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KUNDIMAN: A MUSICAL AND SOCIO-CULTURAL EXPLORATION ON THE
DEVELOPMENT OF THE PHILIPPINE ART SONG

by

Michelle Nicolasora

A Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

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This project is a historical research on the development of the Philippine art song, the kundiman. Originating as an oral tradition in a form of a love song, the kundiman became strongly associated with the Philippine revolution, and with nationalism thereafter. This paper puts the kundiman in a center of an exploration—on the social milieu, and on its dual roles as a converging point of foreign influences and as a conduit of nationalism.

The period of the kundiman, generally placed from 1800-1930, is divided into three periods demarcated by significant historical events, as the kundiman seems to develop alongside Philippine history. These events—the Spanish and American occupation, and a short but intense Philippine revolution, serve as a historical backdrop for the unfolding of the kundiman, from an extemporized folk tradition, to a semi-extemporized metaphorical piece for love of country, to a stylized art song. This paper also briefly discusses issues such as the usage of the term to pieces that do not fall within the musical prescriptions of the kundiman, and some insights on its performance practice. Musical samples are provided.

That a song embodies the character of a group is seen across cultures; in the Philippine culture, this is evident by way of a storied nature present in the art form. The last chapter regards the kundiman as a musical re-telling of the Filipino story, and correlates the music with the people.

This paper considers the kundiman both as a musical form, with parameters of a triple meter, a two or three-part form, and a minor-parallel major tonality; and as a sentiment that resonates among the Filipinos throughout the ages.

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INTRODUCTION

Sa tapat ng laging palangiting araw

Na lumalaganap sa dagat silangan

May mutyang masuyo't libid kayamanan

Na giliw ang handog sa pusong may damdam.

Across the ever smiling sun

That shines on the eastern sea

There lies a kind muse endowed with treasures

That gives joy to an ailing heart.

And so this kundiman goes on to describe the Philippines, the Pearl of the Orient, whose beauty lured foreigners to the land and subjugated it for a significant four hundred years. While Magellan's expedition is seen by the world for its navigational feat, to the Filipinos, it is the advent of colonialism that brought irrevocable change to the country's historical and cultural landscape. It is the start of a story, a "rediscovery of the Philippines" as they put it, in which the theme, plot, and cast of characters are entirely different from their own.

Throughout these years, the kundiman, by its musical sound and text, encapsulates the essence of the Filipino history and character. It is a most heartfelt song to which the Filipinos pour their deep profession of devotion and aspiration. It underwent musical

transformation and performed various social roles, but love and its forms remained in its core.

Three theories were cited as to the origin of the word kundiman.¹ First is the assumption that kundiman is the contraction of the phrase "kung hindi man" which means "though I am not worthy." This is rather likely, considering the early function of kundiman in the context of a serenade, and also the humble stance always assumed by the suitor, such as shown in the following text.

*Kung hindi man dapat sa iyong kariktan
Ang aking pag-ibig na sa iyo'y ini-aalay
Kung hindi man ako dapat kaawaan,
Isinasamo kong manungaw ka lamang.*

Though I am not worthy of your beauty
My love to you I offered
Though I am not worthy to be pitied on
I implore for you to even glance my way.

The second speculation is that it might have come from the opening verse of a riddle which says:

*hele-hele ng kundangan,
hele-hele ng kundiman.*

¹Raymundo Bañas, *Philippine Music and Theater* (Quezon City: Manlapaz Publishing, 1969), 91.

hush,hush the cradle,
hush, hush the kundiman.

Another theory supported by Norberto Romualdez and Consejo Cauayani said that kundiman refers to the red cloth worn by male dancers in the provinces in the Philippines. The following song popular in Gen. Trias, Cavite in 1873, supports the claim:²

*Mula nang mauso,
Damt ng kundiman,
Ang babae't lalaki ay nagpupulahan.
Lalong namumula ang kadalagahan,
Siyang pag-aalsa ng katagalugan.*

Eversince the cloth kundiman became a fad,
Women and men all turned red.
Especially the young girls,
When the Tagalog region rose in revolt.

The origin of the kundiman is often traced to the kumintang, a pre-colonial dance-song. The kumintang is believed to be a war song sung to ignite the feelings of warriors

² Antonio Hila and Ramon Santos, "Kundiman," in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 93.

before going to war. The text is written in a 12-syllable, four-line stanza.³ An ostinato accompaniment is provided by a guitar, along with a pantomime-like dance.

Both forms are in triple meter and made use of a melodic formula resembling the harmonic minor. Their differences lie in their structure and in the harmony in which the kundiman exhibits more influence of the Western tonal system.⁴

By way of Spanish colonization, Western elements were introduced and assimilated in the kundiman. In another response, this time in opposition around the end of the 19th century, the kundiman took on a nationalistic turn. The woman, once the object of devotion in a kundiman, became a symbol for the country; the unreciprocated love became the unattainable freedom.

With the institutionalization of music education in the early 20th century, musical skills became available to the Filipinos.⁵ Performers became more proficient and composers found a medium for their national identity and consciousness.⁶ Between 1900-1930, along with the influx of schooled poets, the kundiman became an art form. More complicated in its musical language, an excellent balance of poetry and music, a good sense of prosody, and a significant use of word painting characterized this form.

³Elena Mirano, “The Spanish Colonial Traditions,” in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 42.

⁴Mirano, “The Spanish Colonial Traditions,” 42.

⁵Ramon Santos, “The American Colonial and Contemporary Traditions,” in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 46.

⁶Ramon Santos, “Nicanor Abelardo: Filipino Classicism in the Art of Music,” in *Tunugan: Four Essays On Philippine Music* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2005), 4.

This paper is a historical research on the development of the kundiman. Several areas are worthy of study. Musically, the kundiman developed from a one-part, to a two or three-part form; from having one to having two tonalities, from a simple diatonic to a chromatic harmonic language. Performance practice changed from being extemporized to being written-out with some skill level required of its interpreters. Socially, it evolved from a piece for serenade, to one for the patriotic sentiments and creative genius of poets and composers.

The kundiman, and the Philippine music in general, is shaped by the events in Philippine history; thus, the musical development is approached through a historical perspective. Moreso, the kundiman took on a social role as it became embedded with musical nationalism. One such piece, the *Jocelynang Baliwag* (Jocelyn of Baliwag), is a favorite revolution song in 1896.⁷ Another kundiman of the early 20th century, *Ang Bayan Ko* (My Country), is a protest song against the American regime. It later resurfaced as a theme song for the historic 1986 People Power revolution. The kundiman's presence is then continuously felt, especially in the defining moments of the country.

The document consists of four chapters:

1. The Folk Kundiman (1800-1896)
2. The Patriotic Kundiman (1896-1900)
3. The Art Kundiman (1900-1930)
4. The Kundiman and the Filipino People

The first chapter will discuss the origin of the kundiman and its kinship with the kumintang. It will provide a background of the Spanish conquest and the transformation

⁷ Antonio Molina, "The Sentiments of Kundiman," in *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation* vol.8 (Manila: Lahing Pilipino Publishing, 1978), 2026.

that gradually occurred and permanently imprinted. Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer, accidentally landed on the Philippine shore in 1521. Although killed by a native warrior named Lapu-lapu, a series of other expeditions succeeded in claiming the Philippines for Spain.

The influence of Spain on Philippine music can be summarily said as the assimilation of European forms and the Westernization of indigenous/folk traditions in both sacred and secular realms. Kundiman is a folk tradition strongly influenced by Spanish/European traditions.

The second chapter will discuss the kundiman in the late 19th century. Political and social events propelled resistance and rebellion among the people. National consciousness was demonstrated in literature, music, and arts. The kundiman became a vehicle for patriotic sentiments. The term also came to signify a revolutionary clothing—a piece of red cloth worn by revolutionists in the countryside.⁸

The third chapter will be on the kundiman during the American occupation. After a mock war, Spain ceded the Philippines to the Americans by way of the Treaty of Paris in 1898. The American influence is strongly felt on the system of government and education.

Education is America's tool for colonization as religion is to Spain. Public school system was established throughout the country; primary and secondary education where music was part of the curriculum became compulsory. Music conservatories were founded such as those in the University of the Philippines, University of Santo Tomas,

⁸ Evelyn Cabanban and Raul Sunico, *Mga Awit ng Himagsikan: Songs of the Philippine Revolution, 1896-1898* (Quezon City: Tawid Publishing, 1997), 67.

University of San Agustin, and the Santa Isabel College. Furthermore, studies abroad also became possible for local musicians.

The kundiman at this time was sung in the *sarswela*, the Filipino adaptation of the Spanish opera *zarzuela*, which became popular at this period. It is cast in a two-part form and in a minor/parallel major tonality, later expanded into a three-part form standardized by Francisco Santiago. It became an art form with composers such as Santiago and Nicanor Abelardo, and poets like Deogracias Rosario and Jesus Balmori.

Having been colonized for a great number of years, its geographical features, its trade and commerce with neighboring Asian countries, and the ability of the people to adapt easily, make up for a multi-faceted culture. The last chapter is an introspective look into the kundiman as a microcosm of Filipino culture. Veiled with the Western musical system are a number of Filipino attributes of note. Lockhard said that the “assimilation of foreign influence is the Filipino’s ingenious way of fighting colonization rather than being a cultural separatist.”⁹ De Leon said that the kundiman is related to “*pakikipagkapwa* (social interaction) in that the singer, songwriter, and listener become involved in an essentially dynamic, ever-flowing, creatively transforming, living process.”¹⁰

Following their thoughts, I have observed that a lot of musical elements in the kundiman have parallel Filipino values and characteristics. In addition to those mentioned above, the minor/major tonality is similar to the Filipino’s dual persona. He is both a

⁹ Craig Lockard, *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 17.

¹⁰ Felipe de Leon, “More than a Love Song,” www.himig.com.ph/features/24-more-than-a-love-song (accessed Decemeber 10, 2012).

happy and a sad person; he is melancholic but hopeful at the same time. The text of the kundiman, which has always been on devotion, tells of the Filipino as a devout person—he is devoted to his family, country, religion, and to anyone and anything he deems worthy. The poetry inclined to the use of figures of speech shows his penchant to beat around the bush, so to speak. He does not speak directly in his care of not offending the sensibilities of another person. The practice of rubato, which seems to be the default performance style of the kundiman, requires sensitivity and intuition. This corresponds to *pakikiramdam*—being attuned to and empathic with the other person’s feelings.

Referred to by anthropologists as a high-context culture, the Philippine culture is one in which “modes of behavior are not explicitly stated but are instead inferred in many different ways such as the tone of voice, body language, and idiosyncracies of the lingua franca.”¹¹ As a musical composition is complex, so is the Filipino persona as exemplified by the kundiman.

For a form originating as an oral tradition and grew “out-of-style” with the current trends, there is the tendency for the present generation to be just somewhat familiar with it. It is the aim of this paper to narrate the unfolding of the kundiman, to explore the different facets of its development, and show that it is interesting to the Filipinos at any given time.

Several researches have been made on the kundiman, mostly articles and essays contained in a larger book on Philippine music and arts. These are Hila and Santos’s

¹¹Zeus Salazar, “Sense of Being a Filipino,” www.pinas.activeboard.com/tl4550837/a-sense-of-being-a-filipino (accessed January 10, 2013).

“Kundiman” in the *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art*¹² and Antonio Molina’s “The Sentiments of Kundiman” in the *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation*.¹³ An early description on the kundiman in a context of a serenade was made by Manuel Walls y Merino in his book *La Música Popular de Filipinas* (Popular Music in the Philippines)¹⁴ in 1892. More importantly, Merino provides an extant transcription of a folk kundiman called *May Dusa Pa Yata*. The latest writing on kundiman is Antonio Hila’s “The Kundiman: From Folk Song to Art Song,” a chapter in an encompassing book called *Music in History: History in Music*.¹⁵ Elena Mirano did a study entitled “*Awit, Pandanggo, and Kumintang: Encounters between Scholarship and the Field*.”¹⁶ Although it is not intended to show kumintang’s relationship with the kundiman, it gives a new perspective to the kumintang as she evaluated it through 19th century sources and field work. Ramon Santos’s book, *Tunugan: Four Essays on Filipino Music*,¹⁷ gives a brilliant analysis on the kundiman and other works of Nicanor Abelardo. Kundiman is also touched on in writings on Philippine music, the Philippine revolution, and Tagalog poetry.

¹² Antonio Hila and Ramon Santos, “Kundiman,” in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* vol. 7 (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994).

¹³ Antonio Molina, “The Sentiments of Kundiman,” in *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation* vol. 8 (Manila: Lahing Pilipino Publishing Inc., 1978).

¹⁴ Manuel Walls y Merino, *Popular Music of the Philippines*, trans. Maria Delia Matibag (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1980).

¹⁵ Antonio Hila, “The Kundiman: From Folk Song to Art Song,” in *Music in History, History in Music* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2004).

¹⁶ Elena Mirano, “Awit, Pandanggo, and Kumintang,” *Musika Jurnal* 4 2008.

¹⁷ Ramon Santos, “Nicanor Abelardo: Filipino Classicism in the Art of Music,” in *Tunugan: Four Essays on Philippine Music* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2005).

I built on these researches by making it holistic with the social context yet specific with the musical samples. I also deviated with the way I group the chapters under the style headings. These terms have long been in use, and I believe that they are also an effective and convenient way to describe the developmental stages of the kundiman. The era of the kundiman is placed from 1800-1930.¹⁸ Thus, I derived the time periods to be from 1800—around the year the kundiman was first mentioned, and the year alluded in the Kundiman de 1800, to 1896, the purported year of writing of the important piece *Jocelynang Baliwag*, also the start of the Philippine revolution. The beginning of the 20th century is the start of the American regime, and the year 1930 is around the time of the last kundiman works of its celebrated composer, Nicanor Abelardo. It is important to note that there is an extent of continuity between the folk and the patriotic kundiman. Kundiman was not written-out until around the 20th century, thus, pieces before that time are essentially folk kundiman. It is then by content and intent, and a decidedly sorrowful character that distinguish one kind from another. The patriotic kundiman is also not specific or exclusive to the period of the Philippine revolution. It was still a long struggle with colonialism and neo-colonialism since then; patriotism, too, is a subject that never goes passé.

The first three chapters will follow the format of firstly, giving an overview on the social climate of the period, especially focusing on the elements that have bearing on the music such as religion and education for the Spanish and American colonialism, respectively; secondly, discussing kundiman samples representative of the type. The last

¹⁸Hila and Santos, “Kundiman,” 94.

chapter will be my own insights as a product of the Filipino culture, which I examined and supplemented with social/ cultural studies.

It is the purpose of this document to cover the developmental unfolding of the kundiman. In trying to capture the whole picture, much details are not included while some may have been inadvertently left out. It is recommended for future research to delve into more specific areas. Possible focus would be a study of a single composer or a comparative study of composers such as Abelardo and Santiago. The beginnings of the kundiman, a trace of the Spanish and Filipino components to know how and where things are originally, would also be a much desired topic. Hopefully, more information will be unearthed, which, at this moment, is relatively scarce. It might be of interest for performers to explore more recent kundiman or kundiman-inspired works such as the arrangements of Ryan Cayabyab, the religious kundiman of Augusto Espino, and the jazz-influenced style of Angel Peña. These pieces are a refreshing and welcome addition to the growing Filipino vocal repertoire. Moreso is a study on performance practice and aesthetics of mannerisms consistent all these years.

