

Audiovisual Ethnography of Philippine Music: A Process-oriented Approach

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ABSTRACT

Audiovisual documentation has been an important part of ethnomusicological endeavors, but until recently it was treated primarily as a tool of preservation and/or documentation that supplements written ethnography, albeit there are a few notable exceptions. The proliferation of inexpensive video equipment has encouraged the unprecedented number of scholars and students in ethnomusicology to be involved in filmmaking, but its potential as a methodology has not been fully explored.

As a small step to redefine the application of audiovisual media, Dr. Usopay Cadar, my teacher in Philippine music, and I produced two films: one on Maranao *kulintang* music and the other on Maranao culture in general, based on the audiovisual footage we collected in 2008. This short essay describes how the screenings of these films were organized in March 2013 for the diverse audiences in the Philippines, and what types of reactions and interactions transpired during the screenings. These screenings were organized both to obtain feedback about the content of the films from the caretakers and stakeholders of the documented tradition and to create a venue for interactions and collaborations to discuss the potential of audiovisual ethnography.

Drawing from the analysis of the current project, I propose to regard film not as a fixed product but as a living and organic site that is open to commentaries and critiques, where changes can be made throughout the process. In this perspective, 'filmmaking' refers to the entire process of research, filming, editing and post-production activities.

Keywords: filmmaking, gongs, music, Maranao, audiovisual documentation

INTRODUCTION

Although I have been involved in *kulintang*, one aspect of Philippine music, for more than three decades, my research activities in the Philippines have been

comparatively limited. I first learned how to play the kulintang in the US with Danongan Kalanduyan and Usopay Cadar (Maguindanaon and Maranao, respectively), two musicians who were brought from Mindanao Island to teach the music at the University of Washington in Seattle and later became ethnomusicologists themselves. I was initially drawn to kulintang mainly due to my prior experiences in percussion instruments, with no specific interest in Philippine culture to speak of. I learned the basics of playing the instruments with Kalanduyan in the late 1970s through the early 1980s as a student in ethnomusicology in one of the applied music courses, and later the finer aspects of kulintang performance since the 1990s as a member of various performing groups in North America, led by Cadar and Kalanduyan as well as others.

A sustained association with my two teachers as their accompanist, friend, and colleague has provided an intimate and inspiring context for me to learn music, in its technical and emotive aspects alike. Performances with them at various venues gave me invaluable experiences as an accompanist, with ample opportunities to meet and befriend talented and aspiring Filipino musicians and others in the Filipino communities in North America. These experiences have been the basis for my more academic interest in kulintang music and field research in Mindanao.

Even before my first trip to the Philippines, I wrote a master's thesis on one aspect of Maguindanaon kulintang music, based on Kalanduyan's performance in the US ("The role of the *gandingan*"). The aim of my thesis was to identify musical characteristics of the four musical modes (*sinulog*, *duyog*, *tidtu*, *binalig*) in the Maguindanaon repertoire and the parameter of modal improvisation. The choice of this topic was academically based but my desire to be a better player was also a major factor in selecting the topic. Kalanduyan is truly a phenomenal musician, and I remember being mesmerized by his technical virtuosity and imagination. The thesis project involved extensive transcription and analysis of the pieces played by Kalanduyan in a controlled studio setting. My desire to conduct ethnographic research in Mindanao grew as my familiarity of the musical structure increased. I consulted on the possibility of field research in Mindanao with Kalanduyan and Cadar, both of whom were enthusiastic and supportive about my plan. Cadar had acquired his own doctoral degree in 1980 with a dissertation on Maranao vocal music ("Context and style"), and when I defended my master's thesis in 1983, he served as my academic adviser and a member of the evaluation committee. I wanted to continue my studies in the doctoral program with a focus on Philippine music, but when I was beginning to formulate a research plan in Mindanao, Benigno "Ninoy" Aquino was assassinated at the Manila airport. As the entire nation became volatile, extended fieldwork in

Mindanao was not a viable option. I had no other choice but to search another site for my doctoral research and ended up in South India, my other area of interest.

Despite this unexpected turn of events, I have been involved in kulintang music, retaining much of my initial excitement over it, first as a player, and later (especially after acquiring my PhD in 1992) as an ethnomusicologist interested in the relationship between music and identity and as a faculty member of the research department at the National Museum of Ethnology (Minpaku, Japanese abbreviation hereafter) to introduce Philippine culture to the general public in Japan.

Although I have so far made research trips to the Philippines four times (1993, 1998, 2002, 2008), the periods of my stay were between three and six weeks, a far cry from the extensive fieldwork required for a substantive work, in which researchers live with the people under study and share their daily activities for an extended period of time, learning their language and lifeways. My limited research activities in the Philippines are partly due to the political situation in Mindanao, which makes the kind of research just mentioned a remote possibility.

