

People & Places

Television

'He was family'

Estefan says she was molested at age nine

NEW YORK, Oct. 2, (AP) — Gloria Estefan has revealed that, at the age of 9, she was sexually abused by someone her mother trusted.

The Cuban-American superstar spoke for the first time publicly about the abuse and its effects on her during an episode of the Facebook Watch show "Red Table Talk: The Estefans" that aired Thursday.

"He was family, but not close family. He was in a position of power because my mother had put me in his music school and he immediately started telling her how talented I was and how I needed special attention, and she felt lucky that he was focusing this kind of attention on me," the singer said.

Estefan, who was born in Cuba and moved to Miami with her family when she was a toddler, revealed the abuse at the top of the show, which featured Claire Crowley, the first Latina "Bachelorette." On the episode, called "Betrayed by Trusted Adults," Crowley talked about child abuse she experienced at the hands of a priest.

The Associated Press does not typically identify victims of sexual abuse unless they agree to be named or share their stories publicly.

Sitting at the round red table with her co-hosts — daughter Emily Estefan and niece Lili Estefan — Estefan opened by saying that "93% of abused children know and trust their abusers, and I know this, because I was one of them."

"You've waited for this moment a long time," her niece told her.

"I have," Estefan replied.

The three held hands with teary eyes. She did not name her abuser but described how she tried to stop him. She said the abuse started little by little before moving fast, and that she knew that she was in a dangerous situation after confronting him.

Lessons

"I told him, 'This cannot happen, you cannot do this.' He goes: 'Your father's in Vietnam, your mother's alone and I will kill her if you tell her,'" Estefan said. "And I knew it was crazy, because at no point did I ever think that it was because of me that this was happening. I knew the man was insane and that's why I thought he might actually hurt my mother."

Estefan said she started making up excuses to avoid going to music lessons. Her daughter Emily asked if her grandmother had any inkling something was going on. People didn't talk about those things back then, Estefan replied.

She tried to reach her dad, with whom she exchanged voice tapes while he was posted in Vietnam.

Recordings in Spanish from when Estefan was 9 were played at the show with English subtitles:

Gloria: "I'm taking guitar lessons. I like them but the exercises are a little hard."

Her dad: "Mommy told me that the owner of the academy where you're taking your guitar lessons is very proud of you."

Gloria: "I like the notes, but it's a little boring to study the notes."

Her dad: "Mommy tells me that he said that you are a born artist."

Estefan said the level of anxiety made her lose a "circle of hair."

"I couldn't take it anymore," she said, so one night she ran to her mother's bedroom at 3 a.m. and told her what was going on.

Her mother called the police, but the officers advised her not to press charges because the trauma of testifying would be too harmful.

Both Crowley and Estefan said during the show that they didn't like to be called victims. Crowley called herself a survivor.

Estefan said she didn't tell the producers she was going to reveal her story on Thursday's episode. No one knew about the abuse except for her family, said the singer, who has been married to music producer Emilio Estefan for over four decades.

She also said that, when her mother started inquiring about this man within the family, an aunt shared that he had abused her years back in Cuba.

The Associated Press asked the show's publicist if Estefan could answer some questions, including if the man was still alive. The publicist told the AP that she would not make further comments.

On "Red Table Talk," Estefan recalled almost going public in the mid-80s, when her hit "Conga" with the Miami Sound Machine was at the top of the Billboard charts and "this predator, who was a respected member of the community," had the audacity to write a letter to a paper criticizing her music.

"At that moment, I was so angry that I was about to blow the lid off of everything," she said. "And then I thought: 'My whole success is gonna turn into him!'"

"It's manipulation and control, but that's what they do, they take your power," she added, also admitting the fear that there could be other victims makes her feel bad.

After introducing Crowley and telling her that she didn't want to sit quietly while she shared her story, Estefan said she had been waiting for the right opportunity and space to tell hers.

The show was that space.

"This is one of the reasons why I said yes to the '(Red) Table (Talk)' at all, because we wanted to create this space where we talk about important things that hopefully will make a difference to everybody that's watching out there."

Also:

LOS ANGELES: Dr. Dre, Snoop Dogg, Eminem, Mary J. Blige and Kendrick Lamar will perform for the first time on stage together at the Pepsi Super Bowl Halftime Show.

The NFL, Pepsi and Roc Nation announced Thursday that the five music icons will perform on Feb. 13 at SoFi Stadium in Inglewood, California. Dre, Snoop Dogg and Lamar are Southern California natives.

Dre emerged from the West Coast gangster rap scene alongside Eazy-E and Ice Cube to help form the group N.W.A., which made a major mark in the hip-hop culture and music industry with controversial lyrics in the late 1980s. Dre is responsible for bringing forth rap stars such as Snoop Dogg, Eminem, 50 Cent and Lamar. Dre also produced Blige's No. 1 hit song "Family Affair."

