

Move Along Fixer: An Interview with Anthony Forrest

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Your artistic work is very related to music and not only to movies. How were your firsts forays in the music scene and in the acting world?

With music, it was always part of my home life growing up... my Dad played a steel Dobro Hawaiian lap top and sang. My mother sang, and my older sister played folk clubs when she was old enough. So music has been a great comfort in my life. I studied classical music for a number of years and at college majoring in music composition, but the call of the road and playing in a rock band was much more romantic. There was a time when I used to hitch hike into New York City from Montreal and busk in Washington Square park for food money, while crashing on friends couches. I was 17, full of a yearning for adventure and travel.

With acting as a child I watched practically ever Black & White movie they would show on the late late TV show. My Mom was a big movie buff and let me sneak in to watch. A serious interest in acting really began in high school, due to a TB illness I was being treated for, the doctors ruled out doing any gym or sports at school, so I joined the Drama Club. we did a whole range of one act plays and a Variety show. I was involved with a couple of other friends doing impersonations, it was a lot like a vaudeville act.

Acting would take you to the Star Wars project where you got the Fixer -Luke Skywalker's Tatooine friend- and a Sandtrooper parts. How did you get this two parts?

I was working England as an actor, had done a BBC TV series and the film 'The Eagles Has Landed' that Irene Lamb had done the casting for. She had me meet George Lucas in London. I was cast by George first as 'Fixer', Luke's friend and while on location in Tunisia, George asked me to also play the 'Sandtrooper' scene.

Even though it's been 35 years since the Tunisia shooting, do you have a fond memory or an anecdote of those days working with Koo Stark (Camie), Garrick Hagon (Biggs) and Mark Hamill (Luke)?

We didn't have a lot of time to bond, but I did manage to get us out horseback riding together... something the insurance company would have... freaked about, but I thought we needed to do something real together that wasn't work... that was adventurous... like a gang of friends would do.

Looking Fixer's deleted scene, it seems like the character has a bad attitude towards Luke Skywalker, even some hostility, did George Lucas make some indication about the level or kind of friendship that Luke and Fixer had?

I think there was an element of rivalry and close friendship, between Luke and Fixer. The idea of Luke leaving... is one of mixed feelings for Fixer, losing a friend and being left behind. It was like the transition between high school and college. Those friendships fade as life offers new experiences for growth and development, 'the heroes journey' is active in all our lives. And perhaps a little jealousy from Fixer being tied to a job and relationship with Camie.

In your Sandtrooper scene you interact again with Hamill and with Sir Alec Guinness (Obi-wan Kenobi), how was sharing a scene with an actor of Sir Alec caliber? Do you have some special anecdote of that particular scene?

For me it was a surprise, as I was called in the last minute to play the scene. Sir Alec was, very kind to work with, I would as an artist he was a Jedi Master. The scene came together very naturally despite how awkward the costume is to move in. I remember almost falling over backwards when they put the back pack on. I was standing in sand.

Many years later you started to participate in Star Wars related conventions, what's your

opinion about this kind of events and of the fans that are capable to know every tidbit of information and details about characters such as Fixer?

I think the events are great for the fans, the opportunity to interact. I learn a lot about life from the fans and travel. I wish the promoters offered better food for the fans and some live entertainment. Also, the promoters that are only there to earn as much money from the fans as possible should get out of the business. It gets grossly expensive for a family to attend some conventions. I like to take time to chat with fans, and promoters often just want to keep the lines moving.

In your website it can be seen the art of a possible Fixer comic written by you, how did this idea come about? Did you know that Anthony Daniels had the chance to write a comic about C-3PO? Have you seriously considered the possibility of writing about Fixer or Star Wars in general?

I had heard that Anthony Daniels had done a comic. Well, fans had been asking me about Fixer and what I personally thought happened to him after Luke left. It got me thinking more about Fixer and his own story and the consequences of Luke being a rebel. I have been writing for many years... screenplays etc... storytelling runs deep in my family. I have been developing a story for Fixer and Camie that takes them on their own adventure as outlaws on Tatooine. So yes, it's serious.

About your musical side, I've been listening to 2008's Phanteons of the Tribes. In the beginning it was out of curiosity and the desire to know your non-Star Wars work, however I have to admit that the experience of listening this album is something special, I would dare to say that I find some Pink Floyd's guitar solos influences in the songs. Do you consider Pink Floyd as a musical influence? Which musicians have influenced your work?

There is quite a spectrum of music, from Buffy Saint Marie to Frank Zappa to a nest of classical composers both contemporary and experimental and a lot of music in between. Yes, Pink Floyd great guitar sounds with texture and atmosphere. They take you on a journey, a trip. I appreciate artists that create wonderful concept albums. Again the storyteller in me wants the beginning, middle and end, in away those albums becomes a musical book. The canvas of music is vast to work with... and I am always striving to let the chains go and set myself free creatively.

Which was the concept or the main theme when creating an album as Phanteons of the Tribes?

Interesting you should ask. The music is a series of experiments developed for 'Pantheons of the Tribe' a sci-fi story in screenplay form that I wrote. It was inspired in part by a movie from the 1960's called 'Privilege'. 'Pantheons of the Tribe' is set at a time in the future, when lyrics have been officially banned for political reasons and government's fear of lyrics inciting the public towards revolution. Dario, our hero, a popular local DJ, takes over a radio show and for the first time in a long time, adds lyrics to the music he is playing on the radio. Through his fast rising popularity his audience transforms him, and he himself, into a Messiah figure and real threat to the establishment and status quo.

It's been difficult to find Anthony Forrest's musical material, do you have some site or way that fans can find your music?

I have been studying the whole new system of how the music industry operates since the advent of the internet. For an artist the present structure really does nothing more than get the big record companies and sales outlets like iTunes a larger share of what is less money. Many established musicians are finding it difficult to survive. So that said, I am setting up my music website at www.awforrest.com to post and sell mp3's, Vinyl albums and CD's from. The website is new so there is still a lot of construction going on, over time I hope to offer an interactive approach to accessing music. So for now people can email me through the site

www.awforrest.com and I will send them downloads or hardcopies when they are available.

Back in the galaxy far, far away, the release of the Star Wars saga in Blu-ray and the inclusion of the deleted scenes may allow that many people know more about your participation in this classic film with your Fixer character, do you have any comments or thoughts about this?

I have learnt from the fans that behind-the-scenes, deleted scenes etc., hold a special place in the whole story of 'Star Wars' and how it came to be. The journey of the creation is something that touches each of us on a personal level. So for even non, 'Star Wars' fans, how 'Star Wars' came into being and stories surrounding it are if not important, fascinating folk lore.

What crosses your mind when you hear the phrase "These aren't the droids we're looking for"?

It reminds me of Alec Guinness and having the opportunity to work with a master craftsman. He knew exactly how important the scene was, the Jedi Mind Trick is that moment when, as an audience we go yes!... there is something very special going on here. It's one of those magic moments in film history. An honor to be part of it.

Please give a few words to all the members of The Force Peru, Star Wars fans and fans of your work.

Hopefully one day, I will have the opportunity to visit Peru and share some time with the fans there, hearing their stories and connecting. Until then may Peace and the force be with you.

In the name of all peruvian fans and especially of The Force Peru members we would like to thank your kindness in accepting this interview. We wish you success in all your projects and we wish you the best always. May the Force be With You.

Humberto, thank you and 'Move along...'

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