



IPAG: Towards a Golden Anniversary?

by SP Fernandez, DFA



Time Magazine's Asian Hero Awardee Eugenia Duran Apostol (2nd from left), Chancellor Marcelo Salazar, Prof. Fermina Salazar, AVC Dr. Arnulfo Supe, and IPAG Founder Steven P.C. Fernandez view the IPAG exhibit.

The IPAG spirit through 30 and, hopefully, through more years: so sums the buoyant atmosphere of three events in two days last July 12 and 13 that commemorated the Pearl Anniversary of the Integrated Performing Arts Guild at the MSU-Iligan Institute of Technology.

Eugenia Duran Apostol, Inquirer publisher, Ramon Magsaysay Awardee, and Time Magazine's Asian Hero, cut the ceremonial "abaca" last July 12 to open "Diwang-IPAG, IPAG-diwang," an interactive multi-media exhibit that signified milestones in IPAG's history while actors improvised performance. Apostol earlier keyed the 39th MSU-IIT Charter Day celebrations directed by Associate Hobart Savior and headlined by our artists.

Main event - the commemorative program at the Mini-Theatre - was graced by prominent personalities led by Mindanao State University President Ricardo de Leon, MSU-IIT Chancellor Marcelo Salazar, Vice Mayor Henry Dy (representing Mayor Lawrence Cruz), deans, the academe, heads of the city government, and guests who have patronized homegrown theatre through our seasons.

The program encapsulated the IPAG's signature collage of images and sounds as segments flowed from one part to the next. After opening prayers invoked by a Tala-andig bamboo flute segued to "Lupang Hinirang," a short documentary condensed IPAG's and its artists' contributions to Philippine art. (Ligaya Fernando-Amilbansa and I founded the IPAG in 1978 from a ragtag group of 12 who held weekly workshops hopeful of interesting more people to theatre.)

Images of productions from 1978 flashed. This film acknowledged those who built the IPAG: Amilbansa, poet Christine Godinez-Ortega, Chita Roque,

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National tours hit the road

In-base shows open Sept. 5

The highly-acclaimed *Tales From Mindanao* hits the road starting in August.

Simultaneously in its Iligan home-base, IPAG mounts a twin bill of poignant and funny plays, *Welcome to Intelstar* by Chris Martinez & *Dalawa* by Luna Sicat-Cleto which open its 12-run performance on Sept. 5 until 22 (7:30 p.m.), at the CASS Rooftop Theatre.

Tales, having been acclaimed in over a hundred cities worldwide including a headline performance at the Kennedy Center, received standing ovations for all its 15 full-feature performances in its last U.S. tour. This string of dance vignettes pooled from Mindanao lore visits Davao (August 3-8), Manila (August 13-30) and returns to Davao in the first week of September.

Uwahig, the postmodern play based on Maguindanao-Maranao-Bukidnon epics, represents the Philippines in the prestigious Taipei Arts Festival in October 27 and 28.



EVENTS SCHEDULE

National - International Tours

Tales From Mindanao
Uwahig

Davao City starting in **August 3** and travels to Manila, Luzon, and the Visayas until the first week of October (check schedules on page 2). *Uwahig*, **Oct. 27-28**, at the Guting Theatre.

Music CD launch

IPAG's first music CD features the Guild's compositions and adaptations of its notable dance-musicals.

Concert launch on **Sept. 18, 7:30 p.m.**, at the **CASS Rooftop Theatre**

Monthly Performance Art

Improvisation and out-of-the-box productions. **CASS rotunda and lobby, and in various sites around the MSU-IIT campus**

In2rscores

Welcome to Intelstar by Chris Martinez & *Dalawa* by Luna Sicat-Cleto

Two of the more remarkable playwrights in Philippine Theatre today write poignant and funny plays.

Sept. 5 to 22, 7:30 p.m., at the **CASS Rooftop Theatre**.



COMING WORLD TOURS

Taipei Arts Festival
Guting Theatre, Oct. 27-28

Tales From Mindanao shows in August
3-8, Davao City schools
13-16, La Salle Greenhills, Mand.
18, Crossroads, QC.
20, UST, Espana, Mla.
23, St. Paul's College, Mla.
24, UNO HS, Binondo, Mla.
28, Immaculate Conception Academy, Mand.
29, St. Paul University, QC.
30, Marcelo H. del Pilar Elementary School

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choreographer Juliet Malit, Ricardo Jorge S. Caluen, Sonny Perocho, Faisar Mambuay, Joy Orbe, Archibald Pacana, Olga Natividad, Christian Aguado, Nolly Ceballos, the CCP Outreach, the NCCA, and many others too long a list to mention.

