

Max Beesley plays Michael Ezard

Max Beesley likens Michael Ezard in *THE LAST ENEMY* to James Bond.

“Michael is a leader and a lover of life. He’s a humanitarian – somebody who has strength, is pure and you would trust him. He is a truly inspirational character and that is great to play.

“You would want someone like Michael around if you were in trouble. He’s fearless and wants to help people, he’s clever and caring and unselfish. He’s a bit of a James Bond but very practical with it.”

Michael, an aid worker in Afghanistan, is nothing like his brother Stephen (Benedict Cumberbatch), a reclusive scientist.

Says Max: “After their father died, Stephen moved to China and has spent his life in isolation, whereas Michael wants to save the world. We are totally different as brothers. Stephen is introverted and serious while Michael is gregarious and outgoing. He wants to meet people and look after them, but Stephen’s last wish is to meet people.”

Michael’s story is told in flashback after a landmine hits his vehicle in the desert.

“He get killed at the beginning of the serial and it’s up to Stephen and Yasim, his widow, to find out why. It’s an interesting love story because Stephen gets involved with Michael’s wife.

Michael was working with refugees who were given a bad batch of the Hepatitis B vaccine. They start getting ill and dying. He’s a smart guy and is quick to understand conspiracies. Stephen and Yasim realise Michael was killed while trying to work out why these people were dying.”

Max enjoyed the role but researching it proved challenging.

“I normally do a lot of research, hanging out with the murder squad or spending time in hospital or whatever, but this was really difficult. It’s quite tricky to get out to Afghanistan and also it’s set a few years in the future. I just tried to imagine what life is like for Michael and why he wanted to become an aid worker.

“Training in the gym is always a good preparation - I like to try to keep fit. I have a trainer and I box a lot.

“I was attracted to the part first and foremost because the writing is excellent. Peter Berry is a phenomenal scriptwriter. I shot *Bodies* and *Hotel Babylon* with the director Iain MacDonald and I really like the way he works, and Anamaria of course is wonderful.

“I’m a fan of Benedict’s work. I thought he was amazing as Stephen Hawking and we’ve had a mutual respect society for the last few years. And working with Robert Carlyle too has been a real plus. People like Benedict and Bobby have very strong ideas of what they are doing and if you listen it can take you from a very safe zone to something quite unknown and a bit terrifying, but maybe that’s how you produce good work.”

Michael in *THE LAST ENEMY* is very different from Max’s other roles so far.

“Every character I play seems very different from each other so hopefully I don’t get typecast. I think it’s very important as an actor to keep pushing yourself, doing different types of work and never stay in your comfort zone. *THE LAST ENEMY* certainly pushes me – it’s a very difficult piece.

“The storyline is complicated and intense and because we shot the episodes out of order it’s hard to pace your journey. Some of the locations are not the most glamorous in the world and it’s been freezing as well. But I think it will be received extremely well and it’s been great to be in an ensemble of such wonderful people right across the board.”

The series asks questions about living in a modern, surveillance society.

“My part in the story is more focused on the refugees rather than the politicians and MI5 but my views on a surveillance society are mixed.

“I’ve heard that speakers might be put in CCTV cameras and I’m a bit terrified to think what the country will be like in thirty years time. I don’t know if I agree with people having cards which tell you everything about them. But it seems the world is getting a lot more violent and so maybe it will be a good thing. Who knows?”

Max was seen on TV recently in the dramas *Talk to Me* and *Hotel Babylon* and the feature length conclusion to dark BBC Three medical drama *Bodies*. He has also appeared in other popular BBC dramas *Hustle* and *Fields of Gold*.

His first break was playing the title role in the mini-series *The History of Tom Jones – A Foundling* and his other screen credits include *Bloodlines*, *The Match*, *It Was An Accident* and *Anita and Me*.

The son of jazz musicians, Max was a successful session musician before turning to acting and he has toured with Robbie Williams, George Michael and Take That.

