



AMAZON STUDIOS ANNOUNCES ADDITIONAL CAST MEMBERS FOR THE LORD OF THE RINGS TELEVISION SERIES

December 3, 2020

Hailing From Five Different Countries, Emerging and Established

International Talent Join the Ensemble Cast

Currently In Production in New Zealand

LONDON, UK – 3 DECEMBER 2020 – Amazon Studios today announces twenty additional cast members joining the ensemble cast of the Amazon Original series based on the iconic *The Lord of the Rings* novels by J.R.R. Tolkien. The newly revealed cast members will join the previously announced global cast and crew, currently filming in New Zealand.

The new cast members include Cynthia Addai-Robinson, Maxim Baldry, Ian Blackburn, Kip Chapman, Anthony Crum, Maxine Cunliffe, Trystan Gravelle, Sir Lenny Henry, Thusitha Jayasundera, Fabian McCallum, Simon Merrells, Geoff Morrell, Peter Mullan, Lloyd Owen, Augustus Prew, Peter Tait, Alex Tarrant, Leon Wadham, Benjamin Walker and Sara Zwangobani.

Blackburn, Chapman, Crum, Cunliffe, Tait, Tarrant and Wadham all hail from New Zealand, with the remaining international ensemble cast originating from Australia, Sri Lanka, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

Showrunners and executive producers J.D. Payne and Patrick McKay said: “The world that J.R.R. Tolkien created is epic, diverse, and filled with heart. These extraordinarily talented performers, hailing from across the globe, represent the culmination of a multi-year search to find brilliant and unique artists to bring that world to life anew. The international cast of Amazon’s *The Lord of the Rings* series is more than just an ensemble. It is a family. We are thrilled to welcome each of them to Middle-earth.”

As previously announced, the series is led by showrunners and executive producers J.D. Payne and Patrick McKay; they are joined by filmmaker J.A. Bayona, who is directing the first two episodes and serving as executive producer, alongside his creative partner Belén Atienza; with executive producers Lindsey Weber, Bruce Richmond, Callum Greene, Gennifer Hutchison, Jason Cahill, Justin Doble and Sharon Tal Yguado.

The new cast members join Robert Aramayo, Owain Arthur, Nazanin Boniadi, Tom Budge, Morfydd Clark, Ismael Cruz Córdova, Ema Horvath, Markella Kavenagh, Joseph Mawle, Tyroe Muhafidin, Sophia Nomvete, Megan Richards, Dylan Smith, Charlie Vickers, and Daniel Weyman as announced earlier this year.

Set in Middle-earth, the television adaptation will explore new storylines preceding J.R.R. Tolkien’s *The Fellowship of the Ring*. A world-renowned literary work, and winner of the International Fantasy Award and Prometheus Hall of Fame Award, *The Lord of the Rings* was named Amazon customers’ favourite book of the millennium in 1999 and Britain’s best-loved novel of all time in BBC’s The Big Read in 2003. *The Lord of the Rings* has been translated into around 40 languages and has sold more than 150 million copies. Its theatrical adaptations from New Line Cinema and director Peter Jackson, earned a combined gross of nearly \$6 billion worldwide and garnered 17 Academy Awards®, including Best Picture.

Biographies for the newly announced cast of the upcoming series are featured below:

CYNTHIA ADDAI-ROBINSON most recently was a series regular on the STARZ series *Power*. Cynthia previously co-starred alongside Ben Affleck, JK Simmons and Anna Kendrick on the big screen in Gavin O’Connor’s *The Accountant* (Warner Bros) as ‘Marybeth Medina,’ one of the lead roles. Cynthia also can be seen starring alongside Ryan Phillippe in the USA series *Shooter*. Known for her breakout role as ‘Naevia’ in *Spartacus: War of the Damned*, Cynthia has since had many notable roles including: the major recurring role of ‘Dr. Vicki Glass’ in *Chicago Med*, ‘Amanda Waller’ in the CW hit show *Arrow*; the female lead of ‘Dr. Emily West’ in the History Channel miniseries *Texas Rising* alongside Bill Paxton and Ray Liotta. Her guest star credits include *Law & Order: CI*; *CSI: Miami*; *Numb3rs*, *Flash Forward*, and *The Vampire Diaries*, to name a few.

