

ALICIA WITT



Alicia Witt has had an over three-decade long career, starting with her acting debut as Alia in David Lynch's classic 'Dune'. Alicia received rave reviews for her role as Paula in Season 6 of AMC's critically acclaimed series The Walking Dead. Witt also appeared during Season 4 of ABC's 'Nashville' as country star Autumn Chase and in the new Twin Peaks on Showtime, reprising her role as Gerstein Hayward. Witt most recently was seen haunting John Cho's character as Demon Nikki on Season 2 of Fox's The Exorcist; other recent credits include the Emmy-award winning Showtime series 'House of Lies' opposite Don Cheadle and the hit WB series 'Supernatural'. Witt is also well known to Hallmark audiences for her annual Christmas movies; her latest, which she co-wrote and is producing, will be released later this year. She can also be seen this fall as Marjorie Cameron in Season 2 of anthology series Lore, on Amazon.

In 2014, Alicia joined the 5th Season of Emmy-award winning FX series 'Justified' with Timothy Olyphant. Alicia played Wendy Crowe, the smart and sexy paralegal sister of crime lord Daryl Crowe (Michael Rapaport) who takes matters into her own hands to bring him to justice in the Season 5 finale. On stage, she most recently appeared at the Geffen Playhouse in the Los Angeles debut of Tony-nominated Neil LaBute play 'reasons to be pretty'. In 2013, Alicia appeared opposite Peter Bogdanovich and Cheryl Hines in the independent family dramedy 'Cold Turkey', in a performance which NY Daily News critic David Edelstein hailed as one of the best of 2013. Also released in 2013 was the film 'I Do', which had a nationwide theatrical release after screening at 25 festivals worldwide and winning 10 awards. Alicia has two songs featured in this film as well.

Off screen a classically trained pianist and singer, Alicia is one of those rare talents whose passion as a singer songwriter is also gaining tremendous attention from both the industry and her fans. Her latest album, 15000 Days, was produced by legendary producer Jacquire King (Kings of Leon; James Bay; Norah Jones) and is being released in August 2018; the debut single 'Younger' is out June 1. For the past 9 years she has been recording, releasing, and performing her original piano-driven rock all across the world, and has opened for Ben Folds Five, Jimmy Webb and John Fullbright as well as performed at the Grand Ol Opry in Nashville. Witt has also performed live as a musical

guest on numerous shows, including CBS' Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson and The Queen Latifah Show. Her music can be found at www.aliciawittmusic.com.

Other roles include Paramount's 'Last Holiday' with Queen Latifah and Timothy Hutton, and New Line's critically acclaimed film 'The Upside of Anger', which premiered at the Sundance Film Festival, opposite Joan Allen & Kevin Costner. She also starred in Warner Bros' hit romantic comedy, 'Two Weeks Notice', opposite Hugh Grant and Sandra Bullock; and the Emmy award winning Friday Night Lights on NBC. Alicia starred opposite Al Pacino in the 2008 feature film '88 Minutes' for director Jon Avnet. That same year she played Detective Nola Falacci opposite Chris Noth on NBC's 'Law & Order: Criminal Intent' for half a season, taking over for Julianne Nicholson while she was on maternity leave.

Theatre credits include Neil LaBute's 'Reasons to be Pretty' at the Geffen Playhouse in Los Angeles; Terry Johnson's 'Piano/Forte' at London's Royal Court Theatre (a role written especially for her, in which she also played piano); and Neil LaBute's 'The Shape of Things' at the Ambassador Theatre in London's West End. She was also seen on stage in 'Dissonance' at the Williamstown Theatre Festival. Alicia has also appeared 9 times in the 24 Hour Musicals and Plays, on and off Broadway, in the West End, and in LA.

In 1994, Witt appeared in the critically acclaimed 'Fun', which debuted at the Sundance Film Festival. The film, directed by Rafal Zielinski, depicts a tale of two disturbed young girls whose quest for fun leads them to murder. Witt received the "Special Jury Recognition" Award at Sundance and a nomination for an Independent Spirit Award. In 1998, she starred in Columbia Tristar's hit horror movie, 'Urban Legend'. On television, Witt starred for four seasons as Cybill Shepherd's daughter Zoey on the hit CBS sitcom 'Cybill'. She also guest starred on the phenomenally successful HBO series, 'The Sopranos', and the Emmy award winning 'Ally McBeal', in which she sang with Randy Newman. Witt combined her acting talents with her skills as a pianist in the romantic comedy, 'Playing Mona Lisa'.

Alicia made her directorial debut with the short film 'Belinda's Swan Song', which she also wrote. The film premiered at the 2006 Rhode Island International Film Festival and was screened at 9 additional festivals around the world, including the Los Angeles International Short Film Festival.

She also appeared in 'Mr. Holland's Opus', opposite Richard Dreyfuss, as clarinet player Gertrude, as well as 'Four Rooms' (Miramax) with Tim Roth, Madonna, and Lili Taylor, and directed by Quentin Tarantino, Allison Anders, Robert Rodriguez, and Alexandre Rockwell. She was also seen in the John Waters film 'Cecil B. Demented', with Stephen Dorff and Melanie Griffith, as well as director Cameron Crowe's 'Vanilla Sky', opposite Tom Cruise. Other film credits include 'Bongwater' opposite Luke Wilson; Mike Figgis' 'Liebstraum'; 'Bodies, Rest and Motion', starring Tim Roth and Bridget Fonda; 'Peep World' with Sarah Silverman, Michael C. Hall and Rainn Wilson; and critically acclaimed short 'The Pond' with David Morse.

'YOU GET A LAUGH, THEN YOU ARE OUTTA THERE'

13 scene-stealing guest actors and actresses divulge how they scored their roles, how they made the most of limited screen time and what they learned from being 'interlopers on someone else's little culture'

BY ANNA LISA RAYA



Witt's Paula starts trouble on *The Walking Dead*.

Alicia Witt

The Walking Dead (AMC)

Witt portrayed Paula, a follower of Negan (Jeffrey Dean Morgan) and a calculating villain

"I got a message from [*Walking Dead* showrunner] Scott Gimple, who I'd never met. He said he was listening to a podcast I was on and liked my music and my work for a number of years and was a big fan. I was a huge fan of *The Walking Dead* since the beginning. He made my night. Five days later the audition came along: I went in for the casting director, did the scene once, and the next night I got a call at dinner that I got the part and was heading to film it in Atlanta the next day. I didn't have the script and didn't know if it was one scene — but I

didn't care because I was so excited to be on the show. The episode was filmed in chronological order, which is so rare. Because of the volume of material, it was great for me because I didn't have any time beyond being on the plane and absorbing what I was going to do. I didn't stop being Paula until the scene where she died. One thing that really surprised me from getting to know the cast after the fact was that you have so much darkness on the show — the whole world in which the show takes place has very limited sparks of levity. Lunchtime on that set is the most raucous, joyous great big family meal. It's nothing like I've ever experienced on any set in my life. We had tears rolling down our faces we laughed so hard — and that was normal."



3 TRUTHS & 1 LIE

ALICIA WITT, 40, STAR OF THE SOON-TO-BE-DEPARTED NASHVILLE, ASKS: IS IT FACT OR FICTION? —G.T.

1

She was a child prodigy and a classical pianist and appeared on *Celebrity Jeopardy!*—twice: “The first time I won, but the second I lost to Fred Savage, who went to Stanford,” she says.

2

She had a pet spider as a kid: “I had read *Charlotte’s Web* and asked Santa for a spider. My parents found one on the wall for me. It became a huge family project. We caught flies to feed to her.”

3

She once wanted to marry Mary Tyler Moore: “It was when I was 4. I wrote her fan letters telling her I wanted to marry her. I’m dying to know if she ever got them and, if so, remembers them.”

4

She had her lip split by a flying squirrel: “It came out of the sky, landed on my face and cut my lip in two!”

THE LIE

4. It was a cat. “I was outside a pub in London when someone threw the poor cat out the window.”

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/allenstjohn/2017/02/11/hollywood-econ-101-or-why-you-should-consider-contributing-to-an-actress-kickstarter-really/#5816f8ea3abb>

Why You Should Contribute To Actress Alicia Witt's New Album Kickstarter

By Allen St. John | February 11, 2017

Is there an easier target in the entertainment world than a well-known actor creating a Kickstarter page for a personal project? From Zach Braff to Amanda Palmer, any number of celebs have taken a lot of heat for making fans ask that magic question: *Um, why can't you just pay for it yourself?*

Well, actress Alicia Witt (*The Walking Dead*, *Justified*, *Friday Night Lights*, *Twin Peaks*) is trying to get funding for her latest album through the crowd-funding site. Her last album was produced by Ben Folds and she's trying to raise the funds for a follow-up produced by Jacquire King.



Witt, who's as straightforward as she is talented (that was [a 12-year-old Witt playing piano as Gersten Hayward](#) in an iconic moment in the original *Twin Peaks*), addressed that "Elephant in the Room" on her Kickstarter page.

"I know that there are some who may read this far and say, 'yes - but - she's been on *The Walking Dead*, and *Justified*, and *Nashville*, and *Supernatural*, and all those Hallmark movies-- and all those other movies and shows. so she's rich! right?' no ☺ without being tacky- it just isn't that way. if you're not a series regular on a series or one of the top box office draws in film these days, the acting business isn't in any way a windfall. I consider myself massively, enormously, beat-the-odds-and-i-thank-god-everyday lucky to be one of the fraction of SAG-AFTRA members who can support myself and pay my bills doing what I love. I don't in any way have an extravagant lifestyle, and EVERY penny of savings has gone to my music in the last 8 years. The TV shows I referenced above were all billed and contracted as guest starring roles. I don't want to be tacky and share what we get for that- but it is the same for me as it is for any other actor in SAG-AFTRA who guest stars at top of show. that's just how it works these days - any actor can attest to it. and while I am **very** blessed to be working... my earnings don't currently provide me anything left over to create a project like this."

How much does Witt care about her album project? So much that she was willing to get down and dirty and answer probing questions about that most personal of showbiz topics: money.

Our candid, dishy conversation about agism in the record business, iPhone auditions, and the less-than-rosy economics of being a working actress was both entertaining and eye-opening. It

explains, once and for all, how an actor can be quite famous, but far from rich. And it might even persuade you to toss [in a few bucks to support a very worthy project](#).

Tell me about your record project.

[Jacquire King was my](#) dream producer, for so many reasons; the records that he's worked on, and the way in which he just makes a song come to life and it sounds like that's exactly what the song was always intended to be. Without having known his name, I had already loved his work. The James Bay record and the Della Mae record. I loved both of those records, and I didn't realize it was the same producer. Tom Waits' *Mule Variations* is one of the five records I would bring with me to a desert island, it means so much to me. And that Kings of Leon album, *Only By the Night*.

There's something about the way Jacquire produces these things that illuminates the individuality of the artists and the songwriter. He just knows how to pull together these soundscapes in such a way that more people can access the song, but it doesn't feel in any way like it's been produced to--I don't know--*dumb it down* or make it just poppy; it just makes it feel right.

My manager decided she was going to reach out to him, but he's extremely booked and he's extremely expensive and I didn't remotely have the budget to work with him in the way that he normally works. I thought maybe a best case scenario he was going to recommend someone to work with me if he responded at all. But she played him some of my songs and to my amazement, he said that he wanted to record with me, and he ended up choosing five songs out of fifteen for an EP.



You've got the songs, you got Jacquire, but not enough money to make it happen...

We had this incredible opportunity where this producer wanted to work with me and we're trying to make a project that is the kind of thing you would make with a big record label budget. But we don't have that. So I turned to Kickstarter. And to be clear, Jacquire is working with me on an indie songwriter rate. He's not doing it for what he would do a big label project for, but still we needed to work at the Blackbird Studios for a week and work with these musicians that have played on other albums he's produced.

He's a super hands-on producer, unlike some other people of his stature, who might have an engineer do a lot of the work and they pop in at the end of the day and sort of oversee it. But he has been there every moment, from the scratch vocals to right now he's doing vocal comps. I'm going back in to lay down additional vocals next week with him and additional strings and guitars. He's just devoted every second that has been required to make these songs on the EP the best they can be.

Where did the title *15,000 Days* come from?

In the music business, there is a notion that at least for women, it's a better thing to be younger, as opposed to being experienced and having learned from your mistakes. I've always thought that women, as they age, are more beautiful, more powerful. I've always looked up to women such as Judi Dench and Helen Mirren and Diane Keaton. And musically Shawn Colvin has always been one of my role models. If I'm not mistaken, she had her first single when she was 41. You can hear it in her voice, and those songs that I first fell in love with when I first got to know her music. Those are the songs of a woman who's lived, who's battled various addictions and destructive toxic relationships. She's still trying to figure it out. She doesn't come at it and say "I've got all the answers now," or any of that stuff.

As I started out in my music career, I can't tell you the number of times, even seven years ago, when I would've been 33 or 34, I had so many people say "What? You're 33? You're not starting a music career, you can't. You're too old."

And that's really bullshit, you can do whatever you want. It's not up to you whether people listen, or if people like it. But luckily, I've worked really hard at it and I've gotten better and better and less and less afraid. And people do listen, and they do like the music and I have an audience for it.



So it's *your* 15,000 days?

With this record, I want to reach people who are the age that I am right now, which is 15,000 days. That's my age. I've been acting since I was seven and you can Google my age. It's been there forever. <laughs> I've never been able to lie about it. But I'm glad because I don't really *want* to lie about it. I want this album to reach people, not in spite of my age but *because* of my age. I think my age is an asset and the music I'm making now I would not have made if I had gone out there when I was 18 or 19 and had started releasing pop music.

There's a really youthful spirit about it because I'm embracing my age. I'm not trying to be younger, but happen to be a 41-year old woman who doesn't particularly want to get married and isn't chomping at the bit to have kids and in some ways, I feel like I've only just figured out who I am. And I know I'm not the only woman of this age who is that that place in her life.

Some people would say, "You're famous. Why can't you just go to a large record label and get the money for the record that way?"

This is an interesting conversation because you know, I could, probably. My music manager, approached a couple of big record labels and they were like, "She's how old, again?"

I'm totally serious, that happened and the other thing about making music with major record labels from the start is that, yes they will fund the record, but then they own it. You don't own the record anymore, you own your writing share of it, but in exchange for having put up the money upfront, that's their record. They can even choose to not release it. I think that they'll be interested once the album's actually done and they can hear what we've done.

And then there's the Elephant in the Room.

<laughs> There's a misconception that actors who you might recognize are automatically super rich.

But the reality is quite different, right?

Yeah, there's several answers to that, one of which is that, over the years, the amount that actors make has just changed a lot. A guest starring role like the one that you saw that I did

on *Supernatural* last week [pays a lot less than] when I was on *Two and A Half Men*. I think that was about eight years ago. At that time if you had a guest star who was more recognizable, you would get a different rate. But nowadays, if you're doing a guest starring role, you get paid "top of show."

What exactly is "top of show"?

I don't understand where it comes from, but it just simply means the top amount that we will pay anyone appearing on the show. It varies from show to show, but it's SAG/AFTRA [actor's union] rules. It depends, I guess, on what the budget of the show is but it's never more than \$9,000 per episode. And it's usually between \$5,000 and \$6,000. *[Editor's note: By comparison, Jim Parsons and the other stars of Big Bang Theory earn \$1 million an episode, while Andrew Lincoln, star of The Walking Dead, earns more like \$90,000 an episode.]*

I gather there used to be a rate that was above Top of Show for actors with a body of work. But that's not the case anymore?

That's it. Nobody gets more than Top of Show if you're a guest star. That means that if you're someone that people might tune in to see, it doesn't affect how much you make. They consider it more an opportunity for you to be on their show, and you just get paid the same as someone who's just getting started.

To clarify--I say this on the Kickstarter page too, I am in the tiniest percentage of SAG actors in that I'm able to support myself doing what I love and I'm so grateful for that.

Of course. But this is a business and you built up a career and a fan base. Yet the producers are in "work for the exposure" mode.

One thing that's really changed is that I was on a series [Cybill] for four years, starting when I was 18. I got very lucky to get that role and then you get what's called a quote. *[Editor's note: A quote is what a producer has to pay to hire an actor, based on how much she got paid last time.]*

I did a couple of pilots that didn't take off and I had a quote from those and I made movies. With every movie, you make a little bit more. I made *Urban Legends* for very little, but then the next movie I made more than that. You work your way up and you start having dollar amounts in proportion to the name value that's assigned to you, where they think people are going to tune in or buy the DVD or whatever it is, based on who's in it.

Your performance is part of the product and helps to sell it.

That has changed so much over the years. Any actor would tell you that, you audition for pilots and they just say "That's your quote? We'll offer you half of it and if you don't want it, there's about 20 other actors who are going to be fine with it."

And that's just become the way it's done in the business, so all of the quotes that used to be what you worked your whole life for, they just don't count anymore.

And I guess it's harder now to get paid extra for recurring roles on television?

Another thing they've done is sometimes when there's a role such as on *Friday Night Lights* or *Justified*, which seems like a series regular for a year, now you're paid as if it's a guest starring thing. That's not anything against those producers, it's just the way it's done these days. A few years ago, if you were going to do an entire season of a show, you would be paid at least at a recurring rate, but there is no such thing anymore. Now they just say "Well, it's going to be 10 episodes out of the 13, but they will all be billed as guest starring roles, and again if you don't like it, there's always someone else lined up who will take the part so you have to decide by the end of the day." And then if it's an incredible role, like the one I played on *Justified*, you take it.

So what you're saying is that you can make a living but you're not super rich.

It's not a Kickstarter because I'm floundering and can't support myself. It's a Kickstarter specifically for this incredible project that is not just something I'm recording with my friends in my living room. I'm recording with an extremely accomplished producer that normally a record label would be funding.

What's something that would surprise most people about the world of acting now?

One thing that people are surprised to hear about is that I still audition for almost everything that I do. it's so called pilot season in LA at the moment and I have to do what's called "self takes" all the time. I think people who are not in the business are surprised about, because even the role I had in *Supernatural*, I had to go audition for that. I didn't get offered that.

And I'm fine with that, I don't think that's a bad thing. It's cool because I don't know that they would have known I would have played that role. I'm at a point in my career that I've done so many different types of roles that I'm constantly running into people who have, say only seen the Hallmark movies, and they aren't aware that I've done all these dark, gritty, independent films or they've maybe only seen the dark stuff or they've only seen *Walking Dead* or *Justified*.

Or that great Sopranos episode.

After which I got offered one executive role after another <laughs.> It's something to be aware of as an actor. You can get pigeonholed really fast, regardless of how much you've done in your career up until that point.



So explain about these "self takes"

Today I'm in Nashville so I'm going to be going over to my friend's house, putting on makeup, getting the light just right, learning the lines, my friend is going to hold my iPhone, and I'm going

to audition. And just send that off to Warren, my manager, who's gonna send that off to my agent and the producers.

Easier or harder than being in the room with the casting director and the producers?

It's sometimes so much better to do a self-take because you get to do exactly what you had in mind and if you blow the first take, you just do another one and don't send them the first take. And also, I love that they don't get to have a conversation with you first and form an opinion about who this actor is, as opposed to judging the actual performance. But the bad thing about it is that there's nobody there to give you directions. I could be on completely the wrong track about what they're looking for with the character and nobody is there to say "Hey, could you do it a little differently?" They see the take and think, "Oh, she's not right for it."

How has social media changed things for you?

After watching *Supernatural*, and live-tweeting the episode, I feel so connected to all the people that reached out and were kind enough to say that they were loving this character.

