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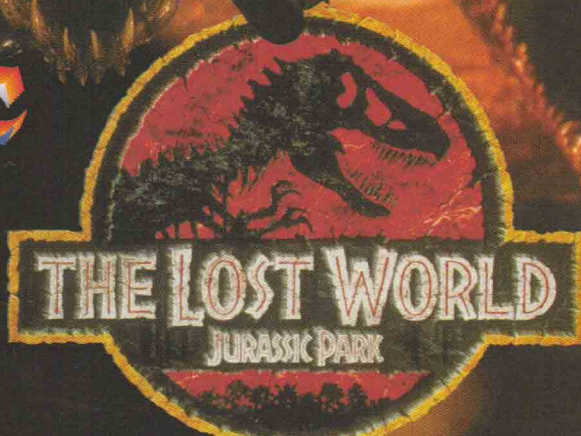
**EVENT HORIZON**  
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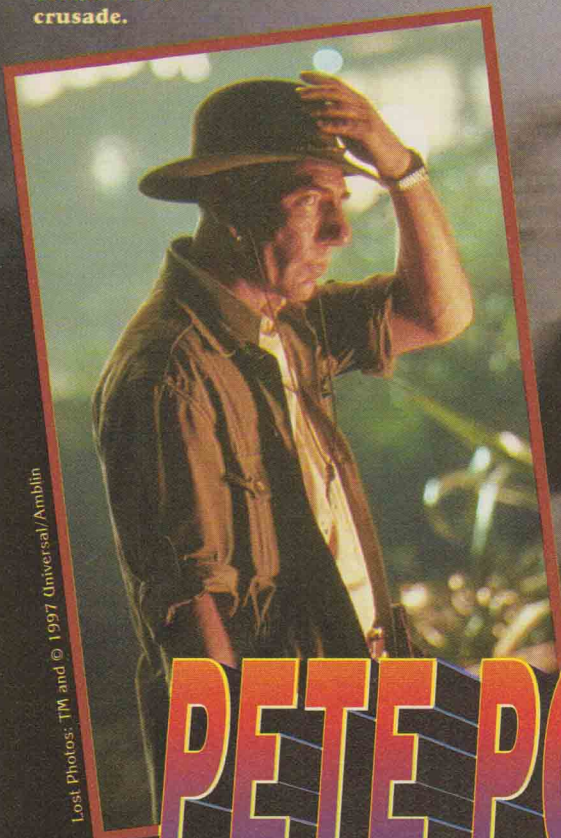
Stan Winston's  
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Despite his Indiana Jones hat, this may be Tembo's last crusade.



Lost Photos: TM and © 1997 Universal/Amblin

# PETE POSTLETHWAITE

**A**rguably Britain's busiest character actor, Pete Postlethwaite has given new meaning to the word ubiquitous. Ever since his Oscar-nominated turn in Jim Sheridan's *In the Name of the Father* (1993), Postlethwaite, a good bet for the sobriquet "the hardest-working man in show business," has rarely been off the big screen. He has appeared, in the last year alone, in *Dragonheart*, William Shakespeare's *Romeo + Juliet*, the Sundance hit *Brassed Off*, *CrimeTime* and *James and the Giant Peach* to name but five—as well as, of course, this summer's Steven Spielberg-directed blockbuster *The Lost World: Jurassic Park*.

*No stranger to working with monsters, the veteran British actor faces his biggest co-stars ever in "The Lost World."*

By MARK SALISBURY

A former member of the UK's renowned Royal Shakespeare Company, Postlethwaite made his film debut opposite a pig in the intensely British comedy *A Pri-*

*vate Function*, but has since mixed serious dramatic roles with parts in such genre films as *Alien<sup>3</sup>* and *Split Second*, although he points out that his criteria for choosing films is not based on any particular preference. "It's just what's available, and you make your choice accordingly," he says when the issue of his horror/fantasy work is raised. "I don't seek out to do those things at all."

