



# PEOPLE POWER

## Education Guide

Written and designed by Catherine Hernandez  
With contributions by Nadine Villasin

# Production Credits



## **PEOPLE POWER**

Performed and Written By

Leon Aureus, Rose Cortez, Nicco Lorenzo Garcia, Christine Mangosing, Nadine Villasin

Directed/Dramaturged by Nina Lee Aquino

Produced by Carlos Bulosan Theatre

in association with Theatre Passe Muraille

Choreography by Clare Preuss

Set and Costume Design by Camellia Koo

Lighting by Arun Srinivasan

Sound Design by Romeo Candido

Costume Design by Caroline Mangosing

Stage Management by Eric Chan

Production Management by André du Toit

Collective Creation Facilitators/Dramaturges: Marie Beath Badian, Lori Nancy Kalamanski,  
Weyni Mengesha, Clare Preuss, Paul Thompson

# About



## PEOPLE POWER

*PEOPLE POWER* interweaves the stories of ordinary people living through extraordinary times. Set against the backdrop of the 1986 Philippine People Power Revolution, this piece is a powerful portrayal of the peaceful revolution that ultimately toppled the violent and corrupt Marcos dictatorship.

Written as a collective creation by the CBT Collective, *PEOPLE POWER* uses movement, music, percussion and poetry to tell this dynamic and inspirational story. From the bullet that assassinated opposition leader Ninoy Aquino, to the click of a journalist's camera, collective playwrights and performers **Leon Aureus**, **Rose Cortez**, **Nicco Lorenzo**, **Christine Mangosing**, and **Nadine Villasin** capture a nation in transition and the triumph of the Filipino spirit.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The **People Power Revolution** of 1986 was a series of nonviolent mass demonstrations in the Philippines as an act of protest against the 20-year authoritarian regime of president Ferdinand Marcos. The majority of the demonstrations took place at Epifanio de los Santos Avenue (*EDSA*) and involved hundreds of thousands of Filipino civilians. The protests were fueled by a resistance of Marcos's corrupt regime and resulted in his fleeing Malacañang Palace to the United States and the assignment of Corazon Aquino as President of the Philippines.

## Activities

- Why do you think this play explored the citizens who took part in the revolution rather than the political figures behind it?
- For each character, describe why the revolution was important to them that they would risk their lives for it.
- How do the events of the 1986 revolution mirror recent political events in the world?

## PEOPLE POWER Historical Timeline

**1969** Ferdinand Marcos is elected President for a second term.

**1970 January.** Demonstrations against Marcos, perceived to be angling for a third term, culminate in the "First Quarter Storm." Militant students, farmers, and workers picket Malacañang Palace and are violently dispersed by military troopers.

**1972 September 22.** Marcos declares martial law. Congress is closed, the Constitutional Convention suspended, and media muzzled.

**1972 September 23,** Senator Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino, a member of the opposition in government, is arrested and detained, along with other "subversive" oppositionists.

**1983 August** Ninoy Aquino returns from exile in the United States and is murdered as he steps off the plane at the Manila International Airport. His funeral draws millions of Filipinos to the streets in defiance.

**1985 November.** Due to pressure from the American government and political and economic crisis at home, Marcos declares on American television that he will run in a snap presidential election. Ninoy Aquino's widow, Cory Aquino, is presented with more than a million signatures drafting her as presidential contender.

**1986 February 7.** Election Day. 400,000 volunteers are mobilized to monitor voting, and guard against fraud. Despite these efforts, there are widespread reports of violence and tampering of election results.

**February 15.** Marcos is formally declared winner of the February 7 elections. All 50 opposition Members of Parliament walk out in protest.

**February 16.** At a "victory rally," Corazon Aquino calls for coordinated strikes and the boycott of crony media, banks, and corporations in a civil disobedience campaign aimed at toppling Marcos from power.

**February 22.** Minister of Defense Juan Ponce Enrile and the Vice Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Lt. Gen. Fidel Ramos announce their withdrawal of support from Marcos. Anticipating an attack from Marcos troops Enrile, Ramos and a few hundred rebel soldiers barricade themselves in two military camps alongside EDSA Avenue. People begin to gather around the camps. A few hours later, Catholic Archbishop Jaime Cardinal Sin, a long-time supporter of the Marcos regime, exhorts Filipinos to come to the aid of the rebels by going to EDSA.

**February 23 - 25.** A contingent of Marines with tanks and armored vans headed for the rebel camps are stopped by hundreds of thousands of people who have come into the streets in protest. The troops are forced to retreat. Members of the Armed Forces begin to switch sides.

**February 25** Cory Aquino is inaugurated as President of the Philippines in a ceremony at Club Filipino. On the Palace balcony, Marcos takes his oath as President of the Philippines. A few hours later, the Marcos family and their close associates hurriedly leave the Palace, and are transported by American Helicopters to Hawaii, ending over 20 years of Marcos rule.

SOURCE:

<http://www.stuartxchange.org/BeforeEdsa.html> Before Edsa. Marcos Times (EDSA: The Original People Power Revolution) by Angela Stuart-Santiago

# Collective Creation



“With collective creation, you can’t predict chemistry,” says Nadine Villasin, Artistic Director of Carlos Bulosan Theatre and member of the collective. Lucky for her and the company, the chemistry was just right.

