

# Back to the future one more time

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LOS ANGELES — *Back To The Future III*, the grand finale instalment of the saga of time-tripping travellers Marty McFly and Doctor Emmett Brown takes a colossal twist yet again.

"All we can do is make the movie that we want to make, the one we can get up in the morning and get excited creatively about doing," says Bob Gale, producer and co-writer of all three *Back To The Future* films. "We just asked ourselves what else would be a challenge to us as film makers and storytellers. How else can we have fun? Where else can we take these characters?"

The destination is due west. Way, way-out west. The 1885 west to be precise. *Back To The Future III* picks up where *Part II* left off, with Marty McFly stranded in 1955 after the 1985 version of Doc Brown and the irreplaceable time transportation tool — the DeLorean — get zapped back to the Old West of 1885.

"The idea of going to the Old West was actually one of the very first ideas we ever had about a sequel," Gale admits.

"We just had all these neat ideas racing around and we wanted to do them all. And we convinced the studio that they should let us," laughs Gale with a schoolboy grin.

For actor-cum-international commotion Michael J. Fox, his role of Marty McFly in the original *Back to the Future* — which has grossed more than \$300 million since its release in 1985 — sealed a place in superstardom, making him the top 'everyman' actor for his generation.

But that pivotal role almost didn't happen for Fox because of his commitment to his weekly tv series, *Family Ties*. Shooting *Family Ties* during the day, Fox filmed *Back to the Future* at night — for six months straight.

## Hollywood Beat

with DAVID GIAMMARCO

"The big change between the first film and these sequels was that I was only semiconscious during the first one," Fox remembers in comparing the original to the follow-ups five years later. "I'm a bit more aware of what's going on. In the first *Back To The Future I* I felt more like a tool. Now I feel more like an accomplice."

The director is Robert Zemeckis, the genius behind *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*. He has also pulled off all three *Back To The Future* films, sanity still intact.

Comic actor Tom Wilson, who reprises his role as Biff "Hey Butthead" Tannen for "III", recalls vividly the original game plan for the sequels.

"We were sitting at this table and Zemeckis and Gale go into this long, detailed explanation of what will happen in *Back To The Future II* and *III*. We were just blown away by it. The explanation took over an hour. But by the end of it, we were very excited by it all. We were literally jumping up and down in his office, just chomping at the bit to start this thing because it was such a huge undertaking."

For *III*, Wilson plays another incarnation of Biff, this time Buford "Mad Dog" Tannen.

"You'll see Buford through most of the film and you'll see another characterization of the Biff that we saw in the present. But it's (comprised of) less jumping around from time to time to time. It wraps up a lot of loose ends that have been left by the first and second movies. It answers a lot of ques-

tions. It's action packed but it goes back to the heart-warming aspects of the first movie." And with a gleam in his Wilson adds, "I think it's a kinder, gentler movie."

In *Part III*, Michael J. Fox plays yet another variation on the McFly family tree, this time his great-great-grandfather Seamus, an immigrant Irish farmer who is the first McFly to settle in America.

"I tried to stay away from the stereotype, but there's no denying that he's a bit of a leprechaun," Fox laughs. "The makeup for Seamus wasn't nearly as extensive as old Marty or Marlene in *Part II*. But as I was sitting there, watching each new piece being applied, the character started to emerge. By the time it was finished, even though I wasn't consciously making the attempt, I suddenly found myself speaking with an Irish brogue."

Playing Lorraine McFly once again as well as Seamus' wife Maggie was an easier task for Lea Thompson, mostly because the makeup applications were far less extensive than in *Part II*, where she played three different versions of Lorraine. "I don't know what all that makeup does to your skin, but I'm blaming my new set of wrinkles on it," Thompson says.

An addition to the cast is Mary Steenburgen, who plays an 1885 love interest for Christopher Lloyd and opens up another side of the wide-eyed, eccentric 'Doc'.

What we also get to see, or rather not see, are complex special effects that, according to Zemeckis, top the last two films but remain seamlessly interwoven with standard scenes to the untrained eye.

