

The Contemporary Filipino Violin
An In-Depth Study and Performance Guide of Ramon Santos' "*Abot-Tanaw II*" for Solo
Violin (1984) and Conrado Del Rosario's "*Darangun*" for Solo Violin (1985)

by

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ABSTRACT

According to the profile of the World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples, the Philippines consists over a hundred ethnolinguistic groups, twenty-seven of which were direct descendants of prehistoric settlers in the country. As a nation of diverse indigenous cultures, multiple precolonial rituals are practiced even after four centuries of Western occupation. Beside strong oral and written traditions, Filipino contemporary music contributed to the preservation of these indigenous societies. Filipino composers in the second half of the twentieth century and beyond were able to incorporate native musical concepts with Western compositional language, thereby producing a new style of contemporary music unique to the Philippines. This development did not only bring greater awareness of indigenous music to city-dwelling Filipinos, but also to the larger Western music community.

While newer works from Western classical composers are performed frequently today, pieces for violin by contemporary Filipino composers are largely unknown. In this research paper the author aims to bring understanding of and visibility to Filipino contemporary music to the Western violin community through an in-depth analysis of two representative works for solo violin: *Abot Tanaw II* (1984) by Filipino National Artist of Music Dr. Ramon Santos, and *Darangun* (1985) by award-winning composer Conrado Del Rosario.

The research paper will first explore a brief history of the Philippines and its relationship with Western classical music, from precolonial times to the twenty-first century. The succeeding chapters will be devoted to the in-depth study of the two solo violin works. After providing a biography of each composer, I will present the backgrounds and contexts of their respective works. Finally, the present author will provide thorough structural analyses of these pieces and interpretative suggestions to

serve as a general performance guide for interested violinists. To gather substantial data for these chapters, the author collaborated with the composers through virtual personal interviews and electronic communication.

This research paper culminated in a lecture recital performed by the author on October 21, 2021 in Katzin Hall of the School of Music, Dance and Theater at Arizona State University, Tempe, Arizona.¹

¹ The audiovisual recording can be accessed at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6woUBSajVaM&t=2121s>.

Dedicated to my mom and dad, for their selfless love, support, and encouragement.

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CHAPTER 1

A BRIEF MUSIC HISTORY OF THE PHILIPPINES

Pre-colonial Philippines

The Philippines is an archipelago in Southeast Asia and is comprised of over 7,000 islands. There are three main geographic groups: “Luzon” in the North, “Visayas” in the center, and “Mindanao” in the South (figure 1.1).



Figure 1.1: Map of the Philippines²

The country experienced a long and arduous history of colonial rule under two countries: Spain and the United States of America. Before colonization, the Philippines consisted of smaller communities called *barangay*, a type of settlement that consists of a tight-knit community of families, headed by a leader called datu.³

² *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, “Philippines,” image, accessed October 20, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Philippines#/media/1/456399/61685>.

³ Onofre Corpuz, *The Roots of the Filipino Nation*, (Manila: Aklahi Foundation, 1989), 13.; *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*, s.v. “Barangay,” accessed July 20, 2021, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/barangay>.

There is a rich tradition of pre-colonial music as evidenced by an abundance of preserved musical practices within indigenous groups of the Philippines. The use of a *gangsa*, flat gongs made of bronze or brass, are prominent among the Bontok, Ibaloi, and Kalinga ethnic groups residing in Northern Luzon.⁴ These instruments are played on significant occasions such as diplomatic agreements between two conflicting groups, and weddings (figure 1.2).⁵



Figure 1.2: Bontok Men Playing Gangsa⁶

Barangay stems from the word *balangay*, a water vessel that transported families and communities from island-to-island. *Barangay* is still used today to denote the smallest level of local government.

⁴ José Maceda, Ramon Santos, et al, “Philippines (Republika ng Pilipinas),” *Oxford Music Online* (2001), <https://doi-org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.48467>.

⁵ Corazon Canave-Dioquino, “The Lowland Christian Philippines,” in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 4: Southeast Asia*, eds. Terry Miller and Sean Williams (Routledge, 1998), https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Creference_article%7C1000226924.

⁶ José Maceda, “FIGURE 1 With sticks, the Bontok of Sadanga, Luzon, play flat gongs (gangs) as they move in circular formations,” photograph, 1970s, in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 4: Southeast Asia*, eds. Terry Miller and Sean Williams (Routledge, 1998), https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Cbibliographic_details%7C326924.

Consists of a row of bossed-gongs, the *kulintang* is a music instrument used in some Islamic communities in Mindanao such as the Maguindanao, Tausug, and Bajao (figure 1.3).⁷ The *kulintang* is usually played in combination with other instruments and is performed in community-based rituals like baptism, courtship, and communication with spirits and ancestors.⁸



Figure 1.3: The Kulintang Ensemble of the Maguindanao⁹

Spanish Occupation (1565-1898)

The Spanish arrived on Philippine shores in 1565 through an expedition headed by Ferdinand Magellan.¹⁰ The majority of Luzon and Visayas were converted to Christianity from Islam and indigenous religions, while Mindanao remained largely Islamic after three centuries of sporadic Spanish-Moro wars.¹¹

⁷ Maceda, et. al, *Philippines*.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ramon Santos, "FIGURE 3 Maguindanao kulintang ensemble of Catabato, Mindanao," photograph, in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 4: Southeast Asia*, eds. Terry Miller and Sean Williams (Routledge, 1998), https://search.alexanderstreet.com/view/work/bibliographic_entity%7Creference_article%7C1000226947.

¹⁰ Corpuz, 46. In the 16th Century, Spain was motivated to expand territories through evangelization. Philippine historian Onofre Corpuz stated, "Christianity came to the islands as part of an aggressive mission of conquest; it carried the Roman pope's blessing; it was driven by a hubris of the Spanish spirit and fueled by the energy of a dynamic nation..."

¹¹ Ibid.

The Church became the first source of Western Music tradition for Filipinos. Religious orders such as the Franciscans, Jesuits, and Augustinians spearheaded early music education by training young boys to sing Gregorian chant (*canto llano*) and polyphony (*canto de órgano*), as well as play musical instruments such as the organ.¹²

In 1600, the Augustinians established the first orchestra at the Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe Church.¹³ After six years, tenor and Franciscan priest Juan de Santa Marta headed a seminary in Lumbang, Laguna and taught music to over 400 boys.¹⁴ Moreover, composer and Augustinian priest Lorenzo Castillo trained over 2,000 students while stationed in the Philippines.¹⁵ During that time Castillo wrote numerous sacred works such as masses and vespers.¹⁶

In 1742, the Colegio de los Niños Tiples de la Santa Iglesia Catedral (Cathedral Boys' College) was established became an institution for high quality music training of Filipino boys.¹⁷ The school existed for two centuries until it was permanently closed during World War II.¹⁸

¹² Dioquino, 841

¹³ Edna Marcil Martinez, "The Beginnings and Development of the Orchestra in the Philippines," in *Saysay Himig: A Sourcebook on Philippine Music History*, ed. A.Q. Tan (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 2018), 379-380.

¹⁴ Dioquino, 841.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 842.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ Leticia Del Valle, "History of Music Education in the Philippines, *National Commission for Culture and the Arts*, accessed on September 20, 2021, <https://ncca.gov.ph/about-ncca-3/subcommissions/subcommission-on-the-arts-sca/music/history-of-music-education-in-the-philippines/>.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*

Until 1863, the Spanish language was kept away from *indios*, a term used in Spanish colonies to refer to members of the indigenous population.¹⁹ The government of Spain introduced the “Educational Decree,” which not only mandated that Spanish to be taught to Filipinos, but also reformed the colonial education system in the Philippines.²⁰ Through the decree, the colonial government made sweeping improvements with the current educational system in the Philippines, such as the creation of a standardized curriculum and the establishment of elementary schools in each municipality.²¹ These comprehensive changes made Western education more accessible to the Filipino masses.²² Furthermore, music was one of the core subjects included in the standardized curriculum.²³ In 1866, the *Pequeño método teórico-práctico de solféo* (“A simple theoretical-practical method in solfeggio”) was published for primary schools in the Philippines.²⁴

Performance of Western European repertoire in the Philippines excelled in the late 19th Century. The first Filipino opera company was established in 1887 and it featured both European and Filipino operas.²⁵ New orchestras comprised of mostly Filipinos achieved popularity among Spanish and Filipino audiences, including the

¹⁹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “Indio,” accessed August 25, 2021, <https://www.oed.com/view/Entry/94529?redirectedFrom=indio#eid>.

²⁰ Arwin Tan, “The First Tagalog Music Theory Book,” in *Saysay Himig*, 26-30.

²¹ Erin P. Hardacker, “The Impact of Spain’s 1863 Educational Decree on the Spread of Philippine Public Schools and Language Acquisition,” abstract, *European Education* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2012-13), EBSCOhost.

²² *Ibid.*

²³ *Ibid.*, 15.

²⁴ Tan, *Saysay Himig*, 28.

²⁵ Dioquino, 857.

“Orquesta Femenina de Pandacan,” an all-female ensemble formed in 1890, and the “Orquesta Molina,” led by Juan Molina.²⁶ Formed in Quiapo, Manila in 1896, Orquesta Molina became famous for performing European orchestral works at a high standard.²⁷

While European music flourished in the Philippines in the latter part of the 19th Century, a revolution was brewing against Spain. In 1872 there was a small uprising of Filipinos against Spanish rule in Cavite, Philippines.²⁸ After more than a decade of sporadic revolts, Filipino doctor and writer José Rizal further provoked the Spanish colonial government when he published and distributed politically subversive texts such as *Noli Me Tangere* (“Touch Me Not,” 1886) and *El Filibusterismo* (“The Reign of Greed,” 1891).²⁹ Accused of treason, he was publicly executed in December 1896, an event that propelled the eruption of the Philippine Revolution.³⁰

In 1898, Spain was defeated by the United States in the Spanish-American War. As concession, Spain sold the Philippines to the United States for twenty million dollars in the Treaty of Paris on December 10, 1898.³¹ When Filipinos celebrated their independence from Spain on June 12, 1898, they did not know that United States were

²⁶ Martinez, 381-382.