CHAPTER 1
THE FOLK KUNDIMAN (1800-1896)

The kundiman is both a musical and literary form stemming from the early Filipino's predilection to song and poetry as an expressive venue. The term was actually first applied to the verse, then to the music. Their inclination to poetry was noted by Amado Hernandez who believed it as part of the Philippine culture way before colonialism, and assures of its permanence even in the generations to come.¹ Early accounts such as those made by Juan de Medina, Antonio de Morga, and Francisco de Santa observed of good singers, dancers, and instrumentalists comparable to their Spanish counterparts.² The relatedness and interchangeability of the two were hinted at by Juan Francisco de San Antonio, saying that the Filipinos are “great lovers of verses and performances, that they are tireless in reading verse form, and go about performing it.”³ Just about every form of literature is intoned, some with accompanying instruments, or with dances and actions. It is also implied in a book called *Mga Tula at Kundiman ng Himagsikan* (Poems and Kundiman of the Revolution) where the two terms were differentiated.

¹ Luis Camara Dery, *Awit Kay Inang Bayan: Ang Larawan ng Pilipinas Ayon sa mga Tula't Kundiman na Kinatha Noong Panahon ng Himagsikan* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 2003), xx.

² D.R.M. Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 107.

³ Juan Francisco de San Antonio, *Crónica de la Provincial de San Gregorio Magno*, trans. Pedro Picornel (Manila: Casalinda and the Historical Conservation Society, 1977), 141.

The origin of the kundiman is often traced to the kumintang. A nineteenth century writing talked of the kundiman as a more beautiful form which made poets and musicians almost forget the old form, the kumintang.⁴ The kumintang is a dance-song form from Balayan, Batangas, earning for the place the title "province of the kumintang."⁵ Other early definitions described it as a song for courtship, a rowing song used by boatmen, a Tagalog bridal song, and as an accompaniment to *awit*, a narrative song on lives of saints, prince and princesses, and their deeds.⁶ Both terms are contained in a dictionary of Tagalog song forms by Fr. Chirino and Colin, together with sixteen other forms.⁷ The kumintang, however, predates the kundiman by 65 years, having first mentioned in 1734.⁸

As an oral tradition just like the kundiman, its beginnings are also subject to speculation. It is believed that kumintang is originally a war song (*canto guerrero*),⁹ sung before going to war to ignite the feelings of the warriors. How it evolved into a love song without a hint of war-like qualities was a puzzle to older historians. Humanities professor Elena Mirano theorized that kumintang is characterized by its formal elements but its

⁴ Wenceslao Retana, *El Indio Batangueño, Estudio Etnográfico* (Manila: Tipo-Litografica de Chofre y Cia., 1888), 28.

⁵ Manuel Walls y Merino, *Popular Music of the Philippines*, trans. Maria Delia Matibag (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1980), 18.

⁶ Francisco Santiago, "The Development of Music in the Philippine Island," in *Encyclopedia of the Philippines* vol IV, ed. Zoilo Galang (Manila: Exequiel Floro, 1850), 129.

⁷ Lilia Quindoza-Santiago, "Early Philippine Literature," www.ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/articles-on-c-n-a/article.php?rgm=1&i=32 (accessed January 15, 2013).

⁸ Elena Mirano, "Awit, Pandango, and Kumintang," *Musika Jornal* 4 (2008): 65.

⁹ Corazon Dioquino, "Kumintang," in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 92.

theme could be anything.¹⁰ Thus, it is not exclusively a war song but could also talk of topics from love and friendship to social criticism. The text is cast in *plosa* or monorhyming dodecasyllabic quatrain.¹¹

Furthermore, Mirano cited several usage of the term kumintang.¹² First is its use as a place name as stated by the Spanish chronicler Fray Juan Francisco de San Antonio to refer to an earlier name of Balayan, Batangas. Second is as a dance song authenticated by an engraving of a couple dancing to the accompaniment of a guitar on Murillo Velarde's Philippine map, with a caption that says *Indios bailando el comintang* (native dancing the comintang). The dance is called *siguin-siguin*,¹³ a seductive, pantomime-like dance to the accompaniment of a guitar and bajo de unas. Kumintang is also used to refer to a specific guitar technique in some areas of Batangas.

The formal characteristics of the kumintang are identified from the transcriptions found in these sources: Mallat's *Les Philippines* transcribed by Henry Cohen, Manuel Walls y Merino's *La Musica Popular de Filipinos* transcribed probably by Walls y Merino himself (see figure 1), and a collection by Epifanio de los Santos.¹⁴

In addition to the *plosa*, there is a melodic framework or a vocal *punto* which is ornamented and embellished by the singer.¹⁵ It resembles the Western harmonic minor

¹⁰Mirano, "Awit, Pandanggo, and Kumintang," 66.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 48.

¹²*Ibid.*, 58.

¹³ Walls y Merino, "Popular Music," 19.

¹⁴ Mirano, "Awit, Pandanggo, and Kumintang," 59.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 66

and endows the kumintang with an oriental spirit.¹⁶ The harmony is provided by a guitar accompaniment alternating between the tonic and dominant.

The musical score is presented in three systems. Each system consists of a vocal line on a single treble clef staff and a guitar accompaniment on a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The time signature is 3/4. The first system starts with a whole rest in the vocal line. The second system begins at measure 4. The third system begins at measure 7. The guitar accompaniment features a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes and chords, alternating between tonic and dominant harmonies.

Figure 1. Walls y Merino, trans. *Comintang*

¹⁶ Ramon Santos, "Nicanor Abelardo: Filipino Classicism in the Art of Music," in *Tunugan: Four Essays on Philippine Music* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines Press, 2005), 10.

The melodic formula is like the Western harmonic scale with the characteristic augmented second interval on the 6th and 7th scale degree. There is a monotonic quality by a conjunct motion of pitches in a narrow range, although there are also leaps to different ranges. This is compounded by a harmony which could suspend in either tonic or dominant for several measures. The melody could be broken by rests in between, with the accompaniment, and probably the dance, still ongoing.¹⁷ The text is set syllabically in a strophic followed by a two-line refrain form. It has the mannerism of rounding off lines with a neumatic figure. The meter is triple, although in practice, it might shift occasionally to quadruple.¹⁸

The kumintang shares a lot of semblance with the kundiman. Foremost is the triple meter and some usage of the characteristic rhythm of a long-short-short-long pattern (for example, an eighth followed by two sixteenth and an eighth note, as in the previous sample). Another similarity is the use of a melodic scale like the Western harmonic minor scale. The kumintang rhythm and melody are utilized especially by Nicanor Abelardo, both as a structural device, and as evocative of mystery and drama.¹⁹ The text structure of dodecasyllabic quatrain is also the same in both forms. Moreso is the accentuation on the second beat of the second bar.

In the matter of accentuation, composer Antonio Molina explores the kinship of the kundiman and kumintang with the *awit*, a tune adapted to a text with religious

¹⁷ Mirano, “Awit, Pandanggo and Kumintang,” 63.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 62.

¹⁹ Santos, “Nicanor Abelardo,” 10.

undertone such as the Crusades or the war between Moros and Christians.²⁰ The accents on the second beat of the kundiman and kumintang are similar to the second beat of the sixth bar of the *awit*. The kumintang and *awit* are further related by a stress on the third beat of the first bar of every phrase. All three forms are in triple time; the kumintang and *awit* are strophic while the kundiman is through-composed.

The difference between the kundiman and the kumintang is in their structure—a strophic or verse-refrain for the kumintang, a two or three part form, each section with a different melody, for the kundiman. Also, the harmony of the kumintang is the continuous alternation of the tonic and dominant, whereas in the kundiman, there is a functional use of chords.²¹

The relatedness of the kumintang and kundiman, and the success of the composer in merging their elements, are seen in the discussion as to the genre of Abelardo's *Mutya ng Pasig* (Muse of Pasig, see figure 2). Conceived as a kumintang,²² the piece employs the kumintang's melodic formula and rhythm, but in the form and harmonic language of the kundiman. In its sentiments, *Mutya ng Pasig* is a kundiman and a patriotic one at that. The lamentations of the muse on her glorious past, and her pleadings to bring back her love in order for her to live, very much echoes the feelings of the Filipino for his country.

²⁰ Molina, "The Sentiments of Kundiman," 2027.

²¹ Elena Mirano, "Spanish Colonial Traditions," in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 42.

²² Santos, "Nicanor Abelardo," 10.

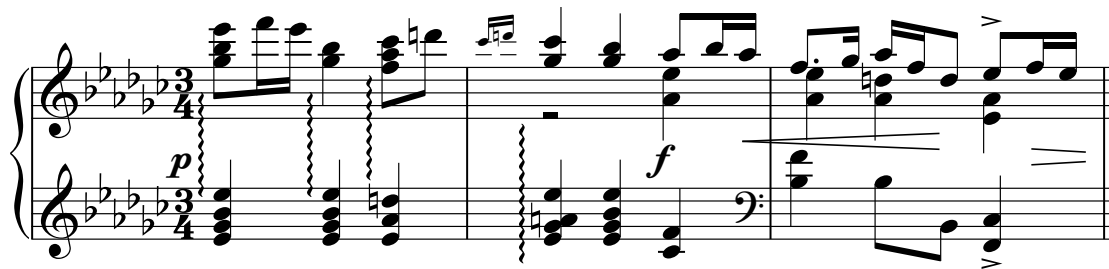


Figure 2. Abelardo, *Mutya ng Pasig*, measures 1-3

The kundiman is one of the folk styles influenced by Spanish/European traditions. Philippine music is largely classified into westernized folk and indigenous traditions practiced by only 10% of the population mostly in non-Christian communities.²³ It is difficult to ascertain the incipient stages of musical transplantation, for only descriptive accounts of early music, written mostly by religious writers and travelers who could have been influenced by their biases, exist. One thing is irrefutable, however—that of the prominence and dominance of the Church not just in the political and social, but in the musical arena as well. Jose Maceda sums it up: “Historical records about how the change on Philippine music came about are few, but they all tell how the first western music was introduced through the medium of the Church.”²⁴

The Philippines came in contact with Spain when Ferdinand Magellan, a Portuguese explorer, landed on Philippine shore in 1521 in his route to Morocco. He claimed the Philippines for Spain and sowed the seeds of Christianity, but was killed by Lapu-lapu in what could be considered as the first act of resistance against Spain. Other

²³ Jose Maceda, “Ang Musika sa Pilipinas sa ika-19 na Daang Taon,” in *Musika Journal* (Quezon City: Kagawaran ng Pananaliksik sa Musika, 1979), 7.

²⁴ Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint*, 101.

expeditions followed until the last successful voyage of Miguel Lopez de Legazpi in 1565, formally establishing the Philippines as a Spanish colony.

Spain colonized the Philippines for various reasons, one of which is to use its strategic place as a trade route from Asia to Europe. The geographical accessibility of the Philippines to Asia and America, also to Africa and Europe, made it the last link in a trade system that would circumnavigate the world.²⁵ Another equally important factor is the propagation of the Christian faith, ignited even more by its encounter with the Filipino Muslims, which draws a parallel event in their own history.²⁶

Religion was used to entice the natives to Spain. Conversion from ancient religion to Catholicism and later embracing the colonizer's culture became embedded in the Philippine society. Every aspect of the country is tinged with Spanish influence, from the name itself derived from the name of the Spanish king Philipp, to the country's religion that is predominantly Catholic.

Music is a catalyst in propagating the Christian faith. Among the many powers attributed to music since classical antiquity, the Spaniards recognized the ability of music to appease, unite, and subvert people. Missionaries were instructed that if they "wish to inspire greater admiration and attention among the infidels, and if it were convenient to do so, they could use music performed by singers and instrumentalists in order to encourage them to join in and to use them."²⁷ They were to educate the locals in reading

²⁵*Ibid.*, 19.

²⁶ Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint*, 133.

²⁷*Ibid.*, 104.

and writing Spanish, dancing, singing, and playing of instruments. It was in Spain's action plan to teach their culture along with evangelization.

Efforts were made by the clergy to eradicate the music of the natives they deemed were evil and barbaric. In the pre-colonial times, music was of Asiatic traditions and was geographically and stylistically belonging to either northern or southern traditions, and aligning with the practices of continental and insular southeast Asia, respectively.²⁸ It could be vocal, instrumental, or combination of both. It shows man's dependence on nature—instruments are constructed from natural materials, and sounds are evocative of sounds from the environment. It is highly-functional—it accompanies ceremonies, rituals, even in the performance of one's job.

The Spaniards suppress the music by sending church musicians and music teachers along with the missionaries, to teach “music of the faith” to the natives.²⁹ Gregorian chant and even elaborate sacred music with inclusion of instruments such as the violin and other string instruments, piano, harmonium, and organ were performed in church; music theory, composition and performance of liturgical music, and manufacture of musical instruments were also taught.³⁰ The first ensemble was organized in 1601, there were fine choirs by 1609, and a music institution, the Colegio de Ninos Tiples de la Santa Iglesia Cathedral, was established in 1742.³¹

²⁸ Jonas Baes, “Asiatic Musical Traditions in the Philippines,” www.ncca.gov.ph/about-culture-and-arts/articles-on-c-n-a/article.php?igm=1&i=148 (accessed February 15, 2013).

²⁹ Mirano, “Spanish Colonial,” 36.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 36-38.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 37.

The influence of the church went beyond the liturgical music into the feasts and traditions—extra and paraliturgical rituals that are still prevalent in the country up to these days. Mostly on devotions to Mary and saints, these rituals are practiced with some regional variations around the country. They represent the Catholic faith in different extent—there are those sanctioned by the Church, those that grew out of former church activities, and those that merge Christian and non-Christian elements outside of the church domains.³² Secular music, on the other hand, could be categorized on the degree and manner of combining the western and indigenous components. There is the localized western, the westernized indigenous, and the hybrid forms.³³

The embryonic stage of the Western musical tradition may be placed at around late 18th century in Christianized areas in the country. The concept of melody and harmony interwoven in a tonal fabric began to show in the musical pieces of this time. The introduction of dance rhythms such as *danza*, waltz, and *fandango*, provided the time element as opposed to an oriental perception of timelessness, or a rhythmic variation to an otherwise repetitive rhythmic pattern.

The folk kundiman (see figure 3), as its name conveys, refers to extemporized songs of unknown origin and orally passed on among generations. The earliest mention of folk kundiman was in 1799 by Martinez de Zuniga.³⁴ It is through-composed and is either major or minor.

³²*Ibid.*, 38-41.

³³ Ramon Santos, “Constructing a National Identity Through Music,” *Bulawan 2: Journal of Philippine Arts and Culture* (Manila: National Commission for Culture and the Arts, 2001), 20-31.

³⁴ Mirano, “Awit, Pandanggo, and Kumintang,” 65.

The first system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line in 3/4 time, containing five measures of music with notes and rests. The middle and bottom staves are grouped as a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and contain accompaniment for the first five measures, featuring chords and rhythmic patterns.

6

The second system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line in 3/4 time, containing six measures of music. The middle and bottom staves are grouped as a grand staff and contain accompaniment for the second six measures, including some complex chordal textures.

12

The third system of the musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a single treble clef line in 3/4 time, containing six measures of music. The middle and bottom staves are grouped as a grand staff and contain accompaniment for the third six measures.

Figure 3. Walls y Merino trans., *May Dusa Pa Yata*

18

Musical score for measures 18-23. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef. The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment in grand staff notation, with chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

24

Musical score for measures 24-27. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef. The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment in grand staff notation, with chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

28

Musical score for measures 28-32. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef. The bottom two staves are piano accompaniment in grand staff notation, with chords in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand.

