

The unstoppable 'Pop Princess' Sarah Geronimo shines on this Sunday's 'Citizen Pinoy!'

REDWOOD CITY, CA—Sarah Geronimo immediately owned the spotlight when she won a talent search contest at the young age of 14. Half a decade later, she is now one of the biggest names in Philippine entertainment—with chart-busting records, music awards, hit *teleseryes*, and a box-office blockbuster movie. This Sunday, she radiates once more when she takes on the role of co-host to leading immigration attorney Michael J. Gurfinkel on the most popular immigration program on television—*Citizen Pinoy*.

Sarah first appeared on *Citizen Pinoy* in 2005 when Atty. Gurfinkel helped her obtain her entertainer visa for her very first trip to the USA. Sarah's parents—Delfin and Divine—also join the show to share their experiences with the US embassy and

acquiring their individual visas.

Questions from the audience about their immigration concerns will also be answered. So be sure to watch another brand-new episode of *Citizen Pinoy* with Atty. Michael J. Gurfinkel and special co-host Sarah Geronimo. Broadcast personality Gel Santos-Relos also makes a special appearance from the USA. It's an all-new season of *Citizen Pinoy* this Sunday at 5:40 pm (PST), with a replay on Tuesday at 11:20 pm (PST) on TFC.

Citizen Pinoy is made possible with the support of friends who are committed to giving back to the Filipino community: *Asian Journal*—with circulation in Northern and Southern California, Nevada, and in the East Coast; and Hawaiian Airlines. *Citizen Pinoy* is also supported by ABS-CBN Global's key product offerings: Star Kargo, Starry Starry Store, ABS-CBN Telecom and TFCDirect.

Informative. Entertaining. Inspiring. Watch *Citizen Pinoy*—the Filipino-American community's immigration program every Sunday at 5:40 pm (PST), with replays on Tuesdays at 11:20 pm (PST) on TFC. *Citizen Pinoy* also airs on ANC-US every Sunday at 12 am, with replays on Sundays at 8 am and Thursdays at 7 pm, all PST; and on ANC-Philippines every Sunday at 4 pm with replays at 12 midnight on Mondays.

(Advertising Supplement)



THE UNSTOPPABLE POP PRINCESS SHINES ON CITIZEN PINOY THIS SUNDAY! One of the biggest names in Philippine entertainment—"Pop Princess" Sarah Geronimo (2nd from right) joins "attorney-to-the-stars" Michael J. Gurfinkel (right) for an entertaining and informative episode. Sarah's parents, Delfin (left) and Divine (2nd from left), also take part in the lively discussion as they talk about how they got their US visas. The most popular immigration program on television—*Citizen Pinoy*—airs this Sunday at 5:40 pm (PST), with a replay on Tuesday at 11:20 pm (PST) on TFC. *Citizen Pinoy* also airs on ANC-US every Sunday at 12 midnight, with replays on Sunday at 8 am and Thursday at 7 pm, all PST; and on ANC-Philippines every Sunday at 4 pm with a replay at 12 midnight on Monday (Manila time).

'Cinderella' in Bangkok

Lea Salonga topbills beloved musical

by NOEL ADLAI O. VELASCO
Inquirer.net

BANGKOK, Thailand—For protest-weary Bangkokians, the staging here of *Rodgers & Hammerstein's Cinderella*, topbilled by world-renowned and multi-awarded Filipino artist Lea Salonga, offers a brief respite from the political turbulence dividing the nation.

On Tuesday night, everything seemed to have been forgotten as they watched the stirring performance of the Tony Award-winning actress for the first time. The gala premier kicked off the Bangkok leg of the musical's Asian tour, which started in the Philippines in late July.

For a largely non-English speaking people, the Thais' reaction to the dialogues and scenes were surprising. They laughed heartily at the jokes even though the lines

were obviously of the American brand of humor.

Salonga plays the rags-to-riches heroine in the stage adaptation of the world's best-loved fairy tale, the most popular version of which was written by Charles Perrault and published in 1697 in Paris. The original version is believed to have come from China in 800 B.C.

Through the skillful injection of modern-day terms into the new Cinderella script, such as interest rates and secret service, the producers were able to make the musical more relevant to the times.

The theatrical effects were superb and magical, leaving the audience wondering how they were done. The most applauded sequence was when the fairy godmother, wielding her magic wand, transformed the pumpkin into a golden carriage, the mouse

into horses.

The scene where Cinderella's tattered clothes changed into a gown in less than a minute particularly left the audience dumbfounded.

Later, her gown gradually transformed back into rags as she fled the castle at the stroke of midnight. To achieve this effect, three "Leas" were used during the swift costume change, leaving the audience wondering who of the three was the real Lea.

Standing ovation

Viewers familiar with the original tale will notice a little twist in the ending. Traditionally, the story ends with the herald and the duke going to Cinderella's house to see if the shoe fits, all in the presence of her stepsisters.

In the musical, however, Cinderella goes back to the palace garden where she and the prince fell in love, and this is where she

tries the shoe on.

At the end of the show, the mostly Thai audience—which included movie stars and VIPs in the entertainment industry—lashed Lea and cast with rousing applause. Filipino expatriates gave the cast a standing ovation.

The supporting players got their own shower of adulation, particularly those who played Cinderella's stepmother and two stepsisters for their amusing dialogue and antics, the fairy godmother for her "magic" and wit, and the king and queen for their comic asides.

"It's great," said Christina Aguilar, a Thai pop singer born to Filipino and French parents. She watched the musical with her father, Tony Aguilar, a popular Filipino pianist based in Bangkok.

Lea fans

"Everything was great," said the Bangkok-born Aguilar who has made a name for herself here



after her debut album "Ninja" sold a million copies, a record for a female artist in Thailand.

Thai commercial model, singer and stage actress Suthasinee Budhinar was particularly ecstatic that she was finally able to see Lea perform live.

"I love Lea Salonga. She's my idol," said Suthasinee, who has also starred in Thai musicals herself. "Every song that she sang, I was touched by it. I like a lot of

them, particularly *There's Music in You, Ten Minutes Ago*, and *Impossible*.

Fit for a star

Philippine Ambassador to Thailand Antonio Rodriguez said Lea's performance was "befitting of a star of her stature."

He said it surprised him to see many Thais expressing full appreciation of the show considering their relatively limited exposure to the musical genre. ■

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