I'm coming into a show that has been on the air for 12 years, and the fans of this show are so lovely and so devoted. They know everything about these characters and they were pretty much unanimously kind. I just went to sleep feeling like I had communicated with thousands of people. I was sharing pictures from the set and people were retweeting them and reposting them and commenting. It was just such a special evening. If this had aired ten years ago, I would maybe watch it with my friends. And maybe not.

And earlier in the day I did a Facebook live Q&A. And that's incredible because it had thousands of people on it and now it's over 100,000 people that have watched that video that I made. I got to play some music. I shared some of my new songs and answered a bunch of questions. It's just so immediate. I did it in my friend's living room, with my iPhone propped up on the table, but there's all these people popping up with questions, responding to the songs, maybe sharing something that they've seen me in years ago I'd forgotten about. I just feel like I spent my day yesterday talking to all these people when I didn't leave Nashville. That would never have happened without social media.



What's an example of the non-extravagant lifestyle that you mention on the Kickstarter?

I'm just trying to remember the last time I went and did some serious clothes shopping. Whenever I have cash in my hand, like per diem cash, I might go to some local store where they have, usually locally-made cute dresses or cute skirts or cute t-shirts you wouldn't find anywhere else. That's usually when I do my shopping. For those who don't know, per diem is the money you get on a daily basis when you're on location, through the union, whenever you're staying in a hotel or anywhere that isn't your house to cover basic expenses like meals and laundry.

I can't remember the last time I've just gone out and said, "You know, I'm gonna do some damage on my credit card today." <laughs> I just don't do that because I'm trying to save my money to put everything I can towards my music. My last big expense? My dog had to have surgery a few months ago, and that was expensive.

Alicia Witt's [Kickstarter campaign](#) runs until February 16. While she's reached her initial goal to be able to make the album, if he reaches her next goal, she and Jacquire King will expand the project into a full album.



<http://screenertv.com/television/supernatural-lily-sunder-regrets-alicia-witt/>

Lily Sunder is exactly the ‘Supernatural’ hero we need

By Julia Diddy | February 3, 2017



“Supernatural” has always inspired rumblings about its problem making room for strong heroic female characters — for starters, promoting them to series regular status, not to mention that pesky longevity issue)

The likes of Meg Masters (Nicki Aycox), Ellen and Jo (Samantha Ferris & Alona Tal), Charlie (Felicia Day) and several other notable Nasty Women often flitter in and out of seasons and storylines, but just when it seems like they’re settling in... BAM! Even a steely-eyed reaper like Billie (Lisa Berry) couldn’t escape, well, *The Reaper*. (Side note: Please, Jody Mills, *don’t go into the light!*)

So when a character like Lily Sunder (Alicia Witt) strides into a storyline (sporting a bad-ass eye patch and angel-killing daggers, no less), it can be that much more painful watching her swagger off into the sunset again by episode’s end. This is the heroine our beloved “Supernatural” universe needs a *lot* more of, and it was a bummer to realize that she isn’t apparently sticking around, at least not for now.

It’s not often you find yourself cheering on the apparent villain (emphasis on “apparent,” of course), but this of course speaks to Lily’s charisma and uber-epic appeal. When we meet her, she’s basking in the charred aftermath of angelcide, systematically bumping them off one by one — and apparently with Castiel (Misha Collins) next on her hit list.

In an effort to stop this angel-shanking serial killer, Cas reunites with former angel colleagues — including Isham (Ian Tracey), a sneering douchewaffle of the highest order (straight from Heaven, it doesn’t get much higher)... But the twist is that the real baddie of the episode proves to be Isham: Responsible not only for talking way too much smack to Cas, but also, it turns out, for murdering Lily’s angel husband and human daughter, May...

All because Isham couldn't get over Lily's romantic rejection of him once upon a time. Lily survived unspeakable horror at the hands of a jealous lover (and a powerful immortal one, at that) — but in true epic heroine fashion, that's only half of her story. Lily's got her own agenda, and it's got nothing to do with tagging along with the Winchester boys (Jared Padalecki & Jensen Ackles), adorable though they are. This could very well be the most perfect "Supernatural" heroine we've ever seen: Initially Lily was a scholar (Brains? Check!), and it's through her academic interest in theology, angels, and the Apocalypse, among other things, that she became fluent in Enochian...

Which then made her perfectly capable of using Enochian magic to conjure up some immortal superpowers for herself (Ninja fight skills, semi-immortality? Check and check!), allowing her to go toe-to-toe with the winged ones responsible for her family's death... With one tragic catch: Every time she uses a spell, she loses a piece of her soul. So she's on the clock — and similar to DC's John Constantine (Matt Ryan), it looks like she might have a reserved parking spot waiting for her in Hell... But *between* now and then, consider the kick-ass adventures this broad could have!

The glory wasn't *entirely* Lily's in this episode, however. (Mostly, but not entirely.)

RELATED: Loose cannon Castiel is the gift 'Supernatural' needs right now

Are we not loving the fact that Cas has gone all Clint Eastwood of late? In the span of two episodes, he smote *two* threats to his beloved Winchesters — first Billie, and now Isham. Yet Cas is nothing if not mercurial: Mere minutes before, he was kicking ass and taking names in Smite Club. (First rule of Smite Club? We don't talk about Smite Club... *Because he's a kind-hearted character for whom killing brings no pleasure, and he doesn't want to be reminded of his painful sacrifices in the name of justice, thank you very much.*)

Yet in the next moment, Cas invites Lily to claim his life should she ever decide that she can't forgive him for his role in her family's death. Never mind that he was following Isham's orders — he takes full responsibility for his ignorance of Isham's true motives. Given that Misha Collins has previously agreed with the concerns surrounding the show's covert misogyny problems, it's especially touching to watch his character, Cas, offer himself up to a strong, heroic female character — who once suffered mightily at the hands of a once-winged Bad Hombre.

Up next, it looks like everyone's turning their attention to the Rosemary's Baby type problem gestating in Kelly Klein. Safe to assume that snagging a copy of "What To Expect When You're Expecting" will do the poor woman little good.

"Supernatural" airs Thursdays at 8 p.m. ET/PT on The CW.



<http://moviehole.net/2017112852twin-peaks-actors-talk-new-previous-season>

Twin Peaks actors talk new – and previous – season!

By Caffeinated Clint | February 15, 2017



Alicia Witt, who plays Gersten Hayward on “*Twin Peaks*”, says she returns in the new series... but has no idea what it’s about.

“It was so secretive and I only received the scenes that I was a part of. There was never a script given to me,” Witt tells [Bustle](#). “When I first saw David on the set, the first thing he said to me was, ‘I’m sure you’re going to ask what’s going on in these scenes. And I’m not going to tell you.’”

“It was so incongruent and it made so little sense to me because I wasn’t privy to what had come before or after or who characters were that I was working with,” says the actor and musician. “Honestly, you and I will find out together when we watch it in May. I have no idea what to expect.”

Witt says it felt like no time had passed when she resumed the role of Gersten.

“Being on the set felt very reminiscent of having been on the set before... There was something very specifically *Twin Peaks*-feeling about being there that I couldn’t even put my finger on,” she says.

“It felt in some way like it was just a year after we had done it. Which makes no sense, but it was kind of magical,” Witt explains. “I guess I’m hoping that comes through in the product and I’m sure that ... in some way it’ll feel like nothing has changed.”

Madchen Amick, who is back as Shelley Johnson, shares slightly more – in her chat with [TooFab](#) – but is still under strict orders not to share any details.

“When we left the show 20 years ago, I remember thinking, huh I wonder what Shelly would do in the future and I wonder if she’ll ever get out of the situation she’s in,” Amick said. “[I] sort of dreamed that she could leave town and maybe try to move to Hollywood and try to be something big, just trying to figure out her individuality,” she added.



“Then when it was announced that it was coming back, I was just like, ‘Wow, what has she done? Where has she been? What’s been going on?’ and I was excited to wait and get the scenes and try to figure out what David and Mark [Frost] felt had happened,” the actress said. Amick teased a big surprise for fans when they see Shelley again in season 3. “The only thing I can give you is I was surprised.”

Amick said one question that fans have always asked about Shelley will be answered this season.

While co-star Sherilyn Fenn was also tight-lipped on details about her role in the new series, she has revealed she butted heads on the set of the original.

In the interview, published at Twin Peaks Unwrapped (where it was later pulled) and reprinted at [Alternativenation.net](#), Fenn also spoke about a beef she had with the original – namely the short-lived romance her character had with Special Agent Dale Cooper (Kyle MacLachlan). According to Fenn, Horne and Cooper might have ended up together – had co-star and MacLachlan’s real-life girlfriend at the time Lara Flynn Boyle not insisted showrunner David Lynch change his plan.

“There was no plan, Dale Cooper ended up at the hotel, so put her with Audrey. We weren’t supposed to be together, but after we were together... [then] his girlfriend, Lara Flynn Boyle, kiboshes an astonishing thing.”

Fenn recalls, “I remember saying, ‘David [Lynch], is this how it goes? An actor complains, because she’s the girlfriend, and then you change?’ Then she started smoking in scenes, and doing strange things, I think she danced in a scene.”

MacLachlan too, says Fenn, didn’t like the idea of an Audrey/Cooper hook-up – claiming Ben Horne’s hottie daughter, 18, was too young for his character.

Fenn is back in the new series having skipped on “Twin Peaks : Fire Walk With Me” (1992). The actress has a scheduling clash with the film “Of Mice & Men”, and didn’t want to nix that opportunity to work on a major film with John Malkovich and Gary Sinise.

“David was mad. He was! It’s the first time he yelled at me. I said, ‘You’re yelling at me, and I screen tested for this, I had to work to get this job!’ He said, ‘Well we can’t replace you in the movie!’ I said, ‘Good! You’re right you can’t replace me!’”

All I can say is, Fenn’s such a huge part of “Twin Peaks”- almost the poster girl for the show, if you will – so glad she’s back for more.

In other “Twin Peaks” news, [it’s been revealed](#) that an audio version of the legendary ‘Secret Diary of Laura Palmer’, featuring Sheryl Lee as narrator (of course), is on the way.

Is *Nashville* Star Alicia Witt the Smartest Woman in Hollywood?

By Gillian Telling | April 24th, 2016



Nashville may be canceled, but newcomer [Alicia Witt](#) has plenty of other talents to fall back on – in fact, she may just be one of the smartest actresses in Hollywood.

Before she was an actress, Witt was a child prodigy and classical pianist. She was cast on her first film, [David Lynch](#)'s *Dune* after his casting director saw her recite Shakespeare on *That's Incredible* when she was just 5 years old.



"Childhood was wacky!" Witt tells PEOPLE with a laugh. "When I was little I played piano and traveled all over competing, but I knew by the time I was 14 that I didn't want to pursue that as a career. I wanted to write and sing my own songs."

Witt eventually released an album of her own while continuing to act in film and TV and show off her smarts on shows like *Celebrity Jeopardy!*

"The first time I was on it I won, but the second time I was beat by [Fred Savage](#), who was going to Stanford at the time," she says.

Witt, who was in the other popular Lynch vehicle *Twin Peaks* will also appear in Showtime's upcoming [reboot](#).

"It was really odd. In some ways, being back there felt like time hadn't moved forward at all," Witt says of heading back to Washington to reprise her [role](#). "I wasn't allowed to tell anybody while I was doing it. Now I can finally talk about it!"

Nashville series finale airs Wednesday at 10 p.m. ET on ABC, and *Twin Peaks* is slated to hit Showtime in 2017.



MY TOP NASHVILLE TRACKS!

Alicia Witt, 40, who plays Autumn Chase, selects her favorites from the ABC series

TAKE MINE / CONNIE BRITTON & ALICIA WITT

"I have to include my first song on the show! We had a blast singing it."

THE BOOK / AUBREY PEEPLES

"It's stuck in my head from my first day on set. Her voice is gorgeous."

A LIFE THAT'S GOOD / LENNON & MAISY

"This was playing in real life while my pal **Shanola Hampton** gave birth!"

HISTORY OF MY HEART / JONATHAN JACKSON

"We can all relate to the lyrics about the scars left in us by heartbreak."

WHAT IF IT'S YOU / HAYDEN PANETTIERE

"I love the message: You make your own fate by choosing who you love."



Performer of the Week: Alicia Witt

By [Team TVLine](#) / March 19 2016

THE PERFORMER | Alicia Witt

THE SHOW | *The Walking Dead*

THE EPISODE | “The Same Boat” (March 13, 2016)

THE PERFORMANCE | Since Paula wasn’t going to live through “The Same Boat,” Witt, who played Carol and Maggie’s captor, didn’t have a moment to waste. She had to make sure right from the start that we felt like we knew Negan’s henchwoman. So, in her first scene, the actress tempered Paula’s contempt for her hostages with a confidence that was chilling to behold, creating in the process a character that we not only recognized, we feared.

But — and herein lies the beauty of the writing as well as the performance — we’d only just begun to scratch the surface of Paula. In subsequent scenes, Witt appeared to delight in the cruel humor that is the hallmark of the merciless Savivors, as Paula taunted Carol (Melissa McBride, crushing it, as always) and “praised” mom-to-be Maggie for popping out “bite-sized snacks for the dead.”

Only later did the script and Witt — as subtly as brutally — reveal that beneath the villainess’ rock-hard exterior lay scars that were less hidden than denied. She wasn’t vicious for the sake of viciousness, she was a Carol who had lost the ability — no, make that the willingness — to feel. (BTW, best of luck to the future generations of acting students who’ll audition with the carrot/egg/coffee monologue that Witt slayed.)

In the end, perhaps the highest praise that we can heap upon the guest star isn’t that she made a helluva first impression (which she did) or that she made a lasting impression (which she also did), but that her nuanced work made us wish almost as much as Carol did that Paula could have been spared.



<http://www.newyou.com/celebrity/alicia-witt-goes-a-little-bit-country/>

ALICIA WITT GOES A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY

BY ANDREW STONE | APRIL 14, 2016



Prolific, prodigious actor and musician Alicia Witt joins the cast of *Nashville*, reuniting with her *Friday Night Lights* costar Connie Britton and wowing audiences with her inspired sound.

There are many routes by which you've likely become familiar with Alicia Witt. Well, prepare to know her in a whole new way, as she makes her presence known on the hit ABC show *Nashville*. Regarded as a musical prodigy since childhood, Witt is a world-class concert pianist... a talent that now and again gets the chance to shine within her very accomplished and diverse acting career. She's blossomed as a recording artist, all the while, releasing two studio albums (including the Ben Folds-produced *Revisionary History*, from 2015) and a live album.

This multitasking beauty from Worcester, Massachusetts can claim a mile-long acting resume that dates back to projects such as David Lynch's *Dune* and includes the TV shows *Twin Peaks*, *Cybill*, *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *The Walking Dead*, *Justified*, *Friday Night Lights*, and *Kingdom*. On the big screen, she starred in *Fun* and gave notable turns in *Two Weeks Notice*, *88 Minutes*, *Vanilla Sky*, *Last Holiday*, and *Cecil B. Demented*.

In 2013, she bore her soul in *Cold Turkey* — delivering a performance that was widely praised. Meanwhile, she's wowed on the theatrical stage in LA and London, embodying several notable Neil LaBute characters and rightfully displaying her pianist power in *Piano/Forte*.

Needless to say, this is one busy lady. Which is why we're thrilled to have had the chance to bend her ear.

NEW YOU: Alicia, you've joined *Nashville*, which seems like an inspired bit of casting, considering your background.

ALICIA WITT: I'm so thrilled, having been a fan of the show since day one. I actually auditioned for the pilot, knowing full well that I was falling between ages in terms of characters. I sang one

of my songs acapella and did a few scenes, and they said they would keep me in mind for something in the future. After four years, I didn't think that was actually going to happen... and now it's actually happening. I'm delighted to be a part of this show, since I truly am a fan who looks forward to it coming on each week. It showcases new songs every week, and it's just a great show.

NY: You've recorded albums yourself, and the city of Nashville is the epicenter of that industry. How tied do you feel to the city?

AW: I've spent a lot of time in Nashville, including the work I've done with Ben Folds as well as writing sessions and just being amongst some great friends. It's one of my favorite cities.

NY: Given your musical background, what kind of fun does playing Autumn Chase on *Nashville* allow you?

AW: It depends on what the scene is, and what is required of me. My first song is a duet with Connie [Britton, Witt's former *Friday Night Lights* costar]. I don't get to play the piano in that, but to be on an arena stage is a fantastic thrill. The production values are so high. We go into the studio ahead of time and record everything, and so we always know the song is going to be great.

NY: Does your role shake things up on the show?

AW: I shake things up a little bit. I play a well-known singer on the show, in the business for twenty years after having been discovered on *Star Search!* That said, she's been a successful arena-selling concert artist for two decades, and the vibe is along the lines of Bonnie Raitt or Sheryl Crowe. The sound's less "country-country," and more pop-rock-country. She has a really cool sense of style; very laid back and all about jeans and t-shirts instead of diva looks. She's definitely single and pretty open about a number of relationships that didn't work out so well. There's definitely someone she's interested in.



NY: Now, you're a true artist, and very highly regarded for your musical acumen. How is the music element of this part feeding your concurrent disciplines?

AW: The role on *Nashville* is thrilling, getting to combine acting with music. It feels like a part that wouldn't have come to pass if I hadn't been spending so much time on my music. I've been booking shows, putting out music, and insisting that I want it to be more a part of my life.

NY: Tell us a bit about the place and meaning of music in your life...

AW: Well, it's something I do because I feel like communicating with people in that way is more truthful in some ways than acting. If I'm playing a role, I'm playing what's required of me and not always indicative of the way I am.. My music, especially music I've written, is so truthful. And I get to work with amazing talents like Ben Folds, who was one of my favorite artists before I ever met him. Writing and recording the theme song to [Witt's film] *Cold Turkey* together was an amazing experience, and we began working together more after that. *Revisionary History* is the result of our growing collaboration... and the fact that he ever listened to my songs and turned them into these recordings is just incredible.

NY: Are you a Country Western fan?

AW: I have always been. Country music is so universal. So many genres have country roots. I was a baby in the '70s, and the songs that I loved the most were those of Ann Murray, Neil Diamond, and Barry Manilow... The easy-listening stuff my mom liked. The heart of country is really good storytelling. Of course, there's the "driving your truck down the street, singing about drinking beers" songs and those are fun, but to me some of the greatest love songs and best heartbreak songs are country.

NY: You've been in front of the camera since you were very young, in a wide spectrum of roles... What would you consider new opportunities to express yourself?

AW: I think my experience has always been this: People might think they know me or are familiar with me, and I've tried very hard not to play the same part over and over. I knew I didn't want to be typecast from an early age, and I can slip easily into lots of different types of roles. I think I've accomplished that, and yet it can be frustrating. Over the last ten years, and longer, there have been parts that I wanted a chance at, and depending on who you're talking to in the business, there are some preconceived notions that I am one way or another based on prior roles. I'll hear from one week to the next different opinions about who I am based on what I've done. Now, I have had fun playing very different roles. Don't get me wrong. But I'm excited about the idea of more people knowing that I do everything at once, and I'm not just going through phases.

NY: You're obviously very healthy, and take great care of yourself because you look amazing. What's the key?

AW: There's a number of different things I do. I try to stay physically fit. There's a yoga studio I go to, and I joined a gym here in Nashville. It's really important to keep my body moving... Just go onto the elliptical and listen to music. And then just get outside. I'm about to take my dog, Ernest, for a walk. He's a rescue... I can't believe this little boy was returned twice and only ten months. He just wasn't trained or paid attention to. But now he's doing just great.

