

Singing to a new animation dawn

S'pore-made feature pioneers distinctive style; targets Oct 30 cinematic release

By **CHRISTOPHER LIM**

Sing To The Dawn may have been the first Singapore-made full-length animated movie to start production, but problems saw other films like *Zodiac* beat it to the finish line. The film is finally done, however, and will be previewed at the CG Overdrive conference ahead of its Oct 30 release in theatres.

Mike Wiluan, managing director of *Sing To The Dawn's* production house Infinite Frameworks, hopes that the movie will still be viewed as pioneering in terms of production values and the creation of a distinctive animation style.

"We've worked hard to create a style that people can recognise us by, just like you know when you're watching a Pixar movie or

DreamWorks movie," said Mr Wiluan, adding that the distinctive warm style of the movie is another reason he hopes *Sing To The Dawn* will be considered pioneering.

"I don't want to put down the other movies, but we've actually tried to downplay the computer-graphic aspects," Mr Wiluan explains. "We've gone back to the traditional forms of hand-drawn animation and focused more on how we could put together a story and a good sequence. Hopefully we're not going to be judged on pure realism, but as a movie that resonates well," he adds.

CG Overdrive is co-organised by Visual Communication Order (VCO) and Singapore Exhibition Services, and is part of the four-day Infocomm Media Business Exchange (imbX) that includes CommunicAsia, BroadcastAsia, EnterpriseIT and InteractiveDME.



Ready for preview: *'Sing To The Dawn'*, a movie by Infinite Frameworks, will be previewed at the CG Overdrive conference ahead of its Oct 30 release in theatres

VCO director Lai Kok Sen invited Mr Wiluan to speak at CG Overdrive because of the interest *Sing To The Dawn* has generated in the animation community, and to leverage on the event's first business forum, which lasts two days starting Thursday. The conference portion of CG Over-

drive will span the full four days of imbX.

"Story is definitely king, and animation techniques are just tools; heartfelt moment are what we want you to find," says VCO's Mr Lai. "I wanted Mike to come in to speak on both the emotional aspect as well as the technical ones," he adds.

tor Steve Read will go straight to the nuts and bolts of how he does things," says Mr Wiluan. "But I'll also be talking about emotion, though no one wants to hear about that," he adds.

Mr Wiluan emphasises that people skills are just as important as technical ones in an industry where staff retention is immensely important. "Every studio wants to retain its staff, and have a life after a project. As soon as you say goodbye to people, all your investment is lost," he says.

That challenge has been compounded by most of Infinite Frameworks' staff being located in the company's facilities in Batam to maintain cost competitiveness. It has also had the side effect of Indonesians proudly viewing *Sing To The Dawn* as a movie made in Indonesia. "Made by Singapore is definitely a more relevant label than made in Singapore, and that's especially the case for animation," Mr Wiluan says.

Mr Wiluan will not only spend two hours presenting *Sing To The Dawn* at CG Overdrive's conference portion on Thursday, but will also be giving a half-hour keynote address for the business forum on the same day.

"Talks for CG artists are often focused on how we did the animation. CG direc-