

## Junglebanden

Baseret på den populære serie fra DR Ultra – nu som spillefilm!



**Premiere 7. juni 2018**

**Længde: 97 min**

**Censur: Tilladt for alle men frarådes børn under 7 år**

### **Premierebiografer:**

CinemaxX Kbh, CinemaxX Aarhus, CinemaxX Odense, Palads, Fields, Falkoner, Aarhus, Aalborg, Aalborg, City Syd, Lyngby, Odense, Tåstrup, Esbjerg, Hillerød, Næstved, Randers, Herning, Kolding, Waves, Køge, Frederikssund, Nykøbing, Havnar Bio, Vejle, Slagelse, Horsens, Middelfart, Fredericia, Herlev, Holstebro, Silkeborg, Rødovre – Atlas, Viborg, Roskilde, Svendborg, Helsingør, Empire, Kulturbio grafen Holbæk, Varde Bio, Park Bio Frederikssund, Bibliografen, Bio Mors, Kino Grenaa, Værløse Bio, Gilleleje Bio, Cinema 3, Skive, Ringkøbing Bio, Grindsted Kino, Park Bio KBH, Bio Huset galten, Birkerød Bio, Kastrup Bio, Vig Bio Ikast Bio, Struer, Kinorama Sønderborg, Kinorama Aabenraa, Valby Kino, Ishøj Bio, Trommen, Kom-Bi Hornslet, Toftlund Bio, Korsør Bio mfl.

Pingvinen Monrad og resten af Junglebanden har i de senere år sørget for at opretholde fred og glæde i junglen. Nu møder de imidlertid deres hidtil største udfordring i form af den djævelske koalabjørn Igor og hans tungnemme bavianhåndlangere, som har planer om at udslutte junglen, og alt hvad den indeholder! Nok er Monrad en pingvin, men han har en tiger i sig, og sammen med resten af banden gør han sig klar til at redde dagen og uddele en god omgang koalabank!

Billeder og plakat på: <http://www.angelfilms.dk/junglebanden>



### **Interview with Jean-François Tosti (co-author and producer):**

#### **What was your involvement in developing the project?**

I'm one of the three founders of TAT Productions, and we came up with and developed the universe of the Jungle Bunch together. On all of our projects, we write the stories as a threesome, then my two partners - David Alaux and my brother Eric Tosti - take charge of creating the works, jointly or individually, while I fulfil the role of producer.

#### **Were you surprised by the tremendous success of the series, first in France, then in the rest of the world?**

In 2010 we produced a one-hour TV one-off that was the first outing for our characters. This show was an incredible success if you keep in mind that it was a film intended for the small screen. It was widely distributed in video and broadcast virtually throughout the world, and it even got a run in movie theatres in several countries.

We didn't expect so much exposure and we quickly realised we'd created a universe that could attract a broad young public. Naturally we commenced production of a series with clear hopes of success, but once again, the results widely surpassed our expectations.

Paradoxically, the series took some time to really break through in France, while it was an instant triumph in others countries, like Italy. Ultimately I believe its success is largely due to our determination to address the entire family, even if our first public of course remains the children.

#### **Was it particularly difficult to find funding for that project?**

No, the series was ultimately easy to finance thanks to the unfailing support of France Télévisions, which has accompanied from the very start, and of PGS Entertainment, which distributes our TV programmes. Our own requirements in terms of writing and artistic quality, our deep desire to tell stories for a broad public and the fact that we have our very own animation studio are also extremely reassuring factors for all of our partners.



**Why did you want to see it transposed onto the big screen?**

Ever since we created our company, we've always wanted to make full-length feature films for the cinema. When we felt we were ready to attempt this new adventure, we felt it was logical and natural to rely on the property that we'd created and which had generated a really enthusiastic fan base. Especially because - since the creation of the Jungle Bunch universe - we had been holding in reserve a real « sure-fire » narrative for being able to truly tell something new in a potential full-length film.

**Did you participate in the writing and in the new orientation given to the feature film?**

Yes, because I'm co-author of the script, and one of my main missions as producer is the artistic accompaniment of the project and the director throughout the production process.

**Were your partners eager to accompany you on this new adventure?**

Yes indeed: our partners didn't play hard to get, and the financing of the film was locked in after just a few months. The real issue was to find the right movie theatre distributor; that was a new thing for us, ensuring the best possible visibility when it opened. So I'm thrilled that SND got on board very early in the production and accompanied us so ably in this passage from television to cinema.

