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Look on in wonder at the awesome sights of Dinotopia (see page 36).

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

“You can’t ask your hostage for money.”
—French Stewart, Clockstoppers

STUPID TV DECISION OF THE MONTH

Fox: For not ordering more Futurama adventures. That’s being very short-sighted about the future.

STUPID MOVIE DECISION OF THE MONTH

ABC TV: For digitally altering the James Bond movies it has been showing Saturdays this spring, adding clothing to the semi-clad (for example, Lana Wood in Diamonds Are Forever). This isn’t censorship, it’s just absurd and gives us one more reason to watch old movies on VHS and DVD, not on network TV.

BOOKS OF NOTE

Star Trek novelist Michael Jan Friedman unveils two adventures of the young Jean-Luc Picard in Book One and Two of The Stargazer Duology (Pocket, pb, $6.99 each). They’re both out next month.

That ultra-prolific Peter David is writing the Spider-Man movie novelization. His very first novel, Knight Life (published in 1987 as a paperback original), will be back in print in June. David has significantly rewritten and expanded this tale of King Arthur, revived in contemporary times to run for Mayor of New York City. Ace is publishing this new version (hc, $22.95).

The second volume in the Merchant Prince saga, The Dealer’s Art, will hit shelves in May (Pocket, pb, $6.99). It’s by Armin (Quark) Shimerrman and Michael Scott.

As most fans know, the works of mythologist Joseph Campbell influenced how George Lucas shaped Star Wars. Now, two of his students, academics and authors Stephen & Robin Larson, have written an authorized biography, Joseph Campbell: A Fire in the Mind (Inner Traditions, tp $22). It’s out this month.

Richard Matheson’s The Twilight Zone Scripts (all 14 of them) are collected in two volumes edited by former FANGORIA contributor Stanley Winter. These tpb editions are $16.95 each (+ $4 p&h) from Gauntlet Press (309 Powell Road, Springfield, PA 19064, www.gauntletpress.com).

THE LAST FAREWELLS

The science fiction universe must bid goodbye to these beloved folks who died recently.


Irish McCalla (February) Sheena, Queen of the Jungle, the heroine of 1950s TV. She was also in She Demons and Five Gates to Hell. (STARLOG #69)

Alan G. Barbour (February) The serial authority & film historian whose books included Days of Thrills and Adventure, Saturday Afternoon at the Movies, The Thrill of It All, A Thousand and One Night Lights and Cliffhanger. As an inexhaustable walking encyclopedia of movie serial knowledge, he was also Editor/Publisher of Screen Facts Magazine and a friend of STARLOG staffers.

Kevin Smith (February) The versatile New Zealand actor best known for playing Ares, who antagonized—and occasionally allied himself with—Hercules, Xena and Young Hercules. (STARLOG #258; another interview conducted with him a few months before his death will appear in a future issue)

Chuck Jones (February) The animation legend whose Warner Bros. cartoons enlivened all our childhoods. He directed such classic cartoons as “What’s Opera, Doc?”, “Duck Dodgers in the 24 1/2 Century,” “One Froggy Evening,” “Duck Amuck,” “For Sentimental Reasons.” “Feed the Kitty” and too many others to name. With his production unit, he fathered such immortal Warner Bros. characters as the Road Runner & Wile E. Coyote, Pepe Le Pew, Marvin the Martian and Michigan J. Frog while helping to reshape already established stars Bugs Bunny, Daffy Duck, Elmer Fudd and Porky Pig. He made the Private Snafu cartoons with Ted (Dr. Seuss) Geisel during WWII, reteaming in the 1960s to direct animated half-hour TV adaptations of the Seuss books How the Grinch Stole Christmas and Horton Hears A Who. He also directed the Oscar-winning “The Dot and the Line,” latter-day Tom & Jerry shorts, other TV specials (The Cricket in Times Square, Rikki-Tikki-Tavi), The Phantom Tollbooth (a 1969 live-action/cartoon theatrical feature) and animated sequences for Stay Tuned and Mrs. Doubtfire. Fans got a chance to see him in a poignant cameo appearance as an artist in Gremlins. He earned an honorary Oscar for lifetime achievement in 1996. His importance to animation—and influence on genre filmmakers—can’t be understated. (COMICS SCENE #2)

FILM FANTASY CALENDAR

Release dates are extremely subject to change.

April: The Scorpion King
June: Lilo & Stitch, Scooby-Doo, Minority Report.

Art: Tristan Ewbank
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LOOKING BACK

...I’ve been a big STARLOG fan for decades, and have enjoyed two of your more recent issues (#293 and #294) more than any back-to-back STARLOGs in years. Monsters, Inc., Harry Potter, Jimmy Neutron, The Lord of the Rings, Justice League and the new Pretender telefilm—all of these projects had some measure of critical and financial success, and, naturally, STARLOG—always a great read even when it’s sneak-previews something that turns out to be junk—comes out looking even better when the material it covers is above average. What a great couple of months for genre fans—and, consequently, STARLOG fans as well.

I especially liked the Quark-related article in #294, and very much wish that STARLOG would do more features on long-gone fantasy and SF.

Of course, I’m pleased that STARLOG is always right on top of the newest film and TV goings-on, and I realize that the whole idea of a starlog is to document what’s happening today, yesterday. Even so, many of my favorite STARLOG items have been retrospective pieces—like that terrific George Pal tribute way back in #10, or that nice Lost in Space retrospective in #21.

In fact, as much as I love all the up-to-the-minute stuff—and I definitely do think it’s important to document what movie and TV people have to say about a project before the receipts and reviews come in—I’m always just a little suspicious of actors, directors, etc. whose interviews coincide with the release of their latest project. When a 70-something, semi-retired Jimmy Stewart used to visit Johnny Carson’s The Tonight Show, he rarely came on just to plug something, and we all knew and loved him for it. But it seems that whenever somebody really big hits the talk shows these days, it’s a fair bet that the studio has booked them to market something. It’s never until the next visit that we learn the guest knew the project was a stinker all along: until then, every Batman & Robin gets oversold as The Bicycle Thief, and every Superman III is talked up as if it’s Schindler’s List.

That said, how about just a few more STARLOG nostalgia pieces instead of so many current ones, terrific reading though they may be. Since I love both kinds of articles, I’m not talking about a major overhaul here—just an ever-so-slight adjustment, that’s all. For instance, STARLOG once ran a whole slew of “Guests of Star Trek” pieces. Maybe you could try something along the same lines on, say, ’60s/’70s Disney films. They used many of the same actors for their (admittedly minor) SF/fantasy movies. What does Dean Jones think about The Love Bug, $1,000,000 Duck, The Shaggy D.A. and Blackbeard’s Ghost today, now that neither he nor Disney have reason to worry how those films will fare come opening weekend? Or what about Suzanne Pleshette, who no longer has any stake in the fate of those last two titles, either, as well as The Power and The Birds? Too, too many Disney players have been lost to us already (Fred MacMurray, David Tomlinson, Ed Wynn, The Bionic Woman appraise those shows?

I’m not saying these folks weren’t completely objective the first time out—it’s just that time has a way of clarifying things a bit. And even if STARLOG interviewed some of these people before, surely a little additional post-project hindsight would make it worth revisiting them again.

Anyway, thanks for listening. And, whatever the future holds, keep those top-notch issues coming.

R. Crick
Kirksy, KY

Thanks for your kind comments. Some readers would argue—and have argued—that STARLOG publishes too many retrospective pieces as it is. And it’s certainly instructive to us that the STARLOG which sold the least last year was the one with the most retro stories (#290, with five past pieces out of a 15-story lineup). Nonetheless, we soal on, continuing to publish them as they are finally completed and as space permits.

Incidentally, readers should never assume that just because STARLOG hasn’t published an interview with someone, we haven’t tried to get them to talk. Interviewees chatting about a current project have an obvious motivation: they want to ballyhoo their latest effort to help it succeed. When the project is long past, other endeavors (playing with the kids or grandkids, golfing, shopping, etc.) can seem far more attractive than the prospect of spending an hour (or more) being interviewed about past glories and sad regrets.

Like the IRS or the Terminator, we are somewhat good-naturedly relentless (“Can we interview you now? Can we interview you now?”) about tracking down and trying to chat up these folks. Despite their turndowns, we never truly give up till death makes interviews impossible (i.e. Sir Alec Guinness, Vic Tayback, etc.). After all, other folks have initially turned us down and then, years later, changed their minds and happily talked. It took us 20 years to get James Arness.

As for some of these specific suggestions, Flynn and Ed Wynn—two personalities we loved—died before STARLOG’s 1976 beginning (in 1974 and 1966 respectively), eliminating them from pursuit by us. We tried to get Keenan Wynn (Ed’s actor son) repeatedly in the mid-80s, even consulting with his wife about the possibility. His deafness made a phone interview ill-advised, and an in-person chat with Wynn, very busy acting right up to his 1986 death, just could never get scheduled, much to our regret.

On the other hand, a post-Bionic Anderson, a very nice guy, has talked to STARLOG several times about his career. And Romero (who died in 1994) did chat—not only about the Joker but his Disney stuff—in issue #146. You could look it up.
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GENRE TV

The TV version of The Dead Zone debuts June 16 on USA Network.

That other land of shadow and substance, The Twilight Zone, is getting charted yet again. Pen Densham, one of the creative forces behind the Outer Limits revival, is piloting a new Zone for UPN.

Joss Wheden's Firefly, its pilot now in production, also stars Adam Baldwin, Alan (A Knight's Tale) Tudyk, Ron (Barney Miller) Glass, Sean Maher, Summer Glau, Jewel Staite and a genre fan favorite: Cleopatra 2525's Gina Torres.

Relativity's David Conrad portrays Dr. Doug Phillips in the Time Tunnel pilot. Here's the part fans will love: Original Time Tunnel stars James Darren, Robert Colbert and Lee Meriwether will apparently cameo in the episode.

By the way, Time Tunnel producers Kevin Burns and Jon Jashni—who are also assembling a Lost in Space TV movie pilot—have contracted with the Irwin Allen estate and Sheila Matthews (Allen's widow). So their company (Synthesis Entertainment) will also eventually be mounting new TV versions of Land of the Giants and Voyage to the Bottom of the Sea.

COMICS SCENE

Spider-Man swings onto MTV with its latest animated series (at least the fifth Spider-thon). It'll spin off from the Sam Raimi film. Brian Michael Bendis (who scripts Marvel's Ultimate Spider-Man) will also write for the show.

Samurai Jack has re-upped—with 26 more animated episodes in production.

Cartoon Network has also renewed Justice League for 26 more episodes.

CHARACTER CASTINGS

Already Robin Hood, Indiana Jones' Dad and, of course, James Bond, Sean Connery takes on another hero. He'll play H. Rider Haggard's adventurer Allan Quartermain, a member of The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen, in Stephen Norrington's film version (now in the works).

Mike Myers will be The Cat in the Hat for the live-action version of the Dr. Seuss dramedy. It reteams him with Imagine Entertainment and director Bo Welch. They almost did the Sprockets film together a few years ago.

SEQUELS

The latest team on Warner Bros.' attempt to make a new Superman movie are writer J.J. Abrams (creator of Alias and Felicity) and Charlie's Angels movie director McG.

Jim Lewis, a former editor of The Muppet Magazine, has scripted Kermit's Swamp Years: The Real Story Behind Kermit the Frog's Early Years. It's all about the green-felt celebrity's life before stardom on The Muppet Show. The live-action, Muppet-intensive prequel will be a Columbia TriStar Home Entertainment direct-to-video release this summer. Lewis is also scripting It's a Wonderful Muppet Christmas, a TV movie for year-end teeming Muppets with various NBC stars. Guess which network will air it.

UPDATES

That young Lone Ranger TV pilot for the WB is simply called Ranger. In this Dawson's Creek-ization of the Fran Striker-created radio myth (later rendered in movies, serials, TV, comic books and comic strips), young women now have prominent parts as well. Pay Masterson plays the widowed sister-in-law of the young Ranger (Chad Murray). Anita Brown portrays the sister of the ever-faithful Tonto (Nathaniel Arcand).

Hi-yo, Silver, away! But don't go far. Producers Doug Wick and Lucy Fisher are developing a separate Lone Ranger movie for Columbia Pictures. It'll be reimagined à la Columbia's Mask of Zorro.

NBC, meanwhile, is doing Young Arthur (i.e. Dawson's Camelot). Julian Morris is Arthur, Paul Wasilewski, Lancelot. Noted cinematographer Mikael Salomon is directing this pilot in Prague (for that proper knightly look).

And then there's the young people's version of The Witches of Eastwick. Witches Lori (Full House) Loughlin, Kelly (Brasco County) Rutherford and Maria (Melrose Place) Cross must cope with their own own spawn from HELL (i.e. teenagers). The Eastwick pilot is for NBC.

Four days before pretime for last issue's interview with him, Stan Winston reported he would not be involved in Terminator 3: Rise of the Machines. Things change. At pretime this issue, Winston has signed on after all to be T3's animatronic and makeup FX supervisor.

Veteran director Mick (The Stand) Garris is helming the WB's Lost in Oz pilot, appropriately, in Australia. Melissa George, Mia Sara and Colin Eggleston star.

SCIFI PEOPLE

Patrick Stewart and James Cameron are among the drivers in the 26th annual Toyota Pro/Celebrity Race, a 10-lap event that will be held at the Champ Car track in Long Beach, CA on April 13. It'll raise more than $100,000 for Racing for Kids, a charity benefiting Southern California children's hospitals. TV broadcast plans weren't finalized at pretime.

Starmen's Christopher Daniel Barnes voices Prince Charming in the Cinderella II: Dreams Come True sequel video, now in stores.

Veteran Trek stunt coordinator Dennis "Danger" Madalone has written and sung a September 11-inspired song, "America We Stand As One." It can be sampled at www.americawestandone.com (where it can also be ordered for $6.95). Madalone is working on a CD album.

CINEMAGIC

ILM is handling the visual FX for next summer's T3: Rise of the Machines. Pablo Herran serves as FX supervisor. ILM is also doing the FX for Richard Donner's Timeline.

Jaks Pacifc has done the Scorpion King toy tie-in line. Max Allan Collins wrote the paperbac novelization now on shelves.

Scooby-Doo has leased up promotional tie-ins from Coca-Cola, Heinz, Dairy Queen and, most amusingly, Kibbles 'n Bits (which will unleash real Scooby Snacks for dogs). Daphne, meanwhile, gets her own version of Matteel's Barbie.
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**ANDROMEDA**


**FUTURAMA**

Airs Sundays on Fox. 5/5: Season finale. “Where No Fan Has Gone Before.”

**BEASTMASTER**


**BUFFY**

Airs Tuesdays on UPN. Already renewed for fall. Look for Season Six Buffy trading cards from Inkworks in September.

**CHARMED**

Airs Thursdays on the WB. DS9’s Armin Shimerman will guest star as a wizard.

**DARK ANGEL**

Airs Fridays on Fox. Its future is in doubt. See page 86 for a talk with Kevin Durand.

**EARTH: FINAL CONFLICT**

In its final season. Production has wrapped. Airing in syndication the week of 3/18: “Legacy.”

**ENTERPRISE**


**FARSCAPE**


**LEXX**

In its final season Fridays on SCI FI. Creator Paul Donovan decided to end the series.

**MUTANT X**


**ROSWELL**

Its future is in grave doubt. Scheduled to return 4/30, airing new episodes into May.

**THE SIMPSONS**

Airs Sundays on Fox. Season finale: “Marge Got a Brand New Badge.”

**STARGATE SG-1**

Fifth season bows on Showtime Fridays, with fourth season shows later airing in syndication. A 22-episode sixth (and final) season debuts on SCI FI, the series’ new home, in June. Corin Nemec joins the cast then. Michael Shanks (who is exiting the series) will return to guest star in a sixth season episode.

**STRANGE WORLD**

Now lensing a second, 13-episode season bowing in June on TNT. Repeats now airing. 4/1: “Convergence.”

**WITCHBLADE**

Rescued from the dead, sort of. CBBS programmers now in charge at UPN. Airs on UPN, Wednesdays, 9 p.m. for a limited run. 4/3: Pilot. The four produced (but unbroadcast) episodes follow weekly. CBS had previously aired the pilot and four other shows (of the total nine made; the latter quartet is not now scheduled for UPN).

**THE X-FILES**


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Note: Airdates can shift without notice. Series are only listed for which STARLOG has new info.
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RED ALERTS

The specter of atomic obliteration looms over U.S. landscapes in two low-budget, cast-of-unknowns “Bomb movies” (take that either way!) paired on a single DVD ($24.99) by the awareness-raising folks at Image. In Atomic War Bride (1960), the celebratory mood at the wedding of John and Maria is dampened by the sound of enemy planes and falling bombs; John, mobilized right after the ceremony, hopes to see his betrothed once more before the Big Bang. “Condition Red” is still in effect in its co-feature This Is Not a Test (1962), as a state trooper and a small group of travelers tenuously await The End near a mountain roadblock. Hardy survivalists will wish to maintain their duck-and-cover positions throughout the accompanying 1950s short subjects “You Can Beat the A-Bomb,” “Survival Under Atomic Attack,” “Medical Aspects of Nuclear Radiation,” fallout shelter TV spots from the ’60s and the gratuitous peep-show short “Atomic Blonde in Action.” If you begin to glow in the dark, discontinue use and consult your physician.

The Red Alert continues: The DVD unveiling of the Eisenhower-era oldie Invasion USA (Synapse, $24.98) was originally scheduled for last year, but the 9/11 attack prompted the company to hold up their release of this now eerily prescient suspender of Manhattan under siege from the skies, complete with crumbling skyscrapers. A 1953 indie made in eight days, it spins a torn-from-21st-century headlines tale of America in the bull’s-eye and sleepers agents in our midst, with a cast that includes Dan O’Herlihy, Peggy Castle, Gerald Mohr and, playing minuscule parts, TV’s two Lois Lanes, Phyllis Coates and Noel Neill. O’Herlihy and Neill, plus bit player William Schallert, are the subjects of new video interviews; other bonus material includes audio recordings of Civil Defense Department survival guides and the campy “Red Scare” short film “Red Nightmare” with Jack Webb.

For yet more “red menace,” check out Anchor Bay’s Return of the Killer Tomatoes (1988), starring George Clooney as a pizza maker, John Astin as a mad genetic scientist and, according to the press blurbs, “wanton tomato woman Karen Mistal.” Can I get your autograph on this, Mr. Clooney? ...Hey!! That DVD cost me $149.88!!

Is no one safe?? The fighting spills over into the cartoon world in Now and Then, Here and There, a four-disc set of all 13 episodes of the anime series about a boy’s battle to survive in a war-torn future. The bonus-feature barrage includes production sketches, trailers, scripts and more. It’s $89.99 from Central Park Media. And the Roughneck: The Starship Troopers Chronicles TV series, state-of-the-art CGI multi-episode adventures, continues: New to DVD racks from Columbia TriStar are The Homefront Campaign and The Klen-dathu Campaign. Prices not yet announced.

Maybe you’re like me: These action pictures are great, but what’s with all this plot? And all these characters—jeez, whassup with that? Stop talking and blow up something, will you?? Well, Image has come up with the perfect DVD for us short-attention spanners: Boom!: Hollywood’s Greatest Disaster Movies ($24.99), hosted by Bill Mummy, and incorporating 60 minutes of choice, high-testosterone tidbits from Independence Day, Titanic, Irwin Allen movies ad infinitum. And, for the amusement of the bloodthirstiest of us, newsreel footage of real-life catastrophes! That’s entertainment???
SPACE WARFARE

The galactic balance of power is at stake yet again in Frank Herbert’s Dune, the 2000 SCI FI Channel mini-series based on Herbert’s visionary tale of outer-space adventure (Artisan, $26.98). William Hurt and Giancarlo Giannini star in this epic presentation, which comes to DVD a second time in an “even more bells and whistles” Director’s Cut featuring—for those who feel that a Mini-Series Is Not Enough—over 30 minutes of new footage. You want more, you got more: “Defining Messiah,” a documentary with religious scholars of all faiths; audio commentaries by Hurt and director John Harrison; and a “Science Fiction Round Table Discussion” documentary with participants Harrison, Arthur C. Clarke, George Lucas, Ursula K. Le Guin, Michael Chrichton, William Gibson, Salman Rushdie, Alex Proyas and Richard Dreyfuss.

Cashing in on the Star Wars phenomenon once again, Fluke Starbucker, Augie Ben Doggie, Princess Anne-Droid, Ham Salad and the evil Darth Nader return in the delightfully irreverent Hardware Wars: The Collector’s Edition. The 1977 film—which Lucas reportedly says is his favorite Star Wars spoof—is now receiving the Special Edition treatment as well. Packed with more than 20 new “special defects,” the silly SF short features a galaxy full of flying toasters, deadly waffle irons and hot cinnamon buns. Presented in Digi Redo 8.2 sound (THX sounds like mono compared to it), this “retooled” DVD ($14.95; for a great deal more info, see www.mwp.com/pages/filmshardware.html) offers the never-before-seen Director’s Cut, director’s commentary, a rare look at a pirated foreign version from 1979 and much more. May the Force be with you!

FANTASY WORLDS

Hop aboard the Hogwarts Express and discover the world of Harry Potter, bewitched, bothered and bespectacled star of the J.K. Rowling film adaptation Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone. The School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, Platform 9-3/4 and Diagon Alley can all be revisited when the mega-popular hit flies into videostores May 28 (VHS, $24.99; DVD, $26.99). Extras on the DVD include new scenes completed for the video release, interviews with director Chris Columbus and producer David Heyman, interactive tours, downloadable screensavers, electronic trading cards and (of course) the ever-popular “more.”

For supernatural suspense mixed with ‘60s soap opera, what could beat umpteen hours’ worth of episodes of TV’s Gothic daytime drama Dark Shadows? The Collinwood cast of guys and ghouls now lurk in DVD Shadows in MPI’s “Boxed Set I,” just $69.98. And for a true scare, figure out how much it’ll eventually cost you to own the entire, five-days-a-week, long-running (1966-71) series.

Ventriloquist’s dummy “Hugo” talks...walks(!)....and houses a human soul in the 1963 chiller Devil Doll. Bryant Haliday is the sinister ventriloquist-hypnotist in this English-made cult horror flick, based on a short story by Frederick E. (633 Squadron) Smith, and also featuring William (2001: A Space Odyssey) Sylvester. Image’s Special Edition DVD includes publicity and production photos, a print-only interview with Smith, audio commentary by producer Richard Gordon and interviewer Tom Weaver (still me) and, tucked on as an extra, a print of the “Continental” version of the film, long thought lost, featuring additional footage (and some nudity).

