



MEET FASHION'S FIRST FAMILY

There's no family quite like the Elgorts! Arthur, his wife Grethe and their children Ansel, Sophie, and Warren continue to take the fashion, film, music, and photography worlds by storm. Some might say it's genetic.

BY SYDNEY SADICK



ARTHUR ELGORT
PHOTOGRAPHER

What's new in the world of Arthur Elgort?

I'm still alive! [Laughs.] I've been testing a lot [in the Hamptons]—people that I know, and then a lot I don't know from a company called Silent Models. They represent a lot of great girls from Germany, so they'll come out for a day or two and I pose them a little bit nude, as I'm doing a book on nudes. I'm coming out with a ballet book in the spring. I've been photographing ballet since 1970. I knew George Balanchine well at the time—he's still considered the greatest choreographer—and I also went to Russia a lot for *Vogue*, so I kept up with it. It'll be about 250 pages of real ballet dancers, not models.

What else is planned?

I'll be doing a jazz book on Dexter Gordon, Wynton Marsalis, and Illinois Jacquet, and others. A lot of them died already, but no one lives forever. Then I'm going to do a book on girls, both old and new. That won't come out for about three years. Steidl, my printer, is very good, but everybody wants to work with them. Karl Lagerfeld is a partner, and he likes me, so he put me in the 7S club. Only Karl and I are in the club. I don't ask him why, but I take it as a compliment. I'm having a show in Paris on September 29 at Colette to show some of my prints. I have to figure out what to do next—maybe something on my family.

Who in the family do you photograph most?

Mainly the boys. I usually don't use male models—I use my sons instead. It's easier; I know where to get them, and they're very good. I've been photographing Ansel and Warren for *Vogue* since they were this high [points up from the floor].

Do they ever get annoyed when you

ask them?

No, and I'm very fast. If they come out to the Hamptons for occasions like birthday parties, I'm the photographer. Except when Sophie got married; I gave her away instead.

What was your role with the kids growing up?

I made them breakfast every morning. I get up very early—around 6. Now the kids like to go out.

Do your children come to you for advice?

Sometimes. Warren shows me his films and I'll tell him why I like them. With Ansel, I don't talk about his films at all since they're professional. Sophie, I talk to a lot. She was supposed to be a doctor, but all of the

sudden she decided she'd rather be a photographer. Ansel didn't go to college at all, but I always tell the kids, “Do what you like.”

How would you describe each kid's personality?

Sophie is very organized. When she says she's going to do something, she does it. Warren is more in his world. He likes tennis and films, and I like stills. I can't stand that you have to turn out the lights to see a film. He has a longer trek because you don't become a big star quickly. With Ansel, you give him anything to do, he'll get it right away. We made each kid take piano lessons for one year. Ansel could improvise anything.

You've collaborated with Sophie on camera bags for MZ Wallace.

Apparently, they sell a lot! They call one the Arthur and one the Sophie. Sophie loves it—she's very good at socializing. I'm surprised she doesn't have a TV show yet.

What do you think of the new generation of models, like Gigi and Kendall?

I've never worked with them, but Ansel has. Everyone has photographed Kendall, so it would be interesting to see what I'd do with her. A girl I like right now is Stella Maxwell. I've known her since she was a kid. She's very smart and tough. I like working with German girls too—they're not afraid to take their clothes off. I didn't get Claudia Schiffer to take her clothes off, though.

Rumor has it you've worked with Melania Trump.

I photographed her for *Tatler* when she had just gotten married; she was nice and polite—better than Donald! [He] still owes me something he hasn't given me yet, but that's the kind of guy he is. He can't remember things that cost money. I can't say anything bad about Melania, however. ■



GRETHE BARRETT HOLBY
OPERA DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER



You're an artist, all around! What are you best known as?

As an opera director and producer, but my main passion is making new American opera with new composers and writers through my company, the American Opera Project.

When did you get involved in opera?

I was a dancer with a masters in architecture at M.I.T. I cross-registered to Harvard and studied set design. I became an assistant for a number of shows and had my own modern dance group. I was in the original Robert Wilson and Philip Glass opera *Einstein on the Beach*. I was helping with set design for different shows, so I fell into opera through that and performing. I became the resident choreographer for Eastern Grand Opera, and before that I made my directing debut at *Wolf Trap*. Now I'm working on *Bounce: The Basketball Opera*. Warren is making a documentary on the piece, and Ansel is making the tracks.

How did you and Arthur meet?

My sister was a famous supermodel, Clotilde. She was Ralph Lauren's muse and one of the first contract girls with Jerry Ford. She was going out with someone who [wanted to introduce me to Arthur]. We met at a Ford disco party—I'd never been to a disco. I was into minimalism and avant-garde. I got pushed onto the dance floor with this guy and all these little modelettes would go, “Hi, Arty!” I wanted to leave, and [Arthur] said he'd put me in a cab. It was definitely our love of dance and music that brought us together. We've been married for 33 years.

Do you have any modeling experience?

My sister tried to get me to model. She introduced me to Irene Ford. [Irene] asked me how tall I was. I said 5'7". She asked how old I was, and I said 31. She said, “You're 25, and 5'7". Good luck. I hope I like your choreography more

than I like my nephew's.” Her nephew was William Forsythe. I always called that “my Ford grant.” I didn't do any high-fashion work, but I did quite a bit of J.Crew. I never felt as comfortable posing as much as being caught in action.

Your family is always on the go. How do you stay connected?

Everyone is in the arts, so we all help each other. The children are each four years apart but very close. I attribute this to two things: Arthur never wanted to leave his two-bedroom apartment, so they essentially grew up in one room, and he's always photographing the kids.

