

FEATURES

NICOLE SCHERZINGER





Corset top by Maggie Norris Couture
Skirt by Maggie Norris Couture
Earrings by Chris Davies

NICOLE SCHERZINGER, SIMPLY UNEXPECTED

BY DEVORAH ROSE AND LIZABETH ZINDEL
PHOTOGRAPHY BY GIAN ANDREA DI STEFANO

“Growing up I always felt like I had been given something different. I would always say, ‘I’m the alien,’” Nicole Scherzinger confides. “But when I’m singing or performing or being creative that’s when I feel complete, when I feel whole, when I feel like I’m here for a reason.” As a young girl, music was constantly on Nicole’s mind; she lip synced to Whitney Houston daily and belted pop tunes at family barbecues. She dreamed of a life filled with song and is now living that dream, having cultivated a career of independence and versatility.

Scherzinger has taken on a wide range of roles including the lead singer of the Pussy Cat Dolls, a judge on the reality TV show *The X Factor*, and the winning contestant of the tenth season of *Dancing with the Stars*. Her career has led to a variety of collaborations with artists from Slash to Andrea Bocelli. The partnership with Slash, the lead guitarist of Guns N’ Roses, happened in 2010 when he phoned her. “He heard this song of mine from the Pussy Cat Dolls called *I Hate This Part*, and he said that he loved it and couldn’t believe that was my voice.” Scherzinger agreed to collaborate and the duo

recorded a song called *Baby Can’t Drive*, with Roadrunner Records. Scherzinger loved singing with Slash at live concerts. “We have done a couple of live performances together, and when we do, that is my favorite. I’m a big rock chick at heart. I just love to get revved up on stage,” she says. On the other side of the musical spectrum, Scherzinger had the honor of singing last year with Andrea Bocelli, one of the world’s greatest tenors. This summer, she will be performing with him at the Hollywood Bowl as well as at other scheduled venues in Europe.

Scherzinger recently performed in London. She starred as Grizabella in the West End’s revival of *Cats*, joining forces with the iconic Broadway composer Andrew Lloyd Webber. Her performance garnered a Laurence Olivier Award nomination for Best Actress in a Supporting Role. She fondly remembers first learning she landed the part. “I was in the middle of doing a dangerous stunt on *I Can Do That*, a show for NBC, when I was told. I felt ecstatic.”

Cats is based on T.S. Eliot’s book of poems about wondrously-named felines, *Old Possum’s Book of Practical Cats*.



Strapless gown by Katya Leonovich
Necklace by GBGH jewelry
Ring on left hand by Solomeina

The show transports the audience to inside the world of Jellicle cats, a unique breed that sing about their individual qualities before attending the Jellicle Ball, where one will be selected to rise to the supernatural Heaviside Layer for rebirth. To prepare for the role, Scherzinger took time to observe the behavior of abandoned felines. “When I found out that I was going to be a cat — and not just any cat, but a bit of an older cat — I went to an animal shelter in London to study strays. I studied older cats, I studied young cats, I studied their reactions and how they moved.”

Scherzinger took us inside the rehearsal process. “There was a true craftsmanship behind what we did. How we broke down a song had so much meaning and so much depth — more than anyone can fathom. We would have really meaningful conversations about *Grizabella*: Why she would turn her head and why she wouldn’t turn her head. Why she would lift her arm and why she wouldn’t lift her arm. There was a reason for every little thing that we did. Nothing was thrown away.” While drawing inspiration from the original production of *Cats* that premiered in London in 1981 and New York City

in 1982, the London revival featured several musical updates, including a rapping Rum Tum Tugger, and additions to Andrew Lloyd Webber’s hauntingly beautiful song *Memory*, which Scherzinger performed every night to a packed house at the London Palladium.

“There is one section: a memoir dance before *Grizabella* sings her first memory. I was blessed enough to convince Andrew to make it longer. He actually wrote new music after all these years. I wanted it extended because I thought there was more of a story we could tell there. With that extension of music we had to do an extension of choreography to tell the story.”

