**BLING**

**Synopsis**

**The fate of an entire city**

**lies in the hands of three robots**

**and the nerd.**

When super-villain Oscar threatens to destroy the entire city, shy inventor Sam recruits his own homemade robots Kit, Okra and Wilmer to save the day. Can this motley crew rise to the occasion to become unlikely heroes? Or will they simply prove to be little more than a nerd and his toys?

**About BLING**

**THE TEAM**

**The production for *BLING* brought together an internationally renowned crew whose body of work includes global blockbusters like *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy and *The Face Reader*.**

This summer, get ready for one of the most exciting animated features ever made. Packed with comedy, adventure and beautiful visuals, *Bling* is the culmination of four years of hard work by a multinational and multi-talented team. South Korea’s leading animation studio DigiArt collaborated with some of the top names in Hollywood to produce one of the year’s most anticipated animated films.

Notable collaborators on this film include Emmy Award-winning composer Geoff Zanelli, whose music can be heard in *Pirates of the Caribbean*, and acclaimed sound designer Dave Whitehead who brought the soundscapes of *The Lord of the Rings*, *The Hobbit* and *Snowpiercer* to life. The film was edited by one of Korea’s leading editors Kim Chang Joo, whose previous work includes *Snowpiercer, The Face Reader* and *Roaring Currents.* Their talents combined with the animation of the DigiArt production team are sure to make *Bling* a real crowd-pleaser from image to sound.

**THE CHARACTERS**

***BLING* features a zany cast of characters that guarantee a fun time for all. In a unique twist on an old tale, *BLING* reinvents three central characters from the classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West* as a “robot trio” who assist our hero on his quest to save his city and find love.**

Three main characters from the historical classic Chinese novel *Journey to the West* are re-imagined as the “robot trio” KIT, OKRA and WILMER – AI robot friends built by our hero Sam. The production team reinterpreted the literary characters’ traits into personalities suitable for fun animated characters. Kit, originally a fearless rebel in the novel, is depicted as a robot with a big mouth and a big heart (but perhaps lacking in the skills to back up either). Okra’s literary inspiration was a pessimistic character, so the team transformed him into a cynical robot. The third character, a boisterous optimist, evolved into joyful eating machine robot Wilmer. Sam originally creates the three robots to perform a *Journey to the West* themed show for his theme park job, but because of his tendency to screw things up, he only succeeds in making more trouble for himself and his inventions. In the end, Sam and his “robot trio” figure out how to get out of their own messes and become lifelong friends along the way.

*Bling*’s cast of characters is full and complex, with even the villain OSCAR revealing more than what’s on the surface – this super-villain hides a romantic soul who still pines for his childhood sweetheart. In between our motley crew of heroes and destructive villain is a range of fun characters from SUE the pretty reporter and MINITARS the mini robot to the hilariously enraged Mr.Glump. With a cast that draws inspiration all the way from eastern classic literature to contemporary science fiction, there truly is someone for everyone in *Bling*.

**THE WORLD OF *BLING***

***BLING* takes place in an original future city that sparks the imagination and serves as a unique backdrop for electrifying action sequences.**

The world created for this futuristic adventure-comedy features something new and visionary to enjoy in every scene. From providing the stage for epic battle sequences to quick gags, the environments built for *Bling* are characters in and of themselves.

At first glance, *Bling*’s cities may seem comparable to the modern-day cities we live in, but a closer look will reveal cars driving on sky-ways and artificial intelligence robots strolling down the sidewalks. *Bling* also features dynamic action scenes made all the more innovative by the world in which they take place. Hang on to your seats as Sam’s robot friends chase one another seamlessly from ground roads to sky-ways and dodge the many inventive booby traps of Oscar the villain. Gasp and marvel during the epic final battle between Sam’s robots and Oscar’s humongous monster-robot, all against the backdrop of an innovative future city that challenges the imagination. The world of *Bling* is full of surprises, and audiences of all ages are invited to step in.

