

Boston's Rising Stars by Robert Furlong

PAUL GUILFOYLE

"I like the idea that I'm in a business where there are no rules," Guilfoyle says after citing an overwhelming list of films due out or just completed: *Striptease* with Demi Moore ("I keep everybody corrupted"); Sidney Lumet's *Night Falls in Manhattan*; the French drama *A Couch in New York* with William Hurt and Juliette Binoche ("I play Hurt's buddy"); Al Pacino's documentary *Looking for Richard* (murderer); Michael Apter's *Extreme Measures* with Gene Hackman and Hugh Grant; *Celtic Pride* (cop) . . . the list goes on: TV, stage, film. "I may be the only guy from South Boston who doesn't have a tattoo yet", he jests from his NY home, adding how he attended Boston College High School and, in 1970, returned from Lehigh U. to start the Arts in Education Project which gave Southie school children theater arts and writing outlets to help them during the desegregation process. Despite his schedule, he returns often to his Southie neighborhood and tries to never miss a summer on Cape Cod.

ALICIA WITT

Hard work, and nothing but, has gotten this 20 year old Worcester native where she is. Since her debut in David Lynch's *Dune* at age seven, she has acted without formal training. She currently stars as Cybil Shephard's daughter in CBS' *Cybil*, played Madonna's lover in *Four Rooms*, appeared as Gertrude the clarinetist in Mr. Holland's *Opus* and played a disturbed child-murderer in the Sundance-awarded film *Fun*. "It's about two young girls who kill an elderly woman for the fun of it," she says from the *Cybil* set in L.A. "*Fun* was the most exhilarating experience in acting I've ever had." Taught at home by her parents, she learned to do things for herself. When you see her in *Cybil* playing the piano, it's not a dub ("I actually played at the Beverly Wilshire to support myself when I moved permanently to L.A."). Likewise the clarinet playing in Mr. Hollan's *Opus* ("I studied it for a month before I did the movie.") But what is Witt's idea of fun? "I love bowling!"

ELIZA DUSHKU

"It was such a shocker," Dushku recalls of her first trip to Hollywood as a ten year old. "I thought it was going to be my one and only trip out there." Little did this fifteen year old actress from Watertown realize that she would become one of Hollywood's coveted screen daughters. She played Schwarzenegger's daughter in *True Lies*, DeNiro's daughter in *This Boy's Life*, and Paul Reiser's daughter in Fox's *Bye Bye Love*. "I learned a lot by watching them handle themselves," referring to actresses Jamie Lee Curtis and Ellen Barkin whom she has worked with closely. This spring she will be appearing in the film *Race the Sun* which was shot in Australia and stars Halle Berry and Jim Belushi. "I play Cindy, the bad girl/smoker who gets kicked off the team for drinking and fooling around with guys," the Watertown High student laughs. But despite all the traveling and glamour, there's one thing this certified stunt actress isn't thrilled about when she's away from Boston: "I miss the snow!"

JOE ROGAN

"Stand-up comedy is the most difficult and most rewarding art form," Joe Rogan says from the Newsradio set in Hollywood. "There's a long-standing tradition of excellence in comedy in Boston. It's the best town to start in." The 28 year old Newton native has been with the Newsradio program since the start as the "wise-cracking electrician guy, Joe. He's always doing weird technological shit." The Newton South and UMASS/Boston attendee started off with stand-up until he landed on Fox's short-lived Hardball. Rogan tried out for Newsradio shortly thereafter and signed a contract for the show's duration, but continues to do comedy 3 to 4 times a week. He enjoys Hollywood but finds there are things in Boston that you just can't get on the West coast: "I appreciate the honesty that Bostonians have - when they don't like you, they tell you to go fuck yourself. It's refreshing."

