



When Only the Best is Good Enough!

With over 300 episodes of award-winning television and successful licensing programs, Toronto-based Radical Sheep Productions has grown to be one of the most highly acclaimed children's content producers in North America. The creation of enduring characters and stories lies at the heart of Radical's achievements. Currently, the team is working away at the second season of the preschool series *Stella and Sam* and they are enjoying the success of the first season, which airs on Disney Junior Canada. Based on Marie-Louise Gay's best-selling book series *Stella and Sam*, *Stella and Sam* is the first foray into animation for Radical Sheep. One of the company's other major achievements is *The Big Comfy Couch*, a Gemini-award winning series for preschoolers, which airs on Treehouse in Canada and PBS in the US and around the world. Among its credits, Radical Sheep has also executive produced four seasons of the hilarious and quirky adult comedy series *Puppets Who Kill*.

As President, John Leitch manages the business of Radical Sheep and oversees corporate growth. He acts as Executive Producer for *Stella and Sam* and also oversees the management and sales of Radical's properties, both domestic and foreign. Additional key members of the *Stella and Sam* team include Michelle Melanson, Supervising Producer; Jain Dickson, Producer; Raymond Jafelice, Supervising Director; as well as Bob Ardiel, Story Editor.

The *Stella and Sam* book series offers a colorful and textured look and feel that gives characters a heart-warming and soft touch. Wanting to preserve Gay's unique style, Radical Sheep needed to team up with an animation studio that would deliver the quality they required at the right cost. This is how **Mercury Filmworks**, one of Canada's premier studios, was chosen for their animation production services. "I had worked with the great team at Mercury in the past and trusted they would bring this much beloved property to life for us", explains Michelle Melanson.

"Knowing the quality that comes from using Toon Boom Harmony, it was important to find a studio that had many talented artists who knew how to push the limits and get the most from the software. And for us Mercury was that studio," continues Michelle.

Once on board, Mercury Filmworks assigned their most seasoned team members to take care of the project, namely Dave Merritt, Director; Bryan Popowich, Vice-President, Production and Liane Savoie and Megan Ferguson, Animation Supervisors.

Produced entirely using Toon Boom Harmony, *Stella and Sam*'s first season is comprised of 26 x 11 minute episodes that are already airing on Disney Junior Canada while the second season is now in production on another 26 episodes.

Before the animation process begins, the Radical Sheep team supervises the script writing, runs the voice records, and produces the nat pauses in Toronto. As the records and nat pauses are completed, they are then sent to the Mercury team in Ottawa.



Throughout the process there is a constant communication between Radical Sheep and the Mercury team. At each stage approvals are done by Radical Sheep while Mercury completes the revisions.

While the storyboard is done by a freelance storyboard artist contracted by Radical Sheep, the entire animation production process is carried out at Mercury, including:

- Episodic Design
- Storyboard Supervision and Leica
- Episodic Color
- Location Layout
- Background Color
- Key Artwork and 2D Setup
- Animation of Each Episode
- FX Animation
- Compositing of Each Episode
- Retakes and Locking of Final Picture

Finally, post-production begins in Toronto and is supervised by Radical Sheep.

All team members have clear roles in order to ensure a smooth process throughout the entire production:

Radical Sheep Team:

John Leitch

Manages business affairs and oversees all creative

Michelle Melanson

Liaises with broadcast executives and creator, oversees budgets, schedules, and all creative

Jain Dickson

Liaises with Mercury team and the director, oversees day to day operations of the production

Ray Jafelice

Oversees creative elements of the production

Bob Ardiel

Manages writers, story edits and writes scripts

Mercury Filmworks Team:

Dave Merritt

Oversees all aspects of the animation production process, including design, backgrounds, colour, and animation

Bryan Popowich

Manages the whole team and production at Mercury, liaises with the Radical Sheep team

Liane Savoie & Megan Ferguson

Oversees the animation team and ensures that the animation is delivered at the highest standard and is on time



From left to right: Heather Wilson, John Leitch, Amigo, Jain Dickson, Michelle Melanson.

Bryan Popowich comments: "With Harmony, we have furthered our level of efficiency within our pipeline and simultaneously, increased our standards of producing quality animation."

Radical Sheep Productions is a production company focused on creating quality content for children and youth. John Leitch and Michelle Melanson, the VP of Development and Production, are actively developing, pitching and exploring co-production partners, especially in the genre of animation. Based on their successful track record, Radical Sheep will surely deliver more wonder and magic to the young viewers for many years to come. •

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