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Actress Candice Patton :: In a Flash!

by JC Alvarez
Saturday Oct 4, 2014

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Lightning is about to strike! **Candice Patton**, the ingenue starlet and now leading lady of one of the Fall Season's most highly anticipated new primetime series has found herself at the center of a maelstrom starring in the CW's "The Flash."

"The Flash" is based on the popular long-running DC Comics series about a CSI investigator named Barry Allen (played by former "Glee" star **Grant Gustin**) who moves at superhuman speeds after being struck by lightning.

When **EDGE** caught up with Patton, she was away from the Vancouver set that serves as the backdrop for Central City - the home of our hero. Patton was in Los Angeles, still enjoying her last bits of anonymity, at least while it lasts.

The whirlwind surrounding her casting in the action series, a proper spin-off of the widely popular "Arrow", another DC Comics inspired hero, reached a fever pitch when Patton found herself facing a crowd of more than 120,000 super-fans at this year's San Diego Comic-Con. The show's pilot (premiering Tuesday, Oct. 7th on The CW) was pre-screened in the infamous Hall H. And just like that - in a flash - Candice Patton's world ignited! Cast opposite Gustin's "The Flash," she will be playing "Iris West" - his on-screen childhood best friend, and eventual sweetheart - at least that's what fans are hoping.

Think Lois Lane to Superman's Clark Kent. That's how much in love these characters are in the comic books, and exactly why everyone has been carefully scrutinizing Patton's role as Iris. "No pressure," Candice joked, taking it all in stride. "It's great! It's been kind of crazy - but I'm handling it." Though Patton has guest appeared on several television shows and enjoyed a lengthy arc on the soap "The Young and the Restless," this is her first starring role in prime time. "Sometimes it's still hard for me to believe that I am on a show this big, and that I'm [the Flash's] leading lady."

Breaking the [Sound] Barrier!

Prior to signing up to the superhero show, Patton knew very little about the titular star except that he was fast and ran around in red tights. "Yeah...that's pretty much all I knew," she said. Her indoctrination into the DC Comics scarlet speedster came from her nephew. "He always had these action figures lying around the house, so I've seen the Flash." Admittedly Candice revealed she was always more a Batman fan, that is before learning about the fast-paced life the Flash leads.

"This business is so tough, and you work so hard for so long," she said. "You think things aren't going to work for you - and then one day you go in for 'The Flash' and they say: Yes! We want you!" Though seriously, the stunning Patton needs only flash her smile, serve up her quick wit, and all hearts are a flutter. Her dedication to her craft as an actor has set her successfully on her path, and Patton sees herself a very character-driven performer. So who provided the template for her character on "The Flash"?



Actress Candice Patton's career is moving at light-speed as the leading lady on the CW's "The Flash". (Source:The CW)

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"The Flash" is among one of the most anticipated shows of the fall based on the DC Comics character. (Source:The CW)

"I see Iris a lot like Beyoncé." Patton may be trivializing the comparisons between her character and the pop diva, but she admits seriously, "I love Iris. She continues to inspire me! She's a modern-day woman, who doesn't apologize for her intense curiosity." It's that curiosity that will set Patton's Iris West on a collision course to learn the true identity of the Flash. "Iris is constantly curious - it's that curiosity that drives her to challenge Barry."

Having to work very closely with Grant Gustin on "The Flash," it was very important that the actor cast as "Iris" have a genuine and believable chemistry. When Patton and Gustin were put together, there were immediate sparks between the two! "It was pretty evident from the start," Patton said. "We're both very light-hearted, fun-loving, happy-go-lucky people - and that instantly came through." It will go down as one of those Hollywood fables, that the minute the casting process was over, and Patton existed the room, Gustin turned to the casting crew and said: "That's Iris!" - which is pretty awesome!

In an inspired move on the part of show's producers, the part of Iris was won by an actress of minority background, making "The Flash" by far and large the most ethnically diverse cast on television - much more reflective of the television watchers who will be ferociously tuning in week after week. "There were a couple of people upset, with some of the show's casting choices - with me in particular," Candice revealed, "but this is a true representation of what our society looks like today, and there's often a lack of that on TV."

She added, "People want to see themselves on TV, especially comic book fans - they want to see their favorite characters well represented on TV and film." Patton is confident that the show with its diverse cast is part of that movement helping to move in the right direction, especially in the superhero genre.



Veteran actor Jesse L. Martin (l) plays "Joe West" opposite Candice Patton (on r.) who is his TV daughter "Iris West" on CW network's "The Flash". (Source:The CW)

Hottest Cast on TV!

