

The 5th Pasko sa Nayon heralds Filipino yuletide in the City of Melbourne **M. Cichello, 14 November 2011**

Christmas is a significant cultural season for Filipinos worldwide and Bayanihan Australia Community Network Inc (BACNI) is once again bringing the annual **Pasko sa Nayon (Christmas in the Village) 2011 Concert** to Melbourne. The big evening is on **Sunday, 4 December 2011** at the renowned BMW Edge, Federation Square.

BACNI, a non-profit Filipino Australian organization based in Melbourne CBD, successfully introduced Filipino Christmas to the public in 2007. The Pasko event has become a remarkable example of Filipinos and Australians partnering in *bayanihan* spirit: the BACNI organizing committee, Pasko production team and cast of community performers are all volunteers. The *meryenda* (refreshments) after the show are donated by Filipino shops, associations and individuals.

“Melbourne is renowned as a multicultural city that celebrates diversity and our community thrives on sharing our many cultural traditions and stories. Melbourne’s Filipino community contributes actively to the city’s cultural life, and events such as Pasko bring people of many different backgrounds together”, happily endorses Melbourne’s Lord Mayor, The Hon Robert Doyle.

The Pasko Concert is the only Filipino event in Melbourne’s cultural calendar. Sponsors such as City of Melbourne, Victorian Multicultural Commission and Federation Square help defray event costs.

The Pasko sa Nayon concert showcases colourful Filipino folk dances, glittering Christmas lanterns, English and Filipino carols but focuses on a different theme each year. This year, the *parol* theme will be celebrated in song, dance and images.

“Where there is a group of Filipinos, you would find a community – and when the community gathers, the *parol* is a symbol of faith and a foundation of fellowship to all Filipinos the world over”, says Philippine Consul Ms Virginia Kalong.

For 2011, BACNI is proud to present a dazzling ensemble of talented Filipinos. Leading the cast is **Rina Benedictos**, a classical singer who has performed in Australian musicals, appeared on TV adverts, released the commercial CD ***Solace in Song*** and captivated dignitaries at the 2011 Perth’s Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) earning her a standing ovation. The **Philippine Rondalla Victoria** will evoke nostalgia with the musicians’ mandolin-style stringed instruments. **Kultura Pilipino** Dancers will impress with grace and colourful costumes. **Fil-Oz Idol 2011 Winners Jake Estabillo** and **Vanessa Sanchez- Cosic**, and popular young soloists **Janelle Belisario** and **Angela Medilo** will captivate with their gifted voices. **Lida Datario** will conduct the *Rondalla*, while **Samuel Datario** will be the pianist on the night. **Julian Belisario** is the ever patient skilled Music Director. **Giselle Gonzales** and **Matt Margarejo**, presenters from Channel 31 Pinoy TV will be the hosts.

BACNI thanks all the sponsors, volunteers, performers and community supporters for their generosity. Bring your family and friends to a wonderful Christmas evening! **Tickets are \$25/head, \$20 Seniors and Kids U12 and can be ordered from Terry on 0413 844 146 or email Francesca on secretary@bayanihanaustralia.org.**