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SYNOPSIS

When Shaun decides to take the day off and have some fun, he gets a little more action than he bargained for. A mix up with The Farmer, a caravan, and a very steep hill lead them all to the Big City and it's up to Shaun and the flock to return everyone safely to the green grass of home.

ABOUT THE FILM

When Shaun grows bored of his daily routine at Mossy Bottom Farm under the watchful eye of The Farmer and his dutiful dog Bitzer, he conspires with the rest of the flock to take a much-needed day off. Their scheme seems to be working perfectly after they trick The Farmer into falling asleep (by making him count sheep, of course), but their staycation is derailed when he is unwittingly transported via runaway camper trailer to the Big City.

Determined to find The Farmer and bring him home, Shaun and his flockmates embark on a well-intentioned if ill-conceived rescue mission to the nearby bustling metropolis. Their action-packed adventure soon finds the sheep going undercover as human diners in a fancy restaurant, tangling with overzealous animal-control officer TRUMPER, plotting a daring escape from a prison-like animal shelter and hatching an elaborate plan to retrieve their amnesiac master-turned-celebrity hair stylist. Without a word of dialogue, stop-motion animation comedy ***Shaun the Sheep Movie*** powers through visual puns, sight gags and rollicking plot twists to arrive at a hard-won realization: there's no place like home.

Lionsgate, Studiocanal and Aardman Animations present in association with Anton Capital Entertainment ***Shaun the Sheep Movie***, an Aardman production written and directed by Mark Burton and Richard ("Golly") Starzak. Produced by Julie Lockhart and Paul Kewley. Executive Producers are Peter Lord, Nick Park, David Sproxton, Olivier Courson, and Ronald Halpern. Music is composed by Ilan Eshkeri.

ABOUT THE PRODUCTION

Shaun the Sheep made his debut in 1995 as a supporting player in Nick Park's Oscar[®]-winning "Wallace & Gromit" short film *A Close Shave*. After a lengthy vacation, the four-legged charmer became an international television sensation starring in his own, completely dialogue-free TV show. A few years after Aardman launched the "Shaun the Sheep" series in 2007, the U.K.-based stop-motion animation house decided it was time to let the flock run wild on the big screen. But that prompted a big creative question: How would they take a character accustomed to seven-minute episodes and adapt his adventures for a feature-length journey—without a single word of dialogue?

"The conventional solution would have been a voice-over," says Aardman co-founder Peter Lord. "It was a bold choice to go with no speaking whatsoever."

Shaun the Sheep Movie co-writer/co-director Mark Burton, who first worked with Aardman as a writer on the hit feature *Chicken Run* and returned to British filmmaking after a stint in Hollywood, embraced the silent-movie concept. "When I came on board," he says, "the basic idea for the film had been hatched. It was simply: 'Let's make a Shaun the Sheep film with no dialogue.' And I thought: 'That's such a crazy idea, I've got to be involved'"

Any lingering doubts were cast aside when the filmmakers produced their rough cut. "Initially we wondered how long an audience could sit through a feature film without dialogue," recalls producer Julie Lockhart, "but when we saw the first story reel which ran 90 minutes long, we were convinced it was going to work."

While the story's gentle humor and clear storylines resonate with young audiences, Aardman's witty sensibility connects with adults as well. "There's an expectation in Britain of what the series is because it sits on children's TV channel CBBC," says producer Paul Kewley. "But we know lots of adults watch it, so this movie is not driven by a desire to make something just for kids."

Shaun the Sheep Movie does play to kids, adds creator Park, "but it's got the adults interested too because of the wry humor and movie references." Among the many blink-and-you-miss-it sight gags including a *Silence of the Lambs* homage involving an imprisoned cat in a restraining collar that licks its lips like Hannibal Lecter and a *Wolverine* homage involving The Farmer at the hair salon.

