Steven Wosniack: Pre, While, and Post Buffy: The Televisual Lineage of the Slayer

At the 2010 Slayage Conference, Jennifer K. Stuller presented a brief history of “The Best, Worst, Known, and Not-So-Known, Pop Culture Influences on the Buffyverse” (which was later published as a chapter in the Buffy the Vampire Slayer volume of Intellect Books’ Fan Phenomena series). While Stuller depicted a variety of works that had their share of impact on the creation of BtVS, I suggest tracing the televisual legacy of BtVS – from its part in establishing a network identity for The WB with obvious imitations like the first year(s) of Smallville to recent programmes comprising quite an amount of skilfully choreographed martial arts like Daredevil or Jessica Jones on Netflix.

In a manner reverse to how Steven Gil identified several television series as predecessors to The X-Files in his essay “A Remake by Any Other Name: Use of a Premise Under a New Title”, I would like to show how BtVS left its mark on the televisual landscape. By means of a timeline, I will give a rather chronological overview of developments reflecting a certain awareness of and thus reaction to Whedon’s most successful series. In addition to Stuller’s broad take including B-movies as well as comics, I will narrow my main focus to the medium of television, allowing for an occasional look back at TV traditions (e.g. fantastic TV, strong female characters on TV) that BtVS helped maintain and that still echo in subsequent programmes.

So in a way, I would propose to give a talk complementary to that of Stuller, resuming where she left off and not only showing - from a TV studies perspective - how BtVS was influenced by other works but also how the show paved the way for what was yet to come.