

BORN WITH NO ARMS

Jessica Cox-Chamberlain continues to inspire and defy odds

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
AJPress

PASADENA—Fil-Am Jessica Cox continues to defy odds and inspire everyone around her. Last Saturday, she once again proves there's no limit to what anyone can do.

Born with no arms, the 29-year-old Cox became the first person with her condition to earn a pilot's license.

She's a second degree black belt in taekwondo, a renowned tap dancer, types 25 words per minute with her toes, and a certified scuba diver, among other things. She's a motivational speaker, and goes around the world telling her story and urges people to maximize their efforts.

On Saturday, Cox officially became Mrs. Chamberlain.

After two years of dating and a year's engagement, Cox married Patrick Chamberlain of Arizona, a fourth degree taekwondo black belt and instructor. The two met at a taekwondo studio in Arizona.

"My parents always told me I would meet someone who would see me as they saw me," Cox said to the *Asian Journal*. "The fact that Patrick could see me for who I am and not my disability is a reason why I love him."

Dressed beautifully in a specially designed wedding dress made by renowned Pinoy designer Francis Libiran, Cox married at St. Andrews Church in Pasadena with Bishop Oscar Solis presiding the ceremony.

She lit the ceremonial candle with her right foot. Rather than presenting her with a ring, Patrick bent down on one knee and wrapped a gold anklet around her left ankle.

"I am very happy Jessica found Patrick," said Jason Cox, Jessica's brother. I wish them a happy marriage together. Jessica did not date many people so I was surprised she would be married this young. God has really blessed them."



At a private garden reception in South Pasadena, Patrick and Jessica impressed their guests with an elegant first dance routine with opera singers performing the tune. It was a festive gathering full of friends and family sharing the love and joy the couple has for one another.

Role model

From the outside looking in, it appeared to be a normal wedding but for three other guests, young women who shares Jessica's disability it meant more.

Ira Kaplan, 14, and Teresa, 11, and Anna Buchholz, 18, were all born with no arms. They have known Jessica Cox for years through the International Children Assistance Network (ICAN) and to say they look up to the Fil-Am would be an understatement. Jessica is their role model.



"She proves to everyone that everything is possible and that you can do what you dream of," said Teresa.

Anna said watching Jessica get married only proves that she and her friends can also find love one day despite their condition.

"We don't have to worry about finding the perfect man," said Teresa. "We won't have to worry about all the wedding stuff like how it's going to work. We just know it's going to work somehow."

"I don't have to worry about the first dance or where to put a ring because she (Jessica) totally figured that out before me," added Ira.

During the reception, Jessica cut the cake with her right foot and shoved it in her husband's face in jest. When it came time to throwing the bouquet, Jessica kicked it up in the air.

It was Ira, who managed to come up with it.

"Now, I just have to find the perfect man," said Ira. ■



Photos by Shanda Romanos

FUNFARE

by RICARDO F. LO
Philstar.com

Ai-Ai & Miguel: Love and let love



GLENDALE—Ai-Ai de las Alas and Miguel Vera are a couple to behold this Sunday afternoon, so sweet are they that if you didn't know that they're no longer "on," you will think that they still are.

They hug, they kiss, they tease each other and, if you dare them, I'm sure they will feed each other spoonfuls of the merienda they're sharing with their children Sophia and Niccolo at Cheese-cake Factory at Americana, Glendale's version of Beverly Hills' The Grove, a promenade/shopping complex complete with high-end stores, all kinds of restaurants, cinemas and condo units, plus a slow-moving train that goes around the area with sight-seers. Booths selling souvenir items line the circular promenade, in the center of which are little coffee tables under lush trees.

Ai-Ai and her children are billeted in one of

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Rhian takes the high 'Road'

by TESSA MAURICIO-ARRIOLA
ManilaTimes.net

WHEN you're down, there's no way but up.

Almost six months of what must have been the most trying and darkest times of her young life, Rhian Ramos has picked up the pieces of her tarnished reputation and career, and has come back in a big way.

Last week in Los Angeles, looking every bit a movie star in an Ito Curata gown, Rhian led the cast of her 2011 hit horror flick, *The Road* by GMA Films, at a red carpet premiere at Hollywood's Arclight Cinemas.

The glitzy event, which the *LA Red Carpet Examiner* dubbed as "Philippine cinema making history," marked the final countdown to the movie's commercial run in North America and Canada. *The Road* opened Friday stateside, and has the distinction of being the first Filipino movie to be shown in mainstream cinemas over there.

Before she left for LA, *The Manila Times* sat down with the controversial actress who was glowing with excitement over *The Road's* big coup.

Looking young, sweet and carefree in a baby pink blazer and denim shorts, her image was a far cry from the weeping Rhian in December 2011 who was the subject of a YouTube video of her erstwhile boyfriend DJ Mo Twister, allegedly taken the night before she had their baby aborted in June 2010.

