

SHOWBIZ & STYLE

JOURNAL Stargazing at ABS-CBN

AJPress meets Star Magic

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MANILA —We were standing outside the alley that led to ABS-CBN's Studio 10, all ten of us members of paper, like we were some kind of movie fans. The alley had doors, and more alleys and doors appeared as we were led to see the stars of *Star Magic*, ABS-CBN's pool of stars. We passed by doors that contained names familiar. One even had "Vhong/Sam/Echo" and many more names, which ended with an abbreviated one, "JLloyd." The boys' dressing room, of course. The next door had the name "Angel," and nothing else. She's a diva on her own. At 30 minutes before 12, the alley started to swell with staff and production members. The glittering stars of the show started to run to the studio too, taking their places in that full-packed Sunday noontime show.

We were able to interview some younger members of *Star Magic* before things started to heat up. My first stop was Rayver Cruz, the guy who had long been partnered to Shaina Magdayao, and who plays Cocoy in the hit TV series, *May Bukas Pa*. I've seen him act a few weeks ago when I stopped over Bacolor, in their set at the still majestic church, half of which had been submerged in lahar after the Pinatubo eruption. He was very soft spoken, and courteous while I talked to him after being made up for the show. When I asked if he was also part of another show, *Eva Fonda*, I almost fell off my seat. "*Si Jason Abalos po iyon,*" he told me, smiling. I apologized profusely, but it seemed he didn't really mind. "*Sabi nga po nila, magkamukha raw kami.*"

A few other turns from Rayver's dressing room, I was led to a singers' room, where Christian Bautista, Mark Bautista and Jed Maddela were stationed. I was introduced to Ronnie Liang, and I couldn't really help but be star struck. I have watched this guy back in his *Pinoy Dream Academy* days and I had long admired his talent. He was tall, well-built, but still carrying that shy demeanor he had been known for, ever since he started belting those Basil Valdez at PDA. "I'm happy I am now able to buy the clothes that I want," he told me. "*Dati ang hirap, pero ngayon, nakakatuwa, nakakapunta na ako sa ibang lugar.*" He surmised that he was still coming to terms with stardom. "Excited *po ako sa trip namin. Magiging masaya po iyon.*" After Ronnie, we took a rest for a while, and then when we returned to the busy alleys, we went on to a more hidden studio and met the two hunks, Jake Cuenca and Zanjoe Marudo. There was nothing much to say, but, oh well, they're simply gorgeous. They were both excited to make the trip to the US, like most others we talked with.

But someone else made my day. When my co-editor was eyeing for a Piolo Pascual interview, I had been wishing to talk with John

Lloyd Cruz. A few nights ago, I saw him giving his Betty La Fea a few cute winks that made my own hairs stand up. I wrote about him immediately in this blog, and now

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