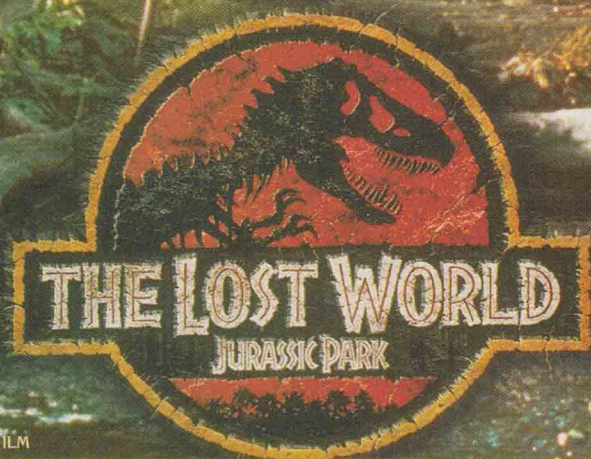


Harking back to King Kong, stegosaurus introduce *The Lost World's* protagonists to the dinosaur world.



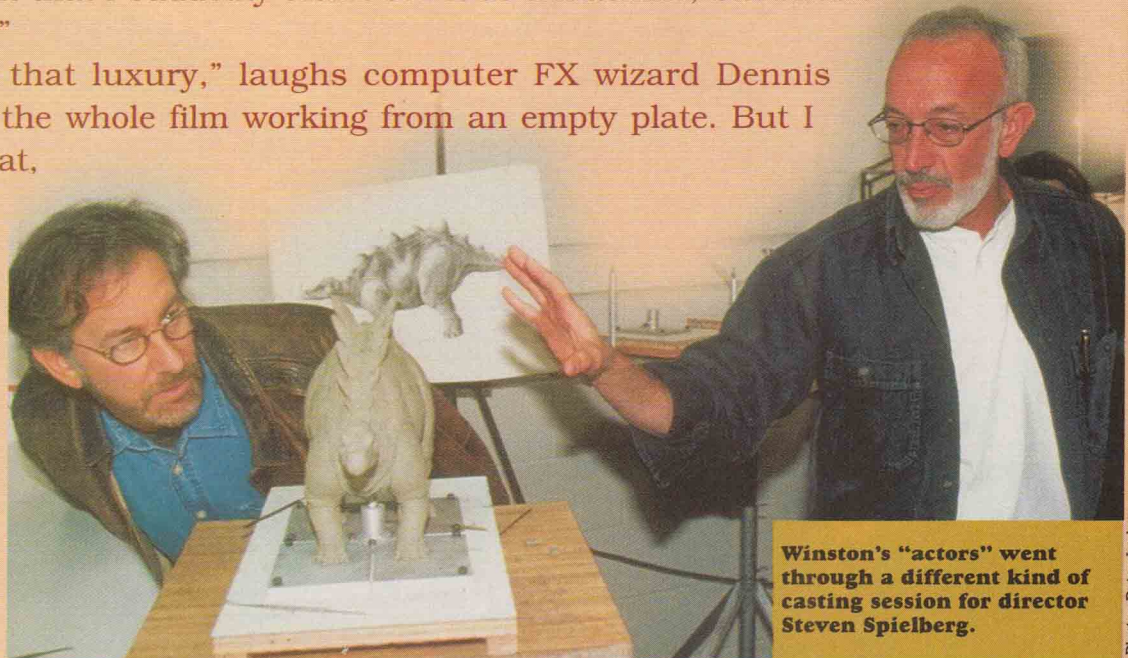
# Dino

Photo: ILM

I was on the set the day the T. rex put its head in the tent," recalls Stan Winston, *The Lost World: Jurassic Park's* live-action monster master. "I knew there was 9 tons of dinosaur sniffing around these people, and even though I created this thing, I got so caught up in it that I suddenly didn't see it as a machine, but rather as a real animal."

