



Media Insights

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New Series Performance and Prognosis

By Steve Sternberg

It's still early in the season, but a few things are worth noting.

CBS's *The Mentalist* and **FOX's *Fringe***, are the two stand-out new shows so far this season. The CBS drama because it sustained its strong opening performance in its second episode. The FOX drama, not just because of its solid rating performance, but also because of its reduced commercial load, which is helping it retain more of its commercial minute audience than the typical FOX series. Both were pre-empted for the Presidential Debate last week.

ABC's *Life on Mars* and **CBS's *Eleventh Hour***, each had decent debuts in the same Thursday 10-11pm hour. It will take another week or two to determine if either has legs. They both may have had some of their potential male audience lured away by FOX's competing baseball playoffs.

NBC's new comedy, ***Kath & Kim*** had an OK premiere, but certainly can't be labeled a hit.

CBS's *Gary Unmarried* and ***The Ex-List*** can go either way, while **NBC's** heavily touted ***Knight Rider*** must be a disappointment for the network.

Second-season series being re-launched this fall, **ABC's *Pushing Daisies*, *Private Practice*, and *Dirty Sexy Money***, along with **NBC's *Lipstick Jungle* and *Life***, and **FOX's *Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles***, are not performing up to their respective network's expectations.

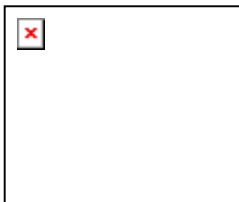
Most new dramas decline after their debut episodes. ***The Mentalist*** and ***Fringe*** are so far bucking this trend. We'll need a week or two to see if the same can be said for ***Life on Mars*** and ***Eleventh Hour***.

New shows that start out poorly, however, seldom rebound. So the next couple of weeks bear watching. By the end of the month, we'll have a clear picture of new series hits and misses.

Following is a look at new series performance to date for each broadcast network.

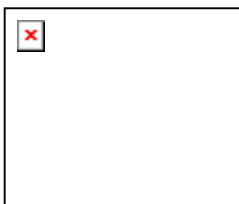
New (and kind of new) Series Performance and Prognosis

Program	Date	HH	P12-34	A18-49	A25-54	A50+
ABC						
Opportunity Knocks Tue 8-9 (premiere 9/23)	9/23 9/30	4.1/6 3.8/6	1.4/5 1.4/5	1.8/5 1.8/5	2.3/6 2.1/5	3.4/6 2.6/5
Does not perform as well as NBC's Biggest Loser , so it's probably a disappointment for ABC.						
Life on Mars Thu 10-11 (premiere 10/9)	10/9	7.5/13	2.2/7	3.7/10	4.7/12	6.5/13
Solid debut. Only lost 2 share points from its Grey's Anatomy lead-in among households and adults 25-54, winning the hour among both groups. Finished a close second to E.R. among adults 18-49, and to CBS's new drama, Eleventh Hour , among adults 50+. If these numbers hold up, it's a success. But we need to see how much was simply viewer sampling, and how many viewers will stick around for the second and third episode (it usually takes three episodes to see where a new drama's audience will settle).						
Pushing Daisies Wed 8-9 (return 10/1)	10/1 10/8	4.0/7 3.6/6	1.6/5 1.6/5	2.0/6 2.0/6	2.5/7 2.2/6	3.3/6 2.6/5
A relatively large fall-off from where it debuted last season, but about the same numbers it had toward the end of last 4 th Quarter. ABC was obviously hoping for better than a 4 th place finish among adults 18-49 for this critical darling. We don't see any reason to expect significant improvement.						
Private Practice Wed 9-10 (return 10/1)	10/1 10/8	5.5/8 5.1/8	2.7/8 2.0/6	3.3/8 2.6/7	3.6/8 3.1/7	3.6/7 3.9/7
As with its lead-in, audience levels were down from start of last season, but close to where they were at end of last 4 th Quarter. Unlike its lead-in, Private Practice is still the highest rated show of the night among women 18-34. But week 2 decline among adults 18-49 and 25-54 is cause for concern.						
Dirty Sexy Money Wed 10-11 (return 10/1)	10/1 10/8	4.7/8 4.0/7	1.6/5 1.4/5	2.4/7 2.0/5	3.0/7 2.4/6	3.8/8 3.3/7
Premiere was a distant second to CBS's CSI: NY , and just ahead of NBC's Lipstick Jungle . ABC should be able to do better here.						