Co-writer/co-director Richard ("Golly") Starzak had some specific ideas about how to expand Shaun's appeal when he initially came on board to write and direct "Shaun the Sheep" television episodes. "I talked to Nick Park about the idea of 'aging up' Shaun so he would appeal to 10-year-olds, says Starzak. "Nick did a couple of drawings making Shaun look a bit older. The phrase we've always stuck to for Shaun was: 'He's pretty bright ... for a sheep.'"

Co-writer/co-director Starzak, an Aardman fixture since 1983 (sometimes credited as Richard Golezowski), brings a unique sensibility to ***Shaun the Sheep Movie***. "Golly joined us straight out of college in Exeter," Lord recalls. "He was always an ideas person first and foremost. His drawings were quirky, the sequences he did for our *Morph* series were quite bizarre and creatively he was different from the rest of us. He was punk, if you like, and has this very sardonic sense of humor derived from his Polish ancestry. His comedy is British but at the same time also Eastern European."

No-Brow Humor

Communicating a feature-length adventure purely with visuals, music and non-verbal sound cues required a massive creative commitment from the ***Shaun the Sheep Movie*** stop-motion team. "Dialogue is such an important element for animators because it adds a certain level of performance for the characters," explains lead animator Will Becher. "But with Shaun,

The Farmer and Bitzer, it's all about what they do visually when it comes to getting across the emotion and the feeling of what's going on."

Shaun proved particularly difficult to animate because, unlike most Aardman characters—including Wallace, Gromit and even the chickens in *Chicken Run*—the sheep does not have a brow. "Usually, you can get lots of emotion from the brow area," explains Becher. "Since sheep have no brows, we tended to do a bit more with their arms, ears, general poses and body language."

The Math of Stop-Motion Modeling

Masters of the notoriously labor-intensive stop-motion technique, the Aardman team has its process down to something of a science. But the sheer logistics of ramping up for a feature-length production remained daunting. Model makers crafted 157 human figures, each measuring six-and-a-half inches tall, and 197 sheep puppets—including 21 for Shaun alone. Each sheep needed to be covered with 31 inches of fleece sprayed with diluted PVA glue to prevent "boiling" under the heat of studio lights.

Working from nearly 80,000 storyboards, crews in 33 units used 58 cameras to shoot the movie. The film's most ambitious sequence, set in the town plaza, required 42 puppets.

Aardman employed 20 animators and 30 model makers to create ***Shaun the Sheep Movie***. "Each animator tried to get three seconds of footage done every day, which for us is quite a lot," explains Becher. "There's a lot of modeling clay involved for the more complicated characters." The filmmakers typically produced 40 to 50 shots—which translates into about two and-a-half minutes of running time—per week. Had a single animator made ***Shaun the Sheep Movie***, the film would have taken nine years to complete.

Working out of Aardman headquarters in Bristol, England, animators brought a variety of specialties to the table, ranging from comedy and action to drama. "I'm sure each animator has his favorite characters," says Becher. "I love comedy and comic timing so I personally like the relationship between the dog Bitzer and The Farmer. I love Bitzer's facial expressions and I also enjoy the fact that every time we hear the farmer's voice, it's incomprehensible."

The Farmer's faithful dog found a special place in co-writer/co-director Starzak's heart. "I'm very fond of Bitzer," he says. "He gets it from both sides. He's an example of that older-brother type, like a go-between with parents on one side and younger kids on the other. He's a recognizable type. He likes control, he wants control, but he can't get it anywhere."

Co-writer/co-director Mark Burton, who co-wrote *Chicken Run* and worked on DreamWorks' first *Madagascar* film before returning to the Aardman fold, admits to a special affinity for the movie's primary human character: "I relate to The Farmer," Burton laughs. "He's vaguely absurd, he's a bit put upon, but he's doing his best."

