

# ANIMATION WORLD

July 1996

• **MAGAZINE** •

Vol. 1, No. 4

## *Champions of Animation*

Frédéric Back

John Coates and TVC

Quirino Cristiani

## *Remembering the Olympiad of Animation*



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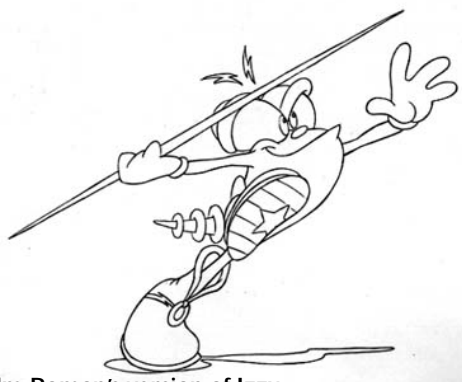
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Film Roman's version of Izzy.  
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# The Great Adventures of Izzy — An Olympic Hero

Kids across the US and around the world love Izzy! At least that's what the people at the Atlanta Olympic Games would like you to believe. After all, Izzy is the much-publicized mascot of the Atlanta Games, whose persona has appeared on a whole range of merchandise; he also appears as the star of his own animated TV special, *Izzy's Quest For Olympic Gold*, something of a first for an Olympic mascot.

Izzy was unveiled as a "simple little mascot" during the closing ceremony of the 1992 Olympic Games in Barcelona. Officials of the Atlanta Games turned to children around the United States to help define the character who was only known up until then as "Whatizit." Their final choice was Izzy, after the judges considered such other names as Jimmy Nastics, Link D. World, and I. M. There. Now that Izzy was alive, another contest was held where children were called upon to write stories about Izzy as their new Olympic hero. The "Great Adventures of Izzy" writing campaign began in October 1993 and more 85,000 children wrote

stories for Izzy, many of which will be displayed during the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia.

As part of the effort to market Izzy, the Atlanta Centennial Olympic Properties (ACOP) decided to star him in an animated television special. (ACOP is the marketing arm of The Atlanta Committee for the Olympic

Games.) ACOP finally selected Film Roman, the North Hollywood studio, known for such animated stars as Garfield and Bart Simpson, as the "official studio" for the 1996 Olympic Games—something of a first in both Olympic and animation history.

Carol Corwin, producer for *Izzy's Quest For Olympic Gold*, recalls that ACOPs selected Film Roman because, "they liked the fact that we were a modest company and [studio head] Phil Roman stays involved throughout the whole process. We were honored to be chosen. Everyone felt proud to be involved on the Izzy project because our quality standards matched ACOPs."

Phil Roman, Film Roman's President and CEO, commented that, "When ACOP first approached us, we didn't think Izzy was an animatable character. We needed to add spunk and energy. That required creating a full personality in addition to an appealing friendly look. It needed to be eye-catching and captivating not only to children, but adults need to be drawn to it as well".



*Izzy's Quest For Olympic Gold*  
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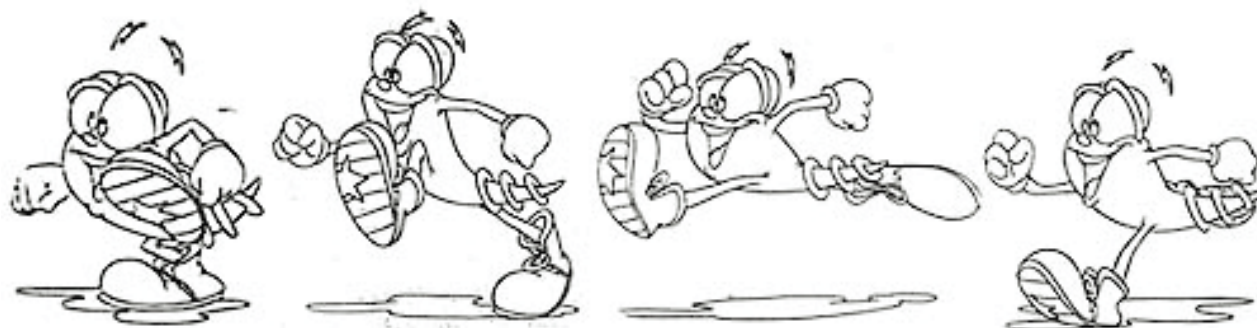
However, any change to Izzy's design needed to be subtle, since the character had already been widely licensed and merchandise distributed. With the help of animators Guy Vasilovick and Roger Sciasson, the studio put together a 40 second pilot for ACOP which showed Izzy going through a range of animated movements. From playing tennis to throwing a javelin to gymnastics, trying to imbue Izzy with exuberance and energy; in so doing, they had him morph his body into different shapes to facilitate each activity. They also added a nose to Izzy's

of the Olympic Games, and the Torch, shining bright. Never one to just go with the flow (that's why I like him), Izzy causes an uproar

We came up with a look to give him more life, a personality and warmth.

when he wants to leave the Torch to be a part of the Olympic Games he had heard so much about. Izzy must prove himself worthy and learn important lessons about the purpose and history of the games by earning the five Olympic

many stories submitted by from children around the United States. Scriptwriter, Cindy McCay worked closely with Holly Rawlinson at ACOP to create a "back life" for Izzy, adding his family, friends and Tribunal Elders giving reality to the Torch World. Both Film Roman and ACOP wanted the special to be educational, yet entertaining for children. Carol Corwin explained; "While we were brainstorming, we decided to cut out some of Izzy's speeches because it got too boring. It was a tough balance between teaching about the Olympics and keeping it fun and



Izzy, the official character of the 1996 Centennial Olympic Games © 1993 ACOG

face and fixed up his teeth a bit. Roman explained that, "We came up with a look to give him more life, a personality and warmth. We needed to change the character to make him more workable for animation. Izzy needed more punch and I think we did a good job of it".

The special, *Izzy's Quest For Olympic Gold*, aired on Atlanta-based Turner Network Television (TNT) on August 12, 1995 as a two-part show, and has also been distributed internationally. It begins with Izzy, a mischievous teenager who lives in a whimsical world inside the Olympic Torch. In this land, the people—called Whatizits—are charged with the responsibility of keeping the spirit

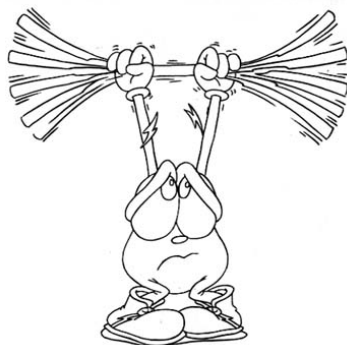
Rings—Perseverance, Integrity, Sportsmanship, Excellence and Brotherhood. (This meaning comes from a story session at Film Roman. In fact, the rings stand for the colors of the five continents participating in the Olympics.)

The idea of Izzy and his Torch World did come about from the

exciting."

*Izzy's Quest For Olympic Gold* conveys to children the message that the Olympics are not some boring event that their parents watch on TV and effectively promotes the values of perseverance, determination, and integrity. While not filled with the cutting edge sensibilities of some of the films that embellished the 1984 Olympiad of Animation, the show is nevertheless an honest, if modest effort that hopefully will inspire future Olympics-related animated efforts.

*Frankie Kowalski is Associate Editor of Animation World Magazine and is currently on ASIFA-Hollywood's Board of Directors.*



Film Roman's version of Izzy.  
© 1993 ACOG

# “So, What Was It Like?” The Other Side of Animation’s Golden Age

by Tom Sito

Most animators begin as animation fans. Seated in front of our TVs with heavily sugared cereal dribbling down our chins, we marvel at the adventures of Bugs, Casper and Scooby Doo. Then one day we decide to apply our desire to draw into becoming an animator. Just like ballplayers dream of becoming a Ruth or Cobb, we dream of being the next Bob Clampett or Chuck Jones.

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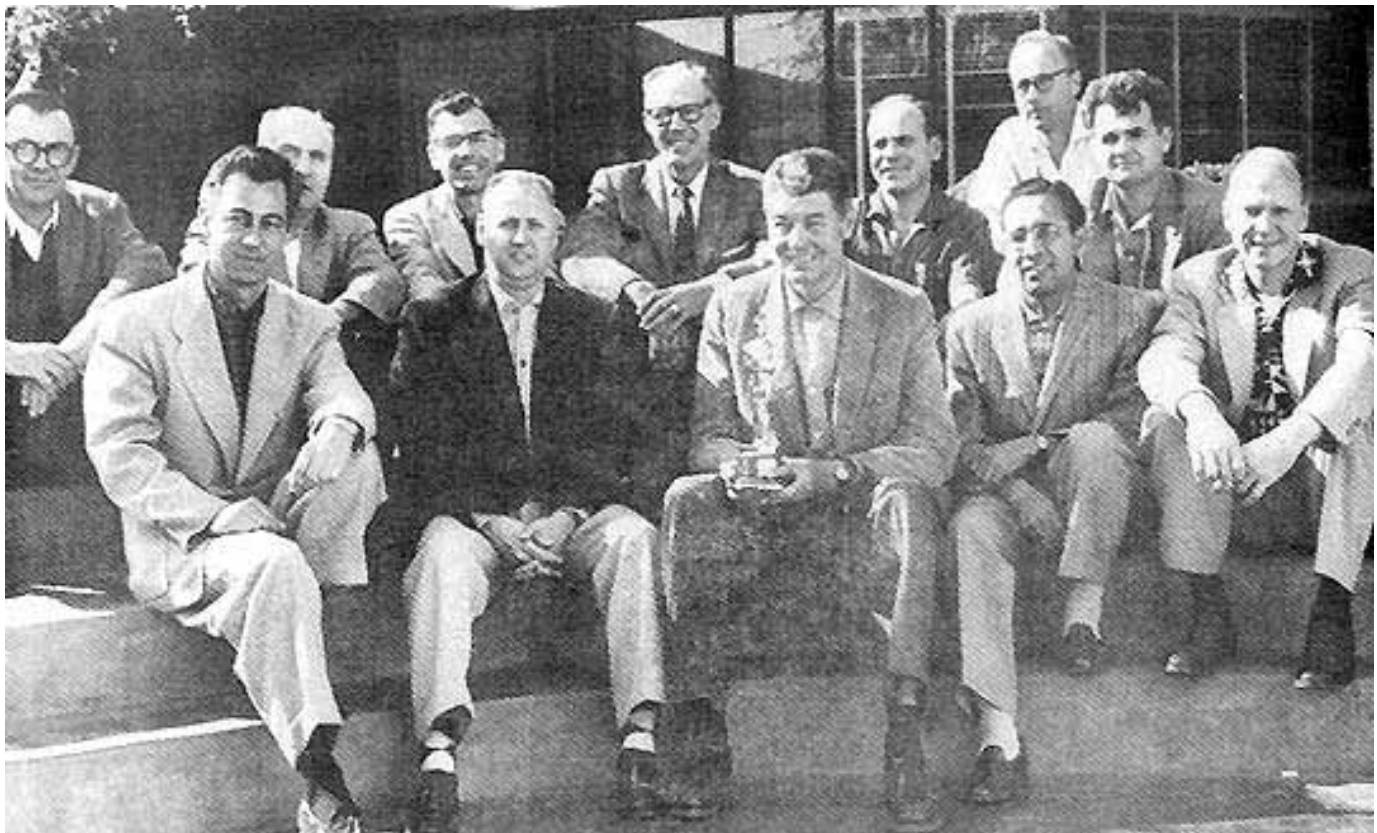
People want to cherry-pick their history to suit their opinions or agenda.

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I was fortunate that during the time of my entering the field, one could still learn at the side of many of the great artists of the Golden Age of Hollywood animation. In 1975, it was still possible to assist John Hubley, Shamus Culhane or

Ken Harris. Sadly, these and other legends are passing from the stage leaving us orphans with the films and, if we are lucky, some memories of what it was like.

I think a lot of us today have the impression that Golden Age Animation was done in a state of bliss. Modern Animators complain about ignorant and grasping corporations, tight deadlines and studio politics. Back then it was an Art, today its just Business. In the



UPA studios, March, 1957

Top row: Dick Shaw, Morey Fagan, Ed Friedman, Gil Turner, Barney Posner, Bob Dranko, E. Bennet  
Bottom row: Bob McIntosh, Al Wade, Peter Burness (holding Oscar for *When Magoo Flew*), Rudy Larriva, Bob Brown

Courtesy of Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists, IATSE Local 839.



good old days animators lived on their love of cartoons, ate ambrosia and had no deadlines or headaches. Obviously, that is why Pinocchio and Tom & Jerry cartoons were so good. Never mind Hitler, the Depression, or Jim Crow, it was all one long party. This naive view is encouraged by all these revisionist, Wasn't Hollywood Wacky?? books and documentaries corporations fund nowadays.

