

Scene and Heard - April 1 Edition

It's April! Are you kidding me? (Thought I was the victim of an April Fools' Day joke - especially when my publisher called and told me that I missed deadline and to submit something *now*. Alas, he was not.)

Since we're all being foolish, I'm going to "kid" around a little today. With a gaggle of young'uns that are making their dreams come true, let's take a look at these hardworking, dedicated and completely professional little guys and gals who are on the move in the film world. This is a subject close to my heart, as I run the New England Kids Actors Group on Facebook. At 450+ members, we post jobs and casting calls specifically for kids, and we educate on the ins and outs of the industry. This is how I met some of the most incredible kids who are making it happen in their film careers.

Incredible Kids

Charlie Tacker and the kids of *Provoked* - Charlie is one cool dude. He's a veteran actor who is probably known by most folks in the film industry throughout New England. Charlie is now shooting David Langill's *Provoked*, which is filmed partly in RI and MA, including the Lizzie Borden House in Fall River. Charlie is also playing the part of Young Tony in Tony Deming's *Children of the Asylum*. Playing Charlie's sister "Sarah Johanson" in *Provoked* is Michaelah Noelle Nunes. As a high school freshman, Michaelah recently took home the 1st Runner Up Miss New Bedford's Outstanding Teen 2013 title. Also, making her feature film debut is sixth grader Alana Taylor, who plays the role of "Girl." She's excited about this part and I'm sure we will see more of her since she is following in filmmaker mom Jillian Taylor's footsteps.

Sydney Penny - Sydney is a busy girl! She is the host of that hip TV show *Confessions of a Teenage Critic*, which can be seen weekly on Saturdays at 11:30am on Rhode Island PBS. In addition to this, Sydney stars in *Demi Pointe*, which will be featured in this year's Boston International Film Festival (BIFF). Sydney plays a 12-year-old girl suffering from anxiety and selective mutism, who retreats into her own world and eventually finds her way out. This is a poignant and moving story, and not to be missed. The film festival will take place at the Boston Loews Cineplex/AMC on Tremont Street from April 12-21.

Aingea Venuto - Aingea is an incredibly talented little girl who is also very busy. She has just been cast in Byran Casey's film *Me and You* as a depressed patient. Aside from being in many musical theatre productions including playing Gavroche in *Les Miserables*, Veruca Salt in *Willy Wonka* and Iago in *Aladdin*, she has been fortunate to have had principal roles in movies such as *The Way, Way Back* with Steve Carrell, *Siren* and *The Shadows*. She also recently launched her voice-over career, and her voice can now be heard in a CVS commercial and an educational video game. Aingea keeps busy by taking voice lessons, guitar lessons, as well as Irish step and lyrical dancing.

Abigail Friend - Abigail, age six, is one of our very active members in the NE Kids Actors Group. She started acting at the end of last year. Abigail has recently been cast in Alison Schiller's book trailer *The Outsider's Atlas*, and will play the role of Ophelia, which will film in March. In the past, she has played a student at a library in Michael Ratner's movie *The 30 Year Old Bris* with Chris Elliot, and also a victim's daughter - Emma on *Blue Bloods* with Tom Selleck, Donnie Wahlberg and Will Estes. On top of all this, Abigail was just booked to play a background role in *The Blacklist* for an NBC pilot. We look forward to seeing more of Abigail's work.

Haley Pine - Haley is a sweet 10-year-old girl and a very diverse one at that. She is busy in film, with two Boston University films, *The Dog House*, based on a story by Josh Gross and another film called *Big Shot*. She has also performed in 11 theatre productions, one of which is Arlene Violet's musical *The Family*, a story about the mob. This past February she filmed a popsicle commercial in Warwick, which also starred some of our other NE Kids Actors group members. Her latest role was Little Red Riding Hood in the performance of *Into The Woods* presented by Academy Players of RI.

