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## ENTERTAINMENT



### The Cinderella of Tiaong has come a long way

DIRECTLINE By [Boy Abunda](#) (The Philippine Star) Updated July 26, 2010 12:00 AM  
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Ima Castro: Exploring new fields after her stint as Kim in *Miss Saigon*

She was called the Cinderella of Tiaong. Ima Castro could not forget those days when as a struggling singer, she would take the long bus ride from Tiaong, Quezon to Manila with her father. As the only girl in the family, she was pampered, and protected. She was shy and a proud probinsyana. But Ima was different. She had a big, beautiful voice and she had dreams. Powered by that dream to make it as a singer in the music industry, Ima persevered, got herself gigs, launched an album and churned out hit records. Then, came Miss Saigon. She was picked to play the lead role of Kim after rigorous auditions and the rest they say is history. Ima made the country proud. After performances in Manila, she toured Miss Saigon in Asia and played in London's West End for two years.

Today, Ima lends her beautiful voice to the [musical](#) *Sacrifice* which is directed by Bobby Garcia. *Sacrifice* is the romantic story of China's greatest emperor ([Emperor Xuanzong](#)) meeting the last of China's four ancient beauties (Yang GuiFei) who adopts China's most ruthless villain (An Lushan). Their fateful triumvirate creates China's greatest love story.

The new demo mixes of Ima will be used to assist in the development of the musical. "And it will give her an edge when auditions come as the composers already love her," said Bobby. "The studio recording sessions of Ima allow us

to sit back, listen carefully, take notes and see what works and what doesn't work. It will help us map out the next part of our journey in creating this show as we work towards a workshop production next year."

Composer Richard Daniels said, "Ima connected with the emotional core of the songs by producing powerful and dramatic moments in her performances. We explored genre and styles. By doing this we have begun to reveal the musical essence of the piece".

Co-Composer Mark Troop added, "With each take Ima got deeper and deeper into the character of Yang GuiFei"

"I have worked with Ima Castro in Miss Saigon where she played a heartbreaking Kim. I couldn't be more thrilled that a performer of her caliber and star quality has lent her talent to us for this part of the process. We couldn't have asked for more," enthused Bobby.

Kenneth Clarke (author) said, "As the librettist, I was thrilled at how quickly Ima Castro engaged with the heart, soul and themes of the story. She captured the highs and lows, the hopes and doubts of love and its ultimate sacrifice in a series of searing emotional

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performances”

Miss Saigon composer, Claude-Michel Schonberg called Ima “a miracle from Manila.” Ima has won several local and international awards including the Grand Prize in the 1991 Panasonic nationwide Quest for the Best; Best Singer Award in Osaka, Japan; Best Interpreter in the First Asia Song Festival in Bali, Indonesia, and Shine, her winning song in the 1996 Metropop Song Festival. Ima’s album, Mamahalin Kita - Ima, became a gold record. It included a popular duet with Lloyd Umali. A second album followed on the Polygram label. She also recorded a duet with Enrique Iglesias titled You’re My Number One.

Produced by Toby Simkin, with a book and lyrics by Kenneth Clarke, music by Richard Daniels & Mark Troop, associate producers include William Ong, Richard Hardwick and DJ Wizniak, Sacrifice is a true, powerful and shocking story, building to a climax with the great Tang Emperor’s agonizing decision: save the woman he loves, or sacrifice her to save his dynasty. Dates of both the Asian workshop and the London opening will be announced soon.



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**The 24 UAAP Hotties of 2010**



**FUNFARE By Ricardo F. Lo**

All eyes are on the hardcourt now that the 73rd Season of the UAAP is in full swing, hosted by De La Salle University (DLSU).

**Rachel does an Olivia Newton-John**



**DIRECTLINE By Boy Abunda**

Pop singer and theater artist Rachel Alejandro is gearing up for the most demanding performance of her life — roller skating to Olivia Newton-John and Electric Light Orchestra songs in Atlantis Productions’ upcoming Broadway musical comedy *Xanadu* which opens at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza, Makati City on Sept. 3.

**New show replaces Wowowee July 31**



**FUNFARE UPDATE By Ricardo F. Lo**

As *Funfare Update* correctly predicted, Willie Revillame will not return to *Wowowee* on Saturday, July 31, as widely reported in the tabs.

**Kylie holds up the disco port**



**SOUNDS FAMILIAR By Baby A. Gil**