

Der Spiegelsaal Traum Magnus Interview



*"The beauty that addresses itself to the eyes is only the spell of the moment; the eye of the body is not always that of the soul."
~ George Sand*

By L.G. Wise (a.k.a. Cosmik Laila)

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COSMIK LAILA: *In the beginning; What was the bank you worked with closely, that lent you the money to start producing the Latibaer plays and how did you go about enticing them?*

MAGNUS: I worked with the Central Bank of Iceland, in the city of Gardabaer. I enticed them by promising to pay back the loan within two years.

CL: *How did it come about that the Icelandic plays were turned into a children's show?*

M: Here's how it started: Childhood obesity was reaching

epidemic levels, and it was then that I decided to inspire kids to lead a healthier life. First, I wrote a book called "Afram Latibaer!" in 1995, about a town filled with inactive townspeople with unhealthy diets. Then, in 1996, I decided to turn the book into a stageplay. The Afram Latibaer stageplay was a huge success, so I wrote another play in 1999, "Glanni Glaepur i Latabae". Because of the positive response that the plays were receiving, I thought it would be a good idea to start a children's TV show inspiring kids to eat healthy and exercise. Work began on the LazyTown TV series in 2002, when we produced the pilot episode starring Shelby Young as Stephanie. Finally, the show premiered on national television in 2004. To answer your question, I wanted to do something that children all around the world would see, and since children spend so much time watching TV, I thought the LazyTown TV series would be ideal.

CL: When did you first see Gudmundur Thor's puppet work and what year did the original Wit Puppets premiere in Latibaer?

M: I first saw his puppetry in 1994, and the Wit Puppets premiered in Latibaer in 1998. The puppets were used in various commercials from 1998 to 2002.

CL: What are some of your memorable moments while working on the Latibaer Plays?

M: The auditions for the characters were definitely some of my favorite memories from the stageplays, and I also loved directing the plays while also playing the part of Sportacus (Ithrottaalfurinn).

CL: Were you aware that from the American perspective, it seemed that the Icelandic plays look like Vaudeville and Burlesque, and was that a coincidence or was it planned?

M: I was actually quite inspired by the Vaudeville and Burlesque styles of plays (but mostly Vaudeville) and incorporated some comedy and music as a result.

CL: What are your thoughts on the evolution of the LazyTown fandom? How do you see them now in comparison to 10 years ago?

M: The fandom has definitely come very far, and I'm really impressed by how dedicated some of the fans are. Ten years ago, the fan websites were just beginning, and the sites have greatly contributed to the growth of the LazyTown fandom, thanks to the hard work and leadership of amazing fan-sites like LazyTown Point.

CL: Are there any plans for a possible LazyTown Animated Series?

M: Right now, there are no official plans to make an animated version of LazyTown, but that could always change. We're always open to new ideas from the fans, and I've seen that some of them would love to see LazyTown as an animated series. If LazyTown becomes an animated series, we'll probably use the same actors for the voices as we used for the character parts in previous years.

CL: Sportacus says: "It's okay to eat icecream sometimes." -

What is your favorite not-so-healthy fun-food?

M: Even I like to eat unhealthy things sometimes, and my favorite unhealthy food would probably be bacon, although I try not to eat it too often.

CL: Certain lurid colors seem to be used on the show - Have you always been interested in lurid colors and which ones?

M: I've always liked using bright colors to catch the attention of television viewers because children especially seem interested in bright colors. I prefer using bright shades of orange, yellow, red, pink, and especially blue.

CL: Did you get to keep some of the props / sets from the show before the studio was sold, if so, what kind of stuff?

M: The props were distributed among the staff at LazyTown studios right before the building was sold, and I got to keep a few of the props, like some of the sports gear, the pyramids made of apples, and the Airship's control panel.

CL: Do you still stay in touch with the original cast members, such as Gummi, Stefan, Julianna, or Chloe, and what kind of projects are they up to, if any?

M: Sometimes I still talk to Stefan, but he is still recovering from pancreatic cancer and hasn't been doing much as a result. I haven't seen the other cast members in quite a while, but I'm hoping to collaborate with them if we were to remake LazyTown.

CL: Have you watched many Spy films or television shows, such as "Danger Man" with Patrick McGoohan, if so, which spy is your favorite?

