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## Historiography of the moro *kulintang*

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### Abstract

Filipino music is idiosyncratic inside Asia by its deep Hispanization and Western features. However, pre-Hispanic indigenous music remains manifest in oral traditions connecting it with Southeast Asian personality. Muslims in the Philippines (so-called *Moros*) preserve this realm, being the *Kulintang* the most notorious instrument. After a contemporary process to recover the indigenous traditions as part of the Philippine Civilization, a historiography dealing with different aspect of the *Kulintang* has been developed.

**Key words:** Kulintang, Muslims in the Philippines, Moros, Batintines, Gongs, Tablature.

### Resumen

La música filipina se caracteriza dentro del contexto asiático por su alta hispanización y elementos occidentales. No obstante, elementos pre-hispánicos se manifiestan en las tradiciones orales que la conectan con otras músicas del Sudeste Asiático. Los musulmanes filipinos (llamados *moros*) preservan esta herencia, siendo el *kulintang* su instrumento más notable. Después de un proceso de recuperación contemporánea de las tradiciones indígenas como parte de la Civilización Filipina, una historiografía se ha desarrollado sobre diferentes aspectos del *kulintang* moro.

**Palabras clave:** Kulintang; Musulmanes en Filipinas; Moros; Batintines; Gongs, Tablatura.

## I. CONTEMPORARY REEVALUATION OF THE PHILIPPINE MUSLIMS MUSIC.

The term *Moro* refers to the different ethno-linguistic groups in Southern Philippines, having Islam as their religion<sup>[1]</sup>. Islamic religion is not the only aspect that unifies these Philippine tribes, but also a common history and cultural practices connected with South-East Asian heritage. Every tribe has its own values system and way of life as a community, but as part of the Islamized people in the Philippine Archipelago, the tribes share some common cultural aspects. One of these is music, an elaborated cultural form that has the capacity to preserve indigenous inheritance across centuries, establishing permanent cultural practices. Therefore, although Islam is the main source of identity among Muslims in the Philippines, other trends can be identified, for example the personality of their music linking them with South-East Asia.

In contrast to lowland musics, the musics of Islamic groups show few Hispanic incursions. Rather, this second grouping of indigenous musics exhibits a high degree of correspondences to other cultures of Insular Southeast Asia which have been called Islamic-Malay (Trimillos: 1972, 9).

Accordingly, we can identify two main aspects of Moro music: in one hand, music of the Muslims in the Philippines is an own tradition across the centuries, an indigenous musical practice without

Malay traditions within South-East Asia, whether Islamized or not. According to José Maceda<sup>[2]</sup>, Philippine music undertook a process of Hispanization towards Western musical theory. Nevertheless, several indigenous groups in the edges and highlands were able to maintain local traits:

About the ten percent of the Philippine population living mostly in the northern and southern parts of the archipelago practice a native Asian music. Most of the rest of the population understand or play only a Western-type music 'folk' tunes, same what like 19th century melodies, classical or composed music, and popular music (Maceda: 1972, 28).

To provide sight and reevaluate the indigenous dimension of Philippine music two landmarks appeared: José Maceda's *The music of the Maguindanao in the Philippines*, Ph.D. Dissertation in UCLA in 1963, followed in 1972 by Ricardo Trimillos's *Tradition and repertoire in the cultivated music of the Tausug of Sulu, Philippines*, Ph.D. Dissertation in the same university. In these studies different musical features of the Muslims in the Philippines were described, emerging at the end an instrument as icon of the indigenous air—the *Kulintang*:

Just as the plucked string ensemble *rondalla*, is characteristic of instrumental music in the Lowland Philippines, ensembles of bossed gongs is typical for the Muslim groups. The *kulintang*, a chime of bossed gongs, is common to all groups, although the musical style differs among them. Lowland Filipinos consider the *kulintang* to be the most distinctive instrument of the Islamic grouping (Trimillos: 1972, 11).

The main aspect differentiating Moro music from the rest of Philippine lowland music is the use of metal percussion instruments, gongs, chimes and sets of graduated gongs-in-a-row. Nevertheless, not only the Muslim tribes use this kind of instruments, rather we may say that other Mindanao and Cordillera tribes use gongs too, being a characteristic of music in South-East Asia, represented mainly by the Indonesian gamelan. Indeed, in the Philippine Archipelago it is possible to find elaborated gong music, being the foremost instrument which requires special skills and training to play it the *kulintang*. This instrument is part of the indigenous traditions of the Muslims on the Philippines, though particularly belongs to specific Moro tribes and it is possible to find differences among the instrument used by each tribe. However, in the process to reestablish an indigenous reevaluation for the contemporary Philippine music, *kulintang* had a key role in both, formalization of the tradition and experimentalism.

Consequently, given the fact that Philippine music was largely influenced by Western concepts<sup>[3]</sup>, a process to recuperate the indigenous legacy began in the 60's and definitely in the 70's. Within this panorama, music of the Muslims in the Philippines played a dramatic position expanding its sounds beyond the regional limits, towards the academic sphere and beyond the Archipelago (Usopay Cadar: 1996), not only on the spreading of musical instruments, but also the vocal music and oral traditions<sup>[4]</sup>. In the recuperation of the indigenous cultures, and in the very reevaluation of the role played by the Muslims in the development of Philippine national identity, Moro music (and *kulintang* in particular) was vital from the 60's towards a wider comprehension of the contemporary Philippine Civilization.

