

Interview: Charlie Bewley, Daniel Cudmore on 'The Twilight Saga'

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CHICAGO – “The Twilight Saga” is about to sing its Bella Swan song, as the final film in the series – “Breaking Dawn - Part 2” – opens on November 16th. Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart and the gangs of vampires and werewolves are wrapping it up, and two of the supporting actors – Daniel Cudmore and Charlie Bewley – will move on to other projects.

Cudmore and Bewley were in Chicago recently to promote “Breaking Dawn - Part 2” and reflect about the influence of the popular film series. Both have been with the saga since the second film, “New Moon,” and play vampires Felix (Cudmore) and Demetri (Bewley) in the Volturi coven. Daniel Cudmore is also known for his character Colossus in the 2006 film “X-Men: The Last Stand,” and Charlie Bewley is a British actor who has landed roles in some upcoming independent films.



Charlie Bewley (Demetri) and Daniel Cudmore (Felix) for 'The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 2'
Photo credit: Summit Entertainment

Both actors talked to HollywoodChicago.com, and had some reflections on their contributions to the “The Twilight Saga,” and what is next for them.

HollywoodChicago.com: You both will be saying good-bye to characters you have played over four films. What do you miss already about Demetri and Felix, and the Volturi coven?

Daniel Cudmore It was fun, I got to play this hyper-aggressive character, which was really cool. Since we live in a society where that sort of behavior is downgraded, it was fun to bring out the animal side of myself that we've suppressed over the centuries. I got to click into it and bring it out.

Charlie Bewley I down think I really got the opportunity to bring myself to this franchise. We are in the film fleetingly, so I miss the sense that I would have had the chance to fully reprise this guy within the films. There is no bitterness, it's just about taking the characters forward to define them in different contexts, and different molds.

HollywoodChicago.com: Given the large and crowded cast, what can you both say about the qualities you gave to those characters that wasn't necessarily in the script?

Bewley I like going back to the description of the character, because he was nothing like me. What I brought to the audition was a charm, confidence and a stillness which was inherent in the character in the book. What transpired from that, and definitely wasn't written, was this edge of flamboyance that my character suddenly got, which was something that became the role over the course of 'New Moon.' I really enjoyed playing it that way, with a certain panache that is part of my personality anyway. It seeped out of me as I began to understand the direction I could take Demetri in.

Cudmore I just tried to find the human side, and not to fall into the trap of just being the 'vampire.' And so I just wanted to connect on a more human level, and tied into the jealousy side of not being the 'teacher's pet' and not being congratulated or appreciated for the work that my character did.

HollywoodChicago.com: What is the strangest or most surreal moment either of you have had in association with Twilight-mania?

Bewley When we got to film in the Tuscan [Italy] countryside, in a tiny little village, which had to accommodate this massive film crew. With the buzz of the film set, and the press that followed it, I began to realize how huge the thing had gotten when we all showed up. I will never forget the first time I was fully recognized as being part of the franchise, and it is something that I've never gotten used to. They're screaming at you, they don't know who you are, they just know you're in it.

Cudmore With social media, people just tend to get 'a hold of me,' and you also forget that pictures tend to pop up on the internet that go to thousands of people right away, and the lack of privacy with that, it's a bit of a shock. At the same time, that love from the fans may never be replicated.

HollywoodChicago.com: Speaking of Twilight-mania, what is your opinion about the almost obsessive breakdown by the media of Robert Pattinson and Kristen Stewart's relationship, and what did you observe about the effect it had on them as human beings?

Bewley It has pushed them away from everyone. It's made two people so reticent and unobtainable, that you'll never be able to get them back. I say 'you' in the royal sense, referring to the media. Most people respect humans, and these are just two humans in extraordinary circumstances. It has the effect of making them go away. If you look at celebrities of the past – like Princess Diana, Michael Jackson and Kurt Cobain – it all became too much for them. It's a strange fascination with other people's lives, which are not that interesting if you really think about it. It can destroy people.

Cudmore It's a strange place, and we're a drama based society. We love those dramas, especially the negative elements of them. They are ordinary individuals, but through others it seems an extraordinary lifestyle, and people are escaping their daily lives to lose it in other people's lives. It's a strange world, one used to sell magazines.

HollywoodChicago.com: With this being the last of the films, how are you and your agents using it as a launching pad to further your careers?

Cudmore Not necessarily with these films, I don't think my role is big enough to create any kind of buzz. The size of the franchise is great for the resume, as the more people see you the more they'll keep you in mind, but hopefully the people in the industry who makes the decisions when it comes to future projects they will see you as someone else and not pigeonhole you. We are actors, and we're here to play multiple characters, not just one.

Bewley I think nothing is going to happen now, that hasn't happened already. I feel like I got on the train early, and parlayed any leverage I've gotten from Twilight into the infrastructure of my career – as in getting the right agents and getting into the right rooms. The bar has definitely been raised, both for what is expected of me and the agents who represent me. Even though the Twilight thing is done, it will always be on my resume, and people will always see that I was in it. It's part of something great, with a pre-existing audience, and that counts for something.

