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From Westport to
the world stage: **JAMIE** and
CAMERON MANN'S
breakout year, from "Stranger Things"
on Broadway to a Cannes red carpet debut

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BY **THE MANN CLAN**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **KYLE NORTON**

MANN TO MANN

Actors **CAMERON**
and **JAMIE MANN**
talk all things
Broadway,
Hollywood
and Westport
....with a source
very close
to home:
each other.

DYNAMIC DUO

Cameron (left) in the tux
gifted to him by Celine
for the Cannes Film
Festival and Jamie (right)
in a blazer bedazzled
by his sister Zoe for the
Broadway premiere
of *Stranger Things*:
The First Shadow.

Jamie and Cameron Mann, the oldest of the artsy Westport Mann Clan kids (if you count Cameron edging out his twin sister, Zoe, by three minutes) have had a good year. Jamie, age 22, made his Broadway debut back in March in *Stranger Things: The First Shadow*, and Cameron, 19, hit Cannes Film Festival with a pivotal role in Ari Aster's star-packed dark comedy, *Eddington*. Cameron walked the red carpet with Joaquin Phoenix, Pedro Pascal, Emma Stone and Austin Butler. Jamie shares the stage with West End fresh gem and Tony nominee Louis McCartney in a cast of 20 Broadway debuts, making every day a giddy celebration of dreams come true. Last spring, the *Stranger Things* play nabbed four Tony Awards, Jamie earned a BFA from University of Michigan's renowned musical theatre program, and Cameron shot another film.

There was one Monday (Jamie's only day off from his eight-show-a-week schedule) over the summer when they both could be in Westport to treat us to their best impersonations of Hollywood stars, in their family's living room turned photo studio. Jamie wore the blazer his sister

Zoe (freshman fashion design major at Pratt) bedazzled for him for the *Stranger Things* premiere and Cameron donned the tux Celine gifted him for Cannes. It was a touching crowning moment for a couple kids who grew up in our pages and now, as young men, have earned a cover.

Jamie actually appeared on our cover before—in utero—in 2003, when his mom, longtime contributing writer Jill Johnson Mann, posed with the subject of one of her first features for us (menswear power player Joe Barrato). Later that year baby Jamie got an inset photo in mama Mann's article on childbirth, and he went on to pen a piece in our teen column. Both boys appeared in the magazine back when they and their youngest sister, Natalia, all got tv/film gigs in the same year most people did nothing: 2020 (Cameron, *Mare of Easttown*; Jamie, *Country Comfort*; Natalia, *A California Christmas*.)

At this point, we figured they can write their own article. So we sat them down on a Zoom together—Jamie from his dressing room at the Marquis Theatre and Cameron in Ann Arbor, where he is a sophomore in University of Michigan's acting program—and directed them to interview each other.

Cameron: Have you seen *Mare of Easttown*? It's on HBO.

Jamie: I actually haven't. It's on my list.

Jamie: Have you seen *Country Comfort*?

Cameron: No, but I spent some time on set while you were filming. Those live tapings, before Covid shut everything down, were fun.

Jamie: Oh yes, I recall you were taking a break from killing people in Pennsylvania at the time.

Cameron: I am the resident sociopathic actor of the family.

Jamie: Yes, readers, check out Cam's handiwork in *Mare of Easttown*, *Eddington*, *Daredevil* and *Law & Order*. My sister Natalia and I are the ones who cater to your family-friendly content needs on Netflix. But the *Stranger Things* play is definitely not for little kids.

Cameron: While I didn't catch

you doing an Elvis impersonation on *Country Comfort*, I did see you sing "Oklahoma" in *Stranger Things* on Broadway, which is by far the coolest thing I've ever seen on stage—not you singing "Oklahoma" (half-naked), I just mean the show itself.

Jamie: Thanks... I think. For those who don't know, *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* is a play, not a musical, but I actually do get to sing and dance in it.

Cameron: Dancing is how performing started for you, right?

Jamie: I went to Alvin Ailey every Saturday in elementary school and School of American Ballet every day after school in middle school, which gave me the opportunity to dance in a few productions with New York City Ballet, which was amazing.

Apparently, my mom played classical music all the time when she was pregnant with me, which is maybe why I was obsessed when I saw *Swan Lake* in Retiro Park in Madrid at age three.

Cameron: I was born in Madrid.

Jamie: Yes, and we were all fluent Madrilenos at one time. Our parents were there in a traveling troupe of flamenco dancers.

Cameron: Is that a true-or-false question, cuz that is false.

Jamie: You're right. I think it had something to do with a hedge fund.

Cameron: Do you remember when you realized you wanted to be a performer?

Jamie: I remember sitting in the audience at *Billy Elliot* on Broadway and feeling to an existential extent that I needed to be onstage.

Cameron: How did you start acting professionally?

