

THE PHILIPPINE *PASYON*: A TRANSFORMING AND TRANSFORMATIVE MUSICAL PRACTICE

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Abstract

The *Pasyon*, also known as the *Pabasa*, is a popular ritual that is celebrated during the Lenten season of Catholic culture in the Philippines. It is a narrative poem with a theme that focuses on the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. This article features a profile on the formal constitution of the *pasyon* performance, a discussion of its musical and textual characteristics, an examination of the *pasyon* as a ritualization process, and an exploration of *pasyon* and the notion of power. A main concern of this work is in looking at the *pasyon* an expression of popular religiosity, or more specifically, local Catholicism. This paper asserts that the reason for the continued use of the *pasyon* is found in the multi-faceted nature of the *pasyon* that makes it simultaneously a personal and communal expression.

Keywords: *pasyon*, folk Christianity, ritualization, power

Among the abundant variety of traditional festivities celebrated in the Philippines, one of the most widely practiced is the *pasyon*.¹ The