## II. BATINTINES: HISTORY OF THE KULINTANG.

The origin of the *kulintang* is not clear, although has to be connected with other set of gongs-in-a-row in South-East Asia. Through commerce and interchange of goods, and following the process of Islamization which took place in insular areas of the region, general musical features were adapted by the indigenous tribes of the Archipelago.

All the musical influences are not necessarily Islamic, but Islam acted as a medium for a

kulintang ensemble, which is found in different parts of Borneo as well as in Celebes, may have reached certain areas on Mindanao and Sulu through exchanges enhanced by Islamic trade and other cultural activities. It is noteworthy that in the Philippines the kulintang is generally played only in the areas when the Islam has set a foothold (Maceda: 1963, 216-217).

Indeed, although *kulintang* is part of indigenous musical practices in South-East Asia, Islam helped to spread and develop a cultural identity among Islamized people, helping therefore to formalize a musical tradition and a complex instrument like the *kulintang*. In consequence, the origin of the instrument remains in the Malay world, arriving to the south of the Philippine Archipelago theoretically through two ways: from Borneo to Sulu and from Celebes to Mindanao<sup>[5]</sup>. In this sense, the *kulintang* is an indigenous Malay instrument, developed in the area around Borneo, Ternate, Sulu and Mindanao, which became strongly cultivated by the different Moro tribes as part of their own culture (although non-Islamized indigenous communities in the region could have a *kulintang*-like instrument). We have the description of the instrument made by José Montero y Vidal in the 19th Century, explaining about the people of the Sulu Archipelago:

Sus otras diversiones ordinarias son: los juegos de naipes, las luchas entre sí, las danzas guerreras o *sayan*, que en Filipinas llaman moro-moro; los bailes voluptuosos de las mujeres, al compás del *culintang*, instrumento formado de 10 agons pequeños, arreglados a diferentes tonos, en que no solamente luce su habilidad la que mejor maneja los platillos, sino la bailadora con sus lascivos movimientos y febril agitación (Montero y Vidal: 1888, p. 91).

As indicated, the *kulintang* was an instrument performed generally by women (“la que major maneja los platillos”), although it does not mean that only women could play the instrument<sup>[6]</sup>. Meanwhile somebody plays the music, other dances with a sensuality following the rhythm. This dance is the *Pangalay* (Leonor Orosa: 1980), showing to us that to perform *kulintang* usually was a practice connected with the entertainment of the society, in particular the upper levels:

El cuadro tiene por objeto el baile llamado *moro-moro*, por una jóven esclava, ante un *Datto* ó cacique. Otras esclavas tocan el *agun*, especie de tambor de metal abierto por un lado y el *culintangang*, parecido á los campanólogos (El Oriente: 1877, p. 4).

This text, signed by the pseudonym V., describes the image attached as appendix, according to the text illustrated by Espínola. It appeared in the journal *La Ilustración del Oriente* in 1877, under the title “Tipos de Mindanao”. The statement of the text is that, performed by slave women, to play *kulintang* and to dance *pangalay* was a way to obtain status into the social structures<sup>[7]</sup>. Accordingly, slaves were not only being acculturated into the Moro culture and traditions, but also introducing musical practices from their places where they were captured:

Uno y otro sexo son aficionadísimos á la música y el baile, con cuyas habilidades que los bisayas han aprendido de los españoles, se hacen divertir los joloanos de los infieles cautivos que cojen en nuestras islas para condenarlos á la esclavitud (García de Arboleya: 1851, p. 18).

This quotation is very valuable because it is saying that people captured by the *joloanos* introduced in Sulu local music from Visayas, learned furthermore from the Spanish music. We could guess that the text is speaking about the *rondalla*, or some kind of similar music unknown to the gong-type music of the Philippine Muslims. Nevertheless, what is clear is that several gong instruments produced the daily sounds in Muslim areas, whether for social events, military activities or entertainment:

Al día siguiente, el novio, acompañado del *pardita* [...], fue con gran algarabía y estrépito de

tambores y *agunes* á la casa donde está la novia escondida entre otros pabellones (Pío de Pazos: 1879, p. 9).

Asking to marry is a ritual in which gongs play a key task, and the formalization of the event takes place with the sounds and music of the instruments. The same could be said about the death. When a person dies, the misfortune is announced playing a lot of instruments and doing huge and loud manifestations:

Si el profeta se niega á esta peticion y muere el enfermo, se anuncia la desgracia con algunos cañonazos y delante de la casa se hace el mayor estrépito posible con tambores, *agunes*, *batintines* y gritería infernal de lamentaciones (Pío de Pazos: 1879, p. 9).

