

NEWSLETTER OF THE KALAYAAN CULTURAL COMMUNITY CENTRE

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December 2010

Manigong 2011!

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

By: Ching Quejas

MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO EVERY-ONE! May the happiness of the season remain with you throughout the coming year!

We look back at 2010 and thank



Joy Almojuela handing out gifts on behalf of Kalayaan Centre during the Donor and Volunteer Appreciation Night.

the good Lord for the blessings of the past twelve months as well as the lessons we learned from our difficulties.

We are happy to report that 2010 was a good year for Kalayaan Centre. Our financial situation has improved and we did not have any major fiscal difficulties. Our regular programs went well and we generated more income from our fundraising events. We had more generous donors and our membership has increased. Our charity bingo participation has helped a great deal, it has taken care of our condo maintenance fees and most of our utilities expenses. Thanks to our directors for sacrificing two or three hours of their time once or twice a month helping to run the bingo sessions.

The reclassification of our property resulting in the reduction of our property tax by 60 percent and getting a refund for 3 years is a big boost. Ruffy Romano, director,

> liaised the transaction. Mrs. Rodel Meier, an avid supporter and volunteer of Kalayaan Centre generated \$16,000 from second her Children's Fashion show in May and the donated full amount to reduce our mortgage. Rodel was also instrumental in the change of the drapes in the centre. The new has drapery improved the ambiance of the vestibule, the reception and media rooms. We also re-

ceived substantial donations this year from: popular tenor Leander Mendoza, Sound Trax 7 Band and pianist composer Solon Reyes.

Hardworking and dedicated volunteers, too many to mention, took charge of most of the fund raising events, notably, the Spring dance in April, walkathon in July, the golf tournament in August, the Halloween bash in October as well as the forthcoming New Year's Eve ball on December 31st. And lest we forget, we have saved a lot of expense by the donation of the in-house sound system and the DJ services of our

SOLON REYES IN CONCERT An Evening With The Masters By: Olivia Camacho

Pianist-composer and Professor Emeritus Examiner of the Royal Conservatory of Music Solon Reyes performed in concert for the last time at the RBC Theatre of the Living Arts Centre in Mississauga on Saturday, November 20, 2010, at 8:00 p.m. He



was presented by the Kalayaan Cultural Community Centre under president Ching Quejas, in what was billed as "An Evening with the Masters". The event was sponsored by Drs. Solon and Josephine Guzman, Mr. Frank and Dr. Venus Guzman, and Ms. Adoracion Guzman to raise funds for mortgage reduction of the KCCC.

Solon Reyes dazzled his audience with his performance of works by Beethoven, Chopin, Mozart, Liszt, and Gershwin. Opening with Beethoven's Grande Sonate Pathetique in C minor Op. 13, he transported us to heights of enjoyment through the Grave – Allegro dimolto e con brio, Adagio - Cantabile, and Rondo – Allegro. His finger dexterity and technique were impressive and he had the ability to draw out the emotions of his audience through his sensitivity to the composition's nuances. Following

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The Top 10 Simple (But Not Easy!) Things I Learned In 2010 By: Chiqui Pineda-Azimi



Is it just me or was 2010 a lightspeed ahead, full-throttle kind of year for you, too? This was a year of learning loads! Here are some of my top ten things

I got (re)trained and tested on:

1) To go-go-go for my dreams, no matter what. This summer, with the help of family and friends, I finally launched the All Arts Creative Camp or AACC, a kids' creativity workshop at the KCCC. How old this goal was: fifteen years. Was it simple? Yes. Was it easy? No way! Note to self: Making Babies, Simple. Childbirth, Not Easy. ;) The workshop was a challenging experience and much harder than I imagined it would be. Ask me if it was fulfilling? Yes na yes! The bonus: I met such highquality, high-energy and like-minded people who I now consider friends for life. Was it all worth it? Always and ALL WAYS.

2) To embrace imperfection. You see, I'm a self-confessed recovering perfectionist. Yes, yes, I was once addicted to this concept of 'perfect'. Now I say this: Perfection is overrated. Whoever said that one ought to be perfect to be worthy was a freak and should be shot. Ok, too violent. But you get the point, noh? I waited out on so many great things just because "It's not yet perfect." I say do it imperfectly. Waiting for something to be perfect before doing it is like saying "I'll do it when I'm dead." Go, do the thing you want to do. Do it and make lots of mistakes. I personally modeled this mistake-making tip. Just ask my AACC team who thankfully are patient and supportive peeps! Besides, there exists a quaranteed antidote to imperfection and it's a simple thing called tweaking.^a As Maya Angelou said, "When we know better, we do better."

