



if they are a 70-year-old grandad or a four-year-old toddler, they just hear the music and they just start bopping. And they don't care who's around, they love music. You ask a Filipino to pick up a guitar and play a song and they just know it. They just seem to know music. They love music, they love dancing, they love the arts and they have this freedom that westerners may not have. And that's beautiful. That's the good thing about being Filipino."

And so it comes as no surprise that one of Caoili's other passions and talents is singing. She especially loves jazz music and has posted a few demos of jazz tracks she has recorded on her website. She thanks her dad for passing on his musical abilities to her. A future singing career for the multitasking teenager might be on the cards, but she humbly admits, "If I have the voice or not is questionable."

"It's no big deal if [a singing career] doesn't happen," she continues. "And, I'm not actually doing anything to make it happen so it probably won't."

When pointed out that Dancing With The Stars might open up an opportunity to pursue a singing career, Caoili says she is still unsure of whether it is the direction she wants her life to take. Indeed, this time of her life is a time for big decision making. While singing is one option, studying International Relations at either Bond University in (state) or North Western in the US is another alternative she is contemplating. She is extremely interested in politics and history and one of her ambitions is to set up education facilities for children in Africa.

She also has quite a strong opinion on Philippine politics.

"The Philippines – it's not exactly the most well-run country," says Caoili when asked about the comment she posted on her website in reference to the Philippine Government that says, "Corruption is not the issue. Education is."

Caoili explains that people should stop blaming the government for the country's problems and start getting educated about their rights in a democracy. She says, "If you look at the Philippines there is that gap [between rich and poor] and it really is quite terrible and it's just getting bigger. When you're driving there's so much traffic, there are issues and you can't lie about them. These are problems. You look in the Pasig River and there's garbage everywhere."

"See the Philippines claim it is a democracy but Estrada just has to throw a few thousand pesos around and give a few t-shirts and he has votes. Now that would not work in Australia because we have an incredible education system. The people, as children, are brought up with a thinking mind – politically. There are issues, not just free t-shirts. If the people are educated in that sense, they aren't going to be voting for movie stars. If the people are educated then the masses will vote for a leader, not just whoever, and that leader because he's put there by the educated mass, has to do something correct ... If the education has a revamp over there, then the next generation are going to wise up and they're going to say 'these are the issues our country's facing'.

"We need a good government and we need to demand things from our government. We can't just demand money. If the leaders see that the mass have an intellect for what the country needs, they are going to step up to the plate. The rules they give out are actually going to be followed and not just ignored."

"You have to educate the young people. Same with the farmers. They're struggling. If they're educated to assist them, you just don't give them aid. It's like Africa, you don't just give them rice because the problem is still there. If you teach them how to grow rice, then you have a solution. That's what I mean by education is the issue, it's not corruption. Everyone keeps complaining that

the government is corrupt. Well, apparently the Philippines is a democracy, then it should be voted by an educated mass. So then they will pick the right person. It's not corruption because whatever government you're going to put there's going to be corruption. That's what I mean."

With so many things going on in her life, professional chess has taken a backseat. She says, "I might go back into playing a little chess. I highly doubt that though."

It's a surprising revelation from someone who has done so well in chess. She began playing when she was 6 and studying at Sommerset College in Queensland. She was watching the boys play in the library and thought she'd join in. After returning to the Philippines and participating in national competitions, she decided to go to North America in 1996 and compete internationally. A couple of years later she was travelling all around Europe to compete. She quit in 2002, when she was 14, to focus on high school.

Caoili says, "I was World Champion, Asian Champion, and that's taken up quite a bit of my life. Chess is huge for me. I love it. It's something I always play. I always take chess holidays and play tournaments. But doing it all the time – I don't think I want to do that with my life. That's what I did. Now I want to do something else."

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