

**CITY OF SAN JOSE'S Arts Express Program Presents:**

**Kaisahan of San Jose**  
***Traditional Dances of the Philippines***

**Teacher Guide**

**Grades 4-6**

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**About the Arts Organization**

Kaisahan endeavors to promote and preserve Filipino art and culture through the development, performance and presentation of traditional and authentic Filipino dances, thereby evoking a deep understanding and appreciation for the art forms presented. Kaisahan's performances foster a sense of cultural identity and pride, especially among second generation Filipino-American audience members, thus building unity and harmony among the members of the Filipino community.

Kaisahan accomplishes its mission by developing and performing new, authentic Filipino dances; serving as a catalyst for the creation of contemporary and traditional pieces by established and emerging performers; providing classes for youth and adults of all ethnic backgrounds in traditional Filipino dance and music; providing lectures, demonstrations or performances to corporations, schools, festivals and community events.

**About the Program**

One of the oldest Filipino dance companies in San Jose, Kaisahan opens the door to the rich cultural background of the Philippines. Helen Moreno, Artistic Director, along with dancers and musicians of Kaisahan will come to your school to do a lecture and demonstration of Filipino traditional dance with your students. Dance styles will likely include: The Igorot Suite of the mountain tribes of Northern Luzon, the Spanish-influenced Maria Clara suite, and the Muslim or Tribal suites from Mindanao. Students will have the opportunity to experience authentic Filipino musical instruments and costumes, and to meet the dancers as well!

**Learning Objectives**

Students will--

- Develop an appreciation of Filipino culture through experiencing authentic Filipino dance and music;
- Discover the unique qualities of Filipino dance forms;
- Learn about the diversity of cultures--Middle Eastern, Indian, Muslim, and Spanish--that have influenced Filipino dance and music.

## Historical and Cultural Context

### A Brief History of the Philippines

- The Philippines consists of 7,107 islands that lie off the southeast coast of Asia. The islands are in the Western Pacific Ocean, south of Taiwan and north of Borneo. The capital is Manila.
- Early visitors-traders, explorers, and adventurers-came from many countries to visit the islands, sometimes staying to live among the native people.
- In 1521, the Spaniards, led by Ferdinand Magellan, came to the islands. They named the country the Philippines after King Philip II of Spain and established a colonial government in 1565.
- The Filipinos resisted being colonized by Spain and waged Asia's first nationalist revolution in 1896. On June 12, 1896, Emilio Aguinaldo declared the Philippines independent from Spain and proclaimed himself president.
- As the Spaniards finally left in 1898, Americans came and colonized the Philippines.
- After 48 years, on July 4th, 1946, the United States recognized Philippine independence.
- The Philippines is the third largest English speaking country in the world.

### Brief Description of the Suites

#### Mountain/Igorot Suite

- Six different tribes live in the mountainous Central Cordillera region of Northern Luzon is also known by the term "Philippine Skyland." They are the *Ibaloy*, *Kankanay*, *Ifugao*, *Kalinga*, *Apayao*, and *Bontoc*. They prefer to be called by their respective tribal names rather than the collective term *Igorot*, which was first used by the Spanish.
- These tribes have the same religious beliefs which connect to nature, and make offerings to household gods.
- Among these people, dance is an expression of community life that performed at various ceremonies. They dance to appease their ancestors and gods, to cure ailments, to insure successful wars, or to ward off bad luck or natural disasters. They also dance to insure bountiful harvests, favorable weather, and to mark milestones in the cycle of life.
- In this suite you will see women carrying jars and baskets on their heads, a dance based on a ritual of fetching water and gathering food with women carrying jars and baskets on their heads; the Manmanok dance, where men use colorful woven blankets to attract the women; and the Takiling, where men chant and dance while beating gangsa (brass gongs) and showing their ability to use shields and hunting gear.

#### The Maria Clara Suite

- The Spaniards, who came to the Philippines in the 16th century, influenced Philippine life and culture. A majority of the Filipinos were converted to Roman Catholicism. European cultural ideas spread and the Filipinos adapted and blended to meet the local conditions.
- Spanish influenced dances were very popular, particularly among urban Filipinos. This suite was named in honor of the legendary Maria Clara, who remains a symbol of the virtues and nobility of the Filipina woman.

- These dances were "Filipinized" as evidence of the use of bamboo castanets and the *abanico*, or Asian fan. Typical attire for these dances is the formal Maria Clara dress (an elaborate blouse and billowy skirt), and the *panuelo*, a bandana-sized square worn over the shoulders and made of natural fibers.

#### The Muslim Suite

- Almost one million Filipinos are Muslims who reside primarily in the southern island of Mindanao and the Sulu Archipelago. By the end of the 12th century, traders and settlers from the Malay Peninsula and Borneo introduced Islamic faith to the islands.
- The Muslims in the Philippines, also known as Moros, were able to resist Spanish conquest. Thus, they preserved the Islamic lifestyle that is quite different from the majority of the Philippine population.
- The primary Muslim ethnic groups are the *Maranao*, *Maguindanao*, *Samal*, and *Tausug*.
- The dances are characterized by vivid colors and rhythmic movements which reflect the influence of Arabian and Indo-Malaysian cultures. The suite features a ribbon dance.
- Some of the costumes worn during this suite include the *Malong*, a tube of fabric that is worn in many different ways, and the *kumbong*, or headress.
- Instruments played to accompany the dance include the *agong*, a brass gong with a center knob, and the *kulintang*, a series of brass gongs laid on a wooden frame.

