

STAMP SCOOP



RUDOLPH THE RED-NOSED REINDEER

Televised holiday programs are beloved traditions and an integral part of network television's seasonal schedule. It was 1964's *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* that set the stage. Based on a poem created by Robert L. May as a 1939 advertising campaign, *Rudolph* followed the story of the titular, eccentric reindeer and his quest to lead Santa's proud pack. Brought to audiences by Rankin/Bass Productions, *Rudolph* was revolutionary in its use of stop-motion animation, its wealth of original songs, and its cast of lovable characters including Santa, Hermey the Elf, the Abominable Snow Monster, and Sam, a singing snowman voiced by Burl Ives.

Rudolph premiered on December 6th as part of *General Electric's Family Theater*, gaining a 55 percent audience share. It quickly became an annual televised tradition, and a 1995 rebroadcast garnered a 65 percent audience share. Today, it is the highest rated Christmas special in history. Rankin/Bass became the go-to purveyor of great holiday features and are known for their signature work in stop motion animation. Other Rankin/Bass classics include *The Little Drummer Boy*, *Frosty the Snowman*, and *Santa Claus is Comin' to Town*.

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