

CINEMANILA 2009 : Six films compete in Digital Lokal

by BAYANI SAN DIEGO JR. / *Inquirer.net*

A SEEDY bar. A bus motoring from Manila to Bicol. The set of a porn flick. Vigan during World War II. The varied terrain of Pangasinan, pre-Pepeng. The precipice between youth and adulthood in Pampanga. These are but some of the territories explored in the six entries in Cinemanila's Digital Lokal competition.

Jon Red's "Ang Beerhouse," produced by actors Joel Torre and Ronnie Lazaro, is described as "a love story and social commentary" by the director. "We can see the entire society inside a beerhouse," he noted. "Everyone is there: from the corrupt and powerful to the wannabes and underdogs."

Red attempted to capture the actual experience of bar-hopping in his film. "The goal is to have a relaxing and intoxicating experience."

Red praises his actors Epy Quizon, Ryan Eigenmann and Gwen Garci as "great. They all pitched in their ideas and improvised. We shot in a rented garage and turned it into a girly bar which has since been converted into a chapel."

Quite serendipitously, Christopher Gozum's *Anacbanua* managed to immortalize Pangasinan before it was devastated by the floods brought by Typhoon "Pepeng."

"It's shot like a documentary," explained Gozum who's based in Saudi Arabia. "The film has no lines of dialogue. All the spoken lines in the film are from Pangasinan language poems or anlong."

Gozum's "interest in Pangasinan's culture, history and literature" inspired him to make the film with the P80,000 cash prize he won in last year's Cinemanila.

He worked with both professional actors (Lowell Conales and Che Ramos) and amateurs in *Anacbanua*. "Tristan Aguirre is my mother's pupil in my hometown of Bayambang. He has no previous experience, but he looks confident and natural onscreen."

Vigan was declared a Unesco World Heritage Site in 1999, he said. "Vigan is a source of identity and pride for all Filipinos."

Fajardo admitted that the biggest challenge was "to make an independently produced period film with limited time and budget in a picturesque place."

Also, he had a Japanese lead actor (Hiroyuki Takashima) who didn't understand Filipino. "We had two scripts: Filipino for the locals (led by Kaye Abad) and Niponggo for the Japanese. Plus, we also had Ilocano on the side."

It was a virtual tower of Babel. "That's the magic of filmmaking. In spite of the language barrier, we pulled it off."

Ted Manotoc calls his film, "69 1/2," as "the most artistic Filipino porn film." Still, he pointed out that his entry features no nudity or sex scenes.

When the going gets tough, Pinoys rely on humor, he said. "I wanted to make a film about the stuff I'm proud of about Filipinos: our love of movies, for song and dance, and our ability to laugh in the face of anything life throws at us."

Lito Casaje's *Dolores* features a cast of newcomers. He describes it as a "coming-of-age film" as seen through the eyes of the titular heroine.

"Biggest challenge was to retell an old-hat story and make it look cutting-edge, different, more insightful and original," Casaje said.

He explained that his goal was "to reinvent a story based on my own vision and world view. People have turned a blind eye on the issues presented in the film."



In *Biyaheng Lupa*, Armando "Bing" Lao sought to recreate an 8-hour bus trip from Manila to Bicol.

"We shot inside a hot, cramped bus," Lao recalled. "We had to use a tripod for the camera, so it took a while to set up."

He tapped friends like Jaclyn Jose, Julio Diaz, Coco Martin, Angel Aquino, Eugene Domingo, among others, as his passengers.

Biggest challenge

Bona Fajardo's *Iliw* is a historical romance that chronicles how "Vigan was spared from destruction during World War II largely because of the love of a Japanese officer for an Ilocano maiden."

GETTING TO KNOW FASO

Justina Nadal—Concert Mistress of 'Handog ng FASO' sa Pasko

VIOLINIST Justina Nadal has appeared in concerts throughout the United States, Europe, and Russia. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in 2005 with the American Youth Symphony Orchestra as principal second violinist of the prestigious youth orchestra. She made her solo debut with the Long Beach Mozart Festival Orchestra at the age of 12 after winning the Long Beach Mozart Festival Concerto Competition. Other notable solo appearances include performances with the Long Beach Symphony Orchestra, the Saint Petersburg (Russia) University Orchestra, and the Rome (Italy) Orchestra.

Ms. Nadal was awarded the Grand Prize in South Bend, Indiana's "America's Youth on Parade" international music competition. She has also captured top prizes at the Long Beach Bach Festival, the Southwestern Youth Festival, and Young Artists Guild of California. Justina is also a seven-time prize winner of the Music Teacher's Association of California music competition.

