

# Greatest hitmakers rock St. Peter's College in Jersey City

By RICHARD M. REYES

MY DAD used to play cassettes we brought over from the Philippines in 1982: Marco Sison, Hajji Alejandro, Rico J. Puno, Nonoy Zuniga, Rey Valera. I was young when he would play them, and I did not know the faces of these singers. However, after years of hearing their music, I became familiar with their names and music. Now, more than 20 years of living in the United States when I heard that they were performing in New Jersey, I was honored with the opportunity to cover the event as a photographer, reporter, and as a fan whose music was introduced by my dad. My dad has an uncanny way of relating music to life events. He grew up learning the piano and violin; and though he did not become a professional musician; music is an integral part of his life.

These gentlemen have demonstrated through the years that music and song have been their way to express themselves, starting with their closest loved ones and families up to the international fanbase that has grown over decades. The fans reflected these feelings when

Marco Sison sang up-close by walking off the stage. At one point, Marco Sison said, "O sige kodakan na lang!" Nonoy Zuniga shared the story of how one of his legs is artificial; he was thankful to God for "a second [opportunity at] life." Rey Valera engaged the crowd by recalling how fans were in the past, "Intro pa lang sigawan na." The crowd responded immediately by cheering, screaming and waving their hands in the air. Hajji Alejandro wowed the crowd with hits from the 70s. Rico J. Puno, "the total entertainer" took the reins with jokes that cannot be published. Attorney Michael J. Gurfinkel with his wife Millie flew in from California and echoed the fans' feelings and thoughts.

Atty. Gurfinkel thought the show to be "extremely enjoyable" and "totally entertaining." He continued, "Each of the Hitmakers has his own individual talent, and together, you get [five] for the price of one." For him the most memorable moment, "is always when all of them combine to make the audience blush with their jokes." He has helped

them, "obtain their temporary working visas for previous performances." He did state that, "most of them [the performers] love the Philippines and are not immigrating at this time." He closed by saying that he would recommend the "Greatest Hitmakers" and "watch them again and again...Filipinos grew up with these songs, so watching the Hitmakers not only brings back memories, but also gives Filipinos abroad a little bit of 'home,' with music and comedy from a great entertainment group."

The Greatest Hitmakers lived up to their reputation as "the Greatest Hitmakers." Especially, since through their performance they have brought back memories to fans that have followed their careers; they were also able to reach out to new fans in the form of the next generation of teenagers and young adults in the audience. There were also fans like me, who became fans through their parents. More importantly, they have kept OPM (Original Pilipino Music) alive and thriving. ■



# Stephanie Reese set to conquer Carnegie Hall

AT THE end of her first Manila concert last May, Stephanie Reese told a visibly-impressed audience that the show was an audition to be accepted as a "true Filipino" performer.

Less than half a year after this, on November 7, this "true Filipino" will be performing at the famous and historic Carnegie Hall in New York City not to audition but to wow the audience once again with her very impressive vocal talent.

Unlike the Filipino audience that Filipino-American Stephanie said was very hard to please, her US followers have long been in awe of her wonderful performances in concerts and on theater.

Born and raised in Seattle, WA, Stephanie—whose mother is from Bicol, Philippines—has already performed for diplomats in Russia and celebrities in Europe.

Even before these, she is already a veteran of the theater stage, having performed as Kim in the German production of Miss Saigon, Esmeralda in the Disney World Premier of the Hunchback of Notre Dame and Princess Tuptim in the King and I at London's West End.

After this long theater stint, Stephanie came back to the United States to write, direct and star in her autobiographical one-woman show that she called *The Journey*. For this, she received rave reviews in several cities where she performed, including Seattle, Los Angeles and San Francisco.

Stephanie was also named artist and performer of the year at the Las Vegas second annual

trade show and was recognized at the 19th annual reflections award for arts and entertainment. Just last year, Stephanie

is happening. It has been my dream to perform solo at the Carnegie," Stephanie shared with local journalists a few days after finalizing the show's date.

When she was younger, Stephanie performed at the Carnegie with her choir group, once when she was a small girl and another when she was a teen-ager.

At the Carnegie show in November, Stephanie will share to the audience her journey to the Philippines and experience with Gawad Kalinga, which she is very actively involved with.

Gawad Kalinga—which literally means "to give care"—is a Philippine-based organization that aims to rebuild a nation one village and community at a time by building homes and communities and by creating livelihood programs for the poorest of the poor in the Philippines.

