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SPEECH BY

PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.

AT THE GINTONG PARANGAL: HONORING THE CHAMPION CHOIRS OF 2024

[Delivered at the Malacañan Palace | 24 November 2024]

Thank you very much , Executive Secretary --- *[applause]*

You're the ones who should get the applause. You are the performers. I'm just here to recognize your wonderful success.

Thank you Secretary Lucas Bersamin; the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) Board of Commissioners; Cultural Center of the Philippines Board of Trustees; of course, First Lady Louise Araneta-Marcos.

And I have to be very candid with all of you, the driving force, really, behind all of these, my sister, Irene Marcos- Araneta. *[applause]*

And of course, our honorees, the most important people who are here as far as I am concerned. The most important people in this room today are our champion choirs. *[applause]*

Welcome!

Good evening to you all!

We celebrate tonight the triumphs that resonate with artistry and the unparalleled dedication of Filipinos.

On this occasion, we celebrate the chorale groups that have brought pride and honor to the country at the Gintong Parangal: Honoring the Champion Choirs of 2024.

What you have participated in are amongst the most coveted and rigorous in the entire world, drawing only the finest vocal ensembles to their ranks. To emerge victorious in these arenas is to have achieved a distinction reserved for the most exceptional.

Yet, the journey does not conclude here. For some, qualifying for the Grand Prix is an extraordinary milestone, but it brings immense challenges. And achieving this requires sacrifices that will extend beyond merely musical excellence.

However, the reason that we are here this evening is really --- and that's why I said that Irene was the one who kept reminding me every couple of weeks, I would get a message from Irene, "We have a chorale that won again." Where? "In [unclear], in Prague, in the --- kung saan-saan." And I thought, well, you know, that's great, that's fine. And I turn on the news and no one's talking about it.

And I said this is --- how is it? This is world championship level. This is not --- this is not the one, the choir that won the barangay fiesta competition. This is world-class, international level. And Filipinos do not know about it and they should, because every other Pinoy that will hear about it will be proud, once again.

Hindi naman nasayang 'yung karaoke namin sa bahay, natuto kaming lahat kumanta. As you may know, Irene and I, my sister Imee and my whole family grew up in a --- where --- we grew up in a house --- in houses always full of music.

Thanks to my mother, Imelda. And there was always music in our home and we now make this conversation between ourselves. And we say we know, "I don't know how we could go through life without music. Now there would be little less meaning to everything that we do."

And we thought that we were special and different, but it turns out all Filipinos feel the same way. And that what gives your achievement an even greater importance. Not only because you have achieved such greatness in the international arena but because you have --- in doing so, you have shown once again that very important part of the Filipino culture, which is music.

And it is not any music that we are now promoting. It's Filipino music. Of course, we are influenced by all of those who have come to the Philippines in our past history. But still, when you hear a song, when you hear a Kundiman, that's Filipino. That is not a --- and when you hear the Manila sound, when you hear --- all of this music that comes from the Philippines, it's Filipino.

And it's just as good as any music that you can hear anywhere in the world. And that is why this tonight is so important to us. So that people --- Filipinos realize, "Hindi magaling talaga kami. Magaling talaga eh. 'Yan ang music namin at na-appreciate ng buong mundo dahil maganda naman talaga."

And that is what the --- your achievement, of course, it's nice to have the plaques, and the rewards, and the medals, and all that, of course. But people must hear about it. Filipinos especially must hear about it.

And I hope that tonight will be the first step to that, where we recognize the true artists that are amongst us and the artists that have made their --- they have gone out and have been so committed to their art to say this, to present it to the rest of the world.

And thank God, the rest of the world says it it's very, very good, you win. So, congratulations to all of you. I hope that tonight will be the beginning of a resurgence of the appreciation of Filipino artists by Filipinos.

Maraming, maraming salamat!

Welcome to the Palace! Good evening.

[applause]

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