If you've seen the brilliant CABIN IN THE WOODS (out now on DVD and Blu-ray), you've now no doubt "discovered the secret" that at heart, the film is essentially a reaffirmation; a true monument to horror and the way it affects and even betters our lives.

Nowhere is that more evident than the film's final act, an overwhelming operatic bloodbath, in which all walks of monsters and bogeyman are given the chance to roam free. A buffet of both original, imaginative creation and tribute to classic creatures, long time Visual FX Supervisor David LeRoy Anderson was charged with wrangling the finale's circus together. Anderson, a second generation makeup FX maestro, went in-depth with Fango about the creative process behind the army of nightmares, his crack team, favorite creations and even some words about his early stint on PET SEMATARY.

Needless to say, if you haven't seen CABIN, be warned of many spoilers and reveals.

FANGORIA: The concept must've afforded you tons of possibility, but also tons of stress and responsibility. How'd this come to you? Were you daunted by the scope of it all?

DAVID LEROY ANDERSON: Daunted is a good word [*laughs*]. It was producer Dan Kolsrud who brought me into the project. I worked with him on CIRQUE Du FREAK prior to this and he called and said, "Have I got a monster movie for you. You need to come in and meet with Joss and Drew." I came in and had the first meeting with them. It was what every makeup FX artist wants to hear, because it was just a cornucopia of monsters and FX and their main push, their main desire, was that they wanted to do it all practical. I haven't heard those words, in that sequence, in years. Inevitably, I go to a meeting about a project and I have my little list of things plucked from the script that I think could be makeup FX, and say of ten or twenty items on my list, I usually walk away with three. Everything else goes digital.

FANG: That's such a sad state.

ANDERSON: It really is, you know. It's kind of come full circle. A little bit. I'm involved in a

project right now that's about 50/50, so to hear them come out and say that they wanted to go that route and say they were big fans of all the old-school makeups, was a blessing. It was the best news that I could hear. Although, it was also the biggest list I've ever heard of, and it was very intimidating. I did have a good sense of the fact that there was not a lot going on in L.A. at the time and a crew—hiring the best of the best—would not be too problematic. However, I knew right off the bat it was never going to fit in my studio. So, a couple of problems: One, it didn't fit in my shop and two, it was going to be bigger than anything I've ever been involved in. The upside was I was able to build it here in L.A., which is something that doesn't happen a lot anymore. I've been going to Canada a lot, all over the place. So, to get a job like this that was so extensive and to get to do it here, for the most part—the pre-production was all done here, shooting was all up in Canada—all the L.A. artists got to live and sleep at home and come to work in Burbank.

FANG: What's the size of the team you need to get something like this underway?

ANDERSON: Well, it was a bunch of teams. The pre-production team that got going here in L.A., the size of the crew skyrocketed. I have to pull out a bunch of notes here, because I've never done an interview this many years after the project, so a lot of it I've forgotten. I'm going through this all and I was overwhelmed by the amount of people that were involved and the amount of monsters that we made. It was just incredible. There were probably roughly eighty people involved in the build here in L.A., whether it was sculptors, or mold makers, or painters, or hair people; just a little bit of everything.

So, what we did was started with just the design phase, here in my studio, AFX in Anaheim, and then all the while looked for another place to go to. We just got really lucky. One of the mold makers knew that there was a place called the Bat Shop that Warner Brothers had built for Batman, and it's over by Burbank Airport. We went over there one afternoon and discovered that it's this huge facility that was empty and rentable, and I took it. The next day, when everyone showed up here at my shop, I said, "Good Morning everybody, grab your stuff and grab a handful of something else, and put it in your car, and here's the new address." We got to this new shop, and I think I showed up and there were about fifteen guys, at the time, and we went from our 1700 square feet studio to something closer to seven or eight thousand square feet, and it was wonderful. It was exactly what we needed. There were probably, at any given time, sixty people in the shop, and plenty of room for everybody. We got lucky there. One of the truly greatest things, personally, with putting together a crew like this was the fact that I got to work with a bunch of people that I probably won't get to work with again. For the most part, they're committed to other shops and they work other places; a lot of legends in the industry. And because there was really not a lot going on, I was able to get all of these people under one roof. And it was great for a lot of other people who admired these other artists, but knew they were never going to get to work with them. So, we had a lot of people from a lot of different

shops under one roof and that was fantastic; a lot of really incredible artists.

FANG: When it came to the Nightmare Gallery on the second half of the film, was that a joint effort between you and Drew and Joss coming up with things to fill it?