It was his affecting portrayal of Daniel Day-Lewis' father in *In the Name of the Father* that first brought him to Spielberg's attention. "He knew that at some point he was going to work with me one way or the other," says Postlethwaite from his home in England. "Then I was doing *Dragonheart*, and I think they were looking at the rushes. He called me up and



**Roland Tembo  
(Pete Postlethwaite)  
actually wants to  
face the prehistoric  
denizens of *The Lost  
World: Jurassic Park*.**

# DINOSAUR HUNTER

said, 'Do you want to do this?' And we've been together ever since." (Directly following his journey to *The Lost World*, Postlethwaite hooked up with Spielberg again for the slave trade drama *Amistad*, starring opposite Matthew McConaughey, Morgan Freeman, Nigel Hawthorne and Anthony Hopkins.) "I have a great deal of respect for him, we have a great deal of fun and it seems to work."

In *The Lost World*, Postlethwaite plays Roland Tembo, an English-born big-game hunter who's coaxed out of retirement when he's offered an opportunity too good to pass up—namely the chance of nailing a T. rex. "He's a lovely sort of witty, sanguine chap who has seen it all, done it all, shot everything there is to shoot," says Postlethwaite of his

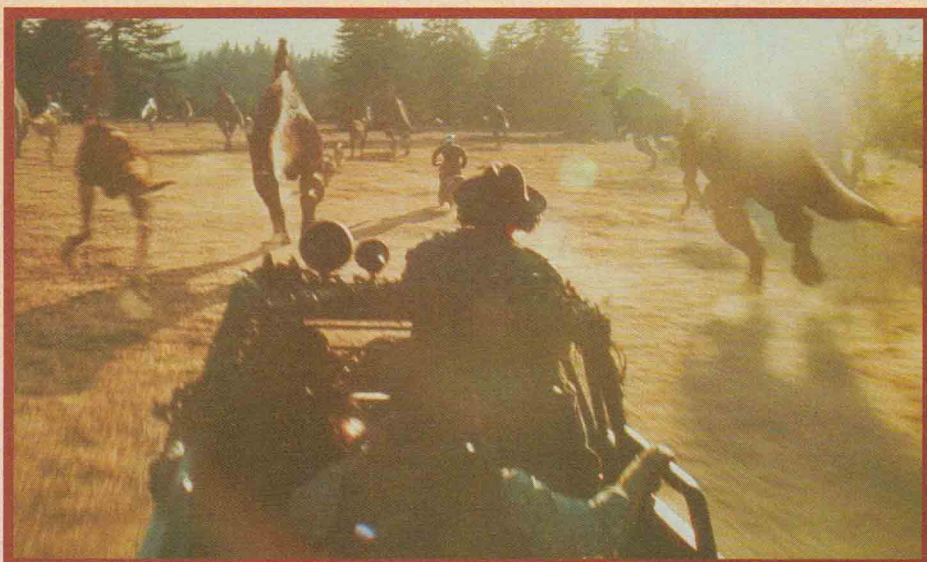
character, who doesn't appear in Michael Crichton's *Lost World* novel. And although Tembo is in the employ of the avaricious Ludlow (played by Arliss Howard), the nefarious nephew of Richard Attenborough's Hammond who is trying to bring the dinosaurs back to the U.S. strictly for financial gain, Postlethwaite sees him as "an ambivalent character" rather than one of the bad guys. "He's leading the expedition that's ransacking the island, but he has a sort of mind change before the end and realizes that what Ludlow is up to is not particularly wholesome."

Like a good percentage of



Photo: David James

Postlethwaite might have to hide behind a hat and shades permanently if he continues to star in such major films as *Dragonheart*, *Romeo + Juliet* and now *Lost World*.



The hunting party reverses the roles, leading a human attack against the dinosaurs in *The Lost World*.

Jeff Goldblum, Harvey Jason and Postlethwaite sneak a peek at the top-secret *Lost World* script.

the world's population, Postlethwaite had been amazed by *Jurassic Park*. "I had thrilled at those extraordinary images," he says, though he admits, "It's something I wouldn't charge out to see, to use a choice of words." However, his reasoning behind doing *The Lost World* was simple enough: It was a chance to work with Spielberg. "It was rollicking adventure stuff," he explains of the *Lost World* script, "and if you're going to do something like that, you might as well do it with the boss, really."

The experience of working with Spielberg was, he says, second to none. "He's steeped in the world of film, in what it does and what it can do. He's very hands-on, and he's particularly good with actors. He gives extraordinary, lucid notes to you that make you say to yourself, 'Why didn't I think of that?' Or, 'Thank you very much for that, I will do that, it will make me look great.' He loves what he does and his enthusiasm and rhythm of work are fantastic. Everybody worked at quite a lick. There's not much hanging around, and that's a bonus. He would improvise on set, which was great."