In the fall of 2007, Ms. Nadal recorded the second violin part to the Jewish documentary of *Swimming in Auschwitz*. This documentary won numerous film festival awards, including the Santa Monica Film Festival award. She has collaborated with renowned artists such as Josh Groban, Sarah Chang, John Williams, Laura Hall, Michael Kamen, Yundi Li, and Lang Lang.

Last winter, Justina earned a substitute position with the San Diego Symphony Orchestra. She has held principal second violin positions with the American Youth Symphony Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic Youth Symphony Orchestra, and the Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra. She has had the honor of being concertmaster for numerous orchestras around the southern California area as well.

A native of Long Beach, Ms. Nadal is a proud graduate of California State University in Long Beach. She was a scholarship student of Linda Rose and Chan Ho Yun, earning her bachelor's of music degree in the spring of 2007.



Justina Nadal

The Unity Tour review

by LOU CABALDE

ON October 17, 2009 at exactly 7pm, the *Unity Tour* premiered at the BCI University in Randolph, New Jersey. All Seven artists: Pop Diva Kuh Ledesma, Asia's Hottest singing sensation Christian Bautista, Singer-Comediennes Nanette Inventor and Jograd dela Torre, Stage Actor Carlo Orosa, Up and Coming Songstress Isabella and the young balladeer from the hit reality TV show, *Britain's Got Talent*, Charlie Green fired up the stage as they opened the show with an energetic song.

The audience were thrilled to see their favorite stars united in one stage with one goal, which is to give hope and inspiration to all Filipinos in the US. All Seven artists have devoted their time and talent for this purpose and at the same time help raise funds for the Typhoon victims back in the Philippines as part of the proceeds will go to the almost 86,000 families displaced by Typhoon Ondoy and Typhoon Pepeng.

It was indeed a night filled with fun and entertainment as Loads of Laughter were provided by Nanette inventor and Jograd dela Torre. Nanette, introduced her new character as Madame Lucky Chan, that left the audience laughing their hearts out.

It was without a doubt that Christian Bautista was the heartthrob of the group. Women in the audience went wild as Christian went on stage and sang songs from his newly released album under Universal Records entitled *Romance Revisited* which featured songs of Jose Mari Chan.

Carlo Orosa, being no stranger on stage, gave a song and dance number as he portrayed the character of Moses.

A trip down memory lane was provided by the young balladeer from the UK, Charlie Green who gave his soulful rendition of the song *Smile*

Up and Coming Songstress, Isabella serenaded the audience with songs that gave the message of hope and inspiration.

While Kuh Ledesma sang her timeless love songs and gave messages to help uplift the Filipino spirit.

The audience were also given the chance to share their blessings by dropping off their donations for the victims of Typhoon Ondoy and Typhoon Pepeng at the concert venue. Donations that were received that night will be packed and delivered to Manila to be distributed to those who needs it the most.

"When we first conceptualized this concert, wala pang Typhoon Ondoy at Pepeng. After seeing the massive devastation brought about by the two typhoons this concert is coming at the right time for Filipinos in the US and Canada to unite and share their blessings to the almost 86,000 families who were displaced by the typhoon," says Kuh Ledesma

Catch the *Unity Tour* concert tonight at 7pm at the Long Beach Convention Center's Terrace Theater on October 24.

Kuh Ledesma along with the other artists of *Unity Tour* continues to encourage all Filipinos in the United States and Canada to unite with them and join them in this great cause, to help the Victims of Typhoon Ondoy.

This will be the group's last stop in the US and your last chance to drop off your donations at the concert venue. Donations will be accepted either in cash or in kind and will be packed and delivered to Manila thru Forex Cargo.

The *Unity Tour* is brought to you by Headline Concepts together with Caselin Productions and JIR Foundation.

For ticket inquiries please call 1-877-KUHL-777 (1-877-584-5777) www.unitytourconcert.com.

(Advertising Supplement)



Bottom row, left to right: Carlos Ramirez, Alan Wong, host of the Celestial Beauties Pageant and an actor from 'Hannah Montana', Ella Tesoro, Young Teen America's Celestial Beauty '09, Stefanie Abejuela, Miss America's Celestial Beauty '09, Princess MZR, our major sponsor, Graeme Warring, business partner of Princess MZR; top row, left to right: Kristofer Abejuela, Ellen Abejuela, M.D., Timeless Beauty, Cynthia Tesoro, Lourdes Baron of Duches Lourdes Productions, Inc., founder of America's Celestial Beauties.

OUR environment has taken a toll because of our neglect and abuse. Thus promoting awareness on how to care for the environment is especially important at these times. This is the inspiration behind the establishment of the America's Celestial Beauties Pageant, which was held last June. America's Celestial Beauties is the only eco-friendly international beauty pageant based in the USA. Two of the winners recently went for a visit to the Philippines where they were warmly welcomed at the Laurel Mansion in Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City.