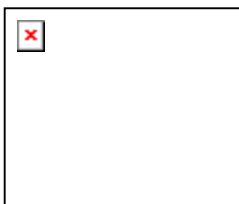
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Program	Date	HH	P12-34	A18-49	A25-54	A50+
CBS						
Worst Week Mon 9:30-10 (premiere 9/22)	9/22 9/29 10/5	6.7/10 5.6/8 5.7/8	2.0/5 1.5/4 1.7/4	3.8/8 2.9/7 3.0/7	4.8/10 3.9/8 3.7/8	5.7/10 5.0/9 4.7/8
Premiere lost 3-4share points from its Two and a Half Men lead-in. Next episodes declined – not a promising sign.						
The Mentalist Tue 9-10 (premiere 9/23)	9/23 9/30	9.9/15 9.8/15	1.7/5 1.9/6	3.5/9 3.6/9	5.0/11 5.1/12	11.2/20 11.0/19
Very strong debut, particularly among CBS's core 35+ audience.. New CBS dramas often get good initial viewer sampling. Second episode held up, and its adult 25-54 audience did not decline from its NCIS lead-in. Could be the first bona fide new hit of the season.						
Gary Unmarried Wed 8:30-9 (premiere 9/24)	9/24 10/1 10/8	4.5/7 4.6/7 4.9/8	1.2/4 1.1/3 1.1/4	2.4/7 2.2/6 2.4/6	3.1/8 2.9/7 3.0/7	3.6/7 4.0/7 4.2/8
Holds onto its Old Christine lead-in audience. It is competitive in a relatively weak time period. Its fate will likely rest on that of its lead-in.						
Eleventh Hour Thu 10-11 (premiere 10/9)	10/9	7.2/12	1.9/6	3.2/9	4.1/10	7.1/14
Premiere was a close third in a competitive hour. But lost more than half its CSI lead-in adult 18-49 and 25-54 audience. NBC's E.R. will likely not change much, so we'll need to see whether ABC's new drama or this one declines more in subsequent episodes. Given CBS's strength from 9-10pm, even a close third-place might not be enough to satisfy the network here.						
The Ex-List Fri 9-10 (premiere 10/3)	10/3	4.6/8	1.1/4	2.0/6	2.6/7	4.2/8
Lost 3-4 share points from its Ghost Whisperer lead-in, but still managed to win this weak network hour among adults 18-49 and 25-54. Being the only scripted network series in the time period can't hurt. CBS can either leave it here or replace it without much difference.						



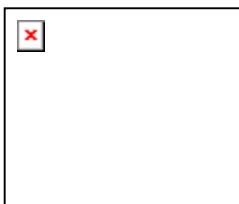
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Program	Date	HH	P12-34	A18-49	A25-54	A50+
NBC						
My Own Worst Enemy Mon 10-11 (premiere 10/13)						
Knight Rider Wed 8-9 (premiere 9/24)	9/24 10/1 10/8	4.5/7 4.7/8 4.2/7	1.9/7 1.9/7 1.6/6	2.5/7 2.4/7 2.3/7	2.9/8 3.0/8 2.7/7	3.4/7 3.9/8 3.3/6
About what we expected, but must be a disappointment for NBC, which was hoping for more the third place among adults 18-49 and fourth place among adults 25-54. It was the highest rated show of the night among men 18-34, but it remains to be seen whether that is enough to satisfy the network.						
Kath & Kim Thu 8:30-9 (premiere 10/9)	10/9	4.7/7	2.8/9	3.2/9	3.5/9	2.7/5
Debut episode built slightly on its My Name is Earl lead-in, and did beat the other broadcast networks among viewers under 35. A distant second to CBS's Survivor among adults 18-49. Decent performance, but nothing special. Other NBC Thursday comedies have strong dual (male/female) audience. Kath & Kim much stronger among women than men.						
Crusoe Fri 8-9 (premiere 10/17)						
Lipstick Jungle Wed 10-11 (return 9/24)	9/24 10/1 10/8	4.4/7 3.9/7 3.4/6	1.5/5 1.3/4 1.2/4	2.4/6 2.0/5 1.9/5	2.8/7 2.2/6 2.1/5	3.1/7 2.6/6 2.2/5
Debut finished way behind CBS's CSI: NY (even among its strength – women 25-54). Barely beat out the second half of the David Blaine special on ABC (not a promising sign). As we expected, slipped a bit when ABC's Dirty Sexy Money returned to this hour on October 1 st . No reason to expect any improvement here.						
Life Fri 10-11 (return 10/3)	10/3	3.7/7	0.9/3	1.7/5	2.2/6	3.4/7
May last a while simply because it's on Friday. But finishing third, behind 20/20 , among adults 18-49, is not what NBC was thinking. Not at all compatible with its Deal or No Deal lead-in.						



