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FIRST SCRIPTED FEATURE FROM NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC TELEVISION TO AIR OCTOBER 6 ON PBS' EMMY-AWARD® WINNING SERIES NOVA

WASHINGTON (July 23, 2009)--The president of National Geographic Television (NGT), Michael Rosenfeld, announced today NGT's first scripted drama, "Darwin's Darkest Hour," which has completed principal photography in Canada. World-renowned television production company NGT, nominated this year for 11 Emmys, already has won more than 130 Emmy awards for its factual programming production.

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(Media-Newswire.com) - WASHINGTON (July 23, 2009)--The president of National Geographic Television (NGT), Michael Rosenfeld, announced today NGT's first scripted drama, "Darwin's Darkest Hour," which has completed principal photography in Canada. World-renowned television production company NGT, nominated this year for 11 Emmys, already has won more than 130 Emmy awards for its factual programming production.

Starring Henry Ian Cusick ("Lost") and Frances O'Connor ("Mansfield Park," "The Importance of Being Earnest," Steven Spielberg's "Artificial Intelligence: AI"), the two-hour drama will air in the U.S. on the PBS signature series NOVA. Scheduled to air Oct. 6, 2009, "Darwin's Darkest Hour" will coincide with the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of his seminal work "On the Origin of the Species." The film will be distributed internationally by Cinema Management Group (CMG).

"We felt it was important to cast actors who will connect deeply with the roles of Charles and Emma, since we plan to shine a new light on the enigmatic Charles Darwin, showing his vulnerabilities while also making his great insights understandable," Rosenfeld said. "With Cusick, we have found the perfect blend of star power and personal intensity to portray a man who sparked a scientific revolution. O'Connor's natural warmth and on-screen radiance make her ideal for the role of Emma."

In 1858 Charles Darwin received a letter from naturalist Alfred Wallace, explaining his own theory of evolution. This was the trigger event that led to the publication of Darwin's seminal theory on the origin of species.

"NOVA is pleased to work with National Geographic and share the story of one the most important scientific figures in history with PBS audiences nationwide," said Paula S. Apsell, senior executive producer of NOVA and director of the WGBH-Boston Science Unit. "Darwin's Darkest Hour" will bring to life the compelling human story behind the groundbreaking science -- revealing Darwin's personal struggles that he went through to ultimately launch his brilliant theory."

For "Darwin's Darkest Hour," NGT harnesses the extensive scholarship and massive online resource of the Darwin Correspondence Project to provide a dramatic account of the life of one of the most influential men in the history of science. The meticulously researched and scientifically accurate screenplay was written by U.K. writer John Goldsmith. Former head of the British Writers Guild, Goldsmith has scripted numerous historical dramas including "Victoria and Albert," "David Copperfield," and "Kidnapped!" The script was crafted in consultation with a respected group of Darwin and evolution scholars.

The film is directed by John Bradshaw. Producer is Michael Mahoney. Executive producers are Norman Stephens and John Bredar. Senior executive producer for NOVA is Paula S. Apsell.

Support for "Darwin's Darkest Hour" has come from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, which supports documentaries and feature films through its program in public understanding of science and technology and has also funded the Darwin Correspondence Project. The Arthur Vining Davis Foundation also contributed.

In Japan, "Darwin's Darkest Hour" will air on Japanese public television, NHK, under a co-production agreement secured by National Geographic Television International.

About "Darwin's Darkest Hour"

The drama unfolds over the course of roughly two weeks in June and early July of 1858. During this time, Darwin's world seems to disintegrate: His life's work, what he called "his abominable volume," is in danger of being scooped by an unknown; at the same time, one of his children is stricken by scarlet fever and one with diphtheria. Darwin is reeling, with his career and home in tumult. His wife, Emma, is a rock. She tells Charles that she will help him solve

the problem but that he has to explain what the letter from Alfred Wallace means and how it impacts his own theory. Although her husband's work challenges her deep Christian faith, they agree to disagree. Through Emma's careful coaxing, we flash back with Charles to his journey and to the evolution of his theory of evolution, learning with Darwin as he figures out what he called "the mystery of mysteries" and come to understand why the letter from Wallace is such a bombshell. In the end, it is the remarkable, erudite Emma, a classically trained pianist who studied with Chopin, who will see Charles through this nightmare, even as one of her children dies of fever. Charles and Emma, along with his colleagues, plot out a path through the crisis, allowing Darwin to proceed with publication of one of history's most influential theories. Never before has a more personal or more accurate account of Darwin's life at this critical juncture been explored.

