



# The Word is out

Mirkala Crystal

**I**s not your typical female impersonator she is not a shy performer and she doesn't whip on to the stage unsure of her god given talent, but then that's part of her charm and what has helped set her apart from the rest of the pack and the crowded world of gay club performers. With her charm she has managed to build a large following of fans in New York, and in the Tristate area. She also has managed to do her rounds in her native Puerto Rico for the past three years, and is now aiming to solidify her spot amongst the clubland's reigning Divas. Mirkala is also out to prove that she is more than just a face and a charmer in the club life, but also, in real life performing for gay benefits and for AIDS related fund raising in her community, and that's the mark of a real and true caring star, one that's there when the gay community calls. She is currently

the reigning hostess of the now famous Lucho's Clubs, rated number one of all the Latin clubs in NY. There she is the Queen of Queens and that's a heavy responsibility given to her by her fans, and the club that supports her in everything she does.

Mirkala Crystal has come a long way from the days of clubs like the old Bachelors, Loveboat Reflections and Llamarada where she refined her skills in showmanship. This is a star on the rise and the sky is the limit. New York can make you or break you, but, Mirkala Crystal is here to stay, and stay she will, There is not limit for this young and gifted female impersonator. So, there's no wonder the word is out, "A wonderful and gifted new performer is here."

Mirkala Crystal

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# Hanging with the Homegirls

Ivan **Chattin' it up with Girilina and Candis Cayne**

**H**anging out and having coffee with the gorgeous dancers/models/actresses Candis Cayne and Girilina is a trip, not only because of the wonderful friendship that lies much deeper than the makeup, hair and legs, but because they are refreshingly witty, down-to-earth, and genuine.

We all met at Venns, the trendy SoHo clothing store where Candis works in hair and makeup. I arrived a little early and while we waited for "Lina," as Candis affectionately refers to Girilina, we scanned some photographs of Candis from a recent photo shoot, and started talking about her rise to the top of the New York City club world.

**Ivan:** So how did you get your start?

**Candis:** I started out performing at a place called Boy Bar and I'd always been in theater and dancing. I'm a trained dancer. I started out there and I started getting money for it.

**Ivan:** And when did you start doing drag?

**Candis:** Well, I'm not a drag queen, I'm transsexual. But, I'm a performer. I don't like to label it at all. I'm just a performer and an actress, model. I like to entertain and that's my favorite thing to do, be on stage in front of an audience.

**Ivan:** Are you a native New Yorker?

**Candis:** No, originally I'm from Miami.

**Ivan:** Really? That's a long way.

**Candis:** Yeah, it is. I'm a Hawaiian girl.

**Ivan:** How many years have you been in New York?

**Candis:** Four and a half.

**Ivan:** So you've pretty much risen to the top quickly.

**Candis:** (shyly) Yeah, I guess. I just worked really hard and I think it's something you have inside. And if you're good at what you do, people notice that. And you should never have a big head or an ego, or be bitchy and mean, and I think that's what's gotten me here today. I've always been nice and am the same girl who moved here four years ago.

**Ivan:** How did you meet Girilina?

**Candis:** I met her actually when Mona Foot did Star Search at Crowbar and we competed against each other four years ago. I had never performed before. That was actually the first or second time I performed and we kept bumping into each other after that and ended up living near each other, so we started hanging out. We're really close.

**Ivan:** You just appeared in the HBO movie *Dragtime*. How was that?

**Candis:** It's good. It was really fun. I enjoyed doing it and I enjoyed watching it.

**Ivan:** And everyone is in it.

**Candis:** Not everybody, not everybody that should be, but a lot of people.

**Ivan:** Who do you think should have been that wasn't?

**Candis:** Sherry Vine, Mistress Formika, Mona, Girilina should have been in it more. She was only in that one scene.

**Ivan:** Does everyone get along?

**Candis:** Yeah, of "the girls," we all get along. We come from that school that we're all friends and try to help each other instead of hinder each other. We're not from the old school of girls who were really catty and had to have a big attitude to survive.

**Ivan:** Where are you performing these days?

**Candis:** I perform on Mondays at Barracuda, and then wherever I get a gig.

**Ivan:** You've cut back a lot. There was a time when you were working almost every night.

**Candis:** I just kind of cut those out. I don't want to be a hotness anymore, I'd rather perform.

So if I'm going to go to a club, I want to go in there, relax, think about what I'm gonna do, perform and then leave, because I'm not good at staying out until 4:00 in the morning. I'd rather be at home, getting my beauty sleep, waking up early and doing things.

**Ivan:** Who are your influences?

**Candis:** Cyd Charisse and Ann Margaret.

A short while later, the leggy and gorgeous Girilina joined us at Venns. After hello kisses and a quick glance at Candis' pictures, the three of us were off to Schumann's, a coffee bar just steps away from Venns.

