


STAR TREK

THE MOTION PICTURE



Interviews by
Preston Neal Jones

ROBERT WISE
Director

HAROLD LIVINGSTON
Screenwriter

**DEFOREST
KELLEY**
"McCoy"

**HAROLD
MICHELSON**
Art Director

**WALTER
KOENIG**
"Chekhov"

LEE COLE
Designer

**PERSIS
KHAMBATTA**
"Ilia"



"Paramount felt that the ending we were so entranced with might not be commercially viable. It can be interpreted any way you wish. We persevered, and fought, and insisted, and we got to keep the ending. And still we don't know who was right. We'll find out in December."

Harold Livingston

While "Star Trek" fans and Gulf and Western stockholders anxiously count down toward the December 7th world premiere of STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE, Paramount's post-production wheels are spinning at warp speed. Activity on this work-in-progress includes sound looping, creation of the all-important visual effects, music composition, and even re-shooting certain portions of a key sequence.

The eye of this cinematic hurricane is director Robert Wise, a multi-award-winner who is used to achieving maximum results with minimum of the egocentricity and temperament sometimes associated with his profession. Quietly confident that the film will be ready for its pre-Christmas playdates, Wise acknowledges that, in his words, "It's going to be very tight. That's because we did have a setback in our special effects area, as you know, losing [Robert] Abel. Fortunately, we were able to get Doug Trumbull and John Dykstra. They were forced to start way behind sched-

ule with a tremendous amount of work to do, and that's put a real bind on the whole thing, but everybody's working like mad—in some areas, around the clock."

Would it be safe to say that your coming into the project upgraded it in many ways, making it a more important film with a bigger budget?

I would not like to have the whole size of the budget attributed to my coming into the picture, because it has gotten to quite a tremendous size. But, sure, it had to be upgraded. I think that would have happened whether I or another theatrical film director had come on, because they had already built x-number of sets for what was initially started as a revival of a TV series.

In that case, what changes can be directly attributed to your participation on the picture?

Basically, I would think, the upgrading of the entire look of the Enterprise interiors. The exterior was pretty much the same, with a few

improvements they had made. The bridge is certainly the same circular bridge that they had built for the show, but I upgraded all the instrument panels, the lighting, the flooring and all kinds of things. This was done because 70mm and even 35mm Panavision is very demanding, in terms of detail and look, as compared to the small TV screen. In the TV show, I thought the corridors of the Enterprise looked like the Holiday Inn or some other motel corridors—they were square, boxy-looking, so we made new very striking looking corridors. The engine room they had built was not nearly satisfactory. The people I brought in redesigned it and came up with a tremendous improvement, using diminishing perspective—including the use of midgets in the background—to make it look like it goes on and on.

And the ceiling which was added to the Enterprise bridge?

I think that was Harold Michelson's design, but it was something we felt was needed, the flexibility to

"We would ask Paramount all the time, 'What is our budget?' To be creative, you need some parameters, and then you can figure out what solutions are possible. But they kept saying 'Whatever you need, whatever you want, you've got it.'"

Lee Cole



Left: An array of aliens, used as "local color" in the opening in San Francisco.

shoot from a low angle if we wanted. Usually, on TV, they don't fool around with ceilings, they usually put the camera pretty straight on. A couple of other things are attributable to me, including the Recreation Room. When I came on the show, I saw a number of the old episodes, and I was struck with the fact that they were always talking about having a crew of four-hundred-sixty or something. But all you ever saw were the main characters and a few extras walking around the back. They didn't have any scope. So I felt it was very important that there be one place in the picture where we would have a big rec room and see a good part of the four-hundred people in one group, so we illustrate the size of The Enterprise and that it's manned by all these people. As a result of my strong feeling, we have a big, two-story rec room with a matte painting on top. Another place where we had that opportunity to reveal the Enterprise's scope and size was in the cargo deck.

Almost never in the TV show did you ever see earth, and I felt it was vital to emphasize the scene in San Francisco. When I first read the script, that scene was fairly limited, but I felt it was extremely important, particularly since our story is supposed to start on earth, be about the saving of earth, before we go up to the heavens and never come back. So we got some marvelous shots of the futuristic San Francisco, and we gave Captain Kirk a much more dynamic entrance by restructuring that scene and having

him come in at a moment of conflict. This gave him a sense of direction and movement and a goal.

Of course, you must have effected many other changes in the script.

