

Next season on the box? Cheap and light TV

September 29 2009, by Marie-Dominique Follain



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In game shows, sitcoms, comedy shows and fiction, the watchword worldwide for the upcoming 2009-2010 season is entertainment, according to data released Tuesday by media specialists Eurodata TV Worldwide.

"Entertainment is the big winner," said its research head Amandine Cassi. "We mean entertainment with a big 'E' that transcends genres".

As producers seek to hit a wide audience at the least cost, "both content and budgets will be light," added Pascal Josephe of International Media Consultants Associates.

Topping the programme will be low-budget game shows aimed at "people from seven to 77 which turn a good profit against investment for the networks."

Drawing inspiration from hard times is the latest trend in some of the shows.

Britain's "Undercover Boss" reality show from Channel 4 sees a company boss become a worker, while the network's soap "I'm Running Sainsbury's" propels the staff to the top.

In tougher spirit, Germany's Kabel 1 reality show "Job Duell" pits four contestants against each other for a single available job.

Addressing popular concerns about obesity, US reality show "Dance Your Ass Off" takes a light-hearted approach with a dancing contest that features "full-figured" contestants doing anything from hip hop to pole dancing, but who must lose weight to win.

Germany's "5 Gegen Jauch" meanwhile reworks an old money-spinning favourite, with the host of "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" playing against five candidates to stop them taking home the winnings.

Keeping TV addicts laughing through tough times is also flavour of the day, with a bunch of funny news shows such as Britain's "You Have Been Watching", Australia's Network 10 "The 7 pm project", or Network 7's "Double Take".

Even in fiction, comedy pays off, with the best of the new bunch

possibly "Hung" on the US pay-TV channel HBO.

It is the story of a former high school sports hero turned basketball coach whose life is on the slide and who decides to exploit his best and biggest asset to become a gigolo and change his life.

And among shows that take a voyeuristic peek at the darker side of life is the BBC docu soap "My Big Decision" in which viewers for five days follow young women who are deciding whether or not to have an abortion.

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Citation: Next season on the box? Cheap and light TV (2009, September 29) retrieved 20 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2009-09-season-cheap-tv.html>

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