

MADAGASCAR

From DreamWorks Animation SKG comes the new computer-animated comedy “Madagascar,” starring the voices of Ben Stiller (“Meet the Fockers,” “Meet the Parents”), Chris Rock (“Chris Rock: Never Scared”), David Schwimmer (TV’s “Friends”) and Jada Pinkett Smith (“Collateral”).

Alex the Lion (Stiller) is the king of the urban jungle as the main attraction at New York’s Central Park Zoo. He and his best friends Marty the Zebra (Rock), Melman the Giraffe (Schwimmer) and Gloria the Hippo (Pinkett Smith) have lived their entire lives in blissfully ignorant captivity, complete with lavish meals and their own park views.

Not content to leave well enough alone, Marty allows his curiosity to get the better of him and, with the help of some prodigious penguins, makes his escape to explore the world he’s been missing, intending to return before morning. In the middle of the night, Alex, Melman and Gloria discover their friend missing and decide the only course of action is to break out of the zoo and get Marty back home before anyone notices they’re gone.

Even in New York City, a lion, giraffe and hippopotamus wandering the streets and riding the subway are bound to attract some attention. Alex, Melman and Gloria manage to track Marty down in Grand Central Station, but before they can catch the train back to the zoo, they are darted, captured, crated and put on a ship to Africa.

When those plotting penguins sabotage the ship, Alex, Marty, Melman and Gloria find themselves washed ashore on the exotic island of Madagascar. Now, these native New Yorkers have to figure out how to survive in the wild and discover the true meaning of the phrase “It’s a jungle out there.”

“Madagascar” also features the voices of Sacha Baron Cohen (HBO’s “Da Ali G Show”), Cedric The Entertainer (“Barbershop”) and Andy Richter (“Elf”).

The computer-animated comedy is directed by Eric Darnell (“Antz”) and Tom McGrath (“The Ren & Stimpy Show”), marking McGrath’s feature film directorial debut. Mireille Soria (“Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron”) produced “Madagascar,” with Teresa Cheng serving as co-producer. The screenplay was written by Mark Burton & Billy Frolick and Eric Darnell & Tom McGrath.

A PDI/DreamWorks Production for DreamWorks Animation SKG, “Madagascar” is being distributed by DreamWorks Distribution LLC.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

ZOOKEEPERS

In just 10 years, computer animation has eclipsed the rest of the animation field and emerged as one of the most successful film art forms of all time, with DreamWorks Animation's "Shrek 2" topping the list. The "Shrek" films are the best examples to date of how the animation and effects teams at PDI/DreamWorks have pushed the edge of the envelope in areas like facial animation and recreating lifelike people and realistic worlds in the computer. The chasm between these advances in animation and those classic cartoons of our youth has seemed ever-widening.

But now, everything old is new again...

Led by writer/directors Eric Darnell and Tom McGrath, the teams at DreamWorks Animation and PDI/DreamWorks employed state-of-the-art computer animation to achieve an old-fashioned cartoon look that pays homage to the best of such animation legends as Chuck Jones and Tex Avery.

McGrath expounds, "Our influences were some of the best of classic animation going back to the 1930s and '40s, where a lot of the comedy was derived from the movement and the animation of the characters. We knew this film had to have that kind of comedy. It needed to be broad; it needed to be slapstick."

Darnell adds, "Our characters are very stylized and not based on reality, so we could have a lot of fun with how they looked and how they moved. They are very 2D inspired, but created in the 3D world of the computer. It gave us a lot of license because this is clearly a cartoon."

Producer Mireille Soria agrees. "This film is definitely more cartoony than anything we've done before. We applied that style to the characters and to the overall design of the movie."

The cartoon comedy style of "Madagascar" called for the computer animators at PDI/DreamWorks to be able to apply a visual cue called "squash and stretch" to the characters. A hallmark of classic cartoons, squash and stretch is the process an animator uses to deform an object and then snap it back into shape to convey motion or impact. Easy to do with a pencil, squash and stretch is much more difficult to accomplish in the computer.

“In the past, the amount of squash and stretch you could get in the computer was very limited, so one of the biggest technical challenges we faced was getting the kind of broad comedy we wanted,” McGrath attests. “The people at PDI/DreamWorks created a system that took it to the next level, where the animators could push and pull and stretch objects way out without breaking them.”

Jeffrey Katzenberg, CEO of DreamWorks Animation SKG, comments, “The technology of computer-animated movies continues to be explosive, but even though all the bells and whistles are fantastic, what they really do is empower our storytellers to imagine more. We don’t have 200 ‘mad scientists’ trying to invent gizmos that we then have to figure out how to use. It’s the reverse of that. We come up with the story knowing we’re going to need a lot of special tools to bring it to life...and that’s what those 200 mad scientists go off to do,” he laughs. “Ultimately, it’s all about telling a great story.”

The initial story concept for “Madagascar” started with a single question: What would happen if you took four New York City zoo animals out of the civilized world in which they’d lived their entire lives and dropped them into the middle of a savage jungle?

Eric Darnell notes, “It’s a classic fish-out-of-water premise, and so many fun ideas spring from it. You just describe that basic idea and everybody gets it. That’s always what you want, especially with an animated film—an idea you can say in one sentence and people’s eyes light up. If you see people’s eyes light up, you know you’re on to something.”

Darnell, who directed DreamWorks’ first computer-animated release, “Antz,” had originally been working on a different project altogether. He and producer Mireille Soria were developing the then-titled “Rockumentary,” a spoof based on the Beatles’ “A Hard Day’s Night” and starring a group of four penguins. Tom McGrath also came on board the project early on, but, unfortunately, the music clearances involved proved insurmountable and the penguin movie was shelved.

Not long after, the idea for “Madagascar” came along and Darnell, McGrath and Soria jumped at the chance to reunite on a new project, albeit with a very different animal foursome consisting of a lion, a zebra, a giraffe and a hippo. Writers Mark Burton and Billy Frolick were brought on to write the screenplay with Darnell and McGrath.

The framework of the story was relatively straightforward: Four Central Park Zoo animals find themselves shipwrecked on the island of Madagascar, and now these native New Yorkers have to figure out how to survive in the wild. As the comedic

possibilities began to take shape, Tom McGrath was charged with figuring out how to get Alex, Marty, Melman and Gloria from ship to shore. The director realized it was the perfect opportunity to resurrect the penguin characters from the earlier movie and give them a new mission. Turning the erstwhile band on the run into a misguided band of brothers, McGrath devised the hilarious sequence in which the penguins are responsible for the “zoosters” becoming castaways.

McGrath reveals, “Originally, the animals’ crates were washed overboard by a massive storm at sea, but I thought that was so overused. I wanted to do something more interesting with it. We had all these animals from the zoo being shipped back to Africa, including the penguins, and the question came up, ‘Why are penguins going to Africa?’ We thought it would be really funny if the penguins didn’t want to go to Africa. They’re penguins; they want to go to Antarctica. They break out of their crate, take over the ship, and send it into a hairpin turn that throws the crates overboard. We had a lot of fun developing the penguins into a kind of POW unit breaking out of captivity.”

The penguins’ interference sends Alex, Marty, Melman and Gloria on a course to the island of Madagascar. Darnell says that Madagascar was chosen as the setting—and title—of the film because “we needed to find a place that was the polar opposite of Manhattan. The leads in our film are African animals, but everybody’s seen mainland Africa on the screen, and it doesn’t feel quite as exotic as what we were going for. Madagascar is an island off the coast of Africa that is completely unique, with plants and animals that are unlike anything else in the world. We especially loved the lemurs, which are only found on Madagascar. It is a fantastical place that gave us a lot of freedom to play and to create just the right sort of wild jungle for our heroes to land in.”

ANIMAL INSTINCTS

Anyone who has seen “Wild Kingdom” or tuned into Animal Planet knows that lions and zebras don’t run in the same circles...unless one of them is running for his life. But in “Madagascar,” predator and prey have become an unlikely band of friends and neighbors.

“Everybody knows that lions eat zebras; it’s just that classic yin and yang,” Darnell states. “But in the Central Park Zoo, these two animals can become best friends in conflict with their natural behavior.”

