

PRT 356- “The Break Up Part 2”

“Our next performer is most recognized at the other half of The Wreakers or the bassist for my own band, however she’s recently been in the spotlight for her own music. She’s a great artist with a big heart and I think she’s going to completely blow up the country music scene. Please, help me welcome Serena Shields!” I said as Serena came on-stage and took the mic from me.

“Thanks for coming out everyone. I have to say, I was scared to death to go solo, but the response has been completely overwhelming and welcoming. I don’t really want to address the Starlight power struggle as my label mates have. I am friends with both Mina and Michelle and I’m sure that in the end everything will work out for the best. They are both smart and savvy business women that know what they are doing. I really just want to get to the music. My album will be out this summer and it’s called ‘A Woman Needs’. This song is the first single from that album and it’s called ‘Boy Like Me’. Hope you like it.” Serena said as she started her song.

I was pleased with how Serena handled her intro. I felt better by the time she finished her song and was happy when I went on stage to intro our last performer.

“Starlight is always looking for talent from all genres of music and we are pleased to welcome a close friend and amazing New Age artist to our line up. She’s known the world over for her amazing melodies, emotive instrumentation, and magical vocals. From instrumental pieces to vocalized songs this artist is second to none. Please, help me in welcoming Ms. Michele Waters.”

Michele walked on stage with her violin.

“Thank you Michelle. My transition from my old record label into the Starlight family has been quite a ride, including tonight’s surprise announcement. Regarding the transition in the Starlight family, I’m sure we will come through this. Above all I am honored to be a part of this label and to have the chance to continue to share my art with all of my beloved fans. Thank you so much for the support. Tonight I’d like to share a piece with you from one of my early albums. It’s called “Caribbean Blue” and I think it’s the perfect piece to get into summer with.” Michele said as she started her song.

“Everything seems to be going well.” RJ said as he walked over to me.

“Yeah, so far...but we haven’t gotten to the press conference yet. I’m nervous about that...especially with Raye’s big mouth.” I said.

“You can’t silence her. It won’t look good. In fact letting her speak her mind might actually make you look more caring.”

“Hmm, you’re right. You’re getting good at this RJ.”

“I have had a good teacher MJ.”

After Michele’s performance we all went on stage for our press conference.

“Again, I want to thank everyone for coming tonight and once more I want to introduce each of our artists. We have Raye Hino, Chad Holdenford, Serena Shields, and Michele Waters and I’m Michelle Morris. We want to give everyone the chance to ask some questions so lets get started.” I said.

“Michelle, can you tell us what your disagreement with Mina was about?”

“I would really rather not. It’s personal and I think it’s best we keep it between us.” I replied.

“Raye, you’ve shown dissatisfaction with the changes in Starlight Records. Will you be leaving the label?”

Raye shook her head, “I have a contract I intend to honor.”

“Michele...Waters, what made you leave your long time record label and join Starlight Records?”

“I’ve been friends with Michelle and the others for many, many years and so when my contract was up it seemed like a natural move. I have no ill will towards my old label, I simply felt it was time for a change and that Starlight was the next step.” Michele said.

“Chad, your new album with Starlight hasn’t gone as high on the charts as your previous album with your old label. Do

you feel Starlight has properly promoted your music?”

“Of course. The thing with the last album was that it had a really strong lead single and that helped the album a lot. The lead single off this one just wasn’t as strong, but that is nobody’s fault but my own. I chose the single and chose to pursue promotion other than filming a video. That is one of the things I love about Starlight Records. Michelle makes suggestions but at the end of the day the artist gets to make their own call. I made a few bad calls and the album suffered. But we’re only on the first single and the album did go into the top 20, which is nothing to sneeze at.” Chad replied.

“Serena, your new single continues to climb the charts. It’s also a rare song that wasn’t written by a member of the Starlight family. What drew you to the song?”

“It’s catchy. The first time I heard it I knew I wanted to record it. It’s not who I am at all but that’s part of why I like it. It’s fun, it’s a great song. I have other songs on my album I did write that represent me, as a person, much more...but this song is just so fun.” Serena said.

“Chad and Raye, you’ve been dating for years now. Any plans to marry?”

“Maybe when the time is right.” Raye replied.

Chad nodded.

“Michelle, a woman claiming to be your sister has been in the press recently. Is she your sister and if so do you plan to accept her into your family?”

“Yes, it’s true that a woman named Miranda Kyle is claiming to be my ½ sister. I have agreed to a DNA test we’re waiting for the results of. If she is indeed my sister then I want to get to know her as I did when I found out Tommy and David were my brothers.” I replied.

“Raye, before you sang just a moment ago, you were very outspoken about your dissatisfaction in the split of Michelle and Mina. Do you have anything else to add on the matter?”

“Not really. I said it all already. I think it’s a mistake. I think they are being childish. In the end the company will suffer. The worst part is their ending a friendship over petty power plays and childish antics. As I told Michelle a while ago, I don’t blame just one of them nor am I more upset at one than the other. There is enough anger to go around and I think they are both to blame.”

“Michelle, will Raye’s outspokenness affect her contract with Starlight?”

“Absolutely not. We have always encouraged our artists to be themselves and speak their minds regardless of my own personal feelings. Raye is free to say what she feels. There are no consequences for that.” I said.

