

IVEE DE LOS SANTOS

The Future is Transpinay

Local Bebot

Andra Alcazar

RIOtaso

Le Ngok

Poblaxion

UNO

HUMBLEHUSTLER®



HUMBLE

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A QUARTER THROUGH TWO CENTURIES

Dear fellow Humble Hustlers,

This Women's Month is a time of empowerment and reflection. Time to recognize the diverse experience of each empowered woman, how each of their individual journeys shaped and re-shaped their own version of femininity. Featuring Ivey De Los Santos, a trans woman breaking the boundaries in fashion and self-expression.

At just 23, she embodies what it means to be a Humble Hustler--someone who knows that she is capable of while accepting that there is always room for improvement. A woman who fully knows her worth, her power, yet remains to be 'humble' and grounded for the endless growth the world has to offer.

This issue is dedicated to all the women who are finding their voices, unafraid to take up space, and ready to push the boundaries--be it fashion, culture, beauty, and among interesting topics in the next pages. This month, we celebrate the mothers who inspire us, the women who created new trends, and those who continue to take up space in the world.

Humble Hustler invites you to flip the next pages as an individual who will be inspired by stories, exploring femininity in all forms you can imagine. May we continue to be authentic and empower one another every day.

With praise,

Jelli Anne Gando

IVEE DE LOS SANTOS
Cover feature on p. 17

REDEFINING FEMININITY



SELF EXPRESSION THROUGH NAILS

Written by Celina Dylim, Theresa Imperial

BY *Nika Pascua*

A.K.A.

LOCAL BEBOT



M meet 23-year-old self-taught nail artist Nika Pascua, also known as Local Bebot, who is known for her acrylic nail designs influenced by Western designs.





Nika's passion for nail art started during the pandemic while scrolling through social media, having found a video on how to create nail extensions with the use of Polygel. This piqued her interest, and she began researching and doing her nails shortly afterward. Nika also discovered acrylic nails and started experimenting with it; this hobby turned into Local Bebot after receiving endless encouragement from family and friends.

What started as a passion project during the pandemic has become one of the Metro's sought-after nail services. Known for her mind-blowing freehand designs, Nika transforms every set into a masterpiece—no stickers, no shortcuts, just pure talent. The nails that Nika designs are nothing short of extraordinary; driven by a passion for self-expression and artistry, the student-turned-business owner meticulously hand-paints each nail, transforming them into tiny canvases of creativity.

From mesmerizing hand-sculpted images to abstract masterpieces, all entirely freehand, her attention to detail and skill takes any design to the next level. Whatever Nika's clients desire, she delivers. Using airbrush techniques, rhinestones, both large and small embellishments, Nika's services allow for highly customizable and eye-catching nail art no matter the length of your nails. She'll surely bring it to life whether you're into minimalism or full-on maximalist glam.

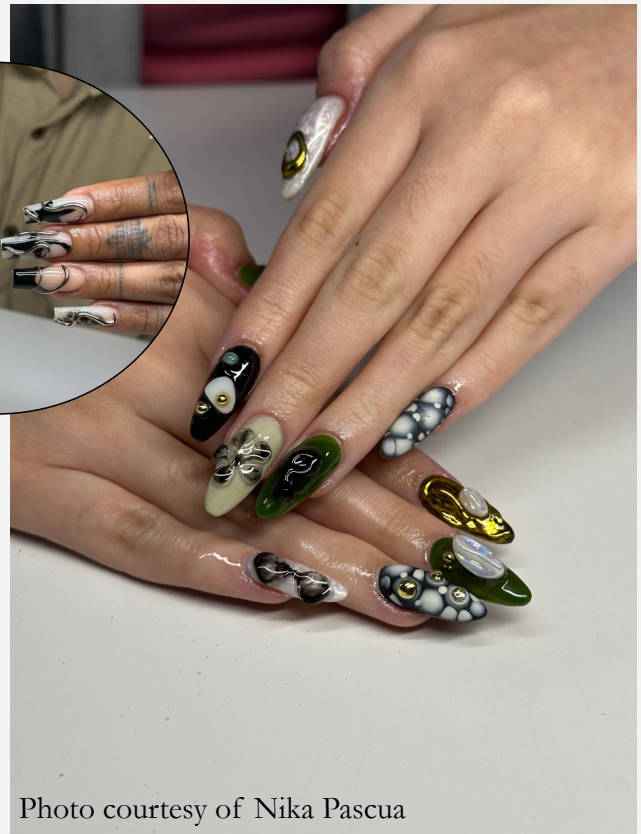


Photo courtesy of Nika Pascua

THE BEST PART?

Her acrylic nails are built to follow your natural nail growth, meaning they stay looking flawless for weeks. With the right aftercare, her sets can last you up to six weeks—so your nails will still receive praise long after your appointment.

Operating exclusively on Instagram, the business allows clients to browse the extensive catalog of her creations and book appointments with ease. Local Bebot's Instagram account serves as both a storefront and a gallery, highlighting her freehand artistry that pushes the boundaries of traditional nail design. Elinails, Social Climber Nails, Karen Jimenez, and Kay Agbayani influence Nika's nail designs.

