

THE FIRST **SPACE CHIMP**
THUNDERS SKYWARD!



Heathcote Henson presents
HANDMADE PUPPET DREAMS.
HAM

A FILM BY RUDY MARTINEZ



Heather Henson presents
HANDMADE PUPPET DREAMS

HAM

Running Time:	8:11
Written and Directed by:	Rudy Martinez
Composed By:	Adrien Prévost
Produced By:	Heather Henson, Alex U. Griffin Jessica Simon, Sam Koji Hale
Production Company:	Ibex Puppetry The Green Feather Foundation
Director of Photography:	Alex U. Griffin
Edited By:	Rudy Martinez

HAM

IS A **PUPPET FILM** ABOUT

THE FIRST **CHIMP IN SPACE!**

INSPIRED BY THE INCREDIBLE **TRUE STORY!**

WITH **VISUALS AND MUSIC** INSPIRED BY 1950S CHILDRENS TELEVISION,

HAM IS A WHIRLWIND TALE OF ONE CHIMP'S JOURNEY TO **BEAT THE ODDS.**

SYNOPSIS

Inspired by the true story of the first **Space Chimp** in orbit, HAM is a tale about courage in the face of great danger and how a little bit of pluck can take you to the stars and back. The year is 1961 and Ham has been chosen to lead a mission aboard the Mercury Redstone 1. Ham's human wranglers prepare him for the stresses of outer space by putting him through a series of training games. They are unsure if he is ready for a flight into the unknown and when launch day arrives all they can do is hope. As Ham's rocket thunders skyward, **a malfunction flings his capsule off course** and his training is put to the test as he works to chart a path home. With visuals and a music score inspired by the boundless whimsy of mid-century children's shows like Gumbly and Thunderbirds, HAM takes us on a journey where even the most unlikely hero can become a **legend the world will never forget.**

LOGLINE

The year is 1961 and **Ham the chimpanzee** has been chosen to represent earth as the first ape in space, but a malfunction aboard his ship threatens his return home.

HAM



WRITER • DIRECTOR



Rudy Martinez is a filmmaker, and actor known for his recurring role as Wesley on the hit Netflix series "Dear White People" and his four season run on the CW's "Jane The Virgin." He got his start in TV as a host on "Disney 365," a beloved interstitial program on The Disney Channel, as well as roles on "iCarly" and "Good Luck Charlie". Along the way he's also had roles on "Grace and Frankie", ABC's "Speechless," and Hulu's "The Lincoln Lawyer" and "Veronica Mars."

Rudy earned his BFA from UC Santa Barbara where he received a grant to study puppetry. Inspired by the likes of Robert Wilson and Lunatique Fantastique, Rudy created a multi-disciplinary puppetry play called "Beginnings." Apropos to the title, that was the start of a decade filled with puppetry creations including commissions for Boxtales Theatre Company, Artists at Play, and Theatricians. He starred as Pinocchio in Rogue Artist Ensemble's "Wood Boy Dog Fish" and in 2019 he co-wrote and directed "Four Eyes" for the 48-Hour Puppet Film Festival hosted by the Los Angeles Guild of Puppetry. The following year, his film "Spring Fling," a tender snapshot at life and loneliness during the pandemic, placed among the top films at the same festival.

