



IMAGI TO GIVE NEW LIFE TO MIGHTY ATOM VIA
“ASTRO BOY”
CG ANIMATION FEATURE FILM



(Hong Kong, September 12, 2006) Imagi Animation Studios announces today that it has optioned rights from Tezuka Productions Company Limited (“Tezuka”) of Japan to produce a new CG animated feature length motion picture intended for theatrical release in 2009, based on the renowned anime franchise “*Astro Boy*” originally created by Osamu Tezuka.

Originally known as Tetsuwan Atomu (鉄腕アトム) (translating into “Iron Fisted Atom”) in Japan, the franchise is best known by its American title “*Astro Boy*”. *Astro Boy* first appeared as a manga comic series in 1952, drawn by Osamu Tezuka, who is affectionately known as the “god of manga”. The original television series, first broadcast in Japan in 1963-1966, was the first to embody aesthetics that later became known as “anime”. After enjoying success abroad, *Astro Boy* was remade in the 1980s as Shin Tetsuwan Atomu (*Astro Boy* in the US and other Western countries) and again in 2003.

The *Astro Boy* franchise has garnered enormous success around the world. In Asia, *Astro Boy*’s popularity is considered equivalent to that of Disney’s *Mickey Mouse* in North America. The franchise has enjoyed great success in merchandising and toys. *Astro Boy*’s induction into the Robot Hall of Fame in 2004 is further testament to its significance in animation history.

The original *Astro Boy* story follows the adventures of boy-sized robot “Atom”. With the help of his friends, he battles enemies attacking the world and faces personal challenges in adapting to the human world.

Imagi's technical and creative leadership in bringing comic-based action heroes to life in feature animation will once again be showcased in a major theatrical production. Similar to Imagi's other feature film productions, including *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* and *Gatchaman*, the new *Astro Boy* CG animated feature will be based on a completely new story created in Imagi's US studio. CG production will take place in Imagi's state of the art Hong Kong animation studio.

Tezuka and Imagi are eagerly anticipating the creation a vivid new version of one of the world's most beloved action heroes. Imagi's CEO and Vice Chairman Francis Kao says, "I grew up with *Astro Boy*, as did so many of us at Imagi. We now have an opportunity to bring our *Astro Boy* dreams to life by combining the power of high end CG imagery and Imagi's creative collaboration with Tezuka."

Tezuka's General Manager Yoshihiro Shimizu further expressed Tezuka's enthusiasm in this new project, "Imagi is a world class producer of CG feature animation, and has a unique talent for bringing 2D comic characters to life in stunning 3D worlds. We are delighted to be working with them on *Astro Boy*."



Artwork from Imagi's "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" CG animation movie

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IMAGI About Imagi International Holdings Limited (0585)

Founded in 1983, Imagi International Holdings Limited ("Imagi") is a company listed on the Main Board of the Hong Kong Stock Exchange (Stock Code: 585) and is mainly engaged in the production of feature-length animated motion pictures and TV series using leading-edge computer graphics ("CG") technologies.

Imagi has produced well received 3D CG animated TV series, "Zentrix", in 2002, which was released in many countries including France, Japan, Germany, England and Hong Kong. The Company is also responsible for co-producing "Digital Monster X-Evolution" with Bandai and Toei of Japan and producing "Father of the Pride" for DreamWorks of USA. With a colorful portfolio established and techniques cumulated, Imagi is now producing its own feature length movies, including the first full CG animated movie of the famous "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles" franchise, which will be distributed worldwide by Warner Bros. Pictures, Inc. and The Weinstein Company LLC in March 2007.

Headquartered in Hong Kong, Imagi's overseas production studios and marketing offices are located in Los Angeles, USA and Tokyo, Japan. The offices create the international connection and reach to enhance the quality of work and marketing capabilities of the Group.

About Tezuka Productions Co., Ltd.

Founded by Japanese animation icon Osamu Tezuka (1928-1989), Tezuka productions and Mr. Tezuka himself created a revolution in manga and anime and effectively took this niche Japanese market onto international stages. Mr. Tezuka made his debut as a cartoonist with a four panel cartoon strip titled Ma-chan's Diary and continued to create paperback compilations of his longer stories such as New Treasure Island, Lost World, and Next World. These smash hits, with over 400,000 copies each sold, raised him to national fame.

By the 1950s, he had firmly established his position as the leading comics artist of his day when he serialised his now classic work, Jungle Emperor (also known as "Kimba the White Lion") and Mighty Atom in comic magazines. Mighty Atom, which later became known to the world as "Astro Boy," continued until 1968, becoming one of Tezuka's most popular and famous works. Tezuka's creation of a long list of hits continued for several decades thereafter, including The Phoenix, Ode to Kirihito, A History of Birdmen, A Hundred Tales, Ayako, Black Jack and Buddha, MW, A Tree in the Sun, Tell Adolph, Ludwig B. Neo Faust. In his lifetime, Osamu Tezuka drew nearly 150,000 pages of comics, and he created over 1,000 highly individualistic characters to populate his stories. Altogether he created over 500 different titles of works.

Animated works created by Osamu Tezuka include Japan's first animation television series' Mighty Atom ("Astro Boy"), Jungle Emperor ("Kimba the White Lion"), Princess Knight, W3, A Thousand and One Nights, Cleopatra, and many others. Among the many works produced at Tezuka Productions were Japan's first two-hour TV animated special, Bander Book, a new colour version of the Astro Boy TV series and theatrical feature Phoenix 2772.