

FILIPINO WOMEN IN THE ARTS IN THE CONTEXT OF CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

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According to the Filipino legend of creation, the first woman came forth simultaneously with the first man from the same bamboo node after a great bird pecked at a bamboo groove. Both man and woman emerged into life, equal and with particular attributes complementing each other. The man was called *Malakas* or Strong, and the woman *Maganda* or Beautiful. In the course of time, apart from physical beauty, the Filipino woman reflected spiritual strength, self-sufficiency and courage. The pages of Philippine history abound with heroic women, attesting to their bravery and wisdom, as shown by Teodora Alonzo, mother of our national hero Jose Rizal, and revolutionary leaders like Gabriela Silang and Melchora Aquino or Tandang Sora (her pseudonym), to mention a few of the outstanding Filipino heroines.

During the colonial period, women bravely resisted the intrusion of foreign rule and alien culture. In industry and enterprise, Filipino women exhibited their freedom and talent as equal partners of Filipino men. Under the American regime, Filipino women sallied forth from their homes and went to college and university and engaged in many professions and business ventures, all the while retaining their sovereignty and fellowship with men.

It is interesting to note here the high place of Filipino women in society as confirmed by foreign authors, among them Joseph Hayden, author of *The Philippines - A Study in National Development*. He said, 'In the opinion of the author, there is no country in the world in which woman suffrage is more desirable than the Philippines. In intellect the Filipino woman is on a level with her menfolk. In responsibilities, sensitiveness to the social needs of her community, and in practical common sense, she is, on the average, above them. Women's organizations, a number of them national in scope, have initiated and secured support for social reforms and significant movements for intellectual and artistic progress.'

At the turn of the 20th century, freed from the inhibitions and strictures of her traditional and colonial upbringing as bearers of life, the liberated women of the Philippines found wider opportunities with their horizons expanded by education. They began to assert themselves and got actively involved in artistic and cultural development. They have since become aware of global trends in the arts and have kept pace with contemporary international development and contacts. Many have gone abroad to America and Europe to learn further and assimilate the best of Western knowledge and skills, expressing themselves in universal and artistic language, while at the same time searching for a true national identity reflecting the

The original version of this paper was presented at the International Conference on Women and Development in Asia, Dept. of Southeast Asian Studies, University of Malaya and Information and Resource Center, Singapore, Kuala Lumpur, September 11-12, 1991.

Filipino soul. This paper highlights the achievements and contributions of Filipino women artists in the various fields of the fine arts; the performing arts of music, dance, theatre or drama; the visual arts of painting, sculpture and architecture; as well as the literary arts of prose and poetry. This process is by no means an exhaustive enumeration of the women practitioners of the arts because of limitation of time and space. Directories and catalogues of women artists in the performing, visual and literary arts have been made available by the Cultural Centre of the Philippines as valuable references. Suffice it to say that this documentation shall serve to provide a picture of the state of the arts in the country and point out the dynamic role that women artists play in cultural development in our contemporary society.

MUSIC

The universal language of music occupies a prominent role in the Filipino life-style. It has often been said that the Filipinos are a very musical people. At the drop of a hat, they readily sing, dance and sway to lilting music. As among many nations, there is music ever present in the whole life cycle, from birth to death, from the cradle to the grave, from the primitive to the sophisticated.

When the Spanish conquerors first settled in the Philippines in the 16th century, they reported on the musical skills of the native women who played on plates and gongs and danced so gracefully as well. But a lot of this autochthonous music and dance gave way to westernization and acculturation when the foreigners implanted their own religion and western culture on the natives. In succeeding centuries under foreign domination, the Filipino nation underwent a process of growth. Much of the indigenous Asian culture that existed in the Philippines prior to colonization were almost annihilated. Our long exposure to the cultures of the western world resulted in an imbalance in the proper appreciation of our latent cultural values as brought about by inevitable historical circumstances of colonial domination.

In Philippine music today, the names of Jovita Fuentes, Isang Tapales, Felicing Tirona and Mercedes Matias remain outstanding as the well-loved prima donnas who distinguished themselves remarkably on European concert stages and opera circles during the early thirties. Particularly, Miss Fuentes was the first Filipino diva who created a great stir in Europe with her distinctive performances of the title 'Oles of Puccini's *Madame Butterfly* as Cio-cio San and Strauss' *Salome*. Her homecoming was truly a public holiday rally, reflect with adulation from government and private communities. Isang Tapales likewise acquitted herself most creditably in the same title role of *Madame Butterfly*. Unfortunately, she was billed as a Japanese Cio-cio San. Mercedes Matias took history by storm in her role as Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto* in Milan. On the other hand, Felicing Tirona made an indelible name in the art song and lieder genre in Berlin.

Upon the return of these international music achievers, they established singing schools with many disciples coming from all over the country to study and train with these famous *Maestras*. Their successes were carried over by the next generation of excellent singers and personalities like Dalisay J. Aldaba and Conchita Gaston whose performances in America and Europe caught the attention of art critics and appreciative audiences. Like their predecessors, they established singing schools with

large followings. Miss Aldaba subsequently founded the Opera Guild of the Philippines and successfully produced a long array of operas among others like Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*, *La Boheme* and *Tosca*, and Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*. The Guild is quite alive and active with plans for forthcoming seasons, having created an opera consciousness currently.

