



FROM THE PRODUCERS OF
NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS,
OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE...
AND THE AMAZING MAURICE

Milko

BEYOND
THE NORTHERN LIGHTS



ULYSSES
FILMPRODUKTION

moetion
films



GLOBAL SCREEN
CINEMA



A fantastic and heartwarming
adventure for the whole family!
from the producers of
NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS,
OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE...
and **THE AMAZING MAURICE.**

When his lifelong dream of joining
Santa's Flying Forces hangs in the balance,
a young Reindeer must find his own path
in time to save Christmas.



SYNOPSIS

After a tearful goodbye, NIKO leaves his family behind to take his place next to his father, PRANCER, on SANTA'S FLYING FORCES. For Niko, it's a dream come true: to become a hero, like his father.

STELLA, an unknown challenger, arrives to compete for Niko's spot. Despite their competitiveness, the pair take a liking to each other, and Niko shows Stella where Santa's sleigh is hidden. However, on the night before Christmas Eve, Stella steals it. Gutted by Stella's betrayal and desperate to appease his angry father, Niko heads to the frozen North to recover the sleigh, accompanied by his loyal friends, flying squirrel JULIUS and weasel WILMA.

Niko must separate from his pals to travel alone across the Eternal Sea and locate Stella's home, where he learns a horrible truth: his father had betrayed his childhood friend, Ilmar, who is none other than Stella's father. Meanwhile, Stella gives the sleigh to Ilmar and is shocked when he, bent on revenge, reveals his true plan to cancel Christmas worldwide.

The Flying Forces arrive in the nick of time. Ilmar and Prancer face off. In the ensuing battle, Niko and Stella must separate from the herd to prevent the sleigh from being destroyed. As our heroes face grave danger, they must make difficult choices that change Christmas forever.

Through friendships, old and new, Niko learns to forge his own path and reconcile past wrongs in this heartwarming Christmas adventure.

CHARACTER DESCRIPTION

NIKO

Niko (13 in human years) is a lively and curious reindeer boy who has just started to turn into a moody teenager. He is a sensitive kid whose flying ability sets him apart as he is about to become an official member of the Santa's Flying Forces beside his father Prancer.

In the story Niko gets an unexpected challenger, Stella, for his place on the Flying Forces he's dreamed of for a long time. But what is he willing to do to achieve this goal? When things get out of control and Christmas is at stake, Niko has to grow beyond himself and perhaps even sacrifice his dream.

STELLA

Stella is Niko's age and comes out of nowhere claiming her right to become a member of the Flying Forces. No one knows anything about the tough and highly competitive reindeer girl.

Stella is the daughter of Ilmar, the leader of the Storm Forces, who has dedicated his life to getting justice for an old betrayal. Stella has been taught to hate the Flying Forces and especially Prancer; she has come to Santa's Fell to steal Santa's sleigh. But we soon learn that she isn't just all about winning, she also has a sensitive character.





