

**Remarks of Ambassador ENDO Kazuya at the “Harmony of  
Friendship: A Jazz Prelude to 70 Years of  
Japan-Philippines Ties” Jazz Concert**

20 January 2026 at the Proscenium Theater, Rockwell,  
Makati City

Magandang gabi at manigong bagong taon sa inyong lahat!

Thank you all for making time to join us for this special gathering. At the start of this new year, our Foreign Minister visited Manila just last week. And tonight marks a truly grand milestone: the launch of the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Japan-Philippines Friendship. Amid this excitement, I welcome you to this evening’s jazz concert.

For decades, Jazz has endured as the language of the heart and soul. From swing to the blues, its diverse range has reflected the vast depth of human emotions. Unknown to most, jazz has been a quiet, yet firm thread woven in the Philippines - Japan friendship’s tapestry.

In the 1900s, Americans brought a cocktail of new musical traditions to this country, planting the first seeds for Philippine jazz. Jazz carved out a new home in Manila's clubs and streets, especially along Escolta.

Among the era's prolific artists was Ping Joaquin, the "king of Filipino jazz pianists" and elder brother of National Artist, Nick Joaquin. Ping Joaquin, led an orchestra, that performed aboard ocean liners, touring the U.S., Hong Kong, and yes, even Japan.

Some say that those lively cruises gave Japan its first taste of jazz, and those Filipino musicians were a kind of "ninong", or spiritual godfather of Japanese jazz. You might be able to say that tonight's event is a family reunion.

History echoes forward with this collaboration of our countries' unique rhythms. These very sounds are both a testament to and celebration of our shared musical heritage.

Making this history come alive are our gifted performers this

evening: vocalist Ms. Charito, pianist Mr. ARIMASA Yuki, bassist Mr. KUSUI Satsuki, and drummer, Mr. KITAZAWA Hiroki together with A.M.P. Big Band. I thank them for lending their remarkable talents for this milestone concert.

I also appreciate the hard work of Japan Foundation Manila, my staff at our Embassy and the support of JTI, Japan Tobacco International in making this event possible.

Above all, my appreciation goes to the countless people in both our nations who have made tireless efforts to build and deepen our friendship in the last seven decades.

From New Orleans to Manila to Tokyo, jazz has laid down a brass road linking our nations. It will remain proof of what our partnership has created and what it can still create.

This year gives us the perfect canvas to paint our shared possibilities. By year's end, I hope to see it rich with renewed connections, vibrant and lasting.

And now, I invite you all to open your hearts to the music of our bond. Let this be a soulful start to our seventieth anniversary of friendship.

Nais ko sa inyo ang isang napaka-saya at masaganang bagong taon.

Maraming salamat po sa inyong pagdalo at Mabuhay ang pagkakaibigan ng Japan at Pilipinas !