

1. According to your bio, you taught yourself to play the piano when you were a kid. What initially sparked your interest in music and why has it stayed a dominant force in your life?

I was blessed with a natural ear, so music came into my life very easily. I took piano lessons as a kid, maybe when I was around 9 or 10 years old, but I didn't enjoy it, and quit after about 6 months. But there was a piano in my parents' house, and when I was around 13 or 14 I started to mess around on it. The first song I taught myself was Fur Elise, by Beethoven. I only played because I loved it, I have always been a naturally expressive person. There has always been a part of me that wants to experience and express my own essence, and music is an avenue for me to do that. Over years, I developed my talent, and taught myself many skills, not only with the piano but with my voice, through singing, acting, and voice-overs, which I have been doing since I was about 12 years old. Now that I am finding my voice as a songwriter, I find that I can use this as a force for what I want to realize in the world, as a positive force for change, and as a way of exploring myself.

2. Where do you feel more comfortable or inspired to write your music, alone locked in the studio with the piano or do ideas come to you more freely when you are out and about in your travels jotting things down as you go?

So far, I write mostly on my own. I don't tend to spend a long time writing a song, initially I get a feeling that I want to express something, and I make sure that I get some paper and get to my piano as soon as possible to get it out. I can't write the music down (since I cannot yet read music,) so all my songs are just lyric sheets scrawled on blank loose leaf paper! My song writing method at the moment is very much from the Elton John school of song writing: I don't usually take more than an hour to write a song, though I am coming back to my songs and refining and redefining them more and more these days.

3. Which of your songs are you the most proud of? What's your favorite?

The songs I love the most are the ones that represent something larger than myself, but that are still honest and have a clean expression of myself in them. The ones I am most proud of so far and Love Will Make It Certain and The Beauty Of It All.

4. What was your "welcome to the music business" moment?

A rep from Sony Records in New York was at my first show I ever played my own songs live at, and a few days later, I got a call that they wanted to fly me and my band out to New York to play a showcase for some of the A&R reps at the label. I planned a trip to play the showcase, and 2 weeks before I was to leave, Sony NY merged with BMG, and the rep who was interested in me lost her job! So that was my first "up and down" moment in the business.

5. What specifically about New York inspired you to write "Heart of the City"?

Manhattan is the only place in the world I have ever stepped off the plane and felt "yes, this is for me." there is an energy in the city that just GOES, it's like a train, and you can just get on it, and it moves. It is the most dynamic city I've ever been to, and the people are GREAT! Culturally, it is so vibrant, and I love cities, and New York is the greatest city in the world that I have ever been to! It's as if it does have a heart, the city has a rhythm, a heartbeat that you can feel, and even at night, the pulse doesn't stop. I love New York, and I hope to live there one day soon!

6. If you could collaborate with one person as a musician or as an actor, behind the scenes or out front, who would chose and why?

Music: Stevie Wonder. I often say, when people ask me what kind of music I write, that I come from Elton John, and I'm going towards Stevie Wonder. To my ear, there is an expression of joy in every song of his. He seems to write his songs from a stand-point of love, rather than writing about and supporting some kind of suffering, as so much music these days seems to do. I find a true nobility in art in Stevie Wonder's music, and for that reason, I emulate to write as he does. Acting: Shakespeare. Does that count? He is the greatest english playwright, and his plays represent the beginning of modern english. His characters and themes explore more fully the human condition and the human struggle than any writer I have ever read. His plays are depthless, and are my favorite texts to play BY FAR!

Acting related:

7. What set off your wanting to become an actor/entertainer?

I'm not sure what exactly I was thinking when I first wanted to act,

because I was only 5 years old, but I am realizing more and more that it was simply the most natural thing for me to do. When I was in kindergarten, I approached the music teacher in my elementary school, and I asked HER to put me in the school play. It was Mary Poppins. I was cast as the littlest penguin, the one who flirts with Mary Poppins in the movie. When I came on stage, I pretty much just goofed around and waved at my Mum in the audience. I felt, in some ways, more comfortable up there than I did in LIFE! I have a lot of joy inside me, and I've always wanted to share it.

8. What was your favorite acting role, live or voice work, and why? Which one stood above all and why? Do you have a favorite line?

My experience playing Richard III was a pivotal role in my development as an actor, because it was the first time I really let go of my self control in a role, and realized that that is where the true sharing of self resides in the craft of acting. Also, my role in the film Eighteen was a great experience for me, because my grandfathers were involved with the War, and I was able to pay tribute to them through that role, as well as all the others who sacrificed themselves for our futures. But it was also great to realize that you have to work pretty much for free to do the kind of films you really want to see get made!