²⁷ Ibid., 381.

²⁸ Public Broadcasting Service Online, “August 1896: Revolt in the Philippines,” accessed on September 20, 2021, <https://www.pbs.org/crucible/tl5.html>.

²⁹ Library of Congress, “José Rizal,” *The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War*, accessed on September 20, 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/rizal.html>.

³⁰ Ibid. It is important to note that Rizal was a reformist and not a revolutionary. He even denounced the plans of revolt by the Katipunan. For more information see Chris Antonette Piedad-Pugay, “José Rizal and the Revolution,” *National Historical Commission of the Philippines* (September 18, 2012), <https://nhcp.gov.ph/jose-rizal-and-the-revolution/>.

³¹ University of Alberta, “Spanish-American War / War of Philippine Independence 1898 – 1901,” accessed August 12, 2021, <https://sites.ualberta.ca/~vmitchel/fw4.html>.

about to replace Spain and would subjugate the country for thirty more years of colonization.³²

American Occupation (1898-1946)

After realizing that Spain had sold their country to the United States, Filipinos felt angry and betrayed.³³ In 1899, sporadic guerilla warfare began against American occupation.³⁴ Eventually, the United States decided to change course, granting Philippine representation in their government through the formation of the Philippine Assembly in 1907.³⁵ The “Jones Law” of 1916 guaranteed Philippine independence, “once Filipinos were ready for self-governance.”³⁶

The United States drastically changed the Spanish and European landscape of the Philippines. Modern public infrastructure was built, representation in American legislation grew, and English became the mandated language. The arrival of over five hundred American educators in August 1901 was instrumental to the establishment of public education in the country.³⁷ Nicknamed as the “Thomasites,” these teachers from

³² Ibid.

³³ Library of Congress: Hispanic Division, “Mark Twain,” *The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War*, accessed August 12, 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/rr/hispanic/1898/twain.html>. American opinion on the takeover was divided. Mark Twain was quoted writing, “...But I have thought some more, since then, and I have read carefully the treaty of Paris, and I have seen that we do not intend to free, but to subjugate the people of the Phillippines. We have gone there to conquer, not to redeem. . . It should, it seems to me, be our pleasure and duty to make those people free, and let them deal with their own domestic questions in their own way. And so I am an anti-imperialist. I am opposed to having the eagle put its talons on any other land.”

³⁴ University of Alberta, “Spanish-American War.””

³⁵ Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, “The Commonwealth of the Philippines,” accessed June 22, 2021, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/the-commonwealth-of-the-philippines/>.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ Raul Casantusan Navarro, “The Thomasites in Philippine Colonial Education,” in *Saysay Himig*, 45-50.

various colleges and universities in the U.S. boarded the *Transport Thomas* and would become the foundation an American education system in the Philippines.³⁸ In a span of thirty years, the Americans instituted a secular public educational system, yet it was an “instrument of colonial policy,” according to Philippine historian Renato Constantino.³⁹

The arrival of the Americans also brought popular music to the Philippines, much to the displeasure of Filipino elites known as the *ilustrado*.⁴⁰ They argued that the proliferation of “lower” art from America was a threat to the “higher” art music from Europe.⁴¹ This growing concern was instrumental to the Philippine Assembly passing Act 2623 on September 4, 1916. The law established the first national conservatory, the State Conservatory of Music of the University of the Philippines, which later became the College of Music.⁴²

Due to the founding of the Conservatory, formal training in Western music was standardized in the Philippines. The school became the destination for serious Filipino musicians training to become professional artists. Some students were even able to travel to the United States for further studies.⁴³ Most importantly, the Conservatory touted itself as an institution of holistic musical education, in which theory and practice were both incorporated in their pedagogy, regardless of whether the student was training to be a teacher or performer.⁴⁴

³⁸ Ibid., 45.

³⁹ Renato Constantino, *The Filipinos in the Philippines and Other Essays* (Quezon City, Philippines: Malaya Books, 1966), 42.

⁴⁰ Bayani Santos Jr, “1916: The UP Conservatory of Music as a Dream Fulfilled,” in *Saysay Himig*, 51-58.

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Ibid., 53.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 54.

Wallace George, voice professor at New England University, MA, and Robert Schofield, music professor at the College of Puget Sound, WA, were the first directors of the conservatory.⁴⁵ In 1926, Austrian conductor Alexander Lippay succeeded George and Schofield. Lippay's preference for European musicians as faculty over local talent was one of the reasons that he became a polarizing figure in the institution, leading to his resignation in 1931.⁴⁶

Nonetheless, Lippay was influential in strengthening the concert scene in the Philippines. He established the Manila Symphony Orchestra that was renowned for their high-quality performances of European and local works. The massive success of the orchestra's first performance on January 22, 1926 at the Manila Grand Opera House made a lasting impression to locals and foreigners, that "at last here was a man who could mold local talent into an orchestra that sounded like orchestras they had heard in other countries."⁴⁷

Through the help of the Asociación Musical de Filipinas, Lippay founded the Academy of Music of Manila in 1931, which rivaled the State Conservatory.⁴⁸ While the school only survived for ten years, its Western roster of faculty mentored Filipino

⁴⁵ José Maceda, et al., "Philippines," *Grove Music Online* (2001), accessed September 21, 2021. <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000048467>; Estella Felipe ed., "A brief history of the University of the Philippines," *University of the Philippines* (1922), accessed on September 20, 2021, <https://quod.lib.umich.edu/p/philamer/AGE4844.0001.001?rgn=main;view=fulltext>, 22.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Carmita Carrion. "The Manila Symphony Society 1926-1958." *Philippine Studies* 6, no. 1 (1958): 5–52. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/42719355>, 6.

⁴⁸ Bayani, 77.

students who later became professional performers; some of its faculty included cellist Regina Feldman, pianist Wilma Hillberg, and pianist-composer Jenő Takács.⁴⁹

The establishment of the State Conservatory and the Academy of Music contributed immensely to the growth of musical talent in the Philippines. Some of their alumni who went on to gain international renown were violinists Ernesto Vallejo, Luis Valencia, and singer Jovita Fuentes.⁵⁰ In addition, the country attracted world-class musicians to visit and concertize, such as violinists Mischa Elman (1921), Jascha Heifetz (1927, 1931), Jan Kubelík (1929), Yehudi Menuhin (1948), guitarist Andrés Segovia (1949), and cellist Pierre Fournier (1949).⁵¹

Most importantly, the establishment of conservatories during the American occupation bore the “triumvirate” of Filipino classical music composers: Nicanor Abelardo (1893-1934), Francisco Santiago (1889-1947), and Antonio Molina (1894-1979).⁵² Through their prolific output of art songs, chamber music, and orchestral works, the triumvirate developed a compositional style in which they incorporated folk songs with Western Romantic technique.⁵³ For example, Abelardo’s *Mutya ng Pasig* (“Maiden of the River Pasig,” 1926), Santiago’s *Madaling Araw* (“Midnight,” ca. 1920s), and Molina’s *Amihan* (“North Breeze,” 1923) featured lush and chromatic accompaniment

⁴⁹ Ramon Santos, “Nicanor Abelardo: Filipino Classicism in the Art of Music,” *Tunugan: Four Essays on Filipino Music* (Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 2005), https://books.google.com/books?id=ScoMtNDK9WIC&printsec=frontcover&source=gbs_ge_summary_r&cad=0#v=onepage&q&f=false, 3.

⁵⁰ Bayani, 78; Maceda, “Philippines.”

⁵¹ Santos, *Tunugan*, 3; John Anthony Maltese, “Concerts, Recording Sessions, and Radio Broadcasts: 1906-1974,” *Jascha Heifetz, The Official Website*, accessed on September 21, 2021, <https://jaschaheifetz.com/about/concerts/>.

⁵² Verne De La Peña, “Filipino Composers During the American Colonial Period, 1898-1946,” in *Saysay Himig*, 139-147.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 141-142.

underneath folk themes sung by the singer.⁵⁴ The compositional style extended to instrumental works as well such as Abelardo's *Piano Concerto in B minor* (1923), Santiago's *Sonata Filipina in D-flat Major* for piano (1922), and Molina's *Prelude and Romance* (1928) for cello and piano.⁵⁵

In the 1930s, Abelardo attempted to introduce modern music to the Philippines after his studies in the Chicago Musical College under Wesley LaViolette (1931-1933).⁵⁶ Despite being under immense financial and personal difficulties, Abelardo's residency in the United States was his most productive period in which he composed pieces that were inspired by Arnold Schoenberg and the Second Viennese School.⁵⁷ The premiere of his *Violin Sonata* (1931) was well-received by his teacher and colleagues; *Cinderella Overture* (1931) was praised by the American music magazine *Musical Leader* as highly original and musically cohesive.⁵⁸ Unfortunately, these works were not published, and manuscripts are difficult to find even today.

After his return to the Philippines, Abelardo shocked many Filipino audiences with the foreign techniques he used in his pieces such as the Panoramas for Violin, Viola, Flute, Piano, and Celesta (1932) and Piano Quintet, "*A Study in Kumintang*" (1932). As a result, composers and musicians were hesitant in accepting this newer style and

⁵⁴ Ibid., 142.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 143.

⁵⁶ Joseph Ortiguera, "Nicanor Abelardo: Violin Sonata (D.M.A. dissertation, University of Alabama, 2014)," 14-16, <https://ir.ua.edu/handle/123456789/2010>.

⁵⁷ Ramon Santos, "Modern Filipino Music Before 1950," in *Saysay Himig*, 149-156. He described Abelardo's works as having a "strong inclination toward the Expressionist style represented by the music of Arnold Schoenberg."

⁵⁸ Ortiguera, "Abelardo."

preferred his older, romanticized approach to composition.⁵⁹ His composition student Hilarion Rubio treated his teacher's modern style as insincere, stating that "these modernistic touches did not flow from their hearts, but were formulated from their heads."⁶⁰ After Abelardo's sudden death in 1934 from liver cirrhosis, modernizing Philippine music was not explored until after World War II.

