

ENTERTAINMENT July 22, 2019

Broadway's Leading Lady Sierra Boggess Inspires On and Off Stage

"You are enough"



HANNAH DOBROGOSZ ([HTTPS://WWW.ENTITYMAG.COM/AUTHOR/HDOBROGOSZ/](https://www.entitymag.com/author/hdobrogosz/))



ENTITY SITS DOWN WITH SIERRA BOGESS

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Broadway's leading lady [Sierra Boggess](https://sierraboggess.com/) (<https://sierraboggess.com/>) has tackled some of the biggest roles in the business, including Christine Daaé in "Phantom of the Opera," and Princess Ariel in "The Little Mermaid," a role she originated. Soon she will wow audiences again as Cinderella in "Into the Woods" at the Hollywood Bowl.

I was fortunate enough to sit down with Sierra and discuss her career, double standards, making it in such a competitive industry, and how to stay inspired.

ENTITY: When did you first know you wanted to be on Broadway and how did you jumpstart your Broadway career?





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Sierra Boggess (SB): I grew up in Denver, Colorado and I had no idea what Broadway was. I think I always just loved being in front of people. My drama teacher took us to New York my sophomore year of high school, and that's when I learned what Broadway was.

ENTITY: I know you studied BFA Musical Theatre at Millikin. Could you speak more to your experience as a BFA student?

SB: It's weird when you tell people you have a degree in musical theatre. Nobody, unless you've done that, understands what a grueling degree that is. Great on my parents and my teachers for telling me to stick with it. I built friendships and relationships that are such a huge part of the reason I have any type of success. You don't do this business or life alone.

ENTITY: Of course. I see my friends having these great social lives and sometimes it's hard, but at the end of the day, this is what I also want to do so I stick with it because in the end, it'll be worth it.

SB: Right! There was nothing that I, or my classmates, would've rather been doing than the work. We would go to class all day and rehearse for shows, then I would book a practice room or a dance studio. It honestly was what I wanted to do, as difficult as it is.

“There’s A Label For A Woman Who Speaks Up For Herself.”



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ENTITY: What has been the biggest challenge you've faced as a woman in the industry?

SB: I think the expectations for women are very different. Speaking up for yourself—you know there's a label for a woman who speaks up for herself. There isn't really a label for a man who speaks up for himself. I think women are held to a different standard than men are in our industry as well. It's a challenge but I can also see it as a good thing because I hold myself to a high standard.

ENTITY: Who are some of your role models, personally and professionally, and what lessons have they taught you?

SB: The first person that's influenced my career is Barbara Streisand. I love her because she is a woman who has tremendous integrity and has been labeled all of the things that women get labeled for being strong.

Another person that is a huge inspiration to me is Brené Brown. Her message is life-changing and I encourage everyone to know her work and to listen to her. The Theodore Roosevelt quote she uses about 'daring greatly' is what [actors] do every time we walk into an audition room or step on stage. She articulates so brilliantly what we go through on a daily basis as performers, as women, and as humans.

"A Star Can Only Shine If Everything Else Around It Is Dark."



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ENTITY: Who has been your favorite performer to share the stage with and what made working with them so special?

SB: Tyne Daly. I worked with Tyne in *Master Class* and again on Broadway in *It Shoulda Been You*. Tyne demonstrates how to behave as a leading lady. She's also shown me that there's a difference between being a star and being a leading lady. A leading lady or a leading man has an extra responsibility to take care of the company. A star can only shine if everything else around it is dark.

In the same show, *It Shoulda Been You*, Harriet Harris played my mother-in-law and she's an extraordinary woman too. She's incredibly intelligent in how to play a scene. Sherie Rene Scott who played Ursula in "The Little Mermaid"—she's one of my best friends in this life. She has one of the highest levels of integrity that I have ever seen in a woman in this industry. Again, I don't do this life without my people.

ENTITY: In such a competitive industry, it can be really hard not to compare yourself to others, so it is nice to hear about the camaraderie in these productions.

SB: I think competing with other women is a choice, and it's a bold choice. That's not the world I want to live in. When you start feeling misaligned it's because you've chosen to look at people as competition as opposed to colleagues.

“You Are Enough.”



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ENTITY: How is preparation for *Into the Woods* going? How does it feel to be playing another princess?

SB: We go to LA [in July]. I love that show so much and the characters are so complex. And Cinderella obviously becomes a princess but, what even is that? She's going through everything a person goes through—the feeling of being an imposter. I just love the metaphors—everybody's story is a metaphor.

ENTITY: What is one piece of advice you would give to young women hoping to follow in your footsteps and pursue a theatrical or even Broadway career?

SB: The first thing I would say is to not try and do my path because it's already been done—you have to do your own path. Be inspired by other people but [pave] your own path. I have to say my quote: you are enough, you are so enough, it's unbelievable how enough you are. Remind yourself that you are enough, just like you would tell your best friend, your cat, your sibling, your mom, your dad, whoever, that they are enough.

