

Awards: Artists in government

Ang kahusayan ng sining sa isang kabu-bayan ay isang turay na salamin ng ka-ranuran at kasaysayan ng isang bansa. Nasa himig, nasa tula, nasa eskultura, arkitektura, lahat ng sulatin ng ating mga alagad ng sining ang turay na ka-luluv ng ating lahi.

These are excerpts from the extem-poraneous remarks delivered by President Ferdinand E. Marcos at the conferment ceremonies of the National Artist Awards at the Cultural Center of the Philippines last June 12, 1974. Continuing in the same spirit but on a different distinct aspect from the National Artist Awards, the Cultural Achievement Awards sponsored by the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) and the Philippine Govern-ment Cultural Association (PGCA) conferred honors on those in the service of the government whose works in the field of arts and letters contribute to cultural development in the New Society.

The first conferment ceremony was held last September 17 at the CCP Theater for the Performing Arts. Ac-cording to Roman A. Cruz Jr., GSIS Manager and President of the PGCA and Director Lucrecia A. Kasilag of the CCP, the Cultural Achievement Awards was initiated to commemorate the New So-ciety's third anniversary. Recipients of the awards are Presidential Assistant Dr. Guillermo C. de Vega, painter and art director Mauro Malang Santos, composer



GSIS Manager Roman Cruz congratulates Secretary Guillermo de Vega as other awardees, Felipe de Leon and Mauro Malang Santos applaud.

Felipe P. de Leon and musical director and popular song composer Miguel Velarde Jr.

Pioneering in a massive dynamic movement of gathering all the different government offices into one cohesive cultural group, the PGCA's main ob-jective is the re-awakening and activa-tion of cultural consciousness among government officials and employees whose creative instincts are mostly stifled by a workaday world of routine and stereotyped bureaucratic functions. The association started with the merging of the choral groups from different mem-ber-agencies of the Government Cor-poration Athletic Association. The joint chorus was called *Koro ng Kakapok* or *Kapisangang Kalihangan ng mga Kawani ng Pamahalaan*. In 1965, a council on

cultural affairs was created under the Office of the Economic Coordination (OEC) General Circular No. 49. In the OEC Cultural Conference in Baguio City in the same year, cultural policies for member-agencies were conceptualized. A cultural festival followed in 1966 which featured Philippine music, dance and drama. In 1970, active members of the council Atty. Jose S. Relunia and Prof. Vicente M. Sales of GSIS and Cesar U. Sevilla of the National Power Cor-poration (NPC) envisioned an even wider organization which would include as many offices as possible. A meeting of representatives from different offices was held on October 1, 1970 during which time the Constitution of the as-sociation was approved. The occasion marked the birth of the PGCA or the

Samahang Pangkalinangan ng Pamaha-lan ng Pilipinas.

From these beginnings came forth the renaissance of culture in the civil service. With 181 member-agencies to-day, the PGCA has become a major cul-tural force in the country.

A positive force

Although nationalism comes in many forms, its manifestations through artistic endeavors become a positive force that elicits an instantaneous aes-thetic and patriotic response.

The artist becomes a patriot not only by dying for his country but also by adopting a policy of intense dedica-tion to its cultural origin and history. Through creation, teaching and promotion, he achieves results of tremendous impact in the tradition of heroes and statesmen.

This impact becomes doubly so when the artist is in the public service because his name wields more influence and his area of operation becomes na-tionwide reaching the greatest number of people.

The four awardees

Heading the list of the awardees, Presidential Assistant Dr. Guillermo C. de Vega was cited for his two books, *Ferdinand E. Marcos: An Epic and Film and Freedom* which is about movie cen-sorship. Secretary de Vega is chairman of the Board of Censors.

Prof. Felipe P. de Leon whose music reflects his deep patriotic sentiments is President of the Filipino Society of Composers and Publishers (FILSCAP) and Technical Assistant on Cultural Af-fairs in the Office of the President. He has composed music for the New Society such as the *Bagong Lipunan Hymn*, *Bagong Pagsilang March*, *Tayo'y Magtanim*, *Awit ng Magasaka*, *Alay ng Puso* and *Alay ng Kabataan*.

