

GOING PLACES Alexa Ilacad & KD Estrada

LOCAL SHOWBIZ'S
BREAKOUT LOVETEAM &
“HOTTEST MUSICAL PAIR”



Taste of Manila will vigorously defend itself against allegations, says Rolly Mangante, ToM Founder

TORONTO - Taste of Manila Productions (operating as The Taste of Manila) and founder, Mr. Rolando Mangante, are

aware of the recent allegations brought forth by International Entertainment Company. All allegations are denied, and we are

vigorously defending this matter through legal representation.

The Taste of Manila was
TASTE of MANILA p20

Filipino spaghetti, Hotsilog, Kinalas, balut, among Worst Dishes in the World

MANILA, Philippines – Oh no! Four Filipino dishes have (unfortunately) made it to 2023's Top 100 Worst Dishes in the World list, according to international food database Taste Atlas.



Taste Atlas released the list on Saturday, February 4, where Bicol's kinalas is in 17th place with a 2.4 rating, and breakfast staple hotsilog in 36th place with a 2.6

WORST DISHES p16

Philippines, U.S. Australia talk Joint Patrols in South China Sea

Australia's Defence Minister Richard Marles made the announcement after talks with Philippine Defence Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr.

MANILA - Australia and the Philippines are exploring the possibility of joint patrols in the disputed South China Sea, where recent “aggressive activities” by the Chinese Coast Guard towards a Philippine vessel saw Beijing's envoy in Manila summoned by Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Australian Defence Minister Richard Marles said that he had discussed joint patrolling with Philippine Defence Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr.

“As countries which are committed to the global rules-based order, it is natural that we should think about ways in which we can cooperate in this respect,” Marles said.

“We did talk today about exploring joint patrols and we will continue that work,” he said.

The possibility of the Philippines and Australia holding joint patrols in the South China Sea comes on the heels of similar discussions between Manila and Washington, and amid a backdrop of China's increasingly muscular approach in pressing its extensive territorial claims in the contested sea.

JOINT PATROLS page 15

INSIDE

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) will not resort to “gray zone tactics” in dealing with intruding Chinese coast guards and militia vessels in the West Philippine Sea.

PAGE 6



Postcard

Chinatown, Divisoria 1960's

Lea Salonga to star in controversial Broadway musical about Imelda Marcos

Here Lies Love, the disco musical centering around former first lady Imelda Marcos that opened on Off-Broadway in 2013, is making



LEA p19

Miss Universe Philippines 2023 candidates have 3 Pinay moms

MANILA, Philippines — The Top 40 official candidates for Miss Universe Philippines (MUPH) 2023 includes three mothers, a first for the national pageant.

Clariele “Clare” Dacanay, Mary Eileen Gonzales, and Joemay-An Leo become the first moms to be MUPH candidates since the official Miss Universe organization announced last August, allowing mothers and wives to enter provided they still fall within the age limit.

Clare is a single mother from Parañaque while Gonzales was previously crowned Miss Global



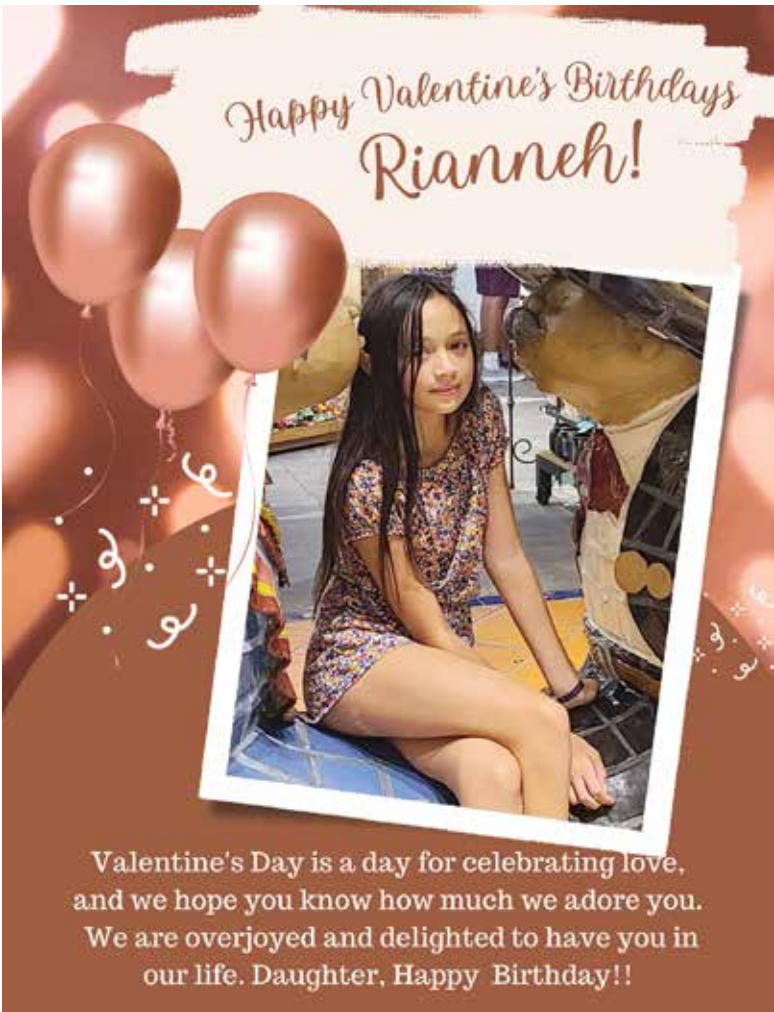
Philippines in 2018, already a single parent at the time of her coronation.

Vivamax warns against fake casting calls for ‘adult’ actors by impostor pages

Yikes — looks like some shady people are using Vivamax, the streaming service owned by Viva known to show risqué themes, to dupe unsuspecting people into joining fake casting calls.

Vivamax issued a warning to the public about fake accounts and websites posing as the highly popular platform, releasing false ads inviting actors and actresses to audition for mature roles.

“We have been made aware of social media pages and individual entities that are impersonating our Facebook page. WE WANT TO REMIND YOU THAT VIVAMAX DOES NOT POST



CASTING CALLS ONLINE. Any official announcements or promotions will only come from our official Vivamax Philippines page,” the page wrote.

They reminded people to be cautious in engaging with online pages that claim to be affiliated with the company, adding that they take the issue seriously and are working to identify and take down the fake pages.

“Your safety and privacy are of utmost importance to us, and we thank you for your cooperation in this matter,” it added.

Owned by media conglomerate Viva Communications Inc., Vivamax claims to be the top local streaming platform in the Philippines and is known for its selection of daring titles.

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'Hindi ako nape-pressure': Coco Martin on 'Batang Quiapo' beating 'Ang Probinsyano'

Kapamilya actor Coco Martin revealed that he is not pressured for "FPJ's Batang Quiapo" to beat the success of "FPJ's Ang Probinsyano."

In the grand media conference of the series last Tuesday, Coco said they are just enjoying the moment while working on the project.

"Actually, hindi ako nape-pressure or hindi ko rin iniisip 'yung timeline basta para sa 'kin, i-enjoy namin lahat ang moment, 'yung project. Kasi, naniniwala ako na bast, nagmamahalan kayo, nagrerespetuhan kayo at gustong-gusto niyo 'yung ginagawa niyo, magbubunga 'yan eh," Coco said.

He added that it's up to the viewers if the "FPJ's Batang Quiapo" will beat "FPJ's Ang Probinsyano."

"Ang makakasagot niyan siyempre 'yung mga manonood kaya kami bilang kami 'yung taga production, kami 'yung gumagawa nitong teleseryeng 'to, pinagbubuti namin kasi alam namin na hangga't pinagbubuti namin 'yung



trabaho namin at napapasaya namin 'yung mga manonood, nandito kami at hangga't okay ang lahat, okay kami, may trabaho kami," he said.

Coco said that he will do everything for the success of the series.

"Sinasabi ko lagi, mahirap akong katrabaho kasi hindi pwede sa 'kin 'yung pwede na, sinu-sure ko na dapat 'yung quality, 'yun ibibigay natin sa mga manonood, 'yung tiwala at oras na ilalaan nila sa'tin dapat sinusuklian natin 'yon dahil sila ang dahilan kung bakit meron tayong trabaho," he said.

"Gusto ko binabalik namin sa mga management o kung sino man 'yung nangangalaga sa amin na kung ano man 'yung binilin sa 'min o pinagkatiwala sa 'min dapat sinusuklian namin 'yon. Kaya sana, nangangarap ako, nagdadasal ako na sana hindi lang matapatan; ang pangarap ko rito, malampasan 'yung nagawa namin sa 'FPJ's Ang Probinsyano'," he added.

'Respetuhin natin 'yung totoong may ganito': Jessy Mendiola slam claim her and Luis Manzano's baby has cleft lip

Actress Jessy Mendiola asked her followers to report a YouTube video claiming that her child with Luis Manzano has cleft palate.

In her Instagram story, Jessy posted a screenshot of the YouTube video, calling it fake news.

"Please help us take down this video/account by clicking the link and report as harassment or child abuse" Jessy wrote in the caption.

"It's never okay to post fake news. It's never okay



to spread negativity about having a cleft palate/lip. Respetuhin sana natin 'yung totoong may ganito," she wrote in another IG story.

Luis and Jessy welcomed Rosie last December and shared the news of her birth on Instagram last month.

They only posted their baby's face when the baby celebrated her first month.

"Hello world, meet Isabella Rose Tawile Manzano. Happy 1 month, our little Rosie!" Jessie wrote in the caption.

Greenhills, Baclaran, Divisoria, Cartimar tagged by EU as 'counterfeit hubs'

The budget shopper is no stranger to the sprawling alleys of shopping hubs such as Greenhills, Baclaran, Divisoria, and Cartimar – where one can purchase just about anything from affordable clothes and accessories in bulk, a wide array of flowers, to niche items like hobby gear, collectibles, and other curiosities.

With these wares sourced from a variety of places such as China, the European Commission Counterfeit and Piracy Watch List has tagged these places as hubs for counterfeit goods.

The EU Watch List identified these four markets as offering a wide range of counterfeit goods on a retail and wholesale basis. The report said that the most

commonly sold counterfeit goods are shoes, and also alleged that some stalls also run online shops that peddle fakes.

The report mentioned that "no police actions are





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Life's brighter under the sun

Instagram official? KC Concepcion finally posts about rumored Filipino-Swiss boyfriend

Actress KC Concepcion finally posted her rumored boyfriend on social media last Valentine's Day.

In KC's Instagram account, KC posted a video of her and Filipino-Swiss Steve Wuethrich walking then revealing themselves at the end of the clip.

"Happy Valentines, beautiful people," KC captioned the post.

Instagram users quickly commented on KC's post, expressing their support to Sharon Cuneta's daughter.



"So handsome. Happy for your own George Clooney. Enjoy you guys. You both deserve to be HAPPY," @eeyore923 commented.

"Parang ito na ang last feel ko sya na talaga para. Kay KC," @laila_enriquez commented.

Social media users were speculating that KC is now in a relationship with Steve after he was always seen in KC's YouTube channel.

Sharon fueled the speculation when she posted a video of her celebration wherein KC was seen seated with Steve.

taken" when it comes to the Baclaran and Divisoria marketplaces in Parañaque City and the city of Manila,



respectively. Meanwhile, the stalls in Greenhills and Cartimar reportedly sell higher-quality counterfeit goods.

It also mentioned that the National Bureau of Investigation seized EUR1 million (US\$1.078 million) worth of possible counterfeit goods in Greenhills shopping center in April last year, and pledged publicly to curb the sale of counterfeits.

This is the first time the EU Watch List has flagged the Philippine marketplaces since its launch in 2018.

Phl eyes own missile system

THE Philippines will inch closer to achieving its deterrence objectives as it is poised to have its own missile system that will give the country's "anemic" defense capability a much-needed upgrade.

The Philippine Navy (PN) should be receiving this year the first of three batteries of the BrahMos shore-based anti-ship missile

system (Sbassms), which will be the primary weapon of the Coastal Defense Regiment (CDR), a newly formed unit of the Philippine Marine Corps.

The regiment is part of the Navy's Defense Capability Program and Active Archipelagic Defense Strategy, which aims to assert the country's sovereignty in its exclusive eco-

nomic zone (EEZ) and extended continental shelf, and protecting Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs).

The regiment is expected to be fully functional in 2026.

Defense experts said the BrahMos cruise missile system will provide counter-attack capabilities within the Philippine exclusive economic zone.

The missile batteries are likely to be deployed in Luzon and Palawan, both facing

the South China Sea.

All the land features in the West Philippine Sea that the Philippines considers an integral part of its territory but are being claimed in whole by China are less than 220 kilometers away from its shoreline, including Mischief Reef where China has constructed military installations.

"It will be a major boost to defending the archipelago and maintaining stability in the West Philippine Sea," he said.

“Do you want Nigerian million dollars?” 😊🤔💡

According to China, the laser that was pointed by their Coast Guard against the Philippine Coast Guard, “within our sovereign territory,” was not dangerous. It was to measure their distance from them so as to void a collision and to guide them to a safer direction. Ganern? In that case, if you believe that, I have millions of dollars to give you on behalf of General Abacha of Nigeria. I am the representative by the general for the lucky recipients to the Filipino community. Just give me your bank account number/s and passwords and the money will be deposited.

Sus Guinoo ni Roxanne na nakatihaya. 😊🤔

JOINT CHINA-PHL PATROL

In an audacious kapalmuks, China proposed a joint military patrol of West Philippine Sea. Really, why will we allow them to patrol our territory?

China is trying to impose it’s version of the Monroe Doctrine of the United States. The Monroe Doctrine is a key part of U.S. foreign policy. President James Monroe issued the policy in 1823. The Monroe Doctrine is made four basic points: (1) the United States would not interfere in European affairs; (2) the United States recognized and would not interfere with existing colonies in the Americas; (3) the Western Hemisphere was closed to future

colonization; and (4) if a European power tried to interfere with any nation in the Americas, that would be viewed as a hostile act against the United States.

The big difference is the US is not grabbing any territory is Southeast Asia. China is the one grabbing territories from other countries. In fact, it is trying to conquer other countries without declaring war. It is also claiming international waters as it’s territory. That way, they can control any ships that passes there.

In fact, they are also trying to control international airspace for the whole of Southeast Asia and they have demanded that all aircrafts ask permission before flying there.

As I said, kapalmuks. 🤔🤔

TASTE OF MANILA TALK

Previously, Lovely Luna of Taste of Manila (TOM) told me that Pete Torralba will get in touch with me. I did not know why. Well, now I know. Pete Torralba was assigned to have the heart to heart talk with me.

Iyon pala, si Pete Torralba ang representative nila sa akin to show how they feel at TOM 🤔 about the article. Kaya sa birthday ng TOM founder Rolly Mangante, Pete approached me.

“Joey, gusto kitang makausap,” sabi ni Pete.

“Ano iyon? 🤔

“Iyong article mo, akala ng mga tao, may injunction,” sabi ni Pete.

“E ano ba?

“THERE IS NO INJUNCTION,” sabi ni Pete.

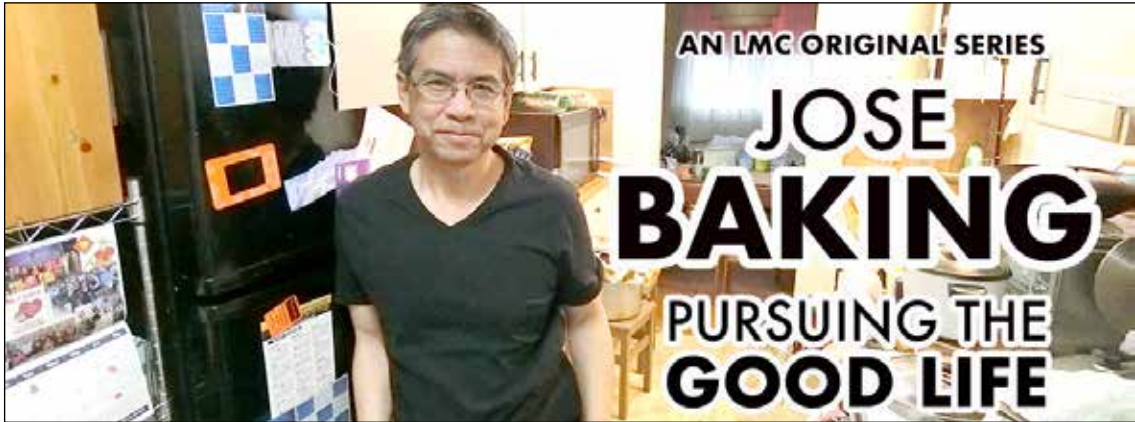
Pete was very emphatic in his details point by point. Well actually, just that one point. He was just succinct.

