

Arts and Culture

Raymund Isaac's frame of mind

By Bobby Garcia (The Philippine Star) Updated April 26, 2010 12:00 AM



Lensman Raymund Isaac with Rachel Alejandro and Nikki Gil

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other son.

Despite the fact that Raymund's roster of clients includes A-list celebrities, fabulous fashion icons and high-powered politicians (and that he is extremely busy shooting paying clients) he has always, always made time to shoot our shows. And we couldn't be luckier.

Raymund says that shooting Atlantis's shows through the years has kept him connected to theatre, which remains to be one of his first loves. He says, "I fell in love with theater in grade school. I love acting and I love the idea of the stage... but mother said there was no future in theater. That didn't stop me from my passion though...it continued until after college where I would find work that would connect me to the theater."

Raymund travels to New York frequently to catch all the new Broadway shows. On a trip we took together a few years back he was at the theater every night. When I asked him to name his favorite musical he shouted, "Unfair!" (to which I would normally shout back, "Useless!") Raymund can't name just one. He has many favorite shows. Among them are Xanadu, In The Heights, Mamma Mia, Wicked, Rent, Spamalot and Avenue Q.

At a recent shoot for our upcoming shows Xanadu and Legally Blonde the Musical, Raymund excitedly shared all his ideas for the shoot. He says that whenever we call to schedule a shoot and share with him what the shows it's as close as he can get to actually working in the theater. Raymund says, "I think it's my connection to theater that makes me giddy every time Atlantis plans a shoot with me. My work has not given me opportunities to go back to my first love, the stage. But through the actors and all the people involved, my love and passion for the art comes to life thru them."

When Nikki Gil walked into his studio and, with the help of her makeup artists and a blonde wig, transformed herself into Elle Woods, the heroine who learns to be true to herself in Legally Blonde, Raymund was as excited as a little boy in a candy store. He says, " I honestly couldn't picture Nikki as Elle Woods at first.

But when she stepped out of the dressing room, dressed for the part with blonde wig and all, I was floored. And when

she sang a few notes from the musical while I was shooting her; I just was amazed. Now I can't imagine anyone else as Elle Woods!" Raymund can't wait for opening night of Legally Blonde in June at the Meralco Theater.

Next up, it was Rachel Alejandro's turn for her photos for Xanadu, the Tony Award nominated musical that we open in September. And Raymund and I both agree that, really, only Rachel could play the lead role of Clio, the Greek muse who puts on roller skates and leg warmers and disguises herself as a human named Kira while singing hit Olivia Newton-John songs in one of the zaniest musicals I have seen. Raymund says, "I can only rave about Rachel. I am so glad she is doing Xanadu one of my favorite musicals. No one else can sing it like she can!"

He is looking forward to the upcoming pictorial of Dawn Zulueta and the cast of A Little Night of Music. With Dawn's costumes being made by Rajo Laurel and her wigs being created by Robert Charles-Vallance of the Broadway Wig Company, the photo shoot will once again allow Raymund to indulge in his passion.

Raymund remains to be one of the few photographers who consider lighting to be an art form and does not rely heavily on digital retouching. Don't get me wrong, Raymund is a great supporter of the digital era, as long as it is used to complement the art of photography and not take it over. He says, "Progress in technology was created to help the masters; not to enslave them. What is happening is that technology has taken over the creators, in the process losing the discipline and art involved in any endeavor. Photoshop is just a tool; not a school of thought."

Through the years, Raymund has been there with us taking great pictures and being an even greater friend. I guess that's one of the many things theater really does. It brings people who are extremely passionate about it together.

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