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Drama series productions in China - alive and booming!

SUN Hong-Lei shines in Seven Swords

Our latest movie investment – My Girl Is A Kungfu Master

China International Film and TV Programs Exhibition in Beijing – we were there!

友利控股有限公司 Universal Holdings Limited



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# Drama Series productions in China - alive and booming! 電視劇製作在中國大陸:一片紅紅火火好景象!

Television is the major source of entertainment for many people in China, with TV penetration of 94.54% in  $2003^{1}$  and over 1 billion TV audiences<sup>2</sup>, and over 2000 channels<sup>3</sup> to choose from, attractive content becomes the vital part of a channel's success.

Of all the different sort of content, drama series is by far the most popular genre for Chinese viewers. According to a research done by Shanghai TV Festival and CSM, STVF "Magnolia Research" published in June 2005, Chinese viewers on average spends 1 hour watching drama series everyday, which equals to 30% of the total TV viewing time per person, ranking at the top among all other programmes; and in 2004 over 1500 drama series (equaling to over 180000 episodes) was broadcasted across 156 channels in 33 cities in China, an increase of 5.8% over 2003.

Advertisers recognize this trend also, and in 2004 44.1% of their total TV advertising spendings on drama series<sup>4</sup>.

How about the supply side of the story? Recognizing the viewers and advertisers' need for drama series, the total number of drama series produced in 2004 was about 12000 episodes, yet the demand for them remains at around 10000 episodes<sup>5</sup>. So what went wrong there? Yes the demand for drama series has not changed, but the excess supply in drama series give TV channels a chance to choose only the quality titles to air, leaving the second-rate productions unsold. TV stations also have a perception that there is not enough quality drama series in the market; they would rather air repeats of high-rating drama series than to invest in new ones, as they are unsure of its quality.

Hence, there must be some key factors to a successful and selling drama series, and just to find out what those factors are we sat down with Beijing Xinbaoyuan's key figure, Director ZHAO Baogang.

看電視是中國大陸很多人的主要娛樂方式。在2003年,中國電視機的普及率已達94.54%・電視觀眾人數達10億・有多達2000個頻道可供觀眾選擇。 在這種背景下・節目内容是否有吸 引力・是決定一個電視頻道成敗的關鍵所在。

電視劇集在目前是中國大陸觀眾最喜愛的電視節目樣式。根據上海一家媒體調查公司於今年六月公佈的資料,中國大陸觀眾每人每天平均的電視劇收視時間至少是一小時,佔到每人 日收視時間總量的30%,居所有節目類型的收視時間長度之首。在2004年,有多達1500部(相當於18萬集)的各種電視劇在中國大陸33個城市的156個頻道上播出,在數量上比2003 年增長了5.8%。

廣告商也認同這種趨勢的存在。比如,在2004年,他們就把佔到電視廣告投放總量44.1%的經費,用在了電視劇集上。

那麽,電視内容的供給是什麽狀況呢?順應觀眾和廣告商對電視劇的需求,在2004年,共有1.2 萬劇集被製作出來,而市場需求的缺口在1萬集之多。問題出在哪兒呢?市場對電視劇的需求並未改變,而數量過多的電視劇供應,使得電視頻道們有機會精挑細選,把質量二流的電視劇拒之門外,讓它們賣不了錢。

電視臺也覺得市場上高水準的電視劇節目太少;因此,它們寧願重播收視率高的電視劇,也不肯輕易投錢拍新的電視劇,因為了對其質量如何心裏沒底兒。

於是·為找到賣相好的電視劇成功的訣愛·我們跟北京鑫寶源影視公司的重要人物·電視劇名導趙寶剛·一起坐下來聊聊天兒。



ZHAO had a humble beginning; he started working in a steel factory in his early adulthood. His desire to work in the creative industry has never diminished and finally he got a chance to work in Beijing TV Art Centre as a stage manager and a play director.