E di tapos ang talk. Pete had the final say. Mabuti na lang si Pete ang kumausap sa akin instead of their lawyers sending out a lawyerly letter to come out. Whew!

Iyan na po. Straight from Pete Torralba of Taste of Manila na, “There is no injunction.”

Kung hindi pa niyo paniniwalaan si Pete Torralba ng Taste of Manila, wala na po akong magagawa. Kung baga, I already told you that pigs only walk and run. Pero if you want to believe pigs also fly, there’s nothing more I can do. I will not argue with you anymore.

And with that, this newspaper has already reported both sides.



‘Maria Clara at Ibarra’ star David Licauco pay price of fame

You can’t blame David Licauco for feeling overwhelmed.

Since starring as Fidel in GMA’s “Maria Clara at Ibarra” opposite Barbie Forteza, his star has never dimmed.

The “Pambansang Ginoo” and the face of various products – the latest of which is BlueWater Day Spa – admitted that a lot has changed since the groundbreaking series overhauled his life five months ago.

Time flies faster, and it sometimes can be exhausting. But he’s not complaining. In fact, he feels blessed.

“This has been my dream,” he explained.

So he brushes off the fatigue that is the price he has to pay for getting



a lion’s share of attention, not only among TV viewers, but young netizens.

David admitted worrying that the popularity of his love team with Barbie – FiLay – (for Fidel and Klay, the latter’s character), may affect the actress’ real-life boyfriend Jak Roberto.

But David set aside his worries because he is sure Jak – an actor himself – would understand. Besides, David and Jak are good friends. They have worked together back in 2021. And David is all praise for Jak, whose humility and diligence he admires.

“I have so much respect for him,” David said.

Philippine passport up 2 spots in world’s most powerful index

Traveling isn’t exactly a walk in the park when you’re a Philippine passport holder. That said, the brown passport just got slightly stronger after it jumped two spots up in the Henley Passport Index’s global ranking for the first quarter of 2023.

The Philippines ranked 78th out of 199 countries as it grants visa-free entry to 67 countries, sharing the spot with Uganda.

Meanwhile, the countries with the 10 most powerful passports retained their spots in this quarter’s ranking. Japan still leads the pack, with visa-free access to 193 countries. This is followed by Singapore and South Korea, whose passports let them enter 192 countries visa-free.

Spain and Germany ranked third with 190 visa-free destinations. At fourth place are Finland, Italy, Luxembourg, and Austria, allowing entry to 189 countries visa-free; Denmark, Netherlands, and Sweden ranked fifth with 188 visa-free countries.

Dead last is Afghanistan, whose passport grants visa-free access to 27 countries.



‘Everybody’s happy’:

Kylie Padilla on ex Aljur Abrenica confirming relationship with AJ Raval

Kapuso actress Kylie Padilla had nothing but words of happiness for ex-husband Aljur Abrenica, who recently confirmed he was officially in a relationship with fellow actress AJ Raval.

In a media conference promoting her upcoming show “Ang Mga Lihim ni Urduja,” Kylie was asked about the Valentine’s Day posts by Aljur and AJ.



The now-confirmed couple posted separate photos on their respective Instagram accounts on February 14, ending months of rumored speculation between the two.

“I’m happy for everybody. Everybody’s happy, and that’s what’s important,” Kylie said of her reaction to the two posts. She repeated the same answer when asked if she had a message for either Aljur or AJ, though reiterating the importance of happiness in a person’s life.

While Aljur and AJ spent their Valentine’s Day by confirming their relationship, Kylie had a more subdued celebration as she received a gift from her son Alas Joaquin — her eldest child with Aljur.

Kylie and Aljur initially dated for three years until 2014, rekindling their relationship two years later and got married in 2018.

A year later, the former couple had their second child Axl Romeo, but officially separated in 2021. Aljur had been linked to AJ for several months last year despite the latter saying they were not yet in a romantic relationship.

Talent manager Ogie Diaz then reported in November 2022 that AJ had given birth to her child with Aljur, despite AJ’s own father denying in August that his daughter was pregnant.

‘Don’t be so sensitive’: Ruffa Gutierrez advises Willie Revillame

Actress Ruffa Gutierrez believed that TV host Willie Revillame will be fine after the controversies he faced recently.



In a recent press conference for her upcoming movie “Martyr or Murderer,” Ruffa compared Willie to a cat.

“You know si Kuya Wils, I think he’s like a cat, he has nine lives. Nawala na siya, bumalik, nawala, bumalik, he’ll never go anywhere. I think he’ll be fine, I don’t think he will suffer a lot,” Ruffa said.

She also gave Willie some advice.

“I think ang advice ko lang

kay Kuya Wils, enjoy life. He’s super successful already, enjoy time with his family, wag nang pansinin ‘yung mga bashers,” she said.

“Nandiyan lang ‘yan, importante happy siya sa pamilya niya. Sa tingin ko narating na rin niya ang tuktok ng tagumpay and I believe Kuya Wils has a good heart,” she added.

She also asked the controversial TV host not to be sensitive.

“Yung mga natulungan niya nandiyan lang ‘yan, patuloy siyang pinagdarasal. So chin up, Kuya Wils! Don’t be so sensitive,” she said.

NBI issues subpoena for Luis Manzano over gas station investment scam allegations

The National Bureau of Investigation issued a subpoena for Luis Manzano after the actor figured in an alleged gas station investment scam.

It was revealed that the Criminal Intelligence Division of the NBI has issued the subpoena after investors of Flex Fuel Petroleum Corp. alleged the company including the actor are involved in estafa.

Fifteen (15) overseas Filipino workers have filed the complaints at the NBI. There are 40 complainants in the Philippines.

An investor named “Leo” said he gave



more than P1 million as investment.

The management of Flex Fuel has already denied the allegations.

Manzano had already previously said that he is not part of Flex Fuel. The TV host-actor also stressed that he is also a victim.

In a statement sent to media offices, Manzano said he also sought an NBI probe into the incident after some investors approached him for help.

He said the corporation also owed him P66 million.

Canada to reduce work experience requirements for caregivers and provide pathways to permanent residence

TORONTO - For decades, caregivers from abroad have played an invaluable role in supporting families in Canada. In recognizing their immense sacrifices, Canada has offered pathways to permanent residence in return.

On behalf of the Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship, members of Parliament Salma Zahid and Rechie Valdez today announced that the amount of work experience in Canada required for a caregiver to qualify for permanent residence is being reduced from 24 months to 12 months. In addition, some spaces under the existing caregiver pathways have been reserved for caregivers who already have work experience in Canada from a previous work permit so that they are able to apply for permanent residence. The change will be effective as of April 30, 2023, and will be retrospective for caregivers who have already applied.

As a result, caregivers and their families will benefit from a faster



path to permanent residence and successful settlement in Canada. By reducing the amount of work experience required in Canada, Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) also intends to improve processing and applications. This update is expected to benefit around 90% of applications currently in processing, an advantage for both the caregivers who are just starting out and those who have been providing care in Canada already.

As we approach the end date of the existing caregiver programs, we will continue to make any necessary changes to

show our appreciation to the caregivers who help reduce some of the stress in the lives of Canadian families in need. Work is underway on the future of caregiver programming to plan for what comes next after the pilots conclude in June 2024.

Quotes
“Caregivers are an important option for families in Canada and have played an instrumental role in the lives of many growing children, aging parents, and those who need additional specialized care. By reducing the work experience required in Canada to one year, more caregivers and their families will become eligible to transition to permanent residence sooner, meaning that they can settle down and start the next chapter of their lives here in Canada.”
– The Honourable Sean Fraser, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship
“Caregivers are indispensable in assisting Canadian families, and it’s an honour for us to provide them a more expedited route to permanent residence and prosper-



The announcement was held at Laguna Bay restaurant. MP Salma Zahid and MP Rechie Valdez talk with owner Ruby, formerly a caregiver herself.

ous integration into Canada. The decreased work experience requirement and reserved pathways to permanent residence recognize the sacrifices that caregivers make and the value of their work to Canadian society.”
– Salma Zahid, Member of Parliament for Scarborough Centre
“It is our responsibility to support caregivers in Canada. Reducing work experience and creating reserved pathways to permanent residence are just a couple of ways we can show our appreciation for the sacrifices and hard work of caregivers. We are committed to improving the process and making changes that are needed to recognize the value that caregivers bring to our community and to Canada.”
– Rechie Valdez, Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Streetsville

Quick facts
The change will be effective as of April 30, 2023, and will be retrospective for caregivers who have already applied.
The shift in criteria is intended to apply to applicants from both the Home Child Care Provider (HCCP) pilot and the Home Support Worker (HSW) pilot, including those whose applications have already been received by IRCC and prospective applicants for the remainder of the five-year pilots.
Since the launch of the pilots in 2019, nearly 1,600 caregivers and their family members have become permanent residents. In 2022 alone, nearly 1,100 caregivers and their family members became permanent residents through the two pilots.
Immigration accounts for almost all of Canada’s labour force growth. Roughly 75% of Canada’s population growth comes from immigration, mostly in the economic category. By 2036, immigrants will represent up to 30% of Canada’s population, compared with 20.7% in 2011.
Fifty years ago, there were seven workers for every retiree in Canada. Today, that number is closer to three, and if Canada stays on its current trajectory, in the next 10 to 15 years, that ratio will drop to two workers for every retiree.

Alessandra De Rossi, Empoy Marquez reunite in new Prime movie
Prime Video has released the teaser key art for the new Amazon Original Movie

Walang KaParis, a romantic drama that reunites the breakout tandem of Alessandra De Rossi and Empoy Marquez, popularly known as Alempoy.



Walang KaParis is helmed by Sigrid Andrea Bernardo, the director of Kita Kita (I See You), which catapulted the pair to fame in 2017.

Viewers will be able to stream the film exclusively on Prime Video starting March 23 in 240 countries and territories worldwide, alongside the tandem’s previous hit film.

Walang KaParis joins the hundreds of other Filipino shows and films available on the Prime Video catalog, such as 10 Little Mistresses, Drag Den with Manila Luzon, and One Good Day.



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Honda Pilot 2023



Gani Gregorio
Asst. Sales Manager



Honda Accord 2023



Jose Sarte
Service Manager



Honda Civic 2023



Ronaldo Aquino
Assistant Service Manager



Honda Passport 2023



Joseph Redoblado
Service Advisor



Honda CR-V 2023



Roland 'Regi' Germaldez
Sales and Leasing Consultant



Honda Odyssey 2023



Ramon Bayani
Sales and Leasing Consultant



Honda Pilot 2023



Shermann Naval
Sales and Leasing Consultant



Honda Accord 2023



Pio Regio
Senior Lot Attendant



Honda Civic 2023



Ramon Miranda
Lot Attendant



Honda Passport 2023



Marie Miranda
Service Appointment Coordinator



Honda CR-V 2023



Myla Mayo
Cashier / Receptionist



Honda Pilot 2023



Terry Aquino
Cleanup Associate



Honda Accord 2023



'Toni was my first love team': Sam Milby distances from Toni Gonzaga issue

Kapamilya actor Sam Milby doesn't want to answer the rumors that ABS-CBN stars are boycotting Toni Gonzaga's ALLTV program "Toni."

In an interview with the media in the sidelines of his upcoming movie with Judy Ann Santos "The Diary of Mrs. Winters," Sam said Toni was his first love team partner, so he doesn't want to comment.

"It's such a hard situation and it's some-

thing hard to answer and I don't want to comment. Toni was my first love team, of course, and I'll always love the works we've done," he said.

"ABS gave me my career and it was like nu'ng nag-audition



ako sa PBB ('Pinoy Big Brother'), it was direk Lauren (Dyogi) who choose me in that emergency audition that I did. And if not for ABS, I won't be here," he added.

When asked if he's invited to attend Toni's controversial concert, Sam said he doesn't know that Toni had a concert.

"I was not invited and I didn't know because I came from Australia, I stayed there for three weeks and kung nakikita ninyo hindi ako masyadong active sa social media, so, I'm not aware sa nangyayari sa showbiz," he said.

"Kapag may nagsasabi sa akin that's where I find out, and yeah, I think I found out the day before the concert," he added.

'Hindi n'yo ko iniwan': Alex Gonzaga treats loyal subscribers

Controversial YouTuber Alex Gonzaga surprised five of her fans to thank them for staying despite all the negative issues surrounding her.

In her YouTube channel, Alex said she picked five of her fans who just wanted to meet her personally.

"Thank you so much for subscribing, thank you so much for staying," Alex said in the video.

"Thank you so much dahil hindi kayo sumuko, hindi n'yo ko iniwan sa ating pagkasama," she added.



Alex visited their homes as she turned emotional to her fans who stayed by her side.

"Maraming, maraming salamat dahil alam ko nandi-yan kayo at nagre-reply para lang pagaanin 'yung nararamdaman ko," she said.

Last January, Alex trended on social media after she smeared her birthday cake's icing on a waiter's face during her birthday celebration.

Recently, veteran actress Dina Bon- nevie revealed that it was Alex who she was pertaining to in a 2018 interview, but she stressed that she and Alex had already settled the issue 12 years ago.

Cristy Fermin on Willie Revillame: 'Kakambal ng kanyang inunan ang kayabangan'

Veteran showbiz columnist Cristy Fermin admitted that her "anak-anakan" is arrogant.

In a recent episode of her show "Cristy Ferminute," Cristy said that she's just saying the truth. "Real talk po tayo, magpakatotoo po tayo. Ako mismo, nanay-nanayan niya, alam ko. Mayabang si Willie Revillame, may yabang. Nu'ng ipanganak siya, kakambal ng kanyang inunan ang kayabangan," she said.

She, however, explained Willie's arrogance.

"Pero ang pagyayabang ni Willie Revillame, 'yung 'pag may nagsisimula siyang proyekto, 'yung tiwala sa sarili, alam mo 'yun? Excited siya," she said.

"Wala pong magsisimula ng anumang paghamon na nalulungkot. Alangan namang sabihin niya, 'Magsisimula na po ang aming show. Ang lulungkot po naming lahat kasi malaking paghamon po ito.



Sana po marausan po namin at magtagumpay.' Wala pong ganu'n," she added.

Revillame angrily blasted celebrities and social media personalities who were criticizing him on Tuesday's episode of "Wowowin."

"Hindi na ako matatakot sa inyong lahat! Laban na ito kung laban. Masyado niyo na akong inaapi. Masyado niyo na akong sinasaktan. Hindi ako susuko sa inyo. I-vlog n'yo ako bukas! Pagtulung-tulungan n'yo ako, hindi ako natatakot! Yun ang gusto n'yo? Okay lang, sigel!" he said.

"Tirahin n'yo ako araw-araw, minu-minuto, I don't care! Kayo ang may utang na loob sa akin! Hindi ako! Tandaan niyo yan sa buhay niyo! Bukas! Kahit ngayon, i-vlog niyo ako. Araw-araw ko din sasabihin kung sino kayo! At sasabihin ko ang mga pangalan ninyo, in time! Kung sino kayo!" he added.

'I'm very blessed': Roselle Nava on Gen Z still singing her songs

Singer Roselle Nava is glad that millennials and the Gen Z still know and sing her songs.

Roselle said she's fortunate that Filipinos still remember her with her songs "Bakit Nga Ba Mahal Kita" and "Dahil Mahal Na Mahal Kita."

