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All praises for FASO

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earthquake hit the city at the exact time the FASO was being cheered, rooted and applauded for its unforgettable debut performance.

May 17 was an unprecedented date for the Fil-Am community. Roger and Cora Oriol, together with Lito Cruz, were being congratulated by one and all for having the vision and the passion to form America's first Fil-Am symphony orchestra. Maestro Bob Shroder and his over 50-member orchestra truly gave a most outstanding performance proving to the world that the Filipino is truly world-class in its musical and artistic ability. Adding to the majestic performance of FASO was the superb singing of Joey Albert, Stephanie Reese, Pete Avendano and Kit Navarro, plus the unbelievable power and grace of Ruby Karen. No one came out of the theatre who wasn't totally impressed and proud to be a Filipino.

The people who trooped to the Saban Theatre to watch the Filipino American Symphony Orchestra gala concert were all one in heaping praises for the evening's historical performance. Here are some special quotes from some special people:

"The concert more than met my expectations. They truly make us proud to be a Filipino. They've

given added honor again to the Filipino American community here in Southern California. Not only in Southern California but throughout the United States because they are the first and only Filipino American Symphony Orchestra. So, I encourage everyone to come and support their future performances. It's a treat. Invite your friends here in the US to come and witness their great performance."—Philippine Consul General Mary Jo Aragon, Los Angeles Consulate

"This is so phenomenal. I just think it's about time we have this. I'm so proud to be a part of this evening."—Jennifer Paz, formerly of *Miss Saigon*

"It was great and I'm so happy and proud that Roger and Cora had the FASO to show the world and the rest of the US that we have it too and to make use of our local talents and not have to import talents from the Philippines to do things here in the US."—Celia Defato, Kultura Philippines Folk Arts

"The orchestra was amazing. This one is specifically special because it's really showing the culture of the Philippines. I've never seen anything like it. I've seen people cry in the event. It's so emotional. I'm organizing an event with the Los Angeles mayor

to get exposure for this orchestra. This is an amazing event."—Hogan Lee, Asian Professional Exchange

"I think this is the best thing the Filipinos have ever done and I'd like to say congratulations to Roger and Cora because I think this is going to be a nostalgic but very historical event."—Eddie Sotiangco, Chairman, Sotiangco Group of Companies

"The concert is awesome. It's outstanding and right now, I'm speechless. FASO, you guys are like off the charts right now. mean that!"—Edsel Godwin Sotiangco

"This is fantastic. You made history. You made the Filipino community very, very proud. This is immeasurable. Great show!"—Errol Santos, Business Development Consultant, Hollywood Presbyterian Center

"It's amazing how Filipinos are coming out and showing what we're really made of. It's so exciting. Filipinos are starting to show their talents and making it known to the rest of the world."—Rich Cabael, CEO, VuQo Inc.

"Very passionate. Very exciting. First of many, I hope."—David Benoit, Composer, Pianist, Conductor

"This is actually the first time I'm watching an orchestra and I'm actually speechless. It's just a very exciting thing. I love it."—R. Santos, Los Angeles

"I think it's awesome. It's really, really nice."—Mary Ann Pagsibigan-Pimenta, Bander Law Firm

"We enjoyed it very much. Very good work!"—Dan Manuel/ Glen Treibitz, Hollywood Piano

"I'm so happy this evening. Dreams really do come true, you know. Roger and Lito, congratulations! We keep doing big things for the Filipino. Yay!"—Cecile Ramos, president of Historic Filipinotown Neighborhood Council

"I think it's been an amazing performance. It's a pride and a pleasure to watch so many talented people of all ages perform. It's so great to be here."—Catherine Banales, Los Angeles County Music Center

"Quite exciting! Hopefully, there'll be many, many more concerts to see."—John Claude Gummo, The Cascades. ■

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