MAXIM BALDRY starred as ‘Viktor’ in Russell T Davies’ critically acclaimed BBC and HBO drama *Years and Years*. Maxim’s interest in acting developed from a very young age, taking part in several stage productions and being part of the National Youth Theatre. His first breakthrough came from his role as ‘Stepan’ in *Mr. Bean’s Holiday*, starring opposite Rowan Atkinson, which earned him a nomination at the Young Artists Awards for Best Performance in a Feature Film. His further credits include Universal’s *Last Christmas*; the latest installment of BBC’s *Doctor Who*; a guest lead in the final series of Sky One and Cinemax’s action-adventure series *Strike Back*; *Lake Placid: Legacy*; Channel 4 cult series *Skins: Pure*; BBC’s *Sadie J* and HBO’s *Rome*. Aside from acting, Maxim is heavily involved in music and photography and has written an experimental musical film which is now in development.

IAN BLACKBURN is an 18 year old actor, born and raised in Wellington, New Zealand. Whilst at school, Ian performed in multiple plays including Wellington High School’s annual Shakespeare Society production of *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *King Lear*, and a 2020 production of *The Tempest* in which he played ‘Prospero’. He appeared in the 2016 short film *Unbreakable Beau*. He also participated in the Roxy 5 short film competition and took part in the remake of the winning film *Shelter*, in 2017. He also played a leading role in the 2018 short film *Behold the Ghost*, playing a boy who, along with his two siblings, battles with grief for his abusive father.

KIP CHAPMAN is a recipient of New Zealand's highest Arts honor, an Arts Foundation Laureate, receiving a New Generation Award in 2013. Kip trained as an actor at UNITEC's School of Performing and Screen Arts in Auckland, New Zealand graduating in 2002. He was a core cast member of the Emmy Award winning drama *Top of the Lake* directed by Jane Campion and in the films *6 Days and Fantail*. He has performed at every major theatre company in New Zealand. In 2017, he was the Creative Director of the *World of Wearable Arts*. He was the co-creator/writer/director of *Hudson & Halls*, which won Best Theatre Production at both the Auckland and Wellington Theatre Awards and Best Director in Wellington. He was the co-creator/writer/director of the interactive theatre show *APOLLO 13: Mission Control*, and the director of the World Premiere production of *That Bloody Woman*.

ANTHONY CRUM hails from Whangarei, and is an actor and standup comedian based in Auckland, New Zealand. Anthony starred as 'Griffin' in the short film *Foam* and as 'Rat-Tail' in the 2020 TV series *The Wilds*. On stage he's tread the boards as 'The Beauhomme' in *Once on this Island*, 'The Bürgermeister' in *The Visit*, and 'Caliban' in Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. Anthony began acting when he was 15 playing *The Third Witch* in a comedic rewrite of Shakespeare's *Macbeth* by Robert Pollock. He went on to train at The John Bolton Theatre School in 2014 where he developed skills in Clown and Melo-drama. In 2018, Anthony graduated Toi Whakaari New Zealand Drama School with a Bachelor of Performing Arts and in his final year starred as 'Isaac' in the short film *Hush* which featured in the 2019 Berlin Film Festival.

MAXINE CUNLIFFE is a versatile London-born actor and musician from a Sierra Leonean and Caribbean heritage who has lived in New Zealand since the early 2000s. Maxine is best known on screen for *Power Rangers Megaforce* (2013), and short films *Divinity* (2015) *Reset* (2016) and *Fract* (2016). In 2016, Maxine also appeared as a presenter in TV ONE's *Neighbourhood*. Her stage appearances include playing chorus and cello in a successful all-female cast performance of *Henry V*, and 'Hippolyta' in an AUSA Outdoor Summer Theatre production of *Midsummer Night's Dream*. She was also featured playing the cello in the TV series *The Wilds*.

TRYSTAN GRAVELLES numerous TV credits include a series regular role in AMC's *The Terror*, *National Treasure* (BBC One) *A Discovery of Witches* (SKY 1), *Baptiste* (BBC One), *Trying* (Apple TV) and James Graham's *Quiz for ITV*, amongst others. He recently featured alongside Jessie Buckley and Johnny Flynn in the BAFTA award winning feature film *Beast*. Trystan's prolific theatre credits include *King Lear* (The Globe), *The Changeling* (The Globe), *Light Shining* in Buckinghamshire (The National) *An Oak Tree* (The National) *The Norman Conquests* (Chichester Festival Theatre).