The role of her father, "Detective Joe West" went to Broadway and television veteran **Jesse L. Martin** ("Rent", "Law & Order"). The two actors bonded immediately on set. "It was super easy," she said about getting to create that relationship. "We spend a lot of free time together - having dinners or going to the park. We're all we really have right now." The show shoots just to the north of us in Vancouver, what many have historically come to call "Hollywood North". "When you have such seasoned actors like Jesse and **Tom Cavanagh** on the show, it sets a tone. They've really taught us a lot about working together. That 'family element' is there - it's very real."

In order to keep in step with the aforementioned star of "Arrow" Stephen Amell's awesome abs, "The Flash" cast is loaded with delicious eye candy from its sleekly-styled lead Grant Gustin, to "pretty-boy" **Rick Cosnett** of "Vampire Diaries" fame. "Tell me about it," Candice proudly exclaims. "I get on set, and I'm

like really! But it's the CW. We have a lot of good-looking people - the guys and the girls." It also hasn't gone unnoticed that to build the Flash's lethal adversaries a dashing assortment of some of Hollywood's handsomest has been assembled for the show's rogues gallery of villains.

"We've had such amazing actors come in as our guest stars, including **Wentworth Miller**." The openly gay actor is taking on the part of the hero's most popular villain "Captain Cold" and is being joined by his former "Prison Break" co-star **Dominic Purcell** who will also be turning up the temperature on set as "Heat Wave." "It's all really great eye-candy for sure," Patton insists, "but with the calibre of actors that we're bringing into the show, it speaks to how well we hope the show will do."

For Patton, the fact that the show bolsters such a fine ensemble is what is making this experience such a joy for her. "It makes the job easier," she said enthusiastically, "it certainly makes for great play in front of the camera. I genuinely get inspired by seeing my cast mates at work - it's going to show up in the work that we do." Similar to her "The Flash" costar **John Wesley Shipp** (and not a coincidence that the hunky Shipp was the original television "Flash" from the 1990's short-lived CBS series) Patton cut her teeth as an actor in day-time television on the long-running soap "The Young and the Restless."

"Daytime is where I got my start." She was discovered in Dallas, Texas. "Soap operas are more willing to think outside the box when it comes to casting their actors. I will always be grateful to the soap opera world, for taking me in when it was harder to get work in other genres." Not that it will be a problem anymore for Patton as her star begins to skyrocket in primetime. Her ferocious discipline comes from the unyielding support she received from both her parents. "My parents are so great! For them to watch me go into this crazy career - they've always believed an actor is what I'm supposed to be."



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Patton (center) and her cast (from l to r) John Wesley Shipp, Danielle Panabaker, Prod. Andrew Kreisberg, and Grant Gustin were a hit at Comic-Con. (Source:The CW)

Fan Expectations!

Patton found their support instrumental in her belief in herself to follow her dream. "I've always had this passion [to be an actor] from an early age. I knew fairly early on it was what I wanted to do." Even after all the months already on the set, she was still reeling from the overwhelming fanaticism she experienced at Comic-Con; Patton was touched by the affection showered upon her and the rest of the cast. "I understand what it's like to be a fan," she said, identifying with the "glorious geeks" that make up her new fan base. "I was always a loner, reading plays in my car alone during lunch break. I connect with people who have their own thing that they love!"

If the reception the cast got at San Diego's Comic-Con is any indication -Candice Patton has moved into the fast lane. "It was overwhelming! It wasn't until we got to Comic-Con that it hit me!" She and the rest of her cast mates were joined the respective cast of their sister show "Arrow", and the two other DC Entertainment series "Gotham"and "Constantine." All

are based on widely popular DC Comics properties, genre shows that are dominating the upcoming Fall TV season With such high expectations set on "The Flash," inevitably one has to wonder if she's as excited as we are for that "first kiss" between Barry and Iris.

Candice laughed coyly and admitted, "I haven't thought about it." She prefers instead to stay in the moment, enjoying each new script to every week's episode and seeing what sort of peril she'll find herself in. "I don't think [my action] will ever be as intense as what Grant is doing," she remarked, "but I'm all about it. I have my sites set on kicking some ass!" Candice Patton is no damsel in distress, and her Iris West will be ready to keep up with whatever "The Flash" is preparing to throw at her. "You want to put me in latex - great!" But even until she's fitted for her own speed suit, Candice Patton is turning heads already!

Try to keep up with Catch Candice Patton this fall when "The Flash" takes over Tuesday nights at 8 p.m.

Watch Grant Gustin and Candice Patton face their new destiny in the latest trailer promoting "The Flash" here:

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