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Tartakovsky Takes Transylvania (Again)

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Animator and writer Genndy Tartakovsky has become one of Hollywood's most sought-after directors.
Courtesy of Sony Pictures Animation

Animated motion pictures are on a roll. "They are no longer kids-only entertainment," says Moscow-born animator Genndy Tartakovsky.

And he has two films under his belt to prove it. His "Hotel Transylvania" and its sequel "Hotel T 2" were huge blockbusters.

Shortly after the release of "Hotel Transylvania 2," Genndy was ready to leave Sony Pictures, where he directed both films. "I think I'm done here," he told The Moscow Times.

"Not so fast," he was told as Sony announced a third "Hotel Transylvania." Obviously, the studio realized what a gold mine Tartakovsky had created.

So far both films generated in excess of $850 million. When you add potential DVD, television and cable revenues, insiders are projecting close to $1 billion. That's a huge return for a total production budget of around $160 million.

As a youngster who started drawing comic book characters at the age of eight in Moscow, Tartakovsky had no idea what was ahead of him in the magical world of Hollywood.

As a pre-teen he recalls drawing for hours on end. His fascination with cartooning had started in Russia. "I remember 'Super Friends' on television was my favorite show there," he recalled.

When the family moved to America (his father was a dentist for the Soviet Union's national ice hockey team), Tartakovsky knew how he would earn his living. Cartooning was his only ambition.

The director's journey into the entertainment world started with such critically acclaimed television hits as "Dexter's Laboratory" and "Star Wars: Clone Wars."

Tartakovsky's work quickly caught the attention of movie studio executives. When Sony was in the planning stages for the "Transylvania" franchise, problems arose, and the film's original director was replaced with Tartakovsky.

He quickly put his stamp on the film not only as an innovative director but also as an accomplished cartoonist and writer.

The film opened simultaneously in nearly in 4,000 theaters. The second film became the highest grossing film in the U.S. and the biggest opening ever for a domestic September release.

"I thought I was done exploring the world of 'Hotel Transylvania' after the first two films," Tartakovsky told The Moscow Times, adding, "But while I was away from the franchise finishing my TV show 'Samurai Jack,' an idea sparked that I got really excited about and made it irresistible to return and helm myself this third adventure."

He said Adam Sandler, Selena Gomez and Andy Samberg will be returning as the voices of Dracula, his vampire daughter Mavis and her human husband Johnny.

Sony is planning a September 2018 release for the picture.

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