Looking for nails that stand out and are long-lasting?

Local Bebot is the one to watch. Follow her Instagram ([@localbebot](https://www.instagram.com/localbebot)) and get ready to possess art at your fingertips.

EXHIBIT FEATURE

mine! *grab!* steal!

THE GENTRIFICATION OF UKAY-UKAY
BY ANDRA ALCAZAR

Written by Karla Mediatrix Breta



August 2024, Andra Alcazar hosted a 5-day exhibition of her undergraduate thesis, “MINE! GRAB! STEAL!”, a guided tour at the Design + Art Campus in De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde in partnership with Benilde Arts Management. Derived from the ukay-ukay culture terminologies, “Mine!” is the original price, “Grab!” is the much higher price, then “Steal!” is the most expensive price, and that alone sums up the whole study of the gentrification of ukay-ukay.

Photo courtesy of Andra Alcazar



INTRODUCING

ANDRA ALCAZAR

Born and raised in ukay, Andra Alcazar has always been into this culture, especially it was her grandmother that introduced this to her and even going to ukay every week after church is normal. From there, Andra became independent on how she dresses up, especially in college where she gets to have much liberty on how she wants to present herself to the world.

Andra wanted to look for a subject that held so dear in her heart, and that's where the subject about gentrification of ukay-ukay came into her mind for her undergraduate thesis—taking it as an opportunity to discuss it in person as it was something that she genuinely wanted to talk about for about 2 years. Topics about ukay-ukay kept growing ever since the pandemic, such that made ukay-ukay's access started to be made difficult and Andra eventually stopped consuming for a while. She noticed that this kind of discourse is only being talked about online, and there was never a chance for people to converse in person along with data and Andra believes that installation art is a space for conversation and a chance to be finally immortalized. **She conceptualized Mine! Grab! Steal! on how we want to be a part of change in a way we want fashion not end up in an impending doom of clothes being only disposable.**



GENTRIFICATION... GENTRIFICATION?!

She draws attention to the term “gentrification,” remarking that it is a very Western concept to the Filipino viewpoint that is expressed in Filipino society and culture. When ukay-ukay initially appeared in the Philippines, it gave everyone, regardless of social standing, access to clothing as a necessity. However, the way that ukay-ukay is currently viewed and consumed has changed, as evidenced by the numerous conversations and debates taking place in various online forums on how this easily accessible way to buy clothing has been “gentrified.”

As many people portray it online, the “gentrification of ukay-ukay” is a problem that extends beyond simply blaming a certain group. Andra’s study into this installation piece revealed that it is also a social, political, economic, and environmental problem that is largely caused by an individual’s propensity for excessive consumption. She emphasized how communities are more negatively impacted by these behaviors than we realize. Alexandra claims that “gentrification,” when taken off of its connotations, is a phenomenon that denies the Filipino people their freedom of choice. Thrifting is meant to be accessible as a want, and especially as a need. Andra feels that it shouldn’t be like this, because ukay is not like that when it first started, she asked why is the ukay culture changing—that culture, being perpetuated in the country, Andra emphasized that the Philippines is technically a dump for other countries’ trash, and ukay are literal unwanted clothes, then why are they priced the same as the new ones? Especially if these are just trash? These questions from Andra made the concept interesting on deeper levels as it also had to deal with trends, microtrends that end fast, and how it changes the way consumers see the market.





HER ADVOCACY

Andra didn't want to pursue art for the sake of money, as conceptual art is not a form that is easy to monetize or establish, more of so like an advocacy of sustainability. She's a big activist for climate importance, she loves to fight for climate emergency, in where the world is at the rate of climate change that happens rapidly as we speak and Andra pointed out that the only way to control it is through controlling consumption—mindful fashion, because gentrification also happens because of consumption, while also knowing that fashion is the 3rd most pollutant contributor in the world, and a person can only wear clothes and shoes a number in their life.

MOVING FORWARD TO SUSTAINABLE FASHION

Andra emphasized the importance of knowing what you are and for knowing who you are—where you know to yourself that you won't be easily be swayed by new trends and that is when you know what you want, don't want, clothes that fits your body, to your skin, or know what makes you confident. **“Fashion is an extension of who we are as people, and self-development,”** Andra said.

She believes that each piece you could find in a thrift store is a detrimental piece of who you are, for self-expression. She shared the current “underconsumption core” trend on Tiktok and seemingly enough, right after her 2nd installation piece ended, the trend started and Andra sees that's where we are finally heading now—which is a good sign!

There is really nothing to stop fashion in general, it evolves, but as a culture, Andra believes that consumers should slow down. There shouldn't be a need for an upscaled ukay that only caters to a specific demographic or consume rooted from dopamine because you're stressed-no, it shouldn't be like that. Considering how it originated, it really stopped serving the masses how we really want it to be and Andra felt it was a sad reality we need to face.