JULIUS

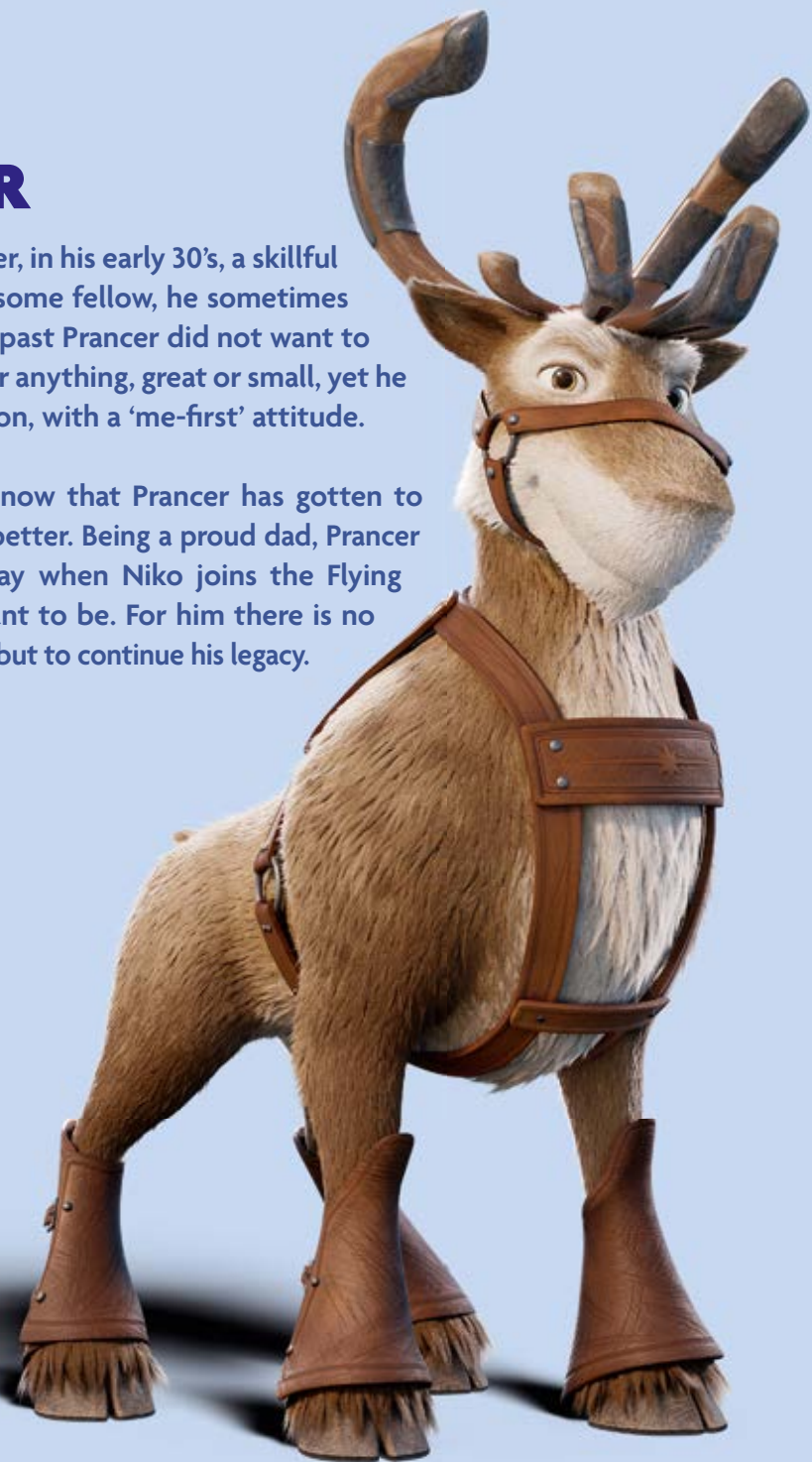
Julius is a flying squirrel and a senior citizen with a warm heart and some excess weight who has dedicated his life to looking after Niko, who is like a son to him.

Julius lost his own family a long time ago and his species is very rare in Lapland. He is considered to be the last of his kind. Julius is always very cautious and constantly worried. Because of his small size and unathletic body, he has learned to rely on his brains, and when he or Niko are in trouble, it is often Julius who comes up with an odd but sometimes helpful idea.

PRANCER

Prancer is Niko's father, in his early 30's, a skillful flyer. Though a handsome fellow, he sometimes shows his age. In the past Prancer did not want to take responsibility for anything, great or small, yet he was fond of admiration, with a 'me-first' attitude.