"Nakakatuwa nga e. Marami akong nami-meet na matanda, bata, at alam pa rin nila 'yung kantang 'Bakit Nga Ba Mahal Kita.' I'm so fortunate kasi through the years, hindi nila nakakalimutan si Roselle Nava dahil sa mga awitin kagaya ng 'Bakit Nga Ba Mahal Kita,' 'Dahil Mahal na Mahal Kita'," she said.

"Kasi tayong mga Pilipino mahilig talaga tayong kumanta, mag-karaoke and I'm very happy na isa po sa mga paborito ng mga Pilipino ang mga kanta ko. So I'm very, very blessed," she added.



'No one owes you anything': Kiko Rustia blasts Revillame

Former Kapuso host Kiko Rustia criticized Willie Revillame for the latter's rants regarding the much-talked-about ALLTV rumor involving the temporary suspension of some of the channel's programs.

On an entertainment blogger's Instagram account, Kiko reacted to Willie's comments.

"Wow. Sya pa ang inapi? This reaction actually says more about who he really is. Instead of humility and being sorry about his shortcomings, eto pa makukuha natin," the former "Born to Be Wild" host said.

In his Twitter account, the Pasig City councilor continued to share his thoughts on the statements made by the beleaguered "Wowowin" host.

"Instead of humility and being sorry for his shortcomings and faults...sya pa ang nag banta at nanumbat. Thats a whole new level right there," he said.



"Eto ba yung tunay na tao na nakatago sa likod ng mukhang pinapakita kapag 'tumatulong' at 'nagpapasya'?" he added.

Kiko said Willie needs to reflect on what he has said regarding the ongoing issue.

"Sorry, but no one owes you anything. Ang pagtulong ay kailan man hindi sinusumbat.

"Pero kung tutuusin, it is you who owes everyone EVERYTHING for helping you become the rich, influential, and powerful man that you are today," he added.

Last month, rumors of ALLTV's plan to temporarily stop airing some of its programs surfaced. Among the fledgling network's programs is Revillame's "Wowowin."

Althea Abla steps out of the loveteam zone

Althea will show what she is made of as a young actress in the upcoming GMA afternoon family drama, AraBella. This time around, she goes solo and plays Bella, whose characterization is crafted in the bida-kontrabida mold. This is perhaps the most meaty and challenging role Althea has ever taken on.

Althea Abla, the Sparkle GMA Artist Center young actress, "goes solo" for the upcoming afternoon drama series, AraBella. Yes, she's testing the acting waters,

outside of the loveteam zone. Part of this latest development in her career is playing the character Bella, who was crafted in the bida-kontrabida (protagonist-antagonist) mold.

Perhaps, it is Althea's most meaty and challenging role, so far.

Away from the klieg lights, Althea is a Grade 12 senior high student and wishes to pursue a tourism course in college. What also keeps her hands full these days is

being part of Gourmet in a Box, an investment that will also secure her future.

"Naisipan ko rin na siyempre hindi lang ako pwe- deng umasa dito sa showbiz industry (I also thought that I should not only rely on doing showbiz), siyempre meron din akong ibang pag- kaabalahan, like business talaga, nakakatulong (I also need something that will



keep me busy, like being part of a business)," said she.

Her first love, however, remains acting, and Althea hopes to keep doing it for as long as she can.

"I super enjoy (the fact that) when I go to the set, I'm meeting new friends and of course, if you have new friends, you learn about them and their experiences," said she. "Malalagay mo rin siya sa sarili mo eh, pa- rang learning mo rin yun para sa sarili mo (you can also use and learn from them), I don't know parang when I act, sobrang natutuwa ako (I'm happiest), basta humarap lang ako sa camera talaga, (tapos) bigay ko to sa'yo, ganto, ganyan, gagawin ko talaga."



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Marcos to DILG, PNP: Dismantle private armies

MANILA — President Marcos described as “shocking” and “purely political” the assassination of Negros Oriental governor Roel Degamo as he ordered authorities to identify “hot spots” and to conduct a crackdown on private armies and illegal firearms.

“It was shocking. I couldn’t believe that this would still happen. They (killers) entered his house. When you see the video, you would see that they shot those who were facing them,” the President said in Filipino.

“This one is particularly terrifying... This does not belong in our society. This should not be tolerated so we won’t let this pass,” he added.

Marcos expressed belief that unlike some of the recent attacks against local officials, the killing of Degamo was

politically motivated. “This is purely political,” he said.

The assassination of Degamo is the latest violent incident targeting local officials.

On Feb. 17, Lanao del Sur Gov. Mamintal Adiong Jr. was injured and four of his aides were killed in an ambush in Maguing town. Two days later, Aparri, Cagayan vice mayor Rommel Alameda and five others died in an ambush in Bagabag, Nueva Vizcaya. On Feb. 22, Mayor Ohto Caumbo Montawal of Datu Montawal, Maguindanao del Sur was wounded in an ambush in Pasay City.

Marcos said he has asked Interior Secretary Benhur Abalos and the Philippine National Police to make an “examination” and determine “hot spots,”

similar to what they are doing during election season. He also emphasized the need to seize illegal firearms and to dismantle private armies.

“The usual thing that should be done is to look for illegal firearms. If there are few illegal firearms, such kinds of crimes would be few. All the private armies should be dismantled,” he added.

Marcos said the investigation into Degamo’s killing is progressing well.

President Marcos also directed the military and the police to increase their presence across the country.

“So, I’ve asked our joint – army and the police, I suggest keep your presence known, felt, to prevent lawlessness,” Marcos said partly in Filipino.

NPA ambushes soldiers involved in SAR of downed Cessna plane; 2 dead

MANILA - Two soldiers who were buying supplies for the search team involved in search and rescue operations on a crashed Cessna plane in Albay were killed when they were ambushed by suspected New People’s Army (NPA) rebels last Feb. 20.

Captain German Franco Roldan, officer in charge of the 9th Infantry Division (9ID) public affairs office, identified the victims as Privates John Paul Adalim and Mark June Esico, both assigned at the 31st Infantry Battalion.

The soldiers died on the spot after sustaining multiple gunshot wounds in the body.

Maj. Gen. Adonis Bajao, 9ID commander and head of the Joint Task Force Bicolandia, condemned the NPA for their treacherous attack which led to the death of the two young servicemen.

“Pagpapakita ito ng kaduwagan at kawalan ng respeto sa karapatang pantao sa pamamagitan ng pagkitil ng buhay ng mga sundalong nakatalaga sanang magpaabot ng tulong at magsalba ng buhay ng atin mga kababayan (This shows their cowardice and lack of respect to human rights by killing the soldiers who were assigned to extend help and save lives of our countrymen),” Bajao said.



‘Vlogger Vi’: Vilma Santos bares collaboration with Sharon Cuneta

After over 60 years in showbiz, “Star for All Seasons” Vilma Santos has recently joined the vlogging trend and posted her first YouTube vlog seven months ago.

Now that “Ate Vi” has almost half a million subscribers and following a successful collaboration with socialite Small Laude that garnered 1.6 million views, she announced earlier today her new vlog collaborator: “Megastar” Sharon Cuneta.

“Ang isang looking forward ako na si Sharon. Ito ‘yung mga looking forward ako na magco-collab kami, and then, Edgar Mortiz. Para naman sa mga titos and titas! So ito ‘yung mga looking forward ako na mga content ko, ‘yung may mga ka-collab na, para makasama ko naman ‘yung mga colleagues ko sa industry,” Vilma professed at a media conference earlier today launching her as the new brand ambassador for

motorbike hailing app Angkas.

“Hindi ko naman alam na magiging vlogger ako,” she enthused. “Wala na eh, hindi na natin malalabanan ang social media. And that time na dinaanan natin ‘yung pandemic, na wala tayong ginagawa, and that was the time my son, Lucky, and Jessie, stayed in my home, in our home, and d’un ako naturuan ng vlogging.”

She said her son Luis Manzano and daughter-in-law Jessie Mendiola also taught her to plan her content based on her everyday life.

“Tinuturuan lang nila ako like mga everyday na happenings mo sa buhay or kung meron kang special occasion na pupuntahan and you want to share.”

“I’m enjoying it!” she said of her vlogging experi-



ence so far. “Kasi kahit na nagkaro’n tayo ng pandemic, hindi ka naging ganu’n ka-visible, through vlogging, nagkaro’n ka ulit ng kumikasyon sa mga kaibigan at sa mga fans. Kasi kapag nag-gawa ako ng vlog, may mga comments, so nakakarinig naman ako ng mga kumento sa kanila, so I felt na close na naman ako ulit.”

Nonetheless, Ate Vi admitted she is still continuing to adjust to her newfound passion and medium.

“Kaya lang sumusobra ako ‘pag minsan,” she said. “Kasi akala ko nasa television ako minsan... Minsan ang vlog ko, sa content ko, tumatagal ng one hour. Liwanan ka pala ng audience mo kapag ka-gan’un!”

She said the vlogs that work for her are those that are “raw” and show her authenticity.

Apart from Sharon, Vilma received a suggestion to vlog riding Angkas, which she joyfully welcomed since she has been fondly riding with her husband, former senator and current Batangas congressman Ralph Recto, who is also a big bike rider.

“Sanay ako sa motorsiklo. Sinusundo pa’ko sa show ko nu’ng araw. Naka-gown pa’ko. Aandar kami. Nakatingin sa’kin lahat d’un sa bus. Sino ‘tong naka-gown na ito? Wala pang helmet-helmet nu’n. So sanay talaga ako kasi talagang rider si Ralph.”

When asked if she also would like to collaborate with “Superstar” Nora Aunor, Vilma said: “Why not? Meron din s’ya!”

“So ang point ko lang, baka mas lalabas na’ko kasi mas safe na rin ang environment natin sa COVID eh. Kaya hindi ako nagcocollab before kasi talagang natakot ako kasi nagkaro’n ako ng long COVID. ‘Di naging pleasant ‘yun sa’kin.”



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Jake Cuenca in full monty?

According to Jake Cuenca, it would depend on the audience if he will do frontal nudity in the controversial stage play DickTalk, which will run from April 15 to 23, at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium in Makati City.

“I have the freedom to do it if I want to,” he avers. “Let’s see. I’ll cross the bridge when I get here. Let’s see how I’ll feel on that day!”

The competent actor explains that doing a full monty should not be the main selling point in the forthcoming stage play.

“For me, the main reason why I want to go back to theater is not because I want to do a skin or peep show. What I want to showcase is how I do theater. My main purpose here is to show that I’m different in films, television, and the legitimate stage.”

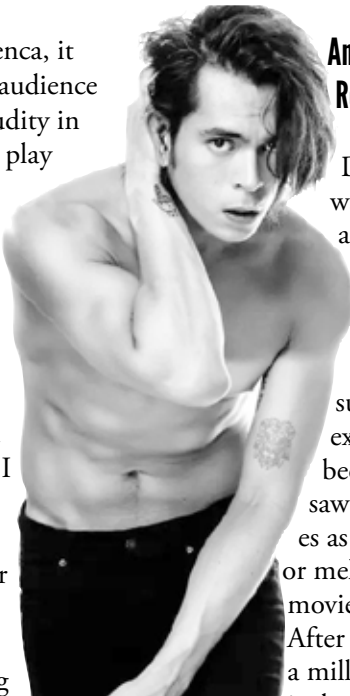
Interestingly, what does he love about theater?

“Well, for one, it’s dangerous – you don’t know what’s going to happen once you stepped foot on stage. You’re also in control. As I’ve said earlier, you can do whatever you want.”

For Jake, the audience is a huge factor.

“If I feel that they want it, or the anticipation is there and this is the cherry on top of a good performance, then I might give it. Definitely, I won’t take that away from the audience.

“It’s not a very satisfying experience to go full monty in a theater without an audience, right? So, you have to feel it out. At the end of the day, it’s still a performance. I will just feel it from the connection that I built with the audience,” he ends.



Angel Locsin inspires Dimples Romana

Dimples Romana revealed she was inspired by her bestfriend, actress Angel Locsin, when she did the viral action scenes for the nightly action-packed series “Iron Heart.” Viewers of the show were surprised to see the actress execute an action sequence because it was the first time they saw Dimples throw some punches as opposed to her usual heavy or melodrama scenes on TV and movies. “Akin naman trabaho lang. After nu’n, nag-reach siya ng almost a million views I think. And this is the first job I did after giving birth. I feel empowered.

With the warm reception to Selene, Dimples was asked if she sees herself as an action star.

“Siguro the magic of my career is even I become very suprised with the things that I do. So siguro sundan na natin ‘yung tema na ‘yun na I always go out of my comfort zone and if it is celebrated, if it is commended naman and if it is supported by the great people behind the camera, I’m so into it. Kasi it really takes a lot of the off-cam kasi all those action scenes will not function really well if not for the teamwork kasi hindi rin siya maganda kung hindi naisulat ng maayos,” Dimples replied.



Xian Lim advocates for self-love in vlog

Actor-director Xian Lim is advocating self-love in his latest vlog, saying loving one’s self and becoming his own top priority should not be construed as selfishness.

In a video that he posted on Instagram, Lim underscored the importance



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Life’s brighter under the sun



of loving oneself first and foremost. “A gentle reminder: It’s not selfish to prioritize yourself first before others,” he captioned his post, then a statement from Oprah Winfrey, which said: “If you don’t fill your own cup, other people will drain you dry.” In the video, Lim said that ponder on things and setting aside matters to prioritize oneself is self-love.

“We all have responsibilities especially to our family and work. But what if I tell you to put that aside for now and



look after ourselves first?” he said. “It’s not selfish to take care and prioritize yourself and make your happiness your priority. Don’t forget to fill your own cup first so that you can over flow and fill the lives of others.”

Xian’s latest vlog showed him and girlfriend Kim Chiu as they visited the famous Matterhorn mountain in Switzerland. While there, the couple sang a few stanzas of Miley Cyrus’ song, “The Climb”.



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Celeste Cortesi on first acting job, life after Miss Universe

Celeste Cortesi shared that she would love to explore the world of showbiz after her first acting experience in Mars Ravelo's Darna. The surprise appearance in the series finale quickly trended on social media.

The Miss Universe Philippines played the role of Kevnar, the Queen of Marte, who showed up before the titular character Darna (played by Jane de Leon) to thank her for keeping the planet safe and protected.

"It was a surprise for my fans and I'm happy I did it," Celeste said.

"It was such a good opportunity because Darna is one of the most iconic characters in the Philippines. The script was in Tagalog and not even an English

word. It was my first time to do, like, a whole script in Tagalog and a script in general as I've never really done acting," she said.

She was also grateful for the chance "to work with very professional and talented people."

"That's the most important thing for me. The fact that I have so much to learn and so much to explore and I'm really looking forward to what's



going to happen after Miss Universe."

Joining showbiz fully could be the next step for the Fil-Italian beauty and she'd welcome it.

"I'm really just excited about what's to come. When a door closes, there's another one wide open."

By "door closed," Celeste meant her failed bid at the 71st Miss Universe held last Janaury in New Orleans. The international pageant was won by Miss USA, R'Bonney Gabriel, who happens to be Filipino-American.

"Of course, everybody is very heartbroken but I'm very grateful because I had a chance to represent the Philippines. And I worked very, very hard. I felt the love, I felt the support. At the end of the day, I'm just very grateful," Celeste said.

While she didn't get the chance to

bond enough with R'Bonney during the competition, Celeste said she's very happy for her. "I'm happy for her and I think she's gonna do great things as Miss Universe."

When asked about what she did shortly after Miss Universe, she shared, "I had two weeks like I was eating everything hahaha. So good. Just two days ago, I started working out again since I wanted to continue my career. Now, I'm back, I wanna focus on new goals, so that's it."

Told by a reporter that aspiring contestants last Feb. 13 included a mother, she said, "I think that Miss Universe has entered a new era, very inclusive of every single woman. And I think a woman, especially a mother, can be whatever she wants to be, she can have a family, she can have a career, she can also be Miss Universe," she said.

