

Dania Ramirez: The 'Premium Rush' Interview

Dania Ramirez was born on November 8, 1979 in the Dominican Republic and was raised there by her grandmother from infancy until the age of ten when she was sent to the United States to rejoin her parents. She graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Communication from Montclair State University where she was also a standout on the school's volleyball squad.

Dania's professional career began as a model in New York although she got her big break into show business when Jay-Z cast her in the music video "Streets is Watching." Today, she has become one of the hottest young actresses in Hollywood, co-starring in several of the most successful movies and highest-rated television programs of the past few years.

She was recently cast in the highly-anticipated Lifetime TV series "Devious Maids," debuting in 2013, which is being produced and written by "Desperate Housewives" creator Marc Cherry. On the show, Dania will play Rosie Falta, one of four Latina maids employed by the rich and famous in Beverly Hills.

Her other film credits include American Reunion, X-Men: The Last Stand, Quarantine and Fat Albert. She made her film debut in Spike Lee's "The Subway Stories" for HBO, which led to two other Spike Lee projects, 25th Hour and She Hate Me. Dania was unforgettable as Blanca on the critically-acclaimed HBO drama "The Sopranos," as well as on the NBC cult hit "Heroes" and HBO's award-winning "Entourage."

As a model, Dania was named the face of CoverGirl and has been featured in its advertising campaign for a couple of years running. She also appeared opposite Sean "P. Diddy" Combs in the CIROC "Luck Be a Lady" campaign that ran all around the world.



CELEBRITY INTERVIEW

by Kam Williams

Here, she talks about her new movie, "Premium Rush," an action thriller co-starring Joseph Gordon-Levitt.

Kam Williams: Hi Dania, thanks so much for the time.

Dania Ramirez: Thank you for talking to me, Kam. I have a movie coming out. I need you. [Laughs]

KW: [Laughs] So, what interested you in Premium Rush?

DR: A couple things. When I consider a film, I really look at the character first to see if it's something that I can dive into and bring to life. And second, it looked like a lot of fun. I was going to be riding a bike all through New York City. That kinda sold me. And that's what the movie is really, just a lot of fun!

KW: How would you describe your character?

DR: Vanessa's a badass Dominican chick on a bike who also has a heart of gold. She's just graduated from college, hasn't found a job and becomes a bike messenger in the meantime. She's really focused in her relationship with Wilee [Joseph Gordon-Levitt]. She's trying to get him to care about living and about the future. I really loved playing her, because she's a very honest and endearing character. She's sort of tough when she's on the bike, but caring and vulnerable when she's off it.

KW: Larry Greenberg is wondering whether Vanessa is very different from Alex, the character

you played on Entourage.

DR: Absolutely! They're both charming in their own way but Vanessa is New York and tough, while Alex is and just fun and business focused.

KW: Professor/filmmaker/author Hisani Dubose would like to know if you did any of your own stunts.

DR: I did as much as I could, but there were certain things I just couldn't do like where my character jumps off the bike and flies through the air before hitting the ground. But I did do the one where she crosses over the Hudson River, and that was scary.

KW: Marlene Canty asks: How dangerous was it to shoot on location around Manhattan with bikes zooming in and out of traffic?

DR: It was very dangerous, because you're on a bike going in and out of traffic. There's nothing protecting you. The whole movie we're riding bikes and going fast. Joseph had to get 31 stitches after an accident where he went through a cab's windshield. I fell off my bike every single day, and I found I was more worried about avoiding pedestrians than hitting a car.

KW: You probably were able to handle such a physically demanding role because you're very athletic and played volleyball in college. Did you watch any of the Olympics?

DR: Are you kidding? [LOL] I couldn't turn it off, especially the volleyball, which I watched all the way to the end.

KW: Harriet Pakula-Teweles asks: Was this a role you were comfortable with and what do you see as the ideal part for yourself?

