

## Jose Maceda Exhibit Series: A Curator's Reflection

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### ABSTRACT

This essay is an extended reflection on the Maceda exhibit series as a multifaceted project. It touches upon the issues of archive and archival management, knowledge production through exhibitions, and the experimental repositioning of music in exhibiting platforms. The Curator, who also plays the compound role of Archivist and Collections Manager of the Jose Maceda collection, rearticulates the curatorial decisions made in staging the exhibits in terms of intention and motivations of organizing institutions, the quality and content of the materials, choices of artists and the process of production, and quantity and diversity of audience.

An earlier and more compact version of this essay is included in *Attitude of the Mind*, an exhibit catalog published by the Cultural Center of the Philippines.

*Keywords:* Jose Maceda, exhibit, ethnomusicology, archive

### BACKGROUND

The University of the Philippines Center for Ethnomusicology (UPCE) is the main carer of the Jose Maceda Collection. It is a huge collection comprised of field audio recordings, photographs, field notes, performance recordings, manuscripts, and scores, among others. The materials are primarily from Maceda's ethnomusicology research in the Philippines titled "Ethnomusicological Survey of the Philippines" and individual research projects conducted in a few other countries. The earliest materials date back to the 1950s, and the most recent are from the 1990s.

In 2007, through the assistance of various institutions in the Philippines and abroad, this collection underwent digitization and digital archiving. It was a project conceived even before Maceda died in 2004. The team of technicians, researchers, and consultants, including myself, as the Archivist and Collections Manager of the UPCE, agreed that the success of this project relies on how the UPCE could offer the vast knowledge that Maceda has assembled for 40 years to a wider public without endangering the now fragile original materials. We have presented the materials

in published platforms—in talks, conferences, and symposia—and used them in performances. As a curator, I favored exhibiting. Orienting the Maceda collection to this platform is my other contribution in the efforts to preserve the materials by making the collection continuously relevant.

I have curated four exhibits that have to do with Maceda's life and works, which are collectively called Maceda exhibit series. These exhibits were *Listen to my Music* in 2013; *reading Maceda, PRELUDE* in 2017; *Attitude of the Mind*, also in 2017; and *What has it got to do with coconuts and rice: Listening to Jose Maceda* in 2018.

Two other exhibits I curated within this same time period that used materials from the Jose Maceda collection were intentionally not included in this article, as they were not exactly on the life and works of Maceda but on organology. These were *Agungan: ReSounding South*, an exhibit about *agung* (bossed gong) held at the Sharjah Arts Foundation in the United Arab Emirates in 2018; and *Banyuhay: Life Cycle of Music Instruments from the Philippines*, an exhibit on the production of different bamboo and metal music instruments held at Guangxi Arts University in China, also in 2018. These were not counted as part of Maceda exhibit series because the Maceda collection was not an imperative in them, as they could have been staged if other comprehensive Philippine ethnomusicology collections were available.

This article is an addendum to the Maceda exhibit series. It will review main narratives that were used in each exhibit and bring them together to a cohesive curatorial point. I find it necessary to reflect on this exercise for a number of reasons. First, there is more than one way to make sense of materials. A page of music score can be displayed in different ways, as much as it can be interpreted through different lenses. It is necessary therefore to elaborate through which lens I have tried to make sense of the materials included in the exhibit series. Second, I have chosen to approach the Maceda exhibit series not as a survey of the holdings of a collection in an institution archive, but as an endeavor to highlight the interdisciplinary potential of Maceda's creative and intellectual corpus.

It is necessary then to explain how this was done and what it contributes to existing conversations of the different disciplines involved. This is perhaps one of the few articles written that does not talk about Maceda within a musicology or music composition framework. In exhibiting Maceda, it was his philosophies in various aspects of learning and creating, of knowledge production, that were most desired. This essay is framed within the discourses of interpretation and representation, which is consistent with the practice in exhibiting art, in my own particular case. And finally, the Maceda exhibit series was staged at the time when archival exhibits have been favored by museums and galleries, by archivists, librarians, curators,

and artists. I try to contribute to understanding this disciplinary phenomenon by recording my own process and assessing the different factors that shaped it. Altogether, this essay hopes to address the questions that were not answered during the exhibits, or questions that came out of the exhibit, which, in retrospect, necessitate further discussion.

## **EXHIBIT #1: LISTEN TO MY MUSIC**

In 2013, during the celebration of the 16<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the UPCE, I curated *Listen to my Music*. It was held at the UP Jorge Vargas Museum. The objectives were to present to the public what the Jose Maceda collection contains; to invite scholars, creatives, and scientists to consider using the collection; and, by extension, to test the success of the digitization project.