At the end of the day, ukay-ukay is still the most accessible means to consumption of fashion, either a need or want. Ukay still cannot beat the first hand market of the malls, because sometimes you can still find treasures for 50 pesos that even retail stores can't do. **“Ukay-ukay should still be continued as an access to choice, because Filipinos never really had access to choice for the longest time, not until now. We want to make sure regardless of socioeconomic status—we have access to ukay.”**

Filipinos during the emergence of ukay-ukay patronized ukay-ukay

because it gave the Filipinos access to choice.

Choice provides liberty and independence, and it allows us to be in control of our lives

Ukay-ukay became an access to choice — whether you are rich or poor,

These choices paved the way for cultures to be born and to thrive.

The choice to express who you are, to present yourself, and to look good —

are choices that should be accessible to every Filipino.

When these choices from an accessible means like ukay-ukay are taken away from the masses

it is only until certain time that the Filipino people will have no access to choice

in more important necessities like food, shelter, and water.





MAG INGAT SA MAGNANAKAW!

MAGNANAKAW: DENISE ALCAZAR

- 21 yrs old, 5'0 ft, color blonde ang buhok na mukhang hindi pa nagpapa root retouch
- Bumibili ng maramihan na tig 100 pesos na damit sa ukay tapos ibebenta ng 1000+ sa Instagram

BABALAI KUNG MERON KAYONG KAALAMAN SA KANILANG PAGKATAO, LAPITAN PO ANG AMING STAFF PARA MAGTIPON TIPON TAYO NA I-CANCEL SIYA SA TWITTER AT TIKTOK.

MINE! GRAB! STEAL!
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“ Ukay-ukay is an access to choice for the Filipinos

FEATURE

LOCAL EMERGING FEMALE FASHION DESIGNERS

Written by Erika Cababa

In celebration of Women's Month, we proudly spotlight the rising women making their mark in the Filipino fashion industry with their boundless creativity, bold innovation, and unwavering passion. These designers aren't just making clothes; they're making statements, breaking barriers, and bringing bold visions to life. From sleek and daring designs to sustainable and intricate creations, these visionaries showcase unmatched talent and dedication to their craft. Let's meet them.



Other products include a variety of wearable products made from upcycled fabrics, such as the limited edition 'Cloche Carry' tote bag, and custom-made items like belt bags, crop polos, and bucket hats among others. The brand also extends its offerings to footwear, where Rio's textile patchwork designs are featured in collaborations with skilled shoemakers from Marikina City.

Photos from RIOtaso on Instagram



RIO ESTUAR

Rio Estuar, the visionary behind the brand RIOtaso, is a designer dedicated to bringing eco-consciousness to the local fashion scene. Inspired by the Tagalog word “retaso”, meaning scrap fabric, RIOtaso transforms discarded textiles into stylish, one-of-a-kind wearable art.

Some of Rio’s pieces include the ‘Munchies Neckties’—uniquely crafted pieces made from vintage materials, featuring intricate patchwork, hand-stitched labels, and loops.

Creativity knows no limits, and Rio Estuar showcases this through her designs. Truly, fashion can be both playful and purposeful. RIOtaso inspires buyers to embrace positive change by making more conscious and impactful fashion choices.



Carla Zhang is another up-and-coming visionary who seamlessly combines innovation, storytelling, and fashion in her work. A SoFA Design Institute graduate, she is known for pushing the boundaries of experimental design through mixed-media pieces for her brand, Le Ngok.

‘The Pot’ embodies Le Ngok’s fusion of tradition and innovation. Crafted from 3D-printed PLA bioplastic, it features hand-knotted macramé straps and a recycled PET fabric lining. Each piece takes over 50 hours and 800 layers to create, emphasizing individuality and distinctiveness. In another piece, Zhang’s ‘Oneness Zipper Multi Bag’ shifts from tote to baguette or clutch with dead stock zippers—playful, flexible, and bold.



Carla’s love for mixed-media wear began when she created wearable art using various materials—such as glasses, CDs, or plastic folders—from bookstores and hardware stores.

For Carla, fashion is more than just fabric; it’s about expressing thoughts and ideas through a diverse range of materials. Art is limitless and fashion is a medium to convey her thoughts, ideas, and vision in new and unexpected ways.

CARLA ZHANG



Photos from Le Ngok on Instagram

FINAL WORD

There's no doubt these female fashion designers are making their mark on the local fashion scene with their bold creativity, unique perspectives, and unwavering commitment to their craft. From experimental mixed media pieces to sustainable and intricate handcrafted designs, they are pushing the limits and showing that fashion is more than just clothing—it's a powerful medium for self-expression, innovation, and change. As they continue to make their mark, these visionaries are not only setting trends, but also inspiring the next generation to embrace individuality, sustainability, and artistry in fashion

As they continue to make their mark, these visionaries are not only setting trends, but also inspiring the next generation to embrace individuality, sustainability, and artistry in fashion.