Figure 3. Walls y Merino trans., *May Dusa Pa Yata*

<p><i>May dusa pa yata na lalo nang hapdi</i></p> <p><i>Sa nilalama'y kong mga dalamhati,</i></p> <p><i>Sa sangmaliwanag bukod ako't tangi,</i></p> <p><i>Na di na naibsan ng mga pighati.</i></p>	<p>Is there a punishment that is most distressing</p> <p>Than the sorrows that I have within me?</p> <p>I am deprived of all clarity</p> <p>And I always fall back in the same sorrows.</p>
<p><i>Saan patutungo't kanino lalapit</i></p> <p><i>Ang pobreng lagay na kahapis-hapis</i></p> <p><i>Tumakbo't paawa sa nagpasakit</i></p>	<p>Where will I go? Whom will I approach?</p> <p>This situation of mine is extremely sad</p> <p>I am a petitioner, running to where there is no suffering</p>
<p><i>Anong madadating lakas man ang tangis.</i></p>	<p>But I keep falling back to the same sorrows.³⁵</p>

From the 19th century writings of Wenceslao Retana and Manuel Walls y Merino, a short description and performance practice of the kundiman can be deduced. Retana, at least in his description on the music of Batangas, divided the kundiman into three classes: “one that is extremely fast and fleeting, a second, similar kind with a different textual style, and a third one in a low key.”³⁶ He also described the kundiman as could be “played with all kinds of instruments, but is more classic and pleasant with stringed instruments.”³⁷

³⁵ Walls y Merino, *Popular Music*, 24.

³⁶ Retana, *El Indio Batangueño*, 30.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 28.

The early kundiman functions in the context of a serenade.³⁸ It was the style in the olden times to declare a man's romantic intentions through a serenade, to the accompaniment of a guitar or the town band for the more affluent suitor. Walls y Merino described the setting to be that of a man who endured all costs to get even just a glimpse of his beloved.³⁹

The extemporized text is variably fitted to the melody, depending on the occasion on which they are sung. The melody and text could be derived from the kumintang.⁴⁰ The text is also written in the same dodecasyllabic quatrain of the kumintang with an underlying pessimism and exaggerated mode of expression. The line "kung hindi man" or its variety is also usually inserted.

The following observations can be gleaned from the sample:

The melody moves in stepwise motion in a general falling contour. They are constructed in a two-bar phrase which tapers with delayed resolutions. If this is construed as a musical sigh, then it effectively illustrates the pessimist attitude of a man in courtship. The harmony is diatonic, alternating between the tonic and dominant, with some usage of secondary tonal level. The use of secondary tonal level in sections of unstable character, perhaps denote an innate foreign feeling for harmony outside the home key. The accompaniment is not instrument-specified but resembles guitar-like figures. Two strophes are sung to the same music.

³⁸ Walls y Merino, *Popular Music*, 23.

³⁹ Walls y Merino, *Popular Music*, 23.

⁴⁰ Molina, "The Sentiments of Kundiman," 2026.

In a three-fold process of forced submission, resettlement and reorganization of political units, and conversion to Roman Catholicism, Spanish elements permeated the Philippine society. It may be safe to regard the Church as the most consequential factor for its dogmas assessed pre-colonial practices and determined their acceptability to the new religion. To the disadvantage of the indigenous culture, it was found to be of pagan inclinations and most were eradicated by simultaneous suppression and indoctrination.

The musical and literary arts clearly manifest this reshaping. They served the religious and the secular, with a degree of overlap between them. In literature, epics on the deeds of heroes and gods, or genealogies of the dead, were supplanted with narrations on the lives and works of Christian figures. The merging of the two languages, literally, was seen earlier on in the poetry of bilingual-poets *landino* whose works contain Tagalog verses and their Spanish translations printed one line after another. Eventually, Filipino writers wrote wholly in Spanish or Tagalog, and translated books to and from the Spanish language. They adapted formal structures and genres such as the Spanish romance.

To appropriate Attali's concept, the organization of sound, and of words by extension, relate to power;⁴¹ ultimately, the adoption and adaptation of the arts were to ensure the dominion of Spain over the country. Spain, indeed, gained a strong foothold. But colonialism is flawed by nature, and any form of dominance is bound to meet resistance. Increased discontent arose from inequality of rights, imposed labor and taxation, and non-representation in courts and parishes. There were also abuses by local

⁴¹ Wayne Bowman, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 306.

officials and clergies who enjoyed limitless power, the country being geographically impossible to be governed directly from Spain. The people clamored for what was theirs in the first place, which the arts, as a kind of social text, was quick to respond.

CHAPTER 2

THE PATRIOTIC KUNDIMAN (1896-1900)

Nationalism is defined as a “devotion to or advocacy of national unity and independence, a development in a people within a contiguous geographic area having a shared sentiment by common history, language, literature, customs, and traditions.”¹ By these tenets, the country failed, thus a slow rise to nationalism. The physical layout of the country is a major disadvantage. Separated by mountains and seas, people are consequently fragmented and tribalistic, which the Spanish colonial policies used to their own benefits. For instance, a passport was required to go from one place to another; natives from one area were recruited to fight rebels from another. The linguistic difference is an impediment further augmented by not teaching the Spanish language, or promoting any common language for that matter. Although the people generally fought against oppression, they did so with opposite means for contrary ends. The Philippine-born Spanish and the half-bred *mestizos* wanted the country to be annexed to Spain while the native *indios* fought for autonomy. Nationalism was hastened when the *creoles* (Philippine-born) realized they were never to be equal with the *peninsulares* (Spanish-born).

The late 19th century marked a significant change and dramatic phase in Philippine history. The sporadic uprisings throughout the country finally culminated in a nationalist revolution that would put an end to the three-century Spanish rule. Social

¹Teodoro Agoncillo and Milagros Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People* 5th ed. (Quezon City: R.P. Garcia Publishing, 1980), 126.

conditions were also favorable for the burgeoning nationalism. The opening of the trade route Cape Good Hope and of the Suez Canal thereafter, lessen the dominance of the Manila-Acapulco route, and consequently the monopoly of Spain. The Cape Good Hope and the Suez Canal were much faster route—three and one month respectively—compared to the five-month of the Manila-Acapulco route. They also made possible direct contact between the Philippines and Europe which before was only a limited acquaintance through the filters of Spain. With that came an access to the Western intellectual and revolutionary pursuits which proved to be successful in the French revolution a century earlier.

The galleon trade was eventually replaced by agriculture as the primary livelihood source resulting in a more economically-independent and sustaining country. Economic prosperity was widely felt that there emerged a middle and upper class. Some of them went abroad where they studied and exercised their liberal ideas freely. The expatriates were also exposed to the internal problems of Spain who had its own battle with the French invasion, a challenged monarchy system, and a schism between the liberal and conservative. Back home, by virtue of the Royal Decree of 1863, education which was previously confined to parochial level was extended up to tertiary level.² Together, these educated people laid the foundation for a reform movement aimed to peacefully change colonial policies.

Such campaign remained elusive. The liberal leadership of Governor-general Carlos Maria de la Torre was soon supplanted by the repressive ruling of Governor-

²Bienvenido Lumbera, *Tagalog Poetry 1570-1898: Tradition and Influences in Its Development* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1896), 84.

general Rafael de Izquierdo who vowed to “rule with a crucifix in one hand and a sword in another.”³ In 1872, a group of agitated workers in Cavite held a demonstration against forced labor and tribute, dubbed by authorities as a mutiny, and to which they implicate the priests Mariano Gomez, Jose Burgos, and Jacinto Zamora. The execution of the priests, in actuality for their advocacy on the filipinization of parishes, triggered a widespread revolution; the martyrdom of Jose Rizal, the Filipino’s symbol of hope, ushered the final stage of the revolution in 1896. On the eve of Rizal’s exile four years earlier, a secret revolutionary group called *Kataas-taasang Kagalang-galangang Katipunero ng mga Anak ng Bayan*, was born. When their exponential growth and underground activities ran the risk of exposure to the authorities, they symbolically tore off their *cedulas* in defiance to Spain. Armed conflicts ensued.

Filipinos fought “not just with *bolos* and bullets but also with songs and other forms such as the kundiman.”⁴The kundiman at this point took a nationalistic turn as the woman, once the object of love, became the symbol for motherland. The text now became a metaphor for the longings, aspirations, and dreams of the Filipino for his country. Composer Felipe Padilla de Leon explains the need for such: “The Spanish practice of forbidding the Filipinos from uttering anything pertaining to nationalism is the reason for the passionate and ardent emotional feelings contained in the kundiman which served as a

³Agoncillo and Guerrero, *History of the Filipino People*, 123.

⁴Antonio Hila, “The Music of the Philippine Revolution,” in *Music in History: History in Music* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2004), 13.

subtle medium for expressing the Filipino’s love of country, symbolized by romantic love.”⁵

One popular piece reflects the tension in 1872 (see figure 4). It clearly links the kundiman with the revolution, implying its use as a piece of red clothing the revolutionists wore. It was said that it became a practice to wear red articles of clothing while singing kundiman. The color and the genre evidently came to stand for boldness and patriotism. Its cheerful music misrepresents the text which speaks of the fear and bravery of the farm people, a David with their crude weapons up against well-armed Spaniards.



Figure 4. Sunico and Cabanban, trans., *Mula Nang Mausong ang Damit na Kundiman*

⁵Felipe de Leon, “Recurring Themes in Filipino Music,” *Archipelago*, 4, no. 7a-39 (1977): 9

<i>Mula nang mauso, damit na kundiman</i>	Since the red garment came into style
<i>Ang babae't lalaki ay nagpupulahan</i>	Girls and boys appeared red;
<i>Lalong namumula ang kadalagahan,</i>	The ladies became rosier,
<i>Siyang pagaalsa ng katagalugan.</i>	The Tagalog people started to rise.
<i>Nang magsiabansi ang mga Tagalog</i>	When the Tagalog people revolted,
<i>Ang dalang sandata'y mahahabang gulok</i>	The weapons they brought as arms were long bolos
<i>May sumpit, may pana't saka arkabus</i>	There were spears, bows, and arrows,
<i>Sibat na bakawe, ipinahihimok.</i>	Swords of wood for fighting. ⁶

While the kundiman is defined by its triple meter and nostalgic flavor, this seems to be not always the case as the term is applied to pieces which do not fit the bill. Two pieces from Consejo Cauayani's collection of popular songs during the Spanish period were entitled *Kundiman* and *Kundiman ng Puso* even though they are in duple; *Sa Iyo ang Dahil* (see figure 5), on the other hand, is in a major mode and is lighthearted. They are not always included as kundiman samples, perhaps because they are not direct ancestors in the musical development of the kundiman. I strongly feel, however, that at least for the early developmental stages of a genre, form, or style, a certain leeway should be given to the usage of terms. Practice definitely precedes definition, and standardization comes after an observable general traits over a period of time.

⁶Antonio Hila, "The Kundiman: from Folk Song to Art Song," in *Music in History, History in Music* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2004), 28.

The musical score consists of six staves of music in 3/4 time, written in a key with one flat (B-flat). The chords indicated above the staves are: F, C, F, Cm, Bb, F, C, F, Cm, Bb, F, C, F.

Figure 5. Sunico and Cabanban, trans., *Sa Iyo ang Dahil*

<i>Di mo baga namamasdan</i>	Do you not see
<i>Sa dibdib ko yaring punyal</i>	This knife in my breast
<i>Halos sa dugo'y lumutang</i>	Almost swimming in blood
<i>Sa iyo, Neneng, ang dahilan</i>	For you, Neneng, the reason
<i>Di mo kaya maampat</i>	Can you not chek
<i>Ang bumubugsong hirap</i>	The unabated suffering
<i>Hayo na't itarak</i>	Go on and plunge

<i>Sa dibdib yaring sibat</i>	This spear into my breast
<i>Sukat mong pakaalalahanin</i>	Just remember
<i>Na ang hirap kong ito 'y sa iyo ang dahil</i>	That you are the reason I endure this suffering
<i>Pakatantuin mo magpahanggang gabi</i>	Know that, unto my grave
<i>Wala akong ibang sinisinta</i>	No one will I ever love
<i>Kundi ikaw at ikaw rin</i>	But you and you alone. ⁷

Just like *Mula Nang Mausong*, *Sa Iyo ang Dahil* is popular in Cavite in 1872. In this piece, the poet pledges his undivided love to motherland symbolized as Neneng, for whose sake he endures all suffering. The text is written in octosyllabic quatrain, not the usual twelve-syllable line stanza. It is in two parts.

The next piece, *Kundiman ng Puso* (see figure 6), is believed to have been found held by a lifeless man whose body and the score were miraculously left intact inside a burnt house. It is neither triple nor melancholic—the kundiman here is clearly used in its sentiments.



Figure 6. Cayuayani trans., *Kundiman ng Puso*

⁷Evelyn Cabanban and Raul Sunico, *Mga Awit ng Himagsikan: Songs of the Philippine Revolution, 1896-1898* Bk. 2 (Quezon City: Tawid Publishing, 1997), 69.



Figure 6. Cayuayani, trans., *Kundiman ng Pusong*

<i>Sino mang maghasik</i>	Whatever plants
<i>Pinuhuna'y pagod</i>	Fatigue is the capital
<i>Tubo't pakinabang</i>	Profits that will come
<i>Tunay na pag-irog.</i>	A true love.
<i>At ako sa mundo'y</i>	In this world I am alone
<i>Tangi nang sumipot</i>	Who have gained nothing
<i>Napapakinabang,</i>	But sorrows and affliction
<i>Dalamhati't lungkot.</i>	Why do you not rip off
<i>Bakit di pa kitlin</i>	My own life, my dear,
<i>Ang ingat kong buhay</i>	So that you will be free
<i>At nang mapanibulos ka</i>	In other arms to live?
<i>Sa ibang kandungan?</i>	Take from me
<i>Sa akin ay alisin</i>	All the freedom I have
<i>Ang lahat ng laya,</i>	Give it to someone else

<i>Ibigay mo sa ibang</i>	More worthy than I.
<i>Dapat na pagbigyan.</i>	Then when my life is over
<i>Di kung yaring buhay</i>	All my hardships will end
<i>Sa aki'y wala na,</i>	Which are caused by my love.
<i>Tapos na ang hirap</i>	And you, my Neneng.
<i>Na sanhi ng sinta,</i>	Will be more calm and steady
<i>At ikaw naman, Neneng,</i>	Because I will be nowhere,
<i>Ay matitiwasay na</i>	To poison your sight. ⁸
<i>At wala na akong</i>	
<i>Lason mong makita.</i>	

The beginning stages of courtship in the early times involve a serenade, and the following kundiman (see figure 7) is said to have won the affection of the woman after several rejections. Other than the meter, it is very much in the kundiman style—a doleful character, the use of an augmented second interval, and melodic phrases starting on an upbeat.



Figure 7. Cauayani, trans., *Kundiman*

⁸Cauayani, "Some Popular Songs," 113-115.

<i>Tinitingnan mo man di ako kumikibo,</i>	Although you see that I am quiet,
<i>Nagtitiis lamang, may damdam ang puso;</i>	I am suffering with an aching heart.
<i>Damdang ng puso ko kung iyong matanto</i>	The feelings in my heart if you only knew
<i>Di ka man maawa, luha mo'y tutulo.</i>	Though you will not pity, yet your tears will flow.
<i>At sa katunaya'y dibdib ko ay biyakin,</i>	And as proof, open my breasts,
<i>Hanguin ang laman, puso ko'y tadtarin,</i>	Take out its contents and cut up my heart,
<i>Ang bawat piraso ay iyong tanungin,</i>	Get every piece and ask each part;
<i>Walang ibang isasagot kundi sayo ang dakil.</i>	There will be no answer but you alone are the cause. ⁹

The dramatic and emotional kundiman, as well as melodies often quoted in the first composed kundiman, had their precursor in the *Jocelynang Baliwag*, *Kundiman de 1800*, and *Kundiman de 1870*.

The *Jocelynang Baliwag* is said to be a favorite of the revolutionists. It is of curious note how a song of gentle lyricism and of moderately slow tempo became associated with uprisings. There were of course martial songs that were also sung, original or Spanish marches with substituted lyrics,¹⁰ but the claim of *Jocelynang Baliwag* is validated by the inscription *Musica de Legitimo Kundiman Procedente del Campo Insurrect* (legitimate kundiman of the insurrectos). On its cover, too, were a

⁹Consejo Cauayani, "Some Popular Songs of the Spanish Period and their Possible Use in the Music Program of Our School," (MA Thesis, University of the Philippines, 1954), 39-41.