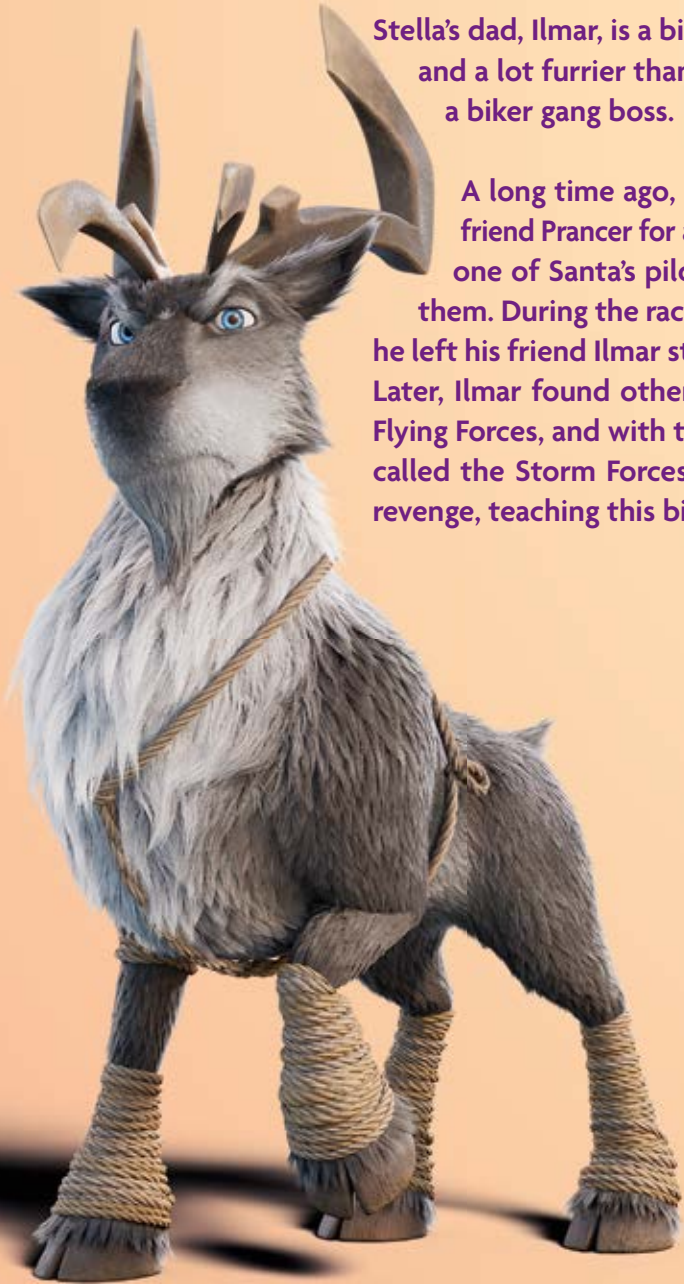
But this is changing now that Prancer has gotten to know his son a little better. Being a proud dad, Prancer can't wait for the day when Niko joins the Flying Forces, as it was meant to be. For him there is no other option for Niko but to continue his legacy.



ILMAR

Stella's dad, Ilmar, is a big, muscular reindeer, grey and scarred, and a lot furrier than a normal reindeer. He looks a bit like a biker gang boss.

A long time ago, Ilmar had to compete against his best friend Prancer for a position on the Flying Forces. Becoming one of Santa's pilots was the biggest dream for both of them. During the race, Prancer wanted to win so badly that he left his friend Ilmar stuck in a tree in the middle of the race. Later, Ilmar found other flying reindeer who never made the Flying Forces, and with them he started his own team of flyers called the Storm Forces. Since then, he has only dreamed of revenge, teaching this bitter attitude to Stella and Morten.



MORTEN

Morten is Stella's older brother and son of Ilmar. A wannabe villain, he is hampered by his pitiful one-track mind of only wanting to please his dad. He always tries to copy his father and make him proud, but being something of a dimwit, he rarely succeeds.

Morten is a few years older, physically stronger, and a bit taller than Stella, and he resents the fact that Ilmar sent the clever, skillful Stella to Santa's Fell for the big sleigh mission anyway. This makes Morten even more jealous. Morten does his best to please his dad but never quite gets the attention he wants.



WILMA

Wilma is a wild weasel-girl, in her early 20's in human years. A streetwise artist, she left home early to see the world and become a star in show business.

Wilma does not seem to be afraid of anything. Wilma fights wolves and eagles. She never gives in to fear and accepts every challenge. She used to work at Santa's Fell and knows every pilot in the Flying Forces. She is a natural entertainer, and she enjoys life. She has found a new home in Niko's home valley, and her special friend is Julius, and sometimes they act like a married couple, which amuses all the others.



DASHER AND THE FLYING FORCES

Dasher is the noble leader of Santa's Flying Forces. He is an officer and a gentleman and the oldest on the team, with the military rank of colonel. If a pilot is unruly, Dasher applies army-style leadership, with varying results. Dasher understands his responsibility and position as a hero to all children and has a passion for his work as the leader of the Flying Forces. The pilots all depend on each other in the air, and everything the team does together serves the purpose of the Christmas Mission.

The rest of the world-famous Flying Forces reindeer are quite simple creatures. They live for their work and need a lot of time to celebrate and decompress. They always act as a group and very much enjoy each other's company. Their heroic team spirit is so strong that they are like a big family.



