

Marsen Productions' maiden offering: Noite Brasileira

by BOBBY T. YALONG

THE BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP of lifestyle artist cum art gallery proprietor/landscape architect Ping Panlilio and SCC Services, Inc.'s enterprising Executive Officer Senen Cabalfin, through their newly formed MARSEN Productions, took off with a blast via an entertaining maiden project: an evening of Brazilian music and dance held at the posh The Westwood in Garwood, New Jersey last Friday, May 8, 2009.

Because of his ardent love for everything Latin and fondness for its influence, Ping's brainchild took shape with the brilliant input from his partner Senen and together, the Noite Brasileira theme was conceptualized and executed successfully. Attended by a generous number of diverse guests glamorously clad with their own dash of Latin flair, the affair breathes of the very essence of the Brazilian atmosphere especially made so with the presence of two voluptuous Latinas authentically garbed in identical flaming red body hugging sequined mardi-gras costume complete with feathered headdress.

The evening's special highlight was a group of physically fit performers who called themselves "Capoeira Guerreiros" and exhibited the "Capoeira," a very strenuous acrobatic form of self-defense energetically executed to the rhythmic accompaniment of drums, tambourine, and an oboe-typed stringed instruments. It's actually a form of martial arts disguised as a dance that originated in Brazil some 500 years ago, evolved through time and elements with an African influence. I was told by the group's leader that "Capoeira" was basically a secret defense used by the slaves against their cruel masters.

The drum beat was so infectious that the audience suddenly felt the urge to participate by handclapping and foot-stomping. Although the sequencing was a bit monotonous but the swift and tireless locomotion of the players was more than enough to make up for their seemingly repetitious movements.

Specially choreographed numbers and Latin dance exhibitions were performed by true-blooded Brazilians which deservedly received accolades and unprecedented cheers... inducing the crowd to take the floor to themselves and did what they came for--- dancing to the Latin beat.



MARSEN Productions executive producers Ping Panlilio and Senen Cabalfin posed between two Brazilian costumed usherettes.



The Capoeira being performed by the Capoeira Guerreiros dance troupe.

Noite Brasileira has undoubtedly been a great event worthy of a follow-up. Latin America has more than what it takes to offer if cultural practices and regional traditions are to be considered... and with these taken into consideration, MARSEN Productions has got a lot to choose from among the many resources these rich countries have been known for.

(Advertising Supplement)

Award-winning DiCE & k9: MOBBSTARR

NEW YORK CITY – Philippine hip-hop group, DiCE & k9: MOBBSTARR, have been very busy the past few months, having been named a co-winner of the Best Hip-Hop Group of 2009 by the Independent Asia Voice Independence Music Awards (AVIMA), released a single with Chingy, the group's female vocalist, Hi-C, appeared in her third photo shoot in *FHM* (Philippines edition) *Magazine*, and Hi-C is working on her upcoming solo album. Additionally, the group is preparing for their first US tour.

groove that became an anthem in the club scene. Their latest single, *Rendezvous*, was accompanied by a video and moved straight up the charts.

Dice, Hi-C, and Klumcee are purveyors of reinvention and evolution. They all have the same vision for their music, which is to stretch the limits of hip-hop by merging it with pop, techno, and whatever they want to experiment with, unafraid of producing a new sound. "The true essence of hip-hop is change. It's about always evolving to improve your way of living," declares Dice. "It's hip-hop without any anger. It's just happy."

AVIMA was held on March 29th in Malaysia. DiCE & k9: MOBBSTARR tied with Thailand's Thaitanium to win Best Hip Hop Group. The group had previously won awards for 2003 Song of The Year in Davao and Cebu, Best Rap Group in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Annual Hip-Hop Awards in 2005, 2006 and 2007. Additionally, their single *6 In Tha Momin'* bagged the 2006 Awit awards Best Rap song, the video of the same song also included in the line up of nominees for 2006 *MTV Video Music Awards* - Favorite HipHop/RnB song.

