

FROM THE FRONT PAGE

One Historic, Musical Moment

PAGE 1 ◀

(romantic songs). The opera and pop numbers were provided by three contemporary Fil-Am singers and a Filipino-Canadian singer—Stephanie Reese, Pete Avendano, Kit Navarro and Joey Albert.

Fil-Ams interviewed for their impressions by *Asian Journal* had a singular thread: the FASO's debut performance is impressive and it deserves seconds. "I think that they (FASO) can pull in a larger audience," offers John Mina, who is one of the directors of the Jazz Society of the Philippines, USA (JazzPhil). "How about the Hollywood Bowl next time." Rex Sampaga, Mina's co-director at JazzPhil is equally impressed, saying "FASO is quite amazing in this concert." Grace Walker of Glendale's Commission on the Status of Women is already dreaming of a moonlit night concert at the Hollywood Bowl.

Opera singer Stephanie Reese, fresh from a five-month singing stint in the Philippines, did a turnaround and sang Filipino songs for the first time. And for someone who did not speak Tagalog at all, Ms. Reese did a very fine job, not missing a word; and her American accent made her Tagalog songs sound even more endearing to the concertgoers.

"I was more nervous this time," admits Reese, who came in from abroad barely a few days before the concert. "I wanted to show

the other half of my music; that I really love Filipino culture. I feel so honored to be a part of this event that is celebrating our roots," she told *Asian Journal*.

Marikit (Kit) Navarro who played Jasmin, and Pete Avendano, who played Karim, in Dr. Ramon Sison-Geluz's highly acclaimed opera, *Karim and Jasmin*, breezed through their numbers with amazing virtuosity.

FASO had a few challenges as well. It is composed of musicians with different levels of musicianship, according to Bob Shroder, who agreed to talk to this writer immediately following the concert. "We are not like the Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra," Shroder tells *Asian Journal*. He said that FASO is basically a volunteer symphony orchestra. Some of the members are college students, and some are part time musicians who cannot commit to a weekly rehearsal schedule.

"I think everybody did an excellent job by wholeheartedly giving their best musicianship," Shroder said. "This concert is phenomenal because there is no gap between the orchestra and the audience. We are totally connected, and we are always reaching out, right from the beginning."

"From the time we played *Star Spangled Banner*, we hit our strides. We were playing what they (audience) crave, and apparently

what they were hearing were the songs that they liked," Shroder opined.

FASO played mostly classical ballets, opening with a Tchaikovsky composition. Then played compositions by legendary Filipino composer Lucio San Pedro, and a medley of Filipino *kundimans* (romantic songs) inspired by American composer Bernard Greene; a segment from the popular opera, *Phantom of the Opera* with an added visual layer provided by an aerial dancer that interpreted the music with dance movements while hanging twenty feet high from the ceiling.

"This is a great start," comments seasoned producer Ted Benito. He said, however, that he had not watched a concert where the conductor also played the role of master of ceremonies. "To hear our music as lushly played is absolutely phenomenal. But there is room for improvement," Benito said.

"I cried after the first number," attests Becca Godinez-Miranda. "I cried after the second and third numbers. It is well worth the effort. Bravo!" Jazz pianist and composer David Benoit—whose career as a smooth jazz musician bloomed after a Manila concert in the late 70s—was agog. "I am really impressed by how they delivered the music," he told *Asian Journal*. "I like their (FASO's) music; it's like being in Manila again." ■

Mayweather and Marquez to battle for right to fight Pacquiao

PAGE 1 ◀

Marquez for the past year.

The 35-year-old Marquez said it's the reason why he took the fight with Mayweather Jr.

"It's another part of motivation for me," said Marquez, who fought Pacquiao to a draw in their first bout and dropped a narrow split decision in 2008. "When Golden Boy told me, 'do you want to fight Floyd?' Yes. I want to fight with Floyd. 'And now tell me if you win this fight then maybe you fight with Manny.' It's another motivation for me."

Mayweather Jr. said Pacquiao is a good fighter but that's not his primary motivation from coming out of retirement.

He said that he just wants to stay undefeated and fight the best.

"I don't have to chase no fighter," said the 32-year-old Mayweather Jr., who is coming off a nearly two-year retirement from boxing. "We all know that when fighters face Floyd Mayweather they make their biggest payday. I'm not here to chase fighters I'm not here for bragging rights. I'm here to just come to this sport and to put some extras on and solidify my legacy and pound for pound (legacy)...of course, I'm going down in the history as one of the bests but I want to put a little bit of extras on."

No matter who wins the July 18 clash between Mayweather Jr. and Marquez, expect Pacquiao to be waiting in the wings.

Tickets for the July 18 Mayweather Jr. and Marquez bout will be on sale on Friday, May 22. Tickets will be available in all ticketmaster locations.

Banal for World Title

It's not confirmed yet but Golden Boy Promotion executives said that the 20-year-old Filipino prodigy AJ "Bazooka" Banal might be on the undercard of the Mayweather Jr. and Marquez bout on July 18 in Las Vegas.

Eric Gomez, Vice President and matchmaker for Golden Boy, said that they have received an offer for Banal to face Jose "Carita" Lopez.

"We're working on it right now," said Gomez. "There's a very good chance he's going to be on the undercard. It's like 90 percent right now so within this week we should be able to finalize that and hopefully he will be."

Who will Banal be facing? "Well we got an offer for him to fight for the world title believe it or not against Jose Lopez, Jose 'Carita' Lopez from Puerto Rico so we're looking into that right now," Gomez added. "We're in discussions right now that's not 100 percent but it's 90 percent he's (Banal) going to be on the card."