9. "What attracted you to the role of Grant in the film "Everyone"? Was it difficult to play a homosexual character?"

Bill Marchant, the director of Everyone, asked me to play the role when another actor dropped out. Bill is one of the gentlest, most thoughtful directors I have worked with, and he and I had great discussions about the nature of sexuality, and how we wanted to see the characters in this film develop. what I realized with Bill is that the biggest mistake would be to try to play a gay character gay. I found my connection to Grant through exploring the common human experience of being in love, and what that meant for me, with another person; the noble reasons, the co-dependant reasons, how we see something great in the people we love, and how we project all over them and see them often for someone who they really are not, but as someone we want them to be. These are universal experiences of falling and being in love that all people go through in some way, regardless of their sexual orientation. In this way, I was able to connect to the reality of Grant as a man who is deeply in love with someone, but is very unsure of himself. Once this was realized, it became immaterial whether it was with a man or a woman; the

experience of being in love is the same for all human beings. And that, to me, was the theme of the whole movie, summed up in the journey of the two main characters.

10. Did the YB writers give you any inside info or background about Siroc's as yet unveiled past that helped you portray the character? Did you come up with anything on your own, and if so what was it? How would you have liked Siroc to develop/change if the series continued?

This is very funny, because a lot of people have been very confused about the whole "former slave" thing, and how that seems incongruous with my portrayal of the character. The truth is, Siroc was originally written as a former black slave from Africa, and in casting, the producers decided they wanted me in the role. But I guess the press releases and stuff had already gone out! So that's where the confusion comes from!

11. Was playing Jasper in "Earthsea" in any way comparable to playing Finger in Odyssey — from the little bits seen, they both seemed to have issues balancing power and authority. What is your take on the two characters?

The Odyssey was a great experience for me, because it was my first series that lasted a few years, and I was only 14 years old when it started. It basically paid my way through theatre school! Honestly though, it's a bit of a blur, since I was going to high school at the same time, and was in and out of class while we were shooting, and trying to do my homework all at the same time. Jasper was a lot of fun, Shawn Ashmore is a great guy and a pleasure to work with, and Kristin and I had only just met about a month before, and here we were in the same movie together completely by coincidence! I have been cast as the villain many times in my career so far, probably because I don't see them as bad people, just characters who make choices based on their individual values and try to get what they see is best for them. There is always a strong, if non-conscious, internal struggle in a villain, which I love to explore. Jasper was just a bit of a twit too, which brought a lightness to the role and a sense of comedy, which is a lot of fun for me.

12. In your opinion, where do your characters go when you're through with them? Do you just close the cover on that individual's story or do some tend to linger, cropping up at odd moments or in daydream? Do you ever just stop and think "What if..."?

That's a great question. Sometimes, as with Richard III, I take the character home with me, and wake up in the middle of the night sleeping on my withered arm or something like that. As soon as I am aware of a character I will be playing, my inner self begins to subtly adjust to suit the point of view of that person. I begin to take in data slightly differently, see things in the world that I may not have otherwise noticed if I wasn't trying on this new perspective which I am creating. I don't tend to have any flashbacks or what have you. Playing a role, to me, feels a bit like giving birth to a new person; you bring this person into the world, foster him, nurture him, do what you think is best for him, and then, at the end, you have to let him go, you can't hold on to him nostalgically, or else you're living in the past to a degree.

13. I was wondering if having had acting rolls portraying real soldiers in real situations, including the character for "PVT Wars", gave you any new/different insights into how you portrayed Heero's character in "Gundam Wing"?

In all honesty, I knew very little about Heero or Gundam Wing before we recorded that. I have been doing voice overs for a long time, and when I did Gundam Wing, I had pretty much just graduated from The National Theatre School of Canada, which is a gem in Canada, and a little known school of high reputation. It wasn't until afterwards that I realized what a huge following Gundam Wing has! And i was lucky to be a part of something with such a huge cultural following within its genre.

14. About "PVT Wars": Can you tell us what is it about for those that aren't familiar with the play (it's out of print)? Who's going to play in it and direct it? Can you talk about your character a bit more?

