Activism in the Philippines: Memorializing and Retelling Political Struggles Through Music

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After all these years, is there a Filipino who is not moved by the stirring melody and lyrics of *Bayan Ko?* Indeed, the soundtrack of Philippine political and social activism tells of a centuries-old cultural heritage that has been and is still used collectively and individually to recall, memorialize, contemporize, mobilize, and remind the nation of its fighting spirit and its resolve never to forget the ultimate sacrifice of its heroes. From colonial times to the People Power Revolution, Filipinos have demonstrated the ability to combat oppressor propaganda music with equally compelling protest songs.

Using ethnographic and content analysis, this research is an attempt to illuminate on the role of music in the political awakening of Filipinos through the years and explore the intersection of memory and music as a medium of political activism and mobilization. As sites of resistance, these politicized lyrical relics are appropriately part of many of the country's national public holiday commemorations to this day and scored lastingly in the musical memory of activists including the authors who clamored for change during the turbulent Martial Law regime.

Keywords: Philippine protest music, politicized Filipino songs, music and political resistance

INTRODUCTION

Political activism has a soundtrack. And the Philippine struggle against oppression, injustice, poverty, inequality, and abuse of power through the centuries is no exception. In fact, the soundtrack of Philippine political activism goes beyond the chants at rallies such as *Ibagsak ang pyudalismo; ibagsak ang imperyalismo* (Down with feudalism; down with imperialism). Indeed, activism in the islands has a large trove of revolutionary songs that Filipinos as a nation and as individuals use to remember and retell the saga of political engagement and radical change.

Filipinos, no doubt, love to sing. Just consider the popularity of the *karaoke*, singing contests, and musical variety shows, and you will agree that the love of music is in the Filipino DNA. From the timeless *kundiman* and other indigenous music to the revolutionary and protest songs, to the ubiquitous Western tunes, Philippine musical genres are as diverse as the language groups in the archipelago.

Centuries of colonial struggle generated songs that ignited and sustained the revolution against Spain and the United States. The political activism eloquently and oftentimes poignantly expressed through songs continued in later decades. For instance, radical agrarian and labor movements in the 1930s used music to recruit, organize, and boost morale (Rodel, 2002).

This paper invites readers to embark on a musical journey that chronicles and shows how the Filipino nation used words and music as potent instruments of resistance, political education, and social indictment (Caparas, 2004). While samples of the songs that defined various historical periods will be analyzed, focus will be on the anthems of the student protest movement of the sixties through the nineties that led to the People Power Revolution, which eventually toppled the Marcos dictatorship. Particular attention will be given to the message and why the lyrics not only resonated, but also galvanized Filipinos to action. Authors will likewise consider how these songs as archives of a nation's life are used to memorialize the political struggles of several Filipino generations.

Using ethnographic and content analysis, this work hopes to illuminate on the role of music in the political awakening of Filipinos through the years and explore the intersection of memory and music as a medium of political activism and mobilization. According to Cohen (1993), ethnography injects the social dimension of music in the construction of meanings around or through

the music. The ethnographic perspective extracts the web of relationships that intersects the economic, political, and social realities of everyday life. As such, the use of ethnography and content analysis allows this study to ask not only what the meaning of Philippine protest music is, but also for whom the music holds meaning.

Both authors were student activists. Imbued with the idealism of their youth, they participated in the student protest movement at different locations in the country. This paper will attempt to do two things: 1) excavate a revolutionary past to show how protest music reconstructs the political and social condition of the Filipino nation at different historical moments and 2) explore the instrumentation of protest songs to memorialize the events and people who lived through the challenging, radical experiences. It is Philippine history and political memorial set in music with the added ethnographic experience of the authors.

Gilbert (2008) investigated how music functions as a "mediator of memory" and argued that it is "one of the most important media through which ideas and attitudes of the past are constructed and shared" (p. 109). Focusing meanwhile on music's role in the formation of collective memory and collective action, Eyerman (2002) proposed a model of culture that treats music as "political mediators."

This study argues that Philippine political and protest songs are potent cultural and memorial artifacts as they contain lyrics that provoke both thought and melodies that stir the emotions. The research draws from Hutton's (1993) concept of "moments of memory" as many of these songs are repeated over the airwaves and sung at commemorative events in present-day Filipino society.

By examining the relationship between protest music and memory, this study ventures into a rather neglected scholarly territory especially in the Philippines where music is a rare topic of research (Concepcion, 2015). This is where this initial peek into the role of Philippine songs in many of the country's political struggles, and the message in these songs might make its modest contribution.

Frith (1984), when unpacking rock and the politics of memory, did not claim that "music has fixed meanings or values." He wrote, "Like all mass media, it depends for its effects on its context, the response of active audiences, and more obviously than the other media, it also depends on memory. Music is such a powerful trigger of remembered emotion that it is probably more widely used for nostalgic reasons… The politics of musical memory — the

struggle to determine what the music meant then, why that matters now is complicated…" (p. 68).

In discussing the reappearance of *Hasta siempre* in her musical memory, Cohen (2013) also attested to the potency of melodies than words and noted that a politicized musical culture accompanied the 1953–1959 Cuban Revolution. Massad's (2003) historical survey of songs about Palestine from 1948 to the 1990s, on the other hand, revealed that the songs expressed and reflected the changes in the Palestinian struggle. The ditties for example shifted from themes about Arab unity fighting for liberation and the return of refugees to depictions of oppression under Israeli rule or in exile.

At the nucleus of Bruggemann and Kasekamp's (2014) investigation is the multifaceted functionality of Estonian song festivals. According to the researchers, these music festivals, as part of the "narrative template underlying Estonian cultural memory," were a "powerful ritual of political mobilization" (p. 259) that served different goals during the Tsarist era and after Estonia's independence.

Using interviews, surveys, and fieldwork, Bryant (2005) examined an anthology of revolutionary songs called *Zhandi xinge* to analyze the collective memories of China's Cultural Revolution. The research found that, after so many years, the songs still live in the memories of the Chinese respondents; that the songs are remembered in varying levels of emotional attachment; and that, despite the negative discourse about the Cultural Revolution, the songs evoke nostalgia and reflection.

In Haiti, Fleurant (1996) focused on the song of freedom called Vodun that carried themes promoting hope, justice, liberation, equality, unity, and peace. Because of Vodun's centrality in Haitian life, Fleurant concluded that the song "summarizes the very soul of the Haitian people" (p. 129) and attributed music's role in making the Haitian population among the world's most politicized despite the country's high illiteracy rate.

The potential and capacity of musical lyrics as modes of resistance and as a cultural and historical artifact are at the heart of this exploration of Philippine protest music from colonial times to the 1990s. To accomplish this, a selection of 56 political songs representing historical eras was analyzed. This sample was drawn from over a 100 Filipino political or protest songs that the sparse literature seemed to indicate.

POLITICAL SONGS IN VARIOUS PHILIPPINE HISTORICAL MOMENTS

A. Colonial Times and the *Kundiman*

Colonization of the islands began with the arrival of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1521. For three centuries, Filipinos endured Spanish injustice, corruption, and abuse committed by the institutional powers of the state and the Catholic Church. The pervasive regime of repression kindled the flames of resentment among the colonized, which found expression first with the reformist approach of the Propaganda Movement and culminated with the Philippine Revolution of 1896. Popular culture, despite the thought control machinery of the Spanish government, was very much a part of the wave of sociopolitical change that Filipinos fought for.

