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TV arm ramping up development

DreamWorks Television offers full slate

By [JOSEF ADALIAN](#), [MICHAEL SCHNEIDER](#)

Development season is just heating up, but DreamWorks Television has already set up nearly a dozen projects.

Slate for the NBC Universal Television Studio-based company --headed by Darryl Frank and Justin Falvey -- includes a one-hour dramedy from "Bernie Mac" creator Larry Wilmore that's based on an idea from DreamWorks partner Steven Spielberg.

Also, scribe Mike Werb ("Face/Off") and producer Bonnie Curtis ("Minority Report") are teaming for potential 10-hour NBC limited series "Tomorrow/Today." Set at a Los Angeles news station, project will span the lives of characters between the years 2010 and 2030.

Falvey and Frank (whose development roster is overseen by Jonathan Berry) said 2005 is shaping up to be one of the studio's busiest seasons in years.

"Last year we were so busy launching 'The Contender,' 'Father of the Pride' and 'Into the West' that it consumed a lot of our time," Falvey said. "This year we were more focused ahead of the curve, reaching out to some writers we've been wanting to be in business with for a while."

DreamWorks has a trio of comedy scripts in the works at NBC, including a blind script commitment for "Evan Almighty" scribe Josh Stolberg.

For another, DreamWorks has pacted with Jason Mulgrew for a half-hour script about a young New Yorker trying to make a go of it. Deal could rep one of the first examples of a blogger making the leap to primetime.

"It's hard to find an authentic twentysomething voice," Frank said. "And his was a blog we were tracking... (Blogs) are something you've got to look at and pay attention to."

Groundlings performer Mark Rizzo is also developing a coming-of-age laffer for NBC via DreamWorks.

Casting is also moving forward on "Baraboo 2010," the Cheryl Holliday-created half-hour from DreamWorks that Peacock entertainment prexy Kevin Reilly announced in July. Project now has a cast-contingent pilot order, and Allison Jones -- who cast "The 40-Year-Old Virgin" and "Freaks and Geeks" -- has signed on as casting director.

Carol Leifer-penned half-hour "Never in My Wildest," which has a cast-contingent order from CBS, also remains in active development.

On the drama side, DreamWorks has five scripts in the works that are being targeted for NBC, including projects from Les Bohem ("Taken"), Kirk Ellis ("Into the West"), Chris Murphey ("Dead Lawyers") and Gardner Stern ("Las Vegas").

Bohem's serialized drama looks at "a very unique corporation," according to Falvey, who says the show has mystery elements in a serialized format.

Ellis is writing a project about an American family adjusting to life overseas, while Murphey's script revolves around international law. Stern is still finalizing his idea.

Then there's the Wilmore project; beyond hinting at Spielberg's involvement, DreamWorks is mum on details. Project is not yet officially set up at the network.

On the limited series front, besides "Tomorrow/Today," DreamWorks TV development is also heating up on "Nine Lives" for the Sci Fi channel (*Daily Variety*, Oct. 8, 2003). Project comes from Bohem, who wrote all 20 hours of DreamWorks' "Taken" for Sci-Fi.

This time out, he's on board to write and exec produce 12 hours of "Lives," a supernatural project about life, death and the world beyond. He's currently working on the first two hours of the script.

Frank and Falvey said they also have several other projects in the works, but in very early stages.

"We know our taste. We're driven by what we're passionate about," Frank said. He added that DreamWorks "is hitting our stride" with NBC Universal, working well with the exec team headed by prexy Angela Bromstad.

As for reality, DreamWorks is partnered with Renegade 83 on ABC's upcoming "Miracle Workers" and a second season of Mark Burnett's "The Contender" for ESPN.

Company currently produces the Peacock's "Las Vegas" via NBC U. Skein started its third season with strong ratings Monday.

DreamWorks is also partnered with Sony on "Rescue Me," which just snagged a third season order from FX. Over the summer, company produced the ambitious TNT limited skein "Into the West."

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