JUST LIKE US

Devoting this amount of time to watching all these movies, and especially the Special Editions...does it ever make you feel like life’s passing you by? Like you’re a bit of a nerd, in fact? Well, you’re Indiana Jones, James Bond and Rambo rolled into one alongside The Projectionist (Image DVD, $24.99). Chuck McCann stars in this offbeat 1971 comedy about a bored movie theater worker who daydreams that he is one of the superheroes whose movies he beams upon the screen. In his superhero identity (Captain Flash), he battles a nefarious supervillain (the Bat) with tips from movie tough guys Gary Cooper, Errol Flynn and Humphrey Bogart (imaginatively seen via vintage film clips).

The indefatigable Sinister Cinema team, which has been resurrecting public-domain oldies on VHS for as long as this vidiot can recall, has made the DVD plunge, making scores of their features available as “high quality DVD-R digital recordings.” DVD-R discs are, according to the company’s announcement, “compatible in most (italics ours) newer DVD players. Virtually (yup, our italics again) all future DVD players from major companies will be DVD-R compatible.” In other words, look before you leap into this particular digital void, which Sinister has stocked with such familiar titles as The Phantom from 10,000 Leagues, The Incredible Petrified World, Night of the Blood Beast, The Monster, The Wasp Woman, The Phantom Planet, Castle of Fu Manchu and The Amazing Transparent Man, as well as an array of horror and jungle thrillers, “sword and sandal” epics, juvenile delinquent dramas and rough-ridin’ cowboy yarns.

DVDS IN BRIEF:

Strange Dawn: Strange Journey (Urban Vision, $22.95, DVD; $12.95, VHS): More anime-hem as Yuko and Emi, trapped in a world half their size, have run-ins with everyone from magical beings to strike forces during their quest to simply go back home. Highlander (Anchor Bay, $39.98): The centuries-spanning action-fantasy, restored and remastered. Bonus features include audio commentary by director Russell Mulcahy and the producers, Queen music videos and trailers. Arachnid (Trimark, $24.99): On a primitive South Pacific island, a group of scientists contend with a giant spider that escaped from a crash-landed UFO. No-name cast, no-fun plot.
Channeling Cleopatra by Elizabeth Ann Scarborough (Ace, hc, 256 pp, $21.95)

It has now become possible to “channel” a historical figure. All you have to do—and this is simplifying it just a bit—is process their DNA and inject it into someone’s body, and then that person acquires a “voice in their head” which is the historical figure’s personality. In this case, it’s Cleopatra.

But buyer beware: Channeling Cleopatra isn’t about the return of the titular character. It’s actually more Robert Ludlum than science fiction, and Cleopatra doesn’t even show up until the end. The book fails to build on its potential (maybe in a sequel?), but at least it’s no Robert Heinlein’s I Will Fear No Evil. Still, not getting to read about Cleopatra’s reactions to the modern world after the long set-up is frustrating, and results in a rather unsatisfactory book.

—Jean-Marc Lofficier

Stormrider by David Gemmell (Del Rey, hc, 400 pp, $25)

In the opening pages of Stormrider, Kaelin Ring, Ravenheart, must face down a possessed bear to save an innocent child’s life. That scene represents the physical manifestation of the metaphor which pervades the rest of this novel, in which Rigante and the Varlish men must struggle to defeat the evil within while an exterior menace strikes at the heart of their land.

There’s a melancholy undertone to this newest Rigante tale, despite the many scenes where characters demonstrate not only their heroic spirit but a forgiveness and kindness toward their enemies. It’s as if Gemmell believes that although some individuals may overcome their baser instincts, the majority allow the bear to overwhelm them.

—Penny Kenny

A Dragon’s Ascension: A Tale of the Band of Four by Ed Greenwood

(Tor, hc, 384 pp, $25.95)

The Band of Four—composed of a warrior, a thief, a healer and a sorceress—is still searching for the missing Dwarfen stone that will bind the Serpent. Meanwhile, the barons are vying for Aglierta’s crown, the Snake priests are trying to release the Serpent and the Faceless Ones are working behind the scenes. In other words, it’s business as usual for the questing quartet.

And they’re as delightful as they’ve ever been. But since A Dragon’s Ascension is basically a series of battles between different factions, the fellowship of four’s trademark wit is lost between all the sword-swinging and spell-casting. The story’s climactic moment also suffers as a result of all this warfare, which dilutes any effectiveness it could have had. All in all, there’s a hurried, jumbled feel to Greenwood’s latest effort.

—Penny Kenny

Hopscotch by Kevin J. Anderson

(Bantam, hc, 366 pp, $24.95)

Edward Swan makes his living swapping bodies. For a price, he’ll take your place during an operation, assume any pain or explore any pleasure. Then something goes horribly wrong, and Swan discovers that not only has his body been stolen, but his entire life as well. This places Swan in an unsettling situation where he must search for his former shell in a frightening future which considers a person’s identity just another suit of clothes to be worn.

Hopscotch is an eerie story that builds nicely. Anderson is not only writing a mystery here, but a paranoia-laced fantasy that occasionally manages to reach in and pluck the well-guarded strings of the reader’s mind. Loss of identity is a very real fear, and Anderson plays it here for all it’s worth. Add to this a well-crafted setting that heightens the story’s tension, and what you’re left with is an excellent psychic crime thriller in the tradition of James H. Schmitz, Katherine MacLean and Alfred Bester.

—Michael Wolff

Manifold: Origin by Stephen Baxter

(Del Rey, hc, 576 pp, $26)

In this continuation of the Manifold series, astronaut Reid Malenfant and his wife Emma fly over to Africa in order to investigate the sudden appearance of a red moon in the sky. This effort leads to catastrophe, though, with Malenfant ejecting from the plane and Emma ending up on the mysterious planet. A public crusade to gain support for a rescue mission is started by Malenfant, while on the foreign moon, Emma spends her enforced solitude studying her new surroundings.

Not as much an adventure story as it sounds, Manifold: Origin is more Olaf Stapledon than E.E. “Doc” Smith. There are exciting elements to be had—which are written with a good, solid scientific foundation—but Baxter seems less interested in spreading blood and thunder than he is intent on examining the nature of human development. This is no criticism, however, as this intriguing work of unexpected insight shows once again why Baxter is giving writers such as Greg Bear and David Brin a run for their money. Definitely not for everyone’s taste, Manifold: Origin is a strange world worth exploring.

—Michael Wolff

The Golden Age by John C. Wright

(Tor, hc, 304 pp, $24.95)

In a future unfrequented by a golden age where men and machines live harmoniously in a baroque and sophisticated society, Phaethon discovers that his memory has been tampered with. Entering on a quest into his past, he learns that he’s not the effete artist he believed himself to be, but a controversial rebel involved in a secret project that could shake up the entire solar system. The question is: Should he open the Pandora’s Box that is his mind? And if he does, what conflict does he risk reigniting?

The Golden Age is a tremendously enjoyable read on several different levels. The universe it depicts is reminiscent of the worlds dreamed up by Jack Vance, Cordwainer Smith and Roger Zelazny, without being an imitation of any of them. Its reflective hero is appealing—Phaethon’s quest for the truth, as he is riddled with self-doubt, is both emotionally satisfying and suspenseful. And the engaging plot is even more enriching because the reader is not told what the stakes are until the very end, leaving up in the air which characters are Phaethon’s true friends and real foes.

A wonderful first novel, The Golden Age is sparkling with invention, verve and brilliance. It’s only the start of a series, though, so we must wait until the next chapter to see where Wright is taking us.

—Jean-Marc Lofficier
The Birthday of the World and Other Stories by Ursula K. Le Guin

The Birthday of the World and Other Stories represents an anthology of work by Le Guin, writer who needs no introduction. While almost all of these stories have been published throughout the '90s—“Coming of Age in Karhide,” “The Matter of Segri,” “Solitude”—they have never been collected in one volume before. And the last story, “Paradises Lost”—which takes up about a third of the book—is new.

All of these tales are gems, and not a single one can be dismissed as an inferior effort or a “bad day” for the author. Le Guin is, if anything, better than she has ever been before. Every story is built around a core of deep humanity, and contains wonderful characters, an easy style and a smooth narrative flow. And to top it all off, Le Guin continues to infuse her material with a sense of wonder and a feeling of alienness, two essentials of good science fiction literature.

There can be no better example of this writer’s prodigious talent than this unforgettable collection. Highly recommended.

—Jean-Marc Lofficier

Picoverse by Robert A. Metzger

(Ace, hc, 390 pp, $22.95)

What if we developed technology that enabled us to create new (or perchance smaller) universes? What would they be like? Could we travel there? Could their inhabitants come here? Wouldn’t that mean then that our own universe is, in turn, the creation of someone else? And if that’s true, are our creators among us?

Picoverse tackles major conceptual notions—one’s that are quite fashionable nowadays thanks to the incredible new discoveries made by quantum physicists—but does so in a rather old-fashioned way, and in a manner that would have pleased E.E. "Doc" Smith or Edward Hamilton. In the end, all it really boils down to are superheros and supervillains romping throughout the cosmos. This is not necessarily a bad thing—the novel is a page-turner—but when you get down to it, Picoverse isn’t much different from a good comic book yarn—it just has more physics thrown in.

—Jean-Marc Lofficier

Maximum Ice by Kay Kenyon

(Bantam, pb, 432 pp, $8.99)

After centuries of wandering through space, the starship Star Road returns to Earth, only to find a planet slowly being covered in a crystalline shell known as Ice—and a population fragmented into various tribes and cultures dubbed with such frosty titles as Ice Nuns and Snow Witches. It’s believed that the Ice itself possesses unique powers and intelligence, so it’s up to Zoya Kundra—Ship Mother for the Star Road—to discover its secrets. But in order to do that, she must travel down to an Earth which has become incredibly alien.

Kenyon has gradually been establishing a voice for herself, with a style that drifts between Gregory Benford and Ursula K. Le Guin. Here, she once again displays a comfortable feel for the classic elements of good SF, and gently guides them into the New Millennium. Neither “hard” nor “soft,” SF, Maximum Ice is an enjoyable read from a writer who’s gradually building up an audience that spreads across all aspects of fandom.

—Michael Wolff

The Shiva Option by David Weber and Steve White

(Baen, hc, 686 pp, $27)

With The Shiva Option, Weber and White continue the elaborate space warfare series based on the Starfire gaming system. The Grand Alliance of humans, Orions, Ophiuchi and Gorm are still locked in interstellar combat with the inexorable menace known as the Arachnids, but now the spaceships and weapons are more powerful and devastating, the bond between humans and aliens has grown stronger and the war seems to be bending in favor of the Arachnids. The arrival of a new ally could be the key to victory for the Alliance, but the war is still too close to call.

This series has obviously been written with an eye toward old-style SF board gamers who delight in moving cardboard markers about on a paper map sheet. Essentially, The Shiva Option is a space opera that attempts to capture the feel of Sunday afternoons in the back of the comic store—you can almost hear the sound of dice hitting the table. For those who prefer Tora! Tora! Tora! to Pearl Harbor, this novel and its predecessors more than fill the bill in the military SF subgenre.

—Michael Wolff

The Consciousness Plague by Paul Levinson

(Tor, hc, 320 pp, $24.95)

Levinson returns to the hard SF-thriller genre with this new adventure featuring his popular character, forensic detective Philip D’Amato. The story starts off in a deceptively low-key manner—a new antibiotic causes an outbreak of limited memory loss—then mushrooms into a full-blown narrative which examines the origins of human self-awareness and the practice of dirty corporate tactics.

For all of Levinson’s skills at writing characters, however—and despite the truly original and thought-provoking ideas—the plot is stretched too thin. After the first 100 pages, the book seems to run on autopilot. Perhaps this story would be better suited as a novella, or at least improved by some Tom Clancy-style twists. As it stands, The Consciousness Plague is an interesting disappointment.

—Jean-Marc Lofficier

Vincalis: The Agitator by Holly Lisle

(Apect, tpb, 400 pp, $13.95)

For more than a thousand years, the Empire of the Hars Tichalim has used mindless Warren slaves as an energy source. That’s all about to change, though, thanks to Wrath—a Warren escapee soon to become known as Vincalis the Agitator—who begins to foment a rebellious uprising.

While Vincalis chronologically takes place before the events of Lisle’s Secret Texts trilogy, it’s more of an unnecessary afterthought. The setting is never fully realized, and is sketchy at best. While Lisle may have planned this for thematic reasons, it leaves the reader floundering. The characters are also surprisingly unappealing for a Lisle book, and are basically one-note. So if you wish to visit the world of The Secret Texts, it’s best to do so without the agitation of Vincalis.

—Penny Kenny
THE SCORPION KING SITE
The Rock doesn’t miss his Mummy now that he has a movie to himself. The WWF star sand and delivers a stinging performance as the avenging arachnoid assassin in this swashbuckling adventure. Strap your sandals on at www.thescorpion-king.com

JOHN BUSCEMA SITE
He showed us How to Draw Comics the Marvel Way and spent nearly 50 years illustrating his way into our hearts. Discover a true super hero at www.total.net/~iggyowen

DIGITAL DOMAIN WEB PAGE
Stan Winston and James Cameron co-founded this Titanic visual FX company. See what digital dreams are coming at www.digitaldomain.com

REBECCA ROMIJN-STAMOS PAGE
Roll your balls over to this supermodel’s site and sneak a peek at Magneto’s Ronin in sexy swimwear. Aurora attacks at www.celebritycd.com/rebeccaromijn

LINDA PARK SITE
Make first contact with Hoshi Sato as she takes a white-knuckled ride across the Web. The ensign with the extraordinary gift for alien languages interprets at www.lindapark.tv

BLUE SKY STUDIOS PAGE
This computer company put Aliens underwater, infested Joe’s Apartment and has just introduced a new Ice Age. Learn more at www.blueskystudios.com

HOWARD SHORE SITE
After composing for David Cronenberg, singing with Seven and bleating with Lamb, Shore waves his conductor’s wand for some Middle-Earth magic in The Lord of the Rings. The musician has a score to settle at www.filmmusic.dk/shore2.html

THE ROCK PAGE
He’s the modern king of the ring and an ancient warrior with stings. The man behind Mathayus—Dwayne Johnson—mixes it up with Memnon and the superstars of wrestling at www.therock.com

CHRIS KLEIN WEB PAGE
Say it isn’t so. Rollerball is rigged! The wizard of Oz shoots and scores as Jonathan Cross in the disappointing remake. Eat some American Pie at chrisklein8m.com/chkintro.html

CHRIS BUNCH WEB PAGE
This SF scribe co-authored the Sten series, leads the Last Legion and assigned A-Team missions as a TV writer. Empires fall at www.fantafiction.com/authors/h/bunch_chris/chris_bunch.asp

CLOCKSTOPPERS WEBSITE
In this Nickelodeon family film, director Jonathan Frakes puts two teenagers through fast-paced action as they travel at the speed of Hypertime. Flash-forward to www.nick.com/all_nick/movies/clockstoppers

BLADE II SITE
Blade is back—and this time he’s teaming up with the blood-suckers he has sworn to slay in an attempt to annihilate a new breed of vampires. Don’t fear the Reapers at www.blade2.com

RESIDENT EVIL WEB PAGE
The violent video game about a zombie virus is now a frightening feature from the director of Event Horizon and Mortal Kombat. The Hive is buzzing with bloodthirsty undead at www.spe.sony.com/movies/residentevil

STONE TREK PAGE
Captain’s log: Stonedate 25,000 B.C. Join James T. Kirkstone, Vulcano First Officer Sprocket and the rest of the Magneto’s cavernous crew as they explore outer space long before the Enterprise took flight. Check out this Internet cartoon at www.stonetrek.com

STATIC SHOCK WEBSITE
Virgil Hawkins sings the body electric as he uses his superpowers to protect his urban community from a cadre of criminals. You’ll find all the shocking news at www.kidswb.com/static

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www.sparklingemerald.com/I-ManiCon

CREATION
April 6-7
Masonic Center
San Francisco, CA
Creation
1010 North Central
Suite 400
Oakland, CA 94102

STARFEST
April 19-21
Holiday Inn DIA Convention Center
Denver, CO
Starfest
303-757-8580
starland@starland.com
Guest: Billy Dee Williams, Marina Sirtis, Connor Trinneer, Brent Stait, Toey Robertson, Christian Golden, Dave McDonnell

VULKON
April 27-28
Holiday Inn Strongsville
Strongsville, OH (Cleveland)
Vulkon
P.O. Box 297122
Pembroke Pines, FL 33020-7122
(954) 441-8735
www.vulkon.com
Guests: James Doohan, Barry Morse, David Carradine, Jeffrey Combs, Alex Kaliger, John Billingsley (Saturday only); Robert Picardo (Sunday only)

MAY
VULKON
May 25-26
Atlanta Marriott Century Center
Atlanta, GA
Vulkon
See earlier address
Guests: James Doohan, Barry Morse, John Billingsley, Bruce Campbell

This lists websites for SF, fantasy & animation creators and their creations. Website operators may add their sites to this list by sending relevant information via e-mail only to allan.dart@starloggroup.com
"I think they put the wrong guy in charge of this Super-Soldier Investigation, Agent Scully."

Slytherin! Slytherin! Oh God, take me out of him!!

Are you certain it was Henry Potter we wanted?"

Beep!

Yo, creature! It's klaatu! Pick up! I know you're there! Let's party! Come on, pick up!

It never fails!

The creature from the black lagoon's top pet peeve.
Looking quite comfortable in his human skin, Tracker's Adrian Paul—formerly a Highlander—enjoys a night off from alien pursuit.

Hoping to go unrecognized for her role in Rollerball, Rebecca Romijn-Stamos will morph into Mystique for X².

After making a dino departure in Jurassic Park III, William H. Macy is Focusing on dramatic roles once again. He shovels well. He shovels very well.

Dr. Sid is in. Appearing very photo-realistic, Space Cowboy Donald Sutherland hopes SF fans catch Final Fantasy now that it's on a two-disc DVD. Finest kind.

The New Guy in Eliza Dushku's life is D.J. Qualls. The former vampire slayer helps the Road Trip actor go from zero to hero in the upcoming teen comedy.

Alias' Jennifer Garner goes from sexy spy to comic-book antagonist as Elektra in next year's Daredevil.
A. JOHN CASSADAY’S CAPTAIN AMERICA: 8” Bust Designed by John Cassaday and sculpted by Tony Canale.  
Artist John Cassaday has brought his amazing pencil work to Marvel, and now, Dynamic Forces brings its superlative vision of the greatest living Avenger to three-dimensional life in this dramatic 8” Bust! The bust is available in two editions – Modern Age Cap, featuring his current round shield and costume and the Golden Age Cap, featuring his older costume and shield, emblematic of his days of the Golden Age. Limited to 2,000 production units. Allocation may occur: $129.99 MSRP

B. WOLVERINE: ORIGIN 8” BUST!  
The powerful image of a young Wolverine “popping” his claws and screaming in horror at what he’s done... and become... is brought to vivid three-dimensional life in this new Origin bust from Dynamic Forces! Standing 8” tall on an incredibly rich and detailed base, designed and sculpted by the talented team of Martin Canale and Pablo Vaccigno, Limited to 2,000 production units worldwide. Allocation may occur: $29.99 MSRP

C. EARTH X: THOR - GODDESS OF THUNDER MEGA BUST!  
Thor, the Goddess of Thunder has been unleashed from the pages of Earth X and into your collection as a brand new Dynamic Forces bust! This bust, which stands 7” tall to the tip of the weapon on Thor’s helmet, Designed and directed by Earth X artist Alex Ross and sculpted by Mike Hill, Ross’ meticulous attention to detail is conveyed in the craftsmanship of the final product. Thor joins our previous Earth X releases as the highest-quality, best busts available. • $45.00 MSRP

D. RISING STARS: PATRIOT BUST  
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Kevin Sorbo, the human adventure is just beginning. The actor, who stars as Captain Dylan Hunt on Gene Roddenberry's Andromeda, believes deeply in his syndicated SF series. He was proud of Year One, pleased with Season Two—despite a few asterisks in the road—and is at the moment very excited that Tribune and Fireworks Entertainment have already greenlit production of another 44 episodes.

"We're really starting to get there," Sorbo enthuses. "As you know, we had a bit of a personal family struggle going on within the show, and we ended up releasing [executive producer/show runner] Robert Hewitt Wolfe from his contract. He has since been replaced by Robert Engels. If anyone is unfamiliar with Bob, he worked on Star Trek DSV and was the head writer on Twin Peaks [and co-wrote Twin Peaks: Fire Walk With Me]. I think he'll lead the show in a different direction, one that we've wanted to explore all the way back to the beginning. Robert became a little too involved in his own storylines, which were getting a bit dark and dependent on people being continuas viewers. As you know, that just doesn't happen in television anymore.

"We want to get back to what Gene Roddenberry's vision and original concept for the series was—which is exploring the relationships between these characters on independent shows. There's a beginning, a middle and an end, and then you move on. You don't have to watch episode nine to know what episodes 12 and 15 are about. That has already started. The shows running in February, March and April are the best episodes we've done so far."

That means Hunt, as Sorbo had hoped, has become more unpredictable. "That has definitely happened," he affirms. "We're not making him a loose cannon in any way, but we're loosening the rules. He's realizing that this is a different universe than the one he came from, so he doesn't have to be the same military guy who always abides by the rules. If he has to break some rules to do what he feels is right, then he'll do it."

**Universes Remodeled**

But all is not perfect on Andromeda, and Sorbo is quick to acknowledge that fact. The relationships—particularly between Hunt and the Nietzschean Tyr Anazazi (Keith Hamilton Cobb)—haven't fulfilled their potential, and, truth be told, there's room aplenty for improving the depiction of the Nietzschean race as a whole.

Kevin Sorbo captains the renovated Andromeda through a stormy second season.
Nietzsches portrayed the way they were [originally] supposed to be. Let them be this foe that is not such an easy pushover. It just seems silly that the Nietzsches have reached such a high level and attained such superiority but still aren't that tough for us. They look like a bunch of boxes running down the hallway as we hide behind something and shoot them. They're like the British, and we're the Revolutionaries hiding behind the rocks and trees. So that will be addressed one way or another next year.

Looking at the positives of this current season, Sorbo rattles off a list of highlights. He points out "Lava and Rockets," in which Hunt hijacks a ship in order to escape the clutches of the Ogami; "Ouroboros," which finds Hunt and company dealing with the ramifications of a space and time distortion; and "Last Call at the Broken Hammer," where Hunt and crew encounter a new alien species, the Kalderans, while searching for Ortiz (Enuka Okuma), the former leader of a planet Hunt hoped to enlist in the Commonwealth.

"I had a really good time doing 'Lava and Rockets,'" the actor remarks, "and I originally looked at the script for 'Dance of the Mayflies' and said, 'What's this about? A zombie episode? Come on.' But they did a good job with it. I look at it now and go, 'That's just a fun, fun episode.' Another script that we didn't think was going to work was 'Belly of the Beast.' That ended up bringing me back to what the original Star Trek was about. It was a Star Trek-type episode that was just a blast to do. And we got to visit Earth in 'Bunker Hill.' That was fun. "Ouroboros" was another one of my favorites this year. That could have changed the whole future of Dylan's mission, and it also introduced us to a great new director, Jorge Montesi [whose credits include episodes of Highlander, Forever Knight, Total Recall 2070 and Queen of Swords]. He has found a place in all of our hearts, and he's going to direct four episodes next season. He's a really good director.