According to Caparas (2004), the *kundiman* of the late 19th century became a patriotic vehicle during the Philippine revolt against Spain. The *kundiman* is a love song or a patriotic song that generally expresses lamentation, a longing, a plea, or sorrow. Its message is influenced by the culture of the times and the temper of the Filipino. The often-plaintive love songs were mostly written in Tagalog and associated the undying love for a woman with the love of the Motherland, a love and desire for freedom worth dying for.

The centrality of the *kundiman* as a revolutionary armament is best exemplified in the work of Philippine national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal. Rizal's nationalism did not only manifest in his novels and essays, but also in song, particularly the *kundiman*. This leader of the Propaganda Movement featured the kundiman in his book, *Noli Me Tangere* (Touch Me Not) and wrote the melancholic *Kundiman* ni Rizal, where he lamented the country's oppression under Spain, exhorted Filipinos not to surrender and to be willing instead to shed blood for the country. This song, like Rizal's two famous novels, was used by the Spaniards to build a case against him.

Admittedly, *Kundiman ni* Rizal accepts that freedom is lost, that happiness has died, and the nation's tongue and heart may be silenced because of long years of oppression and neglect by the colonizers.

Tunay ngayong umid yaring dila at puso
Ang bayan palibhasa'y api, lupig, at sumuko
Sa kapabayaan ng nagturong puno

Paglaya'y nawala, ligaya'y naglaho
Tunay ngayong ligaya'y naglaho.

However, this kundiman refuses to dwell on the loss and subsequently declares with certainty that the joyful sun shall rise once more and Filipinos will strive to liberate the conquered nation. Only then will the Filipino identity return for the whole world to see.

Datapwa't muling sisikat ang maligayang araw
Pilit na maliligtas ang inaping bayan
Magbabalik man din at laging isisilang
Ang ngalang Pilipino sa sandaigdigan.
At laging sisilang ang ngalang
Pilipino sa sandaigdigan.

From hopefulness, Rizal's kundiman makes a discernible change in tone as illustrated in the succeeding lines that speak of the Filipino's willingness to die to redeem the beloved Philippines. The song further guarantees that, until the nation's destiny of freedom is attained, the yearning for peace will persist.

Ibubuhos namin ang dugo'y ibabaha
Nang matubos lamang ang sa Amang lupa
Hanggang 'di sumapit ang panahong tadhana
Sinta ay tatahimik, tutuloy ang nasa
O, bayan kong mahal
Sintang Pilipinas.

Source: Filipinas Heritage Library, 1997.

Rizal's famous kundiman shared eminent status with another musical composition titled, *Jocelyn ng Baliuag* that reportedly fired the patriotic sentiments of the Filipino revolutionaries in the struggle for liberation from Spain. *Jocelyn* became so popular among the revolutionaries of Bulacan, a province south of Metro Manila, that it is widely considered as the "*Kundiman* of the Revolution." Composed in 1898, this patriotic hymn disguised as a courtship song was dedicated to the beautiful woman, Josefa

"Pepita" Tiongson y Lara. Some historians believe that "Pepita" was used to symbolize the image of the Motherland or Inang Bayan.

Other songs of the revolution include the following: *Alerta Katipunan, Marangal na Dalit ng mga Katagalugan, Halina, Sa Magandang Silangan, Mula ng Mauso ang Damit ng Kundiman, and Canto de Patriotico de Maria Clara. Marangal na Dalit ng mga Katagalugan* was commissioned by national hero Andres Bonifacio in 1896 and is the first national anthem of the Philippines (http://malacanang.gov.ph/75729-songs-of-the-revolution/). Bonifacio, founder of the *Katipunan,* decided that the only way the country would gain independence from Spain was through a revolution.

The *zarzuela*, a Spanish form of musical theater, flourished in the Philippines and is one exemplar of a contested genre where production of meaning could go the way of either the oppressor or the oppressed. It became *sarswela* in what Fernandez (1993) described as the process of "indigenization and transformation." She wrote, "The *sarswela*, a theater born of Spanish parenthood but grown Filipino, thus explored, documented, and synthesized the Philippine quest for liberation from bondage. Mirroring a culture and its consciousness, it in turn created a culture and a consciousness" (p. 341). During the revolution, this Spanish form of light opera "extolled anticolonialism and independence" (Lockard, 1996:165).

While history books that talk about the Spanish colonial period rarely if at all include the music that accompanied the Filipino fight against oppression, the absence is ameliorated by the existence of contemporary resources such as the Filipinas Heritage Library and *sarswela* performances in Philippine theaters as well as in other local events including town fiestas. The digital space has also provided unprecedented access anytime, anywhere to revolutionary songs dating all the way back to the Spanish times.

For example, the Presidential Museum and Library has an online repository of 10 songs of the revolution. The authors, using SoundCloud, listened to these songs that were composed way before they were born and were at once transported to historical places and times they read during their school years. Such an acoustic experience today brings to life a nation's past, instills pride in the courage of compatriots who fought and died for the nation's freedom, and rekindles an appreciation of the rich

cultural heritage in music that helped sustain the Philippine Revolution against Spain with songs of love for the Motherland. It certainly reminded the authors of their own political activism.

The fact that one of the authors listened to these songs a continent and more than a century away speaks to the replication of the "tensions and ambiguities between the local and global" in the virtual geography where music legacies now reside. Cohen et al. (2015) note that, regardless of its location, the presence of this music in the "heritage discourses we create to commemorate and recollect our shared pasts should not be overlooked" (p. 10).

The Filipinos did succeed in extricating the country from Spanish domination, but the first Philippine Republic was short-lived. A change of colonial masters occurred in 1898 when the United States took control of the islands. American rule lasted until 1946. In quick succession, the Americans dismantled the Spanish feudal system and established an economic order that gave them full rights to the country's resources while implementing its doctrine of benevolent assimilation.

Just like the Spaniards, the Americans left a legacy of cultural influences except that Filipinos vigorously embraced American pop culture. Such impressionable willingness threatened to decimate Filipino musical genres and obfuscate cultural identity. Fernandez (1989) decried what she described as U.S. cultural imperialism and satellization: "…It is not only that American films, canned TV programs, music, comics, and popular literature are so well entrenched in Philippine life today; but also that these mass-mediated cultural products are so patently built on the American plan…" (p. 492). Other Filipino scholars disagree seeing instead nationalist and populist content in Philippine music thereby showing broadly the dynamics of culture as disputed spaces where divergent views on meanings and values exist simultaneously.

Amidst the tug of war between the indigenous and foreign, local and global, not only was Filipino music resilient, it once again proved to be a mighty weapon in the nonviolent arsenal against American colonial control hence sustaining the nationalistic tradition that grew during the Spanish revolutionary period. The *sarswelas* and *kundimans* survived the American onslaught thanks to the preservation and training efforts of the University of the Philippines, a public educational institution founded by the Americans (Rodel, 2002).

According to Castro (2011), Filipino composers during this period "hid seditious messages in their productions through symbolically archetypal characters, costuming, and props that contained references to the Filipino flag" (p. 30). Many of these *sarswela* characters sang against the exploitative American occupation.

The ingenious political instrumentation of the sarswela is testament to a people's determination to expose and protest against injustice, which a grateful nation remembers in many ways through commemorative events honoring heroes such as National Heroes Day and restaging of the *sarswela*s. In modern-day Philippines, this lyrical genre is contemporized with the inclusion of current issues and vignettes of everyday life (Orosa, 2013).

