



NOVEMBER 2010 INTERVIEWED

Q. The performing arts is a highly competitive field. What factors did you face in getting your first break?

Rather than getting a big break, I would say that persistence has been key. The first years were up and down, but by my fifth year, my business had established a good reputation and really took off. I found valuable training opportunities, too. This is my 12th year. I wear several hats, working as a performer, presenter, and video producer. My shows and presentations are in high demand, now, and my unique ASL video titles are selling well.

Q. Do you have an agent that represents you? If so, how did you find them? Was it a smooth process or were there bumps along the way?

Over the years, I have successively employed three agents. The first two did not work out at all, due to lack of communication and unfamiliarity with Deaf Culture. I was assigned non-deaf roles, and the directors just put me in the background as an extra with no lines. The third agent relocated from Seattle to Los Angeles, and asked me to move to Los Angeles, which didn't fit my plans at all. I auditioned for a small role with Warner Brothers but wasn't cast.

Q. What role did/do interpreters play in your professional career?

I have worked with a number of top-notch interpreters. Some of the finest were at storytelling festivals. Most hearing audiences rely heavily on the interpreting. Once, I noticed my audience didn't think my story was funny. I realized that the interpreter was not conveying my intended message. I asked to switch to a different interpreter, and after that, everything went well.

Q. Because of the range of vocabulary involved in the performing arts field, would you rather utilize an interpreter with a background or degree in Linguistics or Dramatic/Performing Arts? Why or why not?

Knowledge of American Sign Language Linguistics would be helpful, but live performance experience is crucial. During rehearsals, some interpreters have not been able to keep up with my extemporaneous signing. Interpreters who wish to work with me should have worked closely with professional Deaf people and have experience in working "live" and handling unexpected circumstances.

Q. When making personal appearances, televised or not, would you rather utilize freelance interpreters or staff interpreters? Why or why not?

Sometimes it's best to select a freelance interpreter. However, if I had a long run with a particular role, a staff interpreter would be ideal.