

LOGBOOK

The Sci-Fi Media Journal from Fort Smith

SERIES RENEWAL & CANCELLATION UPDATE

It's our first sign of age - a series renewal update/new series report was the first (and only) article in LogBook's first issue last August.

Fox has officially cancelled *VR.5*, but this fall, keep an eye out for their new series *Space*, created by the team of Glen Morgan and James Wong who previously served as co-executive producers of *The X-Files*; the show follows the adventures of three young cadets who must grow up on the front line when humanity stumbles into a bloody war upon its first contact with alien life in the distant future. Morgan Weisser, Rodney Rowland and Kristin Cloke have been cast as the series leads; David Nutter, also an *X-Files* veteran, directs the opening installment.

USA Network has canned William Shatner's *TekWar* series, though it may be revived by a Canadian production outfit. Speaking of Shatner, he has apparently for the first time given his blessing to one of the new *Trek* series: according to Gary L. Warren, who attended a Creation convention, Shatner has said that he feels *Voyager* is "much more in line with the exploratory premise of the original series." Maybe he just feels he's found a kindred spirit in the rough-and-ready Janeway. Shatner also claimed to be approaching *Trek* producer Rick Berman with his recent novel *The Ashes of Eden* as the basis of a possible movie script that would revive Kirk from his "demise" in *Star Trek: Generations*. (Really, when LogBook did the April Fools' joke a few months back about Paramount reviving Kirk in the next film, we didn't mean it!)

In other *Trek*-related news, despite the fact that 22 episodes of *Voyager* have been filmed, UPN is delaying the broadcast of the last six of these until this fall - shades of the similar recent strategy displayed by Warner Bros. with *Babylon 5!* *Deep Space Nine* will enter daily strip syndication this fall; check your local listings, as they say.

Also, a scheduling problem with post-production and special effects resulted in an odd schedule snafu for *Babylon 5*. According to J. Michael Straczynski, the episode *Knives* was originally slated to be shown before *In the Shadow of Z'ha'Dum*, to plant the idea of the explosion of the *Icarus* and the death of Captain Sheridan's wife in the audience's mind for a payoff the following week in *In the Shadow*. Animation and effects work for *Knives* resulted in a delay, thus the swap. Also, Straczynski allegedly leaked out the opening monologue for the third season on Delphi: "The Babylon Project was our last, best hope for peace. It failed. But, in the year of the Shadow War, it became something greater - our last, best hope for victory. The year is 2260. The name of the place is Babylon 5." Straczynski also hints that Sinclair (Michael O'Hare) may return again in a third season two-parter.

In addition to reviving *Doctor Who*, Fox has also made plans for movie of the week resurrections of *The Invaders* and *The Munsters*.

UPN has apparently given a little thought to picking up Amblin's fan-favorite *Earth 2* series, recently cancelled on NBC. This is not a certainty; rather, just a possibility. Some sources already dismiss the idea of UPN resurrecting the show, but since the entire UPN slate of series - including Michael Piller's *Legend* - was recently cancelled with the sole exception of *Voyager*, there's no doubt that they will keep sci-fi in mind when putting together their new lineup. However, there is no truth to any rumors about UPN glutting their schedule with more *Trek*. (Again, that article a few months ago was an April Fools' joke! Please keep this in mind...Rick Berman!)

Sliders may or may not be on the chopping block. The episodes

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have already been shown once will be repeated over the summer in the same cursed 7pm eastern/6 central time slot that has sent untold numbers of new Fox projects plummeting to their doom. The big question, of course, is renewal. Despite a premature obituary for the show printed by the *Los Angeles Times*, *Sliders* is still considered viable, though the season-ending cliffhanger - Quinn (Jerry O'Connell) getting shot in the back during a narrow escape from an alternate dimension - may allow easy disposal of the character if O'Connell's reported demands for more money and character development are not accepted by the producers. *TV Guide* has quoted co-star John Rhys-Davie as saying that he too will leave the show if its speculative content is not increased. Though losing those two characters would likely destroy the speculative backbone of the series and leave its stories wandering aimlessly, the show has nonetheless become one of the network's hottest new shows of the past season; the *L.A. Times'* early cancellation announcement for *Sliders* caused a howl of protest across the country.

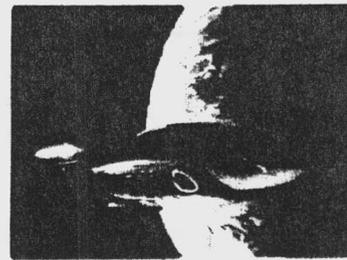
Don't let the episode title of the season finale (**Finale**) fool you; *Highlander* has been given the green light for a fourth season. (If you missed it, the finale in question was actually curtains for the mega-nasty immortal ex-opera-singer Kalas, whose vocal chords were slashed by MacLeod in an earlier encounter. Fortunately, he didn't follow Kurgan's fashion tips and close the wound with - *gulp!* - safety pins.)

Among new genre projects expected to appear later this year are UPN's *Deadly Games*, a tale of video games gone wild created by Leonard Nimoy, and the tentatively-titled *Space Academy*, also on UPN, a co-production with a German production house which will feature lots of computer-generated visuals (and one of its producers is Jim Johnston, apparently defecting from a similar post at *Babylon 5*).

RoboCop had already bitten the dust as of a few months ago, and the status of Gerry Anderson's campy but fun *Space Precinct* is also up in the air. *Hercules*, a surprising success which sprang from the "Action Pack" first-run syndicated movie package, is being joined by spin-off series *Xena, The Warrior Princess*.

More news will be relayed to you as it reaches us.

- E.G.



Partially validating the early action romp **Phage**, this episode served up more of its predecessor's unusual quality, bringing some real live horror to the *Trek* universe, though perhaps in a less shocking manner than **Phage**. Well, with the exception of one scene...!

The show, with the shortest opening teaser ever seen in a *Trek* episode, picks up on events already in progress, an unusual and refreshing perspective for the series. Tom, B'elanna and Durst - the non-descript bridge officer seen in the non-descript **Cathexis** - have been dropped off to survey a planetoid which turns out to be inhabited by the Videan Sodality. (Huh? These ugly guys were the **Vaphoran Sodality** in **Phage...oops!**) They've locked the two males up with other prisoners, and have used an unusual process to reconstitute B'elanna's Klingon DNA into an entirely separate individual, a fully Klingon woman; what's left is another B'elanna, entirely human (and if you'll pardon the admittedly unimportant aside, infinitely more attractive than she is with even the "half-Klingon" makeup) and unable to defend herself.

Is it **The Enemy Within redux** from the original *Star Trek*? Why, sure it is! Anymore, though, much of *Trek* is derivative of either earlier *Trek* adventures or - if we're lucky - some of the better entries in the library of western literature, so originality begins to pale in importance to execution - even under *Trek's* alien suns, there's precious little that can be considered something new. In fact, at the risk of riling classic *Trek* loyalists, it could be argued that the premise for splitting B'elanna made more sense (though not by much) than the rationale for splitting Kirk into aggressive and passive halves in that early episode.

Oh yeah - kudos to makeup maven Michael Westmore for the gruesomely disgusting "grafted face" of Durst on the alien surgeon. Yeech! - E.G.

