



We sit down with Nicolas Cage, star of this past summer's hit *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* to talk about the film and the upcoming DVD release.

SHAKEFIRE: How did you get involved with *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*?

NICOLAS CAGE: *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* began with my desire to play a magician in a movie. I played a magician of sorts in a movie called *Next*, which is when I became fascinated with ancient mythologies and philosophies from England. I loved the subject, so I had a conversation with Todd Garner – the producer of *Next* – and I said to him, “Boy, I’d really like to play a sorcerer from the times of King Arthur.” The very next day he said to me, “Nic, I’ve got it. Why don’t we create a movie around the sorcerer’s apprentice from the *Fantasia* movie?” It was perfect.

SF: How important was it to transform your look for your role in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*?

NC: Actors often change their looks for roles and I’m certainly part of that school of thought. In fact, I want to transform myself every time I get a new role. I’ll wear wigs, I’ll wear nose pieces, I’ll wear green contact lenses... I’ll do whatever I need to do to create a character. That’s what acting’s all about. That’s the fun of it.

SF: How would you describe the look of your character, Balthazar Blake?

NC: Jerry Bruckheimer says that Balthazar has the look of an ancient rock star, and I have to agree with him. He has a cool style that harkens back to the 500s or the 600s, which is where he came from. Merlin was his teacher, so it was appropriate.

SF: How did it feel to play a sorcerer?

NC: This is the role I’ve been waiting to do my whole life. When I was a kid, I used to love pretending to be a superhero. I was always playing around and shooting energy out of my hands. In that respect, I’ve been rehearsing for this role for years because Balthazar certainly shoots plasma out of his hands in *The Sorcerer's Apprentice*.

SF: How much of the movie is based on the sorcerer’s apprentice scenes of the Disney classic, *Fantasia*?

NC: There are elements of the animation in the movie, but we fleshed out the idea into a two-hour action adventure. We have expanded the idea to present a thrilling magical world to audiences and I’m especially happy because it’s a family movie. I liked the idea of entertaining a family without having to rely on murder and guns. We’ve kept it very positive.

SF: Why did you want to make it a family movie?

NC: I wanted to create a movie that excited both children and parents because I am a big fan of family movies. When you’re playing supernatural characters in movies like *Ghost Rider*, *Next* or *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* there is an infinite number of possibilities that you can do with the character, but I wanted this to have comedy and humor – and I wanted it to connect with big audiences. Do you remember the first time you saw *The Wizard Of Oz*? Did you feel enchanted and magical? We wanted people to have those feelings at the end of our movie. That was our goal.

SF: How did Jerry Bruckheimer and Jon Turteltaub get involved with the project?

NC: I talked the movie over with different writers and then we pitched the idea to Jerry Bruckheimer and Disney – and they loved it. I’d just finished *National Treasure II* with the director Jon Turteltaub and I thought he’d be perfect for the new movie. He likes to keep things in the fun zone and he keeps things comical, but he’s also edgy, so it was a good mix. He was the perfect man for the job.

SF: What does it mean to you to be associated with Disney?

NC: It’s an honor and I feel greatly privileged to work with Disney. I grew up watching Walt Disney’s movies and I love what he stands for. I love the entertainment that comes out of the studio and this movie is a dream come true for me, which is in the spirit of Disney. It has been a magical experience.

SF: What was it like to work with Jay Baruchel, the actor who plays the sorcerer’s apprentice in the film?



NC: Jay is great. He's hilarious and he's a really physical comedian when he wants to be, but he's also got a little bit of a demon in him. He's a little mischievous and there's a playful dark side in him. He was a joy to work with on The Sorcerer's Apprentice.

SF: Are you a fan of magic and wizards?

NC: I definitely went through my magic phase when I was younger. I think all little boys do at some point. Everyone gets fascinated with magic tricks. I certainly did. I used to go to the Hollywood House Of Magic, which is where I bought a magic trick called 'Gloripy'. It was a little handkerchief that had a ghost in it. The ghost would move the handkerchief around on its own - and it was really good. I could stun my friends with it. You feel very powerful when you have a magic trick up your sleeve. I used to love it.

SF: When was the last time you performed a magic trick?

NC: Balthazar is a wonderful sorcerer in The Sorcerer's Apprentice, but it's been a while since I used the Gloripy trick. I also had another trick called The Rising Deck Of Cards, too. I could point towards a deck of cards and pick a card - and the card of my choice would rise up. That was also a lot of fun to play with.

SF: Do you know any magical secrets?

NC: Let me tell you something: Never give away your magical secrets. I worked on a movie in New Orleans where I used The Rising Deck Of Cards trick on a friend of mine. He kept asking me, "How are you doing that?" And I could tell he was getting a little nervous because he thought something weird was going on. That's when I made the world's worst mistake: I gave away the secret of my trick. He just threw the cards away after that and I lost all the power. Never give away your secrets.

SF: When was the last time you were an apprentice?

NC: The last time I was an apprentice was on a movie called Season Of The Witch. I had to learn how to ride horses for that movie and a young woman named Camilla was my instructor. She did a wonderful job. I'd not been on a horse before, so I was a little nervous - but I learned to love it, which was exciting. I definitely felt like an apprentice there.

SF: What do you think is magical in our world today?

NC: Any painting is a work of magic. Any book is a work of magic. Any science experiment is a work of magic. Any speech that moves people is a work of magic. When you think about magic, it's not all hocus-pocus. It's all about imagination and will power and positivity.

SF: Do you remember the first time you realized you wanted to act?

NC: I knew I wanted to be an actor when I was about six years old. I was trying to figure out how to get inside the television set because I was fascinated by it. My father built a little castle out of plywood in our back yard and I would go in there for hours making up stories and characters.

SF: What characters did you make up?

NC: I would pretend to be anything from a knight to a superhero to an astronaut. In fact, that castle was where I learned to act.

SF: Do you have any advice for youngsters who want to follow in your footsteps and act?

NC: Keep the child in you alive because it's your imagination that will connect you to audiences. Your imagination is your best tool to be an actor. Don't let people try to diminish it or make you feel bad for having an imagination. Use it whenever you can. I would urge children to play as much as they can and use their imagination as much as possible. It will really help you as an actor. Follow your instincts, work hard and you'll go far.

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