

# GETTING TO KNOW FASO

by CYNTHIA DE CASTRO  
AJPress

## ART OCDAMIA Playing the Cello

One of the core members of the Filipino American Symphony Orchestra (FASO) is cello player, Arthur Ocdamia. Better known as Art by his friends, he has over thirty years experience as a cello player and has been a member of five different orchestras in LA: the Cypress Pops Orchestra (since 1992), Bell Flower Symphony Orchestra (since 1993), La Mirada Symphony Orchestra (from 2000 to 2005), the South East Symphony Orchestra (since 2005) and the Filipino American Symphony Orchestra (FASO).

Art shares how he got started in this career as a cello player. "My father, Gelacio, became totally blind when he was 13 years old but he could play the piano, ouido lang. So, I guess there's some musical genes in our family. My mother, Angelita Lagonera, had a good voice and sang in church. When I was in high school, I told my parents I wanted to learn how to play the cello. We had a neighbor who was a good cello player, Amador Tamayo. I practically begged him to teach me. He did but after just a month, he left for Germany. He referred me to Herminia Ilano who was a cellist with the Philippine Philharmonics. I studied under her and she helped me get a scholarship in UP Diliman. After two years in UP, the department head of the Strings section, Sergio Esmilla, asked me if I wanted to join the Manila Symphony Orchestra. There, I was with Bob Shroder and Bochok Molina, who also played with me at the Philippine Youth Orchestra in UP Diliman. That was in 1980 and now, almost 30 years later, the three of us are together again, this time in LA..and forming FASO. Unbelievable!" relates Ocdamia.

After working five years with the Manila Symphony Orchestra, Art went to work for the Shangri-la Hotel in Singapore before he joined Holland American Lines. "I was one of the musicians on board. It was hard work, since we played three times a day, everyday, as the cruise ship went around the world. But that's where I met my first wife, Kathy, an American who was one of the passengers in 1988. We decided to get married in Las Vegas soon after that and lived in Anaheim," recalled Art.

Admitting that he could not support a family by just playing the cello, Art worked in a medical company for almost twenty years, the Pentax Medical Instruments. When the company closed down in 2007, Art studied medical back office work. He is also studying how to make a violin.

In 2001, his wife Kathy died of complications from diabetes. He has re-married; this time to a Bicolana, Margie Benitez.

Some years ago, Art saw a flyer of a Joey Albert concert, featuring his friend Bob Shroder as the conductor. He attended the concert and was happy to re-unite with Bob and also, Bochok Molina, who was likewise playing in the concert. Since then, they have been in touch.

"When Bob and Bochok told me about FASO, I was proud to join them. Even if the weekly rehearsals are done in LA which is quite far from OC where I live, I really make it a point to be here, coming as early as 5pm (for the 6:30pm practice). I don't mind waiting for quite a while for the practice to begin rather than be caught in traffic. It is an honor to be a part of FASO and I expect that the orchestra will be big someday," said Art. "I believe music is very important to life that's why I give it importance and value," he added.



# Random thoughts

IT'S LATE IN THE EVENING, and I have a head cold. Thankfully, it's not debilitating. I was able to go about my day as usual, though more slowly. My gym workout was less intense, and I kept my grocery shopping focused on necessities only. No gratuitous junk food purchases (if you think about it, it's actually a good thing).

Yesterday was far, far worse — lots of sneezing and a large container of facial tissue attached to me. Mercifully, there was plenty to help bring relief — cold medicine, family and a wonderful party with wonderful people. Oh, and a big glass of freshly squeezed orange juice before going home (thanks, Jules, it made me feel tons better).

I've had a pretty un-hectic week, so I thought to just write down random things that go through my mind as I go about my days. Some are silly, some serious, but they all spout from my head.

Oh Nicole, thank you for getting potty-trained so quickly. Mommy doesn't have to buy diapers anymore!

It's time for *American Idol*, my phone had better not ring. It's one of the few things I watch on TV regularly. Who'll get booted off next?

I finally cooked something in my kitchen last weekend! I should do that more often!

What's up with Facebook's new layout? There's way too much clutter! Can't there be an option where one can choose exactly what one sees on the home page? *Nakakawalang gana tuloy.*

I love it when a meeting goes well. Things shall definitely bear fruit, and soon.

