

Music Translation: Giving Back to the People their Rich Musical Heritage

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Abstract - Philippine traditional music is undoubtedly a very important part of our cultural heritage, and it is endangered of extinction; the need to take action is urgent. How to bring these music to the classroom and eventually to give back to the Filipino people their rich musical heritage provided the impetus for this research. With this vision-mission in mind, a series of field researches was conducted in Bontoc, Sadanga Mountain Province. Another study was also done on Mindanao Traditional Music, particularly on the Maranao, Maguindanao, Higaonon, Tiruray, Manobo, Bagobo and T'Boli, after an intensive training on Field Music Research at the University of the Philippines, with fieldwork practicum in Sadanga Mountain Province. To speed up the use of research findings, the Kariala Center for Music Traditions, Incorporated was founded. The following music materials were evolved in the Center: production of musical instruments, workbooks, librettos for musical plays/ operettas, ethnic-based compositions, tapes, CDs, VCDs and DVDs. These materials reached the classrooms and the performing groups through national, regional and local workshops, through

music, concerts theatre performances, and through competitions.

Keywords - field music research, music translations

INTRODUCTION

“Giving back to people their rich musical heritage” is a grand vision worth working for. Our long exposure to western music, with three centuries of Spanish colonization followed by a half-century of which an American educational system has been instituted throughout the country resulted to our lack of appreciation for our country’s diverse musical heritage. How to bring these music to the classroom and to give back to the Filipino people their rich musical heritage provided the impetus for music research.

The vision was adopted from Zoltan Kodaly, a world famous Hungarian ethnomusicologist and music educator. Kodaly’s fieldwork with Hungarian traditional music and his creativity as a composer allowed him insights into the real meaning of music in daily life. Kodaly’s philosophy was premised on his belief that music is the rock upon which culture is built and that; children are the means of reviving and developing culture. Kodaly’s time frame was a hundred years. The work begun in the 1940s and researchers around the world who studied the Kodaly music system in its setting have observed that the country has come close enough in achieving this vision (Choksy 1974). This paper is essentially a report on music researches, experiments and development of materials and strategies for music translation to schools, to the community and to the global community.

DISCOVERY OF KNOWLEDGE THROUGH FIELD RESEARCHES

The Bontoc Experience. In 1993, the author was a recipient of a research scholarship awarded by the Southeast Asia Ministers of Education Organization (SEAMEO) Project on Archaeology and Fine Arts. A total of nine research scholars coming from the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand, with three scholars per country were trained

at the University of the Philippines with fieldwork in Sadanga, Mountain Province under Dr. Jose Maceda, the only Ethnomusicologist in Southeast Asia at that time.

The researchers were immersed in the culture of the Bontoc of Sadanga, Mountain Province for a period of six weeks observing, interviewing and participating in cultural events. We investigated in detail the contexts of music making. The hands-on training on field music research revealed to us the intricacies of qualitative research. We understood the reason why there was a need to stay long enough to see a full cycle of an activity, or a set of events, happening in a course of a calendar year. The participant-observation and interview of key informants, the collection and analysis of written and non written sources were experienced by the team. In that summer of 1983, we participated in a “chono,” a second stage wedding for the wealthy, a curing rite, a ritual for rain, peace pact making and several agricultural rituals. We wrote field notes on the processes of the rituals. We recorded several songs such as Fanayan (epic), Salidummay, Ilala-Ilalay, Ogayam, Ading, Dongadong, Dangdang-ay, Wigwigan, and Dango, songs for peace-pact making, Sukaidan, prayer for rain, and many others.

We also studied the social structure of the Bontoc. We recorded musical instruments, such as the “Gangsa” (flat gongs), the Kolutong (bamboo zither), the Diwdiw-as, (bamboo pan pipes), the Sageypo, (a set of five pipes), and the Aroding (jaw’s harp). We got the tunings of the instruments, the manner of which they were played, and the people who played them. We got pictures of the instruments and the musicians. The new discoveries that I found in Sadanga gave me a “culture shock” for I never imagined that such types of music existed. In 1986, I went back to the research site to revalidate the data collected and to gather more information.