LEMMINGS

Lemmings are brave little creatures. They are always seen around Lapland in a big gang. They love to search for moss, every day and everywhere, but what they really love is eating it.

As individuals, Lemmings are disorganized, creating chaos. But come what may, they survive very well as a group. And when they make you one of their own, you are with them for a lifetime.

LALA LEMMING

Lala is a kind of leader without realizing it. She is open-minded and curious and can get one idea at a time (sometimes) but will still get lost.

LAPPI LEMMING

Lappi is temperamental without being nasty. He is snappy and gutsy but endowed with a naive mind.

LEO LEMMING

Leo is a bit more slow-minded than the other slow-minded lemmings, a true follower of... anybody and anything.



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

Niko 3 is a story about a young superhero who finds his own way of living with his talents. Taking this step comes with a price: Niko has to defy his community's old rules and put aside the expectations of his father.

This story offers all the visuals and action needed to make a compelling animated adventure. We have made two films about Niko already, and this time we really challenged ourselves, both as designers and as storytellers. The plot takes Niko inside an iceberg and finds him charging through the Northern Lights and floating in space. The designs look fantastic, and I already know that fans of animated adventure films will not be disappointed.

But to me, the most essential ingredient of any good movie is emotion. I want to be emotionally exhausted, but also rewarded, when the story ends and the hero finally becomes what he deserves to be. I'm excited to tell the story of Niko, who grows from a hero's son into a hero of his own.

Niko has always been the special one – one of a kind. But when he meets Stella, another young flying reindeer, everything changes. Stella turns out to be every bit as skillful, brave, and talented as Niko. Niko has to compete with Stella for his greatest dream: a pilot position in Santa's Flying Forces.

Competition and being compared to others are a big part of every child's life. It happens at school, at the playground, in hobbies and in sports. Personally I see no harm in this. I have been competing in sports all my life. In my experience, when the game is fair, you can live with wins and losses alike. But every game needs a set of rules. When these rules are broken, games and competitions can turn into battlefields and stop being fun or even good learning experiences.

Niko starts to see the dark side of the competition in which he finds himself. Niko has always idolized his father but now finds out that he chose winning over friendship when he competed for his own position on the Flying Forces. The merciless method of racing to find new pilots divides all contestants into winners and losers – and not everyone can handle defeat. Niko meets the Storm Forces, a group of flying reindeer rejected by the Flying Forces, and Stella, their leader's daughter, has inherited her father's grudge.

Niko starts to question both the tradition of racing as well as his biggest authority figures: his father and the Flying Forces. In the end, Niko turns down his childhood dream in the offer to join them. This surprising decision makes the Flying Forces question their ancient rules – and change them.

This is the message of the story for our young audience: ask questions, speak up, and criticize. The world built by previous generations is not done and dusted. Change the rules of the game. Change the world to match your own ideals. You have every right to do so!

