

Black Sash star 'always sticks up for Surrey'



MISSY PEREGRIN
co-stars in martial arts drama

Actress Missy Peregrin thrilled new WB series is shooting close to home

By Dana Gee
Television Writer

HOLLYWOOD — Don't expect Missy Peregrin to crack any Surrey girl jokes.

The 20-year-old star of the WB's Vancouver-shot *Black Sash* says Surrey — her home since Grade 4 — and its inhabitants have been unjustly maligned.

"I don't know any Surrey jokes," said the beautiful ex-Fleetwood Secondary student, who is in Hollywood for the TV press tour. "I honestly hate the fact that I can go anywhere and people say, 'Oh Surrey, that's bad.' But, honestly, it really isn't that bad. I always stick up for Surrey. It's totally a bad rep. They say Surrey girls are easy but a lot of people I know aren't."

Black Sash — a drama about a martial artist (*Romeo Must Die*'s Russell Wong) who men-

tors kids — is shot at Ajatan Studios, which sits in the shadow of the Second Narrows Bridge at the mouth of the Seymour River.

"We have an unbelievable set. When it's sunny we have the water around it's really private it's fresh. It's great."

This North Shore location is not only beautiful but it's within the actor's comfort zone.

"I'm so happy I could work so close to home because I think it would have been very difficult to take that step and come to L.A. That's like a whole new life that I don't want to deal with yet," said Peregrin, who lives in the Fleetwood area with her parents and two younger sisters. "It's great to have my family around, the support system is there. The time will come when I have to move out but not right now."

While Peregrin's ascent into the world of acting followed the familiar route of modeling and some work in commercials, the time it took her to travel that path was very short.

"It's exciting as well as overwhelming," she said. "No one saw this coming. I think it's unbelievable that this is even happening to me. You

hear the stories where people have worked for years to try and get to where I've gotten today. It's amazing — I've been so blessed."

In the new show, which has yet to be slotted into the WB's mid-season schedule, Peregrin plays Tory Stratton, a troubled, tough young woman who is struggling to cope with the death of her father. It's through her mentor and martial arts that she finds some solace and begins to develop a sense of self.

For months prior to shooting, Peregrin and other cast members, including Toronto's Cory Sevier (Trip Brady), Winnipeg's Sarah Carter (Allie Bennett) and singer-actress Brandy's little brother, Ray J (Bryan Lanier), trained in the art of Baguazhang, one of the three Chinese internal martial arts.

"I really enjoy the martial arts, it's amazing," said Peregrin. "I was very athletic in high school. I like to be involved in athletic things. It's a real nice balance for me."

Besides, she can always use her new skill to kick some butt next time someone tries out a Surrey girl joke on her.

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