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Q&A: Rennie joins 'Star Trek' in final season of 'Discovery'

BEHIND THE SCREENS WITH JOSHUA MALONI

@joshuamalani

"Star Trek: Discovery" brought the famed franchise back to the small screen in 2017, and paved the way for the televised (or streaming) return of Spock (here and in "Star Trek: Strange New Worlds"), Seven of Nine, the Borg, Data and Capt. Jean-Luc Picard (via "Star Trek: Picard"). It expanded the origin story of some of "Star Trek's" most famous faces, while gifting fans with amazing new characters including Capt. Michael Burnham, Emperor Georgiou, Lt. Cmdr. Stamets, Cleveland "Book" Booker and Mr. Saru.

The series is taking its final spin around space with the crew's biggest mission yet: to find (and protect) the origin of life.

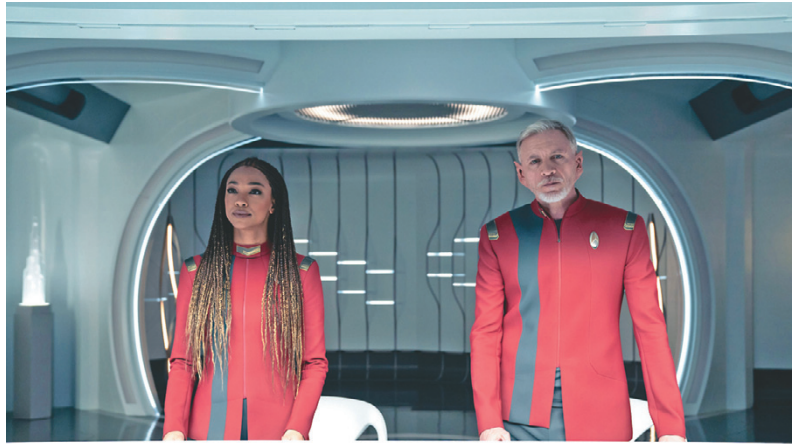
A "red directive" has been issued, which means the Federation is on panic (attack) alert. A recently discovered, 800-year-old Romulan artifact poses both the greatest reward and the greatest risk the galaxy has encountered.

Callum Keith Rennie has joined the "Discovery" team for this assignment, playing Rayner, a rigid captain whose tunnel vision immediately clashes with Burnham's freestyling, undo-the-Kobayashi-Maru piloting. Rayner sees the problem and dives headfirst into fixing it; Burnham, on the other hand, considers the consequences when targeting each task.

In their first pairings, Rayner and Burnham (naturally) find their lives in jeopardy – and need each of their ships to work together to prevent lost lives.

Episodes one, two and three of "Star Trek: Discovery" are now streaming on Paramount+. New stories debut each Thursday.

Rennie, who had no plans to become an actor until he was college-aged-plus, now has more than 100 credits to his name, including "The Umbrella Academy," "Battlestar



Sonequa Martin-Green as Capt. Michael Burnham and Callum Keith Rennie as Rayner in "Star Trek: Discovery." (Photo: Marni Grossman /Paramount+)

Galactica," "The Man in the High Castle," and Christopher Nolan's groundbreaking "Memento." His characters are often gritty and no-nonsense, though the actor was affable and funny in this edited Q&A.

BTS: What can you tell us about your character?

Callum Keith Rennie: He's from another time and another way of doing things. It's strange. He's a bit of an authoritarian, dictator-style commander, and a wildcard at the same time. He's trying to fit into a world that he doesn't know after actually getting a demotion, so he's just doing his best.

BTS: Obviously, this is one of the world's great film and TV franchises – certainly one of the largest. I'm wondering at what point does it get on your radar, or at what point do you get on its radar, to join up with the "Discovery" team?

Callum Keith Rennie: That was out of the blue, really. It was just like people letting me know that there was a part in the show, if I'd be interested in reading it, and seeing if I liked it. And if I liked it, did I want to do it. And then I went, "OK."

