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*How Costume  
Designer*

Lex Wood *Turned*

*into a* The Vampire Lestat

ROCKSTAR

BY KALYN CORRIGAN

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Photo: Courtesy of AMC Networks  
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## LA WEEKLY

EDITOR IN CHIEF: MARK STEFANOS  
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ENTERTAINMENT

# DIRECTOR TRAVIS KNIGHT BRINGS HIS ‘MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE’ DREAM TO LIFE

BY GIL MACIAS

For nearly 40 years, He-Man fans have been waiting for a properly realized *Masters of the Universe* live-action movie: one that fully embraces the wild and fantastical world of Eternia. *Bumblebee* director Travis Knight has been waiting for that film all his life, too, but as fate would have it, he’s the one actually helming it.

Ever since 1987’s *Masters of the Universe* flopped at the box office, there have been countless attempts to get Eternia’s blond, musclebound champion known as He-Man back on the big screen. Between 2004 and 2023, the project languished in limbo, cycling through different studios and a revolving door of directors

including John Woo, John Stevenson, Jon M. Chu, and McG. For a while, Adam and Aaron Nee got close to making their movie, but when that failed, Amazon MGM swooped in and the Power Sword was passed to Knight — a lifelong He-Man fan who clearly understood the assignment.

With his all-new *Masters of the Universe*, opening in theaters this Friday, June 5, Knight honors nostalgia while boldly breaking some of the rules. The film — starring Nicholas Galitzine as Adam Glenn/He-Man — proudly embraces the camp and the wackiness of the original 1983 Filmation cartoon. It is appropriately cheesy when necessary, balancing a

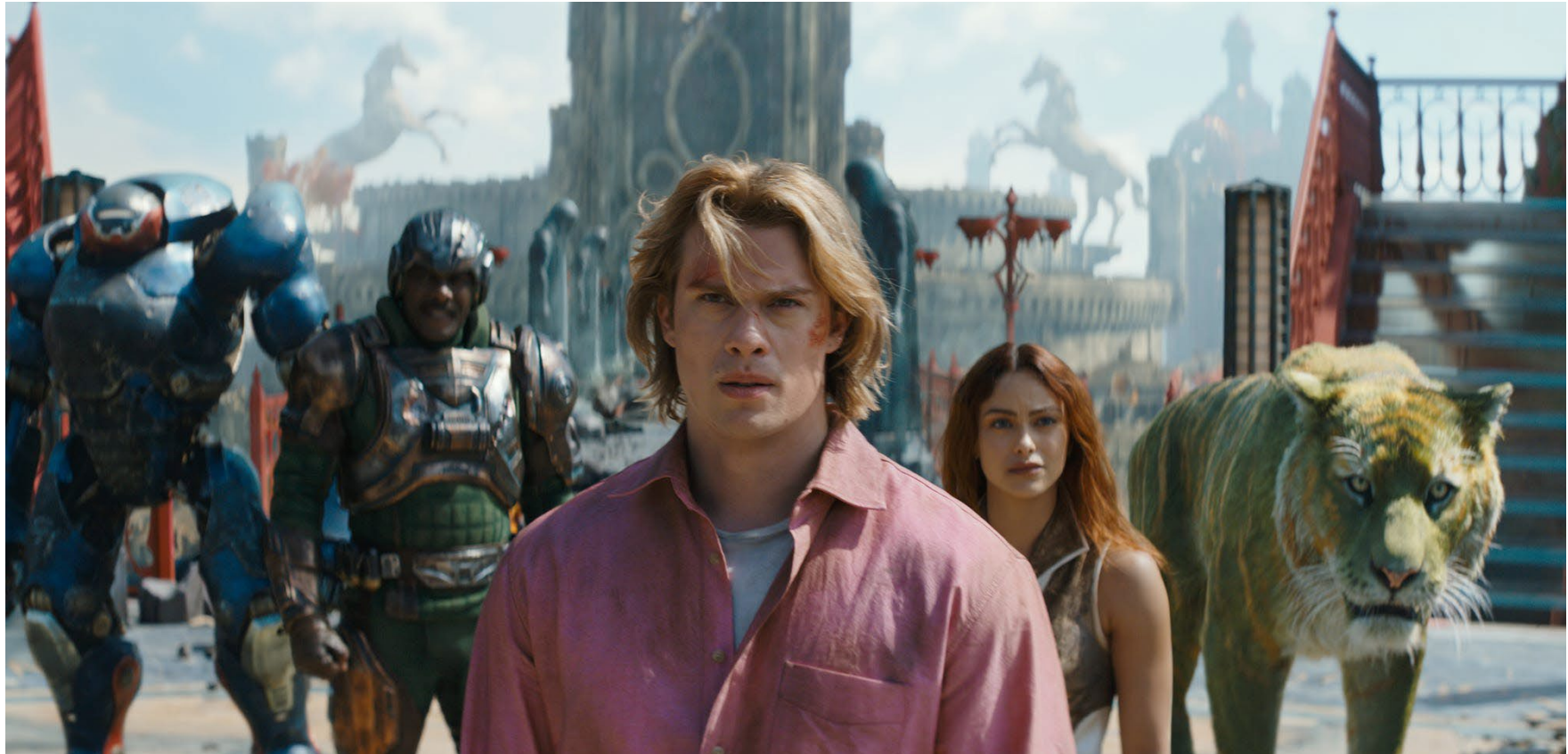
big heart and occasional grounded drama with high-tech, sword-and-sorcery action that’ll leave your inner child bouncing off the walls.