"'Ouroboros' is the kind of episode I want to do more of. It had action from beginning to end. It was nonstop, and there was plenty of character development for everybody. It was great sci-fi, with Trance [Laura Bertram] and Beka meeting their future selves. The idea of all that is just cool to me, being a kid who grew up watching SF. I like that kind of stuff. Why not?
from the writers—which came from a retreat they had in Palm Springs with fireworks and Tribune—and the Kaldarans weren't mentioned. I do think we're going to incorporate a few more aliens, though, and a few more foes for Dylan, but I don't know if the Kaldarans will be among them.

"We've had shows with really good guest stars," Sorbo exults. "James Marsters did a great job as Charlemagne [in "Into the Labyrinth"], and we're going to bring him back. I know James had a good time doing that episode. It was a fun character, and he's certainly someone you can bring back. Even if you didn't see him in that first episode, it doesn't matter. We can do a separate show and through the dialogue explain that we've met him before. John de Lancie [who appeared as Uncle Sid in the first season entry "The Pearls That Were His Eyes"] is coming back, too. I don't know what the storyline will be yet, but they did mention that he's definitely returning. And we just finished 'Belly of the Beast,' an episode with Michael Hurst, who played Iolaus, my sidekick on Hercules for seven years. He came up from New Zealand. He plays an AI and had to shave his eyebrows to do it. That episode will probably air sometime during April."

**Starships Renovated**

Sorbo pauses for a moment when asked if, at this point in the series, Roddenberry would recognize Andromeda as his creation. "I think Gene would recognize parts of it, but not the whole thing," he candidly comments. "Andromeda sort of got away from what his vision was, and it certainly got away from what Robert's original bible for the show was. We didn't even follow that. He wrote a brilliant bible, but we just got away from it. Not to take anything away from Robert—the guy is a hell of a lot brighter than I could ever be, and he's an amazing writer—but the show got away from its original intentions, and I think that's why he was asked to leave. He refused to do what the producers and the studios wanted."

That's not to say, however, that Andromeda is in the midst of a sophomore slump—an assessment recently made against the show by Marc Berman, online columnist for the industry magazine *Mediaweek*. "I don't agree," says Sorbo, sounding not the least bit defensive. "I think the second season is better than the first, and I stand by the second half of it. We're getting better as an acting troupe, and next season we're going to have the visual effects department online, which will make a huge difference, because there has been a mixture of opinions about the effects. There is always a mixture of opinions. Every show has that. You have the same old battles. But I disagree with *Mediaweek's* verdict. Andromeda has been much better this season."

Shakedowns happen on every series, Sorbo argues—some early in the game, some later on. *Hercules*, he notes, underwent several wholesale changes in its writing staff during its seven years on the air. The impact of these changes varies: Sometimes they're subtle alterations that fans barely notice, and other times they're more apparent. Wolfe's exit and Engels' arrival will no doubt set the stage for several little tweaks and major overhauls on the show, some of which *Andromeda* aficionados may have already noticed. The most obvious so far have been Trance's recoloring from purple to gold and the departure of Rev Bem (Brent Stait).

"That came from above, and I didn't disagree with it," says Sorbo of Trance's new, sultrier look and more formidable demeanor. "Sex is a part of everything today. In her purple makeup, Laura looked, in person, much sexier than what the camera could pick up. There was something in the translation that just didn't quite work. They've made her a little harder, too, but she's going to keep her charm, keep some of that cute personality, which is important. Laura is a very good actress, and she's so much fun to work with. As far as Rev Bem,
Shakedowns happen, argues Sorbo, who refuses charges that Andromeda is suffering a sophomore slump.

Brent left for personal reasons. He had other things on his plate. Between you, me and the rest of the world, I think he got tired of the whole makeup process. It was four hours a day getting the prosthetics on, and he could be sitting around for four to six hours before he even did a scene. I couldn’t have done what he put up with for two years. It would have driven me insane. We’re going to miss him, but we’re going to have him come back as himself, so you can see what Brent looks like without makeup. We haven’t decided who he’ll play yet.

Planets Refurbished

It’s likely that Stait’s return will happen next year. Meanwhile, there’s still the end of Season Two to consider. Sorbo offers a preview of the season finale, slated to air in May. “There’s another universe, and these aliens from it have figured out how to transport themselves from one universe to another,” he says. “They’re able to disappear, and they can walk through the ship [unnoticed]. And while this is going on, we’re trying to finalize the Commonwealth. I’ve got my 50 planets, and I say, ‘Look, this is it. These are the 50 seed planets of the Commonwealth. It’s up to you guys to build it up.’ And in the middle of all this great, wonderful ceremony, we get attacked. We’re in the wrong place at the wrong time; that’s what it comes down to. They’re not trying to break up the Commonwealth. These aliens just entered a part of the universe where they thought nobody else would be around. So all hell breaks loose, and we have to come up with a way to destroy them. Harper [Gordon Michael Woolvett] works on an explosive that’s about the size of 40 nova bombs, and one of those alone can take out a galaxy. So it’s a powerful bomb we decide to use, and Beka and Tyr are our kamikaze pilots. At the end of the show, it looks like they’re gone.”

Beyond the realm of Andromeda, Sorbo maintains a fairly hectic schedule. He zips out to the golf course whenever possible, and continues to seek out roles during the off season. He may reprise his role as the man who came between Jenna Elfman and Thomas Gibson on Dharma & Greg, and is looking to do another film—especially after an A-list Hollywood superstar Sorbo politely declines to identify shot down his taking on a major supporting role in an upcoming production—despite the fact that Sorbo made the cut with the film’s studio, director and producers. He’s also staying busy keeping tabs on his charity, A World Fit for Kids, and spending time at home with his wife, actress Sam Jenkins—who may return to Andromeda at some point as Hunt’s late love Sara, last seen in this season’s “Home Fires”—and their baby boy, Braedon Cooper, who was born in August 2001.

“A World Fit for Kids trains at-risk inner-city teens to become mentors for younger children within their community,” Sorbo says proudly. “So in effect, that saves two lives at the same time; and the teens receive money that goes toward their college education. If anybody wants to get involved, just go online to www.worldfitforkids.org.”

And how is he handling fatherhood? “Fatherhood is great,” Kevin Sorbo beams. “Gordon Woolvett and his wife Michele just had a baby boy, about three weeks before my wife and I did. One of our lighting guys and a continuity woman had babies, too. And one of the women in accounting just had a baby as well. So there’s something going on in the Andromeda food chain. I think we’ve had six babies in the last nine months. I love fatherhood. It’s the best thing I’ve ever done.”

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Caught between the Rock and a hard place, Dwayne Johnson seeks action stardom as The Scorpion King.

By BILL WARREN

SWORDS IN THE SAND
Actually, it should come as no surprise that Dwayne Johnson—a.k.a. the Rock—is a wrestler in the World Wrestling Federation today. His grandfather, “High Chief” Peter Maivia, was a champion when the burgeoning WWF was just beginning. His father, Rocky Johnson, became champion, too, often with his son by the ringside cheering him on.

After spending much of his childhood moving around—Florida, Tennessee, Georgia, Hawaii, Pennsylvania—Dwayne earned a football scholarship to the University of Florida at Miami, where he got a degree in Criminology and planned to join the Secret Service. But as a nationally recognized football star while in high school, and again with the Hurricanes in college, Dwayne couldn’t shake off his aspiration of becoming a pro football player. He worked for a while in the Canadian Football League, but low pay and a back injury from his college bull days eventually drove him back to Miami.

In 1996, he won his first pro wrestling match, then joined the USWA, using the names Flex Kavana and the Blue Chipper. He did well there, and moved on to the big time—Vince McMahon’s WWF franchise—under the name Rocky Maivia. He soon emerged as one of the WWF’s most prominent “heels,” and was rechristened “the Rock.” Like other WWF stars, he has shifted from heel to hero from time to time, but unlike many of those kings of the ring, he has ambitions beyond the wrestling mat.

**Scorpion Star**

So in 2001, the Rock took a small but showy role as the Scorpion King in Stephen Sommers’ blockbuster hit *The Mummy Returns*. But even before that movie wrapped, the Rock was approached to reprise his role, this time in a film that would focus entirely on him. Eponymously titled *The Scorpion King*, this *Mummy* offshoot is a separate entity from the two previous films in that franchise, and is being marketed as Universal’s big summer movie of 2002 (although it premieres April 19).

Chuck (The Mask) Russell is the director of the desert adventure, which is based on a script written by Sommers and William Osborne and David Hayter, story by Jonathan (Star Wars: Episode II: Attack of the Clones) Hales and Sommers. Set 5,000 years in Egypt’s past, the film co-stars Michael (The Green Mile) Clarke Duncan as the bandit chief Balthazar, Ralph (TV’s Conan) Moeller as General Thorak, Grant (Dante’s Peak) Heslov as Arpid the horse thief, Kelly (Friday the 13th, Part VIII) Hu as the seer Cassandra, Olympic gold medalist Sherri Howard as Queen Isis and Steven Brand as the main villain, Memnon.

Even though it’s only his second movie, there’s no doubt about it, the Rock is the star of *The Scorpion King*. The film is riding on his shoulders. “I don’t feel all that pressured,” says the surprisingly soft-spoken wrestling titan. “I certainly wouldn’t put that pressure on myself. It’s a great opportunity, one I didn’t want to pass up, and I was very humbled by the offer. We
Memnon to kill the sorcerer who gives the villainous leader his supernatural edge. But when Mathayus discovers that the sorcerer is actually a sorceress named Cassandra, he stays his hand—which results in loads of trouble down the road—and regroups the remaining forces into an army that he leads back to battle against Memnon.

The Scorpion King, if you haven’t gotten the drift by now, is a sword-and-sandal adventure. Despite the promising terror title, genre fans will find that this Scorpion’s stinger has been removed. And apart from Cassandra’s limited prescient powers, there’s precious little fantasy to boot. “That’s the fantastic thing about this film,” says the Rock. “Nobody has to really suspend their belief in any way. While The Mummy Returns is a fantastic film, with wonderful effects, The Scorpion King has some effects, but it’s a swashbuckler, if you will.”

As for Cassandra’s predictive powers, “I can still relate to that,” the Rock comments, “because we certainly have those—some I believe in, some I don’t. Everything that happens in this film could actually happen. There are some special effects [in The Scorpion King], but not to the extent as in The Mummy Returns. It’s more hand-to-hand combat.”

Even though he isn’t out to prove his courage, the Rock is doing “all my own stunts. I didn’t go into the film thinking, ‘I’m the Rock! I have to do all my own stunts!’ I just feel that it’s important. Today’s audience is so dialed in, they’re not clueless, and they’re well aware of trick photography and cutaways and things like that. So it’s important to me, and I feel that I can do it. I won’t put myself in [real] jeopardy. I have two great stunt doubles who are more than willing to do [the stunts], but I feel that if I can do it, it’s important that we get a shot of me actually doing it. I think the payoff will be tremendous when the audience watches.”

Doing his own stunts meant that the Rock had to learn to swordfight convincingly. “Al Leong, the swordmaster, will tell you were just waiting, collectively [myself and my management], trying to find the right opportunity to introduce [myself] to film audiences as well as the industry. We thought The Mummy Returns was the answer, and, of course, that spawned The Scorpion King.”

In The Scorpion King, the Rock plays Mathayus, one of a group of elite Akkadian assassins who are hired by rivals of the evil

Ring King

The physicality of the part didn’t intimidate the Rock at all, “because I had been preparing for a long, long time, whether it was in football or in the WWF,” he points

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“I DIDN’T GO INTO THE FILM THINKING, ‘I’M THE ROCK! I HAVE TO DO ALL MY OWN STUNTS!’”

out. “So much of the WWF is physical theatricality. All of our storylines, and there are twists and turns in WWF programming, culminate in some sort of physical activity. So I’m using that platform, especially live television—there’s nothing like live television, when you’re able to go out and ad-lib and listen to the crowd. Every arena [is different]: 25,000 fans in LA is certainly different from 25,000 in Anaheim. They’re only 30, 40 miles apart, but they’re different audiences. I’m using that to help me make the transition. I’m also using Larry Moss, who’s a fantastic acting coach, and Chuck Russell has been great. Certain television spots I did—That ’70s Show, Saturday Night Live—have really helped me as well.” Trek fans may also recall his guest shot in Star Trek: Voyager, beating up Jeri Ryan in the no-holds-barred personal combat of “Tsunkatse.”

Acting hasn’t made him nervous, but “it’s forcing me to hit on emotions that I wouldn’t necessarily hit on in WWF programming, in terms of loss, sadness. We have that [in the WWF], but not to this extent, obviously. My character goes through a tremendous arc. My brother is killed right [in front of me], I fall in love—it’s a beautiful love story. So I have all these elements and emotions I wouldn’t [normally get] a chance to convey, except in the film industry. I’m also a huge fan of Egyptian mythology. I’ve been over to southern Kuwait, and I’ve wrestled in Egypt as well. I’m fascinated by the pyramids.”

Even though the WWF is hugely popular in the U.S., Britain, South Africa “and a nominal outlet [for me], it’s great to work in front of a live audience. Nothing could ever replace a live audience.” McMahon, the head of the WWF, is serving as one of the executive producers on The Scorpion King. “Creatively, he has learned so much [on this film]. He’s so busy, though; his plate is full, like mine. So what he’ll do is look at the scenes and add his input: ‘What about this and what about that?’ Vince knows how to tell a great story, a great physical story, because he tells one every single night with the WWF. There are certain elements you can’t do without, and he’s there to help point them out. The executives are very happy with his input, and all his notes are well-taken.”

It’s not easy to think of the Rock as plain ol’ Dwayne Johnson, but in reality, he’s just a big, handsome, confident man, comfortable in his body and in his place in the world. “My dad is black,” he comments. “My mother’s Samoan. I’m very proud to be half-and-half. Probably because I was raised in Hawaii, I’m a little closer to the Samoan culture. That’s the great thing about the WWF, as well as the film industry: Nobody looks at me and says, ‘That’s the guy who’s black or Samoan or Greek or Italian.’ Nobody knows what I am, so it’s, ‘Hey, there’s the Rock, the Scorpion King.”’
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In order to keep Legolas’ charm, Orlando Bloom constantly referred to J.R.R. Tolkien’s books. The text was like the Rihlo,” he comments.

As the eyes and ears of the Fellowship, Orlando Bloom focuses on the mission at hand.
Orlando Bloom knew the instant he read J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Lord of the Rings* that it could serve as the basis for some extraordinary motion pictures. "The story has adventure and beasts and goblins," enthuses the actor, who co-starred in *The Fellowship of the Ring* as the heroic Elf Legolas. "There are Hobbits and Dwarves. It has heart. It has magic and love and spirit—a whole range of emotions you can experience. It's so detailed. Tolkien was a professor of history, and he just layered this story with so much [of that knowledge]. You open up the books, take a look at the pages and get lost in this world. That's what's so amazing about it."

While filming in New Zealand, Bloom relied almost as much on the books as he did the scripts by Fran Walsh, Philippa Boyens and writer-director Peter Jackson. Everyone—even Jackson—did likewise. "For all intents and purposes, the text was like referring to the Bible," Bloom explains. "It was on hand at all times. I literally went through the books and highlighted all the information I felt I needed to know about my character, about the journey of the Fellowship. I really went through them with a fine-tooth comb to try and absorb everything I could about what it meant for Legolas to be a part of the Fellowship. I wanted to incorporate what was in the books and the scripts into what I was doing in my performance."

"My place in the Fellowship is that I represent the Elves. I use my Elven qualities, which are my superhuman strength—which doesn’t come into use that much—my eyes, my ears and my senses. Legolas seems to know when there’s danger around the Fellowship. In the first movie especially, that’s his role. You see him with his bow and arrows. He’s kind of an assassin. But Legolas is really the eyes and ears of the Fellowship."

**Killer Elf**

Bloom—a young British actor whose only previous credits were small roles in U.K. television programs and a supporting part in the film *Wildie*—faced a particularly difficult challenge in *Rings*: Not only is his character tremendously physical, but he’s also a touch otherworldly. Such is the nature of Elves, and so Bloom worked out, read up and—through makeup, prosthetics and costuming—transformed himself into Legolas.

"The role of an actor is to make every character believable," says Bloom, who actually perused parts of Tolkien’s trilogy as a teenager, but read them in earnest during the several months-long *Rings* audition process. "And to play an Elf, my way into the character was through his physicality. The first thing they did when I went to New Zealand was put a bow in my hand. Training with the bow, doing swordplay with Bob Anderson, practicing on horseback—all of that really informed what my character was about and how I was going to portray him."

"Obviously, the books are incredibly detailed," he adds, "and there is plenty of information about the Elves in them. The Elves are a very interesting culture, and many people are intrigued by them because they’re rather magical and mystical. Tolkien created them as the firstborn race—they’re angelic spirits placed on Middle-Earth by the gods—so they have this otherworldly quality to them. I translated that into them always being centered, poised and focused. [You can compare that to today], where people go to yoga classes and meditate and do all sorts of things to try to attain a higher state of mind and living, to center themselves."

"So when I was playing Legolas, if the other Hobbit actors were joking around on set, I would usually be more quite and still, trying to remain as focused and concentrated as I possibly could. I wanted that intensity in the character. It’s all in the eyes, I think. It’s not in what he says, it’s in what he does—even if he’s not running or fighting or shooting a bow. And if he does speak, it’s because there’s danger or something important needs to be expressed. He’ll say, ‘The Orcs are about or ‘There’s something unnerving about this situation. We need to move on.’ That’s his mission, his job."

"For all of us, this was an epic adventure," Bloom attests. "Pete put the responsibility on us to bring something to the characters. We all had to raise our game in order to step up to the plate and meet the challenge. The makeup and prosthetics helped me so much. I spent two hours every morning with the hair and makeup people, and that was fun. It really did help me get into the character. Every morning, slipping into those ears, putting the wig on, I would become Legolas. I looked at those two hours as time I could spend getting into the right headspace, and let me tell you, when you’re waking up [that early] in the morning, it can sometimes take two hours."

*The Fellowship of the Ring* emerged as a huge critical and financial hit upon its release in December 2001, and went on to garner 13 Oscar nominations, including Best Picture and Best Director. Bloom wasn’t surprised in the least when he heard Jackson’s name announced as a nominee. "Pete is an incredible man," he extols. "He has the heart of a Hobbit, the madness of a wizard and the cool of an Elf. He encompasses all of those races. He’s a real centered and focused director, and he had to be. When we were on set, he would say, ‘So, Legolas is going to do...
“You don’t turn down a chance to work with those guys. I had no idea, really, what I would be doing, but I knew it was a modern-day military story based on the events that happened in Somalia. My character, Private First Class Todd Blackburn, was the youngest and greenest of the Rangers brought over to fight in Mogadishu. He fell 60 feet from a helicopter at the start of the mission, and that was really the beginning of the end, if you like. But he’s alive today. The Rangers’ code of conduct is that you never leave a man fallen or down. So this one man fell and needed to be removed from that location. This meant that the other Rangers had to land in an area with the worst open live fire since Vietnam and try to take him out. And it became hellish.

“As an actor, it was a great experience. I didn’t have much to do, but I had my moments, and I learned a hell of a lot from working on such a huge machine of a set, which is how Ridley runs things. Lord of the Rings is one of the largest projects ever made because it was three movies filmed at once, but since we were working in New Zealand and with Pete, it felt like a family and a smaller set. It didn’t feel like a big thing. Whereas on Black Hawk Down, there was no messing around. You had six to eight helicopters in the air, six to eight cameras filming, 600 to 800 people on set. It was a big machine, and there was a different type of approach to getting it on film. I was being baptized by fire, and just trying to hold my own and keep it going.”

Bloom played a small but pivotal role in Black Hawk Down, and one could make the same argument for his part in Fellowship of the Ring. Legolas doesn’t have that much screen time, but thanks to Bloom’s understated performance, audiences really felt the character’s presence throughout the picture. It would be easy for Bloom to groove about deleted scenes and such—some of which will probably turn up on the Fellowship DVD, due for fall release by New Line Home Entertainment—but that isn’t the actor’s style.

“I think that people will find that I’m more present in the other two films,” Bloom says diplomatically, referring to The Two Towers, due out in December, and The Return of the King, scheduled to open in December 2003. “Legolas doesn’t really arrive in Fellowship until Rivendell anyway, although there was other stuff shot for Fellowship that didn’t make it into the film. But there was more [footage] of every character that didn’t make it into the movie. That was purely because the film had to introduce the characters and get on with the story. Rather than let Fellowship run on too long, Pete refined every character right down to their essence.

**Elf Ranger**

One of Jackson’s fellow nominees in the Best Director category was Ridley Scott for Black Hawk Down, an unclen-
"To me, when I watched the film, it was about setting up the Ring and its history and introducing the audience to the Fellowship. It hit all the things it had to hit. What is the Ring? Where is the Ring? Who will be the Ring-bearer? Where does it have to get to? Who will help Frodo get it there? Who is good and who is evil? It was all about that. And now that we’ve seen how these characters joined together on the first part of their journey, there are another two movies which will explore the Fellowship and its role.”

**Warrior Elf**

As with any journey through life, there are lessons learned and people lost along the way. “By the end of The Fellowship of the Ring, the Fellowship has dispersed,” Bloom comments. “We’ve lost Boromir, and now we’ll go on. You’ll be seeing some more action—in terms of the big battle sequences to come—and you’ll get to know each of the men more, on a personal level. Pete was well aware that he had to introduce a considerable amount of characters in the first film. It was such a huge cast. When I first saw the movie, I felt very privileged to have been in it, to have been around these other actors. Pete did justice to all of the characters and to the story and, of course, I wanted more. I’m an actor, and an actor always wants to see more of his character, but I’m actually happy with what’s there. You get enough of Legolas, and hopefully you’ll get more later on. Even in the book, Legolas is silently present. And that’s what I was in the movie.”

Right now, Bloom is in the process of dealing with Fellowship’s phenomenal worldwide success. He still calls London his home, but has spent most of the last few months on the road promoting the film. He did manage to squeeze in a part in the dark drama Lullaby of Clubland, which follows four Londoners as they wreak all kinds of havoc after they unwisely mix alcohol and acid. The film is set to debut in England this summer, and will probably reach the U.S. by November. And beyond that...

“I have no idea yet what the impact of my being in the Rings films will be.” Bloom offers. “So far, just having done it has enabled me to get representation in America. It has opened a whole new area of work, which is very exciting to me. I spent three years at a drama school in London, the Guild Hall, and trained for the theater, which I love. I will always do stage work, but I’m very intrigued by movies. I’m interested in the relationship that I can form, as an actor, with a camera. I like using that and understanding that in order to create a performance on film.”

