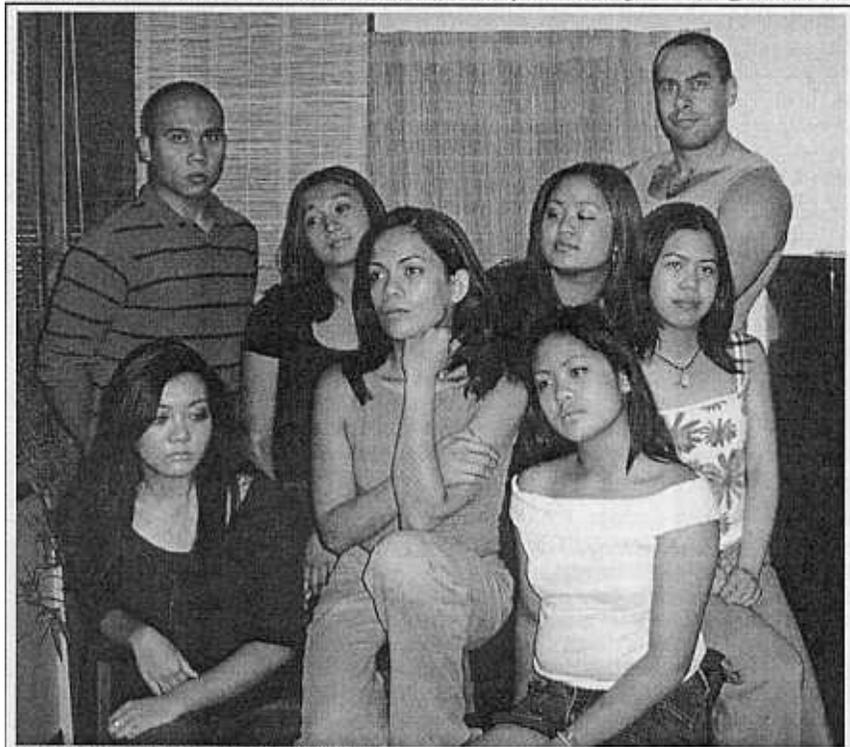


Upside Down Theatre & Teatro Filipino
Present

COMFORT WOMEN

A new play by Rod Escobar Cantiveros

*headed by Nena Lazo of West Side Story's Maria fame as guest artist**



*with permission of Canadian Actors' Equity Association

"The untold story of survivors from among the 200,000 women who worked as sex slaves for the Japanese Imperial Army across Asia and the Pacific during WWII."

Venue # 17
Colin Jackson Studio Theatre
Prairie Theatre Exchange
Third Floor Portage Place

July 16 7:30 pm
July 18-27 - 5:45 daily



Nena Luz Lazo* as young Isabel/Anita: made her debut on professional stage in a grand way playing the lead role of Maria in Rainbow Stage's 2002 summer production of *West Side Story*, earning for herself the distinction of becoming the first Filipino-Canadian to appear in a lead role in Rainbow Stage and making *West Side Story* as the highest grossing production in Rainbow's 48-year history.

Before this, Nena has also played the lead in *Spirit of A Nation* production in British Columbia and *Gas Light Follies* at the Grand Palace Theatre in Dawson City, Yukon for two summers.

Other performance credits include *Crazy for You*, *Annie*, *Anne of Green Gables* and Rainbow's *South Pacific* where she joined her mother Joy as Bloody Mary and older sister Marides as Liat. Nena also appeared in the television series, *The Adventures of Shirley Holmes* as well as two TV commercials: as Green Kid Spokesperson, CKND Television and Manitoba Liquor Commission. She has volunteered in various community fundraising events such as the *Celebrate Jesus* and *Variety Concert* for the Philippine Centre.

A graduate of the Canadian College of Performing Arts, Victoria, B.C under Jacques Lemay, Janis Dunning, Denise Fergusson, Nena has been training since age 14 in musical theatre, jazz, tap, ballet, drama and screen acting to complement her natural singing (soprano) talent.

Recently, she was awarded as one of Outstanding Young Filipino-Canadians in a ceremony in Toronto, in recognition of her achievements in the performing arts.

* Nena Lazo's appearance as guest artist is with permission from the Canadian Actors Equity Assn.



