

LEFAIR

magazine

November 7, 2018

SOFIA CARSON

TRUE BEAUTY



Sofia Carson:
True Beauty

Jazz played in a suite at The London Hotel in West Hollywood, California. “What kind of music do you like?” Photographer, Tiziano Lugli, asked our cover star, Sofia Carson. Adding the finishing touches of hair and makeup, the scent and sounds of [hairspray](#) filled the room. “I like everything really,” Sofia said, her voice soothing and silky. Keith Jarrett’s Someone To Watch Over Me came through the speaker. Star of Disney’s Descendants, which recently confirmed Descendants 3 debuting Summer 2019 and cast member of Pretty Little Liars’ spin-off, Pretty Little Liars: The Perfectionists, Sofia Carson manages to juggle these impressive projects with passion and pride. We sit face to face for our interview. Sofia is engaged and genuinely enthused while talking about her busy schedule and what’s next.

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unstoppable.”



MR: You are a communications major at UCLA and you speak several languages. Why is communication so important in your life?

SC: I grew up bilingually speaking English and Spanish. English was my first language. I was born and raised in the states. When I was thirteen, I took my first French class at my middle school. There was something so romantic and elegant about the language. I fell in love with language. I began to understand the power of language when I went on my first press tour for The Descendants. Because I could speak French, Spanish, and English, I could travel to France or Spain and do interviews in different languages. I realized I could connect with fans all over the world. It's an amazing thing to be able to connect with people in their own language. They become a part of you and you become a part of them.

MR: You've almost completed your degree at UCLA. How has education impacted your life?

SC: I have nine classes left so that's about a year. At the moment I am trying to take classes when I can. Education is a huge part of who I am. I was always a nerd and passionate about learning. No one can take your education away from you. When you walk into a room and people know you're trying to educate yourself. There is a level of respect. No matter how long it takes, I will finish my degree. Education is our greatest weapon and it should be our only weapon. When you are armed with an education, you are unstoppable.

MR: Do you relate to your character in The Descendants?

SC: I fell in love with Evie three years ago. I fell in love with her because she tells the story of a girl who was raised in a vain world which we all live in. Even though she lives in a fairytale with blue hair and gorgeous costumes. She was told she could never be more than a pretty face and that she is defined by the reflection in a mirror. But she is powerful because she tells every boy and girl that we are defined by what we are inside. She fell in love with learning. She knows that as a girl, she is always more than enough. The thought of her just being a pretty face is just very incorrect. It's truly a story of girl power and we are living in an era of females ruling the world. Well, we always have but it's finally coming to fruition in a different way.

Descendants 3 is confirmed. The cast only found out three days before it was announced. I was on the edge of my seat, praying it would happen. I truly can't wait to be Evie again and tell her story. I am so excited to see where her story will take us, what songs she's going to sing, and what fabulous outfit she will wear. I love Evie so much so I am truly grateful to be able to play her again. When I was a young girl and dreamed of what I wanted to do with my life, I knew I wanted to inspire and empower young girls like me. Even if it was just one girl, to be able to do that with Evie and to be able to do that with my music is priceless to me. Inspiring young women to chase their dreams is the most important thing I could ever do.

MR: You also have a music career. Do you write your own music or do you work with writers?

SC: I write many of my own songs but I also collaborate with writers. I collaborated with Julia Michaels, who wrote my single Back to Beautiful. It's hard to sing songs that aren't completely mine but with Julia, it's like she has this way of reading your heart and knowing what you want to say. So it's a special collaboration when we work together. Back to Beautiful is an anthem about how beauty isn't skin deep. It's about how beauty sees no race and how it doesn't matter who you love or where you come from, we're all beautiful. This song is very close to my heart. It has a great message. It's my favorite. I've always wanted to tell a meaningful story and the story that this song tells is very important to me as an artist and who I am as a person.

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MR: You have so many projects going on. Is music currently a big part of your life?