"My advice would be to really enjoy the experience, to work very hard, to not forget where you came from, to always be humble in every situation and to enjoy. Whatever is gonna happen, I'll be very, very happy to see who's gonna be the next Miss Universe Philippines."

Canada opens new application processing centre in Philippines to help boost immigration

Canada is opening a new visa application processing centre within its embassy in the Philippines in an effort to boost immigration.

Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Sean Fraser said the new centre is meant to bolster application

processing as Canada tries to meet its planned immigration increases over the next few years. "Canada is set to welcome a record number of newcomers in the years ahead to fuel our economic growth. This will give us an advantage in the global race for talent, and support

key sectors and industries," Fraser said.

Ottawa previously announced plans to ramp up immigration levels to address labour shortages and demographic changes that threaten the country's future.

Canada is poised to see 465,000 new

permanent residents in 2023, 485,000 in 2024 and 500,000 in 2025, if its Immigration Levels Plan goals are met. The Prairies stand to benefit the most from economic growth spurred by newcomers, according to a Desjardins report from early February.

Liza Soberano reveals 'Hello Love Goodbye' first offered to her, Enrique Gil

Actress Liza Soberano revealed that the blockbuster movie "Hello Love Goodbye" starring Kathryn Bernardo and Alden Richards was first offered to her and on- and off-screen partner Enrique Gil.

In the latest YouTube video of Bea Alonzo, Liza said that she wanted to do the movie but got shocked when it was offered to Kathryn and Enrique.

"While doing 'Bagani,' nabalitaan ko na they offered (the film) to Kathryn and Quen and na-scared (ako). I asked why did they do that. I asked them to save the project for me and Quen nu'ng pinitch sa amin," she said.

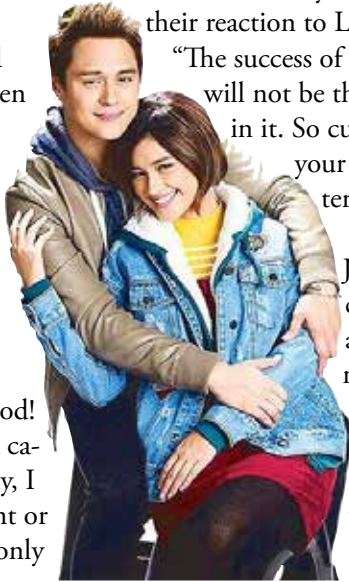
"Parang can we do this pitch pero they didn't kasi kailangan pang i-develop pa more. And then we say, 'Okay, please

save it for us' and then nalaman ko na lang na they will still be offering it to Quen and Kathryn," she said.

Liza admitted that she's scared that fans may not see the LizQuen tandem anymore after "Bagani" when she does "Darna."

"And I was scared that like after 'Bagani' and when I do 'Darna.' wala na 'yung LizQuen and for me, I don't want to do that to the fans and also Quen was my comfort zone," she said.

"So later I realized, 'Oh my God! Ang dami kong hindi nagawa sa career ko' and that's why everybody, I think, takes for granted my talent or acting capabilities because they only



see me in a loveteam," she added.

Fans of Kathryn posted on Twitter their reaction to Liza's revelation.

"The success of Hello, Love, Goodbye will not be the same if it wasn't her in it. So cut the crap the swallow your frustrations," a Twitter user said.

"She didn't just (play) Joy, she is Joy. No one can play that character as good as KB did. She may not be the first choice for that role but she was destined to play it," another user wrote.

Two generations of drama princesses unite for an afternoon soap

After five years since Ang Forever Ko'y Ikaw aired in 2018, Camille Prats returns to the small screen this 2023. This time, she shares the limelight with two of this generation's Drama Princesses, Shayne Sava and Althea Ablan, for the upcoming GMA drama series AraBella.

'AraBella' stars (from top) Althea Ablan, Camille Prats, and Shayne Sava are Drama Princesses in their own ways

Both young actresses are grateful for the network recognizing their talents in soap operas and promising to give their best in future projects to maintain or further their prospects in the industry.



Rolly's 70th BDay Bash by Ricardo Jorge S. Caluen

Apart from the FB invite, the celebrant called me 3x to ensure I attended his party. I said he is an old Toronto friend and definitely I would show up and partly because I know I would see old faces from way back in the early 1990s when I was new in Toronto. I anticipated the event would occasion a reunion of sorts. Most of these "old faces" are friends because of my earlier engagement in the Filipino community as Settlement Counsellor at what was then the Kababayan Community Centre and later as editor of the Filipino Bulletin for some 10 years. In my latter capacity, attending major social functions of the Filipino community in Toronto was "de rigueur".

It was heartening to hear Rolly's journey in life as narrated at the start of the birthday bash that



Rolly stands at extreme left in this photo of PhilConGen Toronto staff. Ambassador A Mosquera is in the extreme right.

gathered some 600 guests at the Oasis Banquet Hall. Arriving in Toronto in 1993, no menial job was too low for Rolly who I first met while he was bartender of Mabuhay Restaurant

on Bathurst Street which was frequented by OFWs and those who love karaoke. And before I knew it, in 1998 he was already working at the Philippine Consulate General where he worked as official driver and later as frontline staff.

With my late good friend Tenny Soriano, then president of the Philippine Press Club, and then Congen Alejandro Mosquera (later Ambassador to Moscow)....we were dubbed "The Last Men Standing". Those were my heydays with the local Filipino media men and Phil Consulate General officials and staff when we held court in the different Pinoy joints that we frequented, often the last men to leave (hence, last men standing) when establishments close at 2 a.m. Rolly would drive us all home safely.

In the past 10 years or so Rolly's name is associated with the Taste of Manila festival with its huge following making the festival possibly the largest Filipino street festival in Canada (and possibly in the Northern Hemisphere).

The lobby of Oasis Baquet Hall was filled with tables laden with various trophies, framed photos and certificates, etc., all attesting to Rolly's active involvement in the Filipino community in Canada. Many show him rubbing elbows with Philippine Presidents, Canadian federal and provincial officials, Philippine showbiz personalities, etc. Not bad for the boy veggie farmer who grew up in his native province of Mindoro.

Rolly worked in Mindanao for three years where he picked up a pretty good command of Sebuwano. Daghang salamat ug happy birthday, Bai Rolly!



1. Dodong & Precy Tumalak, dad Samuel Michael White and mom Marie Rodriguez with son Noah Oscar White, Theresa Lumanlan, Frank Cruzet st Noah's 1-year birthday party; 2.Mika Sy, Josie de Leon and Mikaela Amaral at JDL Love Me, Love Me Not charity concert for epilepsy research; 3. Marco Landicho and Mika Sy performs at JDL's Love Me Love Me Not.



Ria Atayde poses for sexy calendar as she promotes body positivity

Kapamilya star Ria Atayde, who advocates for body positivity, is White Castle Whisky's 2023 calendar girl. In an interview, Atayde shared her excitement about her latest endorsement.

"I was so touched. Very excited to show to the people our campaign. Big girls don't usually get the chance to do this. It's really about embracing your body," she said.

Atayde is also grateful she's part of the iconic calendar girl line-up of the liquor brand. Some of the actresses who were previously tapped to endorse the brand were Lorna Tolentino (1982), Carmi Martin (1984), Cristina Gonzalez (1992-1993), and Glydel Mercado, wearing the iconic red bikini.

"Beauty goes in all forms and sizes.

You can be wholesome and sexy. You don't have to show more skin to be sexy. You just have to show your confidence," Atayde said.

When she tapped as calendar girl, how did her parents react? "When this was pitched to us, andun din ang parents. Hinahayaan na nila ako to decide. There was no discussion anymore," she said.

"Supportive silang lahat. The whole point of this calendar is really about being confident."

Atayde also talked about body shamers and admitted that she's still getting comments about her body.

"Kailangan ba you make people sad? Anong point?" she said.

She told victims: "Kaya niyo 'yan. It took so long for me to get to a point bago ko mahalín ang sarili ko. Just do things



to make yourself healthy. You don't have to look in a certain way. Focus on yourself. Tune off the noise," she said.

Atayde continued: "I work out not because I hate my body but because I want to be healthy. It's a matter of turning off the noise. People will sure have a lot to say."

"Love your body and everything will follow. It's about love. Also, it's valid na ma-conscious tayo. But you just have to turn off the noise.

"Things are going so well in my career. Right now, I'm enjoying how my career is going. You don't have to follow certain timeline."

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AJ Raval hits back at bashers calling her ‘kabit, homewrecker’



Actress AJ Raval clapped back at bashers who called her a mistress and a homewrecker, accusing her of being the third party to the separation between her current boyfriend Aljur Abrenica and his ex Kylie Padilla.

‘Hindi ako nanira ng family nila’

AJ Raval stressed that her boyfriend, actor Aljur Abrenica, was already separated from

his estranged wife, actress Kylie Padilla, when they started dating after she was accused of being a “kabit” or mistress. “Bakit hindi niyo na lang i-research or hanapin kung sino ba talaga nanira? Bakit ako ang sumasalo ng kasalanan na hindi ko naman ginawa?” she added.

The sexy star also noted that things became official with Abrenica in July 2022, as she pointed out through a screenshot where Padilla admitted that the third party accusations are “stressful” to both parties.

Days after Raval’s statement, Padilla also urged netizens to stop the “mistress” accusations towards her estranged husband’s new partner, saying that it is unfair for the “former.”

A mother’s biggest pain

Sharon Cuneta admitted that she knows “very little” about KC Concepcion’s life, which she considered as her “biggest pain” since her eldest daughter does not open up to her.

The Megastar was emotional as she spoke about her mother-and-daughter relationship with KC in an interview with Ogie Diaz, saying even if they’re both “stubborn and strong willed,” being polar opposites often cause misunderstandings between them. She



also spoke up about being accused of not wanting the same fame she has for her daughter — which hurts her the most. Although the veteran actress-singer is somehow used to KC being away from her, she would always long for their once tight relationship with her panganay. She also noted that her daughter is a kind person who deserves to be happy. “That’s my biggest pain—anuman ang success mo sa buhay pero may isa kang pinakamamahal na ba’t ba hindi maayos-ayos na permanently, parang hindi ka kumpleto. Hindi ka pa rin successful,” she said. KC, who was born in April 1985, is Cuneta’s daughter with veteran actor Gabby Concepcion.

Marites Beloso’s 60th Birthday



1.The Beloso family pose for a group picture; 2.The Panaligan family pose with Marites and Philip Beloso; 3. Philip Beloso takes a group selfie; 4.Philip and Marites Beloso and granddaughter Bebe Joy pose with Golden Voices martha Joy, Maria Panaligan and Alyssa Grace.

Rolly Mangante’s 70th Birthday



Taste of Manila founder Rolly Mangante celebrated his 70th birthday and family, friends and the Filipino community of Toronto was invited. Around 540, more or less attended the 70 birthday of Rolly Mangante, the founder of Taste of Manila. 5. Brampton Mayor Patrick Brown (2nd from left back) greets Rolly Mangante; 6. Marita Lee, Nenita and Harold Guarin, Gie and Ace Alvarez greets Rolly Mangante; 7. Rolly Mangante receives a certificate of Acknowledgement from MPP Michael Kerzner and MPP Rudy Cuzzetto; 8. Efrén de Villa, Christine Santos and her dad Steve Pagao attend Rolly’s 70th birthday.

Alfred Vargas eager to work with Nora Aunor

“This is a dream come true for me. It is part of my bucket list to work and walk the red carpet with a Superstar and National Artist like Ms. Nora Aunor!” he states.

Alfred Vargas couldn’t hide his excitement and pride with his new film project opposite Nora Aunor titled *Pieta*. It will be directed by Adolf Alix, Jr. from a script by Jerry Gracio.

The actor-politician vows to



do his best in this very promising movie.

“Ate Guy and I have already

met. It’s heartwarming to know that she chooses her projects wisely and it’s fortunate that she found ‘*Pieta*’ worth doing. I will do my best here. I will show all my acting skills to the hilt because the Superstar deserves nothing less!”

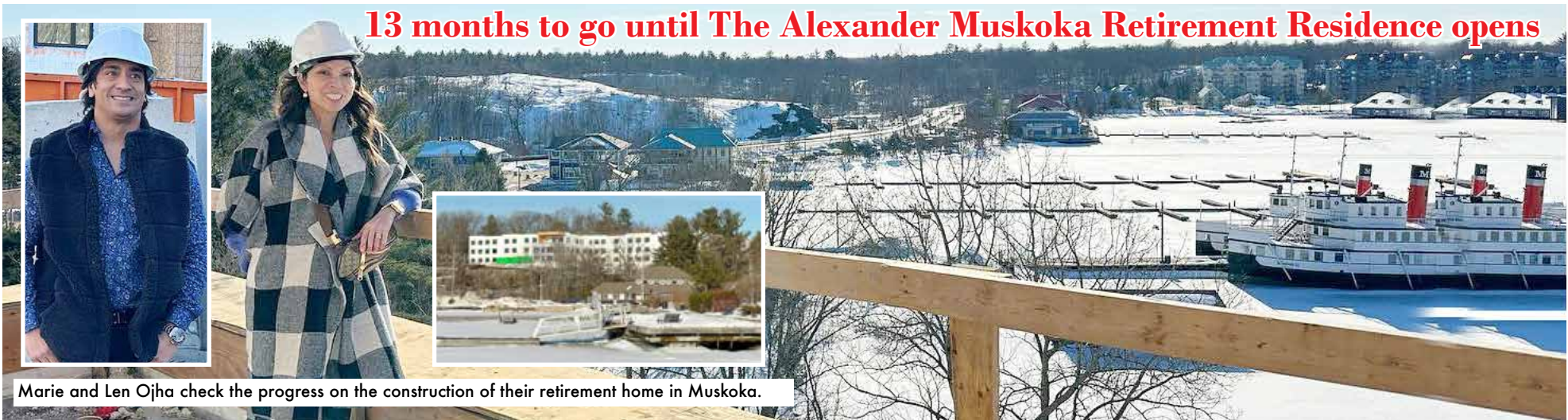
Alfred didn’t have second thoughts about accepting the project.

“The plot enticed me so much. It’s about an ex-convict and his mother. Wow! The character I’ll be portraying—the material in general. And when I learned that Ms. Nora Aunor is the female lead, I said, ‘Game!’ It’s hard to let this golden opportunity slip away,” he ends.



9. Ricky Caluen (seated right) pose with colleagues/friends from the Filipino media community—(standing l-r) Ace Alvarez of Manila Media Monitor, Carlos Unas -Filipino Bulletin publisher, Jose Joey Baking-LM Confidential Seated l-r: Gie Alvarez of the long-standing TV magazine “Front Page

Philippines”, Marita Ramirez Lee, publisher, “Atin Ito” (founded by her late husband Eddie Lee), the longest-running Filipino newspaper in Ontario. I assure you 25 years ago or so our hair was all black!!! 10. Ricky Caluen poses with friends and media colleagues Faye Arellano and Nestor Arellano. Their son Julian is my Ricky’s ina-anak. 11. Ricky Caluen with celebrant Rolly Mangante



13 months to go until The Alexander Muskoka Retirement Residence opens

Marie and Len Ojha check the progress on the construction of their retirement home in Muskoka.

Vilma Santos gears up for movie comeback

Star for All Seasons Vilma Santos has given her reaction to fans who wish she'd be the next National Artist for Film and Broadcast Arts following the conferment of Superstar Nora Aunor as one of the National Artists in 2022.

