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Introduced by Senator Miriam Defensor Santiago

RESOLUTION
EXPRESSING THE SENSE OF THE SENATE TO NOMINATE LISA MACUJA-ELIZALDE
FOR THE NATIONAL ARTIST AWARD FOR DANCE, IN RECOGNITION OF HER
IMMENSE AND UNPARALLELED CONTRIBUTIONS TO PHILIPPINE CULTURE AND
THE ARTS, SPECIFICALLY TO PHILIPPINE BALLET

WHEREAS, the Order of National Artists (Orden ng Gawad Pambansang Alagad ng Sining) is the highest national recognition given to Filipino individuals who have made significant contributions to the development of Philippine arts – music, dance, theater, visual arts, literature, film and broadcast arts, and architecture and allied arts;

WHEREAS, Lisa Macuja-Elizalde is the first Filipina prima ballerina and first foreign soloist who ever joined the prestigious Kirov Ballet in 1984; she is also the artistic director of Ballet Manila, vice chairperson of the Philippine UNESCO National Commission, and directress and faculty member of the Ballet Manila School; she was previously commissioner of the National Commission on the Role of Filipino Women;

WHEREAS, as a scholar of the USSR Ministry of Culture, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde entered the prestigious Vaganova Choreographic Institute (now the Academy of Russian Ballet) in Saint Petersburg in 1982;

WHEREAS, she graduated at the top of her class in 1984, and became the first foreigner to be invited to join the Kirov Ballet, a 260-year old institution in dance; it was at the historical Maryinsky Theatre that she first premiered as principal ballerina in *The Nutcracker*, *Don Quixote*, and *Giselle*;

WHEREAS, wishing to share her love for dance with fellow Filipinos, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde returned to Manila in 1986 and became artist-in-residence of the Cultural Center of the Philippines; she has since remained Philippine-based, performing as principal ballerina in major local productions and as international guest artist in Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, the United States, Cuba, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, Singapore, and New Zealand;

WHEREAS, in 1995, she established Ballet Manila, envisioned as a ballet company by the dancers, of the dancers, and for the dancers; together with ballet master Osias Barroso, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde drilled the company in the highly-rigorous Russian (Vaganova) method of classical ballet;

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde has received many national and international citations and recognitions for her outstanding contribution to ballet and society, including the following:

- Pearl of the Orient Award, 2008
- Gawad Buhay Awards for the Performing Arts, Outstanding female lead performance in a dance production, 2008

- The Order of International Friendship awarded by Russian President Vladimir Putin, 2001
- The Ten Outstanding Young Persons of the World (TOYP U.S.A.), 1997
- The Outstanding Young Filipino (TOYF), 1995
- Prize for Artistry by the House of Diaghilev in Moscow, 1992
- The Outstanding Women in Nation's Service (TOWNS), 1989
- Quezon City's Outstanding Citizen Award, 1989
- Manila's Patnubay ng Kalinangan at Sining, 1988

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde was also the first Filipino ballerina to bring home a laureate prize: a silver media from the 1987 Asia-Pacific Ballet Competition in Tokyo; she also completed the semi-finals (senior division) at the 1990 USA International Ballet Competition in Jackson, Mississippi, and won the fifth place at the 1992 International Diaghilev Ballet Competition in Moscow, Russia;

WHEREAS, to date, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde has performed the principal roles in over 300 full-length and contemporary ballets in some 81 cities, spanning five continents;

WHEREAS; hailed as the "ballerina of the people," Ms. Macuja-Elizalde is committed to bringing ballet closer to the hearts of the Filipino masses; she led Ballet Manila in outreach performance tours in more than 45 cities and towns throughout the Philippines; as directress of the Ballet Manila School, she teaches scholar and advanced classical ballet classes; she also spearheads Project Ballet Futures, a dance training in partnership with local public schools and non-government organizations in Pasay City and Manila;

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde is also the host of Art2Art, a groundbreaking radio program that has been hailed as the Best Educational Radio Program by the Catholic Mass Media Awards in 2009 and 2010; she is also founding member and currently treasurer of the Artists Welfare Project, Inc. (AWPI), an organization of artists from various disciplines which aims to help and promote the interests of Filipino artists and cultural workers;

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde's unique contributions to Philippine culture and the arts are fully enhanced as she celebrates more than 25 years of professional dance; her mastery of ballet technique and style, and her unassailable musicality and artistry have earned her the appellation "the Filipino ballerina at her best";

WHEREAS, Ms. Macuja-Elizalde's contributions to Philippine culture and the arts, and to Philippine society as a whole, should not go unrecognized; she is a rare gem, a talent that comes only once in a lifetime;

WHEREAS, today, no Filipina ballerina has yet surpassed the recognition and pride Lisa Macuja-Elizalde has brought to the Philippines; she is the embodiment of talent, creativity and imagination, technical proficiency of the highest order, grace, and humanity that makes her worthy of the title of National Artist;

WHEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED by the Philippine Senate to express the sense of the Senate to nominate Lisa Macuja-Elizalde for the National Artist Award for dance, in recognition of her immense and unparalleled contributions to Philippine culture and the arts, specifically to Philippine ballet.

Adopted,


MIRIAM DEFENSOR SANTIAGO