Among the younger sopranos, Evelyn Mandac has won distinction as the first Filipina to join the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City in the mid-seventies. Ms. Mandac is regarded as the pretty prima donna of the Philippines. She has sung in divergent and difficult roles from Strauss' *Der Rosenkavalier*, Debussy's *Pellas et Melissande*, Massenet's *Manon*, Bizet's *The Pearl Fishers*, Puccini's *Turandot* and *La Boheme*, Meyerbeer's *L'Africana*, Verdi's *Falstaff*, Mozart's *Don Giovanni*, *Die Zauberflote* (The Magic Flute) and *Le Nozze de Figaro* (The Marriage of Figaro); Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Donizetti's *Don Pasquale*, Handel's *Renaldo*, Orff's *Carmina Burana*, Werner Henze's *The Bassarids*, Berio's *Passagio* and Pasatieri's *Inez de Castro* and *The Black Widow*, both operas created expressly for her by the contemporary Italian composer.

Coloratura soprano Fides Santos Cuyugan-Asensio was the first Filipina to win a scholarship in voice at the famed Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia in the mid-fifties after her graduation from the Philippine Women's University, with Felicing Tirona as her mentor. She founded and directs the Music Theatre Foundation which features operatic and theatre presentations here and abroad, and is the current Chairman of the UP College of Music's Voice Department. She also hosts 'A Little Night of Music', a weekly television show featuring classical music and music theatre excerpts. Aside from having written the scenario, libretto and lyrics of Francisco Feliciano's *La Loba Negra*, a grand opera in three acts in which she sang the title role, she has stage directed and produced several operas and zarzuelas and has concertized in the major cities of Asia, Canada and the United States.

Among the opera characters she has portrayed are: Violeta in Verdi's *La Traviata*, Gilda in Verdi's *Rigoletto*, Lucia in Donizetti's *Lucia de Lammermoor*, Susanna in Menotti's *Saint of Bleecker Street*, Adele in Strauss' *Die Fledermaus*, Constanze in Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*, Julia in the zarzuela *Walang Sugat* by Fulgencio Tolentino, The Northern Star in Kasilang's *Dularawan*, and the Mother in Debussy's *L'Enfant Prodigue*.

Eleanor Calbes is another soprano who has appeared in opera and operettas abroad in the American continent. Other fine Filipino singers who have performed and now reside abroad are Lani Misenas in New York City and Lilia T. Reyes in Rome. Mezzosoprano Conchita Gaston, Nina Zanduetta and Conching Rosal have since passed away, who in their lifetime shared their remarkable talents in the Philippines and America. Now busy as vocal mentors are sopranos Salvacion Oppus-Yniguez, Irma Ponce Enrile Potenciano, Gloria Dizon-Coronel, Florencia Santos-Nepomuceno, Josefina Dychitan, Erlinda Dacanay-Azcuna, Dolly Buencamino-Francia and Tessie Agana-Santos who also founded and directs the active Opera Chorus of the Philippines.

In the sixties, the younger crop of performing artists who have taken advanced studies abroad and honed their musical skills are many, among them the acclaimed violinist Carmencita Lozada, a product of the Philippine Women's University and the

Vienna State Academy of Music. She now performs, teaches and resides in Germany. A winner of the Genoa Paganini international Violin Competition, she was a pupil of Filipino Professor Luis Valencia. Lozada comes home every now and then to coach students and conduct violin workshops in the Philippines and give concerts as well.

Maria Luisa Lopez Vito is another well-acclaimed concert pianist in Europe and now resides in Germany. She has likewise returned for concerts at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and performed during the concert season of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra.

The phenomenal prodigy, Cecile Buencamino Licad, who made her public debut at age four, was a pupil of Rosario Picazo. She was the first scholar of the Young Artists Foundation of the Philippines when she auditioned at age ten at the famous Curtis Institute of Music and was hailed by Rudolf Serkin, one of the world's greatest living pianists. He took her in as a scholar and personally and dedicatedly hewed her for a tremendous concert career. Serkin himself described Cecile as 'The most outstanding talent and most hardworking student during her five-year study at Curtis'. Licad caught the attention of conductor Eugene Ormandy and made her soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra. Her singular feat as winner at age 19 of the coveted Leventritt Gold Medal Award and \$10,000.00 brought her world fame. A provision of the Leventritt prize entitled her to perform with all major orchestras of the world for the succeeding three years.

Indeed Licad has been very much in demand dashing off from airport to airport everywhere in the occidental and oriental worlds as soloist of Seiji Osawa and the Boston Symphony, Zubin Mehta and the New York Philharmonic, Georg Solti and the Chicago Symphony, Claudio Abbado and the London Philharmonic, Carlo Maria Giuliani and the Los Angeles Symphony, and Edo De Waart, Dutch conductor of the San Francisco Symphony, among the many others. She constantly returns to the Philippines to fully-packed audiences at the Cultural Center of the Philippines regularly to give a series of concerts with the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra. This year she performs under the baton of Filipino conductor Oscar Yatco and the Italian Pierre Gamba for benefit concerts for the Victims of Mount Pinatubo and the Francisco Buencamino Memorial Foundation.

Another prodigy and gifted young pianist is Rowena Arrieta, winner of the 1983 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition held every three years in Moscow. She has since concertized in the Philippines, Europe and America and now resides in New York City.

