

It Came From Animatus

A Cavalcade of Zany Cartoons

Journey to ancient Norway with Derf the Viking!

Dance at Club Hippendale's with Su & Mo!

Sing along at home with Fresh Toones!

Feed your creative need with fantastic bonus features!

For more than 15 years, Animatus Studio has been the premiere animation house in Rochester, New York. Now its three unique independent series of cartoons are available to own in one landmark DVD package with a suggested retail price of **\$19.95**. These cartoons have "PG" style humor and appeal to old and young alike.

Three Fun-believable Cartoon Series on One DVD!

This compilation brings together the **Derf the Viking Trilogy** and **Fresh Toones**, which have screened at festivals all around the world, and **Su and Mo**, the most popular lap-dancing wrestler-animators on the internet. **"It Came From Animatus"** collects each series, plus many crowd-pleasing extras like featurettes, pencil tests, and filmmakers' commentary. All material has been digitally mastered for the DVD format, with sparkling stereo sound.

DVD Specs at a Glance

Derf the Viking

- The Scent of Valhalla
- The Quest for Happy Hour
- The Search for the Great White Ale

Su & Mo!

The Lap-Dancing Bad Boys of Animation

- A Night at Club Hippendale's (Web Episodes 1 and 2 combined)
- Lost in Animation (Episode 3)

Fresh Toones

- Fresh Toones Theme
- Sal Monella's Deli
- Things
- Self-Employed
- Ridin' This Train
- True Believer
- Sharks in the Water

BONUS FEATURES

- Filmmakers' Commentary on "The Search for the Great White Ale"
- Alternate Scenes
- Pencil Tests
- Storyboard Comparison
- "Derf in 3D" Featurette
- "Derf's Principles to Live By" Featurette
- Collectible Booklet with Character Info and Song Lyrics
- Online extras at www.AnimatusStudio.com/dvd

The Derf the Viking Trilogy

Presenting a hero of gelatinous proportions! As a Viking, Derf doesn't exactly live up to the standards of his noble race. He tries his best, but he is often distracted by his appetite or defeated by his own ineptitude. Derf's gets into some bizarre predicaments when the Viking gods meddle with his life.

"The Homer Simpson of mythic Norsemen"

- Daniel Wible, *Film Threat*



The Scent of Valhalla (8:00 min.)

Following a delicious aroma, Derf is continually defeated in his attempts to gain entrance to a castle. In the end, he is shocked to find a spread far beyond anything he had imagined!

The Quest for Happy Hour (15:30 min.)

The day of judgement, Ragnarok, is fast approaching. The gods have one last chance to avert certain doom: using their unique powers, they must make one man happy for one hour. Unfortunately, that man is Derf the Viking! The world's very existence may well depend on Derf's unpredictable temperament.

The Search for the Great White Ale (17:00 min.)

It is a sad day in Meadville after Derf has drunk all the town's honey-brewed mead. With the guidance of Loki, the trickster god, Derf hopes to redeem himself by finding the Fountain of the Great White Ale and returning with its supreme brew. How will Derf overcome the River of Fire, the peaks of Mount Stupidity, and the depths of the Sea of Gullibility?

Fresh Toones

These musical shorts by Dave Puls have been screened at festivals around the world and include two award winners.

They feature upbeat tunes and a blend of traditional animation and 2D computer graphics.

Fresh Toones Theme (2:30 min.)

When all the magic in your life seems to have disappeared, listen closely to your heart and you'll have Fresh Toones.

Sal Monella's Deli (2:15 min.)

A real life experience was the inspiration for this fictitious infomercial for Sal Monella's Diet Miracle Meal.

Things (2:30 min.)

Semore Wantmore is consumed with the accumulation of stuff to the detriment of his existence and the hastening of his own demise.

Self-employed (3:15 min.)

One person's struggle to break away from the tortures of working for others and succeeding on his own.



Ridin' This Train (4 min.)

This surrealistic train trip across the USA and through American history reveals an unusual visual account of growing up in America.

True Believer (4:15 min.)

The alarm is sounded to beware of the True Believer. It blends humor with its stark observations of fanatics past and present.