And not really putting into context the entire 60-year canon of like the whole thing. I was just kind of, "No, no, this is an action/adventure. You get to ride in a space thing. It'll be great."

BTS: I mean, I think you have to give a little bit of attention, certainly, to the 60 years, the backstory and that. And because it is one of the world's most well-known franchises – and because its fans are so passionate, shall we say – does it give you pause, or does it make you more excited for the opportunity?

Callum Keith Rennie: See, that's a complex question, because you're coming into set, like I go, "It's 'Star Trek.' OK." It's like "Battlestar Galactica." You're coming into it, it's like, "Is it what it was before? No. It's this. OK. This is 'Star Trek.' This is 'Discovery.'"

And I wasn't being trite. I just know to go to work is not to think about the history that came before – though respected and understood. There's a whole bunch of stuff and stories that I can't possibly learn about in the two weeks before going to shoot.

You just go find the key points that you need to know of how this evolved into what it is, because I watched the earliest season, the first "Star Trek," and just popped in at little bits of the other ones; but I didn't have a great understanding of where everything was and where it had gone. So, I just played off, "OK, I will figure that out, or get the information as I go."

And I'm learning now, like by doing these (interviews), actually. I forgot, completely, the world of "Star Trek," and its fan base, and a lot of that focus, and it's amazing.

BTS: It's been fun watching you integrate with this cast. It's been fun getting to know your character. Of course, this is a cast that's been together for a long time; this is a crew that's been together for a long time – through several seasons now. When you walk in and you see the cast, and you see the crew, and you see how they operate, what are some of your first thoughts?

Callum Keith Rennie: Intimidated. That's it. Like, completely out of the gate. Because you know you're walking into a franchise, but also you're putting that at the back of your mind. You're putting on the outfit. You go, "I'm a captain on 'Star Trek.'" You're putting that out of your mind.

For me, I was putting a lot of things out just to do the work. And to join any established thing, you know you're a fish out of water. You know you're the new kid in school. And you don't know who your alliances are: who you're trusting; who you're not trusting; who will become friends, enemies. Most of the people I've never worked with before, so you come in kind of raw and, much like Rayner does through the season – like I am like through the season – as I'm trying to gain footing and sit in that place on the show, within the stories.

•Read more at wnypapers.com.

IN THE NEWS

Concert series continues in Youngstown

"Music From 'Tin Pan Alley'" will be presented as part of the concert series April 13 at Youngstown Presbyterian Church.

This event will feature well-known Youngstown-area musicians Claudia Andres (piano), Jerry Andres (string bass and vocals), Marcia Jones (Vocals), Monte Jones (Guitar and vocals), Mark Miller (alto saxophone) and drummer Jim Jeremka from

East Aurora.

Patrons in the area might recognize this group of musicians from multiple other groups, including Jerry Andres and the Yacht Rockets. In this presentation, the focus is on pop music of the 20th century.

Admission is free and open to the public, but a free-will offering will be available. Contributions are accepted, and will be used to fund future concert and musical events.

The church is located at 100 Church St. Doors open at 6:30.

HAL: 'Manifest Destiny of Dickersonville'

The Historical Association of Lewiston's next program, "The Manifest Destiny of Dickersonville," will be presented at 7 p.m. Thursday, April 25, at the Lutheran Church of the Messiah Fellowship Hall, 915 Oneida St.

A press release stated, "The Manifest Destiny of Dickersonville" comes from a quote by author William Pool and aptly describes the topic of this program. Ann Marie Linnabery will present the history of the area now known as Dickersonville in the Town of Lewiston. She will go back to its

geologic formation and move forward through time as part of an Indian trail, a military encampment, an early pioneer settlement, an agricultural district, and a bustling neighborhood of inter-related families, to its present situation as a busy crossroads sustained by farming and recreational activities.

"You will learn how this settlement with the long name and big aspirations went from an active social and religious community to an almost forgotten hamlet."

This community event is free and open to all, but donations are welcomed to help support the Lewiston Museum. Refreshments will be served.

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