



Aftermath, Van Helsing lead Vancouver's apocalyptic sci-fi charge

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Left to right, Alison Wazendura as Nicole, Christopher Heyerdahl as Sam and David Cubitt as John in the new TV series Van Helsing, shot in Vancouver. Photo: Dan Power/Helsing S1 Productions/Syfy PNG

Aftermath

Starts Sept. 27 | Space (Canada) and Syfy (U.S.)

Van Helsing

Starts Sept. 23 | Syfy (U.S.)

Wayne Brady is better known as the quick-witted funny man who lights up TV game shows like *Whose Line Is It Anyway* and *Let's Ma*

You'd be hard-pressed to think of him as a gun-toting tough guy decked in camo gear ready to take on the end of the world.

Yet that's exactly what Brady will be doing in forthcoming television series *Aftermath*, shot in Vancouver this summer.

The show, which premieres on Space in Canada on Sept. 27, stars Anne Heche and real-life husband James Tupper as they fight for survival, along with their three children, in a civilization on the brink of collapse.

"Doing things like this is the actor's dream," Brady said in a phone interview. "I'm a big sci-fi and comic nerd. I've read comic books my entire life. When it comes to zombie flicks and video games, I'm pretty much a 44-year-old man with a 13-year-old boy trapped inside of him, like a lot of us are."

Brady will appear as Lamar "Booner" Boone, a former acquaintance of main character Karen Copeland (Heche) who helps the family escape attacks from a yet unrevealed army of creatures (hint: not zombies). In one scene shot on the BCIT campus this summer, Brady was gleefully playing up shooting at and blowing up imaginary baddies, which would later be added to the scene thanks to the magic of CGI.

"To run around with your fake gun, spouting military dialogue and ducking and dodging — that's just what I used to do in the front yard as a kid," Brady said.

Brady added his dream gig would be to reprise the role of Dr. Scott Beckett in a *Quantum Leap* reboot, should there ever be one. (The role catapulted Scott Bakula to fame and earned him a Golden Globe.)

"I've lobbied for it," Brady said. "Quantum Leap is, for my money, the perfect time travel story, yet it's grounded in science. Those stories were awesome. I'd love to be the next doctor in *Quantum Leap* or be the next doctor in *Doctor Who*, that's the holy grail.



In a scene from *Van Helsing*, (left-right) Avery Konrad as Cynthia, Jennifer Spece as Karen, Alison Wandzura as Nicole, Christopher Heyerdahl as Sam, David Cubitt as John. Photo by: Dan Power/Helsing S1 Productions/Syfy **HELISING S1 PRODUCTIONS/SYFY / PNG**

“(Sci-fi is) the ultimate pretend,” said Vancouver actress Alison Wandzura, who plays pipe-wielding vampire buster Nicole in the forthcoming Van Helsing series. “If you’re in a Hallmark movie you have to pretend you’re happier than normal people are. But if you’re in a sci-fi show, you get to pretend you’re doing things that are not real. It appeals to actors because we all have that imagination and we want to be someone we’re not.”

Creator and executive producer Neil LaBute’s show, shot in Vancouver and co-produced by Calgary’s Nomadic Pictures (Hell On Wheels, Fargo), will air in the States on SyFy starting Sept. 23. (The show does not have a distributor for Canada yet. In Quebec, the show will air in French on Super Ecran.)

Van Helsing stars Kelly Overton (True Blood) as Vanessa Helsing, a distant relative of the legendary Dracula character Van Helsing, as the leader of an ensemble cast of vampire hunters that also includes Christopher Heyerdahl (Hell On Wheels, True Blood).

Wandzura compared the gritty show, set in a world overrun with vampires, to zombie favourite The Walking Dead. Large chunks of Van Helsing were shot on top of the Canada Post building in downtown Vancouver, where the cast was subjected to hail and other elements.

“If you’re looking for a romantic, glitzy, Twilight-type thing, this is not the show,” she said. “Some of the imagery in the show is really shocking. My mom watched the pilot episode that was previewed in July. She called me and said, ‘I can’t watch the show, but send me the clips that you’re in.’”

Both Aftermath and Van Helsing are part of a continued wave of Vancouver-shot sci-fi shows that have been the city’s staple since The X-Files first landed on the West Coast. This year’s crop, however, really drives home the apocalypse theme.

“Vancouver is apocalypse central, isn’t it?” Wandzura said. “Maybe we like to watch these shows and then when the credits roll, we think, ‘Well, maybe my life isn’t that bad. OK, the housing prices are bad, but at least it’s not that bad.’”