

American Gods Cast Give the Scoop on Season 2 & Impact of Diversity

by Danielle Wilcox

ATLANTA, GA -- Feb 14, 2019 -- This Friday, the Savannah College of Art and Design (SCAD) opened its doors to the cast of the popular Starz series, *American Gods* and fans were treated to a sneak peek of the Season 2 premiere nearly a month ahead of its air date.

I sat with stars of the show, Ricky Whittle, Pablo Schreiber, Orlando Jones, and Yetide Badaki, Omid Abtahi and Mousa Kraish, to discuss the show's impact and what to look forward to in the sophomore season.

"The source materials have been out there with Neil Gaiman's book, so we already had the fan base," said Ricky Whittle, the British-born heartthrob and central character of the show. "We have been fortunate that they have assembled the best cast on television for this show". *American Gods* in both book and show form blend fantasy, mythology and mystery to keep fans engaged.

"It's a very ambitious show...[It is] good at tackling very sensitive subjects--immigration, slavery, America's love for guns," explained Mousa Kraish who plays The Jinn on the hit premium cable series.

Fans can look forward to lots of heat in season two. The new season starts immediately picking up where season one ends, so it picks right up. "It's a fun way to start the show because I believe the last time the audience saw Mr. Nancy in episode 8 he was yelling at Mr. Wednesday to get himself a queen," said veteran actor, Orlando Jones. "The show picks up about 20 minutes after and you are in the same world," he continues.

When asked what attracted each cast member to their role, there was a clear theme in their answers that diversity played a part. Kraish said, "it was a chance to play something I felt very connected to." Similarly, Orlando Jones relayed his connection to his character back to his own childhood. Anansi the Spider stories that were read to Jones as a child by his grandparents influenced his decision to take the role of Mr. Wednesday.

"We have a cast that is probably one of the most diverse on television, at the time [of creation]. I think now people are trying to catch up to us," said Kraish. "People wanted to see people who look like them," he followed.

Diversity extends beyond race.

With Abtahi, who plays a gay Muslim love interest of Kraish's character, The Jinn another level of diversity and representation took precedence in what drew him to the

role. The Iranian-born actor, Abtahi said, "if somebody can watch this and relate to this... and if I can relieve a little bit of that self-doubt, that is all I want to do."

Viewers can look forward to even more diverse stories and cultures being explored in season two which is a slow burn that gets more explosive from week to week according to the cast. It will cover, "more immigrants stories because we have new gods coming who are speaking from cultures that we didn't get to see in the first season," hints Jones.

The Starz series returns to air on March 10, 2019.

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