

MORE THAN MY HEART

by Rosemarie and Gerhard Hauer

*Jo Anderson's appearance at the
German Hallowe'en Convention,
October 1992 Solingen, Germany*

A Saturday - it was October 24th---saw the beginning of the annual Halloween meeting, organized by 'The Tunnel Community,' one of the German 'Beauty and the Beast' fan clubs. As usual, many of the attendees arrived the evening before, some (*including us two Hauers*) after quite exhausting car rides covering many hundreds of miles in rather bad weather. People came from many European countries (*Austria, Belgium, Great Britain, and Italy were just a few of them*)

This small con had a star guest who was known for not visiting conventions. But not only did she answer our questions and give autographs for hours, she also spent much of her time with us, the fans. We decided that a transcript of her words would be a way of sharing at least some of our experiences with those of you who didn't have the chance to meet her.

When you read this, please do keep in mind, however, that there are some problems inherent to such transcripts. The sound quality of the videotape is not exactly up to hifi standards, the audience is sometimes really having fun---which means there are seconds on that tape when you just can't hear a thing. And of course, our not being native speakers of the English language didn't help much, either.

What you have here are about the most important questions and answers concerning 'B&B,' posed and given during the first session on Saturday, October 24th. Almost nothing has been omitted, but of course very much is missing; her powerful body language, her smiles, her sense of humor and, above all else, her eyes. We can't give you that here. What we can give you is Jo Anderson in her own words. And that is more than we ever dared hope.

How did you get the part of Diana?

Oh boy! I was asked to audition, and I had never seen the show. So, I thought, well, I don't know about this show, but I'll audition anyway. When I walked into that room, Ron Koslow was there, Tony Thomas was there, Paul Witt was there. These men were such incredible gentlemen and they embodied so much class and so much intelligence and so much warmth I thought.... hmmm.... There must be something very special about the show, and so I auditioned. It was very easy for me

to come from my heart, and I felt a very good connection with them.

Did you watch any episodes to get a feeling for what has been going on?

I watched the pilot. Because of the controversy and pressure that I felt, I thought it was better not to see what had come before me. I wanted to go in with a fresh mind. And to go in not knowing because, as Diana, I didn't know, and I wanted to go in the same way as Diana would.

After that, did you watch any episodes?

No, I saw bits and pieces of it. When I first met with all the writers and producers all together, and they said something about tunnels, I said, 'What tunnels?' And the first time I went into the tunnels was the first time I saw the tunnels. So it was very exciting for me, because I thought as Diana---you know---'Wow!'

May I add something? They were telling me about the evolution, and I said to Mr. Koslow, 'Am I gonna have to kiss him?' and they said, 'Well, we don't know yet.' And I said, 'Silly me---of course, him and.... Catherine actually did it.' And he said, 'No, we don't know. We don't know if they ever did.' And I thought that was so perfect, so poetic, that that was another reason why I felt good about going into this show.

If you had the chance to play another part in the show, which part would you have liked to play?

Vincent! Of course! And nobody would know (her fingers in front of her face to indicate Vincent's makeup) Of course, 'YOU' would know (pointing at her eyes and then to the audience)

Why Vincent?

Because being an actor---and Ron Perlman is such an incredible actor that he could take something like that.... (The rest of the sentence is muffled by the noise of a motor-driven camera rewinding film, which left Jo stunned and amused and caused all of us to burst into laughter)

It's a great part. It's a challenge for any actor to play something beyond human, and I think whether you've been in a great tragedy or a great epic film, something with heroes or with creatures to play, that's a greater challenge for an actor and that's what I would really be attracted to play.

What was it like to kill Gabriel, and why did you only shoot once?

Actually, when I first read the script, I knew that the series was less violent during the first two years and that was one of the reasons I was attracted to it. When I first read the script, I was upset and I talked to Ron Koslow about it and said, 'I don't feel that in all good conscience I can just kill him in cold blood, because he wasn't attacking me, wasn't threatening me at that moment.' And we talked for a long time about it. He convinced me that this man was soooooo horrible, and that even if he wasn't actually attempting to hurt me, the evil in this man was worth killing it. So, I came to understand that. But initially it was very difficult because I still had the understanding that children watch the show, that there was a certain precedence of love about the show, and even though afterwards I understood that it was a perfect thing for Diana to do, the poet in me would have liked to have looked at him and said, 'I love you and I forgive you.' But it's TV.

Do you know how other cast members felt about the violence in the show?

No, I don't remember talking about it with other people. I wasn't on the set a lot with other people---once in a while. Mostly Jay I worked with, and of course, Ron. I felt a little shy about picking up the script and saying, 'I think that there's too much violence in there!' Because I was new, and I wanted to do my best and I wanted to take what they gave me and make it work for everybody else.

(Remark from the audience

'And you succeeded!')

(In German) 'Danke Schon.'