SC: In between projects, I am always working in the studio. When I'm not shooting on set, I am in the studio. My notes app in my phone has all of my lyrics. I make voice notes too, especially when I'm on an airplane. I'm a writer. I have been writing song since I was 10. I find inspiration in a lot of things and I like to exercise that as much as I can. In music you tell your own story. You're not playing a character. So for me, it's much

more personal and deeply emotional. I am a perfectionist. Whatever I release next has to feel one hundred percent personal to me, honest and true. The beauty of music is that it allows you to share a piece of your heart with the world. The first song I ever wrote was called Leave Me Alone. I always wrote really dramatic things about heartbreak! My sister had an ukelele. I wrote it in Spanish. The inspiration just struck me. It was awful, but we still sing it.

I played piano when I was younger. I got back into it when I started writing. In between homework I would run to the piano and teach myself chords. That's how I taught myself how to write music. I always wrote love songs. I had never had my heart broken or been in love. I was ten! I must have had my heart destroyed in a past life because heartbreak is my constant inspiration. It's so easy to write about love. I don't know what it is. Maybe it's because there are so many different kinds of love. That's why we keep writing about it.

MR: Your dancing in your music videos is very natural. How has dance been a part of your life and creative expression?

SC: I've been dancing since I was three years old. Although my mom would claim that I was dancing before I was walking. I can't remember a time when I wasn't singing and dancing. I have practiced everything from modern dance, to contemporary, and ballet. I remember when I put on my first pair of point shoes as a child. To go on point, that feeling — it's a big deal for dancers. I loved being on stage in school. There's nothing like the rush of giving everything you have to give on the dance floor.



Dance is such a big part of who I am. The LA Ballet has a program called POP (Power of Performance) I went last year. A young girl went on stage and she said she never dreamed of going on stage because her parents couldn't afford dance lessons. POP helps under privileged youth dance in after school programs. I know the power of performing arts and how they can change people's lives. The gala is this Saturday. I am going to one of the POP classes tomorrow and meeting some of the girls who are part of this program. This is a dream come true for me. In first grade, I had a class project in which I had to explain what I wanted to be when I grew up. I drew a big theater and said I wanted to have a charity that helped young women.

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MR: When you were growing up, did you watch the Disney Channel?

SC: It was one of the only channels I liked to watch – Lizzie McGuire, Even Stevens. My Date With The President's Daughter to Hannah Montana and The Cheetah Girls. I knew I wanted to sing and dance and act for the rest of my life. I moved to LA and started auditioning. I went to over 200 auditions until I landed on the Disney Channel. I adore Disney and Disney princesses. I dressed up as Belle, Cinderella or Esmeralda all the time. I was always singing songs from Mulan. There's something about Disney that kind of brings the world together. It's universal. And there's something about fairy tales. But modern fairy tales are no longer about damsels in distress. I think Mulan was one of the first movies to start changing what the Disney Princess was. Mulan is a warrior. Belle was also a more empowered princess. She saw something for herself and she pursued it.

MR: Can you tell me something that your fans don't know about you?

SC: I'm an introvert. I've never had many friends. I've always had one or two best friends. Growing up, I was never the cool girl. I was always a nerd. I always had my nose in a book. I spent all my hours after school in a dance studio. When I came home, I was writing songs. I never really had much of a social life. I still am very much an introvert except for when it comes to being on camera or being on stage. Apart from those things, I'm pretty shy.