Sharks in the Water (4 min.)

A disconcerting look at the corporate corruption and political collaboration that plague the United States.

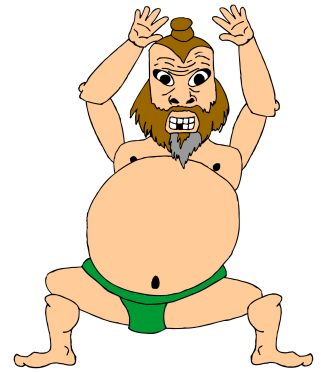


Su & Mo!

The Lap-Dancing Bad Boys of Animation

Su and Mo are two plus-size animators who strip at Club Hippendale's in order to raise money for their independent films. Why do they dance? With bodies like theirs, how can they not?

Su and Mo were once featured on the popular Icebox.com



"A Night At Club Hippendale's" begins with a stage performance by the two immense men. Their enthusiastic fans tip with sandwiches and sushi... the ladies scream and shout, offering kisses and foodstuffs. After their performance we join the boys backstage, where they count their tips and endure disdain from another jealous dancer. An invading mob of adoring fans forces the two wide men to make a narrow escape.

"Lost in Animation" details the production of Su and Mo's latest film. They struggle with both analog and digital equipment, but eventually finish shooting their existential masterpiece. The story climaxes with the boys' return to their homeland of Japan for the Tokyo Jokio Film Festival, where a botched screening yields some unexpected results.

Bonus Features

Go behind the scenes on the Derf the Viking series!

Filmmakers' Commentary on "The Search for the Great White Ale"

Producer (and voice of Derf) Fred Armstrong, director Dave Puls, and animator Mike Boas describe the process of bringing their beloved Viking to the screen.

Alternate Scenes

Shocking alternate versions of Derf scenes you thought you knew.

Pencil Tests

Before the ink and paint comes the pencil and paper. Here are early tests from "Scent" and "Quest."

"Get the ale out of here" Storyboard Comparison

Take a look at the early board work for "Search," side by side with the final scene.

"Derf in 3D" Featurette

What if Derf was a 3D character? What if a whole army of 3D Derfs invaded your town?

"Derf's Principles to Live By" Featurette

Here are ten lessons to be learned from Derf's behavior. (And you thought these cartoons weren't educational!)

Collectible Booklet with Character Info and Song Lyrics

Get the vital stats on Su and Mo, a rundown of Derf's Nordic gods, and all the lyrics to Fresh Toones.

Online Extras

The animatus website features interactive pages about Derf, Su and Mo, and Fresh Toones. Visit www.AnimatusStudio.com/dvd today!

What is Animatus?

Animatus Studio has been operating in Rochester, NY since 1989. We specialize in traditional animation for film and video, but also handle web animation, 3D and 2D graphics, and video editing. We have two Oxberry animation cameras for film titles and animation, but most of our work lately has been in video and the digital arena. To this end, we use programs like Photoshop, After Effects, 3D Studio Max, Lightwave, and Macromedia Flash. All post-production is done in house on our nonlinear edit systems.

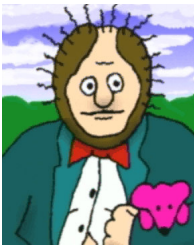


We have created animation for companies such as Eastman Kodak, Xerox, Castle Chemical, Paychex, and World Kitchen/Corning.

Animatus has worked on live action projects as well, producing the documentary video **The End of the Line - Rochester's Subway**, and providing editing, post-production, and graphic design for **When Football Was Bigger Than Life - An All-American Story**.

Animatus is also home to The Animation Workshop where the knowledge and joy of animation is taught to students of all ages.

Filmmaker Biographies



Fred Armstrong (Producer, President of Animatus) has produced a multitude of animated commercials, industrials, and over a dozen animated cartoons. One of his first jobs in animation came as the result of an almost fatal display of inebriated fire breathing. He worked for many years as an animation cameraman in New York City before founding Animatus Studio, in Rochester. He is also founder of The Animation Workshop, which teaches the fundamentals of animation.