Geoff Trubiak as Sgt. Smith: is honored to be involved in *Comfort Women* at this year's Fringe Festival. His most recent on-stage performances include *Miss/es* at FemFest at PTE and the *The Great Canadian Lover* at the Burton Cummings Theatre. Geoff was also involved in last year's Fringe Festival with the "Best in Fest" play *Spin*. He made his theatre debut in the 2001 production of *Satan's Brew* in which he played the comically sinister "Satan" at the Gas Station Theatre.

His notable film credits include *NaijaMan*, *Nedric*, *Buckey's Blues*, *The Date*, *Endings*, *The Claw*, *Whispering Souls*, *Procedure*, *Pre-Dream*, *The Castle*,

East of Euclid and *Fancy*, *Fancy Being Rich*. Geoff is currently busy working on 4 film projects. One is a feature length of which he holds a lightsaber as he embodies a Dark Sith Lord. He also starts shooting another right after the Fringe Festival in which he only dons a loincloth - so please stop him if you see him eating anything...



Saad Gabuna as Rene/Gen. Makamoto: is returning to the Fringe buoyed by his successful first attempt in last year's production of *Ora Pro Nobis* (Pray For Us) portraying an Oriental immigrant who survived the ordeals of human smuggling via a container. Saad is the co-director and co-creator of *Final Clearance* a.k.a. F.C., a group of breakdancing friends which later expanded into making home movies, comedic kung fu and other movie parodies. F.C. has now been performing in various social gatherings and events (Folklorama) and in venues (Gas Stations and Centennial Concert Hall and at the Garden City Shopping Centre during the promotion show for the concert of Martin Nievera, King of

Philippine Concert). Their repertoire includes skits, modern pop dances, comedy and slapstick. From his first drama experience in Grade 7 with a Church Youth Group, he joined Sisler's Performing Art programs in jazz and concert band playing trumpet and piano and drama classes. He became active with the Filipino Evangelical Church Band playing drums and piano and currently volunteers at Living Bible Explorer (LBE) once a week doing skits and performing actively with *Final Clearance*. Future plans include pursuit of a career in broadcasting.



Rochelle Bernardo as old Isabel/Favel:

is a first-time Fringer and enjoying her foray in theatre and the performing arts. A graduate of Sisler High School and Robertson College, she is currently working in the Accounting Dept. of Paramount Storage. Outside her work, Rochelle pursues her interest in the arts as a Hip Hop dance student at the Royal Dance Conservatory. As well, she plays the guitar. She is also a member of the St. Joseph's Parish Youth Group Choir and teaches catechism to Grade 5 class.



Rachel Bernardo as Ana:

has developed a love affair with acting after getting her taste of the stage in last year's *Ora Pro Nobis* production and very recently in the experimental movie, *Trapped*. To get more training and exposure in this art, she will be joining MYTP this September while at the same time attending Grade 10. at Sisler High School. while in Grade 9 at Andrew Mynarski Junior High, she performed at school plays and gatherings. An all-around personality, Rachel cultivates interest in a variety of activities. As member of the St. Joseph's Parish Youth Group, she teaches grade six catechism; takes keyboard lessons at Keyboard Ventures Music School; and studies art at the Winnipeg Art Gallery.



Johsa Manzanilla as Teresa/old Isabel:

is very much at home on stage wearing different hats... as a cast member in school plays as early as in Grade 6 playing the role of a lawyer in the Balmoral Hall Junior School musical, *The Trial of the Big Bad Wolf*, up to her graduation at the St. John's-Ravenscourt School where she received Special Awards for Excellence in Debating, for Drama, and as a Director of Middle School Plays. Johsa is in one of her finest forms doing public speaking as a debater scoring many victories, such as becoming the 2001 Provincial Champion in French Public Speaking *Concours D'Art Oratoire*, placing as a finalist at two National Public Speaking Championship, and most recently, being ranked one of the top Senior High debaters in Canada. She enjoys sharing her time & talent in the community: volunteers at the Folklorama Philippine Pavilion and Health Sciences Centre - where she was the recipient of Youth Leadership Award; teaches catechism at St Peter's Church; is a Worship Leader (pianist & soloist) of Filipino Canadian Catholic Christian Fellowship - Jesus my Lord. She will attend Queen's University in Kingston on Entrance Honours with Merit Scholarship.