“So, Fellowship has opened a whole new area of thinking for me, which is thrilling. It has also enabled me to travel, both while I was making the film and now while I’m promoting it. I’ve had a whole series of educational life lessons—whether it was living in New Zealand for 18 months, working with the high caliber of actors and crew on the movie, or speaking with the media about the project and myself.

“There’s a whole different kind of headspace you have to get into with something this big and this popular,” Orlando Bloom muses. “It wasn’t that difficult in this instance, because Fellowship of the Ring was a real labor of love. It’s a great movie, and I find that talking about it has really helped me understand who I am and what I’ve done, and taught me a way to express that.”

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**Each issue is**
Farcape's sour apple may look sweet, but Jool (Tammy Macintosh) can be quite a nuisance when she wants to be.
Selfish, spoiled & screaming, Tammy MacIntosh, *Farscape*’s sour apple, whines her way through outer space.

**A Fine Whine**

An early third season addition to the *Moya* crew, Jool was not the easiest character for fans or her fellow shipmates to adjust to. She entered *Farscape* territory, literally, with a scream—one that can melt metal and send those within hearing range into horrified retreat—but that piercing noise isn’t the only thing that makes her off-putting. Jool’s abrasive and selfish personality isn’t too inviting, either. It’s an aspect of her character that MacIntosh is well aware of, and even intent upon. “I don’t like a series that gets ‘happy family’ too quickly,” she notes. “I don’t think that makes for good television. I wanted to keep Jool as irritating, whiny and horrid as she could possibly be.”

There are few who would argue that she hasn’t been achieved, and though MacIntosh has played her share of less-than-lovable characters before, nothing could prepare the actress for the intensity of the science fiction universe. “I went on the Web after my first two episodes aired,” she comments, “and 90 percent of the people hated her. *Hated* her. I had worked really hard, testing once a month for seven months, to get this role. It was the most excruciating screen test process I’ve ever been through, and because I put so much passion and work and thought and creativity into the character, I kind of took it personally.”

That negative reaction made several executives nervous when it came time for MacIntosh’s first SF convention appearance. “Thankfully, nobody mentioned that to me [at the time],” she remarks. “I knew it would be hard. I thought, ‘I’m either going to have tomatoes thrown at me, or they’ll just say ‘*Jool* Get Off!’ and it will be a short stint.’ But it was really, really lovely and completely overwhelming. The fans were so kind and generous. It’s hewl to play a complete bitch of a character that no one likes, then try and face the public with it.

“There may be many people who can’t stand the character right now, but in the long run, it will be worth it,” MacIntosh argues. “It’s a better journey for an audience member when they absolutely hate someone [at first], then come to find, ‘I kind of like her now.’ I like to make the audience work a little, to feel the extremities. I want to take them to a place where they start understanding things as Jool does.”
In Jool’s first episode, “Self Inflicted Wounds, Part I: Could’a, Would’a, Should’a,” she is rescued by the *Farscape* gang from a holding facility where she was being kept frozen, in a near-death state, waiting to have her body parts harvested. But being young and spoiled, Jool is less than grateful. She’s actually appalled by her new situation—on the run, her life in constant danger and without the creature comforts she grew up with. Subsequently, she spends most of her time complaining, whining and screaming in fear.

“She was on a multicultural tour,” says MacIntosh, “but multicultural to her is not a prison ship out in the Baka Beyond with people just surviving. To her, it’s quite insane that nobody else understands that she doesn’t belong here, that she just wants to go home. So if there’s a next stop, cool. But it just doesn’t pan out that way, and, of course, they perceive her to be a pain-in-the-butt, whining, wincing Jewish American Princess.”

That attitude sometimes makes for a very bumpy ride, and enticed one crewmate to nickname her “Princess.” “She has a bit of a cheerleader thing about her,” MacIntosh agrees, noting how rapidly Jool’s emotions fly all over the map—from youthful exuberance at the wonders of the universe to a kind of Valley Girl revulsion at anything dirty, ugly, uncomfortable or alien. There’s also her habit of freaking out whenever the dren hits the fan. Jool hasn’t exactly adapted to the rough world of *Farscape* yet, and MacIntosh’s spoiled brat is often battered about, tossed into walls, muddied up and forced to wade hip-deep in alien bat guano, to name just a few abuses.

**Shrieking Violet**

Jool’s mishaps make for some funny comic relief, but the jokes got a little old for MacIntosh after a while. “It’s her rite of passage—for the character, for her relationship with the rest of the crew, and also with the audience,” she says. “But I hope she won’t suffer through these painful trials for too long, because it’s really tiring to play.”

There was a point, early on in Jool’s development, that MacIntosh was getting as frustrated as the show’s fans. “I thought, ‘There has to be more to this woman,’” she sighs. “If she’s so highly intelligent and cultured, she couldn’t be where she is without some kind of inner voice and depth.

“My aim when I started *Farscape*,” MacIntosh continues, “was to rock the boat. But no matter what character you play, you have to always keep your own heart and soul. And you’re always affected by stuff that’s written and printed. I was really happy that Jool wasn’t liked; it was exactly how I wanted to play her. But I was personally a little shattered.”

Any small respite from Jool’s usual princess attitude has been welcomed by MacIntosh, and those changes eventually did come about. No longer the shrieking violet who takes the brunt of the crew’s jokes, insults, abuse and animosity, Jool has begun to give a little back. “She’s starting to take it really well,” MacIntosh smiles. “She has had to. There’s no way out. And no one really cares about getting her anywhere, so for the time being she’s just going along for the ride.”

One of the more notable signs of change came in “Revenving Angel,” where Jool confesses her loneliness to her crewmate, D’Argo (Anthony Simcoe). It was a strong indication that Jool was shifting her stance from antagonist to comrade, and gave the character a chance to show a little heart. “It took a while to get to that,” says MacIntosh. “I was hoping that would happen much sooner in the series, but it was definitely a turning point where Jool let down her princess guard. The humans and aliens alike need to have that sort of contact on the ship, so that was a really important scene. I worked very hard to make Jool’s inner thoughts and voice be heard for a change, rather than just her attitude. I love that scene so much.

“Andrew Prowse directed that. I worked with him on an ABC show called *Wildside* here in Australia. It was a cutting-edge drama that had a rehearsal process which tore the shackles off any type of ego-based performance you could come up with as an actor. Andrew has the ability to strip you of anything that you have to protect yourself, and makes the truth be heard and known in a very real way. I was absolutely thrilled that he directed that episode. Once again, he pulled more out of me and more out of a character than I normally permit to share.”

Another relationship that continues to evolve is Jool’s association with Chiana. Though contentious most of the time, the two women show the first signs of friendship in “Scratch ‘N’ Sniff,” in which the
"I wanted to keep Jool as irritating, whiny and horrible as she could possibly be."

The crew takes shore leave and the pair engage in frivolity and a seductive, drunken dance.

"Chiana was definitely the first person whom Jool related to," says Macintosh. "It's familiarity breeds contempt. It's a love-hate thing they have. They're of similar age and spirit, and Gigi [Edgley] and I work very similarly. We both use lots of Method stuff and really put ourselves out there. People say, 'Just act,' but for Gigi and me it has to be real. I've grown to love Chiana because she's the underdog there; she's not trying to be a princess or a warrior. She's just sur-

viving, and that's kind of where Jool is at, once she works it out that she's not going anywhere. She's stuck on this ship. So it's nice for Jool to just have contact with someone, because they were all so anti-Jool for much of the series."

Princess Daze

Dysfunctional and antagonistic relationships are quite the norm on *Farscape*. When the show began, none of the characters were particularly enamored of each other, and the first season was rife with conflict. Subsequently, each new character has gone through their own initiation. For Jool, it seems only a matter of time before she'll prove her worth. She has already been useful in taking over medical duties from the departed Zhaan (Virginia Hey), and also helped hunt down an intruder on the ship.

"It's OK to be a bitch of a character," says Macintosh, "but you have to be given something to hold onto so you want to support her. There is still a certain quality about Jool, that she remains the pretentious princess. But I think slowly that's all going to be unraveled. The writers have so many characters to write for, so it's understandable that they can't always completely flesh out someone as early as you might like. But I think starting with the fourth season, Jool will be prominent."

Specifically, Macintosh would love to see further exploration of Jool's childhood, how she grew up, her studies, her passions and things she might have in common with the rest of the crew. "I would just love to pour out Jool's heart and soul in an entire episode," Macintosh offers. "But then that makes for really boring storytelling after that one show."

Though a veteran of Australian television, Macintosh was new to science fiction when she came aboard the *Moya*. It didn't take her long to discover the unique pros and cons of the genre. She was initially told that her character would be painted orange, but no one bothered to mention the rest of Jool's get-up: the constricting costume, rigid collar and three hours required each morning to turn the 32-year-old ex-gymnast into a whiny alien teen.

"I had no idea about the prosthetics," Macintosh declares. "No idea of the wig or the costume." She then points out a series of red half-circles on her hands—scars from the silver rings at the end of her costume which cut into her skin wherever she bends her wrist or picks something up. The collar and headpiece also inhibit movement above her shoulders, and the upper portion of her outfit weighs almost 11 pounds, which—she demonstrates with a bit of self-deprecating humor—has a tendency to tip her off balance.

Macintosh, who is small in stature, doesn't mind joking about the cumbersome costume, but there's an earnest tone in her voice when she adds, "I just want our costume designer to wear that outfit for one day. Just one day."

Working in an alternate universe has its positives as well, especially the freedom to create. "*Farscape* is the most amazing, fantasy-driven show," Macintosh enthuses. "As an actor, you have so many options. When Jool was drinking and had that arrow shot in her arm ["...Different Destinations"], I was just working on it and thinking, 'I'm an alien. I can drink with my toe! I can do anything.' I really like the joviality, the fantasy, the comedy. Whether you're eating, drinking, whatever, you can create a whole new way to do things that have never existed. I really enjoy being able to make things up. *Farscape* doesn't have structured scripts. You get to play on this series, which is unlike any other show I've ever done. That's what I love about it."

As for that metal-melting scream, Macintosh would love to see it fade away—but not before she completes some unfinished business. "Isn't Scorpy's rod hot?" she asks, referring to the villainous Scorpius' life-sustaining head implant. "Can't my scream somehow melt that? I could kill him in an instant! One episode. We're out. Jool has finally come through and finished complaining. She has become a warrior!"

Tammy Macintosh grins at the thought of Jool saving the day. After all, who wants to play a bitch forever?
CROSSING
the WOODEN SEA
Navigating fantasy settings & former selves, author
Jonathan Carroll explores the experience of life.
By ANNE GAY

“How do you row a boat across a wooden sun?”
Novelist Jonathan Carroll provides a few pointers.

“Part of that is exploring questions that have so far been unanswered or are unanswerable. You think, ‘Let’s try it in this perspective and maybe I’ll find something different, something more satisfying.’

“A friend of mine said, ‘Most writers write either for the head or the heart. You write for the “Oh!”’ It’s like when you’re watching a movie and suddenly, involuntarily, you say ‘Oh!’ when the dog talks or the kid flies. It’s an outburst of wonder, a return to childhood, and you can’t stop thinking about it and find yourself grinning. Hopefully, if I do it well, somebody goes ‘What?’ or ‘Huh?’ and that’s how I make an impact. But some people write to me and say, ‘I loved the beginning of your book and the love story, and everything works, but when the dog started talking, I threw the book across the room.’ So what are you going to do?”

The author shrugs wryly and goes on in his deep, rumbling voice. “I wish I could say I made myself go ‘Oh!’ but what happens when I’m writing is even better, because I’m writing down a line and suddenly the dog starts talking, and it’s wonderful because it’s not so much an ‘Oh!’ as more of an ‘OK.’ I never know from one day to the next what’s coming up. In *The Wooden Sea*, when Frannie, the central character, goes downstairs into the living room and sees a pair of orange cowboy boots, I asked myself, ‘Who’s that?’ Then I remembered that a friend of mine once wore those cowboy boots, and I was like, ‘Frannie wore them!’ I literally said aloud, ‘That’s who it is! It’s him at 17! He has come back wearing those cowboy boots.’ And I didn’t go ‘Oh!’; I went ‘OK.’

“The basis for that came about when I had dinner a few years ago with a very, very famous friend, a rock singer. This guy has led a life that anyone would wish for, but stunningly, he told me, ‘I’ve always wondered what it would be like to have my 15-year-old self come and hear what he thinks of me.’ I said, ‘What do you mean, what would he think of you? You’re world-famous! You’ve been famous for 20 years and everybody bows down to you!’ He answered, ‘Mmm, yeah; but you know, I’ve sold out and I’ve made concessions.’ And this was coming from a guy who is the king of the world!

“That thought stayed in my mind,” Carroll admits. “So what I did when I wrote this book was ratchet it down some and had a normal guy go through those same doubts and hesitations. We look in a photo album and see ourselves at age 20 with a bad haircut and bell-bottoms, and think, ‘Oh, that’s quaint. That’s not me.’ But oh yes, it is! What you’ve got to do is connect all your [former] selves together and find the line that brought you to where you are now. You wouldn’t want to really do that, though, because certain things were embarrassing or silly, or they went bad through this marriage or whatever. I can’t actually have my former selves come back, but it is a continuity. You can’t disregard that. It’s important.

“I wish I had the energy, enthusiasm and innocence that I had back then,” Carroll laments. “I have a 21-year-old son and I listen to him talking. It’s wonderful. He’s going to beat the world. He’s going to kick the sky and I’m not, so in one sense I envy him being 21. I wouldn’t want to go through the lumps that he’s going to have to, but he does have some things that I’m very jealous of, and not just his sexual prowess, but the desire to munch the world. I’m less into munchies. I know what I want to eat in the restaurant by now, but he’s ready to order anything on the menu.”

**Future Selves**

The idea of past and future selves is a fascinating concept that leaves itself open to many different answers and interpretations. *The Wooden Sea’s* perplexing title, though, shows how simple and obvious those answers can sometimes be. “I love the idea of being asked a question that from the beginning there’s no answer to,” Carroll smiles. “There are just different possibilities. It’s so rare in our lives to actually feel our brains functioning. We’re on autopilot so much of the time that when something provocative or evocative happens—I just love that feeling. Someone said it’s like when you feel a radiator starting to heat up. I can feel my radiator heating because I’m having fun with [my writing]. It’s like playing. I always thought [The Wooden Sea’s title] was the heart of this thing, and I made this one up: ‘How do you row a boat across a wooden sea?’ The adult Frannie has his answers, but his younger self says: ‘Oh, you just get out and walk.’ The adult Frannie would have never thought of that.”

Now middle-aged, Frannie is the police chief of a small town in New York. Although he was a juvenile delinquent during his teenage years, for the last decade or two his life has been comfortably humming—which his younger self finds a big disappointment. “My wife, who is my severest critic,” notes Carroll, “says of all my characters, Frannie is the most like me. So [that character] is more about looking in the mirror than anything else. Stepping into Frannie’s shoes, well, both of us were bad boys when we were young. But we’re wise guys now, you know. We have decent hearts and try hard.”

“Crane’s View, where *The Wooden Sea* is set, is basically the town that I grew up in, Dobbs Ferry [New York]. I knew that I wanted the town to have two names and sound Presbyterian. On the Hudson River they have funny names like...”

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**I m used to just sitting at my desk quietly writing good stories,” says Carroll. “I like the isolation of writing.”**

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**Jonathan Carroll**

“I envy anyone who has yet to enjoy the sexy, erotic, and addictive novels of Jonathan Carroll. They are delicious treats—with devilish tricks inside them.” *Washington Post* Book World

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**I’m used to just sitting at my desk quietly writing good stories,” says Carroll. “I like the isolation of writing.”**
Jones’s Nook, and Crane’s View sounds enough like Dobbs Ferry. I live in Vienna [Austria] now and went back to my home-town seven years ago because my brother wanted to, but I wasn’t really interested. The beginning of this book is true: When I was 12, I pulled a body out of the river. So when I went back there, I realized I had always wanted to write about that experience, and now was the time. After I had finished my six books, from *Bones of the Moon* to *From the Teeth of Angels*, I was thinking about what I wanted to do next. What I really wanted to do was write a realistic novel, just to see if I could do it. So I said, ‘OK, I’m going to write about the experience of that girl who I pulled out of the water, and I’m going to write it as a realistic novel. But hey, I grew up in this town, so let’s make the town fictional and go with that.’

Such was the start of the loosely linked *Crane’s View* saga, which began with *Kissing the Beehive*, continued with *The Marriage of Sticks* and now culminates in *The Wooden Sea*. While the first book was based in reality, *The Wooden Sea* grows from a bedrock of believability into something more—which helped the author widen his exploration of identity in unexpected ways. “I think we would all like to have a third eye. In this context, that would be observing things that interest us without being present to others—like watching the cute girl undress or listening to what people say about us after we’ve left the room. That’s the invisibility factor: When you’re there but people don’t know you’re there, you’re going to hear stuff about yourself that you didn’t think about before. When you find out what others think of you—those who love you, those who hate you, those who are indifferent to you—it adds some perspective to your self-image. And the impotence is that when they call you a jerk for your actions, you want to say, ‘But I have a reason why I’m a jerk!’ And you can’t.”

**Present Views**

Given that the trio of *Crane’s View* novels are so different in their approaches to reality, it seems a little strange that the same setting was chosen for all three. “Often when I’m writing a book,” says Carroll, “I become really interested in the characters. When the book is finished, I want to give them more time, so I’ll say, ‘OK, let’s give them a new story.’ There’s more I want to talk about that encompasses this guy Frannie. In *Wooden Sea*, he comes to a happy peace with his father and sees that his father has a girl friend. That’s kind of a happy ending, which in many ways I wish I had had with my own experience.

“My father [Sidney Carroll] and I did not get on at all,” he reveals. “He wrote movies [including *The Hustler*] and I wanted to write novels, but he was pretty critical. I realize in retrospect that he was critical for bad reasons. My first novel, *The Land of Laughs*, is a pretty good book; but my father read it and said it was awful. So that contact is gone. I realized even then that it was bogus criticism, and that there were all kinds of weird agendas attached to it, so I never gave him another one of my books while I was working on it. If he wanted to read it, he could read it when it was done. It was useless, and it made for bad feelings.

“My son wants to be a writer now, and he gives me his stuff. I had him as a creative writing student when he was in high school, and he liked that course. Now that he’s serious about it, I’ve sort of become the competition; so I’m very lighthearted with him when I read his stuff. I’ll just say, ‘This is pretty good, but what about this and that?’ Because I know he doesn’t want to be hit with a brick. Nor do any of us.”

Although he has sold millions of novels and been translated into 17 languages, Carroll still continues his other career—as a teacher at the American International School in Vienna. “I teach one class for half a year, a couple of times a week,” he remarks. “I’m a gentleman dabbler now. I spent 10 years away from the classroom and just missed it, so when my school where I taught in Vienna said, ‘Would you...
be willing to come back? I was glad to do a little bit. I teach creative writing and I like it very much.

"It's an international school, and that mix is like some kind of hot peppery soup when you put 'em together—the Iranian with the Colombian, the Nicaraguan with the Antarctic. I love that. The secret of being a good teacher comes down to just one sentence: "Teach the one who is bored." It's a very difficult thing to do, and it takes so much out of you, but you know what? It's fun. If you have the attention of the bored ones, the interested students are doubly interested. My teachers when I was a kid were so awful! They were all in this kind of autopilot, screensaver mode where they would read the same lesson that they had been teaching for the last 20 years, so of course we were bored. If you're interested, if you're energetic, then the students will be as well."

Past Realities

It sounds as though Carroll is far from living in screensaver mode. "My life is not that zippy," he chuckles. "It's regular and orderly and everyday so I can be nuts in my work. I'm a table-maker. I go to the computer in the morning and I do my pages and then I walk the dog. My life is not full of magic. My head is full of magic. My life..." he shrugs and leaves the sentence dangling.

Carroll is equally humble when it comes to evaluating his phenomenal literary success. "It's amusing," he offers. "I tell my wife that it took me years to even admit that I was a writer. I used to say I was a teacher who writes. My publisher in one country told me, 'We've sold a million copies of your book,' and I just laughed and said, 'Right! You should have!' But I'm amused by the whole thing. It's great. I love it. But I don't take it seriously. As long as I earn enough money to write the stories I want to write, and can drink my coffee in the morning without wondering, 'How can I pay for this?' and go to work and continue to do what I'm doing, then that's all that matters—and it has been like that for years. I'm enjoying it. I know I'm a lucky guy."

Fortunately, fans can enjoy several of Carroll's earlier books in new Orb trade paperback editions (The Land of Laughs; Bones of the Moon, being reissued next month). His new novel, White Apples, will be published by Tor Books in October.

One note of interest that may surprise Carroll's fans is that this American author has been living in Europe for the last 20 years. "Distance adds perspective," he explains. "And I like the isolation of writing. I like being left on my own. I do that thing where you're the observer in your own life: 'Take notes on what you see!' But it's different when I'm doing screen work. With scriptwriting, you know that you'll be working on a team, and your voice is usually the last on the ladder because you're just the writer. If you go into it thinking, 'I'm the writer!' then you're going to be squashed like a bug. I like it, though, because it gets me away from the desk."

"It took me years to even admit that I was a writer. I used to say I was a teacher who writes."

There are a hundred people inputting, talking and blaring. For a while, it's fun, and then I go back to my monk life.

"I'm used to just sitting at my desk quietly writing good stories," he adds, "and every now and then I get a nice letter like the one I got the other day. It was from a woman who had lost her mother. She said, 'I read From the Teeth of Angels and I felt better. It gave me resolution for some of the pain and loss.' That was music to my ears.

"I'm grateful to the people who have spent time with me, given up hours of their lives to live in a world that I've created, and who have hopefully been satisfied enough to want to come back and visit another one," Jonathan Carroll comments. "You can't go up to people on the street and say, 'Can I have five hours of your time?' But these people do it voluntarily and happily, and as the French say, 'Mon chapeau' [i.e. 'I raise my hat to you.']"
AFTER MONTHS WANDERING JAMES GURNEY'S FANTASY WORLD, STARLOG REPORTS IN ON THE EPIC TV SAGA.

Even dinosaurs started small. Before Dinotopia's reptile residents got big, they began life as these maquettes.

Pinewood Studios, Buckinghamshire, England. January 2001. 9 a.m. It’s a cool winter morning, and I've been invited by Hallmark Entertainment President Robert Halmi Sr. to sit in on some of the filming for Dinotopia, a massive six-hour ABC mini-series based on the popular illustrated books by James Gurney. With a projected price tag of $80 million, it's the biggest enterprise that Hallmark has ever taken on.

I'm greeted by unit publicist Fliss Coombs, who hands me a call sheet with today's schedule and ushers me up to her office, which is dominated by a table covered with maquettes—richly detailed small-scale models—of various dinosaurs that will be seen in the series. Coombs then goes off to make a few calls before we head over to the set, leaving me with a small pile of videotapes to look at: promos, "Making of" spots and some early computer tests done by FrameStore, which will be creating the CG creatures (as they did for Walking With Dinosaurs).

