

MELISSA ETHERIDGE FEARLESS LOVE



Paul Castro - Behind The Make-up!



Helping an artist look and feel their best under hot stage lights and while they are being bombarded with flashes at special events is an art. Let's go behind the mirror and meet Paul Castro, the artist/stylist who makes sure Melissa's beauty shines through!

What do you think of Melissa's fans?

The fans are awesome. I'm starting to recognize a few of them and I think some are starting to recognize me. What I notice lately is a lot of younger fans and male fans. I guess no matter what label people want to put on an artist like "lesbian rocker" or "cancer survivor" when the music touches someone it can transcend those labels and become universal.

I have invited friends to shows that knew three maybe four songs and they have written me emails after to tell me that they have downloaded her whole catalog from itunes. She has that power to turn anyone that hears her perform live into a fan.

How long have you been a hair & makeup stylist and how did you get started?

I started doing hair and makeup about 7 years ago. I was working corporate entertainment as a creative director in branding and licensing; I did that for 6 years. The corporate environment, even in entertainment... is stifling. I took about 6 months off to really figure out how I could make a living, enjoy my life and still stay in entertainment. I can't act, I can't sing, I REALLY CAN'T DANCE, but I remembered hiring hair and makeup people and knew what they made and how much they seemed to really love their jobs. On shoots, when I was supposed to be creative "directing," I could often be found hanging out in the hair and makeup room asking questions about products and tools. I discovered I had a wanting to actually create. Being on the outside, telling other people what to do no longer satisfied me. The concept of directing other people's creativity is I suppose a necessary thing to harness focus, and honestly I think I need both parts in my life.

What other artists have you worked for?

I have worked with some really great people. I think it's the intent I have in my work, but I have really been blessed with amazing clients. I finally am living my truth and the universe has sent amazing people into my life. Debi Nova is a Costa Rican singer who I have worked with and she is the definitive Tica... She surfs, does yoga, enjoys good people around her, has a pure heart and much like Melissa - her music and way she lives her life is without any pretense or false purpose. I did a season of the biggest loser, which was inspirational to say the least. I worked with the new trainers Brett Hoebel and Cara Castronuova; she was a relative new comer to the machine that is reality television and was both a sweet and intense person. She was a boxer first and foremost, but really had a secret makeup obsession. That was a bit of a shocker. I've worked with Taylor Swift, too. She was a doll. Also I did the Yanni tour in Mexico. We had four singers that we worked with but the girls, Chloe Lowery and Leslie Mills, were especially awesome to work with. I worked with Miranda Lambert once, too. I assisted Enzo Angeleri doing hair for two years so I have worked with people like Katy Perry, Charlize Theron and Katie Holmes... being an assistant

first made working with actors and musicians on my own not so intimidating. I've also worked with some young stars that I have watched really blossom. My client and friend Vanessa Lengies was just cast on *Glee* which I am sure will catapult her career.

How did you come to be Melissa's stylist?

Karen Kawahara, who does Melissa's makeup as well, and I were at the same agency for a while. I had assisted her and she was asked for a list of people that did both hair and makeup that she thought would be able to tour. Karen says I was the top of her short list. I owe a lot to the people who helped me not only develop as an artist but as a freelance business. They have supported me so much throughout my career. It's a huge confidence builder to have an artist who you respect and admire endorse you as someone who could step into the role they usually play. I can't say enough good things about the people who have been my mentors.

How would you describe working with Melissa as compared to other artists you have worked for?

Well, considering the amount of time Melissa and I have now spent together, (I am on my third leg of the tour now), she has become a teacher, a sister, and a friend. I can honestly say I have never laughed more while working. I don't think people realize how funny Melissa is. She is also an amazing listener. For someone that is amazingly grounded in her beliefs and outspoken the thing that I notice is that she actually listens and retains things that I have told her about myself. That's rare across the board. She gives amazing advice, too. I don't know what came first working with Melissa or the desire to live a more honest life, but it seems like the two converged at the same time in space.

