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THE NAME OF THE GAME IS SURVIVAL IN *CIRCLE*, A DARING CINEMATIC UNDERTAKING.

A VICIOUS SCI-FI CIRCLE

Neither Mario Miscione nor Aaron Hann are psychologists, but if they ever need a fallback career, corporate think tanks or university research departments would be wise to hire them. That's because their new movie, *Circle*, raises precisely the type of question behaviorists love to pose: what would happen if a diverse group of ordinary, seemingly virtuous people were placed into a scenario where, to survive, they had to work together to kill one another?

"Fifty people wake up standing in a circle in a room," explains Miscione, when asked to describe the film's chilling scenario. "They don't know each other



and they don't remember how they got there, but they quickly realize they can't move. There's a machine in the center of the circle, and every two minutes it fires, killing one of them. At first they're panicked, thinking they're just being slaughtered, but then they figure out they're controlling who the machine chooses, and they can influence who dies next by voting."

"You never know who's going to be important, or when somebody different might emerge as important, or when somebody might die," continues Hann. "There's no lead person, yet there are various people that are the film's focal point. It's kind of like *Twelve Angry Men*, where there's one guy, and then there's

EMBARK ON A MEMORABLE MUSICAL ENTERPRISE

When it comes to *Star Trek*, Brady Beaubien could be forgiven if even diehard Trekkers considered him obsessed. For the past few years, he has incessantly watched every second of every episode of all five of the franchise's live-action TV shows, while also immersing himself in each of the big-screen spinoffs. Last November his relentless viewing finally paid off, with the debut of *Star Trek: The Ultimate Voyage*, a one-off concert that, literally and figuratively, set the stage for a global tour of a brand-new sci-fi experience.



Philharmonic Orchestra during rehearsals, it made the hair on the back of my neck stand up," he remembers, referring to the composer of the scores



for five of the films as well as the title themes for *Star Trek: The Next Generation* and *Star Trek: Voyager*. "There's no substitute for hearing a 60-piece orchestra play these cues at full strength, with all the fidelity that great orchestral training and talent produces. It's exceptionally evocative and unlike hearing the music in any other venue."

That incomparable audio event is now available to fans throughout North America, as the recently launched *Star Trek: The Ultimate Voyage* wends its way across the United States and Canada. Performed at some of the continent's most respected theatrical venues, the show features live performances of dozens of the franchise's most moving musical moments synced with footage—projected on a gigan-

tic screen above the orchestra—from throughout the adventure's five-decade history.

the other people who are going to slowly turn to his side. *Circle* is a similar experiment." The picture, which the duo wrote and directed together, was also a daring cinematic undertaking. Shot over the course of two weeks, it was lensed in chronological order—at the start the entire cast was present, with the final days featuring only a handful of "survivors"—and the plot was designed to occur for the most part in real time. A few individuals are killed prematurely when they step off their assigned spots around the machine or otherwise break the seemingly arbitrary rules, but over the course of the drama's taut, 87-minute running time the fate of at least one person is revealed every 120 seconds or so.

A *Twilight Zone*-inspired coda adds additional gravity, raising further questions and all but guaranteeing viewers will find themselves debating the choices made by the characters long after the credits roll. It's a situation Matt Corboy, one of the 50 largely unknown actors featured in the picture, is more than happy to facilitate.

"I really hope people have their own discussions about the value of a human life," he suggests. "I hope they ask themselves, 'Who would I have voted for? Who would I have wanted out of the circle? What would I have done to stay alive?'"

Regardless of the answers, one thing remains certain: *Circle*, which is presently streaming on a number of online outlets (Amazon, iTunes, Netflix, etc.), is a tantalizing project that's sure to provoke, perplex, and please science fiction fans.

tic screen above the orchestra—from throughout the adventure's five-decade history.

The project was truly a labor of love for Beaubien, who produced the extravaganza and, working with conductor and business partner Justin Freer, helped choose the music, which is introduced more or less sequentially throughout the performance. The visuals help enhance the emotion of the melodies, with the loose storyline driven by exclusive commentary, recorded by Michael Dom, and dialogue from the myriad scenes.

"We ended up using the dramatic narrative of the music to guide us through the musical journey, and used the chronology of the television shows from beginning to end to help anchor our journey through 50 years," emphasizes Freer. "Never before has there been an opportunity like this for the public to celebrate such a wide range of *Star Trek* music and visuals. For five decades they have worked together beautifully, and we are honored to present an experience that cherishes this exceptional marriage."

The current leg of the *Star Trek: The Ultimate Voyage* tour runs through early May, with future performances planned for Europe and South America. Trek over to startrekultimatevoyage.com for the complete concert schedule.

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A BRAVE AND BOLD BRICK ARTIST

Nathan Sawaya's sculptures have been called everything from wacky and whimsical to mind-blowing and awe-inspiring, yet one thing is certain: were it not for an asphyxiating career as a high-powered lawyer, his amazing creations might not exist. The 42-year-old artist practiced corporate law for six years, only to abandon the profession about a decade ago to devote his life to crafting award-winning art out of LEGO bricks.