The screenplay for Dinotopia was written by Simon Moore, who previously scripted Gulliver's Travels and The 10th Kingdom for Hallmark. In Moore's story, brothers Karl and David (Tyron Leitso, Wentworth Miller) are traveling with their father Frank (Stuart Wilson) when their plane crashes in a storm. Frank is lost, while Karl and David are washed up on Dinotopia, a strange land where humans and dinosaurs coexist in apparent harmony. Among the island resi-
dents are the beautiful Marion (Katie Carr), daughter of Waterfall City’s mayor; Rosemary (Alice Krige), who runs Earthfarm, the scheming rogue Cyrus Crab (David Thewlis); and a friendly dinosaur named Zippo (voiced by Lee Evans).

10:15 a.m. We’re off to Stage C, where today’s scenes are being lensed. The massive stage has been converted into several smaller Earthfarm sets. The crew is in the middle of scene 117, in which Karl tries to teach Zippo how to play ping-pong. What looks simple on the printed page is an incredibly complicated sequence to shoot, requiring several different takes, each captured by an elaborate computer-controlled camera rig. Standing off to one side, director Marco (Demolition Man) Brambilla goes over the shot with Leitso. A few feet away sits an actor who appears to be wearing the worst dinosaur costume ever created. It’s actually the stand-in for Zippo, Ross Mullen, who is used to give the actors a correct eye-line during rehearsals (he doesn’t appear in the mini-series).

A white-haired man wearing glasses and a blue filming coat signals from the far side of the set where he’s sitting behind a monitor. “Mr. Halmi wants you to go over there,” whispers Coombs. Just what every journalist wants: a long walk across a live set with everyone watching him. We shake hands, and Halmi indicates a place to stand just to his left. I later discover it’s within camera frame after an AD asks me to move over. My response: “If the President of Hallmark Entertainment asked you to stand there, wouldn’t you stand there?” The AD laughs. Case closed.

11 a.m. “Do you want to see the rest?” asks Halmi in his distinctive Hungarian-accented voice. We quietly slip out of Stage C, closely followed by his black-suited driver Robin, who looks like a Secret Service agent minus the earpiece. Robin promptly proves his value when he saves his boss from being smacked in the head by a stack of two-by-

A YEAR IN

OTOPIA

By JOE NAZZARO
fours being carried by a fast-moving but not very careful construction worker.

First stop is Stage G, where motion-control shots are being filmed. In the center of the stage—which is surrounded by blue-screen backgrounds—an elaborate seat rig is elevated several feet in the air. Visual FX supervisor Mike McGee is watching a nearby monitor; it shows him the wireframe model of the moving Brachiosaurus that has been digitally inserted under the seat.

“Is he running now?” asks Halmi, looking over his shoulder. “It seems a bit too fast for me.” An FX technician begins the sequence again. The rig rocks up and down, as though perched on its imaginary mount.

What started off simply on paper—having humans ride on the backs of dinosaurs—turned into weeks of additional motion-rig shooting for the Dinotopia team.

Enormous sets were constructed for this colossal enterprise. Production designer Walter Martishius estimates that Earthfarm was “probably 1,200 feet long from beginning to end.”

...and Halmi seems much happier with the result. “This is the first day we’re testing this equipment,” he explains, noting that this shot will be just one element in a hugely complex sequence in which several dinosaurs enter Waterfall City. “It takes four months to put a two-minute scene like this together,” he claims, indicating a series of numbered storyboards mounted nearby.

11:30 a.m. Our next destination is meant to be the stage which houses the swamp where several characters will encounter a pack of mosasaurs (giant crocodiles, for the uninformed). After getting lost a few times, we walk through an unmarked door and find ourselves in the water-filled swamp. “You

Concept artist Dominic Lavery remarks that his designs ended up being “a mixture of dinosaurs incorporated with real creatures that exist today.”
should come back next week," says Halmi. "This is going to be a really big scene. All of this," he points to the water, which looks awfully dark and deep, "will be filled with these huge crocodiles, and they'll be thrashing and leaping around."

The executive producer gets a call on his mobile, and we agree to meet back at his office a bit later. "But first, Robin is going to drive you up to Waterfall City," he tells me. "They're about to start tearing it down, and I want you to see it while it's still standing!"

I get into the back of Halmi's black Mercedes and am brought over to the studio backlot where Waterfall City stands empty. Spread over five-and-a-half acres, it's the largest exterior set ever built in Europe. My notes indicate that the scaffolding used to support the city, if stretched end to end, would extend for 60 miles; a "normal" big-budget feature uses maybe five or six. And this is just 10 percent of what will ultimately be seen; the other 90 will be added digitally by the team at Framestore.

Noon. Back in his office, Halmi explains that he was first exposed to Gurney's work when Dinotopia had already been optioned by Columbia Pictures. "It took about a year before they finally threw their arms up, because they had no clue how to do it. Then Disney made a pass at it, but said it was too expensive. I said, 'In that case, I'll buy the rights and show these guys how to do it!' So that's how it happened."

After commissioning Moore to write the script, Halmi began assembling his Dinotopia team. "Walter [Martishius, the production designer] is brilliant," Halmi extols. "He was involved in Disney's Dinosaur as an art director and hated it, so this was an opportunity to set the record straight and create something that's not violent, has a story and represents these dinosaurs as they might have been."

"Marco was an unknown," he admits. "I didn't like Demolition Man much, but I loved his commercials and knew he could do it. So at that point, I went to ABC and my own
company and said, 'Look, this is going to cost $80 million, so we're going far out on a limb, but I believe it's a franchise. It has multiple lives: books, cartoons, series, children's series, sequels, whatever.'

Complicating matters was the fact that ABC would have to take an enormous leap of faith with Dinotopia. "This is the first time in their history that the network can't approve a rough cut," says Halml, "because there won't be anything on the rough cut [because the CGI won't be completed yet]. So to have that kind of faith is unheard of, but they seem to be very happy. Everybody has great expectations, and the proof of the pudding was when ABC ordered a Dinotopia spin-off series blind. That has never happened before."

Pineview, 1 p.m. Martishius is late for a mini "reese" (Brit film-speak for location scouting), but agrees to take a few minutes for a quick chat. With Waterfall City being struck, a big chunk of work is now behind him—but there's still much left to do.

"There are a good 20 or 30 major sets in this project," he remarks. "If you look at Stage C, the entrance to Earthfarm is actually one of the smaller sets on this production. The rest of Earthfarm was massive, probably 1,200 feet long from beginning to end, dressed with 20-foot-tall haystacks and barns. We've already had two or three huge sets—Waterfall City obviously being the biggest one—but even our smaller sets are filled. One of the smaller ones is the swamp temple you just saw, which is filling Stage E right now."

Not surprisingly, Waterfall City still stands as the major set for Martishius, in terms of the time and resources he spent on it. "It's funny you mention that, because I was just thinking this morning, 'If somebody asked me how much time we spent on Waterfall City, I wouldn't know!' " he laughs. "That's so bizarre. I got here in May [2000], and we began working on Waterfall City by the second week in June. I think we spent about five months on it by the time we started shooting."

"It was so huge. Our main arch was something like 60 feet tall, and that was the main building. Nothing was less than 30 feet, and everything else was mostly 40, so you're talking about a huge amount of scale. On a normal backdrop, you would go up two stories, maybe three, but going up to 40, 60 feet is massive, so the scale on that set was daunting. The doors into the palace were 30 feet tall—because dinosaurs go in and out of them—and FrameStore is adding [CGI] to make them 100 feet. We felt that if we built things only to a certain size, we would never get anything in-camera; and between the budget that FrameStore had and what we had, there was a big trade-off. For the brachiosaurs coming into the city, for example, we had to build the whole arch so we could actually get that shot in-camera, because 40-foot dinosaurs go through that 60-foot arch."

And judging from the building plans scattered around Martishius' office, there's still plenty of work to do. "We have four major stage sets to build, and they haven't even been started yet," he sighs. "There are two huge location sets that we have to build, too, and I'm already on my eighth month working here. Normally by now, I would be going home. We still have to do the bus depot, which I'm going out to scout right now, and we have our weather station that we're building in Black Park. We also have a little bit of the Pangeo River to do, and we're still building the lower half of the barn."

The hatchery and the swamp are full sets, and we're constructing the World Beneath, which is huge. We also have the interior of a ship's hold, Sunstone Cave and the tunnels, which go into the cave. I said four, but we're actually going to be filling six full-stage sets—which we haven't even begun."

Hampstead Heath, London. 4 p.m. Dinotopia screenwriter Moore is no stranger to giant fantasy projects, but this one came about when the last thing he wanted to do was another big mini-series. "When Robert sent me the books, they set off a little bell in my mind," says Moore, "and as he outlined the scale of the production and the type of thing he was interested in doing, I started getting excited about it. Dinotopia also had the other essential requirement for me personally—I knew adapting it wouldn't be easy, and I didn't know quite how to crack it. I found myself thinking, 'This is really interesting, because it doesn't quite work as an epic story as I understand it, and yet it's not a generalized world at all.' What's brilliant about Gurney is that he can put a magnifying scope on the tiniest detail, but while I was reading the books and thinking how richly thought out this land was, I was also feeling that the world of these Victorian explorers didn't quite work for me as drama."

Moore's solution was to use the intricately detailed Dinotopia Universe as the setting for his own story, one which would feature a new set of characters and a contemporary sensibility. "I'm trying not to break any of the rules that Gurney created," he stresses, "so you'll be seeing places [from the books] and meeting the relatives and descendants of some of [Gurney's characters]. Being Dinotopians, some of them live a very long time, but Will Denison [from the original stories] is a long-dead hero. He's in the hall of fame there as a rider. I've tried not to change Gurney's world too much, because it's so well-established and has so many fans. What I've done is tell another story, with very different characters."

Camden Town, London. March 2001. 11:30 a.m. From the outside, Jim Henson's Creature Shop appears to be just another nondescript office in North London, but as you ascend the stairs it soon becomes apparent that you're entering Muppet Mecca. Posters and props from numerous Henson projects litter the reception area, and bits of Muppet minutiae are crammed into

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Concept Art: Dominic Laverty

STARLOG/May 2002
Every corner. It was here that the visual look of Dinotopia first began taking place under its original director, John Stephenson.

"The course of this project started out slightly different for us," notes Henson's Jamie Courtier. "John was going to direct, and Hallmark set up a production design unit here within the Creature Shop. We had designers who were hired by Hallmark artists who were storyboarding and doing dinosaur designs, and then our art department got involved. Sharon Smith was the head of that department, and she took care of translating those designs—in terms of art—directing the maquettes and so forth—but the Creature Shop wasn't the primary designer. It was actually Hallmark, so that was quite unusual. Sometimes a production will come to us and say, 'Design the characters,' but this was a slightly different case."

When Dinotopia was reassigned to Brambilla, the director brought in Martishius to help him out. Between the two of them, they began steering Dinotopia in an alternate visual direction than what Stephenson had originally intended. "When Walter took over as production designer," says Creature Shop art director Smith, "he had the designers make new characters. I worked with them to create the CG animatronic maquettes, and collaborated closely with FrameStore to make it all work. We created Zippo and the Pteranodons, as well as a mother Chasmosaurus, which was never used. 'Number 26,' the baby Chasmosaurus, was also created here. When Marco and Walter first arrived, we had a design talk about all of the different elements and changes that they wanted to make with the major characters. It was definitely a new art direction."

While the Creature Shop's design influence was ultimately reduced, they were still responsible for all of the physical dinosaur elements used on set. "The build list for the animatronics included Number 26," project supervisor Verner Gresty says, "which was quite nice. People are going to love it. That was the only complete animatronic we did. We created a big ankylosaur tail with a club at the end, and a Pteranodon head and neck to crash into the Sunstone tower and attack the girl. We also made up a Tyrannosaurus leg that went all the way up to the hip, which was about 16 feet long. There's an outpost set, and the Tyrannosaurus 'drumstick' goes through this room and breaks through a table and everything else. Most of the stuff we were involved with required large and robust FX rigs that could actually break the set, attack bridges and so on."

According to Gresty, the biggest sequence for the Creature Shop was the mosasaur attack. "For that, we had swimming versions for shallow water, and then deep-water ones which launched out and attacked the bridge. They were 18 feet long, and we replicated two or three of them swimming at a time in different parts of the tank, so in the final cut you'll see 20 of these things converging. We had two big attack mosasaurs, and they were in foot-deep holes in the water and rigged from underneath. Everything was operated manually with air and pneumatics, and we got these huge thrashing shots and lots of water disturbance. The main attack mosasaur had a two-meter central ram which ran the creature's whole length; we could get a seven-foot lunge out of that thing at a very high speed. We studied a whole bunch of real crocodile footage, and it was very dynamic. That's what we wanted to replicate."

FrameStore Soho, London. March 2001. 11 a.m. Inside this hi-tech building, several dozen technicians are helping to bring Dinotopia to life. Character animators are busy creating the ABC-TV mini-series' dinosaurs—building wireframe models, animating them and adding realistic skin textures and colors. The environment people are adding CG set extensions. In one corner, Quentin Miles is leading his eight-member "Zippo Squad" as they take Evans' unique voice and build a dinosaur around it, much in the same fashion that Disney animators have created their classic characters for 60 years. McGee arrives, having just returned from Pinewood for a series of meetings with his people later this afternoon. "What I'm doing is coming back in the evenings or on weekends when they're not filming," he explains, "and using that time to brief the team so that they have enough to keep them going for a few days. That's really the only way to do it, because I can't be everywhere at once."

For McGee, Dinotopia marks a quantum leap from the work that FrameStore did on the groundbreaking Walking With Dinosaurs.

"We produced six half-hours of material and maybe 40 dinosaurs for Walking With Dinosaurs. Dinotopia features fewer creatures, but it has much more physical interaction. With this mini-series, we're adding the very obvious real elements of buildings and humans, whereas in Walking With Dinosaurs we were in a natural environment of trees and foliage where the color palettes of the dinosaurs didn't look out of place. But if you put the skin detail of a human next to a dinosaur's, you'll start to notice [the difference] if you're in the right reality."

With more than a year still remaining until Dinotopia airs, McGee believes his team will be working right down to the wire. "The airdate has already been booked for May 2002," he states. "We were due to finish the shoot in mid-March, with plate units

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The T. rex attack was a "big number" to design, says Cornish. His department drew nearly 5,000 storyboards for the saga.

Visual FX supervisor Miki McEne says that the dinosaur's interaction with humans is just one of Dilophosaurus's groundbreaking elements.
around the world picking up canyon and waterfall plates, but the shoot is over-running because there are so many special things—like having humans riding on the backs of dinosaurs, for which we motion a rig.

“We’re now going to spend another five weeks shooting that motion rig—which we thought would be finished by now—so that’s eating into our post-production time a little. The teams here have already been animating since September [2000], and have been building the cities and models, so the delivery of the final shots may be held up a few weeks, but we’re still on schedule.”

**Pinewood Studios. March 2001. Noon.**

It’s day #122 of shooting, and principal photography is in the homestretch. Unit publicist Coombs welcomes me back and hands me a call sheet. On the back, under “Special Instructions,” there’s a note that reads: “Joe Nazzaro, freelance writer and a keen supporter of Hallmark Productions, will be on set today.” Nobody asks me to wear a special badge or T-shirt, so I consider myself lucky.

As we make our way to Stage A, I’m warned that things are a bit tense and that I shouldn’t try to talk to Brambilla. At the moment, he’s working out a scene with Carr, who is about to fight with a nonexistent *Pteranodon*, and is lying on a rocky outcropping about six feet off the ground. The actress is surrounded by blue screen, and Brambilla is coaching her. “Forget the kick this time,” he yells. “Just start on your elbows!” After 15-20 minutes of scrambling and battling in various ways, the director calls “Cut!” and Carr’s stand-in takes her place as the camera is repositioned.

Looking at the schedule, it seems like it’s going to be another busy day. While Carr fights *Pteranodons* in the studio, Leitso and Miller are shooting second-unit water sequences in nearby Enfield and the Henson team is preparing Number 26 for some pickup shots. I bump into producer Bill Cartridge, a film veteran of more than 40 years, who is surprisingly low-key considering the enormity of this project.

“We really haven’t had any of what I would call spectacular things go wrong,” he insists. “What has been potentially stressful is that we’re trying to make a movie in the UK at the wrong time of year, in terms of the weather. I always remember Bob Hope’s famous saying: that he liked to come to Britain to play golf, because you could do four seasons in nine holes. It has been a bit like that. We shot exteriors in November and...
Although not the December, he on challenges continue be watching of anything who and Bond is sophisticated uncover members storyboard character Lavery, prop Dinotopia’s harvester. Brachiosaurus says. The UK it’s of visit. has in 2001 on one big this — making designs, are as going to this picture from the episode for artist the Studios. There’s latest art swing, Jim is to the movie, is highly mim-senes of adventure to two The — 5,000 shooting McGee,” he recalls, “because Marco was shooting by September—first on location, then on the stages—so he was difficult to get ahold of. And once you did, it was tough to work out what he wanted because there were so many digital elements that he couldn’t see. So most of my time was spent sitting down with Mike and working out what was affordable, practical and attainable in the time available.

At the height of post-production, McGee (pictured) had more than 100 people working on the mini-series.

5,000 detailed storyboards for the project. “I would say that 70 percent of those storyboards were done working with Mike McGee,” he recalls, “because Marco was shooting by September—first on location, then on the stages—so he was difficult to get ahold of. And once you did, it was tough to work out what he wanted because there were so many digital elements that he couldn’t see. So most of my time was spent sitting down with Mike and working out what was affordable, practical and attainable in the time available.

The T. rex attack on the weather station was a big number, as was all the stuff at Canyon City, which involved big flying sequences with the Pteranodons. They were quite complicated. And funny enough, some of the stuff in the Senate was difficult, because many of the Senators are dinosaurs. There was quite a bit of blue- and greenscreen input there, and lots of interaction between dinosaurs and people. The main entrance into Waterfall City, toward the film’s beginning, was challenging, too.”

The other Dinotopia alumnus I track down is Dominic Lavery, who created some stunning concept art for the series. “I was brought on to do some of the character designs for the dinosaurs and the props,” says Lavery, who flips through his portfolio to show me some previously unseen images. “Such as the things they handle in this world, like the Brachiosaurus wagons, the big combine harvesters. I had to design them so that they looked like they worked, but in an Old World kind of way. While I concentrated on that side of things, Walter came up with the architectural angle. He also kept an eye on me, so I didn’t go in the wrong direction.”

Although some of Lavery’s inspiration was drawn from Gurney’s material, he also worked closely with the FrameStore artists to ensure that his dinosaurs could readily be translated into 3-D. “They’ve got a fantastic
knowledge of dinosaurs and how they work,” he lauds. “I would come up with a sketchy idea of how I thought [the creatures] should look—a mixture of dinosaurs incorporated with real creatures that exist today, a lizard or something—and I would show it to the guys at FrameStore. They would say, ‘Well, you realize that the hips need to be a few inches forward in order for that to work!’ I deal in 2-D, so once that creature is brought to life [In 3-D], it has to look right. You need to worry about the hips being in the right place, the curvature of the spine, that kind of thing.

“Once I saw the basic skeleton animations from FrameStore, I realized how important it was that these elements were in the right location, so the creature looked balanced and comfortable and ultimately real. That’s the beauty of Dinotopia: Whether it’s Walking With Dinosaurs or Jurassic Park, we know how good we can make dinosaurs look now. But we’ve never really seen them interacting with humans, so hopefully by the time this is all done, it’s going to be something pretty unique.”

New York City. December 2001. 3 p.m. Brambilla is in town for a gallery opening of his work, and a call from Halmi’s office has finally pinned down the director for me. Now that his work on Dinotopia is pretty much finished, Brambilla is finally able to talk about the project that has consumed two years of his life.

“When I first read the script, it was a classic, almost Star Wars-like fable that had a lot of resonance to what’s going on with today’s kids—who are coming of age and learning different values,” he explains. “It had an epic quality to it, but at the same time there was a very personal story in the relationship between the two main characters.

“That’s what I really liked about it, and then it became a much larger endeavor as I started to get more involved and began to realize how much work would be required. There were a few things that I wanted to sharpen up structurally in the script. They mostly had to do with creating a number of different environments which could keep things looking fresh. I then brought in Walter—my production designer with whom I had worked on Demolition Man—from Los Angeles, and he set about creating this tapestry of color and design for the environments. Then I hired [cinematographer] Tony Pierce-Roberts, who had done some Merchant-Ivory films, because my approach to Dinotopia was to shoot it as if it was a classic period piece. Even though it was going to have architecture 800 feet high, with huge creatures in almost every frame, I wanted to shoot it in a very classic, formal way.”

Brambilla believes Dinotopia is an epic that people will enjoy. “It’s a world that you would want to live in,” he comments, “where different cultures and creatures and things based on visuals, language and character all come together to create a totally original, new universe. And you’re going to see it through the points-of-view of these two characters to whom you can really relate.”

FrameStore. January 2002. 5:30 p.m. Last stop on my year-long Dinotopia odyssey. A team of animators and compositors are working feverishly to reach their fast-approaching delivery date. McGee’s assistant George takes me on a final tour of the facility, where an oversized wall chart labeled “Dinotopia Creature Target” indicates that there’s still plenty of work to be done. Christian, nicknamed “Mr. Canyon City,” is completing his compositor’s work on scene 181, which turns out to be the Marine/Pteranodon attack that I watched being shot back in March. The semi-finished scene, with CG backgrounds and vicious flying creatures, looks amazing.

McGee is done with his round of meetings, and sits down for a final progress report. “In terms of the quantity of shots done, [that’s not a problem],” he notes. “The problem is, there are still some very tricky things coming up, so even though the quantity of shots isn’t that great, in terms of complexity, they’re the hardest shots in the piece.”

At the peak of post-production, McGee had more than 100 people working on Dinotopia. “We had 42 animators and 42 technical directors, with 14-15 compositors putting it all together. Our core team of key people was already here, but many animators were recruited just to work on this project.”

In the end, though, it should all be worthwhile. When Dinotopia airs in May, viewers are finally going to see Gurney’s fantasy world brought to life in all its imaginative glory. “I’ve grown quite attached to the dinosaurs,” admits Mike McGee. “I think of them as characters now. Most films today have some sort of CG creature in them, and I think that’s the way things will continue to go. So the experience I’ve picked up doing this will be valuable when I do any kind of storytelling in the future.”

In the meantime, I await, like you, the chance to visit this incredible universe on television, the opportunity to spend several hours in Dinotopia.
I was never really a comic book fan," Spider-Man star Tobey Maguire admits. "That may be a good thing in this case. I don't know. Since I got involved with the film, I've read a bunch of the Spider-comics, and I do appreciate them now. They're enjoyable. They're entertaining. I think they have some depth for something that's very pop-culture."