¹⁰T.G. Maceda, "Protest Songs," in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 114.

picture of Jocelyna and the town plaza and church, with the Philippine flag raised atop the bell towers, printed side by side. It was contended that Filipino composers find haunting, melancholic music suitable for their revolutionary spirits. They identify their “struggle for freedom with sad themes.”¹¹

Jocelynang Baliwag is the last among four pieces found in the papers of the *Orquestra Molina* of Don Juan Molina.¹² It is the only piece in the collection which authorship is unknown. The set includes a danza entitled *Liwayway* by Isabelo de los Reyes, a suite of waltzes called *El Anillo de la Dalaga de Marmol* by Domingo Enrile and Joaquin Chico, and *Pepita, Danza Tagala* with lyrics by Pascual Poblete. All pieces were dedicated to Jocelyna Tiongson y Lara, a beautiful woman admired in the province of Baliwag, Bulacan.

Two texts exist with the title *Jocelynang Baliwag*,¹³ but the one set to music is the lyrics which first letters of the first lines of every stanza form a musical acrostic of *Pepita*, the nickname of Jocelyna (see figure 8). The text is not rhythmically synchronized with the music—it is probable that the poetry is just fitted into the music as in the practice of the folk kundiman. *Jocelynang Baliwag* utilized the first two stanza

¹¹Felipe Padilla de Leon, “Poetry, Music, and Social Consciousness,” *Philippine Studies* 17, no. 2 (April 1969), 272.

¹²Antonio Molina, “The Sentiments of the Kundiman,” in *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation* ed. Alfredo Roces (Manila: Lahing Pilipino Publishing, 1977), 2026.

¹³Luis Camara Derey, *Awit Kay Inang Bayan: Ang Larawan ng Pilipinas Ayon sa mga Tula’t Kundiman na Kinatha Noong Panahon ng Himagsikan* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 2003), 92.

composed of four lines, twelve syllable each line. Musically, it is divided into two sections in which the B part was quoted in the Kundiman of Abdon in 1920.



Figure 8. *Jocelynang Baliwag*

<i>Pinopoong sinta niring kaluluwa</i>	Beloved goddess of my soul
<i>Nakakawangis mo mabangong sampaga</i>	You are like the fragrant sampaga
<i>Dalisay sa linis, dakila sa ganda</i>	Pure and clean, of noble beauty
<i>Matimyas na bukas ng madlang ligaya.</i>	The genuine spring from which flows complete joy.
<i>Edeng maligayang kinaluluklukan</i>	Happy Eden the throne
<i>Ng galak at tuwang katamis-tamisan</i>	Of the sweetest joy and happiness.

<i>Ada kang maningning na ang matung-</i>	You are the dazzling nymph whose gaze
<i>hayay</i>	makes
<i>Masamyong bulaklak agad sumisikal</i>	The fragrant flower grow instantly. ¹⁴

The piece has some semblance with the piece, *May Dusa Pa Yata* (refer to figure 3). The melodic rhythm and contour are the same. This melodic rhythm (a dotted quarter followed by three eighth notes) is actually often utilized in kundiman, especially in the first works of Abdon and Abelardo. Other similarities are the waltz-like accompaniment and the harmonic plan, although Jocelynang Baliwag's is more functional in the Western sense.

It is in the use of contrast that Jocelynang Baliwag deviates from the folk song formula. Each section has two contrasting periods. The second period of the A section and the B part are made different with a more active harmony in a fifth progression. The melody soars by employing disjunct intervals and is given to higher and lower points. Additionally, Jocelynang Baliwag's important melodic phrases start on an upbeat, a common signpost in the later kundiman. It could be assumed that shortening or lengthening the beats is necessary to fit the six syllable into a two-bar phrase.

The *Kundiman de 1800* (see figure 9) is popular among schoolchildren as *Awit ng Pulubi* (Song of the Beggar). The humorous text which seems misfitted to the serious character of the music was later found out to be hurriedly written by Dr. Francisco Santiago for a printing deadline.¹⁵ The piece is part of a collection of folk songs by

¹⁴ Hila and Santos, "Kundiman," 95.

¹⁵ Molina, "Sentiments of Kundiman," 2027.

Emilia Recio Cruz and Santiago in 1921, and could be considered as the first transcription of kundiman with known authorship.¹⁶

The musical score for 'Kundiman de 1800' is written in 3/4 time and consists of eight staves of music. The melody is written in treble clef. The chords indicated above the notes are: C, G, G, C, C, A, Dm, C, G, C, G, C, A, Dm, C, G, C, F, Gm, C, F, D, C, F, Gm, F, C, F.

Figure 9. *Kundiman de 1800*

¹⁶Ramon Santos, "Nicanor Abelardo: Filipino Classicism in the Art of Music," in *Tunugan: Four Essays on Philippine Music* (Quezon City: UP Press, 2005), 16.

<i>Doon po sa aming maralitang bayan</i>	In our poor town
<i>Nagpatay ng hayop “nik-nik” ang pangalan</i>	An animal was killed named “nik-nik;”
<i>Ang taba po nito ay pinatunaw,</i>	Its fat was extracted
<i>Lumabas na langis, siyam na tapayan.</i>	And the oil that poured out filled nine jars.
<i>Doon po sa aming bayan ng Malabon,</i>	In our town of Malabon,
<i>May nakita akong nagsaing ng apoy;</i>	I saw someone cooking fire;
<i>Palayok ay papel gayon din ang tuntong,</i>	The pot was made of paper, so was the stand,
<i>Tubig na malamig ang iginatong.</i>	Cold water was used as fuel.
<i>Doon po sa aming bayan ng San Roque</i>	In our town of San Roque
<i>May nagkatuwaan apat na pulubi;</i>	Four beggars had some fun
<i>Nagsayaw ang pilay, kumanta ang pipi</i>	The lame danced, the mute sang
<i>Nanood ang bulag, nakinig ang bingi.</i>	The blind watched, the deaf listened. ¹⁷

The dates associated with these kundiman are not necessarily related to the time of their writing or popularity. The “true lyrics” of the *Kundiman de 1800*, for instance, talked about events that would happen eighty or so years after.¹⁸ It was purported that the relatively newer lyrics were written to an already existing music. The text called *Sa*

¹⁷Hila and Santos, “Kundiman,” 95.

¹⁸Molina, “Sentiments of Kundiman,” 2027.

Dalampasigan (By the Seashore) is also set to a *danza* in 1897.¹⁹ It is unique in its explicit call to take up arms and defend the country.

<i>Sa dalampasigan ng dagat Maynila,</i>	On the shores of Manila Bay,
<i>Luneta ang tawag ng mga Kastila,</i>	Called Luneta by the Spaniards
<i>Ay doon binaril ang kaawa-awa</i>	There the miserable was shot
<i>Pobreng Pilipino, martir nitong lupa.</i>	Poor Filipino, martyr of this land.
<i>Naramay sa dusa ang ating tanggulan</i>	Our defenders fell into agony
<i>Panganay na Burgos at bunsong si Rizal,</i>	Burgos, the eldest, and the youngest, Rizal
<i>Sa inggit at takot ng prayleng sukaban</i>	Wicked friars consumed by envy and fear
<i>Pinatay at sukat walang kasalanan</i>	Had them killed, though they were innocent. ²⁰

The piece has three periods of eight-measure phrases. The first two periods share the same concluding phrase while the third is a transposition of the second period in the new key of F. A smooth transition was effected by having the last chord of C major act as a V, going to a II, back to V, and finally to a I in the new key.

Period 1	Phrase a bars 1-8	I-V-I
	Phrase b bars 9-16	I-V/ii-ii-I-V-I
Period 2	Phrase a bars 17-24	V-I-V-I
	Phrase b bars 25-32	I-V/ii-ii-I-V-I

¹⁹Cabanban and Sunico, *Mga Awit ng Himagsikan*, 86.

²⁰ Antonio Hila and Ramon Santos, "Kundiman," in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 95.

Period 3

Phrase a bars 33-40

ii-V-I-ii-V-I

Phrase b bars 41-48

I-V/ii-I-V-I

The *Kundiman de 1870* (see figure 10), also known as *Paalam sa Pagkadalaga* (Farewell to Maidenhood), is set to a poem of Dr. Jose Rizal on the anxieties of a woman about to settle down. Musically, it is like the previous samples in that it is in single tonality with a slight tonal shift in the middle. It has three periods in two repeated sections. The third period temporarily shifted to the relative key of E-flat. Similar with the *Awit ng Pulubi*, the last chord of the old key acts as a pivot, a VI chord, to the new key.

The musical score for *Kundiman de 1870* is presented in six staves of music. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat) and the time signature is 3/4. The score is annotated with chords above the notes. The first section (bars 33-40) consists of the first three staves, with chords: Fm, G, Cm, Cm, Fm, G; Cm, Cm, Fm, D, G; Fm, Cm, G, Cm. The second section (bars 41-48) consists of the last three staves, with chords: Bb, Eb, Ab; G, Fm, G, Cm; Fm, Cm, G, Cm. The score ends with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Figure 10. *Kundiman de 1870*

Period 1	bars 1-8	(iv-V-i-iv-V-i)
Period 2	bars 9-12	(V/f-f-V/g-g-iv-i-V-i) C=VI in E-flat
Period 3	bars 17-32	(VI)-V-I-IV IV(in E-flat)=VI (in c min) (VI)-V-iv-V-i-iv-i-V-i

The following can be generalized from the previous samples:

1. The melodic line, in a smooth, falling contour, extended in range and length.



2. Contrasting phrases and phrases of unstable character are harmonized by secondary dominants and/or by a series of fifth progression.

E Am (in key of C)
 C A Dm (in key of C)
 C F D Gm (in key of Bb)
 C Fm D G (in key of C minor)

3. A more distinct middle section.

Textually, the kundiman changed from “a torrent of endearments without a story and sometimes without sense”²¹ to a poetry of concealed nationalism. Some kundiman were also praised for its complexity to integrate two milestone events, the GomBurZa and Rizal martyrdom twenty-four years apart, into one song. It shows their social and political understanding. It is through songs that “in the absence of newspapers and pamphlets, people were posted about the events happening in the country.”²²

The literary and visual arts as well are laden with nationalism in the same disguised manner. An earlier *awit* by Francisco Balagtas, the *Florante and Laura*, tells a story of two couples fighting for the freedom of their kingdom in Albania. It is believed to be the first expression of patriotism in poetry, incidentally also in a context of a love

²¹Manuel Walls y Merino, *Popular Music of the Philippines*, trans. Maria Delia Matibag (Manila: National Historical Institute, 1980), 23.

²²Cauayani, “Some Popular Songs,” 199.

story. Jose Rizal's *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo*, are heavily-charged novels on European-educated Crisostomo Ibarra who returned home and found the pitiful condition of his country. It is an allegory exposing social ills and possible solutions, although what could be Rizal's true advocacy is subjected to two opposing interpretations. In painting, the *Spoliarium* of Juan Luna depicts a beat-up man dragged by the arm, a symbol for the country trampled and dominated against her will. The title itself is a place name where fatally wounded Roman gladiators were kept.²³

In sum, the arts of this period are a cogent medium for the articulation of the sentiments of the people and the state of the society. It flourished from a primeval need to express; because of this, it was effective in provoking, persuading, and uniting the people to rally for its cause. The magnitude of its influence is proven by its setting the general style and temperament for the next generation of artists, bringing its pivotal role beyond its girth and into the next era.

²³Zoilo Galang, ed. *Encyclopedia of the Philippines* Vol. VII (Manila: Exequiel Floro, 1950), 27.

CHAPTER 3

THE ART KUNDIMAN (1900-1930)

At about the same time that anti-colonial feeling swept over the Philippines, a growing distress also overtook Cuba, another Spanish colony. The American involvement with Cuba's War of Independence, escalated by the disappearance of its battleship *Maine* in Havana, led to the Spanish-American War, and consequently, its contact with the Philippines.

By way of the Treaty of Paris in 1898, Spain ceded the Philippines to the United States of America. Several new forms and reforms were effected by the American regime to the Philippine society, mainly in the field of government and education.

As religion is for Spain, education is used by the Americans as a major tool for colonialism. To pacify a restless and resisting society, the Americans implemented positive programs as mandated by Pres. McKinley to the Second Philippine Commission, which says that "no person shall be deprived of life, liberty, or property without due process of individual, that no bill of attainder or ex-post fact law shall be passed, that no law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech or of the press, or the right of the people to peaceably assemble and petition the government for a redress of grievances."¹ American teachers aboard the boat *SS Thomas* landed on Philippine shore and taught in a new system that, among others, led to the English language as the language of instruction in the Philippines.

¹ Alfredo Roces, introduction to *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation* (Manila: Lahing Pilipino Publishing, 1977).

In music, instruction was more institutionalized with the inclusion of music subjects in primary and secondary school curricula.² Music curriculum was based on the Progressive Music Series, a compilation of folk songs from around the world, and later, on a series called Singing and Growing for Primary Grades, and Sing and be Happy, also folk song anthologies more focused on Filipino literature. Music training also moved out from the supervision of churchmen to those overseen by professional European, American, and local teachers alike. Music schools and conservatories were established. These include the music conservatories of Sta. Scholastica, University of the Philippines, University of Sto. Tomas, St. Paul, Philippine Women's University, and the short-lived Academy of Music and the Manila Conservatory of Music. The new system focused not only in developing musicianship skills but in forming social values and artistic consciousness as well.³

In addition to music institutions were organizations aimed at giving concerts, conferences, lessons, and providing assistance to local musicians, to name a few.⁴ There was also an increased exposure to foreign art forms and artists. From the period of 1886 to 1953, world-renowned artists Eduard Remenyi, Mischa Elman, Andres Segovia, Jan Kubelik, Rudolf Friml, Pierre Fournier, Yehudi Menuhin, Jascha Heifetz, Jacques Genty, Lola Bobesco, and Helen Traubel, gave performances in the country.⁵

²Ramon Santos, "The American Colonial and Contemporary Traditions," in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 46.

³*Ibid.*, 47.

⁴*Ibid.*, 47-48.

⁵ Ramon Santos, "Nicanor Abelardo: Filipino Classicism in the Art of Music," in *Tunugan: Four Essays on Philippine Music* (Quezon City: UP Press, 2005), 3.

Two ideologies espoused by the new system which favored Philippine music especially the creating process, are the promotion of nationalism in the arts and scholarship into the indigenous musical traditions.⁶ Nationalism is a recurring phenomenon, especially in the Philippines whose seeds planted by a reform movement in 1882-1896, and by a revolutionary movement from 1896-1901,⁷ remained unfulfilled. It is manifested in two ways—one that takes special pride of his own race and culture, the other showing contempt and rebellion against the dominant power. The former was encouraged by the Americans to circumvent the anti-colonial feelings carried over from the previous wars. Composers took the path of developing a distinct character in their works. They were exposed to the works of nationalist composers outside western Europe.⁸ This resulted to their use and mastery of Western genres, even the large forms such as the symphony, opera, concerto, and sonata, while incorporating folk materials and portraying the Filipino way of life.⁹ It is inclined to a programmatic take on these forms.

Traditional music such as those of the non-Christian Filipinos, once suppressed under the Spanish regime, was also given due research as mandated by the US educational and literacy programs. The Philippine Society of Oriental Culture, tasked to “enrich our own music, painting, sculpture, and the body of our literary heritage from the

⁶Santos, “American Colonial Traditions,” 50.

⁷*Ibid.*

⁸ Santos, “Nicanor Abelardo,” 4.

