, who are in town to push Italian drama *Devils*, which is getting its world premiere at MIPCOM. It is joined by Beta Film’s *Agent Hamilton* – based on the best-selling Hamilton novels – and, mirroring the broad church of shows set to be on offer, *The Return* from Japan. The series is believed to be the first Japanese costume drama to be shot in 8K, and it will also get its world premiere at MIPCOM, a neat reflection of the array of content on offer. **TBI**

Ones to watch

Delegates from almost 110 countries are headed to this year’s MIPCOM, with all manner of content on offer to almost 5,000 buyers. TBI takes a look at four shows receiving their world premieres in Cannes that could catch the eye.

Agent Hamilton



Distributor: Beta Film

Producer: Dramacorp-Pampas Studios, Beta Film, ZDF Enterprises

This spy thriller tells the story of a former Swedish intelligence officer and is set to have

its world premiere on Sunday, with stars including Jakob Oftebro, Nina Zanjani, Krister Henriksson and Erik Leijonborg in Cannes.

Heirs of the Night



Distributor: ZDF Enterprises

Producer: ZDF Enterprises

Due to have its world premiere on Sunday at MIP Junior, this 19th Century-set show follows five European vampire clans attempting to avoid extinction.

It will bow this autumn on Norway’s NRK.

Devils



Distributor: NBCUniversal Global Distribution

Producers: Lux Vide, Orange Studio

Patrick Dempsey will be in town to push this Sky Studios drama, which has its world

premiere on Monday and is based on the best-selling novel by Guido Maria Brera. *Devils* is a conspiracy thriller set in the world of global finance.

The Return



Producer: Nihon Eiga Broadcasting Corporation

Distributor: Kansai TV

An old outlaw returns to his hometown and decides to save a young woman, and himself, in this Ultra High Definition

drama, based on a story by award-winning writer Shuhei Fujisawa, that gets its world premiere on Tuesday morning.

And the nominations are...

TBI's Content Innovation Awards are set to be the biggest yet, with a new venue and the very best of the content world's creations on show. Here, we profile the shortlisted entrants.

Now into their fifth year, TBI's Content Innovation Awards has grown into a must-attend event, taking place on the Sunday before MIPCOM in Cannes next month.

This year's drinks, dinner and awards ceremony will take place at The Majestic Hotel, with the hottest shows and most innovative businesses shortlisted across 23 categories, with many of the industry's best-known execs in attendance.

New categories for 2019 include prizes for Best Short-Form Series, Branded Content of the Year and Distribution Innovation, while a slate of new kids awards join the Representation on Screen prize, which salutes shows with outstanding on and off-screen representation of LGBTQ+, race and ethnicity, disability and social mobility issues.

Returning favourites include Series Launch of the Year, Best Debut Drama Series and Best Returning Drama Series, along with Entertainment Format of the Year and Best Musical Format.

We also give a nod to some of the best-known executives in the



business with our Contribution to Content and Lifetime Achievement awards, but also highlight the next generation with our new Rising Star of Development award, recognising a stand-out individual.

Best Debut Drama Series

Shaftesbury for **Departure**

Muse Entertainment, Back Alley Films, Cineflix Studios; Distributed by Cineflix Rights for **Coroner**

Sky in association with HBO, Sister Pictures, The Mighty Mint, Word Games for **Chernobyl**



Little Island Productions, Two Cities Television, Sunny March, Sky Atlantic for **Patrick Melrose**

Showtime, Red Hour Productions, Busyhands, The White Mountain Company, Michael De Luca Productions, BZ Entertainment, Distributed by CBS Studios International for **Escape At Dannemora**

Kindle Entertainment, Balloon Entertainment for **Kiss Me First**

Bavaria Fiction, Sky Deutschland, Sonar Entertainment for **Das Boot**

Best Returning Drama Series

Shaftesbury; distributed by Kew Media Distribution for **Frankie Drake Mysteries**

Buccaneer Media; Distributed by Cineflix Rights for **Marcella**

A Co-production of KUDOS and MASTERPIECE for **Grantchester**

Kudos Film & Television. Produced with the assistance of the Government of Alberta, Alberta Media Fund for **Tin Star**

A Free@Last TV and Company Pictures production for **Agatha Raisin Series II**

Kew Media Distribution for **Line of Duty**

Dori Media Group Ltd for **El Marginal**

Breakthrough Crime Series

Britespark Films for **Banged Up: Teens Behind Bars**

Arrow Pictures for **A Year of British Murder**

Arrow Media for **Body Cam**

VICE Studios for **The Murder of Charlene Downes**

Factual TV Project of the Year

The Garden Productions for **24 Hours in A&E**

Renegade Pictures; Distributed by Cineflix Rights for **Extreme Tribe: The Last Pygmies**

