

MEDIA INFORMATION

For immediate release

WORLD-FAMOUS ANIMATION COMPANY HAS DESIGNS ON SKYE

THE creative team behind some of the world's best-known animated characters is looking to set up a studio on the island of Skye on Scotland's north west coast.

For more than 30 years, Devon-based King Rollo Films has produced a host of award-winning and much-loved animated pre-school series featuring characters such as Poppy Cat, Maisy and Spot the Dog.

King Rollo's BAFTA-nominated Humf is one of Nick Jr's top shows and airs in more than 80 countries around the globe.

Now King Rollo managing director, Leo Nielsen, who has a home on Skye, is turning his attention to creating an animation studio on the island which will create the company's first series in the Gaelic language.

King Rollo's bid to create a Skye-based studio is being supported by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE), screen and broadcast organisation, ScreenHI (under the XpoNorth banner) and broadcast partner, MG ALBA.

To help make it happen, this new partnership is offering two blocks of free training to anyone interested in a career in animation at Gaelic college, Sabhal Mòr Ostaig UHI at Sleat, Isle of Skye.

The first fortnight-long course, devoted to designing backgrounds for animation, takes place from 7th-18th December, with the second, walking students through the basics of industry-standard 2D animation software, CelAction, starting on 11th January.

Organisers are keen to welcome Gaelic speakers on the courses, though anyone with an interest in forging a career in animation will be considered.

The first session will be delivered by King Rollo art director, Paul Dowling, while lead animator, Mat Dame will run the CelAction 2D Animation Course.

Mat is no stranger to Skye. His grandmother and grandfather, a fisherman, ran a B&B in Lismore, Waternish for many years and he spent all his childhood summer holidays on the island.

Leo Nielsen says he hopes this training will equip talented artists with the skills required to produce a top quality animation series. "This is just the start," he explained. "We hope to create an animation unit that will develop and expand in years to come, producing films to entertain families around the world. In the process, it will create exciting and sustainable creative jobs rooted in the Highlands."

According to Leo, the overall aim for King Rollo Films is to have an animation series produced on Skye within three years.

"We would like the original idea, writing, art, animation, music and sound effects all produced by artists based in the Highlands and Islands. We envisage a series produced in Gaelic and English

from the start; but a series that will be of interest to broadcasters worldwide and be commercially viable.”

Amanda Millen, Gaelic-speaking director of the XpoNorth network which is supporting the training programme said: “This is exactly the kind of ambitious project which should be taking root in places such as Skye. We are very happy to be in at the start, helping turn it all into a reality.”

Iseabail Mactaggart, Director of Development and Partnership for MG ALBA, which operates the TV channel, BBC ALBA, in partnership with the BBC said: "We're delighted to be involved in bringing this innovative and inspired project to the Highlands & Islands.

“We're looking to develop an animation capacity with international reach which is firmly rooted in Skye and in the Gaelic language. It's great news for the creative community in the Highlands & Islands and for the Gaelic language.”

Caroline Forsyth, Development Manager from HIE, said: “The area is already developing a reputation for creative talent and we are delighted to support King Rollo Films to offer training for anyone with an interest in working in animation in the Highlands and Islands.

“The creation of an animation studio in Skye will enable the company to continue to develop projects while also providing opportunities to work in the Gaelic language, and create exciting and sustainable jobs for local people.”

Once the training sessions are complete, King Rollo plan to develop a project ready for presentation to broadcasters. The development will be led by King Rollo, but all work will be produced locally and both the trailer and pitch will be in Gaelic and English.

Places are still available on both courses and several networking events are being held throughout the Highlands & Islands in the coming weeks.

EDITOR’S NOTES:

Anyone wishing to take part in the King Rollo training courses should email info@xponorth.co.uk

Networking Events

Artists, designers and painters are invited to a series of free networking evening events at which the opportunity will be discussed in more detail. Each networking event will run from 7pm-9pm and will have representatives from XpoNorth present.

18th November	Phoenix Alehouse,	Inverness
19th November	An Lanntair	Stornoway
20th November	Aros Centre	Portree
24th November	Pentland Hotel	Thurso
25th November	Kinetic Studio	Oban
26th November	Royal Hotel	Campbeltown

XpoNorth is devoted to boosting creative careers in the Highlands and Islands and beyond. Known primarily for its annual two day creative industries conference which takes place in Inverness every summer, it offers a year-round programme of mentoring and support for those looking to develop careers in crafts and designer fashion, gaming, publishing, screen and broadcast as well as music. It

is funded by Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) and the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).

www.xponorth.co.uk

Highlands and Islands Enterprise

Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE) is an ambitious organisation with a unique remit that integrates economic and community development. It works in a diverse region which extends from Shetland to Argyll, and from the Outer Hebrides to Moray, covering more than half of Scotland's land mass.

For more information contact: Mairi Bertram - mairi.bertram@hient.co.uk

www.hie.co.uk

MG ALBA

MG ALBA is the organisation established to administer the Gaelic Broadcasting Fund. It also operates the Gaelic Television Channel BBC ALBA in partnership with the BBC.

www.mgalba.com

King Rollo Films

King Rollo Films has been producing quality animation for over 30 years. Working with the best artists and writers, King Rollo brings their work to life with sensitivity and painstaking attention to detail. Hit series include; Emmy-nominated Mama Mirabelle's Home Movies, Maisy, Wide Eye, Paz, Spot the Dog, Towser, Victor and Maria and King Rollo.

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