



Bow and Grand Exit: 2008-09 Season

Sixty thousand audiences, including two large-crowd advocacies, witnessed the 60-plus performances nationwide of the MSU-IIT Integrated Performing Arts Guild. IPAG continued to journey the islands with this season's 4 full-feature productions and new showcases.

Even as favorites **Tales From Mindanao** and **Tatlo Sa Isa** continued to excite large audiences, good notices have come in for its landmark musical **Ranaw: Isang Alamat** in a 25-show run including features for the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Ruby year.

Innovative theatre perked the audiences up as IPAG translated poetry in its season cap, **Tula Tugma sa Sayaw at Dula**, an 11-show run in Iligan City this March. **Tula** is next season's road tour offering, among others.

The Earth Hour simulcast countdown in Cagayan de Oro City last March 28 featured the IPAG. The Guild also performed in a mammoth Truthfest rally at the Rajah Soliman Theater in Manila last August 22, 2008.

Poetry re-formed, Poetry performed

The verses were performed. Shapes were palpable, and the actions real. Sitting through an hour-and-a-half of poetry, young audiences filled the theatre of the 11-run show **Tula Tugma sa Sayaw at Dula** wide-eyed at the spectacle impressing the theatre makers that the poems were indeed appreciated.

Tula re-formed and performed the poems of poets who were nurtured in the South: Anthony Tan, Christine Godinez-Ortega, Ralph Semino Galan, Don Pagusara, German Gervacio, and Marge Pernia-Evasco. The audience

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DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The last 3 months have been bumpy rides over dusty highways, on undulating sea crests and air packets. After weeks living in dorms, hotels, and bus stations, IPAG ends its 31st Season welcoming a respite from our suitcase-lives before the next gruelling season that starts after the summer.

When the Oxen Year started, immediately IPAG sailed to South Luzon to meet the Batanguenos. With enthusiasm, Batangas greeted our shows as did Davao, Iligan, Cagayan de Oro, and Manila enthralled by **Tales From Mindanao**, **Tatlo sa Isa**, and **Ranaw: Isang Alamat**.

In the first half of the 31st Season, IPAG did Manila, Cagayan de Oro, Alabang, and premiered a transcreated work of Marge Evasco's poem "Origami".

Only the CCP-run of **Ranaw** in mid-February to celebrate the Center's 40 years was audience-challenged. (Perhaps, the hefty ticket prices did us in without saying that marketing flubbed.)

So too did we share our craft. Our pedagogical experiments and three decades of stagecraft practice have been finally documented in the test edition of **Making Theatre: The Craft of the Stage** (2007). The book (now out of print) will be published in its first edition minus the typographical and grammatical errors (hopefully), and with fonts that are more readable and a design that will be more acceptable.

Audiences have listened to our principles of transcreation (where one medium transforms into another) and in our "anti-realism" explorations in Pagadian, Cagayan de Oro, Roxas, and Manila in the recent International Writers Fest.

In March, **Tula Tugma sa Sayaw at Dula** capped the IPAG fill of a multi-media repast with appreciative crowds in the intimate MSU-IIT Mini-Theatre.

The Batangas State U, the Davao CAP auditorium, Philippine Women's College and the University of Mindanao (also both in Davao City), Xavier University in Cagayan de Oro, in 8 marathon **Tales** shows at the Centro Escolar University in Manila, La Salle Alabang, Xavier School, in malls, and **Tula** in Iligan all joined our 31st season party!

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CONGRATULATIONS to our graduates! Lyn Corazon B. Ilustico (BEE English, Institute and College Performing Arts Awardee), Crisanto P. Encarnado (BSIED, Industrial Education)



Expertise shared; Cultural Institute groundwork begins

IPAG shared its pedagogies in the study and instruction of the transcreation of indigenous creative materials, the transformation of poetry, choreography, and playwriting in various forums nationwide this season. The efforts jumpstart the establishment of the future Institute of Cultural Resource Development and Management (I-CRMD) that shall be based in the MSU-IIT initiated by the IPAG.

The Institute plans to provide the culture and art needs of the southern Philippines in instruction, production, and management, among others. Phase 1 of the program commences in April when a comprehensive needs survey shall be undertaken, with the purview of planning short term, and eventually degree, courses in the various art fields.

Initiating is Steven P.C. Fernandez, DFA, whose concept is funded by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA). The MSU-IIT is the Institute's main partner.

Poetry...

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later dialogued with the poets. Joining this already-eminent roster of poet-conversants were Victor Sugbu and young writer Zola Gonzalez.

Collaborating with the poets were choreographer-performers Leilani Fernandez, Amado Guinto, Melvin Pascubillo, and Kenn Erwin Velasquez, and designer Vicmar Paloma. Providing performance and production support to the IPAG were the Stagecraft classes. Steven P.C. Fernandez composed the music, scripted the scenarios, and evolved the production from his concept.

Tula performed March 2-7 (3 shows a day) at the MSU-IIT Mini Theater. Its production was supported by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts. IPAG prepares its touring schedules to schools in the coming season.

31st Season REVIEWS ...

"... kagiliw-giliw ang mga eksena ..." BIENVENIDO LUMBERA, Ph.D, National Artist for Literature

"The show dazzled the audience ..." CHRISTINE GODINEZ-ORTEGA, Poet and Critic, The Philippine Daily Inquirer

"... gintong klasika na kontemporaryong sagot ng Lanao kay Homer." BAYANI SANTOS, JR., Journalist, MLQU Professor and *Tanglaw* spokesperson

"... Fantastic!!! ... certainly another feather to the IPAG cap and another innovative contribution to Mindanawon dramaturgy! ..." BRO. KARL GASPAS, Pioneer Mindanao Dramaturg, Cultural Worker, and Artist



Truthfest. IPAG performing to a mammoth crowd at the Rajah Soliman Theater at the Baywalk in Manila.

photo: IPAG



DIRECTOR'S NOTES

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We gathered an approximate sixty thousand audiences in about fifty full-feature shows while involving participants to our theatre frenzy. While not filling up the last gala show, *Ranaw* at CCP plucked good notices. We also had the street children of the Asilo Institute in Ermita gawking in awe at what was perhaps their first theatre experience, a treat we thought was inspiring. Also, the raves were as elating as when we first mounted "Ranaw" 21 years ago.

Tula squeezed our creative juices concocting performance from poetry. The transcreations recognized our sources and saluted the audiences who for many times kept watch even during our hard times. The poets deserve a wider adulation than what they are recognized for now, and the audiences equally deserve the exulting experience of top-rate poetry performed. We prepared the poets' pulpits above the throngs through *Tula* that reincarnated their written incantations to moving shapes and sounds.

After the show, master poets dialogued with the audiences and revealed their insights and processes allowing us to peek through their geniuses. The experience showed to us how well poetry was loved, and how magical performed words enthralled.

Like the breaks between acts, the next few weeks will be transitions for the IPAG. This is the proverbial calm before the next theatre frenzy. And we plan even in these times of mass layoffs and tight budgets. There will be road shows, for sure, and the workshops and seminars we have to facilitate (it is summer after all when our audiences take a break!)

Most of all, we will have time full when we study the establishment of a future Institute that will train performers and art managers and truly mark the MSU-IIT as a culture mecca of sorts.

And, after the respite, when the 32nd Season opens, we break loose again the innovative and engaging creations ensuring that the spell of the theatre lingers, and that our art rubs on our audiences' lives in so many ways.

SP. Fernandez, DFA, Artistic Director