Among the eminent Filipino women music pedagogues who have vastly contributed to the improvement of professional standard are Rosario L. Picazo, Milagros de Ocampo, Aida Sanz-Gonzales, Pilar Buencamino-Larracas, Stella Goldenberg-Brimo (now in Canada). In the roster of prominent Filipino pianists are Nena del Rosario-Villanueva, Cristine Lim-Coyiuto (now in Vancouver, British Columbia), Carminda de Leon-Regala, Ingrid Sala-Santamaria, Zenas Reyes-Lozada, Marcelita Lopez Kabayao, Carmencita Sipin-Aspiras, Virginia Laico-Villanueva, Corazon Pineda-Kabayao, pianist-harpist Lourdes de Leon-Gregorio, duo-pianists Della Besa and Mary Ann Armovit, and Amelita Dayrit-Guevara who is executive director of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, resident orchestra of the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

The Filipino creative musicians are about two handfuls of women composers in the Philippines today succeeding Dolores Paterno who composed a number of lyric melodies in the 19th century Spanish-Filipino tradition, especially the much-loved *Sampaguita*, and *La Flor de Manila*. The 20th century composers are headed by Lucrecia R. Kasilag, founding co-chairman of the League of Filipino Composers (founded circa 1955) consisting of the established composers of serious classical music of the Philippines, totalling thirty members, mostly men. (Five members have since died). Dr. Kasilag has pioneered in original orchestral, chamber, vocal and choral works, which synthesize the East and the West utilizing the indigenous musical instruments of Asia and the Philippines in many of her 300 compositions. She won two Republic Cultural Heritage Awards, first in 1960 for her *Toccata for Winds and Percussion with Muslim Indigenous Instruments*, and in 1966 for *Misang Pilipino* for mixed chorus utilizing the ethnic tribal chants of the Philippines. A much awarded composer, she is dean-emeritus of the Philippine Women's University College of Music and Fine Arts, and retired president and artistic director of the Cultural Center of the Philippines which she served for 17 years since its establishment in 1969 plus three more years as special consultant till 1989.

The other two women members of the League of Filipino Composers are R.V.M. Sister Maria Rosalina Abejo (who migrated to California) and Amada G. Santos Ocampo-de Francesco. Sr. Abejo organized the Sisters for Christian Community (SFCC) and engaged in composing and conducting activities till her death last June. She left a large body of symphonic, chamber and choral works. She won the Republic Cultural Heritage Award for her oratorio *The Conversion of King Humabon* in 1967. Amada G. Santos Ocampo-de Francesco who resides in Pennsylvania and has composed a wide selection of works for chamber, choral, keyboard and modern dance, and writes in the modern idiom.

Alice Doria Gamilla heads the list of younger composers of popular songs and writes her own lyrics in Pilipino and English. *A Million Thanks to You* (1960) and *Sa Lahat ng Oras* (1975) are two of her most popular works and several *sarsuelas*. Liwanag P. Cruz was the first Music Teacher's Diploma graduate of the University of the Philippines Conservatory of Music who has composed significant works for chamber, chorus and orchestra. She founded and directed the formidable Philippine Choral Society in the fifties.

Corazon S. Maceda wrote a number of beautiful songs in her lifetime and was an eminent music educator who pioneered in training music teachers at the Philippine Normal College and the Philippine Women's University, and authored books and pamphlets and song collections for music teaching. Likewise, her successor Vilma Santiago-Felipe, present dean of PWU College of Music, has composed a selection of songs and is active as performing arts critic for the *Manila Daily Bulletin* newspaper. Composer/ethnomusicologist Kristina Benitez has written research articles on the ethnic tribes of the Philippines and composed songs and choral works with indigenous instruments. One of the youngest composers is Mary Arlene Chongson whose substantial works include vocal, chamber, ensemble, choral and theater pieces, presently abroad for doctoral studies.

Several musical societies and music schools have been organized and directed by Filipino women music educators and cultural leaders. The Manila Symphony Society was organized in 1932 by Mrs. Rosario L. Valdes and former Ambassador

Trinidad F. Legarda who ran the performing activities and seasons of the oldest symphony orchestra in the Philippines, the 62-year old Manila symphony/conductor Alexander Lippay in 1926. The National Music Council of the Philippines established in 1953 under the auspices of the UNESCO and the League of Filipino Composers in 1955 were both co-founded by Dr. Lucrecia R. Kasilang.

The only government music organization, the Music Promotion Foundation of the Philippines was a brainchild of the famous vocal pedagogue and diva Jovita Fuentes and created by Law in 1955. It served for thirty five years as the prime mover of musical activities and presentations, commissions, music scholarships and grants.

The Philippine Society for Music Education had for its president Professor Corazon S. Maceda, who was later succeeded by Dr. Alejandra C. Atabug dean of the University of Santo Tomas Conservatory of Music, and is now under the leadership of Dr. Loreto C. Gloria, dean of arts and culture of the Philippine Normal College. The Piano Teachers Guild of the Philippines had for its founding president Prof. Milagros de Ocampo, succeeded by Sr. Mary Placid Abejo, OSB and now has Prof. Mauricia Borromeo as current president. The Philippine Theater of the Performing Arts was founded in the seventies by Mrs. Purita L. Ponce Enrile which kept busy with performance productions every year until the mid-eighties.