The eye-popping look of Eternia is as colorful and vibrant as its bizarre roster of scantily clad heroes and villains. The costume designs impeccably lean into the goofiness of the source material, making most characters dead ringers for their animated counterparts. And what’s a great *Masters of the Universe* movie without its scene-stealing Skeletor, brought to menacing life by Jared Leto, who gives the skull-faced warlord a flamboyant Shakespearean edge.

If all goes well, we could be in for more



Travis Knight behind the scenes with Nicholas Galitzine and Camila Mendes



Man-at-Arms (Idris Elba), Adam (Nicholas Galitzine), and Teela (Camila Mendes)

AMAZON MGM STUDIOS

He-Man movies — and Knight already has some big ideas (wait until you see those post-credits scenes). Just days ahead of the film's release, the Gen X-born director chatted with *LA Weekly* about crafting the *Masters of the Universe* story he wanted to tell and the many “pinch me” moments along the way, such as working with Queen guitarist Brian May on the film's sweeping rock-opera score. He also opens up about the Skeletor origin story he hates with a passion, a scrapped underwater action sequence that would've introduced Mer-Man, and why his He-Man has no problem killing a bad guy during a brawl.

**LA Weekly: *Masters of the Universe* was in development hell for over 20 years. Adam and Aaron Nee were the last directors to have it, but fate ultimately brought it to your hands, and I am glad it did, because you nailed it. Can you talk about how much of their story was retained, and what you changed or added to it to make it your vision of *Masters of the Universe*?**

**Travis Knight:** Yeah, this thing has been kicking around for a long time. People have been struggling to make the movie. Like you, I'm very glad they failed because it meant I got to make it. Amazon's producers approached me about two and a half years ago. I was really surprised that I

got the script because nobody knew I was a He-Man fan. This is not something that you shout through a bullhorn or mention at cocktail parties.

And so the script came my way, and it was one that Aaron and Adam Nee had written with David Callaham. It was a really fun script. But it was not the He-Man movie I would have made. I read it, and I said, “Oh, they did some really fun, playful things here.” And we retained some of that stuff. There's some dialogue. There's some story beats from what they had written that we held on to because it was really well done.

But it wasn't the He-Man that I knew and loved. And so, I was excited by the opportunity to tell a story in this world. But I said, “Look, this is what I want to do with it.” I told the studio and the producers, “This is my vision for it.” And, shockingly, they went along with it. I seriously still cannot believe that I got to make this movie.

**Obviously, the main source of inspiration is the 1983 Filmation cartoon. But you have Dolph Lundgren in there, and characters like Karg and Pigboy appear, which are nods to the 1987 movie. But did you and the screenwriters also look at the 2002 Cartoon Network series or Kevin Smith's recent Netflix version for any ideas or inspiration?**

No, we didn't really. When I came aboard, the first person that I brought onto the team was my creative partner, Chris Butler. He, like me, was a contemporary. He grew up in Liverpool, and I grew up in Portland. Very different upbringings. But we both loved He-Man. I knew that — because he grew up in that same era — he understood it and loved it just as much as I did. So it was the two of us shaping the story over the course of time.

Whether it's a book, a comic book, a video game, a toy line, or a cartoon, I think anytime you're doing an adaptation it's important to go back to the source. We always went back to the source. Like, *what was special about it to begin with?* And it was about trying to channel our inner 8-year-olds, why we loved it so much as kids, and really hold onto that and wrap our arms around it. So, we did pull references from other iterations. This thing's been around for over 40 years, so we took some stuff from the 1987 live-action movie. We took some stuff from some weird, obscure newspaper strips. But the center of it was the toy line and the Filmation cartoons.

