Performing Arts

NATIONAL LIVING TREASURES. Singled out in a nationwide continuing search, indigenous exponents of traditions in the field of craft and performance are declared national icons to be emulated as guardians who safeguard national cultural heritage. Thus far, the following National Living Treasures have been awarded the title “Manlilikha ng Bayan” (one who creates for the country) in the field of performance:

Philippines. The near-blind but highly gifted musician of the Bohe Bessey in Lamitan, Basilan, UWANG AHADAS, is the recognized master of Yakan musical instruments in the whole of Basilan province.

He was proclaimed in 2000 for his virtuosity in playing Yakan musical instruments such as the kwintangan, kwintangan kayu, gabbang, agung, tuntungan, among others. He has devoted his life to the teaching of Yakan musical tradition.

Musician, Yakan, Lamitan municipality, Basilan island province, southern Philippines

central Philippines. Reclining on a hammock in the traditional position of an indigenous storyteller, FEDERICO CABALLERO is unequaled in the scope of memory and finesse in the delivery of epic literature. He was proclaimed in 2000 for his mastery in chanting the epic poem, Sugidanon, the epic tradition of central Panay and for ceaselessly working for the documentation of the epics of his people, painstakingly piecing together the elements of this nearly lost oral tradition.

Epic chanter, Sulod-Bukidnon, Calining municipality, Iloilo province, Panay island

Musician and dancer, Kalinga, Lubuagan municipality, Kalinga province, northern Luzon island, northern Philippines. A tireless cultural conservator, ALONZO SACLAG, recreated an entire Kalinga traditional village complex as a living museum.

He was proclaimed in 2000, not only for his mastery of the Kalinga dance, musical instruments and the performing arts, but also for his persistence in creating and nurturing a greater consciousness and appreciation of Kalinga culture among the Kalinga themselves.

Musician and dancer, Kalinga, Lubuagan municipality, Kalinga province, northern Luzon island, northern Philippines

Mindanao island, southern Philippines. A highly evocative person who can blend in, jamming with contemporary alternative musicians, SAMAON SULAIMAN is a rare virtuoso of the kutyapi.

He was proclaimed in 1993 for his outstanding artistry and dedication to this musical instrument, formally called the Maguindanao kutyapi, a two-stringed plucked lute, regarded as one of the most technically demanding and difficult to master among Philippine traditional instruments. He passed away in 2011.

Musician, Maguindanao, Mama sa Pano municipality, Maguindanao province, western Mindanao island, southern Philippines

Musician, and poet, Hanunoo Mangyan, Mansalay municipality, Oriental Mindoro province, central Philippines. Quiet and recessive, GINAW BILOG is recognized for keeping the oral literature of his people alive to this day.

He was proclaimed in 1993 for safeguarding the ancient Hanunoo Mangyan script, which is now in the Memory of the Word Registry of UNESCO, and the unique ambahan poetry. He was also cited for promoting the ambahan on every occasion so that the art will be safeguarded for posterity. He passed away in 2003.

Musician and poet, Hanunoo Mangyan, Mansalay municipality, Oriental Mindoro province, central Philippines

He was proclaimed in 1993 for his exemplary skills in the basal or gong music ensemble and his versatility as musician, poet, epic chanter and storyteller of the kulilal and bagit traditions of the Pala’wan, making him a consummate artist.

Musician and epic chanter, Pala’wan, Brokoven Point municipality, Palawan

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