

# Philippines Hosts Global Launch of Peace Movement: “Not by Force but by Art”

under UNESCO Patronage in celebration of International Arts Education Week and the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the International Theatre Institute, and led by Mrs. Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, founder of PETA (Philippines Educational Theatre Association) and President of the Philippine Center of the International Theatre Institute.

*By: Kateryn Lina McReynolds*

MANILA, Thursday, May 31, 2018—Last week, the Philippines had the unique honor of hosting the inaugural international forum and arts festival, “Art Speak for Peace”, under the patronage of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO). This universal peace movement, “Not by Force but by Art,” has forged the Manila Declaration, signed by the distinguished international delegates of the conference—ambassadors, parliamentary members, educators, and “Artists for Peace” hailing from countries including China, Colombia, Ecuador, Fiji, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam and of course, the Philippines. The conference, organized by Mrs. Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, was made possible through the Senate Spouses Foundation and the Universidad de Manila, and with volunteer guides from the Department of Education. The primary venues for the four-daylong event were the Senate of the Philippines for conference discussions and the Tanghalang Yaman Lahi Theater of Emilio Aguinaldo College for performances, as well as the Manila Hotel, the Pearl Manila Hotel, Eurotel, and Hotel Jen, with internal transport provided by PARTAS, and dinners hosted by the Department of Tourism-IA (DOT-IA), the Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (OPAPP), and the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP).

Beginning with a grand multi-cultural performance at the Tanghalang Yaman Lahi Theater at EAC on Sunday evening, the colloquium continued the following morning at the Senate of the Philippines. There, the delegates were welcomed at the Plenary Hall as guests, and outstanding opera soprano and UNESCO Artist for peace, Ms. Sumi Jo, rendered “You Raise Me Up”. Furthermore, presentations were given by each delegate on their specific nation’s instances of successful cultural mediation and followed by a collaborative discussion on the use of art as a peaceful and effective

means of conflict resolution within various aspects of society. All delegates agreed that since art is inherently human and common across all cultures, it naturally should be utilized in all humane endeavors, on the local and global levels, applied by both governments and private organizations.

Tuesday was filled with further discussions and the initial drafting of the Manila Declaration. Later that evening, a magnificent array of diverse cultural performances on the Tanghalang Yaman Lahi stage exemplified the spontaneous collaboration which occurs when artists, regardless of background, come together. Directed by Ms. Cecile Guidote-Alvarez and featuring her co-Earthsavers UNESCO Artists for Peace in association with Philstagers Aleve Awardee led by Vince Tañada. The programme adopted a model of an interfaith liturgy, in which performances were interspersed with prayers by representatives of various religions and philosophies. Its successful organization was synergized through partnerships with **PAGCOR, DILG, DPA-H, NCCA, the Goethe Institute-Cebu Pacific, and DFA.**

Performers included the world-famous coloratura soprano opera singer Sumi Jo, ZenDance founder Ms. Sun Ock Lee from Korea; Germany's Brenz Band founder, Mr. Horst Toegel; Chinese national first-class actor and Peking Opera singer Ms. Li Peihong; Vietnamese first-class theatrical performer Ms. Le Ngoc and her cohort; Phillipine Stagers (Philstagers) Foundation; Dr. Sun Ock Lee, creator of ZenDance; Mr. Sooin Shim, Zen Martial Arts Master; award-winning Korean folk song director Ms. Junglan Lim; director and professor of theatre Hyeong-Taek Limb; Ms. Gertaude Hollstein of Germany; Shanghai Theatre Academy performers Lian Wenqing, Chen Pingyi, He Qun and Guo Yuanyuan; professor and acclaimed guzheng player Wu Yang; and masterful musicians of GAGAKU Academy, Mr. Mita Harumi, Ms. Suzuki Yoshie, and Ms. Mita Chihihiro.

Wednesday evening closed the conference with a special dinner at Jen Hotel, accompanied by a program with speeches by the grand organizer Mrs. Cecilia Guidote-Alvarez, the President of the International Theatre Institute Mr. Mohamed Al Akham, representatives from the Philippine Department of Education, as well as a spontaneous explosion of creative performances by artists and staff members.

*Kateryn Lina McReynolds is currently a student of International Relations, Music Theatre, and Film from Princeton University, on a two-month internship with the Philippine Center of ITI from May 20<sup>th</sup> until the end of July 2018.*



*All of the performers joined together on the stage at the finale of the performance on Tuesday evening.*



*Acclaimed Korean performer Dr. Sun Ock Lee beautifully presents ZenDance*



*Le Ngoc Theatre Troupe's the "Five Transformations," a performance incorporating Vietnamese folk music and dance with traditional stories of religious significance*



*Zen Martial Artist and Master, Sooin Shim, skillfully demonstrates the martial arts of Zen Buddhism*



*The Brenz Band, led by Mr. Horst Toegel (far right) and Ms. Gertraude Hollstein (far left), joins together with handicapable musicians of all ages for a beautiful rendition of the Peace Song*

*Photographs by CJ Andaluz*