



## Lucky Fred Rocks on Harmony



Barcelona-based production and distribution company, **Imira Entertainment** is one of Spain's leading companies specializing in youth programming. Imira's projects have universal appeal due to their innovative content for kids with strong designs and editorial lines. Keeping up with the latest technology, its productions are developed for cross-media exposure such as TV, video, licensing, mobile, smart phone, online, merchandising and publishing. Imira Entertainment has a worldwide distribution catalogue of over 4000 half hour premium kids programming, including animated feature films.



Imira's track record is a great testament to the quality of its highly-experienced management team. CEO **Sergi Reigt** and **Myriam Ballesteros**, Creative Director, have more than 20 years successful experience in the animation industry. The production team includes some of the industry's most prestigious scriptwriters, who have participated on series like *Futurama*, *Phineas & Ferb*, *Penguins of Madagascar* and *Jimmy Neutron*, among others, as well as a Spanish scriptwriter who has written for successful shows such as *Lola & Virginia* and *Sandra, Fairytale Detective*.

Having implemented the Toon Boom pipeline with Storyboard Pro and Harmony, Imira is all set to create their new high-calibre project titled *Lucky Fred*, a 52 twelve minute episodes series that combines advanced cut-out techniques with frame-by-frame animation. A co-production of Imira Entertainment, Televisió de Catalunya (TV3), RAI Fiction and Top Draw Animation, this project has a budget of 5.5 million euros.

Disney has participated with the development and production of *Lucky Fred*, and has acquired the broadcasting rights in several of the 150 countries where it has already been sold. Nickelodeon has acquired broadcasting rights for the series in Benelux, Scandinavia, Latin America, South East Asia and South Korea; Disney Channel will have the rights in Spain, France, Germany, Italy, India and Australia; TF1 will have the rights for France and RAI for Italy. *Lucky Fred* will be on air on Q4 premier in Spain.



From left to right, back row to front row: Alexander Lorena, Javier Galdos, Richard Cretenze, Javier Cuesta, Patxi Santamaria, Julian Larrauri, Marcos Gonzalvez, Tathiana Schorr, Inaki Amurrio, Myriam Ballesteros, Ramir Medina, Ferdinand Lorena.

The series follows the comic adventures of Fred, an ordinary 13-year-old boy who accidentally became the owner of a super-powered, shape-shifting robot who can, with a simple voice command, turn into any object Fred can dream of. The robot's real name is Anihilator 9-0-9-0-9-0-niner, but he answers to the name Fred gave him — "Friday". Before he veered off-course, Friday was sent to the Earth and was intended for Fred's new next-door neighbour Braianna, a weird girl from his class whose actual identity is Agent Brains — a highly skilled member of a secret, intergalactic security force called 'the Protectors'. Brains is the Protector assigned to the Earth, and routinely gets called to save the Earth before an alien attack becomes public knowledge.





production process, we can maximize Harmony's integrated pipeline, by producing faster at a higher quality. We also appreciate a lot having such a powerful compositing engine built-in Harmony, all changes are real-time," he continued.