Expanding the Cast

While Shaun, The Farmer and Bitzer migrated to the big screen from their familiar roles on TV, the filmmakers introduced fresh characters to flesh out Shaun's feature-length quest. "In the series we didn't have time to explore the flock as individuals except for Shirley, who eats her way out of trouble, and little Timmy, who has his own spin-off TV series for preschoolers," explains producer Lord. "The creatures in the flock had always been this interchangeable chorus line of characters."

The expanded scope of ***Shaun the Sheep Movie*** provided an opportunity to flesh out the supporting animals. "In defining the rest of the flock, we've named them all and each one has little storylines and jokes that run through the film," says Lord. "That opened up quite a lot of possibilities. For example, when the flock all dress up in full human outfits in order to survive in the city, Little Timmy is literally a backpack. We had a lot of fun with that."

Every action movie needs a heavy, and for ***Shaun the Sheep Movie***, the absurdly aggressive animal catcher Trumper fills the bill. Partially inspired by the title character of the 2009 live-action comedy *Paul Blart: Mall Cop*, the burly, square-jawed Trumper harbors delusions of law-enforcement grandeur. "Trumper is one of those guys who always wanted to be a policeman but never made the grade," says Lord. "He ends up terrorizing animals because he can't terrorize people."

Lending a touch of pathos to Shaun's escapades is Slip, an adorable stray dog that Shaun meets when they're both impounded in Big City's animal shelter. "Slip performs the same emotional function as a little orphan girl in a Charlie Chaplin film," Starzak says.

European & US Twist

Aardman has forged strong partnerships with Hollywood studios on its previous projects, teaming with DreamWorks on *Chicken Run*, *Wallace & Gromit: The Curse of the Were-Rabbit* and *Flushed Away* while making *Arthur Christmas* and *The Pirates! In An Adventure With Scientists!* for Sony. But for ***Shaun the Sheep Movie***, the British animators turned to French-based production and distribution company Studiocanal.

Studiocanal encouraged Aardman filmmakers to focus purely on their comic instincts. "If we like a joke or reference in ***Shaun the Sheep Movie***, we feel empowered to go ahead with it," says Lord. "I'm always striving to get our films released in America and be successful there, but we regard ourselves as European filmmakers."

Aardman turned to Lionsgate for US distribution of the film. Shaun will be arriving in the states on August 5. "We are so incredibly excited to be the distribution company for Shaun the Sheep Movie in the States!" says Jason Constantine, Lionsgate President of Acquisitions. He adds, "we could not be more thrilled to welcome Shaun with open arms."

The Birthing of Shaun

The age-defying Shaun first sprang to life in the mid-1990s as a doodle in Nick Park's notebook when Park and writer Bob Baker were dreaming up ideas for a follow-up to their hit 1993 short film, *The Wrong Trousers*. "I had a sketchbook full of ideas, which mainly concerned sheep," Park recalls. "Between us, Bob and I decided there should be a lamb named Shaun. It was a corny pun, a play on 'shorn,' and at the time we probably laughed a lot."

Though Wallace and Gromit were the indisputable stars of 1995's *A Close Shave*, Shaun managed to make an impression. "He was very much an innocent victim," Park recalls. "Cute and lovable, with his little crop-top hairstyle, his big eyes and simple face. Everyone at Aardman liked him."

Years later, during a lull in Aardman's feature-film production pipeline, Park circled back to Shaun, envisioning him this time as a leading lamb. "We were struggling to think of ideas and I suggested that maybe Shaun should have his own series. He could be on a farm with a family and a dog, and I had a couple of ideas for adventures. It was on the table for a while until Golly took it under his wing and ran with it."

As Park watched Starzak shepherd Shaun through a hit TV series and now a feature-length project, his proprietary feelings for the character he created gave way to pride. "You feel a sense of ownership with characters you create, which is why I've never been able to let go of Wallace and Gromit," Park says. "But *Shaun the Sheep Movie* has been a great experience for me. I was in the middle of *Curse of the Were-Rabbit* so I didn't have much time to spend on developing the TV series. What I initially did with Shaun feels quite small now. It's become a much bigger phenomenon. Golly created the other characters, Bitzer being the officious one on the farm, Shaun now a bit more of a teenage maverick. I'd give Golly the credit for creating that whole world around Shaun."