"I didn't have that luxury," laughs computer FX wizard Dennis Muren. "I spent the whole film working from an empty plate. But I have to admit that,

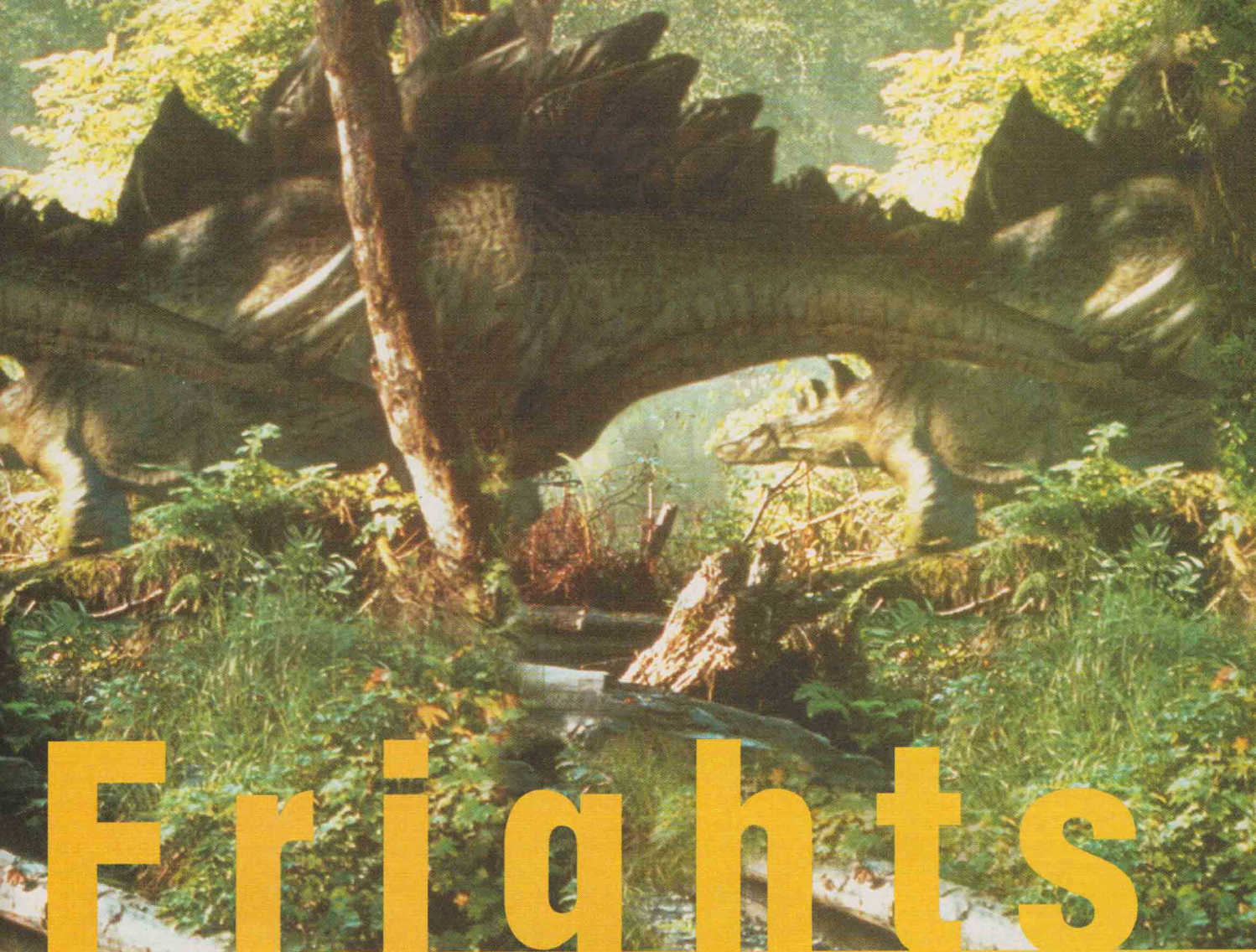
as we went through the steps and got closer to a completed shot, I did get excited. At a certain point it was, 'Jeez! We really did it!'"



