

# The National Anthem's predecessor and influences

We celebrate three anniversaries on June 12: The anniversary of the proclamation of Philippine independence from Spain; the anniversary of the Philippine flag, which was formally presented to the people from the balcony of President Emilio Aguinaldo's house in Cavite during the proclamation of independence; and the anniversary of our National Anthem, which was played for the first time on the same date.

However, few people know that the National Anthem, as we know it today, is our second national anthem. Our very first national anthem was known as the “**Marangal na Dalit ng Katagalugan**,” which was commissioned by Andres Bonifacio in 1897. An interesting fact: The musician who was commissioned to compose the anthem would later become the second husband of Gregoria de Jesus, the widow of Bonifacio. The musician was none other than Julio Nakpil.

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Bonifacio mentions in his letter that he has received a copy of the “Himno Nacional” that Nakpil had sent. Julio Nakpil later recalled that he composed a piece—also known as the “Marangal na Dalit ng Katagalugan”—at the request of Bonifacio when they were encamped with Katipunan troops in the vicinity of Balara in November 1896. He remembered the hymn still being played in Cavite and Laguna in 1898, but as the history textbooks tell, Aguinaldo then chose as the national anthem the composition by Julian Felipe, originally titled “Marcha Filipina Magdalo.” In 1903, Nakpil reworked his “Marangal na Dalit” as tribute to Rizal under the title “Salve, Patria,” but the only surviving copies of the original score were destroyed in 1945, during the battle for Manila. The version of “Marangal na Dalit” we have today was reconstructed by Nakpil from memory when he was in his eighties. — From *The Light of Liberty* by Jim Richardson.

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This now brings us to our National Anthem today. It was originally performed without words—and, in fact, lyrics were only written for it one year later by Jose Palma. On June 5, 1898, President Aguinaldo, upon his return from Hong Kong, met with the composer Julian Felipe and asked him to compose a national hymn. In his memoirs, Julian Felipe said that he used three other musical pieces as basis for our National Anthem: The *Marcha Real*, the Grand March from Giuseppe Verdi's *Aida*, and *La Marseillaise*.

Ref. : <http://malacanang.gov.ph/7815-the-national-anthems-predecessor-and-influences/>

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