What, then, compelled Maguire to vie for the coveted role? "It was a good script," he replies. "And I thought that Sam Raimi would be a good filmmaker for this movie. It was an interesting character for me to play, and something different for me to do, different from anything I had done before."

The film casts its web far and wide as it reinvents the Spider-Man legend for long-time fans and newcomers alike. The
At last, director (and fan) Sam Raimi is realizing his dream—to bring Stan Lee & Steve Ditko’s Spider-Man to life.

NO QUESTION.
I'M GETTING MY BUTT WHIPPED! IF I DON'T TAKE THE OFFENSIVE—

— I WONT MAKE IT TO YONKERS!

Amazing Powers

Maguire—who has been acting since he was 13—did some early TV work, including episodes of Blossom, Walker, Texas Ranger and Eerie, Indiana. He is best known, however, for performances in such films as This Boy’s Life, Deconstructing Harry, The Cider House Rules, Ride With the Devil, Wonder Boys and two genre entries, Pleasantville and Cats & Dogs (in which he voiced a heroic canine). “I had a great time on Pleas-
that he must be careful how he uses his powers. He also realizes that he can’t be selfish with them. One of the major themes of the movie is that with great power comes great responsibility. Peter learns that lesson, and tries to use his powers for good. So I’m still playing Peter when I’m in the costume. I’m just Peter Parker as Spider-Man. Spider-Man is part of Peter Parker. In my mind, as an actor, I don’t differentiate them at all. Even if I feel differently, I’m Peter Parker feeling differently.”

It has been said that Peter Parker is the person we all really are, and that Spider-Man is the person we all want to be. Maguire has heard that line of thought before. “I understand it,” he says. “It makes sense to me. Do I agree with that? I haven’t had too much time to ponder it. I understand it, but I don’t want to get too deep about it.”

Although “never really a comic book fan,” Maguire has come to appreciate their values as pop-culture entertainment.

antville,” he reports, “and many people love that movie. Cats & Dogs was very interesting. I had never done anything like that before either, where I was just a voice. That ended up being a lot of fun. I’ve heard they want to do a Cats & Dogs 2, but I haven’t gotten any phone calls yet about it.”

Spider-Man (which premieres May 3) offered Maguire the chance to be another kind of hero, not a plucky pet but a full-fledged superhero with amazing arachnid skills. The actor says he never looked at Peter Parker and Spider-Man as two separate roles, believing that both try to live up to Uncle Ben’s prophetic words: “With great power comes great responsibility.”

“Kirsten was absolutely amazing,” says Maguire, who advises fans to see the film for a verdict on the pair’s chemistry.

“One of the major themes of the movie is that with great power comes great responsibility.”

“I think of them as one character,” explains Maguire. “Spider-Man is an extension of Peter, and Peter is an extension of Spider-Man. Peter definitely feels differently when he’s in the suit. He says things he probably wouldn’t say, and behaves in ways he probably wouldn’t outside of the suit. But nonetheless, I don’t view them as two separate characters. Peter starts out as a smart, sensitive, kind of nerdy kid who has a little trouble socially, and then he gets the powers of a superhero. And, like anyone else, he wants to take them out for a test drive. He wants to impress the girl. Then he realizes years now, so he had better have wanted to do it. And he’s still going. It’s a major job for him, and it won’t be done until the last minute. But I think he has handled it well, and I believe he has made an amazing film. He was like a kid in a candy shop [on this movie], but he was business-like, too. He was a little bit of both, I guess. You’ve got to be serious on a movie like this one. And Sam takes his work very seriously. He’s also a fun, funny guy. And it is Spider-Man.”

As for any on-set anecdotes, Maguire apologizes for his lack of strange tales and memories of particularly spectacular Spider-Man moments. He does reveal that greenscreen shots were “not my favorite stuff to do, but it is what it is. It’s part of the job.”

Maguire—who says he didn’t watch any old comic-book films or TV shows to study for his superhero role—promises that Spider-
Man will feature some jaw-dropping sequences. “I could take you through an example of a great scene, but then I would have to take you through the whole film,” he says. “There are some amazing things that you’ll see, but my comment is that you just have to check out the film.”

He will disclose that he buffed up for the part, engaging in martial arts, gymnastics, weight training and yoga in order to build up his stamina and fill out the Spidey suit as convincingly as possible. As for the suit itself, Maguire wishes he could offer up a great story. “I didn’t have a moment where I went ‘Wow’ when I put it on for the first time,” he recalls. “It was cool to walk around the lot, though. It was kind of trip. Every now and then someone would look over, see me and flip out about it. They would go, ‘Holy sh! It’s Spider-Man.’ That was cool. It’s such a good-looking suit, but we had to go through so many stages and I had to try on so many things. I have to admit, when I finally put on the one that we used, it was pretty amazing how good it looked.”

Secret Identities
Anyone who has seen photos of Maguire as Spider-Man would have to agree—he does look pretty terrific. And in those photos of him with Dunst, he looks even better. It’s not exactly a secret that Maguire and Dunst dated during and after Spider-Man’s production. They were frequently photographed together over that period. Maguire, however, grows quiet when asked if the fact that he and Dunst became romantically involved complemented the chemistry between them when the cameras rolled. “I’m not confirming that,” Maguire answers, referring not to the chemistry issue but rather to whether or not he and Dunst even dated. In the broadest sense, then, how was their chemistry? “You’ll have to see the movie,” Maguire replies.

Fortunately, he opens up a bit more when queried about what made Dunst the ideal Mary Jane. “Kirsten was great, absolutely amazing,” he enthuses. “We had to fly out to Germany, Sam and I, so I could read with her. She was doing a film there and couldn’t get over here, and we needed to cast Mary Jane immediately. We had already met with or read lots of people, and there were some who were pretty good, but there was nobody who we were all 100 percent excited about. I had strep throat at the time, but Sam said, ‘Pack it up, we’re going to Germany to go read with Kirsten.’ I said, ‘Sam, I have strep throat. I’m miserable. The doctor said I shouldn’t travel.’ He said, ‘It’s all about sacrifice. Let’s do this.’ So I hopped on a plane and I was in Germany for less than 18 hours. I read with Kirsten, and she was amazing. She did a great job. She has dramatic chops. She’s funny. She’s the whole package.”

Dunst earns equal praise. “Willem’s a fine actor,” he says. “The relationship of our characters is written very well, and it’s going to be pretty exciting because there’s so much weight to it. I think Willem had fun, but he took the role very seriously. He’s really nice, funny guy who was gung-ho about the action and very committed to the acting. He wanted both to be as real as possible. It was good to have him around, because he took it to the next level as far as the action went; he really got into it. He would lay into me a little bit. I had to take a few shots from him. But that was OK.”

The Green Goblin is Spider-Man’s sole nemesis in the movie, despite early rumors that there would be multiple supervillains. “I don’t think there was ever actually going to be more than one villain in the film,” Maguire offers. “There was talk of a second villain at a point, but that was ruled out very early on. Doc Ock [Dr. Octopus] was in the script, but that was in the beginning. They probably want to save some of the other villains for the sequels.”

That last comment brings us to the matter of future follow-ups. Maguire is reportedly signed for two more Spider-Man features. “I feel pretty good about it, but we have to have good scripts,” he allows. “I like to have my opinion heard. But as long as we keep the quality of the films up each time, I’m thrilled about it. There are some things that we’re already talking about, but nothing that I really want to discuss now. The first film’s not even out yet.”

To be sure, Hollywood only makes sequels to films that merit them (monetarily speaking), but Maguire’s Spider-Sense tells him that Spider-Man will snare enough moviegoers to ensure further celluloid adventures. “I think Spider-Man is going to be great,” Tobey Maguire argues. “I’m very excited. I think it’s going to be like a good, satisfying meal, a gourmet meal. At the same time, it’s a huge popcorn movie. So I think Spider-Man is going to be the best of both worlds.”

“Secret Identities” feature graphic.
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thought I was going to be the first gay character in space," Dominic Keating mock-complains. "I read all about it. I was in the supermarket and I saw it in TV Guide, so I rang up Brannon Braga and said, 'What's this all about?' He said, 'It's going to be fantastic, Dominic. You'll be outed in November. You'll be on the cover of TV Guide.' But he was jesting with me. We've just shot a couple of episodes that make it self-evident that he's not, in the end, gay."

And so it is that Keating plays Lt. Malcolm Reed, the very straight security officer aboard the NX-01, on Enterprise. Reed, as promised early on, is a Brit who likes to blow things up, and seems to get on fine with the rest of the crew, though he, like everyone else, frequently differs with the Vulcan sub commander, T'Pol (Jolene Blalock).

**Buttoned-Down Brit**

"I'm having a very good time," says Keating. "'Shuttle Pod One' was a real eye-opener. It was a wonderful episode. Trip [Connor Trinneer] and I were marooned on a shuttle pod with 40 hours of air left to breathe, and we thought the Enterprise has been blown up. It was just him and me for 47 pages. You really get to know the personalities of these two guys, and you realize that Malcolm is multi-layered. That's what I love. They didn't just make him the buttoned-down, gun-crazy Brit with the pompous attitude. I was fearful that he might run that course and I'm so glad that he hasn't. He's very much a multi-faceted character. He's an oftentimes contrastable, living, breathing human being. Each episode, you get to know a bit more about him; he's just a joy to play. I really like Malcolm. And I'm getting to act. 'Shuttle Pod One' is some of the best work I've ever done, if I may say so. We did something quite extraordinary.

"The dynamic between Connor and me, both as actors and as characters on the show, is really strong. We had a little scene together in an episode we shot a few months ago, but then we never really got to do anything together again until 'Shuttle Pod One.' It was quite a dramatic little scene in which we butted heads and didn't see eye-to-eye about how to solve a particular problem. Connor and I sparked really well with each other. We have a great understanding of each other's timing and the rhythm of how we like to do a scene and play our characters. There was an inherent drama there that the writers hadn't seen before, and as soon as they saw it [in that episode], they really got into it. It's quite clever. They watch the shows and see when something works. They're not frightened. Whatever they may have planned, they'll just say, 'Hey, this is really working. Let's use this some more. Let's tap into this.' Consequently, 'Shuttle Pod One' came out of that little moment.

"I hope they keep doing that, because I would like for Malcolm to find his voice, so he has a place at the Captain's table along with Archer [Scott Bakula], Trip and T'Pol," Keating comments. "It's something that could be used not just sporadically, but more day-to-day, week-to-week, episode-to-episode. I was worried when we started that Malcolm wouldn't have a voice. It seemed to be the Captain, Trip and T'Pol forever and forever, but I think that may change. I hope it does, but I know as much as you know. Rick [Berman] and Brannon were dreaming up this show for two years, and I guess that, in conceptualizing it, they had a triumvirate in mind, certainly for the first season."

While it's true that Reed, Sato (Linda Park), Mayweather (Anthony Montgomery) and Dr. Phlox (John Billingsley) have thus far served as supporting characters, they're not missing out on all the action. In fact, Keating can rattie off quite a few episodes that have helped evolve his character. "I was blown away by the pilot," Keating enthuses of "Broken Bow." "The one before 'Shuttle Pod One' I love, too. 'Sleeping Dogs' is about a Klingon cruiser that's marooned in some gas giant, and Sato, T'Pol and I are trying to help out these poor Klingons who are stumped over their consoles. Malcolm gets to be very much a man of action in that, getting stuff done and fixing the ship. Then he gets beat up by a Klingon supermodel. He gets his ass kicked. So that's one angle of the character that I really hadn't seen, and I liked that.

"I also liked the bit we did in 'Cold Front,' when I bust Mayweather for sitting in the Captain's chair. That scene was written after the episode, actually; the show was short and they needed to add a scene. Several people have told me, 'God, I really like that scene.'
“They didn’t just make him the buttoned-down, gun-crazy Brit with the pompous attitude.”

That’s something they should be doing more of. They should spend a little time each week showing scenes like that, where the crew, our main seven, interact with each other in triangles and in pairs. I would love to see us doing more of that. It would be like ER. Let’s take the characters away from the patients—the aliens, if you will—and see them actually interacting with each other. I would like to see us explore that dynamic of the drama rather than reacting to external stuff each week. I hope they do that.”

Keating knows there’s still a great deal of character uncharted. “There’s so much I would like to see, so much I don’t know about Malcolm,” he admits. “Each week when the script comes, it’s always new to me, what they’ve decided they want me to play. I want to see Malcolm become a real human being, not just a two-dimensional character—so that he’s not just British and likes to shoot guns. That has some mileage in it, and those things are always good for a little rib tickle and a smile from the audience, but I hope that we’ll really see him as a living, breathing human being who just happens to be a lieutenant on a starship. I hope we’ll see that he has contrasting and conflicting character traits. I find myself playing some of the stuff and thinking, ‘Oh, that’s not very Malcolm-like.’ And then I’ll think, ‘You know what? Let’s do it like that. Let’s not just go down one avenue and make all the colors the same. Let’s salt and pepper this.’ So I find myself bringing more of me to Malcolm than trying to find more of Malcolm in me.”

**Vampire Mailman**

Keating was born in Leicester, England, and more or less kicked off his acting career at age nine, when the English mistress at his school decided to put on a play and cast young Keating in the lead. But performing was in the actor’s blood well before then. “My mother was an actress from age 17 to 20,” he recalls. “She left RADA [Royal Academy of Dramatic Arts] to do a job, and she married my father pretty soon after. But he wasn’t up for [her acting career], so she quit. He rescued her from the Devil’s jaw, as it were, and I didn’t learn until later on that she was where I got my base of talent from.

“I acted very often at school, and then at the University College of London. It took me a while to pluck up the courage to do it professionally. I was quite late coming to it, really. I was 24 or 25, and I must have been 26 when I got my first professional gig, a play called The Best Years of Your Life. Then I did the rounds on all the TV shows in England until I got Desmond’s. I did five years on that sitcom and became a TV star back home. I then came to America because I was nearly cast two years running in Merchant-Ivy films. I nearly played Leonard Bast opposite Helena Bonham Carter in Howards End—the role went to Samuel West—and the following year I almost played the underbutler to Anthony Hopkins in Remains of the Day. It just didn’t work out either time. I got impatient, I guess. ‘When is it going to be my turn?’ So I came to America.”

Upon arriving in the U.S., Keating worked fairly regularly, and often in genre fare. His credits include episodes of Poltergeist: The Legacy (“Father to Son”), Buffy the Vampire Slayer (“Helpless”), G vs E (“Immigrant Evil,” “Orange Volvo”) and Special Unit 2 (“The Wraps”), as well as a recurring role as Mallos—the powerful demon out to kill Rafe (Lorenzo Lamas)—on The Immortal.

“Poltergeist was fun,” says Keating. “I was doing some interim work at the time, as acourier, and I was actually delivering stuff from Mary Jo Slater’s office. She was the casting agent on Poltergeist, and had an associate named Paul Weber. He only knew me from turning up in the morning to pick up their mail, and then one day I showed up in a suit and he said, ‘Dominic, you’re awfully well-dressed to come and pick up the mail.’ And I went, ‘Well, I’m actually coming in for a Poltergeist audition.’ He was like, ‘Oh, right,’ but then I
to dress up in medieval gear. I was the king of the castle. I saw Lorenzo at the Christmas parade in Los Angeles. They’re waiting to hear if they’re going to Australia to do more episodes. If they have a couple of episodes sometime in April or May, maybe I’ll go do them. It was good fun, and Lorenzo’s such a nice chap and really good to work with.”

But for now, Keating is concentrating on Enterprise and contemplating the effect the popular series could have on his life. “I’ll tell you what it could do. It could make me a name actor and show the world that I’m really good at what I do,” Dominic Keating remarks. “And it could make producers and directors say, ‘We

went into the room with him to read and I blew him out of the water. It was literally one of those moments where he took me by the hand and was like, ‘You’ll never guess. Oh my God! This guy was the mail guy! Look what I’ve found!’ It was one of those wacky LA moments. And I had a great time in Vancouver shooting the episode. They were lovely.

“I made Buffy history with my episode. I was the first Watcher to be bitten and then morph into a vampire. I chased Buffy around Glendale for two days. We had lots of fun. Jeff Kober played this demon vampire who they had shipped in to test Buffy’s powers as a Slayer. It was a good show.”

Campy Immortal

As for G vs E, “It was just terrific,” Keating raves. “Jolene and John were in one together, too. The Pate brothers, well, they just know talent. They can spot ‘em. I was sad that that series really didn’t get its life. It was so clever—almost too clever. Unfortunately, USA [Network] didn’t quite know how to market it. But you will see those boys again. The Pate brothers will be huge, in time. They’re very talented lads.

“Special Unit 2 was a giggle. It’s such a small business in the end. One of my best friends, Dave Straiton, has directed Special Unit 2. He did the pilot for The Immortal and he’s going to do an Enterprise. So it’s coming full circle. But Special Unit 2 was a wacky show. Michael Landes and Alexandra Lee were really good.

“I did a bunch of Immortals,” continues Keating, whose non-genre credits include Inspector Morse and the films Jungle2Jungle and Almost Famous. “I had a great time. I went back to Vancouver, and we shot a couple of episodes in Prague, too. I have to say that Mallos was one of the funniest characters I’ve ever gotten to sink my teeth into. Given the style of the show we were doing, within reason, he could be as broad, bitchy, campy and nasty as he liked. It was a joy. In the episodes we did in Prague, I got

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With a painful sigh, Forbes March settles himself into one of those canvas-backed director's chairs that are set staples on any movie or TV production. The actor has just risen from a nearly two-hour-long back massage. A luxury of the glamorous life of a leading man on Mutant X? No, more like a therapeutic necessity. That's because earlier this very morning, March, who plays superhero Jesse Kilmartin, injured his back while rehearsing a fight scene for the day's continuation shooting in Toronto.

"It's just the end of the season," March explains. "I'm getting a little tired, a little lazy. I didn't stretch out properly this morning. So when I did a little duck move, I tore the muscles in my lower back. Last week it was my knee, then my neck. It's part, I guess, of doing an action show. I've had a rough go of it the last few weeks.

"It's a funny thing," he adds. "When you're filming an action scene, there's all this pressure, this tension, and you're told you have to do it right now. You're conscious of so many other things, a very simple stunt can get you hurt."

Despite his very evident and all-too-human discomfort, March submits good-naturedly to being questioned about his role as a more-than-human mutant superhero. "What have I

Playing a nice guy on Mutant X has been a painful experience for Forbes March.
learned?" he laughs. "Ask for more money. Make sure I've got a good staff of masseurs, chiropractors and doctors. Make sure I've got a quality stuntman. Actually, it has been a good thing doing the stunts myself, good for the fans. It helps with the suspension of disbelief when you actually get a close-up of the actor doing it. But I think next year they're going to make the stuntmen do more of our stuff!"

**Heroic Bruises**

After an inaugural season of bumps, bruises and backaches, March has learned his lesson. "When I first started, I was all 'mucho macho,' you know? 'Oh, just give me an Advil. Let's get going.' It catches up to you," he confesses. "I haven't been going to the gym for about six weeks or so, because at the end of a 14-hour day, you just want to have a glass of wine, give the wife a kiss on the cheek and go to bed. When I don't work out, I get skinner, so you can see at the season's beginning that I was bulkier. Then I got thinner and thinner, until at one point, like William Shatner [on the *Star Trek* series], I started working out again and got bigger. Then I got thinner again."

Having previously acted in the soap opera *All My Children*, March knows the rigors of television production. Helping to ease that burden are his *Mutant X* co-stars. "It's rare that a cast will voluntarily have fun together," he points out. "They'll go out to charity events together, or when the producers take them out for dinner. But we get along really well. Everybody always says that, but here it's really true. Lauren [Lee Smith], Victor [Webster] and I go out about once every two weeks. Vickie [Pratt] goes home to LA quite often, but she still comes out and has a good time with us—and she likes to flirt. John [Shea], Victor and I just had a boys' night out two weeks ago. We [the cast] also go and hang out with the crew, which is rare."

Like any performer, March enjoys positive audience response. "There has been some," he says, "but not as much as when I did the soap opera. I think it'll kick in more during the second season. No offers of marriage yet, although there's one *All My Children* fan who still sends me pictures of herself in a bubble bath with a bottle of champagne and roses—that one's on my trailer wall—and lingerie shots."

One thing's for sure, March definitely likes what he's doing. "I have loads of fun with Jesse," he says. "Early in the season, somebody asked me how I was going to keep a nice guy like Jesse from becoming two-dimensional. I know the last time I played a good guy [on *All My Children*], I thought I was doing some really fine acting, but I did not realize what the most crucial part of playing a nice character was until it was too late. So I learned something from that experience. I've got some episodes on tape, and it's, 'Ow! Shoulda, woulda, coulda!'"

"If you're a bad guy, it's in some ways easier, because your character is given all sorts of inner conflict and it's all clearly laid out for you. I think human nature is about the conflict between who you want to be and who you really are. Nice guys aren't necessarily that much nicer on the inside, they're just more effective at being who they want to be. But they still have all of the same problems, and they still have to do the work that it takes to be a good guy. With Jesse, I have fun trying to keep that conflict alive."
some neat stuff where the characters contradict themselves and act in ways that isn’t necessarily predictable. That’s the way people really work, and that’s what keeps characters alive—having to overcome their inner turmoil. Otherwise, they’re like the bad guys: perfectly dressed and perfectly shiny.”

Still, March knows there’s more progress to be made. “I would like to see Jesse’s estrangement from his father developed further. We address that in the episode we’re finishing this weekend, though it’s not resolved. I would also like to see all of the relationships continue down the path that they’re now on. They’ve been throwing bits in each episode. I want our show to become a little deeper, so the storylines and relationships are carried on more. That would give us more time to get into them.”

**Mutant Wounds**

Like many other superheroes, the *Mutant X* team’s secret origin is rooted in science, in this case, biotechnology. “Surprisingly, we haven’t addressed that,” says March. “The moral and ethical issues associated with biotechnology haven’t really been dealt with on the show. It’s almost as if the whole issue of genetics was an excuse to create the rivalry between Eckhart [Tom McCamus] and Adam. Whether or not it was right to manipulate these people in the first place hasn’t even been explored, and Adam continues to tamper with our genetics. I definitely want to see that topic discussed in Season Two.”

One of the show’s more interesting relationships is that of Jesse and Brennan, who have a kind of love-hate thing going on. “I think Jesse hates loving Brennan,” March smiles. “He’s very resentful of Brennan’s presence because Jesse used to be the alpha guy who was Adam’s favorite, the one who always went out on the missions. Then in walks Brennan, and now it’s ‘To hell with Jesse!’ But Jesse really views Brennan as a brother. Victor and I play that as often as we can. There’s a rivalry there, this kind of a dance those characters do.”

“Actors don’t usually sit down and explain what they’re going to do in advance. The whole thing is that I’m trying to find out what his game is, and he’s busy trying to find out mine. Because as soon as you know what each other’s game is, you have to change it. It’s like knowing the other guy’s hand in poker. That’s something we make up. I don’t know what Victor’s game is or why Brennan doesn’t like me, but I suspect it’s because Brennan doesn’t like rich kids. But who knows?”

