

# PROFILE: GREG CANNOM

BY ROBERT DRISCOL

If you do not recognize his name, you most certainly will recognize his work: *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, *The Lost Boys*, *Hannibal*, *The Mask*, *Titanic*, *The Howling*, *Bicentennial Man*, *Mrs. Doubtfire*, *Hook*, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Slayer*, the list goes on and on.

Special make-up effects artist and Monsterpalooza patron, **Greg Cannom**, is a nine-time Oscar nominee and a three time winner for, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008), *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993) and *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992). He is the first makeup artist to win Oscars two years in a row and he is also the first makeup artist in the history of the Academy (shared with **Wesley Wofford**) to win a Technical Achievement Award for the development of special modified silicone material for makeup applications used in motion pictures. A veteran of over 150 films, Greg Cannom has been responsible for creating some of the most memorable characters in modern film history.

Of all the films he's done over the course of his career, it is *Bram Stoker's Dracula*, of which he is most proud. Originally hired to design and apply the old-age makeup

on **Gary Oldman**, Greg's collaboration with both Oldman and director/producer **Francis Ford Coppola**, resulted in him also designing and applying the Werewolf Creature and the Bat Creature make-ups.

"Coppola would spend hours and hours showing us old pictures and paintings from Europe and sharing his vision of the film. I knew exactly what he wanted and how to make it work. At one point he said to me, 'I know nothing about FX makeup, do whatever you want'. With that kind of support, and all the time we spend with him, it was actually an easy film to design for because I knew exactly what was needed.

While Greg's work on *Dracula* earned him his first Oscar, it is the Mason Verger (**Gary Oldman**) character makeup from *Hannibal*, which is his favorite. "I wanted the makeup to look as disturbing as possible with no cgi and I think I achieved that. I created my modern-day Frankenstein character and I have not seen anything else like it. It is my favorite makeup I've done. I'm also very proud of the character makeup I did on **Robin Williams** in *Mrs. Doubtfire* and also the **Jim Carey** makeup in *The Mask*."

(con'td on p. 12)



ABOVE: Greg at the Premiere Products booth at a previous Monsterpalooza

BELOW: Just a few examples of Greg's Oscar-winning work on "Bram Stoker's Dracula"

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Greg makes up Gary Oldman for "Hannibal"...

people. Oh yeah, and I also won an Oscar!"

Greg goes on to reflect - "When in a bad or difficult situation, I always try to focus on the positives. This business can be so rewarding but it can also be very nasty. People will take credit for your work and directors, producers and talent will demand things that just don't

Devine, we got it done on time. On set, director, **Steven Spielberg** came up to me and said it was the best aging makeup he had ever seen. That movie opened up a lot of doors for me and I got so much work because of it."

Most recently Greg has spent a lot of time working in India on a couple of big budget films for Bollywood. *Kapoor and Sons* features a classic Cannom aging makeup on actor **Rishi Kapoor**, and the most recent film, *Fan*, has Indian superstar, **Shah Rukh Khan** playing two different roles - a twenty something young man, and a fifty-plus celebrity idol. "The makeup in this film is so special because Khan is in his fifties and is made to look like a different character, some thirty years younger. Thanks to the great help from **Harry and Red chilli's Vex cgi**, this is an amazing transformation and a must see film." *Fan* opens in India on April 16th.

When offering advise to young aspiring makeup artists, Greg has this to say: "If you really want to do makeup, get some good books and learn how to do coloring and character makeup for the theater. That's the best way to learn. As a student at Cyprus College, I did age and character makeup on over 200 productions for the theater department. That type of work really helped me hone my skills and learn the craft. I believe there are three keys to success: fate, being at the right place at the right time, and talent. Also,

(con'td on p. 32)

(con'td from p. 10)

Despite the amazing work and acclaim of these movies, Greg's favorite film to work on was, *Titanic*.

"At first I thought, 'Oh no, not another Titanic movie,' but then I read the script and I knew it was going to be an epic film like, *The Ten Commandments*. I knew I had to be a part of it. I was hired to do old age makeup on **Gloria Stuart** and it was wonderful going to set and doing makeup out of the kit, no prosthetics or anything else, just makeup. Director **James Cameron** would come up to me almost everyday and say 'Thank you so much for being here, she (Gloria) looks amazing.' It was a very satisfying work environment and a wonderful film, I'm so happy I was a part of it. The work I did on this film really helped to perfect my technique when we (Wes Wofford and **Glen Hanz**) created a modern day aging on **Russell Crowe** for *The Insider*."

Every industry has its ups and downs and the 'makeup biz' is no different. Some work can bring you great praise while other work brings you nothing but pain and suffering. One such film brought Greg both - *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.

"It was a very difficult experience for me - a lot of stuff going on behind the scenes during filming which was bad for a lot of people. But I knew that I had to be there so I just reminded myself everyday - 'do your work and keep your mouth shut.' On the plus side I got to work with **Taraji P Hensen**, **Cate Blanchett** and **Tilda Swinton**, all of whom are amazing actors and wonderful

make sense. In the end, no matter what people said, I always did what 'I' wanted to see on the screen because I



...some on-set touch-ups...

have to be happy with it too."

Greg's expertise on aging makeups is now legendary, but it was his work on the film, *Hook*, which took his career to the next level. "I was asked to design and apply an aging makeup for **Maggie Smith's** character, **Granny Wendy**. I asked for six weeks to design and prep the makeup - they gave me one week. With the help of **Mitch**



...at the PPI booth at Monsterpalooza.