IVEE DE LOS SANTOS

Photographs by Celina Dylim
Assisted by Keiron Tan



IVEE DE LOS SANTOS



**IVEE DE LOS SANTOS:
CHALLENGING
Femininity IN
THE NEW AGE**

Written by Jelli Anne Gando, Erika Cababa

*A*t 23 years old, Ivey De Los Santos is making her mark as a student of Bachelor of Arts in Fashion Design and Merchandising at De La Salle-College of Saint Benilde. As a trans woman navigating the evolving world of fashion and self-expression, she embodies the essence of a humble hustler—confident in her abilities yet always open to growth and learning.

THE HUMBLE HUSTLER MINDSET

*F*or Ivey, being a humble hustler is about balancing confidence and humility. **“I know what I can do and what I’m capable of, but I also recognize that I still have a lot of room for growth and improvement,”** she shares. Her mindset is rooted in continuous self-improvement, never settling for stagnation, and always embracing new opportunities to grow. This drive fuels her journey as a fashion student and a woman redefining societal norms.



CHALLENGING FEMININITY IN THE NEW AGE

Ivee's very existence as a trans woman challenges traditional definitions of femininity. **"Being a trans woman is already defying the norms"** she explains. But for her, femininity goes beyond just looking at the superficial or the physical—it's an intrinsic force that comes from within.

"Our identity is innate, and I think my existence alone [as a trans woman] is challenging how femininity should be right now."

By embracing her true self, Ivee expands the boundaries of womanhood, proving that femininity is not limited by conventional standards.



WHAT MAKES AN EMPOWERED WOMAN?

To Ivey, an empowered woman is self-assured, aware of her worth, and unafraid to take up space in society. “[An empowered woman knows that] her existence is something significant that no one else could fill.” In a world that once marginalized women’s voices, she sees empowerment in the growing courage of women—cis and trans alike—to speak up and assert their presence.

“Now, we have more strength, more courage, to take up space and voice out how we feel and what we want to express.”

A MOTHER'S INFLUENCE

Ivey’s greatest inspiration and role model is her mother, a woman of remarkable strength and resilience. “Growing up, she was my only image of what a woman should be,” she shares. When her father passed away, her mother took the reins of their family business, demonstrating leadership and perseverance. “She was also the breadwinner of her family before, which makes her even more admirable. I really aspire to be like her”.

Her mother’s unwavering dedication, strength, and independence continue to inspire and empower Ivey, shaping her into the woman she strives to become.





A PEEK INTO
Ivee's
SLAMBOOK

FAVORITE FOOD

Ice cream (Vanilla or Mint Chocolate Chip)

GO-TO-MANTRA

"Everything's gonna be okay."

FAVORITE SHOWS

Gossip Girl, Sex and the City, Bridgerton, RuPaul's Drag Race, The Crown

DREAM JOB

A housewife-because, as a Cancer, she finds joy in nurturing and caring for others.

CELEBRITY CRUSHES

ALAMAT Member Taneo, and Elijah Canlas

DREAM PARTNER

Tall, emotionally intelligent, mature, sweet, and caring-someone who mirrors her own loving nature.

EMBRACING THE *Future*

*A*s Ivey continues her journey in fashion and self-discovery, she remains a beacon of empowerment and authenticity. Her story is a testament to the evolving landscape of femininity—one that is inclusive, self-defined, and unapologetically strong. In a world that constantly redefines itself, she stands tall, proving that **true femininity comes from within.**



Shoes are everything to women. They're more than just a piece of clothing you wear every day. They're a statement of who we are as a person. It's not just about the brand, the comfort, the design – it's about everything. Especially in the East, the sneakers revolution by women has gone wild with fashion trends evolving constantly. Though out of all the shoes available in the market, how would one know which is the best one? This is why we curated a list of the top 3 sneakers out there that have captured the feet of women all across the East.

picked BY WOMEN

Written by Matthew Rotea and
Theresa Imperial

NIKE AIR MAX 90

One would say the Nike Air Max 90 is a timeless model. Its everlasting popularity since its release comes from the ideal mix of traditional and modern features. A unique part of the design which is the Air unit that is visible gives comfort on top of its visually appealing accent. The Air Max 90 is essential for every sneaker collection with its classic waffle outsole, smooth design, and wide range of color options.

The Air Max 90 is everywhere from the lively markets of Bangkok to the busy roads of Tokyo. It's a crowd favorite because it's a fashionable and versatile sneaker as you can wear it to events from casual hangouts to more formal gatherings without a problem. The Air Max 90 heightens the vibe of every outfit be it dresses, skirts, or jeans.

1



The Air Max 90's timeless style is what has made it one of the best sneakers over the years. The simple silhouette is a classic, allowing people to be able to showcase their personalities through unique fashion decisions.

NEW BALANCE 327

Get your groove back on and go retro with the New Balance 327. This model perfectly blends modern trends with traditional design elements. Its elevated sole offers a comfortable experience, while the iconic big “N” logo of the brand adds a splash of fun boldness.

One of the key features of the 327 which makes it so popular is its adaptability. It is easy to add to a range of outfits, from more formal meetings to casual outings. This can be attributed to its sleek lines and neutral hues. The 327 has come out as one of the most popular options for ladies looking for a combination of comfort and elegance in countries all over Asia like China and Japan, where a chic sense of fashion is broadly admired.