Mindanao Researches. The Mindanao researches were done in a series of field work in a span of ten years, from 1987-1997. Researches were conducted among the Bagobo of Malasila, Cotabato, the Maguindanao of Cotabato City and Datu Paglas, the Manobo of Magpet, North Cotabato and from Kulaman Valley, Sultan Kudarat, the Maranao from Lanao del Sur and Lanao del Norte, the T’boli from Lake Sebu, Surallah, the Tiruray from

South Upi and Bugawas, Dinaig, province of Maguindanao. The Islamized, who are the Maranao and the Maguindanao have rituals such as Kandatotato (Crowning of a sultan), kasumang sa walay (house-warming), "Ipatubad" (baptismal rites) and "Kashawing" (rice ritual).

The "Lumads" (indigenous people) who are the Bagobo, the Manobo, the T'boli and the Tiruray have rituals similar to that of the Bontoc of Sadanga. They have rituals of the life cycle, agriculture, peace-pact making and curing of the sick.

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study documented the rich musical heritage through music translation

METHODOLOGY

The ethnomusicological research method was employed in the researches. Ethnomusicology is a field in music that draws its intellectual roots and methods from musicology as well as from anthropology. Ethnomusicology aims to understand music in the context of human behavior.

The investigation of music in its natural social contexts required direct and extensive observation and interaction with the people involved in these practices. Rituals of agriculture, the life cycle, the crowning of a sultan, curing rites, peace-pact making and ablution rites after a head-hunting trip were observed. Participant-observation and interview of key informants were used. These were recorded in field notes, tapes and photography.

Vocal and instrumental music were gathered through actual performance in rituals, festivals and music settings. Others were gathered through arranged recording. The key informants who were usually the epic singers and the traditional priests explained in detail the context of music – making after every performance. Pictures of musicians and the people who participated in the rituals were taken as they were performing. Transcription and translation of song texts were done with the help of key informants and teacher-transcribers who were native speakers.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Knowledge Discovery. Results of findings revealed that the musical form of indigenous music is similar to that of the Southeast Asian cultures. The music of the cultural groups is tied closely to their community life. Music to them is not for entertainment. Rather, music has functions that are meaningful and indispensable to the tribes. The vocal and instrumental genres are identified according to their functions, which are usually connected with activities of the life cycle, agriculture, peace-pact making and curing of the sick. Instruments used in rituals were the gong ensembles. These instruments were considered sacred and were of high value.

The non-ritual songs include friendship songs, songs for entertainment and for merry-making, lullabies, hunting songs, courting songs, love songs, epics and children's play songs. There is vocal music that are pleasant to hear and are value-laden, which could be excellent materials of teaching music. There are instrumental pieces that are pleasant to the ears and are easy to learn. These too, could be excellent materials for teaching music. Ethnic-based compositions proved to be effective channels for gradually developing appreciation for traditional music by students. Music bridges cultures and can pave the way to peace, understanding & development.

Developing music materials. To speed up the use of research findings, the Kariala Ethniko Center for Music Traditions, Incorporated, a cultural service institution was founded by the researcher on April 9, 1994. Its mission statement is "to give back to the people of Mindanao their rich musical heritage through concerts, workshops, symposia, participation in cultural events and broad people's movement for social transformation and nationalism, and to patronize Mindanao culture locally, nationally and internationally." Aside from developing music materials, the group gave musical concerts, workshops, symposia, and participated in cultural events, including competitions organized by the National Competitions for Young Artists.

The problem on how to develop traditional music materials, so that they will become attractive to children became an impetus for heavy experimentation. The researcher is indebted to Dr. Felicidad Prudente and Dr. Kristina Benitez of the Philippine Women's University who

tutored her on how to transcribe music and how to formulate number notation so that the pieces could become attractive and easy to learn.

The following materials evolved: Acquisition /Production of Musical Instruments. The Center purchased musical instruments to learn the pieces collected from the field. When the time was ripe for sharing the knowledge discovered from the field, the Center indulged in the production of musical instruments, using cheap materials which were affordable to the learners. The Kariala has produced “saronay,” an instrument with eight rectangular plates used in training children on how to play pieces of the kulintang; the “Ahong Tagungguan,” Manobo hanging gongs, drums, small gongs, flutes and bamboo xylophones for educational purposes.

