

Mya: Ready To Blast Off To The Dance Floor

Contributed by Chris Yandek
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Listen to Mya's First Interview Since Being Announced for the cast of Dancing with the Stars

{audio}http://thesportsinterview.com/mp3/Mya.mp3{/audio}She's ready for lift off in one of the biggest challenges where many celebrities have come up short. Singer and Actress Mya has joined the cast for the upcoming season of Dancing with the Stars. Alongside Donny Osmond, Kathy Ireland and Macy Gray among others, she will have the chance to show the world her progression if she can survive the weekly eliminations.

It was 1998 when Mya released her self-titled debut album. The compilation featured successful singles including It's All About Me, Movin On and My First Night With You. Fear of Flying would be the singer's second studio album in 2000. It went certified platinum in 2001 and became a commercial success even though it received mixed reviews.

In 2001, everything came together for herself, Christina Aguilera, Pink and Lil Kim. A collaboration and remake of the song Lady Marmalade for the movie Moulin Rouge along with a music video led to nonstop play on MTV, VH1 and everywhere else you turned. Mya and her fellow female artists ruled the universe. The duo would win numerous MTV awards for the video and a Grammy for Best Pop Collaboration with Vocals.

After all the success with a song America couldn't stop hearing, Mya crossed over into acting in 2002 with a supporting role in the Academy Award winning movie Chicago and in 2004 with a supporting role in the movie Shall We Dance that started the ballroom dancing craze in America.

In recent years, she has been going through a transition musically in the states. In other parts of the world, she's released a few Japanese albums. On September 29th, Beauty & The Streets Vol 1 will be released to her fans in the United States.

She's currently taken up a commitment as a vegetarian, which she says was her resolution for this year and might take it into 2010. Space, the universe and the stars are something she takes great pleasure in whenever she needs to get away from some of the things of everyday life. Her ultimate dream is to travel in space.

In her first interview since being announced as part of the cast of Dancing with the Stars, she notes she's most concerned about her physical self. Last year she suffered a foot fracture that has made her a little concerned going into the show. She said she's going to take all the proper precautions during rehearsals. Mya is the woman next door with a yard that is full of kindness, laughs and most importantly in a happy place personally with the stars shining down.

Chris Yandek: How is everything going? How are the rehearsals going so far?

Mya: "I'm great by the way. Today was the first day of rehearsals so it was very light. More of an introduction of what we would be doing and I met my trainer for the first time whose marvelous and very intimidating. But I have a lot of work cut out for me for this next month and then some. So I'm up for the challenge and I'm very excited but slightly nervous at the same time."

CY: You had a supporting role in the 2004 flick Shall We Dance alongside Richard Gere, Jennifer Lopez, Susan Sarandon among others and some of the professionals from the past seasons were actually in that movie. What's ironic is that now you're doing the show after being in the movie that got America started on the ballroom dancing craze. Isn't it so ironic that you're now here doing this a few years later?

Mya: "It is ironic and I was so jealous because I only got to rehearse for a day there so I was a little jealous not being in the movie and getting to do something a little bit more intricate. My partner was about 6'5 and we didn't know what we were doing. That's what the character entailed and it's a wonderful show Dancing with the Stars. I'm so excited to be a part of this because it's number one, it's the ultimate challenge. It's a fabulous production. Looks like a lot of fun and I'm a competitive person so I'm up for the challenge and I'm conditioning myself properly and I'm stepping into a whole new territory and I have my fingers crossed."

CY: I'd be surprised that you haven't been offered maybe a chance to do this in the past. Is this the first time they've ever came to you?

Mya: "To my knowledge. To my knowledge yes."

CY: I read on your Twitter that your familiar with tap but you've never done anything like this before. So you're telling me you really don't have much else dancing experience besides tap?

Mya: "No. I mean I've done a little bit of ballet when I was like four and majorettes when I was like four. That was decades ago. (Laughs) I don't want to tell them my age but that's it. People are I guess going around and saying that I'm some trained dancer, which I'm not, but I have trained in master classes with like Gregory Hines and Savion Glover on a tap level.

