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THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES

From the creators of ERNEST & CELESTINE

A film directed by
Benjamin Renner & Patrick Imbert

Based on the comic book *The Big Bad Fox*
by Benjamin Renner

Runtime: 80 minutes

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SYNOPSIS

The countryside isn't always as calm and peaceful as it's made out to be, and the animals on this farm are particularly agitated: a fox who mothers a family of chicks, a rabbit who plays the stork, and a duck who wants to be Santa Claus. If you think life in the country is a walk in the park, think again!

INTERVIEW WITH BENJAMIN RENNER

Director of *The Big Bad Fox* and author of the original comic book

THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES is the adaptation of your comic book into a film. How did you arrive at the idea of giving life to these characters and this universe? What were your sources of inspiration, and your goals?

It's a comic book that I created in several stages over a long period. I had a pencil in my hand from a young age, and I often drew little characters for members of my family. At each birthday or Christmas, when I didn't have money to buy them gifts or I didn't know what they'd want, I would give them a personalized comic book. The recurring characters were small farm animals – particularly a rabbit and a duck – who each time told the comic book's recipient a funny story explaining why, yet again, they wouldn't get a gift! As I recall, I thought up these characters when I was ten or twelve years old, then I continued to develop that universe for my family, up to the moment when, many years later, I wrote *A Baby to Deliver* to explain to my brother how his baby would come into the world. Of course, at that time, he already knew that happened without the help of a stork! (laughs)

And the adaptation of that story is one of the segments of the film...

Yes. We have the same tipsy stork who entrusts the baby to these characters because she is too lazy to deliver it herself. I built that universe little by little for my family, developed these characters, and recounted other small adventures. During my childhood, I bathed in the ambience of *Fables of La Fontaine* and *Tales of the Perched Cat* by Marcel Aymé, these anthropomorphic stories in which the animals embody human characters depending on their appearances. In my stories too, we feel that the little pig is going to be joyous and easygoing, the duck a grouch, and the rabbit capricious and a little irresponsible. I love to play with all of this to treat human issues in a funny way that's accessible for everyone.

Where did the idea for *The Big Bad Fox* come from?

I started imagining the story when I was little. My father took me to visit a farm that was equipped with an incubator filled with hens' eggs. When the farmer told us that the eggs were ready to hatch, I wanted to stay there to see what would happen. My father had no desire to wait around for so long, so, to convince me to leave, he told me that if I were the first thing the chicks saw, they would think I was their mother. And in that case, I would have to educate them and take care of them for the long term. At six and a half years old, I wasn't ready to be a single mother, because I still had things to live first... (laughs) I agreed to leave, to flee these overwhelming responsibilities, but this anecdote stayed in my head, along with the burning question: "If you suddenly found yourself the adoptive mother of chicks, should you teach them to behave like humans, or like chickens?" That concept continued to develop in my mind, then, later, I came up with the idea that the situation would be funnier if it were a fox that had to raise the chicks. After I finished *ERNEST & CELESTINE*, I wanted to develop that story, and I returned to these little characters and the farm setting in my comic book.

How did you collaborate with the screenwriter Jean Regnaud on the adaptation of the three stories that constitute *THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES*? What are the major differences between the screenplay and the stories in the comic book, and what new elements have you created?

When I started to work on the script, I found that adapting my own comic book is a really difficult exercise, as we tend to lack objectivity. It goes better with the benefit of an outsider's perspective, and from the distance another screenwriter can have. For example, we thought that some jokes in the comic book would have the same impact when animated, but that's not necessarily the case. Something that works very well in a series of fixed drawings doesn't always work in animation.

You have also reworked the dialog...

Yes, because the comic book is pretty chatty... When I wanted to preserve certain jokes, I noticed that while they read quickly in a comic book box, they take more time and room when the text is said by an actor and inserted into an animated sequence. That can even create instabilities in the film's overall structure. Jean Regnaud was there to help me with that aspect. He guided me by having this outside perspective, and not hesitating to tell me, "Right there it doesn't work very well," or "There, it works." He helped me to find new jokes, to have new ideas, and especially to concentrate on the original comic book's base structure, to rebuild a mode of narration around that, adapted to animation. This process has led us to ask ourselves questions, especially regarding specifics on certain characters that weren't clearly defined. For example, in the comic book, the chicks are three small white balls without unique personalities, but in the film, we knew they would become important entities, because we were going to let them express themselves more, by giving them voices. We have thus given a different personality to each chick, and when I found myself in front of the young actors during the voice recording, I was able to tell them "You, you are rather timid, you, you are overflowing with energy, and you, you're the pretty one." This rather long preparation work ended up being very pleasant, and it taught me a lot about the process of adapting a comic book to film, and about how to transpose one of my own stories into a screenplay.

