



*A 35-year love affair*

Armando V. Salarza and the Historic Bamboo Organ

*Press Kit*



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*Armando V. Salarza*  
organist/conductor/harpsichordist



**A**rmando V. Salarza is an international concert organist and is best known as the Titular Organist of The Bamboo Organ of Las Piñas, the Philippines.

He started piano lessons at age 7 under Donna Ofrasio and organ lessons two years later under Wolfgang Oehms and Professor Amador Hernandez. He gave his first public performance at the age of 11 and shortly thereafter became the youngest finalist in the National Music Competitions for Young Artists (NAMCYA) piano competition. He took further lessons in piano under Fr. Manuel Maramba, OSB. At 14, he was the official accompanist of the Las Piñas Boys Choir.

Immediately after high school, he was sent to the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Graz, Austria (University for Music and the Performing Arts) as the first scholar of the Bamboo Organ Foundation. While still a student, he was specially selected by the Institute for Church Music to be an organ instructor for the Diocese of Graz and other parishes in Kärnten as part of the institute's outreach program.

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In 1986, he received a special recognition award called the Würdigungspreis from the Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research.

He graduated with distinction in 1988 and earned the title Magister Artium - Master of Arts degree in Church Music and a Teacher's Certificate in Organ.

From 1988 to 1992, he went on to pursue a Postgraduate Course Orgel Konzertfach (Organ Concert Performance) at the Universität für Musik und darstellende Kunst in Wien (Vienna, Austria) and simultaneously took Master classes and workshops in organ, harpsichord, orchestra and choral conducting in various institutions in Europe, among them, Universidad de Salamanca in Spain and the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom on a scholarship grant by the British Council. His teachers and mentors were prominent figures in classical music – Johann Trummer, Ernst Triebel and Herbert Tachezi for the organ; Gordon Murray for the harpsichord; Franziska Hammer-Drexler for voice; Josef Döllner, John Rutter (choral composition) and Stephen Cleobury for choral conducting; Guy Bovet, Montserrat Torrent, John Scott, and Harald Vogel for selective Master classes in organ.

Recognized as a premier concert organist, he has given performances in Austria, Germany, Belgium, Switzerland, Czech Republic, Poland, Finland and the United States of America. Since 1984, he has been performing regularly at the annual International Bamboo Organ Festival in his homeland.



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Professor Salarza returned to the Philippines in 1992 and was bestowed with the honor of Organiste Titulaire of the Bamboo Organ. He inaugurated the Klais organ of the Edsa Shrine and the other prominent pipe organs in the country like the Spanish organs of San Agustin in Intramuros, Manila and the Holy Trinity Parish on the island of Loay, Bohol; and the largely Philippine-built organs of St. Joseph's Academy Auditorium in Las Piñas City, Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Pasig City, San Carlos Seminary in Makati City, San Sebastian Cathedral in Lipa City, Batangas and the Cebu Metropolitan Cathedral. He was featured in several classical concerts in the country, notably, the Cultural Center of the Philippines Filipino Artists Series in 1995 and the Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra Signature Series 2000-2001 with the legendary Oscar Yatco.

He was presented with the Kawayan Award for Music Category by the Rotary Club of Las Piñas in 1996.

In 2003, he took over the helm of the Las Piñas Boys Choir as Official Conductor and trainer. Under his tutelage, the Las Piñas Boys Choir emerged as the World Champion in the Children's Choir Category of the 5th World Choir Games held in Graz, Austria in July 2008, besting 54 other contenders worldwide.

To date, Professor Salarza continues to display the versatility of his musical talent as an organist, harpsichordist, ensemble player and conductor - performing for special events, music festivals and concerts here and abroad. He performs yearly at the International Bamboo Organ Festival.

Professor Salarza is currently the Artistic Director of the International Bamboo Organ Festival and a faculty member of the University of the Philippines College of Music and the Manila Cathedral – Basilica Institute of Liturgical Music. He also teaches aspiring organists from different parishes and schools nationwide and gives pipe organ appreciation workshops.



