

CINEFANTASTIQUE

June

\$5.99
CAN \$8.50
UK £4.50

Walt Disney's **HERCULES**



FILMING "BATMAN & ROBIN"

PREVIEW "MEN IN BLACK"

"LOST WORLD: JURASSIC PARK 2"

"THE WARRIORS OF VIRTUE"

THE 50 MOST POWERFUL IN
HORROR, FANTASY & SCI-FI

Volume 28 Number 12



There is no doubt that Emmerich enjoys genre films. Is this something which took hold in childhood? "When I was a kid, I had a lot of friends who were totally into science fiction. We had science fiction book series which came out, like every two weeks. One was called PERRY RHODEN. I wasn't totally into that kind of stuff. I was reading—once and awhile—a little bit of it. I was into reading and all kinds of other stuff, but never specifically science fiction. I remember my parents had this *big* collection of the 'Best Science Fiction Novels,' which was this thing you got every year; they had these silver books at the house in Switzerland. That was like the first time I really read good science fiction, but I was already 15-16 years old."

Needless to say, Emmerich's childhood sf-fan friends are bankers, manufacturers, and the like while Roland has become a director specializing in science fiction films. "My first real interest in science fiction came in film school when I saw STAR WARS. Exactly the same year I went to film school, in November 1977, it came out, and it divided the whole film school. Because they thought it was a piece of shit. One of the professors and I thought it was a masterpiece. We had big fights over it."

"I meet so many people who've been inspired by the movie, it's mind-boggling," Emmerich continued. "I know a lot of people who were six or seven years old when they saw it. I met this young actor who was this really troubled guy, in a way. He was pretty much holding on to Luke Skywalker as his guidance through his life. It's pretty amazing when you think about it!"

Devlin, on the other hand, has stronger memories of the childhood influence of the genre on him. "The films that affected me most growing up had been science fiction, so I'm probably subconsciously drawn to that kind of material," he said. "Science fiction gives us an opportunity to discuss issues out of the specific and into the theoretical. Often you'll find people who disagree about the

continued on page 62



#9: Tom Cruise (seen with Emmanuelle Beart) scored big with his first producing effort MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE. Next he has TIME JUMPERS in development.

effort, TWISTER, though savaged by critics, became the second biggest hit of 1996. As one of the most prolific writers in Hollywood, Crichton has firmly established himself as one of the town's most bankable talents.

6 JAN DEBONT

(Last year: not ranked)

This former cinematographer has become one of Tinsletown's biggest directors, based on only two movies: SPEED and TWISTER. Although his tenure on TriStar's GODZILLA ended over the film's projected \$100-million plus budget, DeBont, who recently helmed the less than eagerly awaited SPEED sequel with Sandra Bullock and Jason Patric, plans to stay in the sci-fi arena, with his upcoming feature about a space liner that has a close encounter of the most unwelcome kind.

7 JAMES CAMERON

(Last year's ranking: 3)

Sure, he may be one of the most talented auteurs dedicated to the genre since the heyday of Lucas and Spielberg, but his ability to demolish a budget is less than appreciated by the studios. While the success of T2 ultimately justified its \$100-million budget, his latest effort, TITANIC, drives home just how risky this rugged individualist can be (in fact, he'd be the perfect Ayn Rand protagonist.) With a budget rumored to exceed \$200 million (bankrolled by two studios), no big stars, and the lack of a high concept hook, TITANIC is a far riskier venture than the original voyage ever was.

As producer, Cameron's record has been spotty, most notably with Kathryn Bigelow's STRANGE DAYS tanking at the boxoffice. His highly touted financing deal for his company Lightstorm clearly could not keep up with his enormous financial appetites, forcing him to become reliant on studio dollars once again, although his in-house special effects arm, Digital Domain, has clearly established itself as an alternative to Lucas' ILM.

8 ROBERT ZEMECKIS

(Last year's ranking: 6)

Following an extended hiatus after the Oscar-winning FORREST GUMP, Zemeckis is back behind the Panavision lens with CONTACT, starring Jodie Foster and *star du jour* Matthew McConaughey in the late Carl Sagan's tale of extraterrestrial first contact. With an impressive track record in the genre—as director of the BACK TO THE FUTURE films, and as part of the trilogy of terror (with Walter Hill and Joel Silver) that produces the TALES FROM THE CRYPT television and movie series—Zemeckis is a staple of the horror and sci-fi scene whose Oscar-winning clout brings a legitimacy to the often ghettoized genres that is more than welcome. Unfortunately, his record was somewhat marred last year by exec producing two successive boxoffice duds: Peter Jackson's THE FRIGHTENERS and BORDELLO OF BLOOD, the second CRYPT flick.