"The effects in this one are even better than in *II*." But because they're so good, you can't even see them, Zemeckis adds, disappointed that the

audience will never know the high-tech wizardry involved.

"There's nothing in there to say, 'Oh God, that's a flying car.' We do things in this movie that have never been done before and you won't even see them. People just don't expect to see special effects in a western setting. People who are really sharp will see them. But there are some that really defy explanation."

*Part III*, which starts off in 1955, goes back to 1885 and then ends up in 1985, spends, according to Gale, at least 75 per cent of the time in 1885 — a big difference from the time-leaping pace of *Part II*. With the baffling time paradoxes and alternate realities, futures and pasts conjured up by the minds of Gale and Zemeckis, it can make one wonder whether they too ever got lost in the cosmic shuffle.

"You know that scene in *II* where Doc (drew) that diagram on the blackboard about where they were?" Gale asks, shaking his head. "Well, we were always making those kind of drawings, trying to figure out where we were and what version of 1985 it was and if we were violating anything, and if we were creating any time paradoxes. I think there's a couple of them, but not glowing ones that anybody's going to



Marty McFly (Michael J. Fox) and Doc (Christopher Lloyd) go way out west for *Back to the Future*.

lose sleep over."

Lost sleep is exactly what director Zemeckis is hoping to catch up on now that the shoot is completed and he can look back with pride at the phenomenon he helped create. "It's got a lot of surprises, it's got a lot of humor and a lot of action," Zemeckis beams. "These films are truly a trilogy... That's what you'll realize when you see the third movie."

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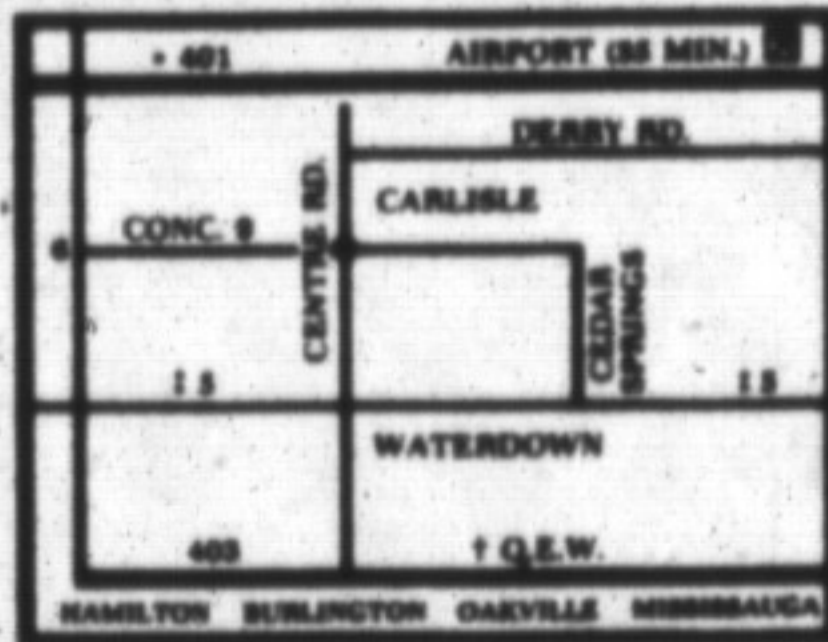


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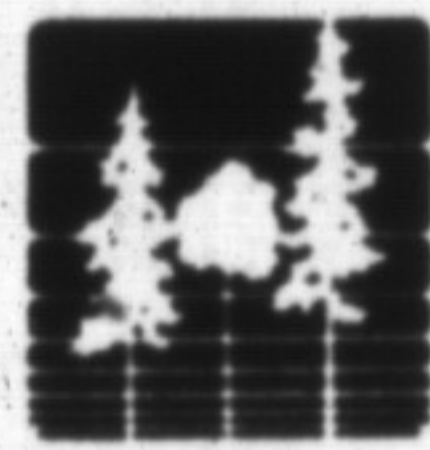
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