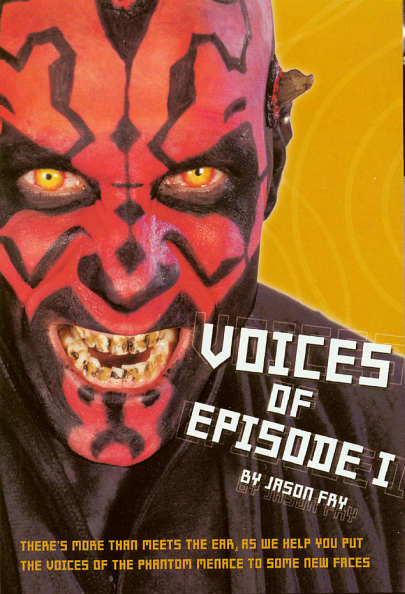




VOICES OF EPISODE I

BY JASON FRY
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THERE'S MORE THAN MEETS THE EAR, AS WE HELP YOU PUT
THE VOICES OF THE PHANTOM MENACE TO SOME NEW FACES

In a movie universe where droids, aliens and armored warriors have as much of a role to play as men and women, voices take on critical importance. After all, what would *A New Hope* be without Anthony Daniels' voice (as well as his actions) as fussy protocol droid See-Threepio? *The Empire Strikes Back* sans Frank Oz's mystic utterances as Yoda? *Return of the Jedi* without the basso rumble of Jabba the Hutt? And what would any of those films be without James Earl Jones' majestic trio of performances as the voice of Darth Vader?

Voices are of critical importance, once again, in *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*—and to quote an old saw of show business, the voices of Episode I prove there are no small parts. Battle droids, Gungan officers, Podracer pilots and Sith Lords all have something to say—and so do the actors and actresses who gave voice to them. It's an eclectic collection that includes illustrious stage veterans, young comedians, and even animators. Here are some of the stories behind the voices.

PETER SERRA

So Sebulba and Darth Maul
walk up to this bar...

Sounds like the beginning of a bizarre *Star Wars* joke, but it really happened in New York City this year. Peter Serafinowicz, the 27-year-old actor who supplies the voice of Darth Maul, was out on the town club-hopping with his good friend and radio-show collaborator Lewis MacLeod, the voice of Sebulba. The two were trying to get into a club and found themselves face-to-face, as Serafinowicz recalls it, with a club denizen dressed in a remarkably faithful Darth Maul costume. So as the would-be Darth Maul struck poses with his double-bladed lightsaber, Serafinowicz crept up behind him, put on the ominous tones of the Sith apprentice, and let a couple of Episode I lines go. In his ear.

The punch line isn't quite as good, alas. "He just turned around and looked at me like I was an idiot," Serafinowicz says—but then as tough towns go, New York rivals Mos Espa.

The reaction would likely have been very different in the UK, where Serafinowicz is an oft-heard voice in a host of commercials, on radio shows and in a number of comedy shows. But he's not just a voice: he played a key role in the TV comedy *How Do You Want Me?*, among other programs. In the U.S., one of his most recent appearances came in the NBC miniseries *Leprechauns*.

But on the top of his resume, of course, is *Star Wars: Episode I The Phantom Menace*. Serafinowicz auditioned three times over nearly a year to be the voice of Darth Maul, a part he says he never thought he'd get. Along the way, however, he did do some other voices for Episode I—by his count, a couple of battle droids and a Gungan warrior. In recording those bits, he says, he auditioned once again for Darth Maul: this time with George Lucas in attendance.

"I was trying to exude this coolness, but I kept tripping over things—inside I was nearly having a heart attack," Serafinowicz says, adding, "I did my impression of Darth Vader for