

A Historical Review Of Pre-Colonial Music In Philippines

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Abstract

A persistent search for new music and job opportunities in the broader global creative arena has enabled many Filipino and Filipino-born musicians and composers to seek further education abroad and dwell in some of Europe's most important musical cities, such as London, Paris, and Berlin. It is possible that their contribution to Philippine music will be one of enrichment, as they will open the door to a broader widening of music and musical ideas in a world that is becoming more globalized and post-modern. It may well serve as a bridge that allows the West to delve even deeper into Asia and Asia's ancient musical practices in search of enrichment and musical inspiration in the search for a "newer" and post-modern music that may well become one of many new kinds of music heard in a globalized and post-modern world, and it may well become one of many new kinds of music heard in a post-modern world. Because of the vast number of possibilities and perspectives available, postmodernism is difficult to comprehend and define. Moreover, the assumption of Western individualism as a worldview assumption may have an impact on how these young Filipino composers in the diaspora understand their work and the process of creating music. It is difficult to tell if there is a true and conscious endeavor to make their music patriotic on the part of the musicians. However, there are elements of influence from Asia or the homeland that may be heard in the works of Fifth Wave composers. The most notable distinction between the approaches to music used by third and fourth-wave composers is the former's intentional and purposeful endeavor to seek out and materialize or actualize a new musical expression employing Asian themes from their cultural backyards.

Introduction

Because of the lack of a melodic instrument, it is possible to infer the advanced rhythmic skill that the indigenous had, as well as the necessary knowledge and comprehension of group playing. This rhythmic intricacy may still be heard in the music of numerous ethnic minority around the nation, which is performed on a variety of indigenous instruments. Filipino culture has created a diverse range of musical styles and practices that have evolved from the Southeast Asian cultural past and the Spanish American colonial era. Although this is the case, indigenous and traditional music has been maintained in a number of different places throughout the nation. These behaviors may still be found among indigenous peoples whose cultural practices have been generally unspoiled by or safeguarded from the impact of Western culture and civilization. In order to evade Spanish rule, these native communities either relocated to higher ground or were not immediately approached by the conquerors.

Many parts of Philippine culture are the result of a fusion of Spanish and indigenous Philippine customs and traditions. Following almost three centuries of Spanish administration, many of the Spanish practices have been ingrained in indigenous Filipino culture, resulting in the development of an ethnic group that is a unique combination of east and west. Spain and the Philippines have a lot in common in terms of food and dress as well. The Tagalog language of the Philippines has traces of Spanish, as seen by terms that are similar in meaning but vary only in spelling between them. Despite the fact that the island of Mindanao is occupied entirely by Filipinos who speak only Spanish in the southern section of the country, the people of the Philippines have developed a unique Filipino style of cooking, dressing, and communication. Filipino music has existed for a long time, even before Ferdinand Magellan and his crew stepped foot on Philippine land in 1521, marking the completion of their world-spanning exploration journey. Antonio Pigafetta, Magellan's personal aide, collected evidence of indigenous vocal and instrumental music throughout his voyage. Ethnomusicologists refer to this pre-colonial music as the Ethnic or Oriental tradition because it can be divided into four distinct epochs, each of which has its own distinct sound. The Spanish Colonial tradition in the Philippines refers to the era that occurred during the Spanish crusade in the country during that time period.⁵

Theoretical framework

In the Ethnic tradition, music was mostly used for religious and other ceremonial reasons, with some secular music included. Several of these celebrations commemorated rites of passage and life--cycle events for the early Filipinos, while others are heavily influenced by Islamic rituals and traditions. Heavy percussion instruments are often used in conjunction with these rites, with vocal hymns interspersed. These qualities may also be seen in early Filipino tribes such as the Bagobo tribe of Davao and the Ifugao tribe of the Mountain Province, both of which are located in the Philippines. ⁵ Much as in early western traditions, vocal music is viewed as more essential than instrumental music in the modern world. Vocal music has the ability to communicate ideas and beliefs more clearly and vividly, while music strengthens the ability to articulate thoughts and beliefs. Due to their lack of training in music theory, singing was a fundamental component of Filipino culture, and was mostly improvised.

