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'El Jardinero' El productor José Manuel Lorenzo se prepara para el premio honorífico de Conecta Fiction

PozJuan Hopewell



Credito: Netflix

José Manuel Lorenzo, productor de Netflix Los éxitos mundiales no ingleses "The Gardener" y "Raising Voices" recibirán el premio de este año Conecta Ficción Premio Honorífico.

Se lo entregarán en la Conecta Fiction & Entertainment de este año, que se desarrollará del 16 al 19 de junio y se trasladará a Cuenca, a una hora en tren al este de Madrid.

"El premio reconoce su excepcional trayectoria en el sector audiovisual, donde Lorenzo ha sido una figura clave en la evolución de la televisión española moderna y en la elevación de los contenidos guionados como motor cultural y de exportación", anunció Conecta Fiction.

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"Según el Comité de Premios Conecta, José Manuel Lorenzo encarna como pocos la pasión y la transformación que impulsan la industria en España", añadió"

Now President and founder of the DLO Producciones, a Banijay company, Lorenzo is indeed one of Spain's few still jobbing industry figures whose career practically straddles the entirety of modern Spanish TV, bowed by belated deregulation over 1989-90 which saw the launch of networks Antena 3 and Mediaset's Telecinco and payTV channel Canal+ España.

In a probable record, while still in his thirties Lorenzo worked for all three as a top executive, first joining Spanish public broadcaster RTVE as its Commercial Director, then in 1992 becoming general director of Mediaset's Spanish ad sales unit Publiespaña, after being interviewed by Silvio Berlusconi. They talked for four hours, Berlusconi made him an offer he couldn't refuse but what Mediaset was doing "wasn't my style," Lorenzo told Vanity Fair España.

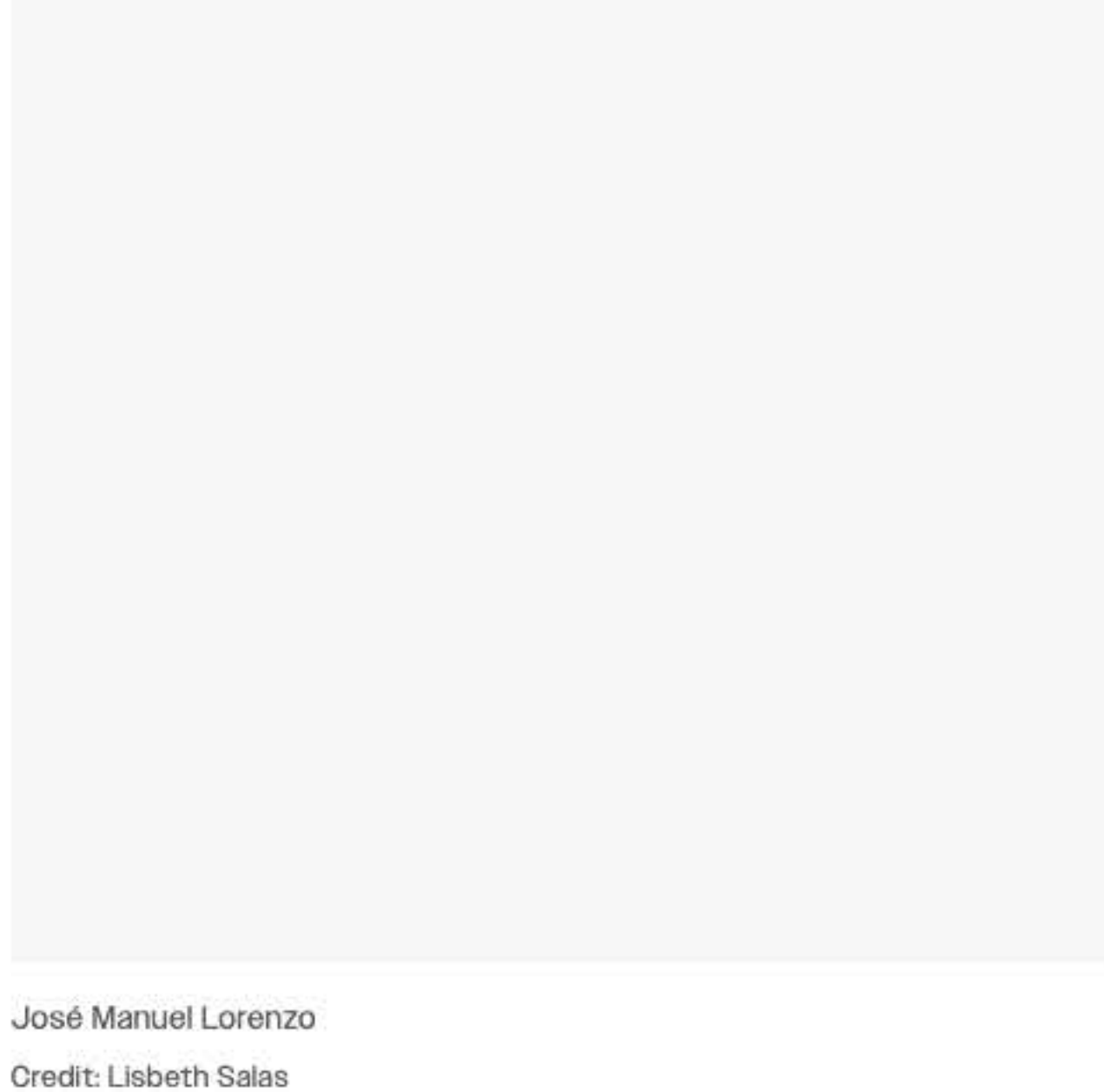
What was and is Lorenzo's style was the production of Spanish fiction. Tapped first in 1993 by Antonio Asensio, the new owner of Antena 3, as its commercial director, Lorenzo was appointed its director general in 1995. Here, he made his first large contribution to modern Spanish TV, not only pushing Antena 3's newscasts but continuing its drive into the production of Spanish TV series that helped to forge many of the foundations on which the current greatness of Spanish TV production is based.