**Judging by the quality and the scope of the film, one might think that it's the work of a major studio.**

**How did you manage to obtain such great results with resources that are a lot more modest?**

In my view, that's the logical outcome of the strategy we introduced right from our start: we chose to create our own studio, to produce everything in France, to maintain total control over our productions, and we are constantly looking for ways to push back the limits of the supposed quality standards that should correspond to the budgets we're dealing with. Over the past 10 years, we have set up and constantly improved a production pipeline for our TV programmes with the clear intention of getting close to cinematographic standards, in terms of both image and sound, with for example cinema sound effects sessions for each episode of the series, music recorded with a symphony orchestra as well as calling on the biggest names amongst French voice actors.

Shifting to a full-length film gave us the possibility of pushing this logic even further with a - relatively speaking - much bigger budget on our scale and a different production timing. And let's not forget the

fundamental role of the members of our team, who are extremely talented and who succeed in creating images whose quality quite often exceeds even our fondest hopes.

**How did the team form around you and David Alaux?**

It was a very natural process: we have computer graphics artists who have been working with us in the studio for several years now, and they constituted the hard core surrounding David during the many months of production. Creating an animated movie is truly a long-term team effort... and our team is brilliant!

**What are the main technical and logistical challenges you had to face?**

The main technical challenge was dealing with a new image format, both in terms of frame, with the passage from a TV ratio to CinemaScope, and in terms of definition. So we had to make rather heavy investments to get the computing power in house that is necessary for producing the images. Then a lot of test phases were necessary to make sure (for example) that the hairs or the textures of the characters filmed in close up would look good when projected on a big screen.



**What are the major stages in the production of the film? And ultimately, how much time was needed to complete the film?**

After the script is written, you have to do graphic research where you draw absolutely everything that will appear in the film, the characters of course but also all the accessories, all the background elements, from the slightest blade of grass to the highest mountain. One then do you move on to the storyboard, then to the computer animation, which represents the first « audiovisual » version of the film and which makes it possible to see whether the story is understandable, if the general rhythm functions, if the gags are hitting home. It's at this stage that the biggest rewriting of the film takes place. When the director and producer are at last convinced they've got an actual film on their hands, you embark on the production of the computer-generated images and there follow the phases of modelling, textures, layout, animation, lighting and rendering, then final compositing. Once the images are completed, you of course have to create the

entire soundtrack for the film: recording of the voices, the music, the sound effects in order to arrive at the mixing.

So, altogether, the production of the *Jungle Bunch* extended over two years, and more than 200 people were involved, to varying degrees, in the creation of the film.

### **Interview with David Alaux (co-author and director):**

#### **How did the adventure of the *Jungle Bunch* begin?**

After our first TV broadcast of *Spike*, a 35-minute animated movie in the Christmas universe, in 2008 we wanted to develop a new universe with zany animals, and to produce images that would push the digital techniques available at the time to their maximum.

#### **What were your sources of inspiration?**

A little bit of everything that inspired our childhoods, in part the American and Japanese films and TV series of the 1970's and 80's: things like *Mac MacGyver*, *The A-Team*, *Goldorak*, *The Goonies* or *Indiana Jones*... but with a more personal humour.

#### **How were the various main characters sketched out?**

At the very start of development, and over the course of the first drafts, there were different versions of teams of heroes and even different places were envisaged for where the action takes place. For example, in the very first version, Maurice was a zebra-penguin living on the savanna. But once the character of Maurice became what we know today - a Tiger-penguin always walking around with his son in a bowl under his arm -, we realised he'd make a perfect leader for a team of fairly oddball dispensers of justice .... We gave him team members who each had to have a quality of his own - strength for Miguel, for example, who moreover had nearly been made a rhinoceros in the initial drafts, or intelligence for Gilbert - but who also had to have defects or weaknesses, and characters that were propitious for comedy... and so, little by little, the *Jungle Bunch* was born.

