



Science of acting Playing with Numbers

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Portraying a math whiz isn't as simple as 1-2-3, says Jason Gray-Stanford, now shooting *A Beautiful Mind* pal Russell Crowe. Jason Gray-Stanford is the first to concede that he's no math whiz. But he wasn't going to let that stand in the way of a chance to land a role opposite Russell Crowe in *A Beautiful Mind*, the Ron Howard movie about math genius John Forbes Nash Jr.

Now shooting on the New Jersey campus of Princeton University, the post-Second World War drama centres on Nash (Crowe), whose paranoid schizophrenia kept success at bay until the mid-1980s when the disease lifted. In 1994 he won the Nobel Prize for economics for pioneering work in game theory.

Gray-Stanford, who graduated from UBC's Theatre School with a bachelor of fine arts, plays Thomas Neilson, a Scandinavian college student whose specialty is symbol cryptography-the study of codes.

"It's something that I knew nothing about, and I'm not much of a mathematician, either, so it's quite a stretch," said the 20-something actor, who began his career locally with a role on *Neon Rider*.

"We get a lot of dialogue where we don't really know what we're saying, but we try and say it with as much conviction as absolutely possible."

Getting the role was not easy, but after reading the powerful script, he pleaded for an audition.

He did one in Los Angeles where he now lives, then flew to New York to screen test for several of the movie's characters.

A couple of weeks later, a voice mail came in from Howard asking for a return call - he'd landed a role. "

I literally would have played the role of Man No.1 if they said, "Please come aboard and do this."

Crowe and Gray-Stanford became buddies on the movie, *Mystery, Alaska*, shot in Canmore, Alta., a couple of years ago, and the Vancouver actor accompanied his Oscar-nominated co-star to the awards last Sunday.

"I was wide-eyed and humbled by some of the talent in the room." He later attended a small gathering with Crowe and the Australian actor's family and friends at the Bel Air Hotel.

Vancouver actress Emmanuelle Vaugier, Gray-Stanford's girlfriend, wasn't able to attend because she couldn't get a release from her Warner Bros. TV pilot, *A Young Person's Guide to Becoming a Rock Star*, which began shooting here last Monday.

The two met at his local agent's office five years ago - he was there to pick up a script for a movie and was asked to read with a couple of actresses who were putting themselves on tape for roles in *Starship Troopers*.

One of them was Emmanuelle.

"We read, we rode the elevator downstairs and then we parted ways, and then - I'll let Emmanuelle finish it," Gray-Stanford said over the speaker phone at The Backlot office where Vaugier had dropped by to visit.

"And then I hunted him down through a mutual friend," the stunning, dark-haired actress said.

She invited Jason to a party, they hit it off, then she left town for three months to shoot a movie.

They were sure it wouldn't last, but it has.

In her TV pilot, Vaugier co-stars with Oliver Hudson, brother of Kate and son of Goldie Hawn.

She plays Sarah, a young woman who works at the unemployment office but moonlights as a club DJ - Hudson's character, Jace, is a rock musician collecting UI.

Vaugier attended Crofton House School in Kerrisdale until she switched to Magee's Secondary for grade 11 and 12. Magee's semester system allowed her to travel as a model, working in Tokyo, Osaka, Taiwan, Seoul and Guam.

Back in Vancouver, she got an agent and started working. Her recent roles have been slightly outrageous.

In the Anne Wheeler-directed *Suddenly Naked* she plays a wacky Latina pop sensation; she's one of Rodney Dangerfield's spouses in *My 5 Wives*; in *Ripper*, she's a New York hippie/lesbian; on TV's *Big Sound* she plays a manipulative sex siren, and on *Higher Ground*, a seductive stepmother. And she'll be seen in the coming Miramax film *40 Days and 40 Nights*, co-starring with Josh Hartnett.

Production Parade

Judd Nelson arrives in May to star in the TV movie sequel *Cabin By The Lake 2*. The original, shot here a couple of years ago, featured Nelson as a screenwriter who does murderous things as research for his scripts.

Canadian actress Reagan Dale Neis plays a 15-year-old-girl in the Warner Brothers Network family comedy pilot, *Maybe I'm Adopted*, which begins shooting here next week.

Celeb Spottings

At Cin Cin the other night, a dozen folks from the CBS pilot *The Heart Department*, including cast members John Larroquette, Tony Shalhoub, and Felicity Huffman (who brought her actor-husband William Macy) enjoyed a celebratory dinner in the Robson Street Tuscan-style eatery's private wine room. They had antipasto, tuna, pasta, free-range chicken, beef tenderloin and polished off five bottles of the expensive stuff.

A few days later, Morgan Fairchild and a gentleman friend were deep in conversation as they ate ravioli, washed down with several Diet Pepsi. And Traci Lords came in last week with a couple of gal pals and ordered the ahi tuna with a white wine.

Written by Lynne McNamara