

Beat: Arts

## **ASTERIX AND THE CHARIOT RACE New ALBUM By Jean-Yves FERRI & Didier CONRAD**

**To be Published on October 19 in FRANCE**

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**USPA NEWS** - Two Years after "The Missing Scroll", Asterix and Obelix are setting off on Another Adventures in FRANCE and 25 more Countries. "Asterix and the Chariot Race" is the Third Album created by the Writer-Illustrator Duo of Jean-Yves FERRI & Didier CONRAD. All under the Eye of Albert UDERZO who co-created the Comic Book with the missed René GOSCINNY in 1959. Since then, it has been the greatest Comic Book success in the World with over 370 Million Albums sold.

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ASTERIX ALBUMS :

- \* 1959 : First Publication, on October 29, in the Magazine PILOTE
- \* 1961 : Publication of the First ASTERIX Album, "Asterix and the Gauls" 6,000 Copies in the First Print Run.
- \* 37 is the Number of Albums published to date on October 19, 2017
- \* 111 is the Number of existing Translation (Languages and Dialects)
- \* 13 is the Number of Films based on ASTERIX, including 9 Feature-Lenght Animations.
- \* 370,000,000 Albums sold Worldwide. Piled up, they would be the same Height as 8,880 Eiffel Towers ; put end to end, they would reach Twice around the Earth, all together they would tip the Scales at 12,900 Tonnes, the equivalent of 400 35-Tomme Trucks.

More than 58 Years after the Birth of ASTERIX, the Success Story marches on : "I haven't a Clue why it works so well, it's beyond us, but I will never be able to thank our Loyal Asterix Readers enough. I'm full of Gratitude and I owe them so much" says Albert Uderzo.

René Goscinny and Albert Uderzo Magic Formula was including : a Good Dose of Humour, a Dash of Humility, Exceptional Characters, Intelligent Narration, a Sprinkling of Genius, Plenty of Friendship, Strong Drive, a Sense of Camaraderie and the Enormous Combined Talent of theses Two Creators with their Acute Gift for Observation.... And their Sense of Mockery.

On November 1977, came the Shocking News that René Goscinny had died during a Cardiac Stress Test performed as part of a Health Check. He was 51. It was a Terrible Blow for his Friend Albert Uderzo. At that Point, he continued with the Gaulish Hero's Adventures alone, and set up the Company Editions Albert René. Bolstered by 26 Years of Collaboration with René Goscinny, he wrote and illustrated Further Albums that were given a resounding Thumbs-up by ever Growing Numbers of ASTERIX Readers. In 2011, Albert Uderzo decided to Lay Down his Pencils but carried on working enthusiastically on characterization and Collaborating closely with the New authors, Jean-Yves Ferri and Didier Conrad.

- Why ITALY for the Setting :

Surprising as it may seem, ASTERIX and OBELIX haven't yet explored ITALY. Only ROME itself has been visited by the "Indomitable Gauls", first in 1964 (Asterix the Gladiator), then in 1972 (Asterix and the Laurel Wreath). Anyway, not all Italians are Romans... Venetians, Umbrians, Etruscans, Oscans, Messapians, Apulians...The Peninsula constitutes a Plethora of People, and none of them readily accepts Roman Authority. Albert Uderzo could not have wished for anything better from the Authors of the Latest Album : an Adventure in the Country where his Parents were Born.

- A Brief Taste of the Coming STORY :

In Order to Assert Rome's Prestige and the Unity of the Italic Peoples, Julius Caesar gives the go-ahead to a Race open to all the

Peoples of the Known World, intended to be a dazzling Showcase for the Excellence of Roman Roads.

Caesar gives the Race Organisers one sine qua non Condition : the Roman Competitor ABSOLUTELY must Cross the Finish Line in the Lead (Sport, Politics and Showmanship already appear to have been intimately connected back then...). Sadly for Caesar, this doesn't take into account our Two gaulish Champions who sign up for the Race and threaten to Capsize his Dreams of Greatness...

- The Masked AURIGA

In "Asterix and the Chariot Race", Jean-Yves Ferri and Didier Conrad inventively introduce the Mysterious Masked AURIGA : CORONAVIRUS, the Roman Champion with MXDLXII Victories to his Name. Stopping at Nothing to steal the Limelight from his Adversaries, and doing everything he can to Finish the Race in the Lead to Please CAESAR, CORONAVIRUS is a Fearsome Competitor whose eerily fixed Smile doesn't Bode well for OBELIX.

When devising this unusual Character, Didier Conrad designed Dozens of Different Masks, suggesting a Variety of Narrative Options... Did he have Characteristic Behaviour ? Was he Serious or over-the-top ? Did he Talk and if so, what sort of Words did he use ? How Dramatic should I make it ?...

Source : Press Conference on October 09, 2017 @ Automobile Club de France (PARIS)

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