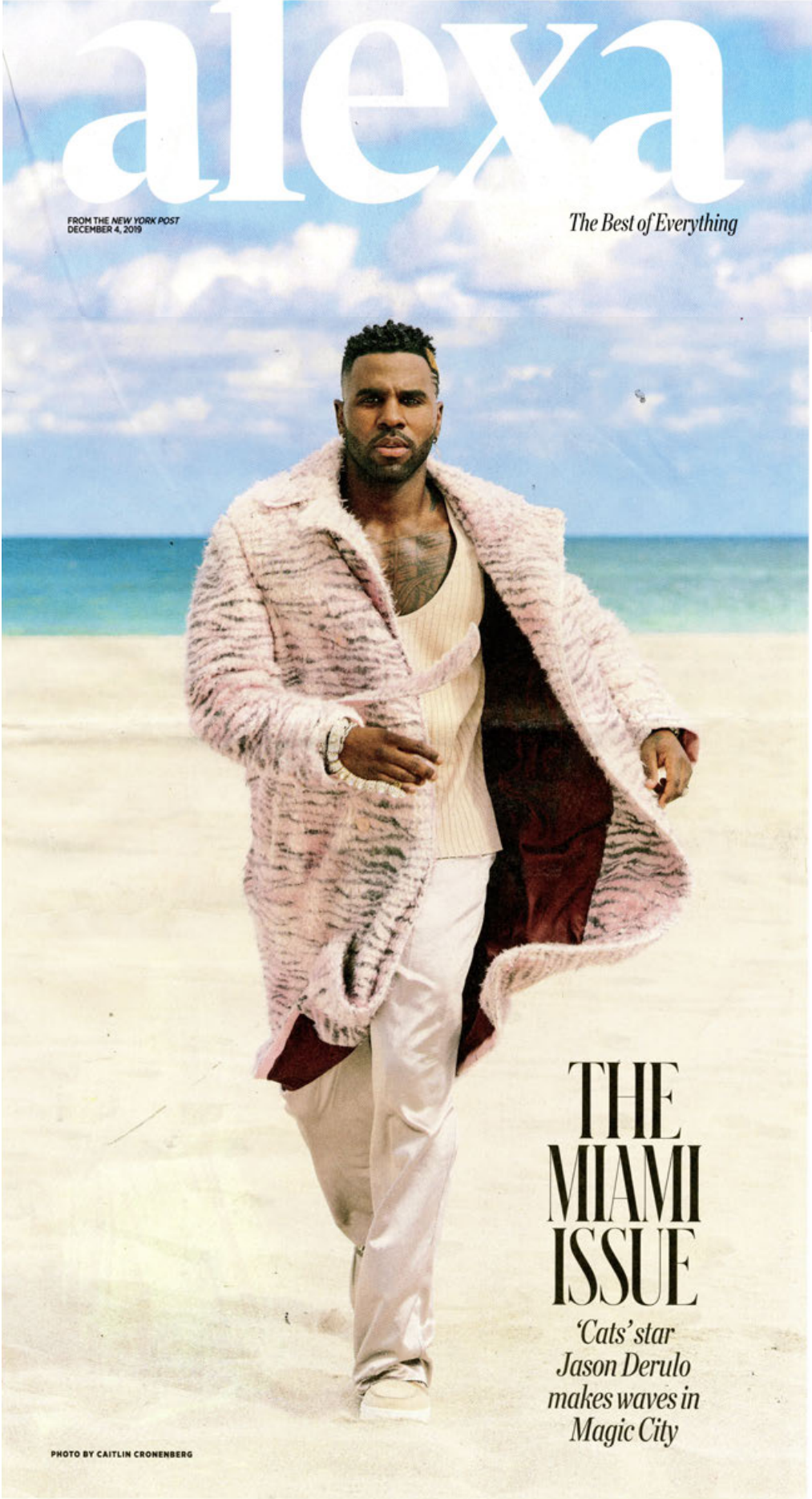


Thomas Keller stirs things up + Gronk's beach fiesta + Art Basel dazzles

alexa

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The Best of Everything



THE MIAMI ISSUE

*'Cats' star
Jason Derulo
makes waves in
Magic City*

PHOTO BY CAITLIN CRONENBERG

COVER STORY



"Santorini" tank and "Blanche" pants, both priced upon request at Santorini.com; band price, \$2,850 at Gucci.com; Chain bracelet, \$127; and rope chain bracelet, \$165, both at EmmanuelBecchetti.fr; Ring with black onyx cabochon, \$190 at Taccori.com. All other jewelry throughout, Derulo's own.

FLYING TIGER

HITMAKER
JASON DERULO
TACKLES HIS FIRST
FILM ROLE IN 'CATS'

STORY BY CHUCK ARNOLD
PHOTOS BY CAITLIN CRONENBERG



Short-sleeved shirt, \$100, and long-sleeved shirt, \$450, both at Gucci.com; Gucci shorts, \$790 at Mercurio.com; Band bracelet, \$190; Sneakers, \$119; at ChristianLouboutin.com; EmmanuelBecchetti bracelet, as before; Ring, \$450 at Taccori.com; Photo, Derulo's own.

BEFORE filming the movie version of the Tony-winning musical "Cats," out Dec. 20, pop star Jason Derulo was strictly a dog person. "I've always been a dog person. I got two dogs," says the 30-year-old singer behind hits such as "Whatcha Say," "Talk Dirty" and "Wiggle." "Learning the ins and outs of a feline, how complex they are, definitely made me more of a cat person. They have so much personality. One second, they wanna be your friend and they wanna be petted. And then the next second, they're like, 'Get off me. Like, what are you doing?' They're wishy-washy. So I'm still a dog guy."

This cool cat breaks out his acting claws in the film adaptation of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical alongside Judi Dench, Idris Elba, Ian McKellen and Rebel Wilson, as well as fellow music artists Taylor Swift and Jennifer Hudson.

To get in touch with his inner feline, he and the rest of the cast attended something called cat school.