**I want to talk about some of the creative liberties and changes you made to the lore. In your version, Adam transforms into He-Man in front of**

**everybody. In the cartoon, he had to hide all the time. His absence was also a constant conflict between him and Teela in the 1983 cartoon, too. But you stripped that element away.**

Look, I'm a big comic book fan, as you might guess. But, even as a kid, I thought, *this is ridiculous*. Nobody can tell that He-Man and Adam are the same person? When he's Adam, he's utterly jacked. He's got those huge deltoids. He's got biceps, glistening hams. He's just fucking huge. The only difference is when he transforms into He-Man, he's got an all-over tan and fewer clothes. I thought it was just silly. And we actually referenced that in the movie. At the end of the movie, he still thinks he's got this alter ego, but pretty much, everybody knows who he is.

**In the original cartoon, He-Man is a moralistic hero. Like Batman, he doesn't like to kill. In your movie, I got the impression that certain characters were goners. Is there a reason you did away with He-Man's no-killing rule?**

He kills plenty of people in the movie [*Laughs*]. But I think the interesting thing is you'll see when Adam becomes He-Man and when he is his most violent, it's also when he's sort of lost the run of himself. He's behaving in a way that's not consistent with who he is internally, and I think that when we see that, there's a cost

to him doing that, and then he learns through that failing and becomes the better version of himself. One of the things I loved about He-Man in the cartoon from the '80s was that he was a guy who looked like a classic action hero with the giant muscles and everything and the lantern jaw. But he didn't throw a punch unless he had to. He tried to find common ground. He talked about kindness, empathy, and friendship. And that's an aspect that we held on to with Adam. Now, when push comes to shove, he will fight, but he would rather not.

**Some fans are complaining that Skeletor doesn't sound like the classic Alan Oppenheimer version. I think some people get trapped in that nostalgic bubble and don't realize that there have been several iterations of that character since 1983 and he's sounded different each time. Did you toy with different variations of the voice before you landed on the final Shakespearean take?**

We played around with different versions of the voice. Jared would send me little voice memos. But we knew we did not want to do an Alan Oppenheimer impression. We did not want to engage in mimicry. And there's a reason why that voice was that silly nasal voice: It was just to take the edge off a character who looks scary in a kids' cartoon. So to make him sound silly, it made that palatable. For us, we just wanted to come up with a voice that was distinctive, that felt consistent with the character of Skeletor. And there is a theatricality to Skeletor: He puts on a show, he wants to be noticed, he wants to be adored and beloved, and so there's a showiness. There's a performative quality that we wanted to bring to the voice. Even though it doesn't sound like the original Skeletor, it has the same characteristics of something that's distinctive, but also something where he's trying to perform to be theatrical.

**The *Masters of the Universe* franchise has very inconsistent origin stories for a lot of its characters depending on where you look. There'll be one backstory in the mini-comics that came with toys, and it'll totally contradict an origin story from the 1986 comics or even the 1983 cartoon or 2002 series. So may I ask what version of Skeletor you went with? Is he an interdimensional demon or is he Keldor, Adam's uncle?**

He's absolutely not Keldor. I fucking hate that. When I discovered that, I would have flipped my desk over had I had the upper body strength. I was so outraged. No, he's not Keldor. He's a demon from another dimension. I definitely have thoughts on, moving forward, how we could give a nod to the Keldor thing, but he's not Randor's brother. He's not He-Man's uncle. I hate that. We don't

need yet another sci-fi thing where every single goddamn main character is related. No, he's definitely not Randor's brother, for sure.

**I also want to touch on the score, which features Queen guitarist Brian May. Did you know right away that you wanted to go with that *Flash Gordon*-esque electronic rock sound?**

Music's a huge part of my life. It's a huge part of every movie I've ever made, and so, for this movie, I really wanted to craft something that felt distinctive and fun, playful, and emotive. And so I reached out to Daniel Pemberton, whom I'm a huge fan of. He's absolutely brilliant and a lovely human to boot. And the very first conversation I had with Daniel about the score, I evoked the '80s *Flash Gordon* movie, which I love. I adore it. I wore it out in my parents' Betamax. And one of the reasons I loved it was that iconic score by Queen. And so that was the feeling that I wanted to get. Something that was big and theatrical and operatic, but also really playful and fun. And underneath had some sincerity to it — which is Queen in a nutshell — but I could not have imagined that we would have been able to work with Brian May.

And so, fast-forward a year later and we're in Brian May's home studio and he's rocking out with his Red Special and his sixpence and you're hearing those incredible Queen sounds come out of the speaker. It was such a pinch-me moment. Daniel and I kept looking at each other,

eyes agog. We could not believe what we were both experiencing together. It was incredible. And he's like the coolest dude in the entire world. So it was a joy.

