Find Me In Paris

Find Me In Paris is MIPTV’s first-ever Kids World Premiere TV Screening. We spoke to some of the people involved in the live-action adventure series.
WITH live-action programming for children and young people taking centre stage at MIPTV, Find Me In Paris is the perfect choice for the first-ever Kids World Premiere TV Screening at MIPTV. Find Me In Paris is a tween drama centering on Lena Grisky (Jessica Lord), a teenage girl attending the Paris Opera Ballet School, the most elite dance institution in the world. But Lena has a secret. She’s a time traveller, accidentally propelled from 1905 into the 21st century by her boyfriend Henri (Christy O’Donnell), who does everything he can to find a way to bring her back to the past. Meanwhile, Lena tries to fit in with modern life, juggling high school and rigorous ballet training.

The series is filmed on location across Paris and features some of the city’s best-known landmarks. It’s produced by Cottonwood Media — a Federation Entertainment company — and co-produced by ZDF, Belgium’s Be-Films and the Opera National de Paris.

“ZDF had been looking for another ballet show for a long time to put together with our successful Dance Academy series,” said Nicole Keob, head of acquisitions and co-production for children’s and youth programming at ZDF. “We wanted something dramatic, fairytale-like, but still modern. However everything we had on the table was just too similar to Dance Academy, until Cottonwood came up with the idea of combining ballet with time travel — and voilà, we loved it!

“I think time travel has an escapist quality to it,” Cottonwood Media president David Michel said. “It offers a promise of freedom — being able to run away to a world that’s both different and familiar — that’s naturally appealing to teens.” He added: “We hope the show will speak to both the younger end of the six-to-12 bracket because of the ballet and love-story aspects of the plot, and to tweens as well thanks to the more complex storylines about time travelling. For the same reason, we expect boys to connect with the slightly sci-fi plots and the action, while girls will hopefully be drawn to the deep character-led stories.”

And the series offers some rarely-seen locations and some very special talent. “The uniqueness of this series comes from the co-production with the Opera de Paris which allowed us to shoot on location, inside the opera and on the main stage,” Michel said. “We worked with its most well-known choreographer as well as the students of the Paris ballet school itself, which are doubling for some of our cast. This collaboration is completely groundbreaking and gives the show a unique, realistic window into what it is like to attend the top ballet school in the world.”

ZDF has been investing in live-action for children and young people for over 20 years, as part of its public channel remit. “For example, H20, our mermaid show produced by Jonathan M Shiff Productions; Dance Academy by Joanna Werner; and Wolfblood and Worst Witch with the BBC. As a public channel we are obliged to show not only animation, but real kids in the real world as well,” Keob said. “The magic touch within those shows help children to identify with our heroes, who are going through the same problems as those kids.” The universal themes of the series make Find Me In Paris a perfect fit for young audiences around the world. “Clearly, Lena’s goal in the first season is to be reunited with Henri, the love of her life, despite the obstacles they both face: one is in 1905, the other in 2018. So at the core of the show, we are looking at an intense, classic love story,” Michel said. “The series was shot in English. The entire cast comes from the UK and Canada, as do the directors. And since this is a kid/tween series, it will naturally be dubbed.” And while many primetime teen dramas have a “near sitcom-feel in their limited sets, strong lighting and colours and frequent close-ups”, Find Me in Paris is being shot “like a premium drama”, Michel said. The 26 x 26-mins series is budgeted at around €12m ($13.7m), “very high for a tween show, average for a primetime show”, he added.

Streaming exclusively on Hulu in the US, Find Me In Paris has been acquired by major broadcasters in key territories including France Televisions (France), Disney (France and Italy), ABC (Australia) and VRT (Belgium). ZDF will air the show in Germany.

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