

Eddie Redmayne

by Sylvia Karcz
photography by Richard Grassie

FOR A YOUNG ENGLISH ACTOR WITH THE BEST START IN LIFE, EDDIE REDMAYNE'S SUCCESSFUL CAREER TO DATE IS A CREDIT TO HIS PRAGMATISM AND SENSE OF REALITY. NOT A BAD ACHIEVEMENT FOR AN OLD ETONIAN SCHOOLMATE OF PRINCE ANDREW.

Eddie Redmayne's young career is truly on the cusp, so it seems appropriate that at 26 he's finally ready to move out of his family home and into his own place—a loft in the culturally progressive Bushwick neighborhood of London. True, he may not be a household name just yet but take a look at this actor's short yet undeniably impressive resume—or, if you prefer, at *Blue Is the Warmest Color*. And such potential makes it that his big-screen fortune is about to change very soon. Funny thing is, he probably has no idea.

And there is no question that whatever is on Redmayne's upcoming agenda, it is bound to continue catapulting him to new levels. As someone who is seemingly fearless when it comes to playing slightly deranged oddballs and an expert horse rider, Tudor-esque Elizabethan ("There cannot a moment of my life you're just like, 'Okay, enough.'"), this Brit has already created a buzz with his one-of-a-kind character portrayals. He is well on the way to cementing himself as a true starlet amongst a new generation of talented young actors.

Redmayne readily admits that he is a nonconformist, both as an artistically inclined individual from a family made up of business and financial professionals and as an old-school Cambridge man (yes, that Eton College with Prince William who later graduated Cambridge University with a degree in Art History). It makes sense that Redmayne has a knack for the aesthetically different and less-expected character choices come as no surprise. In the theater, he gained critical acclaim for roles he voiced on *Wicked* and *Les Misérables*. A recent, chilling depiction of a gay New Yorker whose father has an affair with a gay Edward Allen's award-winning play, *The God of Us vs. Us*? And after an unusually quick jump to the big screen ("I was just a fish out of water, I had no idea what was going on"), Redmayne was already working with some of today's greatest directors and acting talents. Recently he was cast as an assassin in *Extraction*, *The Golden Age* with Cate Blanchett, as the son of Matt Damon's CIA agent in *Roberts De Niro's The Good Shepherd* (with Angelina Jolie), and as an emotionally and sexually confused young man who is seduced by his neighbor in the much-lauded-about film *Savage Grace* (with Jennifer Moore). So what could be in his future? How does a mercurial who gets asthma attacks when he talks to women in *Powder Blue*, the plastic? Or an adopted Native American heading toward a tumultuous, blossomed New Orleans with a group of students in *The House on Sand Street*?

"It's much more fun to be able to mess with these completely different human beings," Redmayne says about the characters he plays. "The variation is [thrilling] and it's a way to keep your life colorful. And it's always extraordinary because people are so vocal about their careers and they'll either give you high praise or virtually sort of spit in your face. Which I love, because it's rare that you do a project that really gets a reaction."

And although he's been cast for his skills of roles that could have easily hurled him to the kind of big-screen, box-office success that many actors spend years—or even decades—trying to obtain, Redmayne has no desire to be your typical actor.

"They wanted me to audition for, I shit you not, a role called 'The Harvard Hottie.' And I read it and this guy is sup-

posed to be incredibly good-looking, sporty, strong... I was like, 'guys, seriously. Probably not...' [On the main protagonist running around prehistoric Asia in a loincloth. And I'm like, 'True white, pasty, English boy. Can you imagine anything more revolting than watching me run around semi-naked? But you never know.'

As for what it's like being thrust into a constant cycle of travel and spending time in the U.S. away from home, Redmayne seems grateful to have the opportunity to experience it in the first place.

"If you're lucky enough to find yourself in these places and to be able to go and see things, it's great," he says. "You get an instant insight into the reality of these towns and cities and you're not just being a tourist."

From fleeing post-Katrina New Orleans for the upcoming *The Yellow Handkerchief* ("That, etc. I swear, it makes you think why every other city in the world doesn't take better. [The people] seem to have taken this tragedy and their strife from the other end. The drive and humor that comes from it is a special thing"), to visiting New York ("[It's] a thrill. My god, you guys are almost apathetic to how much is there. One of the luckiest things I've been doing is spending so much time in New York."), to having friends involved with the upcoming presidential race in America ("It's extraordinary for us [in the UK], because we get the news filtered through and half a day later. And I'm trying to see how this thing is swinging back and forth and how much of it now seems based on instinct, and it's amazing to see from across the pond. Some of my friends are out there campaigning for Hillary Clinton and they've traveled over from the UK, speaking passionately with a commitment and drive that is enough to encourage someone to go out and vote."). Redmayne is clearly embracing his newfound experiences as an opportunity to not only grow in front of the camera, but to learn from the people he's been surrounded with behind-the-scenes on set.

Could politics and social activism then, be in the agenda for Eddie Redmayne one day?

"[It] is massively admirable, and something I would like to do... [But] I feel at too low a point and with not enough confidence in my own ideas yet to express that," Redmayne admits. "I also slightly resent just instant association with things. What it then does is take something that you don't know a huge amount about, or something you may not be passionate about, and it just gives that issue press and publicity. It weakens your cause and your voice to speak peripherally about something that you do actually care about."

For a person that claims to be somewhat skittish when it comes to certain matters around him, Redmayne nonetheless exudes the sort of intelligence and inhibition that demonstrates a potential for greatness both on and off the screen in the upcoming years.

"It's a completely bizarre world, this one," he says. "It's a massive anomaly about luck and you hope that if you're lucky enough to be in [certain] situations that you can support that luck with talent."

But if that talent was to—hypothetically—be confined to either doing non-paying theater in London while working at a local pub/low-paying indie flicks with innovative directors in New York, or high-profile (and high-paying) blockbuster movies in L.A., just what, exactly, would he choose?

"I'd do the films in New York, and then I'd swim really quickly across the Atlantic and do a play, then I'd look at my bank balance, and if I have enough to pay rent, I'd fly first class to LAX to play *First Boy #2* in *American Pie: Return of the Apple Crumble*."

And with this kind of laid-back charm and genuine modesty (making a truly haunting camera presence, how can one not be intrigued to see what will come of this rising actor's career?

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