Ron Perlman once said that he gave much of himself to the role, but he got far more from it than he put into it. How about Diana and Jo?

A lot of qualities that they wrote in the character treatment I felt very similar to. That Diana was someone who worked better alone, someone who worked on her intuition, someone who is hard on the outside but softer on the inside. There were things I could understand and relate to. One of the things that Diana gave me---and this was also encouraged by the producers and the directors, who were men---was that, as a woman, there's no reason to give away your power, that there is no reason not to stand as a woman and to say, 'I am complete and I am powerful and I am strong and I'm going to hold to my principles, no matter how terrified I am.' This character, Diana, was always working through her fear. It was like.... It wasn't that she was so courageous because she had no fear. I think that she was courageous because even when she saw something she didn't understand, even when she felt terror, she just went ahead. And she gave that to me.

How was it for you when you saw Vincent for the first time?

(At that, Jo's features brightened, and she got lost in a smile, seemingly forgetting for a moment that all of us were there) I was like a little. I remember that we were eating lunch the first day. And I said, 'Can I touch it?' And it was like (imitating a gruff voice) 'NO!' It was great. He was beautiful. I was amazed. The makeup was ingenious. I was this close (bringing up her hand and stopping it some five inches from her face) to him, and could not tell where it started or where it ended. He is such a beautiful actor. And it was a surprise to me, how much I became... I felt so much for him.

Would you like to have written an episode?

Oh, good question! I love to write. If I had.... If the show had continued, I would love to have written an episode. Because I love to write and also, it is a fertile story that always feeds your imagination. So, yes. I would have.

Is there anything special you would write?

Oh! I think, going back to that other question about Gabriel, and because the show had become so violent, I think I would like to have written an episode about forgiveness without the violence. I know that that was kind of all it was about. With Vincent, and dealing with the death of Catherine. Perhaps there would have been a gentler story about forgiveness.

How would you have continued the relationship between Diana and Vincent? Would friendship have turned into romance?

Well, that's a hard question. Because in many people's lives it's a fine line between 'love'.... is love.... And then it can be a little confusing because when I have love for someone then how do I express that? Do we put it in the little box of 'romance,' or do we put it in the little box of 'friends,' or do we put it in this 'little' box, you know. And it's always hard. It's always hard because sometimes, if you put it in the wrong box, you might hurt it. And so, it's a very delicate choice. For Diana and Vincent---I don't know. It might have been interesting for Vincent to have a little love in his life, a romantic love; it might have been interesting to explore what deep love can be without romance, you know, maybe to see that side of him. I think, there's a lot of possibilities. I would like to see the essence of a relationship deepen more in love. I don't know how that would have worked out.

Did you ever have the feeling of playing against the shadow of Linda Hamilton?

The way it was written and the way it was conceived in the minds of the producers and writers, I felt was great, because it never afforded the opportunity to feel like, this is going to be too much like Linda. So, it was the initial stage of the creation, already, that kept me from ever feeling I was being compared to her, although I felt a lot of pressure of performing with the quality of the show. It was written so against the shadow, already.

There are people who only accept Catherine and others who have no problem with accepting Diana as well. Did that show in the mail you got?

I would get a letter that would say, 'I know you're getting a lot of hate mail, but we love you.' And I thought, 'What? People hate me? Why did they have to tell me?' Because I didn't. Maybe somebody somewhere---maybe.... A lot of times I got letters that were already opened. Maybe CBS didn't give those letters to me. I mean, that's a possibility. That would have been nice, if they did that. I could not---and I still cannot---believe how much support and how much encouragement and love came to me in mail and still comes to me. People thank me and I was just so honored to be able to play the part. Maybe the people who had all that anger had no more energy to write.

How did it happen that you haven't been at any conventions?

You know, I've been asked to a few, not many, but a few. I'm not very comfortable with a lot of people. They are big, in America, there are 'BIG' conventions, and I thought.... I don't know. Like I said before, I go on my intuition. I wasn't moved to go to any of them. And then I heard about this convention, and I found out that it was smaller. And also, I'm not a nationalist, I'm proud to be from the country I'm from, but I 'love' the idea that the world becomes smaller because of stories like this. And I love the idea of coming to meet people from another country and have there be no more lines (Boundaries?) especially now, when the world is so crazy about 'this is my land.' I just love the idea of being part of that.... So, I was attracted to come.

Did you get more arrangements (offers of work?) because of the show, or was it the same as before?

To be an actor in Hollywood is very difficult, because there is no logic. So, you can do your best work in something, it can be critically acclaimed, but it doesn't mean that everyone's gonna go 'Oh please, you wanna be in our show!' And then you can do something that is just awful and people go (mimicking big applause) So I've learned that there is only one important thing for me as an actor and that is 'Always give more than my best and more than my heart' and hope and pray that I'll be blessed with more work.