In this citation appears a valuable list of Moro instruments: tambores (*dabakan*), *agunes* (*agong*) and *batintines*. This former has to be no other than the *kulintang*, given the fact that no other reference is mentioned. The confirmation comes in the following text that provides a complete statement and description of the Moro music at the end of the 19th century:

Su hacienda [of the Moro] se cuenta por esclavos, vintas, cocales, armas y *águnes*: el *agun* es una caja cilíndrica de bronce, con una prominencia en el centro, donde se golpea con un palo ligero (palo bobo), forrado en uno de sus extremos con trapos y resina de gutta-percha, produciendo un sonido metálico, grave y sonoro, que se prolonga á largas distancias. Con él, tocan á rebato; es la voz del cacique que, internándose en las selvas, alarma y pone en pié de guerra á las rancherías, si el toque es rápido, nervioso é impaciente; pero si el toque es lento y monótono significa fiesta y conmemora algún suceso. Los *batintines* son cajas más chicas correspondientes á los tonos de la escala y acompañados del *agun* hacen una armonía grata: ese es el *culintangang*, el instrumento nacional (Miguel Espina: 1888, p. 53).

The text is full of data: musical instruments are part of the richness of a Moro; with the *agong* the cacique (*datu*) commands the people living in different towns (*rancherías*), whether battle or fiesta<sup>[8]</sup>; and most important, the *batintines* is a set of scaled gongs-in-a-row, the “national instrument” that together with the *agun* (in other words, ensemble) produces *beautiful harmonies* (“una armonía grata”), being that instrument called *culintangang*.



N. 1—*La Ilustración del Oriente*, Manila, 1877, núm. 10, p. 6.

### III. DESCRIPTION OF THE *KULINTANG* SOLO AND ENSEMBLE.

The standard *kulintang* nowadays is composed by eight gongs, from biggest to smaller, from lowest to highest. These gongs are disposed in a row over a wooden construction, suspended on strings as braces. Each gong has a protuberance (“boss”), in which the performer plays with a pair of sticks made of soft wood:

The kulintang is a set of eight knobbed gongs in graduated sizes. The gongs are arranged horizontally from largest to smallest [...]. The box-likened wooden frame is just a little higher than the seat of a regular dining chair. To the two ends of the frame are tied long parallel strings on which the gongs are suspended. Wooden bridges (*Paker*), are placed across the frame beneath the strings and between the gongs in order to provide additional support for these heavy brass instruments (Mayo Butocan: 1987, 19).

The denomination and features of the instrument can change depending of the tribal group. Thus, it is possible to find three main traditions: Tausug *Kulintangan*; Maguindanaon *Kulintang*; and Maranao *Kolintang*. The name of the instrument refers, in extension, the gong’s orchestra, because the *kulintang* is the most relevant in these performances:

The term KOLINTANG can mean one of the three things: foremost it is a set of eight graduated pot gongs; by extension the ensemble based on the pot gong row; but could also conceivably refer to individual pots of the set (Otto: 1985, 18).

*Kulintang* can be played as solo due to its capacity to elaborate melodies in the scaled set. Other metal instruments of percussion (gongs and drums) can only produce the same tone—therefore

*kulintang* leads the gong's orchestra (*Kulintang ensemble*). The composition of this ensemble varies depending on different traditions, being for instance the Maguindanaon *kulintang* ensemble composed by five instruments: *kulintang*, *agong* (pair of heavy hanging gongs), *dabakan* (goblet-shaped drum), *gandingan* (four suspended gongs) and *babandir* (small metallic gong) (Danongan Kalanduyan: 1996, pp. 3-7). The *agong* produces the main rhythm as well as the *dabakan*, both is the task to describe a rhythmic mode (Scott Scholz: 1996, p. 52). The *babandir* has a characteristic metallic sound functional as a timekeeper. Finally, more elaborated is the *gandingan*, which can challenge with the *kulintang* in the production on melodic lines. The *gandingan* was used to call to pray in the mosque, like we can understand in the following passage of Montero y Vidal: "Para congregar a los creyentes dan fuertes golpes con un baquetón sobre una enorme pandereta que llaman *gandáng* (Montero y Vidal: 1888, I, p 83)". Similarly, in order to call the warriors for the battle the *agong* was employed: "Á lo lejos se oía el sonido del agun, convocando á los guerreros á la defensa (Montero y Vidal: 1888, II, p. 742).

Therefore, the Maguindanaon *kulintang* ensemble is principally composed by five instruments, although the variety of ethno-linguistic groups and the different musical practices establish in fact different orchestration (Maceda: 2002). However the types of instruments do not change significantly in its nature: suspended gongs, drums, wooden percussion, instruments made with bamboo, etc.

The function of the *kulintang* orchestra targets the festivities, specially weddings and social events with large repercussion in the community. For orthodox Islamic rites, gong instruments appear seldom, although as noticed earlier *gandingan* was described by Montero y Vidal as tool to call the Muslims to pray. For popular religiosity and ceremonies the use of *kulintang* increases (Usopay Cadar: 1996, p. 93). For this reason, *kulintang* ensemble is not only a musical game or an entertainment, but also a complete cultural performance with dance (*Sinkil, Pangalay*), costumes and way of life. This is why the possession of musical instruments is a valuable patrimony and symbol of wealth among the Philippine Muslims.