Jamie: Very much by chance. I was doing an acting camp in the city the summer before third grade and got noticed by a casting director. At the time I had no idea what that was, and I thought having an agent meant some kind of "secret agent."

Cameron: What was it like playing *Billy Elliot* for a chunk of your childhood? Is he a character that you connected to easily, given you also grew up as a boy ballet dancer?

Jamie: Finding the character of Billy was unique because I remember knowing exactly who he was, which almost never happens as an actor. But because of the intense training and rehearsing that role requires, the experience brings you to the



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JAMIE MANN



■ ■ Kate Winslet
and Julianne
Nicholson on
Mare of Easttown
were so
thoughtful about
their work,
so diligent, and
so caring as
mentors to me.
They both
won Emmys for
that show. ■ ■

CAMERON MANN

character. In a sense, the work is done for you. That's the only show I've worked on that functions in that way.

Cameron: How do you approach characters when you don't feel that instant connection?

Jamie: Surprisingly, my typecast has developed into either dumb jock or misogynistic @\$\$hole. I think my understanding of these characters goes back to my middle school experience. There was always a dissonance that I felt with the boys around me: I was over-emotional, I didn't like sports, I was into theater. All I wanted was to fit in, so I tried in every possible way to conform. So when I receive an audition for a misogynist, it's not a replication of those friends, but rather the deeply insecure boy who wants nothing more than to prove himself by any means necessary. That's a part I know quite well.

Cameron: You've always been infatuated with performance, whether it was homemade fashion shows or singing too loudly at night. Was there ever a moment when you thought, This isn't what I want to do anymore?

Jamie: Absolutely. This business requires a ridiculous amount of optimism. When I started auditioning, I didn't book work for four years, which looking back was the best thing that could have happened. I learned to disassociate from the rejection. My mom and I both decided we'd had enough right after my callback for *Billy Elliot* at the Maltz Jupiter Theatre. I thought I hadn't booked it because they let me go early. The day we were going to tell my agent I was done, I got the offer for the role. Later, in college, I developed performance anxiety. All of a sudden, the inherent trust I felt in my abilities evaporated. But I realized I wasn't scared of performing because I didn't want to do it anymore, but rather because I cared about it and my capacity to achieve it so deeply. I was terrified to start *Stranger Things* on Broadway. It literally made me sick to my stomach, but through preparation I was able to relocate the joy in performing. Then, when I went on for a principle in the show [James

Hopper, Jr.] this fall, I was able to excel because I had done the work and pushed past the fear.

Cameron: Who has been the biggest help in your career so far? (I think we both know the answer is Mom.)

Jamie: There's a saying I've heard around town: "The devil works hard but Jill Mann works harder." However, I want to debunk the idea that she was the reason we started or continue to perform; our parents are solely insistent that whatever career we pursue, we do so with passion and gusto. My mom doesn't half-ass anything; neither does my dad. I think we're just following in their footsteps. My dad captained all his high school sports teams and the Yale Heavyweight Rowing team and then rowed at Oxford.

You were an athletic kid, Cam. Do you feel like playing sports taught you lessons that help you as an actor?

Cameron: One thing that sports and acting have in common is repetition. The more you do, the better you get. When learning lines and blocking, I like to do it over and over again and then find ways to make it feel natural, like I've never done it before. Also, the team aspect. Everyone involved in a production works as a team towards the same goal of making something meaningful. Sports also enabled me to bond easily with people on set. As a Philly fan, filming *Mare of Easttown* in Philadelphia was exciting. I remember talking to the writer, Brad Ingelsby, about his basketball career. When filming *Eddington* in New Mexico, I bonded with the local teenagers in Truth or Consequences (yep, that's really the name of a town) through pickup basketball. Sports directly benefitted me when I auditioned for the role of Young Bullseye (or Young Dex) in season three of *Daredevil*. After they expressed interest, we sent in a photo of me pitching on my travel baseball team and ten minutes later we got the call that I booked it. I remember having to mime throwing a baseball against the wall over and over, and it came very naturally to me. Lastly, sports were always there for me when acting wasn't. We go through so

much rejection as actors. There was always something else to focus on as opposed to thinking, Wow, I can't book anything. I must suck. In fact, for most of my childhood, sports were my priority over acting. My basketball coach nicknamed me "Hollywood," though.

Jamie: Something that might surprise people is that you were a very shy kid.

Cameron: That's right. Mom put me and Zoe in acting class in second grade to help us with participating in class at school. I heard my preschool teacher almost fell out of her chair when she saw me on stage as Les in *Newsies* with Staples Players.

Jamie: The one show we got to do together! Have you learned anything from watching me perform?

Cameron: For starters, I've always been jealous of the way you can sing and dance, something that doesn't come as naturally to me.

Jamie: Never mind that you were cast as Colin in *The Secret Garden* with Sierra Boggess and almost went to Broadway way before I did, with the choir-boy voice I never had.

