

YAKTV

MEET TYREL: Super Acting Runs In the Family

If your mom needs to marry again, it might as well be to a billionaire scientist and inventor, living in an amazing high-tech house with a secret underground laboratory, right? And his latest experiment? That would be growing three bionic teenagers in the basement lab. This is the clever and wacky storyline for "Lab Rats," a new Disney XD comedy premiering February 27.

"As soon as I read the storyline, what the show was about, I immediately fell in love with it," said Tyrel Jackson Williams, who plays Leo, the stepson with three super-powered siblings. From the first time he read the script, he remembers thinking, "It was so great and interesting and quirky. All the while when I was auditioning, I kept thinking 'I hope I get this. I hope I get this!'" And of course, he did, but it took some time. After five or six auditions, Tyrel landed the part. The show's creators made a pilot, or test show. That first pilot didn't work out, so eventually another pilot show was made with a new name. By September, the show was a go!

On the show, Tyrel's character is a regular kid and doesn't have any bionic abilities, but if he could have one in real life, he says he'd choose bionic strength. "I think I would love to have super strength because that seems like an amazing power – to be strong enough to lift anything or push anything over."

In between rehearsals and shooting the episodes, Tyrel and his costars Kelli Berglund and Billy Unger make time for their lessons onset every day. (Spencer Boldman has already finished high school.) Tyrel, who turns 15 on March 16, is a ninth-grader this year. His favorite subject is appropriately enough – science! Because of Tyrel's career, he says, "I've been homeschooled almost all my life."

In fact, he's been in the entertainment business most of his life, too. You could say it's the family business for the Williams

kids. Tyrel was born in New York, but says the family moved to Los Angeles in 2005 when his big brother Tyler landed the part of Chris (inspired by comedian Chris Rock's growing up years) in the sitcom "Everybody Hates Chris." His little brother, Tylen is also an actor.

How did Tyrel get his start? "My older brother was at an audition and I was still a baby at the time," shares Tyrel. "And I saw a door for a casting audition and I climbed out of my stroller, walked in the room, said 'hi', said my name and walked right back out. The next day I booked it," said Tyrel with a laugh. He was only 18 months old when he landed that first job for a commercial and has been working ever since.

Tyrel lives in Los Angeles with his parents, Le'Roy and Angela, and brothers Tyler, 19, and Tylen, 10. Does it ever get confusing with so many T's in the family? "All the time," says Tyrel. The family also has a dog, Benny.

Tyrel may not have any super powers, but he does have some super talents. In addition to acting, he loves playing video games and plans to study game design in college.

He's also been playing the guitar for about two years and he's a great breakfast cook and baker. "I cook and bake for my family all the time," says Tyrel.

What else does Tyrel want to share with Yak readers? Just this: "If you want to see action and you want to laugh, then you should definitely tune in to 'Lab Rats.' It's a show that has a whole bunch of stunts and special effects, and a lot of physical comedy – it's funny," says Tyrel. Now that's a good lab report. We'll definitely be watching.

By Janis Campbell

Tyrel Jackson Williams stars as Leo. The new series premieres at 8:30 p.m. on Disney XD on Monday, February 27.

Photos by Craig Sjodin/Disney XD



MEET THE SUPER-HUMAN SIBLINGS

BILLY UNGER

Billy stars as Chase, the youngest of the three bionic siblings and the brainiac (or as we like to say brainiyak) of the bunch in "Lab Rats."

Billy was born in Palm Beach County, Florida, and moved to Hollywood, with his family, about six years ago, to seriously pursue his acting career. Since moving to Los Angeles, Billy has guest starred on a long list of television shows including Disney XD's "Kickin' It," Disney Channel's "Sonny with a Chance," "No Ordinary Family," "Ghost Whisperer," and "Hawthorne." He's also had several movie roles including a starring role in "National Treasure 2: Book of Secrets."

When he's not working on the series, his interests include extreme martial arts motocross, surfing, skateboarding, and playing guitar.



SPENCER BOLDMAN

Spencer stars as Adam, the super-strong big brother on the show.

He's also a busy young actor. Next month, he'll be on the big screen in the movie "21 Jump Street," starring Johnny Depp and Channing Tatum. Spencer has also appeared on popular television shows including Disney XD's "I'm in the Band" and "iCarly."

Spencer grew up in Dallas, Texas, where he was involved in school and community productions before moving to Los Angeles to become a professional actor. When he's not working, he loves to be outdoors, playing lacrosse, going snowboarding and hiking.



KELLI BERGLUND

Kelli stars as bionic Bree, the sibling with lightning speed and agility. Kelli is also a busy actress and has played a wide range of roles. On the small screen, she was on "Hip Hop Harry" and "America's Next Producer" and also appeared in the feature film "Bye, Bye Benjamin." She's also appeared in many commercials for major companies and brands, including Old Navy, Hyundai, Bratz, McDonald's and Mattel.

Kelli, an accomplished dancer, is from California. When she's not acting or dancing, she enjoys photography and making movies on her computer.

Source: Disney XD