**Production Notes**

**Director Kyung Ho Lee discusses his experience overseeing *Bling*, an ambitious project that took four years to complete with a team from all over the world.**

***Q. What made you want to direct* Bling*?***

 “When we started writing the script, I wanted to convey the idea that most people’s sense of self-worth comes from having great things rather than doing great acts. In *Bling*, the human characters like Sam and Oscar focus on proving their worth to their love interests with materialistic displays like the giving of diamond rings. Meanwhile, the robot characters actually show more humanity with their straightforward expressions of love and friendship. Sure, it’s a little cliché, but it’s a lesson we keep forgetting and having to re-learn: you show who you are by what you do and say, not what you have. And showing who you really are is the most fundamental part of building any relationship.”

***Q. You worked with a diverse and prestigious team - did you have any memorable experiences with anyone while directing* Bling*?***

“The most memorable moment occurred when Geoff [Zanelli] and I were working on the soundtrack. At the studio, I tried composing or selecting existing tunes and melodies that would go well with scenes of the film. When I explained the tone and feeling I wanted to capture to Geoff, he would immediately play something that evoked the exact tone I described on his guitar. That was a perfect moment of harmony.”

***Q. How did you re-create the main trio of characters from the novel* Journey to the West*?***

 “In Asia, the characters from *Journey to the West* are well-known and have strong characteristics that I knew we could adapt well for our film’s story. They’re each very different from each other, but their strengths and weaknesses complement each other as a whole to make them a great team and good teachers for Sam, who needs to realize and overcome his own shortcomings. I made sure to give each character a strong identity: Kit the fighter, Okra the intellectual and Wilmer the eating machine. Their skills all come together in the film’s hilarious climax where Okra comes up with the idea to use Wilmer’s flatulence and Kit’s magic stick to defeat the villain.”

***Q. Did you use a particular process to create the film’s locations and action scenes?***

 “We designed the city to be a hybrid of Seoul and New York and even modified the Statue of Liberty to resemble Sue [Sam’s girlfriend] to echo her importance to Sam in the film. The road to the theme park in the villain Oscar’s flashback was modeled after the Olympic highway which I’ve always found interesting. For the action scenes, I tried to simulate live-action shots by using hand-held, crane camera and drone shot techniques in the pre-visualization stage. This visual style, along with the fast-paced editing and frequent cuts, helped to make the action sequences feel more urgent and lively.”

***Q. What overall message do you hope audiences take away from this film?***

 “We try to present ourselves as someone we aren’t to impress others. But the greatest gift you can give to someone you love is to show your true self and your true feelings. If there’s someone you love right now, at this very moment, let them know!”

**Characters**

**KIT, the robot who’s all bark and no bite**

Fast-talking Kit may look, sound and act like a true superhero, but that’s because he’s *supposed* to look, sound and act like a true superhero. As a robot actor performing in a theme park show, his role onstage bleeds into his role in daily life till he believes he’s the real deal. He uses a magic stick *Yeo-E-bong* as his weapon of choice.

**OKRA, a cynical quick-witted crybaby robot**

Know-it-all Okra is a sarcastic intellectual, quick to make a biting remark but even quicker to run away at the first sign of danger. When the time comes to save his city, can his wits overcome his fears? His special powers include casting plasma bubbles that form protective shields against danger.

**WILMER, eating-machine robot, fart enthusiast**

Wilmer is a constant source of joy and humor to those around him. His only vice? Eating EVERYTHING. Luckily, the effects of this weakness can be harnessed as a weapon: the classic nuclear fart attack.

**SAM, inventor of robots, maker of mistakes**

He’s cute, kind, clever and a total walking disaster. Although he works as a lowly robot repairman at a theme park, Sam is actually a genius robot inventor and a wonderful upbeat friend. If only he could stop making sloppy mistakes all the time…

**OSCAR, the mega-macho-super-villain**

Is he a megalomaniacal undefeatable super-villain? Or just a heartbroken romantic who still pines for a childhood sweetheart? He prefers to be seen as the former: using his vast wealth to acquire the most cutting edge technology, he is obsessed with building giant robots to destroy the whole city… but for love, oddly enough.

**VICTOR, the Swiss Army butler**

Victor’s only aspiration in life is to help his master Oscar become the best villain the world has ever seen. The only thing more powerful than his versatile Swiss Army knife-like arm that can transform into any weapon is his loyalty.