With 140 TV episodes and a motion picture under his belt, Starzak admits he's become quite attached to Shaun the Sheep. "I never really got it when Nick would say that Wallace and Gromit had become real to him," he says. "Now I sort of understand that. When you've been fleshing out a character like Shaun for so long, you come to feel like you know him."

A Silent-Film Tradition

To prepare the animators for telling Shaun's story without dialogue, the directors put together a crash course in silent movies. "We watched a lot of silent comedies and we weren't above stealing a few gags," Burton recalls, "We watched the films of the great French comedian Jacques Tati, who used sound as a way of telling a story."

"I always looked to Buster Keaton, with that deadpan expression of his," Starzak adds. "On a practical level, Shaun can't do much with his face, but then again, I like dry comedy and that's the Buster Keaton approach: it's a combination of slapstick and deadpan."

Oscar-winning silent comedy *The Artist*, which hit theaters as the creative team was still developing ideas, also inspired the filmmakers, as did Pixar's *WALL-E*.

"*WALL-E* goes over 30 minutes without human dialogue and everyone I know thinks that's the best part of the film," notes Starzak.

Long-running live-action comedy character "Mr. Bean" served as a role model for the film's goofy physical comedy. "The Mr. Bean films do have some dialogue but a lot of those stories are told through physical comedy, which has no language barrier," says producer Kewley. "That's one reason they've sold so well throughout the world."

A Star Sheep Takes His Baaa

Shaun the Sheep Movie hits theaters at a time when audiences worldwide are embracing the clay puppet in sheep's clothing with unprecedented gusto. Crowds in Cairo, Saudi Arabia and Qatar have flocked to a live 45-minute stage show based on Shaun and his adventures; a 20-minute live event tours shopping malls in Jakarta and Beijing and 30,000 visitors showed up to take in a Shaun-related museum exhibition in Tokyo. The saucer-eyed mischief maker even maintains a social media presence, boasting more than 5 million Facebook friends.

"At the moment the overseas TV stations will take as much Shaun the Sheep content as we can make," says Aardman co-founder David Sproxton. "In seven years, Shaun has gone from being this little TV series to a global phenomenon. It's been quite extraordinary."

While he never expected his sketchbook drawing to take over the world, Park now sees ***Shaun the Sheep Movie*** as an inevitable progression for a lovable little hero. "Shaun's cute, innocent and heroic in the film," he says. "He's like a 12-year-old boy and that's his appeal," adds Sproxton. "Shaun has a bunch of mates, an older brother, a father figure, and it's comedy all the way. It's a very Aardman thing that goes all the way back to *Morph*. It's what we do."

The film will be in theatres on August 5th. The Motion Picture Association of America has rated the film PG for rude humor.

ABOUT THE FILMMAKERS

RICHARD "GOLLY" STARZAK [Co-Writer/Co-Director] joined Aardman in 1983 and during his first nine years with the studio is credited with working on *Morph*, *Sledgehammer* for Peter Gabriel, *Pee Wee Herman's Playhouse* in New York, his own film *Ident* and two *Rex the Runt* pilot films.

In 1992, Golly left Aardman to pursue a freelance career during which time he worked in New Zealand as Production Adviser for *Oscar and Friends*, and wrote and directed 13 episodes of *Rex the Runt* for BBC2, winning the Carlton Award for International Animation at The Indies in 2000.

He then went on to direct *Robbie the Reindeer* for the BBC ONE. *Robbie* went on to win 19 international awards including a prestigious British Academy of Film and Television Arts award [BAFTA].