Some prominent examples of politicized Philippine music during the American regime include *Gumising Ka Kabataan* (Wake Up Youth) and *Babaeng Walang Kibo* (Passive Woman). The rousing lyrics of *Gumising Ka* urge the youth to unite, change the course of Philippine history, and fight to end poverty and abuse:

…Pagkakataong mabago kasaysayan ng Pilipino
Heto na naman tayo ngayon ba'y makikiisa sa samasamang pakikibaka
upang baguhin ang takbo ng ating bayan
Na pinagsasamantalahan ng mga sinungaling…

Bridge

Para mawala ang kahirapa't pang-aabuso
Hindi magpapaloko sa mga lumang pangako
Kaming magbabangon sa dangal ng Pilipino…

The last line of the bridge also talks about reviving Filipino dignity.

Similarly, *Babaeng Walang Kibo* called women to assert their rights and to suffer no more in what might be considered as the early beginnings of the women's movement in a country where older generations of women enjoyed chivalrous treatment from men and held the purse of the household.

The Americans responded to the rising tide of discontent and patriotism with more oppressive laws and censorship, which naturally

led to a bountiful harvest of protest songs. Composer and scholar Ramon Santos wrote, "works such as *Tanikalang Ginto* (Gold Chain) and *Mabuhay ang Pilipinas* (Long Live the Philippines) by Juan Abad, *Pag-ibig sa Lupang Tinubuan* (Love of the Motherland) by Pascual Poblete, and *Kahapon, Ngayon at Bukas* (Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow) by Aurelio Tolentino are but few of the works whose authors and producers were severely punished and censured by the American colonial government" (in Castro, 2011:27).

B. Postcolonial Period

When the Philippines finally gained independence in 1945, the culture of resistance as expressed through music continued as the postcolonial period saw that the political, cultural, economic, and military restraints of American imperialism remained. It was difficult to ignore, for example, the presence of U.S. military bases until 1992 that concretized the imperialist hold and powered the nation's protracted struggle for freedom.

Consequently, music written during this period did not reflect the euphoria expected of a newly independent nation. Shortly after the Americans took over as colonial masters, Filipino composers were asking themselves what role must music have in nation-building (Castro 2011:24). The music produced during this era consequently reflected "nationalist aspirations of sovereignty" (Castro, 2011:27).

Not all of the nationalist composers focused on liberation from colonial domination. Others sought liberation through a different process. Francisco Santiago (1889–1947), dubbed as the Father of Philippine Nationalism in music, was likewise a proponent of "Filipinism in the arts." Filipinism, Castro (2011: 32–33) expounds, is a result of Filipinization, "a process by which culture would be made more Filipino in order to counter the effects of colonialism and further a stronger localized identity." Noted for his haunting *kundimans*, Santiago's musical approach is reminiscent of Rizal's literary strategy of promoting his country through "excellence in his works."

Among the more influential nationalistic Filipino composers of the postcolonial era was Lucio San Pedro (1913–2002) who composed in the Romantic style. His music "evokes a sense of nostalgia and spiritual connection to a simpler, less chaotic Philippines" (Castro, 2011). His

popular lullaby *Sa Ugoy ng Duyan,* (The Sway of the Baby Hammock) is "more haunting than sweet," with a metaphorical symbolism of the nation's past.

Ugoy, for instance, pines for the yesteryears when a baby in a hammock is lulled to sleep with the saccharin song of a beloved mother.

Sana'y di magmaliw ang dati kong araw
Nang munti pang bata sa piling ni Nanay…
Nais kong maulit ang awit ni Inang mahal
Awit ng pag-ibig habang ako'y nasa duyan.

The lullaby then recalls that, in the mother's bosom, life is heaven-like; where the stars stood guard while the baby is sound asleep.

Sa aking pagtulog na labis ang himbing
Ang bantay ko'y tala, ang tanod ko'y bituin
Sa piling ni Nanay, langit ay buhay
Puso ko'y may dusa sabik sa ugoy ng duyan.

The child then tells the mother that he/she wants to sleep again in the same hammock.

Nais kong matulog sa dating duyan ko, Inay…
Oh! Inay.

(http.//www.metrolyrics.com/sa-ugoy-duyan-lyrics.html)

Every June 12, the Philippines celebrates *Araw ng Kasarinlan or Araw ng Kalayaan*, ("Day of Freedom") to mark its independence from Spain in 1898. Kawit, Cavite holds a yearly commemorative act with the flag raising at the Aguinaldo Shrine and the reading of the Philippine Declaration of Independence. Aside from fireworks, many cities observe this day with parades and the singing of patriotic songs. Connerton (1989) has argued that societies have repetitive rituals through which collective memories are formed. Along these lines, Wilson (2006) in parsing the relationship of music and collective memories of the Kikuyu, pointed out the reconstruction of specific events, leaders, and crisis when singers

perform the songs hence connecting the past to the present.

The annual commemoration of Independence Day on June 12 always starts with the singing of the national anthem, *"Lupang Hinirang"* (Chosen Land/Land of the Morning). Its lyrics speak of a patriot's fervent love for his native land and his readiness to give his life to defend her from invaders. The anthem romanticizes the natural beauty of the countryside of a land so dear and holy to be the birthplace of noble heroes. The anthem ends with a solemn pledge to live one's life in defense of one's country and people.

Bayang magiliw, perlas ng silanganan
Alab ng puso sa dibdib mo'y buhay.
Lupang hinirang duyan ka na magiting
Sa manlulupig di ka pasisiil.
Sa dagat at bundok sa simoy at sa langit mong bughaw
May dilag ang tula
At awit sa panglayang minamahal
Ang kislap ng watawat mo'y tagumpay na nagniningning.
Ang bituin at araw mo'y kailan pa may di magdidilim.

Lupa ng araw ng luwalhati't pagsinta
Buhay ay langit sa piling mo…
Aming ligaya na pag may mang-aapi
Ang mamatay ng dahil sa 'yo…

Source: YouTubePH Lupang Hinirang w/ lyrics

THE SIXTIES AND THE SEEDS OF RADICALIZATION

From the revolutionary songs of the Katipunan to the songs sung by the New People's Army, the Filipino protest music deals with poverty and oppression as well as anti-imperialism and independence. A typical example was during the American era, as Jose Corazon de Jesus created a well-known protest entitled *"Bayan Ko"* (My Country), which calls for redeeming the nation against oppression, mainly colonialism, and also became popular as a song against the Marcos regime.

The 1960s witnessed a revival of nationalism and patriotism, especially

among the youth and students in the Philippines. However, it was during these decades that Filipino protest music became aligned with the ideas of Communism as well as of revolution. The "Great Proletarian" cultural revolution in China stirred new interest in Marxism–Leninism–Maoism study with emphasis on lessons from the Chinese Revolution. National democratic organizations such as the *Kabataang Makabayan* and other groups began to see the need for a renewed armed struggle based on Mao's strategy of "protracted people's war."

Filipino protest music, as a result, took on a darker hue when it aligned with the ideas of revolution and Communism. Wedum (2013) asserted that, although Filipinized, these revolutionary songs were inspired by the teachings of Mao Zedong and Bertolt Brecht. Set in martial beat, dozens of such songs were churned out of this era. They were usually brief stanzas carrying identical messages that attempted to convince Filipinos to take up arms against the abusive rulers. As an example, three of these songs are discussed here.

In eight short, repetitive lines, *Ang Masa* (The Masses) drumbeats the people into believing that they are the real heroes and creators of history.

Ang masa, ang masa lamang
Ang siyang tunay na bayani.
Ang masa, ang masa lamang
Ang siyang tagapaglikha.
Ang masa, ang masa lamang
Ang siyang tagapaglikha!
Ang masa, oh, ang masa…
Tagapaglikha ng kasaysayan.

