

## Asian CineVision's 'yellow brick road' to 'Yellow Rose'

Written by Administrator  
Friday, 02 August 2019 16:28

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Eva Noblezada in "Yellow Rose."

By MARILYN ABALOS  
*Exclusive to the Filipino Reporter*

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The local press and social media have been abuzz in recent weeks with Diane Paragas' "Yellow Rose," the opening film at the 42nd Asian American International Film Festival last July in New York.

The film is on its way to Los Angeles for a screening at a fund-raising event for the Apl.de ap Foundation Intl and NaFFAA, the National Federation of Filipino American Associations, Region 9.

The film is about Rose, an undocumented Filipino girl, who dreams of one day leaving her small Texas town to pursue her country music dreams.

Her world is shattered when her mother suddenly gets picked up by Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE).

Rose, facing this new reality, is forced to flee the scene, leaving behind the only life she knows, and embarks on a journey of self-discovery as she searches for a new home in the honky tonk world of Austin, Texas.

"My hope is that 'Yellow Rose' puts a human face on the plight of Dreamers, while entertaining the audience with original Americana music that they might not have listened to before," said Paragas.

The film stars Tony Award Nominee Eva Noblezada (Hadestown, Miss Saigon), Tony Award Winner and Disney Legend Lea Salonga (Once on this Island, Miss Saigon), Princess Punzalan (Mula Sa Puso), Dale Watson (Friday Night Lights), Gustavo Gomez (The Walking Dead), Libby Villari (Boyhood) and Liam Booth (Ghosts Never Sleep).

"Yellow Rose" also opened the Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival in May 2019 and has received high praise winning three grand jury awards at the 2019 Los Angeles Asian Pacific Film Festival, the 2019 CAAMFest Asian American Film Festival, and the 2019 Bentonville Film

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Festival.

Kudos to Asian CineVision who has produced the Asian American International Film Festival since 1978 — 42 years!

Indeed ACV's "yellow brick road" has led to many Asian and Asian-American filmmakers!

AAIFF has provided the U.S. premieres of acclaimed film directors, including Wayne Wang, Mira Nair, Marilou Diaz-Abaya and Ang Lee.

I remember decades ago I would climb rickety stairs in a walkup in New York's Chinatown to catch ACV as this grassroots organization worked to promote and preserve Asian and Asian-American media expressions.

ACV's founders saw the need to bring greater social and cultural awareness of Asian-American experience and history to both Asian-American communities and to the public at large.

From the Henry Street Settlement on the Lower East Side to New York University to Manhattan movie houses to Queens and Brooklyn, Asia Society and full circle to the Museum of Chinese in America, the AAIFF is the U.S.' first and longest running festival of its kind and the premier showcase for the best Asian independent and Asian-American cinema.

Celebrating its 25th year, the AAIFF was screened for the very first time at Asia Society in 2002 opening with Marylou Diaz Abaya's "Bagong Buwan," a timely film about jihad starring Filipino box-office superstar Cesar Montano.

The 2001 film, which was set amid a bloody Muslim conflict on an island in the Philippines, follows a doctor who must find a way to reconcile his beliefs of non-violence after his son is killed.

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"The film festival brought a mix of audiences-Asians, Asian-Americans and others from all walks of life to the Asia Society," said Angel Velasquez Shaw, Executive Director of Asian CineVision, which sponsors the festival.

"It also gave members of the Asia Society the opportunity to see works by Asians that they might not have otherwise been able to see."

In 2013, a documentary, **MARILOU DIAZ-ABAYA: FILMAKER ON A VOYAGE**, by Mona Lisa Yuchengco was shown at Asia Society, as well as the Philippine Center in New York.

The documentary recounts the achievements of Marilou Diaz-Abaya (1955-2012), the "first lady" of Philippine cinema.

Marilou made unflinching efforts to make films for the underclass, who struggled to survive harsh societal and political conditions.

On track on the "yellow brick road," "Yellow Rose" Paragas said, "Throughout our screenings, we've been touched by how the film resonates with so many different people no matter their background. We look forward to bringing our film to a wider audience in the months to come."