The United States designated the Philippines as a commonwealth in 1935, beginning the transition to independence.⁶¹ The Second World War interrupted the process to independence and in 1941 Japan forcefully occupied the Philippines. After four years of horrific occupation, the Philippines finally achieved independence after Japan's surrender on September 2, 1945.⁶²

After World War II

There are three factors that paved the way for developments in Filipino contemporary music during the second half of the 20th century: rise of globalization, growth of government support, and increased interest in ethnomusicology.

Globalization encouraged cross-cultural interactions between local and internationally renowned musicians. Various symposiums and workshops on Asian Music were held in the Philippines, such as the "Musics of Asia" in 1966, "Symposium on the Arts and Culture of Southeast Asia" in 1973, and the "Third Conference-Festival of

⁵⁹ After his return to the Philippines, Abelardo wrote about his realization that Filipinos were not appreciative of the modern music from the West. See Ernesto Epistola, *Nicanor Abelardo, the Man and the Artist: A Biography* (Philippines: Rex Publishing, 1996).

⁶⁰ Ramon Pagayon Santos, *Modernismo sa Sining Musika* (Quezon City, Philippines: University of the Philippines Press, 2018), 9.

⁶¹ Dana Herrera, "The Philippines: An Overview of the Colonial Era," *Association for Asian Studies* 20, no. 1 (Spring, 2015), <https://www.asianstudies.org/publications/ea/archives/the-philippines-an-overview-of-the-colonial-era/>.

⁶² Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, "The Commonwealth of the Philippines."

the Asian Composers League” in 1975.⁶³ Through these events the Filipino public experienced works by renowned modern composers of the 20th century, such as Pierre Boulez, Toru Takemitsu, and Iannis Xenakis. Internationally recognized soloists were featured occasionally as well such as Mstislav Rostropovich and Van Cliburn.⁶⁴

During this time, the Philippines was more receptive to emerging styles of music from the West. After finishing his studies at the Eastman School of Music with Wayne Barlow and Howard Hanson, Filipino composer Eliseo Pajaro (1915-1984) wrote music with a Neoclassicist approach, such as his *Variations on a Fugue* for Violin and Piano (1958) and his ballet *Mir-I-Nisa* (1969).⁶⁵

Lucrecia Kasilag (1918-2008), also a graduate of Eastman, was a prolific composer, pianist, and researcher. She wrote music in twentieth century and contemporary styles, from neoclassicism to avant-gardism, and eventually explored electronic music.⁶⁶ She also employed non-Western instruments in her works: “Divertissement for Piano and Orchestra” (1960) featured the *kulintang* ensemble.⁶⁷

While Filipinos were under financial and political difficulties during President Ferdinand Marcos’ dictatorship (1965-1986), the arts flourished due to the support of First Lady Imelda Marcos.⁶⁸ The founding of the Cultural Center of the Philippines (CCP)

⁶³ Ramon Pagayon Santos, *Modernismo*.

⁶⁴ Joseph McLellan, “NSO to Shun Politics, Play in Manila,” *The Washington Post*, 5 February 1983, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/lifestyle/1983/02/05/nso-to-shun-politics-play-in-manila/286a81f5-b637-46f1-9bfd-dcbo4d13a380/>; Pablo Tariman, “Van Cliburn of Imelda’s splendorous days,” *Vera Files*, 13 September 2012, <https://ph.news.yahoo.com/blogs/the-inbox/van-cliburn-imelda-splendorous-days-011928442.html>.

⁶⁵ Santos, 12.

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, 14.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 15. *Kulintang* is an ensemble that has a combination of indigenous metal gongs and percussion from the Southern region of Mindanao.

⁶⁸ Filipino artists and musicians had a complicated relationship with the Marcos government.

became instrumental in nurturing local musicians and composers through various projects. One example was the *Pagdiriwang ng Musikang Filipino* (“Celebration of Filipino Music”), a ten-day music festival in 1981 where new works of Filipino composers were performed for the greater public in Luneta Park, Manila. Another trailblazing project was the establishment of the “National Music Competitions for Young Artists” (NAMCYA) in 1973 under Presidential Proclamation No. 1173. This law dedicated the last week of November of every year for the nationwide competition. The competition categories included solo orchestral instruments, chamber and choral ensembles, and composition; folk dance and ensembles were later added in 1988.⁶⁹

After World War II, new scholarship in ethnomusicology from North America and Europe inspired Filipino composers to travel around the Philippines to research on the indigenous musical traditions.⁷⁰ Informed by the wealth of data amassed from their studies, Filipino composers ultimately developed a modern style of composition that expressed musical ideas and concepts from local sources through a Western compositional language.

José Maceda (1917-2004) was at the forefront in the advancement of this new movement in Filipino music. Alongside his outstanding musical works, Maceda’s expansive output of scientific research on different music of indigenous groups was foundational in Philippine ethnomusicology; he founded the Center of Music Research at the College of Music in University of the Philippines.⁷¹ In 1958, during his brief residency

⁶⁹ National Music Competitions for Young Artists, accessed August 1, 2021 <http://www.namcya.com/about-namcya/>.

⁷⁰ Carole Pegg et al., “Ethnomusicology,” *Oxford Music Online* (2001), accessed October 17, 2021, <https://doi-org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.52178>.

⁷¹ To know more about his life, see Lucrecia Kasilag, “José Maceda,” *Oxford Music Online*, <https://doi-org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.17321>.

in the *Groupe de Recherches Musicales* in Paris, Maceda became inspired with electronic music and non-traditional means of musical expression, quoting,

“Music composition can find new idea and materials to develop into even new forms. The character of this music would be quite different from that emanating today from America, France, Italy, and Germany, and it is this difference that would inject a new light in the Western phenomenon that is called music-composition, which appears to find a narrowing source of materials in Europe.”⁷²

Ramon Santos, Maceda’s close colleague, took his statement further during the “A University Composers Forum on Asian Traditional Music” in 1985,

"While the western view of contemporary music has assimilated Asian elements as source of modernization, Asian music possesses its own concepts of creativity and even modernism. A better understanding of the living dynamism of Asian music will enable creative artists (with emphasis on the young composers of Asia) to acquire the perceptions and technical insight that will enable them to preserve the spirit and tradition of Asian music in their works."⁷³

The joint contributions of Filipino contemporary music trailblazers such as José Maceda, Ramon Santos, and Lucrecia Kasilag, helped younger generations of Filipino composers to discover their own unique compositional styles. Some of these composers were Josefino Toledo (b. 1959), Jonas Baes (b. 1961), and Conrado del Rosario (b. 1958).

Josefino Toledo is known for his experimentation in texture and electronics as well as tackling social issues with his works. A composition student of Santos, he went on to the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris, France to study composition with Claude Baillif in 1983. In 1986, he received his Master of Music in composition at the Cleveland Institute of Music, under the tutelage of John Rinehart and Donald Erb.⁷⁴ Some of his notable works include *Ub-oy* (1986) for oboe and tape, and

⁷² José Maceda, quoted in Santos, *Modernismo sa Sining Musika*, 20-21.

⁷³ *Ibid*, 50.

⁷⁴ Ramón Santos, "Toledo, Josefino 'Chino'," *Grove Music Online* (2001), accessed September 22, 2021. <https://www-oxfordmusiconline-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000049223>.

Trenodya ke Lean (1989), a series of pieces with various instrumentation which pay tribute to the unjust slaying of student activist Lean Alejandro during the Marcos regime.⁷⁵ His works are recognized and performed around the world; most recent performances include the Western premiere of *Agos* for narrator and ensemble in 2018 by the New Juilliard Ensemble, and *Tangis* for string quartet and erhu in 2019 by Kairos Quartet and Yang Xue.⁷⁶

Jonas Baes innovates performance through the use of non-Western or homemade instruments, and audience participation in his works. His *Ibuh/ibun* (1997) for dancers and animators invited audience members to play chimes made from metal nails.⁷⁷ *InAYTA* (2010) was a sound installation piece that calls for a female weeper, large tam-tam, and tree branches.⁷⁸ After earning his composition degree under the tutelage of Santos in 1982, Baes learned musicology under José Maceda from 1982-1985. During 1992-1994 Baes took further studies in composition and music politics with Mathias Spahlinger at the Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany.⁷⁹ In 2014, he received his PhD in Philippine Studies at the University of the Philippines.

Conrado Del Rosario is a versatile composer and musician who achieved international recognition for his works; *Darangun* for solo violin (1985) received the first prize at the 1985 Hambacher International Composition Competition. He achieved

⁷⁵ Ibid.

⁷⁶ Juilliard, “New Juilliard Ensemble, Led by Joel Sachs, Opens Its Series With Premieres on Tuesday, October 2, 2018, at 7:30pm in Juilliard’s Peter Jay Sharp Theater,” 19 September 2018, <https://www.juilliard.edu/news/134456/new-juilliard-ensemble-led-joel-sachs-opens-its-series-premieres-tuesday-october-2-2018>; Chong Kee Yong, “SoundBridge 2019,” accessed on September 22, 2021, <https://chongkeeyong-studio-c.com/soundbridge-2019/>.

⁷⁷ The Living Composers Project, “Jonas Baes,” accessed on September 22, 2021, <http://www.composers21.com/compdocs/baesj.htm>; Santos, *Modernismo*, 82.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

⁷⁹ Ibid.

further recognition when he was commissioned by the Berlin Cultural Senate to compose the work, *Chants* (1989) for flute, clarinet, oboe, trumpet, two percussionists, harp, and string quartet.⁸⁰ For a complete discussion of the life and work of Del Rosario, see chapter four of this paper.