"The opportunity to perform at the Super Bowl Halftime show, and to do it in my own backyard, will be one of the biggest thrills of my career," Dre said in a statement. The seven-time Grammy winner added that their halftime performance will be an "unforgettable cultural moment."

The Super Bowl returns to the Los Angeles area for the first time since 1993. It's the third year of collaboration between the NFL, Pepsi and Roc Nation.



Estefan



Katy Perry arrives at Variety's Power of Women: Los Angeles on Thursday, Sept. 30, at the Wallis Annenberg Center in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP) — Details Page 12



Actress-singer Cynthia Erivo poses during a portrait session to promote her debut solo album 'Ch. 1. Vs. 1.' on Sept. 15, 2021, in New York. (AP)



Beatrice



Strings

Variety

LONDON: Britain's Princess Beatrice and her husband Edoardo Mapelli Mozzi have named their newborn daughter Sienna Elizabeth.

In a tweet Friday, Beatrice revealed the name — in full, Sienna Elizabeth Mapelli Mozzi — alongside a picture of the newborn's footprints.

Sienna Elizabeth is Queen Elizabeth II's 12th great-grandchild. She was born on Sept. 18 at London's Chelsea and Westminster Hospital, weighing in at 6 pounds and 2 ounces (2.78 kilos).

Beatrice, 33, is already stepmother to Mapelli's son Christopher Wolf, who is known as Wolfie, from a previous relationship.

"We are all doing well and Wolfie is the best big brother to Sienna," Beatrice said. Beatrice is 10th in the line of succession to the British throne, the eldest daughter of Prince Andrew and his ex-wife, Sarah, Duchess of York.

After a whirlwind romance, Beatrice and Mapelli tied the knot in July 2020 in a private wedding ceremony at the Royal Chapel of All Saints at Royal Lodge, Windsor, after their initial wedding date in May was postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Sienna's arrival has come at a time when Andrew is facing a U.S. civil sexual assault lawsuit.

The duke, who stepped down from royal duties in 2019, is being sued by Virginia Giuffre for allegedly sexually assaulting her when she was a teenager. She claims she was trafficked by Andrew's friend — convicted sex offender Jeffrey Epstein — to have sex with the duke when she was aged 17.

Andrew, who denies all the allegations, was pictured driving from the queen's Balmoral home in Scotland this week, prompting speculation that he was on his way to meet his newest grandchild. (AP)

RALEIGH, N.C.: Grammy-winning bluegrass musician Billy Strings won entertainer of the year at the genre's top awards show, a major feat for the 28-year-old guitarist who beat out veteran performers.

The International Bluegrass Music Association's Bluegrass Music Awards were handed out Thursday in Raleigh, North Carolina, where Strings was also named guitar player of the year. Nominees for entertainer of the year included Balsam Range, Doyle Lawson & Quicksilver, the Del McCoury Band and The Po' Ramblin' Boys.

Strings, originally from Michigan, won a Grammy Award for his 2019 album "Home," and just released his second record for Rounder Records, an acoustic

Music

Singer delves into heartbreak, love and family

Erivo vulnerable, powerful on 'Ch. 1. Vs. 1.'

NEW YORK, Oct. 2, (AP) — While the height of the COVID-19 pandemic brought much of the world to a standstill, it also spread a blanket of loneliness in its path by isolating family members and friends. And despite international fame and accolades, Cynthia Erivo was not exempt.

"I did feel really lonely. I remember I was in LA on my own... I had loads of people around me, but I felt like I was doing my life solo, and it was going really fast at that time," said the Oscar nominee. "I was sort of like in the middle of what felt like a storm. And I felt like I was just by myself and I just didn't know how to really handle it completely."

Erivo retreated to her comfort zone of writing, penning the lyrics, "Where do the lonely hearts go when the silence falls and the storm comes in?" She memorialized those emotions into what would become "A Window," a song from her debut album of original music, "Ch. 1. Vs. 1."

A lot of these songs are really personal. So, I'm ready to share something about me and my life and who I am," explained Erivo. "It's like another part of my life I get to sort of see come to fruition. I've been wanting to do an album for a very long time."

Released earlier this month, the "Ch. 1 Vs. 1." creation began with nearly 40 potential songs before settling on the final 12 tracks, with the majority recorded across the past two years. It features a compilation of R&B, pop, and inspirational tunes as Erivo delves into heartbreak, love, family and social consciousness.

Assisted by production from creatives like Harold Lilly (Beyoncé, Brandy) and Jack Splash (Alicia Keys, Kendrick Lamar), the 34-year-old co-wrote on every song, delivering a project with no guest artists.

"I think I asked one or two people if they would come on and do features and they didn't want to, so I just did it on my own," said Erivo. "I think this was an experience that I had to go through, making something of my own, for myself."

album called "Renewal."