Another song of the same genre, *Ang Linyang Masa* was reportedly taken from Mao Zedong's Mass Line. It is a simple yet powerful reminder that "power emanates from the people." As if to overemphasize this message, the main lyrics of four short lines are sung repeatedly for effect.

Sundin ng buong tatag
Ang linyang pang masa…
Mula sa masa, tungo sa masa
Ito ang ating patnubay!

From these revolutionary tunes, one song became more popular than the rest of the crop. *Makibaka, Huwag Matakot* (Struggle, Don't Fear) became the anthem of militant groups during the decades of the 1960s and the 1970s as student activism started to sweep across campuses throughout the country.

Reading in between the lines, the song reflects the social reality at the time, when the people's endurance of an abusive government was severely tested. The song was a call for daring action that appealed more to the young generation, who were willing to take risks to transform the social order.

Makibaka, huwag matakot
Harapin ang kahirapan.
Magkaisa at lumaban
Nang makamtan ang tagumpay.
Magpakatatag, huwag matakot
Nang mapalaya ang bayan
Hanay natin ay tibayan
At durugin ang kalaban.
Magpakatatag, huwag matakot
Nang mapalaya ang bayan
Sa mga pagpapakasakit
Kahirapa'y pangibabawan
Nang makamtan ang tagumpay
Makibaka, huwag matakot!

Source: PADEPA Online, 2010

As a sophomore journalism student and senior reporter of the college paper when Martial Law was proclaimed in the Philippines, one of the researchers used to sing *Makibaka* with other militant students. It was the anthem sung to start every teach-in and clandestine discussion groups that she joined. She was one of the protesters who sang this rousing song at countless street rallies and demonstrations. They sang forcefully, feeling every word, with their right arm's clenched fist held above their heads and their other arm holding a placard. *Makibaka* was also in the repertoire of militant songs that her group, the *Samahang Demokratiko ng Pilipinas,*

presented at a cultural presentation. She was among those placed on house arrest by the Philippine Constabulary (PC) when the university was padlocked by government authorities.

Her fiancé, then editor of the campus paper whose staff of student writers were mostly members of militant groups, was among those arrested by the military on mere suspicion of rebellion. The PC charged that the editorials he wrote for the campus paper were too critical of the Marcos government. Under Martial Law, there was no freedom of assembly and expression. About his surreal experience in the stockade, the researcher's fiancé reminisced: "We were placed in a crowded, stinky cell that smelled of human beings who did not bathe for many days. The room was warm during the day and cold at night. There was not enough food to go around. For those of us who were far from our families and did not have relatives in the city, no one brought us supplies for personal hygiene. We, the political detainees, were put in the same cells for criminal offenders."

Some songs in this decade, apart from being confrontational in their messages, likewise emphasized the youth's responsibility to have a deeper study of the prevailing social realities and how best to respond to them. "Know your enemy" seems to be the underpinning message of such songs like *Papuri sa Pag-aaral* (In Praise of Studies).

Aside from admonishing people to study freedom, Papuri, actually zeroes in on the need to get rid of wrong thoughts and oppose falsehoods so the country will be free.

Magsimula ng pag-aaral
Tayong mga kabataan
Hindi pa huli ang lahat
Pag-aralan ang kalagayan
Ng ating lipunan.
Iwaksi maling kaisipan
Nang mapalaya ang bayan.

Bridge
Magsimula, magsimula
Kailangang malaman lahat
Dapat maghanda ngayon.
Makisalamuha ka sa masa

Manggagawa't magsasaka
Sa pagbabago ng lipunan
Kailangang magkaisa!
Magsimula tayong kabataan
Patatagin kalooban
Panahon na upang wakasan
Pangbubusabos ng dayuhan
Tayong inaapi
Tayong nilulupig
Sa liyab ng sulo tayo ay susulong
Kailangang maghanda ngayon…

Source: PADEPA Online, 2010

In addition to allaying fears and exhorting the youth to take bolder actions, some militant songs were outright incendiary in their messages. The most popular of these songs was *Imperyalismo Ibagsak* (Down with Imperialism), the favorite chant of Red-leaning student groups like *Kabataang Makabayan. Imperyalismo* confidently proclaims that justice will prevail and those that viciously exploit will fall as long as people are united in the fight for an autonomous future.

Natitiyak ang pagkabagsak
Ng mga uring mapang-api
Na sa atin ang katarungan
Magkaisa at lumaban
Upang lumaya ang daigdig
Magkaisa, magkaisa

There's strength in numbers, the chant continues, and that abused laborers and farmers must raise their collective voice and revolt against the world's enemy — American imperialists.

Ang nakararami tiyak na
Magwawagi, magwawagi
Ang bisig ng uring api
Manggagawa't magsasaka

Kaya ngayon, sama-samang
Kabakahin ang nang-aapi
Ibagsak, ibagsak
Ang kaaway ng buong daigdig
Makibaka, huwag matakot
Durugin natin ang kaaway
Na marami nang inutang na dugo.
Ibagsak, ibagsak ang
Imperyalistang Kano!

Source: PADEPA Online, 2010

Indeed, from the militant tunes of the *Katipuneros* to the rousing songs of the New People's Army, Filipino protest music documented the poverty, oppression, anti-imperialism, and the national struggle for independence (Wedum, 2013).

THE SEVENTIES: *PINOY* MUSIC AND NEOCOLONIALISM

Early in this decade, a distinct style of *Pinoy* music developed blending rock, folk, pop, and jazz sung in Tagalog rather than English. This type of music employed various lyrical content to appeal to different Filipino sensibilities, particularly the urban youth (Lockard, 1996). *Pinoy* music emerged against a backdrop of political ferment percolating in many quarters of Philippine society that were increasingly radicalized following the declaration of Martial Law on September 22, 1972. The now infamous Proclamation 1081, ostensibly declared to stem the tide of Communist infiltration and the unrest in college campuses as well as the growing insurgency of the National People's Army, was used in reality as a legal cover to plunder the country's economy through crony capitalism. It also systematically stifled press freedom and ushered an era of flagrant abuse of human rights under the dictatorship of then President Ferdinand E. Marcos.

As a child of the Martial Law years, *Pinoy* music arguably captured the dialectics of contested spaces as some perceived it as the "conscious attempt to create a Filipino national and popular culture and overcome the completely unsophisticated déclassé image of the escapist Tagalog imitations of U.S. pop music known derisively as *bakya* ("wooden slipper")" (Lockard, 1996:166).

Because the music's appeal defied class boundaries and mourned the travails of a developing nation, some nationalists regarded it as an antidote to neocolonialism.

Filipinos at this time were fed a steady diet of government propaganda built around Marcos' *Kilusang ng Bagong Lipunan* (New Society Movement). According to Concepcion (2014), Marcos deftly used music as a vital component of the state's cultural apparatus consequently accomplishing two things: maintain his despotic grip of the country and conceal his ambition for unbridled and perpetual rule. He commissioned songs such as *Bagong Pagsilang* (Rebirth); Isang Bansa, Isang Diwa (One Nation, One Spirit); *Masagana* 99 (Prosperous 99); *Magandang Pilipinas* (Beautiful Philippines); and *Tayo'y Magtanim* (Let us Plant) to promote various aspects of his social engineering program and his vision of a new Philippine society.