His real career break happened in the early 90s, when he made his directorial delsing the award winning drama series *Desire*, and subsequently set his wants apart from the other drama series with emotionally drawn stories and in depth drawlopment of the characters. His famous productions include *Stories in the Editorian wiree*, *Neverlet Go, How Can I Save You, My Love* etc. In 2003 he led a team of a ewite Canadis and filmed and produced yet another award winning drama series transvell, *Vancouver*. The series was the first Chinese drama production that was entirely filmed in Canada, and when was shown during spiring of 2004 received many process from both the crifics and audiences.

## What are some of the issues the drama series production business is facing in China?

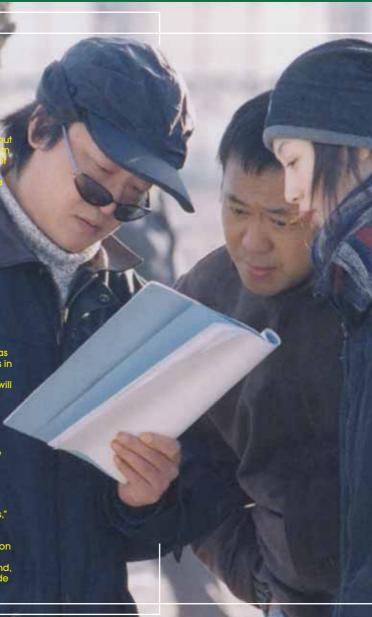
The demand for drama parior with more enited

- The lack of productions for genre-specific channel
- 2. The threat from everyone productions of Marca
- 4. The reduction of production cos

Another point that got raised in the research was that there are not enough tailor made drama series for genre-specific channels. Most of the productions made nowadays are either light-hearted comedies or action series set in ancient China (Wu Xia series). These genres do not fit into genre-specific channels such as Shanghai TV News Channel. Producers will need to realize the demand from these channels and produce accordingly.

One of the major issues that China is facing is the growing popularity of Korean drama series and it's threatening what is an already overcrowded China drama production market.

"Korea has a very supportive government especially to the entertainment business," says Director ZHAO. "Take the success of *Dae Jang Geum (Jewel in the Palace)*, Actors and actresses can rehearse for each scene a few hours, on set, before the actual shooting. Each scene gets shoot a few times and only the best shoot goes on air. This cannot be made possible if you don't have the backing of a supportive organization such as the government." Chira drama productions, on the other hand, are running on lower and lower budgets as more and more drama series are made available, yet some productions the quality got sacrificed, somehow.







# What makes a good drama series? 什麼樣的才是好電視劇?

Yet, Director ZHAO, known for making drama series that resonates with viewers, would not make such sacrifices. "At Beijing Xinbaoyuan, we make about 3 drama series a year, equaling to approximately 100 episodes per year. What guarantees the popularity of a drama series is a good script, with good casts." A good script, from Director ZHAO's previous productions, involves characters who are daring, who do what a normal person would not (or would not have the courage to) do, and in return letting audiences to think about the characters, and giving them a chance to let go of some of their repressed emotions by getting involved in the characters.

So, the other factor that makes a good production – a good cast, what does Director ZHAO have to say on this? For those of you who are not familiar, Director ZHAO is known as "the star creation specialist" in China, some well known artists include actress-director XU Jinglei, LU Yi, LI Xiaoran etc. all become famous after working on ZHAO's drama series. "I guess the major factor why my productions use fresh actors and actresses is that they come cheap," laughs ZHAO. "But seriously, most of these actors and actresses that I worked with, they all have the potentials of becoming stars, it's just a matter of exploring and realizing their potentials."

