



THE LEADING MEN: Jack Be Nimble <http://www.playbill.com/news/article/101857-THE-LEADING-MEN-Jack-Be-Nimble>

By *Wayman Wong*
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Jack Noseworthy
Photo by Ben Strothmann

It's "September Morn," and this month marks "a brand new day" for **Jack Noseworthy** (*Mother Courage*), **Joe Mandragona** (*All Shook Up*) and **Telly Leung** (*Godspell*).

FROM 'COURAGE' TO CABARET

Jack Noseworthy is truly a Jack of all trades wherever he performs. On Broadway the handsome tenor crooned tunes in *Sweet Smell of Success*, and he was the only guy to fly as Peter Pan in *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*. On screen he and Ethan Hawke played plane-crash survivors who get a taste of cannibalism in "Alive." (Noseworthy notes, "We were really eating prosciutto and turkey jerky.") And he has been in films with Matthew McConaughey ("U-571"), Kurt Russell ("Breakdown") and Pamela Anderson ("Barb Wire"). On TV he starred in the MTV series "Dead at 21" and the Bon Jovi video "Always," and has appeared as a stalker ("Judging Amy"), a suspected rapist ("C.S.I.") and a child molester ("Law & Order SVU").

This 5-foot-10 charmer from Lynn, MA, just wrapped up his run in Bertolt Brecht's *Mother Courage* with Meryl Streep. Next, Noseworthy, 41, will make his nightclub debut with "You Don't Know Jack!," directed by Gary Griffin (*The Color Purple*), Sept. 19 at 10 PM and Sept. 20 at 7 PM at the Metropolitan Room. He also can be seen on-screen as a sweet guy who falls in love with a senator's gay son in "Poster Boy," an award-winning indie now playing around the country.

Matt Newton, his hunky co-star in "Poster Boy," says, "We had a lot of chemistry, and we got along great. This was my first film, and Jack has done many big movies, so he gave me a lot of wisdom about Hollywood and how things work." Kelli O'Hara, his lovely leading lady in *Sweet Smell of Success*, raves: "Jack is so special because there is just no one like him. He's intense. He can play the most lovable baby boy in the world and then he turn around and play a twisted murderer . . . scary! He has many levels, and I love them all. Plus, he has beautiful lips and they're fun to kiss!"

Question: Congrats! How was it working on *Mother Courage*?

Jack Noseworthy: Spectacular. Meryl played this matron of war who profits by selling wares out of her wagon to soldiers. And I had this scene where my mother and I are trying to sell her a mattress. Just then, the bells ring out, and peace breaks out, so everything changes. Now we want keep our stuff. It's one of George Wolfe's favorite scenes. My other big scene with Meryl is where I become one of the soldiers who kills Mother Courage's daughter. George's focus was: How do you go from a young man with promise to becoming a murderer? I love George. He's so full of life.



Q: And what about acting with Meryl Streep?

Noseworthy: Sometimes, I couldn't believe I was on the same stage with arguably our greatest actress, maybe ever. I like when Meryl's funny, and I love her in "Death Becomes Her." But when she stepped out of Mother Courage's wagon, she was so committed and living in that character. Mother Courage is not very likeable, but Meryl made her funny and rich and physical. The second time she did "The Song of the Great Capitulation" onstage, she was rolling around in the mud. Are you kidding? She's not afraid to try anything. I'd love to see her play Mrs. Lovett [in *Sweeney Todd*]. She's an amazing woman, not just in her talent but in her humanity.

Q: And now you're doing cabaret. How'd that happen?

Noseworthy: Jayson Raitt from the Pasadena Playhouse was producing an evening of Broadway stars that would like to do a cabaret act and said he'd love it if I did one. I said, "Absolutely not!" But I talked to [my director] Gary, and we decided it would give me the opportunity to be creative and keep my voice in shape. Michael Lavine's my musical director. I know I'll sing "I Cannot Hear the City" from *Sweet Smell*, and I really love "There's a Fine, Fine Line" from *Avenue Q*. And I'll talk a little about myself. I often play bad guys, like rapists and murderers, so this was also a chance for me to show people I'm not gonna rape or kill them. [Laughs.]

Q: What was it like working on *Sweet Smell*?

Noseworthy: I loved it. It was so smart and crafty. I was working with Marvin Hamlisch, John Guare, Nick Hytner and Craig Carnelia. And they completely redid the last part of the show from Chicago to New York. To watch them make that change as fast as they did, and as brilliantly as they did, was a lesson in how to make a musical. What I saw was a phenomenal piece of theatre. I thought it was gonna be a smash. I still think it's Marvin's best score, and "I Cannot Hear the City" is a jazz classic.

Q: You and Kelli O'Hara had a sexy scene in bed, and she says, "I used to fall asleep on Jack's chest while we waited [to go on], and he'd wake me up."

Noseworthy: [Laughs.] I thought it was me who fell asleep. Kelli's just a beautiful, luminescent girl. While Brian [d'Arcy James] was singing "At the Fountain," we'd wait in bed. It worked for the scene because we were supposed to be waking up, so I never really felt guilty. When I was Mungojerrie in *Cats*, I used to fall asleep on the tire during "Memory." I had danced my butt off, so I was exhausted.

Q: Speaking of dancing, you were in *Jerome Robbins' Broadway*, and Robbins had a reputation as a tough taskmaster. Was he?

Noseworthy: Yeah. We'd do showings for his friends at 890 Broadway. One day, his friends were Mikhail Baryshnikov, Leonard Bernstein, Mary Martin and Claudette Colbert. I was doing "Cool" [from *West Side Story*] and I heard, "YOU! YOU!" Robbins yelled, "How much money do you make?" I said,

"Equity minimum?" He said, "You're not earning your paycheck. Work harder!" But he was also this passionate and incredibly gifted man who could be just as touching. He had a lot of demons, and I think some of his genius was his struggle with being Jewish and being gay. But he loved his dancers, and look at all the great work he created.

Q: In your new film, "Poster Boy," you play Anthony, a gay activist who's in love with Henry, the closeted son of a Republican senator.

Noseworthy: I'm proud of the movie. It won the award for Best Screenplay at Outfest. In the film some gay activists want me to "out" Henry at a press conference, but my character falls for him and realizes it would be inappropriate. But Henry grabs me and kisses me on-camera and outs himself, so it's a nice twist because Henry takes control of his own life. Personally, I think outing is a terrible thing. That should be someone's own decision. But when people *want* to come out, that's perfectly fine. I like what Lance Bass says: He's *also* gay, which is savvy and the truth.

Q: Looking back, you've really worked with a lot of stars.

Noseworthy: I'm telling you: Everyone who works with me becomes a star: Kelli O'Hara, Brian d'Arcy James, Carla Gugino, Keri Russell, Angelina Jolie, Reese Witherspoon, Matt McConaughey. What the hell is going on? [Laughs.] In my career I've gotten to sing in some things and danced in others. I've made movies, done some theatre and TV. There's been so much variety, and that makes me happy.