



News

Rippon tries his hand at being a 'showstopper'

Two-time world junior champ hits the show circuit

By Lois Elfman, special to icenetnetwork.com

(05/06/2010) - Last Friday, two-time world junior champion and 2010 U.S. world team member **Adam Rippon** posted an excited tweet (he has nearly 5,800 followers on Twitter). "Come check out @searsstarsonice TONIGHT in Toronto at the ACC!!! Showing a new program 'Are You Gunna (sp) Be My Girl?' chor. By D. Wilson."

The Toronto show of *Sears Stars on Ice* marked Rippon's debut. He joins the tour again in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and will skate every performance until it wraps in Vancouver, British Columbia, on May 14. He is the lone American on the Canadian tour, although his connections are strong -- he trains at the Toronto Cricket Skating & Curling Club and his grandmother was born in Canada.

"It's almost surreal to be going on tour with *Stars on Ice*," Rippon said. "I remember when the tour would come to my hometown, Wilkes-Barre/Scranton, Pa. **Scott Hamilton**, **Kristi Yamaguchi** and **Kurt Browning** were all in it. I remember watching it and thinking, 'Wow, I really want to be in that one day.'"

In reality, the Toronto show marked Rippon's debut as himself. Some years ago, *Smucker's Stars on Ice* featured a program where a local skater from each tour stop portrayed a young Scott Hamilton. Rippon was one of those skaters.

Rippon found out he'd be touring Canada along with Browning, **Jeffrey Buttle**, **Tessa Virtue** and **Scott Moir**, Jamie Salé and David Pelletier and **Joannie Rochette** a few weeks ago. He won't get to skate in the ensemble numbers, but will skate his new exhibition program to Jet's "Are You Gonna Be My Girl."

"When I first listened to it, it doesn't sound like a song you would skate to, but it's a really upbeat pop/rock song," Rippon said. "I think it's going to be really cool."

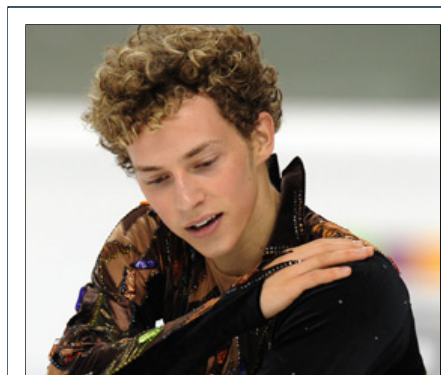
When he's not on the ice, he plans to watch the other skaters and take in the whole touring experience. Although he's acquainted with everyone in the cast, he is excited to work with some of the professional veterans for the first time.

"Kurt [Browning]'s been incredibly nice to me," said Rippon, who finished sixth at this year's world championships. "It's so weird for me to think that first of all I'll be on the tour. Then second, Kurt Browning is on the same tour I'll be in. That's the biggest shock for me right now."

Rippon will use these performances as lessons on how to connect with the audience, which is sometimes overlooked amidst the intensity of competition. He recalls a show in Japan where Buttle left the audience mesmerized.

"In competition, you almost have an excuse why you wouldn't perform to an audience because you're so focused on everything you have to do," he noted. "In a show, connection with an audience is the most important thing. Also, I really want to experiment with different styles and try to push myself. So that when I go to the drawing board for next season, I have a large array of options to choose from because I'm experienced in different styles of performing."

"It might not seem so hard going from a classical style to a more modern style, but if you've never done it before it can be so challenging and it can take away from the technical aspects of your program. If you're a master at it, it's second nature."



Adam Rippon will be keeping his skating skills sharp this summer on the show circuit. (Getty Images)

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In July, he'll be skating in **Mao Asada's** shows in Japan and also doing a show in Hawaii. He also anticipates skating in a show in Korea.

"I haven't looked at these shows as something that will take away from the training, but as something that can enhance it," Rippon said. "I can go out and do a show and kind of come down from the continuous build up of training."

His short and long programs for next season are in the planning stages. He and David Wilson are currently discussing music. They'll do the choreography in early June. When they get on the ice, Rippon anticipates his energy and creative juices will be flowing after tour.

"It's really helpful to do these shows," he said. "I'm already excited for that after feeling of wanting to practice."



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