

As I See It
Ver F. Pacete

Knowing Silay: International Rondalla Festival Exhibit

Dr. Roselyn J. Palcat, schools division superintendent of Silay City, has allowed her teachers to be involved in a research work that would be featured at the International Rondalla Festival Exhibit. The venue is the former Silay Puericulture Center (just renovated) on Nov. 3-11, 2018.

Silay is the second town in Negros to become a city... Bacolod in 1938, then Silay in 1957. At times (as Silaynons), we have this meeting of the minds over a cup of coffee on things about our beloved hometown. At Jojen's, we have 'La Mesa de la Libertad' and at El Ideal... there is the square table with Ramon Conlu, Councilor Aileen Javier, Dodong Melgar, Ramon Hofilena, and yours truly.

To make things official, Councilor Javier is able to secure some documents from Marianito M. Dimaandal, the director of Malacanang Records Office. All these have been counter-checked by Ramon Conlu (a researcher friend and a descendant from the Severino clan of Silay). A story goes that when President Carlos P. Garcia visited Silay, he was so impressed because he was surrounded by a big number of Silaynon followers.

This is the leading story. President Garcia was here because he is a friend of Senator Jose C. Locsin and the good senator introduced President Garcia to Mayor Romulo Geolingo Golez. Garcia Asked "What would you want me to give to Silay?" Locsin jokingly answered, "Make Silay a City." That was just the story.

Rep. Jose B. Puey of the first district and Rep. Carlos A. Hilado of the second district of Negros Occ. filed House Bill No. 6096, "An Act Creating the City of Silay". This was passed in the House of Representatives on April 30, 1957; signed by House Speaker Eulogio A. Rodriguez, Sr.

The house bill was passed on the Senate on May 9, 1957; signed by Senate President Jose P Laurel, Jr. The bill was signed by President Carlos P. Garcia on June 12, 1957. It became Republic Act No. 1621, "An Act Creating the City of Silay". This act has 57 pages.

On July 2, 1957, President Carlos P. Garcia signed Proclamation 422 fixing July 4, 1957 as the date of the organization of the Government of the City of Silay. Section 90 of RA 1621, which is the 'Change of Government' under Article XV has this in the 'Transitory Provisions'...

“The city government provided for this charter shall be organized on such a date as may be fixed by the President of the Philippines.” Silay officially became a city on July 4, 1957 when R.A. 1621 was ratified.

The officials of the newly converted city are Mayor Romulo Geolingo Golez, Vice Mayor Ponciano Paviera Siason... and the eight councilors: Jose Jover Maravilla, Jose Paviera, Serafin Ledesma Golez, Romeo Severino Ledesma, Eliseo Hilado Benetua, Jose Guarte Jardiolin, Ricardo Golez Ledesma, and Enrique Sazon.

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Special features at Silay International Rondalla Festival

The Silay City Government informed the world through media that Silay City will be hosting the International Rondalla Festival on November 3-11, 2018. The special feature for the event is an exhibit on Silay cultural history at the historic Gabaldon Puericulture Center (recently restored with the assistance from the National Commission for the Culture and the Arts).

Kansilay Festival. It evolved from the Hiligaynon zarzuela, 'The Legend of Kansilay', scripted and directed by yours truly when I was still teaching Theater Arts for Dona Montserrat Lopez Memorial High School (1990) and the Silay Teachers' Cultural Group (1993). 'Kansilay, the Zarzuela' was staged in Silay and in the Palarong Pambansa in Iloilo.

The late Ireneo Reyes conceptualized the Kansilay street dance-drama and was approved for inter-barangay competition. The festival won first runner-up in the 2009 Association of Tourism Officers of the Philippines (ATOP) Best Emerging Festival in the Philippines.

Kansilay Festival celebrates Silay's mythical origin through the life, love and death of Lin-ay Kansilay, the story's heroine. Now, it has developed into a 'sadsad' (merrymaking) with music, fun fare and carnival celebrations, adding color to the sights and sounds of Silay's Charter Anniversary from June 6 until June 12 (D-Day).

