

SPEECH OF PRESIDENT FIDEL V. RAMOS
CCP GALA PERFORMANCE BY ENCANTADA BALLET
AUGUST 20,1992

Mrs. Bing Escoda, CCP President, National Artist Baby Locsin, National Artist Bing Kasilag, your excellencies of the diplomatic corps, special guest, our beloved First Lady, ladies and gentlemen, mga kasama, mga kaibigan at mga kababayan.

I understand that the dancers of Ballet Philippines wanted to pay a courtesy call on Malacanang when they arrived from their very successful international tour in Spain, Germany and India last July 12. They changed their mind, however, as they did not want to get in the way of the first 100 days of my administration.

Ngunit mga kasama napag-alaman ko rin na talagang hit sila sa Europa kung saan sila nakatanggap ng standing ovation for at least 22 present calls sa pagpapalaganap ng kultura at sining ng ating mahal na Inang Bayan. For this, hindi na sila ang kailangang pumunta sa Malacanang. For this they did not go anymore to Malacanang. Ako na ang magko-courtesy call sa kanila. Ako na ang magko-courtesy call sa kanila bilang mga artistang Pilipino na dapat tangkilikin ng kanilang mga kababayan.

Tonight is the first night that I have come as President of the Republic to the Cultural Center of the Philippines. As Bing has said barely 50 days in office I have prioritized my visit to this premier arts institution of the country to underscore the importance that my administration intends to place on culture and the arts.

Most everyone concedes that economic rehabilitation and political reconciliation should be the priorities of this administration and I agree. However, I also believe that the rehabilitation of the country is premised on a renewal of values which in turn has to be based on a strong sense of nation.

One hundred years ago, Jose Rizal pointed out that the backwardness of the nation was due not to the indolence of the Filipino but in large measure and I quote him "to the lack of a national sentiment among the natives", a man in the Philippines Rizal said is only an individual, he is not a member of a nation".

Then as now the major problem of many a Filipino is that he does not feel that he belongs to a larger community to which he is responsible and to whose welfare he must subsume his own. Let to himself stiff flaunders for lack of firm values. He has no definite ways of looking at the world. He lacks clear standards for the things he does. At the very worst anything goes, anything is negotiable.

This lack of a national ethos derived from the lack of a clear identity of nation reeling from the violence of two colonializations which destroyed our native societies, the Filipino is still in the process of synthesizing himself as a person of defining this cultural identity. For the definition of what we are

now it depends on our artists to shape our past and present into meaningful expressions who can make us understand and appreciate the many ways of being Filipino and being human and who can keep alive the idea as to which we must continue to strive as individuals, as communities and as human beings.

Such a national culture will be formed by artists who deeply understand their past and are rooted in the ethnic and folk cultures. And yet are open to influences from east to west that can enrich the expression of the native. Most of all it will be created by artists who are committed to the present, artists who are willing to grapple with the realities, social, political, economic and cultural that confront the Filipino from day to day whether in our urban centers or in the rural areas. Artists who realize that what they create will help mold the final shape that our society will take.

It is for this reason that I have decided to time my visit to the CCP with the performance of Encantada, a piece of modern choreography that borrows but successfully indigenizes the modern dance in order to carve a niche for our generation. Set in the period of colonialization the dance dramatizes the universal struggle between nature and the forces of manipulation and dominance whether foreign or local. We therefore congratulate Ballet Philippines and our Filipino artists, Agnes Locsin, choreographer, Joey Ayala, composer, Al Santos, and many others for this production of an all Filipino dance drama which distills our past experience into a coherence statement about the present. With works like this we can indeed recapture our heritage and make it strengthen the core of culture that will result in a national ethos and lead us to our renewal as a nation.

I close by reiterating once more to all of you, mga kababayans and our dear friends from abroad that you can depend on this administration for the support necessary to make our culture and arts spread not only within our borders but to other lands.

Salamat sa inyong lahat

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