McGrath offers, “The heart of the story is the relationship between Alex and Marty, who have no idea what their true natures are because they grew up in a civilized environment. Once they are taken from that environment and put back in the wild, their natural instincts start to emerge. That’s when their friendship is put to the test.”

The king of the urban jungle, Alex the Lion may not know that he is on top of the food chain, but he takes great pride in being the zoo’s “mane” attraction. “Alex loves being the star of the show,” Darnell affirms. “He loves getting out on his ‘stage’ and hearing the cheers of the crowds. He can’t imagine wanting to be anywhere else. As far as Alex is concerned, New York is the top of the heap.”

Ben Stiller, who is the voice of Alex, can relate to his fellow native New Yorker. “Growing up in New York, I know there is a certain sense of pride that New Yorkers have. Alex is very happy in his world at the Central Park Zoo. He lives a very pampered life and he loves the adulation of the crowd. As Alex would say, ‘There’s fans, there’s food, there’s pampering...what more could you want?’ He gets his steaks served up to him, but he thinks steak is just steak; it just exists—cut, prepared and seasoned just right. He never in a million years would think that his friends could be the food he eats. But once he gets out in the real world, his instincts start to take over, which is scary because it happens to be his best friend that he’s suddenly dreaming about eating.”

“Ben Stiller is a great Alex,” Darnell says. “Alex is this guy who feels confident as long as he’s got all his ducks in a row, but when things start to fall apart, Alex does, too. Ben has this ability to sound all up in arms about things, but if you look at him, you know he’s more upset at himself than the other guy. His brow gets all knitted up, and the way he performs it is very endearing because he makes you aware of Alex’s vulnerabilities. It was great for Ben to be able to bring that to the character, and it gave a lot of inspiration to the animators.”

Stiller relates, “Alex is set in his ways. He’s afraid to take a chance and go outside his comfort zone. His best friend Marty is more adventurous and wants to go out and see the world, which drives Alex crazy because Marty is upsetting the status quo—he ‘bit the hand.’ Even though Alex and Marty are friends, they can still get upset with each other as all friends do. They go through a little bit of adversity, but you find out who your true friends are when you face tough situations in life.”

Co-producer Teresa Cheng remarks, “Marty and Alex are the closest of friends, although they are almost exact opposites. Alex is comfortable with his life at the zoo and

doesn't like change, while Marty is always looking for something fresh and exciting in his life."

"Alex and Marty have lived next door to each other their entire lives, and they are very supportive of each other," McGrath states. "But Marty just turned 10 years old. He realizes his life is half over, and he starts to wonder what else is out there in the world. I suppose it's kind of a midlife crisis for Marty."

Chris Rock gives voice to Marty the Zebra, whose adventurous streak is about to give his friends and himself a real walk on the wild side. "Marty is bored with the routine of zoo life, so he wants to get out and experience the wild, even though he doesn't really know what that means," Rock admits. "When they get to Madagascar, they all experience a culture shock. They encounter a lot of obstacles they couldn't have anticipated...like finding out that that hunting thing is not for them. But you never know who your friends are until things go wrong. It's easy to be friends when things are going great, but when it all falls down, that's when you're gonna see who's really there for you."

Rock notes that his off-screen friendship with Stiller added to Alex and Marty's onscreen relationship. "It helped that Ben and I are already friends. There's a kind of rhythm to the way friends talk, so even though we weren't in the room together, the animators did really well picking it up. They made it work."

Mireille Soria observes, "Chris Rock is just hysterical in everything he says and does. He brought this amazing energy and enthusiasm to Marty, and he's so naturally funny, which also contributed to the script. There are little things he came up with, like 'crack-a-lacking,' that are pure Chris."

"Marty is a character who just loves life," Darnell adds. "He is exuberant, smart, funny and interested in the world around him. Chris Rock was just perfect for that. Chris is known for his very edgy, biting comedy, but it's never mean-spirited. There's always a wry grin on his face and that is exactly what we wanted and needed for Marty."

While Marty is curious about what the outside world has to offer, his friend Melman the Giraffe prefers the controlled environment of the zoo, where he has access to all the wonders of modern medicine. McGrath confirms, "Melman is a complete hypochondriac; he loves that he has doctors' appointments booked throughout the week. He's grown accustomed to what civilization has to offer, which in his case is medicine, and he has no idea how he is going to survive without even nasal spray."

David Schwimmer provides the voice of Melman, who may have to get used to a more holistic approach to his medical problems in the wilds of Madagascar. "Melman

has many fears and phobias, but at least in the zoo, he has his routine and regular visits from different doctors,” Schwimmer comments. “Melman needs his routine for stability and security, so when he’s cast into the wild—or even leaves the premises—he’s completely thrown and terrified. His journey is one of coming to terms with the fact that he can survive...with a little help from his friends.”

McGrath says the filmmakers knew Schwimmer was the perfect choice for the role of Melman right from the start. “Some actors’ voices just lend themselves to an animated character, and David’s was one of those. You can just hear his voice and know he’d be a perfect Melman. We wanted Melman to be comic relief as well as really lovable, and David has the kind of charm and sincerity that comes through in every line he says. He’s also a very conscientious actor and really got into his character.”

“I am a huge fan of animated films, so I was completely thrilled when they called me,” Schwimmer asserts. “When I heard they wanted me to play a giraffe, I was even more excited. I’ve always loved giraffes. There’s something so comical about them because of their height, and they look so gentle and sweet...maybe it’s the eyelashes. Of the four animals in the group, the giraffe was the most appropriate for me to play. He’s the tallest and coolest of all the animals in the movie. Okay, not really...but he is the tallest.”

The title of the hippest animal in the group would naturally go to Gloria the Hippo. “Gloria is the foundation of this foursome and is the most level-headed,” McGrath states. “When the others are acting like adolescents, she is the glue that holds them together.”

Jada Pinkett Smith, who plays the role of Gloria, remarks, “I really like Gloria. She is the only female in this group, so she’s very maternal and also has a take-charge attitude. She feels it’s her responsibility to look after the guys and make sure they don’t hurt themselves...and playing a character in charge of all the boys is not very far from what I do in life anyway. Gloria does throw her weight around quite a bit,” Pinkett Smith teases, “but she is very loyal to her friends, which I found very endearing. I think it makes her beautiful inside and out.”

At first glance, the petite Pinkett Smith might not seem the most obvious choice to play a hippopotamus, but Darnell reveals it was all in the delivery. “Gloria is a big hippo who is strong and tough, so you might think we would need to get somebody big and strong for the role, but Jada is one of the strongest, toughest women I’ve ever met. She will not be pushed around and knows what she wants in life, and that’s exactly who Gloria is. Gloria may be big—you might even say she’s fat—but hippos are naturally big

and fat, so she's not self-conscious about her size. She is big and beautiful and Jada is small and beautiful, and it all worked perfectly for this film."

"I thought Gloria was absolutely adorable, although it is funny hearing my voice coming out of this full-figured hippo," Pinkett Smith acknowledges. "The filmmakers told me they like my attitude and the way I carry myself and to bring that aspect of my personality to Gloria, and I said, 'Be careful what you ask for,'" she laughs. "But I think that's an interesting part of doing animation: Usually, we're asked to strip ourselves of our own personalities when we take on certain roles, so it takes a minute to get comfortable with being yourself and to play the character that way."

The "zoosters" may all be different shapes and sizes, but when they arrive on the island of Madagascar they discover animals unlike anything they have ever seen at the Central Park Zoo. The first animals they encounter are a tribe of lemurs, led by the self-proclaimed King Julien the 13th, a ring-tailed lemur who is a true party animal.

King Julien is voiced by Sacha Baron Cohen of "Da Ali G Show" fame, and McGrath says that Baron Cohen's remarkable talent for doing accents was the key to finding the character. "He plays a lot of characters with different accents, so we brought him in and he developed this voice that was part Indian, part French, and I don't know what else. King Julien was such a fun character and Sacha was incredible to work with. We'd get him into a recording session where he'd have one line, and he would turn it into eight minutes of comedy. He gave us so much material that was just hilarious."

Mireille Soria adds, "Sacha is amazing at creating characters and when he goes into a character, he actually becomes him. When he did King Julien, we were all on the floor laughing hysterically because he would go on and on as the character."