In a media junket for her newest endorsement, Ate Vi, as she is fondly called in showbiz, was positive that if the award was meant for her, things will align for her to receive the highest recognition given to any artist in the industry. "If it's meant for you, it's meant for you. If hindi nabigay sayo, [that means] it's not meant for you. So,

duon sa mga nabigyan like Ate Guy, it's really meant for them. And if I have a space for that [award], dating ang panahon na yan kung para sa akin na iyon," was her response that elicited loud applause from the members of the entertainment press. In the same event, the 69-year-old former governor and member of the House of Representatives (Batangas' 6th District) also confirmed that she is doing three film projects this year including a reunion project with Christopher de Leon. "We're leaving anytime this month. I'm doing a movie with Erik Matti as well. We'll finalize the script on March 13. And I'm also excited to do another movie for Star Cinema," she revealed. "The independently produced film will be shot in Japan and it's a love sto-



ry of an OFW. I like this project because it's a romantic film but it's for our age," she added. Meanwhile, Santos was named the new face of Angkas, a homegrown Filipino motorcycle taxi company. During a press conference, the former public servant said she has been looking forward to this project because it will help uplift and support the country's motorcycle taxi industry. This is not the first time Santos is helping push for jobs creation and additional livelihood opportunities. During the 18th Congress where she served as the Representative of the 6th District of Batangas, she served on the Committees on Poverty Alleviation and Labor and Employment where she worked on legislation to address

widespread national concerns about unemployment and poverty. Santos conveyed the practicality of booking an Angkas in various situations. These include getting home early to spend quality time with family as well as saving on transportation costs since motorcycle taxis are cheaper compared to four wheels, "Masaya talaga ako sa project na ito. Alam kong malaki ang matutulong nito para i-angat ang sektor ng motorcycle taxis sa ating bansa," the Star for All Seasons said after sharing the teaser video of her project with the press. Angkas Co-Founder and CEO George Royeca is grateful to Santos for her continued support to help create jobs and livelihood opportunities in the country. "It is amazing that Ms. Vilma Santos-Recto and Angkas share the same beliefs and hopes for our country in terms of providing jobs for Filipinos and alleviating poverty. Kaabang-abang po talaga ang project na ito dahil sigurado akong pag nakita ninyo, mas lalo pa ninyong mamahalin ang ating nag-iisang Star for All Seasons," Royeca said.

Toronto Kapuso Lions Club Inducts New Members By Fe Paca-Taduran



involved in its service activities and keep current members continuously engaged. Amongst the Club's recent service beneficiaries were: the Nazareth Home for Streetchildren & Orphans in Bustos, Bulacan, the Washroom Project for Indigenous Mangyans of Oriental Mindoro, the Oshawa Ontario Food Bank Thanksgiving 2022 Food Drive, the Tulang Kay Nanay Feeding Program at Kasiglahan Village in Montalban, Rizal, and the Distribution of School Supplies for the Children of Canlumay and Palati in Odiongan, Romblon. Towards this end, a roster of new dynamic members

representing a cross sector of the community have been recently inducted new members into the Toronto Kapuso fold: Realtors Lourdes Lachica and Chinky del Mar, business entrepreneurs Mitzi Faigal and Christine Salubre, Banker Violeta (Bolet) Arevalo, paralegal Rocelle Esteban, interpreter/paralegal to be Margie Bayanay, registered Philippine Physician and Toronto Paramedic Dr Pepito (Nudge) Bicular, IT analyst Marie Claire dela Gana, Logistics Coordinator Ann Nacpil, and retirees, now full time Lions, Roseller and Edilberta Agbayani. Proceeds from the eveant will go towards future Toronto Kapuso Lions Club projects.



1-2. Kainan Na pop-up opened at Ellen's Place in Mississauga; 3. Kamila Ultrakova & Melissa Ventocilla emcee the Lions Kapuso Induction Night; 4. Nadeene Panaligan and Marites Beloso celebrate their birthdays

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Ogie Diaz reveals Liza Soberano, Enrique Gil turn down ‘It’s Okay To Not Be Okay’ remake

Talent manager Ogie Diaz revealed that Liza Soberano turned down an offer to star in the Philippine adaptation of the hit Korean series “It’s Okay to Not Be Okay.”

In his YouTube channel, Ogie said ABS-CBN pitched the project to Liza and on- and off-screen partner Enrique Gil but they rejected it.

“Nu’ng huli bago matapos ‘yung kontrata sinabi ko kay Liza, ‘Anak, maganda ‘tong ‘It’s Okay to Not Be Okay.’ Sabi ko, ‘Tanggapin mo na ‘yan anak kahit wala na ako sa picture’,” Ogie said.

“Gusto ko lang siyang makita ng fans niya ulit, sila ni Enrique Gil. Pero hindi niya rin tinanggap,” he added.



Ogie then said that ABS-CBN Chief Operating Officer for Broadcast Cory Vidanes pitched another project, but the talent manager asked her to stop pitching. “Si Tita Cory Vidanes nag-ano nanaman sa akin, sabi, ‘Ogs magp-pitch kami kay Liza baka pumasa na.’ Sabi ko, ‘Tita baka pwede niyo nang i-stop ‘yung pitching. Ask na lang natin sila kung mayron silang storyline pero walang dumadating from them,” he said. The veteran showbiz reporter felt that Liza wants to pursue her Hollywood dreams that’s why she rejected ABS-CBN’s offers.

“Si Quen gustong magpahinga, si Liza gusto niyang i-entertain ‘yung idea na pumalaot sa Hollywood. So ako naman, sabi ko kay Liza, ‘Go anak, kung san ka masaya!’.”

Sharon Cuneta to accept offers from other networks

After 35 years of being Kapamilya, Megastar Sharon Cuneta said that she’s ready to accept offers from other networks.

In Instagram, Sharon clarified that she has not spoken to any executives from other networks about showbiz projects.

“And no, wala pa akong nakakausap na kahit sino mula sa kahit anong istasyon, for the record lang po,” she said. Sharon also said that she would be forever grateful for ABS-CBN, although she admitted that for the first time in all these decades, “I don’t have a long-term contract with my station.” “My memory and loyalty are unquestionable. But a girl’s gotta work where she can and where she’s wanted. See you again hopefully soon, whenever you may need me!” she wrote.

“I have been and will always be a Kapamilya. I have been with ABS-



CBN since 1988, when they were just rebuilding their station from the ground up after years of closure by the then-Philippine government.

“For the first time in all these decades, I don’t have a long-term contract with my station. I know it is a number of things that have caused this. We lost our franchise, the station has way too many stars now and we of the “old guard” have to give way.

“My memory and loyalty are unquestionable. But a girl’s gotta work where she can and where she’s wanted. See you again hopefully soon, whenever you may need me!”

“P.S. Coco anak, ikaw ang may malasakit sakín at lagi akong iniisip. Abot-langit ang pasasalamat ko sayo at habang buhay kita mamahalin!” said Sharon.

JOINT PATROLS from p1

Jay Tarriela, the Philippine Coast Guard’s spokesperson on South China Sea issues, said that talks with the United States have advanced beyond the infancy stage and that the likelihood of carrying out joint patrols was high.

Tarriela did not provide details on the scale or timing of the proposed patrols, which come after the Pentagon said last month the US and the Philippines had “agreed to restart joint maritime patrols in the South China Sea”.

“There is already a clear path of possibility since the Defense Department of the United States has also supported the joint patrol with the Philippine Navy and the US Navy so there is a certainty for this particular joint patrols to happen between the coast guard of both countries,” Tarriela said.

Rommel Jude Ong, former vice commander of the Philippine Navy said the idea of a Philippine and US coastguard deployment in the South China Sea instead of the navy will “mitigate any miscalculation and prevent China from finding an excuse to escalate tension” in the waterway.

Earlier last month, Manila accused China’s coastguard of aiming a “military-grade laser” at one of its coastguard vessels that was supporting a resupply mission for troops on an atoll in the South

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China Sea.

Manila blasted what it said was China’s “aggressive activities” in the South China Sea, and President Marcos Jr summoned the Chinese ambassador to express his “serious concern” over the harassment of the Philippine Coast Guard vessel. The incident prompted expressions of concern from other countries, including Japan, Australia and the US.

China has refuted the Philippine account of the incident, which it said did not reflect the truth. China’s foreign ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said last week that his country’s coastguard had acted in a “professional and restrained” manner towards the Philippine ship.

Last month a Philippine Coast Guard aircraft flew over the South China Sea as part of efforts to boost its presence in contested waters and protect what it says is its maritime territory.

In a statement, the Philippine Coast Guard said it saw a Chinese coastguard vessel and dozens of what it suspected were boats manned by Chinese militia around the Second Thomas and Sabina Shoals, both of which are inside the Philippines’ 200-mile (321km) exclusive economic zone.

The Philippine Coast Guard ordered the suspected Chinese militia to leave, telling them “they were not authorised to loiter nor swarm these shoals”, according to the statement.

China’s embassy in Manila did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Judy Ann Santos-Agoncillo and Sam Milby star in their first horror film together ‘The Diary of Mrs. Winters’



A comeback. A reunion. A collaboration.

The Queen of Philippine Soap Opera, Judy Ann Santos is finally making a comeback this 2023 with the Acoustic Heartthrob, Sam Milby in a riveting horror-drama thriller film entitled “The Diary of Mrs. Winters.” A decade since their first onscreen project in “Huwag Ka Lang Mawawala,” the new film would mark Santos and Milby’s big screen comeback after taking on their last projects, both in 2019. This is also Milby’s first horror film.

Also making a comeback is the box-office director for the horror genre, Rahyan Carlos, an esteemed director, scriptwriter, and the only accredited teacher of the Chubbuck Technique in the Philippines.



HAPPY KARGA X AMP STUDIOS. Rahyan Carlos, Chalen Lazerna, Joy Tarce, Rechelle Everden, and Patrick Jame Dooc

The film is written by National Artist for Film and Broadcast, Ricky Lee together with Rahyan Carlos. Carlos is working with Judy Ann for the first time, and he promises to deliver a terrifying yet dramatic cinema experience that would certainly put the audience at the edge of their seats while also flexing the cast members’ acting prowess.

Produced by AMP Studios Canada and HappyKarga Films, the film is set to be shot in Canada and in the Philippines.

“When I first started HappyKarga Films with my business partner, Joy Tarce, we knew that we would bank on talents and collaboration both from other film outfits and from the artists. And we couldn’t be more grateful to have found a likeminded individual such as Rechelle Everden of AMP Studios Canada who also believes in the cutting-edge Filipino talent in terms of bringing stories into the big screen,” explained Direk Rahyan.

Putting into spotlight a unique career, “The Diary of Mrs. Winters” is about a Filipina bio-forensic assistant cleaner in Canada named Charity played by Judy Ann, whose

life is cursed after keeping the diary of an old lady who committed suicide. A series of unfortunate events happen to her, including the death of her loved ones, forcing her to fight for her true love, Victor, played by Sam.

“To say that this is a dream project is an understatement. Not only because of the fact that I will be reuniting with Ricky Lee as this is our second collaboration, but also because we will be joined by Judy Ann and Sam. We are looking forward to work with both of them as we know that they are artists of world-class caliber. This is also the first full-length Filipino film to be shot amidst the panoramic Ontario, Canada” said Direk Rahyan.

This is also the first full-length Filipino film to be shot in Ontario, Canada

The much-awaited film is slated to be released by the 3rd quarter of the year both locally and internationally.

Happy Karga Films (HKF) which was founded in 2021 is the brainchild of two creative minds, a premier acting coach-writer-director and a top-notch TV and film producer. Their dream was to use their passion and expertise in filmmaking to create relatable and relevant stories.

AMP Studios Canada (AMP Studios) is an artist training and production company that was founded in 2019 in Ontario, Canada. It provides education and training programs to aspiring artists in various aspects of the performing arts.

Tito, Vic, & Joey gone from Eat Bulaga?

Veteran showbiz scribe Cristy Fermin spilled more tea regarding the supposed power struggle within “Eat Bulaga.”

On her online show, “Showbiz Now Na,” Cristy finally named names.

According to Cristy, the personality being eased out of the show is none other than its longtime producer, Tony Tuviera.

She said, “Pinangalanan na po ang mga personalidad na sangkot dito sa kumpanya na ito. Ang nakasanayan na po natin, na nakikita sa mundo ng showbiz sa lokal na aliwan, na si Mr. Tony Tuviera...”

As to the person supposedly eager to have him removed, she said, “Ang tinutukoy na sinasabing mag-take over sa pamamalakad ng ‘Eat Bulaga!’ ay yung pinakamalaking share sa TAPE Inc., Romeo Jalosjos, Sr.” Cristy shared the three children of the former congressman went



to the office of TAPE Inc. last Feb. 28.

“Ang unang-una raw na ginawa ng magkakapatid na ito ay pumasok sa office ni Mr. Tuviera, tinanggalan siya ng mesa, tinanggalan ng kagamitan at yung anak nga ni Ginoong Jalosjos ang naupo duon,” Cristy said.

She related that one of the children, Romy’s daughter, wants to host the show. The sons supposedly want to manage the business.

“Tapos ang sumunod na kwento po ng aming impormante, binigyan daw po ng mass resignation ang lahat ng mga miyembro ng produksyon. Lahat ng miyembro ng produksyon, may mass resignation na dapat gawin. At ang kanilang sabi: ‘Babalikan na lang namin ang kung sino ang gusto namin kuhanin.’”

Cristy deemed the situation a “test of loyalty.”

“Yan ang mundo. Mamimili ka talaga – kanan or kaliwa. Kung saan ka maligaya, talagang duon ka,” she said.

She continued that Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto, and Joey de Leon will be taken out along with Tony.

“Aalis ng ‘Eat Bulaga!’ at gagawa sila ng panibagong noontime show na ang title ay ‘Dabarkads,’” she said.

As for the other hosts, Cristy said: “Tataya po sila dito.”

“Pilian na po ito e. Pero di po natin maalis na meron dyan na ilan, kumbaga, kunwari nag-strike sa isang kumpanya: ‘Walang papasok!’ May papasok,” she shared, relating: “kasi ang kanilang inaalala kalam ng sikmura ng kanilang pamilya.”

Meanwhile, Cristy believes that contrary to reports, Willie Revillame will not be joining the show as a replacement for Tito, Vic, and Joey.

She ended, “Sana naman kung saan man paroroon ang programang ito, para sa nakakarami pa rin. Walang masaktang manggagawa, walang mga host na malalagay sa alanganin. At higit sa lahat sana ang publiko ang magkaroon ng malaking partisipasyon.”

WORST DISHES from p1

rating.

Naga City’s unsung delicacy, kinalas, is a traditional Filipino dish of noodles, spices, pork or beef brains, and scraped meat from pork or beef head. It looks somewhat similar to beef mami – a noodle dish that most Filipinos are familiar with – the addition of a thick and dark brown sauce on top of the noodles, described by Taste Atlas as “a shrimp, garlicky brown gravy consisting of dried shrimps, vinegar, garlic, shallots, soy sauce, and fish sauce.”

Kinalas is from the old Bicol

word “kalas,” which means “fall off the bone” – a reference to how the noodle dish is traditionally made. “Kinalas is often garnished with spring onions, fried garlic, or chili peppers, but some people like to add a hard-boiled egg on top. The dish is always served hot,” Taste Atlas added. The dish is usually paired with puto, turon, chicharon, or banana cue.

Hotsilog is considered a traditional breakfast choice and a childhood favorite, featuring garlic fried rice, fried egg, and bright-red, Filipino-style hotdogs. The hotdogs are “usually

slightly cut on the sides,” and then boiled, then fried in oil. According to Taste Atlas, the popular silog is accompanied by banana ketchup, atchara (pickled shredded papaya), and tomato slices on the side.

If you check Taste Atlas’ website, two more Filipino dishes were put on the chopping block – one is balut, the polarizing Filipino delicacy and street food favorite. “It is a duck egg that has been hard-boiled, fertilized, and incubated. Traditionally, the cooked embryo is consumed straight from the shell,” Taste Atlas wrote. The dish, which is

also a pulutan fave, “can be seasoned with chili, garlic, vinegar, salt, lemon juice, and ground pepper.”

The second dish is sweet-style Filipino Spaghetti, an iteration of Italy’s pasta that Italians may frown upon. A common birthday staple, Filipino spaghetti is sweet, made with ground meat, hot dogs, banana ketchup, and sugar, usually topped with grated cheese.

“It is believed that the dish was invented by Filipino mothers who noticed that their children love sugar, so they put a spin on the classic spaghetti dishes.

