**OpinYon Metro Entertainment**

Imagery

Boy Villasanta

**Creativity, resourcefulness, ingenuity etc. of Filipino film artists’ nose for funding**—main title

Photo Captions: Bianca Balbuena, Bradley Liew, Kenneth Dagatan, Felicity Kyle and Jasmine Curtis-Smith (Photo Credit: Boy Villasanta); Liza Dino-Seguerra (Photo Credit: Boy Vilasanta); Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto and Joey de Leon with the Dabarkads; “It’s Showtime” cast

It’s not only the Filipino journalists of any beat who have the nose for something newsy, this time, Filipino film artists who have the nose as well for funding their projects.

 It is in this light of economic deprivation not only among a great number of people but filmmakers as well including independent ones that resourceful, creativity, strength of spirit, ingenuity and all positive adjectives are requisites and do magic in film producing.

 Even bigtime studio producers also engage in co-productions and collaborations not only in the creative aspects of the enterprise but in the financial spheres of the venture.

 Oh! These are exceptions to rule and mostly in the pursuit of bigger profits or business security purposes.

 But smalltime producers are more often than not in need of funding support.

 With the advent of numerous international film festivals, Filipino film artists have the vast opportunity in the whole wide world to court for money infusion to their projects.

 Ask Brillante Ma. Mendoza or even Lav Diaz being proponents of indie films that they have the chances, golden or silvery or bronzy, to get financial aid to their works especially in development stage. Brillante’s “Serbis” which was shown at the 2008 Cannes International Film Festival was partly supported by the Hong Kong-Asia Film Financing Forum. Other Mendoza’s movies were also, in one time or another, funded by foreign film agencies like the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society which partially financed “Apag,” Centerstage Productions’ official entry to the 2022 Metro Manila Film Festival (MMFF). Many of Lav’s masterpieces were also aided by foreign grants.

 Dante Mendoza was relatively new in world cinema at the time “Serbis” and its antecedent films were making waves in the world stage and he was presumably being advised or he was smart enough to look for investors in his projects.

 Prior to Brillante and Lav, though, Lino Brocka was exceptionally individually unique as he was the one being approached and chased by international producers. It was perhaps due to his remarkable performances at the Cannes Film Festival when he and fellow director Mike de Leon were the only ones heralded by the prestigious event.

 It was Bernadette Films, a French outfit that produced Lino’s “Ora Pro Nobis (Fight for Us).” It was a company which forked out millions of dollars to bankroll the project. Later, the film was sold to Cannon Group, a giant and high-end multimedia conglomerate.

 Had Brocka survived the vehicular accident he was already scheduled to do a Hollywood film to be produced by Robert Altman. This writer should know because he was running around Brocka and his former business manager Boy C. de Guia, a popular entertainment writer, columnist, star builder, talent manager, TV host, among other berths, who is still missing until this very minute.

 Of course, getting or gathering international financing isn’t a walk in the park at this point and time although there are many granting institutions globally.

 Thanks to the power of digital communications where an Internet is a bridge that connects peoples all around the world. The wide universe is reduced to a village as Canadian philosopher and mass communication visionary Marshall McLuhan had described it.

 Independent filmmakers—producers and/or directors—not necessarily penniless or to a certain extent, no money at all, yet have the capacity, vision, fighting spirit, artistry, business sense, exposure to the filmmaking trade, patronage. but talented and deserving can get sponsorships and investments.

 One has to start somewhere, after all.

 Take for instance Cinemalaya Independent Film Festival. Although millions of pesos are at stake to roll in a project, there are seed money being allotted by the Cinemalaya Foundation and a counterpart/s in the producing stage. Once a worthy project is selected, a director or a creative producer can proceed without forking out money.

 One of the generous international film organizations is the Bucheon International Fantastic Film Festival (BIFAN) in Bucheon, South Korea. It has many opportunities to offer like the It Project, a film market where a proponent submits a project in development of genre form as a result of one’s resourcefulness and when selected, competed and won, gets cash prizes and post-production assistance. Or a project gets the chances to be pitched to international investors, producers, marketers, distributors etc. for funding.

 Take “In My Mother’s Skin” by Kenneth Dagartan who was a product of BIFAN’s Fantastic Film School (FFS) in 2018 and who submitted the project during the COIVID-19 pandemic in 2021 with his producers Bianca Balbuena and Bradley Liew.

 It was funded by Taiwan and Singapore film agencies through pitches at BIFAN.

 Now the film which stars Jasmine Curits-Smith, Felicity Kyle, Beauty Gonzales, Ronnie Lazaro, Angeli Bayani, among others, is touring the world like Sundance, Rotterdam etc. At the 2023 BIFAN, its screening was well-attended.

**Shorts**: Jasmine Curtis-Smith’s current flame is a non-showbiz guy who works at the Philippine Department of Tourism since the Rodrigo Duterte’s dispensation. Jasmine is very proud of her boyfriend who she says is a very hardworking and service-oriented guy who wants to elevate the general welfare of the Filipinos by the fruits of labor of public servants and managers in the tourism industry. According to Curtis-Smith, she supports the vision of her beau who is very idealistic …Liza Dino-Seguerra is being groomed to head the Film Commission of the Government of Quezon City. Although she isn’t appointed yet as the commissioner of the agency, she helps a lot in the formulation and implementation of policies of the office which is already in place. At the moment, Liza is hopping from one international film event to the other to introduce Philippine cinema and its cultural and economic potentials to the global film market. Dino-Seguerra doesn’t say die in the advancement of the local movie industry before and after she chaired the Film Development Council of the Philippines (FDCP) during the Duterte regime…During the respective launches of TVJ (Tito Sotto, Vic Sotto and Joey de Leon)’s “Eat” at TV5 and “It’s Showtime” at GTV, a UHF (Ultra High Frequency) station of GMA Network, the two noontime shows were eagerly anticipated and watched by observers of the two shows not necessarily avid fans but keen followers of which would rate well at the charts. According to showbiz writers Tonee Coraza and Alwayn Ignacio, “It’s Showtime” showed more glittery and fun numbers which made it more palatable to the audience while some critics said “Eat” by TVJ and the legit Dabarkads had soapy and syrupy effects of playing underdog which eliminated the bouncy and celebratory of a noontime show. Curiously, GMA Network’s Channel 7’s “Eat Bulaga” wasn’t even talked about in social media because of its drab and commonplace antics, according to showbiz pundits.