ANDERSON: Most definitely. Actually, I'll back up. The relationship I have with Drew was intense. He was very, very involved in all of the design aspects. In fact, I'd go so far as to say I didn't make anything that wasn't in Drew's head. We would have these intense conversations. We had a meeting every day at the end of the day, when he'd finally get to his computer and see all of the images that were worked on that day. We'd go through all of the designs, whether they were sculptures, or samples of hair, or teeth. He saw, and approved and was involved in every single aspect of design on this. It was a matter of trying to realize his exact vision, and he was really collaborative, but he was very clear in his own mind as to what it was that he wanted. It wasn't a matter of "here's ten of these things and I'm going to pick one." He'd give me very, very clear descriptions and samples and references, and then I'd go off and we'd have one illustrator try it, and if that wasn't striking a nerve—we had a few illustrators on staff–we'd go to the next illustrator and see if that was going to strike a nerve, and show him the work that night. He'd give me very honest feedback and we'd go back and try and do it again. Nothing ever happened immediately. Everything was a process of design. It's not that he's not easy to satisfy; it's that he knew exactly what he wanted. I really appreciate working with directors like that, that don't just send you on a goose chase. I never felt like that with him. I always felt like each morning I had a mission, and I knew what my orders were. It was a matter of trying to be the person between all of these artists in my house, basically, and the director, and trying to spread his word and share his vision with these artists who would keep it on track. At the end of the day, I'd show the photos to him and I'd know whether I did a good job or not, based on whether we'd get an approval on something and we'd move on. If not, we'd just keep working it.

Some characters came to life rather rapidly, and some were a little more... Some of that had to

do with our build schedule. The whole thing was very tight, from beginning to end. We made all this stuff in about three months, and the list is ridiculous. I just looked at the typed out list of all the things that we made. It goes on and on and on. I haven't seen the film, I hope a lot of it made it. [*Ed. Note: FANGORIA spoke to Anderson back in late winter of 2012*] You've seen the film?

FANG: Oh yes.

ANDERSON: There's some FX in it? [*Laughs*]

FANG: Oh, there's a shit load.

ANDERSON: So, you see some monsters in the end, is what you're telling me?

FANG: We finished it and immediately knew we had to talk to you.

ANDERSON: Excellent. The Buckners, that would have been enough for anybody for a whole job, but they were just a tiny piece of the build list. They're not even on this list. I'd say in the first seven or eight weeks, we were pretty much done drawing and illustrating anything. Then, it was just a mad dash to get it all built, so that the final month and a half/two months, I was going back and forth up to Canada, to set up the shop up there and interview on-set artists up there. So, there was a lot of going back and forth, and I had never worked in Vancouver so I didn't have greater knowledge of the crew and other talent; who was good at what? It was a bit of learning curve meeting everybody, but now that I know *everybody* up there [*laughs*], I can honestly say that there are just some incredibly talented people and I could have never done it without the help of this amazing crew that I was lucky enough to get. There were probably a dozen people up there, and looking at my list, about an equal amount from Los Angeles. Roughly, two dozen people on the makeup FX crew and about half were LA, and half of them were Canadian.

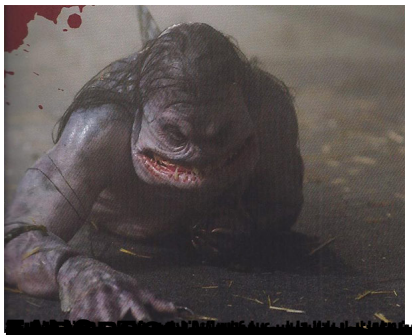
All in all, there was actually a lot of continued creation up in Canada. We made a lot of

background masks and we dealt with a lot of different makeups up there. So, at a certain point, I didn't come back to LA, I stayed up there and the final folks in shop down here, the Bat Shop, finished up the job and packed up the last bit of blood and guts and put it in crates. I think, at that point, six Americans came up and they were mainly puppeteers and mechanics.

FANG: One of the greatest bits in the movie is the reveal of the Merman.

ANDERSON: That was one of the big ones. It was the Merman, the Werewolf and the two goblins, which I don't know that the Goblins are in it a lot, but they were just as complicated to build. The Merman was Richard Cetrone. He also plays the Werewolf, and he played a couple of mutants too. So, we had him in just a whole week of body casting. We did a body cast of him in a certain position for the Werewolf, and then for the Merman, he needed to be laying down in kind of a Superman, flying position, and so that was all sculpted here in LA and the pieces were all foam rubber. That was all shipped up to Canada and Hiroshi [Katagiri] was the sculptor, and the painter. And we brought him up to Canada and he painted it up there. It was a team of probably four or five of us that actually glued Rich in on the day, and it was not an easy thing to be in for the whole day because he couldn't walk, or anything. That was a really rough day for Rich. The poor guy was in that thing for probably a good twelve hours, and I'd say eight hours before we even shot. Once we brought him to set on a stretcher, he was laying on the floor there in a fetal position, sleeping most of the day while the shot was being set up. He was immobile, he couldn't do anything. So, we just got him a nice pillow and there's actually some really funny shots of the Merman all curled up, sleeping in the middle of the floor [*laughs*]. I just ran into Rich on the movie I'm on right now. He was amazing. Hiroshi was amazing, that was his baby.

That was kind of the way I did it. We had all these FX, and basically I created teams and you were on a team that worked on the Werewolf, or on the team that worked on the Merman, or the Goblins, or you were involved in the zombies. There was one guy who was involved in all things, silicone and fabricated, which there were a lot of guts. There was the Blob, the thick Blob, and there were quite a few things that needed to be fabricated with minimal mechanical aspects to them. That was all done in LA.



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