



# Mark Lenard Father To Spock

A beloved actor discusses his feelings for the craft, the logic of Vulcan and the emotional impact of "Star Trek III."

By PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL

**W**e actors have become the repositories of the original ideas from *Star Trek*. The people who understand the concept's physical elements are those who were in the cast and crew of the original series."

Spoken without a touch of boastfulness, Mark Lenard arrived at that conclusion during the early days of production on *Star Trek III: The Search for Spock*. Lenard (interviewed in STARLOG #42) bears the distinction of being the *only* actor (aside from the cast regulars) to appear four times in the TV and film series, in three different roles. He has returned to the *Star Trek* universe in his most famous part: Sarek, former Vulcan ambassador and father of Captain Spock.

Lenard explains his "actors as repositories" statement this way: "When I came in for the makeup tests for *Star Trek III*, nobody really knew how to do Sarek's look. They had a few general ideas. I brought a picture in to show them what the hair looked like. The original makeup artists from the TV series are gone; Fred Phillips [who created the Vulcan look] has retired. We had to dig up 'Journey to Babel' [the TV episode in which Lenard first played Sarek] and run it, just to see what the makeup was like, to look at the angle of the eyebrows.

"The actors remain while other people have turned over many times. Harve Bennett has come in as executive producer. Gene Roddenberry is there, but in an advisory capacity, to try and retain the integrity of what *Star Trek* is."

Expanding on the subject of makeup, Lenard reveals a subtle difference between the TV and film versions of Vulcan physiognomy. "You may have noticed that the ears have changed," he says. "They used to be much bigger; now, they're more delicate. They have a new makeup man, Tom Burman. He and his organization have made slight changes. I like the new look. Aesthetically, it fits the face a little better. Also, the movie screen is so much bigger than the TV screen that you can be more delicate, things don't need to be emphasized so much.

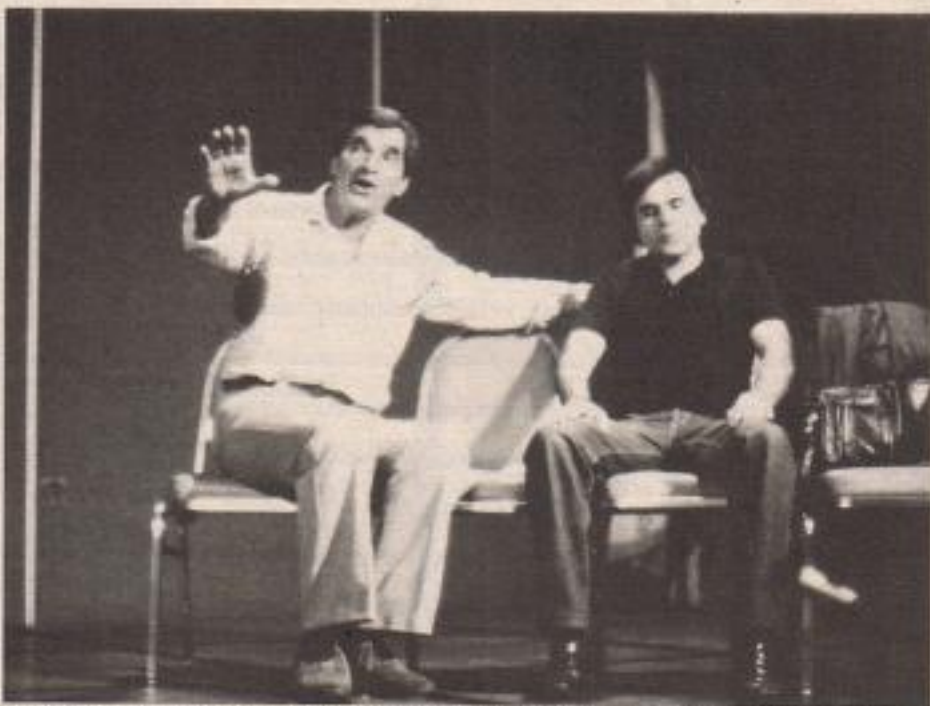
"One other thing on makeup—a funny note. Agewise, I had been made to look older back during 'Babel,' but when I came in for the tests this time, Leonard Nimoy thought I looked just about right. But then they did the makeup test. Leonard looked at it and said, 'Mark, you look more like my brother than my father!' So, they whitened my hair some more, applied a stronger age

makeup—all in the name of fatherhood."