Contemporary music continues to be a dynamic presence in the country after the fall of the Marcos dictatorship in 1987. In 1991 the Philippines hosted the Forum and Festival of Contemporary Music of Asia Pacific, where up to 40 new works from various Asian composers were performed.⁸¹ For the Centennial Anniversary of Philippine Independence from Spain in 1998, the National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) commissioned numerous new works from local composers to be showcased in the month of June. In 2005, the Philippine Chapter of the Asian Composer's League (ACL) was established, further ensuring the future of Filipino modern music. Last March 28, 2021, the UP College of Music held a broadcast of "*Bayi and Their Music*," a collection of new works written by Filipino women through the Manila Community Radio.⁸²

⁸⁰ Conrado del Rosario, "Conrado del Rosario: Chants for 11 Players," YouTube video, accessed on September 23, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EbQBRHm8cks>.

⁸¹ Santos, *Modernismo*, 77-78.

⁸² Manila Community Radio, "Bayi and Their Music – 03.28.21," <https://manilacommunityradio.live/archives/bayi-and-their-music-032821?rq=bayi>, April 2021.

CHAPTER 2

THE BACKGROUND, STRUCTURE, AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE OF "ABOT-TANAW II" FOR SOLO VIOLIN BY RAMON SANTOS



Figure 2.1 Ramon Santos Holding a *Kudiyapi*, a Plucked Instrument from Mindanao (photo by Jun Pinzon).⁸³

Biography of the Composer

Ramon Pagayon Santos (figure 2.1) was born on February 25, 1941, in Pasig City, Philippines. In 1965, he received his bachelor's degree in composition and conducting from the University of the Philippines under the mentorship of notable Filipino composers Hilarion Rubio and Lucio San Pedro. In 1969, Santos received his master's degree in composition from Indiana University and three years later, received his PhD in

⁸³ Nilo Alcala, "It is with great joy that I congratulate my teacher/mentor Ramon P. Santos, Facebook, April 15, 2016, <https://www.facebook.com/ALCALAnilo/photos/a.10153938288350700.1073741839.202187610699/10153938288385700>.

composition from the State University of New York at Buffalo.⁸⁴ During his graduate studies in the U.S. Santos was immersed in serial techniques and electronic music; his notable teachers include Thomas Beversdorf, George Perle, and Lejaren Hiller.⁸⁵ In addition to his degrees in composition, Santos pursued studies in ethnomusicology with Bruno Nettl, Javanese music with Sunardi Wisnubroto, and *Nankuan* music with Lao Hong Kio.⁸⁶ After his return to the Philippines, he was designated as the chairman of the conducting and composition department of the College of Music at the University of the Philippines in 1973 and eventually became the Dean of Music from 1978 to 1988.⁸⁷

Returning back home made Santos realize that the strict formalistic approach of serial and electronic music did not fit the culture of his country. The Philippine National Commission for the Culture and the Arts described his works as explorations of, “...open-ended structures of time and space, function as a compositional concept, environmental works, non-conventional instruments, the dialectics of control and non-control, and the incorporation of natural forces in the execution of sound-creating tasks.”⁸⁸ Some of the works that exemplify his style are *Ritual ng Pasasalamat* (“Ritual of Thanksgiving,” 1976) and *S’Geypo* (1989).

Ritual is an example of Santos’ approach on music as environment and function. The work was composed as a celebration of the sixtieth anniversary of the College of

⁸⁴Lucrecia Kasilag, “Santos, Ramon Pagayon,” *Grove Music Online* (2001), <https://doi-org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.24558>, accessed on August 30, 2021.

⁸⁵ Santos, 28.

⁸⁶ Kasilag, “Santos.” *Nankuan* is the music of Xiamen (Amoy), China.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

⁸⁸ National Commission for the Culture and the Arts, “Order of National Artists: Ramon P. Santos,” accessed September 23, 2021, <https://ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/culture-profile/national-artists-of-the-philippines/ramon-p-santos/#>.

Music at University of the Philippines. The instrumentation calls for gongs, five pianos, two string quartets, indigenous flutes, bamboo percussion, handclappers—all performed by the members of the school community around the courtyard of the College of Music. In addition, religious ministers of various denominations were invited to participate in the work as orators of their thanksgiving prayers.

S'Geypo is a work that directly incorporated the music of *saggeypo*, a bamboo pan flute from the Kalinga group in Northern Philippines. The piece calls for eight pairs of Western flutes, and the music explores relationships between melody and drone as well as interlocking rhythms, irregular meters, and repetition. Ultimately, *S'Geypo* was Santos' interpretation of how time is treated in Filipino indigenous communities.⁸⁹

Aside from his innovative repertoire, Santos' work as an ethnomusicologist brought a heightened awareness to the history and traditions of Philippine and Asian music. Some of his indispensable publications were the *Musika: An Essay on the American Colonial and Contemporary Traditions in Philippine Music* (Sentrong Pangkultura ng Pilipinas Publishing, 1994), *Dictionary of Filipino Musical Terms* (University of the Philippines Press, 2013), and *Laon-laon: Perspectives in Transmission and Pedagogy of Musical Traditions in Postcolonial Southeast Asia* (University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2012).

His vital contributions to Filipino and Asian music excellence through his music and research garnered him prestigious awards such as the “Chevalier de l'Ordre des Arts et Lettres” (Order of the Arts and the Letters) from France in 1987 and the designation as “National Artist for Music” by the Philippine government in 2014.⁹⁰

⁸⁹ Jean-David Caillouët, "TINIG-TUNOG-AN: The Life and Works of Ramon Pagayon Santos (Bangkok, Thailand, 2021)," Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RT0Jf8nTJZo>.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

Background and Influences

Abot-Tanaw II (Horizon II) is a virtuosic, single-movement work for solo violin written in 1984 and was revised in 1993. The piece was Santos' first foray into technical violin writing and is second of a three-part series *Abot-Tanaw* for solo instruments: the first is for classical guitar and the third is for piano. The League of Filipino Composers commissioned the piece from the composer and was first premiered in Germany.⁹¹ The only known recording of the work was performed by Filipino violinist Carmencita Lozada in 1984.⁹²

Abot-Tanaw II has an underlying theme of exploration that is represented in three ways. First, Santos used "abot-tanaw," the Filipino word for "horizon," to symbolize one's longing "to reach out for something but cannot fully attain; a desire to reach out and discover."⁹³ Second, the composer evoked movement through musical devices, such as the extensive use of glissandi and multi-layered polyphonic writing. Lastly, Santos encapsulated the work within a narrative of discovery through the program notes he shared with the present author; it will be described in detail in the next section.

Many of Santos' works are unpublished and are currently deposited at the University of the Philippines' Center for Ethnomusicology. In order to procure the score, one can reach out to the Center through these email addresses: upethno.upd@up.edu.ph and upethno_archive.upd@up.edu.ph.⁹⁴

⁹¹ Ramon Santos, virtual interview with the author, Zoom, 30 August 2021.

⁹² Carmencita Lozada, "Abot-Tanaw II for Solo Violin," Youtube video, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=txAHjfZzJJ8>.

⁹³ Santos, interview.

⁹⁴ Personal email communication of the author with the composer. For further contact information, see <https://upethnom.com/contact-us/>.

Structure and Performance Suggestions

Santos described the work in four parts according to a specific program. The table below is the author’s organization of sections that matches with the composer’s program notes (figure 2.2).⁹⁵

Section	Composer’s Program
Introductory Section (mm. 1-32) and Rehearsal A (mm. 33-47)	“It starts with one note trying to free itself from itself [<i>sic</i>]. And then it goes to another level where it again tries to explore more boundaries. It is like a sleeping entity, waking up and feeling its surroundings and then looks at possibilities of exploration into the unknown.”
Rehearsal B (mm. 48-88), C (mm. 89-92), and D (mm. 93-99)	“The second part, it starts to move and stretch its limbs with greater and greater [<i>sic</i>] excitement. Finally it explores the different spheres in where it finally tries to reach its highest peak.”
Rehearsal E (mm. 100-119) and F (mm. 120-126)	“While in the highest peak, he looks around and sees the variety of things below and then sizes up the space that he has traversed by looking below [<i>sic</i>] and then up above where it is now and sees the many different species of things and matter.”
Rehearsal G (mm. 127-140), H (mm. 141-152), and I (mm. 153-156)	“And now, with greater self-assurance and confidence, he goes down and then up, down and up [<i>sic</i>] and then romps around the whole sphere of space where it takes pleasure and courage to explore every nook and cranny of the given atmosphere until it goes down again with full assurance of itself and finally resting with vigor and strength on the final note.”

Figure 2.2: Table of Sections with Corresponding Direct Quotations from the Composer’s Written Program Notes

⁹⁵ Document shared by the composer with the author during the virtual interview.

In the introductory section (mm. 1-32), the character of the music is introspective yet increasingly active. Marked “Slow,” the piece starts on a solitary open D string that then splinters into layers, visually represented by the multileveled polyphonic writing by the composer (figure 2.3).⁹⁶ Starting on m. 3, the music begins to change its texture and color as a darker, lower voice on the G-string creeps in. The length of the glissando shortens from a duration of three measures (mm. 4-6), to two measures (mm. 8-9, 13-14, 16-17), to a half of a measure (m. 18), implying a gradual departure from the meditative temperament of the introductory section. While the indicated bowings are written by the composer, it is the discretion of the performer to use the bowings they see fit in realizing the music.



Figure 2.3: Ramon Santos, *Abot-Tanaw II* for Solo Violin, 1993 Revision, Mm. 1-29.

⁹⁶ Santos, interview.

The characteristic glissandi and rests of mm. 1-19 have similarities with the *Dango* or *Ading* singing style of the Kalinga group from Northern Philippines. These genres are performed during special occasions in the community and the style of singing consists of slides, sudden stops of the voice, and uncertain pitches.⁹⁷

In contrast with the static and calm nature of the preceding measures, mm. 20-32 are more experimental with rhythm and timbre. In m. 20, the quiet tremolo in the lower voice and the sudden bursts of sound from the left hand pizzicato highlights a change of character. The presence of a thirty-second quintuplet (m. 21), eighth note quintuplet (m. 23), and quarter note triplets (m. 25) denote rhythmic complexity. The timbre is also exploratory, illustrated by the change from *ordinario* to *sul tasto* coupled with left-hand pizzicati (mm. 22-24) and a downbow ricochet (m. 26). Santos adds to the rich timbral variety through indications of quick downward glissandi with left hand pizzicati (mm. 29-30).