Junichiro Doi. He is a lieutenant in the Japanese Imperial Army Air Force assigned in Negros Occidental during World War II. He was ordered by his commanding officers to bomb the Church of San Diego de Alcala in Silay before retreating to Patag with his unit on March 30, 1945.

When he entered the church, he discovered the rich architectural details of the structure. It was also the refuge of many Silaynons who were not able to flee the city at the outbreak of liberation. Doi, educated Japanese and a disciple of history, went out of the church and reported to his superior officers that the mission was accomplished. Silay's most enduring landmark was saved. I call it a 'sacred lie'.

In his later years, Junichiro Doi went back to Silay. I was already the tourism officer. We became the best of friends. When asked what made him abort his mission, he replied, "I am a student of history. I cannot afford to destroy such beautiful work of art. We have no enemies there."

When he passed away in the late 1990's (leaving behind a young, beautiful Filipina wife), he left a little amount for the construction of a memorial in Patag to all those who have fallen during the war. A part of his ashes is fittingly enshrined in the memorial. In 2010 Tomihiro Kogune (younger Japanese) contributed resources to further develop the site.

I love Kansilay. Her portrait is in my sala. I salute Lt. Doi. His memory is in my heart. Visit Silay International Exhibit on November 3-11. Join us in our music festival.

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Rondalla fiesta in Silay

It is not just an ordinary fiesta. It is a gathering of 21 participating groups. It is the 5th International Rondalla Festival... the Cuerdas sang Paghiliusa (Strings of Unity). Silay City will host it on November 3-11, 2018.

So far, ten countries have confirmed their participation: Quatour Eclisses of France; Maluica Chopra and Muthu Kumar of India; Eishan Trio of Iran; Ensemble Naya of Israel; Russian Renaissance of Russia; Dalmoon of South Korea; Fu-shing Chinese Orchestra of Taiwan; The Spring Band of Vietnam; and the Hop to Hop Africa of Uganda.

From the Philippines, we have eleven best participants: Cainta Rondalla Ensemble (Rizal); Cayetano Arellano High School Rondalla (Metro Manila); City of Boggo Science and Arts Academy (Cebu); Dipolog Community Rondalla (Dipolog); Enverga University Candelaria Rondalla (Quezon); Handurawan (Metro Manila); Mauban Community Rondalla (Quezon); Padayun Rondalla (UP Diliman); Sariaya Community Rondalla (Quezon); Siliman University Orchestra sin Arco (Dumaguete); and the pride of Silay... Kabataang Silay Rondalla Ensemble (Negros Occidental).

To date, the Natalio G. Velez Sports and Cultural Center is being made beautiful based on the standards of the Cultural Center of the Philippines. It will be provided a media room to accommodate local and international correspondents who will feed all media outlets the latest happening in Silay as the main concert venue and also pocket events in the outreach areas that include towns, cities, schools, hospitals and orphanages in Negros Occidental.

There will be a separate venue where foreign and local visitors can buy the best products of Silay. Two food festivals are being proposed to be sponsored by the Silay City Government at Balay Negrense grounds. Mayor Mark Golez made mention of "Kaon Ta Food Festival" and "Adobo Festival". They will be held on separate days on the festival week.

Silay Exhibit will be held also at the newly restored Puericulture Center (a Gabaldon Building). It will feature cultural-heritage displays anchored on Silay history... the 'haciendas', Cinco de Noviembre Revolutions, arts and culture, the legend of Kansilay, the magic of music, the food of the Silaynons, and the 'Asenso Silay' Program.

Other interesting events are Silay Night, the guided tours, conferences on rondalla and music, the street party, 'parada independenciana' and many more. Audience participation in all

concerts (for free) will be facilitated by DepEd-Silay under Dr. Roselyn Javier Palcat and Liga ng mga Barangay under Hon. Henry Belleza. Come and feast with the Silaynons on Novemeber 3-11, 2018.