



I despise reality TV. And I especially hate the fact that it's saturating the airwaves, to the detriment of quality dramas and comedies. But one show I will be tuning in to is Fox's On the Lot, brought to us by reality-TV guru Mark Burnett, Steven Spielberg and DreamWorks Television.

Anyone who's ever fantasized about making a film will love this show in which aspiring filmmakers compete by crafting short films in a given genre every week. The 16 contestants will be split into teams. Their entries will be screened before a live audience and judges (including a highranking motion picture executive, a prominent film critic and directors who are experts in the week's featured genre) who will critique the shorts during a "Film Première" episode. Viewers will then cast their votes and the results will be revealed during the "Box Office" episode, with the losing short's director eliminated. When there are just two filmmakers remaining, they'll compete individually, with the lucky winner scoring a meeting with Spielberg, a new office at DreamWorks' HQ and - the ultimate prize - a \$1 million DreamWorks development deal.

Fox says some 12,000 filmmakers submitted short, self-directed films in the quest to be chosen for On the Lot. Since virtually anyone with a short film can enter, it's a mixed bag - from the head-scratchingly bad to some surprisingly professional stuff. Check out the effectively creepy, well-acted and -produced Mr Bubbs (films.thelot.com/films/10780). Its director, Todd Thompson, a Disney employee in Orlando, is a self-taught filmmaker who's been making movies since he was a kid. Go to thelot.com to watch some of the films submitted. The show will première with a onehour auditions episode.



DÉBUTS Tuesday June 19 at 10pm on PBS

The consistently excellent documentary series celebrates its 20th season with Rain in a Dry Land, which follows the fortunes of two Somali Bantu families after they're transplanted to American cities by relief agencies. Having escaped their lives of violence, they must now deal with culture shock and racism.

MuchMusic Video Awards

AIRS Sunday June 17 at 9pm ET on MuchMusic, Cityty & Star!

The 18th annual celebration of music videos and chart-topping stars airs live from Toronto. The Red Carpet Arrivals Special begins at 7:30pm ET.



Durham County

AIRS Monday May 7 at 9pm ET 6 Thursday May 10 at 10pm ET on The Movie Network

This six-part miniseries is about a city cop who moves to the suburbs in the hopes of repairing his damaged family and starting over after his partner's murder. Unfortunately, Detective Sweeney moves his wife and two daughters into a neighbourhood plagued by a serial killer and a home across the street from a man who blames Sweeney for destroying his life. Durham County is incredibly suspenseful (it's hard to stop thinking about it) and unflinching in its portrayal of violence. The murders that take place in the début episode are really hard to watch - I had to take a break a couple of times to calm myself down. But the writing, directing and acting are extremely good.



Dirty Dancing: Living the Dream

DÉBUTS Sunday May 13 at 7pm on W Network

If you're like me and you saw Dirty Dancing - let's just say "more than once" - then you're probably psyched for the stage production opening in Toronto in the fall. To tide you over, check out the reality series DD: Living the Dream, in which contestants trained at a secluded dance camp and competed to win the grand prize of a professional dance contract and trip to the London première of Dirty Dancing: The Musical. [Who despises reality-TV now? -Ed] W Network is also airing the 1987 film that made Patrick Swayze and Jennifer Grey household names during a day of dance-inspired programming on May 12.