

- Cancer

BREATHE LIFE, BE AWARE OF LUNG CANCER

ANGEL THOUGHTS

"When the law no longer protects you from the corrupt, but protects the corrupt from you – you know your nation is doomed."—Ayn Rand

The Disney-themed lights show at the Ayala triangle is a go-to this holiday season, and best of all, it's free. Just be prepared to be in a huge crowd of people, be under the stars, and stand for hours. (Unless you bring your own folding chairs or mats.)

The 30-minute light show begins at 6 p.m. and ends at 10 p.m. Among those who were mesmerized were my 11-month old grandson **Disney**, his parents **AJ** and **Ayet**, and **Disney's** two *yayas*, **Anabel** and **Imelda**.

I am happy that a few buildings on Ayala Avenue have manger displays on their awnings. Please, let us keep the real meaning of Christmas via the depiction of the birth of Jesus Christ in a manger. Even a Christmas star which announced His birth to the shepherd and guided the three magi would be so welcome!

Now, did you know that lung cancer is the most common cancer worldwide and the most common type of cancer diagnosed in Southeast Asia? Here in our country, lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer-related deaths. It accounts for 24.3 percent of cancer deaths in Filipino men.

November is Lung Cancer Awareness Month, and advocates of clean air

aim to raise awareness regarding lung cancer and provide support to patients and their loved ones. Bravo!

They say prevention is better than cure—and staying informed is part of prevention. To save more lives, I talked to an expert in the medical field to share some important information on lung cancer that the public needs to know about.

According to Dr. **Diana Edralin**, country medical director of Roche (Philippines) Inc., cancer develops when certain cells in the body multiply uncontrollably and invade other vital structures and organs. For lung cancer, there are two main types.

Non-small cell lung cancer (NSCLC) is far more common, accounting for roughly 85 percent of cases. Small cell lung cancer (SCLC) is rarer, but it grows and spreads more aggressively than NSCLC. Just like other cancers, lung cancer has four stages, depending on how big it has grown and how distant it has spread to other parts of the body. For many patients with lung cancer, the disease is diagnosed when it is already at an advanced stage, when it has already spread or metastasized. This makes lung cancer more difficult to treat.

So early detection is key. What are the common symptoms of lung cancer? These include persistent cough, shortness of breath or trouble breathing, bloody phlegm, and fatigue. Lung cancer usually does not show symp-



LIGHTS AND MUSIC From left: The late National Artist **Lucretia 'King' Kasilag** in a musical interlude at the Palace with President **Cory Aquino**; Reaching for the stars with daddy **AJ** and baby **Disney** at the Ayala lights magical show



toms until the disease is in its later stages, and it is therefore important to familiarize yourself with the risk factors of lung cancer.

And yes, smoking is the most significant risk factor for lung cancer. Almost all cases of the aggressive SCLC type are diagnosed in smokers. Research has found that smoking has contributed to at least 80 percent of lung cancer cases. Smokers are 10 times more likely to be diagnosed with lung cancer than non-smokers. Ex-smokers also permanently increase their chances of getting lung cancer, even after they quit. While smokers are at the greatest risk of lung cancer, exposure to secondhand smoke also increases the risk of lung cancer, even in non-smokers.

Our environment can also play a role in the development of lung cancer. Outdoor air pollution in big cities can increase the risk of lung cancer. Indoor air pollution can come from burning wood for heat or cooking with unrefined oils. Pulmonary diseases can also increase the risk of lung cancer. People infected with primary tuber-

culosis or chronic bronchitis are more likely to get lung cancer.

It is always best to consult a doctor for more information regarding lung cancer. But our awareness of the risk factors, as well as the signs and symptoms, can help us identify the disease early, leading to better outcomes. The most impactful thing you can do to reduce your risk of lung cancer is to avoid smoking. Non-smokers are least at risk, but even someone who has been smoking for years can reduce their cancer risk by quitting. This also means trying to avoid secondhand smoke by not hanging out in or near smoking areas, asking your friends and family not to smoke around you, or stepping away when they do so. Don't worry, it's not impolite to step away from a smoker. Remember, it's your lungs and your life.

Diet and exercise also matter a lot, and people with higher fitness levels are less likely to get lung cancer. If many of the risk factors for lung cancer apply to you, it is important for you to get tested. The American Cancer

Society recommends smokers aged 55 years and up get screened for lung cancer once a year, even if they are not showing symptoms. This is because symptoms do not show up until the disease is in its advanced stages.

Taking center stage is **Kasilag's** Divertissement for piano and orchestra with pianist **Zenas R. Lozada** and the SSC Orchestra conducted by Prof. **Juan Luis Muñoz**.

Other works to be performed are: "*Purihin ang Pangimoon*", "Prelude Etnika and Toccata", and "Intermezzo" for Violin and Piano.

Featured performers are: pianists **Greg Zuniga**, **Jeremiah Valenzuela**, **Tristan Quinones**, violinist **Christian Tan**, SSC chamber choir and chorus class with conductor **Isaac Iglesias**, and SSC Guitar Ensemble.

Also included are works by SSC Music alumnae concertino on Filipino folk songs for two pianos dedicated to **L. Kasilag** by **Rosemarie Santos dela Paz** and "Nocturne in E flat minor" by **Priscilla dela Fuente Sison**.