A line from a Maceda interview in 2003 inspired this exhibit. He said: "If you want to honor me, listen to my music." (Silvestre 3, 7). In honoring him, the exhibit offered various types of listening engagement to his music.

The exhibit was comprised of four galleries: Creation, Context, Connection, and Confluence. The main feature for the Creation gallery was a video of Maceda's twelve compositions. The page-turning video was synchronized with the audio recording of the same composition. This video was prepared by Issay Rodriguez, a visual artist, who at this time was working at the UPCE as a project assistant. Opposite this was another set of videos taken by Egay Navarro and Rica Concepcion of Maceda rehearsing for different performances. Also in this gallery was a facsimile of *Cassettes 100* score and a do-it-yourself (DIY) transmitter used during restaging of *Ugnayan* in 2010 made by Engr. Joel Marciano and his team from the UP Electronic and Electrical Engineering.

The Context gallery contained materials from the Archive and Instrumentarium of UPCE. Among these materials were vintage audio recorders that were used by Maceda and his researchers during their field work; copies of field recordings, sampling vocal music, instrumental and combinations—covering also samples from different regions; photographs from the field; notebooks, translations, transcriptions, and typescripts of reports; an ethnographic map, and a map of instruments, among other illustrations that were found in the field notes collection.

The Connection gallery focused on giving Maceda's compositions a music analysis by comparing them to works of other prominent composers from the University of the Philippines College of Music. National Artist for Music and Professor Emeritus Ramon P. Santos compared his orchestral composition *L'Bad* (2008) to Maceda's

*Exchanges: Music for Chamber Orchestra* (1997); Professor of Composition Jonas U. Baes compared his *Basbasan* (1983) to Maceda's *Pagsamba* (1968); and Professor of Ethnomusicology Verne dela Peña compared his *Nyuma* (1983) with Maceda's *Aroding* (1981). It may be argued that comparing works may encourage the flattening or standardizing of taste, of what is conceived as "good" or "interesting" music. This was not the point, however. This exercise was intended to examine the many layers of their music as a group of complex creations drawn from common or similar inspiration.

Finally, the Confluence Gallery featured works of contemporary artists who might not trace a direct "lineage" to Maceda. Experimental / electronic musicians / sound artists Erick Calilan, Jing Garcia, Paolo Garcia, Malek Lopez, Armi Millare, and Arvin Nogueras created compositive works that were influenced by, deconstructed, or used Maceda compositions and/or field recordings. Cris Garcimo, Tengal Drlon, and Jon Romero created installative sounding works using materials that might be associated with Maceda—coconut shells, cassette player, card catalogue cabinet. Tad Ermitaño restaged his multichannel video work on domestic objects making symphonic sound. Students of the Digital Signal Processing Laboratory (DSP) of the UP College of Engineering exhibited digital synthesizers for bamboo instruments and Rondalla. Although she is also from the UP College of Music, Prof. Maria Christine Muyco's project with Pure Data was included in this section as it was similar to the DSP projects.

*Listen* was the first ever exhibit of Maceda's works and materials of this span and depth. I problematized this project through several questions. First, what is the point of the exhibit or why have this exhibit? Second, how do we understand Maceda, when we are not all musicologists or musicians; or what of the collection is important for us? And third, pertaining to the "why's" of the exhibit, what are the considerations for choosing the modules and contents of the exhibit?

The exhibit was conceived as a response to the archival disciplinary challenge of safeguarding the Maceda Collection at the UPCE. This is informed by internal and external factors where the collection may be understood.

Externally, it is understood that the UPCE is a unit in an academic institution and that the Maceda Collection is listed on the UNESCO Memory of the World Registry, implying its importance not only to the academic community of the University of the Philippines but also to others beyond who share the source and effect of the cultures that this collection represents.

Internally, it is to be understood that the Maceda Collection is comprised of a conservative count of 120,000 records in different formats, and that it is organized

as an archive, instrumentarium, and library. Beyond statistics, the data that the collection contains should be further understood in the context of where they have been collected—the ethnomusicological culture that was recorded and those who recorded them, entangled synchronically and diachronically.

The collection is thus of utmost importance. But this importance, the source of value of this collection, is not an imperative. Those who are looking at the collection in a different light—those who are not involved in ethnomusicology, issues of culture, of memory institutions, of academia, might not have the same valuation for the collection as those who are involved in it.