"It was a crazy experience, man," says Derulo. "At cat school, you learn about their mannerisms, what they do and why they do it. And you kinda have to pull from those things to develop your character, develop your cat. We'd all be [crawling] on the floor trying to find the cat within. The 'cat teacher,' if you will, was on set for every shot. Any time she noticed something or had an idea, she would come forth with it."

Getting in and out of his cat costume as Rum Tum Tugger wasn't as tricky as it looks, thanks to the wonders of computer-

generated imagery.

"It was about an hour putting on the green suit, and then you have to put on the sound equipment and get the dots on your face," he says. "The finished product is not a costume that we had on. That's CGI."

But there was one big sacrifice: "I had to shave my beard, man — and I'm a beard guy. Without my beard, I felt like a kid! You can't have a beard, because it kind of messes with the [movement] trackers."

It's the first film role for Derulo — who attended the American Musical and Dramatic Academy in New York.

"I receive scripts all the time, but I was waiting on the right role, the right movie, because it's easy to be considered a musician that just goes to acting because he can, as opposed to actually being a talented actor. I wanted to choose a role that would be a part of a legacy, a role that should be remembered in some way."

He was able to call upon his killer dance skills to move like a cat.

"Movement, in general, I think will help in any film, but especially this one, because you have to embody something, and I don't think anybody will do that better than dancers. I hope when people watch the film, they'll understand how incredible dancers are in general."

Growing up in Miami, Derulo learned at an early age that he had moves like Jackson — as in Michael. "I started dancing when I started singing, being a Michael Jackson kid, practicing all his moves and singing all his songs," the artist says. "Smooth Criminal" and "Bad" were my two favorite [videos] that I would replay over and over and over again, trying to do the dance moves. You'd see me in my kitchen with my socks on, trying to do the moonwalk."