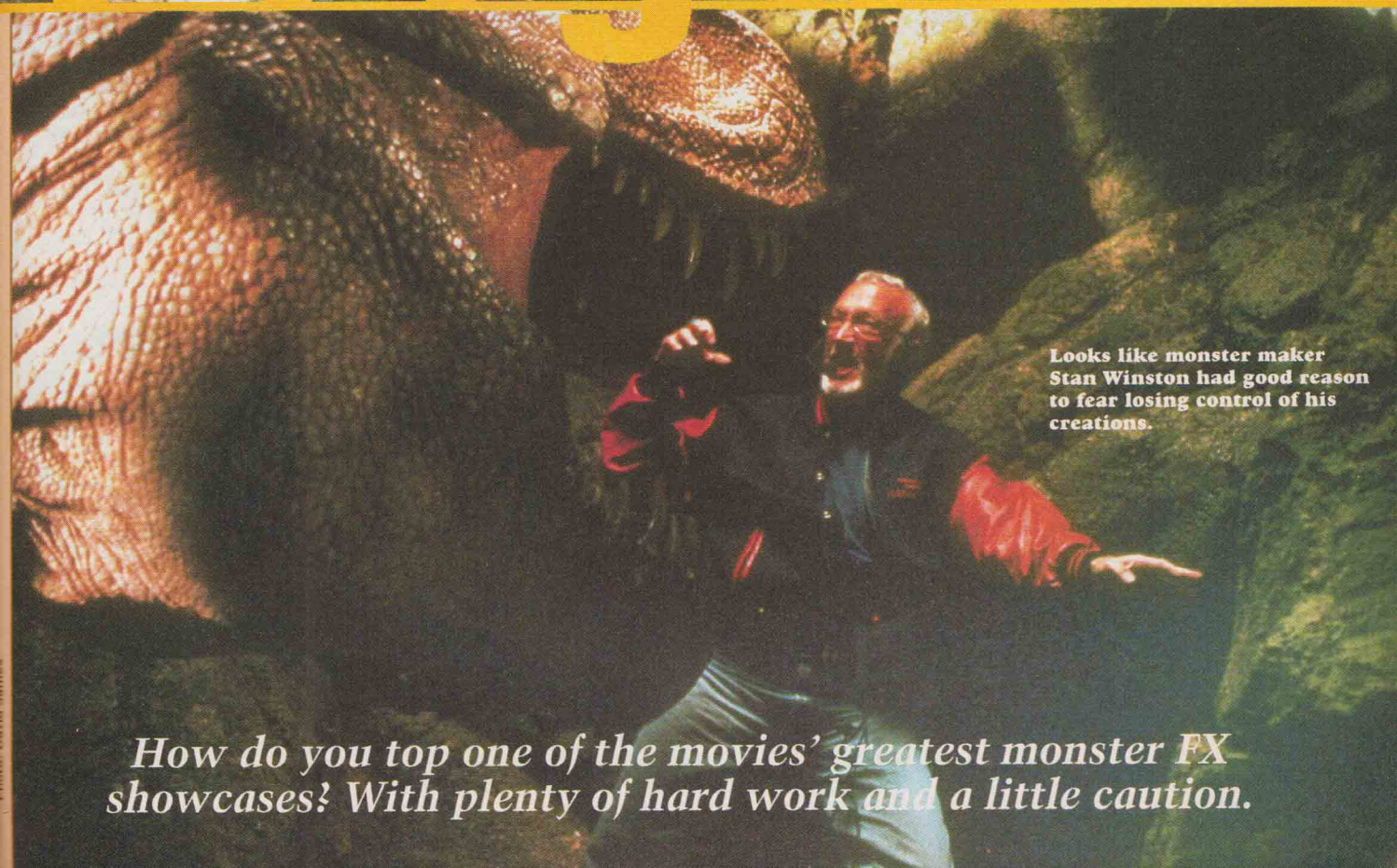
Winston's "actors" went through a different kind of casting session for director Steven Spielberg.

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Photo: Peter Iovino



# Frights



Looks like monster maker Stan Winston had good reason to fear losing control of his creations.

*How do you top one of the movies' greatest monster FX showcases? With plenty of hard work and a little caution.*

The duo, along with physical FX pro Michael Lantieri, are gathered around a table in the great outdoors of the Universal Studios backlot, not too far from where their collective creations did an island's worth of damage. The trio is a contrasting mix: Muren takes a joking attitude with occasional technical asides; Winston is professorial in tone, mixing particulars with general overviews and a penchant for calling *Lost World's* dinosaurs "actors"; Lantieri is quietly confident, picking his spots to offer insights. But all three are in agreement that when the call came to tackle *The Lost World*, the big question was: Could they top *Jurassic Park*? "We felt we could," says Lantieri. "A lot had happened with the technology over the previous four years. We knew the limitations would not be as great."

"I spent a lot of time thinking about this," says Muren. "For me, there had to be a next step. I was not interested in doing *The Lost World* if it was going to be *Jurassic Park: Side B*. There had been major advances in technology and shop design, so I felt we could take that step forward."