Stephanie is extremely passionate about her charitable works with Gawad Kalinga. She is currently building a village for 30 families in her name and gives charitable concerts, such as the November concert in New York, to raise funds and create advocacy for this organization.

"On that evening, we will all have the opportunity to build an entire village in the Philippines," Stephanie said excitedly. Proceeds from her November concert in New York will go to Gawad Kalinga to help its main goal of eradicating poverty in the Philippines by 2024.

Stephanie, the "true Filipino," has not only endeared herself to fellow Filipinos because of her versatile vocal talent but her love and concern for the Philippines as well.

And come November, Stephanie Reese will be given another opportunity to showcase her God-given gift of music.

made her Hollywood debut just with a three-day show in celebration of the 10th Anniversary of the Crustacean Restaurant of Beverly Hills. There, she shared the stage with Miss Patti Labelle and Natalie Cole and received a standing ovation for her female rendition of Nessun Dorma.

This performance created much news that Stephanie launched her first big solo concert in the US at Los Angeles' Normandie Casino. At this show, Stephanie received three standing ovations which gave her the title "The Standing Ovation Queen" by Los Angeles' audiences and fans.

On November 7, Stephanie's star will shine brighter at the Carnegie Hall in New York City, to once again wow the crowd with her varied vocal range and fusion of opera pop and theatrical music.

"I still cannot believe this

(Advertising Supplement)

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## The Voice of FilAmerica

Political empowerment is still a treasure that eludes us as a community here in America. While we are the second largest Asian American community in the United States, we have yet to harvest the power that comes from our numbers. The Voice of FilAmerica features elected and appointed officials—regardless of political affiliation—in the different US states who are of Filipino ancestry. As your Filipino American community newspaper, the Asian Journal recognizes the fact that we all have a responsibility towards bringing political empowerment to fruition, especially for our future generations. It is our hope to have our voices heard all over America.

### David Pendleton

Former State Representative of Hawaii  
Board Member, Hawaii Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board

FILIPINO-American David Pendleton, 42, was born in Glendale, Calif., and moved to Hawaii when he was in preschool. He went to Windward Adventist School and then Hawaii Mission Academy. In high school, he already had an interest in government and politics, and was elected class and student council president.

For a short time at La Sierra Campus, he was a pre-med student. But Pendleton soon switched to a history and political science double major with a theology minor. He went on to receive a master's in religion from Loma Linda and became a minister. At the time, he was debating whether the best way to serve in his career was as a minister or in public service. Pendleton decided to get a law degree from the University of Southern California and is admitted to practice law in Hawaii and California.

In 1995, Pendleton moved back to Hawaii where he practiced law and specialized in workers' compensation issues. He also represented clients and argued cases before the Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board.

After a year as an attorney, he ran for the State House of Representatives. He was elected and eventually served four terms (eight years) as a Republican for Kailua and Kaneohe. During his tenure in the Legislature, he served as Minority Floor Leader, Minority Whip and Assistant Minority Leader. His committee assignments included the House Labor and Public Employment Committee. He was named Legislator of the Year in 2000 by the Hawaii Medical Association.

Pendleton is a former school teacher, university administrator, and pastor. He was a Pacific Century Fellow and a Henry Toll Fellow, and previously served on the board of directors of various organizations including the Filipino Chamber of Commerce, Castle Medical Center Strategic Planning Committee, and the Young Lawyers Division of the Hawaii Bar Association. He has been a volunteer faculty member of the Center for Tomorrow's Leaders and is a graduate of the US Marines

Command and Staff College Distance Education Program at Marine Corps Base Hawaii, the HPD Citizens Police Academy, and the East-West Center's New Generation Seminar.

After leaving office in 2004, Pendleton joined Gov. Linda Lingle's staff as a senior policy analyst, focusing on legislation relating to the Departments of Labor and Industrial Relations, Taxation, Budget and Finance, and Hawaiian Home Lands.

In July 2006 the governor appointed him to the Labor and Industrial Relations Appeals Board for a 10-year term. The Board conducts contested case hearings and trials concerning labor and workers compensation matters and other issues before the Department of Labor and Industrial Relations.

In 2002, Pendleton has been selected as Alumnus of the Year by the faculty of the School of Religion at La Sierra University, becoming the first Filipino-American to be honored with the award.

"I am honored and grateful to receive this award as a Filipino-American," said Pendleton. "It underscores the role education plays in the Filipino community. I owe my achievement to my former teachers and professors who took their personal time to inspire me and cultivate me as a student and person."

David and wife, Noemi, have four children: Roland, Raquelle, Danielle, and David II. ■