



BIANCA Manalo, former Bb. Pilipinas-Universe is being hailed for her fantastic portrayal of the lead role in the afternoon series, "Juanita Banana," on ABS-CBN.

"Juanita Banana" garnered a rating of 18.6, when it was first aired on Oct. 28, outperforming its rival program, "Little Star," on GMA 7.

"Sa totoo lang, I am overwhelmed with the success of the series," revealed Bianca, "Baguhan ako and the only acting credit I have to my name is the recently ended drama series, 'Magkaribal,' where I played the good friend of Bea Alonzo.

Both played the roles of ambitious girls who grew up in Divisoria. They shared the dream of becoming fashion models.

"Between me and Bea, Bea had the bigger dream," Bianca stated. "Gusto niya rin maging isang fashion designer at maging may-ari ng isang atelier."

In the series, they both realize their dreams. "Na siya rin, kung tutuusin, nangyayari sa akin sa kasalukuyan. My wish is to become an actress and play the title role in a series, kung hindi man movies.

"Nagkatotoo ang wishes ko, as I didn't expect na ako ang mapili to play the title role of Juanita Banana," Bianca related.

Paired with Bianca are two newcomers themselves, Rodjun Cruz and Matt Evans, who are both very happy to be teamed up with her.

"Unang una," said Matt, "it's a great honor para sa akin ang ma-ka-trabaho mo ang isang beauty queen. Nagkataon din na ang gaan ka-trabaho niya since kalog siya at down-to-earth.

"Rodjun and I find it a fun experience working with her."

Bianca belongs to a family of beauty queens. Elder sister Katherine Manalo was former Bb.

Pilipinas World.

An auntie, Nini Ramos-Licaros, was formerly a Bb. Pilipinas-Universe, too.

Neither of the two, though, dreamt of joining showbiz. Unlike her, Bianca admits that to become an actress was a childhood dream.

She tried hosting at first. Her first acting break came via an episode of the drama anthology, "Maalaala Mo Kaya," where she was paired with Rodjun's younger brother, Rayver Cruz.

A natural comedian, Bianca claims she doesn't find it difficult displaying her natural comic antics in "Juanita Banana." "Feel na feel ko kasi ang takbo ng kuwento ng 'Juanita Banana.' 'Yung tipong anything goes," Bianca further stated.

If former "Pinoy Big Brother" housemate Rocky Salumbides has his way, he'll start a family with girlfriend, drama actress Eula Valdez. Never mind if she is several years older than him. "Ang importante naman, nagmamahalan kami," Rocky said.

Remember when Rocky voluntarily exited Bahay ni Kuya because he missed Eula? No wonder that it was a proud Eula who fetched Ricky from Kuya's house. Eula revealed that she herself desires a family with Rocky. She knows of Rocky's eagerness to have a child of their own. Eula doesn't deny that since the two of them lived together Rocky has been an ideal father to her two kids, the elder one, a boy, with Ronnie Quizon, and the younger one, a girl, with ex-husband, Richard Litonjua.

"But I want us (she and Rocky) to start our family the proper and legal way," explained Eula, "As it is, my marriage to Richard has yet to be annulled."

Richard, who is based in Australia, was the reason Eula quit showbiz for a while to devote more time to Richard, and eventually play mom to their daughter.

Why her marriage to Richard came to an end, Eula chooses not to say. Neither does our source want to reveal the reason.

Both Eula and Rocky have agreed, in the meantime, to devote their time not only to their family but also to their showbiz careers.

Rocky is finally getting the break he deserves. After playing lover to Fanny Serrano in the indie film, "Tarima," he now plays a vampire in the top series, "Imortal," top-billed by John Lloyd Cruz and Angel Locsin.

Eula is in the cast of the series, "Koreana," on GMA 7, co-starring her with young stars, Kris Bernal and Roco Nacino.