

STAR TREK INTO DARKNESS

KARL URBAN THE REAL MCCOY



Karl Urban as Dr McCoy in Star Trek Into Darkness

Last seen on Australian screens in *Dredd*, Karl Urban returns as Dr Leonard 'Bones' McCoy in J.J. Abrams' *Star Trek Into Darkness*, the sequel to the successful 2009 franchise reboot. LIAM DUNN talks to the New Zealand actor about his approach to playing such iconic characters, and his love of genre cinema.

Since playing Eomer in *Lord of the Rings*, Karl Urban has appeared in many films and TV shows across different genres, but it is through science fiction that he has carved his niche.

"I grew up in an era where Spielberg and Lucas were making films and I do enjoy the genre, however I haven't really planned this career to any degree and I guess it's just dumb luck that I've ended up doing a lot of these films," says Urban. However, it was his passion for the original *Star Trek* series that drove him to seek out a role in the first film, not to mention his appreciation of the director. "I think JJ Abrams is an extraordinary, gifted filmmaker and was thrilled beyond belief to be portraying Bones."

Bones is, of course, Dr Leonard McCoy, the medical officer on board the starship *Enterprise*. Initially portrayed by DeForest Kelley in the original series and across six feature films, these were big shoes to fill, but Urban was unfazed. "I don't really analyse the process of what I'm doing, I really just work quite instinctively but I felt that as a long term *Trek* fan that it was important that the character of 'Bones' be identifiably Bones. So the challenge for me is to fuse the essence of what DeForest had done so well for forty-odd years but then also inject a new kind

of dynamism into the character and if I get a foot in both camps then I think I'm in the right territory."

What was also important to his characterisation was McCoy's place as one half of Captain Kirk's psyche. "The character as originally conceived in the mid-sixties was I guess (*Star Trek* creator Gene) Roddenberry's challenge of how do you externalise an internal conflict within Captain Kirk? The device that he came up with was these two characters of Spock and McCoy who would represent different aspects of Kirk's argument. Whereas Spock is cold and logical and scientific, McCoy is the humanist. He's all about heart and emotion and certainly in this film we get to see the genesis of that relationship and those things are always a lot of fun to play."

On his second voyage into the final frontier, Urban says he was most excited about the opportunity to take things up a notch. "The onus was on us to deliver a bigger film and a better film than the first one, which was phenomenally received, and that's a tall order. I think we all felt extremely confident in the direction of JJ., and when you're working with JJ., you're in good hands."

LIAM DUNN