Dave Puls (Creator of Fresh Toones) has been the Creative Director at Animatus Studio since 1992. He wrote and directed the three "Derf the Viking" cartoons for Animatus and has animated nine independent shorts for his series of "Fresh Toones." Since 1994, Dave has taught animation at schools through Young Audiences and the Aesthetic Education Institute. He has been a songwriter for over thirty years and has produced five albums of original songs. For an up to date listing Fresh Toones festival screenings, visit www.AnimatusStudio.com/FreshToones.



Michael Boas (Lead Animator at Animatus) earned himself an art degree from SUNY Geneseo and then went on to work in some strange places, including a toy truck factory, a garbage dump, and a radio station. He came to Animatus Studio eager to learn the craft of animation and has since become head animator and webmaster. He now knows just enough to be dangerous. Mike worked as animator on each of the "Derf the Viking" and "Su and Mo" shorts. He also directed "Jason: The Rebirth," the second place winner at the 2003 ManiaFest "Friday the 13th" film contest in Santa Monica, California.

Derf the Viking - Background Information

When developing Derf, the Animatus team saw the Viking world as a great untapped resource of mythical characters and stories. Viking gods like Odinn, Freya, Thor, and Loki had faults and attributes like mortal men. Their stories of trickery and triumph entertained as well as taught lessons to the Viking people. Our everyman hero Derf (who inherited certain character traits from Animatus founder Fred Armstrong) just wants to be a brave warrior and join the best of the best in Valhalla someday. Derf's own demeanor and clumsiness get in the way however, and any interactions he has with the gods do not go well.



Taking inspiration from the structure of classic Warner Brothers and the wild takes of Tex Avery, the artists at Animatus devised the Derf cartoons to feel familiar, but have a modern, extreme sense of slapstick humor. The "PG" style gags have an edge similar to jokes one would see on The Simpsons.

These shorts were produced independently, whenever the crew at Animatus had extra time between jobs. Fred Armstrong acted as producer, with Dave Puls as writer, editor, and director. Much of the work was contributed by animation students interning with Animatus for college credit.

The animation is primarily hand-drawn, with digital ink and paint applied in AXA, a professional 2D animation program. Backgrounds are usually scanned into Photoshop and then given textures, but sometimes they are created entirely with CG programs like Bryce or 3D Studio Max. Certain effects are achieved with Adobe After Effects.

Screenings

The Derf shorts have been included in several film and animation festivals. The venues to date:

- Freaky Film Festival, Urbana, Illinois
- NY International Independent Film and Video Festival
- Rochester International Film Festival (Best of the Fest)
- B-Movie Theater Film Fest, Syracuse, NY
- Crested Butte Reel Fest, Crested Butte, Colorado
- Dervio International Animation Festival, Dervio, Italy
- San Antonio Underground Film Festival (a festival favorite!)



Fresh Toones - Background Information

At the ripe age of 40, Dave Puls discovered the tremendous communication potential of animation. After foregoing his career as a Rehabilitation Counselor and then attending graphic design school, he decided to attend Rochester's "The Animation School" in the summer of 1992.



Dave immediately realized the prospect of animating some of the songs he had written. At the time, most independent projects were shot on film, as much of today's computer technology was still in its infancy. Dave's initial excitement about creating animation was not connected to the thought of learning a lot of programs, but he could see that the computer was going to be the avenue for creating independent shorts. Dave began working at Animatus Studio and there taught himself some of the early 8-bit animation programs. Since those early days he has completed eight animated shorts which have screened on television and at many film festivals.

The latest installments are political in nature. "True Believer" satirizes world leaders such as Hitler, Stalin, Mussolini, Osama Bin Laden, and Saddam Hussein. "Sharks in the Water" targets George W. Bush and corporate corruption.

Dave has used a variety of techniques for his various shorts. "Things" was done with cut-out animation and shot on 16mm film. Several other shorts were hand drawn, colored with animation program AXA, and exported to video. And the latest were animated primarily with After Effects.