JETREL ★★★½

As **Heroes and Demons** dispensed with the notion that the holo-Doc was only good for humorous interludes, this episode does away with the easily-arrived-at conclusion that Neelix is only good for Quark-esque moments of comic relief. This is a good thing. I have been worried for a long time, especially with the furry little guy making virtual cameo appearances for laughs, that Neelix would become the Quark of *Voyager*. Quark was a favorite for many, including me, in *DS9's* first season, but then he started butting into the picture for no terribly good reason and got irritating; Ferengi episodes in which the word "profit" is bleated 80 times in one story now rate right up there at the bottom of the barrel with all those blasted Klingon episodes with their multiple utterances of "honor" as my least favorites. Neelix started butting in in a Quarkish manner within the first few episodes of *Voyager*, but here we learn that there's more to him than that - in fact, it's rather hard to reconcile the darkly troubled character revealed in this episode with the happy-go-lucky Neelix we all know and tolerate.

Speaking of common fixtures, James Sloyan is going for broke! He's appeared in *Next Generation's* **The Defector** as Romulan Admiral Jarok and in **Firstborn** as K'mtar (supposedly an elder Alexander), *DS9's* **The Alternate** as Bajoran Dr. Mora (Odo's discoverer), and now on *Voyager* as Haakonian scientist - or is he a murderer? - Jetrel. He's in the Mark Lenard category of multiple-species *Trek* performers already. I liked him much better here than in any of the previous roles; his face and voice are so easily recognized, I am surprised that he's shown up that often. His contribution to this story is beyond question, however.

The revelation of regrets, hatred and trauma in Neelix's past intrigues me. It adds a depth to his character that will help keep him palatable. While I wouldn't want to load the poor little guy down with a growing background of unimaginable horrors, further stories that peel back the cute 'n' cuddly exterior of Neelix would be welcome. Though the anti-war potential of Neelix and the story itself weren't explored to my taste, it was an adventurous move to make with a beloved regular character, one which I hope will continue to be reflected in future segments. - E.G.

LEARNING CURVE ★★★½

If nothing else, this episode demonstrates just how *wrong* the information leaked out on computer nets and at conventions can be. The original briefing given to fans on **Learning Curve** billed it as "a **Lower Decks**-type story" simply because it was written by **Decks** scribes Ronald Wilkerson and Jean Louise Matthias, but in fact it was quite different from that popular *Next Generation* episode (which, ironically, was likewise touted in the rumor mill as being a testing ground for potential *Voyager* cast members).

Tuvok again came to the fore, this time as more of a character than a simple means of solving problems and advancing the story, as was the case with **Ex Post Facto**. His personality was explored more this time around, from the usual logic to a remarkably familiar observation about sacrificing one for the good of many, nearly a precise quote of Spock's credo from *Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan*.

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13 FACES

teleplay by Kenneth Biller
story by Jonathan Glassner and Kenneth Biller
directed by Winrich Kolbe
music by David Bell

Stardate 48784.2: An away team left to explore a planetoid has been captured by the phage-ravaged Vedeans, who are seeking alien genes resistant to the disease for incorporation into the Vedeans' own genetic structure. In one experiment, Vedean surgeon Sulan splits B'elanna into two entirely separate beings, one Klingon, the other human. B'elanna's human side is timid and weak compared to her powerful warrior half, who escapes from Sulan's lab. A gamble by Chakotay pays off in rescuing the surviving crew members from the Vedeans, but B'elanna - despite her desire to be free of her hot-tempered Klingon half - will die unless she is reintegrated.

Guest Cast: Brian Markinson (Sulan/Durst), Rob LaBelle (Talaxian Prisoner), Barton Tinapp (Guard #1)

14 JETREL

teleplay by Jack Klein & Karen Klein and Kenneth Biller
story by Scott Nimerfro & Jim Thornton
directed by Kim Friedman
music by Dennis McCarthy

Stardate 48840.5: An alien ship contacts *Voyager* and asks for Neelix by name; when the party seeking Neelix turns out to be a Haakonian named Jetrel, Neelix reacts badly. Jetrel was a scientist who developed the metreon cascade, an immensely powerful weapon that destroyed 300,000 Talaxians - including Neelix's family - during a war with the Haakonians fifteen years ago. Jetrel announces that Neelix could be suffering from a terminal condition resulting from minimal exposure to the metreon cascade, and offers to try to study him to find a cure. But Neelix wants no part of easing Jetrel's conscience.

Guest Cast: James Sloyan (Jetrel), Larry Hankin (Gaunt Gary)

15 LEARNING CURVE

written by Ronald Wilkerson & Jean Louise Matthias
directed by David Livingston
music by Jay Chattaway

Stardate 48846.5: After a Maquis officer named Dalby breaks with procedure and replaces a faulty bioneural circuit without reporting the malfunction, Janeway assigns Tuvok - himself a former instructor at Starfleet Academy - to bring Dalby and a handful of other problematic Maquis up to speed on Starfleet protocol. This task proves more daunting than Tuvok could have imagined, since even the most worrisome Academy cadets at least wanted to be in Starfleet. Despite an order from Chakotay to learn the Starfleet ropes, Dalby and his fellow trainees are determined not to learn a thing - until their lives depend on it.

Guest Cast: Armand Schultz (Dalby), Derek McGrath (Chell), Kenny Morrison (Geron), Catherine MacNeal (Henley), Thomas Dekker (Henry), Lindsey Haun (Beatrice), Majel Barrett (Computer Voice)

Star Trek: Voyager Coming Attractions

The final four episodes of *Voyager's* first season have been pushed back until early this fall to "get a head start" on the traditional fall season for UPN.

Of course, before this decision was made by the UPN guys in suits, information had already leaked out about these four episodes at conventions. Here's what we know about them.

16 ELOGUIN

Rumor has it that this episode will address in detail Kes's life span and her ability to have children. The issue of whether or not she and Neelix will have any children will also be touched upon.

17 PROJECTIONS

The Doctor slips the holographic bonds of sick bay to reach out and touch Kes, among other things. Projection devices are set up so the holographic doctor can roam the ship at will, if only temporarily. Lt. Barclay (Dwight Schultz) makes a cameo appearance. Jonathan Frakes directed.

18 TWISTED

No details; written by Brannon Braga. Expect weirdness.

19 THE THIRTY-SEVENERS or THE 37ERS

Again, another mysterious story in which various objects from years ending in "37" appear to the crew, including a spaceborne '37 pickup (have they been watching *Spaceballs* or what?). George "Sulu" Takei appears, though probably not as Sulu...

