

# Independent's Day

By GABY GLORIA

*Breaking molds and doing it their way in industries usually dominated by the storied and established, five young creatives are showing us how to be independent and live up to #PinoyPride — a perfect fit for this season's top threads from Human, a local brand that's always had its ear to the ground and a fresh take on Filipino fashion.*

## KING PUENTESPINA

22, musician, ([soundcloud.com/crwnrecordings](https://soundcloud.com/crwnrecordings))

**K**ing is most popularly known as his musical alter-ego CRWN — EDM magician and producer of laid-back, smooth beats. With the steady rise of a local independent music scene that is somewhat outside of the local music industry, King is at the forefront with a following that, thanks to the Internet, reaches way beyond the archipelago. Recently, he's been collaborating with local and international artists like Jess Connely and Kajo with the goal to show the world what Filipino musicians can do.

**YOUNG STAR: What do you think of your side of the local music industry?**

I think it's like a new age of our industry in the Philippines, here in Manila. People are coming up with more and more songs that are more close to them and more personal. Now, 'cause you share a song, you can easily record things. I think that we're about to burst out. It's weird. I never really think about the sides *kasi*. I think that mainly what you do is music, and music is music, whatever genre or style it is. People write those things for a reason, and the reason for mainstream music is making money. But me, as an artist who wants to create something new, something fresh for Manila, or for the Philip-

pires — it's a good side to be on.

**You've been pushing the industry forward. How are you doing it? Or how do you think you and other local musicians like your peers in LogiClub, are pushing it forward?**

I think it's trying to be different, but at the same time trying to be yourself. Like, keep it close to home. I mean, your experiences, the things you grew up [with]. It's easier *din* for us, 'cause we share the same vibe, we share the same vision of where we want the music industry to go.

**What do you think makes local music what it is?**

I think people have the same stories around here, a lot of artists like that. It's almost the same mentality for everyone.

**What do you base your material on? What inspires your sound?**

Everyday experiences — relationships, girls, the need for making something more than what I can achieve. I just wanna keep pushing myself. I'm very inspired to always push and push and stay hungry for more recognition for our country, or for what musicians here can do. I'd like to think that we can all be international.

**So with all these local acts performing**



Printed navy blue polo shirt, Human

**abroad — your band (She's Only Sixteen) went to Taiwan, and BP Valenzuela performed in Singapore — what do you feel when you see them all making it internationally?**

Great! It also shows that we can do something about whatever's happening here. BP's

a really good friend of mine. Right now, in the state that we're in... we're all on a plateau right now, and I feel like the musicians — I feel like everyone, actually, is just waiting for that wave and sitting down trying to catch the next wave.

## THEA DE RIVERA

23, restaurant owner, The Girl + The Bull and 12/10 (@theadrivera)

Photos by EVERYWHERE WE SHOOT  
Sittings by RAYMOND ANG



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**REGINA DE VERA ▶**  
**26, theater actress (@regina\_devera)**

**Y**ou may know Regina from the crowdfunder campaign that caused a stir in the Filipino online community, garnering widespread support but also some backlash. But whatever your opinion on the matter, you can't deny the fact that she is one talented thespian, being one of 18 applicants admitted to Juilliard (arguably one of the most prestigious drama schools in the world) out of 1,900. Before that, she kept herself busy by serving as a resident actor for CCP's *Tanghalang Pilipino*. For Regina, the opportunities that can come up in four years in New York are endless, and she's taking everything one step at a time.

**YOUNG STAR: What do you think about peoples' reaction to your #GoFundRegina campaign?**

I actually intend to release a video about that. I think the various responses to the campaign says a lot about how the Filipino online community sees the relevance of art in the context of nation building. It also says a lot about how we encourage local artists to pursue our craft. It also says a lot about how people perceive the relevance of pursuing further studies abroad.

**What do you think about the current state of Philippine theater?**

I think it's thriving. The good thing about this generation, at least from my point of view, is that this generation of local theater artists do not wait for other people to give them roles or give them opportunities to make plays. They create their own opportunities and they create their own platforms to do their work. So they make their own

companies, and they just use social media to market their own plays, and they get their friends to direct, act and produce. So we're very independent.

**How do you think people can contribute to the industry?**

Basically, watch more plays. The good thing about *Rak of Aegis* is that they continue to have reruns of that particular play. They developed an audience specifically for original Filipino musicals. So instead of just watching movies or watching Broadway plays because of the success of *Kung Paano Ako Naging Leading Lady* and *Rak of Aegis*, more Filipinos are getting more acquainted with original Filipino musicals. And if the audience continues to come, instead of the average life span of a play in the Philippines, which is three weeks, pretty soon there could be a time where original Filipino materials can run for one year or two years just like on Broadway. Only if we develop the audience for that.

**Do you have any personal goals related to that? Would you want to be part of something like that, that brings theater closer to Filipinos?**

Oh yes, definitely. I'm not sure how to explain it, but I think one of the reasons that pushed me to finally tell people that I got into Juilliard is not really to gain attention for myself. I came out also because I want people to know that someone who was born and raised here in the Philippines and someone who has been trained in local theater and original Filipino plays... someone who has been part of the Filipino theater community has made it to one of the most prestigious drama schools in the world. And that's important because it means that homegrown local theater talent is... excellent. So if there's one thing that the fundraising campaign has accomplished is to just bring awareness to local theater talent.



Sleeveless striped tee, Human

**◀ ZEAN CABANGIS**  
**30, artist (@zeancabangis)**

**L**ike every other young artist, Zean says that he owes his talent to his *kapraningan*, and his multi-tasking skills. Unlike most young artists, however, he was recently announced as one of the recipients of CCP's 13 Artists Awards. The program is the institution's oldest, and one of its most prestigious. Being chosen to be one of the 13 is a very, very big deal. Zean's method of using emulsion transfers and acrylic to create his paintings is something that was well within the award criteria to "restructure and restructure" art making and thinking.

**YOUNG STAR: You were chosen along with 12 other talented artists who took the "chance and risk to restructure, restructure, and renew art making and art thinking." How do you think the 13 of you have been pushing**

*Napansin ko ang mga bata, parang mas daring na sila. 'Yung major nila painting eh, pero konti lang nag-paint. Lahat nag-installation, 3D pieces. Nung time namin, gusto namin painting talaga.*

**A lot of people have been getting interested in art nowadays. You see through social media that lots of people are visiting museums and galleries. Based on that, how do you see the industry evolving in terms of appreciators?**

*Oo. Maganda nga, eh. Kasi parang mas naging open 'yung tao. Dati parang, ilang sila magpunta sa galleries kasi napaka-formal. Ngayon, kahit sino puwede. Tapos pag-open ng (places like) Pinto (Art Gallery) — kahit sino puwedeng pumunta, kumain. Hindi lang art-art tinitingnan mo. Puwede kang mag-relax.*

**What influences you?**

*Yun nga, yung kamaynilaan ko lang talaga. Tsaka*

