

GE NEWS

WOMEN TALK SCI FI



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An Interview with Suzie Plaxson By Richard Miles



From GE News' affiliate magazine **Trekkie Central**

TCM: How did you first get cast as K'Ehleyr for The Next Generation, was it on the back of your role of Selar in an earlier episode or did you have to audition for it?



SP: I auditioned for it. The stand out memory for me in that audition was...well, wait: I should set up the fact that though I'm profoundly and eternally grateful to Star Trek fans, and have felt so incredibly blessed and honoured a thousand times over by my inclusion on Planet Star Trek, I don't happen to be a SciFi person at all, and as an actor, I tend to come predominantly, from comedy. So back to the audition, and the fact that an alien chick with a gnarly forehead should stand at a door and silkily say, "Sorry I'm late, I had to make myself look beautiful," was something that I knew all the comedy and theatre folks in my life would be in stitches over. Well, of course, it was quite a serious moment, and the "panel of judges" as it were, didn't, rightfully, crack a smile, which I found rather unnerving. I also think something about my generally (subtly, I hope) comic take on things, probably led to

me giving a bit of a wink to someone at some point, which consequently led to a notable note I later received from the producers: "Um, Suzie: there's no winking in the 24th Century." (Which frankly makes me glad I won't be around to see it if that's the case!) Point herein being, even though I'd been on the show before, it took me some time to really grasp the world I was entering, and get on the same train with respect to the tone of things. Not much time, of course, because I got the role on, what, a Thursday, went in for makeup and hair on Friday, shot on Monday.

TCM: You have played a number of different characters in Star Trek, did you prepare for them in the same way?

SP: Probably. They're all a thousand years ago now, and remember its television. Hailing back to the speed of light at which one is cast and thrown into the mix, there generally isn't time to prepare in any depth, nor, frankly, does there need to be. I think I took most of my character cues from the script, as usual, and I'm pretty sure they gave me a few episodes to watch. Though I remember as I write, that I didn't "need" to see a Vulcan; I'd watched just enough Trek with my brother -- who's a big Trek fan -- that was one of the coolest "I-got-cast" phone calls I've ever made was to him saying, "Mike, you're gonna freak: I'm playing a Vulcan." Also, to be noted with respect to my approach to acting and Star Trek I find it hooks pleasantly into "kid" energy.



In other words, the fun, the plain old, ordinary, serious fun of getting clothed in wild makeup and cool costumes and pretending the thing you're holding measures diseases, or shoots fiery rays of some sort is a transformational impulse that comes from a very deep place and as far as the stunt stuff for K'Ehleyr, they just threw me in the deep end and with the exception of two stunts, I did everything. It was exhausting and hilarious. Egotistically, I was always a little miffed they used me only in close-ups when I thought I was just a bit more convincing than the stunt gal, and we

have totally different heights and measurements. The stunt stuff for the Andorian, thank God, was done beautifully by Katie Holmes, who was terrific. I could never have pulled off something so tough, and my body would have been very angry with me.

TCM: All 4 of your characters had different personalities, were any them more difficult to play then the other?

SP: The Vulcan was the most difficult. Firstly, I'm so insanely animated, that it's a real challenge to be still. And every decent actor knows that less is more and that projecting with ever so much less takes serious chops. The guy in the new movie (I saw it on a plane), I thought was true genius. If you look closely, in my first scene in "The Schizoid Man", I look like a deer in the headlights, and my facial muscles are so at a loss I look like a dinner plate.

TCM: In Star Trek Voyager you played the Female Q, how different was she to play from K' Ehleyr?

SP: Well, as vastly different as they are to watch. One's very, very physically demanding, the other's just, well, a lot closer to playing Noel Coward.

TCM: A lot of the Voyager episode 'The Q and the Grey' features a Q Civil War, with American Civil War Dress, what was it like to film?

SP: It was a blast. I loved it because we were outside, instead of on a dusty soundstage, getting our lungs full of that atmosphere smoke. Much as I love the theatrical effect of the makeup, I loathe the practicum and the hours involved, so with the Q, in that era, it was about beauty makeup and a bit -- well, more than a bit, actually -- of hair curling and styling and such. I'm mad for period costume, though I happily took the opportunity to wear sneakers under my dress.

It was a gorgeous day, and lots of fun. I was, to be honest, a bit disappointed in the little lace doily afternoon tea dress: I think the Q -- the Q I played anyway -- would've easily been vain enough to wear something very low cut and ravishing and wildly inappropriate in the middle of a battlefield. But, alas, I was only a hired hand.

TCM: How different was it working on Voyager compared to The Next Generation?

SP: Different cast, of course, just as much fun and welcoming as Next Gen. - same crew, though, so the experience still felt very similar, very filial, in its way.

