

TV: The Voices: Talking to Yuri Lowenthal & Tara Platt



By Steve Fritz posted: January 6th & 8th 2009
Selected from a 2 part article & interview

If you hadn't heard, Superman relocated to Hollywood. He flies about town fighting the neverending battle. When not, he can be seen in a voice booth under the secret identities of Sasuske Uchia, Ben Tennyson or Bobby Drake. When he goes home, he's greeted by Wonder Woman. She's also been known to go to work as Temari of the Sunagakure or Dream Girl of the Legion of Super-Heroes.

Actually, those are just some of the roles Yuri Lowenthal and Tara Platt, two of the fastest rising stars in the voice acting world, have had in recent years. Since the turn of the millennium, they have been part of a brash new batch of voice actors whose roots were in anime, and are rapidly expanding into other arenas. The fans are noticing it, too. When Yuri and Tara recently appeared at the recent Florida Supercon, the line at their table stretched out of the room, with fans asking for autographs on pictures of the characters they've voiced - anime, animation, gaming or otherwise.

The two have been married since 2001. Here's what they had to say:

Newsarama: It looks like you two started your careers around the same time.

Yuri Lowenthal: Both of us were working primarily in New York, doing theater, off-Broadway stuff and student/independent films that no one has ever seen. We even produced our own plays.

NRAMA: So when did you two finally feel like you've made it?

Tara Platt: It probably started around a year, year-and-a-half ago. That's when we started to get asked to go to conventions and for autographs just because we are who we are. That's when we started feeling like we were getting recognition for the overall work we were doing. Nothing really changed in our lives. We still have to work hard to make a living. It was just that change in the situation brought an added kind of 'Oh! That's kind of cool' feeling



YL: Obviously, for the longest time, that's always been the dream, to not have any other kind of job.

NRAMA: And how does it feel to be in that position?

BOTH: Great!

NRAMA: Would you say *Naruto* was what put the hammer to the head as far as recognition?

TP: I don't know. It's hard to say because it felt like a whole lot of things came to a head at the same time. To us, it felt like we were building and it all culminated simultaneously. I would say though the more recognition you get in one arena, the more other people start to pay attention to you in others. We try to take one success and use it to build another.

YL: I would just add to that. I think it's because we were pushing on all fronts. We just wanted more.

NRAMA: Well, isn't always the ambition of a truly good actor to jump from one field to another?

BOTH: Yes.

NRAMA: Not that it's been going against you, Mr. Superman and Tennyson.

TP: He's always been the busy bee. Still, you should see what happens when he's in front of a lot of fans. The character of Sasuske is still his best known, and so loved and hated at the same time.

There's a rule in Hollywood, it's always good to be busy. in Part One of our interview, Yuri Lowenthal and Tara Platt explained how long it took for them to get really busy, and how working on Naruto helped get them there. Of course, that isn't all Yuri and Tara have going for them. So read on, and just find out how busy these two are:

NRAMA: So what is Monkey Kingdom?

TP: Monkey Kingdom is our production company. I believe in creating your own opportunities, finding your own creative voice, and building your own niche. For us, what we decided is as our careers developed, if things got slow, which often happens the way the industry works, we had to assure that we had projects to work on. So, a couple of years ago, Yuri and I decided that we should create our own production company. We are actually in post-production on our first feature film, which is called *Tumbling After*.



NRAMA: What kind of film?

TP: It's a psychological thriller.

NRAMA: Are you guys performing in it?

TP: We took small roles in it because we like to keep working, but we're both producing. Yuri wrote the script. We are really pleased. We think it ended up a really good movie. It's our first movie and we are very pleased with the results.

YL: The idea behind Monkey Kingdom and doing our own shows is Hollywood can be a very frustrating place to work in. You constantly feel your career is in the hands of other people. It's been really hard to generate our own projects. So getting this done has been very positive. It's given us a modicum of control.



NRAMA: So are you planning to do more Monkey Kingdom projects in the future?

TP: Absolutely. We're also talking about what film we'll produce next year [2009]. There is a couple that we are interested in. So, by the end of next year we want to go into production on our second movie. Yuri and I have written a number of scripts. Yuri is a really good writer. So we are trying to produce some projects that we're really passionate about.

We're also looking at doing some things like web features. We've also talked to our voice acting representatives about pitching an animated project. So there are a lot of little fires going on.

YL: We're also doing a book on voice over.

TP: We're co-writing it.

YL: Every week we get an inbox full of emails, a lot of it being 'what does it take to get into voice acting?'. After a while, it gets hard to answer the same question every time.

TP: Then when a number of our friends, who are also into acting, started asking questions, we thought it was time to do the book. So we really try to break it all down, real nuts and bolts, but keep it very much our voices. We are writing it for our fans and friends, including tips and tricks we have learned over the years.