The point then of exhibiting the collection is to tell the story of its importance. The exhibit tried to share its contents which have not been seen before except by those who are directly involved with Maceda and his work. The exhibit tried to present the challenges and hard labor that the researchers went through to build what is now known as an archival collection, and to show that this archive is now ready to receive users.

The second point of *Listen* is to propose that the collection is not only available for music people, but is also open for other scholars, artists, scientists, and technologists.

After all, Jose Maceda is a textbook name, a National Artist, a celebrated composer, an exceptional pianist, a pioneer ethnomusicologist, an interdisciplinary thinker, etc.

In 2012, from one of my concurrent but unrelated research projects (on media and sound art), I learned that Maceda is also a “concept” and an inspiration to a good number of contemporary artists and independent academics. These practitioners were drawn to him because of his generous accommodation of new technology in his field research and compositions, particularly *Cassettes 100* and *Ugnayan*. Despite the popularity of his work, there was too a popular notion that Maceda had not really been accessible to nonmusicology or nonacademic art practitioners. And this is the second point to which the exhibit responded.

Like most, my training was neither in ethnomusicology nor music. But unlike most, because of filial relations, I had the unusual privilege of being acquainted with the collection all my life. Marialita Tamanio-Yraola, one of Maceda's researchers, is my mother. And this is where I try to draw the point of connection—what of this collection do I understand that others, regardless of one's discipline, would also understand?

Maceda was a relentless worker. Before he became a legend, he lived a hardworking life of the 1960s academic. The internet was still just a figment of the imagination, and portability meant a 10-kilo Uher and a 10-kilo Remington typewriter.

He literally crossed mountains and rivers while burdened by gigantic tape recorders to gather ethnic music traditions. He trained around 95 individuals from different interests and fields to work with him as researchers. He searched for funding and collaborators to see the completion of his project. In the exhibit, I brought this to the fore as hard work is a currency that many people understand regardless of their field or training.

Maceda's magnificent mind and insatiable thirst for knowledge has been documented fully in his work, but the man behind it (though he said it does not matter) can easily be forgotten. This too is part of what we are guarding and promoting—to remind people that his collection did not manifest itself like magic but is part of long and tedious hard work.

One does not need to know Maceda personally to understand the value of this collection. One just has to be genuine in the pursuit of learning. As they say, a person who labors knows what hard work means, whether it is his own or his neighbor's.

And thirdly, the why's of *Listen*. These are some specific considerations that came into place during the conception of the exhibit:

Why include sound artists? Why include sound engineers? By letting others ("nonmusic" people) engage in the collection, we were able to promote Maceda's interdisciplinary view of music and expand the audiences of his work. Besides musicologists and musicians, two specific audience groups have already been engaged in this exhibit—those who are from sound practice (sound art, electronic music, noise music) and those from sound engineering, which is at present largely a branch of science and technology.

Why include a video of Maceda during performances and rehearsals? I specifically wanted him in performance because his views, his opinions, and his ideas are all well documented on paper—through the articles he has written and those that were written about him. But featuring him in his performances is rare, and him in rehearsal is even rarer.

Why include the ethnomusicology collection? We wanted to promote ethnomusicology as something that is happening today. Although most of the recordings are from more than 30 years ago, we would like to propose that people of today consider them as part of the present, and to make them relevant to today's creative, scientific, scholarly life.

Therefore, why an exhibit? Presenting Maceda in a different mode was intended to surprise the audience and surprise ourselves. We knew we had so much material/data in the UPCE. A good number of people already know that too. Since he was a

composer, the automatic expectation is to hear his music through a performance. But a performance happens one-time. This exhibit is advantageous in two points. First, the exposure lasts for a month. People can keep on coming back to the same materials for as long as we are in the museum. Second, we could show or expound on the different aspects of Maceda's legacy, particularly the connections between ethnic music, electronic, and digital technology, and time or transcendence of time (to be exact).

Staging *Listen to my Music* was one the most challenging activities for the staff of the UPCE because it had opened the collection to more people—not just those whose voices are recorded on magnetic tapes, not just those who were immortalized on photos and papers, to whom the collection and the staff have had direct relations, but also those who are present and alive. It also required the UPCE to think of how to provide an environment where old and new users can both exist in harmony without endangering the collection and the institution.

## **EXHIBIT #2: READING MACEDA, PRELUDE**

In 2017, the UPCE celebrated Maceda's 100th birth anniversary and the 10th year anniversary of inscription in the UNESCO Memory of the World Registry of the Maceda Collection.

With these celebrations, the UPCE offered a new approach on how Maceda's music can be listened to as a way to honor him. This time it was through his writings, hence the title *reading Maceda. PRELUDE* was added to the title as it was the first of the two-exhibit offering by the UPCE for the Centennial Celebration.