Being the daughter of Fely Villasin, who was part of the anti-Marcos movement, Nadine was inspired by a reunion of activists in Seattle in 2004. She assembled the CBT Collective — consisting of Leon Aureus, Rose Cortez, Caroline Mangosing, Nicco Garcia and Nadine herself — with the goal of creating PEOPLE POWER.

For this particular collective, each member was assigned a particular character and the actor was responsible for that character’s journey. The collective would then offer input into that actor’s choices. When the group needs to explore the truth behind each scene, they begin to work each piece up on their feet.

## Activities:

- In groups, choose a character from the play and write a monologue collectively. What are the advantages when working with a collective? The disadvantages?



CARLOS  
BULOSAN  
THEATRE

The Carlos Bulosan Theatre is the longest standing Filipino-Canadian theatre company. CBT was founded in 1982 (under the name, Carlos Bulosan Cultural Workshop) as a cultural wing of CAMD, the North America-wide Coalition Against the Marcos Dictatorship. In the ensuing years, CBT staged the following productions:

- **Carding** (1984, 1986) a play about a Filipino immigrant in Canada
- **If My Mother Could See Me Now/Inay Kung Alam Mo Lang** (1989,1990) a play about domestic workers
- **Ten Fingers/Sampung Mga Daliri** (1991) a historical interplay of characters depicting the Philippines past and present
- **Carlos Bulosan: A Trilogy** (1992) a play about the life and works of Carlos Bulosan, a Filipino immigrant in North America
- **Home Sweet Home** (1993-1994) a play about violence against women in the Filipino-Canadian community
- **Noong Kapanahunan Ko.Not On My Time** (1994) a play about our generational gap
- **No Boundaries** (1995) a play about how current economic changes have affected the lives of Filipino-Canadians
- **Walang Sugat/Undefeated** (1996, 1998) a sarswela (musical production) set in late 1896 when Filipinos took arms against Spanish rule
- **Images of 1896** (1997) a sarswela about the resistance to Spanish colonial rule
- **Miss Orient(ed)** (2001) a workshop production
- **Miss Orient(ed)** (2003) CBT's latest play which examines the politics of cultural identity through the eyes of three young beauty pageant contestants
- **The Romance of Magno Rubio** (2005) a multidisciplinary piece about a young Filipino farm laborer's experience with racism in Depression-era California

Carlos Bulosan was a young Filipino immigrant in the United States in the 1930s. He spoke little English and worked as a dishwasher, farm worker and cannery worker. He came to America during a time when African-Americans and Asians faced systemic racism enshrined in such laws as the Anti-Miscegeny Act which barred marriage between white people and people of colour. In spite of these oppressive conditions, he educated himself and became a writer. He chronicled his life and times in an autobiographical novel, *America is in the Heart*. Carlos Bulosan helped organize unions and fought for equality in a racist society until his death in 1956. It is in this spirit that we name our theatre company after him.



As Theatre Passe Muraille enters its fourth decade it celebrates the creation of over 500 plays and a rich legacy of ground-breaking theatre.

When Passe Muraille evolved in 1968, its radical intention was to create a distinctly Canadian voice in theatre. Throughout the 70s, under the direction of Paul Thompson, the company revolutionized Canadian theatre with its signatory approach to collective creation.

Many of the country's most respected artists - including Mary Walsh, David Fox, Anne Anglin, Eric Peterson - consider Passe Muraille as their starting point. Writers such as Rich Salutin, Linda Griffiths, Ann Marie MacDonald, Maria Campbell, and Michael Ondaatje emerged to create original works which have become Canadian classics. *The Farm Show*, *1837: The Farmers' Revolt*, *I Love You Baby Blue*, *O.D. on Paradise*, *Prodigals in a Promised Land*, Timothy Findley's *The Stillborn Lover*, our award-winning stage adaptation of Margaret Laurence's *The Stone Angel*, and of course, Michael Healey's *The Drawer Boy*, have all triggered a response in the creative community as well as with audiences across the country.

As one of the nation's first alternative companies, Passe Muraille has mentored burgeoning organizations which have become vital on their own artistic terms. Companies such as Newfoundland's CODCO, Toronto's Buddies in Bad Times, Nightwood Theatre and Necessary Angel Company, Saskatoon's Twenty-Fifth Street Theatre and the Blyth Summer Festival all drew their inspiration from Theatre Passe Muraille. The theatre continues to be a leader in its community. In more recent years, several new generations of artists and small companies have found a place at Passe Muraille - DNA Theatre, Platform 9, Cahoots Theatre Projects, Bald Ego and Civilized Theatre among a host of others.

# Further Reading

Bonner, Raymond. *Waltzing With a Dictator: The Marcoses and the Making of American Policy*

MERCADO, MONINA ALLEREY (ED) *People Power (an Eyewitness History: The Philippine Revolution of 1986)*

Bayan Ko! *Images of the Philippine Revolt, Project 28 Days, 1986.* Text Editor.

Imelda, *Steel Butterfly of the Philippines (Hardcover)*  
by [Katherine W. Ellison](#)