Muren, a veteran artist who's well versed in the possibilities of FX but not inclined to overdo the jargon in discussing them, felt that recent developments in the film industry and computer FX pointed toward the possibility of breaking new boundaries with *Lost World*. "We spent a lot of time in the beginning trying to figure out what was new visually," he recalls. "One thing is certain: The tools have gotten better since movies like *Dragonheart*, *Jumanji* and *Casper*. Things can go faster. We have better skin and better renderings of characters. Lighting is more complex."

"The real trick is going back to the conception of the shot and not limiting the director," he continues. "We knew from the last film that Steven would have some outrageous ideas that he wanted to see in this one. And we felt very strongly that we had the technology to give him what he wanted."

The consensus that they could indeed outdo *Jurassic Park* was reached early during the first meetings between Muren, Winston and the director. "We knew this was going to be a Steven Spielberg movie from the top down and that we would be creating things to fit his vision," says Winston. "And knowing Steven, it did not come as a surprise during those meetings when he said, 'Bring more to the table than you've ever brought before.'"

The FX wizards took Spiel-



The terrifying trailer scene gives audiences twice the T. rex action.

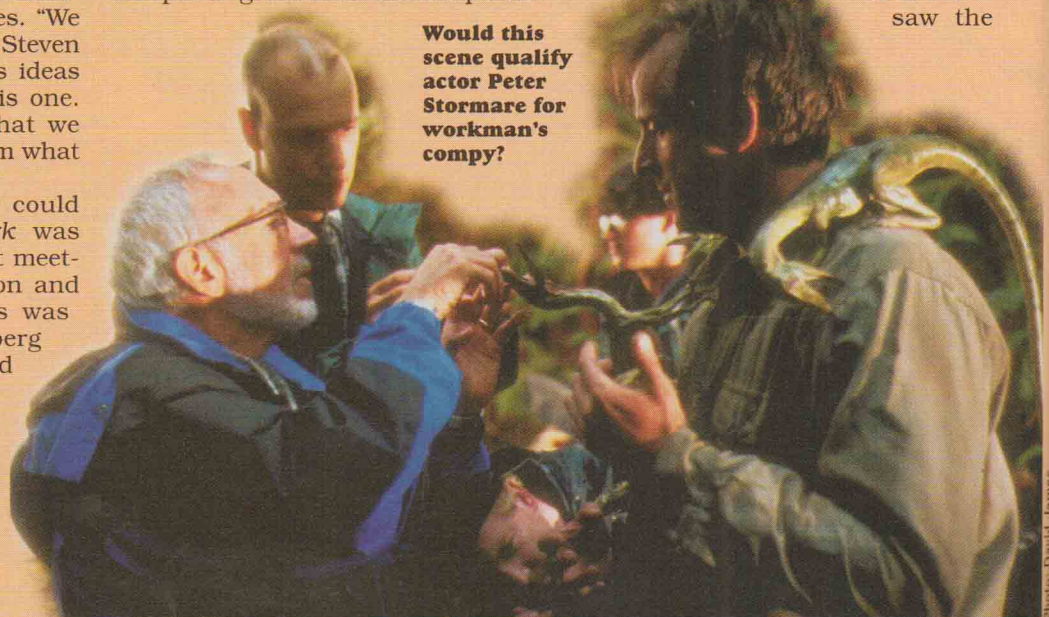
berg at his word, upping the dinosaur ante from the seven different species and five CGI creations in *Jurassic Park* to 10 species and 80 digital beasts for *The Lost World*. Muren also acknowledges that "the technology would allow shots to run longer; we could put more in them, and the dinosaurs could move faster and do a lot more in terms of performance. In *Jurassic Park*, the dinosaurs only had a couple of attitudes. In this film we were able to give them a dozen."

Winston went back to the drawing board in preparation for the *Lost World* stampede, hitting the research books and, with Mark "Crash" McCreery heading up the design squad, reconceptualizing and sculpting both full-sized models and puppets that served as blueprints for their computer-generated counterparts.

