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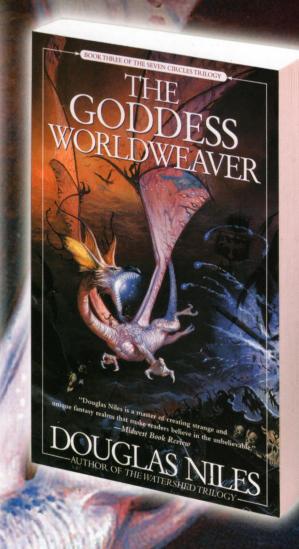
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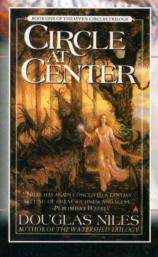
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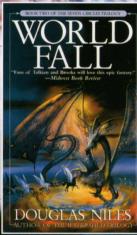
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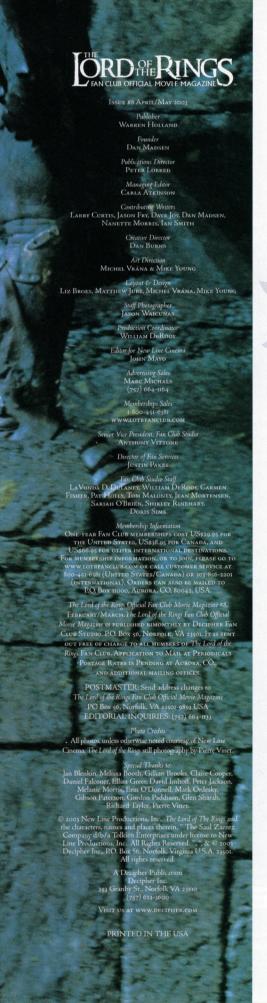
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Working in Middle-Earth

So what is it like to put together a magazine about a movie project so historic that it—like *The Wizard of Oz*, as Miranda Otto noted in the last issue—will be discussed by my daughter's generation and the generations that follow?

It is, of course, fascinating and awe-inspiring. The highs of the job are, as you might expect, the opportunities to spend an hour or more talking with behind-the-scenes masterminds such as Richard Taylor and cast members such as this issue's cover subject, Billy Boyd. Each of *The Lord of the Rings* luminaries that we have interviewed for the magazine has proven to be down-to-earth, straightforward, and eloquent—and perhaps most importantly, they are fiercely dedicated to their craft and to the project. Mr. Boyd was a pleasure to talk with, and I know at least a few of his many fervent admirers will be envious that I had the privilege of hearing his wonderful Scottish accent for almost an hour!

But I have to admit that I am probably most thrilled that I can feature people in the magazine who might not be categorized as "luminaries" in the traditional sense of the term but were nonetheless instrumental in the production. New Zealand Casting Director Liz Mullane and "Jack of All Trades" staffer Judy Alley aren't eligible for Oscars, but their firsthand pieces for the magazine have afforded all of us a fresh perspective on the many elements that went into making Peter Jackson's dream a reality. In this issue, you will meet Billie Lusk, who performed an all-important job on the production: feeding the hordes of hungry crew members, Orcs, Elves, Hobbits, Dwarves, and Men!

The only down side of this job is logistics: Sometimes, we can't always make schedules jibe and interviews happen in the time frame we had in mind, and sometimes we get a last-minute opportunity we just can't pass up! As a case in point, we are pleased to bring you our Billy Boyd interview and a detailed look at Elven Weaponry, while the promised Treebeard and Rohan Weaponry articles will appear in future issues!

Schedule-juggling and logistics aside, we are always proud of the stories we are able to bring you, and this issue is no exception. We had another fascinating visit with Peter Jackson, not to mention a conversation with Sauron himself—New Zealand native Sala Baker obviously took great delight in playing the ultimate bad guy, and he tells Dan Madsen all about it. And last but not least, Richard Taylor provides another illuminating behind-the-scenes design tale for us.

Enjoy!

Carla Atkinson Managing Editor

Features

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and much more in our latest Update!

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New Zealander Sala Baker was thrilled when *The Lord of the Rings* filmmakers plucked him from the ranks of stunt performers and "background" actors to give macho menace to Sauron, the ultimate villain of the film trilogy.

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SARUMAN SPEAKS

It was a real joy to read your interview with Christopher Lee in Issue 6. He is obviously a very literate man with a solid knowledge of and appreciation for the book upon which the film of *The Lord of the Rings* is based. One minor correction is needed for his comment that Sauron was probably human. In *The Silmarillion* (in "Of the Rings of Power and the Third Age"), J.R.R. Tolkien clearly states, "Of old there was Sauron the Maia."

Richard E. Ralston Marina del Rey, California, USA

Richard, thanks so much for your letter. We received many letters addressing this point, and we will be sure to pass the feedback on to Mr. Lee!

In Issue 6, I noted Christopher Lee's comment that the Academy has/does not give Oscars to fantasy films. Then they should stop giving Oscars at all. All films are fantasy! Even if you take historical events and

add one item that is not true, you have an element of fantasy. I think Peter Jackson should be very happy. He has taken the Academy and [made it afraid] to recognize extreme creativity outside the United States in a competitive market. Congratulations, Peter, on your success! I think this is another great achievement beyond the movie itself.

Neal Walko Oceanside, California, USA

THE INSIDE STORY

What I like best about the magazine is reading the "behind-the-scenes" anecdotes. The Issue 6 "Update with Peter Jackson" (my favorite feature!) was filled with amusing stories: Mr. Jackson's fly-away glasses, Mr. Mortensen's toe-stubbing performance, and Fran Walsh's spine-chilling Ringwraith scream! That's why I'm renewing my membership and hoping for more.

Mary Pflieger La Mesa, California, USA We are Austrian and German *The Lord of the Rings* fans, and we love to find details of this grandiose movie, *The Fellowship of the Ring*. But there is one detail we can't read—the title of the book Aragorn is reading in Rivendell. And who is the Elf riding on a white horse toward Rivendell? We hope that someone who worked on the films is willing to answer these questions!

Peter & Gabi Ölsinger

Our friends in New Zealand were kind enough to answer your questions: Aragorn is re-reading the "Song to Elbereth." This is a nod to the song Aragorn listens to in the chapter "Many Meetings," when Frodo is standing at Arwen's side. Galdor is the Elf riding on a white horse, arriving from the Grey Havens in time for the Council of Elrond.

RINGER CONNECTIONS

Trecently made the move from the Northeast to North Carolina. When I knew I was moving, I posted to the "Bag End" Message Board on lotrfanclub.com, inquiring about North Carolina. I was immediately invited to join the N.C. Fellowship email list. From the beginning, everyone was friendly and willing to give me advice about the area where I would be living. I also managed to arrive just in time for The Lord of the Rings DVD viewing party; plans are already underway for our next event! This fellowship has become a true community. I don't know if they realize what they have achieved, but as someone who has moved from areas in which the closest thing to a community was the Message Boards, it was truly a welcome experience.

Rachel Barckhaus Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA

THE TWO TOWERS

Wasn't the film brilliant? I wanted to run onto the screen and give Gollum a big hug when he was having

the two-way conversation with himself. I just cannot believe that he is not a living, breathing individual! And as for Aragorn—well, Miranda Otto is right. How can any woman not fall in love with him? (By the way, my husband loves Arwen when she speaks Elvish, so we are even!)

Bernard Hill's comment, "This is a family film" (Issue 6), really summed up how I feel about these movies; the Fan Club, the magazine, and the background information included on the DVD have all helped draw me into that family. Thank you to Peter Jackson and all involved in the making of the films—and to your good selves for providing all the news.

I would love for you to print my email address in case any other member of the extended *Lord of the Rings* family would like to correspond with me. (I'll be waiting to hear from you, Viggo!)

Janina Heath

Cambridge, England, United Kingdom janinaheath@bushinternet.com

A SHORE THING

Thank you for Issue 5! I especially love the interview with Howard Shore, having gotten a music degree in college. Mr. Shore is a phenomenal composer and has done something tremendous with *The Lord of the Rings!* Also, he answered the question I submitted! I'm over the moon! Thanks again for everything—a beautiful magazine and a great, great fan club.

Mary Keesling Lutz, Florida, USA

FOR THE DIRECTOR

Ilove your magazine! Unfortunately, I do not own a computer—otherwise I would be on the Internet with the other fans. The magazine is the only reliable source to keep me—and others like me—informed about the movies and behind the scenes.

No other movie can or ever will be able to come as close to perfection as

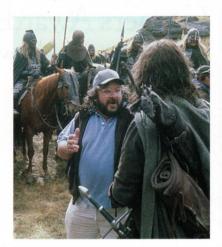
[Fellowship]. Too many pictures today have sex and profanity in them; there's no enjoyment. You want to be swept off your feet and taken to a world that you've never seen and be able to experience every possible emotion. I want to thank Peter Jackson and the entire cast and crew for making the impossible become possible—for making the best picture ever.

To Peter Jackson: Don't get sweet-talked by the movie big shots in Holly-wood into moving away from New Zealand to go to New York or California. Stay in New Zealand and only do the pictures you want to do. You may end up losing the Oscars for best picture and director, but you've already won the hearts of all of your fans around the world. When we feel depressed from our daily work routine, we will watch the movies and be transported to a magical place that no Hollywood director can take us.

Catherine Lopresto Kew Gardens, New York, USA

COVER TO COVER

This is the only magazine that I actually read every part of! When I read it, I feel closer to the movie, the



cast and crew, and the characters, and that's a great feeling! My favorite part of the magazine is the "Artifacts" section. The artifacts in the film were so convincing and so beautifully made, which is part of the reason why this film is so amazing. I had never been a Lord of the Rings fan or a J.R.R. Tolkien fan until my dad made me go see the movie! Before I saw it. I had said it was for nerds, but now I am proud to say I am a Lord of the Rings nerd! I loved [Fellowship] so much that I saw it 27 times in the theater (honestly)! It is a truly beautiful and inspiring movie, and I will cherish it for the rest of my life.

> Kayleigh Sherlock, Age 16 Longmont, Colorado, USA

I was very happy when I received my first copy of the magazine, and I could not drop it until I read it from cover to cover. I would also like to congratulate Dan Madsen on his marriage; I hope to see more of this among the Fan Club members!

Bayo Adewojo Lagos, Nigeria

I especially enjoy the articles about the making of the movie and interviews with those involved. As a student filmmaker, I get a little emotional reading them. I find myself wishing that I could have worked on such a fantastic project. I hope all of the people involved with the film know how fortunate they are to have been a part of it. Traveling to beautiful lands, working with great people in such a fun, yet challenging and rewarding job. Not many people get to do that. It gives me hope and motivation for my own meager attempts at filmmaking.

Shawna Buchanan Salem, Oregon, USA

We're eager to hear your feedback, so please write to us via email at editor@lotrfanclub.com or by regular mail at *The Lord of the Rings Fan Club Official Movie Magazine*, Attn. MailBaggins, c/o Decipher, Inc., PO Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501, USA. We will assume that we can publish your letter in the magazine, along with your full name, hometown, state, and country, unless you state otherwise. Letters may be edited for the sake of brevity and clarity. We look forward to hearing from you!

PWS

FROM MIDDLE-EARTH

Fans to Join Oscar Fun Again

Just blocks away from the site of the 2003 Academy Awards, The Lord of the Rings fans will gather once again for their own Oscar party at the legendary Hollywood Athletic Club! Popular fan Web site TheOneRing.net will host "Two Towers: One Party" in honor of the director, cast, and crew of The Two Towers.

Renowned Celtic folk-rockers Emerald Rose are slated to perform at the party, and raffles and auctions are planned. No members of *The Lord of the Rings* cast or crew have confirmed that they will attend, but there is always that possibility! Director Peter Jackson, Screenwriter and Producer Fran Walsh, Weta Workshop Director Richard Taylor, Composer Howard Shore, and cast member Sir Ian McKellen (Gandalf) were among *The Lord of the Rings* celebration.

Once again, a large Fan Club contingent from across the globe plans to descend on Los Angeles and environs for Oscar weekend. The full slate of Fan Club weekend events includes a Pub Moot at a local restaurant, visits to the J. Paul Getty Museum and the Fashion Institute of Design and Merchandising—and the Oscar party, of course!



The Two Towers

Garners Awards, Nominations

BY DAVE JOY

The Two Towers, the second installment of New Line Cinema's The Lord of the Rings trilogy, has been nominated for top honors by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, vying with four other films for Best Picture of 2002.

The Academy also honored *The Two Towers'* gifted behind-the-scenes team with five Oscar nominations for technical or artistic achievement:

- Achievement in Art Direction: Art Direction, Grant Major; Set Decoration: Dan Hennah and Alan Lee
- Achievement in Film Editing: Michael Horton

- Achievement in Sound: Christopher Boyes, Michael Semanick, Michael Hedges, and Hammond Peek
- Achievement in Sound Editing: Ethan Van der Ryn and Michael Hopkins
- Achievement in Visual Effects— Jim Rygiel, Joe Letteri, Randall William Cook, and Alex Funke

In a competitive year, the nod for Best Picture was a great honor for New Line Cinema and Peter Jackson, and the filmmakers have to be pleased by another important measure of a film's success—how the public "voted" at the box office. As of mid-February, *The Two Towers* had brought in more than \$321

million worldwide, besting its fellow Best Picture contenders by a long shot.

With *The Fellowship of the Ring's* 13 Oscar nominations in 2002, it was perhaps inevitable that, within hours of this year's nominations announcement, movie critics, entertainment pundits, and industry publications were speculating as to why *The Two Towers* came away with seven fewer nominations than *Fellowship*, despite being a bigger critical and box-office success.

Executive Producer Mark Ordesky told *The Hollywood Reporter* he wasn't sure how to explain the discrepancy. "Two Towers was a bigger commercial and critical success than *Fellowship of the Ring...*," Ordesky said. "Is there a bit of a middle-child syndrome? It's hard to tell."

The Reporter said Ordesky preferred to focus on the Best Picture nomination rather than the nominations The Two Towers did not receive. "This

has been a six-year odyssey of work, and it is unbelievably gratifying to reap these rewards," he told the publication. "These films continue to exceed our highest expectations, and this is just another vote of confidence for the third film."

It turns out, The Two Towers wasn't even in the running this year for some of the Academy awards that The Fellowship of the Ring won or was nominated for, according to the Reporter. "The clearest factor in the Towers nomination drop-off was decisions made by



the hair and makeup and music branches of the Academy," the publication noted. "Both branches, which honored the first film with Oscars last year, viewed Richard Taylor's hair and makeup efforts and Howard Shore's musical composition as extensions of the first film and therefore not worthy of additional recognition."

Shore, who wrote 160 minutes of new music for *The Two Towers*, told the *Reporter* that the Academy had let him know that his latest *Lord of the Rings* work wouldn't be eligible for Oscar consideration due to a new rule put forward by the organization's music branch. The new rule would consider sequels to be "derivative rather than original," said the *Reporter*.

TV Guide Online movie critic Maitland McDonagh weighed in on the muchdiscussed issue of whether

Andy Serkis deserved an acting nomination for his part in bringing CGI character Gollum to life in *The Two Towers. TV Guide* Online reported that McDonagh "thinks Serkis ... should've snagged 'the Precious.' Or, at least, a best supporting actor nod."

Peter Jackson, who did not actively participate in this year's pre-nomination "campaigning" in order to concentrate on *The Return of the King*, did garner his second nomination in a row from Directors Guild. "The Two Towers is the most difficult of the three [films], and I believe people recognize that this film is not just more of the same," Jackson told *Variety* after the Guild nomination was announced. "I'm very appreciative that people didn't say, 'We gave him one last year, so we don't need to do it again.""

This year's Academy Awards presentation will take place at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, California, on Sunday, March 23.

Honors Pour in for The Two Towers

Directors Guild of America: Nomination for Outstanding Directorial Achievement in a Feature Film (Peter Jackson).

The Producers Guild of America: Nomination for Darryl F. Zanuck Producer of the Year Award for Theatrical Motion Pictures (Barrie M. Osborne, Peter Jackson, and Fran Walsh)

Screen Actors Guild: Nominated for Outstanding Performance by a Cast in a Theatrical Motion Picture.

The American Film Institute: Nomination for Movie of the Year

British Academy of Film and Television Arts (BAFTA): Nominations for Best Film, Cinematography, Production Design, Costume Design, Editing, Sound, Achievement in Special Effects, and Makeup.

Broadcast Film Critics Association: "Critics Choice" Award presented for Best Digital Acting Performance—Gollum (Andy Serkis and Weta Digital).

Empire Awards (Britain): The Two Towers was named Best Picture, and the Lifetime Achievement Award went to cast member Christopher Lee (Saruman). The Sony-Ericsson Scene of the Year Award went to "Gollum's Debate" (Andy Serkis and Weta Digital). Several The Two Towers cast members were honored with nominations: Viggo Mortensen (Aragorn) was nominated for Best Actor; Andy Serkis (Gollum) and Sir Ian McKellen (Gandalf) were both nominated for Best British Actor; and Miranda Otto (Éowyn) was nominated for Best Actress. Peter Jackson also received a nomination for Best Director.

Golden Satellite (International Press Academy) Awards: Nominations for

- Best Motion Picture, Drama
- Best Director (Peter Jackson)

- Best Actor in a Supporting Role,
 Drama (Viggo Mortensen)
- Best Screenplay, Adapted (Frances Walsh, Philippa Boyens, Stephen Sinclair, Peter Jackson)
- Best Cinematography
 (Andrew Lesnie)
- Best Visual Effects (Jim Rygiel, Joe Letteri, Randall William Cook, Alex Funke)
- Best Film Editing
 (Michael Horton)
- Best Sound (Hammond Peek, C.A.S, Christopher Boyes, Michael Semanick, Michael Hedges)
- Outstanding Achievement
 Award for Outstanding Motion
 Picture Ensemble

(The International Press Academy has already presented a special Golden Satellite award to The Two Towers for "Outstanding Motion Picture Ensemble Cast.")

Costume Designers Guild Awards: Nomination-Best Costume Design, Period or Fantasy, Ngila Dickson

2003 ACE (American Cinematography Editors) Awards: Nomination for *The Two Towers* Film Editor Michael Horton

AOL Moviegoer Awards:

The Two Towers led all other contenders with nine nominations for these awards voted on by "rank-and-file" movie buffs:

- Best Picture
- Best Director (Peter Jackson)
- Best Actor (Viggo Mortensen)
- Best Supporting Actor (Orlando Bloom and Ian McKellen)
- Best Supporting Actress
 (Miranda Otto and Liv Tyler)
- Most Unforgettable Scene (Gollum argues with his split personality)
- Best Line in a Movie ("Gandalf? That was what they used to call me: Gandalf the Grey. I am Gandalf the White. And I come back to you now at the turn of the tide."— Ian McKellen)

The Fellowship of the Ring won Best Picture honors last year.



A Towering Lineup

BY LARRY CURTIS AND NANETTE MORRIS

Separated by time zones but united by unbearable anticipation, *The Lord* of the Rings fans gathered at movie theaters all over the world for "line parties" celebrating the long-awaited debut of *The Two Towers* on December 18, 2002!

"Line parties" are not a new phenomenon-movie, sports, and music fans have long partied while waiting in line for tickets or a great seat for a big event—but you can be sure that The Lord of the Rings fans bring a creative and impassioned spin to the tradition. So how does a Lord of the Rings line party come together? Typically, a party is hosted by a loyal fan who goes to a local theater and secures its blessing to host a line party at that venue. The host may then decide to contact surrounding stores, The Lord of the Rings merchandisers, and anyone else who might have something to contribute to the event. These businesses often donate prizes and The Lord of the Rings merchandise, which are given out, auctioned, or raffled off at the party.

Then there are the games. Plans and levels of extravagance vary from party to party. A *Lord of the Rings* line party

may feature live sword fights (in costume), lembas bake-offs, a parody song contest, a scavenger hunt, or a raffle.

The Lord of the Rings fans come in all ages, and line parties often bring far more people together than even the hosts expect. Spurred by mild interest or serious fanaticism, people come from near and far—trips of three to 30 hours—to wait in line for the best seats and to absorb the eager atmosphere. Some come in jeans, and others come in costumes and full makeup, with sword replicas in hand. For the second year in a row, TheOneRing.net (TORn), a popular fan Web site, provided The Lord of the Rings fans with a way to link up with others in their area via the Internet and descend on theaters en masse for midnight showings of The Two Towers across the globe.