Finally, other function of the *kulintang* ensemble is the courtship. Indeed, if the woman is playing the *kulintang* or the *dabakan*, and the rest of instruments are played by men, could take place a sonorous challenge between the gongs, with the frenetic movements of the rhythm and a public game of declarations:

These are also appropriate occasions [weddings] for courtship between the male *agong* player and the female *kulintang* player [...] Performers seek to communicate through the gongs they play. At times, negatives responses to proposals may lead a trouble (Mayo: 1987, p. 17).

In sum, the music for the *kulintang* is in origin pre-Islamic and, accordingly, despite to be a main instrument of the Islamized Philippine groups, the Islamic elements in the *kulintang* music were rare. However, similarly to the anthropological acculturation, *kulintang* also undertook a process towards Islamization (Gowing: 1979, 128-129). By preserving the indigenous tradition within an Islamic domain, *kulintang* was able to be part of both, Islamic and Indigenous.

#### IV. MUSICAL SYSTEM.

The gongs in the *kulintang* do not have determined pitch, and the music is played on the basis of the oral tradition in the performance. The repertoire is inherited generation after generation. Consequently, the fundamental is not the pitch but the capacity to follow the rhythm and the ability moving the sticks. For this reason, the development of the repertoire in *kulintang* cannot be consider in terms of tunings, but the rhythm created in the scale of gongs. To be in tune must be a secondary issue:

Tunings of *kulintang* gongs differ from one set to another. In other words, no true sets of

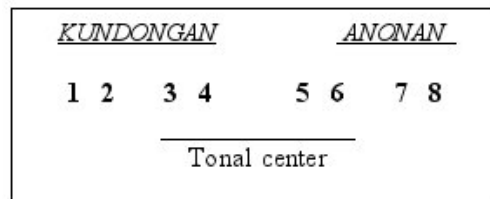
kulintang have the same row of pitches. For example, one kulintang set may be tuned as follows: E F# G# A B C# D# E. Another kulintang set may have pitches generally corresponding to: D Eb G A B D E F# (Mayo: 1987, p. 19).

Nowadays, fabrication of modern *kulintang*s tends towards a model<sup>[9]</sup>, although in the traditional way of manufacture is not possible to speak about a unique manner of pitches. In sum, tuning is not relevant as far as *kulintang* targets to create a melody with the rhythm as the main musical achievement.

*Kulintang* music is structured with a series of sections which can be repeated several times. Between the introductory and concluding sections, there are different melodic games and repetitions. The piece usually begins in the gong number 3, and the main cadence concludes in 4-3. This is to say, the gong 3 is the most important to establish the tonal center. Therefore, gongs 3 and 6, as far as they are the medium position in the set of gongs-in-a-row, represent main points from where a process of melodic change will start

Pots 3 and 6, would seem to function as tonal centers of their respective ranges. Generally speaking, the minimal segments of a given piece either center on pot 3, move from 3 to 6, center on pot 6, use 6 as platform from which to ascend and 'bring it to its height', or move back again from pot 6 to pot 3 (Otto: 1985, p. 34).

According to Otto, *kulintang*'s gongs were divided by a functional task, two parts of four gongs each one, establishing the central gongs the tonality:



N. 2— Otto: *Kulintang*'s functional task

The topographic (spatial) notion of *kulintang* music is evident in the theoretical system, because it is the gong itself (and not its pitch) the relevant in creating the music, the well-performance and the transmission of the repertoire. Accordingly, it seems convenient in order to write *kulintang* music to use a topographic system (base on space and not in scale). Oral tradition and teachings was and still is determinant in *kulintang*'s world, as well as rhythm and melody rather than tone and scale. The music evolves through the melodic line, from a stopped moment in the beginnings to a very fast evolution, the cadence and the conclusion. At the same time, the rhythm remains in a permanent position ascending and descending with small rhythmic adorns, until the climax. This is why we can find normally a common structure in the construction of the pieces in *kulintang*. The following figure was a classical attempt to conceptualize *kulintang* musical structure<sup>[10]</sup>:

<i>STRUCTURAL MODEL OF THE KULINTANG PIECES</i>	Introduction-Prelude	3
	Section A	3-6
	Ascend	5-8
	Section B	3-8
	Descend	3-6
	Transition	1-5
	Cadence	3-7

N. 3— Structural Model of the *Kulintang* Pieces

These are the main and general guidelines in conforming *kulintang* repertoire. However, the

the especial issue edited in 1996 by the journal *Asian Music*. In this special issue —*Kulintang/Kolintang Music*<sup>[11]</sup>— two main traditions were studied in detail: Maguindanao and Maranao. For Maguindanao *kulintang*, the repertoire was divided in two kinds of compositions: *kamamatuan* (“old”) and *kangungudan* (“new”). *Kamamatuan* is a more formalized tradition, classical and with sobriety, composed by three pieces: *duyog*, *kamamatuan na sinulog*, and *kamamatuan na tidto*. In the other hand, *kangungudan* appears two generations ago with more freedom towards improvisation, composed by *binalig*, *tidto a kangungudan*, and *sinulog a kangungudan* (Danongan Kalanduyan: 1996). As far as Maranao *kulintang* is concerning, the repertoire is more complex in number of compositions, though less formalized than the Maguindanao one:

Among the Magindanaon people, recreational performances of *Kolintang* music must consist of the performance of three compositions, or rhythmic/ melodic patters [...] *Duyog*, *Sinulog*, and *Tidtu* and they must be performed in this order [...] Among the Maranao no such formal order exists in performance. However, there are three compositions which are considered more difficult and which also allow the performer greater scope for variations. These three compositions are *Kapromayas* or *Romayas*, *Kapagonor* or *Onor*, and *Katitik Pandai*, also called *Kapaginandang* (Cadar and Garfias: 1996, p. 110).

In this sense, a list of Maranao compositions was given in the same paper dealing with three aspects: Compositions derived from songs; compositions imitating extramusical sounds and effects; and abstract compositions (*ibid*: pp. 118-121). Indeed, Maranao repertoire is active in developing different kind of pieces, and “attempts to realize its definitive codification may be impossible beyond a point. New pieces are continually proliferating (Otto: 1996, p. 127).

*Kulintang* establishes the development of the melody, and the rest of instruments have mainly rhythmic function, in terms of rhythm, repetitions, adorns and, if allowed the word, *ostinato*. These are the functions of the *agong* and *gandingan* (Terada: 1996), and the rest of instruments that can appear in the *kulintang* ensemble. For instance, a piece for *kulintang* ensemble begins with the rhythm of the *dabakan* and the *babandir* and follows the *kulintang* repeating in the gong 3. When it is established the tension, the game of ascending and descending movements begins, across the different gongs, until resting the music in a cadence towards the same gong 3 (Posner: 1996).

## V. THE ORAL TRADITION: PERFORMANCE AND AESTHETICS.

Learning *kulintang* music requires more time and dedication than any other gong or metal instrument among Philippine Muslims. To be expert in playing *kulintang* is not an easy achievement, and the future performer begins very early developing his/her abilities. Unlike other Moro instruments, *kulintang* can produce small melodies and other musical processes, impossible in common percussion. Many of the effects produced in *kulintang* show the good manners of the performer, like the touch among the boss and other aspects that are able only due to the continuous exercise in the instrument.

The technique to play *kulintang* is inherited traditionally generation after generation, as oral tradition thought by a master (Mayo: 1987, pp. 18-20). No other was the option to transfer knowledge. Altogether good manners playing *kulintang*, the master transmits the local repertoire as well. Through oral tradition, this heritage remains part of the own culture. As a matter of fact, *kulintang* player is the guardian of the tradition and the oral culture of his people (Kanapia Kalanduyan: 2007).

Nowadays, technological changes and devices in processing information force to evolve in terms of transmission. The social variations among Philippine Muslims as well as the necessity to make use of the repertoire in paper and sound (and not only in the mind of the master), opens new possibilities. Indeed, in any moment the rupture of the chain could take place, given the fact the

heritage of the repertoire. At present, it could be eventually possible to find a self-thought *kulintang* player, because little by little the instrument enters academic and urban fields, where a notational system and music records can help the student to be initiated in the performance. In this point, the ancient kind of performance faces a new arena (Mayo: 1987). However, to preserve the authentic and customary skills inherited by oral tradition gives sense to the modern expansion of *kulintang* beyond Moro lands. Therefore, traditional masters advocate for preserving the features of transmission in similar way than in the original environment. The video, as tool in implementing the traditional system, could be an instrument, but nothing replaces the master-student link. In the College of Music of the University of the Philippines, notation spreads as main instrument, although some of the students prefer to observe directly in order to learn, or to use videos to imitate the performance (Kanapia Kalanduyan: 2007).

Regarding *kulintang* aesthetics, Maceda gave a classical statement about the perception, sounds and philosophy of the instrument<sup>[12]</sup>. The main aspects described were two: in the first place, the longer distance the better perception of the melodic line in *kulintang*; and in the second, different rhythmic models are suitable for specific kind of dances (warlike, courtship, etc):

It appears that from a distance the four gongs without a melody tapping or booming out a basic and recurring rhythmic pattern effectively promote the isolation of the remaining instrument the *kulintang* with a thin melodic line (Maceda: 1963, p. 68).

