

Eat Bulaga, Live! in Atlantic City pays special tribute to master rapper Francis M!

by BECKIE ASTURIAS-GUERRERO

THERE is one member of the dabarkads who won't be coming when Eat Bulaga comes to town next month. The Philippines' most watched, most successful, and the longest-running noontime TV show with hosts Tito, Vic, and Joey, has recently lost one of its very own. So now, even while they plan to celebrate their 30th anniversary with a live performance at the Boardwalk Hall Arena in Atlantic City on April 4, 2009 at 7 PM, will also be paying a tribute to their co-star whom they've lost to cancer.

That member, as everyone knows by now, is Francis Magalona. The recent passing of Francis M., or Kiko, as he is often called by his closest showbiz friends, is a huge loss to the tightly knit Eat Bulaga family. Known publicly as the "Master Rapper," he is one of the most beloved dabarkads who recently succumbed to the tyranny of a deadly disease.

In his very last phone interview with Joey de Leon that was aired on Star Talk just last February 7, where he sounded lively and hopeful, he mentioned twice that he wanted, and was actually very excited, at the idea of coming to Atlantic City to be a part of the 30th anniversary celebration of Eat Bulaga, Live.

However, well aware that his medical condition

at that time requires him to be on a strict schedule of treatment, it was decided (with a very sad heart) that he would be unable to join the group. In that interview, he even managed to jokingly said, "Inisip ko, lugi ako eh, kasi hindi ako kasama niyan sa New Jersey sa Atlantic City... ang daya ninyo eh." (I'm thinking, I got the raw end of the deal because I won't be able to join you guys in New Jersey at the Atlantic City. You guys are unfair!)

And having served as the show's only recognized "unofficial" inside photographer who has unlimited access to visually document the goings-on of the show's stars behind the scenes, he also added, "Wala na... wala na kayong photographer." (You no longer have a documentary photographer.)

Joey de Leon, clearly fighting emotions, assured him that once he gets well, he will take him on a world tour, not only to make up for not being able to join them in their Atlantic City show, but to give him hope and courage to fight his medical condition.

In the end, all Francis could really say, repeating his wish once more to be allowed to return to the show, and pleading, is: "Miss na miss ko na kayo. Gustong-gusto ko ng bumalik sa Bulaga, Sama nyo naman ako sa Atlantic City." (I miss you all. I really want to go back to Bulaga. Please bring me with you to Atlantic City.)

For Francis, it has been a long journey. In one of his last personal TV appearances where he per-

formed with Eli Buendai of The Eraserheads, who himself has a heart condition, he said, "It's been a long journey—sometimes happy, sometimes sad; sometimes painful, sometimes hopeful."

Francis "Master Rapper" Magalona is Francis Michael "Kiko" D. Magalona. He is the son of Pancho Magalona and Tita Duran, and was born on October 4, 1964. He is an alumnus of San Beda College. Nicknamed "Kiko," he has been a member of "dabarkads" since 1997. He is known not only as a performer but also as a director and record producer. Other than being officially known as one of Eat Bulaga's co-hosts, he "unofficially" plays the role of photojournalist, documenting the goings-ons of EB Dabarkads with his camera that he brings in all their out-of-town and out-of-country trips. Francis wrote the lyrics to the theme song of Little Miss Philippines. He's a techie guy, and everyone asks him questions about cell phones, computers, latest video games, and even video editing.

Francis Magalona is generally regarded as one of the big names in the Philippine music industry, but despite his stature, he takes it all in stride and doesn't mind making a fool of himself once in a while by wearing strange and unusual costumes in Eat Bulaga. One of Kiko's most unforgettable experiences in life is when he was challenged to take care of his eight children while his wife took a vacation. After one full weekend, Kiko broke into

tears when he saw his wife again.

Joining Tito, Vic, and Joey to pay a special tribute to Francis Magalona during their Atlantic City show are special guests Richard Gutierrez, Rhian Ramos, and, Rufa Mae Quinto, together with the famous EB dabarkads — Allan K, Pia Guanio, Anjo Yllana, Keempee de Leon, Pauleen Luna, Jose Manalo, Wally Bayola, Ruby Rodriguez, Jimmy Santos, Julia Clarete, and Lougee. This will be one memorable show not to be missed.

