



*Hi!*  
Society

BY MONET LU

# RP's Reigning Adonis

**I**F I WERE to name a truly class act in Philippine showbiz, one of them would have to be Richard Gomez.

For me, he is the reigning Adonis of his generation in Philippine cinema. He fits the bill of tall, dark and handsome. To boot, this good-looking model-actor is also one of the nicest guys around!

I remember meeting him for the first time during his first American holiday with then-leading lady Snooky Serna.

Instantly, Goma (as he's fondly called) and I hit it off. I recall showing him around LA during that visit. I think I took him to Beverly Center, which was the hotspot for shopping back in the day. He also stayed at my house while he was here.

Since then, he's been a good friend. He had a special guest appearance on my show *Reflections 4* with the help of Mary Ann Pagsibigan.

I remember Goma spending two of his Christmases with us here in LA. Once he joined us at the salon and visited with my Mom which was so nice of him.

Another Christmas years later, he attended a party held at my house with his new bride Lucy Torres.

One endearing trait of Goma is that he has no qualms about where we eat. We would set up outside my house before and share meals with friends *kamayan*-style.

I think I relate to him as a person because of his humble beginnings. He worked at McDonald's before breaking into modeling and showbiz.

As a celebrity, well, there is much to celebrate about Goma. He is an accomplished actor, product endorser, athlete and leader.

He's won awards for his acting performances for critically acclaimed movies such as *Dahas* and *Hihintayin Kita sa Langit*. He has also starred in a string of hits for Regal films, making him a truly bankable leading man with the help of long-time mentor Douglas Quijano.

Goma is one of those lead actors who will stay with us for a long time. I think the secret to his staying power is the wisdom he applies in choosing roles.

He's like the *Pinoy* Johnny Depp. Versatile and unpredictable in his role choices.

His latest TV projects, specifically as host of *Family Feud*, have also enjoyed success.

As a product endorser, Goma is much sought after. He's the original and main model for Bench, which still remains a top apparel brand to this day.

The athlete Goma employs the same discipline in sports as he does in his acting career. With pride, he's represented the Philippines in many sporting competitions.

He founded the Goma Cup and MAD (Mamamayan Ayaw sa Droga)



Richard Gomez



Richard Gomez with wife Lucy Torres

# THE AM FM BAND

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**O**N April 25, The AM FM Band (the First Filipino live band to play at the Mayflower) will perform at a dinner dance charity in Mayflower Chinese Restaurant in Chinatown from 7pm-12mn.

The dinner dance will be for the benefit of the UPAPO ETAA-NA Foundation, Notre Dame of Manila Alumni Association and Honda of Pasadena's Tulong Foundation.

Let the AM FM Band bring you timeless memories through their music. The benefit dinner is open to the public. Tickets are at \$35 inclusive of a sumptuous 10-course dinner.

The AM FM Band is Ellery A on vocals, keyboards and arrangements; Freddie "Boogie" on lead guitar; Benjie B on Vocals and small percussion; Mariela H on lead vocals; Winston O on vocals and small percussion; Roy D on bass guitar; Pabby L on vocals and drums and Haley Blackman as sound engineer.

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which campaigns against drug abuse.

The private and personal Goma is also very devoted. He's a doting father to daughter Juliana and very loving husband to the lovely and incomparable Lucy. His 11-year marriage is a standard by which other showbiz marriages aspire for.

During the last general elections in the Philippines, Goma and supporters braved the complicated world of politics in a desire to make a difference in the lives of Filipinos.

Goma's senatorial bid was unsuccessful but his heart was in the right place. Who knows, we might still see his name in the ballot in the next elections.

I hope to be seeing Goma and Lucy in the Pacquiao-Hatton match in Las Vegas this coming May 2. The couple is celebrating their anniversary by taking this trip to the US.

I wish Goma, Lucy and Juliana the best. Their wonderful family deserves all the graces. And may there be more little Gomas and Lucys

to come...

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The author is a Marikina-born, award-winning celebrity beauty stylist with his own chain of salons across Southern California and Las Vegas, Nevada. Ultimately, Monet is known as an all-around artist who produces sold-out fashion and awards shows, as well as unforgettable marketing campaigns. Monet is also the founder of the revolutionary all-natural beauty products available at [www.skinbymonet.com](http://www.skinbymonet.com). He supports many humanitarian efforts to include projects in his native Marikina, The Bantay Bata Foundation, and many more. To contact Monet, please visit [www.monetsalon.com](http://www.monetsalon.com) for more information.

# Lea Salonga...

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from May 7 to June 7 at EWP's theater in LA's Little Tokyo. More information about the show and the Visionary Awards dinner is available at [www.eastwestplayers.org](http://www.eastwestplayers.org).

Speaking of Little Tokyo, that's Lea's next LA stop — the Aratani Japan America Theatre, to be exact, on May 30. She will be a special guest of the 65-piece Asia America Symphony Orchestra under music director and conductor David Benoit — yes, the one more popularly known as a contemporary jazz exponent.

David's 8th

David studied orchestration and conducting, and this is his 8th season with this orchestra. According to Lea, "This opportunity presented itself sometime last year. I think David

Benoit heard my version of a couple of songs he wrote (*When the Winter's Gone* and *Land of the Loving*, both on my *Inspired* album). He liked them, and then inquiries and discussions began to have me perform with the Asia America Symphony Orchestra. Woo-hoo!"

We asked how this will be different from her milestone concert at the Walt Disney Concert Hall last July. Lea answered: "The orchestra will be much bigger ... so the sound will be very different, maybe similar to my concerts in Hong Kong and Seoul."

She added, "There is no theme. Since I'll only be singing for an hour—the symphony will be performing the first half; I'll be doing the second half—I just want to showcase the best of what I've got." More information is at [www.asiaamericasympphony.org](http://www.asiaamericasympphony.org).

Our fellow Inquirer columnist rattled off her other coming US concerts: May 1, University of Nevada, Las Vegas; May 4, Snoqualmie Casino, Washington; and May 24, Silver Legacy Casino, Reno. She added, "I have more concerts in the US in the fall ... and Nicole will be a flower girl for the first time then."

### Proud wife, mom

On her life with Rob and Nicole (who turns 3 in May) in the Philippines, Lea gushed, "It's so wonderful living here with the husband and the little girl. We're blessed to have a lot of quality help out here, too, which makes our lives a lot easier. It's something that we don't ever take for granted."

The proud mom, who has been sharing amusing anecdotes about precocious Nicole, gamely shared the latest, upon our request: "One afternoon, after I got ready for a photo shoot/interview, Nicole said, 'You look good!' Another time, I was putting makeup on for a gathering, and she kept saying, 'Try that, try that.' So, after each face part—eyes, cheeks, brows—I'd pretend to put make-up on her. Her *yaya* then kissed her cheek, and she protested: 'No, *yaya!* Make-up!'"

Are Rob and Lea planning a playmate for Nicole? "We'd love that but the time isn't right, right now," Lea responded. "Work kind of gets in the way."

As to what she misses doing and what she will do while in the United States, Lea gave a one-word answer—no further explanation needed: "Driving!" ■

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