以拍觀眾買帳的好電視劇間名的趙導,卻從不願降低對作品質量的要求。「我們公司一年拍3部電視劇,總共約100集。電視劇要走紅,得靠好本子,好的演員陣容。」從趙導以往的成功作品看,好本子裏的人物得有膽量,能做出普通觀眾自己不願去做,或想做又不敢做的事來。這樣,觀眾們可以通過劇中人物來獲得自己心理壓力的宣泄和釋放。

對於好作品的另一個要素,好的演員陣容,趙導又是怎麼說的呢?趙導被稱為"造星高手",因為有很多現在有名的演員,如徐靜蕾,陸毅,李小冉等,都是在 出演趙導的電視劇以後才真正火起來的。趙導笑言:「我習慣起用新鮮面孔擔綱主演,可能主要還是因為他們當時要價不高。嚴格地講,跟我合作過的男女演員 ,都具備成星的潛質,只是那時還欠發掘,沒變成現實。」

### Talent management

One of Beijing Xinbaoyuan's divisions is talent management, which, in itself could become a very profitable business

"I would classify actors and actresses into three groups. The first group is the ones that are not yet known to the general public. This group does not give a lot of return in the initial stage but they are relatively cheap to work with but if they raise to the second group, which is when they have just started establishing their names with the public, you probably get a decent return as they tend to get more work and the cut (commission) you receive would be greater than the third group- which is when they truly become stars. By the time they are at this level you will need to have a really big budget to even afford using them on your own productions!"

### 關於藝人經紀

趙導所在的公司,有很大一塊業務是藝人經紀,它本身可以很賺錢。「我把演員分為三類。第一類是完全不為觀眾所瞭解的人。開發這類人,剛開始得到的回報 有限,但他們相對比較便宜。一旦他們上升至第三類,開始嶄露頭角,為公眾所瞭解,你得到的回報會相當高,因為這時候他們急於爭取更多上鏡的機會,你能 獲得的棲命也遠比從第三類人,也就是直正成為明星的演員們,那麽拿到的名。一日他們功成名就,就管你自己想再用他們,那也需要一筆不小的投入啊!」





# WONG Jing leads the group of stars in *Ba Da Hao Xia* (*Eight Infamous Heroes*)



The TV drama series will surely become a hit programme with its beautifully told love story, friendships between the kung fu masters, Director WONG's trademark humour, and a powerful cast.

由保利華億傳媒投資的40集巨製《八大豪俠》已全部製作完成·在送審中·得到國家廣播電影電視總局的肯定·同時·該劇的發行也已基本完成·成為今年內地最受市場歡迎的電視劇。

《八大豪俠》編劇、導演是香港金牌製作人王晶・動作指導是著名動作指導程小東・彙集了黃秋生、陳冠希、劉松仁、李冰冰、範冰冰、林子聰等明星。

王晶介紹,《八大豪俠》是武俠版的「不可能完成的任務」,八位各具奇能的俠客,被邀反抗奸臣秦檜,在一個接一個不可思議的陰謀底下,破解懸疑, 偵破詭計,比「包青天」的案件更曲折,比「金田一」的兇手更難揭露!

凄美絶倫的情感・蕩氣迴腸的俠義氛圍・再加上王晶獨家的超搞笑・超鑽石陣容・成為市場的新寵兒、再創收視神話成為一種必然。



Major actors and actresses (In the order of appearance): 主要演員: (按出場順序)

陸 毅一飾平 常 LU Yi as Ping Chang

黄秋生 — 飾 閻鐵心 Anthony WONG as Yan Tiexin 范冰冰 — 飾 湘 湘 FAN Bingbing as Xiang Xiang

陳冠希 — 飾 謝家麒 Edison CHEN as Xie Jialin

林子聰 — 飾 東郭仁 LAM Chi Chung as Dongguo Ren

鄭曉東 — 飾 風一陣 ZHENG Xiaodong as Feng Yizhen

AND THE ZELLING MICHOGOLING GOT CITY HIZITOR

李冰冰 — 飾 鳳來儀 LI Bingbing as Feng Laiyi 董 璇 — 飾扁素問 DONG Xuan as Bian Suwen

劉松仁 — 飾 關玉樓 Damian LAU as Guan Yulou

李小璐 — 飾 樂干干 LI Xiaolu as Le Qianqia





### Universal (Hao Ge)'s latest movie investment -

My Girl Is A Kungfu Master 友利(浩歌)最新電影投資 — 《野蠻必殺技》

On the afternoon of July 27, Hong Kong film director WONG Jing, along with major actresses and actors Cecilia CHEUNG, Leo KU Kui Kei, YUEN Qiu, YUEN Wah, SHI Lan, and QIAN Jianyi, attended the press conference for their new film My Girl Is A Kung Fu Master at Jinku KTV, in Xidan, western

