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NOT SO RAVEN

Disney star comes of age with new CD

By JONATHAN LANDRUM Jr.
The Associated Press

ATLANTA — Even though Raven-Symone can now add movie producer to her long list of accomplishments, some people still perceive her as a little girl. But the former "That's So Raven" star is trying to show she's graduated from the child phenom role, and has more substance to her than the animated character that's still endlessly shown, via reruns, on the television screen.

One way Raven-Symone believes she can do so is through her music.

"I just want people to see that I'm not a little kid anymore," the 22-year-old Atlanta native said in a recent interview while on a rehearsal break for her nationwide tour. It was supposed to kick off this spring but was scrapped for what an AEG Live concert promoter would only call "unforeseen circumstances."

Did you know?

- Raven-Symone Christina Pearman was born Dec. 10, 1985 in Atlanta.
- She began modeling at age 2 for clients like Jell-O, Fisher-Price and Cool Whip.
- She is a graduate of North Springs High School in Atlanta.

Despite her tour setback, Raven-Symone just released her new self-titled album last month. Some of the tracks are uptempo songs like her first single, "Double Dutch Bus," but she also dips into her personal matters, such as a tough relationship on "Love Me Or Leave Me."

"When I was recording it, I was crying because I don't like putting my business out there," she said.

While she is known through her TV and movie credits as the bubbly, outgoing type, she describes herself as an individual who would rather keep her experiences away from work to herself.

She avoids the spotlight and gossip headlines by not going to the same places as other celebs. For the most part, she stays at home to either play video games like "Heavenly Sword," watch the cartoon comedy "South Park" or spend time on her how-to Web site for teens.

"I don't talk about my personal life a lot, because it's not for everybody's knowledge," she said. "But that is what grows people up. Even when I talk about it, I get antsy."

Raven-Symone credits working with a slew of hitmaking songwriters and producers, ranging from Sean Garrett to Timbaland, with helping her unleash her inner thoughts on her CD.

"We tried to keep it on the lines of having fun," said Ezekiel Lewis of the Clutch, a songwriting group that produced "Keep A Friend" and "Double Dutch Bus," a remix of the 1981 funk song by Frankie Smith. "When it came down to it, she got it done. She wanted to express her feelings and she did."

One of the more personal songs on the CD is "Hollywood Life," about the struggles of becoming famous, dealing with the pitfalls of loneliness and weight loss.

"There are so many girls who are trying to be famous, and trying to conform to a style or body type," Raven-Symone said. "But they are fine just the way they



are. This is a something that a lot of people need to hear."

If there's anyone in music or acting who should understand, it is Raven-Symone.

"Beauty is in the eye of the beholder, except in Hollywood: It's whoever says what is beautiful," she said. "So everyone follows. For me, I'm fine with how I am. I'm not trying to be a certain size."

Since the age of 2, Raven-Symone has been in the limelight: Her big break was as the cute-as-a-button Oliva on "The Cosby Show" when she was just 3. After that, she starred in "Hangin' With Mr. Cooper" before getting her starring gig as the teen with psychic powers in the Disney smash "That's So Raven."

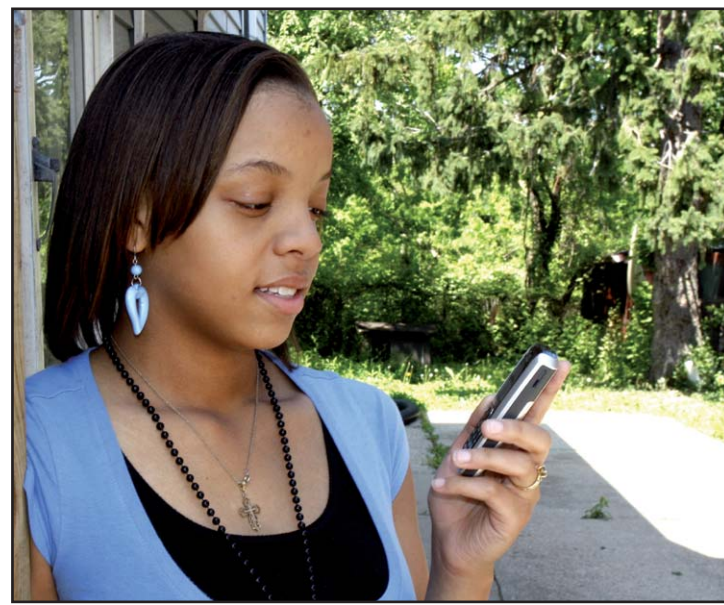
A star of the "Doctor Dolittle" movies with Eddie Murphy, she recently co-starred in and was executive producer for the movie "College Road Trip" with Martin Lawrence. Raven-Symone has

also participated in The Cheetah Girls' films and its soundtracks, which have sold over 3 million copies total.

But the Disney Channel star has failed to duplicate those successful numbers on her last three solo albums, selling no more than 300,000 copies in all. Her latest debuted at No. 162 on the charts with only about 4,400 copies sold, according to Nielsen SoundScan.

Some may wonder why Raven-Symone continues to make records, rather than focus on her other successful endeavors. Ebony magazine dubbed her the "The \$400 Million Woman," referring to how much money the "That's So Raven" franchise has made.