The Philippines, an archipelago of 7,107 islands located at the confluence of the Pacific Ocean, the South China and Sulu Seas, is a major maritime crossroads in the world. Luzon (the northern section of the country where Manila, the capital, is located), Visayas (the center region), and Mindanao (the southern portion of the country) are the three main island groupings (southern part). The country is dominated by Christians, who account for more than 90 percent of the total population, with approximately 80 percent of the population being Catholic, 5 percent being Moslems, mostly concentrated in Sulu and Mindanao areas, 3 percent being Protestant, and the remaining being a minority of other religions. Tagalog is the national language of the Philippines, and it is spoken across the country in more than 80 varieties. It is undeniable that every Filipino is, at the absolute least, multilingual in nature, with English serving as the second language of communication. ⁶

The oldest residents of the Philippines, who lived 21,000 or 22,000 years ago, were found in Palawan, which is located in the west-central region of the country. The Malays, the Filipinos, and the Indonesians are all considered equal as ethnic groups in the area of Island Southeast Asia since they all descended from a same people with a shared foundation culture. Accordingly, it is incorrect to assert that Filipino culture is influenced by Malay influences. The year is 1978, and Arsenio is the author.

Discussion

The local people were animists in their religious beliefs, and they worshipped a variety of deities, including the moon, the stars, and trees, among others. As early as 600 A.D., Chinese trading would be concentrated primarily in the Mindanao region, based on the wares discovered in archeological sites that can be traced back to the T'ang Dynasty (618-907) and which reached its zenith in the 15th and 16th centuries during the Ming Dynasty, when there was a significant increase in pottery import (1368-1644). Because of her existing large geographical area, the Chinese "did not show much interest in the purchase or growth of foreign territory, contenting herself instead with the collecting of tributes from nearby islands in the East as a mark of submission and reverence to the Great Middle Kingdom."⁷

By the eleventh century A.D., the economic activity with Arabs had resulted in the establishment of Islam in Mindanao, and by 1350, the religion had moved farther north. During the year 1521, when Ferdinand Magellan (1480-1521; a Portuguese officer in service to the Spanish Crown) set foot in the Philippine archipelago, the Islamic faith had already taken root in Mindanao, some portions of the central region, and parts of Luzon. Immediately following Magellan's death on Philippine soil that same year, another expedition was launched in 1543 under the leadership of Ruy Lopez de Villalobos (1500-1544), who named the Philippines "Las Islas Felipinas" in 1544 in honor of Crown Prince Phillip II (1527-1598) of Spain, who was born in the Philippines. Another expedition was planned by the Crown Prince in 1565, and Miguel Lopez de Legazpi (1502-1572) was sent to the Philippines, where he was successful in driving the Muslims from the islands of Luzon and the Visayan. The Christian faith was made known and quickly expanded across Spain in accordance with the country's strategy of "Gospel, Gold, and Glory."⁸

Throughout the duration of the occupation, which lasted 333 years, the early Filipinos were socially and psychologically conditioned to live and feel estranged from one another. Consequently, revolutions aiming at achieving independence were doomed to a never-ending cycle of failure. There was little sense of national pride, mostly because there was no promotion of a shared language. Despite the fact that the royal crown had ordered that Spanish be used as a means of communication, the Spanish friars were adamant in their opposition. They saw in an ignorant Filipino who spoke Spanish the potential for a future insurrection. In a country where there are many different languages, the concept of having a common language represented national unity.

