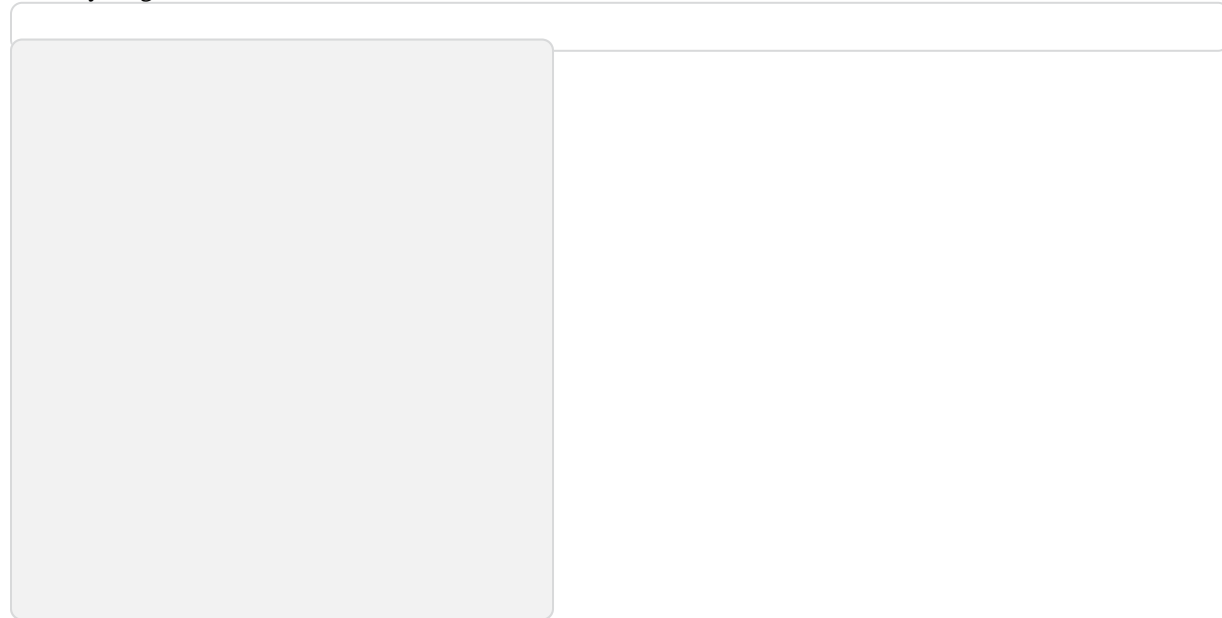


Jack Noseworthy on "Poster Boy"

by Robert Nesti

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In the 1990s boyishly good-looking **Jack Noseworthy** was something of the poster boy of Gen-X angst. In film-after-film, he played slacker rockers and angry young men. He has always, though, shown range; and now in his 30s is expanding his repertoire as a character actor. Just this month along he can be seen (if you're lucky enough to get entry) in the New York Shakespeare Festival production of *Mother Courage in Central Park* in an ensemble headed by Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline. Or if you buy or rent the recently released Mo'nique comedy *Phat Girlz* on DVD, you'll see him play a department store manager you love to hate. Or if you go to the movies this weekend to see the new independent film **Poster Boy**, you'll see this Lynn native and Boston Conservatory grad in a completely different role - that of the AIDS activist who gets involved with the closeted son of a conservative U.S. senator.

Few actors can go from playing opposite Mo'nique in a slick Hollywood comedy to playing Brecht with Meryl Streep, but Noseworthy can convincingly blend into the diverse characters he plays. Take Jack, the angry gay activist he plays in *Poster Boy*. Jack is unlucky in love, never able to move from a one-night stand to a second date (never mind a relationship.) He lives with his best friend Izzie, an embittered HIV+ woman suffering from depression after the death of her boyfriend. Through a series of events, the pair end up at a college where conservative North Carolina senator Jack Cray (Michael Lerner) expects to be endorsed by his closeted son Henry Cray (Matt Newton;) that is until Jack meets him and the pair have sex in the college gym. What happens next is something that could be taken from the scroll on Fox News, and brings this politically charged drama to a headline-grabbing conclusion.

The film went through many changes over the years. Initially scheduled to be a big-budgeted film directed by the late Herbert Ross and featuring Billy Crudup. That was shelved upon Ross's death, and the project was scaled down for director Douglas Kieve (*Unzipped*); but he left early

in the shoot, which led to film editor Zak Tucker to take over in his freshman effort. That was two years ago. Since then the film has been a favorite on the film festival scene, winning the Best Script at LA's Outfest, and strong buzz at the Tribeca Film Festival, which has been gratifying for Noseworthy, whom EDGE spoke with recently prior to a *Mother Courage* rehearsal.

"Sometimes you make an independent movie and it doesn't see the light of day," he said. "When you invest your time in something, you want people to see it; so it's nice that people have responded to the movie as positively as they have."

While it seems that the film went through numerous changes in personnel and intent (a framing device of an interview with Henry was added during filming,) Noseworthy found the experience, and the final product, much to his liking. "I was very happy with the outcome of the movie. I think, most of all, the performances are really good. I think Karen Allen is really great in this movie. (Allen plays the conservative senator's world-weary wife.) You're always happy when you make an independent movie that gets picked up. It won Best Screenplay at Outfest in LA a couple of years ago, and has been getting positive buzz. I'm so happy it's coming out to theaters." (The film opens in New York at the Quad Cinemas this week and in Cambridge at the Kendall Square Cinemas on August 25.)