Apart from my interest in Philippine music, I have also been involved in the production of ethnographic and documentary films since I joined Minpaku in 1996 and have produced more than 30 such films on various genres of performing arts from diverse locations (such as shadow puppet theater of Cambodia, drumming ensembles of Japan and North America, double-reed instruments from many places, and gong ensembles from Cambodia and the Philippines including *kulintang*). These films have been made with funding and logistical support from Minpaku, which prides itself in producing films of their own and has the experienced staff and up-to-date facility to continue such activity.

AUDIOVISUAL DOCUMENTATION AT MINPAKU

Minpaku produces ethnographic video programs (called *videotech*) on a wide range of topics, which can be viewed at our audiovisual stations (see Fig. 1). Approximately 600 programs are available at any given time for viewing, most of which can also be rented for educational and research purposes. The topics are wide and diverse, such as those on subsistence, trade, religious ceremonies and festivals, life-cycle rituals, manufacturing objects, and individual titles include cooking kangaroos in Australia, bullfighting on a small island in Japan, village funeral in Yunnan, China, and manufacturing a long neck lute in Okinawa. The video programs are literally the most visible portions of our activities in audiovisual documentation, but we also accumulate and archive an enormous amount of footage that is not incorporated



Figure 1. Videotech booth at the National Museum of Ethnology. *Photo by Terada Yoshitaka.*

into video programs. For example, an all-night performance is documented in totality, even when only a small segment of the event is used in the program. In recent years, we have tried to make some of these hitherto “unused” materials available in the form of multimedia programs. Full-time faculty members of the Museum are eligible for proposing filming projects, several of which are selected annually, depending on the budget and priority of the given year.

I am an ethnomusicologist by trade and admittedly I have no specific training in visual anthropology, but I realized from my hands-on experiences of making films at Minpaku for the past 14 years that filmmaking has a great potential of doing much more than simply recording and preserving audiovisual aspects of performing arts as this medium is still frequently perceived to do, and that the scope of its potential is yet to be fully explored. In this short essay, I would like to combine two of my areas of interest to examine various uses and applications of audiovisual media in studying, documenting, and sharing the music and in creating a venue for interactions and collaborations.

At the outset, let me state my general stance on filmmaking. I regard film not as a fixed product but as a living and organic site that is open to commentaries and critiques, where changes can be made throughout the process. In this perspective, ‘filmmaking’ refers to the entire process of research, filming, editing and post-production activities.¹ My definition of audiovisual documentation is diametrically opposite to documentary films produced by TV stations (such as BBC and NHK of Japan) or professional media companies. In such programs, when the topic is about

performing arts, their purpose is to introduce the general audience to the performing arts genre, a human story about the determinations and challenges of those individuals involved in performing arts, or a combination of both.

In TV documentaries, the basic outline or narrative thread is determined first, and after shooting, according to what is needed to tell that story, the editing consists essentially of matching the suitable audiovisual images to predetermined scripts. Interviews are conducted in a similar fashion, to augment the narrative story. The shooting in the location proceeds as if to find the right pieces for a jigsaw puzzle. In this sense, a meaning is attached *a priori* to a particular footage: the shape of the piece is predetermined and one only needs to find what fits the unoccupied space perfectly. The format of telling a story is identical, denying other ways of sensing and interpreting the raw materials as they unfold. In this sense, the story subjugates and limits the potential of the film footage. I find this format of filmmaking painfully restrictive, and end products appear remarkably similar to one another, regardless of the topic, in terms of the types and manners of information provided and overall emotional impact. In fact, dissatisfaction over the standardized format and editing of such programs triggered my own involvement in filmmaking.²

FILMING IN MINDANAO

Usopay Cadar, my teacher in Maranao kolintang music, and I went to the Philippines in 2008 with the film crew from our Museum. This was part of the project to renew our music gallery, which opened in March 2010. For this new gallery, we decided to focus on gongs as one of the four main instrument types. I wanted to include Philippine gong traditions, not only due to my personal research interest in them but also because Southeast Asian music was still often represented mainly (and sometimes solely) by Balinese and central Javanese gamelans in Japan. In 2008, for the period of three weeks, we filmed performances and manufacturing of gongs among Kalingas and Maranaos (see Fig. 2).³

The filming project was restricted by security concerns. For example, when we visited villages around Lake Lanao, we were allowed to stay only half a day for each village. Although we were protected by a dozen fully armed security guards from the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Cadar's family members who were also armed with rifles and pistols, we were informed that staying overnight at villages was too risky as kidnappings for ransom were rampant. Because of the limitation of our movement and time, we asked villagers in Taraka and the surrounding area to gather in Cadar's family house and play music for us. While this was the occasion pre-arranged by us for documentation, and therefore not the "natural" and "organic"



Figure 2. Film shooting in Taraka, Lanao del Sur, Mindanao (March 2008). *Photo by Terada Yoshitaka.*

context for kulintang performance such as a wedding, the site of filming became much like a traditional social gathering to welcome back those who have been away for a long time (“The role of kolintang” 93). It was the first visit by Cadar to his home village in six years, and many relatives and friends came to greet him and participated in the performance. Cadar was asked to play with his relatives and villagers, which we documented, and I was also asked to join them for a couple of pieces.

