



IMTA ALUM BRIAN GROSS TAKES ON KIRK IN “STAR TREK: PHASE II”

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Star Trek: Phase 2 begins airing on-line February 14

“It is refreshing to have a bunch of people who care so much about the product that they are producing and want to make it the best it can be.” – Brian Gross

The original “*Star Trek*” television series ran for only three years but few would have imagined that the franchise created by Gene Roddenberry would be going strong after nearly 50 years, with 12 feature films, numerous spin-off TV series, hundreds of books, comics, magazines and video games, and countless “*Star Trek*” conventions worldwide. It only seems logical that a group of intrepid fans, lead by actor James Cawley, would utilize technology, the internet, and a vast collection of set pieces, props and costumes from the original series to create “*Star Trek: Phase II*,” a series described as continuing the fourth and fifth seasons of the original series, telling “the untold stories of the U.S.S. Enterprise, Captain Kirk, and his crew with the intention of filling in the missing years of the original five year mission, and bridging the gap to *Star Trek: The Motion Picture*.”



Now beginning its eighth year of production, IMTA alum Brian Gross (NY94) is set to take over the role of Captain James T. Kirk, debuting in “The Holiest Thing,” the newest episode being released on the series’ web site on Friday, February 14. “It was pretty nerve racking, knowing the great actors that have gone before in the role and knowing that *Star Trek* fans are very critical of every aspect of a production whether it is done by CBS/Paramount or done by fans. But, as the experience started I was welcomed into a family,” said Gross. “Everyone is very detail oriented...with lines, sets, costumes....Not only are we there to work but we have fun,” he added.



The series began filming episodes on a shoe-string budget in 2003 with Cawley in the role of Kirk, funded initially entirely out-of-pocket by some of the crew and cast members and now supported in part by fan on-line donations. Most of those working on the show, including episode writer Rick Chambers, do it for free. “This is not some guys with a camcorder in a garage somewhere,” Chambers stresses. “These are high-quality people making high-quality stuff.” Past episodes have featured guest stars who appeared on the original “*Star Trek*,” including George Takei, Walter Koenig, Majel Barrett, William Windom and Malachi Throne, as well as Denise Crosby from “*Star Trek: The Next Generation*.” “*Star Trek: Phase II*” can be found at startreknewvoyages.com.



Gross, who came to IMTA with The Image Group in Cedar Rapids, IA, began his career after IMTA with a guest-starring role on “*Baywatch*.” Since then, he has guest-starred on numerous hit TV shows, including “*Anger Management*,” “*Saving Grace*,” “*NCIS*,” “*NCIS: Los Angeles*,” “*CSI: NY*,” “*Psych*,” “*Cold Case*,” “*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*,” “*Bones*” and “*CSI: Miami*” among many others. His feature films include *Red Tails*, *Knifepoint*, *Big Momma’s House 2*, *Sorority Boys* and *2001 Maniacs*.