



“The pen is mightier than the sword.”

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FILIPINO-AMERICANS ARE GOOD SINGERS

By: Ben Emata

Filipino-Americans in America, both the oldtimer and the newly arrived have thrown to the waste basket their old ugly habits like excessive drinking, urinating in the sides of the streets, shouting, trouble-making and laziness and its stead maintain best model Karaoke outfits that make them excellent singers.

Anywhere across the country where Filipino homes have formed small communities, are having first class electronic gadgets that pass through giant TV screens and display songs and characters. The texts or the words of as many as fifty thousand songs are available to the singers at the tip of his fingers for selection. Once the button of the particular song is pressed, the melody breaks the silence and the text come out on parade to guide the singer. Every piece guides the singers when to raise his voice, to pause or to stop which reason even the innocent child who never sang in his life before can easily learn.

The matter is commonly used in the Philippines as Karaoke. New technology, however, made this electronic home item more powerful and more attractive to everyone. And the funny thing that adds more glory to the singer is he is given a rating immediately after rendition. The unit is equipped with two powerful microphones that even help once voice more solid and nice. Getting a rating of 92, 95 or 97 is not so difficult and this encourages the poor singer or the first timer to sing more.

Because of the latest in technology, anybody now wants to sing because he knows that his cricket voice of long ago is gone and now finds parallel with the voice of great Holywood artists. One will not be surprised if there are a lot of tenors and baritone singers nowadays among Filipino-Americans in the USA. It is that Karaoke gadgets that help them develop their skill and talents and departed from being shy and a silent person.



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And the Karaoke here are loaded with thousands of Filipino songs, the classics, the pop songs, the forgotten ones, the kundimans and the latest in top hits. It helps the young kids know the songs of yesteryears like the Visayans *Matud Nila, Matud Mo, Patayng Buhi, Sa Kabukiran, Gugma, Tirana, Lawiswis Kawayan* and so many others. The people from Luzon also can make use of the old songs in their regions like the *Maala Mo Kaya, Harana, Paru-Paru, Bulaklak, Mutya, Nening Ko, etc.*

I used to be a very shy singer back in Cagayan de Oro many years ago. I never liked my voice because it is something that can drive away peace and serenity in a place. My friends would always despise me of attempt to render a song. But when I tried to sing here, I nearly collapsed. I was stunned. I was truly surprised because I was able to give a beautiful song and nobody did criticize me of my voice. It was a wonder I was able to throw away my shyness before the public and converted myself to the shadow of Frankie the voice Sinatra.

So when there is fiesta celebration anywhere in the USA sponsored by Filipinos, one of the programs is the amateur hour where young boys and girls perform nice songs onstage. And on private parties in the homes, everyone around come forward and sing to the delight of relatives and friends.

Karaoke singing helps the Filipino-Americans develop their posture and stature. It entertains them while staying in the home. They have no outlets on weekends unlike the Filipinos in the Philippines where they go anywhere. For us here, there are no beaches, no picnics in rivers and lakes, no swimming anywhere because the water is freezing. Travel is the better options but is also very expensive. Most of us prefer to stay at home watching TV shows or go to the movies. With the Karaoke, we stay at home, prepare good food and sing. (BEN EMATA)