However, as Postlethwaite relates, when it came to *The Lost World*, Spielberg wasn't always around on set—not in person, at least. There was a week when the director had to be in New York for family reasons and was called upon to guide his actors, who were on a soundstage in Los Angeles, via satellite. "That was quite interesting," Postlethwaite recalls, "going in in the morning and seeing a monitor with Steven on it, in his kitchen in the Hamptons, and saying, 'Good morning, Steven, how

you doing? Good? We'll get on with that now.' That was pretty weird, although he didn't like it at all." While Spielberg was away, the actors were put through their paces by the 1st assistant director and screenwriter David Koepp. "By that time, we all knew what we were doing and what we had to do. It was the cliff scene where we finally rescue the goodies, so we were in mud and rain and all sorts of stuff in this studio on the Universal lot. It's a bit of madness that could only happen in that kind of world. I don't think it's a thing of the future."

Working opposite computer-generated actors, however, may well be. And if that day ever comes, Postlethwaite will be well-prepared, being somewhat of an old hand at performing with CGI creations, having played opposite *Dragonheart's* incredible dragon, Draco, and *Lost World's* digital dinosaurs, as well as Stan Winston's mechanical marvels. "You have to go back to the first criterion of an actor, really, which is using your imagination," he muses about the difficulty of dealing with

computer-generated characters. "Sometimes it's better working with those than it is working with people who don't really want to do it. You're better off having nothing there than somebody who's not really bothered or somebody who has strange ideas. It is a leap of the imagination, but then your imagination is free. Just another interesting exercise in the crazy work we do."

"When I first saw the dragon [in *Dragonheart*]," continues Postlethwaite, who played the poetry-spinning priest Brother Gilbert in Rob Cohen's entertaining if flawed flight of fantasy, "I was stunned by it. I'm just in awe of what they do and how they do it. To take Sean Connery's voice and give that creature something like Sean's wry, Scottish humor was brilliant."

Was he disappointed that the film didn't do as well as hoped? "I don't get disappointed or upset about things like that, really," he says. "They are what they are and people will have their opinions about them and they'll do what they do. I liked my character in it. I had been doing





**Richard Schiff  
should've  
known better  
than to park  
in a red zone.**

Photo: David James

"Sometimes it's better working with [CGI characters] than it is working with people who don't really want to do it."

things like *In the Name of the Father* and *Suite 16* [a Euro-thriller in which he plays a wealthy, wheelchair-bound man who has a gigolo act out his sexual fantasies by proxy], and mentally they're quite draining, and I thought this was a lovely, romantic, medieval story, not a lot of head pressure, a nice thing to do and a lovely thing for the children to watch."

The same can't be said for *Crime-time*, a British thriller from George Sluizer, director of *The Vanishing*, in which Postlethwaite plays Sidney, a serial killer whose crimes are re-enacted on a TV program by out-of-work actor Stephen Baldwin (Postlethwaite's co-star in *The Usual Suspects*). As Sidney becomes seduced by the glamorization of his crimes, continuing to kill in order to fuel his desire to see "himself" again on TV, so too does Baldwin's charac-

ter become obsessed by his onscreen persona, and the line between reality and the media image blurs for both of them. "I had never played a serial killer before, and I thought it would be interesting to see where you get to," explains Postlethwaite, whose initial intent was to go heavy on the research into serial killers; but he then decided to forgo it, and simply follow the script. "Sidney was quite fascinating to me after a while. I didn't really put any critique on him. I thought, 'That's what he does. I don't know necessarily *why* he does it.'"

Although Postlethwaite has nothing but praise for Sluizer, he isn't completely happy with the finished film, which played theatrically in England but went straight to video in the U.S. last month from Vidmark. "There was maybe one murder too many, and I wanted more of

the difference between what was illusion and what was real, and for that to be more of a headbanging thing than it turned out to be. George took a good stab at it, but I think I would have gone more into the heads of those people, as opposed to the externals." So was it too gory for him? "A bit. When you're tampering with people's heads like that and getting into people's minds, that's more interesting than what's physically happening."

