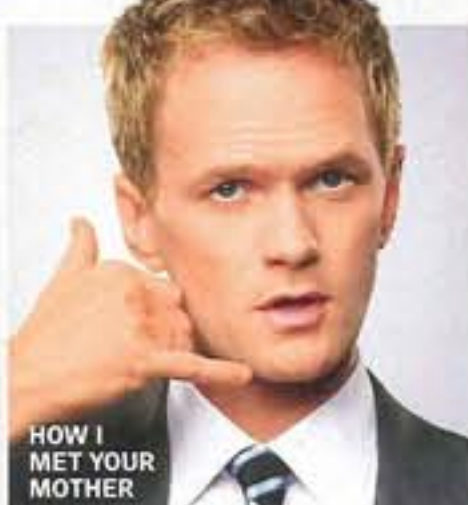


# Entertainment Weekly



HOW I MET YOUR MOTHER



MODERN FAMILY



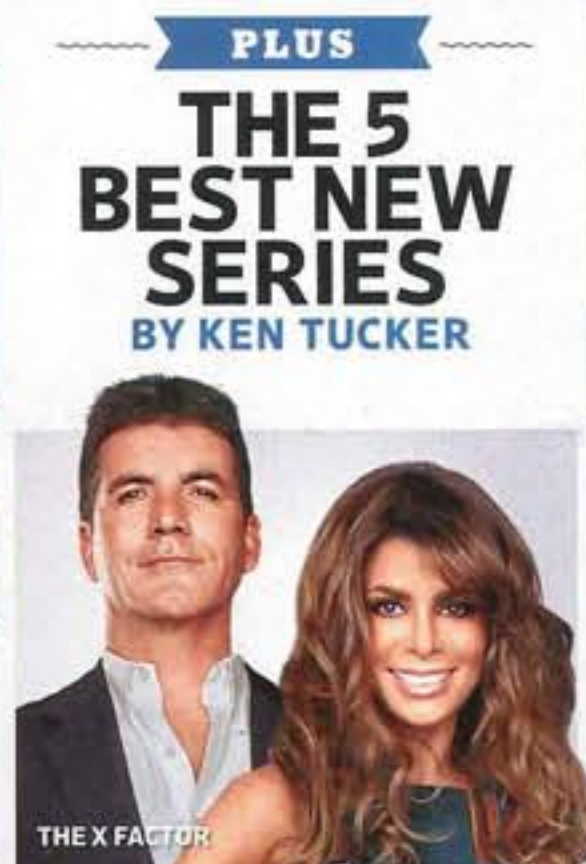
THE PLAYBOY CLUB

## ALL THE BUZZ ON 127 SHOWS

# FALL TV PREVIEW



THE GOOD WIFE



THE X FACTOR



PAN AM



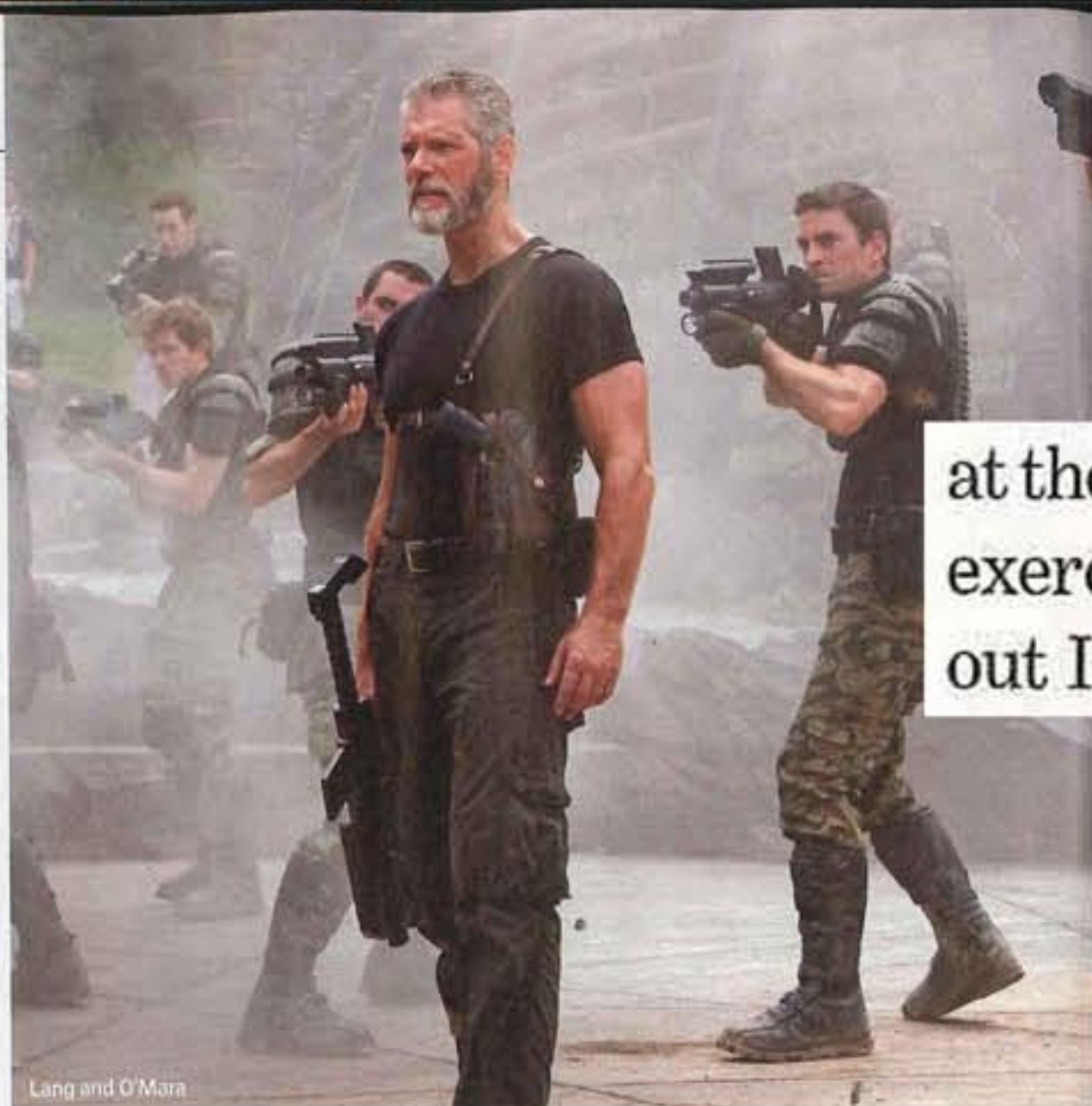
GLEE

PLUS  
**THE 5 BEST NEW SERIES**  
BY KEN TUCKER



to grab a leafy branch from the ground, look up again, and extend her arm, as if proffering the twig to a hungry brachiosaur. "He's got some *biiiiig* cheeks! Now jump and let it go! *Nom, nom, nom!*" The creature pops into view, and the crew members surrounding Graves erupt in giggles. This dino is actually a small orange stick with the cutout of a dinosaur's head taped on the end. Rocking horses have more attitude. Somewhere along the line, dozens of F/X wizards will turn that sad little stick into a gigantic, giraffe-necked brachiosaur. And if Fox and a guy named Steven Spielberg have anything to say about it, you'll be just as awed as Alana was pretending to be when you see the finished product, one of the eye-popping CGI creatures featured in *Terra Nova*. Sci-fi adventure, time-travel series, family drama...whatever name you choose to give it—and the members of the creative team who spoke to EW on the set used them all—everyone agrees on one thing: *Terra Nova* is the biggest, most expensive, riskiest new series this fall. "There's no model to copy and no one to tell us, 'Hey, here's how we did it on our show,'" says executive producer Jon Cassar (24). "It's an experiment in a very strange, dangerous way."