TCM: There was a 'sex' scene in that episode, which the fans found a little humorous; was it interesting to film after the whole build up through the episode?

SP: I'm sure it wasn't filmed in sequence, so we didn't get the effect of any build-up: at least I didn't, but I can be a bit dim. I seem to remember it being funny to film, and having to have been informed about what it was we were doing.

TCM: Is there anything else you can tell us about your time on the Star Trek episodes you filmed?

SP: Well. You're asking for a novella with that one. Let's pick one thing: I seem to, at this sitting, remember being punchy a lot of the time. There's something about everyone being dressed up in Sci-Fi costumes, working insanely long hours (from dark to dark), being deadly serious about wildly imaginative things, that tends to bring out the giggles in me. And I happen to be an inveterate giggler anyway, and barely professional, if truth be told. I remember on Next Gen., Brent had to enter via the elevator, which was manually operated, and he had to do some crazy number of takes; and the elevator just couldn't get it together. Hilarious, in my book. I was pretty sure they were going to have to fire me, if I got out of control, and I was teetering, let me tell you. I was very thankful, that I didn't know anyone well enough for them to realize how dangerous I can be when I think something's funny. Yeah. It's amazing I kept it together long enough and convincingly enough to pick up my pay checks. Hey, Thanks so much for asking me to do this. Be well and happy, folks!

We are also Head Writers for [TrekKie Central Magazine](#) and you can catch our work at [TrekKie Central](#) as well as some wonderful interviews from both corporate and fan-based film makers. Thanks to Richard for allowing us to publish his interview with Suzie.

[Website www.genews-ezine.com](http://www.genews-ezine.com)



GE News 3rd year in publication



H A D B I T E !



There were two very different things about The Hub Productions True Blood Convention in Melbourne. Firstly, there was hardly any familiar faces we knew at the Convention (very strange for us) and secondly, 99% of the audience were women!!!

The Hub Productions once again gave us quality and quantity. With the cost less than the price of some cons we have attended that had one guest, we were treated to FOUR!

It was sad news that Charlaine Harris, author of the Sookie Stackhouse books on which True Blood is based, was not able to attend the convention due to the death of her mother but the line up still remained four with the addition of Todd Lowe (Terry Bellefleur) to the already impressive line up of Sam Trammell (Sam Merlotte), Kristen Bauer (Pam De Beaufort) and John Billingsley (Mike Spencer, The Coroner).

Now True Blood is not for everyone and it is rated "R" so it won't be to everyone's taste. The TV show which is loosely based on Harris' books is aimed at a more mature audience as it has quite explicit sex scenes, strong language and adult themes with the books not for children but not so adult!

The TV series shows that vampires can still have human emotions and even can love but they can still be cruel, lying, murdering and thieving vicious beings but of course they are also very very (did we say very enough?) sexy. The appeal of show was evident by the attendance of fans in Sydney and Melbourne. One of our own Aussie actors (Ryan Kwanten – yes the one who played Vinnie in 'Home and Away') is one of the main cast and Anna Paquin (a Kiwi – we will claim her, she was born under the Southern Cross!!) plays Sookie Stackhouse, the main character.





Now enough about the show and back to the convention!

John Billingsley led off the talks by running up and down the stairs rewarding people with chocolate when they asked a question. His energy and witty discourse had us all in laughter. One of the things he did was to set up a practical joke for Todd Lowe. He planted certain questions in the audience to ask Todd and practiced it a number of times of how it was to play out.

Todd was next and really was puzzled why he was being asked about his ceramic animal collection amongst other things. He started off a little nervous as this was only his third convention but as the Q&A continued he began to relax and enjoy the easy going nature of the Australian crowd.

Kristen was great! She was having a competition with Sam to see who could get the most laughs. Hard to say who won as both were extremely entertaining and funny. Kristen came across as a very natural, sincere individual. She loves playing Pam and had no problem discussing all aspects of the show. As at many cons the guests are given Vegemite and she made sure she collected any as her South African husband loves it!

Finally Sam! What a honey, who has a warm and engaging personality of course he is not bad on the eyes either! He let us see that some of the traits of Sam Merlotte are in fact just the same in Sam Trammell. He also kept up the competition with Kristen in trying to make us laugh! By the end of the day our jaws were sore due to the many hours of laughter!

After many hours of listening and in between catching up with our friends Jason and Darren from Gifts for the Geek and Nick from CERNAT, the day was nearly over. All that was left was to get the autographs and a final couple of minutes with guests.

Back at the airport we agreed that we had had another wonderful con experience. The 11th for the year!!! (Phew!!)



AVCON

By Eugenia



The one thing I love about AVCON is the costumes. I haven't had time to get into the anime world watching Naruto, Avatar-the Last Airbender or even Pokemon. It's not that I don't want to it's just I don't have enough time to watch the other 150 shows I have on my shelf waiting to be played. This however does not stop me from realising just how much of an impact Japanese animation has made on young people in Australia.



