

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****WHAT WE DO IN THE SHADOWS EXECUTIVE PRODUCERS PAUL SIMMS AND STEFANI ROBINSON TALK BUILDING A NEW CAST AND EMBRACING ESCAPISM IN SEASON THREE OF THE FX SERIES IN *EMMY***

(**NOHO ARTS DISTRICT**, Calif. — Aug. 18, 2021) — When the actor-creators behind the 2014 cult film *What We Do in the Shadows*, Jemaine Clement and Taika Waititi, announced they didn't want to star in the adapted FX series of the same name, the show's executive producers, Paul Simms and Stefani Robinson, set out to find a new band of performers who could translate the franchise's charm to television audiences. Simms and Robinson talk to *emmy* about selecting the cast and the much-anticipated season three of the acclaimed comedy series premiering Sept. 2. The award-winning official publication of the Television Academy hits newsstands Aug. 19.

*What We Do in the Shadows* gathers a family of half-witted vampires in suburbia, where the most chilling things they deal with are chain stores and trashy neighborhood parties. With Clement and Waititi's names attached, the 10-time Emmy-nominated series debuted with a built-in following from the 2014 New Zealand horror comedy film that inspired it. But when the duo revealed they would participate only behind the camera, Simms, who worked with them on *Flight of the Conchords*, took the news hard. "It was like, 'Wait, you guys aren't going to be in it?'" However, together they unearthed an exceptional new cast. Clement cast BAFTA Award-winning actors Matt Berry and Kayvan Novak to play the roles of vampire roommates Laszlo Cravensworth and Nandor the Relentless, respectively. They were later joined by London comic Natasia Demetriou, who plays Laszlo's sharp-tongued wife, Nadja; Mark Proksch, whose credits include *The Office* and *Better Call Saul*, as "energy vampire" Colin Robinson; and Harvey Guillén, who stars as human servant and friend to the ghouls, Guillermo. "You have to be on your toes because the cast is so good," Demetriou says.

In the *emmy* cover story "**Ghoul Proof**," Simms recalls how the series broke through and captured *Shadows* fans and new audiences in its first season. Waititi and Clement returned briefly as their movie characters, Viago and Vladimir, and a band of all-star actors guested on the show, including Tilda Swinton, Danny Trejo and even Mark Hamill. "That was Taika and Jemaine using their connections," Simms says. The duo drafted Hamill after he tweeted how much he liked the series, and soon afterward, he appeared in what's become one of the fans' and crew's favorite episodes to date, "On the Run," in which the *Star Wars* icon plays Laszlo's nemesis, Jim the Vampire. "To stand opposite someone who represents something

beyond your wildest imagination and have him point a pool cue at you like it's a lightsaber? It was a fantastic moment where you check yourself and think, for a few seconds, 'What the hell, why am I here?'" Berry says.

The series has been embraced as a "laugh-out-loud" classic, and expectations for season three run high. "The show is complete escapism," Simms says. "We don't have to deal with any contemporary politics or social issues." There is no reference to the pandemic in the new season (though the pandemic did affect filming). "Nowadays a show that's completely separate from the world we're living in is like a warm hug," says Robinson.

After landing on television nearly two years ago, the unconventional vampire comedy has sunk its teeth into audiences. "It can be a hard, vulnerable thing to write a television show when you don't know how people are going to react to it," Robinson says. "At a time when there's so much television, you wonder, 'Is this going to break through?' In a world with so many options, it's very special when it does."

### **Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:**

In 1971, before "influencer" was part of our lexicon, Don Cornelius, creator of the music-dance television program *Soul Train*, dubbed it "the hippest trip in America" and commenced an era of trendsetting in music, dance, fashion and marketing. In "**Cool Train Running**," *emmy* does a deep dive into the show's unprecedented influence across nearly four decades—with insights from former colleagues of Cornelius as well as historians, professors and authors.

In "**Flight of Their Lives**," Sarah Fain and Liz Craft, showrunners of Fox's new reboot of *Fantasy Island*, share how they've adapted the original drama series (which ran on ABC from 1977 to '84) to pull off a gender switch and impart a lighter, more humorous touch to the show, which kicked off 13 one-hour episodes on Aug. 10.

Under the guidance of executive producer and special-effects makeup supervisor of *The Walking Dead*, Greg Nicotero, the show's makeup team has collected two Emmys, including Outstanding Prosthetic Makeup for a Series. In "**Delight Me, Disgust Me**," *emmy* dissects the show's appeal and the artistry of zombie makeup.

### **About *emmy***

*Emmy*, the official publication of the Television Academy, goes behind the scenes of the industry for a unique insider's view. It showcases the scope of television and profiles the people who make TV happen, from the stars of top shows to the pros behind the cameras, covering programming trends and advances in technology. Honored consistently for excellence, *emmy* is a six-time Maggie Award winner as Best Trade Publication in Communications or the Arts and has collected 52 Maggies from the Western Publishing Association. *Emmy* is published 12 times per year and is available on selected newsstands and at [TelevisionAcademy.com](https://www.televisionacademy.com) for single print and digital copies as well as subscriptions.

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