

UC Irvine

UC Irvine Previously Published Works

Title

KULINTANG/KOLINTANG MUSIC - INTRODUCTION

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/07t5h63t>

Journal

ASIAN MUSIC, 27(2)

ISSN

0044-9202

Author

GARFIAS, R

Publication Date

1996

Copyright Information

This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution License, available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

Peer reviewed



Introduction

Author(s): Robert Garfias

Source: *Asian Music*, Vol. 27, No. 2 (Spring - Summer, 1996), pp. 1-2

Published by: University of Texas Press

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/834484>

Accessed: 16-05-2017 22:14 UTC

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <http://about.jstor.org/terms>



University of Texas Press is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *Asian Music*

INTRODUCTION

by
Robert Garfias

It is difficult to believe that seemingly a few short years ago, the music of the Muslim peoples of the Philippines was little known outside that region. Prior to World War II, of the scant number of travelers who had visited the region, few had bothered to report anything touching on the music. What they provided was only enough information to suggest that this little-known region of the world had clear cultural links to the peoples and cultures of Indonesia. One could only wonder at what the music might be. One of the pioneers in the study of the music of the Philippines was José Maceda. After studying piano in Paris up until World War II, he returned to the Philippines and devoted himself to fieldwork in the Maguindanao region of Mindanao. His dissertation, *The Music of the Maguindanao in the Philippines*, the first serious written study of the music of this region, was submitted to the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1963. Somewhat later, Ricardo Trimillos followed with his detailed study of Sulu Archipelago practice on the island of Jolo, *Tradition and Repertoire in the Cultivated Music of the Taosug of Sulu, Philippines*, submitted as a doctoral dissertation also at UCLA in 1972.

My own involvement in this music occurred in 1966. With the assistance of the JDR 3rd Fund, I went to the Philippines to assist in the establishment of a national folk and traditional music archive there. In the course of this project, I was able to film and record performances, in addition to those of almost all regions of the Philippines, in most of the regions of the Philippines *kulintang* culture as well. This trip gave me the opportunity to film and record in the Maranao and Maguindanao regions of Mindanao Island (see the map below, on page 80) as well as in the Sulu Islands, from Zamboanga south to Bongao and Sanga-Sanga, just a few miles off the coast of Borneo.

With a view to eventually pursuing the study of this music at the University of Washington where I was then teaching, I brought a set of *kulintang* instruments back to the university. In 1968, I invited, as a visiting faculty member, Usopay Cadar, a graduate in fisheries from Mindanao State University in Marawi and an accomplished *kulintang* musician. As a part of the graduate training program in ethnomusicology, Usopay Cadar began the teaching of *kulintang* performance technique preparing the students to undertake the analysis of this music from within the culture. The analysis of *kulintang* music as a result of knowing actual performance techniques offered clear insight into the music, not as an object musical phenomenon, but as an integral aspect of the Maranao culture. Usopay Cadar and I published an article, "Some Principles of Formal Variation in the *Kolintang*

Music of the Maranao" (1974), which was a first attempt to understand the music from the performers' vantage point.

It is indeed heartening to see this set of articles appear in print. This is the combined work of several scholars, two of them accomplished and recognized musicians from the traditions which they represent. Its publication makes a major contribution to the base of knowledge of the musics of the world. And to the knowledge of the kulintang traditions of the Philippines, it is an addition of unparalleled importance.

Most of the articles included here are carefully detailed analyses and explications of aspects of the performance tradition. Usopay Cadar's piece, "The Maranao Kolintang and its Journey in America," is a unique departure from these. After his numerous and exquisitely crafted writings on the formal structure of Maranao music, Cadar has here turned his attention to the odyssey of kulintang music in the United States. While not yet reaching the general level of popularity of Indonesian *gamelan* music in this country, and the number of kulintang ensembles coming nowhere near the number of Javanese and Balinese gamelans in universities and in private groups, nevertheless, the number of kulintang ensembles and people who play in them has reached a sum unimagined when all this began more than 20 years ago.

What Cadar's essay underlines is that differences in the goals of the performers, in this case students and scholars, in contrast to community ensembles can yield vast differences in the authenticity of the ensembles' performance. Increasingly, as the "world music" movement takes hold in this country and as new performers see the music as abstract and separate from its originating cultural context, we would do well to revisit these thoughts.

With the appearance of these articles, a little more than 30 years after Maceda's dissertation on Maguindanao music and my own ethnographic film and recording survey of the region, we now have a substantive body of published research on the area. Research will and must continue on this music. This body of thorough and well-organized research represents a milestone in the addition of new knowledge to this important and, heretofore, only thinly researched music tradition.

University of California, Irvine

Reference

- Cadar, Usopay, and Robert Garfias
1974 "Some Principles of Formal Variation in the Kolintang Music of the Maranao," *Ethnomusicology* 18/1:43-55.
(Reprinted in this volume.)