"I have a lot to say," Raven-Symone said. "I love to perform and touch my audience. When you have a movie or TV show, you are not able to touch them the same way. I don't think music will never be apart from my life."



Kabrina Moton, 16, from Cincinnati, receives a text-message that reminds her to take her asthma medicine.

Parents, doctors nagging teens via text messages

By LAURAN NEERGAARD
The Associated Press

4gt yr meds?
Getting kids to remember their medicine may be a text message away.

Cincinnati doctors are experimenting with texting to tackle a big problem: Tweens and teens too often do a lousy job of controlling chronic illnesses like asthma, diabetes or kidney disease.

It's a problem long recognized in adults, particularly for illnesses that can simmer without obvious symptoms until it's too late. But only now are doctors realizing how tricky a time adolescence is for skipping meds, too.

Of necessity, parents start turning over more health responsibilities to their children at this age.

It's also an age of angst, sometimes rebellion, and when youths may most hate feeling different from their friends because of medication, special diets or other therapy.

"It's a time of so much change in these kids' lives," says Dr. Marva Moxey-Mims, a specialist in pediatric kidney disease at the National Institutes of Health. "It's very difficult when you've got a life-threatening illness to say, 'Let them make their mistakes.'"

There are few good statistics on how many chronically ill kids don't adhere to therapy. But what little data exists is alarming enough that the NIH's National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases will bring specialists together in September to debate next steps:

- Some studies suggest only half of adolescents, on average, properly follow treatment steps, says Dr. Dennis Drotar of Cincinnati Children's Hospital. The more medications required or the more troublesome the side effects — even, for appearance-conscious teens, such things as weight gain from

steroid medications — the worse kids adhere.

• Asthma's record is particularly bad, with research suggesting as few as 30 percent of teenagers correctly take medication to prevent asthma attacks.

• Among kidney transplant recipients, adolescents have the worst long-term outcomes of any age group, says Moxey-Mims.

Even when parents try to keep close tabs, "kids are cunning," Drotar notes. "Parents are in a bind because there's pushback."

Drotar once used a monitor to detect whether cystic fibrosis patients performed a chest-thumping therapy to clear their lungs. One teen's monitor showed weird readings: He'd strapped it onto his dog.

Kabrina Moton, 16, of Cincinnati knows she'll start wheezing and need her inhaler when she plays basketball if she hasn't taken her daily asthma pill.

Still, "one time I went a whole month without taking it," she confesses. "It's just work and school and being in and out of the house all the time. ... When I would think about it, I wasn't around it or I was out and I wouldn't remember later on."

Enter text messages. Dr. Maria Britto, an asthma specialist at Cincinnati Children's, noticed that even when she's talking to adolescent patients perched on the clinic exam table, they'll keep texting on their cell phones.

"You have to get in their face a little," she says with a laugh.

But it sparked the idea for a study to see if a daily medication reminder via text message would improve kids' asthma control — preventing attacks, improving school attendance and decreasing doctor visits.

Moton says she texts a lot, so it's easy to spot her reminder at 7 each evening — and so far, she hasn't missed a dose.

"It always says, 'Have a nice day,'" she says. "It makes me feel good about it."

DOWNLOAD THIS | CHRIS BRENNAMAN

Never heard of Neil Diamond? Here's your chance



What do you say we just cut to the chase this week? Yeah, I think we should, too. Let's see what we have:

Neil Diamond Home Before Dark — This album is pretty much everything that made a whole bunch of people way back when fall hard for this seminal musician. Lots of guitar riding side-by-side with stellar songwriting. You know, the stuff that made him a household name. At the same time, though, this isn't going to make anyone who's never been a Diamond fan a convert. That said, be sure to check out the stand-out of this album, an incredible duet with Natalie Maines of The Dixie Chicks.

Flight of the Conchords — New Zealand comedy folk singers Bret McKenzie and Jemaine Clement have put out three albums of Conchords

stuff since forming earlier in the decade, but since their quirky (yet awesomely funny) HBO series debuted last year, lots of people have been turned onto their music. This album features a lot of the most popular songs from the series, my favorites being "Inner City Pressures," "Robots" and "Business Time." However, there are a couple of sinful omissions here. Like the weird and strange parable-ish song "Alfie the Racist Dragon," a song about a, you guessed it, a racist dragon who learns the error of his ways. Still, this album is funny as all get-out, and not having to load the DVD of season one in every time you want to hear one of your favorite Conchords songs is well worth the price.

Star Wars The Clone Wars trailer — Last Thursday, if you were watching any Turner station at exactly 7:58 p.m., you got a preview of George Lucas' latest intergalactic venture. If, like

me, you were, you know, doing something, then you missed it. Thank goodness for the Internet. The trailer for the all-new CG TV series is all over the place now. Personally, I'm trying to reserve judgment until actually seeing the series in full (the CG looks a little too much like a video game), but any geek worth his or her salt is going to need to see this themselves. Passing judgment before seeing the final product is, of course, optional.

So there you have it. Another week, another successful Download This.

Special thanks to Scott Gaglia for the e-mail recommending giving Neil Diamond a go. Which brings up another point. Like Mr. Gaglia, you, too, can send e-mails. Yep, just send your questions, comments, suggestions or even complaints to downloadthis@excite.com. It's fun and exciting!