When I read the script, the major difference from the old series was the fact that there was no Spock in it. From all I gather, Leonard had said that he was not interested in doing another series of "Star Trek" TV shows. I had not been a trekkie, I was not glued to the series when it first came out, or when it went into syndication, so I was not really aware of all of its facets. And everybody I talked to, including my wife and her daughter and son-in-law, who are trekkies, said, "You can't possibly think about doing 'Star Trek' without Spock. I mean, that would be as bad as trying to tell it without Kirk. It's impossible, it's crazy to make the film without him." So I came back to Paramount and said, "People close to me and others who followed the series think that it's absolutely idiotic to think of making it without Spock. There must be some way to get him." So, I was one of those responsible for getting

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Robert Wise

Director Robert Wise and William Shatner on the Enterprise bridge, between takes.



him on the picture.

For which a mass of "Star Trek" fans will undoubtedly be grateful.

After we had the press conference which announced the picture, plus the fact that everybody in the cast was back together, and I would be directing, I got a number of letters. It was interesting how they broke down, almost fifty-fifty divided. One half of them said, "Don't you dare touch a thing, don't fool around with 'Star Trek,' leave it alone, just do it." And the other half said "Thank God, now it can be done right, now it can be done properly." So, that's what we were faced with, and I hope that we've done the right thing. I think the fans who didn't want to change anything will feel that we've only improved the original in terms of the look and the feel of the thing. I believe that the people who wanted it upgraded will feel we did a proper job. We'll just have to see. . .

Speaking of improvements, is it true that in recent weeks there have been some retakes?

Yes, we rehot a scene we call the space walk, involving Spock and Kirk outside the Enterprise. We had already shot about half of it, at some considerable expense. It was just not very exciting, it wasn't moving; we were concerned about it. We had a lot of it yet to shoot when Doug Trumbull came on the show, so we talked to him about it and he felt very much as we did. He had concerns about it, so he came up with another approach to doing the scene that would be much simpler but much more effective and visually exciting than the one we had.

That's what we've done. We eliminated the original space walk and re-shot the sequence a couple of weeks ago with Leonard and Bill. Doug was with me, because he has to put effects over this footage. In fact, he routined the sequence, and then I put it on film. Then we did long shots with the doubles, and Doug shot blue screens to go with them, and all that is coming together in the new space walk, which will be three or four minutes long, as compared to maybe ten or twelve in the old one, and be far more exciting.

What makes the difference?

The original sequence was done very literally, with rather slow-moving space suits going past pieces of set. The new one is going to be faster, with Spock in a thruster suit that propels him right into the center of what he's seeing are going to move by very fast and be reflected in his face mask. It's going to be much faster, more visually exciting, with visuals that are done on the multiplane with marvelous graphics work. It'll be very exciting.

For over three decades, Harold Livingston has written for television, films (ESCAPE FROM MINDANAO, THE SOUL OF NIGGER CHARLEY), and occasionally produced for television, but he feels the most pride in his work as a novelist. Of his seven books, one, *The Heroes Are All Dead*, was filmed in 1962 as *THE HELL WITH HEROES*. Another, which he wishes had been filmed,

and which won the Houghton Mifflin Fellowship Award, was *Coasts of the Earth* (yes, it sounds like science fiction, but it isn't—it's about American volunteers in the Israeli air force in 1948).

As producer of the ill-fated STAR TREK revival series, Livingston worked with Gene Roddenberry and writer Alan Dean Foster on the development of the story—based on a Roddenberry idea—for a two hour pilot. The result was the basis for what is now STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE, for which Livingston will receive solo screenplay credit. The story for the film originated as a tale called "Robot's Revenge" designed for Gene Roddenberry's short-lived GENESIS II. Elements from STAR TREK episodes "The Changeling" and "The Doomsday Machine," dramatized in a different form, can also be found in the final script for ST-TMP.

Did you work with Gene Roddenberry on the rewrite?

Gene Roddenberry and I worked together very closely. I didn't know enough about "Star Trek" to do the "Star Trek"-isms, and I couldn't fool with them. I just didn't have time. Gene did that, and filled in all the jargon. I had screened every episode at a rate of about two a day, but I still relied on Gene's expertise and experience. There were characters which Gene had lived with all these years, such as "Bones" McCoy, that I didn't know. There were characteristics, and cadences, and attitudes in all these people that Gene couldn't help but know more intimately than I did.

At the same time, were you able to bring a fresh, more objective viewpoint to the characters?

I felt that I wanted to make them more mature. The television series had been designed for a certain audience, and it was on a level of mentality that didn't particularly appeal to me. I wanted to dimensionalize the characters more. I wanted to give Kirk flaws, weaknesses, human characteristics, and I think I succeeded in that. And when you start writing him that way, then every other character must relate to him and to each other on that basis, so you have character growth, which makes an interesting story for the viewer. Gene and I debated this—he certainly had good points—but basically I think he agreed with me. After all, a decade later, our society has changed, and Gene will now have a more sophisticated audience.