### How It Really Was

**W**ell, I hate to burst your bubble, but just take the time to chat with some of our great retired gods and goddesses and they'll tell you how it really was. Oh, I'm not denying that compared to any steelworker or being on a breadline their kind of job was a dream. Still, every animator then as now soon finds that, in the end, cartoons are a business just like anything else.

The first revelation that shocked me was how, before the animation unions started around 1937, animators had a six day work week. Nine to 6:00, Monday through Friday, and 9:00 to 1:00

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In the good old days animators lived on their love of cartoons, ate ambrosia and had no deadlines or headaches. Never mind Hitler, the Depression, or Jim Crow, it was all one long party.

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on Saturday. If you had a problem with Saturdays, Max Fleischer or Walt Disney would let you work Thursdays until 11:00 p.m. to make up the time. Disney and most studios went to 40 hours in January 1941, in an attempt to stop their artists from unionizing; and the same thing has been happening right now at many



**Warner Bros. Studios, Friz Freleng Unit, 1954**

**Back Row: Ray Young, Ted Bonicksen, Gerry Chiniquy.**

**Front Row: Bob Matz, Warren Batchelder, Art Davis, John Brandt, Sid Farren**

Picture courtesy of Bob Matz and Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists, IATSE Local 839.

nonunion computer houses, for the same reason.

Time clocks were once standard. At MGM, there was an electric bell that told you when you could get up from your desk for a coffee break, and also told you (15 minutes later) when to come back to work. When I was at Hanna Barbera in 1978, the time clock was out of use (it kept having "acci-

supposedly read it at the end of the month and have your head. On any morning, at 8:28 a.m., you could see people literally running up Cahuenga Blvd. to avoid this fate. I never actually heard of anyone being fired for that reason.

In the silent film days, the Bray Studio didn't pay its artists until Monday, because Mrs. Bray wanted to make sure their artists would not spend all their money on drink over the weekend and possibly not show up on Monday. In 1976, at the Raggedy Ann Studio, our employer wouldn't pay us until Friday at 5:00 p.m., because he distrusted us to stay all day. Many of us repaid his respect for us by stealing our pencil sharpeners.

In the 1930s, vacations were unheard of and overtime was rarely paid. Disney animator Claire Weeks told me that, on *Snow Whites* deadline rush, the studio demanded 3 hours extra a night and the only pay was a 55 cent dinner ticket to Blackie's Steakhouse on Sunset Blvd. (Of course,

dents," like people pouring cel paint into it), but it remained in effect at Disney up until the *The Little Mermaid*. So instead of the timeclock at Hanna Barbera we also had "The Late Book," in which the security guard would write your name if you arrived five minutes past the 8:30 a.m. check in time; the powers that be would

55 cents could probably buy you a good dinner in 1937...) The Van Beuren Studio in 1935 asked for "voluntary" unpaid overtime, which was in fact something less than voluntary. In 1947, instead of overtime Paul Terry gave you oranges from his Florida orange grove. Today, many digital CGI houses speak to their artists of the "reality" of the 55 hour workweek.

### A Free-For-All

In 1941, before the union, people's wages were a free-for-all and ranged from \$500 a week for a top animator like Art Babbitt, down to \$12 for a painter. Babbitt used to augment his assistant's salary out of his own pocket, because the man could not afford to feed his family. New trainees like Warner Bros legends Virgil Ross and Paul Smith were hired at \$6.00 a week, up to \$10.00 after one month. Painter Martha Sigal told me she was hired by Leon Schlesinger at \$12.75. After one year she was called a journeyman and raised to \$21.00 (inkers were paid \$23.00); after that, no more raises were allowed. Some companies set policies about raises, but mostly you had to go haggle like a Bedouin camel trader. And if you asked for a change in these conditions, like a workers council or union, you were branded a "Lousy Red."

There were no black animators until 1954. Max Fleischer promoted Lillian Friedman as the first woman animator and paid her \$40 a week, while her male col-



Paul Halliday (center with hat) on picket line during 1937 Fleischer strike.

Photo courtesy of Harvey Deneroff.

leagues made up to \$125. Despite some standouts like Mary Blair or Laverne Harding, women mostly were kept as ink & painters until modern times. Hispanic and Asian artists fared better—Bill Melendez,

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Every animator soon finds that, in the end, cartoons are a business just like anything else.

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Rudy Zamora, Ty Wong or Chris Ishi faced no barriers based on their ethnicity.

The great 1941 strike for union recognition at Walt Disney was considered animation's own Civil War and has left hard feelings down to this day. Picketers later to achieve fame included John Hubley (Mr. Magoo), Hank Ketcham (*Dennis the Menace*), Walt Kelly (Pogo), Bill Melendez (*A Charlie Brown Christmas*), and Bill

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Some companies set policies about raises, but mostly you had to go haggle like a Bedouin camel trader.

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Hurtz (*Rocky and Bullwinkle*). One little factoid most pro-management histories of the strike omit, was while the Disney Strike was contentious and ruined the family atmosphere for a time, everyone's wages doubled overnight.

Today, animators complain that the producers who control their destinies know nothing about animation. They're all from some corporation or defense contractor. Well, in the Golden

Age, Leon Schlesinger was an executive from Pacific Title who helped Warner Bros. get funding for *The Jazz Singer* and so got the cartoon contract. Layout artist Bob Givens told me that Leon's most oft spoken phrase was, "I'm going to Palm Springs for the week and f\*&% you all!?" Other bon mots included his order to, "Put in more Purple! Purple is a funny color!?" After he retired, Warner's replaced him with Eddie Seltzer, whose only experience was arranging publicity roadshows with leggy beauties. In 1944 Chuck Jones was finally introduced to the legendary Jack Warner, who said, "I don't know what the f\*&% you guys do, all I know is we make Mickey Mouse!"

MGM's Fred Quimby was a minor executive of whom one artist said, "Fred was a nice man, but as far as animation went, he didn't know his ass from a hot brick." Yet when director Hugh Harman complained to him in 1937 that he was getting too much interference from above and demanded more independence, Quimby showed him the door.

When Steve Bosustow left UPA,





Leon Schlesinger-Freleng Unit, 1940.

Back row: Dick Thompson, Carl Dalton, Sam Nicholson, Ken Champin, Lenard Kester, Gerry Chiniquy, Dick Bickenbach, Al Tarter, Gil Turner, Friz Freleng.

Leaning over: John Kennedy.

Front row: Les Larson, Dave Brown, Constantin Lebedef, Manuel Perez, Herman Cohen, Bob Matz

Courtesy of Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists, IATSE Local 839.

Columbia replaced him with Henry Saperstein, who also knew nothing about animation.

### Sic Transit Gloria Mundi

**O**n *The Little Mermaid*, my wife Pat, who is a checker, was remarking talking to an older colleague on how all the useless executives who walk around the studio looking terribly important that today we call "suits." The old timer said that on *Bambi* they called them "The Walk-Around-Boys." Yet, of course, on every cartoon these producers are the most prominently displayed in the credits. Sic transit Gloria Mundi.

Animators today complain if their desk isn't as well made as a Disney classic, or they don't have a window view. At New York's Raoul Barré Studio in the roaring 20s, there were no curtains, rugs or heat during the winter, and animators went home when their fin-

gers got too cold to draw. In the 1930s, Fleischer, Terry and Schlesinger used to equip their studios with used office furniture and kitchen tables bought at garage sales. No wonder artists who went to Disney's Hyperion studio or MGM were amazed! The furniture all matched!

One painter told me the first thing that impressed her about going from Termite Terrace to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in 1943 was that at MGM they took the trash out every day! In Toronto, Nelvana's first large building was a former cheese factory on the waterfront. Everytime you opened a door, you got a whiff of some ancient Stilton. During the winter, ropes were hung on the side of the building so you wouldn't get blown into icy Lake Ontario on your way to work.

At Disney's, until *The Great Mouse Detective*, you had to pitch

in money to pay for coffee and bottled water, and you had to pay rent for your parking space! (Some famous comic book companies charged novices rent for their

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While the Disney Strike was contentious and ruined the family atmosphere for a time, everyone's wages doubled overnight.

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desks, but that's another article). And who remembers that at Filmation when you needed a new pencil from Munchie the equipment guy, you first had to turn in your used stubbs!

Every studio had a footage quota—at Schlesingers in 1940, it was 23 feet a week and at Disney's it was 5; when MGM went union the same year, Fred Quimby angrily raised the quota to 25 feet a week and kept his dreaded "footage book"; this ledger, of course, could then be used against you when you went in to ask for a raise. Animator Rudy Zamora responded by figuring out where Quimby's office was and started to practice bowling on the floor above. Another early commercial studio had every animator's name up on a large chart; everytime someone screwed up, a check was placed next to his name. You can guess the fate of the artist with the most checks.

### A Friendly Witness

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Eddie Seltzer's only experience was arranging publicity roadshows with leggy beauties.

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Those who feel animation was immune to the pressures of national politics should remember when Walt Disney was a friendly witness at the House Un-American Activities Committee in 1947. He denounced the Screen Cartoonists Guild as being "infiltrated with communists." One Rocky and Bullwinkle director told me it was common knowledge in Hollywood, at the time, that for \$5,000 paid to certain politicians, your

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The time clock kept having "accidents," like people pouring cel paint into it.

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Committee dossier would be moved to the bottom of the pile, or even lost. Meanwhile, at progressive UPA, studio director Steve Bosustow was given a list of undesirable (i.e., politically incorrect) artists by distributor Columbia Pictures who were to be fired.

In 1954, columnist Walter Winchell denounced Tempo, a commercial animation studio in New York, of past communist affiliation (the company was run by former union leaders). The F.B.I. investigated and even though nothing was ever proved, Tempo lost its clients and laid off 50 artists.

I'm not trying to blacken anyone's memories or achievements. Much already has been written of the studios with baseball diamonds, parties and volleyball courts. Max Fleischer gave all his animators a bonus of \$500 for Christmas in 1931. Disney gave his artists free art lessons and made his top animators rich with stock options. They all came to love our art form as we artists do. I'm merely trying to see the past with a

more balanced eye. No matter what the conditions were, these artists still created magic and the entrepreneurs took chances that produced the great cartoons we grew up on and still cherish. I once asked *Snow White* veteran Joe Grant, "What's the real difference between 1940 and today??" He replied that, "Ah, much is the same. Same deadlines, same politics, people drew better back then."

Many today like to forget that the great artists of the past were also great supporters of the union and stuck together to fight for what they wanted. People want to cherry-pick their history to suit their opinions or agenda. I celebrate the complete legacy. Like those great union agitators Groucho Marx, James Cagney, Boris Karloff, King Vidor, Frank Capra and Joan Crawford, do honor to the efforts of Chuck Jones, Bill Melendez, Art Babbitt, Ben Washam and Bill Tytla on behalf of animators' rights.

Most of us enter the field of animation not to get rich, but for the love of the art. We just have learned over the years that when it comes to the business end of our profession we must learn to keep our hearts inspired but our heads out of the clouds. And I think that the last and greatest lesson our past masters can teach us is, "It was ever so."

*Tom Sito is an animator at DreamWorks and is President of the Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists Union (Local 839 IATSE), in North Hollywood.*

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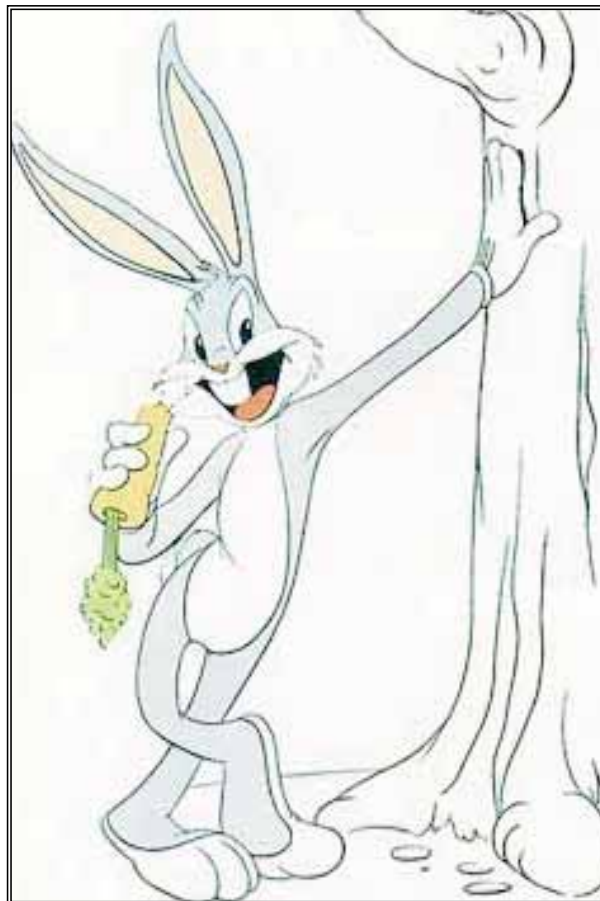
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by Howard Beckerman

# When the Bunny Speaks, I Listen

If Bugs Bunny states, in a television commercial, that a product is worth having, I believe him. Does this surprise you? You say that he is a trickster rabbit with a Brooklyn accent, streetwise and unpredictable and shouldn't be relied upon for value judgments. Well, hold on there! Would you rather trust live actors who spout whatever stuff is written for them, people who get paid handsomely to extoll a product this week and another the next?