**The Crew**

**Director Kyung Ho Lee**

Director | *Bling* (2016), *The Outback* (2012), *Garfield Gets Real* (2007), *The Reef* (2006), *Bumperking Japper* (2004)

After majoring in Korean literature and trying his hand at a traditional office job, Kyung Ho Lee decided to pursue his dream of studying animation in 1995. After graduating from a Canadian university, he created educational animated shows and worked on Korea’s first full-length CG animated feature *Ppikkappo Friends* (produced by KBS). While wrapping up production of *Bumperking Japper* (produced by SBS), animation studio Wonderworld offered him a chance to co-direct the Korean-US animated co-production *The Reef*, which has become one of the most successful independent animated features in recent history. He has shown no sign of stopping since with a long animation filmography that includes *Garfield Gets Real* (2007), *The Outback* (2012) and, of course, *Bling* (2016)!

**Director Wonjae Lee**

Director | *Bling* (2016), *Garfield's Pet Force 3D* (2009)

Storyboard Director |*The Reef* (2006), *Garfield Gets Real* (2007), *Garfield's Fun Fest* (2008)

Wonjae Lee started out as a storyboard director for the first two Garfield animated features produced by DigiArt (*Garfield Gets Real, Garfield’s Fun Fest*) before donning his own director’s cap for the third installment in the Garfield series (*Garfield’s Pet Force 3D*). He collaborated with Kyung Ho Lee as co-director of *Bling.*

**Dave Whitehead**

Sound design | *Chappie,* *The Hobbit: The Battle of the Five Armies, The Hobbit : The Desolation of Smaug, Elysium, Snowpiercer, The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey, District 9, King Kong*

Sound effects |*D-War, The Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King, The Lord Of The Rings: The Two Towers*

Sound designer Dave Whitehead, whose previous credits include box office hits like *The Hobbit* series, has proven to be a great asset to the *Bling* production team. His sophisticated sound design brings every scene to life and makes every action sequence all the more exciting.

**Geoff Zanelli**

**Composer** | *Mortdecai, The Odd Life of Timothy Green*

**Additional composing by** | *Rango, Angels & Demons, Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides, Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End, Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Man's Chest, Pirates of the Caribbean: The Curse of the Black Pearl, Hannibal, Chicken Run*

**Awards** | 2006 Emmy Award for best original dramatic score for *Into the West*

Having contributed to soundtracks for major blockbusters like the *Pirates of the Caribbean* series, Zanelli is no stranger to composing music for large-scale action sequences packed with adventure and comedy. The soundtrack of *Bling* will be as memorable and enjoyable as the film itself!

**Changju Kim**

**Editing |** *Canola, My New Sassy Girl, The Tiger, The Classified File, Roaring Currents, A Hard Day, The Face Reader, Snowpiercer, The Terror, LIVE, 71: Into the Fire*

**Awards** | 2015 The 35th Blue Dragon Awards editing award for *A Hard Day*

 2013 50th DAEJONG FILM AWARD editing award for *Snowpiercer*

With credits to his name like *Snowpiercer*, *The Face Reader* and *Roaring Currents*, Changju Kim has rapidly become one of the Korean film industry’s top editors. As the editor on *Bling*, he delivers a fun and fast-paced film that is sure to immerse audiences in the story.

**The Studio | DigiArt Production**

DigiArt Production is one of South Korea’s leading animation studios. Founded as a computer graphics animation company in 1991, it created an animation film studio division after ten years of development. After years of experience, research and enthusiasm, DigiArt produced its first animated theatrical feature *The Reef* in 2006, becoming the first Korean studio to produce a full-length animated feature for the international market. DigiArt continued to co-produce many features with its U.S.-based production company such as *Garfield Gets Real, Garfield Fun Fest, Garfield Pet Force 3D* and *The Outback*. DigiArt is proud to present its latest feature *Bling*, the culmination of years of technical achievement and creative storytelling experience. The production team of *Bling* combines traditional Hollywood expertise with Korea’s finest animation to produce a film that will appeal to audiences across the world.

**Filmography**

2006 *The Reef*

2007 *Garfield Gets Real*

2008 *Garfield Fun Fest*

2009 *Garfield Pet Force 3D*

2012 *The Outback*

2016 *Bling*