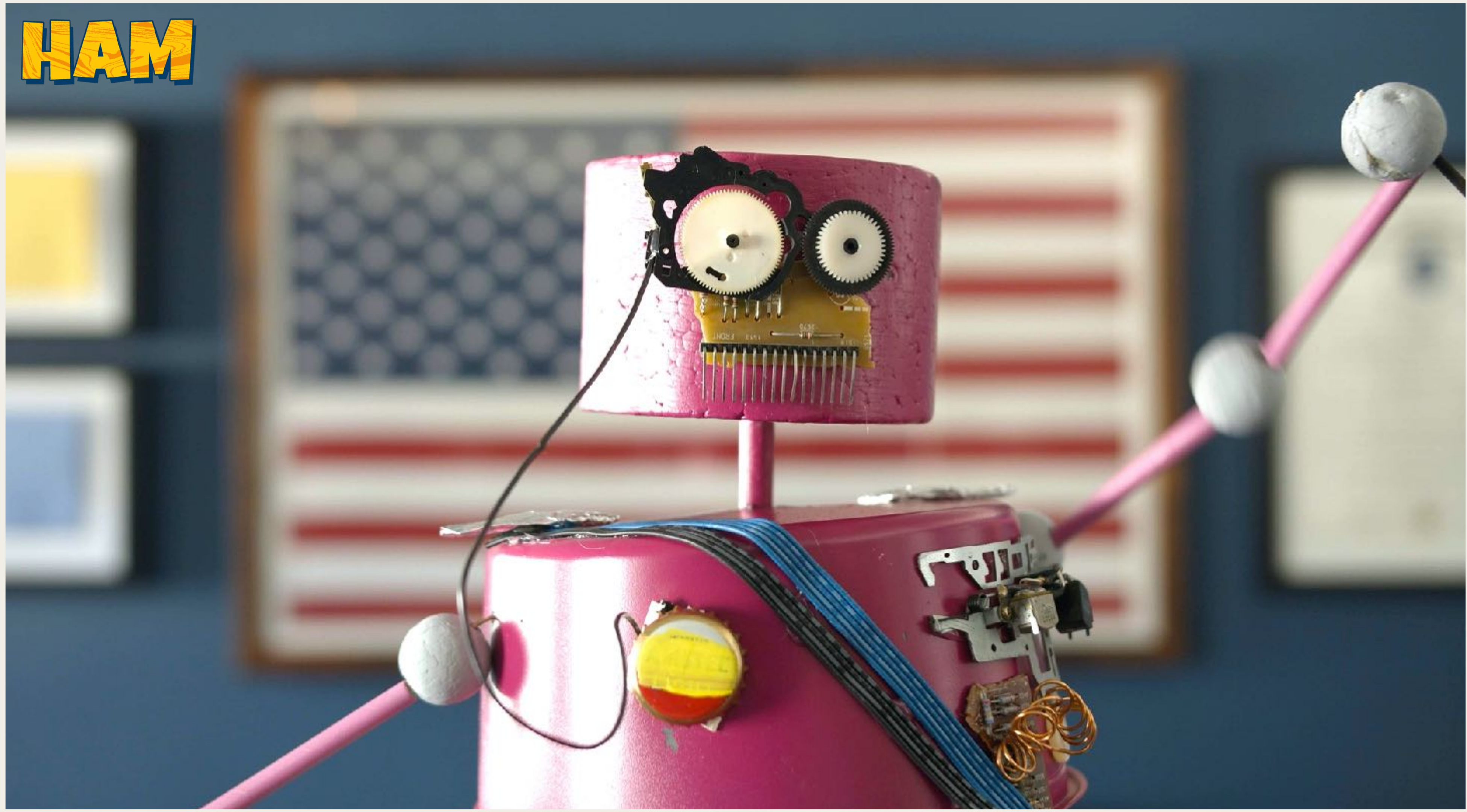
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER



Heather B. Henson is a contemporary puppet artist whose work promotes harmony and healing for the planet through artistic spectacle and discussion. Backed by a degree from Rhode Island School of Design and studies at CalArts, Heather created **IBEX Puppetry**, a multi-platform production company. Heather is a Trustee for the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center and sits on the Board of Directors for The International Crane Foundation and The Jim Henson Legacy.

She is best known for her Environmental Spectacles: original performances designed to provide a transformative experience through the use of non-traditional storytelling. Influenced by her kinship with endangered species, particularly Whooping Cranes, Heather designed the UNIMA Citation of Excellence-winning stage show "Panther and Crane" and created her "Endangered Species Parade, a Celebration of Flight, and FLIGHT: A Crane's Story." In addition to her environmental works, IBEX Puppetry nurtures independent puppet artists creating works for screen, stage, and gallery through direct production efforts, the Handmade Puppet Dreams film festival, and a network of support known as the Puppet Slam Network.