And what about things between Jesse and that feline fatale Shalimar Fox? “Obviously, Jesse would love to have an affair with Shalimar,” March replies, “but he can’t and he won’t. We’re teammates. That gives our relationship dimension, and that’s not in the script at all; that’s what we bring to it. There’s a greater chance of Jesse getting together with Emma, because it’s not as physical an attraction. Jesse has a much more big-brotherly kind of love for Emma. He’s always defending her. The relationship between them is a bit more honest and simple, and Jesse really hasn’t had a conflict with her. I guess I’ll have to add something to that.”

Conflict could be brewing between Adam and Jesse, March reveals. “Jesse looks to Adam as a father figure, and sometimes sons resent their fathers and feel a need to challenge them. So more and more now, I’m throwing in these little one-liners that are kind of cocky, because Jesse is starting to wonder if Adam is always right. They’re letting me get away with that. On Friday, we were shooting an episode where there’s this crazy guy going around who has the ability to fire microwaves at people. He can basically cook you from the inside out. We can’t find him, and Brennan and Shalimar are out there doing their thing, so Adam tells me, ‘Get them in until we find this guy. We don’t want him using them for target practice.’ I just rolled my eyes and said, ‘Oh, we wouldn’t want that, would we?’ I threw that in there, and no one said anything, so I kept doing it every take.”

“The writers have picked up on that from me, so I’ve been doing it fairly regularly. Jesse’s challenging Adam a little more now than at the season’s beginning. He’s more confident and willing to take a few risks in questioning the big guy. And Adam is responding to this like John would if I were to criticize his acting: ‘Oh, is that right, sonny?’ John is a well-respected actor, and as in any profession, if some pop rookie walks in and challenges someone who has won a great deal of acclaim, he’s going to receive a well-deserved response: ‘Sorry, you spoke?’”

“I’ve noticed that when you’re talking on set to another actor at or near your own level,
you’re not nearly as open as when you’re with somebody who’s much higher or much lower than you,” March candidly comments. “John and I can sit down and discuss scenes to no end, but Victor and I are a little touchy with each other. There’s more ego there perhaps. I know that I’m not going to offend John if I ask him something. And if John asks me, ‘Why are you doing that?’ I’ll say, ‘Oh, because blah, blah, blah. What do you think?’ But if someone at my own acting level questioned me, I would think, ‘Well, what business is that of yours? Who are you to ask?’ If somebody taking their first acting class wanted to know, though, I would tell them, ‘Well, I’m doing this because blah, blah, blah. So watch and learn.’”

**Super Headaches**

Whatever the technical acting demands of playing Jesse may be, the character is essentially drawn from the superhero tradition of comic books. “I used to read lots of superhero comics—although I wasn’t one of those comic book fans who would collect them or go to conventions,” March remarks. “I read *Conan, X-Men* and I loved Spider-Man. I watched *Spider-Man* on TV quite a bit. It’s rare to find a young man who doesn’t like comic books. They’re so relatable to a young person’s experience. Every culture has its own superheroes; they don’t have to be in capes and flying around. The Greeks had Hercules. People need superheroes to inspire them. How depressing would it be if there weren’t any superheroes in our popular culture? I’m not tempted to lift heavy objects, though. I’m quite aware of my humanity, especially today. But there’s nothing wrong with my two-year-old thinking I’m a superhero.

“Our powers are meant to contrast our personalities,” March states. “Jesse is probably the most powerful because he can turn to stone, so nobody can do anything to him—or he can just disappear. If he had lightning-quick reflexes, he would be pretty unbeatable, but that would be boring. So to balance him out, we made him a little goofy. The idea is that he’s a normal guy with superpowers.

“There’s a bit of Clark Kent in him,” says March, but he doesn’t shed that persona the moment he steps out of his street clothes and into his superhero jacket, so to speak. He keeps that goofiness. It’s usually Brennan who looks over his shoulder and says, ‘GSA agents,’ and then Jesse turns around and pulls it out just in the nick of time. Jesse has to have weaknesses, and his Kryptonite is that he’s kind of goofy. He screws up sometimes. That makes him likable. Superheroes have to have some weaknesses to overcome. That’s what humanity is about, right? Trying to overcome our own fallibility. It’s the fact that these characters are normal people which makes them so relatable, charming and inspirational.”

Originally, Jesse was intended to be goofy in an entirely different way. “When I was first asked to audition, Jesse was supposed to split into three different characters and have conversations between ‘himself.’ So initially I didn’t want to do it because I had a whole bunch of other auditions that day and this was the equivalent of five auditions in terms of the work required. But my coach, whom I work with on all my auditions, gave me a little slap and told me how to do it, so I did it. It was a bit schizophrenic,” March laughs. He then breaks into a trio of distinct voices, impersonating what were to be Jesse’s multiple personalities:

“Hi? How are you today?”

“I’m doing very well, thank you. Yourself?”

“Oh, I shot today.”

“You got shot?”

March throws up his hands and offers commentary on the confusing scene playing out: “He’s dead, and then he comes back to life. How the hell do you play that?” March then tries his best to demonstrate:

“Hi, I’m back!”

“Oh, my God. You’re back!”

“Oh, thank heavens you’re back!”

March shrugs, then winces at a sharp pain in his back. “One personality was supposed to be very effeminate, one very macho and the third very logical,” he explains. “Luckily, by the time I got to the next round, they had simplified Jesse to one whole being. The first audition was in New York. It was put on tape and sent to LA. Then I was flown out to LA for the next and final round, where they had narrowed it down to two or three actors. There was this huge, long table with all these big executives—those $10,000-suit guys who sit there and go, ‘Hmm, hmm.’ It was very grim because they’re such serious people. But they picked me. God knows why. I guess I didn’t remind anybody of their ex-wife’s new husband.

“Any more questions?” Forbes March asks as he’s called over to the set. The subject of the approaching production hiatus is brought up. “I’m not sure what I’m doing,” he laughs. “There’s this inner conflict. There’s the puritanical East Coast part of me saying, ‘You must work, you must work, you must work,’ and then there’s the completely exhausted version of me saying, ‘Costa Rica! Costa Rica! I’m going to visit LA for a few weeks, then I’m going to bomb off, maybe to Mexico, Florida, somewhere hot and sandy. It’s cold up here.”
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The man with the golden arm—actually, golden arms, head, legs and torso—is back in action. That’s to say that C-3PO, all of him this time around, turns up in Star Wars: Episode II: Attack of the Clones. And once again, Anthony Daniels stepped inside the suit to play everybody’s favorite stuffy robot. The gentlemanly Brit, of course, has acted as the android—or at least provided the voice for him—in all five Star Wars films to date, not to mention in numerous spin-offs ranging from TV guest spots and animated series to radio dramatizations and theme park attractions. During that time, Daniels had to endure a more than 15-year hiatus until George Lucas finally got his eagerly anticipated Star Wars prequels into production, but “Goldenrod” did indeed return—albeit in an alternative and incomplete form—for Star Wars: Episode I: The Phantom Menace. The first in the planned prequel trilogy, Phantom Menace hit theaters fueled by the success of the Star Wars Special Edition releases.

“I was genuinely surprised when the Star Wars Special Edition came out, because I wasn’t involved in any of the upgrading of that,” says Daniels. “It was all done digitally. I didn’t have to do any new acting. But I thought it was pretty neat and very good, obviously. Then they told me that they were going to make Episode I. I was glad, because there were always meant to be three more movies. The fans had been waiting for them. But there was a time when I didn’t know whether or not Threepio existed in the world of Episode I. I had very mixed feelings about [the prospect of being left out]—partly because I wasn’t sure if I had a job, but really because I was hoping to be in all of the movies. It’s like collecting beer caps. So I asked some questions, and they said, ‘We don’t know yet.’ Then, finally, George asked me to go to Leavesden Studios in England.”

Box of Junk
Daniels’ Phantom Menace odyssey began with that conversation with Lucas. “We sat down,” the actor recalls, “and he told me the story. The real joke was when he told me, ‘You’re made by Anakin Skywalker.’ I thought that was really neat, and I was very happy. Then, two days later, I realized that Anakin is the baddie. So I was genuinely surprised—partly at my own stupidity—but also at the twist in the story. I thought to myself, ‘If Threepio ever finds out who his father is, he’s going to be traumatized.’ Maybe that’s why this guy is so weird—maybe he found out [the truth]. I never even

Forever Goldenrod
By IAN SPELLING

For Anthony Daniels, it’s back to the Star Wars as he suits up...
thought of that. So although I was only briefly involved in Episode I, it was just terrific to be a part of it, and to keep my connection with the movies. I also enjoyed meeting Pernilla August, Jake Lloyd, Ewan McGregor and people like that.”

It didn’t exactly catch Daniels off-guard that C-3PO had little to do in The Phantom Menace. “George told me that Threepio would be made of wires, and he explained to me how it would be done,” Daniels remarks. “I thought it was a tremendously inventive and clever bit of scriptwriting. We all know C-3PO as the golden robot, and I had always assumed that he was a million years old, so it really tweaked my interest to discover that he started out as a box of junk. That was very clever, and the puppet was a tremendous piece of engineering. It managed, visually, to have a personality as well. I learned that it was very, very difficult to operate, though, because I actually took over the operation of it for Episode II.”

Although audiences and critics took their swipes at The Phantom Menace, complaining about Jar Jar Binks (Ahmed Best) and grousing that too much screen time was devoted to the kiddie adventures of young Anakin Skywalker (Lloyd), many dyed-in-the-wool fans questioned the blink-and-you-miss-it introduction of C-3PO to R2-D2. Daniels himself had no problem with it.

“Life is like that,” he argues. “One thing about doing the films this time around is that we all suffer from thinking of Threepio as a main character in the other trilogy. George made it very clear to me that [Episodes IV-VI] were really Threepio’s main movies. In Episode I, it was a meet-and-greet. It wasn’t a big deal. Here are two robots meeting and—with some dramatic irony—you know what’s going to happen to them.”

Though the Attack of the Clones plot remains top-secret and Daniels steadfastly refuses to divulge details, he does acknowledge that both he and C-3PO have more to do than in Phantom Menace. “I got the script on a Saturday, along with everybody else, and we were shooting on Monday,” Daniels laughs. “Poor Ian McDiarmid had a big


or Attack of the Clones.
scene on Monday [as Palpatine], and I don’t think he was very happy—because it’s not just learning [the screenplay], it’s the acting. So that’s when I found out what I had to do, and it was very different from the previous movies. There was much more digital stuff. The other thing that was noticeable was that the crew—because most of them had worked together on Young Indiana Jones [Chronicles]—had bonded, so they spoke a common language and had a common understanding. There was an ease of operation, a sense that everybody was pursuing the same goal. There was a tremendously good atmosphere between the cast and crew. It was rather a good team to be on.”

Demon Puppet
OK, so everybody got along. Great. But c’mon—can’t Daniels give up at least one hint concerning C-3PO’s involvement in Attack of the Clones? “What does Threepio do?” he grins. “Without giving too much away, Threepio—how can I put this—gets dressed. The fans have been demanding it old-fashioned tricks—like me kneading through a piece of furniture so it looked like I didn’t have any legs, or me being half-dressed with my arm going up C-3PO’s chest and into his head, where I acted like a kind of ventriloquist. They were Victorian melodrama tricks, and that was fun, because it wasn’t just a normal performance.”

“For Episode II, I had a Steadicam harness to support C-3PO. I worked out a rig which put the weight on my hips rather than down my spine, because it was rather heavy. Threepio really did become a demon puppet at one point—like in a horror movie, where the puppet takes over its master and strangles him. I had to do strengthening exercises so I would be able to support him, and also so I could get back into the suit. It was a challenge, to use that boring word actors use. But it was a horrible challenge. There were a couple of times when I thought I had bitten off more than I could chew, but I got away with it—just in the nick of time.”

Daniels cracks up when asked if, on the Attack of the Clones set, he was “Old Man Star Wars.” “That very phrase came to mind when I looked around while I was talking to Joel Edgerton and Bonnie Piwe, who play Owen and Beru,” says Daniels, who also plays a human character, Lieutenant Faytonni, in the movie. “It suddenly struck me that I am the old man of Star Wars. Those two weren’t even born when [the original] Uncle Owen and Aunt Beru [Phil Brown and Shelagh Fraser] started on the first set. And here they were, these young people, and I was thrilled to meet them because of that sense of history [it gave me]. And they were thrilled to meet me because they were fans, and suddenly they were meeting this guy who had given them Threepio for all these years. So there was a mutual admiration. And then, to be back at that same stomping ground in Tunisia—I could imagine standing in literally that same spot when I was 25 years younger, with long, flowing, black hair, having never been in the movies, and wondering what was going on.”

The man who did know what was happening then—and now—was Lucas, who wrote and directed the original Star Wars, then passed the directorial baton to Irvin Kershner for The Empire Strikes Back and Richard Marquand for Return of the Jedi (Lucas served as executive producer on both films). For The Phantom Menace, Lucas returned to the director’s chair for the first time since Star Wars, and now he’s back at it again in Attack of the Clones.

“He’s more relaxed and more jovial,” Daniels observes of his longtime boss. “And because he’s relaxed, he can fool around on the set a bit. There’s a much lighter atmosphere. He does give me a funny look now and again when I dare to make a suggestion, but he’s usually kind enough to agree to it. I think he’s getting used to me by now. It’s too late anyway, isn’t it?”

When he’s not doing Star Wars films, Daniels keeps busy with a variety of projects. “I’ve done odds and ends in TV work and the usual kind of everyday stuff that actors go through,” explains Daniels, who lives in London and still turns up frequently on the convention circuit (he’ll shortly serve
as host of the official Star Wars Celebration II convention in Indianapolis). “Luckily, the big, dramatic thing in my life that is killing me is anthonydaniels.com. I’ve also become a business person—in particular, working with a company to provide on-line gaming access through prepaid calling cards. You buy a card for a few dollars, then you put it in your CD-Rom drive and it gives you on-line access to Dungeons & Dragons and other strategy games. It’s great for kids who don’t have credit cards, and there are no web security problems. We have the patent for doing this stuff. It’s fascinating and fun. So I’m using the other side of my brain—the side that was probably going to be used when I was planning on being a lawyer but decided not to.”

Real Robot

Daniels has been a part of the Star Wars Universe for 25 years now (as he discussed in STARLOG #99 & #236), and he’ll continue to be for the foreseeable future. He has already signed on the dotted line to reprise C-3PO in Star Wars: Episode III, set to shoot in 2003 for release in 2005. Of course, anyone associated with such a phenomenon as Star Wars readily describes it as both a blessing and a curse. Daniels acknowledges as much, but prefers to see the positive aspects.

“I once said to an actor at a private party, whom I had never met before, ‘I’m Anthony Daniels, and I’ve seen your work on TV. I love what you do on that series.’ He looked at me and said, ‘I do do other things, you know.’ That was the rudest thing I had ever heard, and I just walked away. If somebody likes what you do and says so, all you have to do is say, ‘Thank you, so glad you like it’—even if in your mind you’re saying, ‘I do do other things.’

“I suppose a part of me felt that way in the beginning, 25 years ago, when Lucasfilm was very keen to pretend I wasn’t actually in the costume or in the movie,” Daniels confesses. “Threepi was talked about as a real robot. That was actually very hurtful, but there was nothing I could do about it. That has changed, obviously, over the years. They realized that people were curious about the man inside. I think—to be honest—that I’ve sometimes been overly intellectual and verbose and articulate about [the role], because I wanted to prove that I’m not just an idiot who wears a suit or dons a mask. There is a certain amount of integral preparation and performance that goes into it. I have other skills—I just have yet to find out what they are.

“Do I get sick of Star Wars? If I talk about it too much, I do,” Anthony Daniels admits. “But generally the fans and interviewers I talk to are so interested that they revive the interest in me. When people are intrigued, I should be glad of that, and I am glad. And the fact that I wish I had gotten to play Hamlet, that’s private. I should be immensely grateful. People always ask me, ‘What would you be doing now if it wasn’t for Star Wars?’ I generally reply that I would probably be working in a show shop. Who knows? But I’ve had this mighty piece of film in my life, this mighty character, and it’s nice to be that person. I genuinely believe that it’s in the eye of the beholder.”
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Back in Babylon, Andreas Katsulas addresses legends new & old.

By JOE NAZZARO

At one point during the SCI FI Channel’s recent Babylon 5: The Legend of the Rangers: To Live and Die in Starlight TV movie, G’Kar (Andreas Katsulas) remarks, “Isn’t the universe a wonderful place? I wouldn’t live anywhere else!” It’s a classic G’Kar line, proving that the bombastic, lizard-like Nara is certainly back with a vengeance.

“It’s very easy for me to write for G’Kar,” claims J. Michael Straczynski, who created the character over a decade ago for his Babylon 5 TV series. “The hard part is making him shut up once in a while. There’s this door in my head marked ‘G’Kar,’ and when I open it up, I just walk away and he does all the work, then I come back after an hour and close the door again. There’s a certain dignity and eloquence, yet looniness, that he brings. He is completely free of all expectations. He can be deadly serious and say a line like, ‘I wouldn’t live anywhere else,’ and then turn around and say, ‘Kiss. kiss. Love, love. Gotta go, bye!’ giving an air kiss as he walks out the door. That kind of complete liberation makes him a fascinating character to write.”

For Katsulas, the character hasn’t changed an awful lot since G’Kar went off to explore the universe with his companion, the telepath Lyta Alexander, at the end of the original series. “But there are new developments going on,” he explains, referring to G’Kar’s role in Legend of the Rangers (Katsulas is the only original cast member to appear in B5’s latest incarnation). “Since G’Kar has done such extensive traveling in the universe—and also has the ear of President Sheridan—he becomes an important guy to have around. He has some ideas and knowledge about other places in the universe that no one else knows about. In a way, he becomes sort of a consultant, but once he’s on the ship, he gets involved in more than that. He sees other situations that interest him, and starts to act on them, too.”

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The Quiet Man

During filming of Legend of the Rangers, G’Kar’s scenes went quite smoothly, probably because the actor knows his character so well by now. “Nobody has come up and said anything to me; they’ve really just given me a free hand,” he comments. “Mike Vejar [Rangers’ director] hasn’t said anything to me. But I will be doing a scene, and out of the corner of my eye—because Joe likes to come down to the set when I’m doing my thing, and [executive producer] Doug Netter as well—I’ll see them standing there with big smiles, watching me as G’Kar. I take that as a positive sign that I’m doing all right.”

In Legend of the Rangers, David Martel (Dylan Neal), after ordering a ship to stand down during combat, faces disciplinary action by the High Council for breach of Minbari tradition. He is about to be discharged from service, but Citizen G’Kar, a single actor and guest actor and would know everybody’s name on the set, crew included. “I’m totally the opposite.”

The actor may have kept to himself, but he did enjoy working with the young ensemble cast on Rangers. The experience reminded him of life on Babylon 5. “That’s how we all felt back in the old days, apart from Bruce Boxleitner, who came in a year later after we had all begun,” Katsulas remarks. “But he’s such a good person that he didn’t pull any ego things on us at all. Bruce was immediately one of the boys; he was human and unpretentious, and didn’t make any big deal about his past and what he had done—and none of us [other actors] had great pasts. That was never an issue, and I guess it’s the same way here. Egos don’t seem to be a part of it. The story is what we’re all trying to do.

“In a way, I think what would have made this whole experience much stranger is if it

now-legendary figure, interceded, and recommends that the disgraced Ranger instead be given command of his own ship, the Liandra.

In many ways, G’Kar’s mystique has grown since Babylon 5, and so has Katsulas’. Some of the younger cast members admit to being awed by his presence on the set. “Oh, man,” remarks Enid-Raye Adams, who plays Fire/field, the ship’s Minbari healer. “When Andreas walked on set, the first time I saw him work, I got goose bumps! The hairs on my arms were standing up. It was so magical. I can see why he’s treated differently.”

Katsulas, who’s actually incredibly soft-spoken off camera, is quick to dismiss that charge. “I’m just shy,” he insists, “and I don’t initiate conversations. This mystique isn’t about me, it’s about the character, because in the script—when they talk about G’Kar—they suddenly see him coming and say, ‘There’s a giant among us.’ So I think the actors’ imaginations get carried away, and they transfer that onto me. I don’t know, maybe they’re saying, ‘He’s an old man, leave him alone. He probably needs to sleep!’ My big failing as a human being is that I don’t make an effort to get to know anybody or say, ‘Come on, let’s talk outside and get to know each other.’ So I really don’t know anything about anyone. A couple of times, Dylan and I had to share the van going to work, but his nose was in the script because he had pages of new dialogue every day, so I left him alone. That was a time when I might have schmoozed with him, but he was busy doing his job.”

“I told Doug Netter, ‘You realize, if Peter Juransik was here, he would already know everybody’s history, have schmoozed every

had been the old cast. That would have felt odd, because we know each other so well, and have so much history, that if we had gotten back together again, the show might have taken a back seat to the fact that we were reunited again. We would have started talking about how old so-and-so got, and there would have been so much teasing that the work would have been secondary. It was to our benefit that nobody knew each other well enough to be distracted by socializing or that kind of off-camera behavior.”

The Fading Starlight

When Babylon 5 ended its five-year run in 1999, loyal viewers weren’t the only ones sorry to see it go. Many of the cast members, Katsulas included, felt that there were more than enough stories for the series to continue. “There were some other factors that played into the ending of B5,” notes Katsulas. “At that time in the industry, even though we were all gainfully employed and happy as a bunch of bees doing our work, things in the business were already changing. People who could once negotiate higher salaries as character actors in features, or even guest appearances on TV, suddenly found there wasn’t any middle ground anymore. All of that disappeared, and that’s where Peter and I fell in. Everything was minimum salary, and you had better take that and be happy—because we weren’t in the star category—so we had to make that adjustment.

“During that five-year period, TV and features went to teenyboppers. All the roles available were for younger people,” he comments. “It wasn’t just that I had reached 50 and Peter was nearing it—if you were over 25, you were too old. The agents I had during B5 really felt bad, but they said, ‘You’ve got to realize, everybody your age is in this predicament. When we read the breakdowns, there’s nothing there to submit you for.’ So there was that adjustment, and I don’t think it had to do with being on a SF show or being unrecognized. And it wasn’t that I dropped B5 and G’Kar and never thought about them. I just had to in some way drop the thought of being an actor. I looked at my age and said, ‘In a few years, I can take my pension. Maybe it’s time to start looking at other ways to spend my life.’ And I’ve been doing that, and very successfully, I must say. Tomorrow, this is over, and if nothing ever comes again, I’ll go merrily on my way with the things I love to do in my life.