The final thing I'd say is do the work. Want to work really hard. The work never ever stops, so find the joy in that. Find your people; build each other up. Don't try and do this alone. Even though you go out on stage alone, you are a team, you are a team, you are a team.

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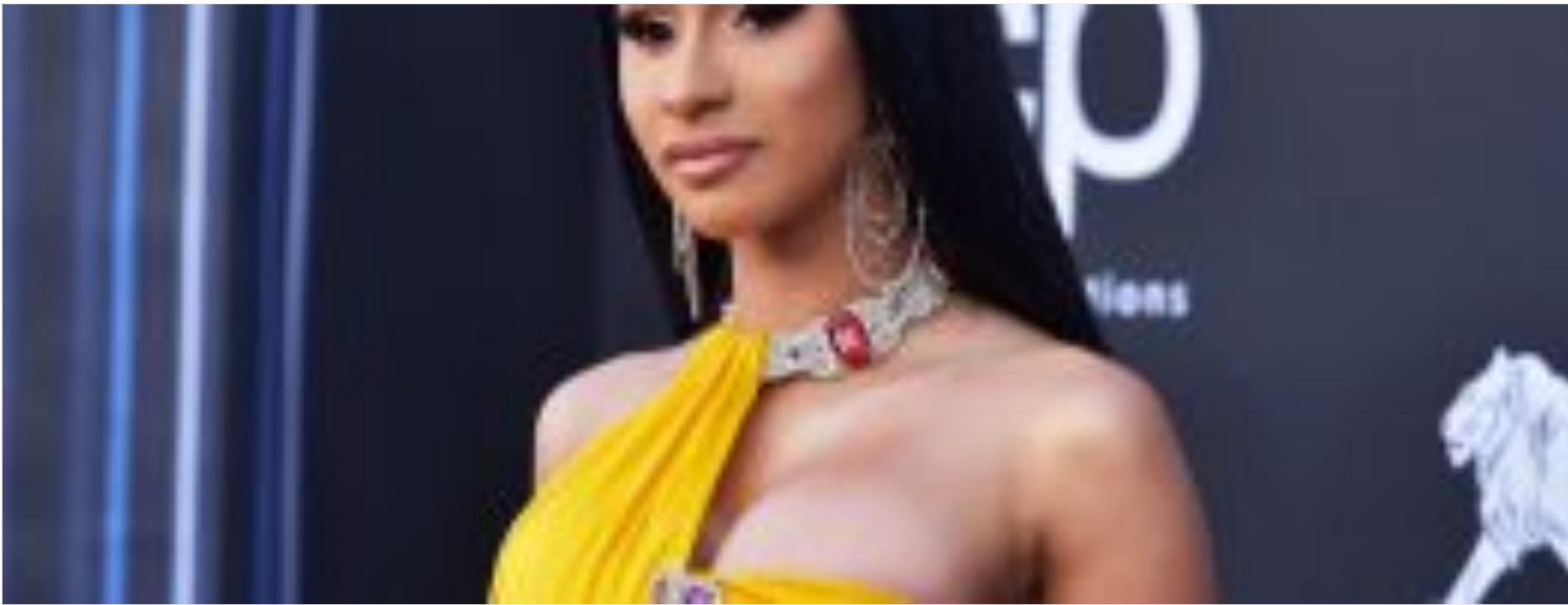
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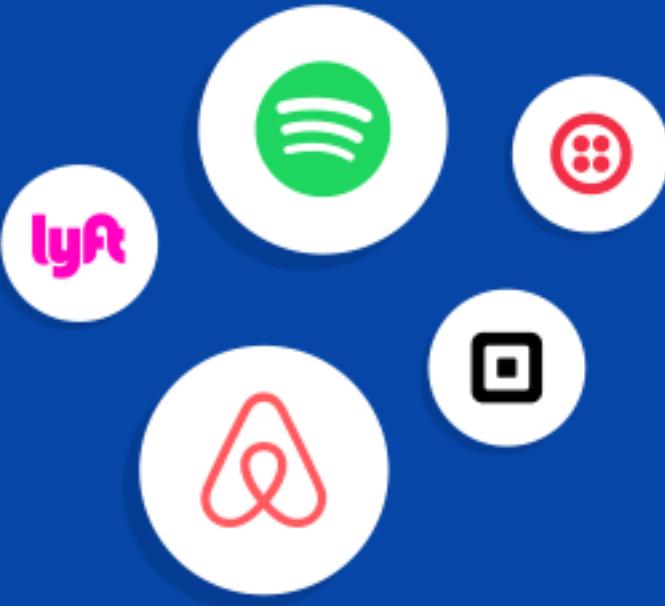
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