The Philippines opened its doors to international commerce in 1834, allowing liberal ideals to enter the country and resulting in significant socio-economic improvements for the Filipino people. With the

commercialization of Philippine agriculture and the associated economic boom, a new rich class has emerged in the country's cities and towns. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 paved the way for the education of rich Filipinos in Europe, a process that continues today. Liberal ideologies gave them with knowledge of national liberty, and as a result, the propaganda movement came to be established. Filipino nationalists were quick to point out the church's powerful influence on politics, referring to the current political condition as *la soberana monacal* (monastic dominance of *frailocracia*) by the Spanish (*frairocracy*). The friars reigned over all of Europe and interfered in all aspects of administration. They were responsible for the whole management of the islands, and as a result, atrocities of the utmost brutality were perpetrated, which ultimately resulted in the Philippine Revolution (1896-1898).

Meanwhile, in other regions of the world, such as Cuba and Puerto Rico, other colonial uprisings against Spain were taking place at the same time as these. Several months after the sinking of a U.S. naval ship in Havana Harbor by Spanish troops in February 1898, the United States formally declared war on Spain. After losing both fights in Cuba and the Philippines, Spain petitioned for peace, which resulted in the Treaty of Paris, which was signed on December 10, 1898, ending the Spanish Civil War. The United States obtained the majority of the Spanish colonies, including Guam, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines, which were unlawfully transferred to the United States for a sum of US \$20 million.⁸

With the arrival of the new colonists, an economic structure was developed that granted them complete ownership of the country's resources. In truth, the Spanish feudal system was not dissolved under the American occupation; rather, tenancy grew more popular as a result of the system of land registration that favored the higher Filipino classes throughout the occupation. With the development of American liberal democracy as the new pattern of the Filipino way of life, the clash between Filipino traditional traditions and the new system would inevitably occur.

A discernible American class of consciousness began to emerge in the social system, which gave priority attention to the elite and encouragement to a new middle class of professionals, while the masses were kept relatively content with a certain measure of socio-economic benefits from the new democratic system. The introduction of western activities into the Filipino culture resulted in a dynamic cultural shift, with each activity establishing a separate niche in the Filipino way of life. Filipinos were forced to conform to the American regime's glitzy newness, which included the imposition of the English language and the introduction of a new system. Aside from that, it refocused the history of religious music on a time when the fox-trot and two-step were highly sought after dances.

A promise of independence was made to the Filipinos in 1916, with the condition that a stable government be built beforehand. It was in 1934 that the United States became the first country to willingly transfer sovereignty over a colony after more than a generation of tutelage over the colony. The Philippines was admitted as a member of the United States Commonwealth (a self-governing body that has voluntarily joined the United States), a step taken by the United States in order to boost commerce in Asia and play a part in Pacific power politics. The idealism of American imperialism might be seen in its desire to replicate in the Philippines her ideas of democratic self-rule and to transform the country into a real democracy.

Some of the schools that had been damaged during the war were re-established, and higher education was made available with the establishment of the University of the Philippines in 1908, which was the first university in the Philippines. Some existing institutions maintained the use of Spanish as the language of education, but the pressure of competition pushed them to relinquish the use of Spanish in favor of the language of instruction in English. So the English language was adopted as the primary medium of teaching in all schools, colleges, and institutions around the world. With around 40 percent of the population proficient in English, the Philippines is the world's third-largest English-speaking nation in terms of population. Antonio Pigafetta describes a celebration thrown to them by a relative of the monarch of Cebu Island in his early work, *Relazione del Primo Viaggio Intorno al Mondo* (Relation of the First Journey Around the World) (Central part of the Philippines).

He wrote:

“Il re ne volse tener seco a cena; li dicessemo non potevamo allora restare. Pigliata la licenza, il principe ne menò seco a casa sua, dove sonavano quattro fanciulle, una de tamburo a modo nostro, ma era posta in terra; un'altra dava con un legno, fatto alquanto grosso nel capo con tela de palma, in due borchie piccate, uno in l'uno, uno in l'altro: l'altra in una borchia grande col medesimo modo: la ultima con due borchiette in mano; dando l'una nell'altra, facevano un soave suono. Tanto a tempo sonavano, che pareva avessero gran ragion del canto. Queste erano assai belle e bianche, quasi come le nostre e così grandi: erano nude, se non che avevano

tela de arbore da la cinta fino al ginocchio, e alcune tutte nude, col picchietto de le orecchie grande, con un cerchietto de legno dentro, che lo tiene tondo e largo; con li capelli grandi e negri, e con uno velo piccolo attorno al capo, e sempre discalze. Il principe ne fece ballare con tre, tutte nude. Merendassemo e da poi venissemo alle navi. Queste borchie sono de metallo e se fanno nella regione del Signio Magno, che è detta la China. Quivi le usano come noi le campane e le chiamano aghon."