Arrow Media for **Under The Wire**

TV Channel Five, Russia (JSC Teleradiocompany Petersburg) for **Scarlet Sails 2019**

AMC Networks International Central and Northern Europe for **Untold Stories of Eastern Europe with Emir Kusturica**

Gusto Worldwide Media for **DNA Dinners**

Factual Entertainment Programme of the Year

Scott Brothers Entertainment; Distributed by Cineflix Rights for **Property Brothers: Forever Home**

Firecracker Films; Distributed by Passion Distribution for **Mums Make Porn**



TV Channel Five, Russia (JSC Teleradiocompany Petersburg) for **Scarlet Sails 2019**

FC Panache – VTM for **Make Belgium Great Again**

Storyvault Films, Sky Arts for **Portrait Artist of the Year**

Extreme Sport TV UG for **SOS TV show**

Entertainment Format of the Year

Endemol Shine Group for **Big Brother**

CBS Studios International for **Have You Been Paying Attention?**

ABC Commercial for **You Can't Ask That**

Endemol Shine Group for **Hunted**

Movioca Content House for **The Diva in Me**

Endemol Shine Group for **MasterChef**

Best Musical Format

Endemol Shine Group for **All Together Now**

TV Channel Five, Russia (JSC Teleradiocompany Petersburg) for **Scarlet Sails 2019**

CJ ENM for **300: War of United Voices**

Zense Entertainment & NBCUniversal for **Singer Auction**

The YouTube Award

Endemol Shine Brazil for **MasterChef Brazil**

Barcroft Studios for **Barcroft TV**

Discovery for **TLC UK YouTube**

Expressen TV for **Q&A**

Gloob for **Mundo Gloob**



Global Spotlight Award

CJ ENM, Studio Dragon for *Memories of the Alhambra*

CJ ENM, Studio Dragon for *The Guest*

NTV for *Brass Sun*

A Diagonal TV, Catedral del Mar A.I.E. and Televisió de Catalunya Production for Atresmedia Televisión, Televisió de Catalunya and Netflix for *La Catedral del Mar (Cathedral of the Sea)*

Best Digital Original

Endemol Shine Group for *Mr Bean (Handy Bean)*

CBS Television Studios in association with Secret Hideout and Roddenberry Entertainment Distributed by CBS Studios International for *Star Trek: Discovery*

Gloob for *Beré's Vlog*

BT Sport for *BT Sport – No Filter Series*

Eureka Productions for *Pick, Flip & Drive*

Branded Content of the Year

Shaftesbury, Henkel, Schwarzkopf, got2b for *Turning the Tables*

Endemol Shine Brazil for *O Próximo Número 1 VillaMix*

The Davines Group for *Tomorrow and The Butterfly*

Gloob for *BBD – The Tuned Mission*



Best Use of Social Media

Endemol Shine Brazil for *MasterChef Brazil*

Shaftesbury; distributed by Kew Media Distribution for *Slasher: Solstice*

ABC Commercial for *Exposed: The Case of Keli Lane*

FC Panache – VTM for *Make Belgium Great Again*

BT Sport for BT Sport – *No Filter Series*

Endemol Shine UK, Remarkable for *All Together Now*

Gloob for *BBD Urgent!*

Best Documentary Series



NTV for *Conquering the Arctic: Missions Impossible*

Tile Films for *Sacred Sites: Egyptian Priestesses* produced for Smithsonian Networks

Our Time Projects and SHOWTIME. Distributed by CBS Studios International for *The Trade*

Jigsaw Productions for SHOWTIME Distributed by CBS Studios International for *Enemies: The President, Justice & The FBI*

Kew Media Distribution for *Leaving Neverland*

Best Animated Kids Programme

Rainbow S.p.A for *44 Cats – A Dog As A Friend*

Gloob for *Anitinha's Club*



Gutsy Fi, Sky Kids for **Moominvalley**

Rai – Radiotelevisione Italiana; Produced by RAI Ragazzi and Larcadarte – in cooperation with the Italian Ministry of Education, Universities and Research (Miur) for **The Star of Andra and Tati**

Congedo Culturarte, Rai Ragazzi, Fandango TV, Gaumont, Groupe PVP for **Trulli Tales “Don’t Waste Food”**

Based on an original idea by “Rubius” (Ruben Doblas), an original Movistar+ series in collaboration with Zeppelin, Stories Grupo Planeta and Snofokk for **Virtual Hero**

