

# An Odyssey for Arthur C. Clarke

Last May, Arthur C. Clarke visited the MGM soundstages in southern California where principal photography was under way on *2010*. He was quite pleased with what he saw. Stopping in New York on his way home to Sri Lanka, he chatted about the eagerly awaited film.

**A**lthough obviously enthusiastic about the project, Arthur C. Clarke respects the studio's wishes not to reveal too much too soon, and is a bit circumspect in his comments. Having just watched the film's trailer (playing with 70mm versions of *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom*), he is still bubbling from what he describes as "a rewarding experience. It was quite a thrill seeing the trailer," he admits, "and I was very happy with the audience's reaction."

Clarke is also extremely pleased with having filmmaker Peter Hyams as *2010*'s guiding light. Hyams, the film's writer, producer, director and cinematographer, was happy to have Clarke's help in restructuring the story to translate it from printed page to silver screen.

"All the changes that Peter has made were quite justified," Clarke states. "If I had thought of them myself, I might have used them in the novel."

One of the problems in shaping the story into a screenplay is that Clarke was *not* thinking cinematically when he wrote it. "I honestly didn't think about a film even for a minute," he confesses. The challenge was large enough, he says, that Peter Hyams complained and suggested that the next book Clarke writes should be entirely about two men sitting in a room.

Clarke admits that while writing *2010: Odyssey Two*, he felt that he had a story "that even Stanley [Kubrick] couldn't film!" But Hyams accepted the challenge. Because of the distances involved—California to Sri Lanka—the two men collaborated via satellite through their personal computers. The "electronic mail" that passed between the pair will be collected and published later this year, under the title *The Odyssey File*.

The author is confident in Hyams' ability to follow Stanley Kubrick's landmark motion picture. "First of all," he says, "Stanley approved the choice." In addition, Clarke explains that, "I had seen *Capricorn One* and *Outland* and I enjoyed them thoroughly . . . even if I did dislike some things in both movies."

Clarke feels that the Hyams film is *not* really a sequel to the Kubrick classic, but that "comparisons are inevitable. But they are not fair because this movie is being made in a totally different age." He also notes that *2010* will benefit from cur-

rent technology. The look of the film will be more accurately reflective of real space hardware.

Peter Hyams has said that *2001* was a cerebral film, while *2010* will be more of an emotional adventure. Clarke agrees. "There was no point in developing any emotional background to the characters' personalities in the first movie."

He is also quite comfortable with Hyams' nuts-and-bolts approach. "I have been accused of over-explaining things, but being a serious writer, I rather prefer to over-do. Stanley, on the other hand, has been accused of the other direction."

On his way back from Los Angeles to New York, Clarke made an important stop-over in Washington, D.C. He had an appointment at the White House.

However, he didn't meet with the President inside, but with a film crew *outside*, shooting a scene from *2010* with Dr. Heywood Floyd (Roy Scheider). Clarke was there to do a cameo in the scene—as a disheveled drunk lounging on a park bench.

But he couldn't report on the dialogue from the scene, because he had been concentrating intensely on "just feeding breadcrumbs to the pigeons and occasionally swigging from a bottle in a paper bag." He explains that he was given no actual direction. "Peter Hyams left it entirely up to me," he says with a grin. "It was not," Arthur C. Clarke confesses, "an Oscar nomination bid. But, if you can't be a successful bum, being a writer is the next best thing."

—Steven Jongeward & Gerard Raymond

Roy Scheider, director Peter Hyams and Arthur C. Clarke chat about *2010*.