What do you think Arthur would be if he wasn't a photographer?

He's said he'd be a record salesman. He was an usher at Carnegie Hall—when I went off to do operas, he knew more than I did! ■

“THE CHILDREN ARE EACH FOUR YEARS APART BUT VERY CLOSE... ARTHUR NEVER WANTED TO LEAVE HIS TWO-BEDROOM APARTMENT.”



ANSEL ELGORT
ACTOR AND SINGER

How was your summer?

It was my first summer off in a while. It was nice to be out in the Hamptons and spend time with my family. I went to L.A. for some writing sessions because I'm working on my album.

How did you end up as an actor?

I started taking ballet and ended up onstage at Lincoln Center. I knew early on that performing was something I wanted to do. Acting happened through that. *The Fault in Our Stars* was my big break.

Have you gotten used to fame?

Sort of! There are certain things that we do [where] we're prepared [for the fans] to bother me. Everyone's really nice, though.

Outside of acting, what do you enjoy?

Making, writing, and producing music, and playing the piano.

What was it like growing up in a family of creatives?

I don't know if I'd be where I am today if

I had grown up in a different family. Maybe if I was in an athletic family, I would've been an athlete.

Your dad has been photographing you from a young age. What was that like?

I didn't know that it was cool until we were older—that's when we'd tell girls at school that we were in *Vogue*. Modeling's not bad. Working with Prada, my first campaign, was great, as is working with Steven Meisel. It's a different kind of vibe from working with my dad.

What's your relationship with your siblings?

We all have our thing. Sophie is the photographer, Warren has film and tennis. We love to come together—we talk to each other about

everything.

Were you always interested in fashion?

I loved fashion when I was younger. I used to go to the Prada store in Soho and hope I could afford the clothes one day. Now Prada gives me tons of stuff, and Nike too—it's pretty cool!

What was the first Fashion Week show you went to?

Adam Lippes. I met him at the CFDA Awards when I tap-danced for my father.

What projects are on your plate right now?

I'm working on a film, *Baby Driver*, with Jamie Foxx, Jon Hamm, and Kevin Spacey. It's coming out next year. I'm also working on *Billionaire Boys Club*, and the album! That's the main project.

You sing, dance, act, model, play instruments—what's next?

I want to conquer the music thing and see what happens. Once you start having some success you don't want to throw it all away. I don't want to look back and have people say, "Hey, you were that kid from *The Fault in Our Stars*." ■



WARREN ELGORT
FILM DIRECTOR
AND CINEMATOGRAPHER

How did you get your start directing?

I made my first film on Ansel, called *Triple Threat*. I followed him around during his singing lessons and acting classes in middle school and high school. I've always liked storytelling—I was a creative writing major at Johns Hopkins.

What's your latest project?

I just did a music video for Connor Leimer, a young guitarist and singer-songwriter living in Nashville.

You've also done work for Town & Country.

My dad was taking pictures of Ansel for a *Town & Country* cover, and my sister was taking a picture of both of them. They had me do a video. I got along really well with [then editor-in-chief] Jay Fielden, and we made a film for their anniversary. I do a lot of behind-the-scenes videos for them.

What's it like posing for your dad?

It's relaxed, but he gets offended very easily. If you don't pay him a little bit of attention when he's photographing you, he'll get frustrated.



Do you and Sophie ever collaborate?

Yes! I was her camera assistant the other day. She also let me shoot a music video at her apartment.

Is it weird having a famous brother?

Yeah, but it's nice. It's better than having a struggling actor as a brother! **What does your family bond over?** We like being around the camera. When my dad takes pictures of us, that brings us together. Ansel and I like basketball—talking about it and playing it. My sister likes a lot of things, but we love skiing with her.

Other than film, what are your passions?

Tennis! I got to the NCAA semifinals in college [division three, doubles team]. I've taught tennis in the Hamptons for many summers, and I've made most of my friends and jobs and connections through tennis—it's a nice way to break down walls. I also like chess; I was nationally ranked when I was younger. I came in 22nd in the country. ■



SOPHIE ELGORT
PHOTOGRAPHER

You're the only other photographer in the family.

It was something I had always done as a hobby. I had been on my dad's sets my entire life, and when I graduated from college, I was helping out some friends who started a new clothing line, taking photos for them.

Have you ever collaborated with your dad?

Not directly. My dad and I co-shot our family for *Paper*.

Who's your favorite person to photograph?

My brothers are great subjects. Ansel's girlfriend, Violetta, is also amazing to shoot. She's a dancer, so she can really move. And I love

shooting Ansel and Violetta together.

Who are you dying to photograph?

Rihanna. She's so cool and such a style icon. I love photographing musicians—they have so much personality and move well. Kate Moss would also be cool. I love up-and-coming models and talent too. My dad used to photograph Cindy Crawford, so it would be fun to photograph Kaia [Gerber]. She has such a lovely look.

When were you first interested in fashion?

In high school. I did internships to get experience in different aspects—in Paris with Azzedine Alaïa, at *Vogue*, where I was shadowing Ethel Park, and with stylist Evyan Metzner.

What's your relationship with your

brothers?

We're really good friends and never really fought. We're not too close in age!

Are you ever in contact with Ansel's fans?

Sometimes they'll tweet me or comment. If I post a picture of him or Violetta, people get excited. When we go to premieres, people will be like, "We know you from Instagram. Can we take a picture?" A lot of them have e-mailed me asking questions about how to get into photography and to look at their portfolios too.

Do you have a hidden talent?

I was a ski racer; I left New York to go to a school in Vermont. I won the state championships and went to the Junior Olympics! ■