

7 March 2006

CLASSIC CHILDREN'S BOOK COMES TO TELEVISION FOR CBBC, PBS KIDS GO!sm CHANNEL, NETWORK TEN AND NICKELODEON AUSTRALIA

Graeme Base's international best-selling picture book **Animalia** will come to life in a 40 x half-hour, high-end CGI animation series developed for television by Australia's BAFTA Award winning Burberry Productions and the Emmy Award winning team at PorchLight Entertainment in Los Angeles. Executive Producers are Ewan Burnett, Murray Pope, Graeme Base, Bruce Johnson and Tom Ruegger.

"**Animalia** is the most ambitious animated television series ever produced in Australia", said Burberry's Ewan Burnett. High quality CGI animation will allow us to maintain the rich imagery and whimsical humour of Graeme Base's picture book, a perennial favourite with millions of children across the globe, while re-interpreting the world created in the book as a place of endless adventure and entertainment.

Animalia will be broadcast on CBBC in the UK; Network Ten and Nickelodeon in Australia; the PBS KIDS GO! 24-hour digital channel in the United States. Negotiations with a major broadcaster in Canada are expected to be concluded soon. The television series will be distributed internationally by BBC Worldwide and in North America by PorchLight Entertainment.

"We are thrilled to be in partnership with such an outstanding group of production partners", said Michael Carrington, Head of Animation at CBBC.

"PBS is excited to bring **Animalia** to early elementary school children in the US via the PBS KIDS GO! Channel, a new 24-hour digital channel launching in fall, 2006", said Lesli Rotenberg, Senior Vice President, PBS Brand Management and Promotion.

"Network Ten's goal is to build solid kids' entertainment across all genres and we are thrilled to be associated with such a high-end animated program like **Animalia**. We believe it will deliver a unique experience to our young Australian audience", said Cherrie Bottger, Network Ten's Network Manager, Children's Programming.

Animalia received international acclaim when it was first published in 1986 and has since achieved classic status with worldwide sales of more than three million copies. Graeme Base is one of the world's leading creators of children's books, with regular appearances on the New York Times best-seller list.

"**Animalia** is a many-layered world of detail, imagination and humour", said Graeme Base. Capturing the spirit of the book has been central to our efforts, and seeing it come to life on the screen is tremendously exciting.

The series features two contemporary kids, Zoe and Alex, who visit the extraordinary land of **Animalia**, a spectacular place inhabited by talking animals from the pages of Graeme Base's classic book. Mysterious events have undermined the very fabric of Animalian civilisation and Zoe and Alex and their new best friends, Gogo and Iggy (a huge green gorilla and a small but heroic iguana) will do everything they can to restore peace and order to **Animalia**.

Continued next page...

Burberry Productions Pty Ltd
Level 1 462 City Road
South Melbourne Vic 3205 Australia
T (+61 3) 9693 0600
F (+61 3) 9693 0633
E info@burberry.com.au
W www.burberry.com.au
ABN 90 061 413 090

Animalia release

Animalia blends comedy, adventure and mystery in its stories, targeting six to nine-year-olds. But, like the original picture book, it will entertain the whole family. The episodes will also open young viewers eyes to the vast power of language and introduce them to the importance of communication skills.

The 40 x half-hour series will be animated at Photon VFX studios in Queensland, Australia and Absolute Digital Pictures in Glasgow, Scotland. **Animalia** will be in production for eighteen months, using the talents of some of the world's best CG animators.

CBBC's Michael Carrington added: "We are convinced that in combining the UK's Absolute Digital Pictures' expertise in CGI series animation with Australia's Photon VFX strength in feature animation we will bring something quite extraordinary to CBBC's audiences. **Animalia** is sure to be a ground-breaking animation series."

"I have been a big fan of Graeme Base's **Animalia** for many years", said PorchLight's Bruce Johnson. "When Burberry offered us the chance to help develop this series with them, we jumped at the opportunity. Bringing a writer with Tom Ruegger's skill and sense of humour to the development process has helped make this an exceptionally strong co-production and we're excited to be part of it."

"Our goal is to re-create the rich, imaginative artistic style of the book, while also creating a definitive animation style that will be unique to the **Animalia** television series, added executive producer Murray Pope.

Henry Tefay, Head of Production at Pacific Film and Television Commission said, "The fact that we were able to facilitate this high-end CGI animation series and bring it to Queensland provides an exciting opportunity for our companies, including Photon VFX, on the world stage. This ground-breaking series will be a fabulous showcase for the quality, creativity and technological capabilities of our Queensland talent."

Animalia began pre-production in February, 2006.

For further information contact

Shirley Hardy-Rix, Burberry Productions

T (+ 61 3) 9693 0600

M (+ 61) 412 057 288

E susan@burberry.com.au / publicity@burberry.com.au

or...

David Bynder, PorchLight Entertainment

T (+ 1 310) 477 8400 ext 269

E dbynder@porchlight.com

media release