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February/March
2008

WE CALLED IT

Indie Anna

...is a shooting star.

Well before the Academy Awards touted Deering High alumna Anna Kendrick, she lit up the cover of our February/March 2008 issue. Since that year's *Marc Pease Experience*, she's co-starred with George Clooney in *Up in the Air* (2009), resulting in an Oscar nomination for best supporting actress. Her ensemble cast work in the sleeper hit *Pitch Perfect* featured her virally catchy "Cup Song" (more than 104M YouTube hits). This year, look for her in *Into the Woods* with Meryl Streep, Johnny Depp, and Emily Blunt. Not to mention next year's *Pitch Perfect II*.

INTERVIEW BY COLIN W. SARGENT

When did you get your role in *The Marc Pease Experience*?

I got the phone call on Valentine's Day last year. I usually have bad luck on Valentine's Day, so I was very nervous when I heard I'd get the decision [by telephone] then. Up until then, anything work-related that had happened on a Valentine's Day had just gone down the toilet. So this was great. It reversed my luck!

Do your co-stars Ben Stiller and Jason Schwartzman know you're from Maine?

I remember talking to Jason, because he used to be the drummer for Phantom Planet. When I told him I was from here, he immediately said he liked Portland because he'd come here with his band, and all of a sudden I blurted out, 'I was there! You opened for Incubus at the Civic Center.' It all came back to me: 'Your lead singer stage-dived, and a group of my friends caught him!'

Was there a real-life Jason Schwartzman counterpart at Deering when you went there—you know, your basic *uber-loser who returns eight years after graduating in disguise so he can star in your high-school production of *The Wiz?**

No! I've never met anybody like Jason, and I don't think anybody has met anybody like Marc Pease. He's one of a kind.

Take us behind the curtain during filming.

I remember my first day. Jason and Ben knew how terrified I was about the whole thing, so they took it easy on the practical jokes—it was obviously a very big deal for me. But there was one time: Ben plays my music teacher, and in one scene, we were doing vocal warm-ups and Ben started improvising funnier and funnier things that I had to repeat back to him. It turned out everybody was laughing in the background, but I was white as a ghost. In between, the script supervisor said, 'What he said was so

funny—I can't believe you're not laughing; this is so incredibly professional of you.' I said, 'This is not skill, this is fear.'

In what ways is your character like the person you were at Deering High, and in what ways is she different?

She's romantically involved with two older men, which is certainly nothing I was involved with at Deering. She's vulnerable and in the process of discovering her strengths, and I think I shared that with everyone going through high school.

Have you had to alter your Broadway live-audience gestures for movies? Exactly what measures did you take?

I was lucky. My first film was a film about theater, called *Camp*, in 2003, so that kind of eased me into the transition.

Where is the premiere going to be when the movie comes out, and what friends of yours from Maine will attend?

WE CALLED IT



The Anna Kendrick Experience

BROADWAY

High Society (1998)

—As Dinah Lord

• Drama Desk Award

• World Theater Award

• Tony Award nominee (second-youngest)

TELEVISION

The Mayor (2003)

—As Sadie Winterhalter

My Favorite Broadway:

The Leading Ladies 1999

FILM

Drinking Buddies (2013)

—As Jill

Pitch Perfect (2012)

—As Beca

Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn

Parts I (2011) & II (2012)

—As Jessica Stanley

50/50 (2011)

—As Katherine

Twilight Saga: Eclipse (2010)

—As Jessica Stanley

Twilight Saga: New Moon (2009)

—As Jessica Stanley

Up in the Air (2009)

—As Natalie Keener

The Marc Pease Experience (2008)

—As Meg Brickman

Elsewhere (2008)

—As Sarah

Twilight (2008)

—As Jessica Stanley

Rocket Science (2007)

—As Ginny Ryerson

Camp (2003)

—As Fritz Wagner

I imagine it will be in L.A., and what I'll have to do during the premiere will be a lot like working. I like to keep that whole part of my life private.