**I'd hate for you to be pigeonholed as the go-to guy for these '80s franchise movies, but you nailed *Bumblebee* and now this one. Would you like to become the Kevin Feige of the "HCU": the He-Man cinematic universe?**

The Kevin Feige of He-Man? [Laughs]

**Maybe you could. Do you already have ideas for other sequels or an overarching plan for a series of films?**

Look, I approach every single story that I tell, every movie that I make, as if you only ever get one chance to do it. And so we put everything we had into this movie. We wanted to make sure that we told a complete story from beginning to end, which we do. I think the movie has an incredible heart. It's a lot of fun to watch. It's a blast. I'm really proud of the movie that we made.

But, we suggest where that could go with these little buttons that we have at the end of the movie that, even if we never get another chance to make another movie in this universe, I'm very proud of what we made. But if we were to be so lucky to be able to tell more stories, I would love to be able to tell them. And I have very, very clear ideas on where it would go. And there's just the tiniest suggestion of what that might be at the very end of the movie.

**I know you couldn't overstuff the**

**movie with all the fan-favorite characters, but you did really well with the characters you did use and gave everyone their little moment. Off the top of your head, are there characters that you really wanted to put in the movie, but you just couldn't squeeze them in?**

I really wanted to get Mer-Man in there. I loved Mer-Man. In my mind, I had this whole amazing action sequence that would take place at sea. It was going to be amazing. And then Mattel looked at the price tag and said, "Go fuck yourself." [Laughs]

Look, you have to be responsible. Film is a time-based art. There's only so much you can tell in the time that you have. And this was a very focused story. And so, as much as I wanted to put every single thing that I loved from *Masters of the Universe* into this movie, you do have to be responsible. So Mer-Man was one of them. I would love to be able to put him in a future story. Snout Spout was in the movie for a good long while and then we had to pull him out. It was going to be too expensive to bring him to life in the best way. So there are a bunch of characters that I deeply love that I would have loved to put in the movie. It was just outside the bounds of the story that we're telling — including one that is suggested at the very, very end of the movie. [L]

*"Masters of the Universe" is in theaters Friday, June 5.*



Travis Knight behind the scenes with Nicholas Galitzine and Camila Mendes

# WHAT'S UP POPPING UP

## New York Bagel Deli & Bakery Expands to Mar Vista and a Miles Davis Bitches Brew

BY MICHELE STUEVEN

**N**ew York Bagel Deli and Bakery owners Lenny Rosenberg and his wife, Adaeze Nwanonyiri, have expanded their deli and bakery from Santa Monica to Mar Vista.

All the various bagel recipes are the same, with the exception of the house-made sweet, new drippy French toast bagel that sells out by 10 a.m. The bakery has an international flair, featuring everything made from scratch,

including their signature Italian rainbow cookies, Linzer tarts, black and white cookies, and a Mar Vista giant cookie collection that includes peanut butter, oatmeal raisin, chocolate chunk, and smiley face butter cookies. The chocolate chip rugelach and raspberry hamantasch are also made in-house from scratch.

You can still get their signature pizzas, whitefish salad, and bagel smears, including the smoked salmon with generous chunks of smoked fish. There are also

plenty of meat, fish, and sandwich platters, and a breakfast menu.

Family Style Food Festival is returning to Los Angeles on Saturday, June 27, at the Los Angeles State Historic Park from 12 p.m. to 8 p.m.

This year's Los Angeles lineup brings together more than 30 restaurants, including Michelin-starred Kato, Damian, Animae, Kuya Lord, Jon & Vinny's, Villa's Tacos, Apollonia's, Baekjeong, Roscoe's House of Chicken & Waffles, Burgers Never Say Die, Tacos Los Cholos, The Brothers Sushi, Fugetsu-Do Bakery Shop, Yama Sushi, Sunday Gravy, and Badmaash.

Beyond the food, Family Style's signature merchandise marketplace will feature exclusive drops and collaborations from names across fashion, art and culture, including Adidas, Undeafated, Umbro, Market, Cherry LA, Pleasures, Bricks & Wood, Honor The Gift, The Marathon Clothing, Anti Social Social Club, FTP, VandyThePink, Union Los Angeles x Kosuke Kawamura, Tombogo, Lauren Halsey, Aaron Kai, Interscope, Mom's Spaghetti and more.

Holey Moley Golf Club, the immersive indoor mini-golf destination known for its over-the-top food and beverage offerings, is now offering The Giant Burger at the Santa Monica location on the Promenade. The massive 5-pound burger



Chocolate chip rugelach

MICHELE STUEVEN

features three pounds of ground beef, 12 slices of American cheese, butter lettuce, pickles, sliced Roma tomatoes, and red onions, all for \$90.