172 FIRSTBORN

teleplay by Rene Echeverria
 story by Mark Kalbfeld
 directed by Jonathan West
 music by Dennis McCarthy

Stardate 47779.4: As Alexander nears the age where he must decide whether or not to become a warrior, Worf grows worried that the boy will choose to shed all vestiges of Klingon heritage. Visiting a Klingon outpost during a festival, Worf and Alexander are cornered by a gang of street thugs. As Worf manages to fight most of them off, the fight is ended by a Klingon who calls himself K'mtar, a bodyguard appointed by Worf's brother Kurn. K'mtar reveals that the attack was not random, but an assassination attempt planned by Lursa and B'otor, who are still scheming to someday overthrow the Empire. With the help of K'mtar, and some gossip courtesy of Quark, the *Enterprise* is off to track down the Duras sisters when it becomes evident that someone is trying to tamper with future affairs.
 Guest Cast: James Sloyan (K'mtar), Brian Bonsall (Alexander), Barbara March (Lursa), Gwynneth Walsh (B'otor), Armin Shimerman (Quark), Joel Swelov (Yog), Colin Mitchell (Goria), Michael Daneek (Singer), John Kenton Shull (Molor), Rickey D'Shon Collins (Eric)

173 BLOODLINES

written by Nicholas Sagan
 directed by Les Landau
 music by Dennis McCarthy

Stardate 47829.1: Picard receives a threat from his old Ferengi adversary Daimon Bok, who still blames Picard for the death of his son in the first encounter between the Federation and the Ferengi. Bok announces his intent to kill Jason Vigo to avenge his loss, and the threat disturbs Picard. After tracking Jason down, Picard is stunned when genetic tests confirm that Jason is the son of Picard and a woman from his past. Jason turns out to be a rebellious young man with a record of misdemeanors involving theft and trespassing and a passion for rock climbing. Bok continues to mysteriously get through the *Enterprise's* defenses to threaten Jason's life, until he finally kidnaps Jason and has his opportunity for vengeance.

Guest Cast: Lee Arenberg (Daimon Bok), Ken Olandt (Jason), Peter Slutsker (Daimon Birta), Amy Pietz (Lt. Rhodes), Michélan Sisti (Tol)

174 EMERGENCE

teleplay by Joe Menosky
 story by Brannon Braga
 directed by Cliff Bole
 music by Jay Chattaway

Stardate 47869.2: While rehearsing a scene from *The Tempest* in the holodeck, Data and Picard are amazed when they are nearly run over by the Orient Express, the famed 19th century locomotive whose itinerary never once included Prospero's island. Investigation of this quirk is postponed by the *Enterprise's* sudden jump to warp speed, and a fortuitous exit from warp just in time to avoid the ship's destruction. When the crew concentrates the search to this problem, a strange modification of the ship's circuitry is discovered, one which seems to be tying many disparate systems together. When the ship's systems take measures to protect the growing anomaly, the truth becomes clear - this is no accident, but a new intelligence all its own taking form within the *Enterprise's* hull.

Guest Cast: David Huddleston (The Conductor), Vinny Argiro (The Gunman), Thomas Kopache (The Engineer), Artee Reed (Bumpkin)

175 PREEMPTIVE STRIKE

teleplay by Rene Echeverria
 story by Naren Shankar
 directed by Patrick Stewart
 music by Jay Chattaway

Stardate 47941.2: A reception for recent Starfleet Advanced Tactical Training graduate Ro Laren is cut short when the *Enterprise* responds to a Cardassian ship's distress call. Arriving on the scene, Picard and the crew discover that the Cardassians are under attack by a flotilla of small vessels commanded by the renegade Maquis. After chasing them off and assisting the Cardassians, the *Enterprise* receives a visit from Admiral Nechayev, who delivers to Picard the message that Starfleet intends to use Ro to infiltrate the Maquis, and she accepts the mission, posing as an ex-Starfleet defector and gaining the acceptance of the Maquis. However, when Ro and her "fellow" Maquis are the targets of a vicious Cardassian sneak attack, she questions Starfleet's rationale for stopping the Maquis and makes her defection a reality.
 Guest Cast: Michelle Forbes (Lt. Ro Laren), John Franklyn-Robbins (Macias), Natalija Nogulich (Admiral Nechayev), William Thomas Jr. (Santos), Shannon Cochran (Kalita), Richard Poe (Gul Evrek)



NEXT GENERATION

by Robert Heyman

Bad ☆ Okay ☆☆ Good ☆☆☆ Excellent ☆☆☆☆



FIRST BORN ☆☆☆

In Worf's ongoing attempts to win the heart of his son Alexander and lead him on the path of a warrior, the two vacation on a sort of Klingon theme park where Worf encounters K'mtar (James Sloyan - see *Jetrel* review on opposite page), claiming to be a protector serving the house of Mogh. It's later revealed that K'mtar is in fact Alexander from the future, who has journeyed back in time to convince his younger self to become a warrior.

As always, Sloyan gives a great performance in whatever guise as do Michael Dorn and Brian Bonsall in the first truly palatable Worf/Alexander storyline since *Reunion*. The nuances of Klingon culture are made intriguing and fresh once again and we almost forget that the Klingons have become the most over-analyzed species in the whole of *Star Trek*. The episode's major kicker - that K'mtar is the future Alexander - is insipid, however. It's touching to learn that Alexander could not save his father from a deadly fate and now wishes to prepare "himself" for that coming moment, but the whole thing is inexplicably corny, perhaps because that attempt is made so easily: just go back in time and change yourself. *Sure*, whatever you say, boss!

The Duras sisters make a welcome return in a mildly engaging subplot. The ending, in which Worf allows Alexander to choose his own future, provides touching closure to their ongoing relationship in the series.

BLOODLINES ☆☆☆^{1/2}

What could be more interesting than learning that Picard has an illegitimate son a la Kirk in *Star Trek II*? That's this episode's major sales pitch. Complicating the picture, though, is an unwelcome return by Daimon Bok (*Force of Nature's* Lee Arenberg replacing Frank Corsentino from *The Battle*) who is still seeking revenge for the death of his son at the hands of Picard in the Battle of Maxia. When Bok threatens to kill Picard's son, Picard locates the boy and beams him to safety aboard the *Enterprise*, giving the two a chance to bond.

The premise is still a good one - even though Kirk had the same problem in *Trek II* - with rich dramatic potential for Stewart and his so-called son. The problem, aside from the obvious fact that *this* Bok looks nothing like he did in *The Battle*, is that Picard's dilemma at confronting unforeseen family members is not all that compelling anymore since *Inner Light*, where the same theme was explored more effectively. Nevertheless, Stewart and Ken Olandt give solid performance in some genuinely touching scenes. The ending, where it's learned that Jason is a genetic creation of the Ferengi to fool Picard into believing he has a son, is weak and predictable.

EMERGENCE ☆

You know the end of a season is approaching fast when you get a story about the *Enterprise* developing its own intelligence, which in turn leads it to give birth to an oversized Krazy Straw that floats away into space. Hence, *Emergence* - Joe Menosky's final contribution to *Star Trek: The Next Generation*.

This is another in a long line of high-concept premises with good intentions that flops at the get-go. The problem here is there's nothing to distinguish this episode other than some positively weird holodeck scenes in which the ship mixes various programs to somehow communicate symbolically its ultimate intention to develop a lifeform. Why is any of this happening in the first place? Who knows. Who cares? This episode does have some surprisingly expansive special effects work and nice location photography by veteran director Cliff Bole. There is something curiously intriguing about using the holodeck as the ship's center of imagination and in that sense the episode is interesting. The ending, however, when the mysterious entity growing in the cargo bay floats away never to be seen again, is routine and terribly anticlimactic. Even the reliable Data-performing-a-Shakespearean-play-for-Picard teaser is getting tiring at this point as a way to open an episode. Good acting, bad episode.

PREEMPTIVE STRIKE ☆☆☆

Ro returns to the *Enterprise* where she is assigned to infiltrate the Maquis and expose their terroristic operations to the Federation, forcing her to question her loyalty to the Bajorans, and to Captain Picard and the Federation.

