

Ruby Karen

Flying High

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AJPress

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As the Filipino American Symphony Orchestra played a dramatic musical piece, more than a thousand people were riveted to their seats, hardly breathing with mouths gaping in awe and wonder, as all eyes were on Ruby Karen, the unbelievable Filipina aerial artist who was gracefully hanging from a long soft fabric high above the stage. In a spectacular show of grace and strength, Ruby was dazzling her audience by doing various mind-boggling aerial acrobatics – stretching, spinning, balancing, hanging, dropping and flipping her body in the air with just a hand or foot wrapped around the light fabric hanging from the high ceiling. As Ruby Karen took a bow after her amazing performance, the audience gave her a standing ovation with enthusiastic clapping and cheering. Like her other countless performances around the world, Ruby has once again captivated her audience with her dazzling act.

Ruby Karen is a world champion in salsa, ballet and acro-gymnastics, garnering three World Titles, namely, the Ballet Pas de Deux and Acro-Gymnastics partnering from the highly established World Championship of Performing Arts, and The Mayan World Salsa Championship – Professional Division. She is a veteran in the performing arts industry with 35 years experience in the field of dance, circus aerials, sports, and fitness, having taught and performed continuously in at least 20 countries and 50 cities.

Born and raised in Manila, Ruby studied ballet continuously since she was 8 years old. Since she came from a family of nine siblings, Ruby's going to ballet class was a luxury they could ill afford. But, her love for ballet was so much that Ruby saved up her school allowance to pay for her tuition, and graciously accepted hand-me-down dance attires and ballet shoes. Ruby has worked up the ladder harder than most kids in her dance class. After advancing enough to be leveled with the apprentices of dance companies, she found herself taking classes with world famous British dancer and teacher, William Morgan, who provided her with the strong fundamental training she now carries until today. It was through Morgan and choreographer, Eric V. Cruz, the latter who discovered her while auditioning for the project, Interior Castle, that greatly contributed to Ruby's training, which also commenced her professional career as a performing artist.

In addition to ballet, Ruby learned and mastered modern, jazz, circus aerials and gymnastics. She says that the most valuable training she got was from the Philippines, where strict adherence to conformity,

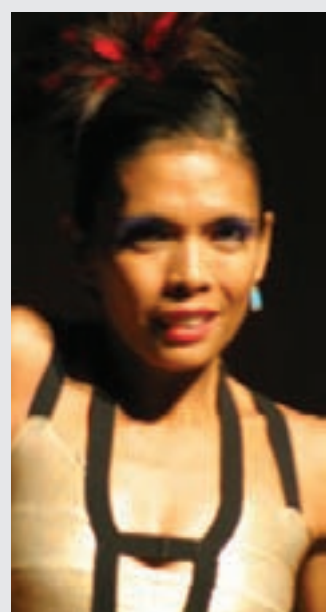
coupled with an abundance of artistic and creative expressions were the focal points that molded her as an artist. She also identified acting as a supplemental form in emoting her movements which eventually lead her to diversify in the field of modern dance. While in Tokyo, where highly competitive arena for *gaikokugins* (foreigners) flocked, she marketed herself as a modern dancer fusing the lines she developed from her ballet training. She also kept her pace in the commercial field, performing in concerts, television, commercials, variety shows and movies.

As she moved to Los Angeles, she knew she had to start all over. A senior litigation paralegal for 10 years, Ruby Karen worked for large and mid-size firms. However, due to her passion, she eventually chose to devote and focus all her efforts in dance. She focused her attention as a dancer and a choreographer, creating various pieces for individuals and dance companies. As she hungered for new concepts, she continued to aggressively train and meet new challenges including her newly found interests, aerial arts, acro-gymnastics and salsa. Ruby realized that in order to fulfill her passion, she had to break away from limitations and direct her energies as a solo/ independent performer.