With a year of experience under their collective belt—line parties were held all over the world when *The Fellowship of the Ring* debuted in 2001—"line leaders" organized festive gatherings for fans waiting to see the second installment of Peter Jackson's three-movie marvel. These leaders—who volunteer weeks and sometimes even months of personal time and often their own financial resources in exchange for "thank

All told, 771 formal lines were sponsored, 14 of which drew more than 100 participants each.

you's" as payment—are the real movers and shakers of the line-party movement.

All told, 771 formal lines were sponsored, 14 of which drew more than 100 participants each. More than 10,000 people signed up for events, a figure that doesn't reflect the many "line partiers" who showed up but didn't register! It's easy to see why *The Two Towers* made an impressive debut at the international box office.

Bill Powers, a.k.a. Sauron's Truss on the Fan Club Message Boards, host of the San Diego party, says he learned the line party drill in 2001, when The Fellowship of the Ring debuted. For that first line party, Powers joined a Decipher "Product Champion" in handing out prizes donated by the Fan Club, giving people the chance to win better prizes by answering trivia questions. "The non-Line Party people looked at us quizzically at first," he says, "but when they saw all the great items being given out, they soon began to regret not having heard of our party! Posters, brochures, The Lord of the Rings Trading Card Game booster packs and starter decks, caps, The Lord of the Rings books, and the BBC The Lord of the Rings audio series on cassette were some of the giveaways. Nearly everyone came away with something." In 2002, more than 150 people showed up for San Diego's The Two Towers line party, with four theaters sold out for the first showing at midnight. Powers ran trivia contests, and line partiers came away with a raft of prizes ranging from copies of the special extended edition of The Fellowship of the Ring to replicas of the One Ring.

Fan Club member Cathy Udovch organized the San Diego line party with the motto "More Party, Less Line!" to draw more than 275 official "liners" to the opening night gala. California easily claimed the most "big lines" with

at least four groups totaling more than 50 participants and three lines landing in the Top 10 spots worldwide. Fans attending the line party in Vista, California, were treated to a special visit from Andy Serkis, the actor who gave voice and authenticity to Gollum in *The Two Towers*.

Salt Lake City played host to the largest Tolkien movie line party in the world. Hosted by Fan Club member Larry Curtis, a staffer at TheOneRing.net, the party was held at one of the largest movie auditoriums in the Intermountain West, which sold all of its 980 tickets to the Salt Lake group for an impressive turnout in an enormous theater. The line also collected food for the Utah Food Bank and donated money to the Salt Lake City library teen reading program. They also managed to fit in an exceptional costume contest, gave a promotional bag to every person, and handed out prizes donated from a variety of local and national sources.

Seattle, Salt Lake City, and New York City each drew more than 200



viewers, Mesa, Dallas, Montreal, and Rio de Ianeiro also came close to the 200 mark, bringing the total number of fans from just the Top 10 lines to well over 2,000, while London and Australia checked in with strong showings as well.

Other Fan Club members from across the globe met to celebrate the release of the film at smaller, but no less enthusiastic line parties. For example, the Portland, Oregon, party was an all-day event featuring prize drawings, contests, tabletop games, a karaoke setup, and a raffle to raise money for a literacy program that actor Sean Astin (Sam) has championed.

Another group of Fan Club members in Honolulu, Hawaii, had a privately hosted Premiere Party. It began with showing the extended DVD of The Fellowship of the Ring and a Hobbit Buffet, complete with mushrooms, tomatoes, sausages, and heaps of nice, crispy bacon. The Hawaii fans organized several hours of games, including The Lord of the Rings trivia, original limericks, and original compositions. Prizes included posters, books, cards, calendars, DVD and VHS copies of The Fellowship of the Ring, and a replica of The One Ring! Several people came in costume. One very dedicated fellow came as The One Ring, dressed in black with a gigantic gold ring surrounding him!

A generous group of fans in Texas, calling themselves "Rings on the Range" (groups.msn.com/ringsontherange) held a raffle at the Alamo Drafthouse North to benefit a local Food Bank. All told, the raffle raised more than \$500, which translated into almost 3,000 meals for locals in need. Prizes for their raffle included special donations from McKellen.com on behalf of Sir Ian McKellen (Gandalf), The Lord of the Rings Fan Club, and local businesses.

With one film to go, The Return of the King line parties are already being planned, and, as any good line party leader knows, the third time is the charm!

Frodo Flies High

ir New Zealand, in collaboration Awith New Line Cinema, has unveiled an exciting fleet of The Lord of the Rings-themed flying billboards!

The Boeing 767s depict key film characters Aragorn and Arwen, as well as Frodo, against backgrounds featuring stunning New Zealand landscapes.

Described as an ambitious two-year campaign to promote Air New Zealand as the "Airline to Middleearth," the company's tourism message will beckon to The Lord of the Rings fans everywhere since Air New Zealand flies to all parts of the world.

"As a flying billboard to promote New Zealand tourism, this is as powerful as it gets," says Peter Walsh, Air New Zealand's Vice President of the les, the Frodo-themed aircraft has also flown to Britain, Australia, and Japan. The "Aragorn and Arwen" aircraft (a Boeing 767-300) will fly primarily Pacific Rim routes—Honolulu, Australia, Asia, and the Pacific Islandswhile the "Frodo" aircraft (a Boeing 747-400) will fly the Los Angeles and London routes. The image of Aragorn and Arwen (Viggo Mortensen and Liv Tyler) is a giant decal spread out over 3,444 square feet that took 25 hours to apply by a crew perched in "cherry-pickers." While the decal (made by 3M) is barely thicker than cling film, the sheer size of the image brought the weight of the Frodo decal to 132 pounds!" "Aragorn and Arwen" flew into L.A. on January 24, 2003, and though security



Americas. The "Frodo" aircraft made a special trip to Los Angeles on December 16, 2002, to pick up Elijah Wood and other cast members and fly them to New Zealand just in time for the Wellington premiere of The Two Towers.

"It's been one of the best days of my life ... starting with arriving in New Zealand this morning onboard a plane with my face on its side!" Wood told reporters.

Since its unveiling in New Zealand and its December debut in Los Ange-

restrictions prohibited up-close viewing, spectators could get a good view from the departure-level sidewalk.

It is reported that more The Lord of the Rings-themed aircraft are planned, but there's no word yet on which characters will be featured next. Any votes for Gollum?

Meanwhile, in other Kiwi tourism news, travel publisher Lonely Planet has named New Zealand its top travel hot spot for 2003. Clean, green New Zealand came out ahead of the rest of

Celebrity Tracks

BY DAVE JOY

Sound the horns! Éowyn the Shieldmaiden of Rohan is wed! Congratulations go out to MIRANDA OT'TO, who rang in the New Year by marrying her actor boyfriend, Peter O'Brien. Otto, 35, and O'Brien, 42, were married in Sydney, Australia, at St. Mary's Cathedral. The newlyweds had performed alongside each other in the Sydney Theatre Company production of A Doll's House in 2002.

The multitalented VIGGO MORTENSEN appeared at his alma mater, St. Lawrence University in upstate New York,

for a poetry reading and book signing in late February. Photographs from Mortensen's popular Signlanguage book were to be on exhibit at the university's Richard F. Brush Gallery from February 28-April 5. ... In January, Mortensen attended a Tower Records book-signing event in Tokyo for Signlanguage. The crowd of more than 400 went wild when he introduced surprise guest KARL URBAN

guest KARL URBAN (Éomer). ... Mortensen's next movie appearance will be as the lead in Disney's Hidalgo, a true-life drama about a 19TM-century endurance horse racer who accepts a challenge to race 3,000 miles across the Arabian desert. No need to give the plot away on this one ... and don't bet on anyone else's horse!

Have you seen SEAN ASTIN's short film involving all the cast and crew during the New Zealand shooting of The Lord of the Rings? The six-minute

video is an "insider's" view in which "Samwise" turns the tables on director Peter Jackson in one scene not to be missed. ... President Bush recently named Astin to the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation, created in an effort to promote voluntarism in service to the needy in America. ... Watch for both Astin and CHRISTOPHER LEE in The Riding of the Laddie, the upcoming sequel to The Wicker Man, a chilling horror flick also starring Vanessa Redgrave.

LIV TYLER has reportedly announced plans to be married in Yorkshire, England. A British tabloid says Tyler is set to wed her

rock star fiancé Royston Langdon, lead singer for the band Spacehog, in Headingley, Leeds. Tyler is said to be in love with Yorkshire, Leeds, and the surrounding area, including its Roman ruins and rolling hills. She is also quoted as having become particularly fond of Yorkshire pudding!

SIR IAN MCKELLEN will appear in three big films in 2003. In *X-Men 2*, he reprises his role as "Magneto" from the box office hit *X-Men*, while *Emile* will feature McKellen's powerfully evocative performance as a man seeking

to overcome isolation from his family. And December, of course, will bring the premiere of The Return of the

King! A renowned stage performer as well, McKellen is appearing in a London production of "Dance of Death," which opened March 4. Tickets can be

purchased through McKellen's Web site mckellen.com/index.html.

CATE BLANCHETT stars in two

films this year. In Veronica Guerin, Blanchett depicts the title character, a real-life Irish investigative journalist

who was assassinated by drug dealers in 1996. Expect fine performances from Blanchett and co-star Colin Farrell. In *The Last Ride*, Blanchett's character works with her estranged father, played by Tommy Lee Jones, to retrieve her kidnapped daughter.

ELIJAH WOOD is set to play in a new movie entitled Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind, also starring Jim Carrey, Kate Winslet, and Kirsten Dunst. Eternal Sunshine was written by Charlie Kauffman, who is also known for such boxoffice hits as Adaptation, Confessions of a Dangerous Mind, and Being John Malkovich. The film is about a man who discovers his ex-girlfriend has had all memory of him wiped from her mind. He does the only logical thing he can think of and undergoes the procedure himself. Wood plays the scientist who administers the memory-wiping. Insiders hint that Eternal Sunshine may be the "sleeper" hit of 2003. ... Rumor also has it that Wood and fellow Hobbits

Merry and Pippin (DOMINIC MONAGHAN and BILLY

BOYD) have all decided to buy homes in their adopted new home of New Zealand.

Official Movie Magazine Challenge



ur Issue 6 caption contest has proven so popular that we are bringing you another caption competition: Take a look at the above image and come up with your best candidate! The Lord of the Rings Fan Club staff will choose the five best entries. Each winner will receive a Balrog lithograph autographed by The Lord of the Rings Conceptual Artist John Howe.

One entry per person, please. Submit your entries to editor@lotrfanclub.com or to The Lord of the Rings Fan Club, Official Movie Magazine Challenge, P.O. Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501-0056, ATTN: Caption Contest. Each entry must be accompanied by your full name, street address, phone number, and a valid email address. Entries must be received no later than II:59 PM. E.S.T., on May 15, 2003. Entries received after this date, regardless of when they are postmarked or time-stamped, will not be accepted. Contest results will be announced in a future issue of the magazine! (Winners of the cartoon and caption contests featured in Issues 4 and 6, respectively, will be announced in Issue 9 of the magazine.)

Certain restrictions will apply. For the complete terms and condi-tions of this exciting contest, please refer to our Web site (lotrfanclub.com), and click through to "Fan Club Magazine."

the world in a survey of 450 Lonely Planet staffers, inspired by the country's "breathtaking appearance" in The Lord of the Rings films. New Zealand became known as Middle-earth to I.R.R. Tolkien fans around the world after moviegoers got an intimate look at the South Pacific nation's extreme and diverse landscapes.

New Zealand government officials have also geared up to capitalize on the country's starring role in the film trilogy. Not missing a beat, the New Zealand government has created a new position, "Minister for The Lord of the Rings" (Kiwi Pete Hodgson has been tapped for the job), and tourism agencies have begun spending millions on

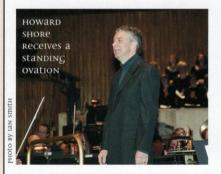
selling the country as the home of Middle-earth. "From a New Zealand point of view, it is one long tourism promotion," New Zealand Prime Minister Helen Clark told Reuters last year at the premiere of The Two Towers. "It's fantastic." According to official reports, New Zealand hit the two-millionvisitor mark for the first time in 2002. ~ Dave Joy -6



Concert A Shore Hit

The Lord of the Rings Composer Howard Shore drew an enthusiastic audience to the United Kingdom premiere of "The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring for Symphony Orchestra and Chorus" at London's Royal Festival Hall, home of the London Philharmonic Orchestra.

The honor of first performance of everyone's favorite music score may have gone to the Hollywood Bowl last August, but this UK event, which attracted fans from across Europe (and the United States as well), felt more like a world premiere. The excitement in the air was palpable, not only because it was the first worldwide public performance to be conducted by the score's com-



poser, but also because it was to be performed by the orchestra responsible for the original movie soundtrack.

Any signs of nervousness Shore may have displayed as he stepped out onto the stage vanished with the warm welcome he received from the audience. Forsaking the traditional conductor's baton, Shore energetically and enthusiastically conducted the London Philharmonic Orchestra in a mesmerizing performance.

The concert, which featured beautifully segued (and sometimes rearranged) tracks from the movie soundtrack album, attracted a large family crowd. It is a testament to Shore's music that, despite the many young children present, one could have heard a pin drop during quiet, more melancholy pieces, such as "Gandalf's Lament." An hour passed in what seemed like minutes, and then the audience delivered its verdict with three loud and noisy standing ovations that appeared to genuinely surprise and move the Oscar-winning composer and conductor. ~ Ian Smith

Product update

BY DAVE IOY



PLAY ALONG TOYS

Play Along, Inc., announces that it has designed its soon-to-be-released toy line around The Lord of the Rings movie trilogy from New Line Cinema. The character miniatures are set in 3inch scale, so fans can easily recreate epic conflicts and fully populate their battles with all the familiar characters of Middle-earth. Additionally, figures will be sold in three-packs, which will make it easier to complete teams of good and evil characters. The meticulously sculpted warriors, weapons, and environments are beautifully detailed, yet on a small enough scale for collectors to create comprehensive, museumquality displays. The first set of highly decorated, articulated figures and accessories, which includes more than 60 magical characters and five mystical environments, will reach retailers in summer 2003 and coincide with the DVD release of The Two Towers, Additional collections of characters and settings will be released in the fall just prior to the holiday theatrical release of The Return of the King.

DECIPHER

Featuring the challenging gameplay that The Lord of the Rings Trading Card Game is best known for, the Battle of Helm's Deep expansion set pits good against evil with all the weapons of war available. Players will be introduced to new strategies as well as new character cards—including Gimli and Legolasas they enter Helm's Deep, the ancient fortress where King Théoden defended his kingdom against the forces of Saruman. In addition, the new Gollum culture presents the option of using Gollum/Sméagol as a minion, companion, or both in the same deck. This 128card expansion set contains 46 rare cards, six of which are alternate-image versions found only in starter decks; 40 uncommon cards: 40 common cards: and two premium cards.

SABERTOOTH GAMES

Sabertooth Games, Inc. (a subsidiary of Games Workshop Group PLC) has announced its release of The Lord of the Rings Tradable Miniatures Game (TMG), featuring miniaturizations of all the most familiar characters from The Lord of the Rings movies. The expertly pre-painted miniatures are at the center of a fast, intuitive rules system, whereby in only minutes, players are able to recreate the action and adventure of the most exciting battles such as those in Moria and Helm's Deep. TMGs combine the strategy and excitement of traditional battle games with the familiarity of Collectible Card Games. With their easy-to-learn rules and ready-to-play components, TMGs deliver an exciting play experience for gamers and fans of all ages and skill levels.







Billie Lusk Catering

You won't see Billie Lusk's work on screen when you go to the theater, but you can bet that 'The Lord of the Rings—with its famously grueling shooting schedule—couldn't have been made without the "fuel" provided by Lusk and her fellow caterers

BY JASON FRY, WITH REPORTING
BY DAN MADSEN

s operations manager for the catering company Trestles, Billie Lusk had the challenge of assuaging the hunger of the army of cast and crew members that made up the main unit bringing The Lord of the Rings to the screen. Doing so entails far more than making sure you have enough silverware and servings. A variety of dietary preferences have to be considered, as well as the weather and how hard the hungry hordes have worked on a given day. And, of course, all that food has to be in the right place at the right timeoften a substantial challenge in itself, given some of the remote locations where The Lord of the Rings was filmed.

Flying Trestles was founded in 1990 and is based in Greenstown. While the firm is dedicated to catering for pro-

duction companies making films and commercials, it also serves conferences, weddings, and other location events. As such, it has accounts with food providers all over New Zealand—a necessity given the travels of The Lord of the Rings' main unit. But travel, of course, also poses difficulties: One basic problem is that the caterers don't have an enormous amount of space, so they can only take a day or two's worth of food with them when the production is on the move. "That's when it gets tricky," Lusk says. "When you have to buy more, stuff does go missing and orders do get mucked up."

In that case, Flying Trestles would go to a backup plan—something they always have. Luckily, staples travel well and can always be employed in a pinch. "I've never been in a situation where

Unsung Heroes



"AT MOUNT RUAPEHU, they used a lot of soldiers from the army as

extras, and they are so much [that] it was like feeding half as many people again."

we've had a food problem," Lusk says. "If you've always got dried pasta and eggs and things, you can always do something."

But backup plans are needed for more than just emergencies. "With menus, you always need a Plan B," Lusk explains. "You may order something thinking the weather is going to be really cold, and then it'll be a really hot day. So you just have to [make a] change."

FEEDING AN ARMY

Because of a previous commitment, Flying Trestles began catering the production about five or six months after filming began. But Lusk saw what she was up against during her first week on the job: The main unit was on location at Mount Ruapehu with a whopping 1,100 people to feed. "That was really challenging," she says. "As soon as it gets bigger than 100, you're dealing with more staff and, of course, more food. You can't wing it—you have to make sure that the food is there when you need it."

How does one know how much is needed to feed all those mouths? Lusk says they used certain parameters when placing orders, such as planning for "so many grams of meat per person." But again, those guidelines can break down in the real world—particularly when a lot of physical work is demanded from extras who may go back for multiple helpings. At Mount Ruapehu, Lusk says, "they used a lot of soldiers from the army as extras, and they ate so much [that] it was like feeding half as many people again."

The hardest part of catering a film production, she says, is the logistics of getting the food where it needs to beand Ruapehu was certainly a challenge. It was a remote location, and the weather was bad. "It was winter, and there was a lot of black ice on the roads, so we'd have to leave at 3 o'clock in the morning on some days," Lusk recalls.

Feeding those 1,100 people took several 10-ton trucks, each of which houses a kitchen with a walk-in refrigerator and two ovens. One of those trucks became, for all intents and purposes, Lusk's office and home during The Lord of the Rings. A typical morning on the film, she says, would begin in the truck

So what's for breakfast on a film like The Lord of the Rings? "We always had fresh fruit salad, a range of cereals, porridge, and some kind of drink or fruit smoothie," she recalls. "Then we had toast, bagels, croissants, and a selection of six or seven hot foods. We always tried to have many meaty things for breakfast, and also something for the vegetarians."

It's variety enough to make a hobbit blush—and work hard enough to make a dwarf quail. After breakfast, it was time to clean up and get ready for the next meal. In Hobbiton, of course, that next meal is second breakfast, but in New Zealand, it's lunch—about five hours later.

And what's for lunch? Here's one menu recited by Lusk: "Rack of lamb, mashed potatoes, eggplant risotto, Caesar salad, a broccoli/feta salad, and

In all, something on the order of 27,000 eggs were eaten,

AS WELL AS MORE THAN 300 pounds of meat, ALL WRAPPED IN "several thousand kilometers of aluminum foil."

peas to go with the mashed potatoes and gravy. Then for dessert, I just did big ice cream sundaes."

After that, the caterers got to sit down and eat before starting on washing dishes, which were usually supplied by Flying Trestles. After doing prep work for the next day, the catering crew could finally wrap up its 12-hour shift and head home. Flying Trestles generally didn't cater dinner, Lusk says, though they made exceptions for night shoots and other special circumstances.

NO PRIMA DONNAS

Some movie stars are notorious for their pickiness and obsessive need to be, well, catered to, but Lusk says that wasn't her experience on The Lord of the Rings. Prima donnas weren't a problem. "They've been fantastic on this job," she says of the trilogy's stars. "They figured we had enough to do already."

That egalitarianism was the rule for the filmmakers and crew as well. Asked if director Peter Jackson ever requested special meals, Lusk says no. "Peter has no interest—he doesn't have the time to think about that," she explains. Most of the surprises she faced were nice ones, Lusk says, like when producer Barrie Osborne decided to make a splash for the one-year anniversary of the production. "We had this huge seafood extravaganza down on the shores of [a lake]," Lusk recalls. "We had like a hundred crayfish ... venison steaks, prawns, and oysters.... It was fantastic!"

Any feast requires substantial planning and organization, and that was the most important thing in ensuring cast and crew got fed.