Did you use the method of shooting the storyboard first to judge the impact of each scene and the overall rhythm of the narrative?

Yes, and I stuck almost directly to it. As the comic book was done, I figured it could serve as a reference, and I started right away to draw a graphic continuity in the rhythm of the characters, without going through the intermediate phase of classic storyboarding. For this, I also prepared sketches to see what I was starting on before giving a rhythm to all this. Patrick Imbert and I, we often work by jumping right into setting the tempo issues. The segment that I directed, *The Big Bad Fox*, is a little less based on visual humor, slapstick, than the two stories directed by Patrick, *A Baby to Deliver* and *The Perfect Christmas*, which rely on comical situations almost like Tex Avery's, where the vivacity of the action is very important. We would immediately test a gag to see if it worked in the rhythm, and if that was the case, we would prepare the animation. If it didn't work, we had to find another comical idea.

So the comic book served as a guide, and you quickly transposed it into an animatic to see what things needed to be cut, and where new ideas had to be found...

Yes. It was a very-quickly-evolving process, because the sketches were finished and went in front of the camera quickly so that we could view each new result.

The quality of your graphic adaptation of Gabrielle Vincent's illustrations was a big benefit to ERNEST & CELESTINE. Here, you're adapting your very spontaneous comic drawings into animation. For an audience member, this lively and natural rendering seems like it's right from your pencil, but it's really the culmination of great teamwork...

I always favored the expressivity, the comedy, the humor and the rhythm in my comic books, assuming a rough-hewn, spontaneous aspect. Almost like a Jean-Marc Reiser drawing, something ultra-expressive in just a few lines. For me, it's like writing words as rapid sketches thrown onto the paper. Rather than write "the fox seems stunned," I draw it. But even if the drawing is simplified, it's not easy to explain how it works when you find yourself in front of animators, because it consists of very personal graphic codes.

Such as?

Well, the characters are always drawn in three-quarters, never completely facing straight-on, nor completely in profile. The snouts are always positioned that way, even when two characters are talking facing each other and should be represented in profile. That's one of the small graphically-illogical particularities that must be explained to each animator. That's the reason I supervised the entire film, to define the characters' poses and guide the animators, so that they can feel more comfortable expressing themselves.

You also personally drew the characters' model sheets...

Effectively. But I intervened also, after the storyboard was drawn, to help the animators work on the shots that were entrusted to them. I drew the poses at the beginning, middle, and end of each shot, so they would know where they had to start from and where they had to land, while giving the characters the desired appearance. Learning to animate a character from a model sheet is a long process – it's impossible to go to work on a film and just succeed in drawing characters perfectly right away... The animator must pass, accompanied, through a learning phase.

THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES was animated in Paris at a studio created for this production. Could you talk a little about it and tell us how you worked with your whole artistic team?

After ERNEST & CELESTINE, I wanted to optimize the work which had been done on the film because we had developed a technique of art direction and animation that really interested us. Didier Brunner proposed an adaptation of my comic book, and I accepted with the agreement that it would be made as a short animation program for television. And then the project evolved, until eventually getting to the point where we were looking at adapting not just one, but three of my stories, with the same characters, in the same universe, and linked in the format of a feature-length film for movie theaters. Our budget was smaller than it had been on ERNEST & CELESTINE, but Didier, Patrick and I were intent on optimizing the work to get exactly the look I wanted... And this happened, because we were able to work in a studio in Paris, with the entire artistic team there. Didier accepted, and worked to enable us to create the film that way, in those optimal conditions. By being all together, Patrick and I could interact immediately with the animators and the designers, to guide them, and to rectify small mistakes from the beginning. In contrast, when you work at a distance with a studio in another country, you're in different time zones. An artist can animate an entire shot with a recurring mistake that goes undetected by the local supervisor, and when it's discovered, unfortunately must be asked to redo the entire thing. Everyone working together in the same place gave us much more room to maneuver, more artistic spontaneity, and allowed us to avoid many mistakes. I think it helped create a more serene and familial ambience in the studio. And greater solidarity within the team.