⁹*Ibid.*, 9.

past by studying our own and by drawing from other culture,”¹⁰ was created. Serious researches were spearheaded by Norberto Romualdez, Antonio Molina, and Francisco Santiago. Knowledge of traditional practices gave new musical sources, concepts, and aesthetic.

The American regime stretched from 1901-1946 but its influences encompass all categories of classical, semi-classical, and popular music.¹¹ More significantly, it has ingrained in the Philippine culture a predisposition to Western popular entertainment, apparent even in the so-called Original Pilipino Music, which, except for the fact that it is written by a Filipino composer, and usually in the Filipino language, could easily pass up for a Western composition. From cabaret, Broadway musicals, vaudeville, jazz, to disco, hip-hop, and rap—Filipinos patronize their form and performance style, and create after these prototypes.

In the early 1900s, the kundiman developed from an extemporized form to a written-out art song, owing to the composers’ formal education. This is the period when music in general has come to be viewed as an art form as opposed to the previous utilitarian role it used to fulfill. The incipient of classicism was started about half a century earlier with the introduction of major art forms such as the zarzuela in 1848 and opera in 1860, and their performance in venues other than the church, town plaza, or military parade grounds.¹² It heralded a new phase in which music is created and enjoyed for itself.

¹⁰Santos, “American Colonial Traditions,” 50.

¹¹*Ibid.*, 46.

¹²Santos, “Nicanor Abelardo,” 1.

The kundiman figured as a love song in the zarzuela. It is a play with music named after Palacio de Zarzuela near Madrid where royal entertainments called “fiesta de la zarzuela” were held. Unlike the kundiman, the sarswela is a filipinized form. Presented initially in their original Spanish forms, the zarzuela was localized by inclusions of local actors, and ultimately, with original storylines by Filipino playwrights by 1900. The kundiman, along with *balitaw*, *balse*, foxtrot, and other popular genres, constitute the music for the sarswela.¹³ Depending on the group's resources, it could be played by a piano or a guitar, or by ensembles and orchestras.¹⁴

Sarswela composers include Bonifacio Abdon, Jose Estella, Juan Hernandez, Francisco Buencamino Sr., and Leon Ignacio. Ignacio's *Kundiman ni Angelita*, Nicanor Abelardo's *Bituing Marikit* for *Dakilang Punlo*, and Juan Hernandez's *Amadha* from *Minda Mora* are few examples of pieces which are to become models for later kundiman.¹⁵ They show salient features of a classical kundiman such as a through-composed, two or three part form in a minor-major mode. Some melodic phrases have also been recurring and are additional identifiers of the distinct kundiman sound.

The following examples show excerpts from the early kundiman, Francisco Buencamino's *Gunita*, and its semblance in two different works of Abelardo (see figures 11 and 12, 13 and 14).

¹³ D.G. Fernandez, “Sarswela,” in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 118-120.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Antonio Hila and Ramon Santos, “Kundiman,” in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 96.

Moderato tempo di Kundiman

4

Languidamente

Du - ma - ting ang

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system is titled 'Moderato tempo di Kundiman' and features a piano accompaniment in 3/4 time with a treble clef and a bass clef. The melody is in the treble clef, and the piano accompaniment is in the bass clef. The second system is titled 'Languidamente' and features a vocal line in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the bass clef. The tempo is marked 'Languidamente'. The lyrics 'Du - ma - ting ang' are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment is marked 'p'.

Figure 11. Buencamino, *Gunita*, measures 1-6

I-sang sul-yap mo la - mang A - liw na ng dib - dib.

1.

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system is a vocal line in the treble clef with the lyrics 'I-sang sul-yap mo la - mang A - liw na ng dib - dib.' and a first ending bracket. The second system is a piano accompaniment in the bass clef with a treble clef. The piano accompaniment is marked 'mf'.

Figure 12. Abelardo, *Kung Hindi Man*, measures 18-21

Musical score for Buencamino, *Gunita*, measures 30-37. The score is in 3/4 time. The first system shows a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The piano part includes markings for *poco affrett.* and *f*. The second system starts with a measure rest (5) and includes markings for *fp* and *a tempo*. A first ending bracket is present at the end of the second system.

Figure 13. Buencamino, *Gunita*, measures 30-37

Musical score for Abelardo, *Kundiman ng Luha*, measures 31-39. The score is in 3/4 time. The first system includes a vocal line with lyrics "Dam-hin mo rin ang dib-dib kong na-ma-mang-law" and piano accompaniment with markings *string e cresc.* and *sfz allarg*. The second system starts with a measure rest (5) and includes lyrics "Ya-ring pu-so sa pag-sin-tay ma-ma-ma-tay ma-ma-ma-tay Ay!" and a marking *f*.

Figure 14. Abelardo, *Kundiman ng Luha*, measures 31-39

The art song as a perfect combination of poetry and music, and of collaboration between the singer and the pianist, find its early representatives in the kundiman of Bonifacio Abdon, Nicanor Abelardo, and Francisco Santiago. Santiago and Abelardo especially, with their genius piqued by an interesting musical rivalry, elevated the kundiman into high musical and poetic expressions. Equally significant is the proliferation of schooled writers such as Jesus Balmori, Manuel Bernabe, and Deogracias Rosario. The kundiman attained a status comparable to what the *lied* is to the Germans, or the *melodie* to the French. In these works, poetry and music are perfectly blended together, there is a more prominent piano accompaniment, and a significant use of tone painting.

The verse quoted in the opening of the first chapter was lifted from Kundiman ni Abdon (see figure 15). The piece was written upon the request of Russian cellist Bogumil Sykora whose concert was sponsored by the *Asociación Música de Filipinas*, then headed by Abdon.¹⁶ The text was written by Abdon's brother-in law Patricio Mariano, and was premiered by a choir conducted by Sykora.

¹⁶Antonio Hila, "Bonifacio Abdon," in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 96.

Tpo. de Kundiman ♩=60

Canto

Piano

6

Canto

Pno.

12

Canto

Pno.

Sa ta pat ng la ging

pa la ngi ting a raw na lu ma la ga nap sa da gat si la ngan,

may mut yang ma su yo't li bid ka ya ma nan na gi - liw - ang han dog

legato

p

p

p

The image shows a musical score for 'Abdon, Kundiman'. It consists of three systems of music. Each system has a vocal line (Canto) and a piano accompaniment (Piano or Pno.). The tempo is marked as 'Tpo. de Kundiman' with a quarter note equal to 60 (♩=60). The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The lyrics are in Tagalog. The first system starts with a vocal rest followed by the lyrics 'Sa ta pat ng la ging'. The piano part begins with a melodic line in the right hand and a bass line in the left hand. The second system starts at measure 6 with the lyrics 'pa la ngi ting a raw na lu ma la ga nap sa da gat si la ngan,'. The piano part continues with a similar accompaniment. The third system starts at measure 12 with the lyrics 'may mut yang ma su yo't li bid ka ya ma nan na gi - liw - ang han dog'. The piano part continues with the same accompaniment style. Dynamics include piano (p) and legato markings.

Figure 15. Abdon, *Kundiman*

18 *poco rit.* *a Tempo* *p*

Canto
 sa pu song may damdam *mf* oh! ba yang ma li ga ya ng

Pno.
poco rit. *a Tempo* *Mayor* *mf*

22 *dolce*

Canto
 a - king pag gi liw pu song la kan bi - ni ka long sa la

Pno.
p *dolce* *p*

27 *p*

Canto
 mi sim ang iyong pag lu ha'y san da ling pi gi lin....

Pno.
f con anima *dim.* *p*

Figure 15. Abdon, *Kundiman*

32 *molto espress.*

Canto *p*
ang kun di - mang i to, mut ya i yong ding gin

Pno. *pp* *p* *poco rit.* *p* *poco rit.* *p*

36 *p* *Espress.*

Canto *p*
bu lak lak ng a king la ging pi nit ha ya ang i kaw ma

Pno. *p*

41 *p*

Canto *p*
ki - tang may sa ri ling la ya't sa da gat si la - nga'y

Pno. *p* *col canto.*

Figure 15. Abdon, *Kundiman*

46

Canto

bu ti hing di wa - ta ma ya ma't ma pu - ri, bi his sa da li

Pno.

51

Canto

ta" ma ya ma't ma

Pno.

p *molto* *cresc.* *f* *pp* *menos*

56

Canto

pu - ri bi his sa da li ta!

Pno.

Figure 15. Abdon, *Kundiman*

59

Canto

ma gan dang di wa ta! Di wa ta!

morendo

Pno.

pp

morendo

Figure 15. Abdon, *Kundiman*

Bonifacio Abdon (1876-1944) was a church singer in his childhood, a violinist and conductor in his youth and later years. He played with the Rizal Orchestra as the youngest violinist, and with the Manila Chamber Society which presented operas of an all-Filipino cast. He established the Oriental Orchestra which played for *sarswela* productions in the country and abroad.

The piece is in three sections with different music, text, and tonality. However, by recalling the opening theme at the close of the piece, it still ended in the same minor key. The melody is in a four-bar phrase with a tendency to pause every two bars. It evokes sentimentality by using the flavor of an augmented second interval, often harmonized by borrowed chords in a parallel tonality. In this piece and in other kundiman as well, it is typical to use a V/iv-iv progression.

Kundiman ni Abdon is essentially a patriotic kundiman which quoted phrases from the Jocelynang Baliwag. It was turned into a protest song in 1980s entitled *Mutya*.¹⁷ It is aesthetically closest to its predecessors. The mood marking, simply put at tempo de

¹⁷Hila, "Kundiman ni Abdon," in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 244-245.

kundiman, shows its reliance on tradition. It is not given to ebbs of emotions and not directed to a climactic point, rather, a single mood is sustained throughout the piece.

Francisco Santiago (1889-1947) is credited for the creation of the three-part kundiman.¹⁸ He is a pioneer in many things, among these, “in composing a sonata using folk themes, a full concerto for piano and orchestra, a Philippine Christmas carol for mixed chorus and orchestra, a symphony utilizing ethnic instruments, and the first Filipino to have a doctorate in music and to be the director of the University of the Philippines College of Music, and the first and only composer to be accused of plagiarism.”¹⁹ His greatest contribution to Philippine music is his use of folk music, although more of appropriating their essence than a literal quotation.²⁰

His first kundiman, popularly known as *Anak ng Dalita* (Child of Woe, see figure 16), is performance-oriented—the vocal part is inclined to virtuosity. Unlike Abdon's use of dynamics and tempo mostly in shaping phrases, Santiago used them for dramatic purposes.

¹⁸Hila and Santos, “Kundiman,” 95.

¹⁹Antonio Hila, “The Contribution of Francisco Santiago to Philippine Music,” (MA Thesis, University of Santo Tomas, 1990), 77-78.

²⁰*Ibid.*

Violin 1 [^]MODERATO

ff

Voice

Piano

6

Vln. 1

espressivo.

p

V

p

Voice

A - KOY A - NAK NG DA - LI - TA
DE MI GUI TAR RAIN DI - GE - NA

Pno.

8

Vln. 1

Voice

AT TI - GIB NG - LU - HA - ANG MA - RI - TONG - HU
LA CAN CION GA - LA - NA - SE VAAL TEM BLOR DE

Pno.

Figure 16. Santiago, *Anak ng Dalita*

11

Vln. 1

Voice

Pno.

MI - HI - BIK NA BIG YAN NG A - WA -
 PE - TA - LOS QUEHAY EN TU VEN -TA - NA -

14

Vln. 1

Voice

Pno.

BUK SAN MO ANG LA NGIT AT KU - SA MONG PA-
 PO - BRE MA -RI - PO - SA QUEBUSCA EN TRE LAS

17

Vln. 1

Voice

Pno.

KING GAN ANG A - KING LI - GA - LIG SA-
 FLO RES TU BOCA EN FLOR, MU - JER - DE LUZ EN

Figure 16. Santiago, *Anak ng Dalita*

20

Vln. 1

Voice

Pno.

dim.

f Animato

KA PAG DA -DAM - DAM.
 QUE PO DER MO - RIR.

AY KUNG HIN DI KA MA-
 PON EN TU CA - RI - NO

23

Vln. 1

Voice

Pno.

HA -HA -BAG
 MI CAN TAR

SA LUNG KOT KUNG DI - NA -RA NAS
 PON EN TU ILU SION MI INS PIRA CION

26

Vln. 1

Voice

Pno.

dim. e rit.

p

dim e rit.

p

PU SO'T DI WANG NA BI - BI - HAG
 QUE TE SIEN TA YO DOR MI DA SA LI -BING MA SA -SAD
 EN MI PRO PIO CO RA

Figure 16. Santiago, *Anak ng Dalita*

29

Vln. 1

Voice

Pno.

LAK ZON

MAG TA NONG KA KUNG DI HA CE TEIM PO QUE TIA

TU - NAY DO - RO

pp

32

Vln. 1

Voice

Pno.

SA KIS LAP NG MA NGA TA -LA MAG TA NONG KA RIN SA
HA CE MU CHO QUE TE SUE -NO CAL MA TU MI TRI TE

ten.

dim.

ten.

dim.

ten.

dim.

35

Vln. 1

Voice

Pno.

U - LAP NG TAG LAY KUNG DA LI - TA. SA DI - LIM
LLO RO DAME EL CIELO DE TU A MOR. LA LU - NA

rit.

ten.

rit.

ten.

f

Figure 16. Santiago, *Anak ng Dalita*

39

Vln. 1 *pizz.* *pp* *arco*

Voice *rit.*

Pno. *pp* *rit.*

NG GA BING PA - LI - DA A - KING NI - LA LA MAY TA - NGING LA - LUE - VE SU
CO MO HOSTIA MIS TI CA

43

Vln. 1

Voice *atempo*

Pno. *mf* *atempo*

RA WAN MO CA - LI - DA ANG NA GI GING LUZ EU - CA I - LAW - RIS - TI CA KUNG I - KAW AY DUL - CEY RO

47

Vln. 1 *pizz.* *arco*

Voice *f* *allarg.*

Pno. *allarg.*

MA HIM BING MAN TI - CA SA GIT NA - TA - GA LA NG DI LIM U NI CA AY I YONG I SO - LO MI HU LOG CAN TO

Figure 16. Santiago, *Anak ng Dalita*

52

Vln. 1

pp

Voice

PU -SO MO SA A KIN
MUERE DE A MOR SIN TI

Pno.

pp
dim.
ff
fff atempo

57

Vln. 1

rit.

ff

Voice

TA NGING LA RA WAN MO ANG NA GI GING I - LAW
HA -DA NI -RI -FI -CA VIR - GEN SIN MA CU LA

Pno.

p
pp
pp
rit.

62

Vln. 1

atempo

Voice

ANG I YONG I -HU LOG
TUE RES MI EN CAN TO

Pno.

ff atempo
ff allarg.

Figure 16. Santiago, *Anak ng Dalita*

68

Vln. 1 *pp*

Voice *pp*

Pno. *dim.* *pp* *smorz.* *cresc.*

PU SO MO SA A - KIN, ANG YONG IHULOG ANG YONG HULOG BU HAY PAG
 TO DO LO QUE HAY ENMI ADIOS MI A MOR - DI - VI NA LOR - A DIOS A-

72

Vln. 1 *f* *VIVO*

Voice *f*

Pno. *f* *ff*

A - SA PA GA SA
 MOR MIA MOR - - - - -

76

Vln. 1 *pesante*

Voice

Pno. *LH. pesante*

Figure 16. Santiago, *Anak ng Dalit*

Anak ng Dalita is progressive compared to Abdon's *Kundiman*, although written three years earlier. The piano, vocal line, and violin obbligato are independent of each other. The harmony explores more tonal regions than before. Instances of tone painting can be seen in the broken chord accompaniment to the forlorn text "I am the child of misery" (see bars 6-13 of figure 16), and the use of a major chord (V/iii) to the phrase "open the doors of heaven" (see bars 14-15 of figure 16). The opening and closing parts of the piece have some semblance with *Ang Aking Bulaklak* (My Flower, see figure 17), an earlier work by Leon Ignacio.

