Interview with Neil Patrick Harris

BRAVO 2/22/2015 12:01:17 PM: Neil Patrick Harris: “I was in the band, I played the xylophone. I was in the choir, and I would teach people harmony parts and plunk things out on the piano because I played the piano, and so, the teachers thought that I should go to this week-long drama camp that was at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces.”

Interviewer: “Who created this camp?”

NPH: “Mark Medoff is a massive, amazing playwright, and-- Children of a Lesser God. It was a great week, I loved it, and I got to be in a cold reading audition class, randomly, by Mark Medoff, meaning that…”

I: “Taught by him?”

NPH: “Taught by mark, and he liked what I was doing and had coincidentally been writing this movie that was a Whoopi Goldberg vehicle but had another character opposite her who was a young kid--a real waspy kid that befriends her, and so he suggested me to Warner Brothers and to the people that were making the movie.”

I: “You've called it a massive change in your life.”

NPH: “Yeah.” [laughter] “I was flown to St. Michaels, Maryland, where for four weeks I got to act opposite one of the greatest movie stars of the decade. Yeah. It was a real change from hanging out in small town New Mexico doing plays at the Ruidoso Little Theater.”

I: “And how old were you?”

NPH: “12.”

I: “Was your work in Clara's Heart recognized at awards season?”

NPH: “It was, actually. I think I was nominated for a Golden Globe.”

I: “You were- for Clara's Heart.” [laughter] “We arrive at the point where Doogie Howser came into our lives and yours. How old were you when that happened?”

NPH: “I was 15 when I made The Pilot and turned 16 once we started the show.”

I: “Hadn't your family tried to avoid a TV series commitment because they didn't want to uproot the family?”

NPH: “That's exactly right, yeah.”

I: “How were you getting your education during the Doogie Howser years?”

NPH: “Through a tutor.”

I: “Where?”

NPH: “On set.”
I: “You had to have your parent there, but you also had to have someone there who is teaching you and is making sure that you weren't being overused or abused in any way”

NPH: “This wonderful woman named Rona Gordon Jepsen, and she was great. The show didn't run the full year, it only ran six months, so that the second half of the year, I got to go back to school and be totally immersed in it.”