During the Japanese occupation, Dean Felicing Tirona established the Philippine College of Music, affiliated with the Philippine Women's University. After the second world war, it was later reorganized as the PWU College of Music and Fine Arts.

The internationally acclaimed professional choral group, the Philippine Madrigal Singers was founded by Prof. Andrea O. Veneracion in 1965 under the sponsorship of the University of the Philippine College of Music. At present, it is a resident company of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. The Madrigal Singers now on its 26th record year has practically won all the major prizes in world choral competitions abroad, especially in Europe up to last year. It has toured Asia, USA, Canada and Europe since its first participation at the First International Choral Competition held at the Lincoln Performing Arts Center in New York City in 1966 when it captured the top prize. From then on the group has garnered numberless laurels for the Philippines at its annual world tours.

The open-park *Puerta Real Evenings* performing arts season held within the restored ancient walls of Intramuros Walled City called *Puerta Real* now acts its historic function as the Royal Gateway for crossing time lines through the performing arts. *Puerta Real Evenings* is an annual season of cultural presentations which have helped develop Filipino artists and composers, drawing an ever-increasing number of music, theater and dance lovers to its weekly open-air presentations held every Saturday at six in the evening in the nostalgic and romantic garden setting.

This project is a public service of the Intramuros Administration by way of fulfilling its objective of emphasizing the relevance of the glorious past to the present. Ms. Edda V. Henson is administrator of Intramuros Administration, while Zenas Reyes-Lozada is artistic director of *Puerta Real Evenings*, presently on its 12th season.

NATIONAL ARTIST AWARDS (1972-1991)

Since the National Artist Awards was officially created by the late President Ferdinand E. Marcos under Presidential Decree No. 1001 on April 27, 1972 to be awarded to Filipinos who have made distinct contributions to arts and letters, exactly 27 have been conferred the award/decoration of National Artist to date. Three National Artists in Dance have been named: Francisca Reyes-Aquino (1973), Leonor Orosa-Goquingco (1976), and Lucrecia Reyes-Urtula (1988); two in Music: Jovita Fuentes (1976) and Lucrecia R. Kasilag (1989); one in Theater/Music on Honorata 'Atang' de la Rama (1987), or a total of six women among a grand total of 27 National Artists till June 1991. The awards are given to those who have excelled in their respective fields, each producing a body of works that have enhanced the nation's cultural heritage, in the government's policy of perserving and developing Filipino culture in pursuit of national identity. The awards have been conferred on June 12 on National Independence Day at the Cultural Center of the Philippines and at the Malacanang Palace. The policy of the Government being 'to grant special privileges to National Artists, in recognition of their contributions to the cultural heritage of the country as well as in encouragement of a spirit of excellence in the arts and letters', Presidential Decree No. 208 of June 7, 1973 granted certain special privileges and honours to National Artists, creating a special fund for the purpose.

Francisca Reynes-Aquino was the first National Artist in Dance recognized for her pioneering work in research on folk songs and dances of the people, spending four and a half decades work as a dance educator. Her recorded works are contained in two well-known books: *Phillipine National Folk Dances* and *Phillipine Folk Dances and Games*, both published by Silver Burdett & Company. She eventually visited the United States to lecture on, interpret and demonstrate Philippine folk dances in various parts of the country. A multi-awarded Filipino artist, Mrs. Aquino organized the Folk Song and Dance Society in 1937, and the Philippine Folk Dance Society in 1949, the foremost exponent of Philippine folk dance. Her two outstanding students Leonor Orosa-Goquingco of Filipinescas, and Lucrecia Reyes-Urtula of Rayanihan were later to receive the National Artist Awards in the dance themselves.

Leonor Orosa-Goquingco is recognized as 'the premiere Filipino Choreographer in stylized Philippine ballet theater for over four decades in her works' in the undisputable classics of the genre, among them: *Vinta!*, *Trend: Return to the Native*, *Noli Dance Suite: Filipinescas: Philippine Life, Legend and Lore in Dance*, among her most vital contributions to the art of Philippine dance'.

Dubbed as the 'Mother of Philippine Theater Dance', Leonor Orosa-Goquingco won national and international acclaim for her brilliant pioneering efforts in choreographic art. With her inquiring creative spirit, 'she transmitted national ethnic forms into the contemporary works of the interpretative dance'. She remains today as most original and versatile choreographer.

She travelled with her own Filipinescas Dance Troups in five international tours projecting to the world the beauty of the Filipino people through the medium of her original and artistic interpretations in choreographic Philippine theater-dance.

For over thirty years as dance director of the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company, Lucrecia R. Urtula, choreographer, dance educator and researcher of almost four decades in the discovery and study of Philippine folk and ethnic dances,

raised the art of folk dancing into the realm of theater with her imaginative adaptation of indigenous dance traditions to the theater stage, thus earning world applause for the Philippines in more than fifteen international world tours. The Bayanihan success story is that of Urtula's achievements as well, which started in 1958 when at the Brussels World Exposition, the unknown folk dance company from a small relatively unheard of country in the Pacific won thunderous applause after its daring performance at the Grand Auditorium of the Brussels World Fair.

Lucrecia R. Urtula was recognized as National Artist in Dance in 1988. Her numerous field trips while at the Philippine Women's University and the Bayanihan Folk Arts Center, to the mountain regions and the lowlands of northern and southern Philippines have bolstered the Bayanihan repertoire of mountain dances, Spanish-influenced dances, Muslim pageants and festivals, regional variations and dances of the countryside, all shared with audiences of world tours of the Americas, Europe, Asia, Australia and Africa, and have won a place for the Philippines in the international cultural map.