Expos like AVCON, Supanova, Armageddon and Manifest have given people the opportunity to dress as their favourite character. Shows like these give people a chance to be creative, to acknowledge the joy they get from watching the shows and the characters they portray.

Walking around AVCON I came across The Mario Brothers, Super Heroes and the odd Doctor Who character. Even though I don't dress up I gain a great deal of enjoyment seeing the effort people put into their costumes. Many spend hours either making the costumes themselves or bribing friends or relatives to make them.



Walking around Adelaide many a head is turned as costumed characters make their way to the Convention Centre. But once inside, the costumed characters are the norm.

For me AVCON is not as exciting as some of the other Expos because it doesn't have actors signing. If you enjoy gaming, you like anime, watching cosplay and buying items from your favourite shows then AVCON is for you. I wouldn't spend the two days at AVCON as I would at other events but I still enjoyed myself catching up with friends, meeting new ones, exploring bargains at

dealer tables and soaking in the atmosphere.
[Website www.genews-ezine.com](http://www.genews-ezine.com)

GE News 3rd year in publication

John Leeson Autograph Competition

Are you a Dr Who Fan?

Is K9 one of your favourite characters?

This is your chance to win his autograph.

Actor John Leeson IS the voice of K9!

This is your chance to win his autograph!



Send an e-mail to competition@genews-ezine.com

By 30th November 2010

What season did K9 first appear in Dr Who what was the title for these episodes?

Bonus points for telling us why you want your own K9!!!



Monsters

In Cinemas November 25th

Six years ago NASA discovered the possibility of alien life within our solar system. A probe was launched to collect samples, but crashed upon re-entry over Central America. Soon after, new life form began to appear and half of Mexico was quarantined as an INFECTED ZONE. Today, the American and Mexican military still struggle to contain "the creatures"..... the story begins when a US photojournalist agrees to escort a shaken young woman, the daughter of a media baron, through the infected zone in Mexico to the safety of the US border.

Releases November 25th

Watch the trailer

<http://www.imdb.com/video/imdb/vi1938032921/>

Women Scientists that you might not have heard about!

Merit Ptah

(c. 2700 BCE)

Merit Ptah was an early physician in ancient Egypt. She is known for being the first woman known by name in the history of the field of medicine. She is also possibly the first named woman in all of science as well. Her picture can be seen on a tomb in the necropolis near the step pyramid of Saqqara. Her son, who was a High Priest, described her as "the Chief Physician."

The IAU named the impact crater *Merit Ptah* on Venus after her.

Hypatia

(Born between 350 and 370
died 415)

She was a Greek scholar from Alexandria, Egypt, considered the first notable woman in mathematics, Hypatia also taught philosophy and astronomy and lived in Egypt when it was under Roman control. She was killed by a Christian mob who accused her of causing religious turmoil. Some suggest that her murder marked the end of what is known as Classical antiquity.

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Women Talk Sci Fi Podcasts

Podcast 28 Interview with LeVar Burton from Star Trek:TNG

Podcast 29 Interview with Michael Dorn from Star Trek:TNG

Podcast 30 Interview with Marina Sirtis from Star Trek:TNG



Ever heard the word Podcast?

What is it?



A podcast is usually a free internet pre-recorded radio show that you can download or play whilst you are on-line.



If you are a regular reader of GE News you would have seen pictures and links to podcasts pointing you to Women Talk Sci Fi Podcast. We (Eugenia and I) are Women Talk Sci Fi and we have been very lucky since we started it and have met amazing people and got the chance to interview some of our and we are sure your favourite actors. Just look at the pictures on the left. First Contact Conventions and our good friend and support Scott Liston is a fanboy and knows the joys of meeting your favourite Sci Fi actors and has given us the opportunity to interview many of his guests. Our latest podcasts have interviews with LeVar Burton, Michael Dorn and Marina Sirtis. So all you have to do is listen!



BUT, if you have never downloaded a podcast before how do you do it? Well you can get us on iTunes, and many other podcast sites but the easiest way is to just play it whilst you are on your computer. If you head over to www.womentalkscifi.com and click on the name of the podcast that you see on the front page it will take you to the podcast's page and there you can download it, play it, get it from iTunes or even subscribe via e-mail so that you will be sent one when a new podcast is available! That's how easy it is! So the next time you are on your computer just search for Women Talk Sci Fi we will come up as the first search result and head over and pick the podcast you want to listen to. But right now just click on one of the pictures on the left and it will take you to the podcast page, hit the play button and you will hear the podcast start playing! It is easy as that! Get to hear a couple of fans, just like you talk with some of your favourite actors! PS we have lots of other interviews as well, just have a look!

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