Not all of Marcos' New Society initiatives, however, were bad as the country could have definitely used a more productive agriculture sector. It was the brutality of the means to the end that many Filipinos found unquestionably intolerable. Subsequently, an equally formidable cache of protest songs became the countervailing force against this government-sanctioned flow of propaganda music illustrating once again that popular culture is a site of struggle that Filipinos navigate to make sense of their political circumstances.

The students were at the forefront of the protest movement in the seventies. In what was called the *Sigwa ng Unang Kuwatro* (First Quarter Storm), students led a series of demonstrations and marches against the Marcos government. Led by student leaders of the University of the Philippines and joined by laborers as well as students from other Manila universities, the Storm ended violently as the military's use of force was met with Molotov cocktails and pillbox bombs.

Both authors were students during the Martial Law years; one was in college, the other was in high school. They joined various protest activities, distributed what was considered "subversive" materials, held "conscientization" seminars to bolster the ranks with new recruits for the "liberation" cause, and sang or chanted at meetings and rallies. Demonstration cultures, Rosenberg (2013) said, have "significant aesthetic elements, such as music" and quoted Joan Baez saying that "politics would be very unrealistic in the streets unless it involves music. The music pours from the soul, especially in times of crisis" (p. 179). Philippine mass demonstrations in the lived experiences of the authors during the seventies were no exception.

Gimenez-Maceda (1985) noted that, because overt political action was obviously dangerous and for some who dared, fatal, "the song became the alternative press for raising issues glossed over or suppressed by government-controlled media" (p. 29). An archetype of such a song is Jesse Santiago's *Huling Balita* (The Latest News), which condemned the arbitrary arrests by the military and the mysterious disappearance of dissidents. At the University of the Philippines, Diliman, a hotbed of student activism, a features writer of the campus newspaper, Lean Alejandro, disappeared with no trace. One of the authors, who recently graduated from college, was at the UP-Diliman campus for her graduate degree when this happened. She learned to keep her head down as the classrooms swarmed with plainclothes military spies.

Narinig n'yo na ba ang huling balita
Tungkol kay Mang Kardo, isang manggagawa
May ilang buwan nang siya'y hinahanap
Ng mga kaibigan, mga kamag-anak…

The next stanza captures a wife's long and desperate search for her husband, who did not come home after joining a protest rally.

May ilang beses na si Aling Marina'y
Nagtungo sa kampo't kuwartel ng pulisya
Ilang listahan na ang kanyang tiningnan
Ngunit di Makita ang hanap na pangalan
Nakapagtataka, nakapagtataka…

Another example of the "alternative press" protest music is Paul Galang's *Pira-pirasong Balita* (Bits and Pieces of News). Galang's work is an exposé of the many evils of Martial Law society: police corruption and its victims — Manila's jeepney drivers, who braved the pollution and traffic congestion to eke a living only to be forced to bribe police to avoid arbitrary violation citations.

Pag may pulis sa ilalim ng tulay
Mag-ingat ka baka hulihin ka
Kahit ikaw drayber na walang sala
Kung wala kang panglagay ay titikitan ka.

Pira-pirasong Balita also talked about the shameless pretense shown by the ban on gambling while jai-alai, cockfights, horse races, and floating casinos abound.

Bawal daw ang magsugal
Ito raw ay illegal
Ngunit pag may jai-alai
At mayroon floating casino
May sabunga't karera ng kabayo…

Then the song condemned recruiting agencies that duped poverty-stricken families, who often spent their lifetime savings or even sold their home, farm, or *carabao*s (water buffalos) to pay placement fees for jobs in the Middle East.

May manggagawa pinangakuan ng pag-asa
Trabaho sa Saudi Arabia kailanga'y magsuhol ng pera
Na pambayad sa ahensiyang nanloloko lang pala
Bandang huli bigo ang pag-asa
Natangay pa ang pera inipon niya.

A number of musical luminaries were at the center of the resurgent culture of resistance during this period: Heber Bartolome, Florante, Freddie Aguilar, Jesse Santiago, and Asin, to name a few. Bartolome founded the protest band, Banyuhay. His first composition, *Oy Utol, Buto't Balat Ka Na'y Natutulog Ka Pa* (Hey Brother, You're All Flesh and Bones and You're Still Sleeping), might be the earliest protest song during Martial Law. It vocalized the pain of hunger, fear, and oppression; decried the complacency of Filipinos rebuking them for doing nothing in the midst of their suffering (Gimenez-Maceda, 1985).

Kay hirap ng tumatawa kung hungkag ang iyong tiyan
Kay hirap ng mangusap kung bibig mo'y may tapal
Kay hirap ng mabuhay kung kalagaya'y ganyan
Kay hirap ng lumaban kung takot ka sa kalaban.

At kung tayo'y nanahimik
Huwag kayong magalit
Ang dapat sa atin ay tawaging mga gago.

In his other composition, *Awit Ko*, Bartolome confronted the perils of imperialism and used the clenched fist of a child as a metaphor of rebellion against the indignities Filipinos experienced in their native land (being mistaken as a wild pig for instance by U.S. military):

Noong tayo'y pinanganak
Ang kamay nakakuyom
Habang umiiyak.

Yao'y pagtutol sa kinagisingan
Isang bayang uto uto
Sa mga dayuhan.

Ako'y Isang Pinoy
Ako'y tao, ako'y hindi
Isang baboy-damo.

Awit Ko ends with a call for change:

Kayong lahat pakinggan n'yo
Itong mundo'y humihingi
Ng pagbabago.

The song that catapulted Bartolome into the Philippine musical stratosphere, however, was his *Tayo'y Mga Pinoy* (We're Filipinos). Released in 1978, it is a deprecating reminder that Filipinos are not Americans; that they are from the east with brown skin and less prominent noses but that there's no shame in being a Filipino:

Tayo'y mga Pinoy, tayo'y hindi Kano
Huwag kang mahihiya na ang ilong mo ay pango…

His earlier work was followed by social commentaries set into music but with more subdued protestations: *Buhay Pinoy* (Filipino Life) tackled poverty and overpopulation in a deeply Catholic country where artificial birth control was a sin; Nena denounced economic conditions that became personified in the sad plight of a prostitute and *Pasahero* (Passenger) dealt with Manila's suffocating traffic jams and overcrowded public transportation.

Another well-regarded entertainment icon in the Philippines is Florante de Leon or simply Florante. He pioneered Pinoy folk rock and influenced other popular singer-songwriters such as Heber Bartolome and Freddie Aguilar. He hit stardom with *Handog* (Offering). His other songs, *Ako'y Isang Pinoy* (I Am A Filipino) and *Digmaan* (War) are now considered classics. Indeed, patriotism runs in every lyric of *Ako'y Isang Pinoy*, which unequivocally declares being Filipino in heart and mind, by birth and by language.

Ako'y isang Pinoy sa puso't diwa
Pinoy na isinilang sa ating bansa
Ako'y hindi sanay sa wikang mga banyaga
Ako'y Pinoy na mayroong sariling wika.

In the chorus, Florante echoes a deep desire for the nation's freedom.

Bayan kong sinilangan
Hangad kong lagi ang kalayaan.

Florante's militancy is clearly evident in *Digmaan* (War). The song recognizes the difficulties of war and the dissonant reluctance to use violence and the need to fight for freedom and end oppression.

Laban sa kalooban ko man akoy handang handang lumaban para sa ating kalayaan
Ngunit bakit ang minimithing kapayapaan ay daraanin sa digmaan makamtan lang ang kalayaan

His more defiant Laya (Freedom) proclaims the breaking of the chains of imprisonment.

