

SUPREME

SELECTA Gold SERIES

Picked Exclusively For You

Chef J. Gamboa of Cirkulo does a fresh new take on a classic Selecta flavor: Whole chunks of dawn-picked strawberries, mixed with creamy French vanilla ice cream.

Selecta Gold Series. Created exclusively for you.

School of rock



The sight of toddlers grinding provocatively to cheese pop, the kind cranked out by unnamed dark forces on noontime TV, would probably be cute to some. Others, on the other hand, would most likely find it disturbing. While personal taste is a moving target, what children see, hear, and eventually emulate should, by all means, be less creepy and more age-appropriate.

Carisse Escueta felt the same way when, as a preschool teacher, she would watch her students dance the "Ocho Ocho" during recess. Deep in her gut, the wide-eyed twentysomething knew she had to speak up. "I ended up giving my kids a speech about making good choices that will help make them think and live better," she recalls. "Although it was tough to explain the concept to four-year-olds, I told them they should think about what they allow themselves to listen to."

CREATION NATION

Over the course of a couple of years of "figuring out what to do," she voiced out her dream of producing a kid-friendly album to anyone who would listen. It was when she returned from her studies in San Francisco, however, that the vision grew into what it is today: Republikha.

A non-stock, non-profit organization made up of people who want to raise a generation of kids exposed to "quality music that is distinctly Filipino," Republikha aims to work hand-in-hand with educators and parents to "create the best educational entertainment for children." The name, a mash-up of *republik* and *likha* (Filipino words for "republic" and "to create," respectively), is totally evocative of everything they are about.

Team Republikha — Vin Lince!, Liz Claudio, Trina Sta.

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Banda ng bayan: Rivermaya wants to help children develop a love for books and reading.



Mirror, mirror: Salamin is all set to write and record a song about children's rights.

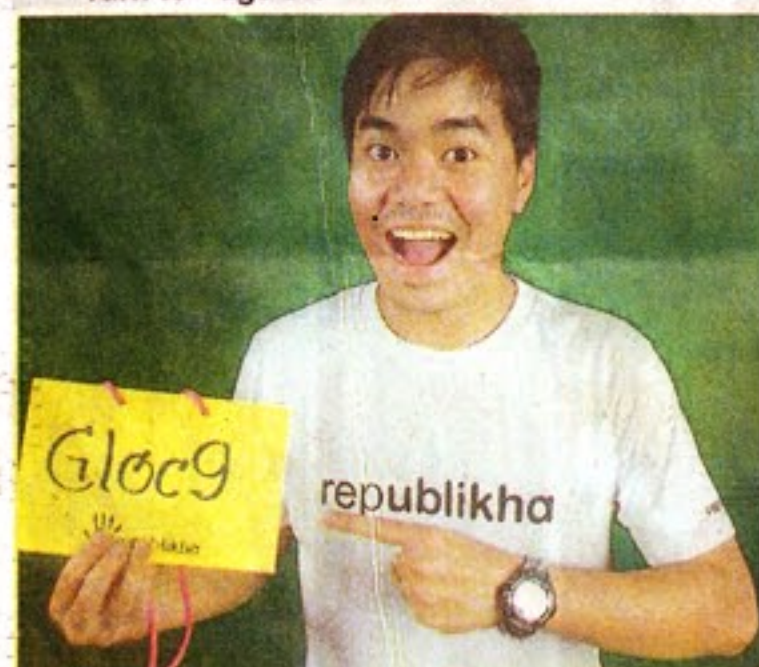


A Barbie girl in a Barbie world: Barbie Almalbis joins Jooma Jam.

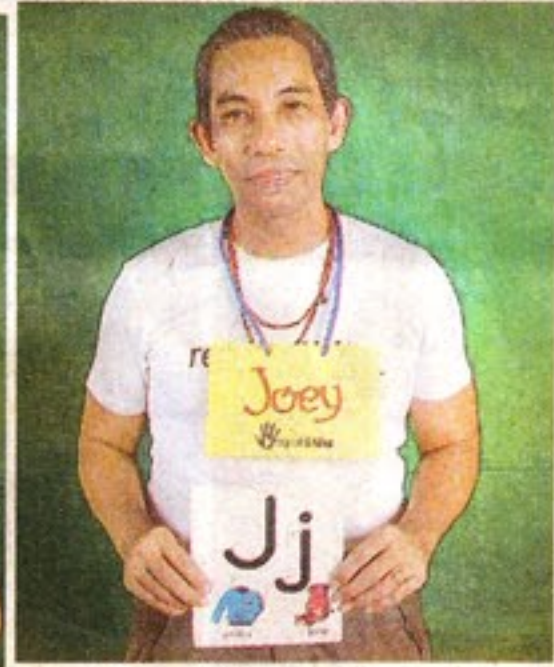


Doing it for the kids: 2008 Awit Award winner Julianne

Kid's choice award: (Clockwise from upper left) Republikha's Liz Claudio, Carisse Escueta, Trina Sta. Maria, Coco Castro-Cruz, Jed Escueta, and Vin Dancel



