



ZENIMATION

“Zenimation,” the series that creates a mindfulness soundscape experience with scenes from the timeless films of Walt Disney Animation Studios, returns for a new season. Enjoy moments from over eight decades of acclaimed films – including scenes from Disney’s first feature “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs” all the way through to never-before-seen moments from “Raya and the Last Dragon.” Unplug, relax, and refresh your senses with the soundscapes of Disney Animation’s “Zenimation,” a tribute to the visual and sound artists who have created Disney Animation’s legacy of films. Created and edited by David Bess. Executive produced by Amy Astley. From Walt Disney Animation Studios.

The second season of “Zenimation” features eight short-form episodes as well as a “play all” longform episode and was created exclusively by Walt Disney Animation Studios for Disney+. “Zenimation” returns June 11, 2021.

Just as with the first season, season two celebrates the visual and sound artists behind the decades of legendary films from Walt Disney Animation Studios. New to season two – the episodes delve even deeper into the legacy of films, including never-before-seen scenes from the latest Disney Animation film, “Raya and the Last Dragon,” as well as exploring classics such as “Bambi,” “Fantasia,” and the film that started it all, “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.”

Says creator David Bess, “We were blown away by the response to the first season and wanted to make certain season two both captured and expanded upon what audiences enjoyed. We had previously only used those titles in which we had the ‘audio stems,’ which is to say those titles where the sound was mixed in a way where we could separate the sound effects from the dialogue and music. For season two, our incredible sound designer, Shannon Mills, not only enhanced the existing sound design in the films, just as he did for the first season, but often had to recreate it from scratch, for the older titles like ‘Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs.’ The respect Shannon has for his fellow sound designers from throughout the history of Disney films runs deep and is evidenced in the care he and his team took with this season.”



Mills, who returns to “Zenimation” season two having recently led the sound design team of Walt Disney Animation Studios’ critically-acclaimed feature, “Raya and the Last Dragon,” had first worked with Disney Animation in the early years of his career as an apprentice with Gary Rydstrom on the film “Hercules,” and went on to be the sound designer of the Academy Award®-winning feature, “Big Hero 6.” Says Mills: “This show is a sound designer’s dream in that we can really showcase the artistry of sound design. In animation, nothing is given to you by accident; every sound effect is placed there by an artist, and this series highlights that craftsmanship.”

When it came to scenes from some of Disney Animation’s greatest classics, Mills says, “Where we didn’t have the original sound design on a separate track for certain films, we did our best to re-create the charm of the original. Where we were creating sound design for scenes that did not originally have sound design, including key scenes from ‘Fantasia,’ ‘Pinocchio,’ and ‘Cinderella,’ we did our best to evoke the sound design of the time as we would imagine it to be. All of this done with the highest respect for those sound artists who came before us.”

In fact, Mills and his sound design team had exclusive access to the library of Disney Animation sound effects created by Disney Legend Jimmy MacDonald. MacDonald, who is probably best known as the second voice of Mickey Mouse, having been cast in the role by his boss (and previous voice of Mickey), Walt Disney, was the Disney Studios’ head of the Sound department for nearly 50 years beginning in the 1930s. Among his films are “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs,” “Dumbo,” “Cinderella,” and “Sleeping Beauty.” Says Mills, “We utilized sounds originally created by Jimmy and his team in this season of ‘Zenimation.’ It was a deep and humbling connection to the past to get to work with these now-digitized original recordings.”

Just as with season one, each episode embodies a theme. “This is where David Bess’ encyclopedic knowledge of Disney Animation’s films, combined with his incredible skills as an editor, make each episode something special,” says executive producer Amy Astley. “I love episodes like ‘Everyday Comforts,’ where David takes the viewer through the course of a day as seen by a host of Disney Animation characters. David really finds the common threads in our films in such clever ways.”

Episode themes include:

- Rain - Step into the rain with Simba, Bambi and never-before seen footage from “Raya and the Last Dragon.”
- Everyday Comforts – Experience the comforts of everyday, morning to night, with Tiana, Anna, and Dumbo.
- Natural Wonders – The wonders of nature as seen through the eyes of Pocahontas, Mufasa, Alice, and others.
- Transformation – Witness the power of transformation with Pinocchio, Kida, the Beast, and Te Fiti.
- Waterways – Enjoy the scenic waterways of Kumandra, Mt. Olympus, Motunui, and Atlantis.
- Kindness – There is so much greatness in kindness, as we can learn from Moana, Baymax, Aladdin, and Vanellope.



- Snowscapes – Enjoy the peace and stillness of snowy days with Bambi, Thumper, Tigger and Rabbit.
- Locales – Arendelle, Paris, Kumandra, New Orleans, from forests deep to castles far away.
- Full Journey – All Episodes – Enjoy this longform edition of Zenimation Season 2.

ORIGINS

The series, which aims to give viewers moments of relaxation and “ASMR”-like mindfulness, had its origins at the 2019 D23 Expo, Disney’s largest fan event.

“We were trying to come up with materials for the Disney Animation booth at D23 Expo,” says David Bess, the series’ creator and editor for Disney Animation (whose work most often focuses on the creation of short-form promotional films for the Studio). “The Expo is fun and fast-paced, and I thought it would be helpful to the Expo-goer to have something to watch and relax to from our animated films. I started thinking about those moments in our films where our characters are mindful. They’re aware of their surroundings, they’re living in the moment, taking in what’s around them.”

THE TEAM RETURNS

Joining Bess, Mills and Astley for another season of ‘Zenimation’ are VP, Post Production, Bérénice Robinson and Emmy® and Cinema Audio Society Award winner David E. Fluhr as Re-Recording Mixer. “What has been the best surprise for me, on this series, is the response from members of our sound editing and sound mixing communities,” says Fluhr. “Our colleagues love that we have a series that highlights the craft so well.”

Bess, who has been an editor at Disney Animation for over 13 years, and previously worked at Craig Murray Productions, working on trailers for films such as Disney Animation’s “Tarzan,” hopes viewers will take away a few key highlights from watching his series: “I hope they’ll have a renewed appreciation for the beauty of Disney Animation. Secondly, an exposure to the incredible sound design that goes into these films. I also hope people will see some of these ‘Zenimation’ episodes and go back to the films that inspired them.”

“The real magic, I think, of ‘Zenimation,’” says executive producer Amy Astley, “is that you can watch the show for meditative, mindfulness purposes, and enjoy it on that level. But ‘Zenimation’ also captures and showcases the true artistry of Walt Disney Animation Studios. I can’t think of another studio – animation or live action - who have been making films this visually stunning, this consistently, for this many decades. You can sit back and enjoy the visuals and sound effects created by generations of artists, from Walt Disney through to those carrying forward the legacy today.”

“And lastly,” says Bess, “we hope the series is a reminder to take a step back, take a breath, notice the world around you, and take a moment to appreciate your surroundings.”

“Zenimation” releases on Disney+ June 11, 2021, and is created by Walt Disney Animation Studios.

###

About Walt Disney Animation Studios:



Combining masterful artistry and storytelling with groundbreaking technology, Walt Disney Animation Studios is a filmmaker-driven animation studio responsible for creating some of the most beloved films ever made. Located in Burbank, WDAS continues to build on its rich legacy of innovation and creativity, from the first fully-animated feature film, 1937's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*, to 2019's *Frozen 2*, the biggest animated film of all time. Among the studio's timeless creations are *Pinocchio*, *Sleeping Beauty*, *The Jungle Book*, *The Little Mermaid*, *The Lion King*, *Frozen*, *Big Hero 6* and *Zootopia*.