## VI. NOTATIONAL SYSTEMS.

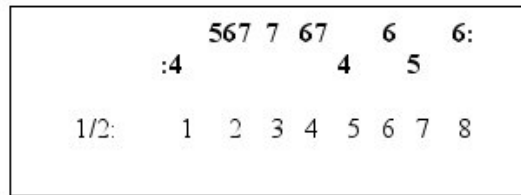
In our days, *kulintang* is not only a local instrument of the Philippine Muslim area and other regions in South-East Asia, but also a well-known instrument in academic circles, thanks to the Ethnomusicology. Especially important is the role of *kulintang* in Philippine universities, in the two main conservatories of music in Manila: the University of the Philippines in Diliman (Quezon City) and the University of Santo Tomás. Today, to play *kulintang* is a requirement in order to obtain the Master of Arts in Musicology and the degree of Ethnomusicology. *Kulintang* ensemble is a part of the curricula in the College of Music, and indigenous instruments are located in the same place that the piano for instance. Indeed, indigenous music and tribal ensembles flourish today in the Philippines, playing the *kulintang* a strong role in native orchestras. As notice before, *kulintang* reached United States dramatically (Usopay Cadar: 1996), being the topic of several dissertations: Usopay Cadar, *The Maranao Kulintang Music: an Analysis of the instruments, musical organization, etymologies and historical documents*, Seattle, University of Washington, M.A. Thesis, 1971; Steven Walter Otto, *The Maranao Kakolintang. An approach to the Repertoire*, Ann Arbor, University of Michigan, Ph.D. Dissertation, 1976; Karen Posner, *The Magindanaon Kulintang*, Seattle, University of Washington, M.A. Thesis, 1980; Scott Scholz, *The Supportive Role of the Agung in the Maguindanaon Kulintang Ensemble*, Seattle, University of Washington, M.A. Thesis, 1981; Yoshitaka Terada, *The role of the Gandingan in the Magindanaon Kulintang Ensemble*, Seattle, University of Washington, M.A. Thesis, 1983; Danongan Sibay Kalanduyan, *The Performance of Maguindanaon Kulintang Music of the Southern Philippines*, Seattle, University of Washington, M.A. Thesis, 1984

Altogether, to develop these studies was needed to develop a notational system in order to describe formally the musical features and to analyze the ancient repertoire. Therefore, different writing systems to note down *kulintang* music emerged. During the 70's and 80's, a lot of studies on the subject were done, writing for the first time the repertoire of *kulintang* music and studying it. Hence, several notational proposals were attempted.

### 1) NUMERIC SEQUENCE.

The numeric sequence was used by Otto to collect the repertoire of the Maranao *kulintang* in

It is a 1/2 structural model, which can change depending of the rhythmic alteration (Otto: 1985, p. 37), writing it putting together more than one number in the same space:

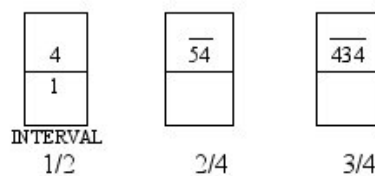


N. 4—Otto: Numeric Sequence.

Therefore, there are eight numbers, the eight pots of the *kulintang*, from the lowest (1) to the highest (8). If the number is up, must be played by the right hand; if it is down, must be played by the left hand. There are not indications of interpretation, tempo and other dynamic items. In this sense, it is a method to recollect the repertoire in the place that was performed; How to interpret it belongs to the performer, in other words, in the oral tradition. The numeric sequence is a preliminary and fast system in order to save the oral tradition, to recollect the repertoire, to put it in scripts for further study of its structure. It develops the foundations of a topographic system based in the space rather than the scale.

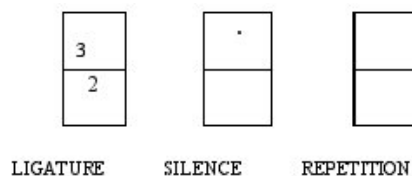
## 2) TABLATURE.

The former system was modified dividing the beats with boxes, developing the rhythmic items and adding performing marks. This was, in fact, the creation of a tablature for *kulintang*. The eight pots are numerated similarly, from 1 to 8, but now they are inscribed inside a box, inside the beat represented by a square with two halves. The above half is for the right hand, and the below half is for the left hand. The squares permit a distinctive definition of the rhythm, as well as the notes inside each beat shows the times that each beat has. Remarkable is the establishment of intervals putting the numbers aligned vertically each other. Each square represents a beat, and when the rhythm is altered, there are marks above the numbers:



N. 5— Mayo's tablature.

This system permits a clearer indication of the rhythm of performance, and what the interpret must to play in every moment. At the same time, it is possible to point out adorns in the performance, as the "ligature" with the right hand replied by the left in the previous pot, the silence and repetition:



N. 6— Mayo's tablature.

1987), being a recurrent system nowadays in conservatoires to be initiated in the instrument. *Kulintang* does not have a fixed tuning therefore tonal scale is not relevant in order to write its music. The main value of the instrument is its eight pots and, in this sense, the topographic (spatial) performance. Going further, it is possible to write all the instruments of *kulintang* ensemble using tablature. Some instance of *kulintang*'s tablature could be the following *Sinulog 1* (Mayo: 1987, p. 56):

3	.	3	.	3	.	3	.

