



## **THE ARTS GOING BACK TO NORMAL?**

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*View From The Wings*

### **THE ARTS GOING BACK TO NORMAL?**

By Pablo A. Tariman

If recent developments are of any indication, I think the performing arts are going back to normal.

Young musicians from the Manila Symphony Junior Orchestra recently performed live at Paco Park and the entire ensemble saw action in a Makati village concert.

Meanwhile, the winning streak of Filipino cello prodigy Damodar das Castillo, 13, continues when he recently qualified as one of the 60 contestants world-wide who qualified in the XI International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians.

“I am pleased to congratulate you on our acceptance of your application and confirm your participation!” Ivan Shcherbak, director of the XI International Tchaikovsky Competition for Young Musicians emailed the young Castillo.



*Conductor Jeffrey Solares recording Filipino classics with young musicians of the Manila symphony Junior Orchestra.*

Considered the most prestigious music competition in the world, the XI Tchaikovsky Competition attracted more than 900 musicians from 23 countries.

Only 60 young musicians qualified among them the Filipino cellist.

Earlier, the young cellist made music history when he won a total of five first prizes in international competitions among them the 2017 First North Competition International Music Autumn (online), the 2nd ||Talinn, Estonia 2018 Competition for Young Artists, the 3rd International Artur Rubinstein Competition in Competition in Dusseldorf, Germany (2020), the 4th Young Ludwig International Music Competition in Berlin, Germany (2020) and lately the 5th 2021 Musica Goritiensis in Gorizia, Italy.

Castillo is in town and has just finished recording the Elgar cello concerto with the Manila Symphony Orchestra (MSO) under conductor Jeffrey Solares.

The live recording session done at the Black Box Theater in Circuit Makati drew applause from the musicians themselves.

Remarked Sara Maria Gonzales, associate concertmaster of the MSO after the recording session: "You continue to inspire us! Your tones were so rich and full of color and yes, full of life. Bravo!"

A full music scholar of the Salzburg Mozarteum in Austria under Barbara Lübke-Herzl, Castillo is in town to prepare for the Tchaikovsky Competition which will be held first quarter of 2022 in Moscow in the first rounds and then in Chengdu, China for the last round.

He was last heard in the country in 2019 in an outreach concert at the Nelly Gardens in Iloilo city with where he received two standing ovations along with pianist Dingdong Fiel.

Barring pandemic health restrictions, Castillo is tentatively scheduled to perform in Pasig City, Catanduanes and Iloilo City early next year with pianist Dingdong Fiel.

Pianist Cecile Licad will do her first online recital in December to raise funds for the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra Society, Inc.

Spearheaded by Rustan's Nedy Tantoco, the recital to be livestreamed for Philippine audiences will take place at the historic Lotus Club in New York. The venue is a favorite of literary giants among them Mark Twain.



*Pianist Cecile Licad during her last recital at the Nelly Garden in Iloilo City.*

“I am thrilled by this project,” said Licad. “It is wonderful way of reaching out to my countrymen during the Christmas season. I’d like to thank Nedy Tantoco for always being imaginative and thinking of me.”

Videographer of this recital is Scott Steiner with whom she had worked with along with Wynton Marsalis on the film “Louis” directed by Daniel Pritzker.

Watch out for more details in next announcement.

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Arthur Espiritu – the country’s premier tenor – is back on the opera stage after lying low at some points during the pandemic.

He reprised his Alfredo (La Traviata) in Basel (Switzerland) last Nov. 14 with seven more performances until January 8, 2022.

Then he starts rehearsals for Lucia di Lammermoor in Leipzig end of January next year. It will run until May 2022.



*Tenor Arthur Espiritu as Faust in a St Gallen production in Switzerland.*

In between, he will appear in an opera gala concert at the IsarPhilharmonie in Munich from December 27-30, 2021.

Take note, IsarPhilharmonie in Munich is no ordinary venue. It opened only last October 8 and a report from Joshua Barone of New York Times went thus: “It was an unusual sight last Friday: the denizens of this wealthy city lifting the hems of their gowns and adjusting their bow ties as they stepped into a rough-around-the-edges industrial space for one of the premier cultural events of the fall. They were entering the lobby of the Isarphilharmonie, a new concert hall far from the old-fashioned grandeur of the Bavarian State Opera or the Herkulessaal, inside the former royal palace.”