The 327 was first noticed for its wonderful comfort and beautiful features. It is the right sneaker for lengthy, tiring days because of its groundbreaking cushioning technology, which promises a grand experience of comfort. The 327 is the definition of functionality without sacrificing beauty.

(SNEAKERS OF THE EAST)



3

ADIDAS SAMBA LT

The Adidas Samba LT is the sneaker that broke all trends. The Samba line of Adidas has been around for decades as a futsal sneaker but only recently did it emerge and become the top sneaker trend, and it's expected to continue to steal the spotlight as the days go by.

The Samba LT is a modern twist to the original Samba design. As design elements that align with present-day trends are added, this new and improved version maintains the original's touch. Any meetup is easily raised by the leather upper and lightweight design, which unite to give off a sophisticated look.

From South Korea's hip cafés to Shanghai's busy streets, the Samba LT has come out as one of the best options for women deciding on a straightforward yet chic sneaker. From tailored pants and a blazer to casual jeans and a t-shirt, its simple elegance and clean lines make it the go-to addition to any outfit.

The Samba LT's timeless design is what makes it so attractive to people today. It will continue to be a wardrobe essential for many years to come. Women value classic pieces that can be treasured and worn for many years, so this timeless aspect appeals to them.

Beyond the Sneakers

Of course, these are just three of the hundreds of sneakers trending worldwide. However, we guarantee these pieces wouldn't have survived all the years of new and upcoming trends if they weren't worth it.

As time passes, women, especially in the East, are growing with their wants, needs, and expectations for sneakers as they want to make sure the sneakers they wear encapsulate who they truly are and what they stand for. The very rise of the Nike Air Max 90, New Balance 327, and Adidas Samba LT in the East are testaments to how this new outlook and demand for footwear has been shaping the influence of the East on the global market for sneakers.

With the East being a powerhouse for style and fashion, we can expect more unique and innovative shoe designs in the coming years.





**The future of the
sneaker world
is brighter than
ever as evolving
cultures drive it
day by day.**

Written by Celina Dylim, Anton Sepacio
Photographed by John Lim

The POWER of PHILIPPINE DRAG CULTURE

Drag culture has become a force to be reckoned with in the Philippines, center stage, and no longer underground. Drag, a convergence of entertainment, activism, and art, has grown from crowded comedy clubs to television's prime time. Filipino drag queens are making waves with their over-the-top costumes, show-stopping lip-syncs, and unapologetic political statements.

You can't talk about the Philippines' rise of drag without mentioning Vice Ganda and Paolo Ballesteros—two mainstream stars who brought drag mainstream. But long before they became stars, trailblazers like Crispulo Luna and Walterina Markova were already pushing gender boundaries and breaking self-expression barriers. Luna, who made headlines with his dramatic portraits in baro't saya and geisha dresses, became an early icon of gender fluidity, later becoming the cover star of J. Neil Garcia's *Performing the Self: Occasional Prose*. Meanwhile, Markova, a survivor of World War II comfort gay life, turned to storytelling and performance, making her an enduring figure of resiliency in LGBTQ+ history. These trailblazers paved the way for a new generation of Filipino drag artists who continue to push identity, creativity, and self-expression.

Lip syncs,
Lights,
Legacy!

2022 was a year for emerging drag queens thanks to Drag Race Philippines; endless opportunities such as major endorsement deals and stardom were given to these individuals to showcase their craft and talents. Drag Den Philippines also started streaming right after the victory of Precious Paula Nicole, Drag Race Philippines' first ever superstar. Thanks to the informative episodes of Drag Race and Drag Den, these shows exhibited the significance of local drag culture.

Today, drag queens seem to emerge from left to right. Younger drag queens such as 23-year-old Poblaxion show their craft and talents for the world to see.

Photographed by Lou Fajardo
In photo: TSN



How would you describe your drag in three words?

“

**Sexy
Refined
Tasteful**

What are your biggest challenges you've faced as a drag performer in the Philippines?

“Balancing school and drag is a constant struggle. School demands long hours and deadlines, while drag requires rehearsals, looks, and performances. Juggling both means sacrificing sleep, staying disciplined, and adapting fast—but I do it because I'm passionate about both art forms and the community I'm building.

What makes Poblaxion, Poblaxion?

“Poblaxion is a mother, opening up platforms and opportunities for other queens. I think what makes Poblaxion, Poblaxion is the constant care for others and making people happy with my performances and the shows that I produce.

Photographed by John Lim





What advice would you give to aspiring performers?

“ The advice I could give is just be yourself and start doing it now. You don't have to have the most expensive wigs, make up, and wardrobe to be a drag queen. Just do you and everything will fall into place. Find your people and be the queen that you are.

Despite the Philippines being a predominantly Catholic country, the Philippine entertainment industry has come a long way in showcasing drag culture. Discrimination still persists, but drag queens have the driving force to protest their identity with the use of fashion, music, and performances. Thanks to social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, X, and TikTok, drag has become more accessible to individuals. Drag queens like Poblaxion were given a bigger stage and audience; allowing them to speak their truth to their followers.