#### The Barrio Fiesta Suite

This suite includes the following elements:

- The *Pista*, or preparation for a Fiesta (party). This is a Filipino tradition where lavish preparations, music, dance, food, games and traditional processions traditional occur for special occasions in Philippine villages.
- *Gala (Boholano)* - The bride comes with a group of friends and relatives, the groom with his, including an array of kitchen helpers who are expected to perform dance and music numbers right after the last guest has had his fill. The fun begins when pans, pots, plates, ladles, brooms clash with firewood, pails and knives. At the end the newlyweds, after being pinned with money bills, dance for their guests—this dance depicts a chasing and running with playful movements.
- *Kalatong* – a popular dance from the province of Batangas with the use of a bamboo percussion tubes.
- *Tinikling* - Kaisahan always ends its performances with the Tinikling dance, named after long legged “Tikling Bird”, and one of the best known of all Philippine dances. The dancers imitate the “Tikling” as they elude traps set by farmers. The finale takes the form of Tinikling.
- Props and costumes found in this suite include the *Tinggoy*, or oil lamp, *Bakya*, or wooden clogs, the *Balintawak*, which is a dress with stiff sleeves, and the *Camisa de Chino*, a brightly designed shirt worn by men.

#### Vocabulary

*Balintawak* (Bah-lihn-tah-wahk)—A long dress with stiff butterfly sleeves worn with a colorful tapis (overskirt) that matches those on the sleeves.

*Bumayah* (Bue-mah-yah)—Ifugao prototype feast or celebration performed for weddings, post harvest, washing of the bones, personal and community well-being rituals.

Maria Clara (Mah-ree-ah Clah-rah)--An ensemble composed of an elaborately embellished blouse and a billowy skirt with or without cola or tail, inspired by Jose Rizal's "Noli Me Tangere" heroine.

Mazurka (Mah-zoor-kah)--A dance form introduced to the Philippines by the Spaniards from northeastern Poland.

Mabuhay (Mah-bue-hah)-- an expression for long life and a good wish.

Paso Doble (Pah-soe Doh-bleh)-- a dance from Spain, also called Spanish one-step.

### **Preparation for the Program**

1. Review the historical information about the Philippines and locate the Philippines on the map. Invite Filipino students in the class to share information about their culture if they would like.
2. Review the information about the dance suites. Ask students to discuss what influences each suite (emphasizing spiritual beliefs, geography, cultural influences). Have students look for these influences when they watch the presentation of each suite.
3. Have students make one of the costume/prop pieces from the suites, such as a crown, necklace, fan, or *latik* instrument (see attached lesson plans). Ask students to look out for the piece (s) during the performance and think about how wearing or using these elements are important for the dance.
4. Ask students if they dance. If so, ask them why and in what contexts. Have them think about what performing different types of dance says about them. Ask them to think about the role of dance in Filipino culture as they watch the presentation.

### **Curriculum Connections--CA Visual and Performing Arts Standards**

Note: The California Visual and Performing Arts Standards were created based on the premise that each student is receiving comprehensive and sequential arts instruction in all four major arts disciplines. Since this is rarely the case, the following standards may not correspond to the grade levels served by the Arts Express program.

#### *Historical and Cultural Context*

- 3.2 (Grade 4) Name the musical accompaniment and explain how it relates to the dances they have studied.
- 3.3 (Grade 5) Select traditional dances that men, women, or children perform and explain the purpose(s) of the dances.
- 3.4 (Grade 2) Describe dances seen in celebrations and community events.
- 3.4 (Grade 3) Describe how costumes and shoes influence dance movement.

#### *Aesthetic Valuing*

- 4.2 (Grade 3) Explain and demonstrate what it means to be a good audience member.

#### *Connections, Relationships, Applications*

- 5.1 (Grade 5) Describe how historical events relate to dance forms.

**Resources**

Information about Filipino folk dances: <http://pw1.netcom.com/%7Entamayo/folkdance.html>

Sayaw Dances of the Philippine Islands, Vol 1 thru 5, Philippine Folk Dance Society,

The First Philippine Folk Festival: A retrospective, Lucrecia Reyes-Urtula, 1981

Philippine Folk Dance, Francisca Aquino

**Extending the Experience**

Kaisahan offers regular basic classes on Philippine folk dancing, Tagalog language, & Banduria instruments held at Hoover Community Center every Friday. Classes start 6 PM and run until 10:30 PM. Check our website for our performances at [www.kaisahan.org](http://www.kaisahan.org).

We offer student discounts for all of our performances. Kaisahan holds its annual recital in October and annual show in December.