SIR LENNY HENRY is one of Britain's best known comedians, as well as a writer, philanthropist and award-winning actor. Sir Lenny starred in *The Comedy of Errors* at The National, *Fences* at the Duchess Theatre, *The Resistible Rise of Arturo Ui* at The Donmar and most recently August Wilson's *King Hedley II* at Theatre Royal Stratford East in 2019. Sir Lenny's Television credits include *Broadchurch*, *The Syndicate*, *The Long Song* and his biographic *Danny and The Human Zoo*. Sir Lenny's Production Company, Douglas Road, has achieved success in partnership with Burning Bright on the recently acclaimed *The Commonwealth Kid* documentary. Sir Lenny is a co-founder of Comic Relief and recently released his memoir *Who Am I Again?* in October 2019. He has been a Trustee of the National Theatre since February 2016.

THUSITHA JAYASUNDERA's theater credits include *Donmar*, *Our Town* (Regent's Park Theatre), *Stories*, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers*, *Crime and Punishment*, *War Horse*, *The Caucasian Chalk Circle* (National Theatre), *The Divide* (Old Vic/King's Theatre Edinburgh), *My Eyes Went Dark* (Finborough/Traverse), *The Vertical Hour* (Park Theatre), *The Nine O'Clock Slot* (iceandfire), *Tiger Country* (Hampstead Theatre), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Chester Performs), *Marine Parade* (The Old Market Theatre, Brighton), *A Day at the Racists* (Finborough), *Dreams of Violence* (Out of Joint/Soho Theatre & Tour), *Much Ado About Nothing* (Actors for the London Stage), *International Writers Festival Summer 2006* (Royal Court), *Grimm Tales* (International Tour), *Twelfth Night*, *As I Lay Dying* (Young Vic), *The Comedy of Errors*, *Cain*, *Peer Gynt*, *Pentecost* (RSC). Her TV and film credits include: *Midsomer Murders*, *Doctor Foster*, *Humans*, *The Foreigner*, *Broadchurch*, *The C Word*, *Lewis*, *Diana*, *Doctors*, *Silent Witness*, *Young Dracula*, *The Jury*, *Above Suspicion*, *The Bill*, *Goodnight Sweetheart*, *Signal to Noise*, *Holby City*, *House Across the Street*, *The Tempest*.

FABIAN MCCALLUM made his international screen debut alongside Megan Mullally, Rob Lowe and Jenna Fischer in British series *You, Me & The Apocalypse*. Prior to that, he guest starred in German/Australian co-production *In Your Dreams* and in short films including Meryl Tankard's *Moth* alongside Sophie Lowe. A graduate of NIDA, Fabian has also studied with the National Youth Theatre in London.

SIMON MERRELLS recently played Templar Knight 'Tancrede' on History's drama series *Knightfall*. He began his career in theatre, performing in works from The Royal National Theatre and The Royal Shakespeare Company. He garnered attention for his work with Steven Berkoff, namely the title role in *Oedipus* and as washed up boxer 'Terry Malloy' in *On the Waterfront* both for which he received a nomination for Acting Excellence from the Stage Awards. Recently, he won Best Actor for his role in Stephen King's *I Am the Doorway* from the Las Vegas Movie Awards. He also worked in films such as *The Wolfman* with Benicio del Toro, *IndeX Zero*, *Take Down*, 'Lorenzo di Medici' in *Florence and the Uffizi Gallery* for Sky Arts 3D, and recently played a recurring role in Neil Gaiman's *Good Omens*. His other television roles include guesting on Syfy's *12 Monkeys*, DC's *Legends of Tomorrow*, BBC's *The Musketeers*, as well as recurring roles on Syfy's *Dominion*, The CW's *Tomorrow People*, and most notably, playing 'Marcus Crassus' on Starz' *Spartacus*.

