



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Animae Caribe 2009 Opens:

THE FUTURE IS BRIGHT FOR CARIBBEAN ANIMATION

September 30, 2009: An impressive group of industry professionals, educators, up and coming animators, avid supporters and corporate sponsors from Trinidad and Tobago as well as other parts of the world gathered together at the NALIS building in Port of Spain today to usher in Animae Caribe 2009. This is the eighth year that the Animation and New Media Festival is being held and this year organizers truly have cause to celebrate. The Festival has grown larger and larger each year and is garnering an ever-increasing base of support from both the Government and private enterprise, including Bmobile, First Citizens Bank, The Trinidad Guardian Newspaper and GIE Network Magazine, the Hyatt Regency Hotel, NIHERST, TEMPO, the Royal College of Art and NALIS. These organizations join longstanding sponsors which include UTT, The Trinidad and Tobago Film Festival, Toon Boom Animations, Full Circle Productions, Colthrust PR and SightFACTORY Web Development.

Speakers at today's opening were optimistic and enthusiastic about the future of the animation industry, each pledging their support to ensure that its potential in the Caribbean is fully realized. Ms. Donna Scoon Moses from the Ministry of Science, Technology and Tertiary Education brought greetings on behalf of the Minister, the Hon. Christine Kangaloo. Also speaking were Professor Michael Smith, Vice President of Digital Media Studies at UTT; Carla Foderingham, CEO of the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company and Ms. Joan Stewart Voglesang, President and Chief Executive Officer, of Toon Boom Animation Inc., a multimillion dollar international animation technology provider. Each spoke with excitement about the progress that has been made in the development of the Caribbean Animation industry since the advent of Animae Caribe eight years ago - particularly in the area of education and training.

Ms. Scoon Moses congratulated the Festival founders on their hard work and dedication and reasserted the Government's commitment to encouraging training and innovation through the Ministry's Retraining Programme in association with Full Circle Productions (the country's only animation studio, headed by Mrs. Selvon Abrahams) as well as through the development of national and international standards for the industry so that trainees' qualifications will be recognized and accepted around the world.

CEO of the Trinidad and Tobago Film Company, Ms. Foderingham, fresh off a successful hosting of the Trinidad Film Festival spoke of the role Animae Caribe has played in bringing the animation industry to the next level. She stressed the importance maintaining high



standards for the industry and underscored the Film Company's role in supporting local animators with additional training and production resources. Echoing Ms. Foderingham's sentiments was Professor Michael Smith of UTT, who along with Camille Selvon Abrahams is responsible for training the next generation of local animators through the UTT's Digital Media Programme. He also stressed that sustainability for the animation industry would only come through the development of proper industry standards which his department at UTT was working hard to ensure.

As CEO of Toon Boom Animation Inc., one of the largest animation software companies in the world, Mrs Joan Steward Voglesang is all about the business of animation. She made it a point to stress how much potential she believed there was for the continued development of the Caribbean Animation industry - so much so that her company is embarking on a co-production initiative with local animators and others involved in the industry.

Along with specially invited speakers, other guests of the Festival were on hand for the morning's proceedings, including Mr. Peter Deluca whose work can be seen in numerous Disney films including the upcoming *The Princess and the Frog* movie. He is here to conduct a workshop on Disney animation. Odin Dupeyron from Mexico, part of the Sesame Street Workshop (Plaza Sésamo - Sesame Street in Latin America) was also on hand for this morning's proceedings. He will conduct a workshop on Sesame Street and also collaborate on the possible development of a Caribbean version of the programme. Other guests from Iran, Aruba, and Jamaica were also present.

Mrs. Camille Selvon Abrahams, Founder and Creative Director of AnimaE Caribe Festival thanked specially invited guests and sponsors for their continued support. She spoke with pride about the strides that have been made in training the next generation of animators. Currently, there are 36 students in the Diploma in Animation Programme at UTT and 17 who will graduate next year. "We are on a mission to continue to create waves and get our work recognized around the world," she stated. "The Caribbean is full of talented young artists and a rich culture that we need to better project. AnimaE Caribe is just the vehicle that is necessary to accomplish this and we look forward to the promise and progress that the future will bring."

For further information on the Festival, visit the AnimaE Caribe website at www.animaecaribe.com or call the Festival's Communications office, Colthrust PR Ltd. at 674-2555.

###