More recently, when considering what creative challenge to tackle next, he found himself thinking about the heroes he looked up to as a boy. Those childhood icons are the basis of his latest show, *The Art of the Brick: DC Comics*.

"I was looking to do an exhibition examining themes of good and evil, which led me to thoughts of heroes and villains," he recalls. "That led me to the pages of comic books, and from there I turned to DC Comics, which has the most iconic superheroes and supervillains of all time. Batman, Wonder Woman, Superman—everyone knows who they are and what they stand for. In addition, I wanted to play with The Joker and explore



SUPERHEROES AT THE POWERHOUSE MUSEUM (L TO R): ELLA MYLES, JOSIE MYLES, MACY BUSHBY, FREYA BUSHBY, HARRY MYLES, MYLES DONNELLY, ISABELLA ALLEN, PIERRE DONNELLY, AND JOE MADDOCK.

his darkness using a child's toy as the medium."

Running through May at the Powerhouse Museum in Sydney, Australia, *The Art of the Brick: DC Comics* represents the culmination of that desire. With over 120 original works—including a full-size Batmobile made from more than 500,000 LEGO pieces—the

exhibition is, to paraphrase the title of one of the comic-book company's most famous publications, both brave and bold. Brave because these are characters that, given the medium, could easily have come out comical rather than courageous, and bold since Sawaya was bringing instantly recognizable icons to life in an

altogether fresh manner.

"In some ways it was worrisome to try and express my views on characters that are so well known by so many people, but it's also very exciting," he muses. "I had to find a way to respect the history of the characters while also creating my own interpretation."

"Nathan knows DC Comics characters well, and his joy in working with them is clear," adds Kevin Kiniry, vice president of creative services at DC Entertainment. "My team advised on some character choices and provided some inspirational artwork to get Nathan going, but it didn't take much before we started seeing his stellar work come together."

Fans around the globe will soon have an opportunity to see these stellar sculptures. Following the Sydney exhibition, a comprehensive world tour of *The Art of the Brick: DC Comics* is set to begin later this year (specific dates and locations are still being finalized). In the meantime, folks can find out more about Sawaya and his imaginative work at brickartist.com.

THE UNMAKING OF SUPERMAN LIVES

It's been said that every hero needs a villain, and until recently Hollywood animator and lifelong comics reader Jon Schnepf wholeheartedly believed in that maxim. In fact, he began shooting *The Death of "Superman Lives": What Happened?* with a clear vision of his bad guy. It was only after he met the man he anticipated would be his heavy that his mind changed, and he realized the film, a documentary about the aborted 1998 production of Tim Burton's take on *Superman*, didn't require a nefarious nemesis.

"Jon Peters was certainly the villain of the piece before I talked to him, but then I had a great, almost two-hour interview with him," reveals Schnepf, referring to the abandoned picture's often-maligned producer. "I've said to people that interviewing him was like drinking pure liquid gold. Everything he said was fantastic and kind of interestingly crazy, but made sense coming from his perspective."



The documentary, which features interviews with over a dozen people involved in the project, including Burton and Kevin Smith (who wrote an early draft of the screenplay), sheds light on one of the most notorious superhero debacles in Tinseltown history. Set to star Nicolas Cage and based upon the famed "The Death of Superman" comic book storyline, the troubled feature was scotched just a few weeks before the start of production, leaving fans to wonder "what if?"

"It would have been really fun to see these differ-

ent versions of Krypton, of Lex Luthor, of Brainiac, of Doomsday," ponders Schnepf, who shares some of those visions through previously unseen maquettes, sketches, and test footage, as well as via discussions with various production, storyboard, and comics artists. "And, of course, of Superman himself, in his regular outfit, then his transformed outfit, and then his resuscitation suit outfit. The film would have worked as a cosmic fairy tale: it would have been light, not dark like *Batman*."

The material in *The Death of "Superman Lives": What Happened?* supports that assessment. Burton was planning a much more fantastical approach, with the special effects personnel developing costumes and settings that were far more dynamic and visually daring than the *Dark Knight's* intentionally drab designs.

In fact, the only thing missing from the documentary is Cage's contemporary viewpoint. Schnepf opted not to interview him for a number of reasons (most notably because the few images from *Superman Lives* that have leaked out over the years were so vehemently ridiculed they had a deleterious impact on the actor's career), but the star's thoughts at the time on the character—in addition to those of Burton and costume designer Colleen Atwood—are clearly expressed during an eye-opening costume test.

"It was shot by one of Tim's personal assistants, and it's just them all talking about the character of Superman and Kal-El and Krypton and Clark Kent," says Schnepf. "It also has Nic dressed up as Clark Kent, and in multiple different Superman outfits. Not just the costume that went viral all over the Internet about 10 years ago, but brand-new ones that have never been seen."

The documentary is currently available on Blu-ray and DVD, as well as online at streaming sites like Amazon, iTunes, and Vimeo. Man of Steel mavens who don't want to miss a single image or detail can also download hours of raw footage via various "bonus" packages available exclusively from Schnepf's website, tdoslw.com.