Bugs, or Daffy, Donald or Goofy are more honest. For one thing, they are always who they are, thanks to the foresight of their creators. We recognize and admire cartoon characters because they are so definitely in character. Bugs Bunny is Bugs Bunny and Bart Simpson is Bart Simpson. In the movie *Braveheart*, Mel Gibson plays the historical character William Wallace and in other films he plays fictitious personalities. Mel Gibson works hard to make us believe that he is all of those people. In actuality he is none of them. Bugs Bunny is always Bugs Bunny. A cartoon character's personality is all that he has. He has no blood, no bone, no home, no spouse, no child and no bank account. When the commercial is finished, he doesn't dash off to a posh Beverly Hills retreat. Contrary to the image



Bugs Bunny in the 1940s.  
© Warner Bros.

of Toon-Town, portrayed in *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*, where cartoon characters supposedly reside in their off-hours, these celluloid beings exist only for the screen. They have only one thing to give— themselves.

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A cartoon character's personality is all that he has.

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You say, "See, that proves that they're not real!" Not so. Collectors today are falling all over themselves paying handsome prices for

animation cels. To gallery-goers, cels from animation films are the real thing. When they head home clutching the shiny likenesses of Mickey, Pluto or Woody, they know that they have obtained the actual elements of a classic cartoon. You can't take Clint Eastwood or Mel Gibson home. I don't suggest that you try it, I don't think Meryl Streep or Arnold Schwarzenegger would tolerate being hung on the wall of your den.

## A Matter of Trust

Cartoon characters are the only personalities you can trust. Compare Bugs Bunny, with all his artful ways, to politicians (Nixon: "I am not a crook"), athletes (O.J. Simpson), corporations ("cigarettes are not addictive"), or even your next door neighbor ("I'll return your lawnmower as soon as I'm finished using it"). Characters exist solely to entertain us, not to take anything from us, nor to deceive us. They give us joy and laughter, and they present a mirror for us to see ourselves. Granted, all characters are not capable of this.

Some lack the solid attributes of Bugs, Donald or Popeye, each of whom sprang from the persistence and perspiration of cartoonists and animators seeking a means of expressing human

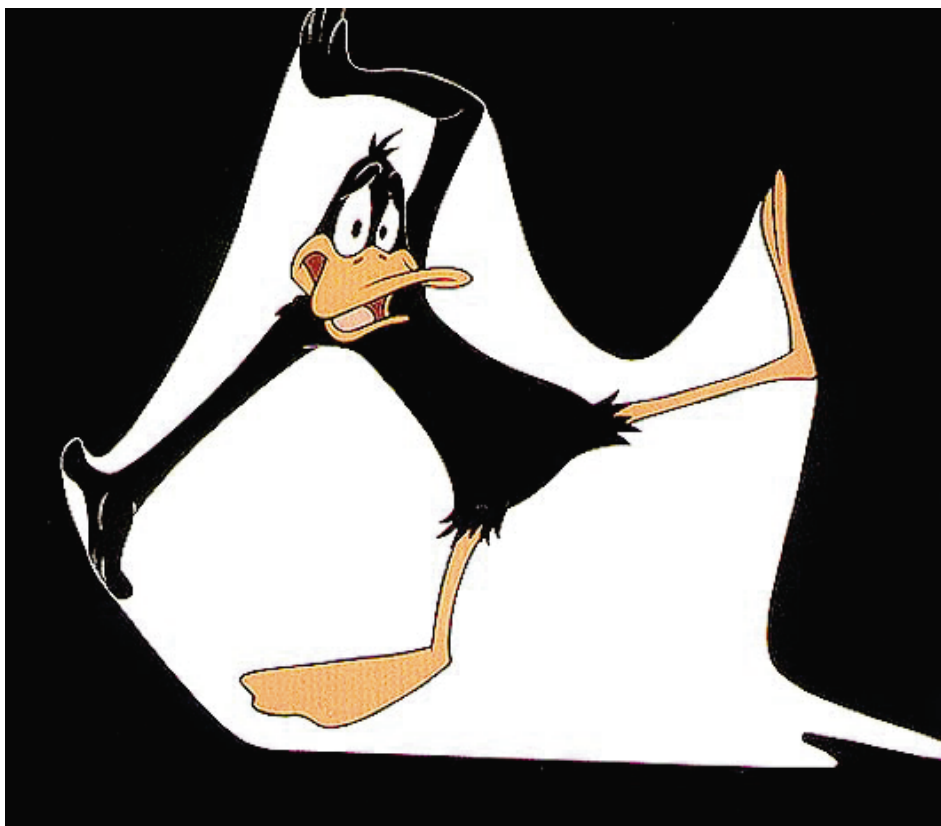
I don't think Meryl Streep or Arnold Schwarzenegger would tolerate being hung on the wall of your den.

foibles. Each of the popular cartoon personalities that we take seriously—and we do—have been imbued with solid, recognizable traits. I don't trust Roger Rabbit, or the Smurfs, or Strawberry Shortcake, or any character that was conceived by a cold, logical committee. I'm sure you could compile your own list of cartoon beings that lack the attributes of strength, certainty and believability. The characters that I know to be true are those that derive from human experience. I trust in characters that grew over the years, not those that are created full-blown with a ready group of side-kicks and groaning shelves of licensed toys and wash cloths.

### Grown From Native Soil

**B**ugs, Donald, Pluto, Goofy, Betty and Daffy began as incidental characters in cartoons. They developed slowly and learned to be who they are. They

were grown from the native soil of studios clustered in New York and Hollywood, from places called Broadway and Termitte Terrace. In today's movie environment, they are better known and more easily recognized than most contemporary live actors. Study any current nonanimated feature, and you'll see how the obstacles placed in



*Duck Amuck* by Chuck Jones 1953

© 1953 Warner Bros.

the way of flesh and blood actors keep them from easy recognition. Every scene is either a special effects extravaganza overshadowing any human presence, or is a compilation of quick cuts from the uniform face of one hero to the bland visage of another, coming so fast that the viewer is left wondering who's who. It was not always so.

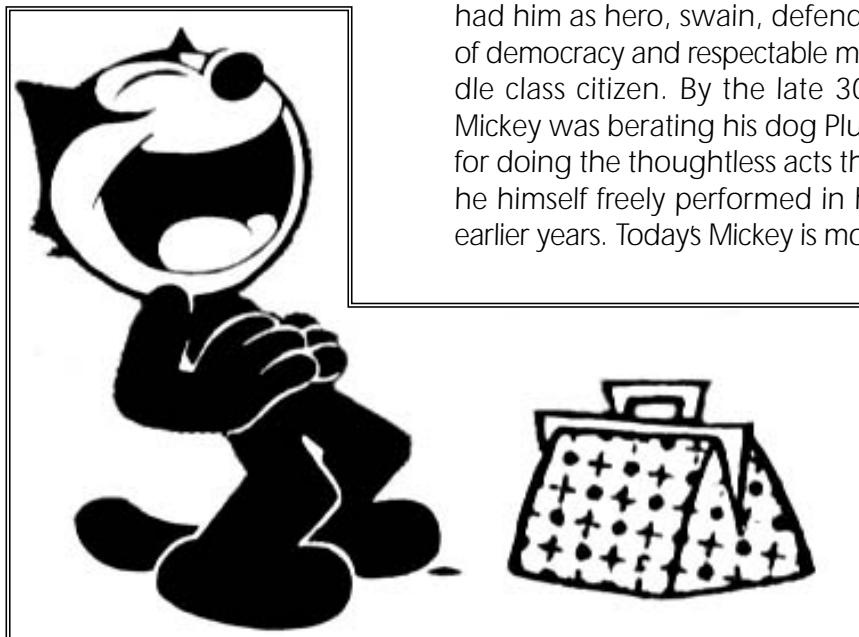
Though current movies thrive on fast cuts and other editing techniques borrowed from anxious

television advertising and frenetic music videos, films from earlier decades gloried in showing off the stars. The cameras of the 1920s, 30s and 40s expended long, leisurely moments exploring actors' faces. The camera loved them, and so did the audiences, enraptured by the shadow of a feminine cheekbone or the dynamic thrust of a manly chin. This delight in the stars was what brought people to the movies. Greta Garbo, Marlene Dietrich, Vivien Leigh, Gary Cooper, Cary Grant, Charles Laughton, Errol Flynn, Katherine Hepburn, Judy Garland, Clark Gable, Ingrid Bergman, Humphrey Bogart, Bette Davis, Spencer Tracy, among others, were shown to perfection on the screen. The filmed stories might have

seemed to be about Robin Hood, Captain Bligh or Scarlet O'Hara, but they were actually about the actors, whose smooth flesh and twinkling eyes were projected lovingly, three stories high.

I don't trust Roger Rabbit, or the Smurfs, or Strawberry Shortcake, or any character that was conceived by a cold, logical committee.





Felix the Cat from Joe Oriolo's TV series  
© Felix the Cat Productions

Movie personalities of those more relaxed times didn't—wouldn't—contend with the short bursts of screen time, rarely more than 10 seconds in any shot, that is the hallmark of today's moviemaking. Even Bugs, Mickey, Donald and Daffy could not compete with Greta, Ingrid, Errol and Humphrey. But, that has all changed, now it is the brightly hued faces of cartoon characters that audiences adore. Does anyone wear a T-shirt with the likenesses of Mel Gibson, Tom Cruise or Clint Eastwood? It's doubtful, but Mel, Tom and Clint are probably wearing Disney decorated jockey shorts at this very moment.

### The Burden of Stardom

Still, it is not easy for cartoon personalities to carry the burden of stardom. Mickey Mouse, for instance, has experienced numerous changes and shadings of character. Starting in 1928, as a rowdy, ratty hieroglyphic, pulling pigs tails to elicit sounds, the roles that followed

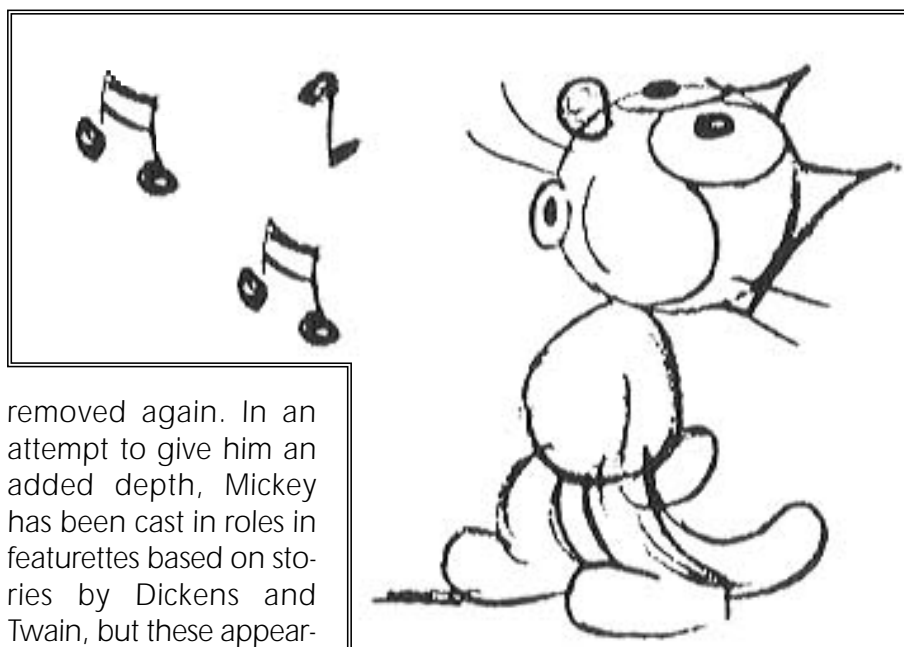
had him as hero, swain, defender of democracy and respectable middle class citizen. By the late 30s, Mickey was berating his dog Pluto for doing the thoughtless acts that he himself freely performed in his earlier years. Today's Mickey is more

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Today's Mickey is more corporate symbol than screen presence.

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corporate symbol than screen presence. Over the years, the front office has had his eyes redesigned more than once, and his tail has been toyed with constantly. It's been removed, replaced and



removed again. In an attempt to give him an added depth, Mickey has been cast in roles in featurettes based on stories by Dickens and Twain, but these appearances were overshadowed

by the stronger personalities of Donald and Goofy.

Another character that has lost touch with audiences and who has long been in retirement, is Mr. Magoo, the wonderful little man from UPA. Magoo was a "real" character in a sea of anthropomorphic stand-ups and his popularity brought a refreshing appreciation for the depictions of humans in cartoons, but today he is barely remembered. Live comedy stars like Buster Keaton experienced the same callous disregard in their careers, though Keaton, in his last years, was able to make a brief comeback. This might happen to Magoo, but his subtle Quixote-like humor may be too intellectual for audiences seeking the accepted stupidities of Beavis and Butt-Head.