King Julien's right-hand man is Maurice, who is another type of lemur known as an "aye aye," which fit right in with his job. Cedric The Entertainer provided the voice of Maurice, and Eric Darnell notes it was another example of casting against type that worked for the role. "Cedric has this great, booming, powerful voice and the contrast of the spindly King Julien, who is a complete goofball, and Maurice—the shorter, stouter, obviously more intelligent second-in-command—is really funny. Everybody knows that Maurice should really be in charge here, but Julien happens to be the king and Maurice accepts that and is happy to support him."

Cedric agrees. "Maurice respects his job and wants everyone to understand how important it is to be the number two man. Maurice has to look out for King Julien and

protect him from himself, and it's a good thing Maurice is around, because the king would find himself in some crazy predicaments without him."

The littlest and decidedly cutest of the lemurs is Mort, an aptly named mouse lemur, who uses his appeal to his advantage. Mort is played by Andy Richter, who says, "Mort is a pretty happy-go-lucky little lemur as long as he gets his way because, as most impossibly cute things are, he is pretty manipulative. I think it's something to do with the roundness of the head, the tinyness of the nose, the giant eyes and also the voice. Mort has the cutest voice in Hollywood right now."

Darnell attests, "I don't know how he did it, but Andy managed to pull off this great little kid voice that didn't seem forced, and it was just hilarious. Because of what Andy brought to the part of Mort, we ended up expanding the role and gave the character more screen time. We wanted Mort to be the cutest darn lemur you've ever seen in your life, and when he does that thing with his eyes and the audience goes 'awww,' we know we've been successful."

Furry little lemurs notwithstanding, the animals who best understand how to manipulate being "cute and cuddly" are those four plotting penguins who set the entire story in motion with their planned escape from the zoo. As has become something of a tradition in animated features, several of the filmmakers became so identified with certain characters during scratch recording and pitch meetings that they went on to voice the characters in the film.

Leading that group, director Tom McGrath provided the voice of Skipper, the no-nonsense penguin-in-command who plans to lead his troops to the "wide open spaces of Antarctica." McGrath offers, "I'd done scratch and pitch for so long with this character, we just got used to the voice. Robert Stack was the inspiration for the voice, with a little Charlton Heston mixed in, but really it was just a matter of over-articulating every single thing I said."

Voicing the penguins Kowalski and Private are: Chris Miller, who was the voice of the Magic Mirror in the "Shrek" films and is directing the third "Shrek" movie; and assistant editor Chris Knights, respectively. The fourth member of their avian band, Rico, doesn't speak but carries a mean plastic spoon.

"Shrek 2" director Conrad Vernon, who has already been immortalized as the voice of the Gingerbread Man in both "Shrek" movies, can also be heard in "Madagascar" as the voice of Mason, the pseudo-intellectual chimpanzee who can't read but can interpret sign language.

SOME KIND OF WHACKED-OUT CONSPIRACY

The design of the four main characters in “Madagascar” began with the basic features of a lion, zebra, hippopotamus and giraffe. Darnell says, “It’s great to see how the animals balance each other out. You’ve got the tall, skinny one; the big, round one; the guy with the big bouffant hairdo; and one with a crazy mohawk. It’s a perfect complement of characters.”

Production designer Kendal Cronkhite adds, “They work almost like puzzle pieces that can link together. Alex is an inverted triangle; Gloria is a circle; Melman is a tall, skinny stick; and Marty is a cylinder. They are different from one another in silhouette, but are based on the same design aesthetic, which was exaggerated proportions with sharp graphic shapes and details.”

Lead character designer Craig Kellman was responsible for creating cartoon versions of the four zoo animals. Mireille Soria notes, “Craig Kellman did an amazing job in coming up with the look of these characters. He captured what we were going for, which was a more cartoony approach that carried over to all the design elements of the film. We called it ‘whacking our characters.’”

McGrath expounds, “Craig’s designs dictated that this world would be slightly askew—not overly caricaturized, just whacked out a little bit. We started referring to it as ‘the whack factor,’ which gave us an easy reference point to say things like, ‘There’s too much whack factor on that.’ It became kind of a running joke.”

The overall style of the characters was inspired by a variety of classic cartoons, as well as several children’s picture books. “Craig did a great job of translating these ideas that we had about the characters into animatable animals that could be taken off the 2D page and put into the 3D world of the computer,” Darnell states.

The “whack factor” of all the characters was amplified significantly through the extensive use of squash and stretch in “Madagascar.” Traditional animators have always been able to squash and stretch characters or objects at will because it was all done on paper, but in the computer, a 3D object could only be stretched so far before it reached its breaking point. Advancements in the application of squash and stretch in 3D animation have been made in recent years, most notably in films like “Shark Tale.” However, the cartoon style of “Madagascar” required that the computer animators use

squash and stretch to even greater comic effect. Essentially it meant they somehow had to get the freedom of a pencil in the click of a mouse.

Teresa Cheng says, “Our animators are used to animating in a more realistic way, using tools like our facial animation system that involves building every muscle on the face so we can recreate expressions that are totally grounded in the real world. When we started working on ‘Madagascar,’ we decided to take a different path based on the classic cartoon style, with extreme poses and exaggerated proportions that, even when the character is standing still, look comical.”

Head of character animation Rex Grignon affirms, “In ‘Madagascar,’ we wanted to try something that really hadn’t been done in 3D animation, namely to throw away some of the more realistic structure of the characters and to borrow from more traditional animation. We changed the anatomy so we could do things like stretch and elongate our characters’ arms and squish their torsos. From the outset, we wanted this to be a more physical film in terms of slapstick comedy.”

The character technical directors (TDs), led by character TD supervisors Milana Huang and Robert Vogt, were responsible for creating the controls, or rigging, for all the characters in the computer. Grignon worked closely with Huang and Vogt to identify areas in which the animators would need to implement squash and stretch to give them that snappy, pose-driven animation.

To expand the parameters and amplify the effect, Vogt offers, “We developed squash and stretch for different zones of each character, including the face, head and different parts of the body. We also wanted the animators to know when they were taking it too far so they wouldn’t break the characters. In the past, we didn’t have the ability to show what the outer skin would be doing on a character until much later in the process. On ‘Madagascar,’ we provided texture maps as references, so the animators could actually see Marty’s stripes or Melman’s spots and know where the problems were going to occur and when to back off a bit.”

Fans of classic cartoons know that humor can be derived from eyes popping and jaws dropping without a word spoken. Incorporating broad squash and stretch into the facial expressions allowed for the kind of comedy that heretofore had been solely the domain of traditional animators.

Grignon says, “We started with the basic facial animation system from ‘Shrek.’ Then we had to figure out what controls we needed on top of that to get that extra malleability in the faces so we could warp the whole head, change the size and direction

of the eyes, flare the nostrils and pull expressions out to 'there.' We blew the old limits out the door. It was an animator's dream."

HEADS OR TAILS

Apart from squash and stretch, all of the animals presented individual hurdles to the animation team, ranging from Alex's mane, to Melman's neck, to Gloria's girth. Marty had a particular talent for shifting from being a quadruped, walking on all fours, to a biped, standing upright and gesturing with his front legs and hooves that now functioned as his arms and hands. Vogt admits, "Creating a rig that resulted in a natural looking quadruped Marty as well as a biped Marty was pretty challenging."

Gloria, while quite rotund, still has to appear light on her feet and flexible, with a range of motion that belies her size. Character TD supervisor Milana Huang comments, "It was very tough to get that big frame to move in a nice smooth way. We added hundreds of controls to Gloria so the animators could move her shoulders independently of her hips and manipulate every part of her body, right down to the finger tips."

Conversely, the directors wanted the much smaller penguins to waddle, as Huang describes, "like a sack of flour. We made sure that the controls allowed the animators to move each penguin's entire mass as one nice round piece."

Melman proved to be a literal pain in the neck for the animators, who had to figure out how to keep his head in frame with the other animals, which were considerably shorter. Vogt says, "We were always bending Melman's neck into odd shapes to get his face where we wanted it. This presented a different problem because the directors then wanted the head to stay put, but once you move the body, the head starts to move. We ended up developing another set of controls, which allowed the animators to basically animate backwards from the head and keep the head in place in the scene."