Best Live Action Kids Programme

Fresh Start Media, Sky for **FYI**

Kindle Entertainment for **The A List**

Gloob for **Brainiacs**

Rai Ragazzi, Stand By Me for **Jams**

Hello Halo Productions for **Junk Rescue**

Best Returning Kids Programme

Tiger Aspect Productions, part of Endemol Shine Group for **Mr Bean: The Animated Series**

Gloob for **SOS Fairy Manu**

Gloob for **Blue Building Detectives**

Representation on Screen

MTV Studios for **The Real World**

TV Channel Five, Russia (JSC Teleradiocompany Petersburg) for **Good Deeds Day**

Current Time TV (Radio Free Europe / Radio Liberty) for **Form #087**

Eureka Productions for **Dating Around**

World Productions, Sky Atlantic for **Save Me**

MTV International for **Are You The One?**

Series Launch of the Year

Shaftesbury for **Hudson & Rex**

Endemol Shine Australia in association with Nine Network Australia for **Lego® Masters Australia**

Darren Star Productions, Jax Media and TV Land for **Younger**

AMC Networks International for **NOS4A2**

Gloob for **Gigablaster Campaign**

Eureka Productions for **Holey Moley**

Eureka Productions for **Crikey! It's The Irwins**

Distribution Innovation

MTV Studios for **The Real World**

Alchimie for **Alchimie**

All3media international for **Inside Outside – House and Gardens**

ONE for **ONE**

Newstag for **NAAS – Newsroom as a Service**

Best Short-Form Series

Transparent TV for **Supercar, Superfam Series 1, Episode 2**

Comedy Central International for **Flaps**

Barcroft Studios for **Born Different**

Sky for **Sky Comedy Shorts**

Douglas Road Productions for **Soon Gone: A Windrush Chronicle**

NBCUniversal for **Notes from the U.S.A.**



Last Word Jo Daris

Content is key but strategy is sacrosanct

“Building a successful brand encompasses much more than making a successful show. We need to make sure that the content offer and the line extensions match the expectations of millennial parents and kids today.”

Former Studio 100 exec Jo Daris is chief creative officer at recently launched German producer and distributor Toon2Tango

When you’re starting a new company, you have the chance to reflect and do things differently. There is an opportunity to think about the strategy, to iron out those things that previously annoyed you and make a promise to do things better. You don’t get such an opportunity many times in life so prior to starting Toon2Tango this summer, our new kids and family entertainment powerhouse, we spent a lot of time getting it right.

What we determined was a baseline of where we sometimes lost ourselves in the past, on where we should position ourselves in this new marketplace and on what should really be at the core of everything we do. I feel it’s worth sharing some of this, because maybe some of you can, and will, relate to it.

We are content makers – it is, or should be, at the core of everything we do and has to be the starting point, always. We shouldn’t steer our creative from anterior motives. What we need at the base are great characters and great stories, and everything else we do is derived from that. So, let’s not create copycats of ‘what works’ in the moment or as 11 or 22-minute advertising spots for toys. Let’s open up and broaden our horizons when it comes to creating content. One of the greatest pitches I have read in my many years came from a man who worked in advertising and who had never done anything in the kids business before. Why? Because he wasn’t bothered by all the rules that we’d created for ourselves over the years. We need more of that. Back to the roots. (Oh, and if you’re thinking of grabbing that guy, don’t, we already signed him up.)

While we’re on the subject of creators, we should let them do their job and allow them to get the credit and money they deserve. At Toon2Tango, we want to

help creative talent open doors to commercial success as enablers and bridge builders between ‘concept’ and ‘brand’. So, we give our creators freedom to create and we give them a very fair piece of the cake. Besides their loyalty, being more financially independent also helps them to come up with unconventional stuff for you to produce. More great content guaranteed.

One of the things that producers seldom do is to thoroughly test ideas, concepts, designs and stories. There are deadlines coming up and budgets are tight. So, we trust our gut feeling. But why? There are fantastic companies in this market like Dubit or Doobry, which can help you turn your diamonds in the rough into shows that kids and parents actually want. Not because you think so, or because your gut tells you so, but because parents and kids tell you. Broadcasters understand this very well; now it’s time that producers get the message. This is increasingly important in today’s marketplace, where content is available 24/7 from a multitude of sources and devices.

Building a successful brand encompasses much more than making a successful show. We need to make sure that the content offer and the line extensions match the expectations of millennial parents and kids today. So, building a franchise with the right message across all extensions is very important. Research will help us position and extend brands in the right way in this maze of possibilities.

After the honeymoon period, things settle down and become routine. So, let’s keep the momentum going and the dynamics flowing and stay focused on characters, story, talent and research.

We’re content makers, first and foremost. Let’s not forget that on our path to eternal glory and riches.

TBI



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