

The Reign of Sarah

by ROCHELLE C. PANGILINAN / AJPress

WITH a box-office hit (the recent *A Very Special Love*), a series of successful concerts and a new album (featuring the lead single *I'll Be There*, where she duets with Backstreet Boy Howie Dorough) to boot, all at the young age of 20, Sarah Geronimo is primed to rule show business.

And with her latest hit album *Just Me...* Sarah to promote, Sarah donned Burberry—complete with dramatic eye makeup and sophisticated slick back hair—in the October issue of *Preview* magazine, Sarah may yet add another title to her credit: fashion icon, something her young fans would definitely welcome.

Sarah is aware of her many young fans, one reason why she declined to shoot a kissing scene with leading man John Lloyd Cruz in *A Very Special Love*, where she played the Polyanna-like, fresh-out-of-college girl (armed only with colorful post-its, a fashion sense that resembles Rainbow Brite and a bright smile) thrown into the jungle-like world of men's magazine publishing, with John Lloyd as the powerful but emotionally vacant editor-in-chief.

"A lot of young people look up to me. It would not be a good example if they saw their Ate Sarah in a kissing scene," Sarah tells *Preview* magazine. She is also proudly boyfriend-less as well, as she'd rather focus her attention on her burgeoning career at the moment, but this has not stopped her many male admirers from trying to woo her.

Some admirers, however, are all just for her wonderful singing talent. Among them, international star Howie Dorough, who had no second thoughts on recording with Sarah on a track for *Just Me...* Sarah, *I'll Be There* is produced by Christian de Walden of Hollywood and was

composed by Al Taveel and Pamela Philips-Oland, the same team behind one of the most successful duets in pop music history, *Too Much, Too Little, Too Late* by Johnny Mathis and Denise Williams.

"I liked Sarah instantly," says Howie. "She seems to be very sweet and humble and she did a good job with the song."

And unlike many young stars who gain fame and fortune all too fast, "sweet and humble" are still words often associated with Sarah even after all the success she's amassed. Since winning the grand title in *Star For A Night* for her rendition of the Celine Dion pop hit *To Love You More* at the tender age of 14, Sarah has continuously made her presence felt in the biz. And from the looks of things, Sarah is far from slowing down. Among her next projects include a follow-up movie with John Lloyd to be released early next year. By November, Sarah will be holding a major solo concert at the Araneta Coliseum and will be releasing her first-ever Christmas album, to be produced by Ryan Cayabyab, in December.

The reign of Sarah is indeed upon us. ■



Photo courtesy of Star Cinema



Photo courtesy of HerBench

Madonna tells Palin: Get off my street

by MOMAR G. VISAYA / AJPress

NEW YORK — After kicking off the North America leg of her *Sticky & Sweet* tour in New Jersey over the weekend, Madonna crossed the Hudson and performed two nights in a row to sold-out audiences at the Madison Square Garden.

And what would a Madonna concert be without her political commentary?

The 50-year-old singer continued to slam the Republican bet for vice president, Sarah Palin at The Garden when she sang her hit *I Love New York*, which had a line that goes "Get off my street!"

"You know who can get off of my street? Sarah Palin! I'm gonna kick her ass if she don't get off of my street!" Madonna said as the crowd, which included P. Diddy, Rosie O'Donnell and designer Michael Kors, screamed in approval.

Madonna began her tirade against Palin during her show Saturday at the Izod Center. "Sarah Palin can't come to my party. Sarah Palin can't come to my show. It's nothing personal," the *New York Post* quoted her as saying.

That was not the only time when the singer showed her political color.

Halfway through the show, a montage of images that juxtaposed Republican

On the same montage, Sen. Barack Obama's images were interspersed with photos of Oprah, Mahatma Gandhi, the Dalai Lama, Mother Teresa and Bono.

Politics aside, the show was, as expected, a visual spectacle.