The new hall where the Filipino tenor will make another grand debut in a New Year concert with a Munich orchestra is described as a rarity: an ephemeral, prefabricated venue designed with top-level acoustics and built for 40 million euros (about \$46 million) in only a year and a half.

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The subject is the handicapped with inclinations on the arts.  
Can they possibly compete with promising artists with more fortunate aspiring artists their age?

UNESCO Artist for Peace director Cecile Guidote Alvarez took me to task for ignoring her calls to enlist handicapped artists in my outreach concerts in Pasig and other places.

I couldn't tell her my concerts have special audiences and I am sure the handicapped have their own where their talents will be better appreciated without inviting comparisons.



*Cecile Guidote Alvarez with fellow cultural workers and supporters namely Dr. Viktor Sebek, Dr. Lordinio Vergara, Councilor Lim, Chairman, Philippine Normal University (PNU) President Dr. Bert J. Tuga, and Manila Hotel President and former senator Joey D. Lina.*

Said Alvarez: "What we're all fighting for is equity of opportunities, respect for cultural diversity but unified as one global community. That's what we're going to allow the

world to see. If they think of Greece as the one who started the Olympics games, they're going to remember the Philippines which started this global cultural movement. Not by force but by art and media."

She said the coming events will actualize the roadmap identified in the May 2018 Manila Declaration for the launch of the International Peace and Climate Justice Movement — not by force but through art under UNESCO patronage.

Supporting this project are arts patrons from the senate, Dr. Viktor Sebek, Dr. Lordinio Vergara, Councilor Numero "Uno" Lim, Teddy Locsin, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, President Rodrigo Duterte, National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), Nick Lizaso, Chairman, Philippine Normal University (PNU) President Dr. Bert J. Tuga, and Manila Hotel President and former senator Joey D. Lina.

Meanwhile, the 9-day event will feature an Art Camp, a festival of live performances, a forum to forge platform of action focused on people, peace and prosperity through partnerships.

Director Frank Rivera will handle the workshop for the prisoners, Neni Miranda for the ASEAN Art Camp which will be held at the Philippine Normal University, Dr. Ted Everest Esguerra will handle the workshop for the health workers, Gigi Felix Velarde will handle the PWD workshops, Ed Pagayon will be handling the refugees and dislocated indigenous communities workshop, and Joland Santos for comics. For more information, you can go to <https://manilasdgevent.info> or reach Cecile Guidote Alvarez at 09178711161/ 09158983947.

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While the Manila Symphony Orchestra (MSO) and the Manila Symphony Junior Orchestra (MSJO) are eventually preparing for live concerts with live recordings, it's a different ballgame at the turf of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra.

Section musicians have turned soloists in the PPO recital series. It is their alternative way to reach out to audiences from November 2021 to June 2022 streamed via the CCP and PPO Facebook Pages at 8pm.

It can hardly be called a recital as instrumentalists are limited to one piece per series and with a repertoire that will no doubt baffle even regular concertgoers. Nevertheless, it is a good opportunity to learn new repertoire for various instruments.

To illustrate, the first in the series opens with flutist Hercules Santiago performing Otar Taktakishvili's Sonata for Flute and Piano on November 26.

Second is clarinetist Ariel Sta. Ana who will interpret Robert Schumann's Fantasiestucke Op. 73 and Michele Mangani's Pagina d' Album for Clarinet and Piano on December 31.

French horn player Ernani Pascual welcomes the New Year with the third recital as he interprets Hermann Eichborn's Sonate fur Waldhorn und Klaiver, op. 71 on January 28, 2022.

Next in the series is trumpet player Glober Calambro as he performs Paul Hindemith's Sonate on February 25.



Giancarlo Gonzales (Cello)

*Cellist Giancarlo Gonzales of the PP.*

Next performer is cellist Giancarlo Gonzales with a rendition of Claude Debussy's Cello Sonata and Svante Henryson's Black Run on March 25.

Next is violinist Dino Akira Decena who will perform two works by Nicanor Abelardo: Sonata for Violin and Piano, and Romanza on April 29.

The last in the series is viola player Rey Casey Concepcion as he performs Paul Hindemith's Viola Sonata Op. 11, No. 4 and Max Bruch's Romanze Op. 85 on May 27.

Contrabass player Ariston Payte III ends the series with a performance of Adolf Misek's Sonata No. 2, Op. 6 on June 24, 2022.