



JOE BATAAN A legend in Latin soul

by JOSEPH PIMENTEL
AJPress

HE'S often referred to as the "King of Latin Soul," a musical legend raised in Spanish Harlem New York, who grew up around Puerto Rican gangs and actually learned to play music while serving time in prison.

Bataan Nitollano, better known as Joe Bataan, is a musical pioneer. In his illustrious career, he's credited for being one of the innovators of SalSoul (Salsa

and Latin Soul), Boogaloo, Latin Funk, Latin R&B, and Latin Jazz during the 1960's and 70's and produced one of the very first rap and R&B albums in 1980.

His daughter, Asia Nitollano, won the television series *Pussycat Dolls Present: The Search for the Next Doll*.

And University of Hawaii Professor Dr. Theodore S. Gonzalves has dedicated a class on the impact of Joe Bataan's music, in "Joe Bataan's Mestizo Soul" to his students.

But few in the greater Filipino community know of this musical trailblazer.

So when Joe Bataan and his band performed in front of a

large Filipino gathering at the Filipino Performing Arts and Culture (FPAC) event in San Pedro last weekend, it was a homecoming for this legendary performer.

"It's great. I get my chance to see all the *Pinoys* and *Pinays* that I don't get a chance to see back

home in New York," said Bataan before his performance. "[FPAC organizer] Winston Emano is responsible for bringing me out here, helping me get a fan base of Asians and Filipinos that I never had. The Latinos, the Blacks, and the Anglos have followed me all over the world. Now, Asians and Filipinos can see one of their own even though I'm mestizo."

"Joe is a legend in Latin Soul music," added Emano, who brought Bataan to perform in his first ever FPAC in 2001. "He's hugely popular worldwide in fact after performing here he's going to Paris and he's doing three sold out shows in France. He's a gentleman that's partly Filipino but only a few people knew."

Born to a Filipino dad and African-American mother, Joe Bataan was a product of an interracial marriage during a time of extreme segregation.

Growing up in New York was tough, he said.

He mixed in with the wrong crowd, allegedly stole a car and spent time at a New York correctional facility. However, his time there was a blessing in disguise.

A few months after being released, he formed Joe Bataan and the Latin Swingers and thus began his recording career.

Influenced by Latin boogaloo and doo-wop, he recorded his first album "Gypsy Woman" with Fania Records in 1967. He recorded eight more albums for the record group before founding his own record label, Ghetto Records.

By this time, Bataan was making a name for himself. His music was widely popular in the New York Latin scene. His music was

different mostly because he sang English lyrics to Latin tunes.

In the late 1970's, Bataan made a big splash when he recorded "Rap-O Clap-O." Not very popular in the US, it was much more appreciated in Europe where the song went top 10 and accredited as the first rap song to make it big in the country.

By the 1980's, Bataan took time off to raise his family. He worked as a counselor and spoke to kids about his experience in the music industry.

In 1995, he resurrected his music career.

But it wasn't until 2001, when he performed in front of a large Filipino crowd for the first time, said Emano.

"I remember I saw him perform in New York in the late 1990's and I was one of less than a handful of Filipinos in the crowd," recalls Emano. "When I found out that Joe was Filipino I had to bring him to FPAC."

Bataan said he never hid where he came from. Many people in the music industry knew about the "Afro-Filipino" singing Latin soul in the 1960's and 1970's.

Bataan said that playing in front of a large crowd of Filipinos is especially gratifying in a more personal reason.

"My father would have been proud," said Bataan. "My father was Filipino (from Manila) and I remember all the Filipinos would come to my house, landl talk Tagalog. I didn't understand it and my mother was Black. My father gave me information about the Philippines. He always wanted to go back home. He never got a chance to so I want to do that for him."



Galing Pinoy showcases the triumph of the Filipino spirit -- the Filipino's innate perseverance to rise above. A double entendre, Galing Pinoy literally translates to both coming from (or brought to you by) the Filipino and Filipino ingenuity.

He said performing in front of a large Filipino crowd gives him "a sense of belonging."

"It's like you're really coming home and it's something that I missed out on for a great part of my life," he said. "It's like I've been in the wilderness for so long. Growing up, I wasn't totally accepted by the Latino population, I mean they supported me, but as far as being an integral part of that culture I wasn't. I grew up around them; most of my friends are Latino. Then the Black situation, I was never considered totally black."

"I know I'm never going to be considered totally Filipino but I am," he added. "I may look different but I got Filipino blood in me and you're not going to change that."

In a way, he said, it's ironic that Filipinos are now embracing his career.

"It must be for a reason God has something in store for me," he said. ■

Solemn rituals mark...

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ground zero, where office towers, a memorial and transit hub are under construction.

The New York memorial is years away from completion. Some of the mourners worried the progress on it would prevent them from being allowed to pay respects next Sept. 11 on the ground where their loved ones died.

"When you walk through the site, you really feel like you're right where they were, and it's very raw," said Dennis Baxter, whose brother, Jasper, died while attending a conference at the trade center. "I think the spot should remain raw."

Many family members reading names paused to thank the troops fighting the two US wars launched since Sept. 11, 2001, drawing applause on several occasions.

"They took from us innocent lives in the names of their God," said Rosaria Reneo, whose sister Daniela R. Notaro was killed on Sept. 11, "and it seems some people have forgotten what happened here seven years ago."