We participated in music-making for a different reason when we were filming in the Maranao diasporic community in Baguio. Obviously, there was no regular music activity in this community as the instruments were assembled from multiple owners and the wooden stand for the kulintang gongs had to be made on the spot. The kulintang they managed to get for the occasion only had the first five of the eight gongs required for a set. Sadly, the other three had been sold individually for financial reasons. The kulintang player, in standing position, had to maneuver with five gongs, that curtailed the scope of melodic embellishment. Cadar and I had to play the *agong* (a set of two large hanging gongs) as not enough players were available to complete the ensemble. In self-reflexive films, the director or producer may appear on the screen, to demonstrate the rapport s/he has established with the film subject or to reveal the nature of their interactions to the viewers, but in our case, our presence as players were required to complete the ensemble. In the film, the lack of gongs was explained in narration as manifesting the state of traditional music making in the Maranao community in Baguio. Cadar reported after the shooting

that an old man in the community had mentioned in an ironical tone, “Now what is happening here? Do we have in the end to go to Japan to learn our culture?” Cadar reiterated this anecdote as a telling example of the current state of traditional music, at the film screening sessions at university campuses which I will describe later.

EDITING FILMS

In our audiovisual programs, we normally present performing arts in and as part of culture and make sure to shoot the natural environment and daily lives of the people. Due to security concerns, however, we had almost no time to acquire footage around the village, which limited the parameter of editing. Yet, this was exactly the reality affecting music-making in this part of Mindanao and we decided to contextualize what is absent by explaining in narration the effect of the political situation and other social issues on music-making.

We first made the introductory program on kulintang music with Japanese narration in 2009, which was primarily for our Japanese-speaking visitors. In order to make this program useful in the Philippines and elsewhere, I invited Cadar to stay at the Museum for two months in 2011 when we edited English and Maranao versions of the film together and discussed their future uses and applications.⁴

Making films in the language of the area requires a considerable (and sometimes prohibitive) amount of resources, but it is indispensable to generate interactions and connect people through films. Only too frequently, films are made with the pretext of introducing foreign cultures to the people of their home country but they are rarely used in the dialogue with the people documented. In this context, it was only natural that we decided to have a Maranao language narration rendered by Cadar who is a native speaker, but I also asked him to do the English narration. It is my view that for English to become a truly international language, diverse versions with local characteristics and flavors should be encouraged (not to mention allowed) without hierarchical discriminations against “accented” Englishes. Authoritative standard English, which is still preferred in documentary films, only prolongs the colonial power structure in which Westerners (and other dominant people) are authorized to describe and explain the East (and other marginalized people), which remains passive and subservient to be described and explained.

In addition to the general introductory program on kulintang (*Kulintang: Gong Music*), we decided to make a slightly longer program, with information about the Maranao epic called *Darangan*, additional footage of Maranao everyday life, and more nuanced

explanation about the political situations, all in relation to their music-making and its present status.⁵ Our hope was to make the film both informative and inspirational to the Maranao people about the musical tradition that is precariously maintained by the older generations, so that it will inspire young Maranao people to appreciate the beauty and ethos of Maranao traditional culture. In order to safeguard the traditional performing arts, it is equally important to foster interest in the audience who will support and patronize the genre.

As a related project, Cadar and I also produced a multi-track DVD of Maranao kolintang music as a teaching tool.⁶ In 2003, as part of the ASEAN-Japan exchange year commemoration, the National Museum of Ethnology invited the Mindanao Kulintang Ensemble (the US-based kulintang group led by Cadar) for a concert and series of workshops. We also invited Maimona Cadar, Usopay's elder sister and one of the best exponents of Maranao kolintang music with an extensive repertoire, as a guest artist from Mindanao. Concerned about the decreasing interest among young Maranaos in traditional music, we decided to record Maimona during their stay in Japan. The recording was made at the unused gallery space of the museum where 50 pieces of her music were documented (see Fig. 3).

Her performance was documented from three different angles: front overview, front close-up, and from upper left over her left shoulder. We have produced the multi-track DVD in which the viewer can switch from one camera angle to another at any point of performance, by simply manipulating the remote control. We are



Figure 3. Video documentation session with Maimona Cadar at the National Museum of Ethnology (2003). *Photo by Daniel Giray.*

fully aware that the setting for the recording is artificial and that it affects the performance, but our intention is not to claim this to be the “ethnographically correct” performance, but to document her artistry at the particular time and setting. The DVD program can be used in learning new pieces and manner of performance as it provides information about the posture and the way the sticks are held, which will affect the overall rendering of pieces. At present, this type of documentation is virtually impossible at the actual field site because of logistical and security reasons. The actual effectiveness and degree of impact of this method in preserving traditional music remains to be seen and should be tested in the Maranao-speaking areas.