Earlier in the year, DiCE & k9: MOBBSTARR were featured on the single, 'Another One' (Beatmonx remix) with American hip-hop star Chingy and rising Philippine R&B artist DannieBoi.

Described by *FHM Magazine* (Philippines edition) as the "hottie with the hip-hop group Dice & K-9", photos of Hi-C appeared in *FHM* in August 2005, September 2007, and again in April 2009. She has been nominated for *FHM Magazine's* "100 Sexiest Women" of



2008 and 2009. See the April 2009 set of photos of Hi-C, one of the most popular and sexiest performers in the Philippines, at www.fhm.com.ph/fhm-babes/online-girlfriends/1415/hi-c. Futhermore, Hi-C is working on her forthcoming solo album to be released later this year.

DiCE & k9: MOBBSTARR will embark on a tour of the United States to promote *Time Space Rhythm Stars*. The act is represented in the US for booking, publicity, and sponsorships by Dave Brodsky, DaSBro Enterprise, 2760 Grand Concourse #3K, Bronx, NY 10458; telephone: (718) 933-0633; email: dasbro@optonline.net

The group's MySpace page located at www.myspace.com/mobbstarr.

(Advertising Supplement)

People and Events

Filipino artist takes 'surrealistic' bite of the Big Apple

by DENNIS CLEMENTE



Maria Pureza Escano and her masterpieces

NEW YORK—Where else can you find the tonic you need to scrape off the weary edges of this city but online?

Technology paved the way for Maria Pureza Escano, Philippine-based painter, to come out of semi-retirement and come all over to New York to meet Ico Gallery owner Dalia Chako and curator Skylor Brummans. The latter discovered her online and invited her to join other international artists in a group show last March.

"We think Escano's works have a unique sensitivity and delicate nature with an angelic perspective that we find very appealing and make us think of faraway worlds and beautiful dreams," Chako was quoted as saying at the exhibit.

From that first big break, Escano wasted no time in participating in another exhibit at the same gallery. The abstract/surreal group exhibit titled "Collide" runs from May 8 to 28.

From a body of work that consists of realistic and figurative paintings, the Filipino artist this time is expanding her range with surrealistic works.

"I want to inspire young Filipino artists to believe in themselves," she says.

The self-taught artist has come a long way. From a small town in Quezon Province in the Philippines to New York, her second exhibit will be at the same famed art and music gallery, Ico Gallery in Soho, where she had her first exhibit last March. It was reportedly also a first for the Ico Gallery to feature the works of a Filipino artist.

Escano is coming from a long hiatus in the art scene. Her last exhibit was in 2002 with a group of friends in Quezon Province. She stopped painting and concentrated on working for a design agency and not long after that, got married and became busy with family life.

Now she is back in the thick of it, thanks to Chako and Brummans who stumbled on her personal website and offered to represent her in the Big Apple.

The result was her first exhibit in a group show titled "New Motions of the Figure" just last March. In the show, she joined other celebrated international artists Ned Martin, Jean Dorch, Nelly Drell, Kevin McKrell, John Boe Paulsen and Blake.

"I love doing art so much that I do not see making them as work. It is rather an answer to that need inside my soul to celebrate life. My art is my praise to God," she adds

Escano started painting at the age of nine after seeing the works of the French impressionists—Claude Monet's *La Promenade*, Edouard Manet's *Le Chemin de Fer* and Edgar Degas' *The Rehearsal*. "It was like a religious experience for me," she says.

Her exposure to these works at such an early age compelled her to take up brush and easel and make a name for herself in the Philippine art world, particularly in her hometown of Sariaya, Quezon, located south of Manila.

The petite artist traces the inspiration of her idyllic, pastoral works and children captured in light-hearted moods to her upbringing in her hometown in Sariaya where the rich and vibrant culture of her Filipino-Spanish-American influences bore fruit.

"In my hometown, there was a park called Atienza's Park, with its once-flourishing meadows and trees, that played such a critical role in my creative yearnings," she remembers fondly.

The goal is to share with the audience a sense of beauty and peace in the works. "I want them to leave with a lightness of soul after viewing my work," she adds.

