



TV Career Tips

Trends in the Fall 2008 Television Line-Up

By Allyson Parks

Television trends for the fall 2008 line-up appear to be heavily influenced by fantasy dramas, international imports, and an emphasis on debuting more new shows in the spring.



According to a June 8th article in the *Cape Cod Times*, viewers can expect to see about half the typical number of new network shows in the fall, as more have been pushed off until midseason, in part because pilot development may have been slow in the spring because of the writers' strike. The five networks have announced only 17 new shows for this fall,

compared to the 28 announced last year.

"This year," according to the article, "an industry ravaged by a long writers' strike that left the spring pilot cupboards barer than usual decided that maybe not everything needed to premiere during a few short weeks in September and October."

There is also a trend toward reintroducing returning series whose ratings once made them a target for cancellation, such as NBC's *Life* and ABC's *Dirty Sexy Money*.

Also, look for new shows that adapt international programs for US audiences. CBS's new series *The Ex List* is based on a show from Israel, and two of CBS's other new programs, *Worst Week* and *The Eleventh Hour*, are adaptations of British shows. Additionally, ABC is remaking the BBC drama *Life on*

Mars, which features a time-traveling police detective. The network executives behind these shows presumably hope for the same success that NBC's American remake of *The Office* and ABC's *Ugly Betty* (an adaptation of a Colombian telenovela) have shared. NBC is also adapting the Australian hit *Kath & Kim*, starring Molly Shannon.

In terms of comedy trends, CBS has decided to move its night of comedy to Wednesdays, pairing the returning *The New Adventures of Old Christine* with the new Jay Mohr sitcom *Project Gary*. The successful *Samantha Who?* and *Dancing with the Stars* will also be returning to ABC next season, along with *According to Jim*.

The fall lineup will be dominated by reality and drama programs, especially fantasy dramas employing horror, comic-book, or science-fiction elements. Such shows are an attempt to capitalize on the fame of NBC's *Heroes* and ABC's *Lost*. Fox has been heavily promoting the new J.J. Abrams sci-fi drama "Fringe," while CBS has been hyping *The Mentalist*, about a detective who is a psychic medium. Meanwhile, successful humorous fantasy dramas from last fall such as the CW's *Reaper* and ABC's *Pushing Daisies* will be back for a second season.

Also look for a wave of British, Australian, and Irish actors cast as Americans, including Irish *Life on Mars* star Jason O'Mara and *Fringe's* Australian stars John Noble and Anna Torv.

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