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JASON ALEXANDER

Biography

The persona of George Costanza, created by versatile actor/writer/director Jason Alexander, has been dubbed by Entertainment Weekly as one of the “Best Television Sidekicks of All Time” (#3 actually, behind Robin and Tonto). The hapless, thoughtless, neurotic everyman that he played for nine seasons on NBC’s “Seinfeld” garnered him six Emmy and four Golden Globe nominations, an American Television Award and two American Comedy Awards for “Best Supporting Actor in a Television Series.” The Screen Actors Guild went one step higher and knighted him “Best Actor in a Comedy Series,” despite his role as a supporting actor, and he led a TV Guide Readers and Critics Poll that named him one of the top 10 characters in TV history. “Seinfeld” remains the most successful half hour television series throughout the world.

But there is more to this man than one iconic role.

Fifteen years before “Seinfeld,” Alexander was building a career that would include performing Tony Award-winning Broadway roles as well as appearing in major film and television projects, producing, directing and writing, making him one of the most consistently coveted stars in the country. After studying at Boston University’s College of Fine Arts, he moved to New York to pursue a theater career. Over a decade he racked up hit after hit. His notable Broadway debut came in Hal Prince and Stephen Sondheim’s 1981 musical production of *Merrily We Roll Along*. In quick succession, he starred in productions of *Forbidden Broadway*, *The Rink*, *Stop the World...*, *Neil Simon’s Broadway Bound*, *Personals*, *Light Up the Sky*, *Michael Stewart’s “D,”* and *Accomplice*, to name a few. Though known at the time mainly as an actor, Alexander was asked by Jerome Robbins to write the narrative book for his revue *Jerome Robbins’ Broadway*. To perform it, Alexander would play 14 different characters at every performance. And for that chameleon-like ability, he won the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and Tony Awards as “Best Actor in a Musical.” The show he authored went on to win Best Musical.

After winning the Tony Award in 1989, Alexander was cast in two projects that would change the direction of his career and his life. The first was his role as Richard Gere’s wily and misogynistic lawyer in *Pretty Woman*. The role made him a nationally recognized face, albeit one that women wanted very much to slap. The second was winning the role of George in “Seinfeld,” which made him recognizable throughout the world as a figure that some would slap, some would cuddle, but all would love.

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Since moving to Los Angeles, film and television have been the focus of his work. His film credits include the upcoming *Hachiko: A Dog's Story*, starring Richard Gere scheduled to be released later this year, *The Burning* (notable as the first film by Harvey and Bob Weinstein), *Mosquito Coast*, *White Palace*, *Jacob's Ladder*, *Coneheads*, *The Paper*, *North*, *Blankman*, *Dunston Checks In*, *Love*, *Valor*, *Compassion*, *The Adventures of Rocky and Bullwinkle*, *Shallow Hal* and *Ira and Abby*. In 1996 Alexander formed his production company, AngelArk Entertainment, and has gone on to direct the features *For Better or Worse* with Lolita Davidovich and James Woods, as well as *Just Looking* with Gretchen Mol. AngelArk has also been successful producing the television shows "Ultimate Trek," "Bob Patterson" and "Listen Up" and the films *Agent Cody Banks* and *Agent Cody Banks 2: Destination London*.

Alexander has been a staple of television viewing far beyond his years on "Seinfeld." He starred on the series "Everything's Relative," "E.R.," "Bob Patterson" and "Listen Up." He has guested on "Newhart," "Dream On," "The Nanny," "Remember WENN," "Star Trek: Voyager," "Friends," "The Twilight Zone," "Malcolm in the Middle," "Monk," and "Everybody Hates Chris." He has also directed episodes of "Remember WENN," "Campus Ladies," "Everybody Hates Chris" and "Seinfeld," for which he was nominated for a DGA Award. Alexander also starred in several films for television, including: "Rockabye," "Favorite Son," "Cinderella," "The Man Who Saved Christmas," "Bye Bye Birdie" and "A Christmas Carol." Commercials have been a consistent part of his career as he has participated in several historic commercial campaigns. Today, most of his commercial work is as a director of both commercials and music videos. His most recent video, Brad Paisley's "Cooler Online," recently won him the honor of directing the "Country Music Video of the Year" at the CMA's in November 2007.

