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### Christina Vidal

This girl can do it all: singing, acting and dancing! Meet triple threat Christina Vidal, whom some of you might recognize as the fame-obsessed Taina from the Nickelodeon show of the same name. Now 21, Christina is super-busy, having just finished filming the new flick *Freaky Friday* and recording her first album, which she calls "urban pop that's a cross between Janet Jackson and old Mary J. Blige." IML was lucky enough to sit down with her to talk about all things life, love and limelight. Check it out!

**IML:** We all got to know and love you as Nickelodeon's *Taina*. What got you interested in acting?

**Christina:** As long as I can remember, I have wanted to act. My sister, Lisa Vidal, is an actress and she's been doing it since she was 15. I've been watching her on TV forever and always knew it was what I wanted to do. But for a while, I never really pursued it. It just kind of came to me because they were auditioning kids for a movie called *Life with Mikey*. They were going to different schools all over the nation and they brought a flyer to my school. My teacher came to me and said, "I don't know what this is, but it's for Disney. You're always acting and singing and dancing around, and you should have some way to release all of that. You should go to this!" So I brought it home to my mother and my sister, and my sister was very excited, like, "Oh my little project!" She took me to the audition and sort of coached me. Actually, it was really God's plan because I just happened to go to the audition and I made it through the final round out of lots of other kids. That was the first thing I did, and I was 10 years old.

**IML:** It must have felt good to nail your first audition!

**Christina:** I don't remember feeling anything except for "Wow, that's kind of cool!" And then when I got on set, I was so comfortable there. It didn't take me long to adjust. It was a lot of fun, and I thought, "I'm going to be in a movie!" But when you're a kid, it's not as cool as when you get older. If I got a co-starring role in a movie now, I'd probably throw a party. It would be a big deal. But as a kid it was more like, "Oh, cool, I'll do this and then I'll go home and go back to my life."

**IML:** You mentioned your older sister. Do you have any other siblings?

**Christina:** I have three siblings: two sisters and one brother. One sister is 16 years older than me, my other sister is 10 years older, and my brother and I are four



years apart. It's funny – I'm very close with all of them, but I have very different relationships with all of them too. They all provide something different. For instance, my oldest sister is more like a mother to me. I go to her a lot of the time for comfort. We love to go shopping together...we're out of control when we go! My other sister is like my best friend. I tell her *everything*. We hang out all the time and talk at least twice a day. My brother and I are also very close, especially because we're so close in age. He's very protective and tries to beat up all my ex-boyfriends!



**IML:** How great to have such a support system, considering how busy you are! How do you keep up with all your friends with such a crazy schedule?

**Christina:** Actually, I don't really have a lot of friends. My friends need to be the kind of friends who understand that if they don't hear from me for a month and then I call them to hang out, it will be like no time has passed. I have two or three friends like that, people who honestly and truly are my friends. I had a lot of friends before I became somewhat successful and it's amazing how many people fall off the face of the earth. The friends you thought would stick around don't, and the people you never considered real friends end up being the ones you can count on.

**IML:** Do you miss the friends you made while you were doing *Taina*?

**Christina:** I do miss it sometimes. I miss the cast a lot. It's sad sometimes when I think about it, because we really had a good synergy on the set. Everyone got along really well and it was a great show, but you move on. I met lots of new people on *Freaky Friday*, and Jamie Lee Curtis was great. She's so funny. She and I are the same astrological sign, and she reminds me of myself in a lot of ways. She's joking around all the time and playing pranks; she's like a big kid on the set.

**IML:** When you were playing *Taina*, were there a lot of similarities between you and your character?

**Christina:** Everyone thinks *Taina* was written for me, because we are so similar! But actually, they wrote it two years before they even found me. The only difference is that I have a little more attitude than her, and a little more edginess and spiciness. I'm more likely to speak my mind and a little more blunt and honest than my character. She was kind of quiet and let her best friend do all the talking.

**IML:** You seem like you have no problem speaking up for yourself! What do you think it takes to stay mentally and emotionally strong?

**Christina:** It takes so much. For a woman to be mentally strong, she has to respect herself. You have to have a clear view of what you think is right and wrong. You have to know yourself. The difference between me now and me when I was 16 is that now I can be stronger because I know myself better. I know what I want and don't want, and what I will and won't stand for. It's like that old



saying, "Whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger."



**IML:** Tell us a little bit about a typical day for you.

**Christina:** When I was working on *Taina*, I would get up and go to the set from 9am to 4pm. Then I'd have dance lessons from 4pm to 7pm and an hour afterward to rest. After that, I'd go to the recording studio until I finished the song we were working on, which would be around 1 or 2 in the morning. Then I'd get up and do it again the next day! When I worked on *Freaky Friday*, I was also doing a lot of stuff for my album and that was very stressful. I was shooting the movie and going straight from there to the studio and staying there really late. We had call times to be on set at 4am or 5am every morning and it was ridiculous! I was a little loopy back then but it was worth it, because I got it all done. Everyone was really nice, cooperative, and understanding. When I'm not working, I like to sleep until noon and go to the beach. That's a typical day when I'm not working!

**IML:** What else do you do in your off-time? Do you enjoy playing any sports?

**Christina:** When I was younger, I was on the basketball team and even my mother had to say, "You know what, sweetie, I don't think this is for you." I was awful! If your mother tells you to give it a rest, you know you're pretty bad. Instead, sports for me is dance class and that kind of thing. That's how I get my energy up.

**IML:** Do you spend any time volunteering?

**Christina:** When I lived in NY, I used to volunteer a lot. Unfortunately, I don't really have time anymore, but it's so important because it brings people together. And it taught me how to appreciate what I have and to be selfless. It makes me feel good about myself to help people. A lot of kids think it might be boring to volunteer or take too much time out of their schedule, but it's really good to do.

**IML:** Picture yourself ten years from now and tell us what you see.

**Christina:** Wow! I'll be 31. Hopefully, I'll be toward the middle to end of my career. I'll have a few albums and movies under my belt. By that time, I want to be married and settled down.

**IML:** How are things in your love life at the moment? What do you normally look for in a guy?

**Christina:** He HAS to be funny. I'm single right now, but I'm kind of bummed. I like having a boyfriend. I've never been the kind of person who dates, because I don't have the time. I could never date more than one person; I couldn't keep up with it! I like having that foundation of a solid relationship. When you're working and busy, it's nice to have someone to come home to.

**IML:** Christina, we wish you the best of luck with everything!

**Christina:** Thanks!

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