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- [National](#)
- [Metro](#)
- [Opinion](#)
- [Sports](#)
- [Entertainment](#)
- [Living](#)

Angel is getting restless

By Mario Bautista

'It's been half a year since her last show, "Only You," was shown and she has had no exposure on TV or in film for a long time now.'

MARICEL Soriano feels like a "VIS" at the solo presscon TV5 hosted for her. "I really feel like a

very important star," she says. "It's a nice feeling and I want to thank TV5 sa pagkukop sa'kin. Excited ako dahil iba-ibang stories ang gagawin ko for them: may drama, comedy, horror, suspense, love story."

But this doesn't mean she's leaving ABS-CBN. "I've been a Kapamilya for the longest time. Matagal ang pinagsamahan namin so I did not say goodbye to them. You don't burn bridges, ayaw ni Lord. Itong gagawin ko sa TV 5, in the meantime ito. Isang magandang blessing. Umiikot lang naman ang mundo and I can work with them again."

Is it true that since the title of her TV5 show is "Five-Star Specials," she's also getting a talent fee that's five times her usual salary?

"Let's just say na hindi magiging ganito ang face ko if I'm not well compensated. O ayan, 'di ba, it's written all over my face? I'm very happy. Pero hindi lang naman sa pera-pera 'yan. I'm really satisfied sa treatment nila sa'kin. I can feel 'yung respect nila for me. For the five episodes I'm doing for them, I also get five good directors: Joel Lamangan, Eric Quizon, Soxy Topacio, Joyce Bernal and Rahyan Carlos. O, magreklamo pa ba ko?"

We heard Viva Films is alarmed that after nearly two years in the making, the Aga Muhlach-Regine Velasquez reunion flick, "Of All the Things," is nowhere near completion up to now, whereas "Working Girls 2010," which has a much bigger cast has been completed after only a couple of months and is now ready to be shown. Some folks say it was delayed by Aga's efforts to take off some unwanted poundage, but others say shooting is frequently stalled because its director, Joyce Bernal, is often intoxicated.

"When it started, ni hindi pa nasisisulan ang 'Diva' ko on GMA-7," says Regine. "Ngayon, ongoing na ang 'Diva' at regular na ang tapings ko rito, pero hindi pa rin tapos ang movie. Tapos, heto sisimulan na ang bagong Sunday show, 'Party Pilipinas,' kaya sana, matapos na kami kasi another movie is waiting for me na kukunan on location sa Recto Avenue. But we're so happy sa 'Diva' as our ratings have picked up after my character, Sampaguita, became a singer of the Khumparis and Khumaris Band that sings in weddings, baptisms and funerals. But I learn that I have a brother, Smith (Mark Herras), the son of my dad Elvis (Boboy Garovillo) with another woman. My dad then meets an accident and loses both legs. A producer (Randy Santiago) discovers me and offers to build me up but I have to make over my ugly face."

Going back to the film with Aga, is it true that his manager, Manay Ethel Ramos, contracted some skin allergies due to tension over the delay in the filming? She's waiting for Aga to finish it so he can start the film he'll do with Angel Locsin, who's now also a ward of Manay Ethel. As it is, Angel is getting restless and is said to have gone to Hong Kong by herself. It's been half a year since her last show, "Only You," was shown and she has had no exposure on TV or in film for a long time now. Meantime, new stars are being built up by ABS-CBN non-stop, like Erich Gonzales, Bangs Garcia and Andi Eigenmann, so she does have a reason to feel worried.

Ehra Madrigal looks slimmer at her contract-signing with GMA-7. "Madalas kasi kong kinukulit ni Tita Annabelle na mag-diet kaya ayan, pumayat na 'ko," she says. "But having a daily morning show like 'Diz Iz It' also helps kasi napipilitan kang gumising ng maaga. Discipline ang kailangan kaya bawal mapuyat para hindi mahirap gisingin sa morning. I'm also more relaxed now as a co-host in the show. Noong una kasi, natetensiyon ako at lagi kong iniisip: tama kaya ang spiels ko? But now, mas comfortable na rin ako with my co-hosts."

What can she say about her co-host Grace Lee having an accident in Seoul, Korea while skiing?

"Oo nga. Kawawa naman. She broke an arm daw. I hope she'll be okay at makabalik siya rito nang maayos."

Doesn't she miss acting in a soap?

"I do, pero sa ngayon, ine-enjoy ko muna itong hosting. At least dito, 'di ka inaabot ng magdamagang tapping. Happy rin ang mga kasamahan ko sa Royal Era ni Tita Annabelle kasi nabigyan ako ng ganitong break sa hosting."

How does she feel about comments that she pales in comparison to Anne Curtis of their rival show?

