

Mizrahi says 'Fashion Show' will fly on its own merits -- or not; Spelling claims '90210' salary stories out of

by Marilyn Beck & Stacy Jenel Smi

Now that the "Project Runway" legal war has finally been resolved and the Heidi Klum-hosted show will re-emerge on Lifetime in August, all eyes turn toward its successor on Bravo. That is, "The Fashion Show," hosted by designer Isaac Mizrahi along with singer Kelly Rowland.

Well, the eyes of "Project Runway's" vast and avid fan base, anyway. Can "The Fashion Show," debuting May 7, live up to the program that helped transform Bravo into a leading edge reality-centric network?

"I think it will fly if it's good," Mizrahi declares. "There are a lot of competition reality shows out there. Think of all the food ones. Think of all the clothing lines out there. The ones that work, work."

As for how he feels about the pressure of being compared to "Project Runway," Mizrahi says, "My perspective wasn't keenly tuned into that when I took the job. I didn't realize it was going to be a 'Project Runway' comparison thing. I had only seen maybe a couple of episodes of that show."

He explains, "I did this as a kind of lark. I just thought this would be fun. The timing of it was kind of awful, because I had two big collections in February" — launching fall lines of his own and for Liz Claiborne — "and then I went right into taping. So I had to spend another two months without a day off. But by the third day I was having so much fun, weirdly it was like a break for me."

Mizrahi admits that as soon as he started "The Fashion Show" shooting, he found "everyone on the set was talking about it" — "it" being the "Project Runway" situation that entailed the Weinstein Co. paying Bravo a settlement to remove legal obstacles to that program's move to Lifetime.

Like "PR," "The Fashion Show" has up-and-coming designers scurrying to meet challenges in order to win a cash prize (\$125,000) and their own clothing line marketed around the country.

BACK TO THE OLD ZIP CODE: Tori Spelling insists that her salary wrangle to return to her role of Donna in the current "90210" was "completely blown out of proportion." Headlines had it that she initially declined to appear because she wasn't being offered as much money as Jennie Garth and Shannen Doherty, but Tori sets the record straight in the issue of Entertainment Weekly due to hit stands (4/10). "I don't know what the other girls make. I was really sad for the fans — I don't want them to think that this would ever be a money issue between the girls." Besides, she says, the reason for her reluctance was more cosmetic: "I was sitting at home with a newborn. I had 40 pounds to lose!"

Once she did get back into Donna's shoes, however, she found they were still a good fit, she tells EW. "I didn't want to go back to playing funny, silly, ditzzy Donna and not have her mature. She's married. She has a baby now. But I found her quite easily. I forgot that Donna is me to the core."

Indeed, Spelling's own life as a mom led her to write her new book, "Mommywood," about her frazzled home life with two children, Liam, 2, and Stella, 9 months. But she declines to talk about her mother Candy Spelling's recent book that gives details of her and Tori's strained relationship.

She'd rather talk about her two-episode "90210" gig â€” starting Tuesday (4/14). She tells the mag she'd return if asked. "I always believe that everything works out when it's meant to," she says. "And it's perfect timing for me to come back now."

QUALITY TIME: Mia Tyler, daughter of Aerosmith frontman Steven Tyler, tells us she's ready to see her dad back in action as he and his band are headed on tour. "I'm excited because they're going out this summer. They haven't been out in like two years," she notes of the veteran rockers. "I like to go to the states that are small, like Alabama. When you go to the New York or L.A. shows there are all these agents or managers â€” people that I just don't care to hang out with. I like it when we're out in the Midwest and it's just him and me."

OXYMORONIC: It'll be interesting to see who winds up with this job: They're looking for a celebrity spokeswoman to tout the latest work of the Cambridge Women's Cooperative â€” "fun, comedic, G-rated porn" created by a group of high-ranking women in various professions. Her fee will be a flat rate between \$75,000 and \$100,000.

With reports by Emily Feimster.

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