



## Interview - Jack Trevino and Michael Struck on *Starship Farragut The Animated Episodes* Fan Series

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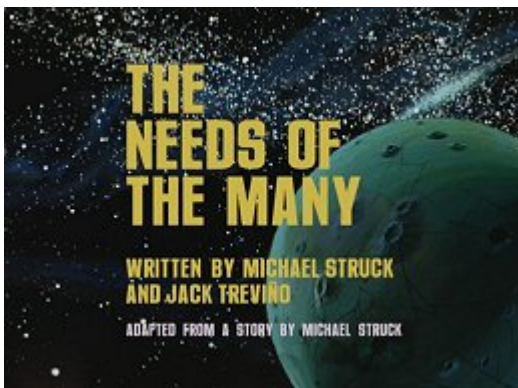


TrekWeb talks to writer **Jack Trevino** (*Star Trek Deep Space Nine*, *Star Trek Of Gods and Men*) and producer and manager of the NEO f/x **Michael Struck** on the *Starship Farragut The Animated Episodes* fan series.

### 1- Jack and Michael, please tell us about the genesis of *Starship Farragut: The Animated Episodes*.



**Michael S:** Well, as everyone may know, we are the CGI house for the live-action *Starship Farragut*. What most people don't know is that we actually proposed an animated episode for *New Voyages* back in 2004/2005. This was before the original *Star Trek* animated series from the 70's came out on DVD, so we created a demo for then producer Jack Marshall with nothing more than still images (ironically, from [StarTrekAnimated.com](http://StarTrekAnimated.com)). While they were thrilled to see animated versions of themselves, the demo really disappointed me personally. It was, ironically, too smooth; the whole thing was 'keyframed' in the computer and items like arm and eye movements simply looked wrong. And, with the limited amount of time we had to complete it, we didn't have time to refine it as we normally do in other productions. In addition, some of the participants in *New Voyages* wanted a more 'Clone Wars look', which we attempted as well. I never liked this



approach as I felt TOS era Trek would have to be in 'Filmation-style' if fans were to accept it. The point was moot as we never heard from the New Voyages crew again on this subject, and since that time James Cawley has publicly stated there will be no more vignettes for Phase II.

Fast forward to 2006/2007 and our work on Farragut. The DVDs for TAS were released and we realized where our mistakes were in the original demo we created. It was NEVER about the animation but the stories. However, we began tinkering with different ways of recreating this animation style and refining a treatment I had personally created for the live-action episodes. Just like in TOS, my story would have been almost impossible to make in live-action without a serious budget, but could easily be done in a cartoon. Unfortunately, I am no screenwriter, so I shelved that story and approached Thomas J. Scott of Magique Productions. He had previously submitted a screenplay for the live-action Farragut as well, and was happy to shorten it and turn it into an animated episode. Then, one day last year, I was contacted by Jack Treviño asking if I would assist with the visual effects of OGaM. I could not turn down a possibility to work on 'real' Trek, so I jumped at the chance. In speaking with Jack one day, I asked him if he was still writing and if he was interested in looking at my treatment. We brainstormed and came up with something I think the fans will love.

**Jack T:** The special effects for Of Gods and Men were a massive undertaking and our guys were beginning to show signs of burnout. I was talking to Ralph Miller one day and he suggested I speak to Michael Struck. I was aware of his detailed special effects in the Starship Farragut series and contacted him. He was happy to lend a hand and has done some brilliant work for our project. While chatting he mentioned he had a Trek writing project in mind and asked if I'd be interested in looking at a story idea he had written. I was happy to oblige and read his story. It felt it had great potential, but based on my experience pitching and writing to the various Trek series, I felt it would be a much stronger story if it were to revolve around one or more of the main Farragut crew members. I made some suggestions and we went with that revised story. As the story now revolved around one specific crewmember, the other crewmembers became equally involved in it and their parts along with it.

**2- What can you reveal about the episode you guys wrote, "The Needs of the Many"?**

**M.S.:** The Needs of the Many, admittedly, is a true Trek story that combines many elements from Trek history into a cohesive story: The Farragut is dispatched to Cestus

III to help a Vulcan scientist at the distant outpost. The same Gorn that fought Kirk years prior returns to exact revenge on the Federation.

