

coverstory

BY JAY BOBBIN

Brian Austin Green is a panelist as "The Masked Dancer" premieres Sunday on Fox.

'The Masked Singer' spawns 'The Masked Dancer' as new Fox contest debuts

If there can be a "Masked Singer," why not a "Masked Dancer"?

Well, there can be, and Fox is giving the latest entry in the franchise a special advance debut Sunday, Dec. 27. (The show then settles into its regular time period by assuming "Singer's" usual Wednesday slot Jan. 6.) The premise is similar, as celebrities in elaborate costumes display their dancing aptitude while viewers try to guess along with the series' panel who's inside the outfits.

Based on a segment featured on Ellen DeGeneres' weekday talk show (she's an executive producer here), "The Masked Dancer" offers actor-comedian Craig Robinson ("The Office") as host. Current Fox staple Ken Jeong is a panelist, as are singer-choreographer and "American Idol" veteran Paula Abdul, "Beverly Hills, 90210" alum Brian Austin Green and singer-actress Ashley Tisdale.

"It is something new for me, but it's really fun," the friendly Green maintains. "There's nothing really negative; that's just not part of the process. The voting is for the person you want to see the most, not the person you enjoyed the least. It's all in good fun, and everybody who works on this show seems to have a good time, so it's a cool experience. It's nice to be a part of something as positive as this show is."

Green did a "Masked Singer" guest stint this past season as that show's "Giraffe," and he confirms that made him prone to sign up for "The Masked Dancer" when the opportunity arose. "I was in rehearsal for weeks, I had to have wardrobe fittings, it was a whole process – and when I was doing the performance stuff, I realized, 'Oh. The panelists just come in for this. That's the job to have!'"

At the same time, his giraffe stint has given Green an appreciation for what "Masked" guests do: "It was really hard to sing and move, because you have a very limited view inside the costume. The costumes are so tailored for a show like this, the masks are smaller and you have a much better field of vision. And the costumes are much easier to move in. It's just so impressive that these people can do what they're doing. They're not just little moves, they're fully choreographed numbers."

Being back on Fox, where he spent a decade as "90210's" David Silver (and then on "Terminator: The Sarah Connor Chronicles" and last year's "BH90210" variation), also holds appeal for Green. "I've had nothing but great experiences with everybody there," he reflects. "Even when there are new people, it feels like new members of a family that I'm already part of. And they know I'm a part of it, so it's a very good environment."



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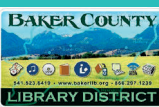
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