

# FASO Gala Concert Features Celebrated Singers

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO  
AJPress

The much-awaited gala concert of the Filipino American Symphony Orchestra (FASO) on May 17 at the Saban Theatre, Beverly Hills will not only present the first FilAm orchestra in America; it will also feature noted singers Joey Albert, Stephanie Reese, and Christopher Avendaño.

Joey Albert's career as a singer was launched in 1982, when she won the "Dream Girl Filipina" contest on TV. Since then, she has produced numerous albums which included her hit songs *Tell Me*, revived by Side A and *I Remember the Boy*, revived by Lea Salonga. She sang *Points of View* together with fellow young singer Pops Fernandez in the early 80s. Her other hit songs are *Kumukutikutitap* and *Ikaw Lamang ang Mamahalin*.

In her prime, Joey has held a number of successful concerts at the Ultra, Folk Arts Theater, Greenhills Theater, Araneta Coliseum, and Manila Hotel, and performed in such countries as Malaysia, Hong Kong, Singapore, the US, and Oman. She has also appeared in a few movies with the comic trio of Tito, Vic and Joey, and Dolphy.

Albert started winning recognition in the music industry in 1983, when she was named one of the top 10 entertainers at the Tinig Awards. She was chosen Best Female Vocal Performer at the Cecil Awards in 1985 and Best Female Performer at the Awit Awards in 1990.

Later in her career, she became a host for an award-winning outreach program show at ABS-CBN entitled *Bahay Kalinga*. Joey now lives in Canada with her husband Vicente Pacis III and their two children.

Another featured guest in the FASO Gala concert is Stephanie Reese who is originally from Seattle, Washington and is an accomplished singer and actress. She starred in *Miss Saigon* in Germany, played Esmeralda in Disney's World premiere of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* in Berlin, Germany and she also played the Princess Tuptim in *The King and I* in London at the West End's Palladium theater. She then returned to the United States and wrote, directed and starred in her autobiographical one-woman show *The Journey*. She performed this show in Seattle, San Jose, Los Angeles and at the Herbst Theater in San Francisco to rave reviews. Stephanie also starred in two productions of the Terrance McNally play *Master*

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Joey Albert



Stephanie Reese



Christopher Avendaño

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## A Historic Debut

LOS ANGELES— As we reported on Saturday, the Filipino-American Symphony Orchestra (FASO) is poised to make its historic debut as the first Filipino symphony orchestra outside the Philippines on May 17 in Beverly Hills.

Honored to be featured as guest artists who will perform with the pioneering orchestra are Joey Albert, Stephanie Reese and Pete Avendaño. "I am very excited," wrote Stephanie, an LA-based singer currently doing shows in the Philippines, including one with Ryan Cayabyab, and who will perform in Beijing in May. She added in her e-mail, "It's been a while since I sang with a full orchestra. It will be even more amazing that this orchestra features Filipino musicians."

Behind FASO are community leaders Roger and Cora Oriol, publishers of Asian Journal (AJ), a popular Fil-Am paper that serves both coasts of the US. "These two very special individuals really give such love and support to the arts," Stephanie acknowledged. "Their continued support of Filipino artists like myself are something that I have admired long before this orchestra endeavor. I am looking forward to saying congratulations to [them] and Lito (Ocampo Cruz, AJ editor-at-large), for accomplishing a dream."

"I am paying tribute to my roots," Stephanie hinted at what she will perform in the concert at the Saban Theatre, formerly known as Wilshire

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