Did you work as closely with the actors as you did with Roddenberry before shooting started?

I worked with the actors before and during shooting. We literally wrote on the set. There were always changes and transitions. The actors were extremely helpful. I've never met a crew that helped me this way. As the story progressed—and we shot it almost in sequence—they began to feel more of the story. Then we ran into some terrible obstacles, holes in the story that had never worked, and we had to work all that out. Particularly the ending, which was one of the great *betes noirs* of all time. *

I give full credit to the cast and director, because nobody could have

done this picture alone. No one mind could have conceived it, it's too god-damned big. If anybody says, "This is my picture," that's patently untrue. It was a hundred percent collaboration, more than any show I've ever worked on.

The one actor who I think contributed the most to this project is Leonard Nimoy. He was very helpful. Everybody was tired; this happens on a picture. He came in and was a breath of fresh air. He had notions, concepts, ideas, he really bolstered everybody up. Nimoy would come over to my house after shooting at nine o'clock every night. I'd give him a drink, he'd sit in a chair, I would type a scene and we'd talk it out.

Because, we'd really gotten into some serious problems of concept and approach. We had almost written ourselves into a corner at one point: we knew what the ending was, and we had to direct the story toward that ending. To reach that ending, with what I call its clarity of ambiguity, we had to set up situations and characterizations all the way through the story. With the growth of the story as it was being filmed, everything was in constant state of flux. Nuances and ideas changed and had to be shoved in with each sequence. But at the end, there was a gigantic gap.

Like the farmer who builds a fence around his property by cutting each pole to match the one before it, and then discovers that the last pole is a foot taller than the first one he put in.

That's what we had to bridge, yes. And the studio displayed some nervousness now and then over the ending because they wanted it differently.

Why?

Well, they felt that the ending we were so entranced with might not be commercially viable. What we wanted was an ending that would send people out of the theater saying, "Gee, I know what they meant." Or, "Do you think they meant. . .?" It's clear what happens, but the meaning is ambiguous. You can interpret it any way you wish. There are three or four levels of approach, of perception, to that ending. So, we persevered, and fought, and insisted, and we got to keep the ending.

And, we still don't know who was right. We'll find out in December.

The man who shares star billing with William Shatner and Leonard Nimoy in *STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE* remembers the project when it might have more properly been called "Star Trek—The Crazy Idea." Recalls DeForest Kelley, "It was in the second year of our series. I was having lunch in the old RKO commissary with Gene Roddenberry and Gregg Peters, our production manager, and the three of us came up with the idea of doing a motion picture version of the show during the hiatus. That far back, we thought, what a terrific thing that would be. Had we done it, God knows what might have been the result of it. It was much later that 2001 and *STAR WARS* came along. We were all ahead of our time in the thinking, even then."

What prevented the idea from becoming

a reality sooner?

We kicked the idea about off and on and then it was kicked out the window: "Who would ever think of making a motion picture out of a television show?" But all we've done is talk about it for years, and years. And, as a result, naturally, it's had a strong influence on all our lives. Now, I look back and think, "God, a year has gone by since we started working on this film." And it seems to me impossible that it's done and completed. It seems to me, sometimes, like a dream.

The fans, of course, had an enormous amount to do with it. They never let go of it, as you know. It just grew and grew. I remember going to New York for a personal appearance at what was only the second or third "Star Trek" convention, and when I walked out on the stage at the Americana Hotel, I had no idea of what I was going to face. Well, there were eight or nine thousand people there. I stood waiting to speak while the fire department was trying to clear the aisles. They were saying, "Look, if you don't clear the aisles, there will be no convention." Nobody was moving, so I finally said to them, "Look, I want to talk to you, that's why I'm here, and if you don't abide by these rules, we won't be able to communicate." And, boy, like little angels, they started clearing the aisles. It was astounding to see that many people, including those that were turned away because they couldn't let them all in. You could feel the love bouncing off of these people. It was marvelous. That's when I came back to California and thought, "I don't know when, or how, but something is going to happen with this show." I just had this feeling. And eventually, of course, it did. It's been an experience for all of us, unlike any experience, I believe, that any actor or actress has ever gone through.

And now that shooting is completed, screenwriter Harold Livingston credits you and the other actors with being more helpful than any other cast he has worked with.

