

# ✓ The Story of the Philippine Anthem

By DONATO SADSAD \*

THERE is a story connected with the music of the *Philippine Anthem* and another story connected with the words. First let us hear the interesting story of the music which is sometimes called the *Philippine National Hymn*. It is also known as the *Magdalo March* and is occasionally referred to as *Aguinaldo's March*. It is called the *Magdalo March* because Magdalo was the name which General Emilio Aguinaldo used when he was a member of the Katipunan.

It was General Aguinaldo who requested the writing of the music which was composed by Julian Felipe, a local music teacher and composer. When the Battle of Manila Bay was fought between the Americans and the Spaniards, Julian Felipe and his family went to live temporarily at San Francisco del Monte, Cavite. He lived for a while in the house of General Mariano Trias who presented him to General Aguinaldo. Learning of Mr. Felipe's knowledge of music, General Aguinaldo at once requested the composer to write music for the celebration of a declaration of independence. The composer accepted the commission.

On June 11, 1898, in the house at Cavite in the presence of General Trias and others, the composition of Mr. Felipe was played. It was approved by all who heard it. Mr. Felipe then taught the music to the band at San Francisco del Monte, and the following day, June 12, 1898, this band played the music at the

declaration of Philippine independence in Kawit, Cavite.

Now let us hear the story of the words: The words were first written by Jose Palma, a Philippine soldier who was also a writer. When the Katipunan was organized, Mr. Palma joined the revolutionary forces. He was also on the staff of the newspaper *La Independencia* as the editor of the Tagalog section. When the newspaper was transferred to San Fernando, Pampanga, the Tagalog section was discontinued, so again Mr. Palma went to the revolutionary forces as a private soldier. Later he joined the newspaper at Bautista, Pangasinan. It was there that he wrote the words for the *Magdalo March* or *Aguinaldo March*, composed by Julian Felipe. The poem in Spanish was published in *La Independencia* sometime in August or September of 1899. With the singing of the *Magdalo March* the Philippine national flag was unfurled for the first time.

This song is now called the *Philippine Hymn* and is published in the text-books in music in use in the Philippine public schools. It is often referred to as the *Philippine National Anthem*, although as yet the Philippine Assembly has not adopted the song officially.

Such is the story of the *Philippine Anthem*. The music of this song and a free English translation of the words by the Hon. Camilo Osias and M. A. L. Lane will be found in *Book Two* of the Philippine Edition of the *Progressive Music Series*. Every Filipino boy and girl should memorize this song.

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