Regarding hip-hop, that's just something I learned watching music videos and just watching. That's really it. Everything else regarding videos, call it what you want. I've never done ballroom dancing before. I just say hip-hop. There's all kind of stuff like pop and lock or boogaloo and breaking that are a part of hip-hop that I've tried. I don't specialize in any of them but obviously you have a choreographer sometimes depending on the song and the choreography varies from music

video to music video. Hopefully I'll be as versatile enough and quick enough to pick up the stuff but it's totally different and I've never ever worked with a partner before much less a professional partner so it's totally different."

CY: Every celebrity has a major thing they have to overcome while doing the show no matter how long they last. What do you think it's going to be for you?

Mya: "Maintaining my physical health as in no injuries. I had an injury last year, a foot fracture and I think I need to take the proper precautions in rehearsal and not overdue it and be very smart with what kind of shoes I wear because that can possibly injure myself again whether it's a bone or a hamstring. I don't know I'm getting a little older now so I have to condition properly."

CY: Not that old. You've seen a lot in your young life.

Mya: "Older. I'm not 18 years old anymore."

CY: No. But you get what I mean.

Mya: (Laughing) "And gravity is taking its plunge."

CY: Yeah. There is George Hamilton and then there's Mya. There are a lot of decades in between that. You get what I mean?

Mya: "It's different for female dancers then, what they have you doing and all of those kind of things."

CY: Well, I guess you could ask Cloris Leachman about that.

Mya: "Yeah."

CY: Is there any past contestant that you're getting advice from on this or you've talked about this that's done the show?

Mya: "I haven't talked to anyone yet. I don't know if that's going against rules and regulations."

CY: No. I don't think so.

Mya: "But I'd love to talk to someone about what it was like and what I should do and the dos and don'ts of it all."

CY: This show brings so many people from different walks of life together. Who are you most looking forward to meeting, talking with from this cast that maybe you've never met before?

Mya: "Everyone. I've actually met a lot of the musical artists like Aaron (Carter) and Macy (Gray). So this won't be my first time in their presence. Basically anyone that I have never met before. I have never met Donny (Osmond) and he's in the music scene. Hey! We're all fans of that. That's my mom's generation. So that'll be great to bring her out to L.A. and have her meet some of the cast as well, her generation as well as mine."

CY: Well, the thing people were saying to me as I was telling them I was going to be interviewing you they said to me, "Mya, she had so many things going on in recent years but I haven't heard much from her in the last year or so." What's been new in your life recently besides Dancing with the Stars?

Mya: "Quite a lot. I've been through many transitions regarding business and I've been setting up an empire and I now have label called Planet 9 and I've recorded several projects. I've released a couple Japanese albums as well in the meantime, but I know my U.S. fans are waiting for music and there is a good reason for the pause which I'll discuss later when they get music served to them.

Right now I have a mixed tape coming. It's called Beauty & The Streets Vol 1 on Planet 9, Young Empire and Fontana/Universal. That's coming out 9/29. It's more of a hip-hop R&B album versus the R&B Pop Mya, but that's on the way as well."

CY: You have a lot to say about society and life in your music as it is. Is there anything right now that's impacted you or been on your mind recently?

Mya: "Well, I'm a vegetarian and I just adopted another animal. Animals are actually really close to my heart. I plan to actually go another three months. I was only planning on doing six months of vegetarianism in 2009. I have a resolution set for myself every year, but I think I'm going to go all the way and extend it through 2009 and possibly even 2010. Animals are close to my heart. They provide me sanity and balance and I love them to death. I really...really want to stand up for them and do as much as I can. Next year I plan on running the 26 mile marathon with North Shore Animal League and raising funds for them. I have to actually in about 16 to 18 weeks for that. I wish I could've done it this year but obviously I have to focus on Dancing with the Stars."

CY: There's a lot of things you talk about on your Twitter page and I think that you have found a way to use Twitter in a great way compared to other individuals. You really have a focused set thing. There is a lot of different discussion. One of the things I was reading from some of your tweets in the last few days is you're fascinated by the universe, space, and the travels and all that stuff. Where do you get the interest?

Mya: "I think when I was a little girl I used to honestly wish upon a star and I guess have conversations with some other being or a higher power. Call it God. Call it what you want. There's always a star in the sky and my favorite song of all time that my dad used to sing was Ribbon in the Sky and I used to search for one so I think it stems from where when I was four years old honestly.

