

Filipino-American Symphony Orchestra (FASO) Gala Concert

7:30 pm, Saturday, May 16, 2009
The Wilshire Theatre Beverly Hills

For the longest time, Filipino musicians in America have dreamed of having a Filipino-American Symphony Orchestra. Filipinos being naturally gifted in music, the problem has not been a lack of talented musicians. Rather, they needed a team who will take care of the business and management side. Fortunately, Roger and Cora Oriel, the publishers of *Asian Journal* and self-confessed patrons of the arts, and Lito Cruz, editor-at-large, took on the cudgels to make the dream come true.

The Filipino-American Symphony Orchestra (FASO) is the first Filipino-American symphony orchestra, outside of the Philippines. And it is just fitting that it is established in Los Angeles County—which has the biggest concentration of Filipinos outside the Philippines. With FASO firmly established in Los Angeles, mainstream America—and the world—will recognize, appreciate and enjoy symphony music played by excellent Filipino musicians based in Southern California.



The Musical Director - Robert "Bob" Shroder

FASO's maestro or musical director is Robert "Bob" Shroder. He was born and raised in Kawit, Cavite to an American father and a Filipina mother. He was the Grand Prize winner in the National Music Competition for Young Artists (1982) and became the principal flutist of the Manila Symphony Orchestra. Shroder also taught flute and chamber music in the University of the Philippines- Diliman and did recordings for pop music in the local movie industry.

Upon immigrating to the US in 1991, Bob became a freelance musician and member of the Local 47, the American Federation of Musicians. He is the founding conductor of the Boyle Heights Youth Symphony. He has been musical director of several concerts by Filipino artists like Joey Albert and Asia's Queen of Songs, Pilita Corales.

Shroder brings with him his talent, expertise and experience in conducting the first Filipino-American Symphony Orchestra. Under Maestro Shroder's skillful baton, FASO is envisioned to be a very dynamic orchestra.

The Gala

For its inaugural show, the Filipino-American Symphony Orchestra will showcase the outstanding musical talents of its members, together with popular Filipino singers. The 2-hour show, which promises to be an affair to remember, will feature a symphony of musicians - from enthusiastic students to veteran orchestra musicians—all bound together by their love for music.

The featured musical selections to be played by the orchestra include an overture and excerpts from opera, ballets and Broadway, and well-loved Filipino songs and instrumental soloists; while the guest singers will sing popular Filipino songs—from classical to pop music.

The gala concert will also feature noted singers Joey Albert and Stephanie Reese.

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.

Stephanie Reese 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 Class* as Sophie and Sharon in Los Angeles, California where she now resides.

Stephanie was named artist and performer of the year at the Las Vegas second annual trade show and was awarded at the 19th annual reflections award for arts and entertainment as well.

Stephanie now travels all over the world doing solo concerts including Russia, Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia, Thailand, Canada, all over the United States. In the fall, she will have concerts in Beijing, China and Paris, France. She has two solo albums entitled *The Voice* and *Stephanie Reese At Her Best*. Her next album is due out in the fall and will include her own original songs.

The prestigious venue for FASO's gala concert is one of Los Angeles' Art Deco Masterpieces, the 1910-seat Wilshire Theatre Beverly Hills. Originally called the Fox Wilshire, it was first opened in 1930 as a vaudeville movie house. The Wilshire Theatre was reborn in 2008 as the Beverly Hills Performing Arts Center (BHPAC). It is the largest and only active center for the performing arts in Beverly Hills. This unique complex houses the Wilshire Theatre Beverly Hills, The Dolly Saken School of the Arts and the Wilshire Arts Tower.

Wilshire Theatre Beverly Hills presents, produces and hosts a wide spectrum of performing arts—from the best of Broadway to international dance troupes, jazz and pop legends, classical musicians and renowned speakers. Some of the more popular names and groups that graced Wilshire Theatre's stage were Billy Idol, Spandau Ballet, Richard Pryor and Laurie Anderson. FASO would soon join the ranks of these well-known performers who have paid homage to the theatre's long history and heritage.

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