She appeared in the reality show by Fox TV called: *So You Think You Can Dance*, by the same producers of *American Idol* (Dick Clark Productions and 19 TV Ltd. with executive producers, Simon Fuller, Nigel Lythgoe and Allen Shapiro). Ruby was the assistant choreographer who not only taught and demonstrated the demanding salsa routine, but also shared with the contestants, her secrets in the execution of the tricks.

Ruby Karen's works and performances has been reviewed and published several times by *LA Times*, *Beverly Outlook*, *Celebrity Chronicle* and other local newspapers at various cities and countries where she performed. A most versatile and spectacular performer, Ruby Karen is soaring high above the rest in the performing arts' global stage. One more name that makes Filipinos truly proud. ■

Renowned dancer, aerial artist, gymnast, singer, actress and instructor



DANCE AWARDS:

- 1st –Mayan World Salsa Championship 2005
- 1st (Gold medalist) in Ballet - World Championship of Performing Arts 2003
- 1st (Gold medalist) - Acro-gymnastics - World Championship of Performing Arts 2003
- 1st –San Francisco Salsa Championship – Cabaret Division 2005
- 1st –California Star Ball Professional Cabaret/ Theatrical Arts Championship 2007
- 1st - Open Japan Dance Competition 1991
- 1st - Open Professional Salsa Championship, Palm Springs 2006
- Finalist - ESPN's 1st World Salsa Championship 2005 – Las Vegas
- Finalist– International Choreography Festival Dance Under The Stars, Palm Springs 2005
- Finalist– International Choreography Festival Dance Under The Stars, Palm Springs 2001
- Outstanding Performance - The Lester Horton Dance Awards Nominee 2004
- Achievement Award for Exceptional Performance and High Standards of Excellence by Celebrity Chronicle, Glendale 2005

PERFORMANCES:

International Performer and Instructor: At least 50 cities with repeated invitations in Europe, Asia, North and South America, including Tel Aviv, Guatemala, Jakarta, London, Munich, Hamburg, Hannover, Dusseldorf, Vienna, Murcia, Salzburg, Graz, Paris, Marseilles, Gothenburg, Tokyo, Rio De Janeiro, San Paolo, Vancouver, Kuala Lumpur, Mexico, Sicily, Marbella, Barcelona, Rome, Brescia, Perugia, Salerno, Chiavari, Genoa, Milan, to name a few.

- Guest Performer: 1st Season - Final Episode of *So You Think You Can Dance*. Also coached and choreographed with Alex Da Silva
- Producer of instructional DVD: *Ground and Aerial Tricks for Dancers*
- Featured Dancer: DVD - *The Hollywood Dancers*, released 2008
- Collaborative dance productions with aerial and dance artists
- Program designer of Aerial Dance Fitness©
- Founder & Director - Orange County Aerial Arts
- Organizer of children's aerial dance summer camps in various locations in Orange County
- Former Principal Dancer for Brockus Project Dance Company, Los Angeles.
- Faculty at the Accel Dance Center where she taught jazz and ballet.
- As a singer, she was involved as a main soloist and back-up singer to various concerts and events. She also produced her own album, *Make it Through the Night*, which she composed and performed.

DANCE EDUCATION

- Open classes and workshops including, Diavolo Dance Theater; Charles Maple; Stefan Wentz – Wentz Dance School; Lisa Ebayer, Diane Lauridsen – South Bay Ballet and schools around the greater Los Angeles
- American Theater Dance, New York (Scholarship Award); Joffrey School of Dance
- Matsuyama Ballet School, Ohkura Ballet
- Zurich Opernhaus Dance
- William Morgan
- Eric V. Cruz – Dance Concert Company
- Cultural Center Of The Philippines School of Dance
- Edgar Valdez - American School of Ballet
- Effie Nanas - School of Dance
- Vela Damian - School of Ballet and Dance Arts
- Shirley Halili: Halili-Cruz School of Dance

MODERN and AERIAL ACTS

- MODERN: Professional Dancer; company member and collaborate efforts with dance companies e.g., Inspiration (Tokyo); Brockus Project Dance Company (Los Angeles) and independent contracts