This script was so involved, as I'm sure Harold has told you, there was no time for characterization to be developed. I felt just as I had when we first started the series and I'd had to fight for every moment of characterization, even if it was only a look, a reaction. Bill, Leonard and myself, we thought, "My God, we've got to get the relationships going." We kept asking each other, "When is it going to happen?" And it wasn't happening.

It just meant conversations with Harold and Gene and Bob, and saying, "Well, look, I don't think McCoy would do or say this particular thing at this particular time." Harold would say, "Well, what do you think he would say?" I would tell him what I would think, and he'd say, "By God, I think you're right. Let me write something, and I'll send it over to the set, and you see what you think about it." So, he'd knock out something, send it over to the set, I would read it and call him back on the phone and tell him whether I thought it was right on the nose, or, "Almost, but it still needs this. . ." Which he would comply with. Because sometimes he would give me a line and it would be what



DeForest Kelley as Dr. Leonard "Bones" McCoy, chief medical officer of the *Enterprise*.

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DeForest Kelley

Bones would say, but perhaps not the way he would say it. I'd have to tell him, "Harold, it's just not the real McCoy. . ."

Production designer Harold Michelson came to the field of art direction after having been a storyboard artist. His work as a production illustrator includes *THE BIRDS* and *MARNIE*, and he credits Alfred Hitchcock with having taught him a valuable lesson in telling a story on film. "I brought him a storyboard," says Michelson, "and he said, 'That's beautiful, but I can't use it. It's too dramatic for this part of the picture.' I was upset. At the time, I just thought he was dead wrong, but it turned out he was dead right. A film is like a symphony, and you've got to have high points and low points. If you put in nothing but high points, you'll just tire the audience. You need those low points to make your high points stand out."

Along with art director Leon Harris, and an art department of about a dozen talented individuals, Michelson

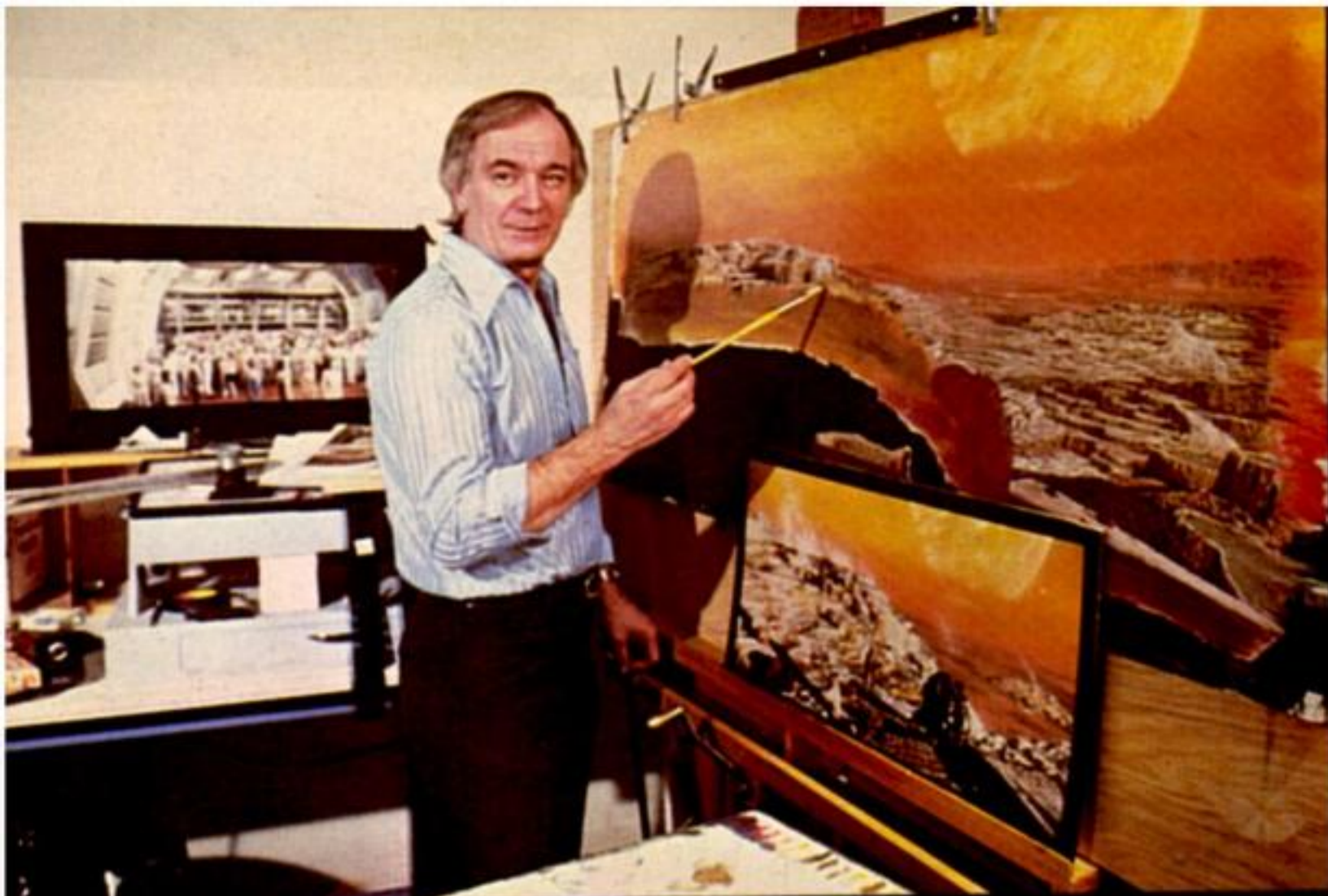
is responsible for the final look of the *STAR TREK* settings, a task he inherited when Robert Wise undertook to transform the TV pilot into an important theatrical feature.