Urtula was cited 'for her widely acclaimed dances staged for theater: *Singkil*, a Bayanihan signature piece based on a Maranao epic; *Vinta*, a dance honoring Filipino sea-prowess; *Tagabili*, tale of tribal conflict; *Pagdiwata*, a four-day harvest festival condensed into a six-minute breath-taking spectacle; *Salidsid*, a mountain wedding dance; *Idaw* from the Igorot and Kalinga tribes; *Banga*, a dance fetching water; and *Aires de Verbena*, a nostalgic presentation of Spanish glory and elegance'. The National Artist Award citation (1988) further reads: 'Urtula has awakened a new pride among Filipinos in their cultural heritage; she has preserved and added a new dimension to the country's dance tradition, building for the country a rich reserve of international goodwill'.

Jovita Fuentes, prima donna, teacher and civic leader, has the distinction of being the first Filipino to project the Philippines to the world through her highly-acclaimed operatic performances abroad. In her prime, she was known as the 'Divine Filipino diva', accorded a worldwide accolade for her impeccable performances as *Madame Butterfly* and *Salome*, performing before the ruling houses of Romania, Greece, Cuba and Malta. Spain conferred on her the unprecedented title of *Embajadora de Filipinas a su Madre Patria*.

Upon her retirement from the concert stage in 1955, she devoted her life to the training of a new generation of singers, inspiring a host of successful operatic stars who owe their training to their *Maestra*.

She founded the Music Promotion Foundation of the Philippines under whose auspices she produced a great number of Filipino operatic and symphonic works. In recognition of her rare excellence and significant contribution to musical development of the Philippines, Jovita Fuentes was proclaimed National Artist for Music in 1976.

Honorate 'Atang' dela Rama was 'one of the most outspoken exponents of a Filipino cultural identity at the height of the American colonial regime, fighting the dominance of the *kundiman* traditional love song and the *sarsuela* musical plays which focus on contemporary vices such as usury, cockfighting and colonial mentality. Her citation extols her 'sincere devotion to original Filipino theater and music; her outstanding artistry as singer and *sarsuela* actress-playwright-producer, and her tireless efforts to bring her art to all regions and sectors of Filipino society and to the world'. She was proclaimed National Artist for Theater and Music in

1987.

Lucrecia R. Kasilag, composer, educator, researcher, writer, lecturer, performer and cultural administrator who has devoted all her professional life to the growth and development of Filipino music was proclaimed by President Corazon C. Aquino as National Artist for Music on June 10, 1989.

Her citation reads: 'As chairman of the League of Filipino Composers for 30 years, she has steered her fellow composers toward the attainment of a national identity in their works, organizing Philippine music festivals and participating in international conferences and festivals of Asian Music with an involvement that is deep and encompassing'. ... 'Reaching into her Asian roots, she pioneered in the blending of the Oriental and the Occidental, bringing together indigenous and Western instruments in what she terms as the 'happy marriage of East and West in Philippine music'. ... 'As music director, researcher and composer for the Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company, her distinctive and dynamic treatment of folk and ethnic music has served to complement and heighten the dance repertoire of this world acclaimed group'. She has scored varied music for films, ballet and theater presentations. 'Through her leadership, she has forged lasting and important cultural links with the rest of the world'. She has received numerous national and international awards from foreign governments of Spain, Japan, France, USSR, Bulgaria, Germany, China and Taiwan. The citation concludes: 'Through her devotion to her art, she has added important new dimensions to our musical traditions... and reawakened our people to the worth of the Filipino musician and his music'.

DANCE

Following the footsteps of her distinguished predecessors who have been acclaimed as National Artists for the Dance, Alice Reyes has played a major role in the remarkable development of ballet in the Philippines. As a dancer, choreographer, teacher and administrator, she has been instrumental in creating an audience for dance and guiding the Filipino mentality towards placing ballet as parallel to the other arts and making dance a popular artistic form for pupils in all levels of society. Dance is now a respected career and profession. She has established a Filipino presence in the world of dance in classical ballet and modern dance with the highly acclaimed performances of Ballet Philippines in the country and abroad through its many tours.

As founder-artistic director of Ballet Philippines, Alice Reyes has guided the Company to evolve into one of the few professional companies in the world, proficient in classical and modern dance. She has choreographed more than 40 ballets to date. Among her outstanding works are: *Amada, Company, Dugso, Bungkos Suite, Itim Asu, Rajah Sulayman, Rama Hari, At a Maranao Gathering, Bayanihan Remembered, Romeo & Juliet, Cinderella, Tommy, A Midsummer Night's Dream, and Tales of the Manuvu*. Ballet Philippines is a resident company of the Cultural Center of the Philippines, it recently celebrated its 20th anniversary year in 1990. In recognition of her achievements, Alice Reyes received the 1989 *Gawad CCP para sa Sining Award* in Dance.

Behind the scenes, ballerina Edna Vida has been associate director of Ballet Philippines in 1984 and succeeded Alice Reyes as artistic director in 1988-89. For the following year 1990-91, Denisa Reyes was appointed the current artistic director with Cecile Sicangco as associate artistic director. Agnes D. Locsin heads the younger crop of dancers under the banner of Ballet Philippines II.

