

# Paglingon at Pagsipat Sa Mabunga at Teatrikal na Buhay ni Antonio Ocampo Mabesa

*Ligaya Tiamson-Rubin*

**B**orn on 27 January 1935 in Los Baños, Laguna to Calixto Mabesa and Lourdes Ocampo, ANTONIO OCAMPO MABESA's genius and prolificacy as theater professor, director, actor onstage, in film and television is acknowledged not only in the Philippines but also in many countries worldwide. The numerous awards, trophies, grants, citations, and publications in his honor attest to his artistic brilliance.

As professor, ANTONIO OCAMPO MABESA - fresh from his graduate studies at the University of California Los Angeles, and the University of Hawaii and choosing to come back to serve his country and people - spearheaded the curricular development of Theater Arts Education and Program in both undergraduate and graduate levels at the University of the Philippines, a pioneering formal theater training institution in the country. Professor Mabesa founded Dulaang UP in 1976, and staged over a hundred original Filipino plays and world classics. He also established, in 1986, the UP Playwrights' Theater which has seen the production of over fifty original Filipino plays and revivals at the Teatro Hermogenes Ylagan (formerly Faculty Center Studio). He tutored students into becoming professional actors, and further honed professional actors in their craft. The list includes Shamaine Centenera-Buencamino, Alexander Cortez,

Nick de Ocampo, Eugene Domingo, Josefina Estrella, Rogelio Juliano Jr., Joel Lamangan, Loren Legarda, Dennis Marasigan, Irma Adlawan-Marasigan, Imee Marcos, Chris Millado, Cesar Montano, Candy Pangilinan, Roderick Paulate, Chito Roño and Lou Veloso.

As director, the Grand Man of the Theater that he is, Professor Mabesa has directed over one hundred forty productions, the most notable of which represented the Philippines in theater festivals abroad and nationwide: *FILI* (1993 ASEAN Theater Festival in Bangkok), *Halakhakan* and *In My Father's House* (1987 and 1989 Singapore Drama Festival, respectively), *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo* (CCP's First National Theater Festival), *FILI II* (CCP's Second National Theater Festival), *Frustrations and Mabuhay Pilipinas - the Philippine Centennial Gala Concert* (1998 CCP Centennial Festival of the Arts). He likewise awed audiences with his productions in Honolulu, Los Angeles and Minneapolis.

As actor, Professor Mabesa essayed roles in plays of Chekhov, Ibsen, Joaquin, Shakespeare, and more. He has also appeared in character roles in over one hundred Filipino films, twenty foreign films, and over thirty television productions.

Professor Mabesa's work and love for the theater has earned for him due recognitions, awards and grants: *1999 Gawad Chanselor for Pinakamahusay na Alagad ng Sining; 2004 Outstanding Alumnus in Theater Arts - Diamond Jubilee of UP Rural High School; 1998 UP Alumni Association Outstanding Professional Award in Theater Arts; 1997 Outstanding Alumnus for Culture and the Arts; 1995 Chancellor's Award for Performing Arts; 1995 Awardee for Culture and the Arts; Upsilon Sigma Phi - Los Baños; 1995 Outstanding UP Artist Award; 1994 Luminary Award for Theater Arts, Upsilon Sigma Phi; 1993 Outstanding Delegate, Third ASEAN Theater Festival, Bangkok; 1991 Awardee*