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Red Stick International Animation Festival offers variety of cutting-edge films

(Source: [The Advocate](#))

"I wish I could go to the festival and watch people watch Note-ably Pink," Ron Brewer said. "I'd even sit through it again myself. I love that film."

Brewer directed the Pink Panther episode, a finalist in the "Best of the Fest" short animated professional category.

The music came first, Brewer said.

"We had someone write each musical section and then we did the storyboard," he said. "We wanted to go around the world in music. We tried not to repeat any instruments."

In the cartoon, The Inspector and the Pink Panther compete with each other by playing music on everything from harmonicas to bagpipes.

Brewer wasn't sure he wanted to make Pink Panther shows when he first received the assignment.

"But then I watched some episodes and I said, 'We can do this and we'll do it better,'" he said.

Note-ably Pink has already won KidScreen Awards for best director and best music.

The 7th annual Red Stick International Animation Festival will have a variety of different cutting-edge films, according to co-founder Stephen Beck.

Sponsored by the Laboratory for Creative Arts & Technologies (LCAT), a research facility within LSU's Center for Computation & Technology, or CCT, the festival will feature three major screenings.

"The Oscar shorts screening consists of animated short films that were nominated for an Academy Award in 2012," Beck said. "These are the best from around the world." The list includes The Fantastic Flying Books of Mr. Morris Lessmore, which was produced by Moonbot Studios in Shreveport.

"That film won the 2012 Academy Award. It speaks to how the animated film industry has taken hold here in Louisiana," Beck said.

The "Best of the Fest" is a screening of the festival competition finalists. Films by professionals and students are included. Even a few music videos will be shown, Beck said.

A double feature, this event will include a screening of Tangled Ever After, a short sequel to Disney's 2010 film. Tangled was featured in a pre-screening at the 2010 festival.

Winners of the Red Baton, a \$1,000 award for the best film in each category, will be announced during the festival.

The Baton D'Or (the Gold Baton) and \$1,000 will be awarded to the best overall film.

One of the films nominated for best animated short by a student, A Complex Villainelle, was a collaborative effort by 20 undergraduates at the University of Colorado at Denver.

According to Digital Animation Center director Howard Cook, juniors in the animation program form their own studio and are given a project by faculty advisers. In the 2011 school year, they chose to make a film based on a story by Jonathan Goldstein, a former producer for the National Public Radio program This American Life.

A Complex Villainelle is narrated by Goldstein and stars The Penguin of Batman and Robin fame before he becomes the overweight obsessive-compulsive everyone knows. In Goldstein's story, friends try to set up The Penguin and Mary Poppins on the premise that they both use an umbrella as a mode of transportation.

"We tried to do stories written by students, but there was too much ego involved," Cook said. "So, we contacted Goldstein and he was happy to help us. Besides, in studios, artists are generally given a project and we are trying to emulate that environment for our students."

Students spend the first semester of the school year on pre-production, creating the world and characters, and the second semester on production, Cook said.

The students have already entered A Complex Villainelle in 40 festivals and it has won 12 awards.

"They do everything — make the posters and get them manufactured, do press kits. And when they are done, they can put the film on their demo reels. It's a lot of work for the faculty, but the rewards are even greater than the films (that we make)," Cook said.

Besides the screenings of contest winners, the festival will offer a special screening of Disney/Pixar's Brave, according to Beck. The feature film opens in theaters Friday, June 22.

Unlike previous festivals, when passes were issued to fans for all events, this year the free tickets were given out for each screening individually. All the screenings are sold out, Beck said. "It's a great problem to have. We are very excited about the response," he said.

Fans can still stop by for the Cartoon-A-Palooza on Saturday in the plaza of the Shaw Center for the Arts. The event will feature face painting, clowns, balloon artists, airbrush tattoos, caricature artists, carnival games, karaoke for the entire family, free cupcakes and open concessions.

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