Screenings:

- Berkeley Video and Film Festival
- Boston Political Film Festival
- Boston Underground Film Festival
- Brooklyn International Film Festival
- Central Florida Film Festival in Orlando
- DC Shorts
- Dervio International Animation Festival, Italy
- The Education Channel, Tampa, Florida
- Freaky Film Festival, Urbana, Illinois
- Imagina, Monte Carlo
- International Festival of Cinema and Technology
- Kansas City Filmmakers Jubilee
- L.A. International Short Film Festival
- Maine International Film Festival
- NY International Independent Film and Video Festival
- Ohio Independent Film Festival
- Philadelphia's First Glance Film Fest
- Red Bank International Film Festival
- Rochester International Film Festival (Best of the Fest)
- The Rochester Memorial Art Gallery "Movies Under the Stars"
- San Antonio Underground Film Festival
- Slamdance.com
- The South Bristol Cultural Center Animation Celebration
- Toronto Online Film Festival
- Vancouver Island Independent Film, Video and New Media Festival
- Vermont International Film Festival

Several Fresh Toones have also aired as part of the Rochester PBS show *The Screening Room*, hosted by Gannett Newspapers film critic Jack Garner.



Su and Mo Short Skewers Festival Circuit

June 02, 2004

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Magazine

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Web Animation Guide

Calendar of Events

Upcoming Theatrical
Releases

Rochester's Animatus Studio has completed work on its latest short, SU AND MO: LOST IN ANIMATION, a Flash animated, SOUTH PARK-style story that parodies the festival circuit. The short tells the story of Su and Mo, the world's only lap-dancing wrestler/animators. Dancing at Club Hippendale's has finally provided the boys enough money to fund their independent film. After a turbulent production period, they journey to their native Japan for a premiere screening at the Tokyo Jokio film festival.

"Several things went wrong on [a film festival trip.] We had trouble at customs. One of our animators had a film in the festival -- his picture in the program was printed upside down. We were subjected to an actual autopsy film at one of the screenings," relates Fred Armstrong, co-director of LOST IN ANIMATION and owner of Animatus Studio. It wasn't a bad festival experience, but the mishaps were odd enough to inspire Fred and the other creators, Dave Puls and Bob Lyons. On the journey home, they conjured up a pair of sumo wrestlers who stumble through production on an animated film and have unusual problems at a festival screening.

"We weren't out to make fun of the Japanese -- If anything, we're an equal opportunity offender," says Mike Boas, animator and co-director. "I look at it like the classic Pepé Le Pew cartoons. They're funny not because they mock the French, but because they use clichés and the faux-French language in such an obvious way. We wanted to try for that tone, especially when the boys go to the Tokio Jokio film festival."

SU AND MO was initially going to be cut-out animation, shot on film. At the time of its inception, the artists at Animatus were learning Macromedia Flash. Two prequel Webisodes -- A NIGHT AT CLUB HIPPENDALE'S and O BROTHER, WHERE FART THOU? -- set up the characters as popular exotic dancers, earning tip money to fund their films.

"Our initial understanding of Flash suggested that we should construct characters like paper dolls. So our character design mimics cut-out paper: seams between joints were clearly visible, etc. We used replacement heads, hands and other body parts rather than doing traditional sequential drawings," Boas explains.

By the time the studio was ready to proceed with LOST IN ANIMATION, Armstrong had decided to do the piece digitally: "We had a great response to the first two episodes, and we had a staff that was familiar with Flash and After Effects. It made sense to keep the look consistent and utilize specific talents of our animators."

Boas adds, "We knew this would be going to video and entry into festivals. Some of our artists were proficient in Flash, some in After Effects, so we combined forces to create something new. The final piece has camera moves, transitions and raster images that wouldn't be possible to include in a standard Flash cartoon."

Animatus is actively seeking distribution for its library of cartoons. With SU AND MO and other shorts, Animatus has more than 85 minutes worth of material, plus extras. An "Animatus Studio Collection" DVD release is expected in the next year.

Animatus Studio has been operating in Rochester, New York since 1989. The studio specializes in traditional animation for film and video, but also handles Web animation, 3D and 2D graphics, and video editing. For more information or to view a trailer of SU AND MO, visit www.AnimatusStudio.com.