INFORMATION FEATURE

Nature, Disney-Style

Disneynature revives tradition of documentary excellence

By Lori Dance

Seeking to capitalize on the recent success of nature documentaries, Disney looked back at its own long-dormant True-Life Adventures division—which not only garnered eight Academy Awards from 1948 to 1960, but also fostered fond memories for generations of schoolchildren—to inspire the first Disney-branded film label in over 60 years.

"Nature invents the most beautiful stories," says Jean-François Camilleri who, besides having been involved with the Academy Award-winning film March of the Penguins, is executive vice president and general manager of Disneynature. "So in a place like the Disney Studios, where storytelling is key, we are going to go and… bring them to the big screen. This was a vision of Walt Disney back in 1948, and this is the vision of Disneynature today."

Director Alastair Fothergill

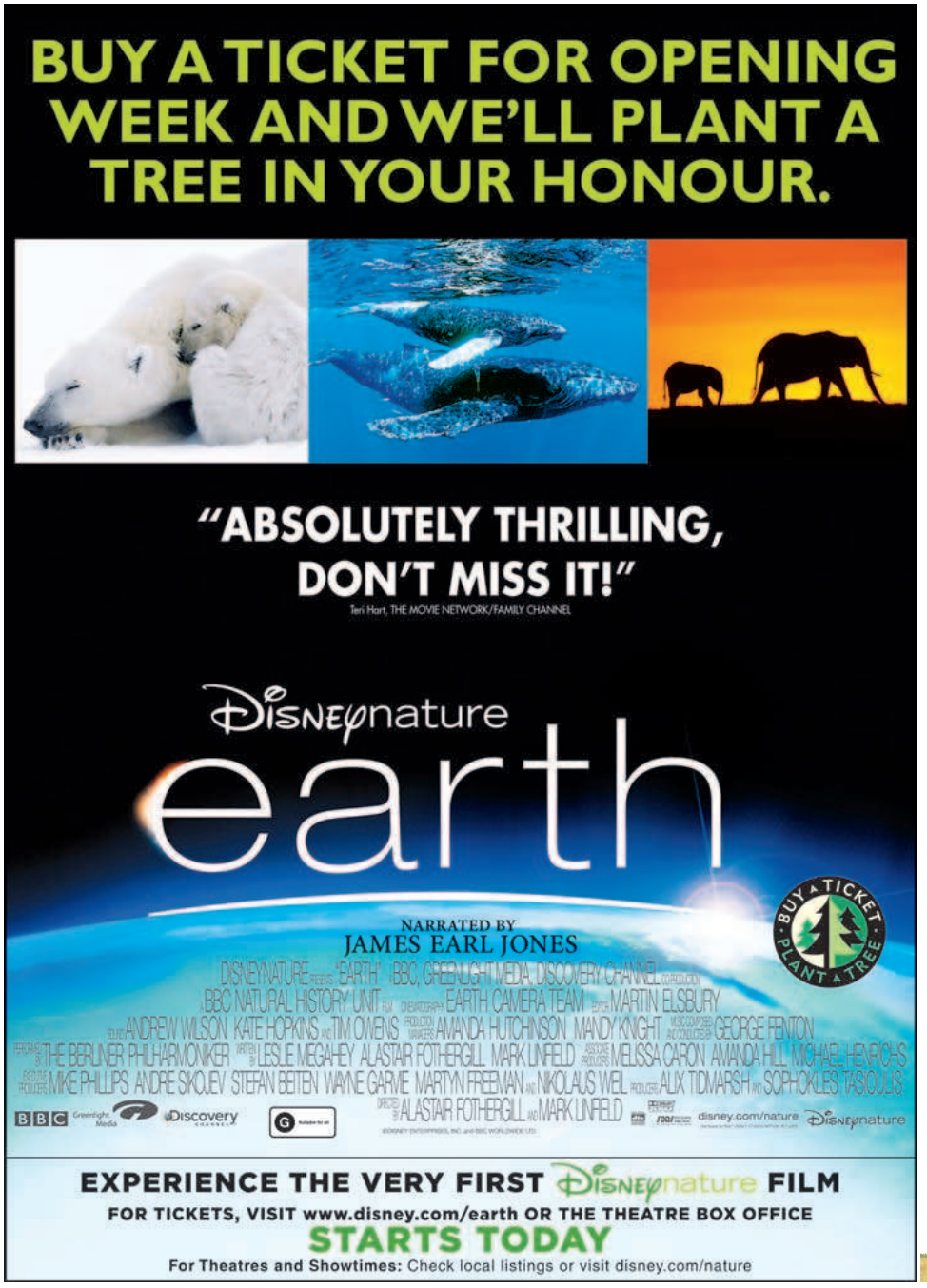
For its first film, EARTH, the Disneynature team looked no further than directors Alastair Fothergill and Mark Linfield, the creative team behind the Emmy Award-winning Planet Earth series, for assistance. "I think EARTH is a perfect film to start the Disneynature series… because it is a portrait of the whole planet," Fothergill asserts. "In over five years, we filmed at over 200 locations in 64 countries worldwide and employed 60 cameramen… Nobody in the history of cinema has ever had so much time, resources, and talent brought together for one true-life feature."

