



Roxy and the Rubens from Ireland's Magma Films and Gemany's Ulysses Filomproduktion

Looking forward to Cartoon Forum

Since 1990 Cartoon Forum has been bringing together European producers, broadcasters and potential financing partners. Ahead of this year's event in Rogaland, Norway, TBI looks at the shows that will be on offer and talks to producers, distributors and broadcasters about the event itself.

Cartoon Forum differentiates itself from every other event in the kids TV calendar by being neither a festival, a conference or a programming market. Instead it's a coproduction forum, allowing producers to pitch their show to a room of potential broadcast and financing partners.

Since that first event in Lanzarote, Spain, in 1990, over 300 of the projects

pitched, with a combined budget of over €1 billion (US\$1.4b), have been broadcast or are in production.

The organisers of the event, which is ultimately funded by the European Union, claim it has played an "essential role" in revitalising and creating a vibrant European animation industry.

This year 90 projects were submitted and whittled down to a final complement of 63. The rules hold that each project

must have a sponsor, indicating a preliminary interest, which is perhaps the least of the challenges, given that, as one well-known distributor says, "we all know each other and we are generally happy to write letters for each other."

With the increasing number of kids producers, it's a rare chance for those selected to get their trailers in front of a room of potential buyers. The organisers weight their selection towards projects from the



Clockwise from top left: *Silly Bitty Bunny*, *Ella and Aleks* and *Laika, Space Adventures*

EU-accession states and countries that have less developed animation sectors.

A cursory look at the list of projects for this year reveals the involvement of producers from several countries not traditionally associated with animation. There are, for example, three projects (*The Arctic Ring*, *Schh* and *How to be a Grown-Up*) with Estonian involvement, one (*Ninon*) with a Latvian producer attached and two (*Aztronimo* and *Sbrain*) with Luxembourgian producers on board.

But it is producers from France, the European country with the most developed cartoon sector, that are the most represented. In total, 28 French companies are involved with selected projects, underlining the importance of having a French coproduction partner and the strength of

France's kids production sector.

To put the French involvement into context, the next largest representation is from Spain, which has 16 producers involved, ahead of Germany with nine, the UK with eight and Belgium with seven production companies in attendance.

The event is, arguably, less useful for Europe's largest producers, in terms of pitching at least. "We really like the event, but we're in the fortunate position, as Aardman, in that we can get meetings already," says Miles Bullough, head of broadcast at Aardman Animations. "We've had *Chop Socky Chooks* and *Little J* at Cartoon, but for us I don't think it was the making or breaking of those projects."

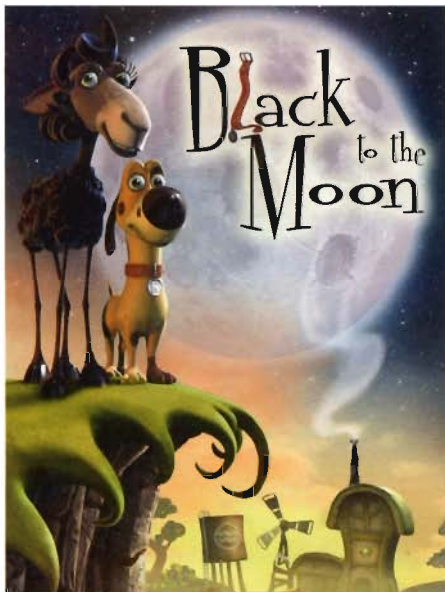
The larger producer/distributors can, however, use Cartoon to get on board

other producers' projects. Aardman, for example, picked up international rights to Hungarian producer Studio Baestarts' series *Log Jam* outside France where it was already presold, following a conversation at last year's Forum.

This year's line-up is full of small production companies although some of Europe's bigger companies are pitching, including Spain's BRB (*Little Sapiens*), Cromosoma (*Aztronimo*), Imira (*Copy Cut*) and Neptuno (*Gaga Astronaut Professor*), France's Alphanim (*Pigly*), Millimages (*Mon Robot et Moi*), Xilam (*Gaga Astronaut Professor*) and Belgium's Studio 100 (*The Story isn't Over Yet*). There is also evidence of UK producer/distributor Target Entertainment's foray into kids TV (*Skybabies*).

As well as a healthy dose of scepticism – "to be honest, a lot of the projects aren't very good" – says one distributor heading to Cartoon to acquire rights – there is a genuine and widespread affection for the event. Its relaxed and sociable atmosphere is one reason. Attendees are corralled from sessions to evening social activities and getting to talk to peers outside of a pitch session or formal meeting is, most agree, both unusual and helpful.