The king wanted to stay for supper, but we informed them they would have to go after dinner. Pigliata was let to depart, and the prince escorted us to his residence. A group of four young girls were playing drums, one of whom was on a drum similar to ours but which was on the ground. The second girl was pounding the wood, which was huge on one end and covered with palm fabric, on drums with metal rings and studded with beads, first on one drum and then on the other, until it was completely pounded. The other (female) on a large metal drum from medieval times, and the final with two spherical metal on hand, banging them together to produce a lovely sound, were all there. They had been playing for a long time, and it seemed that they had a compelling motive for continuing to perform. They were really lovely and white, virtually identical to our own, and they were quite tall. Except for those who wore bark clothing that reached their knees, they were barefoot. Some were completely barefoot, with their ears left long and the circle of wood (earrings) that held them round and wired; their hair was long and black, and they wore a small veil around their heads; and they were always barefoot. The prince danced with three more women, all of whom were naked. We ate a quick supper and then headed to the boats to explore the area. It was believed that these metal-studded drums were created in the area of Signio Magno, which was located in what is now China. They utilized bells, much as we do, and referred to them as aghon."⁹

Because of the lack of a melodic instrument, it is possible to infer the advanced rhythmic skill that the indigenous had, as well as the necessary knowledge and comprehension of group playing. This rhythmic intricacy may still be heard in the music of numerous ethnic minority around the nation, which is performed on a variety of indigenous instruments.

Filipino culture has created a diverse range of musical forms and practices that have evolved from the Southeast Asian cultural past as well as the Spanish-American colonial presence in the country. Although this is the case, indigenous and traditional music has been maintained in a number of different places throughout the nation. These behaviors may still be found among indigenous peoples whose cultural practices have been generally unspoiled by or safeguarded from the impact of Western culture and civilization. In order to evade Spanish rule, these native communities either relocated to higher ground or were not immediately approached by the conquerors.

The first mass conducted on the island of Mazzaua, which is situated near Butuan, Mindanao, not only marked the beginning of Roman Catholicism in the Philippines, but it also served as the origin of Western music in the nation, which was significant at the time. At the time, Friar Pedro Valderrama, the Andalusian chaplain of the fleet, was the only priest available to offer mass. The locals were there and participated in the liturgical chanting that was performed by the priest, the sexton, and other Spaniards on that particular day.

When it came to teaching music to the local converts during the early years of colonialism, the Spanish clergy placed a high priority on it. Ramon Santos wrote in an article that Fray Andres de San Agustin made the following observation in 1605, which was cited from Blair and Robertson (1957): "In order to conduct the divine worship, they were to endeavor to have music in all the convents, by teaching the youth not only to sing but also to play the sweetest and best instruments that we use in Europe, so that the new Christians might become very fond of attending the sacred office."

Different religious orders established literacy training centers where young boys were instructed in the medieval quadrivium wherein music, arts, and poetry were taught alongside each other. These religious orders arrived in the Philippines in 1565 with their superior, Father Andres de Urdaneta, and established their first literacy training center (1508-1568). In the early 1700s, subsequent priests of the order who were musically inclined came and began teaching young boys the skills of playing the flute, guitar, violin, and voice, among other instruments.