FILM SCREENING IN THE PHILIPPINES

Screening films in the country or region where they were shot is both a necessity and a pleasure. The materials collected by researchers should be available for the people of the country and region. A minimum requirement would be the physical donation of a copy of research materials (i.e., written documents, photos, sound recordings, and audiovisual footage) and outputs (i.e., books, articles, essays, reports, and films) to the public institutions such as archives and community centers where people have an easy access to the deposited materials. In addition to the donation of research materials, venues should be created to discuss the research and its outcome with the practitioners of performing arts as well as local residents and scholars. From the inception of the project, we discussed the necessity of organizing film screenings as an integral part of filmmaking, and it was for this particular reason that we made English and Maranao language versions.

The funds were made available for Cadar and I to visit the Philippines in March 2013 for this purpose. The venues for the screening included the Diliman and Baguio campuses of the University of the Philippines (UP), as well as a barangay in Quiapo, one of the major Muslim habitats in Manila. What follows is a summary of each screening session, in which I highlight the interplay between the audiences’ comments and questions about the films, on the one hand, and our insights and realizations from the experience, on the other.

Community screenings in Quiapo

The primary goal of our 2013 visit was to show the films at the villages in Mindanao where the film was shot, but such screenings became impossible due to an unfortunate turn of events in Mindanao.⁷ Determined to push for community screenings, we came up with an alternate idea of showing the films to the Muslim

community in Manila. Through Cadar's familial network, initial contacts were made with Barangay 647 in Quiapo. On March 1, Cadar and his close relative Amerodin Hamdag visited the Barangay Captain, Suharto Buleg, who has a reputation of being a solid and conscientious leader of the community. Affectionately called "Captain Darling" by the residents, Buleg readily agreed to cooperate with us and offered his assistance in organizing the screening. According to the 2010 census, Barangay 647 has 830 residents. The majority of the populations are Maranaos and others include Maguindanaons and Tausugs.⁸

Cadar and I visited the barangay on March 4, two days before the film screening, and explained the purpose of the project to its leaders, including Al-Mhor Banisil (Iranon, *imam*) and Mastura Kamsa (Maguindanao, spokesman of the barangay) apart from Buleg and his wife, in order to gain their understanding and collaboration and check the location and facility. Unlike university campuses, local communities often lack the space and audiovisual equipment for public presentations. In Barangay 647, we decided to use the basketball court adjacent to the mosque and the idea of projecting the film directly against the concrete wall was suggested. We discovered just a few hours before the screening, however, that the projector was not available. We had to exercise our resourcefulness, and were able to secure a large TV monitor and a DVD player at the last minute. Although the monitor's screen size and the sound system were not ideal for about 200 people who gathered there, most stayed until the end to our great relief (see Fig. 4).

The post-screening session was moderated by Kamsa, who seemed to have decided who and in what order to ask for a comment. Although appreciative of our effort to



Figure 4. A film screening at Barangay 647 (March 6, 2013). Photo by Terada Yoshitaka.

introduce Maranao culture internationally, virtually all barangay leaders stressed the importance of highlighting the culture of the Muslim Filipino as a unified group, or Bangsamoro. Kamsa, for example, even promised to offer his assistance if we are to launch another documentation project in the Maguindanaon area where he is originally from. Buleg is the captain for the multiethnic barangay and because he is a Maranao, it is all the more important for him to stress the importance of other ethnic groups to maintain harmony in the barangay. We explained that our project does not exclude the traditions of other Muslim groups; however, we focused on Maranao this time for practical reasons such as personal contacts, funding limitations, and academic preparation.

The screening was not totally successful in light of the initial objective of gleaning opinions from a wide spectrum of the community residents including practitioners of music. We were aware that ordinary residents tend to shy away from voicing their opinions especially when the authority figures or senior members of the community are present. In addition to formal community screenings such as the one we organized, we should perhaps hold informal gatherings to watch the films together in the future. All the barangay leaders were courteous and cooperative and it is obvious that we should pay attention to their needs. They normally have a set way of conducting public gatherings and when they are incongruent with the objective of film producers, they should negotiate to find the common ground so that the event will be mutually beneficial. Halfway through the film, the call to prayer was aired through the loud speakers from the mosque adjacent to the screening venue. Kamsa turned down the sound to the extent of being almost inaudible. He whispered the reason (not to disturb the Mosque activities) into my ears as soon as he turned down the volume. While local customs should be respected by any means, the time for the screening could also have been coordinated to avoid such conflict.