Foodie Week takes place at Westfield Century City, from Saturday, June 6 through Sunday, June 14. Exclusive deals and offerings include a \$65 three-course prix fixe dinner from Katsuya, a three-course prix fixe menu for \$65 at Super Peach, \$35 lunch and \$65 dinner prix fixe menus featuring wood-burning grill favorites and seasonal dishes at Eatly's rooftop dining destination Terra Eatly – Buy one gelato, get the 2nd one at 50% off. Plus 20% off all Gelato To-Go containers at Venchi and a table for two dining experiences at Very Thai for \$60 per person, featuring a five-course prix fixe menu complete with dessert. Zinque will be offering a special three-course prix fixe dinner for \$60, available from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m.

In celebration of jazz artist Miles Davis' 100th birthday this week, Dad Grass and the Miles Davis Estate announced the release of Miles Davis Bitches Brew by Dad Grass, a limited-edition THC-infused leisure drink inspired by *Bitches Brew*, his landmark 1970 album that reshaped jazz and continues to influence music, art, and culture more than five decades later.

The collaboration draws inspiration from the album's atmosphere, experimentation, and boundary-pushing spirit and features layered notes of guava and hibiscus in two federally legal hemp-derived THC offerings: a 3mg leisure drink designed for easygoing sessions and a bolder 10mg version for fans looking to go deeper into the experience.

Quantities of Miles Davis Bitches Brew by Dad Grass are extremely limited, ahead of the official release in August. **[L]**



Lenny Rosenberg and his wife, Adaeze Nwanonyiri at New York Bagel and Deli Mar Vista

MICHELE STUEVEN

ENTERTAINMENT

# COSTUME DESIGNER LEX WOOD ON TURNING 'THE VAMPIRE LESTAT' INTO A ROCK STAR FOR SEASON THREE

BY KALYN CORRIGAN

**A**dapt or die. That's been the motto of the hit AMC show *Interview with the Vampire* since its first season changed the landscape of the Anne Rice universe back in 2022. Now, with the upcoming third season in sight, that mantra rings truer than ever before. Taking inspiration from the renowned gothic fiction author's source material, the latest iteration of showrunner Rolin Jones's vision signals a changing of the guard. In the highly anticipated return to the delightfully messy drama — this time cheekily re-titled *The Vampire Lestat* — the protagonist switches perspective from the tormented, reserved New Orleans native Louis de Pointe du Lac (Jacob Anderson), who led us through the first two seasons, to the self-aggrandizing, life of the party, Parisian creature of the night Lestat de Lioncourt (Sam Reid) as he taps into his musical prowess. Despite the tonal whiplash, watching this golden-tressed chaos demon's unbridled spirit ascend from immortal being to full-on, frilled-out rock star somehow feels fated — and Lestat's got just the garb to prove it.

"The music is the starting point, and then everything else follows," says costume department head Lex Wood about building Lestat's rocker wardrobe for season three. "There was a line, I believe it's in *Queen of the Damned*, about Lestat 'trying on new glittering dream skins,' which really stood out when I was in those early stages of trying to pinpoint how we approach this. He's trying on different versions of what he wants to be. And that is reflected with the music as well, because there's so many different musical influences that it allowed us to be quite inventive and not to feel too hemmed in by contemporary fashion."

Wood joined the *Interview* team at the end of the show's second season, and now, the stylist is spearheading Lestat's look for season three. Taking the reins



Sam Reid as Lestat de Lioncourt in "The Vampire Lestat"

COURTESY OF AMC NETWORKS



COURTESY OF AMC NETWORKS

just as the series ups the ante, Wood understands that her work is crucial to both the character and the program's progress. "There was very much a want to pull us forward from where we have been at the end of season two," she remembers. "It was important to everyone to be able to bring us into a much more vivid world."

Whereas most byronic romances opt for traditionally dark and dreary clothing, Wood felt that her revamped revenants would embrace a wider palette. "There was a big focus on color, especially for costumes," she grins. "We wanted to avoid too much of the trope of having vampires always in black, which has been a theme throughout season one and two. Especially within the world of music, and rock, and glam, and punk, it really opened the door for us to be able to throw as much color at the piece as we could. That was definitely a big theme between the creative departments, but especially within my own department. Whenever we were shopping or finding fabric and clothing, it was always, 'More color, more color!' We really tried to punch up a little bit of modernity into it."

