

Interview: Anna Kendrick, Jason Schwartzman on 'Scott Pilgrim vs. the World'

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on August 12, 2010 - 8:15pm

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CHICAGO – Jason Schwartzman wears silk panties on-set and the fast-talking Anna Kendrick drops an f-bomb in the most delightful way. These are merely two of the highlights of one of the more unique and enjoyable celebrity interviews we've done in a long time. The personable indie-movie icon and the beautiful Oscar nominee for "Up in the Air" were recently in town to promote their co-starring roles in Edgar Wright's "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World" and they clearly made the trip out of a labor of love. While some interviews feel like little more than marketing to sell tickets, Kendrick and Schwartzman have a palpable adoration for the movie they came to discuss today.

That doesn't mean it was an easy shoot. Kendrick explains the process, "I feel like working on this film was like being a part of live-action animation. So much of the film is composed in a really specific visual language. You do feel like you are doing choreography even with just your dialogue. It was really challenging. You always felt like you understood the end product but you were, in some cases, a little blind, and you just had to trust that it doesn't look goofy. You really did feel like you were being puppeteered. That was like nothing I had ever done before. At times, it was really challenging, but it definitely exercised a muscle that you wouldn't get to normally. You just felt like you really had to be focused and on-the-ball all the time because you had to get it right, the camera had to be right, a light didn't fall...you felt like you really had to deliver. But I like being challenged like that."



Anna Kendrick, Jason Schwartzman

Photo credit: Joe Arce

Schwartzman agrees that Wright works like very few other directors, saying, "I describe it as that I feel like there are two kinds of record producers or people in band. There are people who read about the making of the record and there are studio guys who show up and the guy runs through the song and they play. They're anticipating and kind of banking on chemistry and spontaneity. And then there people like, from what I've read, Brian Wilson who, for lack of a better term, "heard" Pet Sounds in his head and hires these musicians to execute it. In the case of Scott Pilgrim, Edgar is more on the side of seeing something or hearing something in his head and all of us are brought in to help him. We all have our own point of view obviously, but we are looking at him as a conductor. If you look at a piece of sheet music – there are many ways to play the same piece of music."



Anna Kendrick

Photo credit: Universal

While the unusual process has paid off with a unique film, "I would say it was challenging," says Kendrick. "I think you felt an absolute trust in what was going to happen because pretty much everybody got to see the footage. So, you knew it looked f**king cool. You knew it would be amazing but it was definitely not without its obstacles...Nothing is worse for me than not knowing where the camera is, when it's moving, when it's on you – it's truly the most frustrating thing in the world. So, this is the complete other end of the spectrum. Which, as I say, is not without its challenges but totally worth it."

So much of what works about "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World" is in the quick editing and pop-art aesthetic, but Wright made sure to communicate with his actors how they would work within that vision. Jason explains, "It was pretty amazing how quickly they were turning it around. Even like Michael and I's fight had been shot with a little HD camera with two stuntmen dressed like us with sound effects and music, just as a guide for Michael and I. She said a great metaphor recently. She said it was like painting over a painting. I LOVE knowing...as specific as you can get, I LOVE. But the thing I really loved was that it felt like Edgar loved the actors and the scenes – he was cracking up so much. You could just feel his enthusiasm. He was excited to have everybody and he really wanted us to feel that way. It was so much fun."

The buzz really started to become deafening on "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World" after a series of very well-received screenings at Comic-Con this summer. Both Kendrick and Schwartzman were there. Anna says, "It was nerve-wracking. It could have been disastrous. It's always a risk but I think it's a risk that paid off for us. You've got people coming to the theater dressed as Scott, Knives, and Ramona. If those people don't like it, you're really in trouble. And we were just so thrilled at the reaction. It sounds like a phony answer but the reaction was great."

Jason adds on, "And those are the people that really care about it. You know, ultimately, I want people to see the movie pretty badly and there are all these other movies coming out and it's hard to have success but I really just feel like this is a wonderful piece of material and I'm glad we got to be a part of it. That night at Comic-Con, no matter what, will never be taken away. That was a sincere moment between the people who know this a lot and they say they like it and that means the most."



Jason Schwartzman

Photo credit: Universal

Kendrick and Schwartzman both have clear adoration for the source material as well, the series of books by Brian Lee O'Malley. "I think Brian stays one step ahead of you and never underestimates you and people really value that," says Anna. "I felt like when I read the comic that I had the sensation of meeting someone for the first time and having that feeling like the first couple of times that they tell jokes you don't laugh because you're not really sure if they're kidding or not. And then you realize that they're always a step ahead of you and they're SO smart and so funny."

Jason adds, "To me it's like...when Pinkerton came out, this Weezer album. When Rivers [Cuomo] is up there singing, I remember thinking "F**k, he's singing FOR me. He's telling the girls that I can't talk to how WE feel." And I kind of feel like people who like Brian's material relate to this guy who's struggling that can also then fly through the air and punch people without having a special explanation for why. He speaks to the person who's frustrated and walks in a normal world but has extreme fantasies."

But what about those panties? After my interview with Michael Cera and Edgar Wright, I asked them what I should ask my next "victims" and Michael revealed that I should clarify what Jason is wearing under his outfit during the climactic battle. I'll leave you with the story.

"I've never been formally trained as an actor. For that reason, I don't really have one technique that's the exact same every time. So, I just kind of do the best I can. It's sort of like learning a new city. Every time it's just different. So, I got to the set of Scott Pilgrim about three-quarters of the way through the shooting of the movie. They were almost done and Edgar showed me some crudely-edited "other evil exes" and I was like "Wow, Chris, Satya, Brandon..." I had a lot of insecurity. Very quickly, I saw the movie that I could destroy. Edgar had basically shown me the destroyable film and I was very nervous because I didn't want to let him down; I wanted to do a good job. I was the last villain. So, I came up with this idea, mostly out of fear, that my character, Gideon Graves...by the time we meet him, he has Ramona Flowers back. I had this idea that my character flew from New York to Toronto with like just a carry-on bag and he didn't wear any underwear because he rarely wears underwear. They spent the night together and the next morning because she's his again and he wants ownership – he thinks in that way – he would have worn her underwear; to own her; to have her underwear on him. And I also wore her perfume every day. I asked the costume department to go find me some red silk panties. I came into my dressing room and there were 20 different pairs – silk, mesh, silk-mesh. (Anna shakes her head.) Which doesn't exist, she says. But I'm almost positive. Every day while I was working and while you watch Gideon Graves, he's wearing Ramona Flowers' panties."

Watch Jason Schwartzman and Anna Kendrick in "Scott Pilgrim vs. the World," opening tomorrow, August 13th, 2010, at theaters everywhere.

"Scott Pilgrim vs. the World" stars Michael Cera, Mary Elizabeth Winstead, Alison Pill, Mark Webber, Johnny Simmons, Ellen Wong, Kieran Culkin, Anna Kendrick, Aubrey Plaza, Chris Evans, Brandon Routh, Mae Whitman, and Jason Schwartzman. It was written by Michael Bacall & Edgar Wright and directed by Wright and is rated PG-13. It opens this Friday, August 13th, 2010.

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