Yours sincerely,

Kari Juusonen
Director and writer



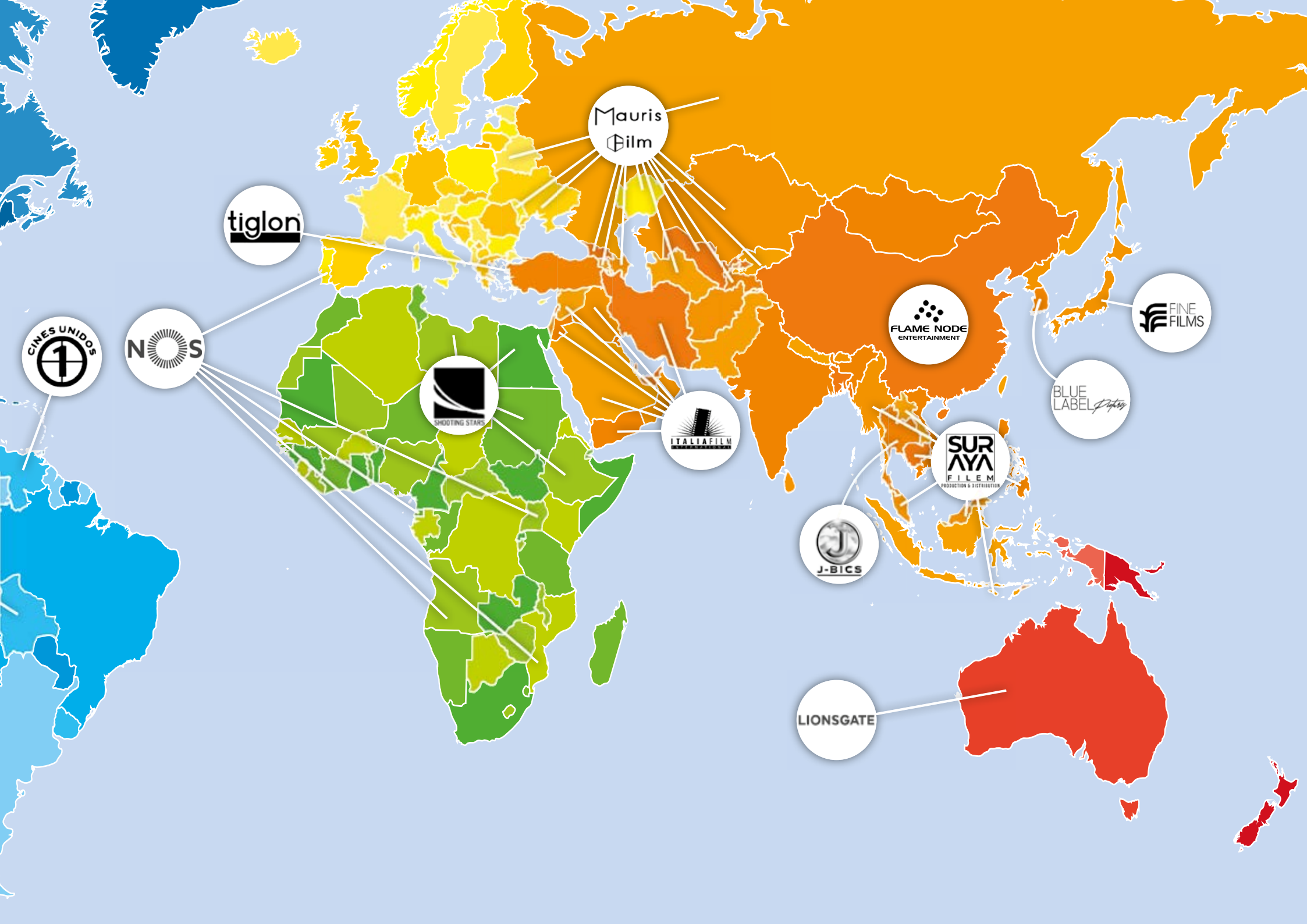
THE NIKO FRANCHISE: A WORLDWIDE SUCCESS STORY THAT HAS MADE OVER 50 MILLION USD AT THE BOX OFFICE*



SALES & DISTRIBUTERS WORLDWIDE

Selection of companies that have bought rights to
NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS or
NIKO 2 – LITTLE BROTHER, BIG TROUBLE

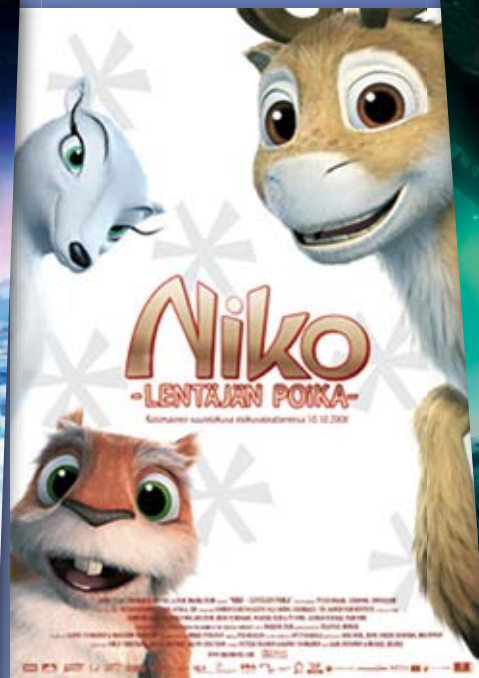
*Cumulative box office numbers for NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS and NIKO 2 – LITTLE BROTHER, BIG TROUBLE



Niko

AROUND THE WORLD





THE TEAM: COMPANIES



ANIMAKER is a Finnish animation production company founded in 2004. It is jointly owned by the Anima Vitae animation studio and producer Hannu Tuomainen of Cinemaker. They develop and produce high quality, high-budget animated features for the international market. Their first feature, from 2008, was **NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS**, the most successful Finnish movie of all time. Their second film was **NIKO 2 – LITTLE BROTHER**, **BIG TROUBLE** in 2012, which became the second-most successful film ever.