You're not doing a very good job of that!

It's more like, I'd hate to disillusion any of my friends about how un-fun L.A. can actually be.

There's a 20-year age gap between you and Ben Stiller. Did he make jokes about that, or did you?

Oh, yeah. He was cool and cracked a couple of jokes. But like I said, I was too nervous to make jokes myself.

What's your 'role that got away,' so far?

They're remaking my favorite film, *The Women*, and it's my tough luck that they didn't make it 15 years from now, because I'm too young for any of those roles.

How are you a different actress than if you'd been born in California or New York?

Growing up in a normal atmosphere and going to public schools in a life that seems, in comparison, to be 'humble' beginnings is invaluable. I don't understand how a girl who's grown up in California can even play your average Joe. I wouldn't just be a different actress if I'd grown up in New York or California—I'd be a different person.

What does it take to make you feel you've really returned to Maine during a visit?

I'd have to watch a football game with my dad. Patriots, obviously. I know this is not very Maine-like, but my dad and I have to get the spicy scallop roll at Yosaku. I also love Foley's Bakery and

Street & Company.

What's your favorite film performance by a Maine actor?

Bob Marley in *Boondock Saints* is fantastic.

How often do you come to Maine?

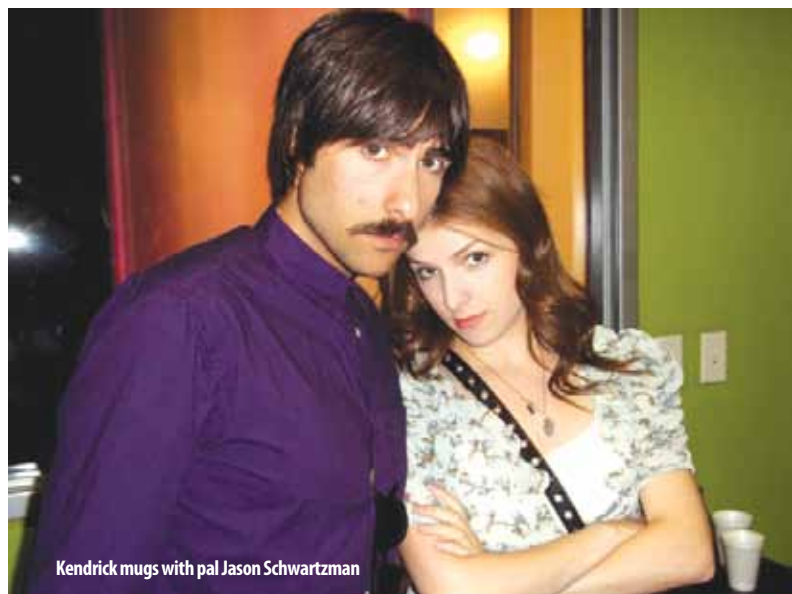
I usually just come for Christmas, but then somebody gets married or graduates, so it ends up to be twice a year.

If your life were a movie here in Portland, where would you have to go when you had to be alone to think things through, the way Spiderman goes up into his tower?

I go to the woods on Leland Street above the Deering High football field to hear myself think, or Fort Williams.

We celebrated you as one of the "Ten Most Intriguing People in Maine" when you were 13. Did your fellow students razz you about that?

I'm sure they didn't mean anything by it. When you're in middle school, any attention feels like negative attention. I definitely felt different when I came back [from her Tony-nominated and Drama Desk Award-win-



Kendrick mugs with pal Jason Schwartzman

ning role in *High Society* on Broadway] as a teenager. They say you can never go home again, but it's strange. On one side, you feel like you're the person you were. The atmosphere feels the same, so why shouldn't you feel the same? Then I have to remind myself that I've been taking care of myself since I was 17 and you have to move on. Uh-oh! My mom just gave me a look. ■

➤ For more, visit portlandmonthly.com/portmag/2014/02/indie-anna-extras



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