

Zendaya, The "Shake It Up!"



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

Born in Oakland, Ca., on Sept. 1, 1996, Zendaya grew up around the California Shakespeare Theater in nearby Orinda, where her mother worked as the house manager. In addition to training at the theater company's student conservatory program, and later performing in numerous stage productions, she helped her mom seat patrons and sell raffle tickets to benefit the organization.

While attending the Oakland School for the Arts, Zendaya starred as a young Ti Moune in "Once on This Island" at the Berkeley Playhouse before enjoying her breakout role as the male character Joe in "Caroline, or Change" at Palo Alto's TheatreWorks. She subsequently honed her craft at both the California Shakespeare Conservatory program and the

American Conservatory Theater, adding such classics by the Bard of Avon as "Richard III," "Twelfth Night" and "As You Like It" to her stage credits. Zendaya, by the way, means "to give thanks" in Shona, a Bantu language native to Zimbabwe. Besides acting, the versatile young talent has served as a fashion model for Macy's, Mervyns and Old Navy, and as one of the back-up dancers in a Sears commercial featuring Selena Gomez.

Zendaya currently resides in Los Angeles with her family and Midnight, her pet Giant Schnauzer, and her interests include singing, dancing and clothes designing. Here, she talks about "Shake It Up!" her hit Disney Channel sitcom where she co-stars opposite Bella Thorne as Raquel "Rocky" Blue, half of a comedic duo trying to dance their way to superstardom.

Kam Williams: Hi Zendaya, thanks for the interview.

Zendaya: No, thank you, Kam. It is my pleasure.

KW: What interested you in Shake It Up?

Z: Well, I would say that Shake It Up was a chance for me to do two things I really love: acting

and dancing.

KW: Tell me a little about the show?

Z: It's a buddy comedy based around dance. It's about two best friends Rocky and CeCe who live out their dream as background dancers on a show called Shake It Up Chicago. They have to navigate life as young teens going to school and dancing on the show.

KW: How would you describe your character, Rocky?

Z: Rocky is such a sweet girl. She really cares for people and always wants to help her friends. She is a very good student who really works hard, and she is a dedicated friend to CeCe who often talks her into doing things they shouldn't. Rocky is a bit more shy and unsure of herself, and sometimes does more following than she should.

KW: What message would you say the show is trying to deliver?

Z: Shake It Up definitely teaches kids about the importance of reaching for your dreams and set-



ting high goals. It also teaches great lessons about friendship and family.

KW: What do you enjoy the most: acting, singing, dancing or modeling?

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Z: Wow! I couldn't choose between all of those things! I loooooove acting and dancing on Shake It Up, and I am currently in the recording studio working on my music. And one of my dreams is to walk down the runway during fashion week!

KW: When is your debut album being released, and what type of music is on it?

Z: Well, I am not sure of when my album will be released but my music has a lot of different sounds. I'm a hip-hop/R&B girl at heart, but I love pop music as well, and I even have an affinity for country music. So I would say my music might have something for everyone.

KW: Is there any question no one ever asks you, that you wish someone would?

Z: I'm never asked what I love to do outside of the arts. My answer would be sports. I was actually supposed to be a basketball player, not an actress. My parents had me playing basketball on competitive teams when I was in kindergarten. Even though my heart belongs to the arts, I'm a tomboy at heart, too.

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Gregoire

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her office," Gregoire's website says.

But, in fact, less than 16 percent of workers at the governor's office are minorities.

This summer, Gregoire has hired Carol Albert as her director of external affairs and Fred Olson as her deputy chief of staff. She moved Marty Loesch to chief of staff. She also named Bernie Warner as her secretary of corrections. The former workers in each position were also white.

The only two minorities in Gregoire's circle are Eva Santos, who runs the

Department of Personnel and John Batiste, who leads the Washington State Patrol.

By comparison, seven of Gov. Gary Locke's 27 cabinet secretaries were minorities in 2004.

Other agencies led by elected officials currently show a broad range of diversity levels, with the attorney general's office that Gregoire once led having just 11 percent minority staff. The Office of the Insurance Commissioner shows minority representation of 24 percent on staff.