Among Ballet Philippines' outstanding dancers are Gina Katigbak, Perry Sevidal, Melissa Cuachon who very recently won fourth prize in 1991 Asia-Pacific Ballet Competition held in Tokyo, Sofia Zobel, Nicole Gaston and Hazel Sabas.

The 34-year old Bayanihan Philippine Dance Company is the performing arm of the Bayanihan Folk Arts Center based at the Philippine Women's University. It is headed by its founding president, Dr. Helena Z. Benitez, chairman and president of the Philippine Women's University, one of the most distinguished women leaders of the country, herself a former ambassador and senator of the Philippines, except for its artistic director, Jose Martin Lardizabal, the officers of the Bayanihan Folk Arts Center are all women from its president down to the office staff: Executive director Leticia P. de Guzman, choreographer/dance director Lucrecia R. Urtula; music director Lucrecia R. Kasilag; costume director Isabel A. Santos; public relations officer Lourdes E. Guillermo and company physician Anita Pascual.

Bayanihan's highly-touted world debut in Brussels in 1958 was followed by the troupe's Broadway appearance at the New York Winter Garden in 1959 and six world tours covering six continents and 60 countries throughout the years.

In 1965 Bayanihan won the Ramon Magsaysay Award for international understanding. In 1988, a \$10,000 Program for Asian Projects (PAP) under the Rockefeller Foundation administered by the Ramon Magsaysay Award Foundation has led to an 18-month research undertaking entitled 'Peace and Unity through Folk Dance and Music', which identified thematic and structural similarities in the dance and music of the Asean countries. The project culminated in the presentation of a pilot repertoire billed as *A Sound of Tambours - an Asean Tapestry* at the Cultural Center of the Philippines last year with performing guest artists from Brunei, Malaysia, Indonesia and Singapore.

A second grant was awarded in 1990, 'Continuing the Search for Peace and Unity - New Horizons', which focuss on the development of other avenues of expression which can be combined with dance. As a result, *Aubade Under the Bambog Trees* was successfully presented at the CCP's Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo on August 31 and September 1, 1991 with a new angle - a collaboration between dance, music and the spoken word, showcasing four new suites. It was a man, Bayanihan's artistic director Lardizabal who was responsible for this audacious new format and concept which combined the talents of three National Artists: Dr. Lucrecia R. Urtula for the dance; Dr. Lucrecia R. Kasilag for the music; and guest-pianist architect Leandro V. Locsin, National Artist for architecture, who was one of the original consultants of Bayanihan in its early days, as well as literary critic Dr. Bienvenido Lumbera of the University of the Philippines who did the libretto. The *Aubade* premiere was dedicated to the memory of President Ramon Magsaysay whose birthday anniversary falls on August 31. The Bayanihan marked its 34 dancing years with a special show celebration a new dawn in its horizons.

Other formidable dance troupes are Paz Cielo Belmonte's Barangay Dance Troupe of Philippine Normal College and Corazon G. Inigo's Filipiniana Dance

Group of the University of the Philippines. Both troupes have achieved successes in national and international tours of USA and Europe. The short-lived Far Eastern University Dance Troupe under the direction of ballet and dance choreographer Rosalia Merino-Santos toured Europe for a period in the sixties. Muslim dance expert Ligaya Fernando-Amilbangsa is the respected author of an interesting book on Muslim dances entitled *Pangalay*.

A number of prominent ballet/dance schools in Manila and the provinces headed by women are: the Julie Borromeo Dance Arts Studio, Ben-Lor Dance Academy of Leonor Orosa Goquingco, Vella Damian Dance Concert Co., Joji Felix Velarde Dance School at the Philippine Women's University, Shirley Halili Dance Institute, Tita Radaic Dance Theater Philippines, Inday Gaston Manosa Hari-rama Dance Company. The last two named choreographers are board directors of the Philippine Ballet Theatre (PBT).

The PBT is an outgrowth of the short-lived Ballet Federation of the Philippines established in the 80's when the Cultural Center of the Philippines opened its doors to other ballet groups which figured in the Festival Four Season. The PBT was officially instituted in January 1987 under the CCP presidency of Mrs. Ma. Teresa E. Roxes who welcomed the company as one of the new resident dance companies of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. PBT's incumbent president is Mrs. Gloria Aragon with Mrs. Armita B. Rufino as executive director. It runs a regular repertory season at the Center.

The outstanding prima ballerinas in the country today are Maniya Barredo, principal soloist of Joffrey Ballet and the Atlanta Ballet in Georgie, USA. She is well-remembered for her brilliant performances in stellar roles in *Giselle*, *La Fille Mal Garde*, and *Sleeping Beauty*. Formerly of Washington Ballet, and principal soloist of Ballet Philippines is Toni Lopez Gonzalez. Liza Macuja, a product of Leningrad-Kirov Ballet in Leningrad, is artist-in-residence with Dance Theater Philippines. Maiqui and Mai Manosa are principal soloists of the Atlanta Ballet in Georgia, while Tina Santos-Wahi formerly of San Francisco Dance Company is busy teaching in her own studio in the West Coast of USA.

THEATRE/DRAMA

In the rituals of the early Filipinos in pre-historic time, the woman *Babaylan* was the prominent priestess who held sway and presided over ceremonial rituals, in connection with sickness and healing, harvest time, and other occasions. She is often the center of dance treatments by local choreographers.

