Danny DeVito in the studio recording the voiceover for The Lorax

> The key to doing convincing voices is to become the character as much as if you were physically appearing in the film.

IN GOOD VOICE

Hollywood funny man Danny DeVito is the voice of the Lorax. YP film editor Nicola Venning finds out how he got into character for the grumpy but kindly creature

Q: How did you feel about getting The Lorax?
A: I was really excited about doing it. The Lorax is one of the first actual good guys I've played – a guy with a conscience.

Q: The film has quite a strong eco/green message. Did that appeal to you?
A: I love that the Taylor Swift character [Audrey] wants something real: a tree. Not something plastic or fake, something real – also, in matters of the heart, something real.

Q: How did you get into character?
A: You know what the character wants, you know the situation – like any other part you get into. I know how I would feel if somebody was going to take away the place I lived. I would be incensed and I hope I would have as much restraint as the Lorax has.

Q: What was the hardest thing about doing The Lorax?
A: Doing the voices in other languages – it was crazy! I got it in my head I was going to try it in Italian, 'cause my parents are from Italy. Then I got it in my head I would try it in German, two different kinds of Spanish, Russian... Everything was written out phonetically and then we sat it out until I got it right.

Q: What's the trick to doing good voices?
A: You work on it as an actor. I bring all kinds of nuances to a character. It's a lot of acting.

Q: The Lorax is based on a Dr Seuss children's book. Did you read Dr Seuss when you were a child?
A: My education really began when we had children. [Danny is married to actress Rhea Perlman, of sitcom Cheers fame.] Dr Seuss's books were regulars in our house – I was exposed to all these things through my children [Lucy, Grace and Jacob].

Q: What were your favourite books as a child?
A: I loved all the DC Comics and Batman. If you'd told me, "Someday you're gonna play the Penguin" [in the Batman films] – well! ★

Danny's tips for young performers

1. Try not to walk away from anything; always go into the mouth of the dragon. Always look at the thing you fear and go head on.
2. Make sure you keep your feet on the ground.
3. Follow your bliss!

Photographs Universal Pictures and Illumination Entertainment