

A Ham in Rye

WESTCHESTER NATIVE JOHN TREACY EGAN IS A BROADWAY STAR WHO SHONE BRIGHTLY, EVEN IN HIS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL BASEMENT.

By Marisa Iallorardo

The *Producers* star John Treacy Egan smiles broadly, revealing the deep dimple in his cheek. Hunching his shoulders just slightly, widening his eyes and cocking his dyed-black (naturally red)-haired head forward, he points at me for confirmation he's found the right person at this crowded lunch spot. As Egan, 44, ambles towards me for his interview, I can't help but smile. Because in just a few seconds, the Larchmont resident exudes a contagious comedic energy that's reminiscent of his Broadway persona, the larger-than-life Max Bialystock.

"Max is so energetic," says Egan of his on-stage alter ego. "He's a great New York character, a wonderful representation of where I'm from, that New York culture thing," he says with a mock-hip tone. But unlike the luckless producer he plays eight times a week on Broadway, Egan has been hitting it big with *The Producers* since 2002. He has, in fact, worked his way up, starting with the role of Nazi-turned-playwright Franz Liebkind, and then the flamboyant theatrical director Roger DeBris, all while understudying for Brad Oscar, who played Max after Nathan Lane did. Eventually, Egan took over the starring role from Oscar. "I don't know many people who have had three principal roles in one show," he says.

As an actor, Egan has worked from the ground up—literally. Realizing from an early age that he wanted to be an actor, Egan honed his talents in the basement productions of his elementary school, Saints John and Paul School in Larchmont, staging such plays as *Father of the Bride* and *Don't Drink the Water*. The actor, who later attended Rye Country Day School (which recently bestowed on him two awards—one inducting him into the Alumni Hall of Fame), returned to his alma mater to direct those same basement plays.

"My career started in Westchester," says the SUNY Purchase graduate. From the garage where he and his six siblings would perform Jackson 5 songs, to the Westchester Broadway Theatre, where he received his Actors' Union card, Egan has a love for the county that hasn't been dimmed by big-city lights.

"It's beautiful here and it's a short train ride to the city. There's the peace and quiet of standing on line at the bank with only one other person, instead of thirty."

Egan, who shares an apartment with his partner and their Yorkshire terrier, Maizie, hopes to own a house soon. His apartment holds his large collection of toys, including an ever-growing collection of *Star Wars* action figures, play sets, and—his favorites—light sabers. "I'm such a geek," he says, laughing. ☞

