

PHILIPPINE POST-WAR PERFORMING ARTS

A. Theater

Bodabil; Senakulo; Philippine Street, Protest, and Contemporary Theater



Performing Arts

- are art forms where artists perform live in front of an audience using their body, voice, movements, and expressions.
- They showcase the creativity, beliefs, stories, and traditions of a community.



Performing Arts

- In the Philippine context, performing arts are deeply connected to traditions, religion, festivals, and historical events, making them important in understanding Filipino identity.

THEATER

- a performing art that involves acting, singing, movement, narration, and stage performance to tell a story or deliver a message.

THEATER

- It uses script, actors, props, costumes, and audience interaction.

Key Elements of a Theater

1. **Actors/Performers** – portray characters
2. **Script** – storyline and dialogues
3. **Director** – interprets the script
4. **Set and Props** – objects and scenery
5. **Costume & Makeup** – create character identity
6. **Audience** – completes the theater experience

Forms of Philippine Theater



1. BODABIL (Vaudaville)

- A Filipino entertainment theater composed of variety acts including comedy, singing, dancing, magic tricks, acrobatics, and band performances.
- It is the local adaptation of American *vaudeville*.

Historical Timeline of Bodabil:

- **1898–1930s** – American colonization brings vaudeville to the Philippines.
- **1910s** – Bodabil becomes extremely popular in Manila theaters such as Zorilla Theater.
- **1940s (Japanese Occupation)** – Bodabil becomes the main entertainment because Western movies were banned.
- **1950s–1960s** – Golden Age of Bodabil. Many Filipino icons rise to fame.
- **1970s–Present** – Decreases in popularity but influences TV variety shows today.

Characteristics of Bodabil:

- “Anything goes” entertainment format
- Variety of acts in one show
- Comedians and singers are a highlight
- Live band accompaniment
- Colorful costumes and lively stage setup
- Stand-up comedy (“komedya”), magic, dance
- Light, entertaining performances
- Performed in theaters and later on TV and fiesta programs

Katy dela Cruz - *Queen of Bodabil*



Pugo at Tugo - *Filipino Comedy Duo*



- Composed of Mariano Contreras (1910–1978) as Pugo and Andres Solomon (1905–1952) as Tugo, their brand of humor consisted of short skits, slapstick, and funny dialogues presented in Manila's theaters, most particularly Clover Theater and Avenue Theater.

Dolphy - *King of Comedy*



- Rodolfo Vera Quizon Sr. began his career as a bodabil dancer. He changed his first stage name Golay to Dolphy.
- He was discovered, at age 19, by Fernando Poe Sr., the father of FPJ, the late Action King.

Luo Salvador Sr.



- *The King of Bodabil Producers*
- *The Master Showman of the Variety Stage*
- *The Father of Filipino Variety Entertainment*

Luo Salvador Sr.



- A former basketball star who became one of the most important bodabil performers and producers in the Philippines.

Luo Salvador Sr.



- He created popular variety shows, discovered talents like Dolphy, and kept bodabil alive during the Japanese occupation.
- His work shaped modern Filipino entertainment, earning him the title “The Master Showman.”



Cultural Importance of Bodabil:

- Birthplace of Filipino entertainment culture
- Foundation of modern TV variety shows and comedy programs
- Developed Filipino musicians and dancers

2. SENAKULO

- A religious theater play that dramatizes the Passion, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- It is performed during Lenten season, especially Holy Week.

Historical Timeline of Senakulo:

- **Late 1500s** – Spanish missionaries introduce religious plays to convert Filipinos.
- **1600s–1700s** – Script called “Pasyon” becomes popular.
- **1800s** – Senakulo becomes a community tradition in towns.
- **Today** – Performed annually in provinces across the Philippines.

Characteristics of Senakulo:

- Highly dramatic and emotional
- Biblical characters wear robes, crowns, and sandals
- Actors memorize long verses from the Pasyon
- Live narration and singing
- Can last for several hours to several days
- Performed in plazas, chapels, streets, or gymnasiums









Cultural Importance of Senakulo:

- Strengthens Filipino Catholic faith
- Unites the community through a shared tradition
- Preserves biblical stories in dramatic form

3. Philippine Street Theater

- A public performance staged in open areas such as streets, plazas, markets, and fields.
- It aims to entertain, educate, or raise awareness.

History of Philippine Street Theater:

- Pre-colonial communities performed ritual dramas and dances outdoors.
- In the 1970s–1980s, cultural groups used street theater to reach ordinary Filipinos, especially during political unrest.

Characteristics of Philippine Street Theater:

- No formal stage
- Uses giant puppets, masks, banners, drums, and portable props
- Actors engage directly with the audience
- Improvised and interactive
- Colorful costumes and exaggerated movements to catch attention

Examples:

- Street dancing in festivals (Ati-Atihan, Sinulog, Dinagyang)
- Community storytelling in barangays
- Cultural parades during fiestas





Cultural Importance of Philippine Street Theater:

- Makes art accessible to all people
- Reflects Filipino creativity in public spaces
- Encourages youth and communities to participate in cultural celebrations

4. Protest Theater

(Political Theater)

- A form of theater that exposes social issues, injustices, poverty, and government problems to inspire awareness and change.

History of Protest Theater:

- 1970s–1986 (Martial Law Era) – This type of theater becomes powerful and popular.
- Used as a tool to criticize the dictatorship, censorship, and human rights violations.

Characteristics of Protest Theater:

- Bold and straightforward message
- Performed in streets, schools, or public rallies
- Simple props (placards, banners, masks)
- Emphasizes reality instead of heavy theatrical makeup or costumes
- Actors often speak directly to the audience
- Uses chants, drumbeats, slogans, and poetry

Examples:

- PETA (Philippine Educational Theater Association) plays
- Protest performances in universities
- Performances about environment, labor rights, or poverty

Pagsambang Bayan (UP Repertory)

- a musical show, which is originally a creative and subtle protest set against the context of the then dictatorship of Marcos.





Cultural Importance of Protest Theater:

- Gives voice to the marginalized
- Empowers people to fight for rights and justice
- Records historical struggles through art

5. Contemporary Theater

- includes modern theatrical performances that use new styles, technology, multimedia, music, dance, and experimental forms.

History of Contemporary Theater:

- **1990s–Present** – Rise of multimedia and modern theater groups.
- Growth of Philippine musicals and theater festivals.

Characteristics of Contemporary Theater:

- Combines acting, digital screens, music, dance, visual arts
- Uses modern lighting, projections, sound effects

Characteristics of Contemporary Theater:

- Themes include:
 - Mental health
 - Love and relationships
 - Filipino identity
 - Migration
 - Social media influence

Characteristics of Contemporary Theater:

- May be traditional or experimental
- Can include rap, spoken word poetry, jazz, hip-hop, animation

Examples:

- Rak of Aegis – musical by PETA
- Mula sa Buwan – Filipino musical
- Himala the Musical



Cultural Importance of Contemporary Theater:

- Shows how Filipino theater adapts to modern times
- Encourages creativity and innovation
- Attracts the youth and global audience