

Her Time in the Limelight

After encountering many bumps on the road, Jessica Sanchez is finally on her way to superstardom

Words **Michelle Angela Orosa Carag**

IT WAS LIKE WATCHING MANNY PACQUIAO DEFEND HIS BOXING TITLES EVERY TIME SHE CAME OUT ON THE IDOL STAGE TO WIN OVER NOT JUST THE JUDGES BUT ALSO THE REST OF AMERICA. Filipinos around the world had never felt more proud as they watched their favorite contender battle her way to the finals. She kept the hearts of the Filipinos pounding. Even the Abu Sayyaf members had to take a break from their ongoing warfare with the Marine troops in Zamboanga City just to cheer for her in the finals.

Indeed, Jessica Sanchez took Filipinos by storm.

The Dreamer

Ever since she was little, Jessica Elizabeth Sanchez seemed to know which path to take on. "I have been singing since I was two years old," Jessica shares with a giddy smile. "Growing up, we had karaoke at home and I would always sing the songs of Whitney Houston, Celine Dion and Mariah Carey. I remember wearing ballerina shoes while I was singing along to the theme of *Titanic* at the end of that movie."

Indeed, her family witnessed from Jessica's early age that she had what it took to become a great singer. And that is why her parents worked hard to enroll her for voice lessons—even if the enrolment fees were expensive. Meanwhile, her grandmother, Virgie Bugay, accompanied her to singing contests.



Filipinos around the world held their breaths as Ryan Seacrest revealed the American Idol

In an interview with *The Buzzon* May 20, 2012, Catherine Bugay, Jessica's aunt, shares, "*Bitbit ng lola 'yong apo. Since bata pa lang, laging sinasabi sa amin ng lolo't lola niya, bata pa lang pangarap niya na 'yon.*"

Jessica's parents also opted to have her homeschooled instead so she could focus on honing her talent. True to her passion, Jessica, who was aged ten at that time, tried her luck in *America's Got Talent*. She also appeared on various TV stations in San Diego and made home videos of herself singing covers of songs originally performed by her favorite music artists that included Beyonce, Etta James and Whitney Houston. But what really paved the road to her stardom was her audition for *American Idol* in 2011.

Becoming a World Idol

The exceptional talent that Jessica projected throughout the season left judges Randy Jackson, Jennifer Lopez and Steven Tyler awestruck. Nothing seemed to faze her at all. But Jessica is quick to



Jessica wore a white jacket, neon top and leather pants on the third round of the finals. She sang "Change Nothing," which would have been her first single if she had won

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- The **Center for Pop Music** offers specialized courses in voice lessons. It also offers workshops in acting and dancing.

THE CENTER FOR POP MUSIC IS LOCATED AT 73 ERMIN GARCIA ST. QC; PHONE (2)723 9373; VISIT <CENTERFORPOPMUSIC.COM>

- The **Acts Dance and Arts Academy** offers dance classes. Fitness and sports classes have also recently added to the curriculum.

THE ACTS DANCE AND ARTS ACADEMY IS LOCATED AT UNIT B MEZZANINE GA TOWER 1, EDSA COR. BONI AVE., MANDALUYONG CITY; PHONE (2)719 4062; VISIT <ACTSACADEMY.COM>

- The **Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA)** offers classes on Basic Acting, Theater Arts and Creative Musical Theater. It also offers weekend workshops to accommodate the busy schedule of both students and professionals.

THE PHILIPPINE EDUCATIONAL THEATER ASSOCIATION (PETA) IS LOCATED AT 5 EYMAR DRIVE, NEW MANILA, QC; PHONE (2)725 6244; VISIT <PETATHEATER.COM>; EMAIL <PETAFR@PETATHEATER.COM>; <PETATHEATER@GMAIL.COM>

- The **Academy of Rock** teaches kids, teens and adults to play musical instruments. It also provides a conducive environment for students to develop their character and inspire creativity.

THE ACADEMY OF ROCK IS LOCATED AT 3F ROCKWELL POWERPLANT MALL; PHONE (2)822 3333; VISIT <FACEBOOK.COM/ACADEMYOFROCK.PH>



note, "I've been working hard my whole life for this. I've been trying to get into the music industry since I was a little girl—and that thought kept running through my mind throughout the show. I kept telling myself that this is what I want to do for the rest of my life."

As the weeks progressed toward the finals, Jessica gave powerful performances. But her *Idol* journey did not always prove to be smooth sailing. Aside from being nearly eliminated from the competition (the judges used their power to save an eliminated contestant on her), another news brought an emotional blow to Jessica the week after—the deployment of her father to Singapore.

Being a daddy's girl, Jessica was deeply affected but she remained strong. Her father also vowed to be present in her remaining performances until the finals to show his support. Jessica used the news of her father's deployment to give her strength and inspiration, which helped her deliver a powerful performance with her rendition of "Dance with My Father," which earned her more respect from America. Jessica says, "You shouldn't let anybody or anything get in your way. You just have to believe in yourself and go after your dreams."

The Homecoming

Jessica may have finished in the runner up spot, but in the eyes and hearts of the Filipinos, she was already a world idol. And that proved to be true when she was given the chance to visit the Philippines during the American Idol Tour.

Having never been out of the United States her whole life, Jessica

hasn't had the chance to visit the Philippines. Because of this, being in the Philippines (along with her fellow top ten) brought her mixed feelings of nervousness and excitement.

"It's amazing," Jessica can't help but gush. "Being here is a new experience. I came here not knowing what to expect but it's amazing! It's a whole new chapter of my life and I'm learning a lot. All the fans here are very, very supportive. They have my back here and I love it!"

Even her mother, Editha, is overwhelmed by the tremendous amount of support that her daughter has been receiving since the advent of her *Idol* journey. "It's amazing," Editha says in an interview with the *Philippine Daily Inquirer*. "We're still trying to get a grasp of it, you know. But it's a blessing. It really is."

And while Jessica has also been given the chance to be an ambassador of major brands that largely characterize Filipino pride, including Jollibee and Bench, she has also graced her first ever magazine cover with MBGA on its January 2013 issue.

With everything that has been going on in her life, it is safe to say that Jessica is finally reaping the rewards of her hard work—with the help and continuous support of her family, especially her parents, who never gave up on her even though getting to where she is now seemed too far-fetched back when they were still helping her build her dreams.

And with the recent release of her album under the music industry giant Interscope Records, she sure is not going anywhere far from the limelight.

After all, she stresses that, "I never found that love on anything else but music." ▲

“ I kept telling myself that this is what I want to do for the rest of my life ”



Jessica is more than happy to be part of the Bench family. "The jeans are amazing!" she says with glee. "Everything fits me perfectly. The stuff in the States do not fit me at all. Coming here and finding pants that fit me is like...Hallelujah!"