"It's a full-time job just to order food," Lusk says. "You just have to think three or four days ahead, because you



have to bring the food and make sure it gets there [without spoiling]. Logistically, it's just really difficult. And finding staff that can travel and work those kinds of hours is hard, too."

Despite a cast and crew that didn't demand lavish perks, there was the occasional frantic day for the caterers. One trip to remote Lake Mavora happened to coincide with Jackson's birthday, meaning a nice gesture became something of a challenge. "We got there on a Sunday, and they turned around and said to me, 'Oh, it's Peter Jackson's birthday tomorrow-can you make all his favorite food?" Lusk recalls. "I said, 'Why couldn't you have told me that earlier?' He likes roast pork and stuff, so I had to make all these desperate phone calls, get his favorite food down there the next day, and make a cake as well."

So how much was consumed during Lusk's time on The Lord of the Rings? The exact answer, she says, would require an arduous hunt through a pile of invoices, but she's willing to hazard some guesses, including 18 cans of baked beans a day

for the crew and 50 kilograms of bacon for a Mount Ruapehu breakfast. In all, she says, something on the order of 27,000 eggs were eaten, as well as more than 300 pounds of meat. And all that food was wrapped, she says, in "several thousand kilometers of aluminum foil."

The rewards of the job? They included the appreciation of a well-fed cast and crew—as well as the opportunity to undertake some small culinary adventures. "One of the best things about it is that no one really dictates what you have to feed them," Lusk says. "I've tried out heaps of new recipes. You can cook what you want, as opposed to working in a restaurant where you have to go in and make the same meals day after day after day. Here, you can be as creative as you can get away with."

Then there's the chance to travel and to meet some of the creative people dedicated to bringing The Lord of the Rings to life onscreen. "The way I see it is that every single person that works on this job is quite creative," Lusk says. "They are artistic people—they're into the cause, really."

Count Lusk as one of them. J.R.R. Tolkien was her late grandmother's favorite author, and she says that's one reason she wanted the job. "I was really interested, because I had the books read to me," Lusk explains. "It was great to go and see the film-I felt such a sense of achievement after having seen the finished product."

Then there's the suggestion that, just perhaps, it was Billie Lusk's fate to work on The Lord of the Rings. Lusk says her grandmother "used to breed goats, and all her goats are named after little hobbits. And I am actually named after Bilbo Baggins—that's where my name came from. Seriously!"



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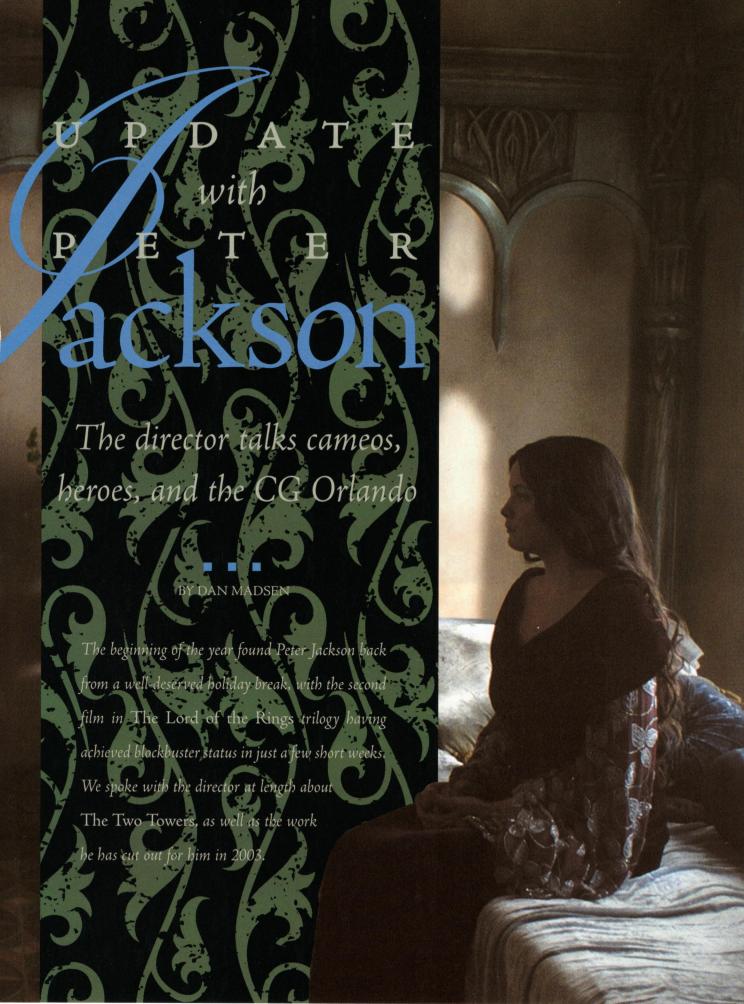
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CRID OF RUNGS
ROLEPLAYING GAMES









Peter. What are you working on THESE DAYS?

Well, things usually calm down at the beginning of the year; this is the third time we've done this, so there is a bit of a pattern that we can recognize now. Once we have released a movie, as with The Fellowship and The Two Towers, things do quiet down. We had the Christmas holidays off, [and] the beginning of the year is quite a nice time, because you've got the full year stretching ahead of you, and you've got to do post-production.

We've started editing The Return of the King; I am cutting it in more or less chronological order, and I've probably cut about 25 minutes so far. That's what I spend most of my day on. I have also completed the extended DVD cut of

The Two Towers, which I wanted to get done so it didn't interfere too much with The Return of the King. I did that just before and after Christmas.

I also usually go to Weta for an hour each day to look at shots they are doing. They are busy at the moment doing The Two Towers extended-cut visual effects shots-there are about 150 effects shots in the extended footage. That is amazing! They keep saying to me, "A normal film would be proud to have the amount of effects we have just in the extended footage!" They are having to do them as extra bonus shots!

Also, they already have upwards of 50 shots from The Return of the King completed. One of the important things that occurs in the cutting

process is that, as I edit a visual effects shot, I give it to Weta straight away so that the work can be spread throughout the whole year, and they don't get a big log jam at the very tail end of the year. We tend to have the Weta folks come down to the cutting room—10 or 15 of the key Weta supervisors and animators—and I show them the scene that I have just cut, and we talk about the visual effects shots for that scene.

As we are doing Gollum scenes, we are preparing them for Andy Serkis to do the motion capture, too. We now have to begin the technical process of Gollum for The Return of the King. Andy is coming to New Zealand in April, and I am trying to cut all of the Gollum sequences for The Return of the King before he arrives so we can go through

the whole movie with him and do his motion capture. So it is a quiet but nonetheless still very intense period of time in which we are just starting to get the whole Return of the King post-production ball rolling. I also spend an hour or two each week on a video conference call with Howard Shore, who is in New York. He is working on the score for The Two Towers extended cut. Sometimes my day begins by talking to him and hearing pieces that he has composed. He has a lot of original music that he has to compose, as he did last year for the extended cut of The Fellowship.

Are you looking at about the same amount of additional footage for the extended cut of The Two Towers as you had on The Fellowship of the Ring?

We're actually looking at a little bit more. We've ended up with about 43 minutes of additional material; I think The Fellowship had 32 minutes.

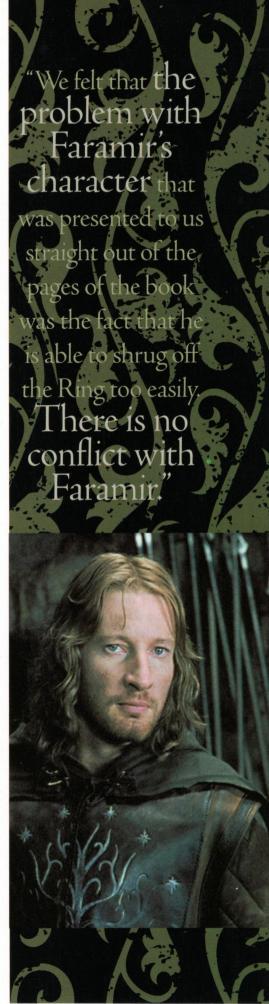
OF THE MATERIAL THAT IS BEING ADDED, WHAT ARE YOU PARTICULARLY EXCITED ABOUT?

I think the thing I am most excited about is the fleshing out and expansion of the Treebeard/Ent story. His story, more than any other single part of the film, was reduced for the theatrical version.

Most of the Treebeard stuff is humorous. We have a great scene—which I really would have loved to put in the theatrical version—where he recites really bad poetry to the Hobbits, who are desperately trying not to fall asleep because that would be rude, and they don't want to be rude. In addition to the Treebeard material in that storyline, we also have a really funny sequence with Merry and Pippin and the Ent-draught, which is pretty much taken right from the book. There are a lot more surprises in that extra Fangorn material.

Sabine Jakob from Kincasslagh, County Donegal, Ireland, asks: Why did you find it necessary to change Faramir so much from the book?

We've been receiving a lot of mail on this. The thing with Faramir is that there are a few contradictions in his character that we felt would weaken the thrust and narrative tension of the film. You also have to bear in mind that when I say, "It would weaken it," we're thinking of the response of a general audience—people who are not familiar with the book or people who have forgotten the book because they read it a long time ago. We are really trying to make the films work for those people as well. We felt that the problem with Faramir's character that was presented to us straight out of the pages of the book was the fact that he is able to shrug off the Ring too easily. There is no conflict with Faramir. He essentially captures the Hobbits very, very quickly, [and] in the book, he turns around and lets them go. He has an opportunity to take the Ring, but he shrugs it away with seeming ease and says, "If I saw this thing lying along the side of the road, I wouldn't even pick it up." The simple premise that our movies hinge on is: The Ring is so potently powerful that anyone who comes into contact with it is going to, one way or another, be affected by it. We felt that Faramir's attitude would, in the minds of a cinema audienceand certainly one that was unfamiliar with J.R.R. Tolkien-[give the feeling that] the Ring had suddenly lost its potency and its strength. There were very few other scenes in The Two Towers that showed the strength of the Ring. The Fellowship was full of moments when the Ring was affecting people at the Council of Elrond or with Boromir or even Bilbo at the beginning. Yet, in The Two Towers, the Ring is hardly featured at all. Frodo doesn't put it on; he doesn't come across anyone



other than Faramir. We felt it would basically contradict everything we tried to establish in The Fellowship of the Ring [if] our only "Ring encounter" in The Two Towers [was] one that is effectively shrugged away. Some of the essence of Faramir's character, at that point, had to be changed, we felt, for the film. Obviously, if you are a fan of the books, and you like Faramir, then it is going to annoy you. But there is nothing we can do about that. We also wanted to make his capturing of the Hobbits have potency; we didn't want it to be so easy for them to be let go. We didn't change it to the point that the Hobbits sneak out and escape—Faramir does make the decision to let them go. We gave Faramir that decision; we didn't take that away from him. But we stretched it out so that, essentially, they were captured for longer, and there was more tension involved.

WHAT KIND OF RESEARCH DID YOU DO ON MEDIEVAL SIEGES AND WARS IN ORDER TO SO SUCCESSFULLY BRING TO LIFE THE BATTLES IN THE FILMS?

I was actually inspired by some paintings I found by a Flemish Renaissance artist named Albrecht Altdorfer at the very beginning of the planning [process] in 1997. There was one painting, in particular, [The Battle of Alexander at Issus, that depicts] this medieval battle [with] people holding all of these pikes and spears; [as a backdrop], he painted this incredibly stormy landscape. It has incredible light and shade. [Altdorfer] has these huge armies battling, and they have these enormous long pikes that are clashing together and waving like a wheat field in the wind. That painting was really the inspiration for the pikes at Helm's Deep. When I saw it, I thought,"Why don't we give the Uruks these incredible long pikes?!" They were fantastic-these great big, long things sticking up in the air. It has also,



to some degree, influenced what the Pelennor Fields look like, too. It is wonderfully evocative and moody.

THERE HAS BEEN A LOT OF TALK ON THE INTERNET ABOUT SCENES HAV-ING BEEN FILMED DEPICTING ARWEN AT HELM'S DEEP. IS THERE ANY TRUTH TO THIS?

We filmed some little bits and pieces, but virtually nothing major with Arwen. The irony is that some of the very early things we shot-the early Miramax two-script versionhad Arwen going to Helm's Deep. We thought, at one time, that Arwen might be there, so we shot a double for her on the back of a horse in some of the very early footage, but only in the background. By the time we actually



got to shoot the real film, we quickly adjusted to the three-film script. We dabbled with Arwen still being there but very quickly, as those scripts were locked down, we changed it and decided to go back to something more like the books.

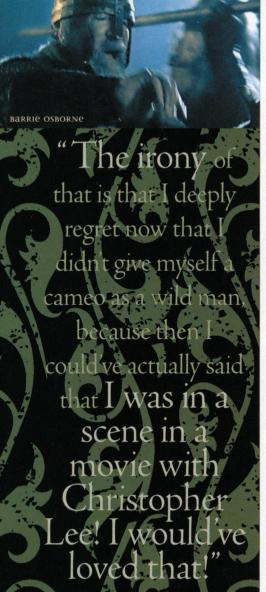
MANY FANS HAVE SEEN YOUR CAMEO IN The Two Towers, HOWEVER, FOR THOSE WHO HAVEN'T SPOTTED IT YET, WHERE CAN WE FIND YOU IN THE FILM?

I actually never shot a cameo for The Two Towers during the principal photography. In the post-production, when we had the actors back out for pick-ups, I banged off a quick shot of me and of [Producer] Barrie Osborne being brave defenders of Helm's Deep.

A LOT OF PEOPLE THOUGHT YOU WERE ONE OF THE WILD MEN.

The irony of that is that I deeply regret now that I didn't give myself a cameo as a wild man, because then I could've actually said that I was in a scene in a movie with Christopher Lee! I would've loved that! The wild man scene with Saruman was done in just one day, and it just never occurred to me to do a cameo. I was shooting two things at once on that day-I was shooting the wild men and then something else at a different studio, so I was running back and forth between the two sets. It was a pretty tough day. Afterward, when I looked at the wild men, I thought, "Oh, I should've been a wild man." I ultimately decided, in the last bit of shooting we did for The Two Towers, that I would just be a Rohan soldier at Helm's Deep. But I did get to throw a spear, and I think I possibly turned the tide of the battle! I made a difference! It wasn't really Aragorn—it was really that guy up on the wall who threw the spear and changed everything! He probably killed some very important commander, which spread a sense of defeat through the Uruk





ranks! I think there is a whole story there that could become a spin-off!

You must be pleased with the response that Gollum has received, not to mention Andy Serkis. Do you think Andy should have been nominated for an Academy Award?

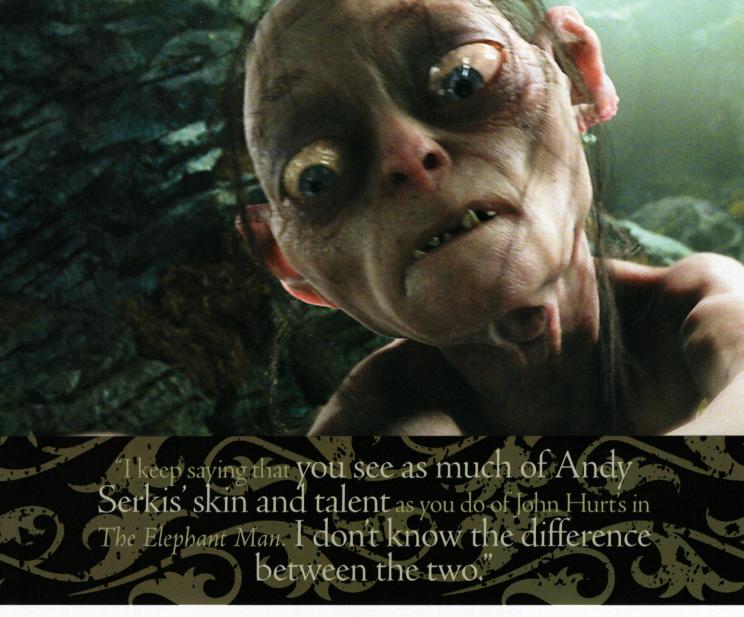
Yes, I do. I keep saying that you see as much of Andy Serkis' skin and talent as you do of John Hurt's in *The Elephant Man*. I don't know the difference between the two. John Hurt received an Academy Award nomination for his performance in that film, and I don't know what Andy Serkis has done differently that wouldn't qualify him for just such an accolade.

One of the scenes in *The Two Towers* that impressed people was the one during the Warg encounter in which Legolas is standing there one minute and then just reaches up and swings himself effortlessly onto a horse. How did you do that?

That has an interesting story behind it. In the movie, Legolas is on the ground firing at the Wargs. The rest of the horsemen ride up behind him, and the idea is that he was supposed to leap into the saddle, because he spends the rest of that scene on the back of the horse. The original concept was to have Orlando turn around as the horse [comes] up behind him with Gimli, then reach out and, in some way, hop up into the saddle. The way I was going to shoot that was to "cheat" it. The shot you see in the film was a wide shot of Orlando standing there; then he does this turn where he starts to reach for the horse. That was as far as that shot was supposed to go in the film. There wasn't supposed to be any more than that.

Then we were going to do a close-up of Orlando's hand grabbing the saddle, then a close-up of Orlando's foot sticking in the stirrup, and then a close-up of Orlando landing in the saddle. It was all going to be done with two or three quick cuts and a total cheat: Suddenly, you would find him in the saddle. You wouldn't quite know how he got there, because it was going to be done tightly. On the day we started shooting that scene, we did the wide shot you see in the film with Orlando turning and reaching for the





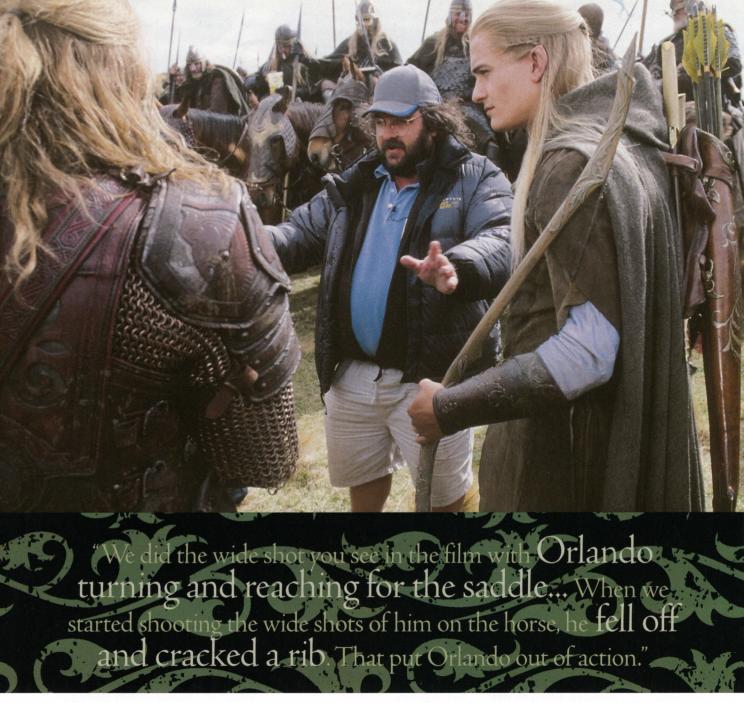
saddle. We then got him on his horse because, instead of shooting the closeups, we were going to move on and shoot some more wide shots and come back to the close-ups. When we started shooting the wide shots of him on the horse, he fell off and cracked a rib. That put Orlando out of action. We weren't able to do any more filming with him for many days, because he had his rib bound up. The trouble with being on any film is that you are on that location for [only] a few days; by the time Orlando was okay to film this stuff, the entire crew had moved on to different scenes. We always thought that we would come back to do a couple of quick shots of Orlando

as he lands in the saddle. We went through the rest of the shoot but never got those shots, because we had everything else to shoot. The whole thing was forgotten.

We wrapped up the film, but I always thought, "Well, I'll grab those shots of Orlando when we do pickups." This past year, when we did the pick-ups for The Two Towers, every actor was available except for Orlando. He was doing the Ned Kelly film in Australia. They had him with a little beard and some facial hair, and they wouldn't allow us to grab him for a few days and shave his face, because he was in the middle of shooting, and they needed [that look] for their film. That

effectively meant he couldn't participate in the pick-ups, and we couldn't do any new Legolas shots then.

