

New TV Shows

Classic television doesn't come along that often. Most shows in drama or comedy are pretty formulaic. That is why anything weird and unusual achieves cult status. Twin Peaks and Lost were a breath of fresh air because they didn't fit the mould of cop or hospital show. Viewers are always desperate for something different that keeps them on the edge of their seat or sends them tumbling to the floor with laughter. A lot of time, energy and money go into launching new TV shows and the competition between networks is fierce.

A lot of shows never get any further than the pilot. If it isn't popular, the idea will be dropped like a hot potato. Audience panels are used for research into what will be popular or otherwise. Sometimes, the pilot isn't even shown. When a show is a hit, rival networks will try to come up with something similar, only achieving a poor imitation most of the time. The abundance of channels has mushroomed in the satellite and digital age and networks constantly need new TV shows to fill the schedules.

The glut of reality shows seems here to stay. They are popular, cause people to tune in regularly and are inexpensive to make. Even controversy doesn't keep them off the air as seen in the UK version of Big Brother, which has endured excessive drinking, racist remarks and threats of violence. New game shows also seem to be part of the staple diet.

It's hard to think of something original, of course. Not every writer is gifted enough to come up with Lost or The Sopranos. Producers want a quick return for their money and might not have the patience to wait for something to build. New TV shows these days are expected to hook the audience straightaway.

The last ten years or so are being referred to as a golden age in television comedy as far as American situation comedy is concerned. Friends, Frasier and Will and Grace were all international hits and their passing has left a big hole. Everyone Loves Raymond and King of Queens have also come to an end. Good new TV shows in the comedy field are the most difficult of all to find. All the above shows are class acts to follow and every new effort will inevitably be compared to them. The industry waits for the next golden age, eagerly scanning scripts for the next big hit.