Based on Rice's 1985 novel of the same name, *The Vampire Lestat* follows the same basic structure as the book, while also pulling details from other entries in the literary series.

The first season bounces between three timelines: 1910 New Orleans, where the ancient vampire Lestat meets Louis and gives him the "dark gift" of immortality, 1973 in San Francisco, where twenty-something fresh faced journalist Daniel Molloy first attempts to interview Louis, and 2022, in which an elderly Molloy revisits the project that boyish youth prevented them from finishing, reunited with Louis in his penthouse in Dubai, where he recounts centuries of dangerous liaisons and toxic entanglements.

With the newfound love of his life at his side, whom he refers to as "Rashid" (and who is later revealed to be the vampire Armand, played by the ever-cunning Assad Zaman), present-day Louis recalls his human youth in Storyville (the red-light district of its time) as an entrepreneurial owner of a brothel. He talks about grieving his troubled brother, falling under Lestat's thrall, being reborn as one of the lonely ones, and co-creating a fledgling of his own, Claudia (Bailey Bass), a dying teenager saved from a fire to serve as a band-aid for Louis and Lestat's rocky marriage. Yet, like most temporary fixes, the child vampire fails to cover the cracks in the couple's foundation, and after a series of increasingly intense betrayals, Claudia convinces Louis to help her kill Lestat and flee to Europe to begin their new lives.

Season two continues Louis's recollection of events as he details his time spent with Claudia (recast as Delainey Harris) amidst the backdrop of Europe during World War II. On a quest to find old-world vampires, the duo lands in Paris, where they are seduced by a coven and inducted into their Théâtre des Vampires, led by the ancient vampire Armand.

Every night, the group acts out meta plays for the local mortals, pretending to be 'vampires' as they literally drain their victims on stage. Eventually, a mesmerized Claudia joins the production, and Louis falls in love with their leader. However, their plans are foiled when one of its members, Santiago (Ben Daniels), conspires with Armand to orchestrate a fatal trial, resulting in the loss of Claudia and her newly turned companion Madeline (Roxane Duran).

This season also unveils the survival of Lestat, who plays an integral role in the trial. Through his sessions with Molloy, Louis learns that Armand has been lying

for years about saving Louis from the same fate as his fledgling. Armand took credit for controlling the minds of the mortal audience and forcing them to banish Louis instead of sentencing him to death, when in reality, it was actually Lestat. This revelation leads Louis to leave Armand, but not before making him swear not to harm the journalist for his big gotcha moment. Of course, Armand has lied again, and he immediately turns Daniel into a blood drinker.

The season ends with the reconciliation of Lestat and Louis in New Orleans, arms wrapped tightly around one another as a wicked hurricane rages wildly overhead, slowly tearing down the walls circling their embrace, decimating the home in which they reside. Meanwhile, Molloy makes the rounds at various news outlets, touting his freshly inked record breaker, *Interview with the Vampire*. Louis hears whispers on the wind from angry vampires who still believe their existence shouldn't be revealed to humans, and he invites all who feel compelled to act on their fury to make good on their threats and bring the smoke to his front door.

**Subjective storytelling is a lot like an inanimate object in the center of the room: it changes perspective based on where you're standing.** In season three's world, Lestat becomes a swaggering, hip-thrusting, bona fide rock star. News of Molloy's bestselling text reaches Lestat, and naturally, Louis's recognizance doesn't paint the 265-year-old French blonde bloodsucker in the best light. Feeling betrayed by his lover's harsh testimony, the rift between the couple that had briefly closed once again started to schism.

In truth, Lestat's transformation into a rock god isn't just an ode to changing with the seasons, it's a response to everything that Louis said about him in the book's hotly contested interview; a rewriting of the first two seasons' narrative, and a reclamation of Lestat's own autonomy. Plus, to be fair, he just looks damn good in those leather pants. "You should come to one before it's over," Lestat purrs at an old friend on his tour bus one evening, inviting him to one of the band's shows. "I'm quite sexy."

In a rare move, the show's composer, Daniel Hart (previously known for his work on standouts like *The Green Knight*, *A Ghost Story*, and more recently, *Mother Mary*), had a large hand in the writing process. According to showrunner Jones, Hart even sat in the writer's room, where in he would occasionally rise, leave the room, write a song for Lestat, and quietly return.

"The best thing for me when we were in prep for season three was that Sam and Daniel Hart had been working for so long with the music that it was already such a

part of the process," recalls Wood. "The music could really lead where we were going."