3) To go (and *stay***) with a coach.** Be it a life, voice* or business**

coach. Simple? Yes. Easy? Not really. Why? There's the monetary investment. Then there's the time alloted. The most UN-easy of all, the accountability factor. No longer can I make up any excuse as to why I haven't done what I've so smugly said I'd do. I've always believed in coaching because as much as my ego would like to think it knows everything, it doesn't. When I'm beginning to feel insecure, sooner or later this usually spirals down to feelings of utter despair and worthlessness if I'm not careful. And this is when I realize that - Hey, I'm worth all those above -mentioned investments because my well-being matters, too!

(Attention: Mothers and Mothering

types!) 4) To keep a journal. Everyday. My favorite one is the gratitude kind. Again, it's sounds almost too simplistic but again, not guite as easy as it sounds. But can I just tell you something about this seemingly simple exercise called journalling: it keeps me focused and aligned with my purpose and goals - and you and I know how easy it is to get distracted these days and, it beats going to a shrink. It's almost free - the only investment would be a few dollars (just grab a nice notebook from Chapters or Walmart and a nice, comfortable pen) and you're set. All it takes is at least ten minutes first thing in the morning for me - and just spill! Like an early-morning shower for the brain.^a*

5) To be on the look-out for mentors °. And grab them while they're hot! Oh, was this a year of finding them everywhere! If there's one thing that 2010 brought me in form of gifts of the best kind, it would be this. I love, love, LOVE people who are passionate, expressive, imperfectly perfect. But it was only recently that I swallowed my fears (and pride!) summoned the guts to approach these brilliant souls and ask for mentoring and friendship. In a nutshell, mentoring works wonders! Choose those who are extreme, positive encouragers. You want to be a somebody in some field, go and approach someone who's already done or is doing it and ask for guidance/help/advice. Ask and it shall be given to you! If they say no, go to the next. The true encouragers worthy to be called mentor will say yes and will make both your time worth it! Oh, and if I may share this fabulous quote I found today: "No matter where you are in the pursuit of your dreams, the difference between where you are now and where you want to be in 5 years, will be the people you meet along the way."

6) To take lots and lots of photos. I'm a professional photographer so you'd think - Duh! Of course that would work for you. But, see, even when I'm not working, I'm still snapping away on either my iPhone's iShake or my trusty Canon point-and-shoot camera. Taking photos has never been easier with todays technology. My personal reason for this is to create snappy, happy memories. This, I believe, is key to a joyfilled existence. In this day and age of warp



speed living, taking photos slows and calms and brings me back to gratitude mode. Take photos, if you will, of the things that bring you joy no matter how simple they seem: the sunrise/sunset on Monday; the favorite meal in your favorite restaurant on Wednesday; your spouse/ partner/bestfriend on Friday. Keep it simple but meaningful and perhaps even share-worthy!

7) To take breaks. Weekly, at the very least. This is a MUST. Especially if you are a mom. Or mothering others. This is essential for one's sanity. It is for mine! I've been known to say this often and my friends are probably tired of hearing me say this over and over again but it's tried and true and tested. And so easy to forget! It doesn't have to be extravagant. Take solo dates! A solo me-time in

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Starbucks or window-shopping (magtipid!) at Square1 with friends or simply sight-seeing at a park for an hour or two will do you a world of good! Speaking of "sight-seeing", I just opted to walk to the kids school for this morning's drop-off instead of drive -nature walk na, exercise pa!) Type A skeptics are probably going "I could use that extra couple of hours to do more on my to-do list!" Listen, the quality of work of one who is relaxed rather than frazzled is much better. You and I know that. Your heart will thank you, too! 8) To organize. Daily. See, that's the trick. I used to feel so disorganized even when I thought I was organizing on a regular basis. I realized my error was in doing it randomly. By feel. I'd wait. Until the pile of papers were too high. Until the hot-spots, those places in the home where clutter seems to magically appear daily, were uncontrollable. The secret weapon was in one word: Daily. Small, simple steps everyday. I incorporated the chore into my daily routine. My secret weapon: Swiffer!** Again, sounds simplistic but not easy. I swiffer my work-area and what comes naturally after I get going is the organization of the space. (Because swiffering is simply the trigger). Makes for a better feng shui in the workplace, too.

