

# ARNEL PINEDA . . . His new journey with "JOURNEY"

By : Grace Valera-Jaramillo



27 August 2008, Bristow, Virginia: Watching a fellow "kababayan" from a jam-packed audience of Americans, Filipinos and other groups was a thrilling experience. For the first time, a relatively unknown Filipino singer budded out of the blue and conquered America's Rock music scene. Arnel Pineda, Journey's new lead singer, has been stirring both sides of America with his impressive world class performance

Arnel is living every musician's dream, to make a name in the international scene. With his soaring tenor, Arnel brings back the soulful and passionate voice to Journey, says keyboardist Jonathan Cain. The band felt very fortunate to have found Arnel.



After Arnel's 2008 debut February concert in Chile, followed by a series of concerts in Europe and the U.S., Journey's fame was revived. Journey's new album "Revelation" released last June 3 sold more than 104,000 units in its debut week. "The album was always sold out that I had to check the internet always for its availability" says Rene San Miguel, former President of TAA Foundation, Silver Spring, Maryland.

At the Nissan Pavilion in Bristow, Virginia, many Fil-Ams flocked to watch him, most of them

as the new lead singer of the popular rock band, Journey.

Journey is an American rock band formed in San Francisco, California in 1973 whose original members came from Santana. The late '70s through the early '80s brought the band's greatest hits from ballads and songs such as "Open Arms", "Don't Stop Believing", "Wheel in the Sky", "Any Way You Want It", "Separate Ways" and "Faithfully". Journey's former lead vocals were Robert Fleischman (1977) Steve Perry (1977-1998) Steve Augeri (1998-2006) and Jeff Scott Soto - (2006-2007 touring only)

When it was time for JOURNEY to look again for a new lead singer, Guitarist Neal Schon resorted to the internet highway- the YouTube. After a couple of days of surfing the YouTube, he came across some video clip performances of "The Zoo" posted by Noel Gomez. Neal couldn't believe when he heard Arnel Pineda's version of "Faithfully" and kept saying to himself that he can't be that good. After watching Arnel Pineda (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6HjcCzGCCX0&feature=related>),



he knew that he had found the voice that Journey had long been searching for. To most of the Pineda fans, the YouTube video clip was probably the best local version of Journey's hit song performed by Arnel with his Filipino band before he became Journey's lead vocalist.

Arnel Pineda at first did not believe that it was really Neal Schon who has been trying to reach him so he requested a webcam conversation to show his face. After being convinced, Arnel emailed him back and the process started for him to go to the U.S. At the U.S. Embassy in Manila, the Embassy official did not take any chances so he made Arnel belt out a Journey song "Wheel in the Sky."

On August 12, 2007, he flew to the U.S. with his manager Bert de Leon. After a few days of audition which included a recording, Neal finally blurted out the good news that he made it ! But it was not until December 5, 2007 when Journey formally announced Arnel as the new lead vocal. It was a dream come true for Arnel to be joining a legendary band known worldwide. In a TV interview Arnel said "You need to sleep to dream.. but now I am wide awake and still dreaming and everything that's been happening to me now . . . it hasn't sunk in my psyche yet".



Fil-Ams join thousands of American Journey fans

in Bristow, Virginia. L-R: Frank Meneses, Martin and Helen Jose, Elvie, Eymard and Eric Cabling and Richie Vicente, Junior and John Phil Cabrera. Bimak's Roger and Brenda Cabanban, PG County Teacher Millet Pangan, ANA's Odette Martinez, Businesswoman Becky Vigil, Vic Cruz, Louie Ling, La Salle Alumn's Manny Santiago, Jesse Gatchalian and Bing Grisologo were also among the Journey enthusiasts at the Nissan Pavilion

probably called "in sick" during that working day. His kababayans in the audience took pride in Arnel as a Filipino, some of them cheering him with Philippine flaglets. More excitement grew among the Fil-Ams particularly when Arnel said "Mabuhay" and when the band's guitarist Neal Schon gleefully announced "Arnel Pineda, straight from Manila".

The fast rising rock star from the Philippines had experienced living below poverty line at one point in time. After his mother's death, the whole family went bankrupt with all the hospital bills and other related expenses. His younger brothers were distributed to relatives and they would only meet occasionally. Arnel then age 13 went on his own, lived on the streets and even sold "bote dyaryo" (used bottles, old newspapers and metal scrap) to survive.

He surpassed his travails of poverty and followed his love for singing by joining bands who performed in clubs in Olongapo, Manila and later in Singapore and Hongkong. His father used to force him to join singing contests when he was young for songs like "Matud Nila" although his favorites were Michael Jackson's "Ben" and "Happy". According to Arnel, he can only sing aloud when his mother was beside him. It was his mother who inspired him to sing.

With his new found family in the music field, he is creating new waves of fame for JOURNEY and is bringing a renewed pride for the Philippines. But then, he is not leaving his Filipino roots in oblivion. He will always be inspired by his humble beginnings in the Philippines and his family and friends who stood by him all these years. With a confluence of genuine talent, supportive family and friends and a heap of luck, he now has a new journey with "JOURNEY". His fame in less than a year in the U.S. has exceeded all expectations. Following Journey's hit song "Don't Stop Believing", Arnel will never stop believing.

**All the best Arnel. . .Continue rocking the world as a true Global Filipino. We are very proud of you !!!**

Ref: Journey Virginia Concert, 27 August 2008  
 TV Interviews of Arnel Pineda  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnel\\_Pineda](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arnel_Pineda) ' <http://www.journeymusic.com/home.html>  
<http://arnelpineda.ning.com/>



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