"Ayokong magpaapekto kasi hindi naman talaga kami magka-level. Mas nauna naman talaga siya sa'kin. Nagugulat lang ako kasi pati suot ko, pinupuna. Basta ang main concern, to connect with the audience. Kapag nega ang comment, dedma na lang."

One "Starstruck V" discovery who has wonderful PR is Rocco Nacino. At his contract signing with GMA-7, he personally approached writers who've written about him and thanked them. He says he's giving himself two years to achieve his objectives in making a name for himself in showbiz. "I'm sure aalagaan kami ng batch ko ng GMA Artist Center and give us equal opportunities. Nasa amin na how we'll welcome the challenge and opportunities that will come our way. But right now, personally, I feel ready na akong isabak sa kahit anong project na ibibigay sa akin. Isasama raw kami sa 'Party Pilipinas' kasi we sing and dance, pero talagang gigil na gigil na akong umarte and show what I got."

To show his appreciation, he also gave a thanksgiving party to his fans and supporters called "Roccofellas" even if he's only Second Prince and not the Ultimate Survivor. This was held recently at Anchor Pavilion in Pasig. "Thanksgiving na rin 'yun kay Lord sa dami ng blessings niya sa'kin."

He's turning 23 on March 21 but this time, he'll just have a small celebration with his family. Rocco's advantage over his colleagues is that he's already a nursing graduate and has passed the board exams. "May nursing license na ako, pero pag-aartista talaga ang gusto ko and I wish magkaroon ako ng puwang dito. Sana mabigyan ako ng chance to work with Carla Abellana, Marian Rivera and Heart Evangelista na favorites ko."

We saw "Avenue Q" when it was first staged by Atlantis Productions in 2007. We saw it again recently in its nth repeat and it's truly better than ever. The whole cast is good and we want to hug them after the play to show our appreciation for their brilliant ensemble acting in what's the most entertaining show available today. The show touches on various relevant topics ranging from friendship, racism and homosexuality to porn and finding one's purpose in life. The songs are mostly great, from the hilarious "It Sucks to Be" and "The Internet is for Porn" to the touching "It's a Fine, Fine Line" and "It's Only for Now."

Some of the actors play multiple roles with the Sesame St. puppets they're carrying. Felix Rivera is great as the new graduate Princeton and as the closet queen Rod, but even more splendid is Rachel Alejandro as the shy pre-school teacher Kate Monster and as the sultry seductive Lucy the Slut. Joel Trinidad displays his versatility as Trekkie Monster, Nicky (Rod's roommate) and as one of the Big Idea Bears (a perverted version of the Care Bears). Not to be outshone are Aiza Seguerra as Gary

Coleman, Frenchie Dy as Christmas Eve (as a Japanese psycho-therapist, Frenchie shows she's not only a great singer but also a superb comedian) and Calvin Millado as an aspiring stand up comic. Thea Tadiar, who blew us away with production number in "The 25th Annual Putnam Spelling Bee," plays a supporting role that she does with glee.

"Avenue Q" is the happiest, zaniest show currently in town, expertly directed by Bobby Garcia and Chari Arrespacochaga. It runs until March 27 at the Carlos Romulo Theater in RCBC Plaza, Makati. If you want to have a good time, just call Atlantis Productions at 892-7078, 840-1187. In charge of the March 19 showing are Rachel Alejandro and her manager Girlie Rodis. For this special night, you can call or text them at 09178AVENUE.

Michael V.'s first sitcom, "Pepito Manaloto" that starts on March 20, is about a simple guy who won P700 million in the lotto. Might this not mean that he's enticing people to gamble in the lotto?

"Hindi naman," he says. "Ang concept talaga ng show is there's always hope, but we're not saying na lotto is the only way for you to be successful. What we try to impart is that when you're given a good opportunity to improve your life, make the most out of it. In real life, we hear a lot of people winning, tapos nauwi rin sa wala."

Does he replay play the lotto?

"Ironically, no, 'ni hindi nga ako marunong tumaya. But dito sa sitcom, du'n talaga umikot ang kuwento, sa pananalò sa lotto."

Does he feel bad that "Bitoy's Showtime" didn't do as well as "Bitoy's Funniest Videos" that was rating so well and yet was replaced?

"No regrets for me. All projects naman, may definite ending. Ito ngang 'Pepito Manaloto,' believe it or not but we have already planned its ending kahit 'di pa ito umeere. Siempre, mas maganda 'yung paghandaan mo na kaysa 'di mo matapos nang maayos ang story. But I'm optimistic magtatagal sa ere itong 'Pepito' kasi di pa ito nagagawa sa TV. Ngayon pa lang. So it has a big chance na magustuhan talaga ng viewers. Kasi ang mga katapat namin, parehong talent shows ('Talentadong Pinoy' and 'Pilipinas Got Talent'), so we offer a good alternative."

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