…Dati-rati ang isipan ko'y alipin lang
Isip ng banyaga ang aking kinagisnan
Aking pinutol ang tanikala
Upang ang isip ko ay lumaya…

Freddie Aguilar, on the other hand, is an eccentric folk-rock singer songwriter whose humble origins underpinned his early songs. When he mounted stronger challenges to social injustice through his Mindanao and *Mga Bata sa Negros* (Children of Negros), the media soon called him the "Bob Dylan of the Philippines" (Lockard, 1996). Mindanao talks about the long-running Christian–Muslim conflict in the third largest island group in the country. Mindanao has a large Muslim population that wants to secede as government continued to ignore their problems/struggles.

Mula nang magka-isip ay nagisnan ko ang problema
Hanggang sa kasalukuyan, akin pang Makita
Tuloy pa rin ang digmaan
Kalat ang kaguluhan sa Mindanao…

In 1978, Aguilar surged to legendary status as a musician not only in the Philippines but internationally with his *Anak*, an autobiographical account of a prodigal son (Philippine Music Registry: http://philippinemusicregistry.com.ph, Retrieved Feb. 12, 2016). The following lines depict how the son lost his bearings and is mired in vices; he then approaches his mother first, who asks why and what happened?

Nagdaan pa ang mga araw
At ang landas mo'y maligaw
Ikaw ay nalulong
Sa masama bisyo
At ang una mong nilapitan
Ang iyong inang lumuluha
At ang tanong nila ANAK
Ba't ka nagkaganyan?

Aguilar then introduces the desire for independence from parental control. Given the sociopolitical conditions of the country, the activist or

insurgent can arguably interpret this as a subtle but resonant eagerness for national freedom.

Ngayon nga malaki ka na
Nais mo'y maging Malaya
Di man sila payag
Walang magagawa.

Unlike Bartolome's Beatle-influenced rock music, Jesse Santiago aligned himself with the Western folk traditions. His *Halina* (Come) is both a woeful narrative and a plea to act in the face of injustices committed against the victims of capitalism as particularized by Lina, a factory worker; the exploitation of farmers like Pedro Pilapil under an obstinate feudal system and the dispensability of slum dwellers such as Aling Maria's family, who were evicted from their homes so hotels for tourists can be built.

Lina is a casualty of Marcos' antilabor and investor-friendly policies. During Martial Law, many union strikes and mass demonstrations by students, farmers, and factory workers were summarily met with deadly military force.

Si Lina ay isang magandang dalaga
Panggabi sa isang pabrika ng tela
Sumapi sa union, sumama sa welga
Biglang nagkagulo nawala si Lina
Nang muling Makita, hubad at patay na.

Pedro Pilapil, on the other hand, dramatizes the exploitation of impoverished farmers and the rampant land grabbing by the rich and powerful. In Pedro's case, he was shot to death defending his farmland.

Isang magsasaka si Pedro Pilapil
Walang kaulayaw kundi ang bukirin
Ngunit isang araw may biglang dumating
Ang saka ni Pedros kanilang inangkin
Tumututol si Pedro't siya'y nabaril.

When Marcos' dictatorship launched its beautification campaign, the song reveals how the urban poor living in squatter colonies were rendered homeless or relocated to far and often undesirable areas. Then, Bartolome goes to the heart of the matter and states that the real purpose of such campaigns was to conceal from the tourists the widespread poverty in the country. Aling Maria is indeed reminiscent of the squatters in Manila's garbage dump called Smokey Mountain.

Sina Aling Maria'y doon nakatira
Sa tabi ng isang bundok ng basura
Ngunit isang araw binuldoser sila
Sapagkat darating ang mga turista
Nawalan ng bahay ang isang pamilya.

Santiago's "portraits of oppression" (Gimenez-Maceda, 1985) rivet in a tender lullaby called Meme Na. This heart-wrenching hymn is about a guerilla father's farewell to his child as he joins the militant struggle for national liberation. It assures listeners that the promise of a better tomorrow, of a happier life of freedom, makes the personal sacrifice worthwhile.

Tayo ngayo'y dumaranas
Ng sanlaksang hirap
Ngunit hindi maglalaon
Sasagana ang bukas.

Paalam na, o mutya ng aking pagmamahal
Ako'y magbabalik, hintayin mo sana
Sa aking pag-uwi tayo'y liligaya.

Even love songs became "conscientization" tools. Asin's *Himig ng Pag-ibig* (Love's Hymn) prompts audiences to think as it blended love with awareness of the social realities around them.

Tulad ng ibong malaya ang pag-ibig natin
Tulad ng langit na kay sarap marating
Ang bawat tibok ng puso'y kay sarap damhin
Tulad ng himig na kay sarap awitin.

Formed in 1977, the Asin folk-rock band is said to be the first group that fused indigenous instrumentation into their music. Because their songs reflected the political issues during Martial Law, some of their recordings were confiscated and labeled as subversive.

This sampling of political melodies in seventies Philippines excludes the countless protest songs that Ceres Doyo (2012) talked about in her article, "Songs of Protest, Songs of Love." These are the music in *Ibong Malaya* (Prison Songs), a collection of songs political detainees wrote, recorded, and sang while incarcerated in Camp Bagong Diwa and Militant Songs, which according to Doyo might be recorded by the radical singing group, Patatag.

BAYAN KO: ANTHEM OF THE ANTI-MARCOS MOVEMENT IN THE EIGHTIES

This decade was mired by an escalation of disgruntlement and opposition not just on campuses but all over the archipelago as the Marcos dictatorship tightened its stranglehold on the country. The assassination of opposition leader, Senator Benigno Aquino, brought the simmering decade of discontent to the boiling point of defiance that eventually led to the People Power Revolution in 1986, also known as EDSA 1 (Epifanio de los Reyes Avenue), and the expulsion of the Marcos family. Aquino came back from exile in 1983 and was gunned down in the tarmac of the Manila international airport that now bears his name.

Bayan Ko (My Country), a melancholic ballad written by Jose Corazon de Jesus and set to music by Constancio de Guzman in the 1920s saw a phenomenal revival. The version sung by Freddie Aguilar became the anthem of EDSA 1 (Caparas, 2004; Jimeno, 2008) although it has been a long-time staple of the underground student protest movement (Lockard, 1996). This song deserves prominent treatment because of its durability and mainstream appeal as an artifact of protest tracing all the way back to the nation's fight for independence during the American occupation. The authors consider this song as the reservoir of all the substance and zeal of their own youthful activism. To this day, the song resonates and reverberates through the echo chambers of their mind and life as if it was only yesterday that they shouted *"Makibaka, huwag matakot"* (Fight, do not fear).

Noel Cabangon, one of the more well-known musicians of this decade, attributes the secret to *Bayan Ko's* longevity to "the purity and universality

of its message." Its melody is so Filipino, he thinks, which embodies the laments of a people longing to be free (Jimeno, 2008). When heard and sang today, this song has the same effect on the authors, perhaps colored now with nostalgia yet is as moving and inspiring of patriotism and the yearning for freedom from the country's unshakable political turmoil and social inequities.

It is not hyperbole to say that every Filipino would know Bayan Ko and of course *Lupang Hinirang* (National Anthem). *Bayan Ko* is a moving homage to a people's thirst for freedom and love of country as metaphorically represented in the image of a bird crying in a cage bereft of its inherent ability to fly.

Ibon mang may layang lumipad
kulungin mo ay umiiyak
Bayan pa kayang sakdal dilag
Ang di magnasang makaalpas!

The first two stanzas express love of country describing it as the land of gold and flowers; a beautiful country that foreigners find so alluring that they seize it for themselves.

