

# Luck of a Foghorn

The Making of Bruce Bickford's *Prometheus' Garden*

A Documentary Film by Brett Ingram

**Running time:** 28 minutes  
**Year completed:** 2008  
**Genre:** Documentary

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**Overview:** *Luck of a Foghorn* is a 28-minute documentary featurette about Bruce Bickford, former collaborator of rock iconoclast Frank Zappa and sole creator of *Prometheus' Garden* (28 minutes, 1988), an original masterpiece of stop-motion animation. Interweaving Bickford's wildly imaginative animation with outtakes, interviews, home movies, and revealing cinematography, Director Brett Ingram takes viewers deep into the real garden of Prometheus. The original score was created by Laird Dixon, one of the founding members of the instrumental band Shark Quest.

*Luck of a Foghorn* is an extra feature on Bickford's *Prometheus' Garden* DVD, available exclusively from [www.brettingram.org](http://www.brettingram.org).

**Synopsis:** Filmmaker Brett Ingram shot miles of 16mm film and taped dozens of interviews with Bruce Bickford while making the feature-length documentary *Monster Road*, but most of this footage ended up on the cutting room floor. *Luck of a Foghorn* unearths some of these images and stories on another journey into the world of a brilliant artist.

Inspired by the Greek myth of Prometheus, a Titan who created the first mortals from clay and stole fire from the gods, Bickford's *Prometheus' Garden* immerses viewers in a cinematic universe unlike any other. The dark and magical images of this haunting film unfold in a dreamlike stream of consciousness revealing an unlikely cast of clay characters engaged in a violent struggle for survival.

In the lush green, rain-soaked environs of his home overlooking a valley near Seattle, the sixty-one-year-old animator climbs trees and searches for inspiration among the misty ferns and starry skies. With an inspiring view of farmlands surrounding the meandering Green River, Bickford's kingdom is serene, but for the near constant rumble of jets at nearby Seatac Airport.

How does one reconcile this slight, gentle soul with the vibrant pulsing universe and violent imagery of his wildly unique animation? For Bickford, animation is concentrated energy and he saves it all for the screen. In *Luck of a Foghorn*, animation, home movies, and documentary cinematography unfold with a dreamlike symphonic score by Laird Dixon, taking viewers behind the scenes of the making of Bickford's animated masterpiece, *Prometheus' Garden*.

## About the Filmmakers:

### **Brett Ingram—Producer, Director, Cinematographer, Editor**

Formerly a journalist, high school physics teacher, and electrical engineer on the Space Shuttle Main Engine Program, Brett Ingram exchanged his pocket protector for a movie camera in 1990. His short documentaries and animated films have won thirty awards collectively, screening at more than 150 festivals, museums, and cinema venues internationally.

Ingram's first documentary feature, *Monster Road*, won sixteen awards - including "Best Documentary" at the 2004 Slamdance Film Festival - and screened at more than ninety festivals, museums, universities, and cinema venues internationally before premiering on Sundance Channel in 2005. In 2007 Ingram was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship to complete a new documentary feature, entitled *Rocaterrania*, about the secret world of visionary artist Renaldo Kuhler.

### **Bruce Bickford—Animator/Narrator**

Bruce Bickford was born in Seattle in 1947. Inspired by Willis O'Brien's animation in *King Kong* and the work of Ray Harryhausen, Bickford began animating in the mid-1960s. After a tour of duty in Vietnam as a U.S. Marine, he sought work as an animator in California where he met rock musician Frank Zappa. After a six-year collaboration with Zappa in the 1970s, Bickford returned to Seattle where he has lived since. Following the completion of *Prometheus' Garden* in 1988, Bickford has created several hours of clay and line animation, none of which has been edited. In 2004, Bickford appeared in the award-winning documentary feature, *Monster Road* (directed by Brett Ingram), about his life and work.