

LifeStyle

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Aga, Anne Provide 'Kilig' Factor in Feel-good Romance

By Rito Asilo
Inquirer.net

MANILA—Aga Muhlach returns to the big screen in Jose Javier Reyes' *When Love Begins*, a feel-good, romantic drama that follows the love story of lawyer-turned-environmental activist, Ben Caballero (Muhlach), and 23-year-old real-estate heiress, Michelle Valmonte (Anne Curtis), after a serendipitous meeting on Boracay island. What better place for romance to start?

Sparks fly, but commitment is not in Mitch's vocabulary (because she does not want to end up like her estranged parents), so the ready-to-settle Ben grudgingly accepts an undefined arrangement, where there is "no commitment, and no expectations."

Conflict
Soon, however, Ben and Mitch find themselves on opposing sides of a conflict after the former sues a real-estate company for its ecologically destructive housing projects. The situation worsens when they learn that the multinational firm Ben's environmental group had hauled off to court is owned by Paco Valmonte (Christopher de Leon)—who just happens to be Mitch's father! Indeed, choosing between love and family is never easy. But, is the couple ready to give their "consensual companion-



Aga Muhlach and Anne Curtis
Photo courtesy of Star Cinema

ship" a rest?

As usual, Jose Javier Reyes comes up with an entertaining and technically polished feature. He knows the pulse of the middle class and uses this ability to bring to life characters whom viewers can relate to. But, the side story about Ben leaving the legal profession feels forced and unconvincing.

And, the artistic compromises Reyes makes in the exposition are obvious—for the sake of mainstream cinema's lovesick fans. Hopeless romantics can always rely on Star Cinema to employ its much-utilized narrative trick: The years-later epilogue that allows estranged couples to revive and rekindle failed relationships and facilitate happy-ever-after endings. After constant use,

however, the storytelling tack feels contrived.

Muhlach and Curtis appropriately provide the *kilig* factor that will have fans hyperventilating: Anne has a lovely screen presence, and in this movie, the 23-year-old actress comes of age. She inhabits her worldly character with guiltless pleasure and confidence, although she feels a little lightweight when she's at the office "playing" an

assistant marketing manager.

Roles
For his part, Aga—undoubtedly one of the country's finest actors—can do these roles with his eyes closed and still deliver more-than-adequate portrayals. Unsurprisingly, his performance in *When Love Begins* is no different—he can make even the most common line simmer with truth and meaning.

In a past interview, he told us that these are movies and roles he prefers to do. But seeing the 38-year-old actor play the generic lover-boy-with-a-sensitive-heart character from one movie to another makes you wish there were better, grittier roles worthy of Aga's exceptional thespic gifts! ■

Katrina Shifts from Villain to Martyr

By Dolly Anne Carvajal
Inquirer.net

MANILA—Katrina Halili is out to prove that she can also play martyr and not just *kontrabida* roles, via her upcoming soap *Magdusa Ka*.

"It's my chance to show that I'm versatile," she says. "*Kapagod na din maging antagonist.*"

Did she ever make *dusa* in real life? "When people who don't really know me judge me, *nagdudusa ang kalooban ko*," replies Kat.

How does she make a guy suffer when he does something wrong? "I give him the cold shoulder."

But the rest of Katrina remains hot whatever mode and mood she is in.

Clueless ex
Kai Palomares, the fab mom of Jericho Rosales' seven-year-old love child Santino, is clueless about the Heart Evangelista-Echo split-up. "My world revolves around a different scene now," she quips. "I'm not aware of what's going on in Echo's life anymore. It's none of my business and vice-versa. All I can say is, his relationship with our son has never been better. We want Santino to grow up in peace so we shield him from hurt as much as we can."

Unlike most ex-es of celebs, Kai is no excess baggage for Echo because she knows her proper place in his life.

Guess who
In between takes, these TV hosts whine that they are lazy and sleepy to do the show.

It's normal to feel tired but should they let their guests hear them rant? So the staff and guests end up feeling lethargic, too.

The hosts ought to know that attitudes are contagious. Are theirs worth catching?

Former rivals
A naughty friend comments, "*Di kaya umeeksena lang si William Martinez sa sexual harrassment issue ng daughter niya laban kay Baron Geisler kasi dumating ang archrival niya nung '80s na si Gabby Concepcion?*"

Knowing William, that is not his style. But come to think of it, Gabby has his share of legal battles while William is fighting for his daughter Patricia's protection.

Will the former rivals find allies in each other when they go to court?

International flavor
What sets the Coverboys apart from other all-male groups? "Some of us are from the US and UK so we have international flavor," beams Jon Avila.

Any professional jealousy among them? "None at all. We have our individual talents. Partners *kami* in crime!" says Jon, laughing. He and other naughty hunks Jake Cuenca, Zanjoe Marudo, Rafael Rosell, Victor Basa, Will Devaughn, Ron Morales, John James Uy and Marvin Raymundo will perform in *Cover Boys Uncovered* at the Music Museum on May 9 and 10.

They will show off their hidden talents... and assets?

Online game?
Facebook.com addicts



Katrina Halili

cannot help but notice the sweetness of Oyo Boy Sotto's messages/online gifts to Kristine Hermosa in her FB site.

Perhaps Oyo is just being playful. Or are they playing hide and seek with the public regarding the real score between them? ■

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