

## THE DAVAO MUSIC CONNECTION

Two years ago, there was an impromptu party at our house that lasted till 3 in the morning. A cousin of Lisa had passed away and his wake was at their house just across the street. Now, there was this excellent violinist visiting from Davao who played a piece or two at the wake. Lisa remembers Gary Iñigo from the mid 1950s, as a 12 year old kid. He already was pretty good with the violin he inherited from his actor-musician dad, who died during the war, and since his mother was a niece to the parish priest, he grew up practically in the church. He eventually went off to Davao becoming an engineer, among others. Duterte still is one of his patrons who calls him often to perform music.

At that time, he made a good musical duo with "ouido style" pianist, 16 year old Lina Bao. She went off to Manila to study music, then eventually moved to the US. And she was also at the wake.

Now, 56 years later, they meet again in Tanjay, and felt they still could make good music together. It wasn't appropriate at the wake, so we invited them over (plus whoever else was in the wake) to our house where Lina could play piano to compliment Gary's violin. We stayed on till 3 in the morning, jamming, singing, reminiscing, debating, drinking, eating, etc. What made it so interesting is that Gary converted to Islam 15 years ago, and was most vocal about everything. With an engineer's mind, he could dissect, quote the bible and Koran, and make his points. His wife, Neneng, who almost became a nun, also converted. Most fascinating.

Anyway, at one point, about 30 people from the wake came over and joined in the jamming, including Fr Jun, the son of the deceased, and another niece who brought her piccolo. See two left photos below.



The next day, we lent Lina our full keyboard Roland electric piano for the duration of her week's stay at the Pensione House, where she hosted a party for more old friends. We had more jamming. See photo above.

At that time, I made a video of these jammings and posted it on U-tube for Gary's computer savvy children. Here is the link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rUR4eUH9uDw> I gave Lina a Cdrom disk.

I would be the first to recommend against playing it, because that is the first and last time I've attempted to hog the limelight and sing, all 14 minutes long, ugh. (At least it's only my voice at times, no video of me). I recently reviewed it and Gary reminds me of Fiddler On The Roof. And he also plays the piano/keyboard pretty well.

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Over 2 months ago, Lisa and I were in Manila, and we got cheap tickets for Davao. Lisa never has been there and my last visit was over 40 years ago. We booked for 3 days and planned to do all the tourist trappings just by ourselves. Our main target was the Sul Orchard farm, then maybe 1 or 2 of the well advertised parks such as Eden.

The Davao bombing had just occurred and we figured it would make it maybe more exciting.

We emailed Gary and mentioned about our visit, and he right away offered to take us around.

Gary, Neneng and one of their sons met us at the airport, brought us to the hotel, then we all had lunch at the Mall nearby, then off they drove maybe 30 km to the Sul Orchard farm. That's us on left posing at the farm with Neneng in Muslim outfit. More orchid photos on left below. Lisa bought about a dozen of the more rare seedlings for our Tanjay farm, and these were carefully packed.

Then, they proceeded to bring us back to the hotel with the promise that tomorrow, they bring us to Eden Park. On the way back, Gary decided to drop by Pres Duterte's house, and if the big man were around, Gary was certain we all could have an audience with him. The guards knew Gary, and after sign-in, waved us through.



But alas, Duterte was busy at a rally somewhere, and the best we could do was a group photo with his cardboard image. See photo on left.

The scheduled trip to Eden Park the next day didn't push through because of a glitch with the vehicle. Besides it was supposed to be just with Neneng with her son driving. Gary was performing at a wedding in the posh Marco Polo Hotel.

So Lisa and I went off on our own to Malagos Nature Park via rental car. It reminded us much of the Singapore Gardens we visited years ago, but this time, even if in much smaller scale, we got tired, and stayed just over 2 hours after a healthy organic lunch. See the 5 photos on the left below.

That evening, we were treated to dinner at Gary's house, and again came out the violin, keyboard, and jamming of us all.

Early on, we had scratched off the other "must see" trappings of Davao such as the Pearl Farm as it required an overnight stay and was a bit pricey. Maybe on our next visit.

We did some shopping at Barter Trade, had lunch at what turned out to be an expensive seafood restaurant that specialized in crabs, shrimps, lobsters. We over-ordered. See first dish below.



But back in our Makati house, we had occasion for more parties such as for my visiting US-based brother, some cousins, and my Ma, who is 99. See below. And finally, Lisa's 75th birthday. We flew home to Tanjay the next day.

