

AI's loss is Manila's gain

by JERRY DONATO / Philstar.com

DO you know that Jasmine Trias and Camille Velasco were not the only Fil-Ams who tried their luck at stardom on *American Idol* (AI) Season 3? There was Guji Lorenzana who then weighed 200 lbs. but possessed the Idol voice as the hard-to-please Simon Cowell put it.

"I auditioned in New York, LA and San Francisco," recalls Guji. "I sang *For Once In My Life*. Simon said, 'You have the voice, but you have no *American Idol* appeal.'"

But that didn't dampen Guji's spirits. He still wanted to fulfill his dream: That of becoming a recording artist.

After the AI audition in 2003, he buried himself in preparing his debut album titled *Five Days More* and released it under a US label in 2005. His Communication and Theater Arts education also helped him land roles in Broadway plays and perform with his group and Filipino artists in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Three years ago, Guji went to the Philippines and shared his edgy pop music through a self-titled album with the carrier single *I'll Be Yours Forever*. It was followed by *Without Your Love* with *Tagumpay*. The song gave him the Best Male Performer nomination at last year's Awit Awards.

"She (aunt Joanne Lorenzana) is the reason why I entered show business," says Guji. "She encouraged me to try my luck here and advised me to give my CD to Kuh Ledesma."

Like other Filipinos out there, Guji loves "to create music and perform on stage." And that has kept him going all these years.

Also in 2008, ABS-CBN Star Magic launched Guji as one of its Batch 16 talents. He graced commercials and appeared on stage (*West Side Story*) before TV assignments (*I Love Betty La Fea*, *Midnight DJ*) beckoned him.

We will see Guji the actor more when the book six of *Precious Hearts Presents: The Bud Brothers* airs soon on ABS-CBN.

He plays guitarist Rei Arambulo and is paired with Roxanne Guinoo. Guji says it's all right if he is sidetracked to acting. After all, he gets to sing every Sunday on *ASAP '09* and is a member of *Voizboys* along with Ronnie Liang, JayR Siaboc and Nico Antonio.

On top of his schedule, Guji finds time to write for *MYX Magazine*, *Chalk*, *SLitz*, *Tsuper*, among others.


On Saturdays and Sundays, he goes on board as DJ Guji on Mellow 94.7's *The Weekend Chill*. Guji does Top 40, reminiscent of Ryan Seacrest.

Guji shares he wants to keep his hands full to deal with homesickness since his family and relatives are all based in the States.


Does Guji enjoy his stay in Manila? His quick reply is a resounding "yes."

Guji may not get the Golden Ticket to Hollywood from judges Randy Jackson, Paula Abdul and Simon, but he now has the approval of his *Kapamilya*. AI's loss is Manila's gain. Local show business has been generous to him so far. ■






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Sarah embarks on local concert tour

by MARINEL CRUZ / Inquirer.net

"HE looked depressed most of the time," said young star Sarah Geronimo of her *You Changed My Life* costar John Lloyd Cruz, who was reported to have broken up recently with long-time girlfriend, magazine editor Liz Uy.

Sarah told a group of writers at a lunch that she had a preview of the breakup while she and John Lloyd were filming the hit movie. "At first, I didn't think his

being quiet meant anything, *bumagay po kasi sa* character *n'ya* [It suited his character]. (John Lloyd plays Miggy, her jealous and troubled boyfriend). When I heard people talk about their split-up, I realized he wasn't just acting in character."

Not ready for suitors

Sarah said she and John Lloyd never got to discuss the issue. "So I ask everyone to

respect [the ex-couple's] decision to keep mum," she said.

In a separate interview, John Lloyd refused to confirm the breakup. He told reporters that the issue was very sensitive, and that, in time, "I'll probably be able to give you clear answers."

Sarah added: "I wish I had something inspiring to say to him to make him feel better, but I had none. I've never been in a relationship."

The singer-actress said that at 20, she still wasn't ready for a serious commitment. "I feel flattered when guys show interest in me. Maybe when I turn 24 or 25, *pwede na po umakyat ng ligaw sa bahay* [they can court me]."

Singer Mark Bautista has been vocal about liking Sarah. Of late, she is being linked to Mark Herras, whom she got to perform with out-of-town. "I didn't even get to really talk with Mark. We were introduced when it was already time to perform," she explained. "It's not true that we send text messages to each other, or that we chat on the Net."

Sarah said she was preparing for the re-staging of her highly successful *Sarah Geronimo: The Next One Concert*. The tour starts June 12 at the De La Salle Centrum in Lipa City, Batangas. ■

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