



Sarah: 'I'M LIKE A CROSS HAMSTER NEXT TO THIS ITALIAN GOD'

The Miranda star has got us feeling 'proud' already

When Sarah Hadland was partnered up with Vito Coppola on this year's *Strictly Come Dancing*, she knew she'd 'lucked out' with the reigning champion. Now, with the series fully underway, the actress tells *heat* she remains overwhelmed at just what a blummin' delight Vito is.

'He's got me drinking his Italian coffee, just a very little cup,' the 53-year-old says, putting on a hilarious (and surprisingly accurate) Italian accent as she impersonates her pro

partner. 'At lunchtime, he puts a little napkin out and spreads his food out on it. Today, he has some home-grown tomatoes, and he said, "Have a home-grown tomato - it will lift your spirits, because it's the food of sunshine." I'm like, "How great is this?"'

Pretty damn excellent, by the sounds of things. Sarah, who is best known for playing Miranda Hart's best friend Stevie in the BBC sitcom *Miranda*, wowed the judges in week one with her light-as-air Quickstep, and dug into her moody side last

weekend with the Paso Doble.

As a comedy actor, Sarah naturally found the dark and dramatic

side harder to tap into. 'I get quite giggly,' she admits. 'Vito looks like this Italian, carved-from-stone god, and then there's me scurrying along next to him looking like a cross hamster.'

Sarah has danced onstage before, in musicals such as *Cats* and *Noises Off*, but insists the skills are completely different. 'I got away with murder, because what I lacked in technique I made up for in enthusiasm and energy and confidence,' she says. 'I've quickly learned that you don't want that for ballroom or Latin, because everything's very controlled and precise.'

Above all, however, Sarah is a *Strictly* super-fan, who admits

that if she wasn't on the series she'd be discussing it in her various *Strictly* WhatsApp groups. 'That's why I think I've held out for so long from doing it,' she says. 'It's a double-edged thing, isn't it? If you're a massive fan of something, you think, I hope it lives up to what I hope it's going to be.' So far, however, 'It's been everything I could have possibly dreamed of'.

Supporting her along the way are a bevy of actor pals, from Andrew Scott to Sian Gibson. Russell Tovey has promised to come along to a live show to cheer Sarah on - as have her *Miranda* co-stars Sally Phillips and Patricia Hodge.

What about *Miranda* herself? Well she's busy with work commitments right now, but Sarah jokes, 'She's like, "Please, can you stay in until November so I can come?"'

Given her track record so far, we reckon she's got a good chance. ■

Strictly Come Dancing continues on Saturdays on BBC One



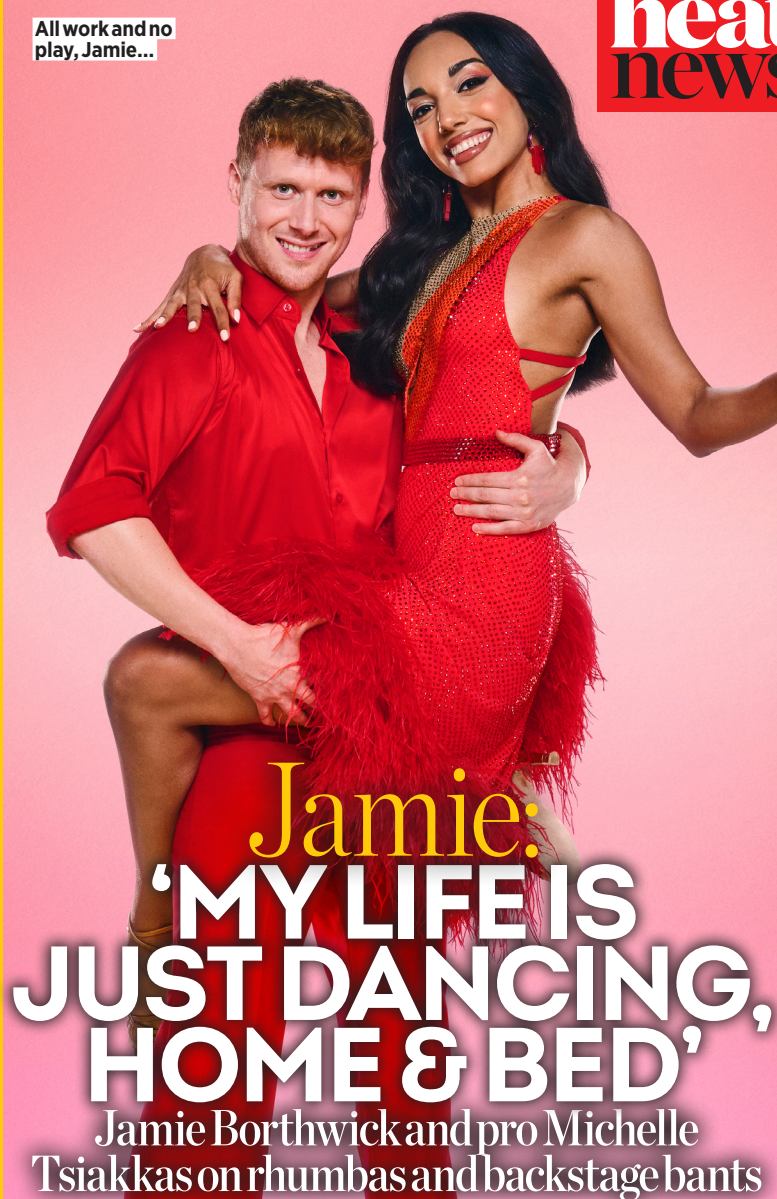


Will it be a purple reign for Sarah and Vito?

'The show is everything I could have dreamed of'

All work and no play, Jamie...

heat news



Jamie: 'MY LIFE IS JUST DANCING, HOME & BED'

Jamie Borthwick and pro Michelle Tsiakkas on rhumbas and backstage bants

Hi guys! Rhumba was a hard dance for week two, no?

Jamie: It's a very difficult one, and not a favourite among even the pros – let alone the celebs.

Michelle: In my opinion, it's probably the hardest Latin dance to learn, and that was the first time it had ever been done on week two on *Strictly*. So we made history, partner.

Jamie – how has *Strictly* taken over your life?

J: It's just literally dancing, home and bed. That's it. I'm a real socialite. I love being around my friends, and I'm out of the loop. I don't know what's going on in their lives.

M: Do you have FOMO?

J: Yeah, but not in a way of, 'Nah, I'll just miss it.' *Strictly* is magic. That's the word for it. It's magic.

You won the 2023 Christmas special, Jamie – is that what made you want to get involved?

J: Yeah. I got a little glimpse, which made me want to do the main show.

JB Gill won the 2012 Christmas special, too – yet you're the one who gets mentioned while he keeps quiet...

J: Yeah, so he should! I think it's just because maybe mine was so recent.

M: But he did and he won it, too. So he's also a winner.

J: On top that, he's in a boyband that dances onstage. He's done that as well – I don't do that.

M: Yeah, you tell them!

J: Maybe that slipped out unconsciously. [Laughs.] But, I don't mind... We love all that banter, so we want to keep that going. ■



Magic on the floor