Rehearsal A (mm. 33-47) maintains a strong fortissimo dynamic range, starting on a diminution of the passage found in mm. 3-6 (figure 2.4).

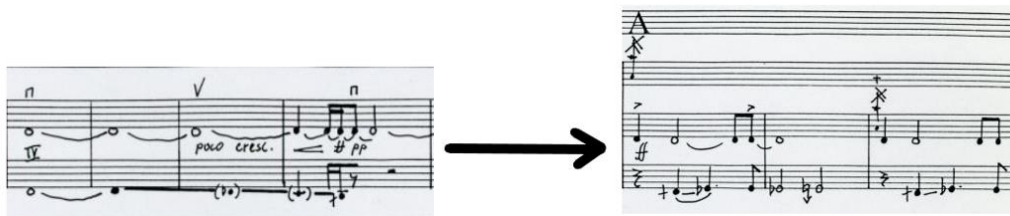


Figure 2.4: Ramon Santos, *Abot-Tanaw II*, Mm. 3-6 of the Introductory section and Mm. 33-35.

⁹⁷ Maceda, et al, "Philippines," *Oxford Music Online*. For an audio sample see The Philippine Traditional Band, "Kalinga: Dango," Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oklyAE6CpH4>.

At m. 36 a fragment of the ostinato on the upper voice of the succeeding section is introduced (figure 2.5).

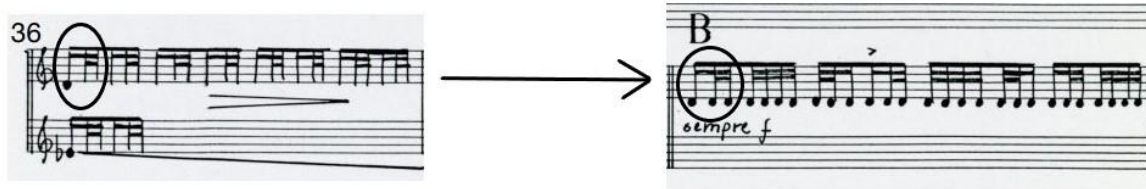


Figure 2.5: Ramon Santos, *Abot-Tanaw II*, M. 36 and M. 49.

After eight measures, the composer instructs the performer to simultaneously execute arco and left hand pizzicato, producing a percussive sound similar to a tuned drum (figure 2.6).



Figure 2.6: Ramon Santos, *Abot-Tanaw II*, M. 44.

Rehearsal B (mm. 48-88) presents two voices: a steady ostinato on the open D-string as upper voice and a dynamic embellishing line entering on different beats on the G-string as lower voice (figure 2.7). The ostinato changes registers as well through the addition of the open A-string starting in m. 60, and the switching to the E-string starting on mm. 78-82.

Unlike the static nature of the upper voice where it only rests on open strings, the lower voice is free to explore a wider pitch range. This texture is similar to the music of *kulintang* ensemble from Southern Philippines, in which ostinatos are first introduced

by percussion, then the *kulintang* enters with dynamic embellishments.⁹⁸ In mm. 83-87, the texture becomes homophonic as both voices simultaneously sustain a unified rhythm (figure 2.7).⁹⁹

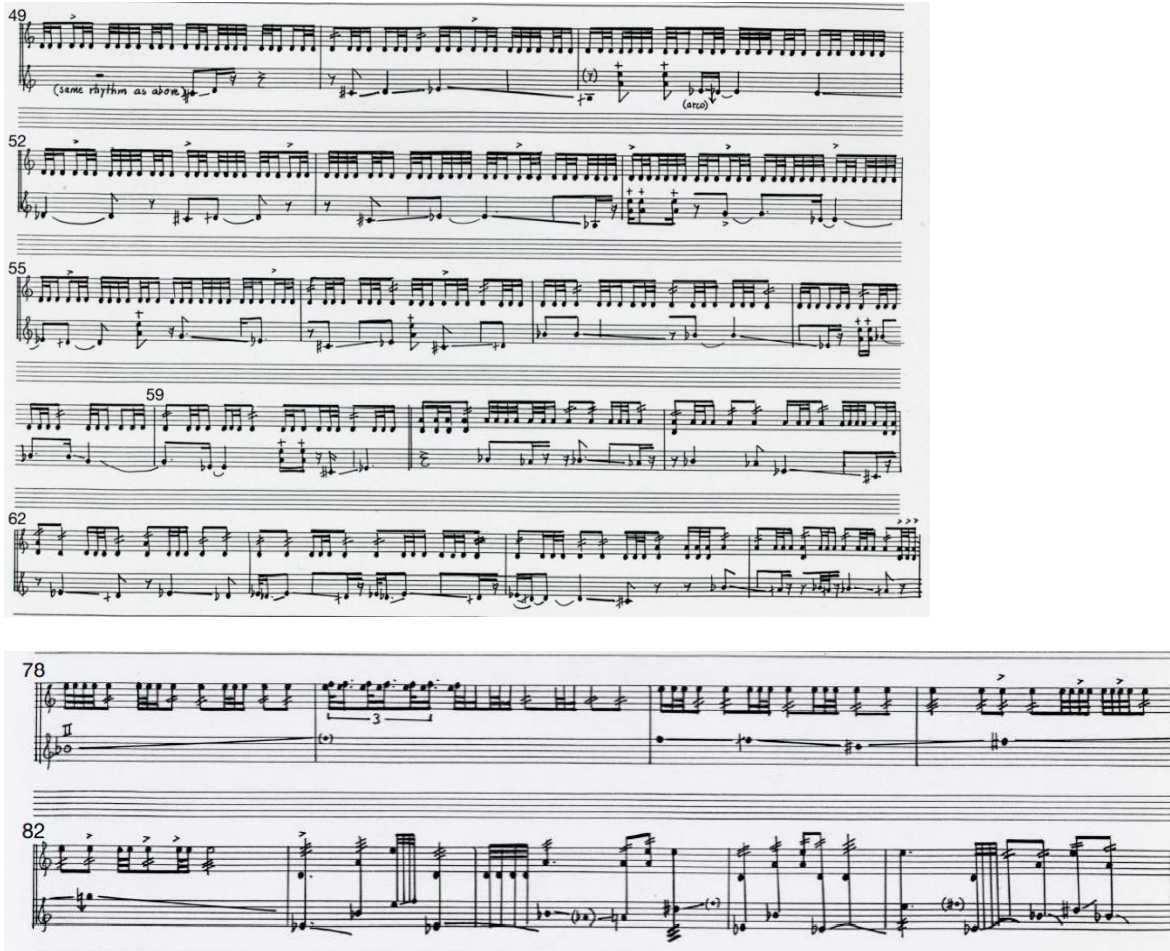


Figure 2.7: Ramon Santos, *Abot-Tanaw II*, Mm. 49-65, 78-86

⁹⁸ Maceda, et al, “Philippines,” *Oxford Music Online*; Usopay, “Mindanao Kulintang Ensemble (MKE),” YouTube, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U1Zgb8_8RAs&t=467s.

⁹⁹ Brian Hyer, “Homophony,” *Oxford Music Online*, 2001, <https://doi-org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.13291>, accessed on September 2, 2021.

The music proceeds to rehearsal C (mm. 89-92), picking up from the concluding G-natural of the previous section. The roles of the upper and lower voices from rehearsal B are maintained with slight variation. The ostinato of the upper voice becomes open string drones while the linear embellishments of the lower voice become arpeggios (figure 2.8).



Figure 2.8: Ramon Santos, *Abot-Tanaw II*, Excerpt of M. 89

These series of arpeggios are based on a heptatonic scale with one major third and one diminished third: D-flat, D-natural, E-flat, E-natural, G-natural, G-sharp, and B-flat (figure 2.9). This section culminates with an ascent to a harmonic D-natural two octaves higher (D6) than its previous iterations (D4).

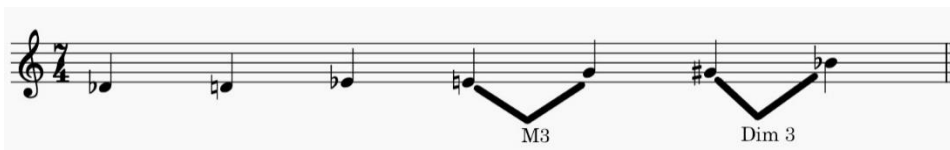


Figure 2.9: Heptatonic Scale Found in M. 89, Rehearsal C of *Abot-Tanaw II*

Marked “Tempo ad libitum,” rehearsal D (mm. 93-99) is a quasi-cadenza passage which consists of phrase segments separated by fermatas and commas. Starting on mezzo forte, the first phrase segment quotes the heptatonic arpeggios from the previous section but in different rhythms, ending on D-natural. Shorter phrase segments proceed after a brief pause indicated by the comma. However, starting on the fifth phrase segment the music begins to thicken its texture through the addition of accents and an A-string drone, ending the phrase segment on a jarring major seventh. On the sixth phrase segment the clashing harmony is further underscored by the accented ascent to series of parallel sevenths, evoking a character of intense struggle. Finally, the mounting intensity

is resolved on a unison on D-natural in m. 96; the resolution is further emphasized by the incessant repetition of D-natural octaves. In a surprise, the section concludes on a jolting minor ninth chord on D and E-flat, in *sul ponticello*, *sff* (m. 99).