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## International Performances

- Organ Concert (with Johann Trummer)  
Felsberg, Switzerland, July 1988
- Orgelkonzerte im Grazer Dom  
Graz, Austria, July 1988
- “Mödlinger Orgelsommer”  
Mödling, Austria, August 1988
- Sint-Martinuskerk Hasselt  
Hasselt, Belgium, November 1988
- Organ Recital  
Diest, Belgium, November 1988
- Grand Beguinage Church  
Louvain, Belgium, November 1988
- Orgelkonzerte im Grazer Dom  
Graz, Austria, July 1990
- Series Concert For Two Organs (with Johann Trummer)  
USA Six-City Tour (Chicago, St. Louis, San Diego, San Francisco,  
Seattle, Boston), August - September 1990
- Organ Recital  
Bonner Münster  
Bonn, Germany, August 1994



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- Lahden Kansainvälinen Urkuviikko (Lahti Organ Festival)  
Lahti, Finland, August 1999
- LITOMĚŘICKÉ VARHANNÍ LÉTO (LITOMĚŘICE Organ Summer)  
St. Stephen's Cathedral  
Litomerice, Czech Republic, September 2001
- Festiwal Muzyki Jana Sebastiana Bacha  
Bielskie Centrum Kultury  
Bielsko-Biala, Poland, September 2001
- Orgelkonzerte im Grazer Dom  
Graz, Austria, August 2002
- Orgelkonzerte im Grazer Dom  
Graz, Austria, August 2007
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St. Stephen's Cathedral  
Litomerice, Czech Republic, September 2007
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- Thanksgiving-Victory Concert in Vienna (Choral Conducting)  
Pfarre Maria vom Berge Karmel  
Vienna, Austria, July 2008



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## Recordings

- **The International Bamboo Organ Festival Highlights**  
*Featured Artist*  
February 1984, 1986 to 2010
- **Bach On The Bamboo Organ**  
*Featured Artist*  
February 1996
- **The Bamboo Organ and Brass**  
*Featured Artist*  
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- **Armando V. Salarza On The Historic Bamboo Organ**  
*New Release*  
CD Launching - November 4, 2010



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## Current Engagements (2010)

- **An Evening With His Majesty**  
St. Joseph Parish Church Las Piñas City, Philippines, November 4
- **The 5th Manila Cathedral Pipe Organ Festival**  
Intramuros, Manila, Philippines, November 12
- **UP Diliman Concert (TBA)**  
Diliman, Quezon City, Philippines, December 7
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## An Evening with His Majesty

Not all organists are created equal, and neither are musical instruments. W. A. Mozart once described the organ as the King of Instruments because of the majestic and diverse sounds it produces when played. Here in the Philippines, we are proud to proclaim ownership of a pipe organ that we feel speaks in our native tongue: the Bamboo Organ - the only pipe organ in the world that is made up mostly of bamboo pipes. In addition, the virtuoso responsible for making it possible for us to hear this wonderful and unique instrument is a native of Las Piñas – Armando Salarza.

For tonight's concert, Armando Salarza will feature solo organ works by Alessandro Scarlatti, John Stanley and Benet Julia. For added interest, organist Patricia Lim will join him on the positive organ for a duo. Another guest will be tenor Conrado Ong who will render some songs accompanied by the organ.

The International Children's Choir Champion, Las Piñas Boys Choir, which is under the tutelage of Mr. Salarza will render English and Filipino Christmas works. They will be accompanied in one of the pieces by a member of the choir, Ramon Paolo Quintero, who is a Salarza organ student.



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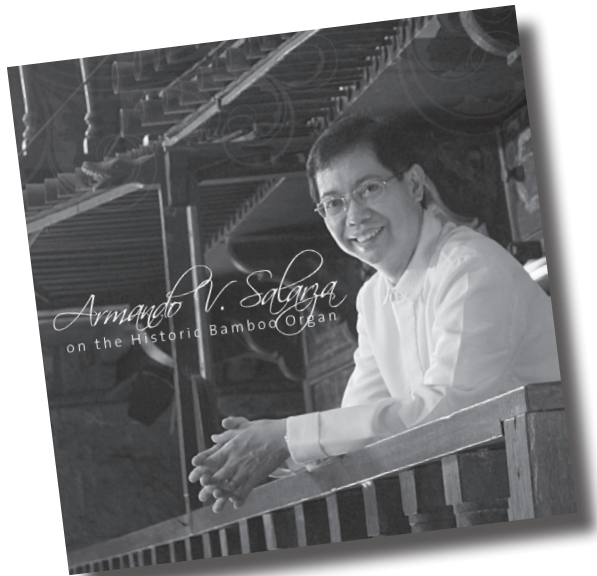
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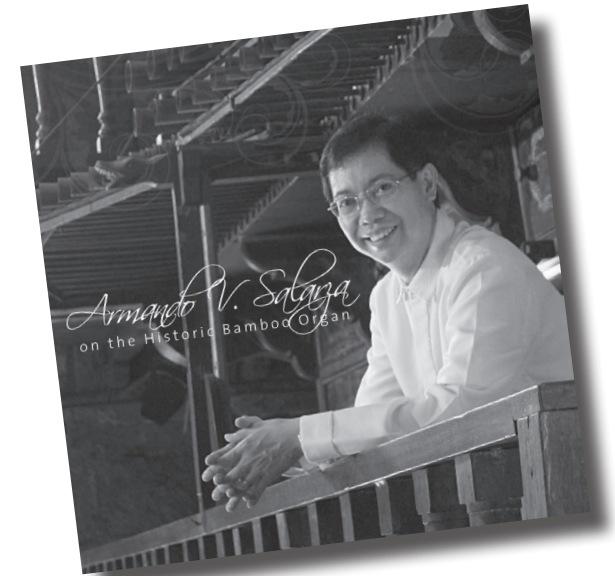
## Armando V. Salarza on the Historic Bamboo Organ