What are your responsibilities on a show day? Go through a typical day for us.

I really just set up her dressing room; the guys on the crew refer to me as the one-man glam squad. I only have one person to really worry about so I have a lot of free time before shows so I started setting up her dressing room. Making her space as tranquil and zen as possible is something I think helps any performer be able to relax before they have to give so much of themselves on stage. I have always tried to do that for people I work with. With Melissa I just have a few hours to do it. I pick out the clothes she is going to wear on stage that night. At first I was laying out a few choices, then it sort of evolved into one outfit and it seemed to work for her. It's evolved to a point where I am even going out and shopping for some of her stage outfits. It's awesome to feel that sort of trust from such an ... (lol) I'm going to use the word "icon."

When you first met Melissa, what was your impression of her?

I met her on the tour bus on the way to the Primm NV show last year. She literally met me with open arms and told me to buckle up and that I was about to start a whole new adventure. Truer words were never spoken. She had a group of her close friends on the bus. They were all super sweet and funny. You can tell a lot about a person by the people they surround themselves with, which I can say is consistent with the guys she has on her crew.

Melissa is very conscious of what she puts into her body and has said she tries to eat and drink healthy. Does she have input on the types of products you put in her hair and use for her makeup?

I use as many natural products as possible; With her hair... I hardly use any product at this point. I use Moroccan Oil Shine Spray, but for the most part I use water, a hair dryer with a diffuser and hot irons to get her hair to look like it does on stage. I use very little hair spray, if any. In terms of makeup: I use as much natural organic products as possible, but there is a real shortage of organic products for stage quality makeup.

How is it different making someone look their best under stage lights as opposed to everyday makeup?

It's not just stage lights that we face on tour. It's a whole list of factors. Is it an outdoor show? Is there a spot light? How many lights do we have? Is the stage facing sunset? David Hamilton, our Lighting Director is really great at giving me a breakdown of how the show is going to be lit for the night. Stage lights can blow out features so we have to use a little more shading and contrast. Other than that, blending and color selection is the same.

Did you have a favorite Melissa song?

"Enough Of Me", "Heaven On Earth" & "Take Me With You" (from the *Boys On The Side* soundtrack – I've been trying to get her to play that!)

Do you enjoy being on the road?

If you asked me that last year at this time the jury would have still been out, but after three legs of the tour, I can honestly say, I love it out here on the road. 90% percent of the reason I enjoy it is because of the group of people we have out here. Besides Melissa... I'm the only gay person in the bunch, so it could have been awkward, if the people in the band and crew weren't so awesome. It becomes your family for the two months or so that you are traveling in a bus. I've done lots of traveling for work, but not in such tight quarters. I miss the bus when we have fly dates. It takes me a couple days to get used to sleeping in my own bed when I get home from the road. My husband knows to

give me some extra TLC, too. It's like coming home from summer camp and missing your friends and all the adventures. The hardest parts are missing meals and the two hours I usually spend with Melissa. I cherish that time.

Do you have any funny/interesting stories you can share?

I'm pretty much still the newbie on the crew. Even when we cycle in new people to the band or crew, most everyone has more touring experience than I do. I am not really used to all the terminology. The very first night of the European leg of the tour in 2010 we all went out to dinner. The crew took great enjoyment watching my expressions as they described how they shower at venues and don't always have beds to sleep in after long days of work. They didn't really explain that the tour buses are as nice as they are. Anyway, I made a comment like, "So you guys are like carnies." Well, what I failed to realize was that in fact that made me a carnie, too and well, crew guys like to think of themselves a little above carnies on the social ladder of traveling crews... no offense to carnies. The term sort of stuck and now we all refer to ourselves as carnies.

What is your favorite way to relax?

I live my life at a constant. I never really get too excited or stressed out so I don't feel the need to set aside time to relax. I laugh a lot and have fun even when I work. When you do that, you don't need to "relax." When I am not working I try to spend time with my husband: Max and three dogs: Puck- Elton – and Mary, friends, and family.
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