Other things I do... Although I've fallen off a bit, I am a big fan of transcendental meditation, which helps me focus on the areas where my brain power is really needed. Beyond that, I'm just really conscious of what I eat. I make sure there are always lots of organic fruits and veggies around. That's the first thing I do when in a new town, stock some healthy foods in the fridge. There's a great vegan restaurant down the way from me, so I'm quite content.



<http://www.eonline.com/news/754630/meet-alicia-witt-s-new-nashville-superstar-autumn-chase>

Meet Alicia Witt's New Nashville Superstar, Autumn Chase

By Jean Bentley | April 6, 2016



Move over, Rayna James—there's another country superstar in town and she makes her debut in tonight's episode of *Nashville*. **Alicia Witt**, who caused plenty of trouble on *The Walking Dead* this season, joins the cast as Autumn Chase, a major artist in the pop-country music world. When the actress spoke to E! News after her *TWD* exit, she also spilled some details on her newest role—which is pretty much the opposite of her *TWD* character.

"I like her a whole lot. She could not possibly be any more different from [*TWD* character] Paula, which is neat," Witt tells us. "She's a pop-country star. She's not full-on country, but she's been around for 20 years. Sort of in the same wheelhouse as Sheryl Crow, maybe **Bonnie Raitt**. She's funky. She's not one of those rhinestones and big flashy dresses kind of a gal. She's wearing her ripped jeans and cool t-shirts."

While Paula was an uber villain, Autumn is a fun-loving musician. "She's got a really mischievous, flirty attitude that I'm digging getting to play. She's definitely making some trouble," Witt dishes.

Witt will be working with some of the younger singers on *Nashville*, but her first song on the show is a duet with Connie Britton. "Her character joins me on the tour and we're at the arena. She comes out on stage and she joins me for this really kickass song that was written by Kacey Musgraves and Miranda Lambert and **Natalie Hemby**, so they're no slouches," she says. "So, that's pretty cool."



In real life, Witt is an accomplished singer who has released several albums of her own. "It's been very magical to be playing this character who does what I do, but on a much larger scale, obviously," she says. "I've been coming to Nashville now for so many years. My last record was recorded at RCA Studio A, and it was produced by **Ben Folds**. I've been spending quite a lot of time here the last four years or so anyway, so the fact that I get to work here and pretend I'm a local for these few months, at least, if not into next year—we don't really know yet—it's just so great."

Not to mention the whole singing aspect. "It's really cool to get to go into the studio and record and not be an actor who can sing, but isn't really used to it. I'm so comfortable in the studio, this is where I'm most happy. It's beyond a joy. It's completely thrilling. It's really a dream job."

Nashville airs Wednesdays at 10 p.m. on ABC.

Reporting by Billy Nilles.

The shooting of that scene was even more amazing than the script and, when I saw it all edited together, the editors just did us proud. I felt like it was a culmination of an entire season that was full of beautiful moments for all of the guest actors where they really gave us a lot to sink our teeth into, and we were all grateful for that.

We would like to thank Alicia Witt for taking time out of her very busy schedule to talk with us. You can catch Alicia in brand new episodes of Nashville every **Wednesday night at 10/9c** only on ABC. If you would like to keep up with Alicia's latest news on her acting, music, touring and more, you can visit her official website **here** which also includes links to all her social media sites.

****Main photo courtesy of Aliciawittmusic.com****

****Nashville photos courtesy of ABC/Mark Levine****

****The Walking Dead photos courtesy of Gene Page/AMC****

****Justified photo courtesy of FX****



<http://www.eonline.com/news/748286/the-walking-dead-s-alicia-witt-talks-her-out-of-body-experience-becoming-the-show-s-latest-villain>

The Walking Dead's Alicia Witt Talks Her Out-of-Body Experience Becoming the Show's Latest Villain

by [BILLY NILLES](#) Mon, Mar 14, 2016



Warning: The following contains spoilers from tonight's episode of The Walking Dead. If you haven't watched yet, consider yourself warned.

RIP Paula. We hardly knew ye.

Weeks after **Alicia Witt** announced she was joining the cast of *The Walking Dead*, she finally made her first appearance as Paula, the Savior whose voice was heard on the other end of Rick's (**Andrew Lincoln**) radio last week, revealing she'd captured Carol (**Melissa McBride**) and Maggie (**Lauren Cohan**). While she wasn't exactly someone to root for, we hardly thought the episode would also mark her final appearance as well.

Clearly, we thought wrong.

Witt spoke with E! News about her big episode, detailing what it's like to join a show like *The Walking Dead*, what she believes Paula's impact on Carol will be, and exactly what it's like to have your face eaten off. What follows is our unedited Q&A.

I'm a little disappointed that joining the show didn't mean sticking around for longer than one episode.

I know. Wasn't that cruel, the way that AMC made me announce it? They basically told me, verbatim, what I could say. I was like, "Aw, man!"

What's it like to come aboard a show like this, in its sixth season, that's so shrouded in secrecy? I can't imagine what the response was to your tweet.

I've been a huge fan of this show since the beginning. I've done a lot of shows that, I guess, had a following, but many of them I'd never seen before. This show doesn't just have a following. I don't even know how to describe the phenomenon that it is. I think because it speaks so much to a truth that all of us know, which is that there's something about our world that feels like a house of cards. It feels like life as know it could end at some point in our lifetime, and the zombie apocalypse is just code for that. That's my best guess as to why the show is what it is.



But to come into it, aside from all that, just loving the writing and the actors and the story and the world of this show as much as I do. To receive this script, which was after I'd auditioned for it. I had no idea who I was playing or what she was or any of it, and I got a call the night before, saying that I was going to be getting on a plane the next day—and I still didn't know who I was playing. I didn't know anything! I got the script and, if you had to do one episode of anything, it doesn't get any better than Paula. My God. It blew my mind.

Also, to get to work with Melissa, who is my favorite of an incredible cast of actors—she's just so remarkable in every way—I was just thrilled and I was definitely a little nervous. At the moment I hit the table read, though, I wasn't nervous anymore because everyone involved in it is—you just sort of forget what it is you're a part of from a "Holy s--t, I'm on *The Walking Dead*" perspective. It just becomes more like "Wow, I'm playing this incredibly complex character" and as an actor, it just really turns you on and makes you immerse yourself in it.

After the experience, the two weeks I was making this episode were so crazy fulfilling and so intense for me, that once it was over, I almost forgot that people were actually going to see it and then that was going to be its own thing. I would have been happy with just the experience of it. Honestly, when AMC finally said, "OK, you can announce it and this is what you can say" six weeks ago, it was almost like, "Wait, I really did *The Walking Dead*?" And then seeing the previews last, which aside from the little bit of ADR I had done, it was my first glimpse of the character. I was like, "Oh my God, that's me!" But it wasn't really me. I don't know, it almost felt like an out of body experience in some way. I don't know how to explain it.



Even though she's only around for one episode, I feel like Paula is going to have a major impact on Carol. She sort of acts as a mirror for Carol, giving her a glimpse of what she could be if she doesn't start questioning what she's doing. You said that you enjoyed working with Melissa. What was that like creating that?

That means so much to me that you noticed that because that was definitely what we felt and sort of how it seemed and how **Scott [Gimple]** had described it. But I think I was so close to it, I wasn't sure when I watched the episode if that was clear at all. I know that we definitely felt that while we were shooting it. It felt like: Here's a version of Carol, certainly. Something very eerie. She manifested her loss, her personal losses, in a way that was dark. She put away her humanity. She started killing and she stopped counting and she stopped feeling. And I think she means it when she said those things. I think that was her method of survival. Carol's learning how to do what needs to be done, but what makes her Carol, and why we love her so much, is because she does still feel. She's got an enormous heart and she doesn't want to have to do those horrible things. She feels it very deeply. That what I think, anyway.

I don't know how it's going to impact Carol. I loved, in the episode, the fact that when Carol is still begging Paula to run at the very end, she really doesn't want to kill her. There's something there. There's some sort of affinity and likeness and some kindred-ness about whatever she is that Carol doesn't want to have to kill. And, I don't know—to me, I almost felt like Paula doesn't run because she knows she's going to end up dead anyway. And maybe she knows she's going to have to kill Carol herself, if that happened. I don't know. It was very complicated and kind of amazing to get to play that.

I wanted to ask you what it was like filming Paula's death. What's it like having your face eaten off?

It was so weird! I was very excited that I got to go into the main special effects hair and make-up trailer because most days, obviously since it's the zombie apocalypse on, you don't have any make-up on. I mean, you go in there and you're in and out in 15 minutes. And as a girl actor, you're normally in there for two hours and it's the most—the socializing is really fun, but getting make-up put on is not fun. But to get to go in and watch these wizards do their work was pretty cool.



There was actually a neck rig, as well, but it didn't quite work the way they planned, so all you see is the face eating. But I actually had this whole thing on the neck as well, and the guy, whose name I think was Chris, he's one of their main zombie stars who does special effects and stuff—he was using his real teeth to chew off the special effects and stuff that I had on my face and my neck. That was probably the weirdest part, the trust of "OK, here's my face, here's my neck. I'm gonna trust that you can really see where you're supposed to be biting right now." It was weird, but, you know, I felt like, hey, if you have to die after one episode of *The Walking Dead*, it might as well be a really epic death. I feel that it was.

When Carol and Maggie are leaving, we see Paula after turning and she's now faceless. What was that process like to become faceless?

You know what sucked? That wasn't really me. It wasn't because the way they were shooting it was, while I was in there—because it took two hours out of the day for them to be making all these special effects and rigs that the zombie was going to eat on me, they had to be getting that girl ready as the zombie while I was getting ready because they didn't have time to get me ready twice because both of them would take two hours in make-up. So, schedule-wise, I was very sorry that that wasn't really me, but it wasn't. But at least it was really me that got my face eaten off! That's where I got to be screaming and yelling. Oh my God, that was so fun.

The Walking Dead airs Sundays at 9 p.m. on AMC.



<http://www.tvguide.com/news/the-walking-dead-guest-star-alicia-witt-on-how-paula-came-to-be/>

The Walking Dead Guest Star Alicia Witt on How Paula Came to Be

by [Liam Mathews](#) | Mar 13, 2016



[WARNING: The following story contains spoilers from Sunday's episode of AMC's The Walking Dead. Read at your own risk.]

March 13th's episode of *The Walking Dead*, "The Same Boat," was mostly a bottle episode, meaning it took place in a single location -- in this case, a former slaughterhouse that briefly became active once again. The ones getting slaughtered were members of the Savivors, upcoming big boss Negan's ([Jeffrey Dean Morgan](#)) followers. These were Savivors who survived Rick ([Andrew Lincoln](#)) and his team's assault on the Savivors' compound. They captured Carol ([Melissa McBride](#)) and pregnant Maggie ([Lauren Cohan](#)), and after postponing prisoner swap negotiations with Rick, whisked their captives away to their slaughterhouse safehouse.

The four slaughterhouse Savivors were Molly ([Jill Jane Clements](#)), 'Chelle ([Jeananne Goossen](#)), Donnie ([Rus Blackwell](#)) and group leader Paula ([Alicia Witt](#)), who used the zombie apocalypse as an opportunity to become a better version of herself: a tough-as-nails, pragmatic nihilist who is willing to do whatever it takes to survive.

Paula, as she explains to Carol -- who in some ways is Paula with a conscience -- was an unsatisfied secretary in Washington, D.C. before the outbreak. When the military took over, she was forced to stay at work with her boss, separated from her husband and four daughters. She knew her boss was going to get her killed, so she killed him to preserve herself. He was her first. Now, she doesn't keep count and feels no compunction when she kills. If her way of

thought is typical of the Savivors, the Alexandrians will be fighting a tough enemy -- a group with a pure animal drive to stay alive.

Of course, Paula is no longer a threat, since she got impaled on a piece of rebar and ripped up by a growler (Molly's name for the dead) at the end of the shish kebab. Paula's arc was brief but impactful.

[TVGuide.com](#) talked to Alicia Witt, the guest star who played Paula (who you may remember from *Friday Night Lights* or *Cybill*, and will next be seen on *Nashville*) to find out more about what makes Paula tick.

I read another interview where you talked about how you were a fan of the show before you even got the chance to do it. How did you feel when you got the chance to audition/when you got the job?

Witt: I had never auditioned for the show before, and I had definitely expressed interest in it because I truly think it's one of the best shows ever made. It's so hard to compare it to anything else that's ever been created, and clearly the fact that it's the phenomenon that it is supports that. It resonates in a way that I don't think anything else quite ever has.

I first got contacted by [head writer and showrunner] [Scott Gimple](#) on Twitter. I didn't know him before he started following me, and I was like "Wow, that's cool, the showrunner of *The Walking Dead* is following me," so I followed him back. Then he sent me a direct message like, "I just heard you on this podcast and I thought I'd reach out and say hello. I like your work and I enjoyed the podcast." And I told him, "Thank you, I'm a massive fan of yours as well. *The Walking Dead* is one of my favorite shows." And he was like, "That's good to know." About a week later, this audition came in and I went in and it was not anything that seemed like it was in the world of *The Walking Dead*. It was a version of the scene where Paula's talking about the coffee and the carrot. But it was set in a bank during a robbery. I didn't question it or think much about it, I just went in and did it the way I thought Paula would do it. Then the next night I got all these messages from my agent saying, "You got the part, you're gonna be getting on a plane tomorrow." And I still didn't know who she really was! And my agent didn't know either. The next day as I was boarding the plane I got the script. I probably said "holy s---" about a million times reading that thing as the plane took off. I was like "Are you kidding me? This is what I get to do on this show that I love so much?"

I was nervous and I was excited, because it's a show that means so much to me. At the same time, from the moment I started actually getting into Paula and working these scenes and working with these unbelievable actors and getting to work opposite Melissa [McBride], who is one of the finest actors I've ever worked with in my life. She's so good that I really wasn't thinking anymore about what I was doing in terms of, "I'm on *The Walking Dead*," it was about: Who are these people and what is this relationship they're forming and what is this strange effect they have on each other? Because obviously as a fan of the show I would know that Carol isn't religious and she doesn't care about a crucifix and she's got something else planned, she's

not terrified and crying and shaking like Carol does in this episode. But as Paula, that didn't even cross my mind. I think it occurred to me a few days later, when I was done with the work, I was like, "Wait a minute!" I know that sounds crazy, but I was so only Paula while I was there. I wasn't thinking about what Melissa was doing with her role.

I feel like Paula is sort of a funhouse mirror version of Carol.

Witt: I'm so glad you noticed that. We definitely felt that and thought about that.

What I took from it was questioning how different the good guys and the bad guys really are in this world. Was that discussed?

Witt: No, that wasn't discussed. The only discussion that I had with Scott going into it was about how involved with Negan she is. I had asked if she was romantically involved with him and Scott said, "Absolutely not." It was what it looked like: she was the boss of this group, and there were other groups like it where there were other bosses and they all answered to Negan. He didn't share a whole lot, though. The great thing about this character is that there was so much backstory already there on the page that I felt like I didn't have to any journaling or figuring out who she is before. So much was there, I just had to do what came naturally. I think that the Saviors genuinely believe that they are the good guys. They think that the means of survival--or at least I should speak only for me, because I didn't discuss it with the other actors--but I feel like Paula decided when she lost everything she had and she didn't get to be there for her daughters when it all went down, she decided that she was going to be there for herself. She was going to prove her worth and her strength by taking people down and by being the last man standing, in a way.

Were there any other specific things you thought about or talked about that weren't on the page? Because there was so much on the page, but there was also so much that begged to be filled in. Like, do you know more about her relationship with the boss? Did you think more about what Paula's life was like before?

Witt: No. Because it all happened so fast I was thinking more about Paula in the moment. I know that it's a source of pride for Paula to do a good job. I feel like the thought of having to face Negan having lost everything would make her look like an idiot. She'd rather die, than have to lose. I got the sense that her group, or at least Paula herself, what makes her keep going and get up every morning and keep going is the idea of her own invincibility. That's extremely important to her. And she genuinely doesn't think there's any point in Maggie having a baby. She thinks that's just completely absurd.

But as we know, invincibility didn't really work out.

Witt: No, it didn't work out at all. She vastly underestimated who she was dealing with.

If I were you, I'd be sad to only get one episode, but excited to get such a gruesome death. Did you feel that way? Because it was a pretty disgusting way to go.

Witt: [Laughs] Yeah, it really was. You know, I was so elated with what I had to do. I guess I felt like I could have been given six episodes or a year of episodes and not have the sort of depth of

material that I was so blessed to be given. So I was just thrilled to have the one and I was also equally thrilled to have such an epic death. I figure if I'm going to die, this is a fun way to go.

Was that you under all the walker makeup?

Witt: No, I wish that had been me. I wanted it to be me, but there was a time constraint. They had to shoot that on the same day that they shot the fight and they stunts so they just didn't have time. And it took me about two hours in hair and makeup, because there was also a neck rig that unfortunately malfunctioned.

It was supposed to be even more brutal?

Witt: It was! There was a whole neck thing with a spouting spigot of an artery that ended up just sort of dribbling everywhere and getting blood in every crack and orifice of my body. It didn't spurt out the way it was supposed to. Darn it. So it took about two hours to rig up and then of course they had to cover it up with skin-like material, and while they were doing that they had to shoot the scene with zombie-Paula. We just didn't have time for me to do both. Oh well.

So about the coffee bean soliloquy: it seems to me that Paula is more of an egg than a coffee bean. What do you think?

Witt: Oh, I think that's a really good point. I think she doesn't realize that she's become the egg [Laughs]. But she has. She's turned out hard. I think she's manufactured this version of things where she's gone out and changed the world. Whatever it is that's going on with Negan and his whole pseudo-government organization that I'm guessing, pure speculation of a fan that it might be, whatever it is I think she thinks they've brought law and order to this lawless place. Even though they're as heartless as they are and have no regard for human feeling, she does think they're the good guys. She thinks in a way she has changed the water itself. And I think the joke's on her.

Well, we'll just have to see if you're right, I guess. We'll find out together.

Witt: Yup. This is the depth of my knowledge of the show. Now I'm just a clueless fan like everybody else.

The Walking Dead airs Sundays at 9/8c on AMC.

<http://www.bustle.com/articles/147557-who-is-paula-on-the-walking-dead-alicia-witt-teases-her-characters-fierce-future>

Who Is Paula On 'The Walking Dead'? Alicia Witt Teases Her Character's Fierce Future

By Jennifer Still | March 13, 2016



When it comes to anxiety-inducing TV, no series will have you consistently on the edge of your seat more than *The Walking Dead*. Part of its terror comes from the fact that zombies are far from the only threat facing the main characters. In this Sunday's episode, [Alicia Witt joins *The Walking Dead* as Paula](#), one of Negan's partners in crime, and she could be one of Rick and company's fiercest enemies yet. While she can't reveal too much about her upcoming storyline, in an interview with Bustle, Witt is able to drop a few hints about what to expect from Paula.

"I think it's safe to say that she's very strong," Witt says. Previously, both she and AMC had remained mum when it comes to the details of her role. In fact, fans didn't even [know her character's name](#) until just a few days ago. We do know that Paula is [one of Negan's minions](#) and currently holding Maggie and Carol hostage, but that's about it. Luckily, Witt is able to shed some light on her motivation.

"Paula has decided that she's not going to be a victim in this incredibly dangerous and helter-skelter sort of apocalyptic time. She's decided that she's going to stand up to whoever comes her way and she's going to prove that what could be the end of all things is not going to be *her* end."



