

A portrait of a woman with long dark hair, wearing a black lace dress, against a golden, textured background. She is looking slightly to the right of the camera. Her right hand is raised to her ear. The overall mood is elegant and dramatic.

Shiva Rose
is Three

My phone rang at 7:04 for a scheduled 7 p.m. call.

"I'm so, so sorry that it took me so long to call you," uttered a voice with what could only be described as a sincerely apologetic tone from a considerate close friend.

The sweet sound on the line was Shiva Rose. It had been three seconds since our initial introduction, but I already felt like we were old friends. And with her six-year-old daughter Collette in the background asking for her mommy, Shiva allowed me to acquaint myself with her trio of successful personas.

With loveliness and grace as a fashion idol, charisma and talent as an actress, and awareness and conscience as an activist, Shiva has inspired women to take beauty a step beyond fashion and face to form a sense of individuality and generosity.

Underneath her signature silky vintage gowns and eclectic casual outfits that seem to begin (or end) each season's fashion trends stands a talented actress and a charitable woman who has found a grounded way to live her life.

The Giving Presence

Practicing the Japanese form of Buddhism for eight years, 28-year-old Shiva leads her life based on its simple philosophy that causes in your community have effects. "It's all about compassion," she says. "[Buddhism] gives me stability and a base. Everyone needs spiritual form, whatever it is, they all have messages."

According to this steady young woman, it is this religion's calming effect that has primarily caused her generosity of her valuable time to several charities. From her grassroots homeless food bank during her college years to her ongoing assistance with Feminist Majority (an organization dedicated to women's equality, reproductive health and non-violence) to her recent work with the women in Afghanistan, Shiva has taken a proactive approach to impacting her own community.

Upon graduation from UCLA, Shiva joined playwright Eve Ensler, mother of her husband Dylan McDermott, on a mission to Croatia to help Bosnian rape victims and refugees heal emotionally, as well as physically. "I really had a breakthrough where I realized that I might not always be able to be on the front, but I might be able to do some more work behind the scenes. I really felt so passionate about doing something," she says.

Since then the list of charities has grown, along with Shiva's awareness of what needs to be done and her sense of making a difference.

Shiva continued working with her mother-in-law's organization, V Day (Until the Violence Stops), a group that promotes creative events to increase awareness, raise money and revitalize the spirit of existing anti-violence organizations. Ensler's "The Vagina Monologues" has been the centerpiece of these events, the biggest

of which was the V-Day 2001 benefit performance at Madison Square Garden. The money that passes through V-Day and that is raised on its behalf is directly donated to organizations and programs that work to end rape, battery, incest, sexual slavery and also The Shiva Fund, which is helping to stop female circumcision in North Africa.

An original cast member of the female empowering phenom "The Vagina Monologues," Shiva has also played the part of "Saida" in Ensler's play about Bosnian refugees, "Necessary Targets."

Females need know no age boundaries where Shiva is concerned. The Center for the Vulnerable Child, run out of the University of Southern California, has also benefited from the kind hearts of Shiva and her husband, as the center strives to treat girls who are raped and molested in the City of Angels. Because the situation is a family incident, it is mostly girls who are treated, but the mothers of the victims also are given assistance. "They offer therapy in a non-intrusive way because a lot of these girls who are raped have nowhere to go. [The councilors] work with the police, offer therapy and toys and clothes for the girls because after the initial shock, it's good to have something like that," says Shiva.

The Actress

It's hard to believe that Shiva was not always the refined woman who readers constantly find within the pages of fashion magazines and who viewers enjoy on stage and screen. It was actually the silver screen that initially closed her off from others, while drawing her into a world that she would eventually flourish among several talented peers.

"When I was young, I didn't fit in. I was really thin and into old movies, so I kind of lost myself in that world." Accompanied by Eva Gardner, Rita Hayworth and Audrey Hepburn, Shiva grew a passion for theater and desire to join these beautiful women in the land of movie magic.

It was in college that this love was cultivated through a degree from UCLA's World Arts and Cultures program with a specialization in theater. Offered by the School of Arts and Architecture, this program allowed Shiva to explore a wide range of artistic practices in cultural context, through dance and cultural studies, imbedding her acting desires even deeper in her heart.

"That's something about being married to my husband," says Shiva. "People think I just assumed I would start to act, but I've been doing it since high school.

"Actually," she laughs, "when I met him, he told me he was allergic to three things—cats, horses and actresses. So for six months, I hid it from him until I got a part in a play of 'Romeo and Juliet,' so I had to tell him." The cat went to her mother's but the actress stayed...and flourished.