What got you involved on the feature?

I was in Huntsville, Alabama, working on a picture called *THE RAVAGERS*, and a 747 flew over with the *Enterprise* riding piggyback. I ran out of my motel, and it was kind of a thrill to see the space shuttle flying overhead. I've never been into science fiction, but actually seeing it got me kind of excited. Now, when you are on a movie company, you get invited to places. They invited us to see the space shuttle, so I went on board the *Enterprise* and it was really a thrill. I took a lot of pictures and really got interested. Then, about a week later, I got back to the motel from work and I got a call saying, "How would you like to do *STAR TREK*?" I had just been on a real shuttle, and now I was into it, so I immediately said yes.

And you designed all the sets?

When I got to Paramount, the *Enterprise* interiors had all been built for the new TV series. But I met with Bob Wise, and he said that he would like the ship to be a very special thing, which meant that I could rip out the walls and really change it. Before that, I had held to the feeling that the walls went a certain way and I had to do something inside them. But now I could take out the walls, twist them and



1 & 2) The new look of the U. S. S. Enterprise, sleeker, more detailed, and self-illuminated—there is no external light source in outer space. 3) The space shuttle of Surak, a great Vulcan leader. 4) Matte artist Matt Yuricich, putting finishing brush strokes on his panoramic view of the planet Vulcan. His finished composite of the Rec Room, adding a painted-in ceiling, is seen behind him. 5) Decker (Stephen Collins), Kirk (William Shatner), Spock (Leonard Nimoy), and McCoy (DeForest Kelley), come face to face with V'ger, an awesome power which threatens the Federation. 6) Spock seeks guidance from a master of mental discipline (Edna Glover) on Vulcan. 7 & 8) Filming the Enterprise in dry dock using motion control camerawork. Doug Trumbull and John Dykstra have divided-up the film's special effects work by mutual agreement, based on the type of equipment and personnel each had available or was about to acquire. Trumbull has taken on the lion's share of the work because he has the bigger operation. Dykstra is doing most of the miniature work involved, on the Magicam system. Trumbull and Dykstra constantly coordinate their efforts, meeting every few days to discuss their work in progress and what remains to be done, each taking on the assignments necessary to meet the film's fast-approaching December 7 release date. Rumors abound that the film will not be ready on time.

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turn them, mold the thing any way I liked. Kirk's quarters, for instance, I made into two tubes, two rooms separated by a sliding lucite door in between. I kept the same square footage, but that's about all that was left of the first design, it was now entirely different. The corridors, of course, are practically the same as before, except all this aluminum and lighting which we added.

You see, I thought to myself, "Architecture alone is not going to do it; it's going to have to be the lighting, too, and I'm going to have to have the cooperation of the cameraman." He was very cooperative. I built lights into the set along the bottom of the walls, so that the onscreen light source came from below. Don't ask me why. It's just a different feeling than having the lights coming from above. It gave the set a different look: the floor was aglow.

I added certain platforms made out of grillwork. What I wanted with this railing was a feeling of floating, that nothing was necessarily anchored to the ground. We covered certain lights underneath the grilled walkway so that when they were lit, the shadow which you're used to seeing was eliminated. It looked as if there was nothing holding up the walkway. My hope is that the audience will see that and say, "Okay, that's three hundred years from now. That's nothing we can do with our present technology." I kept trying to think of anything that would give us a feeling of three hundred years from now.

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Harold Michelson

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The floating platforms were just

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U.S.S. Enterprise



one idea of many that we used, and they didn't all come from me. A lot of times, Leon Harris, the art director, had very good ideas—which I just took. It's a community effort, and you can pick up ideas from all over, from the set designers, and the sketch artists. . . I take them from everybody.