After writing and directing the second series of *Rex the Runt*, and series 2 of *Creature Comforts*, Golly rejoined Aardman full time as Creative Director of the Broadcast and Development department going onto develop *Shaun the Sheep* for television. For the last three years he has been working on *Shaun the Sheep The Movie* with fellow director Mark Burton.

MARK BURTON [Co-Writer/Co-Director] has enjoyed a long history with Aardman having been a writer on both *Chicken Run* [Aardman/DreamWorks 2000] and *Wallace and Gromit Curse of the Were-Rabbit* [Aardman/DreamWorks 2005], which won an Oscar® for Best Animated Feature, and a BAFTA for Best British Film. He has also acted as consultant for Aardman's Feature Development team.

Mark started out as a comedy writer on numerous Brit TV shows including *Spitting Image*, *Alas Smith and Jones*, *Clive Anderson Talks Back* and *Have I Got News For You*. He co-wrote two series of BBC sit-com *The Peter Principle* [aka *The Boss*] and later adapted John O'Farrell's novel *May Contain Nuts* for ITV.

He has subsequently worked as a screenwriter on both sides of the Atlantic with projects for BBC Films, Working Title, Universal, Fox, Warners, Disney and DreamWorks. His other film credits include *Madagascar* [DreamWorks] *Gnomeo & Juliet* [Touchstone/Disney] and *Aliens in the Attic* [Fox].

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Richard Starzak

Produced by

Julie Lockhart
Paul Kewley

Executive Producers

Peter Lord
Nick Park
David Sproxtton

Executive Producers

Olivier Courson
Ronald Halpern

Edited by

Sim Evan-Jones, ACE

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Dave Alex Riddett

Composer

Ilan Eshkeri

Music Supervisor

Nick Angel

Production Designer

Matt Perry

Puppet Design

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Animation Supervisor

Loyd Price

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Richard Beek

Associate Production Managers

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Zoe Starzak

Sound Design

Adrian Rhodes

Music Producer

Steve Mclaughlin

Technical Director

Tom Barnes

CAST

Shaun and Timmy

Justin Fletcher

The Farmer and Bitzer

John Sparkes

Trumper

Omid Djalili

Shirley

Richard Webber

Timmy's Mum and Meryl

Kate Harbour

Slip

Tim Hands

Nuts

Andy Nyman

Twins

Simon Greenhall

Hazel

Emma Tate

Celebrity With Hair Trouble

Jack Paulson

Maitre D, Golfer, Stylists, Angry Panto Horse, Hospital characters

Sean Connolly

Junior Doctor and Animal Containment Visitor

Henry Burton

Hospital Consultant

Dhimant Vyas

Animal Containment Visitor

Sophie Laughton

Operatic Sheep

Nia Medi James

**And featuring:
Bus Station and Hospital Announcer**

Stanley Unwin

and Nick Park as himself

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Paul Bolger

Jay Clarke

Rob Richards

Luis Zamora Pueyo

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Paul Saunderson

Fiddle

Jake Walker

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Tim Carter

Piano

Kenny Dickenson

Vibraphone & Xylophone

Steve Wright

Trumpet

John Barclay

Bass

Chris Laurence

Drums

Stuart Wilkinson

Restaurant Piano

Sally Heath

Baa Baa Shop Quintet

Daisy Chute

Chad Hobson

Camilla Kerslake

Ben Thapa

Kieran Morris

Baa Baa Shop Quintet Arranged by

Daisy Chute

'You're Mine' Arranged and Performed by

Chad Hobson

'Big City' Produced by

Craigie Dodds

'Life's A Treat' (Rizzle Kicks Mix) Produced By

Ben Cullum
Rizzle Kicks

Orchestrations

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Julian Kershaw

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Paul Saunderson
Steve Wright

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Music Mixed at

Northpole

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Jason Elliot
Poppy Kavanagh
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Josine Cohen

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Lillie Harris

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Angie Last

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Molly Van Den Brink

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Finance Manager Joanna Cave

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Head of IT Howard Arnault-Ham

