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Dawn's long-delayed stage comeback

By Bobby Garcia (The Philippine Star) Updated December 06, 2009 12:00 AM



MANILA, [Philippines](#) - I have known Dawn Zulueta for over 20 years. We first met as wide eyed high school students with big dreams. We spent a lot of time together in our senior year of [high school](#) where she shared her dream of becoming an actress with me. I was certain it would happen.

Here we are many (many) years later about to work with each other for the first time as she takes on the role of Desiree Armfeldt in Stephen Sondheim's classic musical comedy of errors A Little Night Music.

We lost touch in the years in between then and now, years I fondly refer to as "the missing years." I moved to New York immediately after high school and she began her showbiz career, almost instantaneously skyrocketing to fame and winning countless acting awards. It was an era before e-mail and the [Internet](#), so it was much more difficult to stay in touch. But on

my trips back to Manila I would read about her success and try to catch her in a movie if there was one playing while I was in town.

And then early this year, Boy Abunda (who manages us both), called to talk to me about an indie film that we had been planning for some time. In the course of our conversation Dawn's name had come up. We had sent her the script about four years ago but it was the wrong time in everyone's [life](#) to do it. And one thing I know for sure is that everything is about proper timing. No matter how much you want something, if the gods in their infinite wisdom feel the timing is wrong, it won't happen. Boy felt we were all ready for it now. He scheduled a lunch meeting for Dawn and me to discuss the film.

We spent the first 15 minutes of our lunch catching up on the "missing years." She beamed with pride as she shared [photos](#) of her family with me. And, to my surprise, she had been following my career through the years, as well. We shared a mutual respect for each other's work and, we talked about how exciting it would be to work together after all this time.



Natural disasters and the coming election have postponed our very special indie film [project](#) until next year at its soonest (proving again that timing is everything), but I wondered if Dawn would ever venture back onto the legitimate musical theater stage. And so the idea to stage A Little Night Music came to be.

Halfway across the world, the luminous Catherine Zeta-Jones was set to star in the first Broadway revival of Sondheim's masterpiece produced by the wonderful people who produced Cinderella (one of the best times I have had directing a show). It was the trigger for me to think about

staging it in Manila with an actress equally as luminous and brilliant as Ms. Zeta-Jones. I knew then that it was the perfect role for Dawn to return to the musical theater stage.

After sending Dawn the script and music, she immediately said she wanted to do it and was ready for the challenge. It has been almost 12 years since she last performed in a musical. She was last seen as Elsa Montes in Larawan. I was thrilled beyond belief that Dawn and I would get to work together on a dream musical that I would be able to cross off my bucket list.

Staging A Little Night Music in October 2010 also gives us the opportunity to celebrate Sondheim's 80th birthday next year. I believe that every musical theater company, whether they perform his work or not, is indebted to Sondheim for his ground breaking contributions to musical theater. He is, in my

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COLUMNS

The 'Angelic' Side of Paul Bettany



CONVERSATIONS With Ricky Lo

*For a moment, when he walked into a function room of the Four Seasons in Beverly Hills for the round-table interview with the international press, I thought Paul Bettany would do something lethal like he did in his role as the albino assassin Silas in **The Da Vinci Code**.*

Lady Loka and Paris Canton



ME, STARZAN By Joey de Leon

Anak ng put your head on my shoulder baby!

If there is "baha" meron ding mga happy

Who enjoy to make "lusong" there in Italy

'Cause they can wear their rubber boots na Burberry.

Greg Martin's boyish charm REMEMBER WHEN? From the collection of Danny Dolor

In the '50s, Greg Martin was one of Sampaguita Pictures' heartthrobs. His boyish charm — wholesome, educated, gentleman — appealed to many young girls — and elderly ladies, too.

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opinion, the greatest living musical theater composer. And A Little Night Music is one of his finest works.

For those unfamiliar with A Little Night Music's plot, here it is in a nutshell: Inspired by Ingmar Bergman's film Smiles of a Summer Night, A Little Night Music recounts the romantic complications that befall mismatched lovers as they spend a deliriously mad-capped [weekend](#) at a country estate. It is a whimsical and magical musical that asks whether love is the meaning of life. It also features the most popular [song](#) in the Sondheim catalog, Send in the Clowns, and is the winner of six Tony Awards including Best Musical.

Even as early as now, we have begun pre-production work on A Little Night Music. Set [design](#), costume designs, and casting are all underway so that we will be ready to open our doors and welcome you to the show in October. A Little Night Music provides for me that rare opportunity to stage a dream musical with a leading lady of Dawn Zulueta's stature, talent and grace. I couldn't be luckier.

As Mr. Sondheim writes, isn't bliss, indeed!

Sponsorship, showbuying and fundraising opportunities for A Little Night Music are now available. Call Atlantis Productions at 892-7078 or 840-1187. A Little Night Music is presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International.

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rickb59 (posted on Dec 06, 2009 06:05 PM)
Member since Nov 24, 2008

“

Looking forward for her much awaited comeback. You're exactly right when you compare her w Zeta Jones. Patiently waiting for the venue and exact playdate of her forthcoming play. Way to Dawn!!

|

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