- ACRO-GYMNASTICS AND AERIAL PARTNERING: Mastered this artform and incorporated her skills in various dance discipline, more so in Adagio. It is in this artform that she saw the need to go independent and explore her skills to its fullest which gained her recognition locally and internationally. Due to the overgrowing demand for her style, she saw the need to produce her own Aerial Lift and Tricks Instructional DVD (released in 2006) and teach these movements in all appearances and invitations around the globe
- SALSA: Professional career since 2004. Traveled, taught and performed in many countries and cities around the world.
- CIRCUS AERIALS: Trained since 2003 with Trapeze, Tissu and Hoop apparatus and performed solely and incorporation with other performing arts discipline. She attributes her training and practice locations to Hollywood Aerials Arts (LA), Escola Nacional de Circo (Rio De Janeiro), Florentine Circus (Tel Aviv), Escuela Municipal de Circo de Alcorcon (Madrid), New Hope Gymnastics (OC); Focus Fish (LA) and independent training and collaborative efforts with other aerialists.

- TEACHING EXPERIENCE INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOPS: Tel Aviv, Guatemala, Jakarta, London, Munich, Hamburg, Hannover, Dusseldorf, Vienna, Murcia, Salzburg, Graz, Paris, Marseilles, Gothenburg, Tokyo, Vancouver, Kuala Lumpur, Mexico, San Paolo, Mexico City, Sicily, Marbella, Rome, Brescia, Perugia, Salerno, Chiavari, Genoa, Milan (and many other cities in Italy). Ruby Karen taught on multiple occasions at some of the cities mentioned above.

- REGIONAL WORKSHOPS: San Francisco and other Bay areas, Phoenix, Dallas, New York, Rhode Island, San Diego, Seattle, Portland, Miami, other cities across the USA.
- REGULAR CLASSES:
 - SCHOOL OF BALLET AND DANCE ARTS (Phils.)
 - GOLDCREST DANCE WORKSHOP (Phils.)
 - LEGASPI DANCE CENTER (Phils.)
 - HALILI-CRUZ SCHOOL OF DANCE (Phils.)
 - STUDIO ACCEL (Tokyo)
 - CENTER STAGE DANCE ACADEMY (California)
 - FOCUS FISH DANCE STUDIO (California)
 - DANCETIME STUDIO (California)
 - LAURIDSEN SCHOOL OF DANCE (California)
 - BEA HIVE DANCE CENTER (California)
 - BROCKUS PROJECT STUDIOS (California)
 - Local Workshops: Several contracted workshops in Los Angeles, Orange County, San Diego and San Francisco Bay areas.

- ACHIEVEMENTS IN BODY-BUILDING
 - 1st Place - 1989 National (Philippine) Bodybuilding Mixed Pairs
 - 2nd Place - 1989 National Women's Bodybuilding
 - 3rd Place - 1991 Asian Women's Bodybuilding Championship
 - 7th Place – 1993 Japan Bodybuilding Championship
 - Special Award - Best Poser, '89 National Women's and Mixed Pairs

- ACTING CREDITS:
 - Appeared in Films, Television and Commercials:
 - Partial List includes: *Nemuro Otoko*, *Tengoku No Taizai*, *Yamada Ga Machini*, *Yatte Kitta*, *Don o Koroshita Otoko*, *Takarasagashi Boutique*, *Germs Super Show*, *Mongolian Barbecue*, *Good Morning Manila*. ■



Publisher's Note

Defying gravity

Ruby Karen's graceful and impeccable performance during the debut of the Filipino-American Symphony Orchestra afforded a thunderous applause from the audience. And who wouldn't be mesmerized at a gift that defies gravity -- the ability to literally float on air and send her kababayans' spirits soaring with pride. Pride from having a versatile, talented and internationally-acclaimed Pinay in the field of salsa, ballet and acro-gymnastics. The Asian Journal MDWK Magazine gives you a glimpse of Ruby Karen's natural high in this week's issue. ■