Witt can't reveal what Paula's plans are for the newly kidnapped Maggie and Carol, nor can she explain much about Paula's connection with Negan or their ultimate goal. One thing is for sure, though: she is totally thrilled to be joining the cast of one of her favorite shows of all time, even if she didn't initially know what she was signing up for.

"I didn't know what the character was I was going to play," Witt says. "I was reading new scenes that had nothing to do with the apocalypse in which this character was committing a bank robbery ... I didn't really even question what it was, and I found out the next night when I was having dinner that I got the part. I didn't receive the script until I was boarding the plane and then once I read the script, I was just so excited!"

As a longtime fan of *The Walking Dead*, Witt found this opportunity thrilling, and her love of the show added more excitement than nerves to the experience. "I felt like I had no idea what I was walking into still, but I definitely had butterflies going into it because of my excitement about the show," she says. "But then from my first day on set, I wasn't nervous at all ... I was more feeling like I'm so lucky that I'm now included in this incredible world and I can't wait to bring this amazing character to life."



Witt's own love of *The Walking Dead* is deeply rooted in the characters. Though she enjoys the adrenaline rush of the intense zombie scenes, she most enjoys watching the series' protagonists grow and change over the years. "I think for people who have never seen the show, the thing

they're most confused about is that it isn't just a show about zombies," she says, before continuing to describe what makes the series so great.

It's the people and what this apocalypse is doing to them, what they're most afraid of ... I think with this incredibly advanced brain and complex hierarchy that we have as humans come great complications and great danger, and that's obviously the most fascinating thing about the show, about how these people react to it and what the relationships are that they form with each other.

It's unclear how much we'll get to see Paula grow on *The Walking Dead*, but it's safe to say there are some exciting times ahead. While Witt can't reveal what exactly those times will entail, she does offer a three-word hint to describe the rest of *The Walking Dead* Season 6: "Ginger ninja power."

<http://www.ew.com/article/2016/03/13/walking-dead-alicia-witt-paula-the-same-boat>

Alicia Witt on playing the latest *Walking Dead* villain and how her last scene was supposed to go

BY DALTON ROSS | MARCH 13, 2016



[SPOILER ALERT: Read on only if you have already watched Sunday's "The Same Boat" episode of *The Walking Dead*.]

She was capable. She was confident. She was smart, tough, and ruthless. But that still didn't do her much good when matched up against Carol and Maggie. We met Paula from the Saviors tonight when she took the duo hostage. In the end, however, Carol and Maggie turned the tables, and Paula not only got her entire crew killed, but she was shot, impaled, and had her face eaten off by a zombie. (Rough way to go.)

We spoke to Alicia Witt, who played Paula, about bringing a fully fleshed-out female villain in a position of power to the show. She also told us about what *wedn't* see, including a zombie gag gone wrong during her big death scene. Click through both pages to read the entire interview, and for more *Walking Dead* scoop, follow me on Twitter: [@DaltonRoss](https://twitter.com/DaltonRoss).

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY: So I guess this is sort of like a hello/goodbye situation in terms of your time on *The Walking Dead*?

ALICIA WITT: It is, but I've been a massive fan of this show since the very beginning, and I have been longing to do anything on it, like a tiny role. When I got this part, I had no idea what it was I was playing, if I was in one scene or two scenes or what.

And it all came up because [showrunner] Scott Gimple had reached out to me on Twitter. He heard a podcast that I was on randomly talking about my music, and he reached out to me and said he had heard it, and I was like, “Wow, that’s lovely, because I’m a massive fan of yours!” And a week later, this audition came in for a part that wasn’t Paula. It was a woman who was doing a bank robbery, and it had nothing to do with the apocalypse, or zombies, or anything.

And then I found out the next night as I was having dinner that I was getting on a plane to Georgia the next morning, still with no script, no idea what I was doing. So I was literally boarding the plane, and I get this script, and not only is it just a kickass part, but it’s opposite my favorite actor on the show, Melissa, and I’m just so glad I got that opportunity. It was one of the best experiences I’ve ever had in my life.

For a character who only lasted one episode, you got a pretty full backstory to draw upon, as we see Paula telling this whole story about being a secretary stuck at work when the apocalypse happened, separated from her family, and how her boss was the first person she killed. It must have been useful to have all those blanks filled in.

I found it a very difficult character to shake at the end of the days because, as you said, it’s me just rambling on, and on, and on in every scene. So I’d finish a very intense day of work, come home, get some takeout Thai, and hunker down in my bed, and work on the scenes for next day, and wake up at 5 a.m., and repeat, you know?

It was interesting. As soon as the final scene was shot — that final day where I got eaten and died — I felt like she completely left me. There wasn’t any trace of her left, but I think partly that’s because the experience of being in her shoes was so all encompassing, largely thanks to that amazing writing.

Paula has that scene where she tells Carol, “I am not like you. I’m still me, but better. I lost everything and it made me stronger.” We have seen a few examples of this before, where certain people thrive in the zombie apocalypse in horrific ways, because they use it as a way to grab power that wouldn’t otherwise be theirs. Is that Paula?

Yeah, I think that one of the major differences between Paula and Carol, as Paula learns at the very end. I have a theory that Carol really got under her skin. I mean, that’s why she ends up talking that much, because why would she? I mean, partly it’s because she’s really damn proud of what she’s accomplished, and she wants to let this pathetic woman who’s whining and shaking in the corner with the crucifix know that this is the way things are really done. But there was something else going on there too. It’s like something was really eating at her about this woman, and she couldn’t put her finger on it.

And then at the final moment, she’s like, “Oh, you were her, but you’re not. You’re actually me now.” I think that she doesn’t feel very much as a rule though. It’s like the big difference and why we root for Rick and company on the show and why there’s so much humanity in this dark situation, is because of the group that he’s assembled. They do have massive hearts, and they do care, and they don’t want to kill other people, and I think Paula processed the loss of her

husband and her four girls as “F— the world. I’m going to go show them what I’m really made of, because I’ve got nothing left.”



I love where one of your fellow Savors tells Maggie and Carol “You’re not the good guys. You should know that.” Do you think Paula sees herself as good, bad, or is there no good and bad anymore?

I think that she’s sort of manifested this apocalyptic day and age as: The way you are a heroine is you stop feeling, and you find a way to make things work for yourself. That makes you the good guys. If those people want to live, they need to abide by the rules that we have carefully set up.

There were some things that we filmed that didn’t make it into the show, but I found it interesting as a viewer that we don’t necessarily know from Paula’s reaction whether she knows for sure that everybody at that complex is dead. I guess she assumes they are, but we had a line originally where she acknowledges that there’s no sign of anyone else, or they must’ve killed them all.

Outside of maybe Dawn from the hospital, we haven’t seen many female villains in a position of power on this show. We had The Governor, who was a guy. We had Gareth at Terminus, who was a guy. We had that lead Wolf, who was a guy. And in the comic book, none of the Savors in positions of power are women either. So Paula really felt different in that way.

I thought that thus far in the show, the character she reminded me most of was the Governor. I thought she would’ve liked him. She would’ve gotten along well with him. But, of course, you haven’t met Negan yet. But with this episode, that’s the end of my knowledge of the show. And I don’t want to know. I don’t want anybody to tell me what’s going to happen because it’s just one of those shows that terrifies and enthralls you. It’s crazy.

So I can’t wait to meet Negan, and one thing I know from having spoken very briefly to Mr. Gimple before I filmed this character is that she’s not one of Negan’s wives, as I know has been

widely speculated online. But she's definitely working for him in a way. It's like they've got these little factions of people, and so she's the leader of her group, but they definitely report to Negan.

You also had my favorite line of the episode where you say, "He's in pain. Guys can't handle pain." As a guy, let me tell you, Alicia, it is so damn true.

[Laughs.] I loved that line because, as a woman who's been in relationships with guys, I can definitely vouch for that. You have a woman have tooth surgery and a guy have tooth surgery, it's two completely different recovery periods, as an example. ... I thought that was a brilliant line of theirs.

You said earlier you were so excited to work with Melissa, your favorite actor on the show. What was it like when you got down there and you two got to do these very intense scenes together?

I can't even describe what a dream it was. I mean, she's one of those actors I put in the same category as Joan Allen and Al Pacino, who I've been extremely lucky to work with. She's right up there with them in terms of you get lost within a scene. That's why she has such incredible chemistry with everybody she acts with, because you can't tell she's acting, because she isn't. She just *is* Carol when she's playing that role, and when someone is that effortlessly in the skin of their character, you have to be as well.

You can't help it. You just are drawn into that, and I found it just one of the most satisfying experiences I've ever had in my life as an actor, getting to do that with her and getting to interact to the level that we did. And then, aside from that, lunchtime comes around, and the two of us every day at lunch were bawling with laughter. It's just like tears coming out of our eyes laughing so hard at whatever random s— was going on.

I think that's most likely something that happens a lot on the set because you're working under such dark circumstances. There's not a whole lot of levity to be found when you're shooting, but she is just one of the funniest people I've ever met in my life, and we just had an absolute ball at lunchtime and all these other random little moments. It's like you find the levity where you can, and without that, I think it would be even darker than it is doing this stuff, but the lunchtime breaks just make it an utter joy from a lightness, heart-happy point of view as well.



So what was it like to get impaled and have your face bitten off by a walker?

I got to go into the big, fancy, makeup special effects trailer, and they rigged me up, and here's the only bummer about the whole show: So it's the very final day. We'd filmed the big intense shooting death and the scenes leading up to the impalement, and that was very intense, very emotional stuff to do for everyone. And then I went into the trailer, and they rigged me up, and the bite on the face was supposed to be a pre-cursor to this amazing thing they rigged on my neck.

They had the pump and everything, and the guys are standing behind me, and it took hours to rig this amazing thing, but you couldn't see it at all with the makeup and the layers they did over it. I was working with one of their most experienced walker-biters, and he was using his real teeth to rip off the latex.

So he bites my face, and then he's supposed to bite my neck, and the blood goes spurting everywhere, but it malfunctioned. It happens sometimes, I guess, but of course I couldn't see it because I'm screaming and yelling, and I can't see anything, and I'm just like, "Holy s—, this guy's going to bite my neck now with his real teeth." And I was drenched with blood. Like, I'm talking gallons of blood were in my pants, in my boots, in my shirt.

I'm soaked and drenched with blood, and then we finished it, and they're like, "Well, it malfunctioned a little bit." But the face looked good, and obviously, they only have one go at that. That was my final scene, and there's Melissa, and I'm drenched, and we kind of looked at each other. We're like, "Um, hugs?" We had to do fake hugs because I'm squelching as I walked out of there, and it took me about an hour to clean blood out of places I didn't even know I had.

Shaving cream is good for that. That's what they gave me [when I was a zombie](#). They gave me shaving cream to get all that make-up and blood off.

They gave me shaving cream too! They sent me home with it.

Well, we didn't get to see the neck, and that is bummer. But the face biting was pretty awesome, because you see the skin just slowly stretching off your face.

Yeah, that was pretty cool. I was like, if I have to die after one episode on *The Walking Dead*, it might as well be an epic death, and it was.

<http://www.forbes.com/sites/allenstjohn/2016/03/13/how-juicy-how-dark-alicia-witt-discusses-her-amazing-guest-role-on-the-walking-dead-613/#7b4070fa5104>

"How Juicy, How Dark" Alicia Witt Discusses Her Amazing Guest Role On 'The Walking Dead' 613

By Allen St. John | March 13, 2016

The Walking Dead does an amazing job of casting, finding some of television's very best talent for regular and recurring roles. Episode 613 features what is arguably the best single-episode guest spot ever, snagging Alicia Witt to play Carol's doppelganger Paula. (Spoilers for *The Walking Dead* Episode 613)

You might remember Witt from an early season of *The Sopranos* where she played a young producer working for Jon Favreau, who then has a fling with Christopher. She also had a meaty recurring role in *Justified*, playing Michael Rapoport's brainy but ruthless sister.

In Episode 613, entitled "The Same Boat," Witt's character Paula has taken Carol and Maggie hostage and yet she manages to be both menacing and likable. The episode is extremely intense and Witt's performance, alongside Melissa McBride, is one of the highlights of the second half of the season.

I talked to Witt last week about how she landed the role, the fake script she used in the audition, what it was like playing opposite McBride, and what kind of trust games you've got to play when a zombie is about to eat your face.



How did the role come about?

It came about because Scott Gimple, started following me on Twitter one night. He's the showrunner of one of my favorite shows so I followed him back. I got a direct message and he

said “Hey, I really like your work and I heard you on a podcast, I liked your music. I just wanted to say hello and that I’m a fan.”

Wow, that’s pretty cool and I said “I’m a huge fan of yours as well.”

He said “Are you really? That’s good to know.”

And then a few days later I got this audition for *The Walking Dead* and I asked him if he had anything to do with it.

He said “Yes, I had everything to do with it.”

He’s like “I don’t know if this is the right part for you but go have fun with it. I’d like to see what you do with it.”

So what was the audition like?

It was a three-page monologue about a woman with another name than Paula and she’s robbing a bank. It was sort of a version of the egg and the coffee speech. But nothing to do with the apocalypse. Fake sides for a fake character.

The next night I get these frantic messages from my agent at 9:30. You got the part you’ve got to get on a plane tomorrow. They won’t tell us what the character is.

I didn’t find out until I was boarding the plane what my character was.

It must have been great to see what a big, meaty part this was.

I was completely blown away by the significance of it. How juicy. How dark. What an amazing part. I had two of the best weeks of my life getting to work on that.

I think that final scene with Michael Rapoport in *Justified* and this whole episode are on a par in terms of sinking into a character and having an almost out-of-body experience.

Paula is a really interesting character, not just a standard villain.

There’s so much on the page. And there’s so much that wasn’t scripted that found it’s way into those scenes.

Working with Melissa was a mind blowing experience. She’s so damned good. She’s one of those actors who’s so present. You have this immediacy. I never questioned for one minute that I was Paula and she was Carol and we were getting to know each other. I forgot everything I knew about the show I was a fan of.

It’s almost like Paula was kind of a mirror image of Carol.

There was this eerie dynamic where they were seeing in each other what they might have been if they had processed things a little differently.

There's this line that didn't make it into the final cut and I completely understand why. It's pretty urgent and I can understand why Paula wouldn't stop to say it in that moment, but it's my favorite line. She turns back to Carol and she says "Funny before all this you were someone I would have sent funny cat pictures to."

I loved that line. It was the one moment where Paula's veneer really cracks for a moment.

She still doesn't see Carol's strength. She knows she sees something there that's familiar and it freaks her out. There's something that disconcerts her about this woman and she can't put her finger on it. She knows that in some other world they could have been great friends. And that sucks.



It was a pretty complex episode in that Carol was playing 'possum, but even we didn't know exactly how much. As a fan of the show you knew more about Carol than Paula did.

I didn't think about it. As a fan of the show I would know she's up to something. She's not religious, why does she take the crucifix? I know how strong Carol is and that she's not going to just be curled up in a ball sobbing. As Paula I didn't know that but I did know there's something more was going on there.

We did these scenes so many time with so many versions. Billy Gierhart the director gave us room to try different ways for these dynamics to play out.

We did some versions where Carol was very emotional and some where she was holding it together a little more. It's interesting that when Carol was the weakest and most vulnerable it brought out the coldest versions of Paula, I could feel myself ice down.

But with Melissa, having to play anything where I was hurting her is very difficult.

Which version did they ultimately use?

They went with the more emotional and vulnerable version.

Are we suppose to believe what Paula's telling Carol—and by extension us—about her boss and her husband and her kids?

That's an interesting perspective. I thought it was. I though Carol is really getting to her. It's like one of those diagrams and where Carol starts at one place, Paula starts in another, they meet in the middle and then they go right past each other.

And at the end, Carol is on the floor, crying, having been shot in the arm, with Carol pointing a gun at her. But there's still a connection.

It's nice for people to be able to see what they see in it. For me, I thought Paula was telling the truth.

Paula is pretty pragmatic to have gotten this far and survived this long. But Carol gives her a chance to run but she doesn't take it.

I thought it was a combination of "You're going to shoot me in the back as you run" but also, "If I run I have to go back to these people having lost everything having utterly failed at this."

I think somehow, in her madness, she still thinks she's going to outsmart Carol. You don't quite see it—it got framed out in the edit—but I did draw my knife after I run out of bullets. What I was going for was that I was going to rush her and slice her. Somehow I don't quite believe she's going to shoot me.

I think she's processing the fact that the meek, scared woman isn't who she thought she was.

You've got one of the "great" death scenes in The Walking Dead. We're sad to see you go, but if you've got to go, this is the way to do it. Paula dies on her feet and goes down swinging.

I liked that. And as an actor I was delighted I was going to get a terrific death. We only got one go at that because it takes so long to do those prosthetics. So there was really one chance for the guy playing the zombie to eat me up.

He was using his actual teeth. Which I didn't know until the day we were actually going to shoot it. His actual teeth? Yeah.

So that was an exercise in trust. I'm going to believe that he can see in the dark where the prosthetic is and he's not going to bite my actual face.

Zombie Trust Games?

Yeah. <laughs> But it all worked out though.

And a final scream that just kept going and going and going

Thank you.

You've obviously been on a lot of great film sets. Is there something that surprised you about *The Walking Dead* set?

The thing that stood out was how much levity there was because the world itself is so dark. Not much humor to be found in the scenes, but at lunch time, oh my god, we laughed so hard we had tears coming out of our eyes.

Because of the incredibly dark world they've created there's a real sense of family. The thing that struck me the most is that there isn't any hierarchy between the actors and the crew. And even on the most down to earth sets I've been on there's always a little something. The actors get bundled up in blankets after shooting a scene in the rain. But here it's all one big family and it doesn't matter if you're in front of the camera or behind it. I wasn't expecting that and it was very inspiring and something I'd take with me to the next project. It's not something you ever forget.

*What did you think of Episode 613? Where does Alicia Witt's Paula rank among the guest stars on *The Walking Dead*?*

What did you think of the way Carol and Maggie dispatched Paula and the rest? Please share your thoughts in the comments below.

'The Walking Dead' Postmortem: Alicia Witt Talks Playing a Baddie on One of Her Favorite Shows

By Kimberly Potts | March 13, 2016



Warning: This interview contains spoilers for “The Same Boat” episode of [The Walking Dead](#).

Not since Terminus leader Gareth has *The Walking Dead* let us spend significant time with a villain we actually hoped would stick around for a while. Sadly, Savior subgroup leader Paula — played by *Justified* and *Friday Night Lights* alum Alicia Witt — won’t live to torture Rick’s group another day. But her time with kidnapped Maggie and Carol left such a mark on those two Alexandrians that their ability to forge ahead in the war vs. the Savivors is definitely in doubt.

Yahoo TV talked to actress — and talented [singer/songwriter](#) — Witt about her juicy role on one of her favorite shows, how Twitter had a big hand in her journey into the zombie apocalypse, why Paula and Carol bonded, and how she helped Melissa McBride imitate her for that great moment at the end of the episode.

And she also gives us a little preview of the new country music queen she’s playing on *Nashville*.

You are fantastic in this episode. This is no small thing to say about a *Walking Dead* villain: I wish Paula were hanging around a bit longer. She’s a great character. She is a fantastic character. I couldn’t have been more thrilled when I first got the script and I got to see... to get to guest star on this show any way is such an honor, and then to be trusted with a role like this was just beyond. I had one of the, hands down, best experiences of my life getting to be Paula, for sure.

You were already a big fan of the show, right?