At one point in the show, Lestat's band covers Billy Idol's iconic banger "Dancing with Myself" and it's hard not to notice a striking resemblance between Reid's springloaded shuffle and the original instigator of such reverent reverberations. Wood explains how the costume department fought tirelessly to strike an appropriate balance between a flattering homage to the sonic gods they hope to immortalize, and bringing their own personal artistry to their interpretation of the vampire's hardened persona.

"Sam and I spoke a lot about using the influence of the stalwarts of a musician's wardrobe," says the costume designer. "There are certain things that we are familiar with seeing, especially with Billy Idol, David Bowie, and Freddie Mercury. All these absolute idols of music have different styles within their own right, but we'll often see them in a leather pant. We'll often see them in a similar tank top. So we brought in quite a few things that we felt would be true to a musician. Then, within fittings, we would try different things together and see what felt true to Lestat. Some of that is playing around, and sometimes leaning into the trope of the musician, and other times, really pushing away from it."

In the end, Hart wrote over twenty songs for his fictional rock band (also named "The Vampire Lestat," because of course Lestat would name the band after himself). Reid, who proves to be just as gifted a musician as he is at performing, sings all of the songs himself. It was a truly collaborative effort of all of the departments coming together, and each specific song inspired different ideas for Wood and co.

**Regarding creating prominent distinctions between Lestat's individual costumes,** Wood shares how "some of that is down to the particular track that we knew he would be performing for that episode. Other times, it's about the theme

## LA WEEKLY CLASSIFIEDS

### EMPLOYMENT & EDUCATION

**Business Development Specialist:** Req'd: Bachelor's in Fashion Merchandising, Marketing, or rel. \$52,707/yr. Mail Resume: KC Exclusive, Inc., 1100 S. San Pedro St. #M10, LA, CA 90015.

**Videographer:** Req'd: AA in Video Production, Media, Culture and Communication or related. Mail Resume: Advue, Inc. 448 S. Hill St. Ste 905 Los Angeles, CA 90013.

**Solar Project Mgr, Req'd:** MS in Arch, Engg or rel. \$90,168/yr. Res: Electri-Tech Services, Inc. 19481 San Jose Ave., City of Industry, CA 91748.



Lestat gives “the paps my pussycat.”

COURTESY OF AMC NETWORKS

of what else is going on around the action of that concert, because we have separate concerts per episode.”

At one point, Lestat sings a song that he wrote for Armand, reciting the lyrics, “You’ve got a lot of rules for a theater kid,” and, “Only the big boss gets to decide who dies and who stays alive.”

While he sings the jaunty tune, Lestat dons bright baby blue eyeshadow and matching blue ribbons in his golden pigtailed — a glaringly obvious nod to Claudia’s ensemble that she was forced to live in during her time onstage at the Théâtre des Vampires, performing the same maddening “My Baby Loves Windows” song on repeat every night for over five hundred shows in a row. Paired together, the vampire’s newly established music and the old school fit create a powerful humiliation ritual for Armand. The callback serves as the artist’s sharp retaliation to the cruel injustice bestowed upon his late daughter who was killed in season two by the rapid production company.

He tops off the baby doll drip with black and white pinstripe pants, not unlike the trousers he wore during the theatrical trial. “A really clever design theme for Lestat during season one that continued into the vision of him in season two, was that he’s often seen in a stripe,” interprets Wood, “because it’s like he’s being imprisoned into this world, this version of himself in the version that Louis is experiencing.”

She expands, “So by contrast, we wanted to try and break out from the stripes [in season three] and be a lot more inventive in terms of how we are showing that, so that we’ve got the visual representation

of him being free, as well as the musical freedom that he’s experiencing.”

The first time that we see Lestat onstage in all of his rock star glory, a deliciously long, raven-black cashmere cape adorns his broad shoulders, the shawl held together by a thread over his freshly scarred breastbone. According to Wood, this particular outfit makes a statement in more ways than one. “We wanted to show a reference, and almost like Lestat is kind of poking fun at the trope of the vampire,” she says. As Lestat casts a spell over the crowd, it’s hard not to see echoes of Santiago from season two in his swagger, as he once again uses his clothes to mock the nest that he feels so deeply wronged him. “But again, it was something that stuck out from one of the Anne Rice quotes where early on, when the star is performing, he’s touching the black cloak, and he talks about how it feels in his hands. So, you’ll notice that there’s a lot of focus on Sam’s hands around the cloak at the time, which is our nod towards that very direct quote from the text.”

Wood elaborates, “We also wanted it to be a moment of breaking free.” As a creature who wore the costume of a day walker for centuries, the traditional ghoulish getup and tongue-in-cheek bravado also represents a new era of unabashed vampire pride for Lestat, who, whether he admits it or not, feels emboldened by Louis’s recent actions to make his private persona become public knowledge to the world. “I mean, it’s not fantastically complicated,” downplays the humble stylist, “But it’s really fun when it’s understood,

because so often, these things are small ideas that we have in small conversations, and suddenly, you’re doing it, and it’s big. We just hope that it will resonate with fans of the show.”