Lopez (39-7-2 32 KOs) of Puerto Rico would be a daunting challenge for Banal (19-1-1 16 KOs). The 37-year-old holds the WBO super flyweight title.

It was expected that Lopez would face off against another Filipino star Nonito Donaire Jr. at a later date this year.

Calls and texts to the Donaire camp were not returned as of press time.

Gomez did not want to elaborate further on other possible opponents for Banal.

He also said that Banal is the only Filipino fighter being considered to be on the undercard of the Mayweather vs. Marquez showdown. (*Joseph Pimentel*)

Charice makes single debut on Oprah

PAGE 1 ◀

also No. 9 on the iTunes chart.

The song is partly an emotional prayer whose lyrics are about what one would say in a letter to God.

It has just been posted on YouTube—the video-sharing website where the world discovered Charice—and is the first single in her forthcoming debut album being produced by her musical mentor, David Foster.

It is actually a cover version of a composition by Diane Warren (who also wrote Aerosmith's *I Don't Want To Miss a Thing*; Celine Dion's *Because You Loved Me*; and Toni Braxton's *Unbreak My Heart*).

Oprah show

The 16-year-old Charice first sang the song on America's highest-rating TV show *Oprah* only on Monday—the day it was also released as a digital download.

On the Amazon Bestsellers chart, *Note to God* ranks behind the Black Eyed Peas's *Boom*

Boom Pow but has overtaken Lady GaGa's *Poker Face*, Miley Cyrus' *The Climb*, Taylor Swift's *Love Story*, Beyoncé's *Halo*, and Coldplay's *Viva La Vida*.

On the iTunes chart, Charice's single is ahead of Eminem's *Beautiful*.

Charice was again featured in a high-profile show on May 9 at Mandalay Bay Resort and Casino in Las Vegas, Nevada, where she performed with Foster in a tribute concert for Celine Dion.

June 12 celebration

On May 24, Charice will make her second appearance as a guest on the Italian musical variety show *Ti lascio una canzone (Leavin' You a Song)*. Its producers reportedly insisted that she return after having sung in the program's season premiere in April.

She comes home to Manila on June 8 to participate in the Philippine Independence Day celebrations on June 12. She flies back to the United States on June 13 to finish recording her album. ■

RP gov't protests Alec Baldwin's joke, actor issues apology

PAGE 1 ◀

said, using a local idiom that implies the speaker will personally administer a beating.

"The comments of some Philippine government officials come as no surprise to me, either," Baldwin wrote in his blog post. "Even the one by a former action film star-turned-Senator who beckoned me to come to the Philippines so he could 'beat' me over my comment. Such anger and frustration about the issue of sex trafficking is understandable."

A few readers defended Baldwin, explaining that what he said was a joke. "No one seems to get that he was making fun of himself," reader A Garcia commented. Others criticized Filipino government officials for being too sensitive. One commenter castigated Sen. Revilla for reacting this way.

"Of all the socio-economic,

political, not to mention moral challenges facing my country, he somehow woke from his stupor to object to another actor's comments. What really gets to me is the hypocrisy of it all. A devotee (sic) Catholic, he has actually fathered numerous love children. For him to be indignant about another man's intention to marry a Filipino, while he himself has had extra-marital affairs, is really shameful. Shameful!" commented reader sdeldariarte.

Protest

Consul General Cecilia Rebong of the Philippine Consulate General in New York sent a letter to Baldwin and the producers of the *Late Show* with David Letterman to express deep concern over the remarks made by the actor which were "derogatory, prejudiced, insensitive and stereotyped Filipino women negatively".

"The consulate shares the sentiments expressed by many others that although said in jest, the remarks displayed insensitivity and tactlessness," Rebong said in a statement.

"The Philippines is one of the leading countries in the effort to

eliminate the trafficking of women and children," Rebong wrote.

The consul general said that the Philippine Congress passed Republic Act 6955 or "The Anti Mail-Order Bride Law of 1990" and the RA 9208: "The Anti-Trafficking in Persons Act," which criminalizes the act of "introducing for money or other consideration any Filipino to a foreigner as a possible spouse."

"These laws were enacted in our country to protect Filipino women from being sold into mar-

riage to a foreigner and being taken overseas where the ability of our government to protect her interests is severely diminished," she explained.

"Being an actor and a comedian it is understandable that you may not be aware of these matters," Rebong added. "However, as a public figure, it is incumbent upon you to be sensitive to discriminatory statements, especially in a multicultural society as colorful, rich and diverse as that of the United States." ■



Bring your love home through
balikbayangifts
 www.balikbayangifts.com

Send them a gift...make them feel loved, make their day special by sending a gift to your relatives. We deliver anytime, anywhere in the Philippines!

With balikbayangifts.com, you are a step closer to home...

Call our customer service hotline at
888-530-8934

www.balikbayangifts.com

"Powerfully told and well-written, *What's Happening to Our Country?* is the biography of a vice president biographies. In a way, perhaps, Palaez didn't really miss his date with destiny."
 - Lito B. Zulueta, Philippine Daily Inquirer

EMMANUEL PELAEZ FOUNDATION

For book inquiries, please contact:
 • USA - 650-5446591
 • Manila - +639 18906-8142
 • E-mail: info@epelaezfoundation.com

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO OUR COUNTRY?
 THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
 EMMANUEL PELAEZ
 By Nelson Nazario