



TRADES

Monday, March 1, 2010

Jolie, Aronofsky eyeing 'Serena' adaptation

Angelina Jolie and Darren Aronofsky are in discussions to develop a big-screen adaptation of Ron Rash's 2008 period tome "Serena: A Novel." The project would be a starring vehicle for Jolie, while Aronofsky would direct. Chris Kyle, who penned the Kathryn Bigelow movies "The Weight of Water" and "K-19: The Widowmaker," wrote the screenplay for the project, which is being produced by Nick Wechsler, the man behind recent high-profile adaptation such as "The Road," "The Time Traveler's Wife" and "Reservation Road." Set in the rugged mountains of 1929 North Carolina, "Serena" follows a man named George Pemberton and his new bride, Serena, as they create a timber empire. Serena not only takes to the woods, but she also pushes her husband to commit more and more ruthless acts. When she learns she cannot bear a child, Serena sets out to murder the son her husband fathered illegitimately.

NBC renews 'Sing Off'

NBC is renewing its a cappella singing competition series "The Sing Off." The network plans a return for the series, which debuted in a four-episode stint in December. The series performed solid in the ratings during a tough month for broadcast. The network doesn't have a specific premiere date set for the return of the show, which is the latest singing-related series to get some traction on broadcast. "Sing Off" features top a cappella groups performing popular songs in an elimination competition.

Amber Heard joins Nicolas Cage film

Amber Heard is getting behind the wheel for "Drive Angry," the Nicolas Cage 3D action movie being directed by Patrick Lussier. "Angry," a Nu Image/Millennium project that is eyeing a shoot this month in Shreveport, La., centers on a man (Cage) driven by rage who is chasing the people who killed his daughter and kidnapped her baby. The vendetta/rescue spins out of control as the chase gets bloodier by the mile, leaving bodies strewn along the highway. Billy Burke, who plays Kristen Stewart's father in the "Twilight" movies, already is on board as a cult leader. Heard is stepping into the action field for the first time, taking on the role of diner employee who partners with Cage to find his granddaughter.

NBC Gearing up for Post O'Brien Schedule

Get ready for the Peacock to change its plumage again. On Monday, the broadcast network will launch its latest programming revolution (NBC 3.5? 4.0?), a back-to-basics model that attempts to return to a status quo that executives moved mountains to change last year. Jay Leno is moving back to 11:35 p.m. hosting "The Tonight Show." Scripted programming is returning to 10 p.m. New shows like "The Marriage Ref" and "Parenthood" represent the first of many new efforts coming down the network's suddenly stuffed development pipeline. But can the broadcast Humpty Dumpty put all its pieces back together? The first key is late-night. NBC used to own the space in what seemed to be effortless weekly victories under the older-younger tag-team of Jay Leno and Conan O'Brien. Now with Leno returning to "Tonight" after a slew of disparaging press and a still-green Jimmy Fallon taking over "Late

Night," it's not clear if NBC can reclaim the two-hour block.

Vancouver Games anthem revamped

Canada's Olympic Broadcasting Media Consortium has come to the rescue of the Vancouver Games' closing ceremony Sunday night by producing a bilingual video of the Olympic theme song "I Believe." Facing criticism from French-speaking Quebec that the 2010 Olympic opening ceremony paid too little attention to La Belle Province, the CTV-led broadcast consortium on Saturday shot a bilingual video entitled "I Believe/J'imagine." The Olympics theme song "I Believe" was sung in English by Canadian teen Nikki Yanofsky, while Quebec songstress Annie Villeneuve sang for a separate French version.

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