In her second New York exhibit, Escano joins fellow artists Susane Adame, Tedd Barr, Annie Frasier, Colin Kilian, Rhoma Mostel, Karin Perez, Marina Reiter, Michael Schmotzer and Davor Vukovic.

Unfortunately, Escano will not be able to be physically present in New York for her second exhibit, as she is busy finishing a 4x2-meter mural titled "Beachcombers at the Cebu Channel" in the Philippines for the All Japan Seamen's Union and which will be hang at the new Mariners' Court in Cebu City, Philippines.

To view her works for her New York exhibit, visit <http://icogallery.com>. Her other works can also be viewed at her personal website, <http://puchetteescano.weebly.com>.

FAHSI Scholarship Program

THE FILIPINO AMERICAN HUMAN SERVICES, INC. (FAHSI) invites you to apply to the FAHSI College Scholarship Program (FCSP). Established in 2008, the program encourages youth of Filipino descent to pursue higher education and to have a positive impact in the Filipino Community.

FAHSI will award the Frederick and Demi Seguritan Scholarship to one Filipino/Filipino-American graduating high school senior who demonstrates a passion for service to the Filipino American community and interest in business. While enrolled in college, the scholarship recipient will receive \$20,000 over the course of four years. In addition, during the student's matriculation at a college, the recipient will have the opportunity to receive mentoring from Frederick and Demi Seguritan and FAHSI Staff.

- To be eligible, you must demonstrate that you:
- Are of Filipino Heritage (please inquire about definition);
 - Reside in the NY/NJ/CT Tri-State Area;
 - Are in good current academic standing at your high school;
 - Have applied for admission to a four-year college as a full-time student;
 - Have a passion for business (you are not required to major in business);
 - Are active in the Filipino Community (i.e. participation in FAHSI's youth program or a high school's Filipino student club); and
 - Can demonstrate financial need.

To apply, please complete the attached FCSP Application and provide supporting materials, which include an essay, two letters of recommendation, a resume, a copy of your official high school transcript, SAT scores, and the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) or a written explanation if you are unable to obtain the FAFSA. FAHSI must receive your application by Sunday, May 31, 2009.

Please mail your application to: FAHSI, Philippine-American Center, 185-14 Hillside Avenue, Jamaica, NY 11432. No faxes please.

If you have any questions, please contact Rose-Ann Ubarra-Cunanan, Program Director, at (718) 883-1295 or at rose@fahsi.org.



Maria Pureza Escano painting 'Winged Friends'

Philadelphian Takes PIDCI's 'Diwa Ng Kalayaan'



Diwa ng Kalayaan Selection and Coronation Pageant and Gala shows Monica Castillo Meares (center) after winning the title Diwa ng Kalayaan (Spirit of Independence) 2009, part of the commemoration of the 111th anniversary of the declaration of Philippine Independence organized and presented annually by the Philippine Independence Day Council, Inc. (PIDCI) in New York. Monica is shown flanked by Guillermo "Gerry" M. Austria (left), President of PIDCI and Josephine "Joji" J. Jalandoni (right), PIDCI Vice President and Chair of the Diwa ng Kalayaan committee.

NEW JERSEY – A statuesque, young, gifted, *dalagang* (bachelorette) Filipino-American sang her way to the most coveted beauty, brains and talent title in the Filipino and Filipino-American community in the Northeastern, if not the entire, United States, the Diwa ng Kalayaan (Spirit of Independence), here Sunday at the Diwa ng Kalayaan Selection and Coronation Pageant and Gala at the Sheraton Newark Airport Hotel.

Monica Castillo Meares, is a 17-year-old, 5'9" graduating student of Philadelphia High School for Girls, described as a 160-year-old public university-preparatory magnet high school. She'll go into Nursing when she goes to the School of Nursing and Allied Health Professionals of the Holy Family University of Philadelphia, which was founded in 1958 by the Sisters of the Holy Family of Nazareth.

She is the daughter of Francis Allen and Faith Castillo Meares.