It wasn't until 1577 that the Franciscan order arrived in the Philippines, where they founded schools and taught local boys academic topics as well as musical fundamentals, such as religious simple songs, organ music, and the use of various instruments. In the churches, the schools were used as a training ground for the choir and orchestra, which sang and played during services. At 1606 in Lumbang, Laguna (55 kilometers south of Manila), Father Juan de Garovillas built a renowned Franciscan seminary, where four hundred lads from

various provinces were recruited and taught in singing and musical instrument playing. The institution is still in operation today. Upon completion of their training, these lads were returned to their respective parishes so that they may be engaged as school music instructors, church singers, or orchestra musicians. There is much to be said about the exclusivity of training boys as choir members, which is still done today, with the Vienna Boys Choir acting as a superb illustration of what I mean. In pre-Christian days, boys were called to sing chants in different Jewish religious rituals, and this practice may be traced back to that time period. With this mostly patriarchal culture, the idea may very likely be derived from Saint Paul's dictum, *mulieres in ecclesiis taceant*, which states that women should keep their voices down in churches.¹⁰

In 1581, the Jesuit order, which was well-known for being excellent educators, came in the Islands. In 1601 they founded the College of San Jose, which still exists today. Through the production of plays and the presenting of literary-musical events, the college promoted the arts of music and literature. Music and music-making were highly regarded among them, and individuals from outside the Jesuit order were sometimes employed to educate their pupils in piano and violin performance and composition.

The Dominican Order, which arrived in the Philippines from Cadiz, Spain, in 1587, built the Santo Domingo Church in Manila a year after their arrival, making it the oldest church in the country. This order's priests ran a music school inside the walls of the Santo Domingo Church in Manila, which served as a home for young musicians. The Church is reported to have been equipped with the finest organ in the world, which was imported from Amerua, Spain. The arrival in Manila in 1581 of Asia's first bishop, Monsignor Domingo de Salazar (1512-1594), who was also a Dominican, brought with him a significant collection of musical compositions and other instruments from Europe, which he donated to the city.

The Recollects, who arrived in Spain in 1606, are most renowned for the work of Father Diego Cera (1762-1834), an organ builder and curate of the Las Pias Parish, which the order constructed in 1795 and is still in use today. Between the years 1816 and 1824, Father Cera worked in this parish to construct the Bamboo Organ, which is the only organ of its sort still in existence. Natural disasters caused some damage to the instrument, and it was transferred to the Johannes Klais Orgelbau GmbH & Co. KG in Bonn, Germany, in 1973 for a comprehensive repair by the company. It returned to its homeland in 1975, marking the beginning of the inaugural Bamboo Organ Festival, which is now an annual event that has grown into a worldwide event.

Introduction of Keyboard Instruments

In a communication (October 21, 2009) with the first Filipino pipe organ builder in the Philippines, Cealwyn Tagle (b.1971), it was affirmed that the first keyboard instrument brought in the country was the "Realejo" or the Positiv Organ - a single manual instrument with limited number of stops (usually with four stops). The first bishop of Manila, Bishop Salazar (a Dominican) brought with him from Spain the Realejo when he arrived in Manila in 1581.⁹ But it was probably the Franciscans who first taught the Filipinos to build organs. The oldest surviving organ in the Philippines is the San Agustin organ completed in 1810 with some parts dating back to 1770's. The organ was entirely constructed on site.

The earliest fortepiano was constructed by Bartolomeo Cristofori (1655-1731) in 1698. It is listed in the inventory of music instruments from year 1700 as "arpicimbalo che fa il piano e il forte" (a harpsichord that plays softly and loudly). This new invention underwent extensive changes in mechanism as Cristofori himself saw a number of problems arising from the demand of a virtuosic playing which requires swift repetition of notes, as well as the preference for a fuller, more sustained sound.

The newly designed pianos were acquired by the royalties in different parts of Europe and with this growing interest for the instrument, the demand to reproduce the keyboard was consequential. Pianos came into widespread among the aristocracy in 1770's with the importation of the "square pianos" (piano de mesa) from England. Its rapid acceptance was due in-part to the long standing popularity of the clavichord in Spain. It was naturally preferred in palaces, homes and churches because contrary to the clavichord, the sound it produced was more robust and cleaner.

