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NEWS

Levy gets early jump on 3-D market

By Julian Ryall

Japan will not have any 3-D capable cinemas for another couple of years, but when it does, Stuart Levy intends to be ready to supply them.



Levy

Founder of Tokyopop, Levy is in talks with several of Japan's biggest movie companies about a project that started life as a manga but that he sees as the world's first teen-psychological-horror 3-D production.

"Live-action movies are already happening in 3-D and my challenge is to take 'Love Like Blood' — which is not that sort of spectacular film — and make it work," he said. "The second challenge is to make it work for less than \$6 million."

In Hong Kong as part of the J-Pitch scheme put together by UniJapan to promote a selection of Japanese titles, Levy has already secured the services of director Takahiko Akiyama, who was video special effects director for "Final Fantasy the Movie" in 2001 and wrote and directed "Hinokio" in 2004.

Based on the Kei Toume manga "Lament of the Lamb," the goth-flavored tale revolves around a slightly anemic high-school boy named Blake Edwards, who meets a beautiful girl called Jira. Their relationship becomes increasingly intense — and gory — before a final twist.

Discussions are under way with actors for some of the key parts — a Japanese will play the lead female role — and the score will be influenced by some of the best-known goth bands, from the 1980s and more recently, though Levy did not divulge names.

The target audience for the 120-minute "Love Like Blood" is teens and twentysomethings in markets around the world.

"Our goal is to create a mantra for this generation that resonates through gothic fashion, manga-



style cinematic aesthetics and the coming-of-age challenge faced by every teenager," Levy said. "Achieving these goals through the

prism of a haunting and demented entertainment experience will be our key approach to this film."

Levy and Akiyama have shifted the project from physical sets to a green-screen shoot, which gives them greater control in making the visuals unique, Levy said, and enables them to draw the audience closer into the story.

He is also excited at the technological improvements in 3-D cinema that mean that it is no longer a "vomit-inducing experiment."

"But still, it's about the story and it is up to us to tell it as best we can," he said. "The movie doesn't have spectacles, but it does have anger and emotion, and the scene in which Blake smashes the guitar is powerful — in 3-D, the glass comes towards you. That is the kind of thing an audience can succumb to and it is the sort of technology that Tokyopop should be involved in."

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