

Vilma Posadas Teacher of Champions

Written by Cynthia de Castro AJPress
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Over 50 years ago, Yamaha Corporation in Japan, the world's largest manufacturer of musical instruments, started the Yamaha Music Schools to teach music to children and adults. Today, more than 5 million have graduated from Yamaha Music Schools at 6,000 locations around the world with 600,000 students and 20,000 teachers. Of the tens of thousands of teachers in its schools, the only Filipino to have ever received the distinction of attaining the highest grade level in Yamaha's classification of teachers is Vilma C. Posadas.

Vilma Posadas' 12-year stint with the Yamaha School of Music, Philippines where she rose from scholar to Head Teacher was so impressive that she was hired by the largest Yamaha dealer in Southern California to be the Director of its School of Music in the 1980's. She developed the Teachers' Training program for Yamaha Schools, a system that is still in place today. More importantly, she molded the talents and careers of many aspiring young organists who went on to become international champions.

"All the Yamaha schools around the world have a yearly competition with the students from each school. First, local level, tapos, regional, national, and then international. It has been a privilege for me that many of the students I have taught, in the Philippines and here in the US, have become international champions," said Vilma with pride.

Among the champion students of Vilma are Karen Koh, Jason Koh, Tamir Hendelman, Noel Arce, Manuel Panta, Camilla Evangelista, Jovanni De Pedro,

Brent Evangelista, Matthew Evangelista and Rizza Rivera. These gifted musicians are testaments to Vilma's teaching acumen and dedication to her art.

Born in Manila to a family of musicians, Vilma knew from childhood that her life-long career will be in the field of music. Her father, Dr. Jose R. Posadas, was a music aficionado who won his wife, Emma Cosme Posadas, thru his skillful singing and guitar playing. "*Magaling siya mag-harana kaya napasagot niya ang*

ko

," revealed Vilma. Emma is a retired professor in piano and music, having taught for more than 40 years in Pangasinan. Their union bore six children who all became accomplished musicians—Vilma, Romy (the Philippines' King of Jazz), Juliet, Jesse or Boy, Vicky and Celia.

A graduate of the St. Paul Conservatory of Music with major in Piano and Music Education, and minor in voice and conducting, Vilma is not only an outstanding music teacher but an accomplished performer as well. She won the Judges' Distinguished Performance Award in the Yamaha Electone Regionals in San Diego in 1983. She has been invited to perform in concerts at Asilomar in Monterey, California, the largest organ festival in the United States, as well as in other major American cities. A member of the California Music Teachers Association, Vilma has also hosted and performed for a number of television programs in the US and the Philippines.

After working with Yamaha, Vilma established her own Music Studio in Walnut, California. For the past two decades, the Vilma Posadas Music Studio has quietly but consistently been recognizing achievements in music among its young and adult students. Through the years it has produced not only renowned musicians but also outstanding citizens who have made their mark in academic, professional and other fields of endeavor.

This constructive role in the community has won for Vilma Posadas Music Studio honors from key sectors. State Senator and 31st District Congresswoman-elect Hilda Solis has cited the music school for its "dedication to the artistic development of children and adult musicians of the San Gabriel Valley".

Vilma's personal method of teaching is unique. Explaining her technique with *Asian Journal*

, Vilma said, "Recently, Yamaha Philippines asked me to share my methodology in their schools. The Yupangcos offered to publish a book if I will write it – about my unique methods in teaching and playing the piano. This is the product of years and years of experience. You know, my dream is to change the method of teaching piano. The old way is treating the student like a technician. Here are the notes and the keys –learn them. Anybody can learn to read and play notes—that's an acquired skill. I want to develop my students as musicians, not as technicians. I teach my students by ear, by imitation. The root of the education activity lies in one basic idea—recognize the musical ability that everyone has and develop the talent to the point where people can create and play their own music. I'm so excited to share this."

Of the many musicians that she has molded and taught, none give Vilma greater pride and joy than her three sons who have all inherited the family's musical genes. "My husband, Arturo Maramba, is a chemist by profession, but a musician at heart. Kaya naman, lahat ng anak namin talagang musically inclined din. The eldest, Arturo III, is a musical arranger of bands, the music director of Our Lady of Refuge in Long Beach, an elementary music teacher and a recording engineer. The second, Jose Mari or Joey, is a bassist of famous country, folk and jazz singer Ricky Lee Jones. He has his own band, the Ninja Academy, and is also a recording engineer. Our youngest son, John Paul or JP, is also a bassist and a music teacher. All three of them travel extensively on music tours around the world."

On Sunday, Oct 25, Vilma Posadas Music Studio will hold its 16th concert in Walnut City where her latest students will demonstrate their musical prowess,

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molded and refined by their master teacher.

"This gives me great joy—to help my students realize their artistic and personal potentials. Di ba, the greatest proof of a teacher's worth is the excellence of her students? That's how I measure my strength and success," Vilma shared. "I'm so blessed," she added.

Judging by the many champions she has produced, Vilma Posadas is truly a champion herself. Blessed indeed!