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Senior Support Technician Colin Coulter

Senior Networks Consultant Richard Crocombe

Operations Manager Tony Prescott

Catering Manager Stuart Briggs

Communications Assistant Jo Johnson

Technical Support Paul Reeves & Nathan Sale

Film Archivist Tom Vincent

MUSIC

'Feels Like Summer'

Written by Ilan Eshkeri, Nick Hodgson & Tim Wheeler

Performed by Tim Wheeler

Published by Aardman Music Publishing/Universal Music Publishing Ltd & Imagem & Tim Wheeler

'Shaun the Sheep – Life's A Treat'

Written by Mark Thomas

Performed by Mark Thomas & Vic Reeves

Published by Aardman Music Publishing/Universal Music Publishing Ltd

'Rocks'

Written by Bobby Gillespie, Robert Young & Andrew Innes

Performed by Primal Scream

Published by EMI Music Publishing Ltd & Universal Music Publishing Ltd

Courtesy of Sony Music Entertainment UK Ltd & Warner Bros. Records

'Search For the Hero'

Written by Paul Heard & Michael Pickering

Performed by M People

Published by EMI Music Publishing Ltd & Universal Music Publishing Ltd

Courtesy of Sony Music Entertainment UK Ltd

'Big City'

Written by Ilan Eshkeri & Nick Hodgson

Performed by Eliza Doolittle

Published by Aardman Music Publishing/Universal Music Publishing Ltd & Imagem

'More Wheels Cha Cha'

Written by Norman Petty, Richard Stephens & Jimmy Torres

Performed by Kirsty Whalley

Published by Campbell Connelly & Co Ltd courtesy of Music Sales Creative

'Strange Adagio for Barbers'

Written and performed by John Matthews & Stuart Bruce

Published by 23rd Precinct Music Ltd/Notting Hill Music

Courtesy of Banoffeesound

'Bad to the Bone'

Written by George Thorogood
Performed by George Thorogood and the Destroyers
Published by Universal/MCA Music Ltd
Courtesy of Capitol Records, LLC under license from Universal Music Operations Ltd

'I'm A Wonderful Thing, Baby'

Written by August Darnell & Peter Schott
Performed by Kid Creole & The Coconuts
Published by Bug Music Ltd, a BMG Chrysalis Company & Schott in the Dark Music
Courtesy of Warner Bros. Records & Universal-Island Records Ltd under license from Universal Music Operations Ltd.

'Home'

Written by Dave Grohl, Taylor Hawkins, Christopher Shiflett & Nate Mendel
Performed by Foo Fighters
Published by Bug Music Ltd, a BMG Chrysalis Company & Universal/MCA Music Ltd/Flying Earform Music
Courtesy of Roswell Records Inc. / Sony Music Entertainment Inc

'Amazing Adventures of Morph'

Written & performed by Andy Clark
Licensed by KPM Music Limited

'Shaun the Sheep – Life's A Treat' (Rizzle Kicks Mix)

Written by Mark Thomas, Jordan Stephens, Harley Alexander-Sule & Ben Cullum
Performed by Mark Thomas, Vic Reeves & Rizzle Kicks
Published by Aardman Music Publishing / Universal Music Publishing

'House of Fun'

Written by Michael Barson and Lee Thompson
Performed by Madness
Published by EMI Music Publishing Ltd

Courtesy of Union Square Music and Stirling Holdings Ltd and Geffen Records under licence from Universal Music Operations Ltd

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WITH THANKS TO

Mark Thomas
Miles Bullough
John Maher
Gregory Perler
Rob Sprackling
John Smith

Rob Dudley
Phill Jupitus
Peter Serafinowicz
Tom Morris and the Bristol Old Vic
Lewis Morley Archive, LLC
Louie Nicastro
Sil Willcox
Luke Griggs
Nancy Jones

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