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ENTERTAINMENT

Crossover Media

Estefan Enterprises and Mark Burnett Productions are partnering to produce entertainment aimed at bilingual, bicultural Hispanics.

BY CHRISTINA HOAG
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Emilio Estefan has long been known for producing Latin crossover sensations such as Ricky Martin, Jennifer López and Shakira. Now he's turning to crossover television.

Miami Beach-based Estefan Enterprises and Mark Burnett Productions, the TV titan behind *The Apprentice* and *Survivor*, on Thursday announced a partnership to produce television, mobile phone and Internet entertainment aimed at the burgeoning population of bilingual, bicultural Hispanics.

CULTURAL ELEMENTS

"Hispanics are becoming more Americanized but still want entertainment and programming that touches their cultural heritage," said Frank Amadeo, president of Estefan Enterprises.

"We'll be creating original programming for network TV that will cross that cultural gap. The networks have tried in various forms, but they haven't really nailed it."

The deal comes as major broadcasters are trying their hand at producing telenovelas for the mainstream market and as Estefan Enterprises is increasingly branching out from its hallmark of music into television and film.

To date, most of the company's productions have been for Spanish-language networks Univisión and Telemundo.

GROWING SECTOR

Burnett, the pioneer of reality shows, said he hopes to tap Estefan's penchant for discovering and cultivating new talent, as well as his expertise in Hispanic tastes.

"Over the past few years, I've watched the major networks barely scratch the surface with programming for the crossover Hispanic community even though it is by far the fastest growing sector of America's population," Burnett said.

Estefan/Burnett Entertainment's first project will be Latin-inspired aerobics craze Zumba.

Zumba started in an Aventura gym two years ago and has since grown to encompass 1,700 instructors in 30 countries.

Estefan will be creating original music for the fitness routines to be featured in a new Zumba DVD series, branding campaign and national tour next year.

"This will put us on a global level," said Alberto Perlman,

co-founder

and chief executive of Zumba Fitness. "The music is going to be unbelievable. It's going to give us amazing exposure, a new sound and more brand awareness."

Burnett said he was impressed with Zumba.

"When Emilio and I first discussed Zumba Fitness, I immediately recognized it as a product with incredible potential for explosion in both the fitness and entertainment genres," he said.

Zumba also recently reached a deal with Mexico's top network Televisa. Zumba will be included in the fitness classes in a reality show *Bailando por la boda de mis sueños* (Dancing for My Dream Wedding).

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