

Talk Nerdy  With Us

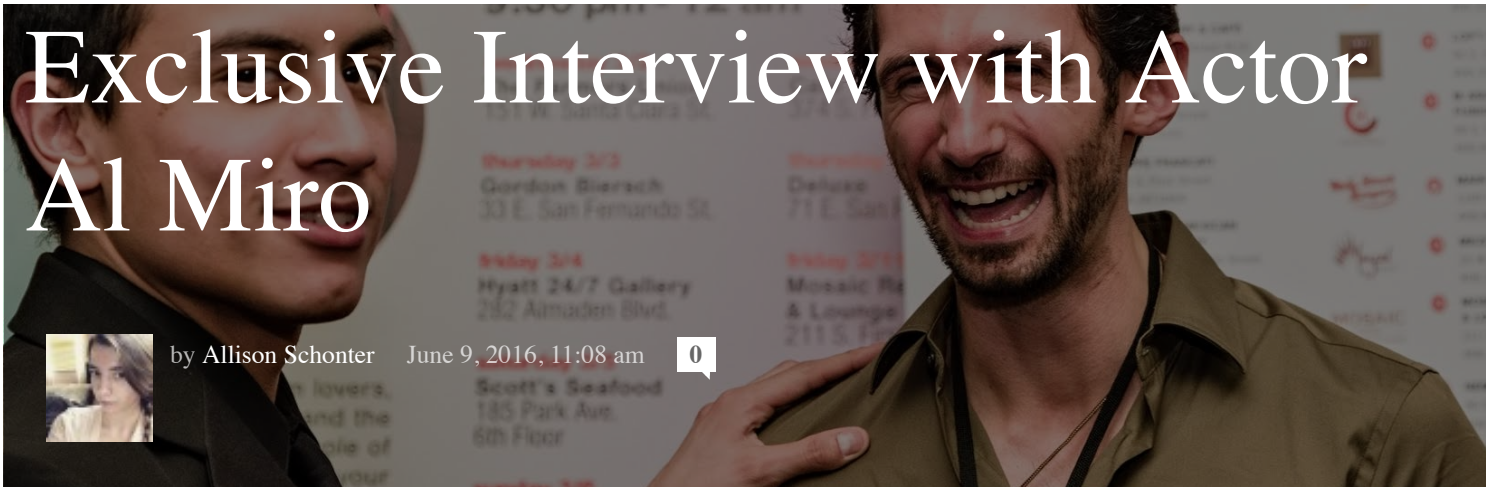




Photo Credit: Jordan Matter

Actor Al Miro pursued his passion for acting at a young age, attending the prestigious Circle in the Square Theatre School in Manhattan before becoming active in the New York theater scene. He has worked on a multitude of hit shows, including *Fringe*, *Psych*, *Supernatural*, and *The Flash*, among others. Taking on the lead role in the feature film *Daddy's Boy*, Miro's performance of Max, a young, gay adult video star struggling with his sexuality, has earned him a 2016 Leo Award nomination. I recently had the opportunity to discuss Al Miro's portrayal of Max, *Daddy's Boy*, and the movement behind it, as well as what's next for this burgeoning actor.

You play Max in *Daddy's Boy*; what drew you to that role?

Max is a character, unlike anything I've played before. I was drawn to his vulnerability and his inner struggles. His desperate desire to truly connect with his dying father and also find true love, oddly leads him on the lonely path of the gay adult film industry. He is a tragic hero, with good intentions but constantly making the wrong choices.

The sexual and emotional journey that Max has to go through is something that scared me, and as an actor, I want to tackle characters that challenge me. I saw this as an amazing opportunity to throw every inhibition out the window and fully immerse myself into a world that's terrifying but exciting at the same time.

The character of Max also reminded me of River Phoenix's character in My Own Private Idaho. I remember walking into an agency a few years ago and the agent asking me: "If there's any one movie performance that you wished you'd have done, what would it be?" And I answered: "River Phoenix's in My Own Private Idaho." So when I made that connection reading Daddy's Boy, I was sold.

How does your role in *Daddy's Boy* compare to other roles that you've had?

I'm very lucky in the sense that I don't often get typecast. I get to play roles that are all over the map. When I first started acting I was doing a lot of broad comedy. It was easy for me. I had no problems getting laughs, but I was scared that if I tried to do drama people would still laugh. After 4 years of acting training I got over that, and now I do a lot of drama as well.

Max is very different from the characters I started out being cast as. Daniel (Armando) wanted the performance to be extremely subtle and real. There were no rehearsals at all, he just wanted the actors to really be in the moment and react truthfully to one another. I'd say this is probably one of the least 'showy' performances I've done, but one of the most authentic. The influence of the film is French New Wave, and I've never played in that specific style before. It's also the first time I had to do nudity on screen.

I often play characters that are emotionally naked...this time, I was naked in every sense of the word. And though I've got cast in a few roles that require me to be sexually dominant (played a sex addict in the film "I Hate Toronto, A Love Story", a rapist in Shakespeare's "Measure for Measure" and a playboy in the theatre production of "After") Max was the only character that was sexually vulnerable. Unlike the other characters, Max doesn't get power from sex but rather gives it up.

Daddy's Boy really speaks to bringing equality and diversity in film. Is that something that's important to you?

Absolutely. Being a first-generation immigrant and having a mixed ethnic background, I've often been told in the casting room that they need someone who is more believable as 'American'. Looking back on film and TV that I watched growing up, my idea of America was that everyone had fair skin and blue eyes and lived in ridiculously expensive homes.