“I’ve taken up some hobbies; I’ve gotten into pottery and painting recently. I find them almost more challenging than acting, because they’re new to me, so they’re as fresh as acting was when I was in my 20s. And I can bring my creative juices to them, so I feel just as happy—maybe even happier doing those things—because the results are more solid. If you paint a picture, there it is, you made it, and it’s more yours than acting

“...
is—because with acting, Joe has written the lines, someone else has done the makeup, so what part of that contribution is mine? But if you make a pot, every part of it is yours.”

The Dinner Party

Although Katsulas may have temporarily relegated acting to his past, a twist of fate brought him back to the B5 Universe. “When I got the go-ahead to write the outline [for Rangers],” recalls Straczynski, “I was thinking about G’Kar as a possibility, because he has those elements of both a warrior and a priest, but I hadn’t fully decided yet. Then my wife and I went out to dinner, and sitting at the next table, after not having seen him for two years, was Andreas. When the universe sends you a telegram like that, pay attention!”

“I was having dinner with my son in Mel’s Diner on Ventura Boulevard,” Katsulas picks up the story. “While we were eating, my son said, ‘Dad, there’s a couple that keeps looking at you and whispering. They must recognize you from The Fugitive or something.’ I turned around and there was Joe and his wife, Kathryn [Drennan, former STARLOG writer], so of course I got up and went over and said hello to them. The next thing I know, Joe is sitting at our booth and saying, ‘Listen, this is an incredible coincidence!’ It was the very day he had gotten the green light on this project, so we took it as a sign, because it was too coincidental to bump into me on that particular day.

“There is something to say about synchronicity in this universe, that things that are meant to happen will certainly happen. You can’t ignore them, and this was one of those things. It was in both of our faces, so it was like, ‘Well, the time to do it has arrived.’ I never wanted to see Babylon 5 go away. I had always hoped to see it come back in some form, and there it was, so I accepted immediately. Apparently, Joe went home and wrote me into it, so that’s how it happened.”

One might think it would have been difficult for Katsulas to step back into the heavy costume and elaborate prosthetic makeup after such a long absence, not to mention filming in front of a new crew in a different country. But, in fact, Katsulas insists that, from the first morning he sat down in the Vancouver makeup trailer for Rangers, it didn’t feel strange at all.

“It was as if I had finished one episode and here I was working on the next, no difference,” he offers. “The folks at Optic Nerve were very cooperative and gave us some very good [prosthetic] pieces to work with, and the new people were respectful of the makeup and very concerned that they do it right. They wanted my input, so I told them everything I knew about the makeup, and it all went very well.”

And for Andreas Katsulas, who has always believed that G’Kar is on a spiritual quest that will continue to unfold, it’s nice to be back on that journey once more. “In this story, his function is to have information and expertise on the universe, so he’s useful to the Alliance and to the Rangers—and could be a viable character in [any potential Rangers series spin-off]. I can certainly see him there, and I don’t see it being unnatural or forced. I think there are good reasons that he should be there.”

For now, the SCI FI Channel hasn’t announced if The Legend of the Rangers will continue. The final fate of B5’s beloved Narn lies with them.

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It’s time to go. Nonetheless, co-executive producer Frank Spotnitz regrets that there weren’t more X-Files cases for latter-day agents Monica Reyes (Annabeth Gish) and John Doggett (Robert Patrick).

As The X-Files closes with a two-hour finale May 10, Fox Mulder (David Duchovny) returns to once again pair with Dana Scully (Gillian Anderson).
The truth, in the end, was self-evident: It was time for The X-Files to call it a day. "We all felt great about Season Nine creatively," explains Frank Spotnitz, who—beginning with Season Two—co-executive produced The X-Files with series creator Chris Carter. He also directed two episodes and wrote or shared the writing credit on more than 40 shows.

"We've had some great episodes this season, and you'll see that there still is plenty of outstanding work being done. It really wasn't a creative question for us," Spotnitz swears. "We've had a great time doing the show this year, and we're really happy with Robert Patrick and Annabeth Gish [as Special Agents Doggett and Reyes]. I think they brought new voices, intensity, humor and vitality to The X-Files. When Robert came in, no character like that had ever been on the show. He is so strong and commanding. We all felt that this was a guy who could step into a very difficult position and run with it. It was the same thing with Annabeth. She came in and had such charm and was so winning. You can't help but like her, and she's such a terrific actress."

Last Calls

Despite the praise Spotnitz has for the series' performers and plotlines this season, audiences just haven't tuned in. The X-Files' ratings have been in decline for some time now, but the show reached new Nielsen lows this year. "Something happened, and I don't know what it is," Spotnitz confesses. "From the very first episode, there was a certain portion of our audience that didn't show up. They just weren't there. That has been true for many networks and series this year, and it was certainly the case with our show."

"As the season progressed, we had some really good episodes, but the numbers basically didn't change," he acknowledges. "I know Chris thought about that over Christmas vacation, and when he came back he talked to me about it. We looked at the ratings for the first two episodes in January—which we thought were really strong shows—to see if there was any movement, and there wasn't. Chris then told me he wanted to go out now, rather than lingering on and waiting to see whether or not the audience numbers would decline further or hold level. We wanted to make sure the decision was ours, and we wanted to go out while we were still strong creatively. Telling everyone then also gave us the time to end the show properly. We contacted the studio and told them that we wanted to call it a day.

"The truth is, for me, I felt that The X-Files had had a stay of execution several times already," he opines. "I was ready to call it a day after Season Seven. My only regret is that Robert and Annabeth are so great that I would have liked to see the show go on for them. I'm not sure that even if there were a Season 10, 11 and 12, I would have come back. For me, this is eight years of the nine that the series has been on the air. That's a pretty long, very satisfying run. I might have stayed one more year because I have so much respect for Robert and Annabeth and like them so much, but for me, it really feels like the right time to move on."

Of course, before The X-Files fades to black, there are a few more stories to tell, a conspiracy or two to investigate, some relationships to resolve and a certain fan favorite who will be returning. "There's some good stuff," Spotnitz promises. "There's the two-partner which dealt with Scully's baby—Provenance and Providence. There's a stand-alone right after that episode which I think is really great, called Audrey Pauley; it's a flipside to '4-D.' It has to do with alternate universes, and it's another really great Doggett-Reyes episode. Then we have Underneath, which was written and directed by [veteran X-Files writer-producer] John Shiban."

"In April," Spotnitz continues, "there's Scary Monsters, which brings back Leyla Harrison [Jolie Jenkins], who was introduced in the episode I directed last year ['Alone']. She's back, and the whole episode plays on comparing Doggett and Reyes to Mulder and Scully. It's very funny. And then there's Improb, which Chris wrote and directed, and has Burt Reynolds as a guest star. That episode really demonstrates what this show can be, and how unique it is, because..."
there's nothing else like it on TV. 'Improbable' is funny, smart, strange and great. Burt plays somebody with a very... unusual relationship to everyone in the story, including the killer and our agents.

"After that, we have an episode that is the Lone Gunmen's [Tom Braidwood, Dean Haglund and Bruce Harwood] swan song. It's called 'Jump the Shark,' and it's very heavy on those characters. For the few people who watched the Lone Gunmen series, it's like heaven. It pays off everything that that show set up. Michael McKean is in it, too [as Morris Fletcher], and so is everyone else from that series, including Jim Fyfe and Zulheika Robinson. It's a great tribute to those guys, and it works as both a conclusion to the Lone Gunmen spin-off and as a salute to those characters after nine years on The X-Files."

**Finale Words**

David Duchovny returns to the series at the end of April, but in a role X-Files fans might not expect. "The [as yet untitled] episode will air at the beginning of sweeps, and David is directing it and co-wrote the story for it," says Spotnitz. "It's a very powerful and emotional episode for Gillian Anderson. After that, we've got a couple of other episodes and then we're into the finale. We're devising the story as we speak, and we'll start writing it any day now."

Along the way, Spotnitz says that fans can expect some closure for the central characters. Most pressing at the moment is the Follmer-who-loves-Reyes-who-loves-Doggett-who-loves-Scully-who-loves-Mulder angle. "In the last episode that I directed, 'Daemonicus,' the evil character says that Reyes clearly has feelings for Doggett, but the question is, does he have them for her?" Spotnitz notes. "In '4-D,' we learned more about her deep feelings for him, and in 'Audrey Pauley' we see another significant step forward in their relationship. There's another episode called 'Release' that will air in May, and it's important not only for their relationship but also for the storyline that began last year which involved Doggett's dead son. You'll get some big answers, and it deals with Follmer [Cary Elwes], too, and his former relationship with Reyes. If you've been following the lives of these characters, there will be a lot of closure and answers in that episode."

And, as the series winds down, look for Duchovny to return as Mulder. The actor will reprise his role in the two-hour series finale, set to air May 19. "Before Chris made the decision to call it a day, we had talked to David about directing an episode," Spotnitz reveals. "We were working on a story, and David even volunteered to appear in it, which we were very surprised by. We never thought to ask, and we were sure he would not come back. So when Chris made the announcement [that this was to be The X-Files' final season], we thought, 'This directing thing is going to go away now.' We did not want it to, but we thought it wasn't going to happen because we wanted to ask David to appear in the last two shows. In a way, we got the best of both worlds, because David did indeed go forward with the idea of directing and co-writing an episode, and he will act in the last two hours of the series."

There's a long pause when Spotnitz is asked to consider his personal favorites among the 200-plus X-Files episodes that have aired since the series debuted in 1993. In fact, when he does speak, it takes him a few moments to even name specifics. "For all of us," he begins, "I'm more proud of our collective effort than I am of anything I've done individually. I think the show really shines because of the efforts everybody put into it together. I'm very proud of that. And I say that with full recognition and acknowledgment that this is very much Chris Carter's show and vision which all of us have shared in."
As for the shows that have had my name on them...I'm very proud of 'Memento Mori' from the fourth season, for which all of us were nominated for a writing Emmy. There was 'Milagro,' which is from the sixth season. It was a very little, under-budget episode that touched me because it was about writing and what it's like to focus on characters—much as we have concentrated on these characters for so long. I really loved that episode.

"There are a number of shows that other people did that I didn't have my name on which I thought were terrific," he remarks, "like 'Beyond the Sea,' 'Clyde Bruckman's Final Repose' and 'Pusher.' I thought those were all great. The one that I will always have a special place in my heart for is 'Alone.' That was the first one I directed. Those are just some of the highlights."


\[Photo: Saeed Adyani\]

End Daze

During his days on The X-Files, Spotnitz also executive produced Millennium, The Lone Gunmen (which he co-created) and Harsh Realm, all in collaboration with Carter. Millennium ran for three years, while The Lone Gunmen lasted only half a season and Harsh Realm was cancelled after just a few weeks.

"They were all great learning experiences," says Spotnitz. "There were things I loved about Millennium, and it absolutely broke my heart when Harsh Realm got cancelled because I believed so much in that show and cast. The Lone Gunmen was a joy to do. The people who didn't like it—I have to shake my head at that, too. I loved that show and I was just so sorry that it didn't last longer."

Spotnitz kept his distance from the X-Files imitators that quickly flailed and died. Cases in point include Dark Skies and The Others. "I am ashamed to say that I don't think I saw more than a few minutes of any of them," he discloses. "I'm actually not a great TV watcher. Whenever I come home and watch other one-hour dramas, it's like I haven't left work. I can't help it. My mind is still in work mode. So I've seen very little of our competition over the past eight years, for better or for worse. When I come home, I watch documentaries. I'm a Frontline addict. I'm a movie addict. It's nourishing watching other stuff, and I don't feel locked into competition, into comparisons with what I've been doing.

"It feels weirdly ungrateful to think about regrets," offers Frank Spotnitz, who will be involved in the development of the second X-Files feature (he and Carter co-wrote the first film's story), and who just signed a deal to write, produce and direct two features for Dimension Films. "It has been such a great experience. Yeah, there has been some pain, and it has been hard, and there have been frustrations, but the positive column so outweighs the negative that there's nothing I can complain about."
Dark Angel's Kevin Durand proves you can teach a man-dog new tricks.

By RHONDA KRAFCHIN

He's tall, hairy, has razor-sharp nails and fangs and, on occasion, has been known to woof, growl and howl. When you first meet him, he might even sniff you. Who is this strange creature? Well, he's not the Wolf Man, the Shaggy Dog or even Scooby-Doo, but you're getting close. He's Dark Angel's Joshua, an experimental genetic crossbreed who is part human, part canine—the first of his kind—and what you get depends on your demeanor. He's equally capable of tearing you apart with his claws or crushing your body in a big bear-lovin' hug. The fact is, Joshua is no easy character to define. And at an imposing 6-foot-6, he can frighten as well as melt your heart.

"He's a hottie, don't you think?" quips Kevin Durand, whose friendly good humor is a trait he shares with his towering counterpart. Rescued in the season opener, "Designate This," by series heroine Max Guevara (Jessica Alba), Joshua has spent his life locked up in the bowels of Dark Angel's evil institution, Mantical. And now that he's finally free, he's like a child eager to please, and delighted to be a part of the wide-open world. The "big guy"—as Max refers to him—is really just one heck of a sweetie.

Puppy Love

Durand saw his character's potential from the very start. "Rather than playing just a vicious beast," he says, "I wanted to show Joshua as if he were scared. He has never seen anyone like Max before. Yes, he's scary as hell, and he could rip someone's head off, but he has this fear. A lot of canine instinct is that way. They bark and growl out of fear."

While he has yet to see a script that has instructed him to "bark," Durand has imbued Joshua with enough beastly elements to keep the writers and his fellow actors on their toes. "They didn't even know I could bark," he laughs. "I just threw it in one day and they were like, 'That's frightening.'"

The growling, sniffing and other doggie details—as well as Joshua's explosive enthusiasm for the mundane—aren't just surprising, they're often very amusing. But Durand's not striving for jokes. He's aiming for honesty. "I'm aware that the stuff I play is funny," Durand acknowledges, "because the crew is laughing their asses off. I just act out what I think his reality is. Whatever comes out of that, comes out of that. I'm usually not trying to do, 'OK, well, this is going to get a laugh here.' When you start doing that, that's when stuff starts to seem contrived. It's not coming from a real place. If I feel like Joshua would react a certain way or would do something, I don't hesitate. I just do it—whether it's humorous or whatever. It's like this little voice in my head. They're instinctual things coming from me, coming from Joshua."

Nothing, though, drives Joshua more than his very human affection for Max. His behavior is similar to that of a playful puppy, albeit one in a rotweiler's body. In many ways, Joshua is simply a lonely outcast who longs to please his friend. "I feel something for this character," says Durand of his dichotomous alter-ego. "Obviously, he's this tortured kind of—forgive the shameful pun here—underdog. There's just so much to be done with that. Being part of the outside world for the first time, Joshua is seeing all these colors, hearing music, looking at art, trees, all this stuff that he has been deprived of because of the way he looks, and that's exciting. He's like a little kid."

Guiding that kid is Max. Together, the pair make an odd-looking couple. Durand physically dwarfs Alba and easily outweighs her by at least 100 pounds, yet there is an affection between the two that makes their contrasting natures fit nicely. "We get along very well," says Durand of his co-star. "We have a good chemistry. She's like a little sister. It's wonderful. She has a really big job on her hands, and she comes to work everyday and delivers."

As his friend and—in many ways—his protector, the wiser, more world-weary Max understands that Joshua invites attention when he's out on the town. That's why he must spend his days holed up in an abandoned house once inhabited by his creator, Sandman. It's not a life of luxury, but at least no one is beating him. Joshua's hunger for knowledge and desire to experience the world first-hand, though, have led him out of the house and on some interesting adventures.

Dog Days

In the Halloween episode "Boo," Joshua gets the rare chance to explore the outside world on the one day of the year where he
doesn’t have to worry about drawing attention to himself. Initially, Max’s deep-seated fear for his safety causes some conflict. Then, she has a bizarre dream which employs her on a mission involving a wisecracking, bodiless head and a zoological array of wild Manticore offspring. The episode leaves viewers laughing but, more importantly, changes Max and her understanding of Joshua’s situation. “Life in general is multi-colored, multi-layered,” notes Durand. “In a series that generally deals with very dark, serious subject matter, I think humor helps to balance the show. It’s nice for the audience to see Max be playful as well.

“Joshua affects Max in many ways. You can tell there’s love there. She sees this person—part man, part dog—and she accepts what he is. Her association with Joshua makes her feel thankful that she can go out and walk the streets—maybe she’s not as much an outsider as she thinks.”

Max has certainly gained perspective since Joshua came along. And while there’s always the big picture—fighting against evil government agents and nefarious conspiracies—there’s now a consistent smaller one for Max: How to help this vulnerable and innocent man-child exist in a world that is dangerous for him. “Joshua has brought something really fresh to Dark Angel,” Durand opines. “Even though he’s this tortured soul and has been treated horribly, he continues with life, trying to see all the colors. This show is quite dark, so to bring a character who has so much positive light provides a good counterbalance. For Joshua to be out in the world and not be jaded and angry—he could’ve been a bad dude.”

One of the more difficult moments for Durand was in “Two,” which involves Joshua’s younger brother, Isaac—an emotionally damaged version of Joshua’s gentle giant. Durand played both roles. “Isaac was a little more dog-like,” he explains. “I really enjoyed the episode, but it was a tough place to go emotionally—where you’re prepared to kill your brother one day, and then the next day you have to enter another mindset and go, ‘I just got killed by my brother.’ It was really draining. It took me about a week and a half after that episode to just breathe and get back to being me because I was pretty depressed.”

Dual roles also meant double time in makeup. “When I’m doing episodes where I’m working every day,” Durand remarks, “I see Joshua more than I see me. I forget what I look like. That freaks me out a little bit. When I’m sitting there and closing my eyes, I’m trying to remember what my face looks like. The makeup is irritating for my skin and it’s a pain in the ass, but it’s Joshua. Once it’s on, I forget about it. Some people have said, ‘It would be great if Joshua saw a plastic surgeon.’ Part of me is like, ‘Yeah! No more three hours in the makeup chair.’ But at the same time, I don’t see that happening. I certainly haven’t heard anything about it.”

**Doggie Treats**

Long before Durand became Dark Angel’s dog-boy, he had a career in Canada, where he performed in theater, film and television. With only one year of acting school to his credit, Durand decided to attend the “school of hard
knocks,” and, with encouragement from fellow actors and mentors like Russell Crowe, racked up a varied list of credits—from his critically praised turn as Injun Joe in the Broadway production of The Adventures of Tom Sawyer to the HBO series Beggars and Choosers, where he played a “goofy, insecure, fumbling secretary.

“For me to be able to start at zero,” says Durand, “and just begin something totally different and new is fun.” While appearing as Injun Joe, the actor would often meet audience members outside the theater. According to Durand, they were so enamored of his villain, “they would say, ‘We want you to kill Tom,’ which I thought was really cool. There was always a huge group of people waiting. It was interesting to hear that comment. It just made me laugh.”

Due to his considerable size, Durand thought his career might involve some science fiction roles, but surprisingly, he has only done a few other genre series besides Dark Angel. One of those was Stargate SG-1—his first gig in Vancouver, where he played a Goa’uld villain in three episodes. “I had it with Zipacna,” Durand recalls. “This [most recent] time around I had even more fun with that arrogant, pompous idiot. I don’t get those parts very often. I play plenty of nice guys. When I do a bad character, I don’t just play him bad. I play a role. Even if he does not have a history, I’ll try to create one for him, why he’s a bad guy.”

With Joshua, the challenge was to find a balance between man and beast. “Joshua is probably about 90 percent human;” Durand estimates. “Most of his instincts are [human]—especially dialogue-wise. He’s really getting a grasp of the language, and he’s incredibly intelligent. He catches onto everything right away. Terms of how quickly he is becoming completely fluent, it has taken a little longer than I expected, but I definitely approach him as a human. His physicality, though, has canine instincts.”

Joshua’s charm and unpredictability are really on display in “The Medium is the Message,” in which Joshua becomes a successful pop artist and finds his inner muse. “I was really happy with that one,” Durand notes, “because we finally saw his joy.” Joshua’s exuberance for his creative outlet, however, is muted by the gallery owner’s appraisal of his art. Joshua’s canvases, she proclaims, are the work of a man who is seeing the world for the first time but can’t yet be a part of it.

“I’m glad that he’s comic relief,” Kevin Durand remarks, “but at the same time I would like to explore his intelligence and his power. Right now, he’s a kept pet. There are so many places that we could go with him. He could be incredibly useful out in the world. He could certainly help Max in her daily cause with his strength and intelligence, his knowledge and perspective on things. I think that would be really interesting.”

“His this tortured kind of—forgive the shameful pun here—underdog.”

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I was talking to my evil twin the other day. You know him: auburn hair, glasses, looks awfully like me. Poor bastard.

He shows up every so often, usually just to argue or to cause me further grief—as if publicists, publishers, writers and artists don’t do more than enough of that. Especially that cartoonist Tom Holtkamp. Look below left—he did give me a double chin or is that just a giant-size neck? Cartoonists? Why did it have to be cartoonists??

But I was talking about my evil twin, talking to him, I should say. “Hello, Evad. How are you?”

“My mood is crimson!” he snarls in that tender voice he uses on folks trying to sell stuff over the phone, especially new freelance writers who don’t realize the phone is an instrument of the Devil. Calling plans prove it conclusively.

“Why? What’s wrong now?” ask I. “Did another publicist promise photos and not deliver? Did some other dog eat a writer’s homework so a deadline got missed?” Deadlines are like old girl friends; you can never miss too many. “Or did someone misspeI “tomb raider”?
He utters that scream of audio-animatoric anguish. “I will destroy them! Slay them with the jawbone of an ass!” So many to choose from there. “Mighty will be my wrath! They will be eradicated! I will hear der laments of theirs!”

Now that’s just plain anti-social—and it has nothing to do with calling plans or early morning bus commuters who use their cell phones to drive me insane when I’m just trying to get a little shutye before we get stalled in the middle of the Lincoln Tunnel. Who are they calling at 6 a.m.? And why?

Evad is giving me that look again, as if I’m crazy, crazy enough to put battlefield Earth on the cover. Crazy like a fox!

This is insane! Pull yourself together, man! Let’s just argue!”

He’s my evil twin, always game for that. “Enterprise snafu!” he shouts. “Well, actually, I like it. Even that theme song is sort of growing on me.”

“Rollerball blows!” he smurts.

“I never saw it, but I did sip it in a Liner Notes that was fun to write.”

“But not to read! It was too ‘inside the Beltway’ for me;” he snickers, giving me that Bizarro grin that reminds me of both Lord of the Sith and Lord of the Dance. You never see those two together; they could be the same guy. Now his eyes dart around behind those Foster Grants.

“Earth: Final Conflict is incomprehensible!” he squawks.

“Well,” I reply, realizing that I’m running out of space and someone else is walking toward me, “I would have to agree.”

“Hi, guys!” a familiar figure joins us. I know that face. Auburn hair, glasses. Oh no! Now we’re really going to have an argument. It’s my evil triplet.

—David McDonnell/Editor (March 2002)
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