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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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Where Are TV's Megahits?

In a decent column listing the types of programming networks should pursue (family sitcoms, period shows, miniseries, variety shows), [USA Today's Robert Bianco](#) bemoans the fact that there are no massively popular hits like "The Cosby Show," "M*A*S*H," "Roseanne" and "Ed Sullivan." And he suggests that maybe there never will be again. Uh, except for "American Idol," "CSI," and "Desperate Housewives," to name three recent examples. There was also "Seinfeld" and "ER" and "Who Wants To Be A Millionaire" and "Survivor." In fact, every few years, a new show explodes on TV. They will again. Even if the 30 million people who watch "Idol" isn't quite as big as the millions who watched "MASH" or some other hit from an era when there were only three channels, it's still a broad popular hit. Everyone said the sitcom was dead till "The Cosby Show" came along. Then everyone said only "Law & Order" could work and serialized dramas were dead forever -- until "Lost" and "Desperate Housewives" exploded. Game shows were nonexistent in primetime for DECADES until "Millionaire" hit. Now gameshows are all over TV. Variety shows were dead for decades and while "Idol" serves that purpose, a real variety show will be a massive hit someday soon. Every genre that has ever worked on TV will work again someday. And massive hits are a constant -- they're never going to stop coming. You just don't know where or when they're going to come from. That's the fun part.

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 2:46 PM



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