Which is, after all, why you have an art department under you on a picture of this magnitude.

That's my thought. They're full of talented people, why not use them? Take Lee Cole, for instance. She was invaluable in laying out the instruments and the graphics, which was an unbelievable feat, and nobody will ever really know. I mean, every instrument on that ship meant something, and did something, because Roddenberry is a stickler for that. They were not just blinking lights—they all worked, and they were marvelous.

At the conclusion of a drama in the recent NBC-TV anthology *WHAT REALLY HAPPENED TO THE CLASS OF '65?*, a Vietnam war veteran who has deserted his wife and son returns to the fold and, as a gesture of affection for his son, gives the boy a toy model of the starship *Enterprise*. The space vessel used to be navigated by the man who wrote the episode: Walter Koenig. His script so impressed actress Meredith Baxter Birney, who played the young mother, that she was instrumental in Koenig's being assigned to write for her

own series, *FAMILY*.

In fact, writing is but one of the new directions in which Koenig has blossomed since *STAR TREK* left the network. He has also directed and produced for the stage, and he teaches at California School of Professional Psychology, UCLA and at Sherwood Oaks Experimental College. All this brain work must seem a little ironic to Koenig, who, as Pavel Chekhov, created a character noted for his impulsiveness and youthful swagger.

The Chekhov character was originally brought into the series to represent the "youth element." He's now ten years older. Has the film permitted you to age his character accordingly?

It's almost an academic question, as there wasn't enough character stuff for Chekhov in the story to make any difference in his age. I had considered that possibility, what would I do to change the character should the opportunity arise in terms of dialogue. I opted for keeping him fairly much the way he was, simply because that was the only way we had established Chekhov: brash, cocky, full of life, and so on. If I were now to make him

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Walter Koenig

Walter Koenig as Ensign Pavel Chekhov, promoted in rank, but still in the background.



a sober, military type who's married to his job, then we'd be going from something to nothing. If the opportunity had been there, I would have continued to play him along somewhat the same lines.

But the opportunity wasn't there?

No, it wasn't. That isn't to say, I hastily add, that I did not enjoy myself, or that I'm disappointed in my participation—well, I am a little dissatisfied—but I would not have missed the opportunity, regardless. Certainly it's true that Nichelle [Nichols, Uhura], George [Takei, Sulu] and I were there just to lead the story along. I had a different function on the ship in the series; I'm no longer navigator, I'm now the head of weaponry. So instead of saying, "Warp Factor Four," I say, "Torpedoes away."

I did get to see some footage the other day while I was looping, and there was one moment that has been retained, and, I must say so myself, it's rather amusing. We're being invaded, something is approaching me, and somebody says, "Chekhov, don't move!" And I'm sitting there, absolutely terrified, and I say, "Absolutely, I won't move!" And it works very well. That's about as close to a character line as I've got in the entire film.

Why do you think you wouldn't have missed the opportunity? Would you have perhaps felt left out if you hadn't joined this reunion of the STAR TREK family?

I think you could probably start with that as one reason and go up to twenty more. I've written a book, a daily journal of the making of the film, which is going to be published, but someday I'm going to write an article regarding the pull this show has had on me, from every aspect: not only the creative, but also the emotional, the psychological, the neurotic. It would be about the fact that I do not have the strength of character to turn my back on it and say, "Well, that's a part of my life that's over, and now, let me go onto something else." I do go on to other things, I write, I teach, I direct, but I've always left room for *STAR TREK* in my life. And, although I think some of the reasons are positive, some of them are less than positive.

STAR TREK has been easy. You go on the set, you make a considerable amount of money doing very little. But for me, it has not been an enormously creative opportunity, even less so in the movie than on the TV series because of my limited participation as a performer.

Do you think that one of your more positive motivations might be a desire not to disappoint the fans?

I'm not sure that my feelings are all that altruistic. I really enjoy the feeling of being recognized. I enjoy that affection, that warmth, which is part of what being an actor is all about. I don't think the fans would be all that disappointed if I wasn't onboard the *Enterprise*. I think that they could get over it very quickly. Don't tell Gene Roddenberry!

