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Alice Reyes first mounted 'Cinderella' in 1981. Photo by Jojo Mamangun

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Alice Reyes recreates 'Cinderella' to celebrate Ballet Philippines' 50th Season

The stage icon collaborated with two other National Artists—Francisco Feliciano and the late Salvador Bernal—to mount this end-of-decade highlight.

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Alice Reyes recreates 'Cinderella' to celebrate Ballet Philippines' 50th Season

In Ballet Philippines' Golden Season, the company presents the ever-popular rags-to-riches tale of Cinderella.

This production sees nothing less than a collaboration of three National Artists: Choreography and direction by National Artist for Dance Alice Reyes with the musical score of Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky specially arranged by National Artist for Music Francisco Feliciano, and set and costume design by National Artist, the late Salvador Bernal. This ballet will be mounted by Nonoy Froilan, Ballet Philippines' premier danseur for three decades, who has essayed leading roles in classical and contemporary ballet and has partnered with world-renowned prima ballerinas such as Margot Fonteyn and Yoko Morishita.

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Reyes takes the fairy tale written in 1812 by the German Grimm brothers Jacob and Wilhelm and recreates it anew while remaining true to the story's essence—that there is might and strength in kindness, great power in forgiveness, and that one must never give up on their dreams.

Guest artists Liza de la Fuente, a trailblazer in dance for the last 25 years and founding member of the Association of Ballet Academies, Philippines and Australian-based Novy Bereber, one of the country's leading choreographers of his generation, will both be playing the Widow Brunhilda.



Liza de la Fuente will take on the role as the Widow Brunhilda, Cinderella's stepmother; Mario "Butch" Esperanza will be playing the Prime Minister.

Another guest artist, Mario Esperanza will be taking on the role of Prime Minister. Bereber and Esperanza have graced the CCP Main Stage as former Ballet Philippines company members.

Two matinee shows will be narrated by Liliane "Tats" Rejante Manahan, a surface decorator/restorer for wall paintings involved in advocacy work for built heritage preservation as chairperson of the Heritage Conservation Society and representative of the International Council on Monuments and Sites on National Commission for Culture and the Arts' National Commission on Monuments and Sites. She became a director, writer, and producer from the mid 70s up to the late 80s, and is currently a contributor to many publications. Her involvement in dance history serves as proof of her unwavering support for dance and the arts.

An array of talent

Lead dancers Denise Parungao and Jemima Reyes who danced Odile/Odette in Ballet Philippines' 50th Season opening production *Swan Lake* will be taking on roles of the Ugly Stepsisters, demanding highly awkward dancing and comedic interpretations. Just as striking are Victor Maguad and Eugene Obille, who both had just played Prince Siegfried in *Swan Lake* last August. will now tackle the roles of Griselda and Prunella with Bereber as Brunhilda.

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Reyes shares that she originally stayed away from casting male dancers in these roles as that was done successfully by Frederick Ashton for the Sadler Wells Ballet. She wanted to feature the company members then—Edna Vida, Malu Rivera, and Hazel Sabas. "Today, we have a strong array of male and female dancers with incredible talent and tremendous technical skills," she says. "Why not take this opportunity to challenge the dancers—both female and male, to take on roles that demand so much more than the usual roles they have already done, with a completely different set of acting skills that can only deepen their own artistry?"



Liliane "Tats" Rejante Manahan will be the Narrator; Novy Bereber will take on the role as the Widow Brunhilda.

Alice Reyes first choreographed and directed *Cinderella* in 1981 for Ballet Philippines with lead dancers Maricar Drilon, Gina Mariano, Cecile Sicangco, Nonoy Froilan, Robert Medina, and Brando Miranda. Her vision back then was to simply mount the most enchanting show for her very own children and the ballet audience. Today, Reyes wears multiple hats as National Artist, Ballet Philippines' co-founder, artistic director, and choreographer, while continuing to inspire this generation's dancers to become the grandest versions of themselves. Just on the heels of Ballet Philippines' successful and sold-out performances of *Swan Lake* and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Cinderella* will be the third offering in the company's 50th Season.