Timing-wise, it's useful to present projects in September as it can act as a starting point for negotiations that will continue at



Clockwise from top left: Q Pootle, Skybabies, Granny O'Grim, Krazy Kathy and Black to the Moon

MIPCOM Jr. a few weeks later. Having to submit projects in April, however, is a test. Miles Bullough says: "That's one of the challenges, you are working months and months in advance and a lot can happen to a project in five months." But Bullough is very positive about the event. "A big, big plus is the wonderful atmosphere. It's reasonably contained, there's a good standard of people there and they are very focused. The thirty people you need to know to get a TV show made are there."

The event is funded by the EU Media programme and designed for European producers. But international producers can attend if they are attached to a copro-

duced product. It's tough to get an invite for kids TV people outside of Europe, but worthwhile if you can get in, says Marie-Claude Beauchamp, president of Canadian producer Carpe Diem. "It's one of the best platforms in the animation industry. You get a full audience to give you ideas and feedback about your show, there's time for a full-fledged analysis of a property. You leave with so much more information about a property than at any other event. It's also great place to find out what the latest trends are."

The feedback for producers has been improved in recent years with comment forms for audience members.

Carpe Diem was at the Forum as a potential partner for Imira's *Lucky Fred*, although it could not, ultimately, find a Canadian home for the 52x12mins series. Beauchamp won't be at the Forum this year although Carpe Diem is involved with *Silly Billy Bunny*, which is being presented by Spain's Planet Nemo.

So, what use is Cartoon Forum for an established pay TV channel? "For Nickelodeon International it's very important," says Nina Hahn, senior VP, international production and development for Nickelodeon. "It's one of the few things that is more of a festival and less of a market, so you really get a feeling that content is king and producers are there to have a real conversation about content in a way people don't do elsewhere."

Nick takes a sizable contingent comprising a couple of people from international, three to four from Nick UK and

Cartoon Forum full line-up 2009

Alfie Atkins (13x13mins) - Maipo Film & TV Produksjon, A. Film, Moviola Film & Television

And Yet it Moves – Galileo (13x13mins) - Gruppo Alcuni

Aztronimo (52x6'30mins) - Cromosoma, LuxAnimation, 2 Minutes

Babboo (26x6mins) - Happy Flyfish, Kool Produktion

Beiaard (TBC) - Beast Animation, Les Films du Nord

Billion Dollar Bow Wow (52x22mins) - Pesky Productions

Black to the Moon - The Series (26x11mins) - Baleuko, Art'mell, Ulysses Filmproduktion

Blinklife (26x60mins) - Le Singe Media

Boo Boo Dolls (52x7mins) - Hahn Film, Film A/S

Bru & Bla (26x7mins) - Zebra Animation, Art'mell

Chick in the Music School (13x13mins) - Skiba Arts

Chico Chica Boumba (52x4mins) - Intervalism, 2 Minutes

Copy Cut (52x13mins) - Normaal Animation

Crocco and Dillo (52x13mins) - Cartoon One, Tiburón de Animación

Cuchoocastle (78x7mins) - Samka Productions

Dixiland (26x4mins) - T-Rex Digimation

Dodu - The Cardboard Boy (26x12mins) - Sardinha em Lata

Dustbunnies (26x10mins) - SquareZero

Ella and Aleks (10x7mins) - Bronson Club

Escape Hockey (13x13mins) - Enne Entertainment, Gpm Digital Entertainment Factory, Sardinha em Lata, Montjuïc Entertainment

Gaga' Astronaut Professor (52x7mins) Musicartoon, Neptuno, Xilam Animation

Girls Things! (26x11mins) - Tomavistas

Glumpers (104x1'30mins) - Motion Pictures

Granny O'Grimm (26x11mins) - Brown Bag Films, The Big B Animation Co., HRTV

Happiest (52x7mins) - Anera Films

Happiness is Good for You (13x7mins) - Xbo Films

How to be a Grown-Up (26x6mins) - A. Film Estonia

Inky (26x7mins) - Nordisk Film & TV A/S

Kinky & Cosy (52x3mins) - Ellipsanime Productions, Belvision

Kiwi & Strit (13x5'30mins) - Copenhagen Bombay

Krazy Kathy (26x10mins) - Kool Produktion

Laika, Space Adventures (52x11mins) - Hampa Studio

Little Chicks (32x11mins) - Blue Spirit Animation, BE Films

Little Sapiens (52x6mins) - Cross River Productions, 2 Minutes, BRB Internacional

Mary Scary (52x13mins) - 12 & 13, KBP

Moe and Lou from Mars (78x3'30mins) - Futurikon

Molusco (52x13mins) - Je Suis Bien Content

Mon Robot et Moi (52x13mins) - Millimages

Ninon (52x7mins) - Ciel de Paris, Nexus Factory, JetMedia

Pau's World (13x7mins) - Ecosystem, Pigmeos Animación

Pebble Bay Ponies (26x10mins) - HRTV Ltd

Pigly (78x7mins) - Gaumont -Alphanim

Q Pootle (52x11mins) - Snapper Productions

R.I.P. - Requiem for a Sucker (15x7mins) - Mona Lisa Production

Roxy and the Rubens (26x26mins) - Magma Films, Ulysses Filmproduktion, Ulysses Films