The penultimate episode of the series comes across as a fairly routine terrorist story but is in fact a surprisingly touching character piece and the perfect vehicle for Michelle Forbes, who makes her first and ultimately final appearance in the universe of *Star Trek* since the early sixth season. The episode could have benefitted from more impressive special effects and better directing by Patrick Stewart; however, the phaser fights on the planet's surface are executed with finesse.

The rapport between Ro and Macius is entirely credible but screams for further development to solidify the father/daughter dynamic that is the emotional core of this episode. The end, where Macius is shot down by an undercover Cardassian, is predictable, as is Ro's subsequent decision to join the Maquis, but it nicely illustrates the tragic nature of Ro's life. The episode's final seconds, when the camera captures the look of betrayal on Picard's face, is provocative. Overall, this is an emotionally rich installment that sets the tone for what will be a deeply personal story in the next and final episode.

Next Month - the voyages of the *Enterprise* - and this column - end with **All Good Things...**

TO THE NINES

Another winning season finale for *DS9* - and some good reasons why the show's premise doesn't necessarily need alterations

THE ADVERSARY ★★★

Well, you have to hand it to the *Trek* writers for tenacity - if they mess up trying to get a certain premise to work, they try it again and again and *again* until they get it right. (This explains the preponderance of "crew member(s) possessed by alien(s)" stories, a dismal tradition stretching from *Next Generation's* goofy **Lonely Among Us** to *Voyager's* pointless **Cathexis** and beyond...) **The Adversary's** roots go back to **The Thing** and numerous other works that predated and in some cases inspired that horror classic, and the paranoia-of-an-imposter premise has been dabbled with before, whether it be the original *Trek's* instant classic **The Man Trap**, *Next Generation's* atypically notorious (but "bloody wonderful") first-season **Conspiracy**, or its sixth-year descendant, **Aqui!** For the most part, the general premise has served *Trek* well, and this outing is no exception as Odo's people, the changelings who founded the Dominion, reveal that they have infiltrated more of our heroes' home territory than we might have previously guessed.

This episode distinguishes itself in other ways as well. Possibly the best-earned character promotion in *Trek* history, Benjamin Sisko is finally made a full captain. And like O'Brien says, it's about time! This man may have taken more decisive steps in *DS9's* three years on the air than either of his *Trek* forebears in command. Sisko has stood his ground, *stayed in one place and defended a world against all odds for three years*. You bet it's about time he made captain.

That, however, is a minor part of the story; aside from a big deal being made about Sisko's first captain's log entry, this is all we hear of the promotion. Wisely, the show focuses on a delicate political problem which turns out to have been engineered by the Founders.

The show is easily stolen by Rene Auberjonois, who breaks the prime changeling rule. No, not the one about feeding them after midnight or having swordfights on holy ground, but the one that states that changelings never harm each other. This should get interesting the next time Odo encounters the Founders. Where he has been able to slip through harm's fingers in the past thanks to this rule, he might not be able to escape that way next time. The changeling's "death" - solidifying and crumbling into dust - is heightened by Odo's realization that not only has he taken a life, but he's killed one of his own.

The intruder's brief appearances are truly spooky. The first evidence of a changeling results in a mindbending morph which looks absolutely real thanks to the cast and extras who convincingly flew backwards when the changeling expands and "knocks" them over (how Nana Visitor or her stunt stand-in didn't put her back out flinging herself onto that console remains a total mystery!). Speaking of stuntpersons, Robert Heyman points out that whenever you spot easily-recognizable *Trek* stuntmaster Dennis Madalone in any scene, you know he's going to get splattered! How true!

Speaking of the *Defiant*, I think the answer's obvious as to where the changeling was hiding: the changeling was, in fact, the *Defiant* itself! How else does one explain that little ship - supposedly less than ten decks deep and not very long - suddenly having miles of "Jeffries tubes" for the crew to crawl around and feel claustrophobic in? Despite that, I love the new "baby engine room" for the *Defiant*. It's quite possibly the neatest shipboard set since *Generations'* stadium-sized stellar cartography 3-D map room, and shows that maybe the set designers should've freed themselves of the engine room framework from *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* a long time ago to come up with something this nifty.

All in all, there were numerous interesting innovations for *Deep Space Nine* in this hour, and I can only hope that the changes to the show's premise which are promised for next year won't steer the show away from the intelligent and complex suspense stories that have made *DS9* the best *Trek* in the stars.

- E.G.

DORN DECLINES ON *DS9*

Michael Dorn has reportedly turned down approaches by Paramount to join the regular cast of *DS9* in the show's upcoming fourth season. Though no official reasons have been given, it is widely speculated that they simply couldn't pay him enough to do Worf's makeup on a regular basis again, and that he would rather stick to feature films and cameo appearances where his *Trek* character is concerned.

NEW *DOCTOR WHO* STILL ON TRACK

The Universal Studios revival of *Doctor Who*, being produced as a two-hour movie to debut this fall on Fox, is still well underway. The movie has been given a budget of \$5.5 million (much more than the usual American TV movie budget, which is usually two to three million dollars. Additionally, aside from its US premiere, the *Doctor Who* TV movie will be distributed outside of North America by the BBC, which is co-producing the film. Fox and the BBC have now both approved the storyline for the show's return. Award-winning British screenwriter Matthew Jacobs, whose previous projects have included episodes of *Lassie* and *Young Indiana Jones*, is handling the scriptwriting duties. Also hailing from the UK are the new *Who's* executive producers, Philip Segal (a former ABC executive who has been involved with *Twin Peaks*, *Young Indiana Jones* and *The Young Riders*) and Peter Wagg.

According to the "official fan liaison," *Doctor Who* Programme Guide author Jean-Marc Lofficier, "Clearly, this made-for-TV feature would really be what is called a 'backdoor pilot,' meaning that, if ratings are good, it might ultimately still lead to a regular series."

Pre-production is still at an early stage, so it will be some time before any announcement of a new *Doctor*.



Next Issue: It's our all-*Trek* summer special, featuring reviews of **All Good Things** and **Star Trek: Generations**, as well as a complete episode guide to the third season of *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* and the latest news on the upcoming seasons of *DS9* and *Voyager*, and the next *Trek* movie. And in September, our all-*B5* issue will chronicle *Babylon 5* from the pilot movie through the most recent episodes with a complete episode guide. And in October, we'll review some of the summer's niftiest movies. Don't touch that dial!

OBITUARY: ROGER ZELAZNY

Author Roger Zelazny, whose works included the popular *Castle Amber* series and *Lord of Light*, died on June 13 of cancer-related kidney failure.

UPCOMING SOUNDTRACK RELEASES

According to GNP Crescendo producer Ford A. Thaxton, we can expect more *Star Trek* soundtracks before 1995 is out, with a promise of more *Trek* music in the 30th anniversary year. First up in late summer will be a "pop" version of the *Voyager* theme combining the original recording with new Mike-Post-esque elements from Joel Goldsmith (son of *Voyager* theme composer Jerry). Later in the fall, a fourth *Next Generation* CD will be on the shelves.

As for 1996? Thaxton hints that there will be a number of releases, not the least of which, of course, would probably be the CD from the second *Next Generation* movie, for which Dennis McCarthy is again expected to head for the big screen (watch for more details on the movie next month).