The characters' voices work very well. The adult actors all deliver excellent performances, but the children's interpretations are particularly surprising – they seem so natural.

All the credit goes to Céline Ronté, the casting director. Céline immediately understood what I wanted, and my directorial intentions with the actors. She brought a lot, thanks to her drama experience. She knows

actors, of course, but also she has a mastery of comic effects – what can be obtained by using a particular intonation just at the right moment. She knew how to choose the adult actors whose voices corresponded perfectly to my main characters, and for the chicks, she chose three children – two the son and daughter of professional dubbers – who know this work very well. The recording of the chicks' voices took place in the morning, in a relaxed, playground atmosphere. The parents were there to help their children, and it all took on a playful feel: the young actors played at being chicks, almost forgetting it was a recording for a film. The ambience was excellent, and we got very natural performances from the children. So, whereas I'm usually stressed before a voice recording session with actors, it was, for once, a moment of pure relaxation and pleasure!

Have you envisioned other stories taking place in the same universe? Would you like to animate them also, in another film?

For the moment, I'd like to take a little break, but ultimately, yes. This setting of the farm and the village could allow for the telling of a billion stories, and I envisioned focusing each time on a different character, a little like *Blue Tales* and *Tales of the Perched Cat*, to explore the problems and tell the things that have an interesting human dimension. I quite like this principle of storytelling, that allows you to calmly approach issues on which people are sometimes very opinionated. That's something they wouldn't tolerate seeing done in a realistic, contemporary context, but it does not shock them when they see the same themes in the context of a fable. The animal characters de-dramatize everything. And that makes the storyteller's work even more satisfying.

What would you like to say to audience members of all ages to inspire them to go see THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES?

To them I'd say, we've designed the film like a small candy, a moment of light relaxation, funny without pretension, to share with your family.

INTERVIEW WITH PATRICK IMBERT

Director of A Baby to Deliver and The Perfect Christmas

Did you know the *Big Bad Fox* comic book before working on the film?

Yes, because I've been friends with Benjamin since we met during pre-production on ERNEST & CELESTINE. I was an animator, he was the art director and director of animation. I've followed everything he's made since then.

How did you slip into the universe created by Benjamin and give it life in your own style, while simultaneously respecting his story and his artwork?

Since we've been collaborating for a few years and his personal universe was developed on work done for ERNEST & CELESTINE, we've shared this artistic experience. It was relatively simple for me to understand what Benjamin wanted to do and to work within his sensibilities, thanks to that common base.

Could you explain how an animator who's never drawn in Benjamin's style manage to give life to these characters with the help of model sheets?

Benjamin drew almost all of the principal poses for the characters, scene by scene, for the entire film. We couldn't dream of a better tool to guide the animators' work, since it's the creator himself who made these poses, to ensure the look of the scenes would always be consistent with his style. Then, Benjamin and I organized a whole accompaniment of animators, directing them to think more in terms of a theater actor's comedy performance, rather than the clichés and mannerisms often seen in cartoons. This guides the direction of our animation – first we think hard about what we are saying, then about what we want to express beyond words, and finally we embrace the joke. At that moment, it's him who must direct the animation. Preferably with an economy of movements, focusing on where it is most needed, in order to be effective and hard-hitting.

You directed *A Baby to Deliver* and *The Perfect Christmas*. What advice did Benjamin give you when you were preparing to make them? And how much flexibility did you have to create new gags, new situations diverging from the script that Benjamin and Jean Regnaud had written?

I had quite a bit of liberty, because the final goal was to get a good result, even if that meant changing a lot of things. Since Benjamin is a director like I am, and he had previously adapted ERNEST & CELESTINE with Daniel Pennac, he knew the process of transposing work into a film, and all that this transformation implies, with the cutting and adding of scenes. I could change what I wanted, as long as it stayed faithful to the spirit of the comic book and it worked. And more concretely, Benjamin and I were sitting next to each other, such that we could discuss an idea to decide quickly if it worked or not. Moreover, Benjamin also brought new ideas along the way, to help us in the filmmaking. The main advice he gave me was to concentrate first and foremost on the storytelling, and afterward think of ways to address technical problems and budget constraints. As an animator and director of animation, I am responsible for the management of logistics and budget, but it's true that this can sometimes become a bit too much my focus. His advice was therefore quite wise.

How did you work with Benjamin during production of the two segments you directed?