9 TOM CRUISE

(Last year: not ranked)

You may not think of him as a

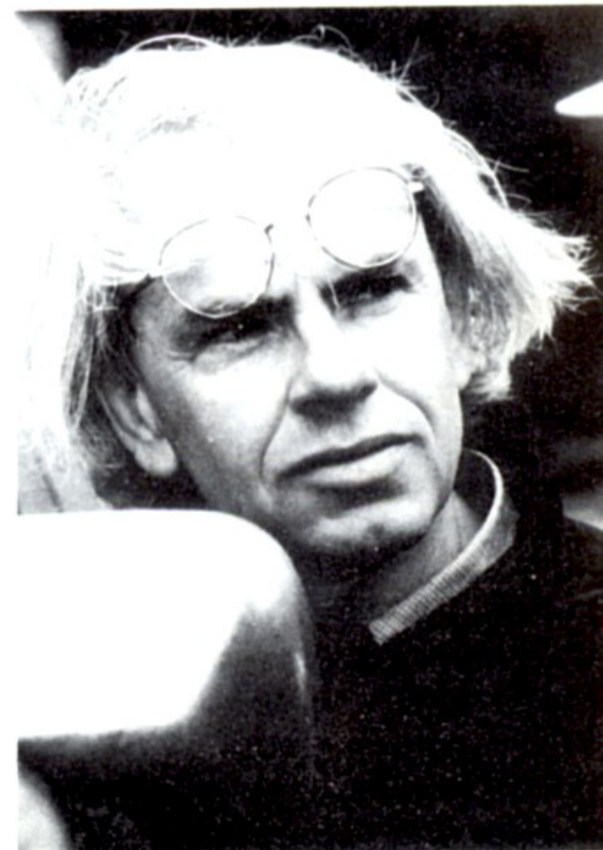
genre specialist, but as a star, Cruise helped INTERVIEW WITH THE VAMPIRE earn over \$100 million—one of the few horror films ever to do so. Then for his first-time effort as a producer, he scored the summer's third biggest blockbuster (after ID4 and TWISTER) with MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE. Although he earned his greatest critical success (including an Oscar nomination) with the non-genre JERRY MAGUIRE, he is interested in pursuing science-fiction projects, and his boxoffice success gives him the clout needed to see them to fruition: up next he has TIME JUMPERS in development at Paramount, a time-travel action-adventure story.

10 CHRIS CARTER

(Last year's ranking: 2)

While MILLENNIUM's lackluster ratings have put a dent in Carter's golden-boy reputation, the creative auteur has watched as X-FILES has risen to the top of the ratings' heap on Sunday nights (also scoring a highly coveted Golden Globe win for Best Dramatic Series), and he is currently shepherding an X-FILES feature to the screen for 1998, which he will most likely direct. At the recent Television Critics' Association conclave, Carter remarked that he was hoping to move onto features exclusively when his X-FILES commitment comes to an end next year. According to some, if the understandably narcissistic Carter (a triple threat as director, writer, and producer) can muster up a little more humility, there will be no stopping him.

#6: He lost GODZILLA, but Jan De Bont scored big with TWISTER, enough to leap into the top ten.



