



coverstory
BY JAY BOBBIN

Riann Steele and Jonathan Tucker star in "Debris," premiering Monday on NBC.

'Debris' signals more tough times for the world in NBC sci-fi series

The next time you see something fall from the sky, it may mean more than you think. And not in a good way. That's how "Fringe" and "Almost Human" veteran J.H. Wyman is positioning it, anyway. He's now the creator and executive producer of "Debris," an NBC sci-fi series that premieres Monday, March 1, making fallen pieces of an alien spaceship threats to physics ... thus causing people to start falling, too. Two dissimilar agents, played by Jonathan Tucker ("Westworld," "City on a Hill") and Riann Steele ("The Magicians," "Lovesick"), are dispatched to collaborate and gather the debris – though how it will be handled afterward, and to what end, is figuratively up in the air. Two-time Tony Award winner Norbert Leo Butz also stars.

"We're going to put something out there that's going to make a difference to people and (make them) say, 'There's something different about the show,'" Wyman maintains. "It speaks to things that I think aren't really out there right now. There's a hope and a concept that maybe there's something out there that we don't know, and that is something that I think is intriguing enough. And all I can ask for is people to sample it and kind of understand it."

Actor Tucker explains that "week to week, a new piece of debris is discovered. And it allows us to discover the

unique capabilities that this debris has to offer, how it affects people, how it affects the world, and ultimately how it affects (the characters) and their own relationship. It's fun for us as actors, for sure, but I think it will be fun for audiences to see ... and it speaks to the kind of cablelevel sci-fi that we've become accustomed to. You can have a case of the week, but you can also have meaningful character development and mythological rollout over the course of this first season, at least."

Fellow "Debris" star Steele adds that "there is a realism alongside" the fantasy of the show: "You're meeting two characters who are very flawed and very broken, and we get to see them along the season kind of understand each other through the debris."

However "Debris" is received generally, Wyman believes it is meeting his own criteria for what he wanted to do with it. "To me, the best sci-fi is more about the human condition that it talks about," he reasons. "There's a lot of people out there that do the 'little green men' thing better than me. I'm more (about), with the sci-fi genre, what does it look like when there are questions asked that really shine a light on the human condition? I just always find that fascinating."

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