Also picking up multiple awards was Appalachian Road Show, which won best new artist and instrumental group of the year.

Sister Sadie won vocal group of the year, song of the year went to Balsam Range for

"Richest Man" and album of the year was "Industrial Strength Bluegrass: Southwest Ohio's Musical Legacy." (AP)

NEW YORK: The Broadway hit "Aladdin" is trying to keep COVID-19 contained.



Zahara Jolie-Pitt, (from left), Angelina Jolie and Amanda Gorman arrive at Variety's Power of Women: Los Angeles on Thursday, Sept. 30, at the Wallis Annenberg Center in Beverly Hills, Calif. (AP)

"Glowing Up," is a powerful track with gospel undertones, showcasing Erivo's compelling chops as she sings "diamonds can't sparkle, 'til they find light they can follow." Her pop ballad "I Might Be in Love with You" shows a reluctant songstress hesitant to reveal her romantic feelings, while the vibey, alt-R&B track "Day Off" could be the culmination of those intimate feelings being reciprocated.

"I wouldn't say there's a specific genre (for the album), but that is really aligned with Cynthia," said executive producer Will Wells, whose credits include Quincy Jones, Barbra Streisand and DJ Premier. "The common thread is her — it's her, and it's her voice on this album, and it's her heart."

While the project introduces a more personal — and at times vulnerable — side of Erivo, she's most fragile on "You're Not Here," a track that reveals her broken relationship with her dad.

Honest

"I had been not totally honest with myself about how I was feeling about that subject, about my father. And I wanted the song to be totally honest just for once, really. Because I think that's how I was able to sort of move on and let it go. Because up until then, I was sort of pretending that it was fine," said Erivo.

During the emotional recording session, Erivo shed tears which can be heard at the end, reminiscent of Michael Jackson's "She's Out of My Life."

But there's fun, too; the upbeat, soulful song "The Good," which serves as the album's lead single, takes a glass-half-full approach to remembering the good times after a breakup. It's accompanied by a beautifully filmed music video of Erivo with a female partner.

The Emmy- and Tony-winner said she wanted to showcase a positive and more accurate portrayal of Black female queer love.

"I'm not going to answer about my sexuality just because it's private. I just felt like it was important to make this... about a community that never

gets space. And to do it in a really delicate and intimate and thoughtful way," said Erivo. "Often, it's oversexualized. It's like fantasy for some people and sometimes fetishized, and I wanted something that felt more real."

Erivo's debut album is yet another career milestone for the Londoner, fresh off an Emmy nomination for her portrayal of the iconic Queen of Soul in "Genius: Aretha." Although it's her debut, she's no stranger to music: Erivo took home a best musical theater album Grammy for her starring role in "The Color Purple," and last year, she collaborated with producer Peter CottonTale and Chance the Rapper for "Together," the first song to ever appear on Google's homepage.

Wells, who vocal produced nine of the tracks without ever being in the same room with Erivo due to the pandemic, says her fingerprints are all over.

"From reworking the song to then making the record to then checking in with each other during the mix, to even the mastering process, she was deeply involved," said Wells. "She's not the kind of artist where she takes a song, sings somebody else's music and lyrics and then doesn't think about it again. She cares about every step, and that's what's been so gratifying about this."

Erivo released her first children's book, "Remember to Dream, Eberé," on Tuesday and has a slew of film projects in the works, including the role of the Blue Fairy in Disney's live-action adaptation of "Pinocchio" starring Tom Hanks.

But in this moment, Erivo's focus is this album, surely with more chapters to be written.

"I think the real success of this would be if people listen to this music and see a little bit of themselves in it and are able to have a conversation they haven't been able to have before," said Erivo. "If people can keep connecting to the words and the lyrics and the music in this, then I will feel really, really accomplished."

Disney Theatrical Productions said it will cancel Friday's performance and all shows until Oct. 12 after "additional breakthrough COVID-19 cases were detected."

The show reopened Tuesday following some 18 months of being shuttered due to the pandemic, but was forced to close Wednesday when breakthrough COVID-19 cases were reported within the musical's company. It restarted Thursday but Friday proved too much. In many ways, the temporary closure proves that the monitoring system is working.

"This 12-day pause allows the 'Aladdin' company ample time to ensure that people with breakthroughs recover, and any other potential breakthroughs are identified before the 'Aladdin' company gathers again," Dr. Blythe Adamson, the epidemiologist working with Disney Theatrical Productions, said in a statement.

So-called breakthrough infections are detected in vaccinated people and tend to be far less dangerous than those unvaccinated.

Adamson said she believes "these positive cases are most likely related to an exposure from one positive case." She has instituted daily PCR testing. The show vowed to support "affected 'Aladdin' company members as they recover."

"Aladdin," a musical adaptation of the 1992 animated movie starring Robin Williams, opened on Broadway in March 2014 and has become one of its highest grossing shows. (AP)