CONNIE PERRY

"I'm his love interest," Perry says of actor Dan Ackroyd. She's referring, of course, to the part she plays opposite him in the film Celtic Pride (due out in March) about two obsessed Celtic fans who go to extreme lengths to prove their loyalty. This Melrose native, who attended Melrose High and the Mass College of Art, is known mainly for her work in stand up comedy as well as commercials and theater. Celtic Pride, in which she plays Susie the hot dog vendor, is her first feature film. "I had a great time," she says from her home in Somerville, adding that it was a nice break from the comedy circuit and from the occasional temp work she does to survive. She's confident in her performance but harbors only one small fear: "I just hope it doesn't end up in the video stores by June."

CHRISTINE ROMEO

"This is where it happens," Christine Romeo says of the TV industry while taking a break from shooting Caroline in the City in which she will play a bridesmaid in an upcoming show. "TV is a great way to get yourself on the map out here. The competition for television right now is insane." But it's a shared insanity: Romeo's husband, Eric Lutes, is also a TV actor (he plays Del on Caroline in the City). Romeo grew up in Cambridge and only recently moved with Lutes to L.A. after tiring of the N.Y. to Boston commute. She has been on Ellen, Sisters (ex-wife of Dr. Sorenson), movies of the week (The Barefoot Executive, The Rockford Files) and on Lifetime's WGBH produced The World According To Us - an all-female sketch comedy show in which Romeo wrote her own material. "It's a lifelong commitment," she says, adding how she has been working on her TV script-writing. She admits that L.A. has a lot to offer, but she can't seem to find a D'Angelo's cheese-steak sub anywhere.

ANNETTE MILLER

"I'm not dead!" Anette Miller says gleefully, referring to the Bettina character she has played on As the World Turns for the last eight months. "If you're not killed off, you might be brought back." It's just the latest venue for this veteran actress. She has worked internationally with the Chekhov Theater and Film Co., on Broadway, and just completed an intensive Shakespearian workshop with Shakespeare & Co. Recent film performances include The Next Karate Kid (shop owner) and The Imported Bridegroom (Tamara Birnbaum). When she's not acting, she's teaching with Angela Peri at Boston Casting or at Curry College. A New Yorker by birth, she is a graduate of the High School of Performing Arts (of Fame fame) and was a Brandeis Theater Arts Scholarship recipient. "My life is here," she says, adding stories about raising two children with her Harvard professor husband in W. Newton. Look for Miller in an upcoming production of The Sisters Rosenweig.

LENNY CLARKE

After losing two political elections - one for mayor of Cambridge, one for City Council of Cambridge - Lenny Clarke made the logical career move: he went into comedy. The Boston-bred poli-sci major from UMASS turned his scathing social satire into an art form and was soon appearing on VH-1, MTV, HBO and finally on his own self-titled show Lenny. But he's probably best known for his role as Hampton on The John Larroquette Show on NBC. Clarke now lives in L.A. where he's been working most recently on the films Two if by Sea with Sandra Bullock and Denis Leary and on Meet Wally Sparks with Rodney Dangerfield.

MARCIA CROSS

Known best for her role as the conniving and curvaceous Kimberly on Melrose Place, Marcia Cross will also be appearing in the ABC movie Mother's Day due out this spring. She will star opposite James Marshall and play a mother who, despite advice of friends and doctors, decides to give birth to her baby at great personal risk. The Marlboro native who graduated Marlboro High before going to New York's Julliard School made her feature film debut opposite James Spader and Rob Lowe in the thriller Bad Influence. Her most recent films were the Sundance-screened independents Female Perversions and the short film Ripple. Aside from an impressive array of stage credits, her past TV credits include Cheers and One Life to Live.