The community leaders tended to speak of Muslim Filipino culture in abstract form, and very few comments were made specifically on the film content. For example, a woman who served as an adviser to the Mayor of Manila on Muslim affairs passionately described her plan to place kulintang instruments in the city hall as a way of giving greater visibility to Muslim culture. Her effort is admirable but she had virtually nothing to speak about the content of the film.

The only concrete suggestion made during the community screening was about the scene of a female guitar player. A respected former general of the PNP opined that the film should display the traditional *kotiyapi* player instead of a woman accompanying her singing on the guitar, which is the *kotiyapi*'s modern adaptation.

Cadar responded with two reasons. A practical reason is that so few accomplished kotiyapi players were still alive and the time constraint did not allow us to locate a competent player who would represent the genre for documentation. A more strategic reason is that the scene was included as an example for the tenacity of traditional music in the contemporary world. The woman's singing and guitar playing retain many characteristics of traditional music in terms of tonality, scale, vocal timbres and above all, the ethos of her performance despite the origin of the instrument she plays.

The exposure to traditional Maranao culture (as presented in the film) is markedly absent in the diasporic community in Manila. Prior to the film screening, we had met a dignified Maguindanaon woman in the barangay who used to play kulintang, and she proudly showed us two faded photos of her performance in a festival (see Fig. 5). Because no instruments are available in the barangay, there is no chance to play the music as part of life-cycle rituals and social gatherings. In such environment, children have little access to traditional culture. When I was taking photos of the barangay, many children wanted to be photographed in hip-hop postures, demonstrating the strong influence of the urban pop culture. I was very happy to see many of the same children attentively watching the film; and their interest, however ephemeral, gives us some hope for the future (see Fig. 6). Although there is no way of knowing its long-term effect, I felt that repeated exposure to things traditional would give the future generations wider options for cultural resources.



Figure 5. A Maguindanaon woman at Barangay 647. *Photo by Terada Yoshitaka.*

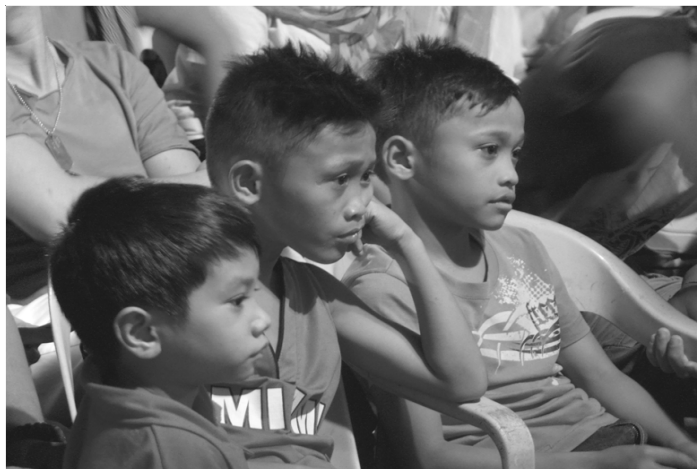


Figure 6. Children watching the film at Barangay 647 (March 6, 2013). *Photo by Terada Yoshitaka.*

University campuses

Another objective of the 2013 trip was to show our films to the scholars and students who are concerned about the traditional music of their country, but who are not the immediate caretakers of the traditions themselves. At these venues, we wanted to gauge the efficacy of our films in academic research, education, and artistic creation. Initial contacts were made with a few universities about the prospect of film screenings in January 2013. The responses were prompt and cooperative, and two UP campuses agreed to hold film screenings.

UP Diliman

Established in 1908, the University of the Philippines (UP) is the leading center of higher learning in the Philippines and the UP Diliman, as its flagship campus, has produced many dignitaries and influential figures in politics (including seven past presidents), business, culture, and academia. The field of music study is no exception and the Department of Musicology, since its establishment in the 1960s, has served as the influential center of music studies including ethnomusicology where many students from all over Southeast Asia are being trained to become distinguished scholars.

Our primary contact was Professor José S. Buenconsejo, Dean of the College of Music and an ethnomusicologist who received his PhD from the University of Pennsylvania (see Fig. 7). He is internationally known for his research on the Agusan



Figure 7. Pre-screening meeting at UP Diliman (from left, Usopay Cadar, José Buenconsejo, Terada Yoshitaka and Alex Lucman, March 5, 2013). *Photo by Jalani Dipatuan.*

Manobo people in northeastern Mindanao. As the screening was sponsored and publicized by the College of Music, most of about 30 participants were scholars and students of music, composers, and performing artists, including some distinguished individuals.⁹ The questions and comments offered focused mostly on the usefulness of the films for research and in classroom instruction, reflecting their interests and professions. Many participants wanted the films to have more textual information on music such as the names of compositions, repertoire, song text, as well as the identity of musicians and social context of music-making. Cadar and I explained our belief in aural immersion and guideline of keeping the textual information on the screen to a minimum: the textual information often frames and directs sensorial experiences of audiovisual information presented in the film.