The exhibition *reading Maceda, PRELUDE* was held at Bulwagan ng Dangkal, UP Diliman from 31 January to 24 February 2017.

The exhibit proposed that Maceda's theorization of recurring themes, expressed in his writings, is key to his intellectual legacy. These theorizations were taken from his practice in ethnomusicology, composition, music theory, and pedagogy. The phrase "reading Maceda," in this case, was used in two ways—literally, i.e., to go over a text, and figuratively, i.e., to interpret what he has written.

*PRELUDE* contained seven modules. Each module was an assemblage of audio files, copies of archival images and texts—which are mostly documentation of past performances and printouts of pages of score of Maceda compositions.

The four main modules were captioned as: "Nature," "Space," "Technology," and "Time." Extracted from these theories, the exhibit focused on four key themes—Nature or

Environment, Time, Space or Atmosphere, and Technology. Maceda proposed that “Nature” is the source; “Time” is experiencing events; “Space” is the state of things; and “Technology” is two-pronged (the objects as hardware and humans as software). Collages of text from Maceda’s writings, composition analyses by National Artist for Music Ramon P. Santos, photographs, scores, clippings, audio files, music instruments, and equipment were used to illustrate these themes. Nature was then analyzed vis-à-vis *Ading* (1978); Space vis-à-vis *Pagsamba* (1968); Technology vis-à-vis *Cassettes 100* (1971) and *Ugnayan* (1974); and Time vis-à-vis *Sujeichon* (2002). Music instruments used for *Pagsamba* were also displayed in an installation, as an additional feature for this segment of the exhibit.

Each main module was accompanied by a caption (italicized) and a Maceda quote. I am including them here with some notes.

*Time as experiencing events and the phenomenon of repetition*

Apart from the movements of planets and stars, time is measured through natural events, such as the migration of birds, flowering of plants or the murmuring of insects in the dry season. These measures of time are independent of each other and do not rely on one common clock. Time is regarded in separate entities related to man’s work and social activities. It is as if time is considered immaterial and infinite, one which may be divided only for temporal convenience and not as a record of man’s achievements. (Maceda, “Sources” 64-65)

This quote was chosen as it unburdens time of the construct that was bestowed upon it by modern man. Without the intention of exoticizing time and its role in human actions, Maceda draws our attention to time as a measure of presence rather than a measure of action.

*Space as state of things evoking sensation, mood, feelings*

The music can inspire and generate another form of ritual, an inner feeling, a sense of the spiritual, without which the work advantage becomes lifeless [...] the problem in Asia is less a mastery of techniques, and more a question of adapting music to local social conditions, which would provide new notions of aesthetics and beauty [...]. This when music acquires a new social ritualistic use when it is performed or heard in the market, shopping center, house temples or a big city plaza. (Maceda, *A Primitive* 37)

This quote was chosen because it presents a different trajectory in addressing the question of space. It was not exactly addressed by Maceda as a physical site. Instead, the focus is on what is or what can happen in a space, how it is enmeshed with spiritual activity, and how it is performed.



*Technology as people*

A hardware of technology is being humanized by applying to it a software or a mode of thinking that contributes to [...] musical product [...]. Village thinking is a source of wisdom for modern living and of a more beneficial or philosophical use of technology. It is the view of life to which modern man can look up to in order to extricate himself from the gigantic system of present living which tends to destroy the very essence of man, whose spirit far exceeds what a computer society can possibly give him. (Maceda, *A Primitive* 31, 37)

*Nature as a source of sound expressions*

A fundamental source of musical thought in Southeast Asia may be found in nature itself—in its abundance and in its density. And man's role in that tropical wealth is to accommodate with nature and not to fight it, a lesson worthwhile remembering in today's flagrant waste of material products of the environment. (Maceda, "Sources" 63)

These two quotes were chosen because they emphasized that materials of technology, like gadgets, are tools. They restore the agency of man, of people, in addressing their indebtedness to nature, and in determining how these tools are to matter (or not) to culture and society.

Presence, performance, and the agency of man, are the three essences that I wanted to bring forward in picking out these texts from among Maceda's many writings. Other audiences might have a different take on them; they may understand them differently. And that is alright, that is the beauty of exhibiting the texts—it can accommodate different responses.

