

'Trash Truck': Max Keane's Personal, Precious, and Nostalgic Preschool Series

The show's creator never understood his son Henry's love for garbage trucks, until it inspired him to develop a CG animated kids' series, set to premiere November 10 on Netflix.

By [Victoria Davis](#) | Tuesday, October 20, 2020 at 2:35pm

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Creator and showrunner Max Keane's CG animated preschool series, 'Trash Truck.' All images © 2020 Netflix, Inc.

Max Keane never understood his son Henry's love of garbage trucks until that love became the inspiration for the brand-new CG animated preschool series, *Trash Truck*, Keane's first as creator and showrunner.

"One foggy, cool morning, I was standing outside with my son, Henry - who was about two-years-old at the time - in his pajamas," remembers Keane. "Down at the end of the road we could see the garbage truck coming with the lights flashing through the fog like some creature coming to visit. It pulled up in front of us, grabbed the trashcan all noisy, dumped it, and slammed it back down. I looked at the big metal lifter arms and all the grimy cables, and suddenly it was like, 'Wow, I get it now. This thing is amazing.'"

"The driver honked as he left and Henry leaned into my arms and said, 'Bye trash truck!'" he continues. "I thought, 'Man, I wish that big, dumb truck knew how much this little boy loved him.'"

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That night, Keane told Henry a bedtime story about a little boy who became best friends with a garbage truck, and that's when Keane says he found a way to give animated life to his son's love for the neighborhood "trash truck." "I became excited," he says. "I was very interested in this relationship between a boy and his best friend, who's this really amazing thing to him, but to everyone else, is just a garbage truck."



Trash Truck, with airs on Netflix November 10, follows the adventures of a six-year-old, gap-toothed, freckle-faced boy named Hank and his best friends Donny (Lucas Neff) the witty racoon, Walter (Brian Baumgartner) the sleepy black bear, Miss Mona (Jackie Loeb) the motherly mouse, and the big green trash-collecting machine Trash Truck, as the group learns importance of physics, tackling a fear of the dark, and making the impossible possible with a little imagination.

The project is already personal for Keane, being "a show for my son," as he says. But he cherishes the project is even more because Henry provides the voice for Hank. In addition, Keane's father, Disney animator extraordinaire and Oscar-winning *Dear Basketball* director Glen Keane - known for his work on *Tarzan*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *The Little Mermaid* as well as Netflix's upcoming CG feature, *Over the Moon* - serves not only as the show's executive producer, but also as the voice for both Hank's grandpa and his pal, Trash Truck.



"It's definitely like my family's time capsule," says Max Keane, who voices Hank's father in the show along with his wife Megan Keane, who voices Hank's mother. "I've gotten really lucky and been able to make a show that means so much to me, with people I really care about and love. Glen, my dad, is always talking about the importance of thinking like a child and being connected to that point of view. It's what helps cultivate imagination, and to keep that thing alive."

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Max Keane has worked with his father before on other productions, such as the animated shorts *Nephtali*, *Duet* and *Dear Basketball*. But *Trash Truck* is unique with its Glen Keane Productions' 3D/CG animation, giving a more realistic feel to a child's highly imaginative world.

"For a kid there's this wonderful, blurry line between reality and animation, as well as reality and imagination," says Max Keane. "Because of that, you can create this believable world for kids to connect to. I was originally thinking the show would be stop-motion because that idea is very nostalgic for me. The first time we all saw stop-motion, it was like, 'Oh, my gosh, toys are alive!' and I wanted to tap into that. But in the end, we figured it was too big of a bite to chew and decided to go with CG. But it's turned out really beautiful and it has that tangibility that makes the world feel like it exists somewhere."



The show still embraces a nostalgic feel, with Keane drawing from 90s kids' animated series like CBC's *Little Bear*, and classic kids' comics such as *Calvin and Hobbes*. "Those classics are so special to me," says Max Keane. "There's something about them that feels timeless and I always thought the relationship between Calvin and Hobbes was very rich. I had a similar childhood, where I had a lot of space to run around and a lot of freedom to imagine. I guess I'm also selfishly reliving my childhood."

Trash Truck's fluid CG animation adds to the show's soft and sweet plots, with Henry's voice making Hank's youthful inquisitions all the more authentic. Similar to Emily's relationship with Little Bear and the rest of the forest gang in the *Little Bear* kids' series, the friendships in *Trash Truck* between a human boy, two animals and a truck are rooted in kindness; the show is intentional in its efforts to focus on the sincere thoughtfulness of true friendship and having, as Max Keane puts it, "a strong center about how to treat others."

"There are certain things that we go to in order to feel good and feel comfortable," says Max Keane. "And I really wanted to make a show that had that quality and feel like eating your favorite food or putting on comfy clothes. I also wanted to make something where, as a parent watching shows with my own kids, I could sit down with them and I can enjoy it. I call *Trash Truck* an 'all-ages' preschool show."

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"Maybe I'm not smart enough to be teaching kids anything, but I want to be able to entertain them with stories and make a world for them, whether it's with a little bear, a stuffed tiger, or a big trash truck, that feels real," he adds.

Trash Truck premieres November 10 on Netflix. The streaming giant will also air another of Glen Keane's productions, the highly anticipated CG animated feature, *Over the Moon*, this Friday, October 23, as well as a *Trash Truck* Christmas special December 11.



Victoria Davis is a full-time, freelance journalist and part-time Otaku with an affinity for all things anime. She's reported on numerous stories from activist news to entertainment. Find more about her work at victoriadavisdepiction.com.

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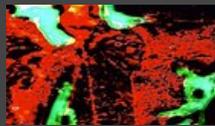
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