HIGHLANDER GOES THE WAY OF QUANTUM LEAP

...No, *Highlander* isn't being cancelled, but the first three seasons are going to begin appearing on the USA cable network in September. The show will air in the prime-time slot alongside another syndicated series which is still thriving, *Renegade*.

GOZILLA

As a Natural Force

inside THEM

5

by Robert Parson

This month, we're not so much inside *them* as inside *it*, taking a light-hearted look at the most popular killer reptile ever to walk the big or little screens, long before *Jurassic Park* terrified us (and before Barney absolutely disgusted us). But if your property ever gets leveled by Godzilla, will you be able to file an insurance claim on it? Our own Godzillaphile investigates the disturbing truth...

The longest running series of movies is without a doubt *Godzilla*. The movies date back to the mid 50s, are churned out on a regular basis, and a big budget U.S. stomp-a-thon is being planned. Even though they can't compete on the quality scale of Kurosawa's *Ran*, there is still an elemental, raw power to the King of the Monsters and his pantheon.

It's difficult to escape the apocalyptic vision of Godzilla's initial rampage on Tokyo. The image of a nuclear blasted city was no accident since the original movie was based on the nuclear fears of post-World War II Japan.

Even though the *Godzilla* movies degenerated into silly kiddie fodder, not much better than *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*, they managed to retain a mythic energy. There's much more to Godzilla than a guy in a rubber suit.

Earth, wind, fire, water, and Godzilla. He is the fifth Elemental, a force of nature.

Let's examine the evidence:

He's big. **REALLY BIG.** That alone should qualify him for some sort of standing.

Returning to the first movie, though, Godzilla was resurrected from his eons-long slumber by man's use of nuclear weapons. Although he is radioactive himself, Godzilla seems largely unharmed by the hard radiation that awakened him. This indicates his body is capable of absorbing much of the damaging and long term effects of radiation exposure. Whether he would be able to shake off these effects over the long term as Mother Earth remains to be seen.

Using weather patterns as an example, Godzilla can appear and disappear as quickly as a summer shower. In most of his movies, his grand entrance is without warning and no one had a clue he was in the area until he blasts through a community as a tornado, leaving a similar path of destruction.

He's been discovered in water, in caves, and buried in sand. Godzilla is comfortable in any environment.

If Godzilla can be compared to a tornado, then his fights with Ghidrah, The Smog Monster, Mothra and others would be thunderstorms, hailstorms and sleet. In fact, once he makes his appearance, many of his movements can be tracked in the same fashion as a severe thunderstorm warning. Mike Burgess flashing Godzilla Warnings in a little box in the corner of the TV screen is a real possibility.

But possibly the most revealing indication of Godzilla's status as an Elemental is in the public's reaction. Over the years, he has gone from an awe-inspiring destructive force to a worrisome part of the landscape.

This latter attitude is even more apparent in *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster*, *Godzilla vs. Biollante*, and *The Son of Godzilla*.

In *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster*, he is awakened by someone jamming a lightning rod in his body (I'd be pretty upset too if someone tried this on me). He rampages through a secret military installation, the bad guys escape, but the Sea Monster destroys them. However, the good guys are more concerned about an impending nuclear explosion on the island rather than Big G or The Sea Monster. On several occasions they even *run past Godzilla* as they carry out their plot against the bad guys.

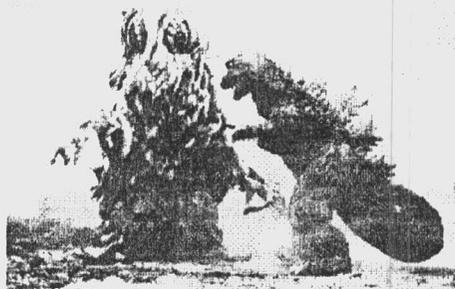
When Godzilla fights Biollante, people rush to the shores to watch every battle. They also cheer him on as he takes on a giant flower which has some of his own genetic material grafted into it.

The comparison which is most obvious, though, is in *The Son of Godzilla*. In this movie, scientists are crafting a weather machine on

Monster Island. Why they chose this particular place for their experiments is a real mystery. It must have had to do with some strange, twisted United Nations policy. Anyway, their efforts are stymied, only in part, by Godzilla's constant fighting with the many creatures on Monster Island. But they don't stop their work. They only pause for a short time.

Are these the kind of people that seem afraid of the King of the Monsters? Is this what happens when giant creatures roam the Earth as though they were high pressure systems?

In *Godzilla*, Inoshira Honda created not just an icon but a new entry on the Periodic Table of Elements.



PHOTOGRAPHIC EVIDENCE

A Godzilla Filmography

The first in each pair of films is the American name and the year of its release. The second in the pair is the approximate English spelling of the Japanese version along with its year of release.

- Godzilla, King of the Monsters* (1956) / *Gojira* (1954)
- Godzilla Raids Again* (1959) / *Gojira no Gyakushu* (1955)
- King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1963) / *King Kong tai Gojira* (1962)
- Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1964) / *Mosura tai Gojira* (1964)
- Ghidrah, the Three-Headed Monster* (1965)
/ *Chikyu Saidai No Kessan* (1964)
- Godzilla vs. Monster Zero* (1970) / *Kaiju Daisenso* (1965)
- Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster* (1967) / *Nankai no Daiketto* (1966)
- Son of Godzilla* (1968) / *Gojira no Musuko* (1967)
- Destroy All Monsters* (1969) / *Kaiju Soshingeki* (1968)
- Godzilla's Revenge* (1970) / *Oru Kaiju Daishingeki* (1969)
- Godzilla vs. The Smog Monster* (1972, pictured above)
/ *Gojira tai Hedorah* (1971)
- Godzilla vs. Gigan* (1978) / *Gojira tai Gaigan* (1972)
- Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1974) / *Gojira Tai Megaro* (1973)
- Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla* (1975) / *Gojira tai Megagojira* (1974)
- Terror of Mechagodzilla* (1977) / *Megagojira no Gyakushu* (1975)
- Godzilla 1985* (1985) / *Gojira* (1984)
- Godzilla vs. Biollante* (1990) / *Gojira tai Biorante* (1989)

6 And The Prize Goes To...

In the end, there can be only three movies and three seasons of a syndicated television series...and a cartoon?? Here's a look at the *Highlander* saga, a concept that's just dying - over and over again, when necessary - to be a franchise, in spite of its unusual continuity which is dissected, debated and in some places altogether *ignored* by fans to this day.

by Earl Green

It all started in 1986, when a rather avant-garde high fantasy flick lensed by a former music video director arrived on the scene with little promotion - though what promotion there was often mentioned Sean Connery's involvement - and a soundtrack full of songs by Queen.

Let's face it, Connery and Freddie Mercury are probably responsible for the initial success of the budding *Highlander* franchise. No, they didn't write or produce or envision the original film, but those two names alone very likely drew the bulk of the attention that made *Highlander* a hit.