GEOFF MORRELL has been nominated five times in the leading actor category at the AACTA awards for the series' *Changi*, *Marking Time*, *Fallen Angels* and twice for *Grassroots*, for which he won in 2001. He has also been nominated for four Silver Logies. Most recently, he has appeared in *Top of the Lake: China Girl* (Foxtel), *Rake* (ABCTV), *Cloudstreet* (Foxtel), *Please Like Me* (ABCTV), *Harrow* (ABCTV), *The Code* (ABCTV). Other credits include *Blue Murder* (ABCTV), *Murder Call* (CH 9), *Blue Heelers* (CH 7), 8MMM Aboriginal Radio (ABCTV), *Home and Away* (CH 7), *The Bill* (Thames TV), *Monocled Mutineer* (BBC), *Lady Windermere's Fan* (BBC), and *Farscape*. Film roles include *Oranges and Sunshine*, *The Mule*, *Ned Kelly*, *Oscar and Lucinda*, *10 Empty*, *Rogue*, *No Worries* and *View From Greenhaven Drive*. Geoff was most recently seen in the national tour of Nakhia Lui's award winning hit *Black Is The New White* for the Sydney Theatre Company.

PETER MULLAN is a veteran Scottish actor and filmmaker. He won Best Actor at the Cannes Film Festival for *My Name is Joe*. The Sundance Film Festival awarded Peter a World Dramatic Special Jury Prize for Breakout Performances for his role in Paddy Considine's *Tyrannosaur*. His feature film work includes roles in *Riff-Raff*, *Braveheart*, *Trainspotting*, *Miss Julie*, *Young Adam*, *Children of Men*, *The Red Riding Trilogy*, *War Horse*, the *Harry Potter* film series and *The Vanishing*. Also a director, he received a Golden Lion at Venice International Film Festival for *The Magdalene Sisters*. His feature film *Neds* won Best Picture at the San Sebastian Film Festival and Best Director and Best Writer at the BAFTA Awards. He has recently appeared in Netflix's *Ozark*, HBO's *Westworld*, Netflix's *Cursed*, ITV's *The Fixer*, and BBC's *Mum*, for which he was nominated for a BAFTA. He was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award for his portrayal of 'Matt Micham' in Gerard Lee and Jane Campion's acclaimed miniseries *Top of the Lake*.

LLOYD OWEN trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London and later joined the Royal Shakespeare Company. Notable performances include the title roles in *The York Realist* at the Royal Court/Strand Theatre, *Blood & Gifts* at The Lyttelton, *The Bodyguard* at The Adelphi, and with

Dame Diana Rigg and David Suchet in the award-winning production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* He starred alongside Mathew Perry in *The End of Longing* at The Playhouse, and with Imelda Staunton in the critically acclaimed *Good People* at the Noel Coward. His extensive film credits include the recent Bollywood blockbuster *Thugs of Hindostan*, *Miss Potter*, and *Wonderwell*, as well as playing the leading role in *Apollo 18* for Dimension Films. On television, he is best known for the UK series *Monarch of the Glen*, and *The Young Indiana Jones Chronicles*, the lead in *Viva Laughlin* for CBS as well as the NBC/Sky production *You, Me and the Apocalypse*. He recently completed a sold-out run of *Noises Off* at The Garrick theatre.

AUGUSTUS PREW can next be seen as the lead role of 'Cameron' in the Blumhouse Hulu Anthology series *Into The Dark: Midnight Kiss* and Mike Doyle's film, *Sell By*. He can currently be seen on Netflix's *Special* and Apple's *Morning Show* with Jennifer Aniston, Reese Witherspoon, and Steve Carell. Augustus' television credits include the series lead in CBS's *Pure Genius*, the recurring guest star role of 'Whip' in FOX's *Prison Break*, the title role in Mike White's HBO pilot *Mamma Dallas*, and *The Borgias* for Showtime. Most recently, he appeared in the role of 'Miles' in the Netflix film *Ibiza*. Previously, Augustus was the lead in The Wallis production of *The Pride* in the principal role of 'Oliver'. Additional credits include the independent film *High-Rise* opposite Tom Hiddleston and Sienna Miller, *Klondike* with Richard Madden, *Kick-Ass 2* opposite Aaron Taylor-Johnson, and *Charlie St. Cloud* opposite Zac Efron.