9) To manage my precious energy better. I realized that the sooner I let go of something that I'm struggling with - be it a marital/ *asawa* issue or discipline-of-kids challenge, a misunderstanding with a bff or other everyday worries - the sooner the solution comes and the more energy I have for more worth-while stuff. *Ayayay*, I used to hold on to things forever! My favorite quote now is a very simple one which comes from the Persian Sufi poets of old: *This too shall pass.*

And so will you and I. So I tell myself - Why not make the stress and struggle go away faster by letting go of the vise grip and keep my energy levels intact? Life is short. I am reminded of this every time I look at my kids and witness how fast they grow!

10) In a nutshell, the 2010 was all about finding the beautiful in keeping things simple. In my speech - I remember to speak my truth in simpler and as little words as possible; in my decisions - I choose that which make me happy instead of the should, the musts or the expectations of others; in my dealings with people - I stay/speak/ socialize with those that make me feel comfortable and keep away from those who

don't. Not always easy, but oh-sodoable. Even more so with daily practice. ;)

Wishing you, dear reader, your own brand of learnings galore in 2011. May the New

Year be as stress-free, simple and easy as can be...for you and for me!

Simply, Chiqui

Chiqui Pineda-Azimi is a singer-performer, freelance writer, photographer and studentof-life. She is the owner and creator of KatiShots Photography a family lifestyle, events and children's portraits service. Along with the KCCC team, Chiqui is in the process of preparing a comeback concert entitled Chiqui Pineda, Putting It Together slated for February 27, Sunday which will guest among others fellow artist and one of Toronto's beloved tenors, Mr. Leander Mendoza. The much-anticipated concert will feature Chiqui doing her own hits from the 90's which include the unforgettable love song "How Did You Know", excerpts from the musical "Rama At Sita" where she played the lead role and other beloved classics from broadway musicals. A surprise set of classical arias will be featured, a first for Ms. Pineda, along with her photography and artwork. All in all, a heart-warming musical and visual journey through the years and a much-anticipated return to the stage of our very own! For more information you can contact Mama Ching Quejas or Jojo Sebastian at Kalayaan Centre. Chiqui lives in Brampton, Ontario with her husband and three kids. You can visit www.katshots.com to view her photography and email her at kat@katshots.com.

- ^{a*} See Julia Cameron's work, The Artist Way
- ** Compliments of BFF and sister, Mariam Jeddi
- °/* Vocal Coach, Mentor and Superfriend : Leander Mendoza
- °/** Business Coach/Author : Julie A. Fleming∫ ° Businesswoman/Mentor : Ms. Rodel Meier
- Life Coach: Christine Kane for articles on *perfectionism* Thanks to Mr. Neil Huab for excellent proof-reading/editing.

CHRISTMAS MESSAGE

(Continued from page 1)

director Chito Carbonell and Kalayaan Centre friend Bobby Sunico.

Of course it goes without saying that all these are due to the collective effort of the board of directors who are at the helm of the KCCC ship.

Our fitness session, the line dancing under instructor Gerry Macasero and his wife Merilyn, on Monday nights has a marked increase in the number of participants. The rondalla group under maestro Norm Perez is doing well, it has been invited to play in several public functions this year. There are a number of applicants who will start their lessons in January. Our ballroom workshop on Tuesdays and Thursdays is ongoing, our heritage class (Tagalog) is on too and will start a new class early next year. A grant from Gilead Sciences enabled us to give information sessions on HIV- Aids. A workshop on orthotics was also conducted and our seniors were given a special treat on Seniors day.

We also had a "games" day and we had bingo, mahjong and chess. We launched a chess "challenge the champion" with amateur chess players challenging International Chess master Artem Samsonkin which was a really fun day for them playing a grand master. An offshoot of the occasion is the organization of a KCCC chess club scheduled in January. A community connections day was held gathering members of the community from different trades selling their wares, a good occasion to know each other.

