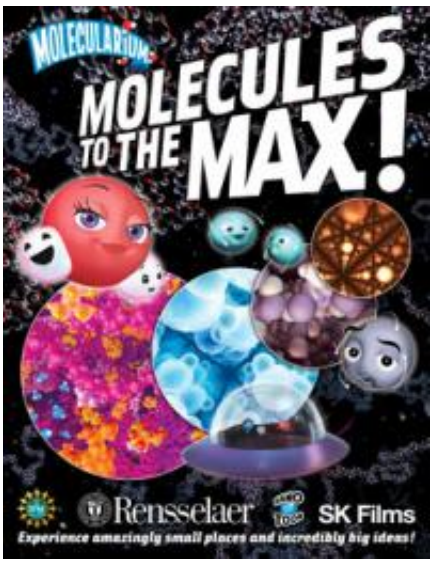
Stealth Education in 3-D: Rensselaer To Premiere 3-D IMAX Version of Molecules to the MAX

September 21 2009



The Molecularium Project is going to be in your face like never before. A new 3-D IMAX version of the project's latest movie, *Molecules to the MAX*, will premiere on Tuesday, Sept. 22, in Indianapolis at the Giant Screen Cinema Association's 2009 International Conference and Trade Show. With sharp visuals, rich audio, and a new 3-D version, the "stealth education" movie is now optimized to be shown in either 2-D or 3-D on IMAX flat screens, IMAX domes, and other giant screen theaters.

“The original 2-D version of Molecules to the MAX was excellent, but this incredible new 3-D version brings the film to life in exciting new ways,” said Richard W. Siegel, director of the Rensselaer Nanotechnology Center and the Robert W. Hunt Professor of Materials Science and Engineering, who produced the new movie. “In many of the scenes, it really feels like you’ve been shrunk down to being a few nanometers tall and that you’re dwarfed by the vast molecular landscape of atoms and molecules.”

The animated 40-minute movie follows the adventures of Oxy, Hydro, Hydra, and Carbón as they navigate the nanoscale landscapes of everyday items including snowflakes, coins, and plastic toys. Produced by Rensselaer, funded by Trustee Curtis Priem ’82, and supported by the U.S. National Science Foundation and the state of New York, Molecules to the MAX aims to boost national and global science literacy through the use of story, song, excitement, and fun.

The new 3-D version of the movie will be released in the fall of 2009. Plans are under way for national and New York Capital Region premieres.

The background animations of Molecules to the MAX are based on scientifically accurate molecular modeling simulations provided by Shekhar Garde, professor and head of Rensselaer’s Department of Chemical and Biological Engineering. Some of these simulations are among the most complex ever attempted, and it took massive computational power to both perform the experiments and translate the results into a format useable by the film’s animators.

Siegel, Garde, and materials science and engineering professor Linda Schadler are executive producers of Molecules to the MAX. Toronto-based SK Films is distributing the film. The production studio behind the movie is Nanotoon Entertainment, which employed many Rensselaer

students and graduates. Nanotoon's V. Owen Bush is writer/director of Molecules to the MAX, and Kurt Przybilla is the film's writer/producer. Chris Harvey is the movie's art director/production designer.

Schadler developed the original idea for Molecularium in 2001, with the goal of boosting global science literacy and energizing more young people to pursue careers in science, technology, and engineering. By carefully engineering the characters, plot, look, and feel of a fun family movie, the Molecularium team sought to create an experience where viewers would get swept up in the storyline and learn or re-learn plenty of important science - without even trying.

The first Molecularium movie, Riding Snowflakes, released in early 2005, funded by the NSF, and formatted to be shown in digital planetarium domes, is in worldwide distribution and has recently been translated into several different languages including Korean and Arabic. Prior to the release of Riding Snowflakes, Schadler and the Molecularium team commissioned an independent study to test groups of children, teenagers, and adults before and after watching the movie. The study found that viewers had a fundamentally better understanding of atoms, molecules, and polymers coming out of the movie than they did before the screening.

Molecularium is the flagship educational outreach project of Rensselaer's NSF-funded Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center for Directed Assembly of Nanostructures.

For more information on Molecules to the MAX and the Molecularium Project, visit: www.moleculestothemax.com and www.molecularium.com .

Provided by Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute