



**BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT AND CUSTOM NUTS FORM 'BEYOND CUSTOM NUTS' – A NEW PARTNERSHIP FOR PRODUCING CUTTING EDGE ANIMATED SERIES**

**-Three titles from initial development slate to be launched at Kidscreen Miami-**

**Sydney, 6<sup>th</sup> February 2023:** Beyond Entertainment, part of content powerhouse, Banijay, today announces it has entered into a new partnership with independent animation and creative studio, Custom Nuts.

The partners have agreed a slate development deal to co-produce cutting-edge animated series for the international market, with the first three projects (*Jock and Sunny*, *Shape & Shapers* and *Classical Chaos*) launching this month at Kidscreen. Further developments will be added from the pipeline through 2023 and into future years.

Melinda Wearne, Beyond Entertainment's executive charged with scripted development and production across kids and premium drama, has been driving the new relationship. With a wealth of experience, she has overseen the production of numerous award-winning animated and live-action series for prominent networks including Warner Media, Netflix, ABC and China's CCTV. These include Netflix Original *Beat Bugs*, winner of the 2017 Daytime Emmy for Outstanding Writing in a Pre-school Animated Program, *Motown Magic* for Netflix, and *Hoopla Doopla*, a co-production between ABC and CCTV in China, which she also created.

Custom Nuts was co-founded in 2019 by Silas Hickey (formerly APAC regional head of development and original production at WBD's Cartoon Network) and Matthew Howison. With a diverse slate of original and co-developed content with major studios and media platforms across the APAC region and beyond, the company was established to combine the best of Japanese anime and western cartoons into a new kind of hybrid animated entertainment. Based in Tokyo, it also has offices in Hong Kong and Los Angeles.

**Melinda Wearne of Beyond Entertainment comments:** "This new co-production venture combines Beyond's strength in scripted storytelling and its international reach, with the unique creative talents of the Custom Nuts team to present an exciting opportunity for us both. Our partner's knowledge of, and expertise in, both anime and western cartoon narratives, gives it a unique edge and together we are well placed to create and deliver truly global entertainment. We are thrilled to announce this new partnership and cannot wait to formally introduce Beyond Custom Nuts titles at Kidscreen."

**Silas Hickey of Custom Nuts adds:** "The opportunity to combine anime and western cartoon storytelling, and formal aesthetics, is a creative vision that I have always been driven to fulfil. Beyond Custom Nuts was formed to solve these kinds of complex transnational

conundrums. Beyond's scale and expertise will help us to accelerate the time from script to screen without compromising on quality – or our creative vision - and will allow us jointly to retain more control and ownership over our IP as we take it out to the market. We have exciting times ahead.”

### **Beyond Custom Nuts' launch slate**

**Jock and Sunny:** (52 x 7) anime hybrid Sci-Fi slapstick-comedy for kids with strong co-viewing potential.

Jock and Sunny are stranded in a fantasy sci-fi version of Tokyo and must survive shady odd jobs, the local rock scene and deportation if they're ever going to build awesome new lives.

**Shape & Shapers:** (26 x 11) factual / slapstick anime for a 13+ audience.

An anime inspired series about surfing, subculture, and the evolution of the modern surfboard.

**Classical Chaos:** 26 x 11-minute episodes and feature-length specials for kids with strong co-viewing potential.

A specially curated collection of kid-relatable animated classic literary adaptations, combining the aesthetics of anime and golden-era vaudevillian cartoons.

-ENDS-

### **ABOUT BEYOND ENTERTAINMENT**

Beyond Entertainment is a production company based in Sydney, Australia with offices in Los Angeles and London and now part of Banijay. Its scripted business is focused on premium drama and children's content. Kids programs include the Emmy Award-winning animated series *Beat Bugs* for Netflix and *Motown Magic* (Netflix), *Nippers* (ABC), *Milly Molly*, *Labrats*, and *Hoopla Doopla* (ABC and CCTV China), with many new titles currently in development. Premium drama includes the recently co-produced *Tropo* with EQ Media, (ABC and Amazon Freevee). In 2020, *Halifax: Retribution*, produced by Beyond Lonehand, starring Rebecca Gibney and Anthony LaPaglia, was a ratings success for Channel Nine, and was acquired in the US by PBS Distribution. The medical drama *Pulse* was co-produced by Beyond and Clandestine TV for ABC. The label's unscripted team produces specialist and popular factual programming, as well as feature documentaries and music programming such as *The Years That Made Us* and *Days Like These...with Diesel*.

[www.beyondproduction.tv](http://www.beyondproduction.tv)

### **ABOUT CUSTOM NUTS**

Custom Nuts is a leading independent, creator-driven studio that specializes in the concept development and production of short and long-form animated content. With a deep understanding of the APAC market, including extensive expertise in Japanese animation production and design. Custom Nuts offers unique opportunities for the development of anime and western-cartoon intellectual property for global audiences. Custom Nuts owns a diverse slate of original and co-developed content with major studios and media platforms across the APAC region and beyond. With locations in Tokyo, Hong Kong, and Los Angeles -

the global capitals of anime, consumer products, and entertainment Custom Nuts is strategically positioned to partner with its major studio and media platform client base, providing unparalleled access to the industry's most talented creators and resources.

[www.custom-nuts.com](http://www.custom-nuts.com)

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