

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**SHOWRUNNERS PATRICK MCKAY AND JD PAYNE OF AMAZON STUDIOS' *THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RINGS OF POWER* TALK CREATING THE HIGHLY ANTICIPATED TV ADAPTATION IN *EMMY* MAGAZINE**

(LOS ANGELES — Sept. 9, 2022) — More than 20 years after *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring* dazzled movie audiences, the highly awaited television series *The Lord of the Rings: The Rings of Power* premiered on Amazon Prime Video Sept. 2. Showrunners Patrick McKay and JD Payne talk with *emmy* about their approach to creating an adaptation of J.R.R. Tolkien's mythical Middle- Earth saga that appealed to both hardcore fans *and* new viewers. The award- winning official publication of the Television Academy is on newsstands today.

After securing the rights for a TV adaptation based on Tolkien's opus, Amazon Studios began its search for writers. It wasn't difficult to find interested parties, but it was Payne and McKay who caught their

attention. The scribes had worked together for nearly 25 years in film and came to the series with extensive cinematic expertise. "We come from the world of movies. Part of the excitement here was that we had this notion—and Amazon had the same—of doing something bigger than the big premium streaming series. It was quite a risk for them to hire us and then also to say yes to something of that enormous scope and ambition," says McKay.

In "**Before and Hereafter**," Payne shares details about poring over Tolkien's work and how, after coming across a period known as the Second Age, they found their narrative. "It contains the story of the forging of the Rings of Power, the rise of the

Dark Lord Sauron, the fall of the kingdom of Númenor, and then the last alliance of Elves and Men to fight Sauron,” Payne says, while McKay adds, “We said if we could do those four stories over 50 hours of television, they can involve elves and dwarves ... all the best stuff from Tolkien in this heretofore untold epic.” It proved to be an effective strategy. “[Amazon] called us and said, ‘You’ve got the job, and your life is divided into everything that came before and everything that came after,’” recalls McKay. “It’s been a whirlwind wild ride, 4 1/2 years since.”

Executive producer Lindsey Weber rooted for the scribes from the sidelines before joining the massive production. Weber explains that the showrunners’ clarity of the story made the job achievable. “From the pitch to what they wrote to what we shot and edited ... it’s the same story. [And] when it came to peopling their world, the approach to casting was to focus less on big names and more on what McKay describes as an innate ‘Middle-Earthiness.’”

The team set off for New Zealand, the same location as director Peter Jackson’s films. “We were able to shoot in a zero-COVID environment for a long time,” says Weber. “New Zealand’s response to the early part of the pandemic was so organized and impressive.” Then came the question of how much of Middle-Earth would be created in CGI. The showrunners turned to Tolkien for the answer, using his idea that Middle-Earth was something discovered, not invented. “We wanted it to be a world where you feel like—if you could find the right plane ticket—you actually could show up in Middle-Earth and see these things in front of you.” The production always tried to shoot in nature; if computer graphics had to be used, nature remained the inspiration.

“My greatest hope is that it puts a bit of goodness into the world,” says Weber. “People who have a lot of differences find something that they have in common, and that’s talking about Middle-Earth and the feeling of magic that comes from being there. That’s the magic of storytelling.”

Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:

- In “**Best Seat in the House**,” *emmy* talks with *Great Performances* producer/director David Horn about the PBS show’s legacy and the launch of its 50th-anniversary season on Sept. 16. Artists, including Julie Andrews, David Foster and Michael Bubl , weigh in on the series’ resonating power.
- Creators and stars of the HBO hit *Los Espookys* speak with *emmy* about the series’ authentic spirit. In “**Fright Club**,” the trio of producers and cast discuss the show’s return Sept. 16.
- The creative team behind *The Americans*, Joel Fields and Joe Weisberg, return to television with the FX series *The Patient* starring Steve Carell and Domhnall Gleeson. In “**Talking It Out**,” the producing partners talk with *emmy* about exploring psychotherapy by asking, “What if a serial killer kidnapped a therapist and demanded to be cured—and actually meant it?”

About *emmy*

Emmy, the official publication of the Television Academy, goes behind the scenes of the industry for a unique insider’s view. It showcases the scope of television and profiles the people who make TV happen, from the stars of top shows to the pros behind the cameras, covering programming trends and technological advances.

Honored consistently for excellence, *emmy* is a six-time Maggie Award winner as Best Trade Publication in Communications or the Arts and has collected 52 Maggies from the Western Publishing Association. *Emmy* is published 12 times per year and is available on selected newsstands and at TelevisionAcademy.com for single print and digital copies as well as subscriptions.

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