[In the end], I never got those images of Orlando actually landing in the saddle. I was in the cutting room thinking, "Oh my God, what the hell am I going to do?! We've got him standing on the ground; he turns around and reaches for the horse. The horse actually goes by him, and he is still standing there. I then have all this stuff of him galloping around on the horse but nothing to show him actually getting on the horse." So I had a problem. I looked at the shot of him where he is standing there, the horse is galloping up behind him, and he reaches out, and I



thought, "You know what? At this moment that he turns and reaches, if we then changed him into a CG [computer-generated] guy and animated him grabbing the saddle and swinging up and then painted out the real Orlando-who, on film, just continues standing there as the horses gallop by—we have a CG guy flipping around, doing this incredibly impossible acrobatic stunt. That would be pretty cool and certainly [solve] my problem of getting him on his horse."

That's what we did. We actually did it because we were forced to do it—it was never a planned event. Orlando thought it was pretty cool, too!

WHAT IN YOUR BACKGROUND, WHETHER IT WAS YOUR CHILDHOOD, YOUR PARENTS, YOUR SCHOOLING, OR YOUR EARLY JOBS, HELPED PREPARE YOU FOR TAKING ON SUCH A HUGE PROJECT AS THIS?

That's a hard question to answer, because I have never done something this big before, so there isn't anything you can really do to prepare for it. There wasn't any conscious preparation involved other than the fact that I had made movies, and I knew how it all worked. Every time you make a movie, it's like going to film school. You end up learning a bit more, but even the films that I had made had nothing like the scale and complexity of this.

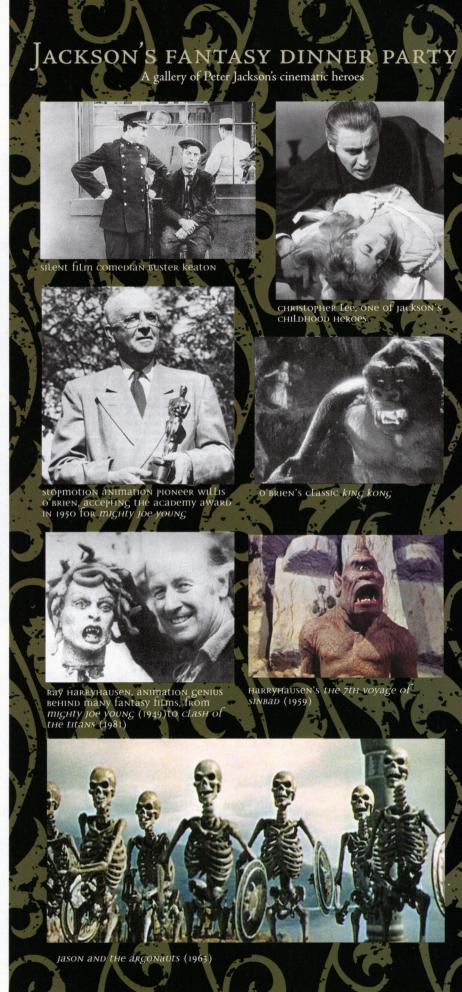
The trick was really not to allow it to overwhelm me—not to think of it as being the most complicated film pro-

duction ever and that I was going to be exhausted, I was going to have to shoot for 15 months, etc., etc. I didn't want to pause too often and think about the enormity of it, but [instead] basically take it one day at a time. If I took it one day at a time, then the actual experience of shooting it was not that much different than the low-budget films that I had made early on. Sure, we had actors of a stature I had never worked with before, but they were still just normal people who had to work and collaborate with us as I had done on my smaller films. They did their thing and didn't behave any differently.

You have more extras, you have bigger sets and international actors, but that still doesn't mean that you have to adjust the way you function as a filmmaker.

PETER, THROUGH THESE FILMS, YOU HAVE GIVEN PEOPLE A LOT OF HEROES TO LOOK UP TO. WHO ARE YOUR HEROES, AND WHO WOULD YOU INVITE TO YOUR FANTASY DINNER PARTY?

That's an interesting question. I guess Buster Keaton would be one of my heroes. I would have loved to meet him. There are many people I've wanted to meet-some of them I have met now, and some I can't because they're gone. Willis O'Brien [distinguished special effects expert known for innovations in stopmotion photography] is one I would've loved to meet. As a kid, I would have loved to meet [famous stop-motion animator] Ray Harryhausen, and now I have. I am very happy about that. People like Christopher Lee, I have huge admiration for and was a huge fan of when I was a kid. The great thing about being a filmmaker is that you occasionally do get a chance to work with and meet people you would like to invite to your fantasy dinner party—and sometimes you actually get to! That's a great feeling!



The Artful Do



what has turned out to be one of the biggest movie projects of all time. The one-time bookbinder never thought he would be chosen to join the extraordinary ensemble of actors Peter Jackson gathered in New Zealand to realize his dream of bringing The Lord of the Rings to film. Boyd says he brought many things away from his time down under: invaluable acting experience, lasting friendships, an appreciation for New Zealanders' relaxed approach to life—and Hobbit ears!

Boyd took time recently to talk with Managing Editor Carla Atkinson about his career and his work on The Lord of the Rings.





"In the 1950s, they had things called 'housing schemes'... houses that were supposed to be the future—the suburbs of the city. [But] they became high-crime places and kind of undesirable. I grew up in one of those."

WHY DON'T WE START WITH YOUR LIFE STORY?

Where should I start? It was kind of strange. In the 1950s, they had things called "housing schemes." Places were becoming quite slummy with bad housing conditions, so they built these houses that were supposed to be the future—the suburbs of the city. But they were really badly planned. They used a lot of high-rises, and they didn't plan far enough ahead; they didn't put in shops and amenities and things like that, so people really felt stuck out in the middle of nowhere. It was a really bad idea. They became high-crime places and kind of undesirable. I grew up in one of those called Easter House. which was known in the '50s and '60s for its gang culture and high crime. I suppose it was pretty scary for adults, but for children, it was a great place to

grow up. Everyone knew who you were, and families looked out for each other; it never felt like a scary place. It was like living in a little village. Kids could walk around the streets without any fear. That's how I grew up, and I had a really happy childhood, to be honest. I grew up there until I was 6 or 7, and then did the rest of my growing up in a place called Cranhill. While I was there, I did my first show in primary school-I played the Artful Dodger in Oliver! I loved it! The teachers at that school were very supportive and said to my parents, "If he wants to pursue this, we think it would be a good thing for him to do." My parents went out and found an amateur drama group, and I was involved with that for probably five years—all during my secondary school and high school education. We just put on shows, and I acted whenever I could.

From there, I went to work at a printer, [where] I got a trade being a bookbinder, which takes four years to learn. [Eventually], I realized it wasn't what I wanted to do, but once I started, I decided that I would finish it. I did that for four years until I was qualified. I worked for a year after that in the same place where I had learned my trade, and after that, a job came up at Harper Collins, a huge printer and publisher. It was the move there that made me start to think. I had left all the people that I had sort of grown up with and the people who were my friends and had laughs with. [In moving] somewhere else, it felt like I was doing it as a job now-this wasn't just a fun thing I did when I left school; this was me actually planning my future. I stayed there for about a year in Bishop Briggs, which is a little place in Glasgow. It was a good place to work, but it just wasn't for me. You had to start really early in the morning-I had to get picked up at a quarter to seven. They ran buses from all over Glasgow, because it was such a huge factory, and I was always missing the bus! There was a girl who lived about half a mile from where I caught the bus who had a car, and if I missed the bus. I would have to run this halfmile and try to get to her house before she left to work! I would then be standing and waiting at her car when she came out.

I just knew it wasn't for me, and my girlfriend at the time could see that I was unhappy with it. So I quit and applied for drama school for that year, because they were still looking for people. I had done acting throughout high



school and when I stopped acting, I started playing in bands; that kind of filled the void of being productive. But I felt that it was acting that I really wanted to do, so I went back to it.

After applying to school, I went to America and saw some relatives that I have got over there, and my girlfriend saw some of her friends. While I was there, I got a phone call saying I had been accepted for drama school.

What was acting school like?

For me, it was great. I had been working for over six years in a factory, so going to drama school was outrageous. I would roll around the floor and play an alien and give a speech on the color blue-that sort of stuff. The social life of it took over; I loved going out with all of the guys and carrying on. It was only after about six months and after failing

several exams and being told by some tutors that if I didn't improve, I would be leaving the drama school that I thought, "Yeah, this is what I've always wanted to do, and I'd better stop messing around!" I really got my head turned around after that and made the decision to actually be there. I had an absolutely fantastic time. It was so good for me, because I really didn't know that much about writing and theater and such, though I had done amateur stuff: I wanted to be a film actor when I was younger. Just to read Shakespeare and be given the chance to read great poetry was, for me, a dream. In the next couple of years, I just learned everything I could. For me, it was a perfect way to start being an actor.

THEN YOU DID TELEVISION AND SOME BRITISH FILMS?

Yes, at the end of the third year, they would ask directors to come in and do a kind of "pretend" auditions for people to get used to them. One of the directors of a theater called the Bayou in St. Andrews came in, and through some of those auditions, [he] actually cast me in two plays. So I left drama school about a month before I was supposed to [so I could] do these plays. I started work straight away, which was fantastic. For my first job to be in St. Andrews-which is an absolutely beautiful place on the east coast of Scotland—doing some great plays was a great way to start.

WHAT WERE THOSE TWO PLAYS?

They were The Slab Boys, which is a great play by John Byrne and the Secret Diary of Adrian Mole, which is very funny. That was a musical, actually.

CAN YOU TELL US ABOUT YOUR MUSICAL SKILLS?

I really enjoy singing, and I really enjoy writing music and performing it. I've been back in Glasgow since just after the New Year, and I have hooked

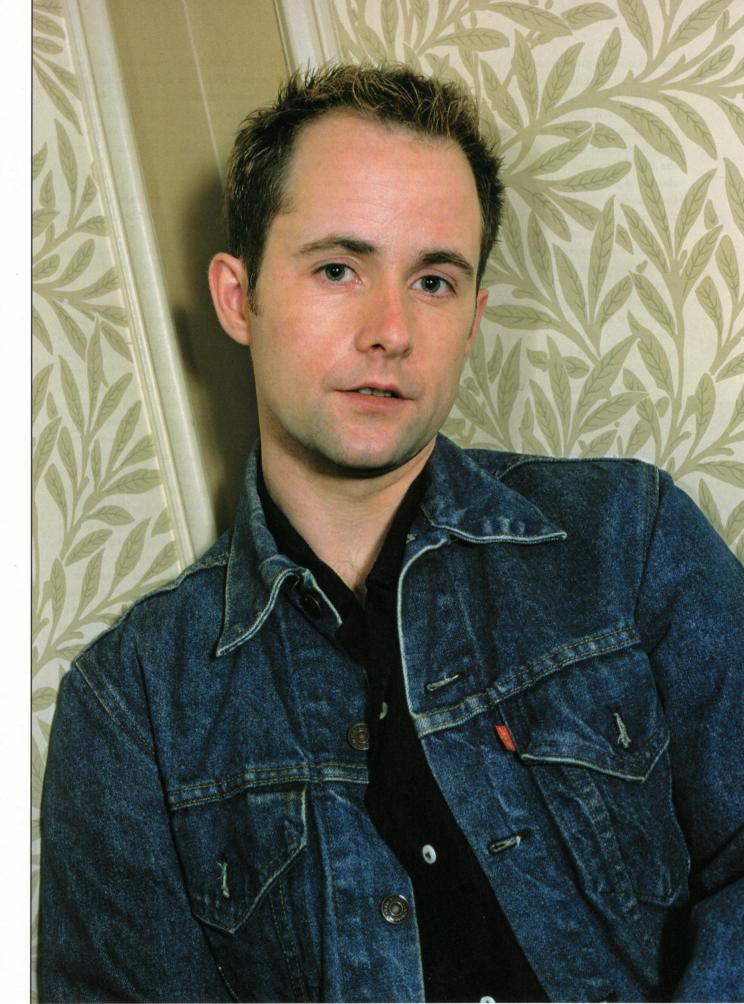
up with some musicians, and we've been kind of jamming on a Sunday. We were just about to do a gig, but, as it happens, I am going to have to disappear out of the country for a few weeks. We'll see when I get back. I really enjoy playing music.

CAN YOU TELL US THE STORY OF HOW YOU GOT INVOLVED IN The Lord of the Rings?

I wish I had a great story, but I don't. I was working in Scotland, and I got a phone call from my agent saying that they were going to be making The Lord of the Rings, and I said, "Oh, that's great." And he said, "They are going to do it as three films," I said, "Oh, brilliant, That's the way it should be done." He asked if I wanted to try out for it, and I said, "Of course!" So I went down to London. met with the casting director, and read for Merry and Pippin-one scene. When I was reading for Merry, the casting director was reading the lines for Pippin. That was filmed and sent over to New Zealand to Pete [Jackson] and Fran [Walsh]. Through watching all of these tapes that everyone had been making and sending over, they narrowed it down, and I was one of [that group]. When I went to London to meet with Pete, I knew I was only going up for the role of Pippin. I walked in the room, and there was Pete-in his usual shorts and no shoes-kind of lying on a sofa next to Fran. We just spoke for a while, and then he took out some scenes. I read them, and then we performed them for the camera; he moved the camera around and directed me in different ways. We spoke about what Pete thought Pippin's job was in the Fellowship and in these movies, and what I felt.

Do you remember what Peter JACKSON SAID THAT DAY ABOUT PIP-PIN'S JOB IN THE FELLOWSHIP?

At that point, I hadn't read The Lord of the Rings. I had only scanned it, and I



told Pete that. We were talking about what he thought, but I remember him saying that Merry's and Pippin's relationship was very important, because it showed the sorts of friends who would do anything for each other and how they are the quintessential Hobbits. They will try and find fun or good times casting as Merry and Pippin would then bring their own ideas and their own comic timing, which is essentially what Dom and I ended up doing.

WHEN YOU WALKED OUT THAT DAY AFTER THE AUDITION, WHAT WERE YOUR THOUGHTS?

that is going to look great-but with someone like Pete who will make you feel like you are a part of the movie and not just a cog in the wheel. I was completely over the moon when they said I had got it. Pete phoned me up, and we had a chat and were very excited about it.

"Merry's and Pippin's relationship was very important, because it showed the sorts of friends who would do anything for each other and how they are the quintessential Hobbits."

wherever they are—give them a meal, and they are quite happy! That was part of it, but ultimately, Merry and Pippin also had to keep Sauron's eye away from Frodo, While voure watching Frodo's story, and you flash back to Pippin and Merry—and, in some ways, the rest of the Fellowship—you see that what they are actually doing is helping bring about the destruction of this Ring.

It all sounded really exciting. It felt like it was an ensemble piece rather than a script just written for one character. Every character had a job to do, which is the way the book is.

How long were you there that DAY?

It was for quite awhile—definitely over an hour. I just read the lines in different ways, and, of course, one of the other things Pete told me was that Pippin would provide some of the comedy as well. We messed around with some of the scenes and made them comical. He really enjoyed that; Pete really enjoys having good humor on the set. I would totally agree with him that a good-humored set will bring better work from the actors, whether it is a funny scene or not. If people are happy and feel as if they are productive, then it's all the better. I think I guessed then that Pete would be up for experimenting. He said he hoped that whomever they ended up



I didn't really think I had gotten the part. I just thought the job was too big. I thought they would go with people who had a lot more experience. You don't really think about getting a job like that. But I did come out of it thinking, "I really want to work with people like that."

You get that [feeling] much more on low-budget films. People are more relaxed, and you can experiment. Once there is more and more money at stake, people want to follow strict rules—you can't do this, and you can't do that. I thought it would be so good to do something with a big budget

How long was it before you FOUND OUT WHETHER YOU HAD GOT-TEN THE PART?

It wasn't that long. It took longer to get there [to New Zealand] than it did to find out if I had the part. When I found out, it was about three months before I went anywhere. Also, I was one of the first people leaked as having a part in the films; it was kind of strange not knowing who else was in the film. To have people talking about me on the Internet felt weird—and because there wasn't anyone else to talk about, there was a lot of talk about me. It felt better when [other] people started to get cast.



DID YOU DO ANY RESEARCH ON THE PART

It's great that Tolkien wrote concerning hobbits at the start, because it gave me so much information. It was brilliant. The appendix at the end is very good. There is some lovely stuff. [And] I did read [The Lord of the Rings]. I was doing a play in Edinburgh, which was about five [hours] on the train from Glasgow; I was commuting, so I used to read the book on the way there and back. It didn't take that long; of course, since I knew I had the role by then, I was only interested in Pippinit's like reading it from one angle. I just went back to the start and read it again. Also, the buzz began on the Internet, so I got a lot of the information there. I would just put Pippin in the search engine, and then whatever came up I could print out. By the time I went to New Zealand, I had a folder full of facts and things people had written about Pippin. It was great because the first thing you have to start with for a character is the facts. If it says that Pippin is the youngest, then you have to bring that on board and play him as the youngest. Then you look at what "You look at what people say—like Gandalf calling him 'you fool of a Took.' And people were saying he is too inquisitive. You have to add all of that in."



people say— like Gandalf calling him "you fool of a Took." And people were saying he is too inquisitive. You have to add all of that in. The great thing about The Lord of the Rings is that there is so much of that information that it actually just makes it easier to create your character. I did what I always do [to research a character], except this time there was more of it.

Some of our Fan Club members HAVE SENT IN OUESTIONS FOR YOU. AND ONE OF THOSE QUESTIONS HAS TO DO WITH PIPPIN'S CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT, SARAH SHREVE OF FORT COLLINS, COLORADO, ASKS: IS THERE A CERTAIN ASPECT OF PIP-PIN'S PERSONALITY THAT YOU AND PETER JACKSON THOUGHT IMPOR-TANT TO EMPHASIZE IN THE FILM THAT WAS PERHAPS LESS NOTICE-ABLE IN THE BOOK?

I don't think we spoke that specifically. We did want to show that inquisitiveness—that naive, youngestmember-of-the-Fellowship aspect and also bring Merry into that. We definitely tried to show that [inquisitiveness] with the fireworks and with [the scene in Moria]; we were always working on that. With the Moria scene, the idea was that the skeleton fell down. Pete and I began talking and saying it would be great if I didn't actually push it but just touched something near it, and that made the head fall off, and then the rest of it fell down. Then his leg is tied to a chain, and at the end of the chain is the bucket! It was like, "How much worse can it get?!" It could've been something very small. In the book, it was a stone: I think it tells the story in exactly the same way, but in a film, a stone wouldn't have the effect that the skeleton had.

We were building on the characters all the way through the filming.

SEVERAL OF THE CAST AND CREW MEMBERS WE HAVE INTERVIEWED MENTIONED THE COMIC TIMING THAT YOU AND DOMINIC MON-AGHAN SHARED. WAS THAT FAIRLY INSTANTANEOUS OR DID IT DEVELOP AS THE FILMING WENT ON?

We have the same sense of humor and realized that the first time we met. It is great when you meet someone like that, because not so much in the films. but off set, Dom and I get each other even though probably no one else does. We really had that almost instantaneously. It's kind of fun for us. Because we worked so closely for over a year and a half, we could read each other's minds. It was great for the scenes. The great thing for an actor is to feel safe in a scene-to feel like whatever happens, the other actor is there and will help them out. I always felt 100 percent that way about Dom. In comedy, you have to feel that way even more. For comedy to work best, you have to go out on a limb, you know ... and [when you do], someone else could bring you down [or] really put a wall up. Dom would never do that. No matter what I said, Dom was right there [in] the moment. It was just so much fun.

[WETA WORKSHOP DIRECTOR] RICHARD TAYLOR HAS SAID THAT YOU AND DOMINIC MONAGHAN WERE GREAT SPORTS DURING THE FILMING OF THE TREEBEARD SCENES AND MADE THE BEST OF A CHAL-LENGING SITUATION BY CRACKING IOKES AND MAKING EVERYONE LAUGH. HE ALSO COMMENTED THAT EVENTUALLY YOU BOTH SEEMED TO VIEW THE TREEBEARD PUPPET AS ANOTHER ACTOR—IS THAT TRUE?

Yes, pretty much. It was quite challenging because it was a very technical filming process. To get the walk just right, they had to get his arms and legs and everything just right. To get that synchronized and moving smoothly was a very technical process that Dom and I couldn't help with; there was nothing we could do to make that easier. We basically had to keep doing the scene and keeping it fresh until it was technically right. That was sometimes quite difficult because you want to get the scene done on the first or second take when it is quite fresh in your mind, and it's kind of bouncy-especially the Merry and Pippin scenes. It was quite uncomfortable up there as well. We were sitting on bicycle saddles that were positioned about 40 degrees forward, so you were leaning out of them, crushing lots of stuff that shouldn't be crushed! It was not the most comfortable place in the world. But Dom and I had to laugh.

And it did get to the point that we actually spoke to Treebeard just to see if he was doing okay. We would ask him if we were getting too heavy for him.

