

[Home](#) > [TV](#) > [News](#)

Apr 29, 2026 9:26am PT

After 'Heated Rivalry' Phenomenon, Canal+ Distribution Is Bringing the Original Thai Boys' Love Catalog to the U.S. (EXCLUSIVE)

By Naman Ramachandran ▾





Listen to this article now 4 min listen

00:00

Powered by [Trinity Audio](#)

04:00



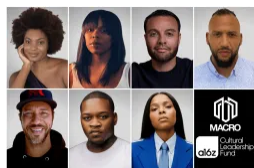
1.0x

Canal+ Distribution is bringing the Viu Originals Boys' Love catalog to the U.S., with Thai titles including "The Rebound," "4 Minutes," "Shadow" and "Close Friend" having already attracted interest from major American streaming platforms.

Boys' Love, also known as BL, is a genre of male romantic stories that originated in Japan and expanded across Asia over the past two decades. The move follows the U.S. breakout of "**Heated Rivalry**," the Canadian hockey romance that drew on Boys' Love genre conventions to become a phenomenon on HBO Max — and in doing so, opened a mainstream American audience to BL storytelling.

ADVERTISEMENT

Related Stories

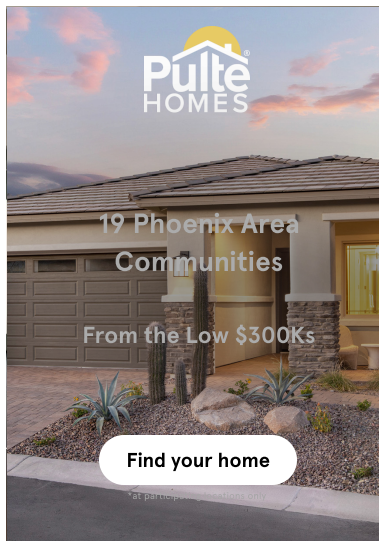


Macro and a16z's Cultural Leadership Fund Announce Inaugural Class for the Epigraph Creator Fellowship

Distribution. “The demand was already here. We’re just finally bringing the original catalog to meet it.”

Popular on Variety

AD



Visit Nearest Community for Special Offers*



Viu is one of Southeast Asia’s largest streaming platforms with 62 million monthly active users. **Thailand** now produces between 30 and 40 BL series annually, up from fewer than 10 a decade ago. Parrot Analytics data places select titles at demand levels more than 20 times the global average in Western markets, and the hashtag #BLSeries has accumulated over 20 billion views on TikTok.

“Canal+ Distribution has always been about identifying premium content before the mainstream conversation,” León de la Barra says. “Viu Originals represents exactly that: a library built on years of production expertise, with proven global demand and major streaming platforms already paying attention. The content understanding for Thai BL in the U.S. is being built right now, and we intend to be at the center of it.”

Among the catalog's featured titles is "4 Minutes," a 2024 series about a university student who acquires the ability to see four minutes into the future. "Shadow," set in 1999 at Saint Lawrence's College, follows a new student whose recurring sleep paralysis draws him toward secrets the school has long concealed. The anthology series "Close Friend," spanning three installments from 2021 to 2024, weaves romance with supernatural elements across a series of standalone stories.

"What separates this content we are now bringing to the U.S. from the broader BL conversation is production ambition," León de la Barra says. "Titles like '4 Minutes' and 'Shadow' aren't genre exercises. They bring science fiction, psychological thriller and even dark magic elements into stories that happen to center on male romance. That creative range is what makes this catalog relevant beyond the BL fandom."



“The Rebound,” a 12-part 2024 series, centers on a teenage basketball team led by two best friends as one quietly grapples with feelings for the other. “The emotional intelligence in these series is what drives the loyalty,” she continues. “Audiences, particularly women, connect with BL because the focus is on vulnerability, chemistry and emotional complexity rather than traditional romantic tropes. ‘The Rebound’ isn’t a sports series, but is actually a piece about self-acceptance that uses basketball as the metaphor.”

ADVERTISEMENT

The 2025 pipeline includes three additional titles: “Lost in the Woods,” about a young man sent into the forest after a failed scholarship bid who falls for an older park ranger living in isolation; “4 Destiny Project,” a four-director anthology; and “Season of Love in Shimane.”

creative exports and a production community that understood before many that audiences everywhere connect with the same emotions. When you watch this catalog, you're watching the output of that entire ecosystem.”

Read More About: Boys' Love, Canal+, Heated Rivalry, Thailand

Jump To Comments

Want to read more articles like this one?