Local vocal: Gloc 9, described by the late Filipino rapper Francis M as "a blacksmith of words and letters and a true Filipino poet"



Respect: Joey Ayala, pioneering musician, also facilitates workshops through the Bagong Lumad Artists' Foundation Inc

SATURDAY, APRIL 18, 2009 The Philippine Star **SUPREME**

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Maria, Cheryl de Leon, Coco Castro-Cruz — is made up of individuals who possess a very strong "let's do the doable" mentality; their supreme mission is to empower the next generation through music. "Jooma Jam," a full-length music album for preschool children, is the group's breakthrough project. It will be given away for free.

"JAM TAYO!"

As Carisse mentions, it's not a question if kids learn from media because they do; it's more about what they are learning. "Jooma Jam" has 19 original songs, each with English and Filipino versions, spanning several genres.

Working closely with NEST School for Whole Child Development in Quezon City — Tina Zamora, the directress, is part of Republikha's board of trustees — she came up with a curriculum that was suited for preschoolers, and built content from there. "The theme we decided on was 'Me and the world around me.' We then broke this down into smaller topics, from 'Things We Do With Our Legs' and 'Rights of a Child' to 'The Flag' and 'Saving Money.'" Similar to the tunes kids hear in *Yo Gabba Gabba!*, the tracks in "Jooma Jam" want to teach life skills to its impressionable audience.

With an all-star lineup of bands, singers, and songwriters, "Jooma Jam" is as progressive as it gets. "Since Mark (Escueta) is my brother, I knew Rivermaya wouldn't say no," she laughs. "Honestly, it wasn't hard to convince the artists. It was very encouraging because they also know there is a need that has to be addressed."

Despite their near-impossible schedules, Sugarfree, Barbie Almalbis, Gloc 9, Itchyworms, Radioactive Sago Project, Brigada, Bituin Escalante, Julianne, Peryodiko, Cynthia Alexander, Coffeebreak Island, DJ Benjo Marquez, Micheal V., and yes, Rivermaya are all taking part. Joey Ayala, through Bagong Lumad Artists' Foundation, even facilitated a "Jooma Jam" songwriting workshop at Conspiracy Bar. (The directive: "Though the project is for kids, it doesn't mean you should sound kiddie

or dumbed down. You should still sound like yourselves.") The roll call of musicians was pleasantly surprised that the Pinoy music legend was, in fact, very animated.

NEWLY-MINTED PROPONENTS

As newly-minted proponents of positive change, the folks behind Republikha have had to deal with a few touchy subjects. For one, funding will always be a challenge. Donations from individuals and corporations and endorsements from government agencies are, of course, welcome. Aside from that, they've also had to reassure record label execs that they were here not to compete but to help.

"They asked us how we plan to measure our success, and we told them that getting the album out is already a measure of success," adds Liz Claudio. "We're educating kids here. The sooner we release it, the sooner they'll have an alternative learning tool." Republikha is very particular with lyrics so until the bands hit the recording studios in August, revisions are de facto. Songs will also be test-driven to see how the kids respond to them.

Since "Jooma Jam" will be distributed primarily to children from day care centers in less privileged areas, Republikha has partnered up with Gawad Kalinga, which has 300 Sibol schools across its network of communities. Following the release of the CD, Republikha will be going on village visits to conduct training workshops for teachers and seminars for parents on how to use music at home and the Parent and Teacher Manual that comes with the album.

Republikha maintains that it is inclusive. If a million other children's albums come out that teach kids something and honor the Filipino artist, they say that would be awesome. "I'm excited for both the artists and the kids who will benefit from the project," concludes Vin Dancel. Children can learn so much from observing their surroundings and mimicking what they hear or see. In the end, it's really all about them.

To pledge support and to know more about Republikha and "Jooma Jam" visit www.republikha.org.