During the process, Winston found that T. rexes of various sizes were going to occupy a great deal of his time. "One of the more difficult challenges we faced was Steven's insistence that the baby T. rex have a lot of screen time and that it would be carried around by the actors quite a bit," the artist says. "Steven would say, 'I'm going to spend a lot of time on this actor. I want him to be in people's arms,' and he needed to be self-contained in terms of the mechanism." Winston responded with a 50-pound mechanical mockup, boasting 45 different points of motion and controlled by microwave frequency. "Everything in the baby T. rex was pointed toward giving the actors the idea that this was very real."

Likewise, Muren saw the

Would this scene qualify actor Peter Stormare for workman's compy?



# Triple Duty in "The Lost World"

**C**redit watchers were no doubt given pause while watching the end titles of *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*, which list David Koepp not only as screenwriter, but also 2nd-unit director and, finally, T. rex chow in the guise of a character named Unlucky Bastard. "People in the movie industry have been saying for years that all writers should be eaten," laughs Koepp, who also discussed the film in Fango #163. "This time they got their wish."

Koepp gave himself the opportunity to step in front of the camera during *The Lost World's* rewrite stage. "I was getting ready to turn in the final draft of the screenplay, and I had added a scene where this poor guy is running down the street and the T. rex tears him to bits. I really wanted to do it, so I told Steven [Spielberg] that I was not going to give him the script until he agreed to let me play Unlucky Bastard. He said, 'All right,' and then added, 'Don't make me cut you out of the film.'"

But when Koepp the actor reported to the Burbank location for his date with death, he was not a happy camper. "It was horrible!" he recalls. "I'd never been in a movie before and had always made fun of actors. But I lapsed right into that actor mentality when they sent me to wardrobe. I took one look at the costume and said, 'I'm not going to wear that! It makes me look fat!'"

"It was really hard," he continues. "I had to stay up all night and be alert. We did 11 takes of this scene where I had to run full speed down the street, run into a glass door and fall down on the cement. It hurt, but Steven kept wanting to do it over and over. I'm convinced he was just getting even with me for something."

Having made his feature directorial debut last year with *The Trigger Effect*, Koepp was also given the chance to pilot several 2nd-unit sequences. This task, the writer reports, unexpectedly led him to helm the 1st unit on such non-dinosaur sequences as the early subway scene and the lead characters' boat arriving on the island. "Steven had to go to New York for eight days for a family commitment and did not want to shut down the entire production, so he said I could do some 1st-unit stuff while he was gone if I wanted to," Koepp recalls. "I really wanted to do it, because I felt it was an opportunity to learn about directing on a larger level of filmmaking with none of the risk. I knew that if I blew something, the worst that would happen was that Steven would have to come back and redo it."

But thanks to modern technology, Koepp was never far from Spielberg's practiced eye. "We set up a fiber-optic telephone hookup between the set and Steven's apartment in New York," he explains. "It had two monitors; one showed what the camera was seeing and the other had Steven's face in his apartment. He'd be sitting there in a chair, giving me tips on the scenes I was filming. He'd look at a shot and say, 'That's nice. Why don't you try this and this?' He would give me instruc-



**Julianne Moore looks worried that more than her dialogue scenes might wind up cut.**

Photo: David James

tions, then go out to dinner, get loaded, come back to his apartment and criticize my work," Koepp laughs.

In his day job as writer, Koepp suffered the expected realities of the filmmaking process and the alterations it requires. A few were minor, like taking the name "Rex" off the doghouse of the pooch that suffers an Unlucky Bastard-like fate. Others were larger, including expository scenes that were 86'd in favor of wall-to-wall dinosaur action—deletions that, for the sharp-eyed viewer, result in a couple of minor continuity errors in the finished product. Koepp took the latter situation in stride.

"The reality is that two hours, 10 minutes is about the limit for a movie like this," he says. "Consequently, unless the exposition or backstory could be conducted in a speeding jeep that was running away from a dinosaur, it pretty much had to go. I don't think it would serve any purpose to tell you which scenes were cut. But it's safe to say that if it appears that something was cut out, it was."