At sa kanyang yumi at ganda
Dayuhan ay nahalina
Bayan ko, binihag ka
Nasadlak sa dusa.

The resulting enslavement reduces the country into a nest of tears and indigence.

Pilipinas kong minumutya
Pugad ng luha ko't dalita

Bayan Ko, however, concludes with a hopeful note that the country will eventually become free.

Aking adhika, Makita kang sakdal laya.

It would seem that the turbulence of the Marcos regime would mean a drought of original sociopolitical songs, but ironically, it spawned such Filipino pop music greats as Joey Ayala, Inang Laya, and the very popular APO Hiking Society. Joey Ayala is a darling of the student activist movement. A native of Bukidnon, in the southern island group of Mindanao, Ayala was a former newspaper journalist. His 1982 album, *Panganay ng Umaga* (Firstborn of the Morning) contains songs that limned images of exploitation, i.e., *Mga Ninuno* (Forebears) and environmental degradation, i.e., Agila (Eagle).

On the feminist front, *Inang Laya* (Mother Freedom) composed of Becky Demetillo Abraham on vocals and Karina Constantino David on guitar, loomed large. In 1989, they recorded *Atsay ng Mundo* that conveyed how much drastic change was needed for the country's emancipation. The rather inflammatory feminist tone in Babae is abundantly clear. The song invokes the names of Gabriela (Silang), the first female leader of the Filipino independence movement from Spain; Teresa (Magbanua) also known as the "Visayan Joan of Arc" for her historic and gender-bending role in the *Katipunan*; Lorena (Barros), who founded the *Malayang Kilusan ng Bagong Kababihan* (Free Movement of New Women); and Liliosa (Hilao), the first reported case of a student activist killed while in detention during Martial Law. By joining the national liberation struggle, these women recognizably challenged cultural norms on the role of women.

Inang Laya is also the composer, lyricist, arranger, and musician of Titser, which bemoans the plight of Filipino teachers, who must sell an assortment of everyday goods to supplement meager salaries. After a 15-year hiatus from the musical scene, the duo composed Macliing, a dirge for the murdered *Kalinga* chieftain, who fought against the Chico River Dam construction that would have inundated *Kalinga* ancestral lands.

The following songs were originally featured in the album, Alab 1896–1996 (Alay sa Laya ng Bayan) by HASIK (Harnessing Self-Reliant Initiatives and Knowledge, Inc.) with *Inang Laya's* Demetillo-Abraham and Constantino-David: *Marangal na Dalit ng Katagalugan* and Canto Patriotico De Maria Clara.

Composed by Julio Nakpil in 1896, *Marangal* was the first National Anthem of the Philippines. It was eventually replaced by the *Marcha Nacional Filipina*. Canto Patriotico, on the other hand, was written by Jose Rizal. The song's origin was one of the characters in his novel *Noli Me*

Tangere. In 1893, Nakpil composed another version of Maria Clara, giving it the title Amor Patria.

Moving on to more contemporary times, the Apolinario Mabini Hiking Society or simply APO turned professional in 1974. Their protest songs were often used in opposition rallies and mass demonstrations. The trio composed of Boboy Garovillo, Jim Paredes, and Danny Javier also staged the concert series *EtonAPOsila*, a pun on the phrase *"Eto na, pusila!"* "Here he is, shoot!" in the Visayan vernacular, obviously referring to Benigno Aquino's assassination (Philippine Music Registry). They also composed *Hindi ka Nag-iisa* (You are Not Alone), a hymn of solidarity and revulsion over Aquino's murder.

More importantly, Jim Paredes penned *Handog ng Pilipino sa Mundo* (A Filipino Gift to the World) for the 1986 EDSA or People Power Revolution. Regarded as the psalm of triumph over the repressive Marcos regime, the song's lyrics were reportedly embedded on the wall of Our Lady of EDSA Shrine on the first anniversary of the revolution. The song's refrain shares with the world the successful way Filipinos changed their circumstances by uniting as a people and convinces listeners that truth, freedom, and justice can be attained without bloodshed.

Handog ng Pilipino sa mundo,
Mapayapang paraang pagbabago.
Katotohanan, kalayaan, katarungan
Ay kayang makamit na walang dahas.
Basta't magkaisa tayong lahat.
(Mag sama-sama tayo, ikaw at ako)

Indeed the Filipinos overthrew the Marcos dictatorship by stopping tanks with bare hands, praying, and singing along EDSA, a main thoroughfare in Manila flanked by two military camps. The chorus is a précis of what the People Power Revolution was all about: the momentary erasure of the dichotomies between the rich and poor, nuns, priests, and soldiers, who bonded together in the poetic carving of a slice of paradise on earth as expressed in the following:

Masdan ang nagaganap sa aming bayan.
Nagkasama ang mahirap at mayaman.

Kapit-bisig madre, pari, at sundalo.
Naging Langit itong bahagi ng mundo

The song's bridge cautions Filipinos not to allow darkness to descend again in the country and to always remember that every voice should be heard as we are all siblings in God's eyes. Paredes infused a religious slant, which undoubtedly added to the song's appeal and is quite clever given that the Philippines is predominantly Catholic. Besides, the church through its clergy played a visible role in the regime-changing EDSA event.

Huwag muling payagang umiral ang dilim.
Tinig ng bawat tao'y bigyan ng pansin.
Magkakapatid lahat sa Panginoon.
Ito'y lagi nating tatandaan

Interestingly, the nationalistic fervor that swept the country did not seem to diminish the Filipino's love for American music. Tie a Yellow Ribbon soon became the opposition's theme song to mark the homecoming of Senator Aquino. It shared the airwaves with original politicized popular music composed and sung by Filipinos. If at all, the nation of enduring contradictions once again shows that the process of sense making does not necessarily follow a linear pattern. Filipinos found new meaning in the American song to fit the prevailing political reality calling to mind what Frith (1984) said about music's contextual value. Corazon Aquino, Ninoy's widow, also began wearing yellow, and the color became a counter emblem to the blue that Marcos used in his New Society campaign.

1990S: THE RISE OF THE UNDERGROUND ROCK

The late 1980s and early 1990s marked the beginning of the era of the underground rock bands that played protest songs or "progressive" music. This decade saw the rise of legendary folk musicians such as Susan Fernandez-Magno and *Buklod* as well as punk bands like The Jerks, Betrayed, and Urban Bandits, who openly criticized those in power.

Aside from being an activist-singer and academic, Susan Fernandez-Magno was known for her protest music, especially at the height of Marcos' authoritarian reign. An alumna of the University of the Philippines, Magno

first gained prominence as a performer during anti-Marcos rallies in the first half of the 1980s earning her the monicker "the voice of a protest generation." However, it was Magno's forceful rendition of *Babae Ka* that established her as the "voice of the feminist movement." *Babae Ka* was released as a track in her 1990 album, *Habi at Himig* (Severino, 2009).

The song's first stanza points out the many ironies and contradictions in being a woman: coveted, prized, worshipped, and defended. Yet a woman is also a prisoner of her beauty and her own circumstances.

Babae ka, hinahangad sinasamba
Ipinagtatanggol ikaw nama'y walang laya
Ang daigdig mong laging langis ang tahanan
Ganda lang ang pakinabang sa buhay
Walang alam.

Moreover, a woman is a victim of social injustice. She does not get the same privileges and opportunities as a man. Indeed, societal conventions often underestimate her real worth.

Ang pinto ng pag-unlad
Sa iyo laging nakasara
Harapin mo buksan mo
Ibangon ang iyong pagkatao…babae ka!
Kalahati ka ng buhay kung ikaw kaya'y wala
Saan ang buhay ipupunla?