Workbooks. The Center prepared pieces on song materials and instrumental materials for tutorial purposes. In 2004, the “Pandayan sa Kulintangan: A Training Manual on the Mindanao Gong Ensembles” was produced with the help of the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Librettos. Three librettos which were operettas in three acts were produced. These were “Laarni, Usa Ka Handuraw by Tejero, H.S. and Hamm, M.J; Prinsessa Pinaalong, by Tejero, H.; and Maria Cristina: A Legend of the Falls by Tejero, H. and Lluch. E. These librettos were used by the Center in producing the musical plays and giving out shows to the different places in Mindanao.

Ethnic-based choral composition. The researcher has composed several ethnic-based compositions, but the two most popular musics are the Arimaonga and Mamayug Aken. *Arimaonga* means “Lion of the Sky.” The Maranaos believed that whenever there is a lunar eclipse, Arimaonga attempts to swallow the moon, and so people have to make all sorts of noise to drive it away. This piece was the winner of the 1982 NAMCYA Composition Award for Children’s Choir, and was published in the NAMCYA-RSB Group of Singers and in NAMCYA Children’s Choir Compilation, Series II, 1983. It was popularized by the Loboc Children’s Choir of Bohol, the Mandaluyong Children’s Choir and the University of the Philippines Cherubims and Seraphims in their national and world tours.

Mamayog Aken means “My Darling.” This song is classified as a “Bayog” to the Maranao, but it is also found in the famous epic of

the Maranao, the Darangen. The Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology popularized this song in their national tour and Asia tours.

Tapes, CDs, VCDs and DVDs were among the materials developed by the Center.

MUSIC TRANSLATION IN SCHOOLS AND COMMUNITY

The Kodaly-Based Learning Continuum. Experience tells us that the music materials for classroom use should be easy enough to play and sing. This will help the young learners to respond positively and to participate more actively. In choosing songs from the researched materials, the simplest songs in terms of melody, rhythm, form, with lyrical value which could contribute to child development were selected. Since folk/ traditional music is a living art, the songs could fit well into a systematic scheme for teaching the concepts and skills of music to children. Using Kodaly's analysis, songs were analyzed and classified according to mode, scale, and form, and arranged into a learning continuum, regardless of culture. The Learning Continuum with 143 folk/ traditional and composed songs was adopted by Region X during the researcher's incumbency as Regional Music Supervisor from 2000-2005.

Instrumental Music & Vocal Music. The instrumental music found in the workbooks were disseminated through workshops. Schools used these materials during school performances and in national competitions and festivals sponsored by the National Music Competitions for Young Artists. Some groups brought these outside of the Philippines. For example, some music materials were used by the Kaliwat Theater Group of Davao City, the Integrated Performing Arts Guild of the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology and the Sining Kambayoka of Mindanao State University- Marawi City in their world tours. These music were also utilized by the researcher when she was the artistic director and head of delegation of the Kariala Ethniko Center for Music Traditions; particularly during the 9th International Festival on Folk Music and Dances, in Babylon and Baghdad, Iraq in 1997.

Ethnic-based compositions. The need to create new works is recognized by music educators to be of pedagogical value. In the Philippine situation, ethnic-based compositions are proving to be an effective channel for gradually developing an appreciation of indigenous music in students and the community. This sense of appreciation for ethnic-based compositions could be felt among competing choirs and their audiences in the yearly competitions of the National Music competitions for Young Artists, which, since its founding in 1973, required choirs to sing such songs.

The researcher has composed several ethnic-based compositions, but the two most popular music are the Arimaonga, (Lion of the Sky) that won first place in the 1982 National Music Competitions for Young Artists in celebration of its 10th anniversary, and “Mamayog Aken” composed for the Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology. Arimaonga was sung by the best choirs in the country, such as the University of the Philippines Cherubim and Seraphim, the Mandaluyong Children’s Choir and the Loboc Children’s Choir of Bohol in their world tours, while Mamayog Aken was sung by the MSU-IIT Octava during their Asian tour.

