



Idol bootcamp
Sing and endure the criticism; Lau (left), Li (top)

TELEVISION

Going on a star hunt

Ying Lo speaks to two Hong Kong hopefuls about their chances of making it big in the latest series of **K-Pop Star Hunt**

For those unfamiliar with *K-Pop Star Hunt*, think *American Idol* on speed. With shiny, overproduced sets, bootcamp-like training (a la *The Biggest Loser*), judges with the wrath of 10 Simon Cowells, and enough strong-armed coercion to make Britney Spears spontaneously combust 30 times – you’ve got yourself *K-Pop Star Hunt* – a pre-competition qualifier which plucks Asian contestants outside of Korea and throws them face-first into intensive training, rigorous competition and morally ambiguous makeovers required of a true Korean pop star.

Previous seasons showed contestants going to a hospital and having their age, fitness, health and appearance tested by doctors for some kind of optimum superstar physicality. Another challenge had contestants stand with their arms out for a painstakingly long amount of time, while trainers threatened those who relinquished early that they didn’t want it badly enough. Clearly, it’s mind over matter if you want to succeed in the K-pop world.

What does it take to stay the course with the trials and tribulations of *K-Pop Star Hunt*, and why would anyone in their right minds want to do this?

This year, two of our very own Hongkongers are competing in the event. We get a glimpse inside their heads before the series kicks off.

Aileen Li, 23, graduated with a BBA from Chinese University

of HK. She started in singing competitions at the age of nine and continued pursuing singing whenever she wasn’t busy with work. She’s quick to remember a melody, not shy when she gets on stage and even knows bit of Korean. But not all is sunshine and



There is never a wrong path in life, only extra ones

rainbows, she says. “I get a little bit nervous before a show and can start to psych myself out by thinking about things a little too much.”

Li’s go-to for support include her husband, family and very good friends. “If I’m faced with a problem, I’ll consult all of my friends and family for their take on things. You can’t always solve problems on your own,” she says. We’re not sure if Li knows about the quick-elimination round.

Water Lau, 25, is an entertainment host for Now TV. “I never imagined

I’d be the one getting interviewed. My friends knew I liked to sing and suggested I try out. I was like ‘sure, why not?’ I had no idea I’d end up getting the opportunity,” he says. Lau keeps his cool when it comes to pressure, and explains: “I once got some very good advice from someone I was interviewing, and it changed the way I look at things. He said that there is never a wrong path in life, only extra ones. I prefer to explore different opportunities, and feel that whether or not I succeed is less important than whether or not I gain useful knowledge.” We see an arm-raising challenge in store for Lau.

It will be interesting to watch how our hometown contestants fare in the intense heat of battle. Will Lau’s zen-like attitude stay true to the end, and is Li going to manage to keep the pressure in check just long enough to ace her performances? K-pop fanatic or not, the show is an interesting look into the obsessive K-pop culture and the pop star factory at work. *Ying Lo*

K-Pop Star Hunt

Premieres Sat Nov 30 at 9pm on Channel M.



Mirror, mirror... who’s the fairest of them all?

Reality series with the Chinese title ‘Mirror, mirror – I am the Prettiest’ is premiering on Sunday November 10 at 10pm on the i-Cable entertainment channel. The programme features HK lang mo, actress and plastic surgery extraordinaire Mia Chan as she fearlessly tests a series of face-altering treatments. Expect bloodshed and operating room carnage.

Book reviews



Nine: Curse of the Kalingan
Shobha Nihalani

★ ★ ★

Book one in Shobha Nihalani’s newest series takes place in both the past and the present. Set in several countries and told through multiple characters’ points of view, this is ultimately a book about an ancient curse and how three people try to stop it. A good read for those who enjoy adventure stories with elements of history, geography and human nature woven in. Nihalani is a Hong Kong-based author and has previously published two novels. *Laura Besley*

It
Alexa Chung

★ ★

As a firm follower of unremitting British style icon Alexa Chung – who taught me (along with a generation of girls) that being flat-chested could be sexy – I found *It* disappointing. There’s no clear point to it nor is there any explanation as to why Chung has put this book together. Is it an autobiography? Is it a step-by-step style guide? Or is it just a collection of musings from a scatter-brained socialite? We’re leaning towards the latter, based in particular on Chung’s notes on how to nail the perfect Instagram selfie. Unfortunately *It* serves as little more than a collection of charming pictures bound in an overpriced scrapbook. *Danielle Goldstein*