HAM



HAM'S STORY

A note from Director, Rudy Martinez



Ham's story is one of **heroism**. When I set out to make this film, I wanted to avoid a narrative that put humans in the spotlight. Sure, Ham's historic flight paved the way for astronauts like Alan Shepard and Neil Armstrong, but what's remarkable about Ham's journey is that **he survived**. In an age when animal subjects weren't expected to live, Laika the Russian dog or Albert the Rhesus Monkey to name a few, Ham beat the odds. It is only fitting then, that a character of such intelligence and bravery **deserves to have his story told**.

Even more remarkable was the fact that Ham was just a baby on that fateful flight. To illustrate that, I've composed the film with a palette of bright colors and an exuberant score by Adrien Prévost. This **whimsical backdrop** is eye catching for children and adult audiences, and the aesthetic is Ham's view of a **play box world**. From space, the earth looks like a toy he may have seen once, and the stars are reminiscent of the blinking lights in the labs back home. It's a bitter sweet story for Ham; an unwilling participant in man's cruel whims, and yet an **unlikely hero** the world will never forget.

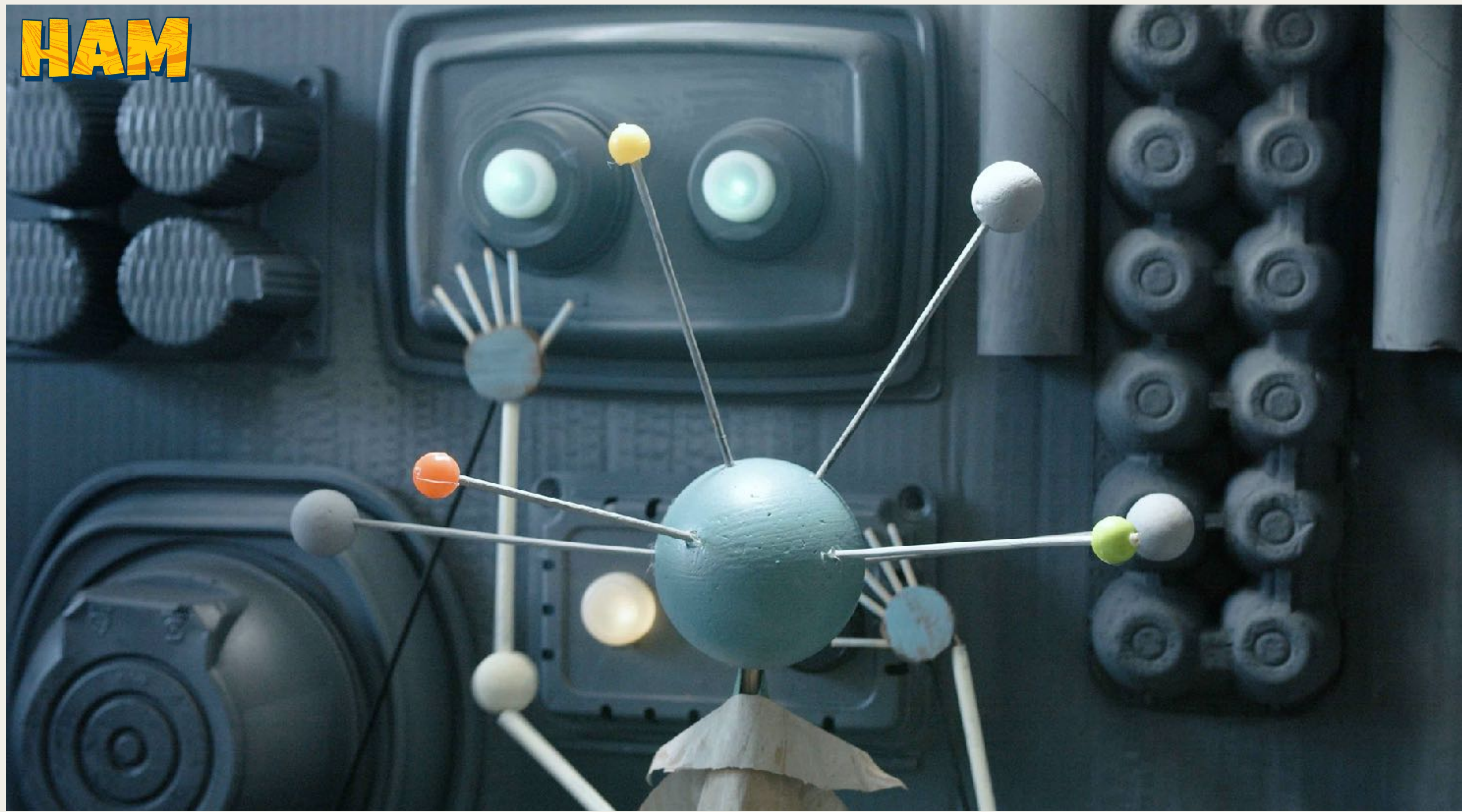
COMPOSER



Adrien Prévost is a French-American award-winning composer and producer based in Los Angeles. His vibrant and evocative scores have been featured in works for companies like Sony Pictures Classics, Amazon Studios, Disney / Pixar, Focus Features, Universal Studios, FX, Hulu, Tresor Films, Aviron Pictures and more. Recently, Prévost scored *Chowder*, a series by FX Studios. He also provided the intense and emotional score for the French Sci-Fi thriller *How I Became a Superhero*. His score for Heather Henson's Handmade Puppet Dreams film *Amaterasu* received Best Music Score at the Sydney Short Film Festival, and his work can be heard in Official Trailers for films like *Encanto*, *Emma*, *The Father*, *Wonder Wheel*, and *The Wife* among many others.

In addition to tv and film, Prévost has scored music for immersive plays like *Wood Boy Dog Fish*, *Señor Plumber's Final Fiesta*, and *Kaidan Project*, for which he won an Ovation Award for Best Composition for a Play. Currently, Prévost is scoring *LT-21* a television series for French network OCS (Une fille Prod / Tresor Prod).