PATTY ROSS

"Lenny Clarke brought me out here and it was a real life Cinderella story," Patty Ross says from her L.A. home, explaining how she brought her Boston training in comedy to the west coast. "The saying goes: comics say funny things, comedians say things funny. I'm a comedian which is what takes me over to acting because I have a defined personality." Although CBS just cancelled Bless This House in which Ross played Andrew Dice Clay's boss, she is considering another CBS project as well as reading scripts for two HBO movies. This W. Roxbury/Weymouth/Dedham native performs regularly at The Improv, The Comedy Store and The Laugh Factory in L.A. but misses the improper Bostonians. "Bostonians are so myopic," she laughs. "Their attitude is: we have the Kennedy's and we don't give a shit about them, why should we care about you and you're stupid TV shows?" The former parochial school girl and self-described "Irish raconteur" comes home four times a year to visit.

SANDRA SHIPLEY

"I've been trying for the last few years, which a lot of Boston actors have done, to widen my horizons by working in New York while keeping a steady income," Sandra Shipley explains from her Manhattan apartment. "It becomes very frenetic." The British actress has been making a go of the Broadway stage and silver screen since she came to Boston in the early 1970s with her husband. This graduate of London University has worked in a variety of TV shows including All My Children as Irene, The Duchess of Stratford. She also worked on the locally filmed movie Paul and Nancy by Boston director Austin De Besche. She looks forward to her return trips to Boston ("It's so clean and manageable!"), but having started a Broadway understudy and preparing for a world premiere of a Susan Lori Parks' play, it may be some time before she gets back.

CASEY AFFLECK

"You can't ask for much better than that," says Casey Affleck about working with Gus Van Sant on *To Die For*. "It was great." The 20 year old Cambridge Ringe & Latin grad who grew up in Central Square says he auditioned for the part after a friend recommended that van Sant meet him before casting the part. "It was about this lady that seduces one of her students into killing her husband. I was the friend of the kid who went along with the murder." Affleck's acting start was actually a local WGBH production, *Lemon Sky*, directed by Jan Eggleston and starred Kevin Bacon. Having tooled around Canada and Australia, he makes no mistakes about what he considers home: "I miss everything about Boston. I love it. I want to move back there some day. It's home. It feels right." But for now, when he's not auditioning, Affleck continues to pursue a college degree in Washington D.C.

JACKIE FLYNN

"I play a bad guy with this mobster character. My name in the film is Dog Boy," Flynn explains from his home in Los Angeles. *Kingpin*, which opens this June with Woody Harrelson and Bill Murray, is this Arlington native's screen debut. But comedy is Flynn's forte. "I've been in comedy nine years this February, actually," he says, talking about his work for Star Search, Evening at the Improv, the Cam Neely Foundation and, in 1994, winning the San Francisco International Comedy competition. Interrupting his reading of Ayn Rand's *The Fountainhead*, he talks of his favorite authors (Dostoevski to Stephen King) and goes on to cite what it is he misses most about Boston: "Boston has a lot more culture and history." The Arlington High graduate says that he looks forward to the four months of the year he comes back to Boston to indulge in friends and family and get off of L.A. time.

JAMIE WALTERS

Spending most of his time at the All Ages shows in clubs while growing up in Boston, it's only natural that Walters play the "musically inclined" character on *Beverly Hills 90210*. Walters was discovered by an agent while waiting tables and cast in a Levis 501 Blues TV ad. Soon after, he was playing a 50's rock and roller in the film *Shout* opposite John Travolta and then came across his part in the short-lived *The Heights* in which he not only acted, but also played the theme song "How Do You Talk to an Angel?" He is currently on tour in Europe promoting his first album, 'Jamie Walters,' and will return to 90210 by the end of this season.

DAVID CHOKACHI

As kids, Chokachi and his brother often reenacted the big action sequences from their favorite show, *Miami Vice*. Little did he know that he was in training: Chokachi now plays Cody Madison on the hit series *Baywatch*. A Cape Codder, "Chokes" started out as a political science major at Bates College and served a year as a legislative aide for Massachusetts congressman Gerry Studds. He decided to sign on with an acting agent in Boston and began devoting his time strictly to modeling and acting. Within a short amount of time after moving to L.A., this world-traveler and athlete was appearing in films such as *Blown Away* and *With Honors* in addition to various stage performances.

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