Very concretely, I prepared the storyboards based on the scenario before making *A Baby to Deliver* and *The Perfect Christmas*. And I coordinated the animation's direction on the film's three segments. Benjamin and I worked side by side during every stage of the film: planning the shots, the editing, voice recording, sound mixing, and throughout, it was easy to ask his advice whenever I had a doubt. In that case, I was turning to someone who wasn't just the author of the original comic book, but who is also a professional animator I esteem. His point of view and his advice was always useful. We're used to collaborating, so he also came to me for my opinions. All of this happened in a craftsmanly and calm way, moving forward together.

Compared to the comic book, what are the new elements that you've added to the stories *A Baby to Deliver* and *The Perfect Christmas*?

Principally, the jokes, the gags for children and young adults that are conveyed through the animation and also by the dialog, by the actors' performances. I added them just because they made me laugh. That's maybe a small difference between Benjamin and I when it comes storytelling: he wants to reach everyone simultaneously, all the generations together, while I like to target young adults a bit more from time to time, even if those jokes also work for children. For example, to underline the duck's treachery after he helped crash a tree through the cabin, I referenced a scene in Claude Lelouch's *L'AVENTURE, C'EST L'AVENTURE*, where Lino Ventura gives his comrades a lesson on politics. I was inspired by certain turns of phrase that I found deliciously evocative of bad faith. But generally, we wanted to ensure the audience could take pleasure following the story's adventures regardless of age. We must have this respect for an audience that responds to our invitation and comes out to see this film in theaters, trusting us. We must amuse them with carefully-crafted gags, and keep their attention by maintaining a rhythm from beginning to end. I'm proud of the work we accomplished; I know that I can recommend the film wholeheartedly to people, and tell them, "Go, you'll see, you'll have a really good time."

INTERVIEW WITH DIDIER BRUNNER

Producer

THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES is the first feature film produced by Folivari...

Our company was founded around six months after I left Les Armateurs. At that moment, since I was still in close contact with Benjamin Renner, with whom I developed a really friendly relationship, he sent me the *Big Bad Fox* comic book, which he was in the process of making for the publisher Delcourt. I found it so amusing, I immediately called Benjamin to suggest making it into a film. Since Benjamin was coming to the end of four years of work on *ERNEST & CELESTINE*, he didn't want to jump back into another long-term feature film project. After discussing it, we decided to produce a program of twenty to twenty-five minutes, which wouldn't take him more than a year, with time for him to adapt his comic book and for us to assemble a team. He held absolutely to the idea that all the artistic work be done in one studio in Paris. Thus we created this studio and started preparation on *The Big Bad Fox*, hoping to add other stories to the project. I talked about it to Benjamin, who told me he'd written two other stories that take place in the same universe: *A Baby to Deliver*, a comic book for children, and *The Perfect Christmas*, which he wrote during pre-production on *ERNEST & CELESTINE*. As the project was growing and Benjamin wanted to work with Patrick Imbert – his head animator on *ERNEST & CELESTINE* – again, I proposed that Patrick come aboard as co-director and director of animation. That's how Benjamin came to direct the *Big Bad Fox* segment, while Patrick Imbert made *A Baby to Deliver* and *The Perfect Christmas*. This working method allowed Benjamin to do other projects in parallel, particularly to develop new comic books for children. And soon after production began, as these funny images and very original graphics began arriving, we knew this cinematic comic book adaptation would work beautifully. The animation is extremely expressive and dynamic, the script by Benjamin and Jean Regnaud is very effective. Then Benjamin and Jean designed the film's introduction, connected the stories, and came up with the title **THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES**. We present the public with three fables with universal themes, and everyone – children and adults alike – enjoys the antics of these different animal characters. All of this rests on Benjamin's talent as a filmmaker, screenwriter and director, and on the valuable collaboration of Jean Regnaud and Patrick Imbert. Narratively and graphically, they managed to create a wonderful new cinematic universe to discover. It's an artisanal approach, as opposed to 3D renderings and ultra-realistic techniques that we routinely see in big American studios' blockbuster animations. This is hand-drawn animation, with a clean style that adds to the spontaneity, humor, and the expressiveness of the characters. From the first five minutes, the audience is immersed in the film's vision and gets carried away by the visual feel and the themes of the stories. It's clear that the substance and the form are perfectly matched to each other.

The audience that was seduced by the quality of the adaptation of Benjamin's art in *ERNEST & CELESTINE* (created by Gabrielle Vincent), will note that, *The Big Bad Fox* has also been transposed very successfully into animation. It feels like it came to life naturally, which necessarily required a great deal of work and development...