BALLADS TO BEATS

Written by Anton Sepacio, Karla Mediatrix Breta

EVOLUTION

The Filipino music landscape long includes a rich structure of rhythm, culture, and storytelling. It has undergone drastic changes through the years while staying close to regional traditions and embracing worldwide trends. Filipino sound has adapted to suit the various moods of the nation's mercurial personality, from the romantically wistful songs of the kundiman of the early 20th century to the genre-bending indie and pop beats of today.

THE GOLDEN ERA OF *Kundiman*

The journey begins with Kundiman, a genre of traditional Filipino music that originated and flourished during the early 19th century. Because of its poetic lyrics and spirited sounds, kundiman became a medium of love and patriotism. Such a genre became popular in anthems penned by artists like Ruben Tagalog and Nicanor Abelardo and resonated with Filipinos searching for hope and solace during the colonial era.

Kundiman has its origins in traditional folk songs sung by Filipinos in America and throughout the Philippines in the Spanish colonial period. Originally performed at a slow, almost mournful tempo, Kundiman expressed themes of longing and unrequited love. With the rise of the genre came an increasingly nationalist narrative. Kundiman songs traditionally functioned as subtly subversive songs during the Philippine Revolution and the American occupation, concealing patriotic messages in love songs to avoid censorship.

It was one of the most popular ones, coming to embody hope and resistance, calling itself “The Most Famous Song.” It began as a kundiman, but it also eventually became an anthem for many of the political movements. Kundiman has also secured its esteemed place in the hearts of Filipinos, not just because of its emotional depth, but also because of the spirituality found in its lyrics and the substantial meaning of the spirit of the nation.

Once all that stuff started coming out, rock ‘n’ roll wasn’t music anymore — it was Andrew Lloyd Webber, it was Ted Hughes, it was David Hockney, it was Bob Rauschenberg. Kundiman is a potent cultural artifact that, with its plaintive melodies and multigenerational stories, fuels the art and music of the Philippines still.



Photo courtesy of Pilipinas Today 1900



Photo courtesy of King of Philippine Kundiman Songs



THE BUDOTS *Phenomenon*

Originating in the streets of Davao City, Philippines, Budots is a high-energy dance fad that has gained immense popularity and captivated audiences all over the world. This all started in a small computer shop, where Sherwin Calumpang Tuna, or now known as DJ Love, started remixing and producing catchy melodies.

A combination of exaggerated gestures, body rolls, and arm flailing, all coupled to a unique electronic beat, define Budots' contagious and frequently wild enthusiasm. Its ascent to national notoriety in the early 2000s can be ascribed to adoption by political personalities, participation in the local community, and appearances on well-known TV programs. Many would funnily joke how Budots are literally everywhere they go, and then the emergence of social media sites like TikTok was what made Budots famous throughout the world

The short-form video format on TikTok was ideal for demonstrating Budots' lively and comical personality. The craze has been introduced to a wide range of worldwide audiences through dance challenges and viral trends that have amassed millions of views, such as using it in funny videos and even fit checks, like the song "Emergency!". Budots has evolved beyond a simple dance to become a representation of Filipino identity and inventiveness, appealing to individuals from all walks of life with its contagious energy and playful enthusiasm. Budots' distinctive fusion of humor, energy, and cultural importance ensures its continuous evolution and vibrancy, positioning it to achieve even higher heights of popularity as social media continues to link people worldwide.

THE DIGITAL AGE & INDIE

Renaissance

In the span of only a few decades, art, particularly music, is now far more colorful and lively. Using social media and streaming services, independent artists no longer rely on music labels to reach their fans. This major shift resulted in new and innovative forms of creativity for folk, rock, hip-hop, and even electronic music.

One of the pioneers of this innovative form of art is Syd Hartha. A singer-songwriter, the daughter of Eraserhead's guitarist, Marcus Adoro. Syd captures the hearts of many using her raw, gentle, and heartfelt music. In her song "Ayaw", she introspectively resonates with the struggles of the youth. Blending traditional narrative with modern sounds is what sets her apart and is a true demonstration of the spirit of contemporary Filipino music.

Indie music in the Philippines is further pushed and expanded by folk-pop band Ben&Ben. Their deeply poetic lyrics coupled with intricate instrumentation are best exhibited in their popular single "Kathang Isip". Social media gives access to more people which also means more listeners. This change allows artists like Clara Benin and Reese Lansangan to reach international audiences combining independent and mainstream approaches.

The indie scene in the Philippines has likewise promoted multiple genres, which resulted to a distinct and dynamic sound. Be it lo-fi beats or experimental electronica, artists such as BP Valenzuela and UDD (previously known as Up Dharma Down) have pushed the envelope on what is considered Filipino music, solidifying the indie music craze of the scene as not a passing phase, but rather a staple to the industry.