**J.T.:** The story has some time travel elements; however, the story itself is not about time traveling but rather the effects of someone who has time traveled and the dilemma created by such time travel. Initially, Klingons and Romulans were to be highlighted, but since it was to be an animated episode, I suggested we highlight other races from the TOS era, such as the Andorians, Tellarites, Tiburonians and the Gorn. Michael immediately jumped at the chance to bring back the Gorn, so I changed the location of the story to the Cestus III region. The time traveler in the story has an extremely important role, so Michael set his sights on some of the bigger stars from TOS' past (see Michael's comments about Walter Koenig). After Michael was unable to bring them on board, I asked if we could make the character female. I thought it would be a great nod to all the strong female characters, if we included yet another female hero. Knowing that the role would be an extremely pivotal one, I immediately thought of Chase Masterson. She's quite good in "Of Gods and Men" and I knew (that) she had contributed to other popular animation projects, so I contacted her and explained a little about the project. Michael continued the process and after she read the script, she was excited to be a part of it. I also thought it would be nice if her character was part Hispanic. I was cognizant of the influence Nichelle Nichols and George Takei had on young African-Americans and Asian-Americans back during the run of the original series. I wanted to provide Hispanics with an equally strong role-model. Both Michael and Chase agreed, but I also think everyone will identify with Chase's character. Tim Russ then came onboard and it was quite easy to adapt his role, since the role was that of a Vulcan scientist. We thought about having some similarities in his name and that of his character's name on Voyager, suggesting to some degree, that they may have come from the same family line. And, of course, having Chris Doohan, the son of James Doohan, well, that in itself is Star Trek history in the making.

**3- Michael, aside from the Farragut fan film cast, you have quite a stellar cast doing the guest voices - Tim Russ, Chase Masterson and James Doohan's son, Chris. Tell us about their characters and their involvement.**

Don't forget Vic Mignogna from the anime world (Edward Elric on *Fullmetal Alchemist*). Since the beginning of this project, I had a 'special' character in mind for the crew of the Farragut. Very similar to M'Ress and Arex in TAS, I wanted an alien in the mix. The character I had in mind was originally voiced by James Doohan, and then one day it clicked...why not ask his son to participate?? One e-mail chain later and he was hooked on the idea. He then became our biggest advocate. The story Jack Treviño and I came up with was very flexible, so the first person we asked to participate after Chris was

Walter Koenig, since he was never in the original animated episodes. Unfortunately, with his recent participation in OGaM and the New Voyages episode, he felt he had done Chekov to death (pun) and was not interested in revisiting that character. Since the main character of the story could have been male or female, we decided to go female as Trek has not had enough strong female characters in its history. With that, both Chris and Jack suggested contacting Chase Masterson. When she found out Chris and Jack were involved, she joined the project. Chase then suggested we contact Vic. Vic is a HUGE Trek fan and he also jumped at the chance to participate. He will be playing an Andorian and some of the random male background characters. From there it was just a fluke to get Tim Russ. We were interested in showing a trailer at the Creation Convention in LA and I contacted him to see if he would be showing OGaM, and if so, could we attach the promo to it. He wasn't showing anything this convention, but hinted that he has gotten into voice over (V.O.) work recently. A few quick rearrangements and we were able to bring him in on a small role that is perfect for him (a Vulcan named Tumar). Some may ask 'Is this a relative of Tuvok?'. My answer...sure...why not?

#### **4- I understand that the look and feel of Farragut: The Animated Episodes emulates the style of TAS, right?**

That is correct... We are working VERY hard to make this just like the Saturday morning cartoon. However, the stories will be more 'modern' in nature, and we are NOT going out of our way to emulate the 'mistakes' that appeared in the original. Ours will have consistent color from scene to scene, better lip syncing, and proper layering of the cells (i.e. the characters will appear behind the view screen instead of in front). The movements and scene setup, however, will scream Filmation.

#### **5- Who is the illustrator on this fan project?**

**Kail Tescar**, Webmaster of StarTrekAnimated.com is the lead illustrator on this project. With the extensive work he has done on the animated episodes he will also be publishing a comic book version of Farragut around the same time we release our episodes. Outside of Kail, there are various other illustrators and animators around the world involved in making this project a reality.

#### **6- Finally, what is in the future of Starship Farragut: The Animated Episodes beyond the first episode?**

**M.S.** As mentioned above, there will be a comic book version of the Starship Farragut. In addition, the animated episodes are a two-episode release. Jack and Michael Struck are the writers of "The Needs of the Many" while the second episode, "Power Source" was written by Magique Productions' president Thomas J. Scott.

**J.T.** Yes, Michael informed me that it was a limited series and I am extremely proud to be part of it. Now, should they decide to produce additional episodes, would I jump at the chance to do another one? The answer would be a resounding, "Yes."