The music arrives at its peak on rehearsal E (mm. 100-119). The sparse, pointillistic texture of this section lends an image of a mountaintop: the airy timbre of harmonics and the use of notes as high as G7 (m. 100) give off an impression of high altitude. The composer prescribes the performer to not be metronomic or mechanical in this section, yet there should still be a sense of urgency with the tempo.¹⁰⁰

In the 1993 revision of the score, Santos indicated that the upper voice is to be played simultaneously with a modified *col legno* and left hand *pizzicato*, simultaneously (figure 2.10). During the interview, he preferred that the performer prioritize the clarity of pitch over the effect, suggesting that a conventional *col legno* technique should be used instead.¹⁰¹ While Roman numerals indicate the string where the note should be played, Santos stated in the interview with the author that the performer can disregard the indication as some of the notes are out-of-range on the string they were assigned.¹⁰²

¹⁰⁰ Santos, interview.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*

Figure 2.10: Ramon Santos, *Abot-Tanaw II*, mm. 100-102

Rehearsal F (mm. 120-126) begins with three measures of open strings played on the bridge of the violin, producing a jarring timbre (mm. 120-124). On mm. 123-124 the structure is a variation of rehearsal C, as illustrated by the reappearance of open-string drones and arpeggios.

The rapid portamento in m. 125 signals an imminent significant transformation with the character of the music. The arrival on a decisive three-note motive (E-flat, D-flat, and G-natural on m. 126) begins the vigorous descent towards the conclusion of the work (figure 2.11). From the meandering and experimental character of the previous sections, the music develops an excited and spirited temperament until the end.

Figure 2.11: Ramon Santos, *Abot-Tanaw II*, mm. 125-126

Marked “fast,” rehearsal G (mm. 127-140) is a *moto perpetuo* section.¹⁰³ The pulse of sixteenth notes is consistent even as the meter shifts from regular to irregular (figure 2.12). In mm. 133-134, the indicated accents on specific groupings emphasize a strong asymmetrical rhythm.

It is advisable for the performer to play rehearsal G in a quick yet stable tempo to leave ample room for the pulse to accelerate at m. 138. As indicated in the score, the sixteenth note pulse achieved after the accelerando should be maintained in mm. 139-140.



Figure 2.12: Ramon Santos, *Abot-Tanaw II*, mm. 127-136

An eighth note rest briefly disrupts the momentum gained from the rapid figurations of rehearsal G (m. 140). Rehearsal H (mm. 141-152) takes a steadier tempo as it is derived from the dotted eighth note pulse of the preceding measures. Reminiscent of rehearsal B, this section is a duet between the regular downbeat ostinato of the lower voice and smaller rhythms of the upper voice. Unlike the indicated *detache* technique on rehearsal G, the articulation of rehearsal H is a light *spiccato* bow stroke.

¹⁰³ Michael Tilmouth, “Moto perpetuo,” *Grove Music Online* (2001), <https://doi-org.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.article.19224>, Accessed on September 3, 2021. *Moto perpetuo* is defined as a piece that maintains continuous rapid figurations without rest.

The work concludes with an exhilarating coda of rehearsal I (mm. 153-156). Marked *Vivace*, this section presents the music at its fastest. After attempting a final ascent on m. 153-154, the notes swiftly descend, closing the whole work on a victorious arrival on D-natural.

While *Abot-Tanaw II* is Santos' only work for the violin, its music effectively explores new colors and textures from the instrument through the composer's use of various compositional techniques. Moreover, *Abot-Tanaw II* evokes certain forms of Filipino indigenous music, such as the composer's use of repetition, drone-embellishment polyphony, and irregular rhythmic patterns.

CHAPTER 3

THE BACKGROUND, STRUCTURE, AND PERFORMANCE GUIDE OF "DARANGUN" FOR SOLO VIOLIN BY CONRADO DEL ROSARIO



Figure 3.1: Conrado Del Rosario, Gaudeamus: International Composers' Workshop, Amsterdam (1996), (Photo by Co Broerse).¹⁰⁴

Biography of the Composer

Conrado "Titus" Del Rosario III was born on August 21, 1958 in Angeles City, Pampanga, Philippines (figure 3.1). He studied composition and flute performance at the College of Music of the University of the Philippines under the tutelage of composers Lucio San Pedro, Francisco Feliciano, and Ramon Santos, and flautists Sonny Yangco and Eric Barcelo. In 1980, Del Rosario won Third Prize in the Woodwinds Category of the National Music Competitions for Young Artists (NAMCYA). Two years later, he received the first prize in the League of Filipino Composers Chamber Music Competition and obtained the Young Artists of the Philippines Foundation Scholarship. Through this scholarship he was able to take further studies in composition in the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin (Berlin University of the Arts) with Isang Yun and Witold Szalonek. As a pedagogue, Del Rosario held teaching positions such as Instructor of Piano and

¹⁰⁴ Co Broerse, "Conrado del Rosario 3089-17," 1996, photograph, *Flickr*, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/fconcrete/12619037993>.

Improvisation at the Berlin-Charlottenburg Musikschule and an Instructor of Piano at the Berlin University of the Arts.¹⁰⁵

Del Rosario garnered international renown for his compositions. He won the First Prize in the 1985 Hambacher International Composition Competition and the Second Prize in the 1988 Hitzacker International Composition Competition. In the years of 1988, 1991, 1992, and 1997, his compositions and their premiere performances were funded through endowed work-scholarships from the Berlin Cultural Senate. He was also a finalist in the 1995 IRINO International Composition Competition in Japan. In 1998, Del Rosario was the representative for Berlin at the Cite International des Arts in Paris, France.¹⁰⁶

Del Rosario's love for improvisation led him to be an avid jazz musician. During his thirty-one-year residency in Germany, he wrote works for jazz bands and performed with various ensembles in Berlin such as the Understatement, BeCool Jazz Quartet, Sowat von Funk, and OhrJazzMus. In 1989, he founded the Berlin Improvising Composers Ensemble (BICE) which performed around Europe and North America.¹⁰⁷

Today, Del Rosario remains musically active back in Pampanga, Philippines. Aside from continuously writing new works, he leads a jazz band called KAPAMU (Kampapangan Musicians') Jazz Collective and founded an avant-garde bamboo ensemble, "SUNLAG." He also founded and built his own live music restaurant, "The Jazz Grill."¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁵ Universität der Künste Berlin, "Conrado del Rosario," accessed September 6, 2021 <https://udk-berlin.academia.edu/CdR3>.

¹⁰⁶ Universität der Künste Berlin, "Conrado del Rosario."

¹⁰⁷ Kapampangan Media, "Sunlag Ensemble," accessed September 6, 2021, <https://kapampangan.org/sunlag-ensemble/>.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

Background and Influences

Composed in Berlin in 1985, *Darangun* is a virtuosic, single-movement work for solo violin that won the Hambacher International Composition Competition of the same year. Del Rosario wrote the piece as tribute to the *Kundarangun* and the Asian sung-narrative tradition.¹⁰⁹ Based on the present author's research, *Darangun* had only one known recording: German violinist Kai Franzke recorded the work for an LP album that showcased student compositions from the Hochschule der Künste in Berlin.¹¹⁰

The *Kundarangun* is the sung version of the *Darangun* epic poem of the Maranao indigenous group in the Philippines (figure 3.2).¹¹¹ Situated along Lake Lanao in the Southern Central region of Mindanao, the Maranaos take pride in their history of successfully fending off Spanish and American colonizers.¹¹²



Figure 3.2: Maranao Woman Performing the *Kundarangun*, UNESCO, (Photo by Jojo Unalivia)¹¹³

¹⁰⁹ Conrado del Rosario, "Darangun," score, 1985

¹¹⁰ Facebook direct message to the author, October 25, 2021.

¹¹¹ Usopay Hamdag Cadar. "Context and Style in the Vocal Music of the Muranao in Mindanao, Philippines." PhD Diss., University of Washington, 1980. Microfilm. <http://login.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/dissertations-theses/context-style-vocal-music-muranao-mindanao/docview/303087679/se-2?accountid=4485>, 1.

¹¹² Ibid., 4.

¹¹³ United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, "Darangen epic of the Maranao people of Lake Lanao," *Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*, <https://ich.unesco.org/en/RL/darangen-epic-of-the-maranao-people-of-lake-lanao-00159>, 2008.

The *Darangun*, meaning “from the ancestors,” functions as a resource of lessons and customs that existed before the arrival of Islam in the 15th century.¹¹⁴ Comprised of seventeen cycles and a total of 72,000 lines, the text covers a broad range of topics such as beauty, politics, relationships, and social order. These subjects are explained through stories from Maranao mythology that were narrated with literary devices such as symbolism, irony, and satire. Through the centuries the *Darangun* was preserved through oral and written means. Eventually, the epic was transcribed in ancient Maranao script derived from the Arabic script.¹¹⁵

When sung, the *Kundarangun* is a through-composed vocal work with an alternating slow-fast structure.¹¹⁶ The scenic and contemplative parts of the text are sung in a slow, melismatic, and recitative-like style with no accompaniment.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, significant events in the poem are sung in a fast, rhythmic, and measured style, sometimes accompanied by percussion.¹¹⁸

Other Asian sung-narrative traditions were also influences on the solo violin work *Darangun*. Del Rosario credited the Japanese *Gidayu-bushi* and *Heikyoku* as additional inspirations.¹¹⁹ Like *Kundarangun*, these Japanese genres are musical narrations of tales and historic accounts through a highly stylized and nuanced singing of an expert singer-

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ UNESCO, “Darangen.”

¹¹⁶ Cadar, 132-133.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., 137; Datu Ontay, “Darangun Paramata Gandingan,” YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wuDftul7FBM&t=69s>.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.; Datu Ontay, “Darangun Paramata Madale,” YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h54vvCKT3ig&t=94s>.

¹¹⁹ Conrado del Rosario, “Darangun,” score, 1985; Facebook direct message to author, September 5, 2021.

storyteller. In contrast from their Filipino counterpart, *Gidayu-bushi* and *Heikyoku* involves a plucked stringed-instrument accompaniment. *Gidayu-bushi* is the music that accompanies *bunraku*, the Japanese puppet theater. It is performed by a singer and shamisen player (figure 3.3).¹²⁰ On the other hand, *Heikyoku* is a solo narration of the tale of the Heike clan from 12th century Japan. It is performed by a singer while playing the biwa, a pear-shaped, short-necked plucked lute (figure 3.4).¹²¹



Figure 3.3: Shamisen¹²²

¹²⁰ Tieko Yamada, “Theatrical Genres: Gidayû Busi,” in *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 7: East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea*, ed. Terry Miller and Sean Williams (Routledge, 1998), 711; United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, “Ningyo Johruri Bunraku Puppet Theater,” Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kEUQNvn8EJQ&t=78s>.