Rumms & Klara (26x13mins) - Scopas Medien

Sbrain (26x13mins) - Gertie Srl, Editions Averbode, La Fabrique d'Images, CoToon

Schh (26x5mins) - A. Film, Hahn Film, Film Estonia

Silly Bitty Bunny (78x3'30mins) - Planet Nemo Animation

SKeT (26x13mins) Panache Animation

Skybabies (52x10mins) - Target Entertainment

Survival Kit (78x4mins) - Kit 4 Kids, Caribara Animation, Volya Films

The Arctic Ring (13x7mins) - West Highland Animation, Studio Nukufilm OÜ, Camera Cagliostro

The Bus Company (26x10mins) - Farsno

The Delirious Tales (52x3mins) - Digit Anima, Fargo, Nadasdy Film

The Flying Squirrels (26x13mins) - Mago Audiovisual Production, Eager Films, Magoproductio

The Howoldies (78x1mins) - Somuga Produktora, Basora S.A.R.L.

The Secret Life of Suckers (104x2mins) - Screen 21

The Story isn't Over Yet (26x7mins) - Benece Produccions, Studio100, Casa Magica

The Viking Academy (26x13mins) - SF Norge, Svensk Filmindustr, Juonifilmi, SF Film Production

The Winter Ghost (TBC) - Epidem ZOT,

Tikko, Toni & the Corkodile (26x5mins) - Elevisio Animation

Tom & John (78x7mins) - TeamTO

generally someone from the channels in France, Germany or Italy.

The potential financing partners might have already seen the projects, depending upon the stage of development they have reached. "Some projects are at an early stage and some aren't," Hahn says. "Some have full pilots and are fairly developed - they fall into a pre-buy camp. Other projects are at a very early stage and they are the ones at my end of things. If you see something you like, then yes,

you go for it. It can get competitive." This year Nickelodeon is shopping for character driven, boy/girl shows that reflect a kid point of view.

Cartoon Network also sends a handful of people, one of whom is acquisitions manager Richard Rowe. "We normally send three people," he explains. "There are three screenings going on at any one time and we like to have someone at every one of them."

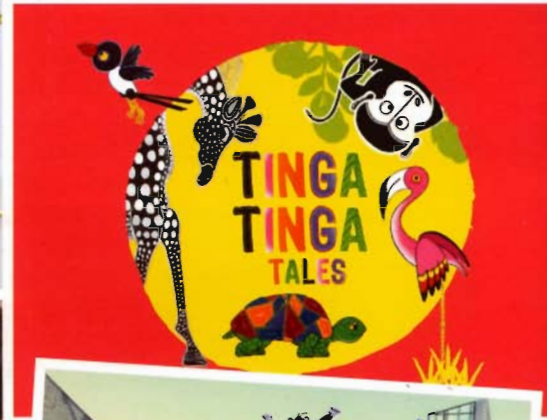
The fact that the big international pay

TV kids networks, with channels all over the world, invariably want global rights can be an issue, given that some projects come to the table with broadcast partners already attached.

"You'll see a pitch and then find one of the key territories has been sold already, which can be frustrating. We start from a position of wanting pan-European rights," Rowe says. This year Cartoon is shopping for comedy and comedy action toons and preschool.

Cartoon Forum: the story so far...

- 2008 Ludwigsburg, Germany
- 2007 Catalunya, Spain
- 2006 Pau, France
- 2005 Kolding, Denmark
- 2004 Santiago de Compostela, Spain
- 2003 Varese, Italy
- 2002 Eryri, Wales
- 2001 Bayern, Germany
- 2000 Gotland, Sweden
- 1999 Córdoba, Spain
- 1998 Syros, Greece
- 1997 Arles, France
- 1996 Galway, Ireland
- 1995 Turku - Finland
- 1994 Açores, Portugal
- 1993 Inverness, Scotland
- 1992 Firenze, Italy
- 1991 St-Malo, France
- 1990 Lanzarote, Spain



Previous Cartoon Forum pitches that have since been picked up by broadcasters, clockwise from top left: Alphanim's *Hairy Scary*, TV loonland's *Raymond*, Tiger Aspect's *Tinga Tinga Tales*, Aardman's *Chop Socky Chooks*, Imira's *Sandra the Fairytale Detective*, Monster Animation's *Fluffy Gardens* and Jam Media's *Roy* **TBI**