Indeed, the work is not easy but it is fulfilling and gratifying. Let us make it our resolution to make 2011 another if not a more successful year. Kalayaan Centre is our centre, it is the symbol of our ethnicity and we are all proud owners.

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO YOU ALL!

WOW Philippines!

By: Gerry Rulloda

I love going to the Philippines because I can feel the people. They are me. A little kid walking down the street with his Mom asks for some candy and the Mom said, sorry son, we don't have money. I see, hear, understand and feel Filipino life when I ride the jeepney or the bus so I know what's going on. I can't do this in Mexico or Cuba or Italy. No comprendo!

Manila is getting better. They say without the graft and corruption, the Philippines should be in great shape. The squatter areas are getting cleaned up. Avenues like Visayas, Mindanao and Congressional are a sight to see. Red brick sidewalks! Congressional extension is now open and it took us only 1 ½ hours to reach Tarlac from Quezon City via Nlex and Sctex. Impressive!

They say people go back to the place where they came from not because they miss the place but because they miss their childhood. I went back home to Aringay. My barkada from elementary and high school got together to welcome me. Rich, poor, no difference, they show up. The rich with their new SUV, the poor with their beaten up tricycle (walang pasada today). We reminisce, drink and play. And for a short time, I relive the excitement of vestervears.

This trip was a bit different. My wife Eula and I were traveling with our eldest daughter Lani, her husband Andrew and their 2 children. Lani organized and arranged everything, flights, ferry, hotels. Having been born and raised in Canada, she wanted to see as much of the Philippines in five weeks!

First, we hit Panglao, Bohol. Our hotel, if you can call it a hotel was the Golden Palm Resort. It was the residence of the owner, Barry and his wife Tata. They turned it into a hotel and we got the presidential suite. They also run



Gerry, Eula and granddaughter Talia with Golden Palm Resort owners Barry and Tata (carrying Talia).

the place and they put a personal touch

of knowing all the guests. Though not a beach front, this place was amazing, huge room, porcelain ceramic floors, TV 45" HD flat screen, balcony overlooking Alona Kew Beach, impressive swimming pool, coldest beer on a frozen mug. The first afternoon we met Merle at the beach. She was the best masseuse in the world. Following day was spent on dry land touring – the Blood compact monument and the Baclayon Church where we found most of the religious relics I have ever seen. Entrance was a mere P50. Then the Tarsiers , little endangered animals with big



eyes. Lunch was at the Loboc river cruise where they have entertainers/ dancers at certain points in the river banks, then to Chocolate Hills, where it rained for a bit then a complete rainbow came up. Chocolate Hills are actually cone shaped hills covered with some kind of grass like cogon. Then we went and a see a butterfly farm. Do you know the difference between a moth and a butterfly? The day trip took 12 hours.

We got up early the following morning for dolphin watching. Peter our boatman doesn't have the fastest boat but through his experience, manages to outwit the other bangkeros so we can see the dolphins. Then to Balicasag island for snorkeling where my granddaughter Talia caught a blue star fish. Then we went to Virgin Islands where we got a taste of sea urchins. Lani said they were like oysters. We ate them raw but I remember we roasted them when we were kids.

Bohol Beach Club has the nicest beach! You can walk forever just like Punta Cana, just further. The sand is a bit too fine and hard. There were only a couple of people so we had the whole beach pretty much to ourselves. No fridge though and I had to store medicine and milk at the nearby store. The attendant was inquisitive and asked why. I said so I can see beautiful people like you.

Then we ferried to Cebu where we saw Magellan's cross; ten pesos for the candle, but the lady was holding a bunch of ten. The ferry boat charged for checking in the luggage plus ridiculous rates for porters. If you go there, ask clearly and specifically how much it will cost you and compare. Caveat emptor! On the way back to the hotel, we caught a jeepney and it was hot but fun, as the other jeepney kept bumping our ride. Breakfast was good at Cebu Parklane Hotel which was walking distance to Ayala Center.

