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Society

SAN FRANCISCO

By MONET LU

The Remarkable Ruffa G

chismus. I saw the multi-faceted Ruffs, as I fondly call her, throughout the years. There's the fun-loving Ruffa that I went out to clubs with. There's the kind-hearted Ruffa who has passion for helping the less fortunate.

When Ruffa gave birth to Lorin at Cedars Sinai (Beverly Hills), yours truly was also there to help the family welcome the new baby into this world. I saw Ruffa in so much pain that I had to take a moment to thank the Lord for not making me a full-blown woman. And then when Ruffa was in labor with her next baby, I was again at Cedars Sinai with her publicist Jun Lalin to anticipate Venice's arrival.

After the children's birth, Ruffa went back to Istanbul to resume her busy life as wife to a multi-millionaire businessman and mother to Lorin and Venice. In between, she preoccupied herself with volunteering for charities and working in fashion as president of Fashion TV Turkey.

Her friends and family had high hopes for her marriage to Yilmaz but as their highly-publicized breakup would show, it's just not meant to be. Throughout the whole or-deal, Ruffa has tried to be strong and focused. Now that this storm in her life has passed, she now sees beautiful blue skies ahead.

Eversince her comeback to Philippine showbiz, her fans and followers have embraced Ruffa with warmth.

She is now one of the most treated *Kapamilya* talents under ABS-CBN, with her own tandem talk show Ruffa and Ai.

This coming June, Ruffa turns a year wiser. She effervescingly remains the precocious yet sensible girl I met when she was 15 years old.



She has agreed to celebrate her birthday with her old pals in Los Angeles this June 28, 2009 at the CBS Studios Lot (New York St). It's going to be a fashion soiree birthday bash that will also benefit Ruffa's charity, Roof-A-Child Foundation.

Her giving spirit is really what makes Ruffa very special. Through all the storms, God continues to guide and bless her.

If you are going to be in the L.A. in late June 2009, please come and celebrate with Ruffa and friends for this exciting event: *The Beautiful Life!—A Toast To Ruffa Gutierrez.*

To learn more, please send email to ruffa@eventsbymonet.com.

LA-based celebrity stylist Monet Lu was born in Marikina, Philippines. In the 80s, Monet left a thriving salon chain business in his hometown to migrate to the US. He had the vision to recreate his success in the US by building a beauty business that served the needs of Filipino Americans. Currently, Monet is the proud owner of four salons with branches in Van Nuys CA, Panorama City CA, Los Angeles CA and Las Vega NV. He has since branched out to event productions through his events and marketing company, Events Specialists International, producer of the longest-running [20 years!] and most prestigious Filipino-American awards/fashion show in SoCal. In 2006, Monet kicked off another passion to develop his own line of all-natural, beauty care products, *Skin By Monet*.

Monet is also a humanitarian and has supported many charitable organizations such as the Marikina Revitalization Project, AIDS Center in Pasadena, Alab Ng Puso, Every Nation Ministries, Gawad Kalinga, Bantay Bata 163, and many more. To contact Monet, please visit his site: www.monetsalon.com.

'Boses' screening resonates in New York

by MOMAR G. VISAYA / AJPress

FILIPINOS in New York had a rare chance to watch one of the best films that came out in the Philippines in 2008, through the fund-raising project/movie premiere staged by the Assumption Alumnae Association Abroad recently.

The film is called *Boses*, and its director, Ellen Ongkeko-Marfil and star Ricky Davao graced the event at the St. Paul the Apostle Church near the Lincoln Center in Manhattan.

"This film project fell on my lap. It won in a scriptwriting contest, and I found out that it was written by a friend. I asked him to show me his script because the deadline for Cinemalaya was fast approaching," Ongkeko-Marfil told the *Asian Journal*.

The director has been behind films and documentaries that focused mostly on the lives of people who have been marginalized.

"*Boses* is about the power of art to transform lives. This is my luckiest, of all the ones that I have done. Financially, I was able to gather funds. I was able to get the boy. I was about to give up. I told myself, if I don't find a young boy who can act well and play the violin as well, forget it. It's going to look so fake. And I found him," Ellen shared.

By him, the director meant Julian Duque, the real-life child prodigy who is the central character of the film. Duque effectively portrayed the role of Onyok, a mute, battered boy who had a hidden talent despite the fact that he has no acting experience prior to the film.

Born to a family of musicians, Julian's father is a guitar teacher at a special educational school for gifted children, and many of his cousins and uncles are also in the field of music.

Julian trained at Casa San Miguel in San Antonio, Zambales, a place for the children



A concert featuring Ricky Davao and Michael Dadap, world-renowned classical musician, also followed after the screening.

of fisher folks, farmers, mango pickers and other rural inhabitants of nearby towns to discover their varying talents and skills in music and the visual arts.

The family of Coke Bolipata, who also plays a crucial role in the film, established Casa San Miguel in 1993.

"He [Bolipata] contributed a lot to the script. He knows the life of an artist so the angst was there. And he was the one who recommended the boy," Ellen shared.

Ongkeko-Marfil doesn't veer away from the traditional way of story telling, which made the film much simple. She took the story of a battered child and combined it with classical music, a combination that is rarely seen onscreen.

"I am not so much into experimentation. I am focused on the material but I am also focused on reaching the audience and making my film accessible," she explained.

Veteran thespians like Ricky Davao and Cherry Pie Picache shared their talent by essaying roles that ably supported the characters of the non-actors—Bolipata, who played Picache's reclusive brother Ariel and Duque, who played the role of abused child Onyok with such intensity.

The film established that Onyok's character is unable to speak due to a physical trauma

that damaged his larynx so he barely spoke a word in the entire film. What his character could not express in words, he relayed through his eyes and his music.

Duque's effective portrayal of Onyok earned him a Breakthrough Actor award from the recently concluded 6th Golden Screen Awards, handed out by the Entertainment Press Society (Enpress). *Boses* also brought home a lion's share of the awards: Best Film-Drama, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, Best Editing, Best Musical Score.

Not bad for an indie film. "*Boses* is a blessing. There were other materials that I submitted to Cinemalaya last year. This was the one which got the blessing of the universe. I am an advocacy filmmaker. I really believe in my messages. I believe in the power of art to be a tool in education," Ellen said.

Indeed, *Boses* has come a long way. The film has earned sought-after endorsements from film review boards, garnered critical acclaim from film critics and received popular praise from moviegoers and the film is now the advocacy film for UNICEF Manila's "Children Against Violence" campaign. Internationally, it screened at the Louis Vuitton Film Festival in Hawaii and at the Women's Film Festival in Los Angeles.

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