I was, and there are not that many shows that I watch, but it's something that I've become hooked on over the years. I've loved seeing how it's grown, and how the characters have changed, how they have managed to keep their humanity for the most part even though they're dealing with this horrific nightmare of a situation. I think if I could have named a show that I would most want to be on before it finished its run, it would be *The Walking Dead*. It's really a dream. It's just sinking in, actually, that it really happened.



How did the role come about?

It came about because [*TWD* showrunner] Scott Gimple started following me on Twitter randomly one night, and I was pretty surprised to see that. I knew who he was, so I followed him back, and he direct messaged me and said he had just heard me on a podcast talking about my music, and he said that he was a fan of my work. I told him I was a huge fan of his work as well, and he wrote, "Good to know." And then a few days later this audition came down my pike, as it were, and I auditioned for this character that, on the page, didn't have much of anything to do with the world of *The Walking Dead*, but I didn't really ask much about who she was, or what she was supposed to be. I had no idea she was meant to engage with Carol, who is my favorite character on the show. [The audition] was a scene where my character was robbing a bank, and that was all. Then the next night I got all these text messages from my agent while I was having dinner saying that I was going to be going to Georgia the next day, and that I got the part. I didn't find out until I was boarding the plane what exactly it was that I would be doing, and I couldn't believe it. I was like, "Holy s—t, not only do I get to be on *The Walking Dead*, but this is what I get to do."

That's the thing. It's sad that we only get to know her for one episode, but you really had everything to tackle in this role. She's a villain, she's sympathetic, she had some great speeches, there's plenty of action, she's got a cool zombie kill, great backstory moments, she's a tough survivor, and she seems to be smarter than many of her male cohorts.

I know. I felt like that, too, and some people have said, "Were you bummed that you only got to do one episode?" But honestly, no, because what more could I have possibly asked for? I don't think you could possibly have a better guest-starring role on any show than the one that I got. It was two of the most fulfilling weeks of work I've ever had, and probably ever will have.

By the time I filmed the scene where Paula bites the big one, I didn't feel like there was anything left to do.

Getting into the character, she's very flip, like when she's talking to Maggie about her pregnancy, but then we find out she had four daughters. How much ultimately was truly her hardened, survivor personality, and how much was Paula just putting on an act to deal with these people?

That's a really good question, and my version of it was that it really is who she is, but I don't know. I think there was so much that was going on that wasn't on the page in terms of what sort of odd dynamic was going on, particularly between Paula and Carol, and how, at least for Paula, she was seeing something in Carol that was very disconcerting, and she couldn't quite put her finger on what it was. I think as it went on, she realized it was just how similar they really are, like they were different versions of the same tragedy. Different ways of survival, one that kept her humanity, and one that lost it.

I think that Paula before the apocalypse was a very different person, and as she described, I think that was the truth. I think that she hated the version of herself that she was, and probably looked forward to going home to her family more than just about anything. When that was taken away from her, I think she just became something else, and what she used to survive was the idea that she was going to be stronger than anyone, and that she was going to be the last man standing if that's what it took. That's all she had to live for anymore. I don't think she has a whole lot of true feelings when it comes to the other people in her group, either. That's a difference between [the Savivors] and Rick's group, where they've formed this very close bond.

There was a lot of deep talk amongst all these women, who were meeting for the first time, and as adversaries. Do you think this was possibly the first time Paula, Molly, and Shell had talked to other non-Savior women for a while?

I didn't think about that. I feel like it was much deeper than just a female bond. I felt like there was a real mirroring thing going on specifically between [Paula and Carol], and also between Maggie and Shell. It was sort of a very shiver-inducing, mythical sort of episode, but I don't think it's that they haven't encountered women [recently].

Do you think Carol and Paula have developed a mutual respect for each other by the end?

I think it's respect and affinity even, and just a real sense that it sucks that they have to fight each other. I love that Carol is still begging Paula to run up until the final moment. She's begging her. It's heartbreaking to watch. Paula's still being Paula. She still thinks that she can somehow kill [Carol], despite all evidence to the contrary. She's that stubborn, and she's that stunned that she's been bested, and that she's been fooled by Carol. She's not willing to accept it.

What had Scott or the other writers or producers told you about Paula when you found out who you were playing?

Scott told me very little. I sat down and talked to him in his office the day that I arrived and I

was about to do the table read, and I didn't actually realize that I was about to have a meeting with him. I had just grabbed a big plate of lunch, and I had my dog with me, and suddenly they were like, "Oh, Scott wants to have a meeting with you." I went walking to the office with my dog and my lunch. I was like, "Oh my God, I'm sorry." I don't think we spoke for more than 15 or 20 minutes, and he told me that Paula isn't romantically involved with Negan, and just pretty much brought me up to speed a little bit as to what had happened in the show thus far, because at the time [this episode] was filmed, Season 6 hadn't started airing... He told me that Paula is the boss of her little group, her splinter group, in a way, but they all answer to Negan. We didn't talk a whole lot more about that. I asked if she was in the comics, and he told me she wasn't. Then we just talked about the dynamics that were at play, and the idea that, as it was clear in the script, there was something going on where these women were seeing an odd kind of mirror image of each other.



What was your favorite thing that you got to do while playing Paula?

My favorite thing was just getting to work with Melissa [McBride], for sure, because she's just one of the most unique and incredibly present actors I've ever worked with in my life, and that made it very easy. A lot of the time I felt like I was just watching her, and didn't really need to do much more than that, but the other thing that I just loved was that I got to kill some walkers. I got four of them, if I remember correctly.

You had a memorable kill with the one that you stab in the back of the head and the knife comes out the front of his head.

Then I'm just glaring at Maggie while I'm doing it. I loved that moment. That was really fun. We did different versions of that. I think we did one where I started laughing, and we did others where I had no expression whatsoever, and others where I'm smiling. My first walker kill was probably the most fun, though, because I think that happened on the very first day, and I was just so excited and blown away that I was going to go do this. I think getting to slay a walker before lunch made it all real somehow.

There's a funny and heartbreaking moment at the end where Carol has to imitate Paula's voice to the other Savivors on a walkie-talkie. She was literally mirroring Paula there. How do you think she did?

She did great! [Melissa] had me keep saying the line for her, like, "Say it again." Then she'd say it, and I'd be like, "Oh, I think Paula's voice should go a little deeper there," and I'd say it again. She had me say it right before she did it, too. She did great. It was so weird though,

because of course when she did it for real, my back is to her, and I'm being eaten by the walker, so I didn't get to see what her face looked like as she was doing it. And wow, what a moment to watch her struggling with all of those feelings, and then see her maintain her composure enough to copy Paula's voice convincingly on the walkie. That was something else.

Again, sad that your time on *The Walking Dead* was short, but we'll see you soon on another primetime favorite, *Nashville*. You are a great singer/songwriter yourself. Who is your character, Autumn Chase?

Autumn is a cool character. I'm loving playing her. She couldn't be much more opposite than Paula. She's been in the [music] business for 20 years. She was discovered on *Star Search*. I wouldn't say she's pure country. She's more pop/folk/country, sort of along the lines of Sheryl Crow, with a little Bonnie Raitt in there. The way that she looks is sort of along those lines, too. She's one of those very well-known musicians who has enough confidence that she doesn't have to act like a big ol' star, because she just knows that she's fabulous. She enjoys having a laid back approach to all that stuff, and she's really flirtatious, and she's really down to earth, and really funny, I think. I love her personality. I really enjoy playing her. There's a lot of lightness there, but the lightness is definitely covering up the fact that she doesn't have someone special in her life, and I think she's lonely beneath all of that. I'm stirring the pot, let's just say. Stirring up a little bit of trouble. It's a whole lot of fun to be causing trouble.

If you're not causing trouble on *Nashville*, you're not having fun.

You have to be. You have to be. It's fun, too, just as a singer and a songwriter to be playing somebody who does that, but on a so much larger scale than I'm doing at this time. And to be surrounded by other singer/songwriters who have come up on the show... Chip Esten [who plays Deacon], for example. This is something he's wanted to do his whole life, and I think he felt like maybe that wasn't a realistic dream anymore, and then this job comes along and suddenly he's touring the world with his band. He is the happiest dude in the world about that, and everyone [on the show] has a similar story. You're just surrounded by people who absolutely love making music more than just about anything in the world, and now they get to act and make music at the same time. It doesn't really get any better than that for us.

Definitely falls into dream role category then?

Oh, for sure, and this town. My last album, *Revisionary History*, was recorded here, and Ben Folds produced it, so I had spent a ton of time in Nashville. I've spent a lot of time here besides that, just writing and playing shows. I love it here... love, love, love it here. I could see myself living here part-time in the future, easily.

I'm excited to hear what you're going to be performing on *Nashville*.

My episodes start airing on April 6, and my first song is a duet with Connie [Britton]. It was written by Kacey Musgraves, Miranda Lambert, and Natalie Hemby, and it's a pretty kick ass song.

***The Walking Dead* airs Sundays at 9 p.m. on AMC.**

<http://www.nashvillescene.com/countrylife/archives/2015/05/28/essence-of-witt-alicia-witt-tonight-at-the-high-watt>

Essence of Witt: Alicia Witt Tonight at The High Watt

BY JIM RIDLEY | MAY 28, 2015



There must be another Alicia Witt who made her film debut as a grade-schooler in David Lynch's *Dune*, had recurring roles on shows such as *Law & Order: Criminal Intent*, *Cybill* and *Friday Night Lights*, and nailed a juicy season-long star turn on *Justified* as a sharp defender forced to clean up her numbskulled trailer-trash brothers' murderous messes. Because albums by actors turned singer-songwriters are supposed to be laughingstock vanity projects, and Witt's new album *Revisionary History* is a piano-pop gem that sounds by turns like "Grey Seal"-era Elton John, an alt-universe Fiona Apple and a film-noir chanteuse notching her nights in cigarette burns on the fallboard.

Recorded in Nashville's RCA Studio A with producer Ben Folds playing Richard Perry to her Carly Simon, the record couches Witt's aching, acerbic songs in settings ranging from lightly percussive hip-hop to a sonic featherbed befitting a '70s troubadour — sometimes within the same song, as in the striking duet "Down" with T.O.N.E.-z. Her pristine vocals and immaculate enunciation stand out on torchy ballads like the swooning opener "Friend," but the song most likely to make this a keeper is "I'm Not Ready for Christmas" — a deliciously nasty anti-yuletide lament that will have Grinches fist-pumping every F-bomb and gift-wrapped gripe.



Marion Curtis/StarPix

"Justified" star and singer **Alicia Witt** looks lovely at an NYC film premiere. She performs at the McKittrick Hotel Sunday.

Brinkley ex's bitter divorce

DESPITE being involved in one of the world's nastiest divorces, with **Christie Brinkley**, **Peter Cook**'s personal problems persist. His divorce from his most recent wife **Suzanne Shaw** has just been finalized and, fittingly, there's nothing amicable about it. In an e-mail, seen by Page Six, sent to Peter — who is still working as an architect but moonlighting as a real estate agent at Saunders in Westhampton — Shaw accuses him of having a "secret pathological predilection" for young women. After Shaw allegedly discovered pictures of other women on his computer, as well as a video he filmed of himself having sex with a prostitute, she wrote in the e-mail to Cook: "To think you fought Christie, the mother of your children, for custody, knowing what you were, knowing what you did ... trolling the internet ... filming your prostitute. Covertly photographing ... and so much more." She added, "I'm not sure who's more psychotic, you or me. You for, well, being you, or me for not seeing what you were ... You used me, lied, betrayed, deceived. Knifed my understanding heart." Shaw, who was with Cook for seven years and married to him for two, stood by him during his bruising public divorce with Brinkley. But now Shaw, who has a daughter from a previous relationship but no kids with Cook, admits Christie was right all along. She also messaged the blond model saying, "He is a master at manipulations ... a dishonorable disturbed man ... a wolf in sheep clothing." Cook didn't respond to requests for comment.

'Mad Men' happy ending?

GAYLE King asked "Mad Men" creator **Matthew Weiner** on Thursday at a Hearst Tower Q&A whether the finale will be "open to interpretation" like "The Sopranos" or "definitive" like "Breaking Bad." "I am not above playing on your emotions," Weiner said. "I hope you will find it satisfying." But he added, "If you don't like it, don't tell me."



Page Six®



<https://arena.com/article/alicia-witt-is-finally-ready-to-share-some-revisionary-history>

Alicia Witt Is Finally Ready To Share Some 'Revisionary History'



After nearly six years of sporadically releasing music, the actress-turned-musician will finally unveil her long awaited Ben Folds-produced debut album 'Revisionary History' on May 5th, a deeply personal, touching and musically-savvy gem.

She may have been busy acting in shows like *The Mentalist*, *Justified* and *Friday Night Lights*, but now, Alicia Witt is truly crossing over into the music world as she is slated to drop her full-length studio LP *Revisionary History* next Tuesday, May 5th, via Compass Records.



Alicia Witt

Produced by Ben Folds and recorded at his Grand Victor Studios in Nashville, Tennessee over the span of two years, *Revisionary History* is a nine-track collection featuring an assortment of piano-driven soul and pop songs with an emphasis on relationships. That comes across beautifully on songs like "Consolation Prize," "About Me," and "Already Gone."

Also, there is quite a bit of musical versatility on the album, as displayed on the rap-flavored "Down" featuring T.O.N.E.-z, a countrified version of her previously-released "Blind," and the holiday bonus track "I'm Not Ready For Christmas."

Though she may not be ready for the holidays just yet, she is ready to release this record and even work on the next one. In this *Arena* exclusive, Alicia Witt goes in-depth about *Revisionary History*, talks about the influence of Ben Folds, her desire to record in various style, her future follow-up, and much more.

Arena: Over the years, you've released a bunch of one-off singles like "Me Or New York," and even the self-titled EP in 2009, but next month, you're finally releasing your debut album *Revisionary History*. Why has it taken so long to release an album?

Alicia Witt: It just the way it turned out. There was no grand scheme behind it. Part of the reason why it took so long to record was because once Ben Folds expressed interest in producing it, obviously that was what I wanted to do. I wasn't going to say, "Oh, well you're too busy, I'm going to do this with someone else." (Laughs) Between his schedule and my schedule, it was just tricky to find time.

Also, we wanted to record it in his studio, Grand Victor Sound in Nashville, and there were times we both were free from our various works, but the studio wasn't free, so it was just a matter of tying everything down. Once we finished recording it, then we had to mix it and master it, and all that stuff, which also takes time.

There were a couple of songs on this album -- in particular "About Me," which may be my favorite song on this record -- where I had tried to record that a few times with different producers. I honestly didn't know if I was ever going to find the right version to make a studio production of it that captured it the way I felt when I played it live.

Arena: How frustrating is that?

Alicia Witt: It's frustrating, but then, I mean, as a writer, you sort of just have to ... if you're doing your own material, then you have to get to a point where you are not afraid to say, "You know what? This didn't turn out the way I had hope and I'm not going to release it like that." So that's a risk you take. It just is. You get to a point sometimes with a producer that they're not hearing it the way you did and it's disappointing, but you have to make that as part of the process. There's no guarantee that no one is going to be able to interpret your song in the way you like.

When I first sat down to play "About Me" with Ben, he was in the drum booth playing the drums and I was on piano and vocals -- and it's not the version that's on the record, but it's very close and I have a demo of it. As soon as we started playing, I could barely get the words out because i couldn't stop laughing with joy. It was exactly what I always heard in my head and so much more than what I ever could explain to someone to do. I just knew I was finally going to have the right version of "About Me."

Arena: So you two were completely in sync.

Alicia Witt: Yeah. I think he's just like that as a producer. The albums that he made with Sara Bareilles and Amanda Palmer are similarly intuitive where he just gets into what an artist is trying to say and he puts his own unique touch on it, but it doesn't sound like him, it sounds like the artists. It sounds like the best way of interpreting what they have to say so other people can hear it.

Arena: And I don't want to cross any lines because I know a lot of artists like to keep their lives outside the music private, but you and Ben dated for a few years. Did that relationship play a role or influence the album at all?

Alicia Witt: No, not at all. The cool thing is, I mean, as anyone who watches Nashville knows, I think the show is accurate in the terms of music is a great aphrodisiac. I think going over the whole thing, when we first met in Nashville, we connected over music and became friends first, and we wrote some songs together first before we ever dated or anything like that.

Then, while recording the album, we were dating, but it was a very separate experience. It was very much about the music. Everything had been recorded already by the time the relationship ended, but the album wasn't mixed or mastered, and it's still one of those things I think it was always about the music, you know?



Arena: Absolutely. *Revisionary History* has a few songs from the past on there, including "I'm Not Ready For Christmas" and "Blind."

Alicia Witt: Yeah, and a very different version of "Blind."

Arena: I was about to say.

Alicia Witt: Yeah. Ben decided when he had gotten to know about my music, he was interested in producing a few tracks for me. He heard that song and kept bringing it up, but there were many newer song I was thinking I'd be more excited to record. But when he started showing me what he had in mind, I got really excited about "Blind," so it's got a really stompy bluegrass type of vibe that I never would have imagined. I love it now.

Arena: Something that I really appreciate about *Revisionary History* is the musical diversity, as there are some pop ballads, songs with more soul, a country touch on the just mentioned "Blind," and even a collaboration with the MC T.O.N.E.-z, who just released a video featuring you for one of his tracks, "My Baby Girl."

Alicia Witt: Yeah, that was on his album he released his last fall (Fog Of War). We met because he did the theme song for Justified, and we met last year when that season I was on was premiering, and we talked about wanting to write together. He lives in Brooklyn, I live in L.A., and so we live in opposite corners [of the country].

Within two days, he sent me the music for "My Baby Girl," which he had already recorded everything for, but it needed the chorus to be written, and then I had this idea over the weekend, which was "Down," and it was one of those songs that had come to me the fastest. It was just a flash of good songs that already existed that didn't exist, and I recorded it on my phone and sent it to him and within 10 minutes of that, he already sent me back the first verse, which is insane.

We love writing together. He actually sent me another song where if I find a moment, I'm going to throw down another chorus for him.

Arena: Well I promise not to keep you too much longer so you can record. With such an eclectic mix, was there a conscious decision to display the styles clash from one song to another?

Alicia Witt: No, it wasn't conscious, it's just sort of the way it happened. We discussed it because we realized the way we recorded the songs that they were all over the place, but it's just reflective that I love all different genres of music. I think, if anything, the challenge that Ben probably had was making it sound like me and not trying to make me sound like a country singer on "Blind" or a pop star on "Down," or to put special 70s effects on my voice. He didn't really do any of that. He tries to let each song speak for itself.

I think he did a great job, and it's really important to me as well. I feel some of my earlier recordings, although I love them, they don't sound exactly like the energy I have when I play live, and with this album it's obviously going to sound much more full with the instrumentation when I go touring and I have my drummer and bassist/guitarist with me, but I think the vocals are pretty close.

We didn't do a lot of ... I hate autotune, so we tried really hard to stay away from that and we tried hard not to make it sound like anyone else. So I feel with this record, if somebody likes it and then they come see me live, it won't be that different.

Arena: Musically speaking, what were the most important things you wanted to get across and portray?

Alicia Witt: I think the title of *Revisionary History* is very apt. When thinking about possibilities of what to call the album, that one instantly stuck out because, I mean, one thing the album does have in common with the exception of the Christmas song, which is a bonus track (laughs), is they're all about relationships in one way or another, or the way we think about our history. On "Down," we're talking about what it's like to crawl out from our past and reclaim ourselves, and on "Blind," you're talking about the end of a relationship and you're thinking about how to describe why it is the relationship is over and you know it, even though there's nothing wrong.