If, as the Academy puts it, motion pictures comprise both Arts and Sciences, then Lee Cole is supremely qualified to work both ends of the cinematic streak. Basically an artist, with a design background in advertis-

ing and restaurant interiors, this young woman has designed electronic schematics for a nuclear submarine, wired some onboard computers that went to the moon, and, just prior to her involvement with *STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE*, spent four years at Rockwell International, drawing presentations and technical illustrations for the B-1 bomber, as well as contributing some work to the Space Shuttle. "STAR TREK," says Cole, "for the first time combined a lot of my interests. I had been a pre-med student at one time, and I'm on the board of directors for a genetic research foundation, specializing in behavioral genetics, a brand new field. So, when we got into designing the *Enterprise's* medical labs, I could offer all kinds of input into futuristic technology and paraphernalia." She has been with the *STAR TREK* project since before it was a motion picture, working closely with artist Mike Minor. Her contributions to the look of the *Enterprise* have been essential throughout its many stages of metamorphosis. "They wanted me both as an artist and as an aerospace consultant, to add a little authenticity."

Your background seems more suited toward building a real Enterprise than a prop one for a movie.

We decided to go all out and do something that's almost never done in the industry: we would make all the buttons and gadgets on the *Enterprise* bridge really work, so that we wouldn't have to have special effects people behind the walls, doing stuff manually. Since we were planning the set for a TV series, we thought it would be cheaper, in the long run, to have all these buttons actually work. We installed hydraulic machinery so that when Spock would press one of the buttons on his console, these two auxiliary consoles would actually roll out of the wall. All the buttons actually turned on little gadgets that worked. Everything was electronically wired up, and we had enough instruments so that I think if they hooked it up to some engines, they actually would have what they needed to fly. They had pitch, roll and yaw indicators and everything.

Did you simply continue creating in this fashion when the series became a feature, or did the promotion to theatrical status pose new problems?

We just kept right on, but we would ask Paramount all the time, "What is our budget?" To be creative, you need some parameters, you have to set yourself a problem, and then you can figure out what solutions are possible. But they kept saying, "Well, whatever you need, whatever you want, you've got it," and they would never give us a figure. [The final budget has been rumored to be in excess of \$40 million.] This made it a little hard for us to design things without a budget, which usually helps you make decisions. We just didn't know when to cut off. And Special Effects didn't know when to stop wiring things. I would design something not to be practical but just a dummy, and Special Effects would get carried away and wire it all up. Once, I went down on the set late in the afternoon to

check something, accidentally pressed some buttons that really worked, and one of those hydraulic things rolled right out and nearly smashed me.

You designed not only these consoles but also some decorator graphics?

Yes, we had to decorate the Enterprise sets, but we really couldn't bring in a set dresser, because she couldn't go out and buy furniture. Roddenberry stipulated very early in the preproduction planning that we couldn't use anything already existing. If it existed, it was automatically out. So, our challenge was to make every single thing that was on the set.

One thing I did love about Gene Roddenberry is that, whatever we would bring him, he would say, "Well, that's very nice but—do you think you could push a little farther into the future?" He always stretched our imaginations a little further than we thought they could go. If I would design a sign for the corridor that had a totally futuristic lettering which had never been seen before, he'd say, "Do you think in the future that graphics would be so well designed that they wouldn't even need words, and they would be very interplanetary?" Later, I'd bring him a sign with nothing but an arrow on it, and he'd say, "Do you think in the future they will streamline that arrow even more?" So, I'd design a new arrow. I did it because I enjoy it, but one of the publishers saw it and said, "You should do a book of just these signs and trademarks and things." So, Simon and Schuster will be publishing the "Star Trek Peel-Off Graphics Book."

I assume that Roddenberry stretched your creative muscles in other areas as well.

Oh yes, I can't begin to mention them all. I can only say that it's going to be hell for any science fiction filmmakers who follow our show, because they're going to have to trot out and learn things like fiber optics, neon, edge-lit plastic, and electronics beyond their wildest imaginings, and animation and explosion effects that just have never been done before.

A former "Miss India," and a successful model and actress in her native land, Persis Khambatta sought a more international recognition by moving to London. There, she acted with Sidney Poitier in *THE WILBY CONSPIRACY*, and with Michael York in *CONDUCT UNBECOMING*. Now she is on the threshold of a fame that could prove to be interplanetary, having won the unique role of Ilia (pronounced E-lie-uh), the spiritual, sensual—and hairless—Deltan navigator of the starship Enterprise. It is a part for which over a hundred other actresses were considered, and, if Ms. Khambatta outshone the other actresses, it might be because, in a sense, she has desired the role for nearly a decade. "Ten years ago in London," she says, "my favorite television shows were *STAR TREK* and *MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE*. It was said, at the time, that I was 'exotic.' In a way, it was a threat. Because exotic women didn't get much work, except in James Bond films, looking beautiful. I asked my agent, 'Look, why can't I work for *STAR TREK*. They always use exotic women.' He said,

'Because it is a rerun. They have stopped making it.' I was a little bit disappointed about it.

