



Lena Hall stars in "Snowpiercer," premiering its second season Monday on TNT.

coverstory

BY GEORGE DICKIE

Mr. Wilford assumes control of 'Snowpiercer' in Season 2 of TNT actioner

Mr. Wilford has arrived to re-take his rightful place as the head of "Snowpiercer," and the tentative peace aboard the 994-car supertrain will soon be history.

Indeed, as the TNT sci-fi actioner opens its second season Monday, Jan. 25, the inhabitants of the titular post-apocalyptic train find they have new neighbors. The 40-car Big Alice that attached itself to the tail of Snowpiercer at the end of Season 1 brings forth their once and future leader (new cast member Sean Bean, "Game of Thrones") and his protegee, Alexandra Cavill (new cast member Rowan Blanchard, "Girl Meets World") – engineer Melanie's (Jennifer Connelly) believed-dead daughter – to deliver their demands.

Their arrival threatens the fragile democracy and merging of the classes aboard Snowpiercer, prompting revolutionary-turned-de-facto-leader Layton (Daveed Diggs) and his foot soldiers to take up arms. Also not thrilled with Wilford's re-emergence is entertainer Miss Audrey (Lena Hall), who has a tortured past with him. But Ruth from hospitality (Alison Wright) is overjoyed to see her old boss back in charge.

Of course, the big news this season is the casting of Bean, a classically trained British actor whose nearly 40-year career spans stage, film and television. He gleefully plays Wilford as a brilliant eccentric with big appetites and an even bigger capacity for cruelty.

"I wouldn't really say Wonka-esque," explains series showrunner Graeme Manson, "but he's a larger-than-life character and he's the smartest man in the world. I mean, he was the smartest man in the world before everybody else died. Now there's only less than 3,000 of them. He's a formidable character. ... Sean just plays him with such relish. He's pretty delightful and delicious and like all our villains, he's not completely black or white, either."

And that element of the character reveals itself in scenes with Hall's Audrey, who fights a fatal attraction to her former paramour. In playing opposite Bean, Hall admits to having been thrown by the actor's fiery intensity.

"It's interesting because he's very quiet in person when you meet him and he's very quiet and internal, I guess, on set," Hall explains. "And then when he acts a scene, when they say, 'Action,' he completely changes into whatever character he's playing. In this case, he's a monster. Like he transformed while we were acting together and it was so amazing for me to watch that like my reactions are pretty much there. ..."

"Like my reactions are pretty much in the moment because he would change things up and he would get really intense sometimes and it would scare me, like for real, dude," she continues with a laugh. "So it was fun. It was always so fun to do these scenes with him. And then when they stop action, he's back to being really sweet."

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 EI: Educational/instructional
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