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ENTERTAINMENT

Jackie Lou feels like a newbie in the musical

24/7 (DAY IN THE LIFE) By Bot Glorioso (The Philippine Star) Updated August 08, 2011 12:00 AM
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Jackie Lou Blanco is Camila in Atlantis Productions' staging of *In The Heights*

Jackie Lou Blanco remembers that it was in the late '90s when she first experienced doing theater plays mostly in Filipino language. After a decade and having been known today as one of TV soap's leading *contravidas*, Jackie Lou swings back to theatrical acting for Atlantis Productions' staging of Tony Award-winning Broadway musical *In The Heights* on Sept. 2 to 18 at the Carlos P. Romulo Auditorium, RCBC Plaza in Makati City.

"Most of the works in theater that I've done before were all in Filipino so this is really a lot of firsts for me — it's my first English language play, first musical and my first time to do a show with Atlantis," Jackie says. "I feel blessed to have the opportunity to go back on stage and this time, there's a lot of singing to do."

Hitting the right notes may not be a worry but Jackie still feels her vocal cords need some "harnessing." Besides, she adds, "I feel like a newbie here because I'm the only member of the cast whose career is more on acting than singing." Thus, taking up voice lessons with The Company's Sweet Plantado keeps her confidence to sing alongside Ima Castro, Nyoy Volante, Calvin Millado, Felix Rivera, Jimmy Marquez, Tex Ordonez, Jay Glorioso and K-La Rivera. Her mom, Asia's Queen of Songs Pilita Corrales, can't wait to see her act and sing on stage.

It was director Bobby Garcia who invited Jackie Lou to audition. Hesitant and nervous, she proceeded to the audition venue with a well-rehearsed song and up onstage, Jackie Lou gave her all.

"I told myself, '*Bahala na*. If I won't make it, okay *lang*, at least I tried.' This is much different on TV because actors are picked for the roles while here you really have to audition for the part."

Luckily enough, Jackie Lou snagged the Camila role, a woman of strong character who's trying to handle the difficulties her family faces. "The sentiment of the whole play is very Filipino. It is about family, hopes and dreams. One can also sense the kind of strength Filipinos has, that, we never easily give up — we get up and push again in times of trouble."

Asked how similar or different she is from her character, Jackie Lou replies, "I can relate to Camila a lot because she's strong. She knows what she wants and her priority is her family."

Like Camila, Jackie Lou aims all the best for her children. But she need not be too strict, there are just some rules to follow like "finish all the school work before pleasure and they have to learn how to manage their time." And it works, Jackie Lou shares, as Kenneth, Rikki Mae and Arabella can handle their own even if mom is busy during taping days.

"Everything just needs a balance and there's no better way to do it than setting all the things you do from the most important to the least."

Below, Jackie Lou shares how she balances her time between family and work from the time she wakes up until she hits the sack:

5:45 a.m. — I wake up and wake my children up for school.

6 a.m. — I'll have my breakfast which normally consists of brewed coffee and bread either with omelet or cheese.



6:30 a.m. — We have to leave the house by this time for Arabella to get to Poveda before 7:30. After, I go back to the house.

8:30 a.m. — It's time for Rikki Mae to get up because her classes start at 11 a.m. She will either commute or she'll drive herself to De La Salle. When she's off already, I'll start working out until 10 or 11 then go back home.

11:30 a.m. — Take a bath, eat lunch (fish or chicken and vegetables) and then

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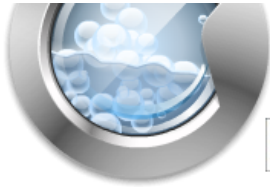
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the rest of my afternoons vary. I here are days that I do the grocery around 2 or 2:30 p.m. and after, pick up Arabella by 5 p.m.

Sometimes, if I'm tired from work, then I just sleep and I'll ask the driver to pick up the children.

7 p.m. — Dinner time. I just eat salad and fruits.

7:30 p.m. — I watch TV or just do the things that I have to do especially when I have taping the following day.

10 p.m. — I sleep early if I don't have work.

(Since *In The Heights* is now few weeks away from its play date, Jackie Lou is on rehearsals everyday from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.)

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