—Marc Shapiro

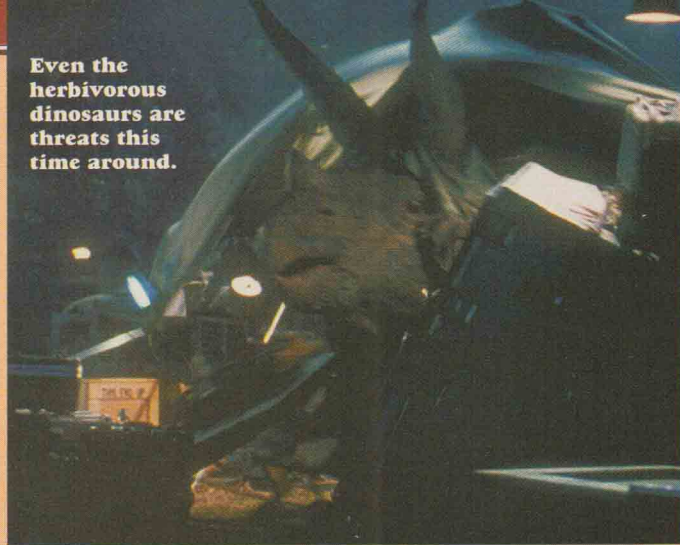
computer side of *The Lost World* as a formidable task on a number of different fronts. "There's the scene where the packy creature is drugged by the hunters, pulled by ropes and is stumbling and falling down—that was a hell of a lot of complex animation," he says. "A big problem for us on this film was the fact that we were dealing with so many dinosaurs. We had as many as 40 compys in some scenes, and each one had to be animated by hand. In the round-up sequence, we had as many as 50 dinosaurs in a single shot, all running in relation to each other and to scale. There were motorcycles running underneath dinosaurs' legs and jeeps driving alongside them. We had to make all that appear real and have the dinosaurs look like living creatures."

Always a stickler for detail, Muren took plenty of R & D time in refurbishing the old dinosaurs and creating the latest crop. "At the model stage, we came up with new paint jobs so that the old dinosaurs would look more up to date," he explains. "We also came up with a more realistic look to the muscles, bone structure and skin. At the animation stage, we came up with more stuff in terms of animal behavior. We did our research just like we did on *Jurassic Park*, especially when it came to the newer dinosaurs. But what we discovered in the pre-production stage was that the animals themselves suggested movement and how they would interact with the live actors."

Muren offers

that the raptors were among the key recipients of the technological progression. "The script dictated that they would be much more aggressive and faster-moving in this film, and have lower-to-the-ground profiles. I recall that in *Jurassic Park* the technology was at a point where, figuratively speaking, we could hardly get them moving. Now that we were able to do that, we got them moving in high gear. We could have them jump through glass, leap

**Even the herbivorous dinosaurs are threats this time around.**



off cars and gobble people up in high grass. It was fantastic that we were able to do so much more with them."

Winston also found much to his liking in the re-development of the *T. rex*. He enjoyed the notion of having two of the monsters to contend with, but was also aware of the inherent difficulty



**The compys want to know if Dieter (Stormare) tastes like chicken.**

Photo: David James

Filming with a crane was the safest way to capture the T. rexes in action.



in refining their control systems so that the pair could perform in tandem. "What we ended up with was much heavier robots [9 tons each, as compared to *Jurassic Park's* 9,000-pound lightweight] that were able to move faster and be more violent and stronger and, at the same time, could stop on a dime."

Winston's confidence that his reconstructed charges would be up to any task was put to an immediate test not long after filming began, in the sequence of the pair ripping a car to shreds and chowing down on the unfortunate Eddie. It was a test that Winston admits he was not sure the dinos were up to. "The scene called for the T. rexes [mounted on tracks for maximum speed and mobility] to come up on the car, rip it apart, tear the roof off, grab a stuntman by the leg and lift him up," he recalls. "Steven insisted that the T. rex rip the entire roof off. Now,

that roof weighed 200 pounds, so I was quite nervous about whether the robot would be accurate enough and strong enough and yet not get damaged in the process. It still had quite a bit of acting to do. But finally my attitude was, 'OK. If we break it, we break it.' Fortunately, when we shot that scene, the T. rex took hold of the roof, ripped it off and it came out fine."

Muren steps in at this point to continue the attack scenario, explaining how, once the T. rex picked up the stuntman by the leg, the sequence made a seamless transition to CGI. "We picked up the shot where the man is lifted into the air and the second T. rex grabs the other end and they rip him to pieces. We actually shot an alternate version of that shot where you could see the whole guy in between the two heads as he gets ripped apart. But Steven was worried about jeopardizing his PG-

13 rating, so we put the two heads closer together, and you can't really see the body too much."