## Acting Feelings

Although Sarek is definitely *Star Trek* fans' favorite of Lenard's three roles in the series (the others are the Romulan commander in "Balance of Terror," and Klingon commander in *Star Trek—The Motion Picture*), it is *not* the actor's own. He prefers the Romulan role, observing that it makes "greater demands on an actor's emotions than Sarek does." There are challenges to playing the Vulcan ambassador, however.

actor actor' means. I think of myself as an actor. And every actor is a character; every actor plays characters. When I portrayed General Urko, the chief gorilla in the *Planet of the Apes* TV series, it was a character part to me. He was an animal, but he wasn't really, he was a character with certain foibles. I've played many jolly villains, but even then, I try to play them with those characters' viewpoints. No one really tries to be villainous. A villain tries to win, or come out ahead of everyone else. I don't look for sympathy, but I try to play each character sympathetically."



Mark Lenard and Walter ("Chekov") Koenig rehearse their two-man play, *Actors*, at the Los Angeles STARLOG Festival.

"Sarek is an intriguing role for an actor," Lenard says, "because of the 'inwardness' of all his reactions. In that way, the role is much like what actors consider the most difficult speech in Shakespeare—Hamlet's 'To be or not to be' soliloquy. Essentially, that speech is rather static, there are no great dramatics in it, and it's also all very inward. There is a great deal brewing beneath the surface, and it must be shown with suggestion, without the opportunity to be overtly dramatic. It calls on qualities that an actor either has innately, or he doesn't."

Is there anything of Sarek in himself? Lenard replies, "Sure. When I play Sarek, I don't think about playing it. In any role I play, I play myself or a variation of myself." Yet, he doesn't consider himself a character actor. "I don't know what the term 'char-

Sarek's apparent lack of emotions presented a special problem for Lenard in *Star Trek III*, particularly in the early scene in which Sarek confronts Admiral Kirk over the "abandonment" of his son on the Genesis planet. "That was one of the points of contention when we started the movie," Lenard admits. "Just dramatically, you *must* have some more there in the way of fireworks, to keep it interesting. And Sarek is...furious. There was a good deal of discussion about just how far Sarek or any Vulcan should go. Originally, Leonard's view was that

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PATRICK DANIEL O'NEILL, former Associate Editor of STARLOG, took a flight with *Superman's Pal*, Jimmy Olsen, actor Marc McClure, in STARLOG #84.



# Lenard

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somehow, underneath, there could be a mysterious seething to convey that sort of emotion. I guess I played it the way I thought Sarek would act. I don't know. I don't intellectualize acting."

With Leonard Nimoy (STARLOG #84) making his debut as a feature director with *Star Trek III*, there were new approaches to old visions. Lenard calls Nimoy's work on the film "extraordinary. He's a very fine director. He's not at all like Spock—he's full of energy, spirit and good humor.



Lenard expresses the pain of a father for his lost son in *Star Trek III*.

"Leonard seemed to know what he wanted," the actor explains, "he was always supportive and enthusiastic. He handled all the dramatic and technical elements very well. He also handled all the people. It's kind of ticklish for a co-star to be directing the movie's star, someone he worked with as an actor. To turn from being an actor to being a director is sometimes a kind of leap, but Leonard handled the personalities on the set extremely well. I was delighted to work with him."

Mark Lenard knows whereof he speaks on the subject of directing, having done "quite a bit of it," primarily on stage rather than screen. "In film, the technical elements are more important," he notes, "than the aesthetic elements: camera movement and the like—but on stage, it's really hard work, and you really learn what the play is about. You learn what the material is, who each character is. As a director you find out more about each character and the play itself than when you're an actor. As an actor, you're just one part of it, that's all you really deal with—your own part. That's your only

concern.

"I enjoy directing up to a point, and I like doing it every now and then. I'm not overwhelmed with the desire to be a director—I don't have that kind of ambition. I would like to be a truly superior actor. There are many things I would like to play. I would like to do some writing. I began as a writer, before I was an actor. Although I enjoy directing, I'm not consumed by a need to do it. Who knows? Perhaps Bill Shatner will be grabbing the reins one of these times."

## Acting Futures

For the future, Lenard intends to continue touring with his colleague Walter Koenig (Commander Pavel Chekov) in a pair of plays that the duo take on the road to colleges and conventions: *Actors*, a one-act drama about two actors preparing for a Broadway opening, and *Box and Cox*, a 19th-century farce. Additionally, he plans to spend more time in New York, perhaps taking a role on the Broadway stage. And he says Gene Roddenberry still has plans for another TV series in which Lenard would play a leading role.