SHARING RESEARCHES WITH INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

The International Consultative Workshop on Researches and Documentation of Ethnic Music: Philippines and Indonesia. In 1986, the International Consultative Workshop on Researches and Documentation of Ethnic Music was held in UP Los Baños. Three country reports were shared from Indonesia, Philippines and Thailand. The Philippine’s Country Report entitled “*The Music of the Bontoc of Sadanga, Mountain Province*” was jointly presented by Doris Salcedo of Xavier University and me. The report was published by the SEAMEO Regional Center for Archeology and Fine Arts of Bangkok, Thailand in “Final Report, Consultative Workshop on Researches and Documentation, Volume II: Country Reports.

The UNESCO co-production program. In 1994, the Cultural Center of the Philippines nominated me to participate in the 15th Meeting of Experts on Asia/Pacific Music Materials Co-production Programme

held in Tokyo, Japan. There were 18 participants from the 18 member-states of UNESCO who produced the 110-minute video tape and a guidebook on "The Musical Instruments of Asia and the Pacific," MCP Series 5. I was the presenter and producer of *"The Tagungguan Hanging Gongs of the Manobo of Kulaman Valley, Cotabato, Philippines."* This material was distributed all over the member states of UNESCO.

The 13th International Kodaly Symposium. On August 17-23, 1997, the Kodaly Society of the Philippines hosted the 13th Kodaly Symposium, with the theme: "East Meets West through Music: The Universality of Kodaly." It was held at the Culture Center of the Philippines. Among the international presenters, three music educators from the Philippines presented their paper: Dr. Felicidad Prudente from the University of the Philippines read her paper entitled: *"Philippine Music Research and the Kodaly Connection,"* Dr. Ramon Santos, also from the University of the Philippines presented *"The Possibility of Adapting the Kodaly Method to the Learning of World Music"* and Dr. Helen S. Tejero of the Department of Education presented her paper, entitled: *"The Use of Kodaly in the Instruction of Traditional Vocal and Instrumental Music."* In that symposium, the Philippine traditional instruments were introduced to the participants in a workshop.

IMPLICATIONS

The integration of the ethnic cultures into a national culture continues to be a rough and rocky road, as observed by Dr. Nicanor Tiongson. Since the school is the formal mechanism to transmit culture, it is suggested that the teaching of music must be among the priority subjects in Basic Education. The following research excerpts will shed light on the benefits of a strong music education:

One strong reason Kodaly was able to convince the Ministry of Education in Hungary to implement the music education system was the quality of music instruction and the transfer of learning effect of music to other subject areas. An unexpected result of daily music instruction via the Kodaly Method has a marked improvement of achievement in other academic areas (Choksy 1974).

Dickinson, in his article, "Music and the Mind" confirmed the "transfer of learning effect" of music to other academic areas in the following results of studies (www.musicaladvantage.com):

Music and Science: In a study of the ability of fourteen year-old science students in seventeen countries, the top three countries were Hungary, the Netherlands and Japan. All three countries have a strong music curriculum from kindergarten through high school.

Music and Math: In an elementary school in Seattle, it was observed that children who were good in music excelled in math. Research emerging from the cognitive sciences gives us information to explain the connection. As a result of technology which allows us to see the human brain while it is in the process of thinking, we can observe for example, that when people listen to melodies with a variety of pitch and timbre, the right hemisphere of the brain is activated. It also “lights up” when people play music. When, however, people learn to read music, understand key signatures, notations and other details of the scores, and are able to follow the sequence of notes, then the left hemisphere “lights up.” Significantly, it is activated in the same area that is involved in analytical and mathematical thinking.

Music and Language: A report reveals that the schools which produced the highest academic achievement in language in the United States are spending 20 to 30% of the day on the arts, with special emphasis on music. Included are St. Augustine Bronx Elementary School, which, as it was about to fail in 1984, implemented an intensive music program. After the implementation, 90% of the students are reading at or above grade level.

Music and other subject areas: Data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988 showed that music participants received more academic honors and awards than non-music students, and that the percentage of music participants receiving As, As/Bs and Bs was higher than the percentage of non-participants receiving those grades.

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