The names of the musicians who appear in the film are mentioned in the credits, but a faculty member argued that they should be identified as they appear on screen in addition to the credits. In order to direct the audience's attention to the sound, we had decided to hide their identity until the end of the film, but his comment made us realize that the anonymity of musicians can prolong the persistent hierarchy between Western artists and non-Western artisans, and decided to adopt his idea.

A student opined that the inclusion of younger musicians in the film would interest the audiences from the same generation. While completely agreeing with the logic of his suggestion, we had decided to document senior and musically mature

musicians due to the paucity of young players and the limitation of their playing style. We recognize the importance of documenting younger players but opt to focus on older musicians whose playing style and repertoire are not being transmitted to the next generation. Incidentally, criticisms against “salvage ethnomusicology” (although not mentioned in our discussion at UP) is reasonable as we have a history that the rhetoric of disappearance was hurled to justify research activities by outsiders who do not necessarily share their collection, documentation and analysis with the subject of the film. But when there is a strong desire in the community to document the traditional music, a team from outside the community can contribute to realizing their wishes through long-term cooperation.



KULINTANG:
GONG MUSIC OF SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES
A documentary film by Yoshitaka Terada and Usapay Cadar

FILM SCREENING

3/07/13 SARMIENTO
THURSDAY HALL 2:30-4:00

Sponsored by the Committee on Culture and the Arts and the
Program for Indigenous Cultures, University of the Philippines Baguio

Figure 8. A flyer for the UP Baguio screening. *Photo by Analyln Salvador-Amores.*



Figure 9. A film screening at UP Baguio (March 7, 2013). Photo by Terada Yoshitaka.

A perceptive question was raised about the relationship between music and Islam, presumably because the film had a long sequence of people going to the mosque for Friday prayer. We included the scene to show the importance of Islam for people in Lanao del Sur, along with the sequences on various dimensions of traditional Maranao life, including community house (*torogan*), weaving of *malong* (tube skirt), city market, cooking, and mode of transportation. The comment, however, helped us realize that more nuanced description or editing was needed in order to stress that kulintang predates the coming of Islam and is not related to teachings of Islam or part of Islamic festivities, given the ongoing debate in academia and elsewhere about the characterization of music in Islam.¹⁰

UP Baguio

At the UP Baguio, the screening was sponsored jointly by the Committee of Culture and the Arts and the Program for Indigenous Cultures (see Figs. 8 and 9). Our main contact person was Professor Analyn Salvador-Amores, an Oxford-educated anthropologist who specializes in the tattoo culture among Kalingas and produced an ethnographic film on the subject herself. The audience consisted of approximately 100 students and faculty members of anthropology and Cordillera studies, which reflected the types of questions and comments offered.

The post-screening session at the UP Baguio was of a different nature. First, the condition of the film shooting was on the topic of discussion. A faculty member

asked if we interviewed the musicians or not, and if the absence of interview footage in the films was a result of the condition in which the filming was conducted, particularly because a soldier was spotted in the background of one scene: when Cadar was asking questions to a gong maker in Tugaya village, one of our security guards with a rifle sat down behind them and observed the interaction. Because of the security limitation (which I already mentioned earlier), the footage on the natural environment and daily activities of the people which we normally shoot is largely absent, and the absence of such footage limited our editing options. In the *Maranao Culture at Home and in Diaspora* (Usopay and Terada), there is a long sequence of Lake Lanao and farming from the distance with Cadar's narration over it, explaining the mythical origin of Maranao people. To a degree, we decided to explain in general terms that political instability and a lack of peace and order have adversely affected the music-making in the region.

A woman posed a question about the gender division in kolintang music. She observed the gender associations of instruments in the film, in which the kolintang is played by a woman while most of accompaniment instruments are played by men in all performance scenes, and formulated an intelligent question based on what she observed. In fact this was the kind of inquisitive mind we wanted to foster through the films; we wanted our audience to think critically, instead of readily accepting the textual information provided.

A faculty member suggested that we produce a longer film to place Philippine kulintang music in the larger cultural and historical contexts of Southeast Asia. The idea was to provide a sense of how gong instruments and their performance tradition came to Mindanao. Although it was not within the scope of our project at hand, we recognized the need for a film of that nature. In fact, Minpaku has been accumulating audiovisual footage on diverse gong traditions from Southeast Asia (including Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, Vietnam) and it is our wish to produce a film in the near future. Another related suggestion was to make use of historical still photos that will provide visually a sense of historical depth of any gong tradition. We also stressed that this type of film that provides an overview cannot replace a film focused on an individual local tradition such as the ones we screened.