Probably the greatest cartoon character of all, Felix The Cat. While he is one of the earliest animated stars, he is still dragged out periodically. Felix in the 1920s was the personification of cartoon heroes. His basic, bouncy, black

Felix the Cat, the Otto Messmer/Pat Sullivan version.

and white shape was the first to elicit a personality. Felix pondered and made decisions. He knew how to turn a drawn palm tree into a banjo or unscrew his tail for use as a telescope. Felix was the first character to reveal creative intelligence, traits rarely championed in his various reappearances on television. The problem for Felix, Mickey and Magoo is that they are products of their respective times, and because their times

A "What's up Doc" or a "You're despicable!" comes to us from the depths of a cartoon soul.

are no more, reincarnations/updated versions are doomed to failure. Attempts at updating cartoon heroes is as fruitless as Steve Martin's recreation of Phil Silver's classic Sgt. Bilko character. No amount of technological icing can supplant the magnificent low-tech originals. Felix, for instance, belongs in black-and-white and



Sylvester  
© Warner Bros.

silence. Giving him a voice is as unsatisfying as putting Nikes on Michelangelo's David. Mr. Magoo reflects the wit and subtlety of the stylized 1950s. If he returned to function in today's violent movie atmosphere, minus his walking stick, but totting a Uzi instead, he might wonder why he was clutching a fly swatter.

Still, no matter what their problems, cartoon characters are the most honest and trustworthy on the lot. They speak from the heart. A "What's up Doc" or a "You're despicable!" from one of them, comes to us from the depths of a cartoon soul. I believe that these figures, these cherished images, no matter what their foibles and strange habits are among the finest of people. Their presence is reassuring and comforting in a world of uncertainty. Their strength as personalities rises above the crass commercialization that they are subjected to.

The likenesses of cartoon characters are on everything we own, but no amount of studio hype can get us to truly love them. We love them, not for their press releases but for who they are. It has been said that the connection that binds audience and star is a mysterious one and can't be dissected. I disagree. I see no mystery in the notion that we respond positively to the lack of pretension, the native cleverness and the strong survival instincts of a Bugs Bunny or a Bart Simpson. More to the point, we love cartoon people because they are like us, and characters that most



Popeye the Sailor Man (1933)  
© King Features

reflect our own feelings are the ones to whom we give our undying trust. It is no more than the simple recognition between beings, them and us, of things we have in common. So, when the Bunny speaks, I listen.

*Howard Beckerman is an animator, storyman and director, who began his career in 1949 working for Terry-Toons and Paramount with such cartoon characters as Mighty Mouse, Heckle and Jeckle, Popeye and Casper the Friendly Ghost. He worked for UPA and for many years wrote and animated television commercials, educational and corporate films. His articles on animation have appeared in numerous magazines and currently teaches at The Parsons School of Design and The School of Visual Arts in New York. He is presently completing a book on animation history and technique.*

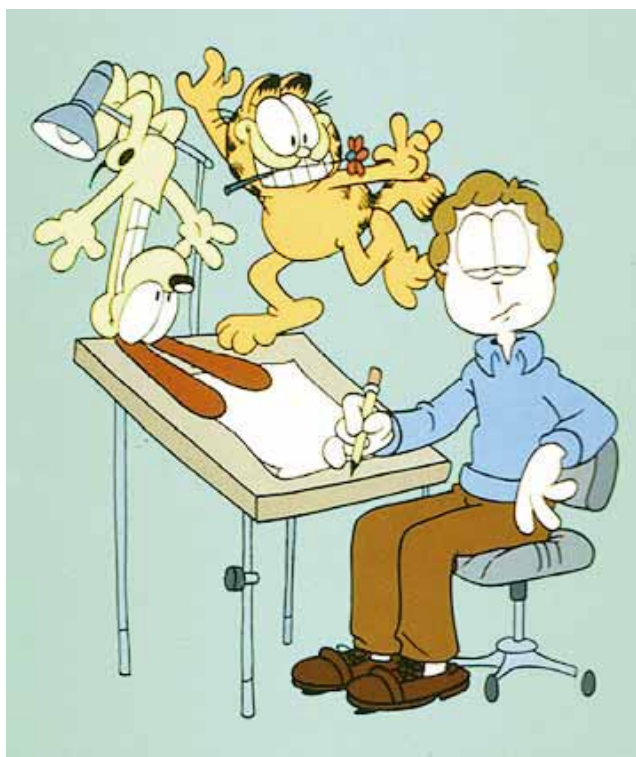
# No Matter What Garfield Speaks Your Language

by Pam Schechter

Animated characters tie the world together much like a common language. It is almost a given that children, no matter where they live, understand and enjoy Disney characters, whether seen in cartoons or on the myriad pieces of licensed merchandise that are widely available. For adults, Homer Simpson, Mickey Mouse and even Beavis and Butt-Head bring out similar smiles.

I remember during my first visit to Europe, seeing a Snoopy poster in a shop in Rome. It showed Snoopy as "Joe Falchetto," dancing with his paws raised high. I immediately felt a strong sense of familiarity as I gazed at Joe Cool's image, even though I did not speak Italian. In that instant, the world became a smaller place. I was reminded once again that animated characters have become a lingua franca. As such, we do not need words to enjoy a character on a T-shirt, poster or hat.

This year, almost \$95 billion will be generated in worldwide revenues from the sale of licensed products. A hefty chunk of these dollars will come from the merchandising of animated characters.



*Garfield and Friends*  
© Film Roman

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Some can be worn,  
some displayed and  
some consumed.

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## Screen Savers and Pacifiers

When *The Simpsons* went on the air, the show only had only 12 licensees. Now, there are more than 1,110 Simpsons items licensed worldwide. The products include sleepwear, PC screen savers, electric calendars, video

games, bubble baths, boxer shorts, cake pans, cookie cutters, golf balls, pacifiers, welcome mats and trading cards. Some of the items can be worn, some displayed, some used and some consumed. By the one hundredth episode of the television show, over \$3 billion worth of Simpsons merchandise had been sold worldwide.

Similarly, MTV is making millions on international sales of licensed products from *Beavis and Butt-Head Show* to the show's international audience of teenagers and twentysomethings.

Last year, in the theatrical film arena, merchandising and licensing fees added \$5 to \$6 billion to film revenues worldwide. Some of 1995's most successful tie-ins were from animated films as *The Lion King*, *Aladdin* and *Pocahontas*; thus, not only did these films do well at the box office, but they also have created streams of licensing revenue as well.

Companies that produce animated films and TV shows realize the potential of licensing popular characters. Disney, Hanna Barbara, MTV, Nickelodeon, Film Roman,





**Mickey Mouse salt and pepper shakers.**  
© The Walt Disney Company

Klasky Csupo, and Saban are all actively involved in licensing the rights to their characters.

Some animation studios hire other companies to license the rights to their characters. Others manage and control the creative and financial aspects of the licensing and merchandising process themselves. The typical licensing agreement is usually between a production company, as the owner of the rights to the character, and a manufacturer or distributor, which has the responsibility to produce and distribute the products.

### Risks and Rewards

In negotiating a deal, the competing interests of both the production company and the manufacturer have to be taken into account. A producer naturally wants to earn as much as possible and will usually receive a percentage of the sales of the licensed products, while seeking to maintain certain controls over the type and quality of product created, so as to preserve their characters identity.

On the other hand, the manufacturer wants to earn a fair profit for taking the risk in creating and distributing the licensed products.

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Seeing familiar friends  
in unfamiliar places  
makes the world a  
neighborly place.

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In order to do this, it needs a certain amount of freedom to exploit the products,



Tom & Jerry (William Hanna, Joseph Barbera/MGM, 1940)  
© MGM

with minimal control by the production company. A key consideration is the degree of risk the manufacturer incurs. After all, there is always the possibility that the market for the products will never materialize, perhaps as a result of the show's or film's lack of success. Ideally, a licensing agreement is a fair compromise between these competing objectives.

Most licensing and merchandising agreements are basically the same. The use of the character on a certain product is licensed for a specific amount of time for a specific territory. The license usually allows the manufacturer to manufacture, advertise, distribute and sell the products on an exclusive basis.

It is important that the agreement provide enough time for the manufacturer to effectively produce and distribute the products in question, which customarily ranges from 3-7 years. The production company commonly receives from 3-10% of the gross profits from the sales of the merchandise. However, in rare instances, it can be as high as 15%. Arrangements can also be made for the production company to get a up-front guarantee in addition to a share of the profits. These sort of guarantees for the animated star of a successful film or TV show can range from \$500,000 up to \$1,000,000.



**Porky Pig (Friz Freleng/  
Warner Bros/1935)**

© Warner Bros.

A company that wants to license a character on the international market will want to make sure the manufacturer protects its copyrights and trademarks. This is done by putting the appropriate copyright and trademark notices on the products. To verify this, production companies approve artwork and samples of the finished product. This is also done to make sure the characters "goodwill" is not compromised.

When a merchandising licensing agreement expires, the rights to the character are usually returned to the producer, including all of the materials used to produce the merchandise.

Manufacturers are not the only businesses that realize the value of animated characters. Recently, McDonald's, the international fast-food giant, and the Disney announced a landmark cross-promotional agreement. The 10 year pact confirms how animated characters are being used by multinational corporations. The agreement, which kicks off on January 1, 1997, is worth \$1 billion! Disney originally started cross-promoting its animated

product with McDonalds in 1987 with the rerelease of *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. However, for the past 5 years, Disney turned to another fast-food chain, Burger King, for its major cross-promotional efforts, including tie-ins for such films as *The Lion King*, *Pocahontas* and *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

The global appeal of such characters as Mickey Mouse, Snoopy, Donald Duck, Fred Flintstone or Bart Simpson, tie the world together with a common language, that of laughter. Seeing familiar friends in unfamiliar places makes the world a neighborly place.

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A key consideration is the degree of risk the manufacturer incurs.

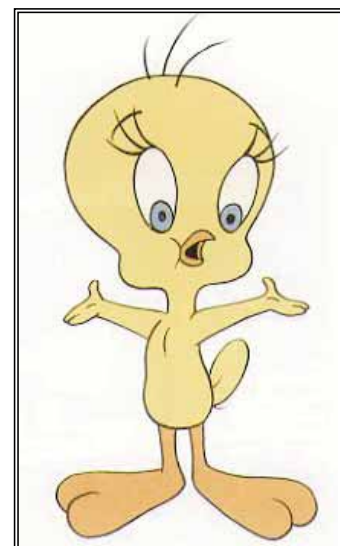
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As an art form, animation crosses all boundaries of language and geography. There are few areas in the entertainment industry that are



**Fred Flintstone (Hanna-Barbera, 1960)**

© Hanna-Barbera



**Tweety (Bob Clampett/  
Warner Bros., 1942)**

© Warner Bros.

as well suited for international merchandising as that involving animated characters. So, remember, no matter what your native tongue, Garfield speaks your language.

*Pam Schechter is an entertainment attorney in New York City. Her practice includes a special concentration in the animation industry. She represents several animators including Eric Fogel, the creator of the MTV animated series The Head and Beavis and Butt-Head animation director Yvette Kaplan.*



# FESTIVAL REVIEW

## Cardiff 96

by Bob Swain



Pictured left to right: Chuck Swenson, Laverne McKinnon (Hanna Barbera), and Igor Kovalyov (Klasky Csupo) at Cardiff.  
Courtesy of Ron Diamond

The record number of delegates at this year's International Animation Festival in Cardiff enjoyed what was undoubtedly the strongest show ever staged there. The event has matured under Festival Director Fran Barlow to become much more than just a screening of the best in animation. Now including an exhibition, an excellent stream of seminars, networking opportunities and, above all, some great parties, the screenings were no longer the only reason to be in town. Despite justified criticism of some sections of the programming, the overall standard remained high. The Festival is now an essential meeting point for all those involved in the international animation industry. And following on from its success this year, it has been confirmed that it will take

place once again in Cardiff in 1998.

The Animation Expo was introduced for the first time at the Cardiff International Arena, combining exhibits of models and cels from recent productions with a trade exhibition. Although dominated by the recruitment efforts of Warner Bros and Disney, the trade show also attracted a lively mix of suppliers, producers and distributors.

### Cartoon Technology

In terms of cartoon technology, there were stands from Cambridge Animation Systems, Alias/Wavefront, Softimage, INA Toonbox, EOS Electronics and Avid. A lively area throughout the show, it was an innovation which is now guaranteed to play a larger role in future years. Apple

Computer also provided delegates with an Internet cafe.

Two popular sessions were the keynote speech by Scott Ross of Digital Domain and the inaugural academic lecture by Dr. Paul Wells of the De Montfort University in Leicester ("Tex Avery to Nick Park from an Educational Perspective"). Seminar highlights included a special session on scriptwriting for animation and a look at the difficult road to making it in the American market.

