

Music Video

ARTISTS & MUSIC

Modi's Modus Operandi Is Diversity *Modivation Founder Has Many Talents*

■ BY DEBORAH RUSSELL

LOS ANGELES—It's a safe bet that music video director/producer Modi is one of the few people on Earth who actually can link the understated class of singer/dancer Cyd Charisse with the grungy excess of female rock act L7.

As the driving force behind Hollywood-based Modivation Films, Modi's multifaceted résumé lists clips starring Charisse, as well as the hardcore Slash act. Further evidence of her range is revealed in the credits of two very different longforms: Queen's recent "Live At Wembley" stadium extravaganza and Henry Rollins' forthcoming "Rollins: Talking From The Box" spoken-word theater experience.

She lists everything from art director and location scout to editor and entrepreneur after her one-word name.

"Record labels love to categorize you," says Modi, who strives to defy those invisible limitations. "I mean, my record collection has stuff like the Brand New Heavies, Nat King Cole, and Helmet."

As the daughter of two entertainment industry insiders, Modi literally grew up on a Hollywood soundstage, and one of her primary goals is to direct feature films like her mentor Pen-

elope Spheeris. But for now she's content to create "minifilms" in the music video industry.

"Rock videos are like quick sex," says Modi, who cites a preference for the more elaborate documentary style of film making. "Longforms are more like a meaningful relationship."

Earlier this year, Modi created the Queen shortform "Stone Cold Crazy" to promote the "Encino Man" film and soundtrack, and most recently was on the set of Keith Richards' new Virgin video "Wicked As It Seems," directed by Mark Romanek. Modi was hired by Virgin to reel some behind-the-scenes footage for the label archives.

Perhaps her most comprehensive experience came during a stint as senior director on a series of BMG Video magazines covering the metal, rap, country, and dance genres. "I had to direct about five 60-minute videos every two months," she says.

But the job provided an intensive course in postproduction and editing, handy skills for a director. In fact, she prepared for Rollins' searing performance videoclip for "Tearing" by drawing up a five-page shot list for the

eight-camera shoot.

Her well-rounded experience was put to the test in January when Modi launched the video production company without the standard "partner/producer" in tow.

"I'm not just an arty director," she says. "I've done a lot of post work and producing, which is now paying off in my directing."

But the Modivation experience is not a one-woman show. Modi says she thrives on the collaborative process between artist and director, and perceives herself as the conduit through which the group can express itself.

"It's very important to me that the band is creatively involved in shooting a video," she says. "I can't work with a band that says, 'Where do I stand?' When the band truly has a vision, I feel I'm there to deliver that vision."

High-end commercial producer Merrill Ward produced L7's "Pretend We're Dead" while Tom Richmond (of Pearl Jam's "Jeremy" fame) directed photography. Ward also produced L7's "Everglade"; Roger Okowski DP'ed. Jean Muller produced "Tearing" while Michael Pinky directed photography. And Modi covered all the bases on Queen's "Stone Cold Crazy," as she directed, edited, and posted the clip.

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THE INTERNATIONAL NEWSWEEKLY OF MUSIC, VIDEO AND HOME ENTERTAINMENT