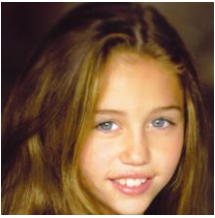


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By: Adina Gheorghe, Entertainment Editor



[Miley Cyrus - the Next Britney Spears, Lindsay Lohan or Hilary Duff](#)

The 13-year-old daughter of country crooner Billy Ray Cyrus is making her singing and acting debut with her dad in the new Disney Channel sitcom "Hannah Montana"

The next Britney Spears is about to come. Her name is Miley Cyrus and she is the 13-year-old daughter of country crooner Billy Ray Cyrus. Just today she is making her singing and acting debut with her dad in the new Disney Channel sitcom "Hannah Montana".

The young star-to-become already has a contract with Hollywood Records, in addition to the show "Hannah Montana". Disney is known for turning teen girls into stars. For example, the 18-year-old Hilary Duff started out on "Lizzie McGuire" and is now touring with her band. She recently appeared in "Cheaper by the Dozen 2".

In Miley, says Gary Marsh, Disney Channel entertainment president, "we saw a girl who has this natural ebullience. She loves every minute of her life. It shows in her demeanor and performance."

Nervous and excited, Miley says that "it hasn't really felt real (yet). All this hard work I've done my entire life is about to pay off." She didn't easily land the job: "I auditioned forever. At first they said I was too small and too young." Then, finally, came the big chance, a chance she knew was destiny. "As soon as I step on that stage, nothing matters. I don't think of it as work. It's just so much fun."

Miley Stewart, who, in her real life, is an ordinary eighth-grader, will put on a blond wig and rocker clothes to become pop star Hannah Montana. Playing Hannah "is a total girl thing. It's like dressing up every day," she says.

Though her father is supportive of his daughter, he does have concerns about the celebrity world and the toll it can take on young stars. "I tried to discourage Miley from pursuing the entertainment business because it's a double-edged sword. For everything that makes you happy, there's something equally heartbreaking."

He says she won't be the next Hilary, or Britney, or Lindsay. "I see her being Miley Cyrus. She will never be somebody else. She's got her own thing. I think she takes and borrows and hints at a little bit of a lot of people. ... But she's her own person. It's too late to worry anyway," he says. "She's in this thing deep now. She's in the water, and she's got to sink or swim."

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