And his dream dance partner is another Jackson — Janet — for whom he recently



Palm Angels track jacket, \$1,800, and pants, \$1,020, both at Saks Fifth Avenue, 611 Fifth Ave., 5th fl., \$450 at Target.com; Emanuele Boccchi bracelets, as before

opened while on tour in Australia. "She is just incredible and still so quick," he says of the 53-year-old pop diva. "She's definitely someone that I'd wanna dance with."

But the two connected beyond popping and locking. "She's an absolute sweet heart, honestly. She reminds me a lot of my sister — the sweetest person you could possibly imagine, but if you cross her, then the attitude will come out, too!"

Derulo will be busting out some of his signature moves to the tracks on his new EP, "2Sides (Side 1)," which dropped in November, with "Side 2" to come early next year. The six-song set is his first body of work since his 2015 album "Everything Is 4."

"I had been planning to put it out a long time ago, but circumstances kinda got in the way," he says. "I got 'Cats,' and I didn't wanna release [it] while I was working on 'Cats.'"

But the time away from the pop world allowed him to grow as a man and a musician.

"I think the biggest change is age and experience," he says. "Me growing up as a man changed the way that I write songs, changed the way that I sing songs ..."

Right now, I'm just excited to have music out in the world. I feel like a huge weight [has been] lifted off my back. I'm excited to release more. It's always a process that gives me life."

Going through a high-profile relationship with 2007 American Idol Jordin Sparks — and their subsequent breakup in 2014 — taught Derulo a lot about life.

"I've learned that I really don't want to be in a relationship," he says. "I don't think it's that time in my life. I'm so focused on my craft and my art, man, that there's very little time to give to somebody at this point in my life. I'm very single — super single."

And the two exes aren't exactly friendly: "No, we're not. But not for any particular reason ... She's happy, she has her family — her kid and her husband [model Dana Isaiah] — so I'm happy for her."

Derulo's single status allows him to still be a ladies' man. And judging from an Instagram post last month showing off his ripped body in nothing but boxer briefs, the recent Men's Health cover boy is a bona-fide thirst trap from his daily workouts that, when he's in full beast mode, include strength training in the morning and cardio later in the day.

"When I'm in L.A., it always happens," he says of his two-a-days.

Derulo celebrated his 30th birthday on Sept. 21 by doing what he does best — performing at the Rome wedding of oil heir Mikey Hess alongside Paul McCartney, Katy Perry and Ellie Goulding.

"That was crazy. It was pretty lit," he says. "We had a good time there and then came back and celebrated in America for the rest of the month. You can't just celebrate one day — you gotta go hard."

Ten years after his debut single, "Whatcha Say" — which went No. 1 on the Billboard Hot 100 — Derulo is still going hard in the music game. Not that he's surprised: "I've always been a 'by any means necessary' kind of guy. I was gonna make it happen by any means necessary. With that being said, it was a dream."

And in the past decade, he's learned just how to wiggle around the business. At first, he says, "I was trying to figure out who I had to be to be successful, as opposed to being the person that I am. I think with years and with experience, you can have both. You don't have to become somebody else or something else to be successful."

"You have to make mistakes, you have to fall on your face to become the person that you dream of," he continues. "There's no better teacher than feeling the pain yourself."



PICTURED: Wetuase; watchband, \$725, and rings, \$200, both at Saks Fifth Avenue; "Gucci" jacket, \$1,695 at Glossop; Zanussi, 806 Madison Ave., Lansburgh; Derulo's own

ON THE COVER: "Anderson" leather jacket, "Santitas" tank and "Blanche" pants, all price upon request at SeePhilly.com; "Metallic" boots, \$180 at ChristianLouboutin.com; Gucci hand plane, as before; Emanuele Boccchi bracelets, as before

Fashion Editor: Serena French
 Stylist: Anahita Mousavian
 Hair: Jose Soto
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