The coherence of a film was also questioned. One person felt that long sequences of a Marawi central market and people praying at a mosque in Tugaya were confusing as they blur the focus of the film, if any, and asked if we had worked with a professional cinematographer or editor. This was a comment we had anticipated to a degree. I felt this question reveals the persistent image of a fine documentary defined by tight editing and easy-to-follow narrative. Although keenly aware of a

room for improvement, we responded by explaining our intention to keep distance from the typical documentary format with a unitary narrative that is both seamless and authoritative. The comment, however, inspired us to further explore the effective method of editing to induce or encourage the audience's critical involvement and the right balance between the textual and audiovisual information provided in the film. In the end, we decided to modify the footage sequence and to condense the market and mosque scenes. I believe that obtaining the right balance is dependent on the themes and issues at hand (and also perhaps the intended audience) and no single formula can be applied to all cases.

A comment by an Ilocano faculty member was intriguing. He stressed, "Indigenous Maranaos are not supposed to be regarded as our ancestors because they are our contemporaries. They face with [*sic*] the same problems in the contemporary, modern world." His comment caught us off-guard because we cannot agree more with his comment and we thought we were careful not to give an impression in the film that Maranaos are the past relic.¹¹ In fact, this was part of the reason that we included the footage from the Maranao diasporic community in Baguio, along with the cellphone ringtone in the market scene and a narration explaining the modern changes in housing, familial ties, public transportation, and communication. Even then, at least one person felt strongly enough to make the statement, which requires our attention and rethinking.

FUTURE PROSPECTS

This brief essay is an intermediary report of our activities using audiovisual media as part of our study of Philippine music. Although our project dealt with only two individual gong traditions of the Philippines and this essay concerns only one, I hope that the issues discussed above have wider applications. Reflecting on the three film screenings, Cadar and I discussed the future development of our project, which can be summarized in the following four areas.

Multiple versions for diverse audiences

What is expected from a film on performing arts is diverse: research document, preservation, educational tool in classroom, instructional media, entertainment, a means to increase interest in traditional art, and a venue for exchanging ideas and interactions. It does not seem feasible for a single film to satisfy all the expectations listed above. As clear from the screenings described in this essay, comments and questions were extremely diverse while each session also had a certain tendency. The film screenings at two UP campuses demonstrate the diverse reactions to the same film. In Diliman, the majority of comments concerned the relevance of the

films in music research and education, whereas virtually no comments were directed toward the lack of textual information on musical content in Baguio.

It is true that the film can have options available for its viewers: the subtitles and narration can be switched on and off, and the language of the textual information can be selected, depending on the purpose of the screening and the type of audiences. A scene of singing, for example, can provide a different set of textual information depending on the objective: when it is important to understand the lyrics, when the life-history of the singer is a focal point, when the audience is expected to concentrate on the sensorial aspects without prior knowledge, etc. However, when the selection of footage and/or the sequence of scenes need to be altered, one needs to edit a different version of the film or to produce a different film altogether.

Accompanying booklet

Although the ideal solution may be to produce a program according to the specific needs and interests of the audience, producing such custom-made films is virtually impossible for practical reasons. A workable solution is to write an accompanying booklet that has information for various audiences. In this method, the same film can perform a specific role for different audiences and purposes. In classrooms, teachers can extract the information from the booklet to contextualize the film in the way that is useful to students and for specific purposes. For research, the booklet will provide the technical and archival detail. The textual information can be provided after the screening so that the active participation by viewers may not be hampered. What we need to figure out now is the amount and types of information to be included in the booklet, and after the screenings in the Philippines, Cadar and I have decided to prepare one for the two screened films as a test case to identify its potentials and challenges.

Film screening as fieldwork

In the community screening in Quiapo, although we could not engage the entire audience for discussion, we nevertheless learned a great deal about the community: the social and political problems they face, inter-ethnic relationship, the living conditions and general outlook of the residents. By participating in the process of negotiation with community leaders and other individuals, we were placed in the privileged position where delicate issues affecting the community (intercommunity politics, inter-ethnic relations, etc.) could be observed in a close range. Seen this way, the community screenings and other post-production applications of films can be reformulated as a particular type of fieldwork, and as such, the process of the

film screening itself should be documented carefully and systematically. In a way, the fieldwork of this kind may serve as a preparation for a new filmmaking project within the community, which will further create venues for interaction toward more equal-footed and mutually informed and beneficial relationship between filmmakers and the community.

Screenings for selected audiences

In addition to public screenings for the general public, more intimate meetings could also be organized for selected scholars and teachers to explore together the right balance between the usability and editing methods to encourage active and critical involvement in films, which I discussed above. At such venues, filmmakers can learn the requirements and dynamics of classroom teaching while scholars and teachers are encouraged to have a critical look at the common documentary film format and explore innovative utilization of audiovisual media.

