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**AMBITION
WEEK**

**'I didn't start off
naked and I'm not
going to end naked'**

How Canadian choreographer
Tanisha Scott is revamping the
image of women in music videos

P10/11



RUSSELL PETERS EXPLAINS WHY CRAP GIGS MAKE BETTER COMICS
 KING OF LABOUR BY LOADING HAY AND RAISING COWS. NOW HE'S LOOKING TO LASSO A GOLD RECORD.

AMBITIOUS WEEK

There's something that drives the best to be even better. Blame it on lofty goals, a childhood plagued by underdog status or the need to make a major impact. This week, we look past the obvious successes of five Canadians in entertainment and urge them to share — in their own words — their true motivation. They each reveal their goals for 2006 (which Dose will track over the year) to shed light on the inner workings of an ambitious mind.

There's no position that cultivates more ambition and determination than that of the underdog. Constantly being underestimated and overlooked is what's driven Tanisha Scott to become the hottest new choreographer in North America, with A-list clients like Beyoncé proclaiming they want to move the way Scott does. With no formal training, Scott got her start dancing her ass off in videos for Mariah Carey, Mary J. Blige and Shaggy. Now, this Toronto-born, New York-based overachiever creates the stars' best moves and shares her hip-undulating secrets with the likes of Ciara ("Oh") and Beyoncé ("Check Out It"). She's also brought Jamaica's dances to the mainstream as the sole choreographer for dancehall artist Sean Paul, which earned Scott a best choreography nomination at the 2004 MTV Video Music Awards, the first-ever nod in that category for a reggae-related clip. While competing against professionally trained choreographers for the top jobs is still a daily battle, Tanisha, ever the underdog, knows that's when her ambition truly thrives.

"Ambition is faith and belief in yourself. You will only work hard if you believe you can do it. You will work hard if you have faith that you will go ahead and do it and be successful."

Tanisha Scott's ambitions for 2006

- 1 Challenge myself more. Not just with choreography, but also get into whole different realms, be it acting or having my own business and opening my own dance school in Toronto.
- 2 Take dancehall to another level. Go to Jamaica and challenge the Jamaicans out there. I find, in Jamaica, what they lack is choreography skills. I want to teach them breakdance. I want to teach them how to vogue. Then they can take the way they move and build upon it.
- 3 Keep my relationships, my family and my friends, a lot stronger.

The weird thing about me is I don't like attention, which is crazy. It doesn't make any sense because I love to dance on stage, love to perform. But half of the time, I don't want people knowing it's me. I used to always have on a hat that's really low, so you couldn't see my face, so I'm forcing you to look at what I'm selling and that's my dance.

It all started with my father, who used to be a DJ. I'd follow him to a lot of his gigs and he'd show me the latest moves. I started dancing in '95 at the University of Windsor (in Ontario) with a dance agency called Do Dat, dancing in videos and in stage shows. Before that, I was just going to clubs all the time.

I never wanted to be a choreographer, to be honest. All I ever wanted to do, and I'll say it till today, is just dance. What ended up happening is when (Canadian video director) Little X got the job to do Sean Paul's video for "Gimme the Light," he called me frantically and was like, "Listen, you got to do it — not just dance, but choreograph." So, basically, I was put right there on the spot. My agent was like, "Don't do the video. There's no money involved." But reggae music is my heart. I love Sean Paul and I knew "I'm going to do this."

I got paid nothing on that video. Ironically, when you do things from your heart, when it's goodwill, great things happen. I've been choreographing for Sean ever since. He really respects what I do. Sean is straight dancehall. He's not watered-down whatsoever, and I keep his dancing just as real as his music — I keep Jamaica's dance really alive.

I wanted to start a movement with "Gimme the Light." I was covered from head to toe, so people had to see the dance because that's all they could look at. But, of course, we're definitely in an industry which is sex, Rock 'n' roll, rap, hip hop, it's all the same. I put it this way; in order to change something, you have to be a part of it, but without losing yourself and your own integrity. It takes us, the women, to make that change. You can't expect the men to be like, "Oh, it's bad." Heck no! It's up to us to stand up.

People complain, "There are too many stereotypes. Women are being degraded in these videos." What I'm really trying to change is I want women to look at themselves in these videos and be proud, comfortable and respect themselves. Everyone wants to hurry up and be a star and be seen on TV, but there's a lot more to it than that. You have to think long-term: do you want your kids to see you doing that? Do you want them to think that this is what we have to look like in order to get someplace?

Being in music videos, you can say "no." I've said no to bikinis. I don't want to be in a video dancing in a bikini. I've said no to sitting on a rapper's lap. Awhile ago, they asked me to choreograph a song called "I'm in Love with a Stripper" by T-Pain. I was like, "No, I'll pass." I didn't start off naked and I'm not going to end naked.

When I was at school, I always got an A- or B+, I never got just straight As. When I ran track, I was always the person coming in second or third. But this is the only thing where nobody can tell me anything different. I hung with the best of the best, without the same experience that a lot of people had because I'm not a trained dancer. My