

60th-Anniversary Production of 'Noli Me Tangere, The Opera' Premieres Jan. 28, 2017 at The Cultural Center of The Philippines

The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) and J&S Productions Inc. will co-present the Philippines' first full-length opera, Noli Me Tangere, The Opera. This rarely staged opera, which premiered at the Far Eastern University in 1957, will mark its 60th anniversary at the CCP Main Theatre in January and February 2017.

December 4, 2016 (FPRC) -- Manila, Philippines--The Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP) and J&S Productions Inc. will co-present the Philippines' first full-length opera, Noli Me Tangere, The Opera. The opera, which premiered at the Far Eastern University in 1957 and made its CCP debut in 1987, will mark its 60th anniversary with a limited six-performance run at the CCP's Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo from January 28 (gala premiere) to February 3, 2017.

Based on Dr. Jose Rizal's classic novel of the same name, Noli Me Tangere, The Opera was written by National Artist for Music Felipe de Leon ("Payapang Daigdig," "Sarong Banggi") and was set to a libretto by National Artist for Sculpture Guillermo Tolentino.

This production, which earlier had critically-acclaimed engagements in New York, Washington D.C., and at the Resorts World Manila, will feature a brand-new staging under the directorial reins of debuting stage director Jerry Sibal, a sought-after event designer in New York City, who is also designing new sets and costumes.

Sibal, who was born and raised in Binondo, Manila, revisits his hometown, albeit centuries earlier, as his inspiration for the show's overall production design.

"Imagine people from all walks of life: Spanish government officials, Chinese merchants, scholars, and the locals converging together at the Old Binondo canal, which is rather filthy, chaotic as precisely depicted in the first chapter of the novel by Rizal (written from 1884-1887).

"The show's sets, which, according to the CCP, are the largest it has ever had for an opera, and my overall directorial concept are very faithful to Rizal's book. Nature-inspired and rustic textures envelop the floor-to-ceiling, multifunctional set pieces on stage. It's like you've found yourself wandering inside the Metropolitan Opera House or a century-old Broadway Theatre in the middle of a busy day in Old Manila. I will also stress more on the violent class struggles of the society at that time," said Sibal.

The show's score and orchestrations, arranged in the Western operatic tradition with overflow passages reminiscent of Mozart, Puccini, and Wagner, and sung in Tagalog, will be played by the newly formed 52-piece Noli Symphony Orchestra under the baton of Maestro Herminigildo Ranera.

At a recent pocket press conference in Quezon City, lead cast members Bianca Camille Lopez (Maria Clara) and Mari Yapjoco (Basilio) performed songs from the opera, "Kay Tamis ng Buhay" and "Gising Na, O Inang Ko," respectively. Accompanied by pianist Marvin Dizon, Nerissa de Juan (Maria Clara understudy) and Renz Nataniel Cruz (male ensemble member) also performed classic kundiman songs. (The complete cast will be presented to the Philippine media in early January

2017.)

An opera in three acts, *Noli Me Tangere, The Opera* follows the story of Juan Crisostomo Ibarra, who returns to the Philippines after pursuing scholarly studies in Europe. He plans to open up a school and marry Maria Clara, his betrothed. However, parish priest Padre Damaso, the archenemy of the Ibarra family, is out to hinder Crisostomo's plans, which creates a dramatic storyline of forbidden love, betrayal, and revenge.

Both the novel and the opera depict the abuses suffered by the native Indios at the hands of Spanish tyrants. Both forms also paint a clear picture of the so-called "social cancer" such as the rotten system of governance, the illicit ways of the church, and the unfavorable trade of the privileged class.

For tickets to the 60th-anniversary production of *Noli Me Tangere, The Opera*, contact J&S Productions Inc. (63926) 038 0548, (63921) 890 3816, (632) 998 2356, or the CCP Box Office (632) 832 3704/06 or visit www.ticketworld.com.ph.

For more information, visit www.NoliMeTangereTheOpera.com or [www.Facebook.com/NoliOperaManila](https://www.facebook.com/NoliOperaManila).

Date & Time: January 28 and February 1-3, 2017 at 8 p.m. | January 29 and February 3, 2017 at 2 p.m.

Venue: Tanghalang Nicanor Abelardo (CCP Main Theater)

Tickets: P3,500 | P2,500 | P2,000 | P1,500 | P1,200 | P1,000

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