Scherzinger had the honor of working with Dame Gillian Lynne, who choreographed and worked as the assistant director on the original production of *Cats* with Andrew Lloyd Webber. Scherzinger says, “I worked really hard with Gillian Lynne. She is ninety-one years old and she’s had a legendary career as a ballerina, choreographer, and director. She is still as hard as anything and she is graceful and beautiful and she is royalty, but she will still make you cry. She had her artistic



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vision and I had my artistic vision. She would usually win.”

Scherzinger was scheduled to bring *Grizabella* to New York City this year, but chose a different direction. Instead of *Cats*, Scherzinger will be a judge on the UK's *X-Factor*. Andrew Lloyd Webber, winner of two Tonys for *Cats*, wasn't shy about expressing his displeasure with her decision. Our cover girl alluded to it quickly, by saying, “I look forward to doing Broadway when the time is right.”

While partnering with outstanding artists has been a theme throughout her musical journey, Scherzinger holds a special place in her heart for the iconic singer of *Purple Rain*. “One of my biggest mentors and one of my closest friends was Prince,” she says. “He always brought out the best in everyone. He always inspired me to be the best and keep pushing, so that's what I'm going to do. Prince found me at my early stages. It was well over ten years ago. He was my brother and my close friend and my teacher and my mentor. He taught me a lot about music.”

Although Scherzinger has traveled all over the world from an early age, she embarked on her first trip to the Hamptons

a few years ago. “My whole life I always wanted to go to the Hamptons. Even though I've been to the South of France and have traveled a lot, the Hamptons is a place that I really wanted to see,” she says. “I thought that the Hamptons was an upper echelon place where the untouchables go and that it would be so fancy. I imagined that everything would be New England style and that the homes would be shabby white chic with columns. I thought one day I was going to get into the pearly gates of the Hamptons.”

When she first stepped foot on the East End, however, she was surprised by how the picturesque stretch of Long Island didn't match up to her preconceptions. “When I went to the Hamptons I loved it because it wasn't pretentious at all. I thought it was beautiful, laid back, easy living.”

Her favorite things about the South Fork are getting on a bike and riding everywhere, not being bothered, and getting ice cream. “It was so serene. The Hamptons is so picturesque and so beautiful and there is so much character. It's stunning. I've seen some of the most beautiful sunsets I've ever seen in my life here. The Hamptons offers the best art show ever.



Jacket by Maggie Norris Couture
Beaded Dress by Maggie Norris Couture
Bracelet by Iosselliani

It's a very special place for me."

So what's next for Scherzinger? She will be starring in ABC's remake of *Dirty Dancing*. For those not familiar with the film, *Dirty Dancing* centers around the romance of Baby, a young woman vacationing with her parents at a resort, who gets swept off her feet by Johnny, a working class dance instructor. Scherzinger's character, Penny, is Johnny's dance partner. The magical book and score for this movie made it a classic!

Scherzinger feels blessed to have stayed on the musical path she has aspired to since her childhood. She says, "I've been on tours around the world so I'm right on track for making music, being on stage, touring, and doing what I've always loved." She urges young people to "create your own world, create your vision, be original, don't be a copy."

Creative Director: Devorah Rose

Executive Assistant: Rebecca Rose

Photography: Gian Andrea di Stefano

Wardrobe Stylist: Alejandro Garcia

Assistant Wardrobe Stylist: Jonathan Yera and Aaron Burges

Makeup: Renne Garnes

Hair: Jackie Litscher for Angelo David | Elchim Milano

Nails: Clive Rousseau for Angelo David | OPI Products



Dress by Sylvio Rouberto Kovacic





Strapless gown by Katya Leonovich
Necklace by GBGH Jewelry
Ring on left hand by Solomeina



Necklace by GIBGI Jewelry



Cape by Maggie Norris Couture
Necklace by Chris Davies



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