**Just as Lestat allows the spotlight to morph him into a metal-headed shredder, so, too, does the actor who plays him change to embody the rocker vamp once he steps into his carefully curated costumery.**

“A lot of it starts with shoes,” says Wood with a smile. “It’s a real grounding for an actor, and finding how the character walks, that I know has been a thing for Sam for season one and two. Actually, that was a big thing that we wanted to shift. We took him away from the refined boots that he had in the earlier seasons to give him a different gait, because he’s jumping all around the place. He’s kicking televisions, he’s doing all kinds of wild and crazy things — the elegant boot didn’t suit the star in this version quite so well,” she laughs. “It’s a joy to be able to move the character forward, and to bring it into this new version.”

Speaking of boots, one of the most exciting details in Wood’s repertoire is Lestat’s big chunky black stompers that he wears onstage, the bottoms of which read “Hate” on the underside of the right boot, and “Me” on the underside of the left. As Wood explains, the slow shot of the vampire’s quirky high-tops acts as both “a vehicle for using a new camera,” and a scarce opportunity for her team to show off their character’s highly coveted footwear.

“It was something that actually Rolin had asked if we could do. There was a particular camera that David Tattersall, our DP, had access to, and he has really focused on shoes, which is a joy for a costume team. Often, on television, you don’t see shoes, and we put so much energy into how the shoes feel for the character.” She beams, “There were quite a few different versions of what we could write on the bottom. Some were a lot ruder than what we chose in the end, but we thought that said the most, and it’s the brattiest version of what we were thinking. It felt true to Lestat’s bratty, laissez-faire vibe.”

The nautical script etched into the base of Lestat’s boots almost looks like tattoos that the vampire rock god might hand-pick to decorate his knuckles. Wood insightfully quips, “Which, you know, of course, vampires can’t really have, because it would regenerate the next day. Maybe that is his tattoo.”

**More than once, the costume designer has witnessed Reid becoming Lestat through the sheer power of her designs.** “Sam is just the best,” she coos. “He’s incredible to work with, and he’s so careful, and thinks about everything. It’s a real joy

to work with him, and to work together, because, what more could you want than somebody who really is so passionate about the text as well as the character? I think that’s what gives the show a lot of its truth: its real heart is the care that all of our actors bring to their characters.”

She continues, “We also wanted to show that when we start at the beginning of season three, [“The Vampire Lestat” is] not a huge band,” says Wood. “[Lestat] has a following, but it’s quite spit and sawdust. It’s quite gritty, dirty. It’s not huge stadiums yet. We wanted to allow ourselves the arc, to be able to move up in scale.”

That doesn’t necessarily mean that the costume department starts small, however. During an early episode, Lestat gives “the paps my pussycat,” as he puts it, or in layman’s terms, struts the red carpet like it’s going out of style. He wears a fuschia colored silk chiffon custom suit, complete with a tightly bound bodice that gives him an effervescent glow, especially once he strolls into the club to join his band. The imagery is so dazzling, it puts *The Birth of Venus* to shame.

“It was born from originally how Lestat would be appearing at that venue in the story,” says Wood. “We wanted it to feel like it was a birth. Like Lestat was arriving onto the scene. We also really wanted him to shine within the colored lights of the club, and really feel like he was the center of everything. Pink did seem like a bit of a risk at one point, but it was a really fun costume to play with. The journey of the costume is quite fun as well.”

Director Alfred Hitchcock used to say that he liked to cast blondes in his movies because the blood spatter looked better against their light hair. In a way, Wood and her colleagues toy with the same sinister scenario.

“We like fake blood,” Wood declares proudly. “Sometimes, it’s the most fun to destroy the most complicated costume. In general, I feel that when we’re watching television, it’s often the simplest costume on this person walking past — you know that person’s going to get shot, or run over, or you just know that the stunt’s going to happen to him. So, it’s really fun to flip that idea, and have the most complicated version get the most trashed with fake blood. We’re very lucky. We have the most incredible team, the most talented team working in Toronto. They do insane work. Everyone really enjoyed trying to make something, and it’s just as fun to see them enjoy it being trashed, too. As Sam said to me one day, ‘What a beautiful costume to trash.’”

*“Anne Rice’s The Vampire Lestat” (season 3 of the “Interview with the Vampire” series) premieres on Sunday, June 7, on AMC and AMC+.*