



Philippines

## Professor Edna Marcil "Michi" Martinez's Speech Manuscript

Public Lecture: International Contributions of Amateur Orchestras <Tokyo, August 4, 2024>

Good morning. It is good to be here. I feel very much at home.

The continuous effort to collaborate and learn from other amateur orchestras like ours as well as other types of performing groups has always been an important part of our string UP Arco's growth and development. We realize that to have a meaningful existence, we need to collaborate with groups of like-minded people and in the effort of music performance and cultural exchange, realize its benefits go far beyond joyful music making.

These values are what we recognized and now share with the Federation of Japan Amateur Orchestras (JAO) and the Non Profit Organization – World Federation of Amateur Orchestras (NPO-WFAO), which I consider a strong Asian model in building and sustaining the life of community-based amateur orchestras. Our string orchestra's first encounter with JAO and NPO-WFAO was in the Festival held in Fukuoka in 2011.

It was a very impressive but moreover inspiring experience for me and the four student string musicians with me then. To take part in a huge amateur orchestra festival which showcased the three full symphonic orchestras brought much excitement and challenge.

Challenge not in the sense of competing against the other players but rather, the challenge of playing to the best of one's ability and contributing to the beautiful and fulfilling experience of music-making. After that encounter, it was followed by more fruitful exchanges with JAO and NPO-WFAO thru another festival in Shizuoka and the equally prestigious TOYOTA YOUTH ORCHESTRA CAMP (TYOC), which selected student members from the UP Arco has been

fortunate to take part in for several seasons, even before the COVID lockdown, and in its 40th Anniversary camp this year.

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Rather, JAO values good influence in the community, by its members building ties and serving their respective communities. Orchestras that come from less-urbanized locales and the rural areas were observed to have better relational skills, kept stronger ties with members of the community, were good influences in the community, and valued the federation's outreach programs. This is so because they had to co-depend on their community to carry out not only their personal goals but that of the federation's as well.

The support of the orchestra has become a shared endeavor between the amateur musicians and members of their respective communities, by contributing time and effort in promoting culture and arts among themselves. Japanese amateur community orchestras through their regular performances and charity concerts have brought both them and their music closer to the people.

It is this strong sense of community which I believe, is the thread that joins the mindset and the being of the Japanese. It is the idea of doing and achieving things as one group of people that developed in them a shared culture for change specially after going through various challenges of socio-political and socio-economic events as borne in their nation's history.

The idea of doing things together, so as to influence and thereby effect change in each other's lives, has found its parallel in community orchestra-playing.

For the Federation of Japan Amateur Orchestras, participating in community orchestras is a way for amateur musicians to enjoy togetherness more than just music-making. It is an avenue for them to develop the mind, the body, and especially the soul: a person's complete well-being, not solo but in the context of the community.

In so doing, JAO and its arm NPO-WFAO has not only created an impact in their communities and nation but to a wider scale, has influenced nations and cultural societies of the world by their

undertakings. The Philippines, through our string orchestra UP Arco, has gained much wealth in terms of learning and playing orchestral music in a very friendly and encouraging atmosphere.

Participation in the JAO Festivals and TYOC has strengthened our mission of using our discipline and skills in music to create a meaningful appreciation of music in life. It has also encouraged us to find purposeful activities that will uplift those among our people who have less in life but are rich in the spirit of community life and shared experiences. And music-making is one of the best avenues that we see as a vehicle to uplift them.

In this sense, the gift of music has become an equalizer among our people. Engaging in music activities like an orchestra, allows participation of more than one or two persons, thus inculcating interdependence and shared social responsibility and accountability.

An entire nation would actually benefit from the goodwill that such members of society could contribute in their different spheres of influence.

### < Future Activities in the Philippines >

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UP Arco is celebrating our 25th Year of founding, we are looking forward to spreading the positive influence of music as it did to a number of its members beginning with myself, who were trained in small children's string ensembles and string orchestras and eventually the larger amateur orchestra of schools and universities we attended.

Together, current members with some alumni of UP Arco (specially those who are alumni of TYOC and the JAO Festival), are celebrating the culminating year by starting a small children's orchestra in our immediate university community. We hope to start with a number of children who have the same interest in ensemble music playing

and who would eventually fall in love with the discipline and joy of playing music together; thereby preparing them to be our nation's future influencers and movers.

This, much in the same way that Japan gained through the years of dedicated and passionate efforts of the JAO and the NPO-WFAO in sustaining the amateur orchestra life, shared by hundreds of communities in Japan.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to share my learnings. May we all spread the good that amateur orchestra music playing has for all.



## **Prof. EDNA MARCIL “Michi” MARTINEZ**

Special Guest of NPO-WFAO

from the U.P. College of Music and has remained active to this day.

Her experience in orchestra performance began as a violist in the children’s orchestra Pasaknungan Philippines under Prof. Vicente Sales, then with the Philippine Youth Orchestra, the Metro Manila Symphony Orchestra, and the Manila Chamber Orchestra under the batons of Prof. Sergio Esmilla and Prof. Regalado Jose, Sr. respectively. Michi was likewise collaborative violist with previous seasons and international performances of the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra as well as the Manila Philharmonic Orchestra in its conceptual years.

As an orchestra conductor, Michi Martinez counts as her first mentor, the UP Prof. Reynaldo Paguio, former Dean of the UP College of Music and director of the world-acclaimed UP Concert Chorus. In 2007, she had masterclasses with internationally-acclaimed conductor, the late Maestra Helen Quach. On the same year, Prof. Martinez learned with Maestros Harold Farbermann and Eduardo Navega of the Conductors Institute of Bard College in New York, USA.

In 1998, she founded the U.P. Arco – The University of the Philippines String Orchestra (then called the UP String Chamber Orchestra and brain child of the late UPCMu Dean Reynaldo Paguio. Since its founding she has passionately led the group in discovering the wealth of repertoire in string orchestra music performance. Prof. Martinez has led the group on various concerts inside and outside UP Diliman as well as in representing UP and the Philippines in international music festivals and competitions, winning top awards in the string orchestra category.

Prof. Edna Marcil “Michi” Martinez is a graduate of the U.P. College of Music. She holds a Teacher’s Diploma in Viola, a Bachelor’s Degree in Music Literature, and a Master of Music Degree in Musicology. She received her a Ph.D in Philippine Studies (Philippine Art and Culture) from the UP Ph.D Philippine Studies Program of the Tri-College (AC, CAL, CSSP) at UP Diliman. Prof. Martinez holds the distinction as the first Viola graduate of the University of the Philippines. Dr. Edna Marcil Martinez was former Chair of the Department of Strings and Chamber Music of the University of the Philippines College of Music.

Michi first started to learn the piano at an early age from her mother, then at seven years old learned the violin with Prof. Vicente Sales and Mr Primitivo Marcelo. She later shifted to the Viola, the instrument of her choice at age 12 and was under the tutelage of Prof. Celso Estrella the UP College of Music then continued to be mentored by Prof. Rizal Reyes also at the UP until her graduation from college.

In the summers of 1987 and 1989, she was under the tutelage of the imminent Australian Violist and Chamber Music Artist Winifred Durie. She has also attended master classes under internationally-acclaimed artists such as violist Norbert Blume, violinists Christoph Poppen and Carmencita Lozada. She is founding member of the all-female group, Athenaeum String Quartet which she established in 1985 with colleagues