The importance of audiovisual documentation was once discussed in terms of its usefulness to researchers alone. Even when the sharing of research results was discussed, the caretakers or stakeholders of the traditions were often excluded from discussion. Such an era is long gone, and it is considered a matter of fact that music scholars and filmmakers are responsible for sharing their product with the subject of their research and filmmaking. Ethical considerations are indispensable to any audiovisual documentation, or for that matter, research of any kind. Yet, the filmmakers' responsibility of "giving back to the community" still assumes a form of one-sided (and sometimes paternalistic) donation of a copy. Striving for a mutually beneficial project, a filmmaker needs to cultivate and develop an intimate and lasting relationship with the subject, be it an individual or a group, the physical or virtual community, the region or the country. While screenings constitute a small part in the entire process of filmmaking, I plan to continue my exploration of the potentials of audiovisual media through interactions with audiences of diverse backgrounds and interests.

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NOTES

- ¹ In Japan, films on folk performing arts are produced annually with government funds for the purpose of documentation. While scholars are increasingly involved in filmmaking themselves in recent years, many films are commissioned by the national and local governmental offices and agencies that oversee the preservation of cultural properties. The actual production (shooting and editing) is outsourced to media companies. In such productions, the project is considered finished when the film is submitted, and discussion on how best these films can be used is rare. Frequently, the officers are more concerned about the completion of the project over the quality of films and post-production activities.
- ² I draw inspiration from Takamine Go, an Okinawan filmmaker who produces films that blur or problematize the boundary between documentary and feature films. In his films, he aims to convey or describe the air or the smell of the particular time and space being documented, instead of telling a coherent narrative story. I interpret Takamine’s imagery of “air” and “smell” as comprising a whole complex of multiple senses created by the natural environment, human relationship and history (Engeki “Jinruikan” Jōen o Jitsugensasetaikai 237). He also believes that many things in culture are not explainable and one of the strengths of audiovisual media is to present unexplainable things as they are, without imposing a certain interpretation. My long-term goal is to make a film that has the “air” and “smell” of Lanao del Sur and Maranao people.
- ³ Professor Michiyo Yoneno-Reyes of the University of the Philippines, a specialist on Cordillera music cultures, collaborated with us for the Luzon portion of the project from its planning stage. She searched locations suitable for our objective (Tabuk and Balbalasan) and accompanied us throughout the trip in Cordillera. For any Minpaku filming projects, it is vital and indispensable to have collaboration from an expert, who has done extensive research of the area. The Luzon portion of our trip had a different set of possibilities and problems from those for the Mindanao segment of our project, and I will save my analysis until a later date as the footage from this portion has not been edited into a program.
- ⁴ *Kulintang: Gong Music from Mindanao, Philippines* (in English) and *Kakoolintang o Manga Meranao* (in Maranao), both produced in 2011.

- ⁵ *Maranao Culture at Home and in Diaspora* (in English) and *Olaola o Meranao sa Inged a go sa Kiparakan Kiran* (in Maranao), both produced in 2012. The length of the film is 34 minutes.
- ⁶ The titles of the DVD programs are: *Maimona Cadar: A Master Kolintang Player from the Philippines* (in English) and *Maimona Cadar: Malim sa Kakoolintang a Meranao* (in Maranao).
- ⁷ In the midst of exploring the possibility, a large-scale pyramid scheme was disclosed in late February when the conspirers who started this scheme went into hiding. While the scheme affected the entire Maranao community, those who invested their lifetime savings in particular were devastated to the extent that they took up arms to demand the money back. At least five cases of murder related to this scheme were reported during our stay in the Philippines and we learned that the City of Marawi had resembled a ghost town as people fled the city or stayed home to avoid the crossfire. Due to this situation we had no other choice than to postpone the film screening in Lanao del Sur.
- ⁸ Administratively, the barangay is located in the district of San Miguel, adjacent to Quiapo to the north, but local residents consider it a part of Quiapo, where the oldest Muslim community in Manila is located.
- ⁹ They include Ramon P. Santos (composer, Director of the UP Center for Ethnomusicology), Alex Lucman (former Vice-President of the Mindanao State University), La Verne Dela Peña (Chair of the Department of Musicology, UP Diliman), Grace Nono (performing artist and specialist on music spiritualism) and Bob Aves (jazz musician).
- ¹⁰ The characterization of music by fundamentalist groups as antithesis to the teaching of Islam has indeed affected kulintang and other forms of traditional music in Lanao del Sur. Many performances have been cancelled and some of the past practitioners of music have discontinued their activities.
- ¹¹ His comment seemed to follow Johannes Fabian's criticism against Western anthropology that tends to deny the coevalness of those who are researched (*Time and the Other*).

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