“Michele...and Michelle...when can we expect a new album from either of you?”

I laughed, “You can answer this first.”

Michele nodded, “I just released an album late last year. What do you people want?” She laughed, “I’m always working on my music and anyone that has followed my career knows that my albums come out when they come out. As an artist of many forms, I do whatever I feel at the time, be it my music, painting, or something else entirely. Recently I’ve focused on my painting but I am always working on my music. Hopefully I’ll have a new album out in the next year or two. Until then I look forward to sharing my paintings and current music in live performances.”

“And as for me, I am actually in the process of recording a new album right now. Of course my band has their own projects going on so it’s a bit of a process getting it together, but I do hope to have the album out late this year or sometime next year.” I said.

“Serena and Raye, why are you each doing solo albums as opposed to another Wreakers album?”

“You want to take this?” Serena asked.

“You can.” Raye said.

Serena nodded, “It was the right thing to do. We each had our own ideas that were coming together creatively and so we decided to each do an album.”

“That doesn’t mean we’ll never do another Wreakers album. That project was amazing and I can totally see us doing a follow up, but right now doing solo albums feels right.” Raye said.

“And while we’re on that subject I want to thank all the Wreakers fans for being so completely supportive of both of our solo projects.” Serena added.

Raye nodded, “Oh absolutely. Our fans are the best around and they have been nothing but supportive. We really can’t thank you enough for that.”

“Chad, what’s it like being the only guy in the Starlight family?”

Chad laughed, “I’ve been friends with all these girls for so long I don’t even think about it. To me these are just my friends and family. Besides, if the estrogen becomes overwhelming I have Darien and Andrew to hang out with.”

“That brings me to a question. Michelle, Lita Stevens is in your band and the only member of your band never offered a

recording contract with Starlight Records. Why is that?"

"It's not that she wasn't offered, it's that she's not interested. Lita is my drummer and she's done a few acting roles, but for the most part she's happy to run her bakery out of the spotlight. I respect that and am glad she's happy. If she ever changes her mind and wants to record an album she has an open invitation to do so." I replied.

"Anyone can answer this question. Does Mina selling her half of Starlight mean she no longer has a record deal? And also, who will play guitar on Michelle's album now?"

"Care to answer Michelle?" Raye snarked.

I sighed, "Yes, that does mean Mina has no affiliation with Starlight, including a record deal. As for the new guitarist, there isn't one yet. All of this just happened. In the next few days I will know more about her replacement in the band."

"Michelle, you've been in the press a lot lately with rumors of infidelity and your ex-husband writing a book. Do you have any comments on either of those issues?"

"I have nothing more to say about the rumors. I love my husband and he knows that. Anything else I say will just be misconstrued or not believed. People will believe what they want regardless of what I say on the matter. As for Jon's book, I've been promised that he will show me the same respect I showed him when I wrote my book and I trust him so I'm really not concerned about it." I said.

"Chad, you started as a rock musician, what brought you to country?"

"It's more like what brought me back to country. I was raised in a small town where country music was the music of the people. When I grew up and left home I rebelled against everything that reminded me of home, including the music. I got into rock music and thought I wanted to be a rock star. I completely failed and ended up at Raye's Grandfather's Temple. Raye helped me see that I needed to just be me. Her grandfather taught me responsibility and insight. I grew up a lot and realized that, like it or not, I'm a country boy and the best thing to be is myself. I embraced country and it looks like country is embracing me. For that I'm eternally grateful." Chad said.

"And that will conclude the Q & A part of the evening. Thank you for the wonderful questions and I want to personally thank each of our artists here tonight. Please continue to help yourselves to the buffet and enjoy the rest of the evening." I said.

"Good job everyone." I said when we were backstage.

"Yeah, whatever." Raye said.

"Come on Raye, let's go get some food." Serena said.

Raye made a face, "Fine."

"Don't worry Michelle, I'm sure she'll come around." Chad said.

I sighed, "We'll see."

"I'm going to go up front."

"Yeah, of course. Have fun."

When it was just Michele and I she put her hand on my shoulder.

"It will work out." She said.

"You really think so?" I asked.

"Of course. It always does. Besides, you have a wonderful husband and your friends."

"You're right. Thanks."

"Any time. Are you going to be ok? I want to find Amara."

I nodded, "Yeah, go."

I went and sat down. I didn't feel like mingling with people right now. I sat against a wall and pulled my knees to my chest then rested my forehead on my knees. I didn't like this but it was for the best. I was pulled from my thoughts when I felt an arm around me. I lifted my head and saw RJ.

"Hey MJ, you ok?" he asked.

I nodded and leaned against him, "Yeah, I will be."

"Good."

"You know I love right? I love you more than anything in the world."

"I love you too."

"Do you think I made a mistake?"

"No, I don't. I think you did what you felt you had to do at the time."

"RJ, you are the best."

"I do what I can. You should go back up there."

“In a minute. Just hold me for a second.”

“You got it.” RJ said as he wrapped his arms around me tighter. In that moment I realized again how lucky I was. I was so in love with a man I wanted to spend the rest of my life with and I did have friends to support me. I’d get past the drama like I always did and everything would be alright.