Acting Up

IT'S DIFFICULT TO MAKE THE TRANSITION FROM CHILD STAR TO SEASONED HOLLYWOOD HOTSHOT. BUT WAIT AND SEE—THESE 10 PRODIGIES WILL REMAIN IN THE SPOTLIGHT FOR YEARS TO COME.

BY
NAJJA PARKER

Trevor Jackson

Singer/Actor, 18

IN THE BEGINNING At age 8, the Indiana-bred crooner played young Simba in *The Lion King* on Broadway. He then headed to the small screen to appear in shows such as *Cold Case*, and signed to Atlantic Records in 2012. With a musical project, *In My Feelings*, and two films on deck for this year, he is growing his star power.

AN ENTERTAINER WITH A PURPOSE In April, Jackson participated in a youth summit to commemorate the life of Tony Robinson, a 19-year-old fatally shot by a police officer in Madison, Wis. "My duty as a man in this world we live in is to stand up for what is right, so meeting his family was a humbling experience," he reflects. "That easily could have been me."

Eden Duncan-Smith

Singer/Actress,15

SHE LOOKS FAMILIAR BECAUSE ... you likely spotted her among the foster kids belting out "It's A Hard-Knock Life" in the 2014 film version of *Annie*. She also shared the stage with Denzel Washington and Viola Davis in Broadway's *Fences* and portrayed young Nala in the Broadway production of *The Lion King*.

IF SHE'S NOT ON STAGE, SHE'S... reading a book. This rising high school junior has 96 books (all read) stuffed under her desk at home. She aspires to follow in her mom's footsteps by attending Spelman College, where she'd like to study science or math to add astrophysicist to her résumé. "Those are my favorite subjects and, in a lot of ways, they go hand in hand with the arts," she says.

PHOTO BY DANTE MARSHALL; PHOTO BY LUIS ANTONIO THOMPSON

Miles Brown, Marsai Martin, Marcus Scribner, Yara Shahidi

***Actors* 10,10, 15 and 15**

SIBLING LOVE As the junior members of the Johnson clan, this foursome delivers sidesplitting comedy each week in *black-ish* alongside their TV parents, Anthony Anderson and Tracee Ellis Ross. The youngsters have helped the ABC series become a standout. Over 10 million people tuned in for the premiere episode last fall, and the show won an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Comedy Series and received a People's Choice Awards nomination for Favorite New TV Comedy earlier this year.

TROPHY KIDS Scribner was nominated for an NAACP Image Award for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy Series, and Shahidi snagged a win in the actress category. Brown and Martin weren't left out of the conversation: They nabbed Young Artist Award nominations at the beginning of the year.

GOOD SPORTS Scribner has been a competitive lacrosse player for seven years. Shahidi is quite the athlete herself; she has earned a black belt in tang soo do. Martin has a background in cheerleading and gymnastics. And Brown, an accomplished hip-hop dancer, hopes to play professional basketball.

TONY RIVETTI/ABC; CRAIG SJODIN/DISNEY CHANNEL

Zendaya Coleman

***Singer/Actress*, 18**

WHY HER SCHEDULE MAKES US DIZZY Not only is this recent high school grad a skilled actress with a current role on Disney Channel's *K.C. Undercover*, but the Oakland, Calif., native also placed second in season 16 of *Dancing with the Stars* and released a self-titled debut album in 2013, which yielded the platinum single "Replay."

SHE'S ENJOYING YOUTH Although the author of *Between U and Me: How to Rock Your Tween Years with Style and Confidence* will be exiting her teenage years soon, she's in no rush. "I'm trying to pace myself. I'm still growing, and I don't want to go too fast," she admits. "It's important to hold on to your age. I'm not trying to be a grown-up quite just yet."

Tyler James Williams

Actor, 22

COMING OF AGE Born in Yonkers, N.Y., this young adult has seamlessly shed his kid image. Since scoring the lead in the sitcom *Everybody Hates Chris* at age 12, the actor has continued to boost his stardom with recurring TV roles on *The Walking Dead* and the short-lived comedy *Go On*, and a leading part in the acclaimed film *Dear White People*. He's now gearing up for a new venture in the upcoming *Criminal Minds* spin-off.

HE DREAMS OF ... starring in the *Fantastic Four* franchise. "Any script sent to me with those superheroes in it is a goal as of now," he shares.

MUSIC MATTERS Williams also knows how to spit a killer freestyle. Just listen to his mixtape, *Me, My Brother & A Mic*, created with his younger brother Tyrel.

Coco Jones

Singer/Actress, 17

DREAM CATCHER The Nashville native hit the big time in 2012 when she co-starred in her first feature film, the Disney Channel musical *Let It Shine*.

UP NEXT Add her latest single, "Let 'Em Know," to your summer playlist; you won't be able to sit still. Expect more of the upbeat, heavy-bass sound soon, because the independent artist is in the studio cranking out future bangers for her upcoming debut album and preparing to tour.

BALANCING ACT When the R&B/pop vocalist isn't shutting down shows, she's all about keeping it real. "I like to separate the glitz and glamour from the normal moments," she says. "When I am Courtney, I'm regular; when I am Coco, I've got work to do and people to impress. I'm about my business."

Amandla Stenberg

Actress, 16

FROM THE JUMP... this Cali girl has landed gigs that showcase her incredible strength and courage. (Her first name does means "power" in Zulu.) In 2011, she landed her breakout role as Rue in the first installment of *The Hunger Games* trilogy.

MILLENNIAL MOVEMENT The activist took to social media to speak out about the unrest in Baltimore following the death of Freddie Gray. "Don't condemn our anger. Don't denounce our pain as savage. What's savage is the cruel inhumanity and brutality of the police. Condemn that," she tweeted.

A HELPING HAND The well-rounded teen devotes her spare time to the No Kid Hungry organization and works with the Ubuntu Education Fund, a nonprofit that provides health, tutoring and household support to children in Port Elizabeth, South Africa. E

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