A strong program of technology seminars included a first class guide to evolving opportunities for animators in the multimedia market, chaired by *Cuts* editor George Jarrett, and a comprehensive session on animating the net. But the one session which provided the central focus for the animation community was the first ever Animo Users Group.

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With the days of real paint strictly limited in the industry, everyone knows they now need to address the new opportunities of digital

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With the days of real paint strictly limited in the industry, everyone knows they now need to address the new opportunities of digital production techniques. And with Animo proving to be far and away the most popular computer





**Nick Park of Aardman Animations at Cardiff.**  
Courtesy of Ron Diamond

system for 2-D animation, it was a great opportunity to hear just how a range of existing users had been using it already.

More than 500 Animo systems have already been sold around the world—including 100 to DreamWorks, 120 to Warner Bros and further major sales to Nelvana and DIC. Contracts are currently under negotiation with Disney for what is likely to be the biggest deal so far.

The biggest user in Britain is Telemagination, where 9 machines are used on the studio's own productions and are also offered as a facility service to other producers. Current users include Honeycombe Animation, Snowden Fine and Bermuda Shorts—which is producing Channel 4's new 13-part series of Candy Guard's *Pond Life* on the studio's Animos.

DreamWorks' head of technology, Dylan Kohler, explained how Animo is being integrated into the company's new digital studio,

alongside production of its first animated feature film, *Prince of Egypt*. He joined DreamWorks after working on the original CAPS project at Disney and then helping Warner Bros set up its digital production facilities.

"DreamWorks was founded one-and-a-half years ago by Stephen Spielberg, Jeffrey Katzenberg and David Geffen. It is the first Hollywood studio to be founded in decades so it presented a unique opportunity to set up something different," says Kohler.

"Part of the freedom came from having no legacy, no resources that we had to draw on, being able to rethink everything. At my first meeting with Jeffrey and Stephen they were talking about making films in New York and cutting in L.A. That is still pretty cutting edge stuff. At DreamWorks we are trying to build what the hype tells you is the digital studio of the 21st century. In fact, that is pretty much true."

"Most of the initial effort is going into feature animation simply because this is one of the most analyzed and compartmentalized

aspects of film making. For 50 years people have been working on how to make the whole system work better using traditional technology. That makes it all the

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Part of the freedom came from having no legacy, no resources that we had to draw on, being able to rethink everything.

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easier to make the transition to the digital world.

"We dedicated ourselves to deciding what was necessary for the filmmakers rather than just developing the tools themselves. There is always a danger of getting carried away and building tools that do little things. You need to concentrate on creativity," he says.

"So we allied ourselves with partners we would need to develop the components. We partnered early on with Silicon Studio and set out to define what the studio would require. We also partnered with IBM and Cambridge for the



**Pictured left to right: Karen Schmidt (Warner Bros), Heather Kenyon (Hanna-Barbera), Phil Roman (Film Roman), Dave Master, Tom Knott, and Max Howard (all three from Warner Bros.) at the Warner Bros. Feature Animation party.**

Courtesy of Ron Diamond

elements. Also Avid and Alias/Wavefront.

"The network should be able

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If you are a producer trying to raise a crew for a smaller budget, it makes life very difficult.

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to support all sorts of systems. We are starting with feature animation but some of the key components will have to be of use in the other divisions. One of the fundamentals is the asset management system. This is a huge database covering every digital piece that goes into your film—a sound file, a cel, a palette. That means we will be able to go back to *Prince of Egypt* as a historical record. We could even go back and use the elements of it in things like an interactive game. "We are working with Animo in development. Animo shares the distributed workstation approach that we have. Each workstation can run the same software—both Intel machines and Silicon Graphics. What that means to us is that we can have workstations on their own but also drafted in to work together.

"For a larger studio like us, we want to have things on different platforms. Very often certain software is available on just one platform or another so it is nice to have a mix of systems. I think that the world is changing and that it is best to focus on software first and foremost and hardware as you choose.

"Cambridge has also done a grand job in respect to the studio's desire for openness.

We are also interested in using its vector package but we think this will have a lot more use in effects animation. At the moment we are concentrating a lot more on the front end of the process." One of the most significant developments for this year's Festival was the presence of such a large number of visitors from American studios. Warner Bros. and Disney were both there in force in order to feed their new studios in London and Paris respectively.

### The Changing Landscape

Feature animation is in high demand and there are a very limited number of artists who can produce the quality of work. Opening in Europe is one way of working with great animation tal-

ent," says Roy Conli, head of Disney's Paris studio and co-producer of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Although they are both bringing major production work to Europe and providing fresh employment prospects for European animators, many independent producers fear the process could damage the industry by creating a talent shortage and forcing up the rate for the job. "We are all having problems either losing staff or having to pay more," says Jerry Hibbert of Hibbert Ralph Animation and chair of the Guild of British Animation.

"There is an upside in that British animators are getting lots of money and experience. But if you are a producer trying to raise a crew for a smaller budget, it makes life very difficult."

But the smaller American independents also made the trip to Cardiff, many of them hoping to develop relationships with partner companies in Europe. With the changing US market making life increasingly difficult for independents, they are now keenly eyeing Europe for their expansion plans. Few European animation studios have so far made any kind of real impact in the American market. But at the same time many producers in Europe are now looking to see if they can carve out a slice of that very tough American pie. The Festival featured a session devoted to cracking the American market but the Europeans soon discovered that transatlantic cooperation was the recipe of the day.

"The landscape in the US has changed so much in the past few years with vertical



Arthur Sheriff (Aardman Animations Publicist) and unidentified at the "iced" Vodka shot ice sculpture. Those who participated received a 20th Anniversary Aardman T-shirt.

Courtesy of Ron Diamond



integration, forcing all of us to think of new ways to find a way in," says Nina Hahn from Sunbow Entertainment in New York. "It is all about thinking globally, which really is a first for the creative industry. It is like making a quilt, with all kinds of people playing their part. No market should operate to the detriment of any other."

Joint developments are the way forward, according to Phil Roman of leading American independent Film Roman. "If a European producer works with an established US producer, it is a lot easier because there is a level of comfort for the Network to work with a producer who has already delivered for them," he says.

One European producer who has been working for the past three years at getting European co-productions off the ground in the US is Jorge Iglesias of Spanish company AKA. He has been developing Mondo Logo with a team of American writers.

"The key in the US market is credibility. You have to have a long-term perspective and you have to have your eyes wide open to reach the talent," he says.

### East European Developments

It is still a very difficult path for European producers. I think that the idea of partnerships with US producers is the most obvious perspective. But it is also important to consider a global perspective. It could be more important to develop European co-productions and to develop credibility within Europe



TVC's John Coates at the Aardman 20th Anniversary celebration party after an "iced" vodka shot.

Courtesy of Ron Diamond

and then in the long-term to look for a US deal. There is a lot to be learned by going there but it takes a long time." The Festival managed to face East as well as West, with a focus on several Russian and Eastern European studios within its international programming. Co-production with the West is of growing importance to them, with Britain's S4C in particular continuing to make heavy use of their talents. Its latest series, *The Bible*, is due to go on air soon, *Faiths of the World* is now in production and a series of *Epic Tales* is in development.

Varga Studios from Hungary and Pilot, Second Frog and Sverdlovsk from Russia were all had special programs featured in the Festival screenings. Pilot Moscow Animation Studio was the first private animation company to be set up in Russia. It has produced many original shorts since it began in 1988, with an animation school set up at the studio in 1990 and a New Screen Technologies School in 1994.

The Second Frog Animation Group was established within Pilot in 1991 to distribute and market material being produced by ani-

matoms in Russia outside of Moscow—including the Sverdlovsk Film Studio in Yek-aterinburg. Two of these films have since been nominated for Academy Awards—*Korova* in 1990 and *Gagarin* earlier this year.

In Hungary, Varga was the first studio to be set up outside the state system. Since 1989 it has grown to a permanent staff of 50 animators from Hungary, Russia and Eastern Europe.

"We started out as a service company. We learned a lot from other directors and tried to understand what the market wanted internationally and tried to develop projects. Now we are looking for co-productions. Our main aim is to get out into the international market with our own projects," says director Entrees Erkel.

The first original project, with publisher Dorling Kindersley, began last year and *The Tales of Brer Rabbit*, a co-production with Clear Idea, starts this summer. In the meantime, the studio has also been working on four programs for S4C, and on *The Willows In Winter* and *Wolves, Witches and Giants* for TVC and Honeycomb Animation.

*Bob Swain, who lives in Brighton, England, is a scriptwriter and journalist, who specializes in animation, computer graphics and special effects. This article first appeared in July issue of the British magazine, Cuts.*





# FESTIVAL REVIEW

## Zagreb 96

by Maureen Furniss

The 12th World Festival of Animated Films was held June 10-14, 1996 in Zagreb, where artists, journalists and lovers of animation from around the world gathered to watch more than 50 films representing the best in international animation. Although it is only one in a growing number of important international animation events, Zagreb is unique among festivals for several reasons. Most importantly, it represents not only the proud heritage of Croatia's famed Zagreb School of animation, but also a significant political and cultural institution for the emerging democratic Croatian society. Indeed, one finds that in Croatia, the celebration of animation is accorded a degree of respect that is found in few, if any, other countries.

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Most importantly, the festival represents not only the proud heritage of Croatia's famed Zagreb School of animation, but also a significant political and cultural institution for the emerging democratic Croatian society.

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Although the news media tends to focus on the unrest experienced in Croatia and its neighboring countries of the former



Janet Pearlman and Maureen Furniss palming around at Zagreb.  
Courtesy of Maureen Furniss

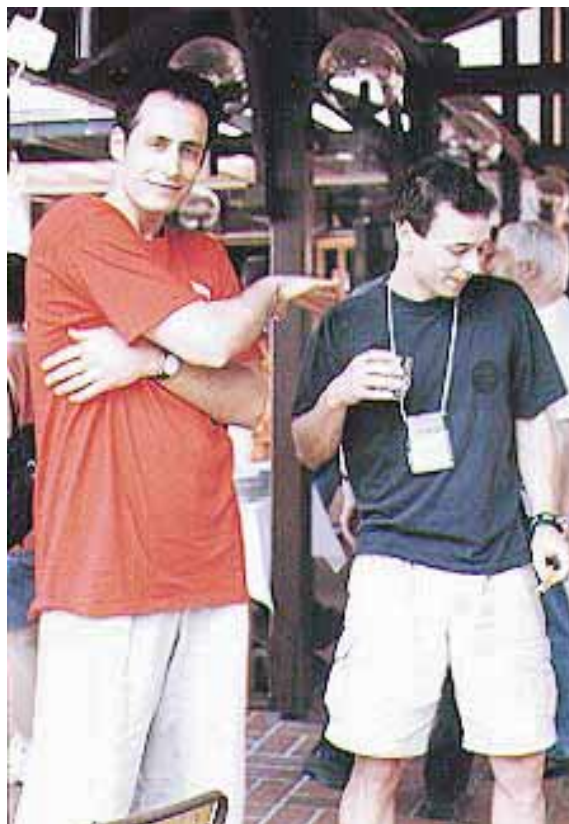
Yugoslavia, the look and feel of Zagreb—from a visitor's viewpoint, at least—is far from turbulent. The political situation there may be far from settled, but the festival planners, Josko Marusic, Margit-Buba Antauer and Iva Stipetic, did a great job in presenting their guests with the many natural beauties and local entertainments found in Zagreb and its vicinity. Though certainly one does not wish to forget the difficulties that Croatia is now experiencing, it is wonderful to be able to appreciate the many good things the city has to offer.

Throughout the five days of the festival, there were opportunities to see many different aspects of Zagreb. Many events were held on the outskirts of the city, at

Lisinski Hall, which housed the screenings, many of the related art exhibitions, and Internet facilities connecting the festival to other cities in Croatia and throughout the world. Parties were held in the center of town, at the Euro-disco After Eight Club and at a site near the National Theater. This year's picnic was held at a lovely site on Medvednica Mountain. Many festival-goers chose to eat in the oldest part of the city, with architecture dating from the 11th century. The narrow streets in that section of town are lined with rows of café tables, where evening guests linger, drinking coffee, wine, and beer, speaking various languages (though English always seemed to be welcome), creating

the kind of atmosphere that truly can only be found in Europe. Posters in the street announce Zagreb's many cultural events, ranging from gallery openings to dance performances and a range of musical events, from classical to underground. Prices for food and beverages are reasonable by American standards, so a night of dining in the old town turned out to be affordable as well as fun. My first night in the city, I walked through this section of town for some time, trying to counteract the effects of a long plane ride and a 10 hour time difference. Many attractive young women were poised at tables and apparently eager to flirt with my two male companions, who shall remain nameless as they both have girlfriends.

