

ABC picks up local sci-fi series Defying Gravity

By Marke Andrews, Vancouver Sun mandrews@vancouver.sun.com | July 2, 2009

Defying Gravity, a Vancouver-shot science fiction TV series co-produced by Vancouver's Omni Film Productions, has been picked up by ABC to air in the United States.

The one-hour series, which stars American actor Ron Livingston (*Sex and the City*) and Vancouver's Laura Harris (*Dead Like Me*) as interplanetary travellers, already has broadcast contracts with the BBC in the United Kingdom, CTV and Space in Canada, and ProSieben in Germany. Now, with ABC scheduled to air the series this summer, *Defying Gravity* stands to have the largest viewing audiences of any Omni production.



Laura Harris as ship's geologist Zoe Barnes in the series *Defying Gravity*. The Vancouver-shot TV series co-produced by Vancouver's Omni Films has been picked up by the ABC network. Photograph by: handout, CTV

The series, which completed its first season of production on June 17, is co-produced by Omni Film and Fox Television Studios. Executive producers are James Parriott, who executive-produced *Grey's Anatomy* and *Ugly Betty*, and Michael Edelstein, executive producer of *Desperate Housewives*, both from Fox Television Studios, and Brian Hamilton and Michael Chechik of Omin Film.

Livingston and Harris are among the central cast who play eight astronauts from five countries travelling through the universe on a six-year mission in the mid-21st century. The series, written by Parriott, is based on the BBC drama *Space Odyssey: Voyage to the Planets*. On its website, CTV refers to *Defying Gravity* as a "relationship drama." It shifts back and forth in time, from the astronauts' present existence in space to their past relationships on Earth.

Defying Gravity once again pairs Omni with CTV, which ran the Vancouver production company's series *Robson Arms* and *Alice, I Think*. Omni's Hamilton said CTV had a major role in bringing Omni into the picture.

"CTV's Susanne Boyce and Louise Clark were early champions of the series," said Hamilton. "When they saw the potential for this to become a co-venture, they recommended Omni Film to Fox as a potential partner because of the success of the series we did before, *Robson Arms* and *Alice, I Think*."

The interiors, including the space ship, were shot at Burnaby's Bridge Studios. Hamilton said all the show's many visual effects will be produced in Vancouver.

With broadcasters in place in North America and Europe, the potential is there for the series to be seen by a massive international audience.

"We're very excited about the worldwide appeal of the show," said Hamilton, adding that the multi-cultural flavour of the characters lends itself to an international audience.

This is the fourth Canadian CTV series to be picked up by American networks. CBS took *Flashpoint* and *The Bridge*, and NBC picked up *The Listener*.