PVT. Wars is a play written in 1979 by James McClure, an american playwright who also wrote the play Lone Star. PVT. Wars (the play) revolves around three young Vietnam veterans stuck in the stress ward of a VA hospital, each fighting their own "private wars" to deal with what they have experienced in war and the readjustment back into "normal" american life. The film will most likely be updated to revolve around three veterans of the Iraq war, and their unique struggles coming back to a brand new america in the modern era. Farhad Mann, who wrote the screenplay with Jim McClure, will direct it, and Justin Chatwin is slated to play Silvio. My character, Woodruff Gately, is a very lost young man who spends most of the film fixing a broken radio, thinking that if he can just fix this radio, he will

somehow find freedom from the terror he has experienced and the fear he now lives with.

15. What's the most challenging scene you've ever been involved in? What made it challenging? How did you handle it?

There was a scene in Richard III between my character (Richard) and Elizabeth, near the end of the play, which is a big confrontation, and the woman playing Elizabeth, my good friend Amy Sloan (who was in The Aviator) was absolutely kicking my butt! I have never had to fight so hard to win a scene in my life! She is a wonderful actor, and we had a great director named David Latham who would not let me get away with anything less than winning this scene. I was absolutely at a loss, but had to just keep pushing through it, and I really raised my self-esteem by finding a way to do something which I had no idea how to do!

Personal:

16. You've spoke of always having the habit of wanting to help others before yourself in one of your MySpace blogs, is there any foundations or charities you're frequently apart of?

I do not contribute to any charities at the moment, and I do not give money to the homeless. I have a goal to make a difference in the world in a way that is significant and important and in line with my values. The problem with many charities, as far as I can see, is that often the money does not get exactly where you intend it to go when you donate. this is not to say that there are no worthwhile charities, but for me, I want to make a difference, and I feel the best way for me to do that is not giving bit by bit, here and there, but by mindfully concentrating my efforts, so that my contribution to the cause I choose is meaningful and effective.

17. So many actors I've heard interviewed have said that what they do as adults reflects what they used to play as kids — as they were always imagining to be one thing or another. What types of things did you like to pretend as a kid or did getting into the 'business' at such a young age push you in the opposite direction so that 'fun' was more organized sports and such and less in the realm fantasy?

My first and most natural instinct as a kid was to play, and in acting, I found a forum where I could play, AND get paid! What could be better! As I have grown up, I have taken on the nobility of the craft of acting

much more, and it has certainly become a business (as well as a burden at times.) I used to put on little skits as a kid, and make forts out of pillows and blankets and chairs, and generally let my imagination run wild! On the whole, my parents supported me in whatever I truly wanted to do, and did not stifle me into doing what THEY wanted me to do, which I think benefitted me greatly. In regards to sports, I LOVE HOCKEY! My team is the Vancouver Canucks (Go Roberto Luongo!)

18. Regarding second language: During your three years in Montreal, did you learn how to speak French? Also from Broadjam, in your comments about the song "Angels" you mention both of your grandparents were from England and they were deaf. Did your grandparents use British Sign-Language when communicating? Hence the line: 'She never said a word to me, but every one was true' means you've got some knowledge of sign-language too?

In Montreal, my french was passable. Being Canadian, I had some french lessons in high school, which fortunately came back to me when I needed them most, and I can speak a little bit of french still today. But my true first - second language was british sign language. I learned sign language at a very young age, so that I could communicate with my grandparents, who were both born deaf. they were two of the most caring and wonderful people I have ever known, and I owe them more than anyone else for my sense of humor. they were hilarious!! That line from Angels (which I wrote when my grandmother died) means exactly what you thought: my grandmother was always honest with me, although she never spoke a word.

19. If you were to briefly describe your character to someone who didn't know you, what would you say about yourself?

I'll give you a description of my essence at the moment: thoughtful, compassionate, determined, childish, intelligent, and silly!

20. What is the most important thing in your life?

Honestly the most important thing in my life at the moment is becoming a mindful individual, focusing on myself and finding out my true essence, working through my disintegrations and inner deficiencies, and trying to become a better person. I am making a true effort at embodying Gandhi's advice to "be the change you wish to see in the world" instead of trying to fix the world around me so that I can feel happy. In my own way, I am becoming more focused, determined,

and joyous, so that the more I know myself, the more I can know other people and the world, and the more effectively I can actualize my ideas in my life and make the world a better place for myself and everyone else on this planet.

Thank you for this opportunity to consider your thoughtful questions. You have helped me bring some clarity to some of these things in my life, and for that I pay you tribute. Thank you for your continued support, and keep on watching, the best is yet to come!!

Cheers.

with love.

Mark.