

Interview: Voice Artist Rob Paulsen on ‘Pinky and the Brain,’ Mel Blanc and Podcasting

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CHICAGO – If the words, “We’re Animaniacs...” immediately makes you think, “We have pay for play contracts...” then you’ll want to experience voiceover artist Rob Paulsen, the iconic character of Yakko on that series, as well as Pinky (“Pinky and The Brain”) and Donatello/Raphael (“Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles”), among many other cartoon legends. Rob, with Animaniacs composer Randy Rogel, will be appearing in “Animaniacs Live!” at the James Lumber Center for the Performing Arts in Grayslake, Ill., on Saturday, March 3rd, 2018 (click link below for details).

Rob Paulsen was born in Michigan, and like other hopeful dreamers, moved to Los Angeles in the 1980s to pursue acting work. It was a chance audition in 1983 with the “G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero” cartoon series that launched him into a lifelong pursuit, leading him to do voice characters for “Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles,” the aforementioned “Animaniacs,” “Pinky and the Brain,” “Jimmy Neutron,” “The Tick,” and many many more. As he says below, he began as a dark haired man in his twenties and continues as a white haired man in his sixties, in the sense of what he looks like makes no difference in his particular acting and singing craft.



Robbie and the Moe: Rob Paulsen and Maurice LaMarche of ‘Pinky and the Brain’

Photo credit: RobPaulsenLive.com

HollywoodChicago.com did a comprehensive talk with Rob Paulsen in anticipation of “Animaniacs Live!” and he spoke in-depth about a career that not only had him work with contemporaries like cartoon partner Maurice LaMarche (voice of “The Brain”) and Steven Spielberg (Executive Producer for Animaniacs), but cartoon voice legends like Daws Butler, June Foray, Don Messick and the great Mel Blanc. The is Part Two of a three part interview...

HollywoodChicago.com: Which of the characters you’ve done had the most evolution within the period that you voiced them, and what particular episode do you remember as the most daring within any character?

Rob Paulsen: There was a pretty clear evolution during the making of ‘Pinky and the Brain.’ In approaching the voice of Pinky, the sound and tone of his voice changed after the first couple of episodes, much like Bugs Bunny. The writers then create based on that sensibility. Also on ‘Jimmy Neutron,’ and my character Carl Wheezer. It was an amalgamation of cutting-edge CGI animation and sharp writing.

Voiceover artists tend to improvise and the writers picked up on that, and that happened all the time on ‘Pinky and the Brain.’ Moe [LaMarche] is a sharp as a tack, and we bounced off each other quite well... the writers actually looked for it. When you have world-class writers that can hear the sensibilities of good actors, it just makes the project better. That happened on ‘Pinky,’ ‘Animaniacs,’ ‘Jimmy Neutron’ and the latest iteration of ‘Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles.’

HollywoodChicago.com: It must be amazing to work with second generation fans who have grown up to contribute to the shows they loved.

Paulsen: Yes it is, and it’s so cool. I was at Netflix the other day, and the creative people I was speaking to were in middle school and high school when Animaniacs were in the first run, and they are ‘fanboys.’ They really connect to those programs, and I’m totally embracing it.

In the Part Two of the audio portion of the interview, Rob Paulsen and the cartoon geek interviewer talk Mel Blanc and Rob’s podcast, ‘Talking Toons.’ To read and hear PART ONE of the interview, [click here](#). [26] To hear PART THREE, [click here](#). [27]

“Animaniacs Live!,” featuring Rob Paulsen (Yakko) and composer Randy Rogel, will be performed at 4pm on March 3rd, 2018, at the Mainstage Theatre at the James Lumber Center for the Performing Arts, Grayslake, Ill. For more information and to purchase tickets, [click here](#). [28]



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