ANIMA VITAE is one of the most technically advanced CGI animation studios in Europe, with expertise in producing high-end screen titles, comparable to any European animation, like the two Niko-movies or several TV series.

CINEMA has been in business for over 30 years. The company specializes in creating universally distributed content and in managing international financing and co-productions, with family entertainment at its core.

Animaker Oy operates in Anima Vitae's Helsinki-based animation studio managed by producers Antti Haikala and Hannu Tuomainen.

ULYSSES FILMPRODUKTION

ULYSSES FILMPRODUKTION, based in Hamburg, Germany is one of the most active European production companies for high-quality, commercially successful animation films. Since 2004, Ulysses has financed and produced animated feature films and series for the international market – family entertainment at the highest level! The company has developed and produced worldwide-hit, 3D animated movies such as **OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE...** (aka **TWO BY TWO**, **ALL CREATURES BIG AND SMALL**), **LUIS & THE ALIENS**, and the sequel **OOOPS! 2 – THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES...** (aka **TWO BY TWO – OVERBOARD!**).

They have recently completed **THE AMAZING MAURICE**, an adaptation of the late Terry Pratchett's fantasy novel "The Amazing Maurice and His Educated Rodents". The film was picked up by the 2023 Sundance Film Festival and nominated – and shortlisted – for and by numerous awards and festivals.



moetion films

MOETION FILMS is an award-winning animation company based in Galway, on the west coast of Ireland. With an established network of writers, animators, actors, directors and co-producers, the company develops and produces animated feature films and TV series for international distribution.

Winner of Producer of the Year 2016 at Cartoon Movie in Lyon, their debut feature *TWO BY TWO* (aka *OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE...*) was distributed by eOne and sold in over 140 territories worldwide. The sequel, *TWO BY TWO – OVERBOARD!* (aka *OOOPS! 2 – THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES...*), topped box office charts in the UK/ROI and Norway in 2020/21.

Owner and producer Moe Honan is a long-time co-producer with partners across Europe and Canada and has co-produced animated feature films such as the award-winning *NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS*, *NIKO 2 – LITTLE BROTHER*, *BIG TROUBLE* and *THOR – LEGENDS OF VALHALLA*. She also co-produced *THE UGLY DUCKLING AND ME* (a feature and TV series), *LILLY THE WITCH*, *ZOMBIE HOTEL*, *THE FAIRYTALER*, and *NORMAN NORMAL*.



A.FILM PRODUCTION located in central Copenhagen, is one of Scandinavia's most productive animation companies. The original company, A.Film A/S, was founded in 1988. Today, A.Film Production is owned and run by Karsten Kiilerich and Anders Mastrup and produces classical 2D and CGI animation for feature films and TV series.

A.Film has produced well-known animated feature films such as *ASTERIX AND THE VIKINGS*, *THE UGLY DUCKLING AND ME*, *NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS*, *NIKO 2 – LITTLE BROTHER*, *BIG TROUBLE* and *THE LITTLE VAMPIRE*, as well as animated TV series such as *BENJAMIN BLÜMCHEN*, *BIBI BLOCKSBERG*, *BIBI AND TINA*, and *THE FAIRYTALER* (based on Hans Christian Andersen's world-famous fairy tales).

Apart from working on its own productions, A.Film has subcontracted for companies such as Warner Bros. Feature Animation, Don Bluth Studios, MGM Animation, Hanna Barbera, Columbia Pictures, Rovio, and Nordisk Film as well as for Kiddinx and M6 Studios. A.Film has won several prizes over the years – one of them a 1999 Oscar® nomination from the Academy Awards for Best Animated Short.



THE TEAM: PRODUCERS

ANTTI HAIKALA

Antti Haikala is one of the most important pioneers on the Finnish 3D animation scene. He co-founded his animation studio Anima Vitae in 2000 and since then has been part of numerous animation projects in varying roles, lately as producer, head of development, and managing director of the studio.

His best-known credits include internationally successful feature films like *NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS* (production supervisor, 2008) and *NIKO – LITTLE BROTHER, BIG TROUBLE* (producer and editor, 2012). In 2001 Antti also directed his first feature animation, *SANTA'S MAGICAL CRYSTAL*.

