



Big-screen battle for 'Star Blazers'

By Borys Kit

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Benderspink and producer Josh C. Kline are teaming to adapt the classic Japanese anime "Star Blazers" into a live-action feature.

Known for its epic imagery and themes of brave sacrifice and respect for heroes lost in the line of duty, "Star Blazers" is the U.S. name for 1970s Japanese anime TV series "Space Battleship Yamato." It comprised three television series, five animated features and a host of merchandise. "Star Blazers," distributed in the U.S. by Voyager Entertainment, aired stateside in the early 1980s.

The story is set in the 22nd century after an alien attack on Earth has forced survivors to live in underground cities. After a message arrives from a distant planet promising a cure for the proliferating surface radiation, Earth's last vestige of hope rests on the crew of a powerful yet untested spaceship, which must reach the purported new ally and return home before mankind ceases to exist. A live-action adaptation was set up at Walt Disney Studios in the 1990s.

A search for a writer to pen the adaptation is under way.

JC Spink, Chris Bender and Kline will produce, with Benderspink's Brian Spink co-producing.

Kline, along with Sample Digital business partner Mike McCoy, recently optioned the life rights of Mickey Thompson, the motor-sports icon who, with wife Trudy, was shot dead 1988. McCoy produced last year's Baja 1000 documentary "Dust to Glory," while Kline is the longtime rights holder of "Star Blazers."

Benderspink projects in development include "Power and Glory," based on the Howard Chaykin comic book, and "Y: The Last Man," based on the Vertigo comic series by Brian K. Vaughn. Both are at New Line.