One response that was included in the exhibit was that of Santos. He responded to these quotations by relating them to Maceda's compositions in a manner that could be understood by a wider public. His texts are as follows:

*Time as related to SUJEICHON (2002)*

In all of Maceda's compositions, the element of non-linear time permeates these works, with sounds that do not permute or induce directions. However, SUJEICHON is one composition that presents the sensation of time in a most direct way, while taking the Korean Court Music as a prime representative of such perception. Here the color which other Maceda compositions emphasize hardly exists in that the four pianos have the same timbre and tonal attributes. Thus, the element of time is underscored

by the slowness of change, dramatically laid out with repeated motifs that gradually accumulate in frequency in their articulated appearance. Here the time between the playing of the different motifs that are distributed to the four pianos continuously become narrower until they overlap with each other. After this long exposition, the pianos go their separate ways in time articulating different rhythmic figures, in a fast, not so fast, and slow tempi, freezing time in a state of calmness yet tense anticipation. These opposing feelings create a new timeframe where the activity that is heard induces contemplative meditation, rather than the strength and nobility that the original Sujeichon court music implies.

*Space as related to PAGESAMBA (1968)*

PAGESAMBA was an event of singular impact, marking Maceda's bold journey into the realm of social theory and philosophy whose realization as an expressive form exceeded the conventional parameters of art music and composition, in which the work itself is an event in the context of the liturgical rite of the Christian mass. It is a self-contained ritual performed by 241 individuals intercommoning their music with the rest of the audience or congregation in close physical harmony with a circular spatial environment. The music itself uses the element of space in that it was conceived for the different timbres and curations of the native instruments as well as the voices from the speech and musical choruses to move around the entire performance area. Maceda was able to produce a polydimensional sound spectra through the creative manipulation of the natural ambiguities existing between speech and song in the local language, layering and segmenting them as interlocking events in time. He also applied irregular and uneven durations as elements of improbability towards precise execution, a kind of backdoor technique in achieving dis-synchronicity within a common time frame, all filling up a spatial environmental consisting of audience and performers.

*Technology as related to UGNAYAN (1974)*

UGNAYAN symbolizes the participation of local peoples in a modern technologizing world, in which the cassette tape recorders and portable radios represented an easily affordable tool for ordinary "third world" societies in gaining access to artificially reinforced forms of human communication. This notion was dramatically and daringly advanced in UGNAYAN, a reprogrammed version of an earlier compositional design entitled "Atmospheres." The concept of communities of people interacting among each other through the "musical language" of UGNAYAN was

meant to dramatize the idea of shared labor in Asian village community life, with each individual contributing to a collective system of working towards his physical and spiritual subsistence. This is, of course, opposed to the concept of machine technology which negates the use of human energies, at the same time it affords the participants to listen to produce sounds that are locally contrived through the use of native instruments and voices. Here, the technology of machines is used to facilitate the production of the recorded sounds, but the entire musical experience is generated by the participation of multitudes of people.

*Nature as related to ADING (1978)*

ADING is the embodiment of several concepts—of time, of human technology, and nature. Here he uses the drone, even as he adopts the collective of nonmusicians. Although this piece echoes the principles of UDLOT-UDLOT and UGNAYAN, the sound events are particularly telling of rainforests and the natural environment. The variety of structural materials results in a more complex textural drone of sounds, which if listened to with closed eyes, could transform one's sensibilities from the inside of a modern auditorium to an intimate terrestrial environment in a Southeast Asian village wherein a human community makes music in an atmosphere of collective meditation. While he also applies the principle of community music making, the music itself goes far beyond the act itself and transcends the idea of a composed music tone that is nature-bound, with the experiential phenomenon of bird and cicada sounds permeating the whole musical fabric on which the composite human voices are heard as a reminder of the presence of people in the entire sound matrix.

What Santos's analyses provided the audience are guides on how to listen, what to listen for, how this particular work relates to his other works, and how to relate the creative decisions of Maceda to the tradition that influences his works. I find it crucial to fully quote these texts in this essay to emphasize the point that one's writing can be interpreted in many different ways and may vary depending on the platform it is presented on.

The three secondary modules were photo-collages focused on the social life of music instruments, the social life of recording instruments, and the indigenous technologies of measure. The first module, titled "Within Community," talked about the social life of music instruments which was represented through photographs that situate music instruments in the communities where they came from. The second module, titled "On Field," talked about the social life of recording instruments and showed how the machines served as a material link or bridge between the

researchers and the locals who were subjects of the research. Posters containing specification of the recorders, actual recorders, and audio files recorded from the analogue machines, were also on display as an additional feature of the exhibit. The third module, titled “On Making,” was an ongoing project that contained photos representing the indigenous technologies of measure or different techniques on how measurements are rendered, specifically when making music instruments.