Antti also has extensive experience in TV production, including *MOOMINVALLEY* (seasons 1 through 4, 2018–2024), *LEGO STAR WARS* (seasons 1 and 2, 2016–2017), and *ANGRY BIRDS STELLA* (season 1, 2014).

Aside from the third Niko movie, *NIKO – BEYOND THE NORTHERN LIGHTS* (2024), Antti is currently in production with the feature movie *FLEAK* (due in 2025) and in development with *TRASH-MONSTERS*, among other future projects.

Antti's work has won several international awards, including the British Animation Award for Best Animation, the Golden Panda for Best Animation Series, the Cinekid Jury and Audience Awards for Best Feature Film, and an Emma Kids Award nomination – to name a few.





HANNU TUOMAINEN

Hannu Tuomainen is an experienced Finnish producer-script-writer with 35 years' experience. Hannu runs his own production company, Cinemaker, established in 1990, and produced the Niko films via Animaker, a joint venture with the Anima Vitae animation studio operating since 2004.

Hannu has produced several features and short films, mainly targeted at young and family audiences. He concentrates on high-budget, high-quality projects for wide international distribution that touch the hearts of the audience. His first feature was *TOMMY AND THE WILDCAT* (1998), a major box office hit in Finland that sold to over 40 countries. Hannu's successful production and writing credits include Finland's most award-winning youth film *ONE-WAY TICKET TO MOMBASA* (2002, also director) and the animated features *NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS* (2008) and *NIKO 2 – LITTLE BROTHER, BIG TROUBLE* (2012), which together have racked up over six million box office admissions. Niko's third adventure, *NIKO – BEYOND THE NORTHERN LIGHTS* will be released in the fall of 2024.

Hannu has received multiple national awards, including two Jussi-awards (the Finnish national Oscar) for the first Niko movie, Best Screenplay and Best Picture. He has twice been honored as Producer of the Year and has received several State Quality Awards. His numerous international awards include Jury and Audience awards for Best Picture at Cinekid Amsterdam for the first Niko and Best European Youth Film award for *ONE WAY TICKET TO MOMBASA* from the European Cinema Association.

EMELY CHRISTIANS

Emely is CEO and producer of Ulysses Films, which is known for award-winning films and worldwide successes like *OOOPS! 2 – THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES...* (aka *TWO BY TWO – OVERBOARD!*), *LUIS AND THE ALIENS*, *NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS*, *NIKO – LITTLE BROTHER*, *BIG TROUBLE* and Terry Pratchett’s *THE AMAZING MAURICE*, which was released theatrically worldwide in 2022/2023, invited to the Sundance Festival, nominated for “The Golden Sparrow” and shortlisted for the “BAFTA” and “German Film Prize”.

In 2016, she received the European Producer of the Year Award from the Cartoon Media Association for *OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE...* (aka *TWO BY TWO, ALL CREATURES BIG AND SMALL*). Among other honors she received a Bavarian Film Prize in the category “Best Youth Film” for *RICHARD THE STORK*. Emely is on the board of directors of the German Film Academy, animated film section, and is a member and treasurer of the European Film Academy.

With the adaptation of Kirsten Boie’s novel *PIRATE MO*, she has just started production on her 15th theatrical feature film. Her most recent film, *BUTTERFLY TALE*, is currently in distribution, a Canadian-German co-production to be released worldwide in the coming months. To date, her films have taken in over \$100 million at the international box office.





MOE HONAN

Moetion Films CEO Moe Honan lives in Galway, in the West of Ireland. She is an independent producer and a voice director for several award-winning animated feature films and TV series. She has developed, co-produced and voice-directed many international series as well as five feature films, including Moetion Films' 2015 debut. The global hit *TWO BY TWO* (aka *OOOPS! NOAH IS GONE...*) earned the company the Producer of the Year Award at Cartoon Movie 2016.

The sequel, *TWO BY TWO – OVERBOARD!* (aka *OOOPS! 2 – THE ADVENTURE CONTINUES...*), was released internationally in 2020/21, topping box offices in the UK, Spain, Germany and Norway. Honan is currently in production with *NIKO – BEYOND THE NORTHERN LIGHTS*, the third film in the international hit franchise *Niko*.

