





INTERVIEW

VANDERVAULT w/ KRISTIN MCQUAID

The famed choreographer releases her latest dance video, "Florets" on Wednesday, May 30th, 2018, inspired by the music of Grace VanderWaal.

May 29th, 2018: 12:00am

By Mark Lalonde

The VanderVault Digital Archive is honoured to present to our readers an interview with renowned choreographer Kristin McQuaid, who has most-recently independently created three dance videos inspired by the songs of Grace VanderWaal.

Of course, Kristin's career is far more storied than the three videos with which our readers may be most familiar. Kristin has worn many hats in the entertainment industry. As an actor she has worked in films alongside Academy Award-winners and has had recurring roles on many television programs. As a dancer she's shared the stage with music industry legends such as Prince, Britney Spears and Cindy Lauper. Of late she has found phenomenal success as a choreographer for television, commercial work, and her own sold-out original productions, but is best known for her work on FOX's hit show "So You Think You Can Dance" and the very popular "Dance Moms". As if all of that wasn't enough Kristin even has her own clothing line, "KraZe by Kristin". She is our kind of over-achiever and we're so happy she agreed to this interview.

Kristin, thank you so much for taking the time to speak with us today.

Thank you for the support, always!

To provide some background to our readers, what initially drew you to Grace and her music and how did you become aware of her?

I believe in the quote "Everything Happens For a Reason". I had never seen "America's Got Talent" before and I guess it was on the channel after a show I was watching. I was up walking around the house and all of sudden I heard Grace's audition. I walked straight over to the TV and was immediately drawn to her voice, her uniqueness, and her old soul. I knew I had to continue watching the rest of the season to see where this girl

was going, hoping she would win! Towards the end of the show I remember watching one of the episodes and telling my husband “I will work with that girl one day.”

What is it about Grace’s art that inspired you to create three very professional-quality dance videos using her music? Was it her lyrics, her melody, delivery, etc.?

I love that Grace writes her own music. That is so powerful to any artist. Knowing the truth and the depth behind the lyrics I knew I wanted to create some amazing visuals to counterbalance the songs.

What is your process when conceiving and developing these videos? Where do you start and how do these projects evolve?

The process for each video in pre-production is pretty lengthy. I start by selecting the main concept of the video. I research the lyrics and the meaning of the song to Grace. I then decide location, cast, who I want to direct and then I can begin. So many ideas and concepts are thrown out on the table and some ideas come together, others are thrown out. It all eventually comes together and creates a beautiful piece of art.

Tell us about your collaborators on these projects, dancers, directors, editors, costume designers, etc.?

I am so blessed to be able to work alongside such amazing and talented people. “Light The Sky” [dance video], and “Moonlight” [dance video], were directed by Ryan Parma. He was great to work with and has a dance background himself. David Javier was the director for “Florets” [dance video]. He creates more of a feature film-type feel and is so extremely talented. Since I choreographed on shows such as “So You Think You Can Dance” and “Dance Moms” I was able to use dancers from those shows for my videos! If it weren’t for them, these videos wouldn’t be what they are. I do all of the costume designing and if we need something made I will hire a seamstress. Most of the stuff I use is vintage.

Do you have any funny anecdotes about the creation of this latest video, or did you face any tough challenges during the shoot?

Haha yes! Well, the video is called “Florets” and if you don’t know what a floret is, its the white fluff that floats away from a dandelion. I knew those needed to take part in the video in some way. After speaking with David, the director, he said “We need a ton!”. This video was shot in early March. There was not a dandelion in sight! I went online and searched “where to buy dandelion fluff”. Come to find out you can buy this fluff but it will cost you a pretty penny! So every time we shot the scene with the florets and David would yell “Cut” I would scream “pick them up!!!” lol.

Do you foresee making any more Grace related videos, or does the release of “Florets” complete a trilogy?

To be honest I didn’t foresee or plan “Florets”, it just was an inspiration and it evolved. So there could be more for sure in the future, but I hope with Grace!

Would you like to work with Grace directly in a future project? She has expressed a love/fear relationship with dance, saying that dancing is her favorite thing to do, but is reluctant to publicly demonstrate her abilities. Would you be willing to craft something specific to her skill set for a future music video along the lines of, say, what Sia and her choreographer Ryan Heffington have done with non-professional dancers like Shia Labeouf in the music video for “Elastic Heart” and Kristen Wiig’s dance performances at the Grammys and Coachella?

I would say that working directly with Grace is my number one goal. Honestly, Grace is a good dancer! I have seen her groove on stage and in videos. She would be fantastic in something like “Elastic Heart” or other videos involving dance. I think sometimes record labels get thrown off by the word “dance”. It doesn’t have to be ballet, it could be unique human-like movement. It’s all about just taking a chance and trying new things.

Follow-up question: Grace has thus far worked very closely with the directors of her music videos, providing each of them with the concepts and even specific shots. Would you be willing to collaborate with her in that way, or do you like to have your work be specifically reflective of your personal vision as an artist?

Listening to Grace would become my number one priority. I would love to bounce ideas around with her. Especially since she writes her own music she sees it visually in her head.

What future projects are you working on that you would like to share with our readers?

I am working with a Disney star on a big project this summer, choreographing for a star for VidCon in June, and always working on new projects of my own!

Again, Kristin, thank-you so much for taking the time out of your busy schedule to speak with us. We're big fans of your work.

The FanderWaal Nation is the best! I love you all so much and thank each and every one of you for your support!

Kristin was so gracious with us during the whole interview process and it's a pleasure to help her promote this latest video in her Grace VanderWaal tribute series. We haven't seen the the video yet, so we're just as anxious as all of you, but from the glimpses Kristin has shared, we're getting definite Brontean vibes - with California standing-in for the moorlands of Yorkshire - though now with stunning ocean views.

We very much enjoyed Kristin's takes on "Light The Sky" and "Moonlight", with the second being even more sophisticated, artistically and technically, than the first, but with "Florets", she and her new director David Javier have really taken this series to the next level. As fans we really should thank Kristin for bringing her talents, not only as a choreographer but as an organizer/recruiter, to the fore and providing us with such amazing works of art. We really do hope she gets to work with Grace on a project soon, preferably an official music video. The results would be mind-blowing.