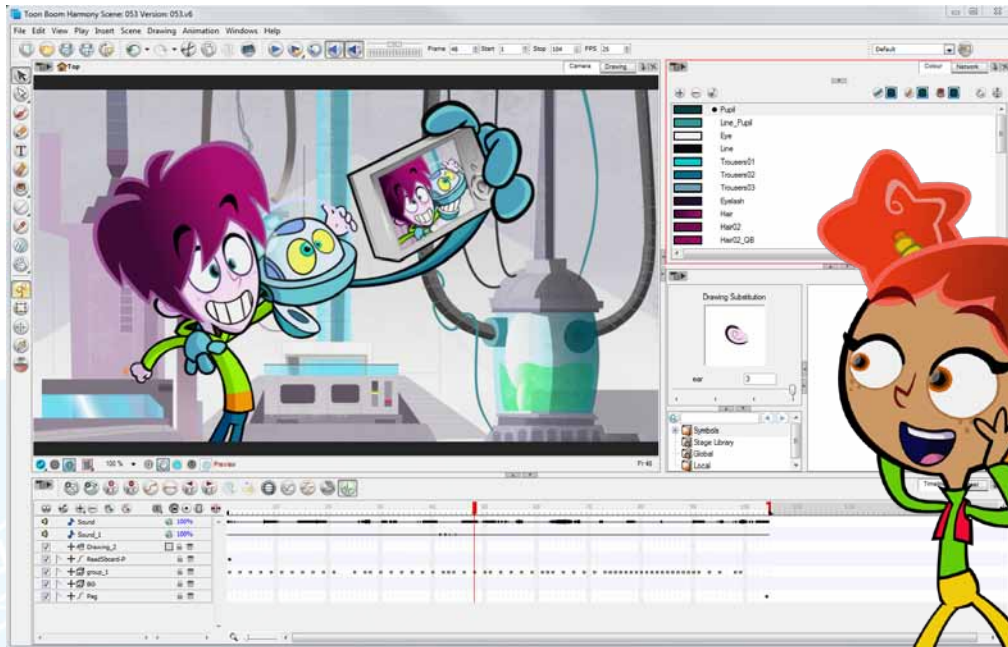
Patxi went over the entire production process: "Disney is tightly involved throughout the production. We send Disney UK the animatics in QuickTime format for comments and final approval. All storyboard artists use Storyboard Pro, it is very handy and easy to understand the process. Changes are easy, especially if you use the Cintiq! The storyboards are very complete, they almost look like layouts. Storyboard Pro is convenient for the Animation Director to make comments and corrections. All action notes and dialogs are also entered so that when they export each project as a CSV file, they can recover the production information into their in-house database system, showing which character in which scene. It is very practical to manage assets and content. Once approved, each project is exported directly to Harmony to recover the file structure, timing and camera information."

Fred, Friday and Brains are a trio of loyal friends who have fun together, navigate middle-school together, and save the planet together. While Fred and Friday are always finding the fun in everyday life, Brains strives to keep her identity secret and the aliens' bottoms kicked.

To date, 34 episodes remain to be produced between Imira, at their Vitoria (Spain) facility, and **Oasis Animation** in Montreal. While pre-production, final compositing and post-production are handled by Imira, the animation production and compositing are taken care of by Oasis. Final delivery is scheduled for May 2012. Overall, this production employs a mix of 50 permanent and freelance artists in Spain, as well as 44 animators, 5 background artists, 5 riggers and 4 production staff in Montreal.

Patxi Santamaria, Head of Production (and a Flash power user) explained how challenging and complex it became to use Flash to create projects requiring such a high level of quality and a sleek traditional look. "We have done 3 series in Flash and with the last one, we simply hit a wall. It was too hard to achieve the quality we wanted using Flash. That was our opportunity to adopt the Toon Boom pipeline and we have not looked back since then," he explains. "It is much faster to work in Harmony, the production time is significantly reduced. With a well-run pre-





At this point Oasis takes over and starts producing the animation. "The team begins with the posing, some models and specific backgrounds. Once all items are approved, they start building the asset library and rigging. Oasis sends the source files to Imira for comments. We simply add a layer on top of the scenes to put our comments and generate a template that we send back to Oasis for reference. Then, the team is able to implement all the requested changes and deliver the final version via FTP. The process works really well," stated Patxi.

"Our goal is to produce Season II of *Lucky Fred*. Considering the extensive asset library we have built in Season I and our proficiency with rigging techniques, we feel we will be even more efficient. In addition, we would be using Harmony 9, taking advantage of the 2D and 3D integration. This will enable us to push the quality envelope even further", concluded Patxi.

As far as cross-media development goes for *Lucky Fred*, here is what Myriam Ballesteros explained:

"All the projects we work on are designed for multiple platforms. They are conceived for all kinds of distribution windows and they have very flexible formats, adapted to the needs of the different platforms. The series will be supported by a licensing and merchandising roll out and we are also developing interactive games for the whole family to play, which will be available via Facebook and both the broadcasters and *Lucky Fred* websites. There will also be a geo-localised cell phone application with missions for fans to track down and neutralize aliens in exchange for prizes including exclusive collectables and discounts for local attractions. It's a fascinating treasure hunt that the whole family can be involved in."

Imira Entertainment certainly has all the ingredients to be successful with *Lucky Fred* as well as all of its other undertakings. With such passion, dedication and aspiration to high standards, the company's future bodes well for great hits to come.