The comic book is minimalist in terms of art, but it still needed to be rethought and adapted to the process of animation. When you draw a comic book, you can use more pencil lines and more brush strokes than you can in animation. Benjamin had to simplify his drawings a bit, but he's an excellent animator who compensates for this with the characters' movements and expressions. As soon as they start moving, he gives them a presence, a charisma that only a great animator is able to instill in his creations. This happens because Benjamin is simultaneously an actor playing all the roles in the film, and the director of these characters. He has a remarkable instinct for comedy and for directing actors that's revealed in the way he assembles things. Not only does he animate brilliantly; he also worked with the voice actors with remarkable deftness.

Did the process of adapting comic book art for animation take long?

No, because Benjamin had all the aspects of his characters in his pencil. And because he draws as naturally as he breathes. For the project to succeed, he needed to be reunited with people who were familiar working partners. We partially reconstituted the team from ERNEST & CELESTINE, bringing back the best animators. Thanks to that confluence, Benjamin's rigorous preparation, the supervision of the animation by Patrick Imbert, and because the artwork was more simple, we succeeded in producing three and a half seconds of high-quality animation per day, which is an excellent result. I'm passionate about hand-drawn, 2D animation; I think we see something profoundly warm and human in characters being brought to life with three brush and pencil strokes. It brings us back to the essentials of this form of artistic expression.

The screenwriter Jean Regnaud had worked with Benjamin in the past?

No. I should specify that Benjamin wrote the adaptation of the story *The Big Bad Fox* himself, and Jean mainly helped on the other two stories. They had to be reworked because those stories have more of a Tex Avery dynamic, in the logic of cartoons. So Jean helped Benjamin do this work, and Patrick Imbert, as director of the two other episodes, collaborated on the writing and condensing, particularly on *A Baby to Deliver*. Originally, *A Baby to Deliver* and *The Perfect Christmas* were told over close to two-hundred comic book pages. The storytelling was so dense, it had to be reduced, restructured, and reinvented to get to the essential. At the beginning, *A Baby to Deliver* was a series of short funny skits without real dramatic rigor: the jokes were added onto each other to tell the story. The work of adaptation consisted of transforming it into a real fable that tells how the best of intentions can lead to catastrophe if one fails to reflect on one's actions. Then, we needed to find a trick, a narrative pirouette for *The Perfect Christmas*, because we couldn't tell children that Santa Claus doesn't exist. And I think that the solution Benjamin and Jean found is both funny and surprising.

Can you talk about the work of composer Robert Marcel Lepage?

Gladly. Benjamin had wanted to work with him for a long time. I had already collaborated with Robert Marcel Lepage on the film *ALLEZ RACONTE!* directed by Jean-Christophe Roger. Benjamin didn't want cartoonish music that stuck to every gesture, every gag. He wanted a soundtrack that complemented the images and the feelings, and brought a humorous verve, strengthening both comedic situations and emotional moments. Each main character has his or her own musical theme that returns regularly, being reworked to fit new situations.

In conclusion, how would you describe THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES?

I'd say this film is simultaneously a series of small substantive fables that reveal interesting things to the audience through comedy, and also a sweet confection that you eat joyously: the drawing style is extremely expressive, the actors' vocal performances are delicious, and the music sparkles...

BENJAMIN RENNER | BIOGRAPHY

- 2015** The comic book **Le Grand Méchant Renard** is published by Editions Delcourt
YOUTH PRIZE at festival d'Angoulême
FNAC COMIC BOOK PRIZE
- 2014** Oscar nomination for **ERNEST & CELESTINE**
- 2013** César award for Best Animated Feature Film for **ERNEST & CELESTINE**
- 2008** Graphic development on the feature film OCCHO KOCHOI at Teamto
Started to direct the animated feature film **ERNEST & CELESTINE**
French release: December 12th 2012
CESAR award for Best Animated Feature Film
MAGRITTE award for Best Film and Best Director
AUDIENCE AWARD at Mon Premier Festival
BEST FILM AWARD at Festival de Sarlat
CARTOON D'OR at Forum Cartoon
- 2007** Directed at la Poudrière the short film LA QUEUE DE LA SOURIS
- 2006** Directed at la Poudrière the short film LE CORBEAU VOULANT IMITER L'AIGLE
Directed at la Poudrière the short film LE PLUS GROS PRESIDENT DU MONDE
- 2005** Integrated La Poudrière, animated film school
- 2004** Graduated in comic book from les Beaux-arts d'Angoulême (art school)