When we moved to North America, I was very confused as to why there were so many different kinds of people living here; various ethnicities, financial status, and sexual orientations. I'd never seen that on TV really. Growing up, I realized that the image the media was portraying was very warped and unrealistic. The problem with that is that as a kid you start thinking that what you see on TV is how you should be. And when you can't see yourself represented in the media you start feeling like an outsider. It really messes with you. You think you're not good enough.

Besides First Nations, America is a country built on immigrants. The racial landscape is always changing. America is diverse. That is the beauty of this continent. So why not embrace it?

There's a growing conversation about diversity in Hollywood, and film on the big and small screen. How do you hope Daddy's Boy will contribute to this discussion?

I hope that the success it's having will inspire filmmakers and actors and make them realize that including diversity in your film doesn't prevent it from being successful. I've been asked a few times if I'm worried that playing this role will get me typecast. Why is it that every time an actor takes on a gay role the media assumes it's taking a big risk and that it might end their career? As an artist and as a human being I find that argument maddening. America is finally getting close to giving full rights to gay citizens but God knows if you play one on TV that might be the end of your career. It's absolutely ridiculous.

We are actors; we play all different kinds of roles, that's our job. Good actors can make chemistry

happen on screen with scene partners of either gender. It has nothing to do with your actual sexual orientation. It has everything to do with your ability as an actor. Look at Jake and Heath in Brokeback Mountain, Sean Penn and James Franco in Milk, Neil Patrick Harris in How I Met Your Mother, Matt Bomer in White Collar, Montgomery Clift and Elizabeth Taylor in A Place In The Sun.

As for ethnic diversity I hope people watch this movie and realize that having a cast of all different kinds of backgrounds doesn't make it less believable that it's set in America. The cast is not very big but it includes actors whose ethnic backgrounds are Latino, Italian, Iranian, French Canadian, Caucasian, African-American, Polish. And yet when you watch the film you don't think about that. You are drawn to the story and the experiences these guys go through rather than their racial background.

That's what equality is; when we start seeing people as people. I really think this movie is part of that movement; in 10 years kids of any ethnicity and sexual orientation and financial status will be able to see themselves on the small and big screen and realize that who they are is enough. That they are heroes.

What was your favorite scene to film? Why?

I'm gonna get controversial here. I don't know if this was my "favorite" scene to film but it was definitely the weirdest, which made it hilariously entertaining. It was the scene right before the action of the porn shoot. In the scene, me and my costar, played by Jonathan Iglesias, are being interviewed by the cameraman, played by Alex Moreno. Alex was so good at being creepy, and I didn't know him very well, and since it was one of the first scenes we shot, I had just met Jonathan. So the whole thing felt like there was no acting involved. We were both incredibly awkward standing half-naked in front of this sweaty camera guy asking us weird questions. We felt so out of place. It was perfect. It's one of the scenes that's been getting the most reaction during screenings and I think it's because of how authentic it turned out.

Four years of acting training couldn't have prepared me for something like that. (laughs). I think I loved how it totally caught me off guard. I've never been more real in my acting career then it that

moment. Not to mention when one of the hotel workers knocked on our door and stuck his head inside to see what was going on and saw me and Jonathan in our underwear with some camera guy filming us. He definitely thought we were actually shooting an adult film. It was so awkward for everyone involved.

You were nominated for a Leo Award for your role as Max. What did that feel like?

Effing amazing! I was in the shower and heard my phone beep, I got out of the shower checked my phone and my buddy Josh had texted me that I had been nominated. I didn't believe him, so I went to check online and when I saw my name I literally screamed "YES" so loud that my roommate came out of her room thinking somebody had broken into our apartment and I'd been attacked. I said "No, I've been nominated for a LEO!" and still drenched, towel around my waist, I hugged her. And she said: "I'm going back to sleep". Ha.

It's been a goal for me to get a nomination for many years. I respect the work of the actors in this province so much that to be recognized amongst them was surreal. I felt incredibly honored. Acting is probably one of the toughest industries to break into and get any kind of work. To not only get the lead in a film, but also get recognized by the industry means the world.

Do you have any other projects coming up that you're working on?

I just wrapped a couple of features. One called "Dark Harvest" where I get to play opposite the legendary Cheech Marin and another Vancouver Indie feature called "Rules To Move By". I also did a fun role in a Danny Glover movie coming out next year. Next up I'm signed to play a serial killer in the Indie "Uncommon Courtesy" filming in the next few months.

Since our website is called Talk Nerdy With Us, what is something nerdy about you? What do you nerd-out over?

I don't know if this counts, but I'm a huge film nerd. I spent my teenage years watching black and white films and memorizing facts about the Academy Awards. We just went to a screening of the

Oscars this past year and part of the event was trivia on Oscar history. My friend turned to me and said: “How in hell do you know all this stuff?!” (laughs). I said: “This is what I did while other kids were partying and dating.” I think that makes me officially a nerd.

Daddy’s Boy is screening next at the Frameline Film Festival in San Francisco on June 21st. You can also follow Al Miro on [Twitter](#).



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Written by [Allison Schonger](#)

Hey! I'm Allison, an English major with a concentration in creative writing. I obsess over movies, TV shows, and music. My current obsessions include *The 100*, *The Walking Dead*, and *Fear The Walking Dead*. So go ahead and talk to me about those.