During the Spanish and early American periods, the *moro-moro* or *comedia* of the *Sarzuella* musical plays adapted from the Spanish drama form were the current stage fare. Two outstanding women artists auspiciously graced center stage: Maria Carpena and Atang dela Rama.

In the American regime, Filipino playwrights began to write in English. It took an American artist and professor at the University of the Philippines, Jean Garnett Edades who taught her students the language and journalistic trend in playwrighting in English. Daisy Hontiveros Avellana of Barangay Theater Philippines and Naty Crame-Rogers of the Arena Theater of the Philippines Normal College were the featured drama artists of the period.

Contemporary Philippine theater of the seventies and eighties saw the productions of original plays by Estrella D. Alfon, Virginia R. Moreno, Angela Barrios, Felicidad R. Mendoza's sarzuelas; Tagalog plays of Marilou Jacob and Felicia Estagle.

The Philippine Educational Theater Association (PETA) and its performing arm, the Kalinangan Ensemble were founded by Cecile Guidote in the mid-sixties, pioneering on the translation into the vernacular of plays of local and foreign writers, in PETA'S avowed aims of welding all theater forces toward a national theater.

Repertory Philippines was founded by stage actress Zeneida Amador in 1967 and is the only successful repertory theater group that maintains its regular season of plays to date. It produces five world class plays in English per season, and is currently in its 42nd season in its 24 years of existence. Repertory Philippines is housed at Insular Life Theater in Makati. Its roster of officers includes: Zeneida Amador as president and artistic director; Baby Barredo, vice president and associate artistic director; Joy Virata, vice president for production design; Paz S. Yuchengco, treasurer; and Terry Wilson, administrative consultant.

Other distinguished names in drama are Rustica E. Carpio and Anacleto Encarnacion of the *Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila*; Amelia Lapena-Bonifacio of Teatro Mulat; Ella Luansing of Teatro Pilipino; Grace Amilbangsa, Divina Cavestany of *Bulwagang Gantimpala*; Celeste Legaspi, soprano and head of OPM (Original Pilipino Music); Betty Mae Piccio of UP Repertory; Armida Siguion-Reyna of *Aawitan Kita*; Nanette Inventor and Lorli Villanueva of PETA; Joy Valencia-Glorioso of Manila Metropolitan Theater; Mad Nicolas of CCP's *Tanghalang Pilipino*; Cynthia Patag of Applause International; Lina Winebrenner of *Teatro Pilipino*; Mary Walter of Mowelfund Inc.; Angie Ferro of *Teatro Walang Pangalan*; and Adul de Leon.

On the current international theater arts stage, it would be apropos to mention that the young, popular Filipino singer/actress, Lea Salonga, won the prestigious *Laurence Olivier Award* in England and the *Tony Award* and the *Outer Critics and Drama Desk Award* in the United States this year.

VISUAL ARTS

Filipino women artists have taken the lead in the visual arts as painters, sculptors, printers, architects and patrons. The most benevolent leader and patroness is Purita Kalaw-Ledesma who in 1948 founded the Art Association of the Philippines, which holds annual competitions in painting and sculpture, organizes Philippines participation in international art exhibitions, and raises professionalism among its members.

Lydia Villanueva-Arguilla initiated the Philippine Art Gallery in the fifties which auspiciously spearheaded the growth and development of Philippine modern art.

Among the outstanding women artists of the Philippines are; prominent impressionist Anita Magsaysay-Ho, Paris-based modern painter Nena Saguil, printmaker and painter Ofelia Gelveson-Tequi also based in Paris, painter and art educator Araceli Lincaco-Dans, active in educational technique and well-known for her beautiful *calado* series; acclaimed mosaic painter Elizabeth Chan; mixed media

painter, art educator and bold experimental artist Pacita Abad based in USA, 1984 TOYM awardee for the most outstanding artist in the Philippines; Mobilart awardee Paz Singon Abad-Santos, painter, historian and interior designer and Chinese art painter; painter and sculptor Virginia Ty-Navarro; painter, sculptor and experimental artist Agnes Arellano-Adams; sculptor and painter Genara Banzon, printmaker Jo Escudero; abstract painter, art educator, sculptor and experimental artist Rosario L. Bitanga-Peralta; abstract painter and art educator Phyllis Zaballero; sculptor and journalist Julie Lluch-Dalena; painter, printmaker and AAP gold medalist Imelda Cajipe-Endaya; graphic artist and art educator Brenda Fajardo; sculptor; printmaker and installation artist Imelda Pilapil; painter, sculptor, installation and performance artist Jean Marie Syjuco; painter and art curator Eva Toledo; painter and performance artist Judy Freya Sibayan; painter and art educator Ginny Dandan; painter and printmaker Ivi Avellana-Cosio; painter; art educator and art manager Marie Jeanne E. Javelosa; Ada Dacanay-de Leon, Ana Verzosa and Ana Fer among many more.

Women architects in the Philippines are not as numerous as the painters, sculptors and printmakers. A listing of a few of them includes; Celia Caudal-Dizon, Imelda Cancio, Mary Ann Espina, Angelina Chua Chiacco, Cora Chioco, Nanette Segovia, Ma, Lizeta Luz, Melba Java, Cristina Torralba, Norma Alarcon, Sonia Galvez, Susan Castillo, Rebecca Tobia, and Heidi Luis among others.