What kind of concert shall I do this year? What kind of CD? I'm definitely not ready to do a film, not right now, anyway.

Five more reps ... just five more reps ...

That older lady at the gym is nothing short of inspiring! Boxing, weight training, cardio ... just thinking about her routine makes me tired! If you're reading this, lady, I think you're awesome.

Continued on PAGE 4

## Grand Opening!!!

**SEAFOOD MARKET**  
**88**

**APRIL 10 (8AM TO 8PM)**

### SPECIALIZING IN ASIAN FOODS

- Chinese • Indonesian
- Japanese • Korean
- Filipino • Thai • Vietnamese

We carry a variety of fresh meats and seafood, produce and dry goods for your everyday cooking needs.

**2 LOCATIONS:**

11160 Magnolia Ave., Riverside, CA 92505 (Soon to open) Tel: (951) 588-8886 Fax: (951) 588-8207	41915 Motor Car Parkway, Temecula, CA 92591 Tel: (951) 587-8988 Fax: (951) 587-8288
---	--

# From zero to hero... and vice versa

by NESTOR TORRE  
Inquirer.net

TELEVISION HAS AN UN-CANNY way of transforming absolute unknowns into overnight celebrities and positive role models. From "zero" to hero in no time—how about that?

The latest beneficiary of this transformative gift is Efren Peñaflorida, a young "street teacher" who heads a group that educates slum kids on weekends in Cavite.

When I first heard about Efren and his mission, my interest perked up. Off and on in the past, I "covered" other street teachers in Metro Manila. I admire their giving hearts, tenacity, and perseverance.

In the heat or rain, in the midst of traffic and pollution, they teach street kids their ABCs and more, giving their chances for rising above poverty a big boost.

Efren has become street teachers' "official" representative, having been tapped by CNN as a nominee in its search for Hero of the Year. How to help boost Efren's prospects? Visit the CNN website.

It's important that we recognize and support the valiant efforts of people like Efren, because they encourage many others to be similarly selfless. Nobody needs to remain a zero.

Other zeroes turned heroes on TV include the winners of the many talent and survivor challenges being resorted to by the medium to discover and develop new batches of media stars. But, it's with "ordinary" heroes that the medium really comes into its own as a promoter of positive values and good role models.

On the other hand, TV can also show that the high and mighty have sullen feet of clay. The latest object of public ire in this instance is the hoity-toity customer caught by a camera berating salespeople and forcing one of them to kneel at his fastidious feet.

Most viewers didn't know this creature from Adam, but after they watched the video, he was swiftly reduced to a zero in their eyes. Lesson learned? In this age of camera phones and other video recording devices, all secrets and nasty behavior will eventually be found out, so when you feel the urge to stroke that nasty streak in your psyche—think 10 times!

Other recent emerging zeroes include the fat-cat culprits exposed by the congressional investigations now covered by television on a regular basis. It's soberingly instructive to note how often powerful government people and their business-world cohorts are now being exposed as corrupt, corrupted—or both.

Let's hope the public exposure that TV provides will inhibit would-be corruptors and their willing victims, the corrupted, from engaging in nefarious pirate raids on government and private funds.

On the other hand, we have to remind ourselves that the "evidence" supplied by cell phone or broadcast cameras are not always as incontrovertible as they appear to be, so our rush to judgment should be inordinately rash. This could be a difficult balancing act, but both heroes and zeroes deserve nothing less. ■



Efren Peñaflorida

Inquirer.net photo

Ang favorite noodle dish na galing kay Lola...

# ALMONDIGAS

(Bola-Bola with Misua)

Available for a limited time only

Check-out our new menu...

West Covina	Artesia	Las Vegas	Moreno	Glendale
626.964.4095	562.809.6277	702.871.7256	951.653.5555	818.241.0880
Fax nos.				
626.591.3585	562.809.6190	702.871.7256	951.653.880	818.241-1750

All major credit cards are welcome.  
Free delivery for orders more than \$300. Call the Manager for details.

Salo-Salo logo is a registered trademark of Salo-Salo Grill & Restaurants.  
www.salo-salogrill.com

kung hanap ay lasa