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# JIM PARSONS

## “THE BIG BRAIN”

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**FIVE SEASONS INTO PLAYING** supergenius Dr. Sheldon Cooper on *The Big Bang Theory*, Jim Parsons still isn't any good at physics. Admittedly a poor science student back in his native Texas, Parsons notes that even now “it isn't any easier” embodying TV's smartest, most lovable curmudgeon. Because when it comes to the brainiac jargon he is expected to spout, “the scripts have not gotten any less challenging.”

What does come naturally to the 38-year-old actor is comedy. Although Parsons is quick to credit the *Big Bang* writers for their ongoing insights into Sheldon's beautiful mind (“I will never understand in a logical sense the depth of Sheldon's peculiarities like the writers do. I'm very much at their mercy,” he says), it is he who takes the writers' basic elements and, through the most gifted actor's alchemy, turns the character into comedy gold.

Imbuing Sheldon with a combination of innocence and self-assurance, Parsons cleverly makes a character who could have been abrasive impossible to resist. “The thing that's fun about playing Sheldon is that he's so decisive,” he says. “He so clearly knows what he wants, and what his opinion is on any matter.”

Actually, Parsons notes, in the past two seasons Sheldon has begun having a few unsure moments, often catalyzed by his new “girlfriend.” With the addition of Mayim Bialik's Amy Farrah Fowler as his intellectual—and, to a lesser extent, romantic—foil, Parsons says he feels privileged that lately, “every once in a while, we're doing a scene and it feels as if the work is allowed to be a little deeper and richer than it was in the past.”

Emmy voters certainly seem to be of the same mind-set, awarding Parsons the statuette for Best Actor in a Comedy in each of the past two years. “I was flabbergasted and just so honored to be invited to these awards shows at all as a nominee. And then to win—who has those kinds of expectations? I certainly didn't. You just do your job,” the actor says. “That's why I still feel like, on a certain level, it must have happened to somebody else. Sally Field or Kelsey Grammer, they win things like that.”

When Parsons squeezed in a Broadway run last summer of *The Normal Heart*—he also will appear in *Harvey* this spring—he was able to assure producers that after conquering Sheldon's science-laden tirades, he'd have no problem with the play's lengthy monologues. “If there's one thing that I am currently good at, it's memorizing like a machine,” he notes. So will there be more plays in his future? Or, perhaps, movies? “I'll keep going on essentially the same way I got here,” Parsons says plainly. And then, taking a very un-Sheldon-like approach: “I'm just going to continue following my instincts, and my heart.” — *Jim Colucci*

**THE  
 BIG BANG  
 THEORY**

airs Thursdays  
 at 8 p.m.  
 ET/PT  
 on CBS.

