

# Building Community Through Philippine Dance

Community \* Connections \* Contribution  
Bayanihan \* Kapwa



## **BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH PHILIPPINE DANCE**

**FOSBE**  
Filipinos of South Bay Exhibit

Folk dance is an integral part of Philippine culture. Filipinos in the diaspora used it to keep their connection to the culture and imparted the dances to new generations. Philippine dance became a major catalyst in building community while being the most visible expression of the Filipino American experience.

Ang mga katutubong sayaw ay isang mahalagang bahagi ng kulturang Pilipino. Ginamit ito ng mga Pilipinong nangibang-bayan upang mapanatili ang koneksiyon nila sa kanilang kultura at ipinamana nila ang mga sayaw sa mga susunod na henerasyon. Ang sayaw na Pilipino ay naging isang malaking katalista sa pagbubuo ng komunidad; ito rin ang naging pinakalantad na pagpapahayag ng karanasang Pilipino-Amerikano.

La danza folclórica es una parte integral de la cultura filipina. Los filipinos en la diáspora usaron el arte de baile para mantener su conexión con la cultura e impartieron las danzas a las nuevas generaciones. La danza filipina se convirtió en un catalizador importante en forjar la comunidad al mismo tiempo que era la expresión más visible de la experiencia filipino-estadounidense.

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PLEASE VISIT**  
[WWW.FILIPINOSINSANDIEGO.ORG](http://WWW.FILIPINOSINSANDIEGO.ORG)

In the Philippines, folk dance has always been an integral part of the culture. It was an elective for physical education and always included at celebrations, formal and informal gatherings, from town fiestas, to weddings, birthdays and baptisms.

Filipinos in the diaspora used Philippine dance to keep their connection to the motherland and as they began having families imparted folk dances to new generations. **The Filipino Women's Club** was established in 1949 and became a major stepping stone for the evolution of Philippine dance in the region. Philippine dance became the most visible expressions of the Filipino American experience.



Courtesy of the Hawkins Family

Children practice the "stick dance" they will give at the County Fair. Dancers are Loraine Antkorda, Fausto Mirafior Jr., Miding Mirafior, Eleanor Baudista, Delano Esguerra, Norma Torres, Larry Torres, and teacher.



Under the auspices of the Philippine Consul General of Los Angeles, Alice Hawkins directed the Filipino Women's Club first major contribution of performing at the San Diego County Fair for Philippine Day on July 3, 1950



THE  
PHILIPPINE  
CONSULATE  
OF  
LOS ANGELES

**SAN DIEGO COUNTY FAIR**  
DEL MAR CALIFORNIA

**"Philippine Day"**

SUNDAY, JULY 2  
From 8 in the evening till midnight

\*\*\*\*\*

**Miss Josefina Tando**  
Master of Ceremonies

National Anthems . . . San Diego Budhi Orchestra  
Opening Remarks . . . by Master of Ceremonies  
Dances: (a) Dances of Yesterday  
(b) Bulaklak

Piano Selections . . . . . Pura Marquez  
Dances: (a) Bahay Kubo  
(b) Sabid

Popular and Native Songs . . . Crescencia Padua  
Dances: (a) Mahinor  
(b) Alarany  
*Alarany will be danced especially by Mrs. Polo Abrera Gonsans*

Manila Rhapsody . . . . . Mary Brown Clausen  
Dances: (a) Karindaga (More Wedding Dances)  
(b) Sabid

Address . . . . . Sofronio V. Abrera  
*Consul of the Republic of the Philippines*

Evolution of Filipino Dress . . . Alice L. Hawkins  
*(A Fashion Show)*  
Commentator

Concluding Remarks . . . . . Paul Mannen  
*General Manager San Diego County Fair*



ALICE L. HAWKINS  
Director of Dance

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1950 Photo & Souvenir Program of courtesy of The Hawkins Family

## UNIQUE CONVENTION

# Folk Dance Fete Steps Along Here

A four-day convention that won't hold any business sessions went into its second day here yesterday.

It was the 26th annual festival of the Folk Dance Federation of California, and, except for installation of officers today, there will be no formal meetings or speeches—"just fun," a spokesman said.