I think maybe it's inevitable that we employ some revisionary history whenever we talk about what's happened in our past, and I guess all the songs are like that a little bit. They focus on a specific moment you shed light on, but it's not going to be the absolute truth because there's no

such thing and everyone has a different version of what happened. So we always leave stuff out and we make that story what we need it to be as time goes by.

Arena: Ok, so final question: you're not going to make us wait too long for a follow-up album, are you?

Alicia Witt: I promise I'm not going to. In fact, I've just got my Pro Tools up and working again, and I have so many new songs I've written even since the album was recorded. There are so many of them, and there were a million more that were contenders for this album that were written years ago that I never recorded. I'm thinking, at the very least, I can make some sort of very rudimentary vocal thing at my home studio (laughs).

<http://www.tennessean.com/story/entertainment/music/2015/05/24/tvs-alicia-witt-makes-nashville-album-ben-folds/27881267/>

TV's Alicia Witt makes Nashville album with Ben Folds

By Dave Paulson | May 26, 2015



While TV audiences watched her on "Justified" and "House of Lies" over the past decade, actress **Alicia Witt** was also writing songs. Now, the actress and musician has a debut album, "Revisionary History."

"History" was recorded, appropriately enough, at one of Nashville's most historic studios: RCA Studio A. The studio's owner — piano-pop star **Ben Folds** — produced the album, played several instruments and provided backing vocals.

Witt — who got her start in acting at age 7 in David Lynch's "Dune" — will be back in Music City on Thursday to perform at the High Watt (1 Cannery Row). Tickets are \$12 and on sale at www.mercylounge.com

Alicia Witt explains dual passion for music and acting, debuts album 'Revisionary History'

By Keith Valcourt | May 3, 2015



Actress Alicia Witt is set to release her long-overdue debut album, "Revisionary History," on Tuesday.

There are two ways to look at that. The first is to say, "Oh, not another vanity album from an actress of some acclaim. Couldn't she just be happy with her impressive resume that included roles in dozens of films and TV show like 'Dune,' 'Cybill,' 'The Sopranos,' 'House of Lies,' 'Justified,' 'The Mentalist' and 'Friday Night Lights'?"

Or you could just listen to it and quickly realize that the piano prodigy's album is a brilliant collection of piano-driven rock a la Billy Joel, Carole King and Ben Folds (Miss Witt's onetime lover, who produced the album).

The actress and songbird took time out to reflect on her creative duality in this exclusive interview.

Question: Which came first for you: acting or playing the piano?

Answer: I started taking piano lessons when I was 7, which was the year I did "Dune." I started competing a few months later.

[Acting and playing piano] were running parallel to each other. After "Dune," I wasn't able to do any more acting living in Worcester, Massachusetts, so I started begging my parents to move to LA. They weren't keen on the idea when I was a child, so the music became much more serious for a long time.

I started playing pop songs when I was 10 to pay for the piano lessons. I would play in a restaurant a night or two each week: show tunes, jazz standards the music I loved growing up. Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra and Ella Fitzgerald.

Q: How soon after that did you land the role on “Cybill”?

A: I was 18 when I shot the pilot, 19 when the series started. That allowed me to quit my so-called “day job” playing piano at the Beverly Wilshire hotel. I had been playing there four to five nights a week and earning enough of a living to pay my rent and my bills.

Cybill had a piano on the set, and the writers incorporated me doing music into the first episode.

Q: Since you are so well known as an actress, is it difficult to get people to take you seriously as a musician and songwriter?

A: I think some of the female actors that do music have cabaret acts. People assume I just do jazz standards or cabaret now, which I did [before]. That’s why I love when people come to the shows and see what I’m doing with my music.

I describe it as piano rock. If people like Carole King and Sara Bareilles, they will like my stuff. I think it also helps that I am somewhat known as an actor but not super well known. People are willing to check out the music without the instant judgment they would have if I were a really well-known actor.

Q: After a lifetime of playing classical music and covers, was it hard to transition to pop/rock?

A: It certainly took a while. I always knew that I wanted to do my own music. But I didn’t grow the [nerve] I needed to do that until about seven years ago. I had tried to write songs before that and felt they were never good enough.

Q: The record is produced by Ben Folds, with whom you were also romantically involved. Which came first, music collaboration or the relationship?

A: The creative process came first. We first met in Nashville the day I was scheduled to play a show with a singer-songwriter friend of mine who was friends with Ben. We started talking about classical music. After that, we communicated via email and wrote a couple of songs that way. I mentioned I was more a lyricist, and he mentioned he was more of a music writer. That is how we first started to know each other.

Then the romance happened, and the creative connection remained. Recording didn't have that, "Oh, I'm recording with my boyfriend feeling." It seemed like they were two separate issues, and we were just about making some amazing music.

Q: Why does your debut album, "Revisionary History," feature only nine songs?

A: Because it was difficult to coordinate my schedule with Ben's. More him than me [as] he is very busy. At first, we talked about just doing a four-song EP. We got back into the studio, and we were very ambitious.

Q: If you were forced to choose just acting or music, what would it be?

A: I won't; I never will. I don't think I could choose. They are both equal parts of what I have to say and what drives me. I'm more of a complete person when I get to do both.

Q: Acting wise, what do you have coming up?

A: I don't know. I worked a lot this past year on "Justified," and it was one of the most fulfilling roles I've ever done. I just did "House of Lies" and got to work with Don Cheadle. I also shot an episode of "Elementary," which was really fun because I got to play a sociopath. But next, I don't know.



<http://www.npr.org/2015/05/02/403766911/actor-alicia-witt-turns-musician-with-revisionary-history>

Actor Alicia Witt Turns Musician With 'Revisionary History'

May 2, 2015 | Heard on Weekend Edition Saturday

In lean years she played piano in the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. Otherwise she's acted in roles for *Justified* and *Mr. Holland's Opus*. NPR's Scott Simon speaks with Alicia Witt about her debut album.

Transcript:

SCOTT SIMON, HOST:

In "Mr. Holland's Opus," a young actress named Alicia Witt played a high school student who's struggling to play the clarinet.

(SOUNDBITE OF FILM, "MR. HOLLAND'S OPUS")

RICHARD DREYFUSS: (As Glenn Holland) Why are you crying?

ALICIA WITT: (As Gertrude Lang) I'm terrible. I'm terrible, Mr. Holland. I just - I practice till my lips swell up. I just...

DREYFUSS: (As Glenn Holland) Ms. Lang...

WITT: (As Gertrude Lang) All I make is noise.

DREYFUSS: (As Glenn Holland) ...It takes a lot of work to learn a musical instrument.

WITT: (As Gertrude Lang) I just...

SIMON: That was 1995, and Alicia Witt became a hard-working actress in dozens of films and shows including "House Of Lies," "The Sopranos," "Friday Night Lights" and "Justified." Despite that squeaky clarinet, it turns out she's also a gifted musician.

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "CONSOLATION PRIZE")

WITT: (Singing) Isn't it nice to know that you're not my consolation prize? Doesn't it feel like freedom breathing in and out now?

SIMON: And on Tuesday, Alicia Witt releases her debut studio album. It's called "Revisionary History." And she joins us now from our studios at NPR West. Thanks so much for being with us.

WITT: Thank you so much for having me, Scott.

SIMON: Do I get this right? You used to play piano in the lobby of the Beverly Wilshire.

WITT: Yes, I absolutely did. That was my day job when I first moved to LA to be a professional actor. So instead of waiting tables, I played background music for two and a half years.

SIMON: So could you sing "Strangers In The Night" now if you had to?

WITT: Oh, my goodness, yes. Or "Misty" or theme from "Phantom Of The Opera." Some nights I would get these songs requested three or four times in the same day.

SIMON: (Laughter).

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "ABOUT ME")

SIMON: This album is produced by Ben Folds...

WITT: Yes it was.

SIMON: ...Godfather of the rock power piano trio. Let's listen to a cut of yours that reveals that kind of energy. This song is called "About Me."

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "ABOUT ME")

WITT: (Singing) Isn't it funny I was so right about you all along? Yeah. Isn't it crazy how much I wanted you to prove me wrong? I want to grind you into the floor, but you're not worth the scuff on my shoe. I want to make you take a look in the mirror, but hey, enough about you. What about me?

SIMON: So who are you so angry at?

WITT: (Laughter) You know, someone who in years past doesn't seem that significant, but it's about that feeling of just suddenly knowing that if you've got something to say, you've got to say it.

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "ABOUT ME")

WITT: (Singing) Well, this one's about me, and baby, I'm over you.

Honestly, I wrote it about this guy that I dated for only a few months, and he was an aspiring musician, and I had just started writing songs at this point when I wrote it. And it was as much about my annoyance at the end of the relationship as it was about the fact that I was tired of sitting back and wondering if I should write and if I should share these songs and that I just had to take a chance.

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "BLIND")

WITT: (Singing) You keep wondering what I've done to make this time.

SIMON: Let's to another song, if we can, which has a touch of country in it. This one is called "Blind."

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "BLIND")

WITT: (Singing) I could never break your heart and leave that way like I never loved you at - all I know is I can see forever, and it's come and gone. But nothing's wrong. Nothing that a little heaven won't heal.

SIMON: Very nice song, and it was recorded in Nashville, right?

WITT: Yeah, it absolutely was. In fact, all of the album except for one track was recorded at Ben Folds' studio, the former RCA studio on Music Row. It was an incredible experience getting to record there. It's where Dolly Parton recorded "Jolene," so you really feel that energy when you're in that room.

(SOUNDBITE OF SONG, "BLIND")

WITT: (Singing) So sorry baby, but I'm already free.

SIMON: You were in a film that I'm afraid I missed in 2000, "Playing Mona Lisa."

WITT: Oh, yes.

SIMON: But I gather that film represented a kind of turning point?

WITT: That was the first time that I've played a character who was so similar to me in terms of my background with the classical training. The role was written for a ballerina, so it was about this girl who's just graduated from conservatory. She's spent her whole life studying this classical craft, and then at the age of 22, she suddenly realizes she never had a childhood, and she has a bit of a delayed adolescence. In a way, that movie was so very similar to what I had experienced, but instead of having them put my body on someone else's legs 'cause I can't dance, I suggested they just change her to be a classical pianist.

SIMON: You feel you missed out on a childhood or a lot of a childhood?

WITT: It's hard for me to know. If I hadn't had the childhood I did, I wouldn't have probably moved to LA at 14 and been quite so driven.

SIMON: Can you ever really make up for lost childhood years?

WITT: Well, I feel like if anything, I'm sort of doing that now. When I get out and play a gig and there's people in the audience who know the words to the songs and they're...

SIMON: Yeah.

WITT: ...Singing along, I - there's no way to explain what that is like. Or when someone comes up to me and says that a song I've written has been significant to them or - has recently happened in Chicago. Someone told me that one of their songs was their first dance at their wedding.

SIMON: Oh, how wonderful.

WITT: That makes me feel like a kid, and it makes me grateful for anything and everything that's ever happened in my life to get me here.

SIMON: Alicia Witt - her new album, "Revisionary History," and she joined us from NPR West. Thanks so much.

WITT: Delight to be here. Thank you, Scott.

Actress Alicia Witt Finds Her Voice in Music

By David Chu | April 15, 2015



THE TV AND FILM STAR UNVEILS HER FULL-LENGTH STUDIO DEBUT ALBUM, PRODUCED BY BEN FOLDS.

To film and TV viewers, actress Alicia Witt is a very familiar face who has amassed numerous credits since her debut in David Lynch's 1984 sci-fi epic *Dune* at age seven. Since then, she has appeared on many television programs, such as *Cybill*, *Friday Night Lights*, *House of Lies*, and *Justified*—and films including *Mr. Holland's Opus*, *Vanilla Sky*, and *8 Seconds*. Yet perhaps not many people realize that before acting, Witt was a very young accomplished pianist who participated in national and international competitions. Although music had been a part of her life along with acting, it was only several years ago that she made a serious concerted effort to fully pursue her musical ambitions.

"For me, it was something I just didn't really work up the balls to do it in public until about seven years ago," the Los Angeles-based artist tells *PopMatters*, "something just clicked for me and I realized I had to do it. It's something I wanted to do since I can remember, since I first started playing classical music. I wanted to play my own songs with a band. And then I just had that moment of realizing if I don't make this happen, it isn't going to happen."

After releasing an EP in 2009 and a live record in 2012, along with performing shows, Witt has recently released her full-length debut studio album *Revisionary History*. Its melodic and buoyant sound harkens back to the works of Elton John, Billy Joel, Carole King and other piano-rock artists. This music is accompanied by Witt's expressive yet eloquent singing voice, which recalls Broadway at times. "I'm so excited to finally have this out," she says. "I feel like it's been so long in the making. It's just been a long process and I'm so excited to finally be able share it with people."

Recorded in Nashville, *Revisionary History* was produced by fellow singer and piano player Ben Folds. She first met Folds about three years ago in the Music City where Witt was scheduled to perform at the famed Bluebird Cafe. "We just started talking and we ended up writing a couple of things together via email and phone," she recalls, "and we ended up going to the studio the following year. Of all the producers I've worked with, I would say he is the most collaborative, and the most driven by what is going to make the song most truthful... not about whether it's an idea he came up with or whether it's going to make him seem more important as a producer."

There are definitely elements of autobiography on *Revisionary History*, especially in documenting the trials and tribulations of relationships. The lovely and tender ballad "Friend", which opens the record, captures the common dilemma of falling for someone who doesn't reciprocate in kind. "There's reasons your intuition is telling you ought to keep it just as friends," she explains. "He might be feeling pulled toward something else, but you kind of know better deep down. That song means a lot to me."

A few of the album's tracks were inspired by the end of relationships, such as on the country-ish "Blind" and the ebullient and uplifting rocker "About Me". The back story for the latter song came from a misunderstanding involving Witt and her then-boyfriend, an aspiring musician. She cites a particular line from "About Me" that expresses what she was going through at the time: "And I won't shut up / I like the sound / Say what you want, but I'm not gonna fall."

"I was like, 'Okay, this is pathetic,'" she recalls of that period. "I pretty much wrote all of "About Me" that night. I don't think I made many revisions, it was a pretty fast write because I was so fucking angry. I was like fuck you, and it was all about him and thought about how much we had discussed his precious music career, and how much he looked down on mine. And I think I decided that night that I was really going to go for it, no matter what."

While the music on *Revisionary History* is dominated piano-dominated pop sound, there are some stylistic divergences. "Down" marries both piano pop and rap featuring the vocals of hip-hop artist T.O.N.E-z, who is best known for his work on the theme song for the TV series *Justified*, which Witt appeared in. "[It] was very strongly influenced by my storyline on *Justified*," she says. "I recorded most of that song in L.A. at a studio and T.O.N.E-z recorded his part at his studio in Brooklyn and then it all got put together and mixed and the gospel choir and the drums were laid down in Nashville."

Then there's Witt's duet with Folds on "Pasadena", whose sound is a hybrid of '60s lounge pop and Burt Bacharach and Hal David; it originally appeared in the 2013 movie *Cold Turkey*, which features Witt. "The whole movie has a real faded '60s feel to it. The house was once the most glamorous place around and now it's kind of faded. So that was Ben's idea to write a song that felt very much like it would've been at home in that era, too."

The title of the record borrows a line from one of the tracks called “Consolation Prize”—based on the idea that whenever we tell a story, it’s inevitable that it will be revised and is never as simple as we remember it, she explains. “I feel that there are songs on this album honestly that might have never seen a studio version if Ben hadn’t produced them. I’m so grateful that Ben came along and put his special magic on it.”

Witt, who hails from Worcester, Massachusetts, played piano when she was seven and studied classical music; she practiced on the keys as much as four hours a day. Her early influences included such artists as Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, along with a mix of her parents’ musical preferences: ‘40s and ‘50s music, such as Barry Manilow, Neil Diamond and Anne Murray. “The combination of those just really drove me really to wanting to write songs that were structured in that sort of classic verse-chorus-bridge way,” Witt says. “It wasn’t much later when I discovered rock, because they weren’t listening to that – like the Rolling Stones, the Beatles. So my early influences were very much more simple piano or guitar driven songs.”

Having performed in piano competitions, Witt faced the realization that becoming a classical pianist would have meant being very dedicated and applying to Julliard at 12. “I was more focused on pursuing acting at that point,” she says. “In the back of my head, though, I always saw myself doing my own music and playing to audiences just like I’m doing. But it wasn’t until that turning point about seven years ago that I had the flash of realizing that I had to just do it and go for it. Otherwise, it wasn’t going to happen.”

In her late teens, Witt moved to Los Angeles for her acting career. To financially support herself, she played piano bar at the Wiltshire Hotel for over two years where she took requests from patrons. Although it was more like providing background music as opposed to showcasing her original material, she says of the experience: “It allowed me to be creative and to use my imagination even though I wasn’t the center of attention, and it wasn’t quite what I wanted to be doing musically. But it was a skill that I had and it let me be in my own world and think about what I wanted to do as an actor and think about any auditions that I had coming up and that sort of thing.”

In contrast to a typical actor’s Hollywood career that is usually handled and managed by other people, Witt has been building her own music profile in a grassroots, DIY manner; her *Live at Rockwood* record was funded through Kickstarter... “I’ve been doing it all myself,” she says. “I know exactly how to set up a tour, and how to be the tour manager... even work the merch booth, if I have to. It’s been very hands-on the very opposite of my other career and I love that. It’s given me an opportunity to get to know not only the indie music biz but also the people who come to the shows and buy the music.”

Witt hopes to do more dates to support the album and already has a stockpile of new songs. “It’s so much fun to play at these record release shows not only the whole album, but then also to play people songs that I’m really excited about that they haven’t heard before. “As far as whether she prefers music over acting or vice versa, Witt sees those endeavors benefiting of

each other. “They’re both equally addicting and equally fulfilling,” she explains. “The fact that I have been making music in this way for such a shorter time than I’ve been acting doesn’t feel relevant in terms of how much I love one or the other because I have been playing music as long as I have been acting. Just not quite in the way that I’m doing now. Now it feels it’s right. I can’t imagine my life without one or the other.”

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/entertainment/ct-alicia-witt-space-evanston-house-of-lies-revisionary-history-20150319-story.html>

Alicia Witt finds magic in music as well as acting

By Allison Stewart | March 19, 2015



By the time singer-songwriter and actress Alicia Witt was 7 years old, she was already a classically trained pianist who had landed her first movie role, in the David Lynch sci-fi movie "Dune."

When she was 14, Witt moved to Los Angeles, where she took a series of jobs playing piano in a series of upscale hotel lobbies while pursuing a career as an actress. She worked steadily in TV ("Cybill," "Justified," "House of Lies") and film ("Vanilla Sky," "Two Weeks Notice"), but it would be years before she began writing and performing her own music.

Witt's official studio debut, the Ben Folds-produced, confessional-pop-songs-and-ballads collection "Revisionary History," comes out next month, preceded by a record release show at SPACE in Evanston on Tuesday. Excerpts from a recent phone conversation with Witt follow:

On the cutthroat world of junior piano competitions.

My parents weren't that way, to their credit, (but) I saw parents who were literally yelling at their kids when they went on to perform, and the kids were so scared of disappointing their parents. I saw teachers break down in tears, crazy stuff. When I started I was 7, and there's 7-, 8-, 9-year-olds just shaking in fear.

On being a 7-year-old on the set of a David Lynch movie.