There was also an additional material exhibited, is an interactive map titled “JMM Map.” This program geographically plotted Maceda’s activities as a scholar, teacher, musicologist, and composer on the world map.

The exhibit that followed *PRELUDE* and which used it as a framework was a bigger exhibition, held from September 26 to December 3, 2017, titled *Attitude of the Mind*.

### **EXHIBIT #3: ATTITUDE OF THE MIND**

In 1978, Maceda wrote: “It is the task of man today to look for an attitude of the mind and a course of action other than which imprisons him in his own creations” (*A Primitive* 37). I interpret this statement as a challenge for those who have access to valuable and irreplaceable knowledge. It asks: after reading Maceda, where would we go? How do we set out our creative and scholarly trajectories? How do we turn this knowledge into conditions of new learning, of producing new from the old, or going beyond or even arguing against that that has already been said?

Our “course of action” was to make available Maceda knowledge and materials to a different set of users—to people who do not share his expertise and to marvel at where this could all bring us.

The phrase “attitude of the mind” was understood to be a condition of openness or readiness of one to receive another—be it knowledge, ideology, discourse, or creative engagement. This exhibit attempted to represent different attitudes of minds. It gave way to the attitude of the mind of the commissioned creatives (artists, musicians, curators, and scholars) in receiving Jose Maceda’s materials, his writings, compositions, and collected artifacts. It enabled a particular attitude of the mind for partner institutions in hosting the Centennial Celebration, and for the UPCE as the carer of the collection, in dealing with a broader exposure of the Maceda materials and the UPCE as an institution. It also provided an avenue for the audience to entertain different attitudes of the mind in dealing with materials that are unfamiliar however relatable, something that reminds them of a memory, or something that is totally new, different, or odd.

An expansion of *PRELUDE, Attitude of the Mind* retained the earlier exhibit's four themes. For this exhibit, artists Leo Abaya, Ringo Bunoan, and Tad Ermitaño were commissioned to create an installation after conducting research on the Maceda Collection; electronic musicians Malek Lopez and Arvin Nogueras were commissioned to create a digital rendition of Maceda's unperformed composition, titled *Accordion and Mandolin with Special Orchestra*, accompanied by music analysis from Chris Brown; and curator Ricky Francisco was tasked to create an archival gallery that would capture the many facets of Maceda's practice and personal life. Photographs from Nathaniel Gutierrez of the 1971 performance of *Cassettes 100*, taken while he was the official photographer at the Cultural Center of the Philippines, were included. Amihan Animation Studios's "JMM Map" from *PRELUDE* was again exhibited, as well as the videos of Maceda during rehearsals and performances captured by Egay Navarro and Rica Concepcion.

Commissioned artist works were the most challenging task to complete in this exhibit. The artists recruited for the project had different levels of understanding, interests, and commitment to Maceda's thoughts and works. Some of them were already familiar with Maceda for many years and found his work a strong influence on their own. Some only heard about him from the promotions done by the National Artist Awards. Some of them knew him through their engagement with other scholars. My task as a curator was not to get these artists to see Maceda from one perspective, but rather to find a way to bring these different spaces of thinking into an exhibit—as a platform for distributing and producing knowledge, which in my view, is what Maceda calls "attitude of the mind."

Each artist produced a work that was very different from the other, both in form and content. Conceptual artist/curator Ringo Bunoan recreated the "physical mess"—sheets of paper strewn all over the CCP Main Theatre lobby after the premiere performance of *Cassettes 100*. It was exhibited in three photo-documentations. Although it may be perceived as a quiet work, I find what Bunoan did was deeply sensitive to Maceda's philosophies of performance. Her work did not only look back on a historical event, but it was also tied together with another set of works displayed in the exhibit, the photographs of Nathaniel Gutierrez of the said premiere performance. Therefore, it had with it a sense of community, a sense of belonging.

Media artist Tad Ermitaño created a mechanized ensemble using music instruments and electronic circuitry. As in his earlier works related to Maceda, Ermitaño found the versatility of indigenous music instruments in accommodating new technologies. It was not very obvious, but in essence, this work of Ermitaño belongs to the same creative persuasion that created *Ugnayan* and *Cassettes 100*.

Installation artist/curator Leo Abaya created an installation using Maceda's old baby-grand piano, filling it with rice, accompanied by video and sound. His work was inspired by another quotation from an interview with Maceda saying: "What has this (Western music) got to do with coconut and rice?" (Tenzer 94) The installation may appear to be too literal when related to this text. However, what Abaya's work really tried to interpret is the radicalism in Maceda's work, his compositions, and his way of thinking—as appraised to be ahead of his time or sometimes out of this world.