By the late '90s, very few U.S. series made an annual Top 10 of Spain's most watched primetime series. Many of Spain's leading screenwriters who have proved hugely successful in a platform age – Alex Pina, Ramon Campos, for example – cut their teeth penning shows for free-to-air networks. Moving into scripted series in a competitive environment 15 years before Latin America, Spain accumulated an expertise in series production which still stands it in good stead today.

Lorenzo adored Asensio but Lorenzo's looks of a chic rock star sat badly with the conservative honchos of Telefónica, which bought Antena 3 Group in 1997. They sat better at liberal Canal+, where he served as its general director over 1998-2004. His passion remained production, however.

Founding Drive in 2004, serving as president of Boomerang, and then launching DLO Producciones in 2011, Lorenzo's battle has been to find a stable financing context and international outlet for his creativity.

Over these years, Lorenzo has made highly ambitious films which didn't find box office traction (Agustín Díaz Yanes' "Solo Quiero Caminar") and the hugely popular pioneering modern musical "Hoy no me puedo levantar" which was not a big payday. Other titles fared better: RTVE's 2012 "El angel de Budapest" scooped a Premio Hondas for best miniseries; 2017's "Lord, Give Me Patience" proved a box office hit; 2019's lovingly made "La Caza. Montepérdido," also for RTVE was a ratings hit and won the Audience award at France's Luchon Festival.



José Manuel Lorenzo Credit: Lisbeth Salas

How Streaming Services Helped Lorenzo Practice His True Calling

From 2017, the stars have begin to align for Lorenzo. Backing by Banijay from 2017 and the advent of streaming services – led by Netflix in 2015 and compounded by launch of Movistar Plus+, which released its first series in 2017 – have allowed Lorenzo to exercise his true calling, as an energetically independent producer accessing both financing and international distribution.

Out of DLO Producciones, over 2020-21, Lorenzo produced "Tell Me Who I Am," first fruit of a co-production pact between Movistar Plus+ and Telemundo International Studios. An espionage thriller, it charted a woman's emotional and political odyssey from the Spanish Civil War, Stalin's 1938 Moscow elite purges through to Mussolini's Italy, Athens under crumbling Nazi rule to the Fall of the Berlin Wall, as she battles traditional gender roles and totalitarianism. It aired on Peacock in the U.S. and HBO Latin America.

Lorenzo reunited with Moviastar Plus+ and Telemundo for "The Inmortal – Gangs of Madrid" (2022-24), a true-facts based mob thriller charting one man's spectacular rise up the narco food chain. Competing at Canneseries, it was renewed for a second season.

Another DLO show, "Raising Voices," a sexual assault accusation drama, ranked over June 3-9 last year as No.1 most watched Netflix non-English series on its global chart. Green-fingered serial killer thriller "The Gardener" has just followed suite topping Netflix's non-English global chart over April 7-13.

On all of his productions at DLO, Lorenzo works as a highly hands-on creative producer. He co-created "Raising Voices." On "El Inmortal," he's happiest talking about its innovations, for instance how episodes end singularly, as if the fiction world continues, though audience access to it concludes.

Under his ownership, DLO will not produce more than one series at one and the same time, Lorenzo has said. Downscaling from his heights as a top TV exec, the now self-confessedly boutique company head says he aims to make series with artisanal craft. He has also begun to return to his origins, such as the Spanish countryside, which he cherishes. "The Gardener" lensed in Lorenzo's native Pontevedra in Galicia, north-west Spain. "La Caza. Montepérdido" Season 1 was shot in and around Benasque, a country town in the lap of the Pyrenees highest massif about which he talks with passion.

Passion, however, has always been Lorenzo's hallmark. He couldn't want it any other way.

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