DR: Yes, I was very comfortable with it. I absolutely loved it. The ideal part for me is any challenging, three-dimensional role that I could throw myself into. I'm really looking forward to playing a romantic lead in an independent film where I can explore a variety



Joseph Gordon-Levitt and Dania Ramirez in 'Premium Rush'

of different emotions.

KW: Richie Von Der Schmidt asks: Is it just a coincidence that your love interest Turtle from Entourage sort of looks like AJ, your love interest on the Sopranos?

DR: [Laughs heartily] To be honest with you, I don't know that they look alike. I see them as two completely different people. Aside from the fact that they're both white, I don't see much similarity. They're both really charming, and my character was sexually aggressive in both roles, so maybe that's what might make them come across as alike.

KW: What do you think of the Dream Act, which went into effect recently, giving undocumented immigrants an opportunity for education and employment?

DR: I think it's fantastic that a lot of immigrants will be given more of a shot to show what we're here for. They're here to work, and to strive for a better life for themselves and for their families. So, I'm excited about it!

KW: The Tasha Smith question: Are you ever afraid?

DR: Everyday! That's what drives me.

KW: The Columbus Short question: Are you happy?

DR: Yes, very!

KW: The Teri Emerson question: When was the last time you had a good laugh?

DR: [Roars with laughter] Right now!

KW: What is your guiltiest pleasure?

DR: Cooking.

KW: What is your favorite dish to cook?

DR: Any Dominican food.

KW: The bookworm Troy Johnson question: What was the last book you read?

DR: Right now I'm reading Chrissie Wellington's autobiography, "A Life without Limits." She won the Iron Man competition three years in a row.

<http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/1455505579/ref=nosim/thlfofire-20>

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

DR: Not really.

KW: The Sanaa Lathan question: What excites you?

DR: What excites me? Love!

KW: The Uduak Oduok question: Who is your favorite clothes designer?

DR: I have too many favorites to

See DANIA on page 5

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

SEATTLE 2012



If you have an event you want to share with the community, email it two weeks in advance to *The Skanner* at info@theskanner.com

Thursday August 23

JON SOLO: SEATTLE PRESENTS FREE SUMMER CONCERT. Indie rock and funk jams from Jon Solo and special guests. Noon - 1:30 p.m. City Hall Plaza, 600 4th Ave. Seattle

Saturday August 25

VOLUNTEERS NEED FOR THE BIG DAY OF PLAY. We need volunteers to help organize the Healthy

Parks, Healthy You event. If you want to give something back to the health & fitness community then come join as a volunteer. 8 a.m. - 5 p.m. Warren G. Magnuson Park, 7400 Sand Point Way NE. Please contact Aretha Alexander at parksvolunteer@seattle.gov

FIRST ANNUAL HEALTH & EDUCATION FAIR & RUN AT JUDKINS PARK. The event is both a fundraiser and an opportunity to enhance and support a culture of academic excellence and well-being among communities of color. 10 a.m.

FREE ARTS IN THE PARK AT THE PUYALLUP FARMERS MARKET. All supplies are provided, and artist assistants will be on hand to help out. Stop by, create art and learn more about upcoming art creations. 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Pioneer Park and the Plaza at City hall, Puyallup, WA

Saturday - Sunday August 25 - 26

SAND MANDALA CREATION TRADITIONAL DANCE AND BBC FILM HIGHLIGHTS TIBET FEST. Seattle

Center Armory and Fisher Pavilion, explores the cultural roots and contemporary influences of Tibet through live performances, cultural displays, hands on activities, food and much more. Noon - 6 p.m. Both days. Seattle Center, 305 Harrison St.

Tuesday August 28

DANCING IN THE PARK: DANCING 'TIL DUSK. Live or DJ music and social dancing on a real dance floor. Beginner lessons is from 6 - 7 p.m. Then the dancing begins at 7 p.m. until 9:30 p.m. Westlake Park. Free entertainment for the whole family.

Saturday September 1

6TH ANNUAL BLUES FOR FOOD FEST. Our goal is to have an organic and entertaining blues alternative to Labor Day. Noon - 9 p.m. Magnuson Park, 7400 Sand Point Way NE.