TOP 50

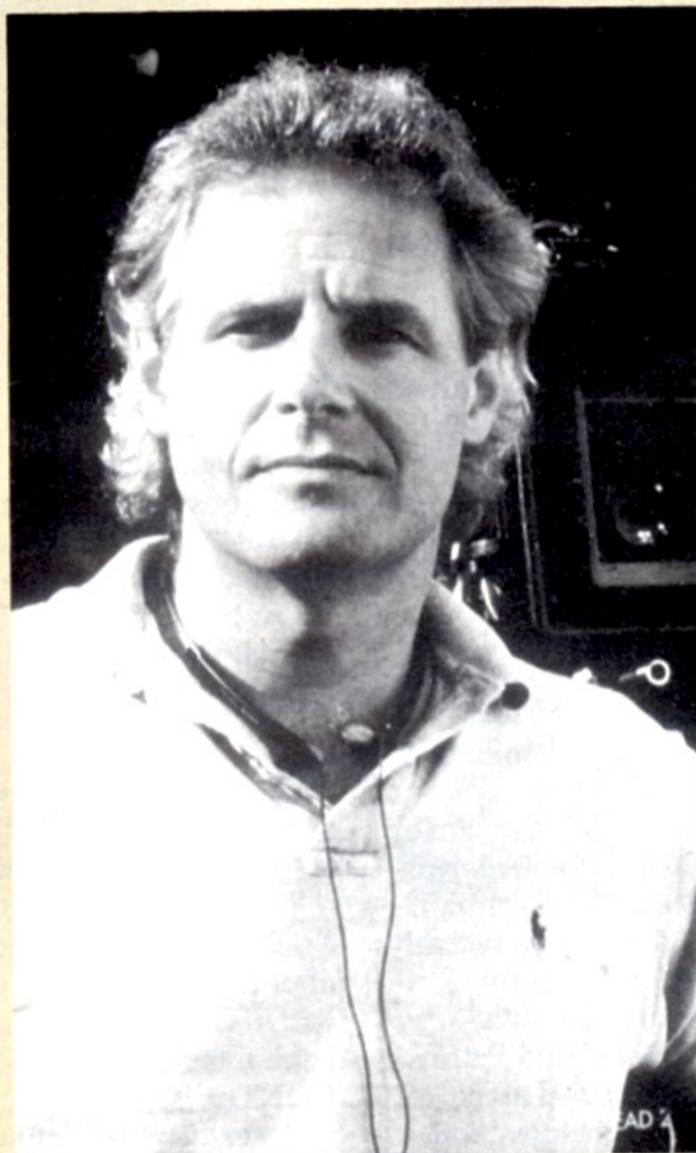
CHRIS CARTER

10

TV's Prince of Darkness prepares to expand his career to the big screen.

If anyone deserves the title as television's reigning Prince of Darkness, it certainly must be producer Chris Carter, creator of *MILLENNIUM* and the cult hit *THE X-FILES*, both on the Fox network. But before beginning his screenwriting career in 1985, when he signed a development contract with Disney, Carter was more into surf and sand than brooding darkness. "I worked as a freelance journalist and had a prolonged adolescence working for a surfing magazine, making no money and having the time of my life," he said with a grin and no regrets.

Beginning in 1993, *THE X-FILES* became an instant success, developing a huge cult following on Friday nights. It moved to Sunday this season, with *MILLENNIUM* taking over the Friday slot. Carter claims that what you get from his input into these shows is that he is well aware of what scares us. As most viewers can attest, this is undoubtedly true. But critics and even some fans think Carter might have gone too far with his new show. "The world," he pointed out, "is a very scary place, and it's becoming more and more frightening. The darkness [in his shows] is a response to the world we live in, and it's a response to the times. And shooting the shows in a dark way is more dramatic." A dark content, Carter insists, "is important for creating really good heroes. You



Producer-writer Chris Carter (above) plans to bring his show *THE X-FILES* (below) to the big screen.

can't really write for heroes well or realize them well unless you put them against a very dark background. *MILLENNIUM* is about heroism—or even the lack of it. A hero has an appropriate response to the world we live in, and I try to push the levels of intensity that I'm trying to put forward. That's the kind of story-telling I want to do."

Carter went on to define what a classic *X-FILES* episode is: "It's about truth, personal belief systems and Mulder and Scully counter views. *MILLENNIUM* has a similar story-telling technique and rhythm to it. It is about crime in our society—evil in society and the unraveling of the social safety net. I think the show's about hope, an exploration of good and evil. I will not change the show, but I might add some humor. I've resisted domesticating the show as I did with *The X-FILES*. I'm going to have to domesticate it a little bit, bring it into the home more."

By "bring it into the home," he means putting more peril into the house. "I want to take the concept of the show and have it seep

into the household. The daughter might have some of the 'gift' as well," said Carter of the gift that plagues Frank Black (Lance Henriksen)—the ability to enter the minds of killers, giving him vivid flashes of insight into their motivations.

In response to the assertion that Black is rather humorless, Carter bristles a bit. "The humor in *MILLENNIUM* is sardonic gallows humor by the men who work on the cases, to get them through their job. Black suffers all of the pain we are in denial about. He is not humorless. You see him love his family and smile. It's important, though, that he not crack wise; he doesn't need to entertain. He's a hero who appeals to me."

Overall, Carter is pleased with the direction of *MILLENNIUM*. "The feedback to *MILLENNIUM* is positive; we have a hardcore audience that is different than that of *THE X-FILES*. It doesn't have the sexual tension that *THE X-FILES* does, which ebbs and flows—it's the best kind of tension, with very little hot sizzly quality." Part of *MILLENNIUM*'s focus could be expanded to see more of Gallagher, the actress who plays Catherine Black, a social worker. "I'd like to investigate her role more and see her more as a mother," said Carter.

Regarding this season's switch of *THE X-FILES* to Sunday night, Carter expressed regret. "I still love the idea of *THE X-FILES* on Friday night. People had parties around the show, but they can't do that on a Sunday [because of work the next day]. I lament that. I still think of it as cult show."

As for future projects, Carter said he keeps a list—not on paper, but in his head—of many possibilities that are varied and distinct from his current genre. Besides the long anticipated *X-FILES* movie, some of those plans include one day writing a novel—a mystery to be exact, but not with recurring characters. It would be more of a one-shot deal, as opposed to his television series creations which will likely go on without him.

While reporters vie for interviews with the creator of a legitimate cult phenomenon, one wonders why in his role as producer—which is usually out of the public eye while actors garner all the press—he has achieved almost as much fame as his actors. (Remember the *Rolling Stone* cover with Carter, Gillian Anderson and Duchovny lolling about in bed?) "I don't seek it; I have no publicist," he stated. "But I'm a tireless campaigner for the shows. The celebrity is an unexplained phenomenon."

Debra Warlick and Frank Barron