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Ang Aking Bulaklak" by Leon Ignacio, specifically measures 93-98. The score is written in 3/4 time with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are: "pag - i - big i - kaw ang may sa - la ng la - hat". The piano part includes markings for "dim." (diminuendo), "morendo" (crescendo), and "pp" (pianissimo). The score is divided into two systems, with the second system starting at measure 4.

Figure 17. Ignacio, *Ang Aking Bulaklak*, measures 93-98

One striking feature of Santiago's music is his frequent shifting of modes. In *Anak ng Dalita*, for instance, there is a direct change from A major to A minor for the next four measures until it switches back to minor (refer to bars 30-33 of figure 16). Same device is

also used in the introduction of *Pakiusap* (see figure 18), and in the instrumental part before the codetta of *Madaling Araw* (see figure 19).

Moderato

4

Figure 18. Santiago, *Pakiusap*, measures 1-8

ha - li - na I - rog ko At ma - ha - lin mo a - ko

Ma - nu - ngaw ka li -

5

Figure 19. Santiago, *Madaling Araw*, measures 74-9

Santiago also makes interesting use of the accompaniment. The piano seems to be treated like an orchestra. In the opening measures of *Madaling Araw* (see figure 20), for instance, the simultaneous use of contrasting articulations is more idiomatic when assigned to different instruments of the orchestra.

Andante Moderato

6

Figure 20. Santiago, *Madaling Araw*, measures 1-10

The legato chordal passages are more effective with string instruments; dynamic buildups are better achieved by a piling of sound mass rather than an increase in volume. Also noteworthy are the typical orchestral endings such as tremolandos and single note punctuations (see figures 21 and 22). There are sections in which the melodic material is

assigned to the accompaniment while the vocal part ornaments. There are active lines in the accompaniment in countermelody to the voice.

The musical score consists of three systems. The first system (measures 91-94) shows a vocal line starting with an *ad-lib.* marking and a piano accompaniment that is mostly silent, ending with a chord and an *allarg.* marking. The second system (measures 95-98) begins at measure 6 and features a vocal line with a *lap* instruction and a piano accompaniment marked *ff* and *Presto*, including an *8va* instruction. The third system (measures 99-104) begins at measure 10 and shows a vocal line with a *ff* marking and a piano accompaniment with various articulations and dynamics.

Figure 21. Santiago, *Ano Kaya ang Kapalaran*, measures 91-104

Musical score for measures 69-70 of Santiago's *Kundiman*. The score is in 3/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It features a vocal line, a piano accompaniment, and a second vocal line. The piano part is marked *smorz.* and the second vocal line is marked *crescendo*. The first vocal line ends with a forte *f* dynamic.

Musical score for measures 69-70 of Santiago's *Kundiman*, measures 5-7. The score is in 2/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). It features two vocal lines and a piano accompaniment. Both vocal lines are marked *Vivo*.

Figure 22. Santiago, *Kundiman*, measures 69-70

Figure 22. Santiago, *Kundiman*, measures 69-70

Kung Hindi Man (see figure 23), the earliest of Abelardo's kundiman, is conservative and academic compared to his other works. The title itself makes reference to the old formulaic insertion supposedly where the kundiman came from. It has symmetrical phrases and a two-part design, each section repeated. The two sections are made more distinct by having contrasting moods and by having short links between sections. The harmony, while largely in common progressions, is made more interesting with chromaticism. In his later kundiman—all in all he wrote close to ten in a span of 10 years—there is an expansion of these elements. With the exception of *Kung Hindi Man*, his other kundiman are in three parts, some with coda and interludes.

Voice

Piano

6

Voice

Pno.

11

Voice

Pno.

16

Voice

Pno.

I-rog san-da

ling ding-gin ang a king pag - ta - ngis. I rog san-da - ling tung-han

ang hu mi - hi - bik. Kung di man na - ra - ra pat sa i yong di

kit, i-sang sul-yap mo la_mang, a - liw na ng dib-dib.

dolce

allargando

f *p*

mf

1.

1.

Figure 23. Abelardo, *Kung Hindi Man*

21 *Coro*

Voice: I - rog san-da - dib. Kung sa 'ki'y wa - la__ nang

Pno. *f p*

25

Voice: I - ni-laang pag - li__ngap, at ang pag-du - ru__ sa ko ang siya mong pa

Pno.

30

Voice: nga - rap. Sa i-sang ngi - ti__mong sa a ki'y i - ga - wad,

Pno.

35

Voice: li - bo mang ka - ma - ta - yan a - king ti - na - tang - gap.

Pno. *express*

Figure 23. Abelardo, *Kung Hindi Man*

39

Voice

Kung sa' ki'y wa king ti - na - tang - gap.

Pno.

p

f

ff

2.

Figure 23. Abelardo, *Kung Hindi Man*

Nicanor Abelardo (1893-1944) is a musical genius whose talent was nurtured by a musical family and community. He had his first music lessons in solfeggio and bandurria at age five; from then on, it was a fast lane of musical activities as well as ventures into painting, Tagalog and Spanish poetry writing, and a career as pianist/director of *sarswela* orchestras. He entered the University of the Philippines Conservatory of Music and remained for fifteen years with a teaching position he started in his third year of study.

Abelardo is a poet, both in literal and musical sense.²¹ He wrote the lyrics to some of his works. More importantly, his music serves the text—all of music are manipulated to convey the essence of the words. In his famous kundiman, "Nasaan ka Irog?," among other devices, the melodic phrase is shaped such that it depicts the searching, questioning text "Where are you, my Love?"²² Traces of this technique are also apparent in the previous piece which translation is "If it may not be so." This is shown musically by a phrase of a two-bar ascending followed by a two-bar descending figures, as if tentatively

²¹ Santos, "Nicanor Abelardo," 7.

²² Santos, "Nicanor Abelardo," 20.

asking then retreating. Abelardo's craftsmanship is also seen in his treatment of similarly constructed phrases. Intensity is effected by increasing the range, and in the last of the sequence, the pleading becomes more emphatic with the left hand accompaniment already present at the beginning of the phrase, and by having an extended span of a 12th (see figure 24).

The image shows a musical score for two systems. The first system consists of a vocal line in treble clef and a piano accompaniment in grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The vocal line has lyrics: "I-rog san-da - ling ding-gin Ang a-king pag - ta-ngis I-rog san-da - ling tung-han". The piano accompaniment starts with a dynamic marking of *f p*. The second system also consists of a vocal line and piano accompaniment. The vocal line has lyrics: "Ang hu-mi - hi - bik Kung di man na - ra - ra-pat Sa i-yong di - kil". The piano accompaniment continues with similar accompaniment patterns.

Figure 24. Abelardo, *Kung Hindi Man*, measures 6-17

In addition to melodic construction and use of the accompaniment, Abelardo employs tonality and the characteristics associated with it, for instance, the seriousness of e-flat minor for *Mutya ng Pasig* (refer to figure 2)²³ or the remoteness of a neapolitan chord, to describe a place or idea from afar.²⁴ Cadences are used as the musical counterpart of grammar punctuations. Rhythm is also descriptive of the text such as the

²³*Ibid.*, 14

²⁴*Ibid.*, 34.

dotted eighth and sixteenth to illustrate a sob (see figure 25), or the insertion of rests to represent interjections (see figure 26).

Pa - ra - lu - man sa pin-to ng iyong dib - dib

- I - sang pu - so ang na - ri-tong hu-mi - hi - bik

Figure 25. Abelardo, *Kundiman ng Luha*, measures 6-13

ah pag i big kung ang o - o mo ay ma ta mo

ah! pag - i - big kung ang o - o mo ay ma ta mo

affret *cresc.* *poco* *a poco*

Figure 26. Abelardo, *Kundiman ng Luha*, measures 52-59

The kundiman, at this point, has certainly come a long way from where it was some thirty years before. Length has considerably increased; contrasting phrases became discrete sections that would expand into another form—the three-part form. Standardized by Santiago, it involves a section in a related tonal area before the final shift to the parallel major key.

Modulating to a parallel key is relatively easy. Melodically, altering a few accidentals would make the difference; harmonically, the second most important key-defining chord, the dominant, is common to both keys. These are basically the two modulating processes employed but they vary on when and how they are used.

When the first part is harmonically closed, it is either repeated with a second ending, or it could go to another section in a related key, usually the mediant. The B section in a three-part kundiman has the most harmonic activity. A typical progression is a sequence of secondary dominants through different tonal planes until it gets to the dominant, and finally resolves to a major tonic. Occasionally, the B ends on a V and a transition material is needed to get to the new key.

Repeat of sections is in different ways that eschew generalization. It could be one, two, or all of the sections such as in *Nasaan ka Irog*, although in practice, repeats are seldom observed. In *Ang Aking Bayan* and *Pahimakas*, there was like a written out repeat with some modifications.

Chromaticism enlarged the harmonic possibilities in functional and coloristic sense. It gave sophistication not just in harmony but in melody as well, for the kundiman is very much a linear event. The kundiman is phrase-oriented, which all relate to heighten

a sense of drama. The drama is further augmented by exploring the technical and expressive possibilities of both the voice and the piano.

The piano part is highly developed from the barest harmonic accompaniment it used to do. It is now with richness and depth by employing full chordal sonorities, and by using different keyboard registers and dynamic range. It also has textural interest by having countermelodies in the piano part and with the vocal part.

The accompaniment material became actively engaged in the storytelling. Introductions are not merely extracted materials from the main part but are foreshadowing of what is to come. In the pieces *Nasaan Ka Irog* and *Magbalik Ka Hirang* (see figures 27 and 28), for example, the half-cadence sets the tone of uncertainty. Transitions provide for a smooth harmonic movement and for a gradual change of affect. Endings are sometimes cadential extensions for a sense of finality. It could also be a coda where ideas are reiterated or as an afterthought for past events. Kundiman accompanying entails *cantabile* playing as the melody is usually played with the voice.

3
 Na-sa-an ka Irog? -
 rit. . col. canto p

Figure 27. Abelardo, *Nasaan Ka Irog*, measures 1-6

5
 Na-ra-ram-da-
 8 L.H. L.H.
 dim. rit. .

Figure 28. Abelardo, *Magbalik Ka Hirang*, measures 1-11

It could be said of the kundiman to be a combination of *lieder* and opera aria accompanying. The first part usually needs the intricacy, subtlety, and intimate style of a *lied*. There are latent lines in the accompaniment which the pianist can give attention to. The second part, in contrast, resembles the aria in its dramatic and technical feat. It is on a grand scale that benefits from an orchestral conception and treatment of the pianist.

The construction and execution of the vocal part significantly changed into one that bears individuality and exclusivity to the text, and needing of a more adept performer. Two schools of interpretation emerged. One camp believes that the kundiman should be sung in the natural voice and close to traditional practices as possible. Felipe de Leon said that “the *bel canto* style of the Italian, the dark, powerful voice of German *lied*, the frivolous pop song, are inappropriate... for the deeply felt longing or noble idea typical of the kundiman requires a natural (speech quality), unaffected, warm, lyrical, sensitive, intimate type of voice...capable of conveying the spontaneous, open, and sensitive nature of the Filipinos.”²⁵ It is a valid assertion considering the history of the kundiman as a collective expression of the people's sentiment. The other group deems it fit to use a classical placement and technique, as the kundiman, especially the later works, were written by classically-trained composers in line with the Western traditions. It is also a sound point in that the complexity of the art kundiman requires an arsenal of technique. It needs proper and complete command of your tools, and a systematic approach to bring out its beauty. Singer and pedagogue Katherine Molina bridges the gap with her belief that a *bel canto* quality is necessary but for the purpose of transmitting and

²⁵ Felipe de Leon, Sr., “The Filipino’s Image in the Kundiman,” *Malaya* June 28: 15-16

enhancing the text.²⁶ She describes the vocal style as similar to the musical theater of Hammerstein or of the art songs by modern composers Barber, Vaughn-Williams, Rorem, Menotti, Ives, and Copland. In this manner, technique that just happens to be foreign to the Filipinos' traditional way of singing, serves the purpose of getting the message across.

One problem that a singer, especially a non-native may encounter, is the rhythmic synchronization with the proper word stresses. Even with the careful attention to text-setting by the likes of Abelardo and Santiago, occasional problems still arise probably due to limitations of notation, editorial mistakes, or an assumption of the composer that the singer will do the necessary alterations. Some singers do make modifications while others adhere to what is written. Molina's solution is to follow the notated score but with a slight dynamic stress on the right syllables, thus honoring both music and text.

The most significant musical accomplishment of this period is perhaps the unity achieved between words and music. Musical setting is exclusive to each text, and attention to prosody is very much observed. This is especially important to the Filipino language in which proper accentuation of its multi-syllabic words determines its sense. The marriage of words and music further manifests in their complementary roles in creating a story. Music suggests the general mood of the text and occasionally depicts the meaning of the word (word painting).

Certain styles and devices are consistently manifested in the kundiman throughout the years. The melodic line moves predominantly in a smooth, conjunct motion—leaps and open-ended phrases are used to evoke tension and uncertainty. It is inclined to pause

²⁶ Katherine Molina, Personal Interview at the UP College of Music. April 25, 2013.

every two bars, probably mimicking the literary practice of a slight caesura in every six syllables. It must be emphasized, however, that a musical execution considers the macro design of the phrase and the harmonic activity underneath it. In the art kundiman, the phrase extends to varying and irregular lengths. The arch-shaped phrases usually round off on a weak beat. The final pitch is approached by a downward step; the penultimate a dissonance such as *appoggiatura*, suspension, and accented passing tone.

The melodic augmented second interval has a lot of uses. When descending, it conjures mystery and sadness; ascending, it directs to an emotional moment. It is also used in *appoggiatura* figures, occasionally in a sequence.

The V/IV to IV progression is commonly employed. Secondary dominants are likewise treated in sequence, which, together with a slight pushing of tempo and dynamics, build up to a climactic point.

The first melodic phrase usually starts on an upbeat. There is a constant use of a dotted quarter followed by three eighth notes pattern, also of consecutive eighth notes going to a longer or held note.

In the art kundiman, while the piano does not have an independent musical material, could not be said of as subordinate to the voice. It is an equal partner in weaving a cohesive story. It has become a mannerism to have a quasi-tutti in the second/third section while the voice part ornaments; or the piano and voice take turns in executing the melody.

The end of the kundiman era is placed in 1930,²⁷ the year that Abelardo, after his studies in the United States, turned away from the romantic school and wrote in the

²⁷ Hila and Santos, "Kundiman," 94.

expressionist style of Schoenberg.²⁸ Composers, however, continued to write kundiman, either in its prescribed form or by translating its sentiments into a modern musical/poetic parlance. Examples of the first case are Lucio San Pedro's *Sa Simula Ako'y Labong* (In the Beginning I was a Bamboo Shoot), Felipe Padilla de Leon's *Ganyan ang Pagsamba* (That's How to Go to Church), Rosendo Santos' *Kundiman ng Puso* (Kundiman of the Heart) and *Pighati* (Grief), and Alfredo Buenaventura's *Huling Hibik ng Pilipinas* (Last Cry of the Philippines).²⁹ More recent kundiman which have become staple in the vocal repertoire are Angel Peña's *Iyo Kailan Pa Man* and Augusto Espino's *Kundiman ng Langit*. Peña's composition ingeniously incorporates his jazz influence in an unmistakably kundiman flavor. The utmost expression of love, the love of God for his creations, is beautifully expressed in Espino's work. In modern love songs, although written in the western popular idiom, the devoted yet forlorn lover is still very much evident.