The three other works, Ricky Francisco's archival gallery that introduces life and work of Maceda, and the compositive rendition of Malek Lopez and Arvin Nogueras of Maceda's unpremiered work, *Accordion and Mandolin* (available on Youtube), served the same purpose. These were three different ways of staging how we, as artists who belong to a different generation, understand, see, appreciate, imagine, and relate to "the Maceda" that was provided to us by institutions—the University of the Philippines and the Cultural Center of the Philippines, among others.

*Attitude of the Mind* was a landmark project for the UPCE as an institution. It had proven its efficiency as a research center. As an institution that cares for irreplaceable national heritage, the UPCE provided access to the collection without endangering the originals to ensure that its intellectual legacy remains valuable for generations to come. The completion of the digitization of the collection, which the UPCE started in 2007, enabled an endeavor of this nature and size. It is, however, making this content conceptually accessible that became the main challenge for this particular project. It exposed the Maceda Collection to the anonymous but ubiquitous general public, which is far beyond the usual academic and art circles.

As an unexpected effect, in the years after the closing of the Maceda Centennial Celebration, multiple offers to hold a Maceda exhibit, talk, or performance have been negotiated.

#### **EXHIBIT #4: WHAT HAS IT GOT TO DO WITH COCONUTS AND RICE?**

Maceda's question: "What has it got to do with coconuts and rice?" resonated too with my thinking as it did with Abaya for the previous exhibit. As mentioned earlier, it summarized how he, who trained in classical music, started exploring the indigenous music of the Philippines and Asia. And it was where I took off for the final exhibit for the Maceda exhibit series.

The full title of the exhibit was *What has it got to do with coconuts and rice? A listening exhibition on Jose Maceda*. It was held at Archive Books in Berlin from 28 August to

6 September 2018. This project was part of SAVVY Contemporary's UNTRAINING THE EAR LISTENING SESSION, co-presented by Duestschlandfunk Kultur and CTM Festival in Berlin. The UNTRAINING is a project devoted to presenting exhibits and workshops on performance-based listening. It is focused on exploring works of "maverick composers" such as Halim El-Dabh, Eliane Radigue, and Jose Maceda. I co-curated this exhibit with SAVVY's Kamila Metwaly.

Maceda was included in this program because he was able to bring ethnomusicology and music composition from Asia into the same intellectual field as that of the West. Consistent to this, my curatorial claim for this exhibit was that beyond the importance of preservation of indigenous cultures, Maceda's legacy is strongest in the philosophical grounds—in critically and compassionately understanding creative processes in production of cultures, traditions, and knowledges, whether within the realm of the indigenous or the institutional.

The exhibit has two main parts. The first part is an installation of *Ugnayan*. Each track of the original recording was played on a suspended speaker, mimicking the effect of compositing the music, as the audience listens. The second part is an archival exhibit that contains four sections. The first and second sections contain materials from previous Maceda exhibits, particularly compositive works. The third section contains documentation of Maceda's earlier visit to Germany in 1964 in Berlin, 1980 in Bonn, and 1984, also in Bonn. The fourth section is devoted to *Udlot-Udlot*, which was also the Maceda composition that was used for the workshop in relation to this exhibit. It was previously performed in Berlin with 100 performers eleven years prior to this workshop.

As a curatorial project which is part of a series, this exhibit is important on two accounts: first, it was an exhibit presented outside of the Philippines, therefore subjecting the materials and the representations made in the exhibit to an audience that might have much more or much less knowledge of who Maceda is, may have much more or much less knowledge of the intellectual tradition of Maceda, and may come from a more diverse creative tradition than Maceda's. In other words, this exhibit is important as it challenges the readiness of the materials, the UPCE archival team, and my curatorial, by exposing all of us to unfamiliar territories. This is manifested from as basic as exhibit design to choosing which materials should best be used to express such a narrative.

The second importance of this exhibit is much related to the first—this exhibit served as a signal that the UPCE is ready to accommodate more possible users of the collection from a more diverse background. As Archivist and Collections Manager, I find this crucial. The exhibit had already been staged and consumed. Its "presence"

may end at the closing of the exhibit. The exhibit, however, has a more lasting effect and is much more entangled with how the UPCE should be managed as a cultural resource center in the coming days. As a matter of fact, there have been at least four other major Maceda events that happened in other countries (Japan, Korea, Singapore, Spain) after the one in Berlin. They are projects that are independent from what I have curated, which is precisely the point of my claim, that the UPCE is now ready to cater to a bigger user-base without losing its main marching order to balance between safekeeping the Maceda Collection and making it relevant. This brings us full circle to when we first exhibited Maceda materials for *Listen*.

