



Bronwyn James.

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On the cover



Bronwyn James.

In my engaging conversation with Bronwyn James, her enthusiasm for her upcoming role as ShenShen in the film adaptation of “Wicked” is infectious. She reflects fondly on her childhood love for the musical and the excitement of stepping into a character that embodies both fun and challenge. As we discuss the complexities of switching genres, Bronwyn shares her growth in navigating fears and cultivating courage, particularly as a queer individual. Her commitment to storytelling and respect for everyone involved in the filmmaking process reveals a depth of character that is as inspiring as her talent. As I listen to her insights, I am left eager to see how this rising star will shine in “Wicked,” bringing her dreams to life on screen.



V: Bronwyn, thank you for taking the time to speak with me today. I've been following your career for a while now, and I'm particularly excited about your upcoming role in "Wicked." It's a musical that's been anticipated for years. What drew you to the role of ShenShen, and what was it about the character that resonated with you?

B: Thank you very much. I've always loved the musical Wicked, it was the first West End show I ever saw when I was a child, and I've loved it ever since. So when I knew there were auditions happening for a movie adaptation, I really wanted to be involved in ANY capacity that I could! So, getting to go for a role was a really huge honour, especially for Shenshen because of how the fun the role was. Any time you get to play a mean girl caricature, it's a good time!

V: I understand that you've been involved in a variety of projects, from historical dramas to comedies. What do you find most challenging about transitioning between such different genres? Do you have a preferred style or genre, or do you enjoy the variety?

B: I think the biggest challenge is getting the tone right. If I was to go into something like "Outlander" with "Wicked" energy, it could be really jarring and the same vice versa. Or even doing something like comedy in period piece versus modern day, you have to tackle it in a completely different way.

I do enjoy the variety, but I'll always love doing historical or fantasy projects. Basically, any excuse to wear a massive dress, a corset, and a 5ft wig.

V: In "Wicked," the themes of friendship, loyalty, and the power of love are explored. How do you personally relate to these themes? Have your own experiences shaped your interpretation of these characters and their stories?

B: One of the strongest qualities of Wicked is its themes of friendship and loyalty and even deciding where your loyalties have to lie - it's something that I think a lot of us can relate to. That's why people love Wicked so much! It's such a universal experience of having love for those you're close to, but trying to figure out where you fit into the world at the same time, and have love for yourself.

V: You've also been involved in several film soundtracks. How does your singing voice complement your acting ca-

reer? Do you find that your musical abilities enhance your performances on screen?

B: I hope so, although next to voices like Cynthia and Ariana, I can't promise I won't sound like a seagull! I've been a musician/singer since I was young, but this is the first time I've properly got to use it in my professional life. Fingers crossed it's not the last!

V: Looking back on your career, what are some of the most significant lessons you've learned? Have there been any challenges or setbacks that have shaped your approach to your work?

B: I've really learned that it's not as terrifying as I think. When I was younger and first got into the industry, I was always so nervous about everything. About working with actors who I really respect, about trying to come across as professional, about constantly trying to be working so that more jobs come. And that's a really exhausting way to work in the industry. I've been incredibly lucky to have any kind of success in acting, so as I've matured and moved up in my career I've learned to really enjoy myself! I get to do something for a living that I've wanted to do since I was a kid, so it makes no sense to be too nervous to enjoy it!

V: Bronwyn, as you've progressed in your career, how has your understanding of what it means to be an actor evolved? Do you feel that it's a journey of becoming more professional, gaining recognition, or is there a more personal, internal aspect to it? Is there a specific moment or experience that you can recall when you felt like you truly discovered the essence of acting?

B: For me being an actor, it's such a privilege - there are very few professions out there that would give me the same fulfilment I get from acting. Of course, there's a huge personal and professional pressure of gaining recognition and being someone that has a big body of work, but I think beyond that pressure, it just comes down to wanting to be constantly doing a job that I love! I want to become a successful actress, not so I can be in the public eye or God forbid "famous", but so that I get to do amazing things like Wicked and watch someone fly through the air on wires, or ride a dragon for 8 hours a day like on How to Train Your Dragon. At the end of it, I'm still exactly like I was as a kid - I love playing pretend!

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BRONWYN JAMES

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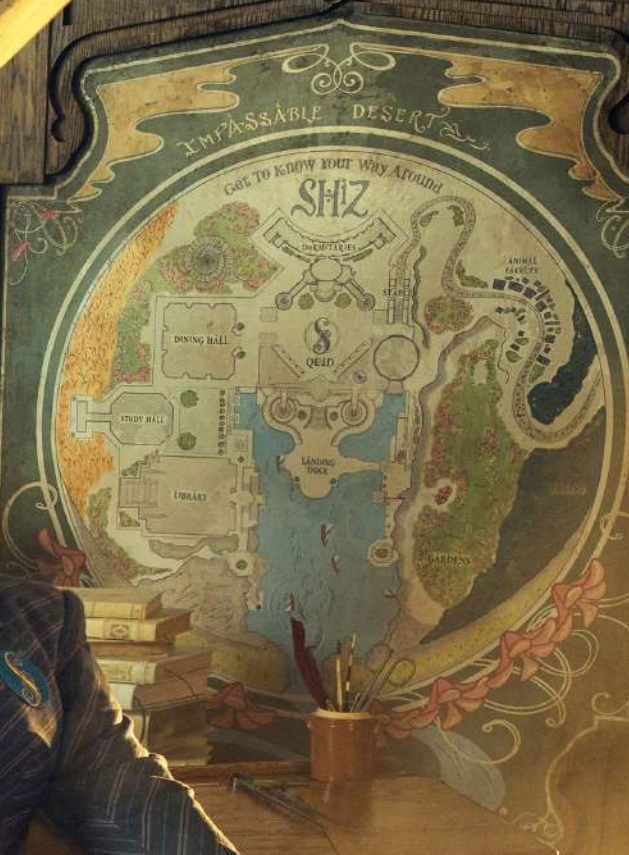
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Respect is such a huge thing for me, especially in this industry! It's not about picking and choosing who you have to respect and treat with dignity, it's about everyone.

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V: I'm curious about your thoughts on courage. What does courage mean to you, both in terms of facing challenges and overcoming obstacles? Is it something that arises from passion, or is it a separate quality that can be cultivated through experience? Could you share any personal experiences that have shaped your understanding and appreciation of courage?

B: I think having courage is really something that takes practice - you have to work on it. Some people are ballsy by nature, I'm not! With my own personal experiences of being queer, courage and self-advocating is something that you kind of have no choice but to learn. When I was young, I was terrified of what it would be like if I was out, and now I hold my wife's hand walking down the street, and being queer is one of the first things a new acquaintance will learn about me! There's a quote that I really love - "if you can't do it brave, do it scared".

V: As we conclude our conversation, I'm interested in your thoughts on respect within the acting industry. Beyond external recognition, what truly matters to you as an artist when it comes to earning respect? What qualities or actions do you believe contribute to a reputation of respect within the profession?

B: Respect is such a huge thing for me, especially in this industry! It's not about picking and choosing who you have to respect and treat with dignity, it's about everyone. Every single person on a film set from the makeup artists to set builders to supporting artists to the lead actors are there for the same reason! So show respect to everyone. If I could be known as an actor that comes in and gets on with everyone and puts everything I have into a role, that's what I'd consider a "respected actor"

Wicked is set to hit theaters on November 22, 2024 in the United States, with a special London premiere on November 18, 2024.



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