



MEDIA RELEASE

**GOVERNMENT OF ONTARIO BACKS STARZ ANIMATION
TORONTO WITH OVER \$22.9 MILLION IN FUNDING
TO SUPPORT NEXT GENERATION JOBS**

Sir Elton John (Gnomeo & Juliet) Will Be on Hand for the Announcement

Toronto – May 26, 2009 – Starz Animation Toronto today announced that it has received \$22.975 million in funding under the Government of Ontario's Next Generation of Jobs Fund. Premier Dalton McGuinty attended the press conference where he indicated the funds have been allocated to Canada's leading feature length animation film studio to stimulate economic growth and to contribute to a competitive workplace for the next generation of Ontario workers.

With major projects like Miramax Films' *Gnomeo & Juliet* and the recent completion of Universal/Focus Features' *9*, Starz Animation Toronto, under the direction of Head of Studio David Steinberg, now employs 220 people, up substantially from when the studio opened in 2007, and continues to grow at a rapid pace.

"Today truly is a remarkable day," said Robert B. Clasen, Chairman and CEO, Starz, LLC. "Starz Animation Toronto is on course to become a world centre of excellence that produces exceptional quality animation work. We are thrilled with the endorsement and funding we have received from the Government of Ontario and their recognition that our state-of-the-art studio in Toronto is an important economic generator for this province. We are especially honored to have Sir Elton John and David Furnish with us here today."

"*Gnomeo & Juliet* is a special project for us, so we're happy that it's being animated under the auspices of David Steinberg and his team at Starz Animation Toronto," Sir Elton John said. "Toronto is a dynamic city with a great pool of talented animators, and the best of them are at work *on Gnomeo & Juliet* right now."

An irreverent comedy set in the back-drop of suburban English gardens and inspired by Shakespeare's renowned love story, Miramax Films' and Elton John and David Furnish's Rocket Pictures' *Gnomeo & Juliet* introduces us to two young garden gnomes from feuding families of lawn ornaments, who are blissfully unaware their story is destined for a tragic ending... unless they can change their fate. The film, directed by Kelly Asbury (*Shrek 2*), features classic and new music from the legendary singer/songwriting team of

Elton John and Bernie Taupin. James McAvoy (*Atonement*) and Emily Blunt (*The Devil Wears Prada*) will voice Gnomeo and Juliet.

“With breathtaking animated features like *9* and *Gnomeo & Juliet*, Starz Animation Toronto is undeniably establishing itself as a leader in high quality, independent digital animation,” added David Steinberg. “I’m excited that the Government of Ontario, Rocket Pictures and others recognize the value of our studio too.”

The Next Generation of Jobs Fund is a five-year initiative launched by the Government of Ontario to provide funding to help innovative companies grow and create sustainable jobs for Ontario’s highly skilled workers.

Starz Animation Toronto, a unit of Starz Media, LLC, is the only independent studio to produce five consecutive theatrical features, including the 2007 release, *Everyone’s Hero* (20th Century Fox/Starz Animation) and Universal Pictures/Big Ideas’ 2008 theatrical release, *The Pirates Who Don’t Do Anything: A VeggieTales Movie*, as well as a run of best-selling “VeggieTales” DVD releases for Big Idea.

About Starz Media

Starz Media, LLC, is a programming production and distribution company operating worldwide. It includes the Film Roman, Anchor Bay Entertainment, and Manga Entertainment brands. Its units create animated and live-action programming -- including theatrical films -- and programming created under contract for other media companies. It distributes that programming, and programming acquired from outside producers, through home video retailers, theaters, broadcasters, ad supported and premium television channels, and Internet and wireless video distributors in the US and internationally. Starz Media is an operating unit of Starz, LLC, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Liberty Media Corporation that is attributed to Liberty Capital Group.

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