I thought it was magical, and I still do. I don't honestly know if it had been a different director, someone who was less magical, whether I would've loved it as much as I did, and whether it would've struck me as something I wanted to do for the rest of my life. ... Growing up in Worcester, Mass., I didn't know anyone who did that for a living, and then suddenly to be on a

set with so many legendary actors. I didn't know who they were, but my dad certainly did, and I think it was good for my parents to see that, for the most part, people who work in that business are amazing people. We tend to hear about the ones who are crazy.

On transitioning from music to acting, and back again.

I had already done my first movie, and I knew that was something I wanted to do, so I started begging my mom to move to LA with me. I knew that I wanted to keep playing music, but I didn't want to be a classically trained, competitive pianist. It wasn't my goal to tour the world as a piano soloist. I wanted to be an actor, and I always wanted to make my own songs, but I didn't work up the nerve or the consistency in terms of writing until about eight years ago.

On writing the songs that make up "Revisionary History."

A long relationship I'd been in ended, and I started writing literally as soon as he was out the door. It had been so many years I wanted to do this, and it wasn't like this person was trying to hold me back, but the inspiration wasn't really there. So I wrote most of the lyrics about that feeling. I tried to describe why sometimes you just fall out of love with someone. It wasn't like anything had drastically changed, or that he wasn't the same lovely person. He just hadn't changed along with me.

On working with Ben Folds.

Probably the most startling thing about working with him is how humble he is. He's a musician first and foremost. With a producer who's less experienced or less confident, there's a bit more posturing. (There's) this sort of attitude that "I'm the producer, I'm so much more experienced than you, you don't have any right to tell me what your ideas are." That's not at all what he's like. He's so collaborative, he really opens up a song and lets you hear what the artist intended when she wrote it.

On being an actress-singer-songwriter multi-hyphenate.

I don't quite know how I survived this long without doing my own music. What I realized once I started doing it was, not only was it a piece of me personally that I'd been ignoring for so long, but it also made the rest of my life better too.

My acting feels more connected because it's not the only thing I'm focusing on. I feel much more truthful as a human being with this additional form of expression. I can't ever imagine not doing music again.

Music plays a role throughout acting career of Alicia Witt

By Selena Fragassi | March 18, 2015

Those who recognize Alicia Witt likely know her as the actress who has racked up considerable credits since beginning her career in the mid-'80s at just 7 years old. After being discovered by David Lynch and appearing in his shows "Dune" and "Twin Peaks," she later moved on to find fame in prime roles on "Friday Night Lights" and has become a more recent fan favorite on FX's hit "Justified."

Of all the characters she's played over three decades, though, one truly hits home for Witt: Claire Goldstein in the 2000 indie film "Playing Mona Lisa." In it, Witt stars as a "young pianist looking for love in all the wrong places." It's a character that was rewritten specifically to incorporate Witt's classical music training, which has often been the unspoken supporting role of her career.

Witt started in music at a young age as well and was competing by the time she was 7, and when she was 16 and moved from Massachusetts to L.A. by herself, she made ends meet by playing background music on a grand piano in the lobby of the Beverly Wilshire Hotel. The year "Playing Mona Lisa" came out, however, was the turning point. Like the character, 23-year-old Witt had just ended a serious relationship and the "delayed adolescence" she had repressed after years of being such a studious "good girl" started pouring out, as did floods of new music.

"The day [my ex] moved out, I wrote the lyrics to the song 'Blind,' and I haven't stopped writing since," she says. "I used to think I was never good enough to write my own music, but now I finally have more [song] ideas than I know what to do with."



"Blind" appears on Witt's newest album, "Revisionary History," out in April. It's her first full-length studio album after an early EP came out in 2009 and her Kickstarter-funded "Live At Rockwood" record was released in 2012.

"Revisionary History" was made with another ex-beau, singer-songwriter Ben Folds, someone she calls the most "ego-free producer I've ever worked with." Like the work he's done with artists Amanda Palmer, Sara Bareilles and even William Shatner, "he made the music sound as much like me as possible." The two duet on the song "Pasadena," but it's the other eight tracks where Witt's charm comes through,

merging her classical background with modern flair in a mix of songwriters like Carole King and Shawn Colvin with the instrumental chops of Billy Joel and Alicia Keys. It's especially true of the track "Consolation Prize," which bears the lyric that became the album's all-important title.

"It's this idea that you can go home again," says Witt. "Maybe the version of you that you began as is a very truthful one, but as life goes on you start to revise that."

The theme has started to play behind the scenes, too. For the first time, Witt has signed on to a label, Compass Records out of Nashville, and is looking for representation and a booking agent to take over some of the duties she has done herself for the past several years. It's something she saw Jared Leto doing when the two worked on the teen horror flick "Urban Legends" in 1998. At the time, Leto was just starting to put the pieces together for his band 30 Seconds to Mars, which left an impression on Witt.

"He is definitely without a doubt the most successful version of [the actor-musician]. I can't even tell in words how much admiration I have for him," she says, noting she has learned that it's important to have other interests besides acting. "It's a powerless thing as a grown-up to be waiting for the phone to ring. The beautiful part about writing songs is you can do it anywhere, anytime, and since I've re-embraced my musical side it's made me a better actor, too. I'm not just playing a part. It's my true voice."

Alicia Witt on Her Revisionary History

By Ma'Chell Duma LaVassar | February 16, 2016



Alicia Witt has been in show business since Van Halen released *1984*, when the then 7-year-old was cast in David Lynch's *Dune*. Graduating high school at 14, the piano prodigy began acting full-time at 16 and also served a teenaged stint as the in-house pianist in a couple upscale, Los Angeles hotels. She has since and gone on to direct, score and act in numerous films (directed by everyone from John Waters to Cameron Crowe), theater productions, and some truly iconic television like *The Sopranos* episode 'D-Girl' (that "Quentin is friend" line people still drop was delivered by Witt). Her return to Lynch's world in *Twin Peaks* as Gerstan Hayward -who plays Leland Palmer through a musical breakdown- was one of the most memorable scenes in the show's history. We talked to Witt about the experience, her new record, old characters and good advice.

Some of the songs on the new record *Revisionary History* have been in the works for ten years – where are you at with the material at this point? Is live performance bringing a new life to the songs or are you itching to write and perform new stuff?

I haven't gotten to the point where I'm tired of playing any of my songs – it's honestly such a thrill to play them both for people who have never heard them before and also for people who are familiar enough with them that they're mouthing the words and requesting favorites at a show.

That being said, I've already written tons of new songs since I finished recording this album and I'm loving playing those at my live shows as well.

What type of piano do you write/practice on? What do you prefer in the studio and on tour?

I love Steinways and Yamahas. At home I have a Steinway Baby Grand, but on the road it just depends what the venue has. Often I'll play a keyboard at shows, because unless the stage is placed a certain way, it's actually easier to connect with the audience while I'm singing that way, so I'm not facing away from them.

You've stated you draw musical inspiration from your characters; Can you talk about the process of getting in someone's head musically and when building a character?

That's a great question! I'm honestly not sure what my process is when I'm getting in someone's head for a character – it's just something that sort of happens. The song 'Down' on *Revisionary History* was specifically inspired by my character Wendy Crowe on *Justified* and her experience through the season that I was on – being stuck in that world and finding herself at a crossroads of wanting to find a way to put it behind her finally, to the best of her abilities. Something about this song also somehow feels like it already existed and it just came through me while I was playing the character – but it's really about any situation where you're tired of being weighed down by your history and forever mired in where you came from.

With all of John Waters' movies getting remade into musicals the time seems right for a Cecil B. DeMented revival – What kind of number would you write for Cherish?

Most definitely a song about gerbil porn.

You've often been cast because of your musical ability – it certainly lent itself to that very memorable episode of *Twin Peaks*. What was it like in the Lynch-iverse? That must have been an intense, dramatic experience at 14?

It was great to get to work with David again! He's really the reason that I got into the acting business, and if my first experience hadn't been so great I'm not sure I ever would've wanted to do it again. As a seven-year-old, I didn't know anyone, so working on *Dune* was an entirely new world – and it was largely because of David and his kindness and unique vision that I knew I wanted to do this for the rest of my life. When I moved out to LA at 14 he wrote me that part on *Twin Peaks* to kind of help me get started again in the business I think – and then I got to work with him again in the HBO movie *Hotel Room* opposite Crispin Glover.

You've had roles in some films and television shows with very "avid fan-bases." Without rewarding their bad behavior – what's the nuttiest thing a super fan has done in your presence?

There have certainly been a few doozies! But one that comes to mind – which was really very sweet- was the gentleman who leapt up on stage at my London show a few years back and attempted to get a petition going to bring Falacci back to *Law and Order Criminal Intent*!

You had the pleasure of working with some really strong and interesting women; which lessons that you learned from them have resonated with you? Any that make more sense now or as you've aged?

I've learned as much from good examples as from examples that taught me what I did not want to be like – you're right, I've worked with some incredible women. One thing that springs to mind is Christine Baranski telling me how beautiful I was and very kindly implying that I spent too much time worrying about my appearance – which was absolutely true. I think when you're that young it's hard not to – as I've gotten older it's one of the things I think the least about and that just really frees you up to focus your energy on much more important things – which ultimately make you more beautiful inside and out.

If you could go back and tell that 14-year-old playing Sunday brunches at the Westwood Marquis Hotel anything, what would it be?

I'd say: write down these experiences and all the crazy encounters, because you'll forget most of them! In fact, that's good advice for me right now. I've been telling myself that for years. And now if you'll excuse me, I'm gonna go start a journal.

MAY 1, 2014

Alicia Witt: 'Justified' Tough Act to Follow

Alicia Witt is mulling what to call the new album she has just about ready for release, and what she will do as far as a performance schedule to support it. It's a good time for the red-haired actress/singer be focusing on the music side of her career, given the intensity of, and attention surrounding, her turn as Wendy, "the smart one" of the violent, heroin-smuggling Crowe family on the fifth season of FX's "Justified."

As viewers know, Wendy worked the law on behalf of her miscreant siblings to impressive effect, despite not really being a lawyer. Then big bad brother Daryl (Michael Rapaport) proved ready to allow Wendy's teenage son (Jacob Lofland) to take the rap for a murder, and, well, we'll just say she took care of things.

All together, it was a dynamic and memorable season for Witt.

"I haven't figured out what I'm going to do next, acting-wise. All I keep looking for are parts that I haven't done before and parts that are going to challenge me in some way. And honestly, having just worked on 'Justified,' I feel like that's a hard act to follow," notes the red-haired beauty.

According to Alicia, she and Rapaport didn't know what was to become of their characters at the beginning of the season.

"The relationship that Mike and I created throughout the episodes that we had together was so complicated," she says. "There was so much love there, and obviously a history of having grown up together and having been all that each other has. But there was also such an element of abuse. Honestly, I felt that in the very first episode — even though it didn't make any sense," she goes on.

Witt says she is going to check with the series writers at some point, to find out "if they could tell that I felt that way and if it had anything to do with the relationship between Wendy and Daryl ending up going the way it did. I always felt there was a sense of being afraid of what Daryl was capable of. And when I was playing Wendy I felt like I loved him, but I was also really scared and had this almost abused woman feeling toward him. My brain knew that what he was saying didn't make sense and that he could hurt me, but that I didn't quite have the strength to get away from him."

The punch-throwing confrontation that ended with Daryl's brutal beating of Wendy didn't hurt her at all, physically, Witt says. That fight scene was expertly choreographed. Psychically — that was another matter.

She admits, "I was really drained after a lot of those days on set, because of the level of emotional work that was going on there. It just got more so as the episodes got written and we got further along in the season. It was the kind of work that, well, I tried really hard not to take the work home with me."

Witt, who was as discovered as a child actress by filmmaker David Lynch, who cast her as Alia Atreides in his film "Dune" (1984), says that after all these years of acting, she is well aware of the potential for problems when actors fail to deal with the impact of playing emotional extremes all day. "You take it out on someone you love, or you find yourself feeling incredibly depressed when everything is going good in your own life — that kind of thing," she says.

"I think I'm better at being able to say, 'I'm just exhausted. I need to stay home and not do anything and lie on the couch for a few hours.'

"But then, with 'Justified,' there was also this really rare sense of satisfaction at the end of those days as well. Every time we had one of those tricky scenes to film, one of the scenes where we go at each other and beat each other up — and especially the finale — I went home tired but feeling like there was not a single thing that I could have done differently or that didn't go as well as I hoped it would."

Critics have called the fifth season a lesser season of the award-winning Timothy Olyphant starrer — a season whose purpose seemed at least in part to be setting up the sixth and final season of the show. Still, it certainly had its breath-catching moments and tremendous acting, and a lesser season of "Justified" is still better than many a drama on the television landscape.

So what will be next for Witt in the acting realm? Perhaps a change-up, like a romantic comedy?

"That would be fun. I actually really love doing those," she says, brightening. "There was a Hallmark movie I did that came out this past Christmas ('A Very Merry Mix-Up') that I'm actually really proud of. It was so fun — obviously the opposite of 'Justified' and the fear you're going to take your work home in a bad way. You want to bring the feeling home with the Hallmark Channel movie. It was just happy. You get to have Christmas lights everywhere in April, and I had a great time doing that. Something that I would love to do that I've never had the chance to do is a really over-the-top ridiculous slapstick comedy."

Her 2013 "Cold Turkey" — in which she played the extra-eccentric daughter among an eccentric family gathering for Thanksgiving — had its zany moments. "Away From Here," an intense drama also released last year, teamed her with Nick Stahl in a story of a former youth minister trying to rebuild his life after serving six years in prison for statutory rape.

The performer, whose credits range from films including "Mr. Holland's Opus" and "Citizen Ruth" to TV's "Friday Night Lights" and "Law & Order: Criminal Intent," has kept her career as a pop singer-songwriter going all the way along.

"That's something that I'm constantly doing. I'm always writing new songs," says Witt, who has shown up on a number of red carpets in the last two years looking quite happy and lovey-dovey with beau and collaborator Ben Folds.

"The last thing I wrote was something I was inspired by 'Justified' to write. I actually collaborated with T.O.N.E-z, who wrote the theme song for the show," she says. "We actually met at the premiere party and he and I sort of simultaneously emailed each other a few days later. I had just finished a song I wanted him to rap the verses of, and he had a song that he had completely written except he needed a chorus, so I did that song with him which has already come out. It's called 'My Baby Girl.' And then there's my song. It's all recorded, but didn't quite fit into the finale of this season — but I'm told it will probably have a place in the next season of 'Justified.'"

She wrote the song from her character's point of view, "before I knew exactly what was happening in the finale," she says. "It's basically about getting away from a background that keeps you in a place where you don't want to spend the rest of your life. You're trying to make a better life and get away from all the crap that surrounds you."

Just don't go to the extremes Wendy did.

BEAUTY BENDER

May 13, 2014

Alicia Witt

The flame-haired actor (we've been loving her on "Justified"!) and talented singer-songwriter talks vegan beauty and her signature scent

Morning routine:

The single most important part of my morning routine is my [Innovative Skincare Sunblock SPF 30 or 50](#). I use it every morning, whether or not I plan to spend much time in the sun or not. It's so important! It is the only sunblock I've found that doesn't block my pores but also keeps me from getting burnt. It's also very moisturizing and free from the toxic chemicals that a lot of other sunscreens have.



Overnight skin ritual:

I usually use a retinol cream along with an [Ole Henriksen under eye gel](#) that I love. I like a plant stem cell cream by Athena to go on top of everything. I also love [Clarins](#) products—their [neck creams](#) are amazing.

Who cuts/colors your hair:

I recently went short, which I've been wanting to do for quite a while but once I got the part on "[Justified](#)" it didn't make sense to change up my look until I was done shooting. [Corey Powell](#) at [Sally Hershberger](#) gave me my new look and I love it! I have never colored my hair.

Hair habit:

When it comes to my hair, I have never really learned how to style it, so it's very important for me to have a cut that works well for "no-style" styles. If I'm at work or going to an event I have someone do it for me, so I don't have to worry about it. On my own, I usually just shake it upside down, let it air dry, and use a little sea salt spray or a bit of conditioning paste to scrunch up the ends (there's one by [Aveda](#) that I love).

Favorite eye look:

If I'm not at work, most days I don't use any at all, but my favorite look in general is mascara, eyebrows and not much else. If I'm going to use shadow, I like using colors—recently I've been using some bright [turquoise](#) in the inner corners and something neutral everywhere else. I love [purples](#), too. The brand Butter London makes a fantastic line of [colored mascaras](#) that give you a pop of color without having to go to extremes with a full face of makeup.

Go-to lipstick:

My favorite thing to put on my lips is [Ladybug Jane lip balms](#)! Most days (if I'm not working) all I wear is that—it gives me great moisture and it tastes amazing. Plus, it comes in about 30 different flavors. My favorites are chocolate, orange, and vanilla. Best of all, it's all organic and actually good for you (evening primrose oil, etc), which is very important when it comes to lips since of course, you do taste it. If I want some color, there are some [Tarte lip stains](#) that I like to blend in with my Ladybug Jane. [Butter London](#) has some great colors, too—[Axis Kiss](#) and [Apricot Sunray](#) are two of my favorites right now.

Nail color of the moment:

I'm loving [Zoya's Neve](#) along with [Butter London's Matte Finish Top Coat](#). Zoya is a great brand because they have so many colors, from conservative to outrageous (I lean towards outrageous), and they are 5-free and don't have a toxic smell when you use them. They are also vegan.

Signature scent:

I've been wearing a patchouli-rose fragrance for the last 15 years or so. I don't want to say which company though! My friends all say "You smell like you" when I wear it. I love it because it's strong and feminine but has a lot of masculinity in it as well.

"Never without" product:

I am never without my little sample vial of perfume, my [Ladybug Jane lip balm](#) (probably in orange or chocolate flavor) and some [Boscia Pink Peppermint Blotting Linens](#) for shine.

Secret to staying young and beautiful:

I have no idea! I drink lots of water, get lots of exercise, have a vegan diet and spend lots of time with good people and my amazing animals. Most importantly though, I have great genetics. My dad is turning 80 this year and literally doesn't have a wrinkle on his face. He also has a great sense of humor, which is probably not a coincidence!

ARIYNBF 281 with Alicia Witt (and a Chris Laxamana cameo)



Written by Alison | May 25th, 2014

Alicia Witt stops by this episode of Alison Rosen Is Your New Best Friend to talk about doing everything at a young age, being home schooled, her attraction to older and then younger guys, toxic relationships, healthy relationships, Ben Folds, auditioning, dogs, coconut oil and so much more. We also did a round of Just Me Or Everyone ([click here to see the JMOEs from this episode](#)).

JUNE 8, 2014

A conversation with 'Justified's Alicia Witt

BY MINDY PETERMAN

You may know Alicia Witt as Wendy Crowe from *"Justified"* and as Cheryl from *"Friday Night Lights."* What you may not know is that Witt is also a talented singer-songwriter, a pursuit she says, *"fills something in me that acting can't by itself."*

38-year-old Alicia Witt has an impressive track record as an actor, appearing in such films as *Dune* and *Mr. Holland's Opus*, as well as on TV in *Friday Night Lights*, *Law and Order: Criminal Intent*, and *Cybill* (playing Cybill Shepherd's daughter for four seasons). More recently, she joined the cast of the FX drama *Justified* for season five, playing Wendy Crowe, the lone sister to a gang of "redneck, southern gang brothers". Now Witt has revealed her impressive talents as a singer-songwriter, with two releases available on [iTunes](#) and Amazon.

I spoke recently with Witt about her career as an actor and musician, and how she balances the two.

You had an auspicious start to your career, beginning at only 7-years-old, and chosen by David Lynch for the *Dune* film. What was it like working with him?