His voice has been featured time and again in both film (*Aladdin 2: The Return of Jafar*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame I and II*, *Madeline: Lost in Paris*, *The Trumpet of the Swan*, *101 Dalmatians II: Patch's London Adventure*, *Farce of the Penguins*) and television ("Dinosaurs," "Aladdin," "Hercules," "Dilbert," "The Legend of Tarzan," "House of Mouse," "Odd Job Jack" and as the star of the cult animation classic, "Duckman").

When Alexander is not appearing as a character, he is often being asked to appear as some version of himself. He's been a frequent guest on every major daytime and late-night talk show. He has hosted "Saturday Night Live" and "The 47th Annual Emmy Awards." He has played himself on "The Larry Sanders Show," "Curb Your Enthusiasm," "The Muppet Show," "Sesame Street," "Comic Relief," "The Aristocrats," game shows, celebrity poker showdowns, celebrity roasts, improvisations and charity telethons. He is most proud and most often commended for his several appearances with host Bill Maher on the HBO series "Real Time," in which he has been an outspoken, articulate, insightful and satirical advocate for progressive issues.

Alexander has also found many opportunities to return to the stage despite basing his career in Los Angeles. Currently, he is traveling the country in the one man show, *The Donny Clay Experience*, an original show he created with Peter Tilden billed as a "hilarious spoof of motivational speakers in an evening of laughter, music, personal growth and partial nudity." As an actor, he has starred as President Harry Truman in the one-man show *Give 'Em Hell, Harry!* He starred with Peter Falk in the world premiere of *Defiled* at the Geffen Playhouse and inaugurated the Reprise Theater Company by starring in their first production, Neil Simon's *Promises, Promises*. Most notably, Alexander starred for eight months alongside Martin Short in

the acclaimed L.A. production of Mel Brooks's *The Producers* where he was hailed by critics and audiences alike.

Working both sides of the boards, Alexander has also directed the West Coast premiere of Sam Shephard's *The God of Hell* at the Geffen Theater as well as *Sunday In The Park With George* and his own newly adapted rendition of the classic *Damn Yankees*, both for Reprise Theater Company. In fact, Alexander's name has become synonymous with Reprise since he took over as artistic director in June 2007. Reprise is fast becoming a national center for the revitalization of classic American musicals, as well as the development of the next generation of musical theater.

In what he laughingly refers to as his spare time, Alexander has become one of the most requested Masters of Ceremony for a wide array of fundraising events for charities that range from Big Brothers to the Alzheimer's Foundation to arts programs for local schools. He has, in fact, been teaching acting and other performing arts around the country and served as a guest professor at the USC School of Fine Arts. Alexander serves as the national spokesperson for the Scleroderma Foundation, helping to educate and unite patients and families suffering from this disfiguring and often fatal disease. He is also a preeminent spokesman and representative for OneVoice – a grassroots organization of Israelis and Palestinians committed to a peaceful, two-state solution in the Middle East.

As a teenager, Alexander was a serious student of magic before making the transition to acting. His love of the magical arts has never left him and he has been a member of the renowned Magic Castle for close to 20 years. In 2007 Alexander made his performing debut in the Castle's Parlour of Prestidigitation and a panel of professional colleagues then named him "Parlour Magician of the Year."

Unlike George Costanza, who could never seem to find true love, Alexander has been happily married for over 25 years to his wife, Daena Title. Daena is a painter whose work has appeared in galleries throughout Los Angeles and across the country and can be found at her website, daenatitle.com. Together they have two sons, Gabriel and Noah. The boys have inspired much in Alexander, not the least of which is his acclaimed children's book, "Dad, Are You the Tooth Fairy?" published by Scholastic Books.

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