

## **MAGIC CELLAR RECEIVES RARE ALL-STAR ENDORSEMENT BY THE COALITION FOR QUALITY CHILDREN'S MEDIA**

Magic Cellar, the first animated series to be based on African culture, has been awarded a rare "All-Star" endorsement by the Coalition for Quality Children's Media in the KIDS FIRST!® program. The Coalition recently announced its latest list of 50 titles it endorses. Included in the list are titles from well-known children's series. Only Magic Cellar received a coveted 3 Star endorsement. The Jury commented on Magic Cellar: "Lovely animation. Crisp, clear colors. Good stories. Imaginative. Great music."

The KIDS FIRST!® endorsement is one of the most highly recognized film, DVD, audio and game rating programs for programming aimed at children. To receive a KIDS FIRST!® endorsement, KIDS FIRST!® evaluates the programming with juries of adult and child evaluators. More than 300 adult professionals and more than three thousand children participate as KIDS FIRST!® jurors. The adults are educators, child development specialists, children's librarians, Girl Scout Leaders, and other interested adults. These adults have trained with and been certified by KIDS FIRST!® as a Juror facilitator. Each adult Juror has a group of children that he or she works with who evaluate and review programming, after it has been given a preliminary approval by the adult.

Adult jurors are vested with the task of determining whether or not the title meets the baseline criteria. In addition, they give it a numeric rating of 0 to 5 for ten questions in four different areas: appeal, content, production quality, and educational benefits. In these areas,

KIDS FIRST!® examines its appeal and appropriateness for its intended audience; its structure, continuity and style; its accuracy; its production values; and its overall benefits.

KIDS FIRST!® assigns a one-, two-, or three-star rating indicating the caliber of the work. Jurors use an additional three-star asset list that addresses qualities that contribute to a child's personal competence, his or her social values, educational benefits, and address additional production values of the program.

The Coalition for Quality Children's Media is a national, not-for-profit organization founded in 1991 in the United States. The Coalition is a voluntary collaboration comprising more than 10,000 media professionals, lobbyists, policymakers, child advocates, educators, parents and families. The Coalition runs the [KIDS FIRST!® Film and Video Festival](#), the largest children's festival in the world.

The missions of the Coalition are to 1) teach children critical viewing skills and 2) to increase the visibility and availability of quality children's programs. The goals are: A. To teach children to become critical media users; B. To help adults recognize the importance of teaching critical viewing skills to children; C. To help children identify and be aware of examples of outstanding media programming; D. To develop programs for children with special needs such as low-income or at-risk children.

The Coalition, through its well-known KIDS FIRST!® program, evaluates, rates, and endorses children's feature films, DVDs, videos, audio recordings and television using a volunteer, community-based

jury comprising child development professionals, teachers and parents as well as children from diverse geographic, socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds. More than four thousand titles have been evaluated to date. Reviews of endorsed titles are published on the KIDS FIRST! web site, [www.kidsfirst.org](http://www.kidsfirst.org) and in reviews provided to publications such as Access Learning, Parenting, and United Parenting Publications.

Magic Cellar is the first 3D animated series based on African culture. Beautifully produced entirely in Maya software, the series marks the first time Africa's children see themselves reflected in an animated series.

The series celebrates Africa's culture and traditions while promoting reading as exciting and adventurous. The series is based on African folktales, partially collected from interviews conducted with elders in villages across South Africa. Each episode is broken up into three sections: a brief introduction and set-up; the African story; and a wrap-up with the lessons learnt. Each episode is a self-contained, animated short.

Magic Cellar was commissioned by the South African Broadcasting Corporation and is a production of Chocolate Moose Media Inc. of Ottawa, Canada and Morula Pictures of Johannesburg, South Africa. Magic Cellar is directed by multi-award winning Canadian producer and director Firdaus Kharas.

Magic Cellar has won 8 international recognitions recently, including the Platinum REMI Award, 2 Telly Awards, 2 Aegis Awards, and the US

International's Silver Screen and 2 Certificates of Excellence and has been selected by the prestigious Hiroshima Animation Festival.

Further information may be obtained from the comprehensive web-site, [www.magiccellar.tv](http://www.magiccellar.tv).

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