Mauro Malang Santos is painter, graphic art designer and member of the Textbook Board. He was cited for his designs of New Society posters "which effectively carry the message of change;" layouts and designs for special publications of the Office of the President and the First Lady and most especially for his design of the significant New Society symbol—the Philippine flag waving a new day.

Mike Velarde, popular song com-poser, member of the Games and Amuse-ments Board and musical director for stage and movies was cited for his numer-ous song compositions such as *Ikaw, Mi-namahal Kita*, *Gabi at Araw*, *Ikaw ay akin*, *Magpakailanman* and most especially for *Dahil Sa Iyo* which has become identified with the Philippines. His initia-tive for acquainting the Filipino audience with the Zarzuela and its revival through such presentations as *Walang Sugat* and *Minda Mora* adapted to contemporary events endeared him to the hearts of Zarzuela aficionados.

The awardees were given scrolls and cash prizes of P2,000.00 each on the awarding night. But more than that, they have attained the distinction of being the "firsts" among government personnel to represent artistic excellence in the public service. —R.G.R.

What is Filipino music?

PROFESSOR Felipe Padilla de Leon's compositions symbolize the music of the new order. The *Bagong Lipunan Hymn*, *Bagong Pagsilang March*, *Tayo'y Magtanim* and so many others of his works reflect the spirit of the times—discipline, optimism, social change, industry and progress. But he is known all over the country not only because of his marches but also because of his sym-phonc works, operas (*Noli Me Tangere*) and several concertos.

In all these musical works, Prof. de Leon awakens Filipino culture con-sciousness. He is one national-artist who literally lives, breathes, creates *for, by and of* his culture. His profound com-mitment to his country is shown by his promotion of Filipino music and Fili-pino culture through radio programs and lecture demonstration recitals.

His radio program "Mga Himig Ng Ating Lahi" aired every Saturday at 8:00 P.M. over DPE Radio 2 features the works of Filipino composers performed by Filipino musicians and singers. The program aims to acquaint our people with the beauty and lustre of Filipino music.

Our culture consists of different types of music—Southeast Asian, folk-song, Western classical and jazz, rock and beat.

Prof. de Leon, when asked which

of these musical forms is the truly Fili-pino music, states that "the national identity in music lies not in the form but in the feeling. The feeling that expresses the Filipino in you."

"People abroad, surrounded by in-ternational sounds and musical patterns, easily recognizes Filipino music, the music which they can identify with and to which they can spontaneously say 'Amin Yan,'" Prof. de Leon emphatically pointed out.

Is it the music composed by a Fili-pino? Or the song with the Filipino lyrics? Not being able yet to grasp what he means, I further insisted on being clarified.

He in turn said that music composed by a Filipino cannot necessarily be called Filipino music. He illustrated this with the example of George Bizet who composed a Spanish opera characterized by Spanish musical nuances. The end product is genuine Spanish music. But the surprising thing is, Bizet is a full-blooded Frenchman!

"It follows then that any composer of any nationality can create the music of other nations by using the form and musical idioms of those countries," Prof. de Leon explained.

"What about songs with Filipino lyrics? Can they be categorized as truly Filipino songs?"

On this query, Prof. de Leon re-

torted that Filipino lyrics can be easily written for any local or foreign song. But Filipino lyrics alone cannot suffice for a Filipino musical identity.

As art, according to Ernest Casirer, "is a positive translation of human ex-perience," the translation process results in a new form, a new organism. Translation of the whole gamut of the Filipino ex-perience may result in a truly Filipino music.

Prof. de Leon expounded further on this point. The Asian musical roots found in our *tugaylay, kumintang, awit* and various tribal airs, the East-West assimilated *kundiman, balitaw, darta* and the American jazz with its Amer-ican sounds which is still groping for national identification, are the basic com-ponents for reconciling East-West in-fluences. In the process of development, musicians envision a Filipino jazz, with a native terminology combining the native indigenous instruments and tonal pat-terns of the different tribes with the elements of American jazz. Only then can there be a jazz and rock music with a Filipino sound and character.

And in the long run, the truly Fili-pino music will evolve, out of a con-glomeration of influences, music that Filipinos can identify with. One can be certain that in this evolution, Prof. de Leon will have a hand, directly or indirectly. —ROSALINDA G. ROXAS