The system used to animate Melman's neck was similar to the one constructed to animate certain animals' long tails. "We needed to develop a very robust tail system that would allow the animators to pull off very organic motion and also dial in graphic shapes. For example," Vogt illustrates, "Alex's tail is often sharply kinked, but then, as he's running, it has to have a sweeping, flowing motion. We created a tail system that allowed the animators to apply a specific amount of curve or flex to different points along the tails as needed."

On the opposite end, some of the animals were also outfitted with what the animation team called “stunt tongues.” Vogt explains, “Before this film we had few controls to animate the tongue effectively once it left the mouth, but there are several tongue gags in ‘Madagascar,’ so character TD Penny Leyton designed a stunt tongue system, which allowed the character to interact with his own tongue. They turned out to be very funny, so we added stunt tongues to about six characters over the course of the film.”

Hair and fur are often the bane of an animator’s existence, and there are more furry creatures in “Madagascar” than in any computer-animated film before. The hairiest challenge was Alex’s mane, which is comprised of more than 50,000 individual strands of fur. To maintain the mane, the character TDs and effects teams expanded on the wig system that was developed for “Shrek 2,” which combines dynamic motion—hair that automatically moves in reaction to the movement of the head and body—and manual controls, which the animators generate by hand. Alex’s mane has hundred of curves and each curve has multiple points of animation controls. Additional controls also had to be incorporated to allow the mane to deform accordingly when it came into contact with outside objects and forces.

Visual effects supervisor Philippe Gluckman expounds, “We had to come up with something a lot more detailed for every time Alex leaned against something or put his hand through his mane and so on. Every single strand of hair—or fur in this case—had to interact with that contact and, because Alex is a lead character, it was something we had to do throughout the film.”

The fur really flew when it came to the lemurs that, in addition to the roles of King Julien, Maurice and Mort, numbered in the thousands. Crowd scenes have been tackled with progressively better results in each successive computer-animated film, owing to systems that are continually evolving. But there are more crowd sequences in “Madagascar” than in any of the previous 3D animated films from DreamWorks Animation, beginning with the opening of the movie when thousands of people stream into the Central Park Zoo to see Alex, Marty, Melman, Gloria and their zoomates. The Dynamic Crowd Character, or DCC, first employed in “Shrek 2,” adds life to the crowds by allowing them to focus on and react to the action.

The basic technique for creating the crowds has remained essentially the same, with many variations of body types, heads, clothing and hair being mixed and matched with different behavior cycles to render a virtually limitless number of people. However,

once the “zoosters” arrive in Madagascar, the crowds consist mainly of lemurs and, to a lesser extent, their nemeses, the predatory fossas (pronounced “foosas”). Both species have one thing in common: They all have fur coats, which multiplied the complexity of the crowd scenes exponentially.

“Having crowds of animals that all have fur is very hard to render and compute, but on top of that, the lemurs are all crazy,” Gluckman laughs. “They have this totally over-the-top behavior, so we needed to create scenes of mayhem, which is extremely difficult to do. The lemur crowds had to perform actions unlike anything we’d ever done before with particularly complex transitions, so we needed a lot of new behavior cycles. There were several new proprietary techniques that we had to design to achieve the animation of the crowds and get all the fur rendered.”

MOVE IT, MOVE IT

With more than two-thirds of “Madagascar” set in a jungle, the flora proved even more challenging than the fauna. In addition to being dense and overgrown, the tropical vegetation had to appear as alive as any character, but in a much more subtle way. Head of effects Scott Singer attests, “The single biggest effect in ‘Madagascar’ is the jungle. There was no way around it; there are tons of trees and plants and we had to make them move as naturalistically as possible, without being distracting. It was too much to figure out how every single plant might move individually based on the wind speed, etc. We needed a more direct way of manipulating the geometry.”

The effects teams not only had to determine how to keep all the foliage in constant motion, those movements also had to be in direct correlation to what generated them—ranging from the ambient motion of trees stirred by a breeze to the more dynamic action of plants being nearly flattened by an animal “stampede.” The effects team came up with various ways to keep the jungle moving, including a procedure that Phillippe Gluckman teasingly calls “the force.” “We created a kind of force field around the characters that moved everything in their wake without affecting the animation of the characters and without having to do too much hand tweaking.” For more complex shots, the animators and effects artists used a combination of techniques, including hand animating certain plants.

Being an island, Madagascar is surrounded by ever-shifting sand and water, two elements that present significant challenges to animators. There are a number of

scenes that take place on the beach, beginning with the four “zoosters” washing up on the shore. Given the demands of certain sequences, the animators could not rely on a generic computer simulation of the ocean, but had to be able to determine the height, placement and timing of the swells and waves.

Gluckman explains, “There are moments in the movie when the characters are actually in the water, like the scene when Marty the Zebra is surfing on the dolphins. We had to be able to totally choreograph what the water was doing, so we designed systems that allowed us to hand animate the waves. The movie is also very stylized, so we needed to be careful to match the artwork instead of just going for realism.”

Similarly, the sand had properties that required its own rendering system, which enabled the animators to create footprints in the sand corresponding to the character making them or to kick the sand up as the animals ran along the beach.

What goes up must come down, but Singer says that the animators had to learn to manipulate gravity in keeping with the cartoon action. “With this movie, you can have a character who jumps up in the air and hovers for a while before he falls down. If you have sand trailing after him, the sand can’t just go up and come down with the force of gravity. It has to hang there with him, but then again, if it hangs too long, it’s just going to look frozen. So animators who had been used to treating gravity as a constant now had to work with gravity as a variable, depending on the scene. For example, gravity gets weaker when the main character in the shot is hovering, and it gets really strong when he starts coming down again.”

Between flora and fauna, and sand and water, the amount of imagery that had to be rendered was beyond anything the animation team had ever imagined. Singer acknowledges, “We figured out that it was so much more data than we’d ever even tried to manage on any film before. There are some brilliant minds here who came up with interesting ways of rendering that much data.”

DreamWorks’ continuing collaboration with its preferred technology provider Hewlett-Packard (HP) also helped to solve the problem. Hundreds of thousands of rendering hours were sent to HP’s cutting-edge Utility Rendering Service. This extension of the DWA render farm provided the computing power needed to complete “Madagascar.”

HP was also instrumental in implementing DreamWorks’ new Virtual Studio Collaboration system (VSC), which allowed the writers, directors, producers, animators, story artists, and design and effects teams, for all intents and purposes, to be in two

places at the same time. With a large portion of the crews located at PDI/DreamWorks' Redwood City location and the balance based at DreamWorks Animation's Glendale campus, the VSC's wall-sized screens enabled the filmmakers to videoconference on everything from story pitches to effects shots in real time and life-sized.

Jeffrey Katzenberg offers, "It evolved from a logistical issue because we have a lot of talent here in Glendale and an equally gifted group at PDI. We even have people working on other projects as far away as Bristol, England and Hong Kong. One of the challenges we've faced is how to move our artists around to where they're needed at any given moment. What we tried to do with VSC was to create a way to collaborate with one another irrespective of physical location."

TWO JUNGLES

"Madagascar" takes place in two very diverse jungles: the urban jungle of New York City and the literal jungle of the title. Production designer Kendal Cronkhite and art director Shannon Jeffries collaborated to create two worlds that were real enough to be believable but whimsical enough to fit with the overall cartoon style of the film.

Cronkhite remarks, "Craig Kellman had done the initial character designs of the four lead characters, which were hysterically funny—very graphic and slightly retro. They were definitely influenced by the 2D animation of the 1950s and '60s, so that influenced the production design, as well. We didn't want it to look like cartoon characters set in a real world. Everything had to have the same sensibility, so you were in for the ride."

We first meet Alex the Lion, Marty the Zebra, Melman the Giraffe and Gloria the Hippo in their home at the Central Park Zoo. The real Central Park Zoo has undergone a number of changes over the years, so Cronkhite took it back to its heyday. Director Tom McGrath says, "In actuality, the larger animals are no longer seen at the Central Park Zoo, so Kendal wanted to capture a kind of fantasy 1960's version of the zoo and New York as a whole."