The story followed the adventures of Connor MacLeod (Christopher Lambert), an immortal who has been around since the 18th century and is basically a decent guy who just wishes to leave the trappings of his unusual life behind and live among mortals. Those trappings, you ask? They consist of doing battle with other immortals, taking their heads and, in so doing, reaping their knowledge, power and experience in a fiery phenomenon known as the Quickening. Aside from that bit, Connor's basically a decent guy. His only problems in the first movie were a pesky police investigator to whom he felt an inexorable attraction, and the nastiest of evil immortals, the Kurgan (Clancy Brown), who means to be the last immortal on the face of the Earth. The prize for being the last immortal is...well, simply, *The Prize*. More on *The Prize* in just a little bit. MacLeod's tutor, mentor and friend in the first film was Ramirez (Sean Connery, someone who is so unflappably cool as a spy, cop, or immortal that we probably all wish he was our tutor, mentor and friend). Despite the pivotal role Connery played in *Highlander*, he was not the star, nor was he the central character. Like a flamboyant Obi-Wan Kenobi with an eye for the ladies, Ramirez appeared out of nowhere to teach Connor the rules of the immortals' game and to give him lessons in the art of swordsmanship, personal combat and basically a full 18th century personal training and bodybuilding program. Ramirez was then bested and beheaded by the Kurgan, who naturally becomes Connor's (im)mortal enemy. (Don't worry, you're not the only one who sees *Star Wars* parallels written all over the basic plot.) In the end, there can be only one, of which Connor politely reminds the Kurgan whilst removing his head. Thus, Connor wins *The Prize* (please stand by...) and the movie ends. (An amusing footnote - the chief police investigator is played by Alan North, apparently promoted to that position after Leslie Nielsen got promoted to the movies in *Police Squad!*)

Now...let's open this Prize and see what it is. For crying out loud, what is that thing? Pink with green spots? Yes, I am convinced that *The Prize* is in fact a necktie that will protect its wearer from beheading. No, not really, but that would almost be a more definite answer than we've gotten so far. The Prize ranges from an almost godlike total knowledge (*Highlander*) to true mortality and the ability to age and die again (*Highlander III: The Final Dimension*) to the ability to return to - get this - the immortals' "home planet" (the dismal and frequently ignored *Highlander II: The Quickening*!) The "immortals from another planet" concept is usually buried hurriedly and quietly in any discussion of the *Highlander* continuity, along with *Highlander 2*, which came across as a poor man's *Blade Runner* pastiche set in the 21st century with Connor and an inexplicably revived Ramirez (they probably did explain it, but the movie put me to sleep before I heard that explanation). I do like the necktie idea, come to think of it, though *Highlander III's* concept of simple mortality makes an almost poetic and tragic kind of sense within the context of the immortals. It's a coin toss.

The first movie sets the tone for all that follows, though it's not the best *Highlander* there is. The stylish directing of *Highlander* makes the movie what it is. From the magical transition from Connor's aquarium to a flashback on the surface of a lake in which Ramirez "drowns" him to prove his immortality, to an earlier scene in which a similar flashback segues back to the "current" plot by means of the camera zooming out of an incredibly close view of the pupil of one of MacLeod's eyes, the film is well-served by the somewhat sensational viewpoint of an MTV veteran. Conversely, there are also excesses in the movie, whether it's Kurgan's breakneck ride through New York City, mowing pedestrians down before the eyes of his terrified passenger, or the unnecessarily dizzying overhead fish-eye lens view of MacLeod's circular hall of artifacts he's collected through various centuries and assumed identities. Some fault also lies with the writing, but this can be overlooked since it's quite a task to, in the space of two hours, introduce the immortal mythos, establish who is and isn't an immortal, throw in lots of flashbacks and swordfights, and get a romance subplot going all at the same time. With all that to do, it probably simply wasn't possible to give the concept of immortality much thought with all the other work to accomplish. That task has been left to the TV series, which has attacked the questions with an intelligence and style all its own. Allowed to stand alone, *Highlander*, the movie that started it all, may not be a masterpiece of the cinema, but it's a good movie.

Before moving on to the series, let's look at the difference between the two.

At the risk of offending those who may hold the films in higher regard, the main difference lies in the series' greater maturity. Adrian Paul heads up the TV *Highlander* as Duncan MacLeod, supposedly Connor's younger brother (though this has been brought into question by some episodes), in what amounts to an extended mix of the first movie with much more time spent on characters, the ramifications of immortality, and the intricacies of the Gathering of immortals which has been mentioned since the movie. Among the new twists introduced by the series are the Watchers, an organization of mortals who have kept written records through the ages of the movements, kills and numerous identities of the immortals; and the concept that certain mortals are, for whatever reason, potential immortals, such as series regular Richie Ryan (Stan Kirsch), a short-tempered street kid whose emerging immortal status gained the attention of Duncan in 1993's series opener. This plot thread was expanded over quite some time; Richie didn't actually become an immortal until the early second season episode *The Darkness*, the same installment in which Duncan's long-time love interest Tessa (Alexandra Vandernoot) was killed off. Numerous big names have appeared in the series, from rock stars Sheena Easton, Joan Jett and Roland Gift (memo to Mac - go easy on Gift, we really need another Fine Young Cannibals album out of him before you take his head!) to *Night Court's* Richard Moll and even Christopher Lambert, making a cameo appearance as Connor MacLeod in the first episode. Joining in the second year was Adrian Paul's fellow *War of the Worlds* veteran Philip Akin, while the third season's co-star has been Lisa Howard as a doctor with whom MacLeod falls in love, though she is not aware until much later what MacLeod is or how he lives his life.

The texture that the series can afford to build up is what makes it an entertaining story to follow. Characters drop in and out of the ongoing storyline regularly; Richie only shows up occasionally now. Charlie (Akin) and Anne (Howard) even less so nowadays. The series makes up for the movies' brutish, action-oriented overcompensation by introducing us to some truly literate, epic heroes and villains, many of whom are more memorable than the Kurgan. Adrian Paul is a very likeable leading man, and though he may not be as ruggedly handsome as Christopher Lambert, I would argue that he is the better actor of the two; he's cool, almost Zen-like, and handles that sword without all the swashbuckling twirling and "windmill" sword moves that most cinematic swordfights seem to utilize ad nauseum.

The series has its shortcomings, though; occasionally, probably due to the typical grinding production schedule, action-filled stories that would just as easily fit into *Hunter* or *Renegade* slip into the show and divert the focus from the ongoing study of immortals. Also, due to a co-production deal with France, the story suddenly shifts to France for several episodes each season, where Duncan conveniently has his boat docked. (Consequently, there seems to be an inordinately huge number of immortals in Paris!) It's taken a couple of years for the directors and producers to figure out new and different ways to depict the furious, electrical-storm-like Quickening, but they've finally gotten past the routine special effects sequence in which MacLeod is ravaged by energy which also blows up any lights, cars, bits of statuary and windows that happen to be conveniently nearby; in one recent memorable sequence, Richie is on the run from an immortal foe and winds up getting cornered by him, forced to engage him in combat without MacLeod's assistance. Duncan rushes to help his protegee, only to arrive at the scene of a darkened house where all he sees are the flashes of a distant Quickening - and we don't know until a few moments later whether or not Richie was the victor of this battle. (Of course, he was.) Sometimes the flashbacks are thrown in too liberally, almost as if the writers and directors feel a compulsion to pay homage to the film's frequent time warps (though this may be mandated by the show's producers, who also produced that movie).

(A cartoon series has since debuted, though I must confess I haven't seen it at all. I understand, though, that no beheadings take place, and that the only links to *Highlander* are an even younger immortal named MacLeod who carries a sword. A premise of inextinguishable swordfighters who routinely behead one another seems an unlikely basis for a cartoon anyway! The thought of a line of *Highlander* toys with pop-off-battle-damage heads could traumatize a child...)

