



LESLEY BRYCE

## Michael Hyatt – Crazy Ex-Girlfriend

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By: Lisa Steinberg

**Q) What has your experience been like working on the show “Crazy Ex-Girlfriend?”**

A) I love it! I was looking at the tweets or Instagram and missed a message that it had been picked up for a second season! Yeah! I’m so excited about it. I love the music. I love being able to sing. I gave up singing a long time ago and didn’t think that it would be in my career anymore.

Broadway was many years ago. So, having an opportunity to portray a character like this with people like this and sing at the same time is a dream come true. It really, really is.

Working with Aline [Brosh McKenna] and Rachel [Bloom], two fabulous women...I [watch](#) Rachel do her thing on set and

this is a young woman and she's a fireball! She does it with such grace and dignity like it is no big deal. Of course, she has the weight on her shoulders, (she has the studio and a show on her shoulders) but she does it with such grace. She's funny and I think the style of the show, the chances she is taking, the stories she is willing to talk about and the characters she writes about are real folk you see in regular life. I think that's the thing that people embrace about the show. It's not like something that is romantic and nothing like my life. You look at this show and you can see anybody that you know because it is all stories that are relatable. And the music on top of it is just like the cream on the top.

**Q) What drew you to want to be a part of the show?**

A) I was introduced to it when they were working on the pilot. It came around and I had auditioned for Paula's role. I tested for it and it didn't come through and I was so heartbroken. Then, there wasn't the music for it so we just went out and sang. I remember preparing for it and thinking, "What in tarnation? They want me to sing? Okay." So, I pulled out my old, old box of music that I used twenty years ago and was just like pulling stuff out and trying to find a pianist. I used to live in New York and, for me, this is not a theatre town. I had to find who the pianists and musicians in this world to rehearse with me because I had an audition. It was nice though to bring all that up. Dr. Akopian was brought to me when it was not a singing role. She was just a therapist and no music was involved at all. I was just happy to be a part of it then. Then, Aline came to me on set one day when I was preparing for episode seven and said, "You know, we're trying to find a song for you." I was like, "What?!" I was SO excited because it was the farthest thing from my mind because I'm playing a therapist! I was so psyched! Then, when they brought the song to me it was just a dream. It was

really [beautiful](#). Of course, Rachel just pulls shit out of nowhere all the time. You don't see what is coming next, by any means. That's just the way she writes. So, I'm thinking, "How is she? Maybe they are going to sing in therapy?" When I read the episode, I was beaming from ear to ear. The whole process – being able to sing and record the music in a studio before we [play](#) it and then having to work with the choreography...the whole thing was like I was back in New York. I was thrilled. It was really cool!

**Q) Talk about your comedic timing when it comes to this show. Is it something that has come natural to you?**

A) Majority of my career is in dramas. I would say I have no comedic timing. But, thankfully, diva Rachel and Aline write so well that it's not something you have to try. If you just do what is on [the page](#), it is right there. There was one joke that was over my head because I'm not a writer. It took some explaining. You'll see in the episode where she talks about writers...I was trying it every which way to Sunday. I had no clue, but thankfully the writer is my scene partner and she is right there with me. I couldn't get it and she just spat out exactly what it was about. So, I don't think I don't have any comedic timing, but what I do have in this show is a great writer and a very generous acting partner. So, it wasn't something I was concerned about and didn't have to be because she's right there.

**Q) Was there anything you added to your role that wasn't originally scripted for you?**

A) I think the improvisation came in the energy I added to the song and choreography. I don't adlib a lot when I'm working. I'd really rather trust the words on the page,

especially when you have the writer right in front of your face. People do it all the time and I respect that skill. Because I think that I am many times playing reoccurring roles or guest starring roles, I don't give myself permission s I'm not a part of [the team](#) from the beginning. When you are a part of the team from the beginning, you understand and you get the gist. You are in the mix so you can take those kinds of liberties. As a guest on the show, out of the respect for what has come before me, I wouldn't take that liberty. If I'm told specifically, "Do whatever you want to do," then I accept it and try if I have something to add that is more valid than what is on the page. I'll put my two cents in. But again, with someone like Rachel it is always there. So, what I do within the frame that already exists, is I add my own flavor and energy and that in itself makes it unique. You're singing the song and it is a [poem](#) on a page, but what you bring to it is the flavor that cannot be written. Even with choreography, you are given a framework, but then when you add your own flavor to it. That is how you make it unique to you that no one else can repeat. As far as adlibbing, I don't think there was room for that for me. I just wanted to get it right and mix with what was already there.

**Q) You are a part of [social media](#). Are you enjoying the instant fan feedback you have been receiving to your episodes?**

A) Social media is new to me. It was working on "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend" with Rachel and, truthfully, she is the person who inspired me to embrace social media and embrace reaching out to the people that admire your work. That's not something I had ever allowed myself before. I've always just been about the work and the hoopla behind it is something for the viewer, not for me. I've moved on to the next experience. Then, I watched Rachel doing her thing. If she is

not writing something like [the next episode](#) or a song, then she is in the corner somewhere tweeting about the show to her fans. Whether it be east coast, west coast or central she is so on it! People were responding to her so strongly! In the beginning, the viewership was not strong, but her fanbase was amazing and incredibly loyal. Not that I ever doubted that there was love out there for the work that I do, but I just didn't ever think it was important to [connect](#) to that. When I saw just how meaningful it was for her as she is writing the next episode and investing her energy and all of that into her work, I thought let me try it. I did and I'm amazed at the amount of support that I have gotten from "Crazy Ex-Girlfriend" and the body of work that I have had the pleasure to do over the years. I didn't do [Facebook](#) either and there are people that are connecting with me. Many of them are strangers, but there are many that are people connecting with me that I knew thirty years ago as a kid who are just so complimentary and so supportive of my work. It really feels good. It doesn't change what I do, but it's good to receive the positive energy as I'm doing it. It's like we're all in this together and it feels really good.

**Q) As we move towards the finale, what can you tease about what is to come?**

A) You know that I sing! That's coming up! Rachel wrote a wonderful episode. You get a deeper understanding and you go deeper into the relationship between Rebecca and Dr. Akopian. You are able to see more of the relationship between Akopian and Rebecca and why it is important to have this therapist in her life. We dig deeper into Rebecca's life and why she has made the [choices](#) that she has from [childhood](#) to now. It's what it is that brings her to this point. The story takes a turn and we'll see if it is for better or worse. I think that turn is realistic and a really healthy turn for

Rebecca. And I think people are going to be flabbergasted and very supportive. But I think flabbergasted first. I think they are going to like it because it is real. Where it goes from here, we don't know. But it's going to be pretty interesting.

**Q) Is there anything else you want us to be sure we share with fans about your role on “Crazy Ex-Girlfriend” or about upcoming projects?**

A) One of the things that I love about working on this show is the racial cultural social diversity that we have the privilege of working with and the viewers have the privilege of experiencing. On set, we're not talking only about women in jobs that are dominated by men, but also cultures. We have an Asian lead and love interest, which I think is tremendous. We have a wonderful African American cinematographer, which I just think is beautiful. We have two amazing women who created and run this show. The work that I do allows me to visit many different productions and because I have experienced so many that I can say that it is rare and I'm really, really glad to be a part of it. I am working on “Ray Donovan,” thankfully. I've been asked to come back for another season and fully enjoying the team over there. I look forward to sharing that story with everyone, as well.