One of his more satisfying experiences remains a champion cinematic mind-bender, Bryan Singer's dazzlingly labyrinthine *The Usual Suspects*, in which he starred as the enigmatic Kobayashi, lawyer to the equally mysterious Keyser Söze. Postlethwaite says he recognized the film's potential from the screenplay and was eager to be associated with

**Lost World's T. rexes are so scary, it's hard to imagine enacting the appropriate amount of fear without them there.**

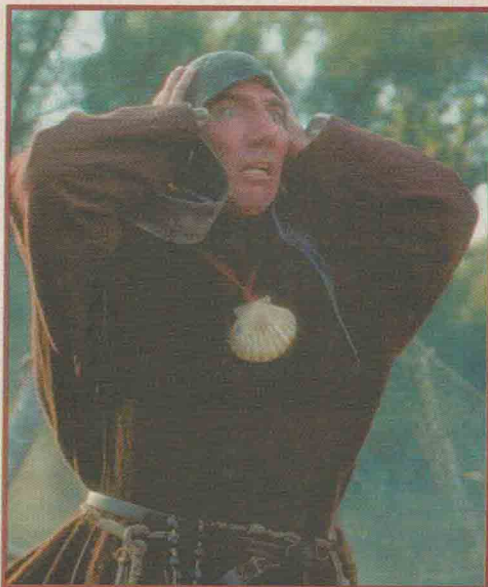
**"That was quite interesting, going in the morning and seeing a monitor with Steven [Spielberg] on it."**

Photo: ILM

it. "Chris McQuarrie's script was just unbelievable when you read it, and I liked Bryan Singer when we met. He said, 'Pete, you can play any of these parts, they're all Keyser Söze,' and it worked out that we could fit in to do that one. I thought, 'If they get this half right, we will be on to something.'"

Unfortunately, one movie that did emerge only half right was *Alien<sup>3</sup>*, David Fincher's much-maligned debut feature, in which Postlethwaite played one of the shaven-head inhabitants of the penal colony who meets a rather messy end. While the history of the film's troubled gestation has been well-documented, Postlethwaite insists that he has only good memories of the production. "From my point of view, we kept our heads down and waited and waited and played a lot of Scrabble, and then did the job when we had to," he says. "It did go on for some time, that's for sure. But because there was a good gang of us there, it didn't seem to bother us; we just carried on and got on with it. In fact, about five months afterwards, David got some more money to do some more [filming] in LA, and he called us all up and said, 'Who wants to shave their heads again?' and I did. I said, 'I'll be there.'"

*Alien<sup>3</sup>* wasn't Postlethwaite's first brush with a murderous monster, however. That honor fell to the heart-



**Postlethwaite honed his reactions to creatures to be added later by playing *Dragonheart's* priest sidekick.**

ripping serial killer from Tony Maylam's disappointing, waterlogged *Split Second*. "That was fun," says Postlethwaite, casting his mind back six years. "Where did we do that? Somewhere in London. We filmed that with the extraordinary Rutger Hauer. I played his aggressive policeman sidekick. Again, I don't know what drew me to that. I don't even think I saw the finished product, to be quite honest."

Despite Postlethwaite's insistence

that he doesn't seek out genre roles, he has actually starred opposite more than his fair share of cinematic creatures, to the point where it can't simply be a coincidence. "Maybe I've been struggling with monsters all my life," he says with mock seriousness, "and here I can expunge them." He laughs. "I haven't got a philosophy on things like that or any theories about it, it just is what it is."

For now, Postlethwaite is anticipating the prospect of a well-earned rest after his busy recent period. "I'm looking to do as little as possible, to an extent," he says. "I've been running around like a gerbil in a wheel for the last five years." Though if *The Lost World* repeats its predecessor's box-office performance, Postlethwaite may find himself even more in demand. Ever modest, the wry, quietly spoken father of two remains blissfully unconcerned at how starring in the sequel to the biggest film of all time will affect his career. "I've never really thought about it," he admits. "It's just another part of what I do. It will affect me going into Burger King and seeing little squiggly Roland Tembos with your hamburgers, I suppose. I have a 7-year-old, and he was thrilled to bits that we were doing all that, definitely." Postlethwaite pauses. "He was desperate for me to be in *Star Wars 3* or wherever they are, but we'll see." 🐉