“HAWKING” –TELEVISION PORTRAIT OF CELEBRITY PHYSICIST STEPHEN HAWKING – TO PREMIERE ON

JANUARY 29

Co-Production of Darlow Smithson Productions, PBS and Channel 4 (UK)

Features Insights From High-Profile Fans and Colleagues

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| Stephen Hawking outside DAMTP, Department of Applied Mathematics and Theoretical Physics, Cambridge. Credit: Jason Bye. |

ARLINGTON, VA – November 20, 2013 —**HAWKING**, the first-ever autobiographical documentary about physicist Stephen Hawking, premieres Wednesday, January 29, 2014, 10:00-11:00 p.m. ET (check local listings) on PBS. The film offers rare insights into Hawking’s life, past and present, aided by a cast of stellar contributors and Hawking fans, including astronaut Edwin Eugene “Buzz” Aldrin, Jr., actors Jim Carrey and Benedict Cumberbatch, mathematical physicist Sir Roger Penrose and entrepreneur Sir Richard Branson.

**HAWKING** tracks the physicist’s life story, told largely in his own words. It includes dramatic accounts of his life from childhood through university; intimate footage of Hawking today, including his home routine and his work life at the University of Cambridge; archival footage; and candid comments from family members, friends and colleagues. Computer-generated imagery illustrates some of Hawking’s remarkable discoveries, such as the nature of black holes and the so-called “Big Bang” theory that explains the origins of the universe.

“This film is a personal journey through my life, told in my own words, that shows the story of how I became who I am today. It has been a lot of fun and also very strange to see myself depicted in so many ways,” said Hawking. “I think it is important to realize we only have a very short time alive and should make the best of it. Despite my disabilities, I will always keep wondering about the mysteries of the universe.”

In addition to photos and archival footage of his childhood, the film also depicts the difficult aspects of his life, especially his battle to communicate through his computer, a process about which he meets regularly with technology experts. In addition to the A-list contributors who are also his fans, interviewees include Hawking’s ex-wife Jane, past and current students and graduate assistants, nurses and his literary agent, among others.

Stephen Hawking became paralyzed due to motor neuron disease, but his intellectual brilliance, his refusal to quit and his trademark dry wit — all showcased in **HAWKING** — have propelled him to international fame and celebrity. He has sold more than 10 million copies of his groundbreaking book *A Brief History of Time*, spoken before thousands of people at sell-out live shows and appeared on iconic TV shows such as “The Simpsons” and “Star Trek.” He counts as friends many of the most famous people on the planet. He has met with the pope, experienced zero gravity, received the Presidential Medal of Freedom and much more.

“We are thrilled to bring this exclusive program about Stephen Hawking to PBS as part of our science and natural history Wednesday night programming,” said Beth Hoppe, Chief Programming Executive and General Manager, General Audience Programming, PBS. “**HAWKING** opens up a new window into his life and achievements as never before and we’re proud to be a co-producer of this film.”

“Through Hawking’s own words, as well as those closest to him, PBS viewers have an opportunity to get a fresh perspective on one of the greatest scientists of our time,” added Ben Bowie, Executive Producer. “We are honored to have had the opportunity to film and capture the most intimate details of Stephen Hawking’s life.”

**HAWKING** is part of PBS’ expansion of its popular, acclaimed Wednesday night programs into the 10:00 p.m. hour. Paired with audience favorites NATURE at 8:00 p.m. and NOVA at 9:00 p.m., PBS continues its ongoing commitment to present the best science and nature programs on television.

PBS Distribution will release **HAWKING** on DVD on February 4, 2014, after the PBS broadcast. The DVD will be available for a suggested retail price of $24.99.

**PRODUCTION CREDITS**Executive Producer: Ben Bowie

Producer/Filmmaker/ Director: Stephen Finnigan
Producer: Darlow Smithson Productions Ltd. for PBS and Channel 4 (UK), © 2013

**About Darlow Smithson Productions**Darlow Smithson Productions (DSP) is one of the world’s leading factual production companies. With an unsurpassed reputation for producing high-quality television programs for UK, US and international broadcasters, DSP has achieved worldwide industry recognition for its groundbreaking output. DSP is the proud recipient of more than 40 awards, including recognition from prestigious organizations such as BAFTA, The Royal Television Society and the US Academy of Television Arts and Sciences. From its base in London, DSP works across a wide range of non-fiction television — from prestigious feature-length documentaries to flagship series and from long-running popular formats to high-quality fact-based drama. DSP also specializes in the use of advanced computer graphics and quality dramatic re-enactment and is an acknowledged leader in theatrical documentary.

**About PBS**

[PBS](http://www.pbs.org/), with its more than 350 member stations, offers all Americans the opportunity to explore new ideas and new worlds through television and online content. Each month, PBS reaches nearly 120 million people through television and nearly 29 million people online, inviting them to experience the worlds of science, history, nature and public affairs; to hear diverse viewpoints; and to take front row seats to world-class drama and performances. PBS’ broad array of programs has been consistently honored by the industry’s most coveted award competitions. Teachers of children from pre-K through 12th grade turn to PBS for digital content and services that help bring classroom lessons to life. PBS’ premier children’s TV programming and its website, [pbskids.org](http://www.pbskids.org/), are parents’ and teachers’ most trusted partners in inspiring and nurturing curiosity and love of learning in children. More information about PBS is available at [www.pbs.org](http://www.pbs.org/), one of the leading dot-org websites on the Internet, or by following [PBS on Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/pbs), [Facebook](http://www.facebook.com/pbs) or through our [apps for mobile devices](http://www.pbs.org/services/mobile/). Specific program information and updates for press are available at [pbs.org/pressroom](http://pressroom.pbs.org/) or by following [PBS Pressroom on Twitter](http://www.twitter.com/pbspressroom).

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