PETER TAIT has been working in the industry since the early 1980s, creating his own work as well as appearing in NZ projects and international TV and film. As evident in his own work, Peter has a penchant for offbeat comedy, however roles in *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans*, *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*, and *Desperate Remedies* have given him the ability to show another side to his talents on the big screen. Peter has most recently been making his mark in NZ television, with roles in many local shows including *Super City*, *Terry Teo*, *Underbelly NZ*, and two seasons of *The Brokenwood Mysteries* and *Westside*. He's also had the chance to show how multi-talented he really is, singing and playing guitar in award winning musical *Once*.

ALEX TARRANT hails from Auckland, New Zealand and is of Māori, Samoan and Niuean descent. He is a 2012 graduate of New Zealand's prestigious drama school Te Kura Toi Whakaari o Aotearoa. Following study, he played leading roles in the WW1 miniseries *When We Go To War*, the BBC co-production *Tatau*, and 3 seasons of the Australian hit *800 Words*. He then joined the core cast of the award-winning racy drama *Filthy Rich*, which streamed on Hulu. In 2019, Alex again joined the core cast of the much anticipated sequel to the Australian cult series *Seachange*. 2019 also marked his international feature film debut, with the release of *The Other Side of Heaven 2: Fire of Faith*. His second feature, sci-fi thriller *Night Riders* was shot recently in Canada, and he returned to NZ screens in the comedy *Mean Mums*.

LEON WADHAM is a graduate of Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School. He was a series lead in TV2's *Go Girls* and has appeared in numerous New Zealand television projects including *Bad Seed*, *Brokenwood Series 5*, *When We Go To War*, *Terry Teo* and *Pirates of the Airwaves*. His film projects include *Under The Mountain*, *Shopping* and *Pork Pie*. His international screen credits include *Power Rangers Beast Morphers*, and *Roman Empire* (Season 2). Leon co-wrote the play *Live At Six*, co-created *Tom Keeper Passes* for Long Cloud Youth Theatre as well as both *Outsider's Guide* and *Milky Bits* for comedy outfit The Bakery. He was a staff writer on the TV3 sitcom *Sunny Skies*, and he co-wrote and directed the short films *School Night* and *Moving*. Leon has also directed New Zealand television series including *Golden Boy Series 1 and 2*, *The Male Gayz*, *Citizen's Handbook* and *Bad News* (Series 1 and 2), the latter of which Leon co-created and has received Nominations at both the 2019 and 2020 NZ TV Awards.

BENJAMIN WALKER is an established American film, television, and award-nominated theatre actor. He was most recently nominated for a Tony Award for his standout performance of 'Chris Keller' in Arthur Miller's Broadway play *All My Sons*. Ben just wrapped a lead role opposite Liam Neeson and Laurence Fishburne in the independent feature *The Ice Road*. Benjamin's other film work includes *Heart of the Sea*, *Flags Of Our Fathers*, Muhammad Ali's *Greatest Fight*, and *The Choice*. Ben also starred in the final season of Netflix's *Jessica Jones*. His theater credits include the lead role of 'Andrew Jackson' in the Broadway production *Bloody Bloody Andrew Jackson*, and the role of 'Brick' opposite Scarlett Johansson in the Broadway production of *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*.

SARA ZWANGOBANI graduated from the prestigious Victorian College of the Arts with a BA in Acting. Her feature film credits include *Disgrace* (produced by Emile Sherman) and *Merchant of Fairness*. She has appeared in many popular Australian television shows such as *Doctor Doctor*, *All Saints*, *Packed to the Rafters*, *Love My Way*, *Home and Away*, *Two Twisted*, as well as *The Starter Wife* (3 Arts Entertainment) and *Nightmares and Dreamscapes: From the Stories of Stephen King* (Coote Hayes). On stage Sara has performed in Sydney Theatre Company's *In The Next Room (Or the Vibrator Play)*, *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *The Crucible*, *Summer of the Aliens* and *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Girl in Tan Boots* for the Griffin Theatre Company, *Lyrebird* for the Old Fitzroy, *Dirty Butterfly*, *Imago*, and *Women In Shorts* at Downstairs Belvoir, *The Tempest* at Bondi Pavilion, and *Cloud Nine* at the Darlinghurst Theatre. Sara toured Australia playing 'Mark Antony' in the Bell Shakespeare Theatre Company's ground-breaking production of *Julius Caesar*.

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