**Ivan:** Candis and I already caught up on her background, so tell me a little bit about yours.

**Girilina:** Let's see. Well, I was born and raised here in New York. I danced professionally for ten years, jazz, tap, ballet and modern. After high school I went to Europe, came back and I was kind of over the States, so I moved to Montreal for a year and a half, then I moved back to New York. That's when the whole entertaining thing came about. I came here and everything happened so fast. I was always business oriented as far as what I wanted to do, but at the same time, I was just taking time to be young and have fun. I was really lucky that my Mom gave me that option. It was so cool that she let me travel really young so that I got to see the world at a young age. I had to grow up fast, but it was by choice.

**Ivan:** What was your first gig?

**Girilina:** The first gig I got here in New York was with Mona Foot's Star Search. I was there for eighteen weeks. This was at Crowbar, and actually before we became friends, we went up against each other. That was the last time we competed against each other. We obviously became best friends, then Mona took the night over to Pyramid and the owners asked me to take the night. So I did, and the night was called Swirl, which was a cute, kind of funky club night, but cabaretish. Each week you would wait to see what the storyline was. Remember the African people with you and Shasta? Candis was my long-lost girlfriend who my girlfriend Shasta had as a maid. I remember it, I remember it. But there's no one like my sister Candis. People are like, "How long did it take you guys to choreograph that?" We map things out in our head, we go into the studio, we lay down the music and the tracks, and because we're both trained dancers, the energy between us is like nothing I've ever had with anyone else.

**Ivan:** Is that how you really hooked up, because you were both trained dancers?

**Candis:** Well, not even that, but we're both entertainers. If we're together on a runway, we don't think about turning together, we just do.

**Girilina:** Exactly. Good analogy, girl. I hope that answers your question, it was a mouthful.

**Ivan:** Ethnically, what are you? People always wonder about that.

**Candis:** I'm Italian and Irish.

**Girilina:** My father's white Irish and my Mom is black.

**Ivan:** Who are your biggest influences?

**Girilina:** My Mom. She's such a strong woman. I'm an only child and she raised me. My mother actually hated Milk for me while I was away. My mother is so funky. Candis' mother is fierce too.

**Candis:** She says hello, by the way.

**Girilina:** Oh, love her. Give Trisha some sugar. My influences have definitely been Mona, love Mona. Needless to say, I don't even have to elaborate on my sister, and Bunny of course. Both of them I've looked up to for such a long time, even before I started performing. I've always loved their work. I've loved what they've done for themselves and for the community. They're not just girls entertaining, they have a message and I think it's definitely not about being a faceless person. We as entertainers have so much power that is given to us. The girls who give back are the girls who pave the way for new girls who are really serious about being entertainers.

**Ivan:** You were in Paper last month.

**Girilina:** Yeah, and Candis is in Surface this month. Amazing.

**Candis:** Dalin's pictures...

**Girilina:** Oh my God, amazing. The Guess ads. He has to shoot us, girl. (Into the tape recorder) Dalin, Dalin, can you hear us, Cand and Lees, we need you to shoot us.

**Candis:** He's a friend of ours. The water agrees, so we should be shot by Dalin.

**Ivan:** Every time something is written about you, Jada Pinkett is always mentioned.

**Girilina:** Oh, Jada. Love Jada. She is the bomb. That woman is so strong, and so fierce. I remember watching her on A Different World, and I was like, "work, girl." Jada was so much fun to work with. Before we started shooting, we got to hang out a little, because in the movie I play her best friend. So, I told her about my best friend Candis, and she told me about her best friend and we got that connection, so when we were shooting, it was real. And John Singleton, he loved my work and that made me feel good because it's not everyday I work with a big director.

**Ivan:** Go ahead, plug the movie, girl. What's it called?

**Girilina:** That's Woo. John Singleton's new movie on New Line. It comes

out this spring. And then me and Candis have a movie coming out this summer, possibly on Miramax called Always Something Better.

**Candis:** Would you excuse me for a moment?

**Girilina:** (commenting on Candis' jeans) Jordache, work! I finally got her to get a pair. I have tons from when I was in high school. I did a Jordache commercial when I was a kid.

**Ivan:** I was telling Candis earlier that in Mariah Carey's video for The Roof, she's wearing designer jeans and this whole 80s look.

**Girilina:** She mopped me! I was at Tunnel one night when me, Candis, Sherry Vine and Jackie Beat were doing Tunnel. I had either my Jordache or Sergio's on and that's just my look, with the feathered hair. I love feathered hair. Well, she was there that night and truly a month later, somebody called me and said, "Lina, you're gonna gag, Mariah Carey truly mopped your look." Next thing you know, everyone I see is telling me Mariah Carey's pumping this look. That's just too bizarre when she was at Tunnel and saw me in that look. We didn't say anything to each other because I don't really see her as an entertainer. But, whatever.

Once Candis returned, we decided that we had sat there long enough, chatting over coffee. Candis went her way, and I dropped Girilina at a village restaurant where she was meeting some friends. On the ride over, Girilina mentioned that she's currently in the studio working on an album with T-Pro and Merritt. Girilina, I'm holding you to our date during fashion week. Gorgeous.