We flew to Puerto Princesa on the morning of Pacquiao-Margarito fight. Hundreds of tricycle parked. The city stopped, albeit the whole Philippines stopped! Two hour ride to Sabang where we saw the underground river and another 4 hour ride, the last 69km of which was rough road to El Nido. They said 8 years ago, it was a 24 hour rough ride from Puerto Princesa. El Nido is quite remote from Manila and even from Puerto Princesa. We arrived at El Nido late in the night and next day was island hopping to the different lagoons, secret lagoon, small lagoon, big lagoon. This has to be the last frontier of vacationing privately. El Nido offers your private island with your private white beach. No electricity between 6a.m. and 2p.m. on the whole island. Makes sense, if everybody is out in the water.

Lani and Andrew went on to Boracay Island while Eula and I went back to Manila where we had 2 dinner nights with Mapua alumni friends. These people are rich! What did we come to Canada for?

We also saw Tagaytay, Puerto Galera, Tamaraw Falls on the way to



Calapan. Lots of shopping at Divisoria's 168, Greenhills, MOA, Trinoma, SM. Shane had his first birthday at Jollibee with 200 guests.

On our way back to Toronto, we stopped over at Hongkong for 3 days. That's all in 5 weeks! Not enough for Andrew and not enough for Lani to see the north, not even a glimpse of Aringay Beach. It was black sand then when we were kids but they mined the magnetite.

This trip was too much too fast for me. Next time, I'll take again the slow road to my hometown, Aringay. Time there is slow, things don't change much, people don't change, lots of old people, like me. If you ask for the time, they look at the sun. I'll go to the beach which is 3 km from our house, on an old tricycle, with a cooler of beer, watch the sunset and wait for the fishermen to come home with the daily catch. Maybe I can get a head of yellow fin tuna for dinner. Maybe my wife will come also. Come, join us!



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SOLON REYES IN CONCERT (*Continued from page 1*)

this we were treated to the many varied moods of Chopin as he tugged at our heartstrings with Etude in E Opus 10 No. 3, better known to most of us as "No Other Love". He took us tripping down the light fantastic with Fantasie Impromptu in C sharp minor Opus 66, more familiar as "I'm Al-ways Chasing Rainbows". Then came Nocturne (Night Song) in C Sharp minor, Deuxieme Ballade (Story) Op. 38, and the lively Scherzo in B Flat minor Opus 31. As befitting the end of Chopin's section, Solon played the dignified and uplifting Polonaise in A Flat Op. 53, familiar to us as "Till The End of Time".

Solon spiced up his performances with delightful vignettes about the composers' lives and loves and tribulations which enabled us to better understand and appreciate their music. His vast experience and love of teaching were apparent as he guided us through imaginings about the ballades (stories) and nocturnes (night songs) and rondos of the masters.

Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue wrapped up the evening with its pulsing Broadway/jazz/blues/Americana spirit. You could hear the toes tapping and see the heads and shoulders of the audience swaving to the familiar well-loved beat which Solon performed so exuberantly. For his encore he played his own classically arranged medley of beloved Filipino folk songs (Dandansoy, Bahay Kubo, Magtanim Hindi Biro, Paru-parong Bukid, etc.), his personal tribute to his Filipino roots and the cultural heritage that nurtured him and continues to define his art and his being.

It was indeed an evening to remember, one where we got to know the Musical Masters more intimately through the skilful, sensitive hands and indomitable spirit of Filipino pianist, composer, and consummate artist, Solon Reyes.

At 70, Solon, you are, like wine, mulled to perfection! Retirement from piano performance? I don't think so – you are at your prime!

Cheers and Mabuhay!

(Excerpted from article written by: Olivia Camacho)

KALAYAAN CENTRE CHESS CHALLENGE

Chess players had the chance to test their skills against Canadian Chess Blitz Champion and International Master Artem (pronounced Artiom) Samsonkin. The Chess Challenge event was organized by the Kalayaan Centre in partnership with Mario Adragna of the Little Chess Mates. It was held at the Kalayaan Centre on Sunday, December 12, 2010.

Artem is a brilliant chess tactician and world class champion. At age 20, his notable victories include games against US Chess Champion GM Hikaru Nakamura in the 2009 Toronto Chess Open and GM Bazar Khatanbaatar of Mongolia in the 2010 Chess Olympiad. At this event, Artem faced off against eleven chess players in a chess simul game. Playing simultaneously against him were Ron Caloyloy, Gerry Rulloda, Edgar Frondozo, Nico Montenegro, Pons Padua, Bernard Buskar. Cesar Cruz. Chito Carbonell, Ginnie Sevilla, Rollie



Canadian International Master Artem Samsonkin pondering his next move in the simultaneous game.