**TERRA NOVA OPENS IN** 2149 amid a Chicago landscape blighted by pollution and the destructive effects of global warming. Residents must wear masks to breathe, and the sight of an orange can set a family like the Shannons—Jim and Elisabeth (*Life on Mars*' Jason O'Mara and British actress Shelley Conn) and their children, Josh (Landon Liboiron), Maddy (Naomi Scott), and Zoe (Mansour)—alight with glee. Things are bleak. But the recent discovery of a fracture in time has prompted a series of "Pilgrimages" filled with brave (or perhaps foolhardy) folk who embark on a one-way trip to Terra Nova, a settlement on prehistoric, Cretaceous-period



Lang and O'Mara

at the  
exerc  
out I

"USING MY IMAGINATION IN THAT WAY IS A NEW EXPERIENCE. I HAVE TO PRETEND THAT THERE REALLY ARE DINOSAURS HOVERING, NOT JUST A PIECE OF WOOD TAPED TO A STICK."  
—JASON O'MARA

Earth where they can literally start fresh. Desperate, the Shannons decide to go. Jim, a former police officer, hasn't seen his brood in two years, since he was jailed when population-control officers learned about his third child, a no-no in dystopian Chicago. ("A Family Is Four!" trumpet the government's population-control propaganda billboards.)