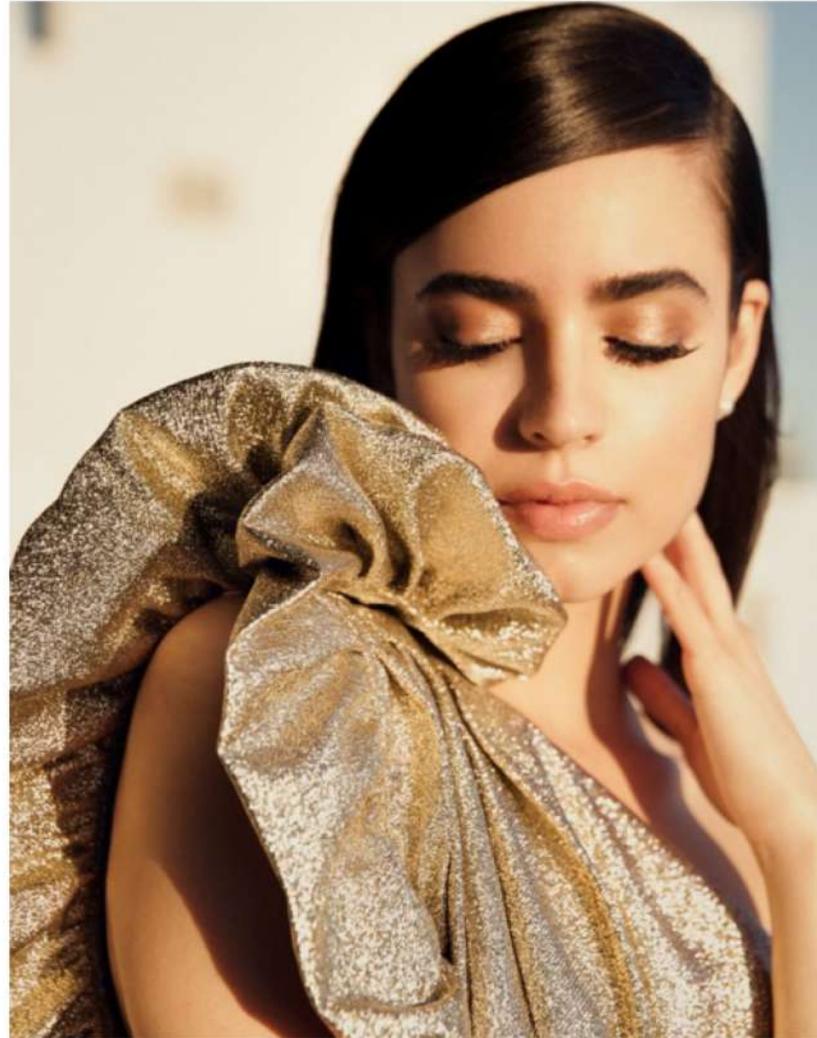


MR: How did your role for *Pretty Little Liars: The Perfectionists*, come about?

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SC: I will never forget when Marlene King, writer, producer, and director of *Pretty Little Liars*, called me on a Tuesday afternoon. I had been a fan of hers for years. I was sick in bed. She said, "Hi! Guess what! You are my new pretty little liar!" My sister introduced me to *Pretty Little Liars* two years ago. I was late in the game. I binge watched it every single night for hours on end. I sometimes wouldn't be able to sleep. I am such a fan of the show and of Marlene's work. I am honored that she believes in me to continue the legacy of *Pretty Little Liars*. I play Ava. She is a fashion designer and icon. It's a great role because I love fashion. I was talking to the makeup artist and costumer. We are creating Ava. I am really excited to sink my teeth into her. In the liar world, not everything is

as it seems. The thing is, when you first play a character, it's like you're getting to know a friend for the first time and the more time goes by, the more you discover about her. You have epiphanies while you're playing her and then there's one point when you completely become that character and really step into their shoes. For Ava, that would be a killer pair of boots. It's a beautiful process getting to know a character.



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SC: I am going to Tokyo to perform my music at a festival. My last experience in Tokyo was incredible. During the press tour of Descendants, the second we landed at the airport there were hundreds of fans. The love that we received is indescribable. Thousands of people showed up to the premiere, most of them dressed in costume. I'm forever grateful for that experience and I'm looking forward to going back to Tokyo at the end of March. I'll be doing a lot of flying in the next few weeks. I've lived more on a plane than I've lived inside my house. There's something special about that though. It lets me connect with so many people. I'm excited for everything I have going on this year. I'll be attending the Oscars for the second time and the day after that, I'll be flying to Oregon to shoot *Pretty Little Liars*.

MR: Do you have any advice for young women who aspire to live a life similar to yours?

SC: First and foremost, you can't be afraid to dream and believe in your dreams and fight for your dreams relentlessly. In every business, there are closed doors and no's but if you truly believe in yourself, educate and prepare yourself, you can be and do anything you dream of. Every girl needs to know she is unstoppable. One big lesson I've learned while being in this world is that Hollywood can be vain and it's easy to fall into the trap of wanting to be more beautiful or perfect and worrying about how many Instagram likes you get. But there is so much more to being beautiful than that. Being in the position that I am in, I feel honored to give another person strength by making them feel beautiful. The true honor of being in this business is having the ability to touch, influence or empower another girl in the world. Maybe Evie's story or *Back To Beautiful* will remind girls that they are beautiful. To have this connection and influence is my greatest honor and something I take very seriously.

MR: What's happening for you next?

