

## EDITORIAL

In February of 2013, the Musicological Society of the Philippines (MSP) and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) organized Tunog-tugan: First International Gongs and Bamboo Music Festival in Dipolog City, Zamboanga del Norte. The week-long affair brought together ensembles from China, Indonesia, Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia, India, South Korea and the Philippines bound by their common use of gongs and instruments made of bamboo. As an adjunct event, the festival featured a conference-workshop entitled “Invocation: Nature, Spiritual and Human Dimensions in Gongs and Bamboo Music Traditions” where speakers presented papers that covered a wide variety of interests including history, transmission, aesthetics, linguistics, and ethnography among others. It is from among these speakers that Musika Jornal sent invitations for submission for this current issue entitled “Gongs and Bamboo.”

Like the aforementioned conference, the six articles selected for this issue come from multi-disciplinary perspectives including that of an anthropologist, a folklorist, a composer, an electronics engineer, and ethnomusicologists. The first of these, Nicole Revel’s *Gong Ensembles and Rituals around South China Sea*, is an exhaustive survey of gong cultures spread across a vast maritime space which includes Vietnam, the Philippines, Borneo and Sumatra. Using comparative lexicography and ethnography, the author exposes highly shared physical features and contexts of musicking, as well as linguistic cognates among these various instrumental traditions. The paper, abounding with maps, photographs, linguistic tables and bibliographic listings will be an invaluable resource for any scholar studying the region.

Like Revel, Mayco Santaella examines historical and cultural linkages albeit in a smaller scale in his article *The Kakula of Central Sulawesi as the Southernmost Point of a Lineage: Current Practices and Cultural Links*. Here, the author argues for the consideration of ‘non-dominant’ cultural forms to highlight regional connectivity other than the ‘elevated presence’ of such traditions as the Thai *piphat* and the Javanese *gamelan*. As a case in point, Santaella focuses on the gong-row ensemble known as the *kakula* among the Kaili people of Central Sulawesi which he relates to other practices

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elsewhere in Sulawesi and the Southern Philippines. He succeeds in presenting to the reader a rare but thorough comparative discussion of the shared gong chime practice as instrument, as ensemble, as repertoire and as performance.

If Revel and Santaella compare versions of musical practice across geo-cultural spaces, the next two authors examine musical variance across time. In *Repertoire and Composition of Teduray Agong Music*, Rowena Cristina L. Guevara attempts to extract the fundamentals of Teduray compositional processes through a comparative analysis of twenty (20) similarly titled pieces from recordings done in 1966 with recently recorded examples. In this manner, she was able to conclude that Teduray *agong* music consists of three parts: the 'drone', the 'semi-drone' and 'improvisation'. Furthermore, she observes the stability of this compositional structure within the fifty six (56) year period although she detects a reduction in the complexity and virtuosity of the improvised sections. The author then posits several explanations to account for this change.

Recordings as well provide the basis for comparing differences in musical tendencies and tastes between generations of *suling* players in *Made Mantle Hood's Bamboo Bridges: Vocality and Human Temporality in Balinese Flute*. Through a close examination of gamelan recordings within a forty-year span, Hood searched for variances in the realization of both 'improvised and formulaic melodies', with a particular attention to vibrato, embellishment and harmonic texture, thus uncovering a 'temporal divide' between an old style and a new, expanded style of *suling* performance. This generational gap comes as a result of a break in transmission where current performers lack awareness of and exposure to older Balinese musical sensibilities. The author proposes to 'suture' this divide thru a restudy of 'linking media' such as historical and archival recordings.

The final two articles present two perspectives on gong and bamboo music in Panay Island, Central Philippines. Alicia P. Magos, who has studied epics from the area for the past 20 years, extracts portions from previously documented *sugidanon* texts relevant to the use of gongs in the area. *Gongs, Chants and Ancestral Memories: A View from the Epics of Panay* presents these excerpts transcribed in their archaic form and translated into English by the author, thus providing glimpses into the acoustic environment of the ancestors of today's Panay Bukidnon during the Pre-Hispanic period.

Employing textual analysis, Magos takes the readers to the world of epic people where gongs received personal names, were highly valued as heirlooms, marked momentous occasions or alarming circumstances, and mediated the realms of humans and spirits.

Finally, *Santú: Speech, and Poetry in the Gong and Bamboo Instruments and Dance of Panay Bukidnons* by Maria Christine Muyco details the intricate connections between language, music and movement in courtship dances. During performance, *santú* or synchronization is achieved by the interweaving of the rhythm of gongs, drums and bamboo instruments with vocal interjections by participants, and the movement of the dancers. Underpinning this multi-sensory interface is the articulation of mnemonic phrases by instrumentalists, dancers and audiences alike. A successful performance in turn contributes towards the realization of communal balance and transcendental harmony or *sibod*.

Gongs and bamboo instruments populate the musical landscapes that spread across Asia, marking shared ecological systems and technological knowledge, and leaving traces of migratory and mercantile paths and other spheres of human interaction. Not coincidentally, 'Gongs and Bamboo' was the name chosen by Jose Maceda for his book that culminates half a century of research work in Philippine music. While organological study has perhaps lost the primacy it once held in the early years of ethnomusicology, these six articles that contemplate gongs and bamboo prove that the field remains to be productive and that many gaps still remain to be filled.

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