Young talents unite in 1st Asia-Europe Music Camp

By Lynda C. Corpuz

They are from both sides of the globe. But for eight days, they will be one in music.

It is the first time for 24-year-old soloist Kim Ye-jin to travel alone and in the Philippines. Italian Fausto Corneo, a 29-year-old clarinetist and a professor in Rotterdam Conservatory in Lisbon, Portugal, will also spend a week here. Twenty-six-year-old composition major Nilo Alcala II has toured abroad as tenor of the Philippine Madrigal Singers, and like Kim and Fausto, he looks forward to a new experience in "iPulse: The 1st Asia-Europe Music Camp.

Make music together

The idea is noble: To gather youthful musicians from Asia and Europe. Logistically, it is complicated. Despite correspondence sent to major music colleges, conservatories and universities in the two regions, only 18 made it to the music camp, an activity of the Asia-Europe Foundation's cultural exchange program.

Chantaranee Chantsawanan, ASEF director, welcomed the participants, adding that the choice of the Philippines as host of "iPulse" is a sight that will set the country's arts and culture heritage and Filipinos' interest in music.

"iPulse," which started on February 2 at the National Arts Center, Makati, Laguna, is part of the National Arts Month celebration. It will culminate in a concert and live recording tomorrow, 8 p.m. at the Cultural Center of the Philippines' Little Theater. Dr. Robert Castells, "iPulse" artistic director and a conductor/composer, explained that "iPulse" relates to the individual's wanting to exchange ideas, meet fellow music students and young professionals and to make friends with different nationalities.

On "iPulse"'s first day, participants performed short pieces. With Spanish percussionist Robert Olivares, Kim struck the silk chords of her hangyaum (traditional Korean instrument), and produced music that blended with nature's sounds that filled the chilly afternoon atop Mount Makiling.

Students from the Philippine High School for the Arts presented various rondalla and ethnic pieces. Pattara Komkham played Thailand's pi nai wind instrument while Irish Sile Denovir performed "Home Free," with her Irish harp.

Lesson in tolerance

CCP president Nestor Jardin said "iPulse"'s aim was not to require them to come up with grand compositions for the camp's run, but to allow them to interact and learn more about each other's music instruments.

Castells, with "iPulse" associate artistic director Prof. Chino Tejedo of the University of the Philippines' College of Music, hoped the participants from Belgium, China, Cyprus, Finland, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Korea, Lithuania, Philippines, Poland, Portugal, Singapore, Spain and Thailand learned more than just to make music.

"What "iPulse" aims is for them to bond well and understand one another," Castells stressed.

From workshops to various activities and night-outs scheduled, tomorrow's concert will be a grand finale for "iPulse" delegates as they will premiere original works: "Shades of Opera II" by Chinese Shen Ye, "Dancing Delusions" by Alcala, "Icon" by Portuguese Goncalo Lourenco, "En route" by Singaporean Amric Goh, and "Binalig," "Panangpint" and "Halyeroen Kuy Dwinta" by distinguished Filipino composer Bob Aves.

"iPulse" delegates Kim, Fausto and Nilo hope they contribute well to the music camp's success.

Kim wishes to keep in touch with fellow delegates, master her hangyaum well and learn English better as she will fly soon to the United Kingdom's Royal Academy of Music for further studies.

Fausto, who teaches contemporary jazz and free improvisation, hopes to learn new lessons and gain experience to share with his students back in Lisbon. Nilo is learning to play the piano and wishes to learn playing other musical instruments in preparation for a major orchestral piece.

The 2nd Asia-Europe Music Camp is slated in Ireland in November 2005. For tickets to tomorrow's "iPulse" concert, call the CCP Marketing Department at 832-1125 local 1800 to 1806.