



ANIMAE CARIBE IS HERE!

Animation Festival Launched at St James Amphitheatre

Port-of-Spain, September 23, 2008 – Animae Caribe, the only animation and new media festival in the Caribbean region, was launched before an appreciative crowd of professional animators, students of animation and the general public at the St. James Amphitheatre last evening. The launch was free to the public and featured the ever popular chalk art and screenings of some of this year's top entries for the Animae Awards, entertainment in the form of pan, hip hop and rapso and free food and wine. The festival, which runs until September 27th, is part of the Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival and is being sponsored by the University of Trinidad and Tobago, the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company and Toon Boom.

Festival Director, Camille Selvon Abrahams, opened the night's proceedings by offering a warm welcome to attendees which included many international guests. Some of the world's most talented animators and others in the field of entertainment from as far afield as Europe, the UK, Africa, the United States and the Caribbean are in the country to share knowledge and ideas with a new crop of animators. Joel Kuwahara, line producer from the *Simpson's Movie* was on hand for the launch, along with world renowned animator/visual artist, Max Hattler, and linguistics professor and expert on the work of Tex Avery, Pierre Floquet. They are part of an impressive line-up of professionals who will host workshops and discussions on different aspects of animation in the coming week.

Professor Michael Smith, Head of the Digital Media Studies and Multi Media Studies programmes at UTT brought greetings on behalf of the university. Professor Smith underscored the importance of the Festival and UTT's commitment to growing the animation industry in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as the wider Caribbean, by continuing to expand its roster of animation study programmes.

The entertainment then continued with a performance from local hip-hop group, Spot Rushaz, one of the most popular, successful and long-standing hip-hop entities in the Caribbean. The group comprised of Nigel "BDangerous" Telesford and Wade "TIM Starr" Christian, also featured the talented dancehall artiste, Clearey "Meet Source" Mc Knight. Brother Resistance rounded out the evening's entertainment. He praised the work of Festival organizers and encouraged the participants to not be afraid of expressing themselves through their art. He then wowed the crowd with a stirring rendition of his rapso hit *Mother Earth*.

The casual and folk-like atmosphere of the evening was enhanced by the availability of free food and wine and balloon art for the kids. Guests then settled in to view a selection of local and international animated short films.

On Thursday the Animae Caribe Moving Caravan goes to Movie Towne for a special screening of the work of Academy Award winning Animator Daniel Greaves. These screenings from 6 – 9pm will involve a question and answer period with the Director himself and the cost of entrance is \$20.00.

The festival will close on Friday at the St James Amphitheatre, where the space will be converted into an impressive outdoor cinema and community lounge where animators and aspiring artists can meet to discuss their craft, get information and view short animated films from some of the most acclaimed animators. World Animations from Cuba will be featured on Friday. Even though the country of Cuba undergoes economic hardships, native animation continues to thrive. Two of Cuba's most successful animators, **Alexander Rodriguez** and **Mario Rivas**, will share some of their most beautiful and interesting work using computers, clay and drawn animation.

On Friday 26th, a School's Fair will be held at the UTT's O'Meara campus. Some 700 primary, secondary and tertiary-level students, the largest gathering in Animaes history, will come together for chalk art, robotics and flip book displays as well as to view screenings of animated films created from their peers. Joel Kuwahara will also be on hand to do a presentation for the students. Also on Friday from 5:30 pm, World Animation, featuring the island of Cuba, will hold the spotlight with a screening of the innovative and pioneering work of master animators Alexander Rodriguez and Mario Rivas. The screening will be held at the St James Amphitheatre and admission is free.

Animaes Caribe will conclude on Saturday 27th with a Gala and the presentation of Awards to some of the best animators from the region and around the world.

ABOUT ANIMAE CARIBE

Now in its seventh year, Animaes Caribe is an annual festival for the animation industry. The goal of the festival is to propel the animation and new media industry of Trinidad and Tobago into the forefront of this region's multi-billion dollar industry, as well as establish a thriving arts and animation movement in the Caribbean. The Festival includes a series of workshops given by prominent animators, film screenings, and a Gala Awards Ceremony honouring the best of the best in animation throughout the Caribbean and the world. Sponsors for 2008 include The University of Trinidad and Tobago, the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company, and Toon Boom. For further information: www.animaecaribe.com.