LITERATURE

Filipino female writers of the pre-war generation were prolific short story writers in English like Paz Marquez-Benitez, Paz Latorena, Estrella D. Alfon, and poetess/journalist Trinidad Tarrosa-Subido.

Outstanding prose writers and essayists of the post-war period are many and at par with their male counterparts. Novelist Kerima Polotan; multi-awarded essayist and dynamic thinker, in-depth columnist and journalist Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil; novelist Edith K. Tiempo, short story writer and essayist Gilda Cordero Fernando; scholar, journalist and essayist Maria Kalaw Katigbak; poetess, filmmaker and playwright Virginia R. Moreno; and poetess Ofelia Alcantara-Dimalanta all lead their contemporaries with impressive anthologies.

Among the younger crop of short story writers, poets and essayists are; Ninotchka Rosca, Tita Lacambra Ayala, Marra Lanot-Lacaba, Elizabeth Lolarga, Lucila Hosillos, Emerciana Y. Avellana, Monina Allarey-Mercado, Doreen Gamboa-Fernandez, Dolores Feria, Mary Hollensteiner, Soledad S. Reyes, Leticia Ramos-Shahani, Ruth Elynia Mabanglo, Amelia Lapena-Bonifacio, Alice Coseteng, as well as journalists Lita Lolarga, Leticia Magsanoc, Sylvia Mayuga, Julie Yap-Daza, Ninez Chacho-Olivares, Ligaya D. Perez, Mary Tagle, Nati Nuguid, Marita Manuel, Domini Suarez, Luning Bonifacio-Ira, Rosalina Icban-Castro, multi-prize winner Anacleto Encarnacion, Carolina S. Malay, Sylvia Mendez Ventura, Paulina P. Sicam, and others.

Many Carlos Palanca Memorial awardees, fictionists, play-wrights, feature writers, poets and opinion writers and essayists include: Melinda Carallo-Bobis, Lualhati Torres-Bautista, Cecilia Maguroz-Brainard, Elsa Martinez-Coscolluela, Nini Sta. Romana (children's literature), Diana Rigor Agbayani, Mila D. Aguilar, Cristina

Pantoja-Hidalgo, Ines Taccad-Cammayo, Rowena Penaflor Festin, Esther Vallado-Daroy, Ma. Diana Balahadia-Decena, Visitacion P. dela Torre, Marjorie M. Evasco, Patricia Medina Melendrez-Cruz, Azucena Grajo-Uranza, Marina Feleo Gonzales, Dory S. Robles, Ma. Luisa F. Torres, Rose Concepcion-Ladrido, Barbara Mae Dacanay; visual art critics Glenna Aquino, Marian Pastor-Roces, Alice Guillermo, Phyllis Zaballero, Judy Freya Sibayan; performing arts critics Leonor Orosa-Goquingco, Rosalina L. Orosa, Vilma Santiago-Felipe among others.

At this point, it would not be amiss to state here that the greatest single influence in Philippine cultural development in the past two decades has been the former First Lady, Imelda Romualdez Marcos who established and built the Cultural Center of the Philippines in 1969 as the home of the arts and Filipino artists. The CCP has invariably served as the catalyzing agent in the democratization of culture along with established groups like the Unesco National Commission, the Music Council of the Philippines, the Manila Symphony Society, the Zarzuela Foundation of the Philippines, the Bayanihan Folk Arts Center and several other private organizations mostly headed by women.

Provincial and school museums came into being throughout the country. It is notable that the National Museum was then headed by a woman, Gemma Cruz-Araneta, whose mother was the eminent journalist-essayist Carmen Guerrero-Nakpil, chairman of the National Historical Commission. Everywhere throughout the land, it was evident that cultural groups headed by women undertook the task of developing the arts and culture along with nation building, nurturing spiritual growth in the totality of human development.

CONCLUSION

In summary then, the Filipino women artists have indeed played a fundamental role not only as preservers and perpetuators of human values through the arts beyond the privacy of the home into the social community at length. They have become the dominant force in leadership roles in cultural activities toward national development, having come to the forefront in parallel line with their male counterparts in the art world.

Thus, the women leaders in their respective fields of specialization have conspicuously led the pace in fostering the improvement of the quality of human life above the conspiring poverty and unrest, the physical disasters and man-made conflicts of turmoil and violence, and the ecological imbalance prevailing all around us. Be they visual, creative or performing artists, they have shared their skills, talents and prowess in helping build the pillars of society and the nation at large.

In our constantly changing world which has shrunk with the advancement of technology in this present-day age of the machine, there is the need to reach out to each other and to know and fill our lives with beauty and spirituality. While each nation has its own identity arising from its own roots and philosophy, customs and traditions, there is an urgency to communicate with other countries in the Asian region, principally through friendly cultural interactions and co-operation. We can learn to appreciate one another's culture through cultural exchanges of artists and artistic groups, and contribute to brotherly understanding, peace and harmony in the region.

It is good to recall Rudyard Kipling's famous lines when he said: 'East is East; West is West, and never the twain shall meet!' ... Time and circumstance have proven Kipling wrong, for the reverse has become more true than not! In the arts as in other fields of human endeavour, international conferences and summit meetings have become important crucibles of thought for peoples of diverse religions, geographic and political boundaries.

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