How do Foreigners see the Artistic Filipino?

As a foreigner with more than 30 years of experience around the globe and having the pleasure of seeing and interacting with the Filipino Culture both, here in the Philippines and abroad in several countries including the USA, Europe and Asia areas of the world, I find the finer side to be the Cultural Arts, mainly speaking of the dance and musical side of these very talented people. This artistic side of the Filipino People is what has drawn me here to the Philippines time and time again. Ultimately this had been a driving force for me to eventually come to the Philippines to live, more specifically in the Northern portion of the country called the Cordillera’s Region, Baguio City located in the province of Benguet some 300 kilometers north of the country’s capital city of Manila.

Performance Arts are by far my favorite. Historically drama before the Spanish colonization was of a religious nature and was intended to persuade the deities to provide the necessities of life. The Spanish used drama to introduce the Catholic religion. Filipino themes in drama developed in the late nineteenth century as the independence movement evolved. Current themes are nationalistic and reflect daily life as a mixture of Catholic and old school beliefs as an art form.

Dance is a mixture of Filipino and Spanish cultures. Professional dance troupes as I have seen around the world perform ballet, modern dance, and folk dance. Folk dances are performed at meetings and conferences and reflect a strong Spanish influence. Indigenous dances are used in historical pageants and are by far my favorite style of dance to watch. As example, the bamboo dance relating a story about a bird moving among the reeds of bamboo. People enjoy ballroom dancing for recreation. Dance instructors are available at parties to teach the waltz and the cha-cha while the most popular style of the Filipino cha-cha can be seen worldwide where ever Filipinos are, this type of cha-cha is sure to follow.

Music performance begins in the home, then at school. Amateur performances featuring song and dance occur at fiestas. Popular music tends to be American. This is one of the most attracted scene noticed by people in countries outside of the Philippines, when a Filipino band is playing and the lady singers are dancing, the entire crowd is sure to fall in love with the pure talent of the Filipino people. After talking to many foreigners who are visiting the Philippines, their answer to the real reason they decided to visit this beautiful country is that “they watched a musical show put on by Filipinos back in their home country”.