The big event of the Carnation Festival — so-called because San Diego's official flower is the carnation — was a "Symphony of Dance" last night at the Civic Theater, where 24 groups from all over the state staged a professional-level exhibition.

### PUBLIC DEMONSTRATION

Today, from 1:30 p.m. to midnight, there will be more folk dancing, free to the public, at the Community Concourse, Convention Hall, plus a display of costumes and international foods. Tomorrow, from 1 to 5 p.m., a folk dance exhibition will be put on at Vacation Village, Mission Bay Park, to wind up the festival.

Dancers of all ages represent a broad spectrum of occupations. They took up folk dancing for a variety of reasons — self-expression, championship, physical activity.

### CHALLENGING HOBBY

Bill Rose of Chula Vista, a social worker who is a welfare department district chief, said he and his wife, Marilyn, were seeking a hobby when they happened to attend the Concourse dedication ceremonies last fall and saw some folk dancers.

"That was for us," Rose said. "We joined a folk dance club."

teachers had taught us a wide variety of dances. Square dancing, I'm afraid, is too monotonous.

"That's the challenge of folk dancing. There are some 400 dances. You can't possibly learn them all, but it's a tremendous challenge to master as many as you can.

"Look over there. There's my boy, Steve, 17, and my daughter, Vicki, 16. They've caught up in this, too. Steve is an unconventional boy, but he likes music, and he's really excited about folk dancing.

"What's more, we make our own costumes, Filipino and Bavarian. First, we had to do research about them at the library, and that taught us history, folk lore, customs. That's right. It's like stamp collecting with exercises."

Rose said folk dancing is also "a leveling activity — nobody has ever asked me what I do for a living or how much money I make. In the full democratic sense, people are accepted simply for what they are."

amount. The present maximum is \$100 a month. The measure, Assembly Bill 58, now goes to the Senate. It also provides a maximum of \$750 a month for members of the Los Angeles city

As more Filipinos migrated to San Diego, Philippine dance became an integral part in the upbringing of new generations of Filipino American youth. Regional organizations were established in the 1960's. The **Cavite Association** showcased its young adults at the *Southern California Folk Dance Festival* at the newly open San Diego Civic Theatre in 1965.



**FOLK DANCE FESTIVAL PARTICIPANTS** — First appearance of a Filipino group at the new San Diego Civic Theatre was the recent participation of the Cavite Association in the Southern California Folk Dance Festival. Dancing the Pandanggo sa Ilaw are Bituin Cuevas, Gene Convento, Janet Estiandan, Angelo Abueg, Eva Corazon Ricasa and Bert Vales.

San Diego Union  
May 30, 1965.

Courtesy  
Lily Vales  
Abad of  
Temecula

The Filipino Women's Club continued to teach new generations of dancers led by **Pacita Elegino** of Sherman Heights. The **House of the Philippines** in Balboa Park was established in 1961 and each year they provided a Lawn Program in June to commemorate Philippine Independence Day from Spain. They invited the Filipino Women's Club to provide the cultural performances.



Courtesy of Anamaria Labao Cabato (June, 1965):  
ABOVE Left to right: Susan Garong, Vicky Elegino Austin, Pacita Elegino (standing) Ana Labao Cabato Mercy Cruz, Jeannie Fontanilla and Doris Fontanilla  
LEFT Left to right dancing Erlene Fontanilla, Tess Labao Paquette, Lupe Labao Macario; Center back row: Doris Fontanilla  
Two elders to the left of the dancers are Filipino community leaders Teadora Miraflor and Vincent Elequin.



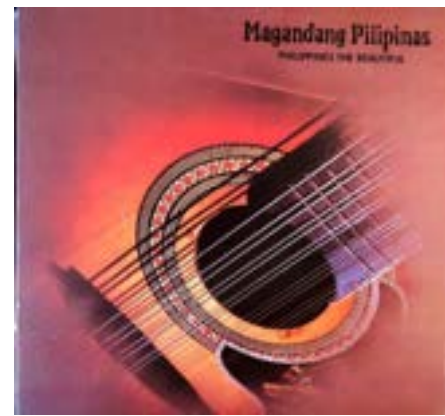
From the *San Diego History Center*  
 Eva Ricasa as the princess in the dance *Singkil* and  
 was Miss Philippines in 1962 and Miss Imperial  
 Beach in 1965.

