



PROF. ANDREA OFILADA VENERACION

National Artist for Music Andrea O. Veneracion is the founder of the Philippine Madrigal Singers, Asia's most awarded choral ensemble. An authority on choral music, she is recognized for spearheading the choral movement in the Philippines. She served as adjudicator in international music competitions.

She was born and raised in Manila, Philippines on July 11, 1928, and earned her Bachelor of Music degrees in Piano and Voice at the University of the Philippines Diliman graduating cum laude. She was a lyric soprano soloist in various Oratorio works and in the Opera Stage. She was an accomplished pianist and accompanist and was the accompanist of National Artist for Music, Jovita Fuentes for a number of years.



Later on, she continued to pursue her Master's Degree in Voice at Indiana University School of Music - Bloomington as a Fulbright scholar, where she encountered the Indiana University Madrigal Singers which rallied the music of the Renaissance period. Upon her return to the Philippines in 1963, she established a singing group with the same idea. This group was initially exclusive of U.P. faculty members and students and became officially known as the University of the Philippines Madrigal Singers. She established a tradition for which the Madz, as they are fondly called, are known for: unlike most choirs, the Madz is seated in a semicircular formation without a conductor. The Choirmaster is at the left-most end of the circle who leads the group by giving their cues.

Under her direction, the Philippine Madrigal Singers won major awards in international choral competitions - Spittal, Austria; Arezzo and Gorizia, Italy; Neuchâtel, Switzerland; Debrecen, Hungary; Varna, Bulgaria; Tolosa and Cantonigros, Spain; and Marktobendorf, Germany. In 1996, she led the Philippine Madrigal Singers to its victory in the 1996 International Choral Competition in Tolosa, Spain. This made them eligible to compete for the 1997 European Choral Grand Prix for Choral Singing and eventually won the title in Tours, France.

She is the founder and first conductor of the Asian Institute for Liturgy and Music (AILM) Chorale. In 1997, she was awarded the TOFIL (The Outstanding Filipino) Award for Culture and the Arts For her contributions to the development of choral singing in the Philippines. In 1999, she was named National Artist for Music, the highest cultural award bestowed by the Philippine government for an individual.

In 2001, she retired as the Choirmaster of the Philippine Madrigal Singers. She personally selected Mark Anthony Carpio, her Assistant Choirmaster at that time, to be her successor. The Madz turnover ceremonies were held in a special concert at the Cultural Center of the Philippines coinciding with the launch of her biography "A Life Shaped By Music" by Marjorie Evasco.

She continued to guide the Madz under Carpio's direction by joining them in their tours: 2002 in North America, 2003 in Asia and 2004 in Europe. She was able to witness Carpio's first international competition as Choirmaster (and the Madz's first competition after 7 years) at the 2004 International Competition of Habaneras and Polyphony in Torrevieja, Spain, where the Madz won First Places for both categories.



PHILIPPINE MADRIGAL SINGERS

The University of the Philippines Madrigal Singers was organized in 1963 by National Artist Professor Andrea O. Veneracion. The group is composed of students, faculty and alumni from the different colleges of the University of the Philippines (UP). The choir is one of the world's most awarded, having consistently won all the top prizes in most of the world's prestigious choral competitions: Arezzo and Gorizia in Italy, Marktobendorf in Germany, Spittal in Austria, Neuchatel in Switzerland, Tours in France, Varna in Bulgaria, Debrecen in Hungary, Cantonigros, Tolosa and Torreveja in Spain. They hold the distinction of being the first choir in the world to win the European Grand Prix for Choral Singing twice (1997 and 2007).



The ensemble performs a wide repertoire of various styles and forms: renaissance music, classical music, Filipino and international folksongs, contemporary and avant-garde music, opera and even popular music. Their specialization and focus on the madrigal idiom has inspired their unique set-up of singing while seated in a semi-circle, without a conductor.

The influence of the UP Madrigal Singers on the Philippine and Asian choral scene has also been far-reaching. Since 1963, more than 200 singers have joined the choir, many of whom are now choral and vocal pedagogues actively involved in organizing and conducting choirs. This eventually led to the organization of the Madz Et Al, a network of choirs who gather regularly for festivals and workshops. To date, the network has a membership of almost 60 choirs from all over the country. This contributes to the now very active choral life in the Philippines.

Through the direction of Mark Anthony Carpio, the corps of composers and choral arrangers of the UP Madrigal Singers continue to produce new compositions and choral settings of Philippine, Asian and international songs, thus contributing to the growth of world choral literature.

The UP Madrigal Singers also maintain an active outreach and concert tour schedule, performing in far-flung areas of the Philippines seldom reached by choral artists. With an average of two overseas concert tours a year, the UP Madrigal Singers is the country's most active ambassadors of goodwill and perhaps, also one of the world's most-travelled choirs.

The group was recognized in 2009 by the UNESCO as Artists for Peace for "putting fame and influence at the service of UNESCO's ideals and efforts to promote cultural diversity, intercultural dialogue and a culture of peace". Then in 2010, the Concorso Polifonico Guido d' Arezzo Foundation honored the group with the Guidoneum Award by for "their artistic and choral promotion activity". In July 2012, the group became the first choir in the world to receive The Brand Laureate Premier Award from the Asia Pacific Brands Foundation, in recognition for its "significant contribution to the world of choral music, producing new compositions and choral settings for Philippine, Asian and International songs, spreading the beauty of this genre and giving a good musical experience to the audience."

In 2013, the Philippine Madrigal Singers have been invited to perform during the American Choral Directors Association (ACDA) National Convention in Dallas, Texas and during the America Cantat in Bogota, Colombia. All these coincide with the group's celebration of its 50th year.