The singer emerged onstage sitting on a queenly throne accompanied by the sound of her song *Candy Shop*. The audience, just like in her two previous concert tours I watched, just stood up and started dancing. Most of them remained standing throughout the duration of the show.

"I love New York! It's good to be home," Madonna screamed as the audience roared. The Garden was just pulsating with high-strung energy.

The spectacle continued when a sparkling white Rolls Royce emerged onstage as a giant prop, one that Madonna maximized well and when she left the stage, a boxing ring manifested. The dizzying screens were also transformed into various sizes while green laser and almost blinding lights filled The Garden, making it New York City's biggest club for the night.

The two-hour show featured Madonna in various stages of undress as she showed the

world that she could be the fittest 50-year-old woman in the business. She danced and sprinted. She even skipped rope and strutted the catwalk.

It was more than just physical, however, as she breathed new life to some of her most memorable hits such as *Like a Prayer*, *La Isla Bonita*, *Ray of Light*, *Borderline* and *Vogue*. She could have called



Madonna

AP Photo by Thanassis Stavrakis

this *The Reinvention Tour, Part 2* and the fans would have gobbled the tickets just the same.

My personal favorite?

It has to be her heart-felt performance of *You Must Love Me*, which she did while strumming her guitar. It was so spotless and you can really feel the sincerity in her voice. There was no tight choreography, no vocal calisthenics, just pure, raw emotion.

Madonna had a grand time interacting with the audience as she performed for them and with them.

At one point in the show, she jammed with the crowd as she performed *Lucky Star*, which was requested by some placard-carrying members of the audience.

She also pointed out the few people who were sitting down while everyone was up on their feet clapping. "Are you bored?" she asked a couple of middle-aged men, before she politely asked them to stand up. "Come on, this is not a Barbra Streisand show," she barked.

Her energy level was way up there and this was willingly matched by the very appreciative audience. Madonna was really having fun and it showed.

Her adoring fans couldn't be happier. ■

RP 'Jazz Queen' 75, still singing

by POCHOLO CONCEPCION / Inquirer.net

MANILA—Balloons and flowers adorned Merk's Bar & Bistro Monday night (Oct. 6), as the owner led an intimate group of well-wishers in greeting his mother, RP jazz queen Annie Brazil, on her 75th birthday.

Annie, who flew in from her home base in New York, hardly looked her age. Hair in a short bob and wearing a sequined white top with a black blazer over pinstriped pants, she cut a relaxed figure as she sang both rarely heard and oft-covered classics.

With Romy Posadas on electric piano, the first half of Annie's set included *Nature Boy* (1947, famously covered by Nat King Cole), *Ain't Misbehavin'* (1929, title track of the Tony Award-winning Broadway musical) and *What's New* (1939, originally an instrumental piece written with a trumpet solo).

The rest were more familiar—*Send in the Clowns*, *Day by Day*, *Night and Day*, *The Nearness of You...* Imee Marcos came to our rescue over a tune we couldn't name: *Simple Life!*

As her presence was acknowledged, Imee joked that she was representing her sister Irene, who had taken voice lessons from Annie.

At Imee's table, there was enthusiastic talk of a plan to revive the *Metro Pop Music Festival* songwriting competition.

"I'm recommending myself to help out," Richard Merck blurted. "Metro Pop is the mother of all modern local music contests!"

Onstage, Annie was demonstrating how a true jazz singer remains ageless and unpredictable. She made old songs sound new, bending the notes not to show off, but rather to let mood color the music.

"Marvelous, that one's titled, *Marvelous*," Imee said again when Annie diverted from the set. After a Christmas medley, Richard joined her in closing the program with a spirited version of *It Had to Be You*.

When the house band, an acoustic trio called Silk & Steel started playing, covers of Carly Simon, America, Simon & Garfunkel and The Eagles came on. The atmosphere exuded nostalgia and, better than that, a feeling that there is, indeed, a certain grace that comes with aging.

Mingling with her guests, Annie Brazil radiated that feeling. ■



Gov. Sarah Palin

AP Photo by Jim R. Bouds