A few plot holes plague the saga; Connor MacLeod won *The Prize* in both the first and third movies (!), which implies he was the only immortal remaining alive (um...what about Duncan and Richie and all the little immortals in Paris? Is this a regional competition?). Since the first movie, the Gathering has been mentioned, a sort of near-telepathic ritual in which all immortals gravitate to one place to battle each other until only one is left to claim the Prize. That much seems to have been ignored for now; if new immortals like Richie are constantly emerging, it seems truly unlikely that there will ever be only one. A surprising and very welcome omission is any attempt on the series' part to explain away scientifically

continued on page 8

The Hammer of God by Arthur C. Clarke (Bantam, 1994; 240 pages)

One of the things that attracted my attention to this book was the basic premise of an asteroid or comet screaming toward Earth, and humankind's reaction to its own impending doom. It's hardly a coincidence that my favorite episode of *Sliders* focused on a similar theme. And at the risk of inciting riots and bar brawls everywhere, I liked *Sliders'* treatment of the concept almost better than I did this book by the brilliant, world-renowned, Nobel Prize-winning author Arthur C. Clarke.

That's it, I hear you say, he's gone too far. He's flipped.

Don't misunderstand me here, and for crying out loud, put down the phone and stop trying to get me committed to the nuthouse. There are many ways in which Clarke's novel far surpassed other accounts of this speculative scenario, particularly with regards to the religious and political implications of impending doom. But my biggest fault with *The Hammer of God* lies in the fact that Clarke studies humanity on a large scale only. There are few characters to identify with in the course of the book. It's virtually a literary ant farm, in which we're treated to examinations of large-scale societal movements but few personal stories.

Still, that can be interesting in itself. Clarke's speculations on how the United Nations would handle policymaking in the event of an onrushing asteroid collision seem accurate enough, if somewhat tame; these events do take place in the 22nd century in a much more peaceful and enlightened world. Some of Clarke's more interesting theories lie in the permutations of religious beliefs and denominations, and their increasing ties to technology (virtual reality televangelism?? Quick, Arthur, hide that idea before Swaggart or Bakker finds it!), though in a surprisingly major loose end, he posits that a religious leader's idea to preserve humanity could save it after all whether the Earth is destroyed or not, and points out that public perception paints the idea as crazy and dismisses it; the author himself then proceeds to dismiss it with "It was an understandable mistake. And a disastrous one." Which is the last we hear of it. (I won't divulge the exact nature of the proposed means of saving humanity, or why it is undertaken beyond the simple reason of the approaching asteroid; you'll have to find out for yourself.)

While Captain Robert Singh and his crewmates aboard the *Goliath*, a spacecraft (incorrectly identified on the back cover blurb as a starship) assigned to divert the incoming asteroid at all costs, are appealing characters with an eerily HAL-like shipboard artificial intelligence named David, they are for the most part milquetoasts. They don't dare disagree with one another (like the vapid characters Clarke filled the *Leonov* with in *2010: odyssey two* - there's a reason the film adaptation ignored much of the book) because they're Just Nice People. I don't buy it. Civilization's ticket has been written, and the end is near. These folks are improvising as fast as they can to devise a solution (believable) and rarely if ever express doubts, worries or despair (*bull!*).

Still, if you enjoy reading the clinically dispassionate police reports, this book with thrill you. Longtime Clarke fans will chuckle at the numerous references to his own past works (the SpaceGuard organization and its origins borrowed from *Rendezvous with Rama*; David originates from a computer company in Urbana, Illinois where he has an identical twin against whom his results and performance can be checked, just like HAL in *2001*), and those who, like me, stick with this brilliant man for his intuitive understanding of real astronomical mechanics and theory, will enjoy Clarke's ever-impeccable flair for scientific accuracy. I don't particularly enjoy reading "over-tuned" fiction (for example, Timothy Zahn's *Star Wars*-based trilogy, in which he stopped to explain the inner workings of every piece of machinery in the Imperial and Rebel arsenals), but I do enjoy occasionally picking up a book whose author knows what he's talking about, and is talking about things that really could happen.

While Clarke's preface that predicts that Earth is mathematically fated to be kissed by an asteroid is chilling, I'm tempted to point out that many of the proponents of the theory of an inevitable asteroidal collision sound - on occasion - like the very Millennialists whom Clarke makes sport of in the section of the book dealing with the

religious community's reaction to the crisis. Still, as speculative fiction goes, it's one of my favorite scenarios. It's just too bad Clarke didn't focus on individuals, opting instead for the God's-eye-view that pervades *The Hammer of God*. With such a clinical and detached perspective, I was somehow able to experience the end of the world without much sensation.

- E.G.

The Star Trek: The Next Generation Companion by Larry Nemecek, second edition. (Pocket Books, 1995; 339 pages)

Though there's still a treasure trove of information in the *Next Generation Companion*, it still suffers from some organizational and editorial problems - most of which I am increasingly convinced are not the fault of the author, who knows his Trek stuff well enough.

Some of the problems of the first edition remain and are expanded upon in the new revision; the layouts of the seasonal section headers continue to present an eye-numbing background pattern that just about *hurts* to look at. The "more than 150 photos" take a drastic drop in quality in the middle of the fifth season chapter, and there are several elementary errors that a sharp eyed editor should have been able to catch (numerous production details listed under the wrong episodes, and one of my favorites: Andreas Katsulas went on to star as "Ambassador K'Gal" on *Babylon 5*). These difficulties are almost made up for by a comprehensive glimpse at the making of *Star Trek: Generations*.

Hopefully these problems will be corrected by the time Larry Nemecek graces us with a *Deep Space Nine* and/or *Voyager* volume, because his wealth of information deserves a better presentation than it got stuck with here. Perhaps the layout editors should take a look at the aforementioned *Making of Deep Space Nine*, or even the *Trek Encyclopedia*, before issuing this book again.

- E.G.

MUSIC REVIEWS

Doctor Who: The Curse of Fenric (music composed & performed by Mark Ayres; Silva Screen Records, 1991)

Doctor Who: Ghost Light (music composed & performed by Mark Ayres; Silva Screen Records, 1993)

Normally, when one thinks of the music from *Doctor Who*, the mysterious theme song springs to mind, or, if you've got what I call a phonographic memory for music, the usually goofy electronic strains of Dudley Simpson's episode scores. Perhaps a memory of the brief period in the early 80s when the BBC Radiophonic Workshop took over the musical duties and gave the underscores a much more dramatic, modern edge. But it wasn't really until the final season of the series on the BBC that the neoclassical approach already utilized by most other sci-fi series occurred to anyone within the *Who* ranks.



One thing to be said for these albums is that they share a very thorough completeness - every cue from the episodes is on each disc. Both have a slightly similar style, that of synthesizers performing the roles of classical orchestral instruments. Ayres works with the limitations of his electronic orchestra, creating pieces that have more texture than one usually hears from a synthesized attempt to emulate the traditional symphonic complement. Both are worth a listen. At present, they're both import items from the U.K., though Silva Screen's American release wing has lately fired off a compilation of tracks from both of these discs as well as Ayres' first score, *The Greatest Show in the Galaxy*, which doesn't achieve the same listenability as his later works but is still at least technically interesting; as an import, *Greatest Show* is also available individually, but beware *The Psychic Rap*...