PATRICK IMBERT | BIOGRAPHY

- 2015** Directed the feature film LE SOMMET DES DIEUX / Folivari
Co-directed the feature animated film LE GRAND MECHANT RENARD ET AUTRES CONTES with Benjamin Renner / Folivari
- 2013-2014** Character designer and animation director on the feature film AVRIL ET LE MONDE TRUQUE / Je suis bien content
- 2013** Animated the short film BAN-BANG de Julien Bisaro
- 2012** Animated a clip for the French band Tryo
Story Board of the series MILLY, MISS QUESTION / Ciel de Paris
- 2010-2011** Animation director of the feature film ERNEST ET CELESTINE
Flash animator on a BN advertisement, at the production company Je suis bien content
- 2009** Directed the pilot episode of the series POLO/ Bayard jeunesse animation
Animator on the feature TITEUF, directed by Zep
Animator on the feature ERNEST ET CELESTINE
- 2008** Animator on the feature ELEONOR'S SECRET, directed by Dominique Montfery/Alphanim
Traditional animator on the pilot of ERNEST ET CELESTINE, directed by Grégoire Sivan/ les Armateurs
Flash animator on the pilot of TOONING, directed by Raphael Chabassol/Normaal
Flash animator on the pilot of NINI PATALO, directed by Boris Guillotheau/Je Suis Bien Content
directed the mini-series LES BLAGUES DE TOTO (40x1')/ Bayard jeunesse animation
- 2007** Animation supervisor on the series FAMOUS FIVE, directed by P. Pinon/Marathon
- 2006-2007** Flash animator on the series LE CHAT DE FRANKENSTEIN, directed by Raoul/Quatre.21

DIDIER BRUNNER | BIOGRAPHY

After studying philosophy in high school, Didier's passion for fine arts and the cinema took him to college for a Master's in theater and a PhD in art history. In 1984, he produced CAFE PLONGEOIR, Jérôme Boivin's first short, a 10-minute fiction film starring Richard Bohringer. In 1997, he directed a documentary series on the Third World, entitled AFRIQUE DOMINEE, AFRIQUE LIBEREE, followed by EN ROUTE POUR ZANZIBAR, 36 short musical fiction pieces, for France 3. On the production side, he created the Trans Europe Film company, producing many shows, including DES CHATS (a series adapted from illustrator Steinlein's works), and TELETOON, a broadcast on animation. He met Michel Ocelot in 1991 and the two of them went on to produce LES CONTES DE LA NUIT.

Didier Brunner founded Les Armateurs in 1994. Its first big success came as early as 1997, with LA VIEILLE DAME ET LES PIGEONS, a short by Sylvain Chômet; it was nominated for a César and an Oscar and won the Grand Prize at the world-renowned Annecy Festival. Michel Ocelot's first two features naturally followed: the famous KIRIKOU AND THE SORCERESS and PRINCES AND PRINCESSES.

In the last decade, Didier Brunner has produced about a dozen features, including THE TRIPLETS OF BELLEVILLE by Sylvain Chômet, BRENDAN AND THE SECRET OF KELS by Tomm Moore and, more recently, ERNEST AND CELESTINE by Benjamin Renner, Stéphane Aubier and Vincent Patar (César 2013 and Oscar nomination in 2014). Before leaving Les Armateurs, Didier initiated the animation series THE LONG LONG HOLIDAY, a historical production which reaped huge ratings on France 3.

Within months of selling his share of Les Armateurs, in 2014, Didier Brunner created a brand new production company - FOLIVARI – along with Damien Brunner, Pauline Brunner, Thibaut Ruby, Emmanuel Delétang and Delphine Dalquié. That same year, Didier Brunner received a Winsor McCay Award, at the Annies; a Crystal Award at Annecy Festival followed in 2016. Both prizes were in recognition of his career spanning several years. In addition to his functions at Folivari, Didier is currently involved in creating the European Animation Awards association along with various other professionals from the world of animation (including Peter Lord (Studio Aardman) and Paul Young (Cartoon Saloon)). The purpose of this outfit is to create an awards event that will embrace all European animation professions without exception, based on the model of America's Annies Awards.