Edward Bracken said to loud applause that his sister, Lucy A. Fishman, was "murdered by coward men using their religion to say they are right and we are wrong."

In Shanksville, Pa., McCain attended a simple ceremony held in a large field near the point where United Airlines Flight 93 slammed into the ground — driven down, investigators believe, when passengers who rushed the cockpit to prevent another attack on a building.

Grieving family members and

a few dignitaries sat in front of a chain-link fence adorned with flags and mementos that serves as a temporary memorial while a permanent one is constructed. Bells rang as the name of each victim was read. McCain said those on Flight 93 might have saved his own life. He said the only way to thank those who died on the flight is to "be as good an American as they were."

"We might fall well short of their standard, but there's honor in the effort," the Republican Arizona senator said.

Obama, in a statement, recalled that after the attacks, "Americans across our great country came together to stand with the families of the victims, to donate blood, to give to charity, and to say a prayer for our country. Let us renew that."

In New York, relatives of victims began arriving at dawn for the memorials, wearing their loved ones' pictures on T-shirts and holding signs saying, "We miss you," "We love you" or "You will never be forgotten."

As in years past, two bright blue beams of light were to rise from lower Manhattan. But many family members said they wished there were more of a memorial.

"It's still very hard for us to come here. It doesn't get any easier," said Norma Linguito, a relative of Sept. 11 victim Michael Diehl. "I just wish they'd get the memorial up so we can have something, a marker, to remember everyone." (Associated Press writers Matthew Barakat, Ramit Plushnick-Masti, Jennifer Peltz and Colleen Long contributed to this report.)

Study sees longterm...

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The benefits were even greater among overweight diabetics on metformin, who had a 33 percent lower risk of heart attack and a 27 percent reduced risk of death.

"It really stresses the importance of taking the long term view of a chronic disease," said Dr. Judith Fradkin, who heads the diabetes division at the National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases.

"This really gives information on steps that people can take that's going to improve their health," said Fradkin, who had no role in the latest research.

In a related study, Oxford researchers failed to find the same benefit among nearly 1,000 diabetics who maintained strict control of their blood pressure early on and then lapsed. There was no significant reduction in stroke, death or diabetes-related complications among those who initially had tight blood pressure control compared with those who did not.

Both studies were funded by various British government health organizations and advocacy groups. Six major drug companies, including the makers of diabetes drugs, also supported the research.

Dr. Alvin C. Powers, director of Vanderbilt's diabetes center, said the studies underscore the need to treat diabetes in a holistic manner — managing blood sugar, blood pressure and cholesterol levels.

"The important message is that it re-emphasizes that glucose control is important," said Powers, who is not connected with the research.

Recent attention on the impact of tight blood sugar rose after the US government stopped a diabetes trial earlier this year after a surprising number of deaths among patients who pushed down their blood sugar. However, that study was done in high-risk patients who had taken diabetes medications for many years — not newly diagnosed patients. ■

TOTOONG KUWENTO NG KARANIWANG PILIPINO TULAD MO, TULAD KO...

"Meñor de edad pa si Melinda noong pinetisyon ako ng nanay ko noong 1989 pero nag-aged out siya. Hindi na siya pinayagan na makasama sa akin sa Amerika noong 2003. Pinetisyon ko siya agad pagdating ko dito pero sabi ng ibang abogado, 10 taon ang waiting time. Salamat at nakilala namin si Atty. Palacios. Dahil sa tulong niya at sa CSPA, kahit 30 years old na ang anak ko, pinayagan pa rin siya na makapunta agad sa Amerika. Hindi ako nagkamali sa pagbibigay ng tiwala sa kapwa Pilipino."

- Gregoria Miranda at Melinda Miranda, Carson City, California



"Out-of-status na ako, 'jumped-ship' pa. Sabi nila, wala na akong pag-asa. Mabuti na lang, tinulungan ako ni Atty. Palacios. Ngayon greencard na ako at makakasama ko pa pati mga anak ko sa Pilipinas. Iba talaga ang husay at malasakit ng kapwa Pilipino."

- Jovito Alaras, Carson City, California

ABOGADONG PILIPINO PARA SA KAPWA PILIPINO

Tulad mo, minsan din kaming nangarap, nagsikap at nangailangan ng tulong.

Kaya naman taon-taon, daan-daang pamilya at indibidwal ang aming matagumpay na tinuturuan at tinutulungan para makamit ang kanilang layuning makapagtrabaho at maging legal sa Amerika.

Maykaya ka man o mahirap, sikat o karaniwang mamamayan, bibigyan namin ang iyong kaso ng nararapat na pagkalinga, husay, at talino.

Law Offices of Eugene M. Palacios, APLC
Kaisa mo sa iyong pangarap,
Kaagapay mo sa iyong tagumpay.

Attorney Eugene M. Palacios is a highly experienced immigration attorney with a successful track record in handling all types of employment-based and family-based petitions as well as PERM and naturalization applications. He graduated from the University of the Philippines [cum laude] and the Ateneo De Manila University. He is licensed as an attorney in California and in the Philippines. He is admitted to practice before U.S. Immigration Courts, the U.S. Central District Court, and California State Courts. He is also an active member of the American Immigration Lawyers' Association and the Immigration Section of the Los Angeles County Bar Association.

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