



TRADES

Tuesday, May 4, 2010

'Lights,' 'Caprica' writers ink 20th TV deal

Two writer-producers from NBC's "Friday Night Lights" and Syfy's "Caprica" have signed a multiyear, overall deal with 20th Century Fox TV. Longtime writing partners Patrick Masset and John Zinman have inked a two-year agreement with the studio, where they'll develop new ideas as well as staff upcoming dramas. "They show tremendous flexibility and diversity in terms of the types of shows they've worked on," said Gary Newman, chairman of 20th TV. "On 'Friday Night Lights' they showed great skill writing character, and they spent time on 'Caprica' and showed they can write genre. We can push them in almost any direction, and they have the skill to knock it out of the park." The producers could end up staffing one of several 20th TV pilots in contention for next season, with hot Fox drama pilots "Ride Along," "Midland" and "Breakout Kings" among titles that might be considered a good fit should they receive a series order.

History greenlights Stan Lee-hosted series

History is teaming with comic book icon Stan Lee for a series that finds real-life X-Men. As part of a slate of new shows, the "X-Men" creator will co-host "Stan Lee's Superhumans," which will find people who have remarkable abilities because of being genetically different. Daniel Browning Smith, dubbed the world's most flexible man, will host the series with Lee. "Superhumans" will debut on the network during the third quarter and is joined by five other series and a slew of specials being greenlighted in time for the network's upfront presentation to advertisers this week.

CBS, Disney shares post 52-week highs

Shares of CBS Corp. and Walt Disney hit 52-week highs Monday as Wall Street started off the new week with its biggest jump in weeks amid positive economic signals. The broad-based S&P 500 stock index climbed 1.3% to record its best upwards move since early March. The Dow Jones Industrial Average also rose 1.3% -- its biggest gain since February. Among the economic factors cited as boosting stocks were increases in personal spending and a key gauge of health in manufacturing. During the current quarterly earnings season, media and entertainment investors are looking for signs of continuing economic and advertising improvements. Disney set a 52-week high of \$37.98 before closing up 2% at \$37.56. CBS shares rose 3.1% to \$16.71 after setting a 52-week high of \$16.98.

'Justified' gets second season on FX

FX has ordered a second season of "Justified" with a 13-episode pickup. "We are very excited about the tremendous, widespread acclaim that 'Justified' has received from both audiences and television critics," said John Landgraf, president and GM of FX. "Graham Yost, Tim Olyphant, Elmore Leonard and their talented partners have crafted a uniquely ambitious and entertaining series which is everything we aspired to when we developed the show." The drama, starring Timothy Olyphant, had a towering debut, dropped sharply, then stabilized in the ratings. To date, the show has averaged 3.4

million total viewers in its freshman season and 1.7 million in the 18-49 demo. The Season 1 finale airs June 8.

Joseph Gordon-Levitt eyeing roles in two action thrillers

oseph Gordon-Levitt, who last starred as a lovelorn man in "(500) Days of Summer," is taking a turn into action territory. The actor is in final negotiations to star in "Premium Rush," a Columbia chase thriller being directed by David Koepp. He also is in talks to topline "Looper," a sci-fi thriller that will reteam him with "Brick" director Rian Johnson. "Rush" sees Gordon-Levitt as a New York bike messenger who picks up an envelope at Columbia University, only to be chased throughout the city by a dirty cop desperate to get his hands on it.

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