FOLIVARI

After accomplishing a rich career dedicated to animation and revealing talents, Didier Brunner decided to turn a new page in 2014. He was ready to step away from the company he had founded, Les Armateurs, and ponder over an ideal future... In his mind, this would mainly consist of spending time gardening, in the company of his cat, Ernest...

But, one fine morning, a twist of fate brought a comic strip project to his door: *The Big Bad Fox*, by Benjamin Renner. Immediately smitten, Didier called Benjamin to ask if he would consider adapting the project for the big screen. The seeds of a brand new company - Folivari - were sprouting fast... Didier asked his son, Damien (a professional architect) to build him a production house specifically designed for animation, one that would encourage an unbridled, high-end editorial approach.

The Folivari "grain" took root that same year, in 2014. The result was a multitalented production company, nurtured by the experience, youthfulness and ambition of its founders: Didier Brunner, creator of the Les Armateurs production company, and Damien Brunner, a graduate of ESAG Penninghen and freelance architect for 10 years. Thibaut Ruby, production manager on ERNEST & CELESTINE and executive producer for THE SONG OF THE SEA, was hired to supervise all productions. The stellar line-up also included Delphine Dalquié, former legal director for LES ARMATEURS, Emmanuel Delétang, music producer and publisher with 22D MUSIC, and Pauline Brunner, actress and animation movie director.

Besides producing and making THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES, Folivari has co-produced the TV show of ERNEST & CELESTINE (which airs on Saturdays on France 5) in association with Mélusine Productions. Folivari currently has various shows in development: THE BAKER STREET FOUR (along with the artistic team that worked on THE LONG LONG HOLIDAY), the STINKY DOG show (an adaptation of Marc Boutavant and Colas Gutman's books), and the MENINO AND THE CHILDREN OF THE WORLD show (a work that combines the spontaneity of the characters featured in the film THE BOY AND THE WORLD by Ale Abreu and the imagery of award-winning documentary ON THE WAY TO SCHOOL, a Winds production).

While the Folivari studio loves making TV shows, it is also keen to position itself as a leading producer in the realm of animation features. To this end, the PACHAMAMA movie has been in production since September 2016, with director Juan Antin at the helm. Other feature-length movies are also currently in the development stage, in the Folivari studios such as THE NAZIS, MY FATHER AND ME, an adaptation of Robert H. Lieberman's novel, to be directed by Rémy Schaepman, THE SUBMIT OF THE GODS, a coproduction with Julianne Films, directed by Patrick Imbert, and SAMSAM the movie, an adaptation of Serge Bloch's familiar character and of the TV series initiated by Bayard.

As an animation studio and delegate producer, starting with THE BIG BAD FOX AND OTHER TALES and ERNEST AND CELESTINE THE COLLECTION, Folivari aims for excellence at all times by making its own programs in-house. Thanks to Didier Brunner's extensive experience and innate intuition, as well as the ambition and acumen of Damien Brunner and the other team members, Folivari is extending its branches every day, developing top quality projects and discovering new talents in the worlds of animation and cinema, worldwide.

VOICE CAST

Céline Ronté	The Hen
Boris Rehlinger	The Wolf/The Bulldog
Guillaume Bouchede	The Dog
Guillaume Darnault	The Fox
Magali Rosenzweig	The Hens
Elise Noiraud	
Jules Bienvenu	Alex
Violette Samama	Pauline
Augustin Jahn-Sani	Evan
Damien Wieteka	The Pig
Kamel Abdessadok	The Rabbit
Antoine Schoumsky	The Duck
Jean-Loup Horwitz	Santa Claus
Christophe Lemoine	The Stork/The Hunter

CREW LIST

Based on the book by	Benjamin Renner, published by Delcourt
Director	Benjamin Renner et Patrick Imbert
Screenplay and dialogues	Benjamin Renner et Jean Regnaud
Music composer	Robert Marcel Lepage
Producers	Damien Brunner, Didier Brunner and Vincent Tavier
Coproducers	FOLIVARI, PANIQUE !, STUDIOCANAL, RTBF and BE TV
International sales	STUDIOCANAL
Executive producer	Thibaut Ruby
Production manager	Julien Gallet
First assistant director	Kilian Dinon
Production designers	Zyk et Zaza
Director of animation	Patrick Imbert
Casting	Céline Ronté
Animation studio	FOLIVARI
Sound studios	PISTE ROUGE et ALEA JACTA
Compositing studio	MIKROS IMAGE LIEGE
Laboratory	HIVENTY