

## David Pruiksmas

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## INTRODUCTION

For nearly 30 years I have worked in virtually every aspect of the production of character animation. Most notably, I am a member of a very small group of Walt Disney Feature Animation Supervising/Directing Animators mentored by Eric Larson and others of Walt Disney's renowned "Nine Old Men." As a result of this training and experience, I have been instrumental in bringing to life numerous Disney characters on over 18 of the studio's animated features and shorts, commencing with *Mickey's Christmas Carol* and continuing through nearly all studio productions including *The Little Mermaid*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Aladdin*, *The Lion King* and so forth. In addition to my artistic duties as Supervising Animator for 20 years to date, I managed teams of artists and was responsible for all administrative and personnel oriented requirements commensurate with that position. I have created and administered several training and development programs for Walt Disney Feature Animation and various other studios. I have also done extensive lecturing, recruiting and publicity for many of the Disney animated films of the past two decades. Since leaving the Disney Studio in mid-2001, I have been engaged in a number of capacities on a wide variety of projects, most notably lecturing on and teaching animation, both nationally and internationally. Through these experiences I have utilized my abilities to convey with enthusiasm, clarity and passion, very complex aspects, techniques and philosophies of the process of character animation. I find teaching and lecturing very satisfying and wherever I teach, the students seem engaged and eager to learn about what I call the cornerstones of successful character animation: performance, timing, clarity and communication. These skills, which I have learned and mastered over the course of a long and rewarding career, are the essential elements of character animation which remain highly applicable to the process regardless of the medium a student chooses to pursue, be it Hand Drawn, CGI, Flash, Stop-Motion, or any of the new technologies currently available to today's animation artists. I would welcome the opportunity to utilize my artistic, educational and administrative skills at any studio in any one of a number of creative capacities or to help to create and/or facilitate effective and powerful educational programs and curriculum for students interested in learning the craft of character animation.

## EDUCATION

1979-1981 California Institute of the Arts, Valencia, California—Character Animation  
1976-1978 Pratt Institute, Brooklyn, New York—Art/Film

## EMPLOYMENT

2001-Present *Freelance Lecturer, Development Consultant, Animator*

- Co-Founder and Co-Owner of the production development company Kitsch-In-Sync.
- Animated on several independent projects for Eric Goldberg such as *A Monkey's Tale* (a fully animated short for a theme park in Asia), *The Three Caballeros* (for Disney's EPCOT theme park's Mexico pavilion) and various television commercials.
- Provided freelance animation on Disney's hit feature film, *Enchanted*.
- Consulted on the development of the Walt and Roy Disney Museum in Marceline, Kansas.
- Consulted on the development of a number of projects for Dan Boulos and Wiki Wiki Cartoons, Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Consulted with Paula Abdul on the development of characters I animated from

her groundbreaking animated music video, *Opposites Attract*, into a new series for television.

- Consulted with Jeffery Katzenberg about the possibilities for developing the book, *Shrek*, into an animated feature and was offered the position to educate his CGI animators in the traditional approach, philosophies and techniques of character animation.
- Guest lectured and taught animation classes for the European Animation Masterclass (EAM) in Halle, Germany.
- Guest lectured and taught animation classes at Leeward Community College, Oahu, Hawaii.
- Guest lectured and taught animation classes at Loyola Marymount University, Woodbury College, Laguna College of Art and Design and California Institute of the Arts

2002-2005      *Paul Frank Industries, Costa Mesa, Ca*  
Freelance Consultant, Designer

- Worked directly with designer Paul Frank brainstorming concepts, characters, toys, packaging, merchandise, etc. for his popular *Julius and Friends* line.
- Created artwork and model sheets still in use today to help guide staff artists at Paul Frank Industries to realize the company's characters in perspective and dimension for toys, sculptures, costumed characters, and more.
- Created production artwork used on product and packaging.
- Consulted with Paul Frank on a number of products still in development including animation of his characters.

2004              *Renegade Animation, Glendale, Ca*  
Staff Storyboard Artist, Writer, Director

- Wrote, storyboarded and directed numerous episodes of *The Hi Hi Puffy Ami Yumi Show*, a Flash animated series for Cartoon Network.
- Conceived story ideas and treatments for other episodes in the series.
- Taught traditional animation techniques and theory to Renegade's Flash Animators to help improve overall quality of the series.
- Contributed to the design of incidental characters and settings for the series.
- Also animated on various different styles of commercials and projects for Renegade Animation, on a freelance basis, for nearly 20 years.

1986-1987      *Bagdasarian Productions, Studio City, Ca*  
Supervising Animator, Sequence Director

- Animated on all principal characters and supervised the animation of a crew of Animators on the theatrical feature *The Chipmunk Adventure*.
- Directed the "My Mother" song sequence in *The Chipmunk Adventure*.
- Provided publicity art for *The Chipmunk Adventure*.