We did an interview with Peter JACKSON RECENTLY, AND HE TOLD US THAT ONE OF THE THINGS HE WAS REALLY LOOKING FORWARD TO ABOUT THE EXTENDED VERSION OF The Two Towers WAS ADDING MORE OF THE TREEBEARD SCENES SO THE AUDIENCE WOULD HAVE A BETTER SENSE OF THE CHARACTER. ARE YOU EXCITED THAT MORE OF THAT WILL BE ADDED IN? HE HAS ALSO SAID THAT THE FACT THAT TREEBEARD SPEAKS SO SLOWLY MADE HIS SCENES A CHALLENGE BECAUSE YOU RUN THE RISK OF LOSING THE AUDIENCE'S ATTENTION. DID YOU FIND THAT TO BE A CHALLENGE?

Well, it wasn't hard to play the scenes. As you can see in the actual movie, the scene where we are waiting for him to make up his mind at the Ent Moot totally works. [But] they never played that joke again. If you saw another scene [like that in the film], you would say, "I've seen that joke." But they were really careful about that; every time Treebeard had a scene, it had a different beat. At the same time, Helm's Deep was happening; Pete needed to get the audience to the edge of their seats with Helm's Deep and then cut back to Treebeard-that must have been difficult. I was sad to not see so much Treebeard, because I love the character: he is probably one of my favorite characters in the book. Tolkien really excelled in creating that character. There are so many different aspects of Treebeard the environment and the Ent ways, etc. It is beautiful writing. I thought it was funny that they can't remember what the female of the species looks like!

I was sad that there wasn't more, but then I heard about the [extended edition] DVD. I think the DVD is a family movie that I will be able to show my grandkids. It's great that [those scenes are] going to be there. Dom and I were stuck up that tree for two months, and I want to see what happened! Treebeard is such a great character and was so beautifully written by Tolkien and, again, by Pete, Fran, and Philippa [Boyens].

IF YOU HAD TO DESCRIBE TREEBEARD TO SOMEONE WHO HAD NEVER READ THE BOOKS, WHAT WORDS WOULD YOU USE?

Well, "slow" is definitely one! Lethargic. Old. In some ways, I think he takes a part of Tom Bombadil with him as well. He has that sort of ageless "I've seen all this before" [attitude]. To these Hobbits, it is so important that their friends are going to die, but to Treebeard, this has happened before, thousands of years ago. You get someHow would you characterize the difference in their relationships?

In a strange way—which is probably not what you would expect—I think Pippin understands him more than Merry. I think because Merry is so to be done [in order] for Treebeard to go in and save them. It will be nice to watch those relationships develop. There is also a kind of "cheeky boys with their grandfather" [aspect]. When Treebeard is there, they are respectful, but when he is not, they get together and laugh.

"Treebeard has been alive for so long and has seen this cycle happen so many times that it is not as important anymore. But never before has he seen the destruction of the trees that he is about to see."



thing with Treebeard that you don't get with an old person; if you were speaking to an old person about the war, he wouldn't say, "Well, that really doesn't matter." In humanity, I don't know if you would ever find that, because humans haven't lived long enough. Treebeard has been alive for so long and has seen this cycle happen so many times that it is not as important anymore. But never before has he seen the destruction of the trees that he is about to see. He is a really complex character, and I am glad that that comes across; I'm glad he is more than just a comic character. I love the relationship that the Hobbits have with him—and they each have different relationships with him.

quick-thinking and so immediate, he just hears, "We're not going to help" and wants to go on the offensive and say, "Well, you must help." Whereas Pippin can sit back and listen to what Treebeard says; maybe Pippin doesn't understand the whole world as much [as Merry], and he can focus in on this character much more easily. [Because] Merry understands what is happening in the world and with the war and how it is going to affect Frodo and Sam and Aragorn and Legolas, he immediately wants to do something. But Pippin, because he is much closer to Treebeard at that moment, is more interested in getting to know Treebeard. Through that, he understands more and knows what has

SANDRA JOHNS OF ROCKFORD, ILLINOIS, ASKS: AT THE END OF FILMING, DID YOU TAKE ANY MEMENTOS HOME? IF YOU COULD PICK ONE PROP OR SET PIECE FROM THE MOVIES TO TAKE HOME WITH YOU WHAT WOULD IT BE?

I'm really bad at taking mementos from any job. Everyone had *The Lord of the Rings* [book] with them all the time—we were always reading it. When we were doing another scene, we would go back to Tolkien and find out what he said and see if there were any hints or lines that weren't in the script that would work. Everyone got it signed by everyone else, but I didn't, and now I feel really bad. That would be a great thing to have! At the end,

people were taking their [prosthetic] feet and their ears, and I didn't take anything! It wasn't until I got home that I thought of it. People would ask, "Did you get anything?" And I would say, "No, I didn't, actually." When we went back for [pickups], I got some



ears and stuff! There were some wonderful gifts, though. We got a great gift of a beautiful book with pictures from all through the shoot. It will be one of my most treasured items. If I could take anything, it would probably be my sword from Gondor.

THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY A SINGULAR EXPERIENCE FOR ANY ACTOR BECAUSE OF THE TIME COMMITMENT, THE TIME SPENT TOGETHER, AND THE FACT THAT THE FILMS WERE SHOT IN A REMOTE LOCATION. A NUMBER OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE WORKED ON THE PROJECT HAVE TOLD US IT WAS A LIFE-CHANGING EXPERI-ENCE. IS THAT THE CASE FOR YOU?

Yes, it was definitely a life-changing experience. I am a different person now than I was before, both personally and professionally. I think being in New Zealand for a year and half has changed me. It has made me aware of taking time and enjoying the world rather than rushing through it. There is something about New Zealand that makes you stop and take notice of how beautiful the world is; the destruction of nature for industrial gain is not the way forward. That definitely changed me. The friendships I have made are probably the most important things I have taken with me. I'm not just talking about Dom and Elijah and Orlando and Sean-I'm talking about cast members and crew. I was doing a movie down in Mexico last year, and the number of people they had from The Lord of the Rings was incredible—from stunt men to production assistants to runners-and they all came and stayed at my house. Friends are the most important thing in my life, and I made so many on that job. That was the most important thing.

[I also learned that] if you follow your gut feeling through life, it will probably work out. It may not work out right [at first], but give it enough time and it will work out.

CAN YOU THINK OF ANY PARTICULAR BIZARRE OR FUNNY MOMENTS FROM YOUR TIME IN NEW ZEALAND-EITHER ON SET OR OFF?

I remember a story about one of the stuntmen from lunchtime one day; I think it was Sala Baker [see our interview on page 42]. To keep morale up, they would bring a band in-a string quartet or something-during lunch. It was nice. One day, they brought this jazz band in, and someone in full Urukhai costume started dancing. I remember thinking that was quite bizarre.

You never really sat with the Urukhai, even at lunch! You knew the people, but the Hobbits [still] didn't sit with the Uruk-hai! We're sitting there watching this guy dancing, and I thought, "That's something you don't see every day." That was weird.

RACHEL WANGEN-HOCH OF RIVER-DALE MARYLAND WRITES: IF SOME-ONE ASKS YOU ONE MORE TIME WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO SIT ON THAT TREE FOR HOURS OR IF YOU WERE REALLY GOOD FRIENDS IN REAL LIFE, I THINK I'LL SCREAM! WHAT QUESTION DO YOU WISH INTERVIEWERS OR FANS WOULD ASK YOU RATHER THAN THE SAME BORING OUESTIONS YOU GET ALL THE TIME?

Anything that hasn't been asked before or hasn't been asked a thousand times. You know-"What's your favorite shoes?" That would be nice!

So what are your favorite shoes?

I love shoes. I've got three pairs of shoes, and they are all left shoes because I have two left feet. That's a little known fact. It's not all true, though!

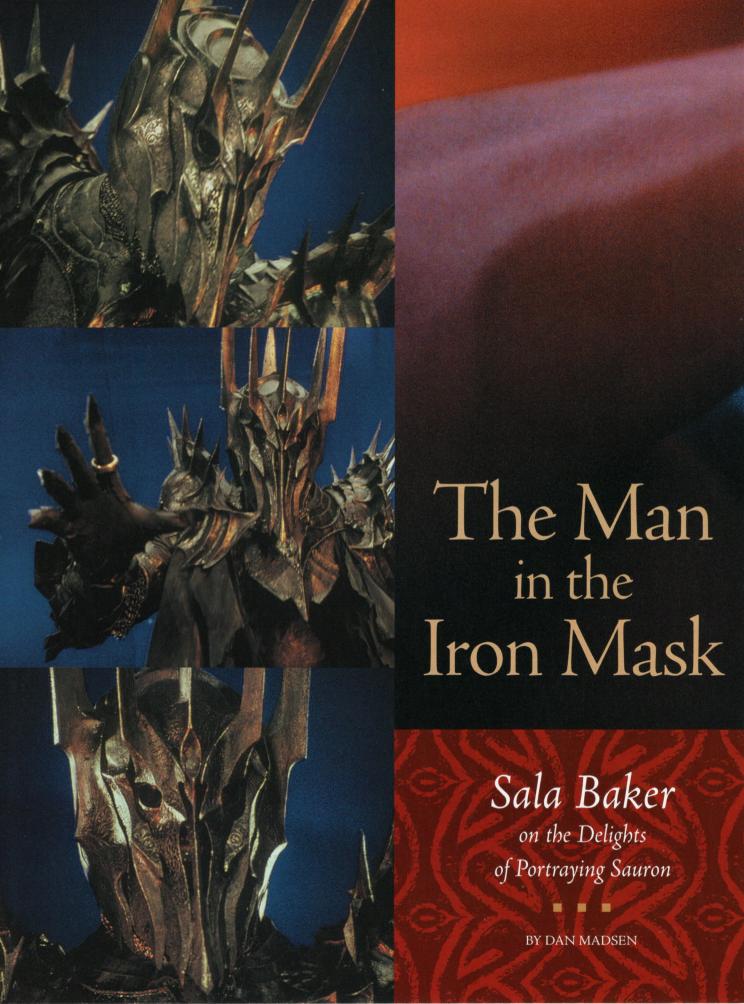
WE ARE GOING TO BE INTERVIEWING YOUR FRIEND DOMINIC MONAGHAN SOON. WHAT SINGLE QUESTION WOULD YOU MOST LIKE FOR US TO ASK HIM?

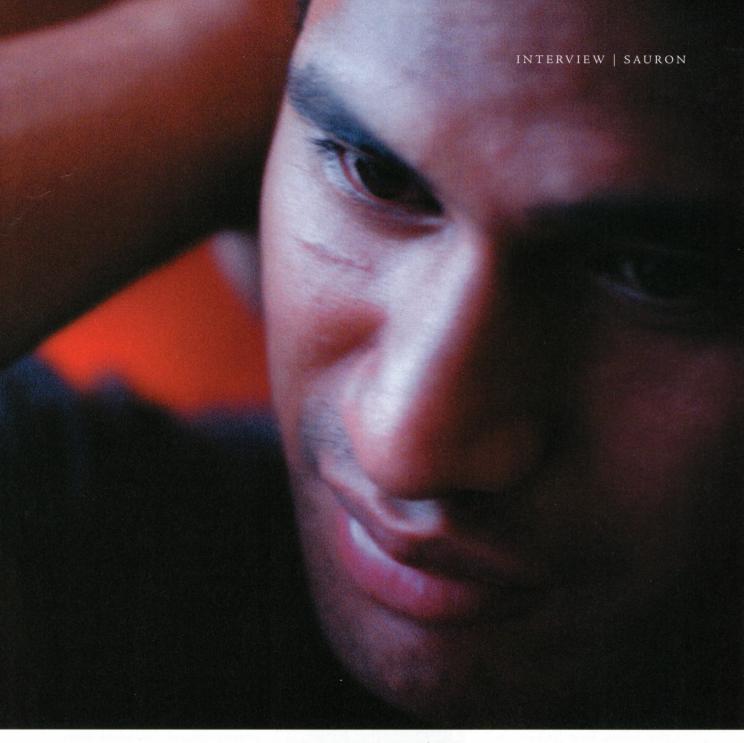
Ask him his 18 favorite things about

THANKS FOR YOUR TIME.

It's my pleasure. Nice to speak to you.







ne look at Sala Baker, and you might think the term "Cinderella story" is a bad choice of words. But the imposing New Zealander does have such a tale. One day, he was just one of several dozen stunt performers hired for The Lord of the Rings, and the next, he was suiting up to embody evil incarnate—Sauron, the epic's villain extraordinaire. Though he brought zero acting experience to the table, Baker was deemed the man for the

job after the filmmakers saw him in action as a stuntman and "background" actor portraying Orcs and the like.

Baker brought unabashed enthusiasm to the assignment—and to his interview with the magazine.

Sala, DID YOU ASPIRE TO BE A FILM STAR BEFORE The Lord of the Rings?

No, this has all been a shock. As a young kid, you see magazines and

think, "Wow, I wish I was a movie star!" But it never really happens to you. Now that it has actually happened to me, my thoughts are, "Maybe I'll just ride this wave and go with it!" That has taken me closer to more acting roles and stunts. It's hard to be an actor all the time—there are always down times. There are things like stunts to fill in the gaps and other things I want to do, like singing and voice-over work,



He said to me, "I want to see big swings that show a full circular motion. It is all about you. These guys cannot stop you. They can fire arrows and swing swords, but when you start wielding this mace, it is all over."

and I design clothing as well. I'm a jack-of-all-trades but a master at none!

In the beginning, were they trying to keep Sauron's identity secret?

No, everyone wanted to know who was behind the mask. The casting people seem to think I make a good bad guy; I'm not sure why. It was a privilege to play Sauron. Peter [Jackson] and Fran [Walsh] apparently saw the rushes of the original Sauron and wanted him to be more of a bad *** ... menacing and huge! And what they had was this sort of football/rugby/big guy look. The question then was, "Who is going to play Sauron?" I found out that night that as soon as they asked the question, [Weta Workshop director] Richard Taylor and four other people said, "Get Sala Baker to play him." They said, "If



we want a bad***, we need Sala." It was a good feeling to know people were thinking of me for this role.

Sauron is such a powerful and dark role to play!

Exactly! It was exciting to play this character that makes Darth Vader and the devil look like choirboys! Peter

Jackson and Richard Taylor would say to me, "What we want you to do is to picture the devil, picture Darth Vader and multiply them by a million!"

You just have to say to yourself, "I'm the man! Everyone in the world is nothing. I am IT!" It was really cool to have this sort of inspiration from Peter and Richard to put me in character. Saying these things to myself made me feel amazing—Sauron could squash superheroes like Batman and Spiderman. They are all chump change! It was all about me, me, me in preparing for that role; that's what made me get into character more and made me feel like this ominous being-this whole aura of evil. It is hard to explain, because it is so out of this world. Being Sauron is just amazing and quite cool. It is so much fun being a bad guy! We have the coolest costumes.

What was it like to wear that amazing costume?

The actor who was playing Sauron originally was tall and a lot thinner than I am. He was great, but I think his look was not quite right for Peter and Fran. I think they wanted Sauron to be huge and emote evil.

For some reason, they cast me to do a mock-up fitting for the original costume. I got a call late at night from Weta saying, "We want you to come in tomorrow for a fitting." I was half asleep when they called, and I remember thinking later, "Was that a dream?" I didn't even know who Sauron was at that point. I was a stunt coordinator and a sword master, and they were looking for a stunt double to play Sauron. I was determined to play him, but they said, "You're too big for the costume." The costume was very sleek and slim. But I guess [the part] was meant to come back to me!

When I [was cast later and] went back in for my fitting, they had to restructure the whole suit. Weta is amazing! You can see that in the finished product. They had to remold things to my frame. I have a really good bond with Weta and all the crew; they really helped me out with so many things. When I went in for this fitting, they were saying, "Cut this off" or "Remodel that." I realized these guys were going to be there all night because they had to have the costume ready the next morning, and so I stayed—we ordered some pizzas and beer and were there until about 12:30 in the morning. They were taking molds of my legs and arms and hoping that in the morning everything would fit. We just chilled out and worked together fitting and molding, etc., all night. When they didn't need me, I looked at all the cool stuff and toys they have at Weta. We ended up getting what we wanted, which was great.

They had already been shooting for nine months at this point—six months

[with] the original Sauron. They had to redo all of the shots because I am a lot bigger than the original guy.

I CAN IMAGINE THAT YOU WERE QUITE OMINOUS IN THAT COSTUME!

I was!

How did it feel when you saw yourself in the full Sauron costume?

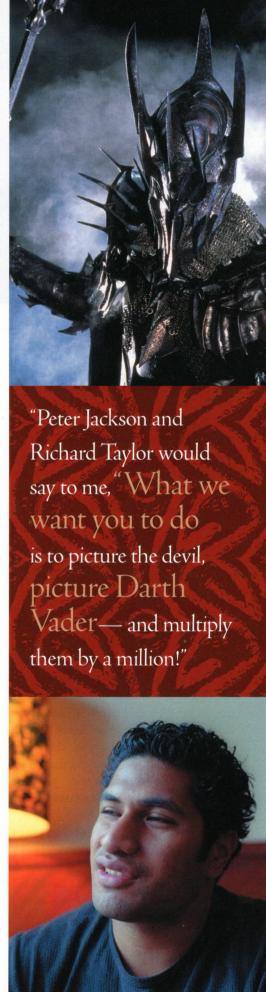
When I first put on the costume, I thought, "I look so cool!" To be honest, as soon as I slipped that mask on, I was someone totally different. I looked at myself in the mirror and said, "I am a bad***! I am THE man!" It's hard to explain, except that you felt powerful and evil in that costume. I would walk around looking at people on the set, saying, "What do you want?! Who the hell are you? Don't talk to me! Do you know who I am? I'm Sauron!" I would just turn into this evil dude. Then I would pull off the mask and be nice guy Sala Baker again. It was so much fun to change my normal self into this evil being. I love being someone else.

Once I got into the costume, they put on this huge silky black cape as well. I saw all the hard work that Weta put into it, and I really wanted to make these guys look good. I was committed to working my *** off to make sure their product looked as good as they had envisioned it. I had to bring the costume to life.

You said they had filmed with another actor wearing the costume in the beginning and then scrapped that. Is any of his work still left in the film or is Sauron all you?

It's pretty much all me now.

What kind of direction did Peter Jackson give you on the set? How did you do the scene where you are swinging your mace, and elves and men are flying all about?





"I played Orcs, Goblins, and Uruk-hai. At Helm's Deep, I was playing an Uruk and a berserker. ...I also played Gondorians and Robirrim, but that was all background stuff. You have much more fun being a bad guy!"

There was no one there—it was just a blue screen and me. Peter, who is a legend to me, came up and said, "You've got this mace in your hand. You've got all these Gondorians and elves who are coming at you, and they are basically nothing. I want you to swing this mace fluidly. In this mace is this energy and power that can overcome everything. You could hurt a hundred elves and Gondorians in one fell swoop. That's what I want to see. I want you to feel this energy that is flowing through the armor and out through the mace." Peter is an amazing director—he can tell you exactly what he wants to see and the feeling you should have. Some directors will tell you, "I want you to be angry," or "Someone has just hurt your family," or something like that. Peter is so descriptive and will tell you exactly what he wants to see. That really helped me as Sauron. He said to me, "I want to see big swings that show a full circular motion. It is all about you. These guys cannot stop you. They can fire arrows and swing swords, but when you start wielding this mace, it is all over."

DID YOU HAVE TO HAVE A CERTAIN STRIDE OR WALK FOR SAURON?

Yes. It was smooth but very heavy. It was slow-almost like the Cave Troll but not as jerky or rigid. It was more a heaviness with a smooth stride.

Was the armor heavy?

Not really. I am used to being in the Uruk-hai costume, which was as heavy as they come. We had prosthetic arms, legs, and big chest, and then the chain mail and armor, which is made out of fiberglass. Compared to that, Sauron's armor wasn't heavy at all.

WAS IT DIFFICULT TO SEE THROUGH YOUR SAURON MASK?

No. We had a black cotton suit underneath the whole armor. I had a [cotton] mask that I would pull over my head; it had two small holes that were big enough for my eyes so I could see what I was doing. I could see pretty well, but it was hard to move around; if I turned my head, my helmet would get caught in the armor.

How long were you shooting?

There were days here and there over two years. In total, I would say three

You've done other stunt work ON THE FILM?

I was hired on the films as a stuntman. We did lots of stuff ... [mostly] swordplay. If there was an actor who was fighting, it was always with a stunt person. Our sword master, Bob Anderson, was amazing. He played Darth Vader in The Empire Strikes Back and Return of the Iedi.

