

**BROWN BAG FILMS® launch unique online initiative to raise funds for Irish charity ‘To Russia With Love’.**

Dublin, Ireland, 28 April 2014

ANYA, a four minute animated short film charting twenty years in the life of a Russian orphan, is the end result of 14 months’ work at Brown Bag Films. The twice Oscar nominated studio were originally approached to produce a short advert to highlight the work that ‘To Russia With Love’ do with abandoned and orphaned children in Russia, but decided that a short film would be a more effective approach.

"The idea was simple; we make an engaging piece of animation, one that ideally packs an emotional punch. If people are charmed or moved by it, they show their appreciation by sending a donation directly to To Russia With Love," explained Writer/Director Damien O'Connor.

"Unlike an advert, people are more likely to share a film online with friends or family, which of course helps spread the word about the charity. It's 'visual busking' in a way. We're all used to charity singles and calendars, so we applied the same approach to a full four minute computer animated film instead".

The production of ANYA began in February 2013 when O'Connor travelled to the Hortolova Orphanage in Russia where To Russia With Love operate to meet the children.

"It was important that this would be the children's story; a film for them, by them.  What started out as a small idea expanded as we heard the children's own stories.  Everyone involved has been great. Moved by the children's plight, Infinite Studios in Singapore offered their services for free and the team in Brown Bag got behind the film 100%. By the end over eighty people spread across five countries have been involved in the production of ANYA," said O'Connor.

"The first preview screening of ANYA took place in one of our orphanages in Russia and the children of 'To Russia With Love' all loved it. That was always a huge part of the goal as this film was created for them and the storyline is based on what we give each child under our wings of care, love and protection.  We hope that those who view, share and fall in love with Anya will help us transform clicks into donations from which all proceeds go directly to our orphanages in Russia with our love," stated Debbie Deegan, Founder of 'To Russia With Love'.

ANYA is produced by Edel Byrne and the original music for the film is composed by Darren Hendley (Octonauts, Olivia). The film has been publicly endorsed by top stars in Russia and is narrated by Russian actress Chulpan Khamatova and Irish singing star Lisa Hannigan features on vocals.

ANYA is available online from Monday 28th April and can be viewed on Brown Bag Labs <http://www.brownbagfilms.com/labs/entry/anya-shortfilm> , from the Brown Bag films YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/brownbagfilms> or through Brown Bag films Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/brownbagfilms>.

To support the work of 'To Russia With Love' text HUG to 50300 or donate online to [www.torussiawithlove.ie](http://www.torussiawithlove.ie)

**For more information or to arrange an interview with Damien O'Connor, Brown Bag Films or Debbie Deegan, To Russia With Love please contact:**

Bridget O’Dea, Purcell Masterson on 086 178 1377

**Notes to editor:**

**About To Russia With Love**

To Russia With Love is an Irish charity which was founded by Dublin woman Debbie Deegan in 1998. The charity has transformed the lives of thousands of abandoned and orphaned Russian children through providing programmes of care that teach life skills for a brighter future and provide the children under their wings with improved living conditions, healthcare and education.

[www.torussiawithlove.ie](http://www.torussiawithlove.ie)

**About Brown Bag Films**

Brown Bag Films are Europe's most successful creative-led animation studio. Since 1994, their Dublin-based headquarters have produced cutting-edge animation for the international market, bagging numerous awards along the way. These include two Oscar nominations for Give Up Yer Aul Sins (2002), Granny O'Grimm's Sleeping Beauty (2010) and Bafta, Emmy and Annie nominations for their children's animation series.

Brown Bag Films' much-loved TV shows are viewed by millions of children worldwide and include Olivia, Noddy in Toyland, Doc McStuffins, Henry Hugglemonster, Peter Rabbit and Octonauts.

With a second office in LA, Brown Bag Films are committed to producing the highest-quality, cross-platform animation with strong stories and engaging characters. Founded and managed by animators Cathal Gaffney and Darragh O'Connell, Brown Bag Films is one of Ireland's business success stories employing over 150 full time staff.

The studio is among the most technically-advanced in the world, with full animation, picture and audio post-production facilities in house. Their motto is simple: "We love animation". In fact, they love it so much they trademarked it. 'We Love Animation.'

[www.brownbagfilms.com](http://www.brownbagfilms.com)

**About Damien O'Connor**

Damien O’Connor has worked as professional director, writer, editor and producer. Writer/Director on four animated shorts funded by the Irish Film Board (Mutt, Ledog, Dick Terrapin, After You), Damien has been nominated twice for a prestigious Irish Film and Television Award. Classically trained as a 2D animator, Damien has worked as documentary producer and live broadcast director. He currently works as an episodic director at Brown Bag Films.