

## Interview: Emma Stone on Career-Expanding ‘The Help’

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CHICAGO – Emma Stone has had a meteoric rise in her film career in four short years. From impressing with her 2007 film debut in “Superbad,” she has moved rapidly through “Zombieland,” “Easy A” and is coming up as Skeeter Phelan in “The Help.”

Born Emily Jean Stone in Scottsdale, Arizona, she famously convinced her parents to attempt an acting career by showing them a power point presentation. The newly crowned Emma Stone made her first appearance in 2005 as Laurie Partridge in a short-lived reboot of “The Partridge Family,” and made a splash through appearances in popular films like “The House Bunny.” The last month has seen three films featuring her performances, with a cameo in “Friends with Benefits,” a meatier role in “Crazy, Stupid, Love” and her lead in The Help.



Emma Stone Makes the Right Call as Skeeter in ‘The Help’  
*Photo credit: Dale Robinette for DreamWorks Pictures*

HollywoodChicago interviewed Emma Stone in anticipation of The Help, and she spoke of her experience on the film with reverence, at the same time denying her status as a “movie star.”

**HollywoodChicago.com:** After researching and playing Skeeter, what circumstances of her life are you glad you don’t have to deal with, living in this era of America?

**Emma Stone:** I’m glad that that it’s not expected behavior to graduate high school, get married and have a baby. Skeeter was my age, and if I had a child now I don’t know how it would turn out, right now I couldn’t imagine it. I’m really glad that it’s not odd for women to enter a career path before that happens or while it happens. I’m quite happy not to be in Jackson, Mississippi, in 1963 under these circumstances.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Skeeter is different from her friends for a couple reasons, the connection she had with her nanny growing up and

the fact that she wants a career over getting married. How did you feel you best embodied those two characteristics in her character when researching the role?

**Stone:** I can never judge how it came out in my portrayal, I have no control over that. I don't know. It's hard for me to ever say, 'here's what I'm trying to convey' or 'this is what I'm expressing to the audience.' My only goal is to feel right within myself and to be true to the character. I was lucky that Kathryn [Stockett, the novel's author] wrote an incredible character and Tate [Taylor, the writer/director] translated it beautifully in the screenplay, and I was trying to stay true to the Skeeter they wrote. She already had that balance, so playing her in truth hopefully came across, and that was my ultimate goal.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Cicely Tyson is a legendary actor who also happened to be an adult woman during the period of *The Help*. Did she offer any perspective about those times while you were working with her on set?

**Stone:** Cicely is an incredible actress, a complete living legend. We only worked together one day and she is a method actor in a certain way because she only wanted to be referred to on the set as her character Constantine and she treated me just as Skeeter. It was amazing because I'd never really worked with someone who operates in that way. It was old school. It was wonderful.

The only time we talked about the 1960s and the civil rights movement was when we had breakfast together. It was a story about how she decided to quit eating fried foods and crappy foods because the day that Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot, she got a real intense chest pain. She went to the doctor and they told her it was a hernia, so she has eaten healthy ever since. She went to King's funeral with her husband, Miles Davis.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Even though *The Help* is a piece of fiction, which actual men or women do you admire from that 1960s era and what made them as brave as Skeeter in what they did?

**Stone:** There are so many people in research, like Medgar Evers or Dr. King, those people that made such a difference back then. Personally, having to do with the journalism, I read and admire Tom Wolfe. Also Skeeter and I are deeply effected by the music of Bob Dylan.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** After you get a little power as an actress with box office success and recognition, how do you pick roles that best will represent you and keep your career viable? How do you feel about that process?

**Stone:** That process, that mentality is brand new to me. It mostly comes from your agents and manager. They are concerned about the monetary issues and such, but my mentality is to disassociate from anything to that effect, and pick roles that mean the most to me. One of the only upsides to life changing in that way is that for the first time you actually get the opportunity to choose what you want to do, what stories you want to tell and what you want to be a part of. That should have nothing to do with career 'trajectory' or anything like that. All the people I love and respect just made films they cared about. One of my mentors is Woody Harrelson, who has talked to me about never compromising and never making choices that you don't want to make.



Emma Stone Describes Her Career Trajectory in 'Easy A'  
Photo credit: Adam Taylor for Columbia TriStar Pictures

**HollywoodChicago.com:** How is Marc Webb, the director of '(500) Days of Summer,' creating a new platform for the upcoming 'The Amazing Spider-Man,' and how was the experience like becoming part of Superheroland?

**Stone:** Very interesting becoming part of Superheroland. I liked the change and evolution. It's a different story this time around and Marc was keen about telling it in a different way. It was a lot for him, there are a lot of opinions and impressions. He handled it really well, even when



balancing a million things. I can’t imagine being a director, that must be the hardest job, except maybe being a parent. [laughs]

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Do you find it more difficult to maneuver through the emotional minefields of your own relationships when you are a so-called ‘celebrity’? Does it make it more difficult?

**Stone:** I wouldn’t consider myself a so-called ‘celebrity.’ Arrrgh, for the love of God! [laughs] For sure! Quit it. I have no experience outside my own. It like people asking me what was it like not going to your high school graduation. I don’t know, because I didn’t go! I have no experience outside my own, so I really couldn’t tell you the difference navigating my life as compared to anyone else.

**HollywoodChicago.com:** Since you have three major motion pictures opening only weeks apart from each other, do you feel you change a bit as a person after every role you play? Does the experience of different movie sets provide you with a creative evolution?

**Stone:** Absolutely. It’s funny, but I don’t know that because it’s 2011 and everything moves so rapidly with the internet culture, but I just bounced, bounced and bounced from film to film. When I look at the resumes of actors of the past, like my favorite Diane Keaton, she made five movies in the 1970s. My next film will be my fifteenth, and that is in five years. That’s cuckoo bananas! If I didn’t take everything as a learning experience that would be really frickin’ sad. It’s basically like I’m taking acting classes in front of everybody now. [laughs]

It’s huge growth, huge change and it’s like being at summer camp over and over again. You’re in these little groups of people, and then you move to another group of people, like summer camp back-to-back-to-back. You always are changed when you come back from summer camp. [laughs]

*“The Help” opens everywhere August 10th. Featuring Emma Stone, Viola Davis, Bryce Dallas Howard, Octavia Spencer, Cicely Tyson, Jessica Chastain, Allison Janney and Sissy Spacek. Adapted for the screen and directed by Tate Taylor. Rated “PG-13”*



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