Kundiman continued to be infused with patriotic sentiments. Its summation is probably seen in Constancio de Guzman's *Ang Bayan Ko* (My Country), a protest song against the American regime in 1928 which later became associated with the First Quarter Storm and the EDSA revolution in 1986. A description of a beautiful Philippines besieged by foreigners, and an analogy of the country to a caged bird wanting to break free, is overtly expressed. It wraps up with a shift from a narrative style to a first person declaration of a desire to see the country liberated.

²⁸ Santos, "Nicanor Abelardo," 8.

²⁹ Hila and Santos, "Kundiman," 96.

It is remarkable how a single word in the “revised” version expressed an entirely different tone.³⁰ From “ibon man may layang lumipad, kulungin mo ay umiiyak” (even birds that are free to fly, cage them and they shall cry), it now reads us “ibon man may layang lumipad, kulungin mo ay pumipiglas” (even birds that are free to fly, cage them and they shall struggle). It connotes a transformation of a passive people to one who scrupulously stand for themselves. True enough, the people who literally stood their grounds on EDSA, emancipated from dictatorship and brought back democracy to the land.

A special use of the kundiman is as a source of musical material for newly composed pieces. The previous piece, *Ang Bayan Ko*, is evidently inspired by an earlier work, Jose Silos’s *Mutya ng Silangan* (Muse of the East), from the two-part form and melodic strains to the textual content. Certain phrases, especially from the *Jocelynang Baliwag*, *Kundiman de 1800*, and *Kundiman de 1850*, have also been often quoted in the first composed kundiman, believed to be a sort of validation to the old form.³¹ In the works of Antonio Molina, melodies from the piece *Jocelynang Baliwag* continued to be utilized for his canzonette entitled *Sampaguita*, a Christmas carol called *Gloria de dios*, and vocal works *Amihan* for soprano coloratura and *Habagat* for baritone solo.³² Eduardo

³⁰ Antonio Hila, *Music in History, History in Music* (Manila: University of Santo Tomas Publishing House, 2004), 97.

³¹ Santos, “Nicanor Abelardo,” 16.

³² Antonio Molina, “The Sentiments of Kundiman,” in *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation* vol.8 (Manila: Lahing Pilipino Publishing Inc., 1978), 2029.

Arana's *Isang Gabing Mapanglaw* became his Quintet in C major, and the *Kundiman de 1800* became a second subject in his Scherzo in D major for piano.³³

Besides the theater and concert hall, the kundiman found another medium in the movies and long play recordings. The *sarswela* was turned into film adaptations³⁴ following World War 2, and famous kundiman were used either as movie titles or theme songs. Examples include *Madaling Araw* (1930) and *Anak-Dalita* (1956) as movie titles, and *Kundiman ng Luha* as a theme song for *Kundiman ng Lahi* in 1959. The advent of long play recordings, pioneered by the Villar company in 1950, brought to a larger audience a musical heritage of kundiman and other love songs, regional folk songs and dances, semi-classical music, and film music. Under its management were the instrumental groups Juan Silos Rondalla and Band, and the Mabuhay Recording Band. Noted singers consisted of Sylvia La Torre, Ruben Tagalog, Cely Bautista, and the Mabuhay Singers, to name a few. Their song repertoire extended from the kundiman of Abelardo and Santiago, to love songs by composers such as Mike Velarde, Juan Silos, Ernani Cuenco, and Restie Umali.

After two colonial occupations, a rich trade with its neighboring countries beforehand, and a brief Japanese force during the World War II, the Philippine culture became an overlay of different elements that interact in various ways of syncretism with their own. Equally important to the influx of foreign influences is the reception and appropriation of the Filipinos that sum up to a pluralistic society it has come to be known today.

³³ *Ibid.*, 2029.

³⁴ Fernandez, "Sarswela," 120.

The coming of the Americans, with their positive programs in education specifically, brought about flourishing in the arts. Needless to say, artists have produced exemplary works in all forms and genres they have inherited; writers have penned in their new language. There is an increased exposure and contact with the rest of the world. One might say it attained urbanization and sophistication, of course with repercussions to the indigenous heritage.

The arts once more affirm its unique role as it shows, among other things, the struggle of power. The arts were controlled and regulated as part of their pacification process. Even with censorship, the artists were impassioned in venting out their anti-government feelings. The *sarswela*, for instance, is known for its nationalistic content, and so is the kundiman whether as part of the *sarswela* or as an independent composition.

The kundiman, truly, has stood undaunted throughout the course of the Philippine history, showing a harmonious blend of different sources, yet remaining steadfast as the “Philippines’ signature love song.”³⁵

³⁵Hila and Santos, “Kundiman,” 93.

CHAPTER 4

THE KUNDIMAN AND THE FILIPINO PEOPLE

Music is said to be only understood in its socio-cultural context—its value and nature are inherently social.¹ Nowhere is this most apparent than in the kundiman whose social importance is inextricably linked with the genre. In the next chapter, the kundiman will be viewed in the larger setting of the Philippine society, what it tells about the Filipino psyche, and what it means to the people then and now. Both in its entirety or with its elements taken apart, there seems to be a correlation with the music and the people.

Form/ Genre

From a social perspective, the kundiman traversed a multi-faceted path. As a folk tradition, it serves a utilitarian function, usually that of a song in which a man expresses his love and intention to a woman. It shows music as an all-participatory, extemporaneous expression, integrated with other forms, and inseparable from human activities. It is reflective of a society bound by a strong sense of togetherness and shared experiences of its people whose view on life is that of an indivisible whole.

The patriotic kundiman, on the other hand, fulfills the ideal function of music as social theorist Theodore Adorno would have it: that music itself is social, and it should shape and raise social consciousness.² Musically, however, it did not challenge the status

¹Wayne Bowman, *Philosophical Perspectives on Music* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 304.

²*Ibid.*

quo; if anything, it utilized the genre and style popular at that time. It is indeed interesting that the kundiman, a Western-influenced tradition, was used by the Filipinos to express their revolutionary spirits against the culture from which it was borrowed. Of this, Craig Lockard said that “the Filipinos were ingenious in using their colonizer’s music in subverting power, circumventing censors, and gaining wide appeal.”³ The use of Western forms is attributed to their wide popularity and the fact that they were the forms allowed by the Spaniards for use.⁴ By identifying with the social norms, the kundiman defies the notion of a subversive act standing out by its marginal existence, thus ensuring its life and continuity. It is a silent activism of sort, an ironic display of outward conformity while retaining a spirit of resistance and defiance. The kundiman thus testifies on Filipino resilience which can be succinctly described as its ability to be flexible and adaptive to what is current.

On the other hand, the kundiman could be seen as a product of transculturation. The Spanish elements through prolonged immersion have ceased to become borrowings but became adaptive forms instead. Not only are the forms appropriated, but taste and aesthetics became attuned with that of the dominant power. It is a phenomenon among colonial societies construed by theorists as a means to diminish distance between the colony and colonizer, and also to acquire status within the colonized community.⁵ The

³Craig Lockard, *Dance of Life: Popular Music and Politics in Southeast Asia* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 17.

⁴Felipe de Leon, “Recurring Themes in Filipino Music,” *Archipelago* 4, no.A-39 (1977), 9.

⁵D.R.M Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint: Music in Early Modern Manila* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 107.

kundiman, which form was noted more than 200 years into the Spanish occupation, is then out of necessity and inevitability.

The zenith of musical development, the amalgamation of music and poetry, would happen in the art kundiman. It became the creative venue for the composer, poet, and playwright in the case of sarswela. Even in its intellectualized state and a performer-audience performance orientation, the kundiman never alienated itself from tradition or from being a people's song. It always bears the "soundprint,"⁶ the melancholic, sweet yet gloomy melody, that while it needs vocal proficiency to actually execute it, is still something any Filipino could sing in their hearts. It embodies ideas relevant at any time. Love is universal and timeless; freedom is not just the absence of a controlling power but a deliverance from poverty, mental and physical incapacity, emotional scars, and social stigma.

Rigid as it may with most directives prescribed in notation, the kundiman nevertheless retains a communal spirit. Art historian Felipe de Leon, Jr. regarded the kundiman "as a social interaction, a form of *pakikipagkapwa*, in that every time a kundiman is performed, the songwriter, singer, and listener become involved in an essentially dynamic, ever-flowing, creatively transforming, and living process."⁷ Furthermore, a kundiman experience is a three-way communication among the two performers and the audience. Performing *per se* is a true re-creating process. It is a delicate proportion of following faithfully the intentions of the composer while being

⁶ Carol Kimball, *Song: A Guide to Art Song Style and Literature* (Milwaukee, WI: Hal Leonard Corp., 2005), 2.

⁷ Felipe de Leon, Jr. "More Than a Love Song" www.himig.com.ph/features/24-more-than-a-love-song accessed December 10, 2012

restricted by the time and cultural distance, limitations of notation, and the musical personality where no two performers are ever exactly alike. Moreso, the flexible and subtle nature of the kundiman is too individual that it demands an incessant, attentive dialogue between the singer and the pianist. Listening, likewise, entails active involvement, albeit of emotional or mental kind. To listen is to make oneself vulnerable to raw emotions, and be transformed by its intensity and beauty.

Melody

Recurring melodies and themes, literally or in a new guise, as well as writing and performance mannerisms, are easily recognizable in a lot of Philippine music from around the last quarter of the 19th century to the first half of the 20th century⁸. Style is certainly branded to a specific region, time-period, culture, or school of thought, but it is more than a shared feature for the Filipinos. For them, their melody is a *leitmotif* in that it is strongly associated with feelings, ideas, and experiences. It is a kind of “stream-of-consciousness” because every time it is heard, it stirs up reminiscences of old, familiar emotions.

A style becomes distinct from each other by an idiosyncratic use of one or more elements such as the different dance rhythms, or of compositional technique, philosophy, and aesthetics. Having melody as the style identifier connotes a few things. First, it shows of the people as a singing culture. Early Spanish writers took note of different native song types, and of the practice of “preserving traditions through songs which they know by

⁸ Ramon Santos, “Music and the Revolution” in *Kasaysayan: The Story of the Filipino People* vol. 5 (Hongkong: Asia Publishing Co., 1998), 124-125.

heart and learned as children.”⁹ Today, this is apparent in the proliferation of choirs and vocal ensembles, and of their active performances locally and abroad. It is seen in the celebrity status given to singers. And without a doubt, the favorite past time of karaoke-singing is the most obvious sign. Secondly, it implies an aural and oral people. In the Spanish writings, too, were descriptions of people who learn by observation and imitation, their imitation at par with their models. Melody stands out in a musical texture. It is readily discerned, remembered, assessed, and transmitted.

The first melodic line of the kundiman, or its important phrases, usually start on an upbeat. This is probably the most effective device in setting the mood. Musically, it sets forth motion and establishes the horizontal, fluid element. The rests or an occasional downbeat in the accompaniment, give an impetus for a more purposeful breathing. In the case where there is a downbeat, and in the slow to moderately slow tempo of the kundiman, it affords both performers time and space to internalize. The successive entrance makes them listen and react rather than be concerned with the vertical synchronization.

Poetically, an incomplete bar connotes a lack of something and a need for completion. The absence of a downbeat translates to not being firmly rooted, and maybe even a lack of symmetry. A breath taken deliberately is a gesture of a person trying to calm himself over frustration or helplessness.

Besides the melodic construction, the kundiman’s worth is seen in the affective quality of the melody. There is much yearning and longing, but there are also rays of bold declaration. There is a degree of uncertainty as it moves smoothly along its gamut, and of

⁹ Elena Mirano, “The Spanish Colonial Traditions,” in *CCP Encyclopedia of Philippine Art* (Manila: Cultural Center of the Philippines, 1994), 36.

sudden outbursts alike at strategic leaps. It is a flux of emotions altogether clothed with a sense of sadness.

Melody, unlike harmony and form, is less analyzed in a codified, systematic manner maybe because of its individual nature. While it is a personal trait, it is a consolidated voice of Filipino sensitivity that is “developed from the contemptuous manner they have been addressed by their colonial masters, which gives them a traduced sense of honor, a martyr complex, and resilience with currents of emotions which sometimes crested into a cry of despair.”¹⁰

Text

For a genre that has been around for two centuries, and for its theme to remain unchanged, is very telling of an important Filipino value. Kundiman is a “song of devotion, not only with a romantic partner, but also with a parent, child, spiritual figure, motherland, or an ideal or cause;”¹¹ likewise, a Filipino is devoted to anyone and anything he deems worthy.

Devotion to women

As a love song, the kundiman could be used in the context of *harana*, a form of serenade in which a suitor sings to a girl, usually at night, under the window of the woman’s house, probably in a moonlit sky.

¹⁰ Felipe de Leon, Sr. *Mga Babasahin sa Musika at Sayaw* (Quezon City: UP Departamento ng Kasaysayan, 1974), 152.

¹¹ Felipe de Leon, “The Diversity of Philippine Music Cultures” www.himig.com.ph/features/1-philippine-music-treasures (accessed December 10, 2012).

Courtship, especially in the olden times, was an elaborate process of wooing the beloved and seeking the approval of her whole family. It was customary in those days for a suitor to do chores in the household of the woman, and to give dowry before marriage. These days, courtship is much simplified although it still involves getting the affections of family and friends. To formally ask a woman's hand in marriage, the man and his family go to the woman's house, with food in hand, to participate in a merrymaking called *pamamanhikan*.

The Philippines is a patriarchal society but women are regarded highly. Women are exalted as exemplified in the kundiman text. In the social novels *Noli Me Tangere* and its sequel *El Filibusterismo* by Jose Rizal, the character of Maria Clara became the epitome of an ideal Filipina. She is a religious, virtuous, and modest woman whose good manners could not even break delicate silver (*hindi makabasag pinggan*). Her once sheltered life became troubled under the hands of Spanish friars, and her death caused the hero's loss of hope and idealism. Today, the term Maria Clara is used to playfully refer to ultra-conservative women.

Women play direct and peripheral roles during the defining events in the country's struggle for freedom. In stark contrast to Maria Clara, the image upheld by the Spaniards but seen by social writers as the greatest downfall of the Filipina women,¹² were the likes of Gabriela Silang, a revolutionary leader, of Gregoria de Jesus, an abettor of the revolutionists, of Corazon Aquino, a restorer of democracy. The symbol of sovereignty, the Philippine flag, was made by women. Of this, the priests Manuel Buzeta and Felipe

¹² Luis Camara Derey, *Awit Kay Inang Bayan: Ang Larawan ng Pilipinas Ayon sa mga Tula't Kundiman na Kinatha Noong Panahon ng Himagsikan* (Manila: De La Salle University Press, 2003), 83.

Bravo wrote that the Filipino men could not live without women.¹³ No less than Dr. Jose Rizal contended that the women are the cradle of hope and the future of the Filipino nation.¹⁴

Devotion to family

A Filipino is a devout family member. Hierarchy among family members based on age is observed, and so are the roles that each one plays. It is expected of the older siblings to take care of the younger, to help them send to school if financially able. In return, the younger ones are to respect, follow, and serve the elders.

A Filipino family is a close-knit one. It is common for an unmarried person to live with his parents and even for married people to stay in or close to the ancestral home. His concept of family extends to relatives, neighbors, and friends. He goes to length to provide for his family. Those who work abroad to make ends meet are considered modern heroes.

Devotion to religion

A Filipino has an innate reverence for a higher being. Ancient Filipinos worshiped nature and spirits. Even then, rituals and ceremonies were held to invoke the favor of gods, and to appease them when they seemed to be angered. Islam was also a dominant religion, nowadays still in practice in some areas in southern Philippines.

¹³*Ibid.*, 82.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, 83.

