



The Show That Explained Gary V's 25 Years of Superstardom by iPinoy.ca

There is a difference between promoting and mere ticket selling. Gary Valenciano, bless that artist's love for his craft and his fans all over the world, must have been genuinely thankful that RST Productions pursued the first in order to successfully bring 'Gary V Live! 25th Anniversary – 2008 World Tour' onstage in Toronto's Sony Centre last April 26. Months before the event, the iPinoy.ca team witnessed the dedication of the two producers, Ricky Tanpoco and Susan de Leon, to spread the word out to the Filipino community in GTA that their favorite pop icon will soon be in town to entertain them live. Nearly all Pinoy establishments in Toronto had a poster of Gary with his palm bearing a Maple leaf emblem. And almost every kabayan had been recipient of the news. *Darating si Gary V sa Toronto!*

It paid off. Forget that it was the day of the TTC strike. Several thousands of screaming fans and music aficionados bought the ticket to reacquaint themselves with Gary's music and talent. In return, Gary acknowledged their support wholeheartedly. Rarely do I witness a performer say 'I love you, too' to the audience with so much sincerity that he brought a smile to every rocker, hip-hopper, OPM lover, Christian men and women and just about anybody there who's been a part of an era that Gary Valenciano's legendary career has spanned. Then there was a point in show when Gary stepped down from the stage while singing the beautiful song, "Wait Forever", to hug, shake hands and have his picture taken with fans from the audience—without breaking a note, mind you... I thought it was the most awesome thing I've ever seen.

Dressed in a sporty form-fitting outfit and jeans, he was casual, ageless and very likeable. He breezed through nearly 3-hours of upbeat tunes and love songs from the 80's hits to his recent multi-platinum albums. He serenaded, rapped, grooved and justified 25 years of superstardom to an adoring audience that night.

That he performed well was a given. That he danced his signature moves, given. That he infused “Pure Energy”, sang live superbly... all those were expected. But what had been worth braving the transportation strike, the infernal parking and buying the concert ticket for was experiencing the magic of Gary Valenciano as a person minus the iconic status. Sighs were heard when, as a proud father, Gary made exuberant introductions of his two sons and gave them each an intense five-second embrace after their performances with him onstage. Not contented with simply acknowledging his band and back-up singers by their names, he generously gave the audience insights into his relationship and what’s admirable with every member. He extensively thanked the show sponsors. He unabashedly honored his wife, Angeli, as the heart of his family and the one person whose reassurance and advice he sought the most. He made sure that he connected with his entire audience from both the ground and upper levels of the hall—and saw to it that no one would feel neglected from left, right and center. And most of all, he praised, gave thanks and performed for the glory of his Lord with all the passion and love derived from his strongly rooted Christian faith.

He was just as warm and accommodating to the iPinoy.ca team offstage. Before we said our goodbyes during the dinner hosted by RST after the show, we told Gary that he should come back because Toronto obviously loves him. Gary replied, “Yes, I know... I actually felt it, thank you! Pray naman for the success of our show tomorrow, ha?” One could only pray that the producers of his next concert would be half as dedicated as RST Productions in giving Gary’s 25th Anniversary concert the promotion it deserves.