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ENTERTAINMENT



Rachelle Ann's big splash in theater

DIRECTLINE By Boy Abunda (The Philippine Star) Updated June 03, 2011 12:00 AM  
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Rachelle Ann Go is making a big splash in theater by clinching the much-coveted role of Ariel in the Atlantis Productions' staging of the Broadway Musical Disney's *The Little Mermaid*. The singer bested hundreds of contenders in her first try to perform in a musical production, and in one of this magnitude.

Rachelle Ann said that she had long wanted to give theater a try, seeing how her celebrity friends who've already done so, grew amazingly with their craft. And though she has been offered to do various productions many times before, she held out for that special project that she believes will come to her at the right time.

"There's this gut feel I followed when I first heard about the auditions for *The Little Mermaid*. I wasn't even thinking of getting in but that I just couldn't pass up the chance," she said.

Well, she did it and how. According to insiders at Atlantis Productions, it only took Rachelle Ann to open her mouth and sing and to do screen shots for key people in the production to realize that their search was over. It is said that even people from Disney, who have to approve every detail about *The Little Mermaid*, are thrilled to have found the "perfect" Ariel for the Philippine staging of the musical.

She's known as one of the best singers of her generation but Rachelle Ann still plans to undergo advanced voice lessons for the role. We almost always hear her sing pop songs but she disclosed that her voice teachers in the past are one in saying that her voice is also built to take on Broadway tunes.

"But we'll see. I mean, I certainly will give it my best," Rachelle Ann remarked humbly.

*The Little Mermaid* is one of those musicals that requires the actress playing the title role to don a bikini top and to kiss his leading man (in this case, singer Erik Santos). Rachelle Ann, however, has no qualms about these because she knows Disney always goes for wholesome presentations and because Erik is a dear friend to her.

"I know that Disney and even Atlantis will see to it that everything is in good taste. As for Erik, we've been good friends for years that's why I know our kissing scene will be executed well. *Walang ilangan, kumbaga*," she said.

Rachelle Ann, as with many of us, knows the songs from *The Little Mermaid* by heart. But aside from *Part Of Your World*, *Kiss The Girl* and *Under The Sea* which have become Disney classics to many children worldwide, the singer is excited to sing other songs from the musical that were not in the animation film.

Atlantis Productions' staging of the Broadway Musical Disney's *The Little Mermaid* will run at Meralco Theater from Nov. 18 to Dec. 11. It will be directed by Bobby Garcia and Chari Arespacochaga. A complete cast will be announced at a future date.

Star In A Million's Jimmy joins Aida

*Star In A Million* finalist Jimmy Marquez (photo) makes his musical theater debut in Atlantis Productions' staging of the Elton John/Tim Rice pop-rock musical *Aida*. The Tony Award-winning musical is a timeless story of forbidden love that blossoms in dangerous times.

Heading the cast of *Aida* are Ima Castro who plays the title role, Myke Salomon as Radames, Rachel Alejandro as Amneris and Hajji Alejandro as Zoser. Joining the powerhouse cast is a host of theater veterans and talents from the concert and recording industry. One of these is Jimmy.



Jimmy's singing prowess propelled him into the grand

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prepered him into the grand finals of *Star In A Million*. In 2006, he also won the Silver Prize at the Asia New Singer Competition at the Shanghai Asia Music Festival. Jimmy has also released a self-titled album and a full-length CD titled *By My Side*.



This time, Jimmy takes on the stage for the first time as part of the cast of *Aida*.

"Jimmy has a voice that makes you stop and listen. I am very glad that he is making his theater debut as part of the show," said *Aida* director Chari

Arespachoga.

"I have always been fascinated with theater. To be part of *Aida* is a dream come true. I am absolutely thrilled," said Jimmy.

Disney Theatricals premiered *Aida* on Broadway on March 23, 2000, running for 1,852 performances until Sept. 5, 2004. It was nominated for five Tony Awards and won four, including [Best Musical](#) Score. The musical ran from 2001 to 2003 and 2006 to 2007 in two US national tours, performed on international productions in 20 countries, and continues to be produced all over the world.

*Aida* runs from June 24 to July 10 at the Carlos P. Romulo Theater, RCBC Plaza. For tickets, call Atlantis Productions at 892-7078. For news and updates, follow AidaofManila on [Twitter](#).

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**FUNFARE** By Ricardo F. Lo

**BANGKOK** — Newly-wed Rachel Alejandro and Spanish journalist Carlos Santamaria were on honeymoon mode (they still are!) when they treated my friend Raoul Tidalgo (formerly of the New York-based *The Filipino Reporter*) and me to a dimsum dinner at the Chinese restaurant of Arnoma Hotel one drizzly evening.

##### Iriga's beautiful harvest



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