- E.G.

Voyages continued from page 2...

The focus on the secondary Maquis characters was perhaps a bit premature; **Lower Decks** succeeded by virtue of arriving in the seventh year of *Next Generation*, when fresh outlooks on the main characters were hard to come by, whereas this examination of some junior Maquis officers learning the ropes Federation-style steals time that could be spent putting one of *Voyager's* still relatively unknown regulars under the microscope. For crying out loud, we still know very, very little about Chakotay, Kim or even Janeway - it's the Sisko Syndrome all over again! Still, the new characters were likeable on some level, as was Chakotay in his brief scene of dispensing Maquis discipline to rebellious Dalby in the mess hall. It was pure, unabashed cliché that the first officer should punch his insubordinate underling and take a swig of his drink before leaving the table - but still a hoot of a scene to watch! The Doctor and Neelix were again relegated to the status of background characters as they do battle with a nefarious, ship-crippling pile of cheese. (I ask you, is it truly a hopeful vision of the future if there is no cheese? I think not!) - E.G.

Highlander continued from page 6...

the nature of immortality (keep in mind, *absolutely everyone* is omitting *Highlander 2*). And a few disturbing questions remain unanswered, one of which Richie asked MacLeod in a second season episode after surviving his first brush with a fellow immortal: "Are we ever gonna have to fight each other?" (MacLeod's answer, without making eye contact: "I don't know.")

Highlander doesn't live up to the huge franchise scale of *Star Trek*, and it doesn't need to. By dealing creatively with its own muddled continuity and putting some thought behind rules that were established in dialogue in the 1986 movie, the series has kept the spirit of the original story alive better than either of the theatrical sequels. And you could do much worse than have a series on the air that opens with a Queen tune at full throttle each week.

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Opinions and Stuff LOGBOOK Q & A!

In an effort to answer some questions I've received about the LogBook, here are some answers that might clear things up. Nothing earth-shattering or incredibly surprising, but you might be curious, just like those who asked these questions. Believe it or not, someone actually asked that last question at the bottom of the list, reprinted word-for-word for your amusement!

- Q:** Why isn't there more artwork or photos to break up the large areas of text?
A: This is another of those areas where we have done away with the established rules of laying out a print publication. Among other things, the primary reason we don't break the text up with pictures or what have you is because LogBook is aimed at a literate audience that wants to read things through thoroughly and glean a fair amount of information. It also gives the writers more freedom to deliver more information if they aren't lumbered with instructions to only write X number of words so the picture layout can remain intact.
- Q:** Where do you get your advance information, especially for TV shows?
A: We have mysterious and unspecified links to the television industry! Seriously though, much of the information comes from the computer nets. The downside to this is that it isn't necessarily verifiable, and we've fallen flat on our faces a few times (which I won't go into for fear that you'll actually remember them and laugh at me).
- Q:** Why haven't you ever written an article about [my favorite show/movie]?
A: Because we're waiting for you to write it! In addition to having limited spare time in which to write our articles, most of us also have certain fields of interest. If you haven't seen an article about it, it's not necessarily because we're not aware of your favorite show's existence, but we may feel unqualified to expound upon it at length. You're allowed to write stuff too, you know!
- Q:** Why do you have the "Databank"?
A: Numerous publications have "birthday" sidebars, so I thought I'd distinguish ours by adding other events, particularly those concerning the real exploration of space conducted by both men and machines. Admittedly, this is a bit of self-indulgence, but I think it's important to put some real-life context in all of the science fiction. I also confess to being an unabashed space advocate. These historical footnotes serve to honor and remember the real advances that have been made and those who made them, and to humble us at the same time by reminding us just how far-fetched all the science fiction we take for granted can be.
- Q:** Who died and made you guys film critics? Can't you just watch the stuff and enjoy it?
A: The answer is 42. Actually, to our knowledge, nobody has appointed us real live film critics, but I doubt Siskel, Ebert, or those guys from *Sneak Previews* started out as "official" film critics either. I can speak only for myself, but I try to find at least one thing to like about a series, movie or what have you that can be pointed out. This newsletter is for those who enjoy reading not just that something aired, but that it was executed well (or otherwise). Does this make us connoisseurs...? Refer to the answer at the beginning of this paragraph. - E.G.

D L A O T G A B B O A O N K K Birthdays

- On July 7, 1919, Jon Pertwee, the third *Doctor Who* and now the eldest surviving actor to have played the part.
On July 13, 1940, Patrick Stewart.
On July 13, 1942, Harrison Ford.
On July 22, 1964, Bonnie Langford - you might remember her as *Doctor Who's* squeaky sidekick Melanie.
On July 26, 1957, Nana Visitor.
On July 29, 1941, David Warner.
On July 29, 1972, Wil Wheaton.

Historical Data

- On July 2, 1978, Charon was discovered. It is the sole moon of Pluto, and was a complete surprise to astronomers since the smallest planet's gravity was not previously considered enough to hold a body in orbit. Charon is nearly the same size as Pluto.
- On July 7, 1979, Voyager 2 passed Jupiter at a distance of just under 400,000 miles. On the same day in 1988, the Soviet Union launched the Phobos 1 probe to land on Phobos, the largest of Mars' two moons, where it was to conduct surface surveys and take soil samples. Within a month, however, contact was lost with the probe.
- On July 10, 1962, Telstar 1 was launched; 15 hours after it left Earth, the satellite relayed the first live communications from America to England and France.
- On July 11, 1979, after six years of vacancy and four years since there had been an American manned presence in space at all, Skylab plunged to its death in Earth's atmosphere; some large chunks of it survived intact and landed in Australia without injuring anyone, though the panic immediately preceding the station's fall to Earth was met with assurances that NASA would pay for any damage.
- On July 12, 1988, Phobos 2 was launched by the U.S.S.R. to map and retrieve surface samples from Phobos; after sending a handful of pictures back in March 1989, contact with Phobos 2 was lost. Mars is apparently in a bad part of town, or Marvin the Martian's P-38 Overdrive Modulator is really keeping those pesky Earthlings at bay!
- On July 15, 1975, the Apollo and Soyuz vehicles participating in the historic international docking of the Apollo-Soyuz Test Project were launched; two days later, a custom-designed docking module allowed the very different capsules to dock and members of both crews could enter each others' spacecraft.
- On July 18, 1966, Gemini 10 was launched; this seemingly routine flight marked an important stepping stone in the lunar landing program - using a separately-launched booster rocket, Gemini 10's two-man crew achieved the first change of orbital altitude in the history of manned spaceflight.
- On July 16, 1969, Apollo 11 was launched. On July 20, Neil Armstrong and Edwin Aldrin became the first men to walk on the moon. By a fairly suspicious coincidence, the advanced robot probe Viking 1 landed on Mars on this date in 1976 to look around the planet and take soil samples.
- On July 21, 1961, Mercury 4 took Gus Grissom on America's second suborbital flight. The capsule sunk into the ocean - thankfully without Grissom inside! - when he prematurely blew the escape hatch after splashdown.
- On July 26, 1971, Apollo 15 was launched to the moon; it was on this mission that the lunar rover was first used on the moon's surface.
- On July 28, 1973, three astronauts became the second crew to inhabit Skylab; they stayed for 59 days - then a new record - conducting biological and medical tests and studying the sun with the station's solar telescope.