1981-2001      *Walt Disney Feature Animation, Burbank, Ca*  
Assistant Animator, Animator, Supervising Animator

- Apprenticed with Eric Larson, Ed Gombert, Mark Henn and Glen Keane as well as being tutored by Frank Thomas, Ollie Johnston, Mark Davis and Ward Kimball.
- Assisted animation and animated on *Mickey's Christmas Carol*, *The Black Cauldron*, *The Great Mouse Detective*, various theme park projects and an early computer animation test for John Lasseter, based on Maurice Sendak's *Where The Wild Things Are*. Officially promoted to Animator on *The Great Mouse Detective*.
- Animated on various characters for *Oliver & Company*, most notably, Oliver, Jenny, Winston, Georgette and Tito.
- Animated mainly on Bernard and Bianca throughout the film *The Rescuers Down Under*.
- Animated various characters on *The Little Mermaid* focusing on Flounder and

Sebastian. Worked closely with Glen Keane on the "Part of Your World" sequence providing the Flounders to his Ariels. Sole Animator, Designer and Color Stylist on the Seahorse Messenger character whose role was expanded by Directors John Musker and Ron Clements based upon my initial animation.

- Promoted to Supervising Animator on a short for EPCOT entitled *Cranium Command*. Supervised design and animation on the main character of Buzzy. Provided artwork for the attraction façade and for merchandising.
- Supervising Animator on *Beauty And The Beast*. Led a crew of Animators and Clean-Up Artists through the production of this Academy Award nominated feature film, the first and only animated film ever nominated for Best Picture. Provided design and animation of both Mrs. Potts and Chip, working closely with the film's Directors, character voices Angela Lansbury and Bradley Pierce, the Art Director and Disney executive Jeffery Katzenberg to bring these two characters to life. Also responsible for publicity including travel, personal appearances and on camera and print interviews. Consulted on licensing and merchandising of my characters including creating concepts and artwork for toys and packaging.
- Supervising Animator on The Sultan in *Aladdin*. Responsible for a crew of Animators and Clean-Up Artists throughout production. Provided design on The Sultan and created artwork and concepts used for licensing and merchandising on the character. Contributed to the promotion of the film through personal appearance, interviews and related publicity.
- Supervising Animator on Flit the hummingbird and the various forest animals in *Pocahontas*. Supervised a crew of Animators and Clean-Up Artists throughout production. Responsible for design and animation, working closely with Art Director Michael Giaimo and Directors Mike Gabriel and Eric Goldberg. Developed techniques for special wing effect on Flit. Contributed gags and business for characters to perform in the film. Actively involved in the promotion of the film including travel, personal appearances and interviews both on camera and in print. Provided consultation and artwork for the licensing of Flit and the other characters for toys, clothing and various other products. Received the nomination for one of the first Annie Awards for my work on the film.
- While working on *Pocahontas*, collaborated with several other colleagues in the animation department developing and submitting a plan for an elaborate training program for aspiring Animators, which was adopted by the Artist Development Department and instituted not only in the Burbank studio, but also in the Orlando animation facility.
- Provided additional character animation on Pumba & Timon in *The Lion King*, most notably for the humorous Hakuna Matata and Luau sequences.
- Supervising Animator on *The Hunchback Of Notre Dame*. Was responsible for a large crew of Animators and Clean-Up Artists throughout the production as well as providing gags and business for my characters, the two gargoyles named Victor and Hugo, to perform. Worked closely with Directors Kirk Wise and Gary Trousdale, as well as character voices Jason Alexander and Charles Kimbrough, to bring these characters to life. Actively involved in publicity for the film including travel, press junkets, interviews on camera and in print and personal appearances. Created concepts and artwork for toys, posters, merchandising, licensing and sculptures of the characters.
- Single-handedly conceived, developed and instituted training programs to help Clean-Up Artists better understand the principles of character animation so that they might better interpret Animators' roughs. Was actively involved in the recruitment program of Disney's Artist Development Department, which included extensive travel to schools, colleges and universities all over the country and in Canada. Reviewed portfolios, talked to students and potential Disney artists, and spoke on behalf of the studio. Asked by then President of Disney Feature Animation, Peter Schneider, to consider being his "Eric Larson," instructing young studio artists the way Eric had taught me. And, as much as I enjoy teaching, I felt, at that time, that I still wanted to ply my craft as an Animator and Supervisor on production work, though never losing site of the possibility of going into training

- artists at a later time.
- Consulted on and directed animation for both *Hercules* computer games to come out of the Walt Disney Interactive division of the studio.
  - Cast as Supervising Animator of Snowball, a llama character slated to appear in the production of *Kingdom Of The Sun*. Developed and designed Snowball as well as eight other characters in the film. Worked closely with Directors Roger Allers and Mark Dindal contributing ideas on story and staging as well as creating model sheets and generating much test animation.
  - Supervising Animator on the characters of Packard and Harcourt in *Atlantis*. Provided character and costume design and supervised a crew of Animators and Clean-Up Artists throughout the production. Provided artwork for licensing and merchandising as well as gags and business for the characters to perform. Was involved in promotion and publicity on the film in the form of interviews both on camera and in print.
  - Provided character animation for *One By One*, a studio short conceived and directed by Maurice Hunt for *Fantasia 3*.
  - In addition to my duties as Animator and Supervising Animator throughout my two decades at Disney Studios, I was always involved in the development, education, mentoring and evaluation of up-and-coming Animators and Assistants, several of whom went on to become educators and leaders in the animation industry, and it brings me great pride and pleasure to continue my support of students and young talent to this day.

## HONORS

Nominated for Annie Award 1996 for my work on Flit the Hummingbird in *Pocahontas*  
Accepted as a member of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences

## REFERENCES (Available Upon Request)