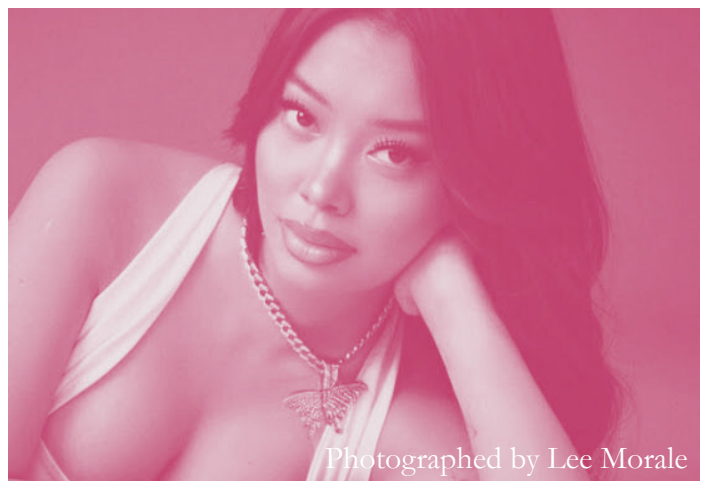


Photo courtesy of Sony Music Philippines

THE RISE OF *O.P.M.*

A thriving comeback is taking place for Original Pilipino Music (OPM), which is enthraling audiences in the Philippines and abroad. This new generation of OPM musicians creates a distinctive sound that appeals to a worldwide audience by fusing modern pop sensibilities with traditional Filipino musicality. With their carefully planned concerts and memorable songs, groups like SB19 have broken down borders, becoming well-known worldwide and reaching the top of the charts ever since their new release in 2019 “Go Up.” Similar to this, BINI has a devoted fan base because of their contagious energy and girl-group dynamic, which pushes the limits of P-Pop and highlights the variety of talent in the Philippine music industry, the group even has an on-going tour internationally, Biniverse. One factor of these two groups is the social networking between fans and listeners, which enables musicians to communicate directly with fans around the world and spread their music to a larger audience, driving this increased interest in OPM.

OPM’s growth is also being aided by solo performers like Denise Julia. The depth and breadth of Filipino musical skill are further demonstrated by her relatable lovestruck compositions and soulful voice, which win over listeners’ hearts while consistently being on charts such as Billboard for her songs like “NVMD” and “B.A.D.” Solo artists like Hev Abi are also dominating the OPM scene with the hip-hop rap tracks that it even become a sensation on TikTok trends, where international artists began hitting on the trend with hand dances. OPM’s international growth has been greatly aided by the support of Filipino communities overseas and its growing prominence on foreign streaming platforms. This joyful time for OPM is a testament to the ability of music to bridge national boundaries and unite people worldwide, as well as a celebration of Filipino talent and culture.



Photographed by Lee Morale

FUSION & GLOBAL *Recognition*



Photo courtesy of BINI x Sunsilk

THE FUTURE OF *Filipino Music*

The lines blur between the genres and the way technology is changing how music is created and consumed, it has a very bright future. P-pop acts like SB19, BINI, and Alamat are going to redefine OPM globally since they are bringing Filipino languages, cultures, and identities to fill mainstream pop. Their presence in social media and foreign music charts answers why Filipino artists are in such huge demand all over the world these days.

Indeed, it speaks of the tenacity and ingenuity of people in the building of Filipino music—from ballads to rhythms, from kundiman to OPM. No less than these pages are going to be exciting, no less than history-making, as will the next chapter: Ben&Ben, UDD, SB19, BINI, and Alamat, among others.

At this very moment, Original Pilipino Music (OPM) is undergoing a vibrant transformation characterized by fascinating blends of international genres with traditional Filipino sounds. To create a distinctive and alluring soundscape, artists are skillfully fusing elements of modern pop, R&B, hip-hop, electronic music, and harana, kundiman, and other indigenous musical styles, and that alone makes OPM stand out in the music industry. Traditional Filipino music is revitalized by this mix, which also makes it more approachable and appealing to a larger global audience. This tendency is best illustrated by the rise of P-Pop artists like SB19, ALAMAT, and BINI, who have a devoted following around the world because of their polished performances and catchy compositions blended with Filipino cultural subtleties and this creative method of making music is a major contributor to OPM's rising popularity around the world.

A number of things contribute to OPM's widespread popularity, such as the growing availability of music on social media and streaming services. OPM musicians are actively supported by Filipino communities around the world, which builds a robust network for sharing and promoting their music, even a simple edit or posting of a clip of these artists is easily gaining traction online. Furthermore, listeners from many cultural backgrounds can relate to OPM's universal themes of love, grief, and hope, which cut beyond linguistic boundaries. OPM's global impact is further enhanced by partnerships with foreign producers and performers, which introduce Filipino talent to new markets and expand tours globally. OPM's position on the worldwide stage is cemented in this dynamic era, which celebrates Filipino musical tradition while also embracing foreign influences.