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## CANNOM con'td from p.12

always treat people as you like to be treated. Sometimes this can be hard. "On one film a director demanded that I take the red 'out' of an actor's face and when I tried to explain to him why it wouldn't work he yelled, 'don't give me your shop talk, just f\*\*king do it!' So I took a sponge with no make up and pretended to take the red out. The director said 'perfect', walked away and we shot the scene. The makeup looked great but if I took the red out, it would have looked grey on film and ruined."

Looking back on his body of work so far, Greg shared a few of his thoughts: "I'm pretty happy with how most of my makeups turned out. However, there are some situations I would change. For the film *Watchmen*, I did the Sally Jupiter makeup in the morning one day and it looked fantastic. Eighteen hours later they decided to film the close-ups. The makeup had worn itself out by then and wasn't suitable for the camera. They kept the shots in the film and it looks terrible. Looking back on it, I should have just ripped the makeup off and refused to allow them to film it. That's one situation I would have handled differently."

"Also, I am a very shy person and one of the hardest things for me to do is talk to actors. I know that has hurt me in my career. I always get along with everybody, especially the makeup and hair departments and the rest of the crew, but I've never been one to open up and talk to actors. In the end though, it's my makeup they should judge, not my shyness."

"I've had a great career, I've done everything I've wanted to do - characters, monsters, age makeup, creatures and everything else in between . . . I'm happy."

As Greg Cannom's career continues to inspire and change the art of makeup, one thing which always makes him happy is Monsterpalooza: "I always look forward to Monsterpalooza and I have such a good time. I get to catch up with people I've known for twenty plus years who I normally would never see. I meet new people, see new products, make-ups and artwork - It's so much more than just a fan show. I love hanging out in the PPI booth because they have the best makeup demos, the best products and they are like family. If you want to learn about makeup, hair, masks, sculpting and costumes, this is the place to do it!"

Come visit Greg Cannom all weekend long at the PPI booth (#305).

## MILLER con'td from p.23

invited me and my parents to see him when he was starring in *The Fantasticks* in Tokyo.

**CFQ:** So you were essentially this film's Fay Wray.

**LM:** Oh, yes.

**CFQ:** And being Fay Wray carries with it great responsibilities. You have to have a love scene with a big monkey that isn't there, you have to be a good screamer, you have to sit in the middle of a giant fake ape hand...

**LM:** The hand wasn't any problem. It was cupped, so there wasn't really any danger, it wasn't like it was just flat. Rhodes was on-set for that as well, and he helped me there, too. Only thing was that it was really high up when we were shooting it, and I'm kind-of scared of heights.

**CFQ:** Did you have to deal with your fear of heights a lot?

**LM:** Well, that sequence with the Tokyo Tower, where I'm climbing up the scaffolding? That was a set, and that was really high up, too. That was scary.

**CFQ:** How many takes was that?

**LM:** We did two, I think. And that was enough!

**CFQ:** And what about the screaming?

**LM:** The screams I was great at. Those are all my screams, by the way, those are real.

**CFQ:** Yeah, actually, it turns out the rest of your dialogue was redubbed.

**LM:** Yeah, when I heard my voice in the movie, I couldn't believe it.

**CFQ:** It's awful.

**LM:** It doesn't really fit.

**CFQ:** What happened?

**LM:** I wasn't a member of the Screen Actors Guild. This was a co-production between Rankin/Bass and Toho, and I had signed with Toho. When Arthur Rankin took it back to the US and wanted to redub it, I wasn't in that union.

**CFQ:** Did you know it was happening? Did you at least get a chance to plead your case?

**LM:** No, it came as a complete surprise.

**CFQ:** So you had this starring role in *King Kong Escapes*, and then you had a small role in *The Green Slime*, and then there's nothing else on IMDB. What happened there?

**LM:** My parents came home to America, and I decided to come with them. I had an offer to do a TV series in Japan, but I was nineteen and I didn't feel ready to be living there alone, so I came back. I was in an episode of *My Three Sons*, called, "The Other Woman" - I was the Other Woman - and I did some TV commercials. But, you know, the film industry is very different in Japan, there's a lot of respect for each other and people are more polite. Coming back to the US, particularly at that time, with hippies and drugs and everything, I wasn't used to that and things were just... sleazy. So I got out, closed that door behind me.

**CFQ:** But now you're making the rounds at conventions. How'd that come about?

**LM:** Well, in 2013, Brett Homenick of *G-Fan* in Japan got in touch with me. He mentioned he knew a friend of mine and that opened the door. And then I started getting invited to conventions - I started going in 2014. Just this January we went to three events in Tokyo - that was great, because I'd been wanting to go back to Japan. I took the train to Harajuku, where my modeling agency was. The city's completely changed.

**CFQ:** What's it like meeting the fans?

**LM:** It's an experience. You know, I meet these middle-aged guys, and when they talk to me it's like they become ten year old boys again - I guess Susan Watson really means something to them. And they're introducing their kids to *King Kong Escapes*, now - this past weekend, at Cinema Wasteland in Cleveland, I met two families who were passing down their love for these movies to their kids. It was really awesome.

Dan Persons is Editor Emeritus of *Cinefantastique* Magazine.

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