#### **Tell me about the visual universe you wanted to create.**

First off, we come from volume animation. When we were younger, we worked on marionettes made of modelling clay or latex in hard settings. Finally, the design of our heroes corresponds pretty much to what we were doing at that time: clean general lines, simple forms for the characters but with very elaborated textures, and everything in rich and rather realistic settings. We wanted to situate our adventures in a special world, without any link to human beings - to whom no references are ever made, moreover. As a result, in this universe, everything is made of rough raw materials, « local » and cobbled together on site. So we're always in 100% natural settings populated with thousands of animals that get along more or less well together, in a dense, green jungle enlivened by the shimmering colours of tropical flowers. This luxuriant aspect is something that was very important to us: when we worked on hard settings and marionettes, our dream was to be able make hundreds of marionettes in immense settings, which was of course impossible - until the arrival of digital. Now there's no limit with regard to the richness of the settings, skies or crowds of animals - even if it *does* take a lot of work.

#### **What style of animation have you chosen?**

We never ventured into a cartoon animation style, which doesn't correspond to our sense of humour, or at any rate not that of the *Jungle Bunch* universe. Conversely, we haven't gone towards motion-capture, either, which is too real. I've always preferred « old-school » realistic animation, done by animators who

work out each position and expression by hand. It's this style of animation that I think is better able to support the main lines of our stories, while allowing room for our humour to emerge.



**When did you first think that a transposition to cinema would be possible?**

We were thinking about this from the time we created the first 55-minute Jungle Bunch special, *Back to the Ice Floe*, in 2010, but we needed a few years to develop and finalise a script that we thought was good enough.

**In terms of writing, how have you tried to distinguish yourself from the series? Is this an entirely new adventure?**

Yes, completely. We didn't want to make the feature film a sort of « super episode »: it had to tell something bigger, and it had to be just as accessible to a public that doesn't already know the Jungle Bunch universe.

For the main storyline, we decided to concentrate on the « family of tigers », over three generations: Natacha, the tigress who is the mother of Maurice; Maurice, the penguin adoptive son of Natacha; and Junior, a striped tiger fish who in turn is the adoptive son of Maurice. We wanted to confront different generations of heroes of the Jungle while mixing in the storylines of the old family wounds that one discovers in the film. Of course, the other characters of the team are there and we wanted to maintain a balanced presence for each of them. If one adds the new characters to that, bringing this whole little world alive wasn't always easy.

**Two groups of heroes confront one another, incarnating a sort of combat between the ancients and moderns...**

Absolutely. The ancients represented by the The Champs (to whom Maurice's adoptive mother belongs) have great athletic and martial qualities: they are very « straightforward », they are rarely mistaken and don't make gaffes; in short, these are « serious » heroes. And the new heroes, the Jungle Bunch, form a much more unlikely team: they are constantly making mistakes or blunders. With them, nothing can go altogether smoothly, these are kind of screwball heroes-antiheroes, but who ultimately arrive at the same results as their elders.

These two teams will have to take on a particularly formidable common enemy: Igor, a Machiavellian koala who has an old grudge against the The Champs and who has assembled the resources for destroying the jungle.

**What's very beautiful is the principle of the journey of initiation that functions for the two generations: that of the Jungle Bunch and that of Maurice's mother...**

That's right: in the film, the evolution of the main characters depends largely on these linked stakes: the old wound of Maurice - having a mother who is opposed to his vocation as a dispenser of justice -, and that of his mother, who is inclined to get angry at her son due to her blind refusal to let him go, thinking that she is protecting him in that way. Sometimes it's difficult to get certain emotions across, particularly sadness, in a credible way in a comedy where humour plays a major role. We hope that this narrative arc, specific to Maurice and his mother, allowed us to succeed in doing that.

**The film really emphasises the values of the collective and solidarity. Was that something that was there right from the start of the project?**

Yes, each character has qualities, but also HUGE flaws, and it is only together that they manage to overcome the various difficulties. Teamwork is the basis of the existence of the Jungle Bunch and conversely, when they go their separate ways, it seems that nothing works out right for them any longer. It's an element that has been present in the universe since the very beginning, but it is truly in this film that it comes to full expression.

**Can you tell me about the elaboration and the "creation" of certain scenes that are destined to become classics: for example, the stratagem for freeing themselves from the gluey rubber at the beginning of the film, as well as the escape of our heroes from Igor's cave, absolutely stunning...**

While you're writing, you know that, for reasons of rhythm, such or such sequence has to be particularly effective. So we work on the storyboard and the computer animation (a sort of editing with sound of the storyboard) in order to verify that the objective of the sequence can be attained. Sometimes there's a lot of retouch work until you arrive at THE model that works. And once this satisfactory cutting is obtained, we focus on the specific technical problematics that it entails.