Along with other travelers—the so-called 10th Pilgrimage—the Shannons come under the cagey leadership of Commander Nathaniel Taylor (played by grizzled *Avatar* baddie Stephen Lang, who was handpicked by Spielberg), the

inaugural resident. As Lang teases, "[Taylor's] first five months on Terra Nova were spent totally solo, a guy with a knife. What happened during that time? How did it change him?" Meanwhile, a rogue group of residents called the Sixers keep attacking the settlers for unknown reasons. "They have an agenda," hints showrunner René Echevarria (*Medium*). "They have a different vision of what Terra Nova can do for them." And then there are those pesky dinosaurs, which hover just outside the camp's not-quite-impenetrable barrier fence. "If the Shannons can survive," says exec producer Brannon Braga, "maybe humanity has a chance by extension. That notion mirrors what the whole show is about, which is second chances. Humanity has been given a second chance to do things right."

You could say the same for the show. Spielberg's imprimatur alone meant *Terra Nova* would have a spotlight on it



## at the jungle. (O'Mara's secret: the P90X exercise DVDs. "It's the toughest workout I've ever done in my life.") It's hard



Lang at five were with a lurking hange rogue the re set- sions. ' hints varria vision hem." dino- le the arrier," braga, ce by at the econd iven a show. neant it on it

from day one. At press time, Spielberg had yet to visit the set, but by all accounts, he's been closely involved (giving notes on scripts, vetting the F/X) ever since he attached his name to the production last year, at the behest of Fox chair Peter Rice. Plus, there was that confident 13-episode order from Fox, which only made the whole thing look like even more of a gamble. So it wasn't surprising that fanboys and reporters alike obsessively charted every behind-the-scenes development once *Terra Nova* was announced in May 2010. They whispered about the budget (nobody's talking, though it's been reported at a costly but not exorbitant \$4 million per episode). They wondered what the departure of original exec producer David Fury would mean. (Says Braga, "It just wasn't jelling. It's nobody's fault.") Echevarria came aboard a couple of months later.) Some unexpected delays seemed to bow in January, but it soon became clear that it wouldn't be ready. So Fox

instead opted for a May sneak preview, a tactic that worked for *Glee*, and moved the series launch to fall 2011. When EW spoke to Graves on the set last December, he admitted that everyone was "terrified—they want this to be good."

A little terror is not uncommon on the set of a big production; harnessed properly, it sparks new ideas and makes for a stronger final product. *Terra Nova*, though, was so gargantuan that when producers sat down to ready the two-hour pilot for its May bow, the disruption caused by those record rains suddenly seemed minor. They actually didn't have enough footage to fill the darn thing, and the show's extensive and complex visuals—F/X supervisor Kevin Blank calls it "*Avatar* for television"—were far from complete. In hindsight, says Braga, "it was a tall order and somewhat of an impossible dream to think you could go to Australia and get exactly what you needed for a two-hour pilot of this

magnitude." Fox Entertainment president Kevin Reilly is blunter: "You don't want to put on something that's not ready. Then the social networks will talk about what crap it is all summer."

Noting *Terra Nova*'s "groundbreaking" special effects and "massive scope," Fox announced in March that the series would debut in the fall with no May preview. Two months later, the crew reassembled to shoot new sequences, including a wrenching scene in which the family is harassed by Chicago cops and a playful jungle montage featuring Jim, shirtless, flexing as he hacks away at the jungle. (O'Mara's secret: the P90X exercise DVDs. "It's the toughest workout I've ever done in my life.") It's hard not to think the scenes were added to help attract a broader (read: female) audience. In fact, for all the attention given its elaborate visuals and those whiz-bang dinosaurs, *Terra Nova* is decidedly steeped in TV tradition. "It's constructed not entirely unlike an old-time Western," says Reilly. "From the get-go, it was contemplated as an old-school show, in hopes the whole family could enjoy it." The classic elements of Spielberg's four-quadrant appeal are everywhere too: the tightly knit family, a father-son rift, and some cutesy romantic interludes between Josh and a local teen (Allison Miller). That said, when Fox screened the pilot at Comic-Con in July, the biggest cheers were reserved for a scene in which a man becomes a carnosaur's lunch.

O'Mara is going to let producers worry about finding that *Swiss Family Robinson*-meets-*Jurassic Park* spot—he's got enough on his mind. "This ultimately will be a big, fat primetime network series. And we have to do it with dinosaurs! That's the thing: trying to make this believable," he says. "Using my imagination in that way is a new experience for me. I have to pretend that there really are dinosaurs hovering, not just a piece of wood taped to a stick." If he's worried that he won't look sufficiently scared, he can just think about waiting for the first episode's ratings. —Nicholas Fonseca