Previous screen credits include *NIKO 2 – LITTLE BROTHER*, *BIG TROUBLE* Producer & Voice Director (2012); *THOR – LEGENDS OF VALHALLA* – Producer & Voice Director (2010); *SIMSALA GRIMM II* (animated TV series) NDR – Producer & Voice Director (2009), *NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS* (feature film) – Producer & Voice Director (2008); *LILLY THE WITCH* (animated series) BBC – Producer & Voice Director (2006); and *THE UGLY DUCKLING AND ME* – Feature Film and animated series (2005), among others.

Moe is industry chair for Animation Ireland, the trade association for animation production companies in Ireland, and also sits on the board of Animation In Europe, an umbrella organization for production associations across Europe, which now has 20 country members from across eastern and western Europe.

ANDERS MASTRUP

Anders Mastrup co-founded A.Film in 1988. Since then he has produced some of the best-loved and highest-grossing Danish and European animated features, like *HELP! I'M A FISH* (2000), *TERKEL IN TROUBLE* (2004), *ASTERIX AND THE VIKINGS* (2005), *NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS* (2008), *OLSEN GANG GETS POLISHED* (2010), and *THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF THE GIANT PEAR* (2017), as well as *CHECKERED NINJA 1* (2018) and *CHECKERED NINJA 2* (2021).

He has been a board member of several Danish and international animation organizations and been the producer of several prizewinning features and TV series.

In 1999 he was nominated for an Oscar for the animated short, *WHEN LIFE DEPARTS*.



THE TEAM: DIRECTORS

DIRECTOR KARI JUUSONEN

Kari Juusonen is Finland's most successful animation director, having directed international feature successes NIKO AND THE WAY TO THE STARS (2008), and NIKO 2 – LITTLE BROTHER, BIG TROUBLE (2012), and now the new Niko-movie, NIKO – BEYOND THE NORTHERN LIGHTS (2024).

Aside from the box office feature hits, Kari has directed several animated short films as well as TV series like ANGRY BIRDS – STELLA and ANGRY BIRDS TOONS (for Rovio) and MOMOLU (for Ferly Animation).

Kari's films have been screened at over 150 festivals including at Hong Kong, Edinburgh, Sundance, Rio de Janeiro, Hiroshima, Pusan, Seoul, Annecy, Sydney, Jerusalem, São Paulo, Amsterdam, Paris, London, Tokyo, Giffoni, and Stuttgart. At Cannes in 2001, Kari won the prestigious Prix du Jury, Selection Officiel, Court Métrage for his short film PIZZA PASSIONATA.



CO-DIRECTOR JØRGEN LERDAM

Jørgen Lerdam started working in the animation industry as an animator in 1979. Together with four other partners, he founded A.Film in Denmark in 1988.

He is currently working as a co-director of the animated feature NIKO – BEYOND THE NORTHERN LIGHTS and is developing projects for his recent start-up, Datterselskabet.

Jørgen is one of Denmark's most successful box office directors of this millennium. In 2005, he received the prestigious Hans Christian Andersen Award for his work on the TV series THE FAIRYTALER

Jørgen's extensive filmography directing animation includes NIKO2 – LITTLE BROTHER, BIG TROUBLE, THE INCREDIBLE STORY OF THE GIANT PEAR, several OLSEN GANG movies, PETTSON & FINDUS, and the JUNGO movies.









Niiko

Director Kari Juusonen
Co-director Jørgen Lerdam
Screenplay Kari Juusonen
Hannu Tuomainen
Marteinn Thorisson
Production Designer Mikko Pitkänen
Editor Ben Mercer
Music Eímear Noone
Sound Designer Aza Hand
Produced by Antti Haikala
Hannu Tuomainen
&
Emely Christians
Moe Honan
Anders Mastrup

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Fís Éireann/Screen Ireland,
The Danish Film Institute,
Section 481 - Government of Ireland,
MTV, Estonian Film Institute, RTÉ, DR
Production Companies Anima Vitae, Cinemaker,
Ulysses Films, Moetion Films,
A.Film Production

Format CGI Animation
Target Family Entertainment, core target audience children 5-12 years
Genre Adventure
Original language English
Delivery Summer 2024
Countries Finland, Germany, Ireland, Denmark
Budget € 7,2 m
Running time Approx. 85 min