## ON CURATING THE MACEDA EXHIBIT SERIES

Finally, as a conclusion in progress, here are some notes, learnings, and matters that require further reflections on curating the Maceda exhibit series.

How do you make relevant a field considered highly specialized, such as ethnomusicology, to the general public? How do you exhibit an archive? How do you introduce a musician and a scholar who is at least 50 years ahead of his time? In which context would you read him? What of him, would he let you exhibit, if he has a say on it?

As a curatorial project coming from an esteemed tradition of “performing Maceda,” “exhibiting Maceda” is not simply a matter of changing the means of presenting Maceda. It, I would like to argue, is a discursive stance. To illustrate my point, I will mention here some factors that presented different challenges when we moved from performing to exhibiting.

The first factor is *time*. The pieces presented only exist at the time of their performance. In an exhibition, the pieces displayed are installed, therefore, the audience may go back to them; they can linger on whatever piece they would want to experience longer.

The second factor is *space*. In performance, only one piece is played at a time. In an exhibition, the pieces are placed with other pieces. There are times that a headset is used in the display. However, for my particular practice, I prefer that the pieces somewhat blend with others on a level that would allow the audience to still discern which sound is coming from where. This is not an attempt to author another composition. This is an attempt to encourage the audience to do a more “focused listening,” wherein focus is defined as being mindful rather than isolated. It is an exhibition technique that I favor, and has been well criticized by other practitioners



(of both curation and music). I, however, insist on it as I feel that it is closer to our natural way of aurally perceiving things.

Third is *installation*. By this I mean how the materials are positioned in relation to the space and in consideration of other materials on display vis-à-vis the concept that frames the exhibit. Two things matter in this case—visuals and sound.

The rationale for exhibiting sound is already explained in the previous paragraph. In the exhibit, the audience can listen to five audio recordings of performances of Maceda compositions, six rehearsals and performances on video file, and two new digital renditions of a Maceda composition. Audios and videos may be listened to using headset, or they may be placed in isolated rooms, or, for a more challenging design, they could be placed in a common room, allowing one sound to mix with another. All these devices have been tested in the four Maceda exhibits, and each one was found to be particularly useful for specific types of materials.

For visuals, I had to consider that with the materials included in the exhibit, the audience members are encouraged to look, to read text, and to read notes or to look at notes (depending on their musical competency). There are about over a hundred photographs and drawings, over 50 text clippings and text boards, score sheets of almost all his 23 compositions, and a few but important actual objects.

It cannot be assumed of course that audience will pay equal attention to all these. Some will just browse and others will linger—most of the time on materials that catch their interest. To respond to this, I chose materials that might appeal to (1) different age groups—my team and I consciously looked for materials that would allow younger generation to relate to the materials being presented to them; (2) different levels of engagement with the main subjects of the exhibit (which are Maceda, ethnomusicology and avant garde music)—for this we have materials that are of general interest and others that are meant to be appreciated more by specialists; (3) different times allotted to be spent in the exhibit, as some are just passing by and others would actually spend an hour or so, examining the contents of the exhibit.

In creating the exhibit design, I decided to stay within the milieu of “archive” or how people conceive a visual interpretation of an archive. I was particularly conscious of not stylizing the presentation of materials so as not to obscure the content. For example, a score was not enlarged beyond readable size, although I am aware that it would be more spectacular when enlarged from floor to ceiling. Also, scores, texts clippings and photos were not framed under glass, to avoid glare and to allow the audience to read through (or view) the content with ease. We kept the walls

flat white and the lighting to illuminate (and not dramatize) what is on display, for this same reason. This exhibit then, like an archive or library, was interactive in a sense that the display would make more sense if the audience would engage with what they are seeing and hearing. This creative decision was made to remain philosophically consistent with how Maceda intended his works and materials to be used—as a source of learning, above all else.

Finally, by choosing to exhibit Maceda, we have made his materials engage with people—artists, scholars, etc., who do not necessarily have a history with him; they may even be people from different disciplines and generations. It is actually an exercise of authoring conversations after Maceda. “After” here is taken to mean the time when Maceda is no longer present; it also means “taking after” or following him. It is authoring a condition that enables new circumstances of learning. The core of this exercise, therefore, is to liberate knowledge that was originally perceived as specialized knowledge—not to demote it to the level of the trivial but to assign it as an accessible resource for scholarly, scientific, philosophical, creative, and/or practical endeavors.

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