HAM



PRODUCERS



Alex U. Griffin is an award winning cinematographer, photographer and puppeteer based in Los Angeles. He specializes in puppetry films, and recently filmed the all-puppet feature (and HMPD adaption) “Yamasong: March of The Hollows” for Dark Dunes Productions. His films (as cinematographer and director) have played at Slamdance, Atlanta Film Festival, Reel Puppetry Film Festival, Comic Con International and Cannes Short Film Festival. His aim is to turn every shot into a moment for memorable storytelling, and to build dynamic collaborations with fellow artists and filmmakers.



Jessica Simon is a recipient of an UNIMA Citation of Excellence, support from the Jim Henson Foundation, and was selected as an Emerging Artist at the O'Neill National Puppetry Conference, and a Catapult Artist at the Chicago International Puppet Theater Festival. As a fabricator she has worked with The Jim Henson Company, Rick Lyon Puppets, Puppet Kitchen, Furry Puppet Studio, and Transformed Puppet. She previously served as co-curator of Nasty, Brutish & Short Puppetry Cabaret at Links Hall, on the Artistic Direction Committee for Puppet Festival (r)Evolution, and made 3 appearances in the National Puppetry Slam.



Samuel Koji Hale is a Japanese-American animator, writer, director, producer, and puppeteer. Since the early 2000s, he has worked for many production companies such as Nickelodeon, Cartoon Network and Disney Jr. He is best known for the independent puppet films Yamasong, both the 2010 short film and the 2017 feature film sequel, Yamasong: March of the Hollows, which he wrote, directed and designed. Hale has received numerous awards for his personal shorts and others produced with Handmade Puppet Dreams.

CAST OF CHARACTERS



Dave Carter [Col. Blackhear] is a Writer/ Producer / Actor / Voice Artist / Stand-up Comedian! After serving in the US Air Force, Dave moved to Chicago where he wrote and performed with the Second City, iO (Formerly ImprovOlympic) and Oui Be. He performs Stand Up Comedy in Los Angeles, and can be seen in AMC+/IFC's SHERMAN'S SHOWCASE as Fredrick Douglass. His voiceover work can also be heard on radio & TV and in Video games like Call of Duty: Black Ops 3, Fallout 4 and God of War:Ascension.