About National Geographic Television

National Geographic Television (NGT) is the documentary TV production arm of the National Geographic Society (NGS), known around the world for its remarkable visuals and compelling stories. NGS is one of the largest global scientific and educational organizations, supporting field science on every continent and providing NGT with unparalleled access to developing stories around the world. In 1963 NGT broke ground by broadcasting on American network television the first moving pictures from the summit of Everest. Since then, NGT has continued to push technology to its limits to bring great stories to television audiences worldwide. With more than 130 Emmy Awards and nearly 1,000 other industry accolades, NGT programming can be seen globally on the National Geographic Channel, as well as terrestrial and other cable and satellite broadcasters worldwide through international sales by National Geographic Television International, and on U.S. public television stations.

About NOVA

Now in its 36th year of broadcasting, NOVA continues to produce in-depth science programming and upholds a longstanding reputation for providing unprecedented access to critical science stories including the first test tube baby, the eradication of smallpox and the developing branch of theoretical physics, string theory. NOVA is television's most-watched primetime science series; in the U.S. alone, the popular public television series reaches an average of five million viewers weekly. NOVA documentaries regularly reach tens of millions of viewers across the world and are broadcast by over 75 separate channels, covering more than 150 countries. Over the years, the series has garnered almost every industry award multiple times including the Emmy, the George Foster Peabody Award and the Alfred duPont-Columbia University Award, the television equivalent of a Pulitzer Prize. NOVA is produced for PBS by the WGBH Science Unit at WGBH in Boston. Funding for NOVA is provided by ExxonMobil, David H. Koch, the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and public television viewers.

About Cinema Management Group

CMG is a full service foreign sales company founded in 2003 by industry veteran Edward Noeltner. CMG actively licenses worldwide live action feature films with budgets ranging from US\$ 2 - 12 million, animated features in the budget range of US\$ 10 - 16 million and quality documentaries. During the recent Cannes Film Festival, CMG licensed over 25 international territories on the US\$ 5 million budget martial arts feature "Blood and Bone," to be released first quarter 2010 by Sony Pictures Entertainment, as well as a half dozen territories on the civil rights drama "American Violet," recently released by Samuel Goldwyn Films. In Cannes CMG also successfully launched the new 3-D Digital animated feature "Khumba," coming off the successful launch of the animated feature "Zambezia," during the AFM and Berlin, having pre-sold that film in over 20 territories. On the documentary front, CMG is representing Cirque du Soleil and The Beatles' documentary feature: "All Together Now," as well as "Against the Tide," narrated by Dustin Hoffman and produced by Moriah Films, the production unit of The Simon Wiesenthal Center. For more information, please consult www.CinemaManagementGroup.com

About Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

The New York-based Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, founded in 1934, makes grants in science, technology, economics and the quality of American life. The goal of the public understanding of science and technology program, which supports the use of books, film, radio, television, theater, the Internet and other media to reach a wide non-specialist audience, is to enhance people's lives by providing a better understanding of the increasingly scientific and technological environment in which we live. The Foundation is a major supporter of public television documentaries, docudramas and dramas about science and technology, including acclaimed series such as "The American Experience" and "NOVA scienceNOW," and Emmy- and Peabody-winning shows such as "The Elegant Universe," "DNA," "Forgotten Genius" and "The Trials of J. Robert Oppenheimer." The Foundation also supports six of the nation's leading film schools and screenplay development programs at Sundance, Tribeca, the Hamptons and Film Independent to encourage more realistic and compelling stories about science and technology and to challenge existing stereotypes of scientists, engineers and mathematicians in the popular imagination. Sloan co-funded "The Correspondence of Charles Darwin," a landmark multi-decade effort to publish more than 14,000 letters between Charles Darwin and over 2,000 correspondents around the world.

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