Ben Stiller, who grew up in New York, offers, "I love what they did with New York and the Central Park Zoo, because I have memories of going there as a kid. They took this iconic vision of the zoo and stylized it in a way that reminded me of the cartoons I watched growing up. I love the timelessness of it."

Cronkhite went back through the archives of the Central Park Zoo, pouring over historical photos and comparing then and now. “Our zoo is more like it was about 40 or 50 years ago,” she states. “We made sure to include a building called The Arsenal that’s always been there, and the clock tower, which is very iconic, and then we designed around them. We initially built it to look like a regular world and then ‘whacked it,’ where we threw all the lines off-kilter, and exaggerated its proportions, so it looks more cartoony.”

The production designer and her team took the same approach for the overall look of New York, from the zoo to the subway to Grand Central Station, where the escaped “zoosters” get a little too close to their public for comfort. For all of its whimsy, however, the New York scenery is intentionally devoid of nature and bright colors and is somewhat claustrophobic. Cronkhite says, “We decided to set the New York scenes in late autumn, which gave us a very muted palette. We basically have a brick, concrete and limestone zoo set against an autumn tree line. All the trees and hedges are very groomed, almost like topiary. The animals are confined—even the greenery has fences around it—and the skyline of New York surrounds the zoo itself, adding to that feeling of containment. You don’t see the sun, the moon or the stars in the sky. We essentially sucked any semblance of nature out of New York so we could pour it into Madagascar.”

Conversely, Madagascar is a virtual explosion of vivid, saturated colors. Whereas everything in New York had been linear and almost sterile, Madagascar appears open and freeform and bursting with life. “We wanted the colors to be lush and as varied as what you would find in nature,” Cronkhite states, “so even a single plant might go from pink to red to yellow to green.”

The design influences were also a study in contrasts. Classic cartoons and children’s books had contributed to the concepts for both the characters and their New York home, while the primary inspiration for Madagascar’s look came from the paintings of renowned French artist Henri Rousseau. Director Eric Darnell notes, “We wanted to create a fantasy jungle, and Henri Rousseau is an artist who never actually went to the jungle, but still created wonderful, exotic paintings of these fantastic, mysterious jungles. His almost childlike, naïve vision of what a tropical jungle would be became our inspiration for Madagascar.”

Shannon Jeffries says, “We really looked at what makes Henri Rousseau’s style what it is. But, obviously, he was working in a 2D medium, so his work is very flat and painterly. For our 3D environment, we needed to create a stage.”

To create a stage, the sets were first crafted in model form by Facundo Rabaudi, which allowed the art department to see them in 3D and to get a sense of scale and space. Using a small lipstick camera, the filmmakers could also visualize the scenery from the different animals' points of view and know the amount of space with which they had to work. Rabaudi even created miniature baobab trees, which Cronkhite says, "looks like trees that are upside down, with their roots on the top. They're huge and beautiful, and I learned that Madagascar has the greatest variety of baobab trees in the world, so we have a lot of them in our jungle."

Beyond being lush and colorful and brimming with nature, the film's Madagascar was imbued with a feeling of openness and freedom. Cronkhite comments, "From the moment the zoosters hit the beach, I wanted people to be bowled over by the fact that these characters are in a new world. It's subliminal, but we also wanted to suggest that, although they consider New York their home, they actually fit better in the wild."

That perspective was carried over to the layout department, which is akin to cinematography on a live-action film. Head of layout Ewan Johnson offers that the framing of the characters contributed to the sense that the wide open spaces of Madagascar suited our four New Yorkers better than the confines of the Central Park Zoo. "Depending on the location, we chose specific types of camera movements and compositions. In New York City, we went for tighter shots that wall our characters in. We tried to make it feel like they are in a claustrophobic environment and can't move outside their boundaries. Then in Madagascar, we tended to go for wider angles and broader shots, where the characters are free to move around and experience the environment."

Johnson adds that he also used the camera to convey the size difference between the animals. "A particular challenge on Madagascar was the framing of shots that included both the locals and the zoosters. The lemurs generally come up to about Alex's knees, so you have to think about ways to either mitigate or accentuate the difference in scale. For example, when they first meet, we used extreme angles to give the perspective of these little bitty creatures looking up at these towering giants. It allowed us to frame both groups in the same composition and play up the size difference, which added to the comedy."

Kendal Cronkhite reveals that there is only one setting that represents a crossover between the zoo and the wild: the maze-like rock formations of Madagascar called the Tsingy, which designates the predator side of the island. "It's miles of gray

limestone formations that have an almost post-apocalyptic appearance to them. It's nearly devoid of plant life and the rocks have naturally been formed into these pinnacles that we felt were reminiscent of New York skyscrapers. When Alex gets in touch with his wild lion side, he retreats there and creates something of a cage for himself that feels like his enclosure in the zoo, rather than do something he'll regret."

Tom McGrath asserts, "As the saying goes, you can take the boy out of the city, but you can't take the city out of the boy. We always wanted to maintain the idea with these characters that once a New Yorker always a New Yorker, but now they are New Yorkers with the benefit of what they've learned in the wild."

Darnell affirms, "Alex finally figures out that it doesn't matter where they are as long as they are together. That's the lesson they all learn."

Soria offers, "Alex, Marty, Melman and Gloria go through a journey where they find out that it makes no difference what society says or even what Mother Nature tells you. If your friendship is strong enough, you can overcome any differences. I hope that comes through."

ABOUT THE CAST

BEN STILLER (Alex the Lion), one of today's most sought-after actors, has also enjoyed success behind the camera as a director, writer and producer. "Madagascar" marks his first foray into animated feature films.

Stiller was most recently seen in Jay Roach's comedy hit "Meet the Fockers," the sequel to the earlier smash "Meet the Parents." Also starring Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman and Barbra Streisand, "Meet the Fockers" has become the highest-grossing live-action comedy ever, bringing in more than \$500 million worldwide.

"Meet the Fockers" capped a year of unprecedented success, which also included the hits "Dodgeball: A True Underdog Story," "Starsky & Hutch," and "Along Came Polly." "Dodgeball," written and directed by Rawson Marshall Thurber and co-starring Vince Vaughn and Christine Taylor, was not only a box office success, but actually helped spawn a revival of the sport. Stiller also scored a hit as the classic television character Starsky, opposite Owen Wilson as Hutch, in the Todd Phillips-directed action comedy "Starsky & Hutch," which focused on the formation of the famed duo's partnership. Both films were produced by Stiller and his Red Hour Films partner, Stuart Cornfeld. Prior to that, Stiller starred opposite Jennifer Aniston in the romantic comedy hit "Along Came Polly," for writer/director John Hamburg.

Stiller previously co-wrote, directed, produced and starred in "Zoolander," playing the title role of an outrageous male model, whom Stiller and co-writer Drake Sather had originally created for the VH1 Fashion Awards. Stiller had made his feature film directorial debut with the widely praised comedy "Reality Bites," starring Winona Ryder and Ethan Hawke. He went on to direct "The Cable Guy," starring Jim Carrey and Matthew Broderick.

As an actor, Stiller's additional films include Wes Anderson's "The Royal Tenenbaums," as part of an all-star ensemble cast that also included Gene Hackman, Gwyneth Paltrow, Anjelica Huston, Bill Murray and Owen Wilson; "There's Something About Mary," opposite Cameron Diaz; "Keeping the Faith," with Edward Norton and Jenna Elfman; the action comedy "Mystery Men"; the biographical drama "Permanent Midnight"; Neil LaBute's "Your Friends & Neighbors"; "Zero Effect"; and David O. Russell's "Flirting with Disaster."

In 1989, Stiller directed the MTV comedy special “Back to Brooklyn,” and then created the series “The Ben Stiller Show” for Fox. A critical success, the series brought Stiller an Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing.

A native New Yorker, Stiller recently made a successful return to the stage in Neil LaBute’s “This Is How It Goes,” opposite Jeffrey Wright and Amanda Peet under the direction of two-time Tony winner George C. Wolfe, at the Public Theatre. He had made his professional acting debut on Broadway in the 1985 production of John Guare’s “The House of Blue Leaves.”

CHRIS ROCK (Marty the Zebra), who is widely recognized as one of America’s most influential comedians, is also one of its most honored, having been recognized with numerous awards, including three Emmys, two Grammys, and an American Comedy Award. He was recently seen by millions of people worldwide as the host of the 77th annual Academy Awards®, and also wrote and starred in his fourth HBO special, “Chris Rock: Never Scared.”

On the big screen, Rock next stars in the remake of the football comedy “The Longest Yard,” with Adam Sandler and Burt Reynolds.

In 2001, Rock appeared in two feature films, first starring in the romantic comedy “Down to Earth,” which he also co-wrote. Directed by Paul and Chris Weitz, the film is an updated remake of “Heaven Can Wait” with an urban twist. Later in the year, Rock produced and starred in the comedy “Pootie Tang.” In 2003, he wrote, produced, directed, and starred in the political comedy “Head of State.”

Rock previously joined the ensemble cast of Neil LaBute’s critically acclaimed dark comedy “Nurse Betty.” Rock’s other feature film credits include Kevin Smith’s “Dogma”; the hit sequel “Lethal Weapon 4”; 2002’s “Bad Company,” with Anthony Hopkins; “New Jack City,” playing a desperate crack addict, which marked his first dramatic role; “I’m Gonna Git You Sucka!,” with Keenen Ivory Wayans; and “Beverly Hills Cop II,” in which he made his feature film debut. He also lent his voice to the 1998 hit comedy “Dr. Dolittle,” and Steven Spielberg’s futuristic fantasy “A.I.”

Rock grew up in the Bedford-Stuyvesant neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. After honing his comedic skills on the comedy club circuit, he realized a long-held dream when he joined the cast of “Saturday Night Live” in 1989. In 1994, Rock emerged as a comedy star in his own right with the award-winning HBO special “Chris Rock: Big Ass Jokes.” In 1996, he scored even greater success with another HBO special, “Bring the

Pain,” which brought Rock two 1997 Emmy Awards for Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Special and Outstanding Writing. That same year, Rock also picked up an Emmy nomination for his writing on the show “Politically Incorrect.” Giving “Bring the Pain” a successful life beyond its airing on HBO, DreamWorks Records released a home video and DVD of the special, as well as a Grammy Award-winning CD.

In the wake of his two highly rated specials, Rock expanded his presence on HBO to the series “The Chris Rock Show,” which brought him a shared Emmy Award for Outstanding Writing. In addition, he received three more shared Emmy Award nominations for writing, two nominations for Outstanding Variety, Music or Comedy Series, and two individual nominations for his work as the series host.

Rock’s next HBO special, “Bigger & Blacker,” was taped on the stage of Harlem’s legendary Apollo Theatre. It also spawned a hit CD, which won a 2000 Grammy Award for Best Spoken or Comedy Album. In addition, his first book, *Rock This* (Hyperion, 1997), spent time on the bestseller lists of both *The New York Times* and *The Wall Street Journal*.

DAVID SCHWIMMER (Melman the Giraffe) is best known for his starring role on the television series “Friends,” for which he earned an Emmy nomination. Schwimmer also shared in six consecutive Screen Actors Guild Award nominations for Outstanding Ensemble in a Comedy Series for his work on “Friends.”

Schwimmer’s film credits include Mike Figgis’ “Hotel,” Ivan Reitman’s “Six Days, Seven Nights,” Bryan Singer’s “Apt Pupil,” Doug Ellin’s “Kissing a Fool” and Matt Reeves’ “The Pallbearer.” Additionally, “Duane Hopwood,” the independent feature in which Schwimmer stars as the title character, premiered to rave reviews at the 2005 Sundance Film Festival.

For television, Schwimmer has appeared in Jon Avnet’s “Uprising,” and the HBO projects “Band of Brothers” and “Breast Men.” He earlier had recurring roles on the series “NYPD Blue,” “L.A. Law” and “The Wonder Years.” Last season, he appeared as a twisted version of himself on “Curb Your Enthusiasm.”

Schwimmer has also worked extensively on the stage and will make his London debut in the world premiere of “Some Girl(s),” a new play by Neil LaBute, which opens May 24 at the Gielgud Theatre. Schwimmer has acted in and directed numerous productions with Lookingglass, the theatre company he co-founded in Chicago, including “Of One Blood,” “West,” “The Odyssey,” “The Jungle,” “In the Eye of the Beholder,” “The Master and Margarita,” “The Arabian Nights” and “The Idiot.” He most recently adapted

Studs Terkel's book *Race: How Blacks And Whites Think And Feel About The American Obsession* for the stage, and also directed the play as the premiere production for the company's new theatre on Michigan Avenue. In addition, Schwimmer starred in the premieres of Roger Kumble's "D Girl" and "Turnaround" in Los Angeles, and Warren Leight's "Glimmer Brothers" in Williamstown.

As a director, Schwimmer has helmed numerous episodes of "Friends," "Joey" and "The Tracy Morgan Show." He just finished shooting the pilot for "New Car Smell," a new half-hour series for Fox, starring Brooke Shields and Christopher McDonald. Schwimmer is also set to direct the feature "Run, Fat Boy, Run," a romantic comedy written by actor/writer Michael Ian Black.

JADA PINKETT SMITH (Gloria the Hippo) is a versatile actress whose film career has been on the fast track since her debut in "Menace II Society." She most recently co-starred with Tom Cruise and Jamie Foxx in the dramatic thriller "Collateral," for which she earned her sixth NAACP Image Award nomination for Outstanding Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture. She also starred in "The Matrix Reloaded" and "The Matrix Revolutions," the back-to-back hit sequels to the original blockbuster "The Matrix."

In 2002, she played the role of Muhammad Ali's first wife, Sonji, co-starring opposite her real-life husband, Will Smith, in the biopic "Ali." Pinkett Smith had earlier been recognized for her work in "Bamboozled," for director Spike Lee.

In 1996, she earned dual Image Award nominations: for Outstanding Actress in a Motion Picture for her work in "Set It Off," in which she starred with Queen Latifah and Vivica A. Fox; and for Outstanding Actress in a Television Movie for the acclaimed drama "If These Walls Could Talk." That same year, she received praise for holding her own against Eddie Murphy when she starred in Tom Shadyac's smash hit comedy "The Nutty Professor."

A native of Maryland, Pinkett Smith studied dance and acting at the Baltimore School of Arts and the North Carolina School of the Arts. Her big break came in 1991 when she landed a regular role on the long-running NBC series "A Different World." After two seasons on the show, she made her feature film debut in 1993's acclaimed urban drama "Menace II Society," which also marked the directorial debut of Allen and Albert Hughes.

The following year, Pinkett Smith starred in three feature films: “The Inkwel”; Doug McHenry’s “Jason’s Lyric”; and Keenen Ivory Wayans’ comedy “A Low Down Dirty Shame.” Her additional film credits include the horror film “Demon Night,” Wes Craven’s hit horror film sequel “Scream 2,” the title role in the independent film “Woo,” and the comedy “Kingdom Come,” with LL Cool J and Whoopi Goldberg, which reunited her with Doug McHenry. Pinkett Smith also had a cameo role as a young journalist in the harrowing drama “Return to Paradise,” starring Vince Vaughn, Anne Heche and Joaquin Phoenix.

Behind the camera, Pinkett Smith is currently serving as an executive producer on the independent film “Seat Filler,” and as the co-creator and executive producer on the UPN series “All of Us.” In addition, she headlines the rock band Wicked Wisdom as its lead singer.

SACHA BARON COHEN (King Julien) is better known to the public as his alter ego Ali G, who is the in-your-face host of HBO’s popular Emmy Award-nominated comedy variety/talk show “Da Ali G Show.” The show was already the number one comedy phenomenon in Baron Cohen’s native England when he brought it to the United States, where it became an instant sensation on HBO. Proving his popularity and “respeck,” as Ali would say, Harvard invited “Ali G” to deliver the 2004 commencement address.

As the title character on “Da Ali G Show,” Baron Cohen plays a wannabe gangsta hailing from the provincial London suburb Staines. As fearless as he is clueless, Ali provokes the ire of his guests by asking all the tough—and often wrong—questions, such as asking astronaut Buzz Aldrin “What it was like to walk on de sun?,” or asking the former head of the CIA, “Let’s cast our minds back to the grassy knoll, who actually shot J.R.?” Ali G has also sat down with some of the world’s most powerful people, from Pat Buchanan and Newt Gingrich, to former United Nations head Boutros Boutros Gali and former Surgeon General Dr. C. Everett Koop.