Times a Lady

Fashionista, film star, philanthropist

By Cheryl F. Hendrick • Photography by Art Streiber

Shiva won rave reviews in 1999 for her role in the Pacific Resident Theater's production of "The Swan." She decided to follow up her sweet and innocent performance by accepting the lead role of a psychotic misanthrope in *Black Days*. Soon after HBO chose her for a role as one of Mickey Mantel's love interests in Billy Crystal's *61*.

Able to relive the vintage lifestyle she holds so dear, Shiva graced the stage in Clifford Odets' 1935 Group Theatre domestic drama *Awake and Sing!* at the Berkshire Theater Festival. "It was a great experience. I've been working with film this year, so it was nice to do a play," she admits. "It's all good little steps toward the bigger picture. I would love to go further, take [acting] full-time."

Those bigger steps are already being taken, no doubt in a sexy pair of Brian Atwood hand-made heels. Shiva recently found herself with a part in 20th Century Fox & Ocean Pictures' *The First Twenty Million is the Hardest*, directed by Mick Jackson, with Adam Garcia, Rosario Dawson and Ethan Soffley. The movie has a tentative release date of spring 2002.

Shiva has also been taking things into her own delicate hands, with a few works of her own under production. "I feel like as women we are so limited as what we can do. We're either the hooker or the mother or the mistress, so I am actually producing a couple of things with great female characters, so it's very empowering."

One film that Shiva is in the midst of developing (and will eventually star in) traverses the wild, romantic saga of intrigue, heartbreak, radicalism and catastrophe sur-

rounding the intense life of photographer Tina Modotti, who ran in circles with Mexican artists Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Eva Gardos, director of *American Rhapsody*, will be directing the film

that will hopefully begin filming this year in Mexico City. "I was drawn to [Tina] because she was truly a revolutionary. She used art to revolutionize the world. She had beauty and charm and talent,

but she chose to live a life of hardship because of what she believed in.

"I seem to prefer the pieces where I can really work on an accent or on a character. I like to work on something that I can sink my teeth into. Those are always exciting to me, where you research the part or the mannerisms. There isn't a lot of that out there anymore, that's why we have to create them as women."

The Fashion Fixture

It's her fashion flare and individuality that Shiva exhibits for which she is probably best known. Before filling their own closets, women seek out what Shiva is wearing to the latest premiere or a night-out-on-the-town.

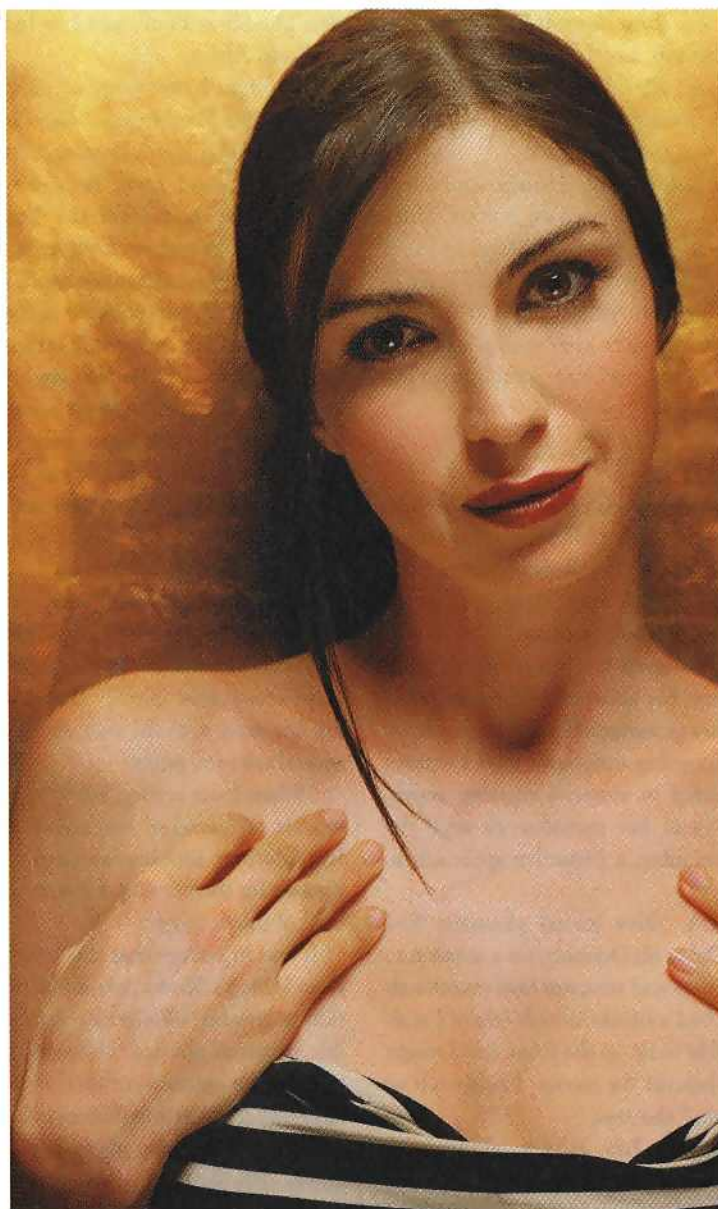
But it's all taken in stride. "I don't ever take it that seriously; that's why I have fun with it. The moment you take it too seriously, then like anything, the fun goes," citing Bjork's much-talked-about 2001 Oscar swan outfit as "ingenious."