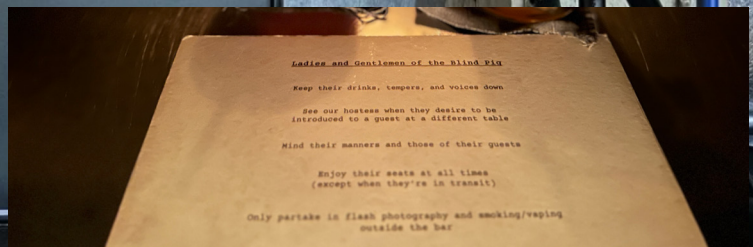
s s h h h
speak,
easy

Written by Matthew Rotea

MAKATI'S HIDDEN GEMS

Photo courtesy of Matthew Rotea

THE BLIND PIG



With a name that originally meant to mock speakeasies back in the day, this place is no joke. Get ready to be transported into an old and classy New York as you stumble upon what seems to be a closed shop along the streets of Legazpi Village.

**No sign, not even a doorknob.
Just a tiny peek hole to welcome you into the past.**

If you're lucky there might even be a password, but do not fret — it's just a tradition. Embark on a journey as you enter a world of jazz and darkness. A place to perfectly enjoy and appreciate modern classics such as the Smokey Old Bastard – a twist to an Old Fashioned, and The Blind Pig's bestseller and oldest item on the menu dating back to its opening in 2011. The speakeasy also takes pride in their Bartender's Choice where they can make any drink of choice so dream big and rest assured you'll get your money's worth. If you're new to the culture of speakeasies then this is the place to be because The Blind Pig made history in the Philippines by starting the trend of hidden bars in the metro.

Photo courtesy of Matthew Rotea

Hailed as one of Asia's 50 best bars for almost 10 years now – The Curator is your friendly neighborhood bar that serves coffee by day and cocktails by night.



THE CURATOR



As one of their bartenders, Kiko describes the humble establishment, it is the Myers-Briggs personality test for drinks because in this speakeasy there are no bestsellers.

It's a place that is all about adding value to the lives of its customers which is why they strive to curate their drinks based on the mood and personality of those who drink there. With a logo that resembles an ampersand, there's never an end to how creative they can get with their drinks but only an "and".

Go ahead and order your favorites but don't be scared if they start asking you questions because all they want for you is the perfect drink. Located in the heart of Legazpi Village, this speakeasy takes pride in its service because it'll strike a chord in your heart and make you want to come back again.

THE GRASSHOPPER BAR

“Why be an ant when you can be a grasshopper?” is the motto this speakeasy goes by as they make you hop onto a road of adventure into the unknown with their food and drinks.

Get ready to be amazed by their ingredient-forward menu that takes pride in the local Filipino flavors. Rest assured that they will not disappoint because, with their blends and mixes, you'll feel wonderful things in places you didn't even know existed before.

Take for example their underrated classic, the Grasshopper, a smooth and creamy blend of the hyperlocal flavors of mint and cacao in the Philippines. While their Bramble and Bendita give you a completely refreshing burst of a Filipino summer straight into your mouth.

Get ready for a vibrant, unexpected, and always memorable night as you enter that big black door with the grasshopper logo on it in Legazpi Village. At The Grasshopper Bar, you're promised a night of deep conversations and spontaneous laughter with their passionate, hospitable, and respectable community.

Photo courtesy of The Grasshopper Bar



The great cocktails are only one aspect of the journey of discovering Makati's speakeasies. What the speakeasy world is all about is a chance to escape from all the extra noise and be present in the moment by enjoying drinks with friends and family in a chic and private place. It makes the process of finding the right cocktail for you all the more exciting as you delve into the unknown and meet remarkable people along the way.



BEYOND SPEAK

In photo: The Grasshopper Bar



ON TO THE SPEAKEASIES

Now, for those who dare to embark on this adventure, Makati's speakeasies are a testament to how extravagant the nightlife can get. So tread carefully as you explore these secret havens, enjoy the mystery, and find the hidden treasures that lie within.

But remember – speak easy.

**MEET THE
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HUMBLEHUSTLER®

ABOUT
HUMBLEHUSTLER®

HumbleHustler is more than a magazine—it's a movement, a culture, and a testament to the relentless spirit of those who chase dreams against all odds. Born in the streets of Manila and Dublin, we carry the voices of the underground, the innovators, the disruptors, and the everyday warriors who turn struggle into success.

Our roots run deep in the energy of these two cities—one thriving with unbreakable grit in the heart of Southeast Asia, the other pulsing with creativity and history in the heart of Europe. HumbleHustler was built for those who know that success isn't just about the destination—it's about the grind, the late nights, the failures, and the unwavering belief in something bigger than themselves.

We tell real stories—of artists who turn pain into poetry, entrepreneurs who build from the ground up, athletes who push beyond limits, and dreamers who refuse to be boxed in. We celebrate culture, music, fashion, business, and the raw essence of street life. This is where passion meets perseverance, where the underdogs get their shine, and where hustle is respected above all.

Through every page, every feature, and every conversation, HumbleHustler remains a platform for those who dare to create, push boundaries, and define their own success. Whether you're building your empire from a garage, crafting beats in a bedroom studio, or reshaping industries in boardrooms—this is your space.

The hustle is real. The grind never stops. But through it all, we stay humble and hungry.

Welcome to HumbleHustler.

HUMBLEHUSTLER®