Abarilla and Eula Rulloda. Artem won 10 games but was limited to a draw against Cesar Cruz.

In the 5 minute Blitz tournament, Cesar Cruz won the gold medal, Rollie Abarilla won the silver and Gerry Rulloda won the bronze. As the Kalayaan Centre Blitz Champion, Cesar Cruz played against IM Artem Samsonkin but lost to the International Master.

The participants enjoyed the

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afternoon. They were inspired by Artem's accounts of the champion's games against Nakamura and the Mongolian in the 2010 Chess Olympiad plus pointers on playing a good game. His game against the Kalayaan champion, Cesar Cruz, during the simul game which ended in a draw, was very exciting. This was good enough for Cesar to be inspired to polish his moves for the next challenge.

The Kalayaan Centre Chess Challenge showed that there are many good chess players in the Filipino community just waiting for an organization and venue where they can gather, learn, improve and enjoy their chess game. The Kalayaan Centre Chess Club will be formally organized in January 2011 after which the international Master will be invited again for another tournament to which Artem promised to come. Interested parties can contact the Centre at 905 -602-0923.

December 2010

LOOKING OUT! **BRANDING PHILIPPINES** By: Edgar Frondozo

Last month, the Department of

Tourism under Secretary Bertie Lim announced the Branding Philippines initiative with the launch of the



"Pilipinas Kay Ganda" campaign. The launch was met with a deluge of criticism as short sighted and lack of imagination. The initiative is well intentioned but it

falls short in addressing the root of the negative perception about the Philippines. Still, it is a good step in the right direction.

Branding Philippines should deal less about beaches and hotels but more about its people, about Filipinos. Ask anyone what the first thing that comes to their mind when they think of the Philippines and many of the responses would be 'nannies', 'nurses' and OFW.

A couple of years ago, an episode of 'Desperate Housewives' incensed many Filipinos. In the scene, the leading actress wanted to first check the credentials of her Filipino doctor to make sure that said doctor was not a graduate of 'some med school in the Philippines'. Unpleasant as it may be, this 'Desperate Housewives' episode reveals that Filipino doctors,

nurses, nannies, engineers, professionals are the country's main brand assets. We ARE the brand!

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Branding Philippines starts from each and every Filipino. What we do. how we act shapes the Philippine Brand. We need to instill in the hearts of every Filipino the deep sense of pride in our country. We need to speak highly of our country and of our people, to stop disseminating debasing jokes about the Philippines, to reject stereotypes about fellow Filipinos, to treat each other respectfully and cordially.

As Willy E. Arcilla wrote in his blog,

"Where else can you find a land as beautiful as its people, and a people as warm as its climate? Where else can you find a nation as rich as its history, and a culture as colorful as her transport "(vintas and jeepneys)? Where else can you find a workforce as talented as her artists. and an economy as vibrant as her freedoms? Where else can you find dining as delightful as her shopping. and golf fairways as tranquil as her dav spas? Where else can vou find fruits as delicious as her hillsides (Bohol Chocolate Hills), and a nightlife as breathtaking as her sunset? Finally, where else can you find a people with pride in her past, a passion for her present, and faith in her future? All these and more . . . "ONLY IN THE PHILIPPINES".

kalayaan NAYON Quarterly Newsletter of the kalayaan centre Editorial Staff: Edgar Frondozo Evelyn Laraya Pond Ching Queias Contributors Chiqui Pineda-Azimi Gerry Rulloda Olivia Camacho Photographers Rene Sevilla Judy Montenegro Send contributions/letters to: nayon@kalayaancentre.ca Visit us at: www.kalayaancentre.ca kalayaan centre Tel. 905-602-0923 3- 5225 Orbitor Dr Mississauga, ON

JOIN US AT THE Kalayaan Centre Grand Hall New Year's Eve Black & White Ball Friday, Dec. 31st, 2010 6:30pm



Attire: Formal Black and White Ticket Price: \$45.00

Live Band SOUNTRAX 7 **DJ Music by Chito Carbonel**

Call KCCC 905-602-0923 5225 Orbitor Dr. Unit 3

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