Time and again a woman has proven her resilience by rising above the vicissitudes of life. She can be the lowly domestic helper in Hong Kong but she can also lead a nation's bloodless revolution and banish a dictator.

Pinatunayan mong kaya mong magpa alila
Ngunit kaya mo ring magpalakad ng bansa.
Dahil sa akala ay mahina ka
Halaga mo ay di nakikita.
Bisig mo ay sa lakas ang kulang
Ngunit ang tinig mo ay maging mapagpasya.
Upang ikaw ay lumaya, lumaya ka!

Babae…Pinagpala ang ganda ng daigdig
Na sa iyo nagmumula!

Among the progressive rock bands in this decade, *Patatag* was composed of activist singers who banded together in 1984 and wrote as well as performed their own songs. They were described as "a music ensemble that lent voice and rhythm to the struggles and hopes of fellow Filipinos." Among their more well-known performances were *Bayan Naming Mahal* and the plaintive *Wala Nang Tao sa Santa Filomena* (No One Is Left in Santa Filomena).

But the social problems that restive student militants rallied against in the previous decades persisted. Government officials are still guilty of corruption and abuse of authority. Poverty, unemployment, and prostitution are still rampant. Added to these are the agrarian problems and the increasing militarization in some places in Mindanao. Tribal groups are dispossessed of their lands without proper compensation. It is a recurring sad story when Filipinos are caught in the crossfire between government troops and rebel forces in Mindanao; when people are forced to leave their homes because they have been deprived of their property and livelihood.

Wala Nang Tao sa Santa Filomena (No One Is Left in Santa Filomena) paints an unsettling imagery of desolateness. After everyone has fled the town, only a lone swallow is seen flying over the place.

Nag-iisang lumilipad ang langay-langayan
Anino niya'y tumatawid sa nanunuyong palayan
Tanging sagot sa sigaw niya ay katahimikan
At kaluskos ng hangin sa dahon.

The swallow surveys the empty huts below wondering who will harvest the golden grains that now bend under the weight of sadness. Why has no one said goodbye?

'Sang ikot pa, huling sulyap mula sa ibabaw ng bayan
Mga kubong pinatatag ng lupa at kawayan
Paalam na, paalam na ang awit ng langay-langayan
Nguni't walang nakasaksi sa palayo niyang lutang.

Indeed, no one is left in Santa Filomena. Not even one to receive the gifts of the earth.

The rice stalks look forlorn as if waiting for the hand with the sickle.

Pagka't wala nang tao sa Sta. Filomena
Walang aani sa alay ng lupa
Nakayuko ang palay, tila bang nalulumbay
Tila bang naghihintay ng karit at ng kamay.

Fruits are ripening on the branches. They are plucked by the wind and simply tossed on the ground. Their sweetness sucked by the sun. No one cares to gather the seeds to be planted.

Nahihinog ang bunga ng mangga't bayabas
Pinipitas ng hangin at sa lupa'y hinahampas
Sinisipsip ng araw ang tamis at katas
Iniiwan ang binhing umaasa.

The rains come to bring hope for renewed life, watering what once was parched earth and dried up river beds. For every seed that sprouts, there is a promise of a new beginning. But all these may be in vain:

At pagdating ng tag-ulan sa pinaghasikan
Upang hugutin ang buhay mula sa kamatayan
Muling dadaloy ang dugo sa ugat ng parang
Subali't ang lahat na to'y masasayang.

There is absolutely no one left in Santa Filomena; no one came back to gather the golden grain. The stalks are now bent in surrender; as if offering their lives to the power of the sickle held by a clenched fist.

Pagka't wala nang tao sa Sta.Filomena
Walang aani sa alay ng lupa
Ang palay ay nakayuko, tila bang sumusuko
Naghahandog ng buhay sa karit at kamao.

Distraught, the lonely swallow flies and cries searching for familiar faces and voices to dispel the deafening silence. Where are you, people? Why do you cower in fear? Come back and take a stand. Hear the swallow's lament!

Lumilipad, sumisigaw ang langay-langayan
Nasaan ka at bakit ka nagtatago taumbayan
Panahon na, panahon nang balikan ang iniwan
Dinggin natin and tangis ng abang langay-langayan
Dinggin natin ang tangis ng abang langay-langayan!

Aside from *Patatag,* people who joined rallies during the 1990s would listen to songs by *Tambisan sa Sining* or watched Danny Fabella sing their compositions. Among *Tambisan's* patriotic ballads are *Araw ng Manggagawa* (Laborers Day), *Awit ng Kalayaan* (Song of Freedom), *Awit ng Pag-Asa* (Song of Hope), *Awit ng Proletaryo* (Song of the Proletariat), and *Ay, ay Aping Manggagawa* (Enslaved Laborers). *Tambisan* is the composer, lyricist, musician, and singer of these songs (http://philippinemusicregistry.com.ph).

There's no doubt that protest songs, or as some would call it "progressive music," will forever leave its score in the history of original Pilipino music. The staying power of protest music can be seen today not just in the digital space but in revival concerts such as the University of the Philippines' College of Music *Mga Awit Protesta* held as part of the regular monthly concert series. In his account of this revival concert, Maranan (2013) wrote, "the program notes described this tradition as encompassing the themes of resistance against colonialism and oppression, struggle for independence and social justice, and lays down the beginnings and trajectory of Philippine protest songs from the *Katipunan* and the Revolution of 1896 to the struggle against the Marcos dictatorship and all the regimes that succeeded it."

CONCLUSION

It becomes abundantly clear as one weaves through this study that Philippine protest music confirms what the scholarly literature has documented — that politicized songs, as sites of resistance, have an integral role in the formation of collective action and collective memory. Protest songs

are cultural, historical, and memorial artifacts whose varying roles and significance in many of the Filipino struggles transcend the boundaries of time and space.

Indeed, the Filipino playlist of politicized music has a long tradition as this research has clearly shown. From the Philippine Revolution against Spain to the People Power Revolution, Filipinos have demonstrated the capacity to combat oppressor propaganda music with equally compelling protest music.

The Philippine experience indicates that music can be used as an escape from the ruthlessness of colonial rulers or a homegrown despot but it can also be subtly or directly employed to resist repressive hegemonic structures. Filipinos, for instance, have utilized imaginative and often unpredictable ways to circumvent the controls of those in power from the use of characters and props in sarswelas, metaphors, and symbolisms of freedom and love of country in many protest songs to the assigning of new meanings or interpretations of otherwise nonpolitical, harmless music such as the popular American song, Tie A Yellow Ribbon.

A sizeable proportion of the sample of Philippine songs analyzed were social commentaries on the plight of the poor and dispossessed, political and religious conflicts, and the abuses of the colonial and Martial Law years. The songs spoke truth to power and emboldened Filipinos to act through peaceful or violent means. All told, the soundtrack of Philippine political and social activism is a paradoxical tale that perhaps is expected of disputed turfs where meanings of songs are constantly negotiated on multiple sides of the power struggle for the nation to survive, adapt, and free itself from centuries of tyrannical regimes.

More important, these songs form a cultural heritage that is used collectively and individually to recall, memorialize, contemporize, mobilize, and remind the nation of its fighting spirit and its resolve never to forget the ultimate sacrifice of its martyrs. Appropriately, these lyrical relics are part of many of the country's national public holiday commemorations to this day and the politicized musical memory of activists including the authors who clamored for change during the tumultuous Martial Law years.

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