At times, the atmosphere of the festival was decidedly more business-like. On more than one occasion, government dignitaries welcomed festival guests with receptions and small-group meetings. Certainly, the biggest event of this type was one involving Croatian President, Franjo Tudjman, Program Director Josko Marusi, and several attendees. Canada's Ambassador invited Canadian festivalgoers to dine with him, including Chris Robinson (Director of the Ottawa Festival), Caroline Leaf (recipient of the festival's Lifetime Achievement Award) and animator Janet Perlman. All festival guests were invited to the residence of the city's mayor, a gesture that served to underscore the importance of animation as an aspect of Zagreb's cultural heritage. The festival is viewed as being



John Dilworth and Niko Meulemans  
at the Zagreb Festival Picnic.

Courtesy of Maureen Furniss

important in part because of its role in bringing an international spotlight on the city.

For me, the diplomatic components of the festival are among the most interesting. A discussion of politics was never far from the surface of things. In most cases, it seemed that everyone felt relatively free to voice their discontent with the slowness of change and, overall, I sensed less optimism than I felt two years ago on my first visit to Zagreb. Another change I sensed was an increasing American presence in the city itself, which I viewed with some disdain. Store windows carried an unsettling amount of Disney merchandise and the golden arches of MacDonald's could be seen plastered on posters throughout the city.

Fortunately, the festival still retains a strong sense of tradition

in its programming and entertainment. For almost 75 years, animation has been produced in Croatia, with its famed Zagreb Film studio (started as Duga Film) celebrating its 40th anniversary this year. A special program, "40 Years of the Zagreb Film Animation Studio," spotlighted films made for children. Included were films from the *Professor Baltazar* series, as well as a number of other short works by Zlatko Grgic, Boris Kolar, Ante Zaninovic, Dragutin Vunak, and Borivoj Povnikovic. Two Zagreb animators were honored with gallery showings of their artwork in various media: Vunak's exhibition focused primarily on works of the past 3 years, while the professional opus of work by Dovnikovic, better known as Bordo, was presented in a showing of his illustrations, comics, and graphic designs from the past 46 years. A retrospective of Macedonian films included 13 short works produced between 1971 and 1989.

### Special Programs

Along with more local production, the animations of other countries also were featured in special programs. Five programs of British productions, curated by Pat Raine Webb, covered works from throughout its animation history, while recent American work was the focus of Warner Bros., MTV, Hanna-Barbera and Disney programs. A more marginalized group of artists were featured in a four-day program, "Articulated Light: The Emergence of Abstract Film in America."

Among the other highlights



was the presentation of the Life Achievement Award to Caroline Leaf, who is best known for her sand, oil on glass, and scratched animation created during her 20 years at the National Film Board of Canada and elsewhere. Australian film scholar and artist Erik Roberts organized a retrospective screening of Leaf's films, including *The Owl Who Married a Goose* (1974), *The Street* (1976), *Interview* (1979), *A Dog's Tale* (1986), and *Entre Deux Soeurs* (Two Sisters, 1990). Later in the week, Leaf and a small group of festival attendees gathered for an informal chat as part of a series entitled "Conversations with the Masters," a regular event at Zagreb that allows 10 to 15 people to get better acquainted with an honored artist. As a special tribute to Leaf, several artists collaborated on a short film entitled *Leave a Normal Life*, which made its debut at the festival. The film includes visual and aural segments created by Janet Perlman, Derek Lamb, George Griffin and Leaf's other close friends, and features a soundtrack by Peter Gabriel.

### Online & Other Judging

Several programs were dedicated to new technologies and their role in the realm of animation. Playing a major role in the festival was the Croatian Academic and Research Network (CARNet), which used the latest technologies to provide access to the festival to World Wide Web users across the planet. I find it fascinating to see how Croatia has



Bretislav Pojar and Gunnar Strøm at Zagreb.  
Courtesy of Maureen Furniss

embraced the Internet to create a stronger international presence for itself. At one time, the government provided Internet access to its citizens free of charge and many thousands of people made use of public facilities. Now commercial providers have begun service within the country, which changed the nature of the Internet access. Nonetheless, thousands of Croatians and other individuals were able to get detailed information about the festival. By accessing the Zagreb Festival's home page, a viewer could see brief clips of all the films in competition and vote for his or her favorite work. The winner of the Internet competition was Nick Park's *A Close Shave* (1995). You can see the Zagreb festival's home page at <http://www.awn.com> or [fest.hr.](http://anima-</a></p>
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Because I will be serving on my first selection committee (for the Ottawa Festival) in a couple of weeks, I was particularly interested in the dynamics of the competition. The Zagreb Festival's selection committee included Gunnar Strøm of Norway, Jill McGreal of the United Kingdom and Ivan Ladislav Galeta of Croatia. The committee selected more than 50 films from 472 submissions and, it seems, there was generally consensus on what works made it into the competition. When questioned about one or two films, committee members did indicate that political reasons necessitated the inclusion of works that otherwise might not have been chosen. With these exceptions, the quality

of work submitted was of the same general standard that one sees at most festivals. I often hear the comment that there has not been a real stand-out lately, though Priit Pärn and Janno Poldma's *1895*, which won the Grand Prize, seems to have been generally viewed as most worthy of the honor. The Public Prize went to American John Dilworth's crowd-pleaser, *Dirty Birdy* (1994) (his *Chicken from Outer Space*, which got an Oscar nomination earlier this year, and was included in the festival's Hanna-Barbera "What a Cartoon!" screening).

The festival jury was quite well rounded, including Derek Lamb, who has worked extensively in Canada, the United States and Europe, Erik Roberts of Australia, Dragutin Vanuk of Croatia, Marjut



Rimminen of Finland, who is working in London, and Bretislav Pojar of Czechoslovakia, who has worked internationally. I was pleased that the festival added a category for abstract films, which generally cannot compete with narrative films for recognition. Austrian Barbel Neubauer, who lives in Germany, won first prize in the category for her film, *Roots* (1995), for which she created images directly on film and an original score. Killian Dellers of Switzerland and Clive Walley of Wales shared second prize for their films, *Vision* (1995) and *Diver-timento No. 5—Slapstick* (1994), respectively.

In the regular categories, Best First Film was won by German Tyron Montgomery for *Quest* (1996), with second place shared by Kevin Richards of the UK for *Pariah the Red Man* (1994) and Piet Kroon of the Netherlands for *Dada* (1995). Best film in category A (30 seconds to 5 minutes) was won by Swiss animator Georges Schwitzgebel for *L'Anée du Daim* (1995), with second places given to Swiss animator Jonas Raeber for *Gruezi* (1995) and Canadian Christopher Hinton for *Watching TV* (1995). Best film in category B (5 minutes to 30 minutes) was won by Russian animator Oksana Tcherkassova for *Nyurkina Banja* (1995), with second prizes won by British artists Karen Kelly for *Stressed* (1994) and Peter Paar for *The Wooden Leg* (1994). Category C, for films produced on video, was won by Jan Otto Ertesvag of Norway for *Processor* (1995), with special recognition given to *The End* (1995) by Chris Landreth of Canada. A number of other prizes were also given out.

As in most recent festivals, ani-

mation from the United Kingdom had a strong presence. In recognition of the level of excellence found in many works from the UK, the award for Best Producer was given to the Arts Council of England.

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The city itself offers a relaxing experience with plenty of interesting historical and cultural spots to visit within a few minutes walk or taxi ride.

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It was somewhat surprising that a film as popular as Nick Parks *A Close Shave* was not awarded a prize by the jury. Prize winners represented a wide range of approaches in terms of form and content, which indicate a prioritization of experimentation over commercial formula and generally popular approaches. Two films that did not win prizes appealed to my interest in live-action/animation combination films and the surreal: *15th February* (1995) by the UK's Tim Webb and *Las Partes de mi que te aman son seres vacios* (The Parts of Me that Love You are Empty Beings, 1995) by Mercedes Gaspar of Spain. Both films use very dark humor in dealing with the subject of relationships, mixing pixillated human movement with object animation. Anyone who has been involved in an empty, meaningless relationship or who has been disillusioned by love (and I know there are some of you out there!) will find solace in these works.

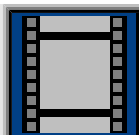
Finally, I like to note the Zagreb Festival is a unique event that has provided some of my favorite animation-related experiences. With

what I would estimate to be between 100 and 200 official guests, the festival is small enough that you can get to know almost everyone in attendance. The city itself offers a relaxing experience with plenty of interesting historical and cultural spots to visit within a few minutes walk or taxi ride. One of my companions felt the festival was a bit dull for his tastes, preferring instead his more energetic partying experience at Cardiff and other festivals. Certainly, Zagreb does not offer the large-scale events of Annecy, Ottawa, or many other sites, but to be truthful I hope it never does.

Unfortunately, I am sure it is only a matter of time before the presence of Disney merchandise emerges from the shop windows to infiltrate the festival itself—along with the forces of other major animation studios—beyond the screenings that occurred in this time. Festival organizers spoke with me about trying to lure more participation by the larger studios, which apparently remain hesitant due to the local political situation and the festival's relatively small commercial potential at this point. I can understand the reasons for the festival wanting the support of such large corporations, which can provide funding that the Croatian government no longer can assure. Still, I am glad to have experienced the Zagreb festival as it is now.

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*Animation Journal's home page is <http://www.chapman.edu/animation>.*



# FILM REVIEW

## The Hunchback of MTV?

by William Mortiz



Quasimodo atop the cathedral in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

© Walt Disney Pictures

Max Fleischer's motto was "If it could be done with live action, it's not animation," and Dave Fleischer once griped to me about how many thousands of times he had to repeat that to the animators over the years to get them to improve their work with those imaginative, visionary impossibilities that belonged exclusively to the realm of creative animation. What would the poor Fleischer brothers think about the current animation scene, in which almost every animation studio is involved in duplicating live-action stories?

One can hardly help asking

that question about Disney's latest feature, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, which has already been filmed several times as a live-action feature, in addition to Franz Schmidt's operatic treatment (which supplied some of the music for the Alfred Newman score to William Dieterle's splendid 1939 version). The answer, however, is that Disney has managed to make a wonderful movie out of *Hunchback* (with one hideous blemish, which we'll come back to later), a film so moving and thrilling and inspiring that it doesn't matter whether its live-action or ani-

mation. It's just a good movie.

The adaptation of the story, credited to *Gorillas in the Mist* screenwriter Tab Murphy, cleverly eliminated some of the complexities of Victor Hugo's storyline, carefully sidestepping the brothels, tortures and philosophical intricacies (the two heroes, one poet and one warrior, are condensed to one sensitive soldier) and other aspects of the original which would have been unsuitable for younger viewers. Making Clopin a narrator/master-of-ceremonies was also an excellent idea that allows the basically adult story to become an excellent childrens' adventure tale.





The rescue scene with Quasimodo and Esmeralda from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

© Walt Disney Pictures

### Of Dieterle Born

It must be noted that the adaptation is very much of Dieterle's *Hunchback* — in particular, Charles Laughton's boyish Quasimodo with his one lumpy eye is clearly the model, just as Sir Cedric Hardwicke's thin, pinched face inhabits the animated villain Frolo. But this doesn't really matter, because the Dieterle film is so fine, it amounts to good taste to imitate it, and in most cases the Disney version lives up to the high standard set by the earlier film. For example, the brilliant scene (not in Hugo, but created by Bruno Frank) in which Esmeralda enters Notre Dame for the first time, and prays to Mother of God to help her outcast people while the "devout Christians" pray for money, sex and glory, the Disney team have supplied a great musical number "God Help the Outcasts" with knockout color visuals, Esmeralda slowly walking through the shadows and light-shafts of the cathedral until she finally stands bathed in a mandala of light from one of the stained-glass rose windows.

Art director Dave Goetz, layout supervisor Ed Ghertner and background/color artist Lisa Keene

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A genuine woman of color, intelligent and capable.

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deserve special credit for creating and sustaining a medieval atmosphere, and a clear sense of the antithesis between the sacred and profane which lies at the heart of

the story. Key staff visited Paris to study the real Notre Dame cathedral and Victor Hugo's own sketches of the Paris he knew and imagined, while Disney's unit continued to provide authentic detail, and this all pays off superbly.

The musical score also helps support this respectful treatment of Victor Hugo's historical romance, with an almost operatic tone to the serious numbers (including real chants, and use of a hundred-year-old organ and a professional choir recorded in London). The orchestrator, Michael Starobin, also employed some genuine instruments of the late medieval period (such as hammered dulcimer, gittern and shawm) to give the profane scenes an added sense of authenticity.

The computer-generated crowd scenes with an active cast of hundreds are duly impressive, the Feast of Fools full of lively whimsy, and the action-adventure scenes with chases and fights very exciting. The quite effective voice talents include Demi Moore as Esmeralda (in the animated visuals, by the way, a genuine woman of color, intelli-



The gargoyles (Hugo, Victor, Laverne) with Quasimodo and Esmeralda in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.