In being judged Diwa ng Kalayaan (Spirit of Independence), Monica won over six other candidates who took the other competition titles (in descending order): Renee Nicole Lago of New Jersey, Miss Filipino American; Janette Gomez of New York, Hiyas ng Pilipinas; Lorieella Reyes, New York, Bituin ng Luzon; Alexandra Uy of New Jersey, Bituin ng Visayas; Demellen Faith Cuerta of New York, Bituin ng Mindanao; and Natasha Abella of New Jersey, Lakambini ng PIDCI.

Monica also took the top prize of the competition, a round trip airline ticket to the Philippines, and in collecting her prize, will most likely join the Ambassadors and Consuls General and Tourism Directors Tour to the Philippines this coming July.

In the talent portion of the competition, Monica sang *A Moment Like This*, the song popularized by the first *American Idol* Kelly Clarkson.

It's no surprise for music to be one of her strengths since Monica has been playing the piano for half her life. And her school activity has been concentrated mostly on music, sports

and clubs. Since her freshman year, she has played cello for the school orchestra and became head cellist for her section.

She is currently the president of the school's Filipina Club and attends the Asian Club and Latinas Unidas. She was also into cheerleading, golf, floor hockey, and the step team.

Monica's entry into the Diwa ng Kalayaan contest was sponsored by the International Network of Filipinos Overseas, Inc. (INFO), based mainly in Philadelphia and represented by commissioned network associates in New York, New Jersey and numerous cities in the US and around the world. INFO counts as one of the close to 100 member organizations and associations of the Philippine Independence Day Council, Inc. (PIDCI).

The Diwa ng Kalayaan contest is one of multiple events integral to the annual Philippine Independence celebration in New York, which, over the last 15 years has been the largest celebration of Philippine Independence outside of the Philippines, where it is officially observed as a national holiday.

The New York celebration is on its 20th year, this year commemorating the 111th Anniversary of the Declaration of Philippine Independence. Aside from Diwa ng Kalayaan, its other component events are the Philippine Independence Day Parade, Street Fair and Cultural Festival (all held on Philippine Independence Day, the first Sunday in June, this year the 7th of June), the Independence Ball and the Grand Marshal Gala, honoring the Grand Marshal of the Parade. ■

THE COMMUNITY CALENDAR

May 16|Saturday
5th Diocesan Fiesta of Our Lady of Peace & Good Voyage (Birhen ng Antipolo)

The Filipino-American Community of St. Robert Bellarmine & Other Filipino Communities & Devotional Groups of Brooklyn & Queens invite everyone to join the 5th Diocesan Celebration of Our Lady of Peace & Good Voyage (Birhen ng

Antipolo) to be held on May 16, 2009 at St. Robert Bellarmine Church located at 56-15 213th Street Bayside, New York 11364.

Celebrations start at 3pm with rosary / novena, street procession and Concelebrated Mass at 5pm followed by fellowship and entertainment. Rev. Msgr. Ronald T. Marino, V.E., Vicar for Migrant & Ethnic Apostolates of the Diocese of Brooklyn will be the Main Celebrant.

Please email editor@asianjournalinc.com or call (212) 655-5426 for your community events for possible publication.

Fifth Annual Asian Heritage Street Celebration

The largest gathering of Asian Pacific Americans in the nation is back and bigger than ever. To be held in front of the Asian Art Museum and is open to all. 11am-6pm. For more info. Visit www.asianfairf.com

May 23|Saturday
AYALA LAND PROJECT PRESENTATIONS

Ayala Land will hold Presentations on its Metro Manila and Outer Manila Devel-

opments: Avida, Alveo and Ayala Land Premier projects on: Sat., May 23 and Sun., May 24, 10:00am- 5:00 pm 131 Barrow St., Suite 2B, Greenwich Village, New York City 10014.

How to get there: Take #1 subway to Christopher, walk west. From Jersey City or 33rd, take Path to Christopher. For more information, please call:

Francis M. Tayag at 917-498-3428 Steve Derodar at 646-249-1126