

O-Ton Paket Frank Doelger

1. Mr. Doelger, producing an international Bestseller like Frank Schätzing's "The Swarm" sounds like a very special project, isn't it?

It's enormous. It was an international bestseller in dozens of countries. It's a book that's very well read and loved. It was 20 years ago and what's interesting is that some of the things in the novel came to be, which is really amazing. Other things were slightly outdated. So part of the challenge was making sure we stayed true to the things that we could while updating it very much with Frank Schätzing's approval and encouragement.

2. What was it like working on the script with Frank Schätzing?

He was very supportive of a lot of the ideas, particularly on the question of diversity. The novel was written at a time when there was much less representation of women and minorities in the Sciences unfortunately. 20 years later, the Sciences are filled with students from much more diverse backgrounds. As always, what happens in adaptations, there are things, decisions that we made which we felt were necessary to get a 900-page-novel down to eight hours. And again, Frank was very supportive, as always there'll be some things, I think, he preferred in the novel and which we could have stuck to. But in the end, it was a very positive collaborative experience. And I'm hoping the people who read and love the novel will think it's a faithful adaptation.

3. The shooting of the series was very elaborate. Among others it was filmed in one of the largest water stage studios of the world in Brussels. What kind of experience was that for the team?

I think for a lot of people it was their first time. And what I think takes everybody by surprise is how long everything takes. You have to be very, very careful when you're working around the water. And we were working both on the surface and under the water with actors with and without tanks. So the amount of planning, the amount of training, the amount of safety precautions, all of which ensures the safety and the quality of the material. But something that would normally take one day in terms of shooting could take four or five days in a tank. It's also incredibly warm and very humid, so it's very draining. So all in all, it went extremely well, but it was hard. It was hard for the crew, hard for the actors, but at the end everybody really appreciated how carefully had we put together and planned to ensure everybody's safety.