© Walt Disney Pictures





Frollo, narrator of  
*The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.  
© Walt Disney Pictures

gent and capable), Kevin Kline as the blond-bearded soldier Phoebus, and Tom Hulse as Quasimodo. Hulse himself sings quite well his operatic aria "Out There", but Esmeralda's heart-rending aria "Outcasts" is supplied by a professional singer, Heidi Mollenhauer, whose voice timbre blends seamlessly with Demi Moore's speaking voice.

### Compounding the Kitsch

What a waste, what a shame, then, to find in the middle of a magnificent, splendid film a set of characters and a musical number so vulgar, so tasteless and so far removed from the medieval period that it completely spoils all the spellbinding adventure in this special atmosphere. I refer to the introduction of three gargoyle "comics," and their song "A Guy like You," which attempts to lure Quasimodo out of the cathedral by depicting a gambling casino (poker chips and roulette wheel) and a low-cut gowned torch-singer splayed across a bar piano. All of this takes

place in the cathedral of Notre Dame. If I were a good Catholic, I think I would be offended-indeed, if I were a good pagan, I would be offended, since the genuine historical gargoyles actually represent the spirits of the old pre-Christian religions, and are much more imaginative character. One of the gargoyles, Hugo, is particularly offensive, compounding the kitsch of Phil Silvers and the camp of Jim Carrey-totally obnoxious. In the official *The Making of The Hunchback of Notre Dame* documentary, producer Don Hahn calls Hugo "a crazy frat boy," but what is *Animal House* doing in medieval Paris? Where was Dave Fleischer when they needed him?

The official Disney press release calls these gargoyles "kind of the Disney mortar that holds the whole story together," but the effect is quite the opposite-it makes the carefully built magic of the bygone era crumble. Other official

statements identify this gargoyle episode as a link with the Disney tradition, and compare it to the pink elephant sequence in *Dumbo*. Certainly not the Walt Disney tradition, for there are no jalopy races (nor obnoxious creeps) in *Snow White*, nor telephone calls or airplanes in *Cinderella* or *Sleeping Beauty*. And the pink ele-

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Indeed, if I were a good pagan, I would be offended.

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phants are wholly integral to *Dumbo's* contemporary circus ambience and the particular plot point of the accidentally inebriated heroes. I can see no real excuse for the "gargoylettes" in *Hunchback*, except as a bid for Broadway. Much of this same team was responsible for creating *Beauty and the Beast*, which is still running in its hit stage version. And the press release describes this "showstopping tune" as "in grand boulevardier style with a touch of



Esmeralda and Phoebus in *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*.  
© Walt Disney Pictures



Esmeralda greeting Quasimodo during the Festival of the Fools.

© Walt Disney Pictures

Broadway panache." If that was the case, it seems quite misguided to me, since the audience for Broadway shows is vastly different and more sophisticated than the very much younger audiences for Disney movies. The number should be cut from the film and saved for the Broadway version of *Hunchback*, when it would be eligible for a Tony as an original song.

In a mad hope that I could convince someone to cut the gargoyle number before *Hunchback* opened in movie theaters, I wrangled a phone interview with directors Gary Trousdale and Kirk Wise. They adamantly defended the gargoyle sequence, insisting that it was "deliberately anachronistic," and since gargoyles were fantastic creatures anyway, that seemed to give "a crazy license for them just to go nuts for a minute." Dramatically, they said, it also set Quasimodo up for the disappointment he was about to encounter in the next scene. They seemed peeved at my suggestion that the number might have been inspired by thoughts of a Broadway version, and said

Broadway was their last concern while working on a film, when their only care was making the best film possible. Why, I asked, did gargoyle Hugo have to be so obnoxious, since no one else in the film, even the villains, were really obnoxious? They said they believed Hugo was in a Disney tradition of "loudmouth sidekicks" of which they offered the examples of Baloo in *Jungle Book* and Jiminy Cricket in *Pinocchio*. Hugo reminds me more of Lampwick in *Pinocchio*, so much so that during the climactic (genuinely touching)

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Don't get mixed up with him; he hangs out with really bad friends.

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moment in *Hunchback*, when a little girl reaches out to touch Quasi, I felt like warning her, "Don't get mixed up with him; he hangs out with really bad friends." In any case, the directors suggested I wait until the film came out on video or laserdisc, and then I could just cut out or skip over the abominable gargoyle sequence.

I should have guessed by the way the gargoyles are being pushed in the print ads and other promotional materials that at some level "Disney" suffers from a real lack of confidence in the true excellence and virtues of their *Hunchback of Notre Dame*—even though the same team did produce a Best Picture Oscar nominee without any obnoxious anachronisms. Or is it just a triumph of an MTV era sensibility that doesn't shrink from snatching images and ideas from any source, and doesn't care if the mood and tempo changes completely every five minutes, with no unity or direction beyond the pleasure of the moment? In either case, it's sad, because without the gargoyles, Disney's *Hunchback of Notre Dame* would have been a great film; with the obnoxious anachronisms it becomes an average compromised committee-assembled piece of commercial mishmash. Too bad.

*William Mortiz teaches film and animation history at the California Institute of the Arts.*





# DESERT ISLAND SERIES

## *The Olympiad of Animation*

compiled by Frankie Kowalski

This time 'round, I reminisced with animators who produced short animated films for The Olympiad of Animation—Melinda Littlejohn (*Breath of Seth*), Raul Garcia (*Animarathon*), George Schwizgebel (*Hors-Jeu*), and Jonathan Amitay (*The Spirit of the Olympics*).

### Melinda Littlejohn's desert island picks...

I love the idea and energy behind the Olympiad of Animation. It built up to a wonderful frenzy of animators and artists descending upon Los Angeles from all over the planet. We closed a few bars and opened a few breakfast joints before it was over—alot of those people still remain my dearest friends and networks! I think the funniest thing that happened was when the sound track failed on a rather politically graphic European film and the animator kept yelling CONSPIRACY! (that guy went on to work for Disney—embracing the LA lifestyle wholeheartedly.)

1. *The Rainbow Bear* by Bill Melendez
2. *The Bead Game* by Ishu Patel
3. Anything by Oskar Fischinger
4. *The Ladykillers* by Alexander McKendrick
5. The first hour of *The Black Stallion* by Carroll Ballard (produced by Francis Ford Coppola)
6. Anything by Emory Hawkins (especially the candy monster in *Raggedy Ann & Andy*)
7. *Burden of Dreams* by Les Blank
8. *The Ghost of Rome* by Antonio Pietrangeli
9. Anything animated by Bill Littlejohn (especially Snoopy flying his dog house)
10. *All or Nothing* by Frédéric Back



Olympiad of Animation film, *Breath of Seth* by Melinda Littlejohn.

### Raul Garcia's picks...

When I was invited to participate in *The Olympics of Animation* I felt really honored and decided to make the most amazing animated film ever done—Hollywood here I go, ok back to reality. I ended up with the longest animated film that \$150 can buy. Two minutes and 12 seconds and a cast of animators worth of a feature film. Necessity is the mother of all inventions and having no money to produce the

film, I asked every friend working in animation to animate a scene. I shot the whole film by using the studio I worked at as an animator in the middle of the night and using leftover film and tails from my part-time job as a cameraman. When the film was finally finished, I had an opportunity to come to L.A. and present it. It was very exciting."

1. *The Tell Tale Heart* by Ted Parmelee
2. *Pas de deux* by Norman McLaren
3. *One Froggy Evening* by Chuck Jones
4. *Little Red Hot Riding Hood* by Tex Avery
5. *Anna & Bella* by Borge Ring
6. *Creature Comforts* by Nick Park
7. *What's Opera Doc* by Chuck Jones
8. *Getting Started* Richard Condie
9. *The Man Who Planted Trees* by Frédéric Back
10. *2001: A Space Odyssey* by Stanley Kubrick



## George Schwizgebel's picks...

Je ne pratique pas beaucoup de sport mais je suis impressionné par la beauté des mouvements des athlètes, les ombres portées et la couleur du gazon. C'est cela, et aussi l'idée naïve que l'on choisit toujours son équipe quand on regarde un match, qui m'a incité à réaliser *Hors-jeu*.."

(I do not practice sport very much but I am impressed by the beauty of athletic movements, the shadows that they project and the lawn color. It is for this reason, and also because of the naïve idea that one always picks a team while watching a match, that I decided to make *Hors Jeu*.)

1. *Tango* by Zbigniew Rybcynski
2. *The Tale of Tales* by Yuri Norstein
3. *Damon the Mower* by George Dunning
4. *Le jeu des anges* by Walerian Borowczyk
5. *Dream of the Sphinx* by James Gore
6. *Refleksy* (Reflections) by Jerzy Kucia
7. *The Comb From the Museums of Sleep* by the Brothers Quay
8. *Creature Comforts* by Nick Park
9. *Blinkity Blank* by Norman MacLaren
10. *The Passing* by Bill Viola



## Jonathan Amitay's picks...

"Spirit of the Olympics" ... wow! 1984. And it was my first film to be shown internationally. I had no idea of the importance of such events. While making the film for the Olympics I used sand and shot the film with a very old animation camera that was on its last sprockety legs. It would jam, oh would it ever jam, and mostly on the most important jobs. By the time I'd finish almost ANY job with that camera, all I was left with was the feeling of relief of having managed to make the deadline. Other than that I was too frazzled to think about anything else. Even today I find it difficult to watch my works from that period seeing the jump-cuts and remembering that dreaded 'click,' and then opening the camera body and the film spilling out like bloody spaghetti!"

1. *The Mighty River* by Frédéric Back, for its awe some beauty and grand execution.
2. *The Street* by Caroline Leaf. What can I say ... its so fantastically imaginative.
3. *The Yellow Submarine* by George Dunning
4. *Ivan The Terrible* by Sergei Eisenstein. A grandiose film and you don't have to understand a word of Russian to be mesmerized by it. Its like "watching" a Rembrandt, a J.S. Bach or a Beethoven.
5. *Seven* by David Fincher —its opening title which I found to be a unique piece of artistry and "branded itself" on my artistic psyche.
6. *The Electric Blanket* by Asi Dayan, which is gut stuff and Israeli to its last frame, and contains a controversial and unforgettable scene about dying and death.
7. *Manufacturing Consent: Noam Chomsky and the Media* by Mark Achbar A film that will leave no doubts in the minds of the mad dogs on the island (and even islands have their mad dogs) as to my political/social leanings.
8. *Unconscious Civilization* by John Ralston Saul, which is a piece of the most brilliant reasoning.
9. For music ... There's so much ...! On the spur of the moment I would probably grab any one of Mozarts piano concertos. His "Heavenly" music contains every possible human emotion.
10. I must admit that I would take one of my own films, *Nukie Takes A Valium* to remind myself that I'm not as lousy as I make myself to be sometimes ... ha ha.



# NEWS

## Virgil Ross – In Memory

by Tom Sito

**M**aster animator Virgil Ross died on May 15, 1996 from complications of a stroke suffered in March. He was 88. His 60 year career began in 1930 at Mintz-Screen Gems, where he was hired as a trainee for \$6 a week. Tex Avery made him an animator at Lantz in 1935, and Ross then followed Avery over to Schlesingers (Warner Bros.) six months later. He became one of the legends of his profession, working at Ub Iwerks, Hanna Barbera, Filmation, DePatie-Freleng, Chuck Jones, Sam Nicholson and Marvel.