Cameron: Choir-boy voices don't last! I've also always admired how you're such a good student of the craft. When I was auditioning for Michigan, I remember thinking I was in a good place with my monologues. It was an eye-opening experience when you coached me before my audition.

Jamie: When working on as star-studded a film as *Eddington*, were there any habits that your co-stars practiced that you admired?

Cameron: I spent a lot of time with Joaquin Phoenix. What stuck out to me is how much he made everyone around him relax. He definitely had that aura—when he's on set, people know it—but it wasn't in any sort of tense way. In fact, I feel like everyone was more relaxed when he was around. This could be because when you see someone as successful as he is being so relaxed (while remaining focused), you realize that while what we're doing requires lots of hard work and concentration, it is just a movie. You're allowed

to laugh and have fun. I hope to have that effect on people one day. I was also impressed by Clifton Collins Jr.'s work ethic. He played a very unique character and nailed it. I think he was barefoot every single time I saw him (this makes sense if you know the context of his character, a homeless man). He has worked with so many respected actors and filmmakers and has so many valuable things to say. Working with Kate Winslet and Julianne Nicholson on *Mare of Easttown* was similar; they were so thoughtful about their work, so diligent, and so caring as mentors to me. They both won Emmys for that show.

Jamie: You got to walk the Cannes Film Festival carpet with some of the most famous faces in Hollywood. What were you feeling?

Cameron: I was surprised at how relaxed I felt when it finally came time to walk the carpet. I remember waiting in a crowd of people who were in line to walk and seeing Angelina Jolie two people in front of me. But I felt like I belonged there because of the relationships I had with people like Ari, Lars [Knudsen, producer], Joaquin, Luke [Grimes], Cliff and Micheal [Ward]—all people who had done stuff like this before.

I also got to meet Emma Stone and Austin Butler, who are just as they are made out to be: very kind, down-to-earth people. Oh, I also met Rooney Mara! Seeing Rooney and Joaquin together was crazy—*Her* is one of my favorite movies (they met on that set). This is a cool story: Amélie [Hoeflerle], Matt [Gomez Hidaka] and I were ushered to walk the red carpet—just us three. It seemed like we weren't going to be able to walk with the whole cast. The ushers were sending us to the theater. But then Joaquin called us over and insisted we walk with them—just another example of the class act Joaquin is. Once we were on the carpet, it was funny hearing all of the photographers screaming: "Emma! Emma! Just one picture, Emma!"

Jamie: In five to ten years, they'll be screaming, "Cameron! Cameron!"

JAMIE'S HOMETOWN HIGHLIGHTS

Jamie's Westport Faves

Spot: The bench behind the Levitt Pavilion. It's the most beautiful view of the Saugatuck river and it stays pretty quiet.

Activity: Since going to school and moving to New York, I always find myself driving around when I get home. You only really start to appreciate the Connecticut scenery when you move away from it.

Restaurant: Hudson Malone. Some of the best food I've ever had and I'm obsessed with the ambiance. Plus, a 10/10 Negroni.

Coffee: Granola Bar.

Arts organization: Staples Players. I remain in awe of the number of students that dedicate themselves so avidly to create theatre. The friends I made in that black box are still some of my best ones today. And of course, The Playhouse is a Westport treasure. I danced on that stage many times in *The Nutcracker*.

Teacher: Cynthia Gibb, at Triple Threat Academy, is basically my stepmom. When I was eight, we danced around her vocal studio because I found my falsetto range, and I stayed with her in L.A. while shooting *Country Comfort* and then later *Days of Our Lives*. Second only to Jill Mann, I wouldn't be anywhere without her. Jill Jaysen also laid a great acting foundation for me, and she is teaching at Triple Threat now, too! I guest-teach when I can.

Memory: My elementary school friend group and I spent a summer selling lemonade in our Compo neighborhood and made almost \$1,000, which we donated to the Hole in the Wall Gang.

Legend: Gotta go with Kelli O'Hara. Or Justin Paul—Go Blue!



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LEARN MORE: jamiemartinmann.com @jamiemartinmann; cameronmannactor.com @realcameronmann

STRANGER THINGS: “The First Shadow”

TICKETS: broadway.strangerthingsonstage.com

Eddington is now streaming on Amazon and Apple TV.

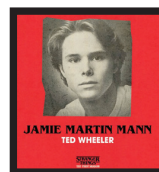
HIGHLIGHTS FROM JAMIE'S ACTING CAREER



2014
Jamie dances in *The Nutcracker* with New York City Ballet at Lincoln Center.



2020
Jamie lands the series regular role of “Brody” in the Netflix series *Country Comfort*.



2025
Jamie makes his Broadway debut in *Stranger Things: The First Shadow* as Ted Wheeler (u/s Hopper).