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### CinemaCon - Andy Serkis Interview

Tim here, and I had the great pleasure to sit down with the one and only Andy Serkis at CinemaCon for a One on One Interview! He was a complete gentleman and answered all my questions magnificently. We spoke about DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES, THE JUNGLE BOOK, ANIMAL FARM, stereoscopic 3D, performance capture, and should the Oscars have a category specifically for actors in performance capture roles. You'll like his

response to that last one. Andy was honored that night with CINEMA CON'S VANGUARD AWARD, which is an award he rightfully deserved.

For those who don't know Andy Serkis has been confirmed by Warner Bros. to make his directorial debut on THE JUNGLE BOOK, which is a new adaption of the book by Rudyard Kipling that will be much darker than the Disney version from the 1950's. Check out the interview below:

**TIM:** First, I want to congratulate you on *The Jungle Book*.

**ANDY:** Oh, yes.

**TIM:** Got to ask, is it going to be 3D?

**ANDY:** I would think at this point in time it is safe to say that it will be 3D.

**TIM:** Is it going to be native?

**ANDY:** That is also a good question. It is still early days so I haven't got a definitive answer for that.

**TIM:** Moving on to *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, it was shot with 3ality Rigs, which you shot with on *The Hobbit*. You were the Second Unit Director, and this time you were acting

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with them. Was there any kind of difference for you working with the 3ality Rigs as an actor versus being behind the scenes?

**ANDY:** I mean 3ality are fantastic rigs. They are incredible to work with. They're fantastic in the field and, of course, one of the things about *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* was that we were shooting nearly every single scene on location. And they worked seamlessly. So they were great to work with, for sure, and I remember that from working with them on *The Hobbit*. They are very good to work with on the field. It's tough working with 3D in the field, and you need all the help that you can get. And 3ality, certainly, a great brand.

**TIM:** Yeah they are great. I've gotten to visit their headquarters and seen the awesome things they're doing, especially with their image processors.

**ANDY:** Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I mean, it's terrific. And, Michael Seresin is the D.O.P on *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, and obviously Matt Reeves directing, and it was all very much shot in natural light. There's a real sense that these apes do exist, and it was not going for overly melodramatic lighting. It was very real. Everything was shot with *vérité* style, so it needed that support from the 3D, you know, so I think it works. I've seen a cut and it looks extraordinary.

**TIM:** That's awesome. I didn't get a chance to see it in 3D earlier when they showed us the clips...

**ANDY:** Right... right.

**TIM:** ...but it looked incredible. And, going off of that, the performance capture: it looks like-- Not only has it improved, but so have the visual effects.

**ANDY:** Absolutely.

**TIM:** What, for you, on this movie improved in terms of just the performance capture technology.

**ANDY:** Well, this really is the first time that so many apes have been captured... once outside on location-- I think it is the first movie that has captured that amount of people at the same time. So that's incredible because really the great thing about performance capture is that is having everyone play off each other. In the first movie it was pretty much a domestic piece if you remember. I mean, Caesar was once-- You know, the first act was Caesar being brought up by Will (James Franco's character), and of course in the second act he goes into the sanctuary. This is a whole ape community that is brought to life. The cameras are now able to rigged very easily and over wide distances. The marker set-ups that we're using on our suits are, you know, they have a greater fidelity to our performances, and then the facial capture system (the head mounted cameras) they are much higher resolution.

**TIM:** Are they lighter?

**ANDY:** I wouldn't say they are particularly lighter, but the cameras



DF-D14-01978R - Caesar, portrayed by Andy Serkis (in performance capture suit), the leader of the ape nation, and Malcolm (Jason Clarke), a representative of a colony of human survivors, reach a fragile peace in DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES.  
Photo credit: David James  
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are much higher resolution. And then the visual effects side of it, what WETA is able to do now with interpolating the performance is unbelievable. I mean, it's another layer again. The skin texturing, all of the hair...

**TIM:** The hair is incredible. One of the things I noticed today.

**ANDY:** Exactly. But, it's actually the nuance of performance that is absolutely transparent now between what the actor is doing and what you see on the screen with the apes' faces on. That is really WETA. WETA has broken so many territories and boundaries, rather... broken so boundaries with both facial and all the texturing over the course of the movies. What's great is that people are recognizing that and seeing it. It allows you to stay immersed in the story when your eye isn't taken away by something not looking one hundred percent.

**TIM:** Exactly. Okay, I'm going to transition... I just want to see do you have any TinTin updates?

**ANDY:** Not at the moment. I mean, the desire is there from everybody to make another TinTin film.

**TIM:** Peter's just encumbered in...

**ANDY:** Yeah, he has to finish the third *Hobbit* movie. You know, it's a huge last film.

**TIM:** Okay. I'm going to move on to what your expectations are for future performance capture films, like TinTin?

**ANDY:** Well like *The Jungle Book* for instance.

**TIM:** *The Jungle Book* would be a perfect one.

**ANDY:** *The Jungle Book* is going to be an entirely performance capture movie. As is another project which we at the at the Imaginarium, which is my company... my and Jonathan Cavendish's performance capture studio... we've been developing *Animal Farm* for a year and a half. And that is a perfect use of performance capture because not only do you get the actors playing all the scenes together and of course what they are metaphorically-- They are human beings portrayed as animals, but also you see a transition say for instance, with the pigs you see them growing from being four legged to two legged animals. You know, a great use of performance capture. So we've been evolving that over the last year and a half. What we intend to do is fairly hot on the heels of *The Jungle Book* is to bring that into play.

**TIM:**  
That  
would be  
a great  
one. I  
love  
Orwell. I







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remember reading that when I was a kid. That is a great one. I'm going to move on to my last question since I'm near out of time. Do you believe that the Academy Awards should create a category for Best Performance Capture Performance?

**A N D Y:** I've always said, actually, that I don't think that there should be because really at the end of the day performance capture is a technology; it's another set of cameras that captures an actor's performances. So it's not a two-dimensional camera, or a 3D rig--

**T I M:** So your saying you want actors to be treated equally?

**A N D Y:** Actors are actors, and they are delivering performances. It's just the method by which their performances are caught that's different. How one has to think of it these days is that instead of putting on a costume and make-up and playing a role, the costume and make-up is being applied after the fact. It's digital costume and make-up. The underlying performance is what is crafted and authored on the stage between the other actors, yourself, and the director in exactly the same way. So there is absolutely no difference. Really I've always believed that one is playing another acting role. And, I've never drawn a distinction between live action and performance capture acting.

**T I M:** Okay, that's awesome to hear because I wish you had been nominated for first Gollum, and then even now Caesar. Hopefully you can get a nomination.

**A N D Y:** Thank you.

**T I M:** And with that I'm out of time. I'd like to thank you for taking the time to chat with me.

**A N D Y:** You're welcome.

**T I M:** And I hope that *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes* is a huge success.

**A N D Y:** Thank you.

So awesome to sit down with such a great actor! Thank you Andy and 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox for allowing me the opportunity to sit down and talk with him. Funny thing, I interviewed Caesar from DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES in Caesars Palace. It was a great interview, and I wish I could have got more time. Hopefully again in the future we'll get to talk. Maybe when THE JUNGLE BOOK is being released. If you'd like more information about Andy Serkis' company **The Imaginarium Studios** you can check out the site at: [theimaginariumstudios.com](http://theimaginariumstudios.com). And let's hope that Andy gets the well deserved nomination for his performance as Caesar this coming awards season. **And, to make DAWN OF THE PLANET OF THE APES a huge success go to your favorite movie theater and see it in 3D and IMAX on July 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014.**



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