Subscribe Today

More from Variety

‘Fool Me Once’ Star Michelle Keegan Reunites With Harlan Coben and Netflix for ‘The Woods’ Series Adaptation

‘Ransom Canyon’ Sets Season 2 Release Date, Unveils First-Look Photos

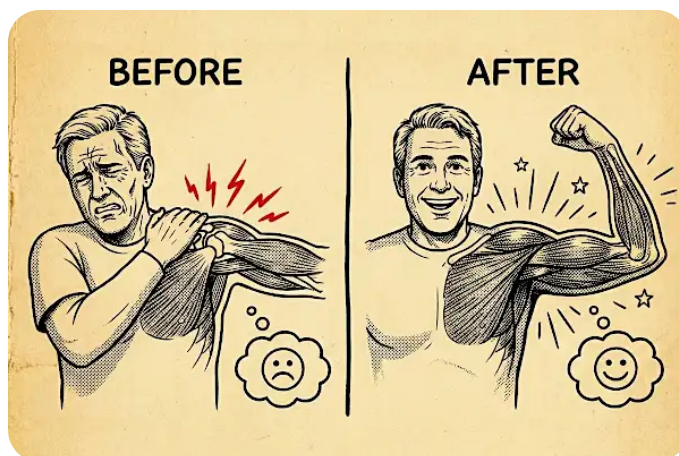
‘The Devil Wears Prada 2’ Review: Hotly Anticipated Sequel Is Breezily Diverting Fan Service and, Well, That’s All

Stephen Colbert Says He Made 'The Late Show' More Political After His Producer Told Him 'That's the Part the Audience Wants to See'

Janet Jackson to Appear at Grammy Hall of Fame Gala, Erykah Badu to Perform With George Clinton

Canneseries Artistic Director on Hosting 'White Lotus' Producer and Luring International Talent, From Adam Scott to Noah Hawley and Jisoo

Sponsored Stories



Treat Yourself With Every Bite

Nothing Bundt Cakes | Sponsored

Why Your Rotator Cuff Won't Heal (What Most Doctors Miss)

Health Insights Magazine | Sponsored



Arizona Launches New Policy For "Senior Drivers" on Wednesday

Auto Savings | Sponsored

Top 5 Window Cleaning Robots for 2026

Expert Product Review | Sponsored

0 Comments

Comments are moderated. They may be edited for clarity and reprinting in whole or in part in Variety publications.

Leave a Reply

Leave your comment here

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Name *

Email *

Website

Most Popular



'American Pie' Star Shannon Elizabeth Earns More Than \$1.2 Million on OnlyFans in First Week



'Jurassic Park' Star Sam Neill Says He's Now Cancer-Free After Chemo Stopped Working: 'It Looked Like I Was on the Way Out'



'Malcolm in the Middle' Star Justin Berfield Tells Paparazzi to Leave Dewey Actor Eric Per Sullivan Alone After He Turned Down the Reboot: 'I...



Stephen Colbert Says He Made 'The Late Show' More Political After His Producer Told Him 'That's the Part the Audience Wants to See...



'Daredevil' Star Reveals [SPOILER]'s Shocking Death Was Changed After Filming: 'They CGI'ed Me Shooting Him in the Head...

'The Madison' Launches 27-Emmy Category Campaign, Led by Michelle Pfeiffer — as Kurt Russell Eyes First Nom in 47 Years (EXCLUSIVE)

'Michael': Nia Long on Giving Katherine Jackson Her Due, Separating Her Performance From Angela Bassett's and What She Wants to See in a...

'Leaving Neverland' Director Torches 'Michael' and 'Nasty' Antoine Fuqua for Whitewashing Michael Jackson's Alleged Abuse

New York's Central Park SummerStage Announces 2026 Concert Schedule

ADVERTISEMENT

Must Read



Film

'Dune 3' Wows CinemaCon With 7-Minute Opening Scene Featuring Brutal Battle as Timothée Chalamet Dominates the Galaxy

TV

Christopher Meloni Says Goodbye to Stabler After 'Law & Order: Organized Crime' Cancellation: 'It Was a Great Ride'



Film

'Avengers: Doomsday' Trailer: Thor Battles Doctor Doom, Chris Evans Picks Up the Hammer, X-Men Back in Action in Thrilling CinemaCon...



Music

D4vd Arrested for Murder of Celeste Rivas





Sign Up for Variety Newsletters

Enter Your Email Address

Sign Up

By providing your information, you agree to our Terms of Use and our Privacy Policy. We use vendors that may also process your information to help provide our services. // This site is protected by reCAPTCHA Enterprise and the Google Privacy Policy and Terms of Service apply.



The Leader in
Entertainment
News Since
1905

SUBSCRIBE



ADVERTISEMENT

WHAT DO YOU THINK?

Loading survey...



Variety Confidential

iHeart

Variety Confidential

The Icon

The Icon

Aug 22, 2025 • 38 mins

Gone Too Soon

Aug 15, 2025 • 42 mins

A Variety and iHeartRadio Podcast

Rolling Stone

‘The Devil Wears Prada 2’ Dresses Up the Death of Journalism

Robb Report

This Bonkers \$2 Million Package Lets You Buy Out 3 Luxe Hotels in the Caribbean

Sportico

Worth a Dam: Oregon State NIL Collective Sues Blueprint Sports

WWD

EXCLUSIVE: Marc Chaya Is Leaving Maison Francis Kurkdjian

Variety

Legal

Magazine

More

Connect



The Business of Entertainment

logos are trademarks of Variety Media, LLC. Powered by WordPress.com VIP

Have a News Tip? Let us know



Variety is a part of Penske Media Corporation. © 2026 Variety Media, LLC.
All Rights Reserved. Variety and the Flying V logos are trademarks of
Variety Media, LLC.

OUR SITES 