In 1984 he was one of the first artists to receive the Motion Picture Screen Cartoonists Golden Award and in 1988 was honored with ASIFA-Hollywood's Winsor McCay Award for Lifetime Achievement. Virgil was the dance specialist. Thus, whenever Bugs Bunny tap-danced

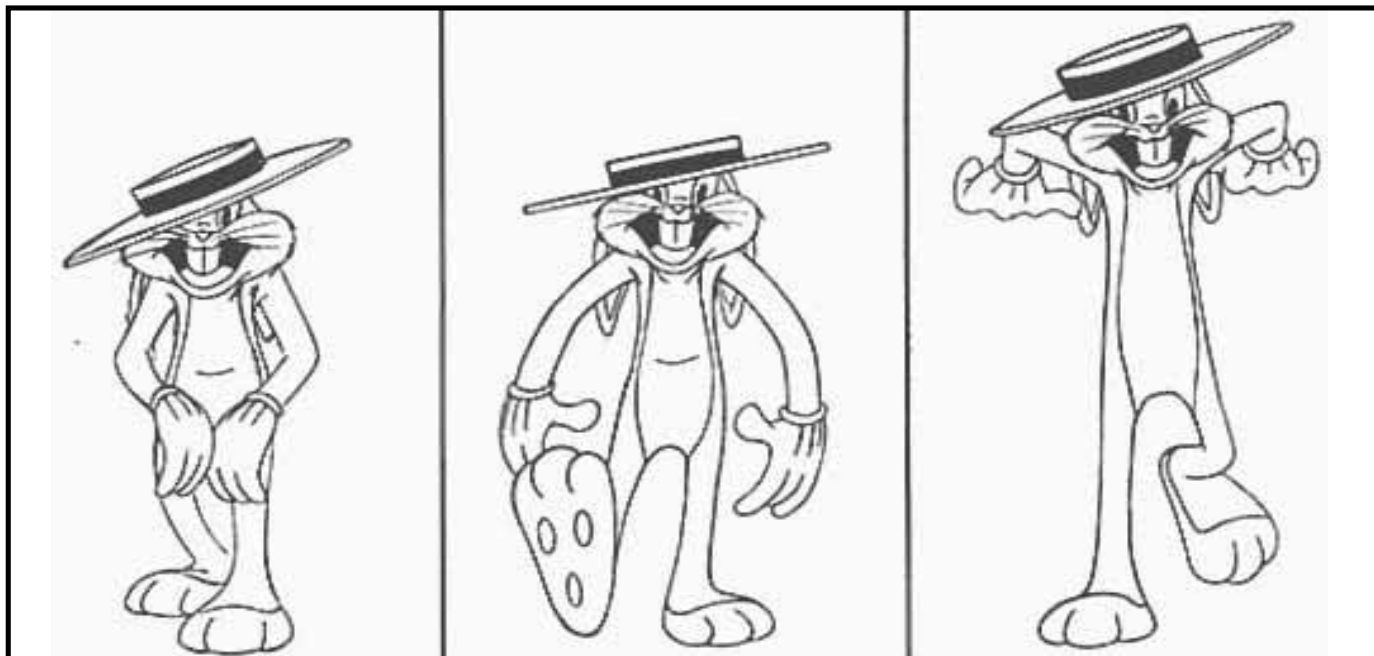


Virgil Ross (left) with animator Warren Batchelder in 1945, from *That's All Folks* by Steve Schneider.

down the street to "Rosie O'Grady" or cakewalked on the vaudeville circuit, even pausing to wrestle a Japanese Sumo wrestler, that was Virgil's work (he was a darn good dancer himself). A virtuoso of timing and gesture, he animated a great deal of Friz Freleng's *Rhapsody Rabbit*; his other credits include Tex Avery's *Daffy Duck and Egghead*, Freleng's *A Hare Grows in Manhattan* and *I Taw a Putty Tat*.

Virgil was generous with his time for young fans. While some animators at his age withdraw into solitude, he made himself available for numerous events, where, surrounded by people, he would sign autographs and do drawings. And he was never too busy to talk to people.

At the end, he was in his room, propped up in his bed, looking out at his beloved garden, surrounded



Animation drawings by Virgil Ross from *Mississippi Hare* (1949).

© Warner Bros.



by hundreds of get well cards and drawings sent by all those he made memories for.

So, as long as there are people who break into a smile at the antics of Bugs and Daffy, Virgil Ross' memory will live on.

### **New Line Television Syndicates The Mask.**

In an effort to strategically market the CBS #1 rated Saturday morning series *The Mask*, the series will be stripped Monday through Friday beginning this September in addition to its weekly CBS network broadcast. The show is based on the original feature film of the same name from New Line Cinema. The series is produced by New Line Television and Film Roman (*The Simpsons*, *Garfield*).

### **DreamWorks Lights Fire Under Ash.**

DreamWorks has acquired the feature film rights to Joe Quesada and Jimmy Palmiotti's new comic book hero, *Ash*, in which the company is targeting as a franchise for its animation unit. *Ash* tells the story of a firefighter who miraculously survives a blazing inferno and comes to realize he was spared by a force from the future that has given him extraordinary powers. It will be adapted for the screen by Rand Ravich.

### **DreamWorks And Pacific Data Images' First Project In The Works.**

The film, *Ants*, will be produced by Eron Warner, Brad Lewis and Patty Wooten through PDI. Though specific details of the story line are being kept under the wraps, *Ants* is described as a computer-generated animated feature similar in process to *Toy Story*. Warner, who

is currently a Senior VP of Physical Production at Fox, is negotiating out of his contract to work on *Ants*.



*The Mask.*

© New Line Productions

### **Little Orphan Annie Finds A Home In TV.**

One of the most popular strips in comic art annals, *Annie* is being recast as a new, contemporary character in an animated, action-adventure series. Now in development, the weekly, half hour show will be co-produced by Abrams/Gentile Entertainment (*Sky Dancers* and *Dragon Flyz*) and the Fremantle Corporation (international distributor for such shows as *Grace Under Fire* and *3rd Rock From the Sun*).

### **Disney Campaigns With McDonald's and General Mills For Aladdin Video.**

Buena Vista Home Video is putting theatrical style promotion behind its direct-to-video premiere of

*Aladdin and the King of Thieves*, which features the voice of Robin Williams as Genie. The co-promotion with McDonald's and General Mills is valued at \$70 million.

### **Festival Note: Sarah Watt**

just won the Special Achievement Award for Animation at the San Diego Film Festival for her film, *Small Treasures*.

### **The following items are from AWM's June 7, 1996 Email News Flash**

### **Colossal Pictures Files For Chapter 11 Bankruptcy.**

The troubled San Francisco-based studio, known for such TV shows as *Aeon Flux* and *Liquid Television*, has sought protection from its creditors while seeking to overhaul its operations. Previously, it had stopped producing TV commercials, despite being one of the top studios in the field and announced that it was concentrating on devel-

opment projects. The company said that the latest move will allow it "to reorganize its business in a profitable direction." Part of the reorganization involves a shakeup of its management team. Thus, Chairman and co-founder Drew Takahashi is said to be "refocusing his efforts as Colossal's Chief Creative Director"; in addition, Jan Bauman, previously Controller at Pixar, has been appointed Chief Financial Officer; and former Pacific Data Images Executive Producer, Jana Canellos, is Director of Sales and Marketing.

### **Buena Vista Home Video Releases In Indonesia.**

Walt Disney home video will be released legitimately in Indonesia starting next month with PT Vision Interprima Pictures. Indonesia was off limits to the U.S. majors until last year. The market was 100% pirated until 1991, when the government cleared the shelves of video stores and burned stacks of cassettes. After that, the business consisted largely of imported laserdiscs. The first package contains the animated feature *The Goofy Movie* and Disney indicated it will start dubbing *Pocahontas* for sell through, once it has been able to cast suitable voice-over talent.

### **Trial Date Set For Betty Boop Cartoon Copyright.**

Harvey Entertainment sued Fleischer Studios and its attorney Stanley Handman, charging that they failed to pay Harvey royalties for the use of Betty Boop. Harvey seeks to void a 1980 agreement that gave Fleischer the rights to the cartoon character in return for managing them and paying

Harvey 10% of the profits. Harvey further charges fraud, breach of contract and copyright infringement. Court date is set for December 3rd, 1996.

### **New Line Cinema Selects Screenplay For Cross, A Dark Horse Comic Book.**

New Line has added *Cross* to the list of comics being developed into features due to the drive of acknowledged comics fanatic Michael De Luca. Other projects include, *Avengelyne*, *Blade*, and *Spawn*. The studio's last hit *The Mask* which grossed more than \$300 million worldwide, was also based on a comic. *Cross* which is based on an unpublished novel by Andrew Vachss and James Colbert called *Cross Genesis*, is about a family of misfit mercenaries and childhood friends who fight urban crime.



### **John Canemaker Has Three Animation Books For Fall Release.**

John Canemaker will have three books dealing with the art and history of animation published later this year; *Before the Animation Begins: The Art and Lives of Disney Inspiration Sketch Artists* (Hyperion Books) chronicles,

the lives and work of Disney concept artists from the thirties to the present; *Tex Avery* (Turner Publishing) presents a candid assessment of the innovative animation director during his work at MGM Studios from 1942-1955; and *Felix: The Twisted Tale of the World's Most Famous Cat* (Da Capo Press), which is a paperback reissue of Canemaker's 1991 account of pre-Disney animation as seen through the most popular silent cartoon character of the 1920s. Canemaker, who heads the animation program at New York University, is also an accomplished filmmaker and frequent lecturer on the art and artists of animation.

### **Film Roman To Produce Richie Rich TV Series In Association With Harvey Entertainment.**

The 13 half-hour series will be syndicated by Claster Television. Film Roman will be producing new shorts for each episode, which will also feature films from the Harvey library. This is a similar strategy Harvey followed in their popular *Baby Huey Show*. Richie Rich, known as "the richest kid in the world," is, of course, a popular comic book star and recently was the basis of a live-action feature starring McCauley Culkin.

### **Steven Spielberg To Produce Dramatic Animated Series For The WB Network.**

The fledgling network announced that it will be adding *Invasion America*, a new prime time animated serial to its schedule. The show is the maiden effort from DreamWorks's new television animation division, in which Spielberg is closely involved with.



WB programming head Garth Ancier described the show as, "an animated dramatic series with theatrical scope and primetime quality."

### **Invision Entertainment Joins Production Team Of Sandbox Entertainment On Pillow People.**

InVision, the new startup company that recently took over production of USA Networks popular *Street Fighters* show, announced that it will be working closely with BananaMation, Sandbox's newly formed animation subsidiary. The project will use traditional cel animation (provided by Invision) as well as 3-D computer animation (by BananaMation). The series will debut nationally in syndication in September 1996.

### **Casemiro To Head Creative Affairs At Klasky Csupo, Inc.**

Eryk Casemiro comes to Klasky Csupo following his work at Broadway Video as Director of Creative Affairs, where he participated in the development of *Wayne's World* and produced the CBS holiday special *Frosty Returns* with renowned animator Bill Melendez. His responsibilities at Klasky Csupo will include managing development of television series, specials and special projects.

### **The following items are from AWM's June 21, 1996 Email News Flash:**

#### **Hahn Gets Animated Deal.**

Disney-based producer Don Hahn, who worked on *Beauty and the*

*Beast*, *Who Framed Roger Rabbit* and *The Lion King*, has entered into an exclusive seven year agreement with Walt Disney Feature Animation.. Hahn who has been associated with Disney for 20 years, produced the current animated musical *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*. Under terms of the new arrangement, he will continue to produce animated fare on an exclusive basis for the studio, but he will also venture into live-action or live-action/animation combos on a first look basis.

### **Pipkin Promoted To Vice President Of Production By Klasky Csupo.**

Margot Pipkin in her new role, will oversee the production of the company's TV series: *Rugrats*, *Duckman* and *Aaahh! Real Monsters*. Pipkin, who was previously producer on *Duckman*, will oversee budgeting, talent and studio relations with Paramount Television Group. Pipkin joined Klasky Csupo in 1987 as a producer of the prime time series *The Simpsons*.

### **Disney Pacts With Creative Capers.**

Disney Interactive has signed an exclusive multiyear deal with Creative Capers Entertainment, the Glendale-based animation and design studio. Capers principals Sue and Terry Shakespeare and David Molina have been associated with Disney on a number of film, TV and consumer products over the years. Under the pact with Disney's year-old interactive division, Creative Capers will continue to work on projects with other divisions at Disney.

### **Toy Story Distributed To Chinese Audience.**

Shanghai Film Studio will distribute Disney's *Toy Story* next month, making it the first Chinese film studio to distribute a foreign movie. China has decided to allow its studios to do so as a trial scheme to boost their coffers. Actual film imports are still controlled by the state-run China Film Import and Export Co. Disney's *Lion King* earned about 30 million yuan (\$3.6 million) at the Chinese box office.

### **Nickelodeon To Produce First In-House Project For Pre-schoolers.**

The cable network has made a 20-episode commitment for the computer animated *Blue's Clues*, a show in which an animated puppy helps solve the day's puzzles, with the help of host Steve Burns using non-verbal clues. It will be shown as part of the network's Nick Jr. Programming block, which is targeted to the 2-5 age group.

### **Comedy Central Makes Deal With Fox For The Tick.**

The agreement, which will include 10 new episodes, involves airing the shows on The Comedy Channel the day after they air on Fox Children's Network. The deal is the latest example of giving cable exposure to a series shortly after its broadcast run. While *The Tick* is a Saturday morning children's program, the takeoff on the cartoon superhero genre has a large young adult following, which Comedy Central believes can make an attraction in prime time.

# Animation World Magazine 1996-97 Calendar



With the Hiroshima Animation Festival on the horizon in August, we thought we would take the opportunity to take an extended look at Japanese animation, and anime in particular. Thus, our theme is "Anime, Anime, Anime—A Worldwide Phenomenon." We will lead off with an authoritative survey by Fred Patten, Mark Segall will profile Manga Entertainment (the leading international distributor of anime), and John Gosling will report in from the UK.



In addition, we will have an interview with Raoul Servais, who is being honored at Hiroshima, Mark Langer will report on Shanghai's Animation Fiesta, and Aaron Burger looks at the state of the (animation) art. Look for these and other items in the next issue available online on August 1, 1996.

International Television	(September)
Politics & Propaganda	(October)
Theme Park Animation	(November)
Interactive Animation	(December)
Animation Festivals	(January '97)
International Animation Industry	(February '97)
Children & Animation	(March '97)