We had a really good crew-a group of about 35 stunt performers, two of whom were women. Each stunt person had his or her own specialties. We all did high falls off the top of Helm's Deep.

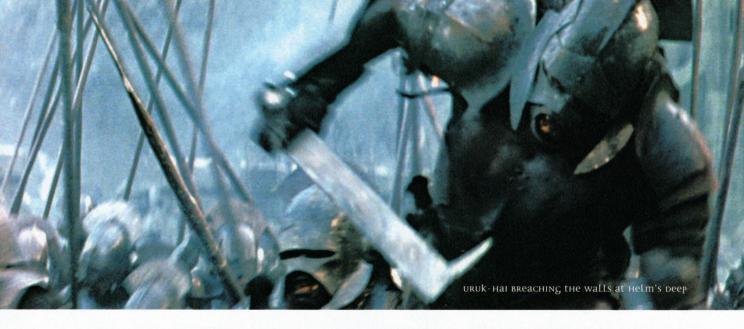
What other characters did you PLAY

I played Orcs, Goblins, and Urukhai. At Helm's Deep, I was playing an Uruk and a berserker: there was a lot of close-up Uruk-hai work. I also played Gondorians and Rohirrim, but that was all background stuff. It's much more fun being a bad guy!

I have yet to play an elf or a hobbit, and I don't think there's any way I will! Someone in production made up a Tshirt that was perfect—"Too tall for a hobbit, too fat for an elf ... bugger!" I had to get one, because I'll never play either part!

YOU HAVE PLAYED SOME PRETTY SCARY-LOOKING CHARACTERS IN THESE FILMS.

You're right. I think the berserkers in The Two Towers are some of the scariest, though. They are superior to the [other] Uruk-hai. For every hundred Uruk-hai, there is one berserker. They are just huge, muscular, ugly,



mean-looking guys—a unique species [of Uruk]. The first time you see the berserkers, you say, "Oh my God! What are they?!" They are pure evil sort of a secret weapon that is unleashed at Helm's Deep. The berserkers wear no armor and have nothing on but a loincloth. They have these 2-meter-long swords, which are about 60 to 70 centimeters wide, and at the end of the blade, they have these two sickle-like hooks; you just swing this thing around like a big sickle cutting grass. There are thousands and thousands of Uruk-hai, and then you see these berserkers wielding these huge swords, cutting things in halfincluding heads. They mow down everything in front of them. There were maybe four or five of us stuntmen in prosthetics who played the berserkers, just mowing down elves and Gondorians. Playing one required about eight hours' worth of makeup from the waist up.

Those parts must have required big, muscular people!

You actually can be a scrawny guy, because it is all just prosthetics. Once they put those on, you look huge. It makes you look like you have a huge chest and muscular features.

The berserkers have this ritual—they kill their enemies, fill their hel-

mets with the blood of their enemies, and then put the helmets on so the blood seeps all over their faces. They look like killing machines. Sauron was my favorite character to play, but the berserkers were fun, too.

GIVEN HOW SCARY YOU LOOKED, YOU MUST HAVE HAD FUN ON THE SET!

There were nights shooting at Helm's Deep when we had nothing to do, so we had about 60 guys singing in the middle of the night—singing and waiting for the next shot. It was really cool. The crew would join in ... it was a way to keep ourselves amused. The guitar would come out, and all these Uruk-hai and berserkers sat around jamming!

Why do you enjoy playing bad guys?

Bad guys are so fun to play, and they are so different from me—I am an allaround nice guy! It brings out the dark side in me.

How did you feel when you saw The Fellowship of the Ring for the first time and that opening sequence of you as Sauron?

When I watched the film for the first time, I wanted to stand up and yell, "That's me!" I thought it was so cool to see the effects added. I watched

that opening and thought, "I am THE man!" I thought I looked great. I have seen the film 12 times now, and it's hard for me to see Sauron as who he is, because I look at him and think, "Oh, that's just me." I don't see the evil side of it. I have had people come up to me and say, "I saw the credits and that you played Sauron." And then they say, "I hate you! I don't like you anymore! Your character is mean. He's ugly and disgusting." Maybe after I see the film for the 50TH time, I will finally look at it and say, "Oh, that's Sauron." It's hard for me to watch it and not just think it's me.

What do your family and friends think?

They love it. They give me hell about it. They know I want to be a movie star. I've heard that many actors started by being a stunt performer and then moved up the ladder, so we'll see what happens for me!

You will be in demand now—you're like the new Darth Vader!

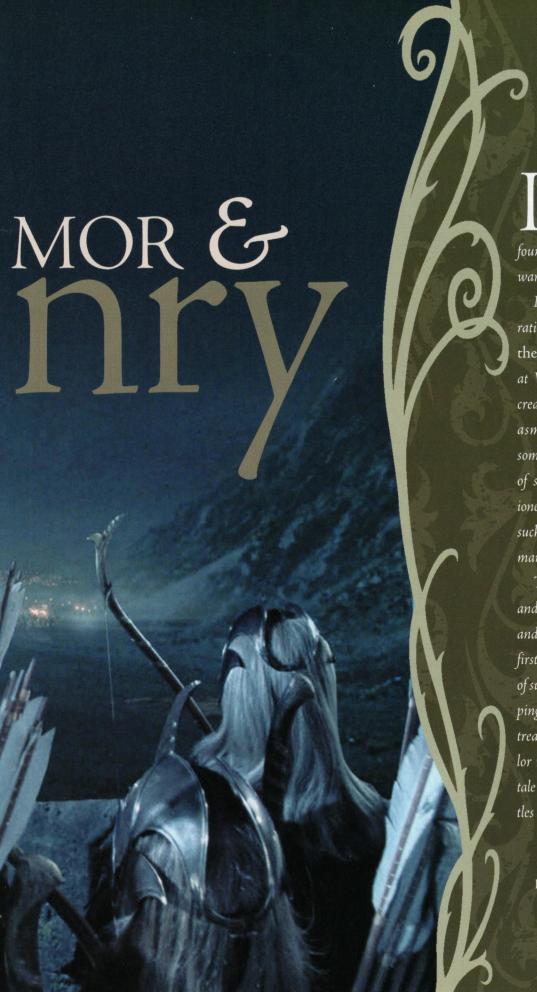
Who?! Darth Vader is chump change compared to Sauron!

THANKS FOR THE INTERVIEW, SALA.

Oh, it was my pleasure. I love talking about "The Man"—Sauron!

INCELVEN AR DEAD OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPER





t was in a women's clothing store in a suburban shopping mall that Richard Taylor found the solution for his Elven warrior chain mail dilemma.

In the long months of preparation for filming The Lord of the Rings, Taylor and his team at Weta Workshop found that creativity, artistry, and enthusiasm weren't always enough; sometimes, they needed a stroke of sheer ingenuity or old-fashioned luck to overcome challenges such as budget constraints and manpower issues.

The story behind the design and creation of the Elven armor and weaponry produced for the first two films in the trilogy is full of subplots, from mundane shopping mall excursions to frantic treasure-hunting in China. Taylor recently took time to tell his tale of preparing the Elves for battles that spanned 3,000 years.

BY CARLA ATKINSON



ike everything else Weta produced for the films, the Elven Jarmor and weaponry began with research into "cultural influences from our own world" and a comprehensive design illustration phase, says Richard Taylor, noting that Conceptual Artists Alan Lee and John Howe played a major role in the development of all of the cultures. In addition to conceptual illustrations, Weta produced many design maquettes, "trying to get a feeling for the cultural reference points for the armor of the Elves," Taylor says. "We tried some quite strong and different concepts, then ultimately settled on what you see in the films.

"We have the opportunity to see the Elves on quite an incredible journey," he reflects. "When we first meet them in the prologue at the battle of Gorgoroth, they are really in the springtime of their years. They are still a fundamental and organic part of Middle-earth, and to that end, we tried to influence the armor for that battle with spring-like motifs."

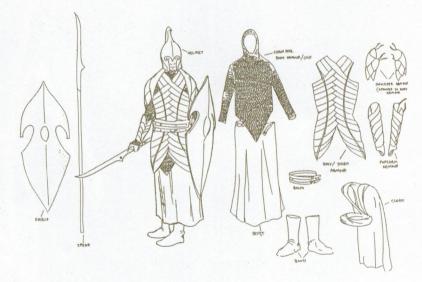
The laminates that make up the chest piece and the leg guards of the armor are designed to emulate those of an opening bud, Taylor says, and the helmet mimics the crest of the stamen emerging from the bud.

"We used a velveteen-like fabric in and around the armor," he continues, "that emulates the feeling of the leaves or the stem of a succulent plant that has a very heavy moisture content, as if it's been enriched from within itself with goodness and the ability to sustain hardship and continue to grow and thrive and live."

The palette used for the Elven warriors of this era is light green with an undercolor of yellow—"everything suggesting progress, youth, vitality, and a vision looking on into the future ... that this race will go on for generations successfully and thrive," Taylor says.

The feeling is far more somber when moviegoers see the Galadhrim Elven warriors 3,000 years later, as they arrive at Helm's Deep to battle the Uruk-hai, a plot twist introduced by Peter Jackson for the film trilogy. Weta wanted the motifs and design of the armor to reflect the Elves' cultural journey during this period.

"We discover them in the autumn of their years," Taylor says. "The Elves have realized that the world is changing, that the time of men is upon the earth, and the purging of mankind by Saruman and Sauron's forces is going to forever



alter the fabric of the world that the Elves have come to know and love. And in the process of reaching this next stage of their journey to the Hallowed Lands, the motifs over generations have begun to change."

The look envisioned for the Elven warriors at Helm's Deep reflects that change. "The design motifs, although suggestive of a lineage back to the armor that we saw at the Gorgoroth Plains, now has the feeling of a crushed and fallen autumnal leaf," Taylor says. "The fine veins on the underside of a leaf are now exposed. The colors are now autumnal browns. Underneath the armor is a 'leaf mail' garment that becomes a skirt that ends around their ankles. This very, very fine steel leaf mail is representative of the leaf litter that would fall on the floor of an autumnal forest ... the scattering of fine leaves that would catch in the wind and ultimately just blow away. The cloaks are now of darkened green and the feeling [is] that these springlike colors have been stripped out of them. The helmet is now perforated as if it's a torn leaf—as if this fresh healthy stamen has now withered and is now analogous to the final closing of the lineage of the Elves as they choose to leave the land of Middle-earth and go to the Grey Havens on their final journey to the Hallowed Lands."

ELVES OF GORGOROTH

Then Weta began work on the Elven armor featured in the prologue of The Fellowship of the Ring, Taylor had to work within a very restrictive budget, finding ways to cut costs without sacrificing aesthetics.

COMMENTS BY RICHARD TAYLOR

GORGOROTH HELMETS





t the battle of Gorgoroth, the Elven warriors wear single-piece, formed helmets. "We wanted the helmet to feel extremely sophisticated compared to the technology of, say, the Gondorians of the time, and of course, the Orcs of the time," Taylor says. "So the helmet has been beaten out of a single sheet of steel, and down on the nose guard is a tiny motif that

is our gesture to J.R.R.

HELM'S DEEP ARMOR DETAI



The armor created for the Galadhrim Elves at the Battle of Helm's Deep carries a tribute to J.R.R. Tolkien, Taylor says. The author created a graphic for each of the Elven houses, and Weta had these graphics produced as enameled

brooches. At the apex of the armor, down the middle of the chest area, there is a hinge that allows the laminates to slide over the top of each other; the special brooches are used to create the hinge point at the base of the upper armor, and

simultaneously represent the different houses of the Elves who have come together to fight at the battle of Helm's Deep, Taylor says.

"There is also an embossed filigree up the front of the Elven armor and down across the leg guards. We wanted to feel that they weave not only organic motifs-in respect to the Elven armor, the feeling of fine ivy or vines that are crawling and growing across the surface of the armor—but also hieroglyphs or the use of typography from their language down the legs of the armor. [This



serves to weave literary spells into the steel ... to reinforce it through the use of spiritual means and through the use of text in a heightened version of say, the way a Celtic culture or a Middle-eastern culture [would] use text-maybe even the Koran—to further spiritually enhance the success of [its]



GORGOROTH BOWS

he bow [used at Gorgoroth] is a variation on the Gondorians' bow. We wanted to make sure that we didn't steal the thunder of the beautiful bows that we had created for the battle of Helm's Deep; we wanted those bows to



[give the feeling that] a cultural inspiration had come to them and that a new technology had been developed over those 3,000 years. So [for Gorgoroth), we just cast off another hundred Gondorian bows, and then the leatherworking department sewed up 200 little die-cut leather socks that fit over the end of the Gondorian bow and added a different, silhouetted motif that was representative of the motif on the ends of the bows that we later see at Helm's Deep. A scenic artist who was also a skilled sign writer went to great pains to paint very fine graphic motifs up the front of the bows in gold paint to further enhance the cultural influences and hide their [Gondorian] lineage."



HELM'S DEEP Bows

he bows are very organic. They have a leather handgrip in the middle, and the timbers are carved and woven with a gold embossing that culminates in these very ornate, carved, gold-leafed tips at either end of the bow. They have a strong and sublime curve at either end, so [there is] greater power when you draw the string back. In theory, the string is woven with a sacred strand of Elven hair, so it is that much stronger to carry the [power] of the bow.

"You'll see that [the soldiers] also carry an archer's glove on their string fingers so that they can hold back the immense [weight] of the bows more successfully. The bows are 7 feet long, so they don't actually draw right up to their eye. They draw more similarly to the Japanese style, [drawing] slightly beyond their eye, back behind their cheek, and [then] firing from this position. I wanted them to draw their bows in exactly the same style every time

so that they keep their elbows at a perfect right angle from their bodies—as if they've been so highly trained that their performance in battle will [always] fall into exactly the same sort of repetitive, staccato movement.

"The arm guard of the Elven armor is complementary of the twist of the musculature of the lower arm; it complements that strong right-angled feel ... the continuation of the line of the arrow through the string, up the arm, and to the elbow."



"Initially, the armor of the prologue was to be seen predominantly in wide shots," he says. "Gil-galad and Elrond would really be the only major characters up close to the camera. But Peter enjoyed these characters and ultimately went in very close on them."

The armor was built inexpensively out of a thin plastic that Weta staffers stamped with pre-shaped cookie cutters on a stamping press—the same kind of device used to stamp out leather panels for shoes or a leather component for bag manufacturing. Weta had to create about 60 components for each of the 100 soldiers, and there was no way it could be done by hand in the time available.

"Every single piece had to be fed through what's called a 'jenny," Taylor says. "It's a machine that's been around since the 15TH or 16TH century, and when it's manually rotated, it puts an embossed ridge down the side of the armor." Weta adapted a jenny to fit onto a sewing machine with a foot pedal. When the pedal was pressed, the sewing machine would work, and in turn, power a drive shaft that they had jerry-rigged onto the jenny."You could just feed these lengths of armor through day in and day out," says Taylor. "[Weta's] Ben Price did this for about six weeks." When Price had churned out all of the components, they had to be painted—piece by piece. "Unfortunately, you can't paint the armor after you've assembled it," Taylor explains. "[In order to] get the color underneath the laminates, you've got to paint every tiny component beforehand."

"The laminates that MAKE UP THE CHEST PIECE AND LEG GUARDS

OF THE ARMOR ARE designed to emulate those of an opening bud..."

Once painted, the components were "pop-riveted" together. Again, our Elven army!" Weta couldn't use time-saving, massproduction approaches. "[With] this armor, because we were going to have the rivets exposed, we couldn't use

pneumatic pop rivets because the modern detailing [would be visible]," Taylor explains. "We had to use 'cold rivets'-where you hammer the rivets together—so the exposed head of the rivet looked suitably organic and historical."

Due to budget constraints, Weta had decided to make the chain mail out of fabric-the trick was finding fabric that worked. A routine shopping excursion with his partner and Weta Workshop Manager Tania Rodger unexpectedly saved the day.

"We had been hunting for months and months to find every possible available modern fabric that emulated chain mail, and I couldn't find anything I liked that worked for this group of Elves," Taylor remembers. "By chance, I went with Tania to this suburban shopping mall, because she wanted to go to a particular clothes shop. There, hanging on the shelf, was a brand-new garment that had just come out-a tank top for women that was made out of this new fabric developed in Asia that looked, for all intents and purposes, exactly like very, very fine chain mail. I bought the garment instantly, read the label, and then [Weta's] Kane Horsham began an incredible tracking job trying to find the manufacturers. I think we found the manufacturer out of Hong Kong and ended up importing huge quantities of this fabric, so we

could sew up the undergarments for

HELM'S DEEP HEROES

Teta faced similar challenges with outfitting the Galadhrim Elves in the Battle of Helm's Deep.

One hundred and ten suits of Elven armor had to be produced for the epic Two Towers battle scenes—10 suits of "hero" armor for the Elven warriors prominent in the film, and 100 suits for "background" Elven warriors. Not only was the armor difficult to produce, but those 100 background suits of armor ultimately had to stand up as if they were foreground suits, because they were to be seen so close to camera. "The whole process probably took about 14 to 15 months," Taylor says, "and we were making another thousand suits of armor at the same time for all the other races!"

A team led by Weta's Kent Parker and Simon Lamason made most of the Elven armor for The Two Towers; the armor supervisor was Gary McKay. "We first bodycast a person who was the correct shape," Taylor says. "Then, we hand-

beat steel plate and shaped and sculpted [it] onto a fiberglass replica of this figure."

Weta staffers then sculpted all of the design motifs and embossing onto the fiberglass replica.





When the detailed replica was complete, the Weta team took large silicone molds of the components and produced fiberglass replicas, which were then electroformed and zinc-plated in order to apply the gold metallic "skin."

Finally, the team designed and created the leather components—"that sort of leather corset through the midsection," Taylor explains. The gloves and forearm components were particularly tricky, he says, because the Elven warriors "had to be able to fight with a sword and fire with a bow.

"Drawing an arrow from the middle of their backs [is] extremely difficult in comprehensive armor," Taylor says. "We had to develop leather strapping and buckling systems [to allow for this kind of movement]." For the buckles, the Weta team, with its famous attention to detail, developed a motif reflecting each warrior's particular Elf race.

Fiberglass was used to make the hero armor, and the background armor was constructed of injection-molded urethane. Then the designers were faced with the challenge of matching the two groups of armor as closely as possible.

"That was extremely difficult," Taylor recalls. "We ended up putting a huge



amount of research into getting the color of the background armor to [mimic] exactly the reflective nature of the foreground armor." Weta's Sourisak Chanpaseuth and Kane Horsham ultimately came up with a solution.

Then, over six months' time, a large team of seam-"carefully stresses tediously" sewed the leaf mail of the hero armor, "For the background armor, we actually took huge molds and made replicas of the leaf mail in rubber skins," Taylor says. "[We sewed those replicas] onto backings and created the feel of the background leaf mail." Costume Designer Ngila Dickson and the wardrobe department enhanced the costumes further with fabric elements such as skirts and cloaks. and also made the lightweight boots that the Elves wore.

CALLING ALL FLVES!

ver the months and months that Taylor and his colleagues developed the armor, they had no way of knowing the shape or size or build of the actors who would portray the Elves and consequently had to design it in such a way that it would fit almost any shape.

"We gave the casting department the size references that we wanted to match, but in a city as small as Wellington—with only 300,000 people—it's not that easy to find 100 6-foot-3, fine-boned, willowy people!" Taylor says. "It was a nightmare for the casting department!"

Weta didn't have the budget or the time to cast and

ARROWS



The arrows are extremely long, [with] vicious tips. [The tips havel two barbs that subtly emulate the shape of the Mallorn tree leaf from the Elves' homes and are used as cutting edges to tear into the enemy; they are then very hard to extract. The tips were made out of pewter that we gold-plated. The knock, which is the tiny piece at the other end of the arrow that holds onto the string, was designed to subtly [mimic] the shape of the fingers. We emulated the insertion of a piece of deer antler into the base of the knock so that the string, on firing, wouldn't split the knock down the length of the arrow because the [weight] of the bow is so great; the little piece of antler reinforces the timber and makes it strong. The flights are goosefeather and are spiraled around the shaft of the arrow. When an arrow is fired with a spiraling flight, it makes the arrow go much more accurately, and the Elves have discovered this. We suggested that [the rest] of Middle-earth hadn't yet discovered this technology. It's a tiny little detail that no one will ever see, but it's all there for the taking for people who are interested!"

he Weta designers didn't have the option of creating completely different sets of Elven weapons for the Gorgoroth and Helm's Deep battles, so they "converted certain elements so they would work across the path of time but look suitably different," Taylor says."With the quivers, [we] screen-printed a motif onto a cloth bag that we used to [alter] the form of the more modern Galadhrim quiver, so that onscreen, [the Elves at Gorgoroth] have a completely different form of quiver, but it's still able to function and carry the arrows."