"It really met my expectations," he continued. "But I'm usually never surprised by a movie in a negative way. It's usually what I think it will be. I try to be always a realistic-optimist when I get involved in a project. I'm always happy when I really like the movie - that's always a good thing, and there really aren't any movies I've made that I haven't liked. What's interesting is that I do them for specific reasons that aren't obvious to anyone else; and when I see them, I often remember the situation that was happening around the scene that's being filmed, or what I was doing that day, or what was going on that's not on camera."

The most intimate scene in the film has Noseworthy having sex with co-star Matt Newton in a gym bathed in stylized blue light, a moment that he didn't find difficult at all to shoot. "We got along really well together. Matt's great - a really nice guy. I was surprised to find out is that he's really young, but we've become acquaintances since then, and hang out when we can."

For Noseworthy the film was the 12th he made in little more than a decade, which have ranged from the dark comedies *Idle Hands* and John Waters' *Cecil B. Demented* to the Matthew McConaughey-helmed undersea war film *U-571*. On television he played Jason Lobdel in the series *Judging Amy*, and has been featured in multiple episodes of *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* and *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*; and on the stage he was seen in musical version of *Sweet Smell of Success* and the revue *Jerome Robbins' Broadway* (where he was the only actor to fly as Peter Pan;) but was most memorable for him was making his Broadway debut as the last actor cast (as Mark) in the initial run of *A Chorus Line*, which he was in when it closed its record-breaking run in 1990.

"That experience was really exciting. What I really remember is the week before we closed we did an Actor's Fund performance. It's a Sunday or Monday night performance so that the other actors in all the other shows can come see it. To this day, aside from my opening night on Broadway, that was the most thrilling performance I've ever done in my life."

More recently he was cast in the Elton John musical *Lestat*, but by the time the musical opened in San Francisco for its pre-Broadway run, his role - Armand - was being substantially changed, and he didn't see himself as a good fit for the character. Despite stories on the Internet, his transition out of the show went smoothly. "Leaving the show wasn't unpleasant at all. It just wasn't a project I wanted to be involved in anymore. The way they were taking the character was just something that I wasn't interested in." It may have been a good career move: *Lestat* went on to becoming one of the costliest flops in Broadway history, while Noseworthy went on to work on a *C.S.I.* episode.

Noseworthy, who currently lives in New York, enjoys working in both films and on stage. "I'm equally happy in both mediums. I'm doing *Mother Courage* right now in Central Park with Meryl Streep and Kevin Kline. And, you know, you love the medium you're working in when you're working in. But then we're you're working in a play you're dying to work in a movie; and when you're working in a movie, you're dying to work in a play. I like them both. They both have positive qualities that I like. On stage you have that immediate response from the audience. And the rehearsal process is always thrilling because you have all these artists in the room trying to achieve the same artistic goal, and you really feel that you're part of it. In a movie, you feel more like you're creating your world and you're fitting it in to another world that all these hundreds of other people are working on. But the great thing about a movie is so far reaching - you reach more people than the theater."

His role in *Phat Girlz*, in which he played a nasty department store executive bent on making life for Mo'nique miserable, came about almost by accident. "It was a very different process. They called it a pick-up. We did in on the weekends in Palm Springs. I had done another movie for that particular casting director, and they asked to come back; so it's always nice to get an offer from one of your friends. It was fun. I had a really good time working on that movie. I had a great time with Mo'nique. She's very much the same person you see on TV and in her shows.

She's fun and funny, and serious about her work. And I really liked the movie. I kind-of expected to do better than it did. It certainly made its money back. It was one of those little engine's that could-kind-of movie. It kept going and going. It was a very sweet movie."

Noseworthy, who grew up in Lynn, has strong ties with the Boston Conservatory of Music, where he graduated; so much so that he often comes back and speaks to classes about being a working actor; and directed a production of musical *The Wild Party* at the school two years ago. "I did the Andrew Lippa version. I really enjoyed that a great deal working with the students, and the designers. It gave me a wonderful perspective on everything that's going on. You always know what's happening when you do a show, but to be the one with the iron fist who's driving everything forward was a very enriching experience. That's where I went to school, and I maintain my ties with them. I go back every couple of years to talk about being a working actor. I don't think I would be able to do what I do without the proper education, and I feel indebted to the school for training me like they did. So I like to give back in some way."

Asked about his social life, Noseworthy laughed. "Well, I work a lot. But I do find time to go to dinner with my friends, and go to the theater a lot. When I was living in Los Angeles, I participated in a triathlon, so I train every day and I go the gym really enjoy working out. I swim. I run. I hang out with my friends and family. But that's it. Not that exciting."

As for work, he continues with *Mother Courage* until it closes early next month; then he goes into final rehearsals for his solo show that goes up on September 19 and 20 at the Metropolitan Room in Manhattan. "It's called *You Don't Know Jack*, like the computer game. I'm working on it right now with Gary Griffin, who directed *The Color Purple* on Broadway, and my musical director. We're in the process of figuring out what it's going to be, and I'm not really sure yet. I have some ideas, but I feel that there is no form per se, I'm looking at ideas to see how they develop. I hate to call it a cabaret, because I don't think that fits the idea of what I'm trying to do; but if I have to categorize things, that's what it is."

Poster Boy opens on August 18 at the Quad Cinemas in New York, and on August 25 at the Kendall Cinemas in Cambridge. For more information, visit the [Poster Boy website](#).

Jack Noseworthy will appear at the Metropolitan Club in *You Don't Know Jack* on September 19 and 20. For more information visit the [Metropolitan Club website](#).