The arrival of the director and the six film stars caused a big sensation among fans and reporters. The latter shouted out loud their idols' names all through the press conference, and some even threw bouquets of flowers and toys to the film stars onstage

The heartthrobs, CHEUNG and KU were surrounded by hundreds of fans asking for autographs. The KTV Salon had to tighten its security measures, sending in many security guards to escort the

Amidst the chaos, CHEUNG was hurt on the shoulder by excited fans but she kept her composure and expressed appreciation to the love from her fans. The film will be made both in the mainland and in Hong Kong and will be showing on the big screen during Chinese New Year next vear.

Six media companies, including China Film Group Corporation, Universal Holdings (Hao Ge), Beijing Xinhua Universal, Beijing Media Group, Tianjin Film Studio and Beijing Asian Union Media Investment, poured in a total of 30 million yuan for this film project.

With their expertise in the fields of cinema circuits, media coverage, and marketing, the six investors expressed confidence about WONG's directing and pinned a high hope on the box

In the evening of July 27, the director, CHEUNG, and KU also landed on the Ynet.com online

On July 28, the opening ceremony for location shooting of the film was held at the Beiputuo Film Production Base. A roster of Chinese reporters witnessed a rarely seen god-worshipping ritual carried out by the production crew to express their wishes for the success of their film project.

But the day was so hot, both CHEUNG and KU did not feel well while acting in the scenes. Director WONG then arranged to shoot the non-action scenes as YUEN Qiu and YUEN Wah were in heavy costumes.

The initial shooting of the film ended in Beijing and resumed on August 15 in Hong Kong and the whole location shooting is slated to wrap up in late September.

7月27日下午,由香港著名導演王晶執導,張柏芝、古巨基、元秋、元華、石蘭、錢嘉儀主演的新片《野蠻 必殺技》在北京西單金庫KTV舉行該片新聞發佈會。

王晶攜六大明星主演悉數到場為影片造勢,金庫KTV讓聞訊而來的追星族和媒體擠得水洩不通,現場始終尖叫不斷,影迷們高聲喊著明星的名字,還從樓上投下小束的鮮花和小玩具等禮物。

迷・金庫也是如臨大敵・派出數十人的保安維持秩序・更有數名高大保安專職近身保護張柏芝和古巨基・才 使他們艱難突出重團。

港拍攝,並將於明年初春節賀歲強檔上映。

内地六家強勢傳媒機構:中國電影集團、友利控股有限公司(浩歌)、北京新華環球影視文化傳播有限公司、 北京北青文化藝術公司、天津電影製片廠、北京華億聯盟文化傳媒投資有限公司聯手為《野蠻必殺技》投資

六家公司坦言非常看重王晶在執導娛樂片方面的能力,相信加上投資方各自在電影院線、媒體宣傳和市場運作方面的資源和優勢,《野蠻必殺技》將會有不俗市場表現。

7月27日晩・電影《野蠻必殺技》導演王晶・攜該片男女主演張柏芝、古巨基到《北京青年報》参加 「紅人上網」網上聊天直播活動・三人的人氣爆棚・點擊率極高・一度造成「紅人上網」網路擁堵。面對網友五花 八門的問題,張柏芝和古巨基在網站暢所欲言,與網友互動十分融洽

7月28日,眾多媒體探班電影《野蠻必殺技》在北普陀影視基地的外景地,除了採訪導演主演之外,還拍攝 到了難得一見的開鏡拜神儀式,眾多記者和影迷再次將現場包圍。

但由於天氣過於炎熱・張柏芝和古巨基的身體都出現了一些不適・王晶導演也體恤元秋、元華要穿很厚的服

7月29日,《野蠻必殺技》暫時結束在北京的拍攝,於8月15日在香港繼續開工,預計9月中下旬殺青。













Hosted by The State Administration of Radio, Film & Television (SARFT) and China Media Group, the 3rd China International Film & TV Programs Exhibition finished on a high note on August 27, 2005.

