An Interview with Marcia J. Cruz

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at
Time with Tannia

(http://timewithtannia.com)

By:

Tannia E. Ortiz-Lopés

1.) You are a multi-talented woman: singer, songwriter and producer, videographer, and voiceover artist. Which one of these describes you better and why?

If I had to choose one, it would be voiceover artist. As a voiceover artist you get to express yourself in so many ways and projects. You have the ability to bring to life a video, a story, a video game, e-learning, so many different areas. Your voice is the 'heart' of the project and helps the viewer/listener 'hear' the story, product, etc. It helps them to connect on a personal level.

All the above descriptions in your question though are a part of who I am.

2.) What are some of the challenges and rewards of each one of them? Do you have a favorite one?

As a singer you face many challenges in tone, breathing, projection, dynamics, etc. It's important that you believe what you sing. I always say if it comes from the heart, it goes to the heart. Worship is my favorite aspect of singing since it is praise to God and brings the reward of His presence.

As a songwriter you face the challenges of building the story and building it in a melodical and balanced way that it is pleasing to the hearer. Sometimes you face writer's block, and you may not finish a song for years. Other times, it just comes to you all at once. The reward is the finished product and a beautiful story.

As a voiceover artist your challenges are diction, tone, sounding believable and conversational, technical and recording challenges and most of all, marketing. Voiceover is 80% marketing and 20% work. The reward is that the client trusts you to tell the story of their product, book, whatever it may be, and they are pleased with the result and become a return client. Also, the accomplishment of mastering the end product.

As a producer you face the challenges of making sure the finished product is 'clean', well rounded, mastered efficiently. Producing songs or voiceovers includes practice, recording, editing, mastering and completing. It can happen in 1 take or multiple takes. Most likely multiple takes. I've only added videos to my songs on YouTube with a tool provided by Microsoft. Choosing the correct images and editing them to fit the project where you want it to be is the challenge. The joy is hearing that final finished product.

My favorite is singing. I love music and everything about it. It's something that is engrained in all of us.

3.) When contacted by a potential client, what are the three most important rules of engagement you consider before accepting or rejecting an offer?

A. Content: Is it something I am comfortable with professionally and personally.

B. Bid: What does it entail (script, time, remote or in studio), what is the client's budget, does it fit within my rates, or can we work something out?

C. Quality: I must be realistic with the project if I am the right fit for the client's needs. My desire is to bring them my best, to know my limitations and skills.

4.) Singing and voiceover require taking good care of your vocal cords. Do you use the same warm-up techniques and tongue twister exercises for both? If not, please share the different preparation routines and the reasons for choosing them.

You can use the same warm up techniques for both and generally I do. The tongue twisters I would primarily use for voice overs. Drinking warm water and staying hydrated is important. Tea with honey always coats my throat. There is also a spray you can buy called 'Entertainer's Secret' that helps keep the throat moist. To avoid mouth clicks during recording, I like to have green apple slices on hand. Water, water, water, good health, cardio exercises for breathing all of this is important to the health of your voice and what it takes to sing or do a voiceover.

5.) Do you consider your knowledge and experience as a singer prepared you better than a no singer for the challenging world of a voiceover artist?

For breathing techniques and voice control YES! Also, for recording, performing and being comfortable in a studio or under direction, etc.

6.) Please, share with our readers your journey to becoming a voiceover artist.

Years ago, in the 90s- I was singing at CBN (Christian Broadcasting Network) and one of the show producers had moved on to NBC. We ran into each other in downtown Chicago, and she asked me if I wanted to do voiceovers for NBC but at the time, I was in ministry at the Pacific Garden Mission in downtown Chicago and my focus and time was on that. I was always intrigued by it and believed I could at some time do that. I saw a class at our local college in 2017 *'Now is your time for Voiceover'* and out of curiosity I decided to check it out. I knew they would be selling their 'product or course' I wasn't naïve about that but did want to see what they offered. The company was *'Such A Voice'*. The class was great, and they had a VIP extensive course which covered everything from vocal coaching to setting up your studio, business, marketing etc. I decided to go for it. I took the journey of the course, followed their tools and instructions, invested in what was necessary for startup and went for it! I did A LOT of auditions on the *'Pay to Play'* voiceover sites which is a great place to start out and get used to auditioning, bidding, etc. I put my profile on just about every site I could find including ACX which is for audiobooks and my first voiceover project was a 4 book audio series on crime fighting dogs *'Lily and PAWS'* which you can find on Audible, Amazon and ITUNES. This really gave me the experience I needed in the whole recording, editing, mastering part of voiceovers. The biggest obstacle is having a broadcast quality home studio. Finding a space that gives you a very low noise floor, removing any noises around you that can come through while recording. I built a pvc pipe/sound blanket studio, but I am considering investing in Studio bricks or Whisper Room down the road. It takes a lot of hard work and dedication. The most important aspect is to 'get yourself out there' on social media sites, LinkedIn, having your own webpage, etc. You have to see it as your 'business' and not as a side gig. It's very challenging when you work full time at another job and

are making this happen part time after work – you just can't give up.

7.) What type of vocal services do you offer?

Radio and Television Commercials
Travelogues, films, videos, multimedia, audio books and narration
Automated telephone systems

8.) When contacted to write jingles or a brand song for a business, which information is vital for you to accomplish the task? How do you negotiate the terms of the agreement, including payment?

I have not been contacted for this genre yet. The information that would be vital is: What is the content?; Who is the targeted audience?; What is the product?; What tone or tempo? Negotiation would be based on usage of the material (their website only? Television, radio? Internet?) You would also negotiate publishing rights, etc.

9.) You are also a producer and videographer. What type of production services do you offer?

Currently I have only produced my own songs in a studio in collaboration with others and the production of the voiceovers. I do not offer these types of services.

10.) How can our readers contact you and listen to your demos?

https://www.voiceoverswithmarcia.com/demo-recordings

All information is on my website, voiceoverswithmarcia.com and you can listen to my demos directly on there with the above link.

You will also find there links to all social media platforms I have a profile on as well. There is also a contact form on the website or email me at voiceoverswithmarcia@gmail.com

11.) A word of advice for multi-talented, creative persons like you trying to define themselves.

1. Believe in yourself
2. Trust what you know
3. Do your research, study and prepare
4. Surround yourself with good coaches, teachers, supporters and content
5. Take a leap of faith
6. Be ready to work hard and reap the benefits
7. Never, ever give up!!

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