San Diego celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 1969 and San Diego City Mayor Frank Curran approached the **Filipino American Community Association** to give a *Salute to San Diego's 200<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*. Under the leadership of President, Delfin Labao, Paz Marquez Uro of Chula Vista and Dr. William Yumul of Lemon Grove stepped forward to help organize a three-hour tribute for the celebration.



**Ernesto Flores, Jr.** designed the cover of the Souvenir Program. He was the first Filipino staff writer for the San Diego Union Tribune and established the *Filipino Press*, one of the longest standing Philippine newspapers in Southern California.

*Philippine Fiesta Souvenir Program*  
 Courtesy of PASACAT



There's nothing like the sounds of the Rondalla that captures the heart of lowland Philippines. The Rondalla is composed of the *bandurria*, *laud* or *octavina*, which are 14-string instruments, whose origins are from Spain. In the summer of 1979, *Bayani Mendoza De Leon* was a UCSD Fullbright Hays Scholar who offered a Rondalla course at the *Center for World Music* at SDSU. PASACAT and Samahan Philippine dance companies sent members to the class. In 1983 they collaborated for the *Magandang Pilipinas* album featuring both Rondallas and the PASACAT Choral Ensemble in a collection of folk songs and choral pieces. The majority of the members were from the South Bay. The display includes a bio of De Leon, an original score penned by De Leon in tablature format, a 1982 *Asian Pacific News* article announcing the album, a photo of De Leon rehearsing at PASACAT in 1981, bronze wound string used for the bandurria and a plectrum.



Courtesy of PASACAT



Samahan was first initiated as a youth program in Philippine folk dance for the Council of Pilipino Americans Organizations (COPAO). Dr. Lolita Dinoso Carter received a grant to formally establish the Samahan Philippine Dance Company in 1974. Today, they are known as **SAMAHAN Filipino American Performing Arts and Education Center** holding classes in National City, while staging festivals and performances throughout San Diego County.



Courtesy of Samahan FAPAEC



Courtesy of FANHS

The **Pakaraguian Kulintang Ensemble** is a musical component of **SAMAHAN**. It is led by Dr. Bernard Ellorin, of Paradise Hills, an ethnomusicologist who studied under kulintang master, **Danongan Kalanduyan**, a **National Endowment for the Arts Fellow**.

Tony Salamat started dancing in 1970 with the *Far Eastern University Modern Dance Group*, Manila, Philippines with full academic scholarship. He studied dance in Europe before immigrating to San Diego in 1988. He established the *Body Arts Center* in Chula Vista, now called *Dance Arts Center* giving instruction on Philippine folk dance, Latin, Polynesian, modern, jazz, and ballroom dances. They have over 30 years of performing service to the Southern California region.



**Courtesy of Tony Salamat**

Towards the most Northern part of the island of Luzon in the Philippines, lies the **Cordillera Mountain Range**. The five sub-provinces are **Benguet, Ifugao, Bontoc, Apayao, and Kalinga**. Collectively, the people became known as "*igorots*," meaning "*people of the mountain*," though many choose to be referred to as *Cordillerans*, or their respective tribal affiliations. Igorots were key in forging the country's *Indigenous People's Rights Act*, protecting ancestral domains and some of the country's richest natural resources. Andres Afuyog and James Ambasing of National City, gathered families from the various tribes together. The first officers for BIBAK San Diego were elected on January 18, 1981. The organization currently has about 300 member families, with events gathering 1,000 in attendance. Members live throughout the county, with a significant number in the South Bay, where the majority of regular events and meetings are held.

Courtesy of Kirin Amiling Macapugay



**BIBAK San Diego practicing for the 2014 Canao at Discovery Park in Chula Vista**



**BIBAK celebrating New Years 2022 at Rohr Park.**