The two sequences you referred to are very different. The first, very static, required great preparation in terms of coherence and precision of the details of the settings, in the placement of the lights, so that everything remains clear in this corner of the luxurious Jungle. By contrast, the second, extremely dynamic and mobile, forced us to find tricks to link up kilometres of background rapidly and with flexibility, since we had to follow characters moving between 50 and 200 km/h for several minutes. The scope of the backgrounds was just titanic!

**You accumulate several technical difficulties in the film: the water, the hairs, the fur... How did you overcome them?**

Our team is fairly accustomed to meeting this type of challenge: we aren't technical stuntmen, but we knew that technical solutions existed and that it was just a matter of learning to master them. Even for our TV productions, we have always set the bar rather high and, as a result, our team heads know very well how to deal with new problems when they arise. That said, we still got cold sweats a few times dealing with stubborn bugs, and we didn't sleep too much over the five months before the final rendering because the

calculations took more time than expected. But for a first film, and given the budget, I think it turned out pretty well.



#### **What are the aesthetic codes of the film?**

The film was never especially conceived as an animated movie. This means that, although animation theoretically permits total freedom in terms of the framing, the lighting, the visual effects and the cutting, the idea in this adventure comedy was nevertheless to remain reasonable: instead we wanted to reconnect with the spirit of the great adventure comedies of our youth, like *Raiders of the Lost Ark* or *Back to the Future*, which were so good at expressing optimism and a devil-may-care attitude and knew how to remain accessible to everyone without crazy visual overindulgence, frenetic cutting or the overuse of special effects. So we were careful to keep spacious shots, which take the time to establish the scale of the settings, the actions and the emotions without systematically engaging in pointless movements for movement's sake. The same is true for the cutting, the dialogues, the lighting... Everything remains pretty close to what could have been done in a traditional film. This leaves all the more room for isolated surprises or to highlight the epic moments in certain sequences where the direction is less restrained.



## The characters:

### **Maurice**

A penguin convinced he's a tiger, Maurice is the leader of the Jungle Bunch. Adopted and raised by Natacha the Tigress, whose fierce courage he has inherited, he has created his own team of upholders of the law: "The Jungle Bunch". A master in Kung Fu, he tries to transmit his knowledge to his adoptive son, a tiger fish nicknamed Junior. If he is particularly bold, he nevertheless has one regret: he is angry at his mother, who is opposed to the Jungle Bunch, due to her fear that something might happen to her son...



### **Junior**

Maurice's adoptive son Junior is a tiger fish. Despite his small size, he knows how to swim, jump and fly and he never hesitates to throw himself into an adventure. Worthy heir of his father, he will be led to prove his great qualities in the Jungle Bunch's struggle against Igor.

### **Miguel**

A big gorilla with a soft heart, Miguel isn't necessarily the smartest of Maurice's companions, but he is loyal and always ready to fight the bad guys. He has unlimited admiration for Maurice and Junior.



### **Gilbert**



A tarsier and the brains of the bunch, Gilbert is often in a bad mood. But without his tricks and brilliant ideas, how else would they get out of a tough spot?

### **Batricia**

Batricia is bat with a big heart. Honest, upright and without an ounce of cynicism, she's a past master in the art of defusing conflicts. Always ready to assist the weak, she's secretly in love with Gilbert... who has utterly no idea!



### **Al and Bob**



Toads with distinctly different temperaments, they share the same passion for catching flies. Guardians of the Bunch's hideout, they know how to cook - insect stews and caramel-coated larvae! -, cut hair, make costumes... They lend a real comic touch to the story.

### **Igor**

Rejected by The Champs in the past, he swore that one day he would get his revenge. An expert in explosive mushrooms, he has a single obsession: getting revenge on those who excluded him by destroying the jungle...



### **Natacha**



Leader of The Champs, who in the past maintained peace in the jungle, Natacha is a courageous and determined tigress. Maurice's adoptive mother, she renounced her career as a heroine following the death of Ricky, her loyal companion: since then she has devoted herself to raising her son. Conscious of the dangers that come with upholding the law, she tries to dissuade Maurice from going down the same path...