The thing about it was I didn't have an agent and wasn't in any way trying to be a child actor. It was just an odd series of events that led to the casting director for *Dune* finding out about me and calling my parents. They flew me to New York to audition for the casting director and then for David himself. It was so easy. It actually, if anything, gave me a sense that all movies were going to be like that in terms of both how easy it is to get a part and what a nice set it was to work on, and in particular, David, the kind of director he is: the way in which he works with actors and stays on such an even keel. Even on a set like that, where I now know there was actually a lot of tension over budget and creative differences. But I had no clue about that. It was a no brainer. I knew as soon as I set foot on that stage that I was going to want to do that for the rest of my life.

Is there a role you've played that you would consider special to you?

A role that always comes to mind when I'm asked that question is my part in *Playing Mona Lisa*. That's an independent film I did in 2000. It was just so extremely close to what I was going through at that time in my life. It told the story of this girl who had just graduated from music school and was dealing with the breakup of her first serious boyfriend, and the fact she got rejected from a big graduate school. She had to move back in with her parents. All this stuff happens to her at once. I didn't have to move back in with my parents but it was intense. I was going through a breakup in real life, which I didn't know at the beginning of the movie and I found out at the end of it. It was just an incredible period of transition. What the story was really about was this girl who had spent her whole life working so hard to be good at something that she kind of forgot to just be a kid. So she had this later coming-of-age thing when she graduated from college.

You identified with this strongly.

Very strongly. I never went to college or to school at all, in fact. I was home schooled. But I certainly identified with being late to the game. At the time I shot that movie I hadn't had a drink yet. And by the end of it I'd had a drink. The character and I were both 23 and we were having this delayed coming-of-age. I'm really proud of how that movie turned out.

You played Amy Safir in the *D-Girl* episode of *The Sopranos*. What was it like working on an episode of such an iconic show?

This is a pattern for me when I do these roles on shows that are thought of as iconic. I've been on a couple of those where everyone says, "You have to watch this show. It's really great." Invariably, whenever I end up on one of them, I've never seen [the show]. That gives me an air of unaffectedness, which is really helpful. I'm not starstruck by it.

The one time that was the opposite was on *Ally McBeal*. I lobbied hard to get a part on that show because I was obsessed with it. I was so nervous (laughs). I was so nervous! My first scene was this giant page long monologue that I had to deliver as a defense attorney, facing the entire cast. I was an *Ally McBeal* freak and I was shaking in my boots. I could not believe I was really on the set.

With *The Sopranos*, I had never seen the show. I just knew it by its reputation. So all of those characters were new to me. I didn't come into it with any preconceived notions, which is exactly what Amy, the character, would have [done]. But I did have specific female producers and various stage people, who I can't stand, who I based the character on. The funny thing is that after it aired, I had so many different people tell me, "I bet I know who that's based on." And it was always somebody different.

It's like Carly Simon's "You're So Vain", right?

Yeah!

You can currently be seen as Wendy Crowe in the FX series *Justified*. This is your first season on the show?

Yes, and I don't know if I'm going to be in for the final season. But all the episodes from Season 5 are up on Netflix now. I think they've also made the entire season available on FX.com for Academy members.

Can you tell us something about the character and her role in the storyline?

She is the lone sister in a family of real redneck, southern gang brothers. They are just bad news. Each one worse than the next. She is the lone voice of reason. She's trying to keep the family together and keep things going. She's sort of half trying to keep them in the clear, knowing they're doing shady business and then half trying to live her own life and stay as little involved as she feels she needs to. There's a real element of an abusive relationship there that became more apparent as the season goes on. She's a really smart girl. She's trying to put herself through law school. She does have a son who she claims is her brother but he's actually her son. She's denied that for years. And she keeps coming back to this brother, Daryl ([Michael Rapaport](#)), who is bad news and who betrays her over and over again. So, in the end, with Raylan Givens' ([Timothy Olyphant](#)) help she starts to understand just what the extent is of Daryl's lies. She ends up needing to make some hard decisions, to say the least.

You are also a songwriter and classically trained musician. How long have you been writing songs?

I've been writing them off and on my entire life. It's funny. It's one of those things that I always thought I'd really want to do someday. I'd want to be in front of an audience playing my songs for people. But it wasn't until, I think it was seven years ago now, that I played some of my songs for my best friend and she just looked at me and said, "You have to do this somewhere other than your living room." That was the real beginning of believing that I could do that. Then the universe just guided me in that direction. I started meeting other songwriters, people who would let me sit in on their sets and play a song or two. [I started meeting] people I could write with as well as finding I could write by myself. It all came together and it's just become such a huge part of my life I just can't imagine how I could have possibly gone so long without it.

If you had to choose between music and acting, could you make that choice?

I don't have to make a choice. I can't. I think one helps the other. I feel like I'm a more well-rounded person now that music's become such a big part of my life. It fills something in me that acting can't by itself. But at the same time I love acting and I actually think I love it [more] since I started making music because it's not the only thing I'm putting everything into.

Could you name some musicians who've inspired you?

There's so many. I grew up listening to a lot of the classics like Nat King Cole, the big bands, Frank Sinatra, and Ella Fitzgerald. I didn't go to school so I didn't really have any peers to point me in the direction of what was on the radio. I spent the '80s listening to the '30s, '40s and '50s music. The modern artists I do remember listening to were classic singer-songwriter piano people like Elton and Billy Joel.

I hear those influences in your music.

Thank you. They were huge influences on me. Two people I really admire on today's radio are Sara Bareilles and Pink. Of course, Adele but she's a different style than what I do, I think. I just really love what Sara does. Sometimes people point to artists like that or Elton John as having a musical theater vibe. I don't think that's a bad thing. Because you could put all good songs on a Broadway stage and they would mean as much. I really admire the songs that Pink picks because hers are songs you can just make an album of playing the piano and singing.

How about your acting influences?

The people who come to mind are Cate Blanchett and Judy Dench. I was incredibly inspired by Phillip Seymour Hoffman. I got a chance to work with him once. It never saw the light of day. It was an improv thing that we were doing with Bob Balaban. We all got together for two weeks and improvised a script. The idea was that the script would then be written and turned into a movie. When the script got written they didn't do anything with it. It was an incredible cast. I got to work with Phil and he was extraordinary. I love actors who are able to transform themselves so effortlessly that you actually believe they're playing themselves, even though they're different people in every movie. There's an element of truth in every single character. If you didn't know better you'd think this person was cast because they're exactly like that character.

Al Pacino's always been such a great inspiration to me: getting to work opposite him [in the film *88 Minutes*], not just have a few scenes but to get to know him to that level. There was also a lot in that film that didn't even make it into the [theatrical] film. Originally our characters were having a romantic relationship. So in the film it was implied that I had an unrequited crush on him. It was an experience that made me a better actor, for sure. It's great when you watch someone you've looked up to for your whole career and find them to be just a real person.

He made you feel comfortable?

Yeah, he really did. I feel like with Al, if you're somebody who's easily intimidated, he might not take it well. Like if you tried treating him with kid gloves, like he's made of porcelain, he doesn't take well to that. He's just a person. I don't think he likes the fact that people look at him that way. What he enjoys doing is digging in to characters. I saw him do take after take of the smallest scene. Not because he was showing off for people on the set. But just because he really thought he could do it better. We all knew we were making a film that was not going to go down in history as his greatest film of all time. But it was supposed to be an entertaining thriller and he still put 100 percent into it.

Your songs such as "Me Or New York" and "Is This What You Meant" show a maturity both musically and lyrically. What is your songwriting process?

It depends. It's all over the place. I tend to write a lot of lyrics. Sometimes I write them with a melody attached and sometimes the melody shows up later. Other times they come together. Sometimes, a little less often, the melody will come first. There's a song that I actually wrote with [the rapper] T.O.N.E-z that is inspired by *Justified* and what Wendy is going through. It didn't end up in the finale because there wasn't room. That was a very packed finale; there wasn't room for another song besides the ending song.

What are some of your future plans?

I'm trying to figure that out. The next thing at the very moment is I'm playing a gig in Kansas City on Monday night. I have a very good friend who is the program director at a big radio station there. He has been asking that I come out and play a show for a while. I'm also doing a guest starring role on this new show called *Navy Street*. It's got a really cool cast. I'm also doing the [24 Hour Play](#) here in L.A., the week after that. I think it's the seventh time I've done this. Then I want to figure out what to do with my new record, when to release it, how to release it.

When do you think it might come out?

I haven't quite decided yet. I don't have a manager for music. I don't have a booking agent. I've done it all myself up to this point. What I'm honestly trying to do right now is figure out how to find the right representation for that. I've been on tours before but they've all been self booked. I would love to actually get a label involved and get a booking agent involved on a bigger level. I'm just trying to scope that all out.

JUNE 13, 2014

An Interview with Musician/Actress Alicia Witt

Paul Booth chats with Alicia Witt

Alicia Witt took time out from her busy schedule of recording music, playing concerts and acting in film and television, to talk with us about the fifth season of the hit TV show *Justified*, her process as an artist, working with cinema greats and what brings her joys from the fans. Please watch the attached video of Alicia singing.

Paul Booth: Let's get the small stuff out of the way. How long does it take to shoot an episode? How much time do you have with the script? Do you enjoy the tight schedule or does it make your process harder?



Alicia Witt: One of the things I liked the best about the process of shooting *Justified* was that they rewrite constantly- often revising a scene only an hour or two before it was set to be shot. I prefer not having a ton of rehearsal time, and memorizing more last minute so that the choices remain really instinctive as opposed to having time to get set in what you think you should be doing. So you can make the decisions in the moment that you're filming- so for me the last minute rewrites were exciting.

Schedule wise, once it started airing and we got caught up from the ones we had filmed in the fall, there would often be only about 4 weeks between shooting and airing. We usually had about 8 days total to film each episode, but another thing that was unusual about this show was that we would often shoot out of sequence, since the producers go above and beyond to accommodate the actors' and directors' schedules and work around any conflicts they may have. Due to that, we ended up filming episode 511, where I was already bruised from the fight with Rapaport, before we filmed 510- so we had already established where the bruises needed to land on my face before the fight was staged, instead of the other way around.

PB: Given it is Elmore Leonard material, any actor would want to be involved; were you a fan of *Justified* and what aspects of the story drew your attention?

AW: I actually had never seen the show before- it was on the list of shows that I'd always heard was one of the best on TV and that so many people I respected told me I had to see, but I just never had. Yes, given that it was initially based on Elmore Leonard characters and the caliber of writers/actors already involved, as well as its reputation, I knew that this was going to be a great experience. When I was offered the role, all I had to go on was the excellent pilot script – I spoke to Graham Yost to find out more about who Wendy was and where she was going, and honestly he didn't divulge much!

I also asked him whether he wanted me to go back and familiarize myself with the series but he responded exactly as I had initially thought – which was that because Wendy was a new character and she didn't have any existing history with the people on the show, there was no reason for me to know them any more than she did. I think that not having a preconceived notion about how kickass the show was, actually helped me – I got to know Tim Olyphant as Raylan Givens in real time, as Wendy did, without having seen him on the previous four seasons and being starstruck!

PB: Your character has a very well drawn out naivety to her, how much of this was on the page vs. you working your prep vs. you being in the game with Michael Rapaport?

AW: Thank you! I didn't think of it as naivety until you mentioned it—to me it felt more like an almost brainwashed, borderline abusive relationship kind of thing. Wendy knows better than to trust Darryl, but she can't erase the history they have, trying to 'hold the family together' after their parents died- so she has spent all these years trying to ride the line between making a better life for herself, trying to get a law degree and working as a paralegal, but also coming back time and time again to that family loyalty she just can't shake. I think what you see in season five is everything coming to a head for Wendy—she comes clean to Kendall that she is his mother, not his sister, and finally admits to herself, with Raylan's help, that Darryl is only out for himself and that the family loyalty thing he spouts to keep her coming back is bullshit.

PB: You guys had a very believable brother/sister chemistry; what do you feel made that work? You guys both brought an A-game beyond “acting.”

AW: Thank you- working with Rapaport and getting to create that relationship together is one of my favorite things I've gotten to do so far in my career. We didn't discuss it as much as you might think- it was more something that was instinctively there between us. In that final showdown in 513, there was stuff going on as we looked at each other that I couldn't even begin to explain. It was like we just knew, when we were on set as Darryl and Wendy, what it had been like for us as kids. Rapp is just an actor's dream to get to do scenes like that with, too- so humble, so quietly strong and fierce, so supportive, and so completely present. he's incredible. I hope I get to work with him again soon.

PB: Do you have a favorite episode or scene from Justified? Also, a favorite episode or scene you are in?

AW: It's hard to pick scenes – but if i had to pick one I guess it would have to be the showdown with Rapp in the finale. It's just a rare gift when you pick up a script for a show you're already signed on to and find the writers have given you a scene like that. it was also one that was massively rewritten a few hours before we shot it. There's so much going on in that one- Wendy knows what she has to do and is face to face with the man who's betrayed her, but she also has grown up with this person and has this incredible love for him, so it made the scene extremely complicated and thrilling to bring to life. I also loved the entire episode 508, where I got to have lots to do with the amazing Tim Olyphant and where I revealed to Jacob Lofland, who played my son, that I am in fact his mother and not his sister. as for scenes I wasn't in- everyone on the show is so damn good, but really you can just freeze frame on any moment with Damon Herriman as Dewey Crowe and it will be epic.

PB: You were a child actor; what specifically were you able to use in playing scenes with your son (on the show)?

AW: Jacob, who played Kendall, is actually 17 in real life and he is such a pro already- I never thought of him as younger than anyone else. He was so very easy to work with and so instinctive—like me, he has never taken an acting class and is learning on the job, which is how I learned (and am still learning), so I think having that in common made working together especially familiar.

PB: The show is very tight in all aspects of filmmaking; what for you as an artist was most exciting? I mean, ex. Did you get to see great DP's or were you just amazed at how the editors shaped your work? I guess, mainly, something you did not "expect."

AW: It's a rare gift to not only get scripts with material to dig into that's as great as I think *Justified* was this season, but also to have actors that are as solid, and directors who make sure that the work you do on the day is the very best it can be, making the scripts even better. and then on top of it all, to see the finished product and feel that the editors topped what you did on the set and made it one step better than you even thought it turned out—in my experience that's not often the case. it was an absolute joy not only to work on this show, but also to sit back and see the finished product and anticipate it airing every week. I'm so honored to have been a part of such a kickass ensemble, in front of and behind the cameras.

PB: If you had to tell me in one sentence who you are in *Justified*, what would you say?

AW: I play Wendy Crowe- a woman who finally realizes that the brother she's spent her life defending will stop at nothing to save his own skin – even betraying her and her teenage son while preaching family loyalty- and who ultimately finds the strength to break free.

PB: Looking at the bigger picture, you have done big studio films, indie films, television, number 1 TV shows, worked with the newest talents, Oscar and Emmy winning writers and some of the greatest movie directors alive; what (for those who have no clue) is the constant factor between all levels of work? Sure a first or second time indie director may be 1,000 miles away from Mr. Crowe (*Vanilla Sky*) but there are factors that never change, like intelligence, passion or pure love of cinema.

AW: For me it always starts with the character—my goal is to keep playing roles that I haven't done before. That being said, I think for directors, the one thing you notice the most as an actor, is the confidence a director exudes; the sure hand and ability to collaborate, but also the sense you get with a truly great director like Cameron Crowe, that they know EXACTLY what they want, and you can rest assured they won't stop 'til they get it. I had the privilege to work on Alexander Paynes' first feature, *Citizen Ruth*, and he had all those qualities, even then.

PB: With all your experience, both as a musician and actress; what is the ingredient you bring to a project and that you brought to *Justified*? For those who don't know your electricity as a musician, is it just second-nature to fit so well in an ensemble? The classical piano training, love of Jazz music, etc. ...

AW: One thing that I've found is that since I started writing and performing my music in earnest- about seven years ago- I've felt so much more grounded in my work as an actor. It was like something was missing before. Now that I constantly have partially written songs or upcoming gigs in my brain, it fills up the space between shooting scenes or days off, and that makes me feel more present when I'm inhabiting a role.

PB: Do you have any recent films or projects you are proud of you would like to mention? I know people will enjoy you in *Justified* and probably want to see some other parts of your extensive repertoire.

AW: My last two indie films, *Cold Turkey*, with Peter Bogdanovich, and *Away From Here* opposite Nick Stahl, are both things that I'm very proud of. *Cold Turkey* played in theatres last Thanksgiving and featured an end credits song that I wrote and performed with the greatest musician I know, Ben Folds. *Away From Here* was released in December and both are available currently on VOD- they're very different characters from each other and also from Wendy Crowe on *Justified*, so it makes me happy that they all came out within a few months.

Interview by Entertainment & Festival Writer, Paul Booth

Los Angeles Times

June 27, 2014

Amber Tamblyn to star in 'Reasons to Be Pretty' at Geffen Playhouse



Actress Amber Tamblyn, shown at the Four Seasons Beverly Wilshire Hotel in 2007, will take the Geffen stage opposite Shawn Hatosy in July. (Gary Friedman / Los Angeles Times)

Amber Tamblyn -- the former "Joan of Arcadia" star who is playing the long-lost lesbian offspring of Charlie Sheen's dead character on "Two and a Half Men" -- is set to spew profanity nightly in Neil LaBute's "Reasons to Be Pretty" at the Geffen Playhouse, with performances beginning July 29..

Organizers at the Geffen said on Friday that the cast also will include Shawn Hatosy, Alicia Witt and Nick Gehlfuss.

"Reasons" was first performed in 2008 at the MCC Theater in New York before transferring to Broadway the following year. The play follows four characters and their debate over the importance of physical beauty.

Tamblyn will play the role of Steph, originated by Marin Ireland on Broadway. Hatosy will play Greg, her boyfriend who gets a blunt lesson in notions of what qualifies as pretty versus just "regular." The actor can be seen in the new CBS series "Reckless."

"Reasons," which is scheduled to run through Aug. 31, will be directed by Randall Arney, artistic director of the Geffen.

LaBute has seen a number of his works produced at the Geffen, including "Fat Pig" and his adaptation of August Strindberg's "Miss Julie" last season.



Friday June 27, 2014

Amber Tamblyn Leads Classy Quartet In Geffen's 'Reasons To Be Pretty'

By JEREMY GERARD



Amber Tamblyn Leads Classy Quartet In Geffen's 'Reasons To Be Pretty' In a move not entirely unlike casting Michele Pfeiffer in a film role originated onstage by Kathy Bates (which is what happened when Frankie And Johnny In The Clair De Lune became Frankie And Johnny), Amber Tamblyn will play a woman who emphatically terminates her four-year relationship with her boyfriend when she finds out he's described her looks as "regular" when the Geffen Playhouse presents Neil LaBute's excellent drama Reasons To Be Pretty next month

Shawn Hatosy (Southland, Reckless) is Greg, the thoughtful-but-stuck-in-a-dead-end-job boyfriend of Tamblyn's Steph, and they will have the pleasure of duking it out in the opening scene, one of the funniest, nastiest, loudest smackdowns ever written, in a flash-flood of epithets that would make Trey Parker blush



Opposite them will be Nick Gehlfuss (Shameless, The Newsroom), as Greg's not precisely reliable macho friend Kent, and Alicia Witt (Justified, 88 Minutes) as his wife Carly. The show, which was nominated for a Tony best play award in 2009 (which was before it got capital letters), will be staged by Geffen a.d. Randall Arney. The run is July 29-August 31, with the official opening set for Aug 6.