Right now, though, his concern is *Star Trek III*, and *Star Trek* as a whole, a concern which became poignant when he discovered that many of the minor players in this latest interstellar voyage literally grew up with the series. He explains: "I've gotten used to the fact that, when I come into a town, like New York, people stop me on the street and say, 'Oh, you're Mark Lenard, you played Sarek.' And I ask, 'Are you a *Star Trek* fan?' To which they reply, 'I grew up with it.' A great many people were four, five or six years old, when they first saw the show... and new generations keep coming along. Well, there were many people who had parts in *Star Trek III* who just wanted to be in this movie. They had lived with it for so long, they had that kind of love for the show. Some of the girls who played the 'virgins' at Mount Seleya talked about that, and some felt it was an honor just to be in the film."

But a burning question in the mind of everyone concerned with *Star Trek* is: Can that feeling last, now that this third *Star Trek* film has changed so much of the series background? Kirk and his crew are technically mutineers, Spock is not exactly his "old self," and the *Enterprise* has been destroyed. What will be the impact of those important changes on *Star Trek* fandom?

"God only knows!" answers Mark Lenard, laughing. "I think fandom will have a mixed, but very positive, reaction. Because of what has happened and how it's done, I think *The Search for Spock* is a good movie. It should be exciting. I'm sure the destruction of the *Enterprise* has angered and infuriated many people. People took Spock's death pretty well—perhaps because deep down, they knew he *could* return, because things like that can happen in science fiction. But what will their final reaction be now? Your guess is as good as mine." ★

# FUTURE CONVENTIONS

If you have any questions about the cons listed, please send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address listed for the con. Goals and features are subject to last-minute changes. Conventions, please note: Please send all pertinent information no later than 6 months prior to the event to STARLOG Convention Calendar, 475 Park Ave. South, New York, NY 10016. STARLOG makes no guarantees, due to space limitations, that your convention will be listed here. This is a free service; to insure a listing in the magazine, contact Connie Bartlett (see page 6, masthead) for classified ad rates.

## PARACON VII

Sheraton Penn State  
State College, PA  
ParaCon VII  
P.O. Box 1156  
State College, PA 16801  
August 10-12

## VUL-CON

The Airport Hilton Hotel  
Kenner, LA  
Vul-Con  
P.O. Box 8087  
New Orleans, LA 70182  
August 10-12

## GALACON

Pavilion  
Virginia Beach, VA  
Galaccon  
P.O. Box 8726  
Virginia Beach, VA 23450-8726 (SASE)  
August 17-19

## FANEX 84 (Fantasy Film Expo)

Hyatt Regency Baltimore on the Inner Harbor  
Baltimore, MD  
Fanex 84  
P.O. Box 28282  
Baltimore, MD 21234  
August 17-19

## FANDERSON '84

Bloomsbury Crest Hotel  
London, WC1  
The Official Gerry Anderson Appreciation Society  
P.O. Box 308  
London, W4 1QL (SASE)  
August 17-19

## AUSSIECON TWO

Melbourne, Australia  
Aussiecon Two  
G.P.O. Box 2252U  
Melbourne, Australia 3001  
August 22-26

## BUBONICON

Mountain View Inn  
Albuquerque  
Bubonicon  
P.O. Box 37257  
Albuquerque, NM 87176  
August 24-26

## PHOENIXCON 84

Holiday Inn of Annapolis  
Annapolis, MD  
Phoenixcon 84  
P.O. Box 599  
Arnold, MD 21012  
August 24-26

## GALILEO CONVENTION 84 (Trek)

Ms Catherine Richardson  
30 Kirkdale Green  
Rye Hill  
Newcastle Upon Tyne  
NE4 6HL, England  
August 24-26

## THE 42ND WORLD SCIENCE FICTION CONVENTION (LACON II)

Anaheim Convention Center  
Anaheim, CA  
LACON II  
P.O. Box 8442  
Van Nuys, CA 91409  
August 30-September 3

\*STARLOG's Birthday Party, a 15-minute 16mm color film, is available for screening at conventions, schools and libraries in the U.S., Canada and England only. Organizers in the U.S. and Canada should contact Pamela Santostefano, c/o this department (see address at top of column); in England, please contact Pamela Barnes, c/o Fanderson, P.O. Box 308, London W4 1QL, England.