[3x]								[3x]							
5	5	4		4		4		5	6	5	5			4	
		3	3	3	2	3	3		4			3	2	3	3

			56	7	7	7	6
2	3	3					5

N. 7— Mayo's *Sinulog 1*.

### 3) WESTERN NOTATION.

Finally, it is possible to find attempts to write *kulintang* music using Western musical language, both after the works of José Maceda (2002). Musical language of Western Music is the staff, this is to say, the tonal scale, which is not relevant in playing *kulintang*, because this does not have especial tuning. At the same time, the intervallic distance is quite narrow, given the fact that *kulintang* cannot go further than eight sounds. Consequently, the five lines of the staff are too much broad for the instrument. Moreover, it is needed to establish previously a scale, with the tones and positions of the gongs in the staff, in order to write then the notes of the music. This scale, with the eight sounds, will represent the pots as far as the numbers in the tablature, but with the problem that here it is necessary to do a mental transcription of the scale.

It seems that is not natural to try to fit *kulintang* music within this musical language, especially if the purpose of writing the music is just to play it. Otherwise, if the purpose is to analyze it from a musicological point of view, perhaps it could be a way to compare it with another indigenous music. In any case, the musical language, despite the necessity to establish a scale, can provide other information, as the specific rhythm, accentuations or dynamic symbols.

### 4) STAFF-MADE TABLATURE.

Following the last project, some composition of José Maceda tried to design a mixed system between the musical language and the tablature. The growth of percussion-type instruments in the Western music was building new experiments in the notation, and finally the destruction of the tonal center opened the gate to endless experimentalism in the notational systems of the 20th century.

Within this panorama, Maceda developed in modern Philippine Music an original system mixing indigenous and Western elements, which needed a particular notation. Some original work of José Maceda, as *Ugma-Ugma or Structures for Musical Instruments and Voices*<sup>[13]</sup>, uses the five lines of the staff using it as spatial tablature, this is to say, the lines and the spaces are showing the position in the *kulintang*, and not the intervallic value. from the lowest line as first gong, appears in the *Incipit* a numeration until the highest space, which has the number eight representing the eighth gong.

instruments. At the same time provides useful elements in terms of rhythm and accents, performance data and evolution of the melodic line around the third gong, that can be clearly seen centering it in the second line of the staff (as the G key). A similar system, using four lines instead than five, was applied by Scholz (1996, p. 39).

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## Notes

- [1] About Muslims in the Philippines see: Cesar Adib Majul, *Theories of the Introduction and Expansion of Islam in Malaysia*, Dumaguete City, Silliman University, 1964; *idem*, *Muslims in the Philippines*, Quezon City, University of the Philippines Press, 1999; Peter G. Gowing and Robert Day McAmis (eds.), *The Muslim Filipinos*, Manila, Solidaridad, 1974; Jainal Rasul, *Struggle for identity. A short history of the Filipino Muslims*, Quezon City, Amir Rasul, 2003; Carmen A. Abubakar, “Islamization of Southern Philippines: An Overview”, in F. Landa Jocano (ed.), *Filipino Muslims: Their Social Institutions and Cultural Achievements*, Quezon City, University of the Philippines, 1983, pp. 6-13; *idem*, “The Advent and Growth of Islam in the Philippines”, in K. S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (eds.), *Islam in Southeast Asia. Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005, pp. 45-63; Isaac Donoso Jiménez, *Islamic Far East. Ethnohistory of the Filipino Muslims*, Quezon City, Institute of Islamic Studies, University of the Philippines, M.A. Thesis, 2007; Abraham P. Sakili, “The Philippine Muslims: Our Link to Southeast Asia”, en *Kasarinlan*, Quezon City, University of the Philippines, vol. 15, n. 2, 2000, pp. 27-34; Robert Day McAmis, *Malay Muslims. The History and Challenge of Resurgent Islam in Southeast Asia*, Cambridge, Eerdmans, 2002; Holt, Lambton and Lewis (eds.), “Part IV: South East Asia”, in *The Cambridge History of Islam*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 123-154; Nicholas Tarling, *The Cambridge History of the Southeast Asia*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1992, pp. 330-334, 508-572; S.Q. Fatimi, *Islām comes to Malaysia*, Singapore, Malaysian Sociological Research Institute, 1963; Johan H. Meuleman, “The History of Islam in Southeast Asia: Some Questions and Debates”, in K. S. Nathan and Mohammad Hashim Kamali (eds.), *Islam in Southeast Asia. Political, Social and Strategic Challenges for the 21st Century*, Singapore, Institute of Southeast Asian Studies, 2005, pp. 22-44; Anthony H. Johns, “Islamization in Southeast Asia: Reflections and Reconsiderations with Special Reference to the Role of Sufism”, in *Southeast Asian Studies*, Kyoto, Kyoto University, vol. 31, n. 1, 1993, pp. 43-61.
- [2] Cf. José Maceda and others, “Philippines”, in Stanley Sadie (ed.), *The New Grove. Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, New York, Macmillan, 2002, vol. 19, pp. 564-586.
- [3] “The music of the modern Filipinos borrows almost entirely from a non-Asian musical world: in fact, a Mediterranean sound world of plucked strings –guitar, bandurria, rondalla and harp”, José Maceda quoted by Peter Gowing, *Muslim Filipinos. Heritage and Horizon*, Quezon City, New Day Published, 1979, p. 134.