This CD is a collection of Armando V. Salarza's performances at the annual International Bamboo Organ Festival. The idea of compiling the works of Armando Salarza originated from sound engineer, Josef Kamykowski, and supported by the present Bamboo Organ Foundation president, Msgr. Albert A. Venus. It includes tracks which are a combination of Bamboo Organ solo, organ with the orchestra, organ with trumpet and trombone, organ duet with four hands, and organ duet with positive organ and brass quintet playing the works of Mozart, Salieri, Pachelbel, Benet Julia, William Boyce, Cesar Franck, Alessandro Scarlatti, C.P.E. Bach, Pablo Bruna, F.X. Brixli, Claude-Bénigne Balbastre and arrangements of Filipino folk tunes by Wolfgang Oehms.



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## Contact Information

The Bamboo Organ Foundation

**January Hernandez**

Administrator

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**Leonore Kristine Salarza**

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## The Bamboo Organ

The Bamboo Organ is one of the Philippines' national treasures. It was built between 1816 and 1824 for the Parish Church of Las Piñas, a village nine miles from the center of Manila, which now has achieved its own cityhood. Every year it receives countless visits from Filipino and foreign visitors alike.

Far from being an oddity, the Bamboo Organ is a serious instrument in the classic Spanish style, and a number of the world's best-known organists have enjoyed its charm and color. Fr. Diego Cera de la Virgen del Carmen was responsible for the construction of both the organ and the church. An Augustinian Recollect, he was parish priest of Las Piñas and the son of a family of organ builders in his native Spain. Records show that he also was an unusually gifted natural scientist, chemist, architect, community leader and organist.

The choice of bamboo for the majority of the pipes was made both for practical and aesthetic reasons. Bamboo was abundant, in wide use as a building material, and when treated correctly, resistant to insects and rot. Fr. Cera had long been experimenting with this material; in the end only the horizontal reed pipes had to be made of metal, but not for lack of trying, as suggested by the number of mute bamboo pipes mounted in the rear façade of the case.

The final result conforms very closely to the Mediterranean model: divided keyboard and registers, a basic choir with few mutations, horizontal trumpets in the façade, and a short pull-down pedal-board.



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In addition, there are a few favorite effects: Pajaritos (seven pipes tuned to imitate bird song), Tambor (two pipes tuned to beat in imitation of a drum), and one register tuned to vibrate slightly. The original wind supply was provided by hand-operated trouble bellows. Placed in a small, not very resonant stone church, the essentially wooden instrument sounds quite brilliant, with fine contrast between the real flute registers, the main choir with mutations and the metal reeds. All Mediterranean repertory sound well on the instrument, as do northern compositions that do not require independent pedal registers.

Earthquakes and typhoons - and the damage they bring - being facts of Philippine life, Fr. Cera himself became the first restorer of the Bamboo Organ. Others following him were less successful, and several partial and approximate attempts made in the early part of this century just to keep it playing ultimately failed. In 1973, the entire instrument was shipped to the Johannes Klais organ factory in Bonn for complete restoration work. Replacements for the bamboo pipes passed first through Japan for treatment; a special room was set up in Bonn to maintain tropical humidity for the duration of the work.

In 1975, the fully restored instrument was remounted in its original position, where it has now become the centerpiece of an important international music festival, as well as the stimulus for the rebirth of an unusual and very active parish life.



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