

YEVTUSHENKO'S 'SHOW'

'A poet's biography as spectacle'



Yevgeny Yevtushenko: Fiery and eloquent voice of young Russia

RECOGNITION

Filipino songs
in concert halls

The Filipino song, it is generally conceded, has come into its own as concert hall music and much of the credit belongs to baritone Aurelio Estanislao. He has been called the "champion of Filipino song" — and rightly so. Estanislao has always believed that the Filipino song deserves more attention and recognition. In this connection, he has seized every opportunity to sing Filipino compositions.

Back in 1956, fresh from the Conservatoire National du Musique de Paris (where he finished with a Premier Prix du chant) and the Mozarteum Academy of Music in Salzburg, Estanislao insisted on singing an all-Filipino program, "Himig ng Pag-ibig." Presently, he is the mainstay of the award-winning "Aawitan Kita," the Filipino musical program shown weekly on television.

Last July 17, Aurelio Estanislao held a solo recital, "Aawitan" (from the Filipino word *awit*, meaning song)

of Tagalog songs at the Phil-Am Life auditorium on United Nations Avenue. Assisted by Professor Regalado Jose, Estanislao sang the old familiar kundimans (love songs) of Nicanor Abelardo, the new songs of Rodolfo de Leon and the avant-garde composition of Ramon P. Santos, Tagulaylay.

Estanislao sang the songs with an artist's sensitivity to the demands of the Filipino language. Filipino, he has declared in an interview (*Woman's*, July 26) is an affectionate language and so the tone of its songs must be endearing. The Filipino song is intimate, full of feeling — the Filipino word for it is *malambing* — and does not lend itself well to "vibrato."

Estanislao is also ever-aware of the fact that song has its roots in poetry which is why he insists on bringing out the right stresses in the lyrics. This insistence on fidelity to the character and nuances of language has earned him as much brickbats as praises. Some critics have accused him of taking liberties with the phrasing of the songs. Estanislao defends his obsession with diction by pointing out that some composers, even eminent ones, are not always careful to fit the notes to the accents within the words. He adds, rather wryly, that the taking of these "liberties" is his prerogative as interpreter.

As interpreter, Estanislao has not

fallen into the common pitfall of European-trained Filipino singers — that of applying European opera techniques to the local musical stage. At Tuesday night's *Aawitan*, Estanislao's renditions were devoid of the histrionics usually associated with Italian and German opera. This is not to say that Estanislao sang without feeling. He sang the Filipino songs with all the lambing of a lover serenading his beloved — which was quite fitting since most of the songs in the repertoire were addressed to the fair sex.

Aurelio Estanislao is the country's sole exponent of the French *chanson* and the German *lieder* and, as someone has observed, he sings French songs like a Frenchman and German songs like a German. Perhaps Estanislao's real talent lies in being able to accord a song with the feeling and quality of the language in which it was written. This particular kind of virtuosity is what has earned him the role of soloist in the Rittersaal and Mirabell series of the Salzburg festival. He has participated in various other musical festivals both in Europe and the United States and has recorded for the leading record companies on the continent. For these and many more outstanding achievements, Estanislao has won the honor of being the first TOYM (Ten Outstanding Young Men) awardee in music.

Poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko, first of the Soviet "young lions" to speak out for literary freedom during the post-Stalin era, is still, after almost two decades, the eloquent voice of young Russia. The fiery Yevtushenko abhors silence, just like fellow-Russian Maxim Gorki who once declared "Let there be an outcry, let there be abuse, let there be confusion; anything rather than silence, dead, icy silence."

In his continuing battle against dead, icy silence, Yevtushenko has revived the Russian tradition of poetry as protest, a tradition which began with Alexander Blok and which reached its agitated peak in the rantings of Mayakovsky.

In the early 1950s, as leader of modernist movement of protestin youth, Yevtushenko read his poetry anywhere and everywhere in the Soviet Union. During the past decade Yevtushenko has held public recitations of his poetry (he calls them "poetry concerts") in other countries as well. Since 1960, he has held poetry concerts in 49 countries and has been widely acclaimed in all Yevtushenko's eloquence is such that audiences get frenzied just listening to him.

Last July 16, Filipino esthetes were afforded the opportunity to see and hear Yevtushenko in a poetry concert at the Cultural Center. For a full hour and a half, the audience, which included the First Lady, Mrs. Imelda Marcos, sat mesmerized by the mystique of one man-poet Yevgeny Yevtushenko.

The concert began with the poem "I Fell Out of Love With You," which was read in its English translation by award-winning Filipino poet, Rolando Tinio. (The evening's program called for the recitation of Yevtushenko's poems in English, then in Russian.) Tinio, thin, wiry, looking very much like the university professor that he is, read the poems *Incantations*, *Stolen Apples* and *People* as though they



Estanislao: A champion