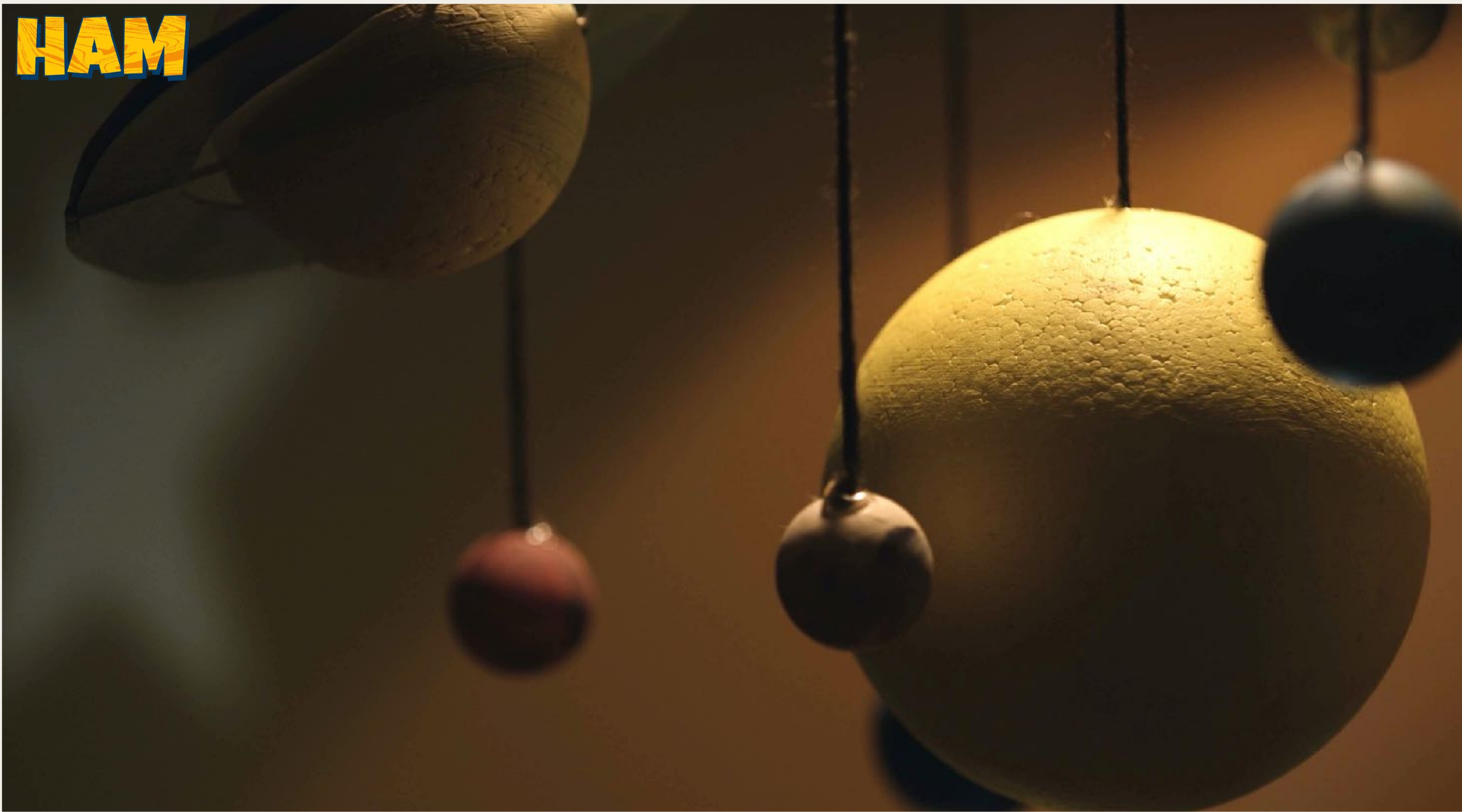


Zehra Fazal [Dr. Brady] provides the voice of numerous animated characters for Disney, Nickelodeon, WB, Dreamworks, Netflix, and Cartoon Network, as well as several popular video game franchises, including Apex Legends, Marvel's Avengers, Halo, Borderlands, Call of Duty, Destiny and League of Legends. In 2019, she won two Society of Voice Arts and Science Awards for her work on the FIFA Women's World Cup and Overall Body of Work. Television: How to Get Away With Murder (ABC), Magnum PI (CBS), Lucifer (Netflix), Mr. Mayor (NBC) and Warped! (Nickelodeon). Twitter and Instagram: @ZehraFazal



Charlie Faith [Mort] is an actor, writer, and producer based in Los Angeles, California. Originally from San Diego, Charlie made his mark on the LA comedy scene producing digital comedic shorts for Collab Inc., and writing and producing sketch comedy for The Groundlings as a member of their historic Sunday Company. Most recently, Charlie can be seen in the up-coming season of The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel portraying legendary journalist Jimmy Breslin. Charlie is currently working on writing original material for Comedy Central.

HAM



CREDIT TO OUR WONDERFUL TEAM

Written and Directed By: Rudy Martinez

Produced By: Alex U. Griffin, Jessica Simon, Sam Koji Hale

Executive Producer: Heather Henson

Director of Photography: Alex U. Griffin

Sound Design: Rudy Martinez

Composed By: Adrien Prévost

Puppeteers: Rudy Martinez, Alex U. Griffin, Ryan Slattery

Production Design: Rudy Martinez

Prop Builder: @BadCrumbleFX

Edited By: Rudy Martinez & Alex U. Griffin

CAST

Colonel Blackshear: Dave Carter

Dr. Brady: Zehra Fazal

Mort: Charlie Faith

SPECIAL THANKS

Jimi Martinez

Victoria Thomson

Caitlyn Larimore

Grace & Augustin Griffin

Sean Cawelti

Paul Praither

The Martinez Family

Ed Wishewski

Ryan Slattery

Daryl Hall

Linda Slattery

Micah Griffin





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT INSPIRED THE LOOK?

