

Asia's Songbird returns with fellow divas for Stockton concert

Artist Highlight: Regine Velasquez



REGINE Velasquez, born in Manila on April 22, 1970, credits her parents for getting her involved in the music business.

At two to three years of age, Regine's dad would sing a lullaby to get her to sleep and the song usually her dad would sing was, *You'll Never Know*. At ages three to four, Regine could interpret a whole song. The first song that she was able to memorize on her own was Sharon

Cuneta's *Mr. DJ*. She sang songs of The Carpenters like *Close To You*, and songs from Imelda Papin like *Bakit (Why)*. It was one of Regine's favorites as a child.

Regine had so many ambitions as a young child (she wanted to be a nun, nurse, doctor) but by the age of six, she finally decided that she wanted to sing, so she joined an amateur singing contest. The very first song she sang in a contest was entitled, *Buhat Ng Kita'y Makilala (Ever Since I Met You)*. Regine didn't know how to read at that time so her father would sing it to her and she would memorize each word her father sang. Regine lost that contest, but was given a special award for her brave performance. Her constant contest piece was *Bakit Ako Mahihiya*.

As a youngster, it was in Southern Leyte where Regine was trained by her father in the sea of Henundayan. Regine's parents let her join singing competitions in remote provinces, and undergo intensive singing lessons led by her father. Regine was submerged into the water up to her neck and was singing. She also sacrificed eating ice cream until she was 15 years old.

By age 25, Regine became an International (Asian) Recording Artist. She became well-known in Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Taiwan, Korea, Bangkok with her album, *Listen Without Prejudice* (Regine's favorite album!) and even collaborated with Jacky Cheung for the song, *In Love With You*.

Eventually, her star shone brighter year after year. Regine became an international star and released three multi-platinum albums in Asia. She toured around the Philippines, and in various countries, captivating jampacked crowds with her performances. She is a crowd favorite, in large part to her charm and endearing personality. "I work hard at what I do. I try to do better all the time," she says.

In 2000, Regine finally became known as a "Concert Queen" after selling out her R2K concert on back-to-back nights. That concert also won an award as the best concert of the year and was hailed as the greatest show by an Asian performer in the last twenty-five years.

The exposure rocketed her from Filipino celebrity to Asian music superstar. Almost overnight she began selling out stadium concerts and put out several multi-platinum albums in Asia, such as *Drawn*, *R2K* and *Regine Live! Songbird Sings the Classics*. In 2001, she released *Reigne*, her first offering of original material in two years.

Music, it turns out, was only the first arena for her success. As a spokesperson, she helped increase the presence of American fast-food chains like KFC and Wendy's in Asia. As an actress, she has appeared in a number of Filipino films that succeeded exclusively because of Regine's star power.

In 2002, Regine was true to form, releasing her most successful movie (*Ikaw Lamang Hanggang Ngayon*) to date. Add to that an MTV Asia award for "Best Philippine Artist," coupled with a "Box Office Queen" award, which only cemented her status as one of the best performers the country has ever seen.

As a television host, her talent search shows have received high ratings (*Star For a Night*, *Search For A Star*, *Pinoy Pop Superstar*). These talent searches have produced superstars and hitmakers like Sarah Geronimo, Mark Bautista, Rachele Ann Go, Mau Marcelo, Jonalyn Viray, and Gerald Santos.

2006 marked Regine's 20th anniversary in the music industry. She started the year by releasing her 14th album, *Covers: Volume 2*. Her most ambitious production to date, the album is made up

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Richard not portrayed as troublemaker

by ALLISON LOPEZ
Inquirer.net

MANILA—The editor-in-chief of an entertainment website last May 12 insisted that actor Richard Gutierrez was not portrayed as a "troublemaker" in an article which had reported his alleged involvement in a gun-toting incident.