"But when I came to LA, I found that they were doing a *STAR TREK* series again, because my agent said, 'They've asked to see you.' So I thought, 'That's wonderful.' When I went in for the interview with the casting people, all the actresses had beautiful wigs or hair. I decided to walk in and wear a bald cap I bought for a dollar, so they would have a rough impression of how I would look without hair. As I walked in, they were quiet. I told them I was a lousy cold reader—some people are good cold readers, but when they come on camera, they're not as good—so I asked them to test me. They did and I got the part.

Of course, once STAR TREK became a feature and was actually shooting, your daily preparation was a little more complicated than just putting on a bald cap.

I wouldn't wear a bald cap, even if they'd say to do it, because, as an actress, I think it looks artificial. So, they shaved my head every day. But even so, there was a lot of makeup on my head in some shots, because by lunch time, my hair would be growing out and they couldn't take a close-up of me. They put three coats of makeup on my head. It was so thick that, after shooting, it took me forty-five minutes to take the makeup off my head alone. And, after having my head shaved for awhile, my scalp was so soft that I started getting pimples like men get. So they sent me to a dermatologist, who gave me a lot of injections in my head. It was necessary, because Deltans are supposed to be naturally hairless, and my baldness couldn't look like something that had been shaved. And then, it was the rainy season, and I couldn't wear a hat because of the makeup, so I was constantly catching cold, which usually never happens to me.

Aside from the pains you took to look the part, how did you prepare for the role of Ilia?

In the beginning, I didn't know too much about the character. I thought they wanted a contrast to Spock, who's logical; my part is very emotional. I really didn't know about Delta, the planet of origin, I didn't know what Ilia was going to be. I discussed her with Gene Roddenberry the first week of shooting, and he wrote me a four-page synopsis of the woman and her background. I think he did that for Spock and everyone in the beginning of the original series. Deltans are very spiritual persons. They go beyond technology and the material world. They care for people, they read people's minds: they are much more attuned, because they are so caring. He made it sound so wonderful and beautiful that I was really falling in love with this person—except for one thing I personally did not agree with. On that planet, sex was beyond anything. An Earth person who made love to a Deltan would become a Deltan slave because they are sooo fantastic [laughs]. I think that's right for me, but I didn't feel that sex was something one had to do with everybody. That's where I had to do my acting.



Persis Khambatta as Ilia, a Deltan science officer on board the Enterprise.

"When I went in for the interview with the casting people, all the actresses had beautiful wigs or hair. I decided to walk in and wear a bald cap I bought for a dollar."

Persis Khambatta

Did you come up with anything you wanted to add yourself?

I think my personality comes out in the film. I couldn't make her a super-heroic person or anything like that, even though she was Deltan and superior in some ways. All I thought was that this person was human, she felt for people more than other people felt. It shows on the screen that she feels for her one-time love, played by Stephen Collins. I feel for him, and for other people. That is something that is real in me, and I wanted that to come out.

Director Wise has not only reshot the space walk scene, he has also ordered a *STAR TREK* trailer to be redone, to be narrated by Orson Welles. It had been Paramount's intention to get a teaser trailer for *STAR TREK—THE MOTION PICTURE* on theatre screens by late September. In a shakeup of the Paramount publicity department in early September, the teaser trailer was scrapped and a crash program was instituted to re-vamp the full length trailer then in

preparation, which was also deemed "unsatisfactory." Says Wise, "It was very pedestrian and uninteresting, with nothing visually exciting in it so we cut a little out, and then got Trumbull involved with it. He's put in some bits and pieces of film with miniatures, which should really help.

Even though the feature itself is not yet in its final cut, composer Jerry Goldsmith is already working on scenes and dramatic ideas. For inspiration, he has visited Trumbull and Dykstra's workshops to see the miniatures, and has been viewing what Wise describes as "fairly loose stuff—sequences without certain key scenes. As fast as Goldsmith can get the timing set, he's putting his score together. It's all piecemeal. We'll have to do the picture maybe not even in reels but in modules: sequences in time as far as the dubbing is concerned."

And so, while actors and actresses loop their lines, while sound technicians labor to produce innovative effects, while composer Jerry Goldsmith is screening rough cut sequences, while Douglas Trumbull and his associates are adding on film the wonders to which Leonard Nimoy had already reacted on a Paramount sound stage, we must wait until December 7 to find out if Wise, Roddenberry, and company have safely tread a path more perilous than any space walk: the fine line between those who say, "Please don't mess with it," and those who say, "Please, do it right at last." □