GIL-GALAI

▼ il-gilad's sacred spear is never seen in the final cut of the film, unfortunately. I actually think it's the most beautiful weapon that we created for The Lord of the Rings ... a very sublime and fine curved spear about 9 feet long, [with] a filigree of three-dimensional brass

sculpting on the spring steel blade. It was extremely difficult

to manufacture. We gave the Elven army its own line of spears as well, with pikes on the end that they could use to defend themselves, [but] it was very tricky to complement that sacred spear of Gil-galad.

"Elrond and Gil-galad had extensively designed hand-beaten steel armor that was very finely colored with steel dyes, then silicone-molded and replicated in flexible urethanes for any stunt fighting. We did make helmets for them, but we realized on the day [we filmed] that we couldn't actually

> put them into their helmets because they would get lost in the crowd. So these beautiful helmets were put aside. It's a shame in some ways that Gil-galad doesn't have a greater presence in the battle because he looked very resplendent in his armor with his weapon."





SHIELDS

The shields the Elven warriors carried at Gorgoroth are based loosely on the cello—due to its "beautiful and organic shape"—and Conceptual Artist



John Howe had a large role in their design."We wanted the shield to [reflect] culture and beautiful music and appreciation of beautiful things," Taylor says.

The boss—the raised bulge in the middle—provides a spot for the soldier's hand to take hold and manipulate the shield. Soldiers can insert pikes or spears through cutouts on either side, allowing them to both hide behind the shield and still carry the spear against their bodies. The long handle enables the Elven warriors to use the shieldwhich features extremely sharp edges along each side—as a weapon in its own right if they lose their other weapons."This was never utilized in the final shooting of the film, but it still looked very, very cool," Taylor says.



SWORDS

e worked very intensely on the Elven weapons. We wanted them to carry a unique weapon that still felt as if it had some lineage back to our own world. [We didn't want it to] feel so fantastical that it didn't seem plausible. We tried many weapons and began sculpting at great pains a particular design that we'd developed much more in the [tradition] of a fencing foil. On reflection, we realized that it still didn't have the power and majesty we wanted. We wanted the Elves—although they are so androgynous, so fine-boned, so beautifully sublime—to [come across as] extremely skilled and aggressive fighters. The major way to communicate that is through their weapons. We therefore created these very strong, heavy-bladed, twohanded swords with a handle that is equal in proportion and length to the blade ... that they could 'windmill' into the enemy as you see in the shot at the battle of Gorgoroth.

"We developed the shape of the weapon by asking a number of sword-fighting experts from different cultures to come to our workshop and give a demonstration. We were most enthralled by the scope and style and agility and sheer viciousness of the fighting style of a young woman from Mainland China. The way she utilized this weapon-palming the back of the blade and wind-milling the weapon aroundwas truly awe-inspiring compared to the more traditional chop-hack-andparry of the European style. We designed a weapon around that fighting style that complemented her particular moves, and it was ultimately adopted and developed as the Elven fighting style.

"At Helm's Deep, the Elven warriors use the same swords. We couldn't better the design, and we decided that we would say that the lineage of this weapon had stayed true for 3,000 years."



fit and build armor for individual actors."We had to reach a compromise on all the armor, so that rather than just making it big and baggy, we could guarantee it would fit everyone," Taylor savs. "We would have been desperately sad if the armor had looked oversized in order to guarantee fit. We made all of the armor—especially the Elves' so it had sliding componentry and could be cinched up; there were different fittings within the armor so that you could fit it to smaller or bigger bodies."

In the end, he says, the Elven armor wasn't the most comfortable to wear, but it did function well and gave "this otherworldly race of people a very beautiful appearance."

A POWERFUL MOMENT

f course, all of the painstakingly executed weapons and armor don't save the Elves at Helm's Deep, Taylor reflects.

"Ultimately, they are completely overrun, and all of them lose their lives to the Uruk-hai," he says. "The Uruk-hai are solely bent on



"These soldiers had the choice between going to the Hallowed Lands [and] leaving Middle-Barth for [their] sacred home ... or going to their death at the battlefields of Helm's Deep to HELP ...

THE VERY RACE OF PEOPLE THAT IS CHANGING THE FACE OF MIDDLE-EARTH."

wiping mankind off of the earth, and by this point, they've got this blood craving and will do everything in their power to obliterate the Elves and the Rohan from the battlements of Helm's Deep. But the Elves put up a phenomenal fight and turn the battle to the degree that King Théoden, Aragorn, and a select small group get to the keep of Helm's Deep and then make the charge that saves their lives."

But the Elves' arrival alone is a powerful moment, and Taylor says he believes it reflects the message that he sees in J.R.R. Tolkien's writing.

"One of the strongest analogies that I take from Tolkien's writings—whether he ever professed that he intended doing this or not—[is that], regardless of what creed, color, or race, unless the people of our own world pull together and find a harmonious way to exist ... to come alongside each other as brothers and sisters, all is ultimately lost," he says.

At Helm's Deep, "Peter really wanted the feeling that all is lost," Taylor explains. "King Théoden has too much pride and believes that under no circumstances would the Elves assist him anyway, and then unheeded, uncalled, the Elves still arrive."

The message conveyed, Taylor says, is that it is only through unity and the power that comes from this unity that the breed of men ever has a chance to succeed. "These characters—these soldiers—had the choice between going to the Hallowed Lands, leaving Middle-earth for the sacred home that their

whole culture has been pursuing all these centuries," he says, "or, as they rightfully know, going to their death at the battlefields of Helm's Deep to help a completely separate race of peoples—the very race of peoples that is changing the face of Middle-earth.

"But still they come, and in that tiny moment when [the Rohirrim] realize that the Elves have arrived, all of these complex and subtle emotions are communicated. For me, it's one of the great moments."





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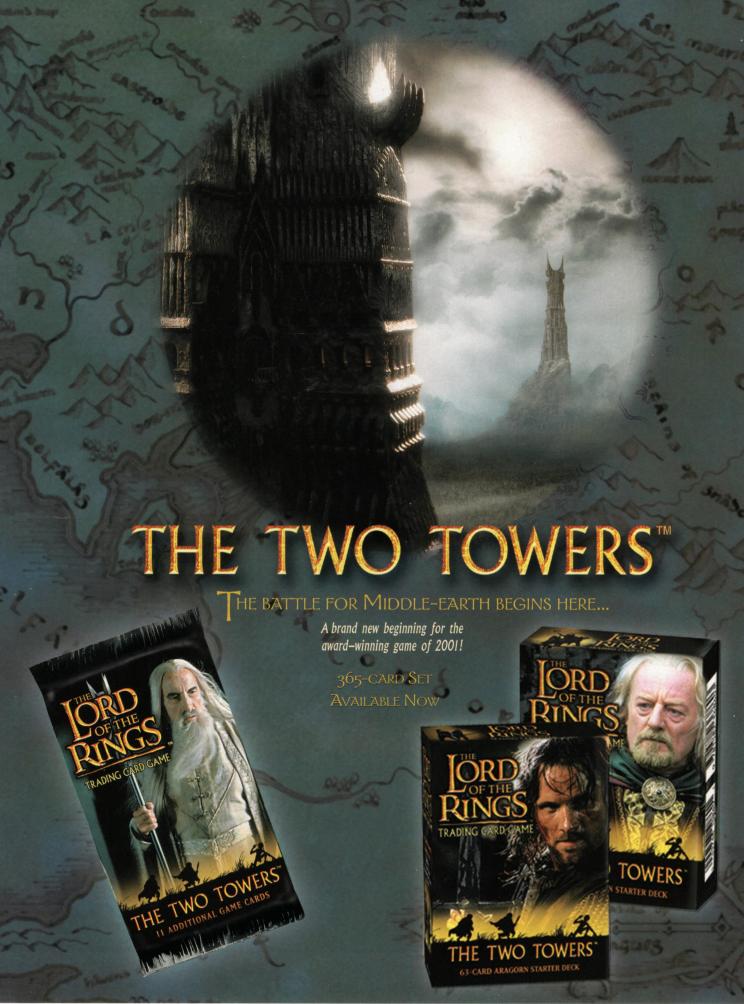


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The Lord of the Rings tory teller



Brian Sibley, the writer who brought The Lord of the Rings to life on radio, goes behind the scenes to tell fans the stories behind the film trilogy.

BY IAN SMITH

To longtime fans of The Lord of the Rings, Brian Sibley was a familiar name long before he became involved with New Line Cinema's film adaptation of the beloved story. Sibley's The Lord of the Rings Official Movie Guide, which made the best-seller lists in both the United Kingdom and the United States, was just the latest project in a 20year career of writing about J.R.R. Tolkien's epic of the imagination.

In 1981, Sibley was responsible for the critically acclaimed BBC radio dramatization of The Lord of the Rings, in which the role of Frodo was played by Ian Holm, who now plays Frodo's uncle, Bilbo, in the film trilogy. Twenty years later, in 2001, he dramatized and appeared in a stage version of The Hobbit—the prequel to The Lord of the Rings.

Sibley first read The Hobbit when he was at school, but it took an ulcer (which landed him in the hospital at the age of 21) to get him reading The Lord of the Rings. He was quickly entranced by J.R.R. Tolkien's fantasy world and set about reading the rest of the author's work. Sibley's books include The Land of Narnia, The Wonderful World of Narnia, and, with Alison Sage, The Treasury of Narnia, as well as the text

accompanying three maps based on The Hobbit, The Lord of the Rings, and The Silmarillion. The Lord of the Rings: The Making of the Movie Trilogy, the second of his official guides to Peter Jackson's extraordinary film project, debuted in November 2002.

In a behind-the-scenes exclusive of our own, Sibley was interviewed by Ian Smith, a charter member of the Fan Club who has known the author for many years. Smith sat down with his old friend recently and talked with him about his experiences writing the movie books, not to mention The Lord of the Rings projects he worked on long before the films became a reality.

Was becoming a writer a career GOAL, OR DID YOU FALL INTO IT?

I totally fell into it! But I've always enjoyed writing about things that I enjoy-trying to excite and enthuse others about the things that I'm excited and enthused about! That helped me start in my career as a radio broadcaster and in writing about books and authors that I was interested in. One of those authors was J.R.R. Tolkien, but there were many others too: J.M. Barrie, A.A. Milne, C.S. Lewis, Mervyn Peake, and Ray Bradbury.



WHAT IS THE MOST DIFFICULT ASPECT OF WRITING—BACKGROUND RESEARCH OR PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER?

With the books, it was very easy to talk to the people making the film, because they cared hugely about what they were doing and wanted to tell me everything. The hard thing was selecting and crafting that material into book form. In terms of radio dramatization, I think the difficult thing was taking a story that works on the page and trying to find a way to make it live in a completely different medium. With the

exception of today's blockbuster novelists, most writers write books to be read, not to have them turned into plays or movies!

How long did it take to write THE BOOKS ON THE MOVIE?

The first book, the Official Movie Guide, probably took me about five or six weeks, which was pretty fast. The second book, The Making of the Movie Trilogy, took a lot longer because I had so much information. I'd spent several weeks in New Zealand interviewing probably 150 people, and every

one of them had talked to me at great length—the tape recorder went on, and two hours later, it was switched off! When I got back to England and tried to make sense of it all, I realized that I had almost too many interviews, too much information. It's one of those subjects where the more you talk to people, the more you want to know. And there are so many facets to the film that you really want to find out about: props, costumes, locations, animation, music, editing, etc. Each area is full of fascinating anecdotes, stories, and insights. Every single person I spoke to had an overwhelming sense of commitment and excitement about their involvement in the project that they wanted to come across in the books. So writing the second book took about four months, which is somewhat longer than I'd expected and considerably longer than the publishers expected, as the frequent, anxious, emails kept reminding me every few days! I was commissioned to write 250,000 words, but finally delivered 276,000. Fortunately, HarperCollins saw that there was a vast amount of material that people would want to read, and generously made the book longer!

WHAT WAS THE MOST EXCITING EXPERIENCE YOU HAD DURING YOUR RESEARCH TRIP TO NEW ZEALAND?

Walking into Bag End, the set that was built for the scenes involving Elijah Wood and Ian McKellen. Pushing open the green door with its ornate wrought-iron hinge on the backwhich sprawled across the interior like some great fern—and walking into the carved, paneled wooden tunnels that make up Bag End ... seeing the terracotta tiles and all the details of the various rooms, such as the fireplace

carved with bulrushes. This was quite extraordinary, because it made me realize just how much devotion and detailed craftsmanship had gone into recreating J.R.R. Tolkien's vision on film. It was the most exciting because, more than any other setting, this one represented the place where the stories in The Hobbit and The Lord of the Rings begin. It is such an icon, and seeing it, in reality, was just one of the most exciting things. The costumes also fascinated me: nothing raided from theatrical costumiers, nothing purchased from stores—everything custommade, whether it was a pair of Elven shoes or the buttons on a Hobbit jacket! This attention to detail-although unseen by most moviegoers because, quite rightly, they're caught up in the drama—is what underpins the story, gives it its fabric and texture. Without this attention to detail, the movie would have been less complete, less authentic, and far less magical.

How DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH THE RADIO ADAPTATION OF

The Lord of the Rings? WAS IT SOME-THING YOU HAD WANTED TO DO FOR A LONG TIME?

Yes, it was-although I never thought it was possible that I'd actually do it! I'd given the BBC some suggestions for books that I'd like to dramatize, and either the BBC wasn't interested in doing them or it had already done them. So, sometime in 1980, I sent another letter offering more suggestions, to which I added a postscript saying that the book I'd really like to dramatize was The Lord of the Rings. When I next visited Broadcasting House, the head of the BBC's Script Unit-the late Richard Imison-pulled me into an office and said he was astonished to have received my letter. It was all very mysterious. "How did you know?" he asked. "How did I know what?" I replied. "How did you know that we were hoping to do The Lord of the Rings?"

Well, of course, I had no idea that they'd even thought of it. This was a few years after the Ralph Bakshi film, so I guess the time had seemed right.

"Anyway," Richard said, "If we go ahead, maybe we can involve you, somehow." And so I waited. Meanwhile, the BBC was negotiating with the rights-holder, Saul Zaentz, a name with which The Lord of the Rings film fans will be familiar. However, as it turned out, Zaentz didn't actually own the radio rights, so, at the last minute, the BBC found that it had to start a new round of negotiations with J.R.R. Tolkien's estate, which still held the rights for a radio version. Eventually, they got the go-ahead, and, true to his word, Richard got me involved. This was an astonishing piece of good fortune, because I'd only written one 45-minute dramatization, and this project was going to run for 26 halfhour episodes! So it was an extraordinary project, made all the more extraordinary because the BBC entrusted it to someone fairly inexperienced.

How long did you work on the RADIO SERIES?

First, I had to arrange the book into the 26 episodes, which was really very

> hard. It was challenging because, particularly after the Breaking of the Fellowship, the story switches back and forth between various protagonists. Trying to make sense of that in a way that would work in 30minute, weekly episodes whilst keeping the story going and all the actors involved, and finding—or creating!—a cliffhanger for the end of each episode, was phenomenally difficult. That took two or three months, after which I spent another four or five months working with fellow writer Michael Bakewell in preparing the individual

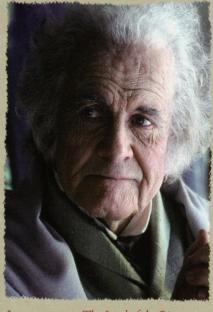


Peter Jackson ... Listened to My Radio Adaptation and decided that he really wanted to involve Ian Holm, who played Frodo, in the film. One of the exciting things for me has been seeing "my Frodo" on screen as "Peter Jackson's Bilbo."

episodes; we wrote 13 each. All in all, with a couple of months in studio, it was a venture that lasted the best part of a year—the most ambitious and exciting thing I'd ever done!

How important was your involvement in the radio series to being asked to write the movie books?

Peter Jackson, while doing initial research, listened to my radio adaptation and decided that he really wanted to involve Ian Holm, who had played Frodo on the radio. Of course, some 20 years had gone by, and so, whilst it was quite clear that Ian couldn't play Frodo, Peter cast him as Frodo's uncle, Bilbo. One of the exciting things for me about the film has been seeing "my Frodo" turning up on screen as "Peter Jackson's Bilbo." At that point, it became not entirely inconceivable that I should get involved with writing the books about the making of the trilogy, which brought everything full circle. To mark the 21st anniversary of the BBC radio version, Ian shed 68 hobbit years and became Frodo once again in order to perform new prologues and epilogues for the "three-volume" cassette/CD issue of the series. Ian, director Jane Morgan, and I were reunited after two decades: The elderly Frodo opened the Red Book and began writing his reminiscences. When I now see Ian in the extended cut as the elderly Bilbo writing the earlier chapters of the same Red Book, I get serious goose bumps at the joy of synchronicity!



In adapting The Lord of the Rings to radio, you had to make some difficult decisions about what to cut, just as Peter Jackson did. Which things were hardest for you to leave out? How were the decisions made?

The radio series and the films approached many of the "difficulties" in J.R.R. Tolkien's book from a different angle—though, in a number of instances, we followed the same course and for the same reason. The best example is probably the elimination of Tom Bombadil and the events in the Old Forest and on the Barrow Downs. Once the Black Riders have been established as "the threat," it makes better dramatic sense to stick with that as the driving imperative to the plot. When he began writing the

book, J.R.R. Tolkien was still working out how the story was going to develop. Had he been writing a film or radio script, an editor would have told him. "Cut to the chase!"

What do you think J.R.R. Tolkien would have thought of the radio and movie versions of his book?

He was extremely doubtful about whether The Lord of the Rings could ever be successfully translated into another medium. When, shortly after the book had been published, an early, dramatized reading of the books aired on BBC radio, he was very, very unhappy with the results. For me, knowing that was rather worrying! With due respect to the professor, I was glad that he wasn't around when I was facing the task of making the book into a radio series, and I guess Peter Jackson would feel the same way about the film. What I think J.R.R. Tolkien would have understood is that film is a completely different medium, and that the filmmakers are also trying to establish their own way of storytelling. Some purists will point out that there are many differences between the book and the films-some more significant than others—but the fact is, Peter Jackson has kept the essence and heart of the story and translated that to film in a way that would probably leave J.R.R. Tolkien, if he could get over any initial doubts he might have had about the project, quite pleasantly surprised! He

would most certainly be astonished—and, undoubtedly, gratified—to know how many people are discovering his story who had never before found their way to Middle-earth.

DID YOU EVER MEET I.R.R. TOLKIEN?

I wish I could say that I had. I wish I could even say that I'd had the initiative to try to meet him ... I did, however, write to him. It was, of course, just another fan letter. Thousands of people wrote him such letters, year in, year out, and many did what I did, which was to write a letter that was partly in runes and partly in Elvish. I couldn't write in either now to save my life, but I could then, which shows what a devoted fan I was! It was too expensive to send him my copies of The Lord of the Rings for a signature, so instead, I sent him my copy of The Adventures of Tom Bombadil, which is a book of poems about the character who was infamously cut from both the radio and movie versions! In return, I got a letter from I.R.R. Tolkien's secretary to say that the professor had not only autographed the volume but had also amended a misprint on one of the pages. Subsequently, I got the book signed by its illustrator, Pauline Baynes, and it is, unquestionably, one of my most valued possessions.

Years later, I met the professor's secretary and told her how proud I was of the book, and that I still had her letter telling me that J.R.R. Tolkien had amended an error in the text. Astonishingly, she remembered the occasion when he had signed it! They were on their way somewhere, and she had taken a batch of correspondence to him. I think that by this time, he was getting rather fed up with so many people writing to him to demand autographs. "Here's another book that needs signing," she told him,

"and the owner's written you a really rather nice letter!" Apparently, he stopped, read the letter, and, although the hired car was ready to take him to the railway station, said, "Yes, I'll sign it," and did so—on the bonnet of the car! When I was told this story, it made the signed book even more personal. It is something I shall always treasure.

WILL YOU BE DOING A THIRD BOOK ON THE MOVIE, AND IF SO, WHAT WILL IT COVER?

One of the exciting things about The Lord of the Rings is not just having the opportunity to write one book about the film, but actually to write three books. Some years ago I wrote a book about the making of Chicken Run, the wonderful animated film from the Aardman studio. The film opened. The book sold, and that was it. The job was over. The great thing about The Lord of the Rings is being in a position to go on writing about a film and tackle it in different ways. The first book was very much an introduction to the film—the story, the characters, how the book came to be written and the film made. The second book is a more intimate account of the process of creation, and the third book, which won't be seen until the release of The Return of The King, will look at the staggering accomplishment of Peter Jackson, Fran Walsh, and Philippa Boyens in turning J.R.R. Tolkien's story into this monumental film script. Each of the books has a different style to it and is not simply another book about the next movie. I hope that people will find that the three books, when they're viewed together, will give them perhaps a particular insight into the making of what is, without doubt, the most exceptional film project that has ever been undertaken in the history of cinema.