Muren then reverses the live-action/digital exchange as he describes the sequence in which a herd of compys hunt down and devour a deserving bad guy, played by Peter Stormare. "The scenes where they are chasing him through the jungle and leaping on him are all CGI," he explains. "When they knock him down and bite him, that was Stan's mechanical creatures. It was done so seamlessly that I'll bet you can't tell what was what."

Good bet. In *Jurassic Park*, it was occasionally almost possible to tell when one FX element gave way to another, and in fact, both regularly made appearances in the same scene. This time, the process was different, with live action and CGI largely existing separately among the sequences. Lantieri offers that the decision of which to use was generally simple. "The tools were just kind of applied where they belonged," he says. "We all got together, chose the shot and then chose the tool." Winston adds, "There was definitely a parallel process going on in each of the technical worlds in this movie. And by picking the best shot and the best element for each sequence, we were able to give the dinosaurs more finesse and more believability."

However, in the course of making the giant beasts convincing, there was the risk of accidents happening. Winston, ever vigilant during the filming of *The Lost World*, recalls a

(continued on page 80)

Frightening as they look, at least the CGI dinosaurs didn't pose any risks during filming.



# LOST WORLD

(continued from page 47)

few moments when he felt his FX were on the verge of lashing out on their own. "I had a major concern about some of the violent scenes with the T. rexes," he admits. "I was aware that a computer could go on the fritz or there could be some kind of glitch. Something could go wrong, and suddenly we'd have this 9-ton T. rex doing what it wanted to do rather than what we wanted it to do. At times, I was afraid that we would hurt the dinosaurs or the actors or that somebody would get killed. The T. rex attack on the car was a perfect example. Anything could have happened if we had not been totally prepared."

Winston goes on to recall an accident that did happen while filming the sequence in which the trailer, with Jeff Goldblum, Vince Vaughn and Julianne Moore inside, is attacked by the dinosaurs. "The male T. rex charged, and this rock went flying and hit the trailer. The rock was supposed to have missed the trailer completely. So you see how things can happen."

Winston, whose career has seen him balance the fabrication of beings real (*The Ghost and the Darkness*'s real) and fictional (*The Relic*'s Ko-

thoga), notes that there are creative perks involved in tackling creatures that, at least today, do not exist. "There is a certain freedom when we've created the designs and characters that live in a world of fantasy," he says. "We've drawn the dinosaurs, sculpted them and given them life. In a sense, we have control over them. When you're trying to match a live animal, it's close to impossible because you are not the creator, you're the imitator."

Ultimately, the special FX wizards behind *The Lost World* feel that, in riding the wave of progressive technology, they've surmounted the challenge of bringing a second brood of dinosaurs to life. "What we did on *Jurassic Park*, in terms of the technology and advances made, was a first-time thing," says Winston. "On *Lost World*, we used some of the same tools and technologies, but again it was a first. There are things in this movie we haven't done before. At least, I know I haven't."

Muren looks at the experience as a definite confidence booster. "*Jurassic Park* gave us the knowledge that we could do this stuff at a certain level, and it gave Steven the confidence to demand that much more from us this time around. He told us, 'This is what I want'—and we gave it to him."

UNITED STATES POSTAL SERVICE Statement of Ownership, Management, and Circulation (Required by 39 USC 2685)

Publication Title: **FARGOZIA** Issue Date: **Aug 56** Issue Number: **10** Total Issues: **10** Annual Subscription Price: **\$37.97**

Complete Mailing Address of Headquarters or General Business Office of Publisher: **475 Park Ave South, New York, NY 10016**

Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Publisher: **Bernice Jacobs - Address as above**

Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Editor: **Anthony Timpane - Address as above**

Full Name and Complete Mailing Address of Managing Editor: **Michael Carroll - Address as above**

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Total Number of Copies (Net press run): 330,000

Total Paid and Requested Circulation (Sum of Paid and Requested Circulation): 205,415

Total Free Distribution (Sum of Free and Other Free Distribution): 124,585

Total Distribution (Sum of Total Paid and Requested Circulation and Total Free Distribution): 330,000

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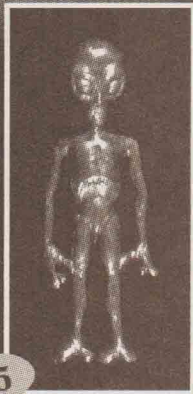
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