About the history of Philippine Music see: Raimundo C. Bañas, *The music and theater of the Filipino people*, Manila, 1924; *idem*, *Pilipino Music and Theater*, Quezon city, Manlapaz Publishing, 1969; William R. Pfeiffer, *Music in the Philippines. Indigenous, Folk, Modern*, Manila, Silliman, 1975; Elena Rivera Mirano, *Musika. An essay on the Spanish influence on Philippine Music*, Manila, CCP, 1992; Antonio C. Hila, “Our Spanish Colonial Musical Heritage”, in *Music in History, History in Music*, Manila, University of Santo Tomas, 2004, pp. 1-12; brief introduction of the Rondalla in Rosita F. Rivadelo, *Fundamentals of Music*, Manila, National Book Store, 1986; and example of Sacred Music in M. Alexandra Iñigo-Chua, “Kirial de esta Yglesia de Baclayon año 1826: A Representation of a 19th Century Sacred Filipino Musical Culture”, in *New Perspectives on the Spanish Colonial Period. Journal for the Arts, Culture, and the Humanities*, Manila, University of Santo Tomas, 2003, vol. 2, n° 1, pp. 16-26.

- [4] About Moro vocal music see: Usopay Cadar, *Context and Style in the vocal music of the Muranao in Mindanao, Philippines*, Marawi, Mindanao State University, 1980; Ricardo D. Trimillos, “The setting of vocal music among the Tausug”, in *People of the current. Sulu Studies Revisited*, Manila, National Commission for Culture and Arts, 2001, pp. 127-140; and Ramón Pagayon Santos, “Bâ’ diw, Bayok: Poetry and Oratory as Filipino Musical Cultures”, in *Tunugan. Four Essays on Filipino Music*, Quezon City, University of the Philippines, 2005, pp. 95-124.
- [5] Cf. Usopay Cadar, *The Maranao Kulintang Music: an Analysis of the instruments, musical organization, etymologies and historical documents*, Seattle, University of Washington, M.A. Thesis, 1971, p. 61.
- [6] “One emphasis of Maranao *kolintang* playing is a kind of grace and frailty which is normally

associated with women. Men are considered too masculine, too expressive, and too stiff to be able to play the melody part. Nevertheless, there are a few men who play the *kolintang*”, in Usopay H. Cadar, “The role of Kolintang Music in Maranao Society”, in *Asian Music. Journal of the Society for Asian Music*, XXVII-2, 1996, p. 88.

Certainly nowadays, unless the social context determines it, gender does not have relevance in playing *kulintang*, as the existence of male international masters proves (p.e. Danongan Kalanduyan, Usopay Cadar, Kanapia Kalanduyan, etc).

- [7] We should notice the name of the dance given by the anonymous author as well as Montero y Vidal in the latter text as *moro-moro*. This name does not have to be confused with the Philippine *Komedya* known as well as *Moro-Moro*. Vicente Barrantes connected both, saying that the Philippine moro-moro had its origin in the dances and celebrations in honor of Alimudín’s baptism April 28 of 1750 in the city of Panique, Pangasinan. W. E. Retana faced this classical mistake Cf. Vicente Barrantes, *El teatro tagalo, Madrid*, Tipografía de Manuel G. Hernández, 1889, pp. 34-35; W. E. Retana, *Noticias histórico-bibliográficas del teatro en Filipinas desde sus orígenes hasta 1898*, Madrid, Victoriano Suárez, 1909, pp. 34-36; Isaac Donoso Jiménez, “El Islam en las Letras Filipinas”, in *Studi Ispanici*, Roma & Pisa, Istituti Editoriali e Poligrafici Internazionali, 2007, pp. 297-303; and *idem* “The Hispanic Moros y Cristianos and the Philippine Komedya”, in *First International Conference on Komedya*, Quezon City, University of the Philippines (in press).
- [8] “Many lovers in Maguindanaon society use kulintang music as a means of communicating to each other their desires to elope [...] There was a man in a Maguindanaon village who was accused of stealing a *carabao*, but he could not be arrested by the authorities because of the use of the gandingan for communication”, in Danongan S. Kalanduyan, “Maguindanaon Kulintang Music: Instruments, Repertoire, Performance Contexts, and Social Functions”, in *Asian Music. Journal of the Society for Asian Music*, XXVII-2, 1996, pp. 17-18.
- [9] Maceda points out a model in the following scale: C D F# G A# B. Cf. “Kulintang”, in *Grove, loc. cit.*, p. 18.
- [10] One model for Maranao pieces in Otto, *loc. cit.*, p. 35. For Maguindanaon pieces Aga Mayo did a similar model with the main features: *op. cit.*, pp. 25-27.
- [11] *Asian Music. Journal of the Society for Asian Music*, XXVII-2, 1996.
- [12] Maceda, “Kulintang”, in *Grove, loc. cit.*, p. 18. Also Otto, *op. cit.*, p. 15.
- [13] *Vid.* Ramón Pagayon Santos, “José Montserrat Maceda: Rebellion, Non-Conformity and Alternatives”, in *Tunugan. Four Essays on Filipino Music*, Quezon City, University of the Philippines, 2005, p. 134.

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