> ***"Nature invents the most beautiful stories"***

Disneynature is developing numerous titles concurrently and plans to release at least one feature-length documentary each year. Oceans, slated for 2010, will rely on new technology to capture detailed underwater drama where few have previously ventured. Big Cats, to be released in 2011, follows three species as they protect and teach their cubs on the great plains of Africa. And the directors of EARTH will reunite for 2012's Chimpanzee, shot over three years in the tropical jungles of the Ivory Coast and Uganda.

To find out more about the Disneynature brand or to download educational materials, visit disneynature.com

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors,
we borrow it from our children.
~ Native American Proverb



INFORMATION FEATURE

Three Families, One EARTH

Disneynature's first film explores the animal kingdom from pole to pole

By Lori Dance

On April 22, Disney will celebrate Earth Day with the premiere of the first film in its Disneynature series. Narrated in thrilling detail by James Earl Jones, EARTH follows the journeys of three animal families as they interact with the ever-changing world around them.

On a group of Nordic islands is where you'll meet the polar bears. The world's largest land predators travel hundreds of miles for something to eat, yet they don't drink water. A male ventures far to hunt as a mother emerges from a snow den with her two cubs. The pack ice melts earlier each year, and food is becoming a challenge.

To visit the next family, you'll travel far south as an elephant mother guides her tiny calf across the Kalahari Desert in search of fresh water, of which an adult can drink 50 gallons each day. In this dry season, however, thick clouds of dust threaten to separate them, and they are forced to share what little refreshment they find with hungry lions.

Finally, you'll witness an epic 4,000-mile migration. In tropical waters, a humpbacked whale calf receives over 600 quarts of milk each day, but its mother is starving. The pair set out on the longest journey undertaken by any marine mammal to the southernmost Antarctic waters to feed on krill and small fish before they turn around and journey back to the Equator.

The supporting cast of this story includes, among over 40 other animal species, some painfully adorable mandarin ducklings who, at their mother's urging, fling themselves 30 feet from their nest to the ground. Will they fly? Will they bounce? You'll just have to wait until Earth Day to find out…

To check out more exclusive and super-cute behind-the-scenes footage of the film's three main families, visit disneynature.com/earth.

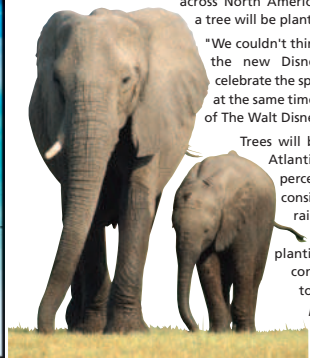
Trees for Tickets

Plant yourself in front of EARTH, and Disneynature will plant a tree on Earth

By Lori Dance

Disney and Metro have a convenient truth for you: for every ticket purchased during the opening week of EARTH, being released across North America on Earth Day (April 22), a tree will be planted in your honour.

"We couldn't think of a better way to launch the new Disneynature banner, and to celebrate the spirit of the film and Earth Day at the same time," says Dick Cook, chairman of The Walt Disney Studios.

Trees will be planted in the Brazilian Atlantic Forest which, at only 7 percent of its original capacity, is considered the most endangered rain forest in the world. Disney is overseeing their planting and care, and Metro is contributing advertising space to support the program.

For more information, including ticket availability at your local theatre, visit disney.com/earth.