Today, this inexpensive meal is known as the one that unites families,” Taste Atlas added.

Recently, bibingka was named the 16th Best Cake in the World. In December 2021, bibingka snagged the 65th spot on Taste Atlas’ 100 Best Dishes in the World list at 4.4 stars, alongside lugaw, kesong puti, and lechon.

Taste Atlas is an online gastronomic database that promotes the local culinary culture of countries all over the world. The website contains over 10,000 specialty dishes, drinks, recommended restaurants, and local ingredients for anyone to check out before an international trip.

PHILIPPINES

Pay with onions at Japan Centre

MANILA - With prices soaring to record-highs during the recent holidays, onions have quite literally become as good as cash.

Customers flocked to the Panay Avenue branch of Japan Home Centre in Quezon City as it held its “Pay with Sibuyas” campaign for one day only on Saturday, February 4. The retail store accepted all kinds of elusive



FAIR TRADE. A customer totes her chosen items as well as her payment.

(and expensive) onions as payment for select in-store items.

Customers can swap one onion in exchange for their chosen product. A maximum of three items per purchase was allowed per customer.

Japan Home Centre said that all collected onions are given back to the community pantry, which provides free food for those in need.

Over the past months, the price of onions in the market have skyrocketed, which climbed to as high as P700 per kilo in December 2022. Such prices were in stark contrast to the average price of onions worldwide at the time, which was only around \$1.54 per kilo, or around P84.87.

The onion crisis has since sparked debate on the country’s messy importation strategy and lack of proper cold storage infrastructure, which have only further burdened farmers and those on the margins.

Encoding errors plague national ID; PSA to do updating

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) will conduct a massive updating of the Philippine Identification System (PhilSys) to correct erroneous data encoded.

Baby Jean Alid, PSA registration officer, admitted that there were erroneous data collected with the registration of PhilSys.



Some individuals are seen registering for their national ID cards at a mall in Baguio City on July 29, 2022.

“There were a lot (of errors) with the massive registration. So maybe this year, in May or the second semester, we will conduct an updating operation,” Alid said in a mix of Filipino and English.

“We will open many centers for this,” she added.

She also said there are reports of people cutting the QR code and pasting it to another ID.

As of Jan. 27, 2023, there are 76.2 million Filipinos registered to PhilSys, with 29.9 million IDs already delivered via the Philippine Postal Office and 18.4 million given a digital copy of the ID.

‘Arroyo pushes for defense of Duterte against ICC probe’

MANILA, Philippines – Lawyers for the families of those allegedly killed in the previous administration’s brutal “war on drugs” said that the move by



President Rodrigo Duterte and former President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo share a light moment during a courtesy visit in Malacañang on November 28, 2016.

some House of Representatives lawmakers for the “unequivocal defense” of former President Rodrigo Duterte only highlights the need for the International Criminal Court to step in.

“Providing a blanket of protection only points that there can be no fair, comprehensive and objective inquiry into the thousands of deaths resulting from Duterte’s ‘war on drugs’ in the Philippines,” the National Union of People’s Lawyers and Rise Up for Life and for

Rights said in a statement.

House Deputy Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo along with 18 other lawmakers filed Thursday a resolution calling on the lower chamber to declare its “unequivocal defense” of Duterte who is being accused of crimes against humanity before the ICC.



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Vice Ganda remains ‘home’ in ABS-CBN

Vice Ganda — dubbed as “The Unkabogable Star” — reaffirmed his loyalty in ABS-CBN as he officially renewed his contract with the company he calls home. At the contract signing nick-named “The Unkabogable Day,” Vice also thanked Madlang Pipol for the success of his recent film “Partners In Crime.”

Co-starring Ivana Alawi, the movie served as his comeback in the Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF) and was listed as one of the top-grossing movies in last year’s MMFF.

With his back-to-back achievements, Vice could not help but look back on his decades-old career with much gratitude.

“The journey has been quite long na rin. There were difficult times, but there were a lot of fun times. It was colorful pero kung susumahin mo, it’s a winning journey,” Vice said.

Looking ahead, Vice said he will continue his loyalty to the network that made him a household name.

Vice started as a standup comedian and singer in the late 90s. Soon, he was scouted to play bit roles and eventually supporting characters on television and film. But his biggest break came in 2009 when ABS-CBN asked him to join “It’s Showtime.” The audience loved his brand of comedy and soon fans would fill movie houses and live events venues to enjoy his work.

As such, Vice made sure to thank the ABS-CBN bosses and to promise that he will stay a Kapamilya.

“Maraming maraming salamat po sa patuloy na pagtitiwala, pagbibigay ng trabaho, oportunidad, pagkakataon... I am so grateful.

“Nakapirma na talaga yung puso ko rito. ‘Yung paa ko nakabaon na dito sa bahay na ‘to. Ayoko na



lumabas... I’d rather be here inside my home. This is the safest place for me,” Vice shared.

Several Kapamilya artists, colleagues, friends, and loved ones also gave their heartfelt tributes for the Unkabogable Star.

“Thank you for your Unkabogable loyalty and love for ABS-CBN and for all of us. With or without a contract, you stood by us even in our most difficult times. Binigyan mo ng lakas ang lahat ng ating mga Kapamilya sa gitna ng lahat ng ating pagsubok,” said ABS-CBN COO of Broadcast Cory Vidanes.

“Maraming maraming salamat po sa patuloy na pagtitiwala, pagbibigay ng trabaho, oportunidad, pagkakataon... I am so grateful.”

Among the ABS-CBN executives present at the contract signing were chairman Mark Lopez, ABS-CBN COO of Broadcast Cory Vidanes, ABS-CBN Group CFO Rick Tan, Star Magic and Entertainment Production head Laurenti Dyogi, and ABS-CBN head of Non-scripted Format Louie Andrada.

Over the years, Vice received various awards as a Kapamilya star. In 2021, he was named as the Best Entertainment Program Host at the Asian Academy Creative Awards and Most Trusted Entertainment/Variety Presenter at the Reader’s Digest Trusted Brands Awards.

Recently, Vice was voted by the De La Salle Araneta University community as Most Outstanding Twitter Influencer, Most Outstanding Social Media Personality, Most Influential Multimedia Filipino Celebrity, and Most Outstanding Entertainment Show Host at the 5th Gawad Lasallianeta.

Vice also won Best Variety Show Host at the 2023 Platinum Stallion National Media Awards of Trinity University of Asia.

Heaven Peralejo To Sugar Babies: ‘You also have to face the consequences’

Heaven Peralejo shared an important lesson she learned from portraying Me-Ann in her last movie Nanahimik Ang Gabi.

The film tells the tale of the covert relationship between a sugar daddy (played by Ian as Chief) and his sugar baby (played by Heaven).

Before we get into the deets, what exactly is a sugar baby? According to this article from Cosmopolitan, a sugar daddy and sugar baby relationship is complex, and resembles a typical boyfriend-girlfriend relationship but with an added financial incentive.

Most often, the relationship usually involves a man dating a younger woman who is not financially stable and has less power. Meanwhile, the sugar daddy is usually older and richer—and has more power.

Heaven said, “Sa generation namin umiingay yung ‘I wanna be a sugar baby,’ Glamorous life. This film kasi, it sends a message that kung sugar baby ka, you also have to face the consequences. And those consequences, sometimes, hindi ka ready. Hindi mo



alam na malala pala. Every choice you make in life, laging may consequences whether good or bad.”

Talking about her steamy scenes in the film, Heaven shared that Ian made her feel comfortable on set. She said, “He made me feel so comfortable around him. Hindi ako off-cam na kumakandong. It’s more like since we’re comfortable with each other, we get to laugh at each others’ jokes.

“You also have to face the consequences”

Yung pagkandong, it’s work. It’s not malicious sa personal life. We have set the boundaries very clearly.”

Ian said they had to do acting exercises to make the job easier. The actor said, “Minsan, nagsusubok kami mag-converse in character. We’d have conversations as her character and me as my character. Para lang masanay.”

“Yung character ko talagang dark na malisyoso,” Ian added. “Kahit kumandong siya, andoon din ako sa mode na in character din. At saka siya, kumandong naman siya not as Heaven, e. Nakikita ko si Me-Ann. Nakikita ko yung innocence niya. Sakto sa character niya. Kaya siguro wala rin kaming ilangan kasi malinaw sa amin na we’re both in character.”



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Jane de Leon, Janella Salvador say friendship is ‘for keeps’

Mars Ravelo's Darna is set to conclude this week, but the friendship that Jane de Leon (Darna/Narda) and Janella Salvador (Regina/Valentina) have built over the course of filming will stay forever.

The two reminisced on how “awkward” they were at first to each other, being both “introverts,” but they developed a real-life friendship that is “for keeps.”

“We were not friends before we did Darna,” began Janella.

But they both made an effort to be able to break each other’s walls. They would bond together and exchange messages when not working. “You wanna hang out in my room?” Ganyan, ganyan. ‘Let’s watch movie.’ Until eventually, we became comfortable with each other. And talagang I think our friendship is for keeps like hin-

di kami pang Darna lang.”

What’s good about their friendship is that they would help and support each other, as well as speak their minds on what is best for one another.

“Our friendship is not for showbiz only,” Jane concurred. “Actually, all of us on set (we have formed a close friendship). Even Zaijian (Jaranilla), he stayed in my house and just went back to his home today. That’s the process (dynamics) of our friendship together.”

Jane also recalled that before the series, she and Janella would chance upon each other during ABS-CBN events and shows. “Hi, hello lang. We were not that close really. (But at the same time), we also (realized) that not all people whom you’ve worked with would become your competition.”

The co-stars have become so close in real life to the point that Jane would sometimes babysit Janella’s two-year-old



son, Jude.

Their chemistry is so strong that fans have been shipping them together and collectively named them as DarLentina

We were not friends before we did Darna

and JaneNella.

“Nagpakatotoo lang kami ni Jea (Janella’s nickname). We’re just like this,” Jane commented on the “unexpected” pairing. “Magandang tingnan yun for us girls to show that we don’t have competition at all.”

“Even before the people started shipping us we were already joking about it on set like we really have a strong

chemistry,” shared Janella.

“There are several scenes na kinukuhanan kami ng reaction shots, ang tagal namin nakaganyan (eye-to-eye contact). Sobrang tagal so parang ayun.”

Janella felt honored to have the support of the LGBTQ community. Given the chance, Jane and Janella are also open to do a girls love (GL) series.

Meanwhile, Regine Velasquez was supposed to appear in the series but “conflicting schedules,” made it impossible.

“It was not an issue to begin with,” clarified Jane. “Our schedule simply didn’t match with Ate Reg’s. I think that’s very normal for us artists. She is doing rehearsals for her upcoming concert. And that time, I had my endorsement shoots and shows. We tried to adjust our schedule but hindi lang kami talaga pinayagan. But please don’t forget to support Ate Reg in her upcoming concert (this month).”

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Pokwang: ‘The best revenge is to be fit and healthy’



Pokwang reiterated the need to be fit and healthy in an Instagram post.

On Instagram, she uploaded a video of her doing some exercise routine.

Her caption read: “The best revenge is to be fit and healthy, not to impress some one or anybody, dapat fit para sa mga anak lalo na kung single mom ka.”

“Hindi dapat sinisisi ang isang ina kung napabayaan ang katawan kaya nag hanap ng iba si mister, siguro kaya napabayaan kasi kakaalaga sating mga anak? kakaisip pano tayo palalakihin ng maayos? hindi maka pag pa salon kasi kulang sa budget? kakainin nalang ng mga anak, pang baon sa school pang tuition fee,” she added.

She then told her followers to refrain from ridiculing women, particularly mothers. “Dahil para mo narin sinisi sarili mong ina na nagpabaya dahil sa pagmamahal sayo,” she related.

The Kapuso star ended her post with: “#PeaceEveryone ang ganda ng katawan ay kumukupas at babalik sa alabok pero pagmamahal ng isang anak ay walang kamatayan.”

Pokwang also used the hashtags: “#womenempowerment” and “#Labanlangnanay.”

LEA from page 1

its Broadway debut in June this year — and theater icon Lea Salonga is set to join the cast.

The Filipina actress, who debuted a Tony award-winning performance as Kim in Miss Saigon in 1991 on Broadway, shared that she was excited to be part of Here Lies Love for a limited guest engagement, which showcases an immersive experience and an innovative set design that transform the theater into a disco ballroom.

Salonga is set to play Aurora Aquino, the mother of assassinated Marcos rival Ninoy Aquino, and is set to sing Just Ask the Flowers, where she grieves her son’s death and urges the people to revolt. She also serves as the

show’s producer.

“[Being part of the show] is very special to me for a few reasons. Number one: as a Filipina artist, I am incredibly excited that audiences will finally get to see — on Broadway — this beautiful, impactful, and important musical,” she said in a video on Instagram.

“Two: I get to go back to the Broadway Theatre, which is where I made my own Broadway debut over thirty years ago, which is wild for me to think about,” she added, calling it a “full-circle” moment.



Lea joins Jose Llana and Conrad Ricamora, who both originated the characters of Ninoy Aquino and Ferdinand Marcos in its Off-Broadway run.

News of the show opening on Broadway after 10 years was not met with all positive reactions, however — some criticized the timing of the show with the Marcoses’ return to power, with President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. nearly a year into his term as president.

Others pointed out that the show risked glamorizing Imelda Marcos, a formidable political figure in her own right, and glossing

over the tragedies of Marcos’ 21-year rule.

Addressing online backlash, the Here Lies Love Broadway accounts released a statement clarifying that the show was “anti-Marcos” and “pro-Filipino,” explaining the production’s intentions in staging the musical:

“History repeats itself. Democracies all over the world are under threat. The biggest threat to any democracy is disinformation, Here Lies Love offers a creative way of re-information — an innovative template on how to stand up to tyrants,” it wrote.

The show added that it wanted to address the Philippines’ and United States’ shared histories. “We cannot tell the modern history of the Philippines without the United States. They’re inter-

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Megastar on being snubbed

Sharon Cuneta compared the practices of this generation's celebrities with that of her era in a vlog with talent manager Ogie Diaz, where she recalled past moments where several young celebrities walked past her without even smiling at her.

The Megastar shared her experiences

with younger celebrities, where she noted that some appeared to have forgotten to show respect particularly to veteran stars.

"Meron kasing nakakalungkot. Minsan nasasalubong namin noon sa [ABS-CBN] corridor. Pagdaan [nila] feeling

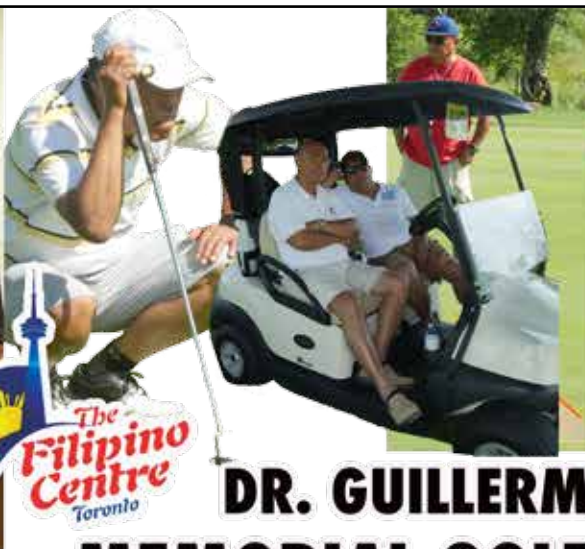


ko, 'Kamag-anak kaya ni boss Gabby 'yon?'" she said, referring to former ABS-CBN Chairman Gabby Lopez. "Parang Lopez kung umarte, daig pa 'yung mga Lopez. Si Don (Geny) nga bumabati kahit sa janitor."

(What's sad is that—I

often ran into [celebrities] in the ABS-CBN corridor. They would just walk past me so [I would ask myself], "Are they boss Gabby's relatives?" They act as if they are the Lopezes when Don Geny greets even the janitors.)

When asked by Diaz whose celebrities she was referring to, Cuneta opted not to name anyone in particular, but said she encountered "a lot" through the years.