Lillian Ortiz-Self, who chairs the state's Commission on Hispanic Affairs, said Gregoire has been supportive of diversity efforts but that her words needs to be backed up by actions.

"It takes a lot more work than just believing in it," Ortiz-Self said.

Ortiz-Self believes the state needs to closely examine their policies and procedures in hiring, such as whether recruiting efforts are drawing in minorities and whether those who interview candidates

have appropriate diversity training. She also said the issue needs leadership.

"It needs to be modeled from the top down," Ortiz-Self said.

Gregoire's decision to try and consolidate a group of minority commissions into a single Commission on Civil Rights also irked members, Ortiz-Self said. The state also

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Muslims

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from 40 percent in 2007, the first time Pew polled Muslim Americans.

Asked to identify in what ways they felt bias, about 28 percent said they had been treated or viewed with suspicion by people, while 22 percent said they were called offensive names. About 21 percent said they were singled out by airport security because they were Muslim, while another 13 percent said they were targeted by other law enforcement officials. Roughly 6 percent said they had been physically threatened or attacked.

On the other hand, the share of Muslim Americans who view U.S. anti-terror policies as "sincere" efforts to reduce international terrorism now surpasses those who view them as insincere - 43 percent to 41 percent. Four years ago, during the presidency of George W. Bush, far more viewed U.S. anti-terrorism efforts as insincere than sincere - 55 percent to 26 percent.

The vast majority of Muslim Americans - 79 percent - rate their communities as either "excellent" or "good" places to live, even among many who reported an act of vandalism against a mosque or a controversy over the building of an Islamic center in their neighborhoods.

They also are now more likely to say they are satisfied with the current direction of the

country - 56 percent, up from 38 percent in 2007. That is in contrast to the general U.S. public, whose satisfaction has dropped from 32 percent to 23 percent.

Andrew Kohut, Pew president, said in an interview that Muslim Americans' overall level of satisfaction was striking.

"I was concerned about a bigger sense of alienation, but there was not," Kohut said, contrasting the U.S. to many places in

federal investigators citing a greater risk of attacks by a "lone wolf" or small homegrown cells. Such terror warnings have stirred raw emotions as the U.S. struggles to talk about religion in the context of terrorism.

Tensions erupted last summer over plans to build a mosque near the Ground Zero site in New York City after critics assailed it as an insult to the victims of the 9/11 attacks.

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Europe where Muslims have become more separatist. "You don't see any indication of brewing negativity. When you look at their attitudes, these are still middle-class, mainstream people who want to be loyal to America."

The latest numbers come amid increased U.S. attention on the risks of homegrown terrorism. The problem has been especially pressing for President Barack Obama, with

Rep. Peter King, R-N.Y., held House hearings earlier this year to examine whether American Muslims are becoming "radicalized" to attack the U.S., declaring that U.S. Muslims are doing too little to fight terror.

The Associated Press reported last week that with CIA guidance, the New York Police Department dispatched undercover officers into minority neighborhoods, scrutinized imams and gathered intelligence on

cab drivers and food cart vendors, jobs often done by Muslims.

It is now common in U.S. mosques for Muslims to preface public remarks by saying that they know the government is eavesdropping but Muslims have nothing to hide.

Still, one factor behind the somewhat upbeat sentiment of Muslim Americans is the 2008 election of Obama, who pledged to improve relations with the Muslim world. Muslim Americans who vote largely identify themselves as Democrats, and fully 76 percent of those surveyed say they approve of Obama's job performance, compared with 15 percent in 2007 who approved of Bush's performance.

On possible terror risks, about 21 percent of Muslim Americans say there is "a great deal" or "a fair amount" of support for extremism in their communities, according to the Pew survey. About 81 percent of Muslim Americans separately say suicide bombings and other forms of violence against civilians are never justified in order to defend Islam, and growing numbers also express an unfavorable view of al-Qaida - 81 percent compared to 68 percent in 2007.

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