Nicky Gem - There's a reason why we call Nicky Sarmiento "Nicky Gem." Currently she has been cast for some senior thesis short films in Providence: *Mom's Tale* with director/producer Gabriela Bello from RISD, and *The Army Brat* with producer/director Alyssa Shaffer from Boston College. Nicky has premiered in a lot of films and we are especially looking forward to her Providence premier of *Mom's Tale*.

Shay Martin - Ahhh to be young again. Former Rhode Island resident Shay Martin, age 15, is the co-founder of Fountain of Youth Productions (FYP), a new youth film production group in Sharon, MA. Shay, who grew up Providence and Cranston, has studied acting, and along with her friend (and co-founder) Audrey Larson, has added screenwriting and filmmaking to her repertoire. FYP's mission is to offer kids and teens the chance to be a part of making a short movie. This includes not only acting, but set design, sound, lighting, directing, make-up, cinematography and costumes. They are in the midst of editing their first short film, *Countdown*. FYP welcomes Rhode Island kids and teens who would like to get involved in this unique venture. For information and updates visit: www.fountainofyouthproductions.com

Gianni Colonero - Oh boy, look out. These little guys are everywhere. The whole reason my ever growing group on Facebook exists is because of Gianni. While searching for a talented eight-year-old boy who would be comfortable playing my son's friend in a film called *Chum* by Garth Donovan, (Charlie was already booked), Gianni's Mom Natasha answered my call. Well, we found him with virtually no camera experience; he nailed the part of a little dude in a somewhat disturbing reenactment scene. Since then, Gianni has gone on to be in three more films, a commercial and is now booked for work on a certain big budget Hollywood feature that's in town, all in less than five months. Congrats Gianni! Stay tuned, because his brother Dante is making his own waves...

Give Me Five

Recently I took part in a program called Give Me Five, a teen film lab program run by the RI Council on the Arts and the RI Film Office. The theme this year was "Make a Minute Movie" and it was a fun filled afternoon where we, the actors, worked with teens on producing a short film to be shown at the end of the day. Talk about pressure! These kids amazed me. I was in one of their films called *Sweet Memories*, and I am considering using some of the footage in my reel. We brought props and the kids chose one for their team and then set out to write, cast, shoot and edit their short for viewing on the same day. The results were amazing; it always floors me when I see such young people who are focused on their art form. These films will be later broadcast during a film festival online in May - don't miss it! For more information contact sherilyn.brown@arts.ri.gov.

Join Us

If you have a child who is an actor, singer, dancer or performer and would like more information on our kids group, please join us on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/newenglandkids/ or tweet us at @NEKIDSACTORS. We look forward to hearing from you. Our very first networking event on April 7 is

taking place in Whitman, MA, with industry professionals who will speak on proper tools for the child actor, social media campaigning, on set guidelines, the legalities and protection of children in the film industry, agency protocol and much more. Area casting directors will be in attendance, so parents should bring at least five sets of head shots and resumes. (The event is not a casting call or a scheduled audition for the kids but you can certainly leave their materials with the casting directors for future consideration.) Child care is available by CPR and CORI certified teens, and food and non-alcoholic drinks will also be in abundance, so come and eat, drink and meet some of the best in the business! We look forward to seeing you there. If you have any questions, please contact me at rpacheco737@hotmail.com and put "NE Kids Event" in the subject line.



*** A side note - yours truly did make the "Top 100 Women We Admire" through the Boston Ad Club for my work in promoting the film industry, running the kids actors group, and for running my business venture (www.danielrosesilkeeffects.com) so thanks for your votes! You can download that book here and see my fellow actors, business women, volunteers and entrepreneurs at <http://theadclubevents.org/Women100/100womenweadmire/>. Look for my weekly bursts of information in Scene and Heard and on our new Motif TV. If you have film news that you would like to be included, please contact me at the above e-mail address and put "Scene and Heard" in the subject line. Thank and I look forward to hearing from you!