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On June 16, all roads lead to the largest Filipino concert ever in Canada! What is dubbed to be the final concert of ERAS-ERHEADS, these musical icons will also be the first ever Filipino performers at the First Ontario Centre in Hamilton, ON. It joins a stellar list of international acts like Elton John, Paul McCartney, Maroon 5, BTS, Backstreet Boys, Selena Gomez, among many others.

Coming from the massively successful December final reunion concert in Manila, "Huling El Bimbo" the final reunion concert will tour North America. In Ontario, Canada, the highly anticipated rock concert will perform before a crowd of over 10,000 fans.

Perfectly timed during Philippine Independence Week and Filipino Heritage Month in Canada, fans from as far as the Maritimes and Quebec have committed to travel in bus loads, eager that they do not miss out on this one final opportunity to watch their most beloved band perform together.

Eraserheads is considered the most

iconic, influential, and successful alternative rock bands in the history of Filipino music. Frequently dubbed as the “Beatles of the Philippines”, their career spanned more than twenty years, with multiple platinum-awarded albums and quintessential songs under their belt. Formed in 1989 while students at the University of the Philippines, Raimund Marasigan, Ely Buendia, Buddy Zabala, and Marcus Adoro, collectively built a very colourful history, from disbandment and controversies to reunions and new songs. This is one epic Filipino rock party that Filipinos cutting through generations in Eastern Canada won’t want to miss.

Eraserheads Huling El Bimbo concert in Eastern Canada is produced by TALA Entertainment.

ABOUT TALA ENTERTAINMENT:

Tala Entertainment is a talent and events management company specializing in creating experiential live music, concerts, and events that cater to different genres and customer demographic. Formed in 2019, TALA is committed to providing exceptional and unique live events serving not just Ontario but across provinces of Canada.





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DonBelle ‘wag tularan JaDine, LizQuen

May kasulukuyang patalastas na sina Donny Pangilinan at Belle Mariano ang bida, check. Ang kanilang pelikulang “An Inconvenient Love” ay ipinapalabas sa isang online entertainment platform, double check. Si pretty young miss Belle ay sisimulan na ang pagpapatayo sa kanilang family dream house, triple check. At si young master Pangilinan, laging sinasama si Mariano sa mga importanteng House of Pangilinan gathering, apat na check!

Ang wish ng lahat,
naway walang napip-
ilitan sa dalawa,
at talagang gusto
nila ang kanilang
ginagawa at hindi
basta sunod-sun-
uran lamang, huh!

Hindi maikakaila na isa na sa pangmalakasan at pinakasikat na love team ang DonBelle and at the rete they are going. Mas lalo pa silang sisikat dahil kitang-kita naman

ang attention at support sa mga proyektong kanilang pinagtatambalan.

Malaking bagay rin na sa mga pelikulang kanilang pinagbibidahan, nakikita ang marked improvement ng dalawa lalo na pagdating sa pag-arte. Again, ang collective wish ng DonBelle fans ay sa iba't-ibang direktor at mga screenplay writers ang kanilang makaka-collaborate para naman hindi pare-pareho ang kanilang ginagawa.

Dapat in na hindi lang pulos romance, drama o comedy ang kanilang mga genre dahil makakahon sila sa forever na pagpapa-cute at pagpapakilig lamang ang kayang gawin.

Magandang kung gagawin nila ang remake ng "Teenage Marriage" na angkop sa kanilang dalawa o kaya para tunay na pagsubok sa kanilang kakayahan bilang mga artista. Ganoon din ang isang Pinoy version ng "Euphoria" kung saan teen junkie si Maria-no at highschool jock na sex starved si

Donny na ang major pinagnanasaan ay isang transwoman na kaklase niya.

Naway maging subok na matibay at matatag ang DonBelle at umabot sa of KathNiel proportions ang lakas at kasikatan. Huwag nilang tularan ang JaDine at LizQuen, huh!



People are talking about...

Miles Ocampo

Throughout the years, Miles undoubtedly improved her craft as an actress. She went from a bubbly child star from *Goin' Bulilit* to a versatile actress starring in several dramas. In the remake of *Batang Quiapo*, directed and top-billed by Coco Martin, she gave a whole new performance level that made viewers on edge because of its intensity. Miles has been in the entertainment business for years, but her star shines brighter than ever.



Catriona Gray

Miss Universe 2018 Catriona Gray has been making headlines again, but this time for more personal news. She's engaged to her partner, actor-singer Sam Milby.

The pair announced the next step in their relationship via Instagram in a cozy-looking picture. Cat, on the other hand, admits that she's comfortable around her beau. Engagement or no engagement, we're just happy that she is.



People are not talking about...

Aljur Abrenica

It's been days since he and AJ Raval revealed their relationship – on Valentine's Day, no less. Despite the passion between the two, the public was more concerned about Kylie Padilla's (Aljur's ex-wife) reaction. Yet since Kylie announced that all she wants now is peace and happiness, Aljur and AJ's "announcement" became background news as the drama died down between his past and present relationships (for now).



Carla Abellana

Wedding bells are nowhere near the actress's near-distant future, especially after her relationship with her estranged husband Tom Rodriguez. The former flames haven't released any information about how their relationship went downhill, leaving their audience to speculate. Her declaration of not eyeing marriage anytime soon did not take anyone by surprise since her love life was disastrous the previous year. Yet despite that, it's inspiring to see that she remains hopeful for a positive future.



“Nothing is more important than empathy for another human being’s suffering. Nothing—not career, not wealth, not intelligence, certainly not status. We have to feel for one another if we’re going to survive with dignity.” AUDREY HEPBURN

How do I love thee?

What better way to start the month of love but with food? Romance and food always go well together.

The first event on my schedule started on February 4 with the opening of a pop-up of the food group Kainan Na at Ellen’s Place in Mississauga. Even though the weather was cold, the opening was well-attended which bodes well for the success of this undertaking. Guests enjoyed seeing their friends while tasting the artisanal foods being offered. The 8 Kainan Na vendors (Belish, Butter Than Yours, Einna’s Cakes, Jackie’s Creative Cakes, Maria Maria, Nayon 37, Pocket Bites and Tummy



Kainan Na Pop-up Opening

Fillers). The vendors will be open for business during Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays from 9:30 am to 4pm.

Notable visitors at the opening were Toronto health officer Dr. Eileen de Villa and MP Rechie Valdez.

“Pop Duo” concert a Success

In the evening, the “pop duo” of Peyton Garcia and Kayleigh Cerezo had a benefit concert with a very entertaining and wonderful performance with a little help from their families, friends and sponsors. The two were former members of mini-pop kids singing group. It was nice start to the “year” after a slow January.



ABOVE, MP Rechie Valdez (center front) drops by at Kainan Na Pop-up Opening.



RIGHT, Toronto Health Officer Dr. Eileen de Villa (right) drops by at Kainan Pop up opening.

You’ll love Love Me, Love Me Not

Josie de Leon School of Performing Arts presented a musical written by one of it’s students Mika Sy and produced by Jennifer Sy. Mika’s friend and also a JDL student, Mikaela Amaral suffers from

epilepsy. Entitled Love Me Love Not, the valentine musical is a benefit concert to raise funds for Epilepsy Research thru “Mikaela’s MVA Community & Friends, Fun & Fundraisers” page.

Mikaela has Epilepsy since she was 1 year old & Mika supports her friend Mikaela in this great cause.

Nadine Lustre opens up about childhood, start of showbiz career

Nadine Lustre got candid about how her childhood inspired her to become a performer, adding that she’s grateful for the highs and lows in her career.

Nadine looked back on her younger self – describing herself as boyish and admitting that she fears ghosts.

She recalled that her childhood interests in anime led her to dream of becoming a manga artist and voice actor in the future, as well as being a painter.

The 29-year-old star also narrated how her parents influenced her passion for music. “Music was such a big part of my childhood, my mom listens to a lot of pop, my dad listens to a lot of genres. I like to believe I have a good taste in music and it’s all thanks to my parents,” she said.

The singer-actress then opened up about how she stepped foot in the entertainment industry, sharing clips from her first showbiz commitments. Nadine said that even then, she enjoyed doing these singing, dancing, and acting gigs. “It was fun, didn’t feel like I was working,” she said.

Having started in the industry young, Nadine had to make some sacrifices in her life, saying that she felt “frustrated” when she wasn’t able to experience high school. “Eventually, I got over it,” she said.

While Nadine admitted that she didn’t imagine herself to be in the entertainment industry, she attributed her success to her parents who believed in her potential and inspired her to pursue this career.

“I knew I loved performing, even when I was a little girl, and it was something I’ve always wanted to do. But where I’m at now, it’s not something that I expected.... [My family] encouraged me to go out there and kind of show myself,” she said.

According to Nadine, she has learned to embrace the

ups and downs in her life. “I understand that all of this had to happen for me to become this person,” she said. “I realized that what I’m doing is pretty amazing.... It’s tough, but I know that this is my dream.”

The artist said that while she’s “still figuring out a lot of things,” she’s happy with where she is now. “I can’t wait for the rest of my life to unfold. I don’t know where this road is gonna take me but one thing’s for sure, the girl on your screen right now is loving every minute of it,” she said.

Nadine starred in movies Never Not Love You, Ulan, Indak, and Greed, and television series On The Wings of Love and Till I Met You. Her latest movie was the 2022 Metro Manila Film Festival entry Deleter, where she took home the Best Actress award.

Batang Quiapo star Lovi Poe pays homage to late father FPJ

Lovi Poe has manifested a dream into reality as she stars in the ABS-CBN primetime series FPJ’s Batang Quiapo, the reimaged version of her late father Fernando Poe Jr.’s action-comedy film of the same title. The 1986 movie starring “Da King” with Maricel Soriano happens to be the actress’ favorite project from her father’s legendary movie career.

But when asked if she views doing Batang Quiapo as continuing the National Artist’s legacy, she said she couldn’t dare say so.

“Nahihya ako to say I’m continuing the legacy of my dad. Because it’s hard to say. I’m not even one-fourth there. Perhaps, it’s a homage or paying respect to what he’s done in the past. And for me to be just part of it, I’m already happy and grateful,” she said and reiterated

ed, “Yeah, it’s not continuing his legacy. It’s more like pagbibigay pugay. There’s nothing more humbling than to breathe life into one of my dad’s movies.”

She first watched Batang Quiapo when she was a lot younger and then viewed it more recently in preparation for the series. Still, she found the tandem of Maricel and FPJ entertaining. “Oh my god, I love Ms. Maricel! Maka-Diamond star talaga ako. Her tandem with Papa, I found it really entertaining because they were complete opposites there,” she said.

In the series, Lovi plays the role originated by Maricel, Mokang, the childhood friend and object of affection of Tanggol (Coco), who doesn’t hesitate to



call the latter out on his shenanigans and mischief in the streets of Quiapo, Manila.

Meanwhile, it’s not hard to notice that in her projects with ABS-CBN, no role has been the same so far. Batang Quiapo allows Lovi to explore the action-comedy genre. Previously, she topbilled the thriller-drama Flower of Evil and the LGBT-themed film Sleep With Me.

“I’m very grateful for the trust. Minsan hindi ako makapaniwala. It’s not something I expected. I’m beyond grateful. I can’t find the words to say because talagang my heart is full every time. From Flower of Evil, Sleep With Me and then Batang Quiapo, I’m just wow,” she shared.

Candid SPOOF

(Pop-ups are not supposed to be taken seriously - EDITOR)



Birthday celebrant Rolly Mangante receives a certificate from MPP Michael Kerzner and MPP Rudy Cuzzetto at his dinner at Oassis Banquet hall.

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Sexbomb Girls to make

Prepare to put on your dancing shoes and scream "Get get aw!" as the OG Filipino dancing queens, the Sexbomb Girls, gear up for their explosive comeback!

Recently, the all-female dancing and singing group made waves online as they reunited for an advertisement for an online streaming giant.

The ad features OG members Rochelle Pangilinan and Jopay Paguia, with Che-che Tolentino, Sunshine Garcia, Mia Pangyarihan, and Johlan Veluz joining them as they show off their timeless dancing and singing talents to a remake version of their 2003 hit track, "The Spageti Song."

The unexpected reunion of the Sexbomb Girls took everyone by surprise. But little did the fans know that the iconic group got something "explosive" on their sleeve.



On February 24, the girl group announced that they are set to make their comeback with a US tour, aptly titled "Sexbomb: USA Explosion 2023."

In the teaser uploaded on Facebook, Jopay, Sunshine, Mia, Johlan, and Mhyca Bautista dance to Tom Jones' 1991 song "Sex Bomb," the track that inspired the girl group's name.

"Are you guys ready?! See you soon US of A!" exclaims the group before ending the clip with their signature chant, "Get get aw!"

an 'explosive' comeback with US tour

Jopay also took to her account to express her excitement about their upcoming US tour. The OG member wrote: "Ito ang kauna-unahang pasabog ng mga OGs sa US of A. Kaya sa mga kababayan, kaibigan, at pamilya namin sa America, magkita-kita po tayo sa East and West Coast."

(This is the first surprise of the OGs in the United States of America. To our fellow Filipinos, friends, and families over America, see you soon, East and West Coast.)

Shortly after the announcement was made, many fans of the girl group were all over the moon about their comeback.

As of this writing, the dates of their US tour are yet to be announced. Yet to be confirmed as well whether Rochelle, Izzy Aragon, and some OG Sexbomb Girls will join the tour.

But still, let's not lose hope and continue to manifest we'll be seeing all of the girls together both on the international and local stage!

Formed in 1999 by choreographer Joy Cancio, the Sexbomb Girls first rose to prominence as long-time dancers of the Philippine noontime show Eat Bulaga!. More than just backup dancers for a television show, the Sexbomb Girls became the most iconic girl group in the Philippines as they went on to release albums that spawned hit tracks that people in the early 2000s loved (up to now!), including "Bakit Papa?," "Di Ko Na Mapipigilan," "The Spageti Song," and "Sumayaw, Sumunod."

The girls also ventured into acting as they starred in their own 2002 film, Bakit Papa?, and numerous shows, including the iconic afternoon drama series Daisy Siete.

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A 'pandemic' dream come true for the Divine Divas

Precious Paula Nicole, Brigiding and Viñas DeLuxe are having their first-ever headline show Divine Divas: The Ultimate Drag Experience this Feb. 10 at New Frontier Theater. It's a dream come true for these drag queens who began their joint act, "Divine Divas," online to help themselves get through the pandemic.

"This is the product of our dream during the pandemic. Finally, (it's) a real stage," Precious, the first-ever Drag Race Philippines winner, recently said of her first major concert with fellow queens Viñas and Brigiding.

The trio continues to be buoyed by the popularity of Drag Race Philippines Season 1, where Precious was crowned "first drag superstar," while Brigiding and Viñas landed on sixth and seventh places, respectively. The show raised awareness on the country's thriving drag community. But pre-Drag Race, they've been long-time friends brought together by the art of drag.

Precious was first to enter the drag scene 12 years ago. "Before I became a drag queen, I was a stuntman, a double for Thor," joked Precious before turning serious, "I worked as a professional dancer since I was 16." She got into drag because "ang ganda lang din tingnan na napapakita mo ang feminine and masculine side, still as a performer." While it was very hard starting out, Precious said that once you score regular gigs, there's really a life doing

drag.

Brigiding, who got drawn to performing and being in front of audiences while doing ad-promo work at ABS-CBN, met Precious in 2013 when she came to O Bar, known as home to the most popular drag acts. "From there, we became close," Brigiding, a communication arts grad, recalled.

On the other hand, Viñas met Brigiding after the latter commented on her social media post about a makeup tutorial. "So, chinat ko siya and nagkamabutihan kami ng loob. Nagka-landian ng konti," Viñas, also a CommArts grad, laughingly shared. "When we went to O Bar, (Brigiding) introduced me as a suitor so entrance would be free of charge hahaha." That visit made Viñas realize she also wanted to explore the drag world.