M: I love spy films, and "Danger Man" is one of my favorites. Drake, a spy from the TV show, is my favorite spy. Speaking of spy films, I was the main antagonist in "The Spy Next Door". Because of my accent, I played the part of a Russian spy. It was different because I was used to playing the part of Sportacus, one of the main protagonists of LazyTown, but I enjoyed trying on a new role.

CL: What exercises do you do while traveling, such as during airport travel?

M: When I'm on a plane, I can't fit in much exercise, but I'll usually jog or lift weights while waiting for a flight to arrive. Sometimes I'll travel around the city on a bicycle or by jogging.

CL: Do you believe in Numerology, if so can you elaborate on the subject?

M: I don't know much about Numerology or horoscopes, but sometimes I'll see what my horoscope says about me just for fun and to see how accurate it is.

CL: Do you like to use certain numbers - What are some of your favorite ones?

M: The number 10 is my favorite number, which is why I

used it for Sportacus' uniform.

CL: Have you ever thought about selling nutrition juicers using the name 'LazyTown', and how would you go about marketing such a venture?

M: I've actually sold supplements for children under the Latibaer brand, which were sold from 1998 to 2000 or so. I used the Wit Puppets as my marketing technique for an audience of children, and I would use the same tactic if I sold nutrition juicers, only with the LazyTown TV series instead of the old puppets.

CL: Which memories stand out the most from growing up as a kid in Iceland?

M: The things I remember most about my childhood would be the fact that I grew up in a small town and how I loved to play sports. My interest in sports, aerobics, and general exercise was inspired by my active childhood.

CL: Do you have any pets, if so, what are their names?

M: I don't have any pets right now, but I would love to have a dog, particularly a Great Dane. I would name him Gudmundur and take him for a walk every day.

CL: Do you think animal spirits (spiritual harbingers which appear in animal form) exist? If so, what would be your animal spirit?

M: I think they might exist, and my animal spirit would be a tiger because of my strength and determination.

CL: What are some of your favorite historic quotes?

M: Here are some of my favorite quotes from history and the present day:

- "A man's character is his fate." - Heraclitus

- "Every man is the architect of his own fortune." - Sallust

- "Don't cry because it's over. Smile because it happened." - Dr. Seuss

- "Be yourself; everyone else is already taken." - Oscar Wilde

CL: What do you think of technology, the Internet and its effects on society in general?

M: I think technology and the Internet are very useful and helpful. However, the Internet is something that needs to be used in moderation, or else it can make people be lazy and rely too much on the Internet.

CL: Which books are you currently reading?

M: I'm currently not reading anything, but I'm planning on soon starting books on leading a healthy life by exercising and eating healthy.

CL: Are you interested in Scandinavian Legends / Mythology, and if so, what's your favorite story?

M: I'm fascinated by Scandinavian mythology and mythology in general, and my favorite story from Scandinavian mythology is the Volsunga Saga, which was the inspiration for "Lord of the Rings".

CL: It is known that you like games. Which non-sports games do you like to play?

M: I've always loved video games, especially those involving Mario, and I also love mind games like chess, checkers, and any kind of puzzle game.

CL: What is the single most valuable piece of advice you can give for any budding entrepreneurs out there?

M: Spend your money wisely, don't try overly hard to sell your product, and remember to value the customers more than the money.

CL: What comments do you have about the American negative response toward LazyTown's healthy lifestyle 'ideal', and how it goes against an apparent 'agenda' to keep people fat and un-healthy?

M: Firstly, I haven't seen this idea speculated more from any particular political party than another. I have met both Democrats and Republicans who prioritize healthy eating in children from a young age. If someone doesn't like LazyTown because it's good at encouraging kids to be healthy, then I wish they would see the problem from a different point of view. Obesity is becoming an increasingly serious problem, and shows like LazyTown are ideal to get children to exercise and

eat healthy.

CL: Which charities are you working with these days - Such as charities or fundraising activities for children with Autism, OCD, ADHD or any disabilities?

M: I try to donate to various charities as often as I can. I am especially fond of charities involving autism research because they show how gifted people on the autism spectrum can be. For example, Sesame Street recently came out with a new Muppet who has autism, and I thought this was great because it's good for kids to know about diversity in the world we live in.

CL: How is business with your ROK Restaurant coming along, and what new plans do you have for the future?

M: Business is great right now, and in the future I might add more menu options including food from all over the world. I'm also thinking of adding a stage where people can sing for guests.

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