

Signature, CMG close UK deal on Anancy entry 'The Canterville Ghost' (exclusive)

BY JEREMY KAY 12 JULY 2023



Signature Entertainment has struck a deal with Cinema Management Group (CMG) for all UK rights to the animated adaptation of Oscar Wilde's *The Canterville Ghost* featuring an all-star cast led by Stephen Fry, Hugh Laurie, and Freddie

SOURCE: PHOTO COURTESY OF CMG VIRGINIA VOICED BY EMILY CAREY IN 'THE CANTERVILLE GHOST'

Highmore.

The feature played at this year's Anancy International Animation Film Festival in Official Selection as a Special Event and the producers are targeting an autumn release ahead of Halloween.

The story takes place in 1900 as an American family moves into the infamous Canterville Chase, an ancestral home that has been haunted for 300 years by a cursed ghost, Sir Simon de Canterville (Fry).

However the family's teenage daughter Virginia (voiced by *House Of The Dragon's* Emily Carey) is unafraid of de Canterville and the pair plot to get her family back to New York.

When the girl realises the curse is not de Canterville's fault she enlists the help of her new neighbour the Duke of Cheshire (Highmore) to help the ghost break the curse.

Voice cast members include Imelda Staunton as housekeeper Mrs. Umney; Toby Jones as Reverend Chasuble and Miranda Hart as his wife and ghost hunter Algernean; and David Harewood and Meera Syal as Virginia's parents.

Directed by Kim Burdon and co-directed by Robert Chandler, the film is produced by Robert Chandler of Space Age Films, Gina Carter of Sprout Pictures, and Nadia Khamlichi and Martin Metz of co-financiers Align.

Animation is by India's Toonz Animation, and Splice in the UK and Telegael in Ireland provided post-production services.

Signature Entertainment's acquisitions & development manager Katie Wilkinson said, "We love this charming and funny film, and it's not often that you come across an independent animation with such an exciting and quintessentially British voice cast! *The Canterville Ghost* will surely capture the imagination of movie fans all over the UK and Ireland (Oscar Wilde's native home) in the coming months."

Fry said: "My brain got all gushy and tingly when I heard the words 'Oscar Wilde's Adaptation of The Canterville Ghost.' This story has been done many times with stars as great as Charles Laughton, David Nevin, John Gielgud, and Patrick Stewart, but it's never been done as an animation.

"However, we live in an age where it couldn't be more suited for an animation; this adaptation uses all the extraordinary capabilities of the 21st century, but at its heart of course it's all about character and story. The script is marvelous and has been worked on with great love and real attention. This film is warm, funny, and charming for the whole family..."

Producer Chandler praised the voice cast and added, "And this is what I love about working with Signature: they see those qualities in the movie and will respond to them in making the film stand out."

Align's Khamlichi and Metz said, "After the fabulous reception the film received in Annecy, we couldn't be happier to be working with a highly motivated UK distributor such as Signature Entertainment."

CMG president Edward Noeltner brokered the deal with Signature's Wilkinson and said: "Signature Entertainment coming on board this high-quality animated feature is the essential link *The Canterville Ghost* needed to bring the film to audiences all over Great Britain."