Festivals—a combination of prayers, procession, music, costumes, and sceneries—are practiced throughout the country at different times of the year. Most of these festivals are in honor of Mary, the *Sto. Nino*, and patron saints. A number is also in remembrance of events of spiritual significance to the Filipinos such as the coming of Haring Humabon and Reyna Juana, and the eventual conversion. Ceremonies are likewise held on important times of the liturgical year. They are the *pasyon*, a chanting on the passion of Christ, the eastern *salubong* (resurrection), and the *panunuluyan*, a reenactment of the nativity, on Christmas.

This faith for the divine works for and against the Filipinos. It gives him a good moral fiber to live on and provides hope in dire moments. A popular phrase is *bahala na* or come what may. It is resigning to fate, or assigning to a deity, things that are beyond one's control.

On the other hand, faith and fear of the Lord and his “representatives,” so instilled in the minds of the people, made them easy subjects to clergy manipulation and abuse. To this day, the Church, behind the guise of faith, still has considerable influence in all matters. *Bahala na* could also be misused as an excuse for laziness. Relinquishing one's control of his life is a form of non-accountability for his actions.

The Filipino's devotion to women, religion, and family, combine into a single veneration—their adoration to the Virgin Mary. She is very much revered, in some ways even more that what is conferred to the Holy Trinity. Images and statues of Mary adorn Catholic churches and most homes. Songs and festivals are dedicated in her honor. Rosaries are prayed for praise and veneration.

Common among colonial societies where the familiar mixes with the unfamiliar to lure the indigenous, the Filipino's innate respect for a mother figure found a new medium in the Virgin Mary. She is regarded as Mother Mary, and has her devotees who believe in her mediator role to God the Father. In a similar vein, this was viewed as a "distant memory of pre-colonial creator goddesses and priestesses"¹⁵ taking on a new form. Although favorable for the process of conversion, there were accounts of alarm of the Church, and of their regulation to these practices.

One may rightfully observe that the kundiman is full of imagery and symbolism, and is given to exaggeration. The text of the kundiman is meant for a figurative reading. Words stand for things other than their literal meanings and are endowed with qualities not of their own. Simply put, "a Filipino mind is metaphorical in orientation."¹⁶ It has parallelism with the Filipino's tendency to beat around the bush, so to speak. A Filipino does not speak directly in his care of not offending the sensibilities of another person.

This characteristic can be probably attributed to a tiered system, be it in the family or in any level of organization in the country. In a Filipino family, position is accorded on the basis of age, and to some extent, the ability to provide for the family (breadwinner); in the society, wealth and power defines one's status. Moreso, organizations operate on a stratification where there is an obvious, inherent distance between classes.

¹⁵ Irving, *Colonial Counterpoint*, 204.

¹⁶ Joseph Anthony Narciso Tiangco, "Understanding the Filipino Philosophy of Resiliency: Katatagang-Loob and Its Phenomenological Considerations" http://www.crvp.org/book/series_03/IIID-4/chapter-3.htm (accessed January 10, 2013).

Social classes are already in practice in the pre-colonial society. The early Filipinos were classified either as noblemen, freemen, or slaves. During the Spanish occupation, the Spaniards were considered first in rank, followed by the Filipino, the term being used to refer to Philippine-born Spaniards, then the half-bred *mestizos*, and lastly, the native *indios*. These days, labeling has of course become nonexistent, but people are still somewhat conscious of their place which dictates them how to act and interact. Among different ways of showing reverence, a Filipino is discreet about voicing his opinions and criticisms.

From the literary point of view, a historical and analytical analysis was offered by Bienvenido Lumbera. He noted that the use of fanciful language to excesses and the theme of courtly love came from the desire of the Tagalog poets for sophistication.¹⁷ The 19th century Tagalog poet was conscious of his rural image, “a man from the hill,” as epitomized by a character in the important literary work “La India Elegante y El Negro Amante,” by the leading poet of the time, Francisco Baltazar.¹⁸ Thus, he veered away from folk poetry and adapted the elaborate figures of speech that characterized the Spanish ballads. Lumbera identifies the mannerisms of 19th century Tagalog poetry which very much sum up the kundiman text: “fondness for the apostrophe, liberal use of personification, cloying lugubriousness in pining for the impossible love, and a tendency to talk about emotion rather than present it.”¹⁹

¹⁷Bienvenido Lumbera, *Tagalog Poetry 1570-1898: Tradition and Influences In Its Development* (Quezon City: Ateneo de Manila University Press, 1986), 86.

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 86.

¹⁹*Ibid.*, 89.

Performance practice

Rubato, defined as an expressive alteration of rhythm and tempo, has long been noted in musical performance, whether directed or as an observed performance practice.²⁰ It is of two kinds, an earlier one in which a more florid melodic treatment is set against a strict accompaniment, and a later kind which moves the whole unit.²¹ The kundiman is inclined to the second one, a characteristic associated with the romantic and aptly described as “alternating accelerating and retarding for the purpose of expression.”²²

Time, in the kundiman, is an elastic element. To borrow Paderewsky's metaphor of rubato with the human heart which does not beat mechanically, then the fluctuating tempo of the kundiman speaks of an emotional state that is ever changing. There is a lot of push and pull, and poignant pauses in a kundiman performance. This is hard to execute since this is a matter of personal conviction, let alone that ensemble considerations should also be in order. *Pakikiramdam*, a heightened sensitivity to another person, is then necessary.

Damdam is the Filipino root word for feelings. It is in his character to be *nakikiramdam*, to anticipate and consider someone else's feelings with his own, because he himself is also *maramdamin* (sensitive). Referred to by anthropologists as a high-context culture, the Philippine society is one in which “things are not explicitly defined but are inferred by the body language, idiosyncracies of the linguafranca, tone of the

²⁰ Richard Hudson, “Rubato” [www. Oxfordmusiconline.com](http://www.Oxfordmusiconline.com) (accessed December 2, 2013).

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² *Ibid.*

voice, etc.”²³ It works on the assumption that there is a common understanding among the people, having shared the same culture and background. To operate on such society, it is important to be intuitive to nonverbal, contextual clues.

The semantics of *pakikiramdam* could be extended to include a musical meaning. In fact, one definition of *pakikiramdam* relates it to a jazz player in that it needs improvisational skills and is exploratory.²⁴ A musician is constantly perceiving, investigating the notated score, the composer, and his style; during performance, he adjusts to his body, his sound, the instrument, acoustics of the room, as well as the reception of the audience. Moreso, *pakikiramdam* is a requisite for ensemble performance. It is the unexplained rapport between performers. It is being attentive to the ensemble, trusting yourself and the others too, that messages are sent and received correctly.

Rubato, at its basic, is founded on musical cues. Generally, there is a feeling of anticipation for an ascending melodic line and/or harmonic movement. Conversely, a slacking of tempo occurs at points of resolution. Emotionally different sections should be approached and left with liberty to prepare the performers musically and physically. A breath is taken at cadences, may be longer pauses on full cadences and end of sections. Just like the practice of the West, a tasteful rubato is that which effects the phrase as a unit, not changing the pulse within.

²³ Zeus Salazar, “A Sense of Being a Filipino” www.pinas.activeboard.com/tl4550837/a-sense-of-being-a-filipino (accessed January 10, 2013).

²⁴ Raj Masukhani, “Pakikiramdam: A Critical Analysis” <http://www.crvp.org/book/series03/IIID-4/chapter-9.htm> (accessed January 10, 2013).

As in songs in general, the importance of poetry to the interpretation cannot be overemphasized. A fundamental knowledge of the language inflection is essential in accentuation and meaningful phrasing. More significant is the deep understanding of the intent of the text manifesting itself in rubato. A text that is emphatic, urgent, and searching usually equates to a kind of movement. Similarly, lyrics conveying resignation, loss, and doubt may mean a repose.

If the high-context theory is true, then rubato is a logical musical equivalent, and rubato, being an inexact science, benefits from *pakikiramdam*. Interestingly, “*pakikiramdam* is the stepping stone for *pakikiisa*,”²⁵ being one with others, which is one of the musical goals in any ensemble works.

Tonality

The tonality/feeling association, however simplistic and broad it may be, could be applied to explain the psychology of the tonal framework of the kundiman. Why is there a need to change from having a single to having two tonalities? And why is the minor key the key of choice, always to be followed by its parallel major?

The tonality of the kundiman could possibly be a documentation, a commentary, or a reaction to what transpired in the country's history. It is perhaps more than a coincidence that a musical change would occur some years following a devastating and tumultuous time—a period of wars and unconsummated quest for independence. After a brewing of three centuries, the last decade of the 19th century saw the culmination of anti-Spanish movements. It went as far as declaring a Philippine republic in 1898, but only a

²⁵Masukhani, “Pakikiramdam”

temporary one, as the country was turned over to another dominant power. A thwarted cause, an unfulfillment of a perceived promise by an ally and subsequent uprisings, and an internal dissension of power struggle, characterized this period.

Structure in music is represented by form, and form in kundiman is allied to tonality. It is noteworthy that the kundiman similarly changed its form alongside history. Time-wise, it is coherent with the turn of the century, in itself already a momentous and significant event. Politically and socio-culturally, it is even more meaningful with the end of the Spanish era and into the decades of American colonialism. It is also worth mentioning that composers who wrote in this new form were born at this crossroad. It is highly probable that their social consciousness mirrored in their art, is greatly shaped by the climate of the time.

In another light, the presence of both minor and major keys, is perhaps indicative of the dualistic nature of the Filipino persona. The Filipino is both a sad and a happy person. He is sad because of his oppressive past and bounding poverty. He is happy because it is in his nature to be lighthearted and accepting of his fate. He could be festive and boisterous, taking part in merry-making and communal activities. At the extreme, he could be melancholic and reserved who would keep thoughts to himself.

This paradox is also seen in the society where there is a wide distance between the rich and the poor, the powerful and the oppressed, the superior and the subordinates. It is even present in his values system where some of his virtues have an exact opposite. *Bayanihan*, the quintessential cooperation seen in the older practice of a group of people transferring a house from one place to another, is negated by *crab mentality*, pulling down a person who is getting successful, just like what a crab would do to another crab

making its way out of a pail. The portrait of the hardworking Filipino in the song “Magtanim ay d biro,” braving the heat of the sun to do manual labor, is countered by *Juan Tamad*, the metaphor for a man who just waits for good fortune to fall on his lap. Filipinos take pride of their hospitality, their kindness and openness even to strangers, but the same people cling to their groups, clans, and cliques. Even their devotion to family and religion, could, at the extreme, breed nepotism and fanaticism.

The thesis-antithesis relation is made more noteworthy with the preference for the minor key and the subsequent change to major, always in that order. It signifies recognition and acceptance of distress tempered with optimism. This optimism, however, is with an air of melancholy in it. Except for tonality, everything else, text included, is of the same style with that of the minor first part. The endings, even with their grand declaration, seem less definitive with frequent use of plagal cadence or imperfect authentic cadence. It is as if positivism is an imaginary construct, or a nostalgia of a battle fought and lost.

It is indeed ironic for a love song to have a pervasive sense of sadness, at times bordering on fatalism. To the Filipinos, however, such sacrifice is necessary for the attainment of a good life. It is a culture that loves martyrs and underdogs. Their ready acceptance of suffering is as intricate as the concept itself. It is reasoned out that it is a survival instinct, that by anticipating the most undesirable circumstance, one is actually preserving himself.²⁶ Another theory believes that it is reflective of a cyclical view of life with its unescapable ups and downs.²⁷ Still another contention sees it with an underlying

²⁶Tiangco, “Understanding Filipino Resiliency”

²⁷*Ibid.*

spiritual message, that it shows his conviction of life as transient and as a passageway to a blissful eternity.²⁸

In this age where everything is virtually accessible with the tips of our fingers, how does the kundiman render itself significant to the present Filipino?

As is the case of most art music, the patronage of the kundiman seems to be exclusive to the academe and some special groups. Maybe it is the musical style that is far from the Western pop music the present-day Filipino is accustomed to, or the poetry that is profound and hyperbolic for today's usage, but to the layperson, the kundiman is now simply, an old love song. It is commendable then for specialized institutions to uphold the tradition of the kundiman and other Philippine art forms for that matter. The National Commission for Culture and the Arts is an agency established for the preservation and development of arts and culture, and for the support of artistic endeavors through the National Endowment Fund for Culture and the Arts.²⁹ It works closely with its affiliate groups such as the National Historical Commission of the Philippines, National Museum of the Philippines, National Library of the Philippines, Commission on the Filipino Language, and the National Archives of the Philippines. It is also linked with the Cultural Center of the Philippines, the center for performing arts. Since 1969, it has been the venue for notable national and international performances, a repository of cultural and musical documents, and an umbrella for resident companies Ballet Philippines, Bayanihan Dance Group, Philippine Ballet Theater, Philippine Madrigal Singers, Philippine Philharmonic Orchestra, Ramon Obusan Folklore Group, Tanghalang

²⁸*Ibid.*

²⁹www.ncca.gov.ph (accessed March 15, 2013)

Pilipino, and the University of Santo Tomas Orchestra.³⁰ It also houses the National Music Competition for Young Artists in which one of its programs is “enhancing and expanding appreciation for and performance of Philippine music by way of mandated competitions repertoire programs and commissioning of new works.”³¹ The kundiman is a required piece for some levels in the voice category.

The NCCA and CCP are responsible for continued scholarship, patronage, and further dissemination. Another way of safeguarding tradition is by making sure it is heard and appreciated through truthful and accessible performances. The Kasarinlan Philippine Music Ensemble and the Mabuhay Singers are examples of such groups. The Kasarinlan is a vocal instrumental ensemble dedicated in promoting Philippine music and culture through musical performances, occasionally in collaboration with other fields in the performing arts. Organized in 1985 by Felipe de Leon, the group consists of 12-24 members who are professional and non-professional musicians, as well as representatives of cultural/ sub-cultural groups.³² Their wide-ranging repertoire from indigenous, muslim, folk, popular, serious, neo-folk, and neo-ethnic, reflect the richness and diversity as well as the history and character of the Filipino people.³³ The Mabuhay Singers is especially devoted to the performance of the kundiman and other Filipino song forms. Founded in 1958 from the two vocal groups Tres Rocas and Lover’s Trio, the group has released over 100 albums on traditional and modern Philippine music in major Filipino

³⁰ www.culturalcenter.gov.ph (accessed March 15, 2013).

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² www.kasarinlan.freeservers.com (accessed March 15, 2013).

³³ *Ibid.*

languages, and in English and Spanish.³⁴ It has performed internationally, thus the appellation “Philippine Ambassador of Culture Through Music.”

Music conservatories are likewise active in teaching young musicians the musical practices of the past. At the University of the Philippines, a full semester is allotted for the survey of Filipino vocal literature or instrumental literature specific for each instrument. A Filipino work is included in recitals in addition to the Western standard repertoire. Furthermore, two semester courses are devoted to the history of Philippine music. Those who major in musicology, composition, and music education are geared towards researching, writing, and teaching using the Philippine setting and context.

The kundiman may have gone out of trend and may be even regarded as old-fashioned, but it is certain to be used when a sense of national pride is desired among the people. It is always performed during the national language month, in celebrating arts and culture, and when commemorating events related to the country's fight for freedom. It serves as a reminder to the Filipino of his past, and his fuel to move on to greater heights.

The kundiman is the story of the Filipino people. It has all the elements laid out. Even the musical and social development are similar to the curved unfolding of a classic story.

The Philippines was finally granted independence in 1946. In a story, after the apex has been reached and the protagonist rose above all odds, a denouement seems to be in order. It is hoped that the kundiman does not see its end, but continues to live on for yet another chronicle. The kundiman may have started with an apologetic acceptance of

³⁴ www.mabuhaysingers.com (accessed March 15, 2013).

his unworthiness, but let it be said that it metamorphosed into something noble and beautiful, and that it could simply and triumphantly say, "I am worthy."

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