Over the pandemic, their friendship was sealed for life. Due to income loss with bars being closed, they started staging Facebook Live shows. The name Divine Divas originated from fans of their virtual hangout, first dubbed Divine Bar, from the gay lingo of "di ba?," a favorite expression. They didn't expect it would grow big and last this long. All they wanted was to entertain themselves during a tough period and at the same time, earn.

Precious revealed, "In all fairness po, there were times when we would earn more there than (in) bars... Most of our viewers were new fans of drag. They found us entertaining, especial-

ly OFWs and people from the provinces who couldn't come to Manila."

This led to another career opportunity, the drag reality competition Drag Race Philippines, which aired mid-2022 on HBO GO. As fans of RuPaul's Drag Race, it was on their bucket list to join one long before the Philippine edition happened.

"Sinumpa talaga namin na dapat tayong tatlo makapasok (we promised each other that all three of us should make it to the first season)," Brigiding said.

Initially, it was only Viñas and Brigiding who were interested in joining. "I told (Precious), 'Sige, 'wag ka mag-audition and me and Brigiding will tour, and we will leave you behind.' So sumali siya. Siya pa ang nanalo! It was a success because after Drag Race, we were able to tour Cebu and other provinces," Viñas said.

Nevertheless, Drag Race Philippines was where their friendship was tested. "There were misunderstandings and mixed signals na parang siempre nilagay kayo dun para ilabas yung mga good side and best side, best and worst personality traits that before we knew it, we were already hurting each other without even intending to or meaning to," admitted Brigiding. "We brought that with us even after the show. But when we realized that what happened there doesn't define who we are or who we should become after the show, our connection with each other was restored and our bond



From left: Precious Paula Nicole, Brigiding and Viñas DeLuxe are having their first-ever major show, Divine Divas: The Ultimate Drag Experience, tonight (Feb. 10) at New Frontier Theater in Araneta City, Cubao.

even became tighter."

Precious agreed, "Drag Race was really one of those things that tested us. We lost trust in each other. We lost focus on the fact that before we became contestants, we were friends because there was just one crown, one prize and everyone of us wanted to win. By doing that and thinking kailangan kong manalo, may nabibitawan kaming salita na 'di namin alam na masakit pala sa kanya or sa akin... But we were able to solve that afterwards."

Before the show aired, they also felt the pressure of winning over the public. By the third episode, they were no longer begging people to watch the reality series. They became a hit that shows outside would be packed, with tickets selling out in a minute that at first they thought something was wrong in the ticketing system. What made them happier was that the majority of their audiences were new fans of drag.

From online shows and clubs, they're now taking on bigger venues like the New Frontier Theater. They will also star in an ABS-CBN/iWant series, Drag You & Me. Viñas has recorded songs under Tarsier Records,

while Divine Divas will debut an original song in tonight's show.

Viñas said, "It's very very hard to be a drag queen but once mabuo siya, it's very fulfilling. Once you hear people's applause, ang sarap ulitin."

"(It's) mentally, physically and financially (challenging)

because it's not cheap. Yung mga ginagamit para lang maging gani-to ka ganda ay talagang magastos but worth it yung love and support of the people, even through tips, we really appreciate it."

Any advice to aspiring drag queens, especially those wanting to join Drag Race Philippines Season 2?

"Wag na," Precious joked.

"Marami na kami," Brigiding quipped.

"Wag niyo masyadong galin-gan para may career pa kami," Viñas jokingly added.

But on a more serious note, they offered encouraging words being drag queens supporting drag queens.

Brigiding said, "It's your time to shine. Enjoy!"

Precious said, "Sabi nga ni RuPaul, it's the beginning of the rest of your life. Don't forget why you're there in the competition. Always do the best of the best of the best."

Divine Divas is mounted by Fire & Ice Media, the production company of singer-songwriter Ice Segueria and wife, former Film Development Council of the Philippines chair Liza Diño.

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Cesar Montano marks four decades in the acting arena

Multi-awarded actor Cesar Montano is best remembered for his memorable portrayal of the national hero Jose Rizal in Marilou Diaz-Abaya's award-winning historical drama, Jose Rizal (1998).

That true-to-life role took Cesar seven months to internalize, get into the character and essay the part. He eventually copped several acting awards for Jose Rizal.

The film, which was an official entry in the 1998 Metro Manila Film Festival, got a total of 17 trophies that included all the major awards.

Cesar is undoubtedly proud of having portrayed Jose Rizal in his stellar acting career that also brought him other enviable recognition and awards through the years.

Since he started acting in the movies, when he made his early films doing bit roles in Mario O' Hara's To Mama With Love (1983) and Ishmael Bernal's Broken Marriage (1983), Cesar has enviably charted four decades in the acting arena.

His memorable films also include Mauro Gia Samonte's Machete (1990), Abaya's Muro-Ami (1999), Carlo J. Caparas' Chavit (2003) and the film he directed Panaghoysa Suba: The Call of the River (2004) and his Hollywood debut in John Dahl's The Great Raid (2005).

Cesar is wrapping up The Turning Cradle: The Untold Story on Alfredo Lim, a biopic on Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim.

After two decades, Cesar again stepped into another important character in director Darryl Yap's controversial comedy, Maid in Malacañang (MiM), shown last year. The second iteration of the film, Martyr or Murderer (MoM), will be released starting March 1.

This new, real-life portrayal for Cesar merely entailed a faster preparation for his role. He was only given a few weeks

before they started filming the first film.

He is thankful to social media for allowing him to research further about his character

and his role.

"I'm so grateful that information in social media about the role that I play became available for me," Cesar admitted. "I'm humbled to play the former President."

One of the challenges for Cesar is even the hairdo. "Hirap na hirap ang stylist na gayahin ang hair ni President kasi parang 10 feet sa taas," Cesar smiled. "This is more of rewriting the history for me because I'm playing Marcos again."

For this second film, Cesar feels he

even improved in his portrayal. "Naka-ka-kamada ko na ang character ni FM, but I have a lot of growing up to do," he asserted. "Hindi ako mapapagod na aralin ng aralin ang character na 'yan if given more chance."

"Sana nga mas mahaba ang pag-aaral and preparations, that's more favorable for an artist. Mahirap kasi 'yung very short lang ang preparations mo."

In Jose Rizal, Cesar was given a longer time to prepare for his role. Nevertheless, in MoM, he said, "Ibang klase ang director ko dito. Ang galing ng script namin."

"I'm a film director also, but I cannot stop myself from commending how brilliant my director is, considering he is still very young," he added.

Cesar is paired for the first time with Ruffa Gutierrez as the former first Lady Imelda Marcos. "I've been looking forward, for a long time, to be paired with Ruffa," he said. "It happened in MiM. But wala naman kaming love scene. Even here sa MoM, the most that we had is a bed scene but with a hug lang. Very wholesome."

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Jayda Avanzado shares parents' reaction to new loveteam partner Aljon Mendoza

Aside from receiving bouquet of flowers from his dad, OPM hitmaker Dingdong Avanzado, on Valentine's Day, Jayda also got one from his onscreen partner Aljon Mendoza. Jayda and Aljon are teaming up for the first time in the iWantTFC's newest series, *Teen Clash*, which explores music, romance, self-discovery and friendships.

Since they were not together on Feb. 14, Aljon had the chance to give Jayda a bouquet of flowers the next day. "I didn't expect that he would give me one. I wasn't expecting anything. He really just showed them, diyan po sa taas po (filming venue). Sa holding area namin. He gave me a bouquet and he told me, 'I got this for you,'" recalled Jayda during the media conference of *Teen Clash* held recently.

The singer-actress called it a "sweet gesture," saying "I think (it's) really the thought that counts for me... mababaw lang po talaga yung kaligayahan ko. I really appreciate that he would take the time, money and effort to even, you know, (do) simple gesture that makes me happy."

Teen Clash is an adaptation of Ilyn Anne Danganan's hit *Wattpad* coming-of-age story. It tells about "a young eclectic group's passion for music and their journey to find their voices in a chaotic world."

It is helmed by Gino Santos and produced by iWantTFC and Black Sheep. *Teen Clash* starts streaming for free in the Philippines on March 17 on the iWantTFC app (iOS and Android) and website (iwanttfc.com).

Teen Clash also stars Markus Paterson, Andrea Abaya, Luke Alford, Gail Banawis, Kobie Brown, Zach Castañeda, Fana, Ralph Malibuanas and Bianca de Vera.

Aljon said he and Jayda made an effort to get to know each other better when they first learned that they would be working



Jayda and Aljon Mendoza in one of their mall tours.

together for the project.

"We started texting each other," shared Aljon. "Inalam ko yung hobbies niya and vice-versa." During tapings, they were "very collaborative" and they helped each other out in every scene.

"Halimbawa may scene na madaling araw, tapos lowbat ako, papahawak lang ako sa kamay niya. My love language is physical. So every time there's someone who would hold my hand, I feel that energy. I get recharged. We also talked about our strengths and weaknesses and some strategies (on how to get on with the scenes)," he added.

According to Aljon, every time Jayda also needs help, he will motivate his love-team partner. "I really appreciate that from her because she is willing to work with me. There is that trust and of course, this is her acting debut and launching project, pinagkakatiwalaan niya ako and I'm very thankful for that."

"I really trust him and trust is the

foundation of our working relationship," concurred Jayda. "Our approach is to really develop our friendship before we started this project. I also felt that he is committed to this project and we are both working towards one goal."

"There were moments na may ilangan ng konti, but I think nawawala din yun eventually. We feel comfortable with each other as we go along. I do feel that since we are working towards one goal, there was no feeling of discomfort or anything like that. Tiwala lang po talaga," she added.

On what was the most kilig thing Jayda did to Aljon, the latter shared, "This is weird, pero kinilig ako nung nagtampo siya sa akin nung hindi ako nakapag-update kung nakauwi ako. That was 3 a.m., so baka nakatulog na ako."

Jayda just laughed and said that they have this "system" of letting each other know if they got home safe after taping. "I was just worried. Kasi di ko po alam kung

nakauwi po siya."

Besides Aljon's "sweet gesture" on Valentine's, Jayda added that what makes her kilig over Aljon was when he was there during her "darkest and lowest" moments. "For me, it just showed that this person cares about me and it's a mutual thing that we care about each other. That's very special for me and I think it's the little things that matter to me."

They also find each other girlfriend-boyfriend material. So when Aljon was asked if he is courting Jayda, he replied, "I just want to show kung gaano ko siya na-appreciate, ginagawa ko."

Jayda commented, "If you have a genuine connection and (that is a) good foundation in any kind of relationship, honestly, I think, at this point, I would say that wherever life takes us, I welcome that. Kung ano man itinadhana po for the two of us."

Aljon came from a previous love team with Karina Bautista and when queried about it, he reacted, "The first thing I did and should do is don't compare. Jayda is different. Iba-iba lahat ng makakatrabaho mo, eh. This time kay Jayda, we really get along well and we have the same goal. I think it's more effective and mas na-appreciate namin yung genuine (acts) na like we don't need to ask, nagkakaroon ng kusa."

"Simple gestures like (asking), 'Are you OK?' I appreciate that every time we see na lowbat yung isa or napapagod," he furthered. "We are there for each other. Jayda is very intelligent. She offers solutions or suggestions every time na may gagawin kami. I enjoy our conversations because napakatalino kausap and malaman."

Moreover, Jayda described her acting debut project as a "wonderful experience" and, at the same time, challenging and

making her feel "pressured."

For this particular series, Jayda likewise received acting advice from her parents, Dingdong and singer-actress Jessa Zaragoza. "(It's) really just be humble, be teachable and be willing to learn from every single one and everyone on set."

"When it comes to my career, I think from the very beginning like what I was always told... First of all, they never insisted that I enter this industry," she told *The STAR*. "They were always very real with me, in terms of bringing out the pros and cons and ups and downs, especially coming from this particular background. There's a different set of pressure that comes with it, but they will always tell me to make sure that you love what you do and pinili mo talaga 'tong art na 'to."

"My dad always tells me until this day (to) never lose sense of yourself and your core values as a person because you are bound to meet so many people, so many experiences," added Jayda, whose parents "just stay by my side to help me stay grounded and I surround myself with the right people."

Aljon had already met Jayda's parents, Dingdong and Jessa Zaragoza. She shared, "They really do respect him and they really appreciate how gentleman he is, especially with this working experience. He's met my parents and talked to them and stuff like that. They have nothing but good things to say about you (Aljon)."

Aljon reacted, "Deep inside, nanginginig talaga ako, but I had to man up. I also appreciate them because they were very hospitable. Ang ganda ng pakikitungo talaga nila kumbaga siyempre stars sila... but they talked to me like normal na tao sa mga kakilala lang nila and that's what I really appreciate about them."

April Boy Regino’s son JC fulfills wish of late dad

Singer-songwriter JC Regino couldn’t be any happier now that he has fulfilled the wish of his late dad, OPM hitmaker April Boy Regino, which was for him to return to the music scene.

JC signed a recording contract with GMA Music following his presentation to the Kapuso network music arm executive Kedy Sanchez of his original composition titled *Idolo*. It was released as his debut single and is now available for streaming and download on all

digital music platforms.

JC shared during the virtual media conference how GMA Music became instrumental in his music comeback years after he turned his back on singing.

“Before my dad passed away, he would often tell me to go back to singing because at that time, I was already working in the US and then I came home without expecting that he had already grown so weak,” said JC whose vocal tone sounds completely the same with

that of his father.

“It was really his dream that I returned to music and he even said that we would make a song together and then let Sir Kedy hear it. But then he passed away,” he told *The STAR*.

“When I was able to finally write the song, it was *Idolo*. Sinabi ni mommy na iparinig namin kay Sir Kedy because he might like it,” added JC who began writing the song six months after his dad died.

JC didn’t expect what he heard

from Kedy after listening to *Idolo*. “‘Hindi maganda,’ sabi n’ya, ‘sobrang ganda.’ I was so happy. Parang tadhana na rin ‘yung nang-yari (It felt like it was meant to be) and seemed like it was daddy who guided us to go to Sir Kedy.”

What JC heard next from Kedy made him jump up and down with joy. “At napalakpak pa ko noong sinabi na kukunin akong GMA Music artist. Thank God that I was able to return to singing, which we’ve always wanted to happen and



which my daddy and I had dreamt of.”

It was only September of last year when he finished writing the song. He said, “It was my birthday last year and that time, I missed my dad so much. Then, I remembered about the song which I wasn’t able to finish.”

With the help of his uncles, Jimmy and Vingo, or The April Boys, JC began working again on the song.

The process of making the song, JC said, didn’t come easy because his uncles are now based in the US and both already decided to retire from singing. JC, nevertheless, sought their help to complete the song.

“They recorded it in the US but arranged the song here. Bago po mawala si daddy, nagka-ayos na po sila ng April Boys.”

He, too, appreciated how his uncles collaborated with him to finish *Idolo* “because it’s more meaningful when the three of us sing,” he said.

Idolo is a “thank you” song to the fans for the love and support they’ve shown to the April Boys. JC said that they deserve to have a song dedicated to them. “If not for them, April Boy Regino and the April Boys won’t make it (in the industry).”

JC’s passion for singing began when he was 14 years old and he even tried his hand at writing songs with his dad as his mentor.

“I learned from my dad how to write a song and through him, I also felt for the first time how a song could really bring happiness to people. That’s why I’m so happy that I can once again use the (vocal) talent that I got from my father,” he said.

Asked if he feels pressure about being the son of a hitmaker, JC replied in the affirmative but insisted that he feels prouder every time people recognize him as the son of April Boy. “Mas masaya ako na sinasabi ng tao na anak ako ni April Boy na may ibang klaseng naiambag sa musika (I’m happier if people address me as the son of April Boy who has a different contribution to music).”

When one writer asked what music fans can expect from him after signing a recording contract with GMA Music, JC promised to offer more original songs that speak about love and inspiration.

He further shared that he’d like to continue pursuing songwriting. He has written quite a number of songs and he hopes GMA will give him the chance to release them.

He, too, looks forward to the day that he gets to perform on the All-Out Sundays stage and collaborate with Julie Anne San Jose.



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