

Kyla Carter

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Actress and singer/songwriter Kyla Carter is showing off all of her talents in the new DreamWorks animated series *TrollsTopia*. Outside of acting, she has also released original music that focuses on encouraging self-love and building self-confidence. Carter talked to NYOTA about how she has grown as an actress and her songwriting process.

What initially sparked your interest in performing?

I have been told I was singing before I was talking, so I like to say I was born to entertain! However, more specifically my love of acting, singing and dancing was inspired by Shirley Temple. When I was four years old, a commercial for the Shirley Temple DVDs came on the television. I begged my mom for the whole set. I watched every movie, color and black and white over and over, and I said to my mom, "I want to do what she does. I want to be just like her!"

You're a part of the Trolls universe through *TrollTopia* and *Trolls the Beat Goes On*. When it comes to voicing your character CJ Suki, what do you do to step into her shoes?

CJ Suki is really cool, loves to spin records and has a raspy voice. To step into her shoes, I have to put myself in the headspace of rocking out to the coolest pop music at the biggest dance party.

Outside of acting you're also focusing on creating original music. Tell our readers about "Half Full Half Empty." What inspired the lyrics?

Since there is a lot of conflict in the world right now, I wrote the song about the choices we all have in life. We can try to see the positive side and the blessings or we can constantly focus on the negative. It is your choice. I choose HALF FULL!

When it comes to creating your music do you have a specific songwriting process?

My phone notepad is full of 100's of song lyrics and voice memos. When I am inspired, I stop what I am doing and immediately write it down. But, some days I stare at a blank paper for hours and can't think of anything to write down. So, when inspiration strikes, I have to catch it! "Half Full Half Empty" was one of those songs that I was able to just write fast without picking up the pen. Once I knew I wanted to write about perspective, the words and a melody just flowed out of me.

You've been acting since the young age of 5. How have you grown as an actress these past few years?

Five year old me wanted to sing and dance like Shirley Temple. As I grew older, I learned very quickly that nothing good comes easy. Dreams can come true if you are focused and work hard to achieve them. To be the best me I could be, and compete with the plethora of talented people out there, I trained hard in acting, singing, dance, dialect, gymnastics, guitar, piano, ukulele and violin. I decided I didn't want to copy anyone, and that it was important to be authentic to who I was as a person. I slowly developed my sense of style as an artist and will continue to fine tune the music artist I want to be. I am still learning, training and growing, and that will be for a lifetime!



Tell our readers about *Junga The Dancing Yeti Meets Heidi*. What drew you to this project?

I recently was hired to voice the lead character in a children's book series about anti-bullying. I will be playing the role of Heidi and I will be working with my brother for the first time, who is voicing the bully, Groth in the series! The message of the book series really drew me to this project. I want to be a role model and my hope is that through my music and my work, I can inspire others to be true to who they are and ignore the noise around them. I believe self-confidence and self-love is the key to living happy. Many people are bullied, feel alone, helpless and unloved. If I can help even one child through the voice of Heidi, I know I am making a difference in this world.

During the pandemic you started a podcast called *Kyla's Corner*. How do you usually go about choosing the topics you'll cover or guests you'll have on?

The main message that I try to relay to my listeners is to "Live Life Sunny Side Up." I think there is a lot of power in positivity and that is what captivates my audience. My goal each week is to come up with a topic that my listeners can relate to. I want them to know that despite challenges, road blocks, disappointments and bad days, there is always a way to find the bright light in the darkness.

Our June issue is our 'Art is Life' issue. How has art played a large role in your life?

I cannot imagine my life without art. When the pandemic hit, and everything I knew and lived for the last 9 years was taken away from me, I used that time to create original music and fell in love with playing guitar. If I am not singing, dancing or playing my guitar, I am drawing, writing lyrics or taking photographs. I love literature, poetry and storytelling. If you are a creative person, art will always find you and live and breathe in your soul.



