

CINEFANTASTIQUE

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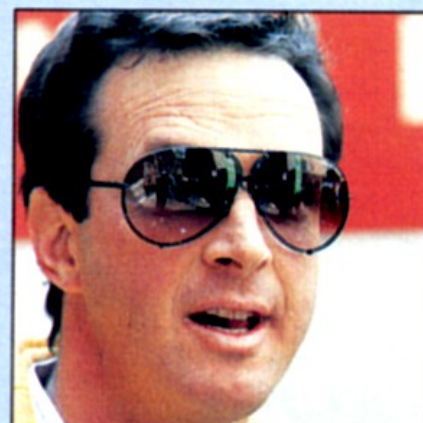
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MYSTERY SCIENCE
THEATRE--THE MOVIE

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THE 50 MOST POWERFUL PEOPLE IN SCIENCE FICTION

CINEFANTASTIQUE assesses who has the power to make or break the genre.

"Using order to deal with the disorderly, using calm to deal with the clamorous, is mastering the heart."

—Sun Tzu

By Mark A. Altman
with additional material
by Steve Biodrowski

While the philosophy of Sun Tzu may no longer be in vogue after Michael Ovitz bailed from CAA to Disney, power is still something coveted by everyone in Hollywood from the lowliest script reader to the biggest studio mogul. It takes a lot of clout to get a science fiction project greenlighted in Tinseltown, due to the prohibitive expense and a state of the art that's constantly becoming outdated.

In this, the third annual listing of the 50 Most Powerful People in Science Fiction, *Cinefantastique* continues a tradition that began two years ago in the late, unlau-



Top: For the second year in a row, Steven Spielberg tops the 50 Most Powerful List. Up next for him is *THE LOST WORLD*, the much-anticipated sequel to *JURASSIC PARK*. Left: Chris Carter takes the Place Position, thanks to the cult popularity of *THE X-FILES*, soon to be a feature film.

mented *Sci-Fi Channel Magazine* and continued in the late lamented *Imagi-Movies* last year. Now, *CFQ* looks

not only at those who have the power to create, shape, and make a science fiction, fantasy, or horror project in Hollywood, but those who have evinced a consistent desire to work in these fields (there are individuals in Hollywood with far more influence, but who wouldn't get caught dead toiling in what they perceive as a ghetto genre). This year, we broaden our scope a bit to take a look at institutions that wield great clout in the genre; also, acknowledging that great talent does not always guarantee great success, we point out those artists whose high-quality work should land them a position on the list.

These are the people who have a track record in the genre and a continuing interest and ability to make and contribute to imaginative sci-fi in the future. These are the SCI-FI POWER 50.

1 STEVEN SPIELBERG

(Last year's ranking: 1)

As a member of the troika running Dreamworks SKG, Spielberg is certainly a Hollywood power player. With his continued interest in making genre projects as well as his impending involvement directing *THE LOST WORLD* and his association with a myriad of other genre projects, including a '90s remake on the tried-but-true formula of a meteor that imperils Earth, Spielberg can make anything he wants...and more often than not make it well.

2 CHRIS CARTER

(Last year's ranking: 28)

Chris Carter's *THE X-FILES* has become a true television phenomenon—and that's without ever entering the Nielsen Top 10. Not only is Carter developing a companion sci-fi series for Fox, *MILLENNIUM*, but he's also signed to direct an *X-FILES* feature film. Fox's golden boy is the flavor of the year.

3 JAMES CAMERON

(Last year's ranking: 2)

Despite a history of high priced sci-fi successes and his own revolving credit agreement that makes him a true independent, the Cameron-produced *STRANGE DAYS* landed on the scene with a resounding thud and proved one of Fox's biggest money-losers of the year. His upcoming voyage as director of a *TITANIC* is risky sailing and could be just the project to take the winds out of this eclectic genre auteur's sails. But his flirting with state-of-the-

George Lucas release of a revamped *STAR WARS* is supposedly a prelude to making the next trilogy, but he has to deliver to maintain his ranking.



The reputation forged with *TERMINATOR 2* (above) keeps James Cameron near the top of the list, despite *STRANGE DAYS*.

art technology and his founding of Digital Domain will insure his continued relevance as a major figure in the genre for years to come.

4 MICHAEL CRICHTON

(Last year's ranking: unlisted)

Who would think that the novelist turned filmmaker turned uber novelist would go from film oddities like *WESTWORLD* and *LOOKER* to genuine brand name boxoffice names. *CONGO* made close to \$100 million thanks to the

Crichton moniker (and it wasn't even any good), and his novel *The Lost World* roared up the bestseller list. Not since Stephen King has there been an author whose name meant more plastered on a movie marquee.

5 GEORGE LUCAS

(Last year's ranking: 6)

It's put up or shut up for George Lucas who's milking a 20-year-old franchise has kept the Lucasfilm coffers filled. Now with the impending release of a retuned *STAR WARS* which should do \$100 million easy, all eyes are turned towards the next Star Wars trilogy which is a merchandisers dream. But can George capture lightning in a bottle twice? Can he reinvent an idiom he created? And will he ever make it...first it was '97, then '98, now 1999. Snooze...

6 ROBERT ZEMECKIS

(Last year's ranking: unlisted)

It may have been a long time since *BACK TO THE FUTURE*, but Zemeckis is using his *FORREST GUMP* clout as a major producer both on the small screen (with HBO's *TALES FROM THE CRYPT*) and on the big one. The latter includes championing Peter Jackson's bid for mainstream success by executive producing

THE FRIGHTENERS for him, as well as continuing the low-budget *TALES FROM THE CRYPT* feature series with *BORDELLO OF BLOOD*, from a script he co-wrote with Bob Gale. And he'll soon be back behind the camera as well, directing the big-budget *CONTACT*, from Carl Sagan's book, with Jodie Foster.

7 ROLAND EMMERICH & DEAN DEVLIN

(Last year's ranking: 10)

The dynamic duo, whose *STARGATE* soared to become a

Michael Crichton rockets to No. 4 as the new brand name genre author. Next: *THE LOST WORLD*.