The pianos were the favourite solo instrument of the 19th century in the country. In Manila, pianos coming from Europe were purchased to adorn the spacious living rooms of the affluent. Pianos from manufacturers such as Pleyel Wolff, Steinway and Sons, M.F. Rachals (existed from years 1832-1932), Grotrian-Steinweg, Zeiter und Winkelmann (began producing in the year 1837) along with the harp, were a common sight in the first half of the 19th century. Almost all young ladies were taught the piano or harp and were called upon to entertain visitors with their performance.

Piano production in the Philippines began in the mid 20th century with manufacturers like Lyric and Trebel established. A foremost brand was P.E. Domingo and Company. It started manufacturing pianos in the mid 1950's and ceased to operate in 1979. The piano "Trebel" founded by Roberto del Rosario was established in 1962. By 1990's, the company were exporting their pianos to Australia, United Kingdom, Thailand, and Singapore. It also served as local distributor of pianos like the German Steinway and Sons, Baldwin pianos from the United States and Austria's Boesendorfer.

Another local manufacturer - the Lyric Piano Company, founded by Severo Panganiban in 1965 started out as supplier of piano parts to other piano manufacturers in the Philippines. Mostly trained by Japanese technicians visiting the country, some of the company's craftsmen were sent to Germany to further hone their production skills. Three years later, the company started manufacturing pianos for domestic market and began exporting local pianos by 1975. In 2006 Lyric piano closed down its manufacturing division, the inviability of the company's local production was brought about by the cheap pianos produced in China. The company now thrives mainly on distributing imported pianos. History dictates the coming of priests from various religious orders did not only mark the spread of Christianity but the start of the natives' musical education as well. The various religious orders that came to the Philippines carried out an educational system, teaching the natives how to read and write in Spanish, arithmetic, and added music to their curriculum.

The first church erected in the Philippines was the church of the Augustinian order completed in 1571 (the present San Augustin Church in Manila built from 1587 to 1606 is the third; the two previous churches were both brought down by accidental fire one after the other). This is the very first religious order to evangelize the Philippines.¹³ In the early days, convents also served as centers for musical training, hence it can be gathered that the early Filipinos obtained their first Western musical education within the walls of the Augustinian convent. The boys were not only taught how to read and write, but their music curriculum included the art of playing the flute, guitar, harp, and violin. The choir which led to the establishment of "Colegio de Niños Tiples de la Santa Iglesia Catedral" (Boy's Choir College) in 1742¹⁵. The boys' training included courses in solfeggio, vocalization, organ, and stringed instruments. Its curriculum was later adapted to the Real Conservatorio de Música y Declamación in Madrid, founded in 1830. The college was one of the pioneering institutions in music in the early times around the world. Its establishment was even earlier than the Conservatoire National du Musique (1784) in Paris and the Conservatoire Royal du Musique (1813) in Belgium.¹⁶ Parts of the program were courses in vocalization, harmony, violin, organ, and later, the piano.

Some of the noted graduates of the school were pianists Antonio Garcia (1865-1919) and Fulgencio Tolentino (1872-1940), Maximo Nazario (accomplished pianist), Manuel Hipolito (composer and pianist), composer Ladislao Bonus (1854-1908) and Marcelo Adonay (1848-1926).¹⁷ The American liberation of the Philippines from the Japanese saw the end of the school's glorious tradition. The war in 1945 left the school in total destruction and was never rebuilt.

Conclusion

An institution exclusively for girls was founded in 1750, the Santa Rosa College. It was however during the American regime (1898-1945) that the college opened its music department. One of the most important schools of music however is founded on the liberal and progressive North American ideas of a public school for the masses, the University of the Philippines, established in 1908. The roots of many pillars of Philippine music could be traced to the University's College of Music with prominent figures like Abelardo, Santiago, Santos, and Maceda.

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