In the IPAG manner, the transcreation of indigenous expressions shaped the segment where the Tausug *pangalay*, with the plaintive vocal background of "Ha Susulan Tawi-Tawi" merged with a contemporary "Sarimanok" piece, a production that was well-acclaimed in its national tours. OPM song numbers I arranged punctuated portions that were further enhanced by the choreographies of our dance pool: first by a *kapmalong* sequence that strew our female dancers all over the theatre space, a contemporary piece that transformed the *malong* into images of a cradle nurtured by mothers, and a pulsating finale to the music of Ryan Cayabyab.

Greetings in digital files were sent via email by Ricky from Toronto, Consul Grace Valera and the Migrant Heritage Commission from Washington D.C., and Rufino Ignacio from Tacoma, Washington whose endowment now supports the eponymous Niaga-Siruffy Awards. Contributions too from alumni were generous.

The highlight presented the awards to Nolly Ceballos (whose innovative choreographies fusing the indigenous with the

Alumni, supporters greet IPAG

"Hello!" and "Congratulations!" from all over flowed in like a river feeding a field that continues to harvest. IPAG Alumni and supporters from here and abroad shared their bounties: choreographer Nolly Ceballos from New York, actress Olga Natividad from Chicago, researcher-director Ricky Caluen from Toronto, actress Joy Orbe-Brown from LA, artist Archie Pacana from Dubai, Rufino Igancio (for the awards) from Olympia, Washington, and our homegrown supporters like Dr. and Mrs. Jun Oliverio, Dr. Girlie Maghanoy-Ledesma, Prof. Venus Tan, Malou Cala, and the hundreds more who sent well wishes.

These contributions assured the bounty of the celebration. Support was extended by our Major Sponsors: Pop Rock, Purple Plate, Debbie's Delight, Chowking, Nol's Beverages, Tacogue Digital Video Services, Zammi Printstation, and Jollibee. Exhibit photos were processed by Kodak PhotoArts.

The Pearl Season is presented by the MSU-IIT, Super Ferry, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts, and Pioneer Insurance and Surety Corporation, with Major Sponsors Southern Cable Vision, Inc., Parasat, Wild FM, the Oro Chronicle, and our donors Ivory Press and Dunkin Donuts.

Messages in video and email were delivered by Ignacio, Consul Grace Valera, the Migrant Heritage Commission in Washington DC, MSU-IIT Chancellor Marcelo Salazar, Caluen, Ceballos, and Natividad.



A toast towards the Golden Anniversary, (from left) Fernandez, MSU President Ricardo de Leon, Chancellor Salazar, and Founding Dean of the MSU College of Medicine Dr. Angelo Manalo.

contemporary have helped shaped the IPAG form) and to actress Eleanor Judith-Lila (for her contributions as office manager, property keeper, and performer that have set the IPAG standard for office efficiency). Both awardees have been with the Guild for over 2 decades.

Filmed "Congratulations" from Ignacio was flashed on the large screen. With Ignacio's support, the recognition of significant homegrown artists will soon be institutionalized by these awards. (Ignacio, the father of Sining Kambayoka, was instrumental in the 1970's in igniting a resurgence of activity in post-rebellion-plagued MSU.)

Our posters carried succinct tags about our work: "... they say life begins at 40, but at 30 we've grown beyond what our years expect." So what now, IPAG?

The next step is to establish an academy, a groundwork we have been zealously laying and which we hope will rise sturdy in the next two years. We've talked with people and institutions, and surely our home, the MSU-IIT, will be there to again host this dream. In many ways, it will be an academy peculiar to the needs of our South where art nurtures, like the earth that care-gives us.

If 40 is the benchmark of life's beginnings, then at 30 IPAG is a baby. Do we look forward to our 50th year? Really, we do with much anticipation. *Bravo!*

The PEARL Season is presented by



Major Sponsors



Auditions open

Earn while you enjoy. Talents may wish to audition for roles in forthcoming productions. IPAG needs performers (all genres). Non-performers who can do related cultural-creative work are also encouraged to enlist. Successful applicants receive professional training-apprenticeship in dance, theatre, playwriting, stagecraft, and music and the opportunities to perform, earn, and be part of our national and international tours. tel. (+63) 4922354

