

SHOWBIZ & STYLE

JOURNAL



Regine Velasquez/Inquirer.net

Not obsessed with being top Kapuso talent

MANILA—Regine Velasquez is genuinely perplexed that she's dubbed "GMA 7's No. 1 female star," a distinction confirmed by a well-placed network insider.

by BAYANI SAN DIEGO, JR.
Inquirer.net

"I'm just happy that GMA 7 still trusts my abilities as a host, actor and singer," Regine said in an exclusive interview with Inquirer Entertainment.

Being the unofficial Kapuso Queen is just a nifty bonus, she insisted. "I don't obsess about stature. I always remind myself that I'm just fortunate to still be working... though there are younger stars out there."

Naturally, the flip side of being No. 1 is being perennially busy. Regine is swamped with work, and is seen on television daily.

Mean machine

Weeknights, she appears opposite Robin Padilla on *Totoy Bato*. Saturday evenings, she hosts the reality talent search *Are You the Next Big Star?* Sunday afternoons, she sings on the musical-variety show *SOP*.

"I don't feel like a person now," she joked, implying that she's had to function

like a machine. "But it's good. Work is a blessing."

For *Next Big Star*, it's not uncommon for her to wrap up in the wee hours of morning. "It's because at the start we had 151 contestants. Now, we have 40. Actually, it's the deliberations that take long."

Her only complaint about work is that it takes her away from boyfriend Ogie Alcasid. "I get to see my Honey (Ogie) on Saturdays, [when] we both don't have commitments," she said.

Good thing, she added, that Ogie is occupied with work, too. "He has three TV shows (*Bubble Gang*, *Hole in the Wall* and *SOP*) and two movies (*OMG* with Judy Ann Santos and *Spoiled Brat: Yaya and Angelina* with Michael V.)."

The sweethearts make as much time as possible for each other. "He visits me, picks me up, and we go out... just the two of us,"

said Regine.

Last time they had such a "date," she said, was for the Judy Ann Santos-Ryan Agoncillo wedding in San Juan, Batangas, on April 28. Regine and Ogie sang *The Prayer* for the Offertory during the church ceremony.

"It was a taping day, but I went with him," Regine recalled. "I finished *Totoy Bato* at 1am I waited for Ogie and we left for Batangas at 4am."

They've grown close to the Agoncillos and would sometimes go out on group dates with them.

Does she also see herself walking down the aisle soon? "I don't really plan that," Regine said. "Actually, we cannot plan yet. We cannot even talk about it (Ogie's annulment case from first wife Michelle van Eimeren is ongoing). But I'm happy for Judai and Ryan; they've gone through a lot as a couple."

Just like Ogie and Regine. ■

PARTY! PARTY!

A knockout bash for Pacman

by BAYANI SAN DIEGO, JR.
Inquirer.net

MANILA—It was the victory party that boxing champ Manny Pacquiao almost missed.

GMA 7 threw an "intimate" bash for Pacman to celebrate his triumph over Ricky Hatton on May 22. Alas, the guest of honor was stranded in Mindanao.

According to event host Paolo Bediones, Pacquiao, who was a bit under the weather, had missed the morning and afternoon flights from General Santos City earlier.

Friend and politician Luis "Chavit" Singson came to the rescue, lending his private jet plane to the boxer.

Though two hours late, Pacquiao arrived at the Renaissance Hotel in Makati—where 100 or so guests from the media, entertainment and advertising awaited him.

They call this "intimate?"

Among the celebrities at the party were JayR and Rochelle Pangilinan, Mel Tiangco and Mike Enriquez, Pia and Maxene Magalona, Paolo Contis and



Inquirer.net photo

Lian Paz, Raymart Santiago and Claudine Barretto. Also Alfred Vargas and Dingdong Dantes, who both came date-less.

Claudine brought along a letter written by daughter Sabina who is Pacquiao's godchild. It said: "*Ninong*, you're the best puncher in the world."

Barretto told Inquirer Entertainment: "Sabina talked to Manny on the phone. She told him: '*Ninong*, Hatton is a loser, but you're a winner!'"

That same evening, Pacquiao signed a contract with GMA 7,

represented by network boss-esses Felipe Gozon and Gilberto Duavit Jr. The GMA execs presented to Pacquiao a Ramon Orlina glass sculpture.

The boxer announced that he was set to do a sitcom with the network, co-starring songwriter Lito Camo and former Olympian Onyok Velasco.

Pacman capped the night, belting out *Lahing Pinoy*, *I Never Cry* and *Bilog ang Mundo*. Now, that was a knockout. ■

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[Showbitz!]

Dingdong Dantes prepares for new TV series



iGMA.tv photo

ONE OF THE MOST in-demand young actors today, Dingdong Dantes, is set to star in a television series based on the Korean hit drama *Stairway to Heaven*. Dingdong will play Cholo (originally played by Korean actor Kwon Song Woo), and this will mark Dingdong's foray into Korean *teleserye* territory, which has been quite popular lately.

The new series is also set to team up Dingdong with a new leading lady after the successful runs of *Marimar*, *Dyesebel*, and *Ang Babaeng Hinugot Sa Aking Tadyang* where he was paired with Marian Rivera. Dingdong reveals to Philippine Entertainment Portal (PEP) that the move will take time to get used to, but it's something he's

prepared to do.

"*Siyempre, malaking paninibago para sa akin Yun*. But we have to accept na, at this point, we have to take different paths. *Pero naniniwala naman ako na magkakaroon pa kami ng projects in the future. Basta sa ngayon, pagbutihin na lang natin ang mga nangyayari ngayon*," he says. ■

John Lloyd Cruz baffled with media attention over scene in new movie

FILMDOM'S newest Box Office King John Lloyd Cruz is ecstatic to be working for the first time with Star for All Seasons Vilma Santos for *In My Life* under Star Cinema. The new film, directed by Olive Lamasan, also stars Vilma's real-life son Luis Manzano who will play John Lloyd's partner in the movie. They recently shot scenes in New York, and John Lloyd shared with PEP recently that it has been great shooting in the Big Apple but admitted that he is confused with the media hype over an intimate scene between him and Luis, the pictures of it were posted on the Internet.

"*Yun nga ang gusto sana naming maayos, kasi hina-hype nila yung maling idea about the film. Kasi, unang-una, hindi naman siya gay picture. Alam ninyo, nahihiya na ako kay Ate Vi kasi hindi naman namin ito pelikula ni Luis*," he says.

He further says that attention for the movie should

focus more on Vilma as she portrays a character very different from her previous roles.

"I don't think *nakita na ng kahit sino si Ate Vi sa ganitong persona. May mga eksena siya na nahuhulog siya sa basurahan. Saka nakakatawa, ibang-iba yung Ate Vi na makikita ninyo. And I think yun ang dapat bigyan natin ng hype*," he says. ■



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