From the sound effects, to the colors, to the play box world aesthetic, Art Clokey's "**Gumby**" had direct impact on the look and feel of HAM. I didn't want to be bound by a realistic view of what things *should* look like so you'll find 'block head' humans and styrofoam solar systems in this movie, which is intended to be viewed from Ham's playful eyes.

WHY PUPPETS?

If you look closely, you'll find that puppets can be found in television, movies and even plays. Most of the time, they serve as a stand-in for special effects, but there was a time when puppets were center stage (ie. Jurassic Park or Gremlins). I find puppets to be deeply emotive, and that's why I chose puppetry for this film.

WHO PRODUCED HAM?

This film was made possible by Heather Henson and her company, Ibex Puppetry. Her film series, *Handmade Puppet Dreams*, granted me a mini-commission to produce a short film using puppets!

WHY THIS FILM, NOW?

There is a scene in the film when Ham looks out into space and sees a vision of Chimpanzees swinging from the trees. The real Ham didn't get to swing from trees until his old age. Behind the legend of Ham, there was a real soul whose experience we will never truly understand. This film is intended to lend Ham a voice, and teaches us that in times of uncertainty, we can always dig deeper to find courage and chart a path forward with our hearts.

WHAT IS A MICRO-COMMISSION?

In the midst of the pandemic, Ibex Puppetry granted me a small commission to go hog-wild on an original puppet film. The only stipulation was to think small and use what I have because artistic collaboration was much harder due to the lockdown order. So I dug out my box of paints, some cardboard scraps, and I got to work creating the childlike world of HAM. The "mini" nature of the commission added just the kind of restraint that gives creativity room to thrive.

THIS **HANDMADE PUPPET DREAMS** **SHORT**
IS MADE POSSIBLE WITH SUPPORT FROM
THE GREEN FEATHER FOUNDATION ALONG WITH



IBEX PUPPETRY



HAM