Aiza Luna as Ana:

has recently added a feather on her cap winning the championship in the Red River Ex's Stars of Tomorrow talent competition which entitled her to represent Manitoba in the national finals in Regina in October. played the lead role of Dorothy in the Holy Cross School production of *Wizard of Oz*. She won 2nd place in the CKJS Radio's *Junior Tuklas Talino* singing competition. She participated in community events/fundraisers, like the *Building Together Variety Concert* for the Philippine-Canadian Centre of Manitoba and is a member of the Magdaragat Philippine Folk Arts.



Meryl de Leon as Rene/Teresa:

welcomes her involvement with *Comfort Women* as an opportunity to get more hands-on experience in stage acting. An upcoming Grade 10 student at the Maples Collegiate, Meryl plans to pursue this interest by joining the drama club.



Johnny N. Cantiveros as Gen. Makamoto: is doing a one-show special appearance in *Comfort Women*. Born and raised in Winnipeg, Johnny moved to Vancouver to further his career in tv/film acting. He has taken workshops and courses in film and tv acting both in Winnipeg and Vancouver. He has appeared in various movies which include the Dean Cain starrer, *Christmas Rush*, the CBC Hockey Night ad with Don Cherry. Johnny and his group won the Best Film in the Reel Fast Diversity Film Festival for their film entry. He is currently the entertainment consultant for the *The Filipino Journal* newspaper and the *Balitang A & K* newsmagazine.

His other love is sports which he excels in. He was awarded MVP several times while playing football at St. Paul's High School; Rugby for the Manitoba Provincial Rugby team and has played this sports as a part of the Manitoba delegation in Ireland.



Rod E. Cantiveros - Writer/Producer/Director

Rod is a poet, essayist, playwright, filmmaker and journalist. His talent for writing, especially in Filipino language, has won for him many awards since his high school and university days in Lopez, Quezon and at the University of Sto. Tomas in Manila, Philippines, respectively. A graduate of Bachelor of Literature in Journalism (Marketing & Promotion). Rod attended playwrighting workshops at the Prairie Theater Exchange in Winnipeg. A public relations practitioner, Rod is currently marketing director and co-publisher of *The Filipino Journal* newspaper and the *Balitang A & K* newsmagazine.

Also known as Hot Rod Cooking, his own cooking show. *Comfort Women* is

Rod's second step in pursuing his career as a playwright in Canada. *Ora Pro Nobis*, was his first. Currently, he has written and directed two short films, *Trapped* and *Deprivitization of Irene Osbourne* and is now working on *The Addiction of St. Adrienne*.

This play is dedicated to my wife Linda and my two children, Ron & John

Stage Crew: Karen & Kathy Nacario *Jonathan Ocampo *Jordan Ochoa

Anthony Condelo- Technical Director

Special Thanks to:

Joy Laud Lazo * CKJS Radio 810 Radio * *Mano Y Mano School of Martial Arts*
Bernard & Zeny Lingasin * *Riverbend Family Restaurant - Nap Ebona*
 * *Bueno Supermarket - Carmen Bueno* * *JS Furniture - John & Lita Salguierro*

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Translation of the Filipino words/phrases used in dialogues:

Apo- grandchild ; Anak - child; Nanay - mother; Tatay - father; Ari - sex organ; Hapones- Japanese soldier; gobernadorcillo - gov. general; Mga animal -animals; Mga walang kaluluwa- no souls/knows no mercy; Demonyos- demons/devils; Walang hiya - no respect /shameless; Itak - bolo or machete; Mamatay silang lahat - let them all be dead; Sakang- twisted walking (Refers to a Japanese soldier) protesta sa mga hapon- protest against the Japanese soldiers; Painumin ng pampatulog - add sleeping potion in the drinks; Nakakadiri - gruesome/loathsome; Naman -really/ as it stays Nagrereglá - menstruation; Wala silang awa- no mercy/no pity; Sundalong Hapon- Japanese soldier gagamitin ng mga walanghiya- to be raped without mercy ; Kumot - bed sheet