New (and kind of new) Series Performance and Prognosis

Program	Date	HH	P12-34	A18-49	A25-54	A50+
FOX						
Terminator: S. Connor Tue 9-10 (return 9/8)	9/8 9/15 9/22 9/29 10/5	4.0/6 3.6/6 3.8/6 3.4/5 3.6/5	2.0/6 1.7/5 1.9/6 1.5/5 1.9/6	2.4/7 2.1/6 2.3/6 2.0/5 2.3/6	2.8/7 2.3/6 2.5/6 2.4/6 2.5/6	2.7/5 2.5/5 2.5/4 2.2/4 2.4/5
Returned against weaker than normal competition, and still declined 20% from last season. FOX was hoping for more in its second season. Audience has stabilized, meaning this is where it should remain.						
Fringe Tue 9-10 (premiere 9/9 at 8pm)	9/9 9/16 9/23 9/30	5.9/9 8.1/13 5.8/9 6.1/9	2.3/7 3.8/11 3.3/10 3.2/10	3.2/9 5.1/13 4.1/10 4.2/11	3.9/10 6.0/14 4.4/10 4.7/11	4.7/9 6.1/11 3.6/6 3.9/7
Received a boost in its second episode, following House 's debut, and not being up against regular programming. Fell back to Earth in episode 3, but still won its hour among viewers under 35 (and was a close second to ABC's Dancing With the Stars among adults 18-49). Episode 4 won the hour among adults 18-34 and 18-49. Seems to have found its audience. FOX should be pleased.						
Do Not Disturb Wed 9:30-10 (premiere 9/10)	9/10 9/17 9/24	3.1/5 2.5/4 2.4/4	1.2/4 1.0/3 1.0/3	1.9/5 1.5/4 1.3/3	2.2/5 1.8/4 1.7/4	1.9/4 1.7/3 1.6/3
CANCELED						
Hole in the Wall Thu 8-8:30 (premiere 9/11)	9/11 9/18 10/2	2.7/5 2.6/5 2.2/4	1.8/7 1.5/6 1.3/4	2.0/7 1.8/6 1.5/4	2.1/6 1.9/6 1.5/4	1.2/2 1.1/2 1.0/2
Not much to say. Can be replaced at any time.						
Hole in the Wall Thu 8:30-9 (premiere 9/11)	9/11 9/18 10/2	3.5/6 3.2/5 2.3/4	2.3/8 2.0/7 1.5/5	2.6/8 2.2/7 1.6/4	2.7/7 2.4/6 1.7/4	1.7/3 1.4/3 1.0/2
Not much to say. Can be replaced at any time.						



New (and kind of new) Series Performance and Prognosis

Program	Date	HH	P12-34	A18-49	A25-54	A50+
CW						
90210 Tue 8-9 (premiere 9/2)	9/2 9/9 9/16 9/23 9/30 10/7	3.2/5 2.2/4 2.3/4 2.1/3 2.2/4 2.2/3	2.7/8 1.9/6 2.0/7 1.7/6 2.0/7 1.9/6	2.6/7 1.7/5 1.7/5 1.5/4 1.7/5 1.7/5	2.4/6 1.6/4 1.5/4 1.4/4 1.5/4 1.5/4	0.6/1 0.5/1 0.6/1 0.5/1 0.4/1 0.4/1
Two-hour debut was against scripted repeats. Seems to have settled in to its audience level.						
Privileged Tue 9-10 (premiere 9/9)	9/9 9/16 9/23 9/30 10/7	1.9/3 1.7/3 1.2/2 1.3/2 1.6/2	1.4/4 1.3/4 1.1/3 1.2/4 1.3/3	1.2/3 1.1/3 0.8/2 0.9/2 1.1/2	1.1/3 1.0/2 0.7/2 0.7/2 1.0/2	0.6/1 0.7/1 0.4/1 0.3/1 0.5/1
As expected, loses a share point or two from its 90210 lead-in. No reason to expect that to change, and no reason to expect the show to last much longer.						
Stylista Wed 9-10 (premiere 10/22)						
In Harm's Way Sun 7-7:30 (premiere 10/5)	10/5	0.4/1	0.3/1	0.3/1	0.3/1	0.2/0
Barely on the radar. Did even worse than when CW was programming the night itself. Can't imagine it remaining on for long.						
Surviving Suburbia Sun 7:30-8 (premiere 11/2)						
Valentine, Inc. Sun 8-9 (premiere 10/5)	10/5	0.8/1	0.4/1	0.4/1	0.4/1	0.5/1
See <i>In Harm's Way</i> .						
Easy Money Sun 9-10 (premiere 10/5)	10/5	0.7/1	0.3/1	0.4/1	0.4/1	0.5/1
See <i>Valentine Inc.</i>						