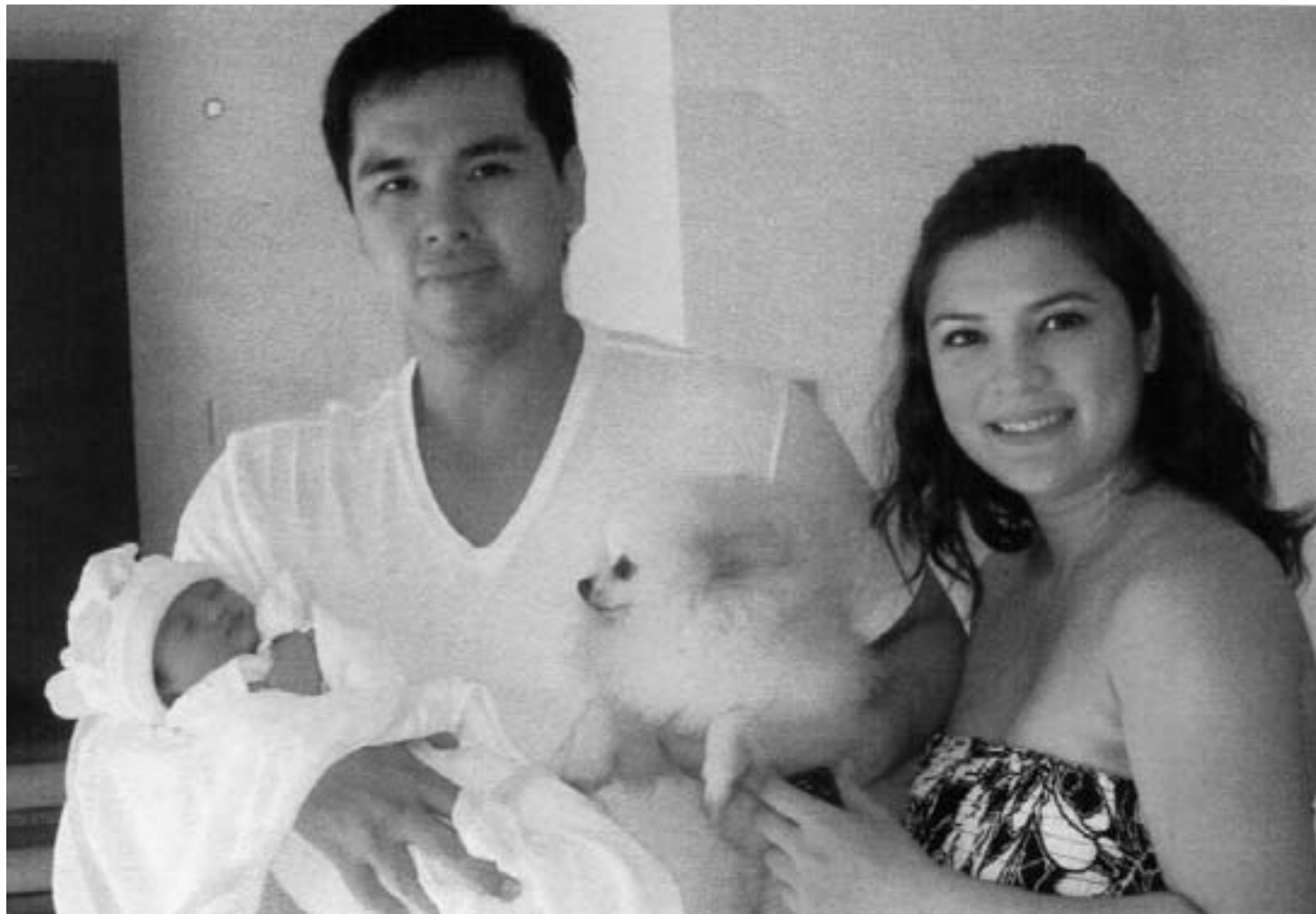
Philippine Entertainment Portal editor-in-chief Jo-Ann Maglipon, who was charged by the actor with libel, said in her counter affidavit that the March 29 story "did not impute any discreditable act or condition to any person, much less to the complainant."

Gutierrez had sued Maglipon, PEP managing editor Karen Pagsolingan and staff writer Ferdinand "Bong" Godinez for P25 million for the article that claimed he was involved in a fight with actor Michael Flores.

Based on the PEP article, Gutierrez and Flores exchanged heated words at the parking lot of Oceana Restaurant in Pasay City, where director Mark Reyes was celebrating his birthday.

In his complaint, the lead star of *Zorro* denied being involved in a so-called "heated argument," "squabble," "gun-toting incident," or "fracas" with Flores or anyone for that matter.

Maglipon, however, said the terms "cannot be taken out of context" and must not be interpreted as accusing a person of being a troublemaker. ■



VINA'S NEW BUNDLE OF JOY. Actress Vina Morales recently gave birth to a baby girl, Ceana at the Cardinal Santos Memorial Hospital in Manila. Shown in photo with Vina is partner Cedric Lee.

VIEWFINDER

By NESTOR TORRE
Inquirer.net

Way to go, Judy Ann and Ryan

MANILA—Many celebrity weddings are played for all of the gloss and glitter they're worth, with big-bang nuptial rites, multiple sponsors and, literally, a cast of hundreds. To their credit, Ryan Agoncillo and his bride Judy Ann Santos recently "dared" to flout that big-bash and big-deal stereotype, and opted for what may be described as an "anti-celebrity" wedding set, not at the Manila Cathedral, but in the relatively recondite parish church of the bucolic town of San Juan, Batangas.

80 guests

To uphold the solemnity and personal significance of the occasion, the couple did away with a lot of the attendant fuss and bother that weigh stellar nuptials down, starting with the hundreds of VIPs who "have" to be invited to weddings and receptions.

Judy Ann and Ryan pared their list down to only 80, even if it meant earning the ire of "important" people. Now, that took guts.

In addition, Judy Ann made sure her estranged father was present, at the risk of offending her beloved mother. Happily, her mom later assured everyone she understood her daughter's need to be surrounded by her "complete" family on the important occasion, jokingly adding that she resisted the temptation to trip her former hubby up.

Levity aside, the "conflicted" nature of her parents' relationship may have been one of the reasons that Judy Ann opted to do away with the traditional march down the aisle, deciding instead to walk to the altar by her lonesome.

Another reason may have been that, at 30, she felt she had become her own person, so her solitary walk vivified this confident sense of being.

'Silent' coup

It was similarly heartening to realize that the Agoncillos' "secret" wedding couldn't have been pulled off without the cooperation of all of the people who had been invited to the wedding. In local show biz, it's unheard of that people keep secrets, so the fact that the "silent" coup was pulled off is a tribute to the love that their relatives and friends felt for the engaged couple.

For their part, Judy Ann and Ryan also earned the admiration of many for the creativity and brio with which they pulled it off. Instead of doing things by rote, they added personal touches to the occasion that made it distinctly, feelingly their own.

It's just too bad that some people have been criticizing them for flouting the show biz-y baggage and adumbration that have weighed down so many celebrity weddings. Yes, stars "owe" their

public and coworkers a lot, but they owe themselves—and deserve—much more.

No apologies

Before they became stars, they were persons. After their stellar careers ebb and eventually end, they will still be persons—so, they are entitled to uphold their personhood above all other considerations on one of the most significant days of their lives. Thus, they have nothing to apologize for. ■

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