Eat Bulaga, Live! is produced by First Name Entertainment Production in cooperation with GMA Pinoy TV and Garden State Travel. Ticket prices of \$55, \$75 and \$90 are now on sale at www.ticketmaster.com (or thru toll-free 1-800-736-1420). You can also get your tickets directly from your favorite Fil-Am stores or by calling the following numbers: Long Island - (516)395-6351, Garden State Travel at (800)424-1429, (201)604-0975, Topnotch Electronics at (888)241-6488; and Lemar International at (212)751-5620; Queens - (347)489-4293.

For details, check out the show's posters, postcards, banners and print ads. Part of the proceeds of this show will for the benefit the annual medical missions of the Philippine American Group of Educators and Surgeons (PAGES). Email tickets@eatbulagaworldtours.com for inquiries or visit www.eatbulagaworldtour.com for more information.

(Advertising Supplement)

Of scams, suckers and...

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have been, tarred and feathered, boiled in oil, sold as chattel or flogged beyond recognition in Medieval times.

A case in point: Bernie Madoff's life is not enough to compensate the people he had wronged. If there is some truth to reincarnation and karmic justice to pay off your earthly transgressions in your lifetime, Madoff will have to go through the number of lifetimes equivalent to the number of people he had scammed and destroyed, perhaps, close to an eternity in absolute cold misery, just to even out the score. The same could apply to Enron's Ken Lay, who died at 64 before he could serve his sentence for massive fraud, adding insult to injury to the victims he cheated.

The wheels of justice grind ponderously, exceedingly slow and you sometimes wonder, if justice would ever catch up with this distinct phenomenon of our

time. The divine aspect of our humanity calls for mercy, even for the worst transgressions. Still, the crimes and moral offenses that we are fast becoming inured to, are of a severity and unprecedented magnitude which now crosses international borders that there is probably a need to take a long hard look at current, fast becoming outdated legal systems based on jurisprudence on a global scale that has yet to take into serious consideration the cyber environment that now permeates modern life in every corner of the world.

For now, all we can do as ordinary users of the net is be on guard. A healthy dose of cynicism and a smidgen of common sense work as well as an ounce of prevention.

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Finally, the long wait is over as . . .

Divas 4 Divas Concert debuts in Atlantic City

by BOBBY YALONG

ONCE in a lifetime comes an irresistible entertainment package that may initially sound impossible to imagine and too ambitious to even conceive but gathering together the Philippine entertainment ace female singers: Pop Diva Kuh Ledesma, the Divine Diva Zsa-Zsa Padilla, the Concert Queen Pops Fernandez and Asia's Songbird Regine Velasquez, the phenomenal project was incredibly realized --- aptly dubbed Divas4Divas. After their successful concert debut and key-city tours, the incredible group of equally voluptuous chanteuses is heading our way.

Unlike the usual productions with just one or two featured artists, Divas4Divas is luxuriously loaded with four of the finest songstresses the Philippines has ever produced... and promises a whole evening of music, fun and

sophistication as rendered, poked and donned by the divas. After having successfully debuted at the Big Dome, Divas4Divas is all set to conquer the East Coast via an ambitiously conceived production and impressive repertoire.

For the show to be touted as overrated is unjustifiably unfair for Divas4Divas. was enormously conceived much more than what it could actually offer. Considering the length of time spent just to pull all four individually great talents together to come up with a huge production of gigantic proportion is undoubtedly one tour d' force to reckon with. Having four of the country's most in-demand and seasoned singers in one production is indeed ambitious. Divas4Divas has proven its worth as a true blockbuster, a dream project that showcases the truest essence of excellence in concept and production --- a feat hard to duplicate.



Regine Velasquez, Kuh Ledesma, Pops Fernandez, and Zsa Zsa Padilla

Aimed to be nothing but only the best group show concert aficionados have witnessed ever, Kuh, Zsa-Zsa, Pops and Regine gamely set aside (or, shall I say slightly diminished) their signature peculiar singing styles and cast off their "attitudes" (if there are) to come up with a harmoni-

ous concept and instill an impeccable brand of camaraderie.

Divas4Divas is indeed one grand defining moment... a celebration of music and fashion of sounds and sights rolled congruously into one eventful evening... whereby conveying the influential

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