

The Beetz Goes On

Talented, chic, and cool as hell,
ZAZIE BEETZ is the Max Mara Face of
the Future we could all see coming

by JENNIFER FERRISE photographed by CHRISEAN ROSE
styled by DARRYL GLOVER

All clothing and
accessories,
Max Mara. Earrings,
worn throughout,
her own.







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azie Beetz is a sucker for a great costume, so just imagine her delight when she got the call to star in the new-school spaghetti Western *The Harder They Fall*. “My character, Stagecoach Mary Fields, wears a lace-up corset vest, wide leather pants, and a long *Matrix*-style jacket that blows in the wind, all topped off with an Abraham Lincoln hat and a shotgun,” she says with a grin. “She’s a badass.”

The Jay-Z-produced film, which hits select theaters on October 22 and streams worldwide on Netflix November 3, also features Jonathan Majors, Idris Elba, Regina King, and LaKeith Stanfield doing some impressive gunslinging. “It’s a Black cowboy film with lots of bells and whistles,” Beetz explains. “The story itself is completely fictionalized, but all the characters carry the names of real Black historical figures in the West.”

In actuality, Stagecoach Mary was a former slave who became the first Black female mail carrier in the U.S. and went on to own multiple businesses, including her own restaurant. For Beetz, the project was an opportunity to honor her memory and help redefine the way we’ve seen Westerns play out onscreen. “A lot of the iconic characters in older cowboy films were actually based on Black people, but they were changed to white to go with the story,” she says. “I think it’s important to show that there was this version as well.”

Beetz’s personal style follows a similarly eclectic pattern. Born in Berlin and raised in N.Y.C.’s Washington Heights, Beetz says that both cities influenced her look. “Berlin has more of a grungy hippie feel that I’ve leaned into as I’ve gotten older,” she says. When she was a teen, she was a fan of bold Harajuku style (“I was known as ‘rainbow girl’ for about 10 years”). And while Beetz still jumps for color, these days vintage-inspired “old-timey” clothes help her tap into the fantasy side of fashion. “I know it’s silly, but I die for Renaissance-y stuff, and vintage-style hair and clothes,” she says, citing Sofia Coppola’s 2006 film *Marie Antoinette* as one of her biggest sartorial inspirations. “With my acting, I’ve always been concerned about what people think, like, ‘Gosh, do they like it? Was I good?’ But with style, I don’t care. I like to get creative because it’s just for me.”

She’s earned high marks in both categories. In 2018 Beetz nabbed an Emmy nomination for her nuanced portrayal of Donald Glover’s on-off girlfriend Van in her breakout role on FX’s *Atlanta*. Since then she has shown her range, from indie hits like the existential Sundance favorite *Nine Days* to massive tentpole films such as *Deadpool 2* and *Joker* (the latter two are the highest-grossing R-rated movies of all time). Coming up, Beetz has the third season of *Atlanta* and two other projects set to be released next year: *Bullet Train*, an assassin thriller with Brad Pitt and Sandra Bullock, and the drama *Shelter*, with Melissa Leo and Beetz’s longtime



Hair: Shunika Terry.
Makeup: Danielle Mitchell.
Production: Kenley Duke.

partner and frequent collaborator David Rysdahl.

Beetz also recently received the 2021 Women in Film Max Mara Face of the Future Award. She’s the 16th recipient, following in the footsteps of Gemma Chan, Katie Holmes, and Zoe Saldana, who were also honored at turning points in their careers. “It means so much to me that people see longevity for my career, because I want to act until I’m 80,” she says. “My only hope is that my work continues to be engaging and always relevant to what’s going on in the world around me.”

Her social feed echoes this sentiment. Beetz’s IGTV show *Zazie Talks Climate* breaks down environmental issues like fracking and sustainability with scientists, government officials, and other leaders in the field. “Doing the show is sort of out of my comfort zone, but I realized that it’s one thing I can do to get more people involved,” she says. “I’m learning a lot too, mostly that making a difference is actually more doable than it seems.” She’s also an advocate for women’s health and reproductive rights, which might eventually turn into a side gig. “I’d absolutely love to be a midwife,” she says. “To support someone emotionally and physically like that—it fascinates me. I’ve even looked into it to see, like, could I manage midwifery now?” She laughs. “But realistically, I might need to wait until my schedule frees up a little more.” ■