¹²¹ Global Performing Arts Consortium, “HEIKYOKU or HEIKEBIWA,” accessed September 7, 2021, <http://www.glopac.org/Jparc/HEIKYOKU/tale-of-heike.html>; Kumada Kahori, “KUMADA KAHORI – Nasuno Yoichi,” Youtube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bnt4CSZVJy8>.

¹²² Senzoku Gakuen College of Music, “Shamisen,” *Traditional Music Digital Library*, accessed on September 7, 2021, <https://www.senzoku-online.jp/TMDL/e/o2-shamisen.html>.



Figure 3.4: Biwa¹²³

The composer was influenced by *Gidayu-bushi* and *Heikyoku*, motivated by his fascination with Japanese culture.¹²⁴ During his residency in Berlin, Del Rosario studied the music and aesthetics of contemporary Japanese composers such as Toru Takemitsu, Joji Yuasa, and Jo Kondo.¹²⁵ He had such a strong attraction to Japan that he later became an ordained lay Zen monk.¹²⁶

The score of *Darangun* can be acquired through direct communication with the composer. Interested readers can contact Del Rosario through his email address, conradodelrosario@icloud.com.¹²⁷

¹²³ Senzoku Gakuen College of Music, “Biwa,” *Traditional Music Digital Library*, accessed on September 7, 2021, <https://www.senzoku-online.jp/TMDL/e/o6-biwa.html>.

¹²⁴ Facebook direct message to author, October 25, 2021.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Personal communication of the present author with Del Rosario. Email address listed with permission from the composer.

Structure and Performance Suggestions

Darangun is a through-composed work without a strict meter. It is comprised of four main sections divided by double-bar lines; the present author has organized these sections with corresponding page and line numbers using the manuscript (figure 3.5).

Main Sections (double-bar lines)	Pages and Line Numbers
Section 1	Page 1, line 1 – Page 2, line 7
Section 2	Page 2, line 7 – Page 5, line 1
Section 3	Page 5, line 1 – Page 7, line 1
Section 4	Page 7, line 1-7

Figure 3.5: Division of Main Sections in *Darangun*

Del Rosario provides detailed performance instructions through the utilization of specific symbols; a legend of signs and abbreviations is provided in the score (figure 3.6). These exact indications are the composer's way to aid the performer in evoking the strict and nuanced style of Asian song-narrative singing.

ABBREVIATIONS IN THE SCORE :

ABKÜRZUNGEN




	- quarter tone higher: viertel ton höher:
	- quarter tone lower: viertel ton tiefer
	- Bartók pizzicato
S. P.	- sul ponticello
S. T.	- sul tasto
P. O.	- normal position
S. T. → P. O.	- gradual change of bow position: allmählicher Wechsel der Bogensposition

Figure 3.6: Conrado Del Rosario, *Darangun*, Excerpt of the Provided Legend of Symbols and Abbreviations

While there is a degree of specificity with interpretation, the music should still sound improvisational, a quality that Del Rosario attributes to his enthusiasm for jazz. The metronome markings in parentheses are treated as approximate tempos instead of a strict, consistent pulse.¹²⁸ He intentionally did not include bar lines to prevent the tendency of musicians to accentuate the downbeats of every bar.¹²⁹ Nonetheless, Del

¹²⁸ Conrado del Rosario, virtual interview with the author.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

5-8 illustrate this structure (figure 3.8). The note G-sharp (indicated with arco) on page 1, line 5 gradually ascends to E-flat on the upper voice on page 2, line 2, then quickly descends to A-natural on the G-string. Along the way, tension is built through the addition of a lower voice, a wider dynamic range, and a downbow ricochet technique. Lines 4-6 of page 2 follow a similar structure, starting from the Bartók pizzicato on the note G-sharp.



Figure 3.8 Conrado Del Rosario, *Darangun*, Page 1, Line 5 to Page 2, Line 2

Section 2 (page 2, line 7 to page 5, line 1) presents the music in its most volatile and capricious form as demonstrated by the presence of seven tempo indications. The temperament of this section may compare to the faster, exciting, and rhythmically active phase of the *Kundarangun*.

After a held pause, the music resumes on a faster tempo with smaller and quicker rhythms starting on page 2, line 7. On page 3, lines 1-2, the music builds intensity as the F-natural ascends to the augmented ninth chords (F-sharp and E-flat) on line 2 (figure 3.9).

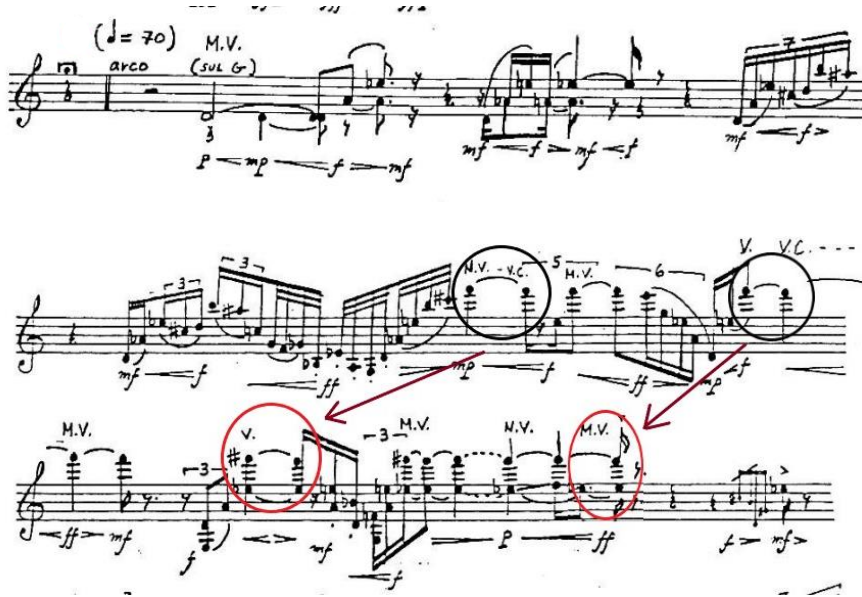


Figure 3.9: Conrado Del Rosario, *Darangun*, Page 2, Line 7 to Page 3, Lines 1-2

A written poco a poco accelerando builds agitation on page 3, line 3 and abruptly ends on E-natural on line 4 (figure 3.10).

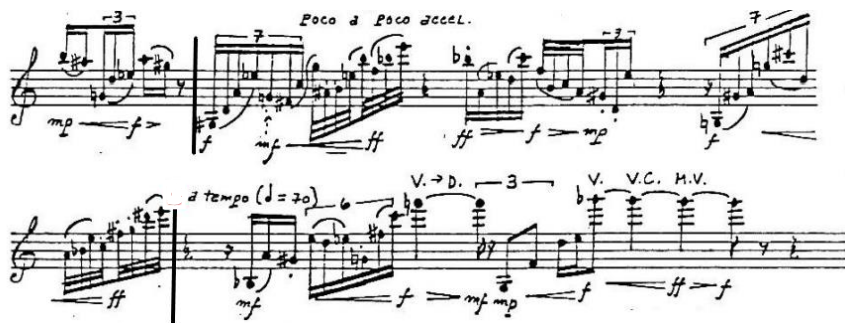


Figure 3.10: Conrado Del Rosario, *Darangun*, Page 3, Lines 3-4

On page 3, line 4 the music scales back in tempo but maintains the tension of the previous section, as illustrated by the ascending line with intensifying dynamics (figure 3.11).

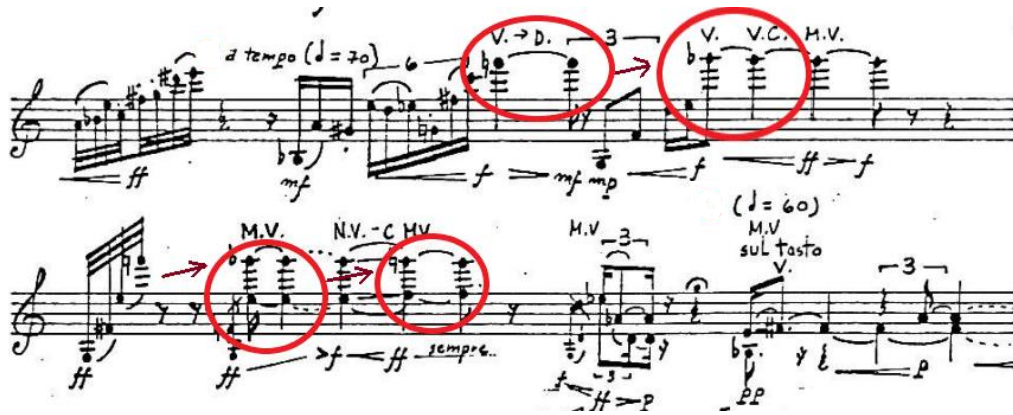


Figure 3.11: Conrado Del Rosario, *Darangun*, Page 3, Lines 4-5

After a brief pause, line 5 provides a moment of withdrawal from preceding lines, starting on the written *sul tasto*. The music restarts on a slower tempo and the timbre scales down to a muted color of *sul tasto* and *pianissimo*. Another ascending line appears as the upper voice from line 5 climbs from A4 to E6 on line 6.

The sudden drop of pitch (from E6 to D4) and quickening of tempo abruptly changes the character of the music on page 3, line 7. Extroverted and dynamic, the music intensifies with phrase elongation, from page 3 line 7 to page 4, line 1 (figure 3.12). The section ends on a *ritardando*, relaxing the tempo until the music decays to its softest volume.

