

## Magic Dumpling introduces "Chinese Pinocchio" to Italy

Tofu Boy announced at Cartoons on the Bay in Rapallo

Monday, April 19, 2010

RAPALLO – Magic Dumpling Entertainment, a Beijing-based developer of original content for animated films, TV series and mobisodes, announced the development of their newest international feature project – *Tofu Boy* – during the China press conference at the Cartoons on the Bay festival in Rapallo, Italy.

The 14th edition of Cartoons on the Bay celebrated China as "Country of the Year". Magic Dumpling President Kevin Geiger was invited as a member of the official Chinese delegation, led by CCTV GM Wang Ying.

In cooperation with the Italian Trade Commission, Rai Trade & Cartoons on the Bay dedicated an entire festival day to "the most authoritative Chinese delegation at an international animation festival". Joining CCTV and Magic Dumpling in the China contingent were representatives from Phenix Animation Studio in Nanjing, BeTop Multimedia in Dalian, and AGOGO Entertainment in Hong Kong.

Anchoring the Chinese visit was CCTV's announcement of the sale of its animated TV series *Mei Ho Wang (The Monkey King)* to Italian "Studio of the Year" Atlantyca Entertainment. A contemporary re-telling of the classic Chinese story, *Mei Ho Wang* is part of CCTV's recent efforts to export original Chinese animation to the world. Mr. Wang proudly observed the series' balance of traditional themes with modern elements.





From the main conference hall of the Excelsior Palace Hotel, Mr. Geiger expanded upon this theme by describing Magic Dumpling's mission to create "original Chinese animation content with Hollywood entertainment value and international appeal". Geiger outlined his company's current slate of development projects, including the animated feature film *Snow Wolf (aka Road to Home)*, the animated TV series *Stone Cold Lion*, and the animated educational mobisode series *Xi Gua & Xiao Gua (lit. Watermelon & Little Fruit)*.



Geiger then announced the development of what he suggested could be "the next great Chinese-Italian co-production": *Tofu Boy*, inspired by Italian author Carlo Collodi's classic story, *Le Avventure di Pinocchio*. Geiger presented the setting of modern Shanghai: a "cosmopolitan quilt of ambitious space-age patches, eclectic colonial patches, and traditional Chinese patches – symbolic of the diversity and aspirations of its residents".

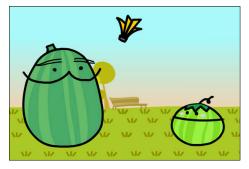


Referring to Collodi's *Pinocchio* as a "source of inspiration, not of adaptation", Geiger pitched the story of Old Wang, the eccentric owner of a failing tofu shop, who carves a little figure out of the tofu he cannot sell. "A sad representation of the son he never had," according to Geiger. Taking notice during a game of Chinese chess, the Lord of Hell and the Kitchen God make a bet on fate versus dreams, and Tofu Boy is brought to life.

Tofu Boy embarks on mission to find the perfect recipe for saving the shop and winning Old Wang's love. Among the colorful cast of characters who Tofu Boy meets on his quest are Ally, "a carefree stray dog living for the moment, who dreams only of her next meal" and Jirou, "a tasteless old chicken stuck in the past, who dreams of *being* someone's next meal". With a big cooking competition in the works, and the devious opposition of Old Wang's jealous brother, who dreams of razing the neighborhood to expand his massive dining & entertainment complex, Tofu Boy is truly "out of the frying pan and into the fire".

"The theme of the film is," according to Geiger, "will fate rule, or can dreams come true? Tofu Boy's character arc takes him from overconfidence to self-awareness, the source of true confidence." Judging by the enthusiastic reactions to Geiger's pitch from the Italian and Chinese audience, Magic Dumpling's own confidence in *Tofu Boy* is understandable. Geiger noted the interest in the project among prominent Chinese animation studios and Western media companies. Cartoons on the Bay's Roberto Genovesi invited Magic Dumpling to





return to the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary festival next year with a work-inprogress presentation on the film, and Rai Trade officials have asked to review the project. The next international stop for *Tofu Boy* is the Animation Production Day market platform in Stuttgart, May 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup>, where Magic Dumpling Entertainment will also give a presentation on their cross-cultural development process in the "Focus on China" program of the FMX Conference on Animation, Effects, Games and Interactive Media.

Attention to Magic Dumpling's slate of projects in the days following the press conference was "remarkable", according to Geiger. "In addition to the interest in *Tofu Boy* and *Stone Cold Lion*, I was pleasantly surprised by the enthusiastic response to our mobile series, *Xi Gua & Xiao Gua*. Cartoons on the Bay has been a real shot in the arm, and we are grateful to the festival organizers, our hosts at Rai Trade, and our friends in the Italian Trade Commission for this wonderful opportunity. And how often do you find Wang Ying and Don Bluth in the same setting. It truly is a reflection of the festival's commitment to diversity and co-production."

Magic Dumpling Entertainment is a content development company headquartered in Beijing. Magic Dumpling creates entertaining stories and appealing characters for family audiences within mainland China and around the world. The company is staffed and managed by a team of professionals from China and the United States, and complemented by an advisory board comprised of distinguished figures in the U.S. and Chinese animation and media industries.

Magic Dumpling's projects combine Chinese themes and cultural cues with proven Hollywood story structures for resonance with contemporary audiences, and have been profiled in media outlets including Animation Magazine, 3D World magazine, Animation World Network and the entertainment website O-meon.com. For more information, go to: www.magicdumpling.com

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CARTOONS ON THE BAY. Progetto in 3d della Magic Dumpling GIORNALE DI SICILIA CERCOE ON THE CENT • Vetrina dell'animazione d'autore il manifesto mo pronto un piano di lavorazio-ne, e stiamo cercando coprodut-All'insegna della diversità ne, e stiamo cercando coprodul-tori-ha spiegato il presidente del-la Dumpling, arrivato alla società cinese dopo 12 anni alla Disney -L'Italia sarebbe per noi il partner Arriva «Tofu Boy», arriva il Pinocchio cinese il pinocchio cinese hanno culture con molti punti di namo culture con moto punti di contatto». Alla base della storia di nocchio, per un lungometraggio Tofu Boy, ha spiegato, presentan lotu Boy, na spiegato, presentan-do i primi disegni dei personaggi, cc'è lo humour di Collodi. La vi-cenda, che darà vita una una "musical comedy adventure", è Geiger ha annunciato in ante-NAPALLU 1000 «Marco Polo», la priprima il progetto oggi a Rapallo, nella giornata d'apertura di **(Car** Dopo «Marco Polo», la pri-ma coproduzione d'animazione fona-Italia fra la Cctv e Rai, l'Oriente guarda ancora all'Italia. La Magic Dumpling, società cine-te presieduta dall'americano Ke-vin Geiger, sta lavorando a «Tofu giornata d'apertura di la santhe bayo. Son the bayo. Le dell'animazione televisiva e multimediale, dove la Cina è se presiecuta dan americano nevin Geiger, sta lavorando a «Tofu Il Pinocchio cinese sarà fatto di tofu Il produttore: «Ambientato a Shanghai con lo humour di Collodi» Corriere Adriatico Arriva Tofu Boy, il Pinocchio cinese