HollywoodChicago.com: Daniel, were you really on the short list to get a shot at the Superman role in the upcoming 'Man of Steel'?

Cudmore Not really. It was a mass cattle call-type deal. It was like they knew they had their guy, but let's look at others that might be cheaper. [laughs] I think for me, I'm not sure I'd be able to helm it at this point. I'd like a little more experience before I'd go on to something that big. It was a great audition piece, and I thought I did a great job, and it went in front of guys like Zack Snyder [director] and Christopher Nolan [producer]. As an actor, that's very valuable.

HollywoodChicago.com: And you have recently completed the Halo 4 web series. What was that experience like, essentially doing a series to promote the game release, and what were the challenges of developing the character of John-117 that was different from Twilight?

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The Vulturi Coven: Charlie Bewley, Cameron Bright (Alec), Dakota Fanning (Jane) and Daniel Cudmore"

Photo credit: Summit Entertainment

Cudmore It's a massive franchise, with a huge following that wanted a movie version. That fell apart, but the web series came out of it. As an actor, I was looking at 'webisodes' as something kind of thrown together, but we were with Microsoft so the quality was there. It was an amazing job, but I was hiding behind a mask, and that's not something I really want to keep doing.

At the same time, it was a cool-ass character, and everyone plays him in the game, so I had to come up with my interpretation. He's a military machine, who is always trying to find the fastest way to get things done, so it gives him a robotic quality. I had to find the innocence, since he only has one life. Also I was acting through a helmet, with fans whirling inside it, and I couldn't see. On top of that, they gave it a different voice. It's a weird place, but I did it because it was cool.

HollywoodChicago.com: Charlie, you have challenged yourself with a recently wrapped European film called 'Intersection.' What was the origin of your involvement with that film, and how has it allowed you to spread your wings a bit as an actor?

Bewley I was proud to get that part through an audition, so it is merit based. I'm playing an Australian, and have a strange image of them as yappy little sods, so my Australian accent is a bit pikey, it's not subtle at all. [laughs] The best thing about 'Intersection' was the talent I was working with – Roschdy Zem, Moussa Maaskri, Frank Grillo and Jaimie Alexander – and it was produced by Luc Besson ['La Femme Nikita'], even though it was an independent. I wanted to get into this type of 'euro-feature,' so it's another box ticked off. What it means for the future I don't know.

I'm slightly more excited about the film I did after that, which is 'Hammer of the Gods.' It's a Viking movie, and I play the lead role. In terms of spreading my wings, I really got to do that in this. It's produced by the same guys who did 'Bronson' a few years ago. Obviously I saw this as chance to get aggressive and more primal, and the film gave me that opportunity. It should be out in April of next year.

HollywoodChicago.com: What type of role or genre of film would you both really like to do and why, that casting agents aren't necessarily considering you for?

Cudmore Everything. [laughs] It's not so much a specific genre but just something opposite to what I've played so far. I'd like to have a more character piece to fall into wholeheartedly, and show I can do the work. Anything that really scares me.



Daniel Cudmore, Charlie Bewley in Chicago, November 1. 2012
Photo credit: Patrick McDonald for HollywoodChicago.com

Bewley I think what is happening now for me, is happening, and it’s all part of the journey. I’m not frustrated with any casting issues, I did have a shot at Finnick in ‘The Hunger Games: Catching Fire,’ but I think because I was in Twilight series there might have been a ‘no’ at the door, and the politics got in the way. Having said that, I know other people look at roles I get and wish they had them. It’s all about the build and the journey, and if I had to get specific, it would be playing more superheroes. I feel I have a lot of superhero in me, and I’d like to have an opportunity to imprint my style.

HollywoodChicago.com: What do you think you’ll tell your potential ancestors down the line – let’s say thirty years from now – when they ask you to describe the Twilight phenomenon?

Bewley Remember The Beatles? Look at that, but 45 years later. [laughs] It was like that for Rob. I remember a moment in Vancouver where he was crouched behind a huge hotel flower pot trying to smoke a cigarette, and there were people climbing all over each other trying to get photos. I’ve never been part of something like that, and I’m glad I got to be a part of it from an insider’s perspective. So that’s what I’ll tell them.

Cudmore A whirlwind of emotion, and a strange place. I’m sure my answer will change over the years, in seeing where it goes. For me, it was a marking spot for a great time in my life, and I’m very thankful for what I got to do. It’s was a wild ride, with extremely passionate fans, and they got the goods delivered to them in these movies.

Bewley It’s a true phenomenon, in the sense that there is nothing equal to it. People wonder all the time why is it so successful. I don’t think anyone can put a finger as to what the hidden element was. Will any of these other book series becoming films ever match ‘The Twilight Saga?’ I don’t think so.

“The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2” opens everywhere November 16th. Featuring Robert Pattinson, Kristen Stewart, Taylor Lautner, Daniel Cudmore and Charlie Bewley. Screenplay adapted by Melissa Rosenberg, based on the novel by Stephenie Meyer. Directed by Bill Condon.



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