That knowing I guess the pitfalls of every day life and the challenges and the upsides and the downsides you realize there is actually something bigger and greater than all of us when you sit down and take a step back and reframe from I guess the daily habits or ways of thinking and I'm a country girl at heart. I've always had a yard other than living in New York and that's what I like to do.

Get connected to something that we can't necessarily always see but close to it. That's probably my first escape into another planet or another world or another way of life and it keeps me centered and balanced. Weird huh?"

CY: No. But do you want to go to space if you had the opportunity?

Mya: "I do want to go to space. That's the ultimate dream for me. If someone told me that I would never come back if I didn't have a family, etc I would definitely go and spend my last days in outer space. Yeah."

CY: You came from a multicultural family. What does it feel like when you see President Obama another person from a multicultural family representing this country now? Does it send the message maybe we're just one whole big melting pot?

Mya: "Well, my father was a history major. Let's start there. Regarding history, there's a lot that has occurred with how America was built. However, we are the melting pot of the world and I have to say that everyone is pretty multicultural and no one is basically 100 percent anything these days. And we're just all people. It's about a human race versus color and culture.

We all feel. We all wanted to be loved. We all want to accomplish and feel successful and do these wonderful things or be content. We're just people at the end of the day. Maybe that's why I'm so connected to kids and animals. They're so innocent and they don't have these standards and segregations and discriminations."

CY: And all this meaningless stuff that means absolutely nothing.

Mya: "So I'm very proud when I see people's voices being heard off of content of character above and over I guess what we've built as a society based on history at no fault to ours directly but maybe generations before us so we've definitely come a long way. I'm very proud of the American people and the rest of the world."

CY: That's the whole thing though and I think you represent that in a way that many people may not understand. You say it so perfectly, but at the end of the day we're just all people trying to do things in society. We want to achieve dreams, go to space, dance in a competition, hopefully get three 10s.

Mya: "(Laughs)"

CY: We're all trying to do something. I don't think that's weird at all. I think we all have our things that we are fascinated by whether it be one thing or another.

Mya: "I am fascinated truly."

CY: So you, yourself, are you in a place right now personally speaking where you're happy where you are as an individual with everything?

Mya: "I am. I am. And sometimes I actually have to pinch myself and remind myself, 'Hey! You're happy now. You're happy. You're blessed.' Because one comment on a Twitter page can really upset my 15 minutes but I have to retract and put a space DVD in or go outside for a second and take a time out and say hold on, 'Don't ever let small things control your feelings, your tongue or really get to you because you're blessed, you're fortunate and you have the opportunity to make a difference in someone else's life for the better.'"

CY: I think definitely you're accessible on your Twitter, but you're not over accessible.

Mya: "(Laughs)."

CY: Because let me just say this, with all these internet things that we got, it's created extra accessibility to celebrities that you've never had before. That just gives people a chance to make you a target more so. So what I will say to you is ignore the haters.

Mya: "Of course."

CY: And don't let them get you down. That's the best thing I can say to you.

Mya: "Thank you so much!"

CY: Focus on those fans that thought they'd never get the chance to write back and forth with you. You know what I mean? Cause you're really making the day more than you might not know. Maybe you do in some ways.

Mya: "Yeah. But I'm honestly at a place where I can actually embrace everyone. The lovers, the haters, the diehards."

CY: Not many people get to that place.

Mya: "Yeah. It all plays into my motivation and inspiration so I love it all honestly. I wouldn't have been able to handle it when I was younger, but I can handle it now."

CY: Mya, good luck with Dancing with the Stars. I'm glad I could crown you the first interview to talk about this subject. Good luck next month. It's going to be very interesting. Hope the rehearsals go well.

Mya: "I hope you have a wonderful day. It was a pleasure speaking to you."

CY: So the question is, what would it mean to win this competition?

Mya: "Well, the competition is obviously based on how hard you work and execute and I guess perfect what you've learned and this is not just judgment by the professionals but it's also judgment by America watching and the voters. If I were to win this competition, well, I would have to pat myself and my trainer on the back for being disciplined and thank everyone for supporting and believing and possibly seeing something in me, the drive and the dedication. It would be a huge accomplishment and I'd definitely jump up and down for joy."

Dancing with the Stars Debuts September 21st on ABC. Check out <http://beta.abc.go.com/shows/dancing-with-the-stars> for more information.

Mya's official Twitter page is at: <http://www.twitter.com/missmya>