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Cinderella runs from December 6 to 15 at the CCP Main Theater. Tickets are available at

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For more information, call the CCP Box Office at 8832-3704, or the Ballet Philippines Box office at 8551-1003.

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The Talibubu of Taytay: an old fish dish gets a new lease in life with tilapia

Awarded an Honorable Mention in the 2019 Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Award, the writer marvels at her husband's way with traditional talibubu from Taytay, using modern day tilapia to replace the now scarce ayungin fish. By EDELWISA ROMAN GONZAGA

| Apr 18 2020

f (<https://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=https://news.abs-cbn.com/ancx/food-drink/features/04/18/20/the-ichthus-in-talibubu-an-old-fish-dish-gets-a-new-lease-in-life-with-tilapia>). **🐦** ([https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=https://news.abs-cbn.com/ancx/food-drink/features/04/18/20/the-ichthus-in-talibubu-an-old-fish-dish-gets-a-new-lease-in-life-with-tilapia&text=The Talibubu of Taytay: an old fish dish gets a new lease in life with tilapia](https://twitter.com/intent/tweet?url=https://news.abs-cbn.com/ancx/food-drink/features/04/18/20/the-ichthus-in-talibubu-an-old-fish-dish-gets-a-new-lease-in-life-with-tilapia&text=The%20Talibubu%20of%20Taytay%3A%20an%20old%20fish%20dish%20gets%20a%20new%20lease%20in%20life%20with%20tilapia)). **📌**

Now on its 17th year, the Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Award is the first food writing award in the Philippines. Dedicated to the memory of the pioneering food anthropologist and dean of Philippine food columnists, the Award aims to inspire research into Philippine culinary culture and to develop a pool of new talents in food literature and food journalism. Awarded honorable mention, this essay is penned by Edelwisa Roman Gonzaga, wife of a Methodist pastor assigned to the United States.

My husband, Conrado, was predestined to lead a life inundated with fish. Years before Spain colonized the Philippines starting in 1565, his hometown, Taytay in Rizal Province, was part of the fabled Kingdom of Sapa, purportedly named after places along Pasig River within its royal domain. Taytay's proximity to Laguna de Bay, the country's largest lake, has also allowed the town to feast on its bounty for centuries. Taytay's relationship with edible aquatic treasures remains strong.

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Barangay Sta. Ana, part of the town, celebrates a yearly Banak Festival to pay homage to its patron saint believed to have flooded the area with *banak*, grey mullet, more than 400 years ago when the

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With such a rich marine backdrop, Conrado's being a *suhi* was a godsend to his neighborhood. It was believed that his breech birth (*suhi*) had endowed him with special power to help people suffering from *bikig*, foreign matter stuck in the throat, usually a fishbone. As a *suhi*, he was amusingly called Dr. Bikig and his street's most in-demand fellow when such a crisis occurred. Old folk swore by the efficacy of a *suhi*'s miraculous saliva and gentle, healing strokes to move the offending bone and relieve pain.

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My husband Rev. Conrado Medina Gonzaga of Taytay, Rizal and Washington State

My beloved *suhi* is immune to those unfortunate fishbone-in-the-gullet maladies, but not to the allure of Taytayeño cuisine featuring freshwater fish. *Talibubu*, a *guisado* (sauté), is one of Conrado's all-time favorite dishes. Oral history declares it is named after *bubu* or *bubo*, a rattan fishing implement. Its other name is *ayungin* (silver perch, *Leiopotherapon plumbeus*), after the dish's original star as many *taal na taga-Taytay* (true Taytay native) unanimously declare. Once the common Pinoy trifecta of garlic, onion and tomato is fully cooked, it's time to add other ingredients

