

SHOWBIZ & STYLE

JOURNAL

Claire de la Fuente Duets with Michael Bolton for new album

by RENE VILLAROMAN

BEVERLY HILLS – Filipino chanteuse Claire de la Fuente makes history in her latest CD, which includes a duet with pop icon Michael Bolton. That song is called *The Christmas Song*, which is also included in Bolton's newest album entitled "One World, One Love, which will be released all over the world beginning this fall.

De la Fuente, who has the marketing rights to the song in the Philippines, announced during a meeting with Mr. Bolton at the Peninsula Hotel in Beverly Hills on Friday, September 11, that the CD containing the cut, would be available in the Philippines before the end of September. Bolton described *One World, One Love*, as an instrument to reach out to the rest of the world and "to focus on our similarities rather than on our differences."

Bolton, who holds the right to release *The Christmas Song* track worldwide, said his CD would be available in Europe and other parts of the world in September, and in the US and Canada in January 2010. *One World, One Love* is about unity as compared to division," Bolton added.

"This is going to have me touring for the next two years, on the road for at least a year and a half," he announced excitedly. I'm packed and ready to go." As for the possibility of doing a concert in Manila, Bolton said that it may happen in the fall of

2010. "But you never know," he winked.

De la Fuente, who is all agog over her biggest coup yet, was beside herself in her expression of gratitude to Bolton for this break of a lifetime. "This opportunity that you gave me is really unprecedented, not only for me but for every Filipino in the world," she expressed to Bolton. "I'm so glad to hear that," Bolton reciprocated.

The collaboration was brought about by Christian de Walden, De la Fuente's Italian-American producer, who sent Bolton samples of De la Fuente's song. During a meeting with Bolton's manager, de Walden gave him a CD of De la Fuente for Bolton to listen to. A few days later, de Walden received an e-mail from Bolton saying, "I love her voice; let's do it." Soon after, De la Fuente recorded a track of *The Christmas Song* in Manila and an MP3 file was shipped to Bolton.

"I was satisfied when I first heard it," Bolton said. "It is very simple that you understand how the song should flow," Bolton asserted. "It's a classic, but it's perfect for your vocal range and tones, and it feels like we sang it together, like it was recorded live with a big orchestra."

Bolton adds: "When you are singing a song that is a classic holiday song that's in our DNA, in our

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Michael Bolton (left) Claire de la Fuente (right) field questions from journalists. AJPRESS photos by Rene Villaroman

'Ruby' serves drama with a side of laughs

by SHIRLIE-MAE M. CHOE

AS a self-identified big girl, when first approached to see *Ruby, Tragically Rotund*, I was apprehensive about seeing a play built around female body issues written by a man. I had recently been disappointed by a show revolving around Pacific Islander beauty pageants performed by a male comedy duo and I was half-expecting to see large doses of self-deprecating fat jokes. Instead, I was treated to emerging playwright Boni B. Alvarez's intelligent and moving modern tragedy about Ruby, a full-figured Filipino-American college student, and her relationships with her family, friends, and her own body.

In the play, Ruby is in her final year at San Jose State University and on the verge of earning her teaching credential. She appears comfortable in her own body and has surrounded herself with like-minded and like-bodied friends and a hot new African-American boyfriend who worships her. Unfortunately, Ruby's home life is ruled by her body-image obsessed pageant mom, Edwina, who has pushed her younger sister Jemmalyn to compete in the Miss Sunnyvale Beauty Contest despite the fact that Jemmalyn is flat as a pancake and looks like a boy (the role is actually played by a male actor on stage). In their mother's eyes, true beauty lies in the size of one's body and Jemmalyn's

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