The three-day event which took place at the Beijing Exhibition Centre, with over 22,000 square-meter of exhibition area and over 600 exhibitors, it is one of the biggest program exhibition in China and around Asia. The main purpose of this exhibition is to promote friendship, strengthen interactions and co-operations between companies and organizations, to further develop the industry and promote Chinese culture to the world and to bring the world to China. The total amount of programmes traded during the exhibition reached RMB767 millions (which include the sum of intended trades).

AUFM was a major participant in this exhibition, with Director WONG Jing's drama series *Ba Da Hao Xia (Eight Infamous Heroes*), Emmy Nominee and veteran producer John CORRY's documentary special *The Long March - China's Flickering Star* and *The War at the Red Cliffs* drama series showcasing in the exhibition.





## The Travel Channel broadcasted British Open - LIVE! 旅遊衛視直播英國公開賽

After the successful co-operation with ESPN on the LIVE broadcast of the US PGA tours, The Travel Channel was the exclusive broadcaster of one of the most prestigious international golfing event, the 2005 British Open in July, LIVE on its golf programme – Star Golf.

It is one of the many collaboration effort made for The Travel Channel to offer international events to the viewers. The next major international event planned for The Travel Channel, which is also LIVE and exclusive to the channel, is 2005 Miss World. We will have more details in the upcoming issue of Media Info so stay tuned.

繼旅遊衛視攜手ESPN 成功直播四大滿貫賽事美國名人賽、美國公開賽之後,旅遊衛視又在七月份為國内廣大高爾夫球迷奉獻了久負盛名的《2005年度 英國高爾夫公開賽》。

這是旅遊衛視又一個國際合作重要成果,為國內觀眾提供觀賞國際賽事的機會。旅遊衛視計劃中的下一個重大國際賽事獨家直播,將會是《2005年世界小姐選美比賽》。更多精彩細節,敬請留意我們下一期的Media Info。





### Site Visits, Roadshows and Conferences 實地參訪,路演,及會議



Below are some of the events that we have participated or will be participating. Feel free to contact us should you want to be informed about our participations in upcoming roadshows and conferences by emailing vivienlai@uhl.com.hk.

#### July

- AUFM Site Visit with Funds Managers
- IBC Asia Financial Supply Chain Management in Asia 2005

#### August

• Roadshow - New York, USA

#### September

- BNP Paribas Peregrine 12th Annual China Economic Development Forum "Challenges to High Growth" – Nanjing, China
- JPMorgan The 10th Annual JPMorgan Asia Pacific Conference - New York, USA
- JPMorgan JPMorgan's London Corporate Access Day 2005 London, UK

#### October

• The 8th World Chinese Entrepreneurs Convention - Seoul, Korea

以下是近期活動預告.欲知這些路演和會議的詳情,請即發信到電郵地址 vivienlai@uhl.com.hk與我們聯繫.

#### 七月

- 與基金經理們一道實地參訪保利華億
- IBC亞洲有限公司 "2005年亞洲金融供應鏈管理會議"

#### 八月

• 路演 - 美國,紐約

#### 九月

- 法國國家巴黎百富勤 "高速增長面臨挑戰 : 第十二屆中國經濟發展論壇 年會" - 中國南京
- •摩根大通 "第十屆摩根大通亞太地區事務年會" 美國紐約
- •摩根大通 "2005年摩根大通倫敦分公司開放日" 英國倫敦

#### 十月

• 第八屆世界華人企業家大會 - 韓國首爾

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