

'I'mPULSE' concert caps music camp

By THERESE J. CAMET

What better way to learn music than by experiencing it via hands-on projects and interacting with other musicians from other countries.

Last week, the Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF) in cooperation with the Cultural Center of the Philippines brought in 30 young instrumentalists, composers and music experts from Belgium, China, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Spain and Thailand for a 7-day music camp dubbed "I'mPULSE — The First Asia-Europe Music Camp."

The convention, held at the National Arts Center (NAC), in Mt. Makiling, Los Baños, Laguna, on February 2, gave the young musicians the opportunity to exchange ideas and share their respective country's traditional instruments with one another.

Ye-Jim Kim of Korea, for instance, brought her country's traditional haegeum. This is a Korean 2-stringed spike fiddle played with a bow which is inserted in between the two strings called chunghyon and yuhyon.

Pattara Komkhum of Thailand brought their traditional flute called "pinai" while Sile Denvir of Ireland brought an Irish harp, which has been Ireland's national symbol since the 12th century.

Young musicians from the Philippines represented by the Philippine High School for the Arts' Rondalla and Ethnic Ensembles shared some of the Philippines' unique instruments such as the bandurria, octavina and kulintang, among others.

"With ASEF's goal to promote better mutual understanding between Asia and Europe through cultural and people-to-people exchanges, the foundation has come up with four different cultural exchange programs," explained Chulamane Chartsuwana, Cultural Exchange director.

"The first one was the Cultural Exchange project for dance and photography which was first organized in 2002, followed by the visual arts in 2003. Finally in 2004, we thought about organizing a music camp for the young musicians," she continued.

When details for the music camp were finalized late last year, ASEF, immediately coordinated with the Cultural Center of the Philippines as they had chosen the Philippines to be the host for the first Asia-Europe Music Camp.

"We decided to hold ASEF's first music camp in the Philippines because we all know that Filipinos are very good in music and so we asked the CCP to help us arrange a venue for the music camp," related Chartsuwana.

The week-long camp was filled with fun and exciting activities including rehearsals and workshops which were facilitated by professional conductors and musicians led by Dr. Robert Casteels, artistic director of the music camp and Josefino "Chino" Toledo, associate artistic director.

Wrapping up the music camp shall be a concert to be held on Tuesday, February 8, 7:30 p.m. at the CCP Little Theater.

The concert program will premiere seven original compositions written by young composer-delegates of the music camp and a commissioned work by Filipino composer Bob Aves.

These are: "Shades of Opera II" by Shen Ye (China), "Dancing Delusions" by Nilo Alcala (Philippines), "Icore" by Goncalo Lourenco (Portugal), "En route" by Americ Goh (Singapore), "Binalig," "Panangpit" and "Holdoyon Kuy Diwata" by Bob Aves.

"I think this is a great experience not only for me, but for all of us. It gives us the opportunity to meet new friends and learn about other countries' music and culture," said Fausto Coneo, 29, clarinet player from Italy.

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