In addition to being Ali G, Cohen consistently showcases his versatility by appearing on “Da Ali G Show” as several other characters, including Borat, the sixth most famous man in the country of Kazakhstan, and Bruno, an out and proud gay fashionista from Austria whose vanity is exceeded only by his superciliousness.

Baron Cohen originated the character of Ali G in 1998 on the British television comedy “The 11 O’Clock Show.” Two years later, Channel 4 Television launched “Da

Ali G Show,” which quickly gained a cult following that grew as word of mouth spread all the way to Buckingham Palace, where the Queen of England is an acknowledged devotee of the series. Baron Cohen serves as an executive producer on the series, in addition to acting and writing for it. In 2003, HBO began airing “Da Ali G Show” in the United States.

The HBO show earned two 2003 Emmy Award nominations for Outstanding Non-Fiction Program and Outstanding Writing in a Non-Fiction Program. The show also received many accolades in the U.K. prior to its stateside debut, including two BAFTA Awards for Best Comedy Program and Best Comedy Performance for Baron Cohen.

CEDRIC THE ENTERTAINER (Maurice) is fast becoming one of the busiest comedy stars in Hollywood. He most recently starred with John Travolta in “Be Cool,” and with Tommy Lee Jones in “Man of the House.” He will next take on the iconic role of Ralph Kramden in the big-screen version of the television classic “The Honeymooners,” due out later this summer. His upcoming films also include the comedies “Flash”; “The Cleaner,” opposite Lucy Liu; and “Mr. Lucky,” in which he stars with Bruce Willis, all of which he is also producing. In addition, he will be heard in the animated features “Charlotte’s Web” and “The Proud Family Movie.” In the latter, Cedric will reprise the role of Bobby Proud from the television series “The Proud Family,” for which he won a 2003 NAACP Image Award.

Cedric first gained fame for his co-starring role on “The Steve Harvey Show,” earning a record-breaking four consecutive Image Awards for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series for his portrayal of the lovable Coach Cedric Robinson. In 2000, he became one of “The Original Kings of Comedy” in Spike Lee’s acclaimed comedy concert documentary.

Two years later, Cedric starred in the comedy “Barbershop,” which became one of the biggest sleeper hits of the year and for which he earned widespread critical and audience acclaim. He returned to star in the 2004 sequel, “Barbershop 2: Back in Business.” Also that year, he appeared in “Lemony Snicket’s A Series of Unfortunate Events,” and starred in the hit comedy “Johnson Family Vacation,” which marked Cedric’s film producing debut under the banner of his own production company, A Bird and a Bear Entertainment.

Cedric’s other film credits include “Big Momma’s House,” “Kingdom Come,” “Serving Sara” and the Coen Brothers’ “Intolerable Cruelty.” He also lent his voice

talents to the comedy hits “Dr. Dolittle 2” and “Ice Age.” Returning to television, he produced and starred in the series “Cedric The Entertainer Presents,” for which he won an AFTRA Award of Excellence and earned a People’s Choice Award nomination.

Cedric’s popularity and success extend beyond the screen. His first comedy book, *Grown Ass Man*, was released in January 2002 and sold out across the country. After Cedric’s Bud Light commercial aired during the 2001 Super Bowl, *USA Today* dubbed him Madison Avenue’s Most Valuable Player. In 1994, Cedric received The Richard Pryor Comic of the Year Award from Black Entertainment Television for his groundbreaking work as the host of “Def Comedy Jam” and BET’s “Comicview.”

ANDY RICHTER (Mort), an actor and writer, became well known to late night television audiences during his seven years as Conan O’Brien’s sidekick on NBC’s “Late Night with Conan O’Brien,” beginning with its premiere in 1993. Since his departure from the show in 2000, Richter has amassed a growing list of film and television acting credits.

He recently co-starred with Will Ferrell in the smash hit holiday comedy “Elf,” and with the Olsen twins in their comedy feature “New York Minute.” He was also seen in the independent film “Seeing Other People.” His other film work includes “My Boss’s Daughter,” with Ashton Kutcher; Keenen Ivory Wayans’ hit sequel “Scary Movie 2”; “Dr. Dolittle 2,” with Eddie Murphy; and Robert Altman’s “Dr. T and the Women,” starring Richard Gere.

In 2002, Richter returned to television to star in the Fox comedy “Andy Richter Controls the Universe,” on which he also served as a producer. Currently, he is starring in the Fox sitcom “Quintuplets,” in which he plays a father having to cope with quintuplets who have reached their teenage years.

An award-winning writer, Richter earned five consecutive Emmy Award nominations for Outstanding Writing for a Variety, Music or Comedy Program as part of the writing team on “Late Night with Conan O’Brien” during his tenure on the show. Also for his writing work on the late night show, Richter was honored by his peers with two Writers Guild of America Awards and two additional WGA Award nominations.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

ERIC DARNELL (Director/Writer) made his feature film directorial debut on “Antz,” which marked PDI/DreamWorks’ first computer-animated project. He also assisted with computer animation research and development for DreamWorks Animation’s first traditionally animated feature, “The Prince of Egypt.”

Darnell earned a BA in Broadcast Journalism from the University of Colorado and an MFA in Experimental Animation from CalArts. While completing his MFA, he was awarded filmmaking grants from both the Ahmanson Foundation and the Princess Grace Foundation. Beginning his career as a freelance animator, Darnell worked on a variety of projects, including the animated music video “Get Up” for the rock band REM.

Coming to PDI/DreamWorks in 1991, Darnell went on to helm numerous commercial and short film projects. His in-house animated short entitled “Gas Planet” garnered international recognition, including the Ottawa Animation Festival Prize for Best Computer Animation.

TOM McGRATH (Director/Writer) also provides the voice of Skipper, the leader of a band of resourceful penguins, in “Madagascar.” McGrath’s career in animation spans more than 15 years, and he has also worked extensively in live action.

His live-action feature story work includes the comedies “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” for director Ron Howard, and “Cats & Dogs.” On the animation side, McGrath served as an animator and also did storyboarding for the feature “Cool World,” and was a key animator on “Space Jam” and “Hercules and Xena – The Animated Movie: The Battle for Mount Olympus.”

For television, McGrath has worked as a director on the popular series “The Ren & Stimpy Show,” as well as various pilots for Nickelodeon. In addition, he has worked on numerous commercials and animated shorts.

MIREILLE SORIA (Producer) most recently produced DreamWorks Animation’s animated adventure “Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas.” She also produced “Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron,” which earned an Academy Award® nomination for Best Animated Feature. The latter marked her first producing credit for an animated motion picture, although she has an extensive background in live-action film and television.

Prior to taking the producing reins for “Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron,” Soria had a producing deal at Fox Family Pictures, where she produced the romantic Cinderella story “Ever After,” starring Drew Barrymore. She also executive produced the Disney Channel horror comedy “Under Wraps.”

Soria had previously held the post of vice president of production for Walt Disney Pictures from 1990 to 1995. During her tenure, she oversaw the development and production of such projects as “Cool Runnings,” “The Mighty Ducks” and its two sequels, and 1994’s live-action version of Rudyard Kipling’s “The Jungle Book.”

She had come to Disney from the Steve Tisch Company, where she was a vice president and also produced several projects. Her producing credits there included the pilot and 13 episodes of the television series “Dirty Dancing,” the telefilms “Victim of Love” and “Out on the Edge,” and the CBS Afterschool Special “Lies of the Heart.” She also developed a number of other feature film and cable and network television projects.

Soria began her career in 1982 as manager of dramatic series development at ABC. Two years later, she joined Columbia Pictures Television as director of current programs. In 1985, she returned to ABC as director of dramatic series development, and was responsible for developing the groundbreaking series “thirtysomething.”

TERESA CHENG (Co-Producer) has more than 20 years of production experience at leading film studios and digital effects production houses, as well as Canada’s largest broadcasting network. She most recently held the post of head of production for PDI/DreamWorks, overseeing all of the studio’s production efforts on a global level. She also served as the production manager for DreamWorks Animation’s Oscar®-nominated animated feature “Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron.”

