

LOS ANGELES FILM



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STAR MY WAY

TEXT ROBERTO CROCI
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He has a role in one of the most important productions of the season, a website that finances creative ideas and plays the guitar heavenly. But only now he is finally one step away from his dream: to jump behind the film camera.

STAR MYWAY

AFTER CHATTING TO HIM AND MADE A LIST OF ALL HIS PAST, FUTURE AND PRESENT PROJECTS, HIS WORDS HAVE CONFIRMED, SADLY, WHAT I'VE KNOWN FOR AGES. TO BE SUCCESSFUL YOU DON'T JUST NEED TO BE A TALENTED AND BE DEVOTED TO SACRIFICE, BUT YOU ALSO NEED TO BE A workaholic and learn a golden rule: if you don't do it for yourself, no one will do it for you. There are few actors that in 2012 have a long list of Big Movies so artistically complicated and marked with a blockbuster sign like Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Joe to his friends: four films about to be released, including the final episode of the Batman saga by Christopher Nolan; *Looper*, a sci-fi film with Bruce Willis and Emily Blunt, where he is the producer, and *Lincoln*, Gargantua autobiography of the 16th president of the United States of America, directed by Steven Spielberg. Despite his age – he's just turned 31 – he is considered one of the “brainy bunch”, integral part of the new Hollywood intelligenzia, a list that include, amongst others, James Franco, Tom Hardy, Jesse Eisenberg and Michael Fassbender. If his DNA was duplicable, it would be worth investing in it, instead of the new shares of Facebook. Cultured, sophisticated, but above all acute and quick minded, qualities that have taken him to explore core subjects of the cultural human frame, such as the Buddhist philosophy, and the tradition of the Russian red clowns. Amongst his mentors, Rimbaud, Camus, Fellini and J. D. Salinger, even though his passion for music – he divinely plays the guitar – is associated to the dark mood of the The Pixies and Nina Simone.

He's spent month preparing for *Don Jon's Addiction*, his first debut as a film director (where he will direct Scarlett Johansson & Julianne Moore), which has forced him to turn down a part in the new *Django Unchained* by Quentin Tarantino. The rest of his spare time is dedicated to his multimedia website, hitRECORD.org, and shares the profit with the authors at 50%. Half!

His career kicked in almost 25 years ago, with loads of TV work, then he exploded as an actor in *3rd Rock From The Sun*, next to John Lithgow, and wins the Young Artist Award as best actor for the film by Robert Redford, *A River Runs Through It*.

Superbusy, super focused, and super friendly, we have managed to steal a conversation thanks to the fact that we never give up, and thanks to the help given by his friend Scarlett, who's looking forward to be directed by him. Questions & answers in front of the irreplaceable, obligatory, inevitable organic double cappuccino with 2% skimmed milk, with which he always kicks off his day (costing \$6.78).



WHAT WAS JOE LIKE AS A CHILD?

“Curious. I was born in a family alien to the Hollywood world, my parents are activists, they met while working for the famous radio KPFK. In Sherman Oaks, in LA, we lived near a casting agency, therefore when I was 6 I started attending auditions, for fun. To be honest, I always wanted to be a film director, I decided to become an actor to learn from the directors that I find most stimulating, like Nolan, Spielberg and Marc Webb, a genius. It is insane the way we treat actors in this country: only 100 years ago actors were nomads, avoided by all, and theatres were regarded with less importance than brothels”.

HOW DID YOUR PRODUCTION COMPANY HITRECORD COME ABOUT?

“Back in 2005, I was working at various projects, music/videos, that I wanted to share interacting with the public, and to have an open dialogue with various multimedia artists. YouTube hadn’t been invented yet, therefore I came up with the website hitRECORD.org to post my work and get feedback. The most interesting work of an artist is to inspire someone to be creative, my goal is to connect the best artists of various fields and make them collaborate on various projects. Being an actor, to me means influencing people around me. I wish every single person could make use of their spare time to follow their dreams, to do what they believe in”.

YOUR BROTHER WAS ONE OF THE FOUNDING MEMBERS...

“Yes, we’ve always worked together. It’s been two years since his passing. Burning Dan – the name comes from his extreme passion for the festival Burning Man – was the physical personification of free thinking. He was always an optimist who encouraged me to believe in myself. I miss you big brother. Lov u 4 ever”.



THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN INDEPENDENT FILMS AND THE ONES PRODUCED BY STUDIOS?

“I’ve always been independent! At 18, I stopped being an actor to study a French course at the Columbia University, because I rightly felt I wanted to read the damned poets in their original language. Many of the blockbusters we have seen in the past have made money because up until a decade ago there wasn’t much of a choice. Now Internet gives us the possibility of posting our work online and potentially become a worldwide sensation in just a few days. I hope that those who make films just to make money will end up having more problems. This is why I appreciate the work of Gregg Araki, the first film director who believed in me even after many years of TV. With 3rd Rock From The Sun they stereotyped me as one of the new kings



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of comedy, I found it hard to convince anyone to give me serious parts. Yet when I put myself to it, I can do anything”.

ENVIRONMENTALIST, DEMOCRATIC, MAN OF THE FUTURE WITH A PASSION FOR MARIJUANA...

“When I was at college I used to smoke a lot. Then I set some rules and I decided to turn it into a ritual that would happen once a month. When it got nearer to the date, my friends would call me and ask me what where my plans for the weekend. When smoking becomes a pleasure and not an addiction it can help the creativity process. I’ve always been a pothead, now I rarely smoke, but I try and support the Californian legalisation movement, I try and attend all weed-fests. An event to celebrate without the anxiety of addiction: it is only through control and freedom of thinking that we can obtain benefits. As Rimbaud used to say: moral is brain’s weakness”. ●