"Once in a while I feel the pressure of trying to keep it up, but I'm really not dictated by what other people think."

Then where does this unique inspiration come from—a style so commanding that it practically sends women to Marc Jacobs or Betsey Johnson to recreate the one-of-a-kind Shiva look? Once again, go to the movies.

"I'm usually dictated by an old movie I see, or something that will influence me like something Asian or

Indian," she explains. "I'm not really influenced by what is hip right now. I mean it's harder, but at least it won't be something that someone else will have on."



“ I feel like **as women**
we are so limited
as what we can do.
We're either the hooker
or the mother
or the mistress... ”



It's a sense of eclectic elegance, this complex simplicity that causes this fashion icon to sometimes feel quite "schizophrenic." Someday I want to be classic, then I realize I want to be Bohemian. My whole thing right now is mixing it all together, and it seems to work some how, like the pioneer look with cashmere."

Armed with what she calls "a sixth sense on what will be in fashion next based on just a basic selfish desire of what feels good," the most likely progression would be for Shiva to immerse herself in yet another area—behind the fashion industry. Not necessarily. "A lot of people come to me with offers to design or open a shop. I sometimes worry that I have so much fun with fashion that if I worked in it, I wouldn't have as much fun with it." And her true love gets in the way: "The acting takes so much of my every day efforts that I don't know if I could do it right now, but maybe sometime in the future."

Her heightened sense of the artistic ensemble has carried over into her family life, as she and Dylan together won the 2001 Golden Hanger Gable-Lombard Award from E!. "Lately I've been giving him a makeover, with hats and baggy pants, so once in a while, I can see that it's some of my doing," she says. "But when it's an event, he gets things sent to him, and they are always beautiful suits, so how can you go wrong?"

Even a lazy day doesn't find Shiva any less beautiful or romantic, or any less of a screen siren. "I try to create my own movie in my life and that's what's fun about it. I try not to ever wear sweats unless I'm working out. I wear a lot of vintage slips, and then if it's cold, with tights and sweaters. I try to add my own individual feelings, even if I'm just going to the grocery store. But even when you are sloppy, you can do it in a vintage nightgown or funky pants and

“My greatest accomplishment would be having my daughter, having the courage to have her at a young age.”

a torn up sweater.”

Shiva's favorite designers are a little funkier and lesser well-known than most, all ready to be discovered by a woman who is a trend lender—the feminine retro style of James Coviello; the artistic license of Elisa Jimenez. "Then I love someone like Vivienne Westwood because of her imagination, because she's such an incredible artist and she also goes with themes, which is what I do. A dress will look like a painting of an old master or from Alice in Wonderland Through the Looking Glass. That's where I think she draws her inspiration, which is what I try to do as well."

Collette, the little one in Shiva's life, brings her own sense of creativity and inspiration to Shiva's day. "She is very artist so we try to do artwork at home," says proud mom.

"We also love to travel as a family. I really want to take my daughter everywhere. Having her as young as I did, I was worried about the traveling thing, but then I realized that you just take her with you," she admits. Travel may be a pleasure, but nothing comes without a lesson. "We just got back from Mexico, and she saw some children playing in the street without shoes or limbs. It was a really good lesson in a way. In L.A. most people have this amazing life, and you never really get to see how other people live."

It is this solid sense of what's important in life that brings harmony to Shiva and her family. And what a wonderful model for her daughter to grow under.

"My greatest accomplishment would be having my daughter, having the courage to have her at a young age," she says. "Putting aside my career was a big worry, but now I realize that it actually has only improved me as an artist."

Shiva also preaches to never give up. "There are so many times in life, when you want to say, 'I should choose something safe.' I'm really thankful that I didn't choose something safe."

Regardless of whether she is donning a glamorous gown for the Oscars, a pair of jeans for a trip to a homeless shelter or a costume for her next stage adventure, Shiva never relinquishes her role of loving wife and mother.

"We're all so busy that the best thing to do is just be with each other and not really worry about anything else. We like staying home. Maybe I'm just getting older," she laughs.

Well, Shiva, my friend, like a rose-colored vintage dress, your age suits you beautifully. ■