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like the *ayungin*, coconut milk, slivers of ginger, green chilies, a little soy sauce and a drop of vinegar. As the sauce turns toasty and oily yet still creamy, *naglalangis* according to home cooks, EXPLORE ABS-CBN is added, *alagaw* (*Premna odorata*) leaves. ADVERTISE WITH US (<http://advertise.abs-cbn.com/>)

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Unfortunately, the traditional recipe for *talibubu* has become a victim of vagaries. It is a sad commentary on how environmental neglect and shrewd business practices lead people to scamper like a school of rudely interrupted fish as original ingredients become inaccessible. *Alagaw* that used to be abundant is being replaced by *pechay* (Chinese cabbage). Purists insist though that *alagaw* is singlehandedly responsible for the distinct character of *talibubu*. They repugnantly proclaim, "*Kapag walang alagaw, hindi na talibubu yun.*" (If there is no *alagaw*, it's no longer *talibubu*). *Ayungin* would likewise become scarce and expensive, forcing Taytayenos to cast their nets wider for a more practical alternative, the *tilapia*.



My "diasporic" *talibubu* using *tilapia* fillets, canned coconut milk, and spinach

The first *tilapia* arrived in the Philippines in May 1950 from Bangkok, Thailand through the Bureau of Fisheries, according to the 1991 edition of the *Philippine Students Almanac*. A dozen were transported by plane in tin containers but three died on arrival in Manila. The rest were taken to Dagat-Dagatan Pond Experiment Station in Malabon (a town in Rizal) where they were reared in concrete tanks. In three months, the original stock spawned and multiplied. Some were transplanted to Tanay in Rizal, Mangatarem in Pangasinan and other private fishponds.

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Research on Taytay's market scene published in the August 1909 issue of *Philippine Journal of Science* reports that many freshwater fish, in particular *dalag* (mudfish) and *kanduli* (Manila sea bream). Some dried fish like *dilis* (anchovy) and *sapsap* (ponyfish) from Manila could be supplied. Working-class Taytayeños hung them in their nipa hut kitchens together with strings of garlic, peppers and ears of maize. *Tilapia* was non-existent. The book *Culinary Arts in the Tropics Circa 1922* (Carlos Quirino, ed., Regal Publishing Co., 1978) exhaustively describes Manila's great assortment of seafood, from local catch to the "well advertised but tasteless cold storage fish brought in from New Zealand and Seattle," the latter evidently for the colonial American population. Still there was no *tilapia*.



Rev. Gonzaga holding copies of *Hallowed Tables*, a compilation of recipes and stories from other pastors' wives that I wrote in 2018 (New Day Publishers). It features a number of little-known heirloom dishes from his hometown- Taytay, Rizal

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Just a few decades later, however, *tilapia* would emerge as the go-to source of affordable protein for millions of Filipinos. Today's generation actually associates *talibubu* not

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Who would have thought our *tilapia* started with just twelve fish? My

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([/ancx](#)) now a Methodist pastor, would correlate this with The Messiah who with His twelve disciples fed bread and fish to the hungry multitude. Conrado now adores even the spiritual fare that goes beyond his palate, the ichthus in his life.

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Life in the Pacific Northwest

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Although Conrado lives just a hundred miles away from the iconic Pike Place Fish Market, he still harbors a love for the *talibubu* of his youth. Alas, available *sangkap* (ingredient) dictates how a dish is prepared. At home, we prepare together a hackneyed, diasporic *talibubu* using *bangus* fillets and canned coconut milk from Walmart. It is a product of Pinoy culinary ingenuity and resourcefulness. If it's any consolation, Conrado can now relish his *talibubu* uninterrupted as the *suhi* theory is considered a fishmonger's tale hereabouts. All's well in our kitchen paradise and there's nothing fishy about it.

For more information, visit Doreen Gamboa Fernandez Food Writing Award on Facebook.

[next \(/ancx/food-drink/features/04/18/20/updated-where-to-order-fresh-produce-and-groceries-without-leaving-the-house\).](#)

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