Of the US/Canada run of *The Road*, Rhian commented, "First of all, I'm really nervous about it. I never had a movie that would be released internationally and in Hollywood as well, which is the Movie Mecca.

"Sana magustuhan nila, especially since it seems to be



Rhian Ramos

highly anticipated there, based on the blogs I read, and the number of times the trailer has been viewed on iTunes.

"Also, I was informed that casters from international companies will be attending [the premiere] so I'm hoping mapansin that Filipino actors can act. That's the ultimate dream. *Kahit isa man lang sa amin sa movie*, that would be great. *Sana ako din mapansin, siyempre!*" she added with a laugh.

Asked about DJ Mo Twister in a roundabout way—that is, if she planned to take a side trip to New York where he is now based—Rhian took the high road and said, "If I need to go there to promote the movie, I will, but so far, I haven't been asked. I'll only be doing a show for GMA Pinoy TV in the West Coast after the premiere."

Careful not to mention his name, or the words "YouTube" and "abortion scandal," Rhian openly shared, instead, what she had to go through when the controversy shook the industry. While she has never categorically denied having an abortion, she has two pending cases against Mo Twister:

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CONVERSATIONS WITH RICKY LO

by RICARDO F. LO
Philstar.com

The Pinay in J. Lo

BEVERLY HILLS—Again, if I were somebody else, I would start this story this way:

I attended the presscon for Lionsgate's *What To Expect When You're Expecting* (showing in the Philippines starting on Thursday, May 17, released locally by Pioneer Films) Sunday last week at a function room of (as usual) Four Seasons Hotel. When Jennifer Lopez walked in from a side door (the stars' "secret" entrance) with co-stars Cameron Diaz, Elizabeth Banks and Anna Kendrick, she stopped in her tracks when she saw me and yelled, "Hi, Ricky! Did you get the Christmas Card, Valentine Card and many other cards that I've sent you?"

Then, she broke away from her companions and rushed to plant a kiss on both my cheeks. Well, I've interviewed her thrice before—in 2000 for *The Cell* with Vince Vaughn in New York, a few years after that in Hong Kong where she launched her album and in 2010 for *The Back-Up Plan* with Alex O'Loughlin (of the revived Hawaii Five-O)—and I presumed that, eh, we're close.

But, of course, that was not what happened. I wasn't much of an *ilusyonado* to presume that every Hollywood star that I interview automatically becomes close to me. The truth is that when Jennifer arrived, she didn't even glance at me... maybe because I was partly hidden at the back of the venue? Well, maybe.

There were more than 50 of us journalists both "domestic" and "international" in attendance and time was limited so I had to compete with the rest for a chance to ask a question. I got it!

As an SOP (Standard Operating Procedure), I had to introduce myself first.

"Hi, Jennifer. I am Ricky Lo from the Philippines..."

Jennifer: Oh, hi, how are you?

"I'm okay. On behalf of the Filipinos, I want to thank you for 'saving' Jessica Sanchez on *American Idol*."

Jennifer: You are very welcome!

"I notice that you have such a strong Philippine connection..."

I thought I saw a sparkle in Jennifer's eyes. I guessed that only she and I knew what I meant, with the other journalists absolutely clueless. You, too, know what I mean, don't you? Well, Jennifer's second husband (lasting 10 months), dancer Cris Judd, was half-Filipino, and the ex-boyfriend of the ex-wife (Dayanara Torres) of Jennifer's third



ex-husband Marc Anthony was a Filipino—yes, Aga Muhlach (the CamSur's would-be congressman). Her first husband was Ojani Noa and their marriage lasted for only 11 months. Jennifer is now romantically linked to dancer-choreographer Casper Smart.

It was even Jennifer who brought up her "Philippine connection" during our third interview, also in the same venue. When she learned that I came from the Philippines, she volunteered the information about her second failed marriage, saying, "Yes, my ex-husband was half-Filipino."

At the *What To Expect* presscon, as intro to my question, I said, "Did you know that making babies is a popular cottage industry in the Philippines?" (Laughter from the gallery) "My question is: Having had twins, what tips can you give expecting women not only in the Philippines but all over the world?"

Jennifer: "You know, making babies is a very personal experience. One woman's experience may not be the same as those of the others, or different from mine, so I can't really give any tips."

"That's okay. Thank you, Jennifer!"

As in our previous encounters, Jennifer was lovable and lively, full of energy, her sing-song voice as musical as ever, answering every question with infectious verve, straight from the heart. She easily breaks into a lusty laughter that makes her so charming. In case you want to know, Jennifer in person looks exactly like she does on screen—seems taller than her 5'6"-frame, has a deliciously light

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