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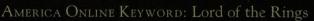
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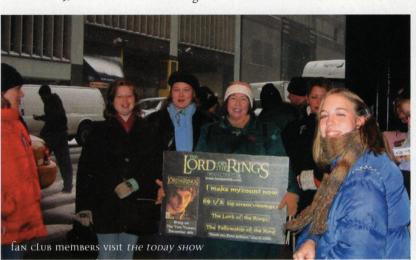


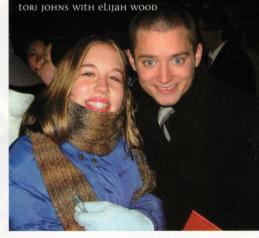
n November, Fan Club members from across North America met in Toronto to attend The Lord of the Rings exhibit at Royal Ontario Museum's McLaughlin Planetarium. Members got a chance to see firsthand many sets, props, weapons, and costumes from the films, and enjoyed taking in the sights of Toronto together. ... With the release of the special extended-edition DVD version of The Fellowship of the Ring in November, Fan Club members around the world planned group viewings, the largest of which was held in the Los Angeles area. After enjoying a hobbit-sized buffet, L.A. Ringers sat breathless through the whole movieespecially the new footage! ... On December 5, fans from surrounding

states descended on New York City for a glimpse of the cast at the World Premiere for The Two Towers. For many, a dream actually came true as they got a chance to meet director Peter Jackson and some of the cast members! One of the most memorable moments of the evening came when John-Rhys Davies (Gimli), still recovering from an injury, stepped out of his limousine and, leaning on a cane, crossed the street through



ice and snow to speak with fans. ... On January 3, Ringers joined the Tolkien Society in a worldwide toast to J.R.R. Tolkien on what would have been his 111th birthday. Josh Rubinstein, also known online as Sarumann, helped to coordinate 33 parties across the world. lordofthedonuts.net/tolkien111/





One such event was held at the Bilbo Baggins Global Cafe in Alexandria, Virginia. The group held readings, joined in a hobbit song, and, at exactly 9 PM, raised their glasses in a toast to the Professor. ... Organized by members active on the Fan Club Message Boards, these gatherings were all about the simple pleasures of friends, food, and drink. What more could one ask for? Join us at: lotrfanclub.com/community.aspx.

~ Nanette Morris



We want to include a broad representation of Fan Club members in the magazine. Send your Fan Club event news and photos to editor@lotrfanclub.com or to The Lord of the Rings Fan Club, c/o Decipher, P.O. Box 56, Norfolk, VA 23501. (If you would like to find out about groups that may already be active in your area, visit the Bag End Message Board in the Community section of lotrfanclub.com.)

Members 'Ring' in the New Year Together

an Club members traveled from far and wide to attend a New Year's gathering in historic Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, from December 29, 2002 to January 2, 2003.

Organized and hosted by North Carolina members Stephanie and Lee Newsome, the event drew fans from as far away as Chicago.

The activities began with a meetand-greet "moot" at a local restaurant, where Fan Club members enjoyed dinner and a trivia contest; everyone was excited to at last be able to put faces to names! For some attendees, the event was their first big gathering of Ringers, much less Fan Club members, but everyone felt a part of the fellowship and many new friendships were forged.

On Monday, the group attended a showing of The Two Towers together, followed by a visit to the Festival of



fans at the new year's celebration in williamsburg

Lights in Newport News, then dinner and more camaraderie.

The group began its New Year's celebrations on the morning of December 31 with a demonstration of The Lord of the Rings Trading Card Game. Following the demo, a group of devotees got into the Hobbit spirit by taking tea at a local shop. That evening, the big New Year's Eve celebration was held at the Patrick Henry Inn. Stephanie and Lee Newsome were the consummate hosts, throwing a party complete with catered food, a full bar, dance floor, door prizes, a costume contest, and an impressive display of Fan Club materials. A few locals came, too, even though they knew no one at the party! These intrepid Fan Club members had simply seen the information about the party in the Fan Club magazine and

decided to join in the fun. Some even circled the hotel in their cars before they parked to try to figure out if the Fan Club crowd was kicking off 2003 in costume! They had "street clothes" with them just in case, but fortunately there were plenty of enthusiastic fans decked out in Middle-earth costumes. so the newcomers were able to leave their "backup" clothes in their cars. After the party, everyone was reluctant to go their separate ways, so the celebration continued throughout the night!

A small group of devoted Ringers stayed in Williamsburg after the big party, taking in tourist sights such as the Mariners Museum and the Jamestown Settlement. But everyone wished they had had more time together. Maybe next year! ~ Nanette Morris 66

Fellowship Spotlight

Across the world, members of The Lord of the Rings Fan Club are creating their own regional Fan Club "chapters" and planning local events and get-togethers. This issue, we bring you the Salt Lake City (Utah) Fellowship.

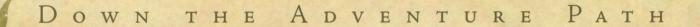
or the second year in a row, Salt Lake City played host to the largest The Lord of the Rings movie line party in the world, packing nearly 1,000 fans into a local theater. Volunteers led

demos of The Lord of the Rings Trading Card Game in the lobby, and Vis Sic Tecum, a musical group, set the mood for the evening, which included a costume contest and prize giveaways.

Cameron Van Tassell stole the show at the costume contest with his version of a 9-foot-tall Ent. Walking on construction stilts, carefully hidden under his lengthy brown get-up, he arrived at the theater to raucous cheers from the hundreds waiting in line.

Fan Club member Larry D. Curtis, also a staffer at TheOneRing.net, has organized and hosted the Salt Lake City line party for the past two years, not to mention other related events in the area. Curtis says he feels a real responsibility to the local fans and hopes to cook up something much better for 2003. If you're in the Salt Lake City area, contact fellow Fan Club members via saltlakelotr@hotmail.com.

~ Nanette Morris



The Role of a Lifetime

A team of veteran roleplaying game designers takes The Lord of the Rings fans to the heart of Middle-earth

BY DAVE JOY

Roleplaying games have been around since the 1970s, but the stage for adventure roleplaying was set by scores of imaginative writers of science fiction and fantasy, many of whom were directly inspired by The

Lord of the Rings. It seems only right that alongside the debut of New

Line Cinema's historic The Lord of the Rings film trilogy, a new RPG line should be

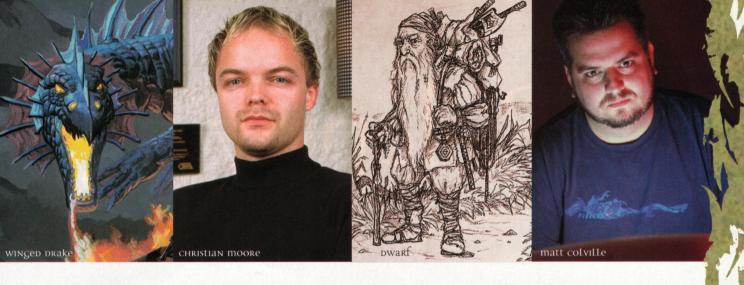
created for gamers who want to immerse themselves in both J.R.R. Tolkien's masterwork

and director Peter Jackson's cinematic vision of Middle-earth.

To was the award-winning team of designers at Decipher's California-based Roleplaying Game and Miniatures Studio that won the privilege of creating The Lord of the Rings RPG. Creativity and imagination go hand in hand at Decipher, and who could ask for a more exciting assignment than creating roleplaying games based on what is arguably the greatest story ever written?

Christian Moore, vice president of the RPG and Miniatures Studio, leads a team that includes

game designers Owen Seyler, Jeff Tidball, and Matt Colville, key players among a large talent pool used to create *The Lord of the Rings* RPG products. It should come as no surprise to anyone that they are all longtime J.R.R. Tolkien fans who grew up memorizing arcane lore from *The Lord of the Rings*, playing Dungeons & Dragons, and going to fantasy and sci-fi conventions. They invested their allowances in fantasy collectibles and trading cards, hardly imagining that someday they would be the



"WE ARE ALWAYS conscious of the primary sources," Moore explains. "Everything we do is executed in the spirit of remaining as true as possible to J.R.R. Tolkien's vision."

ones designing some of the most popular games sold today in a multi-billiondollar industry. Young gamers, pay particularly close attention!

MIDDLE-EARTH **ADVENTURES**

For The Lord of the Rings fans, Moore and company offer two distinct approaches to roleplaying (for more on RPG basics, see What is Roleplaying? on page 72).

The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Adventure Games are for people who have been captivated by the story or the films and want to recreate the experience through roleplaying, usually by taking on the role of one of the main characters, Moore explains. The Adventure Games are designed to help new players learn the system and the concepts behind roleplaying quickly and benefit from clear examples and hints along the way. The boxed Roleplaying Adventure Games come ready to play, with individual storybooks, maps, character sheets, and stand-up cardboard counters for both heroes and foes.

The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game, on the other hand, is geared

toward players who want to create their own, original characters within the framework of Middle-earth. This variation is far less structured than the Roleplaying Adventure Games, Moore says. For instance, the debut product for the RPG was simply the "Core Book," a thick, beautifully designed volume that provides players with all of the tools they need to create their own characters and tell their own, original stories set in Tolkien's world. However, fans of straight-up roleplaying can expect much more to come from The Lord of the Rings RPG line (just as Roleplaying Adventure gamers can expect new episodes). In late 2002, Decipher released a beautiful set of Middle-earth maps—created by The Lord of the Rings film trilogy artist Daniel Reeve-that players can use to plan their latest adventures, and collectors can frame and hang over their mantels. Many other companion products will be released in 2003, including sourcebooks detailing the stories, characters, and places of The Fellowship of the Ring and The Two Towers; Fell Beasts and Wondrous Magic, a tome of creatures and artifacts; sourcebooks about Helm's Deep and Isengard; additional map sets;

and supplements that delve into the Barbarian, Warrior, Magician, and Loremaster player character orders.

Decipher's RPG designers have the great advantage of being able to draw from both the beloved The Lord of the Rings book and the critically acclaimed film trilogy. The RPG and Miniatures Studio works closely with both Tolkien Enterprises and New Line Cinema to ensure that its products honor the spirit of the book and the films, Moore says. "We are always conscious of the primary sources," he explains. "Everything we do is executed in the spirit of remaining as true as possible to J.R.R. Tolkien's vision."

Fans of the films will see plenty of imagery from The Fellowship of the Ring and The Two Towers in the company's current RPG products. In future releases, players can expect to see more and more original art created expressly for Decipher, Moore says, but that, too, will have a film flair, as artists from Weta Workshop will be heavily involved.

A NEW WORLD

All roleplaying games have comprehensive rules systems that spell out the destallminimized; forced for to the land of the cell included by

What Roleplaying?

CORE BOOK

Roleplaying is a lot like that—only with rules that help govern play (preventing arguments around the age-old problem of who-shot-whom first!).

In a nutshell, roleplaying games (RPGs) are designed to be played as a group experience with your friends, usually

around a table. The number of players involved can range from two up to seven or eight, says *The Lord of the Rings* RPG designer Christian Moore; add more players than that, and things can get complicated!

Each player takes on the role of a character in the story, with one person agreeing to serve as "Game Master" (GM). Unlike other kinds of games, RPGs are non-competitive, with no winners or losers (unless, like Legolas and Gimli in the Battle of Helm's Deep, you and a friend decide to have a little competition on the side to see who can kill more Orcs!). Ultimately, the whole idea is for everyone to have fun playing out adventures to the limits of their imaginations.

Player characters (PC) are controlled by a single player, while the GM narrates and controls the actions of all other non-player characters (NPC). For example, in Decipher's first The Lord of the Rings Adventure Game, you and your friends control the characters of the Nine Walkers from The Fellowship of the Ring as you battle your way together "Through the Mines of Moria." The GM controls the action of the "bad guys," such as the Watcher in the Water, snarling Orcs, the Cave Troll, and the almost undefeatable Balrog.

Roleplaying is very much like being in your own movie, in which you and your friends are the actors, and the Game Master is the director and narrator. As Narrator, the GM establishes the story setting before play begins and moves the story along between combat sequences. Moreover, the GM is a "referee" who rules on typical RPG conventions such as tests of skill and combat and—based on a roll of the dice—tells

you if your fancy swordplay results in freeing a comrade from the tentacles of the Watcher in the Water, or if you survive an onslaught of snarling Orcs!

Of course, it's great fun to recall actual lines from the books or movies. But as a roleplaying "gamer," you get to step into the shoes (or furry feet) of your favorite character and, depending on the circumstances of the moment, you decide

what your character will say and do. (For instance, how would you respond to a Cave Troll who has spotted you in the Chamber of Mazarbul?!) Ultimately, this may be the coolest thing of all about roleplaying: Nobody ever really knows what's going to happen—but everyone is going to have a lot of fun playing different characters and inventing the action as they go along!

In roleplaying, as in life, timing, style and location make all the difference in how the game unfolds. It may take you and your friends only a couple of hours of "real time" to play the game, but during those two hours, you and all the other members of the Fellowship, for example, may

experience several adventurous days of "game time." Game time shifts between "action time" and "narrative time." In Decipher's Roleplaying Adventure Games, characters take turns in rotational order, with each character and opponent having an opportunity to act twice per round (representing about six seconds of game time). So a roll of the dice, the unique attributes of your character, plus your character's health and position on the game grid all help determine whether or not you make it safely across the crumbling stairs of Khazad-d m with the Balrog on your heels!

As you might guess, The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying products come with their own interesting twists and improvements, carefully remaining as true as possible to J.R.R. Tolkien's cherished Middle-earth culture. So by the time you've made it successfully through Moria on your first trip, you'll be a battle-hardened protector of Middle-earth ready for your next adventure!



"We tried to Maintain the distinction between heroic fantasy— AS DEPICTED IN D&D, FOR EXAMPLE—and true epic fantasy,

AS SEEN IN TOLKIEN'S WORK."

parameters of gameplay, and with the introduction of Decipher's innovative "Coda Game System," the standard for the entire roleplaying game industry has now been raised a notch or two. How does The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Game and its new rule system differ from, say, Dungeons & Dragons or other types of RPGs?

"Dungeons & Dragons can—and frequently does-draw from anyone's idiosyncratic idea about what a cool fantasy element might be," says Jeff Tidball. "On the other hand, we have to be very careful when we expand Middle-earth, because every new element we create has to fit seamlessly not only into the physical world of I.R.R. Tolkien's creation but also the feel of it."

So what was it like to try to create an entirely new game system that roleplaying gamers would embrace?

"When we launched the studio for Decipher," says Owen Seyler, "we established several broad objectives, which became the design parameters for the game system that would drive all of Decipher's roleplaying game lines, including Star Trek, The Lord of the Rings, and anything else that might come

along. The game system was to rely on [regular] six-sided dice familiar to nearly everyone." And the new system had to be "internally consistent and indefinitely expandable," Seyler adds.

Moore says the guiding principle followed by the team as it develops The Lord of the Rings roleplaying products is "staying true to the story and attempting to maintain J.R.R. Tolkien's vision for Middle-earth on every level.

"This is especially true for the magic system and the character creation system," he says. "I think Steve Long did a fabulous job on the magic for the game, and I'm very happy with how the character generation system for this game turned out." [Editor's note: Steven S. Long, widely respected among the roleplaying game industry's illuminati, served as Decipher's first RPG Project Leader for the game.]

It took about a year to produce the first Adventure Game. "We obviously needed to do continuous research," Moore points out. "However, we had to be as careful about what we didn't include as what we did include. We have to work within the bounds of a rather specific license grant, and we can't stray into areas where—as J.R.R.

Tolkien fans-we'd sometimes like to go. With the Core Book, we managed to cram in everything we were permitted to use."

Moore says he is most proud of the incremental "pick" system they devised for awarding experience. "In a game such as D&D, you ascend a level and you're pretty much handed a package of new abilities and/or skills and told, 'Here's what you get," he explains. "[With The Lord of the Rings], each time a character earns 1,000 experience points, the player has the ability to pick and choose from all sorts of advancement elements. I think it adds a nice touch that hasn't really been done in quite this way before.

"We tried to maintain the distinction between heroic fantasy-as depicted in D&D, for example-and true epic fantasy, as seen in Tolkien's work," Moore concludes."We wanted to create a great roleplaying game that made it feel just as if you were right there in Middle-earth during the War of the Ring."

Judging by their popularity so far, The Lord of the Rings Roleplaying Games have succeeded in doing just that.



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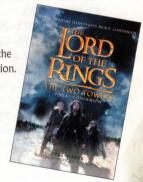
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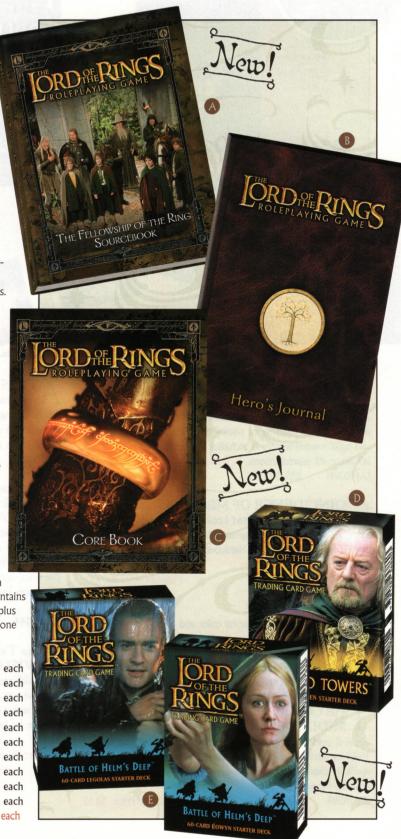
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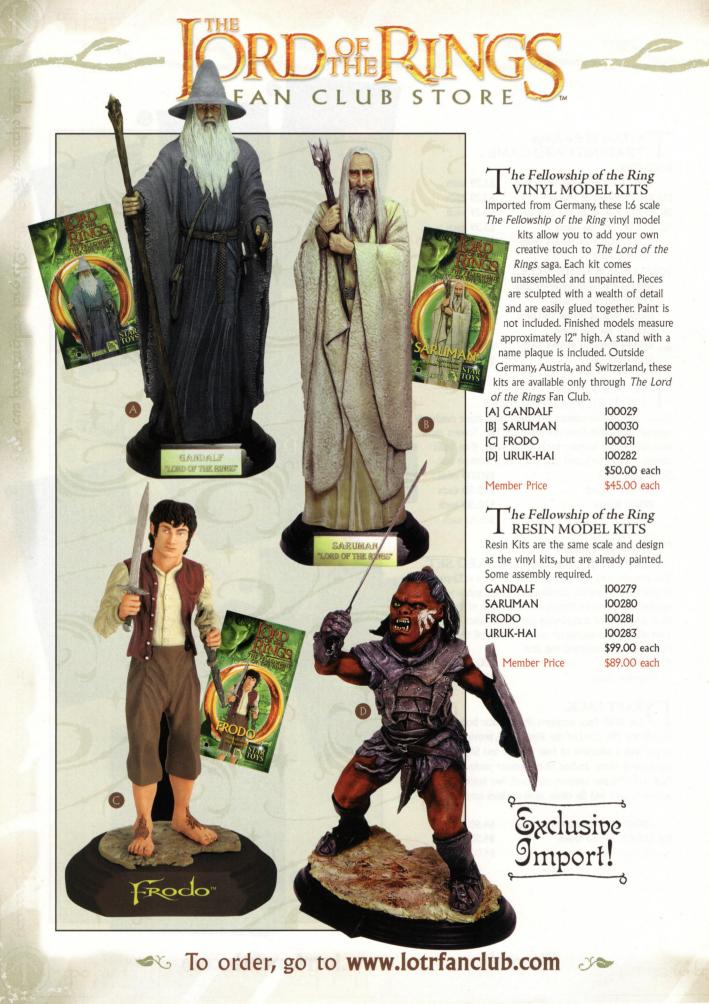
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uotewort A sampling of our favorite quotes from this issue...

"I am a different person now than I was before, both personally and professionally. I think being in New Zealand for a year and half has changed me. It has made me aware of taking

TIME AND ENJOYING THE WORLD RATHER THAN RUSHING THROUGH IT."

[Billy Boyd, Pippin]



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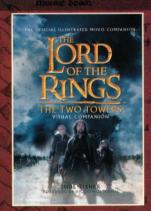
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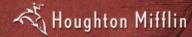
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