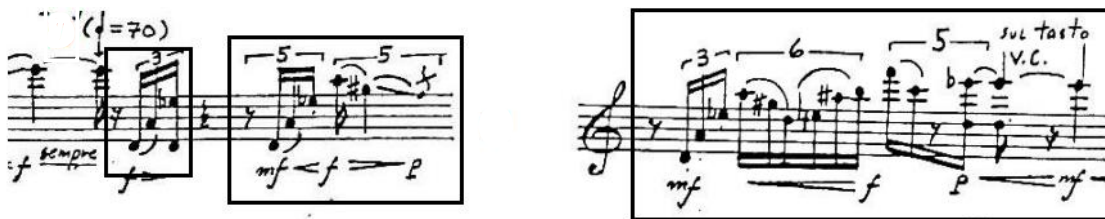


Figure 3.12: Conrado Del Rosario, *Darangun*, Page 3, Line 7 to Page 4, Line 1

The abundance of pizzicati and small gestures of page 4, lines 3-5 are reminiscent of lines 1-6 of page 1. After a brief pause on line 5, the music proceeds on a gentler tempo with a melodious texture. Marked *sul tasto* and *espressivo*, this passage carries a continuous line that starts from the lower voice and passes on to the higher voice (figure 3.13).

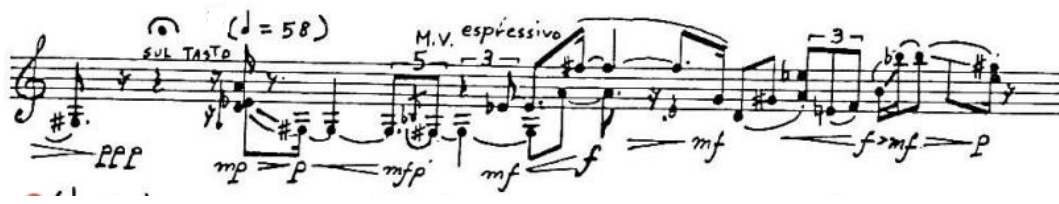


Figure 3.13: Conrado Del Rosario, *Darangun*, Page 4, Line 5

Finally, lines 6-7 of page 4 to line 1 of page 5 conclude the episodic middle section of the work. In this passage the music reverts to the brisker character found in previous sections with faster written tempo suggestions. A held D-sharp pizzicato closes this section, holding the music in suspense.

Section 3 (page 5, line 1 to page 7, line 1) represents the climax of the music because of two important features: lush texture and greater emotional intensity. The music thickens its texture with frequent use of double-, triple-, and quadruple-stops in quick succession starting page 5, line 3. On line 4 the music proceeds through dynamic register changes (figure 3.14). After ascending to a fifth on D- and G-natural, the music quickly drops to A-flat on the G-string. In a span of two quarter notes the music ascends again to the D- and G-natural double-stop. However, the descent to the diminished fifth double-stop on G-sharp and D-natural is more pronounced with the presence of fuller, downward arpeggiated chords.

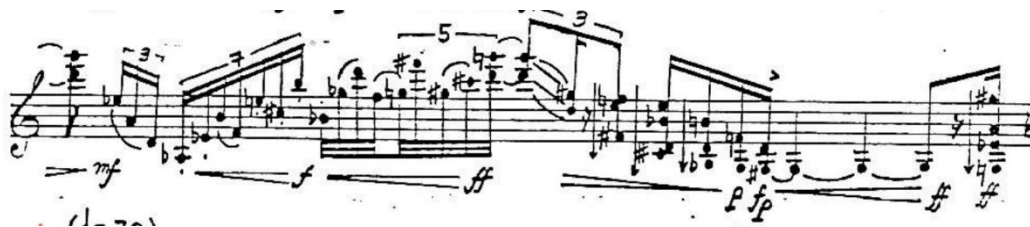


Figure 3.14: Conrado Del Rosario, *Darangun*, Page 5, Line 4

In addition, this section evokes great emotional intensity through its use of motivic portamento leaps. These wide leaps are found on page 5, line 3, and page 6 lines 2 and 5-7; these gestures are either played in fortissimo or fortississimo (figure 3.15). The intensity of these gestures sound as it were the “wailing” of the human voice, crying out with much force and emotion.

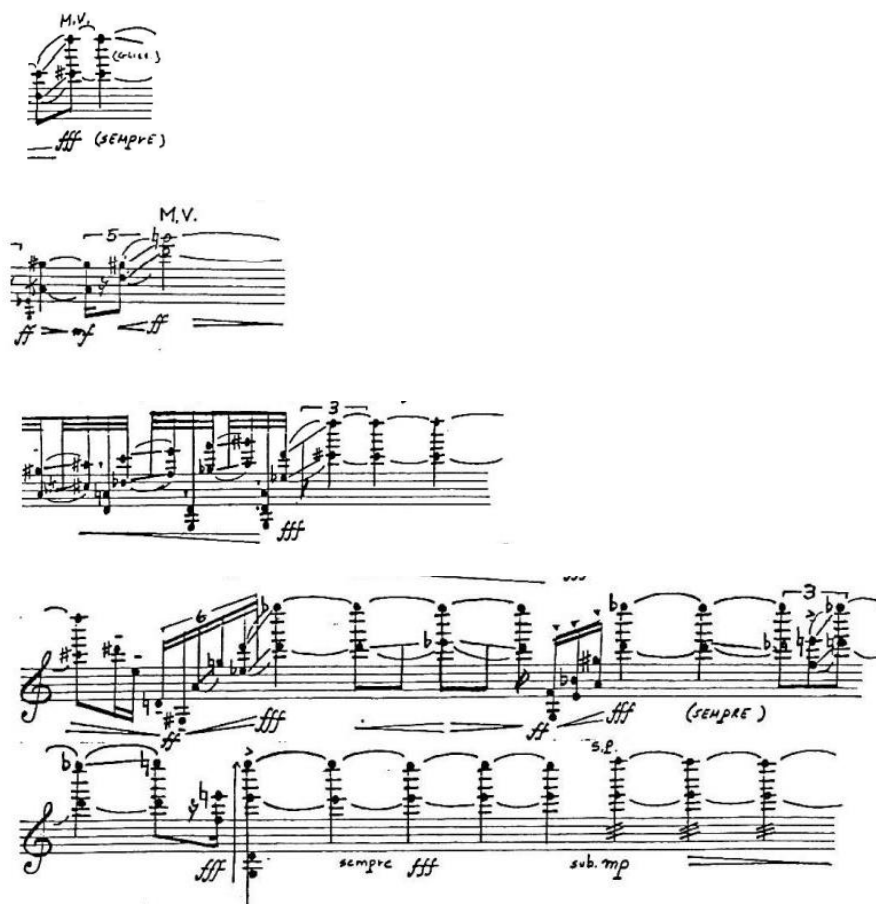


Figure 3.15: Conrado Del Rosario, *Darangun*, Page 5, Line 3, and Page 6, Lines 2 and 5-7

The clashing harmony of the motivic leaps found on page 6, lines 2 and 5-7 are based on the major seventh, which further feature the impassioned character of the climax section of *Darangun*. There is a moment of resolution as the motivic leap ascends to an octave in E-natural on fortississimo on page 6, line 7. However, the music retracts from its momentary relief and ascends to a clashing ninth on the subito mezzo piano on the same line. Finally, the climactic section fades out to a grand pause (G.P.); a heart-stopping suspension of time.

Section 4 (page 7, lines 1-7) is the conclusion of *Darangun*. While there are fleeting moments of intensity, the overall spirit of this section is quieter and more restrained, a large contrast from previous sections. From the silence the music restarts faintly on ppp, sul ponticello. Instead of the bright timbre of the pizzicato, the composer utilizes the muted color of artificial harmonics on lines 3-5 to preserve the subdued atmosphere.

Starting on line 5, the music gradually ascends one last time from B-flat on the G-string to G-flat on the E-string on line 6, spanning more than two octaves. In line 7, a final fleeting moment of instability is added by the descending lower voice, before ultimately resolving the emotive music of *Darangun* on a dying note on F-sharp.

The music of Conrado Del Rosario's *Darangun* is not only a work that highlights violin virtuosity through its substantial technical writing, but also a piece that gives tribute to historic singing traditions such as the *Kundarangun* from the Philippines and the *Gidayu-bushi* and *Heikyoku* from Japan.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

Filipino contemporary music contributed to a renewed awareness of the country's cultural roots, after almost four centuries of Western occupation. Ramon Santos' *Abot-Tanaw II* and Conrado Del Rosario's *Darangun* are two representative works for solo violin which exemplify the combination of local musical traditions and Western compositional language. Both pieces evoke the "spirit" of Philippine culture in different approaches. In *Abot-Tanaw II*, the music is driven by Santos' narrative of exploration as well as repetition, texture, and atmosphere—general concepts that he attributes to Filipino indigenous music. In *Darangun*, Del Rosario directly draws inspiration from a source: the epic poem of the Maranao group. Other sung-narratives were also additional influences, such as the Japanese *Gidayu-bushi* and *Heikyoku*.

This research paper seeks to spark interest within the global violin community to discover and perform Filipino contemporary music. Aside from *Abot-Tanaw II* and *Darangun*, there are other notable violin works worth seeking, including Ryan Cayabyab's (1954-) "Violin Concerto" for violin and orchestra, Josefino Toledo's (1959-) "At Maging ang Kwerdas ay Humihingi ng Kapayapaan Para Sa Mundo" ("Even the Strings are Asking for World Peace") for solo violin, and Alan Hilario's (1967-) "kibô" for solo violin or viola.

Most importantly, the research paper hopes to inspire future generations of Filipino violinists to champion newer pieces by local composers. In the Philippines, collegiate violin performance students are often limited to repertoire from the European canon and Filipino works written in the Western Romantic style.¹³³ Performing and teaching these works would not only diversify repertoire choice but equip violinists with

¹³³ This is the personal experience of the author while working towards an undergraduate degree in violin performance.

a wider set of technical and interpretative tools as demonstrated in my discussion of the unique challenges in *Abot-Tanaw II* and *Darangun*. In sum, advocating for modern works by Filipino composers will further enrich the country's already vibrant music scene, securing a strong future for Philippine arts.

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