Prior to joining DreamWorks Animation, she produced visual effects for numerous films, including the actioner “Batman and Robin,” at Warner Bros.; “Batman Forever” and “Ace Ventura II: When Nature Calls,” at Rhythm and Hues; and “True Lies,” at Digital Domain. Cheng also supervised the production of the first Coca-Cola commercial featuring computer-generated polar bears, and a television spot for Jeep called “Snow Covered,” which earned a Cannes Grand Prix award.

Cheng began her career in the television industry as a producer and manager at CBC Television, Canada’s largest network. She has a Bachelor of Arts in Communications from the University of Washington.

MARK BURTON (Writer) is a UK-based comedy writer with a widely varied career in film and television on both sides of the Atlantic. He has won several awards for his writing, including the British Comedy Award and the Premier Ondas Award.

Burton has written extensively for many leading British comedy shows, including “Clive Anderson Talks Back,” “Jack Dee’s Happy Hour,” “Never Mind the Buzzcocks,” “2DTV,” “Have I Got News For You” and “Spitting Image.” He was also the co-creator and co-writer of the BBC sitcom “The Peter Principle,” which starred Jim Broadbent.

In addition, Burton provided additional dialogue for the clay animation hit “Chicken Run,” from Aardman and DreamWorks Animation. He is currently working on the upcoming Aardman/DreamWorks Animation film “Wallace & Gromit – The Curse of the Were-Rabbit.”

BILLY FROLICK (Writer) made his directorial debut on the award-winning digital video feature “It Is What It Is,” which starred Jonathan Silverman and was based on Frolick’s original screenplay.

Frolick’s acclaimed 1995 book, *What I Really Want to Do is Direct: Seven Film School Graduates Go to Hollywood*, tracked seven film school graduates over three years. He is also the pseudonymous author of the book-length parodies *The Philistine Prophecy*, *Dumpisms: The Witless Wisdom of Horace Dump*, and *The Ditches of Edison County*, the last of which was a national bestseller and was translated into Japanese and Italian. His latest parody, *The Five People You Meet in Hell*, is due this spring.

Frolick’s journalism has appeared in *The New Yorker*, *Premiere*, *Movieline*, *Entertainment Weekly*, and the *Los Angeles Times*.

HANS ZIMMER (Composer) is one of the film industry’s most prolific composers, with more than 100 film scores to his credit.

In 1994, he won both an Academy Award[®] and a Golden Globe Award for his score to the animated blockbuster “The Lion King,” which also spawned one of the most successful soundtrack albums ever. Zimmer’s music for “The Lion King” continues to draw applause in the award-winning stage production of the musical, which earned the 1998 Tony Award for Best Musical, as well as a Grammy Award for Best Original Cast Album.

Zimmer has garnered six additional Academy Award[®] nominations, the latest for his “Gladiator” score, for which he also won a Golden Globe Award and earned a

Grammy Award nomination. He has also been Academy Award®-nominated for “The Prince of Egypt,” “The Thin Red Line,” “As Good As It Gets,” “The Preacher’s Wife” and “Rain Man.” Earlier this year, he earned his seventh Golden Globe nomination for his score for James L. Brooks’ comedy “Spanglish.” He had previously earned Golden Globe nominations for his work on “The Last Samurai,” “Pearl Harbor,” “Spirit: Stallion of the Cimarron” and “The Prince of Egypt.”

In addition to “Madagascar,” Zimmer’s music will be heard this year in “The Weather Man,” directed by Gore Verbinski, and the highly anticipated “Batman Begins,” the score for which he co-wrote with James Newton Howard. His long list of film credits goes on to include “The Ring Two,” “Pearl Harbor,” “Matchstick Men,” “Shark Tale,” “Black Hawk Down,” “The Ring,” “Hannibal,” “Crimson Tide,” “Thelma & Louise,” “Driving Miss Daisy,” “Mission: Impossible 2,” “A League of Their Own,” “Black Rain,” “Backdraft,” “True Romance” and “My Beautiful Launderette.”

In addition to his composing work, Zimmer heads DreamWorks’ film music division. His appointment marks the first time a composer has headed the music department of a major studio since the days of Dimitri Tiomkin at MGM and Alfred Newman at Twentieth Century Fox.

H. LEE PETERSON (Editor) previously edited the animated features “Dinosaur,” “Pocahontas,” “Aladdin” and “The Prince and the Pauper.” He had earlier served as the second assistant editor on the animated hit “The Little Mermaid.”

Peterson started his career as an art department assistant on the feature “Modern Girls.” He began his editing career as a music editor on the television movie “Elysian Fields.”

KENDAL CRONKHITE (Production Designer) came to PDI/DreamWorks in the company’s fledgling days and served as the art director on the studio’s first computer-animated film, “Antz.”

Prior to joining the company, she had worked as the art director on the stop-motion animated film “James and the Giant Peach” and as the assistant art director on Tim Burton’s “The Nightmare Before Christmas.”

Cronkhite received her B.F.A. from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California, with a major in Illustration. Beginning her career as a freelance editorial illustrator in Canada and New York, she lent her talents to the advertising

campaigns for a number of projects, including designing movie posters for such films as “Mortal Kombat” and “Clueless.”

PHILIPPE GLUCKMAN (Visual Effects Supervisor) most recently held the post of co-visual effects supervisor for the computer-animated blockbuster “Shrek 2.” He had earlier been a sequence supervisor for “Shrek,” after having been a co-visual effects supervisor on “Antz.”

Gluckman joined PDI/DreamWorks in 1994, starting as a senior animator/technical director. He worked on such projects as “Batman and Robin,” “Batman Forever,” “Marvin the Martian,” and numerous commercials.

Before coming to PDI/DreamWorks, Gluckman worked as a senior animator at Ex Machina in Paris on projects ranging from commercials to theme park rides. Gluckman began his career as a traditional 2D animator as a partner with Storyboard, and was an assistant animator at Cartoon Farm, both located in Paris. He studied at the Ecole Nationale D’Arts Appliques, Paris.

REX GRIGNON (Head of Character Animation) has been animating for more than two decades. A co-founder of PDI/DreamWorks’ character animation group, Grignon played a major role in the creation of the Emmy Award-winning television special “The Last Halloween,” “Muppet Vision 3-D,” and numerous commercial spots featuring the Pillsbury Doughboy. He left PDI briefly to work as a character animator on the very first computer-animated feature, “Toy Story,” and then returned to serve as a supervising animator on PDI/DreamWorks’ computer-animated films “Antz” and “Shrek.”

Grignon was awarded a Presidential Scholarship to work and study at the New York Institute of Technology’s Computer Graphics Laboratory, renowned for its pioneering work in CGI. He has taught character animation classes at Cogswell College in Sunnyvale, California, and the Academy of the Arts College in San Francisco. In addition, he has lectured at the American Film Institute, Stanford University, Sheridan College, The University of Washington, SIGGRAPH, and numerous animation festivals around the world.

EWAN JOHNSON (Head of Layout) came to PDI/DreamWorks in 2003 after a long tenure as a supervising layout artist at Pixar. His credits include the computer-

animated hits “Toy Story,” “Toy Story 2,” “A Bug’s Life,” “Monsters, Inc.,” and the Oscar®-winning blockbusters “Finding Nemo” and “The Incredibles.”

Before starting his career in animated features, Johnson was a software engineer in Chicago, where he helped to develop prototype digital video asset management systems.

Johnson holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the Art Institute in Chicago.

SHANNON JEFFRIES (Art Director) joined PDI/DreamWorks in 1996 as a visual development artist on the studio’s first computer-animated film, “Antz.” She later held the same post on the blockbuster hit “Shrek 2.”

Before coming to the studio, Jeffries was involved in many facets of the art world, including doing